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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Co

February 2015 Shevat – Adar 5775

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Bulletin from the Board-Tom Berger

GIVE UNTIL IT FEELS GOOD

You have all heard the saying: "Give, but give until it hurts." Well, I think that's a bad idea. I think people should give until it feels good.

There are many reasons for giving to an organization. For example, others have said:

Someone I know asked me to give, and I wanted to help them

I felt emotionally moved by someone's story

I want to feel I'm not powerless in the face of need and can help (this is especially true during disasters)

I want to feel I'm changing someone's life

I feel a sense of closeness to a community or group

I need a tax deduction

I want to memorialize someone (who is struggling or died of a disease, for example)

I was raised to give to charity—it's tradition in my family

I want to be "hip," and supporting this charity (i.e., wearing a yellow wrist band) is in style It makes me feel connected to other people and builds my social network

I want to have a good image for myself/my company

I want to leave a legacy that perpetuates me, my ideals or my cause

I feel fortunate (or guilty) and want to give something back to others

I give for religious reasons—God wants me to share my affluence

I want to be seen as a leader/role model

I suppose these are all good reasons. Most of them I do not relate to myself. But whichever may resonate with you, I want you to consider CKS in this context. Sometimes I have given money to a cause feeling that I could or should have given more. Thus, I did not give until it hurt nor did I give until it felt good. Had I given what I felt I should or could, I would have felt better; until it felt good.

I recently had a discussion with some friends from the synagogue regarding donations and what motivates donors. One of the things I took away from the conversation was that many people give for the last reason in the above list. How many synagogues have we visited

where we see things like this:

I am not certain that I believe we should be putting up plaques to recognize donors, but I wonder whether it might be a good idea to recognize the fact that donors need to be appreciated in a more specific way than with a general letter to all. Perhaps we should consider some kind of more personal way of saying thanks with something like a "Donors Dinner"

where donors can get together and

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share the pleasure of feeling that they have given until it feels good.

As a member of the board, often our main topic of conversation is the budget and our balance sheet of income and expenses. The fact is that, financially, the Synagogue is in good hands but there are warning signs ahead. As we all know, this year has been one in which a couple of major expenditures were made regarding the bathrooms and the playground, both of which we can look at with pride because of your generosity in donating toward the cause.

Continued page 2

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

DONATIONS General

Steve & Bonnie Kramer **Emily Bengels** Ed & Sue Krisiloff Michael Kalison & Debbie Lampf in honor of Janis and Alan Todd's 40th Anniversary Marc & Harlene Rosenberg in memory of Lewis Weisblatt Natalie London Bob Neusner & Helen Pu Marc & Harlene Rosenberg in honor of Janis and Alan Todd's 40th Anniversary Marc & Harlene Rosenberg Lisa and Rich Kent Marc & Harlene Rosenberg in memory of Hannah Busch Marc & Harlene Rosenberg in memory of Ben Rosenberg

Eric Weitze Natalie London

High Holiday

Brick Walkway

David Henry & Deborah Ginsburg

Join us at this year's Spring Event!

This year's annual spring fundraiser, Treasures of the Blue Grotto will be held on Saturday, March 14th, 7:30 - 11pm. The party is going to be the most unique and fun event yet! The planning committee is in rare form, coming up with creative ideas and more ways to entertain our guests as we add to our bottom line financially.

We have a couple of new incentives to share with you before you even get to the party!

- Win a \$100 Visa Gift Certificate! As you know, we need many interesting and generous items donated for our silent and live auctions. You can donate something nice from your "this is lovely but we'll never use it" pile, or something you've solicited from your favorite local business. For every item that you donate and that we use, your name will be added to a drawing for a \$100 Visa Gift Card! What could be better?
- And by the way, if you think you can't come because there's no one to watch the kids, think again. Child care will provided by Kehiloft teenagers on a first come, first served basis for a small donation to their program. More information on this will be coming soon on our website.
- This year's big raffle item is a \$400 Visa Gift Card! You can purchase whatever you want with this gift card, so we hope you buy loads of \$10 raffle tickets! Go to our website to find out how you can purchase them. Don't forget to sell them to your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Who wouldn't want an opportunity to win a \$400 gift card?

As in the past, we will be providing 'heavy' hors d'oeuvres, beverages, live piano, DJ and dancing, and most of all, a terrific opportunity to socialize with your CKS friends and meet new ones (we have several new families)! This is the event of the season, so put the date on your calendar now! Watch for your invitation which will be coming soon in the mail, and we hope you will reply, "I can't wait" on the response card!!

See you in the Grotto!

The Treasures of the Blue Grotto Planning Committee

GIVE UNTIL IT FEELS GOOD, continued from page 1

Strangely, however, even with these donations, total donations have fallen behind the year before while expenses have gone up, creating a negative cash flow. This is why I am asking the question as to whether we have given to the synagogue "until it feels good". "Giving until it hurts" means that we have caused ourselves some financial discomfort by giving money to a cause. This is not a healthy thing to do, in my opinion. The reality is that, as much as we may love our CKS community, our first responsibility is to our families and financial obligations. What I mean by giving until it feels good is an inner feeling that we have done our part in supporting something important to us. Most of us have experienced that feeling of discomfort at times when we know we could have given more than we did. We feel that discomfort because we know that we could afford to give up a dinner out by eating at home once in a while or we could stay home watching TV instead of going out to the theater.

So, if you have experienced this kind of discomfort after donating to the synagogue, I would like you to consider giving to the synagogue "until it feels good"; that you have given only what feels comfortable and definitely NOT UNTIL IT HURTS.

On another note, I am sure many of you have asked yourselves at one time or another "Who made that decision for CKS? I would have done this instead." Perhaps you thought you weren't heard, but you were. The Board wants your involvement and your ideas. Each year we have about a third of the Board positions up for election. The time is now to generate nominations for the Board elections that will be held in May. Being on the Board is the best way to get your voice heard and to make an impact on the future of our community. If you are interested in nominating yourself or another member, please just send an email to Stacey Anderson at sanderson@marketingwize.com by March 15th.

Tom Berger, Trustee

Remember CKS when you donate:

Dues only cover a portion of the CKS operating budget. Consider making a donation in memory of a loved one, honoring an accomplishment, or recognizing a friend or colleague.

Robert M. Fass Sales Associate

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Message from the Rabbi

Seeing Ourselves Clearly



If January 1st typically has us setting resolutions – how we'll eat less, eat better, exercise more – February 1st often brings a re-evaluation of these resolutions, and a sense that we may be slipping.

There's great value in striving for a healthy body that brings

us joy. When we begin a new diet, a new food plan, or resolve to go to the gym more often, we are trying to become our best, most healthy selves. But unfortunately, the American diet industry – currently a \$60 billion behemoth – doesn't really have our health as its end goal. Its bottom line is financial profit, and in pursuit of this profit, it relies on messages that can be damaging to our self-concept, even as we strive to improve ourselves.

The diet industry is based on a grand deception: it proliferates images of the 'ideal' (read: thin, white, young, un-wrinkled) body, and promotes the belief that this ideal can be achieved by all with enough hard work and self-discipline. When we inevitably fail to attain the ideal – whether we lose the weight and then gain it back, or whether we never achieve the ideal – we believe that we fail because of a fault within, unaware that the diet industry is biologically a rigged game.

The diet industry also invites us to label foods 'good' or 'bad'. We assign moral values to nutritional objects, and then transfer those values to ourselves. We say, "Oh, I'm so bad, I can't believe I ate that whole pint of ice cream." And this sense of bodily 'badness' can seep inwards, stealing our ability to look at ourselves without harsh judgment.

In Genesis 1:27, we find a profound and simple statement on human bodies: Then God created Adam in God's own image; in the image of God God created him; male and female God created them. God's actions in this verse remind us that the various forms human bodies take are each a reflection of divine order and will.

Although this idea that we are created 'be'tzelem Elohim' is central to Jewish belief, sometimes we need reminding. Even the rabbis of the Talmud occasionally forgot, as this story in tractate Ta'anit reveals:

Once Rabbi Elazar son of Rabbi Shimon was coming from the house of his teacher. He rode along the riverside on his donkey, and was feeling happy and elated because he had studied much Torah. There he met an exceedingly ugly man, who greeted him, "Peace be upon you, my master!"

Rabbi Elazar did not return the salutation but instead said to him, "How ugly you are! Are all the people of your city as ugly as you?" "I do not know," said the man. "But go to the craftsman who made me, and

say to Him: How ugly is the vessel which you have made!"

Realizing that he had done wrong, Rabbi Elazar dismounted from his donkey, prostrated himself before the man, and said to him, "You are right. Forgive me!" But the man replied, "I will not forgive you until you go to the craftsman who made me and say to Him, 'How ugly is the vessel which you have made.'"

When we buy into the diet industry, both literally and figuratively, we also often buy into the lie that we are ugly vessels. This is not only damaging to ourselves, but is also an affront to God – God's craftsmanship and provenance. In the story above, the 'ugly' man is more aware of this truth than Rabbi Elazar, the learned Torah scholar. In demanding redress for God, he encourages us to see ourselves more clearly; that we are all right, rather than wrong.

May we all find the strength, in this coming year, to see ourselves with greater clarity and compassion – and if not for our own sake, then for the sake of honoring the traces of God in each of us.

Ora Nitkin-Kaner

Sabbatical/Student Rabbi







Religious School Reports by Ann Kanarek



TU B'SHEVAT -- New Year of the Trees

The people of Israel have proven that, tree by tree, they can restore the environment from a barren desert back to a Garden of Eden. Perhaps that is why Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the

trees, has gained importance in modern times. Tu B'Shevat is a holiday we celebrate on the 15th day of the month of Shevat. This year it comes on February 4.

Russian poet **Shaul Tchernichovsky** emigrated to Israel in 1931. In 1943 near the end of his life he wrote a Tu B'Shevat poem to the children of Israel. He wrote:

Here every tree is precious.

How happy we are with every new tree we plant!

With hard work and great patience, we wait for each tree to grow, and count each and every one. You, children, are like those trees ----very, very precious.....

We hope you will strike roots deep, deep in the soil of our homeland, and no wind in the world will move you from your place.

Hold tightly to every clump of earth clinging to your roots ----and you will never be uprooted!



Shalom and blessings to our children for yet another new year. My very best wishes to all of you for a new year filled with Jewish pride, spirit and enthusiasm.

WINTER WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event that it becomes necessary to cancel school due to inclement weather, every effort will be made to ensure that school closing announcements are made on our website (www.kehilatshalomnj.org) and on WCTC 1450AM and WMGQ 98.3FM and on their website (www.wctcam.com), click on storm closings and "C" for CKS. In addition, you will receive a phone call from your class representative to alert you of a school

cancellation. My appreciation to the class parents who volunteered to make the

phone calls. Thank you.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS:

Sunday, February 1: Tu B'Shevat celebrated in school **Friday, February 6:** Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm

Sunday, February 8: COOKING

7th grade orientation to Kehiloft program with parents (9:00am for students and 11:15am for parents). Join us as we explore our newly expanded Kehiloft (post b'nai mitzvah) program. This program is intended for our high school teens to continue their life-long journey of Jewish study by providing a glimpse of the fascinating spectrum of topics Judaism encompasses.

5th grade Tzedakah posters due

Sunday, February 15: NO SCHOOL, President's Weekend

Sunday, February 22: MUSIC

Friday, March 6:

5th grade PACT program: Tzedakah and the Giraffe Connection; 10:00am-12:00pm

Sunday, March 1: Regular school session, Purim is celebrated

Purim shpiel and Purim carnival sponsored by the Kehiloft teens Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm with Shabbat dinner, 6:00pm

Sunday, March 8: Daylight savings time begins, turn clocks ahead 1 hour

COOKING

7th grade PACT program: *The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience*, 10:00am-12:00pm (A family exploration of feelings and thoughts surrounding the life cycle event)

Kehiloft, the next step in your Jewish journey

With the start of the new year, we at Kehiloft have had



our hands pretty full. We had our first session with Rabbi Ora shortly after our winter break. She led us in an informative and interesting discussion about money in relation to Jews and Judaism. The Jewish relationship with money at various points throughout history, ideas of money from rabbis and the Torah,

and what money means to us today, are all things that came up during the discussion. After the discussion I think we all had a better cents (sorry I couldn't resist) of the ideas discussed.

At our first session in January we reviewed the proposal for our annual project and listened to Zach Anderson's presentation. Zach later presented our proposal to the Board of Trustees. He and Jason Weitze also contacted the building and grounds committee for their input and approval. If approved and we can raise the necessary funds, our annual project is going to be the construction of a gaga court. For those wondering, gaga is an Israeli sport, similar to dodge-ball, that is also enjoyed by the students of the religious school. In the past the religious school has needed to resort to creating makeshift courts out of chairs to be able to play. We are hoping that having an actual court will make things more enjoyable for everyone.

Kehiloft experienced a slight bump in the road when, due to unforeseen circumstances, the talent show we had planned was postponed. Although congregants signed up for the talent show, we decided that we didn't have enough acts to host a successful show. Never fear though, we have tentative plans underway and hope to be able to have the talent show at some point this year. Be on the alert for upcoming announcements. We have our fingers crossed that we will receive final approval on our proposed date this spring. If and when we do, be ready to sign up again! And if you didn't get a chance to the first time, you'll have another opportunity to participate.

January also saw the completion of one of this year's projects. We received our Kehiloft sweatshirts and they came out looking great!

Kehiloft led its second Shabbat service at the end of January. We hope that you were able to attend!

Coming up for Kehiloft in February is our second session with Rabbi Ora in which she will discuss the Conservative Movement's recent decision to relax USY's ban on interfaith dating. Also coming up are preparations for Kehiloft's third critically acclaimed Purim Spiel: a performance so amazing it can only happen once a year.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, Feb 4 - Purim spiel rehearsal Sunday, Feb 8 - 11:00 - 12:00. 7th grade family workshop intro to Kehiloft

Sunday, Feb 8 - 12:00 - 2:00 Session with Rabbi Ora

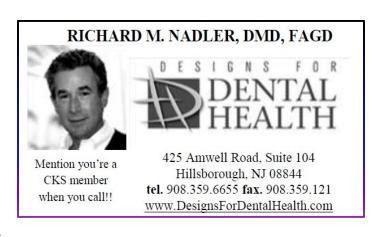
Wednesday, Feb 18 - Purim spiel rehearsal Wednesday, Feb 25 - Purim spiel rehearsal

MARCH

Sunday, March 1- morning. Purim spiel performance during Religious School. Time TBA Sunday March 1 - 12:00 - 2:00 Purim carnival Sunday, March 8 - 12:00 - 2:00 Rabbi Ora's third session

Wednesday, March 18 - Regular session Sunday, March 22 - Social







Jewish LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) Upcoming Special Events...

Join Jewish LIFE on Wednesday, February 4 at 12 Noon for the return engagement of author Iris Krasnow, discussing her new book, Sex After...Women Share How Intimacy Changes as Life Changes. This book is filled with advice and the voices of 150 women and offers an honest, candid and intimate guide. Program and luncheon hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$18 in advance or \$22 day of event). This program is co-sponsored by the Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Sisterhood, the Temple Sholom Sisterhood and the Brandeis National Committee, Somerset Chapter.

Jewish LIFE will be showing the film, Little White Lie, Wednesday, February 11 at 7pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. The film will be followed by a discussion with Lacey Schwartz, the subject of the film who grew up believing she was white. (Fee: \$5/person.) This program is sponsored by Wendy and Stephen Offen. Congregation Or Chadash, Flemington will host the Irma Horowitz Film Series featuring Falafel & Films on Friday, February 20 at 6:30pm. Films shown will be Jeptah's Daughter, Cornerstone and Mika. (Fee: \$12/person in advance or \$15 day of event. Contact Or Chadash to register.)

The Liberation of Auschwitz: 70th Anniversary, An Event to Commemorate Those Who Perished and to Honor Survivors will be hosted at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater on Wednesday, February 25 at 7:00pm. Guest speaker, Tovah Friedman, LCSW. This program is sponsored by Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties. (Fee: \$10/adult and free to students.) For more information, please contact JFS at 908-725-7799.

Coming up in March...Rebecca Alexander, author of Not Fade Away, a Memoir of Senses Lost & Found, on Wednesday, March 11 at 12 Noon. This memoir details how Rebecca is slowly losing her sight and hearing and yet continues to live life to the fullest. Program and Luncheon hosted by the Birnbaum JCC,

Bridgewater. (Fee: \$18/person in advance of \$22/person day of event.)

Temple Sholom, Bridgewater will host **Originals by an Original: the Artistic World of Moredchai Rosenstein** on **Thursday, March 12 at 7pm**. Artist reception and presentation followed by "Paint with the Artist". (Free to the community.)

The Temple Beth-EI, Hillsborough Film Series will be showing *The Wonders* on Saturday, March 14 at 7pm. (To register contact Temple Beth-EI or e-mail bakerec@comcast.net.) Glenn Kurtz will discuss the film, *Three Minutes in Poland, Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film*, on Thursday, March 19, 7pm. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$8/person in advance or \$10/person day of event.

The 3rd Annual Night to Celebrate Israel will be held on Thursday, March 27, 6:30pm at Raritan Valley Country Club in Bridgewater. Distinguished guest speaker Israel Ambassador Ido Aharoni. The event will honor Rabbi Ron Isaacs and Aviv Alter, a Rutgers Hillel Student. (Fee: \$18/Student and \$50/Adult.) To register for programs unless otherwise noted, please contact the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or register on line at www.ssbjcc.org.

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FEBRUARY 2015



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9:00 AM Religious School 3:00 PM Sunflower Chinese New Year Party	7:30 PM Mah Jongg		6:00 PM Kehiloft		7:00 PM Shabbat Michpachah/Family Shabbat Services	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9:00 AM Religious School 11:00 AM Kehiloft	7:30 PM Mah Jongg			7:30 PM Board Meeting	7:30 PM Shabbat Services	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	7:30 PM Mah Jongg		6:00 PM Kehiloft 7:30 PM Education Committee			9:30 AM Shabbat Services
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9:00 AM Religious School	7:30 PM Mah Jongg	7:00 PM Ritual Committee Meeting	6:00 PM Kehiloft		7:30 PM Shabbat Services	



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Current resident or:

Deadline for next newsletter: February 15th

February 2015

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Beautification	Debbie Gartenberg 908-428-7345			
Billing/Payments	Robin Bengochea 908-359-0420 ext. 1 admin@ksnj.org			
B'nai Mitzvah (helpers, celebrations)	Meryl Orlando 732-329-8945			
Board of Trustees 2 nd Thurs	Susan Waskow president@ksnj.org			
Building/Grounds/Décor	Andy Sokel 609-466-8749 andsok@aol.com			
Building Usage/Access	Robin Bengochea 908-359-0420 ext. 1 admin@ksnj.org			
By-Laws	Victor Elgort 908-722-0700 vselgort@nmmlaw.com			
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Financial Committee	Ron Lubin 908-369-3483 Steve Weinstein 609-712-1293			
Fundraising	Debbie Gartenberg 908-428-7345			
Gift Shop	Susan Waskow 609-333-1113 Iris Rubenstein			
Hospitality(Kiddush & Oneg)	Natalie London 908-874-6955			
Kindercapers	Natalie London 908-874-6955			
Kehi-Loft	Karen Fridkis 609-333-1119			
Life Cycle (Caring for each other)	Sheryl Rosenberg 908-253-7049 swellcourt@verizon.net			
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