

BEKI Bulletin

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April 2001 Vol. 7 Issue 4

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Nisan 5761

Pesach at BEKI

Selling of Hametz

During the eight days of *Pesah* (Passover) it is forbidden for Jews to eat or own edible hametz. Hametz is any product containing wheat, barley, oats, spelt or rye that has not been especially prepared kosher for Pesah. Ideally one physically disposes of all hametz by the morning before Pesah (this year, because Pesah starts Saturday night, this date is moved up to 10:00a Friday 6 April 2001). In

order to be sure that this has taken place, or to avoid the loss of expensive hametz such as liquor, one can sell their hametz for the period of Pesah. If you would like to authorize Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz on your behalf to some-

one who is allowed to own it, please sign the form available at each daily morning and evening service beginning at Purim or sign and return the form included in the March synagogue mailing for that purpose. If you need a form faxed to you, leave a message for Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 x14 with your fax number or fax her at 389-5899; you can also find a form at www.beki.org/forms.html. The form is a power of attorney allowing Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz for you, which he will do in a sale that will be effective at 10:00a on the Friday morning before Pesah (with an exception for hametz to be used on Shabbat). Please sign and return the authorization form at your earliest opportunity.



Siyyum Bekhorot

The Fast of the First Born is Thursday 5 April beginning at dawn. Normally the Fast is observed on the day before Pesah. However, this year Pesah begins after Shabbat, and it is not permitted to fast on Shabbat or on Friday, so the observance of the fast is advanced to Thursday. But firstborn who attend the Thursday morning service at 8:15a may conclude their fast by partaking of the seudat *mitzva* (obligatory feast) celebrating a *siyyum*, the conclusion of a study project. Services and siyyum will end by 9:30a. All may attend. That time will also be close to the last opportunity to authorize Rabbi Tilsen to sell your hametz (see "Selling of Hametz" in this issue).

Let All Who Are Hungry..

The Seder of Pesah is a wonderful opportunity to welcome others into our homes. Our congregation comprises many people who may not have extended family locally, do not have Jewish relatives, are new to the area, or who otherwise would benefit greatly from a seder invitation. If you are able to open your Seder to additional guests, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at your earliest opportunity at 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org). If you are able to host an adult who is a mental health services consumer or who has developmental disabilities, please contact Special Programs Director Anne Johnston (389-2108 x33 or anne@beki.org).

Yizkor Memorial Service

The Yizkor Memorial Service will be held during the 9:15a Festival morning service on Sunday 15 April. The Festival service includes a Shaharit morning service, *Hallel* (Psalms of praise), a Torah reading and Haftara, and the Musaf additional ser-

Continued on page 5

Administrative Announcements

How to Contact the BEKI Bulletin

Responses to "A Message from Rabbi Tilsen," questions for "Dear Rabbi" and Letters to the Editor can be sent to: Editor, BEKI-Bulletin, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515 or by email to jjtilsen@beki.org.

Rabbi Tilsen's mail and e-mail are opened directly and exclusively by the Rabbi himself and are as secure and confidential as mail and e-mail can be.

Calling BEKI

To call BEKI, dial (203) 389-2108.

When the automated attendant answers, dial any of the numbers below for the desired extension. You don't have to wait to hear the whole recorded greeting. If you don't have a "touch-tone" phone (i.e. a phone that dials by sending tones), wait to the end of the greeting and you will then be able to leave a message for the Administrator. A shortcut: To skip to the end of a greeting, press asterisk (*).

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No Parking

Members and visitors are advised that parking is prohibited at all times on the East side of Harrison Street as indicated by the "No Parking" signs. Parking is usually available across Harrison Street, and ample parking is available in the BEKI lot at the rear of the building. When driving in the BEKI parking lot, please observe the 5 miles-per-hour speed limit, which is enforced by random speed bumps.

BEKI-Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members. Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership, donations, or special activities, call the Synagogue office (203) 389-2108, or write to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724 or email: jjtilsen@beki.org

or see our web page created by Phill Simon: www.beki.org

For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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BEKI-Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Whatever You Call It

While I was dressed as a large blue M&M candy – my Purim costume – a number of clever congregants (actually I'm not sure they were congregants, since I could not always tell who they were in their costumes) asked me if I had nuts. Most Bulletin readers know that traditionally M&Ms came in two varieties: Plain and Peanut. Besides the introduction of new varieties, and the addition of the blue hue, M&Ms have undergone another change. As one of our young congregants pointed out, the first type of M&Ms are no longer called "plain" but rather "Milk Chocolate." It was only dressed as one that I appreciated the injury to its dignity suffered by the Milk Chocolate M&M referred to as "plain."

In the coming months, prunes and prune juice will no longer be sold in the United States. There is nothing wrong with prunes and prune juice (if you like it). It is just that the prune is getting a new image. Prunes are associated with being elderly (which is, unfortunately, still out of fashion in popular American culture). You would not want to be called an "old prune." From now on, dried plums and plum juice will be consumed in America, not prunes and prune juice.

The War Department became the Department of Defense shortly before "Orwellian" entered our vocabulary. Prisons have become "corrections centers" and terrorists have become "freedom fighters." Orthodontists no longer install braces but rather "dental appliances."

Name changes are nothing new. The Bible records several instances of place names changing. Qiryat Arba becomes Hebron. Later, Shekhem becomes "Neopolis" to the Greeks, then "Nablus" to the Arabs. Our modern Zionists created or restored Hebrew names for many places: Jenin became Ganim, Beit Jala became Gilo, Nablus became Shekhem. Harrison Street, at which BEKI is situated, was originally called Jackson Street. Ponder that the next time you drive across the Bridge Formerly Known as the Quinncipiatic Bridge.

Our Biblical ancestors Abraham, Sara, Jacob and others took – or were given – new names to express their new identities. In the twentieth century, Hirshel became Harry or Herb, Velvel became William or Wilber, Haya became Ida or Carol, and Dina became Diane, when they came to America. They too were expressing something important about their new identity.

The very name of the Jewish People has changed over time. Among the names used in the Bible are Ivri'im (Hebrews, mostly used by foreigners to describe us), Benei Ya'aqov (People of Jacob), Benei Yisrael (the People of Israel), Beit Yisrael or Beit Ya'aqov (House of Israel or House of Jacob) Yisrael, and, in later books, Yehudim (Judeans). 'Am Yisrael (Nation of Israel), also

a Biblical name, remains popular to this day as well as Yehudim.

Even the names we use for God have changed. Seven names are considered so sacred that they may not be written in ordinary publications such as this Bulletin. (Why is this a bulletin and not a newsletter?) A hundred other names are used in the Torah and rabbinic literature. The substitute names for the most sacred names, too, have changed. While Adonai ("my Master") and HaQadosh Barukh Hu ("The Holy One Blessed be He") were once the most common, they have now themselves been elevated and are considered by some too sacred for ordinary use. Some have used "Adoshem" (a concatenation "Adonai" and "HaShem") in its place. More recently the substitute HaShem ("The Name") has become popular. But this name, too, is being elevated in sanctity in the popular mind, to such an extent that some publications will print it as HaSh-m, so as to not actually write this now "sacred" name. As this process continues, at some point it will be considered improper to write HaSh-m, as that symbol (I can't quite call it a word) itself will become too sacred to write, and some new substitute will be invented. While I do not agree with this continual holiness inflation of substitute names of God, I agree with the pious sentiment that Divine appellations should be treated with due reverence.

What we call things, what we call people, and what we call the Almighty, really does make a difference. New or desired spiritual, political, personal or social realities are expressed in names. When considering names for children, I urge Jewish parents to use Hebrew names or their English variants. Many popular "English" names such as Jacob, Benjamin, Sarah and Rachel are, of course, actually Hebrew Biblical names. Some less common English names, such as Obadiah, Ezekiel, Jezebel, and Jocheved, are also Biblical names, and some have been popular among Bible-belt Christians. Other names, such as Ehud, Tsvi, Gilah and Tova are seen as "ethnic" Jewish names.

In the twentieth century, it was common for Jewish parents in America to give children English names such as Robert and Jean, and to also give their children a separate Hebrew name, the latter to be used only in liturgical settings. This practice was a reflection of the desire to "fit in" as Americans while retaining a more private Jewish identity, and was perhaps appropriate for that era. Today, in an America that tries to respect cultural diversity, we may feel comfortable enough to view our children as having a unified identity, expressed with one name. Our "Jewish" identity and our "American" identity can be seamlessly integrated. God is One, the Jewish People are One, and I am One.

LifeCycle

With sorrow we note the passing of

Irma Kabel, aunt of Alan (& Sally) Abramovitz
Elizabeth Blackmer, mother of Corinne Blackmer
Harry Heller, father of Mary (& David) Lesser

Mazal tov to

Liz Kinsley on her upcoming high school graduation and her plans to attend Yale University. Liz is a tutor in the BEKI Benei Mitzva Program and the daughter of Judy Hoberman & Dominic Kinsley.

Ben Rubenstein on his upcoming high school graduation and his plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Ben is the son of Allan Rubenstein & Carolyn Kone.



Office Improvement Makes Calling BEKI Easier

Some BEKI members have had trouble in reaching the synagogue office by telephone. Either the line was busy or the call was answered by "voice mail" instead of an actual person. In response to the growing demand for phone contact, BEKI has added an additional line (actually a DSL line, for those interested in the technical aspects). This frees one or sometimes two lines for additional voice calls. This step will reduce, but not eliminate, the likelihood of callers getting a busy signal.

Letters

I would like to thank the BEKI congregation for the wonderful kiddush given my daughter, Sarah Serkin, prior to her departure to Australia. The outpouring of love was amazing. More important, I would like to thank everyone for the caring, compassion, and understanding given my children Ariel, Esther and Sarah. I will always be grateful to the extended BEKI family.

Tamar Edelkind

20s-30s Havura Enjoys Dinner, Brunch

Jewish singles and couples in their 20s and 30s are invited to contact BEKI member Valerie Sandler (777-4784 or valerie.sandler@yale.edu) or Mary Ellen Mack (389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net) for information on special events of interest. BEKI's new 20s-30s Havura is primarily for adults without children, and meets about once a month at BEKI for Shabbat services, dinner and shmoozing and informal discussion.

People of any age with children are encouraged to contact Anne Johnston (389-2108 x33 or anne@beki.org) or Mary Ellen Mack (389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net) for information on the Children's Shabbat Havura and other activities of special interest.

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vice, and concludes by noon. The Yizkor memorial service is one of four such services during the year that help us recognize our feelings of loss, which are often especially intense during the Pesah season, and to honor the memories of our loved ones.

Shir HaShirim Song of Songs

The Biblical love poetry of *Shir HaShirim - Song of Songs* will be read on the morning of 14 April during the Shabbat Festival morning service. Tradition ascribes the work to King Solomon himself, writing 2,900 years ago. Celebrate the spring holiday of Pesah with this beautiful and moving reading.

Sefira – Counting the Omer

At the second seder (Sunday night 8 April), we begin daily *sefirat ha-omer* (counting of the *omer*), a counting of days to Shavuot, the next major festival. The counting, preferably done each night for 49 nights, is an expression of eager anticipation, commemorating the period of expectation and preparation we experienced in the Exodus from Egypt until the revelation at Sinai.

The simple home ceremony is printed in most *siddurim* (prayer books), including *Sim Shalom*, immediately after the weekday evening service. While it is a mitzva prescribed for adults, *sefirat ha-omer* can also be a fun, artistic and joyous ritual for families with children.

In the days before printed calendars, calendar watches and daily newspapers, the sefira served to keep the liturgical calendar of the Jewish People synchronized, no simple accomplishment given the

dispersion and isolation of much of the community. The term *omer* refers to the measure (one handful) of grain that was used to create a physical relic of the counting. With a physical reminder, even illiterate people could do a recount in case they forgot the day's number.

Special Needs Seder

The **Sisterhood** of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, and **Kulanu Ke'ehad Havura** at BEKI, in conjunction with the Jewish Family Service and Abel Catering, hosted the nineteenth annual Adult Special Needs Model Seder at BEKI in March. This year's service was lovely and meaningful. Each year the Sisterhood has hosted an enthusiastic group of Jewish adults from the New Haven area with a variety of special needs. This year, over 50 people participated.

For many, this is their only taste of Passover and one that they relish and look forward to each year. The Torah teaches of four types of children, and the Haggada reminds us that we must tell the story of the Exodus to each son and daughter of Israel in the way that is most meaningful to him or her. Through the efforts of Sisterhood, Kulanu Director Anne Johnston, the generosity of Abel Catering and the good offices of the Jewish Family Services, the Exodus is reenacted through song, food and story at a table set in the Passover tradition.

Kulanu is BEKI's outreach program for adults with special needs. Kulanu is supported by **The David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel**, which is managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. It is also supported this year through a special contribution of **Roger & Susan Stone Levine**.

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Torah for the Hungry Mind: Adult Studies at BEKI

Darshanim in April

Syma Solovitch will serve as *darshanit* (Torah commentator) on *Shabbat Pesah*, the morning of 14 April, as a Bat Torah (see article in this issue).



photo by Charlie Ludwig

Thanks to Darryl Kuperstock for coordinating the Torah readings for the book of *Shemot* (Exodus). Thanks also to Paul Bass who is coordinating Torah readings for Shabbat afternoon services. Rabbi Tilsen is coordinating the readings for *VaYiqra* (Leviticus). If you would like to read Torah, or learn how to read Torah, call Rabbi Jon-Jay at (203) 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) Darryl at (203) 387-0304 (kuperst@aol.com) or Paul Bass at (203) 397-3046 (pbass@newmassmedia.com).

Basic Judaism Class

"Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot" will be taught by Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen on Thursday Nights in April and May at BEKI. Classes will be held on Thursday 12, 19, 26 April; 03, 17, 24, 31 May 2001 from 6:15p to 7:30p in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library. The class is designed for adults wishing an overview of the Principles of Jewish thought and life. It is ideal for people new to Judaism, considering conversion, or wishing to

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To register, call 389-2108 x14 or email Mary Ellen at beki@snet.net. Material & Registration fee is \$18.00/person.

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a adults meets in the [Rosenkrantz Family Library](#) to read Rashi’s commentary on the Torah. It is possible to participate for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the peshat of the Biblical text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. The Rashi Study Group has been meeting weekly since 1994.

AA Meeting

A Thursday night [AA meeting](#) is held at BEKI every Thursday night at 8:00p. The weekly Meeting has been held at BEKI since May 1997. Open to any person who can benefit from a recovery program, the meeting is held according to stan-

dard AA procedure. This is not a specifically Jewish recovery group, although a large proportion of participants are Jewish. For information on the weekly meeting call Jay at (203) 387-6019 or email Jay at jay@jacsw.org.

Beginning Hebrew I & II

A four-class introduction (or refresher) course to the Hebrew alphabet, “Beginning Hebrew I: Alef-Bet Workshop,” will be offered at BEKI on Sunday nights beginning 22 April. The class will meet from 6:15p to 7:45p on Sundays 22, 29 April and 6 & 13 May. There is a registration and book fee of \$18 per person or \$25 for two people sharing one book.

“Beginning Hebrew II: Beyond Alef-Bet” is slated to begin in May on dates and times to be announced (look for a notice in the *May Bulletin*).



Syma Solovitch Bat Torah

Syma Solovitch will celebrate a Bat Torah observance on Shabbat Pesah, 14 April 2001, during the morning services. Syma is a professional educator and serves on the BEKI Board of Directors as Social Action Committee Chairperson. A native of Canada, Syma lives in Trumbull with her husband Bruce Haynes.



Syma Solovitch

Syma will lead services, read Scripture and teach Torah during the services, which begin at 9:15a. The Bar- and Bat Torah ceremony is as an adult celebration marking a new phase in their participation in the religious community. It affirms the celebrants’ commitment to Jewish learning and Jewish life. Akin to the Siyyum (the celebration which formally marks the completion of study of a rabbinical text), the Bar- or Bat Torah observance recognizes a significant step in an adult’s Jewish education and personal growth in mitzvot.

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History of BEKI

Second in a series. Based on the work of Alan Gelbert, Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel, and others. The first part was published in the [March 2001 – Adar 5760](#) issue of the BEKI Bulletin.

Part Two: Keser Israel

In 1909 a small group of Jewish families who had settled in the Dixwell Avenue neighborhood dreamed of a Temple to be the focal point of their community. The handful of families purchased a building on Foote Street and the Congregation Keser Israel was born.

Over the years, the dream of growth came true and the Foote Street building could no longer contain the congregation. In 1945 Keser Israel joined the Conservative movement, and invited to the pulpit Rabbi Leon Spitz, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Spitz was a scholar and a man of great organizational ability.

In 1948 Dr. Frederick M. Pashall, who served as president for a decade, along with committee chairmen Abraham Gubin, Isadore Miller, Herman Paul and Nathan Sosensky, began a fund drive. They sold the Foote Street building and purchased the Norton Street Congregational Home. Unexpectedly, however, the Plymouth Church on the corner of Chapel Street and Sherman Avenue was put up for sale. The president, assisted by Louis Scherban and Goodwin D. Wolff, purchased the building in the name of Congregation Keser Israel.

The building seemed to have been made for Keser Israel. It was half fortress and half enchanted castle. No two walls were the same, no two towers identical. It was an imposing palace, but somehow off-beat, *heimish* (warm). It did not overwhelm the congregation, but gave it a personality, a sense of being at home in its own special home. The congregation took its time to settle into that home. Abraham Gubin, Louis Scherban and Samuel

Smith traveled all around, looking at synagogue sanctuaries, in search of ideas. Jack Levine supervised the decoration of the main hall, in which there emerged an ark and bima that seemed to have belonged in that old building all along.

By 1951 the congregation was ready to formally dedicate this new House of Worship. Rabbi Spitz, the "Altar Builder," as he was called, had left for a "fine Philadelphia Congregation." A new rabbi was brought in to be installed at the same time, to be consecrated to Keser Israel together with the friendly castle: Rabbi Andrew Klein, whose warmth, rapport with children, and ecumenical spirit were to become legendary in New Haven and beyond.

Merger

Minutes of the Board of Directors meetings show that talks of merger of Beth El and Keser Israel date as far back as 1960, mostly between individual members. However, when official committees were

appointed, they never got very far. Beth El held merger talks with both Beth Sholom in Hamden and Keser Israel in 1962. These were stalemated.

On the surface, merger seemed a natural thing when official committees were again appointed in 1966. Both congregations had their troubles. Beth El's growth was steady, but there was a large financial overhead of the building, new school wing (1964) and staff. Keser Israel had experienced a decline in membership of younger families with children in the religious school. The main stumbling block was finding a financial arrangement that was acceptable as fair to both sides. Beth El had gone through a Building Fund campaign and felt that new people should not come in through merger without some financial contribution beyond the value of their synagogue property. The figure they set was not acceptable to Keser Israel and negotiations were again broken off.

The on-again, off-again romance warmed up in

ON THE SURFACE, MERGER SEEMED A NATURAL THING WHEN OFFICIAL COMMITTEES WERE AGAIN APPOINTED IN 1966. BOTH CONGREGATIONS HAD THEIR TROUBLES.

1967, at the same time Keser Israel was planning renovation of the sanctuary. Rabbi Klein met with Rabbi Ofseyer and they agreed on their respective duties in a merged group. Rabbi Klein was to assume emeritus status. Talks were again cancelled. The event that changed the hearts and minds of most of Keser Israel's members was a most unfortunate one: Rabbi Andrew Klein passed away in July 1967.

Committees again worked out the final details such as memorials, constitution, cemeteries, board representation, etc. Each Keser Israel family taxed itself an amount based on the average Beth El contribution to the building fund. Chairman Alvin Mermin stated it beautifully in his report: "By so doing, we join the merged synagogue as equals, and with the unqualified privilege of becoming involved fully in its affairs and administration – for it indeed will belong to us, and our children, for many years to come – and with God's help, may we all live to participate and enjoy it."

Both Congregations voted approval of the merger on 31 March 1968. Commenting in 1985, Rabbi Elliot Gertel noted that "seventeen years having passed, all vestiges of 'this group' or 'that group' have disappeared and the best features of each have come forward in a truly melded congregation."

Downs and Ups

The merged synagogues, called Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, boasted in the fall of 1968 a membership of more than 600 families with more than 200 children in the Religious school. The fortunes of the times, however, ceased smiling. The City of New Haven hired a new Superintendent of schools who introduced a program of racial integration before it became a popular notion. For many years, Sheridan Junior High School in the Westville area, with a largely white student body, had a relatively high academic standing. Some of the Sheridan children were to be bused to other areas of the city. Many parents, including congregation members, feared that the admixture of

their children with those from families they viewed as "less motivated" would lead to a decline in educational quality. They saw their choice as: leave town or send the children to a private school. Some left town, and the congregation. Others who left the city stayed with the congregation only until the children completed their studies in the Religious School. New Jewish families with young children avoided the city or sent their children to the Hebrew Day School (Orthodox) or Ezra Academy (Conservative). With the financial burdens of private school education, many families chose to avoid a synagogue commitment. By the late 1970s Beth El-Keser Israel membership was smaller and older.

Paul Goodwin reassumed the presidency in the years 1978 to 1980 with a specific goal: to engineer a merger with the Orange Synagogue Center. Orange had a substantial membership of young families but not enough room in their building for an adequate school or for social functions. BEKI had excellent facilities and was currently without a rabbi. The distance between the synagogues represented a 10- or 15-minute car ride.

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BEKI Leaders in 1980, L-R: Alan Gelbert, Lillian Levine, Paul Goodwin, Violet & Charles Ludwig

BEKI Events

April - Nisan - Iyar

2001

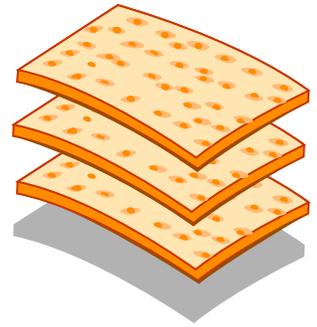
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 Nisan 1	9 Nisan 2	10 Nisan 3	11 Nisan 4	12 Nisan 5	13 Nisan 6	14 Nisan 7
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Religious School and Pesach Program 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:15p Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Search for Hametz</i> <i>Fast of the First Born</i> 8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Benei Mitzva Prgm 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit <i>Office Closes @ 12noon</i> 6:00p Minha-Maariv 7:05p EDT Candles	<i>Shabbat Hagadol</i> 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs Minha 1:00p (Note Special Time) <i>First Seder</i> Candles after 8:00p
15 Nisan 8	16 Nisan 9	17 Nisan 10	18 Nisan 11	19 Nisan 12	20 Nisan 13	21 Nisan 14
<i>Pesach</i> 9:15a Festival Service No Religious School No Minha-Maariv Service 6:45p Community Seder at Bnai Jacob	<i>Pesach</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 9:00a Festival Service No Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Hol Hamoed</i> 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit No Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Intermediate Days</i> 8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:15p Principles of Judaism 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Minha-Maariv 7:13p Candles	<i>Pesach</i> 9:15a Shaharit <i>Kiddush Sponsor: Syma Solovitch</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a SSLM 5:45p Minha Candles after 8:06p
22 Nisan 15	23 Nisan 16	24 Nisan 17	25 Nisan 18	26 Nisan 19	27 Nisan 20	28 Nisan 21
<i>Pesach</i> <i>Yizkor</i> 9:15a Festival Service No Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Office Closed for Vacation</i>					9:15a Shaharit <i>Alexandra Katz Bat Mitzva</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 5:45p Minha
29 Nisan 22	30 Nisan 23	1 Iyar 24	2 Iyar 25	3 Iyar 26	4 Iyar 27	5 Iyar 28
9:00a Shaharit No Religious School 10:00a 20s/30s Havura Group Brunch 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:15p Alef-Bet Workshop	<i>Rosh Hodesh</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:45p Sisterhood Meeting <i>Speaker: Rabbi Murray Levine</i>	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Yom Hazikaron</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:15p Religious School 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Yom Ha'atzmaut</i> 8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:15p Principles of Judaism 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Minha-Maariv 7:27p Candles	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 5:45p Minha <i>Eric Sachs Bar Mitzva (Afternoon)</i>
6 Iyar 29	7 Iyar 30					
9:00a Shaharit 9:30a Religious School and Book Fair 4:00p Siddur Workshop 5:45p Minha-Maariv 6:15p Alef-Bet Workshop	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv		Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Minha-Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan TNS=The New [Religious] School KISS=Kids in Shul when there's no School	<u>BEKI phone numbers:</u> (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Religious School x13 Rabbi x10 Kulanu x33	<u>Office Hours:</u> Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p	<u>BEKI email:</u> Office: BEKI@snet.net Rabbi: jjtilsen@beki.org Anne Johnston: anne@beki.org website: www.beki.org

Sisterhood General Meeting

A **Sisterhood** meeting is scheduled for Monday 23 April at 7:45p. Our guest speaker is **Rabbi Murray Levine**. His topic is "Rosh Hodesh: A Woman's Holiday." Come and learn how and where it is being observed by the modern woman of today. Do bring your friends for an informative and delightful evening. Our special desserts will also please your palate.

Grace Geisinger



Benei Mitzva

Alexandra Katz, daughter of Matthew Katz & Ronni Rabin, will lead and participate in services as a bat mitzva on the morning of 21 April. The service begins at 9:15a. Alex is a graduate of BEKI's religious school and of the BEKI **Benei Mitzva Program**.



Alexandra Katz



Calling all Hebrew School Alumni/ae

On Shabbat morning 19 May, The New School at BEKI will celebrate the learning of its students, past and present, by participating in the Shabbat morning service. We invite any interested alumni / ae to contact the TNS office, 389-2108 x13, to volunteer to participate.

Ramah Family Camp

The Ramah Family Camp will be held from Thursday 24 May to Sunday 27 May 2001 at Camp Ramah in Palmer, MA. The camp is for the Entire Family. For information call 781-449-7090 x231 or ramahfamilycamp@yahoo.com. Camp Ramah serves as the camping arm of the **Conservative Movement**.



Eric Sachs

Eric Sachs, son of Mark & Ilene Sachs, grandson of Ivan & Rita Sachs, and nephew of Ken & Linda Buckman, will lead and participate in services on the Shabbat afternoon and evening of 28 April. The service begins at 5:45p. Eric is a graduate of BEKI's religious school and of the BEKI **Benei Mitzva Program**.



*Rabbi Andrew Klein
painting by Loring*

History of BEKI

Continued from page 9

An “engagement” for one year was arranged during which Shabbat services were held in alternate buildings. Beth El-Keser Israel easily contained both groups for the High Holidays. The Orange group really wanted a synagogue in their own backyard and contemplated ultimate sale of the BEKI building and new construction in Orange. The “marriage” never occurred.

Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel came to BEKI in the spring of 1982. With typical thoroughness he had surveyed the area and was convinced that there was a substantial number of uncommitted Jewish families who were potential members. People were also beginning to move back to the city, and Westville was still a good neighborhood in which to live. The congregation kept the dues low, with inducements for young families, but largely through the efforts of the Rabbi, some former resignees returned to the fold. The Rabbi also established the “BEKI Choir” in the fall of 1982 for Friday evening and other special services.

A jointly operated Hebrew School with Congregation Sinai, West Haven, was founded in the summer of 1983. By the fall of 1984, The Westville Synagogue, an Orthodox congregation, had joined the new United Hebrew School of Greater New Haven, a dream that was envisioned and discussed many years ago but never brought to life until then. Other congregations were invited to participate in this idea of creating a community-wide religious school. But no other congregations joined. Rabbi Gertel also fostered the establishment of a Hebrew School Endowment Fund. The interest on the fund is used to defray the costs of BEKI’s expenses in

operating the school, thus easing the burden on the synagogue’s general budget. Having a religious school once again was a major stimulus in developing young membership. But by 1996, due to declining demographic trends, Congregation Sinai withdrew from the School. In 2000, the School was dissolved, in part due the desire of some BEKI families to develop a school more closely integrated with the Congregation and more closely projecting its values as a traditional egalitarian Conservative synagogue.

Following Rabbi Gertel’s move to a larger and more prominent congregation in Chicago in 1988,

Rabbi Steven Kane served the Congregation until 1993. During those years, he cultivated the Congregation’s appeal to traditionally observant Conser-

vative Jews, and worked diligently to develop the Congregation’s membership and educational programs.

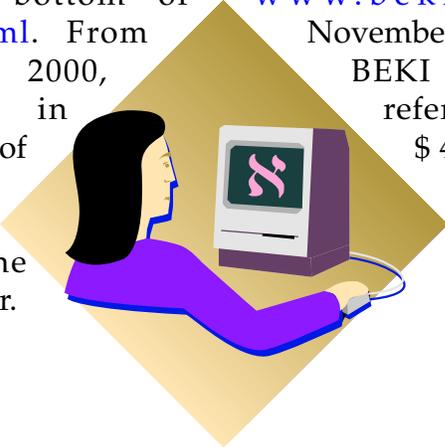
During the years following the merger, despite the continuing efforts of the synagogue leadership, the synagogue faced frequent budget shortfalls and was forced to defer certain building maintenance. While some positive movement was felt, the general trend of synagogue membership was down. By 1994, following Rabbi Kane’s departure, the Congregation’s membership stood at 204 families, the roof leaked, the parking lot had sinkholes, the heating and cooling plants were failing frequently, the carpets were tattered and the paint peeling. Some congregational leaders spoke of seeking merger partners or of ceasing operations.

BY 1994, FOLLOWING RABBI KANE’S DEPARTURE, THE CONGREGATION’S MEMBERSHIP STOOD AT 204 FAMILIES, THE ROOF LEAKED, THE PARKING LOT HAD SINKHOLES . . . THE CARPETS WERE TATTERED AND THE PAINT PEELING.

To be continued

Buying Books?

Buying books, music, software, or electronics on the internet? BEKI earns a small referral fee for purchases made from Amazon.com when the purchaser accesses Amazon from the Amazon icon at the bottom of www.beki.org/links.html. From November 1999 to October 2000, BEKI earned \$208.29 in referral fees on sales of \$4,169. There is no charge added to the purchaser.



Take Care of Your Cemetery Need

The time to take care of your cemetery need is before there is a need. Now is the perfect time to select your sites...while there is a good selection. BEKI cemeteries are located in Hamden and West Haven, within minutes of the synagogue and with easy access to main thoroughfares. Member discounts are available.

We can help you select a site and discuss payment terms. Call the BEKI Cemetery Association office today at 389-2108 x57 and arrange a meeting of one of the officers of the cemetery association. For directions to the cemeteries see our website at www.beki.org under "Directions."

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