



A Message from Rabbi Nehama Benmosche

The next few months will be a lot of “firsts” for me. My first Passover Seder with Machar was certainly a highlight. It was also my first opportunity to see the strong lay leadership of this community. So many different hands came forward to help set up, to make food for the event, to help with cleaning up and all the behind-the-scenes work leading up to the Seder. This community is great and will continue to serve each of our needs and grow, if and only if, everyone is willing to take their turn and make it all happen. While it is clear that we have a strong core of folks who are willing to help get community events off the ground, I hope to work in the upcoming year to make everyone feel a sense of responsibility to Machar. There is a saying from the Ethics of our Fathers, Pirkei Avot, one of the texts of the Mishnah. The popular text reads:

לגמור, ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה
לא עליך המלאכה

מסכת אבות ב', כ"א

My translation of this passage is:
*You don't have to finish the work, but
you can't skip out on the job.* It is

important for us to remember that responsibility is one of the key elements of our moral experience as human beings. I believe it is one of the core values that inform our humanity. When we are at our best, we make the kinds of choices that affirm our responsibility for other human beings instead of acting solely for our own benefit.

I hope to spend the summer in another series of firsts. I would like to set a goal of having first individual contacts with each family at Machar. We could meet in person, talk on the phone or chat over email. I would like to feel like I have gotten to know everyone, at least a little bit, by the time Rosh Hashanah rolls around. Independent of my goal to reach out to all of you, please know that I am always available for conversations, concerns, ideas for Machar programs, etc. Call, text, email or use your owl to deliver a message to me.

Looking forward to getting to know you and beginning this journey together.

Rabbi Nehama Benmosche
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Declare Your Intention to Enroll Your Child(ren) in Machar's Jewish Cultural School by May 31.

Getting a good sense of our enrollment numbers will help us to plan for next year. Complete our "intention to enroll form" at <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=b77bea> or via the Jewish Cultural School page of the website. **Please encourage your friends with children to visit Machar on May 4 or 18!**

JCS News

Debby Brennan

SHJ Teen and Young Adult Conclave: On March 28th, members from Machar's teen group, including Adam, Margot, Yael, Areya, Heather, Vida, Kira, and Sarah, travelled to Boston, Massachusetts for the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) Teen and Young Adult Conclave.

SHJ Conclave brings together young Secular Humanistic Jews from across the country for a weekend of service, study, and relationship-building. The theme of this year's Conclave, led by Rabbi Goldfinger from Toronto, was connections – connections between people, nature, and animals – and the different ways to bond with those who are different.

The weekend included services projects at Boston-based organizations. Among other projects, teenagers from Machar picked up trash along the Charles River, organized the food pantry at the Red Cross, and wrote cards to victims of homelessness. In addition, the teens celebrated Shabbat, explored historic Boston, and discussed different ways to recognize Judaism in their lives.

The teens look forward to next year's Conclave to reconnect with their friends, contribute to the community, and learn more about Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Good Deeds Day: On April 6, for Good Deeds Day, an initiative of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Machar families brought in a wonderful assortment of gifts for patients at Children's National Medical Center.

1) Machar's teens en route to Conclave. **2)** The entire Conclave group. **3)** Good Deeds Day volunteers.



*The families of the JCS B'nei Mitzvah class members cordially invite
members of the Machar community to attend their B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies*

*Sixth and I Historic Synagogue,
600 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
[two blocks from Gallery Place metro; parking on street or in nearby lots]*

*Talia A., Hazel H., Julia P., and Emmett Z.
Saturday, May 24, 10 a.m.*

and

*David D., Sebastian G., and Julia W.
Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m.*

VIEWING OF NANCY WOLFE'S FILM FIT TO PRINT

Saturday, May 17, 2014

Nancy Wolfe of New York City, daughter of members Renee Weitzner and Peter Wolfe, is in the process of completing the film *Fit to Print!* This documentary film addresses the very important subject of the decline of the newspaper industry and its impact on investigative reporting, which has an effect on our growth and understanding as a society.

We would like to encourage all of Machar to support a viewing of a segment of the film, to be shown at our Silver Spring home. Also author Natalie Wexler will share her perspectives at both showings! All donations are tax-deductible. Donations of \$20 per person (or more) are requested at the event to help Nancy and her creative partner finish this work. Checks are accepted, or make a donation by visiting either of the following links.

Please RSVP to attend either the 4:00 or 6:00 showing.

4 pm: <https://itrulycare.com/events/fit-to-print-dc-fundraiser>
6 pm: <https://itrulycare.com/events/fit-to-print-dc-fundraiser-1226706271>

We are happy to host this event on **Saturday, May 17**. The events link will provide you with our address. We hope you'll join us to enjoy the film, nosh and support Nancy's creative hard work.

SHOW YOUR PRIDE FOR MACHAR AT THE CAPITAL PRIDE FESTIVAL

Sunday, June 8, 2014

The 18th annual Capital Pride Festival will take place on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, near the Capitol. More than 200,000 people will attend the Festival, which takes place on **Sunday, June 8**. Exhibits will be open from noon until 7 pm, followed by the Capitol Sunset Closing Party. Machar won't miss the fun. Our members will be there, celebrating Machar's commitment to freedom, equality and empowerment for all people; support for LGBT rights; and pride in building a diverse and LGBT-welcoming congregation devoted to Secular Humanistic Judaism.

This year, Machar is participating in the Jacob's Tent Project, consisting of synagogues and other Jewish organizations from around the D.C. metro area that are hosting adjacent Pride Festival stands. The purpose is to better represent and serve Washington's large Jewish LGBT population. The Project is organized by Nice Jewish Girls, a group dedicated to creating a supportive and positive community of queer Jewish women. Other participants include Jews United for Justice, Hadassah, Etz Chaim, Tifereth Israel, Adas Israel, Bet Mishpacha, and the DCJCC GLOE.

If you are interested in staffing the Machar table for an hour or two, please contact Rick Gold at rickgold@mindspring.com or 571-337-8018.

Adult Education / Clubs and Activities

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. All talks will be in the gymnasium.

There is parking on 16th Street and in the back. (If you have trouble climbing stairs, use the rear entrance.)

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

The wonderful women of WITs, the women's group of Machar, are happy that **Nancy Harris has kindly offered her house for our next meeting on May 28, 2014 at 7 pm.** While Nancy realizes that some people like me, cannot arrive before 7 pm, she welcomes others to arrive a few minutes early to enjoy the gorgeous view. Please let me know that you are attending by **May 26, 2014** and what you are bringing. You may reach me by phone or by email at [rwcats at aol.com](mailto:rwcats@aol.com). Thank you.

In April, we met at the home of Harriet Peck where we enjoyed delightful food from Mandalay, a great restaurant in Silver Spring, which one of our members, Elaine Dancis, was kind enough to pick up and bring to Harriet's for our dinner. Definitely a team effort!

Young Adult Havurah

Danielle Leff

The Machar Young Adult Havurah is hosting a social event and showing of the movie "When Jews Were Funny" at **Leah Kaplan's house on Sunday, May 11 at 5 p.m.** We'll provide popcorn and ask that folks bring a drink or some munchies to share. Please RSVP to [danielleleff at gmail.com](mailto:danielleleff@gmail.com) for more information and the address.

Book Club

Renée Weitzner

For our next meeting on **May 25, 2014** we will be reading *Tell Me a Riddle* by Tillie Olsen, a series of short stories involving working-class individuals. **We will be meeting at the home of Renée Weitzner and Peter Wolfe at 3 pm.** Please let me know by **May 23** if you are able to come. We hope to see you soon!

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](mailto:mprival@aol.com).

¹ https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.jstreet.org/images/national_election_survey.pdf, question 62

Complete the Peace Process Between Israelis and Palestinians to Establish Two States

The following statement was issued on April 10, 2014 by the Board of Directors of Machar, the Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Machar, the Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, calls on the U.S. government to make all efforts to bring to completion the current peace process by Israelis and Palestinians, enabling them to put in place a two-state solution that establishes a secure and viable State of Palestine and provides sustainable security guarantees for the State of Israel. Since 1988, Machar has been advocating for a stable and permanent peace agreement that provides mutual guarantees of security for Israel and the Palestinians.

As American Jews who care deeply about peace and justice in Israel and Palestine, we have a stake in peace negotiations. Since Israel's founding, U.S. leaders have recognized the importance of the American Jewish community in developing policy towards the Middle East.

For too long, however, U.S. efforts have been undermined by a narrow understanding of American Jewish opinion on Israel and Palestine. Listening only to the most strident voices has hindered the strong U.S. engagement that a two-state solution demands. It is time for U.S. leaders to understand that they have a mandate from the Jewish community to lead Israelis and Palestinians toward a two-state solution. National and local organizations, such as J Street and its local affiliates, as well as Jewish congregations such as Machar, provide that mandate.

In July 2013, the U.S. government began the process of facilitating a new round of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We applaud the courage and persistence of the U.S. in facilitating peace negotiations.

Reaching a two-state solution is a vital U.S. interest. It is also vital to Israel, whose long-term security, democratic and Jewish character and acceptance by the international community depend on achieving two states for two peoples. To the Palestinians, it provides the opportunity to establish their own state. It is the only viable approach to righting the wrongs associated with the expulsion and abuse of their families by the Israel government and preventing future wrongs. It is a goal supported by the Israeli and Palestinian governments and majorities of both peoples. A November 2012 J Street-GBA Strategies poll¹ of American Jews found that 79% supported a two-state solution.

From Jerusalem to borders, and refugees to security—issues long considered the conflict's most intractable—there are well known and workable solutions at hand. Both Israelis and Palestinians need to refrain from creating obstacles to negotiations. What is needed is sustained leadership from the international community to bridge the gaps and hold leaders of both parties accountable for the difficult choices that peacemaking requires.

Machar, a Jewish congregation with members from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., calls on the U.S. government to stay engaged until the peace process is completed. We call on Israelis and Palestinians to make the bold decisions needed to put in place a two-state solution that establishes a secure and viable State of Palestine and provides sustainable security guarantees for the State of Israel.

SAVE THE DATE FOR MACHAR'S LAG B'OMER PICNIC

Sunday, May 18, noon to 2 pm
Rock Creek Park Picnic Shelter #24
Near 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW DC

After our last Adult Ed and Jewish Cultural School session for this membership year, we will celebrate the coming of summer with a picnic in Rock Creek Park. We will also celebrate the holiday of Lag B'Omer; if you don't know much about it, come learn more!

There's an association with archery, so we'll have opportunities to practice shooting with kid-safe arrows. Picnic shelter #24 is adjacent to the Rock Creek Tennis Center and Carter Barron complex at 16th and Kennedy Streets, about a mile south of Jewish Primary Day School. Play structures and restrooms are close to the picnic shelter.

A registration page will be available soon, but please plan to come and bring some food or drink to contribute to the picnic.

Machar's 2014 Passover Seder

1) We had an excellent turnout of almost 120 people for our wonderful Passover Seder! **2)** Rabbi Nehama Benmosche led the singing with the accompaniment of Jacob Baron on piano and Naomi Gamoran on guitar. **3)** It was great to see children and teens playing an active role in the Seder. **4)** President Darlene Basch and Nancy Harris are in horseradish recovery from the extra-bitter *maror*. **5)** Feast your eyes on Rabbi Nehama's gorgeous Seder plate. **6)** Thanks to all of you who contributed food to our delicious meal and pitched in before, during, or after the Seder to make it a happy event for everyone!





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!

Mazel and Mazel Tov

Mazel (from Hebrew mazal): luck (literally, constellation of stars). Mazel tov: congratulations (literally, good constellation in Hebrew, meaning, may you be born under a good star, or at a good time). Literally, it says "good luck," but it does imply that the stars are lined up just right for your own success. Imagine that.

Chabad.org says that "The Talmud—the ancient encyclopedia of Jewish wisdom—seems to contradict itself on the issue. In one place it states, 'On your



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

birthday, your mazel is strong.' Elsewhere the Talmud reports, 'The Jewish people are not subject to mazel!'" They finesse this issue by saying that, "When the Talmud says that we are not subject to mazel, it means that we are not limited to our destiny; rather our own actions determine our fate."

There is also the root definition of "a drip from above." So it implies "something trickling down from above." The signs of the zodiac are called mazalot. The concept is used in mystical Judaism too. "Mazel is the term used in Jewish mysticism to describe the root of the soul. The mystics say that only a ray of our soul actually inhabits our body. The main part of the soul, our mazel, remains above, shining down on us from a distance."

For us, not looking for dripping from above, it is a phrase that we nonetheless share with Jews and non-Jews, and it's the right time of year for it! Mazel tov to the 2014 group of Machar Jewish Cultural School Bar and Bat Mitzvah students and their kvelling families! They make us all proud!

—Wikipedia, Yiddish words used in English

The Machar Family

Birthdays

May 1: Laurie Miller
May 3: Greg Rosenthal
May 3: Neil Greene
May 3: Juliet Franklin
May 4: Talia Appelman
May 7: Darlene Basch
May 7: Joshua Schnell
May 9: Vida Fye
May 11: Pamela Fye
May 11: Claire Huson
May 11: Brian Kirkell
May 11: Teo Zentner
May 12: Harry Appelman
May 12: Sarah Gold
May 13: Amy Kotkin
May 14: Jay Carter
May 14: Joshua Desenberg
May 14: Adam Gold
May 16: Holly Campbell
May 16: Jennifer Guilfoyle
May 18: Joyce Rosenthal
May 19: Areya Campbell-Rosen
May 19: Sam Palca
May 20: Marina Broitman
May 20: Noah Castellano
May 22: Kevin Popp
May 23: Donna Bassin
May 25: Deborah Epstein
May 27: Svetlana Shargorodskaya
May 28: Linda Tebelman
May 29: Polina Tomashevsky
May 30: Jules Abrams
May 30: Abigail Royle

Anniversaries

May 4: Amanda Nohaft & Andrew Weiss
May 25: Barbara Francisco & Marc Maurer
May 25: Holly Campbell &
Keith Campbell-Rosen
May 26: Ann Levin & Winthrop Morgan

Yarheits: We remember...

May 1: Renee Dopulos, mother of Gary Peck
May 2: Harry Copeland, father of Donna Copeland
May 4: David Broitman, father of Marina Broitman
May 7: Joseph Maslinoff, grandfather of Patti Maslinoff
May 17: Fay Freedman, mother of Michal Freedman
May 18: Margaret Popkin, sister of Sue Popkin
May 19: Beverly Gold, mother of Richard Gold
May 19: Andrew Goor, mother of Gary Peck
May 19: Arnold Namm, father of Adam Namm
May 20: Edith Levine, mother of Rose Levine
May 20: William David Francisco, father of Barbara Francisco
May 22: Reva Ceasar, mother of Harriet Peck
May 23: Sol David Prensky, father of Hank Prensky
May 25: Julia Ortiz, mother of Pedro Rodriguez
May 26: Regina Frumkin, mother of Ann Black
May 26: Sara Morris, grandmother of Laurie Miller
May 26: Jack Kaplan, grandfather of Leah Kaplan
May 29: Harry Ceasar, father of Harriet Peck

.....

We send our warmest get well wishes to Laurie Miller and Roz Seidenstein.

Congratulations to Pedro Rodriguez on both his special birthday and retirement from serving as a pediatrician for Potomac Physicians, P.A., for the past 28 years! Pedro has been a pediatrician for 30 years, studying medicine in his native Puerto Rico and then moving to Maryland in 1982 to do his residency in Pediatrics at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore. Before becoming a doctor, Pedro worked 10 years as a Medical Technologist in Puerto Rico.

Welcome to our youngest member, Melanie, born on April 7 and mazel tov to her happy parents, Tom and Tricia Gordon!



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Nehama Benmosche

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Kelly Hand

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Danielle Leff

Laurie Miller

Mark Swartz

Renee Weitzner

Honorary Directors

Jules Abrams

Harold Black (*deceased*)

Ann Black

Joe Goodman

Millie Goodman

Mary Perica

Michael Prival

Henrietta Wexler

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Susan Morawetz

Holly Campbell-Rosen

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David Wittenberg

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Nadine Wettstein

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Sunday Refreshments

Ami Argaman

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Book Club

Darlene Basch

Renée Weitzner

Neighborhood Havurot

Laurie Miller

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 (Vice President)

Rick Gold

Machar Trained Leaders

Michael Prival, Madrikh

Deb Godden, Madrikha

Dan Tobocman, Spokesperson



Interested in Advertising with Machar?
Contact [info at machar.org](http://info.machar.org)

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](mailto:Email@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!