



Congregation  
**Kehilat NEWS**  
Shalom

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **February 2019** Shevat–Adar I 5779

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**CKS ADULT B'NAI MITZVAH CEREMONY PLANNED**

BY HILARY CRIST

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, eight adult female members of CKS will become Bat Mitzvah: Rachael Apanovitch, Jill Fraticelli, Hinda Greenberg, Mary Horowitz, Leslie Kowalski, Ramona Mora, Susan Waskow, and myself, Hilary Crist.

Back in October 2017, thanks to Jill Fraticelli's impetus, Rabbi Susan Falk organized a group of interested women, with the help of Susan Waskow, and we started with the basics. We received a reading list of books about the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism, about our holidays, Jewish prayer and, of course, we needed to brush up on our Hebrew. For some, that meant learning Hebrew from scratch; for others, it meant reviewing what we knew and perfecting our skills. Some of us started to learn trope. Lively discussions about our reading assignments followed.

Rabbi Jake took up the helm this past fall. He introduced us to new readings, articles, and podcasts to enliven our learning experience.

As the date of our big day approaches, we thought you'd like to hear how we happened to embark on this journey. For the person who really started it all, Jill Fraticelli, watching her two children go through the process was an inspiration. She notes, "It was great when so many people verbalized an interest. Participating in a group took a lot of the pressure off." Ramona Mora, who was raised in an interfaith household (Jewish and Roman Catholic) was inspired by the meetings she and her son, Jared, had with Rabbi Susan. "The more we learned the more we decided we wanted to take the class and to be called to the Torah because Judaism is what is in our hearts. Having the ceremony is more meaningful to us now, being older than if we did it because we 'had to' when we were young." Jared, who started with our class, will be having his own separate Bar Mitzvah at age 16 on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Susan Waskow is the only member of the group who was Bat Mitzvah as a young woman, but she wasn't allowed to read from the Torah. "I wanted to be supportive of the people who had the courage to learn something new and step outside their comfort zone as adults. It is a great group, and I enjoy studying with everyone." Mary Horowitz, who formally converted to Judaism in 1979, wanted to be more comfortable in services and learn Hebrew. She says, "A surprise and a welcome pleasure has been the way this has become a pathway into participation in all facets of this congregation." Rachael Apanovitch, who has only been a member of CKS for a year, decided to join: "To integrate my informal study in Judaism with formal study, learn more about the traditional Bat Mitzvah process and experience it all with an inclusive group of mature, like-minded women." Hinda Greenberg hopes to re-connect with her Jewish heritage. "My wish for the b'nai mitzvah process and the actual day itself is to confirm my Jewish identity and membership in the Jewish community." Leslie Kowalski, whose brother was Bar Mitzvah, was discouraged by her parents from studying Hebrew so she ended up attending synagogue with an orthodox family in her neighborhood. "I satisfied my need for Judaism by becoming very active in B'nai Brith, but I always wanted to become a Bat Mitzvah."

For yours truly, I have been thinking about becoming Bat Mitzvah since Rabbi Falk came to our synagogue 11 years ago, but the timing was never right to pursue it. As my acting life started winding down, I decided to make the commitment when I heard about the group through an email from Susan Waskow. I wanted to learn more about Reconstructionism and I also was intrigued by the opportunity to learn Hebrew and chant trope.

For all of us, it's been a pleasure to have a special bond with the members of the group. Some of us knew each other from before, others are making brand new friends, and we all are growing closer as we learn Hebrew and discuss our readings together. And it's an added bonus to spend extra time with Rabbi Jake and be the beneficiaries of his learning, insight, and perspective. Rabbi Jake notes, "It has been wonderful to get to work with a group of dedicated, curious, passionate adult learners. These women have stepped forward, choosing to take ownership—to claim their place in our Jewish tradition—and it has been an honor to be present with them on their journey." We hope members of CKS will join us on our special day: June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 9:30AM in the sanctuary. A luncheon celebration will follow the service.

## CKS DONATIONS

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

### General

- ♥ Marc & Harlene Rosenberg  
In memory of Eileen Schreiberman  
Wishing Debbie Lampf a speedy recovery
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## Havdalah, Camp Havaya Style!

Join hands in a spiral while the havdalah candle is lit in the center. Pass around the spices and grape juice or wine, while you sing inspirational songs in Hebrew and English. This is always a beautiful way to end Shabbat.



Rabbi Jake will lead a short Mincha (evening) service on February 9 at 4:30 pm, followed by an Israeli-style dinner. The celebration will end at 6:30pm with a Camp Havaya-style Havdalah service. All are welcome!

Michael and I would like to thank everyone who has been so helpful since my surgery. So many of you have provided us with delicious meals and/or visits and calls that it has made my convalescence from back surgery much less difficult than it could have been. Since we haven't cooked for ourselves these past few weeks, we would like to acknowledge all your help by making a donation to the local food bank in order to help others in their time of need. Once again, many thanks.

*Debbie and Michael*

## Shabbat Mishpacha on a Saturday Morning!

On Saturday morning, January 5, 2019, services at CKS began at 9:30. There were about 10 families with students in Nesiyyot in attendance, along with empty-nester members and congregants of all ages in between.

Rabbi Jake led us in morning blessings—*Birhot Hashahar*, in which we praise God for such things as "Making the blind to see" and "Clothing the naked," etc. He then asked us to provide our own blessings and we came up with things like: "For giving us Shabbat services on a Saturday;" "Helping me pass a test this week;" "Letting my friends come over;" and "Making the beautiful weather." We were also thankful for our Torah readers, Rabbi Jake and Scott Strauss, and for the D'var Torah which was a discussion about Moses and the plagues in Egypt. (We were also grateful for NOT having plagues of our own.)

A potluck brunch was served after the service, and as you know, food supplied by CKS members is always fantastic. We dined on blintzes, cakes, egg dishes and of course, bagels. A wonderful way to share both Shabbat AND a meal with fellow CKS congregants.

*-Iris Rubinstein*



As I sat down to write this to you, I didn't want to be repetitive, so I looked back to see past newsletter writings. I chuckled when I saw that I wrote the February newsletter articles in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Perhaps I have some subconscious affinity to choose February each time? I do know that I

like the feeling of fresh beginnings, and so perhaps that moves me to write to you early each new year, and motivated me to make a long-overdue weekend visit to my father and grandmother in Florida.

I hadn't seen my father and grandmother in some time. Of course I had to update them about my family, friends, and work. But, knowing their lives are quite different than mine, I really was determined to do more listening than talking, and I was fascinated to gain some new insights into family history that I didn't know about. And, at 96 years and going strong, I was happy to find my grandmother willing to share some valuable perspective.

She finds our world and events to be both as exciting and challenging as I do, but she was resolute that membership in her own community is a critical element that both supports her in difficult times, and joins with her to celebrate the joyful times. She felt those with the gift of a caring community were often more resilient, and those without were often struggling to weather life's storms. I told her a little about how much we enjoy being a part of the CKS community, and in the telling, was reminded of how meaningful it is to have that sense of belonging and friendship.

At CKS, we each choose to take part in our community in different ways. Some of us join the book club or the knitting and crafter's group, while others pursue our adult ed workshops or social action work. But whichever outlet you prefer, the important thing is choosing to be a part of our community so that we can all enjoy its benefits. One event that brings many of us together is the CKS Annual Spring Event, and we hope you'll choose to save the date for Saturday, May 11 at 7:30pm! Invitations will be sent in March. Our volunteers are gearing up to offer a fun and easy way for adult members of our community to meet, socialize, eat, drink, and of course help support CKS! And, if you would like to join our volunteer group, we would love to have your ideas and energy, so please email [bill@ries.org](mailto:bill@ries.org) to chat!

*Bill Ries*, Financial Secretary

Tu B'Shevav, the new year for trees in the Jewish calendar, was observed at CKS on Friday night, January 18. Seder, a Greek word meaning order, is a word traditionally associated with the Passover ritual observance. For many in attendance this event was their first group opportunity to observe the lesser known ritual seder for trees. The event was led by Rabbi Jacob Adler with over 40 congregants and guests in attendance. It featured drinking wine and grape juice and eating of different types of food from trees including walnuts, almonds, olives, bananas and apples. The event also featured a potluck dinner. It was followed by a wonderful Shabbat service led by our own Kehiloft teens. The evening concluded with a Friday night oneg. Thank you to Rabbi Jake, the ritual committee, and all who attended.



TU B'SHEVAT SEDER

**kindercapers**

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## MEZUZAH MAGIC DOES A MEZUZAH BRING YOU LUCK?

The popular view on mezuzot (plural for mezuzah) is that it wards off ill-fortune. Does that mean that hanging a mezuzah on your doorpost will bring you good luck?

Placing a mezuzah on the doorpost of your house is stated in the Bible and is important to us as Jews. Inscribed in the mezuzah are the words of the Shema, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One." ([Deuteronomy 6:9](#)).

On the reverse side of the mezuzah scroll is the word: **Shaddai**, which is one of the names used for G-d. Since **Shaddai** begins with the letter shin , mezuzah cases are often decorated with that letter. And because of this lettering, some people naturally believe that the mezuzah is a magical charm. Not only in medieval cultures but even in our day some would attribute good luck to the mezuzah. However, the serious purpose of the mezuzah is to indicate that this is a Jewish household and is a reminder of our love and commitment and willingness to live by a special set of rules, rituals, and beliefs.

Just recently, our students had the opportunity to learn the laws and customs pertaining to the mezuzah scroll, its cover and placement. Each child had the opportunity to create a copper mezuzah cover with their own original design to take home. Now, I consider that lucky!

### *Blessing for Affixing a Mezuzah*

The ritual for affixing a mezuzah is very brief and very simple, especially so considering its enduring nature. Mezuzah in one hand, one recites this blessing.

בְּרֹךְ אֱתָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha'olam me-lekh elohei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-ruk

*"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,"*

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,

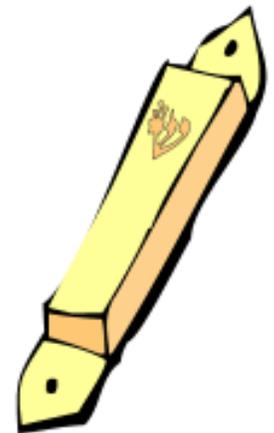
be-mits-votav kid-de-sha-nu a-she

*"who sanctified us with His commandments"*

וְצִוָּנוּ עַל לְקַבֵּעַ מְזוּזָה.

me-zuzah lik-bo'a 'al vetsi-va-nu

*"and commanded us to attach a mezuzah."*



After reciting the blessing, all those standing about answer "Amen." Immediately the mezuzah is nailed or glued to the right doorpost. That's it — a 30-second ritual that lasts the lifetime of tenure in that place....

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS

Friday, February 1  
Sunday, February 3:  
Sunday February 10:  
Sunday, February 17  
Sunday, February 24:

Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm with Shabbat Dinner, 6:00pm  
PACT 5/6: *Torah, Torah, Torah*  
Cooking; Tefillah with the Rabbi  
NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL, *President's weekend*  
Regular School session;  
7th grade orientation to Kehiloft program with parents (10:20-12:00)

Friday, March 1:  
Sunday, March 3:  
Sunday, March 10

Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm  
PACT-5 Tzedakah and the Giraffe connection; 5th grade parent meeting  
Regular school session; Tefillah with Rabbi;  
*Daylight Savings Begins, turn clocks ahead 1 hour.*



Hi everyone! I'm Leila Rose, one of the Kehiloft members. I've been a part of Kehiloft for about a year and a half, and I've had a ton of fun so far. This year, I started working in the Religious School, and you can find me in the office every Sunday. Last month, we did a lot of preparation for the Kehiloft led Friday night Shabbat service, which was on December 14th. That week's parsha was Vayigash, in which Joseph reveals himself to his brothers so that Benjamin would not have to be sold into slavery. Kehiloft wrote a small skit in which we reenacted a couple of scenes from the parsha, and Paige, Stephen, Ellie, Jared F, Jared H, Jack, and I all acted as characters in the play. We concluded the service with a couple of discussion questions reflecting on people's motives within the story.

In addition to that, Kehiloft held an unofficial meeting that was a movie night on December 19th. Kehilofters got together in the loft to get cozy, watch the original *Incredibles* movie, and eat from an ice cream bar! The night was certainly lots of fun.

Last week, we got together to prepare for the next Kehiloft-led Friday night Shabbat service. We read the parsha, wrote a couple of discussion questions, and decided how we were going to present the D'var Torah. The service is on January 18th and the week's parsha is Beshalach. We are super excited to lead another Shabbat service!

On Saturday, February 23 at 6:30- 9:00, Kehiloft will host a Family Movie Night and havdalah service at CKS with free popcorn! Although it is a free event, we ask for donations which will be used later to fund Kehiloft activities. Hope to see you there!

- Leila Rose

**FEBRUARY**

- Wednesday, Feb 6** -Family workshop prep/Purim spiel game prep
- Wednesday, Feb 20** -Purim rehearsal #1
- Saturday, Feb 23** - 6:30 - 9:00 Family Movie Night/Havdalah
- Sunday, Feb 24** - 10:30 - 12:00. 7th grade family workshop intro to Kehiloft

**MARCH**

- Wednesday, March 13** - Purim rehearsal #2
- Wednesday, March 20** - Purim rehearsal #3
- Sunday, March 24** - 10:15 - 11:00 Purim spiel performed in Religious School
- Sunday, March 24** - 11:00 - 12:00 Purim games run by Kehiloft

**The student board meets on Wednesdays from 8:00 - 8:30.**

Shalom,

*Karen Fridkis, Kehiloft Principal*



## ADULT EDUCATION



February 10, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

### **Jews and the Civil War**

Learn about the different roles that American Jews played in the Civil War, despite making up less than 0.5% of the US population. We will discuss the Jewish South, Jewish army enlistment, military leaders, antisemitism, and the role of rabbis in the abolitionist movement (and in the anti-abolitionist movement). This program will feature a visual presentation as well as small-group discussion of primary and secondary sources.



Rabbi Jake leads Diaspora Discussion



### **Diaspora Discussion**

Rabbi Jake led an informative and lively adult education program on Sunday, January 20th. Fellow CKS'ers learned about the similarities and differences between the Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi sects of Judaism. We learned about how the name Ashkenazi originated from Noah's great grandson, Ashkenaz, and how the Ashkenazi tribe of Judaism migrated west from the countries around the Black Sea, such as Turkey, to Eastern Europe where their influence really grew. We explored how the Ashkenazi practices are the ones predominantly practiced in the United States today. Next, we discussed Sephardic Jews and how they originated in France and Spain. We learned that the oldest Sephardic synagogue in the Americas is located in Curacao and is still in use today. We then delved into the denomination of Mizrahi, which translates to "east". We watched several short videos which compared the practices of the three sects and of course talked about the traditional foods associated with each one! Thank you to Rabbi Jake to leading such an interesting program.



Tu B'Shevat Seder



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



# FEBRUARY 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 <a href="#">Religious School</a> <a href="#">Dinner</a> <a href="#">Shabbat</a> <a href="#">Mishpachah</a> <a href="#">(Family Shabbat)</a>	2
3 <a href="#">Religious School</a>	4 <a href="#">Mah-Jongg</a>	5 <a href="#">CKS Knitting &amp; Crafter's Group</a>	6 <a href="#">Kehiloft</a> <a href="#">Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class</a> <a href="#">Kehiloft – Student Board</a>	7 <a href="#">Board Meeting</a>	8 <a href="#">Shabbat Services</a>	9 <a href="#">Shabbat Mincha</a> <a href="#">Potluck</a>
10 <a href="#">Religious School</a> <a href="#">Adult Education:</a> <a href="#">Jews and the Civil War</a>	11 <a href="#">Mah-Jongg</a>	12	13	14	15 <a href="#">Shabbat Services</a>	16
17	18 <a href="#">Mah-Jongg</a>	19 <a href="#">Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class</a>	20 <a href="#">Kehiloft</a> <a href="#">Ritual Committee Meeting</a> <a href="#">Kehiloft – Student Board</a>	21 <a href="#">CKS Knitting &amp; Crafter's Group</a>	22 <a href="#">Shabbat Services – Social Action</a>	23 <a href="#">Torah Study</a> <a href="#">Kehiloft Family</a> <a href="#">Movie Night / Havdalah</a> <a href="#">(tentative)</a>
24 <a href="#">Religious School</a> <a href="#">Kehiloft</a>	25 <a href="#">Mah-Jongg</a>	26 <a href="#">Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class</a>	27	28 <a href="#">CKS Book Club – “A Disappearance in Damascus: A Story of Friendship...”</a>		

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# February 15<sup>th</sup>

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