

# News & Fun Activities

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## Tri-Valley Cultural Jews

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

**TriValleyCulturalJews.org**

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(925) 399-8029

**Affiliated with the Cultural and Secular Jewish Organization**

**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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# ***December 12th, 2020***

# TVCJ Community News

## Member News

We look at some accomplishments from [Brit Mitzvah program](#) graduates.

### From Ella:

One thing I've done since my Bat Mitzvah was that I'm proud of having one of my poems published in the local paper. I think it got published in the fall of 2018.

### From Adam:

I'm proud of the work I've done as a drummer. Recently, a few friends came to my door saying that they were going to play some original songs at a wedding, but their drummer got Covid-19. They asked me to fill in for him, so I learned the five original songs in three days, and performed with the band at the wedding.

## Upcoming Events

### January Havdalah

We will be having our short secular, humanistic observance. If you would like to participate have a braided candle, glass of wine/juice, and spices.

**Date:** Saturday, January 16, 2021

**Time:** 7:00p.m. to 8:00p.m.

**Zoom meeting ID :** 568 599 7884 If a password is requested, enter 123123. **If you have questions, please contact Jamie**

**at** [culturaljews@gmail.com](mailto:culturaljews@gmail.com)

### Tu B'shvat

TVCJ member Leah Morrison will be talking about how she has a zero waste household and how you can have one too.

**Date:** Sunday, January 24, 2021

**Time:** 10:30a.m. to 12:00p.m.

**Zoom meeting ID :** 568 599 7884 If a password is requested, enter 123123. **If you have questions, please contact Jamie** at [culturaljews@gmail.com](mailto:culturaljews@gmail.com)

## Philosopher's Cafe

You never know what the topic will be for our friendly discussion group, Philosophers' Cafe. It could be a topic in current events, or maybe a difficult question we ask ourselves, or a question about friendship, or even something new you've never thought about.

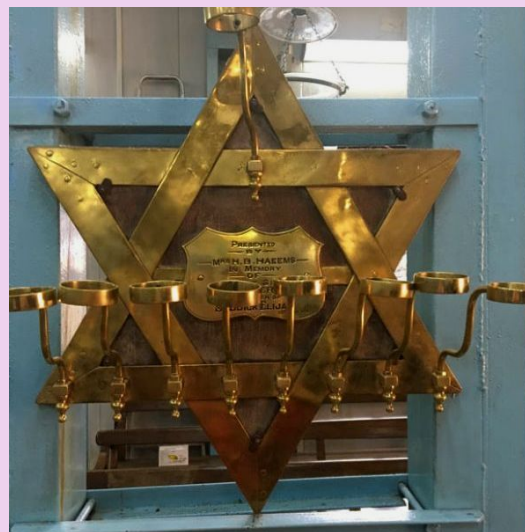
No matter what the topic (which is chosen by one member each month), we have a good time talking. And since we don't know the topic in advance - there's no homework!

**When:** First Thursday of each month at 7:00p.m.

**Zoom meeting ID :** 568 599 7884 If a password is requested, enter 123123. **If you have questions, please contact Jamie** at [culturaljews@gmail.com](mailto:culturaljews@gmail.com)

## Chanukah Fun Fact!

Here's a fun fact! Indian Jews use coconut oil in their chanukah lamps. Their traditional chanukah fried food is typical Indian fried food - pakoras, samosa and the like. Here's a photo of an Indian chanukah lamp. (Because the shamas can't be moved, they do use a candle to transfer the flame from the shamas to the other lights.)



## **Our Chanukah Celebration**

Chanukah on zoom didn't quite have the same latke-peal as years past. But it was fun nonetheless especially with Sophia as our Kahoot master leading us in a fun trivia game. As Chanukah is the holiday of rededication, we lit our menorahs for the second night and dedicated our shammah candles to our own family values that people shared. We also like to use Chanukah as an opportunity to let our members take new Hebrew names if they'd like and we rededicate some who already had theirs. We agreed as a community to support each other and to educate each other. It was so nice to see some faces we hadn't seen in awhile and to welcome some new faces to the crowd.

## **Thanks**

Thanks to the Akin-Pio family for putting together the chanukah packets for our member families. The bags contained chanukah candles and what to say as you light them, Dreidels and instructions for playing, a recipe for latkes and a chanukah word search for kids. Thanks to the Akin-Pino, family the Seid-Gates family, Jamie Ireland and Sarah Rees for distributing them.

Thanks to Jeff Colvin for hosting our December Philosophers' Cafe. The topic, loyalty, sparked an interesting discussion that kept us going past our usual time. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please let us know at [culturaljews@gmail.com](mailto:culturaljews@gmail.com). If you'd like to host but don't have a topic, we can help you find one.

Thank-you to those that donated to the hoodie drive. The hoodies got picked up on December 7th. It will help the unaccompanied immigrant youth and children of migrant families stay warm this winter.

We received a lovely thank-you note from Sophia Ireland for her Bat Mitzvah present, and another thank-you from First Nations Development Institute for our Rosh Hashanah donation.

## **2020-2021 Bus Ticket Drive**

The fifth annual bus ticket drive is underway! The number of people in our community who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness has increased

substantially with the COVID-19 pandemic. It's our goal this year that everyone in our community who needs public transportation to obtain services such as meals, groceries and health care, can receive bus tickets to transport them there. No one should have to forego these services just because they cannot afford the cost of transportation. And for those looking for work, many need transportation to job interviews or to their jobs.

This year, our local bus service Wheels has worked with us to create a new "24 hour pass," a very efficient way for our passengers to take an unlimited number of rides during a 24-hour period for \$3.75. 100% of your donations will be used to purchase these passes. There is zero overhead!

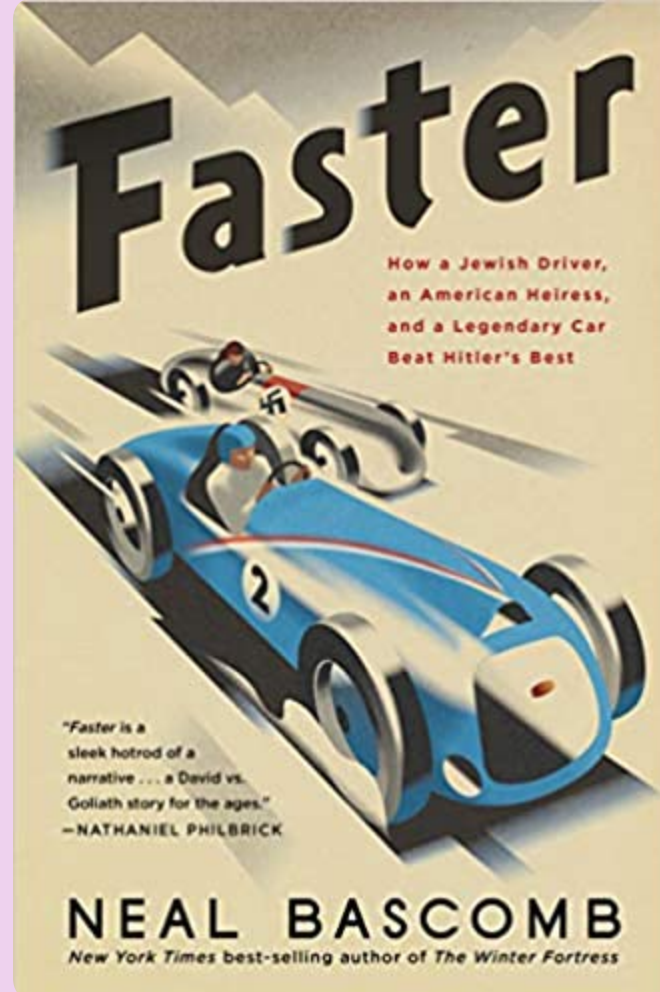
Once again, Asbury United Methodist Church is processing all the donations and providing the online donation site. HUGE thanks to Asbury! **You will receive a donation receipt with every donation.**

**Donations can be made in the following ways:**

- Send a check, made out to Asbury United Methodist Church, with "BUS TICKETS" on the memo line, and on the envelope. Mail to: Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Avenue, Livermore, CA 94550. **Please help lighten our load by including an email address.**
- [Click Here to Donate Online](#) **Please note** that when donating online, the courtesy fee that is charged to Asbury is added to the credit card charge so 100% of your donation goes to support the program.

**Please help spread the word by sharing this email with anyone you think might be interested in participating.** Thanks in advance for anything you can do to help. Have a great day, happy holidays, and please stay well!

**Jacky Poulsen**  
**Bus Ticket Drive Coordinator**  
**[jackypoulsen9325@gmail.com](mailto:jackypoulsen9325@gmail.com)**  
**(Founding member of TVCJ)**



## **BOOK REVIEW FASTER**

**HOW A JEWISH DRIVER, AN AMERICAN HEIRESS, AND A LEGENDARY  
CAR BEAT HITLER'S BEST  
By Neal Bascomb**

If you are a fan of classic auto racing (I am not), you will thoroughly enjoy this historical account of the pre-World War II European racing scene. What I found especially interesting was the intense rivalry between the Jewish driver and the German driver.

Since this took place during the time of the rise of Hitler, it tells about how the German driver represented the pride of Germany. The Jewish driver

represented a thorny challenge to Hitler's and Germany's national ego. Also interesting was the heiress' invasion of the male dominated sport of auto racing. Her assertiveness and desire to win regardless of cost would make the modern day women's liberation movement proud.

What I did not find particularly interesting were the detailed descriptions of the mechanics of the racecars. These took up a large part of the book. However, the descriptions of the races and the struggles, both physical and psychological, of the drivers were fascinating.

**Reviewed by Jerry Zwick**

## **CSJO Board Meeting**

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews is an affiliate member of the CSJO (Cultural and Secular Jewish Organization). Rebecca and I attend the board meetings twice a year that are now held virtually. We are your connection to the larger Secular Jewish community. Rebecca is the teen Representative to the board and I am a board member at-large. The meeting was held earlier in November.

CSJO has been busy with many new programs to keep folks engaged. These include a monthly Shabbes on the last Friday of each month that have been led by yours truly with Rebecca leading the music, a quarterly book club (The next book is The House of Twenty Thousand Books by Sasha Abramsky) and other virtual events - look for the e-blasts for the announcements.

We are also partners with the Secular Student Alliance that is present on many college and High School campuses so look for up-coming workshops/talks led by them in our up-coming events. Some of us attended their conference a few months ago and enjoyed their content so we will be bringing some of that to our programming.

Terry Waslow, our executive director, has been attending activities which has been made possible by Zoom.

We discussed ways to encourage participation of our members so we will get our CSJO blog going again.

I am now one of the CSJO representatives to the board of the IISHJ (International Institute of Secular Humanistic Judaism). This is the body that educates our leaders and where we work together with our other like-minded groups in the Society of Humanistic Judaism and our counterparts in Israel.

Rebecca will be our new Social Action chair so we are looking forward it.

Our finances are holding steady as we are able to cover our day to day expenses. Joan, our treasurer, wants to thank those who answered the annual appeal, it is helping to keep us going.

This was the shortest meeting ever- we figured it was because we didn't have to decide where to eat lunch. Let me know if you'd like to learn more about the CSJO. We will be in touch about the virtual conference next May.

**-Jamie Ireland**



**In December We Remember**

- Elfrida Erhard
- Melvin Luborski
- Martin Salwen
- Benjamin Sczuchman
- Stewart Silverman
- Enye Seid
- Yossl Seid
- Celia Zuckerman
- Charles Zuckerman
- Sam Zuckerman

**Who We Are**

**Rabbi:** Judith Seid

**Madrikha:** Jamie Ireland

**Board Members:**

Jazz Salwen-Grabowski 718-578-7876

Jamie Ireland 510-888-1404

Rebecca Ireland 510-888-1404

Bret Mogilefsky 510-610-1956

Jesse Pino 925-605-6003

Mark Shulewitz 510-846-9718

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

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

**JCS Teachers:** Jazz Salwen-Grabowski, Judith Seid





**Holiday Coordinator:** Jamie

Ireland 510-888-1404

**Movie Coordinator:** Wendy

Berenson 925-829-0554

## **December Birthdays**

Isabel Gross

Ella King

Manda Pepper

Scott Pepper

What did one volcano say to the  
other volcano? I lava you!



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