

Reflections on Pride Weekend and Orlando

Cantor Juval Porat



PHOTO: KEENNA LOVE

As our annual Pride parade and celebration dawned this year, our lives were disrupted by a tragic event on the other side of the country. What should have been a time of festivities and coming together joyously in community became a bittersweet and potentially dangerous experience. I went out into the streets to march,

but was wary of my environment. I watched the floats and felt the intensity of the presence of armed officers bookending the parade. I sang "True Colors" at the opening interfaith service and was a little more saddened than usual to be countered with words of bigotry and rejection, shouted out through megaphones by religious organizations standing behind a fence across the street from where the queer interfaith clergy team was preaching words of blessing.



Ever since the shooting in Orlando and its repercussions on the political, social and human front, I've been thinking to myself how we as individuals can combat the darkness that still seems to befall us and the hate that still is taught and preached towards anyone who is different. Yes, there are charities to donate to and Facebook filters to update one's profile pic in solidarity with the victims and that's all fine and good. But a lasting bitter taste was left for me through realizing the disastrous impacts unresolved internal homophobia (or any other form of internal mental pain) can have. That really hit home for me this year.



PHOTO: RABBI HEATHER MILLER

BCC members and clergy at 2016 Pride parade

As LGBTQ people, many of us grow up in an environment in which we're led to believe that there's something wrong about us that needs to be changed. But really it's the society around us - a society that holds on to "shoulds" and norms and etiquette - that needs the change the most. And so, while I'm not a therapist by any means, I've been left thinking that bullies, unkind neighbors, entitled employers and mass shooters too all have in common some unresolved pain carried within them that has gone untreated for too long. After all, it's easier to just try to blend in and put on a facade of a perfect life, rather than to admit that challenges are real, that struggles are real. Self-acceptance is an evolutionary and often difficult process.

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Can we make it our mission to work with and through the pain rather than suppressing it? Can our work lie in releasing our pain by talking about it, singing about it, meditating about it, cooking a meal about it, hiking about it, praying about it, connecting with someone about it, until love, hope,



PHOTO: RABBI HEATHER MILLER

BCC members and clergy at 2016 Pride parade

the first day of Shavuot, traditionally one of the three joyous pilgrimage festivals, in which the hallel - a collection of verses of praise - is recited. On the day of the shooting, the first day of Shavuot, Cantor Sam Radwine acknowledged these words from the Hallel: (Psalm 118:17) "Lo Amut, Ki echyeh, Va-asaper ma-aseh Yah—I shall not die, but live and will tell of God's divine creation." as "not just a statement of faith" but also as an urgent call to "compel us and all humanity to work for *Tikkun Olam*, the perfection and preservation of all of God's creation." I feel the need to celebrate ourselves with all that we are, as part of God's creation, more urgently than ever before.

May we, currently divided into many different letters of identities that separate us, use our energy and optimism to overcome the barriers and fences of the past. And may we all come to live in painless harmony with each other and with all that is created.

B'shalom,
Juval

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comfort and joy can take the place that was filled up by pain? Can this be one way of combating the darkness outside and inside ourselves? And can we do it alone? The Orlando shooting occurred on

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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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From the Rabbi's Study

BCC Remembers Orlando with Prayers, Tears, and Hope

Senior Rabbi Lisa Edwards



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

As we all painfully know, 49 people were murdered early Sunday morning, June 12, at Pulse, an LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando, Florida, and more than 50 others were injured, in the largest mass shooting in U.S. history. The shooter is believed to have specifically targeted the club because of its LGBTQ clientele. This tragedy unfolded just as we in LA were preparing for our annual Pride

parade and as BCC was observing the holiday of Shavuot (see Cantor Porat's column on page 1 of this issue).

BCC hosted a vigil for the Orlando victims on Monday evening, June 13, amid tight security. Our co-sponsors included JQ International, the LA Queer Interfaith Clergy Council, Temple Isaiah, Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, and Temple Israel of Hollywood. Here are some excerpts from the Jewish Journal post by Lakshna Mehta on June 14, and from the words spoken by clergy at the vigil.

From Lakshna Mehta of the Jewish Journal:

There were tears. There was solidarity. There was singing. There was hope. There was love.

More than 100 people gathered at Beth Chayim Chadashim (BCC) for a vigil held in honor of the victims of the June 12 shooting at an LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando. Police officers stood outside the synagogue, as did security guards. People were given name tags as they came in so it could be verified that they had gone through the security.

"Seeing cops here is both disturbing and reassuring," said Steve Bryan, a member of BCC.

Interspersed between singing led by BCC's Cantor Juval Porat, religious leaders from churches and synagogues around the city spoke to the audience, giving voice to feelings and thoughts of those gathered....

Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels from Beth Shir Shalom in Santa Monica reminded that the Torah teaches to not stand by idly when a friend is bleeding. The use of the word friend, he said, meant that "everybody is a friend when they're bleeding and suffering." He went on to ask the audience to call their senators and tell them that nobody should have an assault weapon, a suggestion met with applause. "We're not asking for political correctness or something reasonable or logical," he said. "We're asking for sanity. For all people."

In what Rabbi Rachel Adler called "a time of lament," people cried and held each other as the cantors sang, and rabbis and other clergy were invited to speak. A box

of Kleenex made its way around the room.

Just before the candles were lit and the people gathered on the corner of Alvira Street and Pico Boulevard, BCC member Hector Viera and Reverend Alejandro Escoto from the Metropolitan Community Church read the names of the people who died in the shooting at the Orlando nightclub Pulse.

From Rabbi Rachel Adler of Hebrew Union College:

We are here because we are heartsick: for young LGBT people, dancing in their safe space, mowed down by another young person firing an AR15. Media and politicians babble about terrorism, ISIS, and lone wolves, but this man did not learn homophobia in Syria or Iraq, nor did he learn to shoot an AR15 there. He learned both in the USA, and as a homophobe, he was no lone wolf. When we rise up from mourning, we must



PHOTO: LAKSHNA MEHTA

Clergy on the bimah at BCC vigil held for the victims of the Orlando shooting.

strategize, work tirelessly to prevent more massacres, but right now is our time of heartsickness, of lament....

As for these innocent young dead, slaughtered so horribly in the midst of their joy, we eulogize them with words from David's death-song for King Saul and Jonathan whom David loved:

"Beloved and dear in their life, in their death they were not parted.

They were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions . . .

I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan,
You were most dear to me.
Your love to me was wondrous,
More than the love of women."

Sleep well, our beautiful ones.

Continued on Page 4

From Rabbi Laura Geller of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills:

We are b'midbar, in the wilderness. A wilderness of hate, fear, homophobia, easy access to weapons, a sense that the way things are is the way they have to be. We need to remember that the only way to get through the wilderness to the promised land is by joining together and marching ... all of us, gay, straight, Jew, Christian, Muslim, all of us standing up together, against hate speech, homophobia, racism, extremist terror, all of us working together against the epidemic of gun violence with access to assault weapons made so easy because of the money poured into political campaigns by the gun lobby.

Prayer is not enough. And yet we also need to pray. Pray for comfort for the mourners, and pray to remember that until we change the way things are we will all continue to be mourners. We can create the paths to turn this wilderness into a promised land ... if we join hands and march, and vote, and work together to change what is to what we know must be.

From Rabbi Heather Miller, MAHL of Beth Chayim Chadashim:

The shooter in Orlando knew progress is moving forward and he aimed to stop it.

To stop gay men from freely kissing in Miami.

To stop LGBT folk from forming families.

To stop the free expression of individuals in places of enjoyment and sanctuary.

To stop celebrations of love everywhere.

And this whole time, I just don't understand how he could possibly think that bullets would do that.

Bullets cannot stop love.

Bullets won't make us in the LGBT community just go away.

Bullets won't make us disappear.

Bullets are not stronger than love.

He should have realized that love always wins.

....

This mass murder is not stronger than love. And we are not going anywhere.

We are out and proud.

We are still here to testify, you see - that bullets are not stronger than love.

But now the question becomes - is our love stronger than bullets?

Can we love one another so much and love safety for our children and society so much that our love can conquer the proliferation of weapons? Can our love curtail the sales of guns? The sales of bullets? Now, we must answer the question - is love stronger than bullets?

From Rabbi Jocee Hudson of Temple Israel of Hollywood:

Ten days ago, in response to the murder-suicide at UCLA, the LA Times wrote the following in an editorial: "It was only two dead. Murder-suicide in a small office. And so America shrugs. Just another incident in the daily parade of gun violence that defines contemporary America."

And a little more than a week later, here we are. At a vigil in response to the largest mass shooting in US history. In response to an act of terror. In response to an act of homophobia, to an act of hate. How can we possibly respond? Beyond tears, beyond prayers, beyond talk, and, please God, beyond a shrug.

....
Ecclesiastes teaches us, "There is a time for a wailing and a time for dancing." Early yesterday morning, at a club in Orlando, a time for dancing was twistedly turned into wailing. And so, in the aftermath we, like Miriam, must pick up the timbrel. This is the timbrel that has witnessed trauma and outrage and pain. This is the timbrel that has witnessed hatred and violence. And, this is also the timbrel that beats out a message of hope. Of love. Of possibility. Of change. This is the timbrel that beats out our demand: We will help create a world where every one of us will sit under our vine and fig tree and none of us will be afraid.

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Remembering Alex Wexler

Senior Rabbi Lisa Edwards



Alex Bruce Wexler of Long Beach, California was born August 26, 1959 and passed away on Saturday, May 21, 2016, after a long struggle with cancer. He was predeceased by his parents, Thelma Miner and Bernard Lewis Wexler, and is survived by his husband, Gregg Milano, their sons Jacob Milano-Wexler and

Michael Crane, and his brother Mark Wexler. He began his career in acting and producing on the stage and on screen before turning his attention to writing and business. He enjoyed a successful career in real estate development, and authored many projects including the musical "Lost in Hollywoodland," which saw a well-received theatrical run in New York City and Los Angeles in 2007.

Along with his husband Gregg, Alex was devoted to helping at-risk foster youth and was active in many charitable organizations, notably Kidsave Los Angeles. At the time of his death, he was finishing memoirs of his family's life with their adopted children. They will be published posthumously. A memorial service celebrating Alex's life was held on Tuesday, May 31 at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. The family requests that donations be made to Kidsave.org in memory of Alex Wexler.

Adapted from obituary published in the Los Angeles Times from May 27 to May 29, 2016.

From BCC Senior Rabbi Lisa Edwards:

In March 5 of this year, on a Friday evening around midnight, Alex sent me an update. Optimistic and very Alex:

My dear Rabbi Lisa,

I hope this email finds you and Tracy doing well. I just wanted to touch base this late Shabbat to let you know I am doing very well myself.

I have finished my second round of Chemo and it is working. I am getting stronger on a daily basis. My life is expanding, my business growing, my relationship with Greggy so improved and satisfying, especially now that Jacob has gone to college. We have fallen back in love....[and I'm so proud of Jacob]

Life is so rich for me, as I reinvent myself, how I live, operate and perceive. It is difficult, but incredible.

How can Cancer be incredible? It is a Gift! I am so deeply aware of the shower of blessings bestowed on me, I can't thank G-d enough. The opportunity to bloom again, to appreciate, to have faith, hope.

My heart and brain swell [as] with the spirit of Rosh Hashanah. I talk to G-d, turn towards myself to get closer to Him and give joyously, remembering my Mom and Dad, and getting pleasure to be able to HELP where I can. To matter.

Yet it doesn't seem enough. I want to thank G-d but more than with platitudes. I want to Give back, but not just slip him a fifty on His birthday. I want to embrace Him, to hold Him, to let Him know how deeply He is appreciated by me. But I can't stretch my arms wide enough to wrap around Him.

It's strange too, how my life is filled with Frummies. You would think SOMETHING would rub off, but I still forgot to light the candles. I'll do it now when I finish writing to you, my Loving friend the Rabbi.

So these are my spiritual problems these days. Spring is nearly here and I am so filled with contentment I can pop.

I know He knows, but is it enough? Maybe I can write Him a letter... address it to the North Pole... I don't know.

But I wanted you to know. I feel so much better. I cry from happiness daily. What a way to live. L'Chaim.

I love you.

Alex

PS I'm lighting the candles now, then going to sleep. I couldn't sleep after Chemo... now I can. Nestle with my Creator.

Alex, though you are not with us in the way we would have chosen, bless you that you wrote, that you spoke, that you cried easily and without shame, that you could spin a story like no one else, that you laughed in an unforgettable way, that your smile lit up rooms and hearts wherever you went, that you were appointed by God to be the world's best giver of hugs. I can picture you now, Alex, nestling with your Creator, sharing your many creations.

Rest in peace, Alex Bruce Wexler, rest in peace knowing you will never be forgotten, knowing each of us who knew you is a better person because of you, and that this world — God's world that you loved so much — is a better place because, at least for a little while, you worked your magic here.

Zikhrono livrachta, you are a blessing to us all.

BCC to Hold Rainbow Bazaar Parking Lot and Estate Sale

On Sunday, July 10, 2016, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, BCC will host its first temple community sale! You will find clothing, household items, artwork, new friends, furnishings, jewelry, CDs/DVDs, plants, kitsch, athletic equipment, sunshine, unusual collections, books, toys, tchotchkes, and super cute stuff. There'll also be many personal items from the estates of BCC members Renée Lamkay and Arnie Pincus. Join us! Shop! Repurpose! Drinks, snacks and shady spaces will be available too. Be sure to visit our foyer art gallery.

You can help make the BCC parking lot and estate sale a success by volunteering for various fun jobs listed below. Make it easy by bringing your friends, partners, kids, family! Please respond to Tracy Moore (tracymoore@earthlink.net) with your availability, and for further details.

Saturday, July 9: **Plan Sale Layout & Price Donated Items**
9:00 am – 2:00 pm, lunch provided! You tell us what times.

Sunday, July 10, the day of the sale, a total 20 volunteers needed!

7:00 - 9:00am: **Display Donations on Tables & Sidewalk**

Take pre-arranged sale items from inside to outside

8:00 am – 3:00 pm: **Manage Table Sales (sit or stand)**

Help buyers, supervise 2-3 tables or sidewalk

8:00 am – 3:00 pm: **Tally Each Buyer's Purchases (seated)**

3 people at each 2 hour shift, addition skills required

8:00 am – 3:00 pm: **Take Payment from Buyers (seated)**

2 people at each 2-hour shift

8:00 am – 3:00 pm: **Sell coffee, muffins, waters, \$1 each (inside)**

1-2 people, 2-hour shifts

Donate sale items (clean, nice)

Right now, send a list of your 5-10 'best items' to feature in ads to Maggie (magparkhurst@gmail.com). Then,

Deliver your sale items to BCC

June 29 to July 6 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Things Needed (bring to BCC before sale): clothes hangers, paper or plastic bags.

Join the BCC Parking Lot Sale Committee and make this a huge financial success for BCC!!

BCC WELCOMES THREE EL AL AMBASSADORS

Aviyah Farkas

On Sunday, June 5, 2016, BCC proudly hosted three El Al Airline Ambassadors. The three, Hagay Ashkenazi, Yitzak Kolb, and Ilan Aharonov, are openly gay flight attendants who spoke for nearly two hours about their life in Israel, their experiences flying for El Al, and their families and friends who accept and support them. They all gave up their furlough weekend to speak to us, instead of participating in the Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade.

In addition to these three men, El Al sent Shay Perez, Director of Cultural Affairs for the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles, also a gay man. Rabbi Lisa Edwards also attended and opened the talk with a poem found in our siddur on page 54, entitled "I Love the Doves of Jerusalem." Altogether there were 41 attendees, and everyone said that they were happy to have had this experience.



PHOTO: ELAD MASSIRI

El Al flight attendants, from left: Ilan Aharonov, Yitzak Kolb, and Hagay Ashkenazi with BCC member Aviyah Farkas



PHOTO: ELAD MASSIRI

El Al flight attendants answering questions from the congregation

President's Message

BCC Plans Annual Congregational Meeting on July 24

Lauren Schlau



This year's annual Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, July 24, from 2:30 to 5:30 pm. I am aware that people may not be enthralled to spend a few hours on a sunny summer Sunday afternoon to hear about temple business. But I'd like you to consider that the meeting offers many good reasons worthy of your time and attendance.

For one, it is quite enjoyable to be with fellow BCCers discussing the very things that motivated many of us to join this special community. It is also an excellent opportunity (among others) to hear from our dedicated clergy, staff and lay leaders about what makes BCC tick and to have your voice be

heard on relevant matters that will guide BCC for the next year or more.

If you have recently joined BCC, this meeting is an accessible way to get more involved. Whether you are a shorter or longer-term member, it provides the information, through the budget approval process, to help understand how our investment in BCC will be used for all the good we do. We see and hear from congregants as to why they want to devote their time to run for the Board of Directors and what they have to offer. And we are all inspired as we recognize the many caring volunteers who have given their time throughout the year. We deeply appreciate you and also seek other interested talented and caring members to become involved.

So please join me, my fellow Board members, BCC clergy and staff on July 24 for our annual meeting! Refreshments will be served.

The BCC "Village" And How We All Can Help Strengthen It

Ruth Geffner, Executive Director



In May I received my MBA in Non-Profit Management from American Jewish University. I want to thank the BCC community and board for providing me the freedom to pursue this opportunity while working. Although my schedule may have been difficult, and late night email responses sent

out, I spent the time learning skills and gaining knowledge that I could take back to BCC. Talking with people from various backgrounds and organizations provided me the chance to acquire new ideas and broaden my thinking.

"It takes a village to raise a child." I believe this saying can be applied to synagogues as well. BCC is the village and everyone plays a vital role in its well-being and growth. BCC volunteers, committee members, board members, and members take on

leadership roles, attend community events, and share ideas and suggestions. Each of us brings skills and knowledge that combine to make BCC the warm, welcoming and energetic community that we know. By sharing your skills and ideas, BCC is strengthened.

"If you do not aspire to great things, you will not achieve even little ones" - Imre Binah. BCC can achieve great things if, as a village, we stand together. I invite you to pledge to BCC. Commit to be part of the village and to "raise" BCC. Whether it is attending events, taking an active role in planning, or volunteering at programs, there are a multitude of ways to get involved. Our upcoming Rainbow Bazaar, on July 10th, is one event that offers numerous volunteer opportunities.

I look forward to achieving great things together and to working with you all! Please call, email or set up an appointment to stop by and share your ideas and thoughts with me.

My Journey to Judaism and BCC

James Sutherland

Adapted from remarks delivered at Brandeis Bardin Institute on May 18, 2016, to rabbinic students at HUC and the Gerech Family Institute, as part of a panel on personal journeys of conversion to Judaism.

Thank you for allowing me to share an important part of your journey towards becoming Rabbis. I would like to thank Rabbi Sabine Meyer for thinking of me, when she had many other people that she may have considered. I would also like to thank Rabbi Heather Miller, who was on the forefront, when I decided to make this journey. A big thanks as well to Rabbi Kaye for welcoming me and to Arlene Chernow for continuing to answer my questions, as the time to be here grew closer.

I believe that there is something that has brought all of us here tonight. I can't put a name on it, but, each of us is sitting here tonight for a special reason. Allow me to explain a little of mine. Like you, my journey began long ago, and for me, I mean long ago. When I was very young, my mother showed me our family tree. And part of what I saw did not fit the exact mold of what the rest of the tree looked like. Two names stood out, both Jewish. I have told myself this story so many times that I may have changed the names over time, yet that is not important. What is important is that I, like you, understand that there is a bond between the Jewish peoples and the thread ran through to me.

My journey to this table tonight has been a long and convoluted one. A moment or so ago, I told you that Rabbi Meyer could have chosen someone else, perhaps someone wanting to convert to be married, perhaps someone who didn't have the chance at their bar or bat mitzvah, but she chose me. "Why?" I asked myself when I received her email.

I am close to finishing my Master's degree in clinical psychology, and have a much deeper understanding of the inner workings of people's minds, thoughts and actions, than the average person. This does not mean however, that I understand myself all of the time. So it dawned on me that Rabbi Meyer wanted me to share with you my reason, because of who I am, and I will.

But first, as you go forth into your communities that you will serve, and guide, bringing joy, peace and comfort in times of need, remember that not everyone you meet will be like yourselves. There will be those whose fears will be deeply imbedded, who if not accepted with kindness and understanding, may never know the joy of being or becoming a Jew living a full and joyous life. I may have been one of those persons had it not been for Rabbi Miller, for you see, I am a member of Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim. Many have not heard of this

Temple (which became the first gay synagogue in the world in 1972). I am sure at this point you can figure out that I am a gay man. I am going to let you in on a little secret right now. I have never, ever, said that out loud to anyone other than my closest friends. Some may know it, but I have never said it. And I can tell you, that waves of fear have been washing/crashing over me, like those of the sea centuries ago. So I sat, and asked that the waves of fear be parted, so that I could come here tonight and share my story on the way to being a part of the Jewish peoples.

So I know a little about being ostracized, shunned, and being the "other". We learn from a very early age, or sometimes at a later age, that being different can be dangerous, at times deadly. We have only to look back at the Shoah to understand, what being different from others led to. I can also look to what happened to Mathew Shepard in Wyoming, tortured and



James Sutherland (third from right) with other panelists at Brandeis Bardin

murdered for being just like ME. This being said, it took me decades to allow myself to knit who am together with what I wanted and needed in a Temple.

Many years ago, I approached a Temple in Los Angeles and told them a minute amount about myself. They were not interested in me, and I understood. Or I thought I did. Only when I realized, that this was MY journey, did I continue to look for a Temple.

As a future psychotherapist I often caution people to spend more time with people and less time on the computer. Thanks to some oxymoronic thinking on my part, I found Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim, and Rabbi Miller through the use of the Internet. By the way Chabad also sends me great blogs by Internet as well. And Chabad has no problems with psychotherapy, as long as we do not deny the religious aspects of being Jewish.

Continued on Page 9

After welcoming me to BCC, Rabbi Miller communicated to me how to become a part of the Temple, and the Jewish faith and fun, and I now greatly admire Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Cantor Juval Porat who help bring Shabbat and all the holidays to life for me. Along with this comes their responsibility to the Temple, and all who walk through, not only at BCC, but to all others of the tribes as well. And I will say that I admire, enjoy, and am proud to be a part of BCC, and each person there. From Tracy who gives me hugs to Bruce and his cheese at the onegs. And each and every one of the others. It is community at its best. This is Jewishness in its wonder.

So what does this mean to you, you might ask, although I am sure you have been able to pick up my meanings? Remember that when you are in the

positions that you will be in, that you, like Rabbi Miller will have the ability to change people's lives. You will have an inherent ability to create change. I ask that you remember once again that not everyone will be like you, but please remember you can give others a sense of joy, happiness, and purpose, even if it just means picking up a phone and referring someone to a place where they might fit in. Perhaps if that had happened years ago, my life may be even more different today. But that is not to dwell on, as today I am a proud member of Temple BCC, and Sunday I will finish Judaism 101 with Rabbi Meyer.

I congratulate each of you on your decision on this path that you have chosen, and remember that you will be a force for change, however you will see it.



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BCC Vegan Group Forming



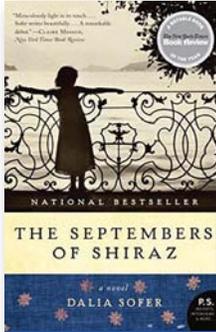
On Friday, April 29, Rabbi Lisa Edwards gave a drash on veganism. (You can find the drash at <https://youtu.be/MVjwJZi4OFQ>.) Following up on that drash, we will be forming a BCC Vegans group, for vegans and those who are vegan-friendly. Among other activities, we'll share meals together, either at home or in restaurants, and pass along our favorite vegan recipes. Just the existence of this group might give an incentive to others to try out veganism and to learn about its health benefits as well as its benefits for the environment.

If you would like to join the group, please email Brett Trueman at brett.trueman@gmail.com. He'll send out an initial email to all group members in a few weeks.

BCC Books and Bagels Group

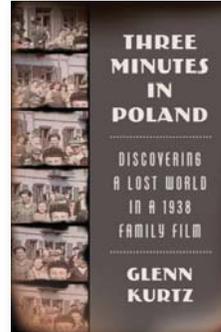
Larry Nathenson

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 24 11:30 am (late start so we can go directly to BCC congregational meeting at 2:30),
The Septembers of Shiraz, by Dalia Sofer.

This novel traces the story of an Iranian Jewish family in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It was recently made into a movie starring Adrian Brody. The Iranian Jewish community has become very prominent in Jewish LA in the past few decades, but most Ashkenazi Jews know little about it.



Sunday, August 28, 10:00 am
Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film, by Glenn Kurtz

The story of the author's investigation of his grandparents' small town in Poland, triggered by his discovery of a home movie at his parents' home in Florida.

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. RSVP required for location and to ensure enough food. For more information, contact Larry Nathenson at Larrynath@aol.com.

Tisha b'Av Observance Saturday, August 13

The saddest day on the Jewish calendar is Tisha b'Av, on which the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem is only one of many Jewish tragedies we commemorate. This year it begins on Saturday night August 13. We'll begin the evening at BCC at 7:00 pm with Havdalah and a symbolic bite of food -- the last before the fast begins (note: not everyone fasts, totally up to you, but either way, please eat before you come to BCC). The main sustenance of the evening will be coming together in solidarity.

Together with Rabbis Edwards and Miller and Cantor Porat, we'll spend a couple of hours learning, sharing music and truths, questions and prayers, including the biblical book of Eicha (Lamentations). We'll share longings and plans for how to move the world closer to the way things are meant to be. Not a full-blown revolution -- just something we could reasonably accomplish when our day of mourning comes to an end. No previous experience is required, just come with an open heart.

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Mazel Tov

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

Rabbi Heather Miller was named among nine nominees of Dignity and Power Now's Coalition to End Sheriff Violence. "The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence stands with incarcerated people and their loved ones as we launch our slate of highly qualified nominees who have been active participants in the movement to end civil and human rights violations inside the county jail system," the statement says. See the BCC website for further details and to read her invocation at the LA County Board of Supervisors meeting on June 21.

Richard Seltzer, a BCC member for over 30 years, recently retired from Glendale Community College after 30 years as a professor of English as a Second Language. Richard marked the occasion with a drash at our Ruach Chayim service on June 24.

BCC Executive Director **Ruth Geffner** received her MBA in Non-Profit Management from American Jewish University in May. Please see her article on page 7 for her thoughts on how this degree will enhance her role at BCC.

Dean Hansell, a long-time BCC member and prominent Los Angeles attorney who previously served on the L.A. Police Commission, has been appointed by Governor Brown to the LA Superior Court. For more information, see this link on the BCC website:

<http://bcc-la.org/people/dean-hansell-appointed-for-judgeship-in-the-los-angeles-county-superior-court/>

BCC member **James Sutherland** spoke on a panel on May 18 on personal journeys of conversion to Judaism at Brandeis Bardin Institute for rabbinic students at Hebrew Union College and the Gerech Family Institute. His remarks can be found on page 8.

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

Need a Morale Boost?

Try BCC's Life Transitions Support Group

Here is some advice from BCC member Les Amer: "Over the last year, my morale has been weighed down by the death of a close friend and my mother's memory impairment. In reading the temple bulletins, I noticed that the Life Transitions Group was still meeting twice a month.

"Years ago I attended one session at our old BCC location, when I was having burdens over my father's failing health. It was an opportunity to break down and cry in frustration. I only needed the one session at the time, but I remembered it years later when I again needed some help.

"Over this past year, I have been able to express myself in confidence about the moods of sadness and depression that my recent experiences have caused. I continue to attend sessions with Shirley Hirschberg and others in the group, and have found it helpful to both express my inner feelings as well as to listen to the needs and concerns of others. Thanks to everyone involved, and to BCC for making the space available."

If you could use some help dealing with the stress of relationships, careers, economics, social life, family life, health or bereavement, you might want to give the BCC Life Transitions Group a try. The goal of the BCC Life Transitions Group is to enhance participants' spiritual and emotional growth.

Participants 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.



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July 2016

Sivan/Tammuz 5776

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY (BCC office closed)	5 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	6 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	7	8 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Davi Cheng	9 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Setup for Rainbow Bazaar (volunteers needed)
10 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Rainbow Bazaar Parking lot and Estate sale	11 7:30 pm Drop-in Session Rabbi Miller	12 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	13 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	14	15 6:30 pm Early Service Cantor Porat Elissa Barrett Gershick Drash by Ginger Jacobs 7:30 pm After Shul Special (American Jewish Photography)	16 10:00 am Shabbat morning Minyan and Veggie potluck
17	18	19 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	20 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	21	22 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Miller Jeff Bernhardt	23
24 11:30 am (private home) BCC Book Group <i>The Septembers of Shiraz</i> , by Dalia Sofer 2:30 pm BCC Congregational Meeting	25 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	26 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	27 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	28	29 8:00 pm Ruach Chayim Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat Guest musicians Drash by Ilene Cohen	30
31	<i>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</i>					

August 2016

Tammuz/Av 5776

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	2 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	3 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	4	5 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Lay song leader	6
7	8 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	9 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	10 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	11	12 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards Cantor Porat	13 7:00 pm Havdalah and Tisha B'Av Service BCC clergy
14 TISHA B'AV	15 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	16 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	17 7:00 pm Life Transitions Group Shirley Hirschberg	18	19 6:30 pm Early Experimental Shabbat Service Rabbi Miller Cantor Porat	20 10:00 am Shabbat morning Minyan and Veggie potluck
21	22 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	23 7:15 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	24 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	25	26 8:00 pm Ruach Chayim Shabbat Service and Open House Rabbi Miller Cantor Porat Guest musicians	27
28 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group <i>Three Minutes in Poland</i> Glenn Kurtz	29 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	30 7:30 pm Days of Awe Preparation (1 st of 5 sessions) Jeff Bernhardt	31	<i>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted</i>		

SEE BCC-LA.ORG FOR UPDATES AND CHANGES.