

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **September 2017** Elul 5776 — Tishrei 5778

Bulletin from the Board - Steve Weinstein

New Year, New Opportunities, New Challenges



And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. (Genesis 1:1)

So many days we wake up and follow our routines – of work, of family, maybe of exercise – without stopping to pause at the wonder of it all and the opportunity that we have to make a difference each and every day. A difference in the lives of others

and in our own lives.

With another year ending, 5777 in fact, I would like us all to just take a few moments sometime here in September and think about how much of an impact you have made in other people's lives. And not just the routines of being a mother or father, son or daughter, spouse or significant other, friend or confidant, but to imagine what life would be like for these people if you were not a part of their lives. And to truly cherish the opportunity we have to share and engage and live the wiggly, rollercoaster joyride of life together.

I am sure you are wondering if I will be recommending watching "It's A Wonderful Life" next. Well, no, although I do love Jimmy Stewart and his movies. Instead, I want us to think about having fun and knowing that everything we do makes an impact on others. So the next time we wonder "isn't there somebody better to do that" or "I don't know enough" or "they don't need me", instead I urge you to think "how could I make this fun" and "how can I help".

Almost 60 days ago, I had the terrific honor of back-filling Bob Neusner as President of CKS – a "job" I am sure most of you look at and say you would never want! Thank God Steve did it so I do not have to! And truly for a long time I felt the same way ☺. But even though replacing Bob requires very big shoes as he did such a great job, I knew it was my time to step up after 10 years on the Board and to "go make some light, have fun and try my best to help CKS grow, advance our mission and continue being a place we all love and cherish." So together with a great Board, Rabbi, and community, we will hopefully make a positive impact on CKS and in all of our lives.

As a small community of about 100 families, it will only happen if each of us imparts our fun and gets or remains involved in some way or ways. Think about what you like to do. Please let me or another Board member know what that is. We are creating Board liaisons to many of our committees and key groups within CKS. We want to hear your opinions. We want to try new things. We want everyone to feel that CKS is a place of joy, of learning, of camaraderie and of community. So many of you already do so much for CKS and I am so grateful to you as we have accomplished so much. If you see an opportunity no matter how crazy it may sound, let us know. If you want to try something new, let us know. There is so much I have to learn and I hope that with your help and willingness to share, to try new things, to bring light and to make an impact, you will all make me a better person and we will all continue to make CKS a place we are proud to call ours.

Toda Raba and Shana Tovah,

Steve Weinstein, President

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In gratitude to Bob Neusner & Helen Pu for their donation to Kehiloft
- ♥Jim Ohls
For the Jill Sobule concert
- ♥George Cohen & Lesley Germaine
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Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

- ♥Karen & Larry Fridkis
In honor of Rabbi Susan for her leadership at CKS

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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.

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EXCITING NEW INTERFAITH EVENT:

CULTURE, CUISINE AND CONVERSATION

The CKS Social Action Group's Interfaith Team is working on an interfaith event that CKS will host on Sunday, October 8th from 1:00 to 4:00PM. Led by Emily Bengels, members of the team and Rabbi Susan are reaching out to different faith-based communities to join us for an afternoon of sharing food and ideas – with the focus on learning and making new connections. Following an official welcome, representatives from each congregation or group will share something most people might not know about their faith. Attendees will then be divided into small discussion groups with an adult "show and tell" about an item or poem of significance to their particular faith, to kick off the conversations. Of course, we'll have time for noshing (in the Sukkah if the weather holds!) and we will close with song and some final words of inspiration. If you have friends or colleagues of other faiths who might be interested, please have them contact Emily Bengels directly at embengels@gmail.com. The beautiful flyer designed by Emily Bengels for the event has all of the information (See page 6). We are looking forward to seeing you there next month. Registration is first come, first served.

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



SEPTEMBER 21

Rosh Hashanah (New Year)
Erev Rosh Hashanah 7 PM
Rosh Hashanah Service 9:30 AM
Rosh Hashanah Tot Service 9:30 AM
Rosh Hashanah Children's Service 10:30 AM
Tashlich at Griggstown Causeway 4:15 PM

SEPTEMBER 22

Rosh Hashana II (New Year day 2) 9:30 AM
Rosh Hashanah Non-Traditional Service 9:30 AM
No Shabbat Service

SEPTEMBER 29

Kol Nidrei Service 6 PM

SEPTEMBER 30

Yom Kippur
Yom Kippur Tot Service 9:30 AM
Yom Kippur Service 9:30 AM
Yom Kippur Children's Service 10:30 AM
Yizkor Service 1 PM
Avodah Service 5:15 PM
Neilah Service 6:30 PM
Break Fast 7:35 PM

Tipping the Cosmic Scales Through Teshuvah: A New Year's Message from the Rabbi



The great Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz wrote: "Teshuva is not just a psychological phenomenon, a storm within a human teacup. It is a process that can effect real change in the world, in all the worlds."

Steinsaltz's words really speak to me this year as we approach the High

Holidays, the season of *Teshuvah*, of Atonement. I write this message just a few days after the terrible and deadly violence, racism, and anti-Semitism we all saw on display in Charlottesville, Virginia. After several years now of ever-worsening rancor in our country, I am deeply troubled and saddened – and naturally focused on our collective *Teshuvah* as a nation. How will we ever get beyond the fear and hatred?

Judaism teaches us to pray in community, and we confess each Yom Kippur as a *community*. Yet, I wonder, are our traditional prayers adequate to the task this year? Are the general confessions of the *Ashamnu* prayer – the one where we all stand together, fists to our hearts and declare: "we have defamed, we have harmed others, we have wrought injustice, we have covered up the truth" – are these confessions sufficient? Or do we need to be more specific? Who have we defamed, who have we harmed, when did we perpetrate injustice and against whom? How have we covered up the truth? And who has been harmed as a consequence?

The storm within the human teacup is very real when we take it seriously. But is it a "process that can effect real change in the world" as Steinsaltz claims? It turns out that Jewish tradition is replete with teachings asserting that our own individual repentance brings us closer to the redemption of the world, tipping somehow, the cosmic scales in favor of the *olam haba*, "the World" or "Time-to-Come" of true justice, mercy, and peace. Perhaps the most succinct of these teachings comes from Moses Maimonides, that veritable giant of a scholar from the 12th century, when he said:

"Every person should see him (or her) self as a scale with an equal balance of good and evil. When s/he does one good deed, the scale is tipped toward the good – and both the person and the world are saved. When s/he does one evil deed, the scale is tipped toward the bad – and both the person and the world are destroyed."

This is not an unfamiliar concept to us moderns who repeat such aphorisms as "what goes round comes around" or "whatever you put out into the universe will come back to you". But save or destroy the world? A heavy burden to be carried by any one

person to be sure.... But what if we all carried it together?

Teshuvah is committing to seek forgiveness for ourselves, first from others, and then from God. *Teshuvah* is also committing to extend to those around us a spirit of empathy and hope, compassion and understanding, and to actively seek *tikkun*, the repair of our broken world.

It's already Elul and Tishrei, the month of the High Holidays, is coming up fast. Take this time now to make *teshuvah* a part of your daily life. This year, Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on September 20th. Come and be a part of it. And bring your friends and relatives. Our door is always open.

B'Shalom uvracha/With blessings for peace in the New Year,

Rabbi Susan

Kindercapers

Now in its 24th 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 igrubinstein@gmail.com

or the synagogue office for more information



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Back To School Letter to Parents

Welcome to **5778**, and a new and exciting religious school year. As you get your children ready for the new school year, think what you as parents can do to help facilitate the process and make them more successful.

You are our VIP's--Very Important Partners. You are the link to our children. For successful education, the partnership must be strong and cohesive. We, as parents and teachers, create models that are emulated by our children. We not only teach, we do.



Parents, we can educate our children and teach them about Shabbat, about the Jewish holidays, about Jewish home observances and about synagogue services. It is only when these aspects of Jewish life are lived in the family context that our teaching lights up the eyes of our children.

The success of our efforts requires a partnership between the synagogue and the home. Please take an active interest in religious school and synagogue projects—not just those in which your own child is involved. Join us at holiday celebrations and special programs. We hold a Shabbat Minyanaire- Family Shabbat service, once a month, Tot Shabbat services, PACT (Parent and Child Together) programs, special enrichment activities and much more.

Prepare your child for the opening of Religious School. Impress upon your child the importance of learning and the influence it will have in making them a better, more knowledgeable Jew.

Take an interest in the materials and notices that are emailed to you or sent home during the year. Discuss regularly the work of the class and homework that your child might have. Many of our books, special activities, or take home projects afford you and your child an opportunity to work and learn together.

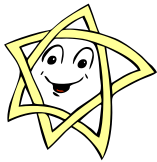
Have conversations about current events at mealtimes. Since we discuss current events at school, your child will be more comfortable and better able to participate in discussions relating Judaism to what is happening in the world.

Encourage your child to participate with you in Jewish ceremonies and holiday celebrations, e.g. saying "Kiddush," lighting Shabbat or festival candles, eating in the Sukkah.

Let us know of any particular talents or interest that you would be willing to share with our students. Please don't be modest! Your participation would be most appreciated and might further stimulate your child's interest.

Together we will fulfill the mitzvah of "teach them diligently to your children" and provide the best possible Jewish education. Thank you for you for making this commitment.

**I wish you all a year that is sweet, rich in learning, and filled with good health, happiness and peace!
From my family to all of you, best wishes for a *Shanah Tovah!***



**PARENT/STUDENT ORIENTATION DAY
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
9:00am - 12:00pm**

All are invited, especially new families, to come together for an orientation to our Nesiyot-Religious School program with Rabbi, Religious School chairperson and myself. Bring your children to class at 9:00am and then come to the Sanctuary for a brief orientation, learn about our school program and Shabbat Minyanaire program, parent volunteer opportunities and exciting upcoming events. From 10am-11:30am, you will have scheduled time to meet the teachers and become acquainted with the curriculum, books and special class activities.

I look forward to seeing you then!

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Sunday, September 10: | Parent Orientation & Reception day and first day of school for grades K-7, 9:00AM
Welcome Back BBQ (12pm) |
| Sunday, September 17: | Regular day of school, 9:00am - 12:00pm (5th grade siddur cover project); COOKING |
| Sunday, September 24: | Regular school session, PACT K-2: <i>Why Does it Always Rain on Sukkot?</i> |
| Sunday, October 1: | Sukkot craft with Kehiloft (11:15-12); Sukkah building at noon |
| Friday, October 6: | Shabbat Mishpachah, 7pm; 5th grade prayer book presentation;
Welcome New Students Ceremony |
| Sunday, October 8: | Regular school session; Sukkah visitation; TEFILLAH with the Rabbi (9:15) |
| Sunday, October 15: | PACT-3: <i>The Crown of a Good Name</i> ; RUMMAGE SALE |
| Sunday, October 22: | COOKING ; Rummage Sale |
| Sunday, October 29: | Regular school session; Special Program: <u>TORAH FACTORY</u> with guest presenter, Rabbi Strasberg (9:30am-10:30am) (parents are welcome to join us) |

Kehiloft, the next step in your Jewish journey



As summer winds down, Kehiloft is gearing up for the 2017-18 school year. It's sad to see summer fade into the distance, but exciting to look ahead to the new year at Kehiloft.

Kehiloft has a full complement of activities to look forward to. Fall will bring us to the start of Kehiloft with our annual car wash, setting up the loft for the High Holy Days, erecting and decorating the succah, and being honored with an aliyah on Yom Kippur. Later in the autumn Rabbi Susan will be leading her first discussion, the Empty Nesters will arrive to share their life stories with you, and you'll lead your first Shabbat service of the year. You'll also be leading a craft project for Sukkot in Religious School, helping at the annual CKS rummage sale, and deciding on your annual project.

Mark your calendar now with these dates for the beginning of the year. August 31 – the Kehiloft student board will meet for dinner with me to make plans for the year. September 13 – Kehiloft's first session in which you will welcome the new students and be introduced to the new student board. September 17 – our annual car wash fundraiser held during Religious School followed by setting up the loft for the High Holy Days. September 23 – A Rosh Hashanah celebration at Stonebridge Continuing Care Facility. September 30 - Yom Kippur aliyah.

This winter you can look forward to the return of Family Movie Night, and writing, rehearsing, and performing the Purim spiel. What will this year's theme be? Who knows? You'll also be planning the Purim games/carnival for the younger students. You'll be in charge of the entire Purim games celebration during Religious School again this year. In March Rabbi Susan will return for another discussion. You'll lead two more Shabbat services and hold an Introduction to Kehiloft Workshop for the 7th graders and their parents.

After Pesach Kehilofters will continue the year with a students-only session with the 7th graders, attend a Yom Hashoah event, and have two more discussions with Rabbi Susan. You'll also create the games and crafts for the annual Lag B'Omer Field Day and run the festival. You'll lead a bridge ceremony for the 7th grade students at their closing ceremony and if you've been working in the Religious School, you will be acknowledged for your contributions to the school at the siyyum. The end of the year takes you into Princeton for a group dinner. Your final Shabbat service doubles as the senior's graduation ceremony and a time to reflect on another fabulous year in Kehiloft. A trip into New York City is scheduled for June. A knish or bialy anyone?

Wow, what a year to look forward to! I didn't even add in the pizza (or falafel) dinners that start each

session or your annual project. What will it be this year? Last year you hosted two Family Movie Nights for your annual project. Prior to that you created the Lag B'Omer Field Day, built the gaga court, started a composting program for CKS, designed Kehiloft sweatshirts, hosted Talent Shows, and much more!

If you haven't done so already, register for Kehiloft so you too can come and experience all of these fabulous events we have scheduled for the new year. I look forward to seeing you in Kehiloft!

Shalom,
Karen Fridkis, Principal of Kehiloft

AUGUST

Thursday, August 31 - Student Board dinner

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, Sept 13 - First Kehiloft session!

Sunday, Sept 17 - 9:00 - 12:00 Car wash fundraiser

Sunday, Sept 17 - 12:00 - 1:30 Set up for High Holy Days

Saturday, Sept 23 - 7:30 - 9:00 Rosh Hashanah celebration at Stonebridge

Saturday, Sept 30 - Yom Kippur aliyah

OCTOBER

Sunday, Oct 1 - 10:30-12:00 Sukkot craft in Religious School

Sunday, Oct 1 - 12:00 - 2:30 - Erect succah and reconstruct loft

Tuesday, Oct 11 - 6:30 - 8:30 Simchah Torah. CKS event

Wednesday, Oct 18 - Rabbi Susan leads discussion #1

Sunday, Oct 22 - 9:00 - 2:00 Help at CKS rummage sale

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SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Kehiloft Student Board Dinner Teacher's Meeting	7 Religioius School Madrahim meeting	8 Shabbat service	9
10 Cleanup day Religious School Welcome Back BBQ	11 Kindercapers First Day of School Mah Jongg	12	13 Kehiloft	14 Board Meeting	15 Shabbat service	16
17 High Holiday Prep Kehiloft Car Wash Fundraiser Kehiloft Religious School	18 Mah Jongg	19	20 Erev Rosh Hashanah Service	21 Rosh Hashana (New Year) Rosh Hashanah Service Rosh Hashanah Tot Service Rosh Hashanah Children's Service Tashlich at Griggstown Causeway	22 Rosh Hashana II (New Year day 2) Rosh Hashanah Non-Traditional Service No Shabbat Service	23 Kehiloft High Holidays at Stonebridge
24 Religious School	25 Mah Jongg	26	27 Kindercapers Back to School Night Ritual Committee	28	29 Kol Nidrei Service	30 Yom Kippur Yom Kippur Tot Service Yom Kippur Service Yom Kippur Children's Service Yizkor Service Avodah Service Neilah Service Break Fast

Our Camp JRF kids!

L to R: Miles Birnbaum, Caleb Birnbaum, Josh Goldhammer, Julia Fraticelli, Paige Kowalski, Joseph Neusner



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

September 2017

Deadline for next newsletter:

September 15th

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