

# BEKI Bulletin

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November 2002 Vol. 8 Issue 11

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

Kislev 5763

## **The Eric I.B. Beller Environmental Endowment Fund**

As Eric Beller approached his fiftieth birthday, he presented a *Devar Torah* (sermon) in which he told us how he had been observing his own Jubilee



*Eric I.B. Beller*

year. He exhorted us to live our commitment to our institution. "I mean it," he said. "Let's stop waiting for someone else to provide – let's provide. Let us see this next decade as our sanctuary in time. And let us use that time to rededicate this synagogue as our collective spiritual home, our sanctuary in space."

A year later, as Eric prepared for the end of his days in this world, he made a bequest to BEKI. To honor his vision, his bequest was used to establish the Eric I.B. Beller Environmental Fund. Income from the Eric Beller Fund is dedicated to making our physical infrastructure and space more efficient and more environmentally friendly.

Eric's family and friends contributed to the establishment of this Fund. If you would like to contribute by check, simply include a memo indicating your gift's designation. If you would like to contribute by credit card or transfer of securities, please see the instructions at [www.beki.org/donate.html](http://www.beki.org/donate.html) or call our office at 203.389.2108 x14.

*MS et al.*

## **Hanuka**

The first night of Hanuka is Friday 29 November 2002. The Hanuka candles should be lit before Shabbat candles, at about 4:07p. The Shabbat candle lighting times listed in every issue of the BEKI Bulletin on the calendar page, and listed at our website at [www.beki.org/schedule.html](http://www.beki.org/schedule.html), represent the exact lighting time within one minute for the location of the synagogue. Anyone within a several mile radius of BEKI can use the time table with confidence. The candle lighting times listed are about 18 minutes before the "sunset" as it is defined in Jewish law. It is permitted to light candles before the listed lighting time, but according to Jewish law candles should not be lit after sunset. The 18 minutes serve as a "margin of error" and are a way for us to show our enthusiasm for Shabbat by welcoming it in a timely, but not hurried, fashion.



*Continued on page 4*

## No Parking

Members and visitors to BEKI are advised that parking is prohibited at all times on the East side of Harrison Street as indicated by the "No Parking" signs. Parking is usually available across Harrison Street, and ample parking is available in the BEKI lot at the rear of the building. Many spots have a scenic view of the pond.

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## BEKI Bulletin

The newsletter is published monthly by Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel for the benefit of its members. Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

To contribute articles or for inquiries regarding membership, donations, or special activities, call the Synagogue office (203) 389-2108, or write to 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515-1724  
or email: [jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)

or see our web page: [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org)

For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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## BEKI Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi  
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## A Message from Rabbi Tilsen

### “Not so much as a thread”

The Torah records (Genesis chapter 14) a war between a league of four kings and an alliance of five kings. Our Patriarch Abram intervened in the war with a force of 318 men when he learned that his nephew, Lot, had been taken away as a captive when the allies' city of Sodom fell.

Returning to Sodom upon his victory, Abram was met by King Melchizedeq of Sodom, who offered Abram blessings and bread and wine. By “local custom,” as victor, Abram would be expected to take possession of all of the property, and enslave or kill all of the captives taken in battle. Trying to salvage the situation for himself, the King of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the possessions for yourself.”

But Abram said to the King of Sodom, “I swear to Adonai, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth: I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours; you shall not say, ‘It is I

who made Abram rich.’”

In this episode, Abram had a clear war aim: to rescue his nephew Lot. There is no evidence that he replaced leaders, disarmed enemies, demanded tribute, controlled trade routes or captured wealth. He had a single, definable, and measurable aim, which served as his real and explicit justification for battle.



Rabbi Tilsen

Our sages noted the Torah points out that it was immediately and only “After this episode,” that “the word of Adonai came to Abram...saying: ‘Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be exceedingly great’” (Midrash Eliahu Rabba).

May our motives for our every deed be as selfless and pure as those of our Father Abraham. May we merit the protection of Magen Avraham – *The Shield of Abraham*.



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## A Message from Education Director Dr. Lauren Kempton

I love to learn. I have always loved to read and as the years march on and job responsibilities increase, reading for leisure becomes a great luxury. Another part of learning is being a good listener, a skill that parents and teachers alike work on instilling in their children. A few weeks ago, during services, I was a very good listener for Josh Levine's Devar Torah captivated me. To me one of the beauties of this life is to always learn from children, from students, from seniors, and especially from those who are different from you.

This is the inspirational message that Josh Levine imparted to me. His take on the destruction of the Tower of Babel was positive: the creation of different races and tongues is a gift, not a punishment. Josh expanded on the parsha and broadened the definition of different. His definition of different included those persons either mentally or physically challenged. Here at BEKI we have a special place and acceptance of those who may be unlike us.

Post-September 11th we live a different life, perhaps a more careful life. Our travel may be more selective and perhaps our daily routines more cautious. Yet to this sense of vigilance I suggest we add a reflection on the words of Josh Levine. Meet and greet people who are different from you and learn from them. And the other lesson; let us not become so involved in our work, the tower, that the bricks become more important than the people. We have a wonderful reputation here at BEKI. The community holds us in respect for our openness and our embracing of all who enter. Josh Levine is now an adult in our eyes by his rite of passage, but as a child, he reminded us of the importance of diversity to our society.



Dr. Lauren Kempton

*Who is wise? One who learns from every person.  
-- Pirqa Avot*

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## Hanuka

*Continued from page 1*

The *berakhot* (blessings) for lighting the Hanuka candles are printed in *Siddur Sim Shalom* (the prayerbook we use at BEKI) and most other prayerbooks. Recordings of the blessings are available on BEKI's website at [www.beki.org/audio.html](http://www.beki.org/audio.html). On each night of Hanuka, two *berakhot* are recited before lighting the candles. On the first night, the *she-hehiyanu* blessing is added.

One purpose of Shabbat candles is to enable us to see during the darkness of night. This was especially important in times and places where artificial lighting was uncommon and people generally were in the dark once night fell. It is permitted to use the Shabbat candles for general lighting, but one should avoid using them for reading or for other uses where one might normally make some adjustment in their brightness or location.

The purpose of Hanuka candles is to "publicize the miracle" of Hanuka. One should not use the Hanuka candles for any other purpose. For this reason, a "shamash" or "utility" candle is added, so that if we need to see in the room with the *hanukiya* (hanuka menorah), we can use the light of the shamash.

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## BEKI Religious School

On 16 October the children of BEKI Religious School held a Commemorative Service for Yitzhak Rabin. The students made yahrzeit candles and placed them on the bima. The service included the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, the prayer for martyrs and a prayer for peace. The service concluded with the lighting of the memorial candles and the singing of "Shir Shalom," the song for peace sung at the rally just before Rabin's assassination. Ongy Zisling, our Israeli Emissary, shared his remembrances of Rabin and read the students the book, Shalom Haver. The upper grade students read Clinton's Shalom Haver speech and Rabin's remarks at the Peace rally.

The classes in October and November found the Religious School very involved in special presentations to further enhance their Jewish life and Jewish learning. They prepared a special display for Shabbat on 19 October highlighting their Kite-Flying Project with pictures and essays in Hebrew.

To facilitate shopping during BEKI Religious School hours, the **Sisterhood Giftshop** will be open each Wednesday afternoon 4:00p to 6:15p and each Sunday morning from 9a - noon during the month of November for Hanuka shopping.

Rabbi Murray Levine will enrich our appreciation of Jewish Book Month during November with

a presentation on Jewish Books. He will show the students Hagadot through the decades and old and revered books in both Hebrew and Yiddish.

The parents and volunteers of Talmud Torah Meyuhad would like to thank you for your support of their first Annual Book Sale. The sale was very successful and enables us to continue our important work in Talmud Torah Meyuhad. I was able to purchase some wonderful books for the Religious School. A special thanks to Pam Howard for her leadership and Hattie McMillian for her work.

BEKI Religious School is participating in the Frameworks for Excellence Program under the auspices of United Synagogue and the direction of Wendy Light, United Synagogue consultant. This is a huge undertaking to be considered as a School of Excellence. Please call Lauren Kempton if you would like to assist in this project.

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## Tiqun Olam – Social Action

### Habitat for Humanity

BEKI has joined Habitat for Humanity's **Covenant of Faith.** We are volunteering to work with other local congregations in rebuilding two houses on Rosette St. in New Haven. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old to work at the site. BEKI volunteers will work on Sundays 10 November and 8 December from 11:00a to 4:00p. If you make financial contributions to Habitat, please designate them as "Covenant Build/BEKI." For planning purposes, Habitat must know how many volunteers are coming at least one week in advance. For information or to volunteer, contact Elisabeth Youngerman at 248-5832 or [jongot@aol.com](mailto:jongot@aol.com).

## Youth News

### Pumpkin & Apple Pie

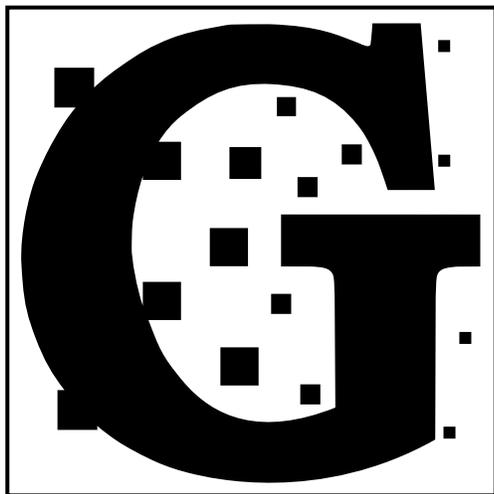
Top Off your Thanksgiving Dinner with a Delicious Pumpkin or Apple Pie!

Again this year, BEKI/BJ **USY** will be preparing delicious fresh Kosher parve pumpkin and apple pies for pick-up before Thanksgiving. These pies are made in the BEKI and B'nai Jacob kitchens under the strict supervision of **KINAHARA** (Kashrut Inspection of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly). The pies are unbaked and frozen so that you can bake them fresh for the holiday. Full baking instructions are included.

Each pie you purchase helps to support our USY (United Synagogue Youth) program and the *Tikun Olam tsedaqa* fund (philanthropic fund) to which the group is committed. If you would like to support USY but do not want a pie, you can sponsor a pie to be delivered to a local soup kitchen or family in need, or you can contribute funds directly.

Watch for order forms in the mail and please return promptly. Additional forms are available in the synagogue offices or from our USYers. You can also email [bekibjusy@mac.com](mailto:bekibjusy@mac.com) or call Rachel at 387-9467.

Pies can be picked up at BEKI on Monday 25 November from 5:30p to 7:00p only. Feel free to participate in the Maariv Evening service at BEKI from 5:45p to 6:00p that night. Thanks for your support.



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With sorrow we note the passing of  
**Bette Merriam**  
 Wife of Robert Merriam

**BEKI Welcomes A New Member**

Michael Moscowitz

**Benei Mitzva Observances**

Ariel Ben-Chitrit, son of Jacob & Rosalyn Ben-Chitrit, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Shabbat 1-2 November, parashat Hayei Sara. Ariel is a graduate of the BEKI Religious School and Benei Mitzva Preparation Program.

Zachary Bell, son of Morris Bell & Raina Sotsky, will lead and participate in services as a bar mitzva on Shabbat 15-16 November, parashat vaYetsei. Zach will participate in the 8:00p Late Service on Friday night and in the 9:15a Shabbat morning service. Zach is a graduate of the BEKI Religious School and Benei Mitzva Preparation Program.

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

**Darshanit in November**

Lauren Kempton will serve as *Darshanit* (Torah commentator) on Shabbat morning 9 November during the 9:15a service.

**Mazal Tov to:**

- Sarah Grazier-Zerberini, daughter of Rabbi Lina & Linden Grazier-Zerberini, who will lead and participate in services and celebrate becoming a bat mitzva in November in Philadelphia.
- Robert Johnston on being awarded the President's Book Award at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association in St. Louis, 24-27 October, for his forthcoming book, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in the Progressive Era, Portland, Oregon*.
- Shulamith Chernoff on being awarded the Outstanding Service Award for efforts on behalf of Connecticut's children by the Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children
- Steven Stoll, on the publication of his latest book, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America*.
- Robert Forbes on being honored by the Clara Muhammad School for his work with Imam Hasan.

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# BEKI Events

## November - Heshvan - Kislev

**5763**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					26 Heshvan 1	27 Heshvan 2
Shaharit=Morning Minha =Afternoon Minha-Maariv=Evening SSLM=Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan	Email Addresses: Office: beki@snet.net Rabbi: jtilsen@beki.org Religious School/Edu. Director: lkempton@beki.org Benei Mitzva Teacher: aschultz@beki.org website: www:beki.org	BEKI phone numbers: (203) 389-2108 Fax (203) 389-5899 Mary Ellen-Office x14 Religious School x13 Rabbi x10 Dr. Lauren Kempton x 33	Office Hours: Mon 9a-12 & 1p-3p Tue by appt. only Wed 10a-12 & 1p-6p Thu 9a-12 & 1p-3p Fri 9a-2p		7:00a Shaharit 4:31p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	9:15a Shaharit <i>Ariel Ben-Chitrit Bar Mitzva</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 4:30p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
28 Heshvan 3	29 Heshvan 4	30 Heshvan 5	1 Kislev 6	2 Kislev 7	3 Kislev 8	4 Kislev 9
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Minha	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 12:00-5:00p KISS 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Election Day</i> 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00p Adult Ed Classes	<i>Rosh Hodesh</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00-8:30p Women's League Fall Institute	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	<i>Office Closed-Vacation</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:21p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a Children's Programs 4:20p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
5 Kislev 10	6 Kislev 11	7 Kislev 12	8 Kislev 13	9 Kislev 14	10 Kislev 15	11 Kislev 16
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Minha	<i>Veterans Day</i> <i>Office Closed-Vacation</i> 7:00a Shaharit 7:45p Rashi Study Grp 8:00a-5:00p KISS 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:45p Executive Board	<i>Office Closed-Vacation</i> 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00p Adult Ed Classes	<i>Office Closed-Vacation</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00-8:30p Women's League Fall Institute	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:16p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv 8:00p Late Service <i>Zachary Bell Bar Mitzva</i>	9:15a Shaharit <i>Zachary Bell Bar Mitzva</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 4:15p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
12 Kislev 17	13 Kislev 18	14 Kislev 19	15 Kislev 20	16 Kislev 21	17 Kislev 22	18 Kislev 23
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Minha	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00p Adult Ed Classes	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8:15a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 8:00p A.A.	7:00a Shaharit 4:11p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv 8:00p Late Service	9:15a Shaharit 10:45a Cosmic Conversations 10:45a Children's Programs 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala Family Ed Havdala Program
19 Kislev 24	20 Kislev 25	21 Kislev 26	22 Kislev 27	23 Kislev 28	24 Kislev 29	25 Kislev 30
9:00a Shaharit 9:00a Religious School 5:45p Minha	7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Grp 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:45p General Board	7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:00p Adult Ed Classes	7:00a Shaharit 4:00p Religious School 4:15p Benei Mitzva Pgm 5:45p Minha-Maariv	<i>Thanksgiving</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 9:00a Shaharit No Evening Svc 8:00p A.A.	<i>Erev Hanuka</i> <i>Office Closed</i> 7:00a Shaharit 4:07p Candles 6:00p Minha-Maariv	<i>Hanuka</i> 9:15a Shaharit <i>Kiddush Sponsor: Van Creveld/                      Ben-Avie Family</i> 10:45a Children's Programs 10:45a SSLM 4:10p Minha, Avot, Maariv, Havdala
26 Kislev December 1						
9:15a Shaharit <i>Jochai Ben-Avie Bar Mitzva</i> No Religious School 5:45p Minha						

## Shabbat Minha Afternoon & Maariv Evening & Havdala on Winter Schedule

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

## Weekday morning services at BEKI

Begin your day in fellowship and with a spiritual direction. Monday morning 7a service is followed by the [Rashi Study Group](#) (to 8:30a). Tuesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) are attended by a unique mix of people. Wednesday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) features a continuing group of friends. Thursday mornings (8:15a to 9:00a) are ideal for people who either may not wish to rise earlier or who bring children to school, and includes a brief Torah service. Friday mornings (7:00a to 7:30a) present an ideal setting for someone wishing to help develop a cadre of dedicated daily daveners. Regular participants in these services are always glad to welcome additional worshipers. Call our office at 389-2108 x14 or see [www.beki.org/schedule.html](http://www.beki.org/schedule.html) for a complete schedule.

## Veterans Day Observance

On Monday 11 November, Veterans Day, daily services will be held at their usual times, 7:00a and 5:45p. The Rashi Study Group will meet at 7:45a. The office will be closed.

## National "Have a Minyan at Home" Day

Beth El-Keser Israel will join with other shuls in observing "National Have a Minyan at Home" day on Thursday evening 28 November. In marking this occasion, no afternoon-evening service will be held at the shul so that participants may have services in their own homes. For this purpose, plenty of kippot are available in your suit pockets or auto glove compartments where you have been stuffing them. Years ago, when this program was initiated, skeptics predicted it would be a real turkey and would be axed, but our actual response has been positive, for which we offer thanksgiving.

Weekday morning services on Thursday 28 November are on the Federal Holiday schedule, from 9:00a to 9:45a.

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## Torah for the Hungry Mind - Continuing Education

### **Chews by Choice**

The Kashrut Initiative of the New Haven Area Rabbinical Assembly ([KINAHARA](#)) presents “Chews by Choice: How & Why of Keeping Kosher,” an exploration into the fundamentals of the Jewish Dietary System. “Chews by Choice” will meet on Thursday 21 November from 6:00p to 7:45p in BEKI’s [Rosenkrantz Family Library](#). The class is especially suitable for those planning or beginning to keep kosher, and those contemplating conversion. For information contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 or [jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org).

### **Continuing Classes**

Classes in Liturgical Hebrew and *Taamei Ha-Miqra* (Trope Cantillation) began in October. If you are interested in joining these classes in progress, or in starting at a future date, please contact Lauren Kempton at 389-2108 x33 or [lkempton@beki.org](mailto:lkempton@beki.org).

### **Rashi Study Group**

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

### **Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan**

The Shabbat Shalom Learners’ Minyan for adults meets in BEKI’s [Rosenkrantz Family Library](#) every second *Shabbat* (Saturday) morning year-round from 10:45a to noon. The SSLM meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> of this month. Everyone is welcome to participate regardless of religious status or background.

### **Pirque Avot Study**

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

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

### **Required Reading & Reference Books on Web**

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

### **Rabbi’s High Holy Days Sermons Available**

Copies of Rabbi Tilsen’s High Holy Days and Yizkor messages are available in the literature rack in the synagogue lobby, or by request from the BEKI office (389-2108 x14). They are also available, along with other writings, at [www.beki.org/tilsen.html](http://www.beki.org/tilsen.html).

### **Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group**

The “[Sanhedrin Talmud Study Group](#)” meets weekly on Thursdays during the lunch hour at a downtown New Haven professional office for Talmud study. The Group has met weekly since 1999. For many participants, this is their first direct experience with Talmud text. The Group focuses on the issues raised in the Talmud, with less attention to the technical aspects of the text. For information contact Marc Schwartz at 562-9873 or [mschwartzmd@hotmail.com](mailto:mschwartzmd@hotmail.com).

### **Women’s League Study Group**

The Sisterhood is hosting a [Women’s League for Conservative Judaism](#) Study Group on six Wednesday evenings which began in October. The Study Group, featuring the teaching of Rabbi Richard Eisenberg of Congregation B’nai Jacob, will meet in BEKI’s Rosenkrantz Family Library from 7:00p to 8:00p. For information, contact the BEKI office at 389-2108 x14.