A Photo Journey Through Europe’s Painful History

In May of 2019, Steve and Linda Bobroff, and Jordan and Cindy Dern undertook a Jewish heritage tour of Eastern Europe with a group led by Rabbi Joshua Heller from Congregation B’nai Torah in Atlanta. The tour included Krakow, Auschwitz, Budapest, Prague, and Berlin.

Cindy Dern reflected that “My Bucket List was to see the Great Synagogues of Eastern Europe. From May 6 to May 15, Jordan and I saw a lot more than that. On our Jewish Heritage Tour of Eastern Europe, we experienced so many aspects of our Jewish history and heritage.”

The photographs presented on pages 8 and 9 of this edition of The Chronicle are their personal and emotional highlights of this journey. Each photo is accompanied by thoughts and observations from the Derns and Bobroffs.

Great and complex feelings were stirred in the heart of both families. In subsequent issues of the The Chronicle throughout 2019-2020 we will publish more in-depth reflections from both couples.

The photo at right taken by Linda Bobroff shows the Shoes on the Danube Bank, a memorial in Budapest, Hungary honoring the Jews who were killed by fascist Arrow Cross militiamen during World War II. They were ordered to take off their shoes, and were shot at the edge of the water so that their bodies fell into the river and were carried away. The memorial represents the shoes left behind on the bank.

Ralph Lowenstein Recognized by Israel Defense Forces

The State of Israel recently honored surviving American and Canadian volunteers who served in Israel’s 1948/49 War for Independence. Among those recognized at a May 5 ceremony at the Jewish Chapel of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York was Gainesville’s own Ralph Lowenstein.

In the photo at left, Ralph is shown with Major-General Michael Edelstein, Israel Defense Forces Attache to the United States, who pinned the Israeli Army’s 70th anniversary medal on his lapel.

(Photo by Henry Lowenstein)

This story continues on page 5.
JCNCF Mission Statement

As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, the JCNCF has been formed to operate and engage in philanthropic, cultural, and other group activities for charitable and educational purposes that shall contribute to the welfare of the Jewish community of North Central Florida and other Jewish communities around the world.

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Submissions Policy

News and announcements of events that are of interest and open to the entire Jewish community will be included as space allows. The times and places of regular and special Jewish religious events, as well as Jewish organizational events, will be placed in the Chronicle’s monthly community calendar.

Please submit original material of 500 words or less, not published or to be published elsewhere, along with photos of interest to the community. Submissions may be e-mailed in Word document format to chronicle@jcncf.org; or dropped off at the Jewish Council of North Central Florida office. Please submit photos in high resolution with a caption identifying the subject and all people depicted. JCNCF reserves the right to edit all submissions. The Chronicle does not publish letters to the editor.

The Chronicle and the Jewish Council do not endorse the goods and services advertised in these pages, and make no representation as to the kashrut of the food, products, and services in such advertising.

If you have any questions, email chronicle@jcncf.org or call 352.371.3846.

All submissions are due on or before the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Together we can do extraordinary things!

With your generous gifts, the JCNCF’s Annual Campaign for 2018/2019 has surpassed $180,000! Thank you to all who donated!

We appreciate your support of our mission.
Visit www.jcncf.org to make your secure donation online now, or contact us at 352.371.3846 or office@jcncf.org.

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Anti-Semitism in Alachua County Public Schools

On Tuesday, May 7, over 40 Jewish students, parents and community members attended a meeting of the Alachua County School Board. At the meeting, students and parents spoke passionately about ending anti-Semitic incidents in local schools. In addition to those who attended that meeting, group leaders presented a petition to end anti-Semitism and ALL ACTS of HATE in the public schools. To date, the petition has received over 1,500 individual signatures – many of which were signed by Alachua County residents. Additionally, a team of parents formed a grassroots advocacy group, which has been following up with the school district and met with a group of administrators on Wednesday, May 29. The school board appointed a contact person with whom the group will work on Holocaust education AND anti-hate curriculum, training, parent communication, and social-emotional learning. Below is the text of the petition.

What happened and why are you circulating a petition? Parents and kids in the Alachua county school district have reported increasing instances of antisemitism within the school system. While sharing our stories within our community, a large group of parents have expressed their outrage over the anti-Semitic instances and have decided to work together to raise awareness of antisemitism in our schools with the School Board of Alachua County and to work together to address the climate of hate.

The local stories that parents are sharing are a part of a nationwide rise in anti-Semitic instances. As we read national news reports, we remember the promise instilled in us – to never forget the Holocaust which took the lives of 6,000,000 Jews during World War II. Among the alarming stories, in 2019, CNN reported that 66% of Millennials cannot identify what Auschwitz is, and a few weeks ago, CBS News reported that 22% of Millennials don’t know if the Holocaust even existed at all.

What are we asking from the School Board? We are hopeful that the School Board will choose to be partners and leaders in addressing the climate of hate that our kids have experienced. While the School Board has agreed to mention Florida’s new antisemitism legislation and to mention Holocaust Remembrance Day at the next School Board Meeting, this alone falls short of our request for more action. We are asking the School Board to:

1. Create a road-map to address this critical issue across the district. The road-map can include honoring Holocaust Remembrance Day in April in all ACPS middle and high schools, infusing an anti-hate curriculum across schools, and a letter to parents outlining the road-map.
2. Write an annual letter to parents that provides resources to discuss the Holocaust and tolerance with their kids.

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Join a group of Jewish and African-American community leaders on a guided tour of Rosewood as we seek to create a better future.

Tuesday, July 16
7:30 am—4 pm

$100/adult min.*
No charge for students**

The Rosewood massacre was a racially motivated massacre of black people and destruction of a black town that took place during the first week of January 1923 in rural Levy County, Florida. At least six black people and two white people were killed, though eyewitness accounts suggested a higher death toll of 27 to 150. The town of Rosewood was destroyed, in what contemporary news reports characterized as a race riot.

*Adults are encouraged to subsidize a student’s participation by making an additional donation.

**High School students may join alone; Middle Schoolers must be accompanied by an adult.
Contact Rabbi Michael Joseph for information & reservations
mljoseph@gmail.com
numbers strictly limited!!

Guide:
Sherry DuPree
Sherry DuPree began researching the Rosewood massacre in the 1970s while she worked as a librarian at the University of Florida. As a Smithsonian fellow, she set up an exhibit about the Rosewood massacre to further educate people about this gruesome occurrence of injustice and violence.

Trip arranged through Rosewood Heritage Foundation.
Complete details will be sent when you make a reservation.
Ralph Lowenstein Recognized by Israel Defense Forces

Ralph Lowenstein, longtime member of the Gainesville Jewish community, was one of the featured speakers at a ceremony at the United State Military Academy, West Point, NY, on May 5 to honor surviving U.S. and Canadian veterans of Israel’s War of Independence in 1948. Numerous Israeli military and diplomatic representatives were present at the event.

Dr. Lowenstein, 89, Dean Emeritus of the UF College of Journalism and Communications, is believed to be the second-youngest of the 1,300 American and Canadian men and women who volunteered in 1948. A native of Danville, Virginia, he was 18 at the time, and served in the 79th Armored Battalion as a halftrack driver (the entire Israeli army had only three tanks at the time). An Eagle Scout, he had learned to drive in Virginia at the age of 13, and had a driver’s license at the age of 14. Few Israelis knew how to drive, and Lowenstein’s skill was in great demand. He went into combat only 10 days after being smuggled into the country. He later served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, 1952-54.

Only five surviving U.S. and Canadian veterans were present at the event. In 1948, along with some 3,000 volunteers from other nations in the world, the volunteers had been known in Israel in 1948 as “Machal,” the Hebrew acronym for the words mitnadvei chutz l’aretz (volunteers from outside Israel).

In his talk, Dr. Lowenstein said that he was a 25-year-old newspaper reporter for the El Paso Times in El Paso, Texas, in 1955 when he was sent one afternoon to interview Yigal Alon, a famous Israeli commanding officer and later politician in Israel who was visiting the city. In the course of the interview, he mentioned to Mr. Alon that he had had an “insignificant” role as a volunteer in the Israeli army during the War of Independence.

“No, Ralph,” Alon responded, “It was not insignificant! When you got there, our backs were against the wall. When we saw the men and women from Machal, we knew we were not alone.”

Lowenstein told the West Point audience that 94 percent of all the Jews in the world now live in the United States and Israel, with about half of those 94 percent living in Israel and half in the United States.

“No matter what you might read and hear and see in the media now or in the future,” he said to the many Israelis in the audience, “I want you to take back to your families and friends in Israel that 98 per cent of American Jews are strong supporters of Israel, and you will never be alone!”

Ralph Lowenstein Retires from “Israel in Brief” Column

Thank you for your kind comments about the column about Israel that I have written for the last four years. I am now in my 90th year of age (I know, I don’t look like it), and woke up one morning recently with a great idea: “Stop making deadlines!” I was editor of my high school newspaper at age 16; wrote a weekly column about army life for my hometown paper (Danville, VA) for the two years I spent in the US Army during the Korean War; had daily deadlines for newspapers in college, three years as a professional reporter, and even editor of a monthly publication while struggling through my Ph.D. degree. I had daily deadlines for kids’ trivia questions for many years as “Radio Ralph” on WRUF-AM, while I was dean at UF. Enough already.

Your friend, Ralph

The Board and Staff of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida are grateful for Ralph’s many years of dedicated service to the Jewish community, in general and The Chronicle, in particular. We wish him all the rest and relaxation he deserves in his “retirement.”
Community Holocaust Remembrance

Yom Ha’Shoah Committee:
Estelle Aden, Jordan Dern,
Dr. Abe Goldman,
Virginia Brissette Hirshik,
Dr. Lynne Holt,
Dr. Barbara Oberlander,
Jenna Price,
Philip Schwartz, Dr. Steven Slutsky,
and Dr. Kenneth Wald
& Dr. Robin West.

Service Leaders:
Rabbi Ze’ev Harari,
Eve Ackerman &
Howard Rosenblatt.

Candle Lighters:
Dr. Kenneth Wald,
Shirley Haberman,
Stacey Steinberg, Jenna Price,
Christopher Maly,
Steven Butler, and Dr. Saeed Khan.

The Actors’ Warehouse:
Steven Butler, Executive Director,
Chuck Lipsig, Director of
The Ghosts on the Wall

Cast:
Justin Clement, Edward Hunter,
Claudia Senesac, and Nick Smith.

Sponsors:
Dawn Burgess-Krop &
Dr. Harry Krop,
Stephen Golant & Dora Kerner,
Dr. Kenneth Wald & Dr. Robin West,
Congregation B’nai Israel,
Rabbi David Kaiman,
B’nai Israel Sisterhood, and
Rabbi Michael Joseph.

Over 200 people attended this year’s Community Holocaust Remembrance Program, featuring a production of The Ghosts on the Wall by the Actors’ Warehouse. Attendees experienced the powerful and moving first hand account of the Nazi persecution of Curt and Regina Schoenwald in 1940s Germany. JCNCF Board member and Gainesville resident Dr. Kenneth Wald is the grandson of Curt and Regina. Chris Maly, a high school English teacher in Wald’s hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska developed the play based on letters between the Schoenwalds and Ken’s father. Wald allowed Maly to use the family letters to educate public school students about the dangers of hate.

The Yom Ha’Shoah committee would like to extend special recognition to Estelle Aden for her many years as leader of the candle-lighting ceremony. Her devotion to the victims of the Holocaust and her excellence as a communicator have greatly enriched the commemoration.

Estelle is pictured at right during the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance program.
Highlights from Israel Day Celebration and Talk

Thank You to All Who Made the PJ Library and PJ Our Way Israel Day Program Possible

Sponsors: Dawn Burgess-Krop & Dr. Harry Krop, Harvey Goldstein, and Roz Okun


Thank You to All Who Made The Honey and The Sting - Israeli Independence Day Program Possible

Sponsors: Dawn Burgess-Krop & Dr. Harry Krop
The brick buildings in Auschwitz were erected as troop barracks during WWI. Over 1.5 million people were killed in Auschwitz/Birkenau, including 24 documented members of Steve’s mother’s family. This UNESCO World Heritage site thoroughly documents and describes the atrocities that occurred there. Our young, Polish tour guide was not only knowledgeable, she was reverent and respectful, which meant so much to us in this horrible place. There are no words that can adequately describe the experience of being there. - Steve and Linda Bobroff

The tour group passes through the infamous entry gate to Auschwitz. The gate reads in German: “Arbeit Macht Frei”, Work Makes You Free. This phrase appeared over the entrances to several concentration camps. The metal gate at Auschwitz was made by the hands of its prisoners who constructed it with an inverted “B” as an act of defiance. *Source: Auschwitz.info*

Seeing Auschwitz, the bunkers, guard towers, an entrance stating “Work Will Make You Free”, the cobble stones, the silence, the cold wind and rain, the starkness of the precisely lined streets and railroad tracks leading to the crematorium bought out the cries of our people.

But to me, the cries within were the photos of the children at Theresienstadt in the Czech Republic from which “I Never Saw Another Butterfly” was taken. Hundreds of pieces of artwork were displayed. Some of the art depicted hope with pretty flowers, a blue sky, green grass and butterflies, while other artwork showed what was happening at that time in real time. A picture of a hanging, a decapitation, an officer with a rifle shooting a man, possibly this child’s own father.

It broke my heart to see this artwork, from the only camp that had crayons and art supplies for children, making life seem like a normal school to the outsider, conducting such horrible events. - Cindy Dern
Europe’s Painful History

Birkeneau only has a handful of (rebuilt) wooden barracks remaining. There were about 300 buildings, each housing up to 300 people (90,000 total). You can see a field of remaining brick chimneys denoting where all the barracks were burned down as the Nazis fled. We said Kaddish at the Monument to the Victims at the rear of the camp. It is a very quiet, solemn and overwhelming experience. - Steve and Linda Bobroff

Before WW II there were 800,000 Jews in Hungary; 600,000 were killed in the Shoah. This unthinkable loss is demonstrated when you visit the Great Synagogue (Dohany Street Syn.) in Pest. This beautiful synagogue is the second largest functioning synagogue outside of Israel, with a seating capacity of about 3,000 people. Yet in 2019, on a typical Shabbat there are about 100 people in attendance. These numbers break your heart. - Steve and Linda Bobroff

There was a Memorial of “Platform 17” – the train platform where Berlin’s Jews were deported quietly in the evening. The Germans were so precise and detailed that when they completed their transports they dislodged part of the rail and planted a tree – noting that these tracks COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN USED FOR THIS PURPOSE THAT “YOU ARE SUGGESTING.” The platform is now lined with 186 plates, each marking the date of the 186 trains that left the platform and the number of victims it carried. The trains held 100 people. Sometimes there were as little as 50 on the trains, and at other times as many as 730 Jews at a time. - Cindy Dern
A Scholar (and Mentsh*) Among Us

By Heath Lynn Silberfeld

Jack Kugelmass, Ph.D., is perhaps known to Chronicle readers as the Melton Legislative Professor and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida, perhaps as Professor of Anthropology, and certainly as the man who shaped the Gainesville Jewish Film Festival, considered to be one of the best in the United States. As director of the Center, Jack has advocated for Yiddish alongside the Center’s traditional programs, hosted international speakers, and garnered a smart and accomplished faculty. In addition, he has arranged for musical performances featuring established and emerging voices in Jewish music from around the world, and worked with his colleagues to mount a series of workshops and conferences that have brought Jewish history and culture to the campus and beyond. Some of these events are organized in tandem with JCNCF. All of them have raised the stature of the Center.

Jack grew up in Montreal, Canada, where attendance at a Yiddish primary school became the starting point for lifelong pursuits related to Yiddish culture, language, and art. He continued his education at McGill University, then further honed his interest in critical theory and theoretical anthropology while earning both an M.A. and a Ph.D. at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan. After graduating he became a research associate at the Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the YIVO Institute. Although he doesn’t consider himself particularly talented at language acquisition, Jack has studied Yiddish, French, Latin, Hebrew, Spanish, and Polish. He’s starting to dip his toe into Turkish.

His first professorship was in folklore and anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He then moved to Arizona State University in Tempe, where he joined the Jewish Studies Program. He has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Lady Davis Foundation, and the Canada Council, as well as three fellowships from the Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and an upcoming one-year fellowship from the Frankel Institute at the University of Michigan.

His interests are many and varied, though Jack’s scholarly nature contributes to most of them. While living in New York City, he tried to earn a livelihood as a potter. He remains an active cyclist and photographer and has shown at both the Jewish Museum in 1985 and at the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv in 1987. (For more specifics about “The Miracle of Intervale Avenue: The Story of a Jewish Congregation in the South Bronx,” including Jack’s synagogue photographs and his accompanying text, see tinyurl.com/y29rhnah).

He is understandably proud of his two children: Eliahu, who just received a B.A. from McGill, and Tamar, who is heading there this fall. Jack’s profound love of Torah is further deepened as a member of Congregation B’nai Israel, and most Shabbats provide another opportunity to share his home-baked challah with family and friends.

Jack has served as director of the Center for Jewish Studies for 12 years and is taking leave for two years beginning this fall. He’s headed to Ann Arbor where he’ll be collaborating with other scholars, poets, and translators about research on the theme “Yiddish Matters.” We hope that Jack will return to Gainesville in 2021 and resume his place as a key participant in the Gainesville Jewish community.

Jack’s self-professed intellectual style is “chaotic,” and, as I learned, much respected by his colleagues and appreciated by his students in the courses he offers, such as Screening the Holocaust, Photoethnography, Performance Theory, and other classes in anthropology and Jewish studies. Ken Wald, a former director of the Center, shared with me that Jack has a sterling reputation in academia and has raised the national profile of the Center so that it is now one of the most robust in the United States.
Jack spends a lot of time in Israel, especially during the summer, where he does research at the National Library and attends the Jerusalem Film Festival. He is the author of some important publications, including a number of pieces that form part of his new book in progress, *Traveling in Yiddish: A Study of Yiddish Traveler Narratives from World War I until 1964*.

Please join the Jewish Council of North Central Florida and Jack’s many friends and colleagues in wishing him well and welcoming him back when he returns to our vibrant community.

* As a stickler for spelling, and while writing about someone who knows much more about Yiddish than I ever will, in this article’s title I’ve opted for the official Yiddish transliteration of *מענטש*, which is mensch. Jack astutely informed me that mensch is German, not Yiddish. Whatever . . . he’s a mensch!

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**Mission Statement of the Center for Jewish Studies**

The Center for Jewish Studies promotes Jewish literacy among all members of the University of Florida community both on and off campus. Students are encouraged to develop as critical thinkers, aware of the complexity, as well as the historical and regional diversity, of the Jewish experience. The curriculum promotes a broad and comprehensive approach to Jewish studies, emphasizing historical, social, and cultural transformations and comparative frameworks among various Jewish communities and with other groups and religions.

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The Center is home to twenty faculty, eight undergraduate and graduate scholarships, and nearly two dozen endowments. It is a world-class center—a community of intellectuals working together to achieve the center’s mission. The Center offers two certificates—(1) Holocaust Studies and (2) Europe and the Jews—as well as a major, a minor, and an honors program in Jewish Studies. We offer our appreciation to prior directors Barry Mesch and Shaya Isenberg (founding directors), Warren Bargad, Ken Wald, and Judy Page, as well as Jack Kugelmass!
Chavaya Celebrates Another Year

By Shauna Sikron, Coordinator of Jewish Learning
Congregation B’nai Israel

In April, Congregation B’nai Israel’s Hebrew school, known as Chavaya, celebrated the end to another school year. We concluded a busy school year with a ceremony to present a personalized siddur to our rising third grade class. We also took a moment to recognize Connie Stern for her dedicated passion as a B’nai Mitzvah tutor for so many of our maturing students. Lastly, our students led an interactive program for their families that included “Hebrew Through Movement,” a musical performance, a Jewpardy game and a Mitzvah Match memory game (all created by our students).

This past year was full of growth (we enrolled 50 students!), development (we welcomed Dani Vaknin to develop our music program), and kindness (we collected over $80 in tzedakah for the Bread of the Mighty Food Bank and made several meals for the St. Francis House). We continued to study Hebrew through prayer, celebrate our Jewish holidays together, but we also discussed the Jewish values that drive the actions of our community.

We will meet again in August but until then, some will be joining us for B’nai Israel’s first summer camp! With sessions for grades K-5, we will be doing farm tours, gardening, Hebrew movement and more as we focus on Jewish Sustainability.

Save These Dates for Miss Emily Shabbaton Weekend!

Friday, September 27 from 4:30 to 5:30 pm
PJ Library/Day School concert with dinner afterwards.
Saturday, September 28 from 10:30 to 11:30 am
Musica program for ages 6m through PreK
Sunday, September 29 from 11 am to 12 noon
Family High Holidays program

Miss Emily Aronoff Teck is a Jewish Music Educator who loves to engage young kids and their families with their Judaism through music. She believes wholeheartedly in the power of informal education and utilizes music as her tool of choice.

Introducing North Central Florida Chapter of BBYO

Greetings, friends!

We are so happy to share with you the good news that North Central Florida has a new chapter of BBYO! For those of you who don’t know, the B’nai B’rith Youth Organization is a youth group for both Jewish boys (who are called the AZA, Aleph Zadik Aleph), and Jewish girls (who are referred to as the BBG, B’nai B’rith girls). It is an international organization that aims to unite Jewish youth and to educate them about their heritage, and of course, it’s a fun way to connect with new friends! This past year, our Gainesville chapter was formed and we held board elections, volunteered, went bowling, and attended some local conventions.

BBYO is open to anyone who identifies as Jewish, in any way. We try to meet every two weeks, barring the summer and large scale conflicts. While it’s free to be a part of our Gainesville chapter, there is a fee to become a member of BBYO, which allows you to register easier and pay less for regional events. As it currently stands, we have four officers: President, Noga Brauner; Spiritual Director, Naomi Richards; Secretary, Shaina Storch; and Event Planner, Daniel Silver. For more information about BBYO, please contact Naomi at omimimbug@gmail.com, or Noga at nogbra10@gmail.com.

We wish you all a happy and hopefully, not too warm summer!

~ BBYO Gainesville ~
Transitions: Community Life Events

Do you have a life cycle event you would like to share with our JCNCF community? Please submit items to chronicle@jcncf.org. Submissions may be edited as space allows. Pictures are welcome and encouraged! Transitions may include birth, engagement and wedding announcements, bar and bat mitzvah, graduations, promotions and honors, and memorials.

In Memoriam: Our community mourns the passing of these beloved friends and family members:

George Dern,
Brother of Jordan Dern & Cindy Dern

Beverly Ruth Soclof Kaiman & Marvin Kaiman,
Parents of David Kaiman & Rebeca Shalom and Jay & Natalie Kaiman.
Grandmother of Joel (Bethanie Barber), Daniel (Rachel Gold),
Ari (Emily), Shira (David Hudson), Aliza (Daniel Epstein).
Great-grandparents of Eliana, Amalya, Maayan, Shai, Levi, Ezra and Shula.

Judith Levin,
Mother of Cliff Levin and Linda Lewis.
Grandmother of Cara Levin.

Rose Lowenstein,
Mother of Jay Lowenstein, Susan Nadeau.
Grandmother of Che, Everette, Nicole, Cameron, Adrienne, Hillary, and Leslie

Michelle Sternshein,
Sister of John & Anita Prager

May their loved ones find solace in their memory.

Mazel Tov to Gainesville’s Newest Graduates!

High School Graduates

Jasmine Buzzella
Safi Chalfin Smith
Ruth King
Tamar Kugelmass
Nathan Parks
Sarah Pincus
Adin Richards
Grant Schaffer
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Sandra James, Office Assistant
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**Gainesville Chapter of Hadassah (HAD)**
Meredith Bacharach, President
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352.256.7631.0

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www.interfaith-encounter.org

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www.bethsholomcitrus.org
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10 Locations Throughout Florida!
### Save These Dates

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<th>WHEN</th>
<th>JCNCF Programs &amp; Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, September 27 -</td>
<td>Shabbaton Weekend with Miss Emily</td>
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<td>Sunday, September 29</td>
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<td>Monday, September 30 -</td>
<td>Rosh Hashana</td>
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