

The Higher Ground Revisited

Greener Grounds in a Jewish Context

by Carol M. Towbin Greenberg

Yes it was January—and not Yom HaShoah—yet the early appearance of our community's first yellow daffodil of the season, poking up right by the Children's Holocaust marker was a cause for excitement! Several people arriving for at the Savannah Jewish Film Festival sought me out to tell me they saw the flower. Since the film that night was a masterfully told story of a Holocaust experience through a child's eyes, it seemed so appropriate.

As part of a national project, in 2012 the JEA Garden Club—an extension of our Buildings & Grounds Committee—hosted various groups to plant 324 yellow daffodil bulbs as part of our JEA Centennial celebrations. We joined groups throughout the country that honored the memory of the children lost in the Shoah with this living memorial. Volunteers who planted the bulbs included JEA members, students from Rambam Day School, Shalom School, the JEA winter camp, and our Israeli Shlichah Tal Bratman—a Tel Aviv city girl who found digging in the dirt a new experience and said it was funny she needed to travel to the United States to have “a pioneer experience.”

As a child that survived, there was no one more suited to design the memorial marker than local artist Rochelle Frank who was born in Germany and immigrated to Israel at the beginning of the state's inception. She was aided in the implementation of the marker by the Rich family—who now has so many members actively involved in the JEA and other Jewish community organizations.

We are tied to our traditions, we



The first daffodils appear near the Holocaust Memorial marker at the JEA

are tied to our history, we are tied to the land, and we are tied to each other. Each time we celebrate together a new cycle of seasons, we affirm life and the continuance of the Jewish people.

Yes it was January, but it was also the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the week before Tu B'Shvat celebrated the birthday of the trees. In a time when so much of the daily news challenges us as Jews, this simple flower gave many pause to remark about this bright yellow star of hope.

The JEA Building & Grounds Committee, with the help of our community, is committed to making sure even the appearance of our garden flowers always reflect our Jewish values. If you are interested in being part of our newest venture, a Jewishly inspired community garden, please contact JEA President Arlene Ratner.

LASTING LEGACIES

For many years, men of a certain age would gather on Tuesday mornings at the JEA. Calling themselves the Kibbitzers, and taking up where the JEA Men's Club had left off, they extended an open invitation for anyone who wished to do so to join them.

There would be juice and coffee, bagels and a schmear, often eggs or some other hot breakfast staple. More importantly, always there would be good-natured conversation, laughter and camaraderie. This was the place to come for a joke – some you could tell your grandchildren, some maybe not.

The Kibbitzers enjoyed being with each other to socialize and also to help out with programs at the JEA. They often could be found in the kitchen helping to cook for an event or to bartend if called upon.

But as sometimes happens, the Kibbitzers found that with age their ranks were thinning and the 'youngsters' weren't picking up the rear, so to speak. They found that they really were no longer able to meet regularly as a group.

However, while they were still able, the remaining Kibbitzers wanted to decide what to do with what remained of their operating funds. The **Kibbitzers JEA Fund** was established as a designated fund with the



Kibbitzers Nate Siegel (left) and Phil Scharff, both of blessed memory, share a nip while helping out in the kitchen on Yom Ha'Atzmaut in 2009.

Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah. Income from the fund will be used in perpetuity to provide support for senior programming at the JEA. The Kibbitzers JEA Fund helps to assure that the JEA always will be a place for senior members of our community to enjoy a good meal and a good time, things that were the essence of the Kibbitzers.

Create a Fund

A designated fund can benefit a specific purpose dear to your family or the community at large. Funds can be created and activated now or established with a bequest or other financial instrument. To discuss establishing a Lasting Legacy for your family with a fund at the Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah, contact Adam Solender at (912) 355-8111 or adam@savj.org.

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