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THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

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Standing at her parents' dining room table, filled now with momentos of time passed

instead of family and favorite foods, Dalia pulls up a box and opens it.

Inside, under the stack of old cards, awards, scribbled children's drawings her mother had kept and cherished, is a smaller box of black and white snapshots she has never seen. Among these is a small photo of her great grandparents Aviel and Golda, dressed in their Sabbath best, young and smiling triumphantly. On the back is written: "Avi and me, safe in Brooklyn, June 1943."

Pushing back a pang of grief, Dalia drifts back to a childhood sweet remembrance of family gatherings in this same house. When Great Uncle Aaron told the story of his parents' journey from the Old World to America, she would hold her breath when he described how they had hidden in a cold cellar with no light and little food to escape the concentration camp. When he came to the part where they descended the ship onto Ellis Island, holding hands and safe in New York, she always clapped her hands and cheered.

Years passed and soon Dalia's own children clapped and cheered as the story was told first by her own grandmother Bubbe Ora after Uncle Aaron passed on – and then by her mother Maddie Esther. Now Maddie Esther was gone too, and Dalia is now the matriarch. This year, she will tell the story, and smile broadly as her own granddaughter Ruthie, now seven, claps and cheers.

That evening Dalia and her husband Seth, and their three children and their children's young families, are all together again in the house where she grew up. After the memories have been packed away for posterity, and the table has again been filled with favorite foods and then cleared, Dalia tells the wondrous family story one last time in her parents' home.

The next morning Dalia, Ruthie and daughters Kara and Dorah – just a few months away from the birth of her first child – rise early to go to the cemetery to pay respects to the elders. They drive down a winding path to the rose marble monument where Savta Golda and Sabba Aviel rest eternally, where Bubbe Ora and Zayda Mordechai are laid nearby – and where now Maddie Esther has joined her beloved.

"This bench is beautiful. I'm glad the family decided to put it here," Dorah says, easing gingerly down to sit. Beside her, younger sister Kara says coming here still makes her feel like their family is forever.

"Family *is* forever," Dalia smiles. Sitting next to her daughters, she pulls Ruthie into her lap and hugs her tightly.



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never gone.
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our hearts."*

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Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

It's August and you are looking at the 2017 edition of the Summer Reading Issue. We have uncovered more stories and photos of some of the extraordinary people in our community, written by a group of great local leaders and writers. This month you can meet dynamos Howard and Tara Cadmus, who are helping to re-shape Williamsville; acquaint yourself with Ben Siegel, one of the region's cultural creative superstars who is working every day to turn around Buffalo's old image. Then meet teenager Aaron Schapiro- part Rock Star, Part Baby Mozart—who is just getting warmed up for greatness, even before he graduates from high school. And if you don't know about the Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy project already, let Carin Greenfield's and Amy Heumann's profiles introduce you to a Federation project making a difference in Buffalo every day, and learn how literacy volunteers David and Beverly Schiller took an entire school class to the Albright Knox Art Gallery.

As we enjoy the beauty and warmth of summer, we also must remember that the Hebrew month of Elul begins August 23. Elul reminds us to begin preparing our souls for the High Holiday days next month, enabling us time to review and recollect. So enjoy your long summer days, the warmth of the sun and

the smell of the trees, air and flowers. I'll be digging up dirt...in the garden.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



The Difference Makers for August 2017 are (from left-top row) Howard & Tara Cadmus, David Bunis, Judge Lisa Rodwin, Carin Greenfield; (from left –middle row) Samantha Sugarman, Aaron Schapiro, Dr. Ted & Phyllis Steinberg, Ben Siegel and Todd Sugarman; (from left- bottom row) Amy Heumann, Hadar Borden, Dr. Phil Glick with his wife, Dr. Drucy Borowitz, Captain Sydney Cole and Vilona Trachtenberg.

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Published by
Buffalo Jewish Federation
2640 North Forest Road
Getzville, NY 14068
716-204-2241
www.jfedbflo.com



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The Buffalo Jewish Federation is a proud member
of the Jewish Federations of North America and the
American Jewish Press Association

Produced by



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JEWISH BUFFALO'S *Difference Makers*



“Whoever saves one single life, it is as if he or she saves the entire world.” That is what the Talmud teaches us.

And so when we first introduced our “Difference Makers” special edition last summer that featured a dozen individuals, we knew that we had only scratched the surface; that there were dozens of others we could have featured had we more room. So we put together a second issue this past February, highlighting fifteen more Difference Makers. And so it was an easy decision for us to do a third version of “Difference Makers” this month to showcase individuals who are making an impact on those around them.

In this issue, we meet people of all ages creating or reshaping places in Buffalo that make a difference for those around them. Included among the group is a judge who helps new immigrants have a better life here, just like the opportunities given to her mother many years ago. Two chairs of the Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy explain how the program has changed their lives while they have helped to change the lives of hundreds of



Steven J. Weiss

children and volunteers. We also learn about a 102 year-old veteran who recently received not only long overdue recognition for his service, but also his High School diploma as well. Together these members of our community weave a story that underscores the diversity and strength that is Jewish Buffalo.

We hope that you enjoy each of their stories and are inspired by their work, passion and contributions. Many thanks to Teresa Kennedy in Congressman Brian Higgins' Buffalo office, Ezra Rich, Maria Scrivani, Mara Koven-Gelman, Rob Goldberg, Peter Simon, Howard Rosenhoch, Ellen Goldstein, Jana Eisenberg, Chana Kotzin, and Nicole Bard who contributed the narratives for our Difference-Makers. We are so pleased to be able to share these stories about the best of our community—and to continue to do so in *The Jewish Journal of WNY*.

Steven J. Weiss
President
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Sam Sugarman: Back Home, Singing Her Heart Out

by Maria Scrivani

Not many young people would come back to Buffalo to launch their performing arts careers.

Samantha (Sam) Sugarman is a little bit different—or perhaps it's more accurate to say that a whole paradigm is changing, with the proliferation of online platforms and ability to reach ever-widening audiences. In so many fields of endeavor, we are seeing more young people choosing Buffalo as their launch site. Why not? Things are happening here, in the arts and entertainment, medical and educational areas—not to mention development and tourism.

And though this Amherst native and aspiring singer/songwriter admits to a bit of pride-swallowing when she

returned to her hometown two years ago after a New York City stint, she is busier than ever, and happy to be back.

"My parents were completely supportive, allowing me to grow, fail, and learn," says the oldest of three daughters of attorneys Steve Sugarman and Judith Gerber. "I've always felt very safe, discussing the different moves of my life...When I graduated, in 2013, from Carnegie Mellon University, I knew music was part of my plan, but coming back to Buffalo was not!" Sam was a vocal performance major, a natural fit for someone who first caught the performing bug here as a star in Jewish



Community Center musicals (at age 10, she was "Annie" in that eponymous show, and a gender-bending "Joseph"

the following year in *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*) and on stage at Amherst Central High School.

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“I grew up in a very lively, musical household,” she recalls. “My mom played piano, and we often gathered around the piano, singing—and my dad’s a pretty good guitarist. He sang James Taylor lullabies to us.” Though they are not pursuing careers in music, her siblings share the family musical talent: Abby is a cellist, and Emily plays guitar. The Sugarmans were active members of Temple Sinai (now merged with Temple Beth Am as Congregation Shir Shalom), a place with “an enormous emphasis on connection and community, and also a strong musical tradition,” Sam says.

By the time she graduated from college in Pittsburgh, she says she was only sure that music would always be paramount in her life. How and where was the question. Like so many newly-minted performers before her, Sam

are for me the equivalent of an artist’s portfolio,” she says. “You never know who’s going to hear it.”

Writing original material is another way to express deeply-felt emotion, or as she says, “singing my stories and my opinions,” in the manner of some of her idols, Joni Mitchell and Ani DiFranco among them. “My most common themes are being able to conquer fear...and reveal the common ground we share as humans. Music is one of the most powerful forces that exist, it is the language of emotion, and it provides a safe space for strangers and friends alike to connect.”

Channeling passion and empathy informs the work Sam Sugarman has done back home, while actively pursuing a music career. Sharing a Buffalo West Side flat with her second youngest

“Channeling passion and empathy informs the work Sam Sugarman has done back home, while actively pursuing a music career.”

took her nebulous dreams to New York City, where friends were also bound for Broadway, or thereabouts. “I knew I could still be part of a community I was comfortable with—friends from college. I did a few open calls for various shows—to keep your sanity in that world you have to enjoy pounding the pavement. But that wasn’t really for me.

“I went to work as a day care teacher. My overarching focus was still musical, but I had found something I could just as easily be passionate about...and I loved the job. The big change came for me when I met a brilliant musician and recording engineer, who remains a close friend today...He had me come in and record a cover of Ed Sheeran’s song *Kiss Me*. I got this sense of fulfillment from this experience that I hadn’t felt in a very long time. In a recording studio, you are in your own space—very vulnerable, but also very real. That first recording was made in April 2015—I wanted to post it on **YouTube**, but I was afraid to push that button—finally I asked my sister to do it.”

In March of that year Sam moved back to Buffalo. That first **YouTube** video, featuring a soulful Sam singing and accompanying herself on piano, has been followed by seven more, the last three featuring her own songs. “These

sister, Sam’s been an environmental activist, canvassing for NYPIRG. She’s coordinated the after-school program for Kadimah Academy of Buffalo, as well as working as a Kindergarten aide there, where she attended two years of middle school. She’s worked as a Conflict-Avoidance Counselor through a new program at Stanley G. Falk School, and is embarking on an intense training program as a volunteer with the Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition, helping to build empathy at the community level.

“The common point between my music and this kind of work is my drive to be involved in the healing this world needs,” she says. So she works in the community, and performs publicly, in local coffeehouses like **The Daily Planet** on Hertel and Parker. She was featured at a new event this summer, Cobblestone Live. Look for her on **YouTube**. For Sam Sugarman, launched in Buffalo, the only way to go is up.

Maria Scrivani is a frequent contributor to Forever Young and Buffalo Spree.

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Howard & Tara Cadmus: The Village People

By Ellen Goldstein

Howard and Tara Cadmus are on a mission to rebuild and revitalize an historical landmark in Williamsville, create a space for their family's and community activities, make certain they contribute in different ways to Western New York, and have fun-- all at the same time!



Howard & Tara Cadmus

Tara Cadmus grew up in East Amherst, went to North High School, and is in her mid-30s. She is the oldest of five children, and her father is a small business owner. She saw how hard he worked and said to herself, "I am never going to open my own business." Fast forward 20+ years. That is exactly what she is doing. A UB undergraduate, with an MBA from Canisius College, a Master's in Political Science and a law degree from law school in Columbus, Ohio, "I would have gone to school forever if I hadn't gotten married and settled down," she said.

Howard was born where he calls "Downstate NY." He went to SUNY Albany and came to UB for Law School. "When I first moved here, I taught Hebrew History at Temple Beth Am and Halacha at The Bureau of Jewish Education's Hebrew High. I worked for attorney Morris Horowitz as a lawyer, and met a lot of people in the Jewish community, and

they embraced me. One of the reasons I stayed here is that I felt like I had a support system." After a few years at a law firm, he decided to put down some roots and start his solo law practice.

Tara and Howard's paths crossed several times during his early time in Buffalo, but they had never actually met, until they both found themselves at a party together. After that, they started dating, fell in love right away, and married about ten years ago in Buffalo. At the beginning of their marriage, they focused on their careers. They saw themselves as high powered young professionals working in corporate jobs. She was in finance, managing stock brokers in New York City. "I was working for Citigroup out of NYC remotely from Buffalo," Tara said. "Howard had his own law practice (real estate law). We were young, successful, making money—but not fulfilled," she said. "We wanted more

meaning in our lives."

They decided to open themselves to some kind of new career experience, something more family and community-friendly. The first business they undertook was completely Howard's idea, said Tara. "Let's start a candy store—he said." The rest is a sweet story. They opened *Oh Pour L'Amour du Chocolat* (Oh For the Love of Chocolate) at Main & Harlem in Snyder Square.

"Once we got going with candy-making, we began to look for some ice cream

chocolate and ice cream are all made at the rehabbed Mill, and Howard's law practice is a few hundred steps away in an old rehabbed house right next to the Mill on the Spring Street property.

The Mill which houses the Sweet Jenny's shop, started as a timber mill in 1811, then a grist mill, then a cement mill, then a feed mill and most recently a cider mill, and it was owned by all the same family until the Village took it over. "We currently employ 30-50 people at any given time, and we want to share our

Howard and Tara Cadmus said their work, their businesses and their lives are about community.

to sell with the candy," Tara explained. They approached Deb Hanny of Sweet Jenny's, looking to carry her brand of ice cream. But she didn't just want to just sell ice cream. She wanted to sell them her entire Sweet Jenny's business. "Why don't you buy me out?" Ms. Hanny said. "So we did," Tara said. "We were able to be successful enough with two businesses that I could leave my job. Howard is still an attorney from 7am-5pm, and becomes a *chocolatier* until 10pm."

After a few years, the couple wanted to do more in their Village of Williamsville. "We became interested in the Williamsville Water Mill. "I wanted to see that this building—the Mill on Spring Street—stayed safe, and we wanted to breathe life back into it. The Village approved our proposal for the Mill—they didn't want to see it significantly changed either, and we wanted to keep it true to its historic character as a manufacturing site for 200 years."

They put in a bid for the three buildings and offered the Village of Williamsville what it had paid for the site. "Williamsville wanted the property back on its tax rolls, we wanted to rehab the building," Howard said. "We made the rehab project very public, and there was an outcry of support, happily. Two hundred years ago, the Village of Williamsville had grown up around this building. It is one of the oldest commercial structures in Western New York. "We first got under contract in 2014, and ended up being able to occupy the building," he explained. But their businesses were still in three different locations. - *Oh Pour L'Amour* was at Harlem & Main, Sweet Jenny's was on Main street in Williamsville (Main St, Sweet Jenny's is now closed) and they now owned the Mill. Today, the

business with everybody," Howard said.

There are also two existing floors below ground level in the old building Tara explained. All the original water works—the equipment fed by the sluiceway that were used for grinding and milling, and which will be repurposed for hydro electric energy—are still there. The couple plans to invest in water power for the site, as well.

"My law firm and the shops came out of trying to do good. We donate gift certificates and we sponsor three charity events every month," said Howard. "We have made 'giving back' a focus." In addition, the shop has a comic book section on the second floor because Howard was always a fan of comics. "I think comic books can be an important path to literacy," he said. "I grew up very poor, and reading comics made me a solid reader, and helped me to form the cognitive connections between pictures and words. We buy and sell comics upstairs as well as old toys. We also fix up old video games, all so visitors can have fun."

In the end, Howard and Tara Cadmus said their work, their businesses and their lives are about community. "It is never about the income," Howard said. "It's about the outcome." They employ people, create a family atmosphere here for their employees, can bring their new baby son here, so it's not just a family business, it's a business that's a family, they reiterated. Oh, and the ice cream and the chocolate are really good, too!

Ellen Goldstein is the managing editor of the Jewish Journal of WNY, and likes Sweet Jenny's black raspberry ice cream. A lot!

Phyllis & Ted Steinberg:

Choosing Buffalo

By Ezra N. Rich

Catching their three grown children who live in major East Coast cities by surprise, Dr. Theodore L. and Mrs. Phyllis Steinberg chose to move to Buffalo in 2011 to enjoy their retirement years. It was the start of an exciting new chapter in a city they had been visiting over the years since settling in Fredonia, New York, decades earlier. When their children were teenagers, the Steinbergs would bring them to Buffalo to participate in Jewish youth organizations. Their children—and grandchildren—subsequently settled in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City.

Then, as empty nesters seeking Jewish connections, they began visiting Buffalo more frequently, including monthly visits by Phyllis to Buffalo Hadassah's book club meetings. When it came time for retirement, they considered moving to Buffalo, which certainly wasn't what their children and grandchildren were expecting. "All our kids wanted us to move near them, but they all lived in big cities, and we didn't know anyone in any of those places," explains Ted. "Our kids said, 'What?! You're moving to Buffalo?!'" Phyllis recalls with a smile.

Cultivating Small Town Jewish Life

After growing up in the large Jewish communities of Chicago and Baltimore, Phyllis and Ted met in graduate school at the University of Illinois. Phyllis studied special education, going on to teach and ultimately serve as principal of Fredonia Elementary School. After earning his Ph.D. in English literature, Ted joined the faculty at the State University of New York at Fredonia.

During their decades in Fredonia, Phyllis also taught part-time in the education departments of the State University of New York at Fredonia and Jamestown Community College. Making a difference inside the classroom wasn't enough. She was also active in many organizations that advocated for the rights of children with special needs, served as a trustee at Temple Beth El in Dunkirk, and volunteered at the Friendly Kitchen of Dunkirk, which is a soup kitchen within the Food Bank of WNY network. Over the years, they hosted countless Jewish college students at their home and synagogue for meals on Shabbat



Ted & Phyllis Steinberg

and Jewish holidays.

During his 44 years at SUNY Fredonia, Ted was a beloved educator and leader, teaching Medieval and Renaissance literature, as well as Judaic studies. He oversaw the school's Honors College, served as director of its Hillel, and developed courses on topics ranging from the Bible as Literature to African American and Jewish literature. He also authored two books; *Mendele Mocher Seforim*, on the Yiddish author, and *Jews and Judaism in the Middle Ages*. His dedication to teaching and research were recognized with prestigious awards from the President of SUNY Fredonia and the Chancellor of SUNY.

Lifelong Commitment to Action

As a retired couple, the Steinbergs are not slowing down. They are energized—planning events, teaching a range of subjects, and participating in the evolution of Buffalo Jewish life. A consistent theme in their endeavors is a passion to raise participation and awareness of Jewish efforts to help those in need. While still being an active member of Buffalo Hadassah's book club, Phyllis is now a leader of the organization as a co-president. In this role, she explores new programming options, plans monthly events, and is energized about the organization's second century of commitment to women's health and well-being, Israel, Jewish values and continuity.

One emerging initiative the Steinbergs are excited about is the Community

“As a retired couple, the Steinbergs are not slowing down. They are energized... participating in the evolution of Buffalo Jewish life.”

Relations Council, under the auspices of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, which seeks to become a central agent for the Jewish community's participation and engagement with other groups, including local Christian and Muslim communities. The work builds on Ted's experience at Fredonia. Following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, Ted helped organize a group that brought together Jewish, Christian and Muslim students to understand each other's traditions and viewpoints. He sees the Council as a voice for the community. “[It will help] make sure the Jewish community isn't isolated and people know where we stand on [these] issues,” Ted explains. “It's going to be a very important group as it grows.”

Their interest in the Council also expands on Phyllis' leadership as chair of Kehillat Ohr Tzion's Social Action Committee. The committee partners with local relief organizations, including Jewish Family Services' Refugee Resettlement program and several soup kitchens. They collect clothing and household items

for refugees, as well as food staples for the hungry, among other efforts to help vulnerable members of the larger community.

Their actions have not gone unnoticed. Describing the couple, Rabbi Joshua Strosberg, Kehillat Ohr Tzion's outgoing rabbi, says, “Phyllis and Ted are cornerstones of Kehillat Ohr Tzion. Every Shabbos (Sabbath) after davening (services), Phyllis announces a new project or program that she is organizing for the Social Action Committee. She is constantly thinking about what she can do to help other people and she rallies the troops to help implement her vision. Ted is one of the spiritual pillars of the shul; he gives thoughtful and insightful sermons, shares his skill as a shaliach tzibbur (leader of prayer) and haftarah reader, and cracks us all up with his puns. He also does whatever needs to be done around the shul (synagogue) to keep it functioning. Together, Ted and Phyllis are a remarkable couple.”

Time for More Teaching

Ted's passion for teaching has entered a new phase in Buffalo. Expanding beyond college students, he now gives adult classes on topics including Yiddish literature, re-reading the Classics, the Bible as literature, and other subjects at the JCC, Weinberg Campus, and elsewhere. Ted and Phyllis have collaborated with leaders from across the Buffalo Jewish community to co-sponsor these offerings, thereby attracting larger audiences and qualifying for communal funds they invest into the post-program refreshments.

His talents have also brought him back into the college classroom. Ted teaches a course at Canisius College on Jewish culture and practice. It is becoming an attractive option for undergraduate students to meet their Religious Studies requirement for graduation.

Looking back on their choice of Buffalo, the Steinbergs are pleased.

“We find that pretty much everyone in the Jewish community gets along. There is so much cross-denominational activity. We really like that in Buffalo,” observes Ted. Reflecting on the comradeship of the Buffalo Jewish community, Phyllis adds, “I hope more Jews move here. It has been easy to find a great group of friends.”

Ezra N. Rich, a marketing communications professional, is a new member of the Buffalo Jewish community. He, his wife—Hillel of Buffalo's Rabbi Sara Rich—and their daughters, Miriam and Sivan, moved to Williamsville in June.

Sydney Cole:

Real American Hero

Born in New York City in 1914 to Russian immigrants Max and Lena Cohn, Sydney was one of five children. His father, who made a living in restoring older homes, was sent to Buffalo to work on a mansion on Delaware Avenue and the family settled into a house on Shoreham Drive in North Buffalo.

Mr. Cole attended elementary school at Buffalo Public School #32 and high school at Fosdick-Masten Park, now known as City Honors. Sydney, who served as Captain of the swim team, won the All High Medal and led his team to become city champions from 1932 to 1933. After high school he worked as a salesman for Brost Motors Inc. and then for Packard Buffalo Inc. both located on Main St. in Buffalo as well as his father's business Cohn Plumbing Supply Company on William St. in Buffalo. But Mr. Cole's passion was aviation and when World War II broke out in Europe he set out to join the Allied Forces.

Mr. Cole's application to the highly competitive United States Air Corps was initially declined but that didn't stop him. In July of 1941, before the United States entered into World War II, he traveled 120 miles to Toronto, Canada and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. On January 21st, 1942 he was discharged by the Canadian Royal Air Force, returned back to Buffalo, NY and signed up for the United States draft. On September 16th, 1943 he joined the United States Army so he could continue to support the Allies.

Then-First Lieutenant Cole flew an artillery observation plane for the 776th Field Artillery Battalion. He remembers that the enemy would do everything possible to shoot his plane down every time it was in the air. He often flew in bitter cold temperatures and through snow storms. First Lieutenant Cole recalls using blow torches to warm the engine oil in the planes. Cole was involved in the battle of Rhineland and the Ardennes Campaign, known as the Battle of the Bulge, from December 16th, 1944 to January 25th, 1945. He will never forget what happened to him in the early morning hours of January 2nd, 1945 when his plane was shot down; he saved his copilot, risking his life and became a Prisoner of War.

When Captain Cole landed he remembered that his "dog tags" indicated his religion on them. C stood for Catholic, P for Protestant, and H for Hebrew. Knowing that he would be sent to a



Captain Sydney Cole c. 1940's

concentration camp and likely killed if the Germans found out he was Jewish, he threw his tags as far into the woods as possible. There were bullet holes in his parachute which he managed to wrap around his left arm and leg to subside the bleeding before he lost consciousness. Captain Cole laid on the ground bleeding for about two days, and nearly froze to death before being transported on the outside of a German tank.

He was assigned to a POW camp run by the Hitler Youth, where many of the prisoners were killed. He was interrogated, beaten and locked in a cellar of rotten potatoes. He was fed soup made of grass and potatoes, and wasn't allowed to shower or shave. From January through May his weight went from 145 pounds to 95 pounds.

Eventually Mr. Cole and other prisoners were sent on boxcars to Stalag IVF POW Camp on the Polish-German border. He remembers the train ride in which an English doctor, who was also a prisoner, picked the shrapnel out of his leg. Upon arrival, he was asked about his religion and reported he was Protestant. When he got to the camp those who were Jewish were sent away, never came back, and were likely executed. As one of three officers there he was assigned to lead a Battalion. The camp was abandoned and in May of 1945 the Russians came in with medical personell and ripped



Congressman Brian Higgins awarded medals to Sydney Cole at Buffalo's VA Hospital in March

the barbed wire off the camp. They treated his infection and gave him food. A couple months later there was a prisoner exchange and he was officially free.

He was happy to have his freedom, but would encounter further evidence of the Holocaust, which he reported was even more difficult to deal with than his personal experiences as a Prisoner of War. Captain Cole recalls coming upon a satellite of Auschwitz, abandoned by the Germans. He witnessed mass open graves of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Frail Jewish prisoners too weak to move remained in the Camp, including a woman who died in his arms as he spoon-fed her.

Captain Cole was discharged from the Army on December 27th, 1945. He returned to Buffalo, married Sybil Richard, the love of his life, and had one child, Richard Cole. He owned Cole Motors on Main Street from 1946 to 1972 and worked as the manager of the Buffalo Athletic Club from 1978 to retirement.

Mr. Cole's bravery has not gone unnoticed. He was the Grand Marshal in the 2015 Buffalo Veterans Day Parade, was recognized on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor during the Buffalo Bills Game, and awarded the first annual D'Youville College Sydney Cole Award in 2016 for his service to his country.

March 30, 2017 Award Ceremony at Buffalo's VA Hospital

Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-26) joined members of the United States Army, Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW, American Legion, Military Order of the Purple Heart, along with City Honors High School students

“Captain Sydney Cole’s story of service to this country more than 75 years ago is one that should be remembered and retold.”

and Principal Dr. William Kresse, to celebrate the service of and present military medals to World War II Veteran and Prisoner of War survivor, 102 year-old Sydney Cole March 30 at the VA Hospital in Buffalo.

“Captain Sydney Cole’s story of service to this country more than 75 years ago is one that should be remembered and retold,” said Congressman Brian Higgins. “It is a story of bravery and sacrifice. It is a reminder of the importance of the religious freedoms we value. It is validation that one person can make an enormous difference in this world.”

“Sydney Cole is a living example from the Greatest Generation and is one of our national treasures,” commented Brian Stiller, Director, VA Western New York Healthcare System. “We are fortunate to have this special medal presentation here at the VA to honor and mark his heroism and love for our country.”

In a ceremony, Congressman Higgins and members of the United States Army presented Captain Sydney Cole with his medals.

Mr. Cole was also surprised with the presentation of his Fosdick-Masten Park High School diploma, which he never received as a student, and officially inducted into the City Honors (formerly Fosdick-Masten Park High School) Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame. City Honors Principal Dr. William Kresse said, “We really work to be sure that our students understand the heritage of Fosdick-Masten Park High School. So they tend to

have great reverence for Fosdick-Masten, but learning about Mr. Cole's life voyage has really affected them in a powerful way. Kids these days are witnessing a complicated, violent and often hateful world. It's really important for them to understand that these things have happened in another day and age and that people like a young Sydney Cole rose above it to be courageous and help others. The entire City Honors/Fosdick-Masten Park community is incredibly proud to acknowledge Mr. Cole today as an important part of the proud history of our school."



Some of Captain Cole's Medals

Medals Mr. Cole received from Canada:

The War Medal 1939-1945 - awarded for 28 days of service between September 3rd, 1939 and September 2nd, 1945.

Medals Mr. Cole received from the United States:

- American Defense Service Medal,
- American Campaign Medal,
- European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 2 bronze service stars,
- World War II Victory Medal,
- Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII,
- Air Medal,
- Purple Heart Medal – for injuries sustained in action while serving in World War II,
- Bronze Star Medal - awarded to members of the military distinguishing themselves by heroic service while engaged in an action against an armed enemy. It is one of the highest awards presented to the military for acts of merit,
- POW Medal - awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces taken prisoner during armed conflict.

The Prisoner of War Medal Citation

"While serving as Chief Forward Aerial Observer for the 776th Field Artillery Battalion, Cpt. Cole and his aircraft encountered severe inclement weather which required him to remain on station in support beyond normal duration. While on station, Cpt. Cole's aircraft was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and disabled. Cpt. Cole's aviation skill and prior experience as a glider pilot enabled him to place the aircraft in glide mode while he and his co-pilot struggled to exit the aircraft. When the co-pilot's headset was tangled in the door of the craft, Cpt. Cole went to

the aid of his comrade and freed him to parachute safely behind friendly lines. In so doing, however, Cpt. Cole delayed his own departure from the crippled aircraft enough so that he descended behind German lines. During his descent, Cpt. Cole was fired upon by German troops and sustained multiple gunshot wounds to his left arm and leg. Cpt. Cole was later captured by retreating enemy armored troops and transported to Germany for incarceration at German Stalag IVF (pronounced Four F). As one of only three officers at the prison,

Cpt. Cole commanded some 150 enlisted prisoners. Despite his ill-treated wounds and diminished body weight of only 95 pounds, Cpt. Cole was instrumental in maintaining high levels of discipline and morale among the enlisted men and served as an inspiration and an example of American military conduct while in enemy custody. Cpt. Cole's heroism at the risk of his own life, his dedication to the principals of freedom and his exemplary devotion to his duty as an American fighting man are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American military and reflect great credit on him, his unit and the United States Army."

Story compiled by Teresa Kennedy of Congressman Brian Higgins Staff



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Carin Greenfield and Amy Heumann:

Saving the World, One Child at a Time, One Book at a Time

By Ellen Goldstein

About sixteen years ago, the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy was founded by writer, *Moment Magazine* founder, Mazon founder and mensch Leonard “Leibel” Fein, starting in a few Jewish Federations like New York, Boston and Washington. The program was based on the premise that if we don’t teach children to read by 4th grade, they don’t have much of a chance at success in life. Educator Dr. Jane Fischman of Buffalo was very interested in this program, and wanted to start a Buffalo Chapter, which began in 2001 at Buffalo Public School 78 and Bennett Park Montessori School. Dr. Michele Kassirer Pozarny, then principal of School 78, heartily supported the project, and warmly welcomed the “Lovely Ladies,” as they were called in the beginning, into the school. Called the Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy (BJCL), the project came under the Community Relations Committee also chaired by Jane Fischman. BJCL began with about 25 tutors, who would go to the schools once a week through the school year and work with children from pre-school through 4th grade on their reading skills.

The program quickly caught on, Dr. Fischman became chair, and within a few years, Carin Greenfield and Amy Heumann joined as volunteers, as have hundreds of volunteers through this year. And hundreds of students have been helped by members of our community.

Today, this Federation project is one of more than 40 programs of its kind around the United States coordinated by the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy. The Buffalo chapter has been co-chaired by Mrs. Greenfield and Mrs. Heumann for



Amy Heumann

several years. They were excited to share their story about the volunteer project which changed both of their lives.

Carin came into the project because her husband, former Federation President Gary Greenfield found out about the BJCL and thought it was right up Carin’s alley. “Gary related to me that 90% of the children are living in poverty, living with one parent or a grandparent, and are not learning at grade level,” she said. “I joined the program in 2003.” A former languages teacher in several schools in Western New York, Carin says she has always loved children, and thought that she might want to do some tutoring. “I started at School 78 in the Kindergarten class, working with a little boy, Craig, who was

4 or 5 years old at the time. I had heard he had been a ‘crack baby,’ adopted by a family, and the mother was a nurse. Then, two years after he was adopted, the mother died of cancer, and the teacher told me the father was illiterate.”

Carin started working with Craig, who was restless and had attention problems. They bonded right away. She talked to Gary about him, and about how much she cared about Craig and his situation. Gary said “I would like to meet him. Let’s take him out,” so they began going on outings... to the zoo, the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Niagara Falls, and he loved sketching. For his birthday and Christmas, Carin would give him a book, “which he drank up!” she said.

“Craig has had a difficult life, and I really care about him and about what happens to him. I love Craig. He is so sweet with me. Over the years, his family has adopted 15 children. One of his brothers was shot and killed. I was able to get him a cockatiel as a pet, and he loves it.” The Greenfield’s generosity has also included tutoring and summer camp for Craig, who has aged out of School 78, Bennett Park and is now in East High School. “I would say to Craig at the end of our sessions, I love you, Craig.’ He would answer ‘I love you, Mrs. G.’” Their relationship continues, as Carin and Gary Greenfield seek ways to enable Craig to continue to learn. Their goal is for him to finish high school, and maybe more.

But Carin Greenfield also has loved working with the school, the teachers and the BJCL volunteers, as well. “I thought the volunteers at Schools 78, then 80 and at Bennett Park Montessori were wonderful, humanistic people who love children and care about our world. To me, they are the most wonderful people you would ever want to meet. Amy Heumann has been an incredible person to work with, also,” she continued. “It has been amazing that we can do this service for people—help them to read.” She has also hosted “Thank You” lunches



Carin Greenfield

“Volunteering for Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy has been an extraordinarily positive experience.”

in her home for volunteers, as has other generous community members. “We also adopted two families during the holidays, which was another wonderful thing to do, she said. “All of our volunteers were so generous. I hope that the BJCL program will continue to flourish. Our volunteers have done an outstanding job promoting the children’s interests in reading and helping improve the children’s self-esteem at the same time.”

Amy Heumann joined BJCL in 2005 with a keen interest in getting books into students’ hands. “I read the teaser in the *Federation News* saying “do you have an hour a week?” I said, YES. I have an hour to spare, so I joined the program. This is one of the best things that has ever happened to me,” she explained. “I am a former teacher, and worked on Long Island with special-needs kids, and then then raised two special but not special-needs children. And I love children and I love books. When I taught and raised my own children, one of the things I loved the most was sharing books with the children. And now I’ve been able to share 2500-2700 books a year with the children in BJCL. Some go directly to children; some go to the school library.” Amy has been largely responsible for collecting, sorting, then donating more than 10,000 books over the years to the children at Schools 78 and 80.

“When I joined BJCL, we gave away books on a very limited basis. I felt that we could improve the quality of books we gave away and also expand the quantity. So I started to look around for good quality free or minimal cost books that I could bring to the program.” Amy began buying books at the Book

Outlet, and someone told her about the Scholastic Books Warehouse in Getzville. "We started purchasing book there, and then I was told we could volunteer our time at Scholastic Book Fairs in exchange for books, which several of us did."

One of the things she is always on the lookout for is new or nearly new books. "The Community has been very generous when it comes to donations, we had several bnai mitzvah students collected books, I've gotten some cash donations, including from volunteers in the programs. Sometimes when I share what I am doing at garage sales, some people will give me a bargain or for free."

Amy, too has met so many wonderful people, including Carin Greenfield, and other people who have given very generous donations. "This underscored for me the generosity of people in terms of resources or time. At book giveaways, some of the people who can't participate weekly step up and donate time for that," she said. "The last several years, we have had enough books for each child from pre-k through 4th grade including Special Ed, to select 3 books each time to take home. For some children, these may be the only book that they may ever own."

"Volunteering for Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy has been an extraordinarily positive experience. I feel so lucky that in my retirement, I found something so personal and positive. I don't think it's for everyone, but may be for some people, as it has been for me," Amy Heumann said. "If you love kids, or enjoy books and education, this might be a good fit. Try it out and see. It's important that everyone do something in the community. It could be a great fit for a lot of people. You can make new friends, and the emotional feedback is tremendous. These children THRIVE on individual attention. It's an interesting way to see education up close and personal, especially in the inner city, it's eye opening and our volunteers really make a difference." **Also, please read David Schiller's related story on page 39.**

The Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy is always looking for volunteers who can donate at least one hour each week, like to read, like children, and can travel to School 80. Volunteers must make a weekly commitment to volunteer for this program. Books are also needs as donations. For more information, contact Ellen Goldstein at egoldstein@jfedbflo.com or call her at 716-204-2243.

Ellen Goldstein is managing editor of this newspaper, the Jewish Journal of WNY.

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Aaron Schapiro: An Insatiable Appetite for Music

By Rob Goldberg

Aaron Schapiro knows how to play 13 instruments, has written a symphony, conducts an orchestra he initiated, and plays lead guitar in a rock band he founded-- all this before he begins his junior year at Williamsville North High School.

The son of Roger and Shannon Schapiro, Aaron beams when he shares his story with me one summer afternoon at the JCC. "I just have an insatiable appetite for music."

Aaron started playing music when he was a toddler. "My grandmother is an artist and I attribute my musical connection to her. She got me a keyboard when I was 3 and that was the beginning." Shira Goldberg was Aaron's pre-school teacher at the Play And Learn School (PALS) at Temple Beth Zion. She remembers Aaron



Aaron shredding guitar with his band, Sans.

as if it were yesterday. "He was very shy, but had amazing mathematical skills, which correlates to one's ability to read musical notes. I'll never forget one day when we were preparing to deliver canned goods that we had collected for a food drive. All the children were separating the



Aaron conducting his Auxiliary Orchestra at Williamsville North.

items into categories, but Aaron jumped in and began to take inventory, counting and documenting every item in each group. We were blown away."

Before long, Aaron found himself consumed in all things musical. "I was never into the sports thing. I tried every sport but nothing clicked. But it was different with music." Today, Aaron has two main outlets for his passion: playing in a rock band he founded called Sans, and conducting "Auxiliary Orchestra," the high school orchestra he started last fall.

"I have fun playing and singing rock music I've written. I love seeing people dancing to our songs. It's immediate feedback." It's "crazy" when you think about it, he grins, "No one in my school is shredding guitar at a bar in Niagara Falls on a Tuesday in front of a crowd of 20-somethings!"

While the parts of Aaron's classical side and rock side intertwine, he admits to me that though the band is "really cool," it is wholly different when he is conducting his orchestra. Smiling with pride, he told me about how the orchestra was born.



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“There just aren’t enough opportunities to play, and I’m not alone in thinking this. There are a lot of students at my high school who feel the same way.” So Aaron, ever the entrepreneur, created the Auxiliary Orchestra at Williamsville North. “I get so much joy from enabling others to perform,” he added.

“For me, music is one of the most powerful things you can experience. Music is eternal.”

Aaron told me about one student who loved to play violin but there was never a spot for her in the regular orchestra. She took up euphonium and now plays in Auxiliary. “Her Mom thanked me for giving her the opportunity to play.” I was so moved,” he shared. “You see, that’s why I do what I do.”

Kim Burke, one of North’s Music teachers, who signed on to be Aaron’s advisor for another group he co-created freshman year called “Music Discovery,” remarked that Aaron is well beyond his years. “What I love about him is the way he communicates to other students in class.” She said that each week in her class, “Music in our Lives,” students listen to and analyze each other’s musical selections. “Aaron is so respectful in his analysis –

whether his fellow students select rap or country, he always finds a musical way to say something positive about their pieces.”

When asked how he works as a composer, Aaron said that he sits down and just writes. “I think of a melody or a chord progression and just put notes on a page.” I also asked him what artists and composers have influenced him the most. “I listen to classical music all the time, and probably Tchaikovsky and Mozart are my favorites.” And on the rock side, I inquired? “I pull a lot from Zeppelin, Jimmy Hendrix and The Doors. I love the feel of Jim Morrison’s music.”

I assumed that given Aaron’s early success, he is destined for the stage. But when asked about his long-term goals, he was quick to reply. “I want to go into music education. I always wanted to be a teacher and I want to conduct a high school level orchestra.” For Kim Burke, Aaron’s aspiration is so gratifying. “It totally excites me that Aaron wants to go into our field. He’s so diverse and his musical knowledge is so vast. He would make an awesome teacher – I know he’ll be able to reach kids in a thoughtful and meaningful way.”

“For me, music is one of the most powerful things you can experience. Music is eternal,” Aaron shares with me as we wind down our time together. “Just think about it. You can play football into your 30’s and then your body wears out. But one is never too old to play music.”

Rob Goldberg is CEO and Executive Director of the Buffalo Jewish Federation

New USY Board @ TBT

Temple Beth Tzedek’s youth group, USY, installed its new board on Sunday June 4th. The incoming board will plan social as well as community events. Temple Beth Tzedek will be hosting a regional convention in November for USY, the national teen organization of the Conservative Judaism Movement.



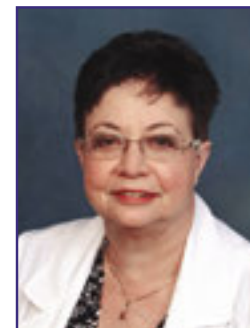
From Left to right: Seth Blum-President, Jordan Grubea-VP Israel Affairs, Jeremy Werbow-membership/Kadimah Liason, Charlie Herman-VP communications, Michael Sanders -VP Religious Education. Missing: Hannah Wallenfels-SATO.

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Hon. Lisa Bloch Rodwin:

Doing The Right Thing

By Howard Rosenhoch

Domestic violence, child and spousal abuse, dysfunctional families. These are societal issues that require attention, resources and action. When overlaid with the cultural dissonances between American law enforcement and judicial institutions on the one hand, and the family structure, culture and practices of recently arrived refugee immigrant families on the other, the mix is toxic and the solutions seem virtually insurmountable.

Then there is the Honorable Lisa Bloch Rodwin, Judge of the New York State Family Court. Judge Rodwin is a Difference Maker with a capital “D” and a capital “M”. In her distinguished career as a lawyer, prosecutor and now judge, Lisa has devoted herself to stopping the perpetrators of domestic violence in their tracks, protecting and healing the victims of domestic violence, and dispensing firm, fair and compassionate justice to families in the throes of dysfunction.

Reflecting on her childhood, Lisa described her late parents as folks who were always giving back. Her father, Larry, taught high school and served as principal of the local reform synagogue religious school. Her mother, Steffi, arrived in America with her parents, Lisa’s grandparents, as refugees from Hitler’s Nazi Germany just as the anti-Semitic



Judge Lisa Rodwin with a photo of her mother and grandparents

impacting the world at large or something more personal and mundane, like “why I should get a telephone in my room.” Learning to hold her own in a conversation and advocate for dearly held positions are skills Lisa would find immensely valuable in later life, and she credits her parents with providing the opportunity to develop those skills early on.

Much to the benefit of our community, Lisa found her way to Buffalo after earning

and skills she acquired as a child and in her university learning to the test. The political environment in Buffalo at the time, however, proved quite challenging, and frustration led Lisa to a change of career and law school at UB.

After graduation in 1984 and admission to the bar, Lisa chose public service, joining the prosecutorial ranks with the Erie County District Attorney. It was here that Lisa honed those arguing skills like a fine-tooth comb, first in the DA’s Appeals Bureau and then as a trial lawyer. The rough and tumble of courtroom work suited Lisa just fine, and she thrived in it. A more specialized and ultimately higher calling, however, awaited.

The year 1994 saw the OJ Simpson case burst on the scene. Horrifying and widely reported, the murders of the football star’s ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman, brought the scourge of domestic violence to the forefront. Lisa, already a top prosecutor in the DA’s office, talked to her then boss, the late Justice Kevin Dillon, about the need to take criminal prosecution of domestic violence cases seriously. They agreed a special unit for that purpose should be created under Lisa’s leadership. Recognizing that putting the perps in jail without providing significant support for their victims would result in an incomplete and inadequate effort, Lisa insisted that the unit include a social worker. The unit prosecuted 450

cases the first year. By the time Lisa left the DA’s office, the domestic violence unit was handling 4,000 cases annually.

As the work of the DA’s domestic violence unit grew under Lisa’s stewardship, Lisa recognized that law enforcement institutions alone couldn’t tackle the problem holistically. Lisa was instrumental in forming the Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence and obtained a \$1.1 million grant to establish the Family Justice Center. A new, collaborative system of response in the form of a centralized family violence center, the Center provides a “one stop shop” for domestic violence victims. Instead of finding barriers to accessing needed services spread out in various locations, the Family Justice Center brings those service providers together under one roof, creating a welcoming, convenient and above all safe space for families in the throes of abuse. Lisa was proud to serve as the Family Justice Center’s first President.

In 2008 Lisa left the DA’s office to assume a seat on the Erie County Family Court bench. Judge Rodwin’s new position exposed her to new problems. Recently arrived immigrant families, refugees from persecution at home and terrorized by civil wars and the trauma of refugee camps, would come before her after the arrest of a minor child, a child abuse charge, a custody dispute or a request for an order of protection. Such circumstances would test the mettle of the most sophisticated US born family. These families, however, far from their original homes and steeped in a language and culture completely foreign to our justice system, were often unable to understand the proceedings into which they were thrust or appreciate the authority and compassion with which justice is dispensed in our system.

Collaboration with others is part of Judge Rodwin’s DNA. Her response to these new problems was to team up with the Department of Social Services, local community and religious leaders, and other local organizations to form the WNY Muslim and Immigrant Community and Family Court Collaborative. The goals of the Collaborative include educating all professionals in the child welfare and family offense network how to work appropriately with Muslim and refugee/immigrant families; educating the local Muslim and refugee/immigrant community how the Family Courts and the Social Services Department work; recruiting culturally diverse and aware foster parents; and training translators in the home languages of the refugee/immigrant community so that they can better understand what’s

“In her distinguished career as a lawyer, prosecutor and now judge, Lisa has devoted herself to stopping the perpetrators of domestic violence in their tracks...”

Nuremburg Laws were ostracizing and victimizing Jews in the run up to World War II. Steffi earned a Master’s degree in nursing, taught public health nursing, served on the local Health Commission, and volunteered at and was on the board of the local homeless shelter. Together, Lisa’s parents received the Volunteer of the Year Award from *The Stamford Advocate*.

In the Bloch household, however, giving back was only part of it. Bloch family dinners were a time for Lisa and her two sisters to hone their argument skills by taking a position on some issue of importance, whether on current events

a degree in Urban Planning from Rutgers University. Lisa found a welcoming Jewish community here, especially at her new synagogue, Temple Beth El (now Temple Beth Tzedek), and at the Kadimah Academy which provided a terrific secular and Jewish education for her sons David, now an attorney with the Baltimore Public Justice Center, and Benjamin, now Chief Resident at the VA Hospital in Bridgeport, CT.

Working for a housing redevelopment agency in the Masten-Ellicott districts and volunteering with Women for Downtown were terrific opportunities to put the traits



FBI Director James Comey and Judge Rodwin in Washington D.C.

going on when intersecting with Family Court. The Collaborative includes more than 200 representatives from local religious and cultural groups, resettlement agencies, government and law enforcement agencies at the local, state and national levels, and legal services organizations. It has become a model for communities across the state.

For her work establishing the Collaborative, Judge Rodwin was presented by FBI Director James Comey with the Community Leadership Award for her "proactive support of Muslim and new American communities in Buffalo." She also was honored at a ceremony by the Buffalo FBI's SAC Adam Cohen for that prestigious award. Lisa has received numerous awards and recognitions for her work supporting the victims of domestic violence and promoting the dispensing of fair and compassionate justice, including, Women Lawyers of Western New York's Lawyer of the Year Award, the Susan Still Profile in Courage Award from the Family Justice Center, the President's Award and Kupferman Juvenile Justice Award from the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, the UB Law School Distinguished Alumna Award, and the Award for Excellence from Everywoman Opportunity Center. Lisa was one of five lawyers selected by *The Daily Record* for the Leaders in Law Award. She has received other service awards from *The Buffalo News*, the National Federation for Just Communities, the Alexa Foundation, the Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence, Hispanics United, New York State Crime Prevention Coalition, Prevention Focus and Time Warner's Western New York Local Hero nomination.

Lisa is the definition of a Difference Maker. She lives in Amherst with her husband, Michael Rickert, a researcher at Roswell Park Cancer institute.

Howard Rosenhoch, a retired attorney, is immediate Past President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation.

Yonatys to Chair 2018 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo

Steven J. Weiss, President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, has announced the appointment of Stephen Yonaty and M. Kim Yonaty as chairs of the 2018 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo. "The 2018 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo will not be divided into Men's and Women's Divisions for the first time in years," said Weiss. "That is why we have called on Kim and Steve Yonaty to inject a spirit of unity into this year's Campaign. I know we can count on both of them to lead us to success in this year's endeavor."

Stephen L. Yonaty, a partner with the law firm Cannon Heyman & Weiss, concentrates his practice in the areas of affordable, senior and multi-family housing, real estate, commercial and public finance, business restructuring and bankruptcy, and commercial litigation. Mr. Yonaty graduated from Cornell University, the SUNY at Buffalo School of Law School and its Management School. He is the 2003 Dr. Meyer and Ann S. Riweh Young Leadership Award Winner from Federation. He serves on the board of the Jewish Federation Board of Governors, was its Community Relations Committee Chair, and has been a member of its annual campaign cabinet. He currently is serving on the boards of Every Person Influences Children (EPIC) and the Erie County Bar Foundation. He is also a board member and officer at Temple Beth Zion, a board member of the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, has served as Vice President of Chabad, and on the boards of Hebrew Benevolent Loan Assn. and Jewish Federation Apartments, and the BJE.

M. Kim Yonaty is an attorney, and is Confidential Law Clerk to



M. Kim Yonaty and Stephen L. Yonaty

Hon. Deanne M. Tripi, Erie County Family Court Judge. She is Secretary on the Federation's Board of Governors, chairs the Planning & Allocations Committee as well as the Jewish Program Venture Fund, served on the Women's Philanthropy Board and was a member of Temple Beth Zion's 2016 Rabbinical Search Committee. She served on the Bureau of Jewish Education board, the JCC board and the Jewish Federation Apartments board. She is a graduate of the Melton program, and was on the faculty at the BJE from 1999-2004. In the general community Mrs. Yonaty served as the Law Guardian Liaison to the 4th Department Law Guardian Program. She was the 2005 Ruth & Milton Kahn Young Women's Leadership Award Winner. She is a graduate of the University of Rochester and SUNY Buffalo School of Law. The Yonatys are parents of four children and both participated in the Jewish Federation's New Leadership program and Mission to Israel in 2012. "We're honored to serve in this position and look forward to a successful campaign which reflects the positive momentum our community is enjoying," said the couple.

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We will publish the Honor Roll thanking all donors to the 2017 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo at our Campaign Kick-Off Event Monday, September 25 and in the *Jewish Journal of WNY*. Your name will appear exactly as it did last year unless otherwise requested.

Should you wish to make any changes, please contact our Campaign Director Randi Morkisz at 716-204-2245 or rmorkisz@jfedbflo.com.

Your gift helps so many here in Buffalo, in Israel and throughout the world!
Thank you!

Ben Siegel: Buffalo's Soulful Storyteller

By Jana Eisenberg

His Facebook profile intro pretty much sums up Ben Siegel's attitude and beliefs. "Gay Jewish Diabetic," it says, succinctly, straightforwardly and with a slight wink. Siegel, 35, is by profession a copywriter and journalist. He works at Block Club, the branding and strategy agency, and is a freelance theater and arts critic for The Buffalo News. In the bigger picture, he's deeply committed to and passionate about many aspects of his identity, including spirituality, art and artistic expression, sexual orientation and community.

Siegel was "raised in the Jewish culture and faith." A native of Williamsville, and now a resident of Buffalo, he grew up in a temple-going family—attending Temple Beth Zion throughout his youth and remaining active as a younger adult. His parents came from varying Jewish traditions; his father, who passed away when Siegel was 17, was raised in an orthodox household, but did not continue the practice, and his mother, reform, with parents of "hybrid" backgrounds.

Of his early experience with Judaism, and his feelings now, Siegel explained, "I still feel very much connected to Temple Beth Zion—both the building and the congregation. Growing up, I was more active in temple life—I was president of our youth group. Later I served on the board. My Judaism is a pillar of who I am, but like many in my age bracket, I'm not terribly traditionally



Ben Siegel. Photo: David Anthony Kafer

devout now. My interest in my Judaism hasn't waned, but the way that I find my spirituality has evolved.

"As I became an adult, I found that there were other physical spaces and places where you could connect with that," he continued. "I've been going to the theater since I was a little boy, and now I write about it. I find a similar spiritual experience sitting in a theater audience as I do sitting in a temple."

A 2006 University at Buffalo Media Study graduate, he nominally focused on film history and theory. But, he said, "I was really learning how to be a critic and a journalist." As an undergrad, he was an editor of the independent student newspaper, The Spectrum, and earned an internship at The Buffalo News, a relationship

that developed into his current steady gig as an arts freelancer.

The expression of his identity, and his support of others' right to live and express their own identities are both overarching and underlying themes to his life. "My Jewish identity is equal to my gay identity—while they are not both exhibited at every moment of every day, they are equally important and occupy an equal part of me," he said. "And, while I wouldn't define myself as an 'activist,' I will speak up for my belief in my and others' rights. Making one's voice heard is part of the tradition of both cultures—to live your life and to defend it whenever necessary."

Cultural traditions are touchstones for Siegel, especially when it comes to his vocation. "I'm a professional storyteller—and while that's not only a Jewish quality, that's a big part of it: to tell your own story and to connect with and learn about others through their stories," he noted.

By day, he works as a content strategist and copywriter for the award-winning company Block Club, whose ethos is based on "wanting better"—for Buffalo, for its clients, for itself. Block Club started out publishing a print magazine, as well; Siegel was the editor. "In the magazine, which we retired after eight years, we told stories about Buffalo's identity," he recollected. "We looked at the fact that, yes, Buffalo is changing—a lot for the better, some not so much."

He doesn't shy away from continuing to peel back the layers of the deeper story behind Buffalo's current circumstances. "Buffalo's narrative for a long time has been about our determination to resurrect, to survive," he said. "You can't be a Buffalonian or live here without recognizing our history—we've waited a long time for the kind of progress we've been enjoying over the last ten years. A lot of it is encouraging and exciting."

"I've been going to the theater since I was a little boy, and now I write about it."

I find a similar spiritual experience sitting in a theater audience as I do sitting in a temple."

"But," he continued, with his social conscience front and center, "the growth and changes are incomplete unless everybody benefits—there's a lot to mend that may not be as 'easy' or appealing, like the education system, poverty and income inequality. These issues and factors are not unique to Buffalo, and like in other places, they haven't been addressed as thoroughly as they should be. Until we fix those and other important gaps, we can't really claim to be experiencing a 'resurgence.'"

His occupations—helping clients define and redefine themselves, writing about theater and art to add to the conversation and experience of it, doing volunteer work for organizations like Young Audiences, which provides and advocates for arts education—all feed into the theme of expression and self-expression.

"Being a Jewish person and someone on the LGBTQ spectrum—throughout history, there are things that get in our way," he said. "Sometimes you take punches, sometimes you throw them. And when you're still here, that's something to both celebrate and examine. One way of surviving diminishment in any way is to re-tell your story to yourself and others—to never let yourself be silenced."

"So many Jewish holidays speak to that tradition," he mused. "Passover is explicitly about telling our story of survival: they came for us, we fled, we are here to tell the story and remind ourselves every year."

"I see similarities in other aspects of my life—when you put it all together, it makes sense," he said. "There's a through line in the overlapping identities and the idea of self-expression: my being Jewish, gay, an artist, and Buffalonian. At the end of the day we all have the right to be who we are and who we want to be."

Jana Eisenberg is a frequent contributor to the Jewish Journal and other publications regionally and nationally.

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL



Todd Sugarman: Taking Care of Business

By Peter Simon

Temple Beth Am was in turmoil six years ago, and there was considerable fear that it was in danger of collapse. To make matters worse, efforts to find a capable and willing new president were fast approaching a dead end. That's when Todd Sugarman not only volunteered for the post, but lobbied aggressively for it. "I was like a last resort president," he said. "I volunteered for it. I knew people thought I was too outspoken, too loud to be president. But I could see the Temple was being torn apart. I knew I could help. I wanted to prove to others that I could do it."

With considerable reluctance and apprehension, the Board of Trustees gave Sugarman that chance. He thrived in the job. Sugarman has now been president five of the last six years, and was recently elected to another one-year term. Along with his initial election came widespread advice for Sugarman to tone

**"Sugarman's vision,
decisiveness and willingness
to make major changes helped
stabilize what is now
Congregation Shir Shalom."**

down his approach and smooth out the rough edges. "I know the popular opinion of him was not good," said David Berghash a former Beth Am president and a friend and supporter of Sugarman. "It was the 'bull in the china shop' kind of stuff."

But Sugarman's vision, decisiveness and willingness to make major changes helped stabilize what is now Congregation Shir Shalom. "I had reservations at first, but I now feel like he was the right person at the right time," said Dr. Mindy P. Weinman. "He's a little unconventional, a little 'outside the box.' But look what he's done."

Sugarman's success is anchored largely around Beth Am's 2012 merger with Temple Sinai. The merger stabilized the finances of the new temple, ensuring Shir Shalom's fiscal viability for at least a decade, Sugarman said. There had long been a realization that a merger between Buffalo area temples would be needed to keep liberal Judaism viable here. "I said: How about Sinai?" The merger also gave the new synagogue the wherewithal to put in place a skilled, attentive and highly-regarded clergy team.

Rabbi Alexander Lazarus-Klein, the rabbi at Temple Sinai, was chosen to lead the combined congregation, and his contract was later renewed through 2021. Arlene Frank, an outstanding cantor who lost her previous position when two downstate temples merged and cut staff, said it was Sugarman's persistence and sincerity that prompted her to sign on with Shir Shalom a year ago. Sugarman also built a picnic grove at the Temple and made many other financial and in-kind contributions.



Todd Sugarman accepting an award from the Network for Religious Communities

He was instrumental in reestablishing bingo and launching other fund-raisers. "I just enjoy making things happen," said Sugarman, the long-time owner of T.L.S. Landscaping. "I love challenges. Everything I say I'm going to do, I do."

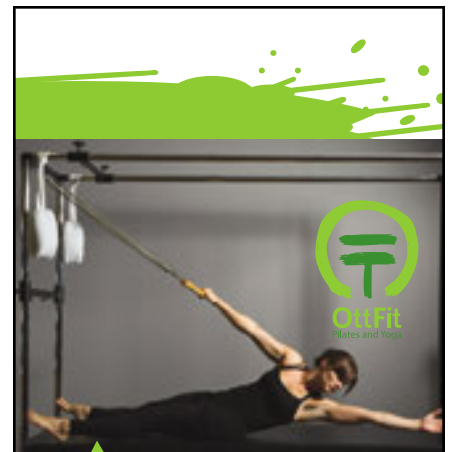
Sugarman, 58, is a hands-on president who is in touch with Shir Shalom's clergy and staff almost daily, even when he winters in Florida. "I love being president," he said. "It's seven days a week for me. I consider it a job." Accustomed to making unilateral decisions in the business world, Sugarman is easily annoyed when he feels there is too much discussion of Temple issues and not enough action. "If we waste time, we put our future in danger," he said. Presidents at both Beth Am and Sinai traditionally served much shorter terms, raising the question of whether a change in leadership would be healthy. "Do you just change for the sake of change?" Sugarman said. "This is a temple. It's not the President of the United States. And

things aren't like they used to be. There aren't younger people coming up through the system. They have other things they want to do."

Sugarman and his wife Pamela, who is not Jewish, joined Temple Beth Am because of its approach to interfaith couples. "People were very warm and welcoming to Pam," Sugarman said. "When we walked through these doors, it made her feel good." Before becoming president, Sugarman was active in the Men's Group, and then became a member of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee. "I think people respect me now," he said. "I think they know who I am, and that I take care of things. I always wanted to help people. I like giving back. I love giving back."

Is this the newer, mellower Todd Sugarman? "It depends on the day," Berghash said, with a smile.

Peter Simon is a retired Buffalo News reporter, and an active member of Congregation Shir Shalom.



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Vilona Trachtenberg: Making Wishes Come True

By Mara Koven-Gelman

Vilona Trachtenberg admits to being obsessed with Buffalo and loves meeting people. “Everyone has a good story to tell,” and she seems to be on a mission to meet as many people as possible. Vilona is a Fulfillment Planner at Rich Products Corporation and recent recipient of Buffalo Business First’s “30 Under 30” award.

She is also active in many non-profit organizations ranging from Danceability (a studio offering dance programs to people with special needs), Make-a-Wish Foundation, WNY Heroes, Special Olympics, American Cancer Society, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, to Nickel City Jews, and the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo. She is also involved with TEDx Youth@Buffalo, writes for Step Out Buffalo (a travel/tourism website), and works at Canalside during Thursday concerts. In December, Vilona did the Polar Plunge, a fundraiser for Special Olympics where people literally go jump in the lake, with a team of coworkers. How was the event? - “so much fun, camaraderie, dance party,” not even mentioning the effects of frigid Buffalo water in winter.

The 26-year-old Amherst resident is modest about her explosion of professional and volunteer achievements. Vilona was nominated for the “30 Under 30” award by her mentor Bob Pokrzyk, Senior Manager of Customer Service and Customer Care at Rich Products Corporation. The award identifies young business professionals starting their careers and demonstrating current and future promise in their field and



Vilona Trachtenberg

community involvement. Deciding factors for the award include career achievements, leadership and initiative, community engagement, and each nominee’s potential to become a community leader on a grand scale. Vilona has them all, but is humble. “I know many people that should have or could have won the “30 Under 30” award. I had a supportive workplace and a mentor.”

Last December she also won a community service award at Rich Products. Vilona credits Bob as an excellent mentor, always encouraging and “going beyond” to help mentees achieve their goals. Vilona was also recently promoted from the Customer Service group to the Fulfillment Planning role – part of Customer Service & Logistics. She explains “supply chain”—the area in which she works—simply, as we sat together drinking coffee one July morning. “See this plastic cup I’m drinking from; it had to be manufactured, packaged, transported, distributed and finally put in front of us on Elmwood Avenue. That is “supply chain.”

It is all around us and how companies get their products into public use.

Motivated to Do Good

While she loves talking about work, she really lights up when asked about volunteering. Her motivation to “make a difference in others’ lives” comes from a 2015 Yom Kippur service at Buffalo’s Chabad House on North Forest Road. Rabbi Gurary was leading a service on how individuals could make a difference in the world, suggesting that in the coming year, everyone should try to do as many mitzvot as possible.

“I’m not one to just listen and go through the motions. I was focused on what he said and decided then to get involved.” Vilona thought about the issues she most cared about and dedicated herself to volunteer

opportunities, workforce employment support and school scholarships. Get involved and engaged.”

Family influence

While Vilona is clearly her own person, she cites her family’s experiences as Holocaust Survivors and newcomers from Moldova as impacting her willingness to embrace all opportunities. Her father, Michael, along with her grandparents (Volodia and Ida), who were Holocaust Survivors, moved to the U.S. in 1980. Her mother, Victoria, first went to Israel before immigrating to the U.S.

“My parents are super appreciative to be in the United States, she said. “My father just retired as a Vice President at LPCiminelli Construction. We have always felt that we could achieve anything we

“While Vilona is clearly her own person, she cites her family’s experiences as Holocaust Survivors and newcomers from Moldova as impacting her willingness to embrace all opportunities.”

work. A couple of chance Facebook posts, and a “60 Minutes” episode on Make-A-Wish Foundation were the on-ramp to a new way of life.

What is her advice to other Millennials about achieving their dreams professionally, socially or in the volunteer sphere? “Don’t be afraid of being overwhelmed, dedicate yourself to learning something new and having new experiences.”

What about those who don’t have opportunities in higher education, or a large network of contacts? “It has to do with what you want and what you are interested in. There are many mentorship

wanted.” While she realizes anti-Semitism exists, she has never felt it directly and “it certainly is not on the scale in which people experienced in the Soviet Union.” She says her father likes to emphasize how many people during World War II were resilient, and fought back while facing challenges. Her parents also instilled in her Jewish values of giving back to the community.

What is next on her agenda on a Sunday? After volunteering all day at a danceability booth at “Taste of Buffalo,” driving her Dad home, and conducting this interview, she says with a big smile, “Ed Sheeran at Key Bank Center tonight. Soaking up everything, never missing an opportunity—I love Buffalo.”

What is next for volunteer roles? “I love being a “wish granter” for the Make-a-Wish Foundation,” she answered. Vilona works with children with illness and helps grant major wishes for them.

“Actually, the best feeling is doing the mitzvot, I don’t even have to know that it helped someone, but I hope I made someone’s life better, and I am also so enriched by other volunteers,” she concluded. Our community is clearly enriched by Vilona Trachtenberg’s presence in our City of Good Neighbors.

Mara Koven-Gelman is Executive Director of The Holocaust Resource Center.

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Teresa Alessandra
Art Show @ JCC/
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through August 31



An exhibit of acrylic paintings by Teresa Alessandra will be on display in the Art Gallery at the JCC of Greater Buffalo, 787 Delaware Avenue, until August 31, 2017.

Teresa Alessandra is a local artist as well as an aspiring writer and entrepreneur, who has lived in Buffalo all her life. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Canisius College in 2013 with Bachelor's Degree in English and Creative Writing, as well as a Minor in Studio Art.



Her artwork can be recognized from various galleries, cafes, and festivals around the city (Including Spot Coffee, Ashker's Juice Bar and Cafe, Parables Gallery, and the Glen Park Art Festival)-and she is very thankful to add The Jewish Community Center to that list! Her current collection of work utilizes a specialized acrylic paint, which is poured and layered on a perfectly flat, level canvas, and then left to dry for four to six weeks (a technique which she has been developing and perfecting for the past several years). Her inspiration for these pieces is the feelings of spontaneity, freedom, and joy which she feels while she is creating them. She hopes those who view them feel the same way!

Gallery admission is free and the gallery is open during JCC business hours, 7 days a week. For more information, visit jccbuffalo.org.



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David Bunis:

Bringing Jewish Theatre to Buffalo

By Chana R. Kotzin, Ph.D.

A man (David) sits down at a café, and turns to another man (Saul), saying, “What about founding a Jewish theatre here in Buffalo?” Some would say it was *bashert*; others would say it was serendipity; both would say, “and with a heavy dose of teamwork and devotion!” Bringing the Jewish Repertory Theatre Of Western New York into being was just such a story, recalls David Bunis. In 2002, while David was taking classes at the University at Buffalo, he sat down in the food court, and by chance, at a table near Saul Elkin, and they started talking. Then the head of Theatre Department, Saul was well known beyond the university classroom as founder of Shakespeare in Delaware Park. As a highly respected actor with NYC Yiddish theatre roots, he also had a busy acting and directing schedule that meant launching such a project alone would be difficult. Enter David stage right! With a passionate love for theatre, a commitment to Jewish Cultural Arts, and over four decades of business management it was a dream pairing for them both - and for all theater-goers in Western New York, Jewish and non-Jewish.

David Bunis, the younger son of Anne and Louis Bunis, is a former chairman of The Sample Shop, a specialty chain store founded in 1929 by his mother Anne Bunis and run by the Bunis family for over 60 years. David pursued undergraduate studies at St. Lawrence University, followed by the Wharton School receiving an MBA After five years at Bloomingdale's in New York City, which was preceded by military service, he returned home to Buffalo to work in the expanding family business, joining his brother Maer and other family members. The Sample began in the family home in the sun parlor, but by the mid-1960s was growing its branches across WNY. Initially known for women's clothing, it had expanded into men's and children's wear, bridal wear, beauty parlor, shoes and even a record shop! In 1990, after 35 year in retail management, David made the move from retail to property management. Always active in lay leadership, David served on boards at the Jewish Community Center,



David Bunis

Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies and Crime Stoppers of Western New York, where he was one of the founders. Much later, he joined SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), counseling small business owners in retailing, property management and non-profits, and where he is still active today.

After that chance lunch meeting, David Bunis moved quickly, presenting his plan to expand Cultural Arts at the Jewish Community Center to the JCC board. For decades through the Dramatic Workshop and the Jewish Center Theatre Arena, the JCC had a strong interest in producing theater, but that had waned by the 1990s. David Bunis proposed putting the “Jewish” back into a revived theater program that showcased Jewish culture as a part of the American mosaic. As expected the plan was enthusiastically embraced by the board, but with one caveat! With a promise of time from then cultural arts administrator Marcie Frankel, the JRT became a special program of the JCC, but the actual funding for day-to-day expenses, salaries, and staging was the responsibility of the Jewish Repertory Theatre (JRT). The theater business, notorious for its financial precariousness,

was even more tenuous as a niche theater undertaking. David, as volunteer producer, however, drew on his decades of business knowledge and persuasive skills to locate committed donors, and found ways to work creatively, in order to fulfill the mission of showcasing Jewish stories with a universal appeal. Borrowing space at local theaters in the city, and other spaces as allowed, the JRT opened with *The Chosen* at the Irish Classical Theatre in 2003. For the next eight seasons, the JRT travelled from theater to theatre, as

one among too-many-to-mention memorable productions).

Committed to continually developing the JRT for the community and its audiences, David utilized good timing again in 2010. While the renovation of the Jewish Community Center/Benderson Building in Getzville was underway, and through a generous lead donation from Maxine and Robert Seller (z”l), David was able to orchestrate—with the aid of others—matching monies to give the JRT a permanent, state-of-the-art, venue. In 2011, the Maxine and Robert Seller Theatre opened within the JCC, and has been packing in the audiences to performances ever since. A frequent Artie Award nominee and winner as well as other awards, this cultural jewel of artistic excellence articulates an array of Jewish experiences to the larger Western New York community.

The JRT produces plays and performances that speak to the human condition and which reflects a vibrant,



David Bunis and Saul Elkin

a wandering Jewish theatre troop, garnering a reputation for outstanding artistic direction and award-winning and innovative performances, building a loyal theatre following (the author of this article will never forget attending *Lebensraum* and the brilliant actor-puppeteers,

ever-changing Jewish culture, providing a broad and inclusive Jewish affiliation that also brings together Jews and non-Jews. Transformative and always innovative, loyal fans and new fans to the Jewish Repertory Theatre productions know the difference it makes to their lives and the joy it brings, season after season. Difference making at its best, we celebrate David and his commitment to bringing Jewish theatre to our community. Now approaching its 15th anniversary, the JRT will be celebrating this milestone with a cocktail party at the newly restored and historically compelling Hotel Henry on October 2, 2017.

Dr. Chana Kotzin is the Community Archives Project Director for the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project.

“David Bunis proposed putting the ‘Jewish’ back into a revived theater program that showcased Jewish culture as a part of the American mosaic.”

SSG Meets RBG!

Sharon Stern Gerstman, counsel to the Buffalo, New York law firm of Magavern Magavern Grimm LLP, is currently President of the New York State Bar Assn. At a recent meeting of the American Bar Assn. in Washington, D.C., Ms. Gerstman had just moved the admission of 40 NYS Bar Assn. Members to the US Supreme Court. Following the ceremony, US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg spoke to the New York State group. While there, Ms. Gerstman asked Justice Ginsberg to sign a copy of the Judge's recent biography for children, *I Dissent*, as a gift for Ms. Gerstman's new granddaughter, born May 10 (a PJ Library selection.) What great role models for the new baby—RBG and SSG!



Judge Ginsberg signs a book for Ms. Gerstman

Senator Kennedy Honors Monica Neuwirt as a NYS Woman of Distinction

New York State Senator Tim Kennedy recently honored community member Monica Neuwirt as a New York State Woman of Distinction. He gave her the award at the Ride for Roswell in June. She is the daughter of two Holocaust survivors. As such, survival and hard work are part of her DNA. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, she decided to put her health in the hands of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Ms. Neuwirt is a longtime supporter of the Institute, having ridden every year in the annual biking fundraiser, The Ride for Roswell, since its inception in 1996. Over the past nine years, she has qualified for the Extra Mile Club, raising over \$1,000 each year. She was also instrumental in inspiring her company, FedEx Trade Networks, to participate in the fundraiser.



Monica Neuwirt with Senator Tim Kennedy at the Ride for Roswell

Last year The Ride for Roswell was a difficult time for Ms. Neuwirt. A year earlier, her partner had undergone chemotherapy and cancer surgery at Roswell Park, a good friend had recently died of lung cancer, and Ms. Neuwirt herself was recovering from surgery and in the midst of her 20 radiation treatments. However, despite all of this, she managed to complete her 30-mile bike route for The Ride for Roswell. Ms. Neuwirt has worked for FedEx Trade Networks for almost 14 years as an IT manager, and has led team members to participate in various fundraisers for charities, including United Way, American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, Hospice Buffalo, the Food Bank and Ronald McDonald House.

"Ms. Neuwirt graduated from the University at Buffalo as a Computer Science major, at a

time when few women worked in this field, Senator Kennedy said. "She was one of two women in her graduating class. She went on to get her MBA at Canisius College. A lifelong feminist and human rights activist, she has participated in many events over the years to fight oppression of all kinds. If it were not for the courage of those who fought against the Nazis in WWII, she would not be here today."

This is what he said at the ceremony:

"Monica Neuwirt is the kind of person you want to meet. For nearly two decades, she has routinely raised money for The Ride For Roswell, hopping on her bike to help friends and family and strangers she didn't even know who had been touched by cancer. But last year, it became personal, when she was diagnosed with breast cancer herself. She'll ride again this year, this time as a survivor. I was incredibly humbled and proud to nominate Monica for the NYS Woman of Distinction Award, which is presented every year in Albany. May her spirit inspire others, and her dedication be celebrated. Cheers to a great race tomorrow Monica!"



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Dr. Philip L. Glick:

Grandpa Flip: Leading with Jewish Values

By Rob Goldberg

Surgeon, teacher, adoring husband and grandfather, passionate advocate for Buffalo, die-hard Dodger fan and a proud, learning Jew: meet “Flip” Glick.

You may know him as Dr. Philip Glick, Professor of Surgery in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and Professor of Management at the University at Buffalo. Phil also maintains a clinical practice caring for surgical problems of fetuses, newborn infants, children, and adolescents and is the Presiding Officer of the University at Buffalo Faculty Senate.

But Phil’s mother never called him Philip. “My mom and others called me Flip my entire life and I only became Phil in med school. And when I was blessed to be a grandparent my daughter Zoey asked me what I wanted to be called and I immediately told her ‘Flip!’”

Phil is not only a man with many names and titles, but he is one who lives his Jewish



Dr. Phil Glick and Dr. Drucy Borowitz in Jerusalem this year.

passions and is led by his Jewish values. Born and raised in Southern California, he told me that he had a typical Jewish

upbringing and his family attended a large conservative shul. While he didn’t get involved in organized Jewish life during college and medical school, he built a vibrant social reality around his Jewish friends, and ultimately met his best friend, wife Drucy Borowitz.

Phil attributes much of his passion for Jewish living to Drucy and her family. “I had the good fortune of meeting a rabbi’s daughter during med school. It was love at first sight.” Phil spent a lot of time with Drucy’s family and was impacted by his wife’s father, the late Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz, who was Emeritus Professor of Theology at Hebrew Union College

“Phil is not only a man with many names and titles, but he is one who lives his Jewish passions and is led by his Jewish values.”

and Founding Editor of Sh’m’a Magazine.

Phil has always sought out the wisdom and friendship of rabbis. When he and Drucy began to grow their family in Buffalo, they soon became involved in Temple Beth Am and among the first people they met were Rabbi Steve Mason and his wife Patti. “After we became empty nesters,” Phil reflects, “and I grew more introspective, I wanted to study more. This is when I met Rabbi Gary Pokras of Temple Beth Zion.” Phil recounts that during the community Tikkun Layil Shavuot program at Temple Beth Tzedek, Rabbi Pokras gave a talk on his father-in-law. He immediately clicked with Gary, and soon thereafter they began learning together. Today, Phil serves on the Temple Beth Zion Board of Directors.

Whether learning about new techniques in surgery or studying Torah, Phil is always hungry to learn. One of the most transformative moments for him came two years ago when he joined 20 community leaders in a Mussar (Jewish ethical, educational and cultural movement) program entitled “Lead with Jewish Values.”

“I am grateful to Federation for providing the resources to offer Mussar to our leadership. I think such values-based learning is essential to our work on boards and in many of our professions, especially mine as a surgeon.” Phil shared with me that humility, for instance,

one of the key “middot” or traits in Mussar, is incredibly important for a surgeon. “This was the first *middah* we discussed with Susan (Schwartz) and Evie (Weinstein) in our group. It really spoke to me.” And ever the LA Dodger fan, Phil shared a line repeated by Vin Scully, the voice of the Dodgers, who, when reflecting on his Hall of Fame career, noted that he was only successful because he had “The humility to prepare and the confidence to pull it off.”

During this past academic year, Phil had the privilege to serve on the Buffalo Hillel Task force to help choose the next Executive Director of the Buffalo Hillel, Rabbi Sara Rich. “I think Sara will be a game changer to Buffalo Hillel and the WNY Jewish Community,” he said proudly. “Hillel is so important now and for our future. We must create a Jewish identity for our kids when they are here, and seek to compel them to stay in WNY for their graduate education and their lives. We frankly need them, and I believe that Sara will lead the way to make this a reality.”

Phil is also a passionate advocate for Israel and recently became a member of AIPAC, attending the last two policy conferences in our nation’s capital. He and Drucy also returned to Israel last summer. “This was our first trip since we were undergraduates,” he said. This trip was especially meaningful as it was arranged and guided by a friend and professional guide, Yonit Schiller, also a native Buffalonian. “Going back to Israel for me was much more emotional than I thought. I loved walking through every doorway and seeing a mezuzah on each door. I can’t really put my feelings about Israel in words – but the land and the people are so much a part of me now.”

Phil and Drucy just celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary. They have two adult children; Zoey, a dermatologist in private practice and Zack who is a cyber-security Engineer for Amazon Web Services (AWS) in Seattle. Zoey and her husband Matthew Swerdlin have two children, Lewis and Margot, who, of course, lovingly refer to Phil as “Grandpa Flip.”

Rob Goldberg is the CEO and Executive Director of Buffalo Jewish Federation.

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Hadar Borden:

By Nicole Bard

Moving from Israel to New York, taking every opportunity she can, believing in and being proud of her community – Hadar Borden inspires all of the lives she touches here in Buffalo.

When Hadar was in the 3rd grade, her family moved from Jerusalem, Israel to the Rochester, N.Y. suburb of Brighton. “My parents were young and foolish, chasing the American Dream,” she laughed. “I knew only one word in English – apple!” Her parents still live in Rochester, spending time working at the family’s kosher Mediterranean eatery, Sabra Grill.

Hadar was a student at the University at Buffalo from 1993 – 1997, returning later in 1997 – 2000 to complete her Master's degree. During her schooling at UB, she tried out all sorts of study areas– starting as an architecture major, switching to Physical Therapy, but finally settling on Geography and International Trade. Hadar thought because she is bilingual—Hebrew being her first language—that skill would help leverage her International Trade studies.

Hadar began her professional journey as a Student Assistant in the Financial Aid Office while a sophomore at UB. There, she found a job where she was able to do what she enjoyed, helping people. Although this job was “messy and had many nuances”, she was helping someone fulfill their dreams, making it all worthwhile.

As a first-generation college student, Hadar was lucky to have Maureen Kanaley, a supervisor in the Financial Aid Office, who guided and mentored her. Hadar calls Maureen her “surrogate parent”. She



Hadar Borden

Hadar eventually found herself back at UB, this time on the Alumni Association. “Back in the day, I was a co-chair for “Ooze Fest” on the Alumni Student Association,” she said, and explained that she yearned to reconnect with UB and give back. This was the perfect opportunity.

Through the love Hadar now has for Buffalo, she is always finding ways to share

By encouraging students to reach their goals and use their creativity...Hadar makes a difference not only in each of the student's lives who she works with, but also for WNY as a whole.

explained that her Israeli parents didn't go to college in the United States and didn't know how to go about the process. Being the oldest sibling, Hadar was able to then help guide her younger siblings after her own experience.

Wanting to be done with school, she took a break after graduation and went into the corporate world. Little did she know she would be returning to UB as a faculty member. Hadar thought she would move out of Buffalo, but then she met her future husband, David. They married in June 2001 and haven't left yet!

David Borden is currently the Program Manager with Moog, Inc. Medical Device Group.

her personal gifts with our community and region. She currently sits on the boards of the Erie County Commission for Women, the WNY Women's Foundation, and Junior League of Buffalo.

Professionally, Hadar, who is turning 42 in September, is currently UB's Program Director for Blackstone Launchpad, a campus-based entrepreneurship program designed to introduce entrepreneurship as a viable career path, and also UB's WNY Prosperity Fellowship Program,

which assists undergraduate and graduate students who are actively preparing for careers that further economic development and growth, especially in the Western New York region. She loves to hear how creative students are, and finds it awesome to be able to support their ideas. Hadar also enjoys coming up with new ideas, projects and programs, so being able to give students the opportunity to have creative freedom, encouragement and believe in themselves along the way is one of the best parts of her job, she says.

By encouraging students to reach their goals and use their creativity for the betterment of WNY, Hadar makes a difference not only in each of the student's lives who she works with, but also for WNY as a whole. Having support from the local community and the campus and acting as a bridge between the two, Hadar is able to develop relationships all throughout Buffalo to the advantage of both "town and gown."


Her passion for the strength of Jewish Buffalo is also driven by the yearning for opportunities for her two sons—Elliot, 13, and Jonas, 11—both students at Amherst Middle School.

“Buffalo people are very interconnected and also so genuine,” she said. There’s a real opportunity to build a community for yourself here.” As someone who has lived in Jerusalem and has plans to go back to Israel, Hadar feels that our local Buffalo connection to Israel is critical. “I have a strong connection to Israel, and I want to help build a connection and love for Israel and Judaism right here in Buffalo,” Hadar explains. She believes all kinds of Jews are welcome in Jewish Buffalo.

Hadar never dreamed she would end up in academic life. She tells me, “You don’t know what’s next. Always be open, embrace opportunities. When you get the chance to work with many others, do it, and be exposed to it all. I can’t tell you what I’ll be doing in 5 years, and that’s okay!” she tells me.

Buffalo is lucky to have Hadar Borden, making a difference in the lives of the students at UB and in our community. We'll just have to wait and see what she's up to in 5 years, but I have no doubt she'll continue to be a leader in the ongoing Renaissance that is Buffalo and Jewish Buffalo!

Nicole Bard is a senior at UB and Buffalo Jewish Federation's Engagement Intern for the 2017-18 academic year.



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Savory Zucchini Ricotta Cheesecake

By Robin Kurss

Just in case you have too many Zucchini.....Enjoy!



Zucchini Ricotta Cheesecake-serves 8

- 2 c zucchini, unpeeled and grated
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 1/2 c ricotta
- 1/2 c parmesan
- 1/4 c red onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 c fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tbsp. lemon zest
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c goat or feta cheese, crumbled

Preheat oven to 325. Grease 7" spring form pan. In a bowl, toss zucchini with salt, let sit 10 minutes. Then squeeze out as much moisture as possible. I like to wring it in a clean dishtowel. Mix the rest of ingredients with drained zucchini, except the goat or feta cheese. Pour mix into pan and bake for 1 hour. Sprinkle with goat cheese or feta and return to oven for 25 more minutes. This savory treat can be served right away, or at room temperature. I like to serve it with some fresh tomato sauce on the side



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Calling all cooks and tasters to join The JCC Super Soup Cook-Off, Sunday, September 15, at the JCC Benderson Building, 2nd floor, Lippman Lounge, 2640 North Forest Road in Amherst. Here's your chance to bring a pot of your favorite pot of soup and a story to share about your recipe. Is it a family secret? Has the recipe been passed down through generations? Does your soup have curative powers? A funny or memorable story? Chefs will have a chance to tell their story to an audience of tasters who will sample all the soups and then vote for their favorite. The winning chef takes home 2 tickets to opening night of VISITING MR. GREEN at the Jewish Repertory Theatre!

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- 2» **The Hebrew month of Elul, which begins August 23, is a traditional time to visit the graves of loved ones,** right before the High Holiday season. Why not make a gift to the Jewish Federation Cemetery Corporation in honor of your parents, grandparents, or any other important person in your life. The Cemetery Corporation maintains and repairs several Buffalo Jewish cemeteries and your help is greatly needed. Go to www.jfedbflo.com and click on "Federation Cemetery Corporation" or call 716-204-2246.
- 3» **Don't Miss the chance to see Macbeth** Thru August 20th at Shakespeare in Delaware Park- on Lincoln Parkway (behind the Albright-Knox Art Gallery) in Buffalo. <http://shakespeareindelawarepark.org/>. A Buffalo summer tradition since 1976, the performance takes place in a historic park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.
- 4» **August 9th - 20th 178th Erie County Fair** takes place at The Fairgrounds, 5600 McKinley Parkway in Hamburg ecfair.org. If you have never pet a goat, seen chickens and roosters or enjoyed auto races, this summer at the Fair is the time to experience these fun things! The fair features \$500,000 in free entertainment, over 2,500 animals, top name concerts, exciting motor events, mile long midway, great food and much more.
- 5» **Come see your Buffalo Jewish Federation friends at the Elmwood Festival of the Arts-** Aug 26 & 27. You will find us on Cultural/ Environmental Row, just off Elmwood Avenue during the festival, looking to engage you in new activities and projects. Interested? Contact mabramovich@jfedbflo.com

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www.congregationhavurah.org
info@congregationhavurah.org

Kehillat Ohr Tzion (Modern Orthodox)

879 Hopkins Rd
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Jeff Schapiro - President
NEW - jeffs@verizon.net
http://ohrtzion.org/kot
Rabbi Ori Bergman

Knesset Center (Orthodox)

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TEL 716-832-5063
Rabbi Shmaryahu Charitonow
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www.SaranacSynagogue.org

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Amherst, NY 14226
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Rabbi Adam Scheldt
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www.tbz.org

Temple Beth El

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www.niagarafallstemple.com

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Due to postal regulations, the *Jewish Journal of Western New York* will no longer be forwarded to "temporary change" addresses. If you plan to be away from your permanent address and will have your first class mail forwarded to your temporary address and would like to continue to receive the *Jewish Journal* over the winter or the summer, please call Nadine Ryback at 716-204-2248 to give us your "temporary" address. Thank you!

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TEMPLE BETH ZION SUMMER CELEBRATION AUGUST 14!

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Make plans now to join us on Monday, August 14, for the Summer Celebration featuring our 19th annual Golf Tournament and 7th annual Wine Tour. This event raises vital funds for education programs at TBZ.

The day begins at Transit Valley Country Club with a fabulous lunch on the newly renovated outdoor patio. At noon, those on the Wine Tour board a luxury air-conditioned coach to tour wineries in Niagara County. Temple sommelier Mark Criden leads this popular tour.

The Golf Tournament has a 12:30 shotgun start with 18 holes on this premier golf course. Our golfers love the "best in foursome" format that allows them to play their own ball.

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres follow the Wine Tour and Golf Tournament. The event is capped off with a delicious dinner and rousing auctions in the country club dining room.

David Goldberg and Sandy Schechter are Chairs of this amazing and highly successful event. Join us for the wine adventure (space is limited), on the golf course, or just come for cocktails and dinner.

If you are interested in participating and/or being a sponsor for this event, please contact Julie Feldman at (716) 836-6565, Ext. 134.

Upcoming Events

July 29

Special Service at Temple Beth Tzedek
honoring Rabbi Netter at regular morning Shabbat services.

Walk Off Hunger, benefitting the Food Bank of WNY

10 am- 2 pm. Island Park, Williams-ville. Co-Sponsored by Congregation Shir Shalom. *Call the Food Bank at 716-935-6717 for more information.*

July 31

TBZ

Movie Night to honor Tisha B'Av

Movie - No Popcorn. 7:00 pm.
805 Delaware Ave.
Call 716-836-6565.

August 1

Tisha B'Av (9th of Av)

This holiday is an annual fast day in Judaism which commemorates the anniversary of a number of disasters in Jewish history, primarily the destruction of both the First Temple by the Babylonians and the Second Temple by the Romans in Jerusalem.

August 6

Nickel City Jews Blue & White Party.

12 noon-3:00 pm.
The Mansion on Delaware
\$25 before August 1/\$36 after
For info contact mabramovich@jfedbflo.com

August 14

Summer Celebration at Temple Beth Zion

Golf! Wine tour! Dinner!
Call Julie Feldman at 716-836-6565 for cost and sponsorship information.

August 17

Jewish Women's

Mental Health program

Home of Cantor Penny Myers
7:30 pm. \$10.

RSVP to stateofmindrsvp@gmail.com

September 4

Jewish Discovery Center

Labor Day BBQ

1-3 pm.
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Mental and emotional health conditions affect all of society, including the Jewish the community. Jewish Family Services and other community volunteers are joining the coalition to destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness. Please join us for an important women's event:

**State Of Mind:
A Jewish Women's Journey
with Mental Health**

**August 17th, 7:30pm
at the home of Cantor Penny Myers**

*Kosher refreshments
Suggested donation: \$10*

Rebbetzin Shana Rosenfeld will talk about her personal experience navigating anxiety and depression. She will share strategies to support, educate, and empower others to end mental health stigma. The Rebbetzin will expound on how she has drawn strength from Jewish teaching and practice. Mrs. Rosenfeld will share the lessons and truths she has discovered during her own struggles and triumphs with mental illness.

Mrs. Shana Rosenfeld is the executive director of the McMaster University Jewish Student Center in Hamilton, Ontario. She is a mother and Jewish educator. Mrs. Rosenberg is certified in Mental Health First Aid. For more info and to RSVP please email stateofmindrsvp@gmail.com

ADULT JEWISH LEARNING FOR THE COMMUNITY

By Susan Goldberg Schwartz,
BJE Director of Adult Learning

According to the dictionary, an adult is someone who is 'fully developed and mature; grown-up'... With that as a starting point, we are developing engaging and transformative Jewish learning for adults in the greater Buffalo Jewish community. This includes college students, young professionals, parents, empty-nesters, retirees, and anyone interested in learning.

Learning together strengthens the community. Transformative adult learning is a process by which we, the learners, by challenging previously held perspectives, become more open, and revise our beliefs and understandings of the world. When we provide opportunities for adults to explore their sense of purpose and express that in meaningful ways, both the learner and the community benefit.

The BJE is connecting to local and international partners, in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. For example:

- We are planning a 3 part-series with the Department of Jewish Thought (UB) on Power and Powerlessness in Jewish Tradition.
- We continue to partner with The Mussar Institute and will begin new Mussar groups and ongoing learning for those who are already familiar with Mussar study and practice.
- We will work with the JCC and Hillel to develop discussion groups and programs based on current Jewish films and new authors through the Jewish Film Festival & Book Fair.
- We will create a program around the "What if Everyone Read the Same (Jewish) Book?"

• We will continue to offer the Intro to Judaism course, taught by the members of the Board of Rabbis and Cantors (beginning September 6th) and both beginning and advanced Hebrew.

• By popular demand, we will again offer the East Side/West Side course, taught by Chana Kotzin, Ph.D.

Let's make Jewish Buffalo a transformative learning community! Mortimer Adler, an American philosopher and educator said, "The purpose of learning...is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live."

Please look for more details soon on our website www.bjebuffalo.org/adultlearning and in the September issue. For more information about Adult Learning programs, please contact Susan Schwartz, Director of Adult Learning, susan@bjebuffalo.org or 716-204-5830.



Photograph by Tom Loonan.



On Five Dollar Family Funday, the second Sunday of every month, museum admission for the entire family is just \$5 and includes an array of activities for both children and adults.

Please visit www.albrightknox.org or call 716.270.8292 for more details.

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BJE: Sarah Moyer's Award-Winning Essay

The Bureau of Jewish Education's Hebrew High program gratefully acknowledges the Better Together Program which has enabled our students to develop meaningful relationships with seniors at Weinberg Campus. The Better Together Program (which is generously supported by a prominent national foundation) also included the Better2Write writing contest. Entries for the writing contest focused on how the students were impacted by the program, as reflected in their feelings about seniors, aging, and the mitzvah of caring for the elderly. The winner of our local Better2Write contest was Sarah Moyer, a 10th grade student, who has been awarded a scholarship to attend Camp Seneca Lake this summer! - Jill Komm, Principal, Hebrew High

BETTER TOGETHER

By Sarah Moyer

I spent the last few months meeting with and talking to a 91-year-old woman named Cynthia once a week. I have learned a lot from her throughout this time about growing up in a different time and location, but I also noticed many similarities in some of our cultural experiences. Meeting with a person very different from myself allowed me to gain a different perspective and learn some important life lessons from someone who has lived a rich, full life.

I noticed differences between our generations and life experience in how Cynthia and I expressed our Judaism, and the environment in which we were taught this rich history of our ancestors. She shared with me that she was brought up in an Austrian-Jewish neighborhood in the depths of Brooklyn, New York. Growing up, she had very limited experiences with people who practiced other faiths and ideologies or people from different cultures. Her school and social circles were all predominantly of a similar faith and ethnicity, giving her few interactions with different groups of people until leaving for college at the age of sixteen.

This was very different from the environment I was raised in. The America I was raised in, from the booming Atlanta, Georgia to the suburbs of Williamsville, New York have been a mixing pot of people from an astounding number of different backgrounds. And although I was active in the Jewish community and in my religious school, I was exposed to a very large number of non-Jewish people outside of it. Out of my high school class of almost 400, we have about a dozen Jewish teens. This means that many of my close friends practice different religions and celebrate different holidays. This has been a very positive influence on my life, being able to share in other religious customs and expand my knowledge on diverse groups of people, and it gave me a sense of being special. Learning about these diverse groups in such a way and experiencing cultural landmarks alongside



Sarah Moyer with her parents

many of my peers has given me access to a much broader pool of knowledge and experience and the value that differences are to be celebrated.

On the other hand, growing up in a much more Jewish area like Cynthia's, would have given me a much stronger connection to my Jewish faith and ancestral roots. I do feel that in some ways, my connection to so many secular groups and activities has put a strain on my connection to the Jewish community. It becomes difficult to be actively involved with so many conflicting activities and so much physical distance from my community's Jewish cultural hubs. Cynthia did not have this struggle. She was raised in a community in which everything closed on Shabbat and no activity took precedence over holiday services or religious school.

We both have been raised with core Jewish values, maybe not keeping of Shabbat or Kashrut, but values of service, justice, and Jewish learning. But Cynthia was afforded more opportunities for these to be reinforced within the Jewish community. Cynthia has used these very strong Jewish values to raise a Conservative Jewish family that keeps kosher and is very involved in the Jewish community. She even volunteered at her local Jewish Community Center for many years. I have continued in religious

school through my Bat Mitzvah and will be confirmed this year, but my Jewish education seems more sporadic, not an integral part of my overall learning. I have ended up spending more limited time at Jewish events and devote the majority of my time to secular activities in my school and community, volunteering, sports, and other extracurriculars. Both ways of growing up Jewish provide us with life skills and morals that allow us to live happy and fulfilling lives, but give us very different global and communal outlooks.

Another major difference that I noticed between Cynthia and me over our time together was our role in society as girls transitioning into womanhood. She grew up as the only girl in a Jewish family from Brooklyn and as such, was told from a young age to focus her life on meeting a husband and starting a family. The basis for her education was to have an outlet to meet men and then to appear intelligent once she met them. She succeeded wholeheartedly in both of these things because she was very bright. Graduating high school two years early at the age of 16 because of her intellect and determination, Cynthia went to Brooklyn College to pursue a bachelor's degree in the sciences. These were huge accomplishments for someone of her age and gender during this time period. But what stood out to me most

was what followed. She met her husband and dropped out with one semester left before getting her degree so he could continue in law school and she could start a family. After this, she went back to work only as a volunteer in the JCC and community activities and never used her childhood passion for science. This was a meaningful and valuable contribution to her community, and the limitation, or what she gave up, never seemed to bother Cynthia. Her perspective is that she has had a long and fulfilling life, and I agree. But to me, this was mind blowing.

As a young woman with practically my whole life in front of me, where I plan to pursue a career in mathematics or engineering, I cannot imagine abandoning these passions for the prospect of finding a partner. This just stands to show what a long way feminism has come that I expect to have a fulfilling career of my own. While the notion of beginning a family is important to me, my professional and academic success remains my priority at this point in my life. Although I'm sure there are many skills Cynthia possesses that I haven't learned, it has been very difficult for me to comprehend that a 91-year-old woman never had to learn how to do things like completing taxes. But things of that nature were never deemed a necessity for her since she essentially moved straight from her father's house to her husband's. She was never forced into the sense of independence, which I have been raised to crave, if not demand, from society. She achieved more connectedness, but at this point in my life, I am more focused on achievement and independence.

Being able to spend time with Cynthia, a woman so different from myself, yet whom I share so much with has been an incredible experience for me. Going through this program has allowed me to reexamine my life and question things that I always took for granted. Although I like my life, it is important to realize that we had different advantages in life. Her solid foundation and warm ties are in contrast with my desire to fly in my multifaceted world, but we both have a strong Jewish identity. Meeting with Cynthia has given me a very important perspective that I believe will have a lasting impact on my life. Seeing how things that she never could have imagined have been brought into fruition and have even taken for granted to some extent has been an incredible experience. Though we were born decades apart, the experiences Cynthia and I have shared every week in our talks will forever bind us.



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BUFFALO HOSTS NAACCHHS CONFERENCE

By Jill Komm, Bureau of Jewish Education

The first full week of June brought Jewish educators from across the country to Buffalo for a week of networking and learning! NAACCHHS, which stands for the North American Association of Community and Congregational Hebrew High Schools, gathers once a year for its professional development conference. This year, our own Hebrew High of Buffalo was honored to host the event!

The week was filled with incredible learning opportunities, including an introduction to Mussar (led by Evie Weinstein and Susan Goldberg Schwartz), Leadership and Board Development (led by Rob Goldberg from the Buffalo Jewish Federation), Fundraising 101 (led by Peter Fleischmann and Lynn Catalano from the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies), Team Building (led by Jason Palevsky from the

JCC), Yoga and Mindfulness (led by Adam Scheldt from the Jewish Spirituality Center of Western New York), and a look into Buffalo's unique Jewish history (led by Chana Kotzin, Ph.D. from the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project). Special guests also included Nina Woldin from Chai Mitzvah and Ellen Kleinhaus from Sharsheret. The group enjoyed visiting the Cofeld Museum and touring

Temple Beth Zion's historic synagogue, along with a fun evening at Niagara Falls.

Our Jewish Community Center provided a beautiful space for the group to engage and the Myers Tel Aviv Café supplied delicious kosher meals, which showcased how much Jewish Buffalo has to offer! Next year's conference goal will be to focus on Israel education in honor of Israel's 70th anniversary.

If you would like more information about NAACCHHS, please contact Shari Weinberger at shari@naacchhs.org or visit the website www.naacchhs.org. For more information on Hebrew High, please contact the BJE at 716-204-5380 or visit www.bjebuffalo.org/hebrewhigh.

YAD B'YAD UPDATE

By Cindi Mikulik, Director

Yad B'Yad summer programming began beautifully in June with the ladies from the Women's Jewish Group Home planting flowers. This was the second part of February's Tu B'Shevat program, when they planted flower seeds. It was a perfect evening to be outside and the gardens look lovely!



Women's Group Home residents planting flowers

Yad B'Yad has programs planned throughout the summer, and fall programming is almost complete. If you know of anyone who would enjoy making new friends and participating in fun, inclusive programs please let us know or have them contact us. We all enjoy welcoming new participants!

Yad B'Yad (hand in hand) is a program of the Bureau of Jewish Education that provides outreach, advocacy and program support to assist people with disabilities in achieving full participation in Jewish life in Western New York.

To join us in our programming, or to volunteer, please visit our website at www.yadbyad.org, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/yadbyadbuffalo>, or contact Cindi Mikulik at 716-204-5380 or yadbyad@bjebuffalo.org. We look forward to having you!



BUFFALO JEWISH TEEN SCENE

4th ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SHABBATON RETREAT WEEKEND

A special program for Jewish teens in Albany, Buffalo, Ithaca, Rochester and Syracuse

September 8 – 10, 2017

DROP OFF: Friday, September 8, 2017 at 3:00 pm

PICK UP: Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 4:00 pm

Jewish Community Center
2640 North Forest Rd, Getzville, NY 14068

Buffalo Jewish Teen Scene events are open to all Western New York Jewish teens in grades 8-12, regardless of affiliation.

This will be a weekend not to miss! We are excited to spend time on the beautiful grounds of Camp Seneca Lake for the 4th ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SHABBATON! The program will be packed with leadership development activities, Shabbat celebrations, and plenty of time to relax and enjoy the great outdoors! There will also be an opportunity for teens who teach at religious school to participate in a special training session. We'll be joining together with our friends from Albany, Ithaca, Rochester and Syracuse for this awesome weekend.

COST: \$18 includes round trip transportation to/from Camp Seneca Lake, kosher meals, snacks & drinks, programming & activities, and adult supervision. The money collected will be used in a Tzedakah activity where teens will determine where 100% of the money will be donated.

PACK: You will need to pack clothes, toiletries and bedding. We'll contact you with more details closer to departure!

Questions?
Contact Melissa
716.204.5380 or melissa@bjebuffalo.org










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The Leadership Shabbaton Retreat is a program through the Bureau of Jewish Education and made possible with a grant from the Wolk Foundation and the Berger Family

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“JOIN THE CONVERSATION” ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA; CALL JFS FOR CULTURALLY SENSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Many people think mental illness affects only certain populations, or that people with a stable solid social status or from communities regarded as economically successful can't be mentally ill. The truth is, like any other illness, mental health disorders do not discriminate by race, religion, economic status or sexual identity. The stigma that still surrounds mental illness, however, leads to discrimination that often keeps people from getting the help they need.

“Stigma prevents people from seeking help, prevents resources from being allocated, and people from supporting others,” Marlene Schillinger, president and CEO of Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County explains. “The number one objective of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition is to change the way people perceive and respond to people with a mental illness in order to reduce or

eliminate stigma.”

As a cornerstone of the 16-organization alliance founded in September 2015, Schillinger worked closely with co-founder and administrator Michael Ranney, Erie County Commissioner of Mental Health, to spearhead the design and launch of a long-term anti-stigma campaign in May. “We want people to know that mental health challenges impact many lives,



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Join the Conversation
at www.letstalkstigma.org

that stereotypes are prevalent and need to change, that you are not alone and recovery is possible, that help is available and recovery is possible,” says Schillinger.

Tagged “Join the Conversation,” the multimedia initiative facilitates an open-ended dialogue at www.letstalkstigma.org, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and invites local residents take the online pledge to:

Share experiences, stories and information to spread awareness and acceptance of mental illness.

Avoid using stigmatizing words like “crazy,” “psycho,” “nuts,” and “insane” in everyday conversations

Continue learning about mental health issues in order to replace myths and fear with truth and understanding.

Speak out against mental health stigma and discrimination whenever it's encountered

Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County has provided comprehensive,

compassionate mental health diagnosis, treatment and counseling for adults, seniors, children and teens since the 1950s. JFS is staffed by licensed counselors with experience in treating anxiety and depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, schizophrenia, eating disorders, problem gambling and a range of other mental and behavioral health disorders. “We are a lifeline for all in need of mental health treatment and support. As a long-standing integral part of Jewish Buffalo, we are also sensitive and respond with appropriate compassion to the cultural traditions and nuances of our own community,” Schillinger explains. “In the broadest picture, we urge everyone to ‘Join the Conversation’ and take the pledge at www.letstalkstigma.org — and encourage anyone who thinks they or someone they love may be experiencing a mental health challenge to call JFS at 883-1914. Help is available and we can help.”



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BUFFALO JEWISH COALITION FOR LITERACY GOES TO AKAG

By David Schiller

Volunteering for Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy (BJCL) is an important way of helping young people. As “the People of the Book” this is a very special responsibility. My wife, Beverly, and I, together with support from Pyramid Brokerage Company of Buffalo, arranged a trip to the Albright Knox Art Gallery for Grade 4 students from P.S. 80/Highgate Elementary School where we volunteer weekly for the BJCL program.

In my volunteer class at School 80, we read a book about Jackson Pollock during the school year. Understanding that none of the pupils have ever visited an art gallery, Bev and I thought a visit was long overdue. We learned that The Albright Knox Art Gallery offers a program to transport pupils to the Gallery for a customized tour with a docent, so we arranged for a visit.

Our first stop was at the Gallery’s own Jackson Pollock piece, “Convergence.” The children participated in a lively discussion of the artist’s work with the docent. The class learned about and enjoyed several other paintings and sculptures.

Lunch was served on the steps of the gallery, followed by a planned-surprise

visit by James the Ice Cream Cycle Dude. Some of the ice cream treats ranked as works of art, too, especially as they dripped in the warm noon sun. We wondered if Jackson Pollock might have considered dripping ice cream on canvas, too. The trip brought the book to life for all of us. And we both heartily recommend this volunteer program.

You can read more about it on pages 10 and 11. If you are interested in volunteering for the Buffalo Jewish Coalition for Literacy, contact Ellen Goldstein at 204-2243 or egoldstein@jfedbflo.com



School 80 students at the Albright Knox on a field trip



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Chautauqua

Buffalo Jewish Federation friends spent a Day at Chautauqua with Chautauqua summer residents and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (center), who spoke about the week's topic, "A Crisis of Faith." In the photo were just some of the people who attended the lecture and luncheon. Thank you to Norm & Hannah Weinberg for their hospitality and Oded Ravenpour of the JCC's Tel Aviv Café/ Falafel Bar for his delicious lunch!



JDC

Jewish Discovery Center's fabulous 4th of July Celebration



Art World

Artists Kathy Corff Rogers and Rick Steinberg's photo show opening in Buffalo



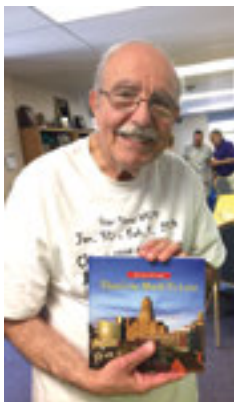
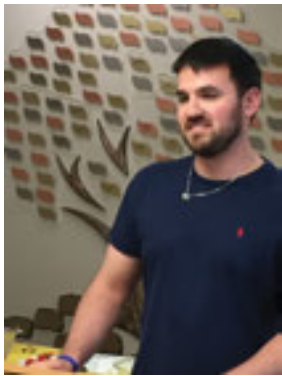
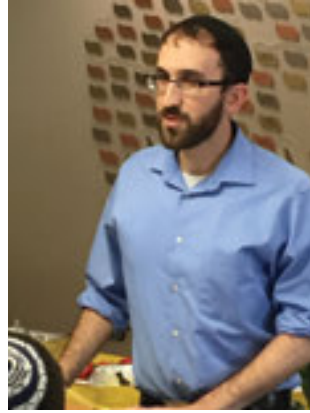
Ride for Roswell

The Annual Ride for Roswell June 23 and 24 was a night and day love-fest of support, hope, fundraising and community, all in the service of raising funds to find a cure for cancer.



KOT: Goodbye, Rabbi Strossberg

Kehillat Ohr Tzion (KOT) and community members gathered in early July to bid farewell to Rabbi Josh, and Andrea Strossberg and their children as they move to their new home in Detroit



Hello, Rabbi Mason

Rabbi Steve and Patty Mason, formerly at Temple Beth Am in Buffalo, returned to Congregation Shir Shalom for a meaningful Scholar-in-Residence weekend



(NOT) THE LAST WORD

OUR AJC MISSION TO WARSAW, TALLINN AND VILNIUS

By Harold Halpern

My wife, Susan, and I went on an AJC mission to Europe this past spring, celebrating the opening of its Central Europe Office in Warsaw. It was a trip expertly crafted and perfectly executed. We met with the highest levels of government officials and with Jewish communities. We visited sites of historical importance. Every moment was exhilarating.

We were about 130 in number. After Warsaw, we broke into three groups. Each group visited two of the other countries serviced from the Warsaw office; Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. Susan and I chose to visit Estonia and Lithuania. Leaders of Poland, Estonia and Lithuania expressed common concerns and interests. They share the values of AJC for a safer and more peaceful world for the Jewish people and for all humanity. They all have generally good relations with Israel, and empathize with its existential fears. They fear Russia in the same way. They need and have the protection of NATO and the US, but worry whether US policy supporting them will continue. They seek forgiveness for a history of anti-Semitism and participation in the Holocaust. But there also stubbornly remains periodic eruptions of anti-Semitic expressions.

Each day was packed with briefings with US and Israel Ambassadors and meetings with Presidents of Estonia and Lithuania, government officials and with leaders of the Jewish communities. We remembered the Holocaust, while gaining hope from Jewish communities reemerging from destruction.

Space permits only this highlight report. Suffice it to say we cried both with tears of sadness and tears of hope. In addition I felt emotions which were mine alone, sadness from the roundup for liquidation of my great aunt and my cousin at Umschlagplatz (the gathering point for transport of Warsaw Ghetto Jews to Treblinka between July and September 1942),

pride in great uncle Shmuel Yatzkan and the Yiddish paper (Haynt) he founded, and overwhelming delight in meeting my cousin, Howard Solomon, Deputy Chief of US mission in Lithuania.



Susan and Harold Halpern with the Japanese Ambassador to Lithuania enroute to Sugahura House

POLAND

In addition to all our meetings and briefings the mission included a trip to Auschwitz, a visit to Umschlagplatz and to 18 Mila St. (the entombed final resting place of leaders of Ghetto uprising who committed suicide on May 8, 1943) left no tear ducts dry. Almost three million Polish Jews were killed during that earlier time.

Yet the Jewish community in Poland survives. There are Jewish Community



Susan Halpern at the POLIN Museum wooden bima

Centers, Jewish camps, synagogues, a Jewish school and theater in Warsaw. Each day, people learn of a Jewish past. Estimates of number of Jews range from 10,000 to 25,000.

We celebrated the opening of the AJC office in Warsaw serving Central Europe as the mezuzah was affixed to the doorpost by the Chief Rabbi. We toured POLIN, the museum of history of Jews in Poland for 1000 years. Our guide stopped under the painting of the Clockmaker reading The Haynt, informing us it was Poland's most influential Yiddish paper, between the Wars, founded by my great uncle Shmuel Yatzkan in 1908 and published until 1939. There at the POLIN, 500 people, including leaders of the Polish community, attended the AJC Gala dinner and program which remembered the Holocaust, honored the present with the presentation of Jan Karski Award to Andrej Folwarczny, President of the Forum for Dialogue, and celebrated hope for the future.

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ESTONIA

We left Warsaw for Tallinn, the capital of Estonia , a country of less than 2 million people which borders Russia. We met with the President, the US and Israeli ambassadors and other government leaders and the Jewish community. Estonia was the first country of Europe that the Nazis declared Judenfrei. Not a single Jew left. We went to the local cemetery and its Jewish section. More tears of sadness.

But now Estonia is a community of several thousand Jews. They came from Russia and the Former Soviet Union. In Tallinn, there is a beautiful synagogue with a kosher restaurant and a Jewish school with 50 Jewish children in kindergarten. In the evening, the Jewish Community sponsored dinner with the uplifting voices of its choir bringing us again to tears , this time of joy; a Judenfrei community now rebuilt, small but vibrant.



Harold Halpern with newly-found cousin Howard Solomon, First Deputy Chief of the US Mission in Vilnius

LITHUANIA

Our final stop was Vilnius. Lithuania is a country of little less than three million people. It was the home of the Vilna Gaon and of Jewish learning including the Mussar and Haskalah (Enlightenment) movements. Before the War, about 200,000 Jews lived in Lithuania with most in Vilnius. 95 % of the Jews were liquidated from 1941 to 44, though not in the gas chambers but by bullets in the head in the killing fields of Ponary and Kaunas. The bodies were later burned to prevent any trace of the killings. We cried and recited Kaddish at the memorial marking the site.

Yet there were others, who saved lives and help preserve culture. Ambassador Shigeeda from Japan accompanied us to the Sugihara House Museum. Sugihara, a Righteous Gentile, was a counsel from Japan to Lithuania in 1940 who saved 6,000 Jew by

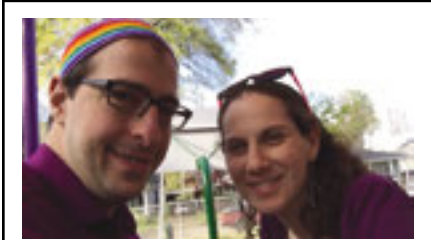
issuing travel visas contrary to his government’s orders. And we visited the small village of Ziezmariar where the mayor spoke proudly of the rebuilding of its wooden synagogue to remember the importance of the Jewish contributions to Lithuania.

We had dinner with US Ambassador Anne Hall, who spoke emotionally of the beginnings of the Jewish renaissance in Poland and the Baltic counties. Only within the month did I learn that my cousin, Howard Solomon, was Deputy Chief of Mission. We never before knew of each other. Ambassador Hall took me by my hand and introduced us. We spent parts of three days together, including Shabbat dinner at the Jewish Community Center, sharing our common Litvak heritage from Birzai and Valbanikus, Lithuania.

On our last evening in Vilnius, we relaxed at the Symphony. Small world. The Israeli ambassador had the same idea. So we bid him farewell. Although there were many moments of sad remembrance of the destruction of the Jews in Central Europe, we were encouraged that the countries we visited and their people were rebuilding the Jewish community. Thus ended the AJC mission.

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Bobbie and Jack Vishner of Amherst, New York are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Sherri, to Rabbi Ilan Glazer. Ilan is the son of Rabbi Melvin Glazer and the late Donna Glazer. Sherri is a Social Worker at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Ilan is currently the Rabbi at Beth Shalom Synagogue in Memphis, Tennessee. Following an October wedding in Baltimore, they will be residing in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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