



Congregation
Kehilat Shalom

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Bulletin from the Board- Steve Weinstein

May All Your New Year's Resolutions Become Habits

On behalf of the entire Board, I would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy, prosperous and fun-filled 2012. If you are like me, there are a number of possible resolutions we can make for the new year. However, most of them are difficult to turn into habits, and thus, will get broken somewhere before the end of February, never to be acted on again in 2012.



There is one resolution that I am very excited about and want to share with you. It is actually a resolution that not only I am making, but the entire CKS Board is making, and we hope that others in the community will join us in making this resolution as well. All 13 members of the Board have committed to attend Friday night services at least once per quarter in 2012.

Now for many of you reading this, you may be saying, "But Steve, this is not a big commitment." But before I ask you how many Friday night services you have attended since the High Holidays, let me be the first to say that for me (and many members of the Board), this is a definite re-prioritization for 2012, and one that I can say I sorely need to make. Sure, I travel a lot for business. Sure, I am tired by the end of a busy week. Sure, I have to balance my kids' activities and my schedule of being a divorced parent. I am very good at always being able to come up with a reason why I am too busy to attend a Friday night service. But the truth is, there is no good reason not to enjoy the singing, the praying, the community and the spiritual uplift that I always feel when I come at least four Fridays per year.

There is no way that I can ask all of you to make this same commitment if I cannot honor it myself. So I put out this challenge to the entire community – set aside at least one Friday night per quarter and join the Rabbi, members of the Board, and members of the community for an evening of song and prayer, of spiritual reflection and relaxation, of camaraderie and celebration. Make it a habit in 2012 and I promise that you will get back much more than you give.

For those who may be wondering, my promise does not come with a money-back guarantee. However, since I am the Financial Secretary, I am willing to make exceptions on a case by case basis ☺.

Best wishes for a terrific 2012 and hope to see you soon,

Steve

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CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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Save the date!!

Family Bingo Night

Saturday, February 11th

Great fun for the whole family!



Richard M. Nadler DMD, FAGD

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Committee Corner

CONSIDERING EMPTY NESTERS? HERE'S AN INVITATION!

For those of you who might be thinking of joining the Empty Nesters group, Kristina and Harry Wise are graciously opening their home on January 7, 2012 from 4 to 8 p.m. for a Wine and Cheese Party. Come meet the members of this long-standing CKS Havurah. Enjoy a sip and a nibble and light-hearted conversation.

Here are the details –

Wine and Cheese Party

Saturday, January 7, 2012 (Rain Date: Sunday, January 8, 2012)

4 to 8 p.m.

Home of Kristina and Harry Wise

56 Catskill Ct.

Belle Mead

RSVP by January 1st to Marilyn Plotkin

908-359-1498

Please advise Marilyn if you will bring an hors d'oeuvres or a dessert.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Make someone's grandma or grandpa happy!
Mark your calendars for a special Tikkun Olam opportunity!

Volunteer to visit Greenwood House Jewish Home for the Aged on one of the following dates*:

February 26

March 18

April 29

*All visits will take place between 10:30 am and noon

More details to follow....

Magazine Fundraiser Continues!

You can still purchase a magazine for a gift. Your recipient will receive the gift for months!

Go onto the apeast.com website, enter the CKS webcode: WC3453 and view the 800+ discounted offerings in order to make your choice. You pay by credit card and CKS makes 40% profit on the orders.



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LIVING OUR JUDAISM



This past November, we held the first Friday night "Rabbi's Tisch" format in which we shared a Shabbat meal and discussed a topic of interest, in this case, "The Occupy Movement and Jewish Values." The economy is on everyone's mind... whether we are well-to-do or struggling to make ends meet. And you can't watch the news or read the newspaper these days without seeing the signs of protest here (and abroad) about the widening gap between rich and poor, access to quality healthcare, fair treatment of labor, taxes, cutbacks of social services, and so on. Over a delicious meal, about 20 of us discussed and shared our ideas about what is happening in our society today - all while learning some basic Jewish values and teachings on the subject of money, business, ownership and debt, the poor and the vulnerable, and the treatment of workers.

Here are a few of these teachings:

There shall be no needy among you... but if there is a needy person among you... do not harden your heart and shut your hand.... Remember that you were slaves and strangers in the land of Egypt and Adonai your God redeemed you. (Deuteronomy 15)

You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another.... You shall not falsify measures of length, weight, or capacity. You shall have an honest balance [and] honest weights.... I am Adonai your God who freed you from the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19)

When you reap the harvest of your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it. It shall go to the stranger, the orphan and the widow, in order that Adonai your God may bless you in all your undertakings. Always remember that you were a slave and stranger in the land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 24)

If you see a theme here you are right. These pieces of text from the Torah are just three among the dozen or so we read that night, and among the thousands of teachings from the Bible, the Talmud, and other works of Jewish tradition from ancient to modern that tell us of our obligation to give back and to create a just and merciful society. Why do we do this? We do it because we were poor (in Egypt, in Poland, in the slums of New York City). We do it because we were slaves and strangers in other lands. We do it out of empathy. We do it because it is commanded. We do it because our Jewish tradition is telling us this is not just the path to be a better Jew; it is the path to becoming a better, fuller, more compassionate human being.

This month we begin reading the book of Exodus, the defining story of the Jewish people's humble beginnings as a little band of runaway slaves who collectively strive to achieve a higher purpose by telling that story over and over again, and by creating a set of laws and practices to ensure the end of oppression, the care of the vulnerable, and a good and decent life for all who dwell on earth.

Here at CKS, there are many ways to put our Jewish values to work to build a better world. You can check our website and weekly e-bulletins; some hard-working CKS

adult or teen is always sponsoring a collection for a local food pantry or animal shelter, coats for the winter, or recyclables. Speaking of recyclables, you can now bring your organic waste (paper, leftover fruits and vegetables) to our teen-run compost pit located behind the building. Or, you can volunteer to come and teach at Kehiloft, our post-bnei mitzvah program. Tell the kids about your work, your hobby, or some other life lesson you've learned along the way. You can also choose to join our Tikkun Olam/Social Action committee and help plan our next event for this year.

The point is to live our Judaism, to live our values, and as it says in the *Shema*, our most central prayer, to take them to heart and teach them diligently to our children. The next Rabbi's Tisch is scheduled for Friday, March 16th. Please let me know if you have an idea for a discussion topic. Meanwhile, I hope to see you soon.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Susan



Tree of Life

Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simcha!* Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.

Contact CKS Office
908-359-0420



The CKS Gift Shop is open each Sunday 10 am - 11 am

Questions?
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
or Harlene Rosenberg 908-874-8283




Now in its 18th full year, CKS's non-sectarian pre-school for children 2½ to 5 years old, offers a unique atmosphere, giving children a chance to explore, create, and most importantly, learn to think and reason.

For more information, call 908-359-0420





CKS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWS JANUARY 2012



Dear CKS Religious School Families,

Happy 2012! Before 2011 came to a close, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Reconstructionist Educators of North America's (RENA) annual conference at Congregation Beth HaTikvah in Summit, NJ. RENA, is a professional group for people leading schools in Reconstructionist congregations. RENA in Hebrew means both "spirited song" and also "shout." The conference allowed us to come together to share the joy we find in Jewish educational leadership. As part of the conference we visited Behrman House, the leading publisher of educational materials for Jewish religious schools in North America. There, we had a first-hand look at their new Online Learning Center, an interactive website that will be accompanying many of the Behrman House text books. We also were able to provide feedback about the needs in our movement. Additionally, we attended workshops about teaching Hebrew, creating Jewish experiences in our Religious school and G-d. Sharing ideas and learning about other Religious school's best practices were certainly a highlight. Attending conferences like these allow me to grow as your Educator and bring these best practices out our Religious School.

Shari Rothstein

*Your comments & suggestions are always welcomed.
principal@ksnj.org*



Morah Karen's 3rd grade class fulfilling the mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim, Welcoming Guests. They made Chanukah baskets for the new CKS families.



SPECIAL EVENTS IN JANUARY



January 6, 2012 - Friday night
K-4th Grades

help lead Shabbat services

Join our youngest students as they proudly join Rabbi Susan on the bimah to help lead the congregation in services.

January 14, 2012 - Saturday morning
Shabbat services led by our 5th, 6th and 7th Grades

Come worship at CKS on 1/14 and hear the 5th, 6th and 7th graders lead us in the prayers they have been working on in class.

January 22, 2012 9:30am
K-2nd Grade Family Workshop UNWRAPPING SHABBAT
Parents, come join with your K, 1st or 2nd grader as we unwrap and learn about the many symbols of Shabbat. Together we will make a challah cover that you can use at your own Shabbat table.

January 29, 2012 9:30am
6th grade Family Workshop TORAH, TORAH, TORAH
The 6th graders and their families will have a chance to get up close and personal with the Torah! Together with Rabbi Susan we will unroll the Torah to see the many stories. Each student will be making a Yad (a torah pointer) that they can use at their bar or bat mitzvah.

Kehi-Loft



CKS's former "Hebrew High School" program has truly made strides in the past few years. It has become a place for learning, socializing, celebrating, helping, and creating, and it has functioned as a community hub for many of our teens here at Congregation Kehilat Shalom. As a

President of Kehiloft this year and a member of the organization for five years, I can truly say that I have seen Kehiloft transform from simply a Hebrew High School program into something even more significant in the lives of its members, and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

As new members of Kehiloft join each year after graduating their seventh grade Religious School classes, each one experiences the many parts of Kehiloft for the first time. For many of these students, the Kehiloft-led shabbat service on December 2nd was the first time (other than at their b'nai mitzvahs!) during which they had an opportunity to lead prayer in front of the congregation. Leading a shabbat service, especially with a group like Kehiloft, allows students to connect with community in ways that they may not otherwise be able to.

While 13 of Kehiloft's students and I led the congregation in Shabbat prayer, the most meaningful part of the evening for many of us was the D'var Torah discussion afterwards. The week's Torah portion discussed Jacob's dream and his realization of G-d's presence in even his humble, temporary home. As we told the story of the parsha and played an enjoyable greeting game with the congregation, I couldn't help but relish the moment and feel grateful to be a part of such a tight-knit and welcoming community. When discussing the parsha itself and its relevance to our lives in 2011, many congregants shared their own experiences and opinions. The congregation's input was invaluable, and we thank everyone who attended our service, including Rabbi Susan. Many congregants' stories brought laughter into the air and even tears to our eyes. I realized, in that moment, that Kehiloft has allowed me to develop my relationships with people in my Jewish community, and has instilled in me many of the values that help me to develop relationships with others in my life. In no other setting could I ever imagine experiencing such a great sense of community and togetherness than in Kehiloft.

To emphasize this sense of community, one of Kehiloft's yearly goals is to perform one large community service act for our own congregation. Last year, I designed compost bins for our synagogue that Kehiloft built. Kehiloft now maintains the composting program in our Religious School. This year's project is still undecided, but we have made some significant changes to the way Kehiloft functions in order to allow us to work more efficiently toward goals like our yearly community service project. Thanks to Amy Rosenthal, Kehiloft now has an official blog and website at <http://kehiloft.org> which we use to keep informed and up to date. I have enjoyed creating the Kehiloft blog, and I certainly hope it proves useful to Kehiloft students as well as any congregants who

5

As Kehiloft continues to develop here at CKS with innovations like the blog and with events such as student-led services, I'm confident that the immense amount of experience, wisdom, and involvement in community I have already gained from being a member and President will continue to expand. Kehiloft teaches more, gives more back, provides more opportunities, and grows every year, and will continue to as it flourishes in the warm community that CKS provides as its setting.

Jeremy Bilotti

Please come support the
Kehiloft students
on January 20 at 7:30
as they lead
Friday Shabbat services

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March 30 - April 1

North American Teen Kallah in New York City*

A No'ar Hadash program for Reconstructionist teens promising an innovative, exciting, creative, fun, and engaging program designed to meet the social, spiritual, and intellectual needs of today's youth. *Details to follow as they become available.

Invitations by Sharon



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Learn to Chant Torah

Instructor: Cantor Emily Pincus

Tuesdays: 8:00 PM

- January 10, 17, 24, 31
- February 7, 14

Location: TBE

The course will begin with a brief history of cantillation, and then introduce the melodies of the Torah tropes. In six one hour classes, we will learn all the major phrases that divide a verse of Torah. By the end of the class, you will be able to chant! Enthusiasm is important; vocal quality is not.

Prerequisite: Ability to read Hebrew with vowels.

Textbook: The Art of Torah Cantillation:

A Step-by-Step Guide to Chanting Torah

Sex, Truth, No Videotape

Instructor: Rabbi Eli Garfinkel

Tuesdays: 8:00 – 9:00 PM

- January 10, 17, 24
- February 7, 14, 21

Location: BES

What do Jewish tradition and wisdom really have to say about controversial sexual issues? You'll find out in this text and discussion based class.

Biblical Seductions

Instructor: Rabbi Ron Isaacs

Tuesdays: 9:00-10:30 AM

January 17 – February 14

Location: TS

The Bible was written for adults, not for children, and some of its stories may well be said to have been written for adults only. Sex, violence, scandal—these are words that we rarely associate with the sacred text. Come study some of the forbidden tales of the Bible to see how these stories teach us lessons in human nature.

Understanding the Hebrew Prophets

Instructor: Rabbi Ron Isaacs

Sundays: 10:00 AM

January 22 – February 19

Location: TS

This course will introduce students to the world of the Hebrew prophets. You will have a chance to learn about what kind of people they were, why G-d chose them, how they were able to hear G-d's word, and the values inherent in their writings.

Invitations by Sharon



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JANUARY 2012

January 2012
6 Tevet 5772 - 7 Shevat 5772

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 7:21AM/4:42PM	2 7:21AM/4:42PM	3 7:21AM/4:43PM Mah Jong - 7:30 pm	4 7:21AM/4:44PM	5 7:21AM/4:45PM Fast of Tevet 10	6 7:21AM/4:46PM Shabbat Services - 7:00 pm led by K-4th grades	7 7:21AM/4:47PM
8 7:21AM/4:48PM Religious School - 9 - Noon	9 7:21AM/4:49PM	10 7:21AM/4:50PM Mah Jong - 7:30 pm	11 7:21AM/4:51PM 6:00 pm - Kehi-Loft	12 7:20AM/4:52PM Board Meeting - 7:30 pm	13 7:20AM/4:53PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	14 7:20AM/4:54PM Shabbat Morning Service led by 5 -7 grades - 10:00 am
15 7:19AM/4:55PM Religious School - 9 - Noon	16 7:19AM/4:56PM	17 7:18AM/4:57PM Mah Jong - 7:30 pm	18 7:18AM/4:59PM	19 7:17AM/5:00PM	20 7:17AM/5:01PM B'nei Mitzvah Family Dinner and Meeting - 6:00 pm Shabbat Services - 7:30 pm led by Kehi-Loft	21 7:16AM/5:02PM
22 7:16AM/5:03PM Religious School - 9 - Noon	23 7:15AM/5:04PM	24 7:14AM/5:06PM 7:00 pm - Ritual Committee 7:00 pm - Membership Committee Mah Jong - 7:30 pm	25 7:14AM/5:07PM Rosh Hodesh 6:00 pm - Kehi-Loft	26 7:13AM/5:08PM	27 7:12AM/5:09PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	28 7:11AM/5:11PM
29 7:10AM/5:12PM Religious School - 9 - Noon	30 7:10AM/5:13PM	31 7:09AM/5:14PM Mah Jong - 7:30 pm				

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January 2012

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January 15th

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