

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **November 2015** Cheshvan — Kislev 5776

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Bulletin from the Board- Iris Rubinstein

Many of us go around the Thanksgiving table in November and share what we are most grateful for. There I mention my daughter first, who is not always with me at this holiday. Actually my list of things to be grateful for is long, and although it sometimes sounds platitudinous, I can assure you it is felt most sincerely.

My synagogue, my spiritual home, is also toward the top of my list. Congregation Kehilat Shalom means so much to my family and me that when Gabi was working on her bat mitzvah speech she even wanted to thank the building for helping her feel at home in CKS.

Every year we donate to CKS, which depends heavily on this generosity to cover the gap between dues and congregational expenses. And this year, our donation will increase partly due to our new Grateful Giving campaign.



CKS has some generous donors who have stepped forward with a remarkable opportunity. Any increase in individual family contributions over the prior fiscal year (kept strictly confidential as always) will be matched dollar for dollar – up to \$20,000 for the congregation as a whole. I will be one member taking advantage of that amazing offer in order to more abundantly express my appreciation for CKS, and perhaps you will too.

So in addition to being grateful for my job, my daughter, my synagogue, family, friends and my dog, a garage, good health, my fellow board members and my rabbi (in no particular order), CKS's robust stronger financial situation will also on my Thanksgiving list.

Iris Rubinstein, Trustee

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

General

Marc & Harlene Rosenberg
in memory of Norma Arons
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in memory of Paul Arons
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in honor of Harlene Rosenberg's mother's 90th birthday
in memory of Louise Applegate
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in memory of Norma Arons
in memory of Rabbi Evan Jaffe
in memory of Aaron Bisberg
in memory of Selma Lipsius
in memory of the yahrzeit of Berth Gelvan
in memory of the yahrzeit of Edith Gelvan

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Jessica Tartanian

Thank you for welcoming us during Yom Kippur and for helping us to acknowledge the yahrzeit of our grandfather, John Forster.

Lee Muchnikoff
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in honor of Jack, Scott and Courtney Reicheg
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Ken Greenberg
Debbie Lampf & Michael Kalison
Margaret & Bruce Miller
Richard & Sheryl Rosenberg
in honor of the members of Kol Ahava with love and thanks for 23 wonderful years.
Mark Weinstein & Lisa Hartman
Iris Rubinstein
in honor of Rabbi Susan's blog on the shooting in Oregon and her words of challenge.
Andy Sokel & Nancy Halpern
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Lisa & Michael Roe
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Carrie & Steve Fischman
Erna Forster
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in memory of Herb Sloan, Eva and Harry Weiss
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Grateful Giving

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Message from the Rabbi



After the month of Tishrei in the Jewish calendar – the month of the High Holidays, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah all falling one after the other – comes the quiet month of Cheshvan. The Ancient Rabbis sometimes called Cheshvan “Marchesvan” meaning “bitter Cheshvan” because there are no holidays during this period. (We modern rabbis, however, find Cheshvan a blissful break from all the holiday hubbub – before things crank up again in Kislev with the holiday of Chanukah!)

At the time of the Ancient Rabbis, the full flowering of Jewish communities outside of the land of Israel had not yet taken shape. But at some point after the Roman Exile of the Jewish People in the 1st Century, the incipient Ethiopian community began its history. Little was known of this community or even of their existence, however, until 1769 when Scottish explorer, James Bruce, came upon them when searching for the source of the Nile River. At that time, their numbers had already been greatly diminished through wars with other surrounding tribes from half a million to around 100,000. Nevertheless, this group of Jews survived in the northern Gondar region of Ethiopia for centuries, resisting conversion, first to Christianity, and then later to Islam, keeping the faith through the laws of Torah, and also creating traditions of their own.

One of those traditions was the holiday known as Sigd, an Amharic word, meaning “prostration” or “worship”. According to the Ethiopian Jews, this holiday, coming exactly 50 days after Yom Kippur, commemorates the meeting of God and Moses at the burning bush, as well as the Return of the Jewish Exiles from Babylonia in the 5th Century BCE. On Sigd, Ethiopian Jews would commemorate the day by fasting and walking to the highest point on a nearby mountain, carrying the *Orit*, or Ethiopian Torah. There, the spiritual leaders would read from the *Orit* (which contains the Five Books of Moses, and many of the Prophetic and other writings, such as Psalms and the Song of Songs), reciting parts of the book of Nehemiah in which Ezra the Scribe teaches the Exiled Jews of Babylon about the laws of the Torah and leads them back to the land of Israel.

Fast forward to the 1980s, when Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Sellasie’s government was overturned in a military coup by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. During the weeks surrounding Mariam’s coup, an estimated 2,500 Jews were killed and 7,000 became homeless. The Mengistu dictatorship forbade the practice of Judaism and the teaching of Hebrew, and so a relentless campaign of anti-Semitism began in Ethiopia. Perhaps many of you remember Operation Moses in 1985 and Operation Solomon in 1991 when the Israeli government airlifted and otherwise rescued

WHAT IS SIGD?

thousands of Ethiopian Jews and brought them to Israel.

Operation Moses began in November 1984, around the time of Sigd, precisely when Ethiopian Jews are reading about the Return of the Exiles in the 5th Century BCE, thus making their own return to the land of Israel that much more poignant. Today, approximately 92,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel and they celebrate Sigd by holding a mass ceremony on Mount Zion in Jerusalem that ends with a procession to the Western Wall.

Sigd is celebrated on the 29th of Cheshvan, this year falling on Tuesday, November 10th. Log onto youtube and you will find footage of both previous years’ and likely this year’s celebrations. So, Happy Sigd! At this time of increased tensions and violence in Israel, may this sacred day be celebrated in peace.

B’Shalom,
Rabbi Susan



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 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





PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Throughout our history we have been known as a "People of the Book." Our literature is filled with stories of our people over the ages. We are taught that it is a religious duty to study and we are the only

people that recognize the maturity of its young people by having them read from the greatest of our books, the **Torah**.

Although the "book" we refer to is the Bible, books of all types have always been important to us. Books generate ideas, provide information, and give us countless hours of pleasure. We purchase books for even the youngest child and regularly take our children to libraries and book stores for story hour.

If our children are to grow Jewishly, they should be exposed to books of Jewish content and interest. When reading they vicariously experience significant times and events, they identify with great personalities, and they learn about our history, customs, holidays and values.

Jewish Book Month usually occurs in the fall. Each year Chanukah and the four weeks preceding it are designated as Jewish Book Month. The aim of Book Month is to popularize books on Jewish subjects among our adults, youth and children. There is no better gift at Chanukah or at any time during the year than a book.

The Religious School will host its first annual **Book Fair** this month. This will give everyone an opportunity to browse and buy Judaic reading material. Through your efforts, the Jewish people can remain the People of the Book.



NOVEMBER IS JEWISH BOOK MONTH

Come by and browse the Book fair. There is an ever-growing library of Jewish books of juvenile

interest available. Visit our book fair sponsored by KAR-BEN and check out the variety of Judaic reading material and at the same time help to support our school. The dates of the Book Fair are as follows: **Sundays, November 15 & 22 and Sunday, December 6, 9:00am-12:00pm.**

MEET AUTHOR & GUEST SPEAKER BARBARA KRASNER

We are delighted to be able to bring **Barbara Krasner** to our school on **Sunday, November 15**. Ms. Krasner is a history writer and an award-winning author. She specializes in writing articles, novels and books about American and Jewish history and immigration for children and adults. Her books for young readers include: Goldie Takes a Stand and Lies's Ocean Rescue.

Everyone is invited to meet *Barbara Krasner* and spend the morning with her as we highlight Jewish Book Month with her visit. Ms. Krasner's books will be available for purchase during the Book Fair. (More details about the program will follow)

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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 family or group. Anyway you choose, you are warming up to a great cause---your Religious School. For more information, check the flyer in this bulletin or in your child's bag or online. On behalf of the Religious School staff and children we thank you for your support.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS:

- Friday, November 6: Shabbat Mishpachah with Ice Cream Oneg, 7:00pm
- Sunday, November 8: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL; *NJEA Weekend*
- Sunday, November 15: Cooking; Jewish Book Fair begins; Jewish Book Month author, *Barbara Krasner* visits
- Sunday, November 22: 3rd grade (PACT program) *The Crown of a Good Name*; Jewish Book Fair
- Sunday, November 29: NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL; *Thanksgiving weekend*
- Friday, December 4: Shabbat Mishpachah 7:00pm with Shabbat dinner (6pm) - 3rd grade naming ceremony
- Sunday, December 6: Chanukah art with Kehiloft teens; Jewish Book Fair concludes
- Monday, December 7: Chanukah begins --First Day of Chanukah

Kehiloft, the next step in your Jewish journey

Hello everyone!

These past few months have been going really well up in the loft! I've been excited to get to know our new members and start brainstorming fun projects we want to accomplish this year. I was appointed as the Vice President of Kehiloft at the end of last year and I'm looking forward to helping out and taking part in many Kehiloft activities in the next few months. Last week, the rabbi visited us for our first monthly session with her. She presented us with the story of creation in the beginning of the Torah and explained how there are actually two creation stories! We then compared the two "chapters" she presented us with, and pointed out all the differences in each Parsha that we found. We all discussed the role that humans have played in the world up till modern times. It was an interesting and engaging topic which was perfect for our first session together, and I can't wait to discuss a new topic next month.



We also had our annual CKS rummage sale this month, which received many generous donations from the families here. We also had a great celebration on Simchat Torah where we danced with the Torah and then unrolled it around the sanctuary.

All these great events this month are just the start of a happy new year here at CKS!

-Tess Kowalski



NOVEMBER

Wednesday, November 4 - Rabbi Susan leads discussion #2

Wednesday, November 11 - Social session

Friday, November 20 - 7:30 - 9:30 Kehiloft leads Shabbat service #1

Saturday, November 21 - CKS event - Film *Food Chains* and discussion

Thanksgiving break

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 2 - Prep for Chanukkah project in Religious School

Sunday, December 6 - 9:00 - 12:00 Kehiloft leads Chanukkah project in Religious School

Sunday, December 13 - 4:00 - 6:00 Chanukkah program at Stonebridge

Sunday, December 16 - Prep for Shabbat service #2

Winter break December 21- January 4

Session time is 6:00 - 8:00 unless otherwise noted. Kehiloft board meets 5:30-6:00 before each Wednesday session.

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**SHIMON AND SARA BIRNBAUM JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, BRIDGEWATER
TO HOST SECOND ANNUAL PROM FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21**

Bridgewater, NJ – The Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center (JCC) is hosting its Second Annual Prom for Adults with Special Needs, Saturday, November 21 from 7-10pm. The Prom is open to adults ages 18 and older with special needs. The event will be held at the JCC, located at 775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater. The admission fee is \$25 per person and includes Italian dinner, dessert and DJ. (There is no admission fee for a personal aide to accompany a Prom guest.) Attire is party chic -- no jeans. The RSVP deadline is November 11. Register by calling the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or on line at www.ssbjcc.org. For additional information contact Stephanie Johnson at 908-725-6994 x230; SJohnson@ssbjcc.org.

The JCC offers a variety of special needs programs including Special Needs Swimming Skills Program; The Rising Tide Special Olympics Swim Team; Adler Aphasia Center Support Group; Jewish Family Service's Social Club for Young Adults with Asperger Syndrome or Developmental Challenges, Parent Support Group and Sibling Support Group. The JCC Blaustein Early Childhood Center, JCC Camp Ruach and J-Crew After School Program work with families with children with special needs. The JCC offers adjusted schedules and one-on-one assistance.

The JCC is holding a Special Needs Symposium, A Day of Learning for Parents, Caregivers and Professionals on Friday, December 11, 2015 featuring keynote speaker Dr. Temple Grandin. The Symposium will be held at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, NJ. In addition to the keynote address, the Symposium will offer breakout sessions featuring experts in the field of autism. For additional information and to register, please call the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

The Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center is located at 775 Talamini Road in Bridgewater. The JCC is a social service agency that serves residents of all ages residing in Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties, providing fitness, recreational, social, cultural and educational programs for the entire community. The state-of-

the-art facility includes an indoor salt based pool, outdoor salt based heated pool with dome enclosure during the off season, gymnasium, fitness center and group fitness studios. New to the JCC is JFitGround, an outdoor adult fitness training facility used for personal and small group training. The JCC Blaustein Early Childhood Center provides childcare for ages 6 weeks through Kindergarten and the J-Crew After School Program is open to children in Grades K- 6. JCC Camp Ruach is the JCC's summer day camp for children ages 15 months through 9th Grade. The JCC is home to the Bridgewater Tide Swim Team and Summer Swim Club. For additional information, visit the JCC website at www.ssbjcc.org.

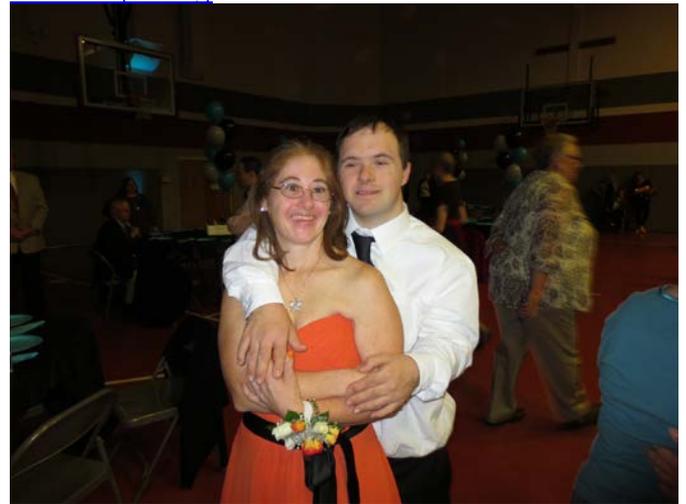
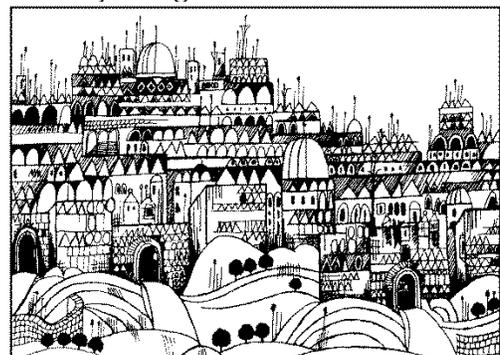


Photo Caption: A Prom for Adults with Special Needs will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Bridgewater on Saturday, November 21, 2015 from 7-10pm. The admission fee is \$25/person and includes an Italian dinner, DJ and dancing. The Prom is open to Adults with Special Needs ages 18 and older. To register, or for additional information, please call the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or online at www.ssbjcc.org. Pictured are guests from the 2014 Prom for Adults with Special Needs. **(Photo by the JCC)**

Media Contact: Debbie Golden, Special Projects & Marketing Director, 908-725-6994 x210; e-mail DGolden@ssbjcc.org



NOVEMBER 2015



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 6:00 PM Kehiloft	12 7:30 PM Board Meeting	13	14
15 9:00 AM Religious School	16 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	17	18	19	20	21 7:00 PM "Food Chains" Film
22 9:00 AM Religious School	23 7:30 PM Mah Jongg	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 7:30 PM Mah Jongg					

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

November 2015

Deadline for next newsletter:
November 15th

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Congregants' Assistance Fund	Rabbi Falk 908-359-0420 rabbik@ksnj.org
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