

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **December 2014** Kislev – Tevet 5775

Congregation

Kehilat Shalom

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Bulletin from the Board- Iris Rubinstein

I recently had the opportunity to think more deeply than usual about attending services at CKS. This was because we held our first Saturday morning Shabbat service that wasn't a bar or bat mitzvah celebration, wasn't a class service and wasn't a family workshop. It was a Torah study service.

Rabbi Susan mentioned that people sometimes ask her for Saturday morning Shabbat services and we don't regularly hold them. I'm not sure why we haven't. I believe it began long before I got to CKS. We hold Shabbat services on Friday nights most weeks. And many of them are well attended. We have a strong core of congregants who come regularly and feel a great connection to Shabbat because of this. Yet, all around the world, Saturday morning is the heart of Shabbat, and Jews everywhere are reading from the Torah and praying for peace. Some of us want to be more a part of that eternal connection. So we bought bagels and coffee, set up a table in the back of the sanctuary, and spread out some new *chumashim* (Torahs in book form) the rabbi bought. We had all we needed.

Rabbi Susan decided to start us with three verses from the week's *parashah* (portion) Lech Lecha. This *parashah*, often known as "The Call of Abraham" and thought of as the official beginning of the Jewish story, was a great place to start our new Shabbat practice. The first thing we did was to take out the Torah from the ark so Rabbi Susan could chant the actual words of Lech Lecha, the first words of the *parashah*, usually translated as: "Go forth". Here is one translation of the first three verses:

1. And the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. 2. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will aggrandize your name, and [you shall] be a blessing. 3. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you.

We then compared the differences in the English translations from each *chumash* and talked about the choices those editors made. We discussed which translations spoke to us and why, and later shared the "Lech Lecha" moments we have had in our own lives. The service was intimate, interesting and powerful. I can't wait for the next Saturday morning service.

Another reason for me thinking more about Shabbat services is that I recently realized some people don't understand that the Saturday morning service of a bar or bat mitzvah is open to all congregants. In fact, it's a wonderful mitzvah to attend Shabbat services during these celebrations to help the family feel part of our community and to witness this wonderful rite of passage for our *Nesiyot* (Religious School) students. Congregation Kehilat Shalom is a warm, welcoming community and all people - adults, children, Jewish and non-Jewish, members and guests - are encouraged to participate in every event, occasion, activity and *simcha* (celebration) we have.

So if that means you happen to find yourself at synagogue on a Saturday morning, know that you will be among thousands of people all over the earth who are also *davening* (praying), sharing, supporting, and learning at that very moment. That is truly a blessing for us all.

Iris Rubinstein, 1st Vice President



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CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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

CKS Women's Night Out

Please join us for the *first-ever* **CKS Women's Night Out**. We'll be meeting at YaYa Noodles in the Montgomery Shopping Center **on Monday December 8th at 7:00 PM** for a fun night of dinner and conversation. Please rsvp to Lisa Roe (lroe1800@gmail.com) by 12/7 so we can reserve a large enough table. Hope to see you there!

Save the Date for the Spring Event!

March 14, 2015

Please join us for our 6th annual spring event! "**Treasures of the Blue Grotto**" will be held on Saturday, March 14th. If you can't envision what this themed party will be like, then you should come and enjoy a special evening with friends and fellow congregants, and experience being surrounded by many treasures in beautifully decorated cave-like surroundings.

It is never too late to join our planning committee! If interested, please contact Debbie Gartenberg at dgart1518@gmail.com

Upcoming events at CKS

Tuesday, December 2 - 7:15 pm - Spiritual Development Group

Friday, December 5 - 6:00 pm Shabbat Dinner Friday,
December 5 - 7:00 pm - Shabbat Mishpachah/Family Shabbat service

Thursday, December 11 - 7:30 pm - Board Meeting
Saturday, December 13 - 9:30 am - Shabbat service and Torah study

Friday, December 19 - 6:00 pm - Festival of Lights Dinner followed by Shabbat service

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Message from the Rabbi

CHANUKAH, HANUKKAH, HANUKA, KHANUKAH



At this time of year, when we start planning for our Chanukah celebration here at CKS, the question of how to spell the name of this holiday in our newsletters, or on our flyers, always comes up. Have you ever wondered why the word for our beloved winter holiday is spelled so many different

ways?

For fun, I googled the question: "Why is Chanukah spelled so many different ways?" Not surprisingly, there were pages and pages of entries on the topic – from Reform Judaism to Chabad, from NPR to Wikipedia, from BuzzFeed to Time – everyone seems to want to weigh in on this subject. Some answers fell into the camp of "since it's a transliteration, you can spell it any way you want". Others took a more technical approach. Still others were interested in cataloguing spellings, or finding out which spelling yields the most "hits" when searched online, or even which spelling is the most prevalent on greeting cards.

Apparently, Hanukkah, is the most popular spelling in the United States, followed by Chanukah (my personal favorite). However, one blogger, Joe Maller, also listed in descending order of popularity: Hanukah, Hannukah, Chanuka, Chanukkah, Hanuka, Channukah, Chanukka, Hanukka, Hannuka, Hannukkah, Channuka, Xanuka, Hannukka, Channukkah, Channukka, and Chanuqa! Wow! (Frankly, I was disappointed that Khanukah didn't make this list. Nor did the Yiddish transliteration, Khanike... oh, well!!)

So, what's the deal? First, transliteration from one language to another, especially from languages with different alphabets, can be a tricky business. There are rules, however – although not all the rules are uniform. In Hebrew, Chanukah is spelled with the letters: *chet-nun-kaf-heh*. The problem lies mainly in transliterating the *chet* and the *kaf*. But then there are also all those double "n's" and double "k's". Finally, we need to decide about the "h" at the end of the word.

Here's how I see it. Since *chet* is a "guttural" consonant, using "ch" or even "kh" seems most correct. But since so many Jews and non-Jews alike have trouble making this sound, many just go with "Hanukah". What about the double "k"? There are two "k" sounding letters in Hebrew, the *kuf* and the *kaf* (our letter). The *kaf* has a *dagesh* in it (a diacritical mark in the form of a little dot), which linguists say signifies a stronger sound or doubling.... Hence the double "k". There is no discernable reason that I could discover, however, for spelling Chanukah with two "n's".

Regarding using an "h" or no "h" at the end of the word, since the last letter in the Hebrew spelling is a "heh", the letter having an "h" sound, one easily justifies spelling Chanukah with an "h" at the end. On

the other hand, "heh" is generally silent when it comes at the end of Hebrew words.... Oy vey! As for the rest of the spellings, well, your guess is as good as mine.

One thing is for sure: We all love Chanukah. The light of the candles brightens our homes at the darkest time of the year, our kids love getting presents, and delicious latkes tickle our sense of smell and warm our stomachs. Moreover, no matter what we make of the Chanukah story (Jewish civil war or miracle of the oil), when we continue to light the candles year after year, we celebrate the fact that we remain Jewish. We celebrate that, as Mordecai Kaplan famously put it, we live in two civilizations, American and Jewish, and that one does not detract from the other.

This year, our Chanukah celebration is on Friday, December 19th. So, BYOM (bring your own menorah) and your sense of fun. And, no matter how you spell it: Happy Chanukah!

B'Shalom uvracha/With peace and blessings,

Rabbi Susan



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Contact CKS Office
908-359-0420



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is open each Sunday
11 am - 12 noon

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



Now in its 21st 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



Religious School Reports



by Ann Kanarek

PICKING FAVORITES

Is Chanukah your favorite holiday? Well join the crowd; most children would agree with you. Now we have to ask: "Why?" "The presents, of course!" you say. Yet giving gifts at Chanukah is a fairly new part of the holiday. Earlier in our history, a few coins were given to children on Chanukah. These coins are called Chanukah gelt (gelt means money in Yiddish). During the holiday, many Jews continue to give tzedakah so the poor could receive gelt, too.

Chanukah is popular because the story makes us proud as Jews. We celebrate the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian-Greek army of the tyrant Antiochus. As we light candles, eat *latkes* and play *dreidel*, we remember that the Macabees' struggle of long ago is still our struggle today: How to remain loyal to the traditions and dreams of our people while participating in the best that the secular world has to offer. There was also a battle for religious freedom, a battle that we continue to fight today, as well.

Chanukah is an exciting time of year for everyone. I wish you all a **Chag Sameach** and best wishes for a happy and enjoyable Chanukah.

We have planned many exciting programs for Chanukah. Please join us and help us celebrate Chanukah as a congregational family.



CHANUKAH IS COMING!

SUPPORT OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL'S WALL OF FLAME

Put your name on a flame; put your handle on a candle. Look for the **Wall of Flame**, our Religious School menorah with your name in lights. For only a dollar each, you can buy paper flames for every member of your family. Or, for 18 big ones, you can buy a whole paper candle for your group. Any way you choose, you are warming up to a great cause—your Religious School. For more information, check the flyer online.

On behalf of the Religious School staff and children we thank you for your support.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS:

Friday, December 5:

Shabbat Mishpachah Family services, 7:00pm with Shabbat dinner, 6:00pm

3rd Grade Naming Service

Sunday, December 7:

K-2 PACT (Parent and Child Together) program: My *Synagogue* **please note that both students and parents come to school at **10:00am** for the program** Music with Moreh Eric

Sunday, December 14:

Chanukah art with the Kehiloft teens

Camp JRF presentation for students and their families, 11:30-12:00

Parents you are welcome to come to a camp presentation and learn why our children get such joy from this great summer experience of activity, Shabbat celebration and Jewish living!

Friday, December 19:

Chanukah celebration: Festival of Lights Pot Luck Dinner & Community Menorah Lighting. 6:00pm

Bring your family's menorah and join us we celebrate Chanukah with music, latkes and applesauce, candle lighting and lots of games, gelt and fun!

Sunday, December 21:

Regular school session; COOKING

Sunday, December 28 -- Sunday, January 4:

NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: Winter break

Religious school resumes on Sunday, January 11

Friday, January 9:

Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm

Sunday, January 11:

4th grade PACT (Parent and Child Together) program: *Saying Goodbye to Shabbat* **

Please note that both students and parents come to school at **10:00am** for the program**

Sunday, January 18:

Regular school session; MUSIC



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Jon Bartels
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This month in Kehiloft we have been pretty busy! We have been preparing for our talent show, which we are very excited

about hosting. The talent show will be on January 10th, 2015 and we highly recommend you come!

We have also been preparing for our upcoming Shabbat service that we will be leading on November 21st! It is going to be very interesting and fun, and we hope to see many people there!

We also have had some very educational and interesting talks with Rabbi Susan this month. In our first two meetings with Rabbi Susan this year, we talked about prayer, and why prayer is important to us as Jews and also as individuals. This month we also spent a lot of time talking about our Kehiloft group project for the year. We have some really good ideas in mind, and we can't wait to get our plans into action!

In addition, we have also been designing an awesome Kehiloft sweater and logo, which we will be finalizing in the near future!

Charlotte Birnbaum

DECEMBER

Wednesday, Dec 3- Discussion with Rabbi Susan #3

Wednesday, Dec 10- Prep for RS Hanukkah project

Sunday, Dec 14. 9:00 - 12:00 Kehiloft leads Hanukkah project in RS

Sunday, 21 tentative date and time: 4:00 - 6:00 Stonebridge Hanukkah program

JANUARY

Wednesday, Jan 7 - Regular session. Social?

Sunday, Jan 11. 12:00 - 2:00. Session with Rabbi Ora

Wednesday, Jan 21 - Shabbat service prep

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

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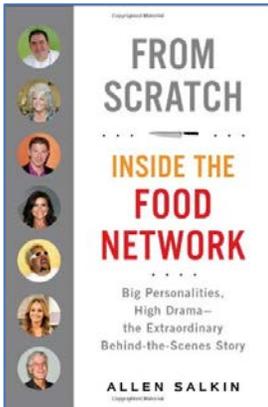


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Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) Upcoming Special Events include:

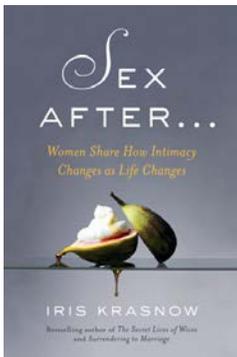


Allen Salkin, author of *Inside the Food Network*, Wednesday, December 3, 12 Noon, program and luncheon hosted by the JCC.

“Jewish Family Names” with Dr. Nathan Reiss, Tuesday, December 9, 12:00 Noon at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater (Fee includes lite Bagel Lunch : \$5/person);

The Irma Horowitz Film Series featuring *Falafel* and Israeli Short Films, Friday, December 5, 6:30pm at Or Chadash, Flemington and Thursday, December 11, 6:30pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater (Fee includes Falafel Dinner: \$12/person in advance or \$15 day of event).

The Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Film Series presents *The Flood*, Saturday, December 13 at 7pm (To register, contact Temple Beth-El directly at 908-722-0674.)



Coming Wednesday, February 4, Iris Krasnow, author of *Sex After... Women Share How Intimacy Changes as Life Changes*, program and luncheon hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. To register for programs, please contact the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or register online at www.ssbjcc.org.



Rummage Sale Friday, October 24

Jewish Family Services – Learning in Retirement

In collaboration with other partners, JFS is organizing a **Learning In Retirement Program** modeled after those in many other communities around the country. The focus is on retired persons as facilitators as well as learners, building connections among their peers and focusing on topics of interest to people in this stage of life.

Are you retired or plan to retire soon?

Are you looking for learning activities that:

- Are intellectually stimulating
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DECEMBER 2014



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7:30pm Mah Jongg	2 7:15pm Spiritual Development Group	3 6pm Kehiloft	4	5 6pm Shabbat Dinner 7pm Shabbat Services	6 Parashat Vayishlach
7 9am Religious School	8 7:30pm Mah Jongg	9	10 6pm Kehiloft	11 7:30pm Board Meeting	12	13 Parashat Vayeshev 9:30am Shabbat Morning
14 9am Religious School 9am Kehiloft	15 7:30pm Mah Jongg	16 Chanukah: 1 Candle	17 Chanukah: 2 Candles 7:30pm Education Committee	18 Chanukah: 3 Candles	19 Chanukah: 4 Candles 6:00 Festival of Lights Dinner 7:30pm Shabbat Service	20 Parashat Miketz Chanukah: 5 Candles
21 9am Religious School Chanukah: 6 Candles	22 Rosh Chodesh Tevet Chanukah: 7 Candles 7:30pm Mah Jongg	23 Rosh Chodesh Tevet Chanukah: 8 Candles	24 Chanukah: 8th Day	25	26	27 Parashat Vayigash
28	29	30	31			

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

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December 2014

Deadline for next newsletter:
December 15th

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