

# 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."

## Upcoming Events for May 2013

Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 pm: TVCJ Planning Meeting. 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

Sunday, May 5, 10:30-12:30: Jewish Culture School, at the Ireland's, Castro Valley.

Sunday, May 5, 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: "Do we really have free will?"

Saturday, May 11, 6:00 pm: Shabbat for Everyone, Greenberg Home, 4698 Shearwater Rd Pleasanton 94566. 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.

Sunday, May 19, 10:30-12:30: Jewish Culture School and Annual Meeting. At the Ireland's home, during JCS. 19663 Fremery Ct. Castro Valley 94546. All members are welcome! Please come and join us, have a say in our future!

## Jewish Culture School

Last time at JCS the students completed their life cycle study with a talk about death. They created poems about their thoughts on the subject. Unfortunately, our students have had much experience with this topic so they were able to have quite a conversation. One of the humanistic ways we focused on dealing with death was to think about the good attributes of the person and try to incorporate that into our own lives to keep their memory alive. The students also made apple cake and hard boiled eggs that are traditional foods to bring to the home of a bereaved person.

### **By Adam King: Advice To a Nine-Year-Old From a Nine-Year-Old**

If you already know that someone's going to die be ready.  
Calm down.  
Don't cry too soon.  
It's still ok to cry.

When you have time,  
draw a picture or look at one,  
Put the person's birthday on your calendar.  
Then you won't feel so sad.

## Message from the President

How can the temperature be 90 degrees and it isn't even May yet? Is this global warming? I don't think global warming works quite like that. Usually you're talking about an increase of a degree, although it is supposed to cause more volatile weather.

Here's the thing: global warming doesn't matter to the earth. The earth doesn't care; it will survive long after all the people are gone. I don't really want to talk about the reality of global warming or the causes. Here is my issue: whether there is global warming or not, we should respect our environment. We live here, why do people want to trash the world we live in?

It seems like those people who deny global warming just want to use that as an excuse to contribute to pollution and wasting resources.

Caring for the environment and being a proponent of business don't have to be mutually exclusive. Newsweek has a top ten list of environmentally friendly companies. Having looked at the list, I may change some of the products I buy. Maybe some other companies will learn from example that you can be green and still be in the black.

## Pesach

Thank you to everyone who made our seder such a lovely event. Thanks to Rick Randel for the eggs and to Noah King for the charoses. Thanks to Kevin and Levi Coren for helping to set up. Big thanks to Wendy Berenson, who did all the shopping and brought everything over, even though it turned out she couldn't attend. Thanks to Jamie Ireland for being the greeter. And to everyone who helped clean up – you're the best!

And a warm welcome to non-members who choose to attend our seder! It was such a pleasure to meet you all and we hope to see you all again.

## 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
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)

Happy May birthdays to Lisa Halperin and Rebecca Ireland!

## 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

**Theatrical Production of When You're in Love, The Whole World is Jewish.** Marines' Memorial Theatre in the San Francisco Theatre District from May 24-26 (Memorial Day Weekend). Check the website as in Los Angeles, the entire run sold out in less than two weeks once they went public. <http://worldisjewishtheplay.com/> and their Facebook page for more details about the show. Jonah Braun Tour Manager, (310) 488-5186, [jonahcbraun@gmail.com](mailto:jonahcbraun@gmail.com), <http://worldisjewishtheplay.com/>

### **LGBTQIQ Jewish Teen Group**

An LGBTQIQ Jewish Teen Group supported by the San Francisco Teen Outreach Program is available for teens you might know. For more information or questions, please be in touch with the group's coordinator, Lauren Greenberg- Coordinator, San Francisco Teen Outreach Program, Phone: 415-292-1299 ext 1104, Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, 3200 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94115.

**New book release: Eric Goldman's new book, "The American Jewish Story through Cinema"** (University of Texas Press). By analyzing select mainstream films from the beginning of the sound era until today, Dr. Goldman's groundbreaking study uses the medium of cinema to provide an understanding of the American Jewish experience over the last century. Copies of the book may be purchased on Amazon, Barnesandnoble.com or your local bookstore. For more about Dr. Goldman and a list of lecture topics, go to: [www.eric-goldman.com](http://www.eric-goldman.com) Eric Goldman teaches cinema at Yeshiva University and the Jewish Theological Seminary and is president of Ergo Media. Further information: 201-692-0404; [ergo@jewishvideo.com](mailto:ergo@jewishvideo.com)

## 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.

## HELLO FROM CSJO

Here we are, in the middle of April, so the next CSJO conference cannot be far away, can it? Indeed not!!! Here are the facts about the conference:

- \* This wonderful event will be held at West Chester University - Sykes Student Union in West Chester, PA, U.S.A. from Friday, May 24 until Monday, May 27, 2013.
- \* The theme of the conference is "Braided Together: Secular Jewish Communities, the Larger Jewish Community and the World Beyond."
- \* The two keynote speakers will be Mindy Blatt, adult speaker and Samara Cogan, youth speaker.

Contact persons for the conference are Sarah Waslow-Washington, [sarahwaswas87@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahwaswas87@yahoo.com), 215-939-2406 and Terry Waslow, [twaslow@verizon.net](mailto:twaslow@verizon.net), 267-312-7635. Do not hesitate to call/email either Sarah or Terry, and please get your registration forms in a.s.a.p. You can also download all of the conference information, including registration forms, at [www.csjo.org](http://www.csjo.org). I look forward to seeing many of you in May!!!!

I wish to remind the presidents of our affiliates to please respond to the message from our Chair, Terry Waslow, about the future relationship between CSJO and your local group. Thanks.

In light of the many tragedies that have taken place in the few days before I wrote this, I can only wish each of you...SHOLEM!

Rifke

## More from SCJO.....

Please consider sharing an item of general interest for the June 2013 issue of the CSJO Newsletter. We'll happily consider:

- \*Articles about accomplishments by you or your secular Jewish organization;
- \*Opinion pieces about issues of interest to the Jewish community at large and/or the secular/humanistic community
- \*Essays about Jewish/Yiddish/Israeli culture
- \*Reviews of books, movies, and plays
- \*Letters to the editor

The deadline for your input is May 11. Please limit your submission to 250 words.

The CSJO Newsletter is meant to be an interactive medium of, for, and by its members. We look forward to reading your contribution.

Best wishes,  
Steve Shucard

**By Michelle Coren: (an excerpt)**

It takes a while to start over  
But you will start a new beginning.  
When you are with someone for a while they become part of your life.  
When they die, you have to start over and learn to live on solo.

**By Ella King:**

Things to do when someone dies:  
Let go  
Smile  
Keep memories  
Bake recipes  
Sing  
Talk about it  
Cry  
Laugh  
Feed a stray  
Make cookies  
Give a gift  
Remember  
Live on

## **What Does it Mean to be a Cultural Jew?**

Conversation during our recent seder got us thinking. It appears that even our name, Tri Valley Cultural Jews, has confused some people in our area who belong to more traditional synagogues. They wonder, “what do they mean by that?” So we thought we would start a new column in our newsletter, “What Does it Mean to be a Cultural Jew?” Email your thoughts on this subject and we’ll continue the topic.

Here is the perspective from the Coren Castaldini Family:

Marisa: The good parts – being part of a wonderful group of people who are true to their beliefs, and who inspire me to be true to mine. Celebrating the heritage of my grandparents, my non-believing and bar mitzvahed grandfather, but also celebrating my other ancestors and where they came from. Being part of a group that is not us vs them, but is inclusive in our celebrations. Raising our kids to think for themselves and appreciate the mysteries of the world for what they are rather than giving credit to some unknown supernatural being. Teaching them that the world and its people are our responsibility. Seeing my son bar mitzvahed in a way that celebrated his heritage and emphasized community service, focusing on community by having a vegetarian potluck instead of a great big expensive bash and hearing from people attending that they thought it was more meaningful than their own bar mitzvah. The difficulties – seeing my kids struggle to define themselves when they are questioned about their beliefs by elementary school peers, wondering how my very Christian friends would react if I told them what I really believe (or don’t) and feeling I am untrue to myself by not saying anything. Knowing that unless our country changes drastically, our children will never become president. It means having a Christmas tree and a menorah up at the same time, and appreciating that our families are okay with that. Celebrating holidays that we didn’t grow up with but that celebrate the Jewish history and culture, yet incorporate an appreciation for others in the world as well.

Kevin: I just want to add a little bit to what Marisa said. I grew up in a Reform Jewish family. I suppose I believed in god, because I was told there was a god to believe in. I didn’t know any better. I was bar mitzvahed, but looking back on it, I don’t know how much it meant to me. At some point I remember thinking that I liked being Jewish for the holidays; I liked knowing that my father had also been bar mitzvahed. I liked the cultural connection I had with my family even though I didn’t really believe in the religion any more. At that point, without realizing it, I became a Cultural Jew.

# Lag-B-O-Moar



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