We hope this finds you well and safe.

We continue to be horrified by the war in Israel. Our hearts are with our Israeli brethren, and we pray for their safety, the safe return of the hostages, and for a just resolution of this conflict. As reported in November 2023 (Volume 19 #2) Venturing Into our Past, we listed recommendations from Gesher Galicia of suggested charities to support, for those who are so inclined. Please click here for that list (on page 1.)

This conflict has hit close to home. Members who live locally are aware that a neighbor, Paul Kessler, died after a confrontation at an Israeli-Palestinian demonstration. The confrontation happened at a well-known intersection here. Mr. Kessler was struck on the head and subsequently fell on the concrete. He died from his injuries the following day. A suspect has been arrested and charged with two felonies: involuntary manslaughter and battery causing serious bodily injury.

On November 6th JGSCV was treated to Janice Sellers presenting Bubbie, Who Are You? Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree. Her handout is on our website, https://www.jgscv.org/meetings-prior.html with November 6th date.

The Nominations Committee presented its recommendations to the membership at the November meeting. No one from the floor responded when asked if anyone else wanted to serve. Then nominations were closed. The election will occur at our December 3rd meeting.

Five people are nominated: Steve Feldman, DVM, Diane Goldin, Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion and Issie Perel. Two of the nominees would be new to the board: Steve Feldman and Diane Goldin. Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion, and Issie Perel are current members of the board whose two-year terms are expiring at the end of this year. See page 3 for the bios for the slate. We are indeed fortunate to have a group of people who wish to serve on our board.

Half of the board is elected every two years. Board members whose terms are not expiring this year are: Jan Meisels Allen, Janet Fishman, Helene Rosen, and Debra Wenkart. 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 the president’s email.

(Cont’d next page)
The board determines which person serves in which role at our first board meeting of 2024. We thank Warren Blatt for his years of service on our board.

We started our 2024 membership renewal in October. Anyone who joins now 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!

We will be meeting via Zoom the first Sunday of January, February and March 2024. This is because Temple Adat Elohim’s Social Hall is unavailable. As of yet, we don’t know the Social Hall’s availability from April-July, therefore, it is possible we will hold additional meetings via Zoom. I know this not as good as in-person meetings, however, holding meetings via Zoom permits us to have speakers from afar without the travel and lodging costs that are entailed with in person speakers.

Hal Bookbinder continues his interesting column on Practicing Safe Computing on page 6. This month’s article is on “Translation Tools” and is the 97th article in his series.

Our December 3rd speaker is Hal Bookbinder speaking on “Practicing Safe Computing in the age of Artificial Intelligence”. His handout is posted to the JGSCV website https://www.jgscv.org/meetings.html under next meeting and following the meeting it will be moved to prior meetings. See page 8.

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.

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

Have a Happy Thanksgiving! Happy Chanukah! For our non-Jewish members and friends, have a happy holiday!

Looking forward to seeing you on December 3rd.

Jan Meisels Allen
Forthcoming JGSCV Elections

As per the JGSCV Bylaws, a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Sonia Hoffman, (with board member Debby Wenkart and general member Allan Linderman) has recommended the following slate of individuals to fill the 2-year positions on the JGSCV board effective January 1, 2024.

At the November 6th JGSCV meeting a call for additional nominations from the floor resulted in no responses. Then all nominations were closed. The board is currently set at eight elected members. The JGSCV By-Laws permit 6-12 elected board members with two appointed board members with the consent of the board. The following individuals are recommended by the Nominating Committee—for two-year terms. Elections will be held at the December 3, 2023, meeting. At the initial 2024 board meeting the board will determine the various officer and non-officer board positions. The positions will be reported to the membership in the February 2024 Venturing Into Our Past.

Candidate bios:

Steven Feldman, DVM

Steve Feldman, DVM has been researching genealogy seriously for at least five years. He has been a member of JGSCV during that period and has connected with many cousins through DNA. Steve and his spouse Betty have three adult children and owned a small animal clinic outside Washington, DC for 21 years. Moving to Thousand Oaks in 2002, Steve served as Deputy Chief Veterinarian for the City of Los Angeles Animal Services until his retirement just before the pandemic. Shelter medicine, surgery, and forensic investigations comprised his work there. Supervision of other veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians were also his responsibilities. He has experience as an executive board member on several nonprofits, including stints as secretary-treasurer. Besides expanding his genealogical roots for his family as well as several friends, his other interests include gardening, hiking at the family cabin located in a Sierra sequoia grove, and writing a history book about Los Angeles animal shelters. The pet family includes two rescued cats and two rescued dogs. Steve looks forward to the monthly JGSCV meetings to expand his genealogy knowledge and is looking forward to helping the organization.

Barbara Finsten

Barbara Finsten was an elementary school teacher for 38 years. Since retiring seven years ago, Barbara made it her goal to create a family tree for her grandchildren. That is when she joined JGSCV and began her genealogy research using the information she gleaned from the many wonderful speakers at the JGSCV meetings. Barbara copies many of the electronic newsletters for our permanent library and places them in the JGSCV journal and newsletter binders located at the Agoura Hills Library.

Diane Goldin

Diane Goldin has been editor of the JGSCV Newsletter, Venturing Into Our Past, for three years and a member of the society since 2019. She became fascinated by her ancestors’ stories as a child, including the one about her great-grandmother who carried three babies across Russia to get on a boat to America. Diane began her formal research in 2012 when her husband gifted her a DNA test kit. In the decade since, she has researched her tree to include nearly 2,000 members and has connected with several second cousins she hadn’t known of previously. She hopes to contribute to JGSCV’s continued quality programming, with a specific interest in the intersection of DNA results and technology. Diane earned a degree in English Literature and, after raising her children, worked in senior healthcare. She is a State-Certified Ombudsman for long-term care services of Ventura County and is passionate about dignity in end-of-life care.

Andrea Massion

Andrea Massion has been a member of JGSCV since 2014 and would love to continue serving on its Board. Andrea has been researching family history for over 25 years. Since retiring to Ventura County from Los Angeles, she has coordinated “Feeding the Family Tree,” a vintage recipe book (available free at JGSCV.org) and participated in creating genealogy displays at the Agoura Library on behalf of the society. Her research on the Jewish community of Iowa Center, WY and can be found at the Chugwater Museum in WY and in the National Library of Israel. Andrea has enjoyed presenting at both JGSCV meetings and at several international conferences and contributes to the society newsletter regularly.

Israel “Issie” Perel

Israel “Issie” Perel Ph.D. is on the JGSCV board as well as JGSCV librarian. As librarian he coordinates with the Agoura Hills Community Librarian Manager in maintaining the JGSCV library. Issie has been involved in family genealogy research for twelve years. He discovered numerous cousins in Europe through his genealogy research. Issie received his B.Sc. degree from McGill University in Montreal, Canada and his Ph.D. degree in Psychology from University of California, Santa Barbara. He is on the board of the Ray Hosford Foundation at UCSB.
It was a dark and cloudy night when Janice M. Sellers of Ancestral Discoveries (http://www.ancestraldiscoveries.com) traveled from Oregon to speak at the JGSCV November 2023 meeting.

Fortunately, there is nothing dark or cloudy about Miss Sellers. Energetic and enthusiastic, she generously shared ideas for genealogy research with an emphasis on finding the maiden names of female relatives. Her talk, “Bubbie, Who Are You? Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree” gave us new ways to uncover matriarchs in our family tree.

Janice is the former editor of ZichronNote, the quarterly journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society (SFBAJGS). Additionally, she is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, Council for the Advancement of Forensic Genealogy, Genealogical Speakers Guild and the Genealogical Forum of Oregon.

In her handout, she states “you say you’ve checked all the available sources for your ancestor’s maiden name.... “If you haven’t checked for every possible record and looked at every possible clue, you aren’t yet through.”

Throughout her presentation, Janice reminded us to keep in mind name variations, name changes and transliterations when perusing all records, and to be vigilant about the real possibility of typos and errors. She followed with examples of these suggestions and how to spot names and follow up on these names.

Beginning with sources from home or a relative’s home, Janice listed photos with writing, scrapbooks, funeral cards and even bookplates in old books. Diaries and address books can also provide names to follow, and then of course, family lore.

Many of those stories are partially or entirely true and merit research to confirm the information.

Her list of vital records included burial records and finding out where mortuary records have been stored or archived, whether local or state.
Marriage-related records include not only licenses, affidavits for civil ceremonies and marriage certificates, but also wedding announcements in local papers and newsletters. Even witnesses’ names may provide a clue to maiden surnames.

Another interesting method shared by Janice was to look up records of any siblings. You may find different maiden names listed on different siblings’ records and will then have to resolve conflicting evidence. Also, parents’ names could appear on public records.

Social security applications also include the mother’s maiden name. See link in item #1 in next column.

Janice then discussed death and estate records as well as probate and court records. She advises looking for names of in-laws, cousins, or any related person to find possible surnames to verify. She reminded us to:

- Look for informant on a death certificate.
- Mortuary: who paid for the funeral?
- Note names in nearby cemetery plots.
- Look for probate records of many relatives to see if a name is revealed.
- Any parole reports?
- Divorce or legal separation records
- Sanitarium/Asylum records
- And again, newspaper announcements and searches!

Janice’s handout is full of specifics, and she is generous with her knowledge. Among her suggestions, Janice included the following pointers:

1. Consider Social Security applications (not just death indexes) which may contain maiden names, parents’ names, and addresses. (federal record) https://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=5057

2. Genealogy and historic journals published by local or state societies as a source for names. Check the local libraries and archives of your locations of interest.

3. Compile a visual timeline of the female ancestor with events, locations, and male names to determine if there are holes in the research.

4. Consider surname variations on naturalization records, passenger indexes.

5. Found a good lead? Verify!

Above is a 1942 Social Security Application with two surnames identified.

Janice M. Sellers specializes in Jewish, Black, forensic, and newspaper research and has taught at local to international levels. Visit her website Ancestral Discoveries: http://www.ancestraldiscoveries.com/
Practicing Safe Computing Article #97:
“Translation tools”

By Hal Bookbinder

My Bookbinder / Buchbinder (Букбиндер) ancestors lived for hundreds of years in Dubno, a town in Rivne Oblast, Ukraine, that was part of historic Volhynia. While my immediate ancestors left prior to WWI, scores of relatives were murdered there in the Holocaust. One of the few who survived was Sheva Beinstock. With her blond hair and Arian looks, she passed as a Christian farmworker.

In 2018, I visited Dubno with my cousin, Boris Fradkin, the son of Sheva. Erna, a friend of his who lives in Dubno served as our guide. I continue to exchange regular emails with Erna. As she does not read English, we communicate in Ukrainian. At first, I used Google Translate to convert her emails to English and mine into Ukrainian. I have since switched to DeepL Translator.

While most of Google’s translations were reasonable, a few were laughably garbled. I found that DeepL provided more consistently credible translations. Google, however, handles 133 languages, including Hebrew and Yiddish; DeepL handles 31. Both provide for translation from images as well as text. So, either can be used to translate a photo of a gravestone or an image of a printed page.

On October 7, a heroic Israeli nurse was severely wounded by rampaging terrorists as she tended to wounded soldiers in Zikim, near Gaza. Controlling the bleeding with a tourniquet, she continued to direct first aid. I used Google Translate to read an image of the Hebrew news article that her mother shared. Here is the amazing story of my cousin, Michal Elon, as covered in the Times of Israel (in English).

To use the text translation version of Google Translate or DeepL Translator, copy or type the text to be translated into the left panel and the translated text will appear in the right panel. To use the image translation facility of Google, select “Images”; for DeepL, select “Translate Files”. Then, drag and drop the image file into the indicated window. Either may have difficulty translating unclear or fuzzy images.

I even challenged Google Translate to handle the following, carefully written, cursive Cyrillic:

Переплетники and, it correctly translated, “Periplichek,” as “Bookbinders”

This appears at the top of the entry for my family members in the 1850 Russian Revision List (Census) for Dubno and is apparently a translation of the surname, which would be meaningless to the Russian ear.

At this time of year, charities ramp up their efforts. Please exercise care in selecting charities to which to donate. Some are out-and-out scams. Others spend an obscene amount on fundraising and administration. Still others do not explain how donations will be spent. “Charity Review Websites” (if this link takes you to the first page of the Newsletter, go to page 10) provides considerations and tools to see that your donations make the most difference. Note that the link for IRS charity filings in that article is out of date. Please use https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/.

Happy Chanukkah, Merry Christmas, and a most Happy, healthy, and especially peaceful 2024.
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.

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

Joan Adler, our June 2020 speaker, suggested our members write up memories and genealogical discoveries to publish in our newsletter.

We would love to include more of these personal, unique, and fascinating memories.

We are eager to help you!

Please send to Diane at newslettereditor@JGSCV.org and Jan at president@jgscv.org

Thank you,
Warren Blatt!

We appreciate your many years of service on the JGSCV Board.
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, CA 91362

Sunday, December 3rd from 2:30-4:30PM
Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 2:10 PM

Genealogical Chanukah gifts will be by name drawing at end of Dec meeting. Must be renewed for 2024 by Dec 3rd and present when name is called.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

“Practicing Safe Computing in the age of Artificial Intelligence”

Hal Bookbinder

The Program:

Genealogists depend on reliable computing, data storage, and access across the Internet. Cybercrime and cyberterrorism have resulted in service disruptions, personal data being exposed, and millions of dollars in ransom being paid. In October 2023, it was learned that significant public-facing customer data had been extracted from 23andMe and was now available on the Dark Web. As the sophistication of cybercriminals grows, this will likely get worse. Scams can also challenge us, and Artificial Intelligence will make current scams more dangerous and will introduce new ones. Even in the absence of bad actors, computers become corrupt and storage devices fail resulting in the potential loss of years of genealogical research. This talk discusses the risks, the myths, ways to reduce the likelihood of being hacked, and how to minimize the impact of data breaches, network, and computing failures that cooccur. To see all of Hal’s articles go to:

https://tinyurl.com/5n7b22hj

The Speaker

Hal is a retired information systems professional who continues to instruct at the university level. For twenty years he volunteered at LA’s Midnight Mission, assisting those in addiction recovery in their transition back into the work world. He has been actively researching his genealogy for more than three decades, identifying over 4,000 relatives and tracing two lines to the mid-1700s in modern Ukraine. He is a past president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles (JGSLA) and of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS). Hal publishes a series of monthly articles on safe computing which are freely available on the JGSCV website. He and his wife, Marci, were raised in the Catskills of New York State, in the famed “Borsht Belt”. After attending New York University and a four-year stint in the US Air Force tracking satellites from inside Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado, they have lived in the Los Angeles area. In 2018, he made a journey to Ukraine, visiting various areas of the former Volhynia and Podolia where his family had lived for hundreds of years.

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

December 2024

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST
## 2023-2024 JGSCV Meeting Dates

### NEXT MEETING:

**Sunday, December 3** 2023  
**2:30-4:30PM** at Temple Adat Elohim

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>2:30-4:30 pm</td>
<td>Hal Bookbinder</td>
<td>“Practicing Safe Computing in the age of Artificial Intelligence” + Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party</td>
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### 2024 Meetings

**Jan – March via Zoom due to play rehearsal in Temple social hall**

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<td><strong>August</strong></td>
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The 2024 International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) annual conference will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from August 18 to 22, 2024.
New resource for descendants of Baghdadi and Calcutta Jewry

https://perlscalcuttajews.com/

Jim Berk to Head Simon Wiesenthal Center, Succeeding Rabbi Marvin Hier


The Faith Museum explores the myriad ways in which faith has shaped lives and communities across Britain through rarely seen objects, national treasures, personal testimonies and contemporary commissions.


Deputy Archivist of the United States Debra Steidel Wall Retires


One-Third of US Newspapers As of 2005 Will Be Gone By 2024

https://eogn.com/page-18080/13280708

December 2024
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

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.)

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________