

BEKI BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, a Full-Service Synagogue for Greater New Haven Jewry

August 1996 Vol. 2 Issue 7

ק"ק בית אל-בתר ישראל

Av/Elul 5756

Saul Bell Elected President

At its annual meeting in June, the membership of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel asked Saul Bell to serve as President. Saul has been a BEKI member since locating to New Haven some 36 years ago with his wife Hope, of blessed memory, and has served as President of the BEKI Men's Club for several terms. Saul's three sons studied with Mr. Friedman of blessed memory and held their bar mitzva observances at BEKI. As the Synagogue is moving closer toward the development and implementation of its vision for the year 2000, a strong need was felt for a leader who is held in high regard by veteran and new members, who is guided by a mature vision, and who is familiar with current operations and the needs for the future. Dr. Bell, a retired chemist, was elected unanimously.

Other officers elected include Vice Presidents Jay Brotman, Steven Fraade, and Diane Dumigan; Secretary Todd Strauss; Treasurer Tina Rose; Financial Secretary Ken Buckman; Assistant Financial Secretary Natan Weinstein; Administrative Consultant Milton Smirnoff; Financial Consultant Bud Volain.

The complete list of Members of the Board of Directors and Officers will be published in the September Bulletin, and the Board Members and Officers will be recognized at a special shabbat evening service on Friday 6 September at 8:00 p.m.

Oppenheim Endowment Sponsors Holy Day Music Workshops

Join Rabbi Alan Lovins, BEKI's High Holy Days Cantor, and Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen for two workshops on the Music of the High Holy Days. This excellent opportunity to review the melodies that will fill our sanctuary on these Days of Awe is an extension of similar classes held last year. By knowing the music we are able to ascend a little bit heavenward with our prayers. These workshops are made possible by the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at BEKI. Established by Sara Oppenheim to perpetuate the knowledge of Jewish Sacred Music, the Endowment assures the continuity of this essential component of our heritage from one generation to the next.

The workshops will be Wednesday 28 August and Wednesday 4 September at 7:30 p.m. The melodies and meanings of selected prayers and poems will be taught and reviewed. Tape recording is permitted, and all are welcomed.

Hebrew Language Classes

This year several Hebrew Language classes will be offered at BEKI. On Tuesday 27 August at 7:30 p.m. a "Brush Up" class will be taught by Liz Shanks for those who know the alef-bet for the most part but want to refresh their reading skills.

Those interested in a beginning Hebrew class that introduces the Hebrew alphabet, and those interested in an intermediate Hebrew language class are asked to call Men's Club President Drew Allison at 389-9503.

Synagogue Office Hours

Office hours are: Monday -Thursday: 9 am-3 pm and Friday: 9am-noon.

How to Contact the BEKI Bulletin

Responses to "A Message from Rabbi Tilsen," questions for "Dear Rabbi" and Letters to the Editor can be sent to: Editor, BEKI Bulletin, 85 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515 or by email to jjtilsen@aol.com.

Rabbi Tilsen's mail and e-mail are opened directly and exclusively by the Rabbi himself and are as secure and confidential as mail and e-mail can be.

Deadlines for Submitting Material for Publication

For the BEKI Bulletin, submit your material by the 1st of the month for the following month. Deadline for the September Bulletin is August 1st.

For mid-month flyer mailings, submit your material to the office by the 10th of the month. Deadline for the August mailing is July 10th. Please submit your material ON TIME.

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 or email: <http://www.uscj.org/ctvly.newhavcb>. For information about advertising, call the synagogue office. Deadline for submission of ads or articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication. Annual subscription is \$36.00.

BEKI Bulletin

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi
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Irreverent Thoughts: Doing Very Well

The afternoon minyan is doing very well, thank you. Except for when it rains, because some people don't like to come out in adverse weather. And except for when the weather is nice, because who would want to miss a chance to enjoy a beautiful summer evening outdoors? Other than that, the minyan is doing fine.

Through sound management and strong support the shul financially is doing well, thank you. That said, remember to pay your shul dues first. The government can wait for its money, because if they run out of cash they can just print more. And if an individual runs out of money, they can change their name and move to California. But a shul can't print money or move to California (the farthest one can go is the nearest suburb). But fortunately, the shul is doing fine.

Speaking of money, some people are unaware that shul dues are tax-deductible as a charitable contribution on federal income tax returns for those who itemize. To qualify as a tax deductible contribution to charity, there must be no tangible benefit received in exchange for the gift. Apparently the IRS and courts have ruled



Rabbi Tilsen

that there is no tangible benefit in belonging to a shul! Just intangible benefits such as gaining mitzva points and helping to assure your place in the World to Come, or maybe a warm fuzzy feeling. But hey, whose going to argue with their ruling? Save your receipts.

You've heard me say this before: More Christians convert to Judaism each year than the reverse. So when the Southern Baptist Church officially and publicly declared that their priority mission is to convert the Jews, they were really adopting a defensive position, although they probably didn't know it. Christianity was originally invented as a new way to convert pagans. For anyone who lives in the mitzva system, the Christian symbols and philosophy are at best superfluous. That's not to say that in its own terms it's not a lovely religion. I'm sure it is all meant out of love. Let them love the Muslims or Buddhists for awhile. Be sure to tell your Southern Baptists friends and co-workers what you think of their Church's mission; as they say in the streets, "in yo' face." Despite the Southern Baptist's new crusade, the Jewish People are doing fine.

Amitai Sela

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Dear Rabbi,

Can a space alien be Jewish?
Signed, Deep Space 18

Dear Deep Space,

Of course. Star Trek fans have always suspected Vulcans are Jewish, since the Vulcan language closely resembles Yiddish, and the Vulcan hand greeting is identical to the Kohanic symbol used since the time of Aaron. Mr. Spock himself is the product of an intermarriage (Vulcan father, Human mother) so his status is uncertain.

According to the traditional halakhic (legal) definition, one who is either born of a Jewish mother or converts is Jewish. I have never refused to convert someone merely because they are from a different galaxy.

If someone who was not Jewish by this definition but followed the mitzvot were to visit us from another planet, they might be treated as Jews at least for some purposes. In theory, their testimony might be acceptable in court, their food might be assumed kosher,



and they might be able to serve as a mohel (or mohelet) to perform brit mila (bris). They might even be able to count in a minyan. It is even conceivable that they would be eligible for qiddushin (Jewish marriage). We will have to examine the specific case when it arises (or beams down).

Once again, we see that you don't have to be Jewish to be Jewish, but it helps. Live long and prosper!

Dear Rabbi,

I'm planning a simha for the fall of 1997. Will the holidays be early or late next year?
Signed, Plan Ahead

Dear Ahead,

The holidays will be right on time.

All letters to Dear Rabbi should be addressed to Rabbi J-J van Tilsen, care of this newsletter. Due to the volume of mail received, Dear Rabbi cannot answer all inquiries.

Lovins & Lovins at High Holy Days

Rabbi Alan H. Lovins and his daughter Rachel Lovins will serve again as our Hazzanim for the High Holy Days. Dr. Alan Lovins, a BEKI member, is a graduate of Yale University and holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Columbia University. He was ordained as a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and has been a resident of New Haven for over forty years. Rachel Lovins, who spent many years in her youth at BEKI, lives with her family in New York. In addition to Rabbi Lovins and Rachel Lovins, the services will again be lead by BEKI members serving as volunteer hazzanim.



Rachel Lovins



Alan Lovins

Rabbi Tilsen commented that our hazzanim are "uniquely qualified to serve as our shalihei tsibbur—our personal representatives before God on the Days of Awe." For information on seating and ticketing call 389-2108.

Prospective Members Brunch

A brunch for prospective members will be hosted by Miriam Benson & Rabbi Tilsen on Sunday 18 August. Your help is needed in identifying and inviting potential new members. If you know a potential member who might like to be invited please call the office at 389-2108.



Late Friday Service to Resume

The ever-popular Late Friday Night Service featuring the music of Cantor Irving Weinstein and Kevin Mack will resume after its summer break on Friday 6 September at 8:00 p.m. Mark your calendar!

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Letters

I would like to thank Sisterhood and the Congregation as a whole for the good bargains at the recent rummage and tag sale. And what savings! I was really surprised how much money I saved, and most of the merchandise was fantastic, of course.

I just loved the friendly service that was extended and rendered me. The next tag sale in the fall I will be more than ready for. I just wanted to say thank you for being so kind.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Whittaby Jr.

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Eric Beller to Lead Torah Discussion

Eric I.B. Beller will present a Devar Torah-Discussion on 10 August during shabbat morning services which begin at 9:15 a.m. Eric is a New Haven attorney specializing in managed care health law, environmental law, business law and estate planning and probate. Beller is a BEKI member who lives with his family in Westville.



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LaMaazel Awarded Gateway Grant

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel has been awarded a grant by the Gateways outreach program of the Jewish Theological Seminary to promote its unique and innovative "LaMaazel: The Jewish-Spiritual Way in Childbirth" workshop.

The LaMaazel workshop explores the Jewish-Spiritual way in childbirth with prospective parents, health care professionals and others. It is open to Jews, members of other faiths and interfaith families.

LaMaazel is designed to take away some of the mystery but to enhance participants' understanding and sense of awe of the miracles of childbirth. It introduces pregnant women and their partners to tehinot (prayers written by and for women), appropriate approaches to sexuality during pregnancy, the meaning of names, brit milah (bris), simhat bat (celebration for baby girl), programs for young children and related topics. It is an opportunity to meet a mohel or mohelet

(the person who performs the circumcision) who can answer questions about that process.

LaMaazel is a safe space for adults to explore questions they may face: Will the child have a brit mila/simhat bat? What happens if parents or grandparents have differing religious traditions? Can or should the baby be brought up with no religious tradition, one tradition or two?

Several BEKI members have been instrumental in the development of LaMaazel, including social worker Marsha R. B. Beller, Miriam Benson, certified childbirth educator Jennifer Botwick-Ries, certified mohelet Paulette Lehrer, Rabbi Murray Levine, Rabbi Alan Lovins, clinical psychologist Dr. Lisa Marcus and Rabbi Tilsen. In addition, Steven Fraade assisted in the writing of the grant proposal.

The next meeting of LaMaazel will be Sunday 27 October at 4:00 p.m. If you or someone you know might like to be invited, please leave a message for Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 or jjtilsen@aol.com.

August Events

02 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	7:49p	Candle Lighting
03 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	10:45a	Learners' Minyan
	5:45p	Minha
	8:40p	Motze'ei Shabbat
05 Mon	7:45a	Rashi Study Group
09 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	7:41p	Candle Lighting
10 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
		Darshan: Eric Beller
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	5:45p	Minha
	8:31p	Motze'ei Shabbat
16 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	7:30p	Candle Lighting
17 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	10:45a	Learners' Minyan
	5:45p	Minha
	8:20p	Motze'ei Shabbat
18 Sun	11:00a	New Members Brunch
19 Mon	7:45a	Rashi Study Group
23 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	7:21p	Candle Lighting
24 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	5:45p	Minha
	8:10p	Motze'ei Shabbat
26 Mon	7:45a	Rashi Study Group
27 Tue	7:30p	Hebrew Brush-Up
28 Wed	7:30p	Music & Poetry of Holy Days 1
30 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	7:10p	Candle Lighting
31 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	10:45a	Learners' Minyan
	5:45p	Minha
	8:01p	Motze'ei Shabbat

September Events

02 Mon	9:00a	Weekday Morning Service
	9:45a	Rashi Study Group
04 Wed	7:30p	Music & Poetry of Holy Days 2
06 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	6:58p	Candle Lighting
	8:00p	Late Shabbat Service Installation of Officers
07 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
		Darshan: Robert Forbes

	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	5:45p	Minha
	7:47p	Motze'ei Shabbat
	9:30p	Selihot at Or Shalom
08 Sun	10:00a	Qever Avot Memorial Hamden
	11:00a	Qever Avot Memorial West Haven
09 Mon	7:45a	Rashi Study Group
10 Tue	7:30p	Meaning of Holy Days
13 Fri	6:45p	Weekday Minha Service
	6:47p	Candle Lighting
	7:00p	Rosh HaShana Evening Service
14 Sha	8:30a	Rosh HaShana Morning Service
	9:30a	Babysitting begins
	11:00a	Children's Havura
	11:00a	Junior Congregation
	6:45p	Rosh HaShana Afternoon Service
	7:00p	Rosh HaShana Evening Service
		* Candle Lighting after 7:35p
15 Sun	8:30a	Rosh HaShana Morning Service
	10:00a	Babysitting
	11:00a	Children's Havura
	11:00a	Junior Congregation
	4:45p	Tashlikh under Edgewood Bridge
	5:45p	Rosh HaShana Afternoon Service
	7:33p	Motze'ei Hag (Holy Day Ends)
16 Mon	7:45a	Rashi Study Group
20 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Service
	6:34p	Candle Lighting
	8:00p	Late Shabbat Service
21 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Morning Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	5:45p	Minha
	7:21p	Motze'ei Shabbat
22 Sun	9:30a	Sukka Set Up
	11:30a	Men's Miqva
	6:15p	Minha Afternoon Service
	6:15p	Babysitting
	6:30p	Kol Nidre/Yom Kippur Evening
	6:30p	Candle Lighting
23 Mon	9:00a	Yom Kippur Morning/Yizkor
	9:30a	Babysitting begins
	11:00a	Children's Havura
	11:00a	Junior Congregation
	4:45p	Yom Kippur Minha/Neila
	7:18p	Maariv & Havdala
	7:29p	Final Shofar
	7:30p	Break-Fast in Lower Hall
27 Fri	6:00p	Early Shabbat Sukkot Service
	6:22p	Candle Lighting
28 Sha	9:15a	Shabbat Sukkot Service
	10:45a	Children's Shabbat Havura
	10:45a	Junior Congregation
	10:45a	Learners' Minyan
	5:45p	Minha
		* Candle Lighting after 7:10p
29 Sun	9:15a	Festival Morning Service

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Doors are open 15 minutes before services and events.	Children's Shabbat Havura (CSH) meets every Saturday morning year-round in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room. All are welcomed.	Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan (SSLM) meets every second Saturday morning in the Library. All are welcomed.	Motze'ei Shabbat means the end of the Sabbath day. Shaharit means morning service. Minha means afternoon service.	16 Av 1 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	17 Av 2 6:00p Early Service 7:49p Candle Lighting	18 Av 3 Parshat Ekev 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a CSH 10:45a SSLM 10:45a Jr Cong 5:45p Minha 8:40p Motze'ei Shabbat
19 Av 4 9:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	20 Av 5 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Minha-Maariv	21 Av 6 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv Did you remember to buy your food certificates?	22 Av 7 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	23 Av 8 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	24 Av 9 7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Early Shabbat Service 7:41p Candle Lighting	25 Av 10 Parshat Re'e 9:15a Shaharit Darshan: Eric Beller 10:45a CSH 10:45a Jr. Cong 5:45p Minha 8:31p Motze'ei Shabbat
26 Av 11 9:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	27 Av 12 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	28 Av 13 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	29 Av 14 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	30 Av 15 Rosh Hodesh 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	1 Elul 16 Rosh Hodesh 7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Early Shabbat Service 7:30p Candle Lighting	2 Elul 17 Shoftim 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a CSH 10:45a SSLM 10:45a Jr Cong 5:45p Minha 8:20p Motze'ei Shabbat
3 Elul 18 9:00a Shaharit 11:00a Prospective Members' Brunch at Benson-Tilsens 5:45p Minha-Maariv	4 Elul 19 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Minha-Maariv	5 Elul 20 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	6 Elul 21 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	7 Elul 22 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	8 Elul 23 7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Early Shabbat Service 7:21p Candle Lighting	9 Elul 24 Ki Tetse 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a CSH 10:45a Jr Cong 5:45p Minha 8:10p Motze'ei Shabbat
10 Elul 25 9:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	11 Elul 26 7:00a Shaharit 7:45a Rashi Study Group 5:45p Minha-Maariv	12 Elul 27 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p Hebrew Language Brush-Up Class	13 Elul 28 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv 7:30p Music & Poetry of High Holy Days Workshop I	14 Elul 29 7:00a Shaharit 5:45p Minha-Maariv	15 Elul 30 7:00a Shaharit 6:00p Early Shabbat Service 7:10 Candle Lighting	16 Elul 31 Ki Tavo 9:15a Shaharit 10:45a CSH 10:45a SSLM 10:45a Jr Cong 5:45p Minha 8:01p Motze'ei Shabbat

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- To Michael & Sara Kohane Reifler in honor of the birth of baby boy from Stuart Serkin & Tamar Edelkind
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- In honor of Dr. Saul Bell on assuming the presidency from Alan & Joan Gelbert
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- In memory of Malka Levine from Saul Bell
- In memory of Malka Levine from Ethel Himberg
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- In memory of Malka Levine from Belle Reese
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Sisterhood News

Sisterhood hopes everyone is having an enjoyable and healthy summer. Keep well and happy!

We are looking forward to the 1996-1997 year. May it be very happy, very healthy, very productive, and very rewarding for Sisterhood and for BEKI.

Those ladies who do not yet belong to Sisterhood, please join us! Enjoy the friendship, the camaraderie and the pleasure of helping our beloved BEKI.

Here's to a Very Happy and Successful New Year!

Food Gift Certificate Fund Raiser

We are delighted to inform our members that this terrific fund raiser presented a \$7000 check to BEKI at the congregational meeting.

With more members participating we could have presented even more.

These certificates are like money, they cost

nothing extra, but the synagogue receives a percentage from the supermarkets.

We especially wish to thank the new congregants who have started to use them. Now that you see how much the synagogue has to gain, call us, we will be happy to accommodate you.

Certificates from Stop & Shop, Waldbaums, and the Westville Kosher Market are available. Call: Mimi Kahn at 387-8105, Mikki Ratner at 387-7882.

Rummage Sale

Our spring rummage sale was very successful. All summer clothing was donated to charities. We wish to thank the ladies and gentlemen who gave their time and help.

Remember, costume jewelry, paintings, lamps, toys, handbags, and household merchandise are good sellers.

The bulletin will inform you of the date of our winter sale.

Mimi Kahn & Mikki Ratner

And the Winner Is....

Congratulations to the winners of our BEKI Raffle-- Dr. Alan Lovins and Patricia Loving for a one year membership to BEKI, and to Ivan and Rita Sachs for 100 coupons in food certificates.

The Board of Directors gives special thanks to Phil Voigt for helping the synagogue with its many building solutions.

The Board of Directors gives special thanks to Sheila Gardner for her outstanding contribution to the synagogue for her work on the newsletter as advertising editor.

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Rabbi Tilsen Lobbies Washington

Rabbi J-J Tilsen and Rabbi Richard Eisenberg visited Washington DC in June as part of a national delegation of Conservative Movement Rabbis to advocate positions on social welfare policy. The Connecticut delegation met with Senator Joseph Lieberman, Representative Rose DeLauro, and the staff of Senator Christopher Dodd to convey positions on welfare, immigration, health care and the separation of church and state adopted as resolutions of the Rabbinical Assembly at its annual convention in May.

"We're all for welfare reform," remarked Rabbi Tilsen, "but you can't just cut programs without developing alternatives for people, without looking at what will happen to real people and real families. During the Reagan Administration they released thousands of mental patients onto the streets without making alternative provisions for them, and it was and is a disaster."

The role of religion in public life was also discussed with legislators. "When we hear about bills permitting or requiring organized prayer in public schools, alarm bells should sound," said Rabbi Tilsen. "As President

Clinton noted, the Constitution affords a great deal of latitude in allowing the legitimate expression of religion while protecting us from compulsion. Don't tamper with the Constitution. I went to public school, and I was able to say hamotzi before lunch, led a Mishna and Bible study group during free time, and I suppose we could have had a minyan if we wanted. But I don't want the school boards mandating anything."

The Rabbinical Assembly delegation met with Secretary of Education Richard Riley for over an hour, and with Presidential advisor Rohm Emanuel. A discussion was held with William Kristol, former chief of staff of Vice-President Quayle and editor of the Weekly Standard along with Mark Talisman, former chief lobbyist of Council of Jewish Federations.

Some in Washington were confused by the name "Conservative Movement," since the rabbis represented positions most often identified as centrist or liberal, and not necessarily "conservative."

The Rabbinical Assembly is the organization of 1,200 Conservative/Masorti rabbis worldwide, serving the largest movement of religiously affiliated Jews.

BEKI 2000 Update



The BEKI 2000 Committee is continuing to reach out to involve all members in the planning process. Before the annual meeting, BEKI 2000 Committee members alerted synagogue members to the fact that the meeting was happening, and that there would be an update about the BEKI 2000 planning process. In part due to the phone calls, the meeting was attended by approximately 80 individuals, about twice the number that have attended in previous years. Synagogue members were able to learn about the wide array of synagogue projects, committees and tasks. The meeting was very positive and the members were pleased to learn of the many ways in which the synagogue was moving forward.

There was a brief presentation of the BEKI 2000 process at the end of the meeting, and a survey was distributed. The survey will help the Committee learn about which members are interested in participating in the planning process, and what skills, interests and experiences members can make available. PLEASE FILL OUT THE SURVEY AND RETURN IT TO THE BEKI OFFICE if you haven't already done so.

The BEKI 2000 Committee is seeking chairpeople for each of the eight planning subcommittees. If you haven't made your interest known, now would be an ideal time to do so. Please contact Rabbi Tilsen, Tina Rose, or any member of the BEKI 2000 Committee. The Committee will be reaching out again during the summer to fill the membership of each of the subcommittees. *John Weiser*

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