

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."



March and April 2015

TV CJ Community Event Dates

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

Shabbat Friday, March 20, 6 pm, at the Ireland Ireland home. 19663 Fremery Court Castro Valley. A little ceremony, pizza and hanging out. Everyone gets home in time for bed. \$7 for adults, kids eat free.

Culture Chat, Sunday, March 29, 10:45-12:15 pm, Café Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave, Castro Valley. Topic: Would you say you have a motto? What is it? Do you live by it?

Community Potluck Second Seder, Saturday April 4, 5 pm – 7:30 pm. Our kid-friendly (but not kid-centered) haggadah is secular and progressive with lots of singing. After the hour-long ceremony, we share a potluck dinner. Please Jamie at 510-888-1404 to let us know you are coming and what you'd like to bring. We need to hear from you by March 31 so we can be sure to have enough eggs, charoses, celery, and – of course- wine.

Planning Meeting, Tuesday April 14, 7:45-9:45 pm, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton. All members are welcome!

Culture Chat, Sunday, April 26, 10:45-12:15, Café Rumi, 4799 Heyer Ave, Castro Valley. Topic: If you had to lose one of your senses, which one would you choose to lose? Why?

Havdalah/Movie night, Saturday, April 18, 4 pm – 7 pm, 302 Hillcrest Ct, 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.

Jewish Culture School

Dates

Sundays

10:30 am -12:30 pm

March 1 - Purim, Bothwell Center, Livermore
March 15 - Castro Valley
March 29 - Castro Valley
April 12 - Castro Valley
April 26 - 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.

This Month in Jewish History

March: In March 1823, "The Jew" – the first English language Jewish periodical in the US began publication.

April: In April 1645, the Dutch West India Co. granted Michael Cardoso the right to practice law in Brazil.



Members' Corner

Book Review

Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey between
Genders
By Joy Ladin

This is a memoir of Joy Ladin, a professor of literature at Yeshiva University. She tells about her transition from being a male to becoming a female.

She describes the conflict she faced in living most of her life in a gender that was not hers with the pain her children felt in losing a father that they loved. She tells about her fears and consequences of dealing with the possible loss of her career and her family. In the book she talks about all of the philosophical, religious, and practical issues she faced while making her transition.

She gives us great insight into the life changing struggles, and conflicts of a transgender individual in the religious community.

The book is written with great candor, humility and humor. It is especially relevant today as we deal with LGBT issues.

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 May and June.

Something to Think About

I recently listened to a fascinating Philosophy Talk on KALW about what rights others should have over your body. The discussion ranged over seat-belt laws, Good Samaritan laws, mandatory blood donation and organ donation. What was stipulated almost at the beginning was that the body is something to be owned, like money or a car. This was said explicitly – that most philosophers consider that you *own* your body, NOT that you *are* your body. This is what allowed the discussion to equate money and one's body. My view (a pretty mainstream Jewish view, actually) is that you *are* your body. This would create a whole different discussion. What do you think?

Judith Seid



Mishpoka (Family)

In March we remember:

Rebecca Friedman, grandmother of Jamie Ireland, great-grandmother of Rebecca and Sophia Ireland.

Doris Handler

Teible Barach, great-aunt of Judith Seid

Edward Looney Sr, grandfather of Ed Looney



In April we remember:

Regina Seid, grandmother of Judith Seid

William Haughn, great-uncle of Ed Looney

Norma Mogilefsky, mother of Bret Mogilefsky



Happy March birthday to Leonard Kreit, Sierra Randel, Leslie Zwick, Debby Seid, and Adam King

Happy April birthday to Jeffrey D. Colvin, Allison Berenson Schiffman, Michelle Coren, Ya'el Seid-Green, and Jerry Zwick

Book Review by
Rebecca Ireland, 3rd grade

The Rabbi's Girls

The Rabbi's Girls*, by Johanna Hurwitz is based on a girl named Carrie, an eleven year old—and very religious Jew—living with her oldest sister, Abby, then Betty, and then, obviously, Carrie. Younger than Carrie by a year is Doris, then Evie, and the baby, Lorain. They live with their mama and papa. In all of Carrie's eleven years, her family has moved six times. They never stay anywhere long enough for Carrie to make any lasting friends. A motto that Carrie's papa teaches Carrie is "life is both bitter and good," meaning: though there are rough times, family makes it sweet! After a tornado everyone is scared, but is there really anything to be scared about?? Can Carrie make *any* friends at all?? Read this book to find out! This book is **AWESOME!*

Message from the President

Parties can be weird.

Our annual union dinner dance was last night. I had another priority, but was able to get there later on when the music was blaring, and people had either stopped drinking or should have stopped drinking. I've worked with some of the people for years, some not. I know some of them really well and others not at all.

Conversations took place, but with the music and setting in general, I found it difficult to really understand what anyone was saying.

Then, the husband of a colleague, someone I've met on several occasions and a teacher in another district, engaged me in conversation about teaching. At least that's what I thought he was doing. His son is in my class, which is his only connection to what goes on in my classroom, but he proceeded to lecture me about what I should be doing to help students be successful in math after they leave middle school. I'm not actually sure if he was implying that I am doing it all wrong, or if he was just talking in general about what he sees as a deficit in math education. He never really gave me the chance to speak.

Parties are weird.

Tu B'shvat

Thank you to Kevin Coren for organizing our annual Tu B'shvat celebration and to Ya'el Seid-Green for initiating the contact with the Alviso Adobe Community Park in Pleasanton.

We worked in the native plant garden, replacing plants that had died over the summer due to the drought. The kids paired up adults, dug holes, got dirty, planted new plants and then added mulch. We finished up with a potluck.

Thank you to Noah King for arranging for Carol Graham of The Independent to write about our event. You can read her article at:

http://www.independentnews.com/community/new-year-of-the-trees-celebrated/article_ac1d794e-b267-11e4-8590-db8aafd848df.html

And thank you, Carol, for a lovely article!

"We are temporal custodians of the valley and its resources, with a responsibility to value and build upon the legacy of those before us who lived in concert with the environment, balancing human progress with the understanding that we are but one part of the web of life in the valley."

David Hartman

Alviso Adobe Task Force Member and
Teacher, Pleasanton Unified School District
2003



In the Community



30TH JEWISH MUSIC FESTIVAL
FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 22, 2015

CALENDAR OF CONCERTS AND EVENTS

www.jewishmusicfestival.org

Festival highlights include the Grammy Award-winning super group, The Klezmatics the World Premiere of newly-commissioned music by jazz bassoonist Paul Hanson; Sway Machinery fronted by Jeremiah Lockwood, of Balkan Beatbox fame; West Coast debut by a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Israeli combo Diwan Saz;; International Women's Day celebration with women's vocal ensemble Kitka, including a tribute to Ronnie Gilbert of the folk music revival group the Weavers; a pop-up community chorus of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, a reprise of last season's hit musical theater piece *Di Megileh of Itzik Manger*, dance workshops, the Instant Klezmer Mandolin Orchestra and party with Veretski Pass

Tickets and info: www.jewishmusicfestival.org or by calling 800-838-3006. Festival passes are available for \$150, \$125 for seniors, students, or JCC East Bay members. 15% discount for groups of ten or more. For more info, call 510-848-0237, ext. 126.

What is Ulpan?

Ulpan San Francisco is a three-week Hebrew immersion language program. Emphasis is placed on conversation, accompanied by reading, writing and grammar. <http://www.usfca.edu/artsci/jssj/ulpan/>

Multiple Levels

Each level at the Ulpan course—beginning, intermediate, advanced—is roughly equivalent to one semester of University studies. Students receive sixty hours of instruction in small class settings.

Placement

All students, except those with no prior knowledge of Hebrew, will be evaluated to determine appropriate placement.

Faculty

Our Hebrew language teachers are native speakers who have taught Hebrew in Ulpan settings, schools and universities. All instructors have taught extensively in the United States.

2015 Dates

July 6 – July 24, 2015. M-F, 9AM - 2PM.

Reasonable Rates

\$1,300.00 if register by April 29, 2015 (includes books and materials)

Registration

<http://www.usfca.edu/artsci/jssj/ulpan/>

Contact Information

Esti Skloot at skloot@usfca.edu
Monica Doblado at mmdoblado@usfca.edu or (415) 422-6601

The program is supported by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Francisco.

Interfaith Interconnect Events

A message from Interfaith Interconnect:

We, at Interfaith Interconnect, present a number of different events to learn about cultures and religions in the Valley over the course of a year. For example, many of you attended Three Weddings and a Reception.

On the second Wednesday of each month from 5:00 to 6:00 PM, we sponsor a discussion to address a diverse group of topics--some of which are suggested by you. Our March Religion Chat will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 950 Mocha Street, Livermore, on March 11 from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

The discussion topic will be "Have you ever felt like an outsider--because of your faith, culture, race, or for other reasons? What was that like for you?"

Some of you will be interested in this kind of event. Others will not care or just not be able to fit in into your schedule. We don't want to send you unnecessary e-mails.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THE RELIGION CHAT MAILING LIST,
PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS MESSAGE.

I look forward to seeing you at the March Chat.

Warmly,

Ruth Gaston ruthgasten@sbcglobal.net

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

