Los Angeles 2012 - AJL is going Hollywood!
SUBMITTED BY ENID SPERBER LOS ANGELES CONVENTION 2012 CO-CHAIR

The Los Angeles Chapter of AJL is thrilled to be holding our first convention in twenty years! We had our initial volunteer meeting in the middle of August with ten people showing up to start work. It was still summer so we received many more emails from people disappointed that they could not attend the meeting but wanting to volunteer to help us. Wow we are off and running! Sharon Benamou, my co-chair has posted a call for papers so I hope that you are all busy considering your submissions for compelling sessions. We want to make this a spectacular convention and treat you to a glimpse of all the wonderful resources available here in the great Los Angeles area.

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A Letter from the Editor
Austin, TX – September 2011
Dear Readers,

It is time again to wish you all Shanah Tovah! Happy New Year to you and yours! May it be Shanah Tovah u-Metukah! (a good and sweet year).

I would like to thank all our reviewers and co-editors for their excellent work. I would also like to take this opportunity and encourage our members, near and far, to contribute to the AJL News and AJL Reviews. You are most welcome to send me your contributions any time; be it an article, a review, or a report that would highlight your own library – all are welcome! If you would like to join our reviewers group, please have a look at the appropriate page on the AJL website under ‘publications’. I would especially like to encourage our ‘international’ members to send their contributions; although most of AJL activities are taking place within North America, it is important that members outside of this continent will be heard!

With best wishes,
Uri Kolodney
Editor-in-chief

AJL Online

To subscribe to Hasafran, AJL’s electronic discussion list, send the message: “sub hasafran [your first and last name]” to: listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu.

AJL is now on Facebook. Become a fan.
A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CHAPTERS RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Amalia Warshenbrot, Charlotte, North Carolina

This fall I plan to contact each chapter president to learn about his/her chapter’s unique structure, programming, strengths, and areas that need improving. I will look for ways that our current chapters can learn from one another and explore ideas for developing new chapters in underserved locations.

My prior position on the AJL Chapter Relations Committee was as representative of the Southeast Regional Chapters. This region has an active chapter in Atlanta. Recently I facilitated the founding of the North Carolina Chapter, whose inaugural meeting took place in April; a second meeting is planned for October.

One of the conclusions of the recent AJL membership survey conducted by Joyce Levine and Racheli Leket-Mor is that AJL needs “young blood”. One of my goals in my area is to encourage AJL involvement by students in School of Information and Library Science (SILS) programs in local universities, by those who seek degrees in Jewish studies, and by those who volunteer in Hillel libraries. I think this is a good goal for every AJL chapter. We need to spread the word about the benefits of AJL membership, AJL scholarships, and AJL conventions; by doing so we will encourage students to train for the field of Judaica librarianship. Experienced Judaica librarians can invite library students to do internships in their libraries, making these students feel at home in this setting. This kind of personal contact can create interest in the profession and in AJL. I hope that all chapter members will consider membership in the international AJL. There are benefits that are limited to AJL members. Local chapters cannot be a substitute for it. A visit to our website provides evidence for it.

The chapters’ goal is to provide peer support to librarians in libraries that serve synagogues, day schools and community centers in close geographic area, as well as librarians in academic libraries, archives, and special libraries. Chapters provide informal continuing education workshops and a forum for discussion and development of ideas. Chapters can work closely with the mentoring and accreditation committees and thus bring libraries to a higher level of performance. Jewish topics can be introduced at meetings to expand the knowledge of chapter members. For librarians who are unable to attend the annual convention a chapter meeting can be very helpful. An updated list of the chapters, their presidents and their locations will be posted on the AJL website. In a few locations where AJL does not have a chapter, contact person information will be provided. Sometimes someone has a question, sees the name on the website and calls for information. It makes the chapters’ presidents or the contact persons ambassadors of AJL.

Some AJL chapters have not met for several years. I will be happy to work with members of these chapters to revitalize them. I would be pleased to visit your area to brainstorm with your members and encourage their participation. For librarians in a close geographic area who want to start a new chapter, it will be my pleasure to get you started. Existing chapters that need help, please do not hesitate to contact me. By getting to know every chapter I will be able to share your ideas for programs, fundraising and improving professional skills. Calls (704-365-3313) and emails (Chapters@JewishLibraries.org) with suggestions, questions, kvetching, or just to say hello are welcome.

SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER
Submitted by Marlene Reynolds
San Antonio Chapter will meet on October 27, at the Jewish Community Center for a short meeting followed by an author event with Iris Krasnow, author of The Secret Lives of Wives.
In memory of our beloved member Sylvia Firschein, who died of a stroke on May 16, 2011.

I believe I speak for everyone who knew Sylvia when I say that she will be missed. For many years she was the first-timers’ moderator at conventions, and our newcomers couldn’t have had a friendlier or more helpful introduction. She always asked our executives to show up, and introduced us, demonstrating AJL’s commitment to expand our reach.

[Editor’s note: Sylvia served as AJL’s secretary and on many AJL committees.]

From Merry Firschein, Sylvia’s daughter:

Dear HaSafranians --

Thank you so much for the kind words about my mom, Sylvia Firschein. I remember the first time she went to an AJL convention, about 30 years ago. My mom loved being a part of AJL and loved being the newcomer’s point-person. She wholeheartedly believed in the mission and raison d’etre of AJL and supported it with her whole being.

My mom was so excited to plan her trip to this year’s convention in Montreal. She was thrilled to be attending again after being away last year. It’s a great sadness that she won’t be there with you all this year.

I wrote my mother’s eulogy and included her thoughts about Jewish librarians and libraries. Perhaps you also might find it meaningful:

When people think of Sylvia, her name is attached to “Jewish librarian” and that’s how she was identified by so many. My mother believed that a Jewish education, even as informal as reading a Jewish book, would help keep the Jewish community engaged. That there was always something to learn about the Jewish experience in America, in history, the future of the Jews. She felt very strongly about the Jewish communities of Wayne and Sarasota that she was giving of herself to help people learn about themselves, their history, and their culture. She was bringing people together to talk about their commonalities and experiences. She was expressing the idea that being Jewish wasn’t only about prayers. That being Jewish could be about books and film and discussions -- and that the power of Judaism didn’t only reside in the religious part, that it resides in our shared and different experiences as Jews.

Next month my mother was going to the annual meeting of the Association of Jewish Libraries. She started going to those in the early 1980s. She was the founder of the Florida West Coast Chapter, in 1997.

She couldn’t wait to go to Montreal. Her passing is a loss to not only everyone who knew her, but to the field of Jewish librarianship and the work the librarians do in strengthening the Jewish community.

With best regards,
-- Merry Firschein

Members of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries enjoyed breakfast and a tour of the new Jewish Federation building at our August meeting. Three additional meetings will be held throughout the year, including the chapter’s annual event in early December for Jewish Book Month. A book discussion group is being planned for the upcoming year. Other program ideas are also under discussion.
New England Chapter (NEAJL)
Submitted by Ann Abrams, President
Minutes of the NEAJL Spring 2011 meeting May, 2011
We had a very good meeting this past Friday, at Gann Academy! Thanks to Julie Koven Levine and all the Gann staff!

1. Gil Rosen, Temple Emanuel, reviewed the Sydney Taylor winners, and most of the honor books. They can all be found here.
2. Gil also reviewed some new titles, for adults, including David Biale’s Not in the Heavens: The Tradition of Secular Thought and The Washington Haggadah.
3. Cathy Balshone Becze recommended Rebecca Goldstein’s 36 Arguments for the Existence of God.
5. Ann Abrams recommended How to Understand Israel in 60 days or Less by Sarah Glidden.
6. Ann led a discussion about programs we run at our respective libraries. Some of the ideas were:
   • Running events in tandem with other community events
   • Summer programs: “Breakfast and Books”
   • Jewish Book Month lectures
   • One synagogue — one book
   • Author talks
   • Custom-made bookmarks to promote a library
7. Ann led a short discussion (because of time constraints) about what to do with old books, and/or books that no one’s borrowed for years. She mentioned that she hired an appraiser to appraise about 50 titles in her collection as a way to help in her thinking about whether to keep, sell, or give them away.
8. We were delighted to welcome Jonathan Krasner, who spoke to us about The Adventures of K’tonton and Hillel’s Happy Holidays: Children’s Books and the Making of American Jewish Identity, which focused on authors Sadie Rose Weilerstein and Mamie Gamoran and the artist, Temima Gezari; he then connected this talk with the subject of his latest book, Samson Benderly and his ‘Boys’: Masters of American Jewish Education and their ‘Dream Not Yet Come True’

Long Island Chapter (LI-AJL)
Submitted by Wendy A. Marx, Chapter President
The members of LI-AJL wish you all a Shanah Tovah for 5772!! We also extend a hearty Yasher Koach to the convention committee of the AJL Convention in Montreal

Our Chapter has planned an exciting variety of activities for the coming year. We will be partnering with the Nassau County Holocaust and Tolerance Center once again, thanks to Marcia Posner. Our thanks go to Elyse Ingber, who has arranged for our participation in the book and author events and the Jewish film festival at the Sid Jacobson JCC.

We hope to schedule a meeting out East in Suffolk County, where we have a number of members. We are also hoping to take advantage of the talents of our member-authors Ann Koffsky, Sandy Lanton, Sandi Wasserman, and Sara Ronen. We look forward to meeting with our newest members, LI-AJL scholarship recipients Sally Steiglitz and Daphna Amar.

I reiterate, as we are “the people of the book” we are twice blessed to be librarians. We continue to get the word out on what is new in Jewish books, what we can offer to our members and to their libraries, what we can offer to public librarians regarding Holocaust literature as it relates to intolerance, discrimination, and bullying where bullying is the new “it” program for discussion.

Kudos to our members Arlene Raatzabi, Elana Gensler, and Joyce Levine, who are AJL Board members.
Montreal Convention:
The capital area contingent returned from AJL’s Montreal convention with excellent reports. They are pictured in the photograph to the left.
Front row L to R: Yelena Luckert, Gail Shirazi, Marina Korenberg.
Back row L to R: Jasmin Nof, Michlean Teverovsky, Rita Sacal, Aaron Taub, Lenore Bell.

Those stayed at home were thrilled to be able to listen to the convention’s keynote speaker, Ruth Wisse’s excellent talk shortly after the convention. You can find it in the AJL website podcasts (www.jewishlibraries.org) Thanks to Heidi Estrin for making it available.

New Job: Jasmin Nof, who has been the Judaica and Hebraica Cataloguer at the University of Maryland for the last six years, will be leaving the capital area in September for Philadelphia, where she will start her new job as Hebraica Cataloguer at the University of Pennsylvania. Mazel tov on this promotion Jasmin! We will miss you, but we know U of P is a great place to be!

Union for Reform Judaism Biennial: Big event coming here this December: The URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) will be holding its biennial convention at the Gaylord Hotel near Washington, D.C. from December 14th – 18th. See: http://urj.org/

Our chapter hopes to be able to support AJL’s efforts to staff an exhibit table there in order to draw national attention to AJL and Jewish Librarianship’s role in the Jewish community. Joyce Levine, President of the AJL’s Schools and Center’s Division is our contact person for this effort. Our member Amy Tumin, Librarian at Temple Emanuel here in Kensington, Maryland has been active in this project.

I am glad to have the e-mail contact and encouragement of Amalia Warshenbrot, who is our new AJL Chapter Relations Chair Person. Thanks for being in touch and helpful, Amalia. Thanks to Toby Rossner for patiently gathering our chapter notes.

Wishing everyone Shana Tova, Rosh Hashanah 5722.
NYMA’s 2011 spring conference, From Generation to Generation: Jewish Genealogy in 2011, was held May 17th at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. In addition to two exciting presentations, the conference included a tribute to retiring librarians, Aviva Astrinsky and Phil Miller. The conference was co-coordinated by Roz Friedman, NYMA President, and Tina Weiss, Vice-President/President-Elect.

In Making Connections: Introduction to Jewish Genealogy, Robert J. Friedman, President, Steps to the Past LLC, provided, as the name of his organization implies, steps to finding one’s background. This often begins with the basic question, “Where did my surname come from?” Because of the commonality of surnames, answering this question can seem daunting. Where to start? The first place, Mr. Friedman suggests, is interviews with relatives, especially elderly family members. From there, you move on to immigration and citizenship records, particularly those at Ellis Island.

As information is gathered, Mr. Friedman emphasized three steps: review, organize, and preserve. The computer, of course, is critical in implementing these steps and, in addition, allows access to websites of genealogical societies as well as those of governments and religious organizations. Research should not be limited to the U.S. or even Jewish sources. Not only is Yad Vashem’s website a source for shtetl life, but the Mormons have their own extensive database, “Familysearch.” Participants received Mr. Friedman’s “Genealogy Source Checklist”; Mr. Friedman has also compiled “Recommended Web Sites (short list).” Another resource, “Suggested Genealogical Materials for a Jewish Library,” prepared by AJL’s own Steven Siegel for AJL’s 2004 convention and currently updated, includes how-to books, reference works and periodicals. Mr. Friedman can be reached at rjfriedman@verizon.net.

The second speaker, David M. Kleiman, Curator, Loeb Visitors Center, Touro Synagogue, and President of Heritage Muse, Inc. addressed the snowballing effect of technology in Family History in the Digital Age. There is currently a national interest in climbing one’s own family tree as reflected in the popularity of such TV shows as Who Do You Think You Are? Through current technology, it is possible to start from the known to the unknown, resuming and refining searches begun years ago. Interaction with new sources of knowledge via iPad or social networking sites such as Facebook may uncover new material. Through the web and database software it is not only possible to search but to share family history with others. David Kleiman can be reached at david.kleiman@heritagemuse.com.

Israel Chapter
Submitted by Ya’akov Aronson

With 13 issues in as many months, the Judaica Librarians’ Group (Israel) is very proud of its online publication Alon (http://safranim.wordpress.com/). Each issue contains a number of articles about interesting items encountered by Judaica librarians during their work. The first eleven issues were produced under the editorship of Rabbi Avishai Elboim, Director of the Rambam Library - the Torah library of the Tel Aviv Public Library System. Beginning with issue 12 Rabbi Elboim was joined by a co-editor, Dr. Ruth Kalman of the Aranne Library of Ben Gurion University. The editors will now alternate the responsibility for the preparation of the Alon. For the first few days after the posting of a new issue of the Alon on the Web more than 300 visits are recorded daily. Contributions, welcomed in
any language, can be submitted to rambaml1@gmail.com.

Issue 11 deals with “matters of state”. Dr. Chaim Grossman who researches Israeli culture wrote about “Haggadat Yom haAtzmaut”. Dr. Yoel Rafel of the Eli Weisel Center for the Study of Judaism at Boston University presented a chapter from his doctoral thesis entitled “The Prayer for the Well-being of the Ruler”. Rabbi Avishai Elboim, Editor of the Alon and Director of the Rambam Library in Tel Aviv, surveyed the discussion in Orthodox circles of how to relate to Israeli Independence entitled “The Shehecheyanu bracha on the 5th of Iyar”.

Among the articles in issue 12 there are two by Adina Zur-Gigi, a member of the staff of the Haifa University Library. One deals with anecdotes from the archive of Abu Hushi which is located in that library. The second detailed the steps involved in the restoration of four rare books. An additional article by Gabriel Yitzhak Ravenna of the staff of the Ben Gurion University Library told of interesting information gleaned from marginal notes and loose pages inserted in books in the library’s collection. The issue was edited by the new co-editor of the publication Dr. Ruth Kelman of the Aranne Library of the Ben Gurion University.

Issue 13 deals with subjects appropriate to Bein hameztarim, the three week period between the Fast of the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha beAv. The articles included are:

- The structure of the Beit haMikdash as represented in Venetian imprints by Dr. Ruth Kalman of the Aran Library at Ben Gurion University.
- Customs to commemorate the memory of the Temple by haRav Yehuda Zoldan, a Rosh Yeshiva at Machon Lev.
- Memorbuch, a digital copy on the Yeshiva University Library web site.
- The exhibition of the works of and items concerning the Gra, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman of Vilna (the Gaon) entitled Revelations of Eliyahu -- Torah and Redemption.

Since the fall meeting will take place close to date of the yahrzeit of Rabbi Reuben Margoliot, it will include presentations about Rabbi Margoliot’s contributions to Judaic studies. In addition to being a scholar of Rabbinics, he was the long time director of the Rambam Library. Among his publications, Rabbi Reuven Margaliot was the author of a well respected commentary on the Tractate Sanhedrin of the Babylonian Talmud. He was a recipient of the Israel Prize for his work on rabbinical literature.

Reminder Regarding the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD)

Uri Kolodney

As some of you know, AJL and CLCD have contracted to give free access to those AJL members that their library budget is less than $15,000 a year. In return, AJL Reviews supply the CLCD with the children’s and young adult reviews which are posted on the database at no cost to CLCD or to AJL. Our members with a limited budget benefit from this agreement and AJL as an organization benefits from the online visibility and free publicity.

As the liaison between AJL and CLCD, it was brought to my attention that some members are abusing this free benefit by sharing their password with others. It is very well understood that one could connect from two different machines – one at the office and the other one at home. Other than this situation, your login information should not be shared, and our agreement with CLCD should be fully respected. I thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

As a reminder, those of you that are interested in getting this benefit, please contact me directly at general-editor@jewishlibraries.org. You will need to complete a form and declare that you are eligible to get this benefit according to the budgetary limit mentioned above. CLCD can be accessed at http://www.clcd.com. Please don’t hesitate to email me with any questions.
Recent AJL Members’ Publications

Our Daily Words by Bernard Horn
Bernard Horn is an English Professor at the Framingham State College at Framingham, MA. His book of poems, Our Daily Words, reviewed in the February JLA Newsletter, was named a “Must-Read” Book and Finalist for the 2011 Massachusetts Book Award in poetry, with the commendation, “Bernard Horn’s poetry in Our Daily Words (Old Seventy Creek) holds the beating heart of everyday’s apparently random trivials. In beautiful language he juxtaposes surprising things that don’t go together – except in real life. His poems are organically musical and lift daily experience to spiritual and intellectual intensity.” Anyone interested in acquiring a copy can email Bernard at bhorn@framingham.edu.

The Baby Experiment by Anne Dublin
Anne Dublin is an Author, Teacher, and our own Editor for Children & Teen literature! Her new book, The Baby Experiment, will be published in May 2012 by Dundurn Press (Toronto). This young adult novel takes place in the early eighteenth century in Germany and the Netherlands. A Jewish teenager, Johanna, works as a caregiver at an orphanage. However, the orphanage is not as benign as it seems. Johanna makes a difficult decision and sets out on an arduous journey. The novel explores issues such as acquisition of language, friendship and loyalty, and anti-Semitism. Read more about her work at http://www.annedublin.ca/.

“The Jewish Studies Book Awards: a collection development strategy for non-sectarian academic libraries” by Izabella Taler
Izabella Taler is a new member of the AJL. Some of you might have met her in Montreal last June. She is the Jewish Studies library liaison and bibliographer at Queens College / CUNY. She recently published an article titled “The Jewish Studies Book Awards: a collection development strategy for non-sectarian academic libraries” (in Collection Building, Vol. 30 (1), 11-38 (2011)). Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot post the full text. Please refer to the citation or contact Izabella directly at Izabella.Taler@qc.cuny.edu.

Hereby is the abstract of the article as was forwarded to us by Izabella:
Purpose: This paper aims to provide an alternative method of building quality collections for Jewish Studies collection development professionals in small and medium-sized academic libraries with highly restricted budgets.

Design/methodology/approach: Sources of Jewish Studies literary awards were identified and a detailed analysis of awarded books’ subjects and the publishing sources was conducted.

Findings: The results show that awarded books cover a vast variety of subjects of interest to Jewish Studies collections. Since many of them are also published by academic presses, the use of identified Jewish Studies book award sources should be considered by bibliographers responsible for building Jewish Studies collections in non-sectarian college libraries with very limited budgetary resources.

Practical implications: The “one stop” access to all award sources and awarded books provides an easy access to otherwise dispersed information.

Originality/value: The comprehensive list of awards, nominated and winning titles, as well as the subject analysis presented herein, is the first of its kind. This can be used by Jewish Studies bibliographers to build and improve their collections and can also serve as a model for building other interdisciplinary subject collections.
Prepare another for a livelihood…

Our Talmud in the Tractate Kiddushin tells us that a father is obligated to teach his son a trade. It is incumbent upon each of us to help prepare a student for a profession and, at the same time, promote Judaica librarianship. We can do this by supporting our scholarship awards. Remember, any amount is appreciated.

The AJL Scholarship Fund awards two scholarships of $1,000.00 each year to talented library science students who show an interest in pursuing a career in Judaica librarianship. For each gift, an acknowledgment card is sent to the appropriate person. It is a very meaningful way to recognize simchas, send donations in memory of a deceased, or make a donation for a speedy recovery. Send your contributions with the appropriate information. Please remember to include the address of the family of those honored or remembered in order that we can notify the appropriate individuals.

Please complete the form below and send it, along with your donation, to Sarah M. Barnard, Serials Librarian, Hebrew Union College-Klau Library, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45220.

A thank you goes to each and every donor!!

DONATIONS TO THE AJL SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN 2011

Sarah Barnard - In honor of Phil Miller’s retirement.
Robert Berman - In memory of Silvia Firschein.
Lynn Feinman - In memory of Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
Sylvia Firschein - In memory of Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
Beverly Geller - In memory of Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
Leonard Gold - In memory of Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
Barbara Leff - In honor of 5 AJLSC members on the AJL board: Enid Sperber, Ronda Rose, Lisa Silverman, Susan Dubin, Sheryl Stahl.
Kathe Pinchuk & Heidi Estrin - In memory of Barbara Betz’s mother, Connie Foster.
Marcia Posner -
To Sylvia Firschein in memory of her husband "Hill."
To Esther Nussbaum in memory of her husband,
Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
Ronda & Fred Rose -
To Esther Nussbaum in memory of her husband,
Dr. Moses Nussbaum.
To Laurel Wolfson in memory of her mother.
In honor of Pearl Berger’s Life Membership Award.
To Etta Gold for the Fanny Goldstein Award.
Toby Rossner - In honor of Pearl Berger’s AJL Life Membership Award.
Ellen & Stewart Share -
For the recovery of Sandra Goldsmith, Claire Wolf and Gerdy Tractman.
In honor of the birthday of Suzanne Davidson.
Amalia Warshenbrot - To Esther Nussbaum in memory of her husband, Dr. Moses Nussbaum.

AJL Scholarship Fund Donation Form

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The AJL Newsletter (Irene Levin-Wixman z"l, founding editor) was published in print from 1979 to 2010 by the Association of Jewish Libraries to inform members about association activities and issues related to Judaica libraries. As of January 2011 it is split into two separate electronic publications – the AJL News and the AJL Reviews. Receipt of these publications is one of the benefits of membership. Please see the AJL website at http://www.jewishlibraries.org for membership rates.

General Editor
Uri Kolodney
University of Texas Libraries
The University of Texas at Austin
One University Station S5400
Austin, TX 78712-8916
genral-editor@jewishlibraries.org

Adult Review Editor
Merrily F. Hart
5090 Oak Tree Court
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
merrilyhart@gmail.com

Send adult books for review to:
Daniel Scheide
S.E. Wimberly Library
Florida Atlantic University
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6424
561-297-0519
dscheide@fau.edu

Children and YA Review Editors
Linda Silver & Anne Dublin
silverlr@roadrunner.com
adublin@sympatico.ca

Copy Editing and Page Layout
Karen Ulric
Golda Och Academy
1418 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052
ajlcopyeditor@gmail.com

Please send requests for membership and dues information to:
AJL VP for Membership
Joseph Galron
PO Box 3816
Columbus, OH 3210-0816
Tel.: (614) 292-3362, Fax: (614)292-1918
jgalron@gmail.com

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Ostrow Library
American Jewish University
15600 Mulholland Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90077
(818) 383-9672 (cell)
ajladmanager@gmail.com

All links to online resources were checked for accuracy on September 13, 2011. We cannot be responsible for broken links to those resources in the future.

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