Bringing in a New Year!

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.
Rachel Norman – K/1st grade
Originally from Connecticut, she has lived in Washington for a little over a year. Rachel works in disability advocacy, and she is earning a master’s degree in education policy. Prior to moving here, Rachel taught English in Israel and social studies in Connecticut. Her B.A. is in teaching social studies and anthropology. This is Rachel’s second year teaching this class at Machar.

The class will learn about the major Jewish holidays, Shabbat, the Jewish life cycle and Jewish cultures around the world (i.e. Yiddish, Sphardic/Mizrahi, American and Israeli) from a Secular Humanistic Jewish perspective. The class will also make secular-humanistic Jewish connections to holidays like Thanksgiving. The Hebrew letters are taught in second grade, but this class will learn some Hebrew words so the kids can get familiar with the sounds, and they will learn about the connection between Hebrew and Judaism. The class will explore these topics through stories, games, art projects, music, video clips, discussions and other activities.

Rebecca Bauer – 2nd grade
This is Rebecca’s first year at Machar, and she is excited to be joining the community! Rachel has a B.A. in Psychology, as well as an elementary teaching certification, from Vassar College. She is currently working at a small educational nonprofit, Character.org, which promotes social, emotional and character education.

This class will begin learning about the importance of Mitzvot and Tzedakah, key themes that we will come back to throughout the year.

Jessica Freilich – 3rd grade
Jessica moved here a year and a half ago from Clearwater Beach, Florida. She is the eldest of three and from an interfaith family. Jessica works at Georgetown University in Biomedical Graduate Education and is part of the university’s Figure Skating Club Team. This Fall Jessica is greatly enjoying the privilege of helping her younger sister, Michelle, apply for medical school. In her spare time she enjoys all things politics, reading voraciously and hanging out with her rambunctious and stunningly beautiful calico, Dooley.

This year she has matriculated along with her class to the 3rd grade and is super excited for this year at Machar’s JCS!
Lisa Kaufman – 4th grade
This is Lisa’s second year as a fourth grade teacher at Machar. Lisa is a recent graduate of the University of Maryland with a degree in nutrition. She is a native of Bethesda, and is excited to continue working and living in the Jewish community she grew up in. While applying to graduate school, she works for a music management company in addition to teaching at Machar.

Sarah Jill Bashein – 5th grade
Sarah Jill is new to Machar this year. She has had experience teaching with the Peace Corps and with Head Start. She is working on a Master's Degree in social work with a specialization in children and families. She has also worked at summer camps, as a nanny and as a volunteer with Big Sister. She has volunteered as a teacher and mentor in South Africa. Sarah Jill has a deep connection to Humanistic Judaism and Jewish culture. Sarah says that “Jewish culture and the concept of ‘good without god’ played a huge role in my own education and development of self, and have made me into the wonderful person I am today! I would love to pass on the commitment to service and the world community that Machar teaches with its curriculum.”

Shel Lyons – B’nei Mitzvah class
She is a lawyer by training from Harvard Law School, but at home, she is secretly an oil painter and aspiring youth novelist. She has four children and spent last year homeschooling them around the world, including in Africa, and then took them all over the United States, visiting 20 different national parks. Her children are now happily back in school at two D.C. public charters schools — Creative Minds International and Sela, which specializes in Hebrew immersion curriculum. She loves yoga and good conversation. Shel has visited Israel one time for a month-long study program in Jerusalem. One of her favorite quotes is “Two Jews, three opinions,” for the amazing discourse Jewish culture offers.

Scott Lyons – Substitute
Scott has a degree in Middle Eastern Studies and graduate degrees in both Law and International Affairs. He is an adjunct professor at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, where he teaches about corruption issues in international health services. His passions are in photography, tennis and hiking, and he once hiked over 200 miles of the Appalachian Trail. His favorite sports teams are the L.A. Dodgers baseball team and the University of Michigan football team. He has taught Hebrew school, Sunday school and Jewish high school (Midrasha), and has visited Israel on four different occasions, including living there for a year.

Lilach Freedman – Teen Group Mentor
Lilach says, “I grew up in Upper Nazareth, which is a little city in the north of Israel (the greenest and most beautiful part of the country!). Since I was 14 I was part of a youth movement which works for social justice in Israel. Later on, when I graduated high school, my friends from the movement and I did a year of volunteer work before the army. I established a youth center and was a youth coordinator. Ever since, I have been part of this group — throughout the army and after — taking different educational roles all around the country. Now I decided to take a year off, far from all I have been doing for the last four years, before I go back to start studying.”
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 gymnasium of the Jewish Primary Day School, 6045 16th St. NW, DC 20012. Community Sundays follow unless noted.

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

October 18
David Wittenberg – A Taste of Wine
Using short handouts of selected readings from Sherwin Wine’s “A Provocative People, A Secular History of the Jews,” David will model small-group open-ended discussions to advance the idea that reading Wine’s work can serve as a vehicle to strengthen our identity as Jews with a secular humanistic outlook. Bring your own copy of the book if you have one. David is a retired teacher and active Machar member since 1981.

October 25
Obada Shtayeh – Amplifying the Voice of Moderates in Israel and Palestine
What does the next generation think about prospects for peace between Palestine and Israel? Join us to hear One Voice Palestine Youth Leader and George Mason University graduate student Obada Shtayeh describe the work of One Voice. One Voice is an international grassroots movement to empower mainstream Israelis and Palestinians to propel their elected representatives toward the two-state solution. The Movement recognizes that violence by either side will not be a means to end the conflict.

November 8
Linda Tebelman – Supporting Others Through Difficult Times
We’ve all heard of the Five Stages of Grief. How does that inform us as we help others who are grieving? Join us for a discussion about how individually and as a community we can provide comfort and support during difficult times. Linda is a retired social worker, having served for over 8 years at Montgomery Hospice, most recently as Director of Bereavement Care. In 2006 Linda and her family moved to DC from Michigan where they had been members of the Birmingham Temple.

November 22
Marlene Zakai – Help Make a Museum!
The Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington is in the process of creating a new museum for our region’s Jewish history (projected 2020) and needs your input! The sneak peak powerpoint presentation includes interactive activities to get your creative input regarding some of the objects and stories the Society plans to tell in its future home. Marlene Zakai is a Senior Advisor at the Corporation for National and Community Service, active with the Hill Havurah, and a Bethesda Jewish Congregation Board Member. She is also a ServeDC Commissioner, appointed by Mayor Gray.

December 13
Stephen Cohen – Why Are Jews Often Both Victims and Perpetrators of Securities Fraud?
Is it a coincidence that Bernie Madoff and Allen Stanford wreaked havoc in the Jewish Community? What is affinity fraud, and how does it affect us? And what can we do to help prevent it? Stephen’s talk will be a blend of history, practical guidance and open-ended discussion. Stephen is Associate Director of Enforcement at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and served as Senior Advisor to SEC Chairman Mary Schapiro during the 2009-10 financial crisis and the immediate aftermath of the Madoff and Stanford ponzi schemes. Stephen and his wife, Alison, are Machar members, and their three children attend Machar Jewish Cultural School.

Extra Items
October 18
Machar Makes Music
A new opportunity to share and learn music from one another. Bring your voices, musical instruments, general knowledge, curiosity and interest in Jewish and inspiring secular songs. This impromptu music session will take place on Oct. 18 following the Adult Ed and JCS classes from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Adult B’nei Mitzvah Class
Enrollment for this class is still open. Please contact Rabbi Nehama for additional information Rabbi at machar.org.
Clubs and Activities

WITs
Renée Weitzner
The wonderful women of WITs (Wimmin’ in Transition) did not meet in September due to the many holidays we celebrated with Machar.

We will next meet on October 21, 2015 at the home of Carole LeBlanc. I will need to know if you are coming and what you are bringing by October 19, 2015, so that I may relay our menu and our guest list to our gracious host. You may reach me by phone or by email at rwcats at aol.com.

Mark your calendars! On November 18, 2015 at 7 p.m., we will be meeting downtown at Cork, the restaurant that the daughter and son-in-law of one of our members, Judith Wiesberg, own. I will need to know that you are coming by November 16, 2015, so that we can let the restaurant know how many people to expect. Whenever we have eaten there, we have had a great time!

WITs is open to women members of Machar who are undergoing transitions, who are interested in making transitions or who simply enjoy each other’s company. We meet to provide support to one another as we face the challenges and joys of living in this modern age.

Young Adult Havurah
Leah Kaplan
Join the Machar Young Adult Havurah for sukkah building and a pot-luck party! Everyone is welcome: members, non-members, friends and family. Please bring a drink and/or food item to share.

Young Adult Havurah Sukkot Party
Friday, October 9
6:30-9pm
The party will be at a member’s house in Ballston, VA. To get the address RSVP to: yah at machar.org.

For more details and updates as the date approaches, visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/macharyah

Book Club
Renée Weitzner
The Book Club of Machar will be meeting for the first time this school year on October 25, 2015 at 3 p.m. at the home of Elizabeth Hodes with my home as a back-up. We will be discussing The Pope and Mussolini by David Kertzer, a well-written study of the relationship between two difficult men in a difficult time: World War II. I hope you will be able to join us for what promises to be a very lively discussion. We will also discuss our books to read for the upcoming year.

Please let me know that you are coming by October 23, so that I may let our host know our numbers. You may reach me by phone or by email at rwcats at aol.com. Thank you.

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!

Nudnik (Nood’ nik)
A person who is annoying you; badgering you on the same subject again, being obnoxious, nagging, driving you crazy.

I love that Wikipedia says it derives from Proto-Indo-European word for “death; to be exhausted.” So perhaps they believed that one could really be “bored to death!” And it’s related to the Russian “nogoodnik” — a fun word! Wiktionary says the Yiddish came directly from the Russian (we know this is all debatable) meaning a “worthless person, reprobate, ne’er-do–well.” So having a nogoodnik in the room seems even worse than the company of a nudnik!

Let us strive in the New Year not to be nudniks or nogoodniks!
You Are Invited: B’nei Mitzvah Ceremony
Saturday, October 24, 10 a.m.
6th & I Historic Synagogue,
600 I St NW, Washington, DC 20001

The Machar community is invited to attend the ceremony of Rachel Epstein-Shuman and Oliver Spiva. Rachel will speak about how the early 20th century Russian pogroms affected Judaism and helped shape her own sense of connection to Judaism, and Oliver will speak about Jewish and African-American comedy.

They will be joined by Rabbi Nehama Benmosche and the students of the 2015/2016 B’nei mitzvah class. Each family will be hosting a private brunch following the ceremony for invited guests.

-Madeline Henley
Society for Humanistic Judaism Urges Humanitarian Assistance for Syrian Refugees

The following is a Society for Humanistic Judaism Ethical Concerns issue passed by the SHJ Board on September 24, 2015. Submitted by Marlene Cohen, Machar’s representative to SHJ Board

As Humanistic Jews, many of whose families fled to the US and Canada from the Holocaust and pogroms, our hearts break as we see the escalating crisis of refugees fleeing their war-torn homes in the Middle East for an opportunity to live in peace and security. We are sickened by the images of men, women and children suffering and dying as they make the difficult and dangerous journey from their ravaged homes in Syria, Iraq, Libya and other Middle Eastern countries to Europe and elsewhere. We are concerned by their treatment in many European countries and their limited opportunities for asylum.

We note that Syria has produced the biggest refugee crisis in 25 years with four million people forced to flee through July 2015, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. More than half of them are children, most of whom do not attend school. As Humanistic Jews, we have a moral obligation to ensure that Jewish, national and international organizations have adequate resources and commitment to assist refugees fleeing armed conflict, repression or religious and ethnic persecution. Jewish organizations are describing the crisis in Europe as the worst since World War II, and emphasizing that Jews have a special obligation to provide moral leadership. As Rabbi Jeffrey Falick notes in his The Atheist Rabbi blog, dated September 10, 2015:

In July 1938 delegates from 32 nations met at the French resort of Évian-les-Bains to discuss the mounting problem of Jewish refugees from Germany and recently-annexed Austria. At the time Hitler was willing to let them leave “even on luxury ships,” in his own words.

As everyone knows, little was done to help the German and Austrian Jews. The nations who participated in the conference were mostly unwilling to change their immigration quotas and very few of the Jews who needed a visa received one.

The Mideast refugee crisis is becoming increasingly acute. The Jewish community has an obligation to be part of the solution here. Though there is controversy surrounding the number of refugees that can be accepted to the U.S., there should be no controversy whatsoever about the dire need for financial assistance.

As Humanistic Jews, we are deeply moved by the plight of these refugees. We urge the Jewish community to demand that political leaders and civil society act expeditiously to prevent further deterioration of this tragic situation and to prioritize a compassionate resettlement response. We further recognize that the sheer enormity of this crisis and the considerable impact on the host countries struggling to meet the needs of these refugees requires a major financial commitment from the Jewish community throughout the US and Canada. Refugees need food, housing, education, medical treatment and trauma counseling.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

The Society for Humanistic Judaism urges Jews and Jewish organizations to view this refugee tragedy as a humanitarian crisis. SHJ urges the collection of funds for relief efforts as well as a permanent political and peaceful solution to the conditions that led to the crisis.

SHJ encourages American and Canadian Jews to contribute to one of these organizations, or any other that is sending aid and advocating a peaceful political solution to the refugee crisis:

- The Joint Distribution Committee has an effort that has been joined by multiple Jewish organizations in what is being called the Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees. You can find information here: http://www.jdc.org/jcdr/where-we-work/syrian-refugees.html
- The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, better known by its acronym, HIAS, is helping, too. This is the link to its efforts: http://www.hias.org/syria
- Many Jewish organizations are participating in an interfaith coalition which has information at this link: http://www.multifaithalliance.org/#/alliance/cjdz
- IsrAid, an Israeli organization, has been working to lessen the crisis of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Efforts can be found at: http://israaid.co.il/projects/jordan

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1 http://unhcr.org/4million/
2 http://www.hias.org/syria
Moments from this year’s Rosh Hashanah service on Monday, September 14.
1-2) Moments from this year’s Kol Nidre service on Tuesday, September 22. 3) Mimi Brody, Michal Freedman and Jack Schwartz at the Moral Action on Climate Change Rally during the Pope’s address. 4-5) Machar’s JCS students celebrate Sukkot.
The Machar Family

**Birthdays**

October 2: **Hannah Figueredo**
October 3: **Julia Williamson**
October 4: **Bridget Ehart**
October 9: **David Goldberg**
October 10: **Isabel Franklin**
October 12: **Anna Cohen**
October 14: **Ronni Schwartz**
October 15: **Gary Peck**
October 16: **Henrietta Wexler**
October 17: **Mark Swartz**
October 18: **Sadie Delicath**
October 20: **Ester Rozenblum**
October 20: **Hannah Goor**
October 22: **Oliver Kahn**
October 23: **Faith Lewis**
October 24: **Shel Lyons**
October 25: **Elena Pastreich**
October 29: **Eva Shankman**
October 30: **Samantha Walker**
October 30: **Scott Lyons**
October: **Madeline Henley**

November 2: **Alison Barnes**
November 2: **Harriet Peck**
November 3: **Ruth Lyons**
November 4: **Keith Campbell-Rosen**
November 5: **Julia Pastreich**
November 5: **Ken Walker**
November 6: **Vicki Wallshein**
November 8: **Emily Ratay**
November 9: **Henry Zamore**
November 10: **Mary Perica**
November 10: **Myrna Frank**
November 11: **Brian Pujanauski**
November 13: **Avi Weiss**
November 13: **Rose Levine**
November 17: **Kara Blank-Gonzalez**
November 18: **Carla Kopell**
November 21: **Charles Franklin**
November 22: **Jill Grant**
November 23: **Allie Liberman**
November 26: **Eliza Walker**
November 26: **Kathy Hudson**
November 27: **Jacob Hudson**
November 30: **Eileen Heaps**

**Anniversaries**

October 2: **Lauren Brown & Charles Franklin**
October 8: **Kara Blank-Gonzalez & Marco Gonzalez**
October 15: **Linda Tebelman & Rob Goor**
October 16: **Brenda Platt & Daniel DeMocker**
October 18: **Michal Freedman & Jack Schwartz**
October 22: **Amy Kotkin & Larry Lawrence**
October 27: **Rebecca & Jon Desenberg**

November 5: **Carole & Stephen Leblanc**
November 25: **Joyce & Greg Rosenthal**
November 27: **Polina & Lev Tomashevsky**

**Yarhzeits: We remember...**

October 6: **Esther Copeland, mother of Donna Copeland**
October 19: **Marcel Slater, grandfather of Leah Kaplan**
October 23: **Gertrude Zinnerman Harris, aunt of Hanl Prensky**
October 28: **Harold Hartogensis, father of Deb Godden**
October 30: **Marta Marks, sister of Alberto Grosmark**

November 3: **Pedro Rodriguez, father of Pedro Rodriguez**
November 16: **Arthur H. Cohen, father of Marlene Cohen**
November 18: **Meyer Weisberg, father of Judith Weisberg**
November 19: **Harriet Hall, mother of Norman Hall**
November: **Anita Dubowitz, mother of Howard Dubowitz**
Staff, Board of Directors and Leadership

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Nehama Benmosche

Congregational Administrator
Jane Christenson

Jewish Cultural School Director
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Norm Hall

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Rabbi Committee
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Ami Argaman

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Darlene Basch
Renée Weitzner

Neighborhood Havurot
Donna Copeland

Volunteer Coordinator
Marina Broitman

Wimmin’ In Transition (WITs)
Renée Weitzner

Young Adult Havurah
Leah Kaplan

**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
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!