

A Day With the Sofer Brings Gifts Both To and From Our Holocaust Torah

Sylvia Sukop



**"The Torah is sick,"
said three-year-old Eliana,
"and we made it feel better."**

Eliana was one of more than 100 members and friends of BCC who, with the help of visiting Sofer (Torah scribe) Neil Yerman, each reinscribed a letter in our Holocaust Torah at a special event on Sunday, March 20. (To find out more about the history of the Torah scroll itself, see the March-April 2005 issue of G'vanim.)

Five groups of about 20 each flowed through the sanctuary in the course of the day. The Sofer conducted an inspirational study session and prayers for each group before they joined him one by one on the bima. Taking an ink-dipped feather quill in their own hand, each person wrote a letter in the Yom Kippur portion of BCC's scroll, which dates from the 19th century and survived the Holocaust.

Participants came with a seriousness of purpose, with quiet reverence and intentionality. Sofer Neil was quick to address their most common concerns. Everyone's biggest fear, he explained, is that they might make a mistake in the writing of their letter. He reassured us that this simply could not happen, as his own hand would be gently but firmly guiding ours. He instructed us to relax, to breathe and to focus on being as fully present as possible to the sacred task we were about to perform—so that we would be able to feel the hand of the Torah's original scribe reaching out to us across time.



Scroll repaired



Rabbi Edwards, Robin Berkowitz and Eliana



Jeffrey Weinstein



Rabbi Edwards, Eldon Teper

Eliana had been playing on the floor with a toy dinosaur while the Sofer spoke to her group. But when she went up to the bima with one of her

mothers, Robin Berkowitz, she turned her full attention to the Torah scroll. Accepting a ride on the "elevator" of the Sofer's knee, she—like her mother a few moments earlier—also took a turn holding the white quill between her small fingers and writing a letter.

"It was an awesome experience for my daughter and me to help keep alive the ancient words of this Holocaust Torah and the memories of those who created it," said Robin afterwards. "And we'll continue to breathe life into this Torah, unraveling the scroll and intoning its ancient words in services to come."

Sofer Neil was still a child himself when he first fell in love with letters. He relished practicing penmanship in school but did not enter formal training to become a scribe until his 30s. Today he heads a busy studio in New York City and travels frequently, sharing his skills and insights with congregations around the country.

Before beginning each day's work, Neil meditates and dons what looks like a purple artist's smock but is actually a kind of tallis. The color purple drew smiles from some of us, who

Continued on Page 2

Sofer...

(continued from page 1)



Robin Baltic



Matt Postrel-Blum



Jeff Bernhardt



Renée and Sylvia Weisenberg



Allison Diamant

thought perhaps he wore it as a special touch for BCC! But we soon learned that the color and design are based on descriptions of certain priestly vestments in the Torah, and that this particular one was made in Israel about 10 years ago. ("It used to fit me better!" Neil joked, patting his stomach.)

A couple of years ago, longtime BCC member Jeffrey Weinstein took on the task of seeing to the repair of our Torah scrolls, and he initiated the current effort to bring attention again to our Holocaust scroll. "For me," said Jeffrey after the event was over, "Neil's most memorable point was the connection that Torah makes between Jews today and Jews throughout the ages."

Jeffrey and a core group of volunteers, along with Rabbi Lisa Edwards, were on hand throughout the day.

"It was Jeffrey Weinstein who made this day happen," said Rabbi Edwards. "He had a passion about what this day could be that I didn't quite have myself until I began watching the faces of the people taking that quill into their hands. I watched each and every person that day, and afterwards I was so incredibly grateful to Jeffrey and to our Sofer for the gentle way they guided our congregation to and through this experience."

Reflecting on his session with the Sofer, BCC vice-president Eldon Teper said, "I appreciated what Neil said about all your departed friends and relatives being with you as

you wrote your letter in the Torah. I felt the presence of my departed loved ones with me as I stood before the Torah helping to restore the parsha."

"This day of Torah ranks right near the tippy-top of my list of memorable moments I associate with BCC," exclaimed member Robin Baltic. "From beginning to end it was jam-packed with heartfelt meaning. The Sofer was a brilliant and sweet man. He set the stage wonderfully for each of us to reinscribe a letter in our Torah and to witness others do the same. Tears just streamed down my face watching Pam Postrel, Mindy Blum and their son Matt help to repair something others believed they could destroy."

"I have often read from the Torah," commented member Jeff Bernhardt, "but writing a letter in the Torah filled me with awe and anxiety. I wrote two 'yuds' (which spell God's name) in the middle of the word 'Chayim' (life). I was still shaking inside and out as I took in what I had been a part of. What a moving and spiritual experience."

"My letter was an 'S'," said BCC member Sylvia Weisenberg who came with her mother Renée. "And my mother's was an 'R'! We decided to come here together to write in the Torah because it seemed like such a unique opportunity. We thought only men who were trained as scribes were allowed to do that."

"I found the evening to be very haymish, extraordinarily

Continued on Page 3



Davi Cheng and Bracha Yael



Steve Sass



Cate Whiting, Happy New Jew



Sue Terry



Bill Resnick



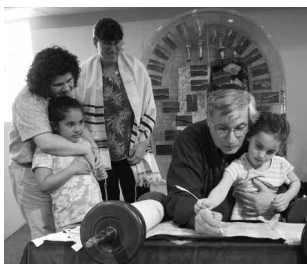
Erik Hyman



Jay Jacobs



Rae Chalin



Weinreich family



Dave and Maggie Parkhurst

special," Allison Diamant said. "Scribing a word was spiritually uplifting for me, and made me think of Moses on Mt. Sinai. The intensity of the experience was similar to when I first carried the Torah and later when I first read from the Torah, at BCC's Yom Kippur services."

"All the children seemed mesmerized as they started to write," observed BCC president Davi Cheng. "The focus and concentration on their little faces were so intense, like grown-ups. For adults, on the other hand, I saw faces light up with smiles and excitement, becoming like little children!"

Sunday's sessions with the Sofer were preceded by a special Friday night service on March 18, featuring guest speaker Susan Boyer, co-founder of the Czech Torah Network and newly-appointed U.S. Director of the London-based Memorial Scrolls Trust. BCC board member Stephen Sass gave a dazzling drash on the week's Torah portion [*read it at www.bcc-la.org*] and also told the dramatic story of locating and contacting a survivor from the Czech town of Chotebor, the same community that our Holocaust Torah comes from. Olga Grilli (born Gabanyiova), now 76 years old and living in New Jersey and Florida, owes her survival to a 1939 Kindertransport to England made possible by a "Righteous Gentile" who has since been recognized for his actions in rescuing some 600 Czech Jewish children.

At that same Shabbat service, BCC member Cate Whiting received a blessing from the congregation as she publicly embraced the covenant, holding our Holocaust Torah in her arms.

Many years ago, longtime member Sue Terry herself embraced the covenant while holding this same Torah scroll. "I still think of it as 'my' Torah," she says warmly. "It was the first Torah I ever held in my life—a powerful moment."



Melissa Irom

BCC Thanks Those Who Gave to Repair the Scroll

Robin Baltic; Amanda Bender; Robin Berkovitz & Laurie Newman; Caroline Bernard & Karen Wilson; Mindy Blum & Pam Postrel; Davin Stuart & Susan Marie Boyer; Helen Brand; Ahavah Brooks; Ellen Brunot & Hermina Ban; Viviane Carson; Francine Magid Chalin & Rob Philips; Deborah Chanen; Davi Cheng & Bracha Yael; Glen Chester; Helen Cohen; Ilene Cohen; Robin Cutler & Penny Shapiro; Heidi Davidson & Bonnie Leopold; Lauren Deutsch; Allison Diamant; Valerie Eads; Rabbi Lisa Edwards & Tracy Moore; Raymond Eelsing; Jack Elliot; Marsha Epstein; J Frank; Sabina Fried & Margaret Conner; Zsa Zsa & Elissa Gershick; Sheila Goldner; Donna Groman & Cecilia Quigley; Kendall Hailey and Danny Miller; Howard Hamburger; Stacy Hicks; Steven Hochstadt & Stephen Sass; Melissa Irom; Ginger Jacobs; Jay Jacobs; Mark Katz & Robert Goodman; Neil Klasky & Adrian Koffka; Myrna Kurland; Carl Kutlin; Joanne Laipson; Forrest Latiner & Marsha Lewis; Steven Leider; Michael Main; Larry Nathenson; Jerry Nodiff; Merav Opher; Dave & Maggie Parkhurst; David Pinchas; Arnold Pincus; James Potter; Estaire Press; Vaughan Rachel; Teresa Kline-Rivera; Lea Rosendahl; Noel Salisbury; Lauren Schlau; Becky & Laurie Schwartz; Devorah Servi; Rachel Siegel; Lana Soroko; Allan Stein; Sylvia Sukop; Eldon Teper; Sue Terry; Arlan Wareham & David Fyffe; Bruce Warner & Stan Notkin; Rebecca & Tara Rose Weinreich; Jeffrey Weinstein; Charles & Renée Weisenberg; Sylvia Weisenberg; Michelle Weiss; Barry Wendell; Natalie White; Catherine Whiting; Neal Wiener; Lee Wygand & Gael Sladky



Gaby Schwartz



BCC's kids and friends visit Chabad's "Matzoh Factory" to learn about Pesach. First stop: Egypt!



Eli and Evie roll the holes into their matzoh.

BCC Choir to Be Showcased May 15

BCC's Choir is one of 6 choirs chosen to participate in the first Southern California Jewish Choral Concert. To be held Sunday, May 15 in Calabasas, sponsored by Congregation Ohr Ami and produced by singer-songwriter Doug Cotler, the concert begins at 3pm. BCC performs about 4pm. Wine and cheese oneg to follow. Ohr Ami is located 2 blocks north of the Las Virgenes exit of the 101 at 26115 Mureau Road.

Schedule for Shavuot

Sunday, June 12

- 6:00 Yizkor Service
- 6:30 Shavuot Service
- 7:30 Potluck Nosh
- 8:00 Study/Tikkun

(see page 10)

OFFICE

Temple Office Hours:

Monday–Thursday 9:00 – 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 – 4:00 pm

Phone: (323) 931-7023 • Fax: (323) 931-1490

e-mail: bcc@bcc-la.org

website: www.bcc-la.org

Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Cantorial Soloist Fran Chalin are available for private appointments. Please call at least a week in advance, if possible, to schedule.

STAFF

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 Scholar-in-residence . Rabbi Aaron Katz
 Office Manager Victoria Delgadillo
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 Tzedakah Council Robin Baltic

G'VANIM

G'vanim ("Diversity") is the monthly newsletter of

BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM

6000 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.

Temp. Editor: Tracy Moore. Graphics & Layout: Donna Roberts. Articles submitted should be typed, emailed or put on disk, and arrive by the 1st of the month preceding 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.

BCC is affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews and the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

From the Rabbi's Study

Lisa Edwards

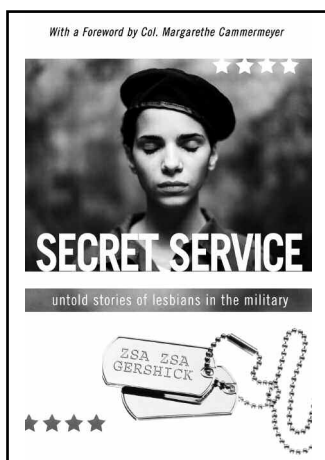
Pride Shabbat is June 10!

I hope you will join Cantorial Soloist Fran Chalin and me for a special service to Bring In Pride Weekend. Our guest speaker will be from UCLA Law School's Williams Project on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy.

And to Bring Out Pride Weekend, join us for **Shavuot** on Sunday evening June 12. This prolonged evening of remembrance, prayer, learning and munching is one of my favorites of the year. Come for as little or as much as you like, but do come. (See p. 4 for schedule.)

More Book Pride

As we come up to Pride Month, could I be prouder that May/June will see the publication of yet a third recent book written by a BCC member? I could not. It is **Secret Service: Untold Stories by Lesbians in the Military** by our own **Zsa Zsa Gershick**. On June 5, BCC and the **Progressive Jewish Alliance** will host a reading and conversation with Zsa Zsa from 3–5pm at BCC. Here's a teaser:



"In *Secret Service*, readers meet the can-do troops who do battle with discrimination from the high-ranking Washington-insider who closes the door to much more than her apartment when she leaves for the capitol each morning,

to the rank-and file enlistee whose make-believe boyfriend helps her fend off daily inquisitions."

Joining Zsa Zsa will be **Prof. Aaron Belkin, director of UC Santa Barbara's Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military**—who is also my cousin! He'll discuss the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and the pricetag—economic, social, ethical and emotional—of prejudice.

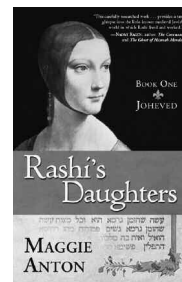
Here are the two other exciting recent publications from BCC members:

Mentsh: On Being Jewish and Queer, edited by BCC member **Angela Brown** with foreword by Rabbi Lisa Edwards and essays by BCCers **Jeffrey Bernhardt, Roy Leibman, Carol Frischman** and **Shifra Teitelbaum**.



Rashi's Daughters: Book One: Jocheved by **Maggie Anton (Parkhurst)**.

This first of three books is receiving rave reviews and being read by Jewish book groups across the land! Copies are available at BCC for \$15 (a big discount).



Ten Commandments of Ohr Chayim

In addition to the 3 newest books, I sense we may have some future writers (and theologians and ethicists as well) in our midst. The following are the Ten Commandments written by our 5 and 6 year olds in Ohr Chayim, the inter-generational learning community that meets two Shabbat mornings each month at BCC:

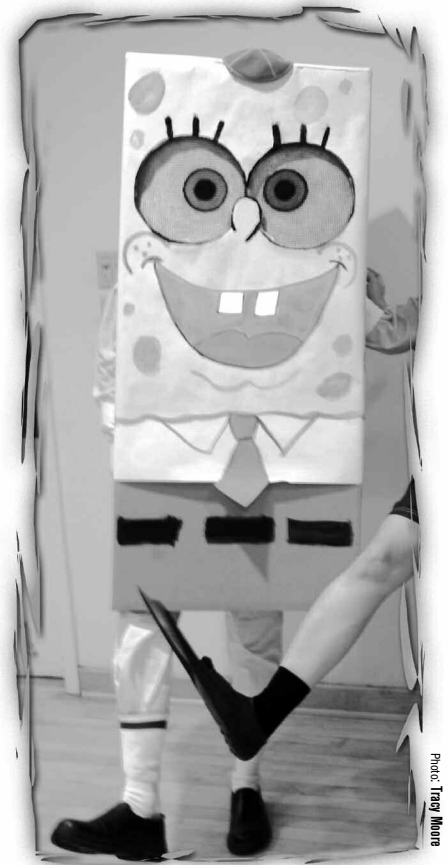


Photo: Tracy Moore

1. Don't use a dad or a mom like a climbing structure.
2. Always look all ways before you cross the street.
3. Don't climb on the roof and go in the chimney.
4. Be nice to everything even if it is not living.
5. Be nice to all parents, brothers, sisters, family and yourself.
6. Be nice to the person you are talking to.
7. Be nice to cantors and rabbis.
8. Do your personal best.
9. Tell the truth.
10. Be good.

Works for me!

L'shalom,
Lisa

Announcements and . . .

Photos by Tracy Moore

Still thinking about . . .

BCC's trip to Israel for World Pride?
Get a copy of the flyer!
Packed with the most fun, interesting,
and unforgettable features
of any trip yet!
14-28 August – Sign Up Now!

BCC Annual Humanitarian Brunch

19 JUNE • 10.30 AM
LUXE HOTEL

– HONORING –
DEAN HANSELL
& JASON MURAKAWA

RABBI LISA EDWARDS
& TRACY MOORE

IF YOU HAVEN'T YET RESERVED
YOUR SEAT AT THIS FABULOUS
AFFAIR, CALL THE TEMPLE FOR
AN INVITATION OR GET A
FAXBACK ORDER FORM AT
WWW.BCC-LA.ORG.

BRING YOUR DADS, YOUR
FRIENDS, YOUR KIDS, YOUR
SPOUSE, OR JUST YOU!



Amanda Bender – "Yinglish"



Tanya Sussman – Croatian



Maggie Parkhurst – Klinton

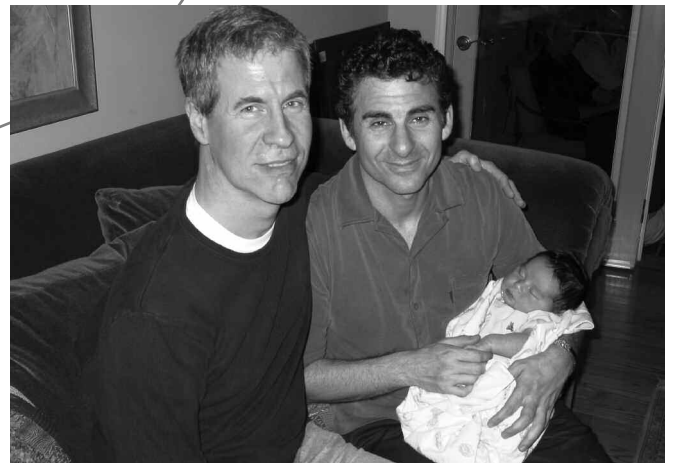


Ray Eelsing – Japanese

Babies!



Rabbi Edwards and moms Rachel Siegel and Debby Chanen at Sonya's Brit Bat. Mazel Tov!

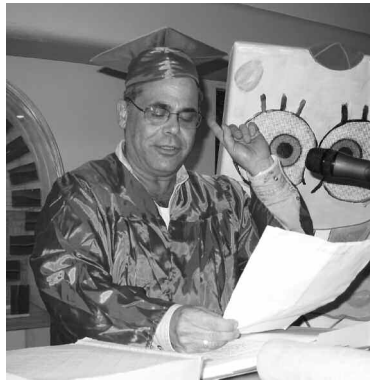


Richard Schulte and Josh Wayser at the Brit Milah of their third child, Adam Joshua (AJ). Mazel Tov!



Arlan Wareham – Esperanto

Richard Seltzer – French



Tracy Moore – Pig Latin

BCC's International Megillah Readers

Some from earth and some from galaxies far far away. . .



Cindy Vandenberg – ASL



Merav Opher – Portuguese



Jeff Bernhardt – Hebrew with cellphone and clergy



Men's Havurah Events

Having celebrated 7 years of Men's Havurah programming at a special Shabbat, the tradition continues:

Sunday, May 15, 6 pm After mitzvah-making, relax with the BCC Men's Havurah at a delicious Persian dinner at Jarvan's, 11500 Santa Monica Blvd, West LA (4 blocks west of the 405, south side of street). RSVPs are mandatory. Contact Mike Halstater at mikeyh2@earthlink.net or 818-705-1563 no later than Wednesday, May 11.

Sunday, June 26, 5 pm BCC men and their friends are invited to a patio party at the home of Don Margolin and Howard Hamburger in Glendale. The event will feature a veggie potluck, video, and socializing. For RSVP and directions, email Howard at audiologypro@yahoo.com or call the temple office by Wednesday, June 22.

President's Message

Davi Cheng

Remember our post-election town hall meeting in November? People were ready for action, and among the many great ideas suggested was one about outreach to African American, Latino and other communities, to cultivate face-to-face partnerships. I want to share with you an experience I had that showed me the importance of such outreach. In February, Bracha and I flew to San Francisco to attend an invitation-only Think Tank for multicultural Jews from all over the world called Be'chol Lashon, "In Every Tongue." This is my third year being invited back to this conference, and for the first time, Bracha was invited to attend and was recognized as my spouse. This was a milestone.

The participants consisted of 80 plus incredible Jews from all walks of life and all movements of Judaism. We do not always agree with one another and many have never interacted with LGBT people face to face. Bracha and I were the only openly gay couple in the group. Ultra-orthodox Yemenite rabbis from New York had trouble looking at us after they found out who we were. There were Presidents and Directors from various national Jewish organizations and foundations, award winning journalists, filmmakers, scholars, and philanthropists. Some were from India, Mexico, China, Spain, Portugal, Zimbabwe, and other countries of Africa. There was a Tutsi Jew in exile from Rwanda and a scholar in the process of setting up a counsel of 100 rabbis and Imams to have dialogues at the United Nations.

Be'chol Lashon's goal is to work with diverse Jewish community leaders to promote visibility and produce information that will help our Jewish communities world-wide to be more racially, ethnically, and culturally inclusive. Initially, I was invited to

participate because of being Chinese and Jewish; little did I know that being a lesbian belonging to the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue would become an added bonus to this culturally diverse group. Three years ago, a couple of African American spiritual leaders said that homosexuals are sinful and that gays have no right to daven. This year, they thanked Bracha and me for being who we are and said that our presence enabled them to change the way they view gays and lesbians. Not only did they hope that one day we can be legally married, they wanted to have their pictures taken with us. What I found most humorous was that the San Francisco Chinese language TV station found me exotic too and interviewed me for prime time news. Try explaining Judaism in Cantonese!

Joking aside, I think it is important for each one of us to know, as I have learned, that because we are members of BCC, the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue, we automatically are ambassadors to the larger society. The changes I've seen in people's attitudes and viewpoints over this past three years have convinced me that BCC members have a very special purpose in the Jewish and GLBT communities.

By the way, on our last day of the conference, Bracha got in the elevator with one of the Yemenite rabbis. Not only did he look at her, he initiated a friendly conversation. Bracha and I were also approached by someone in an African American Jewish congregation who wanted to dialogue with us because of the experience our community has had dealing with HIV and AIDS. Maybe we can form a partnership with his community in the future to offer support and resources.

All of us individually can make a

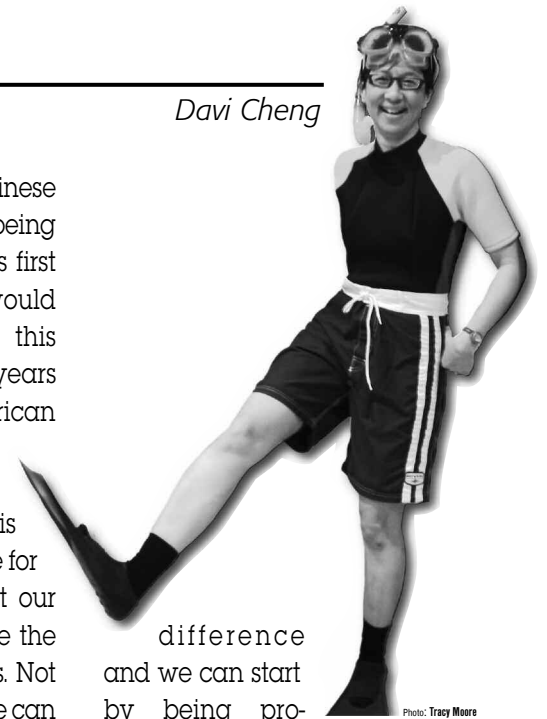


Photo: Tracy Moore

difference and we can start by being proactive here at BCC. I want to acknowledge and celebrate with you BCC's accomplishments. At BCC, no tasks are too small. Everything that we do is with a purpose and importance. Greeting visitors before Shabbat services, getting DSL for the office, re-designing the website, fixing our leaky roof, or de-genderizing our bathrooms—everything that we do is to make BCC more open and welcoming for everyone.

Over the past few months the Board has been working on the issues of outreach, increasing our presence to outside communities, increasing membership, and branding. Howard Benenson, CEO of BenensonJanson marketing, has offered to guide us through the branding process. Check out their incredible work for organizations like the ACLU and APLA at www.benensonjanson.com.

And finally, the board renewed our rabbi's contract not for 3 years, not for 5 years, **but until her retirement!**

L'Shalom
Davi

BCC Goes Back to Breed Street on Big Sunday

Robin Baltic

On Sunday, May 15, BCC members will join more than 6,000 volunteers from different socio-economic, racial and religious communities in LA to lend their time and talents to Big Sunday, a celebration of community spirit where volunteers fan out across Los Angeles to work at 150 different projects designed to improve neighborhoods and uplift spirits.

The Tzedakah Council pledged 25 volunteers from BCC to 3 projects under the banner Back to Breed Street. All take place on Breed Street in Boyle Heights on May 15 from 1 to 3 pm.

BCC's volunteer activities for all ages include:

#93 Early Learning Center – attend a party for 80 pre-schoolers and their families. Help with art projects, storytelling, gardening, and sprucing up the facility.

#94 Chernow House – help throw a party for families staying at the homeless shelter with good food, good cheer and a litter of new puppies!

#95 Breed Street Shul – the historic shul is in the midst of a massive renovation. Help greet and pass out refreshments at the open house.

As part of Big Sunday literacy activities, BCC will be raising a few shekels to purchase children's books for the library at the Early Learning Center. To contribute to the Literacy project, please make your donation to BCC by May 12. The Tzedakah Council will purchase books at 40% discount and arrange delivery. Indicate the contribution is for the Tzedakah Council/Literacy Project.

Get Big Sunday brochures at BCC or sign up at www.bigsunday.org/

Classical Reform Service June 3 to Feature Isaacson Compositions

Cantorial Soloist Fran Chalin

Passach is over, yet I linger on the book we read during this season—the Song of Songs. Why is this book chosen to be read during Passover? Because it so eloquently expresses our personal relationship with the God who brought us forth from slavery.

In 1969, one of the most accomplished Jewish American composers, Dr. Michael Issacson, transformed the beautiful Song "Hegyon Libi" (The Meditations of my Heart) into music especially for Shabbat. On June 3, thanks to a gift from longtime BCC member Jerry Nodiff, the BCC choir will present this work and others by Isaacson as part of a special musical Shabbat. Longtime BCC members may recall that eighteen years ago, then-Cantor Don Croll, BCC's Choir and a string quartet performed this same piece.

As the 1960s brought profound change to American music, the change in American Jewish music was no less dramatic. And because Reform Judaism



Photo: Tracy Moore

is a movement that responded to the art forms surrounding it, American Reform Jewish music drew from musical theater, anti-war music, and atonal avant guard music, all of which influence "Hegyon Libi."

With over 400 publications of secular and sacred music and 40 produced recordings and CDs, Issacson is one of the most accomplished Jewish American composers of our time.

The congregation is grateful to Jerry for giving BCC's choir and me the opportunity to offer an evening of Issacson's music set in the context of Classical Reform Judaism. BCC owes a great deal to the Reform Movement, and this evening will be a way to learn more about Reform Judaism as it was practiced over 30 years ago.

Mazel Tov to...

Adrian Koffka for getting his green card after 11 years of waiting.

Kenna Love for her work in the group show Women Photographers 2005 at the Center's Ed Gould Village, which featured her photograph "Underwater Love" in its ads.

Dean Hansell for receiving the Alumni Citation from his alma mater, Denison University, on June 3. It's hard to tell from the award name, but this is a big deal!

Steven Schneider for his op-ed in the March 8 Times

shaming the passage of the bankruptcy law for potentially enslaving people to credit card debt.

Sylvia Sukop for being accepted for two months at Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado from mid-October to mid-December as an artist in residence in the Photography and Digital Imaging Program. So she'll be here for High Holidays this year, yay!

All of you who donated money to fix the roof—list of thank yous to be published in the next G'vanim, as checks are still coming in. (And if you've been meaning to and just haven't gotten around to it yet...)

LAGLC Women's Night Gala Honors the Honorable Donna Groman

Hannah Theile

At the LA Gay and Lesbian Center's Women's Night on May 21—the largest annual lesbian event in LA—BCC member and Superior Court Judge Donna Groman will receive the LACE Award for Public Service.

Candidates nominated for LACE

awards go through a competitive filing process that draws from the LA lesbian community of active professional women. In 2002, Rabbi Edwards received the LACE award for her outstanding spiritual leadership. BCC is fortunate again to have one of our remarkable women receive this honor.



Donna, Daniel, Vivane, Stacy, Jay, Richard, Diane, Jeff, Ilene, Ahavah and a million poppies

Paaaah-peeetz

Cecilia Quigley

Not even Dorothy could imagine how many poppies are in bloom this year. A BCC group visiting the Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve on Sunday, April 3 were treated to nature on display. The weather was gorgeous, albeit a bit windy, and the crowds were out. Carpets of California golden poppies and goldfields provided spectacular photo ops. There was quite a show of blue pygmy lupines, magenta owl's clover and the boys' favorite, blue dick.

Some of us saw and heard a Mojave rattlesnake close-up! To my surprise, when I printed out my digital

photos, I realized there was a second bigger rattler right behind the one I saw in the viewfinder.

After our trail walk, the guys headed back and the girls continued on to Saddleback Butte State Park. We enjoyed the contrast with no crowds, no wind, lots of open spaces, Joshua Trees, evening primrose, coreopsis and lupines.

Check out the many upcoming Arts & Leisure activities in the offing. Look for info at Shabbat services and in the weekly BCC bytes. Contact Cecilia if you'd like to participate (323) 292-1267 or mceciliaq@sbcglobal.net.

The Omer and Shavuot

Cara Hanes



Pesach passed over and we are left counting the omer for 7 weeks,

marking the time after the Jews left Egypt and slavery but before they become a united people committed to G-d.

During the Exodus, the power of Adonai is proven through many miracles. Granted, the Jews were impressed enough to follow Moses out of Egypt, but only a little time passes before they are whining about their state and even romanticizing their previous lives. It is during this time that Adonai provides water, food and healing, preparing the Jews to enter into the covenant. The midrash refers to G-d as a bridegroom who is courting his bride (the people Israel) trying to avoid appearing too hasty to wed.

Shavuot marks the moment when G-d gives the Jews the Torah and enters into a covenant with Israel. We receive Torah continually, but the text actually reads "gives" Torah. On this day, we are reminded that we were given Torah in an open desert, not the promised land, and that anyone can choose the covenant (not just those born into the tribes), reminding us to welcome all strangers in our midst. The book of Ruth is also read during Shavuot to remind us that Jews can enter the covenant through choice.

Torah was given on the mountain to remind us of the importance of our humility toward G-d. To observe this holiday at BCC, we will study late into the night of June 12th, once again receiving the gift of Torah. (See p. 5.)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2	3	4 7:00 pm Membership Meeting 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group	5 Yom HaShoah (No Torah Study)	6 6:30 pm No Host Pre-Shabbat Dinner Thai House, 8677 Pico Blvd. 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Steve Schneider and Robin Berkovitz Yom HaShoah Observed	7 10:00 am-Noon Tot Shabbat Ages 0-5	
8	9	10	11 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	12 Yom HaAtzma'ut Israeli Independence Day 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	13 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Rabbi Edwards and Cantorial Soloist Chalin Guest: Rabbi Carla Howard on Jewish Hospice	14 9:30 am-Noon Ohr Chayim 11:00 am Project Caring Country Villa Wilshire (Fairfax at Willoughby)	
BIG SUNDAY 15 (see page 9) 8 am Project Chicken Soup 3-5:00 pm CA Choral Concert (see page 4) 6:00 pm Men's Havurah Persian Dinner (see page 7)	16	17	18 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group	19 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	20 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Rabbi Edwards and Herb Toplan Drash: Rabbi Edwards	21 10:00 am Traditional Egalitarian Minyan and Dairy Potluck 1:30 pm Lotus Land Tour/ Arts & Leisure	
22 8:00 am (cook) Project Chicken Soup 338 N. Fairfax (11:45 am-deliver food) 10:00 am BCC Books & Bagels (see page 12)	23	NEW CLASS! 24 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 1 of 6 - (\$60 members/\$90 non-members)	25 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	26 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	27 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Steven Leider and Cantorial Soloist Chalin Drash: Rabbi Edwards	28	
29	30 MEMORIAL DAY BCC CLOSED	NEW CLASS! 31 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 2 of 6 -	<i>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</i>				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</i>			1 7:00 pm Membership Meeting 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group <i>Articles for G' Vanim due</i>	2 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	3 6:30 pm Pre-Shabbat Dinner Thai House, 8677 Pico Blvd. 8 pm CLASSICAL REFORM MUSIC Shabbat Services with Rabbi Edwards and Cantorial Soloist Chalin (see page 9)	4 10:00 am Tot Shabbat
5 8:00 am (cook) Project Chicken Soup 11:30 am-2:00 pm Pop Luck Club Resource Fair @ Plummer Park 3-5:00 pm Book Reading <i>Secret Service</i> ... (see page 5)	6	NEW CLASS! 7 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 3 of 6 -	8 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	9 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	PRIDE SHABBAT 10 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Rabbi Edwards and Cantorial Soloist Chalin With Williams Project speaker (see pg. 5)	PRIDE WEEKEND 11 9:30 am-Noon Ohr Chayim 11:00 am Project Caring Country Villa Wilshire (Fairfax at Willoughby)
PRIDE WEEKEND (Interfaith Service before parade--details to follow) 6:00 pm until dawn SHAVUOT OBSERVANCE (see page 4)	BCC CLOSED	NEW CLASS! 14 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 4 of 6 -	15 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group	16 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	17 8:00 pm Shabbat Services with Rabbi Edwards and Dave Parkhurst Drash: Rabbi Edwards	18 10:00 am Traditional Egalitarian Minyan and Dairy Potluck
BCC ANNUAL BRUNCH 19 Honoring Dean Hansell and Jason Murakawa, and Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Tracy Moore (see page 7)	20	NEW CLASS! 21 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 5 of 6 -	22 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	23 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study	24 8:00 pm Shabbat with Cantorial Soloist Chalin and Barry Wendell	25 9:30 am-Noon Ohr Chayim
26 8:00 am (cook) Project Chicken Soup 10:00 am BCC Books & Bagels (see page 12) 5:00 pm Men's Havurah Patio Party (see page 7)	27	NEW CLASS! 28 7-9:00 pm <i>Gender and Judaism</i> with Rabbi Edwards - 6 of 6 -	29	30 7:00 pm Beit Midrash/Torah Study		



BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM

6000 W. Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90035

What do you do with **YOUR** pushke ?


Let's create Tzedakah together! After all...
 "Your Home is Your Temple & Your Temple is Your Home!"

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We are all responsible for one another. - Talmud

B' Shalom.
 - Sharon Cohen & Michelle Weiss



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* of Net Commissions

Where Bagels and Books Feed the Fine Art of Conversation BCC Book Group

invites

its members and non-members alike to our MAY and JUNE potluck brunches and book discussions.

Sunday MAY 22nd @ 10am
RABBI STEVEN GREENBERG:
Wrestling With God And Man

Just published in paperback by the former BCC Scholar in Residence and out Orthodox Rabbi seen in the documentary "Trembling Before G-d." A scholarly yet accessible reinterpretation of Leviticus.

Sunday, June 26th @ 10 AM
MICHAEL CHABON:
The Final Solution: A Story Of Detection

The latest best-selling novel from the author of "Kavalier And Clay." A mute Jewish boy, a verbose parrot and potential WWII espionage intertwine in this twist on 19th century English mystery novels. A riveting 131 pages.

Our hamische events are held in members' homes. Space is limited so RSVP ASAP by calling the BCC office to avoid disappointment.