



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

September 2014

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Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Not too long ago I sat on a Beit Din (a religious court) to write a Get, the traditional Jewish bill of divorce. Being a participant in a Beit Din for a divorce is always a sad affair, but this particular morning was emotionally very difficult for both me and another rabbi on the court. Decades ago, both of us had experienced divorce ourselves. Both of us had long ago reconciled with that event and the effect it had upon us, our children, and our ex-spouses. Yet, on this day the memories weighed heavily upon us. Speaking together afterwards we both realized that we still had work to do—to forgive ourselves. We enter this month the season of the Yamim Noraim—The Days of Awe. Our tradition requires us to do the work of asking forgiveness of others, T'shuvah. We summon our courage to approach those we have wronged. But how many of us this High Holiday season will turn the microscope of examination of our deeds inward and do the work of forgiving ourselves?

Forgiveness is an act of self-care. If we are bitter over the past, then the damage continues. We cannot live in the present because we are trapped in the past. Anger festering in the heart hurts us, physically, emotionally and spiritually. When we let go of resentment, we are no longer a hostage of the past. When we forgive, we are free.

I write this on Erev Tisha B'av, a day of fasting and mourning for the ancient destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem. Our rabbis teach that the Second Temple was destroyed because of, *sinat chinam*, hatred among the Jewish people. This hatred made it impossible for the Holy One to dwell in our midst and allowed our enemies to overcome us.

We fast, be it on Tisha B'av or Yom Kippur according to the

rabbinic tradition, to arouse God's compassion. During these sacred days we take the time to mourn the losses in our lives. Not only the loss of loved ones, but the parts of ourselves we have lost too. We need to remove anger and sadness from our hearts to arouse our own compassion for others and for ourselves. Only when our compassion is aroused can the Holy return to dwell "bitocheinu"—in our midst.

Some of us feel we've done things that we believe make us unforgivable. We hold ourselves as unforgivable because we know that we have failed to live up to our highest selves. We no longer love ourselves. Withholding self-love and self forgiveness causes us to feel separate from the Source of Being. In this state of estrangement and alienation we do things that are off balance. Often we continue acting in the very ways that caused us to hold ourselves unforgivable in the first place.

This is not because we are "bad" and shouldn't be forgiven. It is because we carry the energy of "I believe I am bad" in our energy field. By the Law of Attraction, we draw to us circumstances that reflect our assessment of ourselves.

But the High Holidays give us an emotional and spiritual reset. We shift the energy of day-to-day existence. We are blessed to have the time to sit

(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 | 3 |
| Congregation News | 3 |
| Calendar | 6 |
| Community News | 7 |

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(Continued from page 1)

quietly, surrounded by friends, family, music, and words that inspire us to examine our essence and to rediscover the Divine spark in us. We are called upon to heal and strengthen our compassion for all that was created on "The Birthday of the World," including ourselves.

Once we experience compassion for ourselves, self-forgiveness is the next natural step in emotional healing. Forgiveness creates unity with the

Divine. We may think that we are cut off from this Source. But this is a false belief that separates us from God and each other. This false belief of being separate from our Creator is at the core of all suffering. The only way to heal this false belief is to bring enough love and forgiveness to ourselves that we can then open to the feeling of wellbeing that is always available to us when we align ourselves with Ratson HaShem—the Divine Will.

This season, together, we will intone these words; Al Cheit Shechatanu L'fanecha—For the sin that we have sinned against You, may we be forgiven. Let us also add to our prayers these words; Al Cheit Shechatati L'atzmi—For the sin that I have sinned against myself.

The President's Column

Joan Wolf

Rabbi Schnitzer shared an idea with BJC. He wanted to offer an adult education series entitled The Jewish Way of Death and Mourning with the possibility of forming a *Chevra Kadisha* (meaning "holy society" or "sacred fellowship", which is comprises volunteers who prepare the body for burial including reading scripture, ritual cleansing of the body and dressing for burial). This second idea was a lofty one, in my opinion, because congregations twice our size (and larger) have not created such a group.

I am proud and honored to announce that BJC has formed our very own *Chevra Kadisha* composed of a dozen members.

Past President Bruce Busman recently participated in his first *Taharah* (rites and rituals of burial preparation) and thoughtfully wrote his reflections:

...I received a call from the Ohr Kodesh congregation men's

Taharah group to assist them in performing a Taharah at the Danzansky Funeral Home. To say the least, it was very humbling, personal and spiritual. I had no preconceptions about the task at hand, but went into this open minded and willing. The classes we attended, and reading the book, Chesed Shel Emet helped prepare me to understand the rituals and procedures of this traditional preparing of the body for burial. As a first timer, the three men I assisted had me help them with all of the different aspects of the ritual from start to finish. As we performed this mitzvot, there was a certain serene calm around the four of us and we acted as one. As someone who for most of my life thought that cremation was to be part of my final arrangements, after going through this Taharah for a complete stranger, I would now not even consider cremation for myself. With Taharah you are encompassed by your spiritual family. The man the Taharah group prepared for burial I felt was part of our extended family and I was both humbled and honored to perform this Mitzvot. It is one of those moments in life that you know that you have made the right decision.

We are still learning the spiritual and technical aspects, and I welcome anyone who is interested in learning more about this new opportunity to contact me. To assist in the preparation and burial of the dead is thought to be one of the greatest mitzvot in our faith and considered a privilege. I feel incredibly privileged to serve and to connect with our amazing BJC community.





Director of Congregational Education

Mindy Silverstein

Welcome back to the 2014-2015 school year. The teachers, madrichim (teen assistants) and I are looking forward to getting to know you as well as working and learning with you. We have many activities and programs planned for each grade. Be sure to read your weekly school and synagogue emails for updates.

The first day of the midweek religious school program for grades 4-7 is Wednesday, Sept. 10, at 4:15-5:45 p.m. Please note that the midweek program begins before our Saturday program.

The first day of Saturday School is Saturday, Sept. 13, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m. For this session only, grades Pre K-7 are being asked to arrive by 9 a.m. For all other Saturday sessions, the schedule is Pre K-2nd grade, 10 a.m.-12:15 pm, and 3rd-7th grade, 9 a.m.-12:15 pm.

The schedule for Saturday, September 13 is as follows:

- 9 a.m. All students, parents and teachers are invited to Memorial Hall for a short school-wide program followed by a brief parent meeting.
- 10 a.m. Parents are invited to visit their child's classrooms for an introduction to the class. The first session is from 10-10:20 a.m. and the second session is from 10:25-10:45 a.m.

This is to allow parents with more than one child in the school to visit each child's class. However, there is one exception to this schedule. Due to the structure of the 7th grade class and the fact that they need more than 20 minutes to go over their year, parents are asked to attend the 10 a.m. session. If you have other children in the school, you are free to leave the 7th grade class at 10:20 a.m. to attend your other child's session.

Congregation News

Shabbat Under The Stars

Who says there's nothing new under the sun (or the stars)? While the weather is nice we were taking Shabbat outdoors on Fridays, September 5 and 12. Join us at 6:30 p.m. on the terrace behind Covenant Hall for a one-hour service with BJC musicians, followed by food and friendship. Bring a blanket and bring your friends. The September 5 service will be geared toward families; the September 12 service will feature a prospective member reception.

Please RSVP to the BJC office by telephone or on our new website ticket and reservations page: www.bethesda jewish.org/registration

BJC Prime Timers

BJC Primer Timers is a new program of discussions and classes on various areas of expertise of BJC members and friends for those who have the time to learn on weekdays.

Join us on Thursday, September 11 at 2:30 p.m., when Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer will speak and present photos on the Archeology of Ancient Israel.

Anyone interested in making a presentation please contact Kurt Kohn at kohnk@mail.nih.gov

Make This the Year You Learn Hebrew!

Our multi-level Hebrew class for adults will resume with the opening

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

of Religious School on Saturday, September 13. There is a depth and richness to being able to experience prayer and Torah in the original that is available to you through the study of our people's ancient yet amazingly modern language. We have groups from beginners through advanced and welcome everyone. Tuition is free for BJC members and \$200 for non-members. We meet every Saturday that school is in session from 9–10:15 a.m. If you will be a new student, please contact our instructor, Maran Gluckstein, at 301-984-0948 so that she can be sure to have the proper books waiting for you. L'hitraot! See you soon!

Open Book Discussion: *Americanah*

The BJC Book Club will meet on Sept. 17 at 8 p.m. in the Library to discuss *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Please note that this is the third Wednesday in September because the fourth is Erev Rosh Hashanah. *Americanah* is a novel about love and race centered around a young man and woman from Nigeria who face difficult choices and challenges in the U.S. and U.K.

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

Selichot with Split This Rock—Reigning World Teen Poetry Slam Champions!

Split This Rock explores and celebrates the many ways that poetry can act as an agent for change: reaching across differences, considering personal and social responsibility, asserting the centrality of the right to free speech, bearing witness to the diversity and complexity of human experience through language, imagining a better world.

Split This Rock is dedicated to revitalizing poetry as a living, breathing art form with profound relevance in our daily lives and struggles. The name "Split This Rock" is pulled from a line in "Big Buddy," a poem from Langston Hughes.

*Don't you hear this hammer ring?
I'm gonna split this rock
And split it wide!
When I split this rock,
Stand by my side.*

Please join us on Saturday, September 20 at 9 p.m. for Split This Rock, followed by a fancy dessert reception, and BJC's Hush of Midnight service. If you've never experienced a BJC Selichot before, this is the one not to miss.

RSVP preferred to the BJC office by telephone or

on our new website ticket and reservations page:
www.bethesda jewish.org/registration

Great Names at BJC

Join us on Sunday, Sept. 28

at 3 p.m. for another Great Names at BJC discussion with Chic Dambach. Chic and Congressman John Garamendi created a team of returned Peace Corps Volun-



teers to help the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia end their border war, and they engaged in a similar initiative in the Congo, helping President Joseph Kabila and the leaders of major rebel groups end hostilities and form a coalition government leading to elections.

Chic has been a featured speaker at US Department of State sponsored National and Regional Town Meetings. He has lectured at Harvard University Law School, the College of William and Mary, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Principia College, and many other institutions. He serves on the governing boards of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, Institute for Economics and Peace, International Peace and Security Institute, Peace x Peace, and the Institute for Horn of Africa Studies.

CE—A New Year, New Programs

Harri j. Kramer, chair

With Labor Day and "Back to School" upon us, we herald one of two renewals at this time of year. The other is, obviously, Rosh Hashanah. As it happens, it's also the beginning of a new phase for CE21. Our



Task Force has now completed its design phase, and we will now start the implementation phase as we begin rolling out the first initiatives that have evolved from the CE 21 process.

What is that "CE21 process," you say? BJC has been on a learning journey for the past 15 months to better understand our congregation, to identify what you want to learn, and to discover what you want to do all under the banner of increasing Congregational Engagement.

CE21 is coming together. In the months ahead,

you will see more thoughtful programming organized around the three themes that have emerged:

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 connectedness.”

Another major outcome of the CE21 process has been the contribution of some members who haven't been as involved in the past. No surprise, their opinions and attitudes have greatly influenced our work, and we are a richer congregation for it. It is “walking the walk” of congregational engagement—and there is always room for involvement from ideas that you may not have yet contributed.

I'd like to particularly recognize two of the youngest voices who have been at our CE 21 table: Jacob Magin and Moses Hetfield. These smart, articulate young men held their own, provided valuable insights and perspectives from the vantage of being involved in the school and congregation, and taught us older folks a thing or two. We will miss their vibrancy in our meetings as they head off to college.

If you have thoughts to share, please let us know at CE21bjc@gmail.com or 301-469-8636.

Pinat Ivrit עבירת פינת Hebrew Corner

Maran Gluckstein

The Hebrew language, in addition to being the language of prayer for Jews all over the world, is also a window into the Jewish mind and soul. The vast majority of Hebrew words—verbs, nouns, and adjectives—are built around a three-letter root that carries the meaning. Prefixes, suffixes, and interspersed letters give grammatical information like who is speaking, when something is happening, and what part of speech the word is. Each month, this column will explore a relevant root. You may find that you know more Hebrew than you realize!

The root for the month of September is “shuv” – שׁוּב. Its basic meaning is return, an important theme of the High Holiday season. In fact, it is the root of the name of our special High Holiday prayer book, *Sha'arei T'shuva, Gates of Repentance*. Look at “shuv” and at “t'shuva.” See the three-letter root? Repentance in Judaism involves a return to the correct way of behaving after making amends for any previous missteps.

Perhaps you have heard someone say that a person is a Ba'al T'shuva. That is how Jews refer to someone who becomes religiously observant after not having been so. It literally means Master of Return. When the Torah is returned to the Ark after the reading, listen for these words in the last line before the Ark is closed: Hashiveinu and Nashuva. See the root hiding in the middle (with one vowel change in the first instance)? These words mean “cause us to return” and “we will be returned.” It is time now for you Lashuv—to return—to the world of English. See you next month!

Yahrzeits

יארצייט

Jack Barsky, Brother of Lisa Strauss
Stephen David Berkowitz, Brother of Susan Berkowitz
Lucille Cifarelli, Mother of Mike Cifarelli
Solomon Dwork, Father of Barry Dwork
Toba Valens Farb, Mother of Warren Farb
Lester Frank, Uncle of Roz Young
Isadore Frankford, Father of Norma Stern
Frank Gold, Father of Judy Scott
Laura Jane Ketcham, Mother of Kathy Spiro
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Shirley Poogach, Mother of Robert Poogach
Benjamin Rosenberg, Father of Phyliss Hoffman
Daniel Aaron Sotnick, Son of Cliff Sotnick
Fanny Stern, Mother of Ed Stern
Eleanor Leister Trussel, Mother of Joy Gold
Joseph Weiss, Father of David Weiss

Thank You

תודה רבה

Ken and Dionne Fine for their generous donation.
Al and Judy Folsom for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Al's father Maurice Folsom.
Samuel Miller for his generous donation.
Mike Schecter and Sharon Curry for their generous donation.
Lorrie Van Akkeren for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and the Cuba Fund.
Eric and Kathryn Zimmerman for their generous donation.
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:
Lorrie Van Akkeren

(Continued on page 7)

September 2014 Calendar

| Day | Date | Time | Event | Location |
|-------------------|----------|--|--|--|
| Wednesday | Sept. 3 | 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. | Adult Hebrew Torah Today | Lounge Library |
| Friday Terrace | Sept. 5 | 6:30 p.m. | Shabbat Under the Stars | Covenant Hall |
| Saturday | Sept. 6 | 10:30 a.m. | Shabbat Worship—Sotnick Bar Mitzvah | Covenant Hall |
| Wednesday | Sept. 10 | 4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. | First Wednesday of Religious School Torah Today | Classrooms Library |
| Thursday | Sept. 11 | 2:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m. | Prime Timers—The Archeology of Israel BJC Board of Directors Meeting | Lounge Lounge |
| Friday | Sept. 12 | 6:30 p.m. | Shabbat Under the Stars—Prospective Members | Covenant Hall |
| Saturday | Sept. 13 | 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 1:30 p.m. 4:30 p.m. | First day of Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship Dedication of Maple Hill Habitat Homes Chant Circle | Classrooms/Memorial Hall Lounge Covenant Hall Gaithersburg Covenant Hall |
| Wednesday | Sept. 17 | 4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m. | Religious School Torah Today BJC Book Club— <i>Americanah</i> | Classrooms Library Library |
| Thursday | Sept. 18 | 7:00 p.m. | Social Action Committee Meeting | Library |
| Friday | Sept. 19 | 8:00 p.m. | Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service w/Band | Covenant Hall |
| Saturday | Sept. 20 | 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 9:00 p.m. | Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship Selichot-Split This Rock, Teen Poetry Slam Group followed by Selichot Service | Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall Covenant Hall |
| Sunday | Sept. 21 | 1:30 p.m. | 9-11 Unity Walk | Washington Hebrew Congregation |
| Wednesday | Sept. 24 | 8:00 p.m. | Erev Rosh Hashanah Service | Sanctuary |
| Thursday | Sept. 25 | 10:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m. | Rosh Hashanah Service Family Service for all Ages Tashlich -Tilden Woods Local Park | Sanctuary Sanctuary Potomac |
| Friday | Sept. 26 | 8:00 p.m. | Shabbat Service | Covenant Hall |
| Saturday | Sept. 27 | 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. | Religious School Adult Hebrew Shabbat Worship | Classrooms Lounge Covenant Hall |
| Sunday | Sept. 28 | 3:00 p.m. | Great Names Speaker Series | Covenant Hall |
| Wednesday | Oct. 1 | 4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. | Religious School Torah Today | Classrooms Library |
| Friday | Oct. 3 | 8:00 p.m. | Kol Nidre | Sanctuary |
| Saturday | Oct. 4 | 10:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m. | Yom Kippur Service Family Service for All Ages Yom Kippur Discussion | Sanctuary Sanctuary Covenant Hall |

| | | | |
|--------|--------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | | 3:30 p.m. Yom Kippur Chant Circle 3:30 p.m. Musical Interlude 5:00 p.m. Reading of Book of Jonah, Yizkor and Neilah | Library Sanctuary Sanctuary |
| Sunday | Oct. 5 | 2:00 p.m. Sukkah Set-Up | Covenant Hall |

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

(Continued from page 5)

Save the Date

Celebrate BJC's 50th Anniversary at Havanah Havdalah on Saturday, Nov. 8!

Cuban music, Salsa lessons, and great food!

Community News

Habitat for Humanity Maple Hill Homes Dedication

BJC helped to build it, now it's time to celebrate on Saturday, Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m. The Maple Hill Townhome Community is a new construction project on Emory Grove Road in Gaithersburg, MD. There are 19 townhomes on 2.9 acres of land. All homes will be sold to applicants earning less than 60% of the Area Median Income.

9/11 Unity Walk 2014

The Walk kicks off on Sunday, Sept. 21 at 1 p.m. at Washington Hebrew Congregation, 3935 Macomb St. NW at Massachusetts. After opening ceremonies, all are invited to walk down Massachusetts Ave at their own pace, visit different houses of worship, engage in conversation with Faith Guides walking among you, and attend a variety of activities at congregations and parks along the way.



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.



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**Design Layout and Desktop Publishing:
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The deadline for submitting articles for the October/November newsletter is September 5. 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 October/November newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.

Deadline: September 5. 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.