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Bulletin from the Board – Steve Weinstein

May 2014 Bring Us All Much Love and Prosperity



I could have written about going to either the Jets or Eagles game on December 8th as two different people were gracious enough to offer me tickets. Except I chose not to go to either as I knew I needed to get two work presentations and this newsletter article done, for my upcoming week was going to be filled with too many activities to name (and would not allow me to meet my commitments if I did not complete these on Sunday).

I promise I do not share this for praise or pity. And I do not look to judge others if they would have chosen to attend one of the games and have fun watching the teams play in what wound up being snow games. I am truly happy with my decision as giving up this one day of fun will actually let me enjoy the entire week and hopefully the rest of the month and next year – especially if my boss and his boss like my work presentations. ☺

Anyway, the situation got me thinking about personal values, New Year's resolutions, meeting commitments, and true enjoyment. So first, on behalf of the entire Board, I would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy, prosperous, and fun-filled 2014. And personally, I wish you all a 2014 filled with much love, much joy, much laughter, much personal growth and fulfillment, and much time spent with those you love and cherish.

As 2014 starts, make sure that your New Year's resolutions (if you make them) include things that match your personal values and are activities you enjoy. If not, then they will be difficult to turn into a habit, and worse, will get broken somewhere before the end of February, never to be acted on again in 2014.

One of the Board's resolutions for 2014 is to build a better sense of community and camaraderie at CKS. So, along with the Membership Committee, we have each chosen six families to call and connect with throughout the year. This will allow us to better share activities with members like the Progressive Dinner (being held on January 18th) and the Meshugah MaCKSquerade Party (being held March 29th), to hear feedback from members and to increase the connection and support that we all enjoy.

If you are looking for resolution ideas, I have listed a few to help make your life easier. I know, I didn't have to do this, but it is just my giving nature coming through. So, please feel free to add any of these to your list and hope they bring you much joy and personal prosperity:

- a) Attend a Friday night service once per month
- b) Attend the Annual Party on March 29th
- c) Make a donation to CKS in 2014 to help fund a particular project, help a family in need through the Congregants Assistance Fund, or help balance our operating budget
- d) Volunteer at CKS and help benefit the community with your talents

I promise you that if you make at least one of these a resolution in 2014 and meet your commitment(s), you will get back much more than you give. And it may even become an enjoyable habit!

Best wishes on a fantabulous 2014 and hope to see you soon,

Steve Weinstein, Financial Secretary

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CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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in honor of Ora Nitkin-Kaner

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Janet Wetherill

Did you know that dues only cover half of the CKS annual budget? Please donate.

CKS Book Club

Thursday, January 9th -

The Chameleon in the Closet: A Conservative Jewish Mother Reaches Out to Her Orthodox Sons by BJ Rosenfeld

Meetings are at CKS at 7:30pm

Join us for one or all of the discussions!

Meshugena masCKSquerade Party

Fifth annual CKS Spring Event will be held on **Saturday, March 29, 2014** at 7:30 pm.

This party is always the event of the season, so mark your calendars now and start getting your creative, beautiful and handsome masks ready! You won't want to miss CKS' most exciting fundraiser of the year!



At a Glance: Upcoming events at CKS

December:

Friday, Dec. 20 7:30 pm Shabbat Service led by Kehiloft

NOTE: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL ON 12/22 AND 12/29

NO SHABBAT SERVICES ON 12/27

January:

Friday, Jan. 3, 7:00 pm - Family Shabbat Service

Sunday, Jan. 5, noon - Kehiloft

Thursday, Jan. 9, 7:30 pm - CKS Book Club

Friday, Jan. 10, 7:30 pm - Shabbat Service

Saturday, Jan. 11, 9:30 am - 5th - 7th grade Shabbat Morning Service

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 6:00 pm - Kehiloft

Saturday, Jan. 18, 5:30 pm - TuB'Shevat Progressive Dinner

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 6:00 pm - Kehiloft

Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30 pm - K-2nd Grades Shabbat Dinner

Friday, Jan. 24, 7:30 pm - Shabbat Service

Friday, Jan. 31, 6:30 pm - 3rd Grade Shabbat Dinner

Friday, Jan. 31 7:30 pm - Shabbat Service

Looking Ahead:

Sunday, March 16, after religious school - Purim Carnival

Saturday, March 29, 7:30 pm - Meshugena masCKSquerade Party

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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.rcc.edu/Israeltrip.

Message from the Rabbi

A few days ago, I tripped over a short poem by an American writer named Rae Armantrout. Her poem reads:



Sky
 god
 girl.
Pick out the one
that doesn't belong.

Armantrout's poem presented an overt challenge, and my answer jumped out at me immediately: 'girl' was the one that didn't belong. Why this conclusion, welling up out of me without hesitation? I can trace it down a winding path to my childhood, a childhood spent in an Orthodox Jewish neighbourhood in Toronto, where men and boys had primary access to God and religion, and women and girls were relegated to the sidelines, stuck behind the *mechitza*, behind the stove, behind the knees of their toddlers. And I can trace my answer to the Conservative liturgy I learned in synagogue on Shabbat mornings – liturgy in which God was 'He', an omnipotent King whose tempers and mercies could be mapped onto those of my father. In my religious world, growing up, 'girl' really didn't belong.

The wonderful thing about poetry is that there are no 'right' answers. If we each chose to play Armantrout's game, we'd each come up with a different answer for different reasons. But her poem isn't just a conceptual challenge. It's also a chance to examine what it means to not belong. No doubt, each of us has been an outsider in some situation at some point in our lives. And being 'outside' can quietly wound us in ways that it's difficult to recover from.

Although I've only just begun my four month sabbatical replacement for Rabbi Susan, I've had many opportunities thus far to witness how unusual Congregation Kehilat Shalom is. CKS seems to be a place where outsiders are welcomed, regardless of ethnic or religious background, health or mental health condition, family status, or gender identity. This is remarkably rare in a community. It's also a powerful gift. A place of such radical inclusiveness is a sanctuary where real healing happens, where an outsider can gradually learn that he or she belongs.

Mordechai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist movement, taught that there are three possible ways of identifying with a religious community: by behaving, by believing, and by belonging. But Kaplan insisted that the primary form of *Jewish* identification is belonging – that an intuitive sense of kinship binds one Jew to another across national borders and even across time. (We're the only religious group that I know of that considers it a mitzvah to say that we *ourselves*, and not just our ancestors, were slaves in Egypt 3,000 years ago!)

Judaism emphasizes shared identity beyond the details of how we look or feel or act, or even where we come from. And the radical empathy and responsibility that I see within the CKS community is a reminder of how powerful belonging can be when it is offered with an open hand.

May we all experience healing from the places we have been othered, and invitations to come in from out of the cold, this new year.

Ora Nitkin-Kaner
Sabbatical/Student Rabbi

Rabbinic Contact Information

Rabbi Susan will be on sabbatical until April 24, 2014. Student Rabbi, Ora Nitkin-Kaner will be our rabbinic leader during this time.

Rabbi Ora can be contacted at –
sabbaticalrabbi@ksnj.org



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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 JANUARY 2014



A FEW WORDS FROM...

Rabbi Isaac Saposnik, Director of Camp JRF

A few years ago, the Foundation for Jewish Camp commissioned a study on the power of Jewish summer camp. They found what campers and their parents have known for years: camp works. More than nearly any other experience, summers at overnight Jewish camp instill in our youth a deep commitment to the Jewish community. Kids who go to camp are much more likely than their non-camp friends to be actively engaged in the Jewish community as adults. The research proves that the magic of camp is real and long lasting!

Providing opportunities for kids to live out the values inherent in Reconstructionist synagogues, Camp JRF offers innovative, creative, and engaging programs for youth entering second through twelfth grades. The only Reconstructionist camp in the world, Camp JRF is a joyful and welcoming Jewish youth community that transforms lives. As an inclusive community, we welcome children from a wide variety of family structures, religious practices, and socio-economic backgrounds. At the center of all we do is a deep commitment to building a community in which all are welcome to grow and thrive. Recognized as one of the "Top 10 Jewish Camps," we have all you would expect from the best camps: swimming, soccer, boating, tennis, volleyball, visual arts, hiking, camping, music, drama, a spectacular challenge course, and so much more. In addition, we place a strong emphasis on experiential learning, creative prayer, and meaningful spiritual experiences. All of these pieces combine to create a holistic camp environment for the holistic camper – providing varied opportunities for exploration and growth in a uniquely Reconstructionist setting. We offer one, two, three, and four week sessions, plus a five day Family Camp program, all on our beautiful 120-acre wooded property in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. In a commitment to making camp accessible to all, generous scholarships are available.

For more information about Camp JRF, please visit www.campjrf.org or call 877-226-7573. And check out www.onehappycamper.org to learn about how eligible first time campers can receive up to \$1,000 off Jewish summer camp.

For 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Graders....

May 2-4, 2014 Save The Date —

Regional Retreat at Camp JRF, South Sterling, PA
Join students from all over the area for a weekend of fun! More details to follow.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, January 3, 2014

Family Shabbat Services - 7pm

Rabbi Ora will lead services.

Sunday, January 5, 2014

Music with Moreh Eric

Saturday January 11, 2014

Shabbat Services - 9:30am

5th - 7th graders will help lead

Sunday, January 12, 2014

Cooking & Tu b'Shevat Celebration

Sunday, January 19, 2014

Regular day of Religious School

Friday, January 24, 2014

K-2nd Grade Kitah baKehilah

Class Community Program

All K-2nd grade families are invited for a pot luck Shabbat dinner at the Neusner's home. Watch your email for a special invitation.

Sunday, January 26, 2014

6th Grade Family Workshop 9am

Brit v'Torah: Meaning and Relationship in the B'nei Mitzvah with Rabbi Ora, Morah Meryl and Shari

PLUS A visit from **Camp JRF** 

11am Camp Program: 3rd-7th grades

11:30am Parents, please join us

for a presentation by Rabbi Isaac Saposnik, Director of Camp JRF.

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Some of our very own students will join us to share about their amazing summer at Camp JRF.

Friday, January 31, 2014

3rd Grade Kitah baKehilah

Class Community Program

All 3rd grade families are invited for a pot luck Shabbat dinner at the Ries family's home. Watch your email for a special invitation.

KehiLoft

We visited Stonebridge Retirement Community the day after our Chanukah party here at CKS to celebrate Chanukah with the residents. KehiLoft aided leading the service in the beginning and continued to spend time with the residents afterwards. We had a fabulous time, as always. The residents there are always great to talk to.



Another adventure we had was painting the wall. We primed the temporary wall in the loft in preparation for beautification. We had been discussing painting that wall for a long time, and this year we decided to put it into action. We are going to paint a mural of a cityscape of Jerusalem on the temporary wall in the loft.

We had also been discussing doing a handprint project on the wall coming up the stairs for a long time. We decided to make that our annual community service act. The wall will have handprints from members in the congregation on it. It will be a fundraiser. We have set up a date in early 2014 for this project to commence.

In our last meeting we prepared to lead services on Friday, December 20th. We prepared a wonderful D'var Torah in the form of a skit for the parsha Shemot. The skit stars many new and old KehiLofters. We originated thought-provoking discussion questions, and chose some new prayers to add to our usual service.

In essence, KehiLoft had a great ending for the secular calendar. We all had a busy month with KehiLoft. We had a lot of meetings and a lot of fun. Can't wait till we come back in 2014!

-Dorothy Waskow

KehiLoft Calendar

JANUARY 2014

Sunday, Jan 5. 12:00 - 2:00. Rabbi Ora leads a discussion about Judaism's dark side.

Wednesday, Jan 15 - Prep for hand print fundraiser, begin to paint mural?

Wednesday, Jan 22 - Shabbat service prep
FEBRUARY

Sunday, Feb 2 - 9:00 - 12:00. Religious School project/KehiLoft fundraiser

Wednesday, Feb 12 - Shabbat service prep

Friday, Feb 21 - 7:30 - 9:30. KehiLoft leads Shabbat service #2

Wednesday, Feb 26 - Purim spiel rehearsal

Invitations by Sharon

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Jewish Community

Jewish LIFE

Join us for these upcoming Jewish LIFE program

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present:

Dr. Robert Harris, Associate Professor of Bible at



The Jewish Theological Seminary, will present *Jews and Christians Read Scripture*, **Thursday, January 30 at 7 p.m.** Dr. Harris will be examining the commonalities as well as the differences between Jews and

Christians in medieval biblical study; the relationships and mutual influences that Rabbis and churchmen had on one another (particularly in northern France) and, in particular, the polemics through which they typically interacted. The program will be hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person at the door.

Ryan Murray will discuss *Anti-Semitism in the 21st Century: An Ongoing Threat*, on **Thursday,**



February 27 at 7 p.m. at the Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. Many incidents of anti-Semitism receive limited media attention, and yet it is only through recognition and education that the threat of anti-Semitism can effectively be countered. Mr.

Murray teaches a widely popular course titled "Holocaust & Genocide" at Watching Hills Regional High School in Warren, NJ. In 2012, Mr. Murray was awarded the Jack Zaifman Humanitarian Award for his work in Holocaust education. The program will be hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person at the door.

To register for Jewish LIFE Programs, please call the Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

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JANUARY 2014



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3 7:00 PM Family Shabbat Services	4
5 9:00 AM Religious School 12:00 PM Kehiloft	6	7 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	8	9 7:30 PM Board Meeting	10 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	11 9:30 AM 5-7 Shabbat Morning Service
12 9:00 AM Religious School	13	14 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	15 6:00 PM Kehiloft 7:00 PM Education Committee	16	17 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	18 5:30 PM Progressive Dinner
19 9:00 AM Religious School	20	21 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	22 6:00 PM Kehiloft	23	24 6:30 PM K-2 Shabbat Dinner 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	25
26 9:00 AM Religious School	27	28 7:00 PM Membership Committee 7:00 PM Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	29	30	31 6:30 PM 3rd Grade Shabbat Dinner 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	

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Fulfilling the religious, educational and social needs of our Jewish community since 1982.

Current resident or:

January 2014

Deadline for next newsletter:
January 15th

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