



JGSCV

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF
THE CONEJO VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY

November, 2012

Volume 8 Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Our 7th anniversary was a smashing success— thanks to our members, Temple Adat Elohim— our meeting co-sponsor— and of course our speaker, Warren Blatt. We had 70 in attendance to help us celebrate. Warren, a founding member and board member of JGSCV as well as the Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of JewishGen.org spoke on Jewish Surnames: Their History, Origins, Types and Etymologies. See page 9 for a brief summary of Warren's presentation.

Giving the 5-minute genealogical hint was JGSCV member Diane Wainwood on "The Port of Dreams" Ballinstadt Emigration Museum in Hamburg, Germany". Albert Ballin became the owner of the Hapag Line and established a departure city—Ballinstadt with dormitories, restaurants and dining hall for the departing immigrants—including providing Kosher meals in the restaurant and on the ships.

Thank you to Hal Bookbinder for facilitating our schmoozing corner—remember that JGSCV feature now begins at 1:10 PM— 20 minutes before the each meeting and is an excellent opportunity to gain insights from a seasoned genealogist.

October is Family History Month and the Jewish month of Cheshevan (October 17-November 14) is International Jewish Genealogy Month (See page 12). What are you doing to promote Jewish Genealogy during



Warren Blatt presenting 'Jewish Surnames'

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, Nov. 5th 7:00-9:00 PM

From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present - A Search for Jewish Roots

Global scholar Genie Milgrom will describe her journey to uncover her Converso and Marrano roots on the way to finding her 15 grandmothers.

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these simultaneous genealogy celebrations? I gave a presentation on "How to Begin Your Genealogy" at the Agoura Hills Library on October 9 and was delighted that we had a good turnout including several JGSCV members!

In honor of Family History Month FindMyPast has downloads and a suggested list of things to do for genealogy including a downloadable family tree and questionnaire for interviewing relatives as well as how to begin searching your family history: <http://tinyurl.com/8mesdn9>

Four of the board positions are up for election at the December meeting. Three of the board members, whose terms expire the end of this year, have expressed a desire to continue to serve, and are included in the Nominations Committee recommendations. At the November meeting, anyone wishing to be nominated from the floor may do so—read about the Nominations Committee recommendations and requirements on page 11.

We started our 2013 membership drive and already have six new members and some renewals! Please send in your membership renewal or new membership—a membership form is on page 13. Remember, those who join or renew between now and our December 2nd meeting and attend the December 2nd meeting are eligible to have their names entered for great genealogy prizes including an Ancestry Worldwide Subscription, as well as subscriptions to Fold3.com, Find My Past and software including Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, Roots Magic and more! While our meetings are open to the public, these are members-only benefits - see page13.

Our November 5th meeting is on a Monday night so those who have not been able to attend on Sunday afternoons have an opportunity to participate...we return to Sunday afternoons in December. Our November 5th meeting is a special treat with Genie Milgrom, President of JGS of Greater Miami. The past president of the JGS of Palm Beach County wrote to me and said she is electrifying and had a standing ovation when she gave the talk to them. Genie will be talking on *From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present: A Search for Jewish Roots*. Even if you don't have known Sephardic roots, you will be able to learn from her techniques in tracing back to her 15th grandmother. Genie has just published a book, *My Fifteen Grandmothers* and she will be selling it at the meeting for \$15 per copy. See page 6 for her story of her recent trip to her ancestral village of Feroselle, Spain.

Looking forward to seeing you at the November 5th (Monday) meeting 7:00-9:00 pm

Jan Meisels Allen



ABOUT JGSCV . . .

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County meets once a month, usually on a Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced genealogist. Members share materials, research methods and ideas, as well as research success or failures. Members have access to the JGSCV library located on special shelves at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter, which is circulated by email.

2013 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send a check in the appropriate amount payable to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

DATABASE TIPS

Sarina Roffe publishes Genealogy Detective, a blog that focuses on Sephardic genealogy. Recently, Sarina listed her top 10 tips for using databases. You can see them at <http://tinyurl.com/8lrvgbp>

FINDING WOMEN'S MAIDEN NAMES

Locating female family members can be a challenge when only a married name is available. William Dollarhide via the GenealogyBlog and the National Genealogical Society shared some insights:
<http://tinyurl.com/9obrryz>
<http://tinyurl.com/9suwf9q>
<http://tinyurl.com/99qzjr9>

GenTeam ADDS VIENNA RECORDS

In cooperation with the Viennese Parish offices, a general index of all birth records of Vienna between 1585 and 1900 has been added to the GenTeam database. There are now approximately 80,000 records available online. Start here and click on English as the language:
<http://www.genteam.at/>

NEW FOIA PROCESS

The National Archives has joined other governmental agencies by simplifying the Freedom of Information Act requests. Now, a single online system will allow users to submit requests, communicate with the processing agency, search other requests, etc. For more details:
<http://tinyurl.com/98fzlg>

UK CLOSES "YOUR ARCHIVES"

The National Archives of the United Kingdom has closed the "Your Archives" section of its website due to changing technology and user expectations. They plan to preserve the site on the government web archive <http://tinyurl.com/btkkfpd> and their Discovery Service <http://tinyurl.com/c5gvb3n>

Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County* (JGSCV) (*and surrounding areas)

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting, co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim, on

Monday, November 5, 2012 7:00-9:00 PM

at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

NOTE: Different Day of Week and Time for This One Meeting!



The Program: From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present - A Search for Jewish Roots

Whether or not you have known-Sephardic roots, you will find this program of interest—both for the genealogical techniques Genie Milgrom will discuss as well as her genealogical journey through time as she scoured the planet for her Converso or Marrano roots. Milgrom was able to document fully an unbroken maternal lineage of 15 grandmothers going back to the late 1400's. She will tell us her personal story and explain in detail the methods she used to open up the Jewish history of the small village in Spain where her ancestors resided for over 500 years. Today she is still very active and preserving her findings in the village of Fermoselle, Spain which sits on the boarder between Spain and Portugal.



Speaker: Genie Milgrom is an International Businesswoman and is currently the President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Miami. She is also the author of the book, *My 15 Grandmothers* and is President of Tarbut Sefarad-Fermoselle in Spain as well as an active member of the American Society of Personal Historians. For more information, visit her website at

www.geniemilgrom.com . Book signing and purchasing opportunity.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques, and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history.

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family. **Join now for 2013!**

JGSCV UPDATES . . .

Traveling Library categories A and C will be at the next meeting. Please check the website for the books included in each category (<http://jgscv.org>). To request a book that is not in either category, please email Jan Meisels Allen at least 5 days in advance of the meeting at president@jgscv.org.



THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is now open 20 minutes before each meeting where a knowledgeable JGSCV member will be available to answer questions, offer direction and maybe even a solution to a brick wall or two. Hal Bookbinder (right) led the Schmoozing Corner on Oct. 7th. Werner Frank will be available to answer question at the Nov. 5th meeting.



Ralphs requires everyone to reregister every September for their community contribution program. If you include JGSCV as your 'community', your groceries cost the same but Ralphs will send JGSCV a contribution. Last year only one in 10 JGSCV members were part of this program. Let's make that 10 of 10 next year! Contact Karen Lewy with questions: Karen@jgscv.org. See our website <http://www.jgscv.org> under "notices" for information on registering.

This month's Five-Minute Genealogy Hint will be on "Researching Military Records" commemorating Veterans Day

celebrated on November 11 will be presented by Jan Meisels Allen.

A one-page genealogical questionnaire for grandparents to complete with their grandchildren appears on our website under the September meeting date. It was created by Archives.com on the occasion of Grandparents Day.

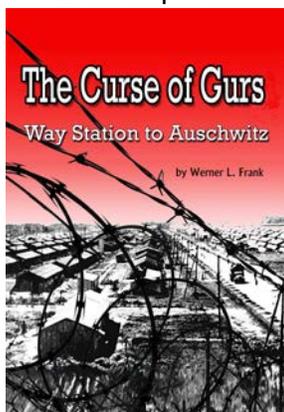
You can also help JGSCV when you shop at Amazon.com by simply entering the Amazon site from JGSCV's home page. Start at www.jgscv.org and scroll to the bottom to click on the Amazon graphic (like  the one below). This will take you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you.

If you are searching for a unique but meaningful Chanukah gift this year, consider a JGSCV membership. JGSCV provides a beautiful certificate appropriate for giving to even your most special recipient. And, attendance at each monthly meeting will be a reminder of your generosity. You can contact Helene Rosen at membership@jgscv.org or Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org



***Curse of Gurs: Way Station to Auschwitz* Latest Book by JGSCV's Werner Frank**

Accomplished genealogist and founding JGSCV member Werner Frank published his latest book, *Curse of Gurs: Way Station to Auschwitz*. Frank chronicles the October 1940 deportation of more than six thousand German Jews from Baden, Pfalz and Saar to the south of France while following the fate of seven hundred members of his own family who were among the victims that ended up in Camp de Gurs located in Vichy France.



Frank tells the story of this little known tragedy by delving into the background of the historical events that led to the *Aktion*. It is available at Amazon.com <http://tinyurl.com/94fm2na>

Recuperating One Day Lost to Jewish History

By Genie Milgrom (Nov. 5th JGSCV Speaker)

Today is the day that I had prepared for such a long time. The day that had kept me awake for many nights and the day that I would finally be able to recuperate a small piece of the Jewish History of one tiny village nestled in the enclave of the mountains overlooking the Duero River that separates Spain from Portugal. The Village of Fermoselle. Cradle of my Ancestors. For 550 years, my family had lived there before emigrating to other parts of the world. First as Jews, then as Crypto Jews and finally for hundreds of years, as Roman Catholics.

For reasons we will never know for sure, I was chosen to be the descendent that returned to the traditions of the Fathers and made my way back again and again to the Village to uncover its' Jewish Past. I had come here several times, to this Northwestern corner of Spain, in search of those roots and had walked its' hauntingly familiar streets many times. On each and every occasion, the walls had spoken to me, quietly whispering and giving up its secrets one by one.

Slowly and through the years, I had found that my full maternal lineage was historically rich and deeply rooted in the history of this village. I had uncovered the occupations of my ancestors, their marriages, their last wills and testaments, the sales of their lands and properties and most importantly, I had unearthed their Judgments before the Catholic Kings from the 1400's in the form of Inquisition Documents because they had had the audacity to practice their Judaism and later the gravest of sins; they practiced in secret. For this, they had been tortured, hung and burned. I would never be able to bring them back, and I can only pray that they are watching me from afar today as I come to this village and pay tribute to them in a public way. Today is the day that the walls will speak.

The mayor of Fermoselle, Don Alejandro Fermoselle Berdion had worked closely with us for many months to make certain that this event would be carried out flawlessly, and I take my hat off to him for venturing into these deep waters of the lost Juderias that so many others in Spain will not acknowledge even to this day. I had gathered an important group of historians to share the day with me and together with Professors Anun Barriuso and Jose Manuel Laureiro from Madrid as well as Professor Jesus Jambrina from Veterbo University and myself from Tarbut Sefarad in Fermoselle, we planned an event at Casa

Parque in Fermoselle, housed in an ancient monastery that is now a museum.

In this, the most perfect of surroundings with its' stone walls, high slivers of windows, Roman Estellas and intricate stone carvings; we came, abound with historical documentation hoping to have an important turnout to our presentation. This would be a presentation that would fascinate many, surprise others and still, we hoped it would not be one that would be denied by some. We had no idea what would happen today, but it was the fervent wish and dream of all of us that had worked so hard, that the evidence we were presenting would be accepted and that it would be the beginning of ongoing investigations that could eventually put Fermoselle on the map as part of the Red of Juderias in Spain, a government organization that is dedicated to bring back the lost Juderias and Aljamas of Villages and cities throughout Spain.

We arrived early, all of us anxious and not knowing what to expect and as usual, my husband Michael, with only words of encouragement for this group of historians and researchers that had assembled today to shed light on the past of 550 years ago. As we set up our presentations, we could not believe the amount of people that were pouring into the building. There were hundreds of people milling about and hurrying to secure their seats. People presented themselves to me and after a while it became a sea of faces. Some had come from Madrid; others had made their way to Spain after driving many hours from Lisbon, from Oporto, and from Mogadouro. I met cousins from my family tree that I had never met before that live in Portugal. I had cousins that came from Oviedo and there were Professors, Heads of Cultural Agencies in Spain and most important of all, the residents of Fermoselle themselves had assembled to hear about their past history.

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We began with some words of appreciation from the Mayor and then I followed by reading a poem written by my grandmother almost 50 years ago called "*A Fermoselle*" where ironically enough, she had made several references to the secrets hidden in the walls of the Village and its' many arches. She expressed a longing to hear the secrets being revealed. We were doing just that on this special day. Professor Jesus Jambrina delighted us with a 10 minute trailer of a longer documentary about Zamora Sefardi. Within a backdrop of splashes of lively Sephardic Music, Prof. Jambrina gave some historical facts about the Importance of the Jewish Community in the Zamoran region of Spain, of which Fermoselle is a part, and which is only now surfacing via our collective efforts. This was followed by a presentation from Professors Barriuso and Laureiro who explained the origins of the Jews in Spain and also presented the audience with the images of what we have been able to determine is the possible site of two synagogues, more than one mikveh, and a myriad of etchings and rock carvings that were known in other nearby villages to have been from the Crypto Jews.

I followed with the proof positive of my family tree and its roots deep in the Village and the Inquisition processes that showed my family from this Village to have lived, practiced their Judaism and died there. Physically seeing my direct maternal tree which is now over 15 feet long, led to a collective gasp from the audience.

Even after all of this, the best was yet to come. The Mayor stood up and we all stood up with him as he proclaimed to be making an Official Act and handed me the Symbolic Key to the Jewish Quarter of The village along with a Pergamino to serve as a Document of Historical Memory being given to a descendent of the Jews that had lived in this town of Fermoselle. The delight in the room was palpable. The clapping and

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roaring was overwhelming. This historical act, which Don Alejandro Femoselle had accomplished today, is a large step towards the recuperation in Spain of our lost memories.

In history this is only the second time that a Mayor in Spain has given a Symbolic Key to a descendent of the Spanish Jews.

I am so proud to be **that** Spanish Jew that has recuperated today that one day that was lost to our history.

We ended an amazing day with Sephardic Music being played by Jambrina and

Madrid from Zamora who so graciously gave of their time and energy while the crowd milled around and tasted olives and cheeses made in Femoselle.

With the deepest gratitude to the Mayor, Olga Gonzalez and Julia Sendin from Casa Parque in Femoselle , Professors Anun Barriuso, Jose Manuel Laureiro, Professor Jesus Jambrina and my husband Michael Milgrom for making this event possible .

2012 FUTURE MEETING DATES

MONDAY, Nov. 5th 7:00-9:00 PM "*From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present: A Search for Jewish Roots*" - Genie Milgrom

Sunday, Dec. 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM "*Getting The Most Out Of Ancestry.com*" – Crista Cowan, 'The Barefoot Genealogist' Ancestry.com

2013 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Sunday, Jan. 6th 1:30-3:30 PM "*Jewish Genetic Disorders Across the Diaspora*" Gary Frohlich, Genzyme and Catherine Quindipan, Cedars Sinai Medical Center

Sunday, Feb. 10th 1-5 PM "*Annual Assisted Research Afternoon*" – LA Family History Library

Sunday, March 3rd 1:30-3:30 PM "*Researching Your Canadian Family*" – Marion Werle

Sunday, April 7th 1:30-3:30 PM Yom Hashoah Day *Holocaust Survivors and March of the Living*", JGSCV members

Sunday, May 5th 1:30-3:30 PM "*Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality*", Marion Smith, USCIS

Sunday, June 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM "*Lodz, The Manchester of Poland*", Debra Kay Blatt

Sunday, July 14th 1:30-3:30 PM "*Genealogy In The Round*"

HIGHLIGHTS FROM: JEWISH SURNAMES

JGSCV was delighted to have JGSCV founding member and board member, Warren Blatt, Managing Director and editor-in-chief of JewishGen give the lecture for our 7th anniversary! The topic: Jewish Surnames—Their History, Origins, Types and Etymologies. Warren stated that most Jewish surnames were less than 200 years old. Previously, we used patronymics or metronymics—the father or mother’s name—such as Abramowitz: son of Abram, or Pesyn: son of Pessa. The earliest use of surnames was in Frankfurt am Main in Germany – Judengasse ghetto where they identified the house by a sign such as “Eichler” for acorn, “Schiff” for ship or “Adler” for eagle.



Surnames were mandated by the Austrian Empire in 1787 and in Congress Poland in 1811, West Galicia in 1805, Romania in the 1870’s and the Ottoman Turkish Empire as recently as 1934. Depending on the country, Gentiles took



surnames anywhere from 200-300 years before Jews.

There is no such thing as a “Jewish” surname as one cannot tell if they are Jewish by a person’s name. In Alexander Beider’s research, he found 40% both Jews and non-Jews used surnames. Once names were required they were either patronymic/metronymic; an occupation, a personal characteristic (short, tall) artificial (bird, field), specific such as Kohen or Levites, acronyms – a series of Hebrew initials for

Hebrew words (RASHI) or a rabbinical surname. [Alexander Beider’s books on Dictionaries of Surnames - Galicia, Kingdom of Poland and Russian Empire are in the JGSCV traveling library-category A—as are Lars Menk’s Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames and Guilherme Faiguenboim’s Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames.]

The JewishGen Family Finder has 125,000 surnames and the Avotaynu Consolidated Name Index has 700,000 names found in 42 databases. Both are cited as excellent sources to research names. Spelling does not matter- different countries have different traditions in spelling- for example no “H” in Russian –Hirsh becomes Girsh. Not all people with the same surname are related. Warren showed a slide of many variations of spelling of one name—to show one has to think creatively when doing their genealogical research.

Warren reminded us that it is a myth that names were changed at Ellis Island. Passenger names had to match the ship’s manifest which was filled out at the port of departure and a clerk with a different native language may have misspelled a name or incorrectly heard an immigrant with a foreign accent. In the 1800-1900’s many immigrants did change their name after arriving in the United States to assimilate. Many who immigrate to Israel choose a Hebrew name for the same reason.



JGSCV MEMBER BENEFITS

While our meetings are open to the public and the newsletter is available to anyone by going to our website, there are definite advantages of being a JGSCV member—here are a few:

- Annual assisted research afternoon at the Family History Library
- Members-only emails from the president announcing special events, and free opportunities with Ancestry and other genealogical organizations and other items of genealogical interest
- Use of the traveling library at president's home—with an advance appointment
- For first year of membership, JewishGen's Warren Blatt will assist with one concise question per month. He won't do your genealogy but with well thought out questions, he can help you on your genealogical journey

FORTHCOMING JGSCV ELECTIONS

As per the By-Laws of JGSCV a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Hal Bookbinder (with board member Allan Linderman and general member Karen Lewy) has recommended the following slate of individuals to fill the four two-year terms on the Board of Directors that will become vacant as of January 2013:

- Debra Kay Blatt
- Karen Lewy
- Helene Rosen
- Marion Werle

Three of the four nominees, Debra Kay Blatt, Helene Rosen and Marion Werle, currently serve on the board.

According to the By-Laws, anyone else wishing to be nominated to the Board can do so during the November 5, 2012 meeting of the Society. An individual may nominate him/herself or another. No second is necessary. Nominees must have been members of the Society for at least one year. Any person that is nominated from the floor must be present and orally agree to serve on the Board if elected, or if not present must have signed a written statement indicating their willingness to serve if elected. This statement must be available for inspection at this meeting. After this solicitation, nominations for the Board are closed. The names of all nominees with brief biographies will be published in the December issue of this newsletter. Elections will then be held at the December 2, 2012 meeting.

HELP WANTED: JGSCV

Your JGSCV has openings for two positions:

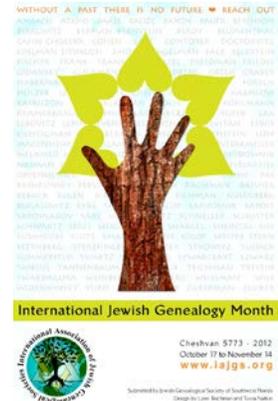
1. Publicity – requires only 1-2 hours per month to email the meeting notice to local media outlets and other interested parties. The notice and the contact list are provided.
2. Librarian – requires 2-4 times per month printing journals and newsletters (that are provided) and filing them into binders at the Agoura Hills library. JGSCV pays for paper and ink.

These are two vital but behind-the-scenes functions that help make your JGSCV a strong, vibrant organization. Your help is needed. Please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org.

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH GENEALOGY MONTH SPONSORED BY IAJGS

The International Jewish Genealogy Month (IJGM) honors our Jewish ancestors through the pursuit of Jewish family history research. IJGM month is celebrated during the Hebrew month of Cheshvan. For 2012, the civil dates are October 17 to November 14.

IAJGS sponsors and supports IJGM and offers an annual poster contest, which promotes the IJGM. The IJGM Poster submissions are due by June 20th each year. This year's winning poster is shown at right. The winners are Lynn Teichman and Tuvia Natkin members of The Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida. Information on past winners and the posters may be read at http://www.iajgs.org/jgm_pastposters.html



WAS COLUMBUS JEWISH?

From time to time we've all heard stories claiming that Christopher Columbus was Jewish. Earlier this year on the 508th anniversary of the death of Columbus, Charles Garcia, a businessman and author, published an article on cnn.com wondering, "Was Columbus Secretly A Jew?" Garcia makes the case that Columbus's great passion was the quest to liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims. Read the entire story at:

<http://tinyurl.com/cdozvlv>

NEW GALICIA MAPS

Three new maps have just been added to the Geshher Galicia Map Room. One may provide some answers to travel questions you've had regarding how your ancestors got from here to there and back again within the 19th century Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Check out the "Arteria Railway and Postal Communications Map of Austria-Hungary 1887" at <http://maps.geshhergalicia.org>. This railway and postal route map of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy shows region borders (highlighting Galicia), towns, rail lines, and postal routes, with a detailed legend of communication lines by color and symbols. Additional features include suburban rail lines around Vienna and Budapest at roughly 5x greater scale, plus a more detailed rail network map of northern Bohemia. Montenegro and the Dalmatian Coast are also pictured. The original image comes from the Gallica Digital Library of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Departement Cartes et Plans.

**JGSCV Welcomes
New Members:**

EVA COX

PAULA GOULD

MARILYN JORRIE

SHARLENE PASS

EYAL B. SMENER

KAY TRIETSCH



2013 Membership/Renewal Form

Jewish Genealogical Society

of the

Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)*

*Member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

www.JGSCV.org

Dues paid now are good through December 2013

Date of form _____

Check one:

This is a New Membership _____ Renewal _____

Single \$ 25.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$30.00 _____ + \$2.00**

*family defined as two people living in the same household

** \$1 per person is a voluntary donation to the IAJGS Stern Award, granted annually when it recognizes institutions for outstanding work in the creation and availability of resources for Jewish Genealogy.

Additional voluntary contributions:

Library Acquisition Fund \$ _____ Programs Fund \$ _____

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for either fund \$5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV Mail application to: Helene Rosen,
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zipcode + 4 _____

Day telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

E-mail address _____

Are you on Facebook? Yes _____ No _____

What is your Facebook Name _____

Talents that you have to share (accounting skills, language skills, computer skills, translation, etc.)

