

SHALOM *Y'all*

A PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDRING/WOLDENBERG
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE

FALL 2022

Choosing
Our Judaism
page 18

Helping Our
Students Find
Their Spiritual
Voices
page 6

Spirituality on
Stage and Screen
page 16

SPIRITUALITY

STORIES OF RITUAL, WONDER, AND COMMUNITY

ISJL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

Jay Hesdorffer

VICE-CHAIR

Stephen Libowsky

SECRETARY

Charlett Frumin

TREASURER

Pepe Finn

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Rachel Reagler Schulman

CEO

Michele Schipper

DIRECTORS

Imogene Berman

Gail M. Goldberg

Joe Herzog

Sally Schneider Huebscher

Andrea Levy

Morris "Lew" Lewis

Monica Lizka-Miller

Margaret Meyer

Scott Miller

Leon H. Rittenberg, III

Robert Roubey

Spencer Simons

Rayman L. Solomon

Joseph Stein, Jr.

Jay Tanenbaum

Mary L. Wiener

Kenneth Zadeck

EMERITUS

Macy B. Hart (President Emeritus)

Kathryn Wiener

SHALOM Y'ALL STAFF

EDITOR

Beth Kander-Dauphin

ASSOCIATE EDITOR & DESIGNER

Nora Katz

ON THE COVER

ISJL Assistant Director of Education Rachel Glazer songleading during Shabbat services at URJ Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi.

Learn more about engaging children in spirituality through song on page 6!

CONTENTS

Leadership Messages.....	4
Education	6
Culture	9
Spirituality	18
Meet the Board.....	20
Meet the Donors.....	22
Remembering Southern Jewish Luminaries.....	23
Southern Jewish Scenes	26
Giving Thanks	28

SPIRITUALITY AT THE ISJL

THERE'S AN OLD JOKE THAT GOES SOMETHING LIKE this, depending on who tells it: Two elderly men attend Shabbat services every single week: Mr. Goldberg, and Mr. Silverman. Mr. Goldberg is a devout believer, who prays fervently. Mr. Silverman is an agnostic, who sometimes checks the football scores during the sermon. One day, Mr. Silverman's granddaughter asks him why he goes to synagogue. "Why do you go there, Zayde, if you don't even really pray?" Mr. Silverman smiles at his grandchild and says: "Well, you see, my good friend Mr. Goldberg goes to the synagogue to talk to God... and I go to talk to Mr. Goldberg."

Spirituality can mean many different things. For some, it means prayer, liturgy, and religious rituals; for others, it means spending time in a lovely outdoor setting, appreciating the wonder of the natural world; and then there are those who find spiritual fulfillment in a quiet moment spent in a beautiful building, or sitting beside an old friend.

Judaism holds space for all these experiences of spirituality. In this issue, you'll learn not only about our traveling rabbi and the more traditional "religious and spiritual" services we provide to the smallest of southern Jewish communities—but also about how our education program addresses spirituality, how our leadership finds meaning in the work they do for the ISJL, and how our communities find spiritual moments in shared cultural experiences, favorite southern places, and more.

As this year draws to a close, we hope that you will consider a gift to the ISJL to help enable our communities to continue experiencing spirituality, culture, education, and more, no matter the size of their community. Thank you, as always, for your support.

The Board & Staff of the ISJL



FROM THE CEO



MICHELE SCHIPPER
CEO

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WE WERE without a rabbi at my home congregation of Beth Israel in Jackson, Mississippi. As a member of the executive board, I was one of the community members tasked with covering some of the “spiritual” aspects of a rabbi’s job. We had to find people to lead Friday night worship and to participate in the service. We had to line up teachers for Saturday morning worship and text study. We had to secure a rabbi for the High Holy Days. It was exhausting—my volunteer gig felt like a second full-time job!

Thankfully, we eventually hired a wonderful rabbi, and I could go back to my primary role as a congregant. Reflecting back on that time, I am amazed that we were able to get everything accomplished. We survived and thrived in a year that challenged our lay leadership and membership to keep all aspects of congregational life moving forward.

It’s important to mention, though, that we also knew it would be for only one year. I don’t know how we would have sustained the energy it took to keep our spiritual life strong at the congregation day after day, year after year... which is exactly what many of the southern Jewish communities served by the ISJL have been doing for years.

Year in, year out, the volunteer leaders in these small communities are constantly answering the questions: Who’s leading services

this week? Who’s organizing the break-the-fast on Yom Kippur? Do we have someone to officiate the next wedding? The next funeral?

The Spirituality division of the ISJL provides vital resources to these communities—the ones who do not have any local full-time clergy. Not only does our Director of Rabbinical Services travel to communities, but we are also able to enlist the assistance of rabbis from our southern region and beyond to visit our communities, as well. With in-person visits supplemented by remote resources including premarital counseling, conversion studies, *b’nei mitzvah* tutoring, weekly *bima*-ready sermons, and more, we’re constantly supporting the spiritual needs of southern Jews.

Time and again, I hear these words from those served by our Spirituality division: “I don’t know what we would do without the support of the ISJL.”

“I DON’T KNOW
WHAT WE WOULD
DO WITHOUT THE
SUPPORT OF THE ISJL.”

I’m grateful we can be there for these congregations and individuals. It’s why we’re here. The board and staff of the ISJL are deeply committed to our shared mission of serving our community partners, bringing Jewish resources

and a sense of spirituality to all. But these vital services incur expenses. From clergy salaries and honorarium to plane fare and ritual objects, we need funding to provide this spiritual support. Without the generous contributions of our donors, all of the work of the ISJL, including the personal and meaningful work of the Spirituality division, would not be possible.

“THE BOARD AND
STAFF OF THE ISJL ARE
DEEPLY COMMITTED
TO OUR SHARED
MISSION OF SERVING
OUR COMMUNITY
PARTNERS, BRINGING
JEWISH RESOURCES
AND A SENSE OF
SPIRITUALITY TO ALL.”

As someone who knows what it’s like to go without a rabbi, I hope you will join me in honoring those who keep their Judaism alive no matter what—and that as you consider your year-end giving, you will extend your generous financial support to the ISJL, so that we can all help those communities year-round.

With my sincere thanks,
Michele Schipper

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



JAY HESDORFFER
BOARD CHAIR

SPIRITUALITY IS VERY PERSONAL, and it looks different for everyone. For me, spirituality doesn't necessarily come when I'm sitting in the synagogue pews. Don't get me wrong; I truly enjoy Friday night Shabbat services and High Holiday worship. I love the music, being with fellow congregants, the whole experience—but it's not where I feel most spiritually fulfilled.

I'm a person driven by action. When others are in need and there's an opportunity to help, that's my cue. When there's something that can be done, especially if it's hands-on and I can actively respond with boots on the ground, knowing I'm making a difference, that's when I feel most connected. Fortunately, I get to spend time doing just that with my congregation's spiritual leader.

I'm fortunate that my rabbi is also my close friend. We've traveled together to clean up devastated cities and to prepare and serve meals to asylum-seekers on the Texas border. We've also gone to Israel together, just to hike and enjoy the beautiful landscape. To me, those journeys are truly spiritual. Whether it's traveling to Biloxi after Hurricane Katrina or to Houston after Hurricane Harvey or Baton Rouge after historic flooding, I hear the call, and I go. That's what my Judaism looks like. Showing up where I'm needed provides me with the spiritual uplift I seek.

It's also the approach that the ISJL takes to spirituality, and to all the work we do. We go where we're needed. When a community requests support to keep Jewish life strong and vibrant, we show up.

.....
"I HEAR THE CALL, AND I GO. THAT'S WHAT MY JUDAISM LOOKS LIKE. IT'S ALSO THE APPROACH THE ISJL TAKES TO ALL THE WORK WE DO."
.....

As the ISJL Board Chair, my contribution is to keep this boots-on-the-ground organization running so our amazing program staff can deliver their special brand of spirituality—day in and out—to the kids, congregations, and communities we serve across the South.

As we approach the end of the year, I know all too well that we're all getting bombarded with requests for donations... and even though it's an important part of my job as a board member, the truth is I've always felt like I stink at asking for donations. But a friend recently told me not to apologize when I'm advocating for an organization or cause that I believe in; my friend reminded me that asking others to participate gives them a chance to connect and make a difference, too. In his case, he said it allowed him to feel good

and feel a part of all the good being done. It provides its own kind of spiritual uplift.

With that spirit of giving in mind, I'd like to ask you to be generous in your support of the ISJL.

.....
"ASKING OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE GIVES THEM A CHANCE TO CONNECT AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE, TOO."
.....

By accepting your gift, I hope we can give you a chance to feel good, feel connected to the ISJL and our communities, and to know that you play a vital role in all the good work being done.

Thank you for supporting the work that we do.

EDUCATION



ISJL Education programming in Raleigh, North Carolina (left), and Hattiesburg, Mississippi (right).

HELPING OUR STUDENTS FIND THEIR SPIRITUAL VOICES

MOLLY LEVY
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

WHEN I WAS ELEVEN, I PARTICIPATED in a religious school talent show. I don't really remember the context—what holiday or event inspired this talent show—but I do remember joining a group of fellow theater nerds to sing “I'd Do Anything” from *Oliver!* I had no idea that it would turn out to be a very spiritual moment for me.

While I had sung in choir and small productions at my school before, this was the first time I sang out loud on my own in front of anyone besides my family. After the show, I had people of all ages coming up to me to let me know that they enjoyed my voice and that my friends and I had been very brave to perform. With every comment, every smile, I could feel my connection to the other congregants grow, and my sense of belonging in this community

solidify. Feeling the support and pride of my community opened up my heart to what a Jewish community could be. When I stood next to the same folks in services the next week, I felt more comfortable, more connected, and more in tune with the process of prayer. Even my parents say that they felt more a part of the community after that moment, because it felt like the other congregants were invested in their child.

Even though I was not singing a spiritual song, I can name that talent show as my first real connection to spirituality. That memory is so strong that it often surfaces now in my career as a Jewish educator, making me wonder: How can I help all our students find that spiritual connection, and find their own spiritual voice?

According to Dr. Lisa Miller, au-

thor of *The Spiritual Child and The Awakened Brain*: “Spiritually plays a significant role in a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. Kids with a strong spirituality overall have greater grit, higher grades, more optimism and persistence than kids without a strong sense of spirituality.”

But what does “spirituality” mean to our students? Often, when we think of the connection to a higher power, our thoughts quickly turn to God—and certainly God is a core component of spirituality for many. What other entry points, though, can we offer our students that might feel more immediate, or personal, in addition to the more traditional concepts of spirituality?

In our ISJL curriculum, there are 10 key content areas which our students spiral through in their

Jewish educational journey: Community, Holidays, *Mitzvot*, God, *TaNakh*, Hebrew, Israel, Culture, Life Cycle, and History. For some students, God will quickly help them feel spiritually connected to Judaism, but for others, spirituality may come in different forms. Some may feel a spark while eating traditional foods with family, while others may have a spiritual moment cleaning up a park on a temple social justice trip. Opening many different doors for students to walk through invites our students to find their own way to connect to spirituality.

The voices of our youth can be a beautiful and powerful thing. By taking the time to listen to our students' words in our congregations and communities we create opportunities for them to connect to their Judaism, their spirituality, and their community. Their involvement may even make the rest of us feel more spiritually connected as well.

TIPS FROM THE EDUCATION TEAM

How can you help your children, grandchildren, students, or young community members connect with their spiritual selves? Here are a few ideas:

- **Encourage youth voices on the *bima*.** Invite students to speak, sing, or share at a service. The *bima* can be an intimidating place and this can be a great way to demystify the order of the service.
- **Create opportunities for youth to be involved in temple committees.** Have students join a board meeting; bring a teen on to a committee running an event. Having a leadership role in what is happening in their community can be extremely powerful for students.
- **Have a youth column in your temple bulletin.** Make space for the youth of your congregation to write and share in your newsletter or on your website.
- **Add toys and coloring books to your temple lobby.** Make sure there are things for young kids to do during services if they get antsy. By having these things available, you are showing everyone that your community welcomes children of all ages.
- **Engage with the youth in your community.** By simply smiling at, talking with, and consistently acknowledging the young people who are coming to your events and services, you are making space for their spiritual moments.

Former Fellow Margo Wagner leading Havdalah services in Panama City, Florida.



Molly Levy and Rachel Glazer singing at services at URJ Camp Coleman.

To learn more about Education at the ISJL, email jewisheducation@isjl.org.

The ISJL PA/Fellow Alumni network presents

Who knows one?



a fundraiser benefitting the ISJL

The Southern Jewish Geography fundraising event of the year!

Your donations drive the game!
Donate hints, advantages, and even obstacles to the teams!

Cheer on former ISJL Ed Team members and Ed Directors from around the South!

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 27
7pm Central**

Live on the ISJL Facebook page

Learn more at www.isjl.org/who-knows-one

Who will find the Chosen One?

If you weren't able to join in on the fun for the live event, you can watch the whole thing on our Facebook page after the event is over... and donations are ALWAYS welcome!



Raúl Esparza as Wilson Mizner in the 2019 New York City Center Encores! production of *Road Show* (photo by Joan Marcus).

FINISHING THE HAT: SPIRITUALITY, STEPHEN SONDHEIM, AND THE ISJL VIRTUAL VACATION

NORA KATZ

DIRECTOR OF HERITAGE & INTERPRETATION

IN JUDAISM, SPIRITUALITY IS DEEPLY connected to the sacred texts of our tradition. The Torah, the Talmud, and rabbinical commentaries provide solace, wisdom, and guidance as we navigate our lives. *Rabbi* means *teacher*—and just as there are many ways to connect with spirituality, there are many kinds of teachers. When I am looking for solace, wisdom, and guidance, I turn to my favorite “rabbi”: Stephen Sondheim.

His words and his music have been with me through every moment of my life. They have made

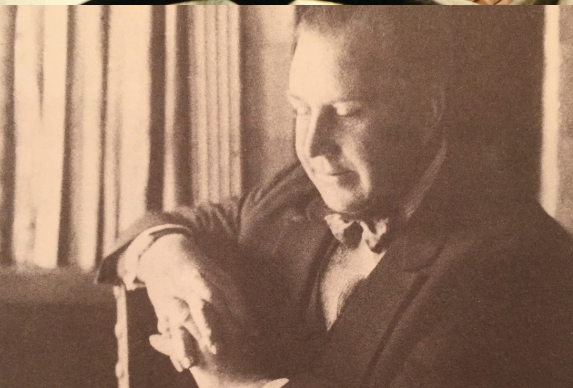
me who I am as a person—I think it’s impossible to understate the truth of that statement. It helps that his writing is so witty, so wry, so intensely focused on what it means to be human.

When Stephen Sondheim passed away in November 2021, I immediately re-watched the original Broadway production of *Sunday in the Park with George*, starring Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Peters. Once I dried my eyes as the last notes of the finale played (“White: a blank page or canvas. His favorite. So many

possibilities.”), I got to thinking: is there a southern connection to Sondheim’s work?

The answer, I soon found, was yes—and my favorite episode of the ISJL Virtual Vacation was born.

The episode “Boca on Broadway: *Road Show*, Addison Mizner, and Florida’s Jewish Boom” explores the little-known Stephen Sondheim/John Weidman musical *Road Show*. The musical tells the story of Addison and Wilson Mizner, real-life brothers who lived extraordinary (and theatrical) lives



in the early 20th century. Wilson Mizner was a multi-hyphenate crook. But Addison Mizner is best known as the architect of Palm Beach and, later, Boca Raton. The Mizner brothers' infamous Boca Raton development project exemplifies a particular American (and Floridian) story of boom and bust, and Sondheim and Weidman told a highly fictionalized version of that story in *Road Show*, a musical they developed over the course of more than fifteen years. Once I listened to the off-Broadway cast recording, I was hooked.

I began thinking about the Jewish angle on this story—the Mizners weren't Jewish, and during their time in Palm Beach, there was only a very small Jewish population in south Florida. But I realized that the Mizners' story is inextricable from the story of Boca Raton, and the answer to a question that had always lingered for me (why is Boca so Jewish?) was finally within reach.

I began to search for interviewees. Finding folks who could speak about the history of Jewish south Florida would be the easy part, but who could possibly tell me about Stephen Sondheim? My first idea was to try to connect with John Doyle, an acclaimed theatre director whose production of *Assassins* ran off-Broadway in the winter of 2021. He directed the original production of *Road Show* at the Public Theater in 2008, and he is currently the artistic director of an off-Broadway theatre. I emailed their communications director, who got back to me within hours: John Doyle would be happy to talk to me, but he wondered if I might prefer to speak to John Weidman, who wrote the book of the musical and also worked with Sondheim on *Assassins* and *Pacific Overtures*. I was overjoyed.

After many emails back and forth, John Weidman agreed to speak with me for exactly one hour. With that interview set, I began scheduling conversations

with experts on the history of Palm Beach and Boca Raton, including staff members of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach, the curator of the Boca Raton Historical Society, and Marcia Jo Zerivitz, founding executive director of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. I even spoke to René Silvin, an expert on Addison Mizner.

The episode was falling into place, and as luck would have it, I traveled to Boca Raton in May to visit my grandmother, Dolly Katz. Originally from suburban Philadelphia, Dolly has lived in Boca since the 1980s. My trips to visit Dolly in Boca Raton have fueled my lifelong curiosity about the city's history, architecture, social and economic landscape, and politics. Before I arrived, I very tentatively asked Dolly to sit down with me to talk about her life in Boca Raton, assuming that she would adamantly refuse. To my surprise, she instantly said yes. I interviewed her in her Boca Raton apartment, adding the perfect button to the episode.

Every ISJL Virtual Vacation episode emerges from a place of curiosity, and becomes real because incredible people (like John and Dolly) say yes to sitting down to speak with me. I am honored to have been able to celebrate Stephen Sondheim in a uniquely southern and Jewish way, and to have had the opportunity to speak with John Weidman, one of my artistic heroes. I hope that you'll watch the episode, share it with friends and family, and think more deeply about the ways in which musical theatre can teach us about spirituality, the human experience, and, yes, what it means to be southern and Jewish.

Left, from top to bottom: Nora's grandmother, Dolly Katz; Stephen Sondheim in New York, 1972 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, photograph by Bernard Gotfryd); Paul Gemignani (Addison Mizner) and Michael Cerveris (Wilson Mizner) in the 2008 Public Theater production of *Road Show* (photo by Joan Marcus); Addison Mizner (courtesy of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach).

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS FROM STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Or, some of Nora's favorite *Sondheim lyrics*.

- **On understanding people:** "Nice is different than good." (*Into the Woods*)
- **On making art:** "Stop worrying if your vision is new. Let others make that decision, they usually do. Just keep moving on." (*Sunday in the Park with George*)
- **On love:** "You always are what you always were, which has nothing to do with, all to do with her." (*Company*)
- **On parenting:** "Careful the things you say, children will listen." (*Into the Woods*)
- **On hope for a better future:** "There's a place for us, somewhere a place for us. Peace and quiet and open air. Wait for us, somewhere." (*West Side Story*)
- **On death:** "Sometimes people leave you halfway through the wood. Do not let it grieve you, no one leaves for good." (*Into the Woods*)

NATCHEZ SYNAGOGUE AN "AMERICAN TREASURE"

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS), in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, announced \$24.25 million in Save America's Treasures grants to fund 80 projects in 32 states and the District of Columbia. Among the historically significant entities selected is Temple B'nai Israel of Natchez, Mississippi.

"Through private and public investments, the Save America's Treasures program supports community-based preservation and conservation work on some of our nation's most important collections, artifacts, structures, and sites for the benefit of future generations," said NPS Director Chuck Sams.

Save America's Treasures, funded through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), provided \$356 million to more than 1,326 projects between 1999 and 2020. Requiring a dollar-for-dollar private match, these grants have leveraged more than \$500 million in private investment and contributed more than 16,000 jobs to local and state economies.

"We are absolutely thrilled that Temple B'nai Israel was selected for the Save America's Treasures program," said Nora Katz, Director of Heritage & Interpretation at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) and a member of the Natchez synagogue's Board of Trustees. "Home to the oldest Jewish community in the state of Mississippi, Temple B'nai Israel tells a truly national story about the development of diverse American Jewish communities, southern cultures, and, perhaps most importantly, the American immigrant experience. The building needs work to ensure its survival, and this support will be vital in making that happen."

Once the largest Jewish community in Mississippi, there are now only a half-dozen members of the synagogue in Natchez. The care and long-term planning for the building has been entrusted to the ISJL. Funds are currently being raised to match the Save America's Treasures funding, to meet the private dollar-for-dollar match requirement.



Learn more and contribute to the matching fund at
www.natcheztemple.org



The sanctuary of Hebrew Union Congregation in Greenville, Mississippi.

CULTURAL CROSSROADS

DR. JOSH PARSHALL
HISTORIAN

YEARS AGO, AS PART OF A GRADUATE course on ethnographic methods, I conducted a semester of participant-observer research at a small Orthodox minyan in North Carolina. I attended Shabbat and holiday services, spent time in regular attendees' homes, and interviewed a few of the key people involved in the group. I remember asking one member, an emeritus professor of classics who chanted Torah most weeks, what it "felt like" to do the weekly reading. He looked at me incredulously and replied with something like, "It doesn't matter what it feels like. If I want to feel good I have a bowl of ice cream." In other words, he was not interested in talking about the experiential dimension of his practice. He fulfilled the *mitzvah* (commandment) and that was sufficient for him.

I think about this story often, in part because I find it funny, but also because my informant articulated an interesting strain in Jewish religious practice, wherein ritual observance is valued above having a "spiritual" experience.

When I conduct research for the Encyclopedia of Southern Jew-

ish Communities, I face a related challenge: the historical record does include information about Jewish religion, but it tends to reveal much more about practice than it does about belief or experience. For example: while I can usually describe some of the ways that a given community observed Jewish holidays, I often have more to say about phenomena that fall outside the purview of "religion": kinship networks, economic trends, cultural practices, civic and political activities, and migration patterns. For the purposes of the Encyclopedia, I usually find it sufficient to report the available facts concerning ritual practice without delving into more intimate spiritual questions, but what might it look like to write Jewish histories that focus more on religiosity?

I already start with sources that document institutional histories and local practices. For example, Jewish-owned stores often took out ads (individually or collectively) to announce holiday closures; these notices sometimes indicate whether a shopkeeper observed one or two days of Rosh Hashanah, which might tell us whether

or not they had adopted Reform traditions. Synagogue affiliation likewise conveys something about the religious preferences of most congregants. Memoirs and oral histories often provide more information about home observances: who led the Passover seder and in what language? Did the family observe any aspect of *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws)? Did the availability of Jewish religious life or specific observances ever influence the family's migrations?

While a variety of historical records document ritual practices, they do not typically reflect individuals' (changing and often complex) relationships to Jewish religion. To provide a brief example, a list of congregational presidents from Temple Israel in Blytheville, Arkansas, would show that my grandfather, Noah Barkovitz (z"l), served at least one term in that capacity. However, it would capture neither his presumable annoyance at having to look alert and attentive while sitting on the *bima* during services, nor his skeptical attitude toward organized religion as a whole. He was involved, to be sure, but he was not "devout" by

any stretch of the imagination.

So where might we find clues as to the internal spirituality, or lack thereof, among Jewish southerners? Oral history interviews are one source. In a 2009 interview, Arnold Schwartzbart (z"l) of Knoxville, Tennessee, described how he left his architecture career in the early 1980s to become a Judaica artisan, and how that choice coincided with a deepening interest in Jewish spirituality, increased observance of Jewish traditions, and participation in the Jewish renewal movement. Memoirs may similarly trace an individual's changing interest in religion over time, as *b'nei mitzvah* or confirmation speeches may reflect a young person's perspective on Judaism in a particular moment. Finally, a number of rabbis in the region held onto sermons and shared their papers with historical archives. These might demonstrate something of the spiritual lives of Jewish clergy in the region, as well as the spiritual messages that Jewish worshippers received in a synagogue setting.

Still, as I concluded in my ethnographic project, ritual remains much more knowable for the third party observer than does spirituality. This is even more true when working with the past. However, just as business history, civic engagement, and migration stories prove essential to a thorough telling of southern Jewish history, spirituality plays an important role. From the observable phenomena of ritual practice to the internal experiences of individual Jews, Jewish religious life draws families and communities together, shapes relationships between Jews and non-Jews, and affects patterns of Jewish migration in a variety of times and places. While the details of local Jewish practice appear more frequently in the Encyclopedia than do personal testimonies speaking to spiritual experience, the persistence of Jewish observance speaks to a rich history of Jewish spirituality in the region.

Havdalah at URJ Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi, in the 1990s (photo by Bill Aron).



CANTON, MISSISSIPPI

CANTON, THE SEAT OF MADISON County, was incorporated in 1836, not long after the removal of the Choctaw Indians brought increased Euro-American settlement to Central Mississippi. The county's population of free white Americans and enslaved African Americans increased quickly in the following decades, and Canton emerged as a local railroad hub and commercial center.

Early Jewish Settlers

In the three decades following the 1828 creation of Madison County, the area's population grew rapidly. In 1830 the U.S. Census found 2,806 free people and 2,167 enslaved Black people in the county. As cotton farming increased, so too did the enslaved population; by 1860 more than 18,000 of the county's approximately 23,000 residents were enslaved Black people. Merchants and peddlers with last names such as Eichelstine and Abram lived in Madison County by 1850, but the first known Jews in Canton do not appear in historical records until the 1860s.

Charles "C.L." and Sophie Gross, from Alsace-Lorraine, arrived in Canton shortly after the Civil War. C.L. served in the Confederate Army with a Mississippi brigade, and Sophie bore their first two children in Tennessee during the mid-1860s.

Joseph Perlinsky arrived shortly after the Gross family. Born in Gostyn, Prussia (later Poland), in 1849, he first immigrated to New York City in the mid-1860s. After a short stint in Jackson, Mississippi, he moved to Canton in 1867 and opened a tailor shop, which later sold menswear. His brother Henry joined him soon after, and the Perlinsky brothers became prominent local citizens.

A third early Jewish family were

the Hesdorffers, who moved from Carthage, Mississippi, about 30 miles east of Canton. Moses Hesdorffer opened a dry goods store in Canton after the Civil War. The 1870 census lists a sizable personal estate worth more than \$15,000, which enabled Hesdorffer and his family to expand their business ventures. His sons, Eugene and Albert, opened a grocery store that was referred to locally as "the hallow."



Organized Jewish Life

In 1867 local Jews endeavored to hold holiday services and took the name Benai Yisrael (Children of Israel, later B'nai Israel). A letter to *The American Israelite* from that time claims that the congregation observed "every high feast" with services in a private home and that "the members of our congregation are pretty well divided" between "old fogies," who preferred traditional worship, and a contingent who preferred Reform practices.

The congregation developed a formal leadership structure within a few years of its emergence. On August 29th, 1870, Jacob Loeb hosted a meeting at his home, during which members of the local Jewish community voted to form a congregation and elected officers.

Rabbi Judah Wechsler of Columbus, Ohio, wrote in 1871 that "our coreligionists of Canton are a noble band of true Israelites... I predict good results of the new congregation at Canton." The same year, Canton Jews sought donations for synagogue construction in *The American Israelite*. They cited their "fast-growing and wide-spreading young generation" as evidence of a promising young community.

The earliest burial in the Canton Jewish cemetery dates to 1872. A number of Canton's late-19th-century and early-20th-century gravestones include places of birth—primarily in Alsace-Lorraine and the Rhineland, with a few outliers in Prussia (later Poland) and Amsterdam.

The congregation did not dedicate its synagogue until the late 1870s. Fundraising for the building took several years, in part due to economic conditions in the post-Civil-War South. Although construction of the modest wood-frame synagogue finished in 1877, the congregation delayed its dedication ceremony until 1879 due to an outbreak of yellow fever. In addition to appealing for donations from out-of-town coreligionists, local Jews received funds from Canton's non-Jewish community, both before and after the synagogue's construction. In 1879, for example, the local newspaper reported on a successful and profitable "Grand Hebrew Ball" which drew a large crowd and ran until early in the morning.

Although there had been an Orthodox contingent within the community, Reform practice had won out by the late 1870s; the synagogue included an organ, and worship services followed *Minhag America*, the early Reform prayer

book developed by Rabbi Mayer Wise.

While much of the historical record reflects the activities of Jewish men in Canton, women played a significant role in communal life, in part through women's groups. By the mid-1880s they organized a Jewish Ladies' Sewing Circle. In 1885 the group collaborated to create a large "crazy" quilt—an asymmetric design style popular at the time—which they sold through a raffle in support of the congregation. The quilt features silk fabric and detailed embroidery, the names of local community members, and decorative images such as beetles and flowers.



Civic Life

Canton Jews made up a visible and generally well-regarded component of white society. Around the high holidays, local newspapers announced the closure of Jewish businesses, which occupied several of the major storefronts on the town square. In 1873 the local paper praised the "solemn and impressive ceremonials recently observed by our Israelitish friends." Additionally, Christian women participated in religious services at Congregation B'nai Israel as organ players and choir members. Jewish civic contributions included philanthropic giving; when Eugene Hesdorffer died in 1925, a number of non-Jewish locals approached his widow Henrietta to tell her that he had discreetly supported them in times of need.

The Decline of Jewish Canton

In 1907 there were approximately 20 families associated with B'nai Israel, a slightly smaller number than had belonged to the congregation thirty years earlier. As the 20th century progressed, younger generations of Canton Jews often moved to larger cities, and few newcomers arrived to take their places.

William (Bill) Wiener, Jr., and Julian Weiner, born in 1915 and 1917 respectively, were among the younger Jews who chose to leave Canton. Bill and Julian remained close throughout their lives; they enjoyed hunting and fishing together, attended school together through medical school at Tulane University, and eventually practiced medicine in adjacent buildings in Jackson, Mississippi.

When Bill and Julian Wiener left for college in the 1930s, the local Jewish population had already begun to decline. Regular worship services continued under the leadership of Max Lewinthal, who had received rabbinical training but held no ordination, and who others regularly referred to as "Rabbi Lewinthal." He worked as a salesman but regularly officiated lifecycle events in Canton, Brookhaven, and other Mississippi towns.

Although the Jewish population of Canton likely peaked in the late 19th century, Jewish-owned businesses remained prominent well into the 20th century. Jewish stores and restaurants included Schlesinger's Smart Shoe Store; Hesdorffer's Grocers; Stein's Golden Rule Store; Frey's Food; I. Rosen's Apparel Shop for Women; Kaplan's Dry Goods and Clothing; and Hirman Brumberg's Busy Bee Café.

As Jewish-owned businesses became less common, the Jewish population continued to decline. By the end of the 1950s Congregation B'nai Israel claimed only ten member families. Improved highways reduced the driving time between Canton and Jackson, allowing Canton Jews to more

Enjoy this abridged excerpt from the newly-updated Mississippi section of the Encyclopedia!



easily participate in Jewish life in the larger city. By the early 1970s the B'nai Israel building had fallen into disuse, and the only remaining congregants were a handful of older couples. The congregation sold the synagogue in 1974, and it was soon demolished.

The history of Jewish Canton did not end with the sale of the synagogue. Former congregants continued to live in Canton until the death of William Levy in 1999; he was a World War II veteran, retired general manager of Levy's Department Store, and lifelong resident of Canton. Bill and Jo Ann Gordon were the last remaining Jews in Canton until Bill's death in 2017. Jo Ann moved to nearby Madison, Mississippi, a few years later. While the longstanding Jewish families of Canton no longer live there, their stories remain visible in the historic storefronts of the town square and in the Jewish section of the city cemetery.

From left to right: Leon Hesdorffer, son of Moses and Harriet Hesdorffer, owned the Famous Stag Saloon (*Canton Times*, May 25, 1900); the 1885 crazy quilt, sewn by Jewish women of Canton (courtesy of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience); the Hesdorffer Building (1905) on the historic Canton Square, May 2022.



SPIRITUALITY ON STAGE AND SCREEN

SHIRA MUROFF
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN IN THIS position for less than a year, there have been so many moments in which I've had a taste of spirituality in my work. A month into my tenure, I was lucky enough to see Tim Lorsch perform here in Jackson in the sanctuary of Beth Israel Congregation as part of his touring show, *The Suitcase*. In this performance, he tells the story of his family's history in Europe (and immigrating to America) in the 20th century, during which some members survived the Holocaust and some did not. As he told these stories and played multiple instruments between the segments, the audience was captivated. We knew it was going to be a musical evening, but I saw rows and rows of people amazed at the confluence of melodic string instruments and generations of family photos projected on the *bima*. All of this happened close to the congregation's ark, so it felt more like the continuation of the Friday night service than a performance. We all felt a sense of community and spirituality, and I realized the significance of the moment.

Looking around, it occurred to me that it was the first service I'd been to in person in two years, as well as the first indoor live musical experience in the same time-frame—and I knew I wasn't the only one experiencing that rekindled spark of spirituality. After the

show, I chatted with countless attendees (while eating the obligatory bagels) about how nice it was to go to a cultural program and have that transformative experience together. Tim visited two other cities that week, and I heard the same thing from each one—that it really was a powerful evening. As reviews of other spring in-person programming events poured in, it was evident that Tim Lorsch's events were not an anomaly—as another presenter said, the end of their performance was full of “the hugs, and the tears, and the joy, and the memories.”

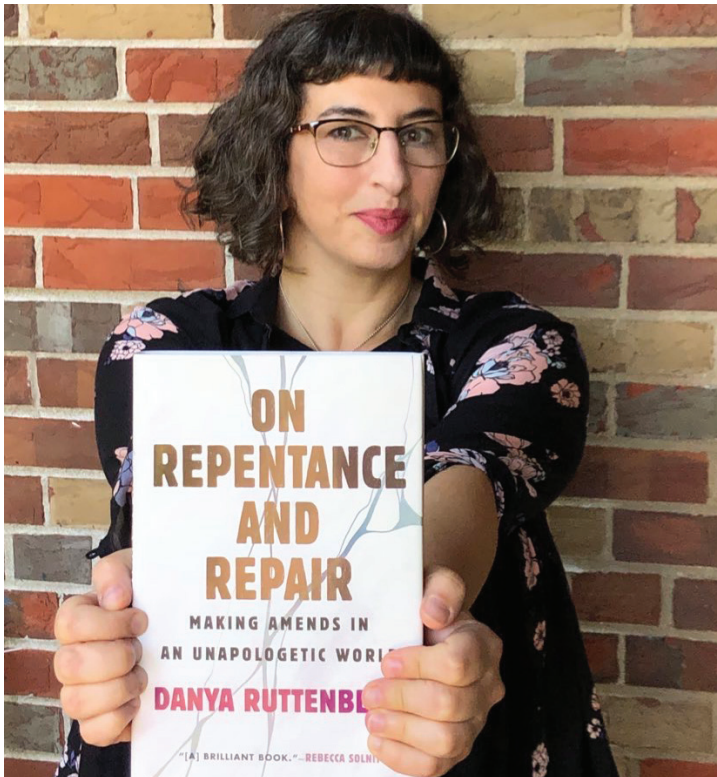
Even as we bring more in-person programming to communities this fall, I am so grateful for the continuation of virtual programming. It increases accessibility for folks unable to attend an in-person program, whether because of distance or disability, and introduces us to performers who live states away. One duo that we recently brought into our ISJL community was Lapidus & Myles out of Atlanta. We were so lucky to have the Mississippi-based Alluvial Collective (formerly the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation) co-sponsor this August virtual event with us.

One of my favorite parts of ISJL events has always been how special—dare I say spiritual—it is to have a communal Jewish experience with people across the

South. I loved being able to tell Rabbi Micah Lapidus and Melvin Kindall Myles that we were going to have folks attending the livestream from four different southern states. When the night of the performance arrived, we prompted folks—as we often do—to write in the chat box where they were Zooming in from. As we saw the different cities and states pour in, a spark of that spiritual community was born, even more so when the music started. I swiped through all of the participants to see their smiling faces and was delighted to see that one person was even wearing an ISJL “Shalom Y'all” shirt during the show! Lapidus & Myles engaged every audience member, their energy causing folks to sway to the music, all the way until their sign-off song. As one participant wrote, this performance was an “inspirational balm to the soul.”

Bringing cultural programming experiences to communities gives participants a feeling of spirituality as they sit in the presence of others, whether in person or on a communal screen. We have some new and returning people on our presenters roster, and they are excited to bring more experiences like this to your community, whether in your community or over Zoom. Reach out to me anytime, and we'll create a meaningful experience for your community!

TWO GREAT EVENTS ONE EASY WAY TO PARTICIPATE!



RABBI DANYA RUTTENBERG *THE TWITTER RABBI*

Thursday, November 3
7pm Central

Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, an award-winning writer who serves as Scholar in Residence at the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), will join us to discuss her new book, *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*.

CHANUKAH SONG SESSION WITH CHAVA MIREL

Thursday, December 15
7pm Central

A multi-award-winning musician and composer whose voice was recently featured on a Grammy Award-winning album, Chava Mirel will bring us a pre-Chanukah musical celebration, sharing Chanukah tunes as well as an array of uplifting and spiritual music. Chava amazed us at the 2022 ISJL Conference, and we are delighted to have her back with us.



COMMUNITY REGISTRATION: \$250 | INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION: \$10

Learn more and register now at www.ISJL.org/isjl-events.

SPIRITUALITY

CHOOSING OUR JUDAISM

RABBI CAROLINE SIM
DIRECTOR OF RABBINICAL SERVICES

GEOGRAPHICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY, demographically, or by any other measure, “southern Judaism” covers a very broad spectrum of practice, belief, and community. One of the beautiful ways this manifests is through the ways our communities choose to be Jewish, and how these choices evolve. Several of the communities the ISJL serves once identified with a particular denomination—Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, or otherwise—but over time, have changed their affiliation or become unaffiliated with any particular movement. Because they are the only synagogue in their area, they need to accommodate and be welcoming to all of the Jews that live there.

A congregation may still lean towards Conservative practice, for example, but also serve many Reform-identifying members. Those who attended primarily English services in the past might have to get used to services with more Hebrew. But congregants are willing to make some accommodations, because Jewish community and the presence and inclusion of fellow Jews is more spiritually important than sticking with a prescribed set of practices. Worshiping with other Jews is so rare and precious that it supersedes most other concerns. This strong sense of community is a spiritual bond that transcends any other differences we might have.

Is it any wonder, then, especially in an age so rife with division, that others would be attracted to this spirit of inclusion and growth?

During my time at the ISJL, I have had a number of people approach me desiring to convert to Judaism—and our southern Jewish communities have been unfailingly overjoyed to welcome them.

One recent conversion student lived in an area without a functioning synagogue within reasonable distance. An important part of the conversion process is connecting the new member of the Jewish community with a congregation. Even though the nearest synagogue was a three-hour drive from where the student lived, the rabbi at that synagogue was willing to work with us to ensure that this student was able to convert and have a community to welcome them into the fold. Because of Zoom services and activities that that synagogue had expanded due to COVID, this conversion student was able to participate in Jewish communal life and begin to form relationships at that synagogue. Now that we are able to travel again, they maintain links to that synagogue and travel there as often as they can.

Another past conversion student was introduced to Judaism when they started dating a Jew. They were drawn to the spirit of community and social justice, as well as the beauty of home and public practice. I recently had the great blessing of being able to officiate at their wedding. However, even if they weren't planning on marrying their now-spouse, this individual knew they would have pursued conversion. The sense of homecoming and belonging the

Jewish community inspired was enough of a reason to convert on its own. Gaining a Jewish spouse was icing on the cake.

One thing I hear from almost every conversion student is that they are drawn to Judaism because of the spirit in which we approach religion. In the Jewish community, they find the connections and support they have been seeking. As Jews, we allow and encourage a spirit of adventure and exploration. We welcome discussion and debate. Almost none of our questions have easy answers—or even a single answer! All of this creates a culture with the capacity to make room for all the different needs, wants, and beliefs of our members. To be Jewish is a great responsibility and commitment—to the laws, to the culture, and to the people. But it also grants us a great deal of freedom to be who we need to be, and to accept others as they are.

The Talmud teaches us that the souls of all Jews were present at Mount Sinai when God gave us the Torah. This includes the Jews living at the time, but also all future generations of Jews. It also included the souls of all the people who might not be born into Jewish families, but who would at some point convert to Judaism. Those in our community who have converted are our spiritual siblings, the same as any other Jew born before or since. And again and again, our southern communities welcome them and embrace them when they come home.



Micah Gordon delivers his bar mitzvah speech in Auburn, Alabama, 2018.



Raven Wilson's conversion, Tupelo, Mississippi, 2021.



Leading Rosh Hashanah services in Beaufort, South Carolina, 2022.

To learn more about Spirituality at the ISJL, email rabbi@isjl.org.

OUR SUPPORTERS

MEET THE BOARD

ISJL BOARD MEETING IN JACKSON

IN SEPTEMBER, THE ISJL BOARD OF DIRECTORS WAS DELIGHTED TO MEET IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI. IT WAS THE FIRST time since the fall of 2019 that the meeting was held in person, which made it a truly meaningful reunion of board and staff. The Board was able to see the new ISJL offices at Beth Israel Congregation, meet ISJL staff members they had only seen onscreen previously, and catch up with friends old and new.



From left to right: Board Vice-Chair Stephen Libowsky, CEO Michele Schipper, and Board Chair Jay Hesdorffer.



Board member Jay Tanenbaum.



From left to right: Board member Morris "Lew" Lewis, Program Associate Sophie Bernstein, and Board member Margaret Meyer.



Board member Monica Lizka-Miller and Rabbi Caroline Sim.



From left to right: Historian Dr. Josh Parshall, Board Chair Jay Hesdorffer, and Board Vice-Chair Stephen Libowsky.



Director of Heritage and Interpretation Nora Katz and Board Chair Jay Hesdorffer.



Board member Gail Goldberg and Board Secretary Charlett Frumin.



Board and staff participating in the Education division's presentation.

“This is the only board that I have remained on at this stage of my life. This is a board that really cares about the organization. It’s a group of people that are down to earth, not only caring about the organization, but each other. This board engages with the staff to find ways that we can help and support them. I haven’t been on another board that is so eager and willing to do that.”

Charlett Frumin
ISJL Board Secretary
Sugar Land, Texas

To view the entire ISJL Board of Directors list, visit www.isjl.org/board-of-directors.
If you are interested in supporting the ISJL’s work or learning more about leadership opportunities, email information@isjl.org.

MEET THE DONORS

RABBI JACK AND AUDREY ROMBERG

RABBI JACK AND AUDREY ROMBERG are longtime supporters of the ISJL, and ISJL CEO Michele Schipper was delighted to catch up with them recently and discuss why the ISJL is an organization close to their heart—and how their contributions to the organization speak to their spirituality. Rabbi Jack Romberg was the rabbi (now Rabbi Emeritus) of Temple Israel in Tallahassee, Florida—a long-time partner community of the ISJL. Rabbi Romberg first met ISJL founder Macy B. Hart almost twenty years ago, and could see the many ways the ISJL could meet the needs of southern Jewish communities, including his own in Tallahassee. Audrey Romberg grew up in New Jersey, then lived in the suburbs of Philadelphia before making her way to Florida, and saw the tremendous resources in those areas. When the Rombergs moved to Tallahassee, they found a town full of smart, innovative people and a wonderful university—but far fewer Jewish resources. They felt as if they were on their own, until they connected with the ISJL. Here's what they had to say about their ISJL experiences, as donors and partners.

Why did you choose to become donors to the ISJL?

Jack: I believe the ISJL does a really good job of meeting communal needs. It's a well-put-together organization that provides resources to small and mid-size communities. My cousin Bert Romberg from Dallas is also an ISJL donor, and I thought, "If that's what my family is supporting, I need to support it, too."

Audrey: A lot of Jewish organizations we reached out to said: "We can't come to Tallahassee – it's too



hard, too far away, there are no direct flights..." The ISJL never said that. The ISJL always said: "You need help? We're on our way."

How do you choose to give to the ISJL?

Jack: We make our donations through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF). Every fall, we make our yearly donation and go through the DAF to allocate our support to organizations that are important to us. The ISJL is one of the key places we give.

The theme of this issue is spirituality. How does your spirituality inform your giving?

Jack: Our Jewish identity pushes us to give to certain organizations doing the right thing in the Jewish community. No other Jewish organization in the South provides support for so many communities. The ISJL rabbis, when they go into communities—they teach, lead a variety of holiday and Shabbat services, and interact with the congregants. The rabbinical visits enrich the spiritual needs of the congregation, and that's spiritual for us.

Audrey: Jack had his student pulpit in Fredericksburg, Virginia,

for three years while he was studying in seminary [at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion]. The people there are just as Jewish as people anywhere else, and have the same needs as congregants in the larger congregations in bigger metropolitan areas. We learned that early on, and want to support spirituality and support for Jewish people wherever they are.

How does the ISJL differ from other causes you support?

Audrey: We support a lot of Jewish causes: Heller High School in Israel, the CCAR initiative to help smaller congregations hire rabbis, and a wonderful school for students with learning challenges, which supported our own family. But none serve the Jewish South in quite the same way that the ISJL does. We're proud to support all these wonderful organizations.

And finally... what's your favorite Jewish food?

Jack: Latkes—because I can make them!

Audrey: Jack's mom made the best whitefish salad. And no, I'm not going to make that!

To support the ISJL's work, visit www.isjl.org/donate or reach out to us any time!

REMEMBERING SOUTHERN JEWISH LUMINARIES

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE LOST MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO INSPIRED AND UPLIFTED US. TWO OF THOSE most recently departed include local and regional luminaries who were instrumental in establishing and supporting institutions that changed the South, for the Jewish people and our neighbors.



In July, **Eli Evans**, dubbed the “poet laureate of the Jewish South,” died at the age of 85 from complications related to COVID-19. A Yale-educated lawyer who worked in Washington as a speechwriter for President Lyndon B. Johnson before moving to New York and shifting his professional focus to philanthropic work, Eli’s southern Jewish roots always informed his identity. He was born in North

Carolina, and authored several books inspired by his southern Jewish upbringing, most famously *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South*. Eli served on a wide variety of boards and committees, from the Southern Jewish Historical Society to The Covenant Foundation; he was also President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation from 1977–2003, and was an early board member of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. His life was celebrated at an online memorial event in October; speakers included Marcie Cohen Ferris, Professor Steve Whitfield, and ISJL founder Macy B. Hart, among others.



Beatrice Lehman Gotthelf, better known as “Bea,” passed away this June at the age of 102. Bea was a dear friend of the ISJL staff—and, it seemed, of pretty much everyone. Born in Jackson in 1920, she became an ardent Civil Rights activist. Bea was a recipient of a Civil Justice Lifetime Achievement Award “for being the Mississippi voice against extremism,” as well as receiving the Communi-

ty Service Award from the Institute of Interfaith Dialogue “for meritorious service from a grateful community.” In the 1960s, Bea, with her husband Harold, was among a handful of white Jacksonians who partnered with their Black neighbors to found the Jackson Interfaith Fellowship. She was also co-founder of the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference; was active in the Panel of American Women, the League of Women Voters, and Concerned Women of Faith; and she, along with her sister, Celeste, was a guiding force in the 1970 creation of the Henry S. Jacobs Camp of the Union for Reform Judaism in Utica, Mississippi. She’ll be remembered for her commitment to a more just society, and for her unfailing humor.

MAY THE MEMORIES OF ELI, BEA, AND ALL THOSE WE HAVE LOST
CONTINUE TO BE A SOURCE OF BLESSING FOR US ALL.

Below: Eli Evans speaking at the Covenant Foundation.

Above: Bea Gotthelf visiting the ISJL office to bring a few smiles in 2012. Below: The Lehman sisters: Bea Gotthelf, Celeste Orkin, and Phyllis Herman (photo by Bill Aron).





SHALOM *Y'all* IN YOUR INBOX!

Don't wait months between issues—**sign up for monthly emails from the ISJL** with insights, updates, recipes, and more!

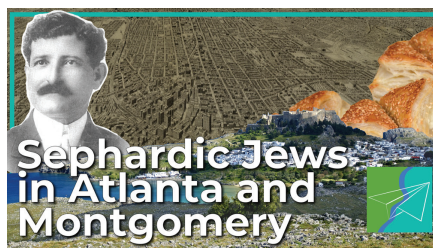
To join the mailing list, email us at information@isjl.org.



CATCH UP ON THE ISJL VIRTUAL VACATION

STORIES FROM THE JEWISH SOUTH

The ISJL Virtual Vacation is a monthly video series that shares stories from the Jewish South—from food and faith to Ballyhoo and burekas to scrap metal and Sephardim, there's so much to explore.



WATCH ON DEMAND AT WWW.ISJL.ORG/VIRTUAL-VACATION

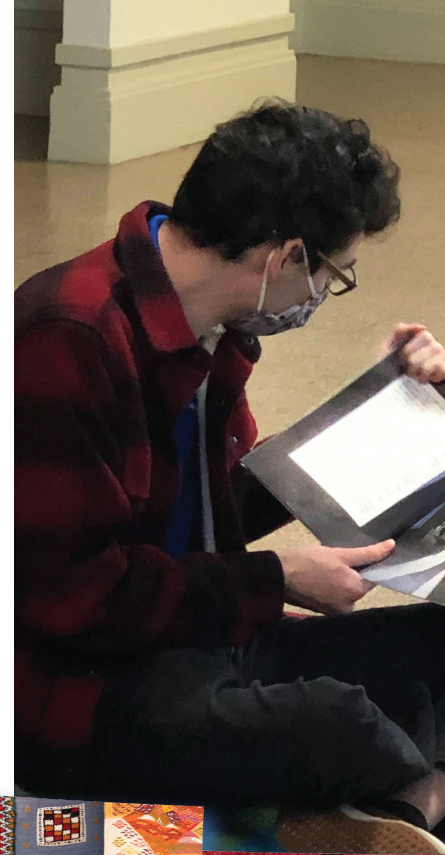
AROUND THE REGION

SOUTHERN JEWISH SCENES

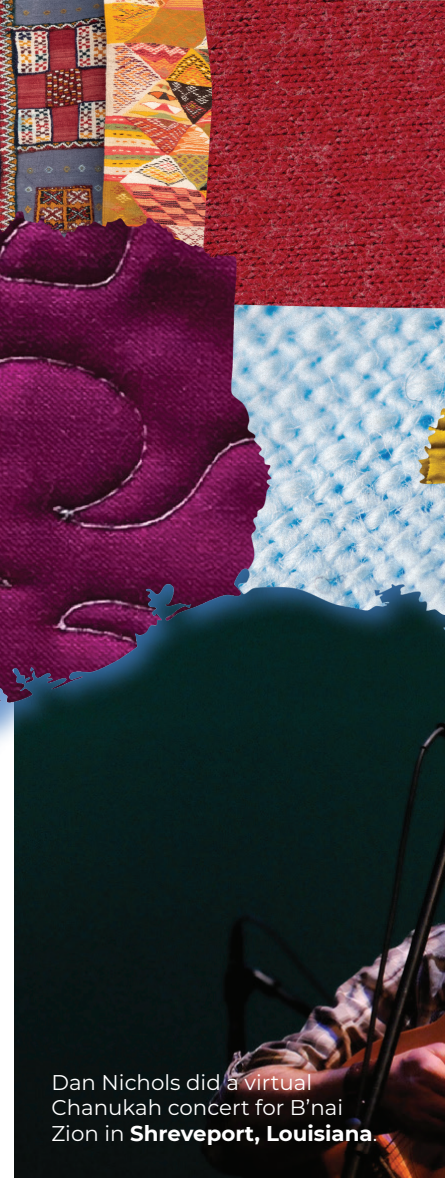
IN JEWISH CULTURE, A CORE ASPECT OF SPIRITUALITY IS COMMUNITY. HERE ARE SOME heartwarming moments from the past year throughout the Jewish South, when we were able to come together or connect across the distance and strengthen these communal ties.



Students designed Valentine's Day cards after learning about loving your neighbor as yourself in **Memphis, Tennessee**.

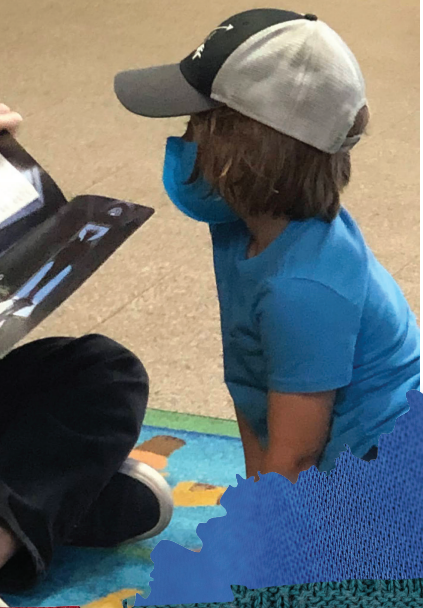


Torah study participants created blackout poetry about the Modern Ani prayer in **Galveston, Texas**.



Dan Nichols did a virtual Chanukah concert for B'nai Zion in **Shreveport, Louisiana**.

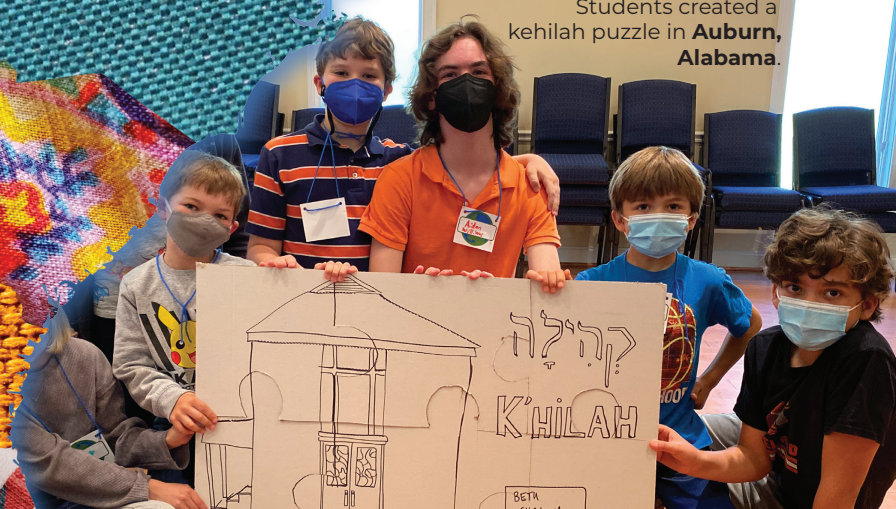
Former PA Landon Crawford read a story with a student in **Lexington, Kentucky**.



Students made golems before Halloween in **Woodbridge, Virginia**.



Students created a kehilah puzzle in **Auburn, Alabama**.



Students of all ages depicted a day of Creation, then connected them to make a collaborative Torah for Simchat Torah in **Greenville, Mississippi**.



Max and Nettie Hutkin—some of the earliest Jewish residents of **Boca Raton, Florida**—were featured in the ISJL Virtual Vacation (courtesy of Marcia Jo Zerivitz).

GIVING THANKS

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

IN THESE PAGES, YOU CAN SEE THE IMPACT THE ISJL HAS 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 or pledge from January 1 to September 15, 2022.

\$100,000+

Stanford & Joan Alexander Foundation
Anonymous
Goldring Family Foundation
Robert G. & Ellen S. Gutenstein Family Foundation
Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies
Woldenberg Foundation
Ann & Henry Zarrow Foundation

\$10,000 – \$99,999

Anonymous
Congregation Emanu-El of New York
Lynn Crystal Charitable Fund
The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Foundation
Jay & Marietta Hesdorffer
The Leon Levine Foundation
Ben May Charitable Trust
National Center for Encouraging Judaism
Spencer & Debra Simons
AMSkier Agency Insurance—Aimee, Jeffrey,
& Henry Skier
Jay & Deanie Stein Foundation Trust
Kenneth Zadeck & Lisa Weiss
M. B. & Edna Zale Foundation

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Imogene Berman
Central Synagogue - New York,
NY
Pepe Prince & Terry Finn
Charlett & Dr. Marshall Frumin
Gail & Michael Goldberg
Susan & Macy B. Hart Tzedakah
Fund
The Douglas J. Hertz Family
Foundation
Joe & Candace Herzog
Sally & Bob Huebscher
Kirschner Trusts
Leifer Family Fund
Andrea & Paul Levy
Morris & Stacey Lewis
Stephen Libowsky & Sue
Berman
Monica Lizka-Miller & Alex Miller,
M. D.
Jackie & Dr. Alan S. Luria

Meyer Family - Margaret, Helen
Marie & Harold Meyer, Jr.
Scott & Julie Miller Philanthropic
Fund of the Dallas Jewish
Community Foundation
Neal W. Nathanson
Heather & Leon Rittenberg, III
Dr. Robert Roubey & Lisa
Brachman
Michele & Ken Schipper
Rachel Reagler Schulman
Rayman L. Solomon & Carol
Avins
Joanne & Joseph Stein, Jr.
Jay & Bz Tanenbaum
Kathryn Wiener
Mary L. Wiener
Henry & Sylvia Yaschik
Foundation



\$1,000 – \$4,999

Stratton Bull
Charles & Bettie Minette
Cooper
Jonathan Coopersmith & Lisa
Halperin
Rabbi Michael & Lindsey
Danziger
Doyne-Oury-Rosenfeld Family
Philanthropic Fund
Arnold Feinstein
Bobette & Lowell J. Friedman
Risa & Drew Herzog
Rachelle D. Hirsch
Jewish Federation of Columbus,
GA
Jewish Federation of Greater
New Orleans, LA
The Aurelia Konrad Charitable
Foundation
Bari & Keith Levingston
Isabel & Peter L. Malkin

Gerald W. Miller Philanthropic
Fund of the Dallas Jewish
Community Foundation
Julia Miller Philanthropic
Fund of the Dallas Jewish
Community Foundation
The Jean & Saul A. Mintz Family
Foundation
Melinda & Morris F. Mintz
Berte A. Muslow
North Louisiana Jewish
Federation
Robin & William Orgel
Beth & Steven D. Orlansky
David & Karen Reagler
Cynthia N. Rittenberg
Terry & Bert Romberg
Philanthropic Fund of the
Dallas Jewish Community
Foundation
Trustmark National Bank

\$500 – \$999

Anonymous
Carol Anne & Sidney M. Blitzer
David & Janet Blum
Samuel & Deborah
Brackstone
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin
Dr. Lawrence & Peggy
Goldstein
Michael & Elaine Gutenstein
Arnold Kaplan
Leo Kayser, III
Anne & Herman S. Kohlmeier,
Jr.
Evelyn & Elliot Kornreich
Edward & Ruth Legum Family
Fund
Lieutenant Colonel Ed Nagler
Donna & Ted Orkin, Jr.
Ambassador John N. Palmer
Lyn & Dr. Carl Schmulen
Susan Shender
Rabbi Todd Silverman
Temple Shalom of Northwest
Arkansas
Dr. Barry & Sandra Uretsky
Rabbi Greg & Tami Weisman

\$250 – \$499

Richard & Andrea Altman
Rabbi Andrew N. Bachman
Jan Carole Benjamin
Laurie Blitzer & Sam Levine
Adele & Rick Burke
Susan & Steven Caller
Clare & Robin Clarke

Jeffrey Cohen
Congregation Beth Shalom: The
Jewish Community of East
AL
George & Alice Copen
Rabbi Denise Eger & Rabbi
Eleanor Steinman
Rabbi James Egoif
Mrs. Elizabeth Friedman
Susan & Howard Green
Hebrew Union Sisterhood -
Greenville, MS
Sharon & David Kessler
Laura & Henry Kline, II
Judy & Mark Konikoff
Dr. Steven Liverman
Morton H. Meyerson Family
Foundation
Debi & Samuel Mishael
Benjy Nelken
The Honorable J. David
Orlansky
Henry & Rose Paris
Cheryl Pollman
Phrose Raphael
Rabbi Joseph Rosen
The Honorable Gerald &
Kathleen Schiff
Mrs. Brunette S. Simmons
Judge John F. & Louise Simon
Annette F. Simon & Robert M.
Portman
Max & Claire Solomon Nisen
Yvonne Stephan
Rachel Stern & Scott Pullen
Max Weiss

CHAI CLUB MEMBERS



THE CHAI CLUB IS THE ISJL'S MONTHLY GIVING society—all of the donors listed here make recurring gifts to the ISJL each month, directly deducted from their accounts; an easy, meaningful way to give!

Rabbi Andrew N. Bachman
Jordan Barkin
The Bleiberg Family
Elias & Michelle Chajet
Samuel Cohen
Sandra & John DeMuth
Mayo "Bren" & Jody Lubritz Dorsey
Lori & Scott Dreffin
Rabbi James Egoif
Debra & Michael N. Fein
Marilyn Gelman
Michael E. Goodman
Charlotte Greely
Susan & Howard Green
Michael & Elaine Gutenstein
Dr. Elizabeth Henderson
Barbara S. Hyman
Norma & Wes James
The Kander-Dauphin Family
Rabbi Debra & Alexander Kassoif
Dr. Madelyn Mishkin Katz
Dorothy & James Kelly
Laura & Henry Kline, II
Judy & Mark Konikoff
Dr. Kevin & Janet Krane
Marla Greenberg Lepore
William Levinson
Alicia Kate Margolis
Lieutenant Colonel Ed Nagler
Phrose Raphael
David & Karen Reagler
Deborah Roberts
Rabbi Joseph Rosen
Malkie Schwartz
Dr. Sam R. Silverblatt
Hayley Smith
Max & Claire Solomon Nisen
Yvonne Stephan
Rachel Stern & Scott Pullen
Paul Sullivan
Sarah & Greg Thomas
Adam & Regan Wassell
Diane & Alan Weil

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAI CLUB?

Visit www.isjl.org/donate



\$100 – \$249

Judith & Stephen B. Alderman
Honey Amado
Joan & Stanley F. Baker
Jordan Barkin
Marcia & Robbie Barron
Lynn & Robert E. Behrendt
Rabbi Judith & Stan Beiner
Jackie & Jerry Bendorf
Sharon Berman
The Bleiberg Family
Neil & Regina S. Block
Rabbi Erin & Batya Boxt
Jerry Branson
Marshall Brill
Milton L. Brown
Rabbi Ben Chaidell
Elias & Michelle Chajet
Charles K. Clark
Samuel Cohen
Congregation B'nai Israel -
Natchez, MS
Benjamin Coplan
Annette Corman
Sandra & John DeMuth
Mayo "Bren" & Jody Lubritz
Dorsey
Lori & Scott Dreffin
Harryette Anne Duncan
Debra & Michael N. Fein
Dell & Leon Felts
Jeff Fleishmann
Howard & Betsy Fleisig
Henry L. Friedman
Marilyn Gelman
Barry & Nancy Glazer
Dale & Jimmy Glenn
Marc & Kimberly Glenn
Dr. Alan Gold, Jr.
Doris & Dr. Martin I. Goldstein
Fred & Edwen Goldstein
Michael E. Goodman
Kimberly Graham
Charlotte Greely
David & Margaret Greenberg
Grace & Jack Hanchrow
Jan Herzog & James Markson
Laurie Herzog & Laura
Arbeitman
Ellis & Marla Hoffman
Debbie & Gary Holzman and
Family
Bonnie Hurtig & Bill Van Hees
Barbara S. Hyman
Florence Isaacs
Dr. Charles Itzig, Jr.
Jackson Jewish Federation -
Jackson, MS
Norma & Wes James
Jewish Council of Lake Norman
- Mooresville, NC
Lis & Hugo Kahn
Arthur & Abby Kalotkin
The Kander-Dauphin Family
Daniela & Seth Kaplan
Helen L. Kaplan
Cheryl & Dr. Howard Katz
Dr. Madelyn Mishkin Katz
Rabbi Stuart & Vicky Kelman
Jeri & David Kitner
Wendy Klein
Maury Kohn
Frederick & Linda Kolchin

Mary & Herb Kornguth
Dr. Kevin & Janet Krane
Leonard & Lynn Krasnow
The Kronenbergs
Marla Greenberg Lepore
Mrs. Dorothy G. Levin
Stuart J. Levin & Sondra
Panico
Dr. Richard B. Levine
William Levinson
Carol J. Levy
Alicia Kate Margolis
Dr. Laurence & Anne Miller
Don A. Mitchell
Don & Rose Ann Naron
Darla P. Newman
Barry Nickelsberg
Esther & Ronald O'Mell
Dr. Mark & Linda Posner
Jerrold Rehmar
Deborah Roberts
Elliott D. & Alice I. Rosenberg
Drs. Eugenia & Marcelo J.
Ruvinsky
Dr. Charles & Harrylyn Sallis
Alice & Elliott Saunders
Robert S. Savelson & Susan
Bianchi
Lorraine & Morton A. Schrag
Katie & Max Schulman
Malkie Schwartz
Mandel C. Selber, Jr.
Cantor Rena Shapiro
Rabbi Robert & Linda Sharff
Arnold Sidman
Rabbi Deborah Silver
Leanne & Alan Silverblatt
Debra Goldstein Smith
Karen Stern
Steven Strauss
Paul Sullivan
The Joseph & Helen Swiff
Fund
Temple Beth Shalom - Austin,
TX
Temple Israel - Jonesboro, AR
Temple Israel Sisterhood -
Memphis, TN
Gene & Annette Vinik
Marcia & Mike Walsh
Adam & Regan Wassell
Ethel & Dr. Richard S. Wayne
Kate & John Webster
Diane & Alan Weil
Jonathon & Stephanie K.
Wolfson
Craig Young
Martha Andes Ziskind

The ISJL is indebted to the following foundations and individuals whose generous investments, past and present, have enabled us to move our vision forward with confidence:

Anonymous
The Stanford & Joan Alexander Foundation
Maurice Amado Foundation
The David Berg Foundation
Bezalel Foundation
Samuel Bronfman Foundation
Covenant Foundation
Elaine & Emanuel Crystal Charitable Fund
Nathan Cummings Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel M. Edelman
The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Foundation
Goldring Family Foundation
The Gottesman Fund
Eugene M. Grant
Robert C. & Ellen S. Gutenstein Family Foundation
Ronne & Donald Hess Foundation
Isle of Capri Casinos, Inc.
Jim Joseph Foundation
Charles & Esther Kimerling Foundation
Ben L. & Betty G. Lamensdorf Endowment Fund
Ted Levi
The Leon Levine Foundation
Lawrence Magdovitz z"l
The Marcus Foundation
Ben May Charitable Trust
Mintz Family
Jean & Bill Mosow
Natan
Harriette & Ted Perlman
Righteous Persons Foundation
Project Accelerate
AMSkier Agency Insurance
Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies
Shornick Family
The Slingshot Fund
Samuel & Helene Soref Foundation
Soref-Breslauer Texas Foundation
Woldenberg Foundation
The Zadeck Family
M.B. & Edna Zale Foundation
Anne & Henry Zarrow Foundation

IN HONOR OF
APRIL 15–SEPT. 15, 2022

William Abrams
Wendy Klein

Lawrence R. Back
Leanne & Alan Silverblatt

**Lucy and Joseph Capotorto's
Wedding**
Elizabeth H. Kleinlehrer

Rabbi Matthew Dreffin
Adam & Regan Wassell

Leah K. Gersh's Birthday
Maury Kohn

Clove Laila Gold
Paul Ackman

Leah R. Harrison
Terry & Bert Romberg

Macy B. Hart
Rabbi Beth Jacowitz
Chottiner
Rabbi Robert & Linda Sharff

Susan & Macy B. Hart
Dr. Richard B. Levine
Teme Levbar

Mary Golde & Bill Howell
Marcia & Robbie Barron

**Sandy & Fred Kline's
Anniversary**
Ethel & Dr. Richard S. Wayne

**Bob & Julia Levingston's
Anniversary**
Leanne & Alan Silverblatt

**The Murrell Family: Lena,
Sallis, Flora, Lazarus, &
Jules**
Dr. Charles & Harrylyn Sallis

**Beth & Steven D. Orlansky's
Anniversary**
The Honorable J. David
Orlansky

Josh & Alli Parshall
Gail & Michael Goldberg

Michele Schipper
Cheryl & Dr. Howard Katz

Carol & David Schulman
Rachel Reagler Schulman

**Francie & Harris Sterling's
Anniversary**
Ethel & Dr. Richard S. Wayne

**Past and Present Jewish
Friends and Colleagues**
Chris Hall

Mary L. Wiener
Mrs. Elizabeth Friedman

**Charlie & Riley Bishop's
naming**
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin

IN MEMORY OF
APRIL 15–SEPT. 15, 2022

Dr. Ayned Mitchell Bell
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin
and John Bell

Dr. Walter Berman
Imogene Berman

Alan Beychok
Susan & Macy B. Hart

Loris Birnkrant
Laurie Blitzer & Sam Levine

Demetrio Charmantes
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Israel Cyrlak
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Libby Cyrlak
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Jonathan S. Dworkin
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin

Eli Evans
Susan & Macy B. Hart

Jean Wolff Friedman
Dan Cohn

Abe & Ruth Frishman
Esther & Ronald O'Mell

Bernard Glickstern
Steven Strauss

Edwen Leyens Goldstein
Fred Goldstein
Helen L. Kaplan

Bea Gotthelf
Lynn Crystal
Dell & Leon Felts
Susan & Macy B. Hart
Michele & Ken Schipper

Jose Kernes
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Ann Zivitz Kientz
Rabbi Denise Eger & Rabbi
Eleanor Steinman
Gail & Michael Goldberg
Susan & Macy B. Hart
Norma & Wes James
The Kander-Dauphin Family
Dr. Mark & Linda Posner
Malkie Schwartz
Rabbi Todd Silverman

Helen B. Kleisdorf
Charles & Bettie Minette
Cooper

Sam L. Kleisdorf
Charles & Bettie Minette
Cooper

Edward Kossman, III
Ethel & Dr. Richard S. Wayne

Harriett Lewis
Susan & Macy B. Hart
Jay & Marietta Hesdorffer
Margaret Meyer
Michele & Ken Schipper

Paul Lewis
Imogene Berman
Susan & Macy B. Hart
Jay & Marietta Hesdorffer
Margaret Meyer
Betsy & Joe Samuels
Michele & Ken Schipper
Rachel Reagler Schulman

Sylvan G. Meyer
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin
and John Bell

Dr. Leon Abraham Minsky
Jack Blumenfeld

Jeanette Nelken
Susan & Macy B. Hart

Robert L. Palmer
Jerry Branson

Beryl Goldberg Pincus
James & Laurie Bell Dworkin
and John Bell

Leon H. Rittenberg, Jr.
Rittenberg Family
Foundation

Marjorie A. Shender
Susan Shender

Stanley Stein Sherman
Dr. Charles Itzig, Jr.

Ralph Silver
Rachel Reagler Schulman

Judith Stein
Susan & Macy B. Hart

Louis L. Switzer
Charles & Bettie Minette
Cooper

Jacob Szynekman
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Leon Szynekman
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

Rabbi Leo & Evelyn Turitz
Carol J. Levy

Ladislav Weisz
The Cusniers: Dr. Rachel,
Edward, Maxwell, &
Bradley

John Wormser
Leanne & Alan Silverblatt





P.O. Box 16528, Jackson, MS 39236-6528

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 134
JACKSON, MS

*THE GOLDRING/WOLDENBERG INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE
SUPPORTS, CONNECTS, AND CELEBRATES JEWISH LIFE IN THE SOUTH.*

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ISJL!



[FACEBOOK.COM/THEISJL](https://www.facebook.com/theisjl)



[@THEISJL](https://www.instagram.com/theisjl)



[@THEISJL](https://www.twitter.com/theisjl)



[YOUTUBE.COM/THEISJL](https://www.youtube.com/theisjl)



[WWW.ISJL.ORG](http://www.isjl.org)



Goldring/Woldenberg
Institute of Southern Jewish Life