

Humanorah

the newsletter of the Society for Humanistic Judaism
affiliated with the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews



Autumn 2010/Winter 2011

Vol. 33 No. 1

HUJEWS TEEN AND COLLEGE CONCLAVE TO RETURN TO THE WINDY CITY

Eighth graders and older, newcomers and existing members: spread the word that the SHJ HuJews Teen and College Conclave will convene March 25-27 at the Hostel International in downtown Chicago. Fill the “get-away” weekend with fun and friendships—no pressure—as you focus on community service and social justice. You’ll ask each other, “What can you do, HuJews?” And you’ll answer, “*Tikkun Olam* and Humanistic Judaism.”

Conclave activities include helping at Ronald McDonald Houses in the city, learning about international service in a workshop, experiencing *Shabbat* and *Havdala* celebrations, and focusing on conditions of low wage hotel workers in Chicago. Just-for-fun time includes a comedy show, sightseeing around Chicago and plenty of hanging out with friends, old and new.

The fee for teens and young adults of **\$225** includes all meals, lodging and activities, but **NO** transportation to Chicago. **AJ Chalom, conclave coordinator**, said, “We will coordinate with your flights to help you find the best way from the airport to the hostel, and all teens traveling alone

will be picked up at the airport by SHJ volunteers.” Two scholarships covering conclave registration fees have been established by SHJ families: the Ethel R. Bennett Memorial Youth Scholarship and the Phillip



Gould Memorial Conclave Scholarship. Travel scholarships are also available. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, please contact AJ.

According to Chalom, **EVERYONE**, even adults, can be part of this year’s conclave. Returning Conclave teens have chosen an all-community service project. They ask all SHJ communities to collect **Box Tops for Education**. Coupons are on many different products. The makers of these products donate 10 cents for every box top collected. “We will

donate these box tops to a school that the HuJews choose together,” said Chalom. Products with box tops for education on them can be found at: <http://www.boxtops4education.com/earn/clip/Brands.aspx>. Please encourage the members of your communities to clip box tops, collect them, and send them to HuJews Box Tops, c/o AJ Chalom, 466 Orchard Lane, Highland Park, IL. “We collect about 20 coupons, \$2 every month at our house just from products we regularly use,” she said. “Think if just 500 households did that for three months, we could raise more than \$3,000 for a deserving school.” Mail box tops by March 1, 2011.

Questions about conclave? Contact aj@hujews.org or info@hujews.org. Registration materials have been sent to communities, to teens and college students on the HuJews mailing list, and are online at www.hujews.org. Registration deadline is February 10. Fee for chaperones sharing a room, \$275; chaperones in singles (if available), \$405.

Photo by Cary Shaw shows 2010 college students Dana Robinson and Zak Rogoff (top); (bottom from left) high schoolers Dani Israel, Oraynu Congregation; Alex D’Amore Braver, Sara Brooks, Birmingham Temple.

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KOL HASKALAH

OHIO

HUMANIST JEWISH CHAVURAH, COLUMBUS

OREGON

KOL SHALOM, CHJ

WASHINGTON

SECULAR JEWISH CIRCLE OF PUGET SOUND

CANADA

ORAYNU, TORONTO, ON

My Adventure with the SHJ Pooled Income Fund by Deb Godden, Machar

Some years ago, before the Bush tax cuts lowered the capital gains tax, I had a modest stock investment that had grown about six-fold since I bought it. The company agreed to be taken over. The deal was to be a cash buyout instead of a stock swap, so I would be receiving cash for my investment, a whopping great capital gains bill, and a greatly diminished remainder to reinvest. What to do?

The SHJ Pooled Income Fund (PIF) had just been inaugurated. A light bulb went on in my head! Just before that cash buyout, I donated my shares of the stock to the PIF. I received a very nice charitable tax deduction (based on my age) for that year, and ever since then I have received quarterly income from my share of the Pooled Income Fund. In fact, those quarterly distributions have been greater than the dividends from that stock!

Upon my death, half of the asset I donated will go to the Society for Humanistic Juda-

ism, and the other half will go to my congregation, Machar. It's not a fortune, but it will go with my love and my wish for a strong and thriving Humanistic Judaism.

The Pooled Income Fund remains a very nice and very available investment for anyone wishing to hand off, and at the same time, maximize the benefit of a stock that has reached its highest value. The minimum initial donation is \$5,000. After that, one may make additional donations of at least \$1,000. It's an easy thing to do, and the result is a tax deduction for the current year, regular income for life, and what's more, the great feeling of supporting not only the wider Humanistic Judaism movement but also one's own local congregation.

To get started, please contact SHJ Executive Director Bonnie Cousens, bonniecousens@shj.org.

JOIN THE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Ensure Your Legacy — Remember SHJ in Your Estate Plan

You can help ensure the future of Humanistic Judaism by remembering SHJ in your will or estate plan. Planned gifts can be made through wills, trusts, life insurance, retirement plan beneficiary options, and the SHJ's annuity, the Pooled Income Fund. No gift is too small and every gift helps. To ensure your legacy, contact Bonnie Cousens at 248-478-7610 or bonniecousens@shj.org.

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Humanorah is sent to members of the Society for Humanistic Judaism as a benefit of membership. Membership in the Society for Humanistic Judaism is \$95 per year plus local dues where applicable. Membership is tax deductible as provided by law.

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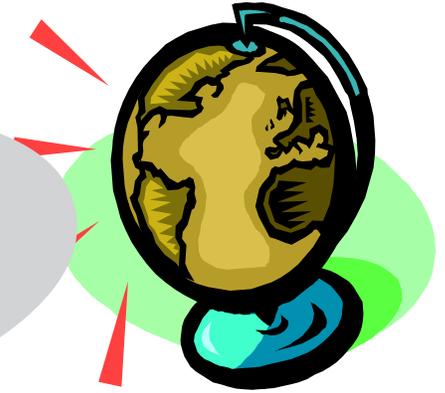
Thank you, SHJ Members The surveys are in.

You have said that our philosophy and our involvement in issues that express our values are important to you.

Your responses to the survey have provided much needed input in developing the new strategic plan. More information about the survey will be available in the spring.

Thank you for your input!

Notes From Around the Globe



KAHAL AM, THE HUMANISTIC COMMUNITY OF SAN DIEGO REVIEWS FIRST 25 YEARS WHILE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

It has been 25 years since our Secular Humanistic Jewish community was formed in the living room of Alex and Shirley Levin. We have seen many committed humanists move through our gatherings, and we have experienced the inevitable ebb and flow of a social organization. “Aren’t you that group that was in La Jolla, Mira Mesa, Carlsbad-Del Mar, Carlsbad?” some people would ask when they met us. Yes, to all the above, we’re wandering Jews in San Diego County.

At present our Kahal Am community is ever-slowly rebuilding from a large decline in membership over the past five years. Our Board has supported a strong push for publicity, and we have spread our name from one end of the county to the other. We spent our advertising money carefully to reach the broadest number of people with an onscreen promotion at the Jewish Film Festival and ads in the summer editions of the Jewish Journal for school and High Holidays. Our internet publicity is continual and visible on many sites. In addition, we set up a table at the Earth Day Festival, here, which had never seen any Jewish groups promoting themselves before. Over 100 palm seeds were planted and taken home that day as people learned about Tu B’Shevat **AND** us.

Our Passover celebration at a local deli restaurant attracted the interest of the patrons there—actually it was the music that did—and the owner has encouraged us to

take over his delicatessen for our next Passover program. Recently our High Holiday celebrations attracted over 60 people, the majority of whom were not members.

We took a risk to be more straightforward with our message to speak to secular Jews who feel disconnected. The result of these efforts at promotion is that many more people are inquiring and attending events. We have signed up only a few new members, but the presence of so many guests is encouraging. Our biggest challenge is following through on our new contacts. We have some enthusiastic new members to work on membership development, so the momentum can continue.

Some of the other highlight events from this last year were a popular lecture on Spinoza from a philosophy professor from San Diego State University; a monthly adult education class using Rabbi Wine’s DVD on Humanistic Judaism; a lecture featuring a handwriting analyst of notable Jews; two havdala picnics at the beach; and bi-monthly Friday night Shabbat dinners at members’ homes.

Our Humanistic Jewish Family School continues to promote participation, and we have recently started a play group. We are hopeful this will develop a new generation of members so we can enjoy another 25 years in San Diego. *by Beverly Zarnow, madrikha*

MAZEL TOV, KAHAL AM, ON 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE HUMANISTIC JEWS OF SAN DIEGO

photo by Irwin Cohn



BJ Saul, Rabbi Falick, and Rabbi Miriam Jerris

MACHAR CONGREGATION PUTS NEW TWISTS ON HIGH HOLIDAYS

We decorated our stage with a basket of towelflowers, a recent tradition. A local merchant provides a discount and we donate the towels to a homeless shelter. The gift basket person donated her services, too.

Following the Rosh Hashana service, we tried a new program inspired by the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County, Connecticut. Participants selected one of three conversations to join:

1. You just received a huge inheritance and health is no issue; what will you do with the rest of your life? The group explored desires for themselves and what they'd share with family, the local community and the world.
2. You're in a small group, settling a new territory. *One* religion will be adopted for the *whole* population. Why choose Secular Humanistic Judaism? Participants questioned whether people could learn to cooperate instead of compete and felt that other religions might be more divisive than Secular Humanism.
3. Do Americans have an obligation to "support" Israel, "right or wrong?" And what is "right" or "wrong?" No one agreed that Americans have an obligation. Some said America should support Israel as a democratic nation in a region where its neighbors are not democratic and that Israel has a fundamental right to exist. It was noted that one could support Israelis without supporting their government.

This was an excellent way for visitors, new/returning members to connect; we received rave reviews.

by Marlene Cohen and Roz Seidenstein, Washington, D.C.

Photo by Gary Peck shows a basket of towelflowers next to President Rick Gold.



BETH ADAM'S DAYS OF AWE INSPIRE NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Our High Holiday celebrations this year could not be surpassed. The introduction of Rabbi Jeffery Falick as a new member of Congregation Beth Adam and as a participating rabbi for our Rosh Hashana service was exciting in itself, but his enthusiasm for Humanistic Judaism was infectious. He and BJ Saul (former president) led us into the New Year with joyous anticipation. We look forward to Rabbi Jeff being with us often during the year.

As if that wasn't enough, we followed with Rabbi Miriam Jerris from the Society for Humanistic Judaism who came to lead us in the three services for Yom Kippur. She was assisted by our own BJ Saul and also by Rabbi Falick. Rabbi Jerris, appropriately for Yom Kippur, led us into mediations of life and death. It was also wonderful to watch the relationship among our three leaders blossom. We all responded to the feelings of respect and friendship that flowed from them. Thank you BJ, Rabbi Falick and Rabbi Jerris.

by Adele Kaserman, president, Boca Raton, FL

NEW PUBLICATIONS Available from SHJ

The SHJ is pleased to announce 3 exciting new publications you will want to have on your book shelf:

- ♦ *Good without God* by Rabbi Greg Epstein
- ♦ *Judaism for Everyone ... Without Dogma* by Bernardo Sorj
- ♦ *Jews and the Muslim World: Solving the Puzzle* edited by Rabbi Adam Chalom

Purchase all 3 and more online at www.shj.org.

KOL HADASH, CA TO REMEMBER A SIGNIFICANT YEAR. THANKS TO A MEMBER-LED COMMUNITY

2010 brought memorable beginnings and endings to Kol Hadash. We sadly lost several long-time members: past president Jutta Organek; Rose Essirg, member of the Marin Havurah; and Marion Schwartz who represented our community at the Jewish Community Relations Council. We owe much to them; their leadership drove us forward.



earthquake Haiti, badly denuded in the last century. Pictures posted by Trees for the Future, an international group working under local Haitian leadership, provided an up-close look at how the lack of trees spell poverty and misery for both urban and rural populations; it also gave a lesson in how people can repair mistakes when they join together.

For the past two years, our leadership has been provided by a steering committee. This year several more members agreed to serve and thus, this fall, we have returned to a more traditional board of directors format, with our enthusiastic president, Joyce Lewbin, back for a second time around. We are also happy to report that this has been a great year for programming at Kol Hadash.

Our once-a-month Sunday morning bagel brunches featuring a guest speaker, all-you-can-eat bagels with lox, and free schmoozing have been consistently well attended by community members and guests alike and feature a diverse array of topics. Presentations included an interview by local reporter Bill Schnechner with Noah Alper, founder of Noah's Bagels, on his book *Business Mensch*; member Dr. Marilyn Boxer, Ph.D., on "Papa Reads the Holy Book, Mama Reads Romance: Jewish Women and Secularization"; and Dr. Eric Meikle of the National Center for Science Education on "Darwin, Human Evolution, and Evolution Denialism."

We've also had a full year's worth of Shabbat services and commentaries, led by members Helene and Harold Lecar, Rosalind Leighton, Bernie Rosen, Gabie Berliner, Bert Steinberg, Jane Freeman and Miriam Aroner, Sharon Gittelsohn, Bill and Barbara Nemoyten, and Naomi Hatkin and family. Lately, Claudio Bluer and son Ariel have been bringing homemade Brazilian soup or stew to the oneg for a late night treat. We end up staying, eating and talking.

We held two seders this year. Our Tu B'Shevat seder, led by Alana Shindler, featured a meal of nuts and fruit, and a slide show on the effort to plant trees in pre-and post-

At Passover, the Caspi-Lai family (Eylon, Denise, Ross and Joshua) led our seder at which son Ross delivered an amusing and original Passover tale. The seder featured three different kinds of charoset made by Denise Lai, and a meal provided both by potluck and catered items.

This New Year the warm and wise Miriam Jerris, rabbi for the Society for Humanistic Judaism, led Rosh Hashana and Tashlikh services (photo by Marcia Grossman). About 100 members and guests were inspired by the rabbi's commentary on the development of Humanistic Jewish liturgy. Participating in the readings were Bill Brostoff, Jill Alban, Mike Green, Bernie Rosen, Helene and Harold Lecar, and Alana Shindler. Performing were Ben Brussell, with music and song-leading; and Bill Nemoyten and Nina Fogel giving their all through their shofar blasts.

The following morning, a group of about 20 members and guests began their Tashlikh observance with a tour of the Botanical Garden at Tilden Park by docents Sue Rosenthal and Michal Commanday who led us around the canyon and creek-side collection of California natives. The walk was followed by a service at Lake Anza where we cast away our regrets with tiny pieces of bread into a picture-perfect lake.

A thoughtful Yom Kippur service, led by member Rosalind Leighton with participation by Gabie Berliner and Sheila Lichtman, and a lyrical Kol Nidre played by cellist Sam Bass closed our holidays for the new year.

We are so very fortunate to have such willing participants in our member-led community. We look forward to continuing our tradition of creativity through the next years.

by Alana Schindler, Kol Hadash, CA



SHJ PRESIDENT LOU ALTMAN PRESENTS A PERSONAL VIEW

Sometimes issues come up that are of legitimate concern to the Humanistic Jewish community, but which I hesitate to bring before the Board or Executive Committee because they are too political or too divisive. The Islamic Cultural Center in lower Manhattan may be one of those issues. So I would like to speak for myself—not *for* the Society, but *to* the Society. I have no doubt that some sincere Humanistic Jews will disagree with me, but here is my personal view on the Cultural Center (or the mosque, if you prefer).

Two aspects of my life experience have shaped my views on this issue: One, I am a Jew; therefore I have experienced discrimination based on my religion or culture. Two, I am a lawyer; therefore I have been trained to view such issues as impartially as I can, and I also have been taught to view the U.S. Constitution in a certain way.

Start with point one: I am a Jew. I was born in an area of Brooklyn, New York that was just about 100% Jewish. Then when I was seven years old my family moved to Union City, New Jersey, and suddenly I was one of the few Jewish children in the school. My request to be excused from singing Christmas songs was met with astonishment by my second grade teacher. I was attacked on my way to and from school by groups of Gentile boys.

Those boys explained to me that at some time in the past Jewish people had killed their lord, and that I personally should be held accountable, however unfairly and illogically, for this transgression. And not just me; all Jews are guilty, perpetually so.

This experience taught me to always try to see things from the viewpoint of other people; for example, from

the viewpoint of religious Jews, of non-Jews, of Christians, of Muslims, of anyone who is treated differently because of their belief or culture or ethnicity—anyone who is unfairly or illogically blamed for something.

Now let's go to point two: I am a lawyer. Suppose that we wanted to build a Humanistic Jewish Center on land we happen to own (we should be so lucky) a few blocks from St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. Suppose the Christian majority was sincerely outraged at this idea because, in their view, all Jews are perpetually guilty of crucifying their lord, and therefore these Christians are upset about that, which makes the location of our HJ center an emotional abomination to them. "Build it anywhere else," they say.

Does the U.S. Constitution permit governmental authorities to decide that a Jewish institution should not be built (just because it is Jewish, no other reason) on a site where a Christian institution could be built without any objection by the majority? Would you actually want to live in a country that is allowed to discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnicity in that manner? And who might they discriminate against next? Haven't we Jews been there before?

The whole purpose of a Constitution is to protect an unpopular minority from the tyranny of an enraged majority. And that idea is precisely what made this country a unique haven for us Jews, starting long before the Christian majority became as comfortable with us as they are now; long before that famous Jew Irving Berlin could get rich "Dreaming of a White Christmas." Let's never forget that.

A Constitution which does not protect everybody, potentially protects nobody. Therefore, we must extend the umbrella of protection to all minorities. Once it was our turn. Now it's the Muslim's turn.

Got EMAIL?

Send your e-mail address to info@shj.org and begin to receive **member only** e-updates about the Society for Humanistic Judaism, holiday facts, messages from the rabbi, greetings and more.

GROWTH BRINGS WONDERFUL BLEND OF PERSONALITIES, PERSPECTIVES AND POTENTIAL TO OR EMET COMMUNITY

In the midst of a flurry of fall activities at Or Emet, it's good to take a moment to reflect on how far we've come. Our growth in the past several years has resulted in a wonderful blend of personalities, perspectives and potential. At our sukka-decorating party, it was delightful to see and hear the combination of adult conversation and happy children. A significant change we see is a cadre of young families who are making Or Emet their community. We have babies and toddlers and children and young adults and, of course, the rest of us. There's a vibrancy that comes with the diversity that is Or Emet.

Our High Holiday services, led by Or Emet's co-founder and madrikh, Harold Londer, involved numerous members, young and old. The music provided by Lionel Davis, Molly Wilbur-Cohen, Chernah Coblentz and an exceptional young violinist, Gaia Ramsdell, was moving and inspiring. There were thought-provoking presentations by Dave Zukor, Donna Sherlock, Melissa Kenig-Davis, Howard Schneider and Richard Logan. And, of course, our Tashlikh and Break-the-Fast potluck events were delicious affairs. Kudos to High Holiday committee chairs Sara Langer, David Fox, Janet Mayer and Paul Petschke.

5771 promises to be a very good year. We're excited about beginning a teen program that we'll tell you about



Rachel S. and Tom Wegner hang the painted panels of the sukka. photo by Margo Fox

in the next issue of the *Humanorah*, along with news from Lisa Gardner-Springer, leader of our Jewish Cultural School. Until then, do visit us at www.OrEmet.org. Margo Fox, president, Or Emet, CHJ of Minnesota

KAHAL B'RAIRA TREATS GUESTS TO A NEW HOLIDAY SERVICE

It wasn't all just spending a KB Day at the Beach, this summer, or rooting for the home team at Fenway or watching a new play in progress, penned by a KB member. In addition to that, many on our committees met extensively to prepare for the coming year.

Most notable was the addition of a new High Holiday service, provoked by visitors who commented that our family services, though great for kids, didn't leave enough for adults to really sink their teeth into. Consequently, our music director, Becky Wexler, spearheaded work on a new service, which was a great success. It was held at midday on Yom Kippur for adults and teens, with child-care provided. More than 100 participants appreciated the opportunity offered. The service ended in time for

people to attend one of the two *break-fasts* we held later that afternoon.

Additionally, the KB family has a new guest. Through our connection with Elaine Kamienny, our former Sunday school principal, we have been loaned a Torah. It has already been put to use in the Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies of some families. Yet we are still unsure how we will be able to care for and put to good use this artifact of our people. So in good KB tradition, we have been researching best practices from other SHJ congregations and have been talking about it quite a bit amongst ourselves. We appreciate the opportunity afforded us and expect that further discussion and learning will ensue.

by Jon Levine, SHJ Board of Directors, Boston

2010 SHERWIN T. WINE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PRESENTED TO SHJ PAST PRESIDENT SHARI GELBER

On October 23, the Society for Humanistic Judaism presented the 2010 Sherwin T. Wine Lifetime Achievement Award to Shari Gelber, past president of the Society for Humanistic Judaism and member of Kahal B'raira, the Boston Congregation for Humanistic Judaism.

“Shari Gelber has served the Society for Humanistic Judaism in more ways than most of our volunteers,” said Bert Steinberg, of San Francisco, California, who established the award.

Gelber has repeatedly stepped up to the plate in times of need. She joined the SHJ Board of Directors in 1995, and by 1997 she was serving on the Executive Committee. In 2000, she stepped in as president when the existing president resigned. She served in that role for more than two years and then became past president. Later, when another past president died, she again stepped up and returned to the position of past president.

“Shari Gelber has exemplified an unwavering, consistent and long standing commitment to the SHJ and Humanistic Judaism,” said SHJ Executive Director Bonnie Cousens, “leading the SHJ with intelligence, generosity, poise, and good humor.”

SHJ Rabbi Miriam Jerris said, “Shari Gelber models ethical volunteerism, encouraging others to fulfill the responsibilities they have accepted.”

Gelber, upon receiving the award, spoke about her motivation to work for Humanistic Judaism, “It may be a

cliché, but I wanted to give back to the movement from which I had gained so much. I wanted to help establish

more congregations throughout North America, so more people could have an opportunity to join an HJ congregation. And just as in my local community, the more involved I became with SHJ the more I connected with inspiring people.”

The award, established in 2003 in honor of Wine’s 75th birthday, represents Steinberg’s heartfelt thank you to his mentor for found-

ing a Judaism that reflected his lifelong philosophy and unfulfilled need. After joining Humanistic congregation Kol Hadash, Northern California, he became bar mitzvah at the age of 72 under Wine’s tutelage. Steinberg is a past president of the Society for Humanistic Judaism and still serves as a member of the SHJ Board of Directors.

When the award was first established in his name, Wine said, “I feel very honored that it is connected to what is most meaningful in my life, but that it is an award recognizing other people’s work.”

Recipients of the award are individuals “who have over the years exemplified extraordinary dedication, devotion, adherence to and activity in the Secular Humanistic Judaism Movement and the philosophical doctrines enunciated by the Movement’s founder, Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine.” A permanent plaque bearing the image of Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine is on display at the SHJ’s headquarters in Farmington Hills, Michigan. A smaller replica is given each year to the recipient, along with a personal gift.



Rabbi Miriam Jerris, Award Recipient Shari Gelber, SHJ Executive Director Bonnie Cousens (Photo by Cary Shaw)

SHJ Nominating Committee Begins Work

The SHJ Nominating Committee has begun the process of nominating the slate for the 2011-2012 SHJ Board of Directors. Each SHJ community has been asked to select one designee to the SHJ Board and it is expected that many designees will continue to serve. Additionally, there are po-

sitions for at-large directors. If you are interested in serving on the SHJ Board or would like more information, please contact Shari Gelber, chair of the Nominating Committee (shari@jimmy.harvard.edu) or Bonnie Cousens at the SHJ office (bonniecousens@shj.org).

From the Executive Director, Bonnie Cousens

Humanistic Judaism — Living Our Values

A unique philosophy and taking a stand that expresses that philosophy on issues of importance to us — that's why we join the Society for Humanistic Judaism and our communities — and that's why we stay. Yes, there are programs and services that meet our needs, from educating our children and ourselves, to celebrating holidays, to sharing in weddings and births and bar and bat mitzvah celebrations, and supporting each other through illness and death. But we derive much more than the concrete benefits of programs. Humanistic Judaism enables us to live our values. Belonging to the Society for Humanistic Judaism enables us to have a voice in the Jewish community and beyond.

Humanistic Judaism began when a group of families led by Rabbi Sherwin Wine began questioning whether what they were saying as Jews matched what they believed. The conclusion they reached was that it did not and the decision was made that as Humanistic Jews, they would say what they believed and believe what they said. That tradition stands alongside Jewish tradition and reminds us that we are humanists, that we are responsible for what happens in our lives, for what happens to the world.

We choose to be involved in *tikkun olam*, in repairing the world. While SHJ communities and members are engaged in serving their communities throughout the year, as an organization, we have designated the month of *Heshvan*, to be Community Service Month — SHJ communities engaged in service projects and social action programs across North America as a demonstration of our solidarity as Humanistic Jews and of our commitment to the future of humankind and our planet.

Living our philosophy is more than community service. It also involves us in speaking out on issues of importance to us as Jews and Humanists and people who live in a world with others who might not share our views.

In October, the SHJ joined many groups and individuals in speaking out against the many recent incidents of homophobic bullying. Expressing our values, the resolution reads in part: “We pledge to speak out when we become aware of anyone being demeaned for their ac-

tual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.”

As humanists, as non-theists, we speak out in defense of the American constitutional guarantees of the separation of church and state.

Recently we joined with the American Humanist Association (AHA) and other Humanist organizations in filing an amicus brief in Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn — asking the Supreme Court to affirm the 9th Circuit, taking the position that the scholarship program that Arizona created while neutral on its face is actually a mechanism for funding religious instruction and, therefore, is a violation of the Establishment Clause.

We also joined with the AHA and others in filing an amicus brief supporting the Freedom From Religion Foundation in their challenge to the National Day of Prayer statute and presidential proclamations pursuant to it. We are asking the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to affirm the decision of the district court, which held that the NDP statute is unconstitutional.

The Society joined other Humanist organizations in a letter to the director of the U.S. Census Bureau protesting the language in the oath required of employees.

Last August, the Society endorsed the resolution adopted by the Association of Humanistic Rabbis condemning the Rotem Conversion Bill introduced in the Israeli Knesset — in part in response to the outcry from the American Jewish community, the Knesset has not moved forward on the bill.

We are making our voice heard. We are living our values. We say what we believe. We believe what we say. And we take action to make our world a just and better place for all.



CONGRATULATIONS!

TO THE PRESIDENTS & LEADERS OF OUR AFFILIATED COMMUNITIES:

Arizona	Phil Lagas , Or Adam
California	Marci R. Goldberg , Adat Chaverim Joyce Lewbin , Kol Hadash Judy Mandel , Orange County SHJ Karen Knecht , The Pacific Community Gary Zarnow , Kahal Am
Colorado	Jon Budoff , Beth Ami
Connecticut	Dana Preis , CHJ, Fairfield County
D.C.	Rick Gold , Machar
Florida	Adele Kaserman , Cong. Beth Adam Richard Stein , CHJ, Sarasota
Illinois	Robin Chessick , Beth Chaverim Kenneth Burk , Kol Hadash
Massachusetts	Jane Eisenstark , David Ossam , Kahal B'raira
Michigan	Paul Kadish , Birmingham Temple
Minnesota	Margo Fox , Or Emet
New Jersey	Claire Kerr , Morris County CHJ
New York	Karen Goodkin-Xiang , Beth Haskalah Ellen C. Weiman , Steve Zalph , The City Congregation Dmitry Turovsky , Westchester CHJ
North Carolina	Alan Metz , Allison Wood Kol Haskalah
Oregon	Myra Himmelfarb , Kol Shalom, CHJ
Washington	Paul Grekin , Secular Jewish Circle
Canada	Louise Sherman , Jim Sadler , Oraynu

SHJ Selects Salk as 2010 Humanistic Jewish Hero, Continues Heshvan as Month Devoted to Community Service

The SHJ Board of Directors, at its meeting in April, 2010, confirmed the choice of Jonas Salk as the Humanistic Jewish Hero of the Year. SHJ communities are encouraged to honor him in a program during the 2010-2011 season. Helpful information can be found on the Grovesite SHJ Community Resource Center.

At the same meeting, the month of Heshvan (Oct.-Nov.) was declared SHJ Community Service Month, although communities are encouraged to devote more hours throughout the year to community service. *Tikkun Olam* projects have included packing meals for local shelters; serving meals at shelters and soup kitchens; packing brown bags for local missions; holding a cookie sale to help the homeless; cleaning and helping refurbish crisis centers; sorting donated clothing; making goody bags for pediatric hospital patients, typing books for Braille associations, and creating sing-alongs at senior residences. **Irv Lesser**, chair of SHJ Communications Committee

SHJ Pledges to Combat Homophobic Bullying

Farmington Hills, MI—The Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ), distressed by the recent increases in homophobic bullying and the often tragic results, especially among school children, has committed to work to end homophobic bullying or harassment of any kind in our congregations, schools, organizations, and communities.

The Board of Directors, in a resolution adopted in October, 2010, is encouraging its members and communities to speak out to prevent homophobic bullying whenever

we become aware of individuals being demeaned for their actual or perceived sexual orientation. "As Humanistic Jews," said SHJ Executive Director Bonnie Cousens, "we believe that all people are deserving of dignity and security. Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgenders should not be persecuted because of their sexual orientation. Nor should our youth be subject to the homophobic harassment or bullying that has become so prevalent on social networks because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation."

Secular Coalition for America Schedules Summit in D.C.

The Secular Coalition for America Strategic Summit, May 19-22, in Washington D.C., is your chance to have a genuine impact on the future of the secular movement as we work to bring reason into (and take religious bias out of) government. This is a one-of-a-kind participatory meet-

ing of leaders, activists, and thinkers from within our secular movement. You will collaborate, network, and strategize with them to improve our Secular Decade plan. The SHJ is one of 10 member organizations of SCA. You can learn more about the Summit and SCA at www.secular.org.

Building Community

AND IF I AM ONLY FOR MYSELF, WHAT AM I?

BY RABBI MIRIAM JERRIS

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
And if I am only for myself, what am I?
And if not now, when?

EEM AYN A-NEE LEE MEE LEE?
אם אין אני לי מי לי,
OO-KH'-SHE-A-NEE L'-ATS-MEE MA A-NEE?
וכשאני לעצמי מה אני,
V'-EEM LO AKH-SHAV AY-MA-TIE?
ואם לא עכשיו אימתי,
— *Hillel*

This well known text, sung and quoted in communities of Humanistic Judaism, rings true even 2,000 years after it was written. And although compelling and completely compatible with Humanistic Judaism, parts of the statement have been ignored by some of us.

We understand “If not now, when?” knowing that life is terminal, precious and sometimes short. That awareness has most Humanistic Jews living in the present, knowing we better take care of business— whatever that business— NOW.

We have integrated, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?” understanding that the power and responsibility for our lives lies within each of us. If we cannot advocate for ourselves, why would we expect others to advocate for us? When we do care for ourselves, we exude self-confidence and draw others to us; we strengthen connections.

What about the phrase, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” Hillel suggests we have a moral obligation to others— that if we find value in something, to pass that *thing* on. For us, it is the desire for others to experience the benefits of belonging to a Humanistic Jewish community that we have had in our own lives. It means building more communities besides our own. It also means creating communities so if our children move, Humanistic Judaism will be available in their new home. It means training leaders for new communities. It means being professional and large enough so that we will be taken

seriously in our local communities and have a voice in the larger Jewish world. Today, that translates into a strong and generous commitment to share resources, time and energy. In our very hectic world, this is difficult but necessary.



When I joined the Birmingham Temple, I was just 22 years old. There were three congregations; now there are almost 30. When I became involved in the Society for Humanistic Judaism more than 35 years ago, I was so excited about the difference Humanistic Judaism made in my life, I wanted to share it with others. I wanted other people to have the opportunity to express their Jewishness in as authentic and meaningful way as I do. The passion and excitement that motivated me to dedicate my life to sharing Humanistic Judaism with others still comes from a place deep inside my heart.

Likewise each community was organized by passionate individuals— nowadays, in partnership with SHJ. I can recreate those initial phone calls in my mind and hear the excitement of the person discovering Humanistic Judaism and wanting the Society’s help and support in creating something for themselves and their children in their own community. That excitement fueled me and still does. We fuel each other.

Share the importance of your commitment to Humanistic Judaism with at least one new person. And offer your support to the staff and Board of Directors of the Society for Humanistic Judaism. Please offer your support whether by word, involvement on the board or through your financial generosity. We welcome all three. And together, what we have, we can share with others. Hillel reminds us, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” and I agree.

Support the Fund for Humanistic Judaism

Building Communities Training Leaders Developing Resources

Community Development

The Sherwin T. Wine Group Development Fund helps nurture and develop Humanistic Jewish communities and leadership, by providing visits to communities by Humanistic rabbis and other leaders to help energize, strengthen, and guide them; and by increasing the outreach capabilities of the Movement. The Miriam Jerris Community Development Fund supports communities in promoting weekend events.

HuJews: Teen & Young Adult Programs

The Society for Humanistic Judaism HuJews Teen and Young Adult Conclaves help establish bonds among our youth and reinforce both their Jewish identity and their connection with Humanistic Judaism. Young adult programs at Society conferences and humanistic *havurot* on university campuses provide a forum for discussion and the sharing of ideas among college students at a time when they are self-identifying, inquiring, and most receptive to new ideas and information. Our HuJews website enables college students to create an online connection with Humanistic Judaism and find the resources they need to celebrate Humanistic Judaism on campus.

Publications & Resources

Society publications provide a ready reference and resource for individuals, families, and communities to create meaningful holiday and life-cycle observances as well as educational programs for adults and young people. *The Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, for example, offers an overview to our philosophy. The topical jour-

nal, *Humanistic Judaism*, features issue-oriented articles and regular departments such as book reviews, travel, and regional events. Society Holiday Kits bring Humanistic Jewish holiday celebrations into homes, dorm rooms, and beyond. Videos and DVDs provide programs on Humanistic Judaism in your home and community.

Curricula and Training

The Society sponsors training programs and provides resources for youth and adult education. Membership orientation, three-year adult study groups, adult bar/bat mitzvahs and confirmations, and manuals on history, culture, music, holidays, and life cycles allow members to learn about Humanistic Judaism and connect to our heritage. Visits to communities and regional seminars provide opportunities for adult education and organizational and teacher training.

Rabbinic and Leadership Training

The International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism is the academic arm of the Movement. The Rabbinic Program prepares men and women to become the spiritual leaders and mentors of Secular Humanistic communities. Similarly, the leadership, educators', and music programs train individuals to serve the ceremonial, philosophic, and educational needs of our communities. The masters degree program provides an advanced course of Jewish study relevant to the movement. Gifts to the Society's Scholarship Fund allow future Jewish leaders to focus on their seminary studies without the distractions imposed by financial need.

Your Generosity Makes a Difference.

Your gift to the SHJ can ensure the future of Humanistic Judaism.



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IT'S A HOLE IN ONE FOR THE BIRMINGHAM TEMPLE AS A LAST MINUTE THOUGHT TURNS INTO A \$3,500 STROKE OF FORTUNE

The Birmingham Temple's first annual golf outing fundraiser, September 15, was just a glint in their eyes in late August, but the steering committee of Ron and Paula Creed, Irving and Marcia Miller, and Anita Green produced a smash success in just three weeks, anyway, bringing in a \$3,500 day for the Temple between the holidays of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. What a way to start a new year!

With members Bruce and Mark Luria and their families graciously providing their upscale, championship facility at a nominal fee including a golf cart, a drink on the course and lunch with wine afterwards, the committee could offer the less than 30 players a great day, indeed.

Most members and their guests chose to play 18 holes for \$75, \$45 of that going back to the club and covering the luncheon and other amenities; six chose nine holes at \$55. So how could there possibly be any income for the Temple? When you sell the holes to advertisers at \$200 per hole, success happens.

It was payback time: members approached their accountants and attorneys, those actively involved in extensive dental work approached their dentists; the Temple approached its printer and its office supply companies, its caterers and local restaurants frequented by Temple goers.

Non-playing members could buy half a hole for \$100. And what did all these advertisers get? A professionally created sign at a designated hole for the world to see with words of their creation.



photo by Dick Rosenthal

Non-playing members came and bought their own lunches; they also volunteered to sell raffle tickets at a pittance. Winners of the raffle received prizes. Golfers, of course, won other prizes as well. Prizes for the best, the worst, the longest drive were donated by sporting goods stores and one dentist donated a tooth whitening kit. People rummaged their own homes and found items for prizes. And our dear member Manny Frisch donated his artistically built bird houses for a silent auction right there, in the midst of it all, on the golf course grounds. What more could you ask for?

The committee answered that. Now that they know the ropes, they're going for twice as much in proceeds next year. **Harriet Maza, *Humanorah* editor (photo above: Ron Creed, Mort Maza)**

Use Goodsearch — Support Humanistic Judaism

If you search the web, if you shop online, you can support SHJ. With Goodsearch.com as your search engine and your gateway to shopping online, each time you search using Goodsearch a donation will be made to the Society for Humanistic Judaism; and each time you shop at a participating merchant — Amazon, hotels, airlines, and much more — each time you purchase clothing, electronics, office supplies, toys, anything and everything online — a donation will be made to the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

You only need to download the Goodsearch toolbar at www.goodsearch.com. Then choose the Society for Hu-

manistic Judaism as your charity and our name will appear in the toolbar in the box saying "I support." Then search the Web or shop for your needs. Each search you do makes a donation for SHJ — if each of us does only one search a day, the Society would receive a donation of more than \$7500 in a year. And if the toolbar is downloaded to your web browser and Society for Humanistic Judaism is selected as your charity, each time you shop, a pop-up will tell you that a percentage of your purchase will be donated to the Society. Your time spent online searching and shopping will help to support programs and resources and endeavors that strengthen Humanistic Judaism and increase our visibility.

2009-2010 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The Society for Humanistic Judaism is pleased to thank the contributors to the 2009-2010 Fundraising Campaign.

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To Shari Gelber
Thank you for transportation and conversation
at the recent SHJ Board Meeting
From Faith Oremland

To Marlene Cohen
Thank you for transportation and conversation
at the recent SHJ Board Meeting
From Faith Oremland

To Murray Kramer
Thinking of you
From
The Society for Humanistic Judaism
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To Bonnie Cousens & Harriet Maza
In honor of the **Humanorah** and the printed word,
From Marilyn Rowens

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Congratulations on your retirement
From Bonnie Cousens
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To Beth Cousens,
Congratulations on your engagement
From Miriam Jerris & Stephen Stawicki

To Karen & Gary Levy
Congratulations on the birth of your grandson,
From Bonnie & Mark Cousens
Miriam Jerris & Stephen Stawicki

To Milton Matz
In memory of your wife, Jutta Organeck,
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To the Luria Family
In memory of Harold Luria
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To Millie Goodman
Thinking of you,
From The Society for Humanistic Judaism
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In Honor of Bert Steinberg & Lucia Brandon,
From Milton Matz

In Honor of Julie Kriegel
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To Lorraine Pivnick,
Wishing you a speedy recovery,
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To Shari Gelber
In honor of receiving the Sherwin T Wine
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To Gladys Steinberg,
In memory of your husband, Joe Steinberg
From The Society for Humanistic Judaism
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To The Society for Humanistic Judaism
With thanks for your caring & kindness
during our bereavement
From Gladys Steinberg & Family

To Stephen Mandell,
Wishing you a speedy recovery,
From The Society for Humanistic Judaism
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Thank you for your
hospitable care and tending of this hitch
hiker en route from the SHJ Board Meeting
to a sheep farm in the Missouri Ozarks
From Deb Godden

To Bonnie & Mark Cousens,
Congratulations on the engagement of your
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January 14-16, 2011	INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM SEMINAR, "Isaac & Ishmael: Jews & Muslims, Then & Now," featuring RABBI ADAM CHALOM, CHJ, Sarasota, FL. Contact: CHJSarasota@hotmail.com, (941) 929-7771.
February 4-6, 2011	RABBI BINYAMIN BIBER VISIT TO OCSHJ, Laguna Woods, CA. Contact: Sheila Bass, shekaba@aol.com, (949) 206-9452.
February 11, 2011	RABBI MIRIAM JERRIS SHABBAT CELEBRATION at BIRMINGHAM TEMPLE, Farmington Hills, MI. Contact: info@briminghamtemple.org, (248) 477-1410.
February 11-13, 2011	RABBI BINYAMIN BIBER VISIT TO KOL SHALOM, COMMUNITY FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM, Contact: info@kolshalom.org, (503) 459-4210.
March 25-27, 2011	HUJEWS TEEN & COLLEGE CONCLAVE 2011, "What Can You Do, HuJews? Tikkun Olam & Humanistic Judaism," Chicago, IL. Contact: SHJ, (248) 478-7610, info@shj.org or info@hujews.org.
May 19-22, 2011	SECULAR COALITION FOR AMERICA BIENNIAL STRATEGIC SUMMIT, Washington, D.C. Contact: www.secular.org.
September 28-October 2, 2011	RABBI MIRIAM JERRIS ROSH HASHANA VISIT TO ADAT CHAVERIM, Los Angeles, CA. Contact: info@HumanisticJudaismLA.org.
October 7-8, 2011	RABBI MIRIAM JERRIS YOM KIPPUR VISIT TO KOL HASKALAH, A HUMANISTIC JEWISH CONGREGATION, Triangle, NC. Contact: info@kolhaskalah.org, (919) 968-7888.

WELCOME to SHJ's Newest Communities
Humanist Jewish Chavurah of Columbus, Ohio
and
Humanistic Jewish Havurah of Southwest Florida, Naples