



Thank you for supporting Machar!

Dear Machar members,

I want to thank you for your support of Machar! We are especially grateful to our donors who kicked off our annual fundraising campaign with a challenge pledge of \$8,000. Our members matched that pledge, and we raised a total of \$16,065! About half of our members contributed to the campaign, while others contributed earlier in the year or paid dues at our suggested above-minimum dues levels. Overall, about two-thirds of households in our congregation made an "extra" commitment to Machar over the course of this fiscal year, and we are delighted to have received additional support from nonmembers—including family and friends of Machar members—who attended High Holiday services or other Machar events.

You can see a list of all our generous donors on page 9. And, if you haven't had a chance to give, it's not too late. Just click on the DONATE button at the top of the Machar home page or follow this link:

<https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=e38cb9>

Your generosity supports a wide variety of programs that expand our knowledge of Secular Humanistic Judaism, build a sense of community among people who share our values, and offer friendship and fun for people of all ages. We are committed to our policy of never refusing membership due to inability to pay, and your commitment to Machar helps to make this possible.

We are grateful to Karen Roe for serving as our Fundraising chair this year. She did a wonderful job co-leading our annual campaign, and continues to secure support for Machar through an Equal Exchange fundraiser that gives a 25% share of profits from sales to us. You can shop for Equal Exchange's Fair Trade chocolate and other merchandise at Machar's "online store" link:

<http://fundraiser.equalexchange.coop/?fundraiser=MACH005W>

Darlene Basch
President

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From the Rabbi

I wanted to let everyone in the community know that I plan to be in the DC metro area in the afternoons after JCS and on Mondays throughout the year. Please consider these my "office hours" and make an appointment to see me if you'd like to get together to talk about Machar or anything else!

Also, if you use Facebook, please friend Machar and me on Facebook so you don't miss out on events that we plan.

Thanks, **Nehama**

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.

Scenes from Machar



At our December 14 Hanukkah party, Eileen Heaps and Jason Lubin led kids in latke-making, and the results were delicious! Thanks to them and to all their assistants! Thanks also to the other volunteers who made the Hanukkah party possible, including Amanda Nothoft, who helped out with organizing prior to the event and during the event.



After the Hanukkah party on December 14, a group of Machar members traveled to Fairfax, Virginia for a protest in front of the National Rifle Association on the second anniversary of the school shooting tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, CT. Pictured here from left to right are: Rabbi Nehama Benmosche, Shawn Rubin, Mimi Brody, Jack Schwartz, Talia A. (who took the lead in organizing this event along with her mother, Mimi), Michal Freedman, and Susan Kahn. Thanks to all of you for taking a stand against gun violence.

Scenes from Machar



We enjoyed a wonderful all-ages field trip on Sunday, March 11 to the National Museum of American Jewish History. One fourth grader said he liked the “historical data,” and he also said, “I liked the tour guide and the way she explained everything. When we walked through, she didn’t have to read everything. She already knew it.” Part of the group also visited Magic Gardens, a “mosaicked visionary art environment” created by mosaic artist Isaiah Zagar.



Adult Education and Community Sundays

Sundays 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.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

February 8

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

Baruch Spinoza, the 17th century philosopher excommunicated by his Amsterdam Sephardic community, is one of history's most controversial Jewish thinkers and has been called both an "atheist" and a "God-intoxicated man." 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 confront the life and teachings of this fascinating figure and explain why he remains as relevant today as any contemporary thinker. He 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: Focus on climate change (featuring a game show and other activities)

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 8

Purim Party at Schweinhaut Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, 10 a.m.–Noon

March 22

Howard Dubowitz—Child Abuse and Neglect: Controversies and Challenges

Barely a week goes by without another horrible headline about an abused child. Howard Dubowitz, a Pediatrics Professor at the University of MD in Baltimore and the Director of the Center for Families, will discuss controversies regarding what constitutes abuse and neglect, what contributes to this enormous problem, its impact, how the 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? 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: Focus on gun violence prevention

Saturday, April 4

Passover Seder at Cedar Lane UU Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, 4:30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Additional dates: (more information in future issues)

April 12

April 26

May 3

May 17

Clubs and Activities

Neighborhood Havurot

Donna Copeland

Several members responded to a request by Neighborhood Havurot coordinator, Donna Copeland, for potluck hosts. The first event on our spring calendar will be a Havdalah potluck at the home of Miriam Gitler and Pedro Rodriguez in Brookeville, Maryland on **Saturday, March 14 at 6:30 p.m.** We will announce additional events for the spring. Donna created a registration page for the March 14 event on SignUp Genius. Visit this link to register: <http://www.signup-genius.com/go/10c0f4ea9af2fa1f94-members>

WITs

Renée Weitzner

The members of WITs (Wimmin in Transition), the women's group of Machar, will hold its February 2015 meeting at **7 pm on February 25, 2015** at the home of Judith Wiesberg. We enjoy a great time together, supporting each other through life's challenges and joys. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Please let me know that you are coming and what food you are bringing by February 23, 2015, so I can let our host know our numbers and our menu. If you need a ride, please let me know so that I may arrange that for you.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Book Club

Renée Weitzner and Darlene Basch

On January 18, 2015, the Book Club held its meeting at the home of Judith Wiesberg. (Thank you, Judith!) A

lively discussion ensued. The members decided that we would continue our discussions of Sherwin Wine's *A Provocative People* by reading Chapters 8 and 9. We reserved decision on whether we will discuss Chapter 10, mostly about Israel, in a later session, to after the next meeting. The next meeting will be on March 15, 2015 at the home of Martha Mednick at 3 pm. Please let me know if you are able to participate by March 13, 2015 so that I may let our host know of our numbers. Thank you, and I hope to see you soon.

Young Adult Havurah

Danielle Leff (non-members welcome)

Visit the Young Adult Havurah Facebook page for upcoming events:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/macharyah/>

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.

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee is proposing that Machar declare its views on two major issues of our time: the prevention of gun violence, and climate change. The Committee has submitted proposals that would make it clear that Machar stands against both climate change and gun violence, and would enable our congregation to make our views known on these issues to policy-makers and the public. In doing so, Machar would join a long list of other religious affiliations and Jewish congregations throughout the country in supporting efforts to reduce both climate-harming activities and gun violence.

Machar needs your support to adopt these policies. Once they are adopted, Machar can formally join the fight to adopt public policies that better reflect our values as a congregation. Join us! The texts of the two proposals can be found on the Social Action Committee page of the Machar website (<http://www.machar.org/community/social-action-committee/>). Please take a look at them. We also need, and look forward to, your comments, thoughts, and suggestions on these proposals. So after you've read our proposals, please use the "Feedback" link on the Social Action Committee page of the Machar website (<http://www.machar.org/community/social-action-committee/>) to share your ideas and comments. We need your input! Thanks.

Additionally, we are organizing Community Sunday activities to engage members of all ages in thinking about these issues. On February 8, we will focus on climate change with a number of fun activities. On March 29, we will focus on gun violence prevention.

Visiting a Jewish Community Down Under

Larry Lawrence

On a pleasant summer evening in January, my wife, Amy Kotkin, and I enjoyed meeting members of the Waikato Jewish Association in Hamilton, New Zealand. Our gracious hosts were Machar member Leah Kaplan's parents, Marjie Slater-Kaplan and Mike Kaplan.

You can read on WJA's website (wja.wikispaces.com) that, "This community includes both New Zealand-born Jews and émigrés from the four corners of the globe. The WJA represents a cross-section of people from different backgrounds, nationalities, ages and professions who range across a spectrum of religious and political views." Everyone we met had come from another country – Canada, the UK, Australia, South Africa and the US.

WJA is the sole organized Jewish community in this area, which is

about an hour's drive from Auckland. (There is a Jewish congregation in Auckland but not in suburbs such as Hamilton.) They aim to be a welcoming community that provides fellowship and keeps Jewish traditions alive for themselves and their children. They also coordinate assistance and a home away from home for Jewish travelers to New Zealand, and may serve as emergency coordinators when things go awry for adventure travelers in the county.

WJA celebrates traditional Jewish holidays, hosts family activities, and brings in guest speakers regularly for discussion, although a member said, "At our meetings we generally eat." Some WJA members were intrigued by the concept of "Judaism Beyond God" and its implementation in North American communities. I briefly described our movement, SHJ and Machar. The conversation

that followed was wide-ranging. We talked about the liturgy and other texts used by Machar and humanistic congregations. We considered whether Judaism has a long-term future without a deity as a central idea. I said yes, but we didn't resolve this question for all time! We also discussed their encounters with anti-Semitism in their countries of origin and even in New Zealand, since this has been much more of a part of their experience than for most Machar members. It can be daunting simply to acknowledge that one is Jewish, they said.

We're most grateful to our new friends for their interest and hospitality. It was fascinating to find the similarities among Jewish communities in both hemispheres, and to hear about the rewards and challenges of sustaining Judaism in near-isolation.



"Deli Man" screening at the Washington Film Festival

Saturday, February 21, 4:30 p.m.
DC Jewish Community Center
1529 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Join us for the Mid-Atlantic premiere of a documentary by Director Erik Greenberg Anjou (90min, USA, 2014). Machar is co-sponsoring this event, and Rabbi Nehama will be introducing the film. There will be a discussion after the film with Jewish cookbook author Joan Nathan and DGS Delicatessen owner Nick Wiseman. To register for reduced price group tickets at \$10 per person, visit our secure Acceptiva page:
<https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=6cdd90>

Please see the announcement about the 7 p.m. dinner to follow at DGS Delicatessen and indicate on your "Deli Man" ticket purchase whether you plan to register for the dinner.

For more information about the film and a brief clip, visit: <http://www.wjff.org/films/deli-man/>

FILM SYNOPSIS: Jewish culture reflects the heart of a vital ethnic history. As that culture continues to shift and adapt alongside mainstream America, delicatessen food – as its name suggests – remains a beloved communal delicacy.

In Houston, Texas, third-generation deli man Ziggy Gruber has built arguably the finest delicatessen restaurant in U.S. history – building on the contributions of iconic delis such as Katz's, 2nd Avenue Deli, Nate 'n Al, Carnegie, and the Stage – and embodying a tradition indelibly linked to its savory, nostalgic foods. A laughter-filled, drool-inducing, history of the kugel, corned beef, and knoblewurst.

For the full schedule of the Washington Jewish Film Festival and the films it is featuring (over 80!), visit www.wjff.org.



7 p.m. Dinner at DGS Delicatessen

In conjunction with the Saturday, February 21 screening of Deli Man, Nick Wiseman, owner of DGS Delicatessen, prepares a special menu for filmgoers. The dinner will be served in the private dining room on the second floor, and RSVPs are required as space is limited.

This dinner is only open to film attendees, but not covered in the price of the film ticket.

Details and registration at:
<http://www.wjff.org/dgs/>

The Machar Family

Birthdays

February 2: Paul Eliot
February 7: Emanuel Pastreich
February 10: Julie Lewis
February 11: Alessandro Topa
February 12: Terry Johnson
February 15: Michal Freedman
February 16: Amanda Nothhaft
February 17: Leah Kaplan
February 18: Teo Topa
February 25: Marina Cooper
February 26: Evan Williamson

March 4: Ava Figueredo
March 7: Michael Kidwell
March 12: Shawn Rubin
March 14: Kira Appelman
March 15: Zach Williamson
March 21: Joshua Castellano
March 22: Susan Ogden
March 22: Lev Tomashevsky
March 25: Tricia Gordon
March 27: Yael Hanadari-Levy
March 29: Helena Dinerman
March 31: Dan Tobocman
March 31: Martha Mednick
March 31: Rebecca Guilfoyle

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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.

Anniversaries

February 21: Adam Namm and Mei Huang
February 26: Susan Morawetz and Yan Raytselis

March 1: Jules Abrams and Anita Willens
March 18: Kenneth Lederman and Helena Dinerman
March 27: Marina Broitman and Tibor Roberts
March 28: Harry Appelman and Mimi Brody

Yarhzeits: We remember...

February 3: Marcia Miller, mother of Laurie Miller
February 16: Rose Miller, grandmother of Laurie Miller
February 16: Frances Wiesberg, mother of Judith Weisberg
February 19: Robert Arthur Kahn, father of Peter Kahn
February 19: Thelma Baron, mother of David Baron
February 28: Bessie Maslinoff, grandmother of Patti Maslinoff
February: Nicholas Dopulos, stepfather Harriet/Gary Peck

March 3: Tome Kurtzman, sister of Michal Freedman
March 5: Wilfred Williams grandfather of Dan Tobocman
March 10: Sidney Levine, father of Rose Levine
March 13: Nancy Tebelman, sister of Linda Tebelman
March 22: Joseph Mauer, father of Marc Mauer
March 24: Rhoda Zwicker, mother of Sue Zwicker
March 27: Dorothy Bassin, mother of Donna Bassin
March 28: Ronald Bassin, brother of Donna Bassin
March 31: Rose Slater, grandmother of Leah Kaplan

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We send our best wishes to Dick Schwab as he recovers from back surgery.

Mazel Tov!



On December 14, 2014, Machar member Leah Kaplan married Linh Cunnion in a small, humanist ceremony with family members at the Netherlands Carillon National Park overlooking Washington, DC. Machar Madrikh Michael Prival officiated at the ceremony.

Mazel tov, Leah and Linh!

The Machar Family

List of contributors to Machar in 2014 (includes above-minimum dues pledges for 2014–15)

David Abramson and Kelly Hand
Harold and Carol Abramson
Harry Appelman & Mimi Brody
Ami & Ann Argaman
Darlene Basch
Donna Bassin
Nehama Benmosche & Terry Lubin
Kara Blank-Gonzalez & Marco Gonzalez
Marina Broitman and Tibor Roberts
Marlene Cohen & Michael Kidwell
Stephen Cohen & Alison Barnes
John Cooper & Linda Seligmann
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Jon & Rebecca Desenberg
Deborah Epstein
Michal Freedman and Jack Schwartz
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Benmosche Family Foundation
Rick Berzon
Melissa Grober
Peter Harnik
Marsha Lucas
Neil and Diane Rosen
Maura Spiegelman
Ruth Spodak
Irwin and Lucille Wallshein

Tributes

Kara Blank-Gonzalez and Marco Gonzalez,
in memory of Gloria Salazar
Marlene Cohen and Michael Kidwell, in
memory of Ann Black
Patti Maslinoff, in memory of Rita Maslinoff
and Miriam Seldin
Ruth Spodak, in honor of Emmett Z.
Renée Weitzner, in memory of Ann Black
and I. James Weitzner

Whaddaya Talkin'?

Marlene Cohen

Zaftig – its first definition, from *The Joys of Yinglish* by Leo Rosten, is “plump, buxom, well-rounded (of a female).” It’s one of those words that can make you wince, showing our masculine-dominated tradition. Or, could we call Chris Christie “zaftig?”

It is typically used to describe a full-bodied woman, which could be a serious compliment. But it is complicated because saying that can be perceived as calling someone overweight.

But let’s dig deeper. Urban Dictionary says it’s Yiddish for plump and juicy, from German “saftig” meaning “juicy.”

There’s an article in *Moment* magazine January – February 2015 called “A Full-Bodied History” by Hilary Weissman. It shows the painting *Woman with a Mirror* by Peter Paul Rubens, circa 1640, as an example of “zaftig” women admired in the past. She reminds us that plump used to be a sign of health

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!

and wealth, but as health and wealth came to be visualized in our culture as thinner, the meaning changed somewhat.

But zaftig has other nonhuman meanings, including “provocative” or “seminal.” Weissman quotes Eddy Portnoy, who teaches Yiddish language and literature at Rutgers University – “‘You can have a zaftik story, you can have a zaftik piece of gossip, virtually anything that fits the bill,’ he says. ‘It’s a very commonly used modifier that can refer to anything that is rich or pleasing,’ much the same way an American might tell a friend that she heard some juicy news at the water cooler.”

AND there is Zaftig’s Delicatessen in Brookline Massachusetts!

Beware – Internet searching of that word may take your kids where you don’t want them to go.

Staff, Board of Directors, and Leadership

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Sunday Refreshments

Ami Argaman

Clubs and Havurot Chairs

Book Club

Darlene Basch

Renée Weitzner

Neighborhood Havurot

Donna Copeland

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 (President)

Rick Gold

Machar Trained Leaders

Michael Prival, Madrikh

Deb Godden, Madrikha

Dan Tobocman, Spokesperson

Join the HuJews community for Conclave 2015!

**When:
Friday thru Sunday,
March 20-22, 2015**

**Why?
To make new friends!**

**Where: Butzel
Conference Center in
Ortonville, Michigan**



To discuss new ideas!

To explore a new place!

**To participate in
community service!**

**To have a
weekend of fun!**

**Registration &
Scholarship
Information
coming soon**

Questions?
Contact Rabbi Jodi Kornfeld
at rabbijodi@gmail.com
or the Society for Humanistic Judaism
at hujews@shj.org, 248-478-7610



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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 oc-

cur 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!

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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! .