



Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. It's hard to believe it's already 2014! The new year is a good time to reflect a bit on the memorable year we had.

In 2013, Machar was deeply saddened by the loss of three dear members: Bert Donn, Norm Gleichman, and Enrique Lerda. But we welcomed many new members and stayed busy with a variety of activities. Our members mean so much to us and your enthusiasm and willingness to lead our activities keeps us a vibrant community.

We ended the year with some wonderful seasonal events: Danielle Leff led us in a lovely Autumn dinner Shabbat accompanied by our song leader Naomi Gamoran. Our teen group organized a fun-filled Hanukkah that so many of you braved the weather to enjoy.

Machar's leadership kicked off our annual fundraising campaign with a \$7,500 challenge pledge. This generous pledge matches dollar for dollar the contributions of other Machar members, and we are delighted to say that we came close to reaching that goal, but we are not quite there! If you haven't had a chance to participate, it's not too late to contribute via the Machar website or by check. Thank you all for your continued support of Machar.

We start 2014 with many exciting activities planned. Please join us for a special adult education program on February 23 when we will welcome Rabbi candidate Nehama Benmosche for a presentation about Purim. Rabbi Benmosche will also join us at 5 p.m. on February 22 for a potluck/challah baking and Havdalah service at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville, 100 Welsh Park Drive.

Machar members Barry and Elaine Dancis will lead us in Machar's annual Tu B'Shevat Seder for our Community Sunday event on January 26.

On March 9, we will honor SHJ's Humanist Jewish Role Model for 2013-14, Maurice Sendak. Machar member Hildie Block will discuss Sendak's work, followed by our Community Sunday when Machar's children will perform "Where the Wild Things Are."

And don't forget Machar's Purim party on March 16 with food, games, and a play!

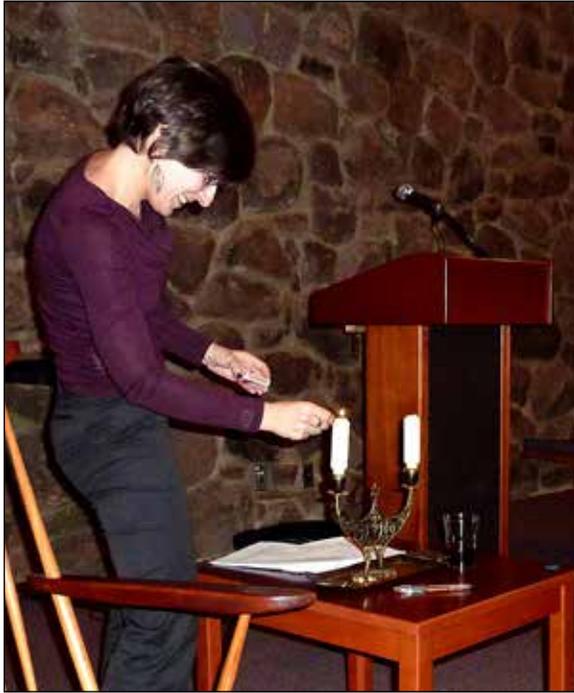
This is only the beginning of the year for us. We have so many more interesting and exciting things planned for 2014!

I look forward to seeing you all!

Darlene Basch
Machar President

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Scenes From Machar

Page 2: About sixty Machar members enjoyed a lovely Autumn Shabbat dinner and service led by Danielle Leff with song leader Naomi Gamoran on Friday, November 22.

Page 3: In spite of snow and sleet, we had a great turnout at our annual Hanukkah party, where we enjoyed a new play by Amit and Yael, fun games and crafts, and songs. Thanks to the teens and teen leader Seth Garfinkel for planning the festivities!





JCS News

Debby Brennan

Thanks to everyone who celebrated Hanukkah with Machar! Many people braved the wintry weather, and many kids kept the dreidls spinning. Thanks to the teen group for running the games. A special thank you to the Hanadari- Levy daughters for another great play, and to all actors. A special thank you to Holly Campbell for all of her organizing, and to Sue Zwicker for leading us in song. A special thank you to all who brought food, to all who helped setting up and cleaning up, and for all those who brought their babies (lots of new babies at Machar!) and good cheer. Congratulations to Manny Pastreich for his delicious latkes!! And congratulations to Henry Zamore for guessing the number of M&M's in the jar..enjoy the 2000 M&M's!!

Looking ahead—we are planning a 4th,5th, 6th grade trip to Ellis Island. Early returns point in the direction of a March 29/30 date.

Any parents in other grades who would like to organize a field trip for their child's class for the same Sunday - March 30 - please contact Debby Brennan.

The registration date for HuJews Conclave in Boston - MARCH 28-30, 2014 is January 31st, 2014, with a deadline to apply for scholarships of December 18th, 2013. There is a capacity this year to have about 60 teens and young adults attend the conclave. The more attendees, the more fun!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR CLASSES:

Kindergarten:

Another fun Sunday in kindergarten - and there wasn't even any candy!

The focus of the week's lesson was the Jewish lifecycle. Judaism is full of cycles - from daily religious rituals to weekly Shabbat to monthly lunar patterns to yearly holidays to singular events in the course of life.

First, we talked about what some important moments in life are - birth, maybe a bar/bat mitzvah, going to college, maybe getting married ("yuck"). As one of the very first Jewish traditions in life is the baby naming, I

thought it would be fun to create name plates and let the students see what their names look like in Hebrew. We'll learn a little more about Hebrew for my lesson on Israel, but this was a great preview. It was also great to hear what the students said they would name their children... as soon as one suggested a middle name of "poopy" I decided it was probably time to move on.

Looking beyond birth, we talked about how life changes but some things tend to stay the same - and one of those things, family, is very important in Jewish tradition. We read a book called "My Rotten Readheaded Older Brother," where a girl complains about being picked on by her brother but, when he takes care of her after an accident, she ultimately realizes that he loves her no matter what. We talked about our own siblings and how we love them even if we don't always get along perfectly. I thought this might be a nice message for the holiday season!

After a little runaround outside, we came back and embarked on our final project of the day - making snowflakes. After a fairly complicated process of folding and cutting, we wound up with beautiful snowflakes, and (some of us) wrote on them something we can do in the new year to give back to our families. Lila wrote about being nicer to her brother. Mason wrote that he wanted to do more magic; I chose to believe that the inspiration for that was wanting to entertain his family, though I suspect there may have been some personal goals there as well! The goal of the snowflakes was to celebrate the season while decorating students' homes and constantly reminding them of one thing they can do for their families.

I hope the next month is restful, safe, and fun - I look forward to seeing you on January 12th for a lesson on Tu B'shvat. It's hard to believe, but after that class, we'll be halfway done with the school year!

—Ben Lauing

First/Second Grade:

In light of the holiday spirit, we focused our attention this week on generosity and gratitude. We began class by sharing our favorite things that had happened since

we last met and then read a story together. It was an Egyptian fable that teaches the importance of sharing what you have with others. We discussed what we had read and the importance of generosity and then went outside for a brief recess. The kids really enjoyed putting together snowballs with the very last of the snow. After we headed back inside, I transitioned us over into our second topic, explaining that generosity and gratitude are mirror images of each other (generosity being a driving force behind what you do for other people and gratitude being the way you express thanks for what people do for you). I asked the students to write thank you letters to someone in their life who they feel gratitude for. The letters were very creative - Jacob's letter to his father was in the shape of a spiral and Teo's letter to his sister was written in a language she created. All around, we had a great class this week and I look forward to seeing you all in January!

—Brittany Grimm

Third Grade:

The third graders organized the Hebrew letters in order of the alphabet. All of the students are really making a lot of progress with this and are able to sing the Aleph Bet song to help them organize the letters. They helped each other out and worked really well together to get each letter correct. After that we used our Machar Bible Stories book (by Michael Prival) and read a bit about the history of religion, the difference between the old and new testament and a brief history of Judaism. The students each got turns reading and worked in groups on a specific section. After reading to each other they shared what they learned with the rest of the class. It was really great to see how much they absorbed so quickly! And finally we got the students favorite part of the day, the next book in the "Snuffbox" series. This one is about immigration and the students had to make choices as though they were an immigrant coming to the United States in the early 1900's. They split up into a couple of different groups each making their own decisions. One group ended up being a Rabbi with their decisions and all groups had happy endings. They loved it so much that when we finished, although I had planned to play a few games, they really wanted to

read it again and make different choices. So we went back to the beginning and I let them make some different choices to see how those choices would change the outcome.

—Heather Gale

B'nei Mitzvah class:

Debby Brennan spoke with the students about secular humanism and the morals and values that are a part of secular humanism and how those could relate to the students' projects. We then transitioned to Jewish traditions and teaching about environmentalism and taking care of the planet. We learned the story of Honi and the carob tree. We then played a game where students were given a blank piece of paper and secret instructions on what to draw, ranging from "start drawing a farm" to "scribble all over the paper." after 15 seconds or so they had to pass off their drawings to a classmate, who had to try and continue their drawings. We then discussed how this related to Honi's story, and how we must strive to protect the world we live in, not just for our sake but for the future. After this activity the teen group came in and they gave frank advice on the students' b'nei mitzvah projects. I encouraged the students that if they needed some extra help (especially with writing) that they can email me whatever questions they have.

Hope everyone has a great break!

—Hadas Gold

Machar Adult Education and Community Sundays

Adult Education Sessions are Sundays from 10–11:30 a.m. Sessions are open to all.

There is parking on 16th Street and in the back. All talks will be in the gymnasium.
(If you have trouble climbing stairs, use the rear entrance.)

January 12

Barry Dancis—Secular Expressions of Jewish Culture

Dr. Barry Dancis, retired bioinformatics consultant and former chair of the Education Committee of the Jewish Children's Folkshul of Philadelphia, will explore the richness of secular expression of Jewish culture and how that is broadening and transforming Jewish forms of community. He will also discuss basic Jewish beliefs in the context of Jewish affiliations and the significance for our secular Jewish communities.

January 26

Andy Thomson—Why We Believe in God(s)

Dr. Andy Thomson is a psychiatrist in Charlottesville, Virginia, a Trustee of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, and the author of *Why We Believe In God(s): A Concise Guide to the Science of Faith*. Thomson will discuss some groundbreaking research done at our National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, that advances a comprehensive psychological science of religious belief. Like Darwin's theory of natural selection, this knowledge requires no specialty training in science. *(read more on page 8)*

Community Sunday: Tu B'Shevat Seder

February 9

Darwin Day/Michael Prival—In the Beginning, God Created... Twice

As a young man, Charles Darwin believed in the literal truth of the Bible. This Darwin Day, Michael Prival, 30+ year Machar member and madrikh, will explore the Bible's creation stories to help us understand on what biblical literalists, including today's creationists, base their views. The Bible starts with two contradictory creation stories by different authors with different purposes. We will review what Bible scholars have revealed about these stories and focus on how the stories address the relationship between women and men and what differentiates humans from animals.

February 23

Im l'et kazot (Perhaps for a Time Like This): The Story of Purim, Pema Chodoron and the Ambiguity of the Present Moment

Rabbi Nehama Benmosche is visiting the Machar community as a candidate for our rabbinic leadership position. In anticipation of Purim, Rabbi Benmosche's presentation will look at the one of only two Biblical texts that do not mention the name of God. She will discuss the intersection of the Purim story with the teachings of Pema Chodoron, a well-known Tibetan Buddhist nun.

Community Sunday: Music with Rabbi Nehama Benmosche and guitarist/song-leader Naomi Gamoran

Also, Please join us on February 22 for a Havdalah Potluck and challah baking with Rabbi candidate Nehama Benmosche. This will be a family-friendly event from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville, 100 Welsh Park Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.

March 9

Sendak Day/Hildie Block—Maurice Sendak and the Wilde Khaye (Wild Thing)

Sendak, SHJ's Humanist Jewish Role Model for 2013–14, perhaps best known for his book *Where the Wild Things Are*, was an artist obsessed with bringing out the hidden truths in society. After years on the fringe, a child confined to bed, an adult who made window dressings for FAO Schwartz in NYC and who drew the backgrounds in for comic books, Sendak embraced the truths as he saw them: he was gay, people you love die, adults lie to children, and there is no god. Join us to find out more truths about this courageous artist and his role in humanism. The Washington Post called Machar member Hildie Block a "book expert," but when she's not lecturing about writing at American University's Literature Department, she's a "book midwife." (More info at www.hildieblockworkshop.com)

All sessions are held in the Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th St. NW, DC 20012
Community Sundays follow at JPDS unless noted; we share details by email, newsletter,
and at www.machar.org.

Community Sunday: Children will perform “Where the Wild Things Are”

March 16

Purim Carnival at Schweinhaut Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD, 10 a.m. to noon

April 6

Group Discussion—Wholeheartedness and Humanism

A discussion about embracing authenticity, self-compassion, play, and other guideposts of Brene Brown’s research, which Rabbi Miriam Jerris introduced many of us to during the High Holidays this year. Led by Marlene Cohen and Danielle Leff.

Community Sunday: Good Deeds Day

April 20 (Easter Sunday)

Passover Seder at Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD, 4:30 p.m.

April 27

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Members’ input is valued. Please attend to hear from the Board what we have been doing in the past year and discuss plans for the future.

Community Sunday: Yom Ha Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance)

May 4

Sherry and Bob Jason—City Hearts: Kids Say Yes to the Arts...Transforming At-Risk Children through the Arts

Sherry and Bob Jason (Darlene Basch’s sister and brother-in-law), both former Los Angeles County Public Defenders, established City Hearts in 1984 to provide free visual and performing arts classes to the most-at-risk children in economically distressed neighborhoods in Southern California, enabling children and youth to be

confident, imaginative, tolerant, generous and cooperative, as well as productive, contributing participants in their communities.

May 18

Debby Brennan – Jewish Education: Exposure or Commitment?

Machar’s Jewish Cultural School Director, Debby Brennan, will talk about the JCS curriculum, the model SHJ curriculum, and will lead a discussion on members’ expectations about children’s Jewish education at Machar. What would Machar parents and members like children to learn? What Jewish experiences would they want children to have? She will also share with members her own reflections and questions about “exposure” versus “commitment” as different goals of a Jewish education. Would Machar parents like their children to be “exposed” to Judaism? Or do they expect their children to learn “how to be a Jew” with the goal of a Jewish identity?

Community Sunday: Lag B’Omer Picnic

Adult Education

Machar will host professor and author Dr. Andy Thomson at our Adult Education program on January 26 at 10 am at the Jewish Primary Day School, to speak on "Why We Believe in God(s).

Here is some background information on our upcoming speaker and his intriguing work on the nature of religious belief.

—*Marlene Cohen*

Andy Thomson is a psychiatrist in Charlottesville, Virginia, a Trustee of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, and the author of *Why We Believe In God(s): A Concise Guide to the Science of Faith*. Thomson will discuss some groundbreaking research done at our National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, that advances a comprehensive psychological science of religious belief. Like Darwin's theory of natural selection, this knowledge requires no specialty training in science.

He has a private practice of general psychiatry and forensic psychiatry as well as serving as a staff psychiatrist at the University of Virginia's Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy and the Counseling and Psychological Services of the University of Virginia Student Health Services. Born in Washington, D.C. he received his B.A. degree from Duke University and his M.D. from University of Virginia School of Medicine. Robert Wright's book *The Moral Animal* introduced him to the emerging discipline of evolutionary psychology. It is that new lens of evolutionary psychology that informs his work on a comprehensive psychological formulation of suicide terrorism. He is a board member of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science.

From Thomson's recent paper on suicide terrorism, "We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers (and Occasional Sisters): The Dynamics of Suicide Terrorism," a description of the influence of religion on suicide terrorism:

While religions may inspire good deeds, religions also facilitate terrorism...If we truly want to understand suicide terrorism at its most fundamental level, we have to face the horror of our evolutionary history, the murderous legacy it has left in all men, and the vulnerability to suicide in each of us. We must see religion's very structure grants it potent ability to hijack men's and women's suicidal capacities and



men's propensity for coalitionary killing...Will any leader step forth and indict religion, hold it responsible for its contribution to this nightmare?

An excellent video of Andy Thomson's talk at the 2009 American Atheists Convention, "Why We Believe in God," has been posted on YouTube courtesy of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science. (Secular Student Alliance website).

Andy recently wrote *Why We Believe in God(s): A Concise Guide to the Science of Faith* in which Richard Dawkins wrote the foreword. It is designed for any curious individual to be able to be up to speed in less than two hours on the psychological science of religion (Wikipedia).

In an interview with the Austin American-Statesman (June 17, 2011), Thomson stated, "There is a massive, irreconcilable conflict between science and religion. Religion was humanity's original cosmology, biology and anthropology. It provided explanations for the origin of the world, life and humans. Science now gives us increasingly complete explanations for those big three."

"Religion arises from certain aspects of human nature, cognitive mechanisms originally designed for other purposes. Religious beliefs have become finely honed, hijack the mechanisms that produce them and then can exploit individual humans to aid in spreading these beliefs to others... You ask what steps we should take to alienate human nature from religion. Anything we can do to loosen religion's hold on humanity furthers civilization. There is an old saying that there are three things crucial to a successful business: location, location, and location. Similarly I think there are three crucial steps to move humans away from religion: education, education, and education" (Thomson quoted in interview by Enki, 2009, *Tabee31: A World of Reason*).

WITs

Renée Weitzner

The women of WITs enjoyed a terrific time at the home of Harriet Peck for our annual Chanukah celebration. We participated in lively conversation and wonderful food, including sweet potato latkes!!

We exchanged small gifts which was a lot of fun. We relish this holiday and our celebration of it.

Next month we will meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at the home of Judith Wiesberg at 7 pm. I hope you will be able to join us. Please let me know if you are coming and what you are bringing by Monday January 20, 2014. You may email me at [rwcats at aol.com](mailto:rwcats@aol.com) or by phone.

Some members would like to have a topic to discuss each or most times. If you would like to suggest a topic or if you would like to lead such a discussion, please let me know.

Thank you, and I hope to see you at Judith's next month.

Book Club

Renée Weitzner and Darlene Basch

The members of Machar's Book Club met at the lovely home of Judith Wiesberg for our first meeting of the school year. We enjoyed a vibrant conversation about the book we had just read, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. The next book on our list to read is *The Swerve-How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt. This analysis of modern culture promises to be a great and fascinating read. I hope you will be able to join us when we meet at the home of Phyllis Hodes on January 19, 2014 at 3 pm. Please let me know that

you are coming by January 17, 2013 so that I may let our host know how many people to expect.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting of the Book Club of Machar.

Evening Study Group

Michael Prival

The Machar Study Group on Jewish religious texts continues to meet every other Monday evening at my home. We are reading and discussing texts from the Bible, the Talmud, and other rabbinic sources. In this way we are learning not only about the Hebrew Bible but also many fascinating and surprising things about traditional Judaism as it existed before the Jewish Enlightenment began in the 18th century. All Machar members, at any level of prior knowledge, are invited to join us. If you'd like more information about this study group, please send me a note: [mprival at aol.com](mailto:mprival@aol.com).

Young Adult Havurah

Danielle Leff

Join our listserve at groups.google.com/group/macharyah or join our group on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/macharyah to get the details. YAH events are open to all regardless of membership status in Machar, and participants are encouraged to bring friends who may be curious about our movement.

Havurot/Social Events

Laurie Miller

Fall saw several months of a very full social calendar. We had a wide range of events from brunches to Shabbats as a combination of in-home affairs to more formal gatherings at Cedar Lane and the Schweinhaut Center. I hope we can keep the momentum for so much activity going into 2014. A couple of people have already volunteered to host different events in the new year. I'll pass along dates and details as they become available.

The in-home Shabbats offer people an opportunity to wine and dine in a casual setting. They are very popular. In November, Eva and Bert Shankman hosted a Shabbat for 13 people, including a couple of potential new members. Their Shabbat took place in early November before the whirlwind of holidays in late November/early December. Eva reported that "the conversation flowed beautifully....People got to know each other." I had previously reported on an October Shabbat and September brunch. Those were also very well attended.

The potlucks make great opportunities for members to socialize and get to know each other while eating homemade food. We are always searching for volunteers to host events. Hosting is fun and easy. Select your preferred date and event type then sit back and let others bring the food to you. OK, there is a little more to it than that - but not much. If you are interested in hosting or helping to coordinate a Shabbat, potluck, or any other style of event, please contact me at [LAURIE.MILJAZI at gmail.com](mailto:LAURIE.MILJAZI@gmail.com)



Machar is a member of SHJ, the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

Dear SHJ Board Members, Community Leaders, Administrators and Rabbis,

As many of you know we received a very generous donation that enabled a video to be produced for SHJ of a young couple telling their story of how they found Humanistic Judaism and what it means to them. We intend to make the video available to every community once it is completed.

We will be placing the video on the front page of our newly designed web-site that is scheduled to go live at the beginning of May. The video will end with a link to another page on the web-site where there will be short paragraphs and photos of other SHJ members and how they found Humanistic Judaism. We would like your assistance with this project.

1. We are looking for families that represent the diversity within Humanistic Judaism. Families or individuals of all ages (families, single individuals, mature couples) and cultures, including intercultural and interracial, and LGBTQ families.
2. Please answer the following question: How has your Jewish identity been enriched by your involvement in Humanistic Judaism? We are looking for vignettes of about 150-200 words. Include your full names and the community to which you belong if you are a member of an affiliate.
3. Please provide a high resolution digital photo showing your family involved in a Humanistic Jewish activity.
4. We will rotate the stories and the photos so that the material will change and refresh on a regular basis.

Since we are sending this to the leadership, we are counting on you to forward it to those members that you think might be ideal candidates to participate.

We are very excited about this project—it will put real faces on Humanistic Judaism and help others see how much Humanistic Judaism has helped deepen our Jewish identity and engage in the Jewish community.

Please send your paragraph and photo to us by January 20th. Send it to rabbi@shj.org We are so grateful to you for your involvement.

Rabbi Miriam Jerris, Ph.D.,
Society for Humanistic Judaism
rabbimiriamjerris@shj.org

Mandela Week: The Full Nelson

By Mark and Joyce Ellyne, former members of Machar. Mark was President of Machar and served on the SHJ board. Currently, they reside in Cape Town, South Africa.

The past week has seen continuous special celebrations for the life of Nelson Mandela. Although it's easy to become "Manded out" it's important to recognize just how important he was for this country.

By analogy, Nelson Mandela is a combination of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, rolled into one. As the president of the ANC, he led the rebellion against the Nationalist government, was elected the first president, and he repealed Apartheid.

The first leader of a country is of critical importance. History tells us that some wanted George Washington to be king, but he refused. Some wanted to remove term limits for Washington, but he stepped down. Had Washington not had the foresight to do such things, the course of American politics could have been much different today. The same was true of Mandela. Too many African presidents think they are indispensable and need to stay in power to make the country work; all they do is weaken their country and their democracy.

We went to the Cape Town Stadium the other day for a Mandela remembrance ceremony with some 30,000 other people. Rather than being a sombre event, such African remembrances are joyous celebrations with dancing and singing. The atmosphere in the crowd was amazingly energetic and electric, like a championship football match. There were spontaneous outbreaks of group singing, dancing, chanting,



Many have wondered if the death of Mandela will be good or bad for the country; or even matter. This remembrance has established his legacy as a man of forgiveness, peace, cooperation, and equality of treatment. This memorial will entrench those values into the country and, I think, reduce the possibility of future discrimination or vengeance between sectors of society. The institutional framework of the country is largely entrenched, so it is unlikely that one man will make a difference in the future. Mandela is a hard act to follow, and many noted that President Zuma was booed during the ceremony, probably because he appears not to have lived up to the Mandela ideals.

Of course, the ANC is not going to lose its political dominance in SA, but no one person controls the ANC—there is no Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe) or Museveni (Uganda). In most African countries where one party dominates, one person dominates the party. So although the ANC will continue to win a majority at elections (about 60%+), it is unclear who will follow Zuma as president of the ANC. I'm still confused how the ANC removed Thabo Mbeki from the presidency before his term finished. The jockeying for power in the ANC reminds me of the former Kremlin or current China, where it is impossible for outsiders to see and understand what is going on in the highest political circles.

So we are sticking around here for a while, hoping that this country will manifest all of its innate potential and fulfil the Mandela dream.

The Machar Family

Birthdays

January 1: Guisepppe Topa
January 1: Marlene Cohen
January 2: Barbara Francisco
January 4: Nadia Raytselis
January 5: Howard Dubowitz
January 5: Abigail Smith
January 6: Alejandra Rodriguez-Gitler
January 6: Tom Gordon
January 7: Joe Palca
January 7: Dick Schwab
January 9: Sue Zwicker
January 15: Clarke Joy Block
January 17: Tibor Roberts
January 18: Aaron King
January 19: Lior Levy
January 22: Laura Ariovich
January 22: Leo Cohen
January 22: Mason Schnell
January 25: Anna Weiss
January 30: Ami Argaman

Anniversaries

January 21: Ami and Ann Argaman

Yarheits: We remember...

January: Anna Gold, mother of Marlene Platt
January 3: Mark Harris, husband of Nancy Harris
January 6: David Bassin, father of Donna Bassin
January 8: Pauline Seidenstein, mother of Roslynn Seidenstein
January 17: Ellen Greene, wife of Neil Greene
January 20: Charles Goor, father of Rob Goor
January 20: Doris Jonas, mother of Jill Grant
January 11: Norm Gleichman
January 24: Leslie Kidwell Jr, father of Michael Kidwell

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Machar is so fortunate to have a community of people willing to share their expertise. Three of our members are therapists or social workers and are willing to be contacted by any members who may need someone to talk to about any personal trauma or other issues that come up. These volunteers will plan to have an initial discussion with the member and/or family, to listen and to help direct them to more support or services in the area. Please contact Renee Weitzner, [rwcats at aol.com](mailto:rwcats@aol.com), for information. All discussions are entirely confidential.

Whaddaya Talkin'?

Marlene Cohen

MOMZER (mom-zer) Noun

The word in Hebrew means "bastard," thus illegitimate child, but it has come to have other meanings. A momzer, according to Leo Rosten (The Joys of Yinglish), can also be an untrustworthy person, or a stubborn, difficult person. Yet the label can mean something quite different, being used affectionately, showing that the person is clever or quick, or the life of the party.

In his book, *Ha Ha and Aha: The Role of Humor in Psychotherapy*, Harold Mosak writes, "To call an adult Jew a "momzer" (bastard) constitutes provocation and invites retaliation; to call

In which Machar's newsletter will provide you with Your Monthly Word in Yiddish—Use it ten times this month and you won't forget it!

a youngster a "momzer" is a term of endearment characterizing the youngster as cute and having a bit of the devil in him."

Sandford Pinsker (The Cynic Online Magazine) was one of many authors I found who labeled Bernie Madoff a "momzer," saying he was "a special brand of momzer, not only for ruining individual families but also for the enormous harm he has done to Jewish organizations in America and Israel."

So if someone calls you a "momzer," who says it under which circumstances would determine if you've gotten an insult or a joke.

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Neighborhood Havurot
Laurie Miller

Wimmin' In Transition (WITs)
Renée Weitzner

Young Adult Havurah
Danielle Leff

SHJ Reps from Machar

Machar Rep to SHJ
Marlene Cohen

SHJ Board of Directors Members
Larry Lawrence (Vice President)
Rick Gold

Machar Trained Leaders

Michael Prival, Madrikh
Deb Godden, Madrikha
Dan Tobocman, Spokesperson

Join us at the HuJews Conclave 2014!



Are you or is someone
you know a Humanistic
Jew between the ages of
13 and 21?

Are you interested in
meeting other HuJews
from around North
America?

**Then the SHJ Conclave
is the event for you!**

Highlights:

- Make new friends!
- Work to develop your
Humanistic Jewish
Identity!
- Participate in Community
Service Projects!
- Explore a new city!



When: March 28th-30th, 2014

Where: Boston, Massachusetts

How to Register: Online Registration coming soon.

Registration Deadline: January 31st, 2014

Member Fee: \$230 **Non-Member Fee:** \$255 **Chaperones:** \$290

Late Registration Fee: \$25

*Scholarships available for those who qualify. Please contact
Miriam Rubín for details.

**Questions: Contact Miriam Rubín, hujews@shj.org,
857-472-0525, or SHJ, info@shj.org, 248-478-7610**

Columbia Jewish Congregation's 22nd Annual Jewish Film Series!

5885 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia, MD 21045

410-730-6044



Four evenings of thought-provoking, varied, entertaining films, including refreshments & optional discussion

Showings: Saturdays, 8:00pm, Room 200, The Meeting House in Oakland Mills, Columbia, MD 21045
\$32 for 4-film series, \$27 for 3-film series, \$19 for 2-film series. (\$10.00 for single ticket: Sold at door only)
(Choice of films is yours and you need not choose in advance.)

TICKET SALES WILL BEGIN AND DOORS WILL OPEN AT 7:30pm

(If a movie is cancelled because of snow, that movie will be shown at the end of the season – May or early June. Date will be announced later if needed.)

Each of the films being presented has been shown, or will be shown, at multiple Jewish film festivals around the country.

All films are subject to change based upon availability.

www.columbiajewish.org/film_series

January 18, 2014

David

2011 – USA – English/Arabic – 80 min. Eleven-year-old David, the son of a religious imam in Brooklyn, NY, is mistaken for a Jewish boy. He becomes conflicted after befriending Jewish kids his age, and the longer he plays out his double life, the more he risks driving a wedge within his family. Ultimately, David's honesty and accessibility trigger a response of tolerance and compassion.

February 22, 2014

The Matchmaker

2012 – Israel – Hebrew with English subtitles – 118 min. Arik, a teenage boy growing up in Haifa in 1968, gets a job working for Yankele Bride, a matchmaker. Yankele, a mysterious Holocaust survivor, has an office in back of a movie theater, situated in the seedy area of the port. The theater, run by a family of seven Romanian dwarves, shows only love stories. Yankele introduces Arik to a new world built on the ruins of the old one. Arik learns the mysteries of the human heart when he falls in love with Tamara, who has just returned from America with different views of life.

March 29, 2014

Jewish Soldiers in Blue and Gray

2011 – USA – English – 86 min. This film reveals the little known struggles facing American Jews, both in battle and on the home front, during the Civil War. The film presents unknown chapters in American history, when allegiances during the war deeply split the Jewish community. Approximately 10,000 Jewish soldiers fought on both sides. They were, at times, honored, but also criticized by the anti-semitic policies of the time.

April 26, 2014

Mahler on the Couch

2010 – Germany – German with English subtitles – 98 min. Gustav Mahler snatched Alma from under the noses of Vienna's artistic elite, but ten years of marriage and the death of one child have exacerbated the strains caused by both the nineteen-year gap in their ages and Mahler's refusal to allow Alma to write music. "I need a wife, not a colleague," he said. While staying at a spa resort, Alma falls in love with Walter Gropius, five years her junior. Tormented, Mahler seeks advice from Sigmund Freud. The encounter of the two giants in their respective fields of music and psychoanalysis is bumpy, temperamental, and not without humor.

Have any questions? Call (410) 997-0694, Tom Laufer. Preferred closing signup: December 10, 2013

Please return this form by **December 10**, together with your check (made payable to CJC)

AND A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

to: CJC Jewish Film Series, c/o B. Belin, 10365 Blue Arrow Ct., Columbia, MD 21044



Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Series: Full _____ 3-Film _____ 2-Film _____ Subscriber: New _____ Renewal _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Where/how did you learn about our series? _____

Machar...
committed to social justice!

Hank Prenskey
Real Estate Agent

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Interested in Advertising with Machar?
Contact [info at machar.org](mailto:info@machar.org)

Directions to Machar

“Cedar Lane” events are held at Cedar Lane UU Church. 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD.

From DC, go north on Wisconsin Ave. (Rt. 355), pass the Naval Hospital, right on Cedar Lane., cross Beach Dr., 2nd entrance on right. From 495, Rockville, etc., take Rockville Pike (Rt. 355) S to left on Cedar to 9601. Metro - Red Line to Medical Center. Walk ½ mile north on 355, right on Cedar, 0.7 miles, or Ride-On Bus #34 (ask the driver).

“JPDS” is the site of our Jewish Cultural School (JCS). 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Metro: Red Line to Silver Spring. S-2 or S-4 bus to Federal Triangle to Military Road and cross 16th Street. JCS and Adult Ed begin promptly at 10 a.m.; please arrive early.

For meetings in private homes, contact hosts for directions.

Machar E-mail Lists for Members and Nonmembers

Michael Prival

There are two different e-mail lists that Machar members can join. The first, the “Machar” list, enables members to receive the monthly Newsletter, event reminders by email, plus announcements of program changes that may

occur between printed newsletters. Almost all Machar members are already on this list.

The second list is “MacharCommunity.” Members of this list can share information about local, non-Machar cultural, educational, social action, or community service events and activities. Any list member can post a note on the “Machar Community” list at any time.

If you would like to be added to either of these lists, or if we are not using your preferred e-mail addresses for them, please send a note to Email at machar.org. Of course you can get off these lists at any time.

Earn for Machar Jewish Cultural School with Service Magic and DriversEd.com!

Get Matched to Prescreened Home Improvement Contractors and earn up to \$6!*

Service Magic is a FREE service matching you to pre-screened, customer-rated service professionals: Maids, painters, remodelers, plumbers, roofers & more! *Earnings depend on the type of project and range from \$2–\$6.

Your Teen Can Start Earning a Driver's License Today!

With DriversEd.com, your teen can complete the required drivers education online—without ever stepping in a classroom.

Their quality course provides everything needed to prepare for the DMV permit and driver's license exams. Sign up and DriversEd.com will contribute 5% of the tuition amount to Machar's Jewish Cultural School.

Help Machar as You Shop

Larry Lawrence

Machar participates in the eScrip (Electronic Scrip) program, a fundraising organization in which participating business partners contribute a percentage of your purchases to our Jewish Cultural School. Some participating businesses in the Mid-Atlantic are Safeway (which contributes 1-3% of your purchase value) and American Airlines (3%). To sign up for eScrip, go to <http://www.eScrip.com> and choose “Machar–Jewish Cultural School” as the benefiting group.

Raise Money for SHJ While you Surf

Use GOODSEARCH.COM to Search on the Web and Raise Money for SHJ

GoodSearch.com is a Web search tool for organizations such as ours to raise money each time someone uses it. Simply go to goodsearch.com, key in “humanistic Judaism,” and type in whatever you are searching for. You can even see how much we have raised—and imagine the potential if all of us use it! .