



# CHAI-LIGHTS

December 2011

Pacific Community of Cultural Jews

Orange County, CA 949/760-9006

PacifComm@aol.com, <http://www.pccjews.org>

Volume XV, No. 4

## DINE OUT

Saturday, December 10th  
at 6:30 PM

## JERRY'S FAMOUS DELI



3210 Park Center Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

RSVP by Dec. 7th

[KNECHTFOUR@aol.com](mailto:KNECHTFOUR@aol.com)

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S CAFE

Friday, December 2nd at 7:30 PM  
at the home of  
Greta Singer & Dan Goldberg

COME AND SHARE YOUR OPINIONS WITH THIS  
FRIENDLY GROUP OF THINKERS AND TALKERS!

RSVP to Greta  
[danandgreta86@yahoo.com](mailto:danandgreta86@yahoo.com)  
714-594-3866

## Miracles

They say there was a miracle  
In Palestine long ago.  
The temple lights burned on for days  
Although the oil was low.

But there was a greater miracle  
In that ancient land.  
Judah Maccabee came forth  
With his courageous band.

He freed the Jewish people  
From their oppressive yoke  
And purified the temple  
For the religious folk

Another miracle occurred  
in 1948.  
After years of devastation  
The Jewish people had a State

Now we are praying  
for a miracle greater than these,  
That Jews and Palestinians  
May learn to live in peace.

We can end all wars and violence,  
It's time to make a start,  
For the real miracle of light  
Burns in the human heart.

Ruth Shapin

*This poem appeared in the anthology titled  
"Refractions of Life," published by the OLLI po-  
etry class at Cal State Fullerton in 2003.*



*Mark  
Your  
Calendar*

Friday, December 2nd, 7:30 PM

**THE PHILOSOPHERS CAFE**  
at the home of  
**Greta Singer & Dan Goldberg**  
(see page 1)

Saturday, December 10th, 6:30 PM

**DINE OUT**  
at  
**Jerry's Famous Deli**  
(see page 1)

Saturday, December 17th, 10:30 AM

**BOARD MEETING**  
at the home of  
Leslie Zwick

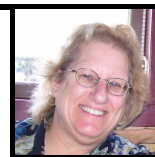
Sunday, December 18th, 1:00 PM

**CHANUKAH PARTY**  
at the home of  
**Terry Bayer & Victor Vega**  
(see Page 3)

Tuesday, January 10th, 7:30 PM

**FILM CLUB**  
at the home of  
**Shirley Spiegel**  
(see Page 6)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We are now at the end of 2011. Hopefully you had a lot of positives come your way this year. We have shared in a number of fantastic happenings, we have eaten out together and have developed new and lasting friendships.

We do need to send some good thoughts towards the Stein family. Jack is dealing with some very serious health issues and they can use all the good thoughts we can send their way.

Our next event is our Chanukah party at the Bayer-Vega home. Hope we will see all of you there.

I wish you all a very safe and health holiday season and a wonderful new year. See you soon.

Karen

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

<i>Zena Jacobi</i>	<i>12/12</i>
<i>Bill Selfridge</i>	<i>12/13</i>
<i>Suzy Baron</i>	<i>12/24</i>
<i>Sylvia Rothman</i>	<i>12/29</i>

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

<i>Felix &amp; Lotte Kopstein</i>	<i>12/04</i>
<i>Zena &amp; Lee Jacobi</i>	<i>12/15</i>

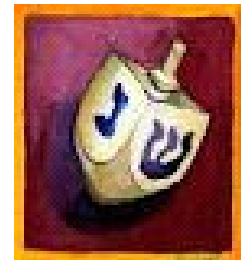
# Pacific Community Chanukah Party

Sunday Dec. 18, 2011 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Terry Bayer & Victor Vega's Home



12 Whitesands Dr.  
Newport Beach, CA  
949-640-4246



Please join us as we celebrate Chanukah with a Menorah Lighting, Chanukah games, Brisket and Latkes lunch, a Guest Talent Show (please prepare a song, poem, dance, etc. to share. Limit is 3-4 minutes), plus a wrapped White Elephant Gift Exchange (between \$10.00 - \$15.00)

Cost - Free for members \$10.00 per non-member (children 10 yrs and under are free)

Please RSVP to Terry Bayer no later than December 11, 2011, as we need to know how much food to prepare.

Terry Bayer - 949-640-4246

**HELLO FROM CSJO**

At the CSJO board meeting in November, the Social Action committee, co-chaired by Ethan Wasserman and Adam Beardsley, drafted two statements that were unanimously approved by the CSJO board. The following are the statements.

**Statement #1**

The Social Action Committee of The Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, CSJO, is a federation of North American organizations dedicated to the continuity of the Jewish people and to their culture. Because of our commitment to our traditional Jewish beliefs in humanism, compassion for all peoples, and social justice we support the concept of a United Nations resolution to admit Palestine as a member state under the condition that Palestine recognizes Israel's right to peacefully co-exist as a Jewish state and have full diplomatic relations with Israel.

**Statement #2**

The Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) is a federation of North American organizations dedicated to the continuity of the Jewish people and to their culture. Because of our commitment to our traditional Jewish beliefs in humanism, compassion for all peoples, and social justice, we support the Occupy action currently underway in many North American cities and the tenets of the Occupy movement which have given rise to these actions.

We support the basic tenets of the occupy movement which includes stopping corporate greed which has led to the following problems:

- the housing crisis
- the loss of jobs through outsourcing overseas
- anti-unionism
- anti-environmentalism
- the lack of universal health care
- student debt
- the unfair distribution of wealth
- the inequitable tax system

and other related issues that impact our society

We urge the North American "occupied" cities to accommodate the occupiers with compassion, dignity and non-violence. We stand in solidarity with the Occupy movement.

I would be happy to hear from you on these issues!

Sholem!

Rifke Feinstein

**OFFICERS 2010-2011**

<b>President:</b>	Karen Knecht	Knechtfour@aol.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Lee Jacobi	LeeJacobi@earthlink.net
<b>Secretary</b>	Leslie Zwick	Jerlesz@verizon.net
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Greta Singer	danandgreta86@yahoo.com
<b>Membership:</b>	Alice Selfridge	selfridg@earthlink.net
<b>Hospitality:</b>	Dan Goldberg	danandgreta86@yahoo.com
<b>Program Coordinators</b>	Jack and Bernice Stein	JStein7901@aol.com
<b>Publicity:</b>	Lee Jacobi	LeeJacobi@earthlink.net

**Committee and board positions:**

<b>CSJO Representative:</b>	Karen Knecht	Knechtfour@aol.com
<b>SHJ Representative:</b>	Lee Jacobi	LeeJacobi@earthlink.net
<b>Board Members At Large:</b>	Sylvia Rothman	sobaysyl@aol.com
	Suzy Baron	BryonBaron@sbcglobal.net
	Bryon Baron	BryonBaron@sbcglobal.net
	Nancy Okamoto	Nokomoto@Roadrunner.com
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Bernice Stein	ChaiLights4You@aol.com
<b>Good &amp; Welfare/Tributes:</b>	Shirley Spiegel	SHIRL-B@SOCAL.RR.COM

## THE GOOD! THE BAD! and THE UGLY! - PART II

By Alice Selfridge

*(The following story is the continuation of the recent trip to South Africa, Egypt and Israel taken by Alice and Bill Selfridge)*

### THE GOOD!

#### Good Adventures and Impressions

Putting the misadventures aside, I would have to say that this trip was one of the best we've ever taken. Everything in South Africa and Egypt was so interesting, it was so thrilling to see things (like wild animals in Africa and ancient Egyptian ruins) that I'd always dreamed of seeing, and none of my fears for our safety turned out to have any basis.

I found that all the people we met in South Africa were extremely friendly. We stayed at a charming B.& B. the first night we arrived in Johannesburg, where the couple who owned it even served us dinner and an included breakfast in their dining room. That night at dinner, the other guests went out of their way to give us detailed directions for the 5-hour drive the next day to our resort, seeing as how we'd been unable to get the GPS we'd been expecting.

The next morning's drive started out rather scary while Bill continued to get used to driving on the right side of the car and the right side of the road. Trying to make a left turn into the right, instead of the left, side of a divided highway earned us some honks and a near accident! Luckily, we were able to scoot across to a driveway on the opposite side of the road to get out of the way of oncoming traffic!

My impressions of the countryside are of miles and miles of brown, dry fields, which gave way in the last third of our trip to lots of forests, planted for purposes of harvesting timber. That's when things became greener. Some of the scenery we went to see with a guide was actually quite beautiful, with mountains, panoramic views, and

waterfalls. We also saw lots of columns of smoke and some fires throughout the countryside. Apparently, the South Africans practice slash-and-burn techniques of farming.

Our guide took us to see a typical village, which his company has adopted as a charity project. Some of the houses were run-down cardboard shacks, and some were small cinderblock homes with dirt streets. Only occasionally did we see some more well-to-do neighborhoods. In this village, we were taken to see a pre-school situated in a tiny, ramshackle building with practically no supplies. We admired the woman who is struggling to keep it going and promised to try to raise funds for her. Besides seeing the homes, it was fascinating to see signs alongside rivers, warning of hippos or crocodiles, people carrying various things such as kindling, boxes, etc. on their heads, and people wearing traditional dress. Many wore Western garb, but many wore long dresses with African-style turbans on their heads. And there seemed to be women everywhere, carrying babies on their backs in towels that were wrapped around the mother's body, tied in front and secured with a cord around the middle.

Twice we went into Kruger National Park, the first time with a guide but the next time by ourselves. Both ways were rewarding, but we were glad that we had a guide for the first time, because he knew the park inside and out, as well as having a 2-way radio, so the guides could share information about what animal they had spotted and at what coordinate. Luckily, the terrain was mostly dry scrub with few trees, so seeing things was relatively easy, but never in my wildest dreams did I think we would see as many animals as we did! Right off the bat, we started seeing elephants and giraffes, and it just went on from there. We never knew what

*(continued on page 8)*

## An Incident in Lisbon

By Greta Singer

I love to write about my childhood in Brooklyn, New York. But the most interesting events in my life have happened in Europe, far from my Brooklyn Jewish background. It is good to branch out, meet different and unusual people.

We had just sat down at a cafe on the long, hilly street where the buses run down to the sea in Lisbon. He came up to us and said, "I am Dr. Miguel Santiago. Are you Americans?" Yes, we told him. We are here in Portugal for a few days. "I am here for a few days also", he said, "although I am Portugese. I have been working in Africa, looking for a cure for AIDS." He seemed friendly enough, so we let him continue. We ordered coffee and ice cream for three.

Dr. S. went on with his story. "I have a son living in Lisbon and an ex-wife in Paris and I have a villa on the sea in a little town to the south. The house is quite large and I have lots of land and animals." We listened quietly. "I have an African fiancé who is here with me. You would enjoy meeting her. She can make a barbecue with the exotic meats I have had sent from Kenya. Please come tomorrow for a day or two." At this point, we looked at each other. Were we really being invited to a rich man's house on the ocean?

"I will send a car for you in the morning. Tell me where you are staying," Dr. S. said. We were dubious. How could a stranger invite us, offer to send a car, entertain us royally? We changed the subject. We talked about the American president and "So what time shall I send the car?" he asked us. By now we had been talking and drinking cafe au lait for almost two hours. We looked at each other again and said that he should give us his phone number and we would call him later that evening and tell him if we would come to his home. He looked disappointed, but wrote his number on his card. He thanked us for the coffee, assumed we were paying and left.

So are we going to call him? We asked each other. It sounds like a great opportunity to see how the other half lives, to swim in the ocean, to eat exotic food, to visit with a native of Portugal. But what if he gets us there and

robs us or murders us? That sounds like a movie. We talked about it for hours, about how we never do anything risky, about how interesting it would be. We decided to do nothing and not see him again.

For years we have told the story of our doctor in Lisbon, who invited us for a wonderful two days which we declined. Or who invited us to kill us and we were lucky we didn't go. What would his villa have looked like? His exotic girlfriend? The zebra meat? Would another couple have gone? Was our imagination too weird? Well at least it is a good story. We may never get to see a villa in Portugal.

## PC Film Club

Tues., January 10th at 7:30 PM

TURN LEFT AT THE END OF THE WORLD!



It's the late 1960's, and two immigrant families -- one from India -- living in an isolated Israeli village must learn to coexist as neighbors. They have little in common except for their teenage daughters and hope for a better life. Amid the culture clash, Moroccan Icole (Neta Garty) and Indian Sara (Liraz Charchi) forge a friendship despite their parents' resentments and prejudices in this coming-of-age drama

At the home of Shirley Spiegel

Please RSVP

714-378-1186 or

SHIRL-B@SOCAL.RR.COM

## A LATE-APPEARING "MIRACLE"

by  
Norma Kellam

A one-day supply of oil burning for eight days goes completely against scientific possibilities. According to the legend, the reason we celebrate eight days of Hanukkah is because that's how many days the oil burned. Of course, we secular humanists don't believe that miraculous oil story. A more rational suggestion about why Hanukkah is eight days is because when the Maccabees celebrated their repossession of the Temple, they were celebrating a belated Sukkot, which lasts eight days.

Even though the legend of the oil burning for eight days has become deeply engrained into the Hanukkah story, it was not there to begin with. The two books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha make no mention of a one-day supply of oil burning for eight days. Neither did the first-century historian Flavius Josephus mention it. The legend about the oil appeared in the Talmud at least a couple hundred years after the Maccabees rededicated the Temple. Hanukkah is the commemoration of victory in a war, which isn't very spiritual. By adding the myth about the oil, the rabbis made Hanukkah more religious.

Various sources suggest that the addition of the oil miracle made Jews safer in the diaspora by deemphasizing the military victory. "I think the political situation was the minor reason the rabbis adopted the miracle story," says Judith Seid, rabbi and cantor of Tri-Valley Cultural Jews in Pleasanton, California. "I don't think it was to protect the populace from the retribution that could occur should they adopt the idea that they could actually rise up. I think it is more likely that the rabbis saw a story (I don't know that they invented it) that could strengthen their own position against the position of nationalists, who might have tried to set

up a monarchy again rather than submitting to the rule of the new rabbinic establishment."

Religious Jews say that the Hebrew letters on dreidles stand for the Hebrew equivalent of "A great miracle happened there," referring to the mythical oil miracle. The letters on the dreidles might appear to be problematic for Secular Humanistic Jews, but they really cause no problem. "The dreidle is an old Eastern European toy," Rabbi Seid explains. "The 'ness gadol haya sham` - a big miracle happened there - (changed in Israel to 'ness gadol haya po` - a big miracle happened here) is a reading in to the letters that stand for the Yiddish words telling you what to do on each side of the toy. It's another way the religious establishment coopted a cultural artifact and re-interpreted it to the benefit of that establishment."

Some people regard the real miracle of Hanukkah to be the victory of a small band of Jews over the Syrian Greek army and the survival of the Jewish people against tremendous odds. Even though the most common use of the word "miracle" is to denote divine intervention, this same word can also refer to a good event that is completely unexpected and completely out of the ordinary, without any divine intervention. We can either disregard the Hebrew sentence that religious Jews attribute to the letters on the dreidle or we can interpret the miracle with the second, non-supernatural, definition to commemorate victory and survival.



*(The Good . . . Continued from page 5)*

would turn up just a few feet down the road, and, often, the animals were right next to the road or even *on* the road! We were disgusted by how careless some of the other tourists were. The ones in cars treated animals, such as the lions, as if they were house cats and let their children hang out of their car windows and make noise. They were lucky not to have had any disaster befall them, because our guide told us that two weeks previously, a couple had failed to heed the warning signs of an elephant they encountered. They drove closer and closer to take photos, until eventually he came over to their car and drove his tusk down through the top of their car! Even on the grounds of our resort, which is something of a wildlife preserve, too, we were warned to be careful when walking around at night, because a mama and baby hippo would typically come out of the rivers bordering the resort and walk around on the grounds. Bill and I didn't go looking for trouble, but we did see the hippos' footprints by the riverside during the day, as well as a small crocodile.

We also went to visit a preserve for endangered or injured wild African animals, particularly cheetahs, which are disappearing from all over Africa. After looking at a very interesting film about the plight of many African animals and the work being done to help them at the preserve, a ranger drove visitors around the grounds in an open-air truck to show us such things as cheetahs (of all ages), storks, vultures, rare hornbills, wild dogs, lions, etc.

Our next destination was Israel. We did have lots of adventures trying to find our way to people's homes! Street names, apparently, change in Tel Aviv, as you drive down the street or, sometimes, depending on which *side* of the street you're looking at! Also, the street signs aren't posted over the street, as they are here. At the intersections, the sign for the street one is on is posted parallel to the street, and the one for the cross street is posted on the

other side of the first sign, perpendicular to it. This means that one has to turn onto a street or drive past it to see if that is the street you're looking for and *intend* to turn on! Sometimes we wandered for hours!

We did manage to do a few things, like walk on a wide beach with flour-soft sand while watching the beautiful sunset over the extremely calm Mediterranean. Another time my college roommate treated us to lunch in an outdoor restaurant enclosed by trees and leafy bowers and surrounded by a little stream and pool with carp. We also drove to Haifa one day to meet one of our sister-in-law's cousins. Too bad he and his wife don't live here! They'd be perfect candidates for the Pacific Community!

One night our relatives took us for dinner in Tel Aviv, and we saw the massive protests that are going on there right now. All up and down Rothschild Blvd. pup tents are set up end-to-end with signs protesting the inequality between rich and poor in their country. Some tents even had little outdoor living rooms set up next to them, with sofas, coffee tables, etc.! Another smaller protest that was also going on amidst all this was one for doctors who are very unhappy about their dangerously long working hours (80+ hours within 4 days time) and the lack of sufficient staff.

While we were there, the bombs went off in Beersheva, but we only saw them on TV. Otherwise, we saw no sign of trouble.

The last major stop on our trip was in Luxor, Egypt. There we stayed in a luxurious hotel that was situated along the Nile, which in that location, is peaceful and somewhat narrow, with hotels on one side and, on the other, date palms and banana plantations, behind which are the dramatically stark mountains leading to the Valley of the Kings. The hotels made a striking contrast with the rest of the town, which seemed like a large village and had mostly run-down shops and apartment houses surrounded by fields. I found it rather exciting, though, that one of the sights we had come to see,

*(continued on page 9)*

*(continued from page 8)*

Luxor Temple, was right in the midst of the town. The roads to Luxor and Karnak Temples were lined by human-headed sphinxes for the former and ram-headed sphinxes for the latter. The Luxor Museum was on our first day's tour. Unbelievable, the huge monuments, columns, and statues those ancients managed to erect! We had heard on a previous trip to Egypt that archaeologists believe that the huge blocks of stone for the pyramids had been rolled on tree trunks to get them to the building sites, and we were told this time that the gigantic chunks of stone for the temple columns were able to be piled on top of each other by building platforms of sand next to the column and adding to them as the column got higher. When the column was finished, the sand was removed. But, no one knows exactly how the obelisks were raised. The whole effect, what with the gigantic proportions, the prolific amount of hieroglyphs written on practically everything and the remaining colors took our breath away.

The next day's tour took us to The Valley of the Kings, the temple of Queen Hatshepsut who reigned as one of the few and most important female pharaohs, and the Colossi of Memnon (two gigantic ancient statues of Pharaoh Amenophis III which were damaged in an earthquake, one of which was heard to make strange sounds and became known by the ancient Greeks as the legendary statue of Memnon, crying for his mother, Aurora, every day as she rose into the sky. The things that impressed me were the massive sarcophagi and surprisingly still colorful and beautifully wrought decorations on the walls of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. We were allowed to visit three of them and, so, went to see those of Ramses I, III, and IV. Also, the temple of Hatshepsut was astoundingly modern in its architecture.

The next day was our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, so we relaxed around the large, round pool at the hotel, ate a delicious dinner there, overlooking the Nile, and went to see the Sound and Light Show at Karnak

Temple. That was a dramatic experience, as we walked through the temple grounds, hearing piped-in voices telling us about the past there and seeing different parts of the temple lit up until we finally came to a small amphitheater in front of a sacred lake where we sat and listened to the rest of the presentation.

As to the question of political unrest in Egypt, I have to say that we were relieved that we didn't see any. I asked one of our guides in Luxor about it, and he said that he felt that the people in Luxor aren't exposed to the ideas to which people in the more cosmopolitan Cairo are. Luxorians (if I may call them that) are too busy trying to survive, and tourism is a big part of their economy, so they can't afford to threaten that. Most of the people we saw in Egypt and the airports wore various exotic-looking styles of Muslim dress and women, to varying degrees, covering themselves ranging from just a head scarf and the rest Western clothes to the burqa, with only eyes showing -- but no one made us feel like they hated us for being Westerners.

It was quite an eye opener to compare security techniques in the airports in South Africa, Israel, and Egypt with the ones here in the U.S. First of all, we never had to take off our shoes, and in Israel, they didn't even have any restrictions on bringing liquids onto the plane! In Munich, where we changed planes to go to Israel, everyone was patted down and checked with a wand before getting on the flight. Maybe they only do that for passengers going to Israel. In Israel, four years ago, I had been questioned about every detail of my ties to Israel, but this time -- nothing. And in Egypt, every time we were about to take a flight, we had to go through a security check for our carry-ons and passports 3 times.

All in all, it was a trip we'll never forget!

Alice & Bill



*The National Education Association is celebrating "Read Across America" by encouraging adults to read to children. Of course, "Green Eggs and Ham" is one of the most popular Dr. Seuss books. And, there's the dilemma --How can Jewish kids celebrate with green Eggs and HAM? So, in honor of (and with apologies to the estate of Dr. Seuss), here's a new ending for the story:*

Will you never see?

They are not KOSHER, So let me be!

I will not eat green eggs and ham.

I will not eat them, Sam-I-am

But I'll eat green eggs with a biscuit!

Or I will try them with some brisket.

I'll eat green eggs in a box.

If you serve them with some lox.

And those green eggs are worth a try

Scrambled up in matzo brie!

And in a boat upon the river,

I'll eat green eggs with chopped liver!

So if you're a Jewish Dr. Seuss fan,

But troubled by green eggs and ham,

Let your friends in on the scoop:

Green eggs taste best with chicken soup!



When a Canadian railroad journal published an advertisement seeking 200 sleepers for a new cross-country line, Rabbi Albert R. Coleman of Detroit offered them his entire congregation.

You heard maybe about the unemployed cantor who is now making a fortune? He learned the Wedding March backwards, and now he sings it at divorces!

A woman goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Hanukkah cards.

She says to the clerk, "May I have fifty Hanukkah stamps?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

"Oh my God," the woman says, "has it come to this? Give me sixteen Orthodox, twenty-two Conservative, and twelve Reform."

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Phone: 949/760-9006 E-mail: [PacifComm@aol.com](mailto:PacifComm@aol.com),  
<http://www.pccjews.org>

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*For an electronic copy, please provide your e-mail address  
Editor: Bernice Stein [ChaiLights4You@aol.com](mailto:ChaiLights4You@aol.com)*

*Affiliated with The Society for Humanistic Judaism and  
The Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations*

Chai-Lights

21152 Lockhaven Circle

Huntington Beach, CA 92646