



# Bethesda Jewish Congregation News

**Hazzan Sunny Schnitzer**

January 2010

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שבט\שבט תש"צ

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## Hazzan's Call—Kriat HaHazzan

Hazzan Sunny Schnitzer

Recently a person came to me in great distress. I cannot precisely quote their words, but in essence they said; "I have been a member of BJC for two years. When I am in the building, people are very nice, they say hello, all the usual pleasantries, etc. But I don't really know anyone in this congregation. No one has ever asked me or my family to join them for a meal, or even a cup of coffee. If we see some of our members at the mall or on the street, they don't even say hello. Yet, I have spoken to them in synagogue. What is going on here?"

Indeed, what is going on here?

We tell ourselves that we'd like to make a difference in the world. We understand that as Jews we are called to perform *gimilut Chasidim*, acts of loving kindness, to effect *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. We give money to charities, we participate in walk-a-thons, we work at soup kitchens, we give blood. Yet, we miss the biggest and simplest opportunity to heal the world. It is the one right in front of our face, yet far too many of us don't see it. It is to ease the sense of isolation and ennui that is so much a part of twenty first century life.

Our modern American culture has made us very comfortable in our cocoons. We forget that as Jews we are called to make true friends out of the people we meet in our community. Our sages were very concerned with how we interact with others and become friends with strangers.

We read in *Pirkei Avot*;

"Receive every human being with a cheerful and pleasant countenance" (*Pirkei Avot* 1:15—Teaching of Shammai).

"Receive every human being with gladness" (*Ibid* 3:16—Teaching of Rabbi Yishmael)

The first of these teachings is quite remarkable because our tradition records that Rabbi Shamai was very grumpy and short tempered, yet here he is admonishing us to reach out with good cheer to others.

We should take note that the word used here in Hebrew is "M'kabeel" which means not merely to welcome or greet each person with a cheerful and pleasant countenance, but to "receive." To truly receive another person is to bring them closer. To make them "Kubal," to be accepted, or brought to the inside. Each human being is created in the image of the Divine and each human being has something unique and special to give to the world. We therefore need each other, and we therefore need to honor and cherish each other. We are called by our tradition to draw closer to each other.

The next time you're here at BJC

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### **BJC News**

Bethesda Jewish Congregation  
6601 Bradley Boulevard  
Bethesda, MD 20817-3042  
Tel: 301-469-8636  
Fax: 301-469-9529  
[www.bethesdajewish.org](http://www.bethesdajewish.org)  
[admin@bethesdajewish.org](mailto:admin@bethesdajewish.org)

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make it a point to have a real conversation with someone you don't know. If you see someone you have met before, consider inviting them to join you "off campus." Get to know them a little better. Consider making a new friend. Change a life.

"Devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.....Be compassionate, and take responsibility for each other. If we only learned those lessons, this world would be so much better a place."

- Prof. Morrie Schwartz (from *Tuesdays with Morrie*)

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

Edward Stern

As many of you know, my wife and I have been members of the Congregation for a long time. We enjoy seeing and greeting people we have known since our children started in the BJC religious school close to thirty years ago. Since then, we have enjoyed meeting, working, studying, praying, celebrating, and eating with many people who joined after we did.

But we don't know everyone, especially newer members. As people's in-

terests and situations lead them to BJC, we members need to do more to make them feel as welcome additions to the BJC family.

I ask you to make a little more effort to meet, work, study, pray, celebrate, and eat with the people who joined after we did. I am sure that they will appreciate a little more welcome from us, and I am pretty sure that we will enjoy getting to know them as well.

Just say, "I know I have seen you here, but I don't remember your name. I am Ed Stern, an officer/teacher/member of BJC." (But use your own name!) If you say these words, the next cookie you take at the oneg will taste better. Everything tastes better with hospitality.



## Sh'ma Koli—Hear My Voice

Chava Gal-Or, Director of Congregation Education

### Adult Education Opportunities and Hebrew Marathon

All of us want to feel comfortable when we come together within our BJC *kehillah* (community). Most would like to feel comfortable with the people around us, with our Jewish knowledge, and with Hebrew. All three things are components of our *kehillah*. The beauty of being part of a community is that we might engage in only one part of the community like Social Action (*tikun olam*) activities, worship

services, chanting, learning, and/or cultural activities; your interests might evolve or change over time.

My goal is to find aspects of learning and programming that excite you and make you want to be part of the BJC community on a more regular basis.

Let me know what you would like to learn. The Hazzan and I both love to teach and if we don't know something that you want to investigate more, chances are we know someone who can give a workshop so that you can grow Jewishly. Also feel free to let me know when you would like to have a class so that we can best accommodate your schedule, if at all possible.

Some possible workshops/classes can include:

1. Understanding the Jewish lifecycle or calendar cycle.
2. Rosh Hodesh programming to celebrate the New moon.
3. What is a Mitvah? Is it a good deed? Is it a commandment? How does it affect us as modern Jews.
4. What are some of the Jewish teachings that can guide our practice as environmentalists?
5. Being present in each moment is something that many of us aspire to do. What Jewish rituals can I bring into my life that would enable me to be more present?
6. Discussion group for parents of young children utilizing the book, *Blessings of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogel.
7. The ethics of decision-making as Jews.

If you don't see a workshop suggestion that works for you here, please let me know what you would like to learn and let's see if we can make it happen.

On Saturday, Feb. 20, we will have an all day Hebrew Marathon for those that have never learned Hebrew and for those that remem-

ber almost no Hebrew from the past. We would love for you to be there. The class will be facilitated by Leesa Fine, a Jewish/Hebrew educator in the Washington, DC area who has taught this course many times. Details will follow next month. In the meantime, mark your calendar for Feb. 20 from approximately 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

BJC's Hebrew Marathon will be made possible in part by a special grant, the Initiative in Congregational Education from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. This gift has allowed us to expand our programming for all members.

## From Hazzan Schnitzer

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

### **As Much as Ever, the Jews of Cuba Need Your Help**

In Feb. BJC returns once again to Cuba. Each year we hold a drive to bring items that are in short supply to the Jews of the island. This year, because of changes in the government food subsidy program, many basic staple foods are in short supply and are available for purchase only with hard currency. Few Cubans have access to hard currency unless they have family who live abroad or friends like the members of BJC.

This year consider making a Hanukkah gift of cash for Cuba's Jews.

For a donation of \$750 every Jewish family in Camaguey can receive a basket of food. A donation of \$75 will feed a family of five for a month. \$15 will feed a Jewish senior citizen living alone.

Please send your gifts payable to the BJC Cuba Fund.

We also need your unused, unexpired prescription medications to help stock the Jewish pharmacies in Camaguey and Havana. Also, 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.

### **Come to the Peace Café**

Join us on Sunday, Jan. 17, 5-7 p.m. for a keynote speaker and discussion on: "How Civil Society in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is Laying the Groundwork for a Lasting Peace," co-sponsored by BJC, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, and The Middle East Peace Civic Forum

A Peace Café is a forum where people of various faiths, backgrounds and nationalities respond to cultural presentations of often difficult issues—usually about life in the Middle East—in an open, non-threatening

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environment by means of respectful dialogue.

The Peace Café is not a forum for policy statements, lectures, or finger-pointing, but rather a place to share personal reactions, questions and stories, and to listen to the stories of others.

### **Habitat for Humanity Build Day**

Please join our team from BJC, BHPC, and the Idara-e-Jaferia Islamic Center on Martin Luther King Day, Monday, Jan. 18, when we travel to Habitat for Humanity's site in Northeast D.C. for another fun and worthwhile build day. Anyone 16 and up is eligible to participate, and no experience is required. Habitat will have its own construction crew to supervise, provide instruction, and provide all necessary tools. The workday is from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In previous years, our crew has had a great time, working on a variety of tasks on townhouses at different stages of construction. This year, the mosque's youth group will be sending a delegation, so we'd especially welcome younger volunteers—although older volunteers are no less welcome!

If you'd like to help, but are not sure you'll make it for a full day of construction work in Jan., we hope you will consider making a contribution to DC Habitat of \$10-20, to help procure the materials they need

as much, if not more, than our labor.

Call the BJC office soon to sign up, first come, first served, or send a contribution. If you have any questions, contact Gary Sampliner at [gary.sampliner@do.treas.gov](mailto:gary.sampliner@do.treas.gov).

### **Open Book Discussion: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist***

The BJC book club invites you to join us on Jan. 27 at 8 p.m. at BJC for a discussion of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid. The novel, which begins a few years after 9/11, is a quietly told, cleverly constructed fable of infatuation and disenchantment with America. Changez, the protagonist, happens upon an American in Lahore, invites him to tea and tells him the story of his life in the months just before and after the attacks. In 2001, as he explains, Changez was hardly a radical. Fresh out of Princeton, he was living in New York City and working as a financial analyst. He appears to have been something of a cipher, until his reaction to the attacks—that sudden smile—pierces the shell. It seems to have come as a surprise even to him, and while hardly endearing, it sets his tale in motion.

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

## **ALEPH: The Alliance for Jewish Renewal**

*Invites you to the Ordination Ceremony of 5770*

**Sunday, January 10th, 2010**

2:00 p.m.

Crown Plaza Hotel

St. Louis, Missouri

*Candidate for Rabbinical Ordination*

• Sunny Schnitzer •

### **Celebrate the Ordination of Rabbi Schnitzer**

Please join in celebrating the ordination of Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer! On Friday, Jan. 29 at 8 p.m. there will be a Choral Shabbat with a congregation-led service featuring the BJC Choir followed by a Celebration Oneg. Families are encouraged to attend with their children.

On Saturday, Jan. 30 at 8 p.m., there will be an adults-only party in Memorial Hall with food, drinks, toasts and a DJ with music for dancing and celebrating. Babysitting will be available. Cost: \$25 per person on or before Jan. 15, 2010; \$30 after Jan.15, 2010. RSVP to the BJC Office.

# January 2010 Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location
Friday	Jan. 1	8:00 pm	Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Jan. 2	10:30 am	No Religious School Shabbat Worship	Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Jan. 6	4:15 pm 6:30 pm	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Jan. 8	6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Family and Friends Service Potluck Shabbat Dinner	Covenant Hall Memorial Hall
Saturday	Jan. 9	8:45 am 9:00 am 10:30 am 4:30 pm	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship Chant Circle	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall Rm 305
Wednesday	Jan. 13	4:15 pm 6:30 pm	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Jan. 15	8:00 pm	Special Simcha B'Shabbat	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Jan. 16	8:45 am 9:00 am 9:00 am 10:30 am	Adult Hebrew Ed Stern's Adult Ed Religious School Shabbat Worship—Ben Sternfeld Bar Mitzvah	Lounge Outer Office Classrooms Covenant Hall
Sunday	Jan. 17	5:00 pm	Peace Café	Memorial Hall
Monday	Jan. 18		Habitat for Humanity Build	
Wednesday	Jan. 20	4:15 pm 6:30 pm	Religious School Kemach and Torah	Classrooms Library
Friday	Jan. 22	6:30 pm 8:00 pm	Tot Shabbat Shabbat Worship	Lounge Covenant Hall
Saturday	Jan. 23	8:45 am 9:00 am 10:30 am	Adult Hebrew Religious School Shabbat Worship	Lounge Classrooms Covenant Hall
Wednesday	Jan. 27	4:15 pm 6:30 pm 8:00 pm	Religious School Kemach and Torah Open Book Discussion: <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>	Classrooms Library Library
Friday	Jan. 29	8:00 pm	Choral Shabbat Worship— Celebrating the Ordination of Rabbi Schnitzer	Covenant Hall
Saturday	Jan. 30	8:45 am 9:00 am 9:00 am 10:30 am 8:00 pm	Adult Hebrew Religious School Tu B'Shevat Sedar Shabbat Worship Ordination Celebration in honor of Rabbi Schnitzer	Lounge Classrooms Memorial Hall Covenant Hall Memorial Hall

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

## The New Siddur Project

This month Hazzan Schnitzer and a group of BJC members will begin a study of recently published siddurim (prayer books). The ultimate goal is to recommend to the congregation and the Board of Directors a new siddur for BJC. This group will study the rubrics and the dynamics of Jewish prayer. As a part of the selection process, excerpts from various siddurim will be tested at services and worshipers will be surveyed for their reactions.

This working group will also visit other congregations to observe their worship styles. In March, the group will visit Congregation B'nai Jeshurun and other congregations in NYC. The New York trip will be open to the entire congregation. See the Feb. newsletter for details.

We look forward to everyone's input as the process unfolds.

## Simchas and Nachas

Let others know of an upcoming event, a proud moment, or the birth of a grandchild, engagement of a child, college acceptances and graduations, special achievements, etc. in the BJC Newsletter. E-mail your short announcements to [office@bethesda jewish.org](mailto:office@bethesda jewish.org) by the deadline printed on page 7.

Gail and David Weiss proudly report that their daughter, Joanna Weiss, has been named to the Editorial Board of the *Boston Globe*. She will also be writing a weekly column for the *Globe's* op-ed page. Joanna started her journalism career at the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, after serving as Editorial Chair of the *Harvard Crimson*. She joined the *Boston Globe* in 1999. Joanna and her husband, Dan DeLeo, live in Milton, MA, with their two children: Ava, 5, and Jesse, 1.

## Yahrzeits

Amy Lynn Barsky, Sister of Lisa Strauss  
Edward Baum, Father of Bruce Baum  
Norma Bernard, Mother of Cathy Bernard  
Frederick Brucker, Father of Anita Farb  
Margaret Campiglia, Mother of John Camp  
Irving Cassell, Father of Wynne Busman  
Meyer Chabot, Father of Herb Chabot  
Charles Coplan, Father of Lois Rose  
Hyman Dubrow, Father of Laurie Dubrow

## יארצייט

Jack Fagen, Grandfather of Karen Jerome  
Lee Feldman, Mother of Betty Kline  
Cecelia Folsom, Mother of Al Folsom  
Mordecai Frank, Father of Stuart Frank  
Lillian Gold, Mother of Allan Gold  
Diane Goldberg, Mother of Madeline Killefer  
Ida Goldstein, Mother of Lorrie Van Akkeren  
Sol Goodman, Grandfather of Sunny Schnitzer  
Nettie Jacobs, Grandmother of Donna Goldberg  
Edward Kerwin, Father of Aleen Chabot  
Edna Rosenthal, Mother of Fred Rosenthal  
Joe Schnitzer, Grandfather of Sunny Schnitzer  
William Simon, Father of Martin Simon  
Freeman Smith, Father of Candace Smith  
William Abbe Sternfeld, Father of Eliot Sternfeld  
Jacob Taylor, Father of Lynne Taylor-Genser  
Ann Umans, Mother of Dorothy Umans  
Maurice Umans, Father of Dorothy Umans  
Maurice Yockelson, Father of Naomi Lichtenberg  
William J Young, Brother of Roz Young  
Miriam Zisman, Mother of Marsha Permut

## Thank you...

## תודה רבה

Bill and Rochelle Banta for their generous donation to the Cuba Fund.

Bruce and Wynne Busman for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund for conducting the service of unveiling for Wynne's father.

Marsha Permut and Alec Cholok for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund for presiding at their recent wedding.

Neil and Gabrielle Ditchek for their generous donation to the Hazzan's Discretionary Fund in honor of their son, Jake's Bar Mitzvah.

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

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

## For their generous donations to Enhancing The Flame

William and Rochelle Banta  
Wynne and Bruce Busman  
Jonathan Eig and Karen Jerome  
Larry Slifman and Barbara Ranagan  
Lorrie Van Akkeren

## BJC Office Hours

Tues.-Thur 9:30-4:30 p.m., Fri. 9:30-3:00 p.m. Closed Sat., Sun., Mon. and Jewish Holidays. Messages won't be returned when the office is closed.

# Community News

## Darfur March—Save the Date

On Sunday, Apr. 25 the Darfur Interfaith Network is sponsoring a march from the Holocaust Museum to Lafayette Park, entitled "Hope for Darfur—A Call to Action in Sudan." The marchers will be people from the Washington Metropolitan Area, compelled by their 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 and plan to participate.




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**Newsletter Editor: Anita Farb—[anita.farb@gmail.com](mailto:anita.farb@gmail.com)**

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

The deadline for submitting articles for the Feb. newsletter is Jan. 8.  
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 Feb. newsletter, mail it to the BJC office with your check made payable to BJC.  
Deadline: Jan. 8. 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.



we'll tend to the details  
so you don't have to



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