

**MACHAR, The Washington Congregation for
Secular Humanistic Judaism
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM
January- June, 2008**

Friday Evening Shabbat Celebrations-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm
Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Sunday Morning Adult Education, 10:30 am to noon
Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

PROGRAM DETAILS

Sunday, January 6, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Behind the Stove - Tell Your Own Stories to Your Child

Noa Baum

JCS parents are invited to participate in a workshop, financed by funds from the Jewish Federation and led by Noa Baum, a professional and talented storyteller who successfully led a workshop for JCS teachers at the start of our school year. Participants will hear stories, share their childhood memories, and bring stories from the attic of their hearts. Participants will also learn the rules and techniques of storytelling. Participants are requested to be there the whole session and to be active participants. All Machar members are welcome to participate. RSVPs are required for this session.

Friday, January 11, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Teen-Led Shabbat & Teens Turn the Tables & Teach!

Lizzi Wapner and Jacob Bernhardt, speakers

Machar's Teen Group will lead our first Shabbat service of 2008, adding their own creative touches. Two of last year's b'nei mitsvah students, Lizzi Wapner and Jacob Bernhardt, will give encore presentations of their talks. Lizzi will speak on the Dada protest art movement, its Jewish members, and its relationship to the values of Secular Humanistic Judaism. Jacob will compare the ethics and other features of Buddhism and Judaism, discussing why many Jews explore Buddhism while maintaining their Jewish identity and values.

Sunday, January 27, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

From the Civil Rights Movement to Today:

How Far Have We Come?

Lucia Campos & Mildred Goodman

In commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and Black History month, this session will draw on various perspectives about the civil rights movement and its legacy. Lucia Campos, 9th grader, will share her B'nei Mitzvah presentation on Jews in the Civil Rights movement and Mildred Goodman, Machar congregation founder, member and a Civil Rights activist since the mid-1950s, will discuss how she first got involved and what advances and setbacks she has seen. Participants will be encouraged to share their perspectives on what obstacles still exist to rights and equity for all. Songs from the Civil Rights era, lead by Paul Wapner and the Machar band, will be interspersed. The session is geared to pre-teens, teens, and adults.

Sunday, February 3, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Coffee with the Jewish Cultural School Director

Hanna Merin

Continuing the tradition started last year, JCS Director Hanna Merin will meet with JCS parents. Hanna will present a report about the JCS classes and parents are welcome to raise any ideas and questions. The event was very successful last year. Don't miss this opportunity. Israeli cookies will be provided!

Friday, February 8, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Eroding Rights, Emerging Evidence: Abortion in the United States

Jonathan Wittenberg

Few issues are as fraught with controversy—or misinformation—as abortion. With the Supreme Court increasingly hostile to the rights enshrined in Roe v Wade, reproductive freedom in the crosshairs in many states, and “junk science” from social conservatives on the rise, sound scientific evidence is critical to preserving access to abortion. Jonathan Wittenberg, Director of Development at the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive health think tank, will present new research on abortion and its implications for ongoing policy debates. Jonathan was Machar’s first B’nei Mitzvah!

Sunday, February 10, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Darwin Day: A Celebration of Reason and Passion – Michael Prival

The most important revolutionary thinker of modern times was a proper, Victorian, English gentleman. The thought of controversy terrified him, but the controversies he instigated still make headlines almost 150 years later. Machar member Michael Prival will discuss the life of Charles Darwin. We will see how Darwin slowly came to understand that species evolve through the undirected process of natural selection and how, as a result, Darwin himself evolved from a Bible-quoting church-goer to a believer in the indifference of the universe.

Sunday, February 10, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Surviving the B’nei Mitzvah Experience: Tips for Parents

Marlene Cohen, facilitator

If you are a parent, you are likely to remember with pride the day of your child’s B’nei Mitzvah ceremony. You are also likely to remember the tensions leading up to the big day. Machar B’nei Mitzvah parents will share the highs and lows of their experiences and answer questions. Prospective B’nei Mitzvah parents and others are encouraged to attend.

Friday, March 7, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Shabbat Celebration, 7:30 pm, followed by Potluck Dinner and discussion

Coming Out of the Closet as Secular: How? When?

Brenda Platt, facilitator

Atheists are among the most hated and distrusted minority groups in America. As a result many of us tend to hide our secular beliefs from extended family, neighbors, co-workers, and others. Should we? Need tips on what to say when [fill in the blank]? At this interactive and designed-to-be-entertaining potluck dinner, participants at tables will be given one or more challenge situations to discuss. During dessert, we'll have fun sharing the best response ideas.

Our Shabbat Celebration will draw from readings in our new Shabbat Celebration book to take a look at perceptions of Jewish identity. We will meet in the Chalice House of Cedar Lane UU Church for this Shabbat evening. Please look for pot luck information coming soon.

Sunday, March 16, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

**Was the Jewish Experience Unique? Jews and Protestants in France from the Revolution to Vichy
Steven Kramer**

French Jews and Huguenots experienced conflict, persecution, defamation, massacre and exile, but both survived to become significant players in the rise of the new capitalist system and the emergence of Republican France in the late 19th century. Their experience from the French Revolution until World War I was remarkably similar. There was even a strong anti-Protestantism which paralleled anti-Semitism. Yet when the Vichy regime came to power after the French defeat of 1940, it energetically pursued a radical program of anti-Semitism but did not molest the Protestants. Comparing the story of French Jews and Huguenots helps define the degree to which the modern Jewish experience is unique. Steven Kramer, long time member of Machar, has a distinguished history of presenting at Machar on Jewish History.

Sunday, April 6, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

God and DNA

Francis Collins

Science and religion have a long and uneasy relationship. Yet the two rest comfortably together in the mind of Dr. Francis Collins, leader of the Human Genome Project and winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In his recent book, *The Language of God*, Collins describes how "belief in God can be an entirely rational choice, and that the principles of faith are, in fact, complementary with the principles of science." Dr. Collins' reflections will be followed by an open discussion.

Friday, April 11, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Humanism vs. Mere Atheism

Edd Doerr

Humanism and mere atheism are not the same. Humanism is a naturalistic life stance concerned with ethics, social justice, compassion, community and making our world better for all. Mere atheism is negative. Edd Doerr, president of Americans for Religious Liberty (founded by Sherwin Wine) and former president of the American Humanist Association, has been active in the humanist movement for 60 years. He is the author of over 3,500 published books, articles, book and film reviews, short stories, poems, letters, and translations.

Our Shabbat Celebration will include readings that speak to the Humanist philosophy that shapes us as Jews.

Friday, May 2, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

Yom HaShoah Shabbat

Followed by Herb Silverman, speaker

Come join the Social Action Committee on this special Shabbat to consider the lessons that should have been learned from our own Holocaust about the ethnic, racial, and religious barriers that divide groups and often lead to war and genocide. Special guest Herb Silverman, President of the Secular Coalition for America, will discuss the dangers of a focus on religion that divides groups and alienates non-theists, and the importance of putting aside religion to join together in the common task of building a better society.

Sunday, May 4, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Memoirs of the Holocaust --Estelle Laughlin

Estelle Laughlin, survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto and Concentration Camp, has written a moving memoir about her experiences during the war years. She will mark Holocaust Remembrance month by sharing her memories as both witness and participant in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising which she describes as a combination of spiritual, passive, and armed resistance. She will also reflect on what she has learned from that experience about protecting a people from abuse. This is Estelle's second year presenting from her Memoirs at Machar. Last year's presentation was very warmly received.

Sunday, May 18, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Women in Israel - Stories, Tales, and Gossip

Hanna Merin

Hanna Merin, JCS Director who was born and raised in Israel, will take participants on a journey following the stories of women who lived in the land of Israel at different times. Through their stories, participants will reflect on the evolution of Israeli society and the role and status of women at different periods. She will start with the Matriarchal Women of the Biblical era, continue through the era of pre-Israel, and end with women in Israel today. Participants will hear the stories of leaders, artists, poets, and full time Moms.

Sunday, June 1, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

An Insiders View of Campaign 2008

Ron Elving

The primary season will be largely over, and the major party's candidates will be known. What are the issues that will dominate the 2008 presidential election? Could this be the year health care reform is primary in voter's minds, or will national security turn states red or blue? One of the best people in the country to address these questions is Ron Elving. Elving is the senior Washington editor for NPR News, where he directs coverage of the capital and of national politics. He's also the author of the online political column, Watching Washington. This promises to be a lively discussion of the American political scene.

Sunday, June 1, 10:30 am to noon

Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Surviving and Thriving in an Interfaith Marriage

Laurie Miller, facilitator

There can be as many religions and beliefs within a family unit as there are members of that family. The sharing of a common religious label, however, is no guarantee that the beliefs themselves are shared. How can these differences be reconciled so that each person is given due respect? What techniques may be used to achieve harmony in the family setting? Please come and share your answers to these and other questions as we explore the challenges of life in an interfaith marriage.

Friday, June 6, Shabbat Celebration-7:30 pm; Speaker- 8:30 pm

Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda MD 20814

While we can't know how Albert Einstein would have celebrated Shabbat, our celebration will address some of the questions that he might have found interesting.

Einstein and God

Ed Goldin

Born to Jewish but secular parents, Einstein resonated positively to religious exposure. As a teenager, he found science and moved away from religious dogma. In the public spotlight he expressed quasi-deistic ideas about religion which drew strong reactions from some conservative religious quarters. Throughout the rest of his life, Einstein held true to his respect for Spinoza's God and his own personal concepts of a cosmic religion. Machar member Ed Goldin is a professor of physics, teaching at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, affiliated with American University.