



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

February 2010

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שבת\אדר תש"צ

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## The Rabbi's Reflection

Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer

Let me begin by saying thank you. Thank you for all of your good wishes, messages of congratulations, generosity of spirit, and acts of tzedakah in my name. I appreciate so very much the fantastic turnout for the events for our weekend of celebration, and the efforts of all who organized and participated in the festivities.

It is a great thing that we have arrived at these days of celebration. We have just come through, as a community, a time of great sorrow. We "stepped up" in exemplary fashion, to support each other. I am so proud to be the leader of this congregation, a congregation of great souls and great hearts.

So, some folks are asking; "now you're a rabbi, what's different than being a *hazzan*?" The answer—not much really. As a rabbi, I can convene a *beit din* (religious court for conversions or divorces), before I could only, under a strict interpretation of Jewish law, serve as a witness on a *beit din*. I can now, if I so choose, write a *halachic tshuvah* (an interpretation of Jewish law) that other rabbis might take seriously. But most importantly, as *mara d'atra* (authority of this place), no one will ever question the legitimacy and greatness of our congregation. Indeed, a rabbi once said to one of our congregants; "as long as you don't have a rabbi you're not a real synagogue." His insulting statement was incorrect. Nowhere in our tradition does it say any such thing. However, this community deserves better. This community deserves respect. Let no one impugn the integrity of our holy congregation, ever again.

One difference you may notice on our website, on our letter head, and on my office door is the name; Rabbi Elhanan 'Sunny' Schnitzer. Elhanan is my Hebrew name. It is not unusual for rabbis

to take a new name or emphasize their Hebrew names upon ordination.

My Hebrew name has an interesting history. When I was born, my maternal great-grandfather gave me my name, and with his heavy Yiddish accent it was heard as, Elhanu Beher ben Meir. When I was married I gave this Hebrew name to the rabbi for the *ketubah* and he exclaimed; "there is no such name." He pondered this for a moment and his face brightened as he shared with me, "your name must be Elhanan. Someone, when they wrote down the name, didn't fully extend the 'final nun,' the last letter. It looked like the letter 'vav' and it was misread as Elhanu!" Elhanan can be translated as God's compassion. I really liked my new name.

My middle name "beher" is the Yiddish word for a type of Kiddush cup. So once I learned a little Yiddish I thought that that my name could mean "The Cup of God's Compassion, Son of Light," Then, I *really* liked my Hebrew name.

*Continued on page 2*

### BJC News

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I was a little disappointed a few years later when I learned that *baḥur* is a Hebrew word meaning first born. I was the first-born great-grandchild of my mother's family. Once again the

Yiddish accents of the old country had led to a bit of confusion. So now I know that my name means "God's Compassion, First Born Son of Light." Still, a pretty cool name.

But, around here, I will always be Sunny.

## A Thought or Two...From the President

Edward Stern

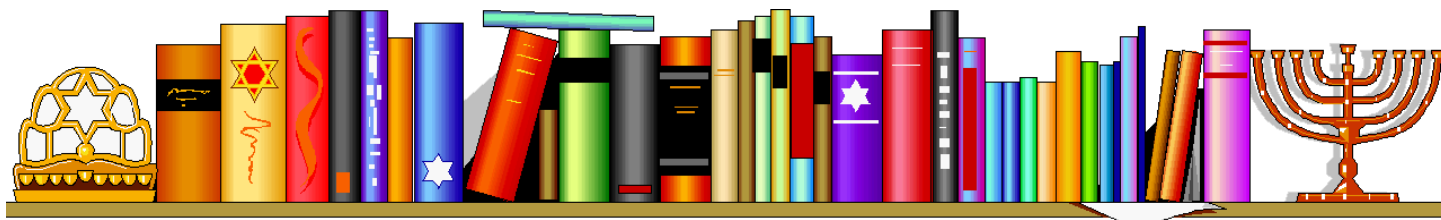
On behalf of the members of BJC and for myself, I want to welcome Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer. For all of us, I want to give a hearty Mazel Tov to Sunny and to his wife and family.

Rabbi Schnitzer has been long known to BJC members and guests as a teacher and interpreter of Torah. He has been a long-time student of Jewish law, history, wisdom, mysticism, and, of course, Jewish music. In this, there is a story of his diligence in studying and a lesson to study for us.

Some years ago, the BJC rabbinic

search committee was trying to find the right person to be our spiritual leader. The proposal to interview the then *Hazzan* Sunny Schnitzer was urged upon the committee by its chairman, Gary Ratner. Gary's enthusiasm and his credibility in the committee prompted a change in course. We interviewed Sunny at length. And then we interviewed him again at length. He fit so well with our needs that we picked Sunny, the ordained *hazzan*, over many others ordained as rabbis. And he kept on studying Jewish law, history, wisdom, mysticism, and, of course, Jewish music.

Sunny's studies led him to become a rabbi. This gives him the formal recognition as the teacher we already knew he was. Few aspire to become rabbis, but we can still follow Rabbi Schnitzer's example in pursuing Jewish studies. It is a life-long pursuit. There is an incredible treasure of Jewish wisdom to discover. Ask the Rabbi.



## Sh'ma Koli—Hear My Voice

Chava Gal-Or, Director of Congregation Education

### Bringing Music and Israeli Dance to our Religious School

*Learning happens in many ways!*

Our children learn through different modalities and observe everything around them. They learn by reading about what interests them or what they are told to read. Mostly though, our children learn through actions. As they acquire new skills, they are excited and are actively engaged in the learning process.

Passion for learning happens best when we meet children where they are and then introduce them to new experiences. When we teach using multiple intelligences, we have the opportunity to engage our children by motivating them to expand their horizons using any number of ways to build skills. Once this happens deep learning can take place.

This year we are blessed to have two fabulous teachers working with our children using two or more different multiple intelligences.

Joanie (Yaffa) Schnitzer utilizes kinetic multiple intelligence while teaching Sacred and Israeli Dance to our children. Her love of

movement inspires the kids to move their bodies with joy as they are introduced to many Israeli and Jewish tunes.

Lisa Baydush is an engaging singer, songwriter, Jewish music educator and children's performer who delights in transmitting the values, stories and traditions of Judaism through the medium of Jewish music.

Our students will all benefit from both Joanie and Lisa's teaching approximately once a month.

While Joanie and Lisa are both gifts to our BJC community, I

would welcome the opportunity for our students to experience art and drama, too. Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering to work with one class or multiple classes on a project that could better enhance the children's Jewish learning experience.

## 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 keep-

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

## Congregation News

### **It's Not Too Late to Help the Jews of Cuba**

We are still accepting, in gratitude, monetary donations before we leave for Cuba later this month. We also need your unused unexpired prescription medications to help stock the Jewish pharmacies in Camaguey and Havana. If you have access to physician's samples, or bulk quantities of prescription medications, we would love to have whatever you can provide. The Jewish pharmacies serve not only Jews, but the larger Cuban community as well. Please drop off your medications in the BJC office no later than Feb. 9.

### **Hebrew Marathon**

On Saturday, Feb. 20, join us, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., for a Hebrew Marathon for adults of all ages! The class will be facilitated by Leesa Fine, a Jewish/Hebrew educator in the Washington, DC area, who has taught this course many times. The \$36 class fee includes Hebrew textbook, lunch, and snacks.

The Hebrew Marathon is good for anyone who:

- wants to learn to read Hebrew.
- went to Hebrew school as a child, but remembers very little.

In 8 hours, you will be transformed from someone who does not know how to read Hebrew or read it well to a Hebrew reader!

Please call Chava Gal-Or at the BJC Office if you are interested in being part of this day of learning or to ask questions. Let's make the Hebrew Marathon class a success!

### **Open Book Discussion: *Olive Kitteridge***

The BJC book club invites you to join us on Feb. 24 at 8 p.m. for a discussion of *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout, a "novel in stories," about life in a hardscrabble community on the coast of

Maine. The presence of Olive Kitteridge, a seventh-grade math teacher and the wife of a pharmacist, links these 13 stories.

Several stories put Olive at the center, but in a few she makes only a fleeting appearance. One story takes place at the funeral reception of a man whose wife has just learned of his infidelity. Another features a hostage taking in a hospital. Elsewhere, an old lover surprises a lounge pianist, sending her reeling back into painful memories. An overbearing mother visits her wary son and his boisterous, pregnant wife. Most stories turn on some kind of betrayal and a few documents, fragile, improbable romances.

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

## *BJC's Annual Adult Purim Spiel*

*Saturday, February 27, 7:00 p.m.*

*This year's version is a surprise!  
(Watch for details via e-mail.)*

*Tickets: \$18  
Includes beer, wine and snacks*

*Reservations Required  
RSVP: 301-469-8636 or [admin.bethesda jewish.org](mailto:admin.bethesda jewish.org)*

### **New Adult Education Course—Judaism 301**

The next level in the BJC College of Jewish Knowledge will be held Thursdays, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 22 and Apr. 1 at 7:30 p.m. This course is a deepening of the Basic Judaism and Judaism 101 classes of years past; Jewish History, Philosophy, Texts, and Customs. Didn't take the earlier courses? No problem. Come anyway. Please RSVP to the BJC Office.

### **Join Us for BJC's Second Night Seder**

Come celebrate this most special holiday with the BJC family on Tuesday, Mar. 30, at 6:30 p.m. As the Rabbi always says, "this isn't your mother's Seder!" It is so much more.

BJC supplies the main courses, macaroons and all the ritual pieces and asks the Congregation to supplement in this way:

What to bring:

- Last Names beginning A-R—bring a Kosher for Pesach side dish for 8 people
- Last Names beginning S-Z—bring a Kosher for Pesach dessert for 8 people
- You may also bring a white or rose wine (Kosher for Pesach) for your table

Cost (in addition to dish assignments)

Adults—\$27.50 prior to Mar. 24, \$37.50 after that date or at the door

Kids 7-12—\$18 prior to Mar. 24, \$21 after that date or at the door

Under 7—free

RSVP by Mar. 24 to the BJC Office at 301-469-8636 or [admin@bethesda jewish.org](mailto:admin@bethesda jewish.org)

Please let us know when you make reservations if you and your family can help set up on Tuesday, Mar. 30 at 10 a.m.

**יארצייט**

### **Yahrzeits**

Barry Aronson, Husband of Debra Aronson  
Elisha Barsky, Father of Lisa Strauss  
Herbert Nathan Cohan, Grandfather of Sandra Walter Steinberg  
Harold Coplan, Uncle of Lois Rose  
Samuel Druckman, Grandfather of Linda Blumberg and Mark Blumberg  
Anna Dubrow, Grandmother of Laurie Dubrow  
Morris Dubrow, Grandfather of Laurie Dubrow  
Maurice Feldman, Father of Betty Kline  
J. Harvey Gleberman, Father of Ellen Gleberman  
Georg Gluckstein, Father of Fritz Gluckstein  
Harry Goldberg, Father of Madeline Killefer  
Beatrice L. Haber, Mother of Miles Haber  
Saul Horn, Father of Joan Schnitzer  
Leon Jacobson, Father of Ann Cifarelli  
Pauline Jerome, Grandmother of Karen Jerome  
Irwin Kaplan, Husband of Harriet Kaplan  
Ida Kline, Mother of Norman Kline  
Bernice S Kramer, Mother of Harri Kramer  
John Krettmeyer, Father of Nancy Glassman  
Sam Leopold, Father of Nancy Regan Sachs  
Walter Levine, Father of Meryl Simon  
William V. Levine, Father of Les Levine  
Sandra Margules, Mother of Margaret Greenwald  
Marchia Olney, Mother of Phyliss Hoffman



# February 2010 Calendar



Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday	Feb. 3	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Feb. 5	8:00 p.m.	N'tivim L'Shabbat—Music Service	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb. 6	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Feb. 10	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Feb. 12	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Family and Friends Shabbat Pot Luck Shabbat Dinner	Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Saturday	Feb. 13	10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	No Religious School Shabbat Worship Chant Circle	Covenant Hall Rm 305
Wednesday	Feb. 17	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Feb. 19	8:00 p.m.	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb. 20	8:45 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Adult Hebrew Ed Stern's Adult Jewish Law Hebrew Marathon Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Outer Office  Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Feb. 24	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah Open Book Discussion: <i>Olive Kitteridge</i>	Classrooms Library Library
Friday	Feb. 26	6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Tot Shabbat Simcha B' Shabbat Service	Lounge Covenant Hall
Saturday	Feb. 27	7:00 p.m.	Adult Purim Spiel	Memorial Hall
Wednesday	Mar. 3	4:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Thursday	Mar. 4	7:30 p.m.	Adult Ed-Judaism 301	Lounge
Friday	Mar. 5	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.*

Morton Peterson, Father of Jonathan Peterson  
Sarah Roger, Grandmother of Robert Poogach  
Nathan Joseph Rosenberg, Father of Lorraine Levin  
Ernest Joseph Schmalz, Father of Lorraine McMillen  
Shirley Selditch, Mother of Renee Asher  
Molly Shaikun, Grandmother of Stephen Turow  
Sylvia Simon, Mother of Martin Simon  
David Sosnick, Father of Barbara Sosnick  
Selma Florence Sotnick, Mother of Cliff Sotnick  
Louis Spector, Father of Judy Fried  
Shirley Tahler, Grandmother of Rori Kochman  
Judith Taylor, Mother of Lyne Taylor-Genser  
Harry Walders, Father of Larry Walders

### Thank you

### תודה רבה

Arup and Miriam Banerji for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund in honor of their daughter Anjali's Bat Mitzvah.

Louis and Tiffany Berman for their generous donation in honor of the Yahrzeit of Louis' father, Bernard Berman.

Phyllis Cassell for her generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund as a thank you for presiding at the unveiling for her husband, Irving Cassell.

Stanley and Dena Forster for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund.

Mark and Miriam Hetfield for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son Moses' Bar Mitzvah.

Russ Hogya and Harri Kramer for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund.

Jim and Liz Korelitz for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund.

Robert Poogach and Wendy Mellinger for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund in honor of the Yahrzeits of Morris Poogach and Roman Poogach.

Antoine and Emily Van Agtmael for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund.

A very special thank you to everyone who has so generously donated to the BJC Cuba Fund to help our work with the Jewish communities in Cuba.

Thank you to all who have been so generous in their donations to Aleph in honor of the Rabbi's ordination.

### For their generous donations to Enhancing The Flame

Warren and Anita Farb

Gary and Beverly Fried

Nancy Glassman

Russ Hogya and Harri Kramer

Sam and Lauren Kline

Dale and Lorraine McMillen

Eileen Newman

Gary and Jean Ratner

Larry Slifman and Barbara Ranagan

Antoine and Emily Van Agtmael

David Wall and Wendy Shay

## Community News

### Volunteering with the Literary Council of Montgomery County

Since 1963, the Literary Council has offered literacy lessons and classes to Montgomery County residents who never learned to read or write (many of whom are new grandparents who wish to read to their grandchildren) and to immigrants living in Montgomery County. Currently, there are more than 350 adults seeking 1 on 1 literacy tutoring or classroom instruction. The Literacy Council provides volunteers with training (3 sessions) and ongoing support. Teaching people to read furthers social justice by indirectly reducing poverty and by facilitating employment, housing, and other opportunities. Your support is critical, given budget cuts and a continued demand for literacy services. Please call BJC-member Stacey FitzSimmons, 301-951-1820 to learn more, or

contact the Literacy Council, [www.literacycouncilmcmd.org](http://www.literacycouncilmcmd.org), directly, 301-610-0030 to volunteer.

### Darfur March—Please Note New Date

On Sunday, May 23rd, the Darfur Interfaith Network is sponsoring a march from the Holocaust Museum to Lafayette Park, entitled "Hope for Darfur- Justice in Sudan." Participants in the march are members of Jewish, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist and Catholic congregations in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. We are compelled by our faith to call attention to the victims of genocide in Darfur and the need to alleviate the suffering of Darfurian refugees. Please save the date, publicize the event and plan to participate.

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# SUPER SUNDAY

...through the years

Each year our community gathers on Super Sunday to raise critical funds that address our community's needs locally, in Israel and around the world.

**JOIN US - VOLUNTEER OR ANSWER OUR CALL**  
**February 21, 2010**

JCC of Greater Washington 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
JCC of Northern Virginia 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Washington DCJCC 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT**  
[www.supersunday2010.org](http://www.supersunday2010.org) or  
call (301) 230-7200.

Please bring a bag of non-perishable food to donate to local food banks when you come to make calls on Super Sunday (or drop off during the week of February 15-21).

[jconnect@shalomdc.org](mailto:jconnect@shalomdc.org)  
(301) 348-7356



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so you don't have to

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**Design Layout and Desktop Publishing:  
Yvonne Bryant**

The deadline for submitting articles for the Mar. newsletter is Feb. 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 Mar. newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.  
Deadline: Feb. 5. Rate structure for a business card: \$20.00 per month, 3-month minimum. Rates are slightly higher for cards that are not camera-ready art.