

Congregation  
**Kehilat Shalom** NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **February 2014** Adar — Adar 5773

**Bulletin from the Board – Alexis Greenberg**

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Winter is upon us in every way, shape, and form! I think we have experienced rain, snow, hail, sleet, high winds, and a mix of all within one week. It makes me want to bow down to the power of Mother Nature, which is one part of life that, although always changing, has always been part of this world. It has made me sit back and reflect upon perspectives, priorities, and really keeping in mind what is most important.



Taking this to heart can be very overwhelming. What helps me find perspective is surrounding myself by a community that is accepting, warm, and embracing. I feel so fortunate to have found that in Kehilat Shalom. As Steve said in the January newsletter, one of the board's resolutions for 2014 is to continually build a better sense of community and camaraderie at CKS. I challenge you to prioritize community. Becoming an active part of this beautiful community is a priceless and fulfilling experience.

Our community is growing. We are researching and developing better ways to keep up with communications among our members and the communities at large. Thank you to everyone who participated in our communications survey. We are also in the process of welcoming in the Sunflower Academy Chinese Language School. They will be renting space in our building on weekday afternoons.

Our religious school is also thriving. The new Torah Tech program is in full swing. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students have been participating in a weekly Skype session with their Hebrew tutor. It's a wonderful addition to our religious school program. I have seen incredible progress in my own son in just a couple of months.

Rabbi Susan's sabbatical is now underway. We are looking forward to all that she has to bring back to our congregation and miss her greatly. Rabbi Ora did a beautiful job at the Saturday morning service with the 5<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> graders as her apprentices.

Lastly, I want to plug one of my favorite CKS events. This year's annual fundraiser and auction is the Meshugena MasCKSquerade Party! Each year, congregants come together to turn our synagogue into an even more stunning and festive space worthy of a night out on the town. Please mark your calendars, truly the more the merrier!!! It's Saturday night, March 29 from 7-11.

Embrace community and enjoy the wonders of unpredictable winter weather!  
 I look forward to seeing you at CKS.

*Alexis Greenberg, Trustee*

## CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of  
our members and friends.

### DONATIONS

#### General

Larry Weitzner  
Sharon Underberg-Davis  
in memory of Bret Underberg-Davis  
In honor of those who helped our family with driving  
this past spring: Natalie London, Marty Millman,  
Audrey Starkman, Nancy Javeline, Jill Fraticelli, Emily  
Bengals, Debbie Grauer, Matt and Amy Rosenthal,  
Nancy Crell  
Lisa & Rich Kent  
Natalie London  
in honor of Eden Berring's birth  
in memory of David Roth, brother of Dan Roth and  
Selma and Theodore Eron, parents of Liz Roth  
in memory of Gloria Holtzman, mother of Gayle  
Holtzman  
in memory of Rosalie Vespa, mother of Ann Gavzy  
in memory of David Harris, father of Jill Fraticelli  
in memory of Brett Underberg-Davis  
in memory of Vicki Levine, mother of Karen Bartels  
in memory of Arthur Goldfield, step-father of Michael  
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in memory of Phillip Zaretsky, father of Harlene  
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in memory of Barbara Pulvers  
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in memory of Morris Levitsky, Pauline Levitsky, Carrie  
Levitsky and Sylvia Tillman  
Susan & Darryl Waskow  
in honor of Rabbi Susan  
in memory of Gloria Holtzman  
in memory of Rosalie Vespa

#### High Holiday

Janis Barondess Todd & Alan Todd  
in honor of Rabbi Susan, Emily Cohen and Kol Ahava  
Susan & Jedd Kadish  
Paul & Phyllis Lehrer

#### Congregant's Assistance Fund

Janis Barondess Todd & Alan Todd  
in memory of Mary Barondess  
Natalie London  
Lisa & Rich Kent

#### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Janis Barondess Todd & Alan Todd  
in memory of Barbara Pulvers  
Natalie London

### Heartwarming Results

The CKS Coat Drive was a heartwarming (and torso/head/neck/feet/hand-warming) success, thanks to all the folks who took the drive as an opportunity to rummage through their closets, pack up the gently-used coats, hats, scarves, boots, gloves and mittens, and donate them. Richard took eight trash bags full of outdoor clothing, plus a few brand new "gifts of the season" to the receiving warehouse. A lot of needy people will be sporting warm outer clothing this blustery winter because of your donations. On behalf of all of them, we thank you all for your efforts and your generosity.

*Richard and Sheryl Rosenberg*



### Lend Us Your Hand!!

All religious school students are invited to place their handprint on the wall of the Kehiloft stairwell! For a \$5.00 donation, you can leave your mark on our community with your hand-print. Hand-prints will be labeled with your name and the date.  
Who: All religious school students are welcome!  
Where: CKS, on the loft stairwell.  
When: Sunday, Feb 2 during religious school.  
Why: To beautify the loft space and to show our strong sense of community!

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

## Message from the Rabbi



As I write this article, it is the middle of January. The news is awash with obituaries and op-eds seeking to clarify former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon's complex legacy.

Days after Sharon's death, author Yossi Klein Halevi wrote a compassionate reflection on Sharon's life in *Tablet Magazine*, stating that 'Sharon's life is the story of the Jewish return to power', and that Sharon's 'excesses, and his correctives, reflect our collective struggles in search of balance, as we moved from the Holocaust to sovereignty and then to seemingly endless siege.' Halevi went on to describe Sharon's all-absorbing desire to create a safe and permanent homeland for the Jewish people.

Many op-eds have not been so kind to Sharon's legacy; he has been described as a terrorist, as the leader (directly or indirectly) responsible for the massacres of hundreds of Palestinians in Beirut refugee camps. Others have expressed feelings of betrayal, wondering how Sharon, father of the settlements, could have dismantled what he had built. Above all, the vociferous debate over the nature of Sharon's legacy stands in contrast to the silence of his last eight years in a coma.

Amid the hubbub surrounding Sharon's death, another Jew left the world more quietly. On January 13, 2014, the *New York Times* carried an unusual obituary of an unusual woman: Marcy Glanz. Marcy had been battling ovarian cancer since 2011, but in November 2013, her doctors told her that she had only a few weeks left to live. Instead of retreating into herself, Marcy declared that she wanted a month-long farewell party.

Marcy and her family spent early December sharing memories reviewed in photo albums and home movies. She even created a written outline for her memorial service, down to the music and the speakers. To mitigate her regret that she would never become a grandmother, Marcy recorded herself reading *Goodnight Moon* for her sons to share with their future daughters or sons. On New Year's Eve, Marcy decided spontaneously to throw 'one last blowout party,' holding forth in her wheelchair and toasting everyone with ginger ale.

New Year's Day was the last day she could speak. Marcy died at home on January 5, with her family surrounding her. At her memorial service, her childhood friend remarked that Marcy "was the glue in our lives that made sure everyone kept in touch," adding that she died 'exactly the way she lived her life.' Another friend remarked that 'by facing her death through the prism of love, Marcy transcended it.'

For centuries, Jews have recited the Mourner's Kaddish in remembrance of loved ones. Written in Aramaic, Kaddish is recited at every prayer service at which there is a minyan. Although the individual mourners speak the words of the Kaddish by themselves, the entire community responds with 'ye'hei shmei raba mevorach le'olam u'le'almei almaya' - 'May God's great Name be blessed forever and for all time'.

Because Kaddish is recited with such solemnity, it can be surprising to realize that it never once mentions loss or grief. Instead, it is a single meditation on God's glory.

In times of mourning, glorifying God can be difficult when all we want to do is shout and rage at loss. But if we believe in a world of oneness, a world in which all beings are connected to each other and all are infused with a divine spark, then when just one person dies, God's self is diminished, and God's sanctity lessened by that loss. In reciting Kaddish, then, we assert that God's name, diminished by a death, needs to be magnified (*yitgadal*). And God's sanctity has been lessened by this loss, and must be increased (*ve'yitkadash*). And God's kingdom has suffered a loss, and so we wish to re-stabilize and re-establish that kingdom of oneness (*ve'yamlich malchutei*).

Whether we've lost a woman who transcended her own death through a powerful will to love, or whether we've lost a complicated public figure, we have lost. And in these losses, we are charged with the task of magnifying the divine spark which has been temporarily dimmed, by taking the best of the people we have lost and shining these qualities out into the world. *Yitgadal ve'yitkadash shmei raba* - May God's great name of Love grow exalted and sanctified in our world, *ve'imru amen*.

*Ora Nitkin-Kaner*, Sabbatical/Student Rabbi



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908-359-0420



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Questions?  
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113  
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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



Rabbi Ora can be contacted at [sabbaticalrabbi@ksnj.org](mailto:sabbaticalrabbi@ksnj.org)



# CKS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWS FEBRUARY 2014



Our K-2nd Grade Family Workshop, **A Sh'ma Pajama Party** was held in December. Together we learned about Jewish bedtime rituals and made beautiful Sh'ma pillowcases. All the students wore their pajamas and some parents joined in the fun too. We heard two wonderful stories, *Because Nothing Looks Like G-d* by Lawrence Kushner, Karen Kushner and Dawn Majewski and *Bedtime Sh'ma* by Sarah Gershman and Kristina Swarner. We reviewed the Sh'ma prayer in Hebrew and in sign language.



## FEBRUARY EVENTS

Sunday, February 2, 2014

**Kehiloft Handprint fundraiser** - please send \$5 with your child to Religious School.

Friday, February 7, 2014

**Shabbat Services 7pm** - led by K-4th Graders. We will be having a pot luck Shabbat dinner for our K-4th grade families prior to services.

Sunday, February 9, 2014

**- 3rd Grade Family Workshop - 9:30am**  
*What's in a Name?* Come explore the meaning of your child's Hebrew name and share with them how you chose the name. Together you will make beautiful Hebrew name hangings.

**- Cooking**

**- 5th Grade Kitah baKehilah - 7pm**  
Class Community Program  
All 5th grade families are invited for a mezuzah hanging Pizza party at the Kent's home. Watch your email for a special invitation.

Sunday, February 16, 2014

Religious School Closed

Friday, February 21, 2014

Shabbat services led by Kehiloft 7:30pm

Sunday, February 23, 2014

**4th Grade Family Workshop - 9:30am**  
*Saying Goodbye To Shabbat*  
Learn all about Havdallah, the service that ends Shabbat and make all the tools you need to do Havdallah at home.  
**Music with Moreh Eric**

## KehiLoft

Hello Kehilat Community!

This month has been very interesting for the Kehiloft youth group, and promises to be productive. We kicked off the New Year with a meeting with Rabbi Ora, when we discussed the dark and mythological side of Judaism. Recalling a number of Jewish traditions, we explored their varied roots and found some surprising details about our culture. It turns out that demons were widely feared many centuries ago, and it was out of this fright that different rituals were established. For example, creating circles around men was thought to create protection against demons, as men were especially susceptible to their possession. During Jewish weddings, it is customary for the wife to circle the husband partly for this reason. Demons also feared sounds, and the breaking of the glass during weddings and use of noisemakers during Purim are specifically meant to scare away demons. We read about several of the demons that these protections were against--did you know that Satan is present in Judaism too--and how one was to be treated if they were indeed possessed by a demon. It was believed that if a person no longer was interested in performing basic Jewish tasks they were possessed, and their disinterest in religion was to be attributed to their demonic possession. Overall it was a very informative meeting and sparked some great conversations. Thank you to Rabbi Ora for leading the discussion and coming to speak with us.



Over the course of the last few meetings we have been discussing the details of a fundraiser that we will be having. On Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, congregation members and Hebrew school students will have the chance to leave their mark on the synagogue. A wall of the loft area will be dedicated to a mural of handprints, and each student is encouraged to participate. Upon the graduation of the program, students will be able to sign their hands off as a form of closure and remembrance of their time spent with Kehilat Shalom. Each hand on the wall will cost \$5, and all proceeds will go to Kehiloft's various projects and community services. After gaining approval, we finalized plans and began taking actions to ensure the fundraiser's success. A first for many in the group, we gathered to paint a wall during one of our meetings as a base layer for the handprints. Working together we managed to cover all of the spots and prevent spillages, which we pride ourselves in as that is quite an accomplishment. The Kehiloft members also added their own hand prints onto the wall in gold, and we hope to continue the tradition of signing on graduation and adding gold on induction into the teen youth group.

Please feel free to stop by on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to witness the mural merriment and maybe even to donate to have your own hand up there too!

*Jennifer Brukman*

## Kehiloft Calendar

### FEBRUARY

**Sunday, Feb 2** - 9:00-12:00. Hand-print fundraiser during Religious School

**Wednesday, Feb 12** - Shabbat service prep

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

**Wednesday, Feb 26** - Purim spiel rehearsal

### MARCH

**Sunday, March 2** - 12:00 - 2:00. Session #2 with Rabbi Ora

**Wednesday, March 12** - Purim spiel rehearsal

**Sunday, March 16** - 9:00 - 12:00. Purim spiel performance!

**Sunday, March 16** - 12:00 - 2:00. Purim carnival

**Sunday, March 30** - 6:00 - 8:00. Social session

*All sessions are 6:00 - 8:00 unless otherwise noted.*

*Invitations by Sharon*

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# Jewish LIFE

Join us for these upcoming Jewish LIFE program

**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 held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person at the door.

**“A Taste of Jewish Spain”** with Gerard Edery, Master Guitarist, Storyteller and Bard, **Saturday,**



**March 29, 6 p.m.** at Temple Beth-El, 67 Route 206, Hillsborough. Enjoy dinner featuring Sephardic food and wine; share Sephardic items and bring stories of your ancestors from Spain; all guests are asked to bring a Sephardic appetizer; learn Sephardic folkdances and enjoy songs

performed by Gerard Edery. Participate in Havdallah service. Fee: \$18/person when paid by March 27; \$25 after March 27. Questions, and to receive a Sephardic appetizer recipe, contact Simona: [bakers@comcast.net](mailto:bakers@comcast.net).

**Save the Date... Thursday, April 3 for the Second Annual “A Night to Celebrate Israel,” Our Community’s Support of Israel and Bond event.** Distinguished Guest Speaker, Israel Ambassador Ida Aharano. Honoring Elaine Dunst, Past President of Jewish Federation; and a Rutgers Hillel Student. Event will be held at Raritan Valley Country Club, Bridgewater. Fee: \$50/Adult; \$18/Student. More details to come!

To register for Jewish LIFE Programs, please call the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201, or register online at [www.ssbjcc.org](http://www.ssbjcc.org).

*Thank you for supporting Jewish LIFE.*

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# FEBRUARY 2014



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2 9:00 AM Religious School 12:00 PM Kehiloft	3	4 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	5	6	7 6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner 7:00 PM K-4 Family Shabbat Services	8
9 9:00 AM Religious School 12:30 PM 5th Grade Mezzuzah hanging	10	11 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	12 6:00 PM Kehiloft	13 7:30 PM Board Meeting	14 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	15
16 NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	17	18 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	19 7:00 PM Education Committee	20	21 7:30 PM Shabbat Services led by Kehiloft	22
23 9:00 AM Religious School	24	25 7:00 PM Ritual Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Membership Committee 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	26 6:00 PM Kehiloft	27	28 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	

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**February 2014**

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

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