

Awards Brunch Makes BCC Pride Transparent

Larry Nathenson

Nearly 300 BCC members and friends came together on Sunday, June 28 at the Skirball Cultural Center for an especially joyous and memorable awards brunch and program. This annual event is always a highlight of our BCC calendar, but this year we took extra pride in our celebration for a number of reasons, including these:

- We presented the Rabbi Erwin and Agnes Herman Humanitarian Award to Jeffrey Tambor, a Golden Globe winner for his role as trans-parent Maura Pfefferman in the acclaimed Amazon Prime series "Transparent."
- We presented the BCC Presidents Award to former BCC president and treasurer Bruce Maxwell, a pillar of our community who was instrumental in many of our recent accomplishments including the hiring of Cantor Juval Porat and the achievement of our goal of a beautiful new synagogue home. For excerpts from Bruce's remarks, see page 14.
- Receiving the Harriet Perl Tzedek Award were Sylvia Sukop and Bonnie Kaplan, two extraordinary artists, writers, and teachers who use their many talents to benefit BCC and the wider community. Portions of Bonnie and Sylvia's remarks are on page 15.
- We celebrated the U.S. Supreme Court ruling only two days earlier that held that marriage equality for same-sex couples is a constitutional right nationwide. For more on this landmark court decision, see Rabbi Edwards's column on page 4.
- We observed the 30th anniversary of our first Humanitarian Award and our first award gala. For more on that 1985 event, see President Lauren Schlau's column on page 3.
- Our awards brunch took place in the beautiful Guerin Pavilion in Herscher Hall at the Skirball Center, with its dramatic arches, ample floor space, and inviting garden and patio surroundings.

Jeffrey Tambor's career has spanned four decades on stage and screen, including roles in "Arrested Development," "The Larry Sanders Show," "And Justice for All," and "Meet Joe Black." He won a 2015 Golden Globe for Best Actor for his portrayal of Maura Pfefferman in "Transparent." He was introduced by his

"Transparent" co-stars Amy Landecker and Judith Light, both accomplished entertainers who have received critical acclaim. Judith Light is also a long-time supporter of LGBT and human rights and the fight against HIV/AIDS and the winner of two Emmy and two Tony awards. She was the emcee of BCC's awards brunch in December 2002 honoring then U.S. Congressman Barney Frank.



PHOTO: MARCIA PEREL

"Transparent" co-stars Amy Landecker and Judith Light present the Humanitarian Award to Jeffrey Tambor

Mr. Tambor dedicated his remarks to all who have the courage to be their true selves. In his remarks he regaled us with tales of his early years at Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco, where he was kicked out of cheder for questioning how we know about God and for correcting his teacher's grammar (is it when the Jewish people "was" young or "were" young?). He told us his award should be for being the luckiest Jew in the room for having the gift and the responsibility of portraying Maura Pfefferman and her struggles to come out to her children and others as a transgender woman.

As always, our awards brunch began with a champagne and coffee reception and our fabulous silent auction, filled with amazing prizes ranging from works of art to dining and vacation packages, theater tickets, clothing and electronics, and professional services. For the first time, this year's auction was entirely electronic, which was a bit disconcerting for some at first

Continued on Page 2

but allowed bidders to keep track of their items without leaving their seats and to be alerted when they were outbid by others. We also sold raffle tickets for an Apple watch, won by Howard Hamburger, and held a spontaneous verbal auction for a "table reading" with the cast of "Transparent" at the studio, won by David Mozes and Peter Bastien. Congratulations to all the winners.

Our emcee this year was actor and comedian Stephen Guarino, best known for playing the over-the-top Derrick on ABC's "Happy Endings" and also for his roles on Rosie O'Donnell's "The Big Gay Sketch Show" on LOGO.

In 2011 he was Best Actor at the Outfest LGBT film festival.

Our beloved Cantor Juval Porat and BCC member Tamara Kline provided additional entertainment. Cantor Porat sang Tamara's lyrics to "Putting it Together (the Art of Making Brunch)," a parody of Stephen Sondheim's "Putting it Together" from "Sunday in the Park with George." They also sang Tamara's original composition "Here's to



PHOTO: MARCIA PEREL

Awards brunch emcee Stephen Guarino

Us," composed for Transgender Remembrance Day at BCC in November 2014. Rounding out the entertainment was "Unforgettable," a video tribute by BCC member Pam Postrel.

There are of course countless individuals who deserve our gratitude for making this amazing celebration possible, many of whom are thanked by name in Lauren's column on page 3.

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

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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.

President's Message

The Awards Brunch, Behind the Scenes

Lauren Schlau



Edited from remarks at this year's Awards Brunch on June 28, which focused on the many people who made the event such a success and also on how BCC arrived at this place in our history.

Sometimes my role as your president is simply to support, appreciate, and thank those who make possible the many wonderful events we enjoy in the BCC community. This Awards Brunch is especially deserving of such recognition.

First I want to recognize the people who make things happen for BCC day in and day out, starting with our beloved clergy, Senior Rabbi Lisa Edwards, Cantor Juval Porat and Rabbi Heather Miller; our dedicated Executive Director Ruth Geffner, who also served as co-chair of this event, Education Director Leah Zimmerman, Office Manager Victoria Delgadillo, Building Manager Tim Goad, our outstanding Board of Directors, and a bevy of regular volunteers who keep us running. For them, this Awards Brunch was extra work beyond their normal duties.

I also want to acknowledge those who made today possible – the BCC Awards Brunch Committee co-chaired by Mike King and Ruth Geffner. In particular, Tracy Moore, our adored lezbtzen, stepped in with her expert development skills and talent to oversee the entire event. The sensational Silent Auction was co-chaired by Cecilia Quigley Groman and Ronnie Wexler. The committee also included Mark Farber, Aviyah Farkas, Ginger Jacobs, Adam Kulbersh, Richard Lesse, Herb Toplan, Brett Trueman, and Arlene Weinstock.

And my deepest gratitude goes to our many supporters who gave generously as table sponsors and hosts, who donated to the silent auction, and who placed kind tributes in our program book. And special thanks to Cameron Andrews of Pier Communications who donated his PR services to ensure the event and the honorees received deserved media notice.

We are also blessed with friends and supporters from the greater community here today: City Controller Ron Galperin, Asher Gellis and Rabbi Rachel Bat Or from JQ International, Jay Geller, long-time board member of the Union for Reform Judaism, and Joel Kushner of the HUC Kalman Institute

Today I stand before you on the shoulders of 21

special people, BCC past presidents, who did so much to bring us to where we are today. BCC was born in April 1972 from a dream and a desire by a handful of Jewish gay and lesbian pioneers to create a safe and welcoming spiritual community. Little could they have imagined that we would grow to 250 members and expand our reach to include bisexual and transgender people and non-LGBT family, friends and allies.

30 years ago, on April 27, 1985 in our 13th or b'nai mitzvah year as a congregation, BCC decided it was vital to recognize worthy community leaders who stood as role models of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. We held our first BCC Awards Dinner Dance and established the Rabbi Erwin and Agnes Herman Humanitarian Award to honor them and to recognize Rabbi Herman's pivotal role in BCC's acceptance into Reform Judaism, the first gay lesbian congregation of any religion to be accepted by its denomination. 1985 was at the height of the AIDS epidemic. Our first honoree was UCLA Research Center physician Dr. Joel Weisman, among the first and few who recognized and worked with the HIV virus and AIDS patients. Gratefully we have come a long way, yet BCC was among the first to recognize such accomplishments.

Several people who were instrumental in that first event are with us today, including Agnes Herman, an activist, ally, and friend of BCC for whom we named the award with her husband Rabbi Erwin Herman (of blessed memory). Also here is Rabbi Janet Marder, our beloved first ordained rabbi who led us and helped us grow in so many ways. Among the Reform movement's most accomplished and acclaimed spiritual leaders, she and her husband Rabbi Shelly Marder came here today from the Bay Area. And finally I want to acknowledge the first Awards Dinner co-chair Jane Fantel, a development professional who put together the first BCC awards dinner dance.



Cantor Juval Porat and Tamara Kline perform at the awards brunch

PHOTO: MARCIA PEREL

From the Rabbi's Study...

Raise Your Rainbow Flags High! Marriage Equality is the Law of the Land

Rabbi Lisa Edwards



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

Excerpted from remarks by Rabbi Lisa Edwards on Friday, June 26 on behalf of the faith community at the Day of Decision Rally in West Hollywood Park, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision holding that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry nationwide.

Shabbat shalom! The Bible says, “sound the trumpets on your joyous occasions!” [Davi Cheng sounded a shofar to much applause]

In the Book of Genesis, God placed a rainbow in the sky as a reminder after the flood, a promise never again to destroy the world because of the bad behavior of humans. In Jewish tradition we take the rainbow as a reminder – an *ot habrit* – a sign of the covenant between God and humans. It is up to us, working in partnership, to make the world a better place. And today, through much working in partnership, the world became a better place!

Some people think voices of faith have no place at a celebration of the legalization of marriage equality. Some think voices of faith have no place here because so many “voices of faith” spoke so loudly **against** our right to civil marriage.

But if you think faith voices have not been on our side of this struggle, think again. The liberal movements of Judaism, for example, (Reform and Reconstructionist) have publicly advocated for marriage equality in civil law since the 1990s, and rabbis of those movements have been marrying same gender couples in Jewish ceremonies since long before then.

In 1968 when the Rev. Troy Perry founded MCC, the Metropolitan Community Church – the world's first gay and lesbian church — right here in Los Angeles (Rev. Perry sends love to us tonight – he would be here if he could), or in 1972 when that same Rev. Perry helped a handful of gay Jews in Los Angeles start the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue – Beth Chayim Chadashim, the House of New Life — no one was thinking we needed queer houses of worship so that we'd have somewhere to get married. And yet soon after their founding, religious weddings were taking place within their walls.

44 years ago, in 1971, it was a Methodist pastor who officiated at a ceremony cited in one of the court cases

that resulted in today's Supreme Court decision. And other ministers along the way, including Troy Perry, brought marriage directly to the courts and to public attention. <http://www.lgbtqnation.com/2015/05/case-of-same-sex-couple-to-receive-marriage-license-in-1971-reverberates-today/>

If you think religion and faith deserve no credit for what happened today, ask our friends Rabbi Denise Eger and Rev. Neil Thomas, who helped found California Faith for Equality in 2005, and have done so much for this cause and so many others (and who send regards to us tonight from Jerusalem and from Dallas). Or ask any one of us [gesturing to the line of clergy standing behind me, including Rabbi Heather Miller with her new baby] who are all clergy ordained by our various faith traditions. Many of us are part of the Los Angeles Queer Interfaith Clergy Council and many of us are L G B and/or T.

Ask us, your queer clergy and your straight ally clergy, about the couples we helped join together many years before any state said okay to same gender marriage.

Ask us what our wedding calendars looked like in 2008 during that



first short window of legal marriage in California, and in 2013 when it became legal again here in California.

Ask yourself why it matters to thousands of couples and their families that their civil wedding be witnessed and declared legal by a clergyperson from their faith traditions.

Marriage – that peculiar and particular joining of human hearts and souls – is high on the list of what serves some human needs. It's why it has become a cause worldwide and it's why we are here tonight – in such variety of human experience – to celebrate this hard won victory of the human heart.

But “voices of faith” are also here tonight to say we know there is more to be done. Today President Obama went from the Rose Garden where he said that the Supreme Court just made our Union a little more perfect to Charleston to deliver a stirring eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinckney, one of the nine Charleston AME voices of faith

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killed by the diseases of racism and violence still running rampant in our country.

We know marriage is not the be all and end all of civil rights. We know that marriage is not for everyone, nor is it bliss for all who enter it. We know that there are many battles still to fight – for transgender rights, health care rights - including mental health, rights to living wages, to shelter, to food, to legal immigration, to gun control, to an end to global warming, and an end to bullying and discrimination and prejudice and injustice in all its many forms.

As a religious community, we celebrate today how far we have come. But we don't rest yet – we know there is a long road ahead until the day we can say that all people, all genders, all colors, all configurations of families, may truly rest secure knowing that the law is there to protect us all so that all human hearts may open wide and let love in. Let Love Win.

Mazel tov to us all! Let us bless each other as we move forward in our struggles and in our celebrations!

Fountain Honoring Lisa and Tracy to be Dedicated July 31

Lauren Schlau, President

Four years ago we had a dream – a water fountain that would welcome guests into our new spiritual home. While that dream was not realized then, it was not forgotten. Thanks to our dears Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Lezbtzen Tracy Moore, that dream was awakened; and with heartfelt thanks to all who have

contributed, the dream is becoming reality!

The fountain will be under construction very soon. On behalf of the Board of Directors, clergy, and staff, I am pleased and excited to



cordially invite you to help us dedicate the new fountain and celebrate our community that made it possible. The event will be held on **Friday evening July 31**, starting with **hors d'oeuvres and beverages at 6:30** and **a short dedication at 7:15**, followed by **Ruach Chayim Shabbat services at 8:00 pm**. It is especially heartwarming that this is the date Rabbi Lisa began serving BCC in 1994, 21 years ago!

This fountain is just another magnificent reflection of the caring, generosity, admiration and commitment of BCC members and friends to our venerable Rabbi and Lezbtzen and to our BCC family. Please mark your calendar to attend on July 31 to celebrate this remarkable testament of our community.

Annual Congregational Meeting on July 19

BCC's annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 19 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at BCC. We'll be electing or re-electing members of the Board and Executive Committee, approving next year's budget and voting on some minor updates to the Bylaws. The proposed budget and Bylaw amendments and the slate of candidates will be sent to all BCC members in early July. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please designate another member as your proxy to ensure that we have a quorum.

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Transliterated Siddur 2.0 Comes to Shabbat Morning Minyan

Adam Barron, Jewish Learning Committee Co-Chair

Since 1991, a small but proud group of “Minyanaires” have met once a month for a Shabbat morning minyan at BCC. Without fighting traffic they start at 10:00 and enjoy a leisurely service. They read morning blessings and prayers and follow with three Torah chantings and an illuminating discussion. They then move to the lunchroom for fellowship and a dairy potluck.

When I first came to BCC, Rabbi Lisa suggested I try the minyan. I imagined long, serious Torah readings and an incomprehensible liturgy. What I found was the opposite. Lay leaders Steve Sass and Steve Hochstadt greeted me warmly. In an intimate, sometimes humorous atmosphere we each participated at our own levels. The melodies of the songs were rousing. Some taken from Conservative services and others from youth camps, they sent a chill of Shabbat joy up my spine.

Despite my limited Hebrew, I have continued to attend. I resonate with the prayers. I like being close to the Torah. I feel awe that Jews have chanted Torah like this for twenty centuries. I relish spending Shabbat morning with my loving BCC community.

Our minyan has had dozens of visitors. Some report that they enjoy the mood, the intimacy, and the melodies, but they get lost in the pages or cannot read the Hebrew. Until recently, we had no apparent solution.

Four years ago a fully transliterated siddur became available. This “trilinear” translation would allow

non-fluent Hebrew readers to follow along, and even learn the meanings of Hebrew words.

Deuteronomy 6:4					
Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one					
One.	Adonai	Our God,	Adonai	Israel,	Hear
אֶחָד.	יְי	אֱלֹהֵינוּ,	יְי	יִשְׂרָאֵל.	שְׁמַע
EhChahd.	Ah'dohNai	Eh'lohHayNoo,	Ah'dohNai	YisRahEhl,	Sh'mah

We purchased several books, but we met with a setback. The pages in the original and transliterated versions did not quite match up, and the English readings were different. Making the new siddur user-friendly would require trial and error. Flagging and copying pages were to no avail. An ingenious solution finally worked - we tore open the bindings of the transliterated versions and put the relevant pages in a notebook. The specific sentences to be read aloud were then highlighted. With the resulting notebooks, users could flip from page to page without consulting a table of contents.

After four years, the Jewish Learning Committee, in cooperation with the Minyan and the Ritual Committee, is delighted to present . . . Egalitarian Siddur 2.0! The BCC Shabbat Morning Minyan meets on the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 am. We invite you come, try our transliterated siddur, and enjoy our warm and intimate Shabbat service.

Summer Course on “Leading a Healthy Life”

Ginger Jacobs and Ilene Cohen

Judaism teaches that in order to help others, we must first help ourselves. This four-part course, entitled “Leading a Healthy Life; Taking Steps to Improve our Well-being,” will look at ways to make our lives easier by taking steps towards a healthier lifestyle, lowering stress through positive thinking, and learning the terminology and questions to ask physicians and caretakers to best serve our medical needs.

Have you ever asked yourself why you can't get motivated to do the things you know you “should” do or even things you want to do? Have you ever made up a list of things to discuss with your doctor and then can't answer the various questions the doctor asks you during your visit? Has someone ever brought it to your attention that you tend to be a bit negative in the way you say or approach things? If you answered yes then you are normal, like the rest of us.

As we get older, “things” start to not work so well. It is harder and takes longer to do almost everything. Sometimes that is good, as it allows us to enjoy the time rather than rushing through life. There are easy things we can do to make our lives easier, the aches and pains more bearable.

Ginger Jacobs, MPH (a health educator and a BCC Vice President) is offering this course to help empower us to make our lives better. There will be lots of discussions and we can learn from one another. The course will start on Sunday, July 26 at BCC and continue on August 16, August 23, and August 30. The sessions will start promptly at 3:00 pm and end at 5:00 pm. Students would benefit most by attending all the classes in this series, as each class will focus on a topic that leads to the next.

This course is free, but please RSVP to ilenelcohen@mac.com so we will know how many copies of the materials to prepare.

BCC Offers Advance Planning Workshop on August 2

Aviyah Farkas

The BCC Education Committee is pleased to continue our series on Death, Mourning, and Living with an **Advance Planning Workshop on Sunday, August 2**. In March of this year, about 25 BCC members were



blessed to experience Cantor Sue Deutsch's profoundly moving workshop "The Healing Hand: Being Present for What Matters Most in Life and Death," based on her book *The Healing Hand: Five Discussions to have with the Dying who are Living*.

We do not plan to replicate the level of intimacy and emotional intensity that Cantor Deutsch created. Rather, with the Advanced Planning Workshop, we hope to clarify our "end of independence" and "end of life" options.

A panel of representatives from Jewish mortuaries and cemeteries, senior assisted living facilities, and an in-home care agency will be present. We will clarify the difference between nursing homes and assisted living facilities; types and levels of in-home care; mortuary and cemetery services including burial and cremation; and organ donation.

We will allow plenty of time for questions to the representatives, including cost and ease of arranging for their services, and their comfort and acceptance of same-sex partnerships and marriages. We will also distribute valuable end of independence and end of life decision-making forms. One of the first things that my wife Marsha did after we were married was sit me down and show me her four-inch thick "Personal Document Planner." This trove of crucial information was filled with forms Marsha had received at a series of BCC presentations held in 2007 or 2008.

You too will receive forms that will allow you to plan for what you want done when you can no longer do it for yourself. I have lived through the death of two sisters and my former wife, and can attest to the need to have your wishes **in writing**. It becomes a supreme act of love to be crystal clear about what you want. The loved ones left behind are in the most confused, even tortured, state that they will ever be in. To help them simplify the innumerable amount of decisions they will be forced to make is a **true act of love**.

Please note that we will not be discussing wills and trusts, ethical

wills, or advanced health care directives at this workshop. Ginger Jacobs will cover advanced health care directives later in the summer in her four-part course.

This Advance Planning Workshop is free to BCC members and will be held at BCC on Sunday, August 2 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Bagels and coffee and tea will be served.

Tisha B'Av with Reform CA and the RAC

**Saturday, July 25th, 7:30 – 9:30 pm at
Leo Baeck Temple, 1300 N. Sepulveda Blvd.**

Please join our BCC clergy and Reform congregations from throughout Los Angeles County as we join together to observe Tisha B'Av, the 9th day of the month of Av. Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and is a day that has been tied to many terrible moments of destruction for the Jewish people throughout our history. Today, we seek to understand our broken communities, the rifts between neighbors, and the destructions that we face daily, through this same lens. We do this not just to commemorate destruction, but to commit ourselves to acting in partnership with one another to repair and rebuild that which has been destroyed.

Join us for an evening of havdalah, text study with Dean of Hebrew Union College's LA Campus, Dr. Joshua Holo, a prayer service led by many Reform CA clergy and lay leaders, chanting from the Book of Eicha (Lamentations), and a chance to connect with one another to imagine together a more just and compassionate California and a world redeemed.

Please RSVP to Rabbi Joel Simonds at rabbisimonds@unisyn.org



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ON DWELLING TOGETHER

Cantor Juval Porat



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

Editor's Note: This column is adapted from Cantor Porat's submission to the Union for Reform Judaism's "10 minutes of Torah," which will be published on July 14. The digital version will have links to a Hinei Mah Tov playlist, as well as to articles about the recent Israel trip with A Wider Bridge.

Hineh Mah tov umah na'im shevet achim gam yachad

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together in unity!

Psalm 133:1

Countless services, meetings, life-and year cycle events in the Jewish world open with these words attributed to King David. The wide use of this verse reminds us that goodness in coming together is not necessarily a default state, but rather a result of the mindfulness, awareness and attention we bring into community.

Every summer, prior to the High Holiday season, between the 17th of Tamuz (July 4th, 2015) and the 9th of Av (July 25th, 2015) the Jewish calendar provides us with a period known as the Three Weeks, or *Bein ha-Metzarim* ("Between the Straits"). This is a time of reflection, as our tradition teaches that in this period that events surrounding the destruction of the two Jerusalem Temples and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel took place. One *Midrash* (a form of rabbinic interpretive literature) attributes the destruction and exile to an atmosphere in which pleasantness and goodness between people dwelling together were replaced by what is known in Hebrew as *Sin'at Chinam* - a baseless hatred. This means not only that people hate each other for no reason but also that leaders of communities do not protest or attempt to fix any injustices they witness.

Throughout the year, when we sing *Hineh Ma Tov*, and especially in the period of the Three Weeks, when the dangers of *Sin'at Chinam* are highlighted, we have the opportunity to reflect on *Ahavat Chinam* - a love that exists purely and without ulterior motives - and its presence in the relationships we have in our immediate and larger communities.

Since I began serving BCC in 2009, I keep learning more about what it truly takes to create a sense of togetherness that is indeed pleasant and good. BCC's members have been no strangers to marginalization, senseless hate and discrimination, and I believe it is by recognizing each other in our personal stories that BCC today is an inclusive community of progressive

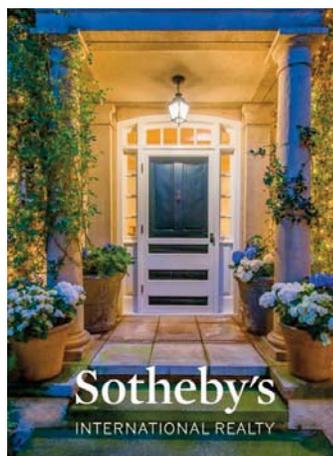
lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual Jews, our families and friends who mindfully try to bring in love in every interaction.

In serving BCC I learn that dwelling together in unity requires acceptance, willingness to engage, and the courage to be authentically ourselves. When we sing *Hineh Ma Tov*, we include our male brothers (*Achim*), female sisters (*Achayot*) and all gender non-conforming friends (*Kulanu*) to allow for a welcoming of every gender-expression. It's our way of encouraging everyone to be their authentic selves.

In June of 2015, BCC co-sponsored a 10-day mission of LGBTQ activists to Israel with A Wider Bridge, in which we met with individuals and organizations who have made it their goal to create an environment that allows for unity despite, or maybe because, of their differences. One of the many highlights of the trip was a jam-packed session at the Knesset, in which Knesset members met and engaged with representatives of the LGBTQ community. Witnessing Israeli lawmakers from all over the political spectrum (except the religious parties, unfortunately) being equally moved by the shared stories truly created a sense of togetherness and unity. For more on this Knesset session, see page 11.

I was also surprised by the power of engagement in the group's visit to the West Bank. In all of its complexity, speaking to a gay Palestinian in Bethlehem and listening to his story once more created a sense of hope and connection that quieted the fear and tension of being in an environment I've previously associated with hostility.

The word "*gam*" (literally meaning "as well") in the Hebrew setting of Psalm 133:1 is interpreted as the *Shechina* - the divine dwelling - according to the Rabbi Shim'on Bar Yochai. Perhaps we truly invite God into our interactions when our dwelling together in unity is devoid of self-interest and based on *Ahavat Chinam*. It is not an easy state to reach, but it is up to us to keep trying. May we use the circumstances in our lives that inspire us to connect authentically, to invite in the divine dwelling, and let it be an integral part of all the many ways we create togetherness. *Hineh Ma Tov* indeed.



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The Story of the BCC Story Lines

Lauren Schlau, President

During the planning of BCC's move to our new spiritual home in April 2011, architects Toni Lewis and Marc Schoeplein helped us envision a project that would involve the entire community, physically and spiritually, and would leave a lasting legacy of our members, literally written on the walls. What emerged became known as the Story Lines project.



PHOTO: LEWIS/SCHOEPLIN ARCHITECTS

The ark wall with Story Lines strips and the skylight.

At a series of structured community workshops, members were invited to think about what BCC has meant in their own lives. Each participant was then given a thin copper strip, on which they hand-etched a piece of their story: a sentence or a few words containing memories, wishes or thoughts for the future of the synagogue.

These 250 unique Story Lines copper strips form the main wall of the bimah, installed on wood building blocks surrounding the glass ark doors, themselves created for the new building by BCC artists. The copper strips overlap and connect with each other and the ark itself, in the same way that the stories they hold are forever intertwined with the unique community that is Beth Chayim Chadashim.

Story Lines will continue to grow. The ark wall panels are removable so that new copper strips can be added as new members join BCC with their own stories to tell. As architect Marc Schoeplein wrote on his own Story Line: "I hope that what we can bring to it is simply a starting point."

In future issues of this newsletter we plan to feature a number of the Story Lines and their location on the wall. The next time you are in the sanctuary, please take a few minutes to look at some of the strips and see what they say.



PHOTO: LEWIS/SCHOEPLIN ARCHITECTS

The ark wall with copper Story Lines strips.

The Will Korthof Memorial Fund

Hannah Theile, Vice President

Last fall during High Holidays our congregation received the shocking news that Will Korthof, a young, vibrant, active member of BCC, was killed in a motorcycle accident. In his memory a new fund has been established, the Will Korthof Memorial Fund, which is designated for large and significant capital improvements.

Will demonstrated his love of BCC in many ways, including donating, installing, and wiring 44 solar panels on the roof of our new building. He also designed and installed a solar panel with a battery backup for the ner tamid in our ark. Will personally took on the task of installing and modifying the lighting throughout our new building. After the stained glass windows had been installed he added spotlights to give emphasis to their beauty and design.

Contributions to this fund can be sent to Victoria in the BCC office with the designation for the Will Korthof Memorial Fund. We hope to keep his memory alive by maintaining our building as he would have wanted it.

TAMARA L. KLINE, M.F.T.
MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST
COUPLES AND SEX THERAPIST

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Photograph by Kenna Love

Deepen Your High Holiday Experience on Tuesdays in Elul

Rabbi Lisa Edwards

Are you awake? Are you prepared?

The month of Elul that precedes the Days of Awe is both a gift and an opportunity. We each enter the High Holiday season with our own personal thoughts and emotions. Some of us are called by our sensory memories (melodies from years past, for example); some by the sense of community; some by the hope we'll be moved and inspired to do our own cheshbon haNefesh (accounting of our soul) and use this opportunity to move closer to the version of ourselves we hope to be.

Join BCC member Jeff Bernhardt and the BCC clergy for preparation and study for the Days of Awe on four Tuesday nights from August 11 thru September 1.

As exciting bonuses, Jeff Bernhardt's new book and the new Reform Machzor (our new prayer book for the Days of Awe) will be available for purchase at each session (though no purchase required). All sessions are at BCC from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

August 11 with Jeff Bernhardt

Based on his new book *For Every Season: An Introspective Guide to Renewing Ourselves During the High Holidays and Throughout the Jewish Year*, Jeff will help us explore and share how we can each take advantage of this gift of the Jewish holiday cycle.

August 18 with Rabbi Heather Miller

Rabbi Miller will begin an exploration with us of our exciting new machzor entitled *Mishkan Hanefesh* ("Sanctuary of the Soul"), which we will use for the first time this year. We sampled a few of its pages last year.

August 25 with Rabbi Lisa Edwards

Rabbi Edwards will continue our exploration of *Mishkan Hanefesh*, and the ways this prayer book might lead us to new insights into our tradition while we travel our own spiritual paths.

September 1 with Cantor Juval Porat and Jeanelle LaMance, "Music of Heaven"

Like our new machzor, the music we make and enjoy during our High Holiday experience can underscore the central value of Teshuvah, a new direction and a return to God. Join Cantor Juval and pianist Jeanelle LaMance as we explore *Shirei Mishkan Hanefesh*, the compendium of new musical compositions developed by the American Conference of Cantors, who give voice to new liturgy and expand upon familiar themes that have remained with us from generation to generation.

Editor's Note: Here is a preview of our High Holiday services to follow:

Selichot, Saturday, September 5, 7:00 pm, at BCC

Erev Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, September 13, 7:15 pm, at Temple Isaiah

Rosh Hashanah, Monday, September 14, 9:30 am, at Temple Isaiah

Second day Rosh Hashanah, Tuesday, September 15, 10:00 am, at BCC (Tashlich at 4:00 pm at Santa Monica Beach)

Kol Nidre, Tuesday, September 22, 7:15 pm, at Temple Isaiah

Yom Kippur, Wednesday, September 23, 10:00 am, at Temple Isaiah

IMPERFECT THING CALLED LOVE

Yanir Dekel

Most of you know me as BCC's website and social media guy, but I'd like to tell you a little bit about my new book, *Imperfect Thing Called Love*. I've been working on it over the past couple of years and finally it's now available on Amazon.



Imperfect Thing Called Love is about a gay man's journey to self-discovery after a breakup, dealing with many questions, like what is a relationship? What does it mean to be alone? What is love? What is a partner's love, a parent's love? What are co-dependency, happiness, competition, Jealousy, fear, and fantasy? And what is the meaning of all of this?

Navigating the demanding "gay world" with a quest for love is not easy, but when you learn how to tune in to who you are you realize that you are good enough for the next guy to fall in love with you. Just as you are — imperfect.

This book started as a journal of my experience in therapy, made its way to be one of Israel's first ever gay blogs back in 2003, and now it's finally here. I hope you'll like it. More details and a link to order is available on my website: yanirdekel.com/love

MUSIC: tempo rhythm melody harmony chords notes

JEANELLE LA MANCE,
BCC ACCOMPANIST SINCE 2002

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BCC Members Attend International LGBTQ Gathering in Tel Aviv

Barbara Kroll and Ruth Spielman

In early June, along with Cantor Juval Porat and BCC members Bruce Maxwell and Les Zendle, we attended the mind-blowing "40 Years of Pride" conference in Tel Aviv. Co-sponsored by Israel's oldest LGBTQ organization, the Aguda (which was marking its 40th anniversary) and by A Wider Bridge (dedicated to linking North American and Israeli LGBTQ Jews), and billed as "a global conference for LGBTQ leaders," the conference was held in a large hotel meeting room and attended by approximately 125 people. It featured speakers from Israel, the USA, France, the UK, Argentina, Sweden, and Nigeria. Multi-panelist sessions were offered all day long on the first day and until late lunch on the third day (also attended by BCC Member Jonathan Falk).

While the panelist from Nigeria, Davis Mac-Iyalla, presented horror stories about his country's policies towards LGBTQ people, he repeatedly stood up to say how much he was learning to take back home from the more affirming stories coming from elsewhere. These included stirring addresses by three gay (non-Jewish) mayors: M. Christophe Girard, Mayor of the 4th Arrondissement of Paris (Le Marais); Ed Murray, Mayor of Seattle; and Olof Lavesson, Mayor of Malmo and member of the Swedish Parliament.

However, the intermediate second day was perhaps the highlight of the conference, as two busloads of conference participants traveled from Tel Aviv to Israel's Knesset in Jerusalem. There we were able to attend the inaugural session of the recently elected Knesset's gay forum, a group of about a dozen or

more Knesset members across the political spectrum who are supportive of LGBTQ rights (regrettably but not surprisingly, none of the religious parties were represented).

The session was devoted to the topic of transgender issues, the theme and highlight of that week's Pride Celebrations in Tel Aviv. About a dozen transgender youth and adults were invited, in turn, to tell their stories and offer suggestions as to what the government could do to make life safer and better for them. We visitors were able to follow these mostly painful stories through simultaneous translation headsets. On several occasions, one or more members of the Knesset were moved to tears, men and women alike, on hearing of the harassment, bullying, and ill treatment of transgender youth at the hands of parents, teachers, community workers, and peers. One happy transition story from a young man, an adoptee, ended with him introducing his relatively elderly but thoroughly supportive parents seated in the room. No lecture or textbook could have possibly given us such deep insight into the workings of the Israeli government as did this visit.



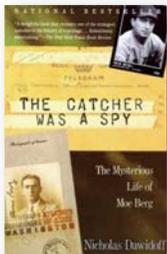
PHOTO: BARBARA KROLL

Knesset opposition leader Isaac Herzog (center) and other MKs at hearing on transgender rights

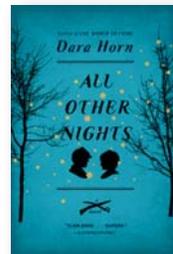
BCC Books and Bagels Group

Larry Nathenson

BCC's Book Group (Books and Bagels) has been meeting continuously since January 1995. The group meets monthly in members' homes for a bagel brunch and discussion of a book selected by the group. 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). Our next two meetings are as follows.



Sunday, July 26, 10:00 am
***The Catcher was a Spy: The Mysterious Life of Moe Berg* by Nicholas Dawidoff**
A biography of a Jewish major league baseball player who was also a spy during World War II for the OSS, the predecessor of the CIA.



Sunday, August 30, 10:00 am
***All Other Nights* by Dara Horn**
A historical novel about a Jewish soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War who is sent on a mission of assassination in the Confederacy and discovers connections to Jews in the opposing camp. We have read and enjoyed two other novels by this author in the past (*The World to Come* and *In the Image*).

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.



Renee Lamkay's Conversation with G-d

Lois Singer

On July 1, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Renee Lamkay, BCC member for 38 years who served on the Board of Directors and Professional Liaison Committee (among others), life partner of Leslie Tuchman, and sister of Victor (Hector Viera) and Eddie (Arthur Novell). Her dear friend Lois Singer imagines the following conversation upon Renee's arrival in heaven.

G: Good Morning, Renee. Welcome to heaven, it's so good to see you.

R: Thank you, G-d. I am glad to be here, but I have to admit, I'm a bit disappointed. I didn't think I'd be here so soon.

G: I knew you'd feel that way, but after you hear me out, you'll understand.

R: I'm listening.

G: (chuckling) Yes, One of your many strong suits! You've always been a great listener! I know you're aware of how challenging things are on Earth. Sadly, I'm needed more and more down there. I just don't have enough time (I still don't know why I created just 24 hours a day) to properly oversee heaven. And who is a better administrator than you!

R: Me? The administrator of heaven? Sounds like a huge job! Will I be able to delegate?

G: (chuckling) Yes, You are the "delegator supreme". I created you with rare combinations of spirit. You are unbelievably strong, and unbelievably sweet. You are a visionary with the ability to bring a vision into reality. You are in control, and flexible at the same time. Your tenacity is partnered with grace. You are confident and yet humble. I did a wonderful job creating you. (As G-d I don't have to be humble). I know you can handle the job!

R: Could you tell me a bit more about the job? Actually, I wouldn't mind a written job description, double-spaced please.

G: (laughs) Sure let me give you some key points to the position right now and I'll have a written proposal sent over to your cloud in an hour (well, I am G-d). As you know, being an educator these days is quite a challenge. When our teachers get to heaven, they have "battle fatigue". Teachers never retire, they spend their lives in service to enlighten and educate, and they will be your most exhausted group. We cannot send them back to earth as teaching angels until they have

been released from the weight they have carried of lesson plans, parents, politics, and small paychecks. They need an infusion of your joy, acceptance, and faith. They need you to give them wings to "just teach."

R: I can do that! I'd love to do that!

G: Another project for you, Renee, is heading up the redesign of heaven's golf courses. It seems our golf angels are bored with the current configurations. They think it's too easy to score low and too easy to make holes-in-one. Funny thing, during the creation I had the courses designed to be heaven, but clearly you golfers, would rather be in hell. Who knew?

I'm sure you'll want to personally mentor the bridge angels (hope you can get them to relax a little more), the bicycle angels, real estate angels, temple angels, and the book club angels (there are way too many opinions at these meetings).

And above all else, you will be the Ambassador of "love". You have been an angel on earth, spreading true, pure, non judgmental love wherever you go. Who is better to represent "love" than you? (that fellow "cupid" is still Greek to me).

R: I can't wait to get started! Tell me more.

G: I'd love to tell you everything but we're a bit short of time, your Welcome Home Brunch will be starting soon. Your parents Lola and Harry have planned quite an event for you. When I saw the menu I was reminded of how many species of fish I had created!! Oy such a wonderful thing!

R: Before we go, can I ask one more question?

G: (chuckles) Renee, you've been asking me questions for 76 years, you certainly don't need my permission to ask a question now. What's on your heart?

R: My friends, my family, my brothers, I love them all so much. How can I say "goodbye"?

G: Renee, look down through the clouds. See all those people who have been touched by you, all the people you have loved and who love you. You will not be saying "goodbye", you will live in their hearts forever. And when their tears dry, they will celebrate you, and the beautiful life that you lived. They will know that you have left the world a better place and that you have made an amazing difference their lives.

I love you Renee, Welcome to Heaven.

R: Thank you G-d, let's go to brunch.

David Fyffe: May his Memory be a Blessing

Larry Nathenson



David Fyffe in 2002

On May 13, 2015, we received the sad news that longtime BCC member David Fyffe passed away in Israel. Those who joined the BCC community within the last decade were not privileged to know David, as he made aliyah in December 2005 with his husband, Arlan Wareham. The move to Israel was only one of the

many amazing things about David's life.

If you are young enough, or newly "out" enough, not to have experienced gay life in the 1970s and 1980s, David's story is an eye opener. He grew up in the small town of Chillicothe, Ohio, in a family of Pentecostal Christians. As this was not exactly a welcoming environment for a young gay man, David moved to the big city of Columbus as soon as he could. By 1980 he had moved to Los Angeles with a group of gay friends from Ohio and immersed himself in the rougher side of the LA gay scene. But he also made his way to BCC and, with no prior experience of Judaism, quickly realized that this was the place for him. By 1982 he had become Jewish and had joined the congregation.

By the time I met David in 1984, he had lost his sight in both eyes as a result of his type 1 diabetes, and also suspected he was HIV positive. I was amazed at how upbeat he was, learning to read Braille, riding the bus with his cane, and attending classes at LA City College. We were partners for several years but never lived together as he was determined to live independently. Once his HIV status was confirmed, he also became one of the founding members of BCC's HIV support group. So far as I know, he was its last surviving member.

By 1991 David had regained his sight through laser surgery and became a bar mitzvah at BCC that year. We took our first trip to Israel together in 1993 with a group from Sha'ar Zahav, the GLBT synagogue in San Francisco. David was an active member of the LA chapter of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and became a para-chaplain who visited patients in smaller hospitals without clergy on staff. He did all this despite being hospitalized himself several times in the early 1990s, before he obtained an insulin pump

to stabilize his diabetes and before drug cocktails of HIV medications became available. As BCC member Barry Wendell said in his recent blog post about David, "the threat of disease and death was hard, but the loss of so many friends in their twenties and thirties was devastating."

In 1995 David met Arlan Wareham, a newcomer to BCC from the Inland Empire, and Rabbi Lisa Edwards officiated at their Jewish wedding at BCC the following year. Despite living 60 miles away, they continued to attend services nearly every week and became stalwart supporters of BCC's monthly visits to a convalescent home under the auspices of the Jewish Federation's Project Caring program.

When they moved to Israel in 2005, David and Arlan first lived in Tsfat (Safed), the ancient city in Galilee where the poem "Lecha Dodi" was written by a 16th century Kabbalist. I last saw them in person there in 2007 during a BCC trip to Israel, and I spent a few days with them after the formal tour ended. Tsfat is a largely Orthodox town, and David and Arlan joked that they were 2/3 of its out gay male population! They found a welcoming liberal congregation in a nearby town and later moved to Eilat, a resort town at the southern tip of Israel, where Arlan continues to live today.

David had more challenges in his 59 years than most of us will ever experience, overcoming juvenile diabetes, blindness, HIV complications, and numerous hospitalizations and periods of depression. Yet he made many life-affirming and even adventurous decisions, leaving the small town of his youth, moving to LA, becoming Jewish, giving back through AIDS and Jewish activism, marrying Arlan and eventually making aliyah. Those of us who knew him are blessed to have had him in our lives.

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A Code to Live By

Bruce Maxwell

Below are excerpts from remarks by Presidents Award honoree Bruce Maxwell on June 28. The award was presented by Yuval David, an activist, entertainer, and long-time friend of Bruce and of BCC. Yuval introduced Bruce as “the best kind of giver. Not the kind who gives for recognition, Bruce gives because there is a need, and he sees that he can be of assistance.” Detailing Bruce’s extensive service, Yuval cited Bruce’s dedication to BCC and his professional achievements and awards in the insurance industry. He continued: “He serves on the board of A Wider Bridge, a pro-Israel organization linking North American and Israeli LGBTQ communities and their leaders. Bruce also has been on the board of the Gay and Lesbian Elder Housing Organization, raising funds and overseeing construction of the first-ever affordable housing for the LGBTQ senior community. And, he actively served as a leader and fundraised for the Anti-Defamation League, City of Hope, the Jewish Federation Council, USC Lambda Alumni Association, the Association of Reform Zionists of America, the Human Rights Campaign Fund, GLAAD, PFLAG, and many other acronymed organizations.”

Thank you Yuval, your friendship means so much to me, and your words were so eloquent and touching....

I chose the song “Teach Your Children” by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young to play this morning as I walked up to accept this humbling award. Among many nostalgic connections I have with it, the song reminds me of a transitional period in my life—around 1993 and 1994—when I had recently come out and also found myself playing the new role of “single dad” to my children Yael and Sam. They sing: “You, who are on the road must have a code that you can live by. And so become yourself because the past is just a good bye.” (Don’t worry, I am not going to next break out singing, “Amazing Grace.”) At the time Yael was 6 and Sam was about 4, and as I was redefining my life and teaching myself to love and respect the new Bruce, I was simultaneously presented with new opportunities to help teach them new life lessons too!

But the song goes beyond that as, they sing, it is also the child’s duty to teach his or her parents well. Perhaps I didn’t realize it as much then as I do now, but as life progresses, I continue to learn that my best teachers are actually my kids. They never cease to amaze me with the lessons they teach me!

Moreover, through the process of my coming out, my parents, Charlotte and Sy, not only accepted me, but also learned many new life lessons along with me. For example, when I first came out to them, they told me that they didn’t know much about this subject, and

asked me to get some books for them to read and learn. As the song goes: “Teach your parents well.”

In the process of learning and educating them, as well as myself, I found BCC.

And BCC became my new home. BCC

became my synagogue, my place of spirituality, my place of prayer. BCC became my place to laugh and my safe place to cry. BCC became a place where I met many amazing people who have become some of my closest friends. Ultimately, BCC became my community.

Community is a concept that was introduced to me by both my Dad and my grandfather, who respectively held esteemed leadership roles within the Jewish, philanthropic, and business communities. They instructed me to appropriately take what I need from my community, but more importantly, to always find ways to give back in my time, energy and resources. And in the process of doing so, I would meet “good people” who were doing the same thing, because good people do good things....

When my soon-to-be good friend Brett Trueman became BCC President in 2005, I was inspired by his vision to bring about positive change in our community, and I knew I had to be a part of it. I served as Treasurer under his leadership, and he graciously agreed to fill that same position when I was elected President in 2009.

I am honored to have with me here today my daughter Yael in from New York where she works as a medical writer for the Cardio-Vascular Research Foundation and my son Sam, a private aviation consultant. Also here are my Mom, Charlotte Maxwell, and my sisters Leslie, Robin and Treci. Those who knew my Dad know what a wonderful person he was. He was my teacher, my business partner, and my mentor. I am sure he is looking down at us with pride, (pause) and he would tell me to “wrap it up!”

Recently I returned from Israel, where I spent a little over two weeks traveling with Arthur Slepian on the “A Wider Bridge” Mission and taking part in the historic 40 years of Pride Conference, where we brought together



Yuval David presents the Presidents Award to Bruce Maxwell

PHOTO: MARCIA PEREL

over 100 LGBT leaders from around the world. Many of you are here today, and I'd like to thank everyone that made that trip a special trip for me.

On a final note, anyone that knows me knows I have a passion for travel. I love to fly, and to visit foreign lands, to learn about culture, see unique architecture, hear local music, eat new foods, and walk the city streets in the

early morning hours before most people have even gotten out of bed. But I always come home. Home to my family, my office and staff, my community, to BCC. The "code I can live by" is constantly evolving and I'd like to thank each of you who have been a part of that journey. Thank you!

Honoring Harriet's Example

Bonnie Kaplan and Sylvia Sukop

Excerpts from remarks at the BCC Awards Brunch on June 28, 2015. Bonnie and Sylvia were introduced by Allison Diamant, a long-time BCC member and past officer and recipient of the Presidents Award in 2008.

Sylvia: Thank you, Allison, for that beautiful introduction and to everyone who has worked hard to make today so incredibly special. And congratulations to our fellow honorees Bruce Maxwell and Jeffrey Tambor.

This whole experience is frankly overwhelming — we're just trying to take it all in. I mean, here we are, in this magnificent space, with our dearest friends and a couple hundred of our favorite people.... My own beloved "Imas" Barbara Kroll and Ruth Spielman, who "adopted" me when I first joined BCC, are here in spirit though they were unfortunately not able to attend in person. Also our beloved clergy — and look, right up front here, all these TV stars!

Bonnie: But, honey, didn't we cut cable?

Sylvia: Honey — Amazon isn't on cable. We stream it on Roku....

Anyway, we could not be more touched to be honored in this way — by this community.

We had the privilege of knowing Harriet over a number of years, and connected with her on many levels. Like me, she was a tough editor.

Bonnie: Like me, she was a committed teacher.

Sylvia: Like me, she loved Rachel Maddow.

Bonnie: Like me, she could really play the femme.

Sylvia: Like me, she loved her black leather jacket.

Bonnie: Like me, she loved her rescue cat.

Sylvia: Above all Harriet was a tireless champion of justice and equality well into her 90s. We stand on her shoulders and those of her generation — the pioneers who paved the way, whose stories we treasure and will continue to share and to emulate.

This year you have chosen us to receive this award but what you are really elevating is Harriet's example. And we are proud to be among so many who carry her bright torch.

Bonnie: Sylvia, what's one word that describes BCC?

Sylvia: You know that when it comes to words I can never pick just one.

Bonnie: Well, I picked one: That word is OPEN.

Open-hearted community.

Open-minded

discourse. An openness that is concerned with the world beyond our synagogue walls.

Sylvia: OK, I do have one word — it's LOVE.

Judaism teaches us to connect not only to God but to each other. The deep affection and mutual support that defines our relationship with BCC makes anything possible.

The name of Beth Chayim Chadashim is typically translated as House of New Life. But if you know a little Hebrew — and believe me, I know even less — it can also be translated as House of New Lives. I like the plural form because it recognizes that our community is formed of many lives, many people.

We need each other, we are here for each other, and only by working together can we meaningfully pursue justice.

Bonnie: I'm a teacher in the corrections system. And when my students need a resume I ask them what kind of work they have done. Many say, I have never worked.

Really, I ask them, what did you do in prison?

For 10 years I was a porter, I cleaned bathrooms, I polished linoleum.

You have a decade of work experience in maintenance and janitorial.

Another tells me, I worked in the kitchen for five.

Do you like to cook, I ask, because you have culinary experience in a high-volume kitchen working with institutional-grade equipment.

There is an incredible joy seeing someone hold a work resume with their name on it for the first time.

This is how I feel today, honored by you for something I never thought of as special. Thank you for helping us see this today.



Bonnie Kaplan and Sylvia Sukop receive the Harriet Perl Tzedek Award from Allison Diamant

PHOTO: MARCIA PEREL

BCC Film Club to Screen "Out in the Dark"

Gordon Blitz and Bracha Yael



On Saturday evening, October 17, the BCC Film Club will screen the Berlin Jewish Film Festival winner "Out in the Dark." NPR calls this 2013 Israeli film an "atmospheric neo-noir" that "pave[s] the way for a brand-new subgenre — the gay romantic thriller." "Out in the Dark" is the directorial debut of Israeli filmmaker Michael Mayer. Below is a movie summary by Rotten Tomatoes:

Nimer (Nicholas Jacob), an ambitious Palestinian student in the West Bank, dreams of a better life. One fateful night in Tel Aviv, he meets Roy (Michael Aloni), an Israeli lawyer, and the two fall in love. As their relationship deepens, they are both confronted with the harsh realities of a Palestinian society that refuses to accept Nimer for his sexual identity, and an Israeli society that rejects him for his nationality. When Nimer's close friend is caught hiding illegally in Tel Aviv and sent back to the West Bank and a terrible fate, Nimer is forced to choose between the life he thought he wanted and his love for Roy.

Bracha Yael will introduce the film and after the screening will lead a group discussion on reactions to the film.

All BCC Film Club events are free and open to the public. Bring your favorite snacks to share! Havdalah and schmooze are at 7:00 pm, and the movie screens at 7:30 pm.

Mazel Tov

We wish the following BCC members a hearty "mazel tov" for their recent accomplishments and simchas:



Rabbi Heather Miller and Melissa De La Rama welcomed their son Julius Fernando De La Rama into the world on May 22, 2015.

Gavi S. Ruit was ordained as a rabbi on Sunday, May 17 at Temple Israel of Hollywood by Hebrew Union College, the Reform Jewish seminary in Los Angeles.



Felicia Park-Rogers, Stephen Sass, and Dean Hansell

BCC members Stephen Sass and Dean Hansell were among the newly appointed LA County commissioners honored at a May 6 breakfast hosted by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl (pictured here with Supervisor Kuehl's Senior Field Deputy Felicia Park-Rogers, former Executive Director of BCC).

Stephen has been appointed to the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission, and Dean is chair of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission Working Group. More information about Dean's work can be found here: <http://supervisorkuehl.com/q-a-with-dean-hansell/>

BCC member and Ritual Committee chair Davi Cheng has an article about being Jewish and Chinese along with accompanying artwork on the myjewishlearning.com website. In it she discusses her life's journey to becoming a lesbian Chinese Jew. Of course, she mentions BCC's importance in that development. Here's a link to her article:

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/jewish-and/seamlessly-chinese-and-jewish/>
Davi is also featured in this month's issue of "Asian Jewish Life," with her 'burning bush' piece on the cover. See <http://asianjewishlife.org/>

BCC Member Sandy Leon was featured in an LA Jewish Journal article about her process of becoming Jewish and her work as a chef:

http://www.jewishjournal.com/religion/article/food_inspired_by_israel

BCC Member John Berger has retired from UCLA.

Richard Lesse, Allison Diamant, and Rod Bran participated in the weeklong AIDS Life/Cycle ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles in early June.

Shane Miller, son of BCC member Tami Miller, became a bar mitzvah at BCC on May 29 and 30, 2015.

If you have a recent achievement or other good news to share, please contact the BCC office. We want to celebrate with you!

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 at (323) 931-7023, ext. 205.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg 8:00 pm Gays R Us Comedy Night Hollywood Improv		BCC Office Closed 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Bracha Yael Davi Cheng	INDEPENDENCE DAY
	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Torah study	7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting		8:00 pm Shabbat Service Richard Seltzer Elissa Barrett Gershick	
	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Torah Study	7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg		6:30 pm Early Shabbat Service At the Beach Rabbi Miller Cantor Porat	10:00 am Saturday Morning Minyan and Dairy Potluck
3:00 pm Congregational Meeting	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting		8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Guest speaker Frank Jaoui of World Congress	TISHA B'AV 7:30 pm Reform Community Tisha B'Av Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat (Leo Baeck Temple)
10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group The Catcher was a Spy, by Nicholas Dawidoff 3:00 pm Class Leading a Healthy Life Ginger Jacobs	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards			6:30 pm Fountain Dedication 8:00 pm Ruach Chayim Shabbat Service Rabbis Edwards and Miller Cantor Porat	August 1

All events at BCC unless otherwise noted

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:00 am Advance Planning Workshop	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg		8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat	
	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Class Preparation for Days of Awe Jeff Bernhardt	7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting		8:00 pm Shabbat service Rabbi Edwards Nancy Cohen	10:00 am Shabbat Morning Minyan and Dairy Potluck
10:00 am Choir Retreat 3:00 pm Class Leading a Healthy Life Ginger Jacobs	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Class Preparation for Days of Awe Rabbi Miller	7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg		6:30 pm Early Intergenerational Shabbat service Rabbi Miller Cantor Porat Drash by Maggie Parkhurst	
3:00 pm Class Leading a Healthy Life Ginger Jacobs	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm Class Preparation for Days of Awe Rabbi Edwards	7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting		8:00 pm Shabbat service Ruach Chayim Open House Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Bat Mitzvah of Dora Ames	10:00 am Shabbat Morning Service and Bat Mitzvah of Dora Ames
10:00 am (private home) BCC Books and Bagels All Other Nights, by Dara Horn 3:00 pm Class Leading a Healthy Life Ginger Jacobs	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	September 1 7:00 pm Class Preparation for Days of Awe Cantor Porat Jeanelle LaMance	7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg		8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Miller Cantor Porat	7:00 pm Selichot Service with Music and Study Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat