ENDOWMENT & BEQUEST QIDDUSH
WHERE THERE IS A WILL...

On Shabbat morning Jan. 10, we will dedicate a qiddush in recognition of those who have supported the Congregation through the establishment of endowments or through estate planning. If you have included BEKI in your plans — whether through a bequest, by designating BEKI as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance, or through the establishment of a trust or annuity — and would allow us to share that fact with the community with the hope of encouraging others to follow your lead, kindly give us your permission in the form of a note to our office (office@beki.org) by Jan. 5 (to ensure inclusion in this year’s recognition), or after that date to be included the next time such recognition is offered.

Rabbi Moshe Murray Levine will serve as darshan that morning, on which we read parashat VaYehi, the closing

Financial Meltdown: How Did We Get Into This Mess?

David Kuperstock, former insurance executive, will be the featured speaker at a BEKI brunch on Sunday, Jan. 11. Brunch will begin at approximately 9:45 following the morning service, which begins at 9 o’clock. David hopes to explain some of the financial instruments, procedures and polices that led to our current financial challenges.

The morning service and brunch are open to the public and free. Brunch participants are encouraged to make a $5 donation to defray costs.

David was second vice president for research and concept development at Phoenix Life, and before that, a vice president for American Skandia/Prudential Annuities. He earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Chicago and his law degree from DePaul University College of Law. He and his wife, Darryl Rotman Kuperstock, are active members of BEKI.

Brunches at BEKI are coordinated by Carole Bass and Helen Rosenberg. For more information, call the synagogue office at 389-2108 or visit www.beki.org.
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: jtilsen@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. Annual subscription is $36

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Charles Ludwig

New to New Haven?
If you have a friend, colleague or neighbor who is new to New Haven or who is not yet a synagogue member, please let our office know (office@beki.org) so we can send them a welcome and invitation to visit and join BEKI.

Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel
Ask us about establishing a fund, trust or annuity to ensure BEKI’s future.

Charitable giving strengthens our Community and provides the donor with tax savings.

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Endowment
Continued from Page 1

chapters of the book of Genesis.

An annotated listing of currently funded endowments for BEKI is presented at www.beki.org/endow.html. For information on an estate bequest or endowment, please contact BEKI Treasurer Donna Levine at sdssi@aol.com, 985-9033.

Irma and Oscar Hamburger, of blessed memory

Irma was a member of Temple Keser Israel, now Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel (BEKI), for over 50 years. For Irma, synagogue membership was an important and essential expression of her Jewish identity. She was a proud Jew. Her charitable giving in her estate was almost entirely directed to Jewish and Israeli organizations. Mrs. Hamburger chose to establish an endowment at The Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven because she wanted to ensure that her bequest would receive professional management and strict accounting, and to ensure that her tsedaqa would support the work of the Congregation in perpetuity.

Support BEKI Builds, Amity Cares, Habitat for Humanity

A new Lowes store is holding their Grand Opening event Jan. 2 in Derby (526 New Haven Ave). For every gift card that is sold that day, Lowes will match it 100% (up to $5,000) in the form of a donation to Amity Cares/Habitat for Humanity. It’s a dollar-for-dollar fundraiser and easy to participate in. We are pre-selling Lowes cards in multiples of $5. You determine how much gift card you’d like to buy. You can give it away or keep it to use for your own household. Lowes cards are good in any store in the country and online. It’s the same as cash when you’re checking out. Many of you may not be shopping in Derby on Jan. 2, but we can purchase the gift card on your behalf that day. You can either pick your gift card up as early as Jan. 3 or we can mail it to you. Please do take stock of what you may be purchasing from Lowes in 2009. Perhaps a new appliance or you know that you will buy at least $50 worth of light bulbs and other items. Every dollar you put on a gift card will result in a dollar for dollar donation to Amity Cares. Contact Cathie at r.miller98@comcast.net and be sure to tell her that you are from BEKI.
Barukh Dayan HaEmet
With sorrow we note the passing of Edward Opton, husband of Diana Friedman Opton
May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Important tax information
You can contribute stocks and securities directly to BEKI. For some, significant tax advantages can be realized by contributing appreciated stocks. IRS regulations normally allow the donor to deduct the appreciated value of the security if it has been held for more than one year.

Taxpayers are reminded that synagogue dues, pledges and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. For some people, January presents a new opportunity to contribute in a way that is deductible in the new year. It is also helpful to BEKI to receive your payment at an early date.

Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

News

PURIM IS COMING
This year we will again help you celebrate the Purim mitzva of mishloah manot – the sending of gifts – and matanot la-evyonim – presents to the poor – with beautiful BEKI Purim Baskets.

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Now the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is embarking on a major campaign to support this bastion of Conservative life. We urgently need your participation to help us complete this dream.

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THE FUCHSBERG JERUSALEM CENTER
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OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Visit us at www.beki.org
Kadima happenings

Kadima has gotten off to an active start this year. We opened the season together with the USYers with a pizza dinner in September at Edge of the Woods. During Sukkot we met Rabbi Levenson at Congregation B’nai Jacob for a bagel lunch with games on a sunny, but chilly afternoon in the sukkah. Good hot apple cider kept us warm. (Special thanks to Susan Dardik for helping with the food.)

The highlights of our fall activities though were “getting lost” in a corn maze on a beautiful fall afternoon at Lyman’s orchards. Our Kadimaniks split up in little groups of three or more each trying to find their way through the maze. Everybody emerged safe and sound and with a lot of laughter. (Special thanks to Kadima-Moms Eva Shragis and Miriam Benson who drove us there.)

Just as we had a lot of fun at the corn maze, we met two weeks later on a foggy November night for the movie “Frisco Kid” and kept on enjoying each other’s company. Thanks to Kate and Eva Shragis for hosting us.

At all of the events we’ve been a group of approximately 10-15 Kadimaniks. So we are looking forward to growing in the coming months and having new members join us. We’ll be open to 5th graders from mid-January onwards. So come and join us. Check out our calendar, and in the weekly emails and web pages of the Synagogues. And take a look at our bulletin boards in the Shuls; we are currently all working together to decorate them.

L’Shalom,
Nitzan (on behalf of all the Kadimaniks in town)
What’s BEKI/BJ USY up to?

Laughter, friendships, and learning are what happen in BEKI/BJ USY. So far this year, we have gotten off to a great start with some of amazing events. The year started off with an ice cream social as a way to get to know each other. We ate lots of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream, played games, and enjoyed each other’s company.

On Oct. 18, we walked as a group to B’nai Jacob for Shabbat morning services and then went back to Rabbi Levenson’s house for a delicious Shabbat lunch in his Sukka.

The third event we had was pumpkin and apple pie making. We got together on two days to make pies for the BEKI and BJ communities as well as for the Connecticut Food Bank. The pies were sold to a great many people, and it was a huge success.

Two great events took place in December. The first one was a way to involve the Israeli emissaries in USY, and to bring Israel closer to us. On Dec. 6, the emissaries played games with the USYers, and talked about the political atmosphere in Israel. On Dec. 13, there was a movie night, which gave us time to relax, socialize and hang out with one another.

The biggest event of the year is being held Jan. 10 – our famous Limousine Scavenger Hunt. This event has always been a huge success among USYers! It is the first event in which the 8th graders can participate to get to learn more about USY, and meet fellow USYers.

Besides Chapter events, the Hanefesh Region held a Boat Dance, a 9th- and 10th-grade Overnight, and Fall Kin-nus. Many BEKI-BJ USYers attended each event.

In December, five of our chapter members also attended the USY International Convention in Washington, D.C. The BEKI/BJ Board is planning lots of more exciting events this year, such as: Shabbat Dinners; Iron Chef, where you can show your impressive cooking skills; a Shabbaton; and more.

Stay tuned for announcements, mailings, and online messages about future events. We would love to see you at upcoming events! If you have any questions you can contact NoriAnna Cohen, BEKI/BJ USY Advisor, norianna.cohen@quinnipiac.edu or (856) 220-5094.

Yael Grazier-Zerbarini

BEKI/BJ Kadima Calendar

6th- to 8th-graders (5th-graders welcome in January)

- Jan. 9: Shabbat Dinner. Reservations required, for 6th- to 8th-graders. Members only.
- Jan. 18: Kadima fun activity afternoon
- Feb. 1: Superbowl Deli Box Fundraiser for Youth Activities (Parents and kids: Help assemble and purchase deli boxes)
- Feb. 9: Tu BiShvat Event

Contact advisor Nitzan Stein-Kokin for membership or other information, steinkokin@yahoo.com, 752-0361

USY Scavenger Hunt

Plan to join USY’s annual Limousine Scavenger Hunt on Motse’ei Shabbat Saturday, Jan. 10 at 6:15 p.m., a guaranteed evening of fun. Look out for forms and further information in the mail! For more information or to reserve your seat contact usy@beki.org. This event is open to youth in grades 8½ to 12. We can’t wait to see you there!

Sunday Testing for SATs and ACTs

The BEKI-BJ Youth Commission would like to encourage all BEKI teens to consider the special Sunday testing date for the SATs.

Testing on Sunday instead of Saturday is an especially nice form of Shabbat observance. It provides solidarity with other Jewish teens, and helps to guarantee that this option is available for Jewish students in the future. As an extra benefit, you’ll test in a smaller, quieter, environment.


ANL Library

The following books have been donated to the Ari Nathan Levine Library, located in the Children’s Room. They are available on a non-lending basis for use by the Children’s program leaders: Miriam’s Well: Stories about Women in the Bible, by Alice Bach and J. Cheryl Exum; Yossi Tries to Help God, by Miriam Chaikin; The Day the Rabbi Disappeared: Jewish Holiday Tales of Magic, retold by Howard Schwartz; and Be Not Far From Me: The Oldest Love Story retold by Eric A. Kimmel.
USYers Bake Pies for Thanksgiving

For the past several years teenagers from the BEKI/BJ USY chapter have gotten together to make apple and pumpkin pies to raise money for Tiqun Olam (“perfecting the world”). People are able to buy pies to pick up before Thanksgiving, or can donate pies to the Connecticut Food Bank. This year, the tradition was continued. Twenty kids from the BEKI/BJ chapter got together on two different days to make pumpkin and apple pies. The group of USYers were split up into efficient working teams, so the pies could be made as fast as possible. We had so much fun hanging out, getting messy, and making the pies! We were able to once again serve our synagogue communities and the greater Connecticut community – even with all the talking and the messes we made. We worked very hard and even got the chance to taste test both pies at the end! We look forward to continuing this tradition next year and making delicious pies for the Thanksgiving season. Thanks to all who ordered pies for their own families or as donations.

Yael Grazier-Zerbarini
**Youth**

**Deli Boxes**

_**Look For The “Golden Ticket” And Win!**_

For the 18th consecutive year, our community will be treated to festive, flavorful and fantastic boxed kosher deli lunches and dinners, thanks to the efforts of the BEKI/BJ Joint Youth Commission. The event, Deli Boxes, is our only annual fundraiser for the joint youth programs of the two synagogues, and will be on Feb. 1 – Superbowl Sunday (as usual).

Buy Deli Boxes! You don’t need to be watching the Superbowl to enjoy a delicious deli meal prepared with love. Give yourself a break, have a party, _fress_!

“Golden Tickets” will be randomly included in three Deli Boxes. Each “Golden Ticket” will entitle each winner to four _free movie tickets_! Per your request, there will also be one additional choice of sandwich this year: _roast beef_. This will be added to the already abundant choices usually offered: pastrami, corned beef, portabella mushroom with roasted red peppers, turkey, tuna salad, egg salad and salami.

The funds that are raised will be used to provide subsidies to enable more of our youth to participate in a broad range of chapter, regional and international activities, and to supplement the program activities of both USY and Kadima at BEKI and B’nai Jacob.

The Youth Commission would like to encourage you to volunteer to help out at BEKI on Saturday evening, Jan. 31, or on Sunday, Feb. 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., or both, as the great “Deli Boxes” machine rolls into action. We need all the help we can get to make sure the program is a success.

Order forms are available in this bulletin, in your mid-month mailing, on the BEKI website [www.beki.org/forms/delibox.pdf](http://www.beki.org/forms/delibox.pdf), in the literature rack in the lobby, and by email request to kuperst@aol.com. **Deadline for orders is Friday, Jan. 25.**

If you are interested in providing additional support for our youth (with funding or volunteer participation), please contact the BEKI Youth Commission Chairperson: Rena Chesekis-Gold.

Thanks for your support!

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**News**

**Greeters Shabbat Meeting**

Members who are serving as Shabbat and Festival morning greeters, as well as those interested in serving in that capacity, are asked to attend a meeting on Shabbat, Jan. 24, following _qiddush_, to commence about 12:30 p.m. This will be an opportunity to review or introduce the role of the greeters in conducting members and guests during services, including ritual, safety and courtesy considerations. For more information contact Steven Fraade c/o office@beki.org 389-2108 x14.

**Erev Shira on Shabbat Shira and Tu B’shevat**

Join us on Motse’ei Shabbat (Saturday night) Feb. 7 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Minsky-Fenick Residence, 56 McKinley Avenue (RSVP 397-3789 by Jan. 31). Bring song sheets, musical instruments, and a kosher dessert or drinks to share. This event is supported by the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music at BEKI.

**Rotation Schedule Available**

The “Master Rotation List” for Shabbat & Festival service participation was mailed in late December to participating BEKI households. (Additional copies are available from the BEKI office at 389-2108 x14, in the literature rack, or at [www.beki.org/rotate.html](http://www.beki.org/rotate.html)). The list is the schedule of services and programs to be led by volunteers. If you would like to lead a children’s or adult service, or learn to do so, contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 ([jtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jtilsen@beki.org)).

The “Master Rotation List” offers only a partial picture of the volunteerism at BEKI. Not listed there are the over fifty Torah Readers and the Torah Reading coordinators, the leaders of weekday services, those who prepare BEKI mailings, the work of the Board and its committees, the work of the Sisterhood and Religious School, the Renovations Committee and Qiddush Committee, and much more.

Leaders of the _shaharit_ (morning) service on Shabbat may sometimes be asked to yield leadership of the Torah service (_hotsaat haTorah_) to bene mitzva students. Leadership of this segment of the service is not scheduled separately.
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Shabbatot
Darshanim in January
Rabbi Alan Lovins will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Jan. 3, parashat VaYigash.

Rabbi Moshe Murray Levine will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Jan. 10, parashat VaYehi.

A guest will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning Jan. 17, parashat Shemot.

Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan
The “Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan,” which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45 in BEKI’s Library Chapel, 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 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 for the services.

Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

Shabbat Minha Study Break
Each Shabbat following the Minha afternoon service during this winter (January-March) there will be a 30-minute study of Maimonides’ Mishne Torah: Laws of Kings and Their Wars, before the Maariv evening service and havdala. This section from the classic law code, written some 800 years ago, sets forth the constitutional outline of a theoretical future Jewish government, and describes relationships with Christian, Muslim and other governments and individuals. It also describes a mainstream Jewish viewpoint on the notion of messiah. All are welcome.

Sundays
Talmud for Teens with Moshe Meiri
Serious high school students are invited to delve into the depths of Talmud with Moshe Meiri on Sunday mornings this winter and spring. In this semester, the class is exploring chapter two of Masekhet Ketubot, “Halsha She-Nitarmela.” Students are expected to have studied some Mishna and be familiar with the Hebrew alphabet. A familiarity with Rashi’s commentaries is helpful. Texts are vocalized for easy reading and are accompanied by an English commentary and translation. The classes meet Sunday mornings from 10 to noon. Instructor’s permission required; students wishing to enroll should speak with Moshe and should register with the office (office@beki.org). The class is open only to students in grades 8-12. This class is taught in an academic Jewish Studies style. Disciplined attendance is expected. Registration and materials fee is $100 for the semester. Moshe may be reached at moshe@snet.net.

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 Rashi Study Group meets immediately following the 7 a.m. shaharit service (except on Jan. 19, Martin Luther King Day, when it follows the 9 a.m. service).

New: Book Discussions
Occasional Monday Nights
Join Bob Oakes with Jon-Jay Tilsen for a conversation about Rabbi Joel Roth’s The Halakhic Process on Monday evening Jan. 12 from 6 to 7:15. Or come to discuss Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s God in Search of Man on Monday March 2 from 6 to 7:15. Or come for both. Both books are in print and available through the Amazon link at www.beki.org or wherever fine books are sold.

Wednesdays
New: Word for the Day
The Wednesday morning service
(shaharit) now includes a 36-second “Hebrew word for the day” to promote the learning of Hebrew. The Hebrew language is highly-structured. Most words are based on trilateral 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.

**Rabbis’ Study Group**

*Wednesdays with Murray*

is a weekly 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. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at (203) 397-2513.

**New: Mini Learning Service**

The Wednesday evening services during the winter months are supplemented with commentary and teaching relating to the history, themes, choreography and language of the daily evening service. Maariv service is from 5:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. on Wednesdays; on other weekdays, the service ends at 6 p.m.

**Thursdays**

**Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group**

The Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30) at the downtown New Haven professional office of attorney Isaiah Cooper for Talmud study. The Group has met weekly since 1999. For some 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. Knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic is helpful but not required. For location or information, contact Isaiah Cooper at 233-4547 or 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.”

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**Point of Grammar**

*Notes on Hebrew Morphology, Syntax and Grammar to Aid Ba’alei Qeri’ah (Torah & Haftara Readers), Shelihei Tshibbur (Service Leaders) and Gabbaim at BEKI.*

**Sheva’: Silent and Vocalized**

The vowel *sheva* is written as two dots arranged vertically under a letter.:

There are two variations on the *sheva*. One is pronounced as the vowel *shewa* (that’s what it is called in English) as the u in circus or the e in deposit. The other is silent.

The *sheva* is vocalized in several circumstances. Here are the four most common.

- **The first** letter of a word or syllable, such as *benei Yisrael* or *kas-pe-khem*
- **The second** of two *shevas* in a row, as in *yiq-reu*
- Under a letter following a *tenu’a gedola* (long vowel) such as under the *mem* in *shomerim*
- Under a letter with a *dagesh* (dot) in it such as in *siperu*

(The long vowels are *qamatz gadol* [regular *qamatz*], *tserei*, *hiriq gadol*, *holam* and *shuruq*.) You can remember this as the *alef-bet-gimel-dalet* rule (*alef* = first letter, *bet* = second of two *shevas*, *gimel* = *gadol*, *dalet* = *dagesh*).

**Gabbaim note:** If a Torah reader pronounces the *sheva* incorrectly, it usually is not necessary to correct the reading, as this error does not affect the meaning or intelligibility of the text. However, if a reader confuses a *sheva* and another vowel, it may change the meaning of the word, and would have to be corrected. The vocalized *sheva* in *shema* must not be confused with a *patah* (or *qamatz*), which would render the word *shema* “heard” instead of *shema* “hear!” or with a *segol*, which might make the word sound like *shema* (ending in *alef*), “perhaps.”
Making Prayers Real

In our thrice-daily recitation of the amida, we refer to the Almighty as Matir asurim, the One who frees captives; Oseh shalom, Peacemaker; Rofei holim, the Healer. We call upon God for prosperity and wellness, and ask for the strength to endure hardship, and the hope to a better future. Indeed, the sage Sadia Gaon indicated that the weekday amida makes specific or general reference to all of our needs. The amida is meant to be an outline for our personal prayers; that is, the individual is invited to elaborate upon and personalize the conventional framework of a communal text.

These same major themes are introduced in the Psalms and blessings that precede the amida and reiterated in the passages that follow. Indeed, the repetition of these ideas can stretch the morning service to over forty-five minutes. No one can complain that the siddur is concise.

It seems odd, therefore, that upon hearing news of hostages or prisoners being taken, a terrorist attack, or some other tragedy or calamity, we receive requests or demands that special prayers be said on behalf of the victims or to request Divine intervention; and that this prayer should be said during the Torah service or at some other dramatic or prominent point in the service. Didn’t we just pray for the release of prisoners? Didn’t we just request peace in at least fifteen different ways in the service? Aren’t we about to repeat those references in the musaf or the next amida today? Were our prayers and hymns to this point uttered without meaning, without intent, without comprehension? When we sang “Oseh Shalom” at the end of the amida, did we mean it, or was it merely a nice little tune? Saying a “special” additional prayer suggests that all that we have said so far was without meaning or sincerity.

While many suggest additional topical prayers be added, few agree as to what events deserve this attention. What criteria determine which cases merit special prayers? Who decides? The taking of a single Israeli soldier as hostage, or a civilian Jew anywhere in the world, a non-Jewish celebrity, or a large number of non-Jews? Which act of terrorism is grievous enough – must the victims be Jews or targeted as Jews?

If we recognize the terrorist attack on Mumbai (December 2008), is it because Jews were targeted, or because Americans were among the victims, or because of the large num-

Realizing Prayers’ Meaning

We can say whatever we wish in private prayer. But communal prayer is supposed to express the actual immediate concerns of the community. If prayer is supposed to be anything, it is supposed to be relevant.

The given prayer in the Siddur is not intended to be the last word; to the contrary, it is supposed to be the starting point for meaningful prayer. It is comprehensive only in that it touches on all aspects of life in a general way, and that with the intent of being suggestive of areas for reflection and elaboration. Indeed, a main role of the hazzan (cantor), at least in some times and places, has been to compose or perform piyutim (poems) and other prayers that elaborate the concerns of the day. This is most notable for the festivals, especially the Days of Awe, for which tens of thousands of liturgical poems are available. Our current mahzor (High Holy Days prayerbook) is limited to only a tiny representation of that vast body of liturgical expression. In some cases, prayers responding to post-biblical historical events such as the Roman conquest or the Crusades have been incorporated into the “fixed” liturgy in much of the Jewish world.

Our congregation seeks to engage the issues of our day, however controversial, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness. That cannot be accomplished by avoiding reference to anything about which someone might disagree. Rather, engagement forces us to consider and recognize the viewpoints of those who are closest to us – and if we cannot learn to respect the viewpoints and beliefs of others in our synagogue community, if we cannot accept ignorance as an opportunity rather than a sin, then we have no hope of meaningful dialog with our neighbors, let alone our antagonists.

It would be strange for a congregation known for its concern for social action, civic engagement, global Jewish well-being and support for Israel to ignore a major event such as a terrorist attack, war or other calamity. Part of the purpose of our gathering as a community is to strive to develop communal responses to the events of the day. If some people do not particularly agree with the perspective as presented by a one-time topical prayer, then they can simply decline to an-

Continued on Page 17
bers killed? Or is it to highlight the “Islamic” character of the terrorists? Did anyone notice that the next day, more than twice as many people were killed in “sectarian” violence in Nigeria? Do we have to determine if Jews were among the victims before we will recognize the event liturgically? And what of our soldiers maimed or killed daily in Iraq and Afghanistan – do we note only the Jews, or do we include any American, or any ally, or any non-combatant including those killed “peripherally” by American military action, or our erstwhile wards such as the Kurds?

If we stand up for the thirteen people killed in a bridge collapse (Minneapolis, 2007), do we ignore the 100 others who died in car accidents that same day, but less spectacularly, or the 36,000 annual traffic fatalities? If we sanctify the memory of white girls killed in a suburban home invasion, do we ignore the black city kids killed in equally senseless violence? Is Sudan on our list? Is our public worship free to be manipulated by whatever the corporate owners of America’s “free press” deem worthy of broadcast? Are we to allow others to choose our symbols of suffering for us, to set our agenda? Or do we just pick the latest front-page sensation?

Referring to the events of our day in public worship invites controversy and conflict. Such conflict would be inevitable, inasmuch as our membership includes people of diverse political perspectives. While everyone (we hope) will agree that terrorism is bad, we don’t agree on how important it is to understand or address the causes that terrorists espouse; we don’t agree on the scope and significance of “state terrorism”; and we don’t agree on which victims are deserving of center stage in our public worship. We don’t agree on how “important” terrorism is compared to other causes of suffering and sources of violence. Explicitly bemoaning the fate of Jewish residents of Hebron, for example, risks turning our decorous service into a Knesset-like free-for-all shouting match.

Regular worship presents us with an opportunity to transcend the tragedies and miracles that occur each day, to seek a balance in our own hearts, and to achieve a broader perspective on our lives and the events of our world. Communal prayer is a chance to rise above the daily bustle and see ourselves from Heaven’s eyes. Within the context of public worship, each individual is free to express and verbalize his or her own thoughts and feelings and to choose which events in our lives are of most immediate or ultimate importance. The sages exhibited great wisdom in composing the prayer book; any more words are superfluous, unduly lengthen the service and call into doubt the value of the set text. Imposing our political views on others through our public worship only fragments and dilutes our community.

There are no set criteria for determining what is “most important,” but that does not mean we have to ignore everything. Should we ignore the 9/11 attack or the latest war with Lebanon because we can’t decide if it is significant enough? Can we just act, and have a service, as if nothing had happened? To make prayer relevant, the community could assign a panel or individual to choose an issue each week to highlight in prayer. Or yes, we could let the New York Times choose for us, picking an issue from the week’s front pages. If prayer is to express the deepest concerns of our hearts or the most critical issues in our lives, it must respond directly to the events of the day.
NOTE: On Monday, Jan. 19, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, morning services are from 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.; the Rashi Study Group meets from 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; and the office is closed. Other services are at their usual times.

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Service Times for Winter

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Deli Boxes

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2009!!!
PICK-UP FROM 11:45 - 1:30PM

On Super Bowl Sunday, invite some friends over and don’t worry about the food. LET US PREPARE THE MEAL FOR YOU!
You don’t have to be watching the big game – watch a movie, play bridge, have a party or just relax and enjoy the break! JUST DON’T COOK!

All profits benefit youth programs at both B’nai Jacob and BEKI

Only $12 each!!! - Each Deli box contains:
1 delicious Deli Sandwich, on freshly baked rye bread (see choices of sandwiches below), 1 container of freshly made coleslaw, 1 beverage, 1 bag of potato chips, 1 scrumptious pareve brownie, 1 large barrel pickle, 1 piece of fresh fruit, condiments, napkin, flatware-all food certified KOSHER and prepared under supervision

AGAIN THIS YEAR – FIND A “GOLDEN TICKET”
3 Golden Tickets will appear in random boxes and can be exchanged for 4 movie tickets each! Good for the whole family or a night out with friends!

All order forms must be received by Friday, January 25, 2009
Payment by check—made out to BEKI/BJ USY—must accompany all orders

Please send all order forms and checks to:
Darryl Rotman Kuperstock, 2 Debby Lane, Woodbridge, CT 06525
For more information contact Darryl at (203)387-0304 or kuperst@aol.com

Please do not send any orders to Synagogue offices

Deli Boxes Order - 2009 (please fill in ALL information and return w/payment - PLEASE PRINT)

Name_________________________Phone_________________________Email_________________________
I will PICK UP my Deli Box(es) at ___BEKI _____B’nai Jacob

Please indicate the NUMBER of boxes you would like:
____ Corned Beef ___Egg Salad (vegetarian) ___Pastrami ___Portobello & peppers*(vegan) ___Salami ___Tuna Salad ___Turkey Breast ___Roast Beef Total # of Boxes_______ x $12 = $__________

Choice of Beverage (1/box) ___Coke ___Diet Coke ___Sprite ___Apple Juice ___Spring Water

ADDITIONAL DONATION TO BEKI/BJ Youth Programs $__________

* served on a hard roll

Total amount of check made out to BEKI/BJ USY $__________
Megilla Readers Needed

If you would like to read Megillat Ester (the Book of Esther) on Purim at BEKI, or learn how to, please contact Rabbi Tilsen (389-2108 x10 jjtilsen@beki.org) at your earliest opportunity. Purim is observed on Monday night, March 9, and Tuesday, March 10, in New Haven and other cities that were not walled in the 13th century BCE. In cities that were walled at that time, Shushan Purim is observed the following day. (Hamden residents note: Rabbi Scolnic of Temple Beth Sholom is currently excavating to determine if Hamden was walled in the thirteenth century BCE; check the next Bulletin edition for an update.)

Web Buys

If you purchase from Amazon.com via this link www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/beki-20 or at www.beki.org through the “Amazon” box at the bottom of the page (or through other Amazon links on the BEKI website), BEKI receives a small commission on your purchase at no cost to you. You must use these links each time you access the merchant’s website in order for BEKI to receive a commission. BEKI received over $200 in 2004, 2005 and 2006, and close to $400 in 2007 and 2008.