



# CSJO Newsletter

"The Voice of Cultural Jews"

Spring 2007

## Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

# Annual CSJO Conference - Cleveland, May 25-28, 2007

"Secular Jewishness - A Fusion of Social Issues, Civil Liberties, and Jewish Culture" will be the theme of the CSJO Conference 2007 in Cleveland from May 25-28.

The usual array of fascinating topics will follow the keynote addresses by Leslie Dyson, Vancouver, and Leah Siemarowski, Philadelphia. A partial list of topics to be covered is given in the table attached to this article.

Conference check-in at Ursuline College in Cleveland will begin at 4 pm on Friday, May 25, with dinner from 6 to 8 and an oneg shabbat/oyneg shabbes program starting at 8:30.

Saturday will include the keynote addressess and workshop sessions, while Sunday will see the annual business meeting, workshops, closing banquet, and the multi-generational talent show. Off-campus teens and young adult activities are scheduled for Saturday night.

A variety of packages is available for registration. A registration booklet has been mailed to as many members as possible. Program co-chairs are Rifke Feinstein and Marcia Rosenthal (866-874-8608 or rifke@adelphia.net). Registrar is Hans Leander (216-481-0850 or hansleander@ieec.org).

### Peretz takes on Cleveland!

*Reprinted with permission from Peretz Papers March – April 2007.*

### Report on the 2006 CSJO Youth Conference by Heather MacLean

New Jersey, with wide open space, clean fresh air, and abundance in wildlife and forests—wait, that was B.C. New Jersey, although famous for many things I've heard, was not so fresh, a lot of smog! I did how-ever LOVE the buildings; they are stunning, and old. The weather was very warm, but not always sunny; we had some thunderstorms one night.

OK, back to the conference. The Peretz youth group put on a fabulous workshop, which was very successful, and well done. So, GOOD JOB Y'ALL!!! I will let someone else discuss what the workshop was about.

The other teens also put on some great and entertaining workshops. My favourite workshop was that of the Philadelphia teens. Their workshop was the dating game. Everyone was given a card with a name and a quote of someone Jewish, and then all the women were the lookers, and the males were the bachelors. I was a looker, and I played Barbra Streisand (my idol) and my quote was "I love gay men, they made me famous. I also study Hebrew dressed like a man" Did you know that?? Because I didn't! I also must say that Mark played a very convincing Jesus.

On the Saturday night was our "night out" so we went to 'The Village' in Manhattan, there my Aunt and my cousin met up with us, and we all went shopping, and for coldstone ice cream (if you get a chance to try this ice cream...you gotta).

On the Sunday night (the last night) is the banquet and talent show. The food was horrible, and that's being nice. Not only was

#### WORKSHOP TOPICS

- The Current Scene in the Middle East
- The Hidden Tradition: Jews on the Right
- Health Care for the 21st Century
- The Esther You Never Knew: Queen and Saint in Three Western Belief Systems
- Challenges to Liberal Judaisms in the 21st Century
- Threats To Our Privacy
- El Chocó, Columbia: Struggle for Cultural and Environmental survival
- Rebirth of Jewish Life in Post-Holocaust Germany
- How Theater Can Effect Social Change
- Corporations and Democracy
- How Do You Say It In Yiddish?
- Jewish Graphic Novels
- On the Fringes of Jewish Identity
- Teaching the Holocaust to Non-Jews
- Creating a Culture of Innovation, and Aligning Leadership and Education
- Towards a New Vision
- Learning Basic Songs
- Evolution
- Cooperation Between Muslims and Jews
- The Cuban Jews
- The History and Future of the American Labor Movement
- Teaching the Bible to Our Students
- Teen/Young Adult Conference Workshops

Some of our Distinguished Workshop Presenters are:

- Adrienne Cooper . Mark Weber . Dr. Jerry Liebman
- Dr. Judith Neulander . Prof. Peter Haas . Carrie Davis
- Prof. Ruth Behar . Prof. Diana Orendi . James Levin
- Greg Coleridge . Shariee Calderone . Gerry Kane
- Roberta 'Rifke' Feinstein . Wendy Wasman . Jeff Zolitor
- Amilee Young . Judy Seid . Prof. Patricia Princehouse
- Al Stern . Steve Cagan . Seth Rosen . Barry Dancis

# Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

*"The Voice of Secular Jews"*

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

California	Huntington Beach	Pacific Community of Cultural Jews and Jewish Culture School
California	Los Angeles	Sholom 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

**2007 Conference**

**Cleveland Ohio, May 25 - May 28, 2007**



## 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](mailto:lawrence.schofer@comcast.net))

CHAIR: Karen Knecht ([knechtfour@aol.com](mailto:knechtfour@aol.com))

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

Newsletter items should be sent to the CSJO Newsletter, [lawrence.schofer@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:csjo@csjo.org).

All material copyright ©2007 Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations except where otherwise indicated.

there never enough food, it was all pretty unpalatable, but that is the only bad thing I can say about the conference. My best friend, Chloe Smith, and I serenaded the banquet hall with a duet selection from the musical *Wicked*, which was given thumbs up by all...GOOD JOB CHLOE. May I also mention that Chloe is the youth newsletter editor for CSJO this year, and we are very proud of her!

Finally, I would like to add that I met some fabulous people, whom I am keeping in touch with. I not only met some people my age, but I also met many young older adults (old folks who aren't ready, and never will be ready to grow up).

In conclusion, I would like to send a shout out to all the upcoming youth of Peretz, and invite them to CSJO next year, new faces are always welcome, and it is so fun, I can't even begin to describe...PLUS you get to miss school (now I have your attention!!!)

## by Samantha Scott

WOW! ANOTHER AMAZING YEAR at CSJO. I thought my first year was as good as it gets. Amazing people, great conversation, long nights, awesome work shops. Who knew it could get any better, but it did!

I suppose as it is our moral duty to save someone in need, it is also my moral duty to write my conference report. Hmm, where to begin, well let's see. First we headed to the airport bright and early, a little too early in my opinion. From there we had a long flight to Toronto where CSJO was held last year. By now we were happy with our arrival and hoped to board the next plane to Newark, New Jersey.

But there was a problem, our flight was cancelled. So Leslie talked to the airline people and got us another flight and food vouchers, because we all know how good Leslie is when it comes to getting a good deal. So finally we arrived after this little mishap and two long plane rides, but here we are at home at CSJO, well our home for the next couple days at Rutgers University.

The next day the Vancouver youth gave the first youth workshop of the trip, which I must say went amazingly well. Relieved to get it over with, and proud of how well it turned out, we set out to find more Jewish things to do, which we definitely found. I suppose it helped that we were at a Jewish conference.

There were many amazing qualities about CSJO, actually too many to list, but a few of them were: The people, the music, the fun, our trip to NEW YORK, the talent show, the fun, the sleepless nights, and of course just being at CSJO with all of those familiar faces and exciting events ahead of us...

## by Toby Dyson

The CSJO annual conference was held in New, New Jersey [in 2006]. The workshops were very informative. I went to a workshop on the relations between the Jews and the Blacks during the civil rights movement. It told of how the Jews helped the blacks in many ways. I even met the person who organized all the buses on the East Coast going to [Martin Luther King's] "I have a dream" speech.

I also went to a workshop on community building. One of the highlights of the conference was when the youth from Vancouver put on our own workshop of the ethics involving charity. The

workshop went very well, and many people told me that it was a highlight of their conference as well.

At the talent show the Vancouver teens (the B.C. boys) put on a skit making fun of the Americans. They took the joke well. At night the youth play ultimate for hours every night. The Dyson boys in one game together had 18 points. We played until 3 am every night. We even played in a thunderstorm on the first night.

Also at the conference was Paul Robeson Jr. He talks about his father's life. It was very informative and engaging. I learned of the struggle and hardship of Paul Robeson.

All in all the conference was very interesting and educational. The most important thing that happened at CSJO is that I made friends all over North America.

# Reminiscences of Itche Goldberg

By Lillian Garfinkel

Sholom Aleichem Club, Philadelphia

December 27, 2006 was a sad day for Yiddish culture. That is the day when Itche Goldberg passed away at the age of 102. Many felt bereaved; 300 people attended his funeral in New York City. While the demise of such an old person is to be expected, it saddened me because I had known about him since my childhood. He was my cousins' shul teacher in the late 20's and early 30's. By the time I was studying Yiddish, he was the director of the IWO (Ordn) Yiddish Schools. His signature is on my mittelschul (high school) diploma.

When I was a student at the School for Higher Jewish Education (Di Hekhere Kursn), he was one of my teachers. He was such a dynamic person that I thought he was 15 or 20 years younger than his true age. I was surprised when his 100th birthday celebration was announced. His classes were delightful. Itche was a gifted teacher and an interesting lecturer, in contrast to some of the other teachers, who did know not how to teach.

What I remember most clearly are his discussions of the Soviet Yiddish writers, such as Itsik Fefer, Dovid Berglson, and Leib Kvitko, who were later executed by the Soviet regime. After learning about these atrocities, Itche stopped admiring the Soviet Union.

Itche Goldberg was a true polymath. In addition to being an educator, he was also a librettist, translator and editor. He edited the magazine, *Yiddishe Kultur* for 40 years. He taught Yiddish at Queens College (CUNY) from 1970 to 1985. He won many important awards, including the Wallenberg Prize.

In 2005, when Itche was 101 years old, the League for Yiddish produced a film entitled "*Itche Goldberg: A Century of Yiddish Letters*," which was directed by Josh Waletzky. It features Professor Eugene Orenstein, a former student, interviewing Itche about his experiences. The film is scheduled to be shown at the May meeting of the Sholom Aleichem Club.

# Jewish Family Museum – Repeat performance!

For the second year in a row this past winter, the Philadelphia Jewish Children’s Folkshul hosted a Kehilla - Jewish Family Museum day.

Last year, the kids brought Jewish mementoes for the adults to look at, and this year the adults brought Jewish mementoes for the kids to look at.

About 15 families, including Barry Dancis of the Folkshul, Paul Shane of the Philadelphia Secular Jewish Organization, and Jane and Larry Schofer from the Sholom Aleichem Club, brought materials for inspection - ships’ manifests for landings at Ellis Island, memorial books from Eastern Europe, grandparents’ prayer books, pictures of past bar-mitzvahs at the Folkshul, a book about vigilantes against Hitler, a Jewish history time-line, and various pieces of Jewish ceremonial art.



**Barry Dancis, a frequent speaker at CSJO conferences, explains his Jewish history timeline.**



**Paul Shane of PSJO (3rd from right) displays family memorabilia.**



**2006 Folkshul student with his exhibit**

## Donations

- General Fund**
- Max Rosenfeld Publications Fund**
- Gerry Revzin Scholarship Fund**
- Harold Gales Community Development Fund**
- Teen/Young Adult Fund**

**Julie Stelton, NY to Max Rosenfeld Publications Fund "with deep appreciation for the kind words of sympathy and comfort from Hershl Hartman and Rifke Feinstein after the passing of my beloved grandson David Aldridge, age 17, of muscular dystrophy."**

**Donations made to all 5 funds by Marie Parham, NY**

# ***Hello From CSJO!***

## **Archiving our materials**

CSJO has embarked on an archiving activity to save and preserve our precious history. Our webmaster, Jodi Goldfinger, will electronically scan, categorize and save all of CSJO's historical documents ... and there are many!!!

This project will enhance the organization's ability to perform our cultural and educational functions by making it easier for us to access past documents. We believe the successful completion of this project will benefit you, the members and friends of CSJO, as well as the entire secular Jewish community.

The materials to be archived include: · Conference material · Holiday programs · Life -cycle programs · Various CSJO publications and newsletters · Music · Member Records · and much more

Most of these materials currently exist only in their original paper form. In this form, the information is not readily accessible. Additionally, paper records fade and disintegrate over time. Once these materials are scanned and cataloged electronically, they will be accessible to CSJO members and friends, by a click of a button. The files will be easily copied and transferred and will last forever. We intend to set up the cataloging system so that all future documents and publications may easily be added to the electronic archive.

Setting up this type of system will cost approximately \$10,000, of which we have raised \$1800.00 so far. In order to help CSJO achieve this goal of preservation and documentation, we need your financial support . Your help will be greatly appreciated and may be a tax deduction for you. Please send your financial support to: Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations History Project, c/o Rifke Feinstein,, 320 Claymore Blvd., Richmond Heights., OH 44143

Thanks for your help...

Rifke

***Following is a list of DVD's that are in CSJO's Lending Library. CSJO affiliates may borrow any video for their use. To do so just choose a video and email Judith Seid at: culturaljews@aol.com Enjoy!!!***

## ***CSJO Audio-Video Lending Library***

### **DVD**

"The Believer." Based on a true story, "The Believer," winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, explores the motivations of a young Jewish man involved in the neo-Nazi movement. Some of the young man's criticisms of Judaism parallel our own Secular criticisms, yet his connection with Judaism

is religious, rather than ethnic. 99 minutes.

"The Children of Chabannes" documents how a small village in Free France sheltered 400 Jewish children. The Emmy-winning documentary includes interviews with both the townspeople and some of the children who survived and deals with both the moral courage of the country people and with the daily lives of the children who were sheltered in an old chateau. 93 minutes.

"Everything is Illuminated" tells the story of a man who travels to Ukraine to find the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis. It's funny, warm and emotional, garnering two thumbs up from Siskel and Ebert. 105 minutes.

"The Hebrew Hammer" is a hilarious spoof of the super-hero genre featuring a woman-crazy private eye who, with the help of the leader of the Kwanzaa Liberation Front, saves Jewish children seduced by bootleg copies of "It's a Wonderful Life" from abandoning Chanukah. It gets goofier from there. A Comedy Central production, it will most likely be appreciated by younger crowds. R Rated. 85 minutes.

"Paper Clips" is the story of how a class of middle school students in Tennessee using paper clips to understand the magnitude of the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust touch the lives of people all over the world. The documentary has won numerous awards. 84 minutes.

"Wanderings: A Journey to Connect" is a Jewish travelogue documenting the explorations of a Canadian mother and her teen-age daughter. The two find little-known Jewish connections in Southeast Asia, Iceland, Spain, Holland, the Caribbean and India. 50 minutes. (Also on videotape)

"Searching for Peace in the Middle East" provides diverse viewpoints on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Produced by the Foundation for Middle East Peace, it includes interviews with Rabbi Arik Ascherman (Rabbis for Human Rights), Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian legislator), and other Israelis and Palestinians of diverse backgrounds who point the way to a peaceful settlement.

"Land of the Settlers: A Journey Log" - a six-CD set by Chaim Yavin, a well-known Israeli journalist who sparked controversy in Israel when the series was first released. The series is extremely critical of Israel's settlement policy and the channel for which Mr. Yavin is anchor refused to broadcast it.

### **Videotape**

"Wanderings: A Journey to Connect" is a Jewish travelogue documenting the explorations of a Canadian mother and her teen-age daughter. The two find little-known Jewish connections in Southeast Asia, Iceland, Spain, Holland, the Caribbean and India. 50 minutes. (Also on DVD)

"The Enchanted Travels of Benjamin of Tudela" is a cartoon account of the travels of Benjamin of Tudela. It's a useful intro-

duction to study of Jews around the world for primary school aged children. 9 minutes.

## **CD**

“George and Ruth: Songs and Letters of the Spanish Civil War” includes letters between a Jewish man fighting with the Republicans (those were the good guys!) and his wife during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939. The delivery of the actors is

not particularly professional, but the CD is redeemed by Tony Saletan’s rendering of some of the most famous - and a few less known - songs of the period. 2 CD set.