SFBAJGS Activity Report for 2019
Jeff Lewy, SFBAJGS Treasurer

This annual report to our members covers our activities, financial results, and grants to other organizations in 2019.

We held seventeen meetings presenting personal family histories and describing a range of genealogical sources and research techniques. We participated again in San Francisco History Days, a jamboree of many local groups interested in local history. We also participate in the monthly "Help With Your Family Tree" events at San Francisco's Jewish Community Library, where people interested in developing their family history and genealogy bring their "brick walls" to moderator Judy Baston, and we help Judy offer research suggestions as homework to knock down those walls.

We are among the six largest societies in the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), with more than 200 members. Our members make us one of the most active Jewish genealogical societies by taking active roles in moderating research divisions (formerly special interest groups) online for JewishGen and participating in other efforts to find and provide public and online access to vital records and other records of genealogical interest.

Although our name says we are the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, the "San Francisco Bay Area" part merely means that we reside here. Our members and our interests are worldwide, as are our ancestors and living relatives. We can be as helpful to our members with ancestors in Russia, Bohemia, Galicia, and South Africa as to those whose families have been in the Bay Area for four generations or more. All of our families, like yours, originally came from "someplace else", and we have knowledge of and connections to many of those places.

Sixteen members attended the 39th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in Cleveland, Ohio in August 2019, and seven society members made presentations at the conference.

Our members are generous in paying dues and making additional donations to the society, giving us the opportunity to support our objectives:

• Support and improve online sharing of data useful to researchers everywhere doing Jewish genealogy

• Make formerly closed or unavailable records that support Jewish genealogical research available online

• Support efforts to research and remember existing and vanished Jewish communities

We support activities in the local area that are consistent with these objectives. We have ongoing volunteer projects to transcribe data from local cemeteries and other sources of birth, marriage, and death records and make that information available online for researchers everywhere.

Other work to fulfill these objectives takes place wherever Jewish communities and records are located, often far from us. Therefore, we continue our practice of making donations to other organizations that are working in those communities and archives. We support projects based on their value to the broadest possible audience of researchers, the need to preserve and protect fragile sites, and the need to record data where the repositories and archives are newly open or at risk of access restrictions.

This year, we donated $4,950 to eleven organizations for their activities. We include the purpose of our donations and the URLs of these organizations so that you can learn more about their activities if you wish.

Local
• Jewish Community Library in San Francisco: maintain and expand the very strong collection of materials related to Jewish genealogy and history in the San Francisco Bay Area. http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/jewish-community-library/

• Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks in the West: protect and maintain the seven Gold Rush–era Jewish cemeteries in the Sierra foothills. http://www.pioneerjewishcemeteries.org/

• Oakland FamilySearch Library: expand its collection of materials for Jewish research and support our Oakland meeting location. https://www.oaklandfhc.org/

National and International
• Reclaim the Records: A nonprofit organization set up just five years ago that identifies important genealogical record sets that ought to be in the public domain but which are restricted by government archives, agencies, and libraries. Freedom of Information and Open Data requests or lawsuits are filed to force the release of that public data back to the public. Reclaim the Records then digitizes everything it receives and puts it all online for

free at its site. It has already opened a variety of records in New York City, other cities in New York State, New Jersey, Washington State, Missouri, and Wyoming. Recent additions include death indices in Nebraska and Mississippi and the New York State marriage index. https:// www.reclaimtherecords.org/

Reclaim the Records is pursuing efforts in many states where officials have not previously allowed public access (see https://www.reclaimtherecords.org/to-do/).

• Italian Genealogical Group: support its ongoing online indexing of New York City records. This year it has added New York City death records and has begun to digitize the index for New York naturalization records. http://www. italiangen.org/

• International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Stern Fund: encourage nonprofit institutions and organizations, Jewish or not, to pursue projects, activities, and acquisitions that provide new or enhanced resources to benefit Jewish genealogists. http:// www.iajgs.org/

• Jewish Records Indexing – Poland: support ongoing digitization and indexing of Jewish records, primarily from Polish archives, but also from Ukraine and other locations where Polish records were formerly recorded. JRI-Poland now contains 5.8 million records from 550 Polish towns. http://jri-poland.org/

• Kirkuty – Jewish Cemeteries in Poland: support photography of Jewish cemeteries in Poland, both extant and desecrated, drawing attention to the remaining signs of the prewar presence of the Polish Jewish community. http://kirkuty.xip.pl/indexang.htm

• JewishGen: to the General Fund, supporting the primary online site of Jewish genealogical records and instruction for researchers. http://www.jewishgen.org/

• Ukraine SIG at JewishGen: support digitization and placement online of records from Ukrainian national archives. https://www.jewishgen.org/Ukraine/

• Ukraine Scanner Project: pay for scanning of records at regional archives in Ukraine. These records became available only a couple of years ago. Our grant pays for scanning these records to accelerate their digitization and posting online. The work is ongoing but may be halted by changes in the management of the archives. https://www. gofundme.com/scanners-for-the-ukrainian-archives

Transcriptions

We continue to transcribe more than 40,000 burial records from Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco dating back to the early 1920's, when Sinai Memorial was established. As a funeral home, Sinai Memorial arranges for burials at cemeteries throughout the Bay Area and in other cities in the U.S. and overseas.

We completed the transcription of about 5,000 burial records from the former Beth Israel Synagogue in San Francisco, covering the years from 1892 through 1929. These burials took place at Salem Cemetery in Colma. The records for the period before April 1906 provide a substitute for some of the death records destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. The records are now online at JewishGen's JOWBR site, and the original register has been given to the History Center at the San Francisco Public Library for archival storage.

We have also continued work on two other projects:

• Burial records for Sherith Israel Synagogue dating from about 1861 to 1889. These records are particularly valuable since they provide a partial substitute for San Francisco City records destroyed in the 1906 earthquake.

• Burial cards for Home of Eternity Cemetery in Oakland from the 1880's until 2000

Financial Results for 2019

Revenues for 2019 were just over $9,300, slightly more than in past years, with about $5,000 in dues from 221 members and about $4,300 in donations. Thank you for your membership dues and donations, which support our activities and those of other groups doing work of great value to you, our members, and to the worldwide Jewish genealogical community.

Expenses totaled about $10,900, generating a loss of about $1,600. This loss was incurred on purpose to make use of our past surpluses and was primarily a result of the $4,950 in contributions to other groups. Those contributions are described above. Other major categories of expenses were costs of meetings and publicity, $1,600; publication of five issues of *Zichron*Note, $1,500; and Web site maintenance and management, $500. All other expenses, including insurance and other administrative expenses, totaled about $2,300.

On page 15 are simple pie charts showing the primary categories of revenue and expenses.
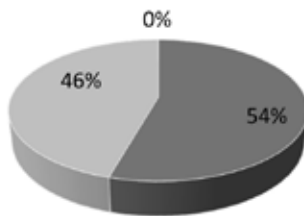
We again thank you for your membership, your donations, and your interest in Jewish genealogy and family history. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions to improve our performance and activities, and how we can most effectively help you with your research. Also let us know if there are any projects or activities you would like to see us undertake or support. We look forward to another year of accomplishments in 2020.
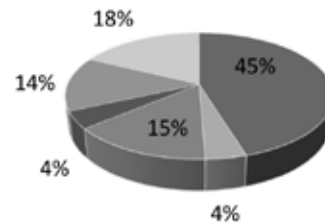
SFBAJGS Revenue - 2019

- Dues
- Donations
- Interest income & other revenue

0%
46%
54%

SFBAJGS Expense - 2019

- Grants to others
- Meetings & publicity
- ZichronNote journals
- Membership
- Website management
- Administration & other

18%
14%
4%
4%
15%
45%