

BEKI Bulletin

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December 2002 Vol. 8 Issue 12

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Tevet 5763

Baruch Levine to Teach at Robert Goodwin Shabbat



Baruch Levine

Prof. Baruch A. Levine will serve as guest *darshan* (Torah explicator) at the Robert Goodwin Memorial Shabbat on the morning 14 December 2002. Baruch is a professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University and an editor and major contributor to [Etz Hayim: Torah & Commentary](#), the *humash* (Bible) used in our services. Baruch and his wife

Corinne are BEKI members.

The Robert Goodwin Family established an endowment at the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven to provide an annual special program at Beth El-Keser Israel as a memorial to Robert Goodwin, of blessed memory. One of the four Goodwin Brothers and husband of Lilyan Goodwin, Robert Goodwin is remembered as an exceptionally personable man who enjoyed the love and respect of others, in part because of the exemplary way in which he fulfilled the mitzva of treating others with equality and dignity. He was a leader in the civic and Jewish communities, a good-natured man who, through his many contacts, enjoyed bringing fine speakers to BEKI. Two of his brothers, Louis Goodwin (of blessed memory) and Paul Goodwin (may he live and be well), served as presidents of the Congregation.



Robert Goodwin



Brian Karsif Awarded USCJ Honor

Past-president Brian Karsif received a prestigious award for exemplary service from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism at its regional meeting in Connecticut. Pictured here with Connecticut Valley Region Executive Director Miriam Benson, Brian was among a select group of synagogue activists recognized for their leadership contribution to our congregation and the Conservative Movement. Brian has served in numerous leadership capacities at BEKI and currently serves on the Rebuilding Campaign Committee and as an officer. Brian is married to Terri Stern.

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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 five miles-per-hour speed limit.

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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: 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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Social Transformation at BEKI

In the short span of 3,500 years, the status of Jewish women has changed from that of virtual chattel to becoming the near-equals of Jewish men, at least as reflected in law and custom. This break-neck pace of social change seemed to accelerate in the twentieth century. Those who work for “social change” know that nothing comes without a struggle.

In our BEKI community, the rapid (in “historical terms”) advance of women was substantially aided by the wisdom and leadership of Louis Friedman, of blessed memory, who served as *shamash* (Ritual Director) and educator for over 40 years, until his retirement in 1993. While rabbis, cantors, teachers, presidents and members came and went, Mr. Friedman provided continuity to a community during years of transition and turmoil. Moreover, Mr. Friedman endorsed and promoted the development of “egalitarianism” in synagogue ritual. This endorsement, from a man steeped in Torah and tradition, made it almost impossible for anyone to challenge this development while staying within the BEKI community. His endorsement enabled those with doubts to feel that this “new” approach was fully legitimate and authentic.

At the same time, it was the efforts of women such as Adele Tyson, may she live and be well, who served as president of the synagogue “long ago” so that in the 21st century, there is no novelty about women serving in any capacity in the synagogue.

I now realize how fortunate I was to grow up in St. Paul (the city, not the church), where “egalitarianism” was the norm even in the 1960s and 1970s. It was not until I was an adult that I realized that there really were large Jewish communities that actually separated men and women.

Our children are growing up in a community where it is normal for men and women alike to take part, as equals, in synagogue ritual and in other aspects of synagogue life. This is as it should be. If our children encounter congregations where this is not the case, it will be up to the leaders and rabbis of those other congregations to explain to our curious children, if they can, just why such deviant practices as prohibiting women from being called to the Torah are truly Jewish and in keeping with law and tradition.

Before we knock ourselves out patting ourselves on the back, however, we should note that there are still a number of unaddressed issues associated with our development as an equal-opportunity congregation. Among these is the question of head covering for women.



Rabbi Tilsen

About four years ago, the Ritual Committee adopted a regulation requiring women called to the Torah or who are leading services to have a head covering. Other women, however, are not asked to cover their head, whereas men, even non-Jewish visitors, are required to have their head covered at least in the sanctuary or chapel.

In our religious school, boys but not girls are required to wear headcoverings. While it is true that there is no rule stated in the Torah that men (or women) must cover their heads, headcovering has been a required practice for many generations. In the case of men, this requirement has been almost universal, and in the case of women, only a little less so.

For our Religious School, it would be possible not to require headcovering for anyone; to continue with the present policy of requiring it for boys but only “encouraging” it for girls; or to require all students to cover their heads.

Were we not to require headcovering for anyone, we would be departing from a standard practice of traditional Judaism and specifically from the *halakha* (law) as stated in the Conservative Movement. If we maintain the present policy, we perpetuate a non-essential difference in the rights and duties of men and women, and we do so without knowing what this fact may signify to our children. But if we require all students (and faculty) to have a headcovering, we are creating a new “mitzva” – one more commandment for children who already have many responsibilities.

The current policy is a “default” position based on the particular history of our congregation and its religious school. It does not represent the outcome of a thoughtful process. If this issue deserves a thoughtful policy, let that process begin.

Reader response is welcome.

For further study see www.jewishencyclopedia.com *cv* bareheadedness; *Teshuvot Vaad HaHalakha shel Keneset HaRabanim BeYisrael*, vol. 6, 5755-5756, “*havishat kipa*.”

A Message from Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton

November was Jewish Book Month and all of New Haven and the surrounding towns were alive with sales, lectures, and presentations celebrating Jewish learning. Our congregation lovingly and wholeheartedly supports Talmud Torah Meyuhad, a class held during Religious School for students with special needs. In late October Talmud Torah Meyuhad conducted a Book Sale, capably chaired by Doron Ben-Atar and Pam Howard, lead teacher of TTM. I had the good fortune to staff the Book Sale the day before opening. I entered the Vine Auditorium to find 10,000 books in cartons. Since I was early, it fell upon me to begin the organization of categories for the sale.

At first, the categories were easy: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Judaica, Self-Help, and Children's Books. But as the piles grew, the categories became more precise and more workers arrived. As I opened each box, some aspect of the donor's life emerged. Some boxes held all paperbacks, bestsellers of a time gone by. Some boxes held scholarly books, perhaps used for a dissertation or an advanced degree. Another carton revealed videotapes; some greeting cards, some even old bills!

As I worked my excitement grew... here are books I can use for Religious School...books for our Israel 55 celebration...books for our study of the Third Aliya to Israel in Grades Six and Seven and more. "Chronicles," books from the fifties that portray Jewish history as newspaper articles and headlines to create the teachable moment, a lovely Israeli Passover Hagada illustrated with the flora and fauna of Israel and the Encyclopedia Judaica for research in Religious School.

Then my "book lens" became more personal - a fifty year old book on the United States Navy for my son Brett, a Navy Veteran, a History of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish for my husband Brooks. Yet the most amazing purchase was a Mr. Rogers video. My oldest son just turned 33. So before computers and video games, Game Boys and CD players, we had only educational television. Twenty-nine years ago, when he was four, Mr. Rogers was his hero. Each afternoon after school, he would change into his loden green button up sweater and put on his slippers (for this was what Mr. Rogers wore on the show). Then at 4:00 we would sing together, "It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood, a beautiful day in the neighborhood; won't you be my neighbor." Seeing the video cover brought back a flood of memories...fast forward to 1994, my son Larry's graduation from Boston University. The honorary doctoral degree recipient was - yes, Mr. Rogers. So 10,000 graduates stood and sang, as they did as children, "It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."



Dr. Lauren Kempton

During National Jewish Book Month, it was a beautiful month for Jewish learning. Perhaps I am old fashioned, but there is nothing like the touch or smell of a book. In this electronic age of information I believe we must return to the teaching of the love of and respect for books. November was a good month for those lessons.

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A Message from President Dr. Gila Reinstein

BEKI is buzzing with activity. The days may be short and cold, but the shul is warm and welcoming. Hanuka is here. The Religious School, youth groups, and adult education are all in high gear.

The autumn that's drawing to a close has been a good one. We've had one simha after another, with benei mitzva leading services, reading Torah and delivering mature and insightful divrei Torah. Later this month, Gilah Benson-Tilsen will celebrate her bat mitzva, and we'll share the joy with Rabbi Tilsen, Miriam Benson, Tsvi, Tova and their entire family.

One Shabbat in October was dedicated to welcoming our new members and bringing unaffiliated friends to the congregation. During services and at the oneg Shabbat afterward, Yale's Jewish a capella group, Magevet, sang and taught new melodies. Their beautiful voices wove dazzling harmonies, and their college humor delighted us.

More than 200 people came that morning, including quite a few new and prospective members who had been personally invited by a team headed up by Jessey Palumbo, chair of the Membership Committee. The same excellent team coordinated all aspects of the event—flyers, decorations, qiddush lunch, and more. People stayed until nearly 2p, because they were having such a good time. As Jessey noted, "We loved this special Shabbat." And we'll do it again.

Building on that momentum, we have begun to hold informal sing-alongs during qiddush, roughly once a month, led by Sascha van Creveld and other gifted and enthusiastic singers. The next one will be 14 December, during a qiddush which is presented in memory of Robert Goodwin. Plan to stay a little longer than usual and join in the zemirot.



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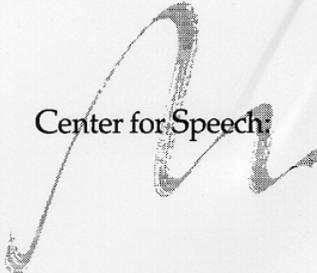
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Benei Mitzva Observances

Jochai Ben-Avie, son of Michael Ben-Avie & Sascha van Creveld, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Sunday 1 December, the Second Day of Hanuka. The service will begin at 9:15a for this special day. Jochai is a graduate of the BEKI Religious School and the [Benei Mitzva Preparation Program](#).

Gilah Benson-Tilsen, daughter of Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen & Miriam Benson, will lead and participate in services as a bat mitzva on Shabbat 20-21 December, *parashat VaYehi*. Gilah is a student at Ezra Academy and a graduate of the BEKI [Benei Mitzva Preparation Program](#).

To mark the beginning of Gilah's acceptance of adult responsibilities toward God and Humanity, her family has endowed the **Gilah Benson-Tilsen Fund for Youth at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel**, to be managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. Proceeds from this fund will provide ongoing support for Youth activities in our Congregation. This is one way we wish to express our appreciation to our community, and to the Almighty, for the blessings of love, joy and Torah that we experience through Gilah.

Letters

Thank you for sponsoring the qiddush in our honor and for the lovely gifts. Our new address is 5855 Bartlett Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217, (412) 422-8064. Please keep in touch.

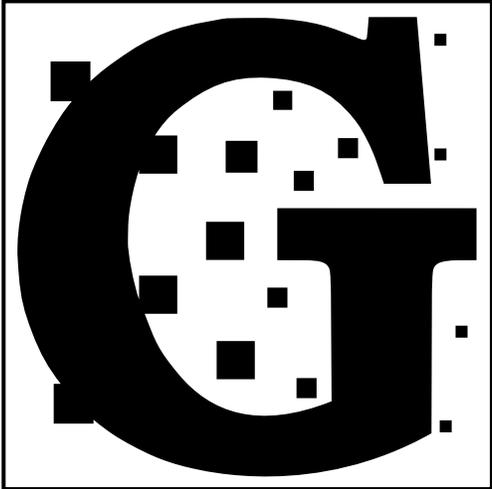
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BEKI Religious School

This month finds the students of BEKI Religious School focused on two studies: the birth of Israel and the holiday of Hanuka. Ongy Zisling, our teen Emissary from Afula has been visiting classes to teach about both historic and present day Israel. Ongy hails from Kibbutz Ein Haron in the Afula-Gilboa region, sister city to New Haven. In the Fifth Grade he taught about Kibbutz life. The students in Rita Sela's class received letters from their counterparts on Kibbutz Ein Harod. They translated the letters from Hebrew to English and wrote back in both languages. For the Sixth and Seventh grades, Ongy taught about the history of the kib-

butz movement and the founding of the State of Israel. His grandfather was the first Minister of Agriculture for the state of Israel and a signer of the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

For Hanuka the Religious School students experienced a special program called "The Olive Press." The students operated the olive press and made olive oil for their menoras as in days of old. The students also made Hanuka cards and decorations for Tower One and Tower East. The upper school students and the Benei Mitzva class helped with food preparation through the Interfaith Ministry Council.



KISS: Kids in Shul when they close the School

BEKI's unique "Kids In Shul when they close the School" program, also known as the "Snow Day" program, offers a fun-filled Judaic program for elementary-school aged children on a day when Ezra Academy and public schools are closed for conferences and holidays when parents may have to work. KISS meets on Monday 9 December from 8:00a to 3:00p. It will also meet if schools close

due to snowfall or inclement weather. Space is limited. Call Lauren Kempton at 389-2108 x33 or email her at lkempton@beki.org to reserve your space or fax in the [registration form](#) available from the office.

The phone number of the Claire Goodwin Youth Room, where KISS meets, is (203) 389-2108 x35.



BEKI Events

December - Kislev - Tevet

5763

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Kislev 1	27 Kislev 2	28 Kislev 3	29 Kislev 4	30 Kislev 5	1 Tevet 6	2 Tevet 7
<i>Hanuka</i> 9:15a Shaharit <i>Jochai Ben-Avie Bar Mitzva</i> No Religious School 5:45p Maariv	<i>Hanuka</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv	<i>Hanuka</i> 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	<i>Hanuka</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	<i>Hanuka</i> 8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	<i>Hanuka / Rosh Hodesh</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:06p Candles 6:00p Maariv 8:00p Late Service	<i>Hanuka</i> 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a Children's Programs 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
3 Tevet 8	4 Tevet 9	5 Tevet 10	6 Tevet 11	7 Tevet 12	8 Tevet 13	9 Tevet 14
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 8:00a-3:00p KISS Program 5:45p Maariv 7:30p Executive Board (Off-Site)	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:06p Candles 6:00p Maariv	9:15a Shaharit <i>Robert Goodwin Memorial Shabbat</i> <i>Darshan: Baruch Levine</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
10 Tevet 15	11 Tevet 16	12 Tevet 17	13 Tevet 18	14 Tevet 19	15 Tevet 20	16 Tevet 21
<i>Fast Day</i> 9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv 7:45p General Board	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	<i>Office Closed-Vacation</i>		9:15a Shaharit <i>Gilah Benson-Tilsen Bat Mitzva</i> 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Children's Programs 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
17 Tevet 22	18 Tevet 23	19 Tevet 24	20 Tevet 25	21 Tevet 26	22 Tevet 27	23 Tevet 28
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Maariv	<i>Office Closed-Vacation</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	<i>Office Closed</i> 7:00a Shaharit No Religious School No Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:12p Candles 6:00p Maariv 8:00p Late Service	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
24 Tevet 29	25 Tevet 30	26 Tevet 31				
9:00a Shaharit No Religious School 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Maariv	Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan	Office Hours: Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p	BEKI phone numbers: (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Religious School x13 Rabbi x10 Dr. Lauren Kempton x 33	Email Addresses: Office: beki@snet.net Rabbi: jjtilsen@beki.org Religious School/Education Director: lkempton@beki.org Benei Mitzva Teacher: aschultz@beki.org website: www.beki.org

Late Service in December

During December, an 8:00p Late Service, lead by Irving Weinstein & Kevin Mack with Rabbi Tilsen, will be held on the 6th and 27th. An Oneg Shabbat Reception is presented by Sisterhood following the Late Service. In addition, a 6:00p service is held every Friday night. Both services are held in the George Posener Daily Chapel.



Irving Weinstein

Weekday Morning Services

Begin your day with spiritual renewal and fellowship. The Monday morning service (7:00a to 7:45a) includes a brief Torah service, and is followed by the [Rashi Study Group](#) (7:45a to 8:30a). Tuesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) are attended by a unique mix of people. Wednesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) features a continuing group of friends. Thursday mornings (8:15a to 9:00a) are ideal for people who either may not wish to rise earlier or who bring children to school, and includes a brief Torah service. It is perfect for those who wish to avoid crowds. Friday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) present an ideal setting for someone wishing to help develop a cadre of dedicated daily *daveners*.

In addition to fulfilling the daily mitzvot of *qeriat shema* (recitation of the Shema), *tefila* (prayer), *Talmud Torah* (study) and *Tzedaka* (charity), attendance also affords those in mourning a Minyan so that they can recite *qaddish*. Audio recordings of some of the prayers are available at the BEKI website under "Audio Library." Regular participants in these services are always glad to welcome additional worshipers. Call our office at 389-2108 x14 or see www.beki.org/schedule.html for a complete schedule.

Shabbat Minha Afternoon & Maariv Evening & Havdala on Winter Schedule

Shabbat afternoon and Saturday evening services follow a winter schedule from November through March. Services on *Shabbat* (Saturday) afternoon begin about 20 minutes before sunset. As the time varies, please check the calendar in this Bulletin or www.beki.org/schedule.html for exact times for each week.

Tiqun Olam – Social Action Habitat

BEKI has joined Habitat for Humanity's [Covenant of Faith](#)." We are volunteering to work with other local congregations in rebuilding two houses on Rosette Street in New Haven. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old to work at the site. BEKI volunteers will work on Sunday 8 December from 11:00a to 4:00p. If you make financial contributions to Habitat, please designate them as "Covenant Build/BEKI." For planning purposes, Habitat must know how many volunteers are coming at least one week in advance. For information or to volunteer, contact Elisabeth Youngerman at 248-5832 or jongot@aol.com.

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To charge your donation or make your payment to BEKI with VISA or Mastercard on the internet, go to www.beki.org and click on the "Donate" button.



Planning Ahead...

If you are interested in including BEKI in your estate planning or current planned charitable giving, please feel free to contact estate planning attorney Donna Levine at 787-1633 (sdsij@aol.com). You may also contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) or David Tein at The Jewish Foundation at 387-2424 x304 (dtein@jewishnewhaven.org) for a confidential discussion.

Buying Books on the Web

Those buying books over the Internet can find a registered referral link on BEKI's website to Amazon.com. If you are ordering books through Amazon.com, and you get there through our website, a 5% referral fee will go to BEKI. There is no cost to the book purchaser. The link is at BEKI's Website under "links" at the bottom of the page — you'll see the Amazon.com logo.

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Torah for the Hungry Mind - Continuing Education

Rashi Study Group

Each Monday morning from 7:45a to 8:30a a small group of adults meets in the Rabbi's Study to read Rashi's commentary to the Torah. It is possible to attend for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. For more information, don't call; just come once and find out what it is about.

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan for adults meets in BEKI's [Rosenkrantz Family Library](#) every second *Shabbat* (Saturday) morning year-round from 10:45a to noon. The SSLM meets on the 14th & 28th of December. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

Pirque Avot Study

The *Pirque Avot* – Ethics of our Sages Study Session is held every Shabbat afternoon before the evening service from November through March. This period of study gives a taste of the wisdom of our sages and an opportunity to discuss the application of the teachings to our lives. *Pirque Avot* is a section of the Mishna, the law compendium compiled in the second century CE by Rabbi Yehuda

HaNasi. Unlike the rest of the Mishna, *Avot* does not contain legal material, but rather records the wise sayings and provocative insights of sages spanning several centuries. The study session lasts 30 to 40 minutes. As the time of the class varies from week to week, please consult the calendar when you plan to attend.

Required Reading & Reference Books on Web

A listing of basic Judaic reference and introductory works is posted on BEKI's website at www.beki.org/books.html with a brief annotation by Rabbi Tilsen. Copies are also available in BEKI's literature rack.

Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group

The "Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group" meets weekly on Thursdays from 12:30p to 1:30p at a downtown New Haven professional office. The Group has met weekly since 1999. For many participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. For information contact Marc at 562-9873 or mschwartzmd@hotmail.com.



Benei Mitzva Program

The Benei Mitzva class has been working very hard on their prayers and blessings. The focus this year is on a special project called Mitzva Heroes. Each of the thirteen young people has chosen a Mitzva Hero to research for the class. Many of the heroes are from our own BEKI congregation; one is of blessed memory and some are abroad. Each student will interview their Mitzva Hero and author a three to five page biography. We will have a celebratory dinner on 29 May to honor the class and their Mitzva heroes. We are inspired by the quotation: "Through the mitzvot, Jews try to raise the common everyday to a higher level of meaning — to grant significance to what by its very nature is devoid of such significance. Not only do mitzvot sanctify our actions, we become more god-like in performing them."

LK

Kulanu and Saul's Circle

November was a month of special programs for members of Kulanu and Saul's Circle. Fellowship Place hosted two special programs in the Learning Barn. The first program concerned Native Americans. The participants learned a bit of Indian lore and heard Native American songs. Instruments were provided for accompaniment to the native legends told. Dr. Lauren Kempton also conducted a program on Abraham, Father of Three Faiths, and a Hanuka celebration, complete with latkes, menorah lighting, dreidels and stories. A Hanuka program at Chapel Haven was another fun event on the holiday schedule.

We are still looking for volunteers for a Pairing Program devised by Rob Biggs. If you have one hour a week to volunteer, please call Lauren Kempton at 389-2108, Ext. 13.

Yizkor Book Committee

The Yizkor Book Committee needs help with a detailed large mailing in the late Spring and with layout, production and proofreading during the summer months. If you can make a commitment of your time, energy and creativity please contact Darryl Kuperstock at 387-0304 or kuperst@aol.com.

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