

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

Editor—Karen Bartels
karen.bartels@comcast.net
home phone 609-921-1811

Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **November 2013** Cheshvan — Kislev 5773

Congregation
Kehilat Shalom

**253 Griggstown Rd.
Belle Mead, NJ 08502**
Phone: 908-359-0420
Fax: 908-359-8848
Regular office hours:
M-W 8:30-4pm T-Th 8:30-6pm
F-8:30-2:30pm

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rabbi@ksnj.org

President

Susan Waskow
president@ksnj.org

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Robin Bengochea
admin1@ksnj.org
robin@ksnj.org

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Bulletin from the Board- Ron Lubin

2013 is a unique year for those of us who celebrate the Jewish holidays. Time seems to be passing us by even more quickly than usual. Rosh Hashanah came while we were still enjoying the remnants of summer and Chanukah starts while we will be prepping our Thanksgiving turkeys. Many have dubbed it "Thanksgivukkah.". For my family, it is actually "Birththanksnukah," because it is also my nephew's birthday on Thanksgiving.



Chanukah and Thanksgiving are my two favorite holidays. For myself, Donna, and our children, they are both holidays where we enjoy spending time with our extended families. On Thanksgiving, we enjoy a traditional turkey dinner at my brother's home, followed by family games, lively conversation and many laughs. Chanukah, on the other hand, is always hosted by Donna and me and we have made it a tradition to serve brisket in addition to latkes and other family favorites. We play dreidel with the kids and of course exchange gifts followed by too much dessert and lots of family stories and laughs.

What is a family to do this year during this once in a lifetime event when both holidays overlap? My family's solution is to simply combine the celebration of both holidays (and of course, my nephew's birthday celebration). We will be enjoying turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, brisket and latkes and birthday cake all at the same table and we will definitely have to try to make some sweet potato latkes. I had better not look at the scale the next day!

The most disappointing part of having both holidays occur concurrently is that we will have one less large family gathering this year. Family is so important and unfortunately, with two brothers and 10 children between the three of us, it is difficult to coordinate our schedules and make time to spend together. Work, school and sports schedules make family get-togethers more of a special event reserved for holidays. I would like to change that. I am going to make a much greater effort in the upcoming year to visit family more often and not just on holidays.

I also want to extend this feeling to my CKS family and suggest to everyone to be more active and participate in more of what CKS has to offer. Seeing our CKS family should not simply be reserved for the holidays. There are so many everyday events within our community such as the spiritual development meetings, mah jong games, book club discussions and Tikkun Olam and of course, weekly Friday night Shabbat services. These are just a few of the many offerings here at CKS. In all cases, you can become a greater part of the CKS family and feel a strong bond with your extended Jewish family.

I hope to see you at our annual Chanukah Potluck Dinner at 6pm on Sunday, December 1st where we will all have the chance to light our menorahs together and share our Thanksgivukkah stories.

I wish everyone a Happy Chanukah and a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Ron Lubin, Treasurer

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TIKKUN OLAM COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES WINTER COAT DRIVE

The Tikkun Olam Committee is launching another coat drive, this one starting Friday, November 22nd, and continuing through Sunday, December 1st. 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 United Way.

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 or phone us at 908-253-7049. Thank you.

Israel Is Calling You!

Join us for the first Reconstructionist Movement trip to Israel, May 14-21, 2014. Deepen your connection to Judaism as you experience life in Israel today. Learn from leading academics, Israeli thinkers, and political activists in a unique series of stimulating and provocative programs. Take your part in a progressive Jewish conversation—an intellectual, spiritual and political dialogue that will build your knowledge, challenge your perspectives, and broaden your understanding of Israel. Learn more at www.rrc.edu/Israeltrip.

CKS Book Club:

All meetings are at CKS at 7:30pm
Join us for one or all of the discussions

Thursday - November 7 - *The Light Between Oceans*
by M. L. Stedman
Thursday - December 5 - *Zealot: The Life and Times
of Jesus of Nazareth* by Reza Aslan
Thursday - January 9 - *The Chameleon in the Closet:
A Conservative Jewish Mother Reaches Out to Her
Orthodox Sons* by BJ Rosenfeld

Message from the Rabbi

PEWISH AND JEWISH



Okay, okay, so I stole this title from writer and blogger Joshua Hammerman in his *Times of Israel* piece reacting to the recent Pew survey of American Jews. In case you haven't heard, the Pew Research Center recently came out with their results from the first study of American Jews in more than ten years. The big headline: Jews in the United States are assimilating faster than ever. There are an estimated

5.3 million Jewish adults in the U.S. (slightly down from ten years ago), with two-thirds of them now unaffiliated with a synagogue; an all-time high intermarriage rate of 58%; and 22% of Jews describing themselves as having "no religion". According to Steven M. Cohen, sociologist and consultant to the Pew study, these statistics predict a sharply declining non-Orthodox population along with an increasing number of Orthodox Jews. Yet, despite these statistics, according to the survey, 97% of American Jews say they are proud to be Jewish and have a "strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people".

So, what does it all mean? Well, in the first place, as we all know here at CKS, intermarriage does not necessitate abandoning one's Judaism, nor does it mean not raising Jewish kids. But, as with the general U.S. population, Jews are becoming more secular, and the younger they are, the more this tends to be true.

What about this 22% who consider themselves Jews with "no religion"? As I have often noted, "religion" and "religious" are tricky, loaded words. Many hear the word "religion" and equate it with believing in a God they are unsure of, or of following all the mitzvot, many of which are viewed as antiquated and out-of-step with contemporary life and attitudes. And as a Reconstructionist rabbi, and part of a movement that is constantly updating, changing, and tweaking ritual and practice, I do not disagree.

Interestingly, only 39% of "Jews by religion" claim that God exists; and 42% of "Jews of no religion" attend Passover Seders and High Holiday services. These data are viewed as contradictory and puzzling. But we all know (or maybe are ourselves) Jews who consider themselves "Jews by culture", that is, connected to their Judaism by food, music, Yiddish or Hebrew literature or language rather than through ritual observance. And the truth is, there never was a time when Jews observed all the commandments. Jews have always doubted the existence of God, or improvised customs and rules to match their ever-changing circumstances – whether in the ghetto in Poland, the cosmopolitan setting of Medieval Cairo, or the freedom of America.

At the same time, I would argue that the decreasing numbers of affiliated Jews is troublesome. Being in Jewish community—whether a synagogue, chaverah, JCC, or other organization—keeps us tied to each other and able to share ideas. This connection is essential for Jewish continuity. Judaism is changing. It always has been. But only by being in community can new customs emerge in a whole and coherent way. It is through community that new ideas, customs, rituals, styles of worship are tested

and adopted – or rejected. It is through community that our Jewish voice and values on the issues of our time are best heard and put to work.

Here's what "Pewish and Jewish" author Hammerman writes in his article: "When 94% of U.S. Jews say they are proud to be Jewish, this is nothing short of miraculous.... We need to figure out the source of this pride and bottle it.... Synagogues that are inclusive, joyous, relevant, and proud can capitalize on this overwhelming sense of pride.... If the doors are opened wide enough." So, ask yourself: Are you proud to be Jewish? Are our CKS doors opened wide enough? Let me know what you think.

B'Shalom, *Rabbi Susan*



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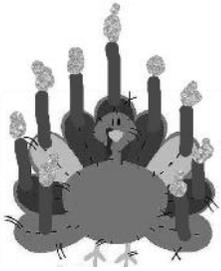
Questions?
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
or Iris Rubinstein 609-947-2633



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 NOVEMBER 2013



Dear CKS Families,

Thanksgiving 2013 falls unusually late this year on Thursday, November 28, while Hanukkah begins at sundown on Wednesday, November 27. That means the second candle on the menorah will be lit on Thanksgiving, – and it won't happen again for another 75,000 years. These holidays share many of the same values - dedication, peace between nations, gratitude and family. Let's celebrate the values of this double holiday. Make your centerpiece out of canned food and donate it to the food pantry. And since I mentioned food, why not serve sweet potato latkes and challah-chestnut stuffing? You should light the menorah, play dreidel and sing Chanukah songs around the Thanksgiving table. For other fun ideas, check out www.thanksgivukkahboston.com.

Happy Thanksgivukkah, *Shari Rethstein*

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Friday, November 1, 2013 - 7:30pm
K-4th grade Shabbat followed by an ice cream oneg.

Sunday, November 3, 2013
- Music with Morah Eric
- 5-7th grade will have Tefillah at 11:30
Parents are welcome to join us.

Sunday, November 10, 2013
Religious School closed

Sunday, November 17, 2013
5th Grade Parent Meeting 9am,
followed by
5TH GRADE FAMILY WORKSHOP
Parents, come join with your 5th graders for "It's A Blessing". Learn together and make a beautiful mezzuzah for the "doorpost of your house" and learn the blessing for affixing the mezzuzah.

Saturday, November 23, 2013-9:30am
Shabbat morning services with 5th-7th grades.

Sunday, November 24, 2013
Special Chanukah program with Kehiloft and **COOKING!**

Looking Ahead

Friday, December 6, 2013 - 7:30pm
5th - 7th graders will help lead Shabbat services.

Sunday, December 8, 2013 - 9:30am
K-2nd GRADE FAMILY WORKSHOP
Shma Pajama Party - all students and parents are encouraged to wear their PJs.
MUSIC with Moreh Eric

Sunday, December 15, 2013
COOKING



Photos from around Religious School:
1&2. Bodie and Sam making rain sticks for the holiday of Sukkot - a time when we pray for rain. 3 & 4. Making blankets for families at Homefront 5. K-2nd graders making cards to be presented with the blankets 6. Singing in the sukkah with Rabbi Jeff 7. Making sandwiches for a soup kitchen in Philadelphia.

Photo credit: Bill Ries



Kehi-Loft

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, Nov 6 - Rabbi Susan leads discussion

Wednesday, Nov 13 - Shabbat service prep

Friday, Nov 22 at 7:30 - Kehiloft leads Shabbat services

Sunday, Nov 24 - 9:00-12:00. Chanukah project in Religious School

DECEMBER

Sunday, Dec 1 - 4:00 - 5:30. Chanukah program at Stonebrige

Wednesday, Dec 11 - Judy Turkheimer leads discussion

Sunday, Dec 15 - Social session

Happy fall! Kehiloft has been pretty busy at the beginning of this new school year. We started things off back in September with our annual car wash and we want to thank everyone for helping us out by trusting us with your cars for a little while and also put up the sukkah for Sukkot with awesome volunteers.

Another thing Kehiloft is excited to be involved in again this year is our trips to participate in services at Stonebridge. It's been a great experience, and we hope to see you there as we continue with it.

Kehiloft also recently partnered up with the CKS Religious School to make blankets to donate to the organization Homefront. CKS has been involved with Homefront before: through our (really fun) annual picnics right here at the synagogue, and also a few weeks ago when we met up at Duke Gardens for a wonderful day of planting and enjoying nature. The Religious School and Kehiloft had a great time making no-sew blankets that we hope the kids at Homefront will enjoy. We're all excited to continue our participation in the Religious School, a goal of ours from last year that we've been having a lot of fun with. There are some great events to come, including a Chanukah project!

As the New Year progresses (and the leaves are getting so pretty!), we're settling into the loft with fun meetings, including a recent game night and interesting discussions with Rabbi Susan, and we are getting really psyched for all the cool stuff to come. We hope you are too! Have a great November.

Gabi Rubinstein

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Jewish Community

Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present:



Dr. Joel M. Hoffman, author of *And God Said: How Translations Conceal the Bible's Original Meaning*. Thursday, November 14, 7:00 p.m. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Dr. Joel M. Hoffman will conduct a lecture regarding the misleading English translation of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that quotes from it. *And God Said* provides an authoritative account of significant mistranslations and shows how new translation methods can give readers their first glimpse into what the Bible really means. Fee: \$8/person in advance or \$10 at the door.



Martin Russ Federman, author of *Russ & Daughters: Reflections and Recipes from the House that Herring Built*. Sunday, November 17, 10:30 a.m. Hosted by Or Chadash, Flemington. *Russ and Daughters* is filled with

charming tales about how an ambitious hard-working family turned their passion for selling delectable fish into an institution with a devoted national clientele for almost 100 years. Fee: \$8/person in advance or \$10 at the door.



Letty Cottin Pogrebin, author of *How to Be a Friend to a Friend Who's Sick*. Wednesday, December 4, 12:00 p.m. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Program includes luncheon. Ms. Pogrebin will be sharing her experiences of friends' and relatives' diverse reactions to her suffering from breast cancer including how some friends and family members behaved; how some misspoke or misinterpreted her needs; and how wonderful it was when people read her right.

Fee: \$18/person in advance or \$22 at the door. This program is being co-sponsored by Brandeis National Committee, Somerset Chapter; Jewish Family Service of

Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties; Jewish Federation Women's Philanthropy of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties; Hadassah; Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Sisterhood; Temple Beth El, Somerset Sisterhood; Temple Sholom, Bridgewater, Sisterhood.



The Irma Horowitz Film Series featuring Falafel and Short Israeli Films. Thursday, December 12, 6:30 p.m. Films presented by the Ma'aleh School of Television Film and Arts in Jerusalem include: *The Breakfast Parliament*, *The Ranch* and *The Rabbi's Daughter*. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Fee: \$10/person in advance or \$15 at the door. (Includes Falafel dinner)

To register for programs, please call the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201. Jewish LIFE brochure is posted at www.ssbjcc.org.

 **Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center**
775 Talamini Rd
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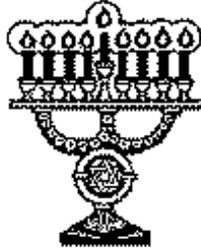


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NOVEMBER 2013



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 7:30 PM K-4 Shabbat Services	2
3 9:00 AM Religious School	4	5 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	6 6:00 PM Kehiloft	7	8 7:30 PM Shabbat Services (Kristalnacht)	9
10 9:00 AM Religious School	11	12 7:15 PM Spiritual Development Group 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	13 6:00 PM Kehiloft	14 7:30 PM Board Meeting	15 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	16
17 9:00 AM Religious School	18	19 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	20 7:00 PM Education Committee	21	22 7:30 PM Shabbat Services led by Kehiloft	23 9:30 AM 5-7 Shabbat Morning Service
24 9:00 AM Kehiloft 9:00 AM Religious School	25	26 7:00 PM Membership Committee 7:00 PM Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	27	28	29	

Come celebrate Chanukah with the CKS community on Sunday December 1st at 6pm. There will be community Menorah Lighting, Latkes, and Pot Luck Dinner.

Please bring a Parve or dairy dish (no meat please) to share. We provide the latkes, applesauce and sour cream - you provide the menorahs and candles.



3D Print, prototype

Plan on Chanukah songs led by Rabbi Susan and Kol Ahava, games, gelt and fun!

NEW THIS YEAR - Win a Menurkey (a turkey menorah) by participating in the Thanksgiving/Chanukah contest of explaining what the holidays have in common! The only rule in this contest is to have fun - bring a poem, skit, story, drawing...any kind of entry is acceptable!

PLEASE RSVP by November 15th to Robin in the office - it helps with planning.

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November 2013

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