



Selections from *BEKI Bulletin: The Newsletter of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel*

September 1997 Elul 5757 -- Vol 3 Issue 9

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Oppenheim Capital Gift

The Officers of Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel have announced that Mrs. Sara Oppenheim, of blessed memory, made a generous gift to the Congregation before her death last June. The family has agreed that this gift be used to pay for required fire and safety improvements to our building.



During their lifetimes, Sara Oppenheim and her husband, Morris Oppenheim of blessed memory, were active in the religious life of the Congregation and are well-remembered for their participation in the BEKI Choir. As life members, they were major supporters over the years, participating in the building and improvement of the physical plant as well as establishing an [endowed fund](#) at the [Jewish Foundation](#) to provide music and music-education

programs for the Congregation.

Each of the Oppenheim's three children has gone on to become leaders in Jewish religious and communal life. Their son Gerald is a member of the BEKI Board of Directors and a frequent leader of weekday and other worship services. Through these ways the names of Morris & Sara Oppenheim will serve as a continuing source of blessing.

The building improvements made possible by Mrs. Oppenheim's gift are part of a larger effort to restore and improve our building. Thanks to a gift of Douglas & Evelyne Goodwin, David Goodwin and Betty Goodwin, [new carpet](#) has been installed in the Sanctuary. The broken and cracked windows have been replaced in the sanctuary. A project of Radon Abatement has been completed with the installation of special vents. Thanks to a generous gift from Eleanor Lowell Stutz in memory of her father, [Frederick L. Stutz](#), a new full-featured telephone system is being installed. A new airconditioner was installed in the Rabbi's study (after the old one was literally ripped off). A new quieter, more efficient and effective airconditioner has been installed in the small chapel. A new small-chapel reader's table cover was provided by Rabbi Murray Levine in memory of Malka Levine. Most of these improvements have already been completed or are in the process of being completed, and several others are in the works for this year, such as new sound equipment for the sanctuary and stage one of upgrading the lower level social hall. Board members Jay Brotman and George Posener have overseen the work on most of these projects.

High Holy Days Children's Programs Memorialize Malka Levine

The outstanding High Holy Days programs for children at Beth El-Keser Israel are being sponsored in memory of Malka Levine by Rabbi Murray Levine. Malka, who died in May 1996, was a renowned Jewish educator, a dear friend, and beloved wife of Rabbi Murray Levine.



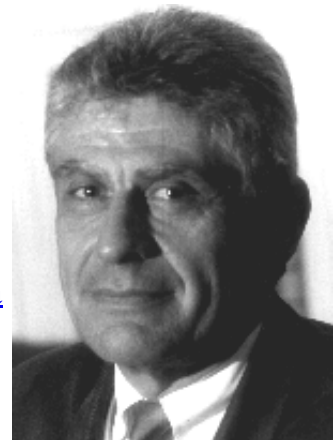
The sponsored children's programs include the Children's Havura for preschoolers, Junior Congregations for differing age groups, and babysitting on each of the three Holy Days. These programs have enjoyed a reputation for excellence.

These programs are free and open to all children. For safety and planning reasons, parents are asked to pre-register their children for participation in these services. For registration information call 389-2108.

Hazzanim Lovins



Rabbi Alan H. Lovins and Rachel Lovins will again serve as our *Hazzanim Rishonim* (lead cantors) 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 lives in New Haven with his wife Trish Loving. Rachel Lovins, Alan's daughter, spent many years in her youth at BEKI. She is a medical student and Jewish educator and



Cantor who lives with her husband Dan Kazer and son Benjamin near the synagogue. In addition to Rabbi Lovins and Rachel Lovins, the services will again be lead by BEKI members serving as volunteer hazzanim. For the fifth year, the services will be conducted by Rabbi Tilsen.

Tickets are required for adult entrance to most services. Among other reasons this is to ensure the safety and security of the Congregation. Every person in the building must be known and cleared. For information on seating and ticketing or for [service schedules](#) call 389-2108.

Installation of Board & Officers

The fall season of Late Friday Night Services begins 5 September at 8:00p as Irving Weinstein, Kevin Mack and Rabbi Tilsen welcome the new and returning members of the BEKI Board of Directors and Officers in the Installation Evening. All are encouraged to attend.

Speakers in September

Steven Fraade teaches Rabbinitics at Yale University. He is a BEKI vice-president and chairs the Ritual Committee. Steven frequently leads the [Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan](#). He will be the *darshan* (Torah discussion leader) on Shabbat morning 6 September during the 9:15a service.

Mannette Dodge is an attorney and serves on the BEKI Board of Directors. She will be the *darshan* (Torah discussion leader) on Shabbat morning 13 September during the 9:15a service.

Eric I.B. Beller is an attorney in private practice. He will be the *darshan* (Torah discussion leader) on Shabbat morning 20 September during the 9:15a service.

Carole Bass is a reporter for the [New Haven Advocate](#). She will be the *darshanit* (Torah discussion leader) on Shabbat morning 27 September during the 9:15a service.

High Holy Day Music Workshops

Two High Holy Days Music workshops lead by Rabbi Alan Lovins and Rachel Lovins will be held Tuesday 16 September at 7:30p and Tuesday 23 September at 7:30p at BEKI. These

workshops are made possible by the [Morris & Sara Oppenheim Endowment for Sacred Music at BEKI](#).

The melodies and meanings of selected prayers and poems will be taught and reviewed. Tape recording is permitted, and all are welcomed. The power of the melodies can help set the religious mood for the Ten Days of Repentance. All are welcomed; there is no charge for these workshops.

Selihot Service

The annual joint Conservative-Masorti Movement Selihot service will be Saturday night 27 September. A reception begins at 9:30 p.m., program at 10:00 p.m. and the service at 11:00 p.m. The service will be held at Temple Beth Sholom in Hamden; call 288-7748 for directions.

At Home for the Holy Days?

Those who are not able to attend services on the Holy Days for medical reasons may still be able to fulfill the mitzva of hearing the shofar. If you would like the shofar sounded at your home, or if you are able to sound it at another's home on either day of Rosh HaShana, please call Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108 or jjtilsen@beki.org.

Dear Rabbi: Answers, Advice and Helpful Household Hints

Dear Rabbi,

Why do Jews put stones on tombstones?

Signed, Don't Rock the Boat

Dear Don't Rock,

The folk custom of placing stones on a grave or tombstone may date back to prehistoric times when our ancestors protected graves from being disturbed by animals or farmers by covering them with rocks. Although there is no *halakhic* (legal) basis for this practice, nor any requirement whatever to uphold it, many experience it as a meaningful expression of continuing love and concern.

A Message from Rabbi Tilsen: "...Who Creates the Fruit of the Vine"

A king once invited his subjects to a royal feast honoring his son, soon to be married. As they lived in a rich land, the guests were asked to each bring a bottle of wine to be shared at the meal. Each guest was to pour his or her bottle into the large barrel in which the wine would be mixed and from which it was to be dispensed.

After the guests had finished emptying the contents of their bottles into the barrel, the king ceremoniously opened the spigot and filled his cup. To his utter dismay, his cup was filled with water.

Each townsman had counted on the others to do their share, and each tried to get away

without making a real contribution. The king and those townsfolk did not live happily ever after.

How fortunate we are that so many in our community do their share and more -- in volunteerism, in financial contribution, in religious leadership. Last year, 25% of our members made significant contributions through the "more than dues" program of enhanced dues categories, and many more contributed through the Kol Nidre Appeal and in other ways. There is no one who is going to do this in our stead.

We stand at the crossroads in the effort to insure the sound basis for this Congregation into the next century. When our "King of Kings" turns the spigot of our barrel, we can only hope that the verse "My cup runneth over" will be upheld, and when we bless the One "who creates the fruit of the vine" our blessing will be upheld.

United Hebrew School Late Registration Accepted

Late registration is being accepted for the [United Hebrew School](#) (UHS) for children entering K through 7th grade this fall. Classes begin Sunday 7 September at 9:30a at BEKI for all students in refreshed classrooms.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on the UHS Board or in another capacity, please contact Barbara Stern at 387-0056.

The United Hebrew School will offer the Talmud Torah Meyuhad for students with special education needs. If your child might benefit from this program, please call Principal Ms Terri Stern at 387-9268 at your earliest opportunity. Talmud Torah Meyuhad is supported by the Department of Jewish Education of the [Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven](#).

Contributions to BEKI toward the cost of operating the School are tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

For registration material or additional information please call the BEKI office at 389-2108 or visit during office hours listed on page 2 of this Bulletin.

Meet UHS Principal Terri Stern

Terri Stern was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she worked as a Pediatric Nurse in both the Clinical Research and Dialysis Units at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. When her husband, Dr. Brian Karsif, decided to purchase a practice in Connecticut in 1986, she became an at-home mom to Benjamin and almost-born Jessie. She was a founding member of Congregation Shirei Shalom, the first Reconstructionist synagogue in the state, serving as Ritual Chair, Membership Chair, and President.

Terri also taught Bet and Gimel classes at Shirei Shalom Hebrew school, and served on the Education Committee, which was responsible for setting curriculum. She feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to visit places like Eilat Chayim, a Jewish retreat center in New York where she took classes with Rabbis Arthur Green and Arthur Waskow.

For the past three years, she has been volunteering as a docent at the Peabody Museum of Natural History, teaching schoolchildren K-12. and was noted for teaching more classes than any other docent during the '94-'95 school year. In June 1995, Terri was appointed to the

Board of Directors of Cold Spring School in New Haven, where Jessie will be entering the 5th grade, and from which Ben graduated in June. After teaching at UHS during 1995-1996, Terri was appointed Principal and has been gratified by the warmth and support she has received from parents. As much as she finds the work of a Principal to be both challenging and rewarding, she is happy to also be able to return to teaching at Makom this coming fall.

LifeCycles

BEKI Welcomes New Members & Their Families: **Liora & Yaron Lew** and Daphne and Dana; **Joy Kaufman & Stewart Frankel**; **Mark Chernyak** and Irena Chernyak and Kay and Anatoly.

HaMaqom Yinahem: We Mourn the Deaths of **Selma Rachel Steinig**, *sister of Gloria Cohen*; **Alan Hodes**, *son of Louis & Elsie Hodes*. May God Comfort All Who Mourn

Mazal Tov to **Michael & Marjorie Shanok** on the birth of their grandson Moshe (Matthew Pack) to their children Cynthia & Manny Pack on 29 June 1997. Matthew is named after his great-grandfather Maurice Schnitzer of blessed memory.

Mazal Tov to **Mimi & Ephrem Glenn** on the birth of a grandchild 23 July 1997.

Mazal Tov to **Jennifer Botwick & Michael Ries** on the birth of their son, and to **David** and **Solomon** on the birth of their brother, Jacob Daniel Botwick Ries on 30 July 1997.

Letters

Dear BEKI community,

We would like to thank the members of our community at BEKI and UHS who have reached out to our family during Ariel's illness. Since May we have been dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of a Wilm's Tumor -- a type of childhood kidney cancer with a relatively good prognosis. Ariel has had surgery and radiation and is now in the process of six months of chemotherapy treatment. The outpouring of concern by members of our congregation and UHS has taken many forms including visits, calls, gifts, Shabbat meals, and prayers. These have all been truly comforting in the most literal sense of the word. By giving us strength and helping us all to feel connected spiritually and emotionally to a vital community, your love and support are as essential as medications in helping to heal Ariel and our whole family.

With gratitude,

Shoshana Zax, John Weiser, Ariel and Sam Weiser

I would like to thank the many members and friends of the congregation who have provided

words and deeds of sympathy to me and my family following the death of my father, may his memory be for a blessing. Your cards, contributions, food, company, and help with daily minyan have been a source of great comfort to me.

Steve Fraade

Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Service

The annual Qever Avot Cemetery Memorial Services will be held at 10:00a at the Hamden Cemetery and at 11:00a at the West Haven Cemetery on Sunday 28 September 1997. Rabbi Tilsen will lead us in communal prayer and there will be time for individual memorial prayers. Rabbi Tilsen is available for individual prayers as well. There is no charge for this service.

Take Care of Your Cemetery Need

The time to take care of your cemetery need is before there is a need.

Now is the perfect time to select your sites...while there is a good selection and before prices go up (as of 30 September 1997).

We can help you select a site and discuss payment terms. Call the office today and arrange a meeting of one of the officers of the cemetery association 389-2108. For directions to the cemeteries see ["Finding Beth El Memorial Park"](#) and see [Area Maps](#).

Sisterhood News

[Sisterhood](#) president Adele Tyson advises that some tentative plans are being discussed for the year 1997-98, including a paid-up supper in October. Details will be forthcoming.

The fall rummage sale will take place in November, definite date to be announced. Clothing for the sale should be clean, in good condition and suitable for fall and/or winter.

Connecticut Valley Branch of Women's League will hold a supper meeting at Beth El in West Hartford on 10 September. The Branch is also planning a trip to the [Jewish Theological Seminary](#) on 13 October. If you would like to attend either or both events, let president Adele Tyson know. Details will be forthcoming.

Recent donations to Sisterhood were made by: Irma Hamburger, Norma Hodes, Jack and Mollie Nuht and Betty Merriam.

Singles & Doubles

Singles and Doubles are back in action. On Sunday 24 August we had a theater trip to New York which everyone enjoyed immensely. Unfortunately, we were able to get only a limited number of tickets on a short notice for Bermuda Avenue Triangle and too late to appear in the August *Bulletin*.

We will be running future trips and programs and will announce them to the entire congregation in ample time to make plans. We welcome your input and suggestions by

calling Inge & Lenny Fish at 288-9116.

Raffle Report

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held in June the drawing for the raffle was held and Darryl Kuperstock won the first prize of BEKI membership for the year 1997-1998 and Brian Karsif won the \$100.00 in food certificates. Congratulations, winners!

Before you send your check...

Before you send a check to the synagogue, read this.

- Do you pay taxes?
- Do you itemize deductions?
- Would you like to save additional taxes when you contribute to BEKI?
- Do you own appreciated assets, such as stocks?

If you answer yes to all of those questions, keep reading and then consult your accountant or tax preparer.

In the past few years the stock market has risen considerably. Federal tax laws allow you to donate appreciated assets and claim that full value as a charitable deduction, but without having to pay taxes on the appreciation. In other words, *it may be much better for you to donate appreciated stock directly to BEKI than to sell it first and donate the proceeds.*

Here is an example. Years ago you bought stock in Gornish Corporation for \$1,000, and now it is worth \$2,000. If you sell the stock, you pay taxes on that gain of \$1,000. Assuming a 28% federal and 4.5% CT rate, that's \$325 in taxes. You have \$1,675 left for your donation, which gives you a tax deduction (for the charitable donation) of $(\$1,675 \times .28 =) \469 .

But if, instead, you directly donate the \$2,000 in stock to BEKI, all \$2,000 is tax deductible so your deduction is $(\$2,000 \times .28 =) \560 , plus you save the \$325 you would have had to pay in taxes on the appreciation if you sold the stock. Your combined savings is \$885 -- not bad for a \$2,000 gift. You could donate an additional \$325 to BEKI and pay \$416 less in taxes.

If you would like to pay your dues or pledge through the transfer of appreciated assets, please call me at 397-8344.

Kenneth J. Buckman

BEKI Financial Secretary

New and Prospective Members Brunch

A brunch for new and prospective members will be held on Sunday morning 7 September at the residence of Ina Silverman & Jay Sokolow. If you or someone you know may be interested in attending, please speak with Diane Dumigan at 393-1815

or Susan Voigt at 387-3421.

Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan

The Shabbat Shalom Learners' Minyan meets every second week in the BEKI library. This Minyan combines study, prayer and discussion based on the week's Torah reading, liturgy and other issues of concern to participants. The Learners' Minyan is ideal for those who wish to deepen their understanding of Judaism, including those preparing for "adult bar/bat mitzva," in interfaith families, or contemplating conversion. It is lead by Steven Fraade, Alan Lovins and others. All are welcomed -- come and "check it out."

Linking Past, Present & Future

As a leading institution in the Greater New Haven region since 1892, Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel affords ideal opportunities to demonstrates one's own commitment and to honor or memorialize a loved one with an unparalleled combination of sanctity, meaning and permanence. The Congregation is in its second century and is now preparing to enter the next millennium in a position of spiritual strength and fiscal fortitude. While providing for its members' religious and communal needs, the Congregation also serves as a center for the larger community, hosting the Holocaust memorial, adult education programs, weddings and benei mitzva observances, and provides a "home" for unaffiliated Jews and non-Jews who come in search of a community of meaning. A name memorialized at Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel will be remembered by the community for generations and by God eternally. Some of BEKI's endowment funds are invested with the [Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven](#), which offers a legally binding guarantee that the endowment will be used for the intended purpose and managed responsibly. If you are interested in a named endowment at the Congregation, please contact BEKI Treasurer Stephen Wizner at 432-4800 or Rabbi Tilsen at 389-2108.

At the Hospital...

If you or a loved one are hospitalized, please inform Rabbi Tilsen by calling 389-2108 so that he and BEKI members can fulfill the mitzva of *biquir holim* (visiting the sick). Remember to request kosher food, which by most accounts meets or exceeds the culinary quality of the standard fare.

"Dear Rabbi" copyright Jon-Jay Tilsen 1997.

For more information contact:

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel
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New Haven, CT USA 06515-1724
203-389-2108

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Email to Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen: jjtilsen@beki.org