

# Tri-Valley Cultural Jews:

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

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<http://trivalleyculturaljews.wordpress.com/>



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."

## Upcoming Events for April 2013

Wednesday, April 3, 7:00 pm: TVCJ Planning Meeting HAS BEEN CANCELED.

Sunday, April 14, 10:30-12:30: Jewish Culture School, at the Ireland's, Castro Valley.

Sunday, April 14, 10:45-12:15: Philosophers' Café/Culture Chat 10:45 AM - 12:15 pm, Cafe Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave., Castro Valley. This month's topic: "Should we lie to keep our children out of jail?"

Sunday, April 28, 10:30-12:30: Jewish Culture School and Lag B'Omer. Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore, 10:30-12:30, potluck and fun in the park. There is an entrance fee. 7000 Del Valle Road Livermore, (Take the N. Livermore exit off I-580; Right on Mines Road; right on Del Valle Road). Signs will be posted, but please respond to the evite. We may meet in Livermore and carpool in.

No Shabbat/Havdalah in April. The next one is Saturday, May 11, 6:00 pm: TVCJ Havdalah Ireland Home, Castro Valley. A little ceremony, pizza, \$7.00 for adults. Please respond to the evite or call 510-888-1404. All members welcome. We also need more people willing to host. Not just for families, but do know that we have children ages 5 to 11.

## Jewish Culture School

Our discussion of the Passover story began with talking about the difference between history, historical fiction and fantasy. Historical fiction, the students explained, didn't happen, but could have in our universe. Fantasy didn't happen because it couldn't. What makes the Passover story so interesting is that it is a combination of a tiny bit of history, some historical fiction and some fantasy. We discussed which parts of the story fit each kind of narrative, then discussed why we would tell a story that isn't history. The students brought up fables, which have a moral, and also the pleasure of reading a story even though you know it isn't true.

## Message from the President

A couple months ago I talked a bit about the gun debate; last month I talked about a situation where a local teacher abused a student.

Part of the gun debate has focused on the erosion of people's constitutional rights. Some gun advocates claim that any restrictions on gun ownership are just steps in the eventual outlawing of all guns. While I don't think that is the intention of most who seek more restrictions on guns, the second situation has made me think about it a little more.

The situation with the abuse has opened up a debate about firing bad teachers. Of course this opens up a huge discussion about teacher evaluation, student achievement, administrators, and many other aspects related to teacher quality, but I want to focus on the general idea of changing the current rules. My worry is that politicians who know very little about education will act on public perception to create laws that are unfair to teachers and detrimental to students. I feel there is a section of the public that wants administrators to be able to fire teachers without any due process. This may or may not be the case, but nonetheless it makes me extremely skeptical about any new legislation that is introduced. We have seen teachers' rights and unions' rights eroded in other states and I would hate to see the same thing happen here.

So here's the problem: I agree that there may need to be some changes in the law with regards to maintaining high standards for teacher quality and holding schools more accountable to keeping children safe, but I don't trust the politicians to come up with appropriate laws. So I find myself in support of changes to school (and teacher) accountability, but opposed to legislation put forth to address it.

Here is where I might have a little bit of empathy for gun rights advocates who are opposed to any restrictions. They may feel they are in a similar situation and even though I disagree with most of their arguments, I at least can understand this one.

There is some hope for the education laws. State assembly woman and teacher advocate Joan Buchanan has introduced two bills that address teacher dismissal and mandated reporting. These bills are supported by CTA. I look forward to seeing what happens with these bills.

## Who We Are

President	Kevin Coren 925-240-5612
Board Members	Judith Seid 925-485-1049 Jamie Ireland 510-888-1404
Newsletter	Marisa Castaldini 925-240-5612 open
Webmasters	Noah King 925-371-8585
JCS Teachers	Judith Seid, Jamie Ireland
Phone Chair	open
Family Shabbat/Havdalah Coordinator	– Amy Greenberg
Publicity	open
Movie Coordinator	Wendy Berenson 925-829-0554

## Mishpokha (Family)

Yortseits This month we remember Regina Seid, Grandmother of Judith Seid  
Happy April birthdays to Allison Berenson Schiffman, Jake Peinado, Sam Witters, Michelle Coren

## CSJO 2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### **Braided Together:**

Secular Jewish Communities, the Larger Jewish Community and the World Beyond

Friday, May 24 (4:00 pm) to Monday,  
May 27 (10:00 am)

West Chester University, West Chester,  
Pennsylvania, USA

Please email Sarah Waslow-Washington,  
Conference Chair, at

sarahwaswas87@yahoo.com or  
call/ text 215-939-2406, or  
www.csjo.org for more information.

## In the Community

**Thursday, April 4, 7:00pm, *Reb Zelmele's Courtyard*:** Mock Ethnography and the Soviet Jewish Imagination, a presentation by Sasha Senderovich. At Jewish Community Library, San Francisco. No charge. More info: 415.567.3327, [jewishlearningworks.org/library](http://jewishlearningworks.org/library).

**Sunday, April 7, 4:00pm, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of Communities that Disappeared, a musical Yom Hashoah Commemoration*.** With the Nigunim Community Chorus, Jewish Folk Chorus of San Francisco, and Linda Hirschhorn. At JCC East Bay, Berkeley. Tickets: \$10, no charge for seniors and children. More info: [mail\[at\]nigunim.org](mailto:mail[at]nigunim.org).

**Thursday, April 11, 7:00pm, *The Ger Mandolin Orchestra film, sneak preview with Avner Yonai*.** At Jewish Community Library, San Francisco. No charge. More info: 415.567.3327, [jewishlearningworks.org/library](http://jewishlearningworks.org/library).

**Saturday, April 13, 1:15pm, *Russian Roots of The Dybbuk, a presentation by Gabriella Safran*.** At Congregation Kol Emeth, Palo Alto. A *Shabbat Shiur*, so of course no charge. More info: 650.948.7498, [kolemeth.org](http://kolemeth.org).

**Sunday, April 14th, 2:00-4:00pm, *KlezCalifornia Flisik Salon*** for fluent Yiddish speakers. At a private home in Berkeley. No charge. More info: 415.789.7679, [flisik\[at\]klezcalifornia.org](mailto:flisik[at]klezcalifornia.org).

**Sunday, April 14, 3:00pm, *Yiddish singer Anthony Russell*,** part of Musical World Tour, also featuring Eliana Kissner, Pacific Boychoir, At Congregation Shalom, Berkeley. More info: [community\[at\]netivotshalom.org](mailto:community[at]netivotshalom.org). Tickets: \$13 in advance [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com); \$15 at the door.

**Saturday, April 20, 8:00pm, *Jewish Soul Music with Klezmania*.** Yiddish tunes, klezmer grooves, Israeli dance numbers, and jazz. Preceded by pizza and *havdoleh*. At Congregation B'nai Emunah, San Francisco. Donations: \$15 adults, \$10 seniors and students, \$5 youth 10 and over, free for children under 10. More info: 415.664.7373, [bnaiemunahsf.org](http://bnaiemunahsf.org).

**Sunday, April 28, 6:00pm, *Klezmer Night, with Jeanette Lewicki and the Mavens*.** At Tannourine Restaurant, San Mateo. More info: 650.638.1960, [tannourinecuisine.com/year](http://tannourinecuisine.com/year).

## Ruth Gasten's Website of Original Source Speakers

Check out this website for information on original source speakers who will come to your school and talk about their lives: <http://ruthgasten.wix.com/speakers>. Please contact Ruth Gasten at [ruthgasten@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ruthgasten@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

Dear Educator,

In 2010 I wrote a memoir about my life as Jewish child in '30's Germany and our escape to the U.S. Since then, I've been speaking in middle and high schools. Often after one of my talks, a student will say something like, "You're a lot better than a book." This website was developed to introduce you to volunteer speakers who have lived through history. We'd like to speak to your students when our stories fit into your curriculum. Check us out. We're original sources, and we're a lot better than books! Warm regards, Ruth Stern Gasten

*Thank you to TVCJ founding member Jacky Poulsen for bringing this wonderful resource to our attention.*

## JVS Scholarship Program

JVS's scholarship program is currently accepting applications! If you know someone who wants to get ahead in their career, but can't afford the training they need, this might be the answer. Through a generous grant from the Newhouse Fund of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, JVS is proud to award grants of up to \$1,800 to Jewish individuals for vocational training.

This scholarship program is open to all Jewish residents of San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma or the Peninsula who meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Demonstrated financial need
- Training programs must be short-term
- Training programs must focus on a clearly defined vocational goal for which there are employment opportunities in the Bay Area
- Grants are limited to \$1800 each

Funds can be used for tuition payments, living expenses while attending a tuition-free program, equipment, or testing fees. Applicants may request funds for up to a one-year period. If a course of study extends beyond one year, applicants may apply for funds during the last year of study.

**We are now accepting applications through April 10, 2013 for this year's scholarships.**

For more information and to download application forms, visit our website at [www.jvs.org/scholarships.shtml](http://www.jvs.org/scholarships.shtml) or contact Raza Handan [atrhandan@jvs.org](mailto:atrhandan@jvs.org) or (415) 782-6263.

With your support we can make a significant impact on low-income Jewish individuals who need financial assistance to achieve their training and employment goals.

## April Programs from JCC East Bay

See [www.jccestbay.org](http://www.jccestbay.org) for more information.

**Yes, We Sang! Yom HaShoah Concert**, Sunday, April 7, 2013, Time: 4:00 pm, JCC East Bay, Berkeley Branch 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709, Contact: Achi Ben Shalom Email: [mail@nigunim.org](mailto:mail@nigunim.org), \$10 Adults | Seniors and Children Free  
*A Musical Tribute to Jewish Communities that Perished in the Holocaust*

**Spotlight: Emerging Young Jewish Voices**, Thursday, April 11, 2013, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, JCC East Bay, Oakland Branch, 5811 Racine Street, Oakland, CA 94609, \$15 General A new series from the JCC East Bay featuring the poems, songs, and artistic reflections of our area's youngest, freshest, and inspiring new voices. *The performance will be followed by a facilitated Q&A session and interactive discussion.*

**Talking Table: Israeli-Palestinian Issues**, Friday, April 12, 2013, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, JCC East Bay, Berkeley Branch 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709, Suggested donation \$5. Israeli-Palestinian Issues: Moving from Conflict to Commonalities. This presentation will highlight commonalities between the two peoples, in light of the presenters' belief that lasting peace will only be possible when each side sees the other as equally human. Presentation includes Q & A.

**Jewish Circle Theatre, Monday**, April 15, 2013, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm, JCC East Bay, Berkeley Branch 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709, \$15 General.  
Come join Jewish Circle Theatre for Playback Theater - an interactive and improvisational theater based on stories told by members of the audience. The actors and musicians will transform these stories into theatrical narratives using movement, music, and dialogue.

**Avivah Zornberg**, Sunday, April 21, 2013, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, JCC East Bay, Berkeley Branch 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709, Tickets: RSVP Online Price: Free  
Bewilderments: Is it a good land or a bad land? The turning point of the Israelites' wilderness journey is the narrative of the Spies. When the people declare their intention to return to Egypt, is it fear that drives them? Or is it deeper issues of love and hate, trust and skepticism? We will explore this central narrative through the prism of midrashic, literary, and psychoanalytic materials.

**Sunday Cycle**, Sundays, April 7, May 19, 10:00am-12:00pm, Berkeley Branch, \$5 Suggested donation. Spring is in the air and we are expanding our Wellness Programs with a new cycling series. Come ride through the streets and hills of Berkeley with other cyclists.

**MAY 2013: Please mark your calendar's for the Community-Wide Tikkun Leyl Shavuot**  
Tuesday-Wednesday, May 14 - 15, 2013, 6:45 pm - 8:00 am  
JCC East Bay Berkeley Branch, 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley

## This Month In Jewish History

This month in Jewish history - thanks to *Jewdayo!* for the facts.

The first crossword book puzzle ever published came out on April 18, 1924. The Jewish connection? It was also the first book published by Simon & Schuster. Richard Simon, one of the founders, was married to Andrea Louise Simon, a biracial civil rights activist and singer. Carly Simon is their daughter. The other Jewish connection? Jews like words!

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