

Savannah JEWISH LIFE



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Savannah Jewish Life

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Shalom Savannah

Adam Solender, Chief Executive Officer

There are times in life when everything changes.

We experienced this five years ago when a gunman filled with hatred towards the Jewish people stormed the Tree of Life synagogue building in Pittsburgh and murdered 11 congregants as they prayed.

We experienced this October 7th when we were confronted with an unimaginable horror when the terrorist organization Hamas massacred more than 1,500 innocent Israeli civilians and took hundreds more as hostages. Hamas' brutal rampage was the worst massacre in Jewish history since the Holocaust.

Since the gruesome and intentional slaughter of innocent civilians by Hamas, we have seen segments of the broader community not only support these inhuman actions but justify the atrocities.

The hatred of the Jewish people and the state of Israel is unmistakable in their rally chants and posts on social media; their actions on college campuses towards Jewish students; their acts of vandalism of Jewish institutions and other attempts at intimidation; and inflammatory remarks at city council meetings. Today we know there are those who hate Jews so much that they are not even able to condemn unequivocally the unthinkable brutality of Hamas.

When seismic change occurs instantaneously in times like these, our perspectives sharpen and clarity is forced onto us.

Five years ago, we immediately understood that Jewish communities needed enhanced security to help safeguard our vibrant and welcoming Savannah Jewish community. We got smarter through training and collaboration with local and national law enforcement agencies. We invested more in experienced security personnel and technology. And we continue to make our security a top priority.

Together we have raised our voice in support of Israel and are having the needed, sometimes uncomfortable conversations with friends, colleagues, and strangers.



We are providing immediate relief and support to victims of terror in Israel through the support of such agencies as the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), World ORT, Israel Trauma Coalition, United Hatzalah, Magen David Adom, Israel Community Center Association, ZAKA, and others through our community's Israel Emergency Campaign. Together, we have already raised essential supplementary dollars and are putting these funds to work immediately.

The critical dollars raised in the Stand Up for Israel Emergency Campaign is in addition to money from the annual Savannah Jewish Federation Community Campaign that we invest each year in humanitarian programs and services in our own community, throughout the world, and in Israel. It is because of the generous support of our community's Annual Campaign that we had the human and financial resources in place to respond immediately to this terrorist attack.

In the same way that this could be a long war in Israel, our fight here is far from over. In fact, our voices need to continue to get louder and our work to combat the anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric must grow and expand to effect the change needed for the vibrant and secure future we want for all of our children in Savannah and in Israel.

On behalf of the entire Board of Governors and staff of the Savannah Jewish Federation, thank you for all you do to ensure Jewish Savannah is a unified community – one that is strong, fully awake, and supportive of each other, our families, friends, and allies. None of what has been accomplished already would have been possible without you. Likewise, none of what still needs to be done can happen without you.

May those who are being held captive be returned to their loved ones immediately. May those hurting have a full and speedy recovery (refuah shleimah). May all those grieving be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. May the memories of those who have fallen be for a blessing that inspires us all.

May the light of the Chanukah candles bring warmth and peace to our homes and to our world.

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Savannah
JEWISH LIFE

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Savannah Jewish Life Design: Michelle Allan

The objectives of the Savannah Jewish Life Magazine are to foster a sense of community among the Jewish people of Savannah by sharing ideas, information, experiences and opinions, and to promote the agencies, projects and mission of the Savannah Jewish Federation.

Savannah Jewish Life is published quarterly four times a year, with a deadline as follows:

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Letters to the Editor

Savannah Jewish Life is a community publication. Letters should be civil and considerate in tone and not contain personal attacks, random attacks on businesses, or defamation. All statements of facts must and may be edited for length, clarity, or factual content. The opinions expressed are always the writer's. All letters must include the author's full name, address, and phone number (only your name, and if appropriate, job title and organization or business name, will be published). No more than two letters from the same author will be published within 12 consecutive months. Submit letters to savannahjewishlife@savj.org. Savannah Jewish Life retains full and sole discretion about which letters to publish.

Savannah Jewish Federation Mission Statement

Charged with raising, collecting and distributing funds, the Savannah Jewish Federation seeks to advance the welfare of the total Jewish community. The Federation strongly supports Israel and world Jewry. Additionally, the organization strives to preserve the civil, political, economic and religious rights of all Jews to develop an articulate, intelligent, and constructive Jewish community and to promote mutual understanding with the community at-large.

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

PRESENTS

*First*NIGHT *First*LIGHT KLEZMER & LATKES PARTY

Featuring members of
KLEZMER LOCAL 42

Bring the family to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah
with Klezmer music and latkes and join us for the
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Funding provided by the Wall Lynch Family

For more information, please visit
savannahmusicfestival.org

Savannah Jewish Federation 2024 Annual Campaign



You CAN help tackle the most important Jewish issues. Today. Tomorrow. Always.

*Your donation combined with gifts from others in our community,
enables you to have the kind of impact that few can have on their own –
right in Savannah, in Israel, and around the world.*

Donate or Pledge to the 2024 Annual Campaign today! Call 912-355-8111 or go to savj.org

From the Editor

The Fall issue of Savannah Jewish Life, we mistakenly credited "Savannah's Own: Leo Center." We apologize for this error, and would like to credit **Tony Center** as the author of this featured story. Our sincere apologies to Tony and the Center family, and we thank you for sharing such a great tribute to your father.



To The Editor To Hell...And Back

By Sandy Berens

We had postponed this bittersweet vacation for several years, although my BW and I knew it was one we were compelled to take while we could. This was the year.

We arrived late afternoon in Krakow, Poland via stopover in Munich, Germany...weary from overnight travel but in time for the descent down 800 steps to the depths of the awesome Wieliczka Salt Mine, where our tour group and guides convened for a welcome dinner. We were mindful that we now were within 180 miles of the Ukrainian border. Our hamstrings remained mindful of those 800 steps by barking for the next week.

Why Krakow? The answer came the following afternoon, when we were driven to the Auschwitz and Birkenau "concentration" (extermination) camps. This was a surreal experience...walking where so many innocent lives were taken. I was surprised by how substantial were the brick buildings comprising the Auschwitz "residences", but discovering the atrocities that occurred in these buildings was even more painful than we had anticipated. And then we learned that the Nazis had "perfected" their killing efficiency at the nearby massive Birkenau camp.

Unlike those poor souls, we were able to leave the camps behind and embark on 7 days of travel down the Danube River on a riverboat aptly named **Joy**. Although the ship could hold as many as 130 passengers, our group only had 32 people. Despite great variations in age, careers and countries of origin, we blended well together and emerged as a cohesive group, many of us with newfound friendships that likely will endure.

A cup of coffee in Hungary, a day in Slovakia, two days in Vienna, where we were treated to a private orchestral rehearsal as well as musical entertainment at a sumptuous palace dinner. A high-speed train took us to our final stop in Berlin.

Four days in the elegant Adlon Kempiski Hotel hard by the Bradenburg Gate. The first night dinner atop the Parliament Building was splendid, but the daily tours provided a meaningful bookend to our early visits to the extermination camps. We all gasped as we stood over the site of Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass), when Jewish properties were vandalized and many Jews were killed... likely the major opening salvo of Hitler's plan. Equally breathtaking was standing at the location of Hitler's bunker, where he and Eva Braun committed suicide. The bunker was not destroyed, but has been covered by pavement and gardens. Perhaps the most powerful visit was to a museum marking the "Topography of Terror"... the location of buildings where Hitler and his henchmen masterminded the plan for extermination of all Jews and other minorities in Europe.

Of course, we did find time for shopping.

One building in Auschwitz was labeled "The Proof". In it were thousands of personal items recovered from murdered victims, including clothing, hair, shoes, etc. I did not need the proof. Hopefully you also do not need proof of the Holocaust. But, should you have any doubts, especially with the recent dramatic worldwide rise in antisemitism, I implore you to make a similar trip.

Your Campaign Dollars At Work

This story was originally posted on adl.org.
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To understand how ADL responds when organized hate comes to town, let's take you to Georgia earlier this year. That's when at least 11 individuals affiliated with the Goyim Defense League ([GDL](#)), a loose network of people who share antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ+ and white supremacist thinking, set out on a "[Name the Nose Tour](#)" – their words – to antagonize Jewish communities in the Peach State. Their overriding goal: to turn communities against the Jewish people by spreading myths and conspiracy theories.

They distributed fliers in various city neighborhoods, blaming Jews for Covid-19, pornography, the slave trade and perceived societal woes. They gathered outside several synagogues, where they yelled slurs, insulted passersby, brandished offensive signs and waved swastika flags. They hung an anti-LGBTQ+ effigy from a street sign. And wherever they went, as they tend to do, they aimed to provoke reactions, even violence, that they could film or livestream to engage with and entertain followers and, ultimately, feed GDL's coffers.

Our Center on Extremism knew GDL was planning to swing through GA weeks in advance. We didn't know when or where, but we made efforts to give law officials a heads up in early June. When Jon Minadeo II, GDL's leader and a Florida resident, said that he was on a road trip with "a van full of Nazis" and "headed for a weekend of Jew naming," we knew what that meant.

We alerted law enforcement, outlining the group's past efforts. We sent an advisory to Jewish community leaders to educate them, provide advance notice, share tips for best practices if GDL showed up and offer our support.

Nearly a dozen ADL staff members in Georgia and elsewhere remained on-call throughout the weekend. We tuned in when reports came in of overnight fliering around Warner Robins, and were on alert when individuals demonstrated outside a synagogue in Macon. Ten of the 11 participants were known to ADL as associates of the GDL. We witnessed the swift law enforcement presence and watched in real time as county deputies arrested Minadeo for disorderly conduct and a noise ordinance violation, and then as the group dispersed. But we also knew as soon as Minadeo was released on bail the group would resume its fliering.

The following day, they showed up to heckle people who rallied outside the synagogue in support of the Jewish community. COE continued to monitor GDL's activity working closely with regional staff and law enforcement. Along the way, we fielded queries from elected officials and organizational leaders, and made sure targeted

communities knew they were not alone.

By Saturday evening, we watched GDL supporters land in Marietta in north Atlanta. There they set out to stir up reactions outside another synagogue, where dozens of peaceful counter protesters assembled across the street.

ADL doesn't always know why hate groups choose the places they target, but over this weekend we could speculate. Driving up I-75 from Florida, Macon (and nearby Warner Robins) is the first major stop. And the Marietta synagogue is right near where Leo Frank, a Jewish man, was lynched by a mob in 1915, two years after the founding of our organization. Photos GDL supporters took by Frank's memorial that night suggested their being there was no accident.

We weighed responses, crafted statements and put out social media posts to help alert the community and the public. More hateful fliers were distributed overnight in Marietta and nearby Sandy Springs. Others were reported elsewhere in Georgia on Monday, June 26, but by then the tour had petered out.

Using our expertise and knowledge, we prepared the Jewish community for what the weekend would bring. We also met with local political leaders, supported their anti-hate work and welcomed statements of solidarity with the Jewish community from valued partners, such as the Georgia NAACP. We participated in and helped facilitate unity and interfaith events planned in the aftermath, including one in Macon that drew nearly 1,000 people.

The groundswell of support for the Jewish community and relationship building, throughout the weekend and afterward, proved more powerful than the actions of GDL ever were.

As one affected rabbi put it, "We can't have our heads in the sand. We need to know what's out there. But if their intention was to make the Jewish people in my neighborhood feel more proud and more connected to their neighbors, they far surpassed their goal."

GDL, unfortunately, will not disappear overnight. But when they show up to troll our communities, as demonstrated in June, you can bet ADL will be ready.

The Anti Defamation League is a beneficiary of the Savannah Jewish Federation Annual Community Campaign. They work directly with community leaders and our Community Security Director.

2024 Annual Campaign

Linda Sacks, SJF President

The theme for campaign 5784 is **"It's moments like this."** a phrase that captures the essence of the special events in life that hold a deep significance for us as individuals, as families, and as communities. Whether joyful, poignant, or even profoundly sad, they all carve an indelible mark in our memories and on our hearts.

Your Federation campaign dollars enable so many heartwarming moments: little kids excited to receive their free PJ library books, the relief on the face of a cancer patient, who has just found out that JFS will take care of her medication and chemotherapy bill, the joy of a Friday morning Shabbat celebration at the JEA preschool with the deliciousness of challah and the beauty of Shabbat songs shared intergenerationally.

"Moments like this" also hold profound significance when they are laden with shock, sadness, and overwhelming grief. When they are moments of horror beyond human comprehension and understanding. Terrorists intentionally slaughtering innocent children, parents, grandparents. Terrorists mutilating the dead. Terrorist dragging off hostages to God knows what fate. Modern day murderous pogroms, world-wide Pro-HAMAS rallies shouting "Death to the Jews", Jewish college students afraid to walk around campus lest they be assaulted for supporting Israel's right to defend itself.

When the overwhelming darkness of adversity surrounds us, that's the time to show our fighting spirit and resilience, which has been embedded in our Jewish DNA for centuries. Our brothers and sisters in Israel are engaged in a war that is a threat to the very existence of our homeland, the very place where a Jew should feel safe.

In America and all over the world, we have come together to rally in support of Israel in Savannah, in Beaufort, and in the March on Washington where over 60,000 gathered to rally our government to continue its moral and material support for Israel, to demand release of all hostages, and to put an end to antisemitism especially on our college campuses.

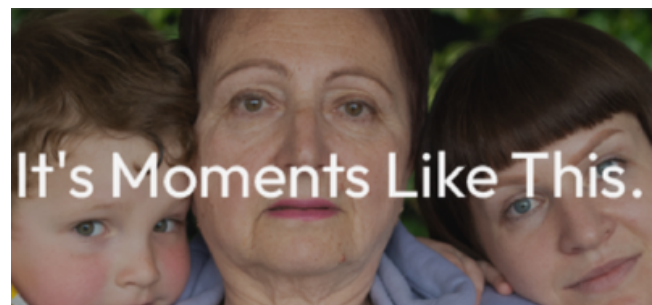
We cannot actively volunteer as civilians in Israel right now, although that may soon be a possibility. For now, our voices and our money serve as our proxy. We continue to pray to the Almighty for the safety of our

soldiers, the hostages, and Israeli civilians. And we give Tzedakah.

Your annual gift to Federation's Annual Community Campaign supports 16 overseas agencies. It's moments like this, when we should involve our family and friends in charitable endeavors. Let's bring people together for our common cause. Let's foster a sense of unity, shared purpose and collective compassion which in turn must lead to actions that can insure a brighter, safer future. What we do today can mean the difference between life and death.

The needs are enormous. If you are reading these words, you are the product of a Jewish upbringing or a conscious decision to become Jewish. Your parents, your synagogue, your Day School or your afternoon Hebrew School, your cultural exposure to Judaism and to Jewish values created in you a Jewish soul that yearns to be part of our Jewish community, and to support Israel. If we want our children and adults with a weaker Jewish background to feel the same way, we have to support our local communal institutions that welcome them and embrace them as valued members of our community, and teach them Jewish values.

We in the Diaspora need Israel and Israel needs us. Your pledge card this year has three lines. The first line is the general campaign out of which we allocate for local and overseas needs. The second line is our ongoing security campaign which, in light of world events is even more important this year than last. The Federation Board voted to have a designated third line this year for Israel Emergency Relief for funds over and above your campaign pledge. The money will be dispatched to Joint Distribution Committee and Jewish Agency For Israel, who have been addressing needs and emergencies in Israel for over 100 years. Money donated on this third line is wired to Israel 2-3 times a week.



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We need everyone's support. Every single dollar counts. The struggle we face as a Jewish nation is the most severe since the Holocaust.

When the solicitation call comes, respond as generously as you can. Respond with the strength that comes from knowing that while joyful moments create indelible memories, it is the dark moments- shocking, sad and horrific – that have the potential to create spirit-sustaining emotional and physical resilience. Our active response to them gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Your community needs you, Israel needs you NOW...

I challenge you to meet the overwhelming need and the descending darkness in a Jewish way - with positive actions that replace the darkness with light.

Am Yisrael Chai!

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

WHY THE JEWS?

Understanding the long and tragic history of antisemitism and the future of Jewish-Christian relations.

12:30-3:00pm

Deli Lunch and Lecture

with

Brendan Murphy

MARIST SCHOOL

History Teacher

Director Peace by Piece

Director Bearing Witness

Lecture begins at 1:00pm

KONTER-WEILAND COMEDY NIGHT

02.03.24

8:00PM

FEATURING

**TOM
COTTER**

**DAN
NATURMAN**



DOORS OPEN AT 7:30
DESSERT RECEPTION & OPEN BAR



TICKETS



Free for JEA members as well as contributors to the Annual Campaign with a minimum gift of \$50

Available on a first come, first served basis

Must be reserved in person at the JEA

Top Legal Dawg In South Georgia



Following her nomination by President Biden and subsequent confirmation by the United States Senate, Jill E. Steinberg was sworn in as the US Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia in February 2023. As the US Attorney Steinberg is the chief federal law enforcement officer for the Southern District of Georgia which covers 43 counties including the cities of Savannah, Augusta, Dublin, Statesboro and Brunswick.

A graduate of University of Georgia ("go Dawgs") and Duke University Law School, she began her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia, was an associate at Rogers & Hardin LLP, in Atlanta, and spent over a decade as an Assistant US Attorney and Deputy Criminal Chief in the US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia.

Savannah Jewish Life (SJL) took this opportunity to interview US Attorney Jill E. Steinberg (JS)

SJL: Can you tell us about your background and journey to becoming the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia?

JS: I grew up outside of Chicago in Northbrook, Illinois. I was a policy debater in high school, and I was recruited to debate at the University of Georgia. After graduating from Duke Law School, I relocated to Philadelphia for three years to serve as an Assistant District Attorney in the District Attorney's Office, and then returned to Georgia to work for an Atlanta law firm handling mostly complex civil litigation and securities arbitration matters. In 2008, I joined the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia where I worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and later Deputy Criminal Chief for over a decade. I also spent about two years in Washington, D.C. working for the National Security Division and serving as Associate Deputy Attorney General in the Deputy Attorney General's Office. In 2021, I joined Ballard Spahr as a partner, and fully intended to have a long career there, but received a call that ultimately changed my life and brought me here to the Southern District of Georgia.

SJL: How has your Jewish heritage influenced your approach to the law and your role?

JS: I'm not sure I can articulate this better than the Attorney General. In early October, he was asked why he pursued a career in law and public service. He answered that it was largely inspired by his family's partial escape from Europe during the holocaust. Partial because some of his family members lost their lives. For those who came to the United States, this country protected them, allowed them to practice their religion, and fully participate in American democracy. Whether you have this personal experience or are simply educated about our history, we know individuals with Jewish heritage have often been subject to prejudice and persecution. Sadly, I'm not optimistic that this will change, as fueling hate can be an effective tool for some individuals to seek to advance their causes or

enhance their political power. One of the protections that we and other affected groups have is the rule of law. The rule of law ensures that all persons, institutions, and entities are accountable to public laws that are equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with international human rights principles. All of us benefit from the rule of law as it protects us from unrestrained and unequal exercises of power. This system separates us in this country from many others in the world who do not have it, and sadly it's something we often taken for granted.

SJL: Can you share a memorable or impactful case that you've been involved with?

JS: That's a tough question because we handle so many types of cases and they all can be (and should be) impactful if we're doing it right. But I've spent many years working on cases involving the exploitation and trafficking of children. The offenders in this area often have multiple victims, many of whom never come forward, and if they're not stopped will likely continue to victimize others. I have incredible respect for the victims of these offenses who have suffered unspeakable harm but participate in a process that even at its best can further traumatize them. When I witness that courage, it pushes me to work harder and be better because it doesn't compare with what these children and young adults have endured and will continue to struggle with through the remainder of their lives.

SJL: The concept of justice is central to both the legal system and many religious traditions. How do you personally define justice, and how do you work to uphold it in your role?

JS: Justice is an incredibly important concept, indeed it's in our name, but a difficult one to define. In the criminal justice space, there are procedural and substantive components. Procedurally the way we apply the ideals of justice is to ensure our actions are consistent with the law, fair, equally applied, and

transparent. Substantively, concepts of justice help us decide who to charge, what to charge, and that we seek a penalty that is consistent among similarly situated individuals and reasonable and proportionate to the harm caused. It means bringing cases civilly where appropriate and resolving our defensive civil cases fairly. Justice means making things right when we do something incorrectly and taking responsibility for our actions as we hold others accountable for their actions.

SJL: Can you discuss any initiatives or projects that the Department of Justice has advanced to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion?

JS: The Department of Justice and our office more specifically are committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). The Department developed a DEIA Strategic Plan that sets forth a road map to advance DEIA across Department components. The plan aligns with the Department's strategic plan, prioritizes key areas, and establishes a set of data-driven strategies. Our office has its own DEIA committee that will identify, inform, and address the emerging DEIA needs and priorities within the office.

SJL: What are some of the most pressing legal issues or challenges that society faces today, and how do you see the legal system addressing them?

JS: I am concerned about the lack of institutional trust. Last year, Gallup reported new lows in confidence for all three branches of the federal government; the public's view of other institutions including the criminal justice system and the media were at their lowest points in over 30 years. Regimes that rule by force or coercion don't rely on building or maintaining trust, but a democratic form of government like ours needs some level of acceptance and support for our institutions and the laws by which we regulate behavior. Confidence in our institutions allows for more civil and respectful conversations about a common vision for the future and implementing positive change. I treat every interaction I have with others as an opportunity to demonstrate the integrity of our office and the judicial system to the parties, victims, witnesses, and members of the public.

SJL: Are there any specific values or principles from Judaism that you find particularly relevant to your work in the legal system?

JS: I remember during Passover every year hearing about the Jews' exodus from Egypt. As a child sitting at the seder table, I was very impatient and wanted to get to the eating part as quickly as possible. But some

concepts managed their way into my head. I perceived that the ceremony was not just to teach us our history, but to instruct us to put ourselves back in that place and time and imagine it's you enslaved in Egypt. Perhaps asking us every year to try to feel that injustice moves some of us to roles that attempt to make our world a better and more just place for everyone.

SJL: How has the legal landscape evolved during your career and what changes do you anticipate in the future?

JS: The impact of new technology on how we work is by far the most significant change in the way we practice law. And I expect additional changes in technology (e.g., artificial intelligence) will continue to have substantial impact on the practice of law. At the most fundamental level, it has changed the positions we need to fill and the responsibilities of those individuals in law offices. It floods us with emails and other data but allows for flexibility that wasn't possible in the past. I don't remember anyone using the word "telework" when I started practicing law and when I started my first law job, we barely used email. Technology has also had an enormous impact on the volume of discovery that needs to be collected, reviewed, and produced in all our cases: criminal and civil. Addressing the impact of new means of communications on discovery practices and adopting modern tools to collect, review, and produce discovery is one of my priorities and a priority for the Justice Department nationwide.

SJL: Can you share any personal anecdotes or experiences that have had a significant impact on your career or perspective as the US Attorney?

JS: It was a misdemeanor case early in my career that had an outsized impact on me. On its face it appeared to be a dispute between neighbors that normally would go uncharged. But I decided to dig further and determined that the to-be defendant was engaged in a systematic campaign to terrorize one of her neighbors. I think the judge and my colleagues were puzzled about why I was giving this case so much attention when we had hundreds of cases, most of which involved serious felonies and acts of violence like armed robberies and drug trafficking. But I knew that I could really help the victim and other families who lived in this neighborhood. They were so thankful because someone cared to take the time to listen and advocate for them. The big wins matter as do the cases that draw public attention. But I treasure the everyday, mostly unknown moments and knowing we can and do have a positive impact on the communities we serve.

SJF Honors Backpack Buddies

Conceived in the Berens' living room over a Mickve Israel Summer Shabbat, Backpack Buddies, known also as Norm's Backpack Buddies, has a very lofty mission-to end childhood hunger. Julie Hirsch's discussion on a congregational social action program became the beginning of a program that provides nutritious meals for the weekend to students facing food insecurity in the Savannah community. Backpack Buddies provided the first 25 of thousands of weekend meals to students on November 18, 2008.

As the program became more known, the donations began to roll in, many of which were allocated to other congregations to begin their own programs, like Agudath Achim in 2010.

Children that are served by the Backpack Buddies program are identified as recipients of free or reduced lunch, and many fall in the 97%-98% poverty level.

Not only does Backpack Buddies provide meals, but they also host drives to meet additional needs like socks, underwear, warm clothing, coats and belts.

Before Norm Hirsch's passing in 2017, Norman name sure every public school in Chatham County has a connection to a Backpack Buddies Program, and at the time of his death, over 30 different sites provided food to over 1300 children each week.

The Savannah Jewish Federation's President's Award was presented to **Marcia Berens and Cathy Rosman of Mickve Israel and Stephen and Annette Friedman of Agudah Achim** for their tireless efforts and dedication to Backpack Buddies.



Marcia Berens, SJF President Linda Sacks, Annette Friedman & Stephen Friedman

Coming Soon

Janet Langhart Cohen's



Anne & Emmett is an imaginary conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till, both victims of racial intolerance and hatred. Frank is the 13-year-old Jewish girl whose Diary provided a gripping perspective of the Holocaust. Till is the 14-year old African-American boy whose brutal murder in Mississippi sparked the Modern American Civil Rights Movement.

The one-act play opens with the two teenagers meeting in Memory, a place that isolates them from the cruelty they experienced during their lives.

The beyond-the-grave encounter draws the startling similarities between the two youths' harrowing experiences at the hands of societies that couldn't protect them.

- Multiple production dates and locations starting late February and running through mid March
- For sponsorship and hosting opportunities, contact Michelle Allan- Programming@savj.org

Home and Personal Safety During The Holidays

Brett Butler, Security Director



Traveling over the holidays is a cherished tradition for many, but it's essential to prioritize home and personal safety during this festive season. Whether you're leaving your home unattended or welcoming guests, there are various precautions you should take to ensure a safe and stress-free holiday season.

First and foremost, securing your home is of paramount importance. Before embarking on your journey, double-check that all doors and windows are locked. Invest in a reliable home security system, which can provide peace of mind through surveillance and alarm features. Ensure that both inside and outside lights are on timers to give your home a lived-in look. Inform a trusted neighbor or friend about your travel plans so that they can keep an eye on your property and pick up any mail or packages, so as not to have mail/boxes pile up.

In addition to securing your home, fire safety should be a top priority. Make sure smoke detectors are operational and replace the batteries if necessary. A good rule of thumb is to replace all smoke/Co2 and carbon monoxide batteries when the clocks are changed in the fall and the spring. Consider investing in smart home technology that allows you to monitor and control your home remotely. These devices can provide alerts for smoke, carbon monoxide, and other hazards.

Furthermore, when it comes to traveling, personal safety is equally important. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Carry your purse close to your body and put your wallet in an inside pocket or front pants pocket. If you're driving, ensure your vehicle is in good condition, including tires, brakes, and fluid levels. Pack an emergency kit with essentials such as a Stop the Bleed kit, blankets, flashlight, and non-perishable food and water. Always have a charged cell phone with you, and if possible, share your travel itinerary with a family member or friend.

If your holiday journey involves air travel, it's crucial to prioritize safety measures. Pay attention to your surroundings, always keep your belongings secure and your carry-on bags with you. Be cautious of scams or suspicious activities or persons who approach you unsolicited.

Hotels play a significant role in holiday travel safety. Research your accommodation in advance to ensure it meets your safety standards. Check for reviews, and, if possible, choose reputable hotels or rentals with good security features. Be mindful of your surroundings when staying in unfamiliar places, and always lock your doors and windows when inside. Many police departments have webpages that allow you to check crime statistics in the area you will be staying in.

It's essential to be cautious about your personal information while traveling. Avoid sharing your precise location on social media and be wary of public Wi-Fi networks, which can be less secure. Use a virtual private network (VPN) to protect your online activities. Safeguard your identification documents, such as passports and driver's licenses, and keep backups in a secure location.

During your holiday travels be mindful of local customs and laws. Respect the culture and traditions of the places you visit, and research any specific safety concerns or health advisories in advance. Staying informed about your destination is a proactive way to ensure your well-being.

In conclusion, home safety and traveling over the holidays are intertwined aspects of a successful and enjoyable festive season. Prioritizing home security measures before you leave is crucial to protect your property, while personal safety precautions during your journey help safeguard you and your loved ones. By planning and taking these steps, you can reduce risks and ensure a safe and happy holiday season, creating lasting memories without unnecessary worries.

Back To The Beginning

By Susan Eller

I'm the daughter of two immigrants – both of my parents grew up in Poland. In the mid/late 1960s, the communist government in Poland forced thousands of Jews to leave the country in an anti-Semitic purge. As a result, my parents, just shy of 20 years old, moved to America. And in 1979, our family moved to Savannah.



When we arrived in Savannah, it was extremely important to my parents that our family find and join a Reform Synagogue. So, we joined Congregation Mickve Israel. We attended services, and my sister and I were expected to attend Sunday School as well as Hebrew School. Admittedly, there was nothing I enjoyed about these activities (except the grape juice served in little paper cups after services). Sitting through Shabbat and holiday services felt like the worst kind of torture. Because of this, I turned away from organized religion when I left to attend college and begin my adult life. I attended occasional Bar Mitzvahs and Shabbat services over the years in Atlanta, but never felt compelled to join a Synagogue.

Fast forward a few decades, a couple of kids, a few houses and one divorce. My kids grew up and flew the nest - and I felt an urgent desire to return to Savannah to begin a new life chapter.

When I returned to Savannah in 2022 after over 30 years away, it felt familiar, but also totally new. Savannah in the 1980s looked very different than it does today. There were not many fancy restaurants or trendy shops, and the downtown area was pretty run down. But that's all changed. The city has undergone a major transformation in recent years, thanks in no small part to an infusion of cash from SCAD, and it's now a thriving tourist destination and a wonderful, culturally diverse place to live.

I didn't process it at the time, but I was also being drawn back to Judaism. Not for the services or for the traditions, but more for camaraderie and friendship with other Jewish women. Like so many others, I discovered that my Jewish identity lives in my heart, not in the sanctuary. This is one of the things that makes Judaism such a rich and diverse faith. There's no one right way to be Jewish and each person's journey is unique. So, 34 years later, I re-joined Congregation Mickve Israel. You won't see me fighting for a seat during high holidays though – I still don't love services. However, if they still serve the same grape juice, I may reconsider.

Turns out, I'm also pretty good at Mah Jongg. Makes perfect sense. I'm a middle-aged Jewish woman. I've been told it's in my DNA. (Back in the 19th century, Mah Jongg was a Chinese parlor game – it became a favorite pastime for middle-aged Jewish women in the 1920s. In 1937, a group of Jewish women formed the National Mah Jongg League)

So, there you have it. I'm a text-book stereotype of a middle-aged Jewish woman: good at Mah Jongg, has a bad stomach, is always cold, and has mastered the art of the guilt trip. But I wouldn't have it any other way. Being a middle-aged Jewish woman in Savannah is a gift, and I'm immensely grateful for it.

Susan Eller earned a Journalism degree from the University of Georgia, and in 2013 became a certified Life Coach. She specializes in helping women navigate challenging life transitions. She lives and works in midtown Savannah. Contact Susan: susanellerlifecoach@gmail.com



SCAN HERE
FOR TICKETS



Moving Forward And Standing Strong On Savannah Hadassah Heels

Building purpose and momentum after the pandemic, Savannah Hadassah has come back strong and emboldened by our successful fall Hadassah Heels Kick-off, our Hadassah Heals emergency fundraising effort, and our future plans which include advocacy, education, health and leadership events.

What started as a fun local meet-and-greet for Savannah Hadassah to start the year, (featuring a corny shoe theme and lots of "soleful" puns), quickly became a metaphor that moved from how we protect and support our heels to how we protect and support Hadassah Heals—the Heal Israel Now crisis initiative.

These targeted funds provide advanced medical treatment to hundreds of traumatic injury patients, secure staff (as many of the medical team members were called to active duty), and prepare for immediate building alterations to keep staff and victims safe during active bombings at the tertiary care regional trauma center hospital in Ein Kerem and the top-tier special needs medical center at Mt. Scopus.

The kick-off, at the lovely home of Michelle Cohen, helped dispel some of the helplessness we were experiencing as we watched the war unfold in Israel. But together with Hadassah, we are 300,000 strong women, in 700 chapters, in 50 states. We discussed how we can march together and stand stronger to make a difference as the boots-on-the-ground right here at home.

Besides a Hadassah film, with remarks from past regional president Joanna Rich, former chapter president Phillipa "Bunny" Montag surprised her daughter-in-law, Michelle Cohen, with a Hadassah life membership—our first for this new year! Want to join or renew? Annual membership is \$36, lifetime membership is \$250 and male associates are \$250. Everything is online and easy. You can even gift a membership! Go to [Hadassah.org](https://www.hadassah.org) and click on Become a Member.

The website is full of resources. For example, you can register for At War: Heal Israel Now informative and inspirational zoom briefings at 11:30am each Thursday which include interviews with doctors, hospital staff, and victims, as well as progress reports on improvements to the hospital to handle these new unique challenges. Rhoda Smolow, National Hadassah President, was among the first guest speakers as she was in Israel when the October 7th attacks occurred, and spoke of her visits with victims and their families brought to Hadassah.

Locally, we shifted our focus from fun to philanthropy, as members were issued a Hadassah Helping Hands and Heels challenge. Every \$50 online donation to Hadassah's Heal Israel Now fund (to mark the 50 years since the Yom Kippur War), entitled the donor to a raffle ticket for a spa treatment from Deloris Screen-Daniels of Facials by Deloris located at the JEA. The drawing, which raised over \$1,200.00 in two weeks, took place on November 2 – Balfour Declaration Day—when in 1917 the UK and the world stated by decree that Jews had a right to a national homeland in our historic land of Israel. Mazel tov the winner, Mary Jane Clements.



On The Personal Side

Mazel Tov To

Yuval & Michelle Bartal on the birth of their baby girl,
Sophie Belle Bartal

Avi & Ruchama Nitekman on the Bas Mitzvah of their
daughter, Racheli

Yitzie & DeeDee Rabhan on the Bas Mitzvah of their
daughter, Rikki

TELL US YOUR

good news

CELEBRATING A SIGNIFICANT
EVENT, SIMCHA, BIRTHDAY OR
ANNIVERSARY?

SUBMIT TO
SAVANNAHJEWISHLIFE@SAVJ.ORG

Community
CALENDAR

Stay up to date on all
events in the Savannah
Jewish community
WWW.SAVJ.ORG

JEA Children's Department Winter Programs

WINTER DAYS AT THE J

WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT, CAMP IS IN!



DEC 18-22 & 26-29

JAN 2, 3 & 5

FEB 16 & 19

4 YEARS OLD - 8TH GRADE

Kids' Night Out

Parents enjoy a night OFF
while your child enjoys a night OUT!

Dec 2: Hide and Seek

Jan 20: Lego of my Eggo

Feb 3: Manhunt

Mar 2: Dive-In Movie

Mar 23: Nacho Average Game Night

Apr 13: Munchkin Masterpiece

May 4: Nerf Wars

Open to all kids age 4 - 5th grade

www.savannahjea.org



Obituaries

through 10/31/23

Gregory Martin Hirsch

Who died Thursday, August 3, 2023

He is survived by his wife, Judith Duwell Hirsh; son Jonathan Hirsch; daughters Lena Hirsch, Sarah Hirsch (Brian) Meyer; granddaughter, Bailey Meyer; mother, Marcia Hirsch; sister Susan (Michael Goldstein) Hirsch and loving cousins, aunts, brothers-in-law, nieces, and nephews.

Donations: Congregation B'nai Brith Jacob, Rambam Day School, Duke ALS Clinic at Duke University or I Am ALS.

Adrienne Goldberg

Who died Friday, August 11, 2023.

She is survived by her sister, Marlene Kimmelman, her son, Ryan (Wendy) Goldberg; and her grandsons, Jack and Alex Goldberg.

Jack Leander Karesh

Who died Friday, August 11, 2023.

He is survived by his daughters Michelle (Jerry) Brody and Amy (Victor) Fishman; grandchildren, Nathan, Jason, Shannon, Rose, and Abby; and his great-grandchildren Xander, Isla, Maddox, and Morgan. He is preceded in death by his loving wife, Harriet, after sharing 48 years together.

Donations: Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob, Chabad of Savannah, or Hospice Savannah.

Gary Weil

Who died Saturday, August 12, 2023

Harvey Kanter

Who died Tuesday, August 22, 2023

He is survived by his sister, Regina Kanter Plateck, a great nephew, Allen Plateck.

Donations: The Humane Society and St. Jude.

Julio Velez

Who died Monday, August 28, 2023

He is survived by his siblings, Carolina (Robert) Spiegel, Peggy (Louis) Vargas, Elliot (Jenny) Velez, and Judith Damian; and many loving friends and family.

Donations: The charity of your choice.

Virginia "Ginger" Weil Caplan

Who died Sunday, September 17, 2023.

She is survived by her devoted and loving husband, Dr. Gerald Caplan, by her children Joel and Leslie, her grandchildren Derek Caplan, Roxanne Caplan, and Lily Martin, and by her 6 great grandchildren Tyler, Brooks, Josie (her namesake), Charlie, Penny, and most recently Jonah.

Julius Edel

Who died Friday, September 22, 2023

He was predeceased by Danyse, son Kenneth, and sisters Helen Udell and Virginia Rothbaum. He is survived by daughter Cathy (Philip) Solomons, granddaughters Delia (Adam Shapiro) Solomons, Danyse (Matt) Cail, Claire (Paul) Musial and Lauren (Christopher) Gaspard, as well as eight great-grandchildren and many devoted nieces and nephews.

Donations: The charity of your choice.

Bernard Mayer Portman

Who died Sunday, October 15, 2023

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Rosalind K Portman, daughter Becky (David Wolf) Portman, step-daughter, Stacy Sullivan, two granddaughters, Janna Sullivan and Leah Wolf, and his sister, Ann Strother.

Donations: Savannah Jewish Federation (on behalf of Israel) or to Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob.

George Hite Shriver, Jr.

Who died Friday, October 27, 2023

He is survived by his wife Cathy Shriver; two daughters, Rebecca Davis and Bonnie (Richard) Spiers; grandson, Matthew Spiers, and stepchildren, Jeffrey (Katarina) Young and Deborah (Sean Werley) Young; and two step grandchildren, Austin and Eliot Werley.

Donations: Cathryn Barnett Shriver Nursing Scholarship, GSU, PO Box 8053, Statesboro, GA 30460.

WELCOME TO THE



John Allen & Leah Pollack

Yuval & Michelle Bartal

William & Elizabeth Bass

Bridges Brantley & Kateleen Swaney

David Bulman & Kimberly McCarthy

Bradley Cherney

Stewart Dohrman & Mary Landers

Dominic Gonzalez & Maygan Palacios

James Groman & Liz Martin

Kyle & Kelley Hagemes

Adrian Hill & Isabel Guzman

William Howard

Lauren Kenard

Victor & Nicole Maog

Christopher Olivares-Jamie & Janea Keith

Wayne Shebilske & Joan Page

Joseph & Lauren Slyadon

Virginia Tyree

Jason Warner & Dominica Baird

Robert Williams

Colleen Willoughby

Andy Yanchunis & Rebecca Wolf

Roi Zaken & Einadis Kasa

Stuart & Janna Zonder

**Check out some of the
amazing new classes
at the Alliance**

**Circl Mobility
Boxing w Jacob
SEAT**



**Our Winter Season
for Swim Team is
now open!**

**Come swim with the JEA
Jellyfish today!**

**Scan below for more info
and registration**



Community Corner

We sat down with Carolina Braunschwig, an educator, Savannah transplant, and recent graduate of Yesod's Cohort III to discuss a new initiative she created.



Project TOV is a new, community-wide initiative.

It is a Jewish organization for civic engagement through education, volunteering, fund-raising and deliberate acts of kindness.

Tell me more!

Deliberate acts of kindness is where we plan to start.

We have two projects in the works: a mid-year school supply drive and the creation of a boutique filled with (totally free!) prom dresses.

Our goal is to strengthen ties both within the Jewish community and with our neighbors, and also to understand how service is fundamental to Jewish life.

In order to do that, our religious leaders have agreed to host a series of guided conversations that tackle issues like what it means to be a Jew in a secular world, tikkun olam and tzedakah. Rabbi Zalman and Zelly Refson led the first Sunday Supper at Chabad in November. The next Sunday Supper is on the calendar for January.

How is Project TOV different?

This is a Jewish project. Rather than working in the community as individuals who happen to be Jewish, we are working in the community as Jews, inspired by our belief in tikkun olam and tzedakah. This is a project for all of us-- the religious, the unaffiliated, the young, the old, anyone.

Why is this project important, especially when there's so much else to worry about right now?

At lunchtime in the school cafeteria a few weeks ago, the four seventh graders sitting next to me were playing: shouting Heil Hitler alongside the Nazi salute. I don't believe these are young Nazis in training, but the wave of antisemitism is hard to ignore.

I believe it's essential for us to engage with our neighbors as Jews so that we can communicate who we are and what it is that we stand for.

Jewish values, Jewish ideas, Jewish culture and Jewish history have profoundly shaped who I am, who I surround myself with, how I spend my time. Participating in a project like this is how I choose to practice my Judaism. It's a sentiment I hope more of us can tap into to create a successful foundation for Project TOV.

How can I get involved?

There's so much to do!

First, we're working with Young Jewish Savannah on a Hanukkah bake sale to benefit the Federation's Campaign for Israel. We'll need help baking and packaging on Wednesday, December 6th.

As for the school supply drive, our goal is to distribute all the essentials-- paper, pencils, erasers-- to 300 Chatham County students in February. We'll begin collecting supplies in January.

But the biggest project of them all is a pop-up prom boutique. Everything inside the store-- dresses, shoes and accessories-- will be free! Beginning in January, we'll need help collecting and sorting dresses, designing and building the boutique, and in April, volunteer stylists who can make anyone who walks through the door feel beautiful.

Stay tuned for more information.

In the meantime, please contact me directly at carolinab@gmail.com. We'll be posting our calendar of events and more detail on our SJF web page and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectTOVSavannah>.



Thursdays at 12:30 PM Jewish Educational Alliance

Join for a delicious meal, meeting
new & old friends, and an engaging speaker.



All meals are served with a
salad, vegetable and dessert

12/07 **Suzanna Eibuszyc**
Author of Memory Is Our Home- Holocaust and WWII Memories

12/14 **Linda Sacks**
Keeping It Together- Part 3

12/21 **Lisa Bodziner**
Repair The World

12/28 **Adam Solender**
End Of The Year Review

01/04 **Corporal Holmick & Captain Few**
Community Policing & Crime Stats from the Savannah Police Dept.

01/11 **Tara Setter & Mickie McNamara**
Savannah Book Festival

01/18 **Nicole Rich**
Gamble Funeral Services

01/25 **Tu BShvat Celebration!**

02/01 **Jennifer Ratner & Catcombe**
Alzheimer's Association

02/08 **Joel Bitterman**
Julius Rosenwald, Businessman/Philanthropist

02/15 **Peach Hubbard**
The Dolphin Project

02/22 **Gene Dobbs Bradford**
Savannah Music Festival

02/29 **Melinda Hofstetter**
Seymour Hofstetter, February Art Gallery

**Reservations are required by the
Tuesday before by calling 912-355-8111**



Savannah Jewish Cultural Arts and Jewish Film Festival presents:

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST

Opening Night Reception

FILM: Bella + Panel Discussion

presented by Hadassah, 7pm

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND

"Genes Day"

Savannah Music Festival's

Gene Dobbs Bradford, 12:30pm

&

FILM: Remembering Gene Wilder, 7pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

FILM: The Catskills, 7pm

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH

Lunch + Lecture with Brendan Murphy,
Director of The Peace by Piece Organization

For more information, visit savj.org

Or Katan, Or Eitan

Eva Locker, Principal



A famous Hebrew Hanukka song describes the lights of the menorah as “each one is a small light (Or katan), but all of them together is a powerful one (Or eitan).”; Like the menorah, we are about to light; Like Shalom School students who often come together as one bright light through the year: Tsedaka, achievements, mitzvah projects... At a time when world problems are so many and so complex, each of us is only one out of nearly 8 billion human beings. It feels like a grain of salt in the ocean, making it difficult to see the potential power of our actions.

Very often in life, the reason why we don't do more is not because we don't care but because we are overwhelmed, we think that whatever we can do doesn't make a difference, so why bother? Why extend our arm?

Seventy-six years ago, 33 countries chose to extend their arm, literally and figuratively, and voted yes to the creation of the State of Israel; today, Israel needs the support of all of us, young and old, Jews and non-Jews alike.

In our classrooms, we teach Tikkun Olam, “Repairing the World”: We practice one mitzvah at a time, and we learn how each one of us, even the youngest ones, can make our world a better place. So many organizations and individuals have stepped up offering us options to help. Donations, prayers, posting facts on social media, or making a phone call to a friend in Israel are just a few examples. There are many ways to support Israel through those dark days. Let us do our best and extend our arm and act, one deed at a time. Despite our fragilities and seeming insignificance, let's remember that when working together, we can make changes, make things better and bring back the light.

Wishing you a Hanukkah filled with peace ... and lights.



**Find your next read, connect with your community,
and discover all your library has to offer at liveoakpl.org**

Join us at Southwest Chatham Library for a family event recognizing Tu B'Shvat in partnership with the Savannah Jewish Federation and Savannah Tree Foundation on January 26th at 11 AM.



We Stand With Israel



Vandana & Noah Abrams-Berta Adams-Jane Anderson-Sherry Belford-Efrayim Ben-Avraham-Victoria Bender-Karen Blickstein -Catherine Calmels & Yair Melamud-Scott Cohen-H. Clark Deriso-Rebecca Doty-Tiffany & Michael Drabek-Sharon & George Durrell-Michael Eckout-Yael Elfassy & Brad Conner-Donna Epstein-Charles Evans-Tommy Ewaldsen-Irene Feddern-Lauren & Adam Fins-Troy Foskey, Jr.-Baoyi Huang & Michael Mikulec-Kathleen & Jeffrey Ignatoff -Servon Jackson-Susan Jaffie-Mary Johnson Annette & Stephen Friedman-Carolyn Fullen-Bob Friedman & Vernon Mosheim-Adelle Burns-Geffen & Theodore Geffen-Marla & Morris Geffen Foundation-Connie & Thomas Glaser-Doris & Arnie Goldstein Sarah & Jerald Gottlieb-Jeanette Green-Carol & Joel Greenberg-Sally & Steve Greenberg

Mickie Griffith & Jay Bishko-Marina Grinberg-Lydia & Edward Harris Peggy & Stanley Harris-Toby Hollenberg-Lawrence Katz-Brenda Kenworthy Jan Kirk-Dawn Lausmeier-Flo Knudsen-LeeAnn & Jeff Kole-Barbara Kooden Melanie Krapf-Wall-Sheryl & Gustave Kreh-Kulbersh Family Fund-Christopher Lane- Andrea & Tony Lembeck-Dayle & Aaron Levy Pamela & Marek Lewanda-Patricia Long-Janna Martin & Stan Friedman James Moher-Melissa & Jeffrey Neil-Jody New

Photos by Rich Burkhart



We Stand With Israel



In memory of Greg Hirsch-In memory of Laura Lynn Miller
Harriet & Paul Kulbersh
In honor of IDF Soldiers
Rob Henderson (Southside Baptist)
In memory of Jeff Nagelberg
Cathy & Danny Nagelberg- Harriet & Paul Kulbersh
In memory of Doris & Basil Lukin
Steven Zahn
In memory of Julius Edel-In memory of Corrine Richman
Arlene & Allan Ratner
In memory of Philip Schwartz
Arlene & Allan Ratner- Laurie & Jeff Rubnitz
In honor of Adam Solender
Sandra & Lewis Schneider

In memory of Buddy Portman

Marcia & Sandy Berens- Miriam DeYoung
Ginny Donaldson & Sherry Donaldson Stafford
Arlene & Allan Ratner- Laurie & Jeff Rubnitz
Thomas Strickland- Haskell & Dale Toporek
Linda & Michael Zoller

Delores Page-Joan Page & Wayne Shebilske-Terri & Barry Parker- Riette Pollack-
Myra & Jerry Portman-Cathy Reiman-Harriet Rosen-Amy & David Rosenthal-
Nancy & Sanford Rosenthal-Deganit & Jesse Ruben-Linda & Stephen Sacks-Leslie & Alan Seidman-Sandra
& Marcus Seligman-Rebecca & James Sentman-Domenick Serra-Elise & Victor Shernoff-
Vicki & Lawrence Silverman- Jacqueline & Charles Sitrin-Heidi Stokes-Barbara & Alan Tanenbaum-
Mark Vogelhut-Susan & Joel Weiner- Leslie Westmoreland-Peggy & Harold Yellin-Ida & Warren Zeger



Rambam Day School

Ester Rabhan, Principal



What's on everyone's minds is the situation taking place in our holy land, Eretz Yisroel. While we have continued with school as usual, we have curtailed any additional celebratory events. Also, our students in first through eighth grade have been saying Tehillim (Psalms) daily. Kindergarten through eighth have begun saying Shema Yisroel at 1:00PM, which is 8:00PM in Israel, when all soldiers able to participate join in with this worldwide commitment. We want our students to participate as much as possible in anything that reaches out to our brethren in Eretz Yisroel. We have been careful to scrutinize what is communicated in school so as not to frighten our students and to be respectful and sensitive to families who have family members in Israel, whether participating in the army or as a student.

First through eighth grade wrote letters to the soldiers and included a dollar bill with each letter. The dollar is for tzedakah. There is a custom when one is travelling to give them what we call money for **shaliach mitzva**. This means you give them tzedakah and ask them to give it to tzedakah when they arrive at their destination. The idea is you have made them a messenger for a mitzva in the hope Hashem will keep them safe to perform the mitzva on your behalf.

Enclosed in each student's note was attached a dollar bill with the following note: *Dear חילים, (soldiers), Enclosed in this letter is \$1 from the student who wrote you this note. They want you to keep this \$1 with you and give it to tzedakah on their behalf and yours, when you return safely from fighting on behalf of our holy land, ארץ ישראל. Be strong חזק ואמץ - and the nation of Israel shall live!! עם ישראל חי !!!!*

We also had each student bring in \$5 (parents could give more if they wanted) and Rambam sponsored 36 pairs of tzitzis to be given out to soldiers. We received notice that soldiers want tzitzis, and we wanted to be part of this effort. We gave out buttons on the same day we collected money. The buttons were the Israeli and American flags merged.

We also had the opportunity to assist a family who was visiting for Succot and was not able to return to Israel right away. Their son came to Rambam for a few days.

May our prayers and the prayers of our children pierce the Heavens and Shalom be showered everywhere.

From A Parent's Perspective

Abbey Naspinski



When my husband, Zack, and I were scouting for childcare, we knew it was a decision we needed to approach with our gut. Our vision was clear: we wanted school to feel like a home away from home for our toddler but as first-time parents, we weren't sure what we should be looking for. When we toured JEA preschool, we were immediately impressed by their professionalism, cleanliness, and safety measures, but what struck us were the words of kindness on the walls, the tender way teachers guided children, and the programs built to engage and nurture students. Everyone seemed happy to be there - staff and children alike. Our gut told us that our son would be looked after with care and respect within those walls.

Furthermore, the sense of community at JEA Preschool Savannah drew us in. I grew up hearing, "It takes a village to raise a child." Today, if parents want a village, they have to seek it out. We heard from many parents who had sent their children to both JEA Preschool Savannah and summer camp that it was a place where they found meaningful connection. A sense of community simply creates a richer and more meaningful everyday life and is essential for the home away from home environment we envisioned. I wanted to be an active participant in the village I was hoping to take part in and this led me to gladly step into a leadership role within the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). I can say with confidence that I never saw myself as a PTO mom but fostering community is a two-way street! The connections made with other parents and the opportunity to celebrate teachers and staff are a total bonus.

Choosing JEA Preschool Savannah was a decision rooted in intuition and fortified by a sense of belonging and purpose. It is a place where our son is growing and learning with a sense of community and belonging that will shape his formative years.



Abbey and family

Mah Jongg and More

Robin Rackoff



It started with a necklace. I took my seat in the theatre an hour before the movie began. The young woman seated in front of me turned around, and I smiled at her. She asked, "What's that pendant you're wearing?" I answered, "Have you ever heard of Mah Jongg? This necklace was made from a tile, a one bam." She told me that her grandma used to play Mah Jongg in Brooklyn many years ago. And we were off and running. We talked for that whole hour before the lights went down, with topics ranging from parents and grandparents, husbands, kids, careers, where we had lived, and on and on.

Even though we had a 40-year age gap, there was no pause in the conversation. How often does that happen? All the time! I'm not so politically incorrect as to say it's a woman thing, but if my husband were with me, he'd have been rolling his eyes. I've met wonderful people in unexpected places: the doctor's waiting room (with a two-hour wait, I was happy for the distraction), the nail salon, and anywhere I go with my dog. We sometimes get into serious life issues. My father, on the other hand, played pool with Fred for ten years. One day, I said, "Dad, what's Fred's last name? Does he have a wife and children?" To that, my dad replied, "How should I know? We're there to play pool, not discuss our families."



At my Mah Jongg game, no topic is off-limits. Fortunately, there is enough talking time while we're mixing the tiles and building the walls so that we're ready to concentrate when the playing starts. Now that we've all gotten a little older, it sometimes takes the four of us to finish a thought. I might say, "I went to that store on Victory. You know the one," and my friends will say, "Whole Foods?" "Target?" "Home Depot?" until we've come up with the answer. It takes a village to finish a thought. And what a great village it is. Until next time, let's Maj On!



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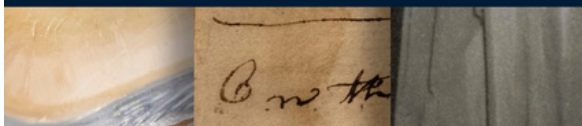
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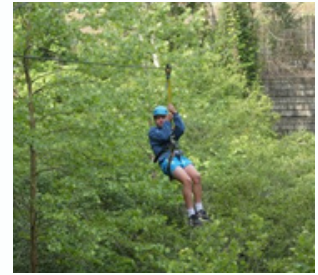
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Our Camp Stories

William Berman

I want to thank the Savannah Jewish Federation for the scholarship I was awarded to attend Camp Judaea (CJ) in North Carolina this summer. CJ was one of the best experiences of my life, if not the best. It helped me dig my feet deeper into Judaism as well as make some great new friends that share my religion. The ability to meet new people and having amazing Jewish experiences, was more than I could have asked for. I was able to gain so much knowledge that I never would've thought I needed.



I had so many Jewish experiences that I never knew were so important for me to have. From the small things like daily services to things like Shabbat and Havdalah, it was truly amazing. Shabbat was a whole experience itself. For starters everyone had to dress in nice, all white clothes. It made the event look like a casual wedding. We wore white to symbolize Shabbat and make it different from every other day of week. Kiddush was another one of these events that I enjoyed each week. We would all huddle up around a table outside the Chadar (Cafeteria) and sing the prayers. Afterwards, everyone would start rushing in to grab the small amount of grape juice and bread that was laid out. It was super chaotic but a very fun camp family experience. These events helped me discover part of my identity and who I am as Jewish person.

At camp, I made new friends and was reunited with some old ones. I was able to spend time with my life long friend, Chloe Steinert. I met people from not only the US but all around the world, including Brazil, Puerto Rico, England, and Israel. I met so many different kinds of Jews it was kind of overwhelming, but so great at the same time. I had never seen so many Jews in my life before, as all of my experiences have been here in Savannah. At first I was shy and not outgoing, but eventually I came out of my shell and made some friends. I connected so well with people in my Eda (age group) that I am planning on going to Tel Yehuda this upcoming summer. Tel Yehuda is in New York but it is vastly bigger than my camp with many regional CJ campers coming together in one location. I know I will make many new friends and gain so much more knowledge and expand my Judaism.

I want to thank the Federation one last time for giving me a scholarship to spend my summer in such a great place as Camp Judaea. From dancing to singing to sports to just hanging out, it was truly and honestly the best experience I could have asked for. I love Camp Judaea and all the friends I made along the way this summer! I wish I had gotten this opportunity sooner but the memories I made will forever be with me.

Joey Heilbrun

Camp Barney Medintz will always be my home. The place where I can fully be myself and never feel judged, the place that I make and strengthen lifelong friendships each year, and of course the place where I experience the most magical month of the year. Camp will forever be my summer place and a piece of my heart. My unit becomes my family and my cabin becomes my home. Every year the memories we share make us much closer and help us form lifelong relationships with each other.

Whether we're in the pool, at horseback, singing at Shabbat, or even just going over our highs and lows during circle time, we're all able to form a bond and connect with one another in a special way that couldn't occur anywhere else. I love being able to watch how I progress each summer at camp as a Jew, friend, athlete, and overall person. Being able to say I'm part of the amazing camp Barney community has been my biggest privilege in life. Living my summers through camp since I was eight and growing with all my best friends has been and will continue to be crucial in who I am and who I'm becoming.



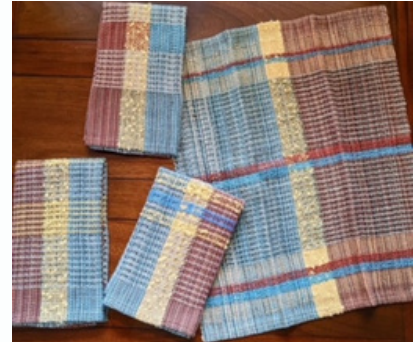
Will is the son of Kasey and Daniel Berman and Joey is the daughter of Michele Heilbrun. They both attended camp with the assistance of a Jewish Youth Summer Experience grant from the Savannah Jewish Federation made possible by your generosity during the annual Community Campaign. For more information on Jewish camping, see the website of the Foundation for Jewish Camp, www.jewishcamp.org.

Montag Art Gallery: Artist Spotlight

December: The Fiber Guild of the Savannahs

December 1-31, Opening Reception December 3rd, 2-4pm

The Fiber Guild of the Savannahs is a group of fiber artists who meet regularly (via Zoom meetings at the moment) to share inspiration and techniques using a wide variety of fiber-related arts. Spinning, weaving, dyeing, quilting, knitting, basketry, rug making, paper manipulation, needle felting, and crocheting are just some of the crafts our members explore. We have a strong sense of community service and volunteerism. Our members demonstrate traditional pioneer crafts to children and families at the annual festivals at Oatland Island Wildlife Center. All persons—beginners, amateurs and professional fiber artists, are all welcome to join the guild.



January: Reflections of Mother & Me:

Acrylics by Jane Rosenblum & Watercolors by Lee Ann Morse

January 1-31, Opening Reception October 5th, 5-7pm



Jane Rosenblum is the daughter of the late Irma and Harry Ginsberg of Savannah. A graduate of the University of Miami, Jane had a fulfilling career in technical writing and editing. Jane married and raised three children in Arlington, Virginia and began painting upon the untimely death of her young son Jonathan. Jane's paintings have been included in various exhibitions and sold to private collectors.

Lee Ann Morse grew up in Arlington, Virginia where her father was a government lawyer and her mother was a technical editor and artist. Lee Ann attended the University of Virginia and had a long career in high tech branding and marketing. Lee Ann has three artistic daughters and lived in Jerusalem for 15 years. She enjoys many creative pursuits including jewelry design, mosaic design, and experimenting with watercolors.



February: Portraits of West Africa—Revival of a National Exhibition

February 1-29, Opening Reception February 8th, 5-7pm



In the summer of 1976, Seymour Hofstetter, along with 20 other northern Ohio teachers selected by the American Forum for International Study, participated in a six-week program of African studies. The U.S. Department of Education sponsored the mission under a Hays-Fulbright grant.

Hofstetter, a World War II U.S. Coast Guard combat photographer who became a special education teacher in the Cleveland public schools, served as the study mission's official photojournalist. The group visited five West African countries. Seymour Hofstetter took more than 1,000 color slides during the trip. Approximately 70 were selected for the original traveling exhibition that ran from 1977 to 1979.

Seymour's daughter, Melinda, sorted and selected many of the remarkable photographs

that will be showcased at the JEA. "He brought a very real sensitivity to people that is clearly revealed in his portraits. This came, I think, through an understanding learned by having taught disabled children in downtown Cleveland's elementary and high schools. He once said he won the confidence of his subjects through, 'smiling, meaning well, and kindness.' "I decided to revive my father's show after almost 50 years because the pictures are too remarkable to be put away forever. I believe anyone who sees them will agree."

Are you an artist? Would you like to show your work in the JEA Art Gallery? Having a show at the JEA is a great way to have your work seen and to help your community. Please contact Vicky@savj.org to inquire about available months for your show!

B'nai Brith Jacob Synagogue

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FALL / WINTER

A look back at what we've done...

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Jewnity Events
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Brotherhood Rum Tasting Dinner
Neszy Succos Cookout
Young Adults Succos Party
Challah Bake
Shabbos Project Block Parties
Shabbos Project Communal Luncheon
Brotherhood Tequila Tasting Dinner
Weekly Communal Prayers for Israel
Youth Letter Writing for IDF Soldiers
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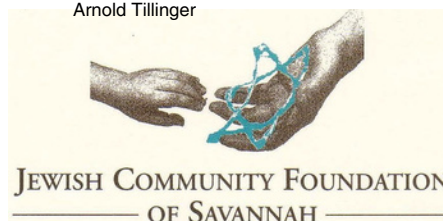
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