



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

August 2014

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## Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

By the time you read this, I will be in deep discussion with the Session of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church as to their response to recent actions by their international governance body, Presbyterian Church USA's recent action divesting its financial portfolio of holdings in Motorola, Hewlett Packard, and Caterpillar, as a protest against Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza. We will soon be talking about this action as a community and what it means for BJC, but not today.

My heart calls me to speak to the savage violence in the West Bank last month, the heinous murder of three Israeli students, the brutal murder and burning of a Palestinian teen, and the riots and rocket attacks in Israel. I will have much to say about this when New Story Leadership visits with us in July and we will have much to discuss after, but not today.

I want to speak with you about fathers.

In mid-June I lost my father, Marvin Schnitzer. Three weeks later I lost my spiritual father, Rabbi Zalman Schachter Shalomi. Both expired of complications from pneumonia. They were my primary role models in ways great and small. Their departure from this world has affected me in profound ways.

The support from our community upon the passing of my dad was comforting and we are grateful. It was an expression of affection and honor that held our family close when we were drifting through the waves of grief. It was everything the traditional Jewish custom of shiva is supposed to be.

My father taught me the value, of hard work, perseverance, and being a good Jew. That L'dor Va'dor, generation to generation, was more than a platitude or a line from a prayer, but that a man who

kept track of and understood his roots, was a better man. Giving honor and respect to others would bring honor to you. And, that love was worth something only if you gave it away freely. Marvin Schnitzer is the father of my heart. I am his only son. He is my only father of body, mind, and spirit.

Reb Zalman too is my father, of mind and spirit, but he is the father of hundreds of thousands in a way that only a great rebbe can be. Within moments of his death the ALEPH Jewish Renewal community, founded by Reb Zalman, came together quickly via cyberspace with support, expressions of sadness and a profound sense of loss, through Facebook posts, blogs, and a live streaming video of the memorial service in Boulder. Tens of thousands of his students, ordines, and friends, came together in a virtual expression of love, gratitude, and respect. In our time, virtual does not mean anything less than real.

Reb Zalman was emphatic that those who loved him NOT rush to Colorado to attend his burial. He was concerned, not only with the logistics of thousands of people disrupting their lives and the grief work of his family, but also with the carbon footprint that this would create. Reb Zalman believed in Gaia consciousness, seeing the

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **BJC News**

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### **In this issue...**

Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call .....	1
The President's Column .....	2
Director of Education .....	2
From the Rabbi .....	3
Congregation News .....	3
Calendar .....	6

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(Continued from page 1)

universe and every action taken as interconnected and affective upon the whole. This is the ECHAD we refer to in our Sh'ma prayer. He was a Pantheist, understanding that God is everything, the totality of this creation where we exist IS the living God. He is

God, you are God, I am God. He would often awake in the morning saying, "Thank you God for deploying yourself as Zalman today." If we understood these teachings in a truly integrative way, the strife noted at the top of this article, could not exist.

I will be a deployment of God in the world today. Honor my fathers and join me.

## The President's Column

Joan Wolf



### Being Jewish in a Foreign Land

As you can see, I have just been far from home. Distance provides a different perspective, exposure to new cultures *and* a comforting constant: my connection to my Judaism. This trip was planned with a Jewish focus and visits to mind blowing (not to mention Murano glassblowing!) venues. I met Jews and saw temples in Marseilles (France), Florence, Taormina and

Venice (Italy), Dubrovnik (Croatia) and I was always at home. The native language in the Siddur might have been different, but the Hebrew prayers were there just like home—in these ancient, striking synagogues. A French congregant/guide talked about his synagogue's commitment to perform acts of *gimilut hasadim*, loving kindness. Afterward, I had an opportunity to reflect upon our wonderful community's own commitment. I hope you get a quiet moment to appreciate our special Jewish jewel.



## Director of Congregational Education

Mindy Silverstein

My brother was approached several months ago by a committee asking if he'd be interested in running for State Delegate in his district. After weeks of thinking about it, he decided to run. He selected his campaign manager,

chair of his team, treasurer and social media expert. After weeks of campaigning, he was beginning to see some momentum. The number of people who were volunteering for his campaign was growing, his message was being received in a positive light, and he received several endorsements—two of which included the *Gazette* and *The Washington Post*.

Up until this point, we, his family, didn't hear anything that would be seen as out of the ordinary for a campaign at this level. The candidates were cordial to one another and ideas were being debated—as much as debating can occur at this level. Things changed drastically when *The Washington Post* endorsed him and that's when I started to see how my brother used Jewish ethics and values as his moral compass.

- **Power of Words**—Before *The Washington Post* endorsement, all the candidates referred to each other as candidates. After the endorsement, my brother was referred to as “the enemy.” Imagine how the tone of the campaign changed with that one reference. While I always knew words had the power to heal or to hurt, this word change was very jolting.
- **Lashon Hara** (forbidden speech about others)—During the course of the campaign, my brother heard negative things about his opponents. Some people on his team saw the information as a way to further his campaign. My brother chose not to use the information because he saw it as lashon hara. He had made the decision right from the start that the campaign was going to be about issues and ideas and not about personality traits.
- **Derech Eretz**—In any profession, there are rules and guidelines for derech eretz, the right path; my brother abided by those rules. For example, at a meet and greet, my brother was pressed to answer difficult questions on a variety of topics. He answered them honestly, which may not have been the politically correct thing to do.
- **Family**—During the entire campaign his family and close friends rallied behind him and gave him their full support. Sometimes this even included giving realistic feedback to his campaign plan.
- **Shabbat**—For the past 30 years, my brother and his wife made the conscious decision that they were going to observe Shabbat

by refraining from any type of work. Running for a political office is a fulltime job, the 24/7 type of fulltime job. Again, early on in the campaign, he decided that his commitment to honor Shabbat was a value that he was going to continue to keep. While he ultimately did not win the Delegate seat, when I am asked how he did, I can honestly say he ran an ethical campaign—one which was guided by Jewish values.

#### **School Schedule**

- **First Day of Wednesday Religious School**—September 10; 4:15-5:45 p.m., for 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> graders.
- **First Day of Saturday School**—September 13, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m. For this session only, grades Pre K-7 are asked to arrive by 9 a.m. For all other Saturday sessions, the schedule is Pre K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 10 a.m.-12:15 pm, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade, 9 a.m.-12:15 pm.

## 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 in-

formed of the health needs of our congregation. Office Number: 301-469-8636, #3.

## Congregation News

### **Open Book Discussion: *And No Birds Sang***

The BJC Book Club will meet on August 27 at 8 p.m. in the Library to discuss *And No Birds Sang* by Farley Mowat. This book is Mowat's gripping eyewitness account of himself as a young man in combat in Italy during World War II. The book details everything from how he lost his virginity to his growing disenchantment with war.

Drop-ins and new members are always welcome. Contact Evelyn Ganzglass, 202-966-7037 or Ruth Rosenberg, 703-560-9525 for more information.

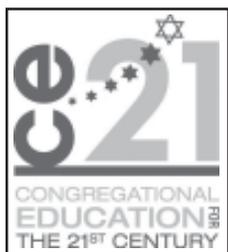
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## CE—Old Ideas, New Ideas

Harri j. Kramer, chair

Our Congregational Engagement (CE21) Task Force has just re-engaged after a short hiatus while the Design Team has been busy over the spring and summer. Our Task Force held a robust session, enlivened by the chatter of friends who have missed each other, accompanied by the thoughtful questions and responses as the Task Force discussed the Design Team's ideas.

The Design Team presented three broad themes that will provide a framework or construct under which all of our programming will fall. In a few words:



1. Jewish learning is linked to Jewish living. Think of this as study, worship, and "doing Jewish".
2. Learning journeys will help our congregants experience the connection between Judaism, Jewish living, and being Americans. Think of this in

terms of our programs "being relevant".

3. Congregation and community bonds are central to BJC. This is our "ensuring connect- edness".

We also shared the working draft of a Congrega- tional Engagement Checklist that will serve as a standard planning tool to use when we are launching events.

Please get in touch at [CE21bjc@gmail.com](mailto:CE21bjc@gmail.com) or 301- 469-8636 if you have any questions or thoughts.

## Yahrzeits

## יארצייט

Sylvia Berkowitz, Mother of Susan Berkowitz  
 Burton Bernard, Father of Cathy Bernard  
 Herman Cohen, Grandfather of Donna Goldberg  
 Noah Cohen, Nephew of Nancy Glassman  
 Adrian Curtis, Sister of Richard Fogel  
 Minnie Druckman, Grandmother of Linda Blumberg and Mark Blumberg  
 Daniel Goldstein, Father of Jim Goldstein  
 Edward Goldstein, Father of Dana Goldstein  
 Morris Heller, Father of Carie Schaefer  
 Dora Hoffman, Mother of Harold Hoffman  
 Charles Hollander, Father of Jill Camp  
 Milton Kochman, Grandfather of Rich Kochman  
 Helen Kohn, Mother of Elise Kohn  
 Isadore Kornfield, Father of Judy Folsom  
 Marvin Levitov, Brother of Sharon Lande  
 Aaron Joseph Levy, Grandfather of Roz Young  
 Kenneth Mandeville, Husband of Dawn Mandeville

Cory Rose, Brother of Stacey Rose Blass  
 Jack Silberman, Father of Paul Silberman  
 Lillian Silbert, Mother of Earl Silbert  
 Nathan Sanders Wall, Husband of Charlotte Wall-  
 Bluestone

Irwin Yockelson, Brother of Naomi Lichtenberg  
 Pauline Levy Young, Mother of Roz Young

## Thank You

## תודה רבה

Joel and Dee Aronson for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeit of Dee's mother, Sadie H. Salkind.

Burt Bachrach and the Adult Hebrew Class for their generous donation to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund, as a thank you for Maran's teaching of Adult Hebrew.

Bruce and Linda Baum for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeits of Bruce's parents and Grand- mother, Edward and Edith Baum and Rose Kline Levine and Linda's father, Sam Schwartz, mother, Beatrice Schwartz and sister, Marla Schwartz.

Dionne and Ken Fine for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Ethan's Bar Mitzvah.

Al and Judy Folsom for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Judy's mother, Ida Kornfield.

Gary and Beverly Fried for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Jill and Andrew Klein for their generous donation in memory of Milton Weinstein.

Sam and Lauren Kline for their generous donation in honor of Alan Schechter's special birthday.

Rich and Rori Kochman for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Jordan's Confirmation.

Mitch and Julie Kraus for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their daughter Allison's wedding to Courtney.

Andrea Calem and Jim Ritter for their generous dona- tion to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Josh's Bar Mitzvah.

Bunny Roufa for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Robert and Susan Schaefer for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Nathan's Bar Mitzvah.

David and Judy Scott for their generous donation to the Cuba Fund in honor of the Yahrzeits of their mothers Rose Scott and Sonia Gold.

Wynn Segall and Anna Jenefsky for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Adin's Bar Mitzvah.

Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeit of her father, Gordon Goldstein.

A special thank you to all who "rounded up" in their first synagogue support payments.

A very special thank-you to all who so generously donated in memory of the Rabbi's father, Marvin Schnitzer.

For Their Generous Donation to Enhancing the Flame  
Herb and Aleen Chabot  
Lorrie Van Akkeren

## Rabbi Sunny's College of Jewish Knowledge

### Shiva Traditions and Customs

After the burial, mourners return home to sit Shiva for seven days. Shiva is a Hebrew word for seven. During the Shiva week, mourners are expected to remain at home. There are seven relatives for whom a Jew is required to observe Shiva: father, mother, brother or sister, son, daughter, or spouse.

- *Washing of the Hands:* Upon returning from the cemetery, each individual pours water upon their hands before entering the Shiva home. Washing of the hands symbolically represents separating ourselves from the spiritual impurity Judaism attributes to death. Containers of water and paper towels should be placed near the entrance of the home.
- *Covering of the Mirrors:* Mirrors in the house of mourning may be covered to disassociate ourselves from our general concern with our physical appearance. The covering of mirrors emphasizes a period of time set aside for spiritual reflection.
- *Doors are Left Unlocked:* Doors are left unlocked so that visitors can enter without knocking or ringing the doorbell, which would distract the mourners from their grief and cause them to act as hosts.
- *Lighting of the Shiva Candle:* Upon returning from the cemetery, a Shiva (seven day) candle is lit immediately. It should be placed in the room where Shiva will be observed. It symbolizes the soul of the human being, as the psalmist states: "The Candle of the L-rd is the soul of man."
- *The Meal of Condolence:* The first meal eaten by the mourner upon return from the cemetery is called the meal of condolence, prepared and served by friends, creating an atmosphere of support. The family should eat before anyone else. It is a Jewish custom to include round foods such as hard-boiled eggs, symbolizing eternal life or the cyclical nature of life.
- *The Shiva Chairs:* Seating for the mourners should be arranged. The mourners may be lower to the floor than the general seating. The tradition teaches that upon receiving news of the passing of a loved one, a mourner would tear his garment and sit in the dust. This custom is to reinforce the mourners' inner emotions. Feeling "low" is a symbol of depression, in Jewish law depression is acted out literally. When individuals visit to offer comfort it is appropriate for the mourner to remain seated.
- *The Wearing of Shoes:* During the Shiva period mourners may choose not to wear shoes made of leather. Slippers and canvas gym shoes provide appropriate footwear for the mourners.
- *Shiva and Holiday:* If Shiva has begun and there's a major holiday (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot) then Shiva is considered complete and no other days are observed. If a death occurs on the holiday itself, then the burial and Shiva begin afterward.
- *Shiva Restrictions and Prohibitions:* Observing the various traditions is a personal decision. Many traditional Shiva restrictions include no wearing of new clothes, no shaving for men, no washing clothes, no bathing.
- *Entering and Leaving the Shiva Home:* It is traditional and appropriate when meeting the

(Continued on page 6)

# August 2014 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday	July 30	6:30 p.m.	Torah Today	Library
Friday	Aug. 1	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Monday	Aug. 4		Erev Tish'a B'Av	
Tuesday	Aug. 5		Tish'a B'Av—BJC Office Closed	
Wednesday	Aug. 5	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Torah Today	Lounge Library
Friday	Aug. 8	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Aug. 13	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Torah Today	Lounge Library
Thursday	Aug. 14	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board of Directors Meeting	Lounge
Friday	Aug. 15	8:00 p.m.	Choral Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Aug. 20	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Torah Today	Lounge Library
Friday	Aug. 22	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Aug. 27	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Torah Today BJC Open Book Discussion— <i>And No Birds Sang</i>	Lounge Library Library
Friday	Aug. 29	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Service	Lounge Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Sept. 3	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Torah Today	Lounge Library
Friday	Sept. 5	6:30 p.m.	Shabbat for Families	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Sept. 6	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—Sotnick Bar Mitzvah	Covenant Hall

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

(Continued from page 5)

mourners not to initiate conversation. Wait for them to speak and then respond. Allow the mourner to guide the direction of the conversation. If they say nothing, simply sit with them in silence or speak the traditional greeting; "May God soon comfort you, together with the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." For many people, their discomfort with seeing friends in grief draws them to make lighthearted remarks or even tell jokes. This is to be discouraged. The sound of laughter or loud conversation is not appropriate in the house of mourning. It is also the custom to conclude ones visit with the same words as the greeting.

- *The Seventh Day and Beyond:* On the seventh and last day of Shiva, the mourners are required to sit for only a small part of the day

followed by a walk around the block, symbolizing the return to the regular world. Shiva is followed by a longer and less intense stage of mourning. First is shloshim (thirty), a thirty-day period and then a year of mourning. Jewish law mandates a full year of mourning for one's parents, the mourning period for all others stops at the end of shloshim. On the anniversary of the Hebrew date (some use English date) of death, mourners light a 24-hour candle and recite the mourners' kaddish. This is called the Yahrzeit date. Four times a year, (Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Passover and Shavouth) individuals in the Jewish community remember their deceased loved ones in communal prayer called Yizkor. Again, a 24-hour candle is lit.

## HIGH HOLIDAYS 5775

### Selichot

Saturday, September 20, 9:00 p.m., Covenant Hall

### Erev Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday, September 24, 8:00 p.m., Evening Service

### Rosh Hashanah

Thursday, September 25

10:00 a.m. Morning Service  
1:30 p.m. Family Service  
3:30 p.m. Tashlich—**Tilden Woods Local Park**  
**6800 Tilden Ln., Potomac**  
**(Location Change)**

### Yom Kipper

Friday, October 3

8:00 p.m. Kol Nidre

Saturday, October 4

10:00 a.m. Morning Service

1:30 p.m. Family Service

2:30 p.m. Yom Kipper Discussion

3:30 p.m. Musical Interlude

3:30 p.m. Chant Circle

5:00 p.m. Reading of the Book of  
Jonah

5:30 p.m. Yizkor and Neilah Services

*Tickets for non-members: \$210 per person for service. Tickets for Children's and Pre-K Services are only \$75 for families. Child Care will be available at no charge for all adult services (excluding Yizkor and Neilah). Tickets will be available after July 15, 2014.*

BJC does not furnish the High Holy Day prayer books, but they are available for sale in the office after July 15 for \$25 per book.



## BJC CUBA MISSION 2014

**December 5-15, 2014**

Join us for the Bar Mitzvah of Daniel Langus and Ariel Levy in the new Santa Clara Synagogue!

Cost: \$3,395 per person, double occupancy (single supplement \$475) Plus Cuba  
Departure tax-\$25

Cost Includes: Round Trip Airfare from Miami, Hotel 10 Nights (Havana, Cienfuegos,  
Caibarien, Santa Clara, Camaguey), All breakfasts, lunches, and six dinners, Air Conditioned  
Motor Coach, Full time guide/translator, Cuban visas, Miami departure taxes.

*Make Your Reservations Now! Deposit of \$500 due September 1.*

For additional information contact Rabbi Schnitzer, [rabbi@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:rabbi@bethesdajewish.org), or Roz Young,  
[admin@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:admin@bethesdajewish.org).



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The deadline for submitting articles for the September newsletter is August 4.  
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 September newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.

Deadline: August 4. Rate structure for a business card: \$30.00 per month, 3-month minimum. Rates are slightly higher for cards that are not camera-ready art.