

## Hebrew Union College Ordains Three New Rabbis with BCC Connections

Larry Nathenson

A strong contingent of BCC members and friends turned out on Sunday morning, May 17, 2009, at



COURTESY OF HUC-JIR

Rabbi Joseph Hample

Temple Israel of Hollywood for the eighth ordination of new rabbis by the Los Angeles campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the seminary of our Reform movement. A total of 15 new rabbis were ordained there, three of whom have BCC connections. The sanctuary at Temple Israel was nearly filled to capacity, and each ordinee had a designated seating section. Most of the BCC members in attendance sat in the section designated for **Rabbi Joseph B. Hample**, who has served as BCC's student rabbi for the past two years and is married to longtime BCC member Barry Wendell. But we also cheered loudly for **Rabbi Rachel Timoner**, wife of BCC's Executive Director Felicia Park-Rogers, and for **Rabbi Joshua Winston**, who has graced our bimah as leader of our monthly Ruach Chayim service on Shabbat evenings, a service he created with special music to enhance our spiritual and liturgical repertoire.



COURTESY OF HUC-JIR

Rabbi Joshua Winston

Each new rabbi was introduced by a sponsoring rabbi, and each rolled a Torah scroll to a passage that encapsulates his or her vision for a rabbinic career. Joe Hample was introduced by our own Rabbi Lisa Edwards. Joe's Torah scroll was rolled to Genesis 18:25, in which Abraham says to God: "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, to treat the righteous and the wicked alike! Shall not the judge of all the Earth do justice?"

Abraham is reacting to God's plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their inhabitants even though there must be some righteous people among them. Rabbi Edwards joked with Joe that he had rolled his scroll to Sodom and Gomorrah, perhaps not the best choice for a BCC student rabbi and member of a married same-sex couple. But Joe's focus was on Abraham's willingness to argue with God, to challenge God, and on the role of the Jewish people in helping to perfect God's incomplete creation. We know Joe is well equipped to carry on this Jewish tradition in his own rabbinate.

A native of New York State, Joe graduated from Harvard in 1978 with a degree in Russian (who knew?) and moved to California in 1980. He worked for many years as a systems analyst for Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco, where he was active as a lay leader in our sibling congregation Sha'ar Zahav. Joe began his rabbinic studies at HUC at



COURTESY OF HUC-JIR

Rabbi Rachel Timoner

Continued on Page 2

the urging of his father, Stuart Hample, whose humor and insight were on display at a post-ordination party for Joe at BCC the same day.

Rachel Timoner was sponsored by Rabbi Richard N. Levy, Director of the School of Rabbinic Studies at the L.A. campus of HUC-JIR. Her Torah was rolled to Deuteronomy 5:21, the passage that made her fall in love with Torah: "YHVH (Being and Becoming), our God, showed us Its Great Presence, and we heard God's voice from the midst of the fire. Today we saw that God speaks humanity into being and is living." To Rachel this means that Torah has an infinite number of faces waiting to be revealed by each new set of eyes, each unique reader or hearer.

Rachel moved to Los Angeles from San Francisco (by way of Israel) to pursue her rabbinic studies, and brought Felicia with her, much to BCC's benefit. They and their sons Benjamin and Eitan will remain in L.A., as she has accepted a position as assistant rabbi with Leo Baeck Temple. This means Felicia will also continue her fine work as BCC's Executive Director. In this most difficult

economic climate in 70 years, Rachel is among the fortunate minority of this class of new rabbis to have found employment quickly.

Josh Winston was also sponsored by Rabbi Levy, and rolled his Torah scroll to Deuteronomy 6:5-9, the portion of the Shema that commands us to wear t'fillin on our arms and foreheads during prayer. Josh says on his page in the ordination program that this provides his guiding principle for his life as a rabbi. We know Torah only when we do Torah, think Torah, and speak Torah, as that is how we bring holiness into the world.

Josh was born in Indianapolis but considers himself a California native. He graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara with a degree in Cultural Anthropology, and has also received a Master of Arts in Jewish Education while at HUC. We hope that he and his wife Sarah will be able to worship with us at BCC on occasion, perhaps for Ruach Chayim.

We wish these three new rabbis, and all of their colleagues, success and health in their careers and life paths, wherever they may lead.

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Rabbi Lisa Edwards is available for private appointments. Please call at least a week in advance, if possible, to schedule.

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**G' VANIM**

G'vanim "Hues (of the rainbow)" is the monthly newsletter of

**BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM**  
 6000 West Pico Blvd., L.A. CA 90035

Founded in 1972 as the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue, today BCC is an inclusive community of progressive lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and heterosexual Jews, our families, and friends. Everyone is welcome to attend weekly Friday evening services at 8:00 p.m.

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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.**

## From the Rabbi's Study...

# Rabbi Edwards to Stop Signing Marriage Licenses Until Prop. 8 Repealed

Rabbi Lisa Edwards



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

I received a press release recently from All Saints Church in Pasadena. Below you'll find excerpts from it. I'm asking that it be reprinted

here because, at least at this time, I plan to join them, and stop signing marriage licenses in California until such time as same-gender couples can once again legally marry.

Several of my colleagues and I have been discussing this idea for many years already. It is a model followed in other countries -- couples who want a religious ceremony have two of them: a civil ceremony and a religious ceremony.

I won't stop officiating at Jewish wedding ceremonies for any couples, according to the same guidelines I have long followed. I don't anticipate this will inconvenience two-gender couples very much at all -- it's quite easy and inexpensive to get a civil ceremony done by a judge or other officer of

the court. In fact, I expect that couples will happily take part in this new separation of church/synagogue and state.

I expect in fact that some states (maybe even California) will eventually make this state law, and remove clergy as "agents of the state" to perform or officiate at civil marriages. I welcome your feedback on this new (yet old) approach, and I look forward to officiating at many weddings in the future -- call me if you need an officiant!

L'shalom,  
Rabbi Lisa Edwards

### LOS ANGELES: All Saints, Pasadena, clergy opt out of civil marriages until gay couples can legally wed

Clergy at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, California, are opting out of performing civil marriages until gay couples can legally wed--and are encouraging other clergy to do likewise, according to the Rev. Ed Bacon, rector. ....

"The California Supreme Court in its recent opinion has ruled that those of same-gender affections are second-class citizens," Bacon added. "Denying fundamental rights to a certain classification of humanity is blatant discrimination with which our governing board, the other clergy of All Saints, and I will not participate. We invite other clergy and congregations to join us in this stand for marriage equality."

All Saints vestry, at its June 2 meeting, had unanimously passed a resolution declaring that "the sacramental right of marriage is available to all couples, but that the clergy of All Saints Church will not sign civil marriage certificates so long

as the right to marry is denied to same-sex couples." ...The resolution states "civil marriage in the State of California is, as a result of Proposition 8 and the Court's decision, a constitutionally-mandated instrument of discrimination, which furthers injustice and denies same-sex couples the fundamental dignities to which each human being is entitled." Rev. Susan Russell, of All Saints, who is president of Integrity USA, an advocacy group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Episcopalians, said there was little discussion in the vestry meeting. "It was just a no-brainer that of course we want to take steps that keep us from being complicit in state-sponsored discrimination.

"I keep thinking I couldn't be prouder to work at All Saints church than I already am and then our leadership keeps taking steps that make me even prouder," Russell said. "It was it is such a part of the DNA of All Saints Church to stand with those in need of solidarity. This stand is so deeply rooted in our baptismal

covenant; it gives us such a strong theological place to stand. It feels like very firm foundation, indeed."

The Rev. Neil Thomas, of Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Los Angeles, a petitioner in the Proposition 8 case, said the 40-year-old 500-member congregation likewise is observing a moratorium on signing civil weddings.

"We will not sign the paperwork" for civil marriages, said Thomas, whose ministry is primarily, but not exclusively, to the LGBT community. He is also the president of California Faith For Equality, a progressive interfaith movement of about 6,000 clergy, which submitted an amicus brief advocating that the California Supreme Court overturn Proposition 8.

*Edited from a press release from The Rev. Pat McCaughan, Episcopal Life Media correspondent for Provinces VII and VIII and the House of Bishops. She is based in Los Angeles.*

# Get Ready for the New Year

Felicia Park-Rogers, Executive Director



PHOTO: KENNA LOVE

It's hard to believe it's already time to start getting ready for the new Jewish year. 5770. 5769 has been a roller coaster politically,

economically, and emotionally. It's good to know there's one thing you can always count on—my annual column about membership renewal! Yes, moving in to the New Year we also begin BCC's new membership season!

BCC has been very active this year—Rabbi Lisa married 46 couples and worked tirelessly against Prop 8. The Real Estate Committee has been feverishly working on acquiring our parking permits, overseeing a slew of consultants and bringing on our fantastic team of architects to design our new home.

Our annual fundraising brunch raised more than it ever has before, in the midst of the worst economic climate in recent history. All of our committees have been busy with various projects and programs. Our adult education programs, newly expanded family religious school, 20's/30's Havurah, Men's Havurah, and Women's Havurah have all been extremely active and involved. We even have regular volunteers in the BCC office!

BCC is a beehive of activity and community. And it is the members of BCC that are the bones upon which this whole body hangs. YOU are BCC. Everybody has a place here, and without you, there would be no place. So, thank you for your membership!

We will keep membership rates the

same for the New Year. Whatever your pledge was this year—it will automatically be kept the same for next year. We will once again implement our new and highly successful policy of "opt out" membership renewal. We assume you are maintaining your membership, unless you tell us otherwise. Many found this new process to greatly simplify their membership renewal.

**Please inform me by Thursday, July 30 if you are planning to discontinue your membership.** Otherwise we will continue your billing/pledge as it is today. **All outstanding balances for the current year must be paid in full by Thursday, August 13. If you are not on a monthly billing cycle, a minimum of 1/12 of your next year's pledge must be submitted by August 13 in order to release your tickets for the Days of Awe and maintain your membership in good standing.**

Monthly donors will stay on the same payment schedule they are currently on. All members will receive statements in the mail in July. Please help our small office staff by returning your paperwork and payments promptly. I know you'd rather have your precious membership contributions going to support programming and planning rather than bill collecting and nagging!

BCC's leadership is well aware that many people's financial situations have changed this year, and some dramatically. Along those lines, if your situation is stable please consider increasing your membership contribution in order to help others who have fared less well this year. And if you need to reduce your pledge, please be in touch with me or the treasurer right away. Our number one priority is to respectfully and thoughtfully maintain the

membership of every person, regardless of income level, while balancing the needs of maintaining a fair and consistent approach to all our members. I welcome the chance to make membership at BCC stay within your reach!

If we all work together, we can keep BCC thriving in 5770 and beyond. Thank you again for your commitment to BCC—every member is a treasure!

On a personal note—

Beginning in July, I will be reducing my hours. My family is lucky and happy to be staying in LA, enabling me to continue at BCC. But in order to take care of our family life in the face of Rachel's new and very demanding schedule I will be spending less time working and more time parenting. BCC will be hiring a part-time administrative assistant to help keep the balls in the air. I feel confident that BCC will continue to hum along and I am very happy for the opportunity to enter my fifth year of engagement with the BCC community and staff!

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# Why I'm a Cheerleader (for OneLA)

Jerry Nodiff

No, I've not taken to wearing short skirts with pleats lately! But I do want to share with you why I'm enthused (and cheering) for the growing BCC interest in One-LA. Rabbi Lisa joins me in this enthusiasm. You haven't yet heard of One-LA? Let me introduce you: One-LA is part of a national organization called the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which brings together churches, synagogues, unions, schools, and non-profits to work on social problems at their roots. The labor organizer, Saul Alinsky, helped shape their philosophy (for information on him see The Jewish Journal, June 12-18, 2009). In our work with OneLA, we are fortunate to have Elan Babchuck to assist us. Elan is an organizer with OneLA, and also working towards rabbinic ordination, as well. In his capacity as an organizer, he works with the Central/West Cluster of institutions, of which BCC is planning membership.

BCC has a long history of work in "caring community" activities. In the 70's with "Produce Oneg Shabbats" we brought food to needy seniors at the Israel Levin Center in Venice to tide them over the weekend. Today our activities include the SOVA High

Holy Day food drive, Project Chicken Soup, and for over 30 years, Project Caring. "Caring community" activities deal with the EFFECTS of social problems. One-LA is a continuation of this work for Tikkun Olam, and can complement our present activities. While Protestant and Catholic churches have been involved for decades in CBCO, congregation-based community organizing, it's only roughly in the last six years that Reform and Conservative temples have become involved. Today, some 100 out of 900 URJ congregations in the US and Canada are involved in CBCO. Locally, Temples Isaiah, Emanuel, Israel of Hollywood, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Judea, and the Conservative Temple Beth Am are partnered with One-LA.

Recently, I was invited to attend a cluster meeting of the Central/West Area at Precious Blood Church, a Mid-Wilshire congregation, on June 10. A diverse group of about 35 people attended. The meeting was concerned with preparation for an "action" or gathering on July 12. The action will focus on the federal Stimulus Package of \$787 billion to aid LA City and County with their social needs. The concern is to develop coordination between city and county levels so that the dollars can be most effectively used, and not squandered on administrative costs. Elan and I would very much like a group of BCCers to attend ...5, 10 or more people would be great!

Here are the details:  
Sunday July 12,  
from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple  
Auditorium  
3663 Wilshire Blvd,  
between Hobart and Harvard

(Parking lots can be entered  
through either of these  
two streets.)

Please RSVP to either Elan at [elanbabchuck@gmail.com](mailto:elanbabchuck@gmail.com) or Jerry at [jerdn2@gmail.com](mailto:jerdn2@gmail.com) if you can attend or would like more information on One-LA. Also, let us know if you would like to carpool from either Jerry's home in Santa Monica or from BCC.

In these troubled times, One-LA has the skill to bring together diverse groups to achieve social change. The listening process, an important step in the One-LA approach, will deepen our sense of community. Their staff has considerable political savvy and knows which politico to bring a particular concern to and how to enlist their help for change.

Will we ever have a challenging time like this again in our lifetimes? I hope not. Is there a place for you to help with this at BCC? I know so!



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# Men's Havurah Summer Plans

Richard Lesse and Mark Miller, Co-Chairs

BCC's Men's Havurah has just come off two very successful events in the last two months. We had our game night on May 9 and our white wine tasting party on June 7. On game night, hosted by our President and First Gentleman Brett Trueman and Mark Miller in Santa Monica, we had about 20 people and lots of games, but interest focused on the games Taboo and Hebrew Scrabble. Before we got too involved in the games Rabbi Joe Hample led us in a Havdalah service and then it was back to the games.

On June 7, again we had about 20 participants who sampled and savored six different white wines including: Riesling, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and a dessert wine plus light snacks. Our sommelier was Men's Havurah committee member Mark Brown and the event was graciously hosted by Peter Bastien (Men's Havurah committee member) and David Mozes at their new home near Universal City.

Upcoming events that the Men's Havurah Committee is

planning and developing include the following:

- Comedy night at the Improv Comedy Club in Hollywood (First Wednesday of each month is Gay Comedy Night)
- Pool/swim party (on a Sunday afternoon)
- Coffee tasting/sampling
- Religious discussion evening with Havdalah (on a Saturday evening)

There are two ways to stay in touch with us:

- Our Facebook Event page ("BCC Men's Havurah") where we'll be posting event details and sharing pictures from events
- Our e-mail address: [bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com](mailto:bcc.menshavurah@gmail.com)

If you would like to be part of our planning team please let us know...we can use everyone's help, especially hosting a Men's Havurah event. We will tailor the event to the size of your home.



PHOTO: RICHARD LESSE

Jay Jacobs, Rabbi Joe Hample, BCC President Brett Trueman, and Mark Brown play Hebrew scrabble at the Men's Havurah game night, May 9.



PHOTO: RICHARD LESSE

The Hebrew scrabble board - zoom in and see how many words you can recognize!



PHOTO: RICHARD LESSE

Our sommelier Mark Brown at the Men's Havurah wine tasting, June 7



PHOTO: RICHARD LESSE

Men's Havurah wine tasting party, June 7, at the home of David Mozes and Peter Bastien



PHOTO: AMELIA WEINMAN

*Cecilia and Donna Quigley Groman*

Here comes the summer! I have wonderful memories of summer camp in upstate New York. Camp Hemshekh, Camp Boiberik, and Camp Willoway are a few of the camps I attended for 8 weeks each summer. I lived for the summer – sports, arts, song and drama (lots of Yiddish) and all the trouble my camper sisters and I could manage without getting booted out of camp.

In honor of those memorable days, the Women's Havurah has some very fun events planned for the summer. Kicking off the season is a beach party

## **Beach, Bowling, and BBQ with the Women's Havurah**

*Donna Quigley Groman, Vice President*

at Westward Beach (south of Zuma beach) to celebrate Cara Hanes' graduation and birthday. This event will take place on Sunday, July 12, 11 am-3 pm. Next, join us for our second annual Bowling Bonanza at the Midtown Lanes on Sunday, July 26, 2-4 pm.

On Sunday, August 2, from 11 am to 3 pm, we will be sunning, swimming and noshing at the Rabbi and Tracy's home. This is a very special opportunity to spend "quality time" with our Rabbi and Rebbetzin.

Following that on Saturday, August 22, 7 pm to 10 pm, we will revisit our ever-popular game night at BCC.

As an example of past events, last month the Women's Havurah met for breakfast in downtown LA at the Nickel Café in the reviving area of 5th

and Main. We spent the rest of the morning geocaching (GPS treasure hunt – see [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)). This activity brought us to places we would not have ordinarily seen in amazing downtown LA. Who would have known about the neon museum and all of the galleries that have sprouted up? What about the Cuban restaurant in Little Tokyo? We had a great time and discovered Ilene Cohen's talent for locating hidden treasure.

If you have any ideas for events, want to have a party at your home or sponsor an activity, please let me know at [dlgroman@hotmail.com](mailto:dlgroman@hotmail.com). Otherwise, I'll keep planning events that I think are fun! Looking forward to having you join us soon!

## **BCC Votes on July 19**

On Sunday, July 19 at 3:00 p.m., BCC will hold its annual congregational meeting. All members are encouraged to attend, as we have important items to consider. We will elect a new President, Vice President, and Treasurer, as well as several members of the Board of Directors. We will consider a budget for the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2009. And we will discuss the progress of our new building. Make sure your voice is heard by attending the meeting or, if you can't, by giving your proxy to another member when you receive your package in the mail.

## **Newly Ordained Cantor Juval Porat Returns to BCC on July 24**



*Juval Porat*

We are very pleased to announce that Juval Porat, who visited with us last year, will return to the BCC community in July. Most of us remember him from last year, when he served as our cantorial soloist for the High Holy Days. Juval was invested in June by the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin, the first liberal Jewish seminary in Continental Europe since the Shoah. He is the first cantor invested in Germany since before World War II. Rabbi Edwards and Tracy Moore, President Brett Trueman and First

Gentleman Mark Miller, Treasurer Bruce Maxwell, and Michael Belkin all traveled to Berlin for Juval's investiture.

Juval's first service at BCC will be on Friday, July 24, when he will share the bimah with Rabbi Edwards. He will join us again on August 14 and 21 for regular Shabbat evening services. Juval will also lead our Ruach Chayim musical service on July 31 and August 28, continuing the tradition begun by newly ordained Rabbi Josh Whinston.

After last year's High Holy Days, we heard much positive feedback about Juval from our clergy, choir, and congregants. And, happily, Juval seems to be equally taken with the BCC community, and looks forward to sharing his music and his learning with us.

# Welcoming Jews of All Ages

Leah Zimmerman, Education Director



Since arriving in California almost two years ago, I have felt welcomed and at home working in the BCC

community. I

fully appreciate the vitality of this congregation, the way people look out for each other and take care of each other, and the joy of celebrating life events and holidays together. As welcome as my family has felt, I have noticed that this is a community more for adults than for children. As I think about our Ohr Chayim program growing and plan for next year, I wonder if it possible to refine BCC's vision of itself from being a community of Jewish adults into a community of Jews of all ages. This is a community that is based upon being inclusive and

welcoming to all Jews whatever their gender identity, whatever their race or color, wherever they are on their Jewish journey. How do we extend that same sense of inclusivity, warmth and welcome to include parents with children and the children themselves?

Now that our Ohr Chayim program is established, our newly created Education Committee is exploring ways to integrate the growing family community with the larger BCC community. Next year we will begin experimenting with ways of creating communal experiences that not only include families because it is printed that way on the flyer, but that are designed to invite and include our families. For example, next year the Education Committee looks forward to working with the Ritual Committee to plan some of our annual holiday events so that they are inviting to families. We are also looking forward to having some Friday night services at earlier times

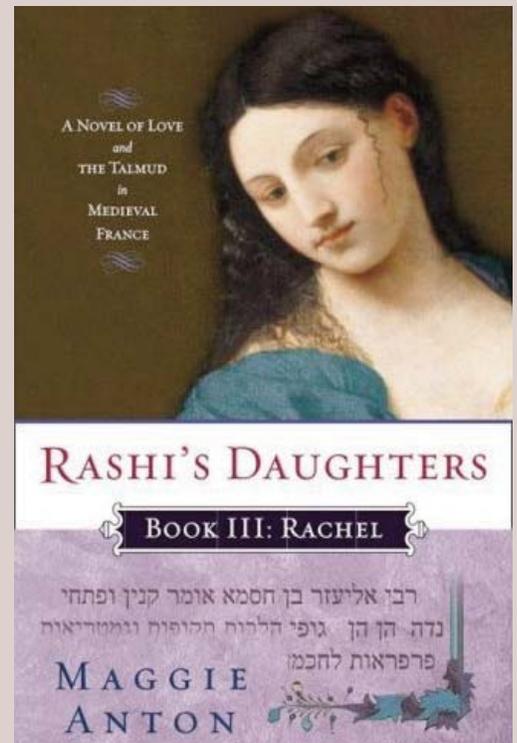
so that parents who have younger children can enjoy the community that they value and our children can see what practicing adults look like, learn how to be in the service, and know that the community values their presence. Just as our children can learn to exhibit some adult behavior at mostly adult events, we invite you to exhibit some childlike behavior at some made for children events! Bring your imagination, your creativity, and your childlike spirit to our Family Service on Shabbat afternoons. Sing, share and learn from the wisdom of our children.

With some increased communication between those who plan adult events and those who plan children's events, some intentionality on the part of all the community members and an open mind, we can become a community that is as welcoming to Jews of all ages as we are to adult Jews from all different backgrounds.

## Rashi's Daughters: Book 3 Launch Party on August 9

On Sunday, August 9, at 5:00 p.m., join host and author Maggie Anton (Parkhurst) at BCC for the kickoff of another installment of her book series, Rashi's Daughters: Book 3 – Rachel. All four of Maggie's books will be available for sale and signing. Dinner will be provided and seating is limited, so RSVPs are a must! Please call the office or email Maggie directly [magparkhurst@gmail.com] before August 1.

Reviewers of books 1 and 2 wrote: "...a must read for fans of Tracy Chevalier's *Girl With a Pearl Earring*." "A forceful novel of the power of learning, faith, and the two sides of love" - *Midwest Book Review*. "Anton has re-imagined the life and world of the famed eleventh-century biblical teacher Rashi through the lives of his three daughters. Readers will definitely be hooked on this series." - *Romantic Times*. "Impressive work...a fine storyteller...an absorbing, detailed account." - *Jewish Journal*. "The writing successfully captures the pace of medieval life and pulls the reader into the details of the characters' lives." - *Jewish Times News*.



# Outfest 2009 Features "City of Borders" and "Door Prize"

**At this year's Outfest GLBT film festival, BCC is sponsoring a film about queer life in Jerusalem, along with Congregation Kol Ami, at the Directors Guild on Sunset Blvd. Here is a description.**

## CITY OF BORDERS

MONDAY July 13 9:30pm DGA 2  
THURSDAY July 16 9:45pm DGA 2

CITY OF BORDERS is a fascinating, multifaceted portrait of Jerusalem, home to adherents of three great world religions, but also to queers from all walks of life. The absorbing cityscape is rendered through several richly drawn portraits that demonstrate the intersecting lines of identity and the possibilities for connection and political leadership when sexuality is introduced as a variable. Gay, lesbian or straight,

Israeli and Palestinian, Muslim, Arab or Christian: every resident of Jerusalem faces numerous borders, but also occasional liberations, in this eye-opening documentary.

Outfest is a leading showcase for diverse, international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) film and video. Outfest produces the oldest and largest continuous film festival in Los Angeles, the only LGBT weekly screening series in the country as well as the only LGBT people of color film festival. Since 1982, Outfest has presented more than 4,000 film and video titles for audiences of well over half a million people. Outfest 2009 features 160 films and videos from 20 countries and runs from July 9 to July 19.

Also at Outfest this year will be the premiere of a short film entitled "Door Prize" by BCC member Zsa Zsa Gershick. The film will screen on Friday,

July 10, at 7 p.m., at the Fairfax 1 Cinema, 7907 Beverly Blvd, at Fairfax Avenue (yes, it's Shabbat, but Zsa Zsa had no choice in the timing).

"Door Prize" chronicles the adventures of a trans butch boi lesbian for whom public restrooms are always a challenge. A restaurant. A necktie. A line at the ladies room. Peeing should never be so problematic! The film stars the marvelous Beth Grant (*Sordid Lives*, *No Country For Old Men*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, et al.), and is playing with the feature "Misconceptions." The evening is sponsored by JQ International.

Tickets can be purchased by calling (213) 480-7065 or on the Outfest website, [www.outfest.org](http://www.outfest.org). For more information, see the link <http://www.outfest.org/tixSYS/2009/filmguide/films/2869>.

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## L.A. to Host 20th World Conference of GLBT Jews

**Save the dates: August 13 – 15, 2010**

*Jonathan Falk*



COURTESY OF UCLA HILLEL

The work is underway for an exciting event next summer. The 20th World Conference of GLBT Jews is to be held in the Los Angeles area in the summer of 2010. First, a little history: BCC hosted both the 3rd and 7th International Conferences of Gay and Lesbian Jews (as they were then known) in 1978 and 1982,

respectively. In the 1990s, two regional conferences were held here: one at Gindling Hilltop Camp in 1992, organized by BCC, and one in the city in 1994, co-hosted by BCC and Congregation Kol Ami.

Plans call for our conference to be held at the warm and welcoming Hillel at UCLA, a very modern three-floor building on the east side of the UCLA campus (see photo), which can accommodate a large group of 200 or more for services, seminars, and meals. We are also

working with the UCLA Faculty Center across the street as a venue for our Saturday evening entertainment. World-class speakers and leaders in the Jewish and GLBT communities will be giving seminars and will be welcoming the world to our conference.

BCC is working with Congregation Kol Ami, JQ International, Mishpacha UCLA and the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation at HUC to host this three-day event, which will welcome visitors to our city from around the world. What impression will they have of our community? That's up to you! Will you volunteer for the social committee? The ritual committee? The accommodations and home hospitality committee?

We'd love to have you involved! Contact Jonathan Falk at [jonfalk@aol.com](mailto:jonfalk@aol.com), or Glen Chester at [glenc18@gmail.com](mailto:glenc18@gmail.com).



# A Season of Mussar In the Fall at BCC

"A Season of Mussar" is a 13-lesson program that guides congregations and other groups in a supervised course of Mussar learning and practice. Created and led by Dr. Alan Morinis, this program aims to help individuals find balance and strength in key inner traits that are



essential for leading a fulfilling life, in worldly as well as spiritual matters. Groups have met in cities throughout North America, in Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, and non-denominational contexts. The course goals are:

- To equip individuals with the tools of Jewish spiritual practice – the centuries-old Mussar practices that purify and elevate

the traits of the soul

- To create a local spiritual group in which participants can share and explore together
- To strengthen the place of spirituality in the local Jewish community.

Every week over a 13-week period, each participant receives an email of teachings and practices focused on a single middah (soul-trait). This email contains an original composition that pulls together and interprets, in accessible language, traditional Mussar teachings on the trait in focus. Questions, exercises and suggestions are provided to prompt inquiry and insight. All materials are in English, and where Hebrew is used, it is transliterated and translated.

Every two weeks, a face-to-face meeting takes place to address questions and practices focused on the middah of that week, and to discuss personal progress, insights and issues. Experience has shown

that these meetings create powerful spiritual community, reinforcing commitment and deepening participants' learning. Meetings are facilitated by a local facilitator, who could be a volunteer, an adult education coordinator, or a synagogue rabbi.

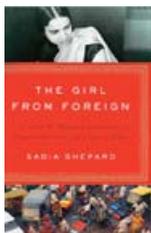
BCC's local facilitator will be BCC member Bonnie Leopold, who has been trained in the Mussar Leadership course to facilitate the Mussar Institute course. Bonnie is a graduate of the chaplaincy program of the Academy for Jewish Religion, and also leads our monthly Project Caring service at Country Villa Wilshire convalescent home. Bonnie hopes to bring this course to BCC in the fall, meeting every other Tuesday evening. Watch for announcements about the starting date and registration. For additional information contact Bonnie at [chaplainbonnieL@aol.com](mailto:chaplainbonnieL@aol.com) or visit <http://www.mussarinstitute.org/learning-season.htm>.

## BCC Book Group

Larry Nathenson

For over ten years, BCC members and friends have gathered in private homes for monthly potluck brunches and discussion of books selected by the group. Fiction and nonfiction, historical and contemporary, American and Israeli, the books read by the group include something for everyone's tastes and interests. We welcome new members to the group, as well as occasional visitors who may be interested in discussing a particular book.

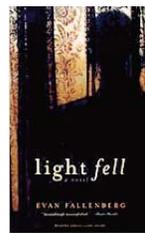
Our next two book discussions are:



**Sunday, July 26, at 10:00 a.m..**

*The Girl From Foreign: A Search for Shipwrecked Ancestors, Forgotten Histories, and a Sense of Home, by Sadia Shepard*

A memoir by a young woman of her search for her roots in the Jewish community of Mumbai, India, in which her Jewish grandmother grew up before marrying her Muslim grandfather. The author took a year off from her studies to explore what remains of the Mumbai community in India and Israel, its history and her family's past.



**Sunday, August 30 at 10:00 a.m..**

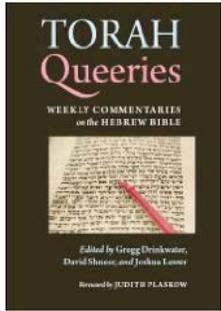
*Light Fell, by Evan Fallenberg*

A novel about a modern Orthodox Israeli husband and father who falls in love with another man, the impact of their relationship on his family, and the complex attitudes of Israeli society toward the gay community in its midst.

BCC members and non-members alike are invited to attend. Because the discussions are held in members' homes, space is limited. Please RSVP to the BCC office early to guarantee your seat at the table, or contact Larry Nathenson at [Larrynath@aol.com](mailto:Larrynath@aol.com).

# Rabbi Edwards (and Tracy) in the News

**Rabbi Lisa Edwards** is one of the contributors to the upcoming book *Torah Queeries*, which features 62 new scholarly essays on weekly Torah portions and major Jewish holidays. It is now in the production stages at NYU Press and should be available at bookstores in the fall.



**Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Tracy Moore** were featured on NPR Morning Edition's story on Marriage Equality on May 11, 2009, by Karen Grigsby Bates. The story was about waiting for the California Supreme Court to issue its ruling on the validity of Proposition 8 and the estimated 18,000 same-sex marriages that took place in California last year. As we all now know, the Court upheld Proposition 8 but also upheld last year's marriages, creating a special group of couples whose marriages

are "grandfathered" in, while no other same-sex couples can legally marry in the State until Proposition 8 is repealed. Rabbi Edwards is quoted as saying:

"I don't look forward to being in a specialized category of this little island of 18,000 whose marriages may be allowed to stand. It's a difficult place to put us in with regard to our friends and peers."

Tracy Moore is quoted as saying: "We never thought this was going to happen as soon as it's happened in America. And today, having five states be places where we could be married is a sea change."

**Rabbi Lisa Edwards and Tracy Moore** were also featured in an article in the online edition of the Jewish Daily Forward on June 3, 2009, entitled "Why Straight People Go to Gay Synagogues – and What We Can Learn from Them." The article is headed by a photo of Lisa and Tracy by BCC member Kenna Love. The reasons given by author Jay Michaelson for why straight

people go to gay synagogues are: (1) "because of their community bonds and shared histories of exclusion, GLBT synagogues are often warmer and more welcoming than your average synagogue in the suburbs"; (2) they are voluntary communities whose members have been rejected by the larger Jewish world, but have retained a connection to Judaism anyway; (3) there is a "refreshing irony" to GLBT religious expression, because in order to deal with Leviticus 18 and other difficult passages, GLBT Jews have to approach Judaism with a critical eye and a sense of humor that straight Jews often find refreshing; (4) they are creative laboratories of the Jewish future, especially in new forms of liturgy and community building, and especially as they become less necessary as havens from persecution as mainstream Judaism has become more accepting. To read the entire article, go to <http://www.forward.com/articles/107069/>

## Join BCC Members in Bringing Shabbat to Convalescent Home With Project Caring

BCC's participation in Project Caring continues to bring joy to the residents of Country Villa Wilshire in the Fairfax district. With timbrels and music, Shabbat is celebrated there once a month, usually on the second Shabbat of the month. Those of us who have the honor of attending bring in the presence of the Holy One. Consider offering an hour of your time, once a month, as a gift to yourself! When you see the eyes of the residents as they touch the Torah you will understand why this is such a mitzvah. BCC has been participating in this mitzvah for over 30 years. Contact BCC member Bonnie Leopold at [chaplainbonnieL@aol.com](mailto:chaplainbonnieL@aol.com) if you are interested.

## Ruach Chayim (Living Spirit)

"Shabbat is a palace in time."

— ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

Enter the palace with us.

Heartbeat...drum beat

Kol haneshamah te halel Yah...

Let every soul sing praise... [Psalm 150]

On July 31 and August 28, join us at BCC to welcome Shabbat with drum, with song, with open heart.

**7:00 wine, cheese, schmooze**  
**8:00 Kabbalat Shabbat service,**  
**with Rabbi Lisa Edwards,**  
**Cantor Juval Porat, and**  
**guest musicians.**

# Mazel Tov

*Please join the whole BCC community in wishing the following members a big "mazel tov" on their recent good news or upcoming naches.*

**Ellen Jaffe Gill** has been admitted to the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. She and her husband **Spencer Gill** are moving to Philadelphia this summer. It will probably take her five years to be ordained, but she is hoping to pare that to four if the college will transfer enough credits from her master's degree in Judaic studies. She is trying to improve her spoken Hebrew (they'll be going to Israel, but not this year), and they hope to drive out together toward the end of July to be there August 3 for a preliminary ulpan.

**Peter Carlson**, husband of **Eric Kamm**, will join the faculty of Bloy House (the Episcopal School of Theology at Claremont) as its new professor for Church History II. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in History of Christianity at the Claremont Graduate University's School of Religion.

**Davi Cheng** spoke on June 11, 2009 at the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy in Little Tokyo (downtown LA) on a panel entitled "An Evening Exploring Shifting Attitudes on Multicultural Families and Inter marriage." The panel was sponsored by the Asian Jewish Initiative.

**Neal Wiener** enjoyed competing in the United States Masters Swimming National Championships in early May near Fresno. He had a great time, some great times and even snagged an individual 8th place (200 yd. Butterfly) and an 8th place in a mixed medley relay – despite being only one month away from competing in an older age bracket. In the relay he swam the anchor freestyle leg and, despite his fast teammates -- a 1972 Brazilian Olympian, another great swimmer who twice competed in the Soviet Union Olympic finals, and a very fast breaststroker -- he entered the water 2 1/2 lengths behind yet closed the gap and his relay team won the heat and the medal.

**Dean Hansell** has been appointed by Mayor Villaraigosa to the L.A. City Police and Fire Pensions Board.

**Harriet Perl** is co-author of a new blog about public education, which is pretty good for someone who doesn't own or use a computer! The address is <http://publiceducationtheinsidestory.blogspot.com/>. Harriet and her longtime friend and collaborator Wayne Johnson, both with many years of teaching experience, address issues ranging from merit pay for teachers and firing bad teachers to the role of teachers' unions to charter schools and vouchers. Congratulations to Harriet on being willing to share the wisdom of a lifetime of teaching experience.

**Leah Rebecca Sussman** has just graduated, earning highest honors, with an Associate in Arts, Physical Therapy Assistant.

*Please send your good news to the BCC office. We want to celebrate with you!*

## Profile – BCC Intern Helen Barriere

Larry Nathenson

Most readers of G'vanim probably don't know (as I didn't until recently) that BCC has had some volunteer help in the office to assist our office manager Victoria Delgadillo and executive director Felicia Park-Rogers keep everything running smoothly. With a congregation as active as ours, with as many programs and services as we provide, it takes a lot of work from volunteers as well as our paid staff. In addition to the many BCC members who serve as officers, directors, committee chairs, and other volunteers behind the scenes, we have also had an official intern, Helen Barriere.

Helen came to BCC through a Jewish Studies Community Service class at California State University Northridge. She was required to volunteer at least 100 hours in a non-profit organization, and was specifically interested in working for an LGBT group, so BCC seemed a perfect fit for her. She spent at least 6 hours a week at BCC from February through May. During that time, she updated files, helped create fliers, assisted with the annual fundraising brunch, and "a little bit of everything." When asked what she got out of the internship, she said "I learned a great deal about how much work and effort it takes to keep an organization running. I also feel that I gained better administrative skills from working with Felicia and Victoria."

Helen has now graduated from CSUN, and is looking for work and holding off on getting her master's degree. We wish her luck in her job search and thank her for her efforts at BCC this year.

## High Holy Days Classes

Yes—the Holy Days will be upon us again soon. Please join Rabbi Edwards and Cantor Juval Porat for a series of invigorating, investigative, insightful classes preparing for the Days of Awe during the month of Elul. Topics to be announced shortly! You may attend one or all of the classes. As is our tradition, there is no charge for these classes.

Dates: The Four Tuesdays of Elul:  
**August 25** (5 Elul), **Sept 1** (12 Elul),  
**Sept 8** (19 Elul), **Sept 15** (26 Elul),  
7:00 to 9:00 pm, at BCC.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted*</b>			1	2 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	3 6:30 pm Thai House Dinner 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Joe Hample Robin Berkovitz	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
5	6 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	7	8 7:00 pm Executive Committee meeting	9 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	10 6:30 pm Telephone Service 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor TBA	11
8:00 am (cook), 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 11:00 am Women's Havurah Birthday at the beach 3:00 pm OneLA Meeting Wilshire Blvd. Temple	13 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm New Israel Fund Amos Gil on civil rights 9:30 pm BCC sponsors City of Borders Film at Outfest	14	15	16 4:00 pm Telephone Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards 9:45 pm BCC sponsors City of Borders Film at Outfest at Director's Guild	17 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Elissa Barrett Zsa Zsa Gershick	18 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Service and Dairy Potluck
19 3:00 pm Annual Congregational Meeting and Elections	20 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	21	22 7:00 pm Board of Directors meeting	23 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	24 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor Juval Porat	25
8:00 am (cook), 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group The Girl From Foreign 2:00 pm Women's Havurah Bowling Bonanza	27 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	28	29 8:00 pm Tisha B'Av evening service Rabbi Edwards	30 TISHA B'AV 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	31 Ruach Chayim 7:00 pm Refreshments and Schmooze 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor Juval Porat Guest Musicians	August 1

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 11:00 am Women's Havurah Pool Party and BBQ Rabbi Lisa and Tracy's home	3 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	4	5	6 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	7 6:30 pm Thai House Dinner 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Jay Jacobs David Mozes	8 11:00 am Project Caring Country Villa Wilshire
8:00 am (cook), 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 330 N. Fairfax 5:00 pm Launch party Rashi's Daughters, Book 3 By Maggie Anton Parkhurst	10 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	11	12 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	13 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	14 6:30 pm Telephone Service 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor Juval Porat	15 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Service and Dairy Potluck
16	17 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	18	19	20 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	21 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor Juval Porat	22 7:00 pm Women's Havurah Game night
8:00 am (cook) 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 330 N. Fairfax	24 7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	25 7:00 pm High Holy Days Preparation Class Rabbi Edwards Cantor Juval Porat	26 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	27 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	28 Ruach Chayim 7:00 pm Refreshments and Schmooze 8:00 pm Shabbat Service Rabbi Lisa Edwards Cantor Juval Porat Guest Musicians	29
30 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group Light Fell	7:00 pm BCC Choir Rehearsal	<b>All events at BCC unless otherwise noted*</b>				