



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The JGSCV is a community resource and we hope you agree. We want you to know this is *your* genealogy society. Please let us know what you want to learn and what type of programs you would like to have. We have many interesting programs planned for 2006; however, we always want your input and participation.

JGSCV can use volunteers to help out in many ways. You don't have to be on the Board to be a volunteer — help out in publicity, programming, membership, community outreach, etc.

Thank you Temple Adat Elohim! TAE took a chance on a new group by offering us a home for our first four programs to help us see if there was an interest in Jewish genealogy in the Conejo Valley and Ventura County. After the overwhelming response from the community in our first two months, TAE recognized the substantial interest in searching Jewish roots. The TAE Board of Directors has offered JGSCV a "home" for 2006 by continuing to co-sponsor our meetings for all next year! The acceptance and warmth shown by the entire TAE family toward JGSCV is much appreciated. We are delighted to be part of the "TAE family."

Don't forget to come to our December 4 meeting. There will be a gift for everyone and door prizes (for members only) celebrating an early Chanukah festivity.

Jan Meisels Allen

Board of Directors Elections for JGSCV

JGSCV has been served by an interim Board since its inception. It is now time to elect a board according to our by-laws. During our December 4 meeting, there will be a call for nominations from the floor. Subsequently, nominations will be closed. Elections will be held at the January 8 meeting. JGSCV by-laws stipulate that nominations from the floor require presence of the proposed candidate who must provide an oral agreement to serve or alternatively that the proposed candidate will have executed a written willingness to serve which must be available for inspection at the meeting. The JGSCV by-laws limits the number of people to serve on the board as no less than 6 nor more than 10 elected persons. See page 3 for brief biographies of 9 interim board members who have volunteered to run for office in the coming election. Questions concerning the elections can be addressed to president@JGSCV.org.

JGSCV's Third Meeting

Topic: Jewish Life in China during the Past Thousand Years

On November 13, 2005 the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV) held its third meeting at the site of co-sponsor Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks, California. Interest in genealogy was shown by the 63 individuals in attendance.

The featured speaker was our newsletter editor and founding member, Werner L. Frank. Werner and wife Phoebe had recently participated in a specialized tour of China which focused on its Jewish aspect. While the earliest Jewish presence in China began over one thousand years ago with the settlement in Kaifeng, more recent Jewish arrivals played important roles in Harbin and Shanghai.

In addition to the long history of Jews with China, Werner suggested that there may be genealogical doors open to both Sephardim and Ashkenazim researchers in finding their own "Chinese connection."

Additional individuals joined JGSCV during this meeting giving us a total of 89 paid up members.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF FUTURE MEETINGS at Temple Adat Elohim, Thousand Oaks CA

December 4, 2005: "Putting Flesh on the Bones" presented by Ron Arons (see page 4 for program details and a special Chanukah surprise).

January 8, 2006: "How to Begin Your Genealogy Research" with JGSCV board members discussing the best way to begin your genealogy research, providing suggested questions to elicit responses from relatives to fill in the missing information on your tree.

February 5, 2006: "Jewish Treasures in the Ventura County Museum Archives" presented by Charles Johnson, Librarian, Ventura County Museum who will discuss the many resources of interest to Jews held in the Ventura County Museum including the A. Levy collection.

Also, mark the following dates for future meetings:
March 5, April 9, May 7 and June 11.

JGSCV SETS UP LIBRARY IN AGOURA HILLS

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a special non-circulating genealogy related library in the facility of the Agoura Hills Library, a constituent of the Los Angeles County Library System. JGSCV will provide Jewish genealogy related reference material in two forms:

- Newsletters and journals in 3-ring binders known as "Ready Reference Pamphlet File"
- Books that will be placed in the "Books for Reference" shelf

Our Society is now gathering the first set of these resources to be placed in the Agoura Library. Assistance in finding this material can be provided by request at the Reference Desk.

The library can be reached at 818-889-2278 and is located at 29901 Ladyface Court (off Agoura Road between Reyes Adobe and Kanan) in Agoura Hills, CA 91301. The facility is open: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.; Thursday from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; Friday, Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Members of JGSCV are encouraged to make donations of surplus genealogy related reference material that may be in their possession by contacting our librarian: Raya Sagi at librarian@jgscv.org. Raya is also the Community Library Manager of the Agoura Hills Library and you are welcome to meet her during your visit.

TIPS FOR THE MONTH

Public libraries provide valuable online databases which support genealogy research. Access to major newspaper full-text indexed archives such as those of The Los Angeles Times, Washington Post and New York Times may yield data relating to family members, especially wedding and death notices. Local newspaper archives are also filled with pertinent information.

Even more helpful are specialized databases such as the U.S. Census for the period 1790-1930. Access to the Census has now been made substantially easier through fee-based name search capability by a number of commercial organizations such as Heritage Quest and Ancestry.com. Fortunately, public libraries subscribe to such services and make free access available to their constituents, sometimes directly in the home (for card holders) or always at the facility of the library. Examples of such locally available online offerings are:

Los Angeles Public Library: Heritage Quest and Ancestry.com

County of Los Angeles Library (Agoura Hills and Westlake Village): Heritage Quest

Thousand Oaks: Heritage Quest and Ancestry.com

JGSCV's Wish List of Books

The Board of Directors of JGSCV is very thankful for the voluntary contributions that many members have made to our library and program funds. The Board has come up with a wish list of books to start off our library purchases and we are listing them here. If any member would like to purchase one of these books (or make a contribution toward the purchase) for our library, we will include an "in honor of" or "in memory of" notation within the book with the donor's name. This is purely voluntarily, and since it is getting close to Chanukah, we thought we would share "our" wish gift list with you. Please let us know if you wish to participate in this effort by phone, email or at the next meeting.

Avotaynu- The International Review of Jewish Genealogy; Quarterly journal, annual subscription \$35.00 – (3 year subscription \$89.00)

Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy; Edited by Sallyann Amdur Sack and Gary Mokotoff, Avotaynu Publishers \$85.00

A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names, Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations; Alexander Beider, Avotaynu Publishers \$ 85.00

A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland; Alexander Beider, Avotaynu Publishers \$69.50

A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia; Alexander Beider, Avotaynu Publishers \$85.00

A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire; Alexander Beider, Avotaynu Publishers \$75.00

Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames; Lars Menk, Avotaynu Publishers \$89.00

Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish Language Civil Registration Documents (Birth, Marriage and Death); Judith R. Frazin, Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois \$27.00

Following the Paper Trail: A Multilingual Translation Guide; Jonathan D. Shea and William F. Hoffman, Avotaynu Publishers \$29.00

JGSCV BOARD CANDIDATES

The following members of the Interim Board of JGSCV have agreed to be Board candidates for the period beginning January 2006.

Jan Meisels Allen, Interim President, who led the organizing committee in creating the new JGSCV. Jan serves on the board of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) chairing the Public Records Access and Monitoring Committee concerned with access to vital records. She served on the board of the JGSLA for 5 years and is the Yizkor Book translation coordinator under JewishGen for two of her ancestral shtetls. She has been active in genealogy since 1998.

Stewart Bernstein, Interim Speaker's Bureau Coordinator and original organizing committee member. His term as an interim Board member included opening the doors to researchers' family histories and he looks forward to continuing in that capacity. Stewart started the Pultusk Area Group on JewishGen, initiated the translation of the Pultusk Yizkor Book, and has been involved in genealogy for a number of years.

Debra Kay Blatt, Interim information officer and member of the original organizing committee. Debra has been researching her family history for the past seven years. She has been a volunteer for JewishGen and has published in the Kielce-Radom Special Interest Group Journal.

Warren Blatt, interim webmaster and member of the original organizing committee. Warren is the Editor-in-chief of JewishGen, the premier on-line site for Jewish Genealogy. He is a winner of the IAJGS' Lifetime Achievement award. He is the author of two books and numerous journal articles.

Dalya Dektor, Interim Treasurer, and member of the original organizing committee. She was in charge of the initial JGSCV publicity campaign. Dalya has been responsible for fund raising for the Channelaire Chorus during the past ten years. She has been working on her family genealogy for the past thirty years.

Dorothy Drilich, Interim Secretary and member of the original organizing committee. Dorothy has had a long time interest in her family history and has started her genealogy research in recent years.

Werner L. Frank is the editor of the JGSVC newsletter and member of the interim board and original organizing committee member. Werner has spoken at a number of IAJGS conferences and written articles for *Stammbaum*, *Avotaynu* and *Maajan*. He has authored his family's 800-year history in "*Legacy: The Saga of a German-Jewish Family Across Time and Circumstance*" published by Avotaynu.

Richard Munitz, interim Vice President of Membership, was an original member of the organizing committee. Richard retired 3+ years ago from Beverly Hills High School, where he taught English and was an assistant principal. He is active in a variety of volunteer activities, including JGSCV. He has been involved with his family genealogy for some years.

Frank Tessel, interim cemetery project coordinator. Frank started a networking group in Simi which he ran for two years. He has been working with the Jewish community for thirteen years. His knowledge of computers and genealogy extends over many years.

HELP.....We need a volunteer accountant to advise us on completing our tax-exempt organization's Federal and State tax forms. If you have the necessary qualifications to help us in fulfilling our obligations, please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org or call 818-889-6616.

Learn How to Expand Your Genealogy Using A Unique Genealogical Approach!

Come to the next meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (and surrounding areas)

Sunday, December 4, 2005 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.
at Temple Adat Elohim

2420 E.Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

"Putting Flesh On The Bones"

Presenter Ron Arons, a founding member of JGSCV and an accomplished nationally known speaker, will provide an entertaining, humorous, yet educational discussion. Genealogy is more than simply looking for ancestors' names, locations, and dates of events. It's about understanding the lives of people and *why* they acted the way they did. Using a myriad of documents, Ron takes one "rogue" relative—a rabbi—who caused chaos in six British towns—and by taking the time to understand the "why" and the motivations behind his ancestor's behavior, builds upon the answers to the typical questions of "who" "when" and "where." The presentation will give examples and guidelines on how to incorporate this unique genealogical approach of exploring one individual in great detail—"putting flesh on the bones."



CHANUKAH IS EARLY AT JGSCV.....

We know that Chanukah comes on 25 Kislev but our meeting is on 3 Kislev (December 4). Come and collect your early gift that will have genealogical value for you. In recognition of the holiday JGSCV will also offer several door prizes in a drawing open to all attendees who are paid up members. Be a winner!

And here is a wonderful gift idea. In honor of the holiday give a membership in JGSCV to a family member or special friend. They will enjoy this present during all of 2006.



JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dalya Dektor, Treasurer
Dorothy Drilich, Secretary
Frank Tessel, Cemetery Project

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