

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



JGSCV

December 2021

Volume 17 Issue 3

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope everyone is well and staying safe!

We enjoyed the November 7th program *Finding Information to Support Family Stories of Holocaust Survivors and Victims* with returning speaker, Janette Silverman, a professional genealogist. Her presentation was about stories within our families about members who remained behind in Europe and elsewhere who were murdered or survived the Shoah. Often the stories are about someone we never met, and whom the teller of the story also never met. These stories may begin with "my grandmother said that one of her brothers survived and resettled somewhere but we never heard from him after that." Other stories reveal memories of mysterious letters arriving decades after the war from unidentified people. The recipients of the letters wouldn't talk about the people who sent them. Silverman discussed how to find these people and resources that have information about their lives, including whether they had descendants. Her handout is available on our website with the November 7 date: <https://jgscv.org/meetings-prior.html>.

I ran the "ask the experts" session which began before the program.

Judy Karta is the chairperson of the JGSCV 2021 Nominations Committee. Other members of the 2021 Nominations Committee are Karen Lewy, and Pat Fuller. Judy submitted the Nominations Committee report and called for any nominations from the floor. There were none. Nominations were then closed and the election by acclamation will take place on December 12. On the slate: Warren Blatt, Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion, and Israel "Issie" Perel. Andrea, Warren, and Issie are current members of the board, Barbara would be a new member of the board. See page 4 for brief bios of the candidates.

We started our membership renewal in October for 2022 and of course, anyone who joins now has their membership through December 2022! A renewal/membership form is on page 17. At the writing of this president's letter, we have about 44% who have renewed for 2022. While PayPal is not yet set up, you do not have to wait for PayPal as you can still send in a check made out to JGSCV and send it to Helene –our membership vice president whose address is on the form. If you want to pay by cash, you can contact me and make an appointment to drop it off at my home if you are concerned about sending cash through the mail.

We will continue to have genealogical Chanukah gifts for those who renew/join by the December 12th meeting **and attend** the program.

(Cont'd next page)

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, December 12th
1:30-3:30 PM



Floriane Azoulay
Executive Director of the Arolsen Archives

Members Only ZOOM

More info page 13

JANUARY MEETING

Speaker: Robert Watson

"The Nazi Titanic: The Incredible Untold Story of a Doomed Ship in World War II"

2021 JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jan Meisels Allen, President and
Program Chairman**
president@jgscv.org

**Helene Rosen, VP Membership,
Zoom Coordinator**
membership@jgscv.org

Karen Lewy, Treasurer
treasurer@jgscv.org

Debra Wenkart, Secretary
secretary@jgscv.org

Warren Blatt, Member Education
education@jgscv.org

**Allan Linderman,
Member at Large**
Allan@jgscv.org

Andrea Massion, Page 3 Curator
Andrea@jgscv.org

Israel Perel, Librarian
librarian@jgscv.org

Barbara Algaze, FSL
barbara@jgscv.org

Pat Fuller, Publicity
publicity@jgscv.org

**Diane Goldin,
Newsletter Editor**
newslettereditor@jgscv.org

David Oseas, Webmaster
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.

JGSCV has received gifts from Ancestry (worldwide subscription, subscriptions to newspapers.com, fold3.com, DNA test), My Heritage- complete annual subscription and DNA test, Geni 1-year Pro subscription, Legacy Software, Legacy webinar one-year subscription, Family Tree DNA test –which can be used toward an upgrade if you already took the basic test with them, Family Tree Maker 2019 and RootsMagic Version 8.0 software. That is 12 prizes. Each of these prizes is valued between \$79-\$350- all way above the cost of a JGSCV subscription— please renew/join. See our fabulous prize sponsors on page 16.

JGSCV is a member of both IAJGS, under whose umbrella we have our non-profit status (501-(c) (3) and the National Genealogical Society. IAJGS will hold its annual conference on August 21-25 in Philadelphia, PA. At the time of this newsletter, we only know they are talking about a possible remote option. More on that when they decide (<https://s4.goeshow.com/iajgs/annual/2022/index.cfm#top>). IAJGS is monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will abide by the rules of the relevant health authorities at the time of the conference. The required protocols will be publicized well in advance. The National Genealogical Society will be holding their 2022 conference in Sacramento, CA (<https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/blog/>) and notes:

“All conference participants—including sponsors, guest speakers, lecturers, exhibitors, and conference attendees—will be required to comply with the laws, rules, regulations, orders, and ordinances required at the time of the conference to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. NGS will apprise participants of the required protocols and procedures in advance of the conference.”

Both conferences are months away and it is too early to determine the requirements, but both will comply with the local health requirements- whether that means wearing masks, social distancing, and virtual possibilities.

Andrea’s project of collecting family recipes for our online recipe book, *Feeding the Family Tree* concluded this month. On December 1st it will be located on our website under noteworthy <https://jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>. We thank the JGSCV members for participating in this delicious genealogical adventure!

Hal Bookbinder continues with his Practicing Safe Computing Series, *Charity Review Websites*. This is the 73rd issue of this interesting series page 10.

If you’ve ever received an ‘Unsafe Website’ message when visiting JGSCV’s site, please see page 11 for information and ways to resolve the issue.

Our next meeting is on Sunday, December 12 with the executive director of the Arolsen Archives, Floriane Azoulay. She will be talking via Zoom on The Arolsen Archives crowd-sourcing initiative, [#everynamematters](https://twitter.com/everynamematters), and will also talk about data protection. It will be quite late in Germany from where she is located, so please be prompt. The Chanukah gift/membership drive will be done following Ms. Azoulay’s presentation.

Happy Chanukah and to our non-Jewish members and friends, Merry Christmas and to all a happy and healthy New Year.

Stay well and be safe!

Jan Meisels Allen



“Venturing Into Our Past” © is the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley (JGSCV). All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce any original content for non-profit use with prior notification to the editor and proper attribution.”

Food and Family

In anticipation of the release of “Feeding the Family Tree,” a collection of handed-down recipes shared by members of JGSCV and friends, we celebrate how food contributes to our genealogical research.
Happy Holidays.

Will Moneymaker Quote:

Learning about the foods your own ancestors ate will not only let you know what they liked, but it will also show you what economic and social conditions were like in their areas during their time periods. It will let you know what foods they had available to them, and what foods were popular. - W. Moneymaker

Matzah Meal Memories

A family business becomes an empire of kosher food. The photographs are a slice of American Jewish life in the early 1900s.

<https://streitsmatzos.com/our-history/>



After the Festive Meal

<http://www.growinglittleleaves.com/activities.html>

Emily Kowalski Schroeder is the creator and author of the *Growing Little Leaves* blog and avid genealogical researcher. She has posted excellent activities on how grandparents and other adult relatives might share how to “read” a family tree, ways to remember and learn about ancestors with crafts and visual tools, and inspiring discussions about family memories. (Dig the *Roll-a-Memory* cubes on the Printables page for a dining table activity for all ages.)

And Finally, Contemporary Recipes

With the creation of the state of Israel, the vast changes in global communication and to accommodate all kinds of eaters at our table, recipes now come in all kinds of versions that are easily found online.

Here’s a collection from *The Forward*, including Apple Olive Oil Cake with pomegranate juice. And now, back to the kitchen:

<https://assets.forward.com/FallRecipes2021-100621.pdf>

Forthcoming JGSCV Elections

As per the JGSCV Bylaws, a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Judy Karta and members Karen Lewy and Pat Fuller, called for any nominations from the floor. There were none. Nominations were then closed and the election by acclamation will take place on December 12, 2021.

On the slate: Warren Blatt, Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion, and Israel "Issie" Perel. Andrea, Warren, and Issie are current members of the board, Barbara would be a new member of the board.

Candidate bios:

Warren Blatt founding member of JGSCV has served on the JGSCV Board for the past 16 years. Warren is the former managing Director of JewishGen as well as author of many JewishGen databases. Warren has been involved in genealogy research for over thirty-five years. He is a winner of the IAJGS' Lifetime Achievement award. He is a presenter at many JGSCV meetings, and an annual presenter at the IAJGS conferences. He is the author of two books and numerous journal articles.

Barbara Finsten has been a member of JGSCV since 2016 and has served on the Publicity Committee sending out meeting notices when we were meeting face-to-face. She has been involved with genealogy for six years. She has worked on creating a family tree for her grandchildren tracing the ancestries of all four of their grandparents. She was an elementary school teacher for 38 years.

Andrea Massion has been researching family history for over 25 years. She writes Page 3 for JGSCV's newsletter and in 2020 had an article in the *NGS Journal*. 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.

Israel "Issie" Perel Ph.D. is on the JGSCV board as well as JGSCV librarian. Issie has been involved in family genealogy research for ten 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.



מרכז עולמי לגנאלוגיה יהודית
The Global Home for Jewish Genealogy



<https://www.jewishgen.org/education/mythbusters.htm>

Highlights from: *Finding Information to Support Family Stories of Holocaust Survivors and Victims*

By Jan Meisels Allen

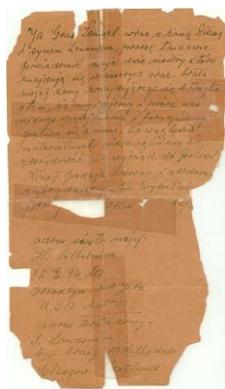
On November 7, JGSCV members had the opportunity to hear Janette Silverman, a professional genealogist, heading a team of researchers specializing in Eastern European and Jewish research at AncestryProGenealogists® the division of Ancestry® that does private client research. Her presentation was about stories about our family who remained behind in Europe and elsewhere who were murdered or survived the Shoah. Often the stories are about someone we never met, and who the teller of the story also never met. They may start with something like "my grandmother said that one of her brothers survived and resettled somewhere but we never heard from him after that." Other stories reveal memories of mysterious letters arriving decades after the war from unidentified people. The recipients of the letters wouldn't talk about the people who sent them. Silverman discussed how to find these people and which resources we can investigate which have information about their lives, including whether they had descendants. Silverman focused on several stories of people who survived the Shoah and found their stories. The handout is located on the JGSCV website at: <https://jgscv.org/meetings-prior.html> with the November 11 date.

The Shoah effectively erased history. Silverman feels compelled to restore the names and information to their families so they can be remembered. Sometimes there are photographs of unidentified people, sometimes we are left with a name and sometimes just a relationship.

We need to identify the people regardless of why we are looking for them. We need clues as to why we are looking for these people—and where we need to look. She started with her father's mother's family—and two sisters who came to the United States- but on different ships in a relatively close time to each other—Fanny and Blima—Blima was Silverman's grandmother. But her grandfather did not share information, regardless of the number of questions Silverman asked him. Her grandfather died when she was in her 30s and her father told her his father never mentioned his family-at least within his hearing.

Before her grandfather's death, he gave Silverman several photos with names of the family- but no further information including how they were related. The two sisters Fanny and Blima had a third sister Clara, who initially came to the U.S., but she returned to Europe to marry her childhood sweetheart. Prior to her grandfather's death, he said the family was killed during the war and no one was left. She thought that was the end of her story. When her grandfather died her understanding of her family was turned upside down.

After her grandfather died, they went through boxes of papers and found a treasure trove. One was an envelope addressed to "Samuel Leon Grass" which reminded her father that his mother had a brother named Samuel. Her father said his mother and her brother had a falling out and never spoke again. But the envelope and scraps of paper proved what her father knew was wrong—as the letter was sent after the war to her grandparents. In the letter, Samuel tells her grandparents that he, his wife, and son survived the war and needed help. The lack of communication between her grandmother and her brother was due to an inability to communicate not a falling out. Letters sent from the United States to the Soviet Union after the war could not be delivered and returned to the sender.



Fragments and scraps of paper can lead to amazing discoveries



Envelope and letter circa 1945, researcher's copy.

Silverman wanted to find out what happened to the family and if Samuel survived the war, perhaps others from the family also survived? From the documents, Silverman now knew where the family lived.

Where did Silverman Look Next?

One of the first things Silverman did was to look at the Pages of Testimony at Yad Vashem (<https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html>). By looking at the Page of Testimony filled out by Bentzion Shafer, she was able to find out about three generations of her family.

Chana Itta was Blima's mother. Who was Bentzion Shafer, her nephew, who filed this report?

Yad Vashem (Jerusalem, Israel), Page of Testimony for Chana Itta Gras; digital image, "Shoah Names Database," *Yad Vashem* (<https://yvng.yadvashem.org>), accessed May 2020.

She was able to determine that Bentzion was the son of Chana Itta's sister Dvora—also murdered in the Shoah. Additionally, she found information on other people in a family photograph. Later she found Samuel and Diana still living in what was the Soviet Union and their daughter Ella. The list of names from the Yad Vashem Page of Testimony (pictured on the left), is the people for whom Bentzion made out a Page of Testimony.

By visiting the archive in Stanisławów, now Ivano-Frankivsk, she was able to gain additional information on the family.

Her Father's Paternal Family

The stories of her father's paternal family were all about what happened once they arrived in the United States in the early 20th-century family—not what happened in Europe. Her grandfather was the youngest of 12 children- seven of the twelve survived to adulthood and six of the seven immigrated to the United States-all arriving before her grandfather's 1903 birth. Therefore, he did not meet some of his siblings until he was an older teenager. Her grandfather was the last to immigrate in 1920.

Silverman gave a story about Norbert, her father's younger brother. He married and had two daughters.

A chilling story she heard from him was that he was in Europe and tried to bribe a guard to get his daughter Erica out from a concentration camp. Norbert agreed with the guard to return on another day with money for his daughter—but when he returned no daughter was there. The guard took the money and shot Norbert. The records from Mauthausen show Norbert was killed trying to escape from the camp the story is that he was never incarcerated in a camp.



Mauthausen Concentration Camp (Mauthausen, Austria), Bureau of the Gestapo (Gestapo) Mauthausen, June 11 (June 1944) (digital image, "Personal File 1944-1945," Mauthausen Concentration Camp, Mauthausen, Austria, <https://www.mauthausen.com/en/visiting-the-camp>, accessed May 2020).

In many cases, the people telling stories don't know the origin of the stories nor the details. Therefore, it's important to research to prove -- or disprove -- the stories. Not all stories can be verified but it is possible to find details about the people whose lives you are researching.

Nancy, France Story

In another story, a Holocaust survivor living in Nancy, France was writing to a woman, Minnie, in the United States. When she died her descendants did not know who was writing to Minnie—or what the relationship was. Silverman only had two photographs with names of people on the back --one said Maurice and the other said Suzanne, Jacqueline, and Andrée. Silverman researching found a repository online, a book with biographical sketches of all the Jewish families in Nancy, France. This told her that the father, Maurice, and his three daughters all survived the war. Through her research online she found who the family was and what the relationship was to Minnie- and that Andrée and her children were still living. She was able to contact Andrée through a volunteer researcher.

By speaking with Andrée she found yet another story that needed to be told. Andrée's sister-in-law, Blanche Samuel, lived in Nancy, France and was on one of the dreaded deportation transports. Following the war, the family received a postcard from her saying she was alive and returning to France and which train she would be on. The family went to the train station but she was not on that train or any other. The family never heard from her again. Her story haunted her only surviving sibling and his children. Researching the United States Holocaust Museum Survivors and Victims Database: <https://tinyurl.com/54h3tfzk>. There, she found a record that is also on Ancestry in partnership with JewishGen (Poland, Auschwitz Work Cards 1944-1945).

This information led Silverman to other pages of documents in her research. Now she has amassed a trove of information about Blanche, the Drancy transport, and what happened after the war. These records are from Arolsen Archives, Yad Vashem, and other repositories. Blanche survived the camp and went to a hospital in the British sector. She died the day before the postcard was mailed. Until they learned about the death, the family continued to search for her.

Sjenberg Family

One of the suggestions Silverman gave was to go back after a while and revisit sources to see if there is new information to be added and what can be found. Make sure to consider all variations of the spelling of names and broaden the search for dates of birth, death, and possible immigration. The research is never over as you may find tidbits later on that help expand your research.

That is how she found information on Wolf Sjenberg—by researching information on the Nuremberg trials. He testified at the trials. As the trials lasted for a long time that told them that he was still alive in the 1960s. He rented a room in a two-bedroom apartment and his family never heard from him. Why? We don't know—perhaps he thought all the Jews worldwide had been murdered.

Filling in context, making it more than names and dates give us the information about our family members.

Morris (Moshe) Schwell

The Schwell family was from Galicia, but where were they from in Galicia? The ship's manifest gave information on where his father, Aron, lived-listed as the closest relative from where they came. Remember that ships' manifests may be two pages and look for both pages. The manifest said the town, but at the time the records were only available onsite-not digitized nor online. They contacted the local archive, and the archivist prepared a packet of records for when Silverman's client visited the local archive. They found that Aron had two daughters—one of whom survived and came to the United States. They found information on his wife, daughter, and others. A marriage record for one of Aron's daughters provided her mother's maiden name, Schürz. The laws in Galicia at the time prohibited children from using their father's surname if the marriage was not civilly registered. At the time many Jews only had ritual marriages. Therefore, to find the family they had to search for the maiden name Schürz to find most of the siblings.

She then researched Frieda Schürz and Saul Schlinger.

- Head of family: Schwell Aron Residence: Ciemna 6
- 1. Last name: Wymyślner
- Birth name (for women): Schlinger, Sara
- 2. Date and place of birth: ? XI.1916, Krakow
- 3. Citizenship: Polish
- 4. Civil status: married
- 5. Exact residence: Town: Kraków, Zakopane Street No. 21, 1st floor, Door No. 10, on the side of the house
- Since when residing in Kraków: since birth;
- 6. Current occupation: shop helper employed in her mother's business
- 7. Are you self-employed: no
- Resettlement instruction issued: on: 20.2.1941 for: 27 February 1941

Ergänzungsbogen, "Aron's school booklet at Ghetto 6, Krakow; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC"

This questionnaire refers to one of Aron's granddaughters, Freida's daughter, Sara. According to the questionnaire, Sara is married but where is her husband, he isn't listed? The family was ordered to be resettled in February 1941. In 1945, Sara's husband was living in Israel, applied for a Get (a Jewish divorce), as there were no graves or death certificates. If he wanted to remarry, he needed to get a Get. He remarried in 1946.

They searched for evidence of Morris' sister who immigrated to the U.S. after the war. She went to Israel in 1950 before she finally came to the United States in 1955. She married shortly after she arrived, but by the time of her death in 1982, she had a different surname Rubin, indicating that she had remarried. Her gravestone was found next to her second husband, in Israel, even though she died in New York City.

The people's stories are not complete until one looks at the cemeteries to find their ancestors so that the family story goes back in time—their parents, siblings, grandparents, and more.

Ancestry

Janette works for Ancestry which has worked with the Arolsen Archives. Ancestry has made its entire Holocaust collection free in perpetuity. The Holocaust collection has over 25 million records. Ancestry® digitized the records at their own expense. Most recently, Ancestry® partnered with the USC Shoah Foundation to release an index to survivor video interviews – there are 50,000 records, in this searchable database.

The best practices are to do an exhaustive search. Silverman recommended:

Ancestry.com

<https://www.ancestry.com/cs/alwaysremember>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)

Yad Vashem

Arolsen Archives (formerly International Tracing Service)

Central Zionist Archives (CZA)

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP)

JewishGen

Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (JRI-Poland)

Onsite archival research: Krakow, Sanok

See the handout for more sites- albeit not an exhaustive list. While both Yad Vashem and USHMM have records from Arolsen Archives they are not the same records. Arolsen is not the only place for Shoah records as the above list notes.

Conclusion

“Each of us has a name given by the source of light and by our parents,” a 20th Century Poet, Zelda, said. A quote whose source is unknown says that “Every man has two deaths: when he is buried in the ground and the last time someone says his name.” In some way’s humankind can be immortal. Silverman asked that we work together so that those who were murdered during the Shoah can be restored to memory—so that those names will only be temporarily lost. We can’t restore them to life, but we can restore them to our living memory.

Dr. Janette Silverman is a professional genealogist, heading a team of researchers specializing in Eastern European and Jewish research at AncestryProGenealogists® the division of Ancestry® that does private client research. Her research on behalf of clients takes her all over the U.S. and Europe. Silverman holds a Doctorate in Jewish Studies from Spertus Institute. Her dissertation, "In Living Memory" explored her family's journey from Europe to the U.S. from the 1880s to the 1920s, contextualizing their experiences.



The Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* reported on November 22, 2021, that the Provincial Administrative Court in Kraków in a case bearing Docket No. III SA/Kr 706/21 ruled in favor of a genealogist who had sued the mayor for access to the vital records file of his deceased great-uncle.

The Provincial Administrative Court (WSA) in Kraków decided that a man’s claim against the city mayor, who refused to allow him to inspect the in the identity card of his great-grandmother’s brother, was justified. Such a folder is created for every citizen when applying for an identity card. The authority argued that the applicant did not belong to the circle of the deceased’s relatives. Initially, the interested party appealed to the provincial governor, but he supported the mayor’s position, referring to Civil Code Article 23 which is the basis for providing access to the deceased’s immediate family, that is ascendants and descendants of the deceased to the documentation from the evidence envelope as personal property. In the context of the memory of the deceased person, when assessing proximity, one must consider the factual circumstances that accompanied specific family relationships. Moreover, personal contacts should be distinguished from psychological bonds between persons.

There is always a subjective element connected with the assessment of proximity, i.e., the feeling of closeness," justified Judge Hanna Knysiak-Sudyka and added: "From such generally defined subjective right it is possible to derive two basic rights: the right to good memory of the deceased and the right to true memory, i.e., not falsified and not distorted. The first of these rights corresponds to the duty of third parties to respect the good name of the deceased, the second to the duty to provide truthful information about the deceased. The final comment in the article, said," The decision is particularly important for people who are scientifically or amateurish in creating family trees of their family and researching its fate. Undoubtedly, it will allow them to see more freely the documents of relatives of the deceased."

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version), therefore there is room for interpretation with other translation sites. To read the original article in Polish see: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8japm2>. To read it translated by Google translate using Chrome as the browser: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8japm2>

**Thank you to Yale Reisner for sharing the article with us*

Practicing Safe Computing #73: “Charity Review Websites”

By Hal Bookbinder



This updates my December 2018 article, “[Practicing Safe ‘Tzedakah’ \(Charity\)](#)” on doing your homework before donating. Some charities are evasive as to where the money goes. Others have fundraising, executive salaries and other overhead significantly above the norm. Some are simply scams.

Tools to check before you donate include Charity Watch (<https://www.charitywatch.org/>), Charity Navigator (<https://www.charitynavigator.org/>), and the BBB’s Wise Giving Alliance (<https://give.org/>). They all provide quick, unbiased, information.

If you would like to drill deeper, you can review the IRS “990” filings required of most large 501(3)(c) charities. These filings can provide a wealth of information as to the purpose, the total revenue and how much goes into fundraising, executive salaries and overhead.

I have even used these filings to aid my genealogical research. On Googling a relative with a common name, I found he had a family charitable foundation. The IRS form 990 showed his address and phone number!

In my previous article I cited the Foundation Center’s “990 Finder.” I now find this tool to be dated, lacking current 990s for a sampling of charities I queried. I recommend use of the IRS search facility for nonprofit filings at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/allSearch>. It is generally up to date through 2019.

Consider Googling the name of the charity plus “complaint”, “review”, “rating” or “scam.” While not everything one reads on the Internet is valid, obtaining critical information as well as material published by the charity may help you make the best choice.

If you simply Google “Best Charities”, “Charity Reviews”, or the like note that the first few links tend to be paid ads in which listed organizations pay for placement. Objectivity is questionable.

A few more considerations:

- Don’t let anyone rush you into donating. This may be a sign you are being scammed.
- Never send cash, gift card or wire money. These are also typical of scammers.
- Monitor bank and credit card statements to ensure that a one-time donation is not recurring.
- Be especially careful before donating to a crowdfunding site. Many are not legitimate.
- Solicitors are often intermediaries who take a fee. Consider donating directly to the charity.
- Ask for written assurance, before you donate, that personal information will not be shared.
- Scammers sometimes choose charity names that sound like real ones. Pay attention!

For more, see, <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-donate-wisely-and-avoid-charity-scams>

This is the seventy-third 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>.



'Unsafe website' message when visiting JGSCV.org

TL;DR:

If your browser or anti-virus program displays an 'Unsafe website' message when visiting JGSCV.org, make certain that your operating system, browser, and anti-virus software have all been updated to the latest release.

The Issue

During the *schmoozing* portion of our November meeting, one of the members commented that his computer had displayed an 'Unsafe website' message when he visited JGSCV.org. The cause of the problem is that the root certificate issued by Let's Encrypt had expired on September 29, 2021, and the member did not receive an updated certificate for his system.

Background

Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) is the protocol that web browsers use to provide secure communications when visiting a website. HTTPS provides authentication of the accessed site, privacy through encryption, and integrity of data while in transit. HTTPS makes use of digital certificates for encryption.

A digital certificate is a text file cryptographically signed by a third party and is used to establish identity of a user or organization – it is the computer equivalent of a driver's license. Much like a driver's license, certificates are only valid for a limited time, forcing the owner to periodically renew them, and, hopefully, keeping the information contained within up to date. Expiration also acts as a safeguard in case the key to the certificate is stolen.

A certification authority (CA) is an entity that issues digital certificates. The main certificates, known as "root" certificates, belonging to these companies are pre-installed in operating systems and web browsers. There are 100 or fewer companies that are trusted out-of-the-box by the major web browsers and operating systems.

A root CA certificate may be used to issue multiple intermediate CA certificates, which are then used to sign client certificates. This is done so that if an intermediate certificate is compromised, only some of the client certificates issued by the CA need to be invalidated. If all the client certificates had been signed by a single root certificate, then every certificate issued by the CA would need to be invalidated.

A chain of trust is established by the hardware and software validating the signatures of each certificate from the end entity up to the root certificate. This chain can usually be viewed in the browser. One common method is to click on the lock icon near the URL. There will be a means to get more information about the connection, usually providing a button labelled "View Certificate".

The Cause

Let's Encrypt is a non-profit certificate authority that provides digital certificates at no charge. It was launched on April 12, 2016. Let's Encrypt is one of the largest certificate providers: to date, they have issued 200 million certificates, at a rate of 2 million per day.

On September 29, 2021, *Let's Encrypt's* original root certificate ("IdentTrust DST Root CA X3") expired, meaning that all intermediate and end-entity certificates signed by that root became invalid.

Devices and software that use HTTPS encryption are designed to handle expiration of certificates and replacements for expired root certificates are typically included by manufacturers in their software updates.

However, devices that do not routinely check for updates or older devices that are no longer supported by their manufacturers may fail to receive a replacement for an expired root or intermediate certificate. This is particularly true for devices such as routers and smart home accessories, such as thermostats, sprinkler controllers, and light switches.

The Fix

For Android devices, there is some good news: owing to the way digital certificates are handled in Android, Let's Encrypt was able to cross-sign their certificates to keep them valid past the original root expiration.

For all other operating systems, it is necessary to apply the manufacturer's update that includes the new root certificate for Let's Encrypt ("ISRG Root X1"). Here is a list of the versions needed: <https://letsencrypt.org/docs/certificate-compatibility/>.

Firefox (and soon Chrome) maintains its own certificate cache, rather than relying on the certificates provided by the operating system. Therefore, updating Firefox to the latest version may resolve the issue with Firefox.

Some antivirus programs offer a feature that checks to see if websites are "safe", acting as a proxy and utilizing their own certificate cache. Again, updating the antivirus software to the latest version may eliminate the issue.

Lastly, browsing to <https://valid-isrgrootx1.letsencrypt.org/> may prompt Windows systems to start using the new certificate automatically.

JGSCV Updates

Membership Renewal & your chance to win FABULOUS prizes!

Did you know that joining and/or renewing JGSCVS membership today gives you membership through December 2022!

Those who join/renew will be entered in our Chanukah drawing (*must also attend December meeting) for the chance to win fabulous gifts donated by our generous sponsors. See items and sponsors on page 15.

A renewal/membership form is on page 16.

Note regarding payment:

Warren is working on technical issues with PayPal, you do not have to wait for it to renew or join. Send a check made out to JGSCV and mail to our membership vice president, Helene (her address is on the form). If you prefer to pay by in-person, please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org.

When we have PayPal working, the board will consider opening our meetings to non-members for a fee per meeting which can be then put toward the person's membership fee if they decide to join.

(easy) Fundraising Opportunities

While we rely on your dues to operate, we also need additional revenue to keep up with what we do. Here are two easy ways to further assist our society.

When shopping at:

- Ralph's or Food for Less, list JGSCV as your charity of choice.
- Amazon please do so through the Amazon Smile program.

Neither of these opportunities cost you any additional money and both result in contributions to JGSCV. For more information, see "noteworthy" on our website at <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>

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

Sunday, December 12, 2021, from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Open only to JGSCV Members (see below for membership application link)

Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 1:10 PM

Zoom link will be emailed to members before the meeting.



December Meeting

Floriane Azoulay presents:

The Arolsen Archives:

A Treasure Trove of Records



The Arolsen Archives, formerly known as the International Tracing Center, located in Bad Arolsen, Germany is an international center on Nazi persecution and answers questions about 20,000 victims yearly. The archives are overseen by an 11-nation International Commission comprised of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They have a comprehensive online archive. In addition to talking about the records, Director Azoulay will discuss their crowdsourcing initiative #everynamecounts, an initiative by the Arolsen Archives which aims to establish a digital memorial to the people persecuted by the Nazis. Ms. Azoulay will also address about data protection and how that equates with their open records access.

Speaker: Floriane Azoulay, Director, Arolsen Archives. A French human rights expert, she was appointed head of the institution by the International Commission (IC) of the Arolsen Archives in 2016. In the past five years of her tenure, she has repositioned the institution, raised its public profile, and implemented digitization throughout the organization. Previously, Floriane Azoulay served as Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department at the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

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 or call
Jan Meisels Allen@ 818-889-6616 See: www.JGSCV.org



2022 JGSCV Meeting Dates

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

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

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
2021		
December 12	Floriane Azoulay, Executive Director, Arolsen Archives	Researching the Arolsen Archives
2022		
January 9	Robert Watson	The Nazi Titanic: The Incredible Untold Story of a Doomed Ship in World War II
February 6	Steve Morse	Getting Ready for the 1950 Census Searching With and Without a Name Index
March 13	Chuck Weinstein	The Three Great Myths of Jewish Genealogy
April 3	TBA	
May 1	TBA	Annual Yom HaShoah program
June 5	TBA	
July 10	TBA	
August	NO Meeting IAJGS conference: August 21-25	
September 11	TBA	
October 9	TBA	
November 6	TBA	
December 11	TBA	Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party

Genealogy Odds and Ends

Welsh Jewish History

The Jewish History Association of South Wales is undertaking a project to record the oral history of individuals who have stories to tell about South Wales. They are looking for any memories, and you do not have to have been born in Wales. All interviews will be conducted on Zoom, so you can be involved from anywhere in the world. The Welsh Jewish population is currently less than 0.5% of the UK Jewish population and is declining. They hope to preserve the rich history of the community that once lived here.

Please email Laura Harrison, Oral History Officer at: Laura.henley.harrison@jhasw.org.uk

ProQuest-Ancestry Remote Access Ends December 31, 2021

During the pandemic, Ancestry permitted ProQuest to offer the Ancestry Library Edition remotely in North America for those libraries that have Ancestry subscriptions. I have been advised that Ancestry notified ProQuest that the remote access ends on December 31, 2021, as more public libraries have reopened.

You need to check with your local library if they have a ProQuest Ancestry subscription that you can access remotely until December 31st. A library card for that library or library system will be required to access the remote Ancestry access until December 31st. After that date access will only be in the library on their computers.

Health History and End-of-Life care

Difficult to consider and even more challenging to discuss, this article gives pointers on how to communicate with loved ones on critical these matters:

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/health/2021/11/23/family-health-history-end-of-life-care/6297666001/>

A tool for recording family health history can be found on the Surgeon General's website:

<https://phgkb.cdc.gov/FHH/html/fhh.html?action=create>

Historical Jewish American Newspapers Online

Follow this link to Jewish-American newspapers that have been published over the last hundred or so years that may help you find information and stories about your ancestors:

<https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/historic-jewish-american-newspapers-online/>



FamilyTree 25 Best Genealogy Websites for Beginners

Are you interested in websites for building your family tree? DNA tests? Learning more about genealogy? Exploring regional and ethnic resources? Beginner-friendly records? Check out:

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/websites/25-best-genealogy-websites-for-beginners/>

Our Generous Contributors for Chanukah Prizes

**Join or Renew before December meeting AND attend December meeting (12/12) for a chance to win*





2022 Membership/Renewal Form

Jewish Genealogical Society

of the

Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)*

*Member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

www.JGSCV.org

Dues paid now are good through December 2022

Date _____

Check one:

This is a New Membership _____ Renewal _____

Single \$ 30.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$35.00 _____ + \$2.00**

*family defined as two people living in the same household

** \$1 per person is a voluntary donation to the IAJGS Stern Award, granted annually when it recognizes institutions for outstanding work in the creation and availability of resources for Jewish Genealogy.

Additional voluntary contributions:

Library Acquisition Fund \$ _____ Programs Fund \$ _____

Security Fee Fund \$ _____

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for any fund \$5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV Mail application to: Helene Rosen,
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zipcode + 4 _____

Home telephone _____ Mobile telephone _____

E-mail address _____

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