



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

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Kriat HaRav—The Rabbi's Call—The Power of the End

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

In January our congregation came through a period when it seemed as if every few days there was a funeral to create and a shiva to attend. It is hard to see suffering, the living and the dying. The inevitability of death makes the end no less hard to bear. The loss, the hole in one's heart, is never truly filled. We know there's no life without death. But the unpredictability and illogicality of how and when it strikes is something that most humans find hard to cope with.

If we were purely rational beings, we should not cry. If we believe in the idea of soul, a spark of the Divine in each one of us, what then could be better for that spark than to return to its Heavenly source, escaping all the travails of the physical world? And if we believe that we just die, the lights go out, then what is there to feel sorry about in that other person's eternal sleep? We, who are left behind, cry because we feel deprived of love or support. But that is only about us, not the dead. We pay respect to the person who has died, but it is for ourselves that we weep.

We ask "why" when we know precisely why. We know full well about diseases and why some people are more susceptible than others or inherit certain sets of genes. We also know that if we take risks we are more likely to put ourselves in danger. But if we ask the question; "Why is this happening now, to me?" We will be better served by asking, "What should I do next?"

Why do the good suffer and the bad prosper? None of the answers satisfy. Only Rav Yannai had the honesty to admit that "we simply do not have the answers as to why the wicked are in peace or the righteous suffer" (Pirkei Avot 4.15). The Talmud in tractate Avodah Zara flatly tells us that "The world functions according its own rules."

We often find that statement hard to swallow. We need to believe we have done our best to solve the issue of disease and death. We scour the world and spend fortunes on medical cures. If they fail us, we may turn to other healing modalities. We feel we must be active, because otherwise we are even more aware of our helplessness. The skill of the healer, the power of the human spirit, can overcome a lot, but not everything.

Illness and death are not to be welcomed. But we can learn from the things that happen to us that bring us pain. We can learn to appreciate what we have. Judaism may not give us all of the answers we seek, but it does give us a framework, rituals, communities, and support structures that all help us cope with whatever comes our way.

Our Jewish customs offer us a way forward. Not answers, but ways of coping. We, the community, gather around to express our love and our support. We busy ourselves with tending to the mourners, we busy the mourners with our presence, and we have rituals that allow us to indulge our grief, before we start the long road to recovering our lives.

If we come away from our loss inspired to fulfill the words of Psalm 90: "Teach us to treasure each day,"

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BJC News

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then we will have brought honor to those we mourn.

Learn more about the Jewish Way

of Death and Mourning. Join me April 26, May 1, and 6 to delve deeply into this holy work.

The President's Column

Joan Wolf

Get Me to the Shuull...ahhnnnn...Time

Never thought I'd be paraphrasing a *My Fair Lady* tune for the President's Column, but it fits. Some (more than a few) BJC folks do not cooperate with Eastern Standard Time or RSVP deadlines. Now, I'm not saying it's you, but...it's someone you know.

Here's the issue: when we (and I fully admit that I am a poor RSVP-er who vows to do better) don't let the organizers know that we intend to participate in a special service or event, it skews the numbers for food, drink, table decorating, associated event items and seating. It should be a no-brainer—they're not even asking for money upfront (though they would gladly accept it!); just your *intent to*

attend. So, when you read the newsletter, peruse an e-mail, receive a tantalizing postcard with upcoming and wonderful opportunities to be a part of something interesting, educational, inspirational, entertaining or otherwise, RSVP immediately and then it will be off of your plate and onto the organizers! As further inducement, you will notice that fees will now be tiered based upon deadline or at-the-door pricing. So, call or e-mail in that reservation!

The companion component of this 'time' issue is actual clock time. Part of tardiness reflects lack of consideration. In other words, low initial attendance can reduce that wonderful feeling of community, such as sharing in a Havdalah service before a social event. Or painstaking 'running orders' have been timed to the minute and have to be adjusted because programs cannot begin when latecomers represent 50% of the audience. The Rabbi makes a compelling example of services: they start at the appointed time. Let's make it a point to get to all BJC events on time.

(Here comes *My Fair Lady* again) *Wouldn't it be lovely?*



Director of Education

Mindy Silverstein

One of the most valuable lessons I learned early in my career as an education director was to Just Do It! I had to stop putting pressure on myself to hit perfection; I needed to relax.

Like anyone, I would play out all the "what if" scenarios and had to have a ready-made solution...just in case. What if the presenter didn't show up? What if the room was too hot? What if the room was too cold? What if the materials didn't work? What if...what if...what if... The list was endless. As my cousin would say, I suffered from analysis paralysis. And she was right; I was frozen.

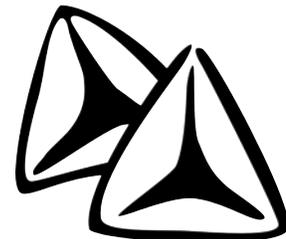
And then it hit me. As long as my intention to have a worthwhile program was honorable and sincere, I should just go for it. And that's what I did.

I see the same lesson can be transferred when we are thinking about incorporating a Jewish custom, tradition or observance into our lives. I think many of us worry about doing it the "right way" and if we can't do it the right way, we won't do it at all. But, if we think about what our intent is, is it sincere, and honorable, and honest? Is it respectful of the tradition? Does it bring us closer as a family? Does it bring us closer to God? I think if we answer yes to all those questions, then we have found our "right way."

Upcoming Calendar

- Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 7-8:30 p.m.—Folklorist and author Dr. Jean Freedman, will talk about the customs and traditions of Purim. RSVP to the BJC Office.
- Saturday, March 8, 2014—Stop Hunger Now. Please join us for the meal packaging morning, 9 a.m.-Noon. What else can you do? Put a jar on your kitchen counter and drop a quarter in it each time you or a family member has a meal. Bring in your money jar to BJC by Thursday, March 6. RSVP to eddirect@bethesdajewish.org.

- Saturday, March 15, 2014—Purim Carnival. Volunteers needed for set-up, break-down, and running of booths. RSVP to eddirect@bethesdajewish.org.
- Saturday, March 15, 2014—First Annual Hamantashen Throwdown! Bring 12 Hamantashen at 9 a.m. Tichon and Madrichim will judge.
- Saturday, April 4, 2014—Tot Shabbat, 6:30 p.m.



Congregation News

We're Moving!

Second Friday night Shabbat Evening Service of Meditation will now begin at 8 p.m.

Note to DC traffic—We Give Up! You win!

Join us for an hour of peace, tranquility, and guided visualizations designed to put you in touch with your soul.

Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Purim



Join us on Tuesday, March 4, 7-8:30 p.m. when folklorist and author Dr. Jean Freedman will talk about the customs and traditions of Purim. What's the truth behind the story? Does the story belong in the *National Enquirer* or the *Washington Post*? Come learn the facts. RSVP to the BJC office.

Modern Jewish History with Rabbi Schnitzer

This is a continuation of last year's very popular Judaism 101 class. We will take a look at Jewish history in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Judaism and the Jewish people have changed radically in the last 300 years from the Haskallah (the Jewish Enlightenment) to the American Jewish experience, the Shoah, and the end of a 2000 year exile from the Jewish homeland of Israel.

Missed the first class? No worries. Come to the others on March 5, 12, 19 and 20, 7:30-9 p.m. Each class stands alone as a separate period of Jewish history.

Open Book Discussion: *The Lady in Gold...*

Please join us on March 26 to discuss *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* by Anne-Marie O'Connor.

We had originally planned to discuss this book in February, but due to cancellation of our January meeting due to snow, we are slipping a month on our schedule of readings.

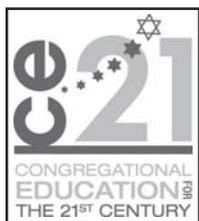
The Lady in Gold is the story of the attempts by a number of Jewish families to reclaim paintings that were stolen by the Nazis during World War II, in particular those by Austrian artist, Gustav Klimt. The book also sheds light on the Viennese world at the time of the painting's inception: a glowing, golden, culturally rich city where intellectual Jewish society was at the

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foreground. It traces the rise of Nazism in Austria, how the Jews at the core of this cultural blooming were dispossessed of the world they had built and the artworks they treasured.

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.

CE—Who Are You?



Harri j. Kramer, chair
As I noted last month, the task force working on our project, Congregational Education for the 21st Century (CE21), is now working on analyzing the amazing amount of input we received in the various Congregational Conversations.

One idea kept popping up: we need name tags. The idea is very simple. To build community, we need to know who each other are. While some of us are well known, others are not. And if *everyone* wears name tags *every time* we are at BJC, before long we will learn each other's names.

This year, the Board took a step forward and created a new name tag system for itself. Now it's easy to spot the Board members and to know their names. At another organization to which I belong, wearing a name button is *de rigueur*; it is simply what is done, and all of the members know upon arrival to put on their name badge.

Changing habits and cultures are never easy. But, unlike quitting smoking, this is so effortless! The Board will be exploring the best, permanent solution. Until then, take a minute and write out a nametag. Before long, BJC will be like *Cheers*, where everyone knows your name—and you.

Those who participated in the Congregational Conversations shared many other ideas and recommendations for educational programming and offerings at BJC. We are now identifying which have the most support and are also easy to do, what you might call "low-hanging fruit."

For those among you who may be more impatient for change, please know that CE21 was always designed to be a long-term and thoughtful process. Your volunteer task force members meet only once a month. This spring we will begin the Design Phase of CE21, which will take us approximately to the mid-point of this journey. While we are trying to keep everyone up to date with our progress, if you would like to know more, don't hesitate to get in touch. If

you want to know more, or get involved, just get in touch at CE21bjc@gmail.com or 301-469-8636.

Mark Your Calendars: BJC's Annual 2nd Night Seder

Join us on Tuesday, April 15 at 6:30 p.m. for BJC's Annual 2nd Night Seder. The cost is \$40 per adult, \$18 for kids 7-12 and free for those under 7.

We ask that last names beginning with A-L bring a Kosher for Passover dessert and those M-Z bring a Kosher for Passover side dish.

Please RSVP to the BJC Office at admin@bethesdajewish.org or 301-469-8636. Reservations by April 8, 2014, after that the cost will be \$50 per person.

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.

This course, held on April 26, May 1 and May 6 at 7:30 p.m. consists of three parts: 1. The rituals of death, funeral, shiva, and shloshim; 2. The function of Jewish cemeteries and memorials; and 3. The Jewish funeral home and Chevre Kadisha (to take place at Torchinsky's Funeral Home on May 6). Upon completion of the course BJC members will have the opportunity to form a BJC chevre kadisha (holy burial society) to serve our community.

Save the Date—BJC Cuba Mission 2014

- When: December 6-15, 2014
- Cost: \$3650 per person, double occupancy. (Single supplement \$400)
Plus Cuba Departure tax \$25.00
Cost Includes: Airfare Miami—Havana / Camaguey—Miami; Hotel nine nights (Miami, Havana, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus, Camaguey); All breakfasts and lunches, and four dinners; Air conditioned motor coach; Full time guide/translator; Cuban visas; and Miami departure taxes.
- Reservations: *Call to make your reservations now.* Deposits due in July.
- Additional information: Contact Rabbi Schnitzer, rabbi@bethesdajewish.org or Roz Young, admin@bethesdajewish.org.

Yahrzeits

Esther Chabot, Mother of Herbert Chabot

יָאָרְצִיִּים

Joseph Ertischek, Father of Debra Aronson
 Joe Glassman, Father-in-law of Nancy Glassman
 J. Harvey Gleberman, Father of Ellen Gleberman
 Pauline Jerome, Grandmother of Karen Jerome
 Dorothy Kaufman, Mother of Emily van Agtmael
 Donald Kerwin, Brother of Aleen Chabot
 Gerald Killian, Brother-in-law of Richard Fogel
 William V. Levine, Father of Les Levine
 Jerry Lichtenberg, Brother of Warren Lichtenberg
 Sam Schwartz, Father of Linda Baum
 Molly Shaikun, Grandmother of Steve Turow
 Herman Schlacter, Father of David Slacter
 Selma Florence Sotnick, Mother of Cliff Sotnick

Thank You

תודה רבה

Herbert and Aleen Chabot for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeits of their fathers Meyer Chabot and Edward Kerwin.

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

Keith and Karen Gallaway for their generous donation in memory of Barbara Silberman's mother, Sarah York.

Allan Gold for his generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Lillian Gold.

Ross and Sheila Kremer for their generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in memory of Barbara Silberman's mother, Sarah York.

Lois Rose for her generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of her father, Charles Coplan.

Steve Turow and Linda Blumberg for their generous donation to the Education Fund for Stop Hunger Now.

Community News

Celebrating Harmony II

Join us on Sunday, March 23 at 5 p.m. for an Interfaith Concert and Dinner with performers from: Church of the Ascension and St. Nicholas, Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community, Islamic Society of Germantown, The International Cultural Center, BJC, and Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church.

The concert will take place at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, 633 Sligo Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Come to an evening of great music, and enjoy great fellowship, featuring the BJC Choir, children from the BJC religious school, five other musical acts from Islamic, Christian, and Jewish traditions, and a combined community children's choir.

Tickets; Adults \$25, Seniors (62+) \$15, Children 12 & under \$5 (Proceeds to Benefit Youth Against Hunger and Stop Hunger Now).

Coming to BJC!
2014
Mark Your Calendars!

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 1

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

March 2014 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Saturday	Mar 1	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship—Schecter Bar Mitzvah	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Tuesday	Mar 4	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Tichon Class Adult Ed—History of Purim Spiel	Youth Lounge Lounge
Wednesday	Mar 5	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Friday	Mar 7	8:00 p.m.	N'Tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Mar 8	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Stop Hunger Event Shabbat Worship Chant Circle	Lounge Classrooms Memorial Hall Covenant Hall Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Mar 12	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Thursday	Mar 13	7:30 p.m.	BJC Board of Directors Meeting	Lounge
Friday	Mar 14	8:00 p.m.	Service of Meditation— <i>Time Change</i>	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Mar 15	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School—Purim Carnival Shabbat Worship—Blanchard Bar Mitzvah Adult Purim Spiel—Megillah According to the Beach Boys	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Tuesday	Mar 18	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Tichon Class Social Action Committee Meeting	Youth Lounge Lounge
Wednesday	Mar 19	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Modern Jewish History	Classrooms Library Lounge
Friday	Mar 21	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service with band	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Mar 22	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	Mar 23	5:00 p.m.	Celebrating Harmony II—Interfaith Concert & Dinner	
Wednesday	Mar 26	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach BJC Open Book Discussion: <i>The Lady in Gold...</i>	Classrooms Library Library
Friday	Mar 28	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Mar 29	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship—Hudis Bar Mitzvah	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	Mar 30	3:00 p.m.	BJC Speaker Series—Marvin Kalb	Covenant Hall

Wednesday	April 2	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach	Classrooms Library
Friday	April 4	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Lounge Covenant Hall

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



The Megillah According to the Beach Boys

*Cowabunga! A farbrengen with flipfloppin' fun presented by
Bethesda Jewish Congregation's world-renowned*

Surfin' Spiel Schlamazels

*Saturday, March 15th at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall
Reserve your seat by 3/8 for @36 per person (@45 thereafter)
guarantees you*

*hors d'oeuvres, catered dinner, dessert and free-flowing wine & beer!
301-469-8636 or email admin@bethesdajewish.com*

Reserve by 3/8 for discount!



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The deadline for submitting articles for the April newsletter is March 7.
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 April newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.
Deadline: March 7. 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.