

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



# JGSCV

November 2023

Volume 19 Issue 2

## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

We hope this finds you well and safe.

We are all horrified at the recent events in Israel. Our hearts are with our Israeli brethren, and we pray for their safety, the safe return of the hostages, and a just resolution of this conflict. As I drove past Temple Adat Elohim the other day, I was saddened to see that it was necessary to have local law enforcement outside the Temple due to rising concerns of antisemitism in this country.

Gesher Galicia posted a list of places to donate for those who are so inclined. While it is not a 100% comprehensive list, it is one with many organizations to contribute:

American Friends of Magen David Adom (Israel's Red Cross)

<https://afmda.org/>

Friends of Yashar LaChayal

<https://yasharlachayal.org/>

Hadassah

<https://www.hadassah.org/>

UJA-Federation Israel Emergency Fund

<https://www.ujafedny.org/israel-emergency-fund>

Friends of IDF

<https://www.fidf.org/>

JNF (Jewish National Fund)

<https://my.jnf.org/gaza-emergency/Donate>

United Hatzalah (EMS/ambulance service)

<https://israelrescue.org/>

(on donor-advised funds: Friends of United Hatzalah)

Colel Chabad

<https://colelchabad.org/>

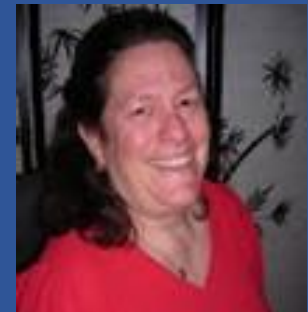
The Nominations Committee has presented recommendations for the four board slots open for election. We have eight people on the board and half of the two-year positions are up for election each year. Our bylaws permit no less than six or more than twelve elected by membership. If someone who is eligible—all eligible members received the letter from Nominations Chairperson Sonia Hoffman—wants to have their name added for consideration, they may do so in person at the November 6th meeting. There is still an opportunity to serve by Nominations from the floor at the November meeting, but you can let Sonia ([Sonia@jgscv.org](mailto:Sonia@jgscv.org)) and me ([president@JGSCV.org](mailto:president@JGSCV.org)) know before then.

(Cont'd next page)

## **NEXT MEETING**

**Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 PM**

*"Bubbie, Who are You?  
Finding the Maiden Names in your  
Family Tree"*



*Presented by  
Janice Sellers*

More info page 8

## **DECEMBER MEETING**

*Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party*

[WWW.JGSCV.ORG](http://WWW.JGSCV.ORG)

6052 Hackers Lane  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301  
[818-889-6616](tel:818-889-6616)

## 2023 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)

**Janet Fishman, 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  
Member at Large**  
[Andrea@jgscv.org](mailto:Andrea@jgscv.org)

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

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**Nancy Goldberg, temp FSL**  
[Nancy@jgscv.org](mailto:Nancy@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.

At that time, elections will be closed, and the election will be held at the December meeting. The new board takes over in January. Per JGSCV's bylaws, the board will decide who holds which position at the board's January meeting. Therefore, when you vote for a person on the board it is not for a specific responsibility. The results will be announced in the February issue of *Venturing Into Our Past*, on our website and in a president's email.

We started our membership renewal last month for 2024 and of course anyone who joins starting in November has their membership through December 2024! A renewal/membership form is on page 11. Thank you to those who have already renewed!

You can 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. We will continue to have genealogical Chanukah gifts for those who renew/join by the December meeting and attend the December program. JGSCV has received gifts from Ancestry; My Heritage- complete annual subscription, Legacy Software, Legacy webinar one-year subscription; DNA tests, and more on the way! Each of these prizes are valued from \$120 to \$450 -- all way above the cost of a JGSCV subscription!

I am in touch with Temple Adat Elohim for meeting dates in 2024. In the meantime, hold the first Sunday of the month as a rule—we do vary if there is a major holiday on that date and we do meet on Monday evenings several times a year, including this November 6th!

With COVID on the rise again, JGSCV is requiring you to wear masks and strongly encourages you to have been vaccinated and boosted—we are a group that is predominately over 50 and with ageing comes some affiliated health issues.

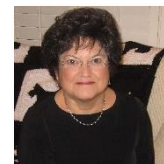
We have had several resignations from the Publicity Committee. We have several members who help us email our meeting notice to local libraries, senior centers, synagogues, etc. It takes less than 2 hours a month. We will provide you with the meeting announcement and the list of places to email it to. If you are willing to help, please contact me at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org).

Hal Bookbinder continues his interesting column on Practicing Safe Computing on page 6. This month's article is on "23andMe Personal Data Exposure" and is the 96<sup>th</sup> article in his series.

Remember that the Auschwitz exhibit at the Reagan Museum has been extended through January 28th. It is in our backyard so everyone should take advantage of this opportunity. See: <https://tinyurl.com/mtvh238n>

Looking forward to seeing you at our November 6th meeting with Janice Sellers presenting "Bubbie, Who Are You? Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree."

*Jan Meisels Allen*



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# ***Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass***

## **85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, November 9-10**

This year marks the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht. Kristallnacht, "Night of Crystal" or "Night of Broken Glass," took place on November 9 and 10, 1938. Jews were terrorized throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia that were occupied by German troops. At least 91 Jews were killed in the attacks, and 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were ransacked. The attackers demolished buildings with sledgehammers. Over 1,000 synagogues were burned (95 in Vienna alone) and over 7,000 Jewish businesses destroyed or damaged.

According to the Free Dictionary, Herschel Grynszpan a 17-year-old Jew, assassinated the third secretary at the German embassy in Paris on November 7, 1938, to avenge the expulsion of his parents and 15,000 other Polish Jews to German concentration camps. This gave the Nazis the excuse they were waiting for and Goebbels urged Storm Troopers to stage violent reprisals--which resulted in Kristallnacht.

Kristallnacht marked the transition in Nazi policy. It was the first violent pogrom (riot) on Western European soil in hundreds of years. Immediately after Kristallnacht, a fine of one billion marks was levied, not upon the criminals, but upon the victims, the Jewish community of Germany. Nazi policy had now moved into the overt destruction of all Jewish life in the Third Reich.

To read more about Kristallnacht see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht> and <https://tinyurl.com/ybhwfeu4> for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum write up.

While there are commemorations throughout the US and other countries, it is best to Google for this to find out what is happening closest to you to commemorate Kristallnacht. For Los Angeles 2023 the Holocaust Museum of Los Angeles is holding a free virtual event on October 22-December 2023—see: <https://www.holocaustmuseumla.org/>

November 8, 2023, 7:00PM Loyola Marymount University Ahmanson Auditorium 18th annual Kristallnacht Commemoration " Henry Morgenthau and Franklin Roosevelt: friendship, politics, bureaucracy, and the creation of the War Refugee Board"

<https://bellarmine.lmu.edu/jewishstudies/events/annualkristallnachtcommemoration/>



*The shattered stained-glass windows of the Zerrennerstrasse synagogue after its destruction on Kristallnacht. Pforzheim, Germany, ca. November 10, 1938.*

# Highlights from: *“Reaching Rebecca: Missing Relatives and Mental Illness in Genealogical Research”*

By Debra Wenkart

Andrea Massion, board member of JGSCV, introduced us to her great aunt, Rebecca, during an informative presentation at the October 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Andrea shared that she’s been on a 20-year quest to substantiate Rebecca’s life story, all spurred by a 1905 photograph of her known ancestors along with a young woman no one knew anything about.

Andrea shared that there may be many reasons for a relative’s story to be lost. They could have been “black sheep” -- a person who has brought shame on the family and thus, were rejected. It may be difficult to find this person as there may be unknown surnames or locations, or few family photos. It may be family lore that tells the story.

But it could also be mental illness. Andrea continued with a brief history of mental illness in the United States and the options families chose, including home care and asylums. She talked about the need to tell these stories and to include these family members in our genealogical research, and shared a short bibliography of published stories that speak to the discovery of mentally ill kin.

So, who was the young girl in the family photo taken in Balta, Ukraine around 1905? Andrea remembered meeting all her

paternal grandmother’s siblings as a young child and could identify them in photos. The young girl was not any one of them. She asked her father and his siblings and their cousins, and none of them knew who she was either. However, her name, Rebecca, appeared with the family on their Galveston, Texas Passenger Index and it later appeared on her father’s Naturalization papers.



*Andrea Massion's Great Aunt Rebecca in 1905*

After the 1930 census, there was no sign of Rebecca. Andrea combed a bevy of Colorado newspapers, city directories and even records in New York, Pennsylvania and the neighboring states for an obit or news of this relative. Years passed and as the state of Colorado digitalized and upgraded their historical marriage

records, the search was complicated by no less than three marriages. Each time a license record was found, it was back to researching the married names.

But a big break came and the “brick wall” came down when the 1950 census came out. Rebecca was listed by her 3<sup>rd</sup> husband’s surname as an inmate at the infamous Colorado State Hospital for the Insane in Pueblo, Colorado: the same in the

1940 Census. Her third husband lived there as well.

Andrea shared suggestions on finding archived hospital records, and both the joy and sadness of reading them. Rebecca's records revealed a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder. She died in 1956 of cancer while institutionalized and still married.

Andrea urged genealogists to ask in interviews if a family history of a medical or mental health diagnosis is known. This will allow for early recognition and intervention so that a person might receive earlier, more effective treatment. There shouldn't be any shame. By sharing, the family can begin a healing process. Today, Aunt Rebecca would have benefited from 21<sup>st</sup> century

medication and been able to live outside of an institution. But Andrea's sister Lisa (1951-2021) did not benefit from Rebecca's medical history. Her diagnosis? Schizoaffective disorder.



*Residences at Colorado State Hospital circa 1935*



*Andrea Massion has been researching family history for over 25 years. She is an engaging storyteller and a frequent contributor to JGSCV's newsletter. She was published in the NGS Journal in 2020. Andrea is retired from 30 years working in Jewish Music education, and public-school library management. Her research on the Jewish community of Iowa Center, Wyoming can be found at the Chugwater Museum in Wyoming, USA and in the National Library of Israel.*

# Practicing Safe Computing Article #96: “23andMe personal data exposure”

By Hal Bookbinder



On October 6, 2023, 23andMe announced, “We recently learned that certain 23andMe customer profile information that they opted into sharing through our **DNA Relatives feature**, was compiled from individual 23andMe.com accounts without the account users’ authorization.” [Read more here.](#)

On October 9, 2023, they issued an update noting that their investigation continues and, “We are reaching out to our customers to provide an update on the investigation and to encourage them to take additional actions to keep their account and password secure. Out of caution, we are requiring that all customers reset their passwords and are encouraging the use of multi-factor authentication (MFA).”

The announcement did not share specifically what data was compromised, or that this data is now available for sale on the dark web. Possibly, a further update from 23andMe by the time you read this will include this. The updates thus far have neither been forthcoming, nor complete. The tone of the updates seems to shift blame to the user, rather than taking any corporate responsibility.

According to Bill Toulas at *bleepingcomputer.com*, “Late last month, a threat actor leaked 23andMe customer data in a CSV file named 'Ashkenazi DNA Data of Celebrities.csv' on hacker forums. The file allegedly contained the data of nearly 1 million Ashkenazi Jews who used 23andMe services to find their ancestry info, genetic predispositions, and more.” [Read more here.](#)

The threat actor apparently obtained passwords that were exposed on other sites and reused on 23andMe. They were then able to retrieve publicly available personal information that users share to facilitate links, including full name, year of birth, city and state, and ancestry information. I have 1,504 DNA “relatives” in 23andMe and so if any of them were hacked, my public information could be seen.

My password on 23andMe is long, complex, and unique. However, this does not protect me from exposure of my publicly available information as others among my 1,504 “relatives” likely reuse passwords and may have been hacked elsewhere. While I considered hiding my public information, or even turning off the DNA Relatives feature, in the end I decided against this.

As genealogists, we know that the publicly facing information in 23andMe is easily found elsewhere on the web. Look yourself up in <https://www.fastpeoplesearch.com/> and you will likely find your name, contact information, even month and year of birth. However, I am disappointed with 23andMe for its lack of internal mechanisms to catch such mass extraction of data, and for its lack of transparency.

In the end, we may learn that the issue with 23andMe goes deeper than the reuse of passwords. At this point, it is too early to speculate. This situation does highlight, however, the need for each of us to use unique, complex passwords for each site that we access, to employ MFA, and to be conscious of the information we share publicly, recognizing that once it is out there, where it will end up is anybody’s guess.

As can be expected in our litigious society, several class-action lawsuits have already been filed against 23andMe. [Read more here.](#)

*This is the ninety-sixth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAIGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAIGS 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

## We could use your help:

1. We need someone to volunteer with Issie Perel to record (audio and video) our meetings. This can be done this using a smart phone. Files can be transferred to Jan's computer by USB or other means. (She has a PC not a MAC so it has to be compatible.)
2. We have had several resignations from the Publicity Committee. We have several members who help us send out by email our meeting notice to local libraries, senior centers, synagogues, etc. It takes less than 2 hours a month. We will provide you with the meeting announcement and the list of places to email it to. If you are willing to help, please contact Jan at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org)

## 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](#) and Jan Meisels Allen at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org).

## Community Contribution Program

Whether you are a friend or member we appreciate your support and hope you will sign up for Ralphs and Food-for-Less community programs.

These programs give donations to JGSCV when you shop.

For more information and signing up go to JGSCV's website under Noteworthy <https://jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>.



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

will hold **an In-Person** meeting at  
Temple Adat Elohim, 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive in Thousand Oaks

**Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00 p.m.**  
Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 6:40 PM

**NOTE THE EVENING MEETING TIME**



**NOVEMBER PROGRAM**

***Bubbie, Who Are You?:  
Finding the Maiden Names  
in Your Family Tree***



*Janice Sellers*

**The Program:**

Female relatives can be difficult to trace, but they can be found. This presentation introduces resources for tracing the women in your family, many of which are available online, including family items, oral histories, federal and state census records, immigration records, vital records, religious records, journals, newspapers, legal and court records, library archives, and manuscript collections.

**The Speaker:**

Janice M. Sellers is related to actor Peter Sellers and to John of Gaunt, son of a king and father of a king. At least that's what her grandparents told her. Unfortunately, they were wrong, but that's why she has researched her family for 48 years and now helps others find the right pieces to fit their genealogy puzzles. She specializes in Jewish, Black, forensic, and newspaper research and has taught at local to international levels. Her site is [ancestraldiscoveries.com](http://ancestraldiscoveries.com).

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>

For more information contact: [information@JGSCV.org](mailto:information@JGSCV.org) or call  
Jan Meisels Allen: 818-889-6616 or visit: [www.JGSCV.org](http://www.JGSCV.org)



## 2023 JGSCV Meeting Dates

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6**  
**\*\*7PM-9PM\*\* at Temple Adat Elohim**

### 2023 Meetings

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
November 6 7:00-9:00pm	Janice Sellers	<i>Bubbie, Who Are You?</i> <i>Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree</i>
December 3 2:30-4:30 pm	TBA	Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party

# Genealogy Odds and Ends

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

## NY Jewish Week

100 years after deadly Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, its Jewish and Italian workers get a memorial.

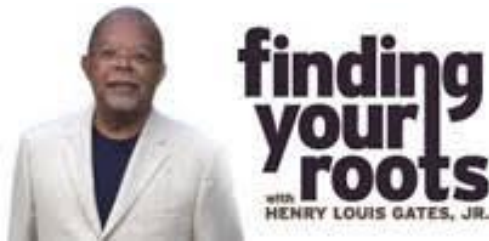
[https://www.jta.org/2023/10/12/ny/100-years-after-deadly-triangle-shirtwaist-factory-fire-its-jewish-and-italian-workers-get-a-memorial?utm\\_source=JTA\\_Maropost&utm\\_campaign=JTA\\_DB&utm\\_medium=email&mpweb=1161-63207-330044](https://www.jta.org/2023/10/12/ny/100-years-after-deadly-triangle-shirtwaist-factory-fire-its-jewish-and-italian-workers-get-a-memorial?utm_source=JTA_Maropost&utm_campaign=JTA_DB&utm_medium=email&mpweb=1161-63207-330044)

### NYC STREET MAP: A CITY APP NOW LETS YOU LOOK AT HISTORICAL STREETS

Available on desktops and mobile devices, the tool offers a digital compilation of the entire history of New York City's 32,000-plus streets.

Users can access detailed street schematics, explore historic maps from the early 1900s, and view modifications over the years.

<https://citymonitor.ai/environment/nyc-street-map-historical-streets>



Season 10 Premieres in  
January 2024 on PBS

*New episodes dive into the ancestral backgrounds and stories of 18 celebrity guests and -- for the time in show history -- three members of the viewing public's family history.*

Check your local PBS schedule.

<https://tinyurl.com/ycx756zk>

## The Legal Genealogist®



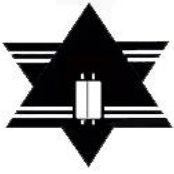
***Change your password.***

<https://www.legalgenealogist.com/2023/10/08/change-your-password/>

*(Also see Hal Bookbinder's article on page 6)*

PORTUGAL MOVES TO END SEPHARDIC JEWISH CITIZENSHIP LAW

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/portugal-moves-to-end-sephardic-jewish-citizenship-law/>



# 2024 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 2024**

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.)

\_\_\_\_\_