

Savannah JEWISH LIFE

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Savannah Jewish Life
5111 Abercorn Street
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Together for Passover.

As families and communities gather around the Seder table to share stories and pass down heritage, Publix celebrates the traditions that bring everyone together.

Savor your Seder at publix.com/passover.

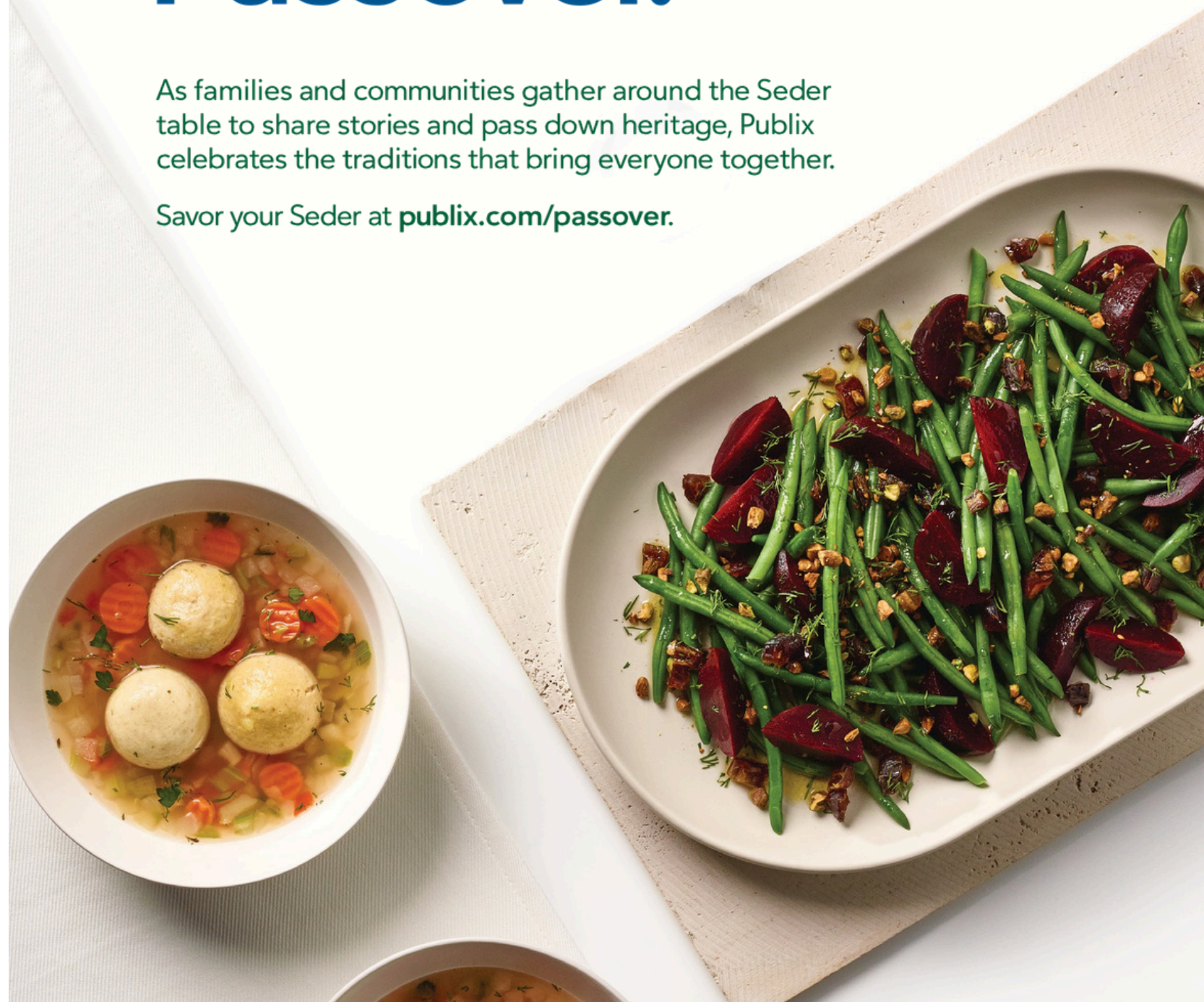


Table of Contents



04

**Shalom
Savannah**
Sam Friedman, CEO

07

**Why
Community
Centers Still
Matter**

08

**Community
Crossword**



11

**Security
Quarterly**

14

**A Jewish Girl
In Shanghai**



13

**JEA
Preschool**

20

**Montag Art
Gallery**

27

**Bedikat
HaMayim**

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**Savannah
JEWISH LIFE**

SJF President: Matthew Allan
SJF President-Elect: Mark Konter
SJF CEO: Sam Friedman
Savannah Jewish Life Editor: 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.

Shalom Savannah

Sam Friedman, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

I have a confession: when I first moved here and people told me that everyone in town knows the JEA and the Savannah Jewish Federation, I was intimidated. I worried that wherever I went, people would meet me with preconceived ideas about who we are and what we do.

And I was right because they do. But I was wrong to be intimidated, because it's actually one of the greatest perks of this job.

I get to hear the most wonderful stories from people all over town when they learn what I do. It's both fascinating and deeply inspiring to see how our agencies have touched so many families across our community.

Recently, I was invited to a neighborhood poker game. A few of us were new, so we started with the usual small talk. A few hands in, the gentleman across from me—covered in tattoos and, as I later learned, a retired Black Hawk helicopter pilot—shared that his daughter loved the JEA. She had come here for school and still talks about her experience.

Another player said his daughter learned to swim here. Another said his kids came for camp ("Is DJ still there? He's the best."). Still another shared that his wife cried after Anne and Emmett. And everyone seemed to agree that the Jewish Food Festival is something special. (Side note: I know it's not technically our program, but I think we can all agree it's a top-tier Savannah tradition and absolutely worth bragging about.)

The stories just kept coming.

None of these gentlemen were Jewish.

None of their children were Jewish.

And yet, all of them spoke with genuine affection for the JEA and the Federation, and all felt strongly about how important these institutions are to our city.

These organizations have real impact.

At the JCC Association Professional Conference this past fall, Barak Hermann, CEO of JCCA, said that no one does community relations better than JCCs. Every day, JCCs around the world open their doors to non-Jewish members for fitness, childcare, and camp. With every interaction, we build bridges, find allies, and help fight antisemitism.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the difficult news of the day. As I write this, details are still emerging about the arson attack at Beth Israel Congregation in Mississippi. But it is just as important, and just as true, to be inspired by the work we do every single day.

So thank you for joining me in the sacred work of building community. And thank you for helping make Savannah a better home for us all.



Mazel Tov
to our
GRADUATES!
**SAVANNAH JEWISH LIFE WANTS TO
CELEBRATE YOU IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!**

Please Submit By May 1st

NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

Jack Malitz & Miriam Slotin

Levy Memorial Concert

featuring

Savannah Voice Festival

Sunday

May 3, 2026

Jewish Educational Alliance

3:00pm

Doors open at 2:30pm

DESSERT RECEPTION

FREE ADMISSION



WELCOME TO THE



Dan O' Brian
Josh Maul
Brianna & Emmanuel Rosa
Sandra Schumer
Marilyn & Harry Sherman
Mandy Lane
Lysbeth & Bruce Moore
Sarah & Aviran Ivgi
Diana Levison & Paul Kelly
Deborah Blum-Shore & Peter Shore
Michael Kent

Kathryn & Harry Edgemon
Stephanie Critchfield
Megan & Jonathan Erwin
Sarah & Joshua Peacock
Theresa & Tony Grohovsky
Rosemary & Guido Perez
Breanna Mitchell & Thomas Jones
James Maury & Daniel Snyder
Patrick McCreary
Tyrone Spann

Richard Thompson
Patricia Jackson
Gabriela Nuno & Roberto Hernandez
Julia Keating & Chris Reardon
Alice & Meir Elfassy
Aimee & Steven Woodin
Caitlin & Michael Burnwinkel
Shirley Sessions
Matthew Sutton
Marlene Warnecke
Marie Eve Paquette & Maimillien Bordeleau

Please join us for **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

MARCH 5

**Fusing Fashion and Flowers:
An Enchanting Experience**

MARCH 12

**Dror Israel: Educating for
a Just and Equal Society**

MARCH 19

Film For Thought

MARCH 26

**Secrets to Getting the Most
of Your Sedar Experience**

APRIL 2 & APRIL 9

**NO FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Chag Pesach Semeach!**

APRIL 16

**Navigating
Caregiver Burnout**

APRIL 23

**AdviseWell:
Medicare Fraud**

APRIL 30

Partnership2Gether

MAY 7

**Finding My Jewish Roots:
8 Days in Poland**

MAY 14

**Sinai and Statehood:
Celebrating Shavuot and
the Founding of Israel**

MAY 21

**NO FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Chag Sameach!**

MAY 28

Summer Trivia

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conversations with friends,
and an engaging speaker.

All meals are served with
salad, vegetable and dessert

**Reservations are required
by Tuesday of every week.
Call 912-355-8111 to RSVP!**

Why Community Centers Still Matter in 2026

Kirby Edmunds, Senior Director of Operations



In a world where so much of our connection happens through screens, it's fair to ask: do community centers still matter, and why?

In 2026, the answer is a resounding yes, and perhaps more than ever.

Community centers like the JEA are no longer defined by walls, schedules, or single-purpose programming. They have evolved into living, breathing hubs that bring people together across generations, interests, and stages of life. They are places where relationships are formed organically, where Jewish values are lived daily, and where belonging is not assumed—it is actively created.

At its core, the JEA is a connector. It connects families to one another during swim lessons and youth sports, young adults through social and wellness programs, and seniors through fitness, arts, and shared routines that provide both structure and community. It connects individuals who may come for one reason—exercise, childcare, a class—and stay because they feel seen and welcomed.

What makes community centers especially relevant today is their ability to meet people where they are. Modern Jewish life looks different than it did even a decade ago. Families are busier, schedules are fuller, and pathways into Jewish engagement are more diverse. The JEA provides accessible entry points into community life—whether that's through a drop-in fitness class, a kids' enrichment program, a cultural event, or a family program that welcomes both members and guests.

Community centers also serve as intergenerational bridges. On any given day at the JEA, a toddler might be splashing in swim lessons while a grandparent finishes a water aerobics class in the same pool. Teens develop leadership skills through leadership program at camp, or through BBYO while adults find wellness, friendship, and balance. These shared spaces create something increasingly rare: natural, everyday interactions across generations.

Beyond programming, the JEA plays a vital role in fostering Jewish values in action. Concepts like *kehillah* (community), *guf bari* (caring for the body), and *hachnasat orchim* (welcoming others) are not abstract ideas, they are experienced daily through inclusive policies, open doors, and intentional program design. The JEA is a place where Jewish life is lived not only in celebration, but in routine.

Perhaps most importantly, community centers offer something that cannot be replicated online: presence. Being in the same space, sharing experiences, exchanging smiles, and forming relationships without an algorithm guiding the interaction. In a time when loneliness and disconnection are growing concerns, community centers provide consistency, familiarity, and human connection.

In 2026, the JEA stands as more than a destination, it is a foundation. A place where Jewish life is strengthened through movement, creativity, learning, and gathering. A place that supports not just individual wellness, but communal resilience.

Community centers still matter because people still matter. And as long as there is a need for connection, belonging, and shared purpose, the JEA will continue to be not just a building but a vital connector for Jewish life in Savannah.

Spring

DAYS AT THE J

WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT, CAMP IS IN!

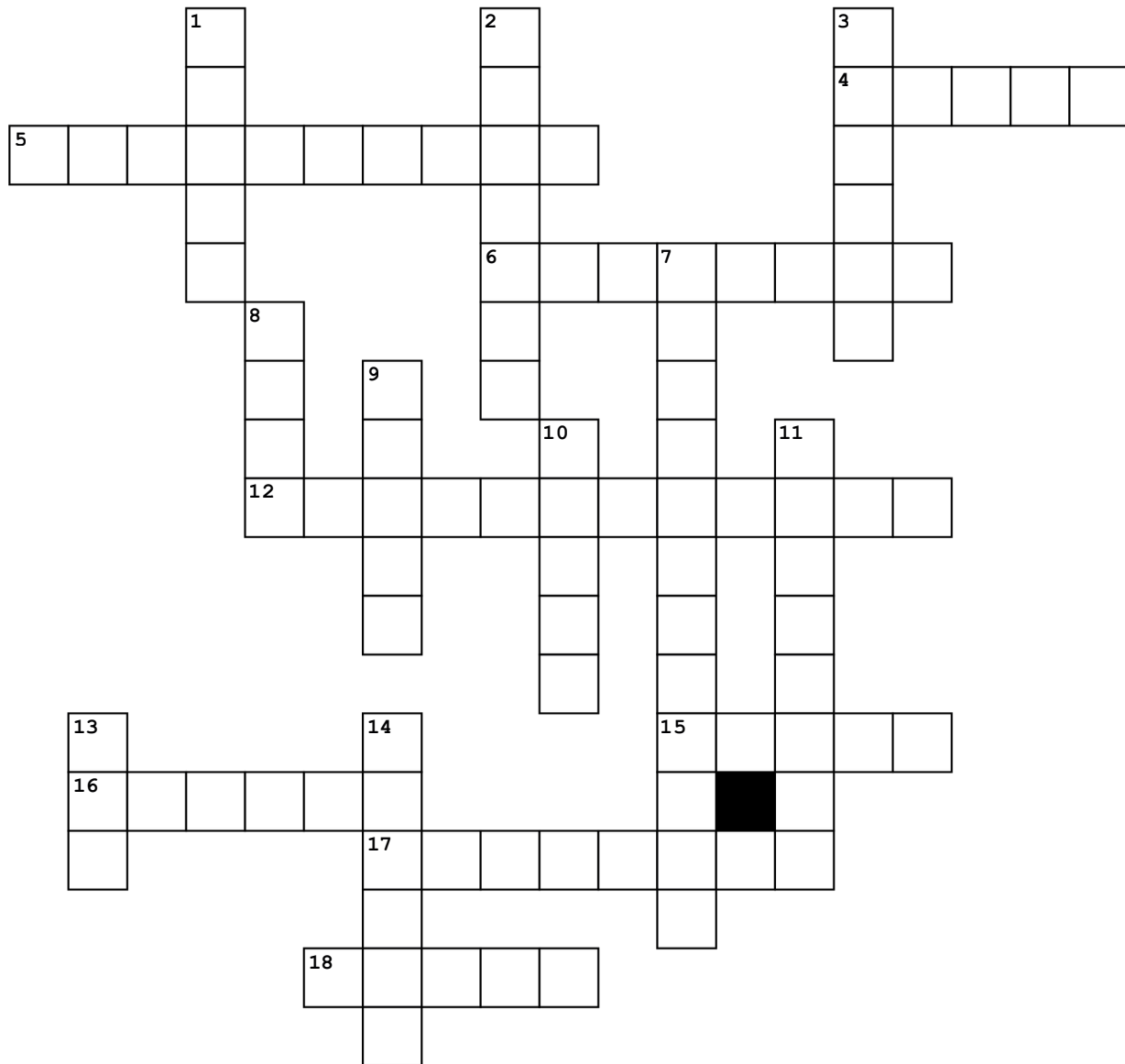
March 16-20, 30 & 31
April 1, 3 and 6

4 YEARS OLD - 8TH GRADE

WWW.SAVANNAHJEA.ORG

The graphic features a blue background with pink starburst decorations. A circular inset shows a group of children in a camp setting. The text is in various fonts and colors, including white, pink, and red.

Community Crossword



Down

Across

4. Congregation Agudath _____ is recognized as the first Conservative congregation in Georgia.
5. Bedikat HaMayim 2026 will happen on this beach!
6. Food for Thought occurs this day of the week
12. Oldest congregation in Savannah.
15. The Levy Concert is on May _____.
16. First word of JEA
17. 5111 _____ Street
18. Hebrew for 'doves' and the name of 3 JEA Preschool Classrooms (A,B and C)
1. The JEA has a zero _____ pool.
2. Chabad is located at 2424 _____ Street.
3. Unleavened bread mixed and baked in 18 minutes eaten on Passover.
7. JEA Camp Savannah _____ is now open!
8. The JEA offers this type of lesson year-round.
9. Congregation B'nai B'rith was established in 1861.
10. First name of the author of the article 'A Jewish Girl in Shanghai'.
11. SJF has an annual _____ to raise funds to support Jewish life locally and abroad.
13. Abbreviation for Savannah Jewish Federation
14. Multi-meaning Hebrew word

SAVANNAH COMMUNITY
Yom HaShoah
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE



Sunday
April 12

3:00pm

JEA Large Auditorium

READING OF THE NAMES

8:00AM- 8:00PM

TUESDAY, APRIL 14TH

SIGN UP HERE



OR VISIT SAVJ.ORG

JEA Camp Savannah R.O.C.K.S!

June 1-5: Going Global

June 8-12: Mythical Mayhem

June 15-19: Claws, Paws & Jaws

June 22-June 26: Color Wars

June 29-July 3: Adventure Awaits

July 6-July 10: The Sweet Escape

July 13-17: H2 Woah!

July 20-24: Level Up

July 27-July 31: Show Up and Glow Up



Mini/Specialty Camps:

- Pokemon Academy
- Pokemon Masters
- Day Trekkers
- Day Trekkers Unleashed
- Artrageous Adventures
- Chess Wizards



Security Quarterly

Richard Ray

Springtime is just around the corner, and before we know it, school will be out for the summer. This time of year also marks the start of family vacation planning. As you prepare for your next trip, taking time to plan ahead can make all the difference in ensuring a smooth, safe, and enjoyable experience.



Before you travel, be sure to consider the following essentials:

- **Medications:** Pack all required medications and, if flying, keep them in your carry-on luggage.
- **Important Documents:** Make photocopies of key documents such as passports and driver's licenses, and store them separately from the originals.
- **Luggage Tracking:** Place a tracking device in your luggage in case it is lost or stolen.
- **Home Preparations:** Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to collect mail and packages, set interior lights on timers to give your home the appearance of being occupied, and set your alarms.

Safety and security are especially important when traveling, particularly internationally. Traveling abroad requires advanced preparation to reduce risk and avoid unexpected challenges. Research your destination in advance to understand local laws, customs, and cultural norms.

Prior to departure, visit the U.S. Department of State website to review current travel advisory levels for any international destinations. It is also important to identify the location of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. In the event of an emergency while abroad, these facilities can provide critical assistance and, if necessary, a safe place to seek help.

When traveling, it's important to utilize situational awareness, recognize potential hazards, and pay close attention to exits in case of an emergency. Keep valuables on your person, secure purses close to your body, and store wallets in your front pocket. While at the airport, remember that only airline personnel should handle your bags, and avoid overly helpful offers for assistance from non-airline personnel. To protect your personal data, use a virtual private network (VPN) and avoid using public WiFi.

The topics outlined here represent only a few of the many considerations involved in safe travel. I encourage you to review SCN's Travel Safety Checklist and participate in SCN's Traveler Safety training before traveling.

Please contact me for information on upcoming training opportunities.

Report An Incident



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Return of the JEWDi MARCH 15 2:00pm JEA Large Auditorium

Sponsored by
Savannah Jewish Federation

New to Savannah? Looking for Your Jewish Community?

Whether you're new to Savannah or have been here for years, Young Jewish Savannah is a place to connect, make friends, and feel at home in the Jewish community.



Connect with us!

Instagram: @youngjewishsavannah Email: yjs@savj.org

Can't Stop The Music

AmiciMusic, the award-winning new chamber music organization in Savannah, returns to the Jewish Educational Alliance on Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 with a fascinating sequel to their "JEWISH JAZZ" program from last year.

This year's concert, entitled "RETURN of the JEWDI" again features the wonderful Seth Kibel from Baltimore on clarinet alongside Artistic Director and pianist Daniel Weiser. Be intrigued and entertained as they make more exciting connections between American Jazz and Klezmer-influenced music with works by Jacob Weinberg, Benny Goodman, Bela Kovacs, Lev Kogan, as well as a fantastic arrangement of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

Kibel is a phenomenal talent who has been voted best musician in the Baltimore/DC area for several years and has performed with several top bands in Klezmer, Jazz, Swing, and more. Both Kibel and Weiser are avid educators who teach numerous continuing education courses. This performance will highlight the wonderful confluence of musical styles that occurred in the early years of the 20th century, especially in New York City when Eastern European Jews began pouring into the city at the same time as the Great Migration of African-Americans from the South.

As Klezmer mixed with Ragtime, a new sound---Jazz---began to flourish and take the country by storm.

You won't want to miss this toe-tapping show!



From The Director's Desk

Amy Blechman, ECE Director



Spring is a very busy time at the JEA Preschool of Savannah. It's that time of year when I walk into the classrooms and think, "these children are grown so much this year!" How quickly a year in a preschool goes!

We are already looking towards summer and fall as we have begun registration for both camp and next school year. Anyone interested in joining our preschool family should reach out and schedule a tour via phone, email or the website.



In the beginning of February, when the country was learning that Puxatawney Phil saw his shadow predicting more winter, we were celebrating Tu B'Shvat and the birthday of the trees. The children delighted in getting their hands dirty planting seeds to grow grass "hair" on the creatures they created. We had a special service in the morning and sang "Happy Birthday" to the trees and decorated our beloved oak tree on our playground. Children also enjoyed a special fruit snack to help them learn about the seven species named in the Torah.

Purim is a favorite celebration with young children because it uses costumes, music, and noise to teach them about one of the bible's most loved heroines, Queen Ester. The children's creative and imaginative skills are actively engaged as they participate in the storytelling using puppets, songs, dressing up, and lots of noise. It's a perfect hands-on way to teach children about community, courage, and being proud of their Jewish identity.

We have also started a mystery reader program in some of our classrooms. The children love to have family and friends show up to read a book and participate in their education. The positive impacts on a child's development are far reaching, but it also strengthens the parent-child bonds. A school is more successful when families share in the classroom activities and learning.

Our parent teacher organization (PTO) is working hard planning our annual fundraiser, the Art Bash. This year's event will be on May 19 from 3:30 -6:00 pm, and will be a parent and child evening celebrating the children's art and successes this year.

The theme is Once Upon A Gala.

The event will include an art reception followed by dinner and dancing. There will also be a silent auction for which we are seeking donations. Our PTO leadership has decided that proceeds from the event will help fund an awning for a covered play area as well as support several family events next year, including Fall Fest and the Book Fair kick off event, Rock N' Read. We encourage participation and attendance from our community.

Please reach out if you'd like more information.



Mah Jongg And More

Robin Rackoff



My family celebrates multiple New Years. There's the classic January 1st (Gregorian calendar), the Jewish New Year in the fall, and in February, the Lunar — or Chinese — New Year. This year, we celebrated with the Chinese side of our family, saying goodbye to the Year of the Snake and hello to the Horse. Next year is the Goat, and honestly, I think the Horse people got the better deal — no one dreams of being the Greatest of All Goats.

We were supposed to be getting ready for the New Year dinner, but instead of forks, chopsticks, and plates, the table was covered with craks, bams, and dots. Yes — Mah Jongg tiles. But not my Mah Jongg tiles. This was a Chinese Mahjong set, which, it turns out, is very different from my American one.

Ever since our Jewish daughter married their Chinese son, his mother and I had been planning for this moment — the day we'd finally sit down together at the Mah Jongg table. Two cultures, one game. Our shared granddaughter, a perfect blend of both worlds, was born to be a natural at every version.

While Mahjong (their spelling) originated in China, Mah Jongg (ours) became beloved in Jewish communities across America in the 1930s. But that night, we weren't thinking about history — the stakes were much higher. The loser had to do the dishes, and I had no intention of it being me.

I'd been told the Chinese version was much easier. "It's just like rummy," they said. Don't believe them. There are no racks, no cards, and the numbers on the flowers actually mean something! I kept mixing up the craks, unable to tell one from another. Still, we laughed our way through the evening. My smile lasted all night — even as I stood at the sink, scrubbing every pot, pan, and dish.

Mah Jongg is more than a game. It's a bridge between cultures, and a tie that binds. Until next time, let's Maj on!

My Camp Experience

William Berman



Hello, my name is Will Berman, and this summer I was able to attend Camp Tel Yehudah in Barryville, New York, with the help of the Savannah Jewish Federation.

I have been going to camp for the past three years, and it means the world to me. I have formed bonds that will last a lifetime, all while deepening my connection to my Jewish roots and having the time of my life. This summer, I was able to make an impact in the fight against anti-semitism that seems to keep getting worse and worse.

Through Camp Tel Yehudah, I visited the capital, Washington D.C., and met with representatives of the US Senate. Our goal was to help urge the passage of a bill proposed to combat antisemitism, and I was able to advocate by sharing my own experiences.

We spoke with representatives in Senator Jon Ossoff's office during our time in the capital. Although the meeting was short, it was impactful. I was able to work with my friends and peers as a team to create the strongest case possible to convince them that this bill was of utmost importance. In my eyes, we succeeded.

This year at camp, I made so many more new friends, and I am planning on returning to Camp Judaea in Hendersonville, North Carolina, to work as a counselor this summer. Afterwards, I will be experiencing Israel for the first time in my life on Camp Judaea's Geshet program and I am beyond excited. Camp is truly what I look forward to all year, so I want to just say thank you so much for blessing me with all of these wonderful opportunities!





PAPA'S

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– Wes Putman, Owner of Papa's BBQ & Seafood on Whitemarsh Island



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David Finn AZA Advisor
Will Goldberg
Wexler Clark BBG Advisor
Jami Ostrow



Have questions? Email the advisors!
savbbyo@gmail.com



A Jewish Girl in Shanghai

Kedma Cantor



I have never enjoyed traveling.

When I was 18 years old I went on a school trip to Russia for three weeks and when I returned home, I decided I had my fill of traveling for the rest of my life. There was nothing I could eat there, I am a fussy vegetarian and at the time

being vegetarian wasn't cool, especially in Russia I didn't understand the language, I got lost in Red Square, flew on planes that had minimal pressurization, and was forced to dance with a large Ukrainian man who did not mind stepping on my feet. There was no need to see any more of the world.

Ten years later, my husband, our new baby, and I traveled to Israel for a year in Jerusalem as part of my husband's studies. If you haven't traveled with a screaming 4-month-old on a plane for eleven hours you haven't lived.

Once again, I was traveling to a place with strange food, a new language and a new culture. I had worked with Israelis so I thought I knew what Israel would be like. I was wrong. But that is for another article.

I was reminded of that promise to myself, and if I survived that year, I vowed I would avoid traveling forever.

Thirty years, four more children, multiple moves, and more trips across the US than I can count, I was a different person. I was stronger, and much more stubborn. I discovered that I craved independence and a challenge. I decided I was going to travel to Nepal. That mystical place of mountains and magic. It was far away and a once in a lifetime trip. A place different part of the world, and perhaps get rid of my wanderlust.

As we all know, "Mann tracht, un Gott lacht", that so oft true Yiddish adage meaning, "man makes plans, and God laughs." Despite our most careful planning, the road of life is unpredictable. And for me the kink in my plan was COVID19. It was still inexpensive to stay in Kathmandu and see the mountains, but the price of the flight after the pandemic had doubled, putting my plans in question.

Undeterred, I rejigged my plans and discovered I could afford a trip halfway to Nepal, and get as far as Shanghai, China. This was a problem. My parents, children, and husband thought I was crazy and I would surely be kidnapped, detained by the government, or killed if I went to China by myself. I considered a group tour, but tours

were never my thing. While other people are happy to follow the guide and silently listen, I always have questions, and I want to know everything. And for some crazy reason people find that irksome. So, I was going to go to China, alone.

Shanghai

As a Jewish educator I like to believe everything has a Jewish element. So I set about finding out if Shanghai had anything Jewish about it. I was amazed to learn that there have been Jews living in China since the 8th century.

Who would have thought that China would have a single Jew? Today there are thought to be less than 2000 Jews in Shanghai. I personally only met 20 of them at a Chabad Shabbat service, of which only one family was Han Chinese, and the rest were transplants who had chosen Shanghai as their home. Pre-pandemic there had been over 4000 Jews living there. Which is amazing considering Judaism is not a publicly recognized religion in China.

There once was a time, however, when the city of Shanghai had



26,000-30,000 Jews, six synagogues, a free loan society, Jewish boy scout and girl guide groups, twelve Jewish publications, two Jewish day schools, kosher butchers, numerous cafes and multiple theatres.

In the 1800s there were a handful of successful Jewish families who had moved from Iraq and Russia. They Russians became wealthy by running the Shanghai port facilities, hotels, and warehouses. The Baghdadi families sold cotton, silk, opium and real estate.

At the time of the first World War, Shanghai had around 1500 Jews from Bagdad and Cairo. There were approximately 3500 Russian Jews fleeing pogroms, the majority of which were poor and had risked everything to get to Shanghai. They were able to fit into the Shanghai Jewish society with the help of the established Jewish families, and they built the first Ashkenazi Synagogue, Ohel Moshe in 1927, which continues to be one of two existing shuls still standing today.

Things were never easy for Jews in Shanghai, however August 13 1936 to November 26, 1937, the Japanese started the capture of Shanghai resulting in damage in the Jewish quarter and even deaths in the community. It was a challenging time for the Shanghailanders but the Jewish community continued to thrive despite the struggles.



Jews had been leaving Europe since the Nazis gained power, however Kristallnacht made it clear that the Jews had to escape to survive. To leave, they had to provide proof of emigration, usually an exit visa from a foreign nation. This was difficult, however, because at the 1938 Évian Conference, 31 countries (including Canada, the US, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand) refused to accept Jewish immigrants.

Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of the Treasury under President Jimmy Carter, had this to say about the choices refugees faced:

"It was sort of a hierarchy of things. If you went to the United States, that was a good thing. If you went to England that was a good thing. If you went to another European country, it was fine, to Holland, to France, all that was good. If you went to New Zealand and to Australia and then to Canada, that was good.... There were countries that were considered to be not so okay, Paraguay and Bolivia...where a European wouldn't be happy. Dominican Republic, Panama, certain Central American countries were considered to be semi-desperation countries you went to. And the worst place was Shanghai."

During the Second World War, while most countries had restricted entry for Jews, Shanghai had an open port and did not require visas for refugees escaping the Nazis until 1938. Many Jews went to Shanghai only after being rejected from Canada, the US, and British Palestine. While Shanghai would allow everyone entry, Polish Jews could not leave without an exit visa. Against orders, the Japanese Consul, Chiune Sugihara issued more than 4000 exit visas allowing many in the Polish-Lithuanian Jewish community to travel to Shanghai.



Chiune Sempo

In 1938, motivated by humanitarianism, Dr. Fengshan Ho, Consul General of the Republic of China in Vienna, issued more than four thousand Chinese visas to Vienna Jews, enabling them to travel by boat from Italy or overland via the Soviet Union to Shanghai.



Ho Feng-Shan

Ho started to issue transit visas to Shanghai, while it was under Japanese occupation and among those saved in the Shanghai Ghetto were leaders and students of Mir yeshiva and Tomchei Tmimim.

While life was harsh for many refugees, the Jews were treated well by the Chinese people and contributed to Chinese society.

Things became more difficult when the Japanese forced the 18,000 "stateless" Jews (who had come to China during the war) to live in a one mile square Ghetto in 1943. When the war was over in 1945 most Jews moved to Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia or returned to Europe. By 1950 there were few left in Shanghai.

Shangai Refugee Museum

In 2007 a beautiful modern museum dedicated to the Shanghaileander Jewish community located next to the Ohel Moshe synagogue, the building was renovated when the government built the museum.

When I went into the small Ashkenazi shul, Ohel Moshe, it was already full of two dozen Chinese men and women, listening to a speaker on the bimah.

I asked my guide what was going on. She replied that all school children and members of the Communist Party were required to attend the museum and learn about the contribution of the Jews to Shanghai and Chinese community. This shocked me. We don't even require American politicians and school kids to study the contribution of Jews, and we've had a much bigger effect on the US.

The synagogue is not used for services anymore, however, there have been special celebrations held for relatives of the Shanghai Jews.

Photos of bar mitzvahs and a wedding adorn the outside walls.



There is a statue with a list of the names of the Jewish families who moved to Shanghai as refugees. It serves as a reminder of both the resilience of those Jews and the kindness of the Chinese people who accepted us into their city.



Across from the museum is the Baima (White Horse) café which was once owned by Jews. This was where the Jewish men would gather to have coffee and discuss important matters.



We walked by the abandoned apartment buildings that the Jews were forced to live in by the Japanese. The city currently has plans to convert them into modern housing maintaining the architecture and the memory of the Jews who lived there. A mile from the buildings of the is the Huoshan or “Jewish park” which served as a central gathering spot for Jews and was part of the “ghetto”.

The Chinese version of dreidel – reflects the miracle of Hanukkah and the miracle of 30,000 the Jews who survived because of Shanghai.



Kedma Cantor is a Jewish educator who has taught all ages, infant to 98, and believes that everyone should learn one thing and teach one thing a day. She married her best friend and they have 4 beautiful children together. She likes to cook, sew, and do Jewish. Kedma loves to learn about dinosaurs, read and write ghost stories, and watch Star Trek. She has traveled to China twice on purpose and been to India and Thailand accidentally. Even though she has been in Savannah more than 8 months, she still gets lost going to Kroger, a mile from her home. She sees it as an opportunity for adventure every day.



PJ Library & PJ OUR WAY.



Chanukah with PJ

Upcoming Events

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

**PJ AND SHALOM SCHOOL
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
10AM JEA**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

**YOM HA'ATZMAUT
CELEBRATION
4PM JEA**

SUNDAY, MAY 3

**HONORING OUR PARENTS
3PM JEA**

SUNDAY, MAY 31

**POOL PARTY
3PM JEA**

PJ Library is for Children birth to 8 years old being raised in a Jewish home, residing in the Savannah area.
Parents can register their children for PJ Library at

PJLibrary.org

Families with children ages 9 to 12 years old can register for PJ Our Way at

PJOurWay.org.

Thanks to our generous local donors, PJ Library® is free for those who qualify for the program, which grants one subscription per child.

The subscription is renewable annually for qualifying Savannah families.

Need more information? Email PJLibrary@savj.org.

From Savannah Frost to the Seder Table: Lessons in Renewal and Connection

Eva Locker, Director



As a Jewish educator, I often turn to the rhythm of our calendar for direction. Our holidays are not only markers of time; they are guiding us toward growth, reflection, and renewal. As we approach Passover, that guidance feels especially meaningful, and a little complex.

Spring, after all, is the season of *hitchadshut*, renewal. It invites us to emerge from dormancy and step forward to grow. Yet for those of us living in the Diaspora, the spiritual season does not always match what we see outside our windows. This year, while Israelis marked Tu B'Shevat by celebrating the first blooming trees, Savannah surprised us with a dusting of snow and Arctic-like temperatures. The contrast was striking; and instructive.

Teaching children about a “biblical spring” and renewal while they are bundled in parkas requires creativity and resilience. In Israel, Tu B'Shevat is in sync with nature: the almond trees always blossom as if on cue, and new beginnings are visible and tangible. Almost everywhere else, this celebration of renewal requires something more of us. It asks us to believe in growth even when we cannot yet see it.

This experience of holding two realities at once, our physical surroundings and our spiritual roots, is not just a challenge to manage. It is a skill we practice. We learn to tell a story that does not perfectly match our immediate surroundings, and to invite ourselves and our children into it anyway.

That is exactly what Passover asks of us.

On Seder night, we are not only recounting ancient history; we are teaching our children how to enter a story of freedom in a way that feels real and personal, even when it is not literally happening around them. The Haggadah understands that this kind of storytelling requires more than one approach.

That is why it introduces the Four Children, the first lesson plan in history and one that acknowledges that each child steps into the story differently. In our classrooms, we see them every day:

- The Wise Child, who seeks understanding through questions, history, and structure.
- The Rebellious Child who seek to test boundaries to find their own place in the story.
- The Simple Child, who experiences through feeling, connection, and acts of *chesed*.
- The Child Who Questions, who learns through action and experimentation.

Together, they remind me that our goal is not uniformity, but bringing joy and preserving the curiosity and wonder that make Jewish learning come alive.

As we prepare to teach the story of Passover, we are excited to bring these lessons of growth to life through our upcoming mock Seder. There, our students will step into the roles of the Four Children, practicing the ancient art of asking, listening, giving, and caring.

By sitting together, retelling our story, our students learn that even when the “weather of life” feels cold, our tradition gives us the tools to keep growing and find our own way to spring. Passover reminds us that freedom is not only something we remember; it is something we practice, together, one step at a time.

May this season bring warmth, renewal, and the confidence that spring is always on its way.

Eva Locker

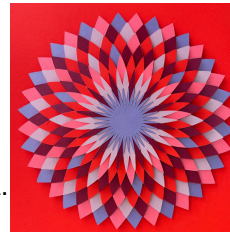
Montag Gallery: Spring Artist Spotlight

March 1-30: Jane Bonady Brackin +

Works by Baldwin Park Friends & Neighbors

Jane Bonady Brackin is extending her show to run in March with works from Baldwin Park artists Mary Carol Kenney, Parker Stewart's Tideland Photographs, and a Papercut Assemblage Series by Peter Roberts:

AIR CORONA, EARTH CORONA, FIRE CORONA, WATER CORONA.



Fire Corona
by Peter Roberts



Water Corona
by Peter Roberts

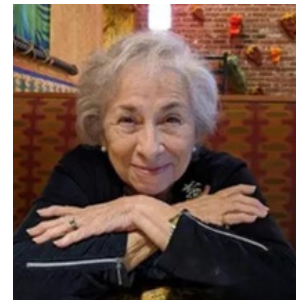
April 1-30: Sherry Dolgoff Yom Hashoah Art & Writing Contest



Works from area middle and high school students will be showcased. This contest honors Sherry Dolgoff and her lifelong commitment to education and advocacy against intolerance, xenophobia, hate, and bias.

Awards will be given during the community commemoration on Sunday, April 12th.

This year's theme is: ***Unbroken: Resilience and Identity.***



Community members are encouraged to add to the Tree of Life by writing messages of hope on the leaves available in the gallery throughout the month.

May 5-31: Melody Postman and Peter Roberts

Reception Thursday, May 7, 5-7 pm

MAZEL POP!



Mazel Pop!" by Melody Postma and Peter E. Roberts is a duet show depicting the many contributions of Jewish makers, creators, and inventors that have shaped culture and lifestyles.

Postma's collage and painting works combine pop imagery and bold print to create modern nostalgia. Roberts returns to his pop culture series of Headcases with over 300 heads that display Jewish creators and their creations.



For information about the Montag Gallery, contact Katie Griffith, Arts & Ideas Coordinator, artsandIdeas@savj.org

Rambam Day School

Ester Rabhan, Principal



Amazing things are always happening in Rambam Day School.

Our boys' basketball team has had undefeated season under the coaching of Rabbi Ephraim Rabhan and Mr. Sam Maddox.

We're off to the playoffs.

Jared Sclar has joined our team and he's doing Music and Movement with our preschool and elementary students. In these classes, Jared encourages our students to explore rhythm, balance, and self-expression in a fun and supportive environment. Classes focus on building healthy movement habits, social skills, and a love for music.

Coach Jared is also giving our elementary students a wonderful after school opportunity. The activity is called Ultimate Play Zone. This is an engaging afterschool program designed to keep children active, connected, and having fun after the school day ends. This class focuses on teamwork, creativity, and movement through a wide variety of games rather than one specific sport.

As part of our electives for our middle school students, Coach Jared is teaching the students all the ins and outs of making their own podcast.

Our SEL (Social Emotional Learning) program under Morah Chavi Rabhan has been focusing on problem-solving, conflict resolution, and healthy boundaries. Students are learning practical tools to identify problems, choose appropriate solutions, and navigate social situations with greater confidence and awareness.

Our Chanukah Program, Beauty and the Beast, A Chanukah Tale, was standing room only. The program was directed by Morah Chavi Rabhan, Mrs. Diane Robinson, Morah Rena Maccabee and with a lot of the props and background created by Mrs. Marlene Rabinowich. As always, a night to remember.

Classrooms are filled with learning both Judaically and Secularly. Walk in our hallways and you'll hear the sounds of engaged, happy children. Inside, our students experience a dynamic curriculum featuring hands-on projects, virtual field trips, science experiments, and immersive activities like building models of the Tabernacle.

Our dedicated staff take immense pride in their role in our students' lives, and we invite you to visit and experience this daily magic for yourself.



It's Easier Than Ever to Find Your Family's Stories

Unlock your family's history with ease! The Breman, home to the Ida Pearle and Joseph Cuba Archives for Southern Jewish History and The Savannah Jewish Archives, offers an online search feature powered by ArchivesSpace, renowned for its state-of-the-art search capabilities. Dive into your family's stories with our user-friendly online research tool. Start exploring today at TheBreman.org for free!



Savannah Jewish Federation

*The Savannah Jewish Archives
is generously supported by the
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1440 Spring St. NW | Atlanta, GA 30309 | 678.222.3700

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Donating to a Savannah Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah fund is a wonderful way to honor a special simcha or life cycle event, honor the memory of a friend or loved one, or recognize someone in the community.

Visit www.savj.org to see a complete list of funds and to make a donation.

**Congregation Agudath Achim
Savannah's Conservative Synagogue**



PURIM

**JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL PURIM
CELEBRATION & MEGILLAH READING
MONDAY, MARCH 2ND**

Megillah Reading, Celebration, Costume
Party, Open Bar & Light Dinner
6:15 PM

\$10/person \$20/family
Use the QR code or call 912-352-4737
to make your reservation!





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CHABAD OF SAVANNAH PRESENTS



PURIM NIGHT OUT

March 2, 2026

MEGILLA READING • OPEN BAR • DELICIOUS BUFFET

 **Chabad**
of Savannah

MORE INFO: JEWISHSAV.ORG/CELEBRATE

 **Chabad**
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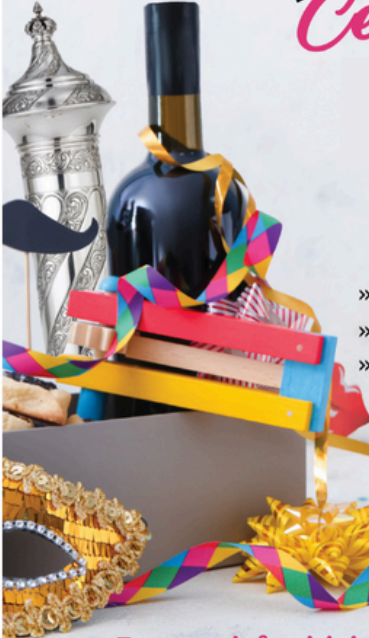
PURIM

Celebration

**Tuesday
March 3, 2026**

2424 DRAYTON ST
SAVANNAH, GA 31401

- » MEGILLA READING
- » DELICIOUS PURIM FEAST
- » FUN FOR ALL AGES



For more info, visit jewishsav.org/celebrate

**PASSOVER
SEDERS**

WITH CHABAD OF SAVANNAH

April 1 & 2

912-844-2477 | rabbi@jewishsav.org

**Wishing you and yours a
happy and meaningful
Passover!**

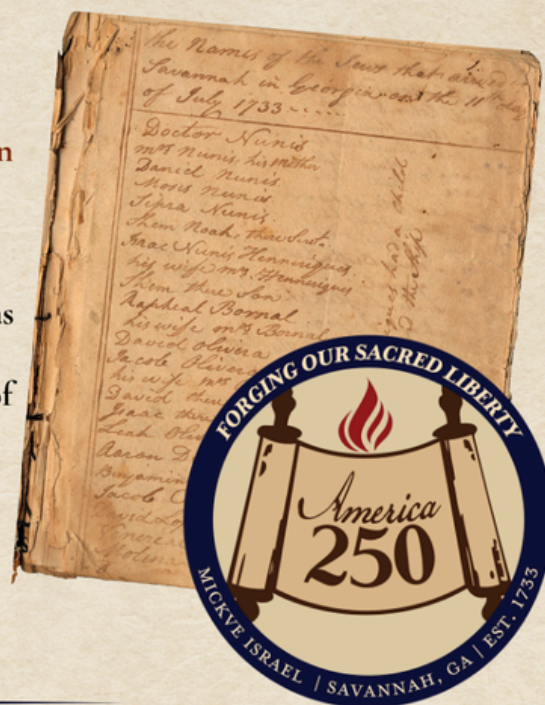


CONGREGATION MICKVE ISRAEL

COMING MAY 2026

Get ready to explore **Forging Our Sacred Liberty: The Declaration of Independence and Religious Freedom in Georgia, 1733-1790** at **Congregation Mickve Israel**! Opening May 2026, this temporary exhibit celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence by diving into how Savannah helped shape the ideas of freedom and liberty that became central to our nation. You'll discover fascinating stories about Savannah's early days, the role of Jewish and other religious communities, and how these voices helped influence the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Whether you're a history lover, student, tourist, or local, this exhibit brings America's roots to life in a meaningful and inspiring way! For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.mickveisrael.org/america250>



PASSOVER AT MICKVE ISRAEL

We have four opportunities to gather, reflect and celebrate!

WMI - Women's Seder - Saturday, March 29 | 1:30pm

A special afternoon celebrating sisterhood, shared tradition, and community.

Check out our website for additional information: <https://www.mickveisrael.org/wmi>

Men's Seder - Friday, March 28 | 6:00pm

An evening focused on camaraderie, meaningful conversation, and connection, set in the spirit of Passover tradition. This year's featured beverage: Rum

RSVP: <https://mickveisrael.org/event/mens-seder-2026.html>

First Night Seder - Tuesday, April 1 | 6:00pm

Congregants will receive priority registration. Non-members are welcome and will be placed on a waiting list as space permits

RSVP: <https://www.mickveisrael.org/first-night-passover-seder-and-dinner-2026.html>

Second Night Seder - Wednesday, April 2 | 6:00pm

Congregants will receive priority registration. Non-members are welcome and will be placed on a waiting list as space permits

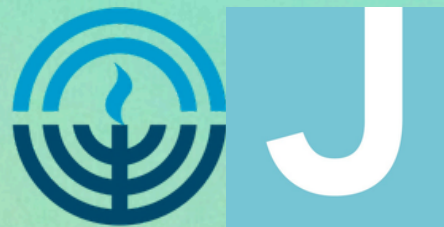
RSVP: <https://www.mickveisrael.org/second-night-passover-seder-and-dinner-2026.html>

Repair the Sea's Second Annual Pre-Passover

Bedikat HaMayim®

International Jewish Waterfront Cleanup

*The Sea saved our ancestors...
Let's return the favor.*



Repair the Sea
תיקון הים

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Butter Bean Beach Skidaway Island 3:00pm - 5:00pm



**The Savannah Jewish Federation and
Jewish Educational Alliance proudly
invite you to join us for an
International Jewish Waterfront
Cleanup Day!**

An RSVP is required to attend





Savannah Jewish Federation

As One

This Passover, open the door to a brighter future.

Your gift to the SJF As One Campaign nurtures Jewish life in Savannah — supporting security, education, and connection so every family can gather at their Seder table in strength.

Make your impact today.



**Make a
Campaign Pledge**



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