



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

May 2014

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Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

For over a decade BJC has assisted the Jewish community of Cuba with its renaissance. We have been intimately involved with increasing Jewish knowledge and liturgical skills, as well as providing ritual objects, prayer books, and a Torah, as well as sorely needed medical and food support.

Many things have changed over the course of time, some of which our members may not be aware.

Jewish identity is stronger than ever, although the Jewish population is shrinking. The Jews of Cuba are proud and active members of a vibrant well-organized community. Many young people, as well as community leaders have visited Israel with Birthright Israel, March of the Living, and as individuals. This past summer 56 Cubans participated in the Maccabiah Games in Israel. While individual Cubans have participated in the games before, this is the first time a full team made the journey. Cuban teams participated in Softball, Soccer, Baseball, Tae Kwan Do, Track, and Archery. Our longtime friends from Cienfuegos, Roxanna and Rafael Gonzalez, won medals in archery.

Jews go to the local synagogues for the satisfaction and emotional/spiritual enrichment that comes with being part of a Jewish community with religious schools, adult and teen programs, and holiday celebrations.

But, Cuba is a country where economic challenges are a part of everyday life. While Cubans now can own private businesses, only a small segment of society participates in this new economy. The remainder are left to scramble to survive as government subsidized food rations shrink (the program now allows for only 21 days per month of food) and food prices in the private markets skyrocket.

Many members of the Jewish community rely upon free breakfasts at the privately operated Jewish senior center and synagogues as well as free Shabbat dinners. The Jewish pharmacy at El Patronato in Havana is the most well-stocked pharmacy in Cuba and serves Jews across the island. Babies receive milk, formula, medicine, diapers and clothes from our BJC Bottoms Up program. Without these programs, supported primarily by the Cuba America Jewish Mission, Joint Distribution Committee, The Friends of Jewish Cuba, B'nai Brith, and BJC, their situation would be impossible.

Things have become so difficult that a record number of Cuban Jews are making aliyah to Israel. Many find life in Israel too difficult and subsequently emigrate to the U.S.

This immigration pattern has left a substantial population of senior citizens with no family to care for them. Cuban state run senior institutions have collapsed, leaving many in a dire situation. The Cuba America Jewish Mission (CAJM) and other groups are rallying to meet the challenge. The Solomon Mitrani Senior Daycare Center meets the needs of 65 Jewish seniors who are mobile. A new CAJM program called "Dignidad" arranges visits by members of the Havana Jewish young adult group "Keshet" to the homes of

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BJC News

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senior shut-ins who, because of their infirmities, cannot leave their apartments. These dedicated young people check in on clients, bring groceries, do chores, cook a hot meal, and provide companionship. Soon this program will supply adult diapers

(almost impossible to find in Cuba) to 21 seniors in need of such care.

I visited Cuba in Feb. and in addition to material aid, the thing we were asked for most often was our presence. Outside of Havana, few Jews meet their brethren. They are hungry for our visits and our friendship.

See how you can be a part of our next mission to Cuba on page 7.

The President's Column

Joan Wolf and Harri j. Kramer, CE21

Engaging You Where You Are

We're still flying high from our inaugural "Great Names in the Neighborhood" speakers series, where Marvin Kalb and his daughter, Deborah Kalb joined us on a snowy spring day. Afterward, we heard from each of them, telling us how impressed they were with our sacred space, our relationship with Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, and the great questions and comments they received from our members as we chatted before and after their talks. Kudos to our speaker series coordinators! We hope you make the connection between what you told us you wanted in the CE21 Congregational Conversations and what BJC is bringing to you, such as this great series.

This month's President's Column is a joint effort: Harri Kramer, CE21's dynamic chair, and I want to share our excitement and get you up to speed. We want you to know that CE21 and the Board are working together through the months of CE21 activities, meetings, all-day seminars with more planned ahead. We have looked in-

ward, outward, and been completely focused. Bottom line: the decision to commit to the CE21 project is an invaluable one.

As a result of extensive and intensive discussions, we have targeted short- and long-term goals to enhance our BJC community—everything from more productive and effective communication to retreat or travel opportunities to cooking series to shared Shabbat dinners at various homes. Sounds terrific because they are all ideas that came from you.

CE21 design team has met several times to begin the work of taking your input from the Congregational Conversations and creating new paths forward to enhance learning at BJC. One of the first things we have realized is that there is still a lot of confusion about what CE21 is trying to do.

Perhaps, it would be better if we thought about the "E" in CE21 as "*Engagement*." Our purpose is to find ways to meet you where you are and how you want to *engage* with BJC and Jewish learning. Congregational *Engagement*, being involved, is the cornerstone of this endeavor.

Opportunities abound. You may have noticed that BJC now has a vibrant Twitter feed (find us at Bethesda Jewish Cong; our name/handle is @BJCBulletin). Follow it! Join us on Facebook, which will become increasingly central to our outreach and our plans to keep everyone up to date in real time. Social media will become more important as we work to create community connections. We say this as "Boomers" who approach social media with more than a certain degree of skepticism. But, "the times, they are a'changing," and it's important to be *engaged*.

Your thoughts are always welcome.

Director of Congregational Education

Mindy Silverstein

When I look back over the past school year, I see that our students were

engaged in learning, either through music, art, movement, text study, discussion, field trips, cooking, writing, or debating.

I can see how students went out of their comfort zone to try their hand at a new skill. I saw how an entire class went from, "We're not going to chant the four questions," to doing an amazing job of chanting. Students in September were very nervous about becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and they matured into confident young adults, asking very pointed and thoughtful questions.

While I am happy with the learning that occurred during the school year, I want to remind everyone that "Jewish" learning does not stop when summer vacation starts. There are wonderful websites such as myjewishlearning.com and babaganewz.com that provide interactive

Congregation News

The Jewish Way of Death and Mourning

When loss assails us, rituals bring comfort with their surety and rhythm. Modern life has blurred for many of us the ancient path of Jewish wisdom for healing the heart during and after the loss of a loved one. This course will allow us to reclaim that knowledge and prepare us to be truly present for the members of our community when death enters our lives.

On Thursday, May 1 at 7:30 p.m., we will learn about Jewish cemeteries with Harley Felstein, former president of the Jewish Cemetery Association of North America. On Tuesday, May 6 we will visit Torchinsky's Funeral Home at 254 Carroll St. NW in Takoma Park at 6:30 p.m. where we will meet with Joyce Torchinsky to learn about the arrangements and tasks that are performed by the Jewish funeral home. Upon completion of the course BJC members will have the opportunity to form a BJC *chevre kadisha* (holy burial society) to serve our community.

BJC Annual Meeting

Each year it is our privilege to invite our members to the Annual Meeting of BJC. It is an opportunity to look at the year now ending and the year ahead, to take pride in our accomplishments and discuss our future. We are in the midst of many new initiatives to broaden BJC's outreach and in reach. Come on Thursday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. to hear about all of the exciting plans for the coming year and to cast your vote for the annual budget.

From Ancient Days to Modern Ways, Precious Oils of the Bible—the Ancient Gifts from the Earth

The twelve essential oils mentioned in the Bible were considered more valuable than gold. They were the earliest articles of commerce, highly esteemed by peoples of the ancient Middle East. Kings and priests were anointed and the sick were healed using these oils. Today, knowledge of the healing properties of those oils are becoming more widely studied and utilized.

Join instructors Yaffah Schnitzner and Nancy Illman on Tuesday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m. to learn about the wonders of the healing oils of the Bible and the uses, past and present, of essential oils to prevent illness and to promote good health.

Open Book Discussion: *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*

Please join us on May 21 at 8 p.m. in the Library to discuss poems by the highly regarded Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. The poems are

ways for both adults and children to learn. The Jewish Book Council, jewishbookcouncil.org, puts out an annual summer reading list. And, of course, learning takes place at BJC during our Friday night services.

Wishing you a safe, relaxing and educationally interesting summer.

included in the anthology of his poetry entitled *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*.

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

Shabbat Pulpit Exchange with Rev. Dr. David Gray

Once again BJC welcomes the spiritual leader of our sister congregation, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, to our annual pulpit exchange on Friday, May 23 at 8 p.m. Rev. Gray will share with us what is on his mind spiritually and temporally at this special Shabbat.

Annual Joint Bible Study with BHPC Members

Come on Wednesday, May 28 at 7:30 p.m. in Covenant Hall and learn with our brothers and sisters from Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC), led by Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer and Rev. Dr. David Gray. Topic and texts to be announced.

Yahrzeits

יארצייט

Arthur Barrios, Father of Rochelle Banta

Edith Baum, Mother of Bruce Baum
Pauline Borden, Mother of Vicky Bailer

Rose Brucker, Mother of Anita Farb
Meyer Dubrow, Father of Laurie Dubrow

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Pearl Dubrow, Mother of Laurie Dubrow
William Dwork, Uncle of Barry Dwork
Blaine Eig, Father of Jonathan Eig and Keith Eig
Peter Feldman, Husband of Judy Feldman
Michael Glassman, Husband of Nancy Glassman
Sonia Gold, Mother of Judy Scott
Gordon Goldstein, Father of Lorrie Van Akkeren
Hilde Hirsch, Mother of Evelyn Ganzglass
Mary Klauber, Mother of Martin Klauber
Samuel Klauber, Father of Martin Klauber
Abraham Kraus, Father of Mitch Kraus
Mortimer Leister, Grandfather of Joy Gold
Max Levi, Father of Karen Levi
Elaine Levine, Mother of Meryl Simon
Rose Kline Levine, Grandmother of Bruce Baum
Lillian Lichtenberg, Mother of Warren Lichtenberg
Vera Poogach, Grandmother of Robert Poogach
Harvey Rabin, Husband of Evelyn Rabin
Irving Roger, Grandfather of Robert Poogach
Sadie H. Salkind, Mother of Dee Aronson
Rose Scott, Mother of David Scott
Rose Wagner Sherman, Grandmother of Harri Kramer
Molly Singer, Mother of Marlene Zakai
Leo Stern, Father of Ed Stern
Julia Ullman, Grandmother of Ted Posner
Sylvia Wasserman Mother of Gail Weiss
Barbara Wilansky, Mother of Robin Sorkin
Nessa Wolfson, Mother of Miriam Banerji

Thank You

תודה רבה

Joel and Dee Aronson for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund with thanks to Rabbi Sunny for his advice and support.

Nancy Glassman for her generous donation.

Gary Hoffman for his generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of his beloved wife, Ileene Hoffman.

Jonathan and Betsey Hudis for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Justin.

Laura Lippman for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

Paul and Barbara Silberman for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund as a thank you for all his help and support at the time of Barbara's mother, Sarah York's death.

Paul and Barbara Silberman for their generous donations to the Maran Gluckstein Family Education Fund in appreciation of Linda Blumberg and Joan Wolf for leading Shiva for Barbara's mother, Sarah York.

Paul and Barbara Silberman for their generous donation to the Cuba Fund in appreciation of Roz Young's help and kindness at the funeral of Barbara's mother, Sarah York.

Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

BJC is looking to grow a little.
Share the love!

Bring a friend, neighbor, relative and colleague to our
Prospective Member Open House
Simcha B'Shabbat Service
'Joy of Shabbos'

Friday, May 16, 2014
Reception 7:00 pm • Service 8:00 pm



David and Gail Weiss for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of Ilene Hoffman.

For Their Generous Donation to Enhancing the Flame

Lorrie Van Akkeren

Community News

Celebrate Israel—66 years young!

Join your BJC friends and family at the BJC booth on Sunday, May 18 from 1-5 p.m. at the Rockville Town Center for this joyous community wide event.

In celebration of Israel's 66th birthday, the community is invited to join us to experience Israeli

culture, featuring: presentations by local music and dance groups, activities for children and food.

Shmooze with the locals and share with them why BJC is special to you!

<p>DOGS • CATS • BIRDS • FISH • TURTLES</p> <p>Bring Your Pet to a Blessed Event at Bethesda Jewish Congregation</p>  <p>PRAYERS FOR PETS</p> <p>Saturday, May 3 • 1:30 to 3:00 pm</p> <p> On the grounds of BJC Rain date — June 7th</p> <p>HAMSTERS • BUNNIES • TEDDY BEARS</p>	<p>*** PRAYERS FOR PETS ***</p> <p>The Jewish concept of <i>Tza'ar ba'alei chayim</i> (taking care of living creatures) requires us to take seriously our responsibility toward animal life. Reb Sunny will lead us as we join together in celebrating life with, and by blessing, our animal companions.</p> <p>***</p> <p>Enjoy an afternoon in the company of other devoted pet owners!</p> <p>Visit exhibitors sharing valuable information on pet health and care, and the many ways we team with pets to help others:</p> <p>Veterinarian • Service Animals • Adoption Search & Rescue • Shelter</p> <p>***</p> <p>Sociable pets welcome! Please respect leash and cage rules while on the grounds, and clean up after your pet.</p>
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Rabbi Sunny's College of Jewish Knowledge

The Five Megillot

While the Book of Esther is usually referred to as the Megillah, there are actually Five Megillot (pl.). They are parts of the Ketuvim (Writings), the third major section of the Tanach. The Five Scrolls are the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther.

The term megillah is most widely used for the book of Esther, even though it is applied to the rest as well. The term megillah is also used in a joking way, in reference to any lengthy story, as in, "that's the whole megillah" (Yiddish—*die ganze megillah*).

All five of these megillot (scrolls) are traditionally read publicly in the synagogue over the course of the year in many, but not all, Jewish communities.

- The Song of Songs (Hebrew: *Shir ha-Shirim*) is read publicly during Pesach. It is a very sensual book of poetry about spiritual and physical love.

- The Book of Ruth (Hebrew: *Rut*) is read publically on Shavuot. It is the story of Ruth, a Moabite woman who converted to Judaism. Ruth was the great grandmother of King David.
- The Book of Lamentations (Hebrew: *Eicah*) is read on *Tisha B'av*. Eicha describes the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the exile of the Jewish people from Jerusalem.
- Ecclesiastes (Hebrew: *Kohelet*) is read publicly during Sukkot. It is a collection of wisdom literature attributed to King Solomon.
- The Book of Esther is read on Purim. The events of this story of the persecution and attempted extermination of the Jews of Persia is, in all likelihood, not historical, but is rather a tale associated with a feast day popular in ancient cultures.

Send me your questions for future inclusion in this feature.

May 2014 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Thursday	May 1	7:30 p.m.	Jewish Way of Death and Mourning	Lounge
Friday	May 2	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 3	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 1:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship—Zimmerman Bat Mitzvah Prayer for Pets	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Patio
Tuesday	May 6	7:30 p.m.	Jewish Way of Death and Mourning	Torchinsky's Funeral Home
Wednesday	May 7	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Torah Today	Classrooms Library
Thursday	May 8	7:30 p.m.	BJC Annual Meeting	Memorial Hall
Friday	May 9	8:00 p.m.	Service of Meditation	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 10	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship-Segall Bar Mitzvah Chant Circle	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Covenant Hall
Tuesday	May 13	7:30 p.m.	Oils of the Bible	Library
Wednesday	May 14	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School—Last Day Torah Today	Classrooms Library
Friday	May 16	7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Prospective Members Open House Simcha B' Shabbat All Music Service w/Band	Gathering Space Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 17	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Last Day of Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	May 18	1:00 p.m.	BJC at Israel Fest	Rockville Town Center
Tuesday	May 20	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Tichon Class Social Action Committee Meeting	Youth Lounge Library
Wednesday	May 21	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Torah Today BJC Book Club: <i>Unfortunately, It was Paradise</i>	Library Library
Friday	May 23	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service—Pulpit Exchange with Dr. Rev. David Gray	Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 24	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship-Friedman Bar Mitzvah	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	May 28	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Torah Today Joint Bible Study w/ BHPC	Library Covenant Hall
Friday	May 30	6:45 pm 8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Dinner Shabbat Service—Confirmation Service	Memorial Hall Covenant Hall
Saturday	May 31	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—Ritter Bar Mitzvah	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	June 4		Shavuot—BJC Office Closed	
Friday	June 6	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	June 7	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Worship—French Bat Mitzvah	Covenant Hall

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

BJC/ISRAEL DUAL NARRATIVE TRIP

November 10-21, 2014

Cost: \$2825 (Single Supplement: \$748) Deposit due: July 10, 2014.

Cost Includes: Eleven nights lodging; Two meals per day; Two fulltime MEJDI trained guides. (One Israeli, One Palestinian); Private bus and driver; All speaker's fees; All entrance fees. Airfare arranged by participants. Optional Petra/Jordan extension.

Reservations/questions: Bruce and Wynne Busman, 703-941-5978; webbeb@msn.com.

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: \$3,650 per person, double occupancy (single supplement \$400) 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 June 1.

For additional information contact Rabbi Schnitzer, rabbi@bethesdajewish.org, or Roz Young, admin@bethesdajewish.org.



Be sure to check
BJC's website &
weekly E-News for
schedule updates

GREAT NAMES Lecture Series

Sundays • 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Marvin & Deborah Kalb, co-authors

*Haunting Legacy: Vietnam and the
American Presidency from Ford to Obama*

MARCH 30

Steve Luxenberg, author

*Annie's Ghosts:
A Journey Into A Family Secret*

JUNE 8

Member,

*Secretary of State John Kerry's
Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations Team*

in SEPTEMBER

Earl Silbert, BJC member

*First Watergate Prosecutor &
Prominent Attorney*

NOVEMBER 2



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The deadline for submitting articles for the June newsletter is May 2.
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 newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.
Deadline: May 2. 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.