

A New Haven Tradition since 1892

# BEKI bulletin

Congregation  
Beth El-Keser Israel

July-August 2008

Tamuz – Av 5768

Vol. 14 Issue 7



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## OSCAR & IRMA HAMBURGER ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED

The Oscar & Irma Hamburger Memorial Fund has been established by bequest of Irma Hamburger, of blessed memory.

Irma Hamburger grew up in Butthard and in Karlsruhe, Germany, in the loving home of her parents Saly & Ida Hess, along with her dear sister Erna and her brother Lothar, both of blessed memory. She was a young woman when their parents died in 1933 and 1934.

She left Germany early in the war and came to the United States. Irma met and married Oscar Hamburger, of Dudelsheim, in March 1945. Her in-laws died in the early 1950s. Her sister and brother-in-law, Erna & Freddy, died tragically in 1954. To her misfortune, Oscar died in 1963.

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, observing the dietary laws and lighting Shabbat and Hanuka candles.

She supported numerous charities. Every year she made a point of contributing to support the needy at each of the Jewish holidays. Her charitable giving in her estate was directed almost entirely to Jewish and Israeli organizations.

Mrs. Hamburger chose to establish an endowment at [The Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven](#) because she



**Oscar & Irma Hamburger**

wanted to insure that her bequest would receive professional management and strict accounting, and to insure that her tsedaqa would support the work of the Congregation in perpetuity.

Irma was blessed with a clear, intelligent and active mind, until her final days. She had the unusual merit of living independently for almost half a century, and was highly self-reliant. She was a strong woman, and through her charitable work, in her own name and that of her husband Oscar, she has become a heroine of the Congregation.

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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:

- Call the Synagogue office: (203) 389-2108
- Write: 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724
- Email: [jttilsen@beki.org](mailto:jttilsen@beki.org)
- Visit our web page: [www.beki.org](http://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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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi

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## The Shul in the News

[Lieberman Stands With Controversial Pastor](#) by

Ed Stannard, New Haven Register, May 29.

## Benefit Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

Ask us about  
establishing a fund, trust or annuity  
to ensure BEKI's future.

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and provides the donor with tax savings.

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Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven



All of us. One Foundation.

## TISHA BE'AV

The fast day of Tisha Be'Av ("ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av") will be observed on Saturday night, Aug. 9 and Sunday, Aug. 10. The Shabbat afternoon minha service is at its usual time, 5:45 to 6:30. The traditional Maariv service begins at 9 p.m. The passage *Ata honantanu* is included in the Amida, and borei meorei ha-eish is recited when the candles are lighted. But the Havdala service is not recited until *Sunday* night, and then only over wine but not spices or a flame.

The Shaharit service on Sunday, Aug. 10 is from 9 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. The evening and morning services include the reading of the Biblical Book of Eikha (Lamentations). On Sunday morning, according to the Ashkenazic custom generally followed in our community, *tallit* and *tefillin* are not worn (although *tallit qatan* is worn).

At the afternoon Minha service, from 5:45 to 6:30 on Sunday, *tallit* and



*tefillin* are worn, with the recitation of their usual *berakhot*, and a brief Torah reading is chanted along with a *haftara*.

The fast is observed from 7:58 p.m. Saturday until 8:43 p.m. Sunday. As a

sign of mourning, many refrain from wearing leather shoes and ostentatious clothing, and do not enjoy music, intimate physical relations or entertainment until *Monday* night.

Tisha Be'Av commemorates the destruction of the first two Temples and other tragedies that have taken place in our long history. The destruction of the Temples represents the downfall of the independent Jewish government, the devastation of Jewish society and tragic loss of life. On Tisha Be'Av in 1290, King Edward I signed an edict expelling the Jews from England. Likewise, the expulsion of Jews from Spain occurred on that date in 1492. The fast is the only full-day fast on the Hebrew calendar besides Yom Kippur. Those with medical conditions that require oral medications or eating are urged to consult their medical and rabbinic authorities.

### Building Update: Gas Service On Line

During the summer, measures were taken to enable our dual-fuel boiler to burn natural gas as well as oil. This gas service will enable us to ensure an uninterrupted supply of fuel, avoiding the recurrence of out-of-oil cold weekends experienced last winter. It will also allow us to choose the least expensive fuel available in coming years. During the past heating season (2007-08), heating costs exceeded \$28,000, compared to \$18,000 the year before (2006-07).

### Coffee and Tea in Beit Midrash: *Java Nagila* or *Mika Mocha*

Coffee, tea and hot chocolate are available daily in the Beit Midrash, free for those attending daily services or classes (\$1 donation suggested for coffee or hot chocolate). Please do not operate coffee machine during services. Use your own mug or our paper cups.

### Ari Nathan Levine Children's Library News

The following books have been purchased through the Ari Nathan Levine Fund and are available on a non-lending basis in the Children's Room:

- *It's Israel's Birthday* by Ellen Dietrick
- *Celebrating the Jewish Year: The Fall Holidays* by Paul Steinberg
- *Shuli and Me: From Slavery to Freedom* by Joan Benjamin-Farren



## HaNoledet BeMazal Tov

Mazal tov to Sarah Grazier-Zerbarini on the birth of Theresa Grazier-Zerbarini in June, and to grandparents Linden Grazier and Rabbi Lina Zerbarini, and to aunts Liora and Yael.

Mazal tov to Elisabeth Bar-On on the birth of Sivan Sarah in June, and to grandparents Howard & Willa Needler; in Haifa, Israel.

## Mazal tov to

Aliza Kuperstock, daughter of David & Darryl Kuperstock, on graduating from Clark University, and on her plan to move to Portland, Ore.

Ezra Academy graduates Lital Avni-Singer, Solomon Botwick-Ries, Emma Golub and Sasha Weitzman

Shayna Weinstein, daughter of Andy & Paige Weinstein, on becoming a bat mitzva

Jonathan Beller on accepting a position with Ivy Insiders in New Haven, teaching SAT prep courses in July and August. Ivy Insiders sends college kids who did well on the SATs back to their local area to teach the SATs using an innovative curriculum that treats the test like a game to be beaten, with impressive results. Jon can be reached at [jonathan.beller@ivyinsiders.com](mailto:jonathan.beller@ivyinsiders.com)

High School graduates Max Pauker; Annie Bass; Zack Bell; Nora Goldfield; Aaron Green; Josh Levine; Daphne Lew; Hannah Rose; Sheree Sachs; Molly Sapadin; Joseph Schottenfeld; Max Stern; Jon Stone; Karen Sutin; Benjamin Watsky; Shira Winter. (Please let us know about others at [office@beki.org](mailto:office@beki.org)).

## LeHitraot ule-Hatslaha: Farewell to our Friends and Members

Mara Benjamin & Miryam Kabakov and Rayzie are moving to 1710



**Baby Girl Bar-On**

Vicki Lane, Mendota Heights, Minn. 55118 in July. Mara will be assuming the position of Assistant Professor of Religion at St. Olaf College. Miryam will assume the position of Director of the Minneapolis Jewish Film Festival. They can be reached at their current email and mobile phone numbers; as of Sept. 1, Mara's email address will be [mberj@stolaf.edu](mailto:mberj@stolaf.edu).

Valerie & Alexander Thaler and Sabrina are moving to Reisterstown, Md., in July. Valerie will be assuming the position of Assistant Professor of American Jewish Studies at Baltimore Hebrew University. Alex will

assume the position of secular education teacher at Krieger-Schechter Day School in Baltimore.

## Benei Mitzva in July and August

Rigel Janette, son of Nathan & Judi Janette, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Shabbat, July 25-26, parashat Matot.

Kathryn "Kate" Shragis, daughter of William "Bill" and Eva Shragis, will lead and participate in services as a bat mitzva on Rosh Hodesh Elul, Sunday, Aug. 31, at the 9 a.m. service.



**Rigel Janette**



**Kate Shragis**



## 16 Teens, 2 Parents, 2 Emissaries, and 2 College Students: The Annual BEKI/BJ USY Chapter Shabbaton

As a culmination of our year's leadership activities, our 5-member USY Board planned and executed a chapter Shabbaton for the last week in May. We piled on a bus to Camp Laurelwood, settled ourselves into 3 cabins, and began with a beautiful Qabbalat Shabbat by the lake.

Have you ever been to a Shabbaton at a camp, either as a teen or as an adult? If so, you know that a good Shabbaton should provide all of these elements for its participants – it should be educational, spiritual, restful, and fun. It should provide leadership op-

portunities for running programs and for leading services, or for simply being a 'dugma' ('setting an example'). There should be as little 'drama' as possible – the environment should be safe and warm where teens can freely express themselves. And, as it is written (somewhere) – there will be little sleep, there will be plentiful food, and it will be good.

As a parent chaperone, I had a wonderful view of just how great the kids were at the Shabbaton. We had 16 kids, which was a reasonable and manageable group, ranging from 8th

graders to 12th graders. Old and new members grouped and re-grouped in all different ways. Everyone participated, no one complained, everyone acted responsibly, no one strongly countered authority, and, at some point or another, each of the kids revealed themselves to be incredibly clever, funny, good leaders, hard-working, and/or highly charismatic. *Are these teens*, you may wonder?! Yes, they are *our* teens and I was incredibly proud of them!

Parents – thank you for helping your teens to prioritize Jewish youth

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group activities in their busy lives. To all the BEKI members who have supported our Youth Programs throughout the year with a Yom Kippur Youth Program pledge or via our Deli Box fundraiser, thank you for your monetary support.

*Please remember that it is at these types of activities that short-term and long-term bonds are formed for our kids – with friends who aren't afraid to be Jewish, in developing a personal statement of what it means to be Jewish amongst one's peers, and in learning to become a leader in one's Jewish community.*

If your kids aren't old enough yet for our youth groups (Kadima: 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades; USY: 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades), tell them about it now so that they know what they can look forward to! (And if you're interested in working with

our Youth Commission, now or in the future, please be sure to let me know.)

Interestingly, in May, Rabbi Adam Kligfeld from Congregation Eitz Chaim in Monroe, N.Y., didn't bring his USYers to a camp for their annual Shabbaton – he brought them to BEKI! In a thank-you note, he wrote, "We are so grateful to BEKI's warm welcome of our group last Shabbat. The *shabbaton* was fabulous, and met our goal of immersing our kids in a new Shabbat community to see what Jewish life is like outside the Monroe 'cloister.' The kids had a blast, and felt fully comfortable and at home... Thank you, again, for your commitment to *hakhnasat orhim*."

B'shalom,  
Rena Cheskis-Gold  
Chair, Joint BEKI/BJ Youth  
Commission

## Kadima and USY Overnight Camp, August 20-24

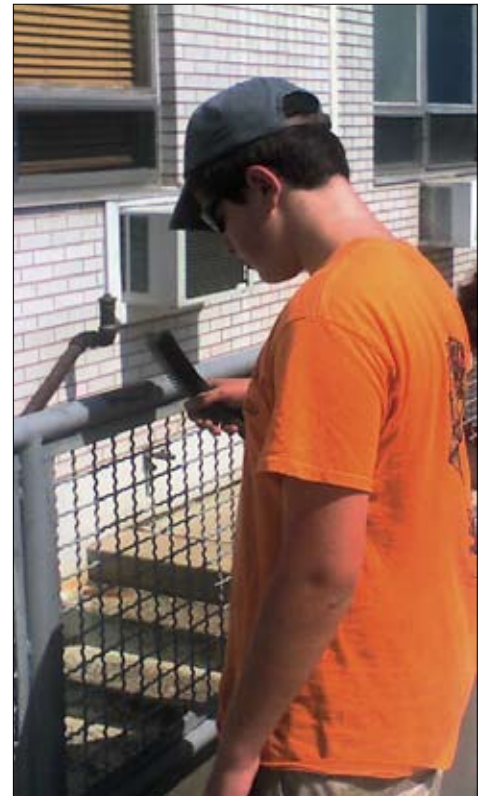
Kadima and USY Encampment is a wonderful mini-camp from Aug. 20-24 at Camp Ramah in the Poconos for kids entering grades 6-12. If your child hasn't attended our youth programs yet, have them grab a friend and attend the highly popular Encampment. For more information, contact Regional Youth Director Marcus Fink at 860.563.5531, [fink@uscj.org](mailto:fink@uscj.org). Synagogue subsidies are available; contact Rena Cheskis-Gold, [r.cheskis-gold@snet.net](mailto:r.cheskis-gold@snet.net).

## Congratulations to Our New USY 2008-09 Board

**Co-Presidents:** Maya Sutin and Yedidya Ben-Avie  
**IA VP:** Avital Sokolow Silverman  
**Rel/Ed VP:** Tsvi Benson-Tilsen  
**SATO VP:** Myia Shoshan  
**Mem/Kad VP:** Esther Bogorov  
**Co-Comm VP:** Carmi Cheskis-Gold and Dan Ben-Chitrit



**BEKI PRESIDENT BEHIND BARS: Corinne Blackmer and Synagogue President Jay Sokolow scrape and paint on a sweltering day in June. The work crew led by Eric Dunsker also included Adam Glass, Dan Jacoby, Alex Shragis, Pilar Stewart and John Weiser. Working inside on renovations were Coby Ben-Chitrit, Nathan Janette and John Weiser.**



**Alex Shragis scrapes a railing.**

Shabbatot

## Darshanim in July



**Robert Oakes**



**Steven Fraade**

A special guest will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning 5 Av, *parashat* Huqat.

Robert Oakes will serve as darshan on Shabbat morning, July 12, *parashat* Balaq.

Rabbi Lina Zerbarini will serve as darshanit on Shabbat morning, July 19, *parashat* Pinhas.

Steven Fraade will serve as darshan on Shabbat, Aug. 2, *parashat* Masei, Rosh Hodesh Av.

## 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.



**Kulanu participants maintaining the Holocaust Memorial**

## Kulanu Discussion Group

Adults who take part in the Kulanu Friendship Circle and the Saul's Circle outreach programs are invited to participate in a Shabbat morning discussion group which meets on selected Shabbat mornings from 10:45 to 11:45 with Dr. Lauren Kempton. For information, contact Lauren at 389-2108 x33 or [lkempton@beki.org](mailto:lkempton@beki.org).

Sundays

## New: Summer Talmud with Moshe

Jump into the Sea of Talmud (or hike in the forest of Talmud) with Moshe Meiri on five Sunday mornings (July 6 to Aug. 3) in the amply air-conditioned Beit Midrash. Suitable for people at all levels, texts in Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek and English supplied. From 9:30 to 11:15 (following morning services). Free for members and guests. Free coffee.



**Moshe Meiri**

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. New participants are welcome.

## New: The Entire Hebrew Language in One Easy Lesson

Learn the entire Hebrew language in one lesson. An overview of the history and structure of Hebrew language that presents guideposts to further learning. With Jon-Jay Tilsen, Monday, July 14, 6 p.m. to 7:25 p.m. Library.

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Wednesdays

### 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. The study group is on summer break and will resume after Labor Day. For more information, call Rabbi Murray Levine at 397-2513.

### New: Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot

"Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot" is for adults wishing an overview of the Principles of Jewish thought and life. It is ideal for people new to Judaism, considering conver-

sion, or wishing to begin a systematic study and practice of Judaism. Topics include The Torah, Halakha (Jewish Law), The Mitzva System, 3,600 Years of Jewish History, The God of Israel, Fundamental Observances, Conservative & Other Judaisms, Messiah, Eternal Life, Talmud Torah, The Sabbath, and more. The series meets on Thursday nights Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28, and Sept. 4 and 11, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library. The class immediately follows the 5:45 afternoon and evening service.

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](mailto:icooper@cooperlaw.net).

### New: Hebrew Alphabet in One Easy Lesson

Learn or review the Hebrew Alphabet in one lesson. Discover the secret for accurate decoding of the alef-bet. Thursday, July 10, 6 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. with Jon-Jay Tilsen in the Beit Midrash. Free for members and guests.

## Sisterhood News

### Torah Fund

At the close of our BEKI year I want to thank everyone who so generously gave to Women's League for Conservative Judaism's Torah Fund Appeal. Your donations and purchase of cards brought us to our 2008 goal: \$2,500.

Please continue to purchase cards for all occasions and Save Gas! No need to shop – just call me (407-0314) and your card goes out promptly. \$4 per card includes the stamp.

Barbara Cushen  
Torah Fund Chair

### Thanks to those who purchased cards last month:

#### Mazel Tov to

• Linda & Joel Cohen on Naomi's Bat

Mitzvah from Barbara Cushen, Adele Tyson

- Violet & Charlie Ludwig on their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary from Barbara Cushen & Stanley Saxe, Sylvia Zeid
- Steve & Sherry Rothman on Mara's Bat Mitzvah from Violet & Charlie Ludwig

#### In Memory of

- Sloan, daughter of Marcia Thompson from Barbara Cushen
- Paul Lopatin to Ruth Lopatin from the Hesed Committee, Helen Miller
- Ruth Heydemann to Lynn Brotman from the Hesed Committee, the Lew Family, Mikki Ratner
- Alex Heisler to daughter Diane Wechsler from the Hesed Committee
- Jean May to C.J. & Becky May from the Hesed Committee
- Howard Sugarmann to Richard & Marcie Sugarmann from the Hesed Committee

- Edith Cooper to Willa Needler from the Hesed Committee
- Jerry Gross to Ruth Gross from Donna & Sid Levine
- Henrietta Forman to Meyer Forman from Gladys Lipkin
- Katie Tuchinski to Dr. Nicholas Rachcotes from Louis Petrillo
- Faige, sister of Norma LeVine from Ruth & Morris Olmer

#### Get Well to

- Michael Zamkov from Anna Goldberg
- Margot Roten from the Hesed Committee
- Irving Weinstein from the Hesed Committee, Violet & Charlie Ludwig
- Stanley Saxe from the Hesed Committee, Reeva & Gary Lynes, Violet & Charlie Ludwig, Sylvia Zeid, Harriet & Jack Kitavitz
- Jim Carloni from the Hesed Committee



## New Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays and New Siddur Or Hadash for Weekdays

Copies of the new [\*Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays\*](#) will be added this summer to the George G. Posener Daily Chapel for daily use, with additional copies available for weekday events such as bar- and bat-mitzva observances, baby namings and brit mila celebrated in the sanctuary. This new prayerbook, published by the Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, incorporates a relatively user-friendly layout, selected transliterations, gender-sensitive language, weekday Torah readings, corrected text, and intelligible directions, all in a handy volume.

This Siddur was edited by Rabbi Avram Israel Reisner, et al., based on the earlier editions of *Sim Shalom* by Rabbi Jules Harlow. Large-print copies of the same volume are also available for those who prefer larger type, and for service leaders.

[\*Or Hadash — A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom\*](#) by Rabbi Reuven Hammer is also part of this series, and will be available in our Beit Midrash for members' use as well. In *Or Hadash*, Rabbi Hammer offers extensive

and edifying commentary on the religious themes, historical background, and literary context on the traditional Ashkenazic prayerbook. The commentary appears in the margins around *Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays*, retaining the smaller work's pagination, making this volume both familiar and usable in public worship.

Dr. Hammer addresses exegetical and homiletic issues raised by the text. He comments on words, phrases, themes and structure, and adds pointers on generally accepted practice. A concise and informative introduction, commentary on Pirkei Avot, and a glossary are a bonus. This is a "must have" for the student of classical traditional Judaism and a great aid to the worshiper in the contemporary synagogue.

These volumes are a gift of William & Eva Shragis.

Copies of the first edition of *Sim Shalom* that are in good condition will be retained for use at *shiva* minyans, at youth and adult retreats, and in other settings.

Those wishing their own copies may purchase them at the Sisterhood Giftshop, from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), or wherever fine Judaica is sold.

## Minyan Seekers / Minyan Makers Mailing List

If you would like email notification when BEKI members are seeking additional participants for a daily service in order to insure a minyan, and might like to request that others attend on a specific date on which you seek a minyan, send a message to [minyan-subscribe@beki.org](mailto:minyan-subscribe@beki.org). You can unsubscribe by sending a message to [minyan-unsubscribe@beki.org](mailto:minyan-unsubscribe@beki.org) and obtain additional instructions at [minyan-help@beki.org](mailto:minyan-help@beki.org).

## Service Leaders' Rotation List

The "Master Rotation List" for Shabbat & Festival service participation was mailed in late June to one hundred households. (Additional copies are available in the lobby literature rack, from the office and at [www.beki.org/rotate.html](http://www.beki.org/rotate.html)). The list is the compilation of parts to be led by those who volunteered for the services listed. If you would like to lead a children's or adult service, or learn to do so, or if you would like to request a specific date between January and June 2009, contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 ext. 10 ([jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)).

## Registration for Religious School

Registration packages will be mailed in July for returning BEKI Religious School (BRS) students. Registration is ongoing and we always welcome new students and their families. If you have any questions please contact office manager Peggy Hackett at 389-2108 x14 ([office@beki.org](mailto:office@beki.org)) or school director Ina Silverman at 389-2108 x13 ([principal@beki.org](mailto:principal@beki.org)).



# A COMMUNITY OF CONFORMISTS

My Grampa Ed, of blessed memory, spoke several languages – his native Yiddish, German, Russian, Polish, English and a little Hebrew. In the 1920s, he was hired by a church in a small town in North Dakota to teach Sunday school, because the local German-speaking immigrants wanted someone who could speak English to their children. They did not realize that Grampa Ed had a profound accent and a non-standard syntax – Yiddish grammar with English words. Nevertheless, he was a very successful communicator, because he was respectful, persistent and ingenious in expressing things in non-standard language.

As an educational principle, I insist that my children learn Standard English. There is nothing sacred about English, nor does it embody any inherent principle of justice or logic. It was not handed down from On High, designed by a great gathering of scholars, or voted on by the masses. It is not the most rich, subtle, complex, simple, original, structured, consistent, euphonic or adaptive language. It does not reify my hope for the continuing unity of English-speakers, or even a hope that my children will remain in an English-speaking country. Rather, its value derives from the fact that it is standard; it is purely a matter of practicality. Slang or jargon is fine in informal or local settings, but once the children go out into the wide, wide world, they need communication skills, and nothing beats good

English. It helps that my wife shares this commitment, and that my in-laws Evelyn Benson (may she live and be well) and polyglot Morton Benson (of blessed memory)

wrote lexicons. We go so far as to insist that the children pronounce the letter “t,” which many of our native Nutmeggers glottalize.

Standard American English does have its drawbacks. It can be less colorful, less spontaneous, and in short, necessarily constrained. Nevertheless, I believe it is the most useful form of the language.

For some of the same reasons, I insist that my children learn the standard Jewish liturgy. With the exception of the recitation of the Shema and a few other passages, there is no claim that the wording or requirement of prayer is divinely commanded, and with the exception of a few passages, most was not voted on by anyone. Rather, it “evolved” however it evolved; and ultimately it has the advantage of being a standard.

Of course, there is no single precise official or authentic representation of the Siddur. But there is a “common version” that has been largely shared by the Jewish world for many generations, and for this

purpose, minor variations in wording (whether incidental or meaningful) are no more significant than similar disagreements about usage or grammar in English. The Siddur Sim Shalom that we use is, at least with respect to the words, an excellent representation of that common liturgy.



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The value of the common liturgy is that anyone trained in it can feel at home in any synagogue in the world that uses this liturgy, insofar as familiarity with the service is central to that feeling. While the décor and music may vary considerably, this verbal dimension establishes a connection among communities throughout time and, most importantly, around the globe today. It means that children who grow up in our congregation and who eventually establish their families elsewhere in the world can feel at home in another Jewish community.

In contrast, individuals who grew up experiencing the beauty and relevance of a highly idiosyncratic service are left without a liturgical familiarity that can transfer or translate to other communities. They walk into another synagogue and don't recognize the service.

One area where I have argued for strict conformity is in the opening blessings of the *amida*, which are not only a central part of all daily services, but are also recited aloud at most services. While in general *halakha* and tradition allow for variation and elaboration in the middle blessings of the *amida*, the formulation of the first three and last three *berakhot* are standardized and it is not considered permissible to alter those formulations. (The variations that occur in these *berakhot* on *Yamim Noraim* such as “*zokhrenu lahaim*” are considered an exception to this rule.)

The inclusion of the matriarchs by name in *Avot* (the first blessing of the *amida*) is also an exception to this general rule that has been approved by the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly and is based on thoughtful religious consideration and sound legal

reasoning. However, there is only one specific wording for the *Avot* blessing that is formally approved, and that is the wording as it appears in our *Siddur Sim Shalom*. Some *shelihei tsibbur* have improvised, with results that have included some syntactic oddities or errors, omitted matriarchs (“three out of four ain’t bad”), and in any

case represented a lack of consistency, which introduces an unnecessary element of confusion to some worshipers trying to follow along in Hebrew or to learn the *Avot* blessing. While there may be some merit to the alternative wordings, the value of standardization is given priority, and in any case, synagogue etiquette (or *halakha*, if you will)

requires the *shaliach tsibbur* to “use the version of the text placed before him or her.” We allow the *shaliach tsibbur* to choose either the “a” or “b” version of the *Avot* blessing as printed in our *Siddur*, while we teach our benei mitzva the version that names the matriarchs with an eye toward what is becoming a standard. In this instance, even a minor variation of wording (such as placing Leah before Rachel) – whether incidental or meaningful – is confusing and, in my opinion, should be avoided.

None of this impinges on the individual's right to pray in his or her own way as an individual, nor does it deny the right of a community to set its own language and style of public prayer. Even less, this does not preclude all other manner of religious expression, whether verbal, musical or otherwise, as long as that does not supplant the standard service. Rather, it argues for a “conservative” approach to liturgical change, and most centrally, for the preference for the standard service as represented in our *Siddur*.



28 Sivan 5768 - 28 Tammuz 5768

Saturday

Service Times for Spring / Summer						
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 Minha



# August 2008

## 29 Tammuz 5768 - 30 Av 5768

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 7:51pm Candle Lighting  29 Tammuz	<b>2</b> Rosh Hodesh 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: TBA  1 Av
<b>3</b> 9:30am Talmud with Moshe  2 Av	<b>4</b> 7:45am Rashi Study Group  3 Av	<b>5</b>  4 Av	<b>6</b> .  5 Av	<b>7</b> 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site) 6:05pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot  6 Av	<b>8</b> 7:42pm Candle Lighting  7 Av	<b>9</b> 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: TBA  8 Av
<b>10</b> Fast of Tisha BeAv  9 Av	<b>11</b> 7:45am Rashi Study Group  10 Av	<b>12</b>  11 Av	<b>13</b> 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program  12 Av	<b>14</b> 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site) 6:05pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot  13 Av	<b>15</b> 7:33pm Candle Lighting  14 Av	<b>16</b> Tu B'Av 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: Membership Committee  15 Av
<b>17</b>  16 Av	<b>18</b> 7:45am Rashi Study Group  17 Av	<b>19</b>  18 Av	<b>20</b> 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program  19 Av	<b>21</b> 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site) 6:05pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot  20 Av	<b>22</b> 7:22pm Candle Lighting  21 Av	<b>23</b> 10:45am Children's Programs Qiddush: TBA  22 Av
<b>24</b>  23 Av	<b>25</b> 7:45am Rashi Study Group 7:45am Rashi Study Group  24 Av	<b>26</b>  25 Av	<b>27</b> 5:00pm Benei Mitzva Program  26 Av	<b>28</b> 12:30pm Talmud Study Group (off-site) 6:05pm Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot  27 Av	<b>29</b> 7:11pm Candle Lighting  28 Av	<b>30</b> Darshan: Nadav Sela 10:45am Children's Programs 10:45am Learner's Minyan Qiddush: TBA  29 Av
<b>31</b> Rosh Hodesh I  30 Av						

### Service Times for Spring / Summer

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