

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."



January and February 2015

TV CJ Community Event Dates

Havdalah potluck, Saturday, January 10, 6 pm, at Debby Seid and Tom Green's home, 795 Meadowlark, Livermore

Planning Meeting, Tuesday, January 13, 7:45-9:45 pm, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton. All members are welcome!

Culture Chat, Sunday, January 18, 10:45-12:15 pm, Café Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave, Castro Valley. Topic: If you could live in someone else's body for a day (someone living currently), who would it be and why?

Tu B'Shvat, Sunday February 1, 10:30am -12:30 pm, Aviso Adobe Community Park, 3465 Old Foothill Rd, Pleasanton. Please respond to the evite or call 510-888-1404.

Planning Meeting, Tuesday February 10, 7:45-9:45 pm, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton. All members are welcome!

Culture Chat, Sunday, February 15, 10:45-12:15, Café Rumi, 499 Heyer Ave, Castro Valley. Topic: What's your favorite quote? Why?

Family Havdalah Movie Night, Saturday February 21, 4 pm – 8 pm, 49 Nead Pl, San Ramon. 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. See the Evite for the names of the movies. There will be a separate movie for kids. An additional \$5 donation is requested from non-member adults.

Mark Your Calendars!

2015							
January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
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Jewish Culture School
Dates
Sundays
10:30 am -12:30 pm

January 4 - Castro Valley
January 18 - Castro Valley
February 1 - Tu B'Shvat,
 Alviso Adobe Community Park,
 3465 Old Foothill Rd,
February 15 - 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

Mazel Tov Ella King on your Bat Mitzvah January 2, 2015!

For my Bat Mitzvah, I did three written projects, as well as doing thirty-two hours of volunteer work. The first essay was called Jews in the Ballet. I researched a prima ballerina, a choreographer, a set designer, and a composer to write about. Another essay I wrote was a summary of the Passover story. My final essay was about Jews in South America, and I wrote about how Jewish people first came to countries such as Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina. I also volunteered with the Livermore Library Summer Reading Program over the summer, and I am continuing to volunteer there throughout this school year. My last project was my Torah portion, which I interpreted as a debate between when justice is really justice, and not just revenge. I'm proud of myself for completing my Bat Mitzvah projects, and I am looking forward to my ceremony.



In the Community

Teen Summer Program - The Szarvas Fellowships

An incredible opportunity to attend the largest international Jewish camp in Szarvas, Hungary with a pluralistic group of teens from across the United States and Canada. This program will explore issues of Jewish identity, Pluralism, Jewish peoplehood and more. Camp Szarvas has campers from 20-25 countries around the world. Please share the flyer with your teens. Scholarships are available to entering 11th and 12th graders in the SF JCF service area. info@szarvas.org

Klez California Events

Saturday, January 3, 8:00-10:00pm, Veretski Pass and Yiddish Arts Trio (Patrick Farrell, Benjy Fox-Rosen, Michael Winograd) House Concert. Yiddish Arts Trio is on a CD release tour. Please bring a drink or snack to share. Seating very limited and always sells out. Suggested donation: \$20. More info: 415.254.8005, horowitz@budowitz.com.
At a private home in Lower Bernal Heights, SAN FRANCISCO

Thursday, January 8, 7:00pm, Chasing Portraits: A Great-granddaughter's Search for Her Lost Art Legacy, a presentation by Elizabeth Rynecki. Artist Moshe Rynecki hid roughly 800 paintings with non-Jewish friends in and around Warsaw at the outbreak of World War II. He perished in the Majdanek death camp. After the War, his family recovered approximately 120 paintings. For more than twenty years, Elizabeth Rynecki has attempted to find more paintings and details about her great-grandfather's lost work. No charge. More info: 415.567.3327, jewishcommunitylibrary.org.
At Jewish Community Library, SAN FRANCISCO

Sunday, January 25, KlezCalifornia *Flisik Yidisheh Salon*. For fluent Yiddish speakers. Bring instructions for your favorite (simple) recipe. More info: 415.789.7679, flisik@klezcalifornia.org.
At a private home in SAN FRANCISCO

This Month in Jewish History

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/story-jews/video/>

Members Corner

Book Review

THE FUTURE JEW
By Michael Carin

This book's premise is that the Holocaust was a major turning point in Jewish history. It states that the extermination of 6 million innocent Jews could not have happened if there was a god.

The author states that the new mission of the Jewish people is to lead the world out of theism and into secularism. In other words, we gave the world monotheism and we should take it away.

We should replace it with rationality and intellectual honesty.

An important feature of the book is the Holocaust Haggadah. This iteration of the Haggadah contains very graphic descriptions of genocidal atrocities perpetrated on Holocaust victims. Readers who are sensitive to this type of material are advised to avoid these chapters.

The book is very readable and dramatic. Those of us who ascribe to Secular Judaism will find it very relevant and in tune with our ideas. I highly recommend it.

Jerry Zwick

Did you know that we have a Facebook page representing our group?

If not, please take a few moments to follow this link to follow the TVCJ Facebook Page! You will find an array of interesting information on Secular Jewish topics, fun links all things Jewishy and info about our up-coming events. For those who are following us already, thanks! Please feel free to add comments, share posts and encourage others to follow our page.

JCS November

Today we were visited by Yon Hardisty who told us all about life in Israel. He showed us a virtual map and Google Earth tour of Israel that started at JCS in Castro Valley and took us to Israel. We even learned of Ashdod where our new pen pals are. Yon told us stories of his travels, life as a young boy there, history, lore, agriculture, geography and really made this faraway place come alive for us. I think all of our questions were answered and we had some good ones! He and his daughters even stayed to taste the baba ganoush we made. After they left we wrote a nice thank you note and invited them to visit again.

Mishpoka (Family)



Happy Birthday in January to Jacky Poulsen, Mary Frances Colvin,
Tom Green, Kevin Coren, Marisa Castaldini, Levi Coren, Colin Mogilefsky
Happy Birthday in February to Derek Greenberg

Yortseits: In January we remember Goldie Chavenson, mother of Deborah
Grossman

Book Review: Marrying Out: Jewish Men, Intermarriage and Fatherhood

I had the pleasure of sitting on a panel with Keren McGinity at the recent colloquium of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism. She has recently published a follow-up book to her 2009 work *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America* (New York University Press). The new book is *Marrying Out: Jewish Men, Intermarriage and Fatherhood* just published this year by Indiana University Press. I found it interesting that in the first work she described three famous Jewish women who married non-Jews in the early years of the twentieth century as politically and socially active rather than Jewishly active, but in her recent book describes men who married non-Jews as politically and socially active as a manifestation of their Jewishness. I asked her about this and she explained that that it was a matter of self-description. The Jewish women did not see their activities as manifestations of their Jewishness, although it may seem to us entirely obvious that their ethical and political views and activities were informed by their Jewish heritages. The men she talked about were interviewed in this century and they, themselves, described their social and political activities as specifically influenced by their Jewish identities. Both books are composed of stories; they are quickish reads and really interesting.

Judy Seid

Message from the President

A couple thoughts:

Why did the democrats lose so badly in the midterm elections? I think the gerrymandering in conservative district led to republicans keeping seats, but why did they win new ones? Obama got elected to improve the economy, which is improving; for healthcare reform, which he accomplished; to get us out of Iraq, which we are. I admit he isn't quite the leader I had hoped for, but he has also had almost no support from congress. Why is his approval rating so low?

The racism in this country is completely institutionalized. Whether the Fergusson police officer was justified in shooting Michael Brown doesn't even matter. The reaction across this country shows that we are oppressive of minorities beyond what we want to admit. I was talking to my kids about being pulled over and not getting a ticket; I am sure the situation would have ended differently if I was black. I read an editorial yesterday saying civilization is the thin crust over a volcano and the police are part of that crust. Well, if we continue to throw a blanket over this problem, it will erupt.

Let's all do our part to make this next year a great one.

Happy New Year

Thank you to the Irelands for opening their home for our annual Hanukkah party and potluck. Good food was served alongside fresh latkes, along with good conversation!

Every attendee brought a menorah from home. Candles represented someone each family wanted to recognize as a hero.

Hanukkah Celebration





Tu B'shvat

Come join us for our annual Tu B'shvat celebration:
February 1, 2015 at Alviso Adobe Community Park in Pleasanton.

We will do some community service by doing some habitat improvement followed by a potluck. What a great way to spend the morning before going to whatever Super Bowl or other activities you have planned.

Community service is a great part of our tradition. All of our Bat Mitzvah students have been doing it and now is your chance to get on board as well.

Make it a Super Sunday and join us!

Would you like to contribute to the newsletter with a book review, movie review, commentary, story, family update or other? Please email contributions to kevinandmarisa@sbcglobal.net. Please put "newsletter" in the subject so they can be found when it's time. You can also send them to CulturalJews@aol.com

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