

Savannah JEWISH ★ LIFE



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Savannah Jewish Life
5111 Abercorn Street
Savannah, GA 31405

The light. The love. The latkes.

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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.

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:

Spring Issue- March, April & May- Deadline February 1

Summer Issue- June, July & August- Deadline May 1

Fall Issue- September, October & November- Deadline August 1

Winter Issue- December, January & February- Deadline November 1

Please send all Savannah Jewish Life materials to: savannahjewishlife@savj.org
Please send eNews newsletter submissions to: news@savj.org

Shalom Savannah

Sam Friedman, Chief Executive Officer



Dear Friends,

Winter has a way of drawing us closer toward warmth, reflection, and one another. In Jewish life, no symbol captures this season's spirit more beautifully than the *hanukkiyah*, the special 9 branched Hanukkah menorah. At its heart stands the shamash, the helper candle, whose quiet purpose is to bring light to every other wick.

And what a lesson it offers!

The shamash does not lose its glow by helping, rather with every flame it lights, the menorah only grows brighter.

So it is with us. When we offer kindness, comfort, or presence to another, our own spirit is not depleted, rather it is strengthened. As Jews we know that generosity of heart doesn't divide our light; it multiplies it. Just like the menorah, our community's warmth is built one shared spark at a time.

Here in Savannah, we see those sparks every day. Everyday, in the familiar smiles exchanged at the JEA, in the generous financial commitment to safety and

We also know that Hanukkah comes at the darkest point of the year. Our commitment to adding our light is the reminder that night never lasts forever and that we can always find time to celebrate.

Like yourselves, I was relieved to watch the return of the living Israeli hostages and the end to the war with Hamas. I was so proud to be part of our community when we celebrated their return, and I want to personally thank Rabbi Hass and Rabbi Cantor for making the time to lead our community Shehecheyanu for that important moment. As I am writing this article the peace seems to be holding (relatively) well and I pray that when you read this peace will come to everyone impacted by that, and every, conflict.

That will certainly be worth celebrating.

As the season unfolds, may we lean into warmth, into kindness, and into the simple power of being together. May we share our light freely, trusting that there will always be enough to go around and that what we build together will shine far beyond us.

Chag Sameach!

P.S. You may have noticed some significant investments around the JEA. In addition to new flooring on the camp hall, a new sign on Abercorn, a new roof, and several new a/c units.... we recently contracted Islands Pressure Washing to give our beloved facility a much needed facelift. I highly recommend them and after seeing their work you will want to use them too.

Ryan and Clay were prompt, polite and professional so if you need pressure washing for your home or business reach out to them today because their schedule is filling up fast!



WELCOME TO THE



Sarah & David Holloway
Karen Honikel
Alison Maher & Joshua Beckler
Carrie Coker & Matthew Kuykendall
Maralie Rhodes
Nancy Green
Kiwana & Henri Martin
Katherine Mock
Julisa Martinez
Andra Darlington & Thomas Engfer
Lillian Clarke
Henry Judkins
Sarah & Tyler Bard
Eunchong Cho & Daeseung Son
John Chapman

Jonathan Vainer
Erin Sensing & Nicholas Arant
Rosa Batista & Juan Maldonado
Nanci Aronstein
Sandra Alaantara Decena
Stefana Nedimovic
Jamie & James Capezutto
Ben Friede
Alison Macleod
Jodie & Ralph Lorberbaum
Jamie & Tommy Linstroth
Nancy & Nathan Ward
Joan & Kari Seppala
Mike Fortune
Summer Wright & Kristopher Deering
Sofia Delikari & James Jarmy



Food Insecurity Drive: A Pop-Up Initiative Fighting Hunger One “Mitzvah Meal” at a Time

When the immediate need for action arose, our community showed up. The Savannah Jewish Federation, with the help and partnership of Repair The World, collected, sorted, and packed full “Mitzvah Meal Kits” and Birthday Boxes for the Windsor Forest Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry, who help approximately 200 people eat each day.

One of our goals was to teach the value of *tzedakah* (justice) through the mitzvah of *ha'achalat re'evim* (feeding the hungry). By talking about the impact that big and small actions can make, and by highlighting the importance of *tzedakah* being about more than just charity, we were able to provide a tangible lesson to this concept with the JEA Children's Department Aftercare program. They helped pack 50 Birthday Boxes, which included all the shelf-stable ingredients needed to make a cake, along with icing, sprinkles, and birthday candles.

We then turned our attention to packing full “Mitzvah Meal Kits”. Over 100 shelf-stable kits were packed and included everything to make a protein rich meal. Each came with an ingredient list and recipe card.

We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and generosity from our community as we quickly mobilized to help our friends and neighbors suffering from food insecurity.

Please look out for more opportunities to positively affect our community in the near future.



Find Your Fit at the JEA: Programs for Every Age and Goal

As the seasons change, there's no better time to invest in your health, confidence, and community. The JEA is your destination for fitness, wellness, and enrichment, offering programs that meet you wherever you are on your journey. Whether you're looking to build strength, develop discipline, or spark creativity in your child, we have something for everyone.

Personal Training: Your Fitness, Your Way

Our certified personal trainers are ready to help you reach your goals with individualized workouts designed around your needs, schedule, and abilities. Whether you're just starting out, getting back into a routine, or training for a specific goal, personal training at the JEA provides the guidance and motivation to help you succeed.

Pilates Training

Build Strength and Balance Discover the benefits of Pilates—an empowering workout that strengthens your core, improves flexibility, and enhances posture. Our Pilates instructors create a supportive environment focused on mindful movement and controlled strength, perfect for all levels.

Boot Camp: Tuesday Mornings at 7:30 AM

Jump-start your week with Boot Camp, an energizing 45-minute class that combines cardio, strength, and endurance training. Join us for a fun, motivating group workout that will challenge you and set a positive tone for the day.

Youth Jiu Jitsu:

Confidence, Discipline, & Self-Defense For ages 6–15

Youth Jiu Jitsu teaches foundational martial arts techniques that build strength, focus, and self-confidence. Through structured instruction and positive reinforcement, participants learn valuable self-defense skills while developing respect, discipline, and teamwork.

Spring Piano Lessons for Kids

Unlock your child's musical potential with spring piano lessons at the JEA. Taught by experienced instructors, our lessons foster creativity, patience, and an appreciation for music that can last a lifetime.

Winter Swim Lessons: Dive Into Confidence!

Keep your kids active and safe in the water this winter with our progressive swim lesson program. Our certified instructors emphasize water safety, stroke development, and confidence—making learning to swim both fun and rewarding.

No matter your interests or fitness level, the JEA is here to help you and your family thrive. Join us this season to move, learn, and grow—together.

JEA PRESENTS

FRONT PORCH IMPROV

FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!

COMEDY SHOW

Sunday
December 7th

Time
3:30pm - 4:30pm

Free Admission | Family Friendly | Free Parking

5111 Abercorn St, Savannah, GA 31405

ADMIT ONE

ADMIT ONE

SCAN ME

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Second Beach Cleanup See Largest Group Participation Worldwide

Michelle Allan & Sarah Docar



On Sunday, September 28th Savannah Jewish Federation and JEA partnered with *Repair the Sea* for 8th Annual International **Reverse Tashlich**, marking our second partnership. Individuals from the community came together on Tybee Island to perform the mitzvah of *Bal Tashchit*, the Jewish prohibition against waste and needless destruction. By removing the waste that has been allowed to accumulate in the waterways, we can protect the marine life and fragile ecosystems essential for life on Earth to survive.

In just two hours, 120 participants collected over 65 pounds of trash, making Savannah, GA, the largest group to participate across 6 continents!

During Rosh Hashanah, we symbolically cast our sins into the water to begin the new year with a clean heart. Our volunteers collected cigarette butts, plastic bags, food packaging, broken toys, fishing line, and other waste, performing a reverse tashlich by removing human “sin” from the water.

On behalf of Savannah Jewish Federation, Jewish Educational Alliance, *Repair the Sea*, and the entire coastal community: we are so grateful to all who joined and can't wait to share more experiences of service through a Jewish lens.

Michelle and Sarah serve in multiple roles at the JEA and SJF. They are **Repair the World Service Ambassadors** and members of the second cohort of the **JCC Talent Initiative: Tzedek: Jewish Service Learning**.

ProjectElef@Savj.org



Security Quarterly

Richard Ray



With the High Holidays now behind us and cooler weather approaching, Chanukah is right around the corner and Thanksgiving is still fresh on our minds. Looking back, we have much to be thankful for this year. The last Israeli Hostages were released from captivity, and for now, the war in Israel appears to be over.

However, as we celebrate the release of the hostages and the war's end, we are reminded that we still face the struggle of antisemitism here in the United States. According to a recent article from the Secure Community Network (SCN), regarding the 2024 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime report, "the Jewish community remains the most targeted religious group in the United States. The report documents 1,938 anti-Jewish hate crimes, representing 69 percent of all religiously motivated incidents, up from 67 percent, or 1,832, in 2023. Among these incidents were terroristic plots, assault, vandalism, harassment, burglary, false bomb threats, and swatting." Since 07 October 2023, SCN has tracked more than 10,000 threat incidents and suspicious activity reports – including several here in Savannah. Just this year, we flagged over 500 credible threats to life that required immediate law enforcement intervention. That number is expected to surpass 700 by year's end, a 40 percent year-over-year increase."

It's not only important that we understand the type of threats that face our community, but that we consistently seek the knowledge of how to safely overcome these threats. Our best defense is for everyone to attend SCN safety and security training. Our SCN staff provides training to help community members recognize suspicious behavior by potential bad actors, de-escalation tips to diffuse hostile encounters, and counteractive threat techniques for self-defense. We encourage all community members to attend our training sessions as often as possible, repetition for muscle memory of training techniques is imperative.

My colleagues and I with SCN encourage members of our community to not allow antisemitism to hinder the way we choose to live our day to day lives. However, we want everyone to stay vigilant, not become complacent, and exercise situational awareness at all times.

Report
An
Incident



INTERESTED IN JOINING
BBYO?



Have a teen in 8th to 12th grade who wants to make new friends, wants attend conventions, and more?

Register today to become a member!
<https://bbyo.org/become-a-member>



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



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

Hadassah Savannah Receives a Commendation From the Mayor as They Begin Their Centennial Year

Mayor Van Johnson issued a proclamation congratulating our local Hadassah chapter as they began their 100th year under the leadership of newly installed President Libby Waldman-Strugatch.

The mayor commended Hadassah Savannah for uniting “women in service, philanthropy, and advocacy to advance healthcare, justice, and worldwide healing.”

Their legacy and contributions, he continues, over many generations, have provided the city with women who “have selflessly dedicated their time, energy, and resources to improving lives, both locally and abroad, lending their voices to historic moments of justice and healing, and bringing honor and recognition to the City of Savannah.”

Over 150 people came last September to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our local chapter and to raise money for rehab equipment for Hadassah’s New Gandel Rehab Center near Jerusalem. Hadassah members wore historic outfits and modern fashions presented by Kathi Rich. Past-Presidents Joanna Rich and Carol Greenberg conducted Libby’s installation, and local Hadassah artists provided a boutique to raise money.

Jean Weitz and Janis Javetz were both honored for their lifelong service, the National Hadassah President sent a congratulatory video message, and Regional President Paula Zucker came in from Atlanta to address the crowd.

The event finished with a film of a 1994 Past President’s meeting that included stories as early as the 1930’s from Hadassah’s third president Frances Rabhan. Local videographer John William Jamerson, IV remastered original footage by J. Ron Higgins (z’l).

As new president, Libby set her goals for this year to enhance member services and communication. Hadassah will be hosting a 2026 film fundraiser in collaboration with the Savannah Jewish Federation’s Jewish Arts and Culture Festival in February.

As Mayor Johnson wrote,... “For more than a century” ... Hadassah Savannah has provided “devoted service to humanity and to our city.” As he “extends the gratitude of the people of Savannah for Hadassah’s lasting impact on health justice and community both here at home and across the world,” so too, Libby, Joanna and Carol extend our gratitude to all of our members, our council leaders, our donors and this community for their support.



WHITEMARSH ISLAND • SAVANNAH, GEORGIA Takeout: **912-897-0236**

“Our brisket is widely recognized as the best in the entire southeastern USA. While brisket is often linked to southern barbecue, its true origins can be traced back to the small shtetls of Eastern Europe. Just ask my great-grandmother, Karolina Lycka.”

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

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: Adventure Awaits

June 29-July 3: Color Wars

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



Sneak Peak for 2026

- New Weekly Themes
- More Specialty Camps
- New Choice Rotations
- New Mini Camps

**REGISTRATION
OPENS**

JANUARY 2026

www.savannahjea.org

Making Dreams Come True

Carolina Braunschweig

Going to prom can cost \$1000. It's out of reach for so many local teens.

We created Race To The Prom so that a price tag doesn't get in the way of anyone's celebration.

At a Race To The Prom boutique, every dress, every set of earrings, and every pair of heels is free. Teens schedule an appointment, come in to shop with the help of a volunteer stylist, and walk out prepped for prom. We build spaces where girls feel beautiful, proud and celebrated.



It was a project incubated inside the JEA as part of Savannah Jewish Federation's YESOD Community Leadership Development Program in late 2023.

A few months later, we opened the first Race To The Prom boutique on Bull Street.

More than 200 teens walked through the door that year-- girls from every public middle and high school in Chatham County, girls who traveled all the way from Macon, girls in foster care, homeless teens, homeschooled teens, and recently resettled refugees.

Now, in our third season, we expect to dress 500 girls. This spring, we'll be popping up in Savannah, West Chatham, Pooler, and Hinesville. We are possibly going to be in Brunswick, too!

Undoubtedly, Race To The Prom is a community effort. Every dress and piece of jewelry is donated. Our volunteers build and staff the boutique. The Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Live Oak Public Libraries, and Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools are partners in communications and logistics. And, for the first time this year, our local department of public health will be providing information on STI prevention and transmission.



We need your help to make this year's giveaway a success!

How can you get involved?

Volunteer!

None of this is possible without the wonderful people who give their time to stuff gift bags, build out the boutiques, and work on-site to style and dress the girls. Last year, we clocked 400 volunteer hours. Two-thirds of our volunteers have been with us since the beginning— and most of our new volunteers are their friends! Look out for volunteer sign-up information in January.

"The best thing about volunteering is seeing the smiles on the girls' faces when they find a dress they feel beautiful in. The way their eyes shine when they pose in their favorite dresses and take pictures in their outfits with their moms or friends is a true joy."

— Sandra, 2024 & 2025 Volunteer

Donate!

We are always in search of great dresses, jewelry, bags, shoes, and makeup. We need 750 prom dresses to make it through this year's season! It's a big number, but not impossible. We'll be collecting donations until February. Or, help organize a donation drive!

Also, please consider giving through our Amazon Wishlist:



Our spring giveaways will run from the beginning of February through the end of March.

Race To The Prom is a whole lot of fun, and we are grateful for the Jewish community's consistent support of this project!

To get in touch, please email carolinab@gmail.com or call 305-496.6069. www.racetotheprom.org

Donations Needed!

* PLEASE DONATE: *

Formal & Semi-Formal Dresses · Party Shoes · Evening Bags · Costume Jewelry · Unused Cosmetics, Beauty & Fragrance Samples

* ALL DONATIONS MUST BE CLEAN AND IN GOOD CONDITION *

* Help us make prom night a magical one for all Cow Country teens. *

* DROPOFF SITES: JEA, 5111 ABERCORN 40 VOLUME, 816 E 71 ST 40 VOLUME POOLER, 405 US HWY W GIRL SCOUTS: 535 E LIBERTY *

* Race To The Prom *

Please join us for
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

-serving up something new every week!



**Thursdays at 12:30 PM
 Jewish Educational Alliance**

Enjoy a delicious meal,
 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!**

DECEMBER 4

Celebrate National Sock Day
 with The Fiber Guild.
CRAZY SOCK CONTEST!

DECEMBER 11

Israel Update

DECEMBER 18

Cuba's Forgotten Jewels:
 A Haven in Havana

DECEMBER 25

**NO FOOD FOR THOUGHT
 HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

JANUARY 1, 2026

**NO FOOD FOR THOUGHT
 HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

JANUARY 8

The Jews of Shanghai

JANUARY 15

Hats Off to History- A Talk on
 Jews and Headwear

JANUARY 22

Advise Well:
 Medical Fraud

JANUARY 29

WomenHeart Savannah: Heart
 Health for Men and Women

FEBRUARY 5

Savannah River Keepers

FEBRUARY 12

What's a Jew To Do on
 Valentine's Day?

FEBRUARY 19

Building Compassionate
 Communities

FEBRUARY 26

Interesting Jewish Minhagim
 (Customs) and Their Meaning



**This December,
 help us SOCK IT TO 'EM!**

**S
O
C
K

D
R
I
V
E**

Ever tried going a day without socks? Cold toes. Blisters. Not fun.
 People without access to clean clothes need help, especially in colder months.

That's why we're **kicking off** the
 Savannah Jewish Federation's Warm Feet Sock Drive
 December 4 - December 18, 2025

We are asking for **new** socks (no smells, no holes- let's keep it fresh)
 because warm feet = happy people!

BRING NEW SOCKS TO FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON 12/4 IN LIEU OF \$7.00

Together, let's wrap the world in warmth—one sock at a time.

My Camp Experience

Hannah Guthrie

Wow! I can hardly believe my life as a camper at Camp Coleman is over. This summer I spent my last year as a camper at Camp Coleman. I am so sad it is over but so happy it ever happened! I could never have imagined the impact that Camp Coleman would have on me, my life, my friendships, and my life as a Jewish person when I started back in 2018 in the Bonim Unit. I am not sure I can even put into words what this summer at Camp Coleman meant to me. The bonds my friends and I have are unbreakable. My camp friends are unlike any other friends I have ever had. They understand me in a way that no one else can. I will forever cherish our time together.



This year at camp, our director started something new where she would give a shout out to specific campers and staff who were seen living out the four core values of Camp Coleman. Those values are Chesed (kindness), Kavod (respect), Kehillah (community) and Shalom (peace). These values are the foundation of everything we learn and do at camp. During the first week of shoutouts, I was called out for my kindness and respect. She said that I consistently help without being asked, model appropriate behavior, and encourage others to do the right thing. She said I bring Kavod (respect) into every part of life. That was one of my proudest moments. Those values have been woven into my camp life for so many years, and I try so hard to live those every day in and out of camp. It felt so good to know that all the good I try to do is seen by so many.

These four core values of camp will continue to be the foundation of my daily life as I move forward. I cannot wait to go back to camp as a Machon and then a counselor and be able to teach these values to younger campers through everything we do.



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!



*The Savannah Jewish Archives
is generously supported by the
Savannah Jewish Federation*



1440 Spring St. NW | Atlanta, GA 30309 | 678.222.3700

Bridging Communities: Partnership2Gether

Jackie Laban

Assistant Children's and Camp Director & P2G Staff Liaison

Exciting things are happening here in our community! The Savannah Jewish Federation has joined the Partnership2Gether initiative as one of the ten Southeast U.S. communities, along with Jewish communities in the Czech Republic and the Hadera-Eiron region in Israel.

What is Partnership2Gether (P2G)?

P2G is a global people-to-people program organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and joined by many of the Jewish Federations in North America. In a world where Jews can easily become disconnected from each other and from Israel, The Jewish Agency uses P2G as its primary platform to strengthen ties between Jewish communities in the Diaspora and partner regions in Israel. It is a way to bridge the gap of understanding and bring us together in the spirit of our faith while creating connections that go beyond location. It celebrates the rich heritage, the differences, and the culture that unites us all.

Why Does it Matter?

P2G offers Jews in communities like Savannah a tangible way to engage with Israel beyond travel and advocacy. It focuses on the connections made through shared experiences, peer-to-peer collaborative learning, home hospitality, and joint programs that also enrich the local community.

We are living through a pivotal moment in Jewish history. In times like the present, where saying "I am a Zionist" translates to far too many people as "I support the killing of innocent civilians in Gaza" these programs are crucial. This partnership affirms that Jewish life in the Diaspora and in Israel are deeply interconnected — not just by conceptual unity, but by actual relationships. It is more important than ever for these connections to be formed and strengthened.

Savannah Jewish Federation's (SJF) Connection to Israel

The Savannah Jewish Federation is instinctively and deeply connected to the State of Israel. Through the generous funding that SJF raises annually through our annual campaign, we are able to provide direct funding and services through the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and through JAFI. SJF is dedicated to preserving and enriching Jewish life throughout Savannah and to perpetuating our identification with the State of Israel.

Savannah's Participation in P2G

Savannah is diving in headfirst! With Ken Miller as the Committee Chair, a committee of dedicated lay leaders, and myself as the staff liaison, we have started selecting the programs that are being offered through P2G that we believe are a good fit for our community. Our first opportunity for community wide participation is coming up and we would love to see you all there. We will be hosting three Israelis from our partnership region to share their stories of strength and spirit through a performance showcasing their own forms of artful storytelling. The main event will take place at the JEA on January 11 from 2-4pm with other Savannah Jewish organizations utilizing their visit for Shabbat Services, Shalom School and Rambam Day School over the 4 days that they will be in Savannah.

With more opportunities on the horizon for educators, teens, young adults and more there are many ways to become involved in P2G. Please reach out to Ken Miller (shorashim@yahoo.com) or me (JackieL@savj.org) if you are interested in learning how to become involved.



Savannah Jewish Federation with
Partnership2Gether
Proudly Presents

IN THEIR WORDS

Stories of Strength and Spirit from Israel

Speakers :



Lina Miriam Shalev

Musical Performer and story teller.
Having the courage to live with passion in a complex reality.



Eran Ben Ze'ev

Actor, Director, Journalist, and Educator
How to cope with crisis through humor, spirit, family and friends

11
JAN
2026

2 PM
4 PM

JEA
5111 Abercorn St
Savannah GA

Contact Person
Kenneth Miller

520-603-2155

shorashim@yahoo.com

Montag Gallery: Winter Artist Spotlight

December 1-15: Fiber Guild of the Savannahs

Reception Sunday, December 7, 2-4pm

The mission of the Fiber Guild of the Savannahs is to promote and preserve fiber-related arts by providing education, programs, and outreach to their members as well as the Lowcountry community at large. Their intent is to share knowledge from outside experts, as well as highlight the techniques and specialties of their own members. All fiber enthusiasts from beginners to experienced professionals are welcome and encouraged to learn more about this talented group.

Members will be on site each day 9am-1pm and 3pm-7pm to help answer questions and assist with sales. Some items may be taken home; however, some items must remain through the show's end.

**ask the guild member on site for more information.*



January 1-30: Teake Zuidema



Teake Zuidema grew up in the Netherlands, where he studied cultural anthropology and specialized in the use of photography and film in anthropological research. He completed his fieldwork and made a documentary while living in a community of Maya campesinos in Mexico. Next, he became a freelance photographer. During his career, he photographed wars in Middle America, religious rituals and customs in Brazil and Bhutan, and worked for travel magazines and newspapers such as *National Geographic Traveler* and *The Guardian*. He studied photography and darkroom techniques at the Photographic Center De Moor in Amsterdam.

In 1995, he moved to Pittsburgh, where he produced photo stories about ecology, science, and technology. After moving to Savannah in 2021, he turned to landscape photography, traveling along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina, and became a member of the former Kobo Gallery downtown. In 2025, with a Sea Grant from the University of Georgia, he exhibited his project "Living on the Edge" at ARTS Southeast, which explored the difficult lives of trees living on the edges of the forest and the marsh, the forest and the river, and the forest and the beach.

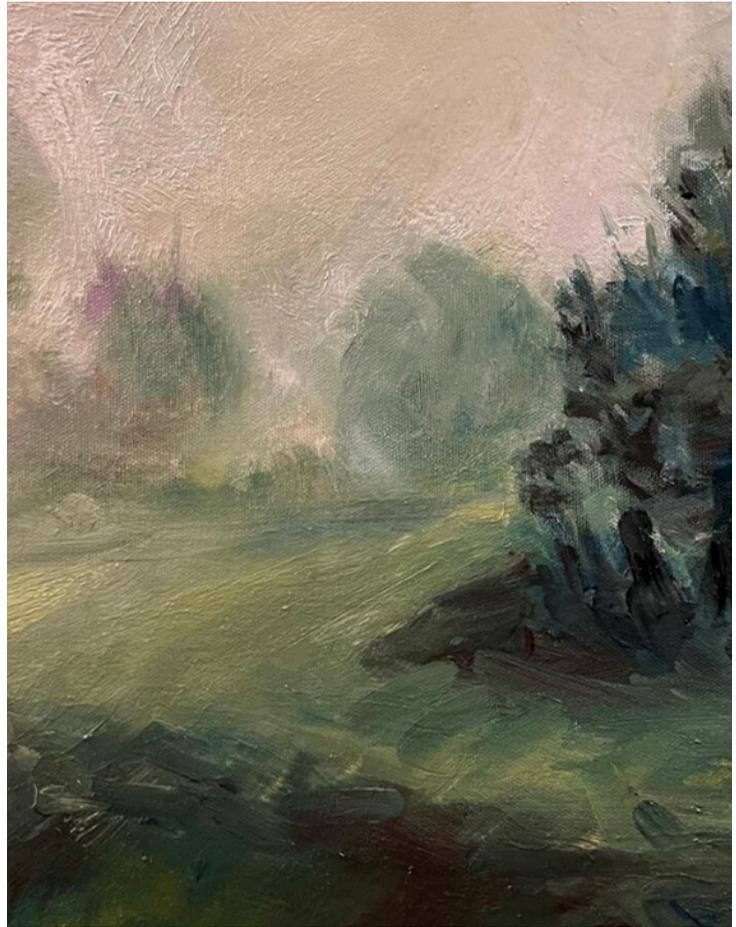
February 1-28: Jane Bonady Brackin

Reception Sunday, February 1, 2-4pm

Jane has been creating all her life. She graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in art and art history and studied printmaking and photography at the Memphis College of Art. She pursued painting in oil for several summers at the Chicago Art Institute and studied with the Michelangelo Project in Memphis, a studio recognized for sight-size realism. Her photography and printmaking backgrounds are reflected in her tight compositions reminiscent of the Japanese influence on the Impressionists. She strives for an expressive realism, showing her viewers her love for the natural world.

Since she was diagnosed with macular degeneration in both eyes, her style has changed to what you see now...a more Tonalist approach to the subject, in which the haziness in her vision is reproduced in her haunting, moody, atmospheric paintings. Using a limited palette keeps it simple for her to recreate what she sees. Instead of detail, she emphasizes mood by painting only what she sees and not what the sight-seeing world sees. This has been a breakthrough in her style.

Jane lives in the Arkansas Delta and travels with her husband in their restored 1962 Airstream.



And featuring local Baldwin Park Neighborhood Artists,
including **Anna Ottum, Peter Roberts, Parker Stewart** and more!

SAVE THE DATE



The Blond Boy From the Casbah

March 31, 2026

Otis S. Johnson Cultural Arts Center



From The Director's Desk

Amy Blechman, ECE Director

November was a busy month at the JEA Preschool. We celebrated Fall with a fun-filled day of activities for the children. They enjoyed creating their own trail mix, pumpkin and face painting, and even a conga line with Rabbi Haas dressed as a scarecrow! We hosted a pop-up donation drive for **Over the Moon Diaper Bank** as part of a larger initiative through the JEA in celebration of World Kindness Day.

The book fair kickoff event, 'Rock and Read,' was a huge success! We had bounce houses and carnival games, and everyone had a blast! November is also the time we celebrate Thanksgiving, a perfect opportunity to teach the children about gratitude. As part of this, we had our parent-sponsored teacher Thanksgiving luncheon. This event is always a hit with the teachers! We are so grateful for all our amazing parent volunteers who make these events happen!

As we move into the winter months, our preschool is filled with light, warmth, and connection—both literal and spiritual. December and January are times of transition: we close one calendar year and begin another, all while continuing to live by the rhythm of the Jewish calendar, which invites us to notice cycles, renewal, and gratitude.

In December, we celebrate **Hanukkah**, the Festival of Lights—a joyful reminder of hope and courage. Our classrooms come alive with songs, stories, and hands-on exploration of the Hanukkah story. Children are making menorahs, spinning dreidels, and reflecting on ways they can bring their own “light” to others through kindness and caring acts. It's a beautiful opportunity to reinforce the Jewish value of **hakarat hatov**—recognizing the good in our world and in each other.

As January arrives, we turn our attention to one of my favorite Jewish holidays: Tu B'Shevat, the “birthday of the trees.” Helping children connect with nature through themes of Tu B'Shevat truly fills my proverbial bucket. After the sparkle of Hanukkah and the quiet of winter, Tu B'Shevat invites us to notice growth beneath the surface. We explore nature through planting parsley seeds (to prepare for Passover), and talk about how caring for our earth connects us to Jewish values of **shomrei adamah**—being guardians of the Earth.



The children are always excited to see their seeds sprout and document their growth over the weeks. It's truly a delight to show the children that even in the coldest season, new life is already beginning to take root.

Through both of these holidays, our preschool continues its ongoing journey of **Masa**—the Jewish journey of learning, growth, and connection. We see this in every classroom, in every relationship, and in every moment of discovery.

As we enter this new year together, may we each find moments to bring light, to nurture growth, and to appreciate the beauty of the world around us.

Wishing you a season filled with light, joy, and renewal.



Notes from the JEA Preschool Garden

The gardening program at the JEA preschool is all about getting children involved in every step of the growing process from seed to harvest. It also helps children understand the importance of caring for the Earth and realizing that they are part of a larger environment full of plants, creatures, and ecosystems that need to be protected. This year, our students have planted seeds and sprouts, watered, picked produce, identified bugs, and so much more. Seeing the garden grow in real time fosters patience, and the reward at the end of the journey is usually a big harvest and the chance to try a new fruit or veggie. For example, earlier this year, our Doobim Pre-K kids harvested a ton of sweet potatoes, so later that week we tasted soup made from that abundance. Jewish values are also woven into what we do, especially the concepts of doing mitzvot, like when we share our harvest with the JEA community, and Tikkun Olam, healing the world by taking care of our environment. Hands-on learning fosters curiosity, patience, and teamwork as students work together to care for the garden, our living classroom where children grow alongside the plants.

Aviva Crystal
JEA Preschool Garden Specialist

Mah Jongg And More

by **Robin Rackoff**

To serve or not to serve – that is the question. The food situation at Mah Jongg games runs the gamut.

A few years ago, I was invited to sub in an afternoon game. “We start at one,” the hostess said, “but come at noon for a light lunch.” Light lunch? If that was light, I’d hate to see her idea of heavy! The table overflowed with egg, tuna, chicken, and garden salads—if it ended in “salad,” it was there. Add bagels, croissants, rye bread, and enough dessert to feed an army. By the time we cleared the plates, I was ready for a nap, not a game requiring brainpower, which is in short supply these days.

At another game I subbed in, it was the complete opposite—nothing to eat. Not a nut, not a candy, not even a lonely pretzel crumb. The hostess said, “We’ve all agreed—no food. Too tempting.” I smiled politely and made a mental note: next time, BYOC—Bring Your Own Chocolate.

At my game, we strike a happy medium—pretzels, a few chocolates, maybe some grapes. Just enough to keep us from fainting from hunger, and no salads in sight.

The one exception? Hanukkah. My friend and I decided to make latkes for the group. “Let’s do it at my house,” she said. I showed up, potatoes in hand, and asked, “Where’s your food processor?” She held up a hand grater. “I grate the old-fashioned way.” I said, “Are you kidding? That’s a bloodbath waiting to happen.” We packed everything into my car and drove to my kitchen, where modern technology awaited.

Fresh from the pan, we served the latkes with applesauce and sour cream just as the girls arrived. They disappeared faster than a winning hand. That’s one snack everyone can agree on.

Wishing you a happy Hanukkah—and whatever you celebrate, may it be delicious and joyous. See you next year, and Maj on!



Repairing the World: Resilience, Partnership & One Local Investment at a Time

Lisa Bodziner



Last Thursday night, I was flying home from Orange County, California. I made it to Phoenix just in time for take off. My red eye was scheduled to land in Savannah by 9am Friday morning. Unfortunately, I looked up to see, *delayed*, then *cancelled*. Then, I *rebooked*.

After waiting in a very long line to get a hotel room, I was able to spend 2 hours in a Phoenix hotel. I returned to the airport at around 4am Friday morning. By Friday afternoon, I was home. Some people might have gotten agitated at the situation. I was definitely tired. Truthfully, though, that

night, all I was thinking about was how many Americans, come the weekend, were going to be losing the opportunity to feed themselves, their households and their children.

According to the USDA, more than 42 million people across 22 million households relied on SNAP benefits during the 2025 fiscal year. That's a staggering statistic, that should give anyone pause. Millions of people across the country are facing an immediate hunger crisis. With SNAP benefits reduced, our neighbors are at risk of going without enough to eat. Food pantries, community kitchens, and mutual aid networks are stretched to their limits.

At this moment, I ask, what are YOU doing to show up for your neighbor(s)?

Love your neighbor as yourself, (Leviticus 19:18)

Are you eating a nice meal three times a day with your family? Recently, I had the great pleasure in planning, dreaming and strategizing alongside friends and colleagues Michelle Allan and Sarah Myers Docar, devoted leaders of the JEA. How can we show up for our neighbors and meet pressing needs in our beloved community, Savannah, GA right now?

As organizers and leaders, we each have the distinct obligation and power to mobilize our peers, connect volunteers to critical food justice efforts, and help ensure that no one in our community goes without a meal. Martin Buber interprets a teaching in Midrash Tehillim 18:19, the following way "When you are asked in the world to come, "What was your work?" and you answer, "I fed the hungry," you will be told, "This is the gate of Adonai (The Lord), enter into it, you who have fed the hungry."

According to a dear friend and colleague, Rabbi Adir, "Every day service is how we bring holiness into the world; reaffirming the dignity of each human and every neighbor, to love those as we love ourselves. Service isn't just something we do; it's who we are. Holiness is accessible to each of us every time we choose compassion over indifference, every time we make the ordinary sacred. Holiness is right here—in our hands, in our choices, and in the ways we care for one another."

I am honored to represent Repair the World and partner with our local Federation and JEA to ensure we can take action into our hands, with resilience and partnership. We invite each of you to make the choice to help impact one local neighbor and neighborhood at a time.

Repair the World (Repair) mobilizes Jews and their communities to take action to pursue a more just world, igniting a lifelong commitment to service. We believe service in support of social change is vital to a flourishing Jewish community and an inspired Jewish life. Our vision is one of thriving Jewish communities that serve in pursuit of a just world. Please be in touch with Lisa Bodziner to learn more about Repair the World.

The Jewish Education Alliance strives to promote a better world, the Jewish value of tikkun olam. The JEA serves our local community through an array of cultural programs and community events, educational and social groups for teens and adults, charitable work, holiday celebrations, and so much more. The JEA strengthens family life and enhances community relations in Savannah and around the world.

Please be in touch with Michelle Allan, programming@savj.org, to learn more local ways to get involved with service in our community.

Lisa Bodziner is Repair the World's Senior Director of National Expansion Strategy. She can be reached by email at lisa.bodziner@wepair.org

Lessons We Must Teach in a New Jewish Reality



Eva Locker, Director



Teaching Jewish teens today feels unlike any other time I can remember. The world they are growing up in is marked by rising antisemitism, confusion about truth, and a relentless questioning of Israel's moral compass. These young people turn to us — adults and educators — looking for clarity and strength, for a way to understand their Jewish identity in a time when it is both challenged and needed more than ever.

Last week in Savannah, I had the privilege of hearing Moran Stella Yanai, a former hostage of Hamas, speak about her experience. I was struck not only by the horror of what she endured by the quiet power of her spirit. Through her words, I was reminded that even

in humanity's darkest moments, beauty can survive. Moran's story was not only one of survival, but of re-awakening. Her faith anchored her when everything else was taken away. Her family memories gave her a way to escape, if only in her mind, and her remarkable refusal to hold on to hatred allowed her to begin healing.

As I listened, I realized that her personal strength mirrors the collective resilience of Israel itself. Since October 7, 2023, a day that ripped open the heart of our nation with unspeakable brutality, Israel has faced a war on every front: physical, emotional, spiritual, and moral. Yet what we have witnessed since is nothing short of extraordinary. Amid the grief and devastation, Israel has shown the world what it means to rise: communities coming together, soldiers and civilians displaying courage beyond measure, and a people rediscovering the unity we feared lost.

This moment has changed us all. It has changed how we speak, how we pray, and how we teach. In Hebrew schools and day schools, it has become clear that our curriculum will evolve to reflect this new reality. Alongside our Holocaust studies, we are teaching about October 7th. This is not merely an addition of history; it is a recognition that our students must understand the world they are inheriting.

They will learn that Jewish identity is not defined by tragedy, but by how we respond to it. The goal is not to instill fear, but confidence; not to dwell on sorrow, but to inspire purpose. We want our teens to see that being Jewish is an act of courage and pride. When I look at Israel, my country, grieving yet strong, I see the truth we must share: that faith is not born of comfort, but of strength; it is what sustains us when the world feels unsteady.

WINTER DAYS AT THE J

Dec. 18, 19, 22-24, 26
Dec. 29-31, Jan. 2, Jan. 5, Jan. 19

4 YEAR OLD - 8TH GRADE

WWW.SAVANNAHJEA.ORG

Rambam Day School

Ester Rabhan, Principal



Rambam has been very busy. The preschool is learning about community helpers. They share their themes so they can interact with each other in various ways depicting the theme.

First and second graders were engineers and scientists as they split into groups and constructed a bridge and then tested each bridge to see which one could hold the most pennies. They also did an experiment with glow sticks to see if you put a glow stick in room temperature water, cold water, or hot water would it affect how much the glow stick glowed?

4th grade made pinhole cameras from Pringle canisters to check out the science of sight. They used the camera to see things upside down, just the way our eyes do before our brains flip things right side up.

Morah Chavi Rabhan, the head of our SEL program has kept our elementary students very involved with learning necessary skills. They have talked about many different emotions that we often feel and the tools we can use to help us manage those emotions.

The students have also explored the skill of problem solving. They learned to identify problems, think through possible solutions, and make thoughtful choices.

The students have begun discussing SOCIAL ORDER and ETIQUETTE which includes how to behave with others and in society.

Our SEL program has been an amazing addition to our students' learning experiences.

We welcome Jared Sclar to Rambam. Coach Jared brings over 10 years of experience working with kids in youth sports, summer camps, and afterschool programs. Coach Jared now owns and operates Oak Roots Kids, a local children's program business in Savannah.

We are excited to announce Coach Jared is doing Music and Movement with our preschool and elementary students. He will soon begin teaching our middle school students all the ins and outs of making a podcast and using the equipment necessary to bring it to life.

Coach Jared is doing an afterschool Soccer Program. Our kindergarten and first graders make up one group, and second through fourth graders make up a second group! The goal is for the kids to have fun, be active, and learn the game of soccer in a supportive environment.

Rambam strives for excellence in an environment that meets our students' needs academically, socially, and emotionally.



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.

Upcoming Events

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7
HANNUKAH HAPPENINGS AT HENNY PENNY
3PM HENNY PENNY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14
CHANUKAH IN FORSYTH
3PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11
KIND HEARTS, KIND PAWS
KINDNESS TO ANIMALS
3:00PM
JEA

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11
TU B'SHEVAT CELEBRATION
CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT
3PM
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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.

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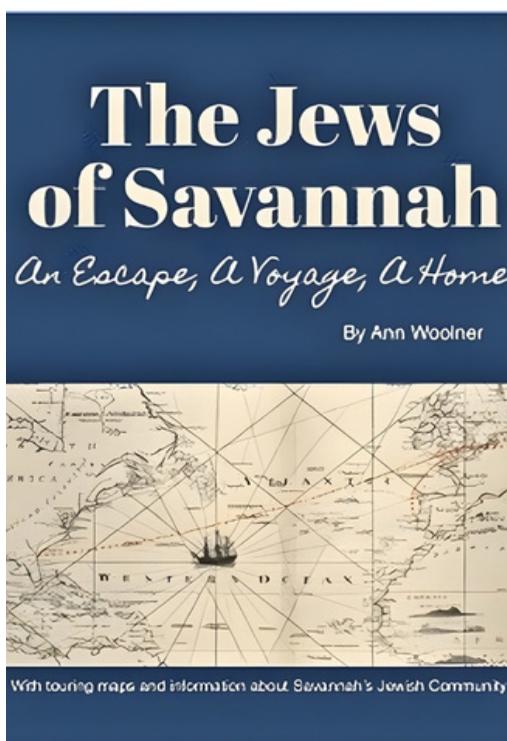
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Congregation Mickve Israel

NEW BOOK ABOUT SAVANNAH'S HISTORIC JEWISH COMMUNITY



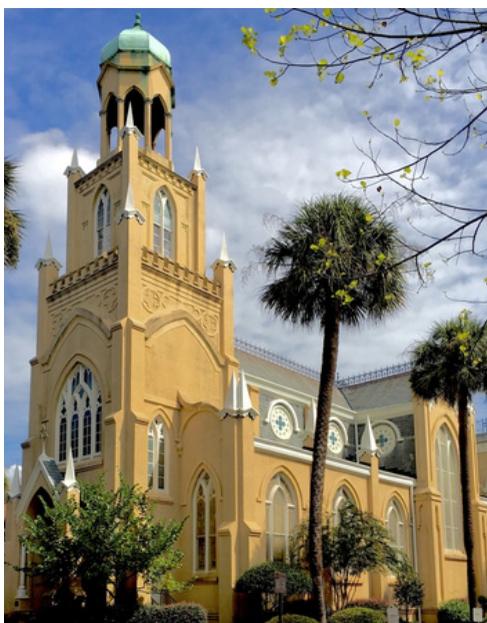
Congregation Mickve Israel is proud to announce the publication of *The Jews of Savannah: An Escape, A Voyage, A Home*. This book is a comprehensive guide to the Jewish community of Savannah – past and present. It was created for scholars, visitors, or anyone interested in our community and its rich history.

You will read about the early chapters of the community's history, from its beginnings in both Portugal and England, through its 1733 founding in Savannah, and up to 1790 when George Washington was inaugurated. This narrative was written by Ann Woolner, a member of the temple with a distinguished career as a journalist and author.

Supplemental materials include an annotated timeline that continues the story to present day Savannah. In addition, both walking and driving tours are provided so that you can visit significant Jewish sites in the Historic District as well as the greater Savannah area. There is also a resource section describing Savannah's Jewish community and its institutions, plus references for those seeking additional information.

Copies of this comprehensive book are on sale for \$25.00 in the temple's Gift Shop. To purchase one, please visit or call the temple at **912-233-1547**

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6:00 pm

Saturday mornings
11:00 am

www.youtube.com/mickveisraelsavannah

Website: www.mickveisrael.org



SHALOM SCHOOL

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Savannah Jewish Federation

As One

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