



Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

November 2013

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Kriat HaRav—The Call of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Today the Jewish world is all a flutter in the wake of the release of an American Jewish population study that indicates that American Jewry is shrinking at a somewhat faster pace than indicated in an earlier survey in the year 2000. It should come as no surprise. Smaller surveys during the past decade already revealed the trend. The Pew survey merely confirms what anyone observing the American Jewish community already knew. Synagogues are shrinking and merging, philanthropy to support Jewish communal institutions is diminishing, the number of Jewish "millennials," both single and married, who claim that they are "Jewish but have no religion" has risen to an all-time high.

In 2012, during the High Holidays, I shared with you some numbers. "For every 20 adult American Jews there are now only 17 adult children. So when our generation is gone, the Jewish population of the United States will be approximately 4.4 million, except that if the current trend holds true, 25 percent of that generation will leave Judaism. So, that number will decrease to 3.3 million. If the trend is unchanged, in 60 years the Jewish population of our country will be half of what it is today." The statistics contained in the Pew survey confirm this trend.

Today there are pundits once again blaming our situation on the effects of interfaith marriage. They point to Jewish history and the Jewish prohibition on interfaith marriage as the glue that kept our people alive. These same pundits conveniently ignore the fact that since the fourth century, the societies we lived in prohibited Christians and Muslims from marrying Jews. So into the early 20th century it was a mutual prohibition.

Admittedly, the obliteration of any barrier between Jews marry-

ing non-Jews in 21st century America, except in the Orthodox community, has had a deleterious effect on the American Jewish population. But the question we should be asking is *why*?

Is it only some sort of seductive quality of Christianity that is luring Jews in interfaith marriages to convert to Christianity? The overwhelming answer is – *no*. According to the Pew survey and other surveys of the religious faith of the American people, the most rapidly growing category in these surveys is *no religion*. Mainstream Christian movements in the United States are experiencing this same phenomenon of their children drifting away from the faith of their fathers and mothers. Young single "millennial" adults display even less inclination to have a connection to religion than their married counterparts. So the dissolution of connection to religion in America would seem to be driven by factors other than, or at the very least in addition to, interfaith marriage.

The problem is not a challenge of shrinking numbers because of our

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BJC News

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success in America and assimilation into a majority Christian culture. Despite a lot of rhetoric, the fact is America is a secular country and large numbers of our children are opting for secularism over Judaism. They find more meaning and satisfaction in secular culture than Judaism as they have experienced it. For the first time in centuries, two Jews can marry each other and have Jewish children without any connection to Jewish heritage, wisdom, or tradition. It is a growing phenomenon.

Our response to these trends cannot be to merely circle the wagons and fight to keep “us” in and “them” out. Circling the wagons in the Old West usually resulted in the death of most, if not all of those inside the circle.

The answer, as I have said before

and will continue to say is to, make Judaism matter. The biggest challenge before us is one of imagination and vision. If we believe that our uniquely American expression of Judaism is worth preserving, then we must be ready to articulate why it is important to be Jewish, how Jewish practice can enrich our lives, and what Judaism can teach that can perfect the world.

As early as 1979, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Reform Movement, advocated organized Jewish outreach to the non-Jewish world as a response to the challenge of a shrinking American Jewish population, a pattern he detected 44 years ago. In 2005, the Conservative Movement echoed his call for sustained organized Jewish outreach in a policy statement; *Al HaDerech* (On the Path). “People will join us because of our sincere love of God, of Torah, of the Jewish people, of Israel, and of humanity.”

Within the Pew Survey there is this statistic within the data. So far I have not heard any comment upon it. According to the survey, there are 1.2 million people who were not identified in the survey as Jewish, (they have no Jewish parent, were not raised as Jewish, and have not converted) but consider themselves “Jewish by affinity.” Perhaps this is where outreach efforts should begin, to embrace them and ultimately to have them join the Jewish people.

The President's Column

Joan Wolf

Getting to Know Who?

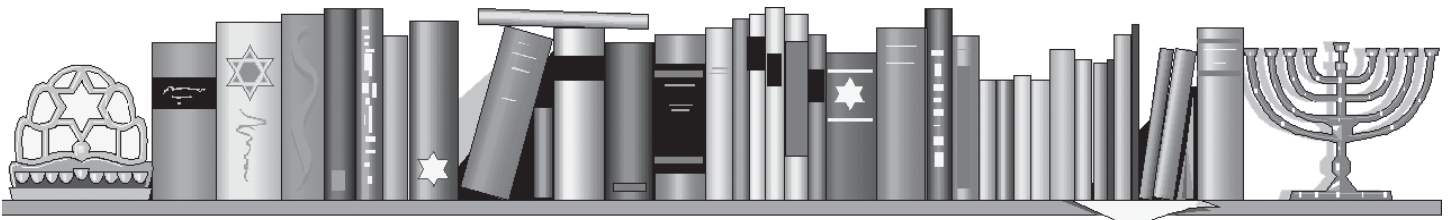
Heard that you wanted to meet some more of our fantastic board members! Introducing Sharon Curry, Education Committee Chair and Robin Sorkin, Membership/Marketing Chair:

Left-handed Sharon is from a Navy family but she spent most of her time in New Hampshire. She majored in Rhetoric (!!) at Bates College but ultimately chose nursing, as jobs in Rhetoric were in short supply! She splurges on Cherry Garcia, favors periwinkle and hiking in the mountains with her family. Her all-time favorite movie is “Tootsie”, she loves the Beatles and lived in Australia for two years. Sharon is a lactation con-

sultant and loves Passover with the in-laws (particularly the time that her cousin did the Four Questions in Klingon!). She recognizes that BJC is a special place and looks forward to being even more a part of our community.

Robin was born in DC, majored in Public Communications and is also trained as a Volunteer Fire Fighter and EMT. She is artistic, indulges with Captain Crunch with Crunchberries and loves the coppery orange of the mountains out west. Robin is a Stones fan and has recently enjoyed a river cruise from Odessa to Kiev. The first thing she notices about people is their hair—she believes that curly hair is a woman's source of strength and power! Her mantra is ‘well behaved women rarely make history’ and her special talent is being a deeply devoted, loyal-to-a-fault friend and mother. Robin's hope is to help BJC be all that it can be!

Interview someone you don't know—we'll put it in print! Tell me about you.



Director of Education

Mindy Silverstein

- **Tri-Cycle**

On Wednesday, Oct. 2, six young families with children, ages 7 months to 8 years of age, gathered in Room 109 for the kick-off event of "Tri Cycle." This new BJC initiative has two goals—to help our youngest members feel comfortable with BJC and to allow parents of this age group the opportunity to meet one another.

After signing in, the parents played a mixer game while the children played on the indoor playground equipment. We then discussed in a little more detail what "Tri-Cycle" was about, read two stories with the children, and ended with the Shema. Of course, food was involved! After the formal part of the program was over, the families stayed and mingled.

Our next "Tri-Cycle" program is Saturday, Nov. 9 at 8:30 a.m. The children will have a preschool session with Puran Corwell, our early childhood teacher. (This is not a drop-off program; parents must stay with their children.)

If you know of any families who you think would be interested in "Tri-Cycle," please send me their contact information. This program is open to members and non-members alike.

- **Room 109**

Does driving the Wednesday carpool to BJC stress you out? Why not consider staying at BJC for the hour and a half that Religious school is in session and hang out in Room 109. You may bring your laptop to get some work done or you can borrow a book from our library.

And remember, Saturdays is Meetcha Mocha Café, from 8:55-10:30 a.m.

- **Religious School Upcoming Events**

Nov. 9—Tri-Cycle Pre-School Session, 8:30 a.m.

Nov. 9—5th-7th Grade Family Tallit Making Workshop, 9:30 a.m.

Nov. 9—Meetcha Mocha Monthly Discussion, 8:55-10:30 a.m.

Nov. 10—Maccabeats Concert at Beth El

Nov. 23—9:00-10:00 a.m. Latka breakfast

Nov. 23—7th grade sleep-over

Nov. 27-30—Religious
School Closed—
Thanksgiving

- **Stop Hunger Now**

The Mission Statement of Stop Hunger Now is "To end hunger in our lifetime by providing food and life-saving aid to the world's most vulnerable and by creating a global commitment to mobilize the necessary resources."

Last year, BJC partnered with Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC) and together we packaged over 16,000 meals to feed the hungry. On Mar. 8, 2014, BJC and BHPC once again will be combining forces with the goal of meeting or surpassing last years' numbers.

In order to reach our goal, we do need funding. The school is committed to contributing all tzedakah money to Stop Hunger Now. You can help by reminding your children to contribute to the class' weekly tzedakah.

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

Joint Thanksgiving Service

Join us on Sunday, Nov. 17, at 10:30 a.m. for this annual morning of inspiration and music with our spiritual siblings, the members of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church and BJC, and members of the Islamic Center (in Burtonsville) for celebration of abundance led by clergy of these three congregations. There will be readings from the texts of Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions.

Brunch following the Thanksgiving service is \$11/adults, \$5/children 12 and under) at 12 noon. Discussion among the three congregations will follow the meal.

Please Note: Those with last names beginning A-M, we ask you to bring a side dish (no beef or pork) for eight and those N-Z, we ask you to bring a dessert for eight.

Brunch reservations are requested to the BJC office

Open Book Discussion: *Canada*

Please join us on Nov. 20 (third Wednesday of the month instead of the usual fourth Wednesday) to discuss *Canada* by Richard Ford. The story is reflected in the opening sentences of the novel: "First I'll tell you about the robbery our parents committed. Then about the murders, which happened later. The robbery is the more important part, since it served to set my and my sister's lives on the courses they eventually followed."

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.

In Search of Volunteers

Have a spare hour or two to join in more BJC activities? We are always looking for volunteers/participants for all of our events. We want to hear of your interest and ideas, so please send a note to BJCVolunteer@gmail.com. All are welcome!

- *Habitat Unity Build* at the Maple Hill Townhome community: Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 5,

- 2014. If not building, you can help out by providing food/drinks for volunteers, etc;
- *Stepping Stones Shelter*-Cook dinner for families in transition from 4:30 p.m.-6 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 18 and Tuesday, Dec. 18. This monthly mitzvah is on a Monday or Tuesday evening (always the third week of the month);
- *Meetcha Mocha Café* is back and open every Saturday morning when Religious School! Speakers on various topics will be there on the second Saturday of every month and looking for volunteers to donate and set-up breakfast foods between 8 a.m.-9 a.m. Saturday mornings;
- *Fellow Gardeners Unite*-Fight weeds around our building! No meetings, just pull weeds during the growing season to avoid a jungle in the fall. Join our weed-fighting corps!;
- *Guns, Violence and the Interfaith Angle*-help reduce violence in our community;
- *Red Cross Blood Drive*-Feb. 1, 2014;
- *Stop Hunger Now* and other activities-Saturday, March 8, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m.;
- *Rally for Darfur* at Sudanese Embassy-April 27, 2014!



CE21—Was Your Hand Up?

At the conclusion of the Yom Kippur morning service, the Rabbi asked many questions. Among other things, he was trying to elicit from our congregation what it means to be Jewish, why we come to synagogue, and what was important to each of us about BJC.

Admittedly, the dialogue got off to a slow start. After all, it's not often that the Rabbi cedes his time to talk and asks questions, particularly in such a large setting. But, after one or two brave souls started offering up their thoughts, soon more hands went up. And then some more.

It turns out that many of you left the service unrequited—wanting to say something about your current practice, the future of Judaism, and how those two topics come together in thinking about the future of BJC.

For many months, I've been using this space to tell you about CE21. Perhaps, you're still confused and uncertain what this Congregational Education for the 21st Century is all about. In short, our CE21 Task Force has been exploring the very types of questions that Reb Sunny posed to us on Yom Kippur. On your behalf, the Task Force has been exploring what matters to us as contemporary Jews, who have a strong sense of tradition, a robust yearning for learning more—in both traditional and nontraditional ways—who have a sense of pride in our congregation, and who want BJC to be the best it can be for everyone in our community.

Soon you will get your chance to raise your hand again. As part of CE21, we will be holding small parlor meetings called Congregational Conversations. Our goal is to share with you our draft visionary description of the future we see for BJC and to invite your active feedback and contributions to inform the process. When you get an invitation, please accept. We're asking you to spend about an hour with your BJC friends talking about all the things you didn't get to say at Yom Kippur.

For more information about CE21 go to www.bethesda jewish.org/ce21/ or get in touch with the BJC office.

Harri J. Kramer, Chair, Leadership Team

Yahrzeits

אדר"ט

Evelyn Adlerstein, Mother of Maran Gluckstein
Kermit Bailer, Father of Byron Bailer
Bernard Berman, Father of Louis Berman
Esther Blumberg, Grandmother of Linda Blumberg
and Mark Blumberg
Herbert Abraham Blumenthal, Father of Diane Blumenthal
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Martin Cohen, Father of Donna Goldberg
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Arthur Fried, Husband of Judy Fried
David Friedman, Father of Hannah Friedman Elson
Max Kurz, Father of Robert Kurz
Isador Levin, Father of Paul Levin
Bessie Lieberman, Mother of Ellen Lieberman
James Meehan, Father of Elizabeth Short Friedman
Roman Poogach, Grandfather of Robert Poogach
Jeff Schaffer, Beloved of Carie Schaffer

Jack Scott, Father of David Scott
Philip Shtasel, Father of Sana Shtasel
Bessie Spector, Mother of Judy Fried
Sara Stern, Grandmother of Melissa Keller
Lisa Gail Sternfeld, Sister of Eliot Sternfeld
Yetta Grant Sternfeld, Mother of Eliot Sternfeld
Joseph Sugarman, Father of Elsa Weinstein
Naomi Walders, Mother of Larry Walders
Irving York, Father of Barbara Silberman

Thank You

תודה רבה

Elliott and Deborah Alman for their generous donation.

Diane Blumenthal and Craig Winslow for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Diane's mother, Freda Blumenthal.

Dixon and Susan Butler for their generous donation in honor of Joan Wolf.

Herbert and Aleen Chabot for their generous donation in honor of Roz's decade at BJC.

Deborah Gale for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of the wonderful music that the Rabbi and Rebbitzen bring to the community.

Martin and Hilda Hainer for their generous donation.

Peter and Carol Levin for their generous donation in honor of Ronnie and Miles Haber.

Stuart and Robin Sorokin for their generous donation to the Reserve Fund.

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

Marlene Zakai for her generous donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

For Their Generous Donation to Enhancing the Flame

Lorrie Van Akkeren

Community News

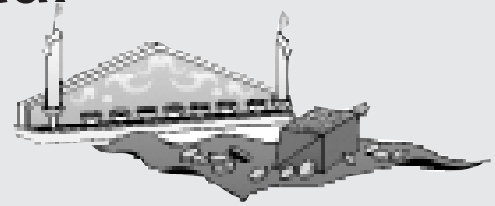
Voices of the Holocaust: Kristallnacht Commemoration

Strathmore Hall is the venue on Sunday, Nov. 10 at 7:30 p.m. for this spectacular choral work that highlights melodies from the ghettos and concentration camps of Europe. It is a tribute to all who endured the devastation and turmoil of the Holocaust.

Choirs from 22 local Jewish congregations, including many BJC choir members, will be joined by the Juniata College Concert Choir as well as an

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November 2013 Calendar



Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Tuesday	Oct 29	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	Oct 30	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Trope Class	Classrooms Library Library
Friday	Nov 1	8:00 p.m.	Choral Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Nov 2	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Nov 6	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach	Classrooms Lib
Friday	Nov 8	6:30 p.m.	Service of Meditation	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Nov 9	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship Chant Circle	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Covenant Hall
Sunday	Nov 10	7:30 p.m.	Kristallnacht Anniversary Chorale with members of the BJC Choir	Strathmore Hall
Tuesday	Nov 12	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge
Wednesday	Nov 13	4:15 p.m.	Religious School	Classrooms
Thursday	Nov 14	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Kemach and Tanach BJC Board of Directors Meeting	Library Lounge
Friday	Nov 15	8:00 p.m.	Simcha B'Shabbat All Music Service with Band	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Nov 16	9:00 a.m.	Adult Hebrew	Lounge
		9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Shabbat Worship Roz's Tenth Anniversary Celebration with Sam Glaser	Classrooms Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Sunday	Nov 17	10:00 a.m.	Joint Thanksgiving Service and Brunch	Sanctuary/ Memorial Hall
Wednesday	Nov 20	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach Open Book Discussion: <i>Canada</i>	Classrooms Library Library
Friday	Nov 22	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Nov 23	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Tuesday	Nov 26	6:30 p.m.	Tichon Class	Youth Lounge

Wednesday	Nov 27		1st Night of Hanukkah <i>BJC Office Closed</i> No School or Kemach and Tanach	
Friday	Nov 29	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Nov 30	9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	No Adult Hebrew No Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Dec 4	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Tanach	Classrooms Library
Friday	Dec 6	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat Music Service	Covenant Hall

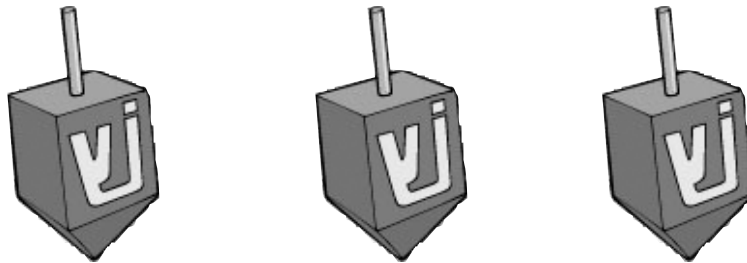
For the latest updates and weekly E-news, please refer to the BJC website.

(Continued from page 5)

ensemble of local cantors and music directors from Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations. Members of the Columbia Orchestra will provide the musical accompaniment for the piece. All musicians

will be led under the direction of guest conductor, Jason Love.

Tickets are \$36 and \$54—at the Strathmore Box Office only.



Save the Date Save the Date Save the Date
Celebrate Roz Young's 10th Anniversary
 Save the Date Save the Date Save the Date

Mark Your Calendars! Roz is a '10'!!

Join us in a smashing tribute to her decade
of service and love

Saturday, November 16th • 6:30 pm • at BJC

Special Concert by Sam Glaser

Soulful singer, composer and musician

Named one of the top 10 Jewish musicians
in the US by *Moment Magazine*

Save the Date Save the Date Save the Date
As Our Beloved Executive Director at BJC
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The deadline for submitting articles for the December newsletter is November 1. 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 December newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC. Deadline: November 1. 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.