

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews:

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

(925) 485-1049

Tri-ValleyCulturalJews.org

CulturalJews@aol.com

<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."



May and June 2015

TVCJ Community Event Dates

Adult Programming Meeting: Thursday, April 30, 7:30- 8:30 pm, Karen Furst's house, 2684 Crater Rd., Livermore. Any interested member is welcome to attend.

Lag B'Omer Picnic: Sunday May 3, 10:30-12:30 pm., San Ramon Athan Downs Park, 2975 Montevideo Dr, Sam Ramon. Come and join us for our annual picnic potluck and our traditional watermelon toss! We will be celebrating "Week of Action" – taking action to do something positive in our community. Bring a new or gently used book for a class of 3rd grade students with limited resources. Reading level 1st through 4th grades. \$5 adult for non-members; can be applied toward your membership should you decide to join our group.

Planning Meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 7:45-9:45 pm, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton. All members are welcome!

Family Havdalah, Saturday, May 16, 6 pm – 8 pm, at the Coren-Castaldini home, 720 Willow Creek Ter., Brentwood. A little ceremony, pizza and hanging out. Everyone gets home in time for bed. \$7 for adults, kids eat free.

Shavous: Sunday, May 24, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. At the Greenberg home, 4698 Shearwater Rd, Pleasanton. Bring a dairy dish, your favorite blintze topping, and be ready to share a review of a book you read and loved this year.

Annual Meeting: Sunday, June 7, 12 pm-2:00 pm. Ireland home, 19663 Fremery Court, Castro Valley. Lunch will be provided. Please come and share your ideas for the upcoming year.

Sierra Randel Bat Mitzvah: Saturday, June 20, 10:30am – 11:30am, Hayward Japanese Gardens - 22373 N 3rd St Hayward, CA. Please join us for the secular ceremony at the beautiful gardens, followed by a small reception. Members are encouraged to bring a finger-food dessert to share.

Jewish Culture School

Dates

Sundays

10:30 am -12:30 pm

May 3 - Lag B'omer Picnic,

San Ramon

May 24 - Shavous,

Pleasanton

June 7, last day, Castro

Valley

Who We Are

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

New Educational Program Being Planned for 2015-16

Too old for Sunday School but still want to be connected? We are exploring a once-a-month youth group/teen education program to begin in the fall. The plan would be to gather at around 6 once a month at the home of Judith Seid and David Gates for dinner and an educational program. We are considering several options, but the favorite at this time looks like a course on comparative religion. The group would be open to graduates of Jewish Culture School and others who are interested in a Secular Jewish identity. If you might be interest, please let us know by emailing CulturalJews@aol.com or calling us at 925-485-1049. Please let anyone you know who might be interested about our plans.

Jewish Culture School

At the last JCS we began with a discussion of utopia and what we would like in our ideal world. The students made visual presentations of their ideal world and we turned it into a mural. We then started a project where the students are working together in groups to create their own kibbutz. They decided where to build it, what industry they would have, what buildings there would be, what jobs needed to be done and who would do them.



Members' Corner

Book Review

Faith No More: Why People Reject Religion

**By
Phil Zuckerman**

A recent study indicates that increasingly more people are turning away from religion. This book examines the reasons for this.

The author quotes numerous in-depth interviews with formerly religious individuals of various faiths (Christians, Jews, Muslims etc.) to determine their motivations for leaving their religions. He finds that leaving a religion is a "highly personal, complex and drawn-out process". He negates the stereotypes associated with secularism. He feels that secularism is a growing trend and is leading to very positive outcomes. But, as many of us have found, it can be a very difficult, but ultimately very rewarding process.

Many of us who have become secular after growing up in religious households can certainly relate to and identify with many of the people who were interviewed. I really enjoyed this book and gained many insights into the growing secular trend. I would highly recommend it.

Jerry Zwick

If you would like to send a contribution to the newsletter such as a book or movie review, a thought, a poem, an announcement, a thank you, a photo, a recipe, etc., please email it to marisard@sbcglobal.net

The next newsletter will be for July and August. Please put TVCJ newsletter in the subject line.

Mishpoka (Family)

Happy May and June birthdays to Joey Mogilefsky, Bette Siegel, Leah Morrison, Rebecca Ireland, Phyllis Looney, Lenore Kreit, Judy Seid, David Gates, Carol King, Eileen Alkin-Fagliano, and Bret Mogilefsky

In May and June we remember Janice Green, friend of Daryle Talavera
And Eliza Haile Cloe, grandmother of David Gates



Question: Does a bear Shabbat in the woods?

Answer: We don't know. But TVCJ does!

Join us August 7th and 8th at the KOA Campground in Petaluma for a weekend of fun!

We will be reserving a group tent camping site. Reservations are required. Please look for emails or evites with the details on when the payment will be required. \$12 per person.

You can check out the campground details at: <http://koa.com/campgrounds/san-francisco/overview/>
20 Rainsville Road, Petaluma, CA 94952

Reserve: 800-562-1233

Info: 707-763-1492

If you would like to join us for group activities, but prefer a cabin or your own RV, please contact the campground directly to make your own reservations. We will be reserving tent sites only.



Message from the President

In this space I write about what is on my mind, so you get to hear about some of the things going on in my life.

Unfortunately tragedy has struck my school district again. You may have read recently about a Timber Point student who was stabbed to death by an 18-year-old. Timber Point is in my district and two of the older siblings of the child go to my school. I don't know either of the siblings but can only imagine what the whole family must be going through.

The issue that I am having trouble processing is that I knew the 18-year-old. We have a class called TEAM at my school that the students stay in for three years and he was in my class. His mother used to be a teacher and vice-principal in our district.

I liked him. Middle school years can be difficult and he had a lot he was going through at the time, but he was a nice and likeable boy. He was obviously troubled.

When these things happen, you mourn for the loss of the child and support the victim's family, but there was another life lost that day. A sad troubled teen will never have the life he could have had.

Pesach 2015

We had a great time at a very well-attended Seder. So many people to thank for making it happen! Thanks to the Randels for bringing the eggs, to Tom Green for the charoses, to Ruthy Seid and all the kids for leading the singing. Thanks to Noah and Jamie for being greeters, Debby Seid for updating and Carol King for copying the haggadah, and to Amy Greenberg for shopping. Thanks to Jeff Covin and the Corens for set up help and to Louis and Eileen Alkin-Fagliano and everyone else who helped to clean up. It is always so gratifying to see everyone - members and guests - pitch in. And many thanks to all for the delicious dinner!

Thank You

We want to thank the Randel family for opening their house to us for the last Havdalah. We watched a film called Cup Final that follows an Israeli taken prisoner by a small group of PLO soldiers as they try to make their way to Beirut during the Lebanon War in 1982. The prisoner and his captors bond over their love of soccer. It was a movie with an anti-war message in the context of a war- interesting concept- it was a pretty heavy movie and we thank Rick for interpreting the hard to follow movie as we went along. The movie was followed by a nice Havdalah ceremony with pizza and ice cream. It was a nice way to spend a Saturday afternoon.



Mazel Tov

Congratulations to Noah King and Kevin Coren for being recognized by their school districts at the Alcosta Service Center WHO awards.

Welcome to Leah Morrison and her son Isaac who have joined our group as our newest members!



Tiri-Valley Cultural Jews
1817 Sinclair Drive
Pleasanton, CA 94588