



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF THE CONEJO VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY (JGSCV)

Volume 4, Issue 2

November 2008

President's Letter

The JGSCV Roundtable Discussions meeting provided one-on-one assistance for those who attended. We are very appreciative of the JGSCV members who provided the expertise at the Roundtables: Debra Kay Blatt, Warren Blatt, Hal Bookbinder, Werner Frank, David Hoffman and Sonia Hoffman.

As of the November meeting we are categorizing the traveling library books. For the categorization of the books, see our website (www.JGSCV.org) under traveling library. Anyone wanting a specific book at a meeting please contact me at least 5 days in advance and we will have that book there. Of course, any books relevant to the program topic will also be available as will all Category A books and, on a rotating basis, those books in Category B and C.

The Ralphs Community Contribution program has been updated. Please visit our website under "notices" for the easy step-by-step instructions to register and have JGSCV benefit from your Ralphs purchases.

Remember to join/rejoin JGSCV for 2009- dues paid now are good through December 2009 and be eligible for our annual Chanukah Party gifts drawing. We have some wonderful genealogical prizes and all attendees get a genealogical gift. Looking for a Chanukah gift—give a membership in JGSCV. We will provide a lovely certificate with the donor's name.

A way to help JewishGen. If you are considering purchasing the 2009 Family Tree Maker, do so through the JewishGen website and Ancestry will donate a portion of the charge to JewishGen! There is a clickable banner at the top of The JewishGen ShtetlSeeker and the "regular" databases such as the "All Country" systems --birth, marriage, death records, Revision Lists, Holocaust datasets, JOWBR.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday November 10 starting at 7:00 PM. Our guest speaker, Jon Entine will be speaking on *Abraham's Children: DNA, Race, Identity and the Chosen People*. *Abraham's Children* is a journey back in time and through history to reconnect with our ancestors. Jon is a former Agoura Hills resident and Temple Adat Elohim member! Jon will be selling and signing his book—a great Chanukah gift!

Jan Meisels Allen

FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS...

As per the By-Laws of JGSCV a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Hal Bookbinder (with members Warren Blatt and Ellen Kossoris), has prepared the following slate of individuals to fill the five two-year terms on the Board of Directors that will become vacant as of January 2009:

Werner L. Frank
Debra J. Kay-Blatt
Fred Land
Helene Rosen
Sharon Rosenthal

The first four candidates have served on the Board during the past year.

According to the By-Laws, anyone else wishing to be nominated to the Board can do so during the course of the November 10, 2008 meeting of the Society. Any person that is nominated from the floor must either be present and orally agree to serve on the Board if elected, or have signed a written willingness to serve if elected which is available for inspection at this meeting. After this solicitation all nominations for the positions are closed.

The names of all nominees with brief biographies will be published in the December issue of this Newsletter as well as a proposed change in the bylaws. Elections and the bylaws change will be voted on at the December 8, 2008 meeting.



LITHUANIAN WORKSHOP LED BY THE HOFFMANS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CYCLE FOR 2009 BEGINS NOW, SEE PAGE 4

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. Dues for 2009 are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountain wood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain new membership or renewal forms on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

Signing up beginning October through November 2008 provides membership valid for all of 2009.

JEWISHGEN ANNOUNCEMENTS

JewishGen made two recent announcements about JewishGen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR):

Firstly, an important enhancement was made to JOWBR's search capability: you can now search and filter by the name of the town of burial. This feature allows you to see all of the burials in a particular town, as well as filter searches by location.

Secondly, JOWBR has recently uploaded tens of thousands of new records. The searchable database now includes over one million burials in nearly 2,000 cemeteries and landsmanschaften plots worldwide. See <http://tinyurl.com/4ye4dy> for a list of all cemeteries, listed by country and then by city or region. The database is searchable at www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery.

Notable additions have been made for Canada, Hungary, Romania, and the United States. Almost 9,300 photos of matzevot (tombstones) have also been added to the database. Between August 2007 and July 2008, JOWBR added more than 272,000 burial records and almost 23,000 photos of the matzevot.

The announcement also states: "We are not slowing down after reaching the milestone of a million records; we are racing against time to record ever more cemeteries due to the effects of time, weather, and the destruction of cemeteries and graves by human hands".

JGSGW ARLINGTON CEMETERY WEBSITE

[This information comes to us via the newsletter, Mishpacha, of the JGS of Greater Washington.]

In May 2008, the family of the late Kenneth Poch donated his volumes of research materials to JGSGW leading to a website which identifies Jewish gravesites at Arlington National Cemetery. The web development was done by Ernie Fine, using Steve Morse's search engine. Researchers may type in as little as a last name to seek results. Because no computer printouts or publications were available providing a list of Jewish burials at Arlington National Cemetery, Ken walked the rows and identified Jewish graves by the Star of David on the grave marker. However, at the latest estimate, there are over 330,000 interments there and prior to WWI, grave markers in federal cemeteries were not permitted to have a religious designation.

Ken passed away in December, 2003, after more than ten years of research at this famous national cemetery and the data has not been updated since. His photographs are numerous, but they are all in print and film format; none of them is digital. Fortunately for us, members of our committee are prepared to research the missing pieces yielding more than half of Ken's photographs of the tombstones. Rabbi Marvin Bash, a member of JGSGW, also serves on the ANC Project Team. Rabbi Bash officiates at many funerals at the cemetery and he lends his expertise in dealing with cemetery resources.

In its present form, the JGSGW website lists only the person's name and grave site location, but in later releases, the site will include photos, family memories, and related documents. This announcement is intended to help gather additional names of Jewish patriots buried at Arlington that Ken may have overlooked or who were buried after Ken's death. You may visit the JGSGW Arlington Cemetery website at www.cygnet.org/anc2008 To submit additional names of persons buried at the cemetery, please use the forms available from the "Contact Us" page of the website.

The Veterans Administration has posted its *Gravesite Locator* and Ancestry.com has the same data (for a fee), but these are incomplete, do not indicate religion, and do not have photos or documents.

Marlene Bishow, Research Coordinator
and Arlington Cemetery Project Manager
< mlbishow@comcast.net >



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

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting on **Monday**, November 10, 2008
at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks,
7:00-9:00 p.m.

Note different day of week and later start time earlier start time!

"Abraham's Children: Race. Identity and the DNA of the Chosen People"

Can identity be found in a pinprick of DNA? What can genes tell us about our ethnic and religious roots—what used to be called our "race"? In **ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN**, author Jon Entine marries genealogy and genetics to vividly bring to life a new understanding of Western identity and the shared biblical ancestry of Jews and Christians. **ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN** uses the latest DNA technology to reconstruct genealogical trees and captivating family narratives. This is a biblical epic told through the prism of our genes. He examines the origins of many diseases, from breast cancer to brain disorders.

Speaker: Jon Entine, is an internationally respected author, consultant, and public policy expert focused on leadership, sustainability and science and society. He is an adjunct fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C. **Opportunity to purchase book and get it signed by the author—a great Holiday gift!**

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV.

For more information contact information@JGSCV.org

See: www.JGSCV.org or call Jan Meisels Allen @ 818-889-6616

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

**All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks**

- December 8, 2008: (Monday at 7:00 PM): Steve Morse speaking on "One-Step Web pages: A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools"
- January 4, 2009 (Sunday at 1:30 PM): Ron Arons speaking on "The 'Musical' Chicago and all that Genealogical Jazz"
- February 8, 2009 (Sunday at 1:30 PM): Arthur Benveniste speaking on "Secret Jews: History and Culture of Crypto-Jews"
- Subsequent meetings: March 1, 2009; April 5, 2009; May 3, 2009; June 7, 2009

2009 Membership Renewal Form

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

2009 Annual Dues:

Dues paid now are good through December 2009!

Check one:

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 to: Helene Rosen
28912 Fountainwood st.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Day telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

E-mail address _____

(This is very important as all communication is done by e-mail!)

SPECIAL ONE TIME OFFER:

**GIVE A CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP IN JGSCV AS A
CHANUKAH GIFT TO ANYONE OF YOUR CHOICE**

REMINDER TO REGISTER

Ralphs Community Contribution Program will support JGSCV through your purchases of goods at Ralphs markets, and at no cost to you. Please register for this community outreach program. Ralphs has updated it's website and community contribution program. The new website also saves you money with discounts and coupons. The step-by-step procedure to enroll is outlined on our website : www.jgscv.org and click on "notices."

Now whenever you shop at Ralphs, JGSCV will receive a percentage of what you spend.

DO YOU HAVE FAMILY ROOTS IN THE SOUTH?

A rather unknown source for Jewish genealogy is an on-going effort by the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL), with headquarters in Jackson MS (see www.isjl.org). Its History Department has undertaken the task of researching the history of every congregation and significant Jewish community in the South through the ISJL Digital Archive Project (<http://isjl.org/history/archive/index.html>). Currently, the following states and number of communities are included: Alabama (20), Arkansas (19), Louisiana (21), Mississippi (28), and Tennessee (13), with the plan to add other states in the future including: Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky. For each such community a history is presented with respect to the presence of Jewish settlers from as early as the mid 19th century. Individual names are cited as well as their associated businesses. Jewish institutions are enumerated.

An example serves to show the genealogical value of this database:

[GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI \(EXCERPTS\)](#)

Incorporated on February 16, 1844, Greenwood was home to a few early Jewish settlers. Ben Gerson came to this area in 1851, and he ran a general merchandise business in the budding town. By 1873, Greenwood had three dry goods stores; two of them had Jewish owners: M. Stein and Henry Sellinger. Henry's son E.S. Sellinger later became assistant chief of police of Greenwood. By the 1880s, more Jews continued to arrive in Leflore County including jeweler Charles Stein as well as the Ettinger and Aron families.....

With enough Jews between 1890 and 1910, Greenwood began to form the foundations of a Jewish community. In 1897, a group of merchants met in a store house and formed the first synagogue, a Reform temple named Beth Israel. This temple remained small throughout the twentieth century and held worship services on Friday nights and during the High Holidays while also providing a Sunday school, a youth group, and a woman's group. In 1907, the Orthodox congregation Ahavath Rayim was founded and featured traditional services in Hebrew frequently led by a resident rabbi. Both congregations not only served residents of Greenwood but also towns nearby like Itta Bena, Winona, Belzoni, Moorhead, Indianola, Sunflower, and many more. In addition, the two congregations shared members and were friendly to each other, welcoming children to joint youth group activities for example. Despite this cooperation, differing religious philosophies prevented the two from ever merging, which is quite an interesting phenomenon for such a small Jewish community.....

The current issue (October 2008) of the Smithsonian Magazine has an article "Secret of San Luis Valley," the discovery of a cancer gene (BRCA-1) among some Hispanic Catholics in southern Colorado which supports the theory that they are descended from "Secret Jews: who fled the Spanish Inquisition." The mutated gene is the same as is found in Ashkenazi Jews from Central and Eastern Europe. The article may be read at: <http://tinyurl.com/4ojo9p> .
Jan Meisels Allen

- We welcome new members: David and Sonia Hoffman, Ken Saul, Tammy Williams

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jan Meisels Allen, President	president@jgscv.org	Stewart Bernstein, Member-at-large	stewart@jgscv.org
Warren Blatt, Member Education	education@jgscv.org	Debra Kay Blatt, Information Chairman	information@jgscv.org
Dorothy Drilich, Secretary	secretary@jgscv.org	Werner Frank, Newsletter Editor	newslettereditor@jgscv.org
Fred Land, Treasurer	treasurer@jgscv.org	Helene Rosen, Membership	membership@jgscv.org

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