



# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 2, Issue 4

January 2007

## President's Message...

JGSCV held its elections for the 2007 board of directors at our December 10 meeting. The following persons were re-elected to the board of directors: Debra Kay Blatt, Werner Frank, and Frank Tessel. Helene Rosen was elected for her first term and will assume Richard Munitz's role of Membership vice president. Welcome Helene! We are delighted to have you on the Board! All terms are for two years. The remaining board positions will be up for election in December 2007. By staggering the board terms only half the board is up for election in any one year. The membership also voted to amend the bylaws by deleting the extraneous phrase mentioned in the last newsletter.

The following members won the 2007 membership campaign prizes: Rosalie Bell, Fran Entin, Cory and Jeni Edelman, Rick Ginsberg, Fran Levy, Mindy Levy, Miriam Mandell, Dan Reed, Faye Rosenberg, Mort Rosenthal and Gerry Reed.

Now for a few words about out-going JGSCV Membership vice president Richard Munitz. Richard has been the backbone behind the exceptionally successful first year of our JGS. All our members know him from his greeting them at the registration desk at the meetings and sending out the various notices. What the board has experienced, and JGSCV has benefited from, is the diligence, knowledge, humor and "sechel" that Richard has afforded us over the past year. While going off the board, Richard remains an active JGSCV member.

.Jan Meisels Allen



## Ron Arons Speaks to our JGSCV

On 10 December 2006, Ron Arons delivered a colorful presentation on the history of Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky and their involvement in the development of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas to an audience of nearly 90 attendees.

This talk was given from a genealogical viewpoint, providing evidence of the life of these nefarious members of the mob through citations that included immigration records, marriage and death certificates, census pages and articles from a variety of newspapers. Arons pointed out that his research involved visits to numerous libraries, local government archives, national archives and contact with family members. Also, good parts of his finding were discovered on Internet sites that covered the history of these individuals.

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.....

For those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, please do so now. You may obtain a renewal form on our website [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) under *membership*. We have a fantastic year planned and you don't want to miss any of it!



Don't forget to make your plans to attend the 27<sup>th</sup> IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy July 15-20, 2007 in Salt Lake City. It will be a genealogical trip of a lifetime! Go to [www.slc2007.org](http://www.slc2007.org) for more information.

**SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

## 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 a special shelf at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

2007 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain new membership or renewal forms on our website at [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) by selecting the membership button.

**SHTETL** (Shteh'-t'l) n. (Yiddish) (pl. *shtetlach*), little city, town, or village. Often used to refer to the small Jewish communities of Eastern Europe where the culture of the Ashkenazim flourished before World War II.

ShtetLinks is a project of JewishGen, Inc., which commemorate places where Jews have lived. This is accomplished by creating an individual web page for a location with information, pictures, databases and links to sites that provide additional data on that place. ShtetLinks is not confined to Ashkenazim (descendants of eastern European Jews); it is open to Sephardim (descendants of Jews from Spain and Portugal), Mizrachim (Jews from Asia) as well as Jews from other places.

For access to this website resource see:

[www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org](http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org)

## **YIZKOR BOOK AVAILABILITY**

The New York Public Library has digitized almost all of its 700 Yizkor book holdings. Full text downloads are available at no fee at the website: [nypl.org/research/chss/jws/yizkorbookonline.cfm](http://nypl.org/research/chss/jws/yizkorbookonline.cfm)

Information concerning Yizkor books is also available on [www.Jewishgen.org](http://www.Jewishgen.org). A master database provides information on how to find Yizkor Books for a specific location and points to libraries that hold the books. A selected number of Yizkor Books have been translated to English and are available for download.

(see also article on Yizkor books on page 4)

## TIPS FOR RESEARCHERS.....

### **ATTENTION: PASSENGER LIST SEARCHERS**

Please be aware: Some New York passenger lists contain Baltimore and other destinations. If the ship made stops at several ports, the ships log will register all passengers departing from a particular port, and they will all appear on the same roll of film.

For example: on New York Passenger arrival film #1027805 Roll 641 (NARA) for May 17, 1895 the NY arrivals on the SS Wittekind have the Baltimore lists immediately following the NY lists. Departing New York passengers are listed separately from departing Baltimore passengers. The same thing occurs with the SS Stuttgart arriving on May 22, 1895. (From Barbara Algaze, Librarian JGSLA)

### **THE GOLD STANDARD WEBSITE FOR SEARCHERS**

Keep your eye on the ever increasing scope of the Steve Morse website at <http://stevemorse.org> where it is possible to search on dozens of topics relevant to genealogy by utilizing simple inquiry forms. Access to the Ellis Island immigration files has 15 variants alone, the latest of which does not even require the identification of a person's name (the Gold form).

### **THE USGENWEB PROJECT**

A free website devoted to general genealogy interests is offered at [www.usgenweb.org](http://www.usgenweb.org). This is a portal which provides a gateway to all US county and state websites which in turn offer links to archival and database sources, some available for a fee. For example, one online resource is the millions of gravesite data across the United States including a number of Jewish cemeteries.

### **SEEKING VOLUNTEERS.....**

We are seeking volunteers to staff a committee devoted to outreaching to the community in order to further the objective of Yad V'Shem (The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem) in completing Pages of Testimony (POT) on behalf of known victims of the Holocaust.

JGSCV wishes to make community synagogues and organizations aware of this effort in the hope that all known victims will have been recognized and incorporated in the Shoah Victim's Database. If interested, please call President Jan Meisels Allen at 818-889-6616.

Learn How To Do Your Genealogy Research!  
Come to the Jewish Genealogical Society  
of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County\*  
(\* and surrounding areas)

Sunday, January 7, 2007 2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m.  
at Temple Adat Elohim  
2420 E.Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

## "How To Begin Your Genealogy Research-Part III"

(no need to have heard Part I or Part II)

Wondering how to fill in the gaps on your family tree? Want to learn how to research newspapers for your genealogical research? Do you know about Yizkor books, which tell the stories of the shtetls your ancestors lived in?

JGSCV Board members, Jan Meisels Allen and Werner Frank, both accomplished genealogists, will lead the discussions including: family hearsay, cemetery books, Jewish history books, Jewish marriage records, searching older newspapers for obituaries, articles on family businesses and Yizkor books (written by survivors after the Holocaust as memorials to those destroyed Jewish communities, containing descriptions and histories of the shtetl, biographies of prominent people, and lists of people who perished, etc.).

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

There is no charge to attend the meeting.

Anyone may join JGSCV.

For more information contact [information@JGSCV.org](mailto:information@JGSCV.org) See: [www.JGSCV.org](http://www.JGSCV.org)

Or call Jan Meisels Allen @ 818-889-6616

### Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim  
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

February 11, 2007: Randy Thompson, Archivist, NARA, "Lesser Known Resources at the National Archives and Records Administration"

March 18, 2007: Joel Weintraub, "Navigating the New York and Federal Censuses with Fewer Tears"

April 15, 2007: "There Once Was A Town" — award winning PBS documentary on a visit to an ancestral shtetl. In 1941 Nazis invaded the small town of Eishyshok, Poland (now Lithuania), and brutally murdered nearly all 3,500 Jewish residents. Fifty-six years after the massacre, four survivors and their families return to their childhood home led by Israeli scholar Yaffa Eliach return "to awaken old memories and confront long-silenced ghosts."

- We welcome contributions from our members regarding their genealogical research experience. Submit your story to this Newsletter at [newsletereditor@jgscv.org](mailto:newsletereditor@jgscv.org) .

## YIZKOR BOOK IS PUBLISHED; RECEIVES RECOGNITION

This Newsletter editor shares a recent experience in the publication of a Yizkor Book commemorating the Jewish inhabitants of his once hometown in Germany. For a number of years I had been in collaboration with Gymnasium level students of Eppingen, located in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. This dialogue led to the creation of a website (see [www.juedisches-leben-kraichgau.de](http://www.juedisches-leben-kraichgau.de)) and the recently published book *Jüdisches Leben im Kraichgau: Zur Geschichte der Eppinger Juden und ihrer Familien* (Jewish Life in Kraichgau: On the History of the Jews of Eppingen and their Families). The 208 pages discuss the once Jewish life in this rural community, its Jewish institutions, the fate of hundreds of members of 30 Jewish families and a list of 38 victims of the Shoah. The book was recognized by Baden-Württemberg for the annual Student Prize granted on 24 November 2006. For this occasion, I and my wife Phoebe were invited to be present for the award ceremony.



Student-authors and teachers of the Gymnasium in Eppingen, Germany with Werner Frank (front row center) and Phoebe Frank (left of center) flanked by two granddaughters, Rona and Tammy Kremer

During our one week stay in Eppingen, we were also invited to meet over 200 Gymnasium and Realschule students in five classes of the tenth and eleventh grade in order to respond to some 70 questions that had been posed to us. The interest of these students ranged from wishing to know from an eye witness what it was like to grow up in the time of the National Socialists, to how emigration from Germany and subsequent absorption in a new land took place. There were also penetrating questions on what Jews expect of the young German generation today as it relates to the period of the Holocaust.

Most Yizkor books have targeted communities in Eastern Europe and are typically authored by Jews in the Hebrew or Yiddish language (see note on page 3). An unheralded number of Yizkor books in the German language have also been created by non-Jews with respect to communities in Germany as exemplified by this book.

Werner L. Frank

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS: Jeff Bock, Bunny & Bud Levine, Marvin & Geri Wynn, Robert Zaas**

### JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jan Meisels Allen, President  
Helene Rosen, Membership  
Dalya Dektor, Treasurer  
Dorothy Drilich, Secretary

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