

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



# JGSCV

January 2022

Volume 17 Issue 4

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope everyone is well and staying safe!

JGSCV was privileged to have Giora Zwilling, Deputy Director of the Arolsen Archives (<https://arolsen-archives.org/en/>) talk about the archives and what is available online. Floriane Azoulay, Director of the Arolsen Archives, was originally scheduled to speak with us but (due to a reaction to the COVID-19 vaccination booster) she was unable to attend. We were delighted that Mr. Zwilling was able to step in and to talk with us. See page 4 for the highlights of the presentation.

The Arolsen Archives, formally known as the International Tracing Service, located in Bad Arolsen, Germany is an international center on Nazi persecution and answers questions on about 20,000 victims yearly. The archives are overseen by an 11-nation International Commission comprised of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They have a comprehensive online archive. In addition to talking about the records, Deputy Director Zwilling discussed their crowdsourcing initiative #everynamecounts, an initiative by the Arolsen Archives which aims to establish a digital memorial to the people persecuted by the Nazis.

Thank you to Warren Blatt for facilitating "ask the experts" session which began prior to the program.

We gave out the 12 Chanukah/membership gifts that were donated by our generous genealogical organizations. Those who drew the lucky numbers are listed with their gifts on page 9. We again thank the organizations for being so generous with their gifts.

Judy Karta, is the JGSCV 2021 Nominations Committee. Other members of the 2021 Nominations Committee are: Karen Lewy, and Pat Fuller. As there were no nominations from the floor at the November meeting, Judy presented the Nominations Committee report which was accepted by acclamation. Those nominated and accepted by the membership for the 2022-2024 JGSCV Board (it's a two-year commitment) are: Warren Blatt, Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion, and Israel "Issie" Perel. Andrea, Warren and Issie are current members of the board, Barbara is a new member to the board. The new board takes effect January 1, 2022. Per JGSCV by-laws at the JGSCV January Board meeting the board members will decide which assignments everyone has. Half the board is elected each year.

(Cont'd next page)

## NEXT MEETING

**Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**1:30-3:30 PM**



**Michael Tobias, OBE**  
*co-founder and Board Member of  
Jewish Records Indexing – Poland*

**Members Only ZOOM**

*More info page 10*

## FEBRUARY MEETING

**Speaker: Steve Morse**

*"Getting Ready for the 1950 Census Searching with  
and without a Name Index"*

## 2022 JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jan Meisels Allen, President and  
Program Chairman**  
[president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org)

**Helene Rosen, VP Membership,  
Zoom Coordinator**  
[membership@jgscv.org](mailto:membership@jgscv.org)

**Karen Lewy, Treasurer**  
[treasurer@jgscv.org](mailto:treasurer@jgscv.org)

**Debra Wenkart, Secretary**  
[secretary@jgscv.org](mailto:secretary@jgscv.org)

**Warren Blatt, Member Education**  
[education@jgscv.org](mailto:education@jgscv.org)

**Barbara Finsten,  
Member at Large**  
[Barbaraf@jgscv.org](mailto:Barbaraf@jgscv.org)

**Andrea Massion, Page 3 Curator**  
[Andrea@jgscv.org](mailto:Andrea@jgscv.org)

**Israel Perel, Librarian**  
[librarian@jgscv.org](mailto:librarian@jgscv.org)

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**Barbara Algaze, FSL**  
[barbara@jgscv.org](mailto:barbara@jgscv.org)

**Pat Fuller, Publicity**  
[publicity@jgscv.org](mailto:publicity@jgscv.org)

**Diane Goldin,  
Newsletter Editor**  
[newslettereditor@jgscv.org](mailto:newslettereditor@jgscv.org)

**David Oseas, Webmaster**  
[webmaster@jgscv.org](mailto:webmaster@jgscv.org)

### Mission Statement:

JGSCV is a non-profit organization run by enthusiastic volunteers dedicated to the sharing of genealogical information, techniques, and research tools with those interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Members who include beginners and experienced genealogists share with each other.

See the manifest on page two to find how to reach any of the board members as well as contact us on the JGSCV website <https://jgscv.org/contact.html>. *Note: there are two Barbara's – Barbara Algaze and Barbara Finsten – so watch the email address as Barbara Finsten has an "F" after Barbara@.*

We started our membership renewal in October for 2022 and of course anyone who joins now has their membership through December 2022! A renewal/membership form is on page 13. At the writing of this president's letter, we have 78 memberships/107 members-- about 69% who have renewed for 2022. We are a 501 (c)(3) and if you do deductions for your federal income tax you are eligible to deduct the dues; we are also a registered state non-profit organization and therefore, also eligible for that deduction- but please check with your tax advisor.

While the PayPal is not yet setup on the website, you do not have to wait for PayPal as you can still send in a check made out to JGSCV and send it to Helene –our membership vice president whose address is on the form. If you want to pay by cash, you can contact me and make an appointment to drop it off at my home if you are concerned about sending cash through the mail.

Hal Bookbinder's monthly article on Practicing Safe Computing is "*A Browser that will not track your every move*". See page 8 for the 74th issue of this interesting series.

While we rely on your dues to operate, we also need additional revenue to keep up with what we do. There are two opportunities further to assist your society. First, by shopping at Ralph's or Food for Less and listing JGSCV as your charity of choice. And second, when shopping at Amazon please do so through the Amazon Smile program. Neither of these opportunities cost you any additional money and both result in contributions to JGSCV. See "noteworthy" on our website <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html> for more information.

Our original January speaker, Robert Watson, was to present about the *Nazi Titanic*. He advised me this week that he was cancelling due to obligations involving travel. I am delighted to announce that Michael Tobias, OBE, from Glasgow, Scotland has agreed to present "*Ich Bin Ein Berliner: (Re)uniting Five Half-siblings from Four Different Mothers*". Please be on time as its 8.0 hours later in Glasgow than California when we start our meeting. Michael is the first person I interacted with when I started my genealogy adventure in 1998. He corrected me when I made one of the most common errors in beginning genealogy and in my very first posting on JewishGen I said that my grandfather "had his name changed at Ellis Island"! (Not true of course). Michael is a co-founder and Board Member of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (1995-); Vice President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (JGSGB 2019-); Former Vice President, Programming of JewishGen. Inc (1995-2018). See page 10 for more on Michael and program.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors have a very safe and healthy 2022!

*Jan Meisels Allen*



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### **Jewish Farming Collectives and the Soviet-Created Famine of 1932**

["The Hope and the Illusion"](#) chronicles the little-known but historically significant story of the attempt to create Jewish autonomous regions in Ukraine, Belorussia, the Crimea, and Birobidzhan during the period 1921-1938. The project recounts this history through texts and remarkable contemporary photographs - many of which have never before been published. Robert Singer, CEO of World ORT writes on the website: *"The history of the creation of Jewish autonomies on the territory of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s was consigned to oblivion for many years. Nevertheless, then this idea was greeted with enthusiasm not only by the Soviet, but also by the world community. ORT also got involved in helping the Jewish migrants at this difficult time."* See <http://ozet.ort.spb.ru/eng/> to read more.

The famine created by the Soviet Politburo began in 1932 when the Central government demanded all foods grown by farm cooperatives in Ukraine. Fifty Million soviet citizens died of starvation. Some of the photos in the ORT project (above) already show starving children and adults. It was suggested that the impetus for ORT to get involved in the Jewish farming collectives was to offset this damage before 1932. Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8c278h>

### **Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Righteous Gentile, WWII**

If you know of anyone who escaped the Holocaust via Portugal and/or is a likely Sousa Mendes visa recipient, please contact the Sousa Mendes Foundation. Chanan Tigay writes in the November 2021 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* about Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who was serving as a consul general in France when the Nazis invaded the country. Aristides was a twin, a devoted Catholic, sired 15 children and suspected he descended from conversos, Jews who had been forced to convert during the Spanish Inquisition. He fell into disrepute for disregarding a Portugal directive, Circular 14, effectively forbidding diplomats from offering visas to most refugees—especially Jews. He died in abject poverty with no pension. His surviving children and children of those he rescued kept his name alive. In 1966, the state of Israel honored him as a Righteous Among the Nations at Yad V'Shem. After years of silence, there is now a foundation, a museum in progress, and genealogical searches to find the stories of the estimated 30,000 refugees saved by the efforts of de Sousa Mendez. For more info, click here:

[Sousa Mendes Foundation](#)

Read Tigay's article here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p968abt>

### **The Rothschilds of Britain**

The British Rothschilds built their estate, Waddesdon completing it in 1883. During WWII it was home to 100 refugee children. Now a part of the National Trust, it is still managed and cared for by a Rothschild and is open to the public for garden and estate tours. The archives available here include family papers, great paintings and art, and world-class gardens. There is an excellent booklet that illustrates the story of the Rothschilds in Britain, their role in the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), the Zionist movement, and Israel's notable government buildings. Find it by following this link: <https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/house/the-rothschilds-at-waddesdon/>

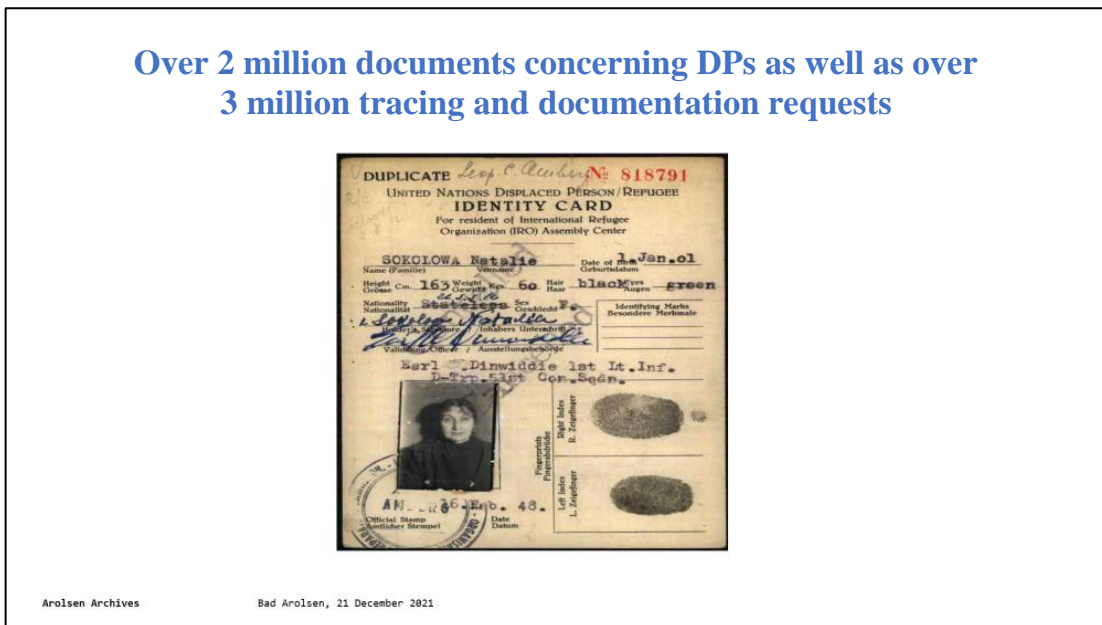


- Nazi Forced Labor—not Jewish slave labor, but those brought from Eastern Europe to work in the German Reich. The number of documents exceed 10 million. When the Allies took over the administration for the vanquished German Reich, they decreed that all the communes, cities have to list the names of non-Germans living in their communities.



- Displaced persons (DPs) documents-post World War II index card file of DPs in Germany and occupied territories. The information includes where they were during the war, relatives, preferred destination upon immigration. Unfortunately, some of the rescue organizations destroyed the information when the persons left Germany therefore, the collection is not complete. When information was needed from reclamation the rescue organizations ceased destroying the information.

They also have passenger lists when people left to go to America, Canada, Palestine, and other destinations.



The files were also used by the Allies for processing refugees from Hungary and Yugoslavia.

In the early years, the workers were mainly DPs. The DPs helped develop the way the Archive works up to today, until they went digital.

The International Red Cross (IRC) took over the administration and the DPs moved on. When the IRC took over the staff became almost exclusively German.

The ITS was established in 1948. There are 30 million documents on over 17.5 million people. A card was created alphabetically/phonetically for each name -even if it was misspelled. This resulted in the creation of the Central Name Index (CNI). There are 50 million cards, each one representing the **mentioning** of a person in a document and referencing 17.5 million individuals.

The requests were immense, and a large backlog ensued. The then-director of the IRC was not receptive to opening the archives. To allow faster work the ITS began digitizing their archives in 1990s.

Since 2019, these digitized records are known as the Arolsen Archives, but also remain the ITS. The Arolsen Archives are open and have broken with former ITS "images" of being closed.

Digitization permits the Archives to do more with the records. The goal is to have all of the core collection digitized by 2025, in house, by crowdsourcing and with cooperation of partners. For example, access for researchers have been simplified. The ITS used to be known as a closed archive. Today, one can use it online or apply for full access to the databank for limited time periods.

### **Online Archive**

Since 2015 the ITS has strived to place information online. At first, they were cautious and started with concentration camp documents. This was a vision of the executive director Floriane Azoulay, now all historical documents are being placed online. Currently, there are 30 million pages on the online archive, with 30 million personal searchable entries. Due to privacy issues, not placed online are the requests for information, although they hope to do that in the future, as well as medical files on DPs and forced labor individuals. They received no complaints from other archives and the Bundesarchiv (German National Archives) backed up the Arolsen Archives, which made the other German archives agree and allowed the Arolsen Archive to place the documents online.

The Archive gets updated every couple of months, with cooperation from Yad Vashem. Not all documents are yet online and not all those online are yet indexed. Therefore, Zwilling recommends checking the database for the names you are looking for every few months.

To fulfill the mandate to obtain information on all persecutees, they have copies of some documents, especially from outside western Europe. There are places with no documents, such as from Ukraine as written about in *Holocaust by Bullets* by Father DesBois or where the Soviets did not supply the information.

Now the ITS, as a hub, digitizes the records from Auschwitz, Stuthoff, deportees from IRC, and more.

Since the expansion of the online archive, they have over one million unique users in the past three years!

Once the IRC gave up its control, the Arolsen Archives is monitored by the International Commission of 11-member states: Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

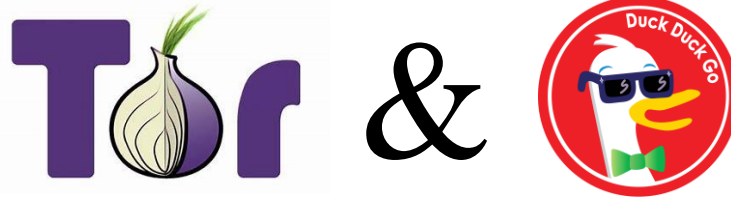
Financing for the Archives is totally from the Federal Republic of Germany government.

Each of the 11-member states- obtain one full copy of the archives annually. For example, in Israel, Yad Vashem holds the copy and in the United Kingdom, it is the Wiener Holocaust Library, in Belgium it is the state archive, in the USA it's the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, etc. It is a hard copy that is sent to the 11-member states' archives and therefore the records at Arolsen Archives may be more current than what the "country" archives have. With a change of system, they hope to change the time delay.



# Article #74: A Browser that will not track your every move

By Hal Bookbinder



In response to an email from the X-CHAIR folks about a \$500-off special, I clicked on the link to read more. Now, I am receiving regular X-CHAIR pop-ups. No doubt, you have had similar experiences. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Edge track your visits and provide these interminable ads. As you have undoubtedly heard, “If the product is free, you are the product!”

If you do not want to be tracked and do not want these pop-ups, use the Tor browser and associated DuckDuckGo search engine. They protect your privacy by routing you to a distant location (I often get routed as if I were in Germany). While some ads are displayed (they have to pay the bills), They do not track your searches and do not generate ongoing pop-up ads. You are also hidden as you surf the net.

There is no cost to the Tor browser or DuckDuckGo search engine. They were developed and maintained by folks who take privacy seriously, almost as a religion. I am no zealot. I use four browsers on my computer, Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Tor/DuckDuckGo. When I do not want to be tracked, I use Tor (“The onion router”), from The Tor Project, a 501(3)(c) organization.

Download Tor and DuckDuckGo at <https://www.torproject.org/download/>. Versions are available for Windows, MacOS, Linux and Android. In three years, I have encountered no issues with the Windows version. It takes a few extra seconds each time you invoke it as it creates a random hard-to-trace network routing. It then works like any other browser and search engine.

If Tor has routed you through Germany, you may see some results in German. If Holland, you may see some results in Dutch. Don’t let it throw you. It is working to anonymize you! As with any browser, once you connect to a site you run the risk of malware being transferred to your computer directly from that site. So, do not look at Tor as a way to safely visit risky sites.

If you think Google’s Incognito mode or Firefox’s Privacy mode are sufficient, consider this; while they claim not to record the sites you visit on your computer and to delete any cookies created at the end of your session, they do not make any commitments regarding whether your accesses are tracked for sale to their advertisers.

If you want to read more about Tor see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tor\\_\(network\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tor_(network)) and if you want to dig deeper, see <https://vpnoverview.com/privacy/anonymous-browsing/tor/>. Along with protecting your privacy, Tor can be used to access “onion” addresses on the dark web. For a quick overview of the dark web, see my November 2017 article, “[What is the Dark Web?](#)”

*This is the seventy-fourth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAJGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award, and his online skills are well documented. All the Safe Computing articles by Hal Bookbinder are available on the JGSCV website <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>.*

# JGSCV Updates



Thank you to Allan Linderman for his outstanding service to JGSCV both on the board of directors and as newsletter editor from June 2009 through the middle of 2021. TWELVE FANTASTIC YEARS!

In addition to his excellent newsletter skills, Allan provided input on a myriad of other JGSCV projects and was “always there” to conduct with membership surveys and help out with administrative issues. His guidance through the years has helped make JGSCV the success it is!

## Family Histories: Call for Entries

In July 2020, our speaker, Joan Adler, suggested members write down family memories and/or genealogical discoveries. We’ve published fascinating and personal family histories and would love to include more of these stories in this newsletter.

For ideas and assistance, please contact our newsletter editor, [Diane Goldin](mailto:Diane.Goldin@jgscv.org) and Jan Meisels Allen at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org).

## 2021 JGSCV Chanukah/Membership Gift Winners

The following are the JGSCV members whose names were drawn for a genealogical gift that was given to JGSCV by Ancestry, Fold3.com, Newspapers.com, MyHeritage, GENI, LegacySoftware, Legacy Webinars, Family Tree DNA and RootsMagic 8 software. (In alphabetical order by prize company):

Ancestry World Explorer Individual Subscription / Ruth Pollock

Ancestry DNA kit / Carol Flesher

Fold3.com Subscription / Sharlene Pass

Newspapers.com Subscription / Carole Brownstein

Family Tree Maker 2019 / Richard Hoffman

FamilyTree DNA certificate / Debra Wenkart

GENI Pro Subscription / Dan Kaufman

MyHeritage Complete Plan Subscription / Barbara Finsten

MyHeritage DNA kit / Michael Persky

Legacy Webinar Subscription / Sue Harris

Legacy Software / Barbara Harris

RootsMagic 8 software / Karen Franklin

# The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV) will hold a **Zoom Meeting**:

**Sunday, January 9, 2022, from 1:30-3:30 p.m.**

Open only to JGSCV Members (see below for membership application link)  
*Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 1:10 PM*

**Zoom link will be emailed to members before the meeting.**



## January Meeting

### Michael Tobias presents **Ich Bin Ein Berliner: (Re)uniting Five Half-siblings from Four Different Mothers**



In July 2020, during the Covid19 pandemic, a woman in the UK asked for help in identifying her newly discovered (via DNA) Jewish birthfather. She could not imagine the story about to unfold. In the next three weeks, following the DNA trail and building family trees for each of 8 significant DNA hits on 3 different websites, her ties to four half-siblings were identified, all sharing the same father but with four different mothers. To be certain of the connections between the DNA matches and the half-siblings, it was necessary to use the JRI-Poland database to create family trees going back to the late 1700s. In the process the accuracy of the DNA-estimated family relationships could be compared with the true family relationships and the impact of any endogamy could be analyzed.

**Speaker: Michael Tobias, OBE**, is a co-founder and Board Member of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (1995-); Vice President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (JGSGB 2019-); Honorary Research Fellow – Genealogical Studies, University of Strathclyde (2020-); Former Vice President, Programming of JewishGen, Inc (1995-2018). He was Database matching consultant to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims. Michael was awarded the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies Lifetime Achievement award in Washington in 2011. He was awarded the OBE for services to the Jewish Community in the Queen’s New Year Honors List 2021.

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual and \$35 for a family. Anyone may join JGSCV

<https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/membership%20application.pdf>

# 2022 JGSCV Meeting Dates



**ALL MEETINGS WILL BE RESERVED FOR MEMBERS ONLY VIA ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

**NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, December 12<sup>th</sup>  
1:30-3:30PM via Zoom**

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
<b>2022</b>		
January 9	Michael Tobias	Ich Bin Ein Berliner: (Re)uniting Five Half-siblings from Four Different Mothers
February 6	Steve Morse	Getting Ready for the 1950 Census Searching With and Without a Name Index
March 13	Chuck Weinstein	The Three Great Myths of Jewish Genealogy
April 3	TBA	
May 1	TBA	Annual Yom HaShoah program
June 5	TBA	
July 10	TBA	
August	NO Meeting IAJGS conference: August 21-25	
September 11	TBA	
October 9	TBA	
November 6	TBA	
December 11	TBA	Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party

# Genealogy Odds and Ends



מרכז עולמי לגנאלוגיה יהודית  
The Global Home for Jewish Genealogy

+100,000 records added to the Holocaust Database

JewishGen greatly appreciates that the Kamp Westerbork organization has permitted it to add more than 101,500 records to the JewishGen Holocaust Database. The data set consists of Westerbork victims deported from the Netherlands.

JewishGen Holocaust Database includes data from a variety of sources including museums, websites, historical organizations, individual researchers, and archives. Access it here:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/>

## The Wiener Holocaust Library

Located in the United Kingdom, The Wiener Holocaust Library is the oldest Holocaust archive in the world.

From its archival collection of Family Papers it has created a map which traces a refugee family or family member's journey with individual records related to a specific location and period within their travels.

Each record includes material such as letters, emigration documents, memoirs, photo albums, newspaper clippings, and interviews.

To search the map go to: <https://www.refugeemap.org/map>



## *Diarna: The Geo-Museum of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Life*

Diarna (ديارنا "Our homes" in Judeo-Arabic): The Geo-Museum of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Life is working to digitally preserve the physical remnants of Jewish history throughout the region. We are in a race against time to capture site data and record place-based oral histories before even the memories of these communities are lost.

Diarna pioneers the synthesis of digital mapping technology, traditional scholarship, and field research, as well as a trove of multimedia documentation. All of these combine to lend a virtual presence and guarantee untrammelled access to Jewish historical sites lest they be forgotten or erased. Explore by clicking this link:

<https://diarna.org/>

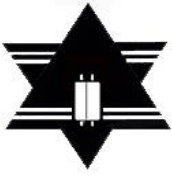
Formerly known as: *Diarna: Mapping Mizrahi Heritage*

## One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse

This genealogical research portal provides easy and alternative means for accessing family information. It is known as the *One-Step* website and can be accessed at:

<https://stevemorse.org>

Please note: *One-Step* recently moved to a new server causing delays, broken links, and being incorrectly flagged as spam on Facebook. Problems are now resolved.



## 2022 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](http://www.JGSCV.org)

**Dues paid now are good through December 2022**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:

This is a New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Single \$ 30.00 \_\_\_\_\_ + \$1.00\*\* Family\* \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_ + \$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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Security Fee Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for any 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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