

# Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **December 2012** Kislev— Tevet 5773

## Congregation

### Kehilat Shalom

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Belle Mead, NJ 08502  
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Regular office hours:  
M-W 8:30-4pm T-Th 8:30-6pm  
F-8:30-2:30pm

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## Bulletin from the Board-Marc Rosenberg

Happy Chanukah!

My father, uncles and grandfather owned a men's clothing store on Long Island. Around this time every year, we'd all come to the store – me, my brothers, my cousins and all the wives – to prepare the store for the holiday Christmas sales rush. Up went the tree, the garland and the lights. Three generations of reasonably religious Jews became masters of Christmas holiday decorations. To this day, I can still trim a tree with the best of them. And then, on a shelf behind the cash register, my grandmother put up the electric menorah.

My youthful experience in the family store got me to thinking that God was pretty crafty putting Chanukah near Christmas. Both are festivals filled with lights, and both celebrate miracles. And, no matter which side you were on, you got gifts (as a kid, my favorite part). But I know there was even more to God's plan. I believe He (or She) was making a statement about co-existence. Since not everyone is Jewish, God wanted people of all religions to understand and respect each other's traditions.

As we come together to celebrate Chanukah and tell the story of the Maccabees, let's all recognize that whatever differences we have, they pale next to our similarities. To all our members and their families, may the holiday season bring health, happiness and peace.

Speaking of which...

This year, we light the first candle of Chanukah on December 8, and we will have a holiday pot luck dinner and community menorah lighting on Friday evening, December 14, beginning at 6:30pm. Everyone is invited to this joyous celebration. Please call the office and let us know you'll be coming and what vegetarian (no meat) or dairy dish or desert you will contribute to the meal. More information is available in this newsletter, our weekly member e-mail, and on our website.

My family and I have been members of CKS for 29 years – almost from the beginning. That's long enough to see a second generation of members take the reins of synagogue leadership. Our longevity is something we can all be proud of, but it takes commitment. If you'd like to get involved in this fulfilling tradition, let us know. If you have an idea for an activity or event – religious, social, educational, or community service, or just want to help out – we have several committees that are in need of people like you: simply speak to any Board member. Whether you can devote a lot of time, or just a little, the more who participate, the stronger we all are.

*Marc Rosenberg*, Trustee



## CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

### General

Susan & Darryl Waskow, Harry and Dorothy  
Thank you to Rabbi Susan, Kate Fridkis and Kol Ahava for their spiritual presence at Dorothy Waskow's Bat Mitzvah

### High Holidays Donations

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## Committee Corner

### CKS Wine Tasting Series

Thursday, December 20th

Other dates in the series are Sunday, February 10th, Thursday, April 18th and Sunday, June 16th. Cost is \$18 per person per class. If you would like to attend please send your check to the synagogue office with a note that it is for the wine tasting and indicate which dates you plan on attending.

Any questions, please contact Matt Rosenthal.

### RITUAL COMMITTEE ASSISTANCE

Dear Fellow Congregants,

We, the members of the Ritual Committee, would like to extend our thoughts and prayers to all those that have suffered as a result of Hurricane Sandy. We send our hopes for a speedy recovery.

Part of our responsibility as a committee is to plan and organize various holidays and celebrations throughout the year. As we have grown as a congregation and community, these celebrations have grown as well. In order to help make these occasions successful, we are asking for assistance with the planning, organizing, and running these various events. Some of the programs we have to plan for each year are: Simchat Torah and Chanukah celebrations, Purim festivities, a Yom Ha Shoah program, and several others.

Perhaps you would consider taking part in helping with one of these activities; all help would be appreciated, no matter how small, and the rewards would be tenfold, knowing that you have helped make that event successful.

If you are interested, please contact Larry Spinrad at 908-967-1704 or at [Lspinrad@yahoo.com](mailto:Lspinrad@yahoo.com).

We thank you in advance.

The Ritual Committee

### TIKKUN OLAM COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES WINTER COAT DRIVE

The Tikkun Olam Committee is launching another coat drive, this one starting November 26th and continuing through December 9th. A labeled box will be on the synagogue porch ready to receive your gently used or new winter coats, hats, scarves, boots, and gloves or mittens for adults and children. We ask that you label new items as such. This year, donations go to Jewish Family Services.

In this age of economic hardship in which many of us are trying to make do with less, many who are not so fortunate must do with less. Please rummage through your closets to pull out the coats, hats, scarves, boots, gloves and mittens you no longer wear, so that someone else can be warm this winter.

Any questions? Please email Richard and Sheryl Rosenberg at [swellcourt@verizon.net](mailto:swellcourt@verizon.net) or phone us at 908-253-7049. Thank you.

## Message from the Rabbi

### HURRICANE SANDY AND THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE: FOLLOW-UP



In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, participating the Food Stamp Challenge took on a whole new layer of meaning. I'm sure that despite multiple days of power loss, cold and inconvenience, all of us here in the CKS community have been counting our blessings, appreciating the simple things, and not taking the basics – food, water, light, a roof over our heads

– for granted.

So, as I planned what I was going to eat for a whole week for just \$31.50, I found myself staring into my kitchen cabinets, newly-mindful of all the millions of struggling Americans trying to put food on the table every day for their families. I thought about how quickly any one of us can find ourselves in that same struggle. Through the loss of a job, a debilitating illness – or, a hurricane – in the blink of an eye, the veneer of security can be washed away.

I consider myself someone who pays a lot of attention to my food and how it gets to my table. Health, ecology, and ethics have ruled my eating habits for over 20 years. I try my best to purchase local and organic produce, to pay attention to who is manufacturing or harvesting what I eat. But, all of a sudden, I realized the week ahead would not just be about surviving on oatmeal, rice and beans, lentil soup, and peanut butter and jelly. I knew I would manage to stay on budget somehow. Yet, as I turned from my kitchen cabinets and fridge, I realized it was not just a matter of staying on budget for one week. I have items in my kitchen that I would never have to begin with were I on public assistance. A \$20 bottle of olive oil. The free-trade coffee I drink to support independent coffee growers – for \$13.00 a pound. And, what about the fancy peppercorns and the long-grain brown basmati rice? What about the brand of oatmeal I buy, the cans of sustainably-fished, dolphin-safe tuna that surely must cost three or four times as much as the “regular brands.” As I go into my week of the Challenge, I thought to myself, how should I manage this position of privilege in which I have such a huge head start?

In terms of practicalities, I decided I would use the olive oil but not the coffee. I would use the oatmeal, but not the tuna. And so on. But, in terms of goals and lessons learned, I understood before I even began the Challenge that I can afford to pay the extra money for high quality products, as well as for foods that feed my conscience along with my stomach. Moreover, I don't have to decide whether I will eat lunch or buy medicine on a regular basis. I don't have to worry about running out of money at the end of every month – or about the impossible task of replacing food lost during a storm power outage!

I don't know if taking the Food Stamp Challenge will ultimately change anything. But, I do know that my consciousness has been raised in new and unexpected ways. I want to thank everyone who donated and supported me during this week. Thanks to you, I raised \$1,274, meeting and surpassing my goal of \$1,134 (my page is still up at [www.foodstampchallenge.org](http://www.foodstampchallenge.org)).

And now, let's remember that the job is not finished until hunger and poverty are alleviated in our country. Let's hold our lawmakers accountable to the values of compassion and justice as they make budgetary decisions for the coming year. Also, please note that we are continuing to collect food and other items for hurricane survivors, as well as participate in hands-on action. Stay tuned to your emails for details. In the words of our Ancient Rabbis: "It is not upon you to finish the work; but neither are you free to desist from it."

*B'Shalom uvracha/With Blessings and Peace,*  
Happy Chanukah and a beautiful holiday season to all our members!

*Rabbi Susan*



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908-359-0420



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is open each Sunday  
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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







## Kehiloft



Last year when I ended Hebrew school, I knew I wanted to join Kehiloft, but I was still nervous. I had been attending Hebrew school for seven years and it felt strange to not wake up every Sunday morning and complain about how tired I was, or how I just wanted to go back to sleep. But somehow, when

Hebrew school and Kehiloft sessions started this year, I suddenly felt totally ready to move on and was not nervous anymore. Each Kehiloft meeting I've attended this year I've felt welcomed and accepted. As the year is progressing, I feel more open to join in on the discussions, and give my opinions and ideas. A few weeks ago, I took part in a skit put together by me, Dorothy and Gabi that taught the students how to use the synagogue's compost bin. The skit started with me coming into the classroom to throw away a plastic bottle. Then, I would "accidentally" put the bottle in the compost bin. Seconds later, Gabi and Dorothy ran in shouting "No! Plastic doesn't go into the compost!" Every time we started our skit, I loved seeing the expressions on the students' faces and what they had to say about our skit. It was super fun!

Last month we also visited Stonebridge, an assisted living home. We led activities and games for the residents there. When we first arrived I was a bit nervous but pretty soon I adjusted to everything and had a lot of fun. I enjoyed helping out and teaching the games to the people who live there. Everyone was very kind and excited to spend time with us. There will be a few more trips to Stonebridge throughout this year and I will be excited to go back.

Joining Kehiloft has been a great experience for me and I can't wait for upcoming meetings and events.

*Tess Kowalski*

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### December

**NEW SESSION: Sunday, Dec 2.** 12:00 – 1:30.  
Operation Respect Program

**Friday, Dec 7.** 7:00 – 9:00 (ending time approximate).  
Kehiloft leads Shabbat services

**Wednesday, Dec 12** – Regular session with rabbi led discussion

**Saturday, Dec 15** – Afternoon Chanukah celebration at Stonebridge

### January

**Wednesday, Jan 9** – Regular session/Shabbat service prep

**Friday, Jan 11.** 7:30-9:30. Kehiloft leads Shabbat services

**Wednesday, Jan 23** – Regular session with rabbi led discussion

**Sunday, Jan 27. NEW TIME:** 9:00 – 12:00. Kehiloft leads art program in Religious School

## KEHILOFT ADDS NEW SESSION

Sunday, Dec 2  
from 11:45 – 1:30

Singer-songwriter Steve Seskin's  
Operation Respect program

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video at approximately 11:45  
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Step Up For Israel Film Series: Israel & the West, Tuesday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Or Chadash, Flemington. Discover Israel as a democratic nation with shared Western values, and learn how the media shapes negative opinions about Israel. All are welcome...free admission.



Iris Krasnow will be the featured Jewish LIFE speaker on Wednesday, January 9 at 12 Noon. New York Times best-selling author Iris Krasnow will discuss her book *The Secret Lives of Wives*, a composite of

200 interviews conducted with women married from 15 to 70 years. This program is hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater and includes brunch. The fee is \$18/person in advance or \$22/person at the door. This program is co-sponsored by The Brandeis National Committee Somerset Chapter; Temple Beth El, Somerset Sisterhood; Temple Sholom Sisterhood. Call the JCC to register at 908-725-6994 x201.



Simcha Weinstein, *The Case for Children: Why Parenthood Makes Your World Better*, Thursday, January 17, 7 p.m. at the Birnbaum JCC. The best-selling author will discuss the

benefits that parenthood brings to individuals and society and how parenthood makes your world physically, materially and spiritually better. The fee for the program is \$8/person in advance or \$10/person at the door. Call the JCC to register at 908-725-6994 x201.

A complete listing of Jewish LIFE special events and synagogue course offering for the 2012-2013 calendar year is posted on the JCC website: [www.ssbjcc.org](http://www.ssbjcc.org)



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Jewish Community Center**  
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The CKS Magazine Fundraiser has begun. Purchase Chanukkah presents via email and CKS makes 40% profit. Easy to order: The catalogue is web based, go to: [aphearst.com](http://aphearst.com), click on the 'shop now' icon, and enter the CKS code: WC3453. Over 800 magazines are discounted and you can purchase new titles or renew what you already receive. And now there are digital subscriptions that would go to your iPad or Kindle. You can purchase items all year long and CKS makes the profit! Questions: call Bob Fass 609 577 8909.



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# DECEMBER 2012



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						<b>1</b> 9:30 AM Andrew Galkin Bar Mitzvah
<b>2</b> 9:00 AM Religious School Anti-Bullying Program 9:00 AM Religious School	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 7:00 PM Shabbat Services	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9:00 AM Religious School	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	<b>12</b> 6:00 PM Kehiloft session with Rabbi Falk	<b>13</b> 7:30 PM Board Meeting	<b>14</b> 6:30 PM Chanukah pot luck dinner and Menorah Lighting 7:45 PM Shabbat Services	<b>15</b> Chanukah celebration at Stonebridge
<b>16</b> 8:30 AM Sam Glaser Concert at Neve Shalom (7th Graders) 9:00 AM Religious School	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	<b>19</b> 7:00 PM Education Committee	<b>20</b> 7:30 PM Wine Tasting - Cabernet Sauvignon & Zinfandel	<b>21</b> 7:00 PM Shabbat Services	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00 PM Ritual Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Membership Committee 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					

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**December 2012**

Deadline for next newsletter:  
**December 15<sup>th</sup>**

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