Please Welcome Our New Rabbi!

Dear Machar members,

Machar is delighted to welcome Rabbi Nehama Benmosche as our Rabbi through June 2015 – and hopefully beyond!

I want to thank our Rabbi Committee chair Mark Swartz, and the committee members Michael Prival, Joy Markowitz, Akiva Lieberman, and Nadine Wettstein, for working so hard to make this happen.

Rabbi Nehama will lead our family-friendly Community Seder on April 20. We look forward to seeing her during our JCS Sunday activities as we continue our Machar year through May. We will work with her over the summer as we plan for our coming year, including our Jewish Cultural School and Community Sunday events, our holiday observances and celebrations, and community Shabbats and Havdalahs.

Rabbi Nehama is eager to get to know our Machar family. She has great ideas to share and I know we have an exciting time to look forward to as she leads Machar.

Darlene Basch
Machar President

Rabbi Nehama Benmosche has served the Jewish community across many movements for over 20 years. She served as a congregational rabbi at Am Haskalah in Bethlehem, PA and as a student rabbi at Kol HaNeshama in Sarasota, FL, West End Synagogue in New York, NY and Beth Israel in Woodbury, NJ. Prior to her graduation from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical college in 2010, she was a day school and synagogue school teacher in Atlanta, Georgia where she earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Emory University. She is completing a doctorate in Jewish education at the Jewish Theological Seminary with a focus on educating staff and campers of a Jewish summer camp about differences in sex, gender and sexuality. She serves as an educator, consultant and board member of the Interfaith Community, an organization for Jewish/Christian families supporting two faith households. She serves on the board of Keshet, an organization working for the full inclusion and equality of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Jews in Jewish life. Her life of service to progressive Jewish life holds a close second place to being the mother of her two adopted, Ethiopian sons: Eliyashu and Sima.
Halloween”), so we took plates with two eyeholes cut out custom to dress up for Purim (I described it as “the Jewish evil plot to kill them. This is the Jews’ way of ‘booing’ the king’s wicked advisor. We folded paper plates in half, put beads inside, stapled the plates’ rims together, and decorated the outside. Then, we made masks. It is a Jewish custom to dress up for Purim (I described it as “the Jewish halloween”), so we took plates with two eyeholes cut out and decorated them however we wanted—one was an angry face, one was an alien with hundreds of teeth, and one had a hilarious little mustache! We then tied yarn onto the plates so the masks would stay on our heads. After some play time outside, we concluded class with a very hands-on activity—making hamantaschen! On Purim, Jews make three-pointed cookies called hamantaschen to represent Haman’s three-cornered hat. — Ben Lauting

**First/Second grade:** The first/second grade read the Jewish creation story out of Michael Prival’s “Learning Bible Today.” (Priceless comment of the day: “the Jews have a bible?!?”) The students have also read other creation stories and they discussed why cultures around the world have stories of creation, and thought about whether those stories really help us to understand how we got here.

The class wrote their own (very silly, nonsensical) creation story. We went around the circle twice, each grown-up and student contributing a sentence, word, or phrase. Here it is:

> Once upon a time
> We ate breakfast
> I don’t know
> Fridgetorators were created
> I had lunch, breakfast and dinner at the same time
> (Too was sleeping)
> The earth exploded 10 times and everything had to be re-created
> But we’re not sure where things were created from in the first place
> Uk...
> Cheese
> A Ninja ate candy
> God created houses. Cool.
> …Too still sleeping
> Is this some kind of interview?
> The End.

The class also read a story about Purim. The teens came into class and we made masks in preparation for the “Where The Wild Things Are” play, and we finished up class with a very hands-on activity—making hamantaschen! On Purim, Jews make three-pointed cookies called hamantaschen to represent Haman’s three-cornered hat. — Ben Lauting

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The class also read a story about Purim. The teens came into class and we made masks in preparation for the "Where The Wild Things Are" play, and we finished up class with a wonderful music session with Naomi in the library. The class made groggers out of paper-towel tubes filled with rice (sorry for any leaky rice!). The kids also learned the song “Let the Mystery Be” by Iris Dement (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlaoR.5mdL&feature=kp) and tied it back into the previous week’s discussion about creation. This coming session we will focus on Passover. — Sue Zivker

**Third grade:** The class started off with a little video about Purim. It was a cartoon that combines modern day ideas with history in a way that is funny and interesting for kids (and adults!). The kids really loved it and begged to watch it again! We didn’t have time to watch it again since we were so busy, but I will make sure to have another one for Passover for our next class. The message of the video was to stand up for what you believe in, which is also a main message from Purim. We talked about what that means and how each person would be able to do that. While discussing this I asked the students what sort of things they were supposed to do for others as Jewish people. We started talking about doing Mitzvahs and Tzedaka, which were our two big vocabulary words for the day. Then we talked about Maimonides’ Ladder and levels of Tzedaka. I read and we discussed each different level as a class. Then the students paired up and drew a picture of one of the levels (each group had a different level to work on). Finally, each group presented their art and explained how it depicted their level of Tzedaka.

We also had a “Where the Wild Things Are” rehearsal mixed in there. — Heather Gale

**Fourth Grade:** The 4th graders at Machar have been busy learning about Jewish immigration to America. Over the last couple of months we have read through the book Letters from Rutika and completed our family tree projects. Now that we’ve learned about where our families come from and how they arrived to the United States, we’re excited to learn what it was like for Jewish immigrants living in America. We’ll explore Ellis Island, learn about immigrant life in New York City, and discuss the importance of yiddish language and it’s impact on Jewish culture. — Aviva Downing

**Fifth/Sixth Grade:** The fifth and sixth graders took a deep dive into the meaning of Purim and its relevance to secular humanistic Judaism. The Megillah of Esther is unique in that it has no mention of God & puts a major emphasis on the role of women in creating justice. It is problematic to think of Purim as a joyous occurrence; after all, it ends with an all out massacre of non-Jews by Jews. However, the lessons learned are huge and I think we had a really productive conversation about it. As always, your kids are wonderful and really make me look forward to spending every other Sunday morning with them. Thanks to them for their insight and creativity. — Izzy Parilia

**B’nai Mitzvah Class:** Thank you so much to Akiva Liberman for a wonderful class with the b’nei mitzvah students. Akiva spoke about different branches of Judaism, particularly modern Orthodox Judaism, and how secular humanism differs in so many ways from the other branches. Akiva brought along several Jewish articles, including telliflin, and he explained, in a wonderfully understandable way how we as secular humanists developed a different ideology from many other Jews.

**CLASSROOM NOTES:**

**Tots:** The tot class learned all about Purim. They made groggers so that when they read the story of Purim they could make noise and boo for Haman. The class also learned about the different traditions to celebrate Purim like eating hamantaschen. Finally, the children colored pictures of characters from the story before going outside to play. — Roxanne Arnon

**Kindergarten:** The class read a book all about Queen Esther and how she saved the Jewish people from Haman’s evil plot to kill them. Then we got to work. First, we made groggers, the traditional noisemakers we shake whenever we hear the name “Haman.” This is the Jews’ way of ‘booing’ the king’s wicked advisor. We folded paper plates in half, put beads inside, stapled the plates’ rims together, and decorated the outside. Then, we made masks. It is a Jewish custom to dress up for Purim (I described it as “the Jewish halloween”), so we took plates with two eyeholes cut out and decorated them however we wanted—one was an angry face, one was an alien with hundreds of teeth, and one had a hilarious little mustache! We then tied yarn onto the plates so the masks would stay on our heads. After some play time outside, we concluded class with a very hands-on activity—making hamantaschen! On Purim, Jews make three-pointed cookies called hamantaschen to represent Haman’s three-cornered hat. — Ben Lauting
Machar Adult Education and Community Sundays

Adult Education Sessions are Sundays from 10–11:30 a.m. Sessions are open to all. All sessions are held in the Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th St. NW, DC 20012 unless noted.

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.)

April 6
Group Discussion—Wholeheartedness and Humanism
A discussion about embracing authenticity, self-compassion, play, and other guideposts of Brené 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

WITs
Renée Weitzner
During the month of March, the wonderful women of WITs met at the home of Donna Pernikoff for a delicious feast with lively conversation. We are now celebrating the group’s 10 year anniversary (!) and will be meeting at 7 p.m. on April 23 at the home of Harriet Pock, where we will feast on foods from Mandalay. Elaine Danis has kindly offered to pick up our food from the restaurant. The cost per person should be around $10 - $15 per person.

Please let me know by April 21 whether or not you can attend so that I can let our host know our numbers. You can reach me at rweitzner at aol.com or by phone. I hope to see you very soon.

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.

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.
Machar’s 2014 Purim Party

At our Purim Party on March 16, we enjoyed mural and puppet-making, the Megillah (Purim story), a fun obstacle course, and creative costumes (including plenty of Purim queens!).
Whaddaya Talkin’?
Marlene Cohen

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!

Glitch or Glitsch? I don’t have to explain this one—you know what it means. But I’ll bet you didn’t know it seems to have gotten Americanized from Yiddish. In German “glitschen” is “to slip” and in Yiddish, “glitch” means “slide.”

So it began as sliding or skidding on a slippery surface. But during World War II the word “gremlin” from England and “glitch” from Yiddish/German were both used to talk about aeronautical problems that cropped up. (So then who was wise enough to call that AMC car a Gremlin? It WAS a glitch!) Later the term “glitch” was applied to computer and electronics industries, followed by video games. Now we also can refer to human organizations as suffering glitches.

*Be a mensche, and submit your Whaddaya Talkin’ entries to: MarleneCCohen@comcast.net

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 Pre-screened 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 and 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!