BEKI Bulletin

BEKI Youth Take Awards

At the annual Connecticut Valley Regional United Synagogue Youth (USY) Spring Convention, co-chaired by Mika Larrison, and held at the North Haven Holiday Inn in April, the BEKI-BJ USY chapter took home many awards. Chapter members also won three of the five Regional Board positions for next year.

- Winner: Region’s coveted “Most Improved Chapter” award
- Winner: Highest Attendance at the Spring Convention
- Winner: Special Award for increasing chapter to 41 dues-paying members
- Chapter member Karen Nahary was elected President of Hanefesh Region, 2001-2002
- Chapter member Verred Hamenachem was elected Regional Israel Affairs VP, 2001-2002
- Chapter member Aliza Kuperstock was elected Regional Membership-Kadima VP, 2001-2002

May 2001 events include a Cosmic Bowling night and a trip to Six Flags New England. Eighth graders are welcome at all USY events this spring. Call Membership VP, Aliza, 387-3351, for more information.

JKO

Lag BeOmer Kumsitz (Campfire Singing)

On Thursday evening 10 May, from 6:30p to 8:00p, everyone is invited to the LaG BeOmer campfire singalong at the residence of Robert Forbes & Joanne Foodim, 2055 Chapel Street, New Haven, after dinner. Note Robert & Joanne’s new address.

Bring a kosher dessert or beverage, instruments and song sheets. In case of rain the singalong will take place indoors at the same residence.

LaG BeOmer is the thirty-third day of the counting of the Omer, the period between Passover and Shavuot, and marks the end of a semi-mourning period between the two festivals.

This music program is made possible through the support of the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at BEKI and the hospitality of the Robert Forbes & Joanne Foodim family.

Shavuot at BEKI ............ pages 4-5
Huge BEKI Contingent Heads for Ramah

There are an unprecedented fourteen BEKI youth planning to attend a Camp Ramah program this summer. Campers include Benjamin & Zachary Bell, Jochai & Yedidya Ben-Avie, Gilah & Tsvi Benson-Tilsen, Dana & J Etra, Rachel Forbes, Joshua Levine, Maxwell Pauker, and Matthew Prober, heading for Palmer, MA; Eliza Kuperstock, heading for Conover, WI; and Joshua Prober, who will serve as staff in Palmer.

Dan & Sharon Prober, Matti’s parents, first met at Camp Ramah, and at one time were the only BEKI family with kids at Ramah. “Ramah can be a wonderful formative experience for a young Jewish person,” says Sharon.

In addition to a variety of summer sessions for youth, Ramah has programs for families to experience together. The Ramah Family Camp will be held from Thursday 24 May to Sunday 27 May 2001 at Camp Ramah in Palmer, MA. For information call 781-449-7090 x231 or ramahfamilycamp@yahoo.com. Camp Ramah serves as the camping arm of the Conservative Movement, with which BEKI is affiliated.

20s-30s Havura Enjoys Dinner, Brunch

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

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

With Sorrow we Note the Passing of
Theresa Palumbo, mother of Joseph (& Ghislaine) Palumbo


Mazal tov to Sara Labowe & Steven Stoll, and to Batsheva and Katya, on the birth of their son and brother, Elijah Shane Labowe Stoll, in New Haven.

Bringing New Friends to BEKI

If you know someone who might like to receive information on BEKI or on the High Holy Days at BEKI, please give their name, address, phone number and email address to Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net).

Benei Mitzva in May

Jason Wiener, son of Stanton & Marjorie Wiener, will lead and participate in services on Shabbat 4-5 May. Jason is a graduate of BEKI’s religious school and of the BEKI Benei Mitzva Program.

Laura Visochek, daughter of Larry Visochek & Julie Cohen, will lead and participate in services on Shabbat 11-12 May.

Cuker – Greenstein Aufrauf

During the course of the Torah service on Shabbat morning 26 May, the Congregation will recognize a couple preparing to enter the huppa (wedding canopy) for qiddushin (Jewish marriage) following the Shavuot Festival. The couple, Adam Cuker & Amy Greenstein, plan to be married under a huppa (marriage canopy) in New Jersey. Adam and Amy are BEKI members and have been active participants in the 20s-30s Havura and Shabbat morning services. Adam serves as a Youth Advisor in our award-winning youth programs.
Shavuot at BEKI

Tiqun Leil Shavuot

The Festival of Shavuot (“Weeks”), one of the three major pilgrimage festivals, celebrates the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai some 3,400 years ago. Shavuot comes at the culmination of the counting of seven weeks from Pesah, and will be the major observance at BEKI this summer. Just as we look forward to important events in our personal lives, so too our ancestors enthusiastically and devoutly anticipated the event at Sinai. By participating in BEKI’s Shavuot observance, we reenact the extraordinary experience of our ancestors and show our own enthusiasm for receiving Torah.

On Sunday morning 27 May, the morning before Shavuot, the Men’s Club Miqva visit will follow the 9:00a weekday morning service, from 9:45 to 11:00a. Individual immersion for Jewish males is one way of preparing for the enhanced state of spiritual sensitivity experienced on the Festival marking our national encounter with the Almighty.

Sunday evening from 7:00p to 8:00p, Anne Johnston and others will lead a “Family Shavuot Experience” for people of all ages.

Family Programs

Families with children from nursery to pre-benei mitzva are invited to join the first hour of the Tiqun Leil Shavuot. All programs are sponsored by BEKI’s family education program in conjunction with Kesher L’Mishpachah, funded by the Jewish Foundation and Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

The evening begins with a gathering of the whole group, and then breaks into three age groups: pre-K, K-2, and 3-6/7. Parents are expected to join their children for the learning.

Our Pre-K program, “Rockin’ with God,” will explore incorporating blessings and prayers into our home lives. We will welcome a special surprise guest and her talking siddur (prayer book), who will lead us through a child’s eye view of one day. We find many times to use our new siddurim as we eat, play, read, and go to sleep! For parents, there will also be an exhibit of books, for children and adults, about talking about God.

The K-2 program, “Food and Families,” will explore two Jewish food traditions: the eating of dairy on Shavuot, and the role of bread as the “staff of life.” We will sample many different kinds of breads and dairy products, as well as dairy-like products without milk. Some of the breads will be gluten-free—so there ought to be something everyone can eat! We will conclude with singing the first paragraph of Birkat HaMazon, which our TNS students learned this spring.

The older children’s program will have two options, both of which explore Birkat Hamazon / Grace after Meals, but with differing flavors. “Sing It!” will explore Jewish musical traditions, especially as incorporated into different melodies for the various parts of Birkat Hamazon. “Halakhot of Birkat” will look at the history and halakha of Birkat Hamazon. This is an opportunity for serious family text study, but it will not be without music and stories! All texts will be provided in both Hebrew / Aramaic and English.

For further information or to volunteer to help with set-up, please call Anne Johnston 389-9184 or anne@beki.org.

Shavuot Shul Sleep-Over

Following the first hour family programs, children from kindergarten to middle school are invited to spend the rest of the night at shul (younger siblings are welcome if their parents are chaperoning!). We will spend the night in fun games and learning, culminating in ice cream (dairy and non-dairy) sundaes at midnight. All participants are expected to remain for shul the next morning; parents must join their children by the start of services. Reservations are a must! Additional chaperones are needed. Please call Anne Johnston 389-9184 or anne@beki.org.

Especially for Adults

Also that evening, at 7:00p, the Tiqun Leil Shavuot Night of Study will begin with a presentation by Bruce Haynes, Assistant Professor of Sociology, UC Davis, on “Jews of African Descent in the Americas.” Those who are able may light Festival candles at 7:58p. It is also customary to light Yizkor Memorial candles immediately before lighting the festival candles. The blessing recited over the Festival
candles is “Barukh...asher qideshanu bemitzvotav vetsivanyu lehadliq ner shel yom tov” and the “Shehehianu,” both of which can be found in most siddurim (prayerbooks).

The brief Minha Afternoon Service, from 8:00p to 8:15p, will be followed by “Songs of Shavuot,” for all to enjoy. Children and adults will be treated to the special refreshments of Shavuot, which may include popsicles, fruit, cheesecake, freshly brewed coffee, tea and softdrinks. The brief Festival Evening service, from 9:00p to 9:20p, will be followed by a presentation by Paul & Carole Bass, entitled “Shemirat HaLashon: Journalists’ take on ethical speech” beginning at 9:30p.

After another break for recently brewed coffee and other refreshments, exploration of Torah continues with additional presentations, from 10:45p to 11:30p and 11:45p to 12:30a. Those still awake will be treated to further delights of Torah through the early hours.

**Shavuot Monday Service Celebrates Mishna Sanhedrin Siyyum**

On Monday morning 28 May, the Shavuot Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15a and includes the recitation of Hallel, a series of celebratory Psalms. During the service, participants in the Mishna Sanhedrin Study Group will celebrate a siyyum (completion of studies) by sharing insights into the tractate. The Mishna, a law compendium edited by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in the second century of the Common Era, includes sixty books or “tractates.” Tractate Sanhedrin deals in large part with court procedures, including capital cases. The Mishna is written in concise Hebrew. The Study Group has been working for close to two years on the tractate.

The Mishna Sanhedrin Study Group chose to celebrate their siyyum on Shavuot for three reasons. First, it happened to be the actual time they reached the conclusion of their reading, at the pace of about one mishna (i.e. one paragraph) per week. Second, participants recall that their own study was inspired by a group of women who celebrated a siyyum two years ago on Shavuot at BEKI. Third, Shavuot celebrates the giving and receiving of Torah, and the Study Group’s project was one of receiving Torah.

The service is followed by a period of qiddush refreshments presented by the Mishna Sanhedrin siyyum celebrants, Eric I.B. Beller, Robert Forbes, Carl Goldfield, Michael Koenigsberg, Dr. Marc Schwartz, Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen and Dr. Kal Watsky.

Later, the Minha Afternoon Service begins at 5:45p. Candle lighting in New Haven is after 8:50p, and the candles should be lighted using the existing flame of a Memorial or other long-burning candle or pilot light that was lighted Sunday before sundown.

**Tuesday Shavuot Shaharit Morning Service Honors Torah Readers**

The Tuesday Shavuot Festival Shaharit Morning Service begins at 9:15a on Tuesday 29 May 2001. The service includes the full recitation of Hallel as on the first day. Following the Haftara (prophetic reading), selections from the Book of Ruth will be read to a uniquely beautiful and ancient melody based on the same system of *ta`amei hamiqra* (“trope”) found in most of the Hebrew Bible.

The Yizkor Memorial Service will be observed during the Torah service as well. This is a sacred time set aside to recall those who have gone from this world, and to reflect on the meaning of our lives and to reevaluate our life choices. All people who have someone they wish to remember may stay for the Yizkor service. Those who wish may take a copy of the Yizkor Memorial Book for personal use. This year’s Yizkor Memorial Book was dedicated to the memory of Sol Reichentahl.

Following the service there will be a qiddush refreshment period presented by the Ritual Committee honoring those who have served as Torah readers at BEKI on at least several occasions during the year. “Torah is one of the greatest gifts,” says Rabbi Tilsen, “but it is not worth a lot unless we use it. The Torah readers at BEKI are among those who make sure we celebrate and use the precious gift of Torah.”
Torah for the Hungry Mind: Adult Studies at BEKI

Book Group

BEKI’s monthly Book Group meets on Thursday 17 May at 7:30p in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. For further information, contact Helen Rosenberg at 389-9594 or Marc Schwartz at mschwartzmd@hotmail.com.

Jewish Parenting Workshop

Creating a Meaningful Jewish Home: A Jewish Parenting Workshop with Amy Pincus will be held on Sunday 06 May 2001 from 9:45a to 11:15a. As parents we have the ability to create homes that foster the values important to building a rewarding Jewish family life. “Creating a Meaningful Jewish Home,” of special interest to parents with young children, will give participants the tools necessary to develop a family culture and rhythm and a nurturing Jewish environment in which parents and children will thrive. The workshop, presented by Jewish Educator Amy Pincus, will be on Sunday 06 May from 9:45a to 11:15 in the Rosenkrantz Library.

Basic Judaism Class

“Principles of Judaism: Torah on One Foot,” will continue to be taught by Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen on Thursday Nights in May at BEKI. Classes will be held on Thursday 03, 17, 24, 31 May 2001 from 6:15p to 7:30p in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Library (but not on 10 May). The class is designed for adults wishing an overview of the Principles of Jewish thought and life. It is ideal for people new to Judaism, considering conversion, or wishing to begin a systematic or holistic study and practice of Judaism.

Topics include The Torah, Halakha (Jewish Law), The Mitzva System, 3,600 Years of Jewish History, God of Israel, Fundamental Observances, Conservative & Other Judaisms, Messiah, Eternal Life, Talmud Torah and The Sabbath

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

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

AA Meeting

A Thursday night AA meeting is held at BEKI every Thursday night at 8:00p. The weekly Meeting has been held at BEKI since May 1997. Open to any person who can benefit from a recovery program, the meeting is held according to standard AA procedure. This is not a specifically Jewish recovery group, although a large proportion of participants are Jewish. For information on the weekly meeting call Jay at (203) 387-6019 or email Jay at jay@jacsweb.org.

Beginning Hebrew II

An eight-week introductory course to the Hebrew language, “Beginning Hebrew II: Beyond Alef-Bet,” will be offered at BEKI on Sunday nights beginning 17 June. The class will meet from 6:15p to 7:20p on Sundays 17 & 24 June, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 July, and 5 August. There is a registration and book fee of $40 per person or $50 for two people sharing one book, or $18 for one person who already has the textbook.

To preregister (required to secure a textbook for the first class), contact Mary Ellen Mack at 389-2108 x14 or beki@snet.net.
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<td>Minha=Afternoon</td>
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<td>Fax (203) 389-5899</td>
<td>5:45p Minha-Maariv</td>
<td>4:15p Religious School</td>
<td>5:45p Benei Mitzva Prgm</td>
<td>6:00p Minha-Maariv</td>
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<td>Office: <a href="mailto:BEKI@snet.net">BEKI@snet.net</a></td>
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<td>Festival Service and 9:15a Festival Service</td>
<td>4:15p Religious School</td>
<td>5:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm</td>
<td>Tue by appt. only</td>
<td>Rabbi: <a href="mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org">jjtilsen@beki.org</a></td>
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<td>8p Minha</td>
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<td>Anne Johnston: <a href="mailto:anne@beki.org">anne@beki.org</a></td>
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CSH/TNS Shabbat 19 May

TNS Shabbat and Children’s Shabbat Havura
Aron Qodesh and Siddur Dedication

On Shabbat morning 19 May, BEKI’s services will be filled with the voices and accomplishments of our children, from nursery school to 7th grade. The New School at BEKI will celebrate its first year by participating in Shabbat morning services. Students, alumni, faculty, and parents will lead services, read Torah, and present a creative Devar Torah (Scriptural commentary).

The children and families of the Children’s Shabbat Havura, our Shabbat morning program for nursery-school-age children, will also join us in the sanctuary that morning to celebrate two very special additions to the program: an Aron Qodesh (Sacred Ark) and the new Children’s Havura siddur (prayerbook).

Our Aron Qodesh, made by Hugh Fryer, will house a collection of stuffed Torahs and Torah “scrolls” with illustrated summaries of each parasha (weekly portion). These will be used by the parent-leaders of the Shabbat morning programs for short Torah services. Our siddurim were designed by the parents of the Children’s Havura, and produced by the Family Education Task Force. Please take a look at the beautiful covers—they were made by the children and their parents, in a workshop or at home. The covers are based on the children’s Hebrew names and their favorite Jewish symbols or memories. These will also be used for the Shabbat morning programs. In addition, each family will receive a child’s siddur and an adult edition (with full words for the prayers and songs) to take home, along with a tape of the full siddur. (These will be distributed before or after Shabbat.)

Qiddush will be cosponsored by families of the Children’s Shabbat Havura and The New School.

The Children’s Havura Aron Qodesh and siddur projects were coordinated by Anne Johnston, one of BEKI’s Jewish Family Educators, as a part of BEKI’s Family Education Project, part of Kesher L’Mishpachah, funded by the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. For information, please call Anne Johnston at 389-9184 anne@beki.org.

The New School at BEKI climbs our own Har Sinai

On Sunday 20 May – 27 Iyar, during school hours, TNS will celebrate the completion of a school-wide study of Jewish texts with a hike up West Rock Ridge. Our special study unit began with the Shema and mezuzot and concluded with Birkat HaMazon (grace after meals). Cosponsored by BEKI’s family education program, our study included work in class and at home with our families—as well as an all-school field trip to seven families’ homes to admire or hang mezuzot.

Our Sunday hike will begin at the fields at the base of West Rock. All of our families—parents, siblings, and others—are invited to join us. As we climb the ridge, there will be break stations for water and Torah study. We will take song sheets with us to sing Jewish songs of mountains, hiking, and pioneers as we hike. At the top, we will meet up with those who drove (our youngest students and others who couldn’t hike that far), daven, eat brunch, and celebrate our learning by singing Birkat HaMazon.

This unit of study and its special events were coordinated by Anne Johnston and Betsy Rosenberg, BEKI’s Jewish Family Educators, and Terri Stern, TNS Principal, with assistance from the TNS faculty and the Family Education Task Force.

BEKI’s Family Education program is a project of Kesher L’Mishpachah, funded by the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven.

Calendar Meeting

There will be a calendar planning meeting on Monday 14 May from 09:30a to 11:15a in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library. All officers, chairpersons and project leaders at BEKI are urged to attend so that our upcoming year of events can be coordinated. Please call Mary Ellen at 389-2108 x14 (beki@snet.net) or Jon-Jay at x10 (jjtilsen@beki.org) for more information.
News

Jewish Foundation “First Fruits”

On the Shavuot Festival, we celebrate the “first fruits” of our plantings. While few BEKI members are involved directly in farming, a number of families with a vision for the future of BEKI have taken steps to insure that our needs will be provided for in the future. This time of year BEKI enjoys an annual distribution from the endowment funds managed for its benefit by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. This year, including a special distribution from the Arthur & Betty Levy Family Fund to BEKI, and the first distribution from the Ari Nathan Levine Memorial Fund for BEKI, the total proceeds exceeded $11,500, providing about 2.5% of our operating budget.

We express our appreciation to those who have established and supported these funds.

- The Ari Nathan Levine Fund for the Continuity of BEKI
- The Beth El-Keser Israel Endowment Fund
- The Borick Family Endowment for Special Education for Youth
- The David & Lillian Levine Endowment for People with Special Needs at Congregation BEKI
- The George & Leah Posener Endowment for the Jewish Education of BEKI Youth
- The Gladys R. Lipkin Fund for the BEKI Hebrew School
- The Leah E. Posener and Betty D. Zelen Memorial Fund for Sisterhood
- The Lester & Bernice Margolis Fund
- The Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music
- The Posener Family Memorial Fund for Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel established by George G. Posener in blessed memory of his wife, parents, sisters, brother and two precious sons
- The Robert Goodwin Memorial Endowment
- The Rosenkrantz Family Library Endowment

Descriptions of each of these endowed funds can be found at www.beki.org/endowment.html or may be obtained from the BEKI office (389-2108 x14).