



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

April/May 2015  
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ניסן ואייר וסיון תשע"ה

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## Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Pesach is a time of details. The Seder plate is arrayed in a very specific fashion. The ceremonial meal unfolds in a precise unchanging order each year. The very word Seder means order. Even the Torah portions we read at this time of year are full of unending details concerning the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting), the garments for the priests, and their activities. Why? What is the hidden message?

When we made the Exodus from Mitzrayim (Egypt), which literally means a narrow place, and crossed the Sea of Reeds, Miriam and all the people burst into song. They sang: "This is my God and I will enshrine Him!" The Hasidic master Rabbi Yehuda Leib Alter of Ger taught that the Israelites sang these words because they themselves wanted to be a shrine to God. God understood this implicitly and said; "Make me a place and I will dwell—B'tocham—in them!"

But after the sin of the Golden Calf, the Holy One of Israel understood that the people were not ready, so instructions were given in great detail for building a Mishkan, a dwelling place where the Holy One would wait until the people were ready for a more intimate encounter. Later even more detailed instructions were given for the building of a Temple, another place where the Holy Presence would wait...and wait, until the people were ready for God to dwell in them.

Alas, with the hint staring them right in the face, the people never got it, until the day came when the Temple was destroyed and the people and the Holy Presence went into exile.

The hint is the very idea of details.

Some spiritual traditions call it mindfulness. Our Hasidic masters teach us that every soul is a vessel containing divine light, a cham-

ber to be prepared for the Holy One of Blessing, associated with the Mishkan and all of the details of its construction.

For traditional Jews preparing the Mishkan means meticulous performance of the mitzvot on a daily basis. But for liberal Jews there are ways to prepare our Mishkan that are no less effective and no less holy.

When we pay careful attention to every detail of what goes into our mishkan in terms of what we consume, for body, mind, and spirit, as well as what comes out, we are making a dwelling place for the holy. We can beautify our Mishkan through gentle loving words and deeds, thoughtful ecological consumption, reading and watching things that elevate our hearts and minds rather than pander to our baser instincts. When we take the time to meditate, pray, and reflect upon the great mystery that is, we are building our Mishkan.

In our souls we can set a table, raise up an altar, light a lamp. If we pay attention to the details we can bring the light and the Divine Presence home.

### BJC News

Bethesda Jewish Congregation  
6601 Bradley Boulevard  
Bethesda, MD 20817-3042  
Tel: 301-469-8636  
Fax: 301-469-9529  
www.bethesdajewish.org  
admin@bethesdajewish.org



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# The President's Column

Joan Wolf

## Who's on First?

It's getting to be that time—my term as President is near completion. I am thrilled to tell you about my successor, Rachel Mosher Williams.

According to Rachel, her parents (Lottie and David) joined BJC in the early 70s, when it was a 'hippie synagogue'. There weren't regular Shabbat services then, but there were coffee klatches and intellectual discussions and a wonderful religious school that closely mirrors our school today.

Rachel is the Director of Learning and Impact at a boutique management-consulting firm serving foundations and nonprofits. Her husband David has a job that may surprise those congregants who don't know them—he's the pastor (lead minister)

at Poolesville Presbyterian Church. *I like to say that we're a novelty family, even for BJC! Seems fitting that he's a Presbyterian, no?* Their son Sam, 17, is a swimmer whose primary passion is singing (this will be his third year in the BJC choir!). Elijah, 14, is a drummer who also plays many other instruments in the quest for total rock-dom.

This is Rachel's third term on the BJC board, having served twice as education committee chair. Looking toward her term as president, she is most excited about continuing to work with an incredibly smart and dedicated group of board members and a fabulous staff as well as carrying out more of the CE21 ideas, with the help and involvement of the entire congregation, and to bringing the BJC journey to many new members.

*Our community and the way we learn and have fun together is just too good not to get more people doing it with us! And BJC is the only place I can imagine being - with my interfaith family and my diverse interests (intellectual, spiritual, and food-y) and my love of music, this is the welcoming community I call home. And let's be honest, no one inspires like Rabbi Sunny!*

## Director of Congregational Education

Mindy Silverstein

### Mitzvah Opportunity Day

Saturday, May 2, 2015 is Mitzvah Opportunity Day at BJC and we need your participation to make this year's event complete!

All congregants will have the opportunity to register to help with one of the following organizations: A Wider Circle (off-site), setting up Computers at various local agencies (off -site),

Humane Society (on-site), Stepping Stones (on-site) and cleaning up a stream in Cabin John Park (off-site).

Mitzvah Opportunity Day is one link in the year-long chain of performing mitzvot at BJC. Starting in September with collecting food for Manna and continuing with cooking for Stepping Stones, dinner and a movie for Bottoms Up, and Walking to end genocide, mitzvot is a way to "refine humanity." (Rav, 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE teacher)

Please check the BJC website for details on Mitzvah Opportunity Day!

## From the Rabbi

Please be in touch with me in times of joy, sadness or illness in your life or in the lives of a loved one or another member of the congregation. This is particularly necessary now that the

HIPAA regulations have made getting any kind of information from the hospitals extremely difficult. I greatly appreciate your help in keeping me informed of the health needs of our congregation. Office Number: 301-469-8636, #3.

# Congregation News

## **CE 21—What's Next?**

**Harri Kramer**

We've been working on our Congregational Engagement initiative for a while now. And, as I've been reporting, BJC has benefited from changes large and small in terms of how we engage with each other, what we focus on, and how we continue to grow and learn as a community.

The logical question is: what's next? After all, special initiatives are not designed to run forever. And we've come to that point where the CE21 activities are running in parallel to all of the other wonderful work going on at BJC. It's time to bring them into alignment.

The CE21 Task Force and Leadership Team are now working on the next step—transitioning the good works and ideas from the congregation into our ongoing operations managed by the Board of Trustees.

This spring we will come together, as a CE21 Task Force and Board, to take stock of our lessons learned, what worked, what didn't, and why. Some of our CE21 efforts, notably our Congregational Conversations of late 2013/early 2014, have been instrumental in our plans, and we heard from you—our congregants—that you want the conversations to be an ongoing event. Other ideas, ranging from our "Great" lecture and cooking series to more family education opportunities have also been well received.

As we make the transition from CE21, you still have one last chance under this rubric to provide input. At the High Holy Days we handed out a flyer with a detachable questionnaire. We didn't get a large response, so it was mailed out again with your year-end statement. Please take a moment to respond and send your form in. Your input will make a difference in how BJC thinks about the future.

## **Welcome our Cuban Friends to BJC**

Our longtime friends, Hella Eskanazi and Jessica Prinstein, the directors of the Havana religious school at El Patronato, Machon Albert Einstein, will join us for the Pesach weekend. Jessica and Hella will attend Friday night's BJC seder and speak at Shabbat morning services on Saturday, April 4 at 10:30 a.m. Please also join us at a luncheon in their honor after services.

Lunch is free. Make reservations at: [bethesdajewish.org/registration](http://bethesdajewish.org/registration). Let's return the hospitality they have shown us with each visit to Cuba and give them a big BJC welcome.

## **Shabbat Under the Stars Is Back!**

With the arrival of warm weather, we "take it outside" on Fridays, April 10 and May 10 at 7 p.m., Covenant Hall Terrace. Last year's first two Shabbat under the Stars services were standing room only. Join us for a one-hour multimedia service with BJC musicians, food, and friendship. Bring a blanket and bring your friends. Please RSVP to the BJC office by telephone or on our new website ticket and reservations page for this free event: [bethesdajewish.org/registration](http://bethesdajewish.org/registration).

## **Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron**

Yom Hashoah—the day where we remember the sacrifice of the Six Million Jews who perished under Nazi tyranny. It is a day of memorial, but also a day to pledge ourselves to renewed vigilance. In these times when the ugly specter of anti-semitism raises its head once again, in many

places around the world, this observance takes on new meaning. Join Rabbi Schnitzer and our religious school on Wednesday, April 15 at 5 p.m. in Covenant Hall as we remember and pledge, "Never Again!"

Also, be sure to attend our observance of Yom Hazikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day) on Wednesday, April 22 at 4:15 p.m.

## **Open Book Discussions**

The BJC Book Club will meet on Wednesday, April 22 to discuss *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David* by Lawrence Wright. This is a gripping day-by-day account of the 1978 Camp David Sadat to sign the first peace treaty in the modern Middle East, one that endures to this day. The book is based on personal diaries and other materials.

We will meet on Wednesday, May 27 to discuss *Letters from the Earth* by Mark Twain. This posthumously published book consists of a series of commentaries in essay and short story form dealing with Twain's observations on the curious proceedings of earthly life and the nature of man's religions.

We meet at 8 p.m. in the Library. Drop-ins and new members are always welcome. Contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

## **Shabbat to Honor Our Volunteers**

All too often we take for granted our members who generously give of their time and resources to make BJC an active and vibrant community. Our volunteers are the living heart of BJC. Join our invited honorees at a special Nitivim L'Shabbat

*(Continued on page 4)*

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service, on Friday, May 1 at 8 p.m. in Covenant Hall, to bestow upon them blessings and honor.

### **Great Names in the Neighborhood—Dan Spiro**

Join us on Sunday, May 3 at 3 p.m. in Covenant Hall for another in the popular Great Names speaker series. BJC member Daniel Spiro is the author of *Liberating the Holy Name: A Free-Thinker Grapples with the Meaning of Divinity*, as well as two novels of ideas, *Moses the Heretic* and *The Creed Room*. He coordinates the Washington Spinoza Society, a discussion group sponsored by the Goethe-Institute Washington, and the Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society. He is active in working for peace in the Middle East and when not pursuing his love of philosophy and religion, Daniel works as a full-time lawyer who specializes in investigating and litigating against corporate fraud.

The speaker series is free to members and the community (invite your friends and family). RSVP is preferred to secure a seat. Call the BJC office or online: [bethesdajewish.org/registration](http://bethesdajewish.org/registration).

### **Learn to Blow the Shofar**

Make this the year you call in the New Year. BJC's own Ba'al Tekiyah, Ben Stern, will give instruction in a one-hour seminar on Thursday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. You do *not* need to purchase a shofar to fully participate. Please RSVP to Rabbi Schnitzer: [rabbi@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:rabbi@bethesdajewish.org)

### **BJC Annual Meeting—Has It Been a Year Already?**

Join us on Thursday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall for the BJC Annual Meeting. The annual meeting is the time to learn about the progress of the congregation and to play a part in its governance. Your attendance is important.

### **Prayers for Pets**

Let us give thanks for those who love us unconditionally, no matter our mood and no matter how busy we are. They are always thrilled when we are with them and all we have to do is show up. Who are these super beings—our pets! Bring yours to our second annual day for blessing our pets on Saturday, May 16 at 1 p.m., Covenant Hall Terrace. Pet friendly treats will be served and representatives from The Washington Humane Society will be here to answer your questions about adoption.

### **BJC and BHPC Annual Night of Study**

#### **"I Don't Believe in God, Can I Still Be a Good Jew/Christian?"**

In an era dominated by science and logic, the question of faith and faith traditions becomes increasingly complex. Is there still a place within our religions for

the one who doubts, or the one who has decided, that God does not exist? What do our faith traditions teach about the value of faith vs. deeds? Rev. David Gray of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC) and Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer will bring the texts. Bring your questions on Thursday, May 28 at 7:30 p.m. in Covenant Hall. Perhaps, we will find answers.

### **Confirmation Shabbat**

Our Jewish tradition teaches us to honor scholars at "Zeman Torateinu", the Season of the Giving of our Torah. Join us to honor our young students as they observe this special milestone in their Jewish education on Friday, May 29 at 8 p.m. This year our Confirmands Rachel Kirkpatrick, Harrison Chiaverini, Teddy Shrenk, and Jennifer Strauss have created a moving Shabbat liturgy you're sure to enjoy.

### **Shabbat Pulpit Exchange**

BJC welcomes the spiritual leader Rev. Kori Phillips of our sister congregation, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, to our annual pulpit exchange. She will share with us what is on her mind spiritually and temporarily on this special Shabbat, Friday, June 5 at 8 p.m.

### **Yahrzeits**

יארצייט

#### **April 2015**

Edith Baum, Mother of Bruce Baum  
Jack Blagman, Father of Diane Blagman  
Rose Brucker, Mother of Anita Farb  
Dorothy Coplan, Mother of Lois Rose  
Pearl Dubrow, Mother of Davi Walders  
Rose Werner Dubrow, Mother of Laurie Dubrow  
William Dwork, Uncle of Barry Dwork  
Suzanne Frank, Aunt of Roz Young  
Michael Glassman, Husband of Nancy Glassman  
Gordon Goldstein, Father of Lorrie Van Akkeren  
Rose Krettmeyer, Mother of Nancy Glassman  
Lily Laufer, Mother of David Laufer  
Max Levi, Father of Karen Levi  
Rose Kline Levine, Grandmother of Bruce Baum  
Lillian Lichtenberg, Mother of Warren Lichtenberg  
Duane McMillen, Father of Dale McMillen  
Sidney Robbins, Grandfather of Rich Kochman  
Laurence Rosenberg, Husband of Ruth Rosenberg  
Leon Sukin, Father of Hope Klauber

#### **May 2015**

Stella Apfelberg, Mother of Alan Kirschner  
Arthur Barrios, Father of Rochelle Banta  
Henry Robert Bluestone, Husband of Charlotte Wall-  
Bluestone  
Pauline Border, Mother of Vicky Bailer  
Bernice Dubin, Mother of Alan Dubin  
Meyer Dubrow, Father of Davi Walders

Blaine Eig, Father of Jonathan Eig and Keith Eig  
 Janet Feldman, Mother of Lisa Ginns  
 Peter Feldman, Husband of Judy Feldman  
 Sonia Gold, Mother of Judy Scott  
 Hilde Hirsch, Mother of Evelyn Ganzglass  
 Harry Jerome, Grandfather of Karen Jerome  
 Mary Klauber, Mother of Martin Klauber  
 Samuel Klauber, Father of Martin Klauber  
 Abraham Klaus, Father of Mitch Kraus  
 Mortimer Leister, Grandfather of Joy Gold  
 Elaine Levine, Mother of Meryl Simon  
 Manuel Patz, Father of Eileen Newman  
 Vera Poogach, Grandmother of Robert Poogach  
 Harvey Rabin, Husband of Evelyn Rabin  
 Linda Ratner, Wife of Richard Ratner  
 Mozart G. Ratner, Father of Gary Ratner  
 Irving Roger, Grandfather of Robert Poogach  
 Marvin Schnitzer, Father of Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer  
 Rose Scott, Mother of David Scott  
 Rose Wagman Sherman, Grandmother of Harri Kramer  
 Molly Singer, Mother of Marlene Zakai  
 Arthur Stern, Husband of Harriet Stern  
 Charles Stern, Grandfather of Melissa Keller  
 Leo Stern, Father of Ed Stern  
 Julia Ullmann, Grandmother of Ted Posner  
 Barbara Wilansky, Mother of Robin Sorkin  
 Nessa Wolfson, Mother of Miriam Banerji

**Thank You**

**תודה רבה**

Margaret and Burt Bachrach for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.  
 Steven H. Beck for his generous donation as a thank you for the BJC Great Names in the Community Speakers Series.  
 Susan Berkowitz for her generous donation to the Cuba Fund.

John and Jill Camp for their generous donation.  
 Herbert and Aleen Chabot for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeits of Aleen's father, Edward Kerwin and Herbert's father, Meyer Chabot.  
 Judi Dash and Rachel Dash for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their mother's first Yahrzeit.  
 Alan Goldstein and Leia Comenetz for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their wedding.  
 Betty and Norman Kline for their generous donation in honor of BJC's Great Names in the Community Speakers Series.  
 Susan Kraut for her generous donation.  
 Les and Marsha Levine for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund to continue to assist those in need.  
 Bunny Roufa for her generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeits of her mother, Billie Evey, father, Curtis Evey, and husband, Benjamin Rouse.  
 Lisa Savitt for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of her father, Sidney Fink and as a thank you for all of the Rabbi's help.  
 Paul and Barbara Silberman for their generous donation.  
 David Wall and Wendy Shay for their generous donation.  
 A special thank you to those who generously donated to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the wedding of Alan Goldstein and Leia Comenetz.

**For Their Generous Donation to Enhancing the Flame**

Lorrie Van Akkeren



**BJC Annual Seder**

*(First Night)*

**Friday, April 3 at 6:30 p.m.**

Cost: \$40\* per adult, \$18 per child, ages 7-12 and under 7, free.

What to Bring: Last names A-M, kosher for Passover side dish; last names N-Z, kosher for Passover dessert.

RSVP: Call BJC office or online at [bethesdjewish.org/registration](http://bethesdjewish.org/registration) (\*cost online will include credit card service fees) by March 27.

After that, the price is \$50.

# April 2015 Calendar



Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday	April 1	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	No Religious School Torah Today	Library
Friday	April 3	6:30 p.m.	First Night of Pesach—BJC Seder	Memorial Hall
Saturday	April 4	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	No Religious School No Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship— <i>First Day of Pesach</i>	Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	April 8	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	No Religious School Torah Today	Library
Thursday	April 9	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board of Directors Meeting	Lounge
Friday	April 10	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Under the Stars	Patio
Saturday	April 11	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	No Religious School No Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship—8th Day of Passover	Covenant Hall
Tuesday	April 14	6:30 p.m.	Tichon	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	April 15	4:15 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Yom HaShoah Observance Torah Today	Classrooms Covenant Hall Library
Friday	April 17	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service with the Band	Covenant Hall
Saturday	April 18	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship—Drake Bar Mitzvah	Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	April 22	4:15 p.m. 4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzma'ut Program Torah Today BJC Book Club— <i>Thirteen Days in September, Carter, Begin &amp; Sadat at Camp David</i>	Classrooms Covenant Hall Library Library
Friday	April 24	6:30 p.m.	Family Shabbat Service Pot Luck Shabbat Dinner	Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Saturday	April 25	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship—Block Bar Mitzvah	Memorial Hall Lounge Covenant Hall
Sunday	April 26	1:30 p.m.	Walk to End Genocide	Behind US Holocaust Memorial Museum
Tuesday	April 28	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	April 29	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Torah Today	Classrooms Library

# YOM HASHOAH

# May 2015 Calendar

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Friday	May 1	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat—Service to Honor our Volunteers	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 2	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship—Zimmers Bat Mitzvah	Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall
Sunday	May 3	3:00 p.m.	Great Names Speaker Series with BJC's own Dan Spiro	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	May 6	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Torah Today	Classrooms Library
Friday	May 8	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Under the Stars	Patio
Saturday	May 9	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship—Fraidin Bat Mitzvah Chant & Meditation Circle	Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall
Tuesday	May 12	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	May 13	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School—Last Day of Wednesday School Torah Today	Classrooms Library
Thursday	May 14	7:30 p.m.	BJC Annual Meeting	Memorial Hall
Friday	May 15	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service with the Band	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 16	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Last Day of Religious School—Everyone Starts at 9 AM Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship Prayers for Pets	Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall Patio
Wednesday	May 20	4:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Confirmation Rehearsal Torah Today	Covenant Hall Library
Thursday	May 21	7:30 p.m.	Social Action Committee Meeting	Lounge
Friday	May 22	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 23	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—Dubin Bat Mitzvah Erev Shavout	Covenant Hall
Sunday	May 24		Shavout	
Wednesday	May 27	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Torah Today BJC Book Club— <i>Letters From Earth</i>	Library Library
Thursday	May 28	7:30 p.m.	Joint Bible Study w/BHPC	Covenant Hall
Friday	May 29	8:00 p.m.	Confirmation Servicee	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 30	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—Ginns Bat Mitzvah	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	June 3	6:30 p.m.	Torah Today	Library
Friday	June 5	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service Annual Pulpit Exchange with Rev. Kori Phillips of BHPC	Covenant Hall
Saturday	June 6	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall

For the latest updates and weekly E-news, please refer to the BJC website.



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**Newsletter Editor: Anita Farb—[anita.farb@gmail.com](mailto:anita.farb@gmail.com)**

**Design Layout and Desktop Publishing:  
Yvonne Bryant—[ly\\_bryant@verizon.net](mailto:ly_bryant@verizon.net)**

The deadline for submitting articles for the June/July newsletter is May 8.  
Please email your article in an MS Word attachment.

**Put your ad in the BJC Newsletter**

To place your card or other-sized ad in the June/July newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.  
Deadline: May 8. Rate structure for a business card: \$30 per month, 3-month minimum. Rates are slightly higher for cards that are not camera-ready art.