



JCSS NEWSLETTER

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Upcoming Events

- Rosh Hashannah Observance. Monday Oct. 3, 7pm. Unitarian Church, Montclair.
- Yom Kippur Observance, Wednesday, Oct. 12, 8pm. Unitarian Church, Montclair.
- JCSS Open House, Sunday Oct. 16.
- Sukkot/Succos Observance, Sunday Oct. 23. Tulip Springs, South Mountain Reservation.
- Secular Shabbat/Shabbes, Friday Oct. 28, 7pm. Home of Bonnie and David. Cushing.

For more details, visit us online, at www.jcss-nj.org

JCSS WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT: ELYSE BARBELL RUDOLPH

The Jewish Cultural School and Society is pleased to announce our newest president: Elyse Barbell Rudolph.

Elyse is the mom of Rebecca and Maya and wife of Mike. She serves as the Executive Director of the Literacy Assistance Center. Before coming to the LAC, she was Director of the NYC Professional Development Consortium (NYC/PDC), an inter-agency staff development network for adult literacy and occupational education. She has worked as a literacy instructor, curriculum de-



Elyse with daughters, Rebecca and Maya

veloper, program coordinator and staff trainer in community-based organizations, universities, jails, and labor organizations.

Elyse is the author of Job Hunting Skills for Lifelong Success, and

co-author of Adult Education Guide to Using the New York Times, and Building Literacy Through Child Development.

Raised in a conservative Jewish home, Elyse has a Hassidic sister living in the West Bank and another sister who is special ed teacher in the South Bronx. Elyse finds the JCSS "fills our family's dual needs for connecting to our history and culture as Secular Jews and serving our community as Humanists.

2005 JCSS GRADUATES VISIT ADOPT-A-MINEFIELD

Every year, the JCSS graduating class does a mitzvah project. During the course of their senior year, the members of the Hey class select a social action project that re-

flects the values of Secular Humanistic Judaism they have been learning in school at the JCSS.

The 2005 graduating class, Jerry Cushing, Melanie Goffman, and

Daniel Solecki, chose to raise money for Adopt-a-Minefield, a non-profit organization that helps locate and remove landmines from war-torn areas of the globe, and pro-

what if no one's watching
 what if when we're dead,
 we're just dead
 what if it's just us down here
 what if god Ain't looking
 down
 what if he's looking up
 instead

— From "What if No One's
 Watching" (1992), **Ani
 DiFranco**. Take *that*, Joan
 Osbourn!

"I'm an atheist ... how
 unfortunate it is to assign
 responsibility to the higher
 up for justice amongst
 people."

— **Ani DiFranco**, Interview
 by Matthew Rothschild in
The Progressive, May 2000.

Remember!

To reclaim your \$100 activity
 deposit, each member family
 must:

1. Attend at least two of nine
 members meetings, **AND**
2. Participate in one holiday
 preparation **AND**
3. Hold a JCSS Officer posi-
 tion or be a member of at
 least one standing JCSS
 committee.

2005 JCSS GRADUATES VISIT ADOPT-A-MINEFIELD (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

vides artificial limbs and
 education to help land-
 mine victims return to
 normal life. They chose
 this project not only be-
 cause landmines are a
 significant threat to hu-
 mans, animals and the
 environment, but also
 because around the
 world young people their
 own age are among those
 most at risk. Children
 are especially vulnerable
 to landmines because in
 many countries it is chil-
 dren who supervise ani-
 mal grazing, and because
 young children do not
 understand the risks and
 dangers of landmines.

Through fund-raising
 letters to family and
 friends, a bake sale, and
 presentations at their
 public schools and at
 JCSS events, the gradu-
 ating class raised over
 \$1,800 for Adopt-a-
 Minefield. The money
 they raised will support
 efforts to locate and re-
 move old landmines and

help landmine victims
 around the world.

The students brought
 the money they raised to
 Adopt-a-Minefield's
 headquarters, where they
 were able to discuss how
 the funds could best be
 used. The JCSS con-
 gratulates the students on
 their work.



2005 JCSS Graduates Visit Adopt-a-Minefield to
 donate funds raised as part of their Mitzvah Pro-

SPOTLIGHT: THE JCSS BAND

The JCSS holiday ob-
 servances and celebrations
 have always provided an
 opportunity for us to cele-
 brate our cultural heritage
 through music. This past
 year, we've enjoyed the
 talents of four of our JCSS

members, collectively
 known as "The JCSS
 Band." (The band are ea-
 gerly accepting suggestions
 for a new, more creative
 name.) In this issue of the
Newsletter, we thank them,
 and we look forward to
 hearing them again at our
 holiday events this year..

Bill Tally is a educa-
 tional researcher who
 dreams every night that he
 is a jazz pianist. Right
 now, he feels lucky to be
 playing regularly, and
 more or less awake, with
 some great Maplewood

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SPOTLIGHT: THE JCSS BAND (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 2)

musicians - all four of whom are Irishmen married to Jewish women. Go figure. He's also enjoying jamming with the JCSS's own Jewish Jug Band. (A reasonable, but not yet accepted suggestion for renaming the band.) However he keeps meaning to talk to Larry about stretching out the tunes so that Mark S. can wail more.

Howie Finkel has been playing since he was 13. His main instrument is bass but also play a whole variety of small string instruments. For the JCSS band he's played a Tarropatch (8



The JCSS Band playing some rocking Purim Tunes.

string Hawaiian instrument) and a Banjo Ukulele. Howie played professionally for a few years with the Cherry Vanilla Band in Europe, where they did a record for RCA. He currently has a 14 piece R & B Band that plays semi-

regularly (almost it's impossible for 14 people with regular jobs to play regularly). His band recently played at Gracie Mansion

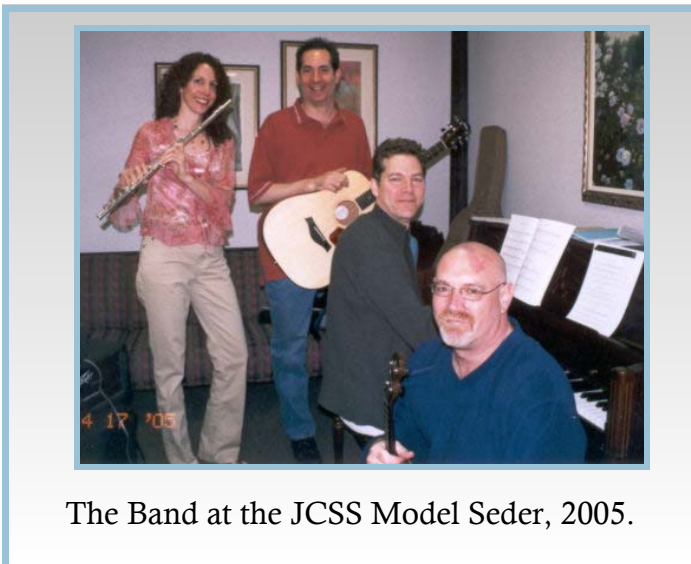
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**It ain't necessarily so,
It ain't necessarily so,
De t'ings dat yo' li'ble
To read in de Bible,
It ain't necessarily so.**

**To get into Hebben don'
snap for a sebben!
Live clean! Don' have no
fault.**

**Oh, I takes dat gospel
Whenever it's poss'ble,
But wid a grain of salt.**

- Excerpt from "It Ain't Necessarily So." Music by **George Gershwin**. Lyrics by **Ira Gershwin**. © 1935 by Gershwin Publishing Co. Gershwin, a Secular Jew, said his sources of "inspiration" were not gods or prophets but two other nonbelieving songwriters: Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, according to biographer Edward Jablonski.



The Band at the JCSS Model Seder, 2005.

JCSS Website

Visit us on the web, at www.icss-nj.org, to find

- Summary of our philosophy
- Summary of the JCSS school curriculum
- Updated calendar, with the schedule for JCSS classes, holiday celebrations, adult programs, etc.
- Registration information and forms
- Photo Album
- Contact Information

JCSS School Calendar 2005-2006

		Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	Adult Program
Sunday	September 11, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	September 18, 2005		Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	September 25, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	October 2, 2005		Alef - Hey Classes		
Monday	October 3, 2005	Rosh Hashannah Observance			
Sunday	October 9, 2005	Columbus Day Weekend			
Wednesday	October 12, 2005	Yom Kippur Observance			
Sunday	October 16, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	October 23, 2005	Sukkot/Succos Celebration			
Sunday	October 30, 2005		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	November 6, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	November 13, 2005		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	November 20, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	November 27, 2005	Thanksgiving Break			
Sunday	December 4, 2005		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	December 11, 2005	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	December 18, 2005	Chanukah Celebration			Adult Program
Sunday	December 25, 2005	Winter Recess			
Sunday	January 1, 2006				
Sunday	January 8, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	January 15, 2006	MLK Weekend			
Sunday	January 22, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	January 29, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	February 5, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	February 12, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	February 19, 2006	President's Weekend			
Sunday	February 26, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	March 5, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	March 12, 2006	Purim Celebration			Adult Program
Sunday	March 19, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	March 26, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	April 2, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	April 9, 2006	Model Seder			
Sunday	April 16, 2006	Spring Break			
Sunday	April 23, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	April 30, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	May 7, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes		Adult Program
Sunday	May 14, 2006		Alef - Hey Classes		
Sunday	May 21, 2006	Pre-Alef	Alef - Hey Classes	Members Mtg	
Sunday	May 28, 2006	Memorial Day Weekend			
Sunday	June 4, 2006	Graduation I			
Sunday	June 11, 2006	Graduation II			

Adult Program Calendar 2004-2005

In addition to family events, JCSS adults enjoy monthly Sunday morning discussion groups. Adults may also participate in conferences/seminars hosted by CSJO, the Society for Humanistic Judaism, the International Federation for Secular Humanistic Judaism. JCSS also co-sponsors trips to the theater, concerts, museums, historic sites and events. Our Adult Program Chair, Bennett Muraskin is a nationally known lecturer and writer on Secular Jewish topics. He has published numerous articles in Jewish magazines and has spoken at North American conventions.

Unless otherwise noted, the JCSS holds these meetings from 9:45am to Noon in the same rented facilities used for Sunday morning children's classes and members' meetings: at the West Orange JCC (760 Northfield Ave) in the Right Nursery.

For more information, call Bennett Muraskin @ 973-734-1972 (h) 908-964-8476 (w)

September 18, 2005 Spinoza and Other Jewish Heretics

Many consider Spinoza to be the first secular Jew. Learn about this seminal thinker from the Sephardic branch of the Jewish family, as well as other Jews who broke with tradition and encouraged freedom of inquiry.

November 6, 2005 Superman, Batman and Other Jewish Creations

GUEST SPEAKER: Rick Rubenstein, an authority on Jews and American popular culture, will discuss the role of Jews in the comic book industry, from Superman to The Thing, Mad Magazine to Maus and a lot more. He will illustrate his talk with rare items from his collection.

December 18, 2003 Secular Jewish Trivia

Note: This session will be held at our Chanukah celebration

The prize is a copy of Judith Seid's book, *God-Optional Judaism*.

(Hot tip---coming to the session on Spinoza will help your chances!)

January 8, 2006 The Ultimate Jewish History Lesson

GUEST SPEAKER: Barry Dancis, leader of our sister organization, the Philadelphia Jewish Folkshul, explains: "While some would have you believe that Judaism went from Adam to Abraham to Moses to Orthodox rabbis with a few minor branches of no account, the real Jewish history was always pluralistic. We will survey with the aid of a 1 page diagram, the many beliefs, currents and branches of Jewish thought throughout its history."

February 12, 2006 Jewish Film: Wanderings: A Journey to Connect

Bringing Jewish history up to date, we will view and discuss a film that chronicles the experiences of a Canadian mother and daughter, who visited obscure Jewish communities throughout the world. *Rated G for Genuinely interesting.*

March 12, 2006 Great Jewish Comedy Shtiks

In conjunction with our Purim celebration. Enough said?

April 2, 2006 Israel and Palestine: Prospects for Peace

GUEST SPEAKER: Ralph Seliger, vice-president of Meretz USA and editor of its magazine, *Israel Horizons*, as well as a frequent contributor to *Ha'aretz* (Israel), *Outlook* (Canada) *Jewish Currents*, the *Forward* and *New Jersey Jewish News*, will share his insights into current developments. This will be his third visit to the JCSS.

May 7, 2006 A Smorgasbord of Yiddish Culture

GUEST SPEAKER: Salo Enis, former JCSS teacher, outstanding scholar and all around *mentch*, will discuss the live and achievements of I. L. Peretz on the 90th anniversary of his death. Peretz was a short story writer, a poet, a social activist and a proponent of secular Jewish culture. He is considered one of the founders of our movement. Salo will also discuss the origins of Jewish melodies and their development into contemporary popular music. This will include an audio presentation.

SPOTLIGHT: THE JCSS BAND (CONTINUED)

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for Mayor Bloomberg's , Salute to Harlem party and also played Harlem Music Festival.

The Band also includes the talents of Marina Stern, on flute, and Marc Stern, on guitar.

The band tells the *JCSS Newsletter* that they “wish we could get someone who played some kind of hand percussion in the JCSS band, it would add a lot to the sound. It's a lot of fun playing with the other musicians in the JCSS band. We usually rehearse for around 5 minutes before we play but everyone is a real good musician so we manage to pull it off. “



Proud graduates of the JCSS Pre-Alef Program pose with teacher Shira Birnbaum, June, 2005.



JCSS
P.O.Box 3365
Memorial Station

Mail to:

Membership Information

Phone: 973-783-7897

Email: communications@jcss-nj.com

The JCSS is dedicated to the study and celebration of Jewish history and culture within the philosophy of Jewish Secular Humanism.

VISIT US AT
WWW.JCSS-NJ.ORG



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED