

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

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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.

Events are free for members. For most events, we suggest a \$15 donation for non-member adults. For High Holiday services, the suggested donation is \$25 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.

August 30, 2025

Mishpokha

Welcome to new member Hacı Ahmet Sarıkaya of Concord!

We Need a Home Fund

We are 2/3 of the way there! Our We Need a Home Fund now has \$13,250 of the \$20,000 we need to unlock the matching \$20,000 and start our search for a permanent rental space for our meetings, holidays, school and storage.

Please consider adding a matching fund donation to your membership this fall. And please let us know if you'd like to help out with either fundraising or our search for space endeavors. Just email us at culturaljews@gmail.com.

Why Join?

If you're not yet a member of TVCJ, we invite you to join and take part in our many activities, including holiday and life cycle observances, discussion group, hiking and movies, and new friends. You also have access to our hands-on Jewish Culture School for children ages 5-14. In addition to what you receive as a member, you are also giving to keep a vibrant non-religious Jewish community and school for children alive and flourishing.

To join us, go to <https://trivalleyculturaljews.org/join-us/> and fill out the form.

Finances are never an obstacle to joining. If our suggested donations don't work for your budget, donate what you can. We won't ask any questions.

Meet Our Members

Each month, we'll spotlight a member, so we can all get to know each other a little better. We'll ask where you live, where you're from, your favorite Jewish holiday, what you're reading, and how you can help others.



Our first spotlight member is Noah King, our website guardian, whose now-grown kids, Ella and Adam, were JCS students. Here are his answers to the questions:

- 1.** I live in Livermore
- 2.** I'm originally from New York, but only lived there until I was eight years old. Then my family moved to Southern California, and I lived there until I finished grad school in 1995.
- 3.** My favorite Jewish holiday is Purim, because I love writing our annual Purimspiel, and getting to dress up in fun costumes.
- 4.** I'm currently reading a book called Year Zero by Rob Reid. It's a sci-fi novel about how human beings create the most aesthetically perfect music in the known universe,

and when other species discover our back catalog, it has a profound effect on their entire culture.

5. I love to Photoshop, and am one of the admins of a Facebook Photoshopping group with over 120,000 members. I also co-host a math podcast called The Math Club, which is geared towards helping people to see math as more interesting and engaging.

Brit Mitzvah



We're so proud of Keren Rother Telias, who celebrated her brit mitzvah this summer. She gave a wonderful talk about her great-grandfather's life in Europe and Uruguay during the 1900s and his memories of seeing the explosion and sinking of the Graf Spee in Montevideo harbor. She also talked about her experience making matzah and explaining the significance to her neighbors, and gave a detailed (and funny) account of her Torah portion.

We were lucky to be joined by relatives from South Africa and Uruguay as well as local friends and family.

Board Election Update

At our recent board meeting, elections were held, and we're happy to share that our leadership team will remain the same for the coming term: Jamie will continue as President, Judy will remain Treasurer, and Jazz will continue as Secretary. We're deeply grateful for their continued dedication — and for the commitment of all our board members who give their time and energy to support Tri-Valley Cultural Jews. This is the team that makes things happen! Serving alongside our officers are David Gates, Rachel Rose, teen representative Maggie Pino, and our newest member, Diego Rother. We're thankful to each of them for helping guide and grow our community.

Upcoming Events

Philosophers' Cafe - 9/04/25

In August, we had a lively discussion of whether we wanted to be liked or respected, what makes us respect or like someone, and who we respect or disrespect.

Join us on zoom for another friendly chat on Thursday, September 4 from 7-8 p.m. Look for your evite! (Non-members are welcome to attend a couple times before we'll ask you to join TVCJ.)

Rosh Hashanah - 9/22/25



Celebrate Rosh Hashanah with TVCJ – A Sweet Start to the New Year

Monday, September 22 | Livermore | Potluck at 6:30 PM, Program at 7:30 PM

Join us as we welcome the Jewish New Year together with warmth, reflection, and community at our annual Rosh Hashanah Celebration. We'll begin the evening with a potluck dinner—we've got the apples and honey covered!—followed by a meaningful program of music and English readings rooted in our shared Secular Humanistic Jewish values.

Our hour-long ceremony invites thoughtful reflection on renewal, connection, and identity as we begin 5786. While not designed specifically for children, the gathering is always family-friendly and welcoming to all.

As part of our ongoing effort to be good stewards of the earth, we invite everyone to bring their own plates, cups, and utensils to help reduce waste at our potluck.

As always, TVCJ celebrates the diversity of our community—people of all backgrounds, identities, and family structures are embraced and included.

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

Let's start the new year of right--with joy, meaning and community.

Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre Gathering - 10/01/25



Kol Nidre Observance – A Humanistic Reflection for Yom Kippur

Wednesday, October 1 | 7:00 PM | Livermore

Join us for an evening of reflection, music, and meaning as we come together for our annual Kol Nidre observance. Rooted in our shared secular and cultural Jewish values, this gathering offers a space to mark the beginning of Yom Kippur through

thoughtful readings, stirring music, and quiet contemplation—without religious ritual, but rich in tradition and connection.

This program is designed for those whose Jewish identity is grounded in culture, heritage, and community. It's a time to look inward, honor memory, and connect deeply with ourselves and one another.

While not a children's event, quiet activities will be available to help families feel comfortable and included. As always, TVCJ welcomes and embraces participants of all backgrounds, including interfaith and non-traditional families.

Reservations are required. Suggested donation of \$25 per non-member adult is appreciated, but everyone is welcome—no one is turned away due to cost.

Sukkot - 10/5/25

The poster features a white background with a subtle pattern of palm fronds and red triangular bunting flags at the top. On the right, a wooden chair with a green seat and backrest is partially visible. Two green circles contain event details. The main title is in large, bold, green letters with a red outline. A handwritten-style message is in the center. A list of activities is in a green circle. The Tri-Valley Cultural Jews logo and contact information are at the bottom left.

SUKKOT CELEBRATION

You are always welcome

**Oct 5th
10:30-12pm
Livermore**

- **Sukkah
Raising**
- **Potluck**
- **Crafts**



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WWW.TRIVALLEYCULTURALJEWS.ORG
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Sukkah Raising & Potluck – All Ages Welcome!

Sunday, October 5 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM | Livermore

Are you ready to break out the power tools? Join us to celebrate Sukkot with our sukkah raising!

Join us at 10:30 AM on October 5th to help build the sukkah—no experience needed, just come ready to pitch in and enjoy the morning together. Afterward, we'll share a delicious potluck brunch, so bring something tasty to share **(and please label the ingredients if you can)**.

In the spirit of Sukkot and being good stewards of the earth, we invite everyone to bring their own plates, cups, and utensils to help us reduce waste at our potluck

events.

And while you're at it, bring a branch or two to help decorate the sukkah! We'll have crafts and activities to keep everyone entertained—kids and adults alike.

We're looking forward to a relaxed, joyful time with our community. Hope to see you there!

Jewish Cultural School





First Day of Jewish Culture School – A Sweet Start to the Year!

We kicked off the new school year (soccer ball included!) with a fun and festive first day at Jewish Culture School! The children got into the spirit of the season by baking delicious applesauce cupcakes—a sweet way to begin the year and a special treat to celebrate Jamie's birthday. The day was filled with joyful singing and creative energy as we decorated our new sun shade using fruit and vegetable stamps. It was a wonderful way to welcome both the new year and each other.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first Jewish Culture School session of the year! We're thrilled to welcome you all back for another joyful and enriching year with Tri-Valley Cultural Jews.

A heartfelt thank you to the Ireland family for graciously hosting our gathering—and special thanks to Sophia for her incredible help in the kitchen and for leading activities in such a meaningful and engaging way.

We're excited for the year ahead as we explore how Jewish culture and values inspire us to make a difference in the world. Through stories, music, food, art, and hands-on learning, we're looking forward to another year of connection, creativity, and community.

Here's to a fantastic year at JCS!

Our TVCJ July Hike

We had a small but pleasant hike in July exploring the trails around Lake Del Valle.

This time Debby, Karen and David checked out alternative trails around the eastern end of the lake. Plenty of birds and lizards.

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.)

Our Movie Night

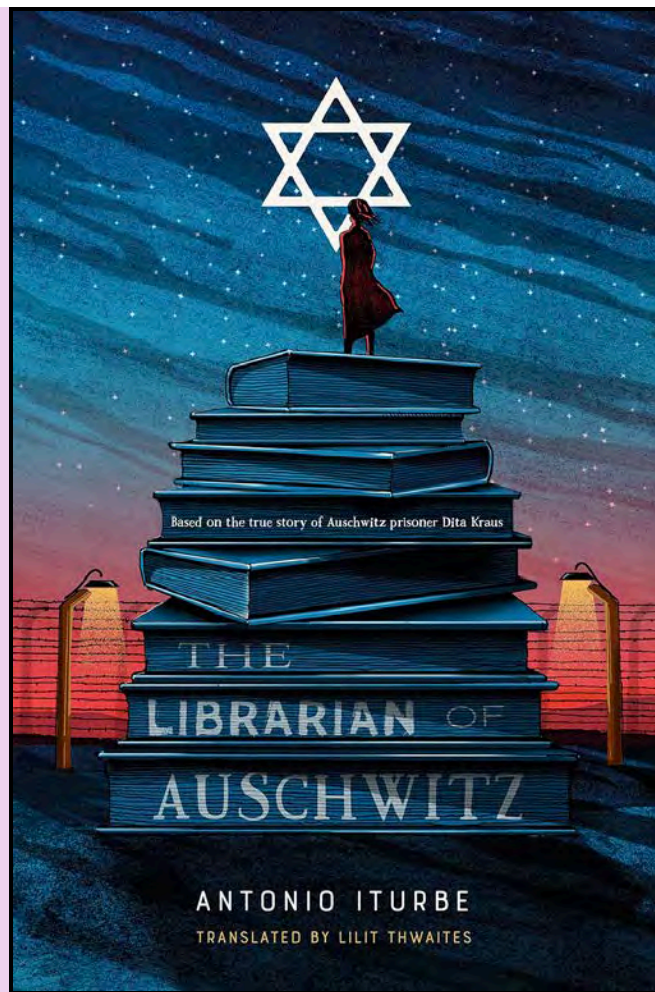
Last month we gathered to watch *Jews Don't Count*. The movie provided glimpse into the treatment of Jews in today's world. We had great conversations about our experiences as Jews in the different places we have lived our lives.

If you want to join our thoughtful group for a chat about movies, then come our next movie night. We'd love to have you. We watch all sorts of movies with some connection to Jewish life. We hope you will join us for our next movie night.

BOOK REVIEW

THE LIBRARIAN OF AUSCHWITZ

By Antonio Iturbe



This is the true story of Dita Kraus. She was a prisoner of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Because she could read, one of the leaders of the prisoners, Fredy Hirsch, gifted her with 8 volumes of banned books that she promised to care for. Anyone caught with books in the camp could be put to death. Because she took this task very seriously, she became known as the Librarian of Auschwitz, even at the tender age of 14.

She dug an underground hiding place for the books, called her “hidey hole.” Only a few trusted prisoners knew where this was. They were lent out individually and very cautiously. The books became very precious to the prisoners because they felt it connected them to the outside world. Because most of the consumers of these books were children, the books had to be read to them—also a crime. People in and out of the camp asked Dita why she bothered to introduce these books to the children, since many would not live a very long life. She replied that her purpose was to provide them with as normal experience as possible, thus giving them hope.

Dita, as well as her co-conspirators were true profiles in courage. They had many close encounters with Nazi officers-including Dr. Joseph Mengele, who Dita felt was always watching her in case she did anything suspicious. She did not.

This book was very well written. In many ways it read like a novel instead of a memoir.

Reviewer's note: I wrote this review with great trepidation. This is because the book contains a number of graphic descriptions of the horrible life in the concentration camps. These scenarios were difficult to read and are not for everyone. Readers beware.

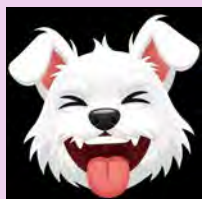
[If you would like to purchase this book at BookShop.org click here.](#)

Reviewed By Jerry Zwick



Bluesky

TVCJ is on Bluesky now.
@tvcj2.bsky.social. Check it out.



Joke

Have you heard about the restaurant on the moon? Great food, no atmosphere.

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 August We Remember

Frances Shapiro Colvin

Lou Garcia

John Gates



August Birthdays

Zachary Arkhipov

Tai Grabowski

Jamie Ireland

Genoveva Llosa

Joy Randel

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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