Miriam Rubin has joined the SHJ staff as the new HuJews Youth Program Associate. She will be working to bring together Humanistic Jewish teens and young adults across North America at the SHJ HuJews Conclave and by encouraging communication throughout the year.

As a teen, Miriam was greatly fulfilled by the relationships she formed attending SHJ conclaves, and the discussions she was able to have about self-identity and Humanistic Judaism. Recently, Miriam had the pleasure of attending her first conclave as an adult. Conclave 2013 (held at a beautiful camp in Michigan) focused on the theme of Pop Culture, which was reflected in a variety of ways. In addition to powerful Shabbat and Havdala services, there were fun group bonding activities modeled after game shows such as Minute to Win It and The Amazing Race. There were discussions about how Jews are represented in the media, and there were even performances by the HuJews themselves featured in the annual talent show. As one teen noted, “I had an amazing time at conclave this year... There was a great group of people... The activities and workshops we did were also very enjoyable.”

Experiencing Conclave as a teen, and witnessing it again as an adult has reinforced in Miriam the importance of providing Humanistic Jewish youth the opportunity to come together. Taking on the role of Youth Program Associate will give her the opportunity to do just that. Miriam was introduced to Humanistic Judaism at nine years old when her parents joined Kahal B’raira. Since then, she has participated actively as a student at the Sunday school, a member, and later leader of the youth group, and a Teacher’s Aide. In addition to the strong connection that Miriam has to Humanistic Judaism, she is passionate about working with teens and young adults. After spending the past five years working at a non-profit devoted to helping underserved students access and succeed in college, she will be attending Brandeis University in the Fall to earn an MBA in Non-Profit Management. Miriam is excited to be combining her strong connection to Humanistic Judaism with her interest in working with teens and young adults as she takes on the role of SHJ Youth Program Associate. She looks forward to being in touch with you as Conclave 2014 planning continues.
BIRMINGHAM TEMPLE CELEBRATES 50TH
IIISHJ ORDAINS 12TH RABBI IN NOVEMBER

Chartered by thirty-five families in November, 1963, the first congregation for Humanistic Judaism, the Birmingham Temple, will celebrate its 50th Anniversary, November 15-17, 2013. All are invited to attend this exciting weekend of events.

Festivities will include a Friday Shabbat Service, led by Birmingham Temple Rabbi, Jeffrey Falick. Rabbi Falick remarked, “Rabbi Sherwin Wine and a small number of enthusiastic families framed a vision that would grow into a thriving congregation and give rise to a worldwide movement. Our congregation’s anniversary is an occasion to celebrate accomplishments and to embrace an exciting future.

Saturday evening will begin with a Havdala Service and Rabbinic Ordination of Denise Handlarski, the recently appointed Assistant Rabbi of Oraynu Congregation in Toronto, Ontario. The ordination will be followed by a gala celebration of the Temple’s 50th.

Sunday morning, the IIISHJ will sponsor a mini-colloquium to coincide with the Global Day of Jewish Learning. Rabbis Adam Chalom, Sivan Maas, and Handlarski will present their ideas on the Jewish people present and future, as well as the future of Humanistic Judaism. They will be joined by Rabbis Falick and Jerris and other Humanistic rabbis for panel discussions. The Colloquium is free. Register at http://collo2013.eventbrite.com. A live webcast will be available at www.iishj.org.

“This weekend will be a celebration of the past, present, and future of Humanistic Judaism,” said Rabbi Chalom.

SHJ Opportunity in DC
Machar, the Washington, DC Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, seeks a Rabbi/Leader.

- This is a half-time position with potential to grow.
- Machar has more than 100 family and single memberships, a vital Sunday School, and a strong commitment to social action.

Please see http://www.machar.org/about/jobs-at-machar/ for a complete job description.

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President: Andrea Friedlander
Executive Director: Bonnie Cousens
Rabbi: Miriam Jerris
Editor: Harriet Maza

Address all inquiries about Humanorah to the Society for Humanistic Judaism, 28611 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI, 48334, 248/478-7610, Fax: 248/478-3159, info@shj.org.
Jeffrey L. Falick of Miami, Florida, has enthusiastically agreed to serve as rabbi for the Birmingham Temple for Humanistic Judaism, effective July 1 and in time to celebrate the congregation’s 50-year anniversary season with its members.

While living and working in Florida, Rabbi Falick was a member and rabbinic advisor to Congregation Beth Adam, the Boca Raton Congregation for Humanistic Judaism. In explaining his decision to come to Michigan, Rabbi Falick said, “In every movement in organized Jewish life, there are some institutions that represent the highest expression of its ideals. For Humanistic Jews, that place is the Birmingham Temple.”

Ordained as a Reform rabbi at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Rabbi Falick turned to Humanistic Judaism about ten years ago and became active within the movement. He has served on the Board of Directors of the SHJ for several years and currently serves on the SHJ Executive Committee as Secretary. He also is president of the Association of Humanistic Rabbis. SHJ Rabbi Miriam Jerris, who has worked closely with Rabbi Falick for several years, notes, “He brings his commitment to Humanistic Judaism, his passion for the Humanistic Jewish Movement, and his love for Jewish history and culture to The Birmingham Temple and Metro Detroit. His deep caring and compassion, coupled with his insatiable intellectual curiosity, will make a significant and powerful contribution to and impact on the Temple and the community.”

Last year he experienced an additional highlight when he led a private group of Humanistic Jews on a tour of Israel. “Zionism and Israel activism have played an important and consistent role in my own Jewish life,” said the rabbi who studied there and has made more than 30 trips to Israel.

Rabbi Falick believes that his 13-year engagement as the Assistant Executive Director and Jewish educator in the pluralistic environment of the Alper JCC in Miami has confirmed his passion for Humanistic Judaism: “The Humanistic Jewish approach is the broadest, most encompassing embrace of our Jewish identities. It brings to us a heightened awareness of the richness and variety of Jewish histories and practices across time and place. It helps us to locate our own place in the Jewish experience.”

“This approach yields wonderful bursts of creativity in our celebrations and ceremonies. We have learned how to freely and sometimes radically adapt and reposition Jewish customs because we understand that their value does not lie in their mere preservation. It lies in the benefits they provide to our lives and the strengthening of our ties to each other. Rabbi Sherwin Wine and the Birmingham Temple created this. Any rabbi who serves the congregation must understand this.”

Birmingham Temple President Lawrence Ellenbogen is excited about celebrating the Temple’s 50-year anniversary and on into the future with Rabbi Falick, whose talents are identical to the Temple’s needs. “He is the perfect rabbi for the Temple.”
Notes from Around the Globe continued

BETH ADAM SPREADS PASSOVER MESSAGE AT B & N

At Congregation Beth Adam this past March, we made the usual preparations for our Passover celebration. The hall was booked, the menu and the music scheduled and the invitations sent. All this was done so that our members, their families and friends could follow the Jewish tradition of Passover. We have provided this service for our congregation for the past 19 years of our existence.

This year it was decided to expand our outreach of the Passover message to the greater Boca Raton community. In concert with Barnes and Noble, we hosted a “Passover Story Time.” Local children and their parents were invited to a reading of the Passover story at the booksellers facility at the University Commons Plaza in Boca Raton. Education Director BJ Saul initiated the program and led the story time with the assistance of Rachel Ignatoff, a parent and Beth Adam Sunday School teacher.

The children (some non-Jewish) ranged in age from 4 to 12. They were enthralled by the telling and participated with questions and drawings. Their parents also participated in the event.

Beth Adam seeks to engage our community even beyond our membership list. This was but one event where we sought to spread not only Jewish holiday traditions, but also the message of Humanistic Judaism and Congregation Beth Adam.

by Irwin Cohn, President

ORANGE COUNTY MAKES LIFE COMFORTABLE FOR MEMBERS

Most long-standing Leisure World clubs owe their success to a shared attitude of friendship and caring among existing members that helps bring in new members. As the membership of the Congregation for Secular Humanistic Jews ages the caring must be demonstrated by frequent phone contact with expressions of concern and offers of help. Especially in our community, readily available transportation to meetings is a priority.

After every meeting, during nosh time, tables are set up and attendees are encouraged to sit, eat, and chat. Our activities consist of winter and summer film festivals. We have Friday meetings throughout the year, except in July and August, as well as celebrations of holidays and commemorations of other events. We have a summer dinner in July and a monthly newsletter keeps our membership informed of events like our once monthly Sunday Brunch, our twice monthly Sunday classes and Out n’ Abouts throughout the county.

Our August bar-b-que is an opportunity for us to introduce our philosophy and invite interested participants to join.

by Shirley Goodman, publicity chair, Laguna Woods, CA

KAHAL B’RAIRA HOSTS FAITH OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Faith Outreach Program of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities came to Congregation Kahal B’raira in March. KB member and attorney Carol Steinberg (L) and Michael Muehe, (R), Executive Director of the Commission, led a workshop on disability awareness aimed at making congregations accessible to all who choose to attend.

Photo by Jon Levine

by Shirley Goodman, publicity chair, Laguna Woods, CA
ADULT LEARNING, DIAPOREA DINING HITS AT KAHAL AM

Humanistic Jews in San Diego have been learning about Jewish cultures through the dining rooms of the world. On a Sunday every other month we visit a restaurant to enjoy the ethnic cuisine and listen to a member explain the history and culture of Jews who live(d) in that country. The event, publicized in our newsletter and through online calendars of events, has brought guests to the table in a comfortable social setting.

We discovered this idea through sharing with other SHJ communities, and it has been a big hit. Meeting at lunch works out best for people on limited incomes (sometimes there is a lunch special) and for those who prefer to drive during the daytime. Members often carpool. Organizers Naomi Title and Gary Zarnow look for personal and online recommendations of good restaurants before they choose the site. Our first Diaspora Dining event was, naturally, at a Chinese restaurant. Other cultures we visited included Ethiopian, Tibetan-Himalayan, Greek, Russian, and Mexican. In the upcoming year we will be exploring a Glatt Kosher restaurant. Wherever Jews have lived, there’s sure to be good food!

President Gary Zarnow has developed a successful adult education series using the recordings of SHJ Colloquia. This event occurs one Saturday morning a month at a public library and has been attended by members and guests. This year Zarnow used the 1997 program, “Reclaiming Jewish History.” He chose the most engaging lectures and developed a list of discussion questions to follow the lecturer’s talk. Often the class discussion develops naturally in response to the topic. He has also used the ten-part video series of Rabbi Wine’s lectures, “Introduction to Humanistic Judaism,” for his adult classes in past years. Zarnow plans to continue the adult education program with a new series in the fall.

by Madrikha Beverly Zarnow, Kahal Am, Humanistic Jewish Community of San Diego

OR EMET HIGHLIGHTS ... SEASON’S SUCCESSES

Greetings from Minnesota and Or Emet! Our congregation has had a busy year with programming, publicity, and our Jewish Cultural School.

Our curriculum focuses on the Jewish people from ancient times through the immigrant experience to present day. Children have had fun this year learning Jewish songs and a little Hebrew, reading the Four Questions at our community seder, and building a community sukkah in JCS director Eva Cohen’s backyard (along with a creative makeshift pirate ship).

As a part of our ongoing effort to better integrate JCS activities and the congregation as a whole, Or Emet kicked off our first family Shabbat, based on the “Peace of the Home” family Shabbat service created by Rabbi Adam Chalom of Kol Hadash, IL. The celebration included a potluck meal and the decoration of havdala spice boxes — a craft project featuring recycled food cartons that were transformed into beautiful spice containers.

Another highlight has been our Social Justice & Action committee’s volunteer efforts at a Minneapolis homeless shelter. On two occasions, volunteers provided dinner to about 50 homeless men. The event was so successful that four dinners are scheduled next year, and JCS children will be included among the volunteers.

Or Emet has also been busy growing its membership through increased publicity. Along with press releases and other efforts, the New Media committee has updated our website and worked some magic to greatly improve Or Emet’s search engine ranking.

by Naomi Rockler-Gladen
Kol Hadash, IL, Creates a To Do List

Have you played gaga? Do you listen to popular Israeli music? Can you blow a shofar? These are only a few of the “Fifty-Four Jewish Things To Do Before You’re Eighteen” list created by Kol Hadash, IL students, teachers, and parents.

Inspired by an article in the Jewish Daily Forward by Lenore Skenazy, members of the Kol Hadash educational community brainstormed a list of Jewish experiences they hoped students would have before they graduated from high school. Students, parents, grandparents, and teachers made, discussed and evaluated suggestions and then made plans to actually do these Jewish things.

From planting a tree in Israel to collecting stories from older relatives, the items on the list ranged from traditional to cultural to humanistic. The list included:

- Explain the basics of Humanistic Judaism;
- Talk to someone who has survived a war;
- Have a debate at the dinner table about some burning social issue;
- Go into the voting booth with a voter (learn how democracy has helped Jews historically);
- Download the Kol Hadash home Shabbat service and celebrate Shabbat in your home.

The last “thing” on the list was “add another item to this list!”

After talking and thinking about many Jewish activities, the groups chose to go on an all-congregation field trip to the Art Institute of Chicago to study Jewish and religious artwork, an experience the congregation last took in 2008. Each class had a unique tour through the museum. Rabbi Chalom led a group of adults on their own exploration of Jewish artists. The only complaint about the field trip was that we didn’t have enough time to see everything!

On the last day of Sunday school, students and parents talked about what they had done from the list. With the arrival of summer, there were plenty of opportunities to have even more than 54 Jewish experiences!

Story and Photo by David Hirsch

Secular Jewish Circle Prepares for Holidays

Secular Jewish Circle sponsored a four-part class offered to members and non-members on preparing for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. The class, held once a month starting in June, is being led by Susan Levine, a certified leader in the Secular Humanistic Jewish movement. Through the sessions she presents the opportunity for participants to enjoy the great gift of these holidays. The sessions focus on teachings of the holiday and how they can guide us throughout the year, helping us to more fully integrate our Jewishness into everyday life.

The traditions and teachings of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are rich with humanistic, secular, non-theistic beauty and meaning, intended to help us better know ourselves and our world. Through in-class readings and discussion, each two-hour session focuses on particular themes and values upon which the holidays rest:

- T’shuva – turning to face our truest selves
- The Sound of the Shofar – waking up to the moment
- Tashlikh – letting go of that which no longer serves us
- Gemilut Hasadim – acts of loving kindness that contribute to tikkun olam, the repair of the world
- The Book of Life – writing ourselves into the coming year
- Vows and Forgiveness – primary themes of Yom Kippur

The class enriches our members’ understanding of the holidays and their connection to Humanistic Judaism, and provides a meaningful entry point to our community for nonmembers.

by Judi Gladstone, Board Designee
MACHAR ENJOYS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE SEMINAR WEEKEND

When we made the plans to host our first IISHJ weekend seminar, “Matzah without Dogma: Four Centuries of Secular and Humanistic Judaism,” we knew Rabbi Adam Chalom would provide a stimulating and educational weekend. What we didn’t expect was the added benefit of Macharniks bonding through a weekend together. All our congregants are so busy that an IISHJ seminar is the treat of a weekend set aside for stimulating Jewish knowledge and conversation.

Our seminar weekend of February 8–10, 2013, included a Friday Shabbat, sessions all day Saturday and a Sunday morning session with attendance ranging from 40-70! Some factors that added to our success: we selected a convenient location near public transportation and near inexpensive restaurants; arranged home stay for any out-of-towners who requested it; incorporated the seminar into the congregation’s regular calendar of Shabbats and Sunday education; and we publicized often, widely and early. We kept the fees low – no more than $60 for the weekend and even less for Machar members – to prioritize participation over turning a profit. The Silver Spring Civic Center, our venue for Friday evening and Saturday, was reasonably priced and letting people wander to restaurants allowed us to charge less. Also Rabbi Chalom was great to work with: he organized his seminar to best match our needs.

So, yes, if you’re pondering hosting an IISHJ weekend, keep it simple and inexpensive and enjoy it!

by Marlene Cohen, SHJ Board Designee

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BETH CHAVERIM CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF JEWISH CULTURE, EDUCATION AND TZEDAKAH

This past January, Beth Chaverim Humanistic Community of Deerfield, IL, proudly celebrated its 10th year anniversary. In addition to our thriving Sunday School, which is active with field trips, guest speakers and special events, and our adult education featuring a “Women in the Bible” study group, we have focused on community service as our way of giving back and engaging in tikkun olam.

Beth Chaverim has been extremely and proudly active in charity work throughout the year, involving both adults and children in helping those in need. In the past school year, the Sunday School participated in the Day of Hope along with other religious communities throughout Southeast Lake County. They made cookies for the local fire department, dog toys for a local animal shelter, cards for the siblings of chronically ill children, and cleaned vehicles for our school site, the Center for Enriched Living.

Throughout the year the children prepared breakfasts and lunches for clients at PADS, a local shelter for the homeless.

Each summer the community donates food and then prepares a Sunday dinner for a large soup kitchen in Evanston. In addition, food is collected for the local food pantry during the High Holidays; donations are pooled from members in times of local and global disasters; and there is an active Helping Hands committee to assist individual members in times of need. It has been an active year, responsive to many needs. We look forward to continuing to make a difference locally and globally.

by Rabbi Jodi Kornfeld and Deb Rusnak, Deerfield, IL
As Humanistic Jews, we often feel isolated in our practice of Judaism. Even when we’re fortunate enough to belong to a Humanistic Jewish community of some kind, the community itself often struggles with a sense of philosophical isolation.

The Society is working hard to combat those feelings of isolation and create a sense of community among our affiliates and at-large members. As the mothership, the Society can do things for members that they cannot do for themselves – serve as a voice for Humanistic Judaism on the national and international stage, attain visibility at both secular and Jewish conferences and rallies, sponsor a thriving annual youth Conclave, provide a veritable treasure trove of vetted online resources, and offer more than 40 years of wisdom and nurturing that only a mothership can provide.

But we are also working on ways to enhance the connections directly between our members to promote the sense that we are not alone out there; rather, we are all part of a thriving Humanistic Jewish community that is doing exciting things in many different locales. To promote these lateral connections, the Society:

- Delivers this publication, *Humanorah*, which highlights twice per year a wide variety of interesting events and programs going on in our affiliated communities;
- Is launching a second e-newsletter called Community Connections (*Kesher*, in Hebrew) that will highlight, in digest form, community programs of interest;
- Maintains both an SHJ Facebook page to connect our members with each other and a HuJews Facebook page to connect our post-mitzvah-age youth;
- Established Google Groups for leaders and committee chairs to communicate directly with each other;
- Set up an Educator’s list-serve for school directors and teachers in affiliate schools to communicate directly with each other;
- Is currently soliciting input from our at-large members about creating an online discussion group moderated by the SHJ rabbi to exchange ideas and resources;
- Provided support to our communities who have organized regional conferences – three in the North East and one in Florida – open for any SHJ affiliates and members to attend;
- Recently held a working meeting of five educators to share ideas and begin development of a model curriculum that will be made available to SHJ community Sunday schools;
- Holds brainstorming sessions at our semi-annual meetings on how to solve some of the most challenging issues commonly faced by our communities – all the suggestions are recorded and emailed to each community.

I know from personal experience that our Humanistic Jewish Community has interesting, creative, energetic people who share a passion for Humanistic Judaism, a passion for the idea of community, and a deep desire to make both the best they can be. Getting to know these people and collaborating with them is the best part of being involved with the Society. We are each other’s most valuable resource. Let’s get to know each other!
After five years of providing excellent leadership, Kahal B’raira’s Sunday School principal Sandra Mayo has retired, leaving behind a strong, healthy school program. We will miss Sandra and wish her the best. She did such an outstanding job as principal that to replace her, we expanded the job to Education Director.

Our new Education Director is Rabbi Rachel Dvash Schoenfeld, who was selected by a sizable group of KB teachers, parents and leaders who reviewed the applications, interviewed and then chose Rachel as their clear first choice. We are delighted she chose us as well!

Rabbi Schoenfeld has taught in various Jewish educational settings for the past 15 years. She will lead/administer our Sunday school and youth group and support such activities as family Shabbat and holiday celebrations that involve youth. She will work cooperatively with our b’nai mitzvah program. She is the first rabbi to lead our school. But she will not be the congregation’s rabbi.

Although, we have employed rabbis as Judaic consultants, KB has been a lay-led congregation all along. By her choice and ours, it will remain that way. We are eager to begin this new phase in the growth of our congregation and our education program. We are confident that our school will flourish under Rabbi Rachel Dvash Schoenfeld’s direction.

CHJ, Fairfield County, CT, has long had trimester planning committees for adult programs. On one of my first trimester planning committees, I followed up on a NY Times article. As the author was a professor at Rutgers University, the possibility existed that he might come to Fairfield County for a program. So I placed a call to his New Brunswick, N.J. office. We had an interesting discussion but he declined to visit. He concluded the call with some somber advice: “Judaism is best practiced in a community.” I guess I should have started our call differently. He hadn’t heard the part about the vibrant community of which I was already a part.

Now, many years later, if he and I happened to talk again, I would add a few new points to my vibrant community spiel.

First I’d tell him about our recent Menschlichkeit award brunch and the two wonderful recipients of that award, Saul Haffner and Lucy Katz. He’d learn of their numerous, varied, contributions to CHJ and the wider community and of the fun time we had celebrating and remembering with them.

Then I’d tell him about the support I felt as part of CHJ after the tragedy in Newtown. The constructive ideas and energy for making societal change that we passed back and forth to one another helped pull us forward.

Finally I’d circle back to the NY Times and ask if he’d read the article that cited the October Pew Research Center poll that concluded that one fifth of the U.S. population now identifies as having no religious affiliation, “nones”. While most of them are unlikely to join a Humanistic Judaism congregation, many of them are part of the larger secular community of which we are members.

Twenty years after the phone call I’m feeling pretty cozy here in my community practicing Judaism the best way I can imagine. If I had his email address, I’d send him the link to our website and invite him to one of our fabulous programs.

by Gladys Maged and Jon Levine

by Jane Campbell, president

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 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 executivedirector@shj.org.
The success of Adat’s Matching Fund Campaign, last May, truly was phenomenal. Not only did we approach the goal of $4,000 in contributions to match the $4,000 donated by benefactors, but we exceeded it and brought our totals to $10,250 [This California congregation consists of 33 households].

The unity that developed among members, parents and supporters reached new heights during the campaign. A chord has been struck among our membership and supporters, who really get what we’re about and who want to build that further. The entire congregation is overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm shown and sincerely thanks all contributors from the bottom of our hearts.

The Board of Directors will work diligently to use the contributions to achieve the goals stated in the original announcement:

- Ensuring Adat Chaverim’s future by enabling us to pay our ever-rising operating costs;
- Sustaining the Joe Steinberg Cultural Sunday School, a vital component of our programming and growth;
- Securing our Leadership Fund, enabling Cantor Friedmann to continue his work as leader and educator and a key to our growth;
- Strengthening our bonds with other humanist groups and individuals and promoting outreach.

Members all really put their money where their mouth is and it will make all the difference to the future of the congregation and to Humanistic Judaism in the Los Angeles area.

by David Borden, president, Los Angeles, CA

Happy Anniversary
Kol Shalom on your 20th
The Birmingham Temple on your 50th
Mazel Tov!
A new year often brings us opportunities for new beginnings. Our history teaches us that today is built on the lessons of yesterday. As Jews, our history has shown that life often brings oppression, degradation, segregation, inequality, and the accompanying loss of freedom, dignity, civil rights, and even life. As Humanists, history teaches us to value equality, freedom, and justice for all. The lessons of the past yield the promise of a better tomorrow.

While some may assert that voicing our views on issues is venturing into the political realm, it is important to remember that the issues we care about often become the subject of political discourse — and then of legislation. We have a responsibility as Humanistic Jews to join the discourse on issues that concern us. We must speak out not only to protect our own individual rights but also to defend the civil rights and equality of all people. The battles of the past century — civil rights, equal education, women’s rights, choice, gay rights, workers’ rights — continue into this new year. The positions we have espoused remain imperatives.

In a Supreme Court ruling striking down DOMA, married same-sex couples were granted the same Federal rights and benefits as married heterosexual couples. And a newly-issued IRS ruling enables married same-sex couples to file joint tax returns, even in states that do not allow homosexual couples to marry. SHJ joined in the Supreme Court amicus briefs in both same-sex marriage cases but this fight is not yet over — 37 states still forbid same-sex marriage.

SHJ also joined an amicus brief in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals opposing the Boy Scouts’ discriminatory policies with respect to sexual orientation and religious belief. Although the Boy Scouts recently decided to allow homosexual boys to join Scouts, they continue to forbid homosexual adults to serve as leaders and continue to reject atheist youth and adults.

Despite a Supreme Court ruling upholding Obamacare, women’s access to appropriate health care remains under attack. Ignoring their infringement on others’ religious freedom, opponents claim their freedom of religion is threatened if any employer or individual is forced to provide contraceptive care, abortion, other medical care or insurance coverage that violates their personal religious beliefs.

Women also came under attack as the U.S. Congress debated VAWA (Violence against Women Act). SHJ joined a broad coalition in a letter to Congress urging passage of VAWA. It passed!

SHJ adopted a resolution opposing school vouchers, recognizing that vouchers mainly support religious schools. As the observance of the 50th anniversary of the ‘63 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom reminded us, secular education and a strong public school system offer the best access to economic security and civil rights for all.

Schools in Columbine, Sandy Hook, Decatur; a political rally in Tucson; a movie theater in Aurora; in our homes and on our streets – gun violence must end. SHJ has adopted a resolution urging a ban on assault rifles and high capacity magazines but this fight continues.

SHJ joined the Military Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF) and others in seeking acceptance of Humanist chaplains in the military. We believe all members of the armed forces deserve counsel from chaplains who share their beliefs.

SHJ has adopted a resolution stating our belief that no one should be subjected to any form of harassment, racism, or violence based on their beliefs or identity. The increase in the use of violence as a means of expressing disagreement with an individual’s or a group’s beliefs must end. Not only has such violence been perpetrated against those expressing different political, religious, ethical, or social opinions, but harassment and racism have become the tools of choice for many in combating ideas with which they disagree. Our resolution supporting gender equality recognizes that not only violence, but discrimination and subjugation based on gender continue to require efforts at prevention.

As we begin this new year, let us remember that the struggle to uphold our values is a never-ending process. It is only through silence, that rights can be denied. Even one voice can make a difference. Coming together with others, in our communities, in the Society, in coalitions, we make our voice stronger. SHJ will continue to be a voice for the values and beliefs we share as Humanistic Jews. As this new year begins, pledge to add your voice. Shana tova.
Today, more than two thousand households, most of them through membership in congregations and communities, are part of the Society for Humanistic Judaism. The SHJ history stems from the founding of the Birmingham Temple under Rabbi Sherwin Wine in 1963. SHJ now comprises 29 affiliated communities in the U.S. and Canada. We’ve achieved many great things – among them:

- Conveying Jewish values and history to countless young people via our Jewish education systems, celebrated in joyous Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies;
- Welcoming “mixed culture” families who come from Jewish and non-Jewish origins;
- Reinvigorating adults who learn more about Humanistic Judaism in adult education classes (and who often then celebrate adult confirmations);
- Gaining national visibility ourselves and through alliances with other secular and humanistic organizations by issuing statements, joining in amicus briefs, and participating in conferences – for example, at last year’s huge national Reason Rally on the Mall in Washington, DC;
- Introducing hundreds of young people all over North America to one another at our “wildly successful annual HuJews conclaves,” as our current president has described them.

However: repeatedly, the SHJ Board has done brainstorming sessions to devise ways we could better help our affiliated communities, repeatedly we run up against the hard fact that we are severely limited in what we can do by a shortage of staff and resources.

SHJ’s visionary goals include having an inventory of programs, speakers, and curricula; developing rabbis and madrikhim to lead our communities; assisting nascent communities across North America; promulgating humanistic values throughout the general society; and more. While we recently have made major steps toward these goals – e.g., by adding new communities, by hiring Miriam Rubin as Youth Program Associate – we could do much, much more if we had more staff and more funds.

Please help us achieve our shared vision! Your donation can make an immediate difference to improve SHJ’s ability to support you and to reach others like you. SHJ faces a funding gap of $15,000 just to sustain last year’s activities. Another $20,000 would allow us to make major advances on programs, community growth, and visibility.

You can help the Society connect you with other Humanistic Jews, supplement the excellent work done by your congregation or community, train leaders for Humanistic Jews in North America and internationally thru the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, and increase the visibility and strength of Humanistic Judaism. Please contribute generously to the Fund for Humanistic Judaism – now, or by the end of 2013. The Society helps you – please help the Society.

Your Generosity Makes a Difference.
Your gift to the SHJ can ensure the future of Humanistic Judaism.

☐ Contact me about the Pooled Income Fund or a planned gift.
☐ I am enclosing a tax deductible donation to the SHJ:

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|--------|-------| | | |
| $136   | $150  | $236 | $250 | $360 | $536 |

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On May 31, 2013, the members of The Birmingham Temple did something for the very first time in their almost 50 year history. They held a special membership meeting and chose the person to be their next rabbi. On Sunday, May 19 more than 250 people came to meet a leading candidate for the vacant rabbinic position at the first congregation for Humanistic Judaism. And twelve days later more than 200 people unanimously voted to hire Rabbi Jeffrey Falick as the next rabbi of The Birmingham Temple. It was an emotional and powerful experience.

This has been a year of transition for The Birmingham Temple. Last summer, the rabbi resigned and the year of change began. Change and transition present great challenges for congregations, even those dedicated to innovation as we are in Humanistic Judaism. Like all organizations that experience change, The Birmingham Temple went through various stages. It was an important process and included sadness and anger at the loss of the rabbi, fear about the future, anxiety and distrust of the process and finally a show of intense support and connection, a feeling of excitement and hope for the future.

Author, Martin Saarinen, in a very insightful article called “Life Cycle of a Congregation” (Alban Institute), establishes the inevitability and even the advisability of conflict in communities. Conflict provides both the opportunity for creativity and growth as well as presenting the dangers of vulnerability and the appearance of weakness. “Care giving institutions in general and [congregations] in particular have a lot of difficulty in appreciating tension and conflict as endemic to healthy organizations. The potency for renewal is positively related to the level of crisis in the congregation—the deeper the level of crisis, the greater the potential for renewal.” We clearly had a great potential for renewal.

Forgetfulness becomes the overarching problem when communities experience traumatic conflict. What is required at this stage is for the congregation to remember and retell the stories of what made the congregation alive and vital. It is clear that The Birmingham Temple was ripe for that experience. The outpouring of attendance at both events showed how important The Birmingham Temple and Humanistic Judaism are to so many people. The excitement at discovering a capable, philosophically committed humanistic rabbi was electric. It was intensely gratifying that almost as many people came to the meeting to vote as to the rabbinic visit.

During the past year, we analyzed and agonized, suffering the pain that growth and change require. But in the end, the members of The Birmingham Temple spoke with their feet and showed up when it counted. In November, the Birmingham Temple will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The celebration will be more intense because we survived a very disruptive period. We have demonstrated that we can endure even through very difficult times. Now we can recall the beginnings and celebrate all that we have been and all that we will be.

I know that many members of other communities were watching and waiting to see what would happen at The Birmingham Temple. As the first congregation for Humanistic Judaism, the other communities look to it for guidance, possibly even worrying about the future for all of Humanistic Judaism as the Temple floundered and then found its way. When it counted most, the members of The Birmingham Temple showed that Humanistic Judaism was important to them. The Birmingham Temple found the strength to endure and triumph, in themselves and each other and the message to the rest of the members of the Society for Humanistic Judaism is clear. We have a distinct philosophy worth fighting for and preserving. “Where is my strength? My strength is in me. And in you.”

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Send your e-mail address to info@shj.org and begin to receive the SHJ e-newsletter, “On the Move,” with timely news about the Society’s activities.
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SHJ is pleased to recognize our Sustaining Communities for the 2012-2013 year. The generous support of SHJ’s Sustaining Communities strengthens SHJ affiliated communities, assists those interested in starting new communities, provides programs that meet the needs of SHJ communities, and helps the Humanistic Jewish Movement grow and prosper.

SHJ is grateful to the following SHJ affiliated communities for becoming Sustaining Communities in 2012-2013:

- Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Fairfield County, CT
- Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Morris County, NJ
- Kol Shalom Community for Humanistic Judaism, OR
- Machar, The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, D.C.
- Oraynu Congregation, Toronto, ON
- Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism, NY

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**SHJ UPCOMING EVENTS**

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<tr>
<td>September 19-26, 2013</td>
<td>SUKKOT</td>
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<td>September 27, 2013</td>
<td>SIMCHAT TORAH</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 28-December 5</td>
<td>HANUKKA</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 13-15, 2013</td>
<td>IISHJ SEMINAR, BASIC IDEAS OF SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM, Kahal B’raira, Boston, MA. Contact: <a href="mailto:info@iishj.org">info@iishj.org</a>.</td>
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<td>January 24-26, 2014</td>
<td>IISHJ SEMINAR, WOMEN IN JEWISH LIFE, Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Sarasota, FL. Contact: <a href="mailto:info@iishj.org">info@iishj.org</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7-9, 2014</td>
<td>IISHJ SEMINAR, FROM CULT TO CULTURE, Or Adam, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: <a href="mailto:info@iishj.org">info@iishj.org</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 28-30, 2014</td>
<td>HUJEWS TEEN AND COLLEGE CONCLAVE, Boston, MA. Contact: <a href="mailto:info@shj.org">info@shj.org</a> or <a href="mailto:hujews@shj.org">hujews@shj.org</a>.</td>
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<td>April 25-27, 2014</td>
<td>IISHJ SEMINAR, FOUR QUESTIONS, The City Congregation, Manhattan, NY. Contact: <a href="mailto:info@iishj.org">info@iishj.org</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 13-15, 2014</td>
<td>RABBI FRANK TAMBURELLO VISIT TO ORANGE COUNTY CONGREGATION FOR SECULAR HUMANISTIC JEWS, CA. Contact: <a href="mailto:Rosart1@aol.com">Rosart1@aol.com</a>.</td>
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