



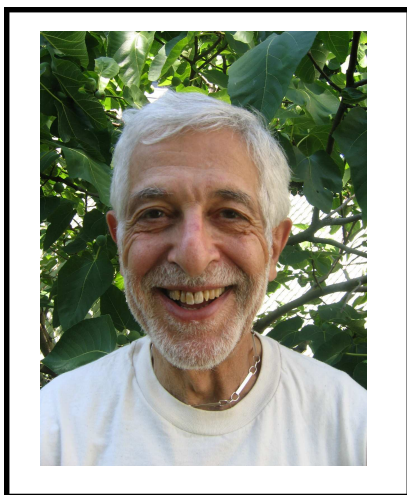
BETH CHAI NEWS

The Greater Washington Jewish Humanist Congregation

May 2 Shabbat Service To Honor Ron Leve

This month, Beth Chai's Shabbat service falls precisely on Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day – which is marked on the 27th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan. The evening also coincides with the congregation's memorial for Ron Leve, one of Beth Chai's most active and popular members, whose recent death, both unexpected and untimely, has deeply affected his many friends in our area.

On this evening, therefore, we will slightly shorten our customary Shab-



bat supper, ending at 7:45 rather than 8 o'clock; incorporate our acknowledgment of Yom HaShoah into our monthly Shabbat service, which will run from 7:45 to 8:15; and devote the rest of the evening to honoring Ron, whose impact on the life of the congregation has been so great and whose presence will be so sorely missed.

At Ron's memorial, to begin at around 8:30, Beth Chai members will be joined by many friends, neighbors, and fellow volunteers who valued Ron and worked

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Annual Meeting and Rabbi Blecher's 25th Anniversary Celebration May 18, 2008, 7 p.m., River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation

We hope that you can join us on May 18 for what promises to be Beth Chai's social event of the year. The evening will begin with a short and sweet Annual Meeting at 7 p.m. to recognize our outgoing Board members and elect our leaders for next year. The congregation has accomplished many goals this year – consistently excellent programming with more music, completely revamped web and e-mail communications to keep members informed, record-breaking fundraising, and a new Yom Kippur service ready to premiere in the fall. This will be a nice opportunity to reflect on our 2007-2008 year and prepare for the year ahead. (See page 5 for more details on the election.)

At 7:30, we will adjourn for an elegant reception celebrating Rabbi Blecher's 25 years of leadership at Beth Chai. We will have music provided by Alan Feldenkris' jazz trio and a decadent dessert buffet. The evening

will be warm with fellowship and memories. We hope to bring together many in our Beth Chai family: former congregants, college students home for the summer, and current members. To RSVP or ask questions about the celebration, please call Shannon Rudisill at 703-752-5809 or slrudisill@cox.net.

A recap of the evening's events:

7:00-7:30 p.m. Annual Meeting, Library, River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC)

7:30-9:30 p.m. Dessert Reception honoring Rabbi Blecher, Sanctuary, RRUUC

Community Work Day approaches. . .

June 1, 2008 . . .

Save the date. . . .

Beth Chai Directory

Position	Name (* = Board Member)	Email
Rabbi	Dr. Arthur Blecher	ablecher@starpower.net
Education Director	Rain Zohav	rainzohav@earthlink.net
President	Andrew Strongin*	astrongin@starpower.net
Vice President	David Elfin*	ElfinD@verizon.net
Secretary/Past President	Deborah Signer Balaschak*	balasig@verizon.net
Treasurer	Pat Lovenhart*	pat@lovenhart.com
Communications Chair	Julie Vigdor*	julievigdor@yahoo.com
Community Building Chair	Shannon Rudisill*	JMG_SLR@hotmail.com
Family School Chair	Susan Stewart*	ssstew@aol.com
Fundraising Chair	Vacant	—
Liturgy Chair	Rob Weinstein*	crobnlynn@earthlink.net
Membership Co-Chair	Reed Dewey*	reed-dewey@verizon.net
Membership Co-Chair	Julie Zalkind	juliehz@erols.com
Music Chair	Marji Ross*	mross@eaglepub.com
Program Co-Chair	Ken Jacobson	kenjacobson@hotmail.com
Program Co-Chair	Mike Wexler*	ela.mike@verizon.net
Social Action Chair	Howie Feinstein*	khfeinstein@verizon.net
Tot Shabbat Coordinator	Joe Gitchell	jgitchel@pinneyassociates.com
Bookkeeper/Accounts Payable	Diane Page	dmpage1@comcast.net
Correspondent	Elizabeth Mumford	eam222@verizon.net
Newsletter Editor (text)	Julie Vigdor	julievigdor@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor (layout)	Judy Gordon	justplus3@comcast.net
Parent Council Coordinator	Susan Stewart	ssstew@aolcom
Sunday School Volunteer Coordinator	Phyllis Kristal	Kristal@fr.com
Website Content Manager	Mary Jo Shapiro	Mjshap-bethchai@yahoo.com
Beth Chai Web Site	Beth Chai Answering Service/Email	www.bethchai.org; info@bethchai.org

Financial Need Policy: Beth Chai welcomes anyone to attend services, become a member, or have their children attend our Jewish Family School, regardless of ability to pay. Considerations available include extended payment plans, service exchange, and fee reduction. Financial aid determination will be made on a case by case basis. Please contact Pat Lovenhart, Treasurer, for assistance.

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side by side with him for the furtherance of peace, the arts, kindness, and human understanding.

Schedule

Note: *Tot Shabbat, which usually takes place from 6:30 to 7, will not be held on this Shabbat evening. It will return when the Shabbat schedule resumes in the fall.*

7 - 7:45 pm: A light supper costing \$10 per person (post-mitzvah and older) and \$5 per child (ages 6 to 12) will be set out buffet style at 7. Those wishing to join in are asked to sign up by contacting Yevgeniya Nusinovich before noon on Thursday, May 1, by email at ynusi@gwu.edu.

7:45 - 8:15 pm: Beth Chai's Shabbat service, which features a humanistic Kiddush, singing, thought-provoking readings, and roles for children wishing to participate. Included this month will be special recognition of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

8:30 pm : Memorial for Ron Leve.

Location of all Beth Chai Shabbats (unless otherwise indicated): Beth Chai Congregation at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Fireside Room (second floor), 6301 River Rd. (entrance on Whittier Blvd.), Bethesda.

Note: *The Shabbat program originally planned, which was to be based on readings pertaining to the Holocaust suggested by Beth Chai members, will be held over until next year.*

Condolences can be sent to Ron's nephew, Eric Leve, at 4043 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, CA 94610.

Donations in Ron's memory can be made to Beth Chai, Washington Musica Viva (c/o Banner, 9925 Dickens Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814), or to an arts organization of your choice.

Genographic Project, Part II: Profiling Beth Chai's Collective Background

Not only did Beth Chai members have a special opportunity to learn about our individual origins via National Geographic's Genographic Project, we also have the well-nigh unique possibility of obtaining a portrait of our congregation's collective genetic history. *But we can take advantage of it only if we all do our part.*

Mark Bauman, the Beth Chai member and National Geographic employee who last fall gave us an introductory talk on the Genographic Project – and who with his wife, Karen Martin, arranged the delivery of more than 100 DNA test kits to BC members – is in a position to enlist the folks at National Geographic partner FamilyTreeDNA to profile our congregation. Only 20 percent of us need to participate, but the greater the participation, the richer the picture we'll get of the ancestral background of the congregation.

Here's what each of us has to do:

--**Use the test kit and mail in the samples.** Many have done this already, but not all. And while it may seem as if there's a lot to read in the Genographic kit, it boils down to a couple of minutes of reading, a couple of minutes of swabbing, and then sealing the samples in the mailer and sending them off.

--**Enter your Genographic Project Kit ID**, which is recorded on a document enclosed in the kit, where it says to do so on the project's home page (<https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/>).

--**Click "See Your Results"** on the horizontal nav at the top of the page that entering your Project Kit ID will have taken you to (<https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/journey.html>).

--**Next, on that same page, click on "Contribute Your Results"** and then, still on the same page but at the bottom, click on "What Else Can I Do with My Results."

--**Now, on the FamilyTree DNA page** (www.familytreedna.com/genographicproject.asp), opt in by checking the box next to "I agree."

--**Email your FamilyTreeDNA numbers** – *NOT* your Genographic Kit numbers – to Mark at mbauman@ngs.org.

He will then send in the numbers he receives to FamilyTreeDNA, which – provided we get 20 percent participation from Beth Chai – has volunteered to create a data

group for the congregation. They'll then crunch our data and be able to provide some interesting perspectives on our history and on the sometimes surprising ties that exist among all members of our community.

We're hoping to devote another Adult Education session, if possible in September or October, to a program in which an expert from FamilyTreeDNA presents, explains, and analyses the results. But for that to go ahead, we need as many as possible of those of you who have kits to follow the above steps by mid-June. And those who have already sent their FamilyTreeDNA numbers to Mark are asked to do so again so we can make sure that all goes smoothly and that we obtain as complete a portrait of Beth Chai as we can.

***Note:** Those who missed out on Beth Chai's joint order of Genographic Project Participation Kits but would still like to get their personal data into the pool for the analysis of the congregation's background can order kits online at <https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/participate.html>, which also contains information on the project and how to take part. But please don't delay, as the goal is to have all needed ID numbers (as described above) in Mark's hands by mid-June.*

What is National Geographic's Landmark Study of the Human Journey?

Where do you **really** come from? And how did you get to where you live today? DNA studies suggest that all humans today descend from a group of African ancestors who—about 60,000 years ago—began a remarkable journey.

The Genographic Project is seeking to chart new knowledge about the migratory history of the human species by using sophisticated laboratory and computer analysis of DNA contributed by hundreds of thousands of people from around the world. In this unprecedented and real-time research effort, the Genographic Project is closing the gaps of what science knows today about humankind's ancient migration stories.

(Information from National Geographic's Web site)

Letter from the Education Director - May 2008



Dear Congregants,

On May 4 we will host our annual Open House. This is a great time to invite friends who might be interested in joining to observe classrooms, participate in Adult Education and meet our members. We will begin the day with our music assembly at 9:30. From 10:00 – 10:30 visitors will have an opportunity to meet with me, hear a little about the school and meet members. Visiting children and parents can sit in on classes. Adult Education will begin at 10:30. We will have snack together at 11 a.m. before Adult Education and classes resume at 11:20.

There will be no school on May 11 due to Mother's Day. Enjoy your family time together. We will reconvene on May 18 for our last day of classes, but NOT our last day of the school year. On May 18, the classes will share some of what they have learned during the year. I hope that all the adults who have been attending Adult Education so enthusiastically all year will join us to see what the students have been learning. This is part of what makes us truly a Family School .

Please plan now for our June activities. On June 1 we have our Community Work Day. Plans are in the works for two sites. One will be a cleanup of Sligo Creek in Silver Spring. The other will be at Burning Tree. We are looking into the possibility of bringing back the ever popular sandwich-making for the homeless, as well as making items for the NIH Children's Inn. Look for more details in your weekly email list and the June newsletter. Community Work Day is an integral part of our year-long commitment to Tikkun Olam and an inherent part of our curriculum. If you would be willing to help out, please contact our Social Action Chair, Howie Feinstein.

On June 8, we are planning our first congregational Shavuot celebration. Full details will be in the June newsletter, but please mark your calendars now to be at school that day. We will have our end of the year potluck picnic right after Sunday School.

Since some of our teachers will already be back home or on their way to work in summer camps by June, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our magnificent staff. I was in every classroom almost every week this year and found the students engaged in relevant, meaningful and fun activities at every point. I never found a teacher dully lecturing to a bored group of kids. The kind of hands-on, challenging learning that was taking place is dependent on good teachers. Many of our teachers will be returning. There will be a few openings also, however, so if you would be interested in teaching and contributing in this way, or know someone who might be interested, please let me know. Some of our best teachers have come exactly from appeals like this.

Be sure to RSVP for the celebration of Rabbi Blecher's 25 years of Outstanding Leadership which will take place on May 18 at 7:30 p.m. at River Road (details on page 1). Our students will have their own celebration for Rabbi Blecher at school that morning. It's a pleasure to recognize the immeasurable contribution of our rabbi to our school and our congregation.

B'Shalom,

Rain Zohav

Adult Education for May

May 4: The Paradoxical "Likeness of God." During a recent Adult Education session, we were exposed to an impressive line from the great 20th century Jewish thinker Abraham Joshua Heschel: "Man's dignity consists in his having been created in the likeness of God." But what is the "likeness of God"? How can human beings know it? And how can we, who are mortal and corporeal, be said to be "created in the likeness" of one that our tradition appears to regard as eternal and infinite? Rabbi Art Blecher will lead us in an exploration of these challenging questions and present a midrash that offers one possible resolution of the contradictions they suggest. *Note: In line with the day's Open House schedule, Adult Education will start at 10:30 rather than the usual 10:15. (Continued on page 5)*

Annual Meeting

May 18, 2008

RRUUC, Fireside Room

7:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Please attend the May 18 Annual Meeting to vote for this year's slate of Board nominees. The slate will be presented and the vote taken promptly at 7 p.m., after which the meeting will adjourn to the RRUUC sanctuary for the congregation's Dessert Reception in honor of Rabbi Arthur Blecher's 25 years of outstanding service to the congregation. We hope you will join us!

This year's slate of Board nominees consists of:

David Elfin (President)
 Andrew Strongin (Vice President/Immediate Past President)
 Sara Duke (Secretary)
 Joe Gitchell (Treasurer)
 Daniel Korn (Volunteers)

Returning Board members include:

Julie Vigdor (Communications)
 Shannon Rudisill (Membership)
 Susan Stewart (School Parent Council)
 Marji Ross (Music)
 Hurricane Howie Feinstein (Social Action)

Additionally, Beth Chai is pleased to announce the following new Committee appointments:

Elise Hughes (Newsletter Editor)
 Philip Resnik (Liturgy)
 Ela Koniuszkow & Warren Milburg (Finance)

* A special note of thanks is owed to the following departing Board members:

Deborah Signer Balaschak
 Reed Dewey
 Pat Lovenhart
 Rob Weinstein
 Mike Wexler

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May 18: Please watch weekly email bulletin for topic. At press time, we had yet to settle on an Adult Ed topic for this date. But those consulting the weekly email bulletin should find out well in advance what the session will be devoted to. **Note:** As is customary on the last day of Sunday School for the year, the time after 11 a.m. will be devoted to class presentations. Adult Education will convene from 10:15-11 a.m. only.

Calendar of Events

Date & Time	Event	Location
Fri., May 2, 7 PM, Light supper 7:45 – 8:15 PM, Shabbat	Monthly Shabbat service, featuring Andrea Foster as regular song leader. Shabbat service will pay special tribute to the worldwide Holocaust Remembrance Day.	Beth Chai Congregation at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC), 6301 River Rd., Bethesda, Fireside Room, 2 nd flr.
Fri., May 2, 8:30 – 9:30 PM	Memorial Service for Ron Leve, led by Rabbi Art Blecher	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC
Sun., May 4, 9:30 AM Assembly 10 AM – noon, Open House 10:30 – noon, Adult Ed	Sunday School, Post-Mitzvah Class, Pre-School Class. Adult Ed: Heschel said, "Man's dignity consists in his having been created in the likeness of God." Rabbi Art Blecher will lead us in an exploration of this provocative suggestion. Open House: 10 – noon, prospective members, Sunday school students, and families visit the	Burning Tree Elementary School 7900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda
Sun., May 11	No Sunday School – Mother's Day!	
Sun., May 18, 9:30 AM Assembly 10 – 11 AM Classes and Adult Ed 11 – noon, Class presen-	Sunday School, Pre-School Class; Adult Ed: Watch weekly email for topic.	Burning Tree Elementary School 7900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda
Sun., May 18, 7 – 7:30 PM, Annual Meeting 7:30 PM, Art's Party!	Annual Meeting of Beth Chai: Come vote for our 2008-09 Board members and officers. Art's Party: Join us to celebrate Rabbi Art Blecher's 25 th anniversary as rabbi for Beth Chai Congregation	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda, MD (entrance to parking lot on Whittier)
Sun., May 25	No Sunday School – Memorial Day Weekend	



Beth Chai Congregation

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