



The JSC Newsletter

Newsletter of the Cleveland Jewish Secular Community

www.jewishsecularcommunity.org

Happy New Year!!!

January 2012/5772

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Upcoming Events

Fri., Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m. – Shabbat program, p. 1

Sun., Jan. 15, 10:30 p.m. – JSC Board meeting*

Thurs., Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m. – Men's Discussion Group, p. 4

*All Board meetings are at Heinen's at Lander Circle.

Middle East Expert to Read Egypt's Future at January Shabbat Program

Given the upheaval and aftershocks of the "Arab Spring," January's Shabbat program on **January 13** is especially timely. Featured speaker Joshua Stacher, Ph.D., will discuss "Emerging Democracy or Reasserting Autocracy? Egypt's Transitions Since the January Uprising." Dr. Stacher is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kent State University. His book, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria*, will be published by Stanford University Press in March 2012.

A regular contributor to and member of the editorial committee of the Middle East Research and Information Project's *Middle East Report*, Stacher has made media appearances and written commentary for NPR, CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Jadaliyya*, among others. He is

also a founding member of the Northeast Ohio Consortium on Middle East Studies, which is currently sponsoring a speaker series in NE Ohio.

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Members and guests are invited to meet and mingle at 6:30 p.m. The program starts at 6:45. A donation of \$10.00 is suggested for non-members. If paying by check, please make it payable to "Jewish Secular Community." This fee can be credited toward a JSC membership. The community provides chicken, veggie lasagna, challah, drinks, and all serving utensils.

For January, potluck dishes are assigned as follows:

Last names A - Q and U - Z bring a side dish for 12.

Last names R - T bring a dessert for 12.

Please bring a list of ingredients for your food item—pre-cut if possible.



Pretty Please



Please RSVP to Marcia Rosenthal (sunchoke@sbcglobal.net or 440-423-1718) if you plan to attend or bring guests to the January Shabbat program.

At the JSC's December Shabbat program, members and guests celebrated Chanukah, consuming a feast that was sumptuous but definitely *not* approved by the American Dietetic Association. Andy Gross presented a fascinating 5-minute portrait of his life, from his early childhood in Hungary to the present day as professor of marketing and international business at CSU. Items of clothing were donated to Operation Warm-Up.



Photo by Audrey Halpern

MARK'S REMARKS

Sense and Nonsense on Taxes

One of the most powerful men in Washington is someone who has never held elective office, has no patronage to give out, and makes no endorsements. He is Grover Norquist, and he is the author of the no-tax-increase pledge that all the candidates for the GOP nomination for president have signed (except Governor Huntsman). Today, there is no greater orthodoxy in the contemporary Republican Party than an unconditional and uncompromising commitment to cutting taxes and to opposing any and all tax increases, no matter what the reason and no matter what the trade-offs.

Taxes have been, along with Social Security, the third rail of American politics ever since the late 1970's, when Howard Jarvis led the California tax revolt. In 2001, barely two months after "winning" the closest presidential election in American history, President George W. Bush and the GOP-dominated Congress pushed through the

most sweeping tax cuts since the end of World War II. Two years later, with revenue in decline because of these tax cuts, President Bush involved the country in two undeclared wars that he financed with \$900 billion in deficit spending. These two events together sent the United States from a budget surplus at the end of the Clinton Administration to a yawning deficit that was inherited by the Obama Administration in January 2009.

So, let's get back to taxes. A GOP president pushed through sweeping tax cuts even though economists (even a couple in his administration) felt the tax cuts were not good for the country's overall economic health. But don't lower taxes mean stronger economic growth? Bruce Bartlett, an economic advisor to President Reagan, studied tax increases and tax cuts and resulting economic growth or decline. He found no correlation. I think recent political history supports his conclusions.

In 1993, President Clinton raised taxes and the GOP warned that the result would be steep economic decline. Instead, the economy actually boomed after the tax increases. In 2001 and 2003, President George W. Bush cut taxes and the economy faltered and its recovery was both weak and short-term. So tax cuts do not mean increased economic vitality and growth.

Canada has much higher tax rates than those in the United States, and it has single-payer health insurance (they call it Medicare) and a larger welfare state. However, the Canadian economy is much stronger than ours. So, in the end, the GOP advocacy of tax cuts (as opposed to tax reform) may have some political value; it has, however, very little economic value.

Books To Read in 2012

Several JSC members have asked me about books I would recommend for reading in the new year. Here are four titles for your consideration.

- *The Unmaking of Israel* by Gershom Gorenberg. An Orthodox Israeli journalist takes a despairing look at settlement expansion and its ramifications for Israeli democracy.
- *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* by Peter Godwin. An American journalist, born in Zimbabwe, returns to this tragic African nation to care for his aging parents. In the process, he witnesses a country in disintegration and learns about his Jewish past.
- *To End All Wars* by Adam Hochschild. The author of another fascinating book, *King Leopold's Ghost*, provides a riveting account of the tragedy of World War I. He focuses on British supporters and opponents of the Great War and how the conflict laid the groundwork for a second world war and the rise of Adolph Hitler.
- *In The Garden of the Beast* by Erik Larson. An aging academician and his family arrive in Berlin. He is the new U.S. Ambassador to Germany in 1933. Newly appointed by President Roosevelt, he witnesses the rise of Hitler and the consolidation of the Nazi state.

— Mark Weber
JSC President

JSC Board Actions

At its December meeting, the JSC Board voted to support our umbrella organization, the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, at the full rate of \$50 per family membership.

New Member Profile

The Community warmly welcomes new members **Joyce and Jay Nesbit**. How did they come to join our "family?" Joyce was searching online for a Passover haggadah

and found one (out of print) that had been written by JSC of Cleveland. She then remembered that **Rona Weiss**, a neighbor, belongs to JSC. The Nesbits decided to attend several Shabbat dinners and liked the speakers, the people, and the food...and joined in June 2011. They say, "We enjoy the Shabbat dinner speakers and the potential opportunities to volunteer and to meet new people."

Joyce lived in north central Ohio until her graduation from college and has lived in greater Cleveland since then, except for several years in Charlotte, NC, and Houston, TX. She started her teaching career with a license to teach grades 7-12 in comprehensive business education. She's taught junior high, high school, and adult learners.

Joyce belongs to a book club that meets every six weeks. She likes flower gardening, visiting the museums at University Circle, and walking at Euclid Creek Reservation. She is currently tutoring a student in reading at Project Learn and volunteers at the Rockefeller Greenhouse.

Jay grew up in University Heights but has also lived in Detroit and on Padre Island in Texas. He has degrees in pharmacy from Ohio State and business from Texas A & M and currently works for Genoa Healthcare as a psychiatric pharmacy manager. Jay enjoys real estate investing. He is on the board at one of the condominium properties. He is a faculty member at the college of pharmacy at NEOMED. He enjoys reading and learning. His favorite place to relax is the Chautauqua Institution.

Joyce's two sons, a police officer and an accountant, are married. They live in Lake and Ashtabula counties, respectively, and have nine children (four boys and five girls). Jay has a son and a daughter. His daughter is married with two children and lives in Cincinnati.

She works in advertising at *Cincinnati Magazine*. Jay's son lives in Raleigh, NC and works for Best Buy in computer diagnosis.

Member Notes

We thank **Elliott Berenson** for bringing to our attention an article in the *Cleveland Jewish News* (November 7) about **Greg Malkin**. The piece reports that Greg, who is Director of University School's Entrepreneur Institute, was awarded a full scholarship to attend the recent Annual Entrepreneurship Education Forum in Cincinnati. The scholarship was awarded by the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education for Greg's leadership and creativity in fostering entrepreneurship in students.

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The art of letter (to the editor)-writing is alive and well. **Elliott and Roni Berenson** recently had letters published in the Plain Dealer. In the paper's December 23 edition, Roni questions why the PD omitted mention of the recent protest and arrest of Afghanistan war protesters at the White House. Among those arrested was Christopher Hedges, former war correspondent for the New York Times.

Elliott's December 3 letter in the PD criticizes the smear campaign now being waged against Sen. Sherrod Brown. Another letter by Elliott was published in the *Cleveland Jewish News* (Dec. 10). It concerns Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

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In a letter to the Twinsburg Bulletin (Dec. 8), **Steve Shucard** argues against the diversion of tax money away from public schools and toward private and parochial schools—particularly at a time when local school districts are suffering from reduced funding and acute budget deficits.

Calling All Esthers (Yay!) and Hamans (Hiss!)

The March Purim celebration on **March 2, 2012** is (almost) right around the corner. Last

year's Purim shpielers had a grand time creating and producing "Palace for Rent," the great skit performed at 2011's JSC Purim celebration. Now, plans are already under way for the 2012 production, "Meanwhile, Back at the Palace."

Last year's characters, please join us again and tell us what has happened during your stay at the palace. And ANYONE who would like to be a "Purim shpieler" should contact Marcia Rosenthal ASAP (440-423-1718; sunchoke@sbcglobal.net). Rehearsals, which will begin in a few weeks, are guaranteed fun. Don't miss your chance to be a star!

Men's Discussion Group

January's topic for the Men's Discussion Group is "What should our relationship be, as individuals and as Americans, with Muslims locally and nationally?" The meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 26**, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Steve Shucard, 2999 Waterford Dr., Twinsburg 44087. Please contact Steve (330-425-3234, ssshucard@gmail.com) by Monday, January 23, if you plan to be there. In anticipation of the get-together, you may want to click <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4151833,00.html> for an article about a recent event that included 250 Jewish and Muslim organizations coming together in dialog.

Community Service Notes

The Jewish Federation of Cleveland is looking for volunteers to make calls in the Federation's 2012 Campaign for Jewish Needs on Super Sunday, **January 29**, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Phoning will take place at the Federation's Mandel Building, 25702 Science Park Drive, Beachwood.

You can sign up online at www.jewishcleveland.org. Click Super

Sunday on the home page. There are five sessions to choose from, each lasting about 2-1/2 hours. Or contact Sandy Guth (216-291-5869; www.thelanguagesource@neohio.twc.bc.com).

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At this writing, **Sandy Guth**, co-chair of the Community Service Committee, reports that many JSC members volunteered to work at Montefiore on Christmas day: Irv Bayer, Rifke Feinstein, Lois Gross, Sandy and Allen Guth, Nora Kancelbaum, Eileen Kless, Hans Leander, Kathe and Jim Mayer, Joyce Nesbit, Ruth Rubin, Ellen and Harvey Schwartz, Steve Shucard, Barbara and Marvin Smith, Annette Solomon, John Szucs, Gil Winer, Felisa and Mark Weber, and Rona Weiss.



Christmas morning volunteers at Montefiore included Marvin Smith, Rifke Feinstein, Harvey Schwartz, Joyce Nesbit, Ellen Schwartz, Sandy Guth, John Szucs, Barbara Smith, Allen Guth, and Felisa and Mark Weber. Missing in the picture are Hans Leander and Steve Shucard as well as afternoon volunteers.

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Harvey Schwartz thanks all who have donated magazines and books to the USO for the troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Now that the last troops have left Iraq, the USO doesn't need as many magazines and books. Because the organization now has to reduce the amount of material going overseas, individuals and organizations—many of which have been donating these items for years—have been requested to discontinue their efforts.

You might not be aware that the USO is charged \$10.00 for each box that is mailed overseas. All the money is donated by individuals and companies. The USO has limited financial resources, and Harvey will soon be distributing a list of other items that can be used in Afghanistan.

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In the aftermath of the 2010 hurricane that devastated Haiti, the JSC made a donation to Medwish International's Haiti relief effort. Following is a portion of Medwish's acknowledgment to **Nora Kancelbaum**, former co-chair of JSC's Community Service Committee:

"As I'm sure you remember, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti wrought tremendous devastation, the after-effects of which are still being felt today. But your donation of \$155.00 to MedWish International's Haiti relief efforts made a difference in promoting health and saving lives there, and much of the equipment we sent is still in use in hospitals and clinics around the country.

"... you can be sure that the containers of aid your donation provided - sent from right here in Cleveland, Ohio - are making a tangible impact for earthquake survivors at Albert Schweitzer [Hospital] and throughout Haiti.

<http://karlgrobl.com/blog/2011/08/assignment-haiti-hospital-albert-schweitzer/>

"... I would also like to take this moment to ask for your continued support of MedWish. Your donation today will save lives throughout 2012.

<http://medwish.org/give/>

"Thank you for your support. Thank you for supplying life."

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The social service organization InterAct Cleveland recently announced that it would have to close its doors because

of inadequate funding. The JSC was a member of InterAct. Currently, however, the JSC Board is exploring membership in [Greater Cleveland Congregations](#), a coalition of congregations in Cuyahoga County that seeks to identify and alleviate problems in the areas of jobs, education, health, justice, and hunger. The GCC was able to exert its influence in the recent decision of the Cleveland Teachers Union to make concessions and of the Cleveland School District to rescind plans to eliminate busing, sports, and preschool programs. **Dietz Ziechmann** and **Nora Kancelbaum** attended a large rally at Olivet Baptist Church to celebrate the good news.

Reminders of Our Birthright

In what President Obama gently refers to as the “silly season” of politics, the radical elements in our political process serve a purpose, if only unwittingly, when they make proprietary claims to the foundational documents that make of Americans one family, united and free. Following is a selection of passages from the Constitution of the United States that are too often ignored, misinterpreted, and used to divide us—Jews from gentiles, young from old, Democrats from Republicans. In the context of election-year politics and ongoing street protests, certain words and phrases have been bolded for emphasis, with editorial comments placed in square brackets.

Preamble to the Constitution

“We **the people** of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish **justice**, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote **the general welfare**, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

[Contrary to the claims of certain politicians and pundits, the absurd notion that corporations are people is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution, even by

implication, nor is it suggested that they “ordain and establish” it. The normal reading of “the general welfare” is that *all* Americans deserve protection, not just the privileged.]

Amendment 1. “**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.**”

[(1) The “wall” between Religion and the State is firmly embedded in the psyche of America, despite radical claims to the contrary. (2) The absurd and dangerous notion that money is a form of “free speech” has temporarily been given judicial sanction but violates most Americans’ sense of fairness and common sense. (3) Historically, violent police action to put down peaceful protests have failed to prevent protesters from carrying on their causes—and often gaining the support of most Americans.]

Amendment 6. **In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.**

[The 6th Amendment does not exempt terrorists, unlawful combatants, or any person who might be randomly accused of being one or the other.]

Amendment 8. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, **nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.**

[Waterboarding and other forms of torture, euphemistically called “harsh interrogation,” seem to violate the unambiguous wording of this amendment.]

Amendment 14. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States....No State shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States....

[The cry by radical politicians to deny “birthright citizenship” to children of illegal immigrants by deporting them is an obvious denial of the Constitution’s unambiguous definition of citizenship. Whether done in stages, as one presidential hopeful has suggested, or done in the “humanitarian” spirit of keeping families together, as another politician has offered, deporting a person who was born in the United States is unconstitutional.]

Amendment 15. **The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.**

[Claims of “voter fraud” or of establishing “uniformity of the voting process” within a state are transparent political ploys for imposing *new* voter identity requirements that disproportionately and adversely affect the elderly, the infirm, minorities, and students. State legislatures that attempt to pass laws that have the effect of limiting the voting opportunity of citizens violate the

spirit of the 15th, 26th (establishing the voting age as 18) and possibly the 24th (barring a poll tax) Amendments.]

—Steve Shucard

Falender Disaster Relief Fund

Members who wish to mark a special occasion in a special way may want to consider a donation to the JSC’s Falender Disaster Relief Fund. The money will be used to support relief efforts for specific local, national, or international emergencies created by natural or man-made disasters. Checks should be made out to “Jewish Secular Community” and directed to the fund.

“Caring Hands” Assists Those in Need

The JSC’s “Caring Hands” committee is intended to assist JSC members who have undergone surgery or have other emergency needs that may require assistance with such things as grocery shopping and doctors’ appointments. If you ever have such a need, please contact Sandy Guth. (216-291-5869, thelanguagesource@neohio.twcbc.com).

Calling All Writers!

Consider contributing an original article to the newsletter. Subject only to space, time, interest to fellow members, and editorial constraints, your article, told in your own words, will be gratefully accepted. Email your item to ssshucard@gmail.com. We welcome attributed letters with comments, rebuttals, or new information.

Note: We edit for length and clarity.

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*

JSC Leadership Contacts 2011 - 2012

<p>President Mark Weber, 440-519-0220* lastdetective@yahoo.com</p> <p>Vice President Paula Stone, 440-461-3383* pmstone118@sbcglobal.net</p> <p>Treasurer Greg Malkin, 440-247-7692* jsc@gregmalkin.com</p> <p>Secretary Sharon B. Shucard, 330-425-3234* ssshucard@gmail.com</p> <p>Friday Night Shabbat Programs Lynn Salzbrenner, 330-463-0149* lynnsalzbrenner@gmail.com</p> <p>Shabbat Setup Judy & Sheldon Herzog, 216-381-0651* shell9@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>Madrikh Mark Weber, 440-519-0220 lastdetective@yahoo.com</p> <p>Holidays Rifke Feinstein, 216-481-0850* rifke@bronxbobbe.com</p> <p>Ellen Schwartz, 440-449-4418* eschwa7500@yahoo.com</p> <p>Membership Audrey Halpern, 440-461-2414* audhalpern@sbcglobal.net</p> <p>Elaine Sherman, 440-349-1524* momsherm@sbcglobal.net</p> <p>E-mail Postmaster Scott Radway, 216-691-1949 teamspike@mac.com</p> <p>CSJO Liaison Dietz Ziechmann, 216-320-1088 dietz.ziechmann@gmail.com</p>	<p>Newsletter Steve Shucard, 330-425-3234* ssshucard@gmail.com</p> <p>Social Marcia Rosenthal, 440-423-1718* sunchoke@sbcglobal.net</p> <p>Community Service Sandy Guth, 216-291-5869* thelanguagesource@neohio.twcbc.com</p> <p>Harvey Schwartz, 440-449-4418* eschwa7500@yahoo.com</p> <p>Publicity, Sunshine Sandy Guth, 216-291-5869* thelanguagesource@neohio.twcbc.com</p>
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*Member of JSC Board of Trustees