



CSJO Newsletter

“The Voice of Cultural Jews”

Spring 2008

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

CSJO CONFERENCE 2008

The Whole Mishpokhe - Diversity Rocks!

May 23 - 26, 2008

For the first time ever, CSJO and Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring are working together on a conference to be held at Circle Lodge (Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring Facility)

335 Sylvan Lake Road Hopewell Junction, New York

Registration begins at 4:00 p.m. Friday afternoon and check out is Monday morning 9:00 a.m.

We are very fortunate to have as our keynote speakers -

Mike Felson - Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring

Jeff Zolitor - Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

Sarah Waslow-Washington - Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations Youth

The conference program is listed on p. 3. Registration forms - pp. 5 and 6. Adbook - p. 8.

More memories of Max Rosenfeld - a major shaper of CSJO

Max Rosenfeld (1913-1997) was a leading intellectual force in the creation of CSJO, and was a regular presenter at its conferences. In the last issue we published a tribute to him, referring to the work he did for the secular Jewish movement and the way he inspired many in the CSJO. Recently the Sholom Aleichem Club in Philadelphia at one of its meetings had readings from several of the books of translations that Max published in his lifetime. The following remarks were made to speak about Max as person and artist.

By Larry Schofer

One of the traditions kept alive by Max was that of Sholom Aleichem himself. In his will he discouraged people from grieving for him. Instead he encouraged members of his family to gather every year and to read from his writings in whatever language they understand. Max would try to do that every year for the Sholom Aleichem Club. He would treat the members to a new translation of some ironic humor from the pen of the great writer.

In a way, that is what we are doing today for Max. I can't compare him to Sholom Aleichem – that kind of hyperbole would have embarrassed Max — but we can think about his work with Yiddish literature and remember the man.

Max Rosenfeld translated about 25 books – the number is uncertain because every once in a while he would fess up to another one, some youthful indiscretion in the choice of a book to translate.

Most of his books were done on commission, sometimes by the author, often by the author's family. But three books came directly from him, and we should be eternally grateful to the Sholom Aleichem Club for having been involved in their publication – *Pushcarts and Dreamers*, a collection of stories originally published in 1967 as *A Union for Shabbos* (and now reprinted with permission by CSJO), *New Yorkish and Other American Yiddish Stories*, a collection of stories published in 1995 (published jointly with CSJO), and *Festivals, Folklore & Philosophy*, selected essays and a few translations published in 1997, culled from over 40 years of publishing. And of course, he was a co-author of the very successful *Haggadah for a Secular Celebration of Pesach*, which went through 5 editions and many, many reprintings.

Max was not a creator of Yiddish literature; but like all good translators, he was a preserver of the original language and a popularizer – but a translator is also an artist. Translation is not easy. If it were easy, then a computer could do it. But it isn't easy, and it takes a special person to bring literature from one language into

Continued on p. 7

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

"The Voice of Secular Jews"

Affiliates – for more information, go to www.csjo.org or contact the Executive Director, (320 Claymore Blvd., Richmond Heights OH 44143. E-mail: csjo@csjo.org).

California	Huntington Beach	Pacific Community of Cultural Jews and Jewish Culture School
California	Los Angeles	Sholem Community Organization and Educational Institute
California	Los Angeles	Secular Jewish Humanists
California	Van Nuys	Erev Shabbes Group
California	Greater East Bay	Tri-Valley Cultural Jews
Florida	Southern Florida	Secular Jewish Humanists
Illinois	Chicago	Secular Jewish Study Group
Illinois	Chicago	Secular Jewish Community and School
Michigan	Ann Arbor	Jewish Cultural Society and School
Michigan	Detroit (suburban)	Jewish Parents Institute
Michigan	Detroit (suburban)	Sholem Aleichem Institute
New York	Suffolk County	Jewish Cultural School
Ohio	Cleveland	Jewish Secular Community
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	The Sholom Aleichem Club
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Philadelphia Jewish Children's Folkshul
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Philadelphia Secular Jewish Organization
New Jersey	West Orange	Jewish Cultural School and Society
Maryland	Baltimore	Baltimore Jewish Cultural Chavurah
Canada	Victoria, B.C.	Victoria Society of Humanistic Jews
Canada	Vancouver, B.C.	Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture
Canada	Winnipeg, Manitoba	United Jewish People's Order – Branch 16
Canada	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Sholem Aleichem Community
Canada	Toronto ON	United Jewish People's Order (UJPO)
Canada	Toronto ON	Winchevsky School



CONGRESS OF SECULAR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

A non-profit organization

An affiliate of the North American Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews,
a constituent organization of the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews

Home page: <http://www.csjo.org>

EDITOR: Larry Schofer (lawrence.schofer@comcast.net)

CHAIR: Karen Knecht (knechtfour@aol.com)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Rifke Feinstein (rifke@adelphia.net)

Newsletter items should be sent to the CSJO Newsletter, lawrence.schofer@comcast.net or 419 W. Mt. Pleasant Ave., Philadelphia PA 19119.

Other correspondence (including book orders) should be sent to Rifke Feinstein, Executive Director, 320 Claymore Blvd., Richmond Heights OH 44143. E-mail: csjo@csjo.org.

All material copyright ©2008 Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations except where otherwise indicated.

CSJO CONFERENCE 2008

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

We will have a diverse selection of workshop presenters from CSJO and WC/AR members. Listed below are the names of the workshops and the presenters.

Saturday

Yiddish in Current Hollywood Flicks	Hershl Hartman
The Unknown Role of Jews in American Sports	Bennett Muraskin
Zayt Gezunt Taskforce: A Jewish Perspective on Health Care	Martin Schwartz
Waiting for God: The Spiritual Explorations of a Reluctant Atheist	Larry Bush
Recovering My Southern Roots: Yiddish Unlocks the South	Benjamin Feldman
The Revolutionary Graphic History of Illustrated Yiddish Children's Literature	Nikolai Borodulin
TBD	Elizabeth Rosenfeld
Jews and Fashion	Leah Siemiarowski
TBD	Toby Dyson, Ben & Mark Neuman
Moving Forward, Moving Together: a Multi-generational Creative Movement Workshop on Themes of Progressive Jewish Identity, Activism and Continuity	Susan Griff
Jewish Songs of War and Peace: Every Mother's Son (Hebrew, Ladino, & Yiddish)	Adrienne Cooper
Orange Jews and Blue Jews: Similarities and Differences Between Jewish Sects	Zoe & Samara Cogan
Israeli Apartheid: Screening of Occupation 101	Louisa Worrell
TBD	Sofi Seymour, Becca Luborsky, Rose Semmel

Sunday

CSJO / WC - Who We Are, Where We've Come From and Where We are Going	Rifke Feinstein & Peter Pepper
WikiWebSite - Community Building and Long Distance Learning	Barry Dancis
Noachides, The Seven Laws of Noah	Ed Klein
Secular Jewish Roots	Hershl Hartman
Making Midrash	Judith Seid
Yiddish Games (You Don't Have to Know Much Yiddish to Win)	Nikolai Borodulin
I Don't Want to Talk About It: End of Life in Secular Jewishness	Robert Kestenbaum
Shalom Bayit: Organizing Real Jewish Grassroots Activism in Cross-Racial Coalition	Dara Silverman
The Secret Lives of Gefilte Fish and other Tales of the Kitchen: A Food Workshop	Eve Jochnowitz
Answering Different Questions: Secular Judaism in Casual Conversations	Yael & Shoshanna Seid-Green
TBD	Dylan Tate-Howarth, Sadie Esptein-Fine

On Sunday night, we will have our traditional Banquet, and will end our weekend with the Multi-generational Talent show, hosted by the Teens, Young Adults, and Older Young Adults.

(Schedule subject to change)

CONFERENCE PACKAGES

All prices listed are for members of CSJO and Workmen's Circle / Arbeter Ring
If not a member, please add \$35.00 to listed prices

Full Conference - With Rooming

- Package #1 - \$325.00 Adult Full Conference - Double Occupancy - includes everything (8 meals and rooming)
Package #2 - \$375.00 Adult Full Conference - Single Occupancy - includes everything (8 meals and rooming)
package #3- \$285.00 Teen / Young Adult Conference (13-24) (8 meals and rooming)

Must bring sleeping bags & pillows

- Package #4- \$150.00 Teen / Young Adult Conference (13 - 24 years) **First time attendees only** (8 meals and rooming) **Must bring sleeping bags & pillows**

- Package #5 - \$225.00 Older Young Adult Conference (25 - 30 yrs.) (8 meals and rooming)

Must bring sleeping bags & pillows

Other Packages - No Rooming (Adults only)

- Package #6 - \$225.00 Full Conference - Includes everything except rooming
Package #7 - \$125.00 Saturday Program -Includes Saturday workshops, lunch, dinner and entertainment
Package # 8 - \$75.00 Saturday Program - Includes Saturday workshops and lunch (only)
Package #9 - \$125.00 Sunday Program -Includes Sunday workshops, lunch, dinner and banquet and talent show
Package #10- \$75.00 Sunday Program - Includes Sunday workshops and lunch (only)

All prices listed are U.S. Dollars and Canadian Dollars. They are good through May 12, 2008. All registrations post-marked after May 12, 2008, must add an additional \$25.00 per person per package.

Transportation - The closest airport is Stewart-Newburgh (SWF). We will have a van available to pick people up from this airport only. If you need to be picked up from the Stewart-Newburgh airport, please indicate that on your registration form. We will be posting more travel information on our web site in a couple of weeks. Please check there to get up to date information on the conference. www.csjo.org.

For more information, please contact the following people:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Program Coordinators & Site Information | Karen Knecht - Knechtfour@aol.com
Rifke Feinstein - Rifke@bronxbobbe.com
Adrienne Cooper - acooper@circle.org |
| Teen Conference Coordinator | Maya Richman - mayarichman@gmail.com |
| Young Adult Conference Coordinator | Sarah Waslow-Washingfton - newsies69@yahoo.com |
| Teen / Young Adult Liaison | Karen Knecht Knechtfour@aol.com |

Donations to CSJO

General Fund

Adam and AJ Chalom, IL
Libby Cogan, New York
Joe and Lillian Dimow, CT
Joan Kurtz, New Hampshire
Lester Schlosberg and Helen Helfgott IL
Cary Shaw, Norwalk, CT

Gerry Revzin Scholarship Fund

Alice Dermer, IL
Marvin and Rochelle Goldman, Northern CA
Lee Jaffe, IL

Marsha Meckler and Michael Weinstein, Hawaii
Lester Schlosberg and Helen Helfgott, IL

Max Rosenfeld Publications Fund

Marsha Meckler and Michael Weinstein, Hawaii
Lester Schlosberg and Helen Helfgott, IL

Harold Gales Community Development Fund

Marsha Meckler and Michael Weinstein, Hawaii

Teen/Young Adult Fund

Lester Schlosberg and Helen Helfgott, IL

Eva Goldfinger, Ontario, for get well tribute to Gerry Revzin.

CSJO Conference 2008

May 23 - 26, 2008

Registration Form

Please print clearly! Please copy for additional registrants.

Full name(s) _____ Age (pack. 2-4) _____

M or F _____ Veg. food (Y/N): _____

(If under 18 years of age, you must include a copy of your birth certificate)

Address _____ City _____

State/Prov. _____ Zip/postal code _____ Phone _____

E-mail address(es) _____

Primary group affiliation _____ Is this your first conference? (Y/N) _____

Package # _____ \$ _____ Package # _____ \$ _____

Package # _____ \$ _____ Package # _____ \$ _____

Total fee enclosed \$ _____

I wish to share a room with _____

I wish to share a room with _____

*Special housing or dietary needs (please describe) _____

We will try our best to accommodate all special needs. Thank you for your understanding.

All charges in U.S. currency.

VISA _____ MASTERCARD _____ Card no. _____

Exp. Date _____ / _____ (mm/yy) Verification number _____ (3 digits on back of card)

Name on Card (please print clearly)

Billing address _____

**If mailing after May 12th, you must include a late fee of \$25.00 per person. No partial payments accepted.
Send form and check, money order, cashiers checks (in US dollars only) or credit card information to:**

CSJO 2008 Conference
c/o Joan Kurtz
P.O. Box 448
Intervale, New Hampshire 03845-0448

**TEENS - FILL OUT THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORM
SIGN THE CONFERENCE RULES
(on reverse side of this page)**

TEEN REGISTRANTS EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORM AND CONFERENCE RULES FORM

(Required for everyone under the age of 18 - Please photocopy form for additional persons.)

Name of Teen _____ Birth date
/_____/_____
Allergies _____
Medical condition _____
Food restriction _____ Activity restrictions _____
Medicine taken regularly _____ Date of last tetanus shot ____ /
/_____
Health insurance provider (please supply copy of health insurance card - **required**)
Policy # _____ Group _____

I hereby authorize the CSJO Conference 2008 organizers to consent to and authorize any necessary emergency medical attention to the teen named above during his/her participation in the CSJO 2008 conference. I agree to accept all financial responsibility for any necessary medical attention.

Parent/legal guardian signature _____ Date ____ ____

Address (if different than teen) _____

Phone where I can be reached (_____) _____

Emergency contact Name _____ Phone _____

Alternate emergency contact - Name _____ Phone _____

All Teens and Young Adults must sign the Conference Rules and Declaration of Responsibility CONFERENCE RULES

Circle Lodge and the CSJO Conference organizers have worked hard to ensure an enjoyable, safe, and successful conference. All attendees are asked to do their part by using common sense and courtesy and by respecting the rights of others. Below is a set of rules concerning behavior for all individuals using the facilities at Circle Lodge. They apply to every attendee of the CSJO conference.

1. No one under the age of 18 may leave the premises except for a medical emergency or when accompanied by designated adults. No exceptions.
2. Weapons and controlled substances are not allowed.
3. Alcohol is not allowed on the property, except when served by the cafeteria staff to individuals of legal drinking age.
4. No animals allowed.
5. Smoking is not allowed by anyone under the age of 18. Smoking is not allowed in any building. Smoking is permitted in designated areas only.
6. Only persons who are properly registered for the conference are allowed in rooms or in facilities reserved for the CSJO Conference 2008.
7. Courtesy is required in all living areas.

Teen Signature and date:

Memories of Max Rosenfeld (continued)

another.

Max was always looking for the exact word, and he spared no pains to be accurate. My wife Jane and I took great pleasure in helping Max decipher a word written in Yiddish that actually was Russian or Polish. He called me one day to ask about the word “korshun.” At that time he was working on a translation of a memoir about the Minsk ghetto during the Second World War.

Yiddish draws on many languages

First I looked in a German dictionary – after all, if it’s in Yiddish and if you don’t know the word, you try German. No such word, even with attempts at various ways of spelling the word that was rendered so oddly in Yiddish. It didn’t sound Hebrew, but I tried that. No luck. Then I tried Polish, which will usually do the trick when German and Hebrew fail, but no luck. Then I had a brainstorm – if the writer was in Minsk, perhaps it is Russian – and after trying several ways of reconstructing the Russian word from the Yiddish rendition, with great triumph I discovered for Max that the word meant “kite.”

Go fly a kite

Nu, I can hear him saying – what’s a kite?

It’s a bird, a bird of prey. Max was not familiar with the bird; I had heard the term and had even been next to birdwatchers as they pointed them out. But I really knew nothing about them.

It was here that Max and I had a laugh about the intersection of our childhoods – I reminded him that we may not know what a kite is, but I definitely remembered that a kite is listed in the book of Leviticus as one of the birds that is not kosher to eat. There will be no roast korshun for yontev in a traditional Jewish house.

That was a lot of work for one word, but Max was a stickler for accuracy as well as for artistry.

Home Townies

Max and the Rosenfeld family did not need help finding the best place we ever looked at together on a map – it was the town of Belaya Tserkov’, now known in Ukrainian as Bila Tserkief. The Rosenfeld family came from that town – though Max, Jack, and Bess were all born here – but the Jews didn’t like coming from a town whose name means White Church. So they rechristened it, so to speak, in Yiddish as “Shvarts-timme” – black abomination. Ukrainians from Belaya Tserkov, Jews from Shvarts-timme – and

all from the same place.

When people in South Philadelphia decided to form a landsmanshaft, a home-town network, they certainly didn’t want to call themselves Anshei Shvarts Timme – People from Black Abomination – but they didn’t want to come from White Church either. So they became Anshei S’dai Lavan, People from White Fields. And Reb Motke – to call Max by the pen name that he occasionally used in the News and Comment of the Sholom Aleichem Club – delighted in the story.

Max translates Itzik Manger

Let me end with 2 references to Yiddish.

There is a Yiddish expression that talks about the dignity of an individual, regardless of his wealth. The eastern wall in the traditional shul, the mizrakh vant, is where all the big shots sat. In Yiddish there is a proverb

Vu ikh zitz, dort iz di mizrakh-vant. Wherever I sit, that’s where the eastern wall is.

Well, for Max, *Vu er zitzt, dort iz di mizrakh-vant.* Wherever Max sat, that’s where the eastern wall was. The eastern wall came to him.

And finally, I copied a little bit from a short essay on Queen Vashti of Purim fame – an essay included in *Festivals, Folklore and Philosophy*. This part comes from a poem by the Yiddish poet Itzik Manger, who provided lots of grist for Max’s translator’s mill:

But this one might be about Max himself

Vashti has been fired as queen:

And as she walks the last mile, quietly and with measured steps, her last words to the assembled young tailors and seamstresses in the shtetl are:

I’m leaving this world forever, folks
so whenever you do your Purimshpiel
think of me, please, as a decent gal
and spare a couple of tears for me...

Pushcarts and Dreamers and New Yorkish are still available from CSJO.

CSJO Social Action Resolution

The Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, with 19 affiliated Communities and Sunday Schools across North America and the United Kingdom, expresses its serious concern over recent and pending actions in the House of Representatives that seek to reinforce the erroneous concept that the U.S. was “founded as a Christian nation.” In reality, almost all the leading framers of our national heritage were deists, while non-believers and members of other religions - including Quakers and Jews - played significant roles in U.S. history.

We are concerned, especially, that actions of this sort by Congress tend to erode the clear injunction of the First Amendment to the Constitution, the bedrock of civil liberties in our country: “Congress shall make no law respecting an estab-

lishment of religion...”

We urge the members of our affiliates to acquaint themselves with the content of recent and pending non-binding House Resolutions and, as individuals, to advise their Representatives of their reaction. We also call upon other organizations in the U.S. Jewish community to take similar action.

Details about the House Resolutions may be obtained from the websites of Jews on First (www.jewsonfirst.org) and of Americans United for Separation of Church and State (action.au.org).

DENORA KNECHT, CSJO VICE CHAIR, IN ACT OF LOVINGKINDNESS

Denora Knecht, vice-chair of CSJO, is in the news for a very courageous act. Here is a letter from her parents and two early comments:

As some of you may know, our daughter, Denora (Knecht) Carpenter, had made the choice to donate a kidney to a very good friend. Well, today [March 20], that surgery took place. Denora successfully donated her kidney to a woman named Kelly. Denora is resting comfortably at UCLA Medical Center. She has a little pain, but the pain medication they are giving her is working wonderfully. Kelly is also doing very well, and the kidney started to work immediately.

We are so very proud of her. She is truly a giving human being.

Bob and Karen Knecht

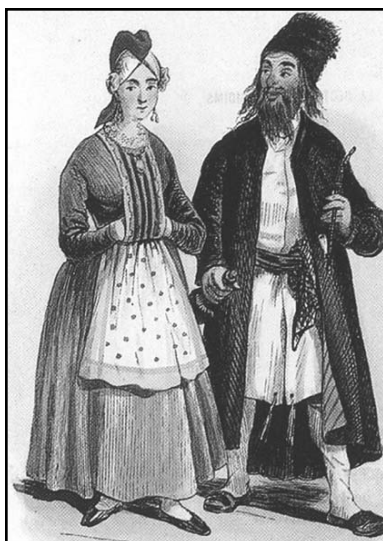
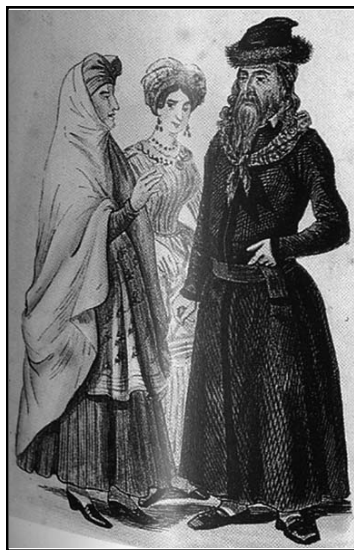
A strong kidney donated by a strong woman. It's truly a wonderful thing, and Denora is a remarkable woman.

Love and best wishes,

Jeff Zolitor

Please give her my wishes for a full and speedy recovery and a *yasher koyakh* (more power to you) for her decency, generosity and courage.

Bennett Muraskin



(Left) A Lithuanian Jew with his wife and daughter

(Right) A Khassidic couple |
images from L. Hollanderski, *The Israelites of Poland*, Paris, 1846.

CSJO VIDEO LENDING LIBRARY - CONTACT JUDY SEID AT culturaljews@aol.com

CSJO Newsletter
419 W. Mt. Pleasant Ave.
Philadelphia PA 19119 USA