

TVCJ Happenings [View this email in your browser](#)

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

TriValleyCulturalJews.org
info@tri-valleyculturaljews.org
[\(925\) 399-8029](tel:(925)399-8029)

Our mission statement: A Secular Humanistic community serving those who identify with the Jewish People through family, culture and history, rather than through religion.



**TRI-VALLEY
CULTURAL JEWS**
secular + humanist

Like and Share on Facebook

TVCJ is an accepting, welcoming, diverse community of Cultural Jews and their families. Call or email us at [\(925\) 399-8029](tel:(925)399-8029) or culturaljews@gmail.com for an Evite or for more information about our community. You can find us at trivalleyculturaljews.org. Free to members, suggested \$15 donation per non-member adult if you are able.

You can make donations to TVCJ through PayPal or Venmo. Our handle is Tri-Valley Cultural Jews.

July 26, 2025

Upcoming Events

Mishpokha

The TVCJ community mourns with Jane Morrison the death of her husband, Mitch. We honor his bright memory.

Host A Sukkah

Sukkah in Your Space? Our annual sukkah raising is coming up, and it's always a meaningful and fun experience—working together, sharing conversation, and celebrating the season as a community. This year, we're looking for a backyard to host the sukkah on **Sunday, October 5th at 10:30 a.m..**

If you have outdoor space and would enjoy hosting this hands-on tradition, we'd love to hear from you. It's a great way to connect and bring the harvest celebration to life.

Interested in hosting or have questions? Email us at culturaljews@gmail.com.

Movie Night - 7/26/25 6:30p.m.

TVJC will be having Movie Night Saturday, July 26th at 6:30p.m. in Livermore (complete location will be in the Evite). The movie is *Jews Don't Count*, an hour long documentary by British writer and comedian David Baddiel.


In it Baddiel explores anti-Jewish sentiment across the political spectrum with emphasis on the left. David Schwimmer, Neil Gaiman, Sarah Silverman and others weigh in on why it seems that progressive voices who oppose discrimination are curiously silent about antisemitism. **Bring snacks.**

Philosophers' Cafe - 8/07/25

We played a game! Philosophers' Cafe, our monthly friendly discussion on zoom, explored the "prisoners' dilemma" last month by playing a game. Some of us were uniformly principled and some of us were cutthroat and some of us had a different strategy entirely. Guess who won!

We'll meet again on Thursday, August 7th at 7:00 on zoom for another thought-provoking hour. Look for your evite! (Non-members are welcome to attend a couple times before we'll ask you to join TVCJ.)

Jewish Cultural School - Starting 8/24/25



**JEWISH
CULTURE
SCHOOL**

JEWISH HISTORY OF
SOCIAL ACTION

AGES 5-BRIT
MITZVAH

1ST CLASS AUG 24TH
10:30AM-12PM

**TRI-VALLEY
CULTURAL JEWS**
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CULTURALJEWS@GMAIL.COM
(925) 399-8029

Jewish Culture School Starts August 24

We're getting ready for another year of [Jewish Culture School](#) (JCS), our welcoming, hands-on program for kids ages 5 through Brit Mitzvah.

First Day of Class: Sunday, August 24, 2025

Location: Castro Valley

This year, we'll focus on Social Action—exploring Jewish identity and heritage through stories, traditions, and community involvement. From civil rights to immigrant justice, students will connect Jewish values to meaningful action in the world around them.

At JCS, kids learn through singing, dancing, cooking, creating, and building community together. Classes meet twice a month, and we welcome families of all backgrounds and identities. No prior Jewish education is needed—just curiosity and a sense of connection.

Enrollment is now open! Let us know if you have questions or want to come see what we're all about.

Learn more or register at trivalleyculturaljews.org, email culturaljews@gmail.com, or call (925) 399-8029.

Rosh Hashanah - 9/22/25



Celebrate Rosh Hashanah with Tri-Valley Cultural Jews
Monday, September 22 · Livermore

Start the Jewish New Year in good company! Join Tri-Valley Cultural Jews for our annual Secular, Humanist Rosh Hashanah celebration—an evening of food, reflection, and community.

We'll gather at 6:30 PM for a potluck dinner (yes, there will be apples and honey!), followed by a one-hour program co-written by our community teens at 7:30 PM with music and readings in English.

The program is designed for adults but is family-friendly—kids are absolutely welcome.

TVCJ is committed to creating inclusive, meaningful Jewish celebrations for people of all backgrounds, family structures, gender identities, and sexual orientations.

Suggested donation is \$25 per non-member adult, but everyone is welcome, regardless of ability to contribute. **Reservations are required.**

We hope you'll join us to welcome the New Year together.

Yom Kippur Kol Nidre Gathering - 10/01/25



Kol Nidre with Tri-Valley Cultural Jews
Wednesday, October 1 · 7:00 PM · Livermore

Join us for a thoughtful and meaningful Kol Nidre observance as we gather to mark the beginning of Yom Kippur together. Our program is designed for

those who connect to Judaism through culture, heritage, and community rather than religious practice.

Through music, readings, and quiet reflection, we'll explore the themes of the season—renewal, responsibility, and memory—from a Secular Humanistic Jewish perspective.

While the evening is not geared specifically toward children, we'll have quiet activities on hand to help make the space welcoming for families.

As always, we warmly welcome people from all backgrounds, including interfaith and multicultural families, and those who may be exploring or reconnecting with Jewish identity in their own way.

Reservations are required. A \$25 donation per non-member adult is suggested, but no one will be turned away due to cost.

SAVE THE DATE: Sukkot - 10/5/25

Shavuos

Thank you to everyone who attended our Shavuos Bookfest! We laughed, we learned, and we indulged in some delicious dairy (and non-dairy) treats.

Some intriguing books were mentioned. Here's a list of titles that might interest you:

-*All the Colors of the Dark*, Chris Whitaker: A murder mystery, to say more would spoil the surprise.

-Nathan Hale's *Hazardous Tales Series*: A collection of graphic novels that explore historical events in a humorous and accessible way.

-*An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917 - 1963*, Robert Dallek: A deeper dive into the inner life of our 35th president.

-*Finnegan's Wake*, James Joyce: A classic that needs to be read aloud.

-*The Rose Code*, Kate Quinn: The women of Bletchley Park come alive in this historical fiction.

-*A Woman of No Importance*, Sonia Purnell: A tale of an American spy who helped the Allies win WWII.

-*Piranesi*, Suzanna Clarke: A mysterious novel narrated by someone named Piranesi, that touches on ideas of identity.

-*Bad Law, Ten Popular Laws that are Ruining America*, Elie Mystal: A breakdown of 10 pieces of legislation that perpetuate injustice.

-*Allow Me To Retort: A Black Guy's Guide to the Constitution*, Elie Mystal: A discussion of what rights we have in the US and how to preserve them.

-*A Half Built Garden*, Ruthanna Emrys: A hopeful novel that combines climate change fiction and first contact story.

-*Gamechanger: The Bounceback*, L.X. Beckett: A hopeful coming of age novel in the wake of a global disaster.

Our TED-style talks were quite fascinating. To take a deeper dive, here's a summary of the topics we covered:

-AI and its impact on society

-The mind-blowing Leaf Sheep (a species of sea slug)

-Nutrition for a longer, healthier life, and how to load your plate

-The art of the kvetch

Events like this are a reminder of what makes our Tri-Valley Cultural Jews community unique: open minds, thoughtful discussion, a touch of irreverence, and excellent dessert.

TVCJ at Castro Valley Pride



A Huge Thank You to Everyone Who Made Castro Valley Pride a Success!

Castro Valley Pride – Thank You!

We want to take a moment to thank everyone who helped make our presence at Castro Valley Pride such a success. This kind of community effort reminds us that when people step up, we really can do great things together.

Thanks to David for coming early to help set up and staying late to break everything down. And to Judy — not only did she help with setup and break-down, but she also staffed our table all day long. That kind of dedication makes a real difference.

We're also so glad to have met Lily and Andy, who jumped in to help at the table and made everyone who stopped by feel welcome.

It was a great day, and it wouldn't have happened without all of you. Thanks for showing up and showing what community looks like.

Our TVCJ July Hike

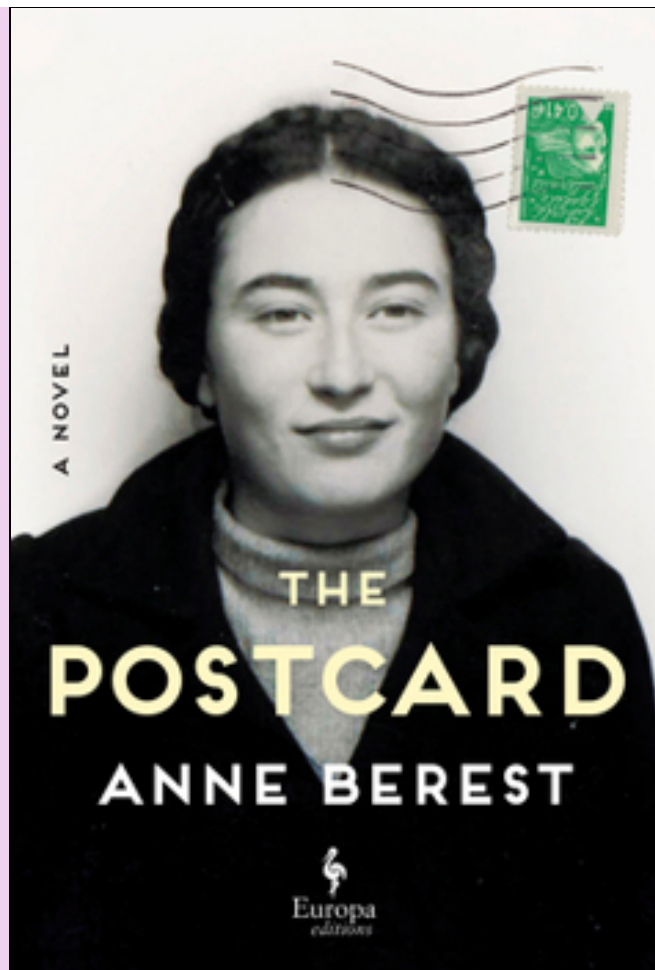
TVCJ members enjoyed an amazing bit of nature on their hike at Del Valle July 20. A 20' long line of ants carrying their pupae were crossing the road just as the hikers came up to them. You never know what you'll see on a TVCJ hike. Look for your evite for the next one! (Non-members are welcome to attend a couple times before we'll ask you to join TVCJ.)

BOOK REVIEW

THE POSTCARD

BY

ANNE BEREST



This historical novel takes place in France in the years before World War II. It starts in the 1930s and goes to the present day. The main characters are a Jewish family consisting of a mother, a father, and a daughter and a son, who are in their teen years. They are doing well until the Nazis occupy the country and arrest all of them. The children are released but the adults are held and killed in a concentration camp. One day the children, who are living with other family members, get a postcard with nothing on it except for the grandparents and children's first names. Nobody knows who sent it or why it was sent to them.

The oldest daughter, Myriam, undertakes a years long investigation to try to get information of who sent the postcard. Also, to try to learn more about her grandparents and other members of the family. She learns that no matter how successful they are in their lives, they are considered outsiders in France due to their Jewish backgrounds. Myriam's search brings her to many cities and villages in France as well as to a number of concentration

camps. At first, very little information is obtainable. But then, finally a breakthrough.

The novel discusses the lives and relationships of many family members of different generations. It reads like a mystery novel, as well as a character study. I found it hard to put down, and I would highly recommend it.

[If you would like to purchase this book at BookShop.org click here.](#)

[Here is a link to this book on the Barnes and Noble online store.](#)

Reviewed By Jerry Zwick

Interfaith Interconnect of the Tri-Valley

A Special Invitation to our Interfaith Friends!

**INTERFAITH INTERCONNECT INVITES YOU TO ATTEND OUR NEXT
Interfaith Worship Experience Visit**

Congregation Beth Emek Shabbat Service

Friday evening, August 8, 2025

Further details to follow by July 28.

We hope to see you August 8.

Marcia Elchesen, Coordinator

Interfaith Interconnect Leadership Committee

[Click here to go to the Interfaith Interconnect Facebook Page.](#)

SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL 45

JULY 17
–AUG 3
SFJFF.ORG

The 45th San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF), presented by the Jewish Film Institute, is taking place from July 17th to August 3rd, 2025. The festival will showcase more than 65 independent films across San Francisco and the East Bay, celebrating the diversity and joy of Jewish identity, culture, and history. The event is the largest and longest-running independent Jewish film festival globally, dedicated to presenting bold films and filmmakers that explore and expand the Jewish narrative.

[The 45th San Francisco Jewish Film Festival website](#)

[Find your perfect film! Just browse our listings, click on your choice, and purchase tickets.](#)

Some highlights of the festival include:

Opening Night: The Sundance award-winning documentary, *Coexistence, My Ass!*, which follows Israeli comedian Noam Shuster-Eliassi as she navigates the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through comedy and political satire. Shuster-Eliassi will also perform a live comedy show during the festival's first weekend.

Freedom of Expression Award: Presented to Oakland native, actor, rapper, and singer-songwriter Daveed Diggs for his genre-defying work exploring identity, justice, and imagination. His latest film, *Magic Hour*, will also be screened.

Centerpiece Narrative: The film *Fantasy Life*, which features a laid-off paralegal who falls for the mother of the children he's nannyng, co-starring Amanda Peet and Judd Hirsch.

Centerpiece Documentary: *Holding Liat*, a documentary that follows a family's struggle to secure the release of their daughter, Liat, who was taken hostage by Hamas during the October 7th attacks, while also exploring the complexities and human cost of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Next Wave Spotlight: The dark romantic comedy *Oh, Hi!*, about a couple's unexpected and unhinged first romantic getaway.

Closing Night: The summer camp comedy *The Floaters*, featuring a struggling musician who takes a job at a Jewish summer camp for misfits.

A Retrospective: *Celebrating 45 years of SFJFF*, this event features guest speakers and rare film clips from the festival's history.

45th Anniversary Town Hall: A community gathering to discuss and contribute to the Jewish Film Institute's vision for the future. [Click here for information on the town hall.](#)

The festival also includes a diverse range of films exploring various themes, including:

LGBTQ+ Stories: With several feature films addressing LGBTQ+ themes and histories, reports the *Bay Area Reporter*. The festival will also feature a reading by non-binary, transgender lesbian actor Tommy Dorfman.

Arts & Culture: Including films profiling artists like Meredith Monk and Paddy Chayefsky.

Holocaust & Post-Holocaust: Films that delve into the history and memory of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Israel & Palestine: Exploring the complex relationship and narratives surrounding these regions.

Social Justice: With films like *Disposable Humanity* investigating the Nazi Aktion T4 program and *Death & Taxes* examining wealth inequality.

[The full program guide is available online here.](#)

[Find your perfect film! Just browse our listings, click on your choice, and purchase tickets.](#)



Bluesky

TVCJ is on Bluesky now.

@tvcj2.bsky.social. Check it out.



Joke

First Person: I don't trust steps. They're always up to something.

Second Person: I don't trust elevators. They let me down half the time.

TVCJ PayPal Giving Fund Page

We now have a PayPal page where you can quickly and easily donate to Tri-Valley Cultural Jews. Simply scan the QR code below.



or visit: <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/2326042>



In July We Remember

Allen Lee Coren

Dolores King

Mitch Morrison

Bunny Simmel



July Birthdays

Gale Fabrikant

Ben Gross

Solomon Ireland

Noah King

Elaine Siegel Kociolek

Rick Randel

Mark Shulewitz

Who We Are

Rabbi: Judith Seid 925-485-1049

Madrikha: Jamie Ireland

Board Members:

David Gates

Jazz Salwen-Grabowski

Jamie Ireland

Maggie Pino

Sophia Ireland

Rachel Rose

Diego Rother

Judith Seid

Newsletter: Joy Randel

Webmaster: Noah King

JCS Teachers: Jazz Salwen-Grabowski, Judith Seid

Holiday Coordinator: Jazz Salwen-Grabowski

Movie Coordinator: Bret Mogilefsky

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