



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 3, Issue 3

December 2007

President's Message

On November 11, JGSCV was privileged to have as speaker Gladys Sturman, editor and publisher of the *Western States Jewish History Journal*. The Western States Jewish History (WSJH) Archives and Journal were initiated by Rabbi William Kramer and Dr. Norton Stern, who accumulated materials on Jews in the West beginning 40 years ago. The WSJH archives are located at UCLA with some artifacts at the Huntington Museum and the Museum of the American West (Autry National Center). For more information on WSJH see www.WSJHistory.com

The pioneer Jews who came to the western part of the US were not religious as there was no Kosher food, mikvah nor congregations. Most early Jews were peddlers and merchants who settled in then small towns. The first thing the Jews did was establish cemeteries in their towns as most wanted to be buried in Jewish grounds. They typically met in store fronts once a year for Yom Kippur — without a rabbi.



Speaker Gladys Sturman

Mrs. Sturman spoke of four Jewish merchants who opened up stores in what eventually became Oxnard, then called "Little Jerusalem." They built roads and eventually the docks to ship beans to Mexico. In the late 1800s Anaheim was a large grape growing and wine making area. One Jewish wine merchant wanted to make the Southern California wines well-known. To get people to come for the wine, he built a chain of hotels.

Hal Bookbinder presented the Nominations Committee report for six Board of Directors positions. Biographies of these candidates are presented on page 2 of this Newsletter. With no further nominations made from the floor, all nominations were closed. At the December meeting the six people will be presented as a slate for election.

If you have not yet renewed your JGSCV Membership-what are you waiting for? It pays to renew by or at the December 9 meeting, (membership renewal form is on page 4 and on our website: www.JGSCV.org) in order to be eligible to win some wonderful genealogically relevant prizes- software, books, Ancestry subscription and more. You must be present to win. To keep JGSCV flourishing we need your membership dues! Your dues provide the funds to put on the great programs and enhance our library! Starting in 2008 there will be several new members-only services — you don't want to miss them! I will highlight the details in the next month's newsletter.

If anyone has translation skills, for French, German, Czech, Hebrew, Hungarian, Polish, Spanish, Russian or Yiddish or other languages, please let me know. One of the new member-only programs, starting in 2008 will be assistance with translations. The committee will be headed by JGSCV member Lina Boardman.

Thank you to Dave Stelman who videoed and made CDs of the "How To Begin Your Genealogy Part IV- How To Use A Family History Center." They are now available for borrowing by members only.

Looking forward to seeing you on December 9 for our annual Chanukah Party and membership drive prizes! You will love the program with Ron Arons, "Using The Internet Beyond Steve Morse and JewishGen." You will be entertained as well as learn some great tools for your genealogical research.

FOR SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS, SEE PAGE 3

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CYCLE FOR 2008 IS IN PROCESS, SEE PAGE 4

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.

2008 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 by selecting the membership button.

Remember, signing up at this time provides membership valid for all of 2008.

BIOGRAPHIES OF BOARD NOMINEES

The following slate of nominees are candidates for election to the Board of Directors of JGSCV at the meeting of the Society on December 9, 2007:

Jan Meisels Allen- Currently serving as President, JGSCV and a founding member of the JGSCV. Is board member of the International Association of the Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and Chairperson, IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee. Has made presentations at the annual IAJGS President's meeting and serves as the IAJGS representative on the Federation of Genealogical Societies/National Genealogical Societies Records Preservation and Access Committee. Served as the 2007 IAJGS Conference Registration Chair and Website editor. Began her genealogy research in 1998.

Stewart K. Bernstein- has been involved in Genealogy for fifteen years. Currently retired, after having spent thirty-five years in the Motion Picture and Television Industry. During that period, was awarded two National Emmy Awards and numerous additional Nominations. Suggested to Jan Allen Meisels the need for a JGS serving the Conejo Valley and Ventura County and currently serves on it's Board of Directors.

Warren Blatt- founding member of JGSCV and served on the Board for the past two years. Involved in genealogy research for thirty years. Employed as Editor in Chief of JewishGen, Inc. and author of many JewishGen databases. He is a winner of the IAJGS' Lifetime Achievement award. Presenter at many meetings of the JGSCV, he is the author of two books and numerous journal articles.

Dalya Dektor- founding member of JGSCV and serving on the Board for the past two years. Has been Treasurer of JGSCV and was in charge of the initial JGSCV publicity campaign. She has been working on her family genealogy for the past forty years. Responsible for fund raising for the Channelaire Chorus during the past twelve years.

Dorothy Drilich- founding member of JGSCV, member and Secretary of the Board for the past two years. Dorothy has had a long time interest in her family history and has started her genealogy research in recent years.

Fred Land- interest in genealogy began in 2002 and has led to research in Lithuania and discovery of many contemporary relatives. Made a presentation to the JGSCV on my findings, "Tangled Web." Would like to serve on the Board of Directors.

KEEPING CURRENT

Keep current with what is being published in genealogy & local history around the country by accessing:

<http://genlibrarian.blogspot.com/>

You can also sign up to receive a free notification of every genealogical related historical publication. In addition, the site affords the opportunity to build your own genealogy library. Every day a few genealogy and local history books are highlighted which may be downloaded. These files (PDF) are fully searchable.

LOS ANGELES DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE

Selected years of the Los Angeles City Directories and the Los Angeles Street Address Directories are now available on the Los Angeles Public Library's Web site: www.lapl.org/resources/en/index.html.

The city directories included are 1929, 1936, 1938, 1939 and 1942. The street address directories cover May 1956, Mar 1960, Oct 1961, July 1962, July 1963, Apr 1964, Apr 1965, July 1965, Apr 1967, Apr 1968, Jan 1969, July 1973, and July 1987. (From newsletter of the Conejo Valley Genealogical Society).

JEWISH GENEALOGY MONTH CONTEST

In 2008, Jewish Genealogy Month will be held during the month of Cheshvan 5769 (30 Oct. through 27 Nov.) IAJGS is sponsoring a competition for a poster or flyer reflecting Jewish Genealogy Month. The winning poster/flyer will be unveiled at the 2008 IAJGS Chicago International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. The artist creating the winning entry will receive free registration for that conference. For submission rules see www.iajgs.org/jgmonth.html

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



Sunday, December 9, 2007 2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m.
at Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E.Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

The Topic:
"Using The Internet Beyond JewishGen
and Steve Morse's Website"

JewishGen and Steve Morse's website provide the Jewish genealogist with fantastic tools to help with their research. However, there is so much more! Ron will discuss other "best bet" websites that allow one to find many other materials online, including historical documents, newspapers and articles, living people, maps and photos, foreign language translators and aids, and more.

Guest Speaker: Ron Arons, a founding member of JGSCV, an accomplished nationally known speaker and published author in *Avotaynu*, will provide an entertaining, humorous, yet educational discussion.

Drawing of fantastic genealogical prizes for those who renew their JGSCV membership or join for 2008. You must be present to win! Light refreshments celebrating Chanukah and our membership drive.

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.

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
See: 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

January 6, 2008, "Documenting Immigrants to America: 1882-1954," presented by Marian Smith.

February 10, 2008, "Using Maps in Genealogical Research," presented by Robert Sherins, MD.

March 2, 2008, "100 years of the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring," presented by Eric Gordon.

Subsequent meetings in 2008: Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1.

PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE AND SUBMIT TO THE TREASURER
CONSIDER GIVING A JGSCV MEMBERSHIP AS A CHANUKAH GIFT TO A FRIEND

2008 Membership Renewal Form

Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)

2008 Annual Dues:

Dues paid now are good through December 2008!

Check one:

Single \$ 25.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$30.00 _____ + \$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 \$ _____

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

Make check out to: JGSCV

Mail to: Helene Rosen
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Day telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

E-mail address _____

(This is very important as all communication is done by e-mail!)

REMINDER TO REGISTER

Ralphs Community Contribution Program will support JGSCV through your purchases of goods at Ralphs markets, and at no cost to you. Please register for this community outreach program by following the steps outlined on our website: www.jgscv.org and click on "notices."

Now whenever you shop at Ralphs, JGSCV will receive a percentage of what you spend.

Dust Off Those Old Address Books and Box of Letters!



Genealogy is an adventure — sometimes funny, many times poignant. I look at it as a voyage of discovering my roots, which defines who I am. It takes a love of history to help understand what shaped our ancestors' lives and therefore us. That voyage entails being a detective, liking to go through old documents, reading microfilms in languages other than my native English, making "cold" contacts with possible relatives who may never reply or if called "cold" say "I don't know who you are or what you want...goodbye." Perseverance is definitely a requirement!

When I started my genealogical adventure in late 1998, I contacted anyone whom I may have known or a name that was familiar from my childhood — if I could find them — and if they were still with us. I remembered the name Goodfarb, cousins through my maternal grandfather, Jacob Flower. In contacting family members, I was directed to a Sammy Goodfarb in Jacksonville, Florida. In talking with him on the phone, I learned that my grandfather had sponsored his father, Abraham Gutfarb and Sammy's Uncle Gedalia (Charles) to the U.S.A. in 1910. Sammy gave me more information and leads, including the name and address of his niece Fran who was now living in Boston. In 1999,

I snail-mailed to Fran a questionnaire that I had developed for gathering family information for my tree. We corresponded several times by email and then nothing further transpired — but she remained in my e-mail address book and evidently, I did in hers.

In August 2007, I received an email from Fran saying she had a new email address. I replied asking if she remembered me — I was the family genealogist and had contacted her in 1999 asking questions and relating to her that my grandfather had sponsored her grandfather to the U.S.A. I received an immediate reply — she remembered me. She still had my original letter and questionnaire and remembered that I did not know her great-grandmother's maiden name. Since then I had learned that it was Piatkowska which became the key to finding several other branches of cousins whose grandmothers or great-grandmothers were all sisters with the last name of Piatkowska.

Fran told me she was coming to LA the next weekend; could we get together? We met for brunch and I brought my laptop with family tree and photos. We had a great time and it was as if we knew each other for years, not having just met. We are of the same generation- only 3 years apart and shared the same professional industry.

I had a photograph of her great grandparents that she had never seen before. Upon her return home she shared with me photographs of her family including a photograph of her grandfather Abraham in his Russian Army uniform (above, left) before he emigrated. We have since exchanged family history, including her grandfather's ship records, Russian-Polish birth records and other documents.

I strongly encourage you to dust off the old e-mail and snail mail addresses and re-contact those possible relatives again...you never know what you may uncover.

Jan Meisels Allen

- We welcome contributions from our members regarding their genealogical research experience. Submit your story to this Newsletter at newslettereditor@jgscv.org .

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS: Anita Arkin, Samuel & Miriam Greenschlag, Ethel Kaplan

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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