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**Reconstructionist Congregations Nationwide Post Welcome Signs**

by Susan Waskow

CKS joined Reconstructionist movements across the country by posting a welcome sign in our lobby. The sign shown in the photo includes the following text.

Welcome

This synagogue honors the divine image in every human being.

You are respected, appreciated and warmly welcome here whether you are....

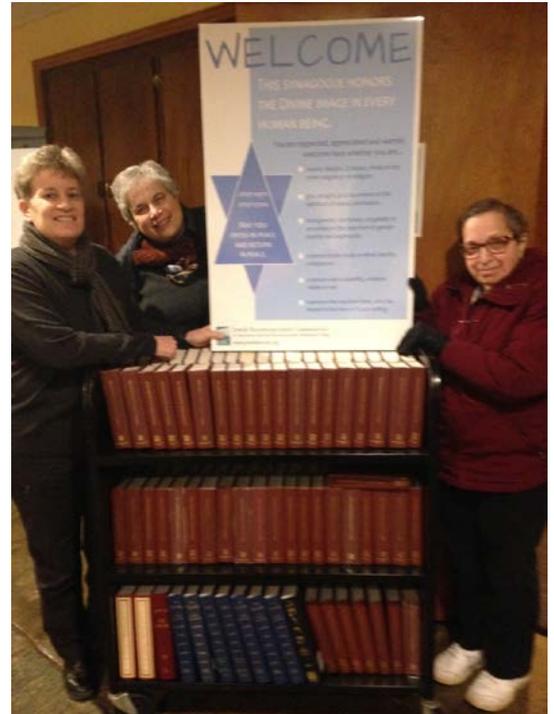
Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu or any other religion or no religion.

gay, straight, bi or anywhere on the spectrum of sexual orientation

transgender, non-binary, cis-gender or anywhere on the spectrum of gender identity and expression.

a person of any racial or ethnic identity whatsoever.

May you enter in peace and return in peace.



**2017 Tu B'Shevat Progressive Dinner**

by Hilary Kayle Crist

Thanks to the hard work of CKS member and Board Recording Secretary Amy Rosenthal, we brought back the tradition started several years ago of having a Progressive Dinner to celebrate Tu B'Shevat. The evening started at the home of Jodi Mahoney, where 47 participants were offered a variety of starters including cheese and crackers, sushi, and skewers of heart-shaped tomatoes with mozzarella cheese. On to the host homes for a more intimate setting where rituals of the holiday for the New Year for Trees could be observed with symbolic fruits and wine, followed by a wonderful meal. Special thanks to the dinner hosts: Amy and Matt Rosenthal with Karen Cohen and Jeff Bachrach; Hinda Greenberg and Bruce Campbell; Debbie and Gary Gartenberg with Ilene and Marty Millman; Steve Weinstein and Judy Forster with Scott and Juliet Strauss; and Bob Neusner and Helen Pu with Heather Ciociola and Aaron Fichtner. Following dinner, all participants reconvened at the home of Dan Morrison where everyone enjoyed a large array of desserts from puddings and cakes to fruit and cupcakes. Thanks to all who provided food and venues for the event and made the evening memorable. (see pictures on page 6)

Published by:

**Calli-Graphics**

Copy Editor: Shana Bartels

## CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

### High Holiday

♥Robert & Judith Harrison

### General

♥Karen & Larry Fridkis

In memory of Stuart Rosenthal

♥Janis & Alan Todd

In memory of Barbara Pulvers

In memory of Esther Stoller

♥Debbie Lampf & Michael Kalison

In honor of the birth of Debbie and Gary

Gartenberg's grandson, Nathan

♥Debbie Lampf & Michael Kalison

In memory of Paul Ganales

♥Harlene & Marc Rosenberg

In memory of Paul Ganales

In memory of Esther Stoller

♥Suzanne and Greg Corsan

In memory of George Corsan at the time of his  
yahrzeit

♥Karen & Larry Fridkis

In memory of Syd Schunkowitz

In memory of Esther Stoller

### Rabbi 's Discretionary Fund

♥Karen & Larry Fridkis

In honor of Rabbi Susan in gratitude for her social  
action work

### 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.

## Purim Celebration on March 12



All are welcome to come to the upcoming CKS Purim celebrations, which will be held on Sunday, March 12th beginning at 10 am. Our Kehiloft teens will present a spiel spoofing the retelling of the Purim story. A spoof by

Rabbi Susan is much anticipated as well. At eleven AM, there will be costume parade competitions including one for adults. This will be followed by games led by the Kehiloft students. Come one, come all to enjoy the festival of Purim.

## CKS Book Club

March 30: *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult

April 27: *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* by J.D. Vance

May 25: *Orhan's Inheritance* by Aine Ohanesian

June 29: *Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead

## Bulletin from the Board- Tim Kowalski



Greetings everyone!

Spring is just around the corner, and this annual renewal of life is especially poignant for me this year...I'm one step closer to seeing my oldest daughter leave for college in the fall while my younger

daughter makes the leap into high school. While this life transition terrifies me for many reasons, I look forward to watching my girls boldly move into the next stage of their lives with confidence. This has prompted me to reflect on the road they've traveled to arrive at this point in their lives – two young women who challenge me to be my best and continuously make me proud and happy.

When I think about the things that have influenced and shaped their worldview, it's very clear to me that the CKS community has been a significant component. We joined CKS when our oldest daughter started first grade in the religious school. As the years marched on, they both developed a rich and fulfilling Jewish identity that was facilitated by our CKS community. Whether it was participation in the children's service over high holidays, dancing on Simchat Torah, Purim spiels and carnivals, and Shabbat services, our entire family always felt welcomed. Their experiences in religious school, preparing for and becoming B'not Mitzvahs, and their current active involvement in Kehiloft, our teen youth group, have provided them with enduring positive lessons that I know will prove essential throughout their lives.

It is my hope that CKS continues its tradition of welcoming young families into the Synagogue. I want others to share in the rewarding journey we've had, to see their children develop a strong Jewish identity that is influenced by everyone – young and old, Jew and non-Jew - that will carry them forward as our legacy to help heal the world. As we welcome the spring, I encourage all of you to welcome other families to come take a look at our wonderful spiritual home, CKS.

Tim Kowalski, Trustee

### Call for Nominations:

The CKS Board of Trustees is calling for nominations to the 2017 (5778) Board of Trustees. As past president, I chair the nominating committee. I know my own experience on the board has been quite fulfilling. We have several board positions opening up this year.

Please feel free to nominate yourself or a fellow congregant, or contact me if you would like more information.

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 [susan.waskow@gmail.com](mailto:susan.waskow@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

Susan Waskow

Immediate Past President

Chair, Nominating Committee

From the Rabbi: Doing Social Justice in Historic Times



In all the political turmoil of these past several weeks and months, some of you may be wondering if there are opportunities to take action through CKS, your Jewish community. Well, I'd like to give you a little update.

Over the past several months, large groups of CKS-ers have been meeting, and together we have formed four teams on issues where we believe, as a Jewish community, we can make a difference: 1) An Interfaith Team seeking more formal alliances with neighboring churches, mosques, and other places of worship; 2) An Immigrants & Refugees Team focusing on education and advocacy work; 3) A Human Rights Immediate Response Team responsible for getting the word out about the latest developments on human/civil rights abuses or other threats to our social safety net, as well as directing us to actions such as calling our local Representatives or attending a rally; and 4) A Recycling & Environmental Team to find ways to make our building more eco-friendly, as well as possibly become involved in local or national environmental issues.

So, how can you get involved? CKS has formed a new opt-in social action group (The CKS SAG). You can get on our email list by contacting me (rabbi@ksnj.org) or Amy Rosenthal (arosenenthal@ksnj.org) and receive notices and updates. You can also become a member of our Facebook group, the "CKS Social Action Group", open to all CKS members upon request. There, you may feel free to discuss various issues with your fellow congregants and post your own thoughts or findings.

What has the CKS SAG done so far? 1) Over 50 of us attended the Women's March on Washington in January. 2) We sent cards of support and donations to the Glacier Jewish Community in Whitefish, Montana, a community being threatened by local white supremacists. 3) We held a Social Action Shabbat on Martin Luther King Day weekend with special readings and songs. 4) We joined the HIAS (Jewish Refugee agency) Welcome Campaign. And now, we are busily preparing our next steps – and we hope more of you will join us!

Personally, I have signed on to several rabbinic letters, protesting the new Administration's controversial cabinet picks, as well as letters against the Administration's immigration ban. This includes a letter co-written with local area rabbis that will be published, as well as delivered in a clergy meeting to Representative Leonard Lance. (The full text of this letter is in this newsletter.) I also attended a demonstration in New York City against this unjust ban with hundreds of my fellow rabbis and cantors.

I believe we are living in historic times – times that require actions that we might not have taken in the past. And I have been deeply moved by the energy and passion of members of CKS mobilizing to do this sacred work. As a rabbi and a Jew, I believe it is my moral obligation to speak out whenever human rights are abrogated. *Kal v'chomer*/All the more so, now. As Jews, we know firsthand the plight of the refugee, we know discrimination, we know what it means to have our very lives threatened – and taken. As I said these past High Holidays, the job of a pastor is not only to comfort the afflicted, but also, sometimes, to afflict the comfortable. So, as I have in the past, I intend to speak up for refugees and immigrants, for women's access to reproductive healthcare, for members of the African-American, Latino, and LGBTQ communities fighting discrimination, for environmental protection for our nation and our world... and I intend to continue speaking up until, in the words of the prophet, Amos, "justice rolls down like the waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

B'tikvah/In hope, Rabbi Susan

Now in its 23rd 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

The CKS Gift Shop  
is open each Sunday  
11 am - 12 noon  
when Religious school is in session or by special request.

Questions?  
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113  
or Iris Rubinstein [irubinstein@gmail.com](mailto:irubinstein@gmail.com)  
or the synagogue office for more information

**Tree of Life**

Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simcha!*  
Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.

Contact Shelley Nord  
908-874-8464



Get your costume, grogger, and masks ready, and plan to join us for a wild Purim celebration at the synagogue on Sunday morning, March 12th beginning at 10:00. The celebration of Purim, one of the most joyous and fun-filled holidays of our Jewish year, will include a costume parade with prizes for the best child and adult costumes. As part of the Purim activities there will be original Purim shpiels with appearances by our Rabbi and members of our community and an extra special presentation by our very own "not yet ready for prime-time" Kehiloft players.

The Megillah which is read on Purim tells the story of the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the destruction planned against them by Haman, vizier of King Ahasuerus. This feat was accomplished by the monarch's Jewish wife, Esther, and her cousin, Mordechai. There is no merrier occasion in the Jewish year than Purim. Tradition dictates that on Purim we must observe "Shalach Manot," the sending of gifts to friends and to the poor as a token of deliverance and to add to the joy of everyone at this festive time. Tradition also says that we should be so intoxicated with merriment at this season that we fail to distinguish between the cursing of Haman and the blessing of Mordechai..... **or between what is real and what is spoof.** 😊



**ATTENTION PARENTS OF K-3**

If you have a child that is between the ages of 4 and 8 years old who is not yet registered in our Religious School, consider joining our religious school program. It offers activities that develops a child's Jewish identity and stimulates their Jewish involvement through music, art, cooking and storytelling.

You are welcome to visit us during our **OPEN HOUSE on Sunday, March 19** and check out our school, visit our classrooms, meet our teachers and enjoy a special music and dance program with *Fresh Arts Theater*.

We make the most of the hours that your child is with us. The children participate in extensive enrichment programs throughout the year as they get acquainted and become part of our religious school life. Many exciting events are already planned for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

Please call the school office (908-359-0420 x2) or email me (principal@ksnj.org) if you would like an application to enroll your child in our school.

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS AND SPECIAL UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Saturday, March 4:** Shabbat Mishpachah, 9:30am
- Sunday, March 5:** SPECIAL PROGRAM: Comic Book writer and illustrator, DOV SMILEY visits. Adult education program
- Sunday, March 12:** Regular school session; Purim shpiel and celebration (10am-12pm)
- Sunday, March 19:** OPEN HOUSE; Special program with Tova Halpern and Fresh Arts Theater. Tefillah with the Rabbi
- Sunday March 26:** COOKING
- Sunday, April 2:** Music; Passover activities; Adult Education



**CKS FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT PART TWO**

**Save the Date: Saturday, May 20**  
**6:30 – 9:00**

**Havdalah before the movie**  
**Free snacks!**  
**Price: "Pay what you want"**

Thanks to all who attended  
*Inside, Out* in January!  
**We're looking forward to seeing you again in May!**

## Kehiloft, the next step in your Jewish journey



Hello everyone!

This month Kehiloft has been very busy. We held our first movie night here at CKS, which is our annual project this year. We showed the movie Inside Out which everyone loved. We also provided snacks for everyone to enjoy and a Havdallah service beforehand. This event was a great success and I look forward to seeing you all again at our second movie night this year.

This past week we began to work on our annual Purim spiel. Every year we put a lot of work into writing a new script and incorporating a fun theme into an old story and I can't wait for everyone to see it this year! We have lots of fun rehearsing and we hope you'll have just as much fun watching.

Kehiloft also met with the Rabbi this month and held a discussion about gun violence in America. We chose to continue speaking about this important topic and I look forward to having that conversation with the group again next month and being able to expand on certain aspects we didn't cover last time.

And finally, in this busy but exciting month, Kehiloft held an orientation for the 7th grade class in the religious school. The purpose of this is so the new Kehilofters who will be joining us next year will begin to get to know some of us. Then, hopefully when they join, they can feel more comfortable in a new environment. We spoke about what we do at Kehiloft and then played games to get to know each other. We will also be having another session with the seventh grade later this year to give them a sense of what a Kehiloft meeting is really like. I hope they will enjoy what we do and want to join our community next year!

Best wishes to you all.

Tess Kowalski

### Robert M. Fass

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### MARCH

**Sunday, March 5** - 11:00 - 12:00 (approximately)  
Kehiloft students invited to attend CKS event- comic book author talk

**Wednesday, March 8** - Purim spiel rehearsal #3

**Sunday, March 12** - 10:00 - 11:00. Purim spiel performance

**Sunday, March 12**- 11:00 - 12:00. Purim games led by Kehiloft

**Wednesday, March 22** - Rabbi Susan leads discussion #5. *Tentative*

### APRIL

**Sunday, April 2** - 12:00 - 4:00 TS Walk

**Friday, April 7** - Kehiloft leads Shabbat service #3. Ice-cream social!

**Passover break April 10-16**

**Wednesday, April, 19** - *tentative new session*

**Sunday April 30** - 9:10 - 10:30 - 7th grade students (only) Kehiloft orientation

Student board meetings from 5:30 - 6:00 before each Wednesday session.

**SAVE THE DATE** FOR NEXT CKS FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT with Havdalah service

**Saturday, May 20 from 6:30 - 9:00. Movie TBA.**

Shalom,

Karen Fridkis, Principal of Kehiloft



Kehiloft students led Havdallah on Family Movie Night

## Adult Education

### The Sabbath: Why We Need it Now More Than Ever

This multi-session class is a book discussion of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's masterpiece, "The Sabbath." For centuries, the Sabbath has been the centerpiece of Jewish life. As we read and discuss sections of the book together we are learning about the history and development of this remarkable concept. We are examining the value of rest and the sacredness of time in our lives. The first session held on January 11 featured both an introduction to the book's key concepts and an introduction to life and works of Abraham Joshua Heschel. Other dates for this series are 3/15/17, 4/5/17 (Wednesdays at 7:00 pm). In our final session, we will incorporate our new perspectives into a Sabbath experience on Saturday, May 13, 2017 at 9:30 am. Suggested donation \$5.00 per session for non-members. All are encouraged to attend, even if you were unable to attend the first session.

#### Leading Services:

##### From Lighting Candles to Adon Olam

This four-session is designed to prepare participants to become service leaders at CKS – but is open to anyone who just wants to understand Shabbat services and prayer more deeply.

##### Session 3: Leading a Torah Discussion

Friday, March 17, 2017, 6:00 pm dinner; 7:30 services

##### Session 4: Putting it All Together

Friday, April 28, 2017, 6:00 pm dinner; 7:30 services

For further details on these or other adult education sessions, check our website, [www.ksnj.org](http://www.ksnj.org).

### Meditation and Chanting

Led By: Rabbi Susan Falk

March 7, April 4

Time: 7:15 pm

Is "mindfulness" Jewish? Is there such a thing as "Jewish meditation"? Absolutely! Through sitting, walking, and chant, learn how to practice mindfulness meditation and discover Judaism's rich history with this ancient practice.

### Wrestling with God: What Do Jews Believe?

From our Biblical forebears to the Medieval philosophers to modern-day Jewish feminists, Jews have been struggling to understand God's nature and how that understanding can provide meaning in our lives. In this class, we will learn about Jewish

perspectives on God through history. We will discuss questions including: What is God? Is God all-knowing or all-powerful? Does God hear our prayers? If I don't believe in God, am I still Jewish?

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 9:15 am

### Progressive Dinner 2/11/17



## RESPONSE TO THE VISA AND REFUGEE EXECUTIVE ORDER

Rabbi Susan Falk along with other rabbis and cantors from Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties co-wrote and signed a special statement in reaction to the recent Executive Order still being litigated on refugees from predominantly Muslim countries. Our congregation's name with the board's approval will also be listed along with Rabbi Susan's as a sign of support for this statement, which is printed below in full. It also serves as a point of discussion for a special meeting with Representative Leonard Lance and local clergy scheduled to take place after this newsletter goes to press. The statement reads as follows:

A Rabbinic Response to the Executive Order on Visas and Refugees  
"Love the stranger, for you were strangers ..." Deuteronomy 10:19

At its core, America has always been a refuge and a safe haven for the oppressed. Our forebears came to this land seeking freedom, opportunity and dignity which they were denied elsewhere in the world. The vast majority of us owe our wellbeing to the willingness of this country to receive us in our time of need. This has been more than a practice or a policy, it has been central to the ethos of this nation. Nothing symbolizes this more powerfully than the Statue of Liberty which stands in New York Harbor and declares to the world these words of the Jewish poet Emma Lazarus:

"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Only a few times in our history has our country betrayed this ethos by closing our hearts and our doors to those who sought asylum. As Jews we remember one of them with great pain because it was our people who were denied entry. Beginning with the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1924, strict immigration quotas were imposed, which were later used to bar admission to Jews who were escaping the rise of Nazism in Germany.

One of the most shameful episodes of that time was the story of the St. Louis, a ship that set sail from Hamburg, Germany on May 13, 1939 with 937 passengers, most of whom were Jewish refugees from Germany. Forbidden entry into Cuba, desperate diplomatic efforts were made to secure shelter for them in the US, to no avail. The ship returned to Europe, and 254 of its passengers ultimately perished in the Holocaust.

We must not forget our history. We must say, "Never again!" Never again should people be singled out for discrimination based upon their religion, their race, their gender, their ethnicity or their national origin. Such policies do not make America safer. They make us callous and cruel. They betray our American values. And they sow distrust and disrespect of our nation in the world.

As Americans we should take pride in the fact that our refugee resettlement policy has been generous and compassionate with significant and appropriate precautionary measures to ensure that those who receive shelter in this land will not pose a threat or a danger to our security. This is a responsibility that our government has taken seriously and has administered effectively, and we see no reason why this should change now.

As Jewish communal leaders we do not engage in electoral or partisan politics. We raise our voices in the prophetic spirit of moral conviction, grounded in the belief that we are all children of the one God who gave us life and liberty, and in whose image we are all made. In this spirit we call upon our government to rescind the Executive Order closing our borders to legitimate refugees and asylum seekers. Instead, let us continue our long and generous tradition of extending to others the promise of hope, freedom and opportunity with which this great nation has blessed all of us.



Progressive Dinner 2/11/17

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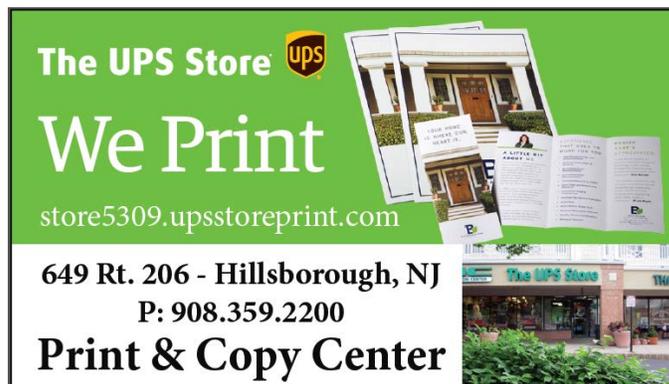
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Deadline for next newsletter:

**March 15<sup>th</sup>**

**March 2017**

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**Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

**Every effort will be made to publish contributed items, but due to space restrictions, placement and format are at the discretion of the editor.**

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