Congressman John Lewis and Tom Houck notes, “A lot of people look up to him as saintly, but he was very much one of us. He worked briefly in a mattress factory, lived in Vine City, played pool, and wanted to be connected to the people. That just makes me realize how each and every one of us may not be a saint, but we can be as Martin Luther King Jr. was, to make a difference as much as he has.”

As Tom told us exclusively, “Civil Rights is, as you know, a Jewish cause...and there is much conversation about the Jewish contribution to MLK and the movement.” Indeed, the year when we were being confirmed at The Temple, in the 10th grade, the synagogue was bombed, one Sunday morning in 1959, by racists who were infuriated by Rabbi Jacob Rothschild’s strong and outspoken support of King and the movement.

To book the tour, which was recently the subject of a major story on the CBS Evening News, check out www.civilrightstour.com, or call 844-442-4845.

NEW FILM: THE JERRY FARBER STORY. One of the most popular films offered by The Atlanta Jewish Film Festival was Leanna Adams’ epic, Jerry-Atric: One Comic’s 77 Year Climb to the Top of the Bottom, edited by Neil Logan Butler.

The film covers Jerry’s growing up in Greensboro, his early career as a schmatta salesman in Atlanta, still “undeterred by age...and there is much conversation about the Jewish contribution to MLK and the movement.” Indeed, the year when we were being confirmed at The Temple, in the 10th grade, the synagogue was bombed, one Sunday morning in 1959, by racists who were infuriated by Rabbi Jacob Rothschild’s strong and outspoken support of King and the movement.

Along with Buckhead Mayor Sam Massell and comic Josh Harris, we were honored to be briefly featured in the documentary, saying, “Jerry does a lot of adult humor— all his jokes are at least 21 years old.”

We figured that if only the people Jerry owes money to showed up, the film would be a sell-out. He says that he signed over a hundred autographs that day... but, sadly, no one asked for one.

Before the showings, Jerry was standing out in front of the Lefont Sandy Springs Theaters, holding court, like at a Hollywood premiere, greeting the likes of his son Joshua, former wife Roberta Rochman, friends Judy Ayal, Debra Berger, Gayle and Dan Glazer, Anna and Jerry Holtzer, Judy Landey, Larry Liebross, Howard Ossoff, David Kuniansky, and Chana Shapiro.

He calls producer Leanna his “future 4th ex-wife,” and expressed disappointment that son Joshua didn’t make the premier, since “there was another film he liked better.”

REBECCA PORTMAN. Meet Rebecca Portman, the newest Humane Society of the United States staff member. She is the new food policy coordinator for HSUS in Georgia, focusing on improving the treatment of farm animals. HSUS is the nation’s largest and most influential animal protection organization.

She grew up in Savannah, where her father was the town pediatrician for 50 years, and her family attended Congregation B’nai Brith Jacob, where her dad still belongs. She attended Hebrew day school until 6th grade.

Becky says, “Like many others I know, I feel a strong disconnect between the slaughter rituals and Tza’ar ba’alei chayim (the code of Jewish laws forbidding cruel treatment of animals). This is one of the reasons I pursued work to help farm animals gain protection from serious abuse and neglect.”

She goes on to observe, “Most animals raised for food suffer inhumane standards of living due, in part, to American’s high demand for animal products. Factory farms cram egg-laying hens into cages so tiny they can’t even spread their wings. Breeding pigs and veal calves are stuffed into cramped individual cages so small they can’t walk or turn around. But we can change that. At the Humane Society of the United States, we advocate for compassionate eating — or the three Rs: ‘reducing’ or ‘replacing’ consumption of animal products and ‘refining’ our diets by choosing products from sources that adhere to higher animal welfare standards. Enjoying more plant-based meals is not only more nutritious and environmentally sustainable, but also helps reduce the number of animals on factory farms.”

Becky and her husband, a pediatric neuro-oncologist at Emory, now reside in Decatur with their 9-year-old daughter.

Our fondest memory of Savannah is 55 or so years ago, dancing with Mickey Ginsberg and competing for her attention with Steve Selig, at a dance following our high school’s playing Savannah Country Day school in soccer, which few Georgia schools played at that time.

Come to think of it, we wonder whatever happened to Selig.

MARTHA JO KATZ CHAIRS AJFF GALA. Martha Jo Katz was once again the dazzling chair of the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival’s Opening Night Gala, and we have exclusive photos of her with some of the stars of the festival.

Sasha Gordon is the star of the film Natasha, in which she played a 14-year-old girl, although she is really 26—which is MJ’s apparent, approximate age. MJ tells us that Sasha “grew up in the Ukraine, speaks Russian, and actually lived in Alpharetta for two months when she was going to college in North Carolina. She has been in the USA six years, was amazing in the movie, and speaks English beautifully.”

Another “great movie,” says MJ, was Surviving Skokie, a personal story about Jack Adler—his time spent in ghettos and concentration camps during the Holocaust and living in Skokie during the 1970s, amidst the neo-Nazi revival and demonstrations there. At 87, he still speaks at events about hatred and bigotry and also has a book out entitled Y: A Holocaust Narrative. The movie received a standing ovation and the entire audience stayed afterwards for the Q&A.

DOUG TEPER AND VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN. We’d like to apologize for the boisterous, rowdy photo we ran in our last issue of former state legislator Doug Teper and producer Perry Goodfriend, as we received several complaints that it scared little children and was not fit for a family newspaper. We agree. So here is a more tasteful and dignified photo of Doug with Vice President Joe Biden.

It was taken at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior in Kirkuk, Iraq, on January 13, 2009, with Senator Joe Biden, then-chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who the following week was sworn in as vice-president of the United States. Doug was serving as governance specialist for the U.S. Department of State at Provincial Reconstruction Team Kirkuk.

Thanks, Doug, for your service, and we look forward to seeing you—and Perry—at the reopening of Manuel’s tavern.

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We stand with Israel security • peace • solidarity