



The JSC Newsletter

Newsletter of the Cleveland Jewish Secular Community

www.jewishsecularcommunity.org

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Happy Pesach

Community Calendar

Saturday, April 10. InterAct Cleveland volunteer activity. See p. 2

Sunday, April 11. "Swingin' at the Temple." See p. 4

Friday, April. 16. Shabbat dinner. See p. 2

Sunday, April 18. JSC Board meeting. See p. 6

Sunday, April 25. InterAct Cleveland panel discussion. See p. 3

People of the Book

One of the few positive distinctions historically bestowed upon Jews is being called "the people of the book." We celebrate the age-old pursuit of education for the betterment of our families, communities, and the world. Historically, we have learned the truth of the saying "Knowledge is power."

In our generation, however, higher education has become harder for average families to obtain for their children and grandchildren. The cost of gaining the knowledge and skills needed

to compete in the 21st century has become prohibitive for all but the most affluent families or athletically gifted students.

One high school senior we know applied to nine colleges and universities in the fall. Armed with an impressive grade point average, astronomical SAT and ACT scores, deep and broad extra-curricular activities, and years of work experience, she confidently submitted her applications to some of the finest private and public institutions in the country.

That exemplary background earned her acceptances and generous scholarship offers from several of the schools. Years ago, this student's only quandary would have been selecting her favorite of favorites. Today, the dilemma is far more serious: How deep a financial hole is a family willing to dig to provide their child with an education?

The in-state cost of a year at Ohio State University rounds up to about \$20,000. If you have a grandchild in another state who wants to attend OSU, the cost escalates to \$35,000. If that graduating senior opts for a good private college, then the tab skyrockets to \$45,000-\$50,000...per year...until the tuition increases.

Of course, that apple of his or her parents' eye is very smart and may be awarded a merit-based scholarship

(though colleges that have seen their endowments dwindle in the Wall St. meltdown now prefer students who can pay their own way). And if the family qualifies, the school may even throw in some needs-based funding.

Problem solved? Not a chance. At the end of four years of college, most middle-class students and their families will be on the hook for tens of thousands of dollars in loans. The debt is a heavy burden for years to come. Will it all have been worth it? Then again, was there really ever a choice? Can “people of the book” short-change their children’s education in an ever-more-competitive economy?

The perfect storm: Jewish guilt, unqualified commitment to education, and costs that price many families out of the market. It’s a Catch-22 that Joseph Heller would have enjoyed.

Enjoy Shabbat Dinner

On **April 16**, the JSC will enjoy a completely catered (chicken-free!) Shabbat dinner courtesy of the Genzyme Corporation. Shmoozing will commence promptly at 6:30 p.m. The evening’s program will begin at 6:45 p.m., with dinner being served at 7:00 p.m.

Dinner Menu

- Beef bourguignon (pepper crusted tender roast beef with a burgundy wine and mushroom sauce)
- Grilled vegetable lasagna (pasta layered with mozzarella, ricotta and grilled marinated vegetables)
- Roasted garlic mashed potatoes
Fresh green beans with vermouth butter
- Salad (mixed greens with sliced Roma tomatoes, cucumbers, julienne carrots, toasted almonds and a balsamic vinaigrette)

- Rolls and butter
- Assorted gourmet finger pastries
- Wine and beverages

Our guest speaker will be Gary Frohlich, MS, Senior Medical Affairs Liaison and Certified Genetics Counselor. He will speak on “Our Heritage, Our Health.” The presentation will raise awareness about Ashkenazi Jewish diseases and Gaucher’s disease. **[Editor’s note:** Go to <http://www.gauchercare.com> for information about Gaucher disease.]

Please RSVP to Marcia Rosenthal (sunchoke@sbcglobal.net, 440-423-1718) by **Tuesday, April 6** at the latest. **The dinner will serve the first 75 people who respond. Others may attend to hear the presentation.** After April 6, we will accept RSVPs for guests if openings remain.

If you are thinking of joining the JSC, this is a great time to send in your membership dues (which will count toward next year).

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The speaker for the March 19 Shabbat program was Dr. Samantha Baskind, Associate Professor at Cleveland State University. She discussed “What Is Jewish Art? Controversy and Confusion.” Although Dr. Baskind never definitively answered the question, her observations on the subject were provocative and insightful.

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All JSC Shabbat dinners are held at the First Unitarian Church, 21600 Shaker Blvd. (east) in Shaker Heights.

Volunteer Activities

We need volunteers. As a member of InterAct Cleveland, the JSC will be helping to prepare and serve another community meal **on Saturday, April 10**. We are once

again partnering with the East Shore Unitarian/Universalist Church in Kirtland and the Unity Mosque in Brecksville.

We will meet at 10:00 a.m. at the church to begin setting up and preparing the meal. We should be finished by 2:00 p.m.

Please call or e-mail **Nora Kancelbaum** (216-283-2562, nkancelbaum@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping with this worthwhile community service. There will be very little involved in the meal preparation. We will cook spaghetti and meat sauce (meatless), both of which will have been obtained from the Cleveland Food Bank, and heat meatballs acquired from Sam's Club. The other two groups will provide side dishes and desserts.

Our first joint meal was successful, and we expect many more guests in April as the schedule is being more widely distributed. This is a wonderful opportunity to get our name out in the community and to work together with religious groups on a joint project.

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InterActCleveland is sponsoring a panel discussion titled "Eco-Justice and Eco-Spirituality: It's More than Going Green!" on **Sunday, April 25**, 2:30 p.m., at Plymouth Church, 2860 Coventry Road, Shaker Heights.

This is part of InterAct's "Sharing Paths" dialogue series, and the conversation will be around congregations' green initiatives and how they help balance humanity's future progress with the earth's sustainability. Among the speakers will be Dr. Tim Beal from CWRU, Rabbi Stacy Schlein of The Temple, and Mr. Ahmed Fellague from the Islamic Center of Cleveland.

For more information, e-mail www.interactcleveland.org or call 216-241-0230.

Shabbat Haggadahs To Be Revised

Roni Berenson, Rifke Feinstein, and Rona Weiss will be teaming up to revise our Shabbat liturgy. If you have any suggestions, contact Rifke (216-481-0850, rifke@bronxbobbe.com). The plan calls for the new booklet to be ready for the fall.

Committee Positions Need Filling

Like any thriving organization, the JSC needs members who are willing to become involved in the nitty-gritty. Please volunteer to serve on any of the following JSC committees that have openings this year: Community Service, Membership, Social, Holidays, and Newsletter. In addition, the term of office of Secretary expires this year. **The Community depends on the active participation of its members**, and all members are *strongly* urged to consider placing their names in nomination to serve in these posts.

For more information, contact Edie Todd (216-272-2901, egmtodd@gmail.com).

Sixty-Five Years Later

Roni Berenson kindly shares a moving experience in the following article.

I play Scrabble on line with people from all over the world. We communicate by typing messages to each other while playing. Today I played with a person from Germany. After a few back and forths like "good luck," "nice move," "You have all the good tiles", I asked, "Where are you from?" He or she answered "Germany." Then the conversation continued like this:

"I was born in Germany in 1930."

"Really? Where?"

"Berlin."

"Do you still speak German?"

"Not too well, no relatives left to speak to."

"That's too bad."

"Most of my relatives were killed in the Holocaust."

A few moves by both of us, with no comments. Then, "I am so sorry."

"At least I got out, with my parents."

"So only you and your parents survived?"

"No, a few aunts and uncles survived, but my grandmother and many aunts, uncles and cousins were sent to concentration camps, where they were murdered."

"That's terrible. I feel very bad."

After a while I asked, "How old are you, if I may ask?"

"Thirty."

"You have learned about the Holocaust, haven't you?"

"Yes, of course, but I've never talked to anyone who was hurt by it."

The game ended with my winning and my new friend congratulating me. Since there are thousands of people playing Scrabble on line, I may never come across this person again.

The Social Scene

Group tickets are available for JSC members to attend a concert by the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, "Swingin' at the Temple -- A Tribute to Jewish Composers," **Sunday, April 11**, 4:00 p.m., at Fairmount Temple.

The cost is \$15.00. Please make checks

payable to "Jewish Secular Community" and send to: Eunice Berko, 403 Muirfield Dr, Highland Hts, Ohio 44143, or to Marcia Rosenthal, 13569 County Line Rd, Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022 **by March 15.**

Member Notes

Walker Todd's father, Fowler Todd, died on March 3 after a long illness. The Community extends its deepest condolences to the Todd family.

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Walker's new book, *Progress and Property Rights: From the Greeks to Magna Carta to the Constitution*, receives a glowing review on the web page of the Property Rights Foundation of America (<http://prfamerica.org/bookreviews/A-History-Lesson.html>)

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Elaine Sherman will receive the National Council of Jewish Women's Arline Pritcher Award for outstanding volunteerism on April 15.

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Enid German is scheduled to undergo hip surgery on April 20. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

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In Violet Spevack's Cavalcade column in the February 26 *Cleveland Jewish News*, she reported on the birthday of Morrie Sayre, who turned 95 this February. Morrie is the father of JSC member **Don Sayre**. A large roomful of well-wishers celebrated the event with a special birthday cake at Montefiore. Morrie founded the charity Shoes and Clothes for Kids 41 years ago. Click <http://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/articles/2010/02/26/features/cavalcade/doc4b86c790d3a10521520323.txt> for the full article and a picture of Morrie, wife Alice, and Don.

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The *Cleveland Jewish News* published **Tybee Zuckerman's** letter to the editor on February 26. Signed Tabitha Korol (Tybee's pen name), the letter points out that Islamic terrorists have killed and injured many thousands of people while the UN would like to investigate Israeli crimes against humanity. You can read the letter at

<http://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/articles/2010/02/26/opinion/letters/doc4b86fa947acd5693678043.txt>.

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Roy Berko spoke at the First Unitarian Church on March 28 on the topic "Cleveland Arts: Observations, Predictions and You."

'Round Town

Siegal College hosts its 3rd Annual Israeli Cultural Lecture on **Thursday, April 22**, at 7:30 p.m. Israeli author and playwright Savyon Liebrecht will discuss "Apples from the Desert: Tension and Resolution in Israeli Society." For more information, call 216-464-4050, x-129 or email evenings@siegalcollege.edu.

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On the same date, the 22nd Annual Catholic/Jewish Colloquium will take place at Shaarey Tikvah. The topic will be "Jews, Jesus & Gospel Dynamics. Rechanneling How We Process the New Testament. Leading the discussion will be Rabbi Michael Cook and Father George M. Smiga. The colloquium is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. Phone the ADL at 216-579-9600, x-24 or email Cleveland@adl.org.

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Ecowatch, the organization founded by our January Shabbat speaker, Stephanie Spear, sponsors its 2nd Annual Green Gala on **April 9** at 7:00 p.m. at Executive Caterers in Mayfield Heights. The featured speaker will be

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. For more information, call (216) 387-1609.

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A film series highlighting Israeli life, culture, and artists runs from April 14 through April 25. For more information, go to www.reelisrael.org.

Men's Discussion Group

The Men's Discussion Group met on March 31 at the home of Mike Varble. The evening's topic asked, "Do you have concerns or fears for your family and/or descendants regarding the world they will live in?"

For information about the April meeting, call or email Steve Shucard (330-425-3234, steveshucard@hotmail.com).

CSJO Conference

The 2010 CSJO Conference will be held at Ursuline College from Friday, May 28 through Monday, May 31. There will be entertainment on Saturday night and a talent show on Sunday.

Hans Leander (committee coordinator), has sent out this preliminary lineup of workshops to be held at the 2010 CSJO Annual Conference: One Hundred Years of Secular Jewish Schools; Jews in China; Yiddish/Jewish Theater; A Taste of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism; Secular Jewish Education; Exploring Our Jewish Roots Through Film; Yiddish; Immigration and Jewish Values; Jews and the Left: A Natural Affinity?; Life Cycle Ceremonies for Secular Jews; Secret Medical School in the Warsaw Ghetto; Jews in India; The Future of Jewish Newspapers; Gay Issues and Jews; Bioethics and Jewish Tradition.

The other members of the Program Committee are **Lois Gross, Allen Guth, Jim and Kathe Mayer, and Lynn Salzbrenner**.

JSC Board Passes Motion

At the March 21 meeting of the JSC Board of Trustees, the following resolution was approved: The Jewish Secular Community of Cleveland will establish a Tikkun Olam Fund for the purpose of making monetary donations to local, national or international causes. Beginning with the fall membership dues notice, a separate line will be added to the dues notice, requesting that members make an optional donation to the fund. Contributions to the fund will be accepted at any time. The donation will be separate from the regular membership dues. The Community Service Committee will be responsible for making recommendations to the Board regarding details for the disbursement of funds.

The next JSC Board meeting will be held **on Sunday, April 18** at 11:00 a.m. These meetings are held at the Heinen's in Pepper Pike on Chagrin and Lander Rds. and are open to all JSC members.

Members Celebrate Passover 5770

A new haggadah, some new songs, and a large turnout, including several new faces, marked this year's Passover observance. Some fifty attendees read portions of the haggadah, and Chuck Fink led the celebrants in song. Kudos goes to the hardworking corps of volunteers who took charge of the myriad tasks that went into making the seder a success: **Eunice Berko, Rifke Feinstein (along with granddaughter Samantha and friend Jessica), Sandy Guth, Judy and Sheldon Herzog, Marcia and Gary Rosenthal, and Ellen Schwartz.**

Community Celebrates Passover 2010

Once again this year, the JSC celebrated Passover at the Solon Community Center. The seder, held on Sunday, March 28, attracted a good turnout, including several guests. The event featured a new haggadah, which called for many attendees to recite passages aloud. Chuck Fink led celebrants in singing traditional and not-so-traditional songs.



Chuck Fink leads the seder in song

By any measure, the seder was a success owing mostly to the hard work of a dedicated corps of volunteers: **Eunice Berko, Rifke Feinstein (along with granddaughter Samantha and friend Jessica), Sandy Guth, Judy and Sheldon Herzog, Marcia and Gary Rosenthal, and Ellen Schwartz.**



Food was plentiful and good as diners queued up at 2010 seder

The JSC Mission

The Jewish Secular Community, affiliated with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations and the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews, is a non-profit cultural and educational organization whose purpose is to:

- ✧ *Encourage Jewish identification in a non-theistic setting that draws inspiration from the traditional Jewish sources and values*
- ✧ *Educate adults in the history, culture, and tenets of Judaism*
- ✧ *Celebrate and observe Jewish holidays and life cycle events*
- ✧ *Contribute to the betterment of our society through social action and volunteerism*
- ✧ *Provide a link to a world-wide community of secular Jews.*

All information and opinions in The JSC Newsletter are those of the author(s) and may not reflect the opinion of the Jewish Secular Community, its Officers, Board, or the JSC editorial staff. Letters to the editor and submissions expressing different views are welcome.

JSC Leadership Contacts 2009 - 2010

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*Member of JSC Board of Trustees