PRESIDENT’S LETTER

January 8th was a phenomenal program! The panel on Ethics, Sensitivities, Sensibilities and Property Rights provided an excellent forum for discussion and audience participation. The panelists: Rabbi Jeff Marx, spiritual leader of Santa Monica Synagogue, Hal Bookbinder, founding member of JGSCV and past president of the IAJGS and JGSLA, and Sandra Malek, attorney at law and president of JGSLA began the program with insights, and thought-provoking comments. Audience members asked penetrating questions, which invoked great participation. The positive response to this program will result in presenting Part II on Ethics, Sensitivities, Sensibilities and Property Rights later in 2012! See page 6 for more information on the panel discussion and question and answer session.

Following the program, the JGSCV Board of Directors held their annual reorganization meeting. Len Shenkin, appointed by me and approved by the board as permitted by the by-laws, is a new board member. Len is a retired optometrist and has been a member of JGSCV since 2008. Per the by-laws, the
board determines who the officers are annually. For 2012, the officers are Jan Meisels Allen, President; Helene Rosen, Vice President Membership; Debra Kay-Blatt, Secretary and Len Shenkin, Treasurer.

Sara Hyman has submitted her resignation from the JGSCV Board of Directors. We thank her for her year of service as treasurer. Tammy Williams-Anderson has volunteered as our new librarian. Thank you Tammy!

We ended 2011 with 12 new members! While we have added an additional three new members in 2012, only 70% of last year’s members have renewed so far. If you have not yet renewed or joined JGSCV for 2012 this is the time for you to do so! Membership forms are available on page 12 as well as on our website www.jgscv.org.

Our Annual Assisted Research Afternoon at the Los Angeles Family History Library (LAFHL) is scheduled for February 12th! This is where you get hands-on help from senior members of JGSCV and volunteers at the LAFHL. Only current dues-paid JGSCV members may attend this special event—you can renew/join at the door. Barbara Algaze, JGSLA’s librarian will be at the meeting to help and give an overview of the Library. See page 9 for suggestions on how to prepare before you attend the meeting!

You can help us by enrolling in Ralph’s Community Program and naming JGSCV your charity of choice—see our website under “Notices” for information. JGSCV is also an Amazon Affiliate. Click on the Amazon icon on JGSCV website (at the bottom of the page). The only way we meet our budget and bring you our wonderful programs and add to our library is by the contributions we receive from both Ralphs and Amazon. See page 5 for more information.

It is not too early to prepare for the IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held July 15-18, 2012 in Paris, France. See page 5 for more information. You may wish to visit your ancestral towns before or after the conference. For a genealogist nothing is more moving than walking through and seeing the towns of your ancestors. If you have already visited your ancestral town, JGSCV’s May 6th meeting will provide an opportunity to share your experiences. Please let me know so we can include you on the program.

Looking forward to seeing you at the LA Family History Library.
February, 2012

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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.

2012 dues are $25.00 for a single membership and $30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send a check in the appropriate amount payable to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

JCR-UK UPDATES
Several changes and updates have been made to the newly redesigned Jewish Communities and Records-United Kingdom website. A single search will now access data from both the JewishGen and the JGSGB databases. And, information on Gibraltar has been added. Visit at http://tinyurl.com/8x3e9ld

NEW PROCEDURES FOR ORDERING FILMS FROM THE LA FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY
The LA Family History Library has a new procedure in place for ordering microfilm and microfiche online. Create a userid on https://familysearch.org/, Verify the film number from the FamilySearch catalog, go to https://www.familysearch.org/films/. Enter the film number and type of loan you are requesting (short-term, renewal, etc before adding it to your shopping cart. Upon checking out, send it to the LA Family History Library where you will retrieve your film then complete the personal and payment information.

ROOTSMAGIC OFFERS FREE ‘ESSENTIALS’
RootsMagic offers a free version with many of the basic features of its family tree software. It is a simple, fast way for a computer novice to use software as a genealogical tool. You can download it from http://tinyurl.com/8y4mwf2

JOWBR DATABASE UPDATED
JewishGen’s Online Worldwide Burial Registry has updated its database by adding approximately 60,000 new records and 16,000 new photos. JOWBR records now include data from 64 countries, 3,350 cemeteries or sections and 1.76 million records. Data can be accessed at http://tinyurl.com/7b5rovb

TOP FIVE GENEALOGY WEBSITES
According to GenealogyInTime Magazine, the top 5 (of their list of 100) genealogy websites is
1. Ancestry.com
2. Myheritage.com
3. Familysearch.org
4. Findagrave.com
5. Geni.com
Note, these are representative of all genealogists, regardless of religion, affiliation or family history.

FREE WEBINARS FROM SCGS
Once again the Southern California Genealogy Society (SCGS) will offer free webinars. Sessions are held on the first Saturday (10 AM Pacific) and third Wednesday (6 PM Pacific) of each month. Past webinar leaders have come from almost every state and Canadian province as well as from across Europe, North Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Israel. Some of those former webinar leaders include prominent genealogists from around the world. This is truly a free global opportunity. For more information go to http://tinyurl.com/6tnklzr
Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County* (JGSCV)
(*and surrounding areas)

The JGSCV will hold its monthly meeting, on Sunday, February 12, 2012 at the Los Angeles Family History Library 10741 Santa Monica Blvd. West Los Angeles (on grounds of the LDS Temple) from 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Parking is free. This special program is open only to current dues paid members of JGSCV! Anyone may join or renew their membership with JGSCV at the door.

**The Topic: Assisted Research Afternoon at the L.A. Family History Library (LAFHL)**

Experienced JGSCV members and Family History Library volunteers will be available to help members get the most out of the L.A. Family History Library’s resources, including computer assistance with many popular genealogical databases including Ancestry.com (full access), Fold3.com, Heritage Quest, World Vital Records, Godfrey Memorial Library on-line resources and more! The LAFHL was recently renovated and increased the number of computers so more people can use them simultaneously. There are the Jewish microfilms of Eastern Europe and a selection of others, and maps and gazetteers. Bring your research documents with you and bring a flash drive if you want to download electronic images of online images. Hard copying is also available. Our sister JGS, JGSLA’s library is available for research at the LAFHL.

Barbara Algaze, volunteer at the LAFHL, and librarian for the JGSLA, will give an introduction to the resources at the L.A. Family History Library.

This meeting is open only to current dues-paid members of JGSCV. Anyone may join at the door. Annual dues are $25 for an individual and $30 for a family.

JGSCV is open to any one interested in researching their Jewish roots. The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history.

January, 2011  Venturing Into Our Past
The Traveling Library will not be at the next meeting since we are the LA Family History Library and have use of the JGSLA library located there. For future meetings, please check the website for the books included in each category [http://jgscv.org](http://jgscv.org). To request a book that is not in either category, please email Jan Meisels Allen at least 3 days in advance of the meeting at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org). New additions to the Library are listed on the next page.

The Schmoozing Corner, is open 15 minutes before each meeting where a JGSCV member will be available to answer questions, offer direction and maybe even a solution to some of your concerns. (Werner Frank with Judy Forusz at right.) There will be no Schmoozing Corner at the Feb. 12th meeting at the LAFHL. It will resume March 4th.

IAJGS CONFERENCE PARIS
JULY 15-18

Registration is open to attend the 32nd IAJGS International Conference in Paris to take place July 15-18. Sessions are already scheduled including experts from Eastern Europe and a roundtable on genetics as well as the holocaust and genealogy. For more information, visit [www.paris2012.eu](http://www.paris2012.eu)

January, 2011

Venturing Into Our Past

O ur own Jan Meisels Allen, JGSCV President, was interviewed on Geneabloggers on January 7th. If you missed it (or didn’t see the link on our facebook page) click here for Jan’s segment on IAJGS, Records Preservation and Access Committee and the status of the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) controversy: [http://tinyurl.com/82xto4h](http://tinyurl.com/82xto4h)

C ongratulations to former JGSCV board member Werner Frank. Werner was the featured speaker at the January 17th General Meeting of the Conejo Valley Genealogical Society discussing his family history as described in his book Legacy: The Saga of a German Jewish Family Over Time and Circumstance.

D on’t forget to ‘friend’ us on facebook and visit often for updates between meeting: [http://tinyurl.com/4yqs7bk](http://tinyurl.com/4yqs7bk)

J oin or renew your Ralphs Community Contribution Program membership at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com). Simple directions are also available on our website at [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) under ‘notices’. Remember, just by shopping at Ralphs, JGSCV receives a contribution at no cost to you.

Y ou can also help JGSCV when you shop at amazon.com simply by entering the amazon site from JGSCV’s home page. Start at [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) and scroll to the bottom to click on the amazon logo. This will take you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive marketing fee at no cost to you.

JGSCV WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS
MARK and MARLENE DAVIS
EDWARD JONES
**REVIEW OF THE JANUARY 8TH MEETING: ETHICS, SENSITIVITIES, SENSIBILITIES AND PROPERTY RIGHTS**

JGSCV Board Member, Marion Werle, moderated the January 8 program, “Ethics, Sensitivities, Sensibilities and Property Rights”. Panelists were: Rabbi Jeffrey Marx, spiritual leader of Santa Monica Synagogue, Sandra Malek, attorney at law and president of JGSLA and, Hal Bookbinder, founding member of JGCV and past president of the IAJGS and JGSLA.

Rabbi Marx began by talking about the primary Jewish value of truth, which underlies the need for footnotes, and attribution of sources. God wants us uphold the truth; God’s stamp is the stamp of truth. What “trumps” truth is not to embarrass another person. If we damage another person, it is like damaging God as we are created in God’s image. If we discover a family secret, we should temper our ego and not share it, if it will harm another.

Our research is holy work as we are bringing facts to life—but other issues trump the truth.

Three trump cards that override “truth”:
- Not to hurt the dead by publishing information that will lessen their character.
- Not to gossip about others even if it is truthful. Posting on the Internet is gossip, therefore, be careful of what you post as once it is posted it is “gone” forever and cannot be retrieved.
- Quoting in someone else’s name and taking someone else’s work and manifest as ours even by sin of omission. If you don’t remember who gave the information, then at least indicate that you’re grateful to everyone who shared.

Sandy Malek stated there is no enforcement of ethics in genealogy. Lawyers have a code of conduct and behavior. Sandy gave a family example of two Russian brothers from Minsk and the current family is a well-regarded Pittsburgh family. The quandary: Does she tell them that their grandfather spent time in Leavenworth Penitentiary? How to handle this delicate situation? Sandy decided not to tell the entire family but her cousin who was the grandchild of the person in question. She shared the information with her and let her decide whom if anyone else is apprised of the “family secret”.

Sandy also discussed the concerns of a particular genealogy website that refuses to remove names from family trees that were not accurate, nor submitted by the correct people.

Hal Bookbinder talked about honesty, respect and sensitivity.

**HONESTY:** It is important to be accurate and to verify primary sources. **RESPECT:** Ask about information in a respectful manner and accept when the person says “enough”.

**SENSITIVITY:** Accept boundaries and requests for privacy. For example, those who lived through the Holocaust may not wish to relive that time, regardless of our interest. Recognize and respect such limits.

Hal also talked about the need to establish the capabilities and costs up-front in using a professional genealogist. Finally, Hal mentioned...
During a very lively question and answer period following the panelist statements, the following issues were raised:

- Founding JGSCV member, Werner Frank (photo right with Marion Werle, moderator) discussed his book, *Legacy: The Saga of a German-Jewish Family Across Time and Circumstance* that comes with a CD with 30,000 names that is shared with anyone. He found his information on a commercial website where, unbeknownst to him, incorrect information was listed. This raised the issue of sites not being maintained and people entering information without permission. Unfortunately, this particular website was a cause of concern with many in attendance who also experienced unauthorized persons uploading incorrect data. The site is not sympathetic to correcting these errors. This is a flagrant disregard of property rights and it was suggested that it is an issue that IAJGS or JewishGen should study.

- Hal reminded us that the propriety of historical information on the Internet—when it is over 75 years old it is considered public information. Information on you and your children is private but is difficult to control.

- The issue of posting on the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) was addressed as in one SIG it was mentioned that a person took the information to sell it for commercial purposes. We were reminded to be mindful what is posted on the Internet.

- The issue of looking up divorce records was also addressed. Can one obtain the actual records to explain what were the “irreconcilable differences”? Some historical newspapers may have some information, but that may be considered “hearsay”. It was suggested to pull the court file and obtain the declarations, which must be factual and get the case number and get the court documents.

- The issue of one’s reputation was also discussed. Rabbi Marx told the story of a terrible person in the shtetl and the townspeople who were trying to find something “kind” to say about the deceased, and one townsperson spoke up saying “the brother was worse!” We may share derogatory information about another if the truth will protect others from harm or there is an important moral lesson to learn from their mistakes.

- Another sensitive issue was suicide and depression in the family. Depression may lead to suicide. Rabbi Marx stated the Jewish position has evolved over time. Previously, full mourning rites were not to be observed for the person who committed suicide. Today, it is recognized that they may have committed suicide due to the illness of depression. Rabbi Marx stated it is important to know depression runs in a family in order for future generation to be aware. This is more important than hiding a family secret.

Other issues discussed were:

- Infertility and the ethical conduct if this is to be divulged.
• Lesbian relatives who do not want their children’s biological fathers—to whom they were married when the children were conceived—listed on the tree as the children’s father. Rather they want the lesbian partner listed as parent.

• Other issues rose when two women in a same sex relationship have children and the grandparents are embarrassed and do not want the relationship known.

• Should adopted children be listed on the family tree? The consensus was that adopted children are on the trees and treated in every way as natural children. Sandy stated that legally adopted children are to be treated as natural children. Hal added that once the child has joined the family they are part of the family and the faith. There were also questions on the names to be used for the Bar/Bat Mitzvot of adopted children—legally the child is no longer part of the biological family if they are adopted by another family.

• How to include truthful but potentially embarrassing information in the family tree. Examples were given where the master tree file has the information but until the person who is embarrassed is deceased, it will not be shared. This was the agreement between the family historian and the person in question.

In summary, we should be mindful that while we are searching for the truth, we have the obligation to refrain from hurting others and to be sensitive to situations that could be embarrassing to an individual while staying within legal and ethical boundaries.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

2011-12

Sunday, Feb. 12th 1:00-5:00PM
Annual Assisted Research Afternoon at the Los Angeles Regional Family History Library-Current Dues Paid Members-only. Anyone may join at the door.

Sunday, March 4th 1:30-3:30PM
Joel Weintraub, HERE COMES THE 1940 CENSUS

Sunday, April 1st 1:30-3:30PM
Arthur Benveniste, THE HOLOCAUST AND SEPHARDIC JEWS OF THE BALKANS AND NORTH AFRICA

Sunday, May 6th 1:30-3:30PM
VISITING YOUR ANCESTRAL SHTETL TOWNS

Sunday June 3rd 1:30-3:30PM
Hal Bookbinder, SHIPS OF OUR ANCESTORS
July no meeting - IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy Paris, France July 15-18, 2012

Sunday, Aug. 5th 1:30-3:30 PM
GENEALOGY IN THE ROUND, share your successes, failures, brick walls and artifacts.
Preventing For the Exclusive Research Afternoon at the Los Angeles Family History Library
February 12, 2012 1:00-5:00 PM

JGSCV members are privileged to have an exclusive research afternoon at the Los Angeles Family History Library (LAFHL). This meeting is open only to 2012 current-paid members. Anyone may join or renew their JGSCV membership by paying their dues at the door—and if you prefer to pay before the meeting a form is on page 12 of this newsletter. The LAFHL is the largest Family History Library outside of Salt Lake City making this an opportunity to visit and receive assistance with your personal genealogy that is not to be missed!

Car-pooling is best, so ask your friends from JGSCV about sharing. JGSCV cannot arrange car pools.

Directions:
The LAFHL is located at: 10741 Santa Monica Blvd in Los Angeles on the grounds of the LDS (Mormon) Temple. From the 405 freeway get off at Santa Monica Blvd. and go east to Manning Ave. Turn north on Manning Ave, make the first left into the LDS Temple compound, proceed right until reaching the Visitor’s Center. You may park along the fence. The entrance to the library is on the right (east) side of the building. The library is on the lower floor. There are stairs and an elevator from the first floor.

With vast holdings of the LAFHL take a look at the website: www.lafhl.org for a listing of the resources that are available. In addition to microfilms, microfiche, maps and books, they have 86 computers (PCs not Macs) that have free access to many genealogical sites! These sites include: Ancestry.com (full institution subscription); FindMyPast.com, Fold 3.com (previously known as Footnote.com), The Genealogist, Genline Family Finder, Godfrey Memorial Library (godfrey.org), Heritage Quest Online, Historic MapWorks Library Edition, Paper trail, WorldVitalRecords.com, 19th Century British Library Newspaper Digital Archive, Alexander Street Press-The Civil War, Origins.net, and more!

Remember, due to the recent concerns of Congress regarding the unauthorized release of Social Security numbers, Rootsweb and Genealogy.com have removed the SSDI index entirely and Ancestry.com, Fold3 and other genealogy websites have suppressed all Social Security Numbers within ten years of the date of death. At the time of writing this article, some genealogy websites such as FamilySearch (http://tinyurl.com/3tvv2su) still have the SSDI with Social Security numbers included. That does not mean they will be listed by the time we visit the LAFHL. Therefore, you may wish to do some research on-line before our visit if you are requiring the Social Security Numbers. (See Venturing Into Our Past January 2012 issue for information on this subject: www.jgscv.org under newsletter)

The number of microfilms, microfilm readers, microfiche, microfiche readers and books has been reduced, as many of these records and books are now digitized. However, the foreign vital records microfilms, including the Jewish ones are still available at the facility. JGSLA has a list of the Jewish microfilms on their website that are currently located at the LAFHL: http://jgsla.org/research/microfilms-at-lafhl

At 1:30 p.m. Barbara Algaze, LAFHL volunteer, will present an overview of the Los Angeles Family History Library. In addition to Barbara, there will be several volunteers from the LAFHL to help you to do your research.
To make the best use of this experience you should prepare in advance and take your research papers with you. Be sure to bring copies of your family group sheets, documents, family time lines, and family trees!

**Prioritize your research lists:**
Foreign and state censuses, city directories, vital records (birth, marriage or death records), maps, naturalization records, WWI and WWII draft registration records.

**For traditional methodology**, bring:
Paper pads, post–it notes, pens, pencils and a magnifying glass.

**For electronic methodology**, bring:
Laptop computer, genealogy program, USB storage drives, writable CD Rom, digital camera—to use if making photos from microfilms. There is wi-fi in the library. In addition, you can connect to the internet by using internet cables. These cables are available for rent from the library with a deposit of $3.00. They sell thumb drives (flash drives) for about $7.25 each.

If you are planning to use the foreign microfilms, remember the records are in their native language. Unless you are knowledgeable in the language, it is best to have some key-finding words in that language such as male, female, birth, death, marriage, wife, husband, father, and mother. While there are some foreign language dictionaries available at the LAFHL, the more you prepare in advance, the more your limited time will be used to its best advantage. Many records are handwritten, are in chronological rather than alphabetical order, and may not be indexed. Bring a magnifying glass to help you read the handwriting.

An extra feature at the LAFHL is the availability of permanent libraries of genealogy societies including our sister society, JGSLA. The books are available for anyone to use. You may wish to look at the JGSLA website to see which books are available: [http://jgsla.org/research/library-lafhl](http://jgsla.org/research/library-lafhl) . The Polish Genealogical Society of Southern CA, also has their permanent library housed there and we can use their materials at the library. To see which books the Polish Society has, check out this link: [http://www.pgsca.org/Library2.html](http://www.pgsca.org/Library2.html)

Remember, all books, microfilms, microfiche, maps, etc. may only be used at the FHL—nothing is permitted to be removed from the facility.

There is a small lunchroom with vending machines. There is a refrigerator in the lunchroom where you can store your bag lunches and drinks. We don’t know what/ if food will be available on a Sunday. If you want to bring a snack or lunch you may eat and drink **ONLY** in that designated area.

There are lockers with keys available at no fee for members to keep their valuables. There is a coat rack for coats, jackets, and sweaters. Sometimes they forget to ask maintenance to turn on the heat on Sundays (when they are usually closed) and it gets very cold down there—especially in the classroom. **You might want to bring a sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket**—just in case!

If you wish to print a document off a computer, microfilm or microfiche reader, or copy machine, you make your copies and pay at the front desk (10 cents per page). **We don’t know how much change they will have so it would be appreciated if you bring change and small denomination bills.**

This library is not a lending library; therefore, nothing may be taken from the library.

Have a very successful research trip!
1940 Census To Be Digitized By FamilySearch—Can You Help?

FamilySearch wants to digitize the 1940 census and post it online so we may all access the data for free. Volunteers are needed to help in this daunting task. Can you help?

Assuming volunteer indexers can input 10 names per day, it will take only six months to complete the digital files of the 132 million names in the 1940 Census. That will require 90,000 volunteers. Will you be one?

The work can be done at home or at a Family History Library or Center. All that is needed is a computer and access to the Internet. You will be able to download the software directly and choose which geographic area you want to digitize—you can do your home city! They especially want people to help digitize New York City so that the name spellings are correct.

Mr. McBride the director of the LA Family History Library, host of JGSCV’s Assisted Research Afternoon (February 12th) appealed directly to JGSCV’s president, Jan Meisels Allen for assistance from this group.

The LA Family History Library is hosting a meeting for “Indexing Directors.” These would be volunteers representing a number of indexers, such as our genealogy society. The meeting will be on Saturday, February 18th at 10:00 a.m. to noon. On April 7th, they will have a “1940 Census Launch Event” led by Thomas McGill for getting indexers started.

The unindexed census will be released by the National Archives on April 2, 2012. Family Search people are planning to line up at midnight on April 1st in front of the Washington, DC National Archives office with trucks to pick up the records and will start to have the materials ready to be indexed by 10 a.m. the next morning.

Please contact Jan Meisels Allen (president@jgscv.org) if you are interested in indexing and if you can attend the February 18th meeting at the Los Angeles Family History Library.
2012 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 2012
Check one:
This is a New Membership________ Renewal________
Single $ 25.00____+ $1.00** Family* $30.00 _____+  $2.00**
Date of form completion____________
*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 application to: Helene Rosen,
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) ________________________________
Address ____________________________________
City _________________________________________
State _________________________________________
Zipcode + 4 _________________________________
Day telephone _______________ Evening telephone __________
E-mail address __________________________________

Are you on Facebook? Yes ___ No _____
What is your Facebook Name ______________________
Link to Facebook by http://tinyurl.com/4yqs7bk

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