

# 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 March and April 2014

**Wednesday March 5, 7:00 pm: TVCJ Planning Meeting.** 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

**Sunday, March 2, 10:30 am-12:30 pm: Jewish Culture School,** at the Ireland's, Castro Valley.

**Sunday, March 2, 10:45 am-12:15 pm: Philosphers' Café/Culture Chat** 10:45 AM - 12:15 pm, Cafe Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave., Castro Valley. This month's topic: "Do non-believers have a responsibility to try to spread their beliefs?" Suggested donation for nonmembers is \$5

**Saturday, March 8, 4 pm – 7 pm: General Havdalah and Movie Night,** everyone welcome, A little ceremony, pizza, a movie for grown-ups, and a movie for kids. \$7.00 for adults. Please respond to the evite or call 510-888-1404. We'll be seeing "When Do We Eat?" a 2005 comedy in which an old-fashioned Jewish father vows to bring his stubborn family together after being slipped a dose of ecstasy during the annual Passover celebration. There will be a separate movie for kids. The movie will be followed by a potluck dinner, so bring a dish to share. An additional \$5 donation is requested from non-member adults.

**Sunday, March 16, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm: Purim:** Bothwell Arts Center in Livermore. We will make hamantaschen, have crafts, games, and fun for all ages, and present our annual Purim skit. Attendees are welcome to come dressed as their favorite Purim character. This event is free for TVCJ members, and costs \$10 for non-members (which can be applied to a membership if someone wishes to join). The Bothwell Arts center is located at 2466 8th St. in Livermore.

**Sunday, March 30, 10:30 am-12:30 pm: Jewish Culture School,** at the Ireland's, Castro Valley.

**Wednesday April 2, 7:00 pm: TVCJ Planning Meeting.** 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

**Sunday, April 13, 10:30 am-12:30 pm: Jewish Culture School,** at the Ireland's, Castro Valley.

**Sunday, April 13, 10:45 am-12:15 pm: Philosphers' Café/Culture Chat** 10:45 am - 12:15 pm, Cafe Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave., Castro Valley. This month's topic: "As members of a minority ourselves, what responsibilities do we have to support members of other minorities? What is the difference between tolerance and acceptance?"

**Please let us know if you are coming to the seder! Call Jamie at 510-888-1404 for reservations and potluck assignment.**

**Saturday, April 19 at 5 pm: Community potluck seder.** Come participate in our Secular seder – a ceremony in English, focused on social justice, with lots of singing, followed by a potluck. This is a great event to bring friends to as an introduction to the Secular Humanistic Jewish tradition. The suggested donation is \$15 per non-member adult. Kids under 13 and members are free. For reservations and potluck assignment, call Jamie at 510-888-1404 by April 13.

**Mark your calendars: May 3 – Movie night/havdalah at the Randels**

## Message from the President

Why do we charge non-members for events? This question has come up every so often, but I'm not sure that everyone has heard the answer.

To begin with, our budget is small and almost entirely consists of the dues paid by members. Without members, we have no budget and no events at all. One of the benefits of being a member is that you do not have to pay for events.

For our events that take place at the Bothwell Center most people understand that we are renting the space and providing supplies so charging for those events seems normal.

The situations where people question the charge are events that don't actually cost anything to put on, like when we do Culture Chats or Tu B'shvat at a location where we pay our own way in. These events are also appropriate to charge for, because they still have to be planned and they are planned for the benefit of our members.

When we charge for events, we shouldn't think of it as paying for that event as much as helping our organization stay solvent so we can continue to function and provide programs for our members and the community.

The other thing to consider is that the charge is a voluntary donation. We aren't going to force anyone to pay, but I would hope community members would like to support the organization providing the program.

## Who We Are

President	Kevin Coren 925-240-5612
Board Members	Judith Seid 925-485-1049 Jamie Ireland 510-888-1404 Ya'el Seid-Green
Newsletter	Marisa Castaldini 925-240-5612
Webmaster	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

## Update on Our Bat Mitzvah Girls

Our three bat mitzvah candidates have been working hard on their projects. Sierra Randel has learned a number of Hebrew and Yiddish words expressing concepts important to her. Ella King has written about Jews in the world of the ballet. Michelle Coren gave a thoughtful response to the book *Number the Stars*. They are all engaged in their community service, too. Sierra completed a number of projects in different areas. Ella has helped out at a dinner program for the needy. Michelle has been dedicated to fostering kittens and has far exceeded the required 30 hours with no end in sight.

## Mishpokha (Family)

In March, we remember: Jamie Ireland's grandmother Rebecca Friedman and Ed Looney's grandfather, Edward Looney, Sr. In April, we remember: Judith Seid's grandmother Regina Seid.

Happy March birthday to: Sierra Randel, Leslie Zwick, Debby Seid and Adam King.

Happy April birthday to: Allison Berenson Schiffman, Ya'el Seid-Green, Jerry Zwick and Michelle Coren and Michelle and Levi's great grandfather who will be 100 years old on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

## JCS

Jewish Culture School students learned about the Spanish Inquisition and the Expulsion from Spain. They found out that there were several Jews who became pirates or privateers preying on Spanish ships to avenge the Inquisition. We made hardtack, which the pirates ate, and it was what we call "a pickle" after the terrible pickles we made several years ago. A "pickle" is a massively failed cooking project. Thank you, Ella, for coining this term! We also discussed reasons Jews might stay in Spain and convert and reasons they might leave. The students considered the dangers of the journey, the loss of a homeland where their ancestors had lived for over 400 years, the dangers of staying, the having to relinquish a heritage, and the feeling of living under an oppressive regime. The students were split 50/50 about whether they, in that situation, would stay or leave.

When we changed the place and time to America now, however, they almost universally chose to leave. Interesting difference! What would you do?



## TV CJ Kids in the Community

TV CJ is comprised of many community members, from young children to seniors. A large portion of our membership consists of families with children, anywhere from 3 years old to teenagers. They are learning to be active members of society, participating in groups such as scouts, theater groups, school and community bands, sports, volunteering and of course many school events, all while maintaining high academic standards. We know our adults are out there, too, volunteering and working, or busy with family. Sometimes it's a challenge to fit it all in, and make it to shabbat/havdalah once a month and JCS twice a month. So we appreciate all of our members who make the effort to attend any events that you are able to. Your presence strengthens our group and we'd love to hear what you have been up to in your lives. Here is a sampling of what TV CJ kids have been up and how they keep busy:

Emma Greenberg was a delightful urchin in "Oliver!" Levi Coren killed "Master of the House" in a show tunes revue. Michelle played trombone in the Brentwood Concert Band and she performed an acrobatic gymnastics routine onstage at El Campinal Theater. Ella King won the Livermore School District spelling bee. Adam King won a blue ribbon at the science fair. Matthew Looney is looking at colleges and working hard on his big Eagle Scout project, a video for the City of Dublin's Heritage Park and Museum. Sierra Randall is working on her Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest honor a Cadette Girl Scout can achieve and earned her green belt in kenpo karate.

## In the Community

### **Birthright trips to Israel expanded!**

The Birthright program funds trips to Israel for Jews 18-26. Teenagers who went on an educational trip to Israel during high school were previously not eligible for Birthright trips, but can now participate! If you know someone the right age who has never been to Israel, or only on an educational trip as a teen, check out [www.birthrightisrael.com/](http://www.birthrightisrael.com/)

### **Gender Schmear – Purim with Keshet**

March 13 from 7-11 pm. At 111 Minna Gallery in San Francisco. \$20 advance ticket, \$25 at the door. Come celebrate the queerest of holidays with Keshet! Observe Purim by dressing in your best drag and celebrating until you can't tell the difference between Queen Esther and Haman. We'll have food, drink, dancing, a photo booth, a costume contest, and fabulous performances by Jill Feltafish, Arty Fishal, and more. MCed by Ms. Shechina Weena. Come blur your boundaries and schmear your gender – whether you're Jew-ish, queer-ish, or something else entirely, you'll feel like a Purim Queen before the night is through! More info at <http://www.keshetonline.org/event/gender-schmear/>

### **Jewish Farm Camp**

Urban Adamah is an educational farm and community center in Berkeley, California, that integrates the practices of Jewish tradition, sustainable agriculture, mindfulness and social action to build loving, just and sustainable communities. Their organic farm produces a diverse yield of crops, all of which they donate to the local community through food banks and their weekly Free Farm Stand. Registration for one-week camp sessions for campers from pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade is now open. More information at [urbanadamh.org](http://urbanadamh.org)

## This month in Jewish history:

March 23 is the birthday of Erich Fromm, Jewish Humanist philosopher and co-founder with Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig of the Free Jewish House of Learning in Frankfurt. His most famous works are *Escape from Freedom* and *The Art of Loving*.

April 20, 1657 marks the date Jews were granted burgher rights (citizenship) in New Amsterdam, three years after the arrival of 23 Jews fleeing the Inquisition in Brazil.

You can get your daily blast of interesting Jewish history from Jewdayo by going to [jewishcurrents.org](http://jewishcurrents.org). You can also access them on Facebook.

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