

Congregation
Kehilat NEWS
Shalom

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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

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Bulletin from the Board – Stacey Anderson

An Unexpected Journey: Is It All About the Kids?

When Dave and I decided to join CKS in 2004, it was all about giving our kids exposure to their heritage and a moral foundation we felt only a religious education could provide. CKS was five minutes from our home and several of my son's friends were joining too. Bottom line – it was all about the kids. Little did I know there was much more to CKS!



Soon after joining, I was asked to be on the education committee. At the time, I thought I was out of my element but there was a need and after all it was all about the kids. I quickly learned you did not have to know how to teach a Jewish education to be on this committee – instead, I was able to contribute my organizational skills and knowledge of business. All of a sudden, I was chairing this committee.

My time at CKS has included chair of the education committee, chair of the marketing/PR committee, VP on the board and even board president. No one is more stunned by this than me.

Through all of these roles, I have been involved in critical decisions that have shaped this organization into the warm and welcoming community we all enjoy today. Some of these experiences include the contribution to the decision to move to a Sunday-only religious school; hiring our fabulous religious school Principal, Shari Rothstein; positioning of our brand inside and outside of our organization; reorganization of how the board operates to be more efficient; development of the CKS mission; hiring of our Sabbatical Rabbi, Ora Nitkin-Kaner; and the creation of a long range plan.

In the process, I have been able to gain invaluable skills that I use daily in my business and family life. But more importantly through all of these experiences, I have been gifted with a strong feeling of community and friendships that will last a lifetime.

It is an exciting time at CKS. We are growing in numbers and are in a solid financial position. In fact, the current board has the unique opportunity to sell land that could provide financial security for the organization for years to come. How could you not want to be part of it? We have several board positions opening up this year. Please consider becoming a member of the board or joining a committee and continuing your personal CKS journey. You never know where it may lead.

As past president, it is up to me to chair the nominating committee for 2014-2015 open board positions. If you or someone you know would be interested in being on the board or have questions about what it might entail, please e-mail me at sanderson@marketingwize.com. *Nominations must be made by April 5, 2014.*

I guarantee that you will get back more than you give! It is not all about the kids at CKS!

Stacey Anderson, Past President

CKS Donations

*CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of
our members and friends.*

DONATIONS

General

Evan & Alexis Greenberg
Hy Grossman & Kris Olson
Simon Berring & Kate Fridkis
Judy Forster



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

CKS Progressive dinner celebrating Tu B'shevat



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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!

CKS Spring Auction - How You Can Help



Do you know anyone who has items or services to donate to the CKS Spring Auction? Perhaps you have a painting, piece of pottery, glass or sculpture that no longer "fits" your décor. Or maybe a new handbag or scarf that just isn't your style. Consider donating items like these to the CKS spring auction! Someone you know might have a special talent that can be taught, or a career experience/internship to share. This can even include cooking, sewing, or decorating a cake! Businesses that you frequent may be happy to donate gift certificates (think hair or nail salons, exercise classes, massages, fitness centers, cleaners, restaurants, bagel shops, auto repair shops, wine shops...) If they don't want to donate items or gift certificates, they might like to purchase an ad in our auction catalog. If you can help find donors or sponsors for our auction, please print and distribute a [Solicitation Letter](#), or submit [Donation/Ad Form](#). Thanks in advance for your help! [Learn more about donating to the auction on ksnj.org](#)

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Message from the Rabbi



This year, the beginning of March happens to coincide with the beginning of the Jewish month of Adar 2. In the middle of March and the middle of Adar 2 we'll celebrate Purim, a holiday of masks and masquerades, revealing and revelry.

Although dressing up and wearing masks may seem like a tradition influenced by such secular and Christian celebrations as Hallowe'en, Mardi Gras, and Carnival, the custom of dressing up on Purim extends far back into the early Middle Ages. In fact, in the late 15th century, Rabbi Mahari Mintz wrote a response to his community's question of whether it was permissible for men to wear women's clothing on Purim, and vice versa. Evidently, then, the custom of wearing costumes was already well established by that time. But where does this custom come from?

One interpretation is that we mask ourselves on Purim in acknowledgement of the fact that the entire Purim narrative, including the miracle of Jewish salvation, is wrapped in the 'hidden nature of God's countenance'. In other words, rather than upending the laws of nature to save the Jews (as in the splitting of the Red Sea), God worked surreptitiously through human actors (Esther, Mordechai, Vashti, Haman, Haman's wife, Achashverosh) to bring about the redemption of the Jews of Persia. God's presence in the Purim story is so masked that God's name isn't even mentioned in the Book of Esther!

Another interpretation is that *all* of the characters in the Purim story are somehow not what they seem: Esther hides her Jewish identity and garbs herself in royal garments, only to become an empowered Jewish leader; Haman craves and collects power, but is eventually hanged in ignominy; Vashti asserts her royal authority and is sent away in disgrace; Mordechai, made to bow low before Haman, is later paraded royally through the streets of Shushan.

On Purim, we mimic the protagonists and antagonists of Purim, divine and human; we alternately hide and reveal ourselves, taking advantage of a day of topsy-turviness to reveal parts of us we would normally keep hidden. And if Purim is an invitation to masquerade, it can also serve as an invitation for us to examine what masks we wear, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, all year.

Therapist Susan Thesenga, in her book *The Undefended Self*, outlines three of the most common 'mask selves' that people wear. A person who wears the Love Mask is most often seen with a smile pasted on his face; desperate for approval and affection, he believes that to express disapproval or anger would push people away. The Power Mask, in contrast, shows up on a person who constantly reacts aggressively, angrily, and overlays a deep-seated fear that she is unheard, unseen, or undefended. Finally, the Serenity Mask allows its wearer to avoid ever having to assert his needs, and keeps him safe and separate from others encroaching emotions.

Often, these masks settle into place in childhood as a defense mechanism, yet they remain into adulthood,

even when we are no longer aware of what we are defending ourselves against.

Sometimes our masks are fixed; at other times they can be more flexible. Sometimes our masks serve us well, allowing us to successfully 'fake it until we make it'; at other times, they keep us apart from those we wish could see us most intimately. Perhaps most dangerous is when the mask stays stuck, and we no longer recognize the person who stares back at us in the mirror.

This Purim, may we embrace what we keep hidden, and trust that the broken beauty of that which we hide will be received with reverence when we unmask.

Ora Nitkin-Kaner

Sabbatical/Student Rabbi



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
11 am - 12 noon

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



Rabbi Ora can be contacted at sabbaticalrabbi@ksnj.org



BE HAPPY
IT'S
ALMOST
ADAR II

CKS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWS MARCH 2014



The Jewish Calendar

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar with 354 days in its year and the secular calendar is a solar calendar with 365 days in its year. In order to balance it out, we add an extra month to the Jewish calendar every two or three years (seven times in nineteen years). This year, 5774, is a leap year which means we have the month of Adar twice, Adar 1 and Adar II. We will celebrate Purim together on the 14th of Adar II (March 16th). So start planning your costumes and BE HAPPY IT'S ALMOST ADAR II!



Our **Kitah baKehilah - Class Community programs** began last year as part of our theme, Kehilah Kadosha—a holy community . They were such a success and enjoyed by all that we are continuing them this year. Outside of our Sunday morning Religious School program, each grade has an opportunity to join together to celebrate Jewish life as a community. Here are some highlights from the programs we have had so far. Special thanks to the hosts - the Neusners, the Kents, and the Ries family for opening their homes to CKS.



K-2nd
Grade
Shabbat
Dinner

3rd Grade Shabbat Dinner



5th Grade Mezzuzah Hanging Pizza & Dessert Party



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR 4th GRADERS!

The Sunday of the Superbowl our 4th graders created Superbowl Vowel commercials to help them remember the sounds of the Hebrew vowels. Check it out on our website at <http://www.kehilatshalomnj.org/superbowl-vowel-commercials/>

MARCH EVENTS

Saturday, March 1, 2014

4th Grade Kitah baKehilah (Class Community) Havdalah Dessert Party 7pm at the home of Ty and Luke Greenberg

Sunday, March 2, 2014

Cooking

Friday, March 7, 2014

Family Shabbat Services 7pm

Sunday, March 9, 2014

- Music

- **6th & 7th Grade Kitah baKehilah** (Class Community) TRIP TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE NYC - 11:30am

Sunday, March 16, 2014

Celebration of Purim during Religious School, Purim Carnival to follow.

Saturday, March 22, 2014

ALL SCHOOL Shabbat services 9:30am

Sunday, March 23, 2014

7th Grade Family Workshop 9:30am
Passover Promises: 7th Grade parents and students will come together to talk about Passover and make Elijah or Miriam cups to use at the seder.

Sunday, March 30, 2014

Passover Cooking

**SAVE THE
DATE**

5/2-5/4/14

4th, 5th, 6th & 7th Graders: Attend the Regional Retreat held at Camp JRF in the Poconos. This is a great opportunity for your child to experience Judaism, make new friends with students from other Reconstructionist congregations and have a fun weekend away! Watch your email

for more details.



KehiLoft

Hopefully everyone survived the harsh winter and is enjoying the more moderate climate. While Kehilofters were stuck inside, we tried making the best of our time and worked hard to make progress on our annual project.



Every year we try to sit down as a group and decide what we should do for the year. This is not simply what will occur at our next meeting or our next service, but an overarching project that we want to do. In the past, we have made the loft and the compost bin. Finally, we arrive at this past year, which was chock full of hard work and planning on this year's project.

For those of you that do not know, we decided that our loft needed some sprucing up, so the decision was made to create a wall of handprints. Students have already had an opportunity to put their hands on the wall leading up to the loft. Additionally, a few parents have had the chance, but to make sure that any congregant who wishes to add their hand has an opportunity we will be adding on another day. If you are interested in adding your hand to the wall, be sure to come to the temple on May 18th, the last day of religious school. I would like to thank everyone who has put their hand on the wall for their support in bringing color and community into our loft.

Since the handprints are a fundraiser, we are requesting a donation of \$5, however anybody can put their hand on the wall whether they donate or not. Any money raised will be put toward a trip for educational advancement and for cultural learning. The trip is scheduled to take place at the end of June this year, at which point we will travel to New York City. Due to the city's unparalleled size, we will be traveling only to the Lower East Side. The Lower East Side is a modern Jewish community located only a short train ride away, allowing us to easily learn more about our Jewish heritage. In the late 20th century, the countless Jews present in this historic neighborhood encouraged the preservation of many buildings associated with this thriving region. Our goal is to visit some of those historic buildings and supplement our classroom knowledge with that of seeing, hearing, and most importantly tasting the wonders of this (formerly) predominantly Jewish area.

Talking about Jewish culture, one of my favorite holidays is coming up—Purim. As an age-old celebration of how Mordecai and Esther ruined Haman's awful plan to kill all the Jews, the story needs to be visually enacted so that Mordecai and Esther's courage can be understood. To that end, Kehiloft will be supplying the congregation with its interpretation of the story of Purim on March 16th. Hopefully, we can provide some entertainment and have fun as a community as we celebrate the great holiday.

Once again, thank you to everyone that has helped with our wall of handprints! We hope that everyone can find as much pleasure from its sense of community and beauty as we have!

Jason Weitze

Kehiloft Calendar

MARCH

Sunday, March 2 12:00-2:00. Rabbi Ora's 2nd session. Judaism & Ritual

Wednesday, March 12 - Purim spiel rehearsal

Sunday, March 16 9:00-12:00. Purim spiel performed in Religious School. (exact time to be determined later this month)

Sunday, March 16 12:00 - 2:30. Purim carnival.

Sunday, March 30 6:00 - 8:00. Social - bowling? laser tag? ice-skating?

APRIL

Sunday, April 6 1:00-3:30. **NEW EVENT.** TS Walk at Mercer County Park

Wednesday, April 9 - Shabbat service prep

Pesach - No Kehiloft week of April 13-19

Friday, April 25 - 7:30 - 9:30. Kehiloft leads Shabbat services #3.

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

Shalom,

Karen Fridkis, Education Director of Kehiloft

Invitations by Sharon

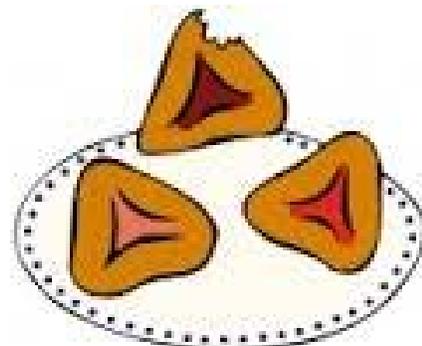
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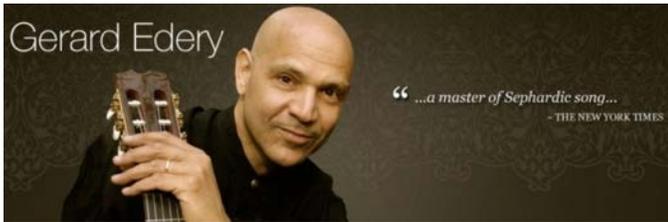
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Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present:



“A Taste of Jewish Spain” with special guest Gerard Edery, Master Guitarist, Storyteller and Bard, **Saturday, March 29, 6 p.m. at Temple Beth-El**, 67 Route 206, Hillsborough. Learn about the heritage and cultural lifestyle of Spanish Jewry. 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 a 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. This program is co-sponsored by the Cultural Arts Committee of Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough.

“Second Annual A Night to Celebrate Israel – Our Community’s Support of Israel and Bond Event”, **Thursday, April 3 at 6:30pm**. Distinguished Guest Speaker, Israel Ambassador Ido Aharoni. Invited Guest US Senator Corey Booker. Honoring Elaine Dunst, Past President of Jewish Federation; and Jacob Binstein, Rutgers Hillel Student. Event will be held at Raritan Valley Country Club, Bridgewater. Fee: \$50/Adult; \$18/Student.

The Irma Horowitz Film Series, featuring Falafel and Short Israeli films, **Thursday, April 10, 6:30pm** at the Birnbaum JCC. Films include First Night, New Year’s Resolution, I’m Ready, and Alone. Fee: \$10/person in advance or \$15/person at the door.

Save the Date for the annual Jewish LIFE **Yom Hashoah Program, Sunday, April 27, 7pm**. Hosted at Temple Sholom, Bridgewater. Free to the community. 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 on line at www.ssbjcc.org.

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MARCH 2014



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 7:00 PM 4th Grade Havdallah dessert program
2 9:00 AM Religious School 12:00 PM Kehiloft	3	4 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	5	6	7 7:00 PM Family Shabbat Services	8
9 9:00 AM Religious School	10	11 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	12 6:00 PM Kehiloft	13 7:30 PM Board Meeting	14 7:30 PM Purim Shabbat Services	15
16 9:00 AM Religious School 9:30 AM Purim Celebration 12:30 PM Purim Carnival	17	18 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	19 7:00 PM Education Committee	20	21 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	22 9:30 AM 5-7 Shabbat Morning Service
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	27	28 7:30 PM Shabbat Services	29 7:00 PM Meshugena masCKSquerade Party
30 9:00 AM Religious School 6:00 PM Kehiloft	31					

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March 2014

Deadline for next newsletter:
March 15th

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