

CIRCA

Newsletter of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life

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GOLDRING
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INSTITUTE OF
SOUTHERN
JEWISH LIFE

CIRCA

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On the cover: The mission and reach of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in word art.

Time to get off our Jewish islands



Message from
ISJL President
Macy B. Hart

Wouldn't it be great if the Jewish community really acted as a community most of the time instead of as the islands we've become?

We Jews are fabulous in the face of natural disasters. We act and speak with compelling communal harmony as we provide relief to millions of people that we do not know. When there is a crisis in Israel, we unite and quickly respond as a community. And when one of our co-religionists does something wonderful or bad, we respond seemingly with a consensus voice of either pride or embarrassment.

In most situations, however, we behave as a group of Jewish islands. These islands dot the American landscape from small towns to urban centers. They exist within the same blocks or zip codes or cities. These islands maintain little interconnection beyond cordiality.

We Jews have learned so much from our participation in the secular world without losing our identity as a people. In fact, the secular world offers many experiences that we employ daily as we maintain and build upon our Jewish heritage. We live in a nation that has benefitted greatly from a systematic educational system available to all children. This magnificent system is based on an essentially uniform curriculum that begins with the youngest children and grows with them as they progress through the grades to college with an almost prescribed background in math, science, English and history.

Can you imagine each of our public, private or home schools creating its own curriculum not

geared toward college readiness? The Jewish community has a goal: to provide a good Jewish education. Unlike the secular world, we have no system to deliver the goal, thus leaving each individual entity to its own devices to develop and implement a curriculum. Our teachers often are laypersons like me. In other words, our congregational schools are operating as islands.

Our children need basic Jewish education in the crucial formative years so that they remain a part of the community when they are adults and seek to create the next generation. Our island approach won't provide the product that they and the Jewish people need. If we didn't already know that, would we have so many separate efforts to fix or correct our product?

Some may be offended by my analysis, but the hard truth is that we Jews aren't properly nurturing and educating our children because we fight among ourselves as Movements and even within our Movements. We argue about whose school or denominational approach is best. We have simply created and constructed many impenetrable barriers that prevent our working together within the same cities. We miss opportunities that could catapult us into relationships that would yield harmony and benefit from our collective thinking.

Another example of our not supporting the communal approach is in synagogue membership. We need to look inward and ask why so many families leave their synagogue when their last child becomes a bar/bat mitzvah or confirmand. Joining a synagogue is not like joining a health club. A syna-

agogue is not a fee-for-service organization. When my wife Susan and I settled in Jackson, Mississippi, we joined the synagogue. We had three young children and were not in the middle class at that time (meaning we did not yet have cable TV), so we paid what dues we could, but certainly not even the minimum. Now that our children are grown and our family isn't using the religious school and youth groups, we are among the top dues payers. Why? Susan and I believe in community. When we needed the synagogue for our children's education and socialization as well as our own, other members were paying more than their share. Now it's our turn to support our community.

As Jews in North America, we would do well to rethink our Jewish community definition. Instead of behaving as Jewish islands, we could use our communal time and resources much more productively as we accomplish so much more for the benefit of countless undertakings. I hope that we can address our Jewish communal dysfunction from the bottom up, community by community. Continuing to ignore this crucial need will insure that we remain rarely connected Jewish islands and continue to bemoan the same major issues we have been talking about for decades. We are the product of this island approach. There seem to be many people who want a different product, so we must do something different ... together.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Macy B. Hart'.

Continuity and change at ISJL



Message from
ISJL Board Chair
Rayman L. Solomon

In this, my first column as Chair, let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to the Board of Directors for giving me this extraordinary opportunity to serve the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. I look forward to the challenge of leading the organization at this exciting time and working with our remarkable Board. The task is made far easier because the ISJL has benefited from excellent leadership.

Over the past six years, Jay Tanenbaum has served as Chair of the Board with great distinction. He was at all times passionate about the Institute's goals, clear-headed about the strategies to achieve them, and articulate in explaining them to funders and the public. During Jay's tenure, we added new programs, such as the social justice initiative, and greatly expanded existing ones, such as the highly acclaimed education program. In all of these efforts Jay supported the staff, but did not abdicate the Board's crucial role of asking penetrating questions about policy and strategy. At all times Jay exerted leadership with the Board and helped to bring on new members to keep it vital. I am delighted that Jay has agreed to remain active in his new role as Immediate Past Chair. Let me also acknowledge the support that Jay's wife, Bz, has provided through the years. Not only did she share Jay with us, but she opened her home to the Board during our meetings in Atlanta. And on a personal note, the transition in the leadership from one Arkansan to another will mean no change in football loyalties during the fall meeting.

The history of every institution is marked by a combination of continuity and change, and the ISJL is no exception. The articles in this issue of *CIRCA* attest to the tremendous changes that are taking place at the Institute office in Jackson, Mississippi, and throughout our region. Those of you who receive the weekly "Taste of Torah" are already aware of one of the major changes. We are pleased to welcome Rabbi Marshal Klaven as our Director of Rabbinic Services, and look forward to his spiritual leadership and teaching during the next three years. I would like to thank Rabbi Batsheva Appel for her exceptional service to the ISJL and congratulate her on her appointment as the first woman rabbi to lead the historic congregation KAM Isaiah Israel in the Hyde Park community of Chicago (opposite President Obama's home). On her first day, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a wonderful article about Batsheva and her work at the Institute, including the unique prayers and message she constructed for the naming of a tugboat on the Mississippi River in honor of my father, David Solomon, last year in Helena, Arkansas.

The Institute is also fortunate to have Malkie Schwartz join us to lead our social justice efforts, Andy Muchin to direct programming, Josh Parshall to be our Oral Historian, and all of our new Education Fellows. The Institute will most certainly benefit from the exciting new ideas, programming and energy of all of our new professional staff; they will be joining the finest group of professionals and staff of any not-for-profit. The education program under the leadership of Rachel Stern and Jordan

Magidson now has Education Fellows serving congregations in all 13 states in our region, and the annual Education Conference has become a major resource in the South. Dr. Stuart Rockoff's work on the history of Jews in the South is attracting national attention. The Institute also benefits from the work of Kate Lubarsky as Project Director for the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, Megan Roberts in special projects, and development professionals Susan Jacobson and Charlett Frumin. The Institute runs smoothly due to the efforts of Chief Operating Officer Michele Schipper, Financial Officer Betsy Samuels, Administrator Nonnie Campbell and Administrative Assistants Lynda Yule and Shirley Eriksen. And, of course, Macy Hart continues brilliantly and energetically to guide everything and everyone connected to the ISJL.

I look forward to future columns where I can discuss in greater detail the new programs that the Board and staff are putting in place. All of you, as friends and funders of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute, will be our partners in that progress. I am most appreciative of your past generosity and am looking forward to your continued support.

It seems appropriate to conclude this first column with the words of the *Shehecheyanu* – the traditional prayer of thanksgiving – and thank *Adonai* for sustaining us and enabling us to reach this moment, and to end with the ISJL's traditional greeting ...

Shalom y'all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Solomon".

What's in a name?

By Malkie Schwartz

I've come to the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life to launch a department that has a vital mission, yet lacks a name. For now, we at the ISJL refer to it as the Social Justice Department, but we think there is a name out there that more accurately communicates who we are and what we aim to achieve.

The department will build upon the positive impact of the ISJL to reach beyond the Jewish community and fulfill our responsibility to ensure that all people, including those who live in our own communities and neighborhoods retain a sense of dignity and receive the opportunity to pursue their educational and career goals.

I have spent the past two months meeting with individuals who are dedicated to advancing the common good. We at the ISJL are honored to begin our collaboration with organizations that share our vision of a more engaged world.

There are many ways in which we can go about our work. However, we believe that we can be most impactful and our work more sustainable if we follow the lead of those whose lives we are looking to impact. We look forward to announcing a name for the department that will clearly express our deep respect for existing efforts and our intention to work together with community members and entities to effectively advance our mutual goals.

Ever since I moved from New York City to Jackson, Mississippi, I've found myself talking about my name more frequently. Many more people have never heard it and ask me to explain. Whenever I say my name, I have to be prepared to disclose what is at the core of who I am and my experience in the world.

I was raised in an insular ultra-Orthodox community in Brooklyn, NY, where the name Malkie is common. Leaving that community was not easy. Nearly six years ago, I founded a non-profit organization, Footsteps, that provides resources for individuals seeking to live in the world outside of these communities. Footsteps participants have needs that range from the very basic – food, clothing, shelter – to the more complex – a place in which to question and construct a new identity.

Many of these same and universal needs are unmet



Malkie Schwartz

in our own cities and neighborhoods. The ISJL's new, unnamed department is determining how we can be a resource to people who are taking proactive measures to shape a future that offers greater opportunity for more people.

While I have met with and will work with people who have had different experiences than mine, I hope that our vision of a just world for all people and my non-profit experience will enable me to be of help as the ISJL embarks on this exciting new path.

New director of programming joins ISJL team

A new director of programming began work at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in June. Andy Muchin has moved from Milwaukee to expand the ISJL's cultural offerings and apply his journalistic experience to ISJL publications.

Andy got to know the ISJL in 2001, when he wrote about Southern Jewish communi-

ties for the Jewish media. He made a return reporting visit in 2003. Most recently, he led an award-winning research project that focused on small-town Wisconsin Jewish history, and collaborated on the production of a documentary film, "Chosen Towns." He also created and co-hosted a Milwaukee radio program, "Jewish Waves," that featured Jewish music and talk. He lectured about

Jewish music and history as a member of the Wisconsin Humanities Council Speakers Bureau.

A multiple winner of the Jewish journalism's Simon Rockower Award, Andy edited and co-published the Midwestern magazine *Jewish Heartland* from 1998-2000. Since 1998, he has written for Jewish and general media, most often about Jewish culture, com-

munities and history. Previously, he was editor of The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle weekly newspaper and assistant editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service.

He served on the boards of Milwaukee Jewish Day School and Congregation Sinai in Milwaukee, and continues to try to write the great American Purim shpiel.

Four Interns help with history research, museum exhibits

Summer is Intern season at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. The History Department doubled in size as a pair of interns worked closely with Dr. Stuart Rockoff, the ISJL historian. Aaron Welt and Caryn Miller were based in the ISJL office, researching and writing for the ISJL's online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities.

Their research included trips to Athens, La Grange and Dal-

ton, Georgia, as well as Houma, Louisiana, to gather data on the local Jewish communities. To read some of their fine work and learn more about the ISJL summer internship program, visit www.isjl.org.

Aaron is a senior at Columbia University majoring in history and political science. He hopes to continue his history studies or attend law school. Caryn is a junior at Rutgers University with a history/political science major. She plans to become a

high school teacher.

Meanwhile, Michelle Blumenthal and Max Lubarsky worked as Interns at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience located at the Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi. Michelle and Max led group tours, took multiple trips to Natchez, Mississippi, to help plan for the "Journey Stories" exhibit (see p. 14), updated the regional wall map in the museum and wrote text panels for a small exhibit on

the history of Jacobs Camp. They also were actively involved in camp life. Michelle helped with Israeli dancing and Max worked with campers in sports.

Michelle, a senior at the University of Arizona, plans to continue in Jewish education after graduating in May. Max, a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, is interested in entering AmeriCorps and plans to do graduate work in creative writing.

Southern Jewish News & Notes

Southern Jewish Life monthly magazine debuts



Editor and publisher Larry Brook of Birmingham, Alabama, has a new journalistic venture. *Southern Jewish Life* magazine debuted in August. The glossy monthly magazine replaces Brooks' Deep South Jewish Voice newspaper.

As with DSJV, the magazine will be sent free to Jewish households in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and northwest Florida. Readers

in other areas can subscribe for \$18/year.

The debut issue contained a preview of the Jewish War Veterans national convention in New Orleans, information on the "Journeys Stories" exhibit in Natchez, Mississippi, co-sponsored by the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, a feature on corned beef lunch fund-raisers, the marketing of the BB Literary Club building in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and efforts to boost Jewish enrollment at Auburn University.

For more information, see www.sjlmag.com.

Delta Jewish Open golf tourney set for Oct. 3-4 in Greenville, MS

Here's your 22nd annual opportunity to enjoy golf, camaraderie and tzedakah in the Mississippi Delta. The Jay Mosow Memorial Delta Jewish Open Golf Tournament will be held Saturday-Sunday, Oct. 3-4, 2009, in Greenville, Mississippi. The tournament, sponsored by members of Hebrew Union Temple in Greenville, raises funds for the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life and the Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi.

The festivities begin Oct. 3 with a 6:30 p.m. social hour at Hebrew Union Temple. You don't have to be a golfer to enjoy the home-cooked dinner, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, prizes and kibbitzing. A putting contest for cash prizes will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 4 at the Greenville Country Club Golf Course. The 18-hole scramble-format tournament will tee off with a 9 a.m. shofar blast.

Prizes are offered for winning teams and holes-in-one. For more information on participating or sponsoring the Delta Jewish Open, call Alan Silverblatt at (662) 887-5878 or (662) 887-5539, or Earl Solomon at (662) 378-3434 or (662) 378-2423.

Jewish Cinema South to mount four film festivals

Roll out the red carpet! Call the paparazzi! Jewish Cinema South: A Network of Jewish Film Festivals is back for its ninth season – this round in four cities.

Jewish Cinema South is an innovative program of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) that enables communities throughout the South to present their own Jewish film festivals.

This season's festivals will take place in Mobile, Alabama, from Oct. 25-Nov. 1, 2009; in the North Carolina Triangle from Nov. 5-8, 2009; in

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from Jan. 20-24, 2010; and in Jackson, Mississippi, from Jan. 21-24, 2010.

Each hosting community appoints a film festival committee that works with the ISJL and its festival coordination plan. The film selections represent a wide-ranging view of the Jewish experience as seen through the lenses of filmmakers and producers from around the world. The newest films include:

- "Beau Jest," a comedy starring Robyn Cohen, Lainie Kazan, Seymour Cassel and Willie Garson (Stanford in "Sex in



"Waves of Freedom" tells of the volunteer sailors who risked their lives to help Jews from Displaced Persons camps reach pre-state Israel.



the City"). Sarah Goldman, a teacher, is dating Chris Cringle, a great guy with one apparent flaw – he's not Jewish. So Sarah invents the perfect boyfriend. When her parents insist on meeting this nice, Jewish surgeon, Sarah hires Bob, an actor, to play her new beau.

- "The Case for Israel," a point-by-point defense of the Jewish State based on the book of the same name by attorney and activist Alan Dershowitz.
- "Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina," a look at a people that has been integral to the Tar Heel State's emergence as an industrial New South society.
- "Hey, Hey, It's Esther Blueburger," a coming-of-age comedy about Esther, who is not like other girls. She befriends a duck, talks to God through the toilet and break-dances at her Bat Mitzvah. Esther meets Sunni and learns that it's okay to be different and true to oneself. Starring Toni Collete ("Little Miss Sunshine"), Keisha Castle Hughes ("Whale Rider") and Danielle Catanzariti.

- "Unsettled," a review of Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip as experienced by

six young people: three settlers determined to stay; two soldiers with different feelings about the order to evict Jews from their homes; and an activist whose sister was killed by a terrorist bombing and sees the withdrawal as a step toward peace.

- "Waves of Freedom," a chronicle of one of the least known, but most dramatic stories of Americans' support of Israel: 27 returning U.S. veterans are recruited to rescue 2,000 displaced Jews from post-war Europe and break the British blockade of Jewish Palestine.
- "We Must Remember," the story of 16 American high school students who set out to learn about the Holocaust through a small extracurricular broadcasting project.

Many of the screenings will be enhanced by the presence of filmmakers, scholars or individuals identified with the films or their topics.

For information on how your community can participate in Jewish Cinema South, please contact the ISJL at 601-362-6357 or amuchin@isjl.org.

Peruse ISJL’s roster of talented presenters

Authors, scholars, musicians, performers – all are available to present Jewish cultural programs in communities across the South. The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life is in contact with many of the leading lights of the Jewish cultural scene. Director of Programming Andy Muchin is ready to help your community organize an event.

To see ISJL’s Possible Program Presenters roster, contact Andy at amuchin@isjl.org or 601-362-6357.



Memphis-based comedian Michael Danziger (above), dubbed the “Funniest Jew in the Deep South,” has an act suitable for synagogues. Jordan Herskowitz (left) performs the one-man show “Jordy Pordy: Taking the Bull by the Horns” about life as a professional mascot and Southern Jew.

Bring a master Israeli musician to perform, teach in your community

Sax/bagpipe/flute virtuoso Amir Gwirtzman will be in the South in early 2010 as a Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation Visiting Artist

Amir Gwirtzman will travel the region performing a one-man show with an eclectic collection of wind instruments and teaching about Israeli and world music. His programs work in many settings and with people of all ages.



Amir has performed worldwide as a solo musician and a member of the acclaimed Israeli world-music band Esta. He is an expert on saxophone, clarinet, flute,

Amir Gwirtzman

bagpipes and a host of Middle Eastern and African wind instruments. He can deftly play two saxophones or three flutes at once. You can view videos of his performances at the website youtube.com. (Just type his name in the search box.)

Consider hosting Amir in your community for a day, several days or a week. He can:

- Perform and discuss Israeli and world music.
- Perform a concert featuring a veritable United Nations of wind instruments.
- Teach musicians in a master class.
- Speak to civic clubs and schools about Israeli music.

Contact Andy Muchin at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life – 601-362-6357 or amuchin@isjl.org – who is coordinating Amir’s visit.

Amir offers an excellent opportunity for Jewish communities to enjoy the sounds of Israel and share Israeli and Jewish culture with their general communities.

Cheshbon Nefesh: An Accounting that Goes Beyond the Numbers

By Rabbi Marshal Klaven

What do you get when you add four to three? The answer: fish. Not exactly what you learned in basic arithmetic, is it? That's because, like most of us, you did not take *gematria*, the system of giving a numerical value to each letter of the Hebrew *aleph-bet*, in elementary school. In *gematria*, four equals the letter *dalet* (ד) and three equals the letter *gimmel* (ג), thus spelling the solution to the above equation: *dag* (דג), meaning "fish." From this equation the rabbis instituted a custom of eating fish at the beginning of the seventh day (*erev Shabbat*) and teaching that those who partake of fish (i.e., of the Sabbath) weekly will enjoy healthy lives.

Now some have incorrectly associated *gematria* with a mystical practice of pulling meaning out of numbers through elaborate formulas. In other words, there is a notion out there that numbers in and of themselves have meaning, and it's up to us to find it. It's easy to understand how this misconception could have occurred. We need only look at recent history to notice

that our society places great significance on numbers. Especially over these past few years, it appeared as if our very fates – or more precisely, our blood pressures – were inextricably tied to the ups and downs of the stock market.

Thankfully, in these difficult times, there is great value in the stock of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, as all our numbers have been on the rise. We now maintain the largest staff in the Institute's history at 28, including hiring the first social justice director and an oral historian. The growing staff enables us to nurture the educational relationships which have expanded to the entire 13-state region envisioned by the Institute. Finally, due to the dedication of my predecessors – Rabbis Debra Kassoff and Batsheva Appel – the *bimah*-ready *d'var Torah* known as the "Taste of Torah" reaches 1,000 individuals weekly.

While these numbers – 28, 13, and 1,000 – are important, they are not meaningful in and of themselves. As *gematria* has taught us, these numbers are mere representations of that



Rabbi Marshal Klaven

which is meaningful. To the ISJL, it is the relationships created throughout our 13-state region – relationships nurtured and maintained, held together and cherished by the dynamic and energetic actions of our 28 staff members as well as the sacrifices from the countless committed volunteers within our communities, all guided by the strategic planning and support of our dedicated Board of Directors.

These actions – not numbers – have transformed the ISJL from the original mission of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience to preserve the history and artifacts of communities to the Institute's new, broader

vision of serving, preserving and enhancing the actual Jewish communities. So that in spite of the odds, Jewish life survives and at times thrives in the American South, ensuring that our unique culture and values continue to influence the lives of all.

As we approach the High Holy Days of 5770 – a moment in which we are called on to make an accounting of our souls (*cheshbon nefesh*) – may the numbers with which we arrive be useful, but only inasmuch as they urge us to see the deeper meaning they represent: the actions which define our lives. For only when there is more quality than quantity, for only when we measure life more by what we do than what we have, may our lives truly be considered healthy and full of meaning. As George Carlin wrote: "Life is not measured in the breaths we take, but by the moments which take our breath away."

L'Shanah Tovah u'Metukah!
May you have a good and sweet new year!

Education Department reaches out to 13 states

As the 2009-2010 school year begins, the Education Department of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life is serving more students than ever. The ISJL curriculum is being used across a 13-state region by nearly 3,100 students in 70 congregations comprising 60 religious schools.

This map shows each state that the ISJL's Education Fellows will visit this school year and some of the programs they have led. From roasting s'mores on the beach for Havdallah in Pensacola, Florida, to a 7th grade camping trip in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Education Fellows are always on the move!



Oklahoma
Education Fellows Andrew Terkel and Shelby Deeney are all smiles during a camping trip with 7th graders from Tulsa.



Arkansas
B'nai Mitzvah students model their new, handmade tallitot (prayer shawls) in Little Rock.



Mississippi
Education Fellow Lena Wise guides students as they examine the Torah in Jackson.



Louisiana
In Lafayette, the entire religious school gathers together to sing Hatikvah in honor of Israeli Independence Day.



Texas
A student in Beaumont practices shaking a lulav before a Sukkot Service.

Kentucky

A teacher and student work together on an art project at Ohavay Zion Synagogue, the first ISJL Education Partner in Kentucky.



Virginia

Tess Goldblatt, left, and Beth Kluger represent Rodef Shalom Temple at the ISJL's Education Conference. Schools in Hampton and Blacksburg will be the first in Virginia to partner with the ISJL.



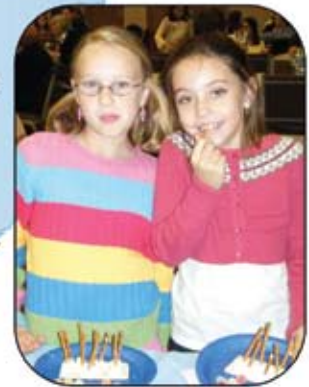
Tennessee

Jason Cathcart works with a 1st grade class at Chattanooga Jewish Community Religious School.



North Carolina

Students at Lake Norman Jewish Congregation show off their edible menorahs.



Georgia

Education Fellow Shelby Deeney shares a hug with a young friend in Rome.



South Carolina

In Columbia, Education Fellow Mandy Farb leads a discussion about the symbols in the Israeli flag.



Alabama

Students in Dothan prepare for a skit about famous Jews throughout history.



Florida

Marshmallows are roasted for s'mores at "Havdallah on the Beach" in Pensacola.

'Go and Teach' conference readies teachers from 13 states

The South is blessed with a growing cadre of enthusiastic and increasingly well equipped Jewish religious school teachers. That's the undeniable conclusion following the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life's 8th annual "Go and Teach" Education Conference, held in Jackson, Mississippi, June 28-30.

The conference provided two days of learning, camaraderie and community building for 182 people from 13 states. Think of it as two days of adult Jewish summer camp, but with nicer beds.

ISJL sponsors the annual conference to help teachers derive the maximum benefit from the ISJL religious school curriculum that their communities use. The non-

denominational curriculum teaches 10 key Jewish content areas with increasing sophistication as students progress from early education through 10th grade.

Each participating community is assigned an ISJL traveling Education Fellow who visits three times per year to provide teacher trainings, all-school programs, prayer leadership and other services the community needs.

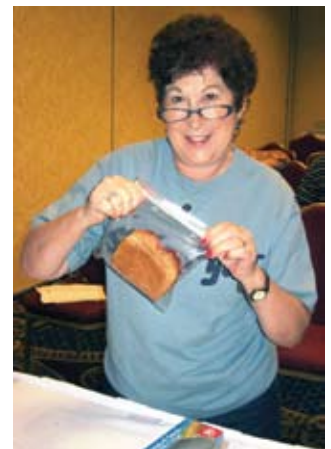
As at previous conferences, the ISJL called on leaders in Jewish education nationally to inspire and instruct participants. Joel Lurie Grishaver of Torah Aura Productions in Los Angeles, an innovative educator and prolific author, discussed approaches to teaching Jewishly – particularly in developing a student-



Joel Lurie Grishaver leads a session on teaching Jewishly.

teacher relationship rooted in Jewish tradition.

For the first time, the Education Conference featured six learning tracks designed to address issues related to participants' varying backgrounds – from new teachers to longtime teachers, trained educators and clergy. To lead each track, ISJL turned to top educators: Grishaver, Josh Barkin of Torah Aura, Mary Lou Allen of South Orange, NJ, Debi Mishael of Houston and ISJL education staff.



Conference participants made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to give to a local charity.



Dan Nichols tells conference participants about becoming a Jewish musician and educator.

Other conference highlights involved recording artist Dan Nichols. Dan shared his story of Jewish growth that took him from aspiring rock 'n' roll star to lover of Jewish teaching and music. He and his band Eighteen performed some of their well known songs such as "Kehilah Kedosha" and "L'Takein (the na na song)" and introduced music from their new CD, "To the Moun-

tains." The band's high-energy concert brought many of the educators to their feet.

Conference planning was led by Rachel Stern, ISJL Director of Education Services, and Jordan Magidson, ISJL Associate Director of Education Services.

Oral historian joins staff

The History Department now includes a second full-time staff member. Oral historian Josh Parshall joined the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) in June, following completion of a master's degree in folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

His interest in Southern Jewish history stems from regular trips to his grandparents' home in Hayti, Missouri, which nearly always included visits to Temple Israel in nearby Blytheville, Arkansas.

In addition to coursework on contemporary Jewish identity and American music, Josh conducted a series of interviews with former members of the now-disbanded congregation.

As oral historian, Josh is dedicated to continuing the ISJL's efforts to preserve the voices, memories and stories of Southern Jews. Ideally, such recordings offer an important supplement to official records by conveying not just the bare facts of an era or event, but the texture of a speaker's life as



Josh Parshall

it is remembered and recounted. Josh will travel the South conducting oral histories to add to the ISJL's collection.

He'll also work to make the collection accessible to the

outside world. In the coming months, he plans to implement a long-term strategy for digitization of the History Department's audiovisual holdings and to begin to supplement our online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities with multimedia excerpts and full transcriptions of archived interviews. To commission an oral history of a loved one, to suggest people to be interviewed or to learn more about the department's archival materials, contact Josh at jparshall@isjl.org.

Mississippi historians laud ISJL online encyclopedia

When the History Department of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) writes about Southern Jewish heritage, other historians pay attention.

In April, ISJL historian Dr. Stuart Rockoff accepted an Award of Excellence for Documenting Mississippi History from the Mississippi Historical Records Advisory Board.

The award recognizes ISJL's web-based Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, in which the Mississippi section presents the histories of 28 Jewish communities and burial lists for 17 Jewish cemeteries. Mississippi was the first state completed in the ever-growing encyclopedia project, which encompasses 134 community histories across seven states. To access the encyclopedia, visit the ISJL website, www.isjl.org.

Dr. Stuart Rockoff, historian at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, accepting an Award of Excellence for Documenting Mississippi History from Julia Marks Young, director of the Archives and Library Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Photo by Chris Goodwin and courtesy of MDAH.



Constructive Georgia Jews

Peach State Jewish history becomes part of ISJL's online encyclopedia

By Dr. Stuart Rockoff

Jews have lived in Georgia since the ship William and Sarah landed in Savannah in 1733 carrying 42 impoverished Hebrews from London. Two years later, these pioneers founded America's third Jewish congregation, Kahal Kadosh Mickva Israel (later shortened to Mickve Israel).

Georgia's almost 300 years of Jewish communal life is documented in the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life's online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities. With 19 detailed community histories, the Georgia section

of the online encyclopedia offers a comprehensive picture of Jewish history in the Peach State.

Overall, the encyclopedia covers 134 communities in seven states and eventually will include Jewish communities in the 13 states that the ISJL serves.

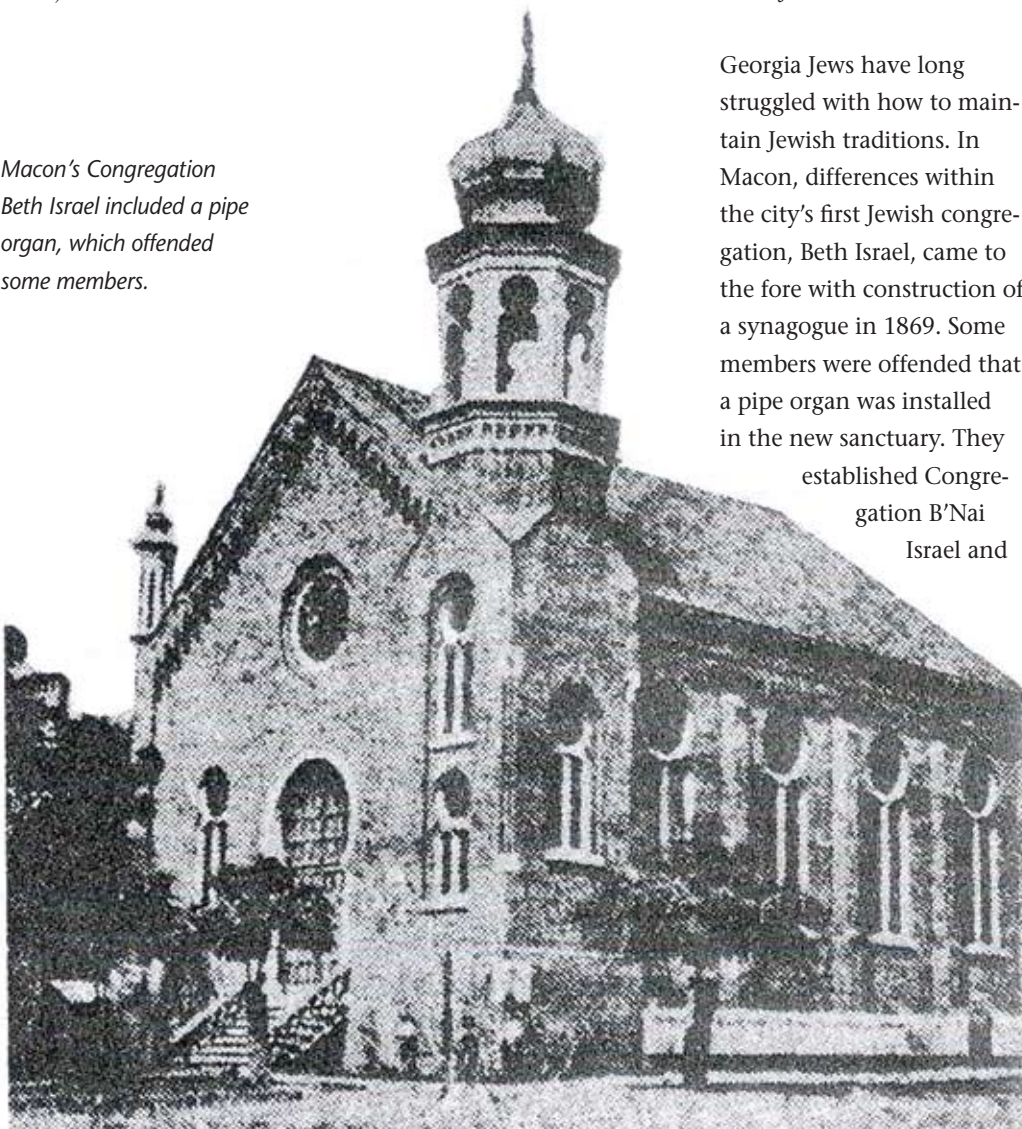
Georgia Jews have long struggled with how to maintain Jewish traditions. In Macon, differences within the city's first Jewish congregation, Beth Israel, came to the fore with construction of a synagogue in 1869. Some members were offended that a pipe organ was installed in the new sanctuary. They established Congregation B'Nai Israel and

purchased a separate burial ground in the city cemetery. This split did not last, and the reconstituted Beth Israel eventually joined the Reform Movement.

In Augusta, Orthodox Jews founded a small *minyan* (prayer group), but some worshippers did not keep their stores closed on Saturdays, which upset other members. In 1890, a disgruntled faction broke away to form a new *minyan* called the "Keep Saturday Society." Soon after, another group broke away to form a third *minyan*. Within a year the three groups merged to form Congregation Adas Jeshurun, which is still active today.

The opening of a new synagogue in Valdosta in 1920 prompted the congregation's movement away from strict Orthodox practice. Women were unhappy with sitting in the balcony away from the men, especially after females had played an important role in raising money for the building. Annie Lazarus challenged this traditional gender segregation on the first Yom Kippur in the new building. She left the balcony and sat beside her husband, Sam. According to the story,

Macon's Congregation Beth Israel included a pipe organ, which offended some members.



she remarked to her husband loudly, "In bed together, but in shul apart? You can have it one way or the other – apart or together." Sam and the rest of the congregation relented.

Georgia has seen its share of anti-Jewish prejudice, from the efforts to expel Jews from Thomasville during the Civil War to the lynching of Leo Frank and bombing of The Temple in Atlanta. Yet more typical was the sentiment of the Atlanta Daily Herald, which welcomed the growing number of Jews in Atlanta in 1875, writing that, "nothing is so indicative of a city's progress as to see an influx of Jews...because they are thrifty and progressive people who never fail to build up a town they settle in."

Indeed, the German Jews who settled in Georgia in the mid-19th century became integral parts of their community, establishing a lasting tradition. In Albany, Samuel Brown founded several businesses, including two banks. He was elected mayor of Albany in 1901 and 1902 and served several terms on the Board of Aldermen. When he died in 1922, the local newspaper reported that "a wave of sorrow swept over the splendid city he had helped to build."

In Rome, the Prussian-born Max Meyerhardt became a city judge in 1879. He was a fierce advocate for public education and helped to found



Max Meyerhardt (left) helped to found the Rome public school system in 1884. Ninety-four-year-old Aaron Cohn (above) has served as a juvenile judge in Athens for 45 years.

the Rome public school system in 1884; he served on the Rome School Board for 25 years. Meyerhardt also was dedicated to Jewish education, running the Rodeph Sholom religious school in Rome for almost 50 years. In Columbus, 94-year-old Aaron Cohn has served as a juvenile court judge for 45 years. Heidi Davison has served as mayor of Athens since 2002.

Like elsewhere in the South, Georgia Jews were concentrated in retail trade. Jewish immigrants and their children owned stores in small towns and big cities across the state. Some became large, successful department stores, like Rich's in Atlanta and Dannenberg's in Macon.

Georgia Jews also played a leading role in the industrialization of the state. During

the Civil War, Louis Haiman of Columbus employed 400 people to manufacture 250 swords a day for Confederate soldiers. After the war, Haiman took the biblical injunction literally, transforming his sword factory into a plowshare operation. Later, Simon Schwob, a tailor who came from Alsace, opened a small clothing store in Columbus and sold the suits he made. From this humble beginning grew a large clothing manufacturing business, Schwobilt Clothes.

In the mid 20th century, a number of northern Jews moved their manufacturing businesses to Georgia to take advantage of lower taxes and cheaper labor costs. H.R. "Dick" Kaminsky of Brooklyn, N.Y., opened the Perfect Pants Manufacturing Com-

pany in Ashburn in 1934. Two years later, he moved the business to Fitzgerald. Ira Nachumson left Chicago for Dalton, where he helped to make the northwest Georgia town the chenille and carpet capital of the world.

In recent decades, Atlanta has emerged as one of the fastest growing Jewish communities in the country. Georgia Jewish life has tilted inexorably toward its capital city. Still, Jewish life flourishes throughout the state, with active congregations in 16 cities and towns outside the Atlanta metropolis. Readers can learn more about the history of these communities and of Jews in Georgia by visiting the Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities at www.isjl.org.

ISJL co-hosts Smithsonian exhibit in Natchez, MS

“Journey Stories,” a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, will be on display in Natchez, Mississippi, for six weeks thanks in part to the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. The ISJL and the Historic Natchez Foundation are co-hosting the Natchez showing Sept. 5-Oct. 20, 2009.

“Journey Stories” depicts how Americans’ increasing and evolving mobility changed a young nation and how transportation made the United States grow.

The exhibit will be supplemented by guest speakers, children’s activities and special events that focus on the particular journey stories of ethnic groups, including Jews. (See box.)

“Journey Stories” complements engaging images with audio and artifacts to tell a big story: immigrants coming to a new country in search of a better life; individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, a homestead or a job; the harrowing forced



migrations of Africans and Native Americans; and fun and frolic on the open road.

The exhibit also features Natchez journey stories told through historic photographs, postcards and objects unique to Natchez citizens and visitors. The ISJL’s Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience has lent ritual objects for display.

The exhibit runs daily from Sept. 5-Oct. 20 from 10 am-5 pm. The exhibit is free and open to the public. “Journey Stories” is supported by the Mississippi Humanities Council. For more information, see the “Journey Stories” webpage at www.isjl.org.

Diverse programs enhance ‘Journey Stories’ exhibit

Interested in Jewish music, historic cemeteries, African art or a balloon race? Then check out the “Journey Stories” supplemental programming sponsored by the Historic Natchez Foundation and the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. All events are free and open to the public.

Jewish Journeys

Sept. 4, 7:30 p.m. – Friday night service at Temple B’nai Israel led by Rabbi Marshal Klaven of ISJL.

Sept. 5, 10 a.m. – Exhibit Grand Opening at the Historic Natchez Foundation. Festivities will include walking tours of downtown Natchez, children’s activities and antique cars on display.

Sept. 5, 5-7 p.m. – Cocktail reception at the Historic Natchez Foundation.

Sept. 5, 7:30 p.m. – Performance and lecture by Rabbi Uri Barnea of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on the history of Jewish music. Temple B’nai Israel.

Journey of War

Sept. 12, 5-7 p.m. – Veterans reception at the Historic Natchez Foundation, co-sponsored by the VFW of Natchez.

Family Stories

Sept. 19, 10-11 a.m. – Tour of the Natchez Cemetery led by Bee Burns. Meet at the Historic Natchez Foundation.

African American Journeys

Sept. 25, 7 p.m. – Lecture by Brinda Willis on the “Great Migration North.” Historic Natchez Foundation.

Sept. 26, 3-6 p.m. – “A Journey of African Art: The Finley Collection.” Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture.

Sept. 26, 7-9:30 p.m. – Voices of Hope gospel singers at Carriage House. Part of the Natchez Fall Pilgrimage.

Transportation Stories

Oct. 2, 8-9:30 p.m. – Movie outside of Historic Natchez Foundation co-sponsored by Natchez Chamber of Commerce.

Oct. 3, 4 p.m. – Lecture by Jack Elliott on the history of the Natchez Trace. Historic Natchez Foundation.

Historic Natchez Conference

Oct. 8, 5-7 p.m. – Grand opening reception of the National Park Services exhibit at the Natchez Visitors Center.

Balloon Journeys

Oct. 16-18 – Great Mississippi River Balloon Race. For more information, call the Historic Natchez Foundation.

Thank You to Our Contributors!

In these CIRCA pages, you can see the impact our education, history, museum, cultural and rabbinic programs have on thousands of people just like you. With deep appreciation, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life extends thanks to everyone who made a contribution between January 1 and July 15, 2009, to enable our important work.

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-Lorraine & Barry Steinberg

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Jack Wormser
-Carla W. Wormser

IN HONOR OF:

Rabbi Batsheva Appel
-Gwen M. Cooper
-Temple Bethel-Lexington, MS
-United Hebrew Cong.-Fort Smith, AR
-Adath Israel Cong.-Cleveland, MS
-Julius Herscovici
-Mark & Cynthia Kristan-Graham
-Temple Shalom-Lafayette, LA
-Congregation B'nai Israel-Jackson, TN

Eva Cate Burson's becoming a Bat Mitzvah
-Barbara Kabakoff & Shelby Deeney

Jeremy Burson's becoming a Bar Mitzvah
-Barbara Kabakoff & Shelby Deeney

Dr. Leslie Burson
-Aileen Burson

Mr. & Mrs. William Carroll's marriage
-Eve & John Herzfeld

Sally Cohen's birthday
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Minette & Charles Cooper's anniversary
-Clay H. Barr

The birth of Katriel Rina Cubell
-Michele & Darren Cubell

The birth of Olivia & Charlotte DeWitt
-Marian DeWitt

Rabbi Lucy & Jeff Dinner's anniversary
-Mary Jo Gunde

Barbara Ducoffe's birthday
-Carol Hart
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Ruth Ellinger's birthday
-Elise & Leon Schipper

Margaret Fleet
-Stephen Whitfield

Eli W. Franco's birthday
-Lisa & Chip Boardman

Betty & Richard Gibian
-Joan Looney

Anita & Sheldon Graber's anniversary
-Michele & Darren Cubell

Shirley & Maurice Gurwitch
-Jim Koerber

Michael Harberg's graduation
-Maxwell J. Lyons, II

Ellen Hart's birthday
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Macy B. Hart
-Sue & Paul Hoffman

Reva & Ellis Hart
-Ruth Richman

Cheryl & Van Hart's anniversary
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Susan Jacobson
-Elise Eplan

Carolyn & Ralph Katz
-Keith Katz

Rabbi Marshal Klaven's ISJL appointment
-Robert Grossman

Judy & Morris Kriger's anniversary
-May Lynn & Charles Mansbach

Lauren Lamensdorf's Confirmation
-Julia & Bob Levingston

Lindsay Lamensdorf's Confirmation
-Julia & Bob Levingston

Sidney Layne Levingston's becoming a Bat Mitzvah
-Julia & Bob Levingston

Maureen Lipnick's birthday
-Goldberg Families-Greenwood, MS

Sarah Marcus & Reed Harkness's marriage
-Elizabeth H. Hoover

Ed Mendel's birthday
-Claudia & Henry Levi

Amanda Rainey
-Mark & Cynthia Kristan-Graham

Stuart Rockoff's birthday
-Julie & Rob Lang

Stuart Rockoff's work
-Jeri & Marc Shapiro
-Sue & Paul Hoffman

Pam & Lee Rubin
-Dan Cohn

Dr. Robert & Joan Sadoff's grandchildren's graduation & Bat Mitzvah
-Marilyn & Paul Weintraub

Michele Schipper
-Elise & Leon Schipper

Selma & Harold Schreiber
-Cheryl & Martin Lewison

Nonie Schwartz's birthday
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Dr. Kamal Sheena's birthday
-Suzanne & Mel Rockoff

Bette & Lou Shornick
-Vera Davis

Jay Silberberg's birthday
-Mr. & Mrs. Harold Silberberg

Leanne Silverblatt's birthday
-Susan & Macy B. Hart

Daniel & Jason Snyder's piano recital
-The Ellis Hart Family

Leland Speed
-Gould-Shenfeld Family Foundation

Joe Stein, Jr.
-Gay Block & Malka Drucker

Ilona Szekely
-Rabbi Sharon Cohen

Al Tanenbaum
-'stranded Jackson travelers'

Jay Tanenbaum
-Brunette Simmons

Lev Aaron Tennen's birth
-Leslie Burson
-Rabbi Eric & Laura Gurvis

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