



*The Washington Congregation
for Secular Humanistic Judaism*



P.O. Box 42014, Washington, DC 20015 • 202-686-1881 • www.machar.org

I hope all of our Machar family had a wonderful summer; it's hard to believe it is already September!

We have a very busy month ahead to begin our Machar year:

Rosh Hashanah

Our Rosh Hashanah service is coming up on September 5. Machar's Madrikh Michael Prival will lead the adult service at 10:30 a.m. at Cedar Lane, joined by board member Danielle Leff. Our wonderful children's service begins at 9:30 a.m.

First day of Jewish Cultural School and Adult Ed

Please join us on September 8 at 10:00 a.m. for the first day of our Jewish Cultural School and adult education at the Jewish Primary Day School. This is your chance to meet the congregation, reconnect with friends, learn about our activities and find out about all the exciting ways you can be involved! We welcome your ideas.

Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur

Rabbi Miriam Jerris of the Society for Humanistic Judaism will lead our Kol Nidre service on September 13 at 7:30 p.m. and our Yom Kippur service on September 14 at 10:30 a.m. at Cedar Lane. Our children's service is on September 14 at 9:30 a.m. Machar member Carla Koppell will be our guest speaker for our Kol Nidre service talking about "Development aid, women's rights and humanism: intertwining strands of life and work."

Yom Kippur Memorials

During our Yom Kippur service at 10:30

a.m. on Saturday, September 14, Machar would like to acknowledge loved ones who have died. We will read aloud the names of those who died in the past year during the "Nizkor" portion of the service. Please submit names via the Acceptiva link we will email to the listserv (it will also be accessible on the home page and Yom Kippur page of www.machar.org). If you don't use a computer, please contact Kelly Hand (see directory or call 202-686-1881) to submit names. We will also create a display where members and guests will be able to record the names of loved ones who died in previous years.

Brunch with Rabbi Jerris

On September 15, Larry Lawrence and Amy Kotkin will host a potluck brunch with Rabbi Jerris in their home from 10:30-12:30. Please register via Acceptiva on Machar's home page to let us know you are coming and what you will bring. Please contact Kelly Hand if you have questions or need assistance.

Machar Sukkot celebration

On September 22, Rahel Hanadari and Roberto Levy will host Machar for a Sukkot celebration at their home following our JCS and adult education programs.

We look forward to seeing you at all of our great events!

Darlene Basch
Machar President

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Secular Humanistic Judaism embraces a human-centered philosophy that combines rational thinking with a celebration of Jewish culture and identity.

We affirm the power and responsibility of human beings to shape their own lives independent of supernatural authority.

Machar is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism and the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews.

High Holidays

High Holidays 2013 service dates at Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814:

Rosh Hashanah—Thursday, September 5

9:30 a.m. children's service
10:30 a.m. community service
(led by Madrikh Michael Prival)

Kol Nidre—Friday, September 13

7:30 p.m. service
(led by Guest Rabbi Miriam Jerris, SHJ)

Yom Kippur—Saturday, September 14

9:30 a.m. children's service
10:30 a.m. community service
(Rabbi Jerris)

We will have a list of all registered members (and nonmembers who purchased tickets) at the door; no paper tickets necessary.

Child care: Members who need child care for the main Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services, register online by Tuesday, 9/3 (the registration page will re-open after Rosh Hashanah for Yom Kippur).

Nonmember tickets: Your Machar member ticket allotment is nontransferable. To purchase tickets for friends and family, visit www.machar.org

Yom Kippur Memorials: During the "Nizkor" portion of our Yom Kippur morning service, we will read names of loved ones who died in the past year. We will also have special memorial trees on display throughout the High Holidays; you may record names of all loved ones who have died (including those who died prior to the past year) on leaves we will affix to the trees. Until our name collection deadline on Thursday, 9/12, please visit the website to contribute.

Sunday, September 15 brunch with Rabbi Miriam Jerris: Larry Lawrence and Amy Kotkin will host a potluck brunch with Rabbi Miriam Jerris for up to 40 members from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at their home in Washington, DC (close to the Cleveland Park metro). Sign up is online.

Discussion groups after Rosh Hashanah services

Machar will be hosting two discussion groups after Rosh Hashanah services again this year. This is your opportunity to voice your opinion on one of this year's topics. It is also a great chance to renew acquaintances with old friends and meet newcomers. There will be two topics to choose from this year. The first is **Israel in a changing Middle East—how will the turmoil of neighboring countries affect Israel.** The second topic is **What is the role of the bystander, whether in personal situations or on the world stage.** Ellen Cassedy spoke about this at adult education last spring in regards to the destruction of the Lithuanian Jewish community.

Please join us about 20 minutes after services in a classroom downstairs. Bagels and light refreshments will be waiting for you to sustain you through the lunch hour. Discussions will last about 45 minutes.

Machar's Annual Food Drive

HOW TO DONATE FOOD: Machar is having its annual food drive to benefit Manna Food Center, the main food bank in Montgomery County. A Manna truck will be in the parking lot of Cedar Lane prior to our Yom Kippur services on **Saturday, September 14 from 9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.** Please place nonperishable food in bags and bring them directly to the Manna truck. If you are unable to attend on Yom Kippur, you may also bring food to the Rosh Hashanah services on Thursday, September 5 or to the Kol Nidre service on Friday, September 13, and we will make sure the food makes it into the truck on Yom Kippur (again, putting food in bags will make that easier). Please see the food list below for suggestions about what to donate. If you have kids, they may be especially interested in donating items on the "kid-friendly" list toward the bottom.

HOW TO DONATE MONEY: You can donate to Manna Food Center directly on their website at www.mannafood.org, which also offers

instructions for mailing donations. If you bring checks made out to Manna, we will bundle them in order to convey them to Manna.

MANNA'S SUGGESTED FOOD DONATION LIST

Here is a handy list of the food we need most often at Manna:

- Peanut Butter
- Tuna Fish
- Canned Fruits & Vegetables
- Shelf-Stable Milk
- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Rice
- Pasta
- Beans
- Canned Tomato Sauce
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Soup
- Baby Food
- Other canned meat and fish
- Canned pasta

Manna's Smart Sacks program needs smaller kid-friendly food, including the following:

- Peanut Butter in 18oz jars or smaller
- Small Fruit Cans/Cups
- Individual Applesauce Cups
- Juice Boxes that are 100% juice
- Easy Mac
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Microwavable Bowls of Pasta
- Canned Pasta
- Individual Cereal Boxes
- Oatmeal Packets
- Tuna Fish
- Crackers packaged in a sleeve, like Ritz or Saltines
- Pudding Cups
- Nutritious Cereal Bars
- Individual Raisin Boxes or Other Dried Fruit
- Small packages of peanuts
- Microwavable Containers of Soup
- Granola Bars
- Cereal Bars
- Kid-Friendly Cans of Soup: Chicken Noodle, Tomato, Alphabet, Etc.

Whaddaya Talkin'?

Marlene Cohen

Kvetching – rhymes with "fetching." Kvetch is both the action/verb and he/she who kvetches/noun.

Kvetching is getting it off your chest – Rosten says "fret, complain, nag, gripe, grunt, sigh – though I think sighing is too indirect to fit Jewish tradition. I never knew my mother to sigh and suffer silently – if she was mad, you knew it! The neighbors even knew it!

It can also mean to squeeze or eck out, as "He man-

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!

ages to kvetch out a living."

I think it's the yin/yang of Yiddish (isn't that a flowing phrase?) – as we try to reach a balance between our kvetching and our kvelling (from August newsletter).

Happy New Year 5774! May your kvells be great and your kvetches small!

—Leo Rosten,
The Joys of Yinglish, 1992

Machar Adult Education and Community Sundays

Sundays 10–11:45 a.m. Sessions are open to all. There is parking on 16th Street and in the back. All sessions are held in the Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th St. NW, DC 20012

September 8

1st day of JCS/Adult Education—Launching the Year with Machar

This is a great opportunity to meet newcomers and renew friendships. Learn about the many activities of Machar as members of every havurah, committee and club introduce their activities. We will build connections for the great year ahead!

September 22

Mark Swartz—Marc Chagall: Village Idiot or Secular Humanist?

Mark Swartz, a Machar board member, is a freelance writer and former director of development communications for the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Chagall is one of the most beloved and sentimentalized Jewish artists, but he was insistently secular in his view of the world. Mark Swartz explores how the painter, whose works inspired Fiddler on the Roof, rejected religion and Zionism, celebrating instead the cultural life of Jews.

Community Sunday: Celebrate Sukkot in the backyard sukkah of Roberto Levy & Rahel Hanadari in Rockville, MD. (Members should drive to the Hanadari/Levy home immediately following JCS/Adult ed. The event is subject to cancellation due to rain.)

October 6

Peter Wolfe—History of the Khazars & the Jewish Connection

Machar member Peter Wolfe is a retired attorney who has given lectures on history at Machar as well as at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. This talk concerns the Khazars, a Turkish people that controlled the region between and north of the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea between the 7th and the 11th Centuries. In the 9th century, the ruling class and some of the common people converted to Judaism. This talk will also explore the validity of theories that the Khazars were ancestors of Ashkenazic Jews.

Community Sunday: Wear old clothes for a creek clean-up in Rock Creek Park across from JPDS (weather permitting).

October 20

Tamara Wittes—The Future of the U.S. in the Middle East

Dr. Wittes is the Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy of The Brookings Institution. One of the capital's leading Middle East experts and a former State Department official, Wittes will provide an overview of the latest developments in Middle East hotspots and an evaluation of the Obama Administration's policy toward the region.

Community Sunday: Join us for a mini-walk for the homeless to benefit Capital Interfaith Hospitality Network (CIHN).

November 3

Francisco Roig – History of Jews in Bolivia

Francisco Roig, of the Inter-American Development Bank, co-authored with David Reichsfeld "Santa Cruz de la Sierra and its Jewish colonial legacy," published in 2009 in the Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales. His research shows how some of that Bolivian city's founders and early settlers were of Jewish origin and how later waves of "converso" migrants and Inquisition fugitives also converged in the city. Traces of centuries-old Jewish customs and traditions persist today.

Community Sunday: Jewish Cultural School students recite poetry from their workshops with poet Rosanne Singer.

Clubs and Activities/Board Highlights

Havurot/Social Events

Laurie Miller

I'm pleased to announce that Nancy Harris has graciously offered to host our first Shabbat for the new year. The potluck dinner is scheduled for Friday, October 4th. I will provide more event details on the listserv, including a registration link, after Rosh Hashanah.

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@gmail.com

WITs

Renée Weitzner

The wonderful women of WITs (Wimmin' in Transition) ate a delicious dinner and enjoyed a thought-provoking discussion on a variety of topics at the home of Rose Levine on August 28, 2013. Thank you, Rose!!! On **September 25**, we will meet at Clyde's in Chevy Chase, Maryland at 7 pm for a delicious dinner and great conversation. I hope you will be able to attend. Please let me know that you are coming by September 23, so that I can let the restaurant know our numbers.

I look forward to seeing many of you in September at WITs. Please let me know if you need a ride and I will try to arrange that for you. You may reach me by phone or by email at rwcats@aol.com.

Book Club

Darlene Basch and Renée Weitzner

The Book Club of Machar is happy to announce its selection for our first meeting of the season. We will be meeting at the home of Darlene Basch on September 22, 2013 at 3 pm. We will be discussing Isabel Wilkerson's study of the great migration, *The Warmth of Other Suns*. This book has been a New York Times best seller and has been praised by many critics. It focuses on the lives of four people, detailing how and why they made the migration north and what they found when they arrived. At this meeting we will also be discussing which books we would like to read over the course of the year. Please bring your suggestions. We have some ideas of what to read but welcome new ideas.

We hope to see you in September! Please let me know if you are able to come. You may reach me by phone or by email: rwcats@aol.com

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@aol.com.

Young Adult Havurah

Liz Pomper

Join our listserv 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.

Machar August Board of Directors Highlights

Susan Morawetz

- The Board discussed plans for the 2013–2014 B'nei Mitzvah process and services and the High Holiday services
- The Board reviewed the 2012–2013 financial situation and 2013–2014 budget, and was gratified to find that we are in the black, thanks to a very successful fund-raising campaign.
- The Board discussed plans for retaining members and encouraging members to renew.

Hanukkah will be on Thanksgiving this year!

Submitted by Roz Seidenstein, with permission from Chai-Lights, the newsletter of the Pacific Community of Cultural Jews, Orange County, CA.

Thanksgiving is set as the fourth Thursday in November, meaning the latest it can be is 11/28. 11/28 is also the earliest Hanukkah can be. The Jewish calendar repeats on a 19 year cycle, and Thanksgiving repeats on a 7 year cycle. You would therefore expect them to coincide roughly every $19 \times 7 = 133$ years. Looking back, this is approximately correct - the last time it would have happened is 1861. However, Thanksgiving was only formally established by President Lincoln in 1863. So, it has never happened before.

Why won't it ever happen again?

The reason is because the Jewish calendar is very slowly getting out of sync with the solar calendar, at a rate of 4 days per 1000 years. This means that while presently Hanukkah can be as early as 11/28, over the years the calendar will drift forward, such that the earliest Hanukkah can be is 11/29. The next time Hanukkah falls on 11/28 is 2146, which is a Monday. Therefore, 2013 is the only time Hanukkah will ever overlap with Thanksgiving.

Of course, if the Jewish calendar is never modified in any way, then it will slowly move forward through the Gregorian calendar, until it loops all the way back to where it is now. So, Hanukkah would again fall on Thursday, 11/28...in the year 79,811. Given our trajectory with global warming, it is fair to say humans won't be here then. And if there are no humans, the holidays will be canceled.

So on November 28th 2013, enjoy your turkey and your latkes. It has never happened before, and it will never happen again!

Judaism puts the "Community" in Secular Humanist Community

Marlene Cohen

The September/October 2013 edition of the *Humanist: A magazine of critical inquiry and social concern*, contains an article called "Preaching to the Nones," about the success of actually holding weekly services to share being nontheist. It talks about the sense of needing community which even nontheists may feel.

This is nothing new to Jewish Secular Humanists and we are included in the article as a source for what works in this regard. "In the 1960s, the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) was formed, and humanistic Jewish congregations, all of which are nontheistic, now exist across the United States, in Israel, and elsewhere."

SHJ-trained rabbi Greg Epstein, the humanist chaplain at Harvard, is working with others on a project to build Sunday Assembly nontheist communities in the US, and will coauthor *The Godless Congregation*.

He told me the editor nixed his idea to title it *Congregation Beyond God*, in homage to his teacher Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of Secular Humanistic Judaism and author of *Judaism Beyond God* in 1985.

The new direction for secular humanism can remind us of what we bring to the table, and what we have to celebrate in this new year.

Machar offers a wonderful way for different generations of Jews to become a family through our trust in ourselves and each other, through our share joys of learning and tikkun olam. We can raise our children and grandchildren within our belief system. We are so much more than a group of adults exploring an idea. L'chaim!





Society for
Humanistic Judaism

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

What Have You Done for Me Lately?

Andrea Friedlander, President of the Society for Humanistic Judaism

It's only natural to want to make sure that your money is being well-spent, whether that money is yours personally or in the coffers of your community. And when money is tight, it's even more important. So when it's time for communities to pay their annual assessment or for at-large members to pay their annual dues, it's natural to ask, "What has the Society done for me lately?"

By definition, that question is short-sighted because it considers only the immediate past without regard for a longer history or the future. Since I can't stop people from asking that question (yep, even my vast power as President of the SHJ has certain limits!), I will attempt to answer it.

Chances are that the Society has provided tangible resources, advice, or programming ideas for you or your community. But even in the absence of this kind of direct support, there's much that the Society has done for you lately.

1. If the growth of Humanistic Judaism is important to you, then the Society is hard at work for you every day. Our main focus is to help communities form in new geographic areas, to provide resources to our existing communities whether they are small, lay led, or have professional staff, and to increase the visibility of Humanistic Judaism across North America.
2. If the future of Humanistic Judaism is important to you, then the Society's wildly successful annual HuJews Youth Conclave should make you kvell (be delighted) every year. Teens and college students

from all over North America come together for a fun weekend that strengthens their ties to Humanistic Judaism and creates future leaders of our Movement.

3. If you want Humanistic Jewish values to be represented in debates on important social issues, then the Society has been both active and successful! The Society is a member of several formal coalitions and informal networks that issue statements, write letters and submit amicus briefs. In fact, the Society was a signatory on two amicus briefs in the recent Supreme Court decisions that made important inroads in the fight for gay rights.
4. If being part of a real "Movement" is important to you, then the very existence of the Society is a constant benefit. Without an over-arching organization, there would be no sense of a larger community and no mechanism for coming together as a whole to support each other and share experiences.
5. If you would like to have more Humanistic rabbis, the Society is a major supporter of the educational branch of the Movement, the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, which trains and ordains Humanistic rabbis.

Bottom line: Everyone receives a substantial benefit from being a member of the Society, directly or indirectly; personally or charitably; sooner or later. Aren't you glad you asked?

Andrea
president@shj.org

The Machar Family

Birthdays

September 2: Rebecca Namm
September 3: Ana Schnell
September 3: Billy Schnell
September 8: Win Morgan
September 9: Mimi Brody
September 14: Sol Prenskey
September 15: Amit Hanadari-Levy
September 16: Mitchell Rosenthal
September 17: Sue Popkin
September 18: Debra DeRuyver
September 19: David Godden
September 25: Jessica Ratay
September 26: Julia Dancis
September 27: Dan DeMocker
September 28: Deb Godden
September 30: Logan Eliot

Anniversaries

September 2: Marlene Cohen and Michael Kidwell
September 11: Joe Palca and Kathy Hudson
September 13: Joseph and Mildred Goodman
September 16: Dick and Shelly Schwab

Yarheits: We remember...

September: William Spencer, stepfather of Adam Namm
September: Tilda Weigl, mother of Eva Shankman
September 22: Ruth Hartogensis, mother of Deb Godden
September 20: Mori Basch, father of Darlene Basch

Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Mina C., who celebrated as part of the B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies in May 2013



photos: Ben Zweig.

Staff, Board of Directors, and Leadership

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Jewish Cultural School Director
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Neighborhood Havurot
Laurie Miller

Wimmin' In Transition (WITs)
Renée Weitzner

Young Adult Havurah
Liz Pomper

SHJ Reps from Machar

Machar Rep to SHJ
Marlene Cohen

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Larry Lawrence (Vice President)
Rick Gold

Machar Trained Leaders

Michael Prival, Madrikh
Deb Godden, Madrikha
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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.

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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! .