

# BEKI Bulletin

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January 2000 Vol. 6 Issue 1

ק"ק בית אל-כתר ישראל

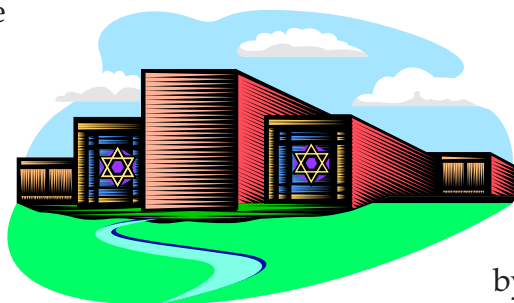
Shevat 5760

## ***New Lipkin Endowment to Support Youth Education***

**Gladys R. Lipkin**, long a BEKI member and supporter, has established the Gladys R. Lipkin Fund for the Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel Hebrew School to provide ongoing support for the religious education of our youth. Managed by the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven, the Gladys R. Lipkin Fund will provide an annual income to provide for the operating and tuition costs of the religious school.

"Originally, Gladys didn't even want us to announce her generous gift," commented Rabbi Tilsen. "She simply said, 'I'm thankful that I am able to do this.' But we imposed on her to let us share this with the Congregation and the community, with the hope that her act of *tsedaqa* will inspire others."

In addition to serving as a director of the Congregation, Gladys Lipkin has taken a particular interest in BEKI's educational programs for youth as well as its programs for adults with special needs. She has served in advisory and volunteer capacities for numerous committees and programs at the synagogue.



Endowments held by the Jewish Foundation enjoy professional management and have attained superior market performance over the past five years. Because the principal is maintained in real terms, the funds provide a predictable income to

the synagogue that more than keeps pace with inflation. "A figure has not yet been set by the planning committee, but I would suppose a goal of \$1 million to \$2 million will be set for endowing our religious school," said Rabbi Tilsen. "Significant gifts such as this one by Mrs. Lipkin and gifts by George Posener, the Borick Family and others have given the school a

'vote of confidence' and have started the ball rolling toward building the needed capital."

For information on establishing an endowment for the benefit of BEKI contact Rabbi Tilsen at (203) 389-2108 x10 (or [jjtilsen@beki.org](mailto:jjtilsen@beki.org)). For information on the Jewish Foundation or to schedule a confidential meeting contact its Director, Dr. Deborah Kaplan Polivy, at (203) 387-2424 x304 or at [dpolivy@jewishnewhaven.org](mailto:dpolivy@jewishnewhaven.org). For information on BEKI's religious school contact Ms Terri Stern at 389-2108 x13 or [bejesteb@earthlink.net](mailto:bejesteb@earthlink.net).

***Save the Date***

***Gourmet Shabbat Dinner 11 Feb 2000***

**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](mailto: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.

**Calling BEKI**

To call BEKI, dial (203) 389-2108.

When the automated attendant answers, dial any of the numbers below for the desired extension. You don't have to wait to hear the whole recorded greeting. If you don't have a "touch-tone" phone (i.e. a phone that dials by sending tones), wait to the end of the greeting and you will then be able to leave a message for the Administrator. A shortcut: To skip to the end of a greeting, press asterisk (\*).

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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@aol.com](mailto:jjtilsen@aol.com)

or see our web page created by Phill Simon: [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.

Annual subscription is \$36.00.

**BEKI-Bulletin**

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A Message from Rabbi Tilsen & Dear Rabbi  
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**Calling Rabbi Tilsen**

Rabbi Tilsen can be reached most days (except Saturdays and Tuesdays) from 6a to 3p and 6p to 10p at 389-2108 x10. When Rabbi Tilsen is on another call or out of the office, you may leave a voicemail message directly for him at x10, or if you prefer, with Mary Ellen at x14.

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## Getting to Know Me

As part of my work as rabbi in the Congregation, I have many opportunities to get to know a variety of interesting and inspiring people. This is one of the greatest benefits of my work at BEKI. Getting to know people is a wonderful way to learn more about oneself.

Some people can be intimidated by authority figures such as rabbis. Fortunately this has not been a problem at BEKI, at least among those who know me even a little. As a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the class "Intimidating Congregations 101" was an elective, not required, so I didn't take it. Instead, I learned how to project a rabbinic aura by reading back issues of *The Illustrated Holy Man News* in the JTS Library. Here are a few factoids about your rabbi that you might not have known. They say that "familiarity breeds contempt" so I will reveal only a few details, not enough to draw a complete picture, but enough to position you to do well in a trivia contest of synagogue personalities, or at least leaving you wanting to know more. Perhaps there is something you can relate to.



Rabbi Tilsen

### *Things I've never done*

Shopped at Wal-Mart  
Been to the Mall of America  
Visited Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun  
Taken illegal drugs  
Paid for sex  
Had a serious car accident  
Bungee cord jumped  
Been convicted of a felony  
Shot a real gun  
Traveled in Europe  
Piloted an airplane  
Changed the oil in my car myself  
Owned a TV

### *Things I've done*

Eaten bacon  
Climbed a big mountain  
Lived in Israel for four years  
Grew up in Minnesota  
Voted for a Republican candidate  
Kayaked in Hawaii  
Fallen asleep while driving  
Held the hand of the dying  
Broken my nose  
Been sorry  
Seen babies born  
Felt awe  
Skinny dipped in the Dead Sea  
Been rescued from a flood  
Wandered in the wilderness  
Changed flat tires  
Installed computer expansion card  
Had my tonsils removed

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## Dear Rabbi

Dear Rabbi,

What is the symbolism of throwing the dirt on a coffin at a Jewish funeral?

Signed, Dying to Know

Dear Dying,

It is not a symbol. It is part of an actual burial.

The first shovels of dirt at a burial service can be a very difficult moment for the mourners, because it brings home the reality of the death in a very direct way. While some mourners choose not to attend the burial service, it is important to understand that the actual burial is a specific *mitzva* (religious imperative) and it is considered a great act of kindness to provide others with this final act of service. Mourners are not usually required or expected to perform or even attend the burial, but they may do so if they are able.

Dear Rabbi,

What is the symbolism of lighting Shabbat candles?

Signed, In the Dark

Dear Dark,

It is not a symbol. Originally, at least, and in most times and places, the lighting of Shabbat lamps was primarily to give light so that people would not have to (as they say in the punch line of many Jewish mother jokes) "sit in the dark." That is, if they didn't light Shabbat lamps, it would be dark, because most people did not otherwise have artificial lighting to illuminate the night. In most times and places, when the sun went down, it got dark, and that was the end of the matter. Lighting Shabbat lamps meant that this one day of the week was special in that people could see, and so could stay up later talking, singing, eating, studying, and reading. Shabbat was a very special day for that reason.

In our day the lighting serves as a moment for an individual or family to pause and begin a period of sacred time. The act of lighting the candles links one Jewish household to another and one generation to another.



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M, T, W, F

Thurs.

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8:00-5:30

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8:00-3:00

## **BEKI Membership**

The BEKI Membership Committee will be hosting a "Bring A Friend To BEKI" Shabbat on Saturday 5 February 2000 with an extended qiddush. We hope that every member can participate by bringing at least one new person or family to the Shul on this day. BEKI has so much to offer in its Shabbat morning programs; there is something for everyone. Why not share it with a newcomer? Save the date, we look forward to the shul being crowded on this day!

## **Renaissance Campaign Approaching Financial Goal**

As of 1 December 1999, the 1999-2000 BEKI Renaissance Campaign raised \$82,400, which represents 88% of its minimum goal of \$93,000. The Renaissance campaign includes only direct donations to the campaign and pledges at the Kol Nidre Appeal. Contributions made to establish endowed funds or directed to specific projects are acknowledged elsewhere.

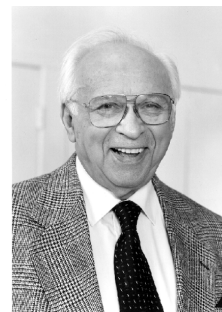
The Renaissance Campaign was implemented in order for BEKI to raise sufficient funds for BEKI to meet its operating expenses for the current fiscal year. This year, BEKI faces additional expenses due to the removal of two underground oil tanks and the hiring of an architect to create a master plan.

The Renaissance Campaign also permits the synagogue to maintain its dues structure at current levels so that they remain relatively affordable. If not for the monies raised from the Renaissance Campaign, dues would need to be raised by approximately \$450 per member unit (single or family).

If you would like more information regarding the Renaissance Campaign, please contact Stephen Pincus at 397-8816 or Robert Leikind at 389-4569.

## **Posener Gift for Shabbat Morning Youth Programs**

Through the generosity of George G. Posener, Anne Johnston will now expand her duties as Special Programs Director by adding her support to the Shabbat Morning Children's Programs at BEKI. The **Children's Shabbat Havura** (Friendship Circle) for preschoolers, the **K-2 Kehila**



*George G. Posener*

for kids in grades K through 2, and the Junior Congregation are all parent-led programs meeting weekly year-round. The addition of Anne's expertise is designed to enhance the volunteer effort, not replace it. The Posener gift will enable Anne to serve as a consultant to parents preparing lessons, to further develop the printed resource center, and to lead additional Shabbat morning sessions through the spring of this year.

The Children's Programs at BEKI begin at 10:45a each *Shabbat* (Saturday) morning and end at about noon. Everyone is welcome to come and explore.

## **BEKI Sisterhood News**

Sisterhood wishes everyone a healthy, happy and rewarding year 2000. We are now discussing plans for the coming spring.

Now that Hanukah is behind us, please don't forget that the Sisterhood Gift Shop has gifts for all occasions: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, new babies, etc.

And Sisterhood always welcomes new members. Please join us!

*Adele Tyson, President*



**DELI BOXES 2000:  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WATCH THE SUPERBOWL  
TO ENJOY A GREAT DINNER!!**

For the 7th consecutive year, Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel/B'nai Jacob USY will again offer delicious boxed deli dinners for sale to the community on Super Bowl Sunday 30 January 2000. This year, in response to requests by our members, both vegetarian and vegan choices will be available in addition to the traditional deli meat selections. Proceeds from the sale of these dinners goes toward support of the group's activities and especially toward the USY international tzedakah fund "Tikun Olam".

Flyers and order forms were sent out to the congregation and to the community in December. Additional order forms are available at BEKI. Please send in your orders before 18 January. For more information, please call our Deli Boxes co-chairs: Aliza Kuperstock 387-0304 or Danya Cheskis-Gold 397-1497.



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## Hebrew Language Courses

Hebrew language courses at two levels will begin on Sunday nights in January. The first course, "The Alef-Bet Workshop," will teach the basics of the Hebrew alphabet and decoding skills. The second course, "Beyond Alef-Bet," will serve as an introduction to the basic vocabulary and grammar of Hebrew, using the *siddur* (prayer book) as the initial point of reference. While focusing on *siddur* Hebrew, the language skills covered are readily transferable to Biblical and Modern Hebrew.

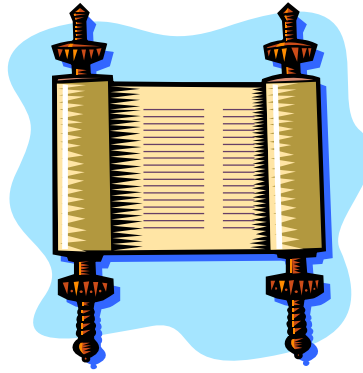
Both classes will meet from 6:00p to 7:00p every Sunday evening from 9 January 2000 to 27 February 2000 (eight sessions). In addition to book fees, there is a nominal registration fee. For more information or to register, call Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10. The courses may be taken independently and are part of the Siyyum 2001 curriculum.

## Avot

Join us every Shabbat afternoon following Mincha afternoon service during fall and winter for a twenty-minute Pirque Avot Study session. Study and discuss this early collection of wise sayings of our sages, also known as "Mishna Avot" or as "Avot." "Pirque" means chapters or quotations; "avot" means "of the ancestors." Avot was edited in the second century of the Common Era by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and contains material from that period as well as from several centuries earlier. As Hillel says, "Do not say, 'When I have leisure, I will study,' for you may never have leisure" (Avot, 2:5). That's the same Hillel who says, "If not now, when?" (Avot, 1:14).

## Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The "Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan," which meets every other Saturday morning at 10:45a in BEKI's Rosenkrantz Library, is an ideal setting for veteran and novice shul-goers alike to become more comfortable and expert in the *Shaharit* (morning) and Torah services in a supportive



setting. Lead by Steven Fraade and Rabbi Alan Lovins, the Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan has helped many feel a deeper sense of awe born of greater understanding while increasing the level of comfort through nurturing step-by-step practice in a non-threatening multi-generational setting.

## 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 join the study for a single meeting or to begin at any time. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary but helpful. For more information, just come once and find out what it is about.

## Classes Coming in March

"Shir HaShirim Song of Songs: Love Poetry of the Hebrew Bible" with Rabbi Murray Levine and "Mishna Berakhot" with Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen will be offered on Sunday nights beginning in March. Look for details in the next issue of the BEKI Bulletin.

## Siyyum 2001

A group of adults has made a commitment to a year-long program of study beginning in January. If you are interested in learning more about the program or would like to join, please contact Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 x10 or [jjtilsen@aol.com](mailto:jjtilsen@aol.com).

## Taste of Honey

The "Taste of Honey" night of adult study presented by the Department of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven will take place on Saturday night 29 January 2000. Among the instructors will be BEKI members Dr. Steven Fraade, Dr. William Hallo, Dr. Paula Hyman, Rabbi Murray Levine, Dr. Alan Lovins, Dr. Nanette Stahl, Rabbi Carol Stein and Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen. For more information on the program, call Valerie Sandler (also a BEKI member) at the Jewish Federation at 387-2424 x316.

## **BEKI Playgroup**

Parents and children in the BEKI Playgroup have been enjoying our weekly meetings at 10:30a on Wednesdays in the Claire Goodwin Youth Room. Between playing and snacking, we have managed to clean the toys and take an inventory of the room. We have created a wish list of items for people to donate to enhance the room and the programs held there. We ask that the items donated be new or "gently used", and they can be brought directly to the Claire Goodwin Youth Room.

### **Wish List For BEKI Youth Room**

- Large floor pillows for the reading corner (with removable-machine washable covers)
- Puppets
- Large durable toys, without too many little pieces
- Jewish games, puzzles and toys for ages 0-5
- Plastic cookware and toy food

We are looking for new families to join our playgroup. Help us spread the word; the playgroup is open to non-members and is a great way to get to know BEKI! For more information contact Sharon Lovett-Graff 387-2683 or Leora Lew 389-1048.

## **KISS meets in January**

BEKI's unique "Kids In Shul when they close the School" program, also known as the "Snow Day" program, will meet on Monday 17 January 2000 from 8:00a to 3:00p in the Claire Goodwin Children's Room. The KISS program offers a fun-filled Judaic program for elementary-school aged children on a day when Ezra Academy and public schools are closed for conferences, holidays and snowfalls when parents may have to work. Space is limited. Call Anne Johnston at 389-2108 x33 or email her at [ajohnsto@connix.com](mailto:ajohnsto@connix.com) to reserve your space or fax in the registration form available at [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html) or from the office.

## **BEKI Day at Ezra**

Our Congregation has a long and close tie with Ezra Academy, our local Solomon Schechter Day School affiliated with the Conservative Movement. Thursday 27 January will be "BEKI Day" at Ezra. Rabbi Tilsen will be joining the children for morning prayers at 8:15a at Ezra Academy. All interested persons are welcome to attend.

## **Bat Mitzva in January**

**Jessie Karsif**, daughter of BEKI President Dr. **Brian Karsif** and Religious School Principal **Terri Stern**, and sister of **Ben Karsif**, will lead and participate in services as a *bat mitzva* on Shabbat 21-22 January.

The logo for Goodcopy Printing & Graphics features the word "Goodcopy" in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below it, the words "PRINTING & GRAPHICS" are written in a bold, sans-serif, all-caps font, enclosed within a black rectangular box.

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## LifeCycle

### With Sorrow we Note the Passing of

- Jack Nuht, husband of Mollie Nuht, father of Joan & Alan Gelbert
- Frances Kaplan, sister of Lillian & Alexander Heisler
- Edith Fields, aunt of Stanley Saxe

### Mazal Tov to

- Wilbur Witten on the birth of his tenth great-grandchild on the first day of Hanuka
- Arthur & Betty Levy on the birth of their grandson *erev* Hanuka
- Robert Leikind & Ellen Jawitz on the birth of **Benjamin Asa Leikind** on the fifth day of Hanuka

## Tree of Life

Outside of BEKI all the leaves have fallen off the trees. It's that time of year and we must clean up the fallen leaves. Inside of BEKI we have our beautiful Tree of Life. The leaves are permanent reminders of our dear ones and reminders of many happy occasions. How about purchasing a leaf that will never fall off the tree? It's just \$118.00 for a leaf inscribed in honor or in memory of your dear ones. Call me at 387-7882; I'll be happy to help you with the wording.

Since the start of our new year 5760, we wish to acknowledge the following donors who have had leaves inscribed on the Tree of Life:

"In loving memory of my husband, father and grandfather" by Rose Feen and daughters Betty Sue and Hildy, and grandson Todd

"In honor of our children's wedding, Victoria and Richard Miller" by Rena and Samuel Miller

"In memory of Philip J. Lipkin" by Gladys Lipkin



One leaf in reserve for future use by Gladys Lipkin

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## Thank you

Thanks to the members of BEKI Renaissance Campaign committee: Brian Karsif, Robert Forbes, Rabbi Murray Levine, Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen, Marc Schwartz, Tina Rose, Carl Goldfield, Stephen Wizner, Steven Fraade, Robert Leikind, and Stephen Pincus.

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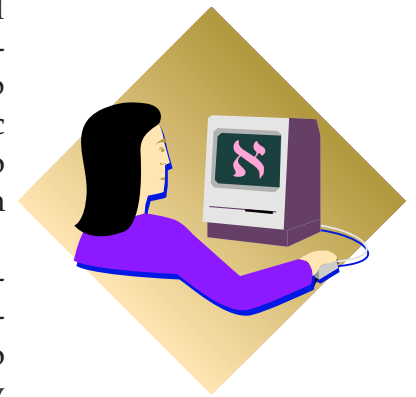
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## New on BEKI's Web Site

Need a form? Selected office forms are now being posted to the website for 24-hour access. Go to [www.beki.org/forms.html](http://www.beki.org/forms.html). The forms are in Acrobat .pdf format.


Need to know a *yahrzeit* (death anniversary)? Our *yahrzeit* records are now available at [www.beki.org](http://www.beki.org) at "yahrzeits." The information available includes the name of the deceased, date of death according to the Hebrew Calendar, and the corresponding date in the civil calendar from last Rosh HaShana to the end of the current Hebrew year. All of this information and more is already available on the web through public sources. There is no private information displayed.



Want to pray elsewhere? BEKI members on the road who want to make a daily or Shabbat service elsewhere can find a minyan schedule of our region linked to our Service Schedule page. Go to [www.beki.org/schedule.html](http://www.beki.org/schedule.html) to find the link.

Want to preview the next newsletter? Past, current and future editions of the BEKI Bulletin are available at [www.beki.org/newsindex.html](http://www.beki.org/newsindex.html). Find out what happened or is going to happen.

A



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