February 2011 ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

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BEKI bulletin

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

Shevat-Adar I 5771 Vol. 17 Issue 2

Message from Rabbi Tilsen - Page 14

Benei Mitzva Qiddush Committee

Celebrating a bar- or bat-mitzva with the BEKI community is a joyous event. Unfortunately, the cost of providing a qiddush (refreshments/luncheon) for guests and the entire congregation has created financial hardship for some families and has precluded others from celebrating their benei mitzva in the BEKI community. In response to a demonstrated need for more affordable benei mitzva qiddush celebrations, a group of BEKI volunteers recently came together with the goal of creating a sustainable committee to enable all families, regardless of their financial resources, to celebrate a B'nai Mitzvah on Shabbat at BEKI. In December the BEKI Board approved the formation of the Benei Mitzva Qiddush Committee (BMQC).

BEKI members celebrating a Shabbat bar- or bat-mitzva at BEKI now have the option of (1) hiring a caterer to provide food for the qiddush; (2) having the BMQC prepare a dairy qiddush (for up to 250 people); or, (3) having the BMQC prepare a dairy qiddush and supplement with additional food from an approved establishment or caterer (for up to 300 people). The cost for the use of the BMQC will vary depending on the number of guests and the menu choices and families will remain responsible for things such as room rental costs, obtaining table linens and hiring servers. Families are asked to sign up to use the BMQC at least four (4) months before their event and are strongly encouraged to join this volunteer workgroup. (With less lead time, the BMQC may not be able to honor a request for service.)

The goal of the BMQC to make it possible for any member family, no matter what their financial situation is, to celebrate a Shabbat bar- or bat-mitzva at BEKI with a festive seuda. In light of that we have established a BMQC Tzedaqa Fund to help those families who cannot afford the monies required to use the BMQC. Not only are families who utilize the BMQC encouraged to contribute to this fund if they are able, the BMQC encourages others to consider donating as well.

For more details regarding the BMQC, please contact the BEKI office or go to www.beki.org/forms/bmqc.pdf . If you are interested in volunteering to become part of the BMQC, please contact Joy Kaufman (203) 387-7262.

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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:

- Call the Synagogue office: (203) 389-2108
- Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
- Email: jjtilsen@beki.org
- Visit our web page: www.beki.org

For advertising information, call the synagogue office.

Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the first of the month preceding publication.

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Torah Fund

Thank you to everyone who very generously responded to the 2010 Torah Fund appeal letter. All funds went directly to support The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS).

If you haven't responded, it's never too late!

Our BEKI Sisterhood is an affiliate of the national Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Through our Sisterhood and BEKI members we support the JTS in New York, the Zeigler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Our support of these schools assures our Conservative movement of its future rabbis, cantors, teachers and educated laity. Your support is vital and we do make a difference – perpetuating Judaism through these institutions and into our communities.

Send "Torah" cards for all occasions - - just $4 (includes postage) per card. It's easy to send one, just call me (203) 407-0314 and your card will go right out.

Thanks to the following who purchased cards recently.

Barbara Cushen
Torah Fund – BEKI Sisterhood

Mazel Tov to:

- Jennifer Botwick & Michael Ries on Jacob's Bar Mitzva from Muriel Banquer, BEKI Sisterhood
- George G. Posener on his 100th birthday from Barbara Cushen, Stanley Saxe, BEKI Sisterhood, Sylvia Zeid, Adele Tyson
- Get Well to:
- Lynda Greenberg from Barbara Cushen
- Arlene Campeau from Barbara Cushen
- Sam Kantrowitz from the Hesed Committee
- Morton Silver from the Hesed Committee
- Cards for own use: Rabbi Murray Levine

Thank You to:

- Violet & Charlie Ludwig from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe
- Sylvia Zeid from Barbara Cushen
- Dr. Samuel Bobrow from Louis Petrillo

In Memory of:

- Morris Cohen to Gloria Cohen from Muriel Banquer, Adele Tyson, Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe, Bea Smirnoff, Sylvia Zeid, the Hesed Committee, Violet & Charlie Ludwig
- Barzillai Cheskis to Rena Cheskis-Gold from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe, Violet & Charlie Ludwig, David Wright, the Hesed Committee
- Beatrice Hartley to Doris Dimenstein from Sheila Caplan, Adele Tyson
- Esther Prober to Daniel Prober from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe
- Arthur Nepiarsky to daughters Gail & Fran from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe
- Alvin Evans to Irma Evans from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe
- Oscar Kipperman to Reeva & Gary Lynes from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe
- Stanley Watsky (yahrzeit) to Dr. Kalman Watsky from Louis Petrillo
- Andrew Zemelman to Shelly Zemelman from Louis Petrillo
- Oscar Brown to Sid Levine from the Hesed Committee
- Susanne E. Kalem to William Hallo from Violet & Charlie Ludwig, the Hesed Committee

Sofer On Site

Sofer (Scribe) Rabbi Saul Teitelbaum plans to be at BEKI on Sunday morning Feb. 13 following the 9 a.m. shaharit service until at least noon to provide new mezuzuot scrolls and tefillin, and to inspect, repair and adjust tefillin. If you have a special need, you can contact him at (845) 536-3226, or just come on that Sunday morning. (If BRS is canceled due to weather, the visit will be postponed.)

Office Hours in February

The office will be closed on Friday Feb. 4 and Monday and Tuesday Feb. 7-8 for a staff holiday, and on Monday Feb. 21 in observance of Presidents Day.

Deli Boxes

Please support our youth activities by participating in our annual Super Deli Boxes Sale on Superbowl Sunday, Feb. 6. Whether you're having a party to watch the big game, eager for a break from cooking, or just want to support our programs, our delicious freshly made deli (meat, fish or vegetarian) boxes are the perfect solution. *Watch for order forms in the mail and via email*. We will also need volunteer help on Sat. evening Feb. 5 and on Sunday Feb. 6. For more information, contact Darryl Kuperstock (203) 387-0304 / kuperst@aol.com.

Weather or Not

Please exercise caution and allow extra travel time to and from BEKI and your other destinations. Daily and Shabbat services are held regardless of weather conditions. Office hours may be curtailed or canceled in inclement weather; please contact the office to confirm availability when in doubt.

Shabbat Schmooze

Sandra Valabregue on "God's Creation in Qabala," Feb. 26, following Qiddush (about 12:45 p.m.) in Rosenkrantz Family Library.

A Star is Born

Darcy McGraw and Bruce Altman are orchestrating a Purim spiel. Anyone from the Congregation with theatrical interests is invited to participate--especially kids. Contact Darcy or Bruce at darcymcgraw@comcast.net or baltman2@comcast.net.

BEKI-BJ Kadima (for grades 5-8)

Have questions about what Kadima can offer your child (now, or in the future)? Advisor Sarah Oren will be at BEKI for Shabbat Feb. 12 to meet and greet kids of all ages and their parents.

Ezra Academy at BEKI Shabbat

The time has come to celebrate Ezra Shabbat at BEKI. This is a wonderful occasion to invite our children to participate in the Shabbat service, to celebrate their Jewish education and to collectively sponsor the Kiddush. As an added bonus this year, Rabbi Amanda Brodie will join us. She will be attending Shabbat services, leading the Children's Shabbat Havura and talking with members of our community about Ezra Academy.

If you can join us in sponsoring ($25 suggested donation), please let us know with a message to Peggy in the office (office@beki.org). If you or your children would like to participate in the service -- especially read from the Torah – let me know and I will compile a list, confer with the appropriate people and then get back to you on specifics. Keep in mind that some roles can only be fulfilled by Bar- or Bat-Mitzva aged or older participants; parents welcome; I will try to get as many participants involved where appropriate.

If you'd like me to invite your Ezra alumni, contact me c/o office@beki.org.

I look forward to celebrating our children's education together. — *Monica Starr*

A brief pause in skating at BEKI-BJ Kadima Ice Skating Event at Yale Rink in December.

BEKI members visit patients at the VA Hospital with B'nai Brith on Dec. 25. From left: Ina, Jennifer, Linden, Eva, HohoHarold, Jacob, David, Jay, Solomon and Michael

Darshanim

Baruch Levine will serve as *darshan* on Shabbat Sheqalim, *parashat* Pequdei, March 5.

Lauren Kempton will serve as *darshanit* on Shabbat parashat VaYiqra, March 12.

Shabbatot

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday at 10:45 a.m. in the office, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and proficient in the Shaharit (morning) and Torah services in a supportive setting. Expertly led by **Steven Fraade, Rabbi Alan Lovins, Rabbi Murray Levine, Rabbi Eric Silver** and others, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan is a nurturing exploration of practice and theory presented in a participatory, non-threatening and multi-generational setting. Many members who take advantage of this unique offering feel a deeper sense of awe born of increased understanding and appreciation of the services. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

Alan Lovins

Shabbat Afternoon Study Break

Each Shabbat afternoon from November through March, a 30-minute study break is held between the Shabbat Minha and Motse'ei Shabbat and Havdala services, featuring popular texts. The minha service begins on Shabbat (Saturday) afternoon at the same hour that candles were lit the night before, and ends about 85 minutes later. Set in the George G. Posener Daily Chapel, the service and study period are intimate, participatory and sometimes intense and uplifting.

Sundays

The Evolution of Judaism in the Second Temple Period

Explore topics in the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism and its evolution in the Second Temple period with Steven Fraade on three consecutive Sunday nights (March 6, 13 and 20) following the 5:45 afternoon & evening services. Steven Fraade is the Mark Taper Professor of the History of Judaism at Yale University; he teaches courses on rabbinic literature, the history of the Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. English and Hebrew texts (and occasionally texts in other languages) are provided. From 6:07 p.m. to 7 p.m. Suitable for adults and mature youth. Costume optional at March 20 class. Coffee, tea and hot cocoa available.

Steven Fraade

Mondays

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45 to 8:30 adults meet in the Library Chapel to read Rashi's commentary on the Torah. It is possible to join the study group for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Rashi purported to explain the *peshat* of the text, i.e., the meaning in its historical, literary and linguistic context. Visitors and new participants are welcome. The RSG began in January 1994 with the first verse of Genesis and is currently reading the final chapters of Deuteronomy. The Rashi Study Group meets immediately following the 7 o'clock *shaharit* morning service. Most participants attend the service before the Study Group. With Jon-Jay Tilsen.

Jon-Jay Tilsen

On Monday, Feb. 21, morning services begin at 9 o'clock, and the RSG begins at 9:45 a.m., marking Presidents' Day; the office is closed.

Wednesdays

Word for the Day

The Wednesday morning service (shaharit) features a 90-second "Hebrew word for the day" to promote the learning of Hebrew. The Hebrew language is highly structured. Most words are based on three-letter roots, and are made with a limited set of verb or noun forms. By learning a few dozen roots and a small set of word-forms, it is possible to roughly translate Hebrew words isolated from any context, something not normally possible in English. The Word for the Day often relates to the weekly scriptural readings, enhancing personal study and public Torah discussion. The Wednesday morning service normally begins at 7 o'clock and ends at 7:31. (The service ends later on Hol HaMoed Sukkot and Pesah, Hanuka and Rosh Hodesh; Word for the Day is not presented on those occasions.)

Rabbis' Study Group

Wednesdays with Murray is a week-

Continued on **Page 8**

Adult Studies

Continued from **Page 7**

ly study group exclusively for rabbis, facilitated by Rabbi Murray Levine. The Wednesday study group affords local rabbis an opportunity to pursue their own *talmud torah* (Torah study) in a "safe" setting and with opportunities to learn from each other's experience and insight. The study group meets Wednesday mornings in the Rosenkrantz Family Library. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

Murray Levine

Thursdays

Mini Morning Learning Service

The Thursday morning services are dedicated to encouraging those learning to serve as *ba`alei tefila* (precentors or prayer leaders), *ba`alei qeri'a* (Torah readers), *gabbaim* and other leaders, and are sometimes supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily morning service. Shaharit service is from 8:15 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. on Thursdays; on other weekdays, the service begins at 7 a.m..

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The *Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group* meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30). The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text; for others, it is a continuation of a long journey. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. Knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic is helpful but not required.

Isaiah Cooper

The Sanhedrin Study Group meets in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Family Library. For information, contact Isaiah Cooper at his law office icooper@cooperlaw.net .

Every Day

Divrei Torah on the Web

A collection of Divrei Torah (Torah commentaries) and essays by members and Rabbi Tilsen is posted on BEKI's website under "Adult Studies" and "Meet Rabbi Tilsen." Jonathan M. Freiman's devar Torah on parashat Bereishit is the most recently posted; see http://beki.org/dt/FreimanJM2010.pdf . For a complete list, see http://beki.org/hungry.html.

LifeCycle

Mazal Tov to

Dr. Jonathan Chernoff, son of Shula Chernoff, Fox Chase Cancer Center, on being named "cancer researcher of the year."

David & Rayna Belowsky on the birth of their granddaughter Lilly R. to Emily & David.

Samuel Kantrowitz,
of blessed memory

HaMaqom Yinahem

With sorrow we note the passing of

Susanne Elisabeth Kalem, sister of William Hallo (& Nanette Stahl)
Amy Aaland, wife of Jonathan Freiman, mother of Gabriel, Elijah and Caleb
Karol Citroen, grandfather of Sascha van Creveld
Gertrude Slopak, mother-in-law of David Schwartz
Samuel Kantrowitz, husband of Harriet, father of Richard and Sherry

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

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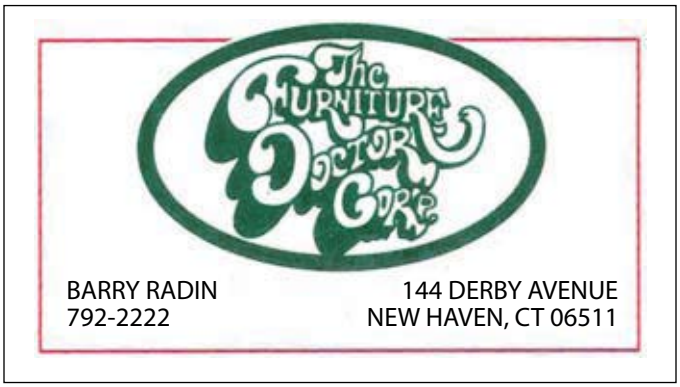

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Citizenship 101

You don't have to read, let alone memorize, the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights to be a good citizen or to know your rights. You don't need to know the stories about Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King Jr. to have insights into American ideals. You don't have to know American history, read the newspapers, or listen to public radio news to know what's going on. You can be a good American without any of that.

Likewise, you don't have to have read the Hebrew Bible, Mishna or Shulhan Arukh to be a good Jew or to understand your responsibilities. You don't need to know about Moses, Deborah, Rabbi Aqiva or David Ben Gurion to have insights into Jewish civilization. You don't have to know Jewish history, read *Haaretz* or the Jerusalem *Report*, or listen to Israel Radio's Qol Yisrael to know what's going on. You can be a good Jew without any of that.

You can live a full and rich life in America without speaking English. You can be a good American without voting, serving in the military, signing petitions or paying taxes. You can be a real American without listening to American music, reading American literature, watching American movies, and attending American theatre.

Likewise, you can be a good Jew without speaking Hebrew (or Yiddish, Ladino, Judeo-Aramaic or Judeo-Arabic). You can be a good Jew without belonging to or supporting a synagogue, contributing to the UJC, serving in the IDF, or participating in Jewish communal life. You can be fully Jewish without listening to Jewish music, reading Jewish literature, watching Jewish movies and attending Jewish performances.

You don't have to watch other actors on stage in order to learn to be a good actor. You don't have to watch players on the sports field to be a good player yourself, and you don't have to listen to good orators in order become a good orator. Likewise, you can participate and lead public services, chant from the Torah scroll, and present a devar Torah in synagogue well and skillfully without watching others do the same. Certainly our children can grow to be educated, empowered and proud participating Jews without continual training and involvement by their parents and other adults around them, just as a fire can ignite spontaneously.

There are more opportunities before us than we can take advantage of to participate in society. Our busy lives mean sometimes we have to take shortcuts. The full challenge, benefit, inspiration and enrichment from belonging to Jewish community and participating in civic life come in proportion to our engagement.

Being born Jewish or undergoing formal conversion is like belonging to a health club. The fact of formal membership provides great opportunities, but by itself provides little benefit. One must actually go to the gym and work out.

One can live a full life in America without being a citizen, and can be a citizen without living a full life as an American. One can participate richly in Jewish community without becoming legally Jewish, and one can be legally Jewish without participating in a community. But to do so is to miss the extraordinary opportunities before us.

Ben Hei Hei says, According to the effort is the reward
(Avot 5:23)
No pain, no gain
(Jane Fonda aerobics workout video)
There are no gains without pains
(Benjamin Franklin, *The Way to Wealth*)

February 2011

27 Shevat 5771 - 24 Adar I 5771

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 27 Shevat	2 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 28 Shevat	3 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 7:30pm Jewish Federation Demographic Study Session 29 Shevat	4 **Rosh Hodesh I** Office Closed/Staff Vacation 4:53pm Candle Lighting 30 Shevat	5 **Rosh Hodesh II** 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: Myer/Kempton 4:50pm Minha-Maariv 1 Adar I
6 9:00am Religious School 1:00pm Pomegranate Guild 2 Adar I	7 Office Closed/Staff Vacation 7:45am Rashi Study Group 3 Adar I	8 Office Closed/Staff Vacation 4 Adar I	9 Office Closed/Staff Vacation 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 5 Adar I	10 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 6 Adar I	11 5:02pm Candle Lighting BEKI-BJ Kadima Shabbat Dinner (off-site) 7 Adar I	12 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: Ezra Parents 5:00pm Minha-Maariv 8 Adar I
13 9:00am Religious School 9:30am Sofer (Scribe) Rabbi Saul Teitelbaum on site @ BEKI 9 Adar I	14 7:45am Rashi Study Group 7:30pm Executive Board Meeting (off-site) 10 Adar I	15 11 Adar I	16 8:30am Rabbi's Study Group 4:00pm Religious School 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program 12 Adar I	17 12:30pm Talmud Study Group 13 Adar I	18 **Purim Katan I** 5:11pm Candle Lighting 6:30pm 20/30's Havura Friday Night Dinner (off-site, reservations required) 14 Adar I	19 **Purim Katan II** 10:45am Children's Program Qiddush: Stanger/Colodner 5:10pm Minha-Maariv 15 Adar I
20 No Religious School 16 Adar I	21 Office Closed/President's Day 9:00am Shaharit 9:45am Rashi Study Group 17 Adar I	22 18 Adar I	23 No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Program 19 Adar I	24 No Talmud Study Group 20 Adar I	25 5:19pm Candle Lighting 21 Adar I	26 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddish: Chernoff 12:30pm Shabbat Schmooze with Sandra Valabregue-Perry "God's Creation in Qabala" USY Chapter Shabbaton 5:20pm Minha-Maariv 22 Adar I
27 USY Chapter Shabbaton No Religious School 23 Adar I	28 7:45am Rashi Strudy Group 7:30pm General Board Meeting 24 Adar I					

Mark Your Calendar

Deli Boxes: Feb. 6

Kadima: Shabbat Dinner at Benson & Tilsen Home, Feb. 11

Ezra Academy at BEKI Shabbat: Feb. 12

20s-30s Havura Dinner: Off-site Feb. 19

Shabbat Schmooze: Sandra Valabregue Feb. 26

Purim Basket order forms due: March 1

Service Times

Sundays	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
9 a.m. Shaharit	7 a.m. Shaharit	7 a.m. Shaharit	7 a.m. Shaharit	8:15 a.m. Shaharit	7 a.m. Shaharit	9:15 a.m. Shaharit
5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	5:45 p.m. Minha-Maariv	6 p.m. Minha-Maariv	5:45 p.m. Minha