

From the Rabbi's Study What I See at BCC

Rabbi Lisa Edwards



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

Excerpted from Rabbi Edwards's report at the congregational meeting on July 14, 2013.

I'm excited about all that's happening and that's coming next at BCC — from signing more State of California marriage licenses (hurray!), to celebrating with several new Jews (some of them adults and some of them babies), to planning and observing all the

Holy Days coming soon, to working with our newly elected officers and board members. While I'll miss Bruce Maxwell as president and Brett Trueman as treasurer, I know they deserve a rest. We can't thank them enough for their service to our congregation, along with other board members and committee members who step up and serve so ably, and then step back to let others have a turn. That's a sign of health in an organization. And I am so appreciative of all of you who volunteer.

I realize I am in a unique position at BCC. Not that I take part in every event or private session or life cycle ritual or worship service that comes about through BCC, but surely I know about and participate in more than anyone else. Sometimes it makes me a little sad that more of you don't see what I see. How the rooms of this building, our wonderful new building, swell and shrink and rearrange (thanks to our custodian, Tim Goad, and our office manager Victoria Delgadillo and the amazing Felicia Park-Rogers) to accommodate different people and events. And of course there are also the many events that take place "off campus."

Think about how our sanctuary, for example, can be a meeting place for legal expert David Codell to talk about the Supreme Court decisions just a few days after they were announced (thanks to our diligent team on the L'chayim Legacy Circle who encourage us to plan and keep our financial affairs up to date and in order). Think about how our sanctuary was transformed into a cabaret for Juval's birthday concert by Our Lady J, and then was a place for a joyous Shabbat on Friday night, a

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Days of Awe 5774



Selichot

Saturday, August 31, 10:00 pm
at BCC

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday, Sept. 4, 8:00 pm
Temple Isaiah
10345 W. Pico Blvd.

Rosh Hashanah

Thursday, September 5, 9:30 am
Morning service at Temple Isaiah
10:30 am Family service,
Rabbi Heather Miller
Catered lunch (ticket required)
4:00 pm Telephone Minyan Service

Rosh Hashanah Second Day

Friday, September 6, 10:00 am
Morning service (at BCC)
4:30 pm Tashlich at Venice Beach
near Fig Tree Restaurant
Followed by hosted dinner at a
member's home.

Kol Nidre

Friday, September 13, 7:15 pm
Temple Isaiah

Yom Kippur

Saturday, September 14
Temple Isaiah
10:00 am Morning service
11:00 am Family service, Rabbi Miller
1:30-3:30 pm Study sessions

2:30 pm Telephone Minyan Service
3:30 pm Reading of Memorial names
4:00 pm Yizkor service
5:00 pm Afternoon/Neilah service
7:21 pm Havdalah
Followed by light community
break-the-fast

Child Care provided on-site during
all services at Temple Isaiah, free
to members. Pre-register all
children on line or by contacting
the BCC office.

Sukkot and Simchat Torah
See page 2

congregational meeting on Sunday, and the next day, emptied of furniture, became a candle-lit room filled with people from four congregations sitting on the floor for a moving Tisha b'Av observance.

In a typical week this summer our beit midrash (library) was a Torah study room on Tuesday night, an Executive Committee conference room on Wednesday night (including Skyped in members), a wedding location on Thursday afternoon, a place for kids to play during services on Friday night, and on Sunday a meeting room for the Ritual Committee before the congregational meeting.

My study in a "typical" week this July was a staff meeting location, a

private counseling place for two newly engaged couples, a new Jew "review" library in preparation for a beit din, a writing room for me, and a green room for the performers at the Thursday night cabaret.

See what I mean? A lot goes on here all the time that most of us don't even think about unless we're part of a particular event. This coming year can be the year you step up to something new (or something old), to be an integral part or a casual observer. Whatever it is and however you choose to take part, don't be a stranger.

Speaking of the coming year, did I mention that Rosh Hashanah begins two days after Labor Day? I love it,

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Sukkot and Simchat Torah at BCC:

Sunday: September 15, 10:00 am
Community sukkah building and decoration

Wednesday: September 18, 7:00 pm
Erev Sukkot services and potluck

Friday: September 20, 6:00 pm
Bring-your-own dinner in sukkah
8:00 pm Shabbat service

Saturday: September 21, 10:00 am
Shabbat morning service

Tuesday: September 24, 7:30 pm
Torah study in the sukkah

Wednesday, September 25, 6:00 pm
Bring-your-own dinner
6:30 pm Yizkor service
8:00 pm Simchat Torah service

Friday, September 27, 8:00 pm
Special Shabbat service ends Days of Awe



For news, events and keeping in touch with the community: Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/templebcc Like

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website: www.bcc-la.org

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

BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM
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.

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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.

Welcome from our Incoming President

Lauren Schlau

PHOTO: HILARY LENTINI



Greetings and Happy New Year! As of this writing I am “waiting in the wings” as your new incoming president. This is such an honor, especially immediately following Bruce Maxwell and all he has done (and will continue to do, he has assured me) for BCC! I also want to acknowledge all the work that Brett Trueman, outgoing Treasurer and Past President, has done for BCC

over his many amazing years of leadership and love for BCC.

Each preceding BCC President has left a legacy and each uniquely has strengthened BCC. Think first of our strong and diverse membership, our amazing clergy, our warm and caring BCC community, and of course our incredible new building! These things did not happen without the dedication of so many members and leaders over the years. As I look ahead, it is now my responsibility to ensure that I contribute something

for current and future BCC generations (I'dor v'dor).

Among the many things I'd like to contribute is strengthening our foundations, that is, growing our membership, developing future BCC leadership, and streamlining and making some of our processes more productive and rewarding for volunteers and staff.

For each of these areas we will need your help, of course, as no one can or should do these things alone. As I always say, it takes the village people! I'm excited that we have already started on some of these and you will be hearing more (and hopefully being involved) over time.

Finally, my highest priority is open communication from and to members. I pledge more openness and communication about Executive Committee (e-comm) and Board activities and decisions. I sincerely invite and welcome you to attend e-comm meetings (second Wednesday) and Board meetings (fourth Wednesday) each month.

My best wishes for a healthy, happy and successful new year, 5774.

(continued from page 2) **From the Rabbi's Study; What I See at BCC**

actually, when Rosh Hashanah begins on a Wednesday night, because that means the second day is on a Friday, which allows us to go to the beach on Friday afternoon for our beautiful Tashlich ritual and then to stay on the beach for Shabbat Shuvah service/singing, and then to go — everybody is invited — to Allison Diamant's home for Shabbat dinner. And it also means that Yom Kippur falls on a Friday night and all day of Shabbat, which often means more people can join us all day long without having to take a vacation day from work.

This year, we'll have lots of rabbis joining us during our Holy Days. Rabbi D'ror Chankin-Gould (have you seen D'ror since he became a rabbi?) will be co-leading services with me and Cantor Porat, Rabbi Heather Miller will be leading our family services, Rabbi Rachel Adler and Rabbi Bob Baruch will be with us on Yom Kippur afternoon. Along with the Ritual Committee, we have all been hard at work planning for these Holy Days including, I'm excited to say, the opportunity to be part of a pilot project for the Reform movement's new machzor. Co-edited by, among others, Janet and Shelly Marder (two rabbis beloved to BCC), the completed

book will not be ready until the Days of Awe 2015, but this year and next we will be part of the pilot project for the Yom Kippur morning service.

Along with our family education director, Leah Zimmerman, Rabbi Miller and I are working on our Ohr Chayim and family programming for the year. We have a few new families joining us this year, and a few slots still open. If you have friends with children looking for Jewish opportunities, please let them know that BCC's family learning is thriving!

One of the things that made it easy for me to be away for sabbatical earlier this year is also what made it easy for me to come back — all the collaboration that goes on at BCC. I am continually energized and inspired by working with my co-clergy, the BCC staff, officers, Board members, and committees. The continuing opportunity to work with lay service leaders keeps us connected to what this congregation has been about for 41 years now — Jews making Judaism real and relevant.

Wishing us all a sweet New Year,

Rabbi Lisa

WHEN BCC COMES TOGETHER

Cantor Juval Porat

PHOTO: KENNA LOVE



It was on the weekend of BCC's annual congregational meeting that we began reading the book of Deuteronomy (D'varim), in which Moses recapitulates the events that had happened so far in the people's journey through the desert, as well as the laws of the Torah and the people's commitment to it. Assuming Moses's order of events is not random, it is interesting to note that the

appointment of officers and judges, chosen from the eldest and wisest of each tribe to help Moses in affairs of leadership, makes it to the top of his list.

This portion from the book of Deuteronomy was read on the same weekend in which the community of BCC gathered together to choose new leaders from our membership. How fitting for us to cultivate a tradition of leadership simultaneously with reading about its importance in Torah! In gatherings like the congregational meeting or the survey results discussion the following week, it becomes clear that BCC is what each and every one of us brings to the table. Our members' input helps the BCC leadership to identify new opportunities along the way.

As the world's first LGBT synagogue, we exist in a world that sadly still struggles with accepting persons who don't fit into a mainstream normative set of beliefs. I'm intrigued by the constant striving, over BCC's 41 years of operation, for rituals to be used during our annual and life-cycle events to help us reclaim Judaism for ourselves and thus find and preserve our most authentic selves.

Everything I do as cantor of BCC is with this goal in mind. Singing and praying together is one of the ways of building a strong community, but it's also in my musical choices that I try to appeal to the different backgrounds and ages of our congregants. The combination of contemporary

American Jewish compositions as well as traditional Jewish folk melodies and cantorial chants aims to reflect the richness of our musical heritage and the eclecticism of our community. At the same time, engaging the congregants to sing along and to create a more participatory service is just as important to achieving a sense of community, spirituality and worship.

Over the past (Jewish) year it has been my focus to increase the congregation's musical involvement in BCC's communal life. Besides choir practice, we've been having several Friday night pre-service sessions to discover new congregational melodies for potential lay leaders and those who are interested in learning new tunes. A first meeting of BCC musicians to brainstorm about musical input also took place and I hope some wonderful musical contributions to our congregational life will grow out of it.

Also, please save the date for a fabulous concert scheduled for December 7th, which will feature the fabulous klezmer band Mostly Kosher. Those of you who've attended BCC's various Ruach Chayim Services have already met some of Mostly Kosher's members. Proceeds from the concert will benefit BCC, ensuring the hiring of future musicians, as well as a charitable organization to be determined.

As we prepare for the upcoming High Holidays, the goal of finding and/or returning to our most authentic selves is yet again what accompanies us. I very much look forward to seeing and talking to you during the many opportunities given to us to pray and sing together this season. Encouraged by your input, the participating clergy have made some modifications to the services, which we hope you find meaningful - the most prominent one is probably the use of the new Reform machzor Mishkan Hanefesh, which we will make use of during Yom Kippur morning. You can read more about it in Rabbi Lisa's column.

As always, our efforts can't become a reality without the support of BCC's professional staff, its volunteers and my co-clergy Rabbi Lisa. I extend my gratitude to all of you. I'm daily humbled by the trust and responsibilities I've been given by you. Thank you all, and may we each have a meaningful High Holiday season and a sweet and fulfilling new year ahead of us!

B'shalom,
Juval

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Social Networking – A Jewish Tradition

Yanir Dekel, BCC Social Media Coordinator



We hear a lot these days about the “revolution” of social networking. Ha! Social networking was a Jewish thing long before Zuckerberg came along and allowed us to know what our colleagues’ cats are up to 24 hours a day.

According to Jewish law, we are required to pray daily and proper prayer can only be

done as part of a minyan (a gathering of 10 or more adults). If that isn’t social networking, what is? “Oh, you’re an orthodontist? How wonderful! My daughter (son?) Faigale is a perfect match for you!” or “Our friend Ms. Cohen is sick and stuck at home. There’s a form in back to sign up to visit her and bring a nice vegan brisket.” The point is, we’ve been doing social networking forever.

Here at BCC, we’ve jumped in with both feet to the new-fangled electronic version in order to bring us closer together as a community, and help others even beyond the Los Angeles area. Many of you have probably noticed that our website has gone through huge changes over the past few months. BCC is increasing our online outreach as part of the services we give our members – and the entire LGBT Jewish community. Besides more information on our upcoming events, our website now also gives updates and news about our members – an opportunity not only to get to know them better, but also to support one another as all good communities should.

Did you watch the “Zach Stone” episode that was written by our member Gavin Steckler? Read Richard Levik’s new book, “Off My Chest”? See the exhibition curated by Karen Wilson at the Autry Museum? Maybe you just didn’t know about the “BCC connection.” Now you do.

We’re also now building our community virtually. If you’re on Facebook, you can now “like” us at [Facebook.com/TempleBCC](https://www.facebook.com/TempleBCC). If you’re on Twitter, you can “follow” us at [Twitter.com/BCC1972](https://twitter.com/BCC1972). In the top two strongest social media we update

about our events and members, and also provide links to the top LGBT Jewish stories around the world.

Social media is what makes people come together, virtually, in everyday life. Recently we’ve decided to open our congregation (virtually) to all of those LGBT Jews who live around the world and don’t have an LGBT congregation near them where they can be comfortable to express both their Jewish and LGBT identities. They can “like” our stories, “retweet” our posts, and watch our services live online. We encourage you to talk to them, be friendly, and remember that not all LGBT Jews are as lucky as we are to express their identities so easily.

The Jews may have invented social networking hundreds of years ago – now let’s use its newest incarnation to open our arms to an ever-wider community.

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Jewish Learning

A New Name for an Old Idea

Jessica Donath and Adam Barron

The Adult Education Committee of BCC has been renamed the Jewish Learning Committee! Some long-time BCC members recently told us that name was used in the 1980s, and we agreed that "Jewish learning" sounds more free flowing and fun, while "adult education" connotes structure and work. But we'll still be working hard to bring you as many varied, fun and exciting learning opportunities as we can.

As you'll see below, at BCC you can learn to read Hebrew, explore Jewish magic (yes, magic!), join fellow congregants in grappling with the many controversies surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and even begin to prepare for an adult bar or bat mitzvah. That's in addition to Rabbi Edwards's weekly Torah study. But before we get to specifics, let's review our first year as co-chairs.

During this past year, with guidance from our clergy and members and the generosity of our guest teachers, we cobbled together a year of experiential, informational, and social action events. Beginning in October, Rabbi Edwards's Topics in Judaism series provided an introduction and some intermediate discussions for members undergoing conversion, while others among us joined in.

In January, Rabbi Aryeh Cohen, professor of rabbinic literature and social justice at American Jewish University, taught from his newly published book, *Justice in the City*. Applying ancient arguments from Mishnah, Talmud, and medieval rabbinic writings to modern times, he demonstrated what makes a just city, one that doesn't insulate the wealthy from their poor neighbors.

As Rabbi Edwards departed on her well-deserved sabbatical, Rabbi Rachel Adler, Hebrew Union College professor and theologian, helped to fill in. Guiding us through the First Book of Samuel, we learned of the colorful exploits of the prophet Samuel, King Saul, soon-to-be-King David, and a remarkable woman, Abigail.

In April, gay-centric poet and educator Steven Reigns treated us to a one-day autobiographical poetry-writing seminar. With his encouragement and humor, we rediscovered, sublimated, and wrote about the wonder and pain of years past.

Most recently, we hosted a panel of five child survivors of the Holocaust who shared their harrowing and moving stories compiled in the book, *How we Survived, 52 Personal Stories* by Child Survivors of the Holocaust.

Moving forward, the Jewish Learning Committee is thrilled to announce the following exciting learning opportunities in 5774.

Beginning Hebrew Reading with Todd Shotz: Sundays, October 20, 27 and November 3, 6:00 – 8:00 pm at BCC.



Learn to read Hebrew in three easy sessions! This class is appropriate for both beginners and those who need a refresher. It is open to everyone. While not 100% guaranteed, most students leave this class

being able to read along in Hebrew during services. The fee is \$75 for members of participating temples and \$90 for non-members. RSVP to Todd Shotz at todd.shotz@gmail.com. A minimum of six participants is needed to proceed.

Does Jewish Magic Exist? Wednesday, October 30, 7:30 – 9:00 pm at BCC.

Just in time for Halloween: Is there such a thing as Jewish magic? [The answer isn't what you think]. What the Torah and Talmud really say about sorcery, magic spells and witches. This class will be taught by Maggie Anton, aka BCC member Maggie Parkhurst, author of *Rav Hisda's Daughter - A Novel of Love, the Talmud and Sorcery*.

Coming soon every other Thursday History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict with BCC member and AJR Professor Robert Levy.

This is a comprehensive course covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the beginnings of Zionism to the present day. It is similar to a graduate-level course given to rabbinic students at the Academy for Jewish Religion-California (AJRCA). Here is an opportunity to throw yourself into serious study of this



Prof. Robert Levy

heartbreaking and painful conflict and to grapple with challenging issues in a supportive atmosphere with fellow congregants. Students are asked to commit themselves to reading 40 pages for each bi-weekly session. For more information, contact education@bcc-la.org or rlevy005@gmail.com



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Ohr Chayim – It's not in the Heavens

Leah Zimmerman, Education Director



Ohr Chayim, BCC's innovative intergenerational school, begins its seventh year on September 28th. Students K-8 and their families gather almost

weekly (we are off holiday weekends and the third Shabbat of every month) to celebrate Shabbat and learn together. On the second Shabbat of the month, we invite children five and under to bring their parents for a Parent and Me Shabbat. On that Shabbat we all begin our day together with a family service led by Cantor Juval Porat. For more information about our weekly or monthly programs, please contact me at leah@bcc-la.org.

Our weekly Ohr Chayim classes are small, and we give our students a lot of individual attention. Because this is a small program, all the teachers work together and get to know the students and their individual learning styles intimately. The teachers and I coach them as they work on reading Hebrew phonetically, learn to sing t'filot, and think deeply about Torah. Together, we track their individual learning milestones and plan how to challenge each student in the coming lessons. We have deep discussions about the Torah portion, asking questions and creating personal interpretations. As a small group of students, parents, and teachers, we build a strong sense of community around Torah

study and celebration of Shabbat. There is continuity in the personal relationships and knowledge of each individual's learning history and learning curve.

One of my favorite quotes in the Torah is from Deuteronomy 30:11-12. "These commandments which I give to you are not too wondrous for you to understand and not too far for you to reach. It is not in the heavens that you should say, 'who among us can reach up to the heavens and bring it back for us to hear and do.'" As the Israelite people stand gathered to hear and receive the teaching of the Torah, God gives them what I see as the ultimate gift: accessibility. The meaning of the Torah is not out of reach and for a special few; it is open to the interpretation of all. This is the beauty of studying Torah. Torah means teaching. By studying and sharing ideas, we are continuously teaching ourselves and each other.

The Talmud tells a story of Rabbi Eliezer arguing with the other rabbis. Rabbi Eliezer called upon a carob tree, a stream and the walls of the schoolhouse to do miracles if his interpretation was correct. They did as he asked. A voice came from God and asked the rabbis why they argued with Rabbi Eliezer if he was correct. Rabbi Yehoshua quoted, "'It is not in Heaven,' God has given the Torah to the people and the majority interpretation should win." God conceded that this was so. (You can watch a cartoon video

adaptation of this story by G-dcast at <http://www.g-dcast.com/snakeoven>

Most Orthodox rabbis I studied with restricted their interpretations of this story from the Talmud to mean that the rabbis had the authority to interpret halachah (Jewish law.) But to me, this story and this passage have always been an example of how Judaism puts the creation of meaning in the hands of the learners, not only the teachers. It is a philosophy of studying Torah that we use in our Ohr Chayim program. "Lo Bashamayim Hi, it is not in the heavens"... and I would add..."but in your hearts." No matter how many times I have previously studied or taught a Torah portion, I always learn new perspectives from studying with our students. Additionally, the same group of students and I can return to a section of Torah we have studied a year or more before and all of the perspectives and discussion will be different because everyone is a year older with new life experiences and perspectives, someone new has joined the group, someone has left the group, or the question is formulated in a new way.

This year, our students will once again hear the ancient stories and bring their own perceptions, responses and thoughts to their interpretations. Their comments and contributions to the discussion will continue to inspire the madrichim and the teacher. And thus, the cycle of learning Torah will continue from one generation to another.

(continued from page 6) **Jewish Learning – A New Name for an Old Idea**

Starting in January every other Wednesday:

Adult B'nei Mitzvah preparation!

For the first time in seven years, BCC will again offer b'nei mitzvah instruction. A group of candidates will share this rare experience and study together, learn to read Hebrew, lead a prayer, write and deliver a drash, and read and publicly chant trope. You can become bat/bar mitzvah for the first time or reaffirm what you did when you were young. A group b'nei mitzvah ceremony will take place following completion of nine months of training. Space is

limited. To reserve your spot and for more information please contact education@bcc-la.org.

As we enter the year 5774, stay tuned for even more Jewish learning opportunities. Our continued vibrancy depends on your ideas, enthusiasm, and participation. We seek new committee members, feedback and suggestions for speakers, teachers and events. Please contact us at education@bcc-la.org.

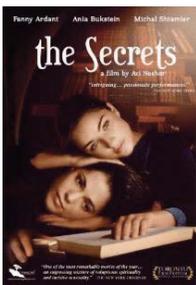
BCC Film Club Lets you Watch Free Movies with Friends

Bracha Yael

If you love landmark, classic or art house films with an LGBT or Jewish theme, look no further than the BCC Film Club. Before each film, we'll give a brief introduction on the film's cinematic importance. There will be a lively discussion after the movie. Feel free to bring your favorite nosh. Film club events are free.

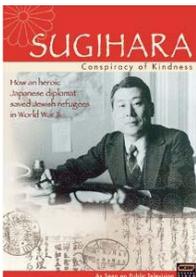
We meet the second Saturday evening of every other month. Here are some of our upcoming films:

October 12: *The Secrets* (8 Israeli Film Academy Nominations, GLAAD Media Nominee for Outstanding Film (Limited Release), Israeli Drama, 2007)



This film centers around two Yeshiva girls, Naomi and Michelle. Naomi, the studious, devoutly religious daughter of a prominent rabbi, falls in love with the freewheeling Michelle and tries to convince her that the Bible doesn't consider their desire a sin in the eyes of God.

December 14th: *Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness* (Hollywood Film Festival Best Documentary, 2000)



A documentary on the life of Chiune Sugihara, the only Japanese person who has been recognized by Yad Vashem as being one of the Righteous Among the Nations. In the dark early days of World War II, Japanese diplomat Sugihara used his power (defying Tokyo's express orders) to rescue Jewish refugees in Lithuania. More than 2,000 Sugihara-

stamped passports allowed hundreds of families to flee to safe havens abroad. This year, the BCC Book Club enjoyed a book that chronicled Sugihara's courageous acts: *The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews during World War II*.

February 8, 2014: TBA

April 12: *A Jihad for Love* (Co-Produced by Sandi DuBowski, director of *Trembling before G-d*, 2007)

June 14: Gay Pride Month: TBA

August 9: *Yentl Sing Along* (Five Oscar Nominations, Barbara Streisand became the first woman to receive the Golden Globe for Best Director, 1984)

October 11: *Eyes Wide Open* (Official Selection Cannes Film Festival, Israeli Drama, 2009)

December 13: *Wish Me Away* (Emmy Winning Documentary, 2011)

All showings are on Saturday Nights at BCC. Havdalah and schmoozing are at 7:00 pm, and the movie starts at 7:30. For more information, please contact Bracha Yael at bracha18@ca.rr.com.

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Photograph by Kenna Love

Saturday Night Culture Series

BCC will soon start a Saturday night culture series to enrich our congregational life and make our beautiful new building accessible to the wider community as a place to experience Jewish and LGBT culture. Possibilities for the series include films, concerts, performances of various sorts, drumming sessions, Israeli dancing, and talks and panel discussions on Jewish and LGBT topics.

We begin on September 21 with a presentation by BCC member Henry Wudl on medieval homoerotic poetry from Spain. If you have ideas or suggestions for future events, please contact Bob Levy at rlevy005@gmail.com

Women's Havurah Keeps BCC Women Connected

Marsha Epstein

All women members of BCC are automatically members of the Women's Havurah. In addition, non-members are welcome to join us for Havurah activities and are encouraged to be on our email list. Here is a sampling of what we have done so far this year to have fun and get to know each other better:

- Walking tour of Downtown Los Angeles with a lunch break during which we got to know each other better
- Afternoon of board games and schmoozing at a member's home
- Tour of the Autry Museum's exhibit on Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic by the curator of the exhibit, who is a member of BCC
- Paper art doll workshop at BCC, at which we created our own unique dolls from recycled and found art materials
- Theater party (with dinner before at a local restaurant) to see a play written by BCC member Jeff Bernhardt

- Lunch at LA Live followed by stroll through the Grammy Museum
- Bowling

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, October 20, 2013, for the Women's Havurah Brunch, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm** at the lovely historic home of Rabbi Lisa and Rebbetzin Tracy. Join other BCC women for a warm, festive brunch to socialize, see old friends and meet new friends. Open to all BCC women, members and non-members.

We will be serving traditional parev brunch fare. There is no cost, but to help us plan please RSVP via e-mail to Marsha Epstein, Women's Havurah Chair at marsha.epstein@gmail.com for confirmation and address/directions. Please bring a canned food or toiletry item to donate to Project Chicken Soup.

As an option following the brunch, all are invited to attend the Autry Museum, where Rabbi Lisa will be appearing on a panel at 2:00 pm

as part of the current "Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic" exhibition curated by BCC member Karen Wilson (see next page). If you missed the BCC tour in June and can't make it on October 20, the exhibition remains open through early January.

Please check the BCC website or weekly announcements for future Women's Havurah activities. If you are not on the email list for the Women's Havurah, please send an email to Marsha.epstein@gmail.com to be added and notified about upcoming events.



Curator and BCC member Karen Wilson welcomes BCC members to the Autry museum to see "Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic" on June 16, 2013.

Membership Committee Welcomes You to BCC

Shalom and Shanah Tovah! The Membership Committee works to make sure BCC is an engaging, welcoming, and open community. We regularly discuss outreach, member recruitment and retention, and plan several activities independently or with other committees throughout the year. In 5773, we re-vamped our membership application process, welcomed prospective members at Rabbi Lisa and Tracy's home, successfully launched the "BCC because..." campaign, personally met with prospective and current members in coffee shops, Thai restaurants and homes, and welcomed over 20 fabulous new members, bringing BCC's membership to a 16-year high! We hosted a retreat in late August to envision our work for the coming year. Everyone is most welcome to engage any or all of us with questions, ideas and recommendations. We are:

Ira Dankberg
Everlyn Hunter
Tracy Moore

Maru Sasson
Brett Trueman
Neal Weisenberg

Cantor Juval Porat
Rabbi Heather Miller, Chair



Coffee 'n Schmooze

Bracha Yael

Start your week right with a fun and casual morning with friendly folks! Our "Coffee 'n Schmooze" events are held bi-monthly from 10:0 -11:30 am. We gather at Colony Café at 10937 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, just east of the 405. This is a self-pay event. We meet next on October 14, then again on December 9. If you have any questions, please contact Bracha Yael by email at bracha18@ca.rr.com.

Make New Friends with the Men's Havurah

BCC Men's Havurah Chair: Mark Miller

Do you like delicious dinners and brunches, wine tastings, game nights, trips to museums, movies, stimulating lectures, pool parties, and Jewish holiday celebrations? How about meeting other BCC men and making new friends? Then make sure you're connected to the Men's Havurah. We have a wide selection of social events throughout the year, at members' homes and in different locations. The Havurah is open to members and non-members alike. So if you're thinking of becoming a member of BCC, this is a great way to get to know our men's community. To be added to our e-mail list, contact the Men's Havurah directly at bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com or look for us on Facebook.

The Men's Havurah sponsored the following very successful event during August 2013:

Summer Sunday Brunch on August 11th

About 20 men enjoyed a fantastic brunch at the home of BCC members Brett Trueman and Mark Miller in Santa Monica featuring great homemade waffles with strawberries and cream prepared by BCC Secretary Richard Lesse together with lots of other delicious food. Acquaintances and new connections were made with lots of schmoozing and socializing.

The Men's Havurah Planning Committee is working on some great events for the next several months. Announcements via e-mail, the BCC Weekly, and Friday evening's Seat Bulletin for our September Pool Party event have already gone out. The party will be on

September 8th at the home of BCC member and incoming Treasurer Ray Eelsing in Playa Del Rey beginning at 1:00 pm. If you are interested in attending, RSVP to bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com.



For events in October and later months, announcements will go out as soon as details are finalized. However, until then here's a thumbnail sketch of what we're planning:

- Tour of the Watts Towers and Arts Center together with brunch
- Game Night, one of our most popular events including the Jewish edition of Taboo and Hebrew Scrabble.
- Chanukah celebration in November/December.

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

- Through e-mail: 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.

Gay Days at Disneyland With the 20s/30s Havurah

Are you new to BCC? In your 20's or 30's? BCC's very own 20's & 30's Havurah is a group designed for young LGBT Jews to get together to enjoy events or shows. Once a month we host events that include brunches, backyard BBQs, happy hours, and our upcoming Gay Days at Disneyland. Come hang out and meet the co-chairs, Cantor Juval Porat and Fernando McCray. For more information please contact us at: 20s30s@bcc-la.org or contact Fernando at (310)430-6988. Also, check us out online: <http://www.bcc-la.org/programs/20s30s-havurah/>

On Sunday, October 6th 2013, the 20's & 30's Havurah will be going to Disneyland's annual Gay Days event. This is open to all BCC members and friends. The prices are: \$82 for Adults (ages 10 years and over) and \$77 for Children (ages 3-9 years old). Please RSVP no later than Friday, September 20th 2013. Lastly, don't forget to wear red in support of the official Gay Days pride color. See you guys there!

Faith Meets 8

On Sunday, October 20, 2:00 to 4:00 pm, "Faith Meets 8" at the Autry Museum in Griffith Park. As a program of the Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic Exhibition, moderator David Lazarus leads a lively discussion on the involvement of faith-based organizations in community activism and the LGBT movement, culminating in the issues surrounding California's Prop 8. Joining the conversation are the Reverend Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), the world's first gay and lesbian Christian church; Paul Lichterman, professor of sociology and religion at USC; Joanna Brooks, scholar and author of *The Book of Mormon Girl*; and BCC's own Rabbi Lisa Edwards. Admission to Faith Meets 8 is included with admission to view the museum exhibits. This program is sponsored by the Max Factor Family Foundation. <http://theautry.org/programs/lectures-seminars-discussions/faith-meets-8>

BCC Live Offers Streamed Events and Telephone Study

Bracha Yael

Streamed Events

Stay connected with BCC online with your computer, iPad, or mobile phone. You can watch what's going on at BCC in real time because we live broadcast all our wonderful Friday night services and some special events at our website www.bcc-la.org/bcc-live and on our Ustream channel <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/bcc-live>.

Plus, you can interact with any live-streamed event. For instance, during Friday night services you can remember someone during the healing prayer or provide a loved one's name for Kaddish by using the "chat" function on BCC's Ustream channel. And during classes or seminars you can ask questions, or just say "hello" to your BCC friends who just like you are away vacationing or visiting family and friends. Nowhere is too far to be "there" with your BCC community. Even someone from El Salvador "attends" Friday night services! How cool is that!

BCC comes "alive" thanks to our friendly moderators, BCC members Davi, Everlyn, Bracha and Marc. This is how it works. When you'd like to share a name of a loved one at Friday night services or ask a question during a class or seminar, just "chat" it to the moderator. Your request will be shared with the rabbi or speaker. Remember the "chat" function is only available through our Ustream channel. Also, make sure you click on "Chat" and not the "social stream" tab.

Don't just watch; be a part of it! If you'd like to sign up for this great feature (and who wouldn't): go to <http://www.ustream.tv/new>; click on "login/signup" at the upper right hand of the page. Then follow Ustream's remaining steps. It's easy and free!

When you can't watch live, tune into our Ustream archives and enjoy past services and community events at your leisure.

Telephone Study

Another way you can stay connected with your BCC community is through our telephone study, made available via conference phone (call in information is provided below).

People from literally all over the world get "together" for telephone Torah study every Thursday, from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Although mostly lay led, once a month we have a guest scholar lead a discussion on the weekly Torah portion.

Upcoming guests are:



Thursday, October 17, 4:00 to 5:00 pm:

"The Akedah in Christian history: Interpretation, Theology, Ethics, and Art."

An overview of some of the ideas surrounding the story of the Akedah (the Binding of Isaac) as found in Christianity. The discussion will invite input about how these ideas share and contradict ideas in Judaism. Together we will ask how these viewpoints distinguish the two religions and in what ways they may enrich each other.

The discussion will be led by Petra Verwijjs, Ph.D. Petra is a native of the Netherlands. She is a linguist with a Ph.D. in Religion (Hebrew Bible) from the Claremont Graduate University. Currently Petra practices and studies the art of translation. She and her wife Linda live in Western Michigan.

Thursday, November 21, 4:00 to 5:00 pm:

Rashi's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion, Vayeshev.

Rashi was a 12th century French rabbi who to this day remains the most authoritative commentator on the Talmud and Tanach (Hebrew Bible) among Ashkenazi Jews. The discussion will be led by BCC member Maggie Anton (Parkhurst), the award-winning author of the historical fiction series "Rashi's Daughters" and "Rav Hisda's Daughter." She is a Talmud and Rashi scholar, with expertise in Jewish women's history.

You can join our lively Torah discussions each week by following these simple instructions. Please dial 702-851-4044, when prompted punch in 2, then our pass code, 22252#. All these offerings are available via conference phone, which is free—excluding any long distance charges from your personal carrier.

If you have questions about BCC Live programming or instructions, please email Bracha Yael at bracha18@ca.rr.com.

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The Tzedakah Council at 15

Robin Baltic

How the Tzedakah Council Began

It all started with one pushke!

In 1996 I received a beautiful hand-painted ceramic pushke. I began a daily ritual of emptying my pockets of change. I had this vague idea that when the pushke was filled I would find somewhere to donate the money. Though I occasionally contributed to my favorite charities by check or credit card (as I'm sure you do too), making a tzedakah contribution each day has since become a meaningful and integral part of my daily routine.

At the time there was no organized BCC giving of tzedakah. There was a pushke mounted on the wall, lovingly dedicated by Carol Saragossi in memory of her father. Periodically, I saw bills and coins accumulating in the pushke, but I had no idea where they went. After about ten months my tzedakah coins had effortlessly amounted to about \$200. In the fall of 1997 I approached a few BCC members to join me in exploring how, as a community, we could put the giving of tzedakah into practice. Within a few months the nucleus of a BCC Tzedakah Council evolved.

In 1998/5778 the first of our more or less semi-annual BCC tzedakah coin drives began at Purim and concluded at Sukkot. Our second cycle runs from Sukkot to Pesach. Following each cycle the Tzedakah Council meets to disburse all the shekels from the prior cycle to non-profit organizations worldwide with programs directly touching people in need.

What Else We Do

In addition to promoting and coordinating the pushke coin drives and selecting the organizations we give to, Tzedakah Council members have written articles to educate our congregation about the meaning and religious sources of the concept of tzedakah (you'll find one from 1998 by Steve Hochstadt excerpted below). Over the years, some of us have given a drash during Friday night services on the theme of tzedakah. We've hosted speakers from recipient organizations such as Virginia Uribe, Founder of Project 10. From time to time we've coordinated BCC members' activities in Big Sunday mitzvah projects like helping paint the playground of a school in Boyle Heights, planting a community garden, or organizing a book collection for a local school library.

From the beginning, members of the Tzedakah Council (with the support of a few others) have underwritten the entire cost of designing and producing all the BCC pushkes. Over the years there have been three pushke designs — two versions of the memorable purple ones with the bottom falling out at the slightest giggle and the current tin pushkes with the secure purple top. In 15 years we have disseminated and recycled over 2000 pushkes.

Where Your Money Has Gone

There have been a total of 24 BCC tzedakah coin drives including the current one ending this year on September 27 following Sukkot. Over the past 15 years the Tzedakah Council has collected and distributed \$30,846 to 84 non-profit organizations worldwide, an amazing accomplishment for a shul of our size. Here are some of them:

Disaster relief donations through the American Jewish Joint Distribution fund to help survivors of the 2011 Japan tsunami with food and clothing, or community agencies such as Mazon and the Foundation at LSU Health Sciences in New Orleans for people impacted by Hurricane Katrina.



Thank You

To all the BCC members, relatives and friends who have generously participated, year after year, in our pushke coin drives, on behalf of the Tzedakah Council we thank you. And, to the 15 BCC members who have joined me these past 15 years on the Tzedakah Council I thank you as well. In particular I want to thank Steve Hochstadt, who from the very beginning has co-led the Tzedakah Council with me, always with style and grace.

Current and Past Tzedakah Council Members:

** indicates founding member of the committee*

Robin Baltic (1997 - present)*
Michael Belkin (2009 - 2010)
Jeff Bernhardt (1997 - 2005)*
Ahavah Brooks (2008 - 2009)
Angela Brown (2003 - 2006)
Steve Hochstadt (1997 - present)*
Nicholas Mestas (2012 - present)
Mark Miller (2005 - 2007)
Laurie Newman (2001 - 2002)
Rob Philips (1997 - 1998)*
Jim Potter (1997 - 2002 and 2012 - present)*
Estaire Press (2003 - 2005 and 2012-2013)
Vaughan Rachel (1997 - 2008)*
Sylvia Weisenberg (2006 - 2007)
Michelle Weiss (1997-1998)*
Barry Wendell (2006 - 2009)

Continued on Page 13

LGBT organizations including GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) for training materials, Project Chicken Soup to cover the cost of food preparation for clients living with HIV/AIDS and caregivers, Jerusalem Open House and Agudah for community outreach programs in Israel, Project 10 for the Models in Excellence college scholarship fund and AIDS Project LA for HIV test screenings.

Israeli organizations including ARMDA (American Red Mogen David Adom) for processing blood for emergency mobile medical situations, Schneider Children's Medical Center for trauma counseling for children, and the Clare Hammer Chicken Fund for Shabbat meals for families in need.

Programs serving children such as: the NCCJ Brotherhood/Sisterhood Camp and Chai Life Line with camperships for kids in need, Children of the Night with backpacks and toiletries for homeless children in Los Angeles, Hobart Shakespearians and Sweet Strings for instruments to loan out to elementary school children, and LA Zoo Pals for bus transportation for one public school class to have a field trip to the zoo.

What's Next?

We hope you will be inspired to begin or continue the practice of emptying your pockets of change, filling a pushke, and returning it to BCC. Here are the six organizations that will receive BCC tzedakah funds at the conclusion of the current coin drive after Sukkot.

- **Drop in the Bucket:** Support for building clean water wells in villages in Sudan and Uganda.
- **Community Water Center:** California based environmental program providing support for Spanish language workshops informing residents in Tulare County about water quality issues in their community.
- **College Path LA:** Scholarship support for books and college tuition for a student brought to the US as a child of undocumented parents.
- **Boyle Heights Community Orchestra:** Support for purchasing musical instruments to loan out to children participating in the orchestra.
- **Beit HaShanti:** Helping adolescents passing through a homeless shelter in Tel Aviv with basic essentials including toiletries, towels, linens and clothing.
- **The Gay and Lesbian Center Transitional Living Program:** Clothing and basic necessities of life for LGBT adolescent youth temporarily staying at the Center's renowned 24-bed facility for 18 to 24 year homeless youth.

To participate in the current tzedakah coin drive please return your pushke, however full, by September 27, 2013 either to the BCC office or during High Holiday services held at Temple Isaiah.

Why Give Tzedakah?

Steve Hochstadt

Excerpted from G'vanim, March 1998

Tzedakah...What is it? Some of us may have a memory of putting coins in the "pushke" at Hebrew school. Most understand it to be charity, but that doesn't convey all that tzedakah is.

The Talmudic sages coined the word tzedakah from the biblical word tzedek, which means righteousness or justice. Helping those in need is not merely responding with sympathy or pity, it is a religious obligation - an obligation from which no one is exempt. "Even a poor person who is kept alive by tzedakah funds must give tzedakah from what he receives" (Shulchan Aruch).

The Torah tells us those who are privileged must give as an act of social justice: "For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy in your land" (Deut. 15.11). Probably all of us are familiar with the farmer's obligation to share the harvest with the poor by leaving the corners of the fields unplowed (pe'ah) and to abandon the forgotten sheaves (shikhah). Further, the farmer is obligated to set aside a tenth part of all the yield brought from the field and make it available for the poor.

For those of us who do not have a harvest to share, our forbears developed the kuppah or community chest. Maimonides said he had never seen a Jewish community without a kuppah box. Indeed, ever since Talmudic times, Jewish communities have established a fund for supporting the poor.

In our own day, giving charity through societies or organizations like the Jewish Federation does not absolve us from the personal obligation of tzedakah. Jewish law explicitly states that it is forbidden to turn away any person who seeks help. As a BCC community, our collective tzedakah enables us to make more of a contribution to a wide range of LGBT, Jewish and non-Jewish charities than we could as individuals. Together, we can make a difference.

Inspired by LA, Winnipeg Hosts 21st World Conference of GLBT Jews

Jonathan Falk

The 21st World Conference of GLBT Jews took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on July 5 – 7, 2013. Co-chairs Arthur Blankstein and Paula Parks commented that attending the 20th World Conference in 2010 at the UCLA Hillel – which BCC co-hosted - was what inspired them to try to organize a similar event in Winnipeg. Since Winnipeg has only 2% of Los Angeles's Jewish population, everyone agreed that this would be a significant challenge. But in the end, more than 100 people from over 15 different countries took part in an exciting, transformational conference.

As secretary of the World Congress of GLBT Jews, and as delegate from BCC, I was privileged to attend our annual board meeting, hosted by historic Congregation Shaarey Zedek. Another BCC member, Glen Chester,



Left to right: Shiri Haines, Gustavo Michanie, German Vaisman, Surat Knan, Rabbi Alan Green, Barbara BradyGoldberg, Luis Perelman, Shelley Faintuch, Ian Staniloff, Glen Chester, Jonathan Falk (seated), Howard Solomon.

serves as World Congress treasurer. The dozen or so other people at the board meeting hailed from as far away as London, Buenos Aires and Mexico City, as well as various US and Canadian cities. Our board

meeting dealt with elections, venues for future meetings, and how our movement will look in the future as mainstream synagogues and other Jewish organizations become increasingly significant in the lives of LGBT Jews. We also heard presentations from local representatives regarding the state of affairs for Canada's Jewish and LGBT communities. The general impression given was that Canada is pretty much paradise for LGBT people, and that while Winnipeg's Jewish population is somewhat threatened by young people moving to Calgary and Toronto, the community has responded by working with the province to help Argentinian Jews immigrate there.

The Conference got underway at the Convention Centre Friday evening with a Shabbat service led by Rabbi David Dunn Bauer. After a delightful Shabbat dinner, Dr. Joy Ladin delivered a heartfelt keynote address titled "Rainbow Blossoms On The Tree of Life: How Torah Grows When Read Through GLBTQ Eyes." Dr. Ladin made headlines with her public transition from male to female, at Yeshiva University in New York. To end an inspiring evening, Justin Jaron Lewis and Jane Enkin invited conference attendees to a traditional and lively tisch, with more story-telling and singing.

Shabbat morning services included three options: a Conservative one led by Shaarey Zedek's Rabbi Green and Leslie Emery, a Progressive one led by Rabbi David

Dunn Bauer, and an Alternative one led by Rabbi Rokie Bernstein.

Some highlights of the conference sessions I attended were:

- The Gender Dance: Picture Books That Challenge Stereotypes. Author Lesléa Newman discussed and read from a surprising number of children's books that have been challenging traditional gender roles. Ms. Newman also read from her classic short story and A Letter to Harvey Milk at the closing luncheon.
- LGBT in the Orthodox World: How Far Have We Come? What Does Success Look Like? Presenter Jay Michaelson pointed out that we are unlikely to get orthodox rabbis to publicly support LGBT rights, but should be satisfied when people from an orthodox background admit that they don't know how to reconcile their religious beliefs with our right to existence.
- Screening of *The Invisible Men*, followed by Q&A with Israeli Director, Yariv Mozer. This powerful documentary follows the lives of three gay Palestinian men living illegally in Israel under death threats from their families in the West Bank, while awaiting news of asylum in a third country. I highly recommend this film.

Saturday night's gala dinner featured entertainment by Winnipeg's extremely talented Rainbow Harmony Project, classical musicians Justin Odwak and Joseph Tritt, and San Francisco comedian Lisa Geduldig. After havdalah, attendees were invited to a Winnipeg sweet table and an after party at a local club called Fame.

On Sunday, the formal conference ended but an optional post-conference tour took us by bus to a number of impressive Winnipeg venues, including the Provincial Legislature, the Asper Jewish Community Campus and Rady JCC, the exchange district (site of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike), and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which is still under construction.

BCC president Bruce Maxwell, who attended the conference as well, found Winnipeg to be welcoming, friendly, polite, and "much more interesting and livable than I could have imagined." Most inspiring, said Bruce, is the "extremely progressive and inclusive mainstream Jewish community."

BCC is a founding member of the World Congress, whose board of directors meets every year and which holds an international conference on a regular – or irregular - schedule. Membership is open to organizations and individuals. Visit our website at glbtjews.org and support LGBT Jews around the world!



Tamar Barr (foreground) and Paula Parks (right) lead visitors on a guided tour of the Asper Jewish Community Campus.

Thanks for a Great Four Years



Bruce Maxwell

Revised and excerpted from his address at the congregational meeting on July 14, 2013.

During the past four years that I have been President of BCC, we as a congregation have had many accomplishments. I would like to recognize a few of the people who have been involved in so many of them. Though I am not intentionally leaving anyone out, clearly I could not name everyone deserving of recognition without pretty much listing our entire membership.

In my first year as President, 2009-2010, we closed escrow on our new building at 6090 W. Pico Blvd. By the end of that year (August 2010) we held our "groundbreaking" ceremony ("I dig BCC") at the same time that we co-hosted the World Congress of GLBT Jewish Organizations at UCLA Hillel. We awarded the Herman Humanitarian Award that year to Bill Resnick, co-chair of our capital campaign for the new building, and the President's Award to Hannah Theile and Kenna Love. In addition we gave a special Community Spirit Award to Wells Fargo Bank for its role in helping us obtain financing for the new building. My fellow officers that year were Vice Presidents Donna Quigley Groman and Lauren Schlaw, Secretary Allison Diamant, and Treasurer Brett Trueman.

That same year we formalized the hiring of Cantor Juval Porat as BCC's third cantor and helped him obtain a work visa to stay permanently in the United States. In June of 2010, we saw his formal installation in a room packed and filled with special dignitaries from the LA Jewish community, the German government, and a large number of our members and friends. Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Rebbetzin Tracy Moore continued to serve BCC, entering their 16th year.

The following year (2010-11), the dedication of our new building on April 10, 2011 was attended by nearly 300 people including BCC members and friends, local politicians, and other VIPs. Our new building is a LEED certified green building, one of only two LEED synagogues in California and only four LEED Reform synagogues in the US. On April 15 we held our first Shabbat service in our new sanctuary and inaugurated our new BCC siddur thanks to many including Ritual Committee chair and past President Davi Cheng, Lee Alhadeff, Henry Wudl, Tracy Moore, Maggie Parkhurst, Rabbi Joe Hample and of course Rabbi Edwards and Cantor Porat. We also inaugurated "BCC Live," our new innovative program to make services available to people unable to attend in person, for which we were awarded a URJ incubator grant. Thanks to the hard work

Bruce Maxwell, Outgoing President

of Bracha Yael and others, we were one of only twenty to receive this out of 120 temples that applied. We completed the story lines writing workshops, which were attended by more than 100 BCC members to create the copper strips adorning the ark wall. These strips tell the stories one by one of so many of our members. We installed new ark doors made of stained glass as well as the ner tamid and yahrzeit markers, and relocated our prized stained glass windows, all thanks to our BCC artists Davi Cheng, Jerry Hanson, and office manager Victoria Delgadillo (who has served BCC with distinction since 1997).

After successfully selling our former home at 6000 W. Pico, we concluded our capital campaign in May and had a successful 2011 Humanitarian Awards Brunch honoring Diane Goodman and Nicolasa Nevarez with the Herman Humanitarian Award, Ira Dankberg with the President's Award and a special Builders Award to our contractor Howard CDM, our architects Toni Lewis and Marc Schoeplein, our realtor Glenn Melnick, our Executive Director Felicia Park-Rogers, our capital campaign consultant Mark Randall, and our capital campaign co-chair Brett Trueman. In addition to Lauren, Allison, Brett, and myself, the Executive Committee that year included Vice Presidents David Mozes and Hannah Theile.

Cantor Porat spearheaded an exciting concert on August 14 with 13 guest cantors from around Southern California. During the year we also welcomed Dr. Reuven Firestone, who guest taught a rare LA series on Jews and Muslims. Dr. Rachel Adler, an accomplished Biblical and Talmudic scholar, joined us for her rabbinic intern year. Our children's program Ohr Chayim continued its successful and innovative programming for our youngsters and families. We were active and supportive of many related organizations including Project Chicken Soup, One LA, the Progressive Jewish Alliance, Outfest, the LA Gay and Lesbian Center's anti-sex violence program (where we received a collaborative grant in working in conjunction with them) and several of our members participated in the San Francisco to LA AIDS ride supporting the Center.

During my third year as President, 2011-2012, BCC began a year-long celebration of its 40th Anniversary that included another concert organized by Cantor Porat, a garden party at the home of Dean Hansell, and many other fun events. The URJ's new president, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, attended a Shabbat dinner and service and provided us with a special drash on a Friday evening. Richard Lesse joined the Executive Committee as Secretary. We had a successful 2012 Humanitarian Awards brunch in May honoring Mark Katz, MD with the Herman Humanitarian Award, Davi Cheng and Bracha

Continued on Page 16

Yael with the President's Award and a special BCC Freedom Award to Aaron Belkin, who single-handedly spearheaded the fight to end the military ban against LGBTQ members also known as "Don't Ask Don't Tell."

The year now ending, 2012-2013, has seen Rabbi Lisa Edwards finish her 19th year as BCC's spiritual leader, almost half of the entire life of the congregation. She was one of five rabbis asked by the URJ to write a D'var Torah for each portion of one book of Torah, and her writings on the Book of Numbers appeared nine weeks in a row on the URJ website and are currently archived there. In addition, Rabbi Edwards was selected by the Jewish Daily Forward, a national periodical, as one of America's 36 most inspiring rabbis. Cantor Juval Porat finishes his first three-year contractual period and begins his fourth year. On July 11 we held a concert with Lady J and helped Juval celebrate his 35th birthday.

BCC continues to grow into and learn how best to utilize our new building. We have bar mitzvahs, weddings, celebrations and funeral receptions. We have an outdoor sukkah, where we hold Shabbat services during Sukkot. We have an outdoor patio where we sometimes celebrate our oneg after Friday night services, and we have many days and nights when BCC has two or three events going on simultaneously. I'd like to take a moment to thank three particular individuals for their amazing work to achieve the success of moving

into our new building. One is Brett Trueman, whom I call the father of our new building because it was his vision and hard work that enabled those of us with similar dreams to take action, raise money, and acquire and build this special place. Secondly, without the extraordinary efforts of our project manager Ira Dankberg and Executive Director Felicia Park-Rogers, our new home might never have been realized.

During this past year, we held a successful Humanitarian Awards Brunch honoring David Codell with the Herman Humanitarian Award for his efforts in support of marriage equality in California and nationally, Ray Eelsing with the President's Award, and Robin Berkovitz and Laurie Newman with a very special new award created this year. The Harriet Perl Tzedek Award honors the memory of Harriet Perl, z'l, a BCC member for more than 35 years and a fierce advocate for justice (tzedek). During the spring of 2013, we conducted a survey of BCC membership, which was conceived and originated by member Jerry Nodiff.

As I prepare to hand over the leadership reins to Lauren Schlau and the other new officers and Board members, I want to express my confidence that BCC is in good hands. I am grateful to have served as President the past four years and as Treasurer for the three years before that. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all who have helped to make my leadership years as rewarding as they have been.

Life Transitions Support Group

Shirley Hirschberg

The goal of the BCC Life Transitions Group is to enhance participants' spiritual and emotional growth. It deals with issues in areas of concern such as relationships, careers, economics, social life, family, health and bereavement.

Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, give and receive mutual support, and exchange coping skills with one another in a confidential atmosphere. Everyone is welcome - members and non-members. The group meets twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

This support group is facilitated by Shirley Hirschberg, Social Worker. For more information, please call the BCC office (323) 931-7023, ext. 205.

A WIDER BRIDGE

A WIDER BRIDGE INVITES YOU ON A UNIQUE JOURNEY THROUGH ISRAEL
October 30-November 9, 2013

Join us for our third annual trip for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) Jews, partners, friends and allies. The 10 night journey takes us to the desert, Tel Aviv, the Galilee and Jerusalem, connecting modern Israeli life with our deep historical roots.

Hike in the desert, swim in the Dead Sea, visit the old city of Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, and the ruins of Bet She'an. We'll engage with Israeli LGBTQ leaders and artists, build community, sing together, celebrate Shabbat with new friends and savor the culture and nightlife of Tel Aviv, one of the leading gay cities of the world.

"Israel now feels like a place I could call home."
Nate (Los Angeles, CA)

"This trip was my single most positive life altering experience."
Erica (Brooklyn, NY)

"I loved seeing and feeling Israel through the vector of gay life."
Michael (St. Louis, MO)

To register and for more details visit: www.awiderbridge.org/Israel-2013
Registration deadline: August 15, 2013
Price: \$2,700 (airfare not included)
An application for scholarships and subsidies is available on our website.

KESHET A WIDER BRIDGE

**Cantor Porat will be joining the group once again as "Cantor in Residence."
Registration is still open.**

Mazel Tov

Please join the BCC community in wishing the following individuals a hearty "mazel tov" on their recent accomplishments or good news.

Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Tracy Moore celebrated their 19th anniversary as Rabbi and Rebbetzin (Lezbetzin) of BCC on August 1.



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Tracy Moore light Shabbat candles on August 2, flanked by friends who were BCC members 19 years ago.

Karen Wilson and Caroline Bernard were legally married in California in August. Mazel tov also to any other newlyweds who may have escaped the editor's attention.



PHOTO: RABBI HEATHER MILLER

BCC clergy, members, and friends gathered on July 1, 2013, to celebrate the resumption of legal same-sex marriages in California.

Doctor Cecilia Quigley Groman has completed her course of study at Antioch University and has been awarded her Ph.D. in Forensic Psychology.

Sarah Trutt became bat mitzvah at BCC on Saturday, July 27. She read from Torah and gave a wonderful drash as well.

Susan McKibben is thrilled to announce the birth of her daughter, Hannah Seraphine McKibben, born July 7 at 9:12 am.



Susan McKibben with new baby Hannah

Aviva Kamin and Elyse Asch are proud aunts of a new baby, Claire, adopted by Aviva's nephew Danny and his husband Scott in Boston.

Ginger Jacobs celebrated the birth of her newest granddaughter, Jessica Emily Jacobs, on August 20.

Francois Chouchan became a U.S. citizen on August 21.

If you have an achievement or good fortune to share, please send it to the BCC office. We want to celebrate with you!

BCC Books and Bagels

Larry Nathenson

BCC's Book Group (Books and Bagels) meets monthly in members' homes for a bagel brunch and discussion of a book selected by the group. We have been meeting continuously since 1995! We read a variety of books: fiction and non-fiction, American and Israeli, historical and contemporary. The only requirement is some Jewish content (LGBT content is a plus, but not required). Recent selections have included *Society's Child*, an autobiography by Janis Ian, and *Last Days of Summer*, a novel by Steve Kluger about New York during World War II. Our next two meetings are as follows.



Sunday, September 22, at 10:00 am
Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaiah Hellman Created California, by Frances Dinkelspiel

A biography of a late 19th century Jewish banker and merchant in Los Angeles and later San Francisco written by one of his descendants, tracing his influence on a variety of industries that have made California the economic powerhouse it is today.



Sunday, October 27, at 10:00 am
The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit, by Lucette Lagnado

A memoir about a Jewish family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World.

The group is open to BCC members and non-members, and you are welcome to join us for a particular book that may interest you. For more information, contact Larry Nathenson at Larrynath@aol.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 LABOR DAY (BCC office closed)	3	4 EREV ROSH HASHANAH 8:00 pm Service Temple Isaiah	5 ROSH HASHANAH Temple Isaiah 9:30 am Morning Service 10:30 am Family Service Catered lunch 4:00 pm Telephone Service	6 ROSH HASHANAH 10:00 am Service at BCC 4:30 pm Tashlich and Shabbat Services Venice Beach	7 SHABBAT SHUVAH
8 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver Project Chicken Soup 3975 Landmark 1:00 pm (private home) Men's Havurah Pool Party, BBQ	9 BCC Office Closed	10	11 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	12 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	13 EREV YOM KIPPUR 7:15 pm, Kol Nidre Service Temple Isaiah BCC Clergy	14 YOM KIPPUR 10:00 am Morning Service 11:00 am Family Service 2:30 pm Telephone Minyan 3:30 pm Names and Yizkor 7:30 pm Havdalah, break-fast
15 10:00 am Sukkah Building, Decoration	16 BCC Office Closed	17 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	18 EREV SUKKOT 7:00 pm Potluck and Sukkot service	19 SUKKOT BCC Office Closed 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	20 6:00 pm Dinner (bring) 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat	21 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Service and Dairy Potluck 8:00 pm Culture Series Medieval Homoerotic Poetry, Henry Wudl
22 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver Project Chicken Soup 3975 Landmark 10:00 am (private home) Book Group Towers of Gold	23 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	24 7:30 pm in Sukkah Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	25 SHEMINI ATZERET 6:00 pm Dinner (bring) 6:30 pm Yizkor service 8:00 pm Simchat Torah Celebration	26 SIMCHAT TORAH 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	27 BCC Office Closed 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat	28 10:00 am Ohr Chayim
29	30	All events at BCC unless otherwise noted				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All events at BCC unless otherwise noted		1 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	2 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	3 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	4 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Cantor Porat Lay Leader	5 10:00 am Ohr Chayim
6 8:00 am cook, 11:30 deliver Project Chicken Soup 3975 Landmark 20s/30s Havurah Gay Days at Disneyland	7	8 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	9 7:00 pm Executive Committee	10 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	11 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Cantor Porat Lay Leader	12 10:00 am Ohr Chayim (Parent and Me) 7:00 pm Havdalah 7:30 pm BCC Film Club (The Secrets)
13	14 10:00 am Coffee 'n Schmooze Colony Cafe	15 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	16 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	17 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	18 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Lay Leader	19 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Service and Dairy potluck
20 10:00 am (private home) Women's Havurah Brunch 6:00 pm Todd Shotz Hebrew Reading	21	22 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	23 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	24 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study	25 Ruach Chayim 6:30 pm Shabbat Dinner 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Guest Musicians	26 10:00 am Ohr Chayim
27 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit 6:00 pm Hebrew Reading Todd Shotz	28	29 7:30 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	30 7:30 pm Does Jewish Magic Exist? Maggie Anton	31 HALLOWEEN 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study		