

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews:

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

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Tri-ValleyCulturalJews.org

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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."



November and December 2015

TVCJ Community Event Dates

Planning Meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 7:30-9:00 pm, at the Seid-Gates' home, 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

Movie and Potluck, Sunday, November 15, 4 pm, Bothwell Arts Center, 2466 8th St, Livermore. Please respond to the evite.

Emma's Bat Mitzvah, Sunday November 22, 11 am – 12 pm, Veteran's Memorial Building, 301 Main St., Pleasanton, CA 94566. Please bring a dessert to share for the reception.

Planning meeting: Tuesday, December 8, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

Chanuka, Friday, December 11, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm, at the Ireland's home, 19663 Fremery Ct. Castro Valley 94546. All members welcome.

The Deli Man

Movie night and ethnic potluck on November 15th at 4:00 pm. "Deli Man" is a documentary film about how recipes and culinary flavors brought by Jewish immigrants flowed into turn of the century America, and soon became part of Jewish and American culinary culture in the form of the Jewish Deli. Please bring an ethnic dish or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

Mazol Tov Emma Greenberg!

Emma's Bat Mitzvah will be Sunday November 22, 11 am, at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 301 Main St., Pleasanton.

Please come and share this event with Emma and her family.

Bring a dessert to share for the reception afterward.

**Jewish Culture School
& Preschool Dates
Sundays
10:30 am -12:30 pm**

November 1, JCS, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

November 15, JCS, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

November 29, JCS, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

December 13, JCS 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

December 6, preschool, 19663 Fremery Ct. Castro Valley 94546

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
Adult Programming	Karen Furst

“13 The Musical” A coming of age story performed by the Pittsburg Community Theater, all teen cast. A kid named Evan moves from New York to Indiana, hoping he can get the cool kids to come to his big party (aka bar mitzvah, of which they know nothing). He learns that “cool” is sometimes where we least expect it. Join us as Levi Coren channels his inner bully jock in this rockin’ show! Music performed by a live band as well. November 20, 21, 22, www.PittsburgCaliforniaTheater.com

Hike Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park

Saturday December 5, 10:00 am

Meet at the Foothill Staging Area: From I-680 in Pleasanton, exit at Castlewood Drive and go west. Turn left (south) onto Foothill Road, towards the town of Sunol. The Foothill Staging Area is about two miles from Castlewood Drive, on the right.

The hike will be 2.3 miles, with an elevation gain of 600'.

We'll hike along the Woodland Trail, a rugged footpath with lots of foliage and trees. The trail winds steeply up an exposed hillside, and has lots of coast live oaks, along with poison oak, sticky monkeyflower, coyote brush, and snowberry in the understory. Long pants are recommended. Rain will cancel the hike.

Members' Corner

BOOK REVIEW

"The Boston Girl", by Anita Diamant

I thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Boston Girl* by Anita Diamant. It is a story of an 85 year old Jewish woman, Addie Baum, who recalls her life story after being prompted by her teen granddaughter to answer "how did you become the woman that you are?" Addie recollects and vividly tells her life story beginning as a first generation born in Boston in 1900. We learn about the hardships of life with her Russian parents in the tenements; the difficulties that women faced at the turn of the century and current times and the importance of friendships and social connection. I liked how Anita Diamant shared the history of this time from the perspective of Addie's life.

There are many Jewish and generational themes throughout the novel. Addie's parents only speak Yiddish and there are lots of gems from this language. I always enjoy coming across a Yiddish word that I am familiar with. Addie's dad attends a more traditional shul and he complains about the younger generation attending service at a reform synagogue. You get to these threads of old-school Jewish tradition starting to unravel.

I highly recommend reading this book. It's a lovely blend of history, Jewish themes, and womanhood.

~ Amy Greenberg

Book Review

"When All Hell Breaks Loose", by Cody Lundin

I first came across Cody Lundin in "Dual Survival", a reality show in which two well-trained survival experts are stranded in remote areas, with minimal gear, and must devise clever hacks to make use of what they have in their surroundings to stay alive and find their way back to civilization. So when I came across his book at the library, I knew it would be chock-full of extremely useful tips for staying alive when faced with a life altering disaster. And that it was. It is not if, but when, for the next big earthquake to hit the Bay Area. Being prepared is the best way to ensure you make it out alive. Cody offers very realistic scenarios and presents well-tested and well-founded means for ensuring our most vital needs are met. You'll walk away with a keen understanding of what to pack in a bug out kit, the multitude of purposes each item can serve, how to ensure you stay hydrated, what to store as food rations, how to avoid getting infections, and how to protect yourself from the harsh elements around you.

~ Leah Morrison

Mishpoka (Family)

In November and December we remember:

Celia Zuckerman
Charles Zuckerman, great-uncle of Judith Seid
Yossl Seid, Grandfather of Judith Seid
Alice Calder, mother of Jacky Poulsen
Sue Greenblum, Aunt of Phyllis Looney,
Irving Shapiro, Uncle of Phyllis Looney,
Benjamin Sczuchman, great-uncle of Judith Seid,
Enye Seid, great-aunt of Judith Seid,
Sam Zuckerman grandfather of Judith Seid,
Stewart Silverman, father of Joy Randel

Happy November and December birthdays to:

David Austin,
Matthew Looney,
Emma Greenberg,
Karent Furst,
Amy Greenberg,
Kelly Mogilefsky,
Ella King

Jewish Perspective on Medical Ethical Dilemmas

At the invitation of TVCJ, on Sunday October 18, Rabbi Hugh Seid-Valencia came to the Bothwell Center for a presentation on the Jewish Perspective on Medical Ethical Dilemmas. This included end of life issues such as defining the moment of death, decisions about withholding of medical treatment, organ donation, and palliative or hospice care. Rabbi Seid-Valencia is the Jewish Community Liaison with VITAS Innovative Hospice Care for the Bay Area. The presentation was well attended with about 10 participants. Rabbi Seid-Valencia first presented an overview of historical Jewish thought. Perspectives were shared from Jewish historical documents such as the Talmud and Mishnah, writings of great Jewish thinkers like Maimonides, Jewish case law, in addition to mentions of more modern sources such as the book *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande.

After he gave an overview we moved into a study format with group discussion on the topics *Triage of Scarce Resources* and *Ethics of End-of-Life Care*. Sheets were handed out with several scenarios on each of these topics taken from Jewish texts. In some areas modern thinking is at odds with traditional Jewish perspectives. We also learned that some changes occurred in the Jewish perspective as technology changed and Jews took on the thinking and attitudes of their times.

~ Karen Furst

Jewish Culture School: Why do we cook?

Our Jewish Culture School meets in a home so that we can cook together almost every week.

Why do we spend time doing this instead of academics, language study or discussions of ethics? We do it because cooking encompasses all of these - and more.

When we cook dishes from various times and places, the students learn what daily life was like for Jews and others in those times and places. They learn that the traditional foods for holidays and daily dishes are those that are made from ingredients available in that place at that season.

They learn that cooking is "making do" and they learn to improvise and experiment themselves. Academics!

When they learn how to make tsimmis, they understand the meaning of the word and can use it in the colloquial sense of making a big fuss. They learn the meaning and use of the Yiddish or Hebrew names for the dishes they cook or the ingredients they use. Language!

When the students cook together, they help each other to read and interpret the recipes. They learn to decide together which ingredients they might choose, compromising or forming themselves into teams. They make sure everyone has a chance to stir or add or break an egg. Ethics!

When the students work together, they form a community. And cooking is fun. Those are the two most important items in our hidden curriculum. We want our kids to form community and to learn that being Jewish is fun and interesting. And that's why we cook!

~Judy Seid

TVCJ are CoSponsors for the KlezCalifornia Festival

Check out their website for all the events they offer in November celebrating Yiddish Music and Culture

<http://www.klezcalifornia.org/events/2015-berkeley>

NEW this year! CABARET & CABERNET, Saturday night, November 7.

We are excited to present our first **Cabaret & Cabernet** featuring some of the Bay Area's greatest entertainers, with wine (for purchase) in a cabaret-like atmosphere!

Sunday, enjoy the day with your choice of eighteen workshops (in three sessions) for singers, poets, dancers, instrumentalists, and anyone with a general interest in Yiddish culture. The Festival concludes with a fabulous klezmer performance and dance party, with music by Veretski Pass and the other music teachers, dancing led by Bruce Bierman, and refreshments!

Message from the President

Performing in Brighton Beach Memoirs was a lot of fun. While it wasn't one of the biggest roles in the play, because there were only seven of us, it was my biggest role. For all of you that made the trek to Brentwood to see it, I truly appreciate it and hope you really did enjoy it. I played the father of a Jewish family in Brighton Beach, New York in 1937.

Judaism is not the focus of the play but is important for the context and some of the humor. There were a couple things that stuck out to me. One was Judy's laughter when she came to see the show. I'm sure most people got most of the humor, but it seemed that the Jewish perspective afforded a special understanding and when we heard Judy laughing at all the humorous lines, it made our day.

The other thing that stood out to me was the scene after dinner when we were discussing the situation in Europe with the beginnings of World War II. My older son, in the play, asks me about whether or not America will be involved in the war. My reply, "If you're Jewish, you have a cousin suffering somewhere in the world." My character mentions his cousin in Poland. As I was playing my part I tried to put myself in my character's shoes. How would I have felt to know these atrocities were occurring across the ocean and there was nothing I could do about it? I tried to feel a bit of that emotion while I was playing my part. I hope it came through for those that were watching.

JCS Update

These first JCS classes we have begun our study of Jewishness through a scientific lens. We are making connections between our Jewish calendar and the studies of astronomy, astrology and history. We made astrolabes through which to measure how high the moon is in the sky and they are marking the new moons on the Jewish calendar. We also have been engaging with a YouTube video that makes many underlying connections between Jewish history and science. We began our study of Yiddish with a family tree. Our music classes have been used to prepare us to participate in Emma's Bat Mitzvah that is coming up soon. Last month we also submitted Rosh Hashanah cards to CSJO with original artwork from our students as they are trying to publish new cards to sell as a fundraiser. They had asked communities to submit cards from which they will choose a new design.

~Jamie Ireland

Our Leaders in the Community

Last month I gave a talk at a local Episcopal Church in Castro Valley. My talk was entitled Jewish Holidays: Beginnings and Traditions. I took the audience on a journey around the calendar to see our weekly, monthly and yearly holidays. I talked about the components of each holiday, traditions, and how many have been adapted over the years to meet our current human needs. I created a powerpoint and brought many of our ritual objects to support my 45-minute talk and Q and A session. The talk was well received, everyone seemed to come away with an understanding and appreciation of secular humanism and Judaism.

~Jamie Ireland