

# SECULAR HUMANIST JEWISH CIRCLE

## NEWSLETTER

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

[December 24, 2011](#)

Hanukah party for members.

[January 28, 2012](#)

Education/Oneg. Open to the public.

[February 5](#)

SHJC 1st Annual Meeting. Members only.

[March 3,](#)

Purim Party for members .

[April 14](#)

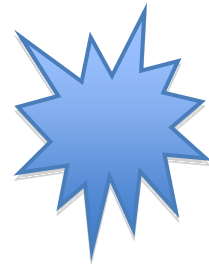
Community Passover Event. Open to the public.

[May 19](#)

Education/Oneg. Open to the public.

[June 23](#)

Education Oneg. Open to the public.



### SHJC High Holiday Observance on Saturday October 1<sup>st</sup>

#### A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

Our High Holiday Observance was a solemn, yet joyous event. About 75 people attended the Observance at the Unitarian Church to “reflect on the past year, to welcome the new year....and to renew ourselves and our community.” Rabbi Jack Silver came from Phoenix led our celebration. The service was balanced with music, thoughtful text reflecting humanistic Judaic beliefs and extensive congregant participation. The morning included a beautiful vocal rendition of Kol Nidre and a memorial service.



Rabbi Silver’s homily focused on Modern Humanist Ethical Dilemmas, and he invited the congregants to contribute their ideas during his talk. This homily symbolized the theme



of this year's observance: that as human beings and Jews, we must proclaim personal responsibility for our actions in our lives and in the world.

Following a delicious lunch attendees formed a circle of chairs around Rabbi Silver for a lively discussion. The Rabbi tossed out stories from the Torah that involved ethical dilemmas and asked what we see in the world around us today that might parallel each dilemma. Sometimes bursting to share our ideas, everyone gave examples, often building on the ideas of previous speakers. It was a discussion that could have gone on for hours! In keeping with our belief in "repairing the world" attendees were requested to bring food donations for the Community Food Bank Nearly 100 lbs. were collected.

## **NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

SHJC held its first election for Directors. In addition to the current 8 members , two additional members are joining this group: Catherine Pintek Becskehazy and Kent Barrabee. At the beginning of 2012, SHJC intends to start the affiliation process with the national association (Society for Humanistic Judaism). The 501 c-3 (non-profit) application has been submitted and a response is expected shortly. At the beginning of February, we will hold our first Annual Meeting to which all members are encouraged to attend.

**2012**

**A Year of Peace, Good Deeds,  
Friendship and Caring.**



On Becoming a Mensch...

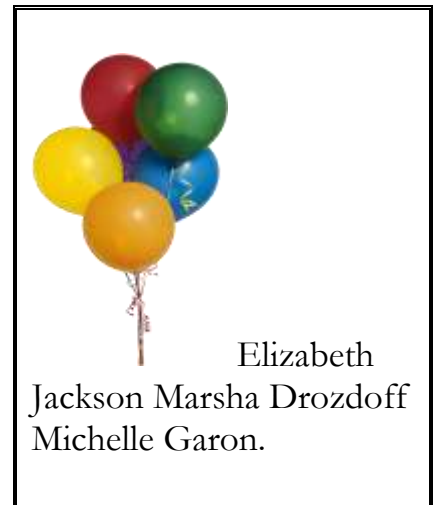
Nan Rubin, Tucson psychotherapist, clinical social worker and a student and teacher of Mussar, was the featured speaker at SHJC's November 19<sup>th</sup> gathering. Most simply, she defined the essence of this uniquely Jewish approach to self-help and social action or as a process that "refines character traits in the service of right action ... becoming a mensch." In a nutshell, the essence is the Golden Rule.

A practice that predates Freud, Mussar (definition: ethics) developed in synagogues in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even today most groups throughout the country are connected with synagogues. However, secular Jews have also found this approach to "introspection for growth" helpful in their own lives. The two Mussar groups in Tucson are connected with Congregation M'Kor Hayim.

Mussar has been made more accessible to modern American Jews through the works of Alan Morinis, founder of the Mussar Institute. Recommended as a first read is *Everyday Holiness: the Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. The Mussar website is: [www.mussarinstitute.org](http://www.mussarinstitute.org).

The meeting included a secular celebration of the Jewish Sabbath and an opportunity to socialize.

## WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS



## A READING LIST FOR HUMANISTIC JEWS edit/shorten

Submitted by Carolyn Simon

Humanistic Jews frequently become so after a great deal of thought and frequently with struggle. No matter, we continue to be "people of the book," and almost without question, we are great readers who have studied our way to our new "faith." The first source for information on HJ and its philosophy are the publications of the Society for Humanistic Judaism. ([ww.shj.org](http://www.shj.org))

For those who wish to continue this course of study, there are a number of excellent sources. Most of them can be found at the Pima County Public Library and are even available on Kindle. This writer recommends the following titles. Is it any wonder that most of the writers are Jewish?

Freedman, Samuel G. *Jew vs. Jew: the Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry*.  
. 2000.

Greenblatt, Stephen *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*. Norton. 2011,

Harris, Sam **The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason**. Norton. 2004.

Hitchens, Christopher *The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever*. 2007.

Jacoby, Susan *Freethinkers, a History of American Secularism*. 2004

Seid, Judith *God-Optional Judaism: Alternatives for Cultural Jews Who Love Their History, Heritage, and Community*. Citadel  
. 2001

## **Needs of the organization**

### **This is your organization – become involved**

- ✚ All the committees need additional help. Just a small amount of time is all that is needed. Please decide which area is the best fit for you and contact the committee chair.
  - Membership – help our organization to grow
  - Publicity/Communications –write brief items. Work on the newsletter. Computer literacy helpful
  - Holidays/Celebrations/Education. This committee also handles social events.
- ✚ CPA or other type of tax advisor.

## **BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

Become a part of a caring, compassionate community reflecting the values of secular humanist Judaism

*Help build a new organization that meets your needs and interests.*

Minimal financial costs. Members pay reduced fees for those events that have an admission cost.

*Opportunity to join a committee*



## **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

For 2011 dues are \$50 per person per calendar year. If you join after July 1st, your dues will be prorated to \$25 for the remainder of the year. Those people who join after November 1<sup>st</sup>, your \$50 dues will also cover the following full calendar year. After beginning the affiliation process with The Society for Humanistic Judaism, dues will be increased to cover the member payment to the national organization,

Members are welcome to attend steering committee meetings as non-voting attendees. Call one of members for the date and location and to receive any committee reports which will be discussed.

Members are encouraged to join a committee.

Membership application is the last page. Please complete and mail back

**SECULAR HUMANIST JEWISH CIRCLE  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name or Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Types of Programs which interest you \_\_\_\_\_

Talents or skills you would be willing to use on behalf of SHJC (e.g. lead a discussion, art or graphic design, music/singing, desktop publishing, etc.)

Comments or suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to Secular Humanist Jewish Circle and mail to :

SHJC  
c/o 930 S Goldenweed Way  
Tucson, AZ 85748

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

E-Newsletter prepared by the Publicity Committee

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December, 2011