“Mountain Jews: Creating Community in Appalachia”
Southern Jewish Historical Society • Thirty-seventh Annual Conference
Asheville, North Carolina • October 18-21, 2012

This fall, the SJHS Annual Conference will be held in Asheville, North Carolina, alternatively known as the “Land of the Sky” or the “Paris of the South,” from October 18-21. We invite everyone to see what drew Jewish settlers to establish communities (complete with kosher boarding houses and summer camps) throughout the Appalachians.

For anyone doubting that Jews played a part in the mountain culture of the past few centuries, it’s worth noting that Asheville alone was home to more than 435 Jewish retail businesses between 1880 and 1990 and that it had two synagogues that even Solomon Schechter could not convince to merge. SJHS offers conference participants a great opportunity to explore Jewish history and culture in the southern mountains, enjoy stunning fall foliage, and attend one of the premiere Jewish heritage festivals in the South. (A registration form for the conference can be found on page 6 of this issue of the Rambler. Reserve your place today.)

This year’s conference kicks off on Friday, October 19. In the morning, participants have several options: they can visit nearby sites related to presentations that will be given on Saturday, such as the Thomas Wolfe Memorial and Black Mountain College Museum and Art Center, and/or they can take a short walking tour of sites of Jewish interest offered by a local Jewish historian. Those who have registered for the optional Friday lunch and tour ($35) will meet for a meal with local rabbis and then go on a trolley tour of “Asheville’s Jewish Museum Without Walls,” including a visit to the University of North Carolina at Asheville and its Ramsey Library’s Special Collections and Archives, which house superb materials on Western North Carolina’s Jewish Heritage (toto.lib.unca.edu/collections/jewish_life_wnc.htm). Friday concludes with a more official start to the conference: dinner and a brief Shabbat service at Asheville’s Jewish Community Center followed by a panel discussion on the history of the local Jewish summer camps and resorts that made this area the Catskills of the South.

Saturday features an array of presentations and panel discussions that examine the Jewish presence in the Appalachian region. These include an exploration of the nearby Black Mountain College experiment and the role that Jews played there; a look at whether native son Thomas Wolfe’s notorious anti-Semitism was genuine; and synagogue life in Appalachia. Later on Saturday afternoon, we’ll visit the Asheville Art Museum for a discussion about being a Jewish artist in Western North Carolina and a reception that will feature music from the Bandana Klezmer Band.

On Saturday evening, participants are invited to visit any one of Asheville’s great restaurants. (We strongly suggest dinner reservations, since our conference falls during the peak of our fall leaf-peeping season. A list of suggested restaurants can be found at www.exploreasheville.com/restaurants/by-neighborhood/downtown.) Following dinner, we’ll offer a screening back at the hotel of a locally filmed motion picture, or participants can visit Asheville’s famous Malaprop’s Bookstore to attend a reading and book-signing by Rich Cohen, who has a new biography of Banana King Samuel Zemurray.

Following breakfast on Sunday, we offer one of SJHS’s most popular programs: a “Meet the Authors” panel featuring writers who have published a book relevant to Southern Jewish history during the past year. Those books will be on sale along with other works by local Jewish authors and of Southern Jewish interest. Although the conference officially adjourns after the Meet the Authors session, participants are invited to HardLox, Asheville’s 10th annual festival of Jewish Food and Heritage, which takes place at downtown’s Pack Square and attracts as many as 5,000 visitors each year. In lieu of our customary box-lunch sendoff, we’ll be providing vouchers for lunch at HardLox.

Register before August 15, 2012, and be entered to win a $30 gift card to EXPLOREAsheville.com to help plan your trip. Connect with us before you travel to get insider tips on ways to make the most of your time in the mountains: check us out on FaceBook, YouTube, and Twitter. See inside this edition of the Rambler for a conference program and information on participants. More updated information will be available on the SJHS homepage, www.jewishsouth.org.

Hotel Information
The headquarters for this year’s conference is the Four Points by Sheraton, located in the heart of downtown Asheville near restaurants, shops, museums, and several cultural sites including Asheville’s Urban Trail.

Reserve your hotel room now. A special conference rate is available. Four Points by Sheraton Asheville Downtown • 22 Woolfolk Street • Asheville, North Carolina 28801 • Phone (828) 253-1851. Mention SJHS. Room Rates: $145.00/night plus tax (single occupancy) and $150.00/night plus tax (double occupancy), includes continental breakfast, parking, & free internet. Reservations must be made directly to the hotel. Prices valid until September 19, 2012.

Find us on Facebook! Search for “Southern Jewish Historical Society”
President’s Message  By Stuart Rockoff

Over the last several weeks, I have watched as the schedule for our upcoming conference in Asheville was being finalized. You can find a detailed listing of the papers and programs elsewhere in this newsletter. I say “watched” because I have had very little to do with the conference, which has been put together by program co-chairs Leonard Rogoff and Richard Chess in conjunction with a wonderful local committee headed by Sharon Fahrer. Hopefully all of you will enjoy the fruits of their labors when we gather in Asheville in October. In putting together the program, they have stressed the distinctive nature of western Carolina and Appalachia. Conference-goers will get to hear authentic Tar Heel klezmer music and learn about Jewish involvement in area summer camps and Black Mountain College. Our members will get to experience the remarkable quality of life that Asheville offers, which has turned this sleepy resort town into a thriving cultural center with a flourishing Jewish community. The conference promises to be one of the most unique and fascinating events we’ve sponsored in years. Please join us in Asheville on October 19 – 21.

I have been thinking a lot about the SJHS conference because I have been busy working on the upcoming conferences for 2013 and 2014. One of the interesting things about the SJHS is that the president helps to plan conferences that will take place during the tenure of his or her successor. Thus, my predecessor, Len Rogoff, deserves far more credit for the Columbia and Asheville conferences than I do. Right now, I am working with people in Birmingham to bring the SJHS to Alabama’s “Magic City” in 2013. Also, I have had preliminary talks with people in Austin, Texas, about hosting the SJHS conference in 2014. In both cities there was great enthusiasm to host our conference.

Selling our conference was easy – we offer a unique mix of serious scholarship that can appeal to popular audiences with a warm, close-knit “hamish” feel. We host some of the biggest “names” in the field while also nurturing young scholars and laypeople. The conference is almost like a family reunion for many of our members, and yet it is not exclusive. Each year I see new participants welcomed into the family. Hosting a conference allows communities to highlight their local history, archives and institutions. It’s a great way for them to reach the leading scholars in the field of southern Jewish history. For the SJHS, holding a conference in a community is an opportunity to attract new members and to learn about a different corner of the southern Jewish experience.

Putting these conferences together is not easy. It involves raising local money, handling a myriad of logistical details, and crafting an original and compelling program that will attract both members and new people. I’m not even going to mention the tyranny of fall college football schedules! We are lucky to have worked with a number of talented and committed people in each hosting community who have ensured that our conferences have been successful. Just know that when things appear seamless during a conference, they are the result of a lot of hard work and planning. If you think your community would like to host an upcoming conference, let us know. 2015 is wide open!

The annual conference is the largest program the society sponsors. While we do other things, including publishing a journal and supporting research and archives with grants, the conference is truly the heart and soul of the society. If you have never been, or if it’s been several years since you attended, I would like to invite you to join us in Asheville. I hope to see you there!

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JHSSC Spring Meeting a Resounding Success  

By Rachel Gordin Barnett, JHSSC President

Tikkun Olam, which in Hebrew means repairing the world, expresses the ideal of every individual’s responsibility to work for social justice. Since the days of Maimonides, Jewish law and custom have regarded public service as a noble venture and serving one’s community as a mitzvah, a commandment. This was the premise behind the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina’s spring meeting, “To Heal the World: Jewish South Carolinians in Public Service.” Held at the College of Charleston’s Jewish Studies Center on May 19–20, the conference focused on Jewish political involvement in our state and region.

Robert Rosen and Richard Gergel, former JHSSC presidents and historians, opened the meeting with an engaging dialogue about Jews who helped shape history in South Carolina—from Francis Salvador to Edwin Warren Moise to Sam Rittenberg to Sol Blat, Bubba Ness, Isadore Laurie, Arnold Goodstein, Nathan Rosen, and Harriet Keyserling, Hollace Ava Weiner’s keynote lecture, “Fighting the Philistines: Southern Jews in High Places,” looked more broadly at the record of southern Jewish participation in national politics. In contrast to the high profile of Jewish politicians at the local level, the numbers of southern Jews elected to Congress has been spotty at best.

On the Saturday afternoon panel, three women currently holding public office—Susan Alion Brill, Dyan R. Cohen, and Belinda F. Gergel—gave personal and insightful presentations about their experiences running for election and serving as council women or school board members. The day concluded with an elegant reception at the historic home of Susan and Robert Rosen.

A Sunday morning panel called “The Next Generation Speaks” featured four men who are the children of public servants, two of whom are currently serving in elected office themselves. Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling described his mother’s unlikely election in 1977 to the South Carolina House of Representatives, a seat he filled after her retirement in 1993. Joel Laurie spoke about his father’s 28-year career in the state legislature, and his own experience first as a representative and then as a senator. Ernie Marcus recalled his father’s tenure as mayor of Eutawville, spanning 23 years, and explained how Harry Marcus’s loyalty to family and community has influenced Ernie’s efforts to build healthy communities through socially responsible real estate development. Benedict Rosen reminisced about growing up in Georgetown, where his father, Sylvan Rosen, served as mayor from 1948 to 1961. The panelists’ comments were at times humorous but always respectful, even reverential, of the contributions and sacrifices made by their parents.

The response of conference attendees was unanimous: JHSSC’s May meeting was thought provoking, convivial, and fun. You can hear Richard Gergel and Robert Rosen’s “dude” online and access the Society’s spring 2012 newsletter, with more information about the speakers, events, and stories of small-town Jews in the public realm, at www.jhssc.org.
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THURSDAY, October 18

Arrivals/Registration, Four Points by Sheraton

6:30 PM
SJHS Board dinner at Four Points by Sheraton, followed by Board meeting at the hotel

FRIDAY, October 19

Breakfast, Four Points by Sheraton (included in room rate)

9:00 AM
Participants are encouraged to visit the Thomas Wolfe House and/or Black Mountain College Museum, and/or go on a 10 AM short walking tour of downtown Jewish Asheville. (Indicate number of participants on your conference registration form.)

12:15 PM
Optional lunch with informal panel of area rabbis at Olive or Twist Restaurant, followed by Trolley Tour of “Asheville’s Jewish Museum Without Walls,” including University of North Carolina-Asheville’s Jewish Archives (special registration required).

6:30 PM
Dinner and camp-style Kabbalat Shabbat service at Asheville's Jewish Community Center led by Rabbi Philip Bentley, followed by panel discussion: “Our Southern Catskills: Camps and Resorts,” moderated by Tom Rosenberg, Executive Director of Camp Judea, featuring former area campers and Stuart Rubin of Rubin's Osceola Lodge.

SATURDAY, October 20

Breakfast, Four Points by Sheraton (included in room rate)

PANEL SESSIONS
Four Points by Sheraton

9:00 AM
Black Mountain College: A Jewish Avant-Garde In Appalachia
Moderator: Leonard Rogoff
Steve Whitfield, “Black Mountain and Brandeis: Two Experiments in Higher Education”
Wendy Fergusson, “Beyond New York: Jewish Refugees and Homosexuals at Black Mountain College, 1933-1956”

10:30 AM
Thomas Wolfe and the Jews
Moderator/Respondent: Ellen Umansky

11:45 AM
Buffet Lunch at Sheraton Four Points, with welcoming remarks by Esther Mannheimer, Vice-Mayor of Asheville

1:00 PM
Judaism in Appalachia
Moderator: Lee Shai Weissbach
Sherry Zander, “In the Hall of the Mountain Shul”
Seth Epstein, “The Fair Sex and Your Guests Are Invited: Jewish Identities at Asheville’s Congregation Beth Ha-Tephila’s Temple Club in the 1930s”

PANEL SESSION
Asheville Art Museum at Pack Place

3:00 PM
Jewish Artists of Western North Carolina
Moderator: Sebastian Matthews
Panel of local artists featuring --Rob Levin, contemporary glass artist and klezmer musician; Rick Chess, poet and essayist; and others on being a Jewish artist in Western North Carolina

4:30 PM
Reception at Asheville Art Museum at Pack Place with music by Bandana Klezmer Band

7:30 PM
Participants are encouraged to attend a reading and book-signing at Malaprop’s Bookstore featuring Rich Cohen, author of The Fish that Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America's Banana King, or to view a screening of the film Songcatcher at the Four Points by Sheraton.

SUNDAY, October 21

Breakfast, Four Points by Sheraton (included in room rate)

PANEL DISCUSSION
Four Points by Sheraton

9:00 AM
Meet the Authors
Moderator: Mark Bauman
Panel of authors who have had books published within the last year — Rich Cohen, Marni Davis, Judy Goldman, Janice Rothschild Blumberg and others, followed by book signings and sales of books on Southern Jewish history by many different local and national authors.

11:00 AM
Adjourn

Participants are encouraged to attend the 10th annual HardLox (www.hardloxjewishfestival.org), Asheville’s Jewish Food and Heritage Festival in Pack Square (lunch vouchers will be issued).
Rabbi Allen Krause (1939-2012) by Mark K. Bauman

Rabbi (Philip) Allen Krause (September 7, 1939 - March 3, 2012) passed away in his home in Mission Viejo, California, after a long battle with cancer. When I started to investigate southern Jewish history thirty-five years ago, one of the essential readings was Allen Krause’s work on southern Reform rabbis and civil rights, his rabbinical thesis at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (1967). In the introduction to a volume I edited in the mid 1990s, I wrote that the topic began with Allen’s pioneering essay that appeared in American Jewish Archives. Mainstream published his article “The Enigmatic Judah P. Benjamin.” To me, Allen was a mythical figure.

Little did I realize that I would meet Allen, first through an email exchange and then in person about six years ago. After decades in the pulpit and adjunct teaching at two California universities, Allen decided to return to research. He was to appear on the program of the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference, and I contacted him about publishing an article in my in-person about six years ago. After decades in the pulpit and adjunct teaching at two California universities, Allen decided to return to research. He was to appear on the program of the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference, and I contacted him about publishing an article in my

Rabbi Krause served a congregation in Fremont, California, before moving to Temple Beth El of South Orange County in 1984, where he filled the pulpit until receiving emeritus status (2008). He inaugurated Jewish day schools in both locations. During the 1970s he worked on behalf of the Save Soviet Jewry movement and traveled to the Soviet Union in 1986 in support of refusenik families. A founder of the Ad Hoc Rabbinic Committee to Rescue Ethiopian Jewry, he led a national petition campaign that pressed for U.S. government action. He also assisted the Reform synagogue in Ra’anana, Israel. In 1994 he organized a local interfaith conference that brought people together for workshops and speakers for fifteen years, and co-founded the South County Interfaith Clergy. After 9/11 he expanded his ties to the Muslim community with the creation of the Living Room Dialogues at the Orange County Islamic Foundation Mosque in Mission Viejo. Krause presided over the Orange County Board of Rabbis and of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis as well as serving on the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and chairing the CCAR Task Force on Rabbi/Cantor Relations. He lived the life of the social activist rabbi that drew his attention as an historian.

Asheville Tourism Video

The Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau has produced a short video, “Asheville: Come for Work, Stay for Play,” which describes many of the sites and facilities available in our host city. Watch the video on YouTube by going to www.youtube.com and searching for “Asheville Work Play.”
The SJHS survives on generous contributions and memberships. While we have no paid staff, we do have expenses: the Rambler newsletter and our annual journal, Southern Jewish History, together cost over $24,000, about 70% of our budget. As funds become available, we want to improve our website, increase grants for the study of our history, and provide funds to sponsor prominent annual conference speakers. Members who give at least $100 in 2011 through grants, contributions, higher level memberships, or gift memberships are listed below. We urge you to consider increasing your membership level, or considering a larger gift to our endowment or a naming opportunity. For details, contact SJHS treasurer Les Bergen at lesberrigen@verizon.net or 703-931-6419.

**Archival Help from Local University**

Temple B’nai Israel in Little Rock will soon celebrate its 150th year. The Temple has moved to only two locations after the initial temple building was constructed, and the leadership kept its documents along the way. An Arkansas State Historian has called the Temple archives “the most complete and possibly the most important religious archive in the State.” Acknowledging this, the Temple recently constructed a climate-controlled archive room for storage and display of its documents and artifacts. Archival boxes and file folders were purchased. The material has already provided answers for many people and has aided academics in preparing papers and books. Typical of a large facility with only volunteer help, however, much of the material remains unprocessed.

In looking at possibilities for additional help, Temple leaders contacted Philip Spivey, a history professor at the University of Central Arkansas, who gained university approval to establish a student internship in the Temple archives for credit toward graduation. Hannah Pearson of Conway, Arkansas, just completed a semester of internship in the archives. Among other things, she processed a collection of letters documenting the actions of the Little Rock Jewish community to assist immigrants during World War II. She also managed groups of volunteers on “archive marathon” and “mitzvah days.” Temple B’nai Israel and the University of Central Arkansas hope to continue the arrangement in future years.

**Marni Davis, Jews and Booze**

At the turn of the century, American Jews and prohibitionists viewed one another with growing suspicion. Jews believed that all Americans had the right to sell and consume alcohol, while prohibitionists insisted that alcohol commerce and consumption posed a threat to the nation’s morality and security. The two groups possessed incompatible visions of what it meant to be a productive and patriotic American — and in 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution made alcohol commerce illegal, Jews discovered that anti-Semitic sentiments had mixed with anti-alcohol ideology, threatening their reputation and their standing in American society.

In Jews and Booze, Marni Davis examines American Jews’ long and complicated relationship to alcohol during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the years of the national prohibition movement’s rise and fall. Bringing to bear an extensive range of archival materials, Davis offers a novel perspective on a previously unstudied area of American Jewish economic activity — the making and selling of liquor, wine, and beer — and reveals that alcohol commerce played a crucial role in Jewish immigrant acculturation and the growth of Jewish communities in the United States. But prohibition’s triumph cast a pall on American Jew’s history in the alcohol trade, forcing them to revise, clarify, and defend their communal and civic identities, both to their fellow Americans and to themselves. NYU Press (nyupress.org).

**Jewish Music in New Orleans**

On March 3-4, 2013, the Jewish Music Forum will hold a concert and conference at Tulane University in New Orleans. Important scholars will discuss Jewish music transplanted from Europe to America and especially to New Orleans. The event is sponsored by Tulane’s new Department of Jewish Studies and the Newcomb Department of Music, as well as the American Society of Jewish Music and the Jewish Music Forum. Further information will be available in the fall at tulane.edu/liberal-arts/jewish-studies.

**“Darkness into Life”**

In 2007, Becky Setiel and Mitzi J. Levin created an exhibit that has forever changed the communities it has visited. Featuring twenty Alabama Holocaust survivors, “Darkness into Life: Alabama Holocaust Survivors Through Photography and Art” uses photography, art, narratives, and maps to record these personal journeys and teach the history of the Holocaust. It is presented by the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center (BHEC).

Established in 2002, the BHEC is one of four regional divisions of the Alabama Holocaust Commission (AHC) dedicated to Holocaust remembrance and education. Inspired by Alabama Holocaust survivors who remind us of the injustices in their past, the BHEC is committed to preserving their memories and continuing their legacies. Darkness into Life will be featured at the three campuses of Troy University between October 2012 and April 2013. The BHEC offers this exhibit free to Alabama communities and charges only a small fee for those outside the state. To view the exhibit in its entirety or for more information on borrowing the exhibit, please visit the BHEC website: www.bhamholocausteducation.org.

**Virginia Veterans**

In May and June, the Peninsula Jewish Historical Society (PJHS), serving the Virginia Peninsula, Hampton, Williamsburg, and Newport News, Virginia, honored Jewish veterans by playing taped recordings by the PJHS of Jewish World War II veterans. They also presented the film “Jewish Soldiers in Blue and Grey: Faith Under Fire in the Civil War.” Both were on display at the United Jewish Community Center in Newport News.

**SJHS Contributions**

The SJHS survives on generous contributions and memberships. While we have no paid staff, we do have expenses: The Rambler newsletter and our annual journal, Southern Jewish History, together cost over $24,000, about 70% of our budget. As funds become available, we want to improve our website, increase grants for the study of our history, and provide funds to sponsor prominent annual conference speakers. Members who give at least $100 in 2011 through grants, contributions, higher level memberships, or gift memberships are listed below. We urge you to consider increasing your membership level, or considering a larger gift to our endowment or a naming opportunity. For details, contact SJHS treasurer Les Bergen at lesberrigen@verizon.net or 703-931-6419.
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Name____________________________________________________________________________________________________ ...
Spouse/Friend______________________________________________________________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
City_________ State_________ Zip_________
Phone____________________________________ Email__________________________________________________________

Registration for FULL program including all meals: (SJHS members only) $150.00 $__________
OR
Register for select events only: (members or non-members)  
Friday morning walking tour  (No charge) Indicate number of people __________
Friday lunch and bus tour:  $35 per person $__________
Friday night dinner and presentation:  $70 per person $__________
Saturday, including lunch and reception:  $100 per person $__________

To join or to renew your membership in SJHS, write your membership level/amount here: $__________

Deadline for registration is October 3, 2012. Registrations received before August 15, 2012 will be entered in a drawing for a $30.00 gift certificate to Woolworth Walk, a local art gallery.

Hotel accommodations at the Four Points by Sheraton Asheville Downtown must be made separately. See hotel information on Page 1.

QUESTIONS? Contact Sharon Fahrer. 828-777-1014. fahrer@charter.net

New or renewing SJHS annual dues:
General member $36
Student $15
Patron $50
Institutional member $50
Century Club $100
Cedar $500
Sycamore $1,000
Magnolia $2,500

Please make checks payable to SJHS-Asheville and return with this form to: Sharon Fahrer 333 Montford Avenue Asheville, NC 28801