

# Tri-Valley Cultural Jews

Your East Bay Secular Humanistic Jewish Community

[TriValleyCulturalJews.org](http://TriValleyCulturalJews.org)

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[\(925\) 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](mailto:culturaljews@gmail.com) for an Evite or for more information about our community. You can find us at [trivalleyculturaljews.org](http://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** (you can also scan our QR code below.)

# **January 31, 2026**

## **Speak Out**

Friends, fellow Jews and allies: We cannot be silent. If you are watching with horror the depravity of the current administration on all fronts, remember that we have seen this before and we know where it leads. This is not a partisan issue; it is an American issue. Speak up. Join a protest and tell your elected officials - whether Democrat or Republican - that this is not the America we want. Phone numbers and emails are available at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.

**Judith Seid**

## **Meet A TVCJ Member, Maggie Pino**



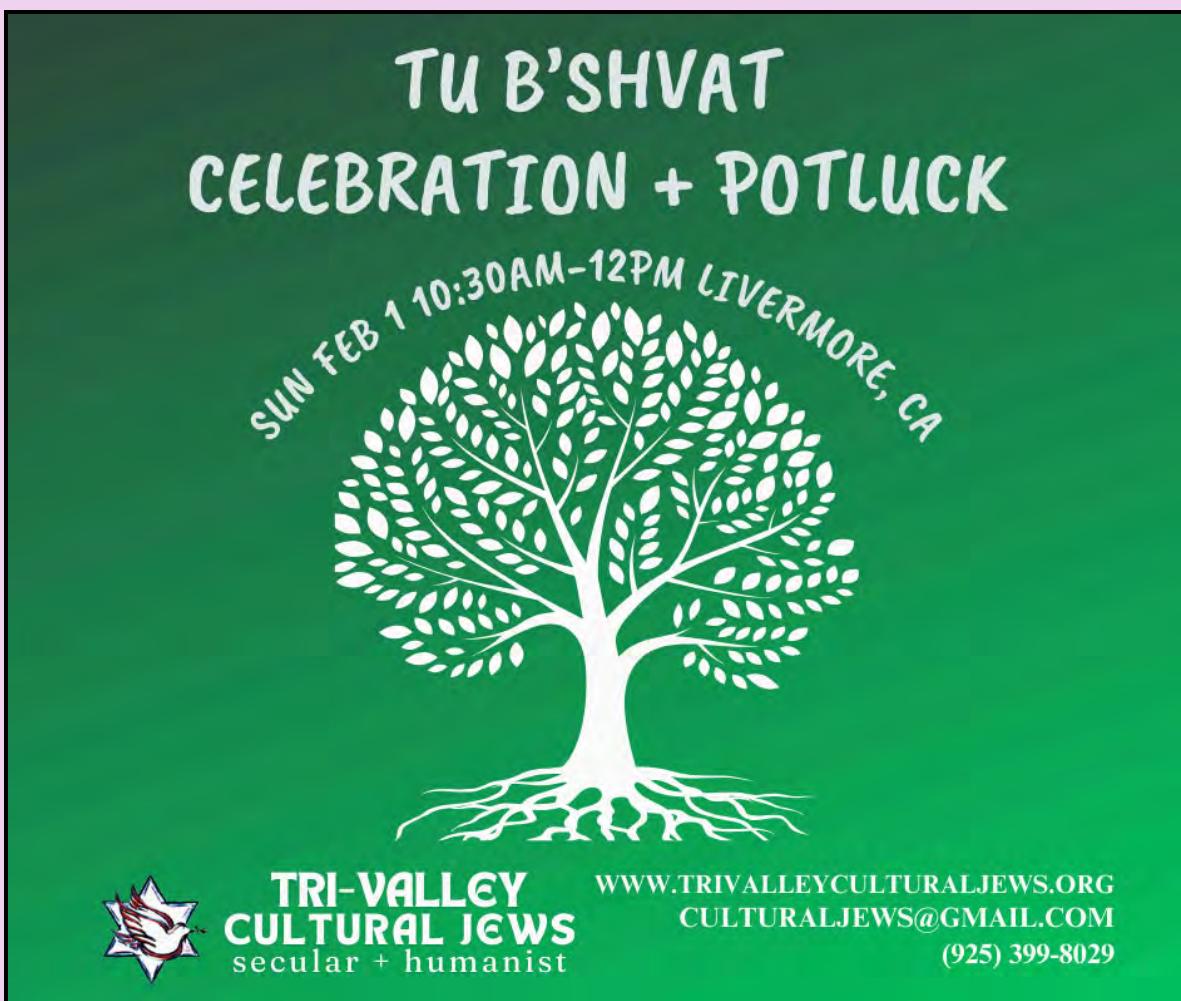
Say hello to Maggie Pino, one of the faces of our community.

- 1. Where do you live?** I live in Livermore, California.
- 2. Where are you from?** I've lived in Livermore for almost my entire life, but was born in New Mexico.
- 3. What's your favorite Jewish holiday (and why, if you'd like to say)?** My favorite Jewish holiday would have to be Hanukkah, because I love fire and fried foods.
- 4. What are you reading now? (Or watching, or listening to)?** Right now, I've been reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, which follows the life of a black woman in the South during the Great Depression.

**5. What do you know about that people can ask you about, or you can help them with?**Feel free to come up to me and chat about almost anything, I'm always open to a good conversation. I'm currently a sophomore in high school, so I can answer questions other teens have about time management and courses, and give advice on study strategies and how to get enough sleep.

## Upcoming Events

**Tu B'Shvat Celebration --**  
**2/01/26 at 10:30am**



Join Tri-Valley Cultural Jews for a unique outdoor gathering on Sunday, February 1st at 10:30am, celebrating the beauty and significance of trees and the land that sustains us. This year's event will take place in a local olive grove, generously opened to us by a community member, offering a rare chance to connect with nature in a truly special setting.

After our time in the grove, we'll gather for a relaxed potluck meal--please bring a dish to share and your own plate, cup and utensils so we can be good friends to the earth.

Come enjoy a meaningful, hands-on experience that highlights our relationship with the natural world, community, and the changing seasons.

## **Philosophers' Cafe - 02/05/26**

Hungry for a friendly chat with curious people? Join us on zoom at 7 p.m. Thursday, February 5 for our monthly Philosophers' Cafe. A random topic always sparks fun and far-reaching talks about ideas we don't usually get to talk about in Real Life.

Look for your evite, and participate in an hour of distraction from daily concerns. Last month we talked about the ethics of volunteer work. Come check out this month's topic! Zoom in and find out, meet other members, and find something interesting to think about. (Non-members are welcome to attend a couple times before we'll ask you to join TVCJ.)

## **Repro Right Gathering - 02/22/26 at 2pm**



# REPRO SHABBAT

Sun Feb 22 | 2pm  
Livermore CA



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Let's gather, eat, and connect. Join us on Sunday, February 22 at 2pm in Livermore for an easygoing community get together centered on reproductive freedom.

There will be food (including some very creatively shaped homemade challah), laughter, and space for real conversation--nothing heavy, nothing intimidating. Just bring your curiosity, your sense of humor, and your appetite.

**Purim - 3/01/26 at 10:30am**



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# CELEBRATE **PURIM**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 1ST, 10:30-12PM  
LIVERMORE, CA**



Get ready for a delightfully silly morning on Sunday, March 1 from 10:30am-12pm in Livermore! This all-ages celebration is about creativity, laughter, and being together--no background knowledge or experience needed.

Expect costumes (highly encouraged for kids and grownups), a lively Purimspiel, hands-on cookie making, crafts and games, and plenty of time to eat, laugh, and catch up. We'll be making hamantaschen--the classic triangle-shaped Purim cookies--so bring a favorite filling and prepare for some delicious fun.

Purim is basically a permission slip to be playful. It's a celebration of courage, cleverness, and standing up to nonsense with humor and heart--plus an excellent excuse to dress up and enjoy good food with good people.

We'll wrap things up with a relaxed potluck lunch, so bring a dish to share (sweet or savory, homemade or store-bought--everything is welcome)!

Bring a friend, bring your family, or just bring your curiosity. Whether you're a longtime community member or joining us for the first time, you'll find a warm welcome.

Keep an eye out for our Evite coming soon!

## **Refugee Sunday - 3/15/26 at 1pm**

Join us on Sunday, March 15 at 1pm in Castro Valley for a welcoming community gathering that celebrates the stories, cultures, and creativity that immigrants and refugees bring to our shared world.

Through food, music, and conversation, we'll explore the richness and resilience of refugee experiences--and how these traditions, flavors, and stories shape American culture and our local community in meaningful ways.

This is a relaxed, inclusive event designed for connection. Whether you come to listen, share, or simply enjoy being together, you're warmly invited.

More details to follow in our Evite--we hope you'll join us!

## **Passover- 4/04/26 at 5pm Ceremony | 6:30pm Potluck**

Join us on Saturday, April 4 for a community Passover gathering that blends tradition with conversation, reflection, and good food. Our evening begins at 5pm with our inclusive ceremony focused on themes that resonate across generations--freedom, justice, and what it means to care for one another--followed by a shared potluck dinner at 6:30pm.

This is a relaxed, welcoming experience designed for everyone. No religious background or prior knowledge is needed--just curiosity and an appetite.

**Save the date**--we'd love to share the evening with you.

**Jewish Culture School**



### **Jewish Culture School 1/11**

At our Jewish Culture School class this month we explored the long history of Jews in the civil rights movement and what it looks like to stand up against racism in meaningful ways. To honor this legacy, we made black-eyed pea hummus--a delicious blend of a traditional Black Southern food and a Middle Eastern staple.

Students also took part in a relay race with different "handicaps" to experience what happens when the playing field isn't equitable, followed by thoughtful discussion. We learned about Jewish civil rights heroes and how their actions reflect core Jewish values: equality, diversity, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the earth.

Another joyful and powerful way to learn history--and see how it still matters today!

### **Calendar of Events for the Next 6 Months**

**2/1 Tu B'Shvat**

**2/5 Philosophers' Cafe**

**2/22 Repro Rights Gathering**

**3/1 Purim**

**3/5** Philosophers' Cafe

**3/15** Refugee Sunday

**4/2** Philosophers' Cafe

**4/4** Passover

**5/3** Lag B'omer

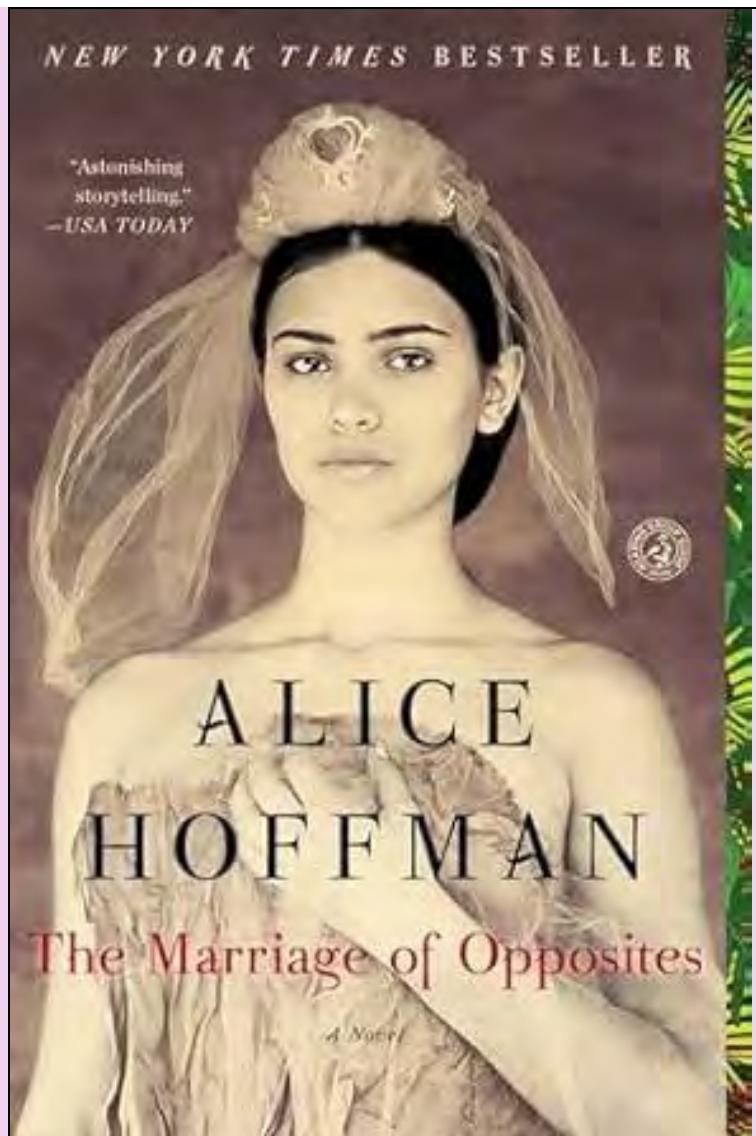
**5/7** Philosophers' Cafe

**5/23** Shavuous



**Joke:** Why was the penguin so good at business? **Answer:** Because he always gave cool presentations.

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**THE MARRIAGE OF OPPOSITES**  
**By**  
**Alice Hoffman**



This novel takes place on the beautiful island of St. Thomas in the middle 1830s. This has become the home of a tight knit group of Maranos who have been expelled from France for the crime of being Jewish. The matriarch of the family tries to keep it intact, but her daughter is intent on living by her own rules.

The father has a successful business that has come upon hard times. The daughter, Rachel is expected to marry a widower that has three children in order to save the business, which she reluctantly does. All goes well until he dies. After a short time his nephew comes to town to manage the estate. He and Rachel have a rocky relationship at first but are forced to work it out.

Another interesting aspect of the story is that Rachel's younger brother has become an artistic prodigy whose sole interest in life is to practice his art. Mother is unhappy about this because she wants him to abandon his art in order to run the family business.

As can be seen, this story has much conflict and drama. It is well written and I would recommend it.

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

[If you would like to purchase this book on Barnes and Noble click here.](#)

Reviewed By Jerry Zwick



**Bluesky**

TVCJ is on Bluesky now.

[@tvcj2.bsky.social](#). Check it out.

## **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 January We Remember**  
Hillel Cohen  
Charles Roy Colvin



## January Birthdays

Marisa Castaldini  
Mary Frances Colvin  
Kevin Coren  
Levi Coren  
Tom Green  
Colin Mogilefsky

## 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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**Our mailing address is:**

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