



THE CITY CONGREGATION for HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Shabbat Program Calendar 2006-2007

Location: The Village Community School (VCS), 272 West 10th Street, in Manhattan.

Time: Shabbat with catered dinner, 6:15pm; Late Nite Shabbat, 7:15pm, Shabbat with lunch, 10:15am

Guests are always welcome at our Shabbat celebrations and programs. *Reservations* are required (212-213-1002).

All dates and programs subject to change. To confirm events and for more information, contact the office at 212-213-1002 or info@citycongregation.org

Friday, Sept. 8 - Shabbat - Catered Dinner

“A Moral Compass for Secular Jews: Living an Ethical Life”

Rabbi Peter H. Schweitzer will examine the question of how we develop ethical lives as secular Jews. If we do not rely on divine revelation for a set of truths, how do we formulate moral guidelines on our own? Participants will attempt to resolve specific ethical questions and dilemmas.

Rabbi Schweitzer is the leader of The City Congregation for Humanistic Judaism and President of the Association of Humanistic Rabbis. He contributes the Humanistic Jewish perspective to Moment Magazine’s “Ask the Rabbi” column. Rabbi Schweitzer is a consultant to the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia where he donated his collection of some 10,000 items of Jewish Americana.

Saturday, Oct. 14 - Shabbat - Welcoming New Members – Lunch

“Jews Bear Witness: Speaking Out on Darfur”

Ruth Messinger, President and Executive Director of American Jewish World Service, has led AJWS in taking a prominent role in delivering humanitarian aid to the people of Darfur. Ms. Messinger will share first-hand accounts that describe her visits to the region and will discuss what must be done to stop these atrocities.

Prior to assuming her role as head of AJWS in 1998, Ruth Messinger was in public service in New York City for 20 years, including having served as Manhattan borough president. For the past five years, she has been named one of the 50 most influential Jews of the year by the Forward and was assigned the top spot on the list in 2005.

Friday, Nov. 10 - Shabbat – Late Nite

“A Life in Politics: David Garth offers a Personal Retrospective and an Analysis of Politics Today”

Media consultant **David Garth** will talk about the influences in his life that led him to politics, his view on the role of Jews – as candidates and in the backroom – and his assessment of how campaigns are waged – fairly or not – today.

David Garth has been called a campaign guru and a political impresario. He helped elect mayors Bloomberg, Giuliani, Koch and Lindsay.

Friday, Dec. 15 - Shabbat / Chanukah (First Night) – Catered Dinner

“Becoming American: The Making of a Second-Generation American Jewish Culture”

Prof. Ted Merwin will examine the challenges second-generation Jewish Americans faced when they needed to reconcile their Jewish identity – particularly laden with traditions and rituals – with the allure and relative openness of American society that offered the fundamental principles of freedom and personal choice. This is a timely topic for Chanukah with its recollection of the temptations of Greek culture that many Jews in that day eagerly welcomed.

Ted Merwin is the Assistant Professor of Religion and Judaic studies at Dickinson College, where he directs the Milton B. Asbell Center for Jewish Life. He also serves as chief theater critic for the New York Jewish Week. He is the author of New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture (Rutgers University Press, 2006).

Saturday, Jan. 6 - Shabbat – Lunch

“Who Is a Jew? The Movie” - produced by Ben Sternhell

Ben Sternhell celebrated his bar mitzvah at The City Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in June 2006. For his major project, he put together a home video, with the assistance of his mother, Carol, that examines the question of Jewish identity and how one becomes Jewish. Ben interviewed family members and friends and also got the views of two quite different rabbis. This project was so informative and impressive that Ben was invited back for a return engagement to present his material to a wider audience.

Friday, Jan. 19 - Shabbat – Late Nite

“Jewish Neo-Cons: A coincidence or a conspiracy – and how can it be good for the Jews?”

Murray Polner will examine the issue of the seeming preponderance of Jewish neo-cons who have been influencing current political views. Is there truth to this claim or is it just myth? And, regardless of the facts, what effect does this have on the Jewish community?

Murray Polner is the author of No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran, and former editor of Present Tense magazine. His writings have appeared in the NY Times, Washington Monthly, Newsday, Nation, and Commonweal, among others.

Friday, Feb. 9 - Shabbat – Catered Dinner

“You don't have to be Jewish to write a Jewish poem, but it helps”

Hal Sirowitz, poet, performance artist, and “cult figure of sorts,” will offer dead-on insights that are matched with a dead-pan delivery. His neurotic quirkiness will charm and entertain.

Hal Sirowitz is author of Mother Said, Father Said, and My Therapist Said. He is also the former poet laureate of Queens.

Friday, Feb. 23 - Shabbat – Late Nite

“Protecting our Secular Freedoms: Taking the Message to Congress”

Lori Lippman Brown will talk about the work of the Secular Coalition for America and the steps it is taking to increase the visibility and respectability of nontheistic viewpoints within the larger culture and to protect and strengthen secular government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

Lori Lippman Brown is the first director and lobbyist for the Secular Coalition for America (www.secular.org) and lobbies U.S. Congressional representatives on issues arising from the inappropriate incursion of religion into civil law. She is also a lawyer and educator and served in the Nevada State Senate, 1992-1994.

Friday, March 9 - Shabbat – Purim – Catered Dinner

“The Great Hamentashcn-Latke Debate, Round Two”

Long a mainstay on college campuses, The City Congregation will be holding round two of the traditional “Hamentaschen-Latke Debate” which it began last year. Members will take positions pro and con on these familiar Jewish delectables and argue their merits. It’s all quite serious – and fun!

Friday, April 20 - Shabbat – Holocaust program – Late Nite
“Memory of the Holocaust in Poland: The Past and the Future”

Prof. Joanna B. Michlic will discuss the history of Holocaust memorial in Poland and how the memory of the Holocaust is being preserved and honored today. There will also be a special candle-lighting ceremony in tribute to those who perished in the Holocaust and in honor of those who heroically took steps to save lives.

Joanna Michlic is Assistant Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Friday, May 18 - Shabbat – Shavuot/Jewish Literature Celebration - Catered Dinner
“What’s so funny about being Jewish?”

James Sherman’s topic speaks for itself. He will offer his take on the intersection of Judaism and comedy- a topic that is an essential part of his work.

Jim Sherman is Playwright-in-Residence, Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago. He is the author of Beau Jest, which originated in Chicago and later played Off-Broadway for two-and-a-half years. Beau Jest will be released as a movie in 2007. He began his career as a writer and performer with Second City in Chicago.

Friday, June 1 - Shabbat – Late Nite
"The Gift of Giving: Where, when, how much, and to whom?"

Julie Salamon will examine how we make decisions about tzedakah (giving charity). Do we give generously or reluctantly? Are we fulfilling our responsibility or could we be doing more?

Julie Salamon has written six books including Rambam's Ladder: A Meditation on Generosity and Why it is Necessary to Give (Workman). She is a widely published journalist and was previously a staff critic and culture reporter for the New York Times and a film critic for the Wall Street Journal.

Friday, June 15 - Shabbat – Catered Dinner
End-of-Year Review, Installation of new Board, Awards, Celebration