

## BCC BEGINS 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

In 1972, a small group of Jewish gay men and lesbians were attending services at the gay-friendly Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles. They were alienated from synagogue life because of their sexuality, but were unwilling to abandon their traditions entirely. With the assistance of Rev. Troy Perry of MCC, they founded BCC as the first LGBT synagogue in the world! All this year, the BCC community will mark our 40th anniversary with celebrations, entertainment and programming that recalls our past while looking forward to our future. We'll honor the pioneers of our community, remember their struggles and achievements, and also come together to explore what new horizons we can reach in our beautiful new home.

The kick-off event for BCC's 40th anniversary year will be a screening of filmmaker Glenna McElhinney's award-winning exploration of Los Angeles queer history, "On These Shoulders We Stand," on Saturday evening, January 21 at BCC. Eleven elders of the Lesbian Gay Bi and Trans communities in LA tell their own stories against a background of images and events chronicling LGBT life in LA in the 1950s through the 1980s. Of special interest is BCC member Marsha Epstein, who narrates her experience over four decades as a bisexual woman and an early leader in health care for our community (see page 5 for details). Don't miss this riveting film history, and then come back for another screening and two book readings in February.

Elsewhere in this issue, Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Cantor Juval Porat help us prepare for this anniversary year by looking back at our recent accomplishments, and inviting us to explore the musical heritage of our Reform movement. Watch for announcements of more exciting and memorable events throughout the year!

## Cantor Juval Porat Shines with "Love in US" Concert

Larry Nathenson

As I drove to BCC on Saturday evening, December 3, 2011, I didn't know what to expect. The advertising and announcements for Cantor Porat's "Love in US" concert had left me with an intriguing sense of mystery. We were told to expect the sanctuary to look different, but not how different. We were told Juval would step outside his cantorial comfort zone, but now how far or in what way. What I saw and heard, along with about 150 others, was more than worth the wait.

The bimah in BCC's beautiful sanctuary was transformed into a cabaret stage, with a red curtain covering the ark and the story lines wall, a small table with roses, a teacup and "vodka" bottle, and lights around the edges on the floor. Cantor Porat sang more than a dozen songs all relating to the theme of love, from many different eras. From Cole Porter's "Let's Do It" (in German) and Harold Arlen and Ira Gershwin's "The Gal That Got Away" through Burt Bacharach and Hal David's "Promises, Promises" to Annie Lennox's "Why" and Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl (and I liked it)," his voice never wavered but only grew stronger. He also sang two of his own compositions, "Yummy" and "LA/American Life." The songs were punctuated with monologues from John Bowe's "US – Americans Talk About Love," including one by a man (Kristian Hoffman) who goes through relationships centered on drugs and alcohol before finding real love with a man in middle age, and another by a woman (Lisa Norgaard) married to a conservative Christian who painfully realizes and acts upon



PHOTO: A.J. LLEWELLYN

her love for a woman.

As for the subjective experience, blogger A.J. Llewellyn, a friend of BCC, said it far better than I could. Here are some excerpts from A.J.'s blog:

"... Those of us who have been privileged to hear [Juval] sing week after week at the temple know he has that extra sparkle that superstars have. I have a feeling however that he himself has no clue of how seriously special he is, and that is part of his charm.

"Yes, he has matinee idol good looks, a sweet smile that is haunting, and he has brains and mathematical talent on top of his high creativity. He also carries with him the heavy load of expectation. The formerly German-based Juval is the first cantor to be ordained in that country since the Holocaust. ... It is his burden and an honor. I see the invisible bag of hammers he carries around and I empathize with him.

"As he performed last night with his partner, Todd, beaming from the middle row behind me, and his proud mother sitting a few seats away from me (she flew in from Israel for the event) I realized that Juval has done a lot of thinking and observing in his two years here. He has come to realize how love and fear have become horribly entwined. Not just here, but everywhere.

"His heart-breaking portrayal of Lisa Norgaard's story was devastating. As he describes the loneliness of being free to be herself, fear transforms to slow acceptance. I saw many heads nodding. ... Juval went on to talk about how all of us at some time or other in our lives hide behind a persona of some kind, yearning to be loved. ... There was humor too in his fabulous rendition of 'I'm Hip' and some of his interactions with his incredible band.

"I hope this is the first of many loving concerts the cantor performs [and] I hope we don't end up losing him to a world tour and fame and riches, but ... what I hope more than anything is that he keeps growing and exploring his art and the nature of Love in US." (<http://www.ajllewellyn.com/site/2011/12/04/1578/>)

Proceeds from the concert went to BCC and to Project Chicken Soup and ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive. Cantor Porat was accompanied by Tamara Kline on piano, Scott Ferguson on violin, David Tranchina on bass, and TJ Troy on drums and percussion. Thanks also to Vince Cerundolo for sound, William Korthoff for lighting, Neal Weisenberg as executive producer, and Adam Kulbersh and Gina Manziello for creative input, as well as to all the BCC staff and volunteers who worked hard to make this concert happen

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Rabbi Lisa Edwards is available for private appointments. Please call at least a week in advance, if possible, to schedule.	
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G'VANIM	
G'vanim "Hues (of the rainbow)" is the monthly newsletter of	
<b>BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM</b> 6090 West Pico Blvd., L.A. CA 90035	
Founded in 1972 as the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue, today BCC is an inclusive community of progressive lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and heterosexual Jews, our families, and friends. Everyone is welcome to attend weekly Friday evening services at 8:00 p.m.	
Editor: Larry Nathenson. Graphics & Layout: Lentini Design. Articles submitted should be typed, emailed or attached as Word documents to <a href="mailto:Larrynath@aol.com">Larrynath@aol.com</a> , by the 15th of the month before publication. To subscribe to G'vanim, send name and address and a check or money order for \$18 per year, attention: Subscriptions. Free to members.	
<b>BCC is affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism, World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews: Keshet Ga'avah and the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.</b>	

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## G'vanim Advertising Rates

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(Rates in bold are discounted 20% for BCC members)

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# From the Rabbi's study... 40 Years Out of The Wilderness

Rabbi Lisa Edwards

Here's the Torah verse that came to my mind when I began to think about entering BCC's 40th anniversary year:

*And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes did not wear out upon you, nor did the shoes upon your feet.*  
[Deuteronomy 29:4]

## "A Calling I Never Expected"

Rabbi Yossi Carron  
Will Drash at BCC

On Friday evening, February 3, Rabbi Yossi Carron will deliver a guest drash at BCC on "A Calling I Never Expected: Working with Jewish Inmates and Addicts/ Putting a Stop to the Cycle."

A former bandleader, singer, and cantorial soloist, Rabbi Carron was ordained by Hebrew Union College in 2003. Since then he has served as the Senior Jewish Chaplain for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in their entire jail system. He is also the Jewish Chaplain at Corcoran State Prison. While he primarily serves Jewish inmates, he also has a considerable amount of interaction with non-Jewish inmates, most of whom are addicts, and helps some former inmates build a sober and healthy life after release through his non-profit 13-bed house, Mekom Tikvah (Place of Hope). Rabbi Carron will offer his insights on addiction and spirituality in the criminal justice system.

But as my mother (of blessed memory), who was in the women's clothing business, might have said, "even if your shoes don't wear out, your feet change, styles change, you get tired of same old same old – a little something new once in a while – it's invigorating!"

Indeed that's how I feel as BCC enters our 40th anniversary year (2012) with a new home plus all the potential that experience, history, and an ongoing delight in change and newness can bring. During 2012 we will take opportunities to look back at all we've accomplished through the years, but I expect we'll spend even more time living in the here and now, and looking forward to all we can and will accomplish as we go forward.

Even just a quick look back at some of our accomplishments in this past calendar year shows us on the move in more ways than two blocks west and into our new very "green" building. Solar panels aren't the only thing that's heating up and lighting up BCC. Since April when we moved into 6090 (with hundreds of people in attendance), we've hosted a cantors' concert and a cantor's cabaret, and talks by Prof. Reuven

Firestone on Islam and Judaism, Prof. Aaron Belkin on the dismantling of Don't Ask Don't Tell, Prof. Rachel Adler on Jewish

prayer, and Gershom Gorenberg on the future of Israel. Chef Peter Bastien has begun to show us what our new kitchen makes possible, and our new BCC Professionals series is well underway allowing BCCers to get a glimpse of the work we do when we're not at BCC. These are just a few of the events that have happened so far – and we've got lots more in the works.

We may have walked into our first 40 years in platform shoes (see Juval's column on the styles of 1972), but my mother was proved right again – those platform shoes may be the only thing still in the closet among BCC members, as we step out and proud and into the future. Happy 40th anniversary BCC! I feel so blessed to be celebrating it with all of you.



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE



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# BCC to Honor Reform Pioneers on February 10

Cantor Juval Porat

PHOTO: KENNA LOVE



1972 was part of a decade characterized by fashion trends such as platform shoes and wide-legged jeans. Don McLean's "American Pie" was on top of the American charts, "Fiddler on the Roof" had its movie premier, John Lennon's immigration visa had expired, the Watergate affair was exposed, and in Los Angeles the world's first LGBT Synagogue was founded. I wasn't

there; I don't know the sights and smells of that era. I can go and listen to the many stories shared by long-time BCC members or browse through the archived stories and sounds of that time. And I can, like hopefully many others, mark the place and time at which I was first touched by the existence of Beth Chayim Chadashim.

As we kick off our 40th anniversary celebrations, it is time to ask how much has changed and how much has stayed the same in the 40

years leading up to today. How many early BCC-related experiences can still be revisited in today's community? What made room for the many reforms and innovations in the communal structure, in the liturgy, the rituals, the many ways of expression for LGBT Jews?

One thing that has remained a constant at BCC is the honoring of those who came before - those who paved the way to what BCC is today. We all owe this vibrant community in which Judaism is practiced authentically to the leaders and members who helped build this congregation along the way. They were all visionaries in their time.

I think BCC's growth and development is a reflection of a larger community that BCC is a part of - the Jewish Reform Movement. Just like BCC, Reform Judaism started as an experiment, constantly struggling, asking questions, and innovating with the tools available in each generation. We'll have a chance to celebrate and honor the pioneers of what today is the largest Jewish denomination in America during a special classical Reform service on February 10th. We'll travel back in time to early 19th century Western Europe where Reform Judaism began, and to the USA in the latter part of the 19th century, where Reform Judaism continued to thrive.

Reform Judaism can be traced to Germany in the early

19th century. Then and there, the Friday night service became the most prominent service for the Reform movement, in which the new values of Judaism and Jewish identity, merged with modern thinking and behaviors, were presented to visitors and members of the Jewish community. Liturgy was completely altered, entire sections of the service were removed, and the vernacular (German) language replaced the Hebrew (something that might sound familiar to those who witnessed the early days of BCC's attempt to find a gender-neutral language for God).

The 19th Century brought a record of new liturgical music (also known as tool-music) being written, researched, notated and analyzed for the synagogue, like no century before. This was mainly possible due to

political developments in Europe and the breakthrough of Reform Judaism. New views on Judaism, liturgy, service props and the physical appearance of the synagogue were formed by mostly by rabbis. Cantors and musicians (Jewish and non-

Jewish alike) made their musical decisions based on the then existing ideas of what is sublime, transcendent and inviting. Some new developments were the use of organ, of order, and of a staging of the service. This created various debates on the importance of maintaining and integrating the traditional musical modes into the new

service, versus making use of melodies, some borrowed, some new, that used the harmonic and musical ideas practiced in the Protestant churches nearby, or in German folk music, or in the Oratorio form.

During this special service, to be co-led by Cantor Lance Tapper, we'll make use of some familiar and lesser-known compositions - some of them are still used

in Reform synagogues around the world. I truly hope this will be one of many opportunities for us as a community to acknowledge and enjoy the beautiful works of the pioneers of our movement. From Louis Lewandowski to Debbie Friedman, these incredible individuals have constantly tried to innovate with the tools of their times, in order to create an uplifting spiritual experience during services.

I look forward to seeing many of you on February 10 and beyond. May BCC's 40th anniversary year and future journey be filled with joyous opportunities to celebrate this cross-generational vision in all of its multi-colored variations!

*As we kick off our 40th anniversary celebrations, it is time to ask how much has changed and how much has stayed the same in the 40 years leading up to today.*



Labeled "Creaciones/Robertina"

## Films and Book Discussions Help Kickoff BCC's 40th Anniversary Year

At the start of a year full of celebrations, remembrances, and hopes for our future, BCC is pleased to screen two outstanding films and present two accomplished authors to help us explore the varied communities we identify with – the pioneers of LGBT activism in Los Angeles, the lost Jewish communities of Europe (in this case, Italy), and American Jewish communities struggling with acceptance of their GLBT members. We hope this will be only the start of an exciting and illuminating year.

### “On These Shoulders We Stand” Screens January 21



“On These Shoulders We Stand” is a film that chronicles the lives of eleven LGBT elders, from their earliest years to their coming out to their

groundbreaking activism for the rights of all LGBT people, from the 1950s into the early 1980s. Countering the popular belief that the early gay rights movement was confined to New York City and San Francisco, the film profiles several Angelenos who helped pioneer the LGBT struggle, statewide and nationally. Viewers will learn the lasting impact the L.A. gay community has wielded on early homophile efforts and publications, the entertainment industry, and the civil rights movement. The documentary brings to light Los Angeles' significant, yet hidden, role in U.S. gay history by interweaving first-person accounts with narration and seldom-seen archival materials. Among those featured are LGBT activist Ivy Bottini, the Rev. Troy Perry, L.A. Times film critic Kevin Thomas, and BCC member Marsha Epstein who was the Medical Director of Herself Health Clinic, the first lesbian clinic in Los Angeles.

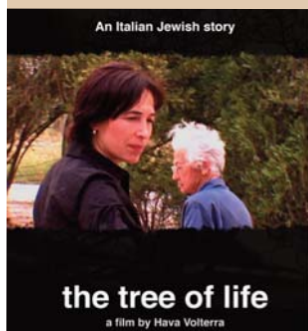
“On These Shoulders We Stand” is a documentary film project of Impact Stories: California's LGBT History, and of Glenne McElhinney, an independent filmmaker, researcher and oral historian based in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Impact Stories has recently received funding for a tour of California to show the film to students and families, focusing on rural and suburban areas of the Golden State. For more information contact [glenne@impactstories.org](mailto:glenne@impactstories.org).

The film will screen Saturday, January 21, at 7:00 pm. We may also present some short features of BCC history that evening, so check the weekly announcements for more details.

### “Tree of Life” Film Screens February 4

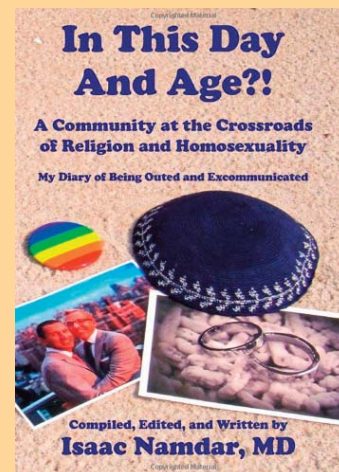
On Saturday, February 4, BCC will host filmmaker Hava Volterra for a special screening of her moving documentary, “The Tree of Life.” This film takes the viewer on her personal tour of centuries of Italian Jewish history including her “roots” trip to Italy with her elderly aunt, a Holocaust survivor. The screening will begin at 7:00 pm with Q & A to follow with the filmmaker. Light refreshments will be served. A suggested donation of \$5.00 is requested.

This is the first in a film series on “Jewish Life in Distant Lands.” Please RSVP by January 27 to [bcc4films@gmail.com](mailto:bcc4films@gmail.com).



### “Everyone Knows Uncle!” – Discussion on February 19

Isaac Namdar, a physician who lived and worked in New York City, received a message from his nephew in 2010 telling him not to come to synagogue that weekend and to stay away from the Sephardic Jewish community he'd grown up in. When Isaac received that message he realized that his on-line wedding album with pictures of him and his husband Andrew had been discovered by his close-knit



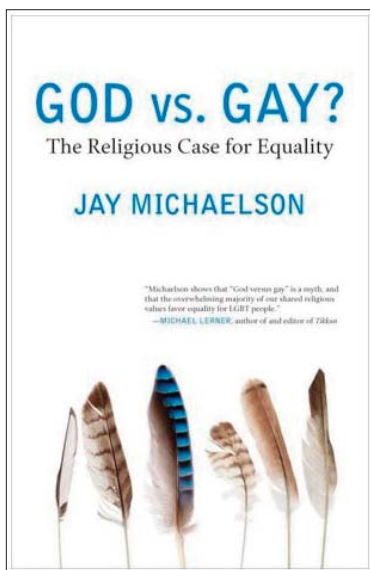
community. He was then excommunicated by his rabbi. Isaac had previously led a secret life hoping to keep his homosexuality separate from his family and religious community. He is now speaking to temples and spiritual conferences about his experience.

Dr. Namdar will speak at BCC on Sunday, February 19, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. His book, *In This Day and Age? : A Community at the Crossroads of Religion and Homosexuality*, will be for sale.

# JAY MICHAELSON TO SPEAK ON “GOD VS. GAY”

Please join author Jay Michaelson for a reading and discussion of his new book, *God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality* [Beacon Press] on Thursday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. at BCC, co-sponsored with Ikar.

Michaelson argues that the “God vs. gay” divide is a pernicious myth and that religious people should favor gay rights because of religion, not despite it. As both a gay rights activist and religion scholar, Michaelson is uniquely positioned to tackle the contentious “God vs. Gay” divide. The author underscores that the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament both emphasize the importance of love, compassion, and equality. From this starting point, he offers a progressive take on gay rights, arguing that the moral principles in these texts favor acceptance of gays and lesbians, outweighing the handful of ambiguous verses so often cited by conservatives. In arguing that politically and spiritually the God/gay split must end, this book will stimulate a long-overdue dialogue on an urgent issue.



Jay Michaelson is the author of three books and two hundred articles on the intersections of religion, sexuality, and law. He is a contributing editor to *Religion Dispatches*, *the Forward*, and *Tikkun*, and a regular contributor to the *Huffington Post*. His work has been featured in the *New York Times* and *NPR*. In 2009, he was included on the “Forward 50” list of the fifty most influential American Jews.

Jay is a longtime advocate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people, particularly in religious communities. He founded *Nehirim*, the largest national provider of community




programming for GLBT Jews, partners, and allies. His work on this subject has been published in anthologies including *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice* (2007), *The Passionate Torah* (2008), and *Queer Religion* (2011).

Jay holds a J.D. from Yale, an M.A. in Religious Studies from Hebrew University, and an M.F.A. from Sarah Lawrence College. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Jay teaches across the country, and has held teaching positions at Boston University Law School, City College of New York, and Yale

University. A practicing Buddhist in the Theravadan tradition as well as a student and teacher of Kabbalah for fifteen years, Jay is crisscrossing the country and appearing on national media to combat the devastating and false dichotomy of “God vs. Gay.”

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# "Topics in Judaism" Series Continues in the New Year

Whether you are new to Judaism, a lifelong learner, coming back after a break, or considering bar/bat mitzvah studies, you'll find something of interest in BCC's ongoing "topics in Judaism" series. On Tuesday nights at BCC, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Rabbi Lisa Edwards, Cantor Juval Porat and BCC scholar-in-residence Dr. Rachel Adler will be exploring a variety of Jewish topics. Each session will be a separate topic, so feel free to drop in once in awhile or take the whole series. The series is free to BCC members, \$10 per session to non-members.

Already completed are sessions on December 6 ("Now I lay me down to Sleep," with Rabbi Edwards discussing Jewish thought, tradition, and prayer about sleep and dreams), December 13 ("Negotiating Kashrut," with Dr. Adler on why some people keep kosher, how they decide what they will or will not eat, and how they manage with roommates or significant others who don't want to keep kosher), December 20 ("Hanukkah," an excursion with Cantor Porat into the creation of the holiday and its religious, historical, social, gastronomical and musical implications), and December 27 ("Death and Mourning," with Rabbi Edwards exploring Jewish traditions and views – old and newer – on this most inevitable of life's events). Further sessions are:

**Jan. 10. The Kaddish prayer – Cantor Juval Porat.** We'll explore the origins of this prayer and its various functions throughout the Jewish liturgy as well as its many musical settings.

**Jan. 17. Everything You Want to Know About Approaching the Torah - Dr. Rachel Adler.** A hands-on workshop for holding and carrying the Torah, taking an Aliyah, dressing or undressing the Torah and how to be respectful of the Torah without being frightened of it.

**Jan. 24. Are All Places Holy or Are There Special Holy Places? - Dr. Rachel Adler.** What makes a place holy? Are all places equally holy? We will look at several texts on this topic revealing different viewpoints in the tradition.

**January 31. Welcoming Shabbat – Cantor Juval Porat.** A close-up look at the Friday night service with its liturgy, rituals and music.

**Feb. 7. Tu Bishvat, no class.**

**Feb. 14. "What's love got to do with it?" – Rabbi Lisa Edwards.** On Valentine's Day, explore what Judaism says about love, romantic and otherwise.

**Feb. 21. The Book of Esther and Its Relevance to LGBT People - Dr. Rachel Adler.** Before Purim, learn about this tragicomic book and discover familiar themes like hiding and masquerading and things being arranged behind the scenes.

**Feb 28. Introduction to Cantillation – Cantor Juval Porat.** An exploration of the art of chanting the Hebrew Bible.

## Trans Texts Series

Join us at BCC for a new monthly series exploring Jewish sacred texts through a transgender lens. This new series is part of our ongoing weekly Torah study. We'll be dedicating a portion of our Torah study specifically to texts that explore gender and gender identity on the third Thursday of every month with the help of BCC member Kadin Henningsen and other guest teachers. Come for the Trans Texts and stay for more Torah study on January 19 and February 16, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at BCC. Our topic for January 19 is cross-dressing in Jewish texts.



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# Torah Study? Why Not?

Marc Gottehrer

"Torah study this Thursday, no experience required." We all see that practically every week in the seat bulletin, so what excuse do we have for not going to Torah study? Is it a busy schedule, fear of the Torah, fear of joining a group and not knowing if it's a fit, or just



being unsure if it's really "no experience required" and not knowing what to say or contribute?

My excuse was that I didn't know if I would fit in and have anything

meaningful to say. Here is a group that has been studying the Torah for years, so what new insights and thoughts can I bring to the table? It's better not to go at all if I am not going to participate. Then my grandmother passed away and when I was talking to the rabbi of my family's synagogue he suggested I attend Torah study at my synagogue for a month to honor my grandmother's memory. She was such an avid learner and quick student that he usually had to plan his lessons around her. So I mustered up the courage to attend the scary unknown world of Torah study.

To my surprise everyone was quite friendly and it really didn't require any previous experience. After a couple

of weeks I started finding it fun and actually started joining in on the discussions and learning new things about Judaism. What I previously knew gained new depth and a richer meaning, and the logical analytical side of me started finding new meanings and new interpretations, sometimes even an interpretation that no one thought of before. The best study sessions happen when all of our different thoughts, ideas, experiences and interpretations of the text merge together and create a whole new interpretation that no one would have thought of on their own. Now I look forward to the Thursday Torah study group and taking the time out of a busy week to relax, learn something new, and have fun doing it.

If that doesn't provide you with an excuse to go, then think about all the food at Torah study every week and how it needs to be eaten. At Torah study the mind, body and soul are nourished, and the Torah contains zero calories. There is always room for one more at Torah study, so hopefully this provides the excuse you need. I'll see you there!

*Editor's Note: This is, I hope, the first in a series of articles by participants in BCC programs and classes that will balance the usual committee reports and news items in G'vanim. If anyone would like to write one, please contact me at [Larrynath@aol.com](mailto:Larrynath@aol.com).*

## BCC Live

Bracha Yael

Our unique BCC Live program insures you're always just a click or a call away from your BCC community! At home or away, you can watch or listen live to BCC services and events.

With your computer, iPad, smartphone or good old-fashioned telephone you can watch or listen live to every Friday night service and special events. Please visit BCC's website, [www.bcc-la.org](http://www.bcc-la.org), for the simple instructions on how to enjoy our broadcasts.

Missed a service or event? No problem. Visit our Ustream broadcast channel, <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/bcc-live>, for video archives. Wherever you go, BCC goes with you!



## BCC's Virtual Minyan

Bracha Yael

Primarily lay led, the Virtual Minyan is a unique BCC 'meet-up' that provides support and connectedness for people who are isolated, ill, homebound, out of town, living elsewhere including abroad, unaffiliated or just looking for a small, welcoming community no farther away than their phone.

Virtual activities are via conference call, which is free, excluding any long distance charges from your personal carrier. To join in just dial 702-851-4044, when prompted punch in 2, then our pass code, 22252#.

*Upcoming events:*

**Coffee n Schmooze:** Where the virtual and real worlds come together. It's our bi-monthly kibitz at the Colony Café, Mondays, 10:30-Noon, check the calendar for February, April and June dates.

**A musical twist to Torah study,** with Cantor Juval Porat, Thursday, January 19th, 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

*Ongoing:* **Weekly Torah study** on Thursday afternoons from 4:00 – 5:00 pm.

For additional information contact Bracha Yael at [bracha18@ca.rr.com](mailto:bracha18@ca.rr.com).

# Men's Havurah Winter Events

BCC's Men's Havurah sponsored the following very successful event during December 2011:

## Hanukkah Dinner Party on December 18th

The Men's Havurah had a wonderful early celebration of Hanukkah at the home of BCC members Mark Miller & Brett Trueman. Nearly 30 of us enjoyed an absolutely fantastic dinner, including latkes and sufganiyot – traditional Chanukah favorites – catered by Executive Chef (and BCC member) Peter Bastien. This year the Men's Havurah joined Jewish Family Service-Los Angeles' Adopt-A-Family Program and purchased gifts for a Jewish family to help make their Hanukkah brighter and happier this year.

Our next event is in early January:

## Volunteering at Project Chicken Soup on January 8th



Join us and perform a wonderful mitzvah by cooking, packing, and delivering nourishing, nutritious, and kosher meals at Project

Chicken Soup for people living with HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses. Announcements for this event have already been sent out via e-mail, the BCC Weekly (formerly the e-bulletin), and Friday evening's seat bulletin.

The Men's Havurah Planning Committee is planning more events in the next several months. As soon as details are finalized for these events, announcements will be sent out via e-mail, the BCC Weekly, and Friday evening's seat bulletin. However, until then here's a sneak peak at what we're planning:

## Visiting the One Archives Gallery & Museum in February 2012

Join us for a visit to the One Archives Gallery & Museum in West Hollywood to see the exhibit "Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945 – 1980: Wink Wink".

## Purim Brunch & Hamentaschen-making Party in March 2012

Join us for a reprise of last year's great Purim brunch and hamentaschen-making party. We're going to have this party at BCC and like last year we'll have Executive Committee member Richard Lesse guide us as we prepare and bake our hamentaschen including traditional poppy seed ("mohn").

## Chocolate Tasting Parting in April 2012

Come all you chocolate lovers. We know you're out there. Join us as we sample several different mouth-watering nuggets of delectably delicious chocolate – a feast for all the senses. Resistance is futile!

There are two ways you can stay in touch with us:

- Through e-mail: [bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com](mailto:bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com)
- Through our Facebook page ("BCC Men's Havurah") where we post event details and share pictures from events

We can use everyone's help and very much encourage

- Your ideas for additional types of events that would be of interest to the Men's Havurah, and
- Volunteers to plan and host events naturally tailored to the size of your home.

Mark Miller and Neal Weisenberg  
BCC Men's Havurah Co-Chairs

## BCC Book Group

Larry Nathenson

For more than fifteen years, BCC members and friends have gathered in private homes for monthly potluck brunches and discussion of books selected by the group. Fiction and non-fiction, historical and contemporary, American and Israeli, the books read by the group include something for everyone's tastes and interests. We welcome new members to the group, as well as occasional visitors who may be interested in discussing a particular book. Our next two meetings will be:



**Sunday, January 29, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Comedy in a Minor Key by Hans Keilson**

This novel is about a Dutch couple who hide a young Jew during the Nazi occupation and must dispose of his body when he dies of pneumonia. Why it's called a "dark comedy" in reviews will have to be seen when we've read it.



**Sunday, February 26, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay**

This is a novel about a Jewish family in Paris who are deported during World War II, with only the daughter surviving, and also a recent motion picture..

BCC members and non-members alike are invited to attend. Because the discussions are held in members' homes, space is limited. Please RSVP to the BCC office early to guarantee your seat at the table, or contact Larry Nathenson at [Larrynath@aol.com](mailto:Larrynath@aol.com).

# Women's Havurah in the New Year

Donna Quigley Groman

The Women's Havurah is planning the following events for the New Year:

**Saturday, January 7, 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Women's Havurah Game Night, for women only, at BCC.** Bring a beverage and snacks to share. Please RSVP to [dlgroman@hotmail.com](mailto:dlgroman@hotmail.com).

**Sunday, February 5, 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Women's Havurah Outing to the Skirball.** We'll view the exhibit "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" at the Skirball Center.



Inspired by the bestselling book *Half the Sky*, by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, this groundbreaking exhibition

addresses the oppression of women worldwide as the human rights cause of our time—and boldly asserts that change is possible, and it can happen quickly. <http://www.skirball.org/half-the-sky>. We'll tour the exhibit

at 1 p.m., followed by a gallery talk at 2:30 p.m. with representatives from the humanitarian organization, CARE <http://www.care.org/about/index.asp>. Free to Skirball members; \$10 to general public; \$7 seniors 65+ and full-time students; \$5 Children 2-12. Please purchase your tickets directly from the Skirball Center: [www.skirball.org](http://www.skirball.org) or 877-722-4849. Everyone is welcome. Please let me know if you will attend at [dlgroman@hotmail.com](mailto:dlgroman@hotmail.com).

**Saturday, February 18, 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. BCC Women's Havurah at Magicopolis, 1418 4th St., Santa Monica.**

The Magicopolis show features comedy, magic, music, illusions, special effects and audience participation. Tickets have been donated by a BCC member – regularly \$27 – contribute what you can to your "favorite charity" in lieu of ticket price. Contact [dlgroman@hotmail.com](mailto:dlgroman@hotmail.com). There are only 10 tickets available to the first 10 to RSVP. Everyone is welcome!



## Remember the Hungry with a Quick Mitzvah!

About one out of every 10 Los Angelenos is dealing with food insufficiency ... some level of hunger. They count on food pantries like Sova (a part of Jewish Family Service) for basic food items like canned tuna, veggies, pasta, and beans. When you come to temple bring a can (or more) for them, and Google "SOVA West Food Pantry" for more details.

## BCC Professionals Series

Join us for the next installment of the BCC Professionals Series on January 22, 2012, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, when BCC member and lawyer, Diane Goodman, will be speaking. Diane's practice focuses on family law, including mediation, dissolution, paternity, adoption and guardianship matters. Diane was named as a Super Lawyer in 2009 and 2010 by Los Angeles Magazine. Prior to the event, beginning at 11:30 a.m., a Belgian waffle brunch will be served. Admission to the brunch and to the talk are free to members and nonmembers.

## ARCHITECTURALLY ELEGANT & MODERN



*Rent BCC for your special events or business meetings.*

Contact Felicia Park-Rodgers Executive Director (323) 931 7023 ext. 203

# A New Home for BCC's Memorial Plaques

Allison Diamant

Judaism has had a long history of honoring those loved ones who have left us. Our traditions include remembering people we knew and loved, as well as individuals and groups persecuted for their beliefs, way of life and actions. The new BCC Memorial Board provides an opportunity for all of us to connect with the past and the present, family and friends, members and non-members. The beautiful design provides a balance to our bimah and ark, a quiet space to sit and think. The new design also allows us to group family and friends together if desired, not in order of the dates people passed away. With the opening of our new building we have an opportunity for new beginnings. Please consider purchasing one or more memorial plaques to be placed on the beautiful new Memorial Board.

From now until February 15th individual plaques will be on sale for \$450 (discounted from \$500). If you purchase two or more plaques you will pay only \$400 each. To further enhance community we will have all of the newly purchased



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

The Memorial Board in BCC's new sanctuary

and inscribed plaques installed at the Yizkor service during Pesach on Friday April 13th. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to remember family and friends with members of your community. Please contact the temple office for order forms and details or call Allison Diamant (310) 737-9641 or Robin Berkovitz (310) 633-3190 to discuss your plans.

## Will Your Loved Ones Be Left Out?

*An innovative look at the unique legal and financial challenges facing the Gay & Lesbian Community*

This workshop is a continually evolving examination of the special legal and financial problems and unique opportunities for the LGBT community! The persistent lack of Federal recognition of LGBT partnerships creates widespread disadvantages for all members of the community, regardless of one's relationship status or economic position. The introduction of State-level recognition via Civil Unions, Domestic Partnerships and state-specific Marriages has further complicated and convoluted the protections offered to all members of the community.

During this unique event, Steven W. Schmitt and Kyle D. Young of the Schmitt-Young Investment Group of Wells Fargo Advisors will discuss key financial challenges, along with Philip J. Hoskins, Attorney at Law, who will discuss legal implications, will help to clarify and define the protections extended due to each of these marriage substitutes. In doing so, they will highlight several of the critical legal & financial challenges facing LGBT individuals while offering techniques to reduce or fully eliminate each challenge.

This is an event you do not want to miss! You are invited to bring friends and all workshops are free.

**Wednesday, February 1, 2012**  
7:00-9:00 pm.

**Sunday, February 5, 2012**  
11:00-1:00 pm.

**Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim**  
**6090 W Pico Blvd.**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90035**

Please RSVP to:  
Steven.Schmitt@WFAadvisors.com  
(973) 564-6997  
or  
Kyle.Young@WFAadvisors.com  
(973) 564-6983

Steven W. Schmitt, CFP®, MBA  
First Vice President – Investment Officer  
Accredited Domestic Partnership Advisor sm  
CA Insurance License #0G61253

Kyle D. Young, CFP®  
Vice President – Investment Officer  
Accredited Domestic Partnership Advisor sm  
CA Insurance License #0G59603

Philip J. Hoskins  
Attorney at Law  
Law Offices of Philip J. Hoskins



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# Mazel Tov

Please join the entire BCC community in wishing a hearty mazel tov to the following members:



PHOTO: TRACY MOORE

**Nathan Looney**, who embraced the covenant in November 2011 and was introduced to the congregation as a Jew on Friday, November 18 (though he has been an active BCC member for a while).

**Jessica Donath**, who embraced the covenant in August 2011 and was introduced to the congregation on Friday, August 12.

**Milan Daw**, who embraced the covenant and was introduced to the congregation on Friday, September 2. We congratulate and welcome all our "new Jews" at BCC.

**Ary Katz** (one of the original generation of BCC kids and son of Naomi Katz), for his movie debut role in "J. Edgar" - Ary is in scenes toward the end, alone with Leonardo DiCaprio.

**Aaron Tornell** for his address to the G20 meeting on December 3, 2011 (along with Frank Westermann) entitled "Eurozone Crisis, Act II: Has the Bundesbank Reached its Limit?"



PHOTO: TRACY MOORE

**Davi Cheng**, who spoke at the Anti-Defamation League's dinner on December 6, 2011, about ADL's assistance to BCC relating to last year's protest by the virulently anti-Semitic and anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church. As a participant in ADL's Asian Jewish Initiative, Davi said: "For standing up to the bigots and bullies, for lobbying for comprehensive hate crimes legislation and for all your work in my many communities, thank you ADL."



PHOTO: ADL

**Davi Cheng** also won a runner-up prize in the Union for Reform Judaism photo contest at the December 2011 biennial, for her photo of Torah reading at the BCC Shabbat morning minyan on July 30, 2011. The photo has appeared previously in G'vanim and is reprinted here.



PHOTO: DAVI CHENG

Please share your accomplishments and good news with the BCC office or G'vanim editor. We want to celebrate with you!

## Looking Ahead...

### Purim Celebration: "Look what the Cantor dragged in!"

Join us for a deliciously fun and funny Purim celebration on Wednesday evening, March 7. Kids are expected from 6-7:30pm, but after that...

[FYI: [www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com) "look what the cat dragged in"

1. Cats are known for bringing dead mice/rats/birds and other vermin they may have found or killed in to their owner's home.
2. An implication that someone is looking haggard, disheveled, and weather beaten...in very bad shape.]

*Also postponed until March 13:*

### Memorializing the Holocaust: A Project in Germany and its Controversies

Kirsten Grimstad, Professor of Liberal Studies, and Chair of the BA Program at Antioch University, will speak at BCC and present a slide show on the controversies surrounding the memorialization of the Holocaust in Germany. Kirsten spent her sabbatical this year in Berlin interviewing people and researching the project that the Germans had created to memorialize the Holocaust and the attempts to integrate remembrance into everyday German life. This is a program that everyone who cares about how the Germans are dealing with the subject of the Holocaust will not want to miss.

## Ask Your Friends How They Liked Their Portrait Session With KENNA LOVE

Aaron Tornell	Ira Dankberg
Barry Wendell	Jeanelle laMance
Bracha Yael Cheng	Joe Hample
Brett Trueman	Julie Gertler
Bruce Maxwell	Juval Porat
Davi Yael Cheng	Lana Soroko
Denis Hiebsch	Lauren Schlauf
Diane Goodman	Leslie Tuchman
Donna Quigley Groman	Mark Miller
Elizabeth Savage	Nicolasa Nevarez
Estaire Press	Rabbi Lisa Edwards
Felicia Park Rodgers	Renee Lamkay
Hannah Theile	Roxanna Bickerstaff
Howard Hamburger	Tracy Moore

**KennaLove.com**

**818-430-9395**

**kennalove@artnet.net**

HANUKKAH GIFTS • FAMILY • WEB • BROCHURES

# January 2012

# Tevet/Shevat 5772

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>	2 BCC Office Closed	3	4 7:00 pm <b>Life Transitions Group</b> Shirley Hirschberg 7:00 pm <b>Executive Committee Meeting</b>	5 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards	6 6:30 pm <b>Pre-Shabbat Dinner</b> 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Davi Cheng	7 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim</b> 7:00 pm <b>Women's Havurah Game Night</b>
8 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver <b>Men's Havurah at Project Chicken Soup</b> 3975 Landmark	9	10 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Kaddish Prayer Cantor Porat	11 7:00 pm <b>PJA Panel, "What's Jewish About the Occupy Movement?"</b> Rabbi Edwards Rabbi Jill Jacobs Dr. Peter Dreier	12 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards	13 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat	14 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim Parent and Me</b>
15	16 <b>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</b> (BCC Office Closed)	17 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Approaching the Torah Dr. Rachel Adler	18 7:00 pm <b>Life Transitions Group</b> Shirley Hirschberg	19 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> Cantor Porat 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards Trans Texts on Cross Dressing	20 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Cantor Porat Richard Seltzer	21 10:00 am <b>Shabbat Morning Service</b> and Dairy potluck 7:00 pm Screening <b>"On These Shoulders We Stand"</b> (p. 5)
22 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver <b>Project Chicken Soup</b> 11:30 am (lunch) <b>BCC Professionals Series</b> , Attorney Diane Goodman	23	24 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Holy Places Dr. Rachel Adler	25 7:00 pm <b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>	26 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards	27 <b>Ruach Chayim</b> 7:00 pm Refreshments 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Guest Musicians New Members	28 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim</b>
29 10:00 am (private home) <b>BCC Book Group</b> <i>Comedy in a Minor Key</i>	30	31 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Welcoming Shabbat Cantor Porat	<b>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</b>			

# February 2012

# Shevat/Adar 5772

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</b>			1 7:00 pm <b>Life Transitions Group</b> Shirley Hirschberg	2 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards	3 6:30 pm <b>Pre-Shabbat Dinner</b> 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Drash by Rabbi Yossi Carron (p. 3)	4 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim</b> 7:00 pm Screening <b>"The Tree of Life"</b> (see p. 5)
5 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver <b>Project Chicken Soup</b> 3975 Landmark 1:00 pm <b>Women's Havurah</b> Skirball Center	6	7 No Topics in Judaism	8 7:00 pm <b>Executive Committee Meeting</b> <b>TU B'SHEVAT</b>	9 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:30 pm Reading and Discussion <b>"God vs. Gay"</b> Jay Michaelson	10 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Cantor Lance Tapper Classical Reform	11 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim</b>
12	13	14 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Judaism and Love Rabbi Edwards	15 7:00 pm <b>Life Transitions Group</b> Shirley Hirschberg	16 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards Trans Texts	17 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Bracha Yael Cheng Davi Cheng	18 10:00 am <b>Shabbat Morning Service</b> and Dairy potluck 8:00 pm <b>Women's Havurah</b> at Madiopolis
19 3:00 Discussion <b>"Everyone Knows Uncle"</b> (see p. 5)	20 <b>PRESIDENT'S DAY</b> (BCC Office Closed)	21 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Book of Esther Dr. Rachel Adler	22 7:00 pm <b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>	23 4:00 pm <b>Virtual Minyan Torah Study</b> 7:00 pm <b>Torah Study</b> Rabbi Edwards	24 <b>Ruach Chayim</b> 7:00 pm Refreshments 8:00 pm <b>Shabbat Service</b> Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Guest Musicians	25 10:00 am <b>Ohr Chayim</b>
26 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver <b>Project Chicken Soup</b> 10:00 am (private home) <b>BCC Book Group</b> <i>Sarah's Key</i>	27	28 7:00 pm <b>Topics in Judaism</b> Cantillation Cantor Porat	29	<b>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</b>		

SEE [BCC-LA.ORG](http://BCC-LA.ORG) FOR UPDATES AND CHANGES.