



CHAI-LIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2006

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

Volume IX. No. 3

PC's Secular Sukkot Celebration

Sukkot is a week-long Jewish holiday in autumn. "Sukkot" are more than one "sukkah", which is a hut or a booth. The booth is the main symbol of this holiday. Sukkot is a happy holiday, in contrast to the serious and somber Yom Kippur.

PC had a secular Sukkot celebration on October 7th. We gathered at the home of Lee & Zena Jacobi where we "built" a sukkah by putting up lattice sides under the wooden patio cover. Pieces were tied together with ropes. Then we decorated it with cut palm leaves, plastic fruits and vegetables, and other ornaments, topped off with a string of chili pepper lights. We also made lulavs* by tying together three species of plants. And we used lemons for the traditional etrogs*. Then we enjoyed a pot-luck meal, dining in the sukkah.

The religious explanation for this 1-week holiday is to remind us of the temporary shelters that the escaped Hebrew slaves would have lived in during 40 years in the desert. But, historians of our secular/humanistic Jewish movement posit that most of the Jewish holidays have origins based on seasonal and agricultural events. Autumn is the time of harvest of tree crops in Israel - apples and oranges are modern additions to almonds, citrus, dates, figs, olives, and pomegranates. Harvest time is a happy time for the whole community: farmers get cash for their crops and stock food for the months ahead; unemployed people get temporary work harvesting crops; and debts get paid off. So, it is not surprising that our ancestor Hebrews created holidays at harvest times. Sukkot's true origin is an autumn harvest festival.

* Four kinds of trees/shrubs are used in Judaic services during the week of *Sukkot*: palm *lulav*, *etrog*, myrtle and willow (the 4 species). A palm *lulav* is a leaf-stem from a palm tree. An *etrog* is a type of citrus fruit, like a pointy lemon, and it has a pleasing fragrance. Myrtle is a pleasant-smelling shrub. Willow is an example of trees used for firewood.

In the religious service, pieces of myrtle and willow are tied together with the palm; the bundle is also referred to as the *lulav*. The *lulav* bundle is held and shaken in a specified pattern; the *etrog* is held point down

An explanation for tying together 3 of the 4 species is that the different species represent different human traits. The palm could represent learning, the myrtle-good behavior, and the willow- hard work. It would be best to have all these traits, bundled into one person.

Lee Jacobi

Shabbat Dinner and Speaker

On Friday evening, Dec. 8th at 7:00 P.M. the Pacific Community will have a short Shabbat service followed by a Potluck Dinner at the home of Phyllis Jacobs, 48 Rue Fontainebleau Newport Beach. Following dinner the Social Action Committee has engaged a Speaker from "Reclaim Democracy."

Steve Spanier will speak on "Restoring Authority Over Corporations" and give a slide presentation. Mr. Spanier formerly worked in the corporate world. After reading David Korten's book, "The Post-corporate World," he founded Reclaim Democracy, a non-profit organization. Discussion will follow Mr. Spanier's presentation.

The potluck dishes to bring are as follow:

A-K	Main Dish
L-P	Salad
Q-S	Side Dish
T-Z	Dessert

Please call Phyllis to RSVP and to let her know what you are bringing for the potluck. 949/644-2712 or E-mail: phylj@cox.net

OY VEY!

The Pacific Community extends wishes for a speedy recovery to Jerry Ackerman who slipped and broke seven ribs! Ouch!

I'm sure Jerry would appreciate a call or a get well card while he's shut in.



*Mark
Your
Calendar*

Thursday, Nov. 2nd 7:00 PM

**I Never Saw Another Butterfly
La Mirada Theatre**

Saturday, Nov. 11th 10:30 AM

BOARD MEETING

at the home of
Phyllis Jacobs

Wednesday, Nov. 15th 7:30 PM

BOOK CLUB

at the home of
Gerry Lumian
(see page 4)

Saturday, Nov. 18th 7 PM

DINE-OUT GROUP

at
MaMa Cozza's
(see page 5)

Friday, Dec. 8th 7:00 PM

SHABBAT DINNER

at the home of
Phyllis Jacobs
(see page 1)

Sunday, Dec. 17th 1:30 PM

CHANUKAH PARTY

at the home of
Barbara & Mark Price
Watch for Flyer

Hello, Friends!

Well, we, in the Pacific Community, started off the year with some fun and meaningful programs, and if you weren't there, I'd like to tell you about them. October saw our first (at least, that I know of) community Sukkah Building, and, of course, what's a Sukkah Building (or any Jewish event, for that matter) without a meal? Thanks to Lee and Zena Jacobi, we had the wherewithal to build and decorate the sukkah in their backyard, and thanks to the delicious pot luck dishes brought by our members and b.b.q.'ed salmon and other dishes prepared by Zena, we had a feast! And let me not forget to mention that, not only was it Sukkot, but it was our first community Havdalah dinner, as well, so we also participated in both secular Sukkot and Havdalah observances. I think I can safely say that "a good time was had by all."



In addition, Judy Seid, a secular humanistic rabbi, came down from the Bay Area and gave our board a very worthwhile seminar on how to grow our organization. Later that day, she also gave a talk to our membership-at-large about the meaning of "Secular Humanistic Judaism." I thought I knew it all already, but I learned that I'd better think again! For instance, did you know that according to the tenets of Secular Humanistic Judaism, anyone who wants to call himself/herself a Jew is considered a Jew, as long as he/she is always willing to ally himself/herself with the Jewish people, even in the face of anti-Semitism?

It seems to me that we have gotten off to a good start, and we have other entertaining and interesting plans for the future. Please join us for as many of these events as you can manage, and tell your friends about them, too! It also wouldn't hurt if you would volunteer some of your time, if you haven't already, to keep our organization active and vibrant.

Shalom!

Alice

NOVEMBER SIMCHAS

BIRTHDAYS

Alice Selfridge	13th
Bob Knecht	14th
Seymour Spiegel	24th

The Jewish History Of Golf !!

It has long been thought that the game of golf originated in Scotland in the fifteenth century. Recently uncovered evidence indicates that this sport actually began in eastern Europe and for many years was enjoyed by the Jews of the area.

Stories passed down from generation to generation told of Moses and Aaron and their famous Desert Classic, which endured for 40 years. This great tradition was re-born many years later in the fields and forests of eastern Europe.

A shepherd, Velvel Gross, passed the time by hitting pebbles with his shepherd's crook. The number of times he hit the stones became known as Gross Score. He eventually decided to lay out an actual course by utilizing the adjacent farmers' properties. The playing area consisted of 18 segments - the number chosen to represent the Hebrew symbol Chai, meaning Life.

The game could then be played by Wednesday golfers as 9 holes (half-Chai), regular golfers as 18 holes (Chai), enthusiasts and fitness-freaks as 27 holes (Chai-and-a-half), and with the wives during mixed play. (double-Chai)

The putting surface was named after Lazar Green, because the shortest grass was found on his property. The search for durable projectiles (which could sustain repeated strikes with wooden sticks) led to the Rebbetzin's kitchen, where her dimpled matzoh balls were the clear-cut winners. They came in 90 or 100 compression and were vigorously tested by a mechanical arm called Iron Myron.

Parva or Par, meaning neither here nor there, was the number of shots allocated to each hole. Faivel the Sissy scored the first recorded Birdie, as onlookers shouted, "Not bad for a Faygelah? The Eagle was so named for Adler the Shtarker, who scored the first amazing 2-under-par!

Soon courses sprung up all over the land with such exotic names as Knobble Beach, Grieven Valley, Seder Brook and the two richest clubs: Chelm Ridge and Chai Ridge. This particular group was known as The Haymishe Five.

Membership in these clubs provided many diverse activities. Tournaments such as Blinsis and Schnapps and Beat the Tsar (which was a shotgun) were organized.

Social events included Revolutionary Hop and Pogrom Night and were carefully planned. A committee of men was responsible for the many rules and regulations that all were required to observe. Men's and women's facilities were strictly segregated according to Jewish law. A dress code was rigidly en-

forced, in spite of the women's insistence on the right to bare arms.

Shortly thereafter, the top golfers in the land emerged and formed the PGA (Polish-Galitzianer Association).

Famous Jewish golfers of the era were Julius Boros, Sam Snead, Ben Crenshaw, Jack Nicklaus, Max Faulkner, Harry Varden and Al Geiberger. These names are immortalized in the Challah Fame.

Of course the person who carried the golfers equipment around the course was called a Mercedes.

And, oh yes - it is believed that the name GOLF is an acronym of the often-heard words:

Gevalt, Oy, Ligner and Feh
(Heaven forbid, Oy, Liar, Fooley)

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GOING TO THE PALM SPRINGS FOLLIES?

We're planning a Saturday PC field trip in March and we need to know how many tickets to reserve.

The theme, *Gotta Dance!* Guests starring in this edition of the Follies will be three legendary, lady singers: **Gogi Grant, Gloria Loring** and **Mimi Hines**.

This is a very popular venue and the seats sell out fast. For those who have never seen the follies, you have a real treat in store for you.

If you want to make a whole weekend out of it, we can provide details on available lodging and, of course, dining.

Call or E-mail Bernice Stein
714-968-0998 JStein7901@aol.com



Jewish Family Service of Orange Co.

Program Spotlight-Jewish Big Friends Little Friends

Jewish Family Service is proud to announce the beginning of a new program titled Jewish Big Friends-Little Friends. This program provides positive mentors and role models to children in need through the matching of men and women volunteers with appropriate boys and girls. Big Friends provide friendship, understanding and guidance in the context of a stable, compassionate and long-term relationship with the Little Friend.

Lend a hand, be a friend, make a difference. For more information on the Jewish Big Friends-Little Friends program, contact Marcia Marcinko, Director of Volunteers at 949 435-3460 or 714 445-4950 ext. 352.

Program Spotlight-Alzheimer's Support Group

Jewish Family Service of Orange County will start a support group for the caregivers or significant others of people with Alzheimer's Disease. The group will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in the JFS offices.

Co-facilitated by Ruth Raskin, a licensed clinical social worker, and Roberta Probolsky, a certified Alzheimer's support group facilitator, this group will provide caregivers with a precious opportunity to share issues, concerns and resources as they struggle with the responsibilities of rendering care for their afflicted loved-ones.

Information: Ruth Raskin, LCSW, at 949 435-3460 or 714 445-4950, ext. 359.

**Jewish Family Service of Orange
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Fax 714 445-4960
www.jfsoc.org

THE BOOK CLUB IS EXPANDING ITS HORIZON - IT IS NOW:

THE BOOK AND VIDEO DISCUSSION CLUB

Our Book Club meeting was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2006, at 7:30 P.M. at the home of Seymour and Shirley Spiegel. We had an introductory schmoozing session and then we continued in our reading of "Stars Of David", by Abigail Pogrebin.. It is a book of many short chapters about the lives of famous American Jews. We first read the chapter about Larry King, the TV personality. He had 7 marriages, two to the same woman. And they were all non-Jewish. So his life is truly assimilated, but he still considers himself a strong cultural Jew. We also read the story of William Kristol, who is a neo-conservative TV and newspaper columnist and opinion-maker. He belongs to a Conservative synagogue. He was chief of staff for former VP Dan Quayle, and I think that propelled him to the famous list. He is a leading personality of the politically conservative Jews of today. Both of these men gave us plenty of thought for a good discussion of them and our own Jewish experiences.

We had a discussion concerning the content of the Book Club meetings, and we decided to have some meetings devoted to showing videos on Jewish themes, which we all thought was a good idea.

The next Book Club meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY**, November 15, at 7:30 at Gerry Lumian's house in Newport Beach. Come to the Book Club for a great read (or a great Jewish DVD video), a great discussion, and great refreshments.

Marty Annenberg

NOTE CHANGE OF DAY (this month only)

JEWISH SOCIAL ACTION MONTH

Cheshvan (October 23 - November 21) is the month for Jewish social action. Jewish organizations around the world participate in social action projects during this time, but not only at this time. There is a wealth of resources for groups to initiate or expand their social action programming. Jewish groups tackle problems ranging from hunger to domestic abuse, mental health to the environment. They are all Jewish issues. Everyone from children to seniors can participate in social-action projects. To find information, go into www.socialaction.com or www.cheshvan.org

DINE OUT November 18th

Mama Cozza's
2170 West Ball Rd.
Anaheim (Corner of Ball and
Brookhurst)

Time change - 7:00 p.m

Just a quick reminder -

When the monthly dine-out event was created, it was decided that the the bill would be divided by the total number of attendees (minus the cost of any liquor). We are still following this method, as most places do not do separate checks for large groups.

Please don't ask for exceptions.

Call Karen Knecht at 714/739-1366 or E-mail knechtfour@aol.com by November 15th to reserve your spot.

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Fall 2006 Seminars Presented by the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and the Host Communities

The Hebrew Bible in a Secular Age

Join host community Oraynu Congregation in Toronto to hear **Dr. Barry Olshen**, professor of English and Humanities, Glendon College, York University, and **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**, director Canadian Section of IISHJ, **November 17-19** as they examine "The Hebrew Bible in a Secular Age."

Antisemitism

Jew hatred is over 2,000 years old. Once a religious movement, it has now been secularized and thrives on the economic anxieties of an urban industrial culture. In recent years, it has found a new center in the Muslim world of the Middle East. **Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine** will discuss the causes of the history of anti-Semitism, **December 8-10**, hosted by Queens Community for Cultural Judaism in New York.

Seminars are open at varying prices to IISHJ matriculating students, continuing education students and the general public. Call Kirk Wicker at the Institute office for further information: **248-476-9532** or iishj@iishj.org.

The Ahnenerbe

In case you've never heard the word before, the Ahnenerbe was an elite Nazi research institute that Heinrich Himmler had founded in 1935 with a small group of associates. The official mission of the Ahnenerbe (definition: something inherited from the forefathers) was twofold: first, it was to unearth new evidence of the accomplishments and deeds of Germany's ancestors, as far back as the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age if possible, "using exact scientific methods", and second, it was to convey these findings to the German public by means of magazine articles, books, museum shows, and scientific conferences. In reality, however, the elite organization was in the business of mythmaking. Its prominent researchers devoted themselves to distorting the truth and churning out carefully tailored evidence to support the racial ideas of Adolf Hitler. Some scholars twisted their findings consciously; others warped them without thought, unaware that their political views drastically shaped their research. But all proved adept at this manipulation, and for this reason, Himmler prized the institute. He equipped it with laboratories, libraries, museum workshops, and ample funds for foreign research.

The Nazi leadership went to enormous lengths to maintain a public façade of rationality, fairness, and middle-class decency. Hitler and the senior members of his government craved admiration and respect from the world, and to obtain it they continually attempted to display their political ideas - particularly on the subject of race - in the best possible light. Hitler was convinced, based on his own highly selective reading of history that only one racial group fell into the category described as "the founders of culture". These, he insisted, were the Aryans, a fictional race of tall, willowy, flaxen-haired men and women from northern Europe. According to Hitler, only the Aryans possessed the spark of genius needed to create civilization, invent music, literature, the visual arts, agriculture, and architecture, and advance humanity. Most modern Germans, Hitler claimed, descended from the ancient Aryans, and as such they had inherited their forefathers' brilliance.

The destroyers of culture, Hitler insisted, were the Jews. He declared that Jews posed a serious threat to humankind, insisting that they possessed a singular talent for undermining and corrupting the cultures of other races. He was especially fond of likening "the Jew" to a type of germ - "a noxious bacillus that keeps spreading as soon as a favorable medium invites him. And the effect of his existence is also like that of spongers; wherever he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period" Never mind that Jews had contributed brilliantly to human civilization, with nearly 30 percent of all Nobel laureates from Germany being Jewish although Jews accounted for just one percent of the German population. And never mind that the first torch of civilization...the first cities, system of writing, and successes in agriculture had all arisen along the green river valleys and hills of the Near East and Asia and not many thou-

sands of miles away in the dark, cold forests of Northern Europe. Actually, ancient Germans had played no role in the great early advances of human civilization.

The answer to the problem required more German scholarship - scholarship of the right political stripe. So he created the Ahnenerbe where brilliant mavericks and brainy young upstarts would give traditional science a thorough cleansing, sweeping away centuries of careful scholarship and unveil a new portrait of the ancient world...one in which a tall, blond race of ur-Germans would be seen coining civilization and bringing light to inferior races, just as Hitler claimed. And this almost magical elixir - pure Aryan blood - could be identified once again through the lens of this "new science". Those possessing the purest of this strain would be used for purposes of breeding to once again create this master race of super-humans. For this important work, a diverse assortment of scientists came together...archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, classicists, Orientalists, runologists, biologists, musicologists, philologists, geologists, zoologists, botanists, linguists, folklorists, geneticists, astronomers, doctors, and historians to share their findings and ultimately portray the true picture of the origins of the world. Himmler paid careful heed to their conclusions, discussed their ideas, and when the opportunity presented itself, employed their research to fuel and justify the Holocaust. Himmler transformed a preposterous and mythological idea into a hard, fact. He cloaked his hatred of others under the respectable mantle of science. He disguised the Nazis' brutal agenda of mass murder as a venerable tradition of the German people, worthy of modern emulation. Himmler was prepared to sacrifice and destroy millions upon millions of people. Those not possessing of significant Aryan features would be either slaughtered or enslaved. All of the world's Jews would have to be exterminated, down to the very last man, woman, and child. In this way, no Jewish "germs" would survive to infect and destroy the fledgling Aryan colonies. The pandemic of "Jewishness" would at last be eradicated.

The German population embraced the "new science" jubilantly. Believing they were, indeed, special people, having proof of this claim grounded their superiority and justified their racism and ultra nationalism. Believing themselves badly treated after the First World War, most Germans welcomed this "evidence" of their specialness. It was in this climate that the German population of young men and women of the 1930's opened their arms in welcome to what became the cornerstone of the Nazi agenda. And their children and grandchildren are the legacy of that mindset. Now aren't you glad we entered and won the war?

Rosalie Gottfried, Madrikha

REMEMBERING BAMBI

Ours is the first generation to have witnessed "Bambi" (the name was shortened from the Italian word for baby, Bambino). The feature-length cartoon was released in 1942 by Walt Disney and has become a children's classic ever since. Today, it can be purchased for home viewing and is known throughout the world. Who wrote the story and what do you know of him?

He was born Siegmund Salzman in 1869 in Budapest and moved with his parents to Vienna when he was three weeks old. The city had begun granting Jews the rare privilege of full citizenship just two years prior, prompting a large Jewish migration from elsewhere in the Hapsburg Empire. Siegmund grew up poor in the Vienna slums, with little formal education. He labored in a series of menial, clerical jobs in the insurance business while sending out his literary work to little or no effect, until 1902, when his obituary of Emile Zola, by all accounts a moving and noteworthy piece of writing, received widespread notice and provided Siegmund, who by now had changed his name to Felix Salten, entrée into Jung Wien, the Young Vienna Movement, a loose conglomeration of progressive bohemians. Artists and writers, most of them Jews, Jung Wien counted among its members composer Franz Lehar, playwright and novelist Arthur Schnitzler, librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Stefan Zweig. Once Salten became ensconced, he became a prolific novelist and noted theater critic for various publications, shuttling back and forth between Berlin and Vienna.

Salten received only nominal Jewish education, being among the first Jews raised in a largely secular milieu. This allowed them to live lives and make art independent of a strictly Jewish experience. They filled the exciting new void left behind by abandoned religious traditions with an exuberant secularism, which would go on to inform painting, writing, theater, psychoanalysis, and just about every other aspect of a dynamic age hurtling into the future. A few decades later, all of this would fall under the umbrella of "degenerate art," as coined by the National Socialist Party of Germany.

It was during this time that he wrote *The Memoirs of Josephine*, using the pseudonym Josephine Mutzenbacher, Autobiographer. The story was told from the point of view of an older

woman looking back over her life as a courtesan. As Josephine, or "Pepi," says near the beginning, whoring "saved me from suffocating in the slums and permitted me to live like any woman of good society". The book documents her childhood in the destitute Ottakring district of Vienna, in a crowded tenement with her parents and two older brothers. A series of boarders who sleep in the tiny apartment's kitchen educate the juvenile Pepi in the ways of sex, along with her next-older brother and a pair of precocious siblings. The book was written in 1906, four years after his Zola obituary. Although not a standout in its field, it reads like pretty standard porn.

When on holiday in the Swiss Alps in 1923, the Viennese writer was so taken with the natural setting and wildlife, he was inspired to write the life story of a young faun in the woods. And so Bambi was born. Read in its original form, it's bloody and vicious, and the dialog mirrors the pogroms prevalent in Europe at that time. Bambi's forest is peopled with characters by turns arrogant, venal, gossipy, and engaging - as flawed and varied as the cosmopolitan fauna Salten probably encountered daily in his life in Vienna. The novel was immediately popular with both children and adults. An English-language edition followed in 1929 and the rest is history.

Important Dates in Jewish Immigration

In 1881 the Russian Emigrant Relief Committee is established to help Jews escaping Czarist Russia. They provide meals, transportation and employment counseling to arrivals at New York's Castle Garden, the main immigrant-processing center of that time.

In 1882 Czar Alexander II is assassinated. The regime of his successor, Alexander III, spurs widespread pogroms. Mass exodus of Russian Jews begins, and almost 20,000 arrive in the U.S.

In 1891 the Russian government expels the 20,000 Jewish residents of Moscow, who flee to various countries. More than 107,000 Jews immigrate to the U.S. during 1891 and 1892.

More next time.



WELL PLANNED LIFE????

Molly and Freda met for the first time since graduating from high school.

Freda asked Molly, "You were always so organized in school. Did you manage to live a well planned life? "

"Absolutely," said Molly.

"My first marriage was to a millionaire;

My second marriage was to an actor;

My third marriage was to a preacher;

And now I'm married to an undertaker."

Freda asked,

"What do those marriages have to do with a well planned life?"

"Simple" said Molly,

"One for the money, Two for the show, Three to get ready, And four to go.

Two old Jewish men are pushing their baskets around the supermarket when they collide.

The first guy says to the second guy, "Sorry about that. I'm looking for my wife, and I guess I wasn't paying attention to where I was going."

The second old guy says, "That's OK. It's a coincidence. I'm looking for my wife, too. I can't find her and I'm getting a little desperate."

The first old guy says, "Well, maybe we can help each other. What does your wife look like?"

The second old guy says, "Well, she is 27 yrs old, tall, with red hair, blue eyes, long legs, big boobs, and she's wearing tight white shorts.

What does your wife look like?"

The first old guy says, "Doesn't matter --- let's look for yours....!"

HUMOR



Hyman recently had a full medical check up.

When he returned 3 weeks later after the exhaustive lab tests were complete, his doctor said he was doing "fairly well" for his age.

Hyman was obviously a little concerned about that comment and so asked his doctor "Do you think I'll live to be 90, doctor?"

He replied, "Well, do you smoke or drink beer?"

"Oh no", Hyman replied, "I've never done either."

Then the doctor asked, "Do you eat grilled steaks or barbecued ribs?"

Hyman replied, "No, I've heard that red meat is very unhealthy."

"Do you spend a lot of time in the sun, like playing golf?" asked the doctor.

"No I don't," Hyman replied.

Then the doctor asked, "Do you gamble, drive fast cars, or mess with women?"

"No," said Hyman, "I've done none of those things."

The doctor looked at Hyman and said, "Then why do you want to live to be 90?"

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