

# News & Fun Activities

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## Tri-Valley Cultural Jews

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

**TriValleyCulturalJews.org**

[info@tri-valleyculturaljews.org](mailto:info@tri-valleyculturaljews.org)

(925) 485-1049

**Affiliated with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations**

**Our mission statement:** "A Secular Humanistic community serving those who identify with the Jewish People through family, culture and history, rather than through religion."



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## November 1, 2016

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## TVCJ Community Event Dates

### Movie Night and Havdalah!

**Date:** Saturday, November 5th

**Time:** 4:00p.m. to 7:00p.m.

**Place:** Gorel Home [3436 Brandy Court Pleasanton, CA 94566](#)

**Description:** Join us for our family-friendly Havdalah, plus pizza and a movie.

Movie: An excellent Hungarian film, 'Gloomy Sunday' (drama, before and during world War II). PG-13. A kid-friendly movie will also be available in another room.

**Dinner: Pizza! Please bring \$7 per adult; kids free.**

### Board meeting/TVCJ Planning

**Date:** November 15th

**Time:** 7:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.

**Place:** Seid-Gates home, 1817 Sinclair Drive, in Pleasanton.

**All members are welcome**

### Join Us on a Hike!

**Date:** Saturday, December 10th

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Place:** Redwood Regional Park, Oakland, CA

Easy (Not steep or strenuous) 4.1 mile loop hike in Redwood Regional Park. If we are lucky, we'll be able to forage for Toyon berries. They can be dehydrated into a yummy snack.

Dog friendly | Parking is free

**Meet at Skyline Gate Staging Area. Carpooling is encouraged.**

**Directions:** 580 East to CA 24.

Drive 3.5 miles, then Exit CA 13 South  
Drive about 3 miles, then exit at Joaquin Miller.  
At the foot of the exit ramp, make a left  
Then take the next left and go straight onto Joaquin Miller Drive uphill for 1 mile  
Turn left at the light onto Skyline.  
Drive 3 miles (past Chabot Space Center) and turn right into the parking lot and staging area. **If you are running late, please let me know. [650-223-9073](tel:650-223-9073) (cell).** We'll embark on the hike by 10:15 a.m.

Our last hike was in Sycamore Grove Park, Livermore. We saw wild turkeys and collected acorns. We also learned about the history of Olivina, one of the first olive growers in Livermore. It was a lot fun!



## Jewish Culture School

Jewish Culture School made two pots of tsimmis using different ingredients. Students discovered the concept of "too much of a good thing" when they added a LOT of honey to one pot!

In our Jewish History through Art module, we learned about Judith and Ya'el. The younger class talked about how powerful these women were and then drew pictures of what made them feel powerful. The older class



discussed the morality of violence.

Some approved of both Judith and Ya'el, some disapproved of both, and one felt that killing one person to prevent the death of many others was appropriate but that killing a person who had killed others but posed no future threat was immoral. This sparked a lively discussion.

**-Judith Seid**





The Tri-Valley Cultural Jews is affiliated with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO). We thought you would find the story of how CSJO was started interesting.



### **The History of CSJO**

The Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) held its first meeting, brought together by Harold Gales of the Jewish Parents Institute of Detroit, in March 1969. Joining this meeting were representatives of secular Jewish local communities and schools from the U.S. and Canada, whose ideas and interests were similar. At that time, the primary concern was secular Jewish education, which resulted in exchanges of curricula and programs. The very first name of the organization, in fact, was the Conference on Jewish Secular Education. Thirty-nine delegates from nine organizations (Ann Arbor, Bethesda/Chevy

Chase, Chicago (2), Cleveland, Detroit (2), Palo Alto, and Toronto) were present at that meeting.

Five years after the Congress was created, it became obvious that the organization was attracting secular Jewish groups that were not involved in schools, yet their needs for exchanging ideas and programming were as great as those of the schools. Consequently, the name was changed to the Conference of Secular Jewish Organizations and then, in 1982, at its annual meeting, it was changed again, and remains, the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations...CSJO.

What is significant to note is that with the establishment of CSJO and, as a result of the first three conferences held in Detroit, several groups in major cities such as Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles were granted permission to rent facilities in Jewish community centers. This had previously been denied, because the groups were not considered to be "mainstream" Jewish organizations.

CSJO has always wanted our young people to find a place where they don't have to explain themselves to anyone. Young people need like-minded young people with whom they can share ideas and thoughts. The young people are the lifeblood and future of CSJO. This was recognized early on and in May of 1975, in Cleveland, Ohio, the first Teen conference was held concurrently with the adult conference. As these conferences continued, the teens became young adults and asked that a place be made for them, too, at the conference. So, the title was changed to the Teen/Young Adult conference still taking place alongside the adult conference. In 2004 the Young Adults again asked for, and received, permission to create an Older Young Adult segment of CSJO. Keeping our young people involved is a major goal for CSJO.

The Teens, young Adults, and Older Young Adults do all of their own planning of conference workshops. The adults are invited to attend these workshops as the younger people are invited to the adult workshops. From these conferences have come basic administrative decisions such as Teens, Young Adults and Older Young Adults having an important place on the board of directors. Keynote speeches at the conferences are made by an adult and a Teen and/or a Young Adult and/or an Older Young Adult. The young people keep in touch with each other through the internet.

From its onset, CSJO agreed that each affiliated school and organization would remain an autonomous unit, free to participate or initiate programs in their own communities. All groups were urged to share the information of their activities with all of CSJO. This sharing took place, by and large, at

the yearly conferences.

CSJO continues to share holiday programs from affiliates across North America. Apples and Honey, a book which incorporates music and readings for the New Year Holiday Celebration, was published by CSJO to share with our affiliates and others. CSJO also has a publications list of books available for purchase.

CSJO is a member of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ) and a number of CSJO officers sit on its Board of Directors.

CSJO boasts a number of certified Leaders and Rabbis, all of whom were trained at the Institute. They perform life-cycle events and offer material for such events.

CSJO has a scholarship fund, The Gerry Revzin fund, which Gerry Revzin, CSJO's first executive director, created. This fund is to help people obtain their leadership training, continuing Jewish education, and to attend conferences.

CSJO has a long-standing Social Action committee. There are a number of statements that the committee, and then the entire membership, have agreed upon, thereby making it much easier to articulate statements to the media in the name of the Secular Jewish movement in North America.

CSJO's newsletter, which is now a monthly electronic up-date continues to share information by and about its affiliates. For those members who do not have access to a computer, the newsletter is printed and sent via the postal service. Today, CSJO makes our curricula materials, for all subjects, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah materials and certificates, available to all of its affiliates.

Today, we are a combination of affiliated groups and individual members. The board members of CSJO work to ensure ongoing and relevant information to all its members.

The schools and organizations of the CSJO are, as stated before, independent, autonomous affiliates. CSJO functions with a board of directors which currently consists of four officers; chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, and five adult members all who are elected. Plus there are four youth members who are elected by the youth, and an appointed executive director and the immediate past chair. The officers, along with the other four members of the executive committee, carry on

the business of CSJO between board meetings. We are , with the exception of our Executive Director, a volunteer organization, as are our affiliates. The schools, of course, have paid teaching and administrative staffs, governed by parent member bodies.

CSJO offers a teacher training program to help teachers who are not familiar with Secular Jewishness teach to the curriculum with a better understanding of who we are.

A most important part of the CSJO Statement of Policy and Philosophy states:...For us the continuity and survival of the Jewish people is paramount; our prophetic tradition of social justice and humanism is the foundation upon which our community is built. It provides us with standards for the conduct of our lives and those of succeeding generations."And the prophetic tradition, indeed, has led CSJO to become socially active and humanistically aware of the world in which we live.

***Happy November birthdays to:***

David Austin  
Matthew Looney  
Emma Greenberg  
Karen Furst  
Amy Greenberg  
Keyll Mogilefsky  
Alexander Pepper

**Who We Are**

**Board Members:**

Judith Seid 925-485-1049  
Jamie Ireland 510-888-1404  
Noah King 925-371-8585  
Joy Randel 925-362-3245  
Amy Greenberg 925-989-9826  
Karen Furst 925-784-1775

**Newsletter:** Joy Randel 925-362-3245

**Webmaster:** Noah King 925-371-8585

**JCS Teachers:** Judith Seid,  
Jamie Ireland

**Family Shabbat/Havdalah**

**Coordinator:** Amy Greenberg

**Movie Coordinator:** Wendy  
Berenson 925-829-0554

**Adult Programming:** Karen  
Furst



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