Seven May Programs!

Schmooze About Tax Benefits

Are you frustrated about the income taxes you had to pay in 2023? This Zoom Schmooze will explain some lesser-known tax advantaged strategies for paying your BEKI bills. We’ll help you find the maximum tax benefits for all of your charitable contributions.

While some of these suggestions are for members over age 70 (or the children of people over age 70), others are relevant for younger members as well.

Join our team of BEKI experts, Estate Attorneys Donna Levine and Lisa Stanger and Financial Advisor Glenn Levine, as we use a question & answer format that will be understandable for everyone. We’ll also have time for you to ask specific financial planning questions, including about how to use these strategies to support other charitable organizations.

There will be no solicitation of either services from our professionals or additional donations to BEKI.

Join us on Zoom Wednesday, May 8 at 7:30 pm.

Spirituality In Our Relationships

There’s Jewish spirituality hiding in plain sight, in the give-and-take between us. Rabbi Dennis Ross of Congregation Mishkan Israel will draw from his latest book, A Year with Martin Buber/Wisdom from the Weekly Torah Portion to discuss spiritual opportunities that so often pass unnoticed.

Part of the Jewish Publication Society’s Daily Inspiration Series, the book explores the fifty-four weekly Torah portions and eleven Jewish holidays through the eyes of Buber, one of the great twentieth-century Jewish thinkers.

Rabbi Ross is an Intentional Interim Rabbi and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with specialized training and experience supporting congregations in transition.

Join us for this Shabbat Schmooze May 11 at 12:45pm.

Seven May Programs
Continued on Page 3
UPCOMING EVENT

Impact of 10/7 on Israeli Academia

Join us Saturday, June 1 for a conversation with some of the 25 participants in the March Israel Yale mission in support of fellow academics, a group that included Roya Hakakian, Dan Prober, Roy Herbst, Alan Gerber, Evan Morris, and Edward Kaplan.

“Every Israeli university, like all of Israel, remains traumatized from Oct. 7. Yet Israelis are resilient, and this is doubly true for Israeli academics… Seeing the strength of our Israeli academic colleagues, we return committed to telling their stories and fighting back against the hate,” Prof. Kaplan wrote in a Newsweek article.

The group also visited Kfar Azza, where kibbutz members were murdered and taken hostage, and the site of the Nova Festival.

The Shabbat Schmooze will be at 12:45 pm.

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: bulletin@beki.org
• Visit our web page: www.beki.org
• Follow us on social media: Facebook
• 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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Associate Editors Donna Levine Donna Kemper
David Spitzer

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If you have questions or concerns please speak with a Board member.

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BEKI stained glass window design by Cynthia Beth Rubin
Seven May Programs
Continued from Page 1

Discussion of the Book of Ruth

The May Prayer and Liturgy discussion with Rabbi Carl Astor will focus on the Book of Ruth, in preparation for Shavuot. Join the group on Wednesday, May 15 at 7:30 pm on BEKI Zoom. Hebrew proficiency is not required. This is not a class, but rather an open forum to learn together and share ideas.

Rabbi Astor moved to Westville from New London, where he served as rabbi of Congregation Beth El from 1981 to 2013, retiring after 32 years as Rabbi Emeritus. While in New London, Rabbi Astor was president of the New London Clergy Association, a faculty member at Connecticut College, a member of the chaplaincy board and ethics committee at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, and a mohel.

Yom HaShoah program with Rafi Prober

Raphael “Rafi” Prober will discuss his 15 years of pro-bono work representing Holocaust survivors in their pursuit of justice from the French rail company responsible for deporting 76,000 Jews and thousands of others towards the death camps.

A new five-part documentary podcast Covering Their Tracks tells the story of Leo Bretholz’s daring escape from a moving train bound for Auschwitz, and the fight he led for accountability from the rail company some 70 years later. Ultimately, more than $60 million was paid into a compensation fund for the victims and their families.

Rafi is the son of members Dan and Sharon Prober. Join us for this presentation Thursday, May 16 at 7:30 pm on BEKI Zoom.

Stop the Bleed Training

On Wednesday, May 22 from 7 to 8 pm, we’re again providing free training on how to stop bleeding and thereby prevent loss of life.

This one-hour, in-person training is open to both adults and teens.

You’ll learn how to recognize different types of injuries and then control bleeding until first responders arrive.

Come to learn—or for a refresher course if you attended last year.

We’ll be seated for the workshop, with a standing portion at the end. Michael Shanbrom, our Regional Security Advisor, will again lead the training.

Pre-registration would be appreciated to office@beki.org. This training is made possible through the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

Lag BaOmer Kumsitz

We’ll celebrate Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the Omer, with our annual kumsitz, on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27. The folk-custom is to sing around a campfire at a “kumsitz,” meaning “come” and “sit.”

We’ll gather at 7 pm in the BEKI courtyard to sing niggunim—which have no words—as well as traditional American songs and Jewish songs, all from our song sheets.

The sheets and recordings of all songs are at the BEKI website, thanks to songleader Max DuBoff.

Come to sing and to enjoy kosher s’mores.

In case of rain, check the BEKI website or email president@beki.org for an update. If necessary, we will delay the kumsitz until the next evening.

Seven May Programs
Continued on Page 4
Green Team Schmooze about ADUs

Our Green Team will present a Zoom schmooze on Wednesday, May 29 at 7:30 pm about the new Accessory Dwelling Unit [ADU] ordinance in New Haven, featuring guest speaker Laura Brown, Executive Director, City Plan Commission, City of New Haven (& co-author of the new ordinance).

BEKI member and real estate agent Rebecca Weiner says that ADUs increase neighborhood density, lessen housing price pressure, and foster greener living and a more sustainable community.

“I feel that no part of the city is riper for this transition than Westville,” she explains. “Probably 4-6 times per month, I get calls from people who want to rent in Westville, ideally inside the eruv, in walking distance from BEKI, but who just cannot find any place they can afford. Those folks could potentially be great new BEKI members, bringing new energy, volunteerism, dues, etc., if we could find them a place to live nearby.”

“Meantime,” she adds, “also probably 2-3 times per month, I get calls from Westvillians who are finding their big homes a bit much to manage financially and otherwise, but who are not yet ready to sell. Even if they did, that would create housing for just a different family wanting a big home. This conversation is to create some community momentum around the idea of ADUs. Single-family homes can have ADUs added without totally changing their character.”

Introducing New Members Jen and Bill Ruth, Eleanor and Cordelia

We met working in regional theatre and have been living in East Haven before our current careers in print production and property management.

The girls have been attending day schools since kindergarten. Their Jewish education has inspired our whole family to join BEKI and we are looking forward to meeting new people.

Jen enjoys hiking, painting and welcoming Shabbat with fresh baked challah. Bill collects hobby board games, has a passion for Japanese language and culture, and explores the weekly parsha through various commentaries and keeps up with the Daf Yomi through the Babble on Talmud Podcast.

Eleanor and Cordelia love reading, especially manga, playing video games and watching anime with their dad, our two corgi mixes, and exploring new places. We are delighted to join the BEKI community.
High Holy Day Exhibition of BEKI Artists

The BEKI Art Committee is seeking submissions of art in any media from BEKI member artists for possible inclusion in the 2024 High Holiday Exhibit.

Please send up to five images, or a link to images, by no later than June 30, as well as any questions, to art@beki.org. The Art Committee will determine the number of works to exhibit based on the number of submissions received. Substitutions of images submitted of any new work done over the coming summer months will be considered.

Prize this month is a mug

Within an article in this bulletin, there’s a Prize Code. If you are one of the first five people to find it and email it to bulletin@beki.org, you will win a BEKI coffee mug.

Calling All BEKI Musicians!

We’re organizing a concert with BEKI musicians—vocal or instrumental—on Sunday June 23, starting at 4:30 pm. We’ll have free admission, open to family and friends too. After all of the performances, we’ll pass the hat for donations to JCARR, our local Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement.

Are you interested in participating? If so, email Jennifer Mellon at jnmellon@hotmail.com.

Update on JCARR Family 9

The father of Family 9, our newest family, started work as a crossing guard at East Rock School. The New Haven Independent ran an article about this Syrian refugee’s first day on the job.

If you’re willing to drive the family to appointments, or volunteer in other ways, please email BEKI’s liaison to JCARR, Jennifer Mellon, at jnmellon@hotmail.com.

HaMakom Yinachem

with sorrow we note the passing of

Kathy Rosenbluh,
former member, wife of Michael Stern

May the Almighty comfort those who mourn

Mazal Tov to

Paige and Andy Weinstein on the birth of their grandchild, Jackson Siecienski, and to parents Shayna and Matt.

David and Joanne Goldblum on the birth of their grandchild, Alice Ann Goldblum, and to parents Mollie and Ben.

Can You Provide a Meal?

BEKI has a long tradition of providing meals to families who have welcomed a child. You can prepare and deliver the dinner or arrange delivery from a restaurant.

Just log in and choose your password. When the calendar is set up for meals, you’ll receive an email with a link.

Consult rachel.d.greenberg@gmail.com if you have questions.
Contributions

Rabbi’s Tzedakah Fund
• In memory of Polina (Perl) Naaman by Alexandre (Sasha) Vaxman
• In appreciation to the BEKI community for support during shiva by Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel
• In appreciation for the beautiful naming ceremony for their granddaughter Lilah (daughter of David Kohn & Zoe Lubitz) by Marcia Silver & Martin Kohn
• To Jaime Grutzendler & Nicole Korda with sympathy on the passing of Pola Grutzendler by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow
• To Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel with sympathy on the passing of Abe Kaufman by Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow
• In appreciation of Rabbi Woodward’s guidance during Becca’s conversion to Judaism by Stephanie Green & Eric Grubman

To BEKI with thanks by
• Stacey Battat
To Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel with sympathy on the passing of Abe Kaufman by
• The Avni-Singer family
• Yaron Lew
• Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
• Sidd & Donna Levine (to the Ari Nathan Levine Children’s Library Fund)
• Jessey & Joe Palumbo
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
• Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold (to the Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund)
To Jaime Grutzendler & Nicole Korda with sympathy on the passing of Pola Grutzendler by
• Joanne Foodim & Rob Forbes
• Steve & Rachel Wizner
• Lauren & Scott Miller
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
To Rabbi Murray Levine & Dr. Arthur Seltzer with sympathy on the passing of Reena Seltzer by
• Rena Cheskis-Gold & Marty Gold (to the Barzillai Cheskis BEKI Youth Israel Scholarship Fund)
• Jessey & Joe Palumbo
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
To Linda Schultz with sympathy on the passing of Howard Gralla (to the Sanctuary Renovation Fund) by
• His sister, Rona Gralla
• Jessey & Joe Palumbo
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
• Steve & Rachel Wizner
• Sherry Zarrow Shragar
• Michael & Winifred Bixler
• Susan & Michael Marx
To Josh Perry, Anna VanCleave & Sydney Perry with sympathy on the passing of Lucille Alderman by
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
To Abby Fraade & Tani Cohen-Fraade and Ellen Cohen & Steven Fraade in honor of the birth of their son and grandson by
• Jessey, Joe, Marlo & Darren Palumbo
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey
• Steve & Rachel Wizner
To Tamara Schechter & Jessica Bod and family in honor of the birth of Akiva Isidore by
• Steve & Rachel Wizner
To Shayna & Scott Siecinski and Andy & Paige Weinstein in honor of the birth of their son and grandson by
• David & Darryl Kuperstock
To BEKI in appreciation of the gift of tzedakah to our congregation by
• Dale Osborne and Congregation B’nai Tikvoh-Sholom
Liora Lew Endowment for the Advancement of Youth Education and Youth Activities at BEKI
To Yaron Lew with sympathy on the passing of Pesach Lew by
• Jessey & Joe Palumbo

Yahrzeit Fund to support synagogue operations
In Memory of:
• Her father, Al Barnett by Caroline Barnett (to the Sanctuary Renovation Fund)
• Lester Margolis by David Margolis
• John & Morris Arovas by Louis & Sally Arovas
• Robert Levine by David Margolis
• Michael Castroll by David Schwartz & family
• Celia Russ by Stephen & Doris Brody
• Ida Brody by Fran Goldberg-Cohen
• Abraham Goldberg by Fran Goldberg-Cohen
• Julius Brody by Fran Goldberg-Cohen
• Shirley Rudof by Joanne & Steve Rudof
• Michael Freiman by Jonathan Freiman & Rachel Light
• Mary R. Kinsley by Judy Hoberman & Dominic Kinsley
• Harold Lidsky by Sandi Lidsky
• Ethel Frey by Eileen Schuman
• Her beloved husband Louis Pearlman by Harriet Pearlman
• Her beloved mother Thelma Kugell by Harriet Pearlman
• Bluma Soloway by Minna & Lewis Kaufman
• Lilyan Goodwin by Stacey Goodwin Podell
• Kate Rochlin by Kranie & Earl Baker
• Moe Epstein by Kranie & Earl Baker
• Herman Louis Grenet by Alan & Shirley Silver
• Marilyn Shure Savin by Ronald & Melrene Savin
• Philip Abramowitz by John & Marcia Gell
• Esther Baer by Maryanne Baer-Hines
• Jenoe Goldberg by Susan G. Cole
• Harry Thal by Phyllis Boyar

Kiddush Fund
• Helene Rosenberg & Keith Richter and Coreta & Naftali Caplan
• Angela & Bruce Oren
• Rachel & Steve Wizner
• Daniel Gordon, Jonathan Gordon, Len Winter & Jonathan Rohner
• Rachel & Jason Greenberg and Steven Fraade & Ellen Cohen

Chai/Synagogue Fund to support synagogue operations
To Richard Levine with sympathy on the passing of Nancy Levine by
• Judy Resnick
• Julie Cohen & Jim Stacey

Weekly Classes
Join Rabbi Woodward for a discussion of the week’s Torah portion on Thursdays 9-9:45 am in the library, following 8:15 am Shacharit. Talmud class meets on select Sundays at 10 am, following 9 am Shacharit.

Ritual

Sign up for Torah Reading
If you are able to read an aliyah of Torah or a Haftorah, make your selection via our online spreadsheet. Just scroll down to the proper date to see details about each aliyah. Questions? Consult Rachel Adelstein at ritualcoordinator@beki.org.
It's not too late to make a pledge or donation to the Sanctuary Redesign, or to increase the amount that you have already given. Contact Peggy in our office, or speak to a member of the Fundraising Committee: John Weiser, Murray Akresh, Jessey Palumbo, or John Wareck.
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Marjorie Wiener Created a Legacy for Her Synagogue, Congregation Beth El–Keser Israel

“I walked into BEKI in 1997 when my older son Matthew was going to start preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. I wanted to be a part of that process, and the Rabbi made sure we were all included. I immediately felt drawn in. BEKI is my community and my Jewish soul.” —Margie
Faith Necessarily Involves Doubt

“Signs point to yes.” “Reply hazy, try again.” “Very doubtful.”

I had a Magic Eight Ball as a kid, and I loved it. Ask it anything, and you’d get an answer … but often, that answer was itself a doubt.

We often see religion and doubt — or faith and doubt — as opposites. We think that religion is about certainty, and that doubt can’t have a place in it.

Theologically, though, doubt is an important ingredient in faith and religion. Faith is something that necessarily involves doubt — that necessarily involves questioning and negation — and it is something we should not portray simplistically.

You’ve probably heard about this theologically. But did you know that, in halakhah — Jewish Law — there is an important room for doubt as well?

In May, from the 19th to the 23rd, I’ll be attending Hadar’s Halakhah Intensive on the topic of doubt. I’ll quote in their words what it’s about:

"The Halakhah Intensive will explore the concept of s’feik s’feika, the notion that sometimes a situation involves multiple axes of doubt. For instance: Imagine a person with doubts about their lineage as a kohen. They generally assume restrictions such as not walking near graves. But if this person confronts a field that might have a grave in it, there are now two axes of doubt: There’s a doubt about the person’s status, and a doubt about the environment they are coming in contact with — the field might not have a grave in it, and even if it does, perhaps this person is not a kohen. Does this s’feik s’feika overwhelm the prohibition against walking past the field?

"We will trace this classic conceptual topic from its earliest appearances in rabbinic sources and watch how it expands and contracts over time. We will ask more general questions emerging from the cases we encounter: What role does doubt play in halakhah? How much are halakhic norms grounded in factual assumptions? What are considered two different axes of doubt? Can you remain blissfully doubtful, or do you need to pursue certainty?"

A huge number of halakhic questions play out on these questions of doubt. I think it makes sense that our halakhic categories parallel things in our spiritual lives, where doubt obviously and importantly plays a role.

We are feeling the press of the unknown — of doubtfulness — in many aspects of our world today — politically, socially, globally, morally, spiritually — and I’m excited to dive into this, to learn Jewish textual tools for playing out these conversations.

Seeking BINA Teachers for the 2024-25 School Year

By Annie Norman-Schiff, Education Director

BINA (an acronym for BEKI Ivrit and Neshama Academy) is BEKI’s dynamic and growing religious school program. BINA brings together a diverse group of students to learn the fundamentals of living a full Jewish life, including Hebrew language, Jewish history, holiday rituals, values, and prayer.

We are looking for 2 or 3 new teachers for next school year. One 1st grade teacher is needed on Sunday mornings from 9 am to noon. Two teachers for older grades are needed on Sundays 9 am to noon as well as Wednesday afternoons 4 to 6:15 pm.

Ideal candidates have the language skills to teach basic Hebrew; bring creativity and enthusiasm to teaching Jewish history, holidays, and values; and can model positive participation in Tefilah (prayer).

Previous experience in religious schools, summer camps, or youth groups is a plus. We welcome Jews who are diverse in race, sexuality, gender, and who are Jews by choice in everything we do at BEKI!

Are you interested in teaching at BINA, or could you connect us to a strong candidate? Contact Annie Norman-Schiff at anormanschiff@beki.org for more information.
Advertise in the Bulletin
Would you like your ad here in the coming year? Each month, the BEKI bulletin reaches over 700 households, most of them in the New Haven area. Check with Peggy in the BEKI office about our variety of ad rates.

Easy Fundraiser
The Stop & Shop gift cards sold by the BEKI office are debit cards for groceries or gasoline. This is an ongoing fundraiser that costs you nothing. Contact Peggy office@beki.org to arrange pickup.

Join BEKI on Facebook
Everyone is encouraged to join the BEKI Facebook group. You’ll enjoy the humor, community information, and links to cultural opportunities. You’ll want to choose the private group with the stained-glass window image. Just ask to join. (The BEKI page with the hamsa is the public-facing page, which has few postings).

E-Statements
Due to rising costs and BEKI’s efforts to be more Earth-friendly, we have transitioned to e-statements and e-yahrzeits. If you prefer to receive them by paper, please contact the BEKI office at office@beki.org or 203-389-2108 x114. The BEKI Green Team supports BEKI’s movement toward paperless communications and hopes the community will also.

Services
All services are also available on Zoom except Friday night and Saturday morning.

Sunday 9 am  Wednesday 7 am
Sunday 5:45 pm  Wednesday 5:45 pm
Monday 7 am  Thursday 8:15 am
Monday 5:45 pm  Thursday 5:45 pm
Tuesday 7 am  Friday 7 am
Tuesday 5:45 pm  Friday 6 pm
Saturday 9:15 am

For the latest information on services, check Happenings or email bekitefilla@gmail.com