

# Texas Jewish Historical Society



May 2017 News Magazine

## Schulenburg Temple Celebrates 65th Birthday

by Sheldon Lippman

Temple Israel has been part of Schulenburg's religious community for over 65 years. This Texas house of worship was dedicated in September, 1951.

To commemorate this milestone and its Founding Members, many of their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and friends came together on March 19, 2017, to pay tribute to those who displayed a pioneering spirit over six decades ago that built a home for the small Jewish community in Central Texas. Temple Israel has held

six bar mitzvahs, the first in 1961. Three of these bar mitzvah celebrants returned for this special day. And there has been only one wedding, in 1953;



*Progeny of Temple Israel founding members who grew up in Schulenberg: Paula (Schwartz) Stein; Phyllis (Schwartz) Hengst; Irvin, Marilyn, and Sheldon Lippman; Isyjean (Pinchin) Korenck; and Phil Lippman.*

that couple, Fred and Diane Koenig, also returned to Schulenburg from their home in Houston to receive a special blessing for their unique role in

Temple Israel's history.

Roy Walter, rabbi emeritus, Congregation Emanu El in Houston and a long-time friend of Temple Israel congregants, delivered a brief history of the Temple; Moshe Ben Bassat, lead singer with the Kosher Klezmer Band, performed a spirited rendition of Israeli music; and there was belated TuB'Shvat, including a tree-planting dedication in the Temple's front yard.

The Sefer Torah used by Temple Israel was purchased in 1903 by Leo and Susie

Edmonds Steiner of Columbus who as newlyweds traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, and purchased the Torah

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# — Message from the Incoming President —

by **Davie Lou Solka**

Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me to serve as President of the Texas Jewish Historical Society. I am looking forward to a year of fun, learning and results for our projects—continuing and new ones.

Our board members are a wonderful group of individuals, and I know they take their responsibility as a board member very seriously to do the best job they can. I have challenged each of them to add two new members this year. Our organization can only continue to grow if we all work toward increasing our membership and involving as many people as we can. You do not have to be a member of the board to serve on a committee, and I encourage you to let me know if you are interested in any area of the organization. We



have wonderful projects and many committees could use your help. Don't hesitate to contact me to discuss the opportunities available to you. We have undertaken and begun to implement a Five-Year Plan. Much has been accomplished, but there is even more to do. We will


be working on that in the coming year.

Our next Board Meeting will be in Austin June 10-11, and we have plans to visit interesting places for our future meetings. I hope you will join us.

I have enjoyed editing the News Magazine, but with the responsibility of president, I am stepping down for the time being. Jack Solka will be the new editor. Please contact him if you have articles for the News Magazine.

I think this upcoming year will be an exciting year for the Texas Jewish

Historical Society, and you can make it even more exciting by travelling with us on our journey. As Howard Cohen, Chancellor Emeritus of Purdue University/Calumet, once said, "History is not history until it is written or told." It is up to us to write and tell. See you in Austin!

*Davie Lou Solka* 

## Save the Date

**October 21-22, 2017**

Board Meeting in  
Marshall, Texas

**January 12-14, 2018**

Board Meeting in  
Gonzales, Texas

**April 20-22, 2018**

Annual Gathering and Board  
Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas

## The Texas Jewish Historical Society May 2017 Quarterly News Magazine

The Texas Jewish Historical Society News Magazine is published four times annually. Stories about Texas Jewish history, oral histories, and requests for assistance with research are welcome, as are photographs and historical documents. Please provide color photocopies or scans at 300 dpi or greater in gif, tif, or jpg format, and send electronically to Editor Jack Solka at [jack@solka.net](mailto:jack@solka.net) or by mail to 3808 Woodbrook Circle, Austin, TX 78759, 512-527-3799. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

**Editor** Jack Solka

**Layout/Design Editor** Alexa Kirk

Note: The Texas Jewish Historical Society is unable to guarantee the safe receipt and/or return of documents and photographs. It is strongly recommended that you provide color photocopies of both color and black & white documents. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

*Visit us on the web at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org).*



**The deadline for  
the July 2017 TJHS  
News Magazine is  
Friday, June 9.**

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# — Message from the Outgoing President —

## by David Beer

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When I was elected your president back in the spring of 2015, my immediate goal was to go into a “not sink the ship” mentality. I was anything but well versed in how the inner workings of our organization operated. After my panic attack subsided, in a rare moment of clarity in my brain, I came to realize where my deficiencies lay in order to



lead an organization of this magnitude. The thoughts that prevailed in that moment of clarity were, “If I don’t know what is required of me in my capacity as president, where could I receive the advice and counsel to help me along the way?”

I decided to ask our past presidents going back some ten to twelve years for their assistance. They graciously agreed to provide me the help that I so desperately needed when I came across presidential decisions that had to be made. Over the past twenty-four months, I regularly reached out to my “Past President’s Advisory Council” who kept me from sinking the ship. For their guidance, I am most grateful. I am glad, though, that as my term progressed, I began to get

a feel for what was needed to be done and how to do it in my capacity as president.

As we traveled around the state, I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many of the members that I did not know. I do regret, however, that there

are so many more of the membership that I would have enjoyed meeting as TJHS continues to go from town to town, and continue to hear about, collect, and disseminate our Texas Jewish history.

When I took office at the Annual Gathering in Dallas in April, 2015, one of my prime objectives was to recruit new members to add to our membership rolls. As our membership ages, the need for younger members becomes more critical than ever to “replenish” the ranks. If we don’t look for new (and younger) members, then the future of the Texas Jewish Historical Society becomes very uncertain. Please, friends, give the gift of membership to your children, age-appropriate grandchildren, and as

graduation gifts. Please help preserve Texas Jewish History.

In addition to the need to increase a younger membership base, we decided to look to the past in order to plan for the future of TJHS. With that in mind, a committee was formed to put together a Five Year Plan that was proposed to chart our future. In the past eighteen months, the plan has begun to be put into action. We still have additional parts that need to be instituted and will be in the near future.

So, as my presidency draws to a close, I have happily accepted my past-president’s pin at the Annual Gathering in San Antonio, and will be proud to have my name added to the illustrious list of past presidents.

I want to thank the TJHS members for honoring me with the opportunity to serve as president these past two years. As I turn over this fine organization to my dear friend Davie Lou Solka, I want to say to her, “DL, I hope that you don’t find too much of a mess that I leave behind for you.”

Finally, I want to thank all of the members of the board and the officers that I have had the honor of serving with for the past twenty-four months. Thank you again.


Your (past) president, David 

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## *Notes from the Board Meeting*

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At the April Board Meeting in San Antonio, the following occurred:

- A grant of \$1,000 was approved for Jillian Glantz, an independent filmmaker who is directing a documentary about Texans with Crypto-Jewish roots. Suggestions for people to contact will be welcomed by Ms. Glantz. See the article on page 21 for more information about Ms. Glantz and her film.
- A new slate of officers was elected (see listing elsewhere in this issue).
- A change to Article IV, Sections (e) and (g) was made. The positions of Archivist and Historian were combined making the title Historian/Archivist.
- Lynna Kay Shuffield is researching Historic Texas Cemetery designations and is completing or has submitted applications for the Navasota Hebrew Benevolent Society Cemetery, Emanu El Memorial Park Cemetery in Houston, Hebrew Section of Fairview Cemetery in Gainesville, and Emanuel Hebrew Rest in Fort Worth. 



# Annual Gathering in San Antonio



*Back: Jack, Liz, Michael, Steven, and Andrea Solka.  
Front: Davie Lou Solka*



*Havdalah service with Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl.*



*Mitzi Chafetz and Ben Rosenberg at the Jewish exhibit at the  
Institute of Texan Cultures.*



*David Beer receives his past-resident's pin from  
Davie Lou Solka, incoming president.*



*TJHS members who attended the Annual Gathering.*



*Robert Cohen spoke at the San Antonio  
Library on photographing cemeteries.*



# April 21-23, 2017



*Charles Hart; Marty & Ruthe Berman; Jack Solka; Pacey Laves under Chihuly sculpture at San Antonio Library.*

*Sharon Gerber and Joan Katz.*



*Davie Lou Solka, Bobbi Kallison Ravicz, and Jack Solka.*



*Cousins at TJHS: Jan Hart, Glenda Alter, and Charles Hart.*



*Temple Chai's Rabbi David Komerofsky, Abbi Michelson, and Samylu Rubin.*



*Left: Barbara Rosenberg with a family trunk at the Institute of Texan Cultures.*

*Right: Texas Jewish Historical Society recognized at an exhibit at the Institute of Texan Culture.*

exhibit was made possible through the generous support of:

**The Texas Jewish Historical Society**  
**The Eleanor and Frank Freed Foundation**  
**Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund**  
**The Jewish Federation of San Antonio Endowment Fund**  
**The Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater San Antonio**  
**Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community of San Antonio and Its Component Funds,**  
**The Samuels Foundation**  
**Mickey and Noel Graubart Philanthropic Fund**

# TJHS Members Visit Cuba

by Vickie Vogel

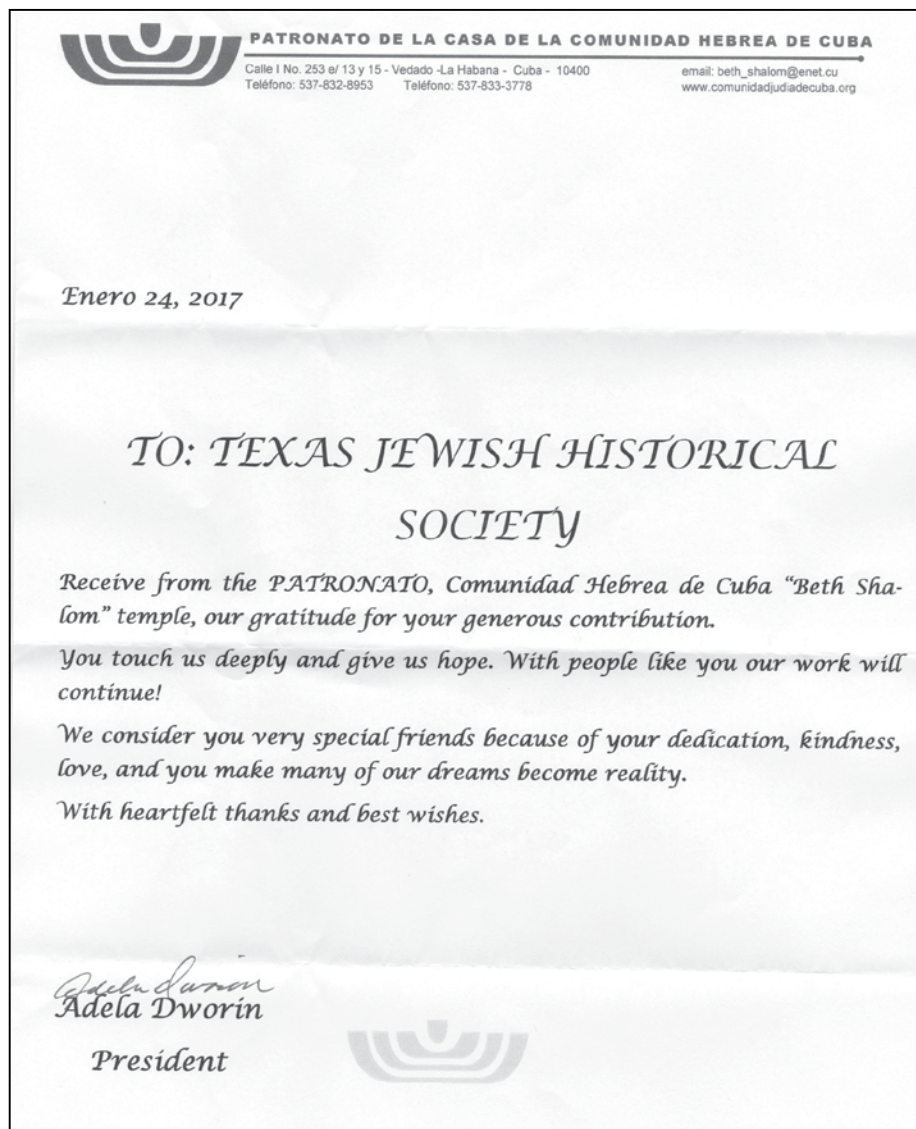
The Texas Jewish Historical Society sponsored its third trip to Cuba in January. Twenty-one travelers, some new to TJHS, joined the humanitarian mission to the Jewish communities of Havana. We have now taken some 100 visitors to the island.

The Patronato is the largest synagogue, and its president, Adela Dworin, met with us again and shared her knowledge of Jewish history and life in Havana. We helped the Patronato and the Sephardi Center with needed goods, as well as cash donations from each of our participants. As always, no TJHS funds were used for anything, and each traveler paid his/her own way.

On Shabbat, we worshipped at the Patronato and were guests of the congregation for dinner, along with a youth group from Argentina. A generous donor from the United States had just pledged funds to replace the roof. Other repair work was going on inside. We visited the Holocaust



*The first Holocaust Memorial in North America is at the Jewish cemetery in Havana. Pictured: Manuel Castillo. Photo by Vickie Vogel.*



*Letter from LaPatronata president Adela Dworin to TJHS.*

Exhibit at the Sephardi Center, and the historic Jewish cemetery where we recited Kaddish. A caretaker was on hand to help some in our group locate specific graves at the request of family members.

We once again had our beloved guide, Manuel Castillo, who took excellent care of us despite a death in the family right after we arrived. The cold front which hit the U.S. the day we left Miami sent high winds to Cuba. The waves crashing over the Malecon

and against El Moro were beautiful for us to watch from the safety of our 17th floor hotel room, but they caused flooding on the eastern side of the island as well as low lying areas in parts of Havana, causing our bus to be re-routed one morning.

Were there changes from our last trip? A few. There is a new fleet of yellow cabs, nudging out some of the classic-car taxis. There are more restaurants and bars in Habana Viejo.

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At the historic Jewish cemetery in Havana. Left to right: Barbara Feldman, Barbara Mandelstein, Hy Penn, Arlene Karchmer, Vickie Vogel, Eric Nelson, Carol Nelson, David Vogel, Lynn Gordon, Joni Levy, Kevin Taylor, Michael Moore, Deborah Sloyer, Debra Swaim, Bob Swaim, Sandra Gabe, Joan Matelli, Bill Kirsner, and Leda Karchmer. Photo by Manuel Castillo.

There are more *paladares* (private restaurants) scattered around the city. We saw many “blue anchor” signs indicating licensed private residences with rooms for rent. There was a cruise ship in the harbor. President Obama’s visit brought about some changes as well. Many streets had been recently repaired, there is new signage at the Hemingway house, and areas where the President traveled were spiffed up a bit.

In his will, Fidel Castro asked for no statues or memorials or naming opportunities. We did see billboards and graffiti mourning his passing and t-shirts that read “Yo Soy Fidel.”

The American Embassy is now a true embassy (the building was already there, designated an interest section), but the ambassador was never confirmed by Congress. This trip was slated to be our final journey to Cuba, after hopes were raised that Cuban-American relations would continue to improve so that travel would become routine. Now faced with uncertainty and instability in relations, the future is unclear. Although American restrictions have been eased, the embargo is still in place, and travelers must jump through a few hoops to go there. Like the rest of the world, we will just wait and see what happens next. 🇺🇸



Holocaust Exhibit at the Sephardi Center. Left to right: Hy Penn, Arlene Karchmer, Lynn Gordon, Sephardi Center spokesman, Debra Swaim. Photo by Vickie Vogel.

## Donate Your Family Records

Donate your family records to our collection at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas. Items you can donate are numerous. Below is a list that you could consider. Call the Center before you take any items

and be sure to indicate that you want it included in the Texas Jewish Historical Society collection.

- **Artistic Materials**—posters; drawings; photographs.
- **Business Papers**—no active

records that are needed for operation. correspondence; ledgers or record books; classified files, financial records such as receipts, invoices, and inventories; legal records such as contracts, deeds, and

*continued on page 22*

# Encyclopedia of Texas Jewish Communities

*The Texas Jewish Historical Society awarded a grant to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life to research and publish the histories of Jews in Texas towns. These histories are available on the Institute's website and are called "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities." We will adapt these histories in each issue of our News Magazine. Thanks to the History Department of the ISJL for permission to do so. To see other towns, go to the TJHS website at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org), or the Institute's website, [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org), click on the "History Department" and look for "Encyclopedia" in the drop-down menu.*

## Jewish Congregations of Austin

An Encyclopedia article on the complete history of Austin was in the July, 2014 issue of the News Magazine. This article is about the Jewish congregations in Austin.

For over a century, Austin was home to a small Jewish community that was often overshadowed by Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and even Waco. Austin was a relatively sleepy capital city, known more for its laid back atmosphere than as a bustling center for commerce. Since the 1980s, this has changed as Austin has emerged as a center for high-tech industry. As Austin has grown, so has its Jewish population. Since 1968, Austin's Jewish population has increased, making it one of the fastest growing Jewish communities in the country. By the 21st century, Austin has become a diverse and vibrant center for Jewish life in the southern Sunbelt.

Although Austin's small number of Jews tried to organize early, it took several attempts to create a successful congregation. Land for a cemetery was purchased in 1866, and in 1872, the Hebrew Benevolent Association was organized with B. Melasky as its president. The group tried to raise money for a synagogue, but was unsuccessful, prompting them to disband. In 1874, Rev. J.M. Chumaceiro of Charleston, South Carolina, visited Austin to try and organize a B'nai



*Construction of the Beth Israel synagogue at the corner of Mesquite (11th) and San Jacinto began in 1881 and was completed in 1884.*

B'rith chapter. Austin Jews decided that a congregation was a higher priority and created B'nai Shalom Congregation with Henry Hirschfeld as its president. Though the congregation collected over \$1300 in pledges toward a synagogue, the group had disbanded by the end of 1875. At that time, a lodge of B'nai B'rith successfully began with Henry Hirschfeld serving as its first president.

In September, 1876, Austin Jews again tried to establish a congregation. This time the effort was encouraged by the local newspaper, which said that several other Texas cities had Jewish congregations, and "we can see no reason why Austin should not keep company with them." That day thirty Jews gathered at the Odd Fellows Hall and established Beth Israel,

Austin's first lasting Jewish congregation. The two most prominent Jews in town, Henry Hirschfeld and Phineas DeCordova, were its first president and vice-president, respectively. B. Melasky lent his Torah to the congregation and the group quickly raised \$2,500 to build a synagogue. One of their first debates was whether to solicit non-Jews, but the group narrowly voted to restrict their fundraising to the Jewish community. They bought land for a building in 1877, but had a difficult time raising the money.

That same year, Dr. Gluck was hired to lead the High Holiday services that were held at the Odd Fellows Hall. He remained in Austin for three more months, and during that time, started a Sunday School, which was run by Sigmund Philipson. Dr. Gluck returned in the spring of 1878 and led the congregation's first Confirmation service. He invited Austin's mayor and alderman to attend in an effort to show these leaders that Jewish worship was not strange or foreign.

By 1881, the group had become inactive and it looked as though Beth Israel might not continue. The following year, Rev. Chumaceiro returned to Austin and inspired them to revitalize the congregation and move forward with a building campaign. The members decided to reopen the religious school, hire a rabbi for the High

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Holidays, and begin to raise money for a building. They held Purim Balls to raise funds, and when members traveled north for business, they solicited contributions from wholesale suppliers and Jewish organizations there. Non-Jews were also asked for donations and \$640 was collected from them. In 1884, Beth Israel dedicated its first synagogue building at 11th and San Jacinto Streets. The Hebrew Ladies



*The congregation of Agudas Achim, 1943.*

Aid Society donated \$120 to buy an ark. For the first year, the Temple did not have permanent seating and in 1885 they purchased pews for the sanctuary. The Ladies Auxiliary Society was established in 1892, and later became the Temple Sisterhood.

In 1883 and 1884, a rabbinic student from Hebrew Union College was brought in and Isaac Mayer Wise's Reform Minhag America prayer book was used. Although Reform, members wore yarmulkes. In 1885, a rabbi was advertised for in the *American Israelite* newspaper asking for "an American Hebrew minister who can deliver English sermons," run the Sunday school and direct the choir. Rabbi A.R. Levy was hired, but stayed one year. Five years later, he returned and stayed for nine years. In 1907, Beth Israel joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with fifty-one members and thirty-five students in the Sunday School. Rabbi David Rosenbaum came to Beth Israel in 1911, and convinced the congregation to adopt the new Reform Union Prayer Book, but he continued to wear a yarmulke to

keep more traditional members happy.

Initially, the more traditional-minded immigrants were part of the Reform congregation, Beth Israel. In 1901, Orthodox services for the High Holidays were held at the Knights of Pythias Hall, led by Rabbi Ben Nathanson of San Antonio. Daily minyans were held at people's businesses and homes. Despite this, the Orthodox group still worshipped at Beth Israel for Shabbat. By 1914, they decided to form their own congregation, Agudas Achim. High Holiday services for that year were held at the home of Ike Frank, and for the next several years, various rented halls were used. One year, thanks to Beth Israel President, Joe Koen, services were held on the floor of the Texas Senate. Orthodox Jews from surrounding towns would come to Austin for Agudas Achim's services. By 1921, the congregation had twenty-five members.

In 1924, Agudas Achim was formally chartered and a small house at 7th and San Jacinto Streets was converted into a synagogue. Israel Cohen was the first President, serving from 1924 until his death in 1936. Bernard Tanenbaum was hired in 1929 to be the chazzan and Hebrew teacher. While the children of the congregation learned Hebrew from Tanenbaum on weekday afternoons, they went to Sunday School at Beth Israel.

The small house used by the congregation was inadequate by 1930 and land was purchased at 10th and San Jacinto Streets. A new building was dedicated the following year. Rabbi Harold Katz was hired and Agudas Achim continued to remain Orthodox. The synagogue contained a mikva, but it was rarely used. Most members kept kosher and walked to synagogue.

There were social and class divisions between the Reform members of Beth Israel and the Orthodox immi-

grants of Agudas Achim. There was not much social interaction between these two segments of the Austin Jewish community.

In 1948, Agudas Achim officially joined the Conservative Movement and Benson Skoff, a rabbi ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary, was hired. By the end of the 1940, there were 137 families in the congregation. It was at this time that Agudas Achim left the combined Sunday School with Beth Israel and began their own. They embraced gender equality fairly early and in 1976, Naomi Worob became the first woman to serve on the Board, with Marilyn Stahl becoming the first female president in 1976. By the 1980s, women were allowed to read Torah and receive *aliyyot*.

By the 1950's both congregations began discussing moving out of downtown Austin to the northern suburbs of the city, where most of their congregants lived. Beth Israel built a new Temple on Seiders Avenue, now Shoal Creek Boulevard, and it was dedicated in 1957. A sanctuary was not built until 1967. In 1962, Rabbi Louis Firestein was hired and he stayed until 1987, becoming the longest-serving rabbi in the congregation's history. Agudas Achim bought land on Bull Creek Road in 1958 for \$19,500. Their old building was sold in 1962 to the U.S. government for \$144,000 for a new federal building.

By the 1980s, the Austin Jewish community began to change, as a new breed of Jewish businessmen would transform Jewish life in Austin. Michael Dell had always been interested in computers and dropped out of college in his freshman year to devote himself to his start-up company, Dell Computer, which would help usher in a high-tech renaissance in Austin. Austin became a center of the high-tech industry in the 1980s and 1990s. What had been a medium-sized arty college town became a booming

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# -Israelis Visit Temple Beth-El in Corsicana-

by Michael Kormos

*Corsicana Daily Sun*, reprinted with permission

Visitors from near and far tour Temple Beth-El, the unique onion-domed former Jewish temple on 15th Street in Corsicana. It is well known for its architectural design and historic value as it is a registered Texas Historical Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places.

A couple of Israeli men visited the Temple on Monday, February 13, 2017, for more spiritual reasons. Rabbi Gilad Kariv and Ron Bernstein of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, were given a guided tour by Babette Samuels, one of only a handful of Jewish residents left in Corsicana.

"I'm here from Israel visiting Texas for the first time," Kariv said. "I'm travelling between some of the reform synagogues in the state, and my good friend and colleague, Ron, told me about this synagogue in Corsicana. He said there is a fascinating lady who captures the story. It is my privilege to be here and to see it; it's an exciting site and a wonderful place."

Kariv said he is the executive director of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism in Israel, and he is deeply involved with building synagogues. "Cultivating communities and bringing our understanding of Judaism to different places in Israel is what we do. For us to see the struggle to preserve this place and the legacy is wonderful. I must say for the general community to believe



*Ron Bernstein, left, and Rabbi Gilad Kariv of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism visited Temple Beth-El  
Photo courtesy Corsicana Daily Sun.*

in preserving this site as a synagogue is special. Mrs. Samuels told me that they now have a monthly service after so many years of not having Jewish life in town. It's exciting."

"Jewish life is not vanishing from the southern United States; on the contrary, it is flourishing," he said. It's part of our story and I think the idea to preserve our legacy is very important. To see the Israeli flag on the stage next to the American flag captures the story about the unique relations between your great country and the state of Israel. It's wonderful."

Bernstein, who handles development and overseas relations between small southern Jewish communities, said he must have stopped outside the Temple ten times before he set up an appointment to look inside.

"I heard about Babette Samuels and I called her in September. We talked for half an hour and she agreed to let me in the next time I came through," Bernstein said. He has

been working in the southern United States, previously as an emissary for Jewish National Fund, and now as Resource and Development director for Small Southern Jewish Communities for the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism. He has visited many Jewish communities and in his opinion, the best ones are in the South.

"The Jews are a tiny minority in the smaller Jewish

communities, and they have to work hard to be Jewish. They do not take their Judaism for granted. The center of Jewish life in these cities is the synagogue and their Jewish identification is incredibly strong. What's fortunate is in towns such as Corsicana, the non-Jewish community is very accepting and always willing to help out." Bernstein said the fact that the City of Corsicana had adopted and preserved this amazing building is incredible.

Temple Beth-El closed as a congregation in 1980 and was turned over to the city around 1990. The building can be rented for various functions. Once a month, a visiting rabbi conducts services which attracts Jews from Fairfield, Red Oak, and other communities. In addition to the monthly Sabbath services, there are services for Church-in-the-Park during winter months. Rental activity consists of social gatherings, such as weddings, reunions, meetings, funeral

*continued on page 11*



metropolis and its Jewish community became one of the fastest growing in the country. Between 1980 and 1990, Austin's Jewish population grew from 2100 to 5000. By 2002, an estimated 13,500 Jews lived in Austin, and estimates in 2017 put the total number at 13,000 - 15,000, and growing.


In 1992, Michael and Susan Dell purchased a 40-acre parcel of land in northwest Austin as part of a plan to create a unified campus for the city's Jewish community. Both Beth Israel and Agudas Achim were invited to move to the campus, which would also house a new and enlarged Jewish Community Center and Austin Jewish Federation. The Dell Campus opened in 2000. Congregation Agudas Achim decided to build a new synagogue on the Dell Campus and dedicated it in 2001. Rabbi Neil Blumoff is the current Rabbi at Congregation Agudas Achim. Congregation Beth Israel members voted to move to the Dell campus, but the deal fell through when congregation leaders could not come to an agreement with the Dell Campus Committee. Instead, Congregation Beth Israel decided to add to its current building. Since 1991, Rabbi

Stephen Folberg has led Congregation Beth Israel.

The decision not to relocate led some Congregation Beth Israel members to break away and form another Reform congregation, Congregation Beth Shalom. They met in the JCC Building on the Dell campus, and by 2010, Congregation Beth Shalom had 390 member families with Rabbi Alan Friedman as their rabbi. They dedicated a building on the Dell campus in 2014.

In addition to Congregation Agudas Achim, Congregation Beth Israel, and Congregation Beth Shalom, there are seven other congregations in Austin—Congregation Beth El, a Conservative congregation, located at 8902 Mesa Drive and led by Cantor Yitzhak Ben-Moshe; Congregation Kol Halev, an Independent/Progressive congregation, led by Rabbi Lev Baesh and meets at the Dell Jewish Community Campus; Congregation Shalom Rav, a Reconstructionist congregation, meets in the JCC ECP Multipurpose Room, and is led by Rabbi Monty Eliasov; Congregation Shir Ami, a Reform congregation, meets at 3315 El Salido Parkway in Cedar Park, and is led by Rabbi Rebecca Reice; Congregation


Tiferet Israel, an Orthodox shul, meets in the Brenham Historic Synagogue on the Dell campus, and is led by Rabbi Daniel Milner. There are also two Chabad centers in Austin. One is located at 4413 Spicewood Springs #106, and is led by Rabbi Yosef and Rabbi Mendy Levertov. The other serves the students at the University of Texas, and is led by Rabi Zev and Ariela Johnson. Texas Hillel is located on the University of Texas campus at 2105 San Antonio Street, and has weekly Reform and Conservative services. In June, 2017, Maiya Chard-Yaron will become the Executive Director. Margo Sack, who has been Director of Jewish Student Life for twenty-four years, will retire in May, 2017.

Today, the Dell Campus is the center of Austin's Jewish community. It is the home of the Shalom Austin, the Jewish Community Center, the Austin Jewish Academy Day School, the Austin Jewish Federation, and five congregations. Befitting of a high-tech center, Austin is at the cutting edge of American Jewish life, and is poised to become one of the largest and most significant Jewish communities in the South. 



*Rabbi Kariv said it was wonderful to see the Israeli flag on the stage next to the American flag. Photo courtesy Corsicana Daily Sun.*

memorials, small plays, summer programs and musicals. Rental times and fees vary upon events.

"To bring you up to date on the restoration of the Temple, annually the city budgets \$30,000 towards this treasure," said Sharla Allen, Parks and Recreation Director. "Donations and grant requests are always appreciated. Currently the right façade of the synagogue has been restored. The left dome awaits renovation. The subsequent phases will include the exterior from the north side of the facility onto the west, ending with the south wall, concentrating on deteriorated wood siding and molding. The building with its distinctive architecture, octagonal towers and two onion domes is a beautiful jewel for the citizens to enjoy and appreciate." 

# From Our Archives

*This column is based on information in the TJHS Collection, housed at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas campus in Austin. It has been supplemented with online research. If you have corrections or additions, please submit them in writing to the TJHS editor at [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org). We want our archives to be as complete as possible.*

## Adah Isaacs Menken

by Vickie Vogel

Adah Isaacs Menken (1835-1868) was an actress and poet who was a sensation in the Victorian Age, largely due to her willingness to display her shapely figure. Little is known of her true background, but some believe she was born to Jewish parents in New Orleans.<sup>1</sup> Other sources state she was born in Memphis, Tennessee.<sup>2</sup>

“Adah” was not her birth name. “Adah is a name that nobody gave me. I selected it myself. My father called me Dolores after his mother, but in the course of time and because I had spirit and soul enough to work for my mother, the proud relatives of my father refused to own me.”<sup>3</sup>

After her father’s death when Adah was still a toddler, her mother remarried. Her stepfather died when she was 18, and Adah bore the responsibility of supporting herself.

Adah created colorful stories of her background, such as learning to ride in a circus, dancing in New Orleans’ French Opera House, and working as a model



*Ada Isaacs Menken*

for a sculptor. She also hinted that she once lived with Sam Houston, and was captured by Indians near Port

Lavaca and rescued by Texas Rangers. Her alleged connections to Indians enhanced her mystique: an Apache brave had renounced his people for her, Chief Eagle Eye taught her to ride, etc.

Her first documented presence in Texas was in 1855 in Liberty, where the newspaper advertised that “Ada Bertha Théodore” would be giving Shakespeare readings.<sup>4</sup>

She made her theatrical debut in 1857 in Shreveport in *The Lady of Lyons*. Critics described her as “moderately talented,” “excessively histrionic,” but “her figure was superb.” Adah was pretty “with crisp black curls and flashing dark eyes” and “on stage she gave the illusion of great beauty.”<sup>5</sup>

Adah married Alexander Isaac Menken in Livingston, Texas on April 3, 1856. Menken was an orchestra conductor of a prominent Cin-

cinnati Jewish family who probably met Adah in Galveston where they

*continued on page 13*



were both members of the Neitsch's Theatre Company.<sup>6</sup> They moved to Cincinnati in 1857, where some claim she first embraced Judaism.<sup>7</sup> Adah learned to read Hebrew fluently and studied classical Jewish texts. She became an advocate for Jewish communities and causes around the world. She refused to appear on stage during the High Holy Days.<sup>8</sup>

In 1859, Adah appeared at

Byron, the play's climax revealed Adah, in the lead male role, in flesh colored tights with a wispy loin cloth which brought the house down. The press dubbed her "the naked lady" and "the most perfectly developed woman in the world." Charles Warren Stoddard wrote, "Every curve of her limbs was as appealing as a line in a Persian love song."<sup>11</sup> Adah had become a star.

in Paris and died a few weeks later of tuberculosis and peritonitis.<sup>13</sup> She is buried in the Jewish part of Montparnasse Cemetery.

Another article on Adah Isaacs Menken by W.T. Block was in the May, 2008 issue of the TJHS News Magazine.

There is also a master's thesis (Adah Isaacs Menken--Her Life and Poetry in America, by Kate Wilson Davis, 1944), many photos and other articles written about Menken in Box 3J153 in our archives. The first article is a treatment for a two-hour feature film, "The Naked Lady of Nacogdoches," with penciled 1988 notes by Cathy Schechter.<sup>14</sup>

Some of Adah's poetry survives, such as this brief one:

"Will he never come? Will the  
Jew  
In exile eternally pine?  
By the idolaters scorned, pitied  
by a few,  
Will he never his vows to Jeho-  
vah renew  
Beneath his own olive and  
vine?"<sup>15</sup>



*Menken in Mezappa, 1866. Photo from the Harvard Theatre Collection.*

Purdy's National Theater in New York. Having left Menken, she believed he had divorced her. She married John Carmel Heenan, a famous fighter billed as the Benicia Boy. When Alexander Menken learned of this, he announced in a passionate letter to a newspaper that there had never been a divorce, but he was prompted to get one. Heenan left Adah because of the scandal. Adah delivered a baby boy who died while Heenan was in England for a match. Having earned money by winning the fight, he denied the marriage entirely.

After this event and the death of her mother, Adah presented herself thereafter as a "woman with a broken heart."<sup>9</sup> She returned to the stage in 1861 in the melodrama *Mazeppa*,<sup>10</sup> which defined her for the rest of her career. Based on the 1819 poem by

Her third husband was the journalist Robert Henry Newell whom she married in 1862. A writer of satirical sketches, Newell encouraged Adah's poetry writing. She met Walt Whitman, Mark Twain and Bret Harte and mingled with that literary circle. The marriage lasted three years.

Adah travelled to England for a successful run, receiving \$500 per performance of *Mazeppa*, the highest fee any actress had ever received. Upon her return to New York, she married James Paul Barkley, but after three days, fled to Europe and never saw Barkley again. In Paris, their son was born and George Sand was named godmother.<sup>12</sup> Adah was successful in Paris for a time, but as the sensationalism began to die down, her career rapidly declined. In 1868, she collapsed during rehearsal

### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Another version is that she was born Adah Bertha Theodore to a French Creole mother and a free Negro father, August Theodore, and she converted to Judaism when she married Alexander Isaac Menken. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adah\\_Isaacs\\_Menken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adah_Isaacs_Menken). She denied this. In response to a journalist who called her a convert, Menken replied, "I was born in [Judaism], and have adhered to it through all my erratic career. Through that pure and simple religion I have found greatest comfort and blessing." <http://www.jewish-virtuallibrary.org/jsources/biography/AMenken.html>
- <sup>2</sup> Pamela Lynn Palmer, "Adah Isaacs Menken," Handbook of Texas Online. <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/MM/fme21>.

*continued on page 15*

# Meet Your Board



**Davie Lou Solka, President, Austin**—Davie

Lou moved to Austin nine and a half years ago with her husband, Jack, from Corpus Christi. They have three sons and daughters-in-law, and six grandchildren. In Corpus Christi, Davie Lou was elected President of several Jewish organizations, PTAs, and Temple Beth El. She was involved in her children's activities, and after they left home, she began and taught a Jewish holiday program called L'Dor VaDor in the JCC pre-school. She retired from teaching just before she moved to Austin in 2007, after teaching for fourteen years. She is involved in activities in Austin, but especially enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren and playing Mah Jong. She is a born and bred Texan, and graduated from the University of Texas/Austin with a BS in Elementary Education.

**Nelson Chafetz, First Vice President, Austin**, is



a lifelong Texas resident, who was born in San Antonio. He attended the University

of Texas/Austin, and is married to another native-born Texan, Mitzi. They have two children, Rachel Chafetz and Valerie Chafetz Gonzales, and one grandson Brayden Chafetz. Nelson, who lives in Austin, is a thirty-one year member of United States Masters

Swimming Organization, and in his spare time, is a party barge captain.

**Susan Zack Lewis, Second Vice President**, is married to Bob Lewis, aka Tumbleweed Smith, and they live in Big Spring. They have two



children, three grandchildren, two of whom are married. Susan is involved in a Garden Club (past president), Hyperion, American Cancer Society, Big Spring Chamber of Commerce, and she and Bob have owned Multi Media Advertising for over thirty years. She has a degree in Interior Design.

She has a degree in Interior Design.

**Jane Manaster Third Vice President**, was raised in the north of England. She moved to Texas in

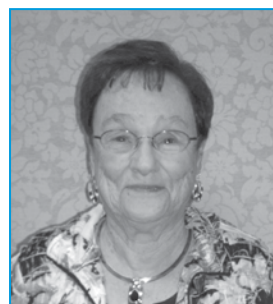


1969 and is married to Guy. They lived in Austin until 2012 when they moved to Dallas. They have

three children and six grandchildren. Jane has degrees in Psychology and Geography and is the author of three natural history books and children's books. She has also written articles on travel and Texas history. Jane is a charter member of TJHS.

**Joyce Wormser, Recording Secretary**, was born in Corpus Christi, and

is married to Marc. They have two sons and four grandchildren. She worked as Employee Relations Officer for one thousand employees at the Corpus Christi State School. In 2000, she and Marc moved to Pearland, Texas, to be closer to their sons and their families.



**Amy Milstein, Corresponding Secretary**, grew up in Longview, Texas. She graduated from "THE" University of Texas in Austin, and shortly after graduation, became certified to teach. She has been teaching for eighteen years.



She has no human children but has a four-legged fur baby named Wiggles, who sometimes attends TJHS meetings.

She loves to travel and has been to Cuba twice with TJHS. In addition she likes to scrapbook, read, and go to the movies. She has been involved with TJHS for many years, and is the daughter of a past president.

**Ben Rosenberg, Treasurer**,



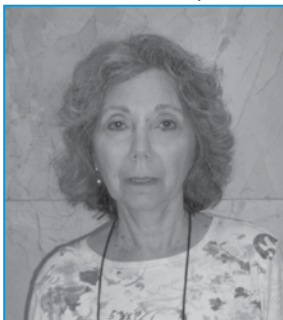
was born and grew up in El Paso. He attended the University of Texas/Austin and gradu-

*continued on page 15*



ated with a BBA in Accounting in 1967. After graduation, he moved to the Houston area and joined a CPA firm until his retirement in 2015. He is married to Barbara, and enjoys travelling.

**Sally Drayer, Historian-Archivist**, has been a member of TJHS for several years, and is a Past President. She is the mother of three, and lives in Dallas. She is a retired teacher, and substitutes in the schools frequently. She volunteers with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, is a volunteer and docent at the Dallas Museum of Art, and is a CASA Advocate.



**Vickie Vogel, Parliamentarian**, is a Past President of TJHS. She and her husband, David, live in La Grange, but spend considerable time in Austin and Colorado. Vickie graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Houston with degrees in Political Science and French, and was number one in her law class at Texas Southern University. Now retired from the practice of primarily criminal law, she enjoys community activism and travel, and has planned several trips for TJHS members. 🇺🇸



## — Briscoe Re-Opening — After Renovation

TJHS members and celebrities were present for the re-opening April 10 of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History after its renovation. The TJHS Collection is archived there.



*Don Carleton, Executive Director, cut the ribbon at the Center*



*Former CBS News Anchor Dan Rather and TJHS Board Member David Vogel were both there for the ceremony.*

*Menken, continued from page 13*

- html
- <sup>3</sup> Box 3J153, Texas Jewish Historical Society Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin. Photocopy of article from *Notable American Women*, Vol. 2.
  - <sup>4</sup> Palmer, op cit.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>7</sup> Palmer, op cit.
  - <sup>8</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/AMenken.html>
  - <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>10</sup> According to the poem, the young Mazeppa has a love affair with Countess Theresa, who was married to a much older man. The Count, on discovering the affair, punishes Mazeppa by tying him naked to a wild horse and setting the horse loose. The bulk of the poem describes the traumatic journey of the hero strapped to the horse. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazeppa\\_\(Byron\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazeppa_(Byron))
  - <sup>11</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>12</sup> This son also apparently died in infancy. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/AMenken.html>
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid. Other sources say she died of cancer. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?jsessionid=C421DE86BF76194527FB7551774FF4C8.tomcat1?fromPage=online&aid=5167752> or complications from an injury sustained in London <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/MM/fme21.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> A contemporary of Menken, Thomas Ochiltree, claimed he grew up with her in Nacogdoches. There is no credible evidence to support this, according to Renée M. Sentilles. *Performing Menken: Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity*. Cambridge University Press. 2003
- <sup>15</sup> Box 3J153, op cit. 🇺🇸

# Share Your Stories

by Jane Manaster

History is, quite simply, the past.

Many (or perhaps most) Texas Jewish Historical Society members are “older adults.” Our memories reach back quite a way, and we clearly recall at least two past generations of our family. And we are proud of the kin who came before that, settled in Texas, and are treasured in memorabilia including their letters and photos.

But what of the TJHS younger members? Their memories don’t reach back so far but they, too, are fascinated by their forebears, the families who started their lives elsewhere then adopted the famous slogan GTT —Gone to Texas!

We read in each issue of our News Magazine about the men and women who arrived here in the late 19th and early 20th century and set up shop—either literally or in some other endeavor and became our heritage as they contributed to the State one way or another. Their homes were in the small, isolated towns in West Texas, down on the

Gulf, scattered through East Texas, in the soon-to-be prominent Texas cities.

The past can be far more recent. How about those Jewish families, who came in the aftermath of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, came here with tenuous hope after the Great Depression? Or the first Jews permitted to set up professional practices in Texas, the lawyers, the doctors, and academics who for decades were not accepted here? How about the World War II refugees and Holocaust survivors who made a special contribution to our social and cultural climate, the South Africans rebelling against a discriminating political stance and set down roots here in the 1970s and 1980s? They have tales to tell. All these, and thousands more who came later in the 20th century, fit into the panorama of Texas Jewish history.

The TJHS News Magazine invites you to share the stories of your family. Let’s see them on these pages soon! 🇺🇸

## Guess This Member

Well—this young man still has not brought forth a winner—He is a TJHS board member and I did not know he played the accordion. We will have to ask for a concert! Another clue for you to ponder—although he is quiet, when he speaks, it is with wise words and conviction. Maybe the third time and clue will be a charm. He loves to travel and visits many places around the world. The winner will receive a year’s free membership to TJHS. Email your guess to Jack Solka at [editor@txjhs.org](mailto:editor@txjhs.org) any time beginning Thursday, June 1. Entries received before that date will not be considered. Previous winners and family members are not eligible to participate. Good luck! 🇺🇸



## Photograph a Texas Jewish Cemetery

by Gordon Cizon

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has a project to photograph every Jewish headstone (both front and reverse) in the state. With over one-hundred-seventy-five cemeteries to photograph, your help is needed. Some have been photographed, but I can tell you which ones need to be.

If you need a camera, we have them to loan. For more information and instructions on how to photograph a cemetery, **please** contact Gordon Cizon at [gcizon@swbell.net](mailto:gcizon@swbell.net), 214 361-7179, or 214-868-6543 (cell). If you have one of our cameras and are not using it, **please return them to me**. Your work will go down in history. 🇺🇸

Visit us on the web at [www.txjhs.org](http://www.txjhs.org).





*Dr. E. F. Mikesky; Leslie Lippman; Alton Hafer; Mayor Hirsh Schwartz; James Prihoda; Lewis Herzik; Lewis Nix; Myke Klein; C.A. Pennington; unidentified. Lippman, Schwartz and Klein were founding members.*

from a congregation that was closing its doors. The Steiners presented the Torah to the Columbus congregation. The Torah was used for many years in Columbus until religious services moved to Hallettsville and the Torah went, too. The Torah was also housed at the Fink Hotel for safekeeping between holidays and would be transported in a wheelbarrow to the Odd Fellows Hall, which was rented for religious services for \$10 per year.

As the congregation grew in Hallettsville, the founding members discussed a move to a more permanent structure. It was decided to locate in Schulenberg, which was most centrally located to the congregants who resided in Columbus, Cuero, Flatonia, Hallettsville, La Grange, and Weimar. Pledges were secured for \$35,000 for construction of the building. Temple dues were set at \$20 per year. The congregation of Temple Israel was at its peak numbers in the 1950s-60s.

For many years, Temple Israel would bring in a student rabbi from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, to conduct the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services that are observed in early autumn.

Also, in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, Sabbath services were held

throughout the year on one Friday night a month and a covered-dish supper on one Sunday night a month.


Friday night services in later years became more intermittent, like in most Texas towns, in competition with Friday night high school football games. The High Holy Day services are still a

mainstay of the smaller congregation, most now traveling in from other towns and cities. There has been no rabbi for many years. But, for over the past 25 years, Rosh Hashanah services have been led by Richard Stein from Houston (grandson of founding member Eli Rubin of Hallettsville),



*A tree was planted in honor of the 65th anniversary.*

who is married to Paula Schwartz Stein, whose father Hirsch Schwartz was also a founding member and former mayor of Schulenberg. Yom Kippur services were led for over twenty years by David and Vickie Vogel.

At a time when many congregations have to permanently close the doors of their temples because of dwindling Jewish populations in rural towns, Temple Israel is hoping to keep going for many more years and be a vital part of the religious community of Schulenberg and the surrounding area. 



*The congregation in 2017. Inset: The congregation in 1950.*

# Honor or Memorialize a Friend or a Loved One With a Donation to the TJHS Endowment Fund

When you honor or memorialize a friend or a loved one with a donation to the Texas Jewish Historical Society's Endowment Fund, you help support important programs. Send the honoree's full name, type of honor (memorial, congratulations, or occasion—birthday, anniversary, award, new child or grandchild, etc.) and your name, along with a check in the amount of your choice, to

**Texas Jewish Historical Society  
P. O. Box 10193  
Austin, TX 78766-0193**

Your support of the Texas Jewish Historical Society's programs is greatly appreciated and will be recognized in an issue of the quarterly News Magazine. Thank you.

The Texas Jewish Historical Society gratefully acknowledges your gift to its Endowment Fund in the amount of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

In honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Acknowledge to:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Donor Information:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve, and disseminate historic information about Texas Jewish culture.*

**Please Note:** *If you are sending a check to the Texas Jewish Historical Society, please indicate the purpose of the check—dues, gift, contribution, etc.*

## Contributions

The following donations have been received by the Texas Jewish Historical Society:

### **In Memory of**

Tina Smith Gardner  
sent to Paul Gardner

Helene Joy Klein Toomin  
sent to Amy Manuel  
sent to Kim & family  
sent to Toomin family

### **From**

Marianne Smith & John Jekabson

Alan Gordon  
Dorothy Schwarzlose  
Regina Rogers  
Roberta Michaels & Donald Toomin

### **In Honor of**

Buddy Freed

### **From**

Sherwin Rubin

### **Donation**

for a successful Annual Gathering

### **From**

Pat & David Rubenstein

## We need Your Stories!

We are earnestly looking for stories with ties to Texas Jewish history! Any kind of story about your family history or your Temple's history can fill the pages of our News Magazine. Everyone has a story to tell, long or short. To submit your story, or if you need help writing your story, contact Jack Solka at [jack@solka.net](mailto:jack@solka.net) or 512-527-3799.





# Texas Jewish Historical Society Grant Application

The mission of the Texas Jewish Historical Society is to expand and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the Jewish presence in Texas and the history of Jews from their first arrival in the State to the present.

We solicit applications for research projects that are in this spirit.  
Deadlines for submission are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

## Application Form

The Texas Jewish Historical Society will consider applications from individuals and non-profit organizations in any written or visual media. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and Description of project.

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Briefly outline personal and professional background information that support this application.

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What is the anticipated budget for the project? Are you seeking additional support from elsewhere?

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Please detail the timeline of your project.

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Completed project must acknowledge TJHS support. A copy or account of the completed project should be submitted to the Society's archive at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

*Send applications to: TJHS Grant Committee: P.O. Box 10193, Austin TX 78766-0193, or email to [grantchair@txjhs.org](mailto:grantchair@txjhs.org).*

## In Memoriam



**Bernie S. Appel**, TJHS member died on April 2, 2017, in Fort Worth. He is survived by his wife, Ellen Carey Appel; children, Jerry (Sheril) Appel; Arlene (Michael) Kleinberg and six grandchildren.



**Pauline (Polly) Ettelman**, TJHS member, of Corpus Christi and Dallas, died in



**Helene (Dolly) Seligman**, TJHS member, of Edna, Texas and Austin, died on March

**I. L. "Buddy" Freed**, former TJHS board



member and News Magazine editor, of Fort Worth and Austin, died in Austin on April 3, 2017. He is survived by his wife, Sandra; daughters, Monica (Andy) Faber,

Shari (Eric) Stein, Leslie (Jack) Frishberg; and six grandchildren.



**Raymond Ettelman**, TJHS member of Corpus Christi and Dallas, died in Dallas on March 1, 2016. He was survived by his wife, Polly, who died three months

later; his children, Holli (Scott) Baum; David Ettelman; two grandchildren; sister and brother-in-law, Davie Lou, TJHS President, & Jack Solka, TJHS board member; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Sammy & Carol Kins; and many cousins.

Dallas on July 10, 2016, in Dallas. She is survived by her children, Holli (Scott) Baum; David Ettelman; two grandchildren; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Davie Lou, TJHS President, & Jack Solka, TJHS board member; her brother and sister-in-law, Sammy & Carol Kins; and many cousins.

**Tom Dula**, TJHS member died in Austin on April 2, 2017. He



moved to Cedar Park from El Paso in December, 2016. He is survived by his wife, San-

dra (Beleck); daughters, Jessica (Brian) Laviage; Wesley (Matt) Lichtenstein; and Erin (Jason) Busch; four grandchildren; sister, Gabriella (Jimmy) Siegel and several nieces.



**Albert Stein**, TJHS member, died on February 9, 2017, in Houston. He is survived by his wife, Emily Weingarten

Stein; children, Marsha (Lonnie, past TJHS President) Schooler; Rick (Paula); Ronnie; and Joanne (John) Letlow; stepchildren, Steve (Grant Hester) Weingarten; Irene Weingarten; Shelley (Vic) Wisner; Sharon (Mike) Segal; eight grandchildren; seven step-grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.


**May their memories be a blessing.**

## Does TJHS Have Your Current Email Address?

Is your email address current? Has it changed since the 2015 directory was printed? Have you changed email providers? If so, please send Marc Wormser an email at [c2aggie@gmail.com](mailto:c2aggie@gmail.com) so that he can update your information in the database. To reduce postage cost



and printing delays, we are going to be electronically sending as much mail as possible, so don't be left out or behind—send your current information today!

Please put "email change" in the subject line and with your name in the text of your message, send it today! Thank you. 

**If you need TJHS membership applications for an event, program, personal use, etc., please contact Rusty Milstein at [hrmilstein@prodigy.net](mailto:hrmilstein@prodigy.net)**



# TJHS Grants \$1,000 toward Documentary about Texans with Crypto-Jewish Roots

by Hollace Weiner

An independent filmmaker directing a documentary about Texans with Crypto-Jewish roots received a \$1,000 grant from the Texas Jewish Historical Society at its annual gathering in San Antonio. Jillian Glantz, a Dallasite who moved to the Rio Grande Valley last fall to begin researching the picture, is working with a producer from Mexico and gathering a film crew. They plan to work throughout the summer interviewing and videotaping in such locales as Weslaco, Harlingen, Mercedes, Donna, San Benito, Brownsville, Port Isabel, South Padre Island, Mission, McAllen, Pharr and Edinburg.

In Glantz's grant application, which included an impressive sample of her video work, she wrote that she plans to produce a "short documentary that will explore the legitimacy of conversos and Crypto-Jews in the Rio Grande Valley . . . with a subplot that discusses the long-lasting relationships between the Jewish and Mexican communities in the region.

"There hasn't been much research done on either of these topics in South Texas," she wrote, "so I'm excited to unveil new and not widely known information. To do this, I will be conducting interviews with a wide range

of subjects in the valley region, visiting/documenting historically important places and locations, incorporating available historic photos, [and] delving into the deep and unique cultures of the area."


The TJHS grant will help cover travel costs, salaries, equipment rental, film-festival fees, DVDs, and promotional materials. Glantz, who has studied at University of Texas campuses in Austin, Arlington, and the Rio Grande, has produced and directed seven short films and



Jillian Glantz

had internships with Austin-based filmmakers Richard Linklater, David Gordon Green, and Karen Skloss. Her screenplay for a film titled *Conversa* was a semi-finalist in Final Draft's Big Break Screenwriting competition.

Among Glantz's advisors are teachers in the Film & Theatre Department at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and specialists in Mexican-American literature and Spanish-Jewish settlement in northern Mexico.

If TJHS members want to recommend people for Glantz to interview, the filmmaker may be contacted at [jillian.fresh.ink@gmail.com](mailto:jillian.fresh.ink@gmail.com). 

## —Mazel Tov— to the following TJHS Members

**Dick Brooks**, Houston, won a silver medal in the giant slalom at the GS National Championships at Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

**Cynthia Mondell**, Dallas, had her short movie, *The Women's March*, screen at the Texas Women's Caucus for Arts' Vignette during Dallas Arts Week in April at the former Women's Museum Building in Fair Park in Dallas.

**Mark Rosenfield**, Fort Worth, received the Longhorn Council Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

**Hershel Sheiness**, San Antonio, was elected Commander of Jewish War Veterans Post #753 in San Antonio, Texas.

**Helen Wilk** was installed as President of the Nueces County Historical Society on May 3, 2017. On June 7, 2017, Helen will receive the Miriam Award from the Jewish Women's Organizations in Corpus Christi.

**Dolores Wilkenfeld**, Houston, was honored at a Tribute dinner by the World Union for Progressive Judaism with Pillars of Reform Judaism recognition. The dinner was held in Houston in April.

**Babette Samuels** was selected as Grand Marshall of the 2017 Derrick Days Parade in Corsicana, Texas.

*Please send information for this column to Jack Solka at [jack@solka.net](mailto:jack@solka.net).*

## TJHS on Facebook

Did you know that TJHS has a Facebook page? Like us at  
[https://www.facebook.com/pages/  
Texas-Jewish-Historical-Society/187629054741368](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-Jewish-Historical-Society/187629054741368).



# Welcome New Members!

**Marty & Ruthe (Ignatoff) Berman**  
5202 Englewood Point Ct.  
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Fax: 281-395-0199  
Cell: 281-799-4506  
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If you have any changes in your  
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Pearland, TX 77581, 832-288-3494  
c2aggie@gmail.com**

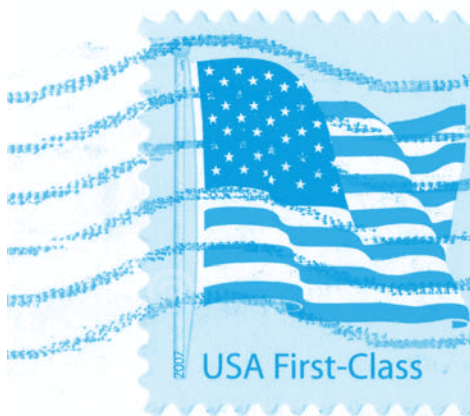
*Donate, continued from page 7*

court records; flyers; calendars;  
schedules; posters; memos;  
business cards; photographs;  
and photo albums, identified or  
unidentified.

- **Literary Productions/Writ-  
ings**—essays, poetry, works of  
fiction, and speeches.
- **Organizational Records**—  
charters, membership lists,  
minutes, yearbooks, programs,  
press releases, correspondence,  
newsletters, newspapers, and  
brochures.
- **Personal Papers**—family trees;  
histories; letters; diaries; jour-  
nals; passports; naturalization  
papers; birth certificates; death  
certificates; records and certifi-  
cates of marriage, circumcision,  
consecration, Bar/Bat Mitzvah,  
or Confirmation; war records;  
recorded or written oral history,  
interviews, or memoirs; legal  
records such as wills, estate  
materials, deeds, court records,  
and contracts; photographs and  
photo albums, identified or  
unidentified.
- **Scrapbook materials**—report  
cards, graduation certificates,  
invitations, programs.
- **Printed Materials**—newspa-  
pers, books, pamphlets, posters,  
and maps.
- **Religious Materials**—Syna-  
gogue records such as minutes,  
programs, bulletins, record  
books, and membership lists;  
prayerbooks; hymnals; photo-  
graphs or photo albums, pref-  
erably identified; and cemetery  
records.
- **Sound Materials**—Music on  
disc or cassette tape and sheet  
music.

## Save Postage

Please notify TJHS when  
your address has changed or if  
you may be temporarily away  
from home when the News Mag-  
azine is to be delivered. These  
issues are returned to us at a post-  
age due rate of \$1.52 (at print-  
ing date) per magazine. These  
amounts add up—it's your money  
we are trying to save! 







# TJHS Board of Directors 2015-2016

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Sally Drayer (Dallas)

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Lionel Schooler (Houston)

Vickie Vogel (La Grange)

Helen Wilk (Corpus Christi)

Marc Wormser (Pearland)

Debbie Winegarten (Austin)

## TJHS Traveling Exhibit

The Texas Jewish Historical Society has compiled two museum quality photo exhibits with explanations depicting early Jewish life and contributions. Both exhibits highlight the lives of Jews in Texas since the early part of the century.

Each exhibit is comprised of approximately thirty-six photographs that can either be self-standing with an easel back or hung on a wall. There is no charge for the exhibits and they will be shipped prepaid freight via UPS in waterproof boxes to your location. There will be the



expense of prepaid freight back to the shipper via UPS ground.

The exhibits have been displayed in various locations in Texas and other

parts of the United States, including Rhode Island and California. They are an excellent program for schools, congregations, and other organizations. To schedule the exhibits, please contact Sally Drayer at 214-244-6234 or [sallyedraye@gmail.com](mailto:sallyedraye@gmail.com) or contact Marc Wormser at 832-288-3494 or [c2aggie@gmail.com](mailto:c2aggie@gmail.com).