

Congregation Kehilat NEWS Shalom

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **May 2019** Nisan – Iyyar 5779

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Shana Bartels Copy Editor

"HAMILTON HAGGADAH" AT CKS MODEL SEDER
 by Abby Grayson

On Sunday, April 14, the congregation held a "model Seder" based on the "Hamilton Haggadah," a parody of the musical "Hamilton" written by Rabbi Jake and one of his colleagues when he was a rabbinical student. A traditional Seder was interspersed with several of the songs from the Hamilton Haggadah, performed by volunteers who collaborated with Rabbi Jake to bring the pieces to life. Gayle Holtzman, Stacey Bachrach, Steve Weinstein, Andrea Lass, Leslie Kowalski, Josh Goldhammer, and Annabelle Grayson each gave their all to entertain and educate via song. They left the congregation laughing and crying. In between songs, Rabbi Jake explained the Seder traditions and recited the traditional blessings, and the religious school students chanted the Four Questions. The event was open to the public, and several community members (including Montgomery mayor Sadaf Jaffer) joined to experience a Seder with CKS members. Congregants and community members alike reported that they appreciated the opportunity to share in the Seder experience together, especially one that was this much fun!



CASINO GAMES  **SAVE THE DATE!**  LIVE AUCTION

CASINO CKS

DJ **GALA AND FUNDRAISER** BASKET RAFFLE

KARAOKE

SATURDAY MAY 11, 2019  **7:30 PM to 11:00 PM** 50/50

HORS D'OEUVRES DESSERTS WINE BEER SODA

IN SOLIDARITY WITH NEW ZEALAND

The importance of community takes on greater meaning when we need to lean on each other to go through hard times. After the tragedy at the mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, Rabbi Jake represented CKS and joined other houses of worship to participate in an interfaith event at the Islamic Society of Central Jersey. He was also accompanied by several members of our community—including president of the CKS board, Steve Weinstein—and shared his remarks and words of comfort to those gathered there that night, adding his voice to other religious and community leaders.

CKS member Heather Ciociola also had an opportunity to speak, and on that night she was there on behalf of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We include her remarks here:

Asalaam Aleikum to my sisters and brothers, all who are here today. Thank you to Heba Macksoud and Azra Baig for inviting me to speak tonight on behalf of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, and to Sheryl Olitzky and Atiya Aftab for allowing me to speak in their stead—although no one can take their place—with words from our collective hearts, hopefully bringing some light to illuminate the darkness of despair.

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is a movement, 3,000 Muslim and Jewish women and teenage girls strong in our chapters, over 7,000 including our conference, trips, and social media, and growing. As the only organization of its kind in the US and Canada, we come together to build bridges that turn into real relationships and communities of love and care. To say that our hearts are broken is an understatement. When one of us hurts, we are all hurting. And our hearts break over and over and over again.

It is one of the greatest blessings of my life to have Sisterhood sisters from all across the country as well as right here in NJ, in the Mercer-Somerset chapter. It was one of my Muslim sisters who first told me the news about Pittsburgh that fateful Saturday in October. My Muslim sisters were among the first to show up, to reach out, to offer support and comfort and solidarity. I know I speak for my Jewish sisters when I say that we will never forget it. I will never forget it.

It is now, unfortunately, our turn to pick up that mantle, for my Jewish sisters and brothers to show our Muslim sisters and brothers—all of you, our communities, and the world—that we are here for you and with you. We mourn and grieve and pray for the souls of the 50 Muslims who were senselessly and tragically killed in an act of terrorism and Islamophobia at two mosques, Masjid Al Noor and Dar Al Hijrah, in Christchurch, New Zealand.

But, my Muslim sisters and brothers, know that we are not just here today or this week. We are here, by your side, for the long haul.

We are sad and angry, yes, but thoughts and prayers are not enough—we will not sit back and let hate prevail. The Sisterhood is waging a peaceful battle against hate, and we demand change. We demand that our government officials at all levels condemn these hateful acts. We demand that they call out hate and enact and enforce laws that recognize hate crimes as crimes of the highest order. We demand to be safe in our places of worship, in our schools and communities, and in the world in general. We

demand that our children grow up in a world that truly sees them, values them, loves them, and honors our common humanity. The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom will not stop until this becomes our lived reality. We stand together, as sisters and brothers, as Muslims and Jews, as one. We are proof that love is stronger than hate.

On behalf of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, thank you again for having me here tonight and allowing me to share our condolences, comfort, and support. Most importantly, know that you have our commitment that we will not stop until love prevails. As someone said this weekend, there is no them, only us. Salaam, Shalom, and peace to us all. Ameen and amen.



Heather Ciociola



Rabbi Jake addresses the gathering

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MY NOT SO LAST NEWSLETTER ARTICLE



It was almost two years ago that I had the tremendous honor of becoming President of CKS, following in the footsteps of a distinguished group of individuals who have helped make our community vibrant, welcoming, and active for almost 30 years. And hopefully, I have continued this tradition and allowed members to "action their passion," do good on behalf of others, and have some fun at the same time.

If this article were all about me (or if I had aspirations for a career in Washington), then it would be at this point in the article that I would list a bunch of accomplishments under my administration to help convince you how great I have been. Sorry to disappoint you, but I believe in a premise called "servant leadership" so it is actually all about the WE and the US and about YOU. The Board and I are here to help make life better for all of the members and to break down barriers so that we can more easily accomplish what matters most to the community and allow individuals to get involved in what they want. Without your engagement and volunteering, none of the activities at CKS would be possible. So thank you for ALL that you do to help make CKS thrive!

Along those lines, two key events in May that need your participation are the Spring Party and Auction on Saturday night, May 11th and the Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 19th. The Spring event is our time to come together as an adult community and have fun, get to meet people we may not yet know, schmooze, eat & drink, buy things we may or may not need, and raise money for CKS—which helps provide critical funds for our other activities. And this year, you can learn how to play some casino games, perform karaoke, or even dance if you desire! Or you can just try to outbid Larry Fridkis on the special bottle of wine!

In the Annual Meeting we will share how we did over the past year, our goals for 2019-20, the vote on next year's Board and of course your feedback. Without giving away too much since you may have already seen the Board slate by the time you read this, we are recommending two new Board members for 2019-20: Heather Ciociola and Christine Witt, and we are changing some people's roles on the Board, as well. I will be moving to a joint role as Past President and Co-President as I will share the Presidency with Jill Fraticelli next year (if you vote yes). Francine Pfeffer and Tim Kowalski will move up to be the VPs, and Iris Rubenstein will become Recording Secretary. Bob Neusner and George Cohen will step off the Board. When you

see them, please thank them for their terrific service as they have been great Board members and will be staying active on other programs critical to CKS like Long Range Planning.

And just like Rabbi Jake 2.0 (for those who attended the Silly Shabbat in late March or just heard about the techno Rabbi upgrade from Jake 1.0), change can be a little scary but, oh, so uplifting and fun! One other change I want to make you aware of is the new doorbell, security system and procedures we implemented here in April. After the Pittsburgh shootings and your feedback, the Board agreed to invest in a new video camera, doorbell, and security system that upgrades our ability to monitor who is coming into or around our building while still maintaining our warm, welcoming ways. This is a big help for Kindercapers, our staff, and our CKS members. Many, many thanks to Mike Petronella, George Cohen, Amy Rosenthal and Monica Horn-Mitchem (Kindercapers Director) for their tireless efforts on getting this system chosen and set up. If you have any questions regarding it, please contact Amy or me.

Hope to see many of you at the May events, hope you will continue to share your ideas and hope you will be willing to approve our Board slate for next year. And please mark your calendars for our official installation of Rabbi Jake on June 23rd. More to come on that event over the next month! Thank you so much for making CKS a place we are all proud to be a part of and proud to call ours.

Best regards, Steve



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
when Religious school is in session or by special request.
 Questions?
 Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
 or Iris Rubenstein irubinstein@gmail.com
or the synagogue office for more information



Because the Torah is the touchstone of the Jewish people, we are often called the "people of the Book." We find instructions to study Torah wherever we turn in Jewish tradition. Torah study serves as a guide for leading a moral life.

In reading Pirke Avot, the Sayings of our Ancestors, we find that our tradition tells us: "If you have studied much Torah, your reward will be abundant."--2:21.

Throughout history there have been teachers whose work significantly impacted the way Judaism is studied and observed up to this time. Teachers such as Rabbi Akiva, Rashi, Rambam, and Rabbi Joseph Caro are but a few. One of the first names given to the synagogues was **Bet Hamidrash**, a house of learning. To this day, a primary function of the synagogue is to provide religious education for children and adults.

Our CKS teachers are a dedicated group of educators who work hard to transmit their love of Torah to your children. As we mark the end of the school year I would like to acknowledge and thank our esteemed faculty:



**Rabbi Jake Adler Karen Fridkis Sharon Taub
Susan Trager Tracey Weingarten Rena Yosevitz**

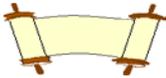


On behalf of the faculty and school, I would like to thank the parents for all your support and most especially, for giving us the pleasure of working with your children.

Thank you to Religious Education Chairperson, **Christine Witt** and her committee for their encouragement, support and efforts all year. Many thanks to all the parent volunteers for helping us with our special activities and programs.

**SPECIAL 7th GRADE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
SUNDAY, MAY 12, 10:00AM**

On Sunday, **May 12**, we all have an opportunity to celebrate with our seventh grade class at their Commencement ceremony. This special service marks the completion of one segment of our students' Jewish education here at CKS, and the beginning of another, the High School - Kehiloft program.



This is an exciting event for which our seventh graders have been eagerly working. As a culmination of their studies, students will be sharing thoughts on Making Connections (Keshet) -- Past/Present/Future.

Please join us as our seventh grade students "graduate" from Nesiyot-Religious School and share their thoughts with us.

CONGREGATION KEHILAT SHALOM

Extends heartfelt good wishes to the members of the 2019 Religious School 7th grade class:

**William Cige Zoey Doelling Ben Edelstein Julia Feldmus Julia Fraticelli
Max Mahoney Samuel Orshan Cole Schulberg Bodie Witt**



THANK YOU TO OUR MADRICHIM- OUR KEHILOFT TEENS

The Madrichim (High school aides) have been excellent role models for our younger children. You can find them around on a Sunday morning either in the School office or in a classroom or in the kitchen. They have been a wonderful asset to our staff, helping in every capacity. I am really proud of the high level of commitment demonstrated by these fine young people. Despite the complexities of their busy schedules, it's wonderful to see how seriously our *madrachim* take their roles in our school. Our *madrachim* provide our synagogue with a genuine source of pride and joy. This year's *madrachim* are:

**Julie Edelstein Jared Fraticelli Josh Goldhammer Matthew Kent Paige Kowalski Olivia Mahoney
Aaron Orshan Ethan Ries Leila Rose Cecily Weinstein Ellie Witt**



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REMINDERS

Friday, May 3: Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm
Sunday, May 5: COOKING; 7th grade Kehiloft orientation--students only 11:00-12:00
Sunday, May 12: Regular school session; 7th grade Commencement and Bridge ceremony (10-12)
Sunday, May 19: LAST DAY OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REGISTRATION

It's not too early to register for the **2019-2020** academic year. All of us at CKS look forward to you joining us again next year, so kindly fill out your registration materials as soon as possible. Thank you.

KEHILOFT-THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR JEWISH JOURNEY



Hello everyone! I hope you have been enjoying the lovely springtime weather. I'm Julie Edelstein and this is my second year in Kehiloft. With my second year, I have really enjoyed getting to know many of the other Kehilofters a lot better, as well as some of the newer members. I've also gotten the chance to be a madrichim

for the first time and mentor fourth graders, which has really been an interesting learning experience for me that I have really enjoyed. As for the Kehilofters, we have constantly been at work this month, preparing to lead a fun service and writing a funny skit about the weekly parsha, as well as discussing some of the topics that mean the most to us with Rabbi Jake.

Something that the Kehilofters all look forward to every single year is the annual Purim Spiel, in which we act out the story of Purim within a funny theme. These skits usually need a lot of practice and involvement from the Kehilofters, so it was very nice to see many investing their time to rehearse every week for three weeks. This year, Paige Kowalski put in a tremendous effort to write parodies to a number of songs from *High School Musical*, as well as the script and dance choreography with the help of Ellie Witt. Additional shout outs go to Josh Goldhammer and Leila Rose for volunteering to lend their voices to some of the larger roles.

One part of Purim that we decided to put a spin on was the carnival that we held for the religious school students after the Spiel. Along with our scavenger hunt and Purim costume parade, we added some newer fun games such as Group Mole, Simon Says, and Wax Museum instead of playing our usual Coke and Pepsi and Steal the Bagel. Each of the Kehilofters took responsibility for a different activity, engaging the students through all the games.

Every year, Kehiloft comes up with a new project that will help out the community in some way. This year, we decided to spend time on cleaning up the environment around the CKS woods and grounds. The environment is something that we were all very passionate about, and we were all willing to donate our time to help make the world a cleaner place where the ecosystem can thrive without being polluted by trash.

More recently, we were assigned to lead a fun family service, presenting and leading a discussion about the parsha of the week, parsha Metzora. Many of us found this Torah portion extremely interesting, comparing a "diseased home" to a different part of society, like a metaphor. We

conveyed this message in a funny skit, which prompted a really interesting discussion from the conversation. It was really interesting to hear the different interpretations from others in our Jewish community.

Coming up soon, the CKS Spring Gala on May 11th is something that many congregation members look forward to, and now Kehilofters are volunteering to help set up and prepare the synagogue for this big event, as well as assisting during the event and cleaning up afterward. We always look for any way we can help out and volunteer for the community, and this gala seemed like the perfect opportunity! We hope to see others there!

As a conclusion, I wanted to write a bit on Kehiloft and how much I appreciate the program. With the fellow Kehilofters, I have found myself becoming more willing to share my thoughts and speak out about things that mean a lot to me. I encourage all religious students who are thinking about joining Kehiloft in the future to do so, it is a memorable experience that you cannot forget, and I have learned so much because of it. *Julie Edelstein*

MAY

Wednesday, May 1 - NEW. Prep for 7th grade orientation/social

Sunday, May 5 - 10:45 - 12:00. 7th grade (students only) Kehiloft orientation

Sunday, May 5 12:00 - 1:30. NEW. Annual project - clean up CKS woods

Saturday, May 11 - CKS gala - volunteer opportunity. Details emailed to students

Sunday, May 12 -11:00 - 12:00. 7th grade bridge ceremony. Kehiloft welcomes students

Wednesday, May 29 - 6:00 - 8:00. Dinner in Princeton

JUNE

Saturday, June 8 - 1:00 - 5:00 CKS event Homefront picnic

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

Karen Fridkis, Kehiloft Principal

kindercapers

Now in its 26th 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

PURIM AND RABBI JAKE 2.0

by Hilary Crist

Prior to this year's Purim celebrations, Rabbi Jake kept hinting that the weekend would be kicked off with "a very silly" Shabbat, and that as "jester-in-residence" he would "turn Shabbat upside down" in honor of Purim. He certainly came through for us. CKS Board president Steve Weinstein, adorned with a special wig for the occasion, started off services (saying he was Bob Neusner) by introducing a special "Rabbi Jake, 2.0." As you can see from the photos, our rabbi was adorned head to foot in silver, with high-tech glow lights, and he robotically entered the sanctuary, met with laughter from the 40-plus congregants of all ages in attendance.



For those of you who attend services on Friday nights, you know that Rabbi Jake has started a tradition of handing out Melachim Jewish Angel cards that have an image and a word in English or Hebrew. He then asks for volunteers to share how that word relates to their lives over the past week, or what it brings up for them. Rabbi Jake 2.0 handed out similar cards – but these were different cards with words relating to his robotic, high tech world like: buffer, home, sync, enter, exit, and the like. We got some great (and often robotic) responses.

As we went through the service, there was much hilarity as Rabbi Jake 2.0 chanted prayers with a deep and at times robotic voice. All in attendance got a big kick out of some newly-inserted words to the familiar "*Lehah Dodi*" like "Apricot, Robot Shabbat, Big Hot Shot," etc. to fit the rhyme scheme for the refrain. During the Hoda'ah where we give thanks, CKS board member Larry Spinrad brought the house down when he said he was thankful for Iris Rubinstein's job. (You had to be there).

A highlight of the evening was during the *Hashivenu* when Rabbi Jake 2.0 performed a wide-ranging selection of song excerpts (which we later learned was inspired by a 2008 YouTube by Axis of Awesome performing "4 Four Chord Song" and from a special list on Wikipedia listing hundreds of popular songs that follow that particular chord progression I-V-vi-IV).



The non-stop davening by Rabbi Jake 2.0 during the *Aleynu* prayer also got laughs. At one point during the service, he paused, saying he was "buffering;" at another he ran out of power, and our tech maven, Amy Rosenthal knew exactly how to reboot him (that special switch under the yarmulke). Thank you, Amy!

The evening ended with a wonderful oneg sponsored by Mary Horowitz, in memory of her husband, Irving Louis Horowitz.

As you can see from pictures of that night as well as of the Purim Tot Shabbat on Saturday and Sunday's Kehiloft led Purim spiel (inspired by "High School Musical" and other Purim events, a great weekend was enjoyed by all.



MAY 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 Shabbat Mishpachah (Family Shabbat)	4 Tot Shabbat
5 Religious School Adult Education: Yom Ha Shoah presentation by Scott Strauss Kehiloft Orientation	6 Mah-Jongg	7 CKS Knitting & Crafter's Group	8	9 Board Meeting	10 Shabbat Services	11 Spring Event
12 Religious School Kehiloft Bridge Ceremony	13 Mah-Jongg	14	15 Ritual Committee Meeting Montgomery Mosaic and the One Montgomery Committee Event: Interfaith Prayer Service and Iftar	16 CKS Knitting & Crafter's Group	17 Shabbat Services	18 Zoey Doelling's Bat Mitzvah
19 Religious School Kehiloft Annual Meeting	20 Mah-Jongg	21	22	23 Lag B'Omer	24	25
26	27 Mah-Jongg	28	29 Kehiloft End of Year Dinner	30	31 Shabbat Services	

Annual Membership Meeting

The 2019-20 Board of Trustees will be voted on, hear about the accomplishments of this past year and what is planned for next year at the **Annual Membership Meeting Sunday, May 19 at 12:15 pm.**

CKS Book Club

May 30: *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* by Elizabeth Kolbert

June 20: *Dear Mrs. Bird* by A.J. Pearce

July 25: *Circe* by Madeline Miller

August: *No Book Club*

September 26: *Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* by David Treuer

October 24: *Beartown* by Fredrik Backman

November 21: *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean



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

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May 2019

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May 15th

Send photos and contributions to:
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