

Machar Adult Education January- June 2010

Friday Adult Education programs are held at **7:30 pm** at Cedar Lane UU Church (CLUU),, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814
Each is preceded by a short Shabbat service (lighting candles, singing, memorial candle lighting, and blessings over the wine and bread).
(For directions to JPDS, please click the Map tab on the website.)

Sunday Adult Education programs are held at **10:30 am** at Jewish Primary Day School (JPDS), 6045 16th St., NW Washington, DC 20011 following our 9:45 am all-school music program
(For directions to Cedar Lane UU, please click the Map tab on the website.)

Friday, January 8th

Short Shabbat service (Shabbat candle lighting, singing, memorial candle lighting, and blessings over the wine and bread).

War and Peace through the Lenses of Judaism, Humanism, & Martin Luther King, Jr. *Rabbi Binyamin Biber*

As our nation questions what to do with two wars left by the previous administration and Israelis continue to question how to create a two-state solution, we will explore the teachings of Judaism, Humanism, and Martin Luther King Jr. for what they may offer us as we seek a way forward to the paths of peace.

Sunday, January 17th

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Discussion with Mildred Goodman: Does Obama's Election Signal the End of US Racial Discrimination?

Mildred Goodman

Machar founding member Mildred Goodman worked in Alabama, Mississippi and other southern states in the 1960s when bombings and murders were being carried out in opposition to the civil rights struggle. She worked closely with Medgar Evers and Dr. King, who were both murdered.

Mrs. Goodman will discuss those experiences with Marlene Cohen and her perspective on President Obama's role as the first Black president during current times when race relations still leave much to be desired.

Sunday, January 31st

Darwin Day Presentation: Evolution in the Schools from Scopes to Today

Michael Prival

Following the 1925 Scopes "monkey trial," the teaching of evolution in public schools declined dramatically and was not revived until the early 1960s. Then the anti-evolution movement began promoting "Creation Science" and, later, "Intelligent Design" but the teaching of these two religion-based theories has been rejected by the courts. A new approach for undermining evolution education was enacted into law in Louisiana in 2008. This most recent anti-evolution tactic may be more difficult to fight legally than its predecessors.

Friday, February 19th

Short Shabbat service (Shabbat candle lighting, singing, memorial candle lighting, and blessings over the wine and bread).

Spinoza, Freedom of Thought, and Pluralistic Democracy: A Teen-Led Discussion

Rabbi Binyamin Biber

The early Enlightenment Jewish free thinker Spinoza was named last year's person of the year by the Society for Humanistic Judaism, and Machar's teen group will lead us in surveying his key ideas. We'll examine selections from his writings on the inherency and benefit of human freedom of thought, the natural expression of this in science and in pluralistic, secular democracy, and the problems confronted in religious and political absolutism.

Sunday, February 28th

Machar Purim Celebration

Sunday, March 14th

Life's Highs: Peak Experiences and Naturalistic Spirituality

Rabbi Binyamin Biber

Finding and feeling love, the birth of children, achieving breakthroughs, giving of ourselves - come explore how such experiences create openings for humanistic and naturalistic 'spiritual' growth. Learn about the growing discourse on and movement for a 'spirituality' focused on this life in this natural world, rather than any supernatural speculations on a life or world to come.

Friday, March 19th

Short Shabbat service (Shabbat candle lighting, singing, memorial candle lighting, and blessings over the wine and bread).

Global Personal Stories of Machar Members

Marcia Bernbaum, Facilitator, with Panel of Machar Members

A number of Machar members were raised in other countries. What were their Jewish and/or secular experiences? A panel of members will share their unique perspectives on secular humanistic Judaism growing from the influences of their cultures on four different continents.

Sunday, March 28th

Life's Lows: Secular Humanistic Jews Facing Illness, Loss, & Death

Rabbi Binyamin Biber

Life's difficulties and sadnesses may elicit some of our greatest strengths, insights and efforts. Come explore together how naturalistic spirituality and philosophy can help us encounter and understand such experiences.

Friday, April 6th

Short Shabbat service (Shabbat candle lighting, singing, memorial candle lighting, and blessings over the wine and bread).

Holocaust Memorial:

Yom ha-Shoah Shabbat

Rabbi Benyamin Biber

As part of our annual Holocaust Memorial Shabbat service, Rabbi Biber will give a talk on the growth of secular humanism among Jews during and after the horrors of WW II. We will explore and discuss the various expressions of this in philosophy, politics, literature, the arts, and in our own families and life experiences.

Sunday, April 11th

A Journey From Nazi-occupied Europe to the US in 1941

Margit Meissner

Ms. Meissner will discuss her journey from Nazi-occupied Europe to the US in 1941, describe her current work at the US Holocaust Museum, and explain why she believes studying the Holocaust is so critical. At the Holocaust Museum, she trains law enforcement personnel, focusing on the role of law enforcement as perpetrators in the murder of six million Jews during World War II. She is passionate about the importance of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust so that today's youth will understand that each of us has an obligation to fight hate and prejudice wherever they occur.

Sunday, May 2nd

Machar Intergenerational Oral History Day

Debby Brennan and Marlene Cohen

Meet a fellow member from another generation. Intergenerational partners will interview each other about our priorities in life and experiences as Jews in Machar. Younger children will interview with a parent. An art project will consist of kids and adults tracing their hands together, cutting them out, writing messages on them, and then hanging them on our banner - Hands Across the Generations. We'll have a nice snapshot of what Machar means to us at the end of the school year.

Friday, May 14th

Shabbat Service; Torah reading by b'nei mitzvah student

Sunday, May 16th

Introduction to Jewish Genealogy

Patti Maslinoff

Machar member Patti Maslinoff will present an overview of Jewish genealogy, from getting started with researching one's own family to using the information collected. She will include examples based on fifteen years of research into her family history. Ms. Maslinoff will discuss the highs (e.g., finding a new relative) and lows (e.g., coming across information that some in your family would rather you had not found.). She also will alert you to some myths and interesting tidbits about doing Jewish genealogy and provide you with worksheets and suggested resources on the Internet and in the real world.

Sunday, May 23rd

The Origin and Structure of Jewish and Islamic Law

Michael Prival

Traditional rabbinic Judaism and Islam of the major schools are, at their cores, complex legal systems that regulate virtually all aspects of life. The role of the Torah, the Talmud, and the oral rabbinic traditions will be illustrated by the rules concerning permitted and prohibited wine. Similarly, reviewing the prohibition of wine consumption by the major Islamic schools will help us understand the importance of the Qur'an, the traditions concerning Muhammad as recorded in the hadith compilations, and subsequent jurisprudence by leading scholars.

Sunday, June 6th

Personal Genomes and Public Policy

Kathy Hudson, NIH Chief of Staff

Dr. Hudson, the Chief of Staff for NIH Director Francis Collins, will discuss the public side of personal genomes.

Friday, June 11th

The History and Politics of Gay Marriage

PFLAG Representative

This talk by a representative of Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) will center on the history of the struggle for the right of gay and lesbians to marry in the US, the current status of that struggle, the political strategies at use, and the prospects of success in the future.