JEWISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

Meeting of December 22, 2013

1:00 – 3:30 pm

Jewish Community Center – Park Heights

MINUTES

Dick Goldman, Co-President, opened the meeting. He announced our first new programs in the new year. The January and February meetings, both of which will be at the JCC – Park Heights will cover the following topics:

On January 26, Dick Goldman will present his talk on the ***Litvak-Galitzianer Wars***.

### At our February 23 meeting Suzan Wynne will be our guest speaker. Wynne is the author of [*The* Galitzianers: *The Jews of Galicia, 1772-1918.*](http://www.amazon.com/The-Galitzianers-Jews-Galicia-1772-1918/dp/1587366096)She will be presenting a topic that should be of interest to a broad audience.

Dick asked each of the board members present to give brief reports.

Secretary Joe Nathanson, reporting from the last board meeting, noted the need to fill several committee chairs. These include Resources (primarily liaison with the Jewish Museum of Maryland), Public Relations, and Programs (to replace Zev Griner, who had to resign due to the press of other activities).

Susan Steeble, our Publications committee chair, reported that our on-line quarterly newsletter, L’Dor V’Dor, will make its inaugural appearance in early January. All members are invited to make contributions of articles for future issues. Susan will also fill in temporarily as our Public Relations chair. The focus will be to get the word out on JGSMD and to recruit new members. Those in attendance were asked to record the synagogues and other organizations to which they could share information about our society.

Robin Thomas, Treasurer, reported on the status of our budget. Our goal is to have 80 paid members by the end of the 2013-14 program year. With that goal in mind our budget for the year is estimated at $1,600.

Vice President Laya Bitman will be leading our efforts in Member Services, which includes mentoring of members as they encounter issues in researching their family histories. Forms are available for those willing to serve as mentors and for those requesting assistance. Reference was made to web sites that can be particularly helpful, including FamilySearch.com (the LDS site), Fold3.com and Cindislist. Dick Goldman also noted the importance of confirming your source of information, e.g. city directories, census records, when you are conducting family history searches.

 **Guest Presentation**

Our guest speaker this month was Dr. Robert M. Shapiro. Dick Goldman introduced Prof. Shapiro as a Baltimorean, formerly on the faculty of Baltimore Hebrew University and now at Brooklyn College. Prof. Shapiro is a historian specializing in the history and culture of the Jews in Eastern Europe, with emphasis on Poland in the 20th century. He is a U.S. citizen who was born in post-war Germany to parents who are survivors of Nazi ghettos in Poland and concentration camps. He is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, where he majored in history; and of Columbia University, where he earned a Ph.D. in history for which he wrote a dissertation on "Jewish Self-government in Poland: Lodz, 1914-1939."

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| ***Robert Shapiro******http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/judaic/faculty/images/DSC00065.JPG******Professor of Judaic Studies, Brooklyn College, CUNY*** | *Dr. Robert M. Shapiro, a professor of Judaic studies at Brooklyn College, gave a lively and engaging presentation titled, “A Rosen by Any Other Name: Secrets of East European Jewish Family Names.”* *He stated that most of the Jews living in North America today are descended from Jews who lived in Eastern Europe. There are about 70,000 Jewish surnames of Eastern European origin (numerous examples were cited). Most Jews in Eastern Europe did not have fixed surnames until the early 19th century, when the governments of Russia, Poland, and Austria-Hungary began to require them for the purposes of taxation and military conscription.**Many Jews chose to make their patronymic names into permanent family surnames. Other Jews chose occupational surnames or geographical surnames derived from the name of the town where they were born or did business. Other naming patterns reflect religious status or role (e.g., Cohen, Levy, Rabinovitch), physical traits (Klein = small, Rothbart = red beard), or aspirations (Gluck = good luck, Fried = peace). Some reveal the role and importance of women in the family and in business (Rifkin, Esterman). Since, in many places, Jews were forbidden to take Hebrew or Biblical names, they often chose “hidden names” (code names) with a similar meaning* |

Dr. Shapiro’s talk generated many questions from those in attendance, including a long line of questioners after the formal close of the meeting. For those who want to pursue this topic further he recommended two books:

### [A Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History](http://www.amazon.com/Dictionary-Jewish-Names-Their-History/dp/1568219539/ref%3Dsr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388957688&sr=1-2&keywords=jewish+names), by [Benzion C. Kaganoff](http://www.amazon.com/Benzion-C.-Kaganoff/e/B001K8H342/ref%3Dsr_ntt_srch_lnk_2?qid=1388957688&sr=1-2) (1996)

* New Name Dictionary Paperback, by Alfred J. Kolatch (1994) (seems to be oriented to the naming of Jewish babies - JN)

Dick Goldman reported that he will be presenting genealogy courses, including one at the Meyerberg Senior Center in February and one at the Pikesville Senior Center in April.

**Next Meeting**

The group will next meet on Sunday, January 26, 2014 at 1:00 pm, at the JCC – Park Heights.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm.