

# Tri-Valley Cultural Jews:

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

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Tri-ValleyCulturalJews.org

CulturalJews@aol.com

<http://trivalleyculturaljews.wordpress.com/>

Affiliated with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations  
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 2016

### TVCJ Community Event Dates

**Planning Meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 7:00-9:00 pm**, at the Seid-Gates' home, 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

**Tu B'Shvat: Sunday January 24, 10:30-12:30.** Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center  
4901 Breakwater Ave., Hayward. Gloves and bags will be provided. **See below for more information.**

**Hike: Sunday, January 31, 10 am.** Meet at Lake Chabot – more info soon!

**Planning meeting: Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**, 1817 Sinclair Drive in Pleasanton. All members welcome.

**Havdalah and Movie Night, February 13** at the Berenson home in San Ramon. More info soon!

Upcoming havdalah dates include March 12 (hosted by Leah Morrison), May 21<sup>st</sup> (a movie night at the Randel's house), and June 18<sup>th</sup> (hosted by the King family).

We're also planning a trip to the Contemporary Jewish Museum in February to see the *Chasing Justice* exhibit – more info soon!

### Tu B'Shvat

Join us as we celebrate the Jewish Arbor Day. This year's celebration will include a talk about our watershed and a clean-up at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, led by two Girl Scouts working toward their Silver Award. Gloves and bags will be provided. Potluck following clean: please bring a picnic-style dish that includes at least one of the 7 foods indigenous to Israel: dates, figs, citrus, almonds, raisins, olives or carob.

### Jewish Culture School

**Sundays 10:30 am -12:30 pm**

JCS, January 10, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

JCS, February 7, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

JCS, February 21, 1817 Sinclair Dr., Pleasanton

## Jewish Culture School

JCS in November welcomed Stan Farkus a retired project manager from NASA Ames Research center to come talk to us about space and science and we made astrolabes to measure where objects are in the sky. This tied in to our study of Jewish history through science as we began our year learning about the Jewish calendar being a lunar calendar.

On December 13 we had another guest at Jewish Culture School. To start us off on our study of Jewish ecology and environmentalists, Ya'el Seid-Green, a maritime policy analyst in Washington D.C, came to talk about science and the ocean. After discussing the nature of science with the students, she helped them perform an experiment to understand that science asks a question, tests an answer, takes measurements and analyzes them. Then she asked the students why the ocean is important. They came up with amazing answers ranging from the more obvious water cycle, fish to eat and scuba diving, to the more sophisticated transportation and establishing borders. Colin summed up the lesson like this, "Everyone is a scientist."

We also made cheese latkes in honor of Chanukah, wrote "Hanukkah Haikus" and, swinging to the next holiday, learned a song about trees in Yiddish.

## Chanukah

The Chanukah party was a blast again and thank you to those who stepped up to help make it possible. Namely, Karen Furst who did all of the running around and shopping for us! Also Solomon and Tom for frying up the wonderful latkes for us along with any others I didn't see. Ya'el. thanks for helping with set up. Thank you also to Leah and the Mogilefskys for staying to clean-up. Thank you Randels for donating the gelt.

We celebrated shabbat and Chanukah together this year. Some highlights included the table of menorahs that were beautiful all lit up, the latkes that were plentiful and then some, the Warrior game, potluck dinner, new faces and old friends. the buzz of celebration. It was a good night! Thank you all for coming out- we love hosting you all at our home.

From, The Irelands.

### 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

## BOOK REVIEW

### BOYS IN THE BOAT By Daniel James Brown

This is a best selling novel about an eight man rowing team from Seattle Washington who faced innumerable challenges in their quest for success in the world of intercollegiate and international rowing competitions.

The story takes place during the time of the depression and during the time of the rise of Nazi Germany. It tells the stories of the team members who came from working class families who rowed for the University of Washington and competed against the elite teams of the East, England and Nazi Germany. Central to the story is a young man without a family who is trying to find his place in the world by way of his participation in the sport. Instrumental to the team's success are an inspirational coach and a builder of the team's boats.

If you are like me and have no knowledge of the world of competitive rowing, you will come away with a new appreciation of this grueling sport and of the dedication and sacrifice of its participants.

The author is a terrific storyteller who takes you into the lives of the characters as well as into the political and economic conditions of the time. I found it to be a great read, and I would highly recommend it.

Jerry Zwick

## Mishpoka (Family)

### ***In January and February we remember:***

Goldie Chavenson, mother of Deborah Grossman

### ***Happy January and February birthdays to:***

Jacky Poulson, Albert Rothman, Mary Frances Colvin, Tom Green, Kevin Coren, Marisa Castaldini, Levi Coren, Colin Mogilefsky, Derek Greenberg

Thanks to Amy and Derek Greenberg for their generous contribution.

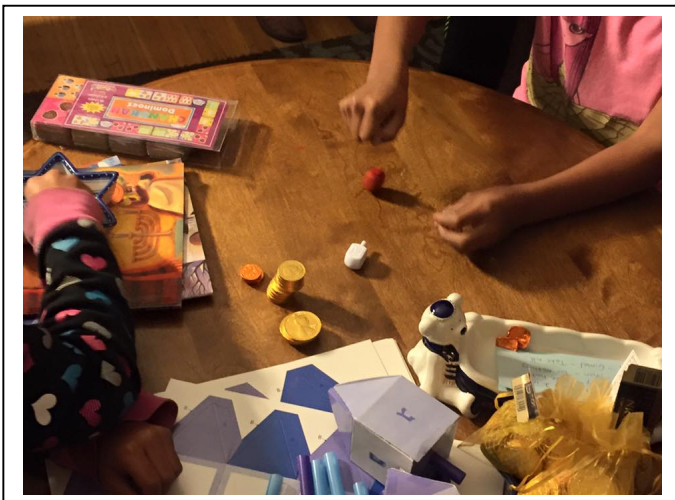
(We invite you to make a contribution in honor or memory of someone. We'll be glad to send an acknowledgement to the honoree.)

## Interfaith Celebration with Movie and Ethnic Potluck

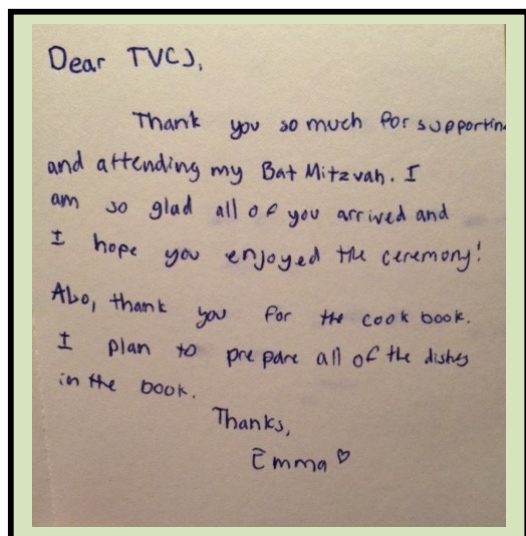
As part of the Interfaith Celebrations, Tri-Valley Cultural Jews showed a movie and had an ethnic potluck on November 15, 2015 at the Bothwell Arts Center in Livermore. The movie was about how New York Jewish delicatessens began, with the melding of culinary flavors brought by Jewish immigrants from countries all over Eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After viewing a movie all about food, it was fun to have a potluck comprised of various ethnic recipes. In addition to eating, we learned about the source of the various dishes that were brought. Special thanks to Solomon Ireland for supplying and setting up the AV equipment for the movie.

To All CSJO Members,

Hi. My name is Karen Knecht and I have been selected as the chairperson of the Nominating Committee of CSJO. This year we have several positions that are up for re-election. They are: Vice-Chairperson Treasurer Adult Member-at-Large - 2 positions To be eligible to run for one of the above listed positions, you must be 18 years of age or older and a Member of an Affiliate in good-standing (current dues paid) or an Associate Member in good standing (current dues paid). The nominee also must agree to serve in the capacity for which they are being nominated. They must be willing to attend two board meetings per year, one at our Annual Conference and one in November in Farmington Hills, MI. (Travel subsidies are available). We are looking for names of people who might be interested in running for one of the above listed positions. If you yourself are interested, or you know of someone who would be interested, please send your name and contact information to me, Karen Knecht at [Knechtfour@aol.com](mailto:Knechtfour@aol.com) no later than January 15, 2016. At that time the nominating committee will prepare a slate of officers for our regular election. Thank you in advance for your help.







## TV CJ Joins Big Tent Judaism

We are so pleased that you have decided to join Big Tent Judaism (BTJ) in our mission to make the Jewish community more welcoming and accessible.

By choosing to become a member of the Big Tent Judaism Coalition, and to be listed in our Directory of Inclusivity, you set your organization apart as one that is committed to the 10 Principles of Big Tent Judaism. Members of the Coalition recognize the importance of making everyone feel comfortable in our institutions, regardless of their background, level of observance, sexual orientation, or family structure.

As a Coalition member, you will receive an “All Are Welcome” decal to post at the entrance to your institution indicating your membership. Additionally, you will have access to resources, materials, and information about training opportunities to grow your outreach efforts.

At BTJ, we aim to provide a big enough tent so that anyone who is interested in exploring meaning through Jewish experiences can feel like they belong. Thank you for joining the Coalition. We look forward to working with you in making the Jewish community a more welcoming place.

Sincerely,

**Miriam Libove**

*Program Officer*

Big Tent Judaism (formerly the Jewish Outreach Institute)

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Please visit our new website [www.BigTentJudaism.org](http://www.BigTentJudaism.org)

## Message from the President

Happy New Year everybody.

In this issue I will recommend movies for you to see that I enjoyed very much. Neither one is related at all to Judaism apart from the fact that we could probably find a Jewish connection in almost any movie if we really try.

Also, although I have only seen each of these movies once, they probably both need to be seen more than once, but for different reasons.

The first movie we saw was Star Wars – The Force Awakens. They did it! They came up with a movie that is worthy of being included with the original trilogy. In many ways, it was remake of the original movie, but there some character changes that made it fresh. Why should this movie be seen more than once?

Because it's STAR WARS!!! I know you all have probably seen it already, but I still like recommending it.

The other movie we saw was The Big Short. I really didn't know anything about this movie before going to see, but I was riveted. An all-star cast told the story of the housing bubble in a funny, informative, and serious way. There were some details that might blow by you, which is why you may want to see it more than once, although the second viewing could probably wait for video. I wouldn't bring the kids to this one. It's rated R for language and a little bit of nudity, but the kids would have trouble following the story and would have very little context for the subject matter.

I hope your year is off to a great start.

