

MACHAR ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SUNDAY CALENDAR—SPRING 2015

Adult Ed sessions are on select Sundays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

at Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th St. NW, DC 20011

Community Sundays follow at JPDS unless noted; for details, see emails, newsletter, and www.machar.org.

Sessions are open to all members and first-time visitors. There is parking on 16th Street and in the lot behind the building. All talks will be in the gymnasium. (If you have trouble climbing stairs, use the rear entrance.)

January 25

***Myrna Frank with Eva Shankman, Miriam Gitler, and Ester Rozenblum –
Longing for Home: Attachments to Spaces and Places Past***

The community together with the panelists--all Machar members who were born outside of the US--will discuss notions of home and belonging. What is home to us? How do we think or feel about our earliest homes? For what do or don't we long? What kinds of attachments do we have to places, spaces, and tastes of the past, and how relevant is this for our present lives? Does having come from another land or culture make us yearn for home differently from someone who has not? What does being Jewish have to do with all of this?

Community Sunday: Tu B'Shvat celebration

February 8

Daniel Spiro – Baruch Spinoza: How Relevant are his Teachings Today?

Baruch Spinoza, a 17th century philosopher excommunicated by his Amsterdam Sephardic community, is one of history's most controversial Jewish thinkers. Called both an "atheist" and a "God-intoxicated man," secular humanists consider him a forebear. Within the Jewish community, he is both widely beloved for his early advocacy of democratic and religious freedom principles and reviled for being critical of the Torah and charitable to the New Testament. Spiro, who has coordinated the Washington Spinoza Society since its inception in 2001, will discuss Spinoza's life and teachings and explain why he remains as relevant today as any contemporary thinker. Spiro is also the Jewish-Islamic Dialogue Society Coordinator and has authored three books, including *Liberating the Holy Name: A Free-Thinker Grapples with the Meaning of Divinity*.

Community Sunday: TBA

February 22

Steve Stoltenberg – Polish-Jewish Relations: Overcoming Difficult Historical Legacies

Polish-Jewish relations span nearly a thousand years and encompass periods when the Jewish community flourished and periods when it suffered the effects of prejudice and anti-Semitism. Steven Stoltenberg will discuss Poland's often painful self-examination of this history today and its "difficult legacies," which are exemplified in the recent opening of the new Museum of the History of Polish Jews, arguably the most ambitious museum of its kind in the world. Dr. Stoltenberg is the State Department's senior foreign affairs analyst for Poland and the three Baltic states. He co-translated the personal memoir of Polish Professor Maria Jarosz, a Holocaust survivor, entitled *May You Live in Interesting Times* to be published in early 2015

Community Sunday: International Women's Day celebration

March 22

Howard Dubowitz – Child Abuse and Neglect: Controversies and Challenges

Barely a week goes by without another horrible headline about an abused child. Machar member Howard Dubowitz, a Pediatrics Professor at the University of Maryland-Baltimore and the Director of the Center for Families, will discuss controversies over what constitutes abuse and neglect, what contributes to this enormous problem, its impact, how systems respond, and what we as individuals and as a society can do. At the Center for Families, Howard is engaged in clinical work, research, teaching, and advocacy in the field of child abuse and neglect.

Community Sunday: Community Service/Good Deeds Day

March 29

Anna Greenberg – God, Guns, Gays....and Jews: Voting Patterns in the US

In 2014, the Republicans took the US Senate and won governor's mansions and state legislatures around the country. What happened? Was this a wave election? How did voters vote? Who turned out to vote? Machar member Anna Greenberg will discuss the results of the 2014 election by exploring historical voting and turnout patterns among different demographic groups, including religious denominations. She will explore the implications of these patterns for the 2016 presidential race. Anna Greenberg is a Democratic pollster with Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research.

Community Sunday: TBA

April 12 ***Margaret Paxson – Remembering the Good: Holocaust Rescue and Resistance in a French Village***

From 1939 to 1945, the villagers of the Plateau Vivarais-Lignon, France, hid, protected, and ultimately rescued thousands of Jews from the Nazis at great peril to their own lives. Their nearly unparalleled actions during the Holocaust are part of this community's long history of taking in persecuted outsiders of diverse backgrounds. Anthropologist Dr. Margaret Paxson will discuss her nearly completed book on how this community has handled the shelter of outsiders. Dr. Paxson, whose first book, *Solvovo: The Story of Memory in a Russian Village*, was named a 2006 "Book of the Year" by Salon.com, is a Research Fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

Community Sunday: Acknowledging Yom Ha Shoah and other genocides

April 26

Annual Membership Meeting

Community Sunday: Israeli Education Day to acknowledge Yom Haatzma'ut

May 3

Larry Lawrence – Non-Joiners, Unite!

Machar is one of 29 U.S. and Canadian groups that belong to the Society for Humanistic Judaism. How are we similar to and different from these other congregations? What kind of society is made up of freethinkers who generally avoid joining clubs and associations—and what has it done for us lately? Larry Lawrence will situate Machar within the spectrum of SHJ member congregations, reviewing the Humanistic Judaism movement's history since 1964 and its plans for the future. Larry has been an active Machar member for nearly 20 years, serving as Machar's secretary and treasurer, and currently is president of the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

Community Sunday: Labor Rights/May Day

May 17

Rabbi Nehama Benmosche – Jerusalem: What is our Relationship to this City?

May 17th is Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) which marks the reunification of Jerusalem in the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967. Today's Jerusalem is imbued with passionate controversy. Rabbi Nehama Benmosche will invite the Machar community into an exploration of the city, intersecting history, literature, world religions, personal anecdotes and visual images. We will discuss its significance across genres and millennia, and explore our many and varied relationships to Jerusalem and to the Middle East.

Community Sunday: End-of-year picnic at Rock Creek Park picnic shelter #24