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THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

BUFFALO, ISRAEL & THE JEWISH WORLD | WWW.BUFFALOJEWISHFEDERATION.ORG

FEBRUARY 2019 | SHEVAT – ADAR 5779



**ENSURING
A SAFER
JEWISH
BUFFALO
(3)**



**LOOK:
DIFFERENCE
MAKERS
(10-20)**



**DON'T MISS:
BUFFALO MOMS
TO ISRAEL
(21)**



**INSIDE:
2018
HONOR ROLL
(40-44)**



THE CONTRADICTIONS OF BEING COMPOSITE WORKS BY HARVEY BREVERMAN

LAST CHANCE VIEWING: EXHIBITION CLOSES FEBRUARY 24

Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience works from two distinct periods in Harvey Breverman's career. *The Discontinuous Sequence* series was made as an immediate reaction to the political unrest on college campuses in response to the Vietnam War in the 1970s, while Breverman's later works from the 1990s capture delayed reflections on the Nazi occupation of Poland and Czechoslovakia during World War II.



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Harvey Breverman (1934), *Discontinuous Sequence: Triumph* (detail), 1972
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"; Courtesy of the Artist.

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February 2019

Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

It has been three months since the horrific attack on Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue, and the Jewish Community in North America is still recovering. Here in Buffalo, the murder of 11 Jews so close to home has pushed us into action, creating the Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund. Following a meeting about security with leaders of all our Jewish agencies and synagogues, Federation leaders concluded that there is a need for a centralized security coordination to represent the Jewish community with law enforcement, and have a central point of communication for security and threat assessment. Thus, with agencies and synagogues in agreement, the Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund was born.

Since launching the fund the last week in December, nearly \$90,000 has been contributed! You can read more about the specifics of what the fund will be used for on page 3. If you have not yet done so, please consider a gift to this fund that will help make Jewish Buffalo safer in these perilous times. There is a form on page 3 you can fill out and mail in with your check, or you can donate online at www.buffalojewishfederation.org. This is a gift that will help all of us.

This month, we are also celebrating some more of Buffalo's talented, generous Jewish Difference Makers. Highlighted for their impact on our community are daughter and mother Madi and Amelida Weinmann, Cantor Irwin Gelman, Drs. Tova and Bob Ablove, 4th grader Ella Rae Greene; Howard, Alan and David Rosenhoch; BPO cellists Robbie Hausmann, Monte Hoffman and Roman Mekinulov; and community philanthropist Charlie Shuman. I hope you enjoy their stories. I loved them!

Finally, all the generous donors to the 2018 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo are listed on pages 40-44 this month, except for those who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you for helping to keep our Buffalo Jewish Community vibrant and caring through your generous donations. Wishing you a sunny February, wherever you may be.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



The Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund will ensure Buffalo Jewish agencies, synagogues and organizations greater security for their members and the general Buffalo Jewish Community at-large. Logo by Shaun Maciejewaki; cover design by Kim Miers.

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A Message from Leslie Shuman Kramer

President, Buffalo Jewish Federation

This past October, I had the privilege of attending the Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly (GA) in Tel Aviv. The theme of the GA was "Let's Talk," referring to the need for the North American and Israeli Jewish communities to dialogue. In addition to focusing on what IS working, the GA addressed the challenges between the two communities and highlighted examples of how to strengthen our relationship.

The GA provided informative plenaries and discussion on a host of subjects relating to Israel and the Diaspora. It also afforded us opportunities to connect with friends and colleagues, both American and Israeli, and to participate in special events (a *Koolulam* singing event in Tel Aviv: <https://www.facebook.com/koolulam/>). A big take away for me was that while North American and Israeli Jews make strides to understand each other, we know each other less than I thought—and it goes both ways.

I understood that many secular Israelis see themselves as Jewish through their national identity ("I live in Israel, I served in the army, that's Jewish enough.") while we Jews in North America largely identify ourselves as Jewish through our religious affiliation and our community connections ("I belong to a Temple, I had a Bar Mitzvah, that's my Judaism"). At the GA, I learned that many don't know of or understand how we in North America practice Judaism, or the variety and differences between Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Orthodox Judaism.

I left wondering how we can relate to one another better, sharing the rich religious and cultural Jewish communal life that we hold dear here in a Gentile country, with Jews who live in the Jewish state. And how do we stay "one global Jewish Nation" when our politics, which for many in older generations seemed aligned with one another, are now often in conflict with one another.

Two and three generations ago, many Israeli and North American Jews shared a recent ancestry and common history. Many of us were immigrants from Europe and as such shared much of our past, and our perspectives with one another. As we move further away from that time, there is greater distance between us and fewer naturally shared experiences. As a world Jewish community, we need to work to understand each other and to establish those ties that bind us as family.

Danna Azrieli, a GA Co-Chair and the chairman of the Azrieli Group, Israel's largest Real Estate Development Company, powerfully described the complicated relationship between Israeli and North American Jewry in her address to the GA. She described it as an Arch—each community representing one side of the arch that, without the push and tension



Leslie Shuman Kramer

from the other, cannot hold up. I encourage you to watch her address at: <https://youtu.be/TwZPk88W-7s>.

I believe that in order to bridge these gaps, we must first know each other through personal relationships. The Jewish Agency's Partnership 2Gether program was highlighted at the GA, and we in Buffalo have experienced and enjoyed its impact. For example, on the Buffalo Israel Experience trip that followed the GA in October, 77 Buffalonians visited our Partnership region in the Western Galilee where we dined in small, intimate groups at the homes of Israeli volunteers who long to learn from us and share their own lives and experiences. We discussed politics, family, way of life, and many other topics. A visit to our partnership is visiting family—we are building bridges and real connections.

At a recent Partnership meeting, the Mayor of Akko (a city in the Western Galilee) asked us to help them build community. That was a profound moment for me. As Diaspora Jews we've learned that building community sustains us. It is ironic that in (particularly secular) Israel, where "everyone is Jewish", and precisely because of that, they need our help to build Jewish community.

I am so proud and excited to be part of our vibrant, active and caring community here in Buffalo. I look forward to continuing to build bridges and community here in WNY, with our partners in Israel, and perhaps teaching just as much as we learn.

BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION

Many in our Jewish community and across the country were shocked by the tragedy last October at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Sadly, it did not surprise others. As we all know, anti-Semitism has been on the rise, including here in Western New York – in schools, public spaces, and online. A recent ADL report shows a **57 percent increase from 2016**.

The threat of an attack like that in Pittsburgh keeps us up at night. While some of our Jewish organizations have made significant strides in preparedness, prevention and protection, **much more needs to be done to ensure a SAFER Jewish Buffalo.**

We are now asking for your help. Please contribute today to Jewish Federation's new **Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund**.

Your gift will go directly to support:

- Targeted grants for security upgrades to synagogues and other community partners;
- Security training for communal and religious leaders;
- Hiring of a Jewish Security Liaison to engage law enforcement and connect them to the local Jewish community;
- Interventions in local schools when anti-Semitism incidents occur, and education to counter hate before it takes root.



Our goal is to raise \$150,000. As of January 18, we have raised nearly \$90,000. Please give today.

Part of the reason more lives were not lost in Pittsburgh, is that the Tree of Life Synagogue had undergone a security assessment, its staff was trained, and they followed emergency procedures.

That is the purpose of this fund – to create resources to invest in training and facilitate a communications network that will enhance community-wide security.

We need to do more! This is, quite literally, a matter of life and death. Don't wait. Please give generously to this vital cause.

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Ellen Weiss Elected Chair of NEW Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning

Ellen Weiss has been elected Chair of the new Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (former Bureau of Jewish Education). As volunteer leader of this important new entity, Ellen was at the helm of last year's highly successful Engagement Conference, which deepened her commitment to expanding and amplifying engagement efforts in our community.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Ellen holds an MBA from the University at Buffalo School of Management. She is a recipient of Federation's Ruth and Milton Kahn Young Leadership Award and has held many volunteer leadership positions in agencies throughout Jewish Buffalo. Ellen currently sits on Federation's Executive Committee and Board and is a member of the prestigious National



Ellen Weiss

Women's Philanthropy Board through Jewish Federations of North America

(JFNA), and serves as her Class chair.

The Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning is an outgrowth of the merger of the Buffalo Jewish Federation's engagement department and Buffalo's Bureau for Jewish Education. Built upon a foundation of engagement principles, the purpose of The Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning is three-fold: 1) to engage and connect with individuals and families; 2) to create opportunities for meaningful, purposeful and relevant Jewish exploration, and, 3) to amplify the good work of partner agencies and synagogues.

Many of our community's learning and engagement projects have made their new home in The Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning including Nickel City Jews, Hebrew High, PJ Library & PJ Our Way, Yad B'Yad, Mussar groups, and Adult Learning opportunities. Ellen


Weiss explained that as the new Center continues to evolve "we are deeply committed to inspiring individuals to access Jewish tradition in powerful and transformative ways."

More information about the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning can be found online at buffalojewishfederation.org/engagementandlearning/ or contact Miriam@buffalojewishfederation.org


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New Year, New Look, New Co-President

Although January 1, 2019 is not one of the four Jewish New Years (Rosh Hashanah, Tu B'Shevat, 1 Nisan, and 1 Elul), Buffalo Jewish Federation's Nickel City Jews (NCJ) rang in this 2019 new year with a new Co-President and a new look. Zahava Fried is the new Nickel City Jews Co-President, filling the space vacated by Gabby Balderman, who finished her term in December, alongside Jake Katz, who continues as Co-President.



Co-Presidents Jake Katz & Zahava Fried

"I am thrilled to be part of the Leadership Team of NCJ, an organization which is so close to my heart," Zahava said. "I'm excited to work alongside Jake and the Executive Committee to bring together Buffalo's Jewish Young Adults to help build a strong cohesive Jewish Buffalo."

In her role on the Nickel City Jews Executive Committee, Zahava brought vibrancy, energy and a passion for Jewish life in Buffalo to the group's collective work. Together with Shiri Kester, a fellow NCJ Executive Committee Member, she worked to plan and execute Light the Night, NCJ's Hanukkah Celebration at Buffalo Distilling Co. in Larkenville this past December.

Zahava, a native of Pittsburgh, PA, fashioned her college studies as an opportunity to travel around the world, from Yeshiva University in New York City to studying in Jerusalem for a year. Zahava is a classically trained singer, and now uses her

talents at PALS - Kadimah, where she is a Pre-School educator. She and her husband, Yaakov, moved to Buffalo in 2016 when Yaakov began his studies at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. They currently reside in Amherst with their 7-month-old daughter, Lilah.

"I'm looking forward to building on a successful 2018 year for Nickel City Jews and continuing to work with our great leadership team," Jake said. "We are excited about our new Shabbat initiative and our upcoming schedule for 2019." Zahava and Jake each bring a passion for exploring and expressing their Judaism in individual ways.

To continue with our new adventures, Nickel City Jews



also unveiled a new logo. With a simplistic vibe, thin lines, and neat lettering, the new logo works well with that of our umbrella organization, the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning.

For more information contact Nicole@buffalojewishfederation.org.

Give to the Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund
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How I Wish You'd Traveled by Boat

By *Gunilla Kester*,
in memory of Cantor Susan Wehle



How I wish you'd traveled by boat up the salt-mixed Hudson to old Erie Canal, caressed by air curling your hair into knots we could've unraveled together, slowly, without words, east-west, north-south, so that stupid journalist would never have called me your "pal" and because that's the way to go,

with dignity the way ancient Viking ships carried furs, slaves and amber. We, too, vessels of warmth, the enslaved, golden beauty. Going slowly under clouds until coast gives way to dark mountains, rising shadows pierced by night fires, pearls scattered among ashes.

Traveling a day or two, a night, or two nights and a day. Taking your time. Smoke from the boat's chimney lingers in your hair, mingles slowly, like a man and a woman in love. Not in a hurry. It's the way to return, early, before

dawn, cold and eager, still wrapped in midnight's velvet when poets stay, look at stars, trace a word or two in dew on the railing or in notebooks. Your book is closed. How I wish you had traveled by boat.

This poem is one of several written in memory of Cantor Susan Wehle. She was the best editor I have ever met: quick, decisive, alert. Her sense of melody, cadence, rhythm, beat, and what she called "the line" was inimical; I miss it every day. She turned my "Swenglish" poetic outbursts into publishable poetry! Whenever I showed up with some scribbles on a piece of paper, she would drop what she was doing and give it a fair reading. She didn't mince her words and was a stickler for correctness. Since we lost her, almost ten years ago, I have carried on the best I could on my own. - GK

A Cantorial Concert
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Security Expert Addresses Challenges of the IDF

Lecture on Monday, February 11 at Hillel of Buffalo

Amiel BaKehila, part of the Ohr Torah Stone (OTS) network, returns to Buffalo this month for several programs featuring Jordan Herzberg, Israel Security Expert and Rabbi Reuven Spolter, the program's director. Herzberg and Spolter will meet with children at PALS-Kadimah, Ohr Temimim and Kadimah Academy, as well as residents of Federation Housing, UB students and community leaders at a variety of forums.

Mr. Herzberg will speak on "Ethics, Morality and the IDF: The Challenges of Being a Moral Army" Monday, February 11 at 7:30 pm at Hillel of Buffalo's new home (520 Lee Entrance UB Commons, Suite 101B). Prior to Herzberg's address, Professor Sergey Dolgopolski of UB's Department of Jewish Thought will provide introductory remarks. This event is free and open to the community.

Lieutenant Colonel (Reserves) Jordan Herzberg has been active in diplomacy, security, political and business affairs in Israel for over 20 years. Serving as a track two diplomat for several Israeli Prime Ministers,



Jordan Herzberg

Jordan participated in hundreds of hours of back channel negotiations with neighboring Arab heads of state, and has advised several Israeli government ministers.

Volunteering as a lone soldier in the Israel Defense Forces Paratrooper Brigade, Jordan served in several different combat theaters, including extensive military service in Lebanon and Judea/Samaria. He also served as Chairman of *Mechinat Lachish*

Meitarim, one of Israel's largest gap year programs for young men and women, secular and observant, and is on the board of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies.

The president of Israel Security Tours, Jordan has a BA with Honors in Political Science and Judaic Studies from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, including studies at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Harvard Business School.

OTS Amiel BaKehila, is a new initiative under the auspices of Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs that brings dynamic programming, speakers and educators to our Buffalo community. Volunteer coordinators of the program are Barb Chazen and Lori Morrison and funding for the initiative is made possible by the Buffalo Jewish Federation.

Contact Rob Goldberg at rob@buffalojewishfederation.org for more information or with questions.

Correction to January Jewish Journal

On page 25 of the January issue of *The Jewish Journal*, the story indicated that Steven Cohen of HoganWillig did *pro bono* legal work relating to the new Temple Beth Tzedek building project. That was incorrect. TBT member Steven B. Bengart of Bengart & DeMarco, LLP in fact was the attorney who provided legal counsel to the Temple regarding the sale of the Getzville Rd. campus to the Northtown Automotive Companies.

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Buffalo Lions of Judah...the Story Continues



Leslie Shuman Kramer Honored at International Lion Conference

New Federation President Leslie Shuman Kramer was honored at the prestigious International Lion of Judah Conference (ILOJC) last month in Miami. This distinction, named for Lion of Judah founders Norma Kipnis-Wilson and Toby Friedland z”l honors extraordinary women who have set a high standard for philanthropy and volunteerism. This year at the conference, the 1,400 women in attendance—including 14 women from our community—raised over \$35 million dollars toward the 2019 Campaign.

Every other year, The Jewish Federations of North America asks each community to nominate a woman for the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award. In 1972, Norma Kipnis-Wilson and Toby Friedland z”l had a revolutionary idea... for women to make a personal statement about their values and commitment to the Jewish people with an individual gift of at least \$5,000 to the annual Campaign—the creation of the Lion of Judah concept. Since then, it has become a phenomenon. The Lion of Judah pin was established in the 1970 by these two outstanding Florida women with the idea that \$5,000 would be the cost that our agencies like HIAS would spend to bring a Russian family to the US. Jewish women said, ‘We can support bringing families to America or Israel. If I give \$5,000, this is what it can do.’ And this powerful project became a tangible platform for a mitzvah.



The pin is now an internationally recognized symbol of philanthropy, commitment, Jewish values and sisterhood worn by approximately 18,000 women across the globe. “I am honored and humbled to be receiving this beautiful award,” said Kramer. “I share it with many other deserving women who make such a difference in their communities, and for whom I have so much respect. I look up to all the previous winners in this community—Janet Desmon, Holly Levy, Bonnie Clement, Ellen Reis, my mother-Marilyn Shuman, who won the award in 2014.”

Leslie Shuman Kramer is currently President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation and is a member of Jewish Federation of



North America’s National Women’s Philanthropy Board, where she holds the portfolio of Vice Chair of Community Engagement. “I feel blessed to be able to spend much of my time involved in the Jewish world, for which I have always had a passion,” she said. As co-chair of the 2017 national Heart to Heart Mission to Israel she was excited to travel on the trip with 10 other Buffalo women.

Leslie was born to be a leader in the Buffalo Jewish Community. Both her parents chaired the

Federation’s Campaign at different times, and her father, Irving M. Shuman z”l, was president of the Federation from 1996-1998. “My life has always revolved around being Jewish,” she said. “My parents were role models for leadership, and when I became a Lion, I was following my mother’s example.”

“I love how we Jews take care of each other,” Kramer said. “We are nothing without community, so for me, becoming a Lion was an honor and privilege. It’s thrilling to both be able to be a part of a community like Buffalo where individuals can and do make a difference, and to be living at a time and place where we can thrive and live as free Jews. I love that we can spend our time focusing on making our own community better. I am thrilled to be able to do this through Buffalo Jewish Federation, its Lions of Judah, and through JFNA’s National Women’s Philanthropy.”

“One important characteristic of Lions is that we share basic values when it comes to the Jewish world,” she continued. “We are not just a bunch of women with fancy pins. We care about our communities and each other, and we roll up our sleeves to get the work done. When I meet another Lion, I think ‘I know you care about what I care about.’ Among us, there is an immediate connection and bond. It is a sisterhood that’s inclusive, one in which we help each other blossom.”

“Leslie’s passion for Jewish Buffalo is unparalleled, and her commitment to ensuring our community’s significant survival is an inspiration,” notes Rob Goldberg, Buffalo Jewish Federation’s CEO. “And while Leslie’s deep roots in Buffalo ground her, her foothold in Israel, with NWP and as a proud Lion, provide her with a global perspective that enriches her leadership. She is in a word – remarkable!”

Leslie recently endowed her Lion gift because she wants to insure that the things she cares about in this community can continue to be cared for by her in perpetuity. “When I was able to endow my gift, I was happy to do it, but I didn’t realize how emotional that would be for me,” Kramer explained. “To be able to make my own mark on my community as a Jewish woman is an amazing opportunity that I don’t take for granted. And I am proud to do it in partnership with my husband, Jim, who shares my commitment to the future of the Jewish community.”



The Lion of Judah Conference is a highlight of the JFNA National Women's Philanthropy program. Over 1400 women (500 first timers) from throughout North America and Lion Sisters from Israel attended the conference. For 3 days we connected, learned, and celebrated together. While many of us are aware how Federation helps Israel and our local agencies, I was touched to learn more details how Jewish Federation of North America assisted during the attacks in Parkland, Florida and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in addition to the hurricane in Houston and fires in California. When Jews are in need of help, Federation is the light to help guide us through the tragedy.

- Ellen Weiss, LOJE



Buffalo Lions in Florida
Attending the International LOJ Convention (ILOJC) in Florida were: (Bottom row- seated) Anne Virag, Bonnie Clement, Barbara Rich, Leslie Shuman Kramer, Marilyn Shuman, Penny Shuman. (Top Row- standing) Amelida Weinmann, Maxine Awner, Joni Shatkin, Ellen Weiss Kim Yonaty, Ellen Reis, Janet Desmon, Holly Levy and Randi Morkisz.





Irwin Gelman: Cantor-Geneticist

By Rabbi Sara Rich

There is only one likely path for a child who sang solos on the High Holidays at his father's synagogue starting at age five, and whose favorite toy at age seven was a chemistry set, and that is the path of Cantor Dr. Irwin Gelman: a Distinguished Professor of Oncology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Veronomics, Inc., and Cantor at Beth Abraham Synagogue. Irwin is driven by his passions, and he houses a deep fascination with scientific discovery as well as a lifelong love of *chazzanut* (the musical art of cantorial singing). In fact, science and music are such integral parts of Irwin that you might even say they are in his genes - but he will be the judge of that.

The Cancer Researcher

At Roswell Park, Dr. Gelman serves as the Director of the Roswell Park Gene Modulation Core lab, the Director of Research Integration, and as the Academic Chair of the Cancer Genetics, Genomics and Development Program, having previously served as the Palisano Chair of Cancer Genetics. His research focuses on the genetic mutations that cause various types of cancer and finding the treatment to which each unique genetic mutation will be most responsive. Through his research, Dr. Gelman has identified a testing platform that will make the discovery of these matches of mutations and treatment more efficient and accurate. He founded Veronomics, which is a start-up venture that delivers this testing platform to companies that are developing treatments, and which will eventually allow for the creation of patient-specific treatment plans that are specific to the genetic root of their cancer.

Although Dr. Gelman has been working for decades in scientific research (including volunteering in a Yale University lab as a high schooler), he shows no signs of slowing down. He loves the collegial atmosphere at Roswell and the investment that they make in mentoring researchers who are early in their career. He is fascinated by the new frontier of cancer research that focuses on the genetic mutations that cause cancer, rather than the area of the body where the cancer is manifest, and he is ignited by the awareness that each new discovery brings a host of unanswered questions that are waiting to be explored.

The Cantor

But what about that five-year-old singing in the shul? Cantor Gelman is a fourth, possibly fifth-generation *chazzan* (cantor). His father, Cantor Charles Gelman, learned cantorial music privately as a teenager in Vilna, and after surviving the Holocaust, arrived as a refugee in the United States and settled in New Haven, Conn.



Mara & Irwin Gelman; photo by CLICK-Linda Gellman

Irwin is a man who embraces both the spiritual soundtrack of life and the scientific quest for exploration.

Charles became a cantor at a synagogue in nearby Hamden and introduced his son Irwin at an early age to the melodies and customs of the rich Eastern European Jewish musical heritage. Over the years, Irwin absorbed this music, and learned directly from his father and his father's community of friends who also were cantors in Europe and who were determined to preserve their traditions and pass them on to the next generation.

At age 13, Irwin celebrated not one, but two Bar Mitzvahs – the first at Young Israel so that those who did not travel on Shabbat could attend, and the second the following week at his father's synagogue. This meant leading two full services, learning to chant two full Torah and Haftarah portions and delivering two unique speeches. That fall, he made his full (amateur) cantorial debut. A small congregation in Northwestern Connecticut needed someone to lead High Holiday services. His father assured them that his son was capable, and after Irwin received permission from the yeshiva where he was studying to take two weeks off of school to learn the special prayers and melodies for the High Holidays, indeed he was quite capable. For years after, he traveled to different congregations in Connecticut and in other parts of the United States to lead High Holiday services, and in doing so has brought pieces of his family's musical legacy to the contemporary Jewish community.

While Cantor Gelman was a post-doctoral research fellow at Rockefeller University in New York, he was hired as a cantor at the Conservative Synagogue of Fifth Avenue. Although he had been leading services for years at this point, he received an additional credential when he joined the Cantors Assembly,

which is the Conservative movement's professional organization for cantors.

Science and Religion

Although science and religion are often seen as at odds with one another, Irwin is no "Dr. Jekyll and Cantor Hyde." Rather, he finds sparks of the divine in both. Irwin remarks, "I am a cantor not just because I grew up with it, but because it is tremendously spiritual for me. It gives me a lot of passion. I think that spills over to my science work. In science, there is tremendous spirituality. I can feel that spirituality in reading an amazing science paper, but also in praying, singing and hearing good spiritual prayer."

Today, Cantor Gelman serves as the Cantor of Congregation Beth Abraham, located in the Elmwood Village. The synagogue has a monthly musical Friday night service, as well as High Holiday services, a community Seder, and social and educational programs. He has also served on the boards of the Holocaust Resource Center and Hillel, and has served for seven years on the Board of Trustees of the JCC, including his current term as Secretary.

Following his participation in a Buffalo Jewish Federation sponsored ecumenical clergy mission to Israel last year, Irwin has become involved in local interfaith work. His personal interest in interfaith relationship-building fits nicely with the work of his wife, Mara Koven-Gelman, who serves as the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Director of Community Relations. Irwin is moved by the shared humanity that he finds when he speaks to people of other faiths. "If you talk and share, you learn the commonality between our religions. We are all doing the same things: marking a milestone in the life of a child, sanctifying love between two people, or helping a person and a community through the stages of mourning." He recently became a member of the NAACP and hopes to build new interfaith and intercultural partnerships in the future.

From the liturgy and rituals that nourish our souls to the genetic mutations in our DNA, Irwin is a man who embraces both the spiritual soundtrack of life and the scientific quest for exploration.

Rabbi Sara Rich is Executive Director of Hillel of Buffalo.

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Tova and Bob Ablove: Championing Impactful Patient Care and Education

By Ezra N. Rich

Buffalo is a place of historical significance to the study of medicine as well as the evolution of the American Jewish experience. One dynamic couple is embracing and advancing both legacies today.

A Student of Jewish Buffalo

Dr. Robert H. and Dr. Tova S. Ablove are grounded in a storied past while paving the way for a resurgent future for medical research and Jewish education in the Queen City. Kenmore native, Dr. Robert Ablove warmly recalls being a young congregant when Rabbi Isaac Klein, z”l, a towering figure in 20th century Conservative Judaism, was the spiritual leader of Temple Shaarey Zedek. Dr. Ablove’s late father, Samuel I. Ablove, a decorated World War II veteran who fought in the Battle of the Bulge and liberated concentration camps, was president of the congregation. Both Samuel and his wife Helen were active at Kadimah Academy.

Growing up, Bob experienced firsthand the power of Jewish education as a student at Kadimah Academy and as a camper at Ramah Canada. After graduating from the Hebrew High program, he led the bar and bat mitzvah program at Temple Beth Am. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, he was active in Hillel, studied abroad at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and served as



Dr. Robert and Dr. Tova Ablove

at the University at Buffalo’s medical school, Tova earned her undergraduate degree in Physics at Buffalo State College. Initially, she was drawn to scientific research, but fate had other plans. While there, her passion for women’s health and women’s rights led her to attend medical school at UB, where she embraced uro-gynecology as

Drs. Robert H. and Tova S. Ablove are paving the way for a more educated, caring, and engaged community.

a delegate to the World Conference on Soviet Jewry. Following graduation, he harnessed his love of sports into orthopedics with a specialty in hand and upper extremity surgery following medical school at the State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse College of Medicine, and earning an anatomical sciences master’s degree from SUNY at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biological Sciences.

A Scion of a Medical Family

A native of the Bronx, N.Y., Dr. Tova Ablove attended an all-girls Orthodox school in her youth, although her family was more secular. The child of a Holocaust survivor who lost family members, she grew up with a strong Jewish identity. Many members of her family were either doctors or teachers, people who championed education, knowledge and care.

Seeking a change of pace and wanting to be near her cousin who was then a resident

a specialist in the area of female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery. While studying at UB, she would occasionally attend services at Temple Shaaray Zedek and knew her future husband’s parents from those visits.

A Capital Couple

The Abloves met in Buffalo and moved to Albany where they were wed in 1998. During their six years together in the Empire State’s capital, they were active in the Albany Jewish Federation’s Maimonides Society for those practicing medicine, Federation’s young professionals wing and the Bureau of Jewish Education. They also attended local Conservative shuls and a Chavurah (lay-led prayer group).

Hello, Wisconsin

Medical research opportunities then drew them to Madison, Wisconsin, where they lived for a decade. Bob was Chief of hand surgery at the School of Medicine and Public Health at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Tova was an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology. While in Madison, inspired by a conversation with late legendary Jewish Buffalonian Leonard S. Kaminker, the Abloves founded the Madison Jewish Community Day School. “He asked me, ‘Bobby, are there enough kids and a place to locate the school?’ I said ‘Yes’ and he said, ‘Then do it. If you don’t start it, it won’t happen.’” he recalled. Anna Ablove, their oldest daughter, was a member of its inaugural graduating class. Their younger daughters, Jane and Sara, also attended the school before the family moved back to Buffalo and they enrolled the girls in Kadimah Academy.

A New Era in the Nickel City

The passing of Bob’s father marked a turning point for the Abloves. Returning to Buffalo for the funeral, he was touched by how Rabbi Perry Netter’s eulogy showed how he had really connected to his father. “He had driven my father around, seeing the old East Side neighborhood. My father was a reserved man, he didn’t talk much about his service during the War, but [Rabbi Netter] really captured the essence of the man,” Dr. Ablove recalls.

One night while browsing online, Bob

noticed an opening for a division chief of uro-gynecology at the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and encouraged his wife to apply. When she got the job, Bob also joined the faculty performing hand, shoulder and elbow surgery. They both also see patients as doctors in the UBMD network.

“I always wanted to return to the East Coast and I was happy to come to Bob’s hometown,” Tova recalls. Obviously, Bob’s mother was pleased! The move back has offered the Ablove daughters the chance to bond more with their Buffalo grandmother, as well as Tova’s family in New York City. As the fourth generation in her family to attend Temple Beth Tzedek, their youngest daughter, Sara, is a regular in leading the congregation in “Ashrei” prayer before the Mussaf service.

Both Drs. Ablove enjoy the medical students and residents at UB. They actively work to enhance outcomes for their patients as well as advancing medical research and education for the next generation of practitioners.

As the keynote speaker at the Medical School’s 2017 White Coat ceremony, Dr. Robert Ablove addressed 180 incoming students, the largest class in the institution’s 173-year history, and used the opportunity to highlight the responsibility of being a doctor.

“The patient-physician bond is the most amazing thing about practicing medicine. Patients will place an incredible amount of trust in you. Recognize this. It’s never routine for your patients. You can be doing something for the 1,000th time, but it’s the first time for that patient,” he said.

The students appreciate the Ablove’s dedication. In 2018, Tova received the Chief Residents’ Award for Excellence in Academic and Clinical Teaching from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

While Bob is proud of serving as a medical consultant to the Buffalo Bills, Sabres and UB Bulls teams, he believes his greatest accomplishment has been bringing UB’s orthopedic services to the local VA system. He is proud to honor his father’s legacy of service by delivering a greater level of patient care to veterans.

Championing Jewish Education

Drs. Robert and Tova Ablove are passionate about educating the next generation of Jewish Buffalo and beyond. Bob is on the board of directors of Camp Ramah in Canada and is active in strengthening American enrollment in Ramah Canada, the camp serving Jewish communities across the Great Lakes region,

including Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh, as well as the children of Ramah Canada alumni from across the United States. He has also served on Buffalo Jewish Federation initiatives with current President Leslie Shuman Kramer.

Tova serves on the board of Kadimah Academy, where she works closely with President Jonathan D. Epstein and fellow directors to transition the school, now in its 60th year, into a new era of excellence in Jewish and secular education. She also co-chairs a Buffalo Jewish Federation Task Force assessing the overall state and possibilities for Jewish education in the region. The Abloves believe a viable day school is a critical part of communal infrastructure, especially for attracting and retaining more observant and religiously committed families to Buffalo.

From Jewish day school and summer camp to medical school and patient care, Drs. Robert H. and Tova S. Ablove are paving the way for a more educated, caring, and engaged community.

Ezra N. Rich is Marketing Communications Manager at Uniland Development Company.

Ella Rae Greene: More than Kid Stuff!

By Peter Simon

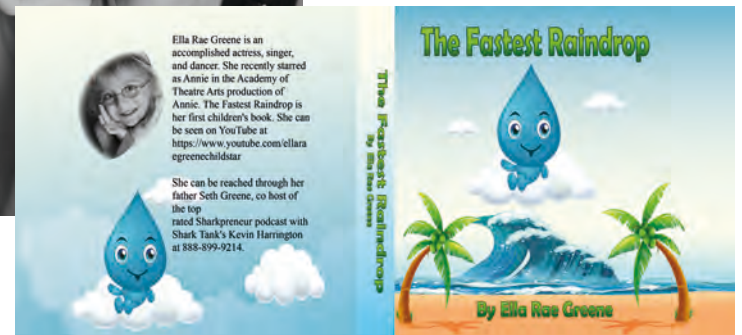
The whimsical story about the world's fastest raindrop started taking shape in Ella Rae Greene's imagination when she was in kindergarten. Now, the story is in book form, and Ella, a fourth-grader at Williamsville's Maple West Elementary School, is thrilled to be an author. "Some people dream about having a book," said the daughter of Rebecca and Seth Greene, the sister of Max and Lillie, and a religious school student at Congregation Shir Shalom. "To me it's a reality."

The book, which is professionally illustrated, tells the story of a courageous and resourceful raindrop that has a series of adventures in New York City before heading west and forming the Pacific Ocean at Hawaii. Ella, who recently starred as "Annie" in an Academy of Theatre Arts production of "Annie", is now working on a second book.

Not to be outdone, Seth Greene authored a longer "chapter book" for



children called *The Magic of the Castle: Find Your Own Fairy Tale*. Seth dedicates the book "to Ella for inspiring it, my father for taking us to Disney World where it happened, and my wife for making our magical fairy tale possible." Seth Greene is a nationally recognized direct response marketing expert, and the author of five best-selling marketing books, including his latest book, *Market Domination for Podcasting*. Seth is the founder of a direct response marketing firm www.MarketDominationLLC.com.



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Amélida & Madi Weinmann: *L'Dor V'Dor*- From Generation to Generation

By Ellen Goldstein

If community leadership and responsibility is learned at home, then the Weinmann women are a noteworthy example of at least two generations of a family shaped by community service, and in turn, helping to shape their communities. Amelida, through Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo Jewish Federation, the Erie County Democratic party, and the Hispanic Women's League, and Madi through Temple Beth Zion and its local youth group, regional and national North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY NEL) groups. They are not the only Weinmanns involved in *Tikkun Olam*, but attorney Peter Allen Weinmann – husband to Amelida and father to Madi – plus the two boys – Aaron and Benjamin – are a story for another issue of the *Jewish Journal*. Lillian the youngest is also plugging in her *mitzvot* time through TBZ religious school, a Bat Mitzvah project, Nichols School, and Darlene Ceglia's Dance Project.

Amélida Weinmann

Amélida Ortiz Weinmann was born in Buffalo to a Hispanic Catholic family, moved to Long Island for junior high and high school, then made her way back to Buffalo after attending SUNY Binghamton. She comes from a politically active family, and is a 3rd generation Democratic committee person. Amelida looks up to her late grandmother, who in the 1960s, was involved in Democratic Party politics, the Hispanic community, and religious leadership. For her service, Amélida's grandmother is featured on 2 obelisks honoring Hispanic community leaders on Niagara Street. "I hope to have followed in her footsteps," Amélida said, explaining that she worked for the US Census in 2000, and served on the Erie Harbor Development Corporation Architectural Design Review committee, and more.

She is also involved in the Hispanic community, serves on the Hispanic Women's League board, co-chaired empowerment, and co-chairs the fundraising committee, collaborating with the Hispanic Heritage Council, Hispanics United of Buffalo, and other community organizations. "Before college, I received a scholarship for college from a Hispanic organization called Adelante (Forward) in Long Island, so through my work in the Hispanic and Jewish communities,



Amélida & Madi Weinmann

I am both paying back and paying forward at the same time now." She helps raise money for college scholarships and supports programming for Hispanic women. She met her husband, Peter, through her work at Hispanics United of Buffalo during the Erie County Coalition for Family Violence luncheon committee when he was an assistant Erie County District Attorney. They were introduced by the now Hon. Lisa Bloch Rodwin, Hallie Weissfeld Brownstein, and Barb O'Neil.

Amélida also served on the Architectural Design review committee for Canalside, has served as Sargent-at-Arms of the Erie County Democratic Party for 10 years, worked for many political candidates, and ran the only Jewish Girl Scout Troop at Kadimah School. In her spare time, she has been and is an active parent at her four children's schools – TBZ's PALS, Kadimah School, Elmwood Franklin School, Nichols, and City Honors. And she also serves on

"I believe that everybody wants the same thing... to get an education, earn a profession to be able to provide what their families need and want, and to give back, and make the world better, to leave a legacy."

the Temple Beth Zion board. She loves that her daughter, Madi, was on the board with her last year while youth group president. Amélida said, "Peter and I look forward to more 'parent-child' community opportunities with all our children. *L'Dor V'Dor*."

Amélida was Temple Beth Zion's Kol Nidre Fund co-chair for the past two years with Peter, on Federation's Overseas Allocation Task Force, and is also Federation's Super Sunday co-chair this year, with Neil Block.

Amélida did a lot of soul searching on her journey to Judaism, because she says she felt drawn to Judaism as it best fit her relationship with G-d.

"There were and are so many people in the Jewish community who have guided me by their own *mitzvot* in our Jewish and general communities, it would be

impossible for me to name them all for fear of missing someone."

She "shul hopped," first starting at Temple Israel in Binghamton, the former Temple Beth El (now a part of Temple Beth Tzedek), then switched to Temple Beth Zion when she married Peter. They keep a kosher home, and she points to the past, noting that Peter's grandfather, Siegfried Capell, was a kosher butcher. She also credits her mother-in-law, Margit Weinmann, for helping her understand "the whole *mishpucha* (family)". Amélida became more involved with TBZ, Buffalo Jewish Federation, and AJC because of Peter. "It's '*Beshert*' (destined) that G-d put our *Neshamas* (souls) together!"

"Judaism gives my life meaning with Hashem through *mitzvot*," she said in talking about why she became a Jew and

why she is so involved in the Buffalo Jewish Community. "My belief in Hashem and through *mitzvot* helps shape life lessons as well as my parenting skills. Knowing who you are and seeking to find a place to be you—that's why I became a Jew."

Amérida went to Israel first in 1997, on a Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Baha'i tour, then again 20 years later with JFNA's National Women's Philanthropy, Heart to Heart Mission along with a P2G pre mission in 2017, and became a Lion of Judah when she returned.

Community service—*Tikkun Olam*—is critical to Amérida's concept of Jewish community. Having been active in all the Jewish 'denominations', Amérida feels making a stand in the Jewish community regarding community service is important to her family. "My grandmother, father, mother and some of my aunts were active in the Hispanic community, and they taught us to pay it forward," she said. "Some people can give more of their time and money at different times. I can do that now. I feel strongly about giving back. I believe that everybody wants the same thing... to get an education, learn a profession to be able to provide what their families need and want, and to give back, and make the world better, to leave a legacy. That's what Peter and I try to teach our children."

Madi Weinmann

Madeleine (Madi) Weinmann is a 17 year old senior at City Honors—a first-born child of two first-born children, and she is a striver. She has grown up as a member of Temple Beth Zion, and is the Regional President of NFTY-NEL—The Reform Movement's North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY)—North East Lakes (NEL) region. Last year—her junior year—she was President of TBaZY—the TBZ youth group. Now she has applied to colleges to study to become an engineer. And she also expects herself to be active in the Jewish community in college—Chabad or Hillel or as part of a local synagogue.

Madi really enjoyed the youth group experience from TBaZY to NFTY. "I started going to TBaZY events when I was in middle school," she said. Her Jewish education is broad—starting with TBZ religious school and attending Kadimah School for five years, going to Shabbat services with her family, being a member of the TBZ junior choir through Cantor Penny Myers, becoming a Bat Mitzvah, attending Camp Seneca Lake,

"Some kids... liked NFTY and got involved in this amazing Jewish organization in high school. And that's how it begins... social activities move to social action, which lead to learning, leadership, and love for the Jewish community."

and being active in local and regional youth group. "I love being a part of the Jewish community. It has always been a part of my life, especially when I first went to City Honors, where there were not a lot of Jewish kids. At that time, I made Jewish friends through youth group—both older and younger. Then, another friend encouraged me to attend a regional event at the URJ Camp George in Ontario. That was the first NFTY event I attended, and have been involved ever since."

Through NFTY, Madi met teens from Toronto, Cleveland and all over the region, as well as Buffalo. At the end of her sophomore year, she ran for TBaZY president, won, and served in that office for her junior year. At the time, she was also a member of the NFTY-NEL regional cabinet. She enjoyed that position so much, she ran for the NFTY NEL presidency at the end of her junior year, and her presidency makes her family, as well as Buffalo, proud.

But she isn't the only Buffalonian involved regionally or nationally in the Reform Jewish Youth leadership. Williamsville North graduate, Nobie Fried, is Communications Vice President, on the national NFTY North American board. Her sister, Lexie Fried, was NFTY-NEL Regional President and TBaZY President before Madi, and Andrew Oesterreicher and his sister, Jacqueline, served on the regional and North American boards, as well.

And while Madi explained that she no longer serves on the TBaZY board, there is a lot going on with the TBZ youth group, including Buffalo as host for the next NFTY-NEL regional Spring Boards Kallah in early March.

"I have been able to make Jewish friends from all over, who are just as passionate about leadership and Judaism as I am. We bond over fun activities,

socializing and relaxing, plus leadership programming." She also explains, "I'm now in charge of a network of the presidents of all the youth groups in my region, which I love. I guide them on topics such as working with adults and a board, how to run an efficient board meeting, and general tips on how to grow into a successful leader. I hold monthly phone calls with my President's network, and I also lead the weekly calls with my NFTY-NEL regional board," she said. "I love being able to get behind the scenes, creating the events and the schedule, and helping NFTY continue to grow. We are a movement, so we're always moving." Madi said that she also learned to advocate on Capitol Hill with Hebrew High, and went to Israel with Camp Seneca Lake in the summer of 2017.

"Now I have NFTY friends from all over the country, camp friends from different regions, and a great network for the future. But," she added, "starting local is nice, and I am so proud of what we have done in Buffalo. Getting involved through TBaZY events, TBZ Shabbat services, local volunteer work, and advocating to legislators

about important issues was the spark that ignited my love for the Jewish community," she said. "Some kids hated religious school, but liked NFTY and got involved in this amazing Jewish organization in high school. And that's how it begins... social activities move to social action, which lead to learning, leadership, and love for the Jewish community."

With Amérida and Madi Weinmann, it is difficult to decide who learns more from whom. But as a community, Buffalo is lucky that both women have chosen to share their time, skills, heart and energy with Jewish Buffalo. Please don't hesitate to ask them how else to become involved. Amérida said, "When it comes to doing *mitzvot* in your life, you don't learn to run until you learn to be guided, to rollover, crawl, walk, then run! We are all at different stages. I hope to eventually run, like some of our community leaders and help pave the way for others to start their way at their own speed!"

Ellen Goldstein is editor of the Jewish Journal.



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Three Paths to the Buffalo Philharmonic Cello Section

By Gail Bauser

When you look up onto the stage at a Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) concert, what do you see? Men and women of all ages and backgrounds? Do you admire the millions of dollars worth of valuable musical instruments? Do you take in the splendor of Kleinhans Music Hall? Or do you simply close your eyes and allow yourself to be carried away by the beautiful music you are hearing?

The next time you attend a concert, take a glance at the cello section. Within that part of the BPO are three players who are members of our Jewish community, and have traveled very different paths on their way to Buffalo. One family came to the US in the 1600s; another sought refuge in the US as Nazi Germany was threatening the European Jewish Community, and yet another ran from Russia during Gorbachev's period of *Glaznost*. Meet Monte Hoffman, Robbie Hausmann, and Roman Mekinulov.

Monte Hoffman

Monte Hoffman has been a cellist with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra for 55 years. On January 19th, Monte completed a long and successful career with the BPO with a final performance at the Led Zeppelin Pops Concert. He chuckles over his choice for this final concert. Monte was always easy to recognize from the audience, sitting tall and stately in the cello section, the stage lights reflecting brightly off his full head of white hair.

Monte's family has a long history in the New York and New Jersey communities. His mother is of Sephardic descent, her ancestors coming to the United States from Spain in 1695. His father's family emigrated from Russia in 1905. His great grandfather's great-grandfather was the first American-born rabbi, and was one of the 12 clergymen in attendance at George Washington's inauguration in New York. A source of pride in Monte's family is the fact that his ancestors were founders of the first synagogue in the US, Congregation Shearith Israel, also known

as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. Monte's father was a prominent lawyer and a judge. His mother founded the Ventnor Music Festival Orchestra. Their support for and connection with the performing arts community played a significant role in Monte's interest in music.

When asked how he came to play the cello, Monte leans back, smiles, and reminisces about his childhood days when his parents would host friends and famous musicians as guests in their New Jersey home. Among the numerous well-known ensembles and soloists that would regularly stay as guests in his parents' home was the Curtis String Quartet. Monte becomes animated as he recounts hearing the quartet performing in his living room when he was just a young boy. "I planted myself on the floor in front of the cello when they played!" And thus was born the soul of a future cellist. When he was 6 years old, Monte told his parents he wanted to play the cello, but they thought he was too immature and not ready. They finally allowed him to begin cello lessons at the age of 9.

The journey from 9 year-old cello student to Buffalo Philharmonic cellist includes a long list of prestigious names and schools. His cello teachers included Leo Sachs, Orlando Cole, Lon Monroe, Misha Schneider, and Leonard Rose. He graduated with a performance degree in cello from the Eastman School of Music and



Roman Mekinulov, Monte Hoffman and Robbie Hausmann

considers Leonard Rose to be his greatest mentor and inspiration. "He was the greatest cellist of them all."

Monte is proud of the 4 years he enjoyed as a cellist with the Casals Festival Orchestra during the 1980s, and also a State Department-sponsored tour with the Eastman Philharmonia in 1961, which traveled over 30,000 miles to give 50 concerts in 16 countries during John F. Kennedy's presidency.

Now, after 55 years in the orchestra, Monte boasts having a long line of famous musicians and conductors as close friends. His easy demeanor and friendly, open manner make it easy to understand why. If you spend a few moments speaking with Monte, he might entertain you with a funny story or two about Mitch Miller, the late BPO Pops conductor in the early 1990s, who used to stay with Monte at his home in Buffalo when in town.

Besides making a career for himself as a professional cellist, he has built a successful life outside of music as an investor and property owner. He loves Buffalo and is grateful for the opportunities the city and the orchestra have afforded him. He has played over 6,000 concerts and has served on all the boards, as a member of the finance committee, and on numerous negotiating committees all at the BPO. His legacy in the orchestra is long. "I feel being in the Buffalo Philharmonic was a privilege." His presence on stage will be missed.

Robbie Hausmann

Robbie Hausmann made news last spring when the Buffalo Philharmonic took its first European Tour in over 30 years. The orchestra traveled to Poland to perform in 4 cities there, to much acclaim. But the trip to Poland had a much deeper personal meaning to him, and became a pilgrimage to the place

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his great-grandmother and many other relatives were murdered by the Nazis.

While in Poland with the orchestra, Robbie took a side trip to Auschwitz to honor the memory of his great-grandmother and the millions of others who died in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Armed with his cello and an old cherished photograph of his mother sitting on his great-grandmother's lap in Poland, Robbie entered the grounds of Auschwitz and performed Ravel's *Kaddish Prayer* in one of the camp's shower rooms. The experience was a very solemn and moving one for him. In an interview with WNET about his experience there, Robbie said, "In a way, I feel lucky that there are survivors from this family, because there are so many families in which everyone was wiped out. No descendants. Nobody to remember them. And I think we all want to be remembered, so, I feel grateful that I am able to remember my family members, my great-grandmother."

Robbie researched and accumulated a rare and vast library of solo cello music based on Hebrew themes and prayers long before visiting Poland. Although his early life was more of a secular one, the cello helped him to find his Jewish voice.

In 1938, Robbie's grandparents escaped from Germany and came to the United States "just in the nick of time." Both families settled in New York City, and his parents first met while students at NYU. His mother, Britta Hausmann, received a degree in Social Work and was an "avid amateur violinist." His father, Ernest Hausmann, earned a degree from Harvard Dental School and was continuing his studies at the University of Rochester when Robbie was born. The family moved to Eggertsville, when his father was awarded a position at the University of Buffalo Dental School as a Professor of Oral Biology.

Robbie started private cello lessons in 2nd grade, studying with several influential BPO cellists, among them Bill Fahlbush and Robert Carapetyan. His next teacher, Paul Katz of the celebrated Cleveland Quartet, has remained a life-long mentor. "Paul Katz had a very encouraging and positive approach. He explained technical ideas in a way that resonated with me." After studying with Harvey Shapiro at Julliard for a year, Robbie returned to Paul Katz and received a cello performance degree at Eastman.

Robbie then returned to Buffalo to study Psychology at UB. While there, the BPO advertised auditions for a cello

position. Robbie decided to take the audition and won a position with the Orchestra in 1982, where he has been ever since.

Robbie is grateful for the many opportunities he has had as a member of the Buffalo Philharmonic and of the Buffalo community. He was featured as a soloist with the orchestra several times, performing the *Lalo Concerto*, *Haydn Concerto in C Major*, Popper's *Hungarian Rhapsody*, as well as Bruch's haunting *Kol Nidre*.

It was at Congregation Havurah where Robbie truly began to find his Jewish voice. Havurah hired him "to play *Kol Nidre* and 3 or 4 other pieces" for their service on Yom Kippur. His search for appropriate cello solo music led to what has become an ongoing exploration for repertoire with Jewish themes. "I have compiled a treasure trove of music with Jewish themes from Russia and Poland, coming from a similar time period as the heyday of the Yiddish Theater." About 8

Within the cello section of the BPO are three players who are members of our Jewish community, and have traveled very different paths on their way to Buffalo.

years ago, after accumulating a sizeable library of cello solos, Robbie presented a recital at the JCC for cello and piano entitled "Son of a Cantor Man", the title of which was a clever play on the title "Son of a Preacher Man".

Robbie continues to research Hebrew melodies for cello in a quest to expand his repertoire. "This particular music speaks to me. The music makes me want to play." And he has a message for anyone learning to play a musical instrument... "Find music that speaks to you!"

Roman Mekinulov

BPO Principal Cellist Roman Mekinulov emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1989. It was not an easy road. His continued presence on stage with the Buffalo Philharmonic represents a happy ending to his parents' quest to raise their children in a land free of oppression.

Roman is a native of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). His parents are both pianists with PhDs from the prestigious Leningrad Conservatory and were graduate students there when Roman was born. Roman began studying cello at an early age. There is tension in his voice as he recalls an audition he took

when he was six years old for a spot at the Leningrad Music School for the Gifted. "After the audition, my mother overheard one of the judges whisper to another judge, 'This kid is pretty good, but we've already taken a Jew.' And I was denied a spot in the school."

Roman's parents made sure he received a strong music education despite the discriminatory environment towards Jews. After his academic studies during the day, Roman took classes at a specialized music school in Leningrad, where he spent his afternoons studying music theory, taking lessons, and playing in ensembles. His hard work paid off and at the age of 12, he won the Young Artist Competition of Leningrad.

Roman began cello studies with master Georgy Ginovker at the Rimsky-Korsakov College when he was 16. His parents dreamed of leaving Russia, and the fact that he would be drafted into the army by the age of 18 made it much more urgent. Fortunately, by 1989, President Ronald

Reagan and President Mikhail Gorbachev had signed an agreement that the Soviet Union would allow 200,000 Jews to leave the country. The Mekinulovs decided to apply.

In order to receive permission to leave the Soviet Union, Jews had to first recuse their Russian citizenship. The idea of being citizens of no country was frightening but required. Roman's father then had to pay the Soviet government the equivalent of 3 year's salary for each passport. "My father shelled out lots of money," he said. The Mekinulovs then waited nervously while the Soviet government did background checks to make sure nobody in the family held any secrets that would cause the government to deny their visas. After some time, they were granted permission to leave for Israel. The Mekinulovs sold all their belongings and secured flights.

"We left on the pretense to go to Israel. But once we reached the Vienna airport, we had to decide on whether to go to Israel or to apply for asylum in US." The family chose the United States, and traveled to Rome to wait for word from American authorities. They underwent a series of interviews during which they had to prove persecution in Russia. They

had many stories to share, among which was Roman's being denied a place in the Leningrad Music School for the Gifted at the age of 6.

Asylum was eventually granted to the Mekinulovs and they settled in Brooklyn in December 1989. Roman remembers how little they brought with them. "I came to the United States with a suitcase and a cello." Three months after their arrival in the US, Roman auditioned for Julliard and was awarded a "full ride."

For the first time in their lives, Roman and his family felt free to openly be Jews. Once settled in New York, the family immediately associated with the temple nearby on Benson Ave. The freedom Roman now enjoyed was enormous. "In Russia, we were not allowed to practice our religion or to learn Jewish music. I played my first *Kol Nidre* in the Brooklyn temple that year."

Roman studied cello at Julliard for 6 years, where he met his future wife, Sebnem, a lyric soprano. In 1992, he won the Young Artists International Auditions Cello Award and presented his New York Debut Recital in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall the following year.

In 1998, Roman was awarded the principal cello position in the *Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo*, and he and Sebnem moved to Brazil. Their daughter, Talia, was born there. The orchestra paid well and Roman had many wonderful opportunities, but still, the city didn't feel like the right fit for them. With their second child on the way, Roman started auditioning again and won his position as principal cellist with the Buffalo Philharmonic in 2001.

Roman's family is grateful for the freedoms they now enjoy. "My mother has completed a full circle, so to speak, through her job with the United Jewish Appeal in New York City working on research and fundraising efforts to bring Jews to the US," he said. "It is her way of fulfilling the Jewish tradition of *Tikkun Olam*, or "repairing the world."

"I consider myself very lucky," Roman said. "We all like it here. We thought it would be an amazing place to raise children, and we were right. And I love the orchestra." He is proud to be able to openly enjoy his Jewish heritage. "I am very proud to say I am a Jew, something I couldn't openly say until I came to USA."

Gail Bauser, a professional cellist, recently retired as strings teacher in the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District.

Charles Eugene (“Charlie”) Shuman: Community Builder

By Howard Rosenhoch

Who can forget that iconic scene in *The Graduate* when recent college graduate Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) is taken aside by Mr. McGuire, one of his father’s friends, and given just one word of advice to insure his future: “Plastics.” Perhaps Charlie Shuman, like Dustin Hoffman, was on the receiving end of that same advice. Unlike Dustin Hoffman, however, Charlie took that advice, and made of his life and the internationally significant Shuman Plastics, Inc. the success, and the Difference Maker in the Buffalo and greater Jewish communities, that we celebrate today.

Charles Eugene Shuman was born October 19, 1929 to Philip (Hebrew name “Peretz”) and Ida (“Chaika”) Shuman. Charlie speaks lovingly, yet wistfully, of his parents’ early years, which were hard. Both were from Sokolivka, which had a Jewish community, many of the survivors of which (and their progeny) are now part of Jewish Buffalo. Peretz first came to the US at age 17, avoiding the Russo-Japanese war. He returned to Europe and, at age 22, married Chaika who was three years his junior. Chaika lost 4 brothers and her father in the pogroms. With their young daughter Fanny (later known as Faye), Charlie’s late older sister, Peretz and Chaika escaped Sokolivka to Rumania. In 1922 they emigrated to the US, settling in Buffalo where Charlie was born to them seven years later.

Charlie grew up on Buffalo’s East Side.



Charles Shuman

He recalls his father as a hard worker, who peddled scrap paper, iron and other metals from a horse and wagon. When Charlie’s older brother, Hy, was discharged from the army, Hy and their father rented a junk shop and then bought a place on Goethe Street as the fledgling scrap business grew. Charlie describes his mother as an unusual woman, who “had a need, like Elie Wiesel, to tell stories”. She started a library in Sokolivka and wrote Yiddish poetry about the pogroms that his sister translated into English. Peretz served on the board of the local *Chevra Kadisha*, and Chaika belonged to Pioneer Women, a national

Zionist organization. Penny Shuman, Charlie’s wife to whom he’s been married 54 years, described Chaika as “a giver, a very charitable woman involved in many mitzvahs.” (Penny is profiled in the January 2019 *Jewish Journal*, pages 12-13.)

Charlie’s early years included public school on Buffalo’s East Side and Talmud Torah on Hickory Street, from which, Charlie says, “I didn’t learn very much!” It was later in life that Charlie turned his early emotional connection to Judaism into an intellectual searching. After high school at Seneca Vocational and Fosdick Masten, Charlie sold shoes at Burt’s Shoe Store downtown on Main Street. Edison Bros, the company that owned Burt’s and other shoe stores nationwide, sent young Charlie to Chicago where there was more opportunity for advancement. A promotion was soon offered in the form of an assistant manager position in a new store Edison was establishing in Chicago. Charlie would have been the youngest assistant

manager in the whole company, but news that his father took ill and needed surgery derailed those plans. Charlie returned to Buffalo to be with his family.

Amid challenge, sometimes fortune smiles on you. So it was with Charlie. While still in high school, he bought a single 25 cent raffle ticket from Holy Angels Church. Charlie won the first prize, a 1946 Ford convertible. When Charlie returned to Buffalo from Chicago, he was able to use the money from the sale of that car, along with savings from his work in Chicago, to buy a third interest in the family scrap business, which came to be known as Philip Shuman and Sons.

Shortly after serving two years in the US Army, Charlie and his brother Hy bought their father’s interest in the scrap business. It was right around this time that Charlie and Hy turned a chance meeting with a stranger at Ontario, Canada’s vacation community Crystal Beach into a business opportunity. A fellow driving a truck asking directions happened on Charlie and Hy. The stranger was carrying a load of scrap plastic. This prompted Hy, who Charlie refers to as “the smart one,” to suggest they talk to their friend, Cecil Green, a pioneer in the plastic scrap business in Toronto. One thing led to another, and Shuman Plastics, now an international producer and seller of specialty recycled plastics and plastic extrusion machinery cleaners, was born.

In 1963, Charlie was introduced to Penny Kanel by a mutual relative. A year later, on May 31, 1964, Charlie and Penny married. As they raised their three sons, Kenneth, Robert and Daniel, Charlie and Penny started going to Shul every Shabbat, and their involvement in Jewish philanthropy and service grew to the point that now they are one of

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the pillars and power couples of Jewish Buffalo.

Charlie's passion is Jewish education, especially day school education. He was an early supporter of Kadimah Academy. Partnering with Arthur and Susan Gellman, Charlie and Penny were the philanthropic catalyst to create the Ohr Temimim School located on Audubon Parkway. Charlie is fond of telling the story of his involvement in Chabad of Buffalo. He read an article in the *Buffalo Jewish Review* announcing that Rav Schneerson, then leader of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, was sending a *shaliach* to Buffalo. Charlie knew that, as he puts it, "they were never going to raise money with that article, and I wanted to help." He met the next morning with Arnold Weiss z"l, the late publisher of the *Jewish Review* at the time, and, collaborating with Arnold, helped create what is now a vibrant Chabad community in Buffalo.

Charlie has served on innumerable boards and committees, including the Jewish Community Center, Buffalo Jewish Federation, Bureau of Jewish Education, Montefiore Club, Ahavas Achim Lubavitch Synagogue, Temple Shaarey Tzedek, Chabad House, Jewish Discovery Center, Kehilat Shalom, the Westwood Country Club and others. He served as telephone chair of the Young Men's Division of UJF and was a UJF solicitor for many years. Charlie and Penny have a thirst for lifelong learning, enrolling in many adult education classes. They have traveled to Israel many times, visiting family members who live there.

Charlie is now retired from actively running Shuman Plastics. Two of Charlie and Penny's sons, Ken and Danny, run the company as President and Executive Vice President, respectively. Danny, an ordained rabbi, led the congregation at Jewish Federation Apartments' Himmel Chapel for many years, where Charlie enjoyed functioning much like a cantor. Ken has served on the board and executive committee of Buffalo Jewish Federation, was President of Kadimah Academy and currently serves on the board of the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies. Robert is a successful lawyer living out of town.

Jewish Buffalo is thankful for Charlie, because Charlie has made a difference in Jewish Buffalo.

Howard Rosenhoch, a retired attorney, served as President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation from 2014-2016.

"Rocking March" with Rak Shalom

Rak Shalom – the outstanding A Capella group from University of Maryland - will be coming to Buffalo Friday, March 15 and Saturday, March 16. The 10-piece ensemble will join Kehilat Ohr Zion Friday night in Kabbalat Shabbat services at 5:50 pm and will lead *zemirot* (songs) after a congregational dinner. On Saturday morning, the group will participate in Shabbat morning services at Temple Beth Tzedek beginning at 9 am and will perform and lead *zemirot* at the Kiddush luncheon. The group will be featured Saturday evening as part of the *Stained Glass Cultural Arts Series* at Temple Beth Zion at 7:30 pm. They will conclude their time in Buffalo the next morning in a performance for Sunday School students at Congregation Shir Shalom.



All programs are open to the public though tickets are required for the Stained Glass Series. For more information on how to obtain tickets, call 716.836.6565

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The Rosenhochs: Destined To Be Difference-Makers

By Maria Scrivani

Last fall cancer ended Valerie Rosenhoch's life on earth, but not her style of living.

Community development, disability advocacy, and support of Jewish education were all part of the late health care executive's repertoire through nearly seven decades. For her family— spouse Howard and their sons Alan and David—the saving grace transcending their great grief is a commitment to continue Valerie's work.

It is, in fact, the way the Rosenhoch boys were raised.

"So much of what she did was community work for causes about which she was passionate, both within the Jewish community and outside," says Alan, 34, director of business development for Invest Buffalo Niagara, and immediate past president of the board at his alma mater, Kadimah Academy and a board member and an on-ice instructor for SABAH. "She encouraged me to do what I am passionate about, building the regional economy



Valerie (z"l), Howard, Alan and David Rosenbach

for the city and region I love," says the graduate of University of Toronto who also holds an MBA from the University at Buffalo. He and his wife, Gabrielle (Gabby)

"So much of what she did was community work for causes about which she was passionate, both within the Jewish community and outside."

in the wider community. Valerie was a founding member of the Developmental Disabilities Alliance of WNY (DDAWNY) Family Committee. She and David testified before legislators at statewide hearings on disability issues pertaining to housing.

"She got that cancer," David said in a recent interview. "It was tough on her. She was a good mother to me. I am still missing her, and I have my eyes on her, too."

As do they all. Howard, a retired attorney who is a volunteer extraordinaire, when asked of what he is most proud, pointed to his two sons and said, "You're looking at 'em." The former president of The Buffalo Jewish Federation recently signed on as chair of the Federation's 2020 and 2021 Campaigns for Jewish Buffalo. He is an alumnus of the Buffalo-Israel Experience, having made his most recent sojourn to that country not long after his wife's death, in what was a restorative endeavor, and is a long-time board member and treasurer of the Erie County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project.

This winter, Howard and David will travel to Washington D.C. for Jewish Disability Advocacy Day at the end of this month, on a Federation-sponsored mission to lobby legislators.

"Before Valerie died, when she was in Hospice, we talked about legacy," says Howard. "She asked that memorials be made to two near-and-dear organizations: Kadimah, with its emphasis on a terrific education and strong Jewish identity, and Aspire, which runs the house where David can live independently. Disability advocacy is at the core of what our family believes...Valerie died with great comfort and clarity in knowing that we would carry on."

And so the Rosenhochs are looking ahead. David hopes to have a relationship with a woman one day and get married. "I'd like to stay happy," he says. Alan's future focus is on his daughter, the apple of her grandpa's eye—Howard cares for her one day a week—a bright light in his busy calendar. He expects to continue that for some time, and also keep up the family tradition of community service, "sprinkled with as much skiing and golfing as I can fit in!"

Longtime Buffalo Spree contributor Maria Scrivani writes about local history and people who make a difference.

New Twinning Program Brings Teacher to Israel

In December, Naomi Wiseman, one of the two Buffalo teachers overseeing a unique 'school twinning' program with 5th & 6th graders (COOLanu), had the opportunity to spend 5 days with an Educator's Delegation in Israel through Buffalo's Partnership with the Western Galilee. Through this experience Naomi was able to visit our partner school, G'vanim, and meet with the 5th and 6th grade students, their English teacher and the principal of the school. She had a tour of the school's garden and classrooms and brought a newspaper with her that the Buffalo students created.



Buffalo students with teachers Rob Taylor and Naomi Wiseman



Naomi with students



Balderman, also a Kadimah alum and now a dentist at Buffalo's Neighborhood Health Center, live in Kenmore with their infant daughter Emilia, born days before Valerie died.

"In a lot of ways we don't have to wonder what our mother would think about things, or certain subjects," says Alan. "She would be very disappointed if we didn't continue the work [she had been doing] because she isn't here."

David, 28, whose life has been underscored by multiple volunteer stints, including (but not limited to) work at Cradle Beach Camp, Spirited Athletes Bold At Heart (SABAH), and Kadimah and Temple Beth Zion Early Childhood Play and Learn School (PALS), has Down syndrome. He graduated from Emerson High School of Hospitality in 2009 and the Canisius College Young Adult Life Transitions Program (Y.A.L.T.) in 2013. Today he lives with six other developmentally disabled adults in a group home owned and operated by Aspire of WNY. His late mother was widely known for championing and spearheading efforts to assist and include the disabled

Buffalo Moms Israel Trip in December

Join other women from Buffalo on a year-long journey with the Jewish Women's Renaissance Project (JWRP) that includes 8 Days in Israel December 10-17, 2019. Connect with women from all over the world for a revitalizing year of self-exploration, unforgettable experiences in Israel, and inspiring Jewish learning. Enjoy empowering Jewish classes led by world-class speakers and Israeli thought-leaders. Explore spiritual Tsfat, dynamic Tel Aviv, Masada's desert magic, Shabbat in Jerusalem, and many more unique experiences. Discover how to connect deeper with yourself, your family, and your community.



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DISCOVER
how to connect deeper with yourself, your family, and your community.

* Momentum Trips are free for participants excluding airfare. Additional costs for participants include \$75 for tips, a \$99 acceptance fee, and some meals. Participants pay a \$500 deposit, which is fully refundable upon returning from the trip. This trip is designed for women with children at home under the age of 18. The Momentum Year-Long journey continues with monthly gatherings and Jewish learning.

For more information, please contact:
Stacey Block | 716-204-2250 |
stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org

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The JWRP's MOMentum trip, run in partnership with the Buffalo Jewish Federation, brings mothers who have children at home under the age of 18 to Israel for a week.

The Jewish Women's Renaissance Project (JWRP) was established in 2008 by eight Jewish women who came from all walks of life, affiliation, observance, and age. Together, they started a global movement designed to empower women through Jewish values. Since that time more than 10,000 individuals from 26 different countries have experienced this life-changing journey, returning home with a connection to Jewish values, ties to Israel and the tools to take action in their homes and communities.

For more information, please contact: Stacey Block | 716-204-2250 | Stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org



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1» Help Keep Jewish Buffalo secure.

Give to the brand new Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund (see page 3), which will enable the Buffalo Jewish Community to be much more proactive in protecting the community and Jewish institutions. **Send your check today to: Secure Jewish Buffalo Fund – c/o Buffalo Jewish Federation, 2640 North Forest Rd., 14068; call 716-204-2242; or go online at www.buffalojewishfederation.org.**

2» Help the Food Bank!

Attend Sweet Charity Thursday, February 7 from 5:00 pm - 8:30 pm at the Buffalo Grand Hotel (formerly Adam's Mark). Sweet Charity features hors-d'oeuvres, dessert items, wines, beer, liquor tastings and coffee provided by some of WNY's finest establishments. Guests will also enjoy live and silent auctions, a prize wheel, basket and cash raffles and more! All proceeds will benefit the Food Bank of WNY. Tickets are \$75 per person. **Go to www.foodbankwny.org/sweetcharity/ or call 716-852-1305.**

3» Aspire's Winterval, February 7, 5:30-8:30 pm at Riverworks.

Aspire's 1st annual Winterval fundraiser brings families and friends together for an evening of food, drinks, skating and curling. 2 hours of Open Skate and Curling (6pm-8pm), Basket Raffle, Full Dinner Buffet, Unlimited Non-Alcoholic Beverages (including coffee and hot cocoa, cash bar. Skate rental included but limited. If you own skates please bring them. Adults \$25. Children under 5 years old are free, and children 5 - 10 years old \$20. **www.eventbrite.com/o/aspire-of-wny-18327739359. Buffalo RiverWorks, 359 Ganson St. Buffalo, NY.**

4» The Buffalo Museum of Science presents THE ART OF THE BRICK

and features original pieces, as well as re-imagined versions of some of the world's most famous art masterpieces, like Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," made exclusively from LEGO bricks. This show will be on display from February 9 through May 4. **Buffalo Museum of Science, 1020 Humboldt Parkway, Buffalo, NY**

5» Write Your Own Children's Book.

This workshop is FREE, aimed at young students aged 12-18, and limited to 12 participants. Tue, Feb 26, 2019, 4:30 pm and Thu, Feb 28, 2019, 5:30 pm EST. **Just Buffalo Writing Center, 468 Washington Street, 2nd floor, Buffalo. Call 716-832-5400.**

FEBRUARY

February 2

Pre-Super Bowl Party

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7:00-9:00 pm

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February 3

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February 7-March 13

Talley's Folley- at the Jewish Repertory Theatre

Seller Theatre at the Benderson Family JCC

**\$38 general tickets/ \$36 senior/
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February 9

Concert commemorating
the 10th Anniversary of the
Crash of Flight 3407

7:00 pm

Congregation Shir Shalom

February 10

TBZ Brotherhood's Achim with Rob Goldberg

10:00 am

Weinberg Campus's
Meadows Lounge

Free & open to the community

February 10

Lecture on

**Holocaust Study Findings
on intergenerational
long-term effects of the
Holocaust on the Children of
Survivors by Nurit Fischer –Shemer**
2:00 pm

JCC/Benderson Family Building

Contact: 650-7627

February 11

**Amiel BaKehila Lecture:
Israeli Security Expert Jordan
Herzberg will speak
"Ethics, Morality and the IDF"**

7:30 pm

Hillel of Buffalo

520 Lee Entrance/UB Commons,
Suite 101 B

February 15

Tot Shabbat

5:45-6:45 pm

Congregation Shir Shalom

Contact:

Nicole@buffalojewishfederation.org

February 18

President's Day observed
in many places

February 24

**CSS Men's Group
with Gary Bluestein**

9:15 am

Congregation Shir Shalom
4660 Sheridan Drive

RSVP to Shir Shalom: 633-8877

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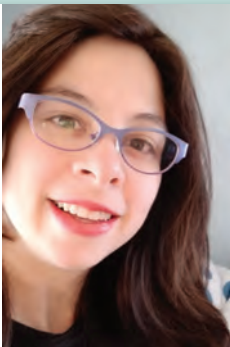
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Attention Snowbirds!

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 Joan Kwiatkowski at 716-204-2242 to give us your “temporary” address. Thank you!

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Rob Goldberg Speaks Feb. 10 at TBZ Achim

The TBZ Brotherhood Achim program February 10 at 10:00 am will feature Rob Goldberg, Chief Executive Officer of the Buffalo Jewish Federation. Goldberg is a past participant in the Achim series, and he will be presenting a discussion entitled "Seder Every Day." This provocative and timely discussion will incorporate the concept of "Jewish engagement" and the idea behind the Passover Seder. Questions and discussion are welcome.

Achim is a monthly program sponsored by the Temple Beth Zion Brotherhood for the benefit of the residents, their guests, and the community, at the Weinberg Campus. It is open to the public at no cost. You do not need to be Jewish to enjoy or learn from this program.

The program takes place at the Meadows Lounge on the second floor, located at the Weinberg Campus, 2700 North Forest Road in Getzville. For further information, please contact Ken Graber at 681-9885.



Rob Goldberg

CSS Men's Group Feb. 24:

Dealing with the Internal Revenue Service from the Inside and the Outside

This month's Congregation Shir Shalom Men's Group speaker February 24 at 9:15 am will be attorney Gary Bluestein, who will discuss the IRS. Gary spent the first half of his career as an attorney for the IRS, with a dual appointment as a Special Assistant United States Attorney. After he left government service, he became one of the founding partners in Andreozzi Bluestein Law, a firm which represents clients who have problems with the IRS or New York taxing authorities.

Gary will also discuss civil and criminal tax enforcement from both sides, and will highlight what people should know about their rights and their exposure, both in the civil and criminal arenas. At this program bagels & lox will be served, and both men and women are encouraged to attend. **Please RSVP to the Temple Office at 633-8877.**



Learning Opportunities at Kehillat Ohr Tzion



Kehillat Ohr Tzion's Rabbi Ori Bergman looks for opportunities to offer classes in a variety of settings. On Sunday mornings after *davening*, he examines current issues through a Talmudic lens. On Tuesday afternoons, he offers a class at Cheryl Stein's law office on prayer. Later in the day on Tuesdays, you can find him at Dash's grocery teaching an introduction to Judaism. The community is invited to participate in any of these classes. *For more information, contact oribergman@gmail.com.*

ROB'S COMEDY PLAYHOUSE

A Joint Fundraiser of Congregation Shir Shalom & Temple Beth Zion



Sunday, March 3, 2019
7:00pm

- Tickets are \$25 each and include 2 drink tickets.
- Comedy performed by Rob Lederman and Ian Sirota who is the opening act for Seinfeld! (*Content may be adult in nature*).
- Basket Raffle and 50/50 Raffle.
- Food available for purchase.

Enjoy an evening of entertainment and friendship.

Contact the Temple Offices for tickets.

Tickets are available on both Temple websites:

www.shirshalombuffalo.org/comedy-night/

www.tbz.org/community/rob/



CSS: 633.8877
TBZ: 836.6565



Tot Shabbat with PJ Library at Congregation Shir Shalom

Friday, February 15 • 5:45 pm

Join your family and friends for Tot Shabbat with PJ Library. The CSS clergy and staff will lead a Tot's Service and celebration of Shabbat including joyful singing, crafts, story time and more! Make new friends and catch the Shabbat spirit! Open to the community. A complimentary Pizza Dinner will follow.

Please RSVP to the Temple Office at 633-8877.

Buffalo Jazz Collective Sextet @TBZ featuring trombonist James Burton III

The Buffalo Jazz Collective includes some of the finest musicians from Western New York and beyond. Come to Temple Beth Zlon, 805 Delaware Avenue on Saturday, March 9 and hear featured musician and NYC-based trombonist, James Burton III, a member of Juilliard's jazz faculty since 2011. For this concert, Burton will join the Buffalo Jazz Collective Sextet for an exciting evening of world-class jazz. \$15 per person at the door. 7 pm reception, followed by the concert at 7:30 pm.

February Pulpit Exchange at Shir Shalom

Rev. Michele Buhite of the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Church will take the CSS bimah Friday, February 15th at 7:00 pm to talk about her Christian spiritual journey. An Oneg Shabbat will follow. Then, Rabbi Alex Lazarus Klein will be speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst Sunday, February 17th at 10:30 am on his Jewish spiritual journey. Both programs are open to the community.

Jewish Scout Shabbat at Shir Shalom

**Friday, February 8, 2019
7:00 pm**

CSS will welcome Scouts who will attend in uniform and participate in our Erev Shabbat Service. An Oneg Shabbat will follow and be sponsored by the WNY Jewish Committee on Scouting.
OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY!

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PALS-Kadimah Winter Fun

PALS-Kadimah pre-school students take time out of playing hard inside to romp around in the snow outside.



I and Thou and Lunch with Temple Beth Zion

**Fridays,
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**Wednesdays,
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JCC at 70: Community Life, historical painting by Lewis Rubenstein, restored at Holland Family JCC

By Jordana Halpern

An astounding mural of historical significance, "Community Life" by artist Lewis Rubenstein, has been refurbished and is now featured as part of the permanent collection at the JCC Holland Family Building, adorning the entryway that faces Delaware Avenue.

Artist Lewis Rubenstein, son of Emil and Hannah Rubenstein, and an art student who studied at the Albright Knox Art School, Harvard University, and in Paris, Rome and Cambridge, and later taught art at Vassar College, was commissioned in 1949 to paint the mural. Rubenstein used the *hora* (a traditional Israeli dance) as the central theme of the painting to demonstrate the importance of music and storytelling in the Jewish community. A young tree growing out of a stump symbolized the revitalization of contemporary Jewish life. On January 18, 1950, the mural was dedicated at the JCC and later won the Empire State Architects Award.

This year, as part of the JCC's \$4 million renovation project to meet the growing needs of Buffalo communities, the painting was restored by Mark DiVincenzo, primary artist at DiVincenzo Studios. DiVincenzo, along with Hannah Olek, worked on restoring the painting for 10 days. "The painting was damaged by 50 years of sun exposure, and in some of the areas the paint was powder, so we had to reconstitute the powder with a special solution and then restore and repaint those sections, while retaining the integrity of the original work," said



Above: The restored "Community Life" mural at the JCC Holland Building. Right: Art restorers Mark DiVincenzo and Hannah Olek take a break while touching up the 70 year old mural.

DiVincenzo. When the restoration was complete, the painting was covered with a clear coating of removable varnish so that in the future, conservators could

uncover the original painting. "We worked on this painting with kid gloves to stabilize and preserve it to last another 50 years."

Historically Rubenstein was well known for his frescos but "Community Life" is a unique example of his work in oil painting. "The style we see in this piece truly demonstrates the breakout period of the 1950s when artists were breaking the mold. It was an era of expression and this painting beautifully conveys the spirituality of the artist, captured in his style and the subjects he painted," said DiVincenzo.

Because of the location of the painting, across from the member services desk on the main floor of the Holland Building, and facing out towards Delaware Avenue, it's best to view "Community Life" in person. Visitors and members at the JCC can enjoy the refurbished mural any time they are in the building. Rubenstein's artistic theme of community continues to exemplify the JCC's mission to, "Build and strengthen the Jewish and Western New York communities by providing recreational, educational, cultural and social programs and services that are consistent with Jewish values."

Jordana Halpern is Director of Development at the JCC. For more information about the Jewish Community Center at 787 Delaware Avenue, as well as hours and programs, visit www.jccbuffalo.org.



CAFÉ EUROPA AND KADIMAH SCHOOL

On December 5, Café Europa joined Kadimah School for a joyous Hanukkah celebration. The children of Kadimah presented a delightful program of song and dance to celebrate the festival. Candle lighting was followed by a delicious latke lunch for all.

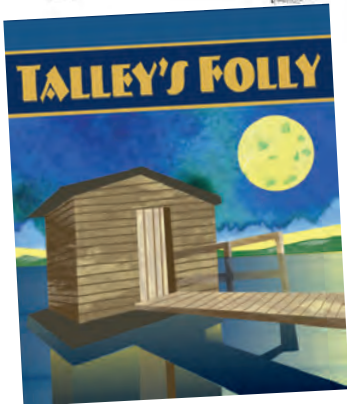
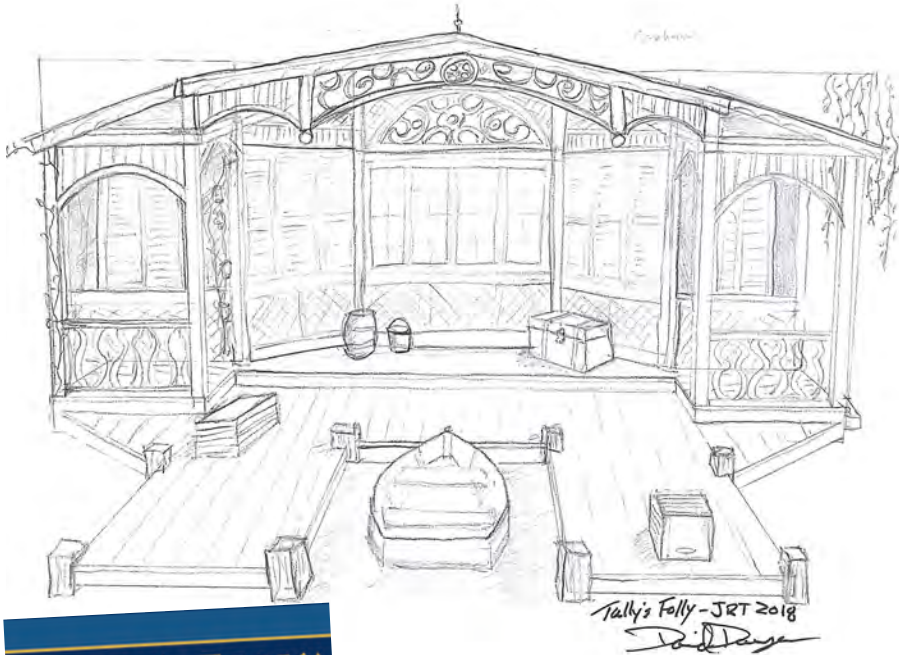
Café Europa offers Holocaust Survivors the opportunity to socialize with other survivors from similar backgrounds and experiences. This series of semi-monthly programs includes musical entertainment, holiday celebrations, lectures on interesting topics, films and special trips to various places.

These programs exist throughout the United States and Canada. Buffalo's Café Europa project is offered to Survivors through a generous grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc., and operates through the JCC. **For more information on this program please call Karla Wiseman at the Jewish Community Center of Buffalo at 204-2257 or email her at kwiseman@jccbuffalo.org.**



JEWISH REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS *TALLEY'S FOLLY*

Jewish Repertory continues its 16th season with the 1980 Pulitzer-prize winning play, *Talley's Folly*, by Lanford Wilson, February 7 – March 3.



Set in a 1944 deserted Victorian boathouse on the Talley place in Lebanon, Missouri, *Talley's Folly* follows Matt Friedman, a Jewish accountant from St. Louis, who has arrived to plead his love to Sally Talley, the susceptible but uncertain daughter of the family. Bookish, erudite, totally honest, and delightfully funny, Matt refuses to accept Sally's rebuffs and her fears that her family would never approve of their marriage.

What begins as a story that appears on the outside to be about a Jewish man wooing a gentile woman in the 1944 Midwest quickly shifts to reveal the challenge of relationships between two emotionally wounded individuals who belong together. Gradually it is clear that they are two kindred spirits who have truly found

each other—two “lame ducks” who, in their union, will find a wholeness rare in human relationships.

“Since its inception in 1917, only 99 plays have received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and rarely do comedies receive the prestigious honor,” says JRT co-founder and Artistic Director, Saul Elkin. “The Pulitzer judges were taken with Lanford Wilson’s quiet, funny, yet powerful *Talley's Folly* ... and so were we. On the surface, this is a simple story of an over-forties bachelor wooing a thirty something spinster but we think audiences will find it full, rich and sweetly amusing. The JCC is pleased to welcome back director Steve Vaughan (*Bad Jews*, *Beau Jest*) and actress Anne Roaldi Boucher (*After the Revolution*, *Compulsion* or *The House Behind*, *Kindertransport*), and to welcome for the first time on the JRT stage, actor Chris J. Handley.”

“The Folly” referred to in the title of the play is a boathouse, a fanciful and frivolously extravagant structure that comments on the aesthetics of another era. This romantic setting is full of intention as a backdrop for the obstacle fraught courtship that blossoms during the darkest days of World War II. Set designer David Dwyer, with decades of impressive set design in his portfolio of work, has long wanted to build a set for *Talley's Folly*, and will be recreating this famous boathouse for the Jewish Repertory Theatre’s production.

The Jewish Repertory Theatre of Western New York is a program of the JCC of Greater Buffalo. This season’s original artwork is created by artist Eta Rottenberg. For more information on JRT productions, dates and tickets, visit www.jewishrepertorytheatre.com. Tickets are available at 716-650-7626, through Showclix at 1-888-718-4253 (Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm EST) or at either JCC reception desk.

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Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival



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www.bijff.com

TWO SPECIAL EVENTS!

Festival Fundraiser: A Conversation with Linda Reisman

Saturday, March 9, 7:30pm

Producer Linda Reisman, of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences,
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JCCBUFFALO.ORG

“PRAY TELL” & MORE WITH BUFFALO HADASSAH

Buffalo Hadassah has held several exciting and well attended programs during the last few months. Over 40 women celebrated Hanukkah together at the home of Judi Stern. A variety of menorahs were displayed on all the tables, which enhanced the holiday spirit! After lunch, several of the attendees talked about some of the unique menorahs.

Later in the month Hadassah held a special program with Israeli artist David Friedman, who made a power point presentation of some of his paintings from his gallery in Tzfat. He was in Buffalo for three days as part of a delegation from Amiel BaKahila, an organization funded by the Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs. His interactive presentation about the symbolism in his art was very well received by those in attendance.

“Pray Tell,” one of Hadassah’s long standing monthly groups, is changing



its format. This year, the group will be exploring Jewish communities, foods and customs from different parts of the world. As part of this program, Rabbi Ori Bergman spoke at the December meeting about his mother’s Iraqi roots, and he brought a delicious rice and lentil dish for everyone to taste. Another Iraqi food that everyone enjoyed was a date and nut dessert made by Phyllis Steinberg.

Buffalo Hadassah continues to welcome new members and members from other chapters. For membership information contact Nancy Greenberg at nangrnbgr@gmail.com.

JCC, JFS Holiday Mitzvot

Jewish Community Center staff and members partnered with Jewish Family Service to ensure immigrant children, who recently made the challenging transition from troubled regions overseas to a new life in America, had an extra special holiday in their Buffalo communities by donating gifts for the children. Between both JCC buildings, more than 100 gifts were collected and distributed, making everyone’s holiday season that much more happy and fulfilling.



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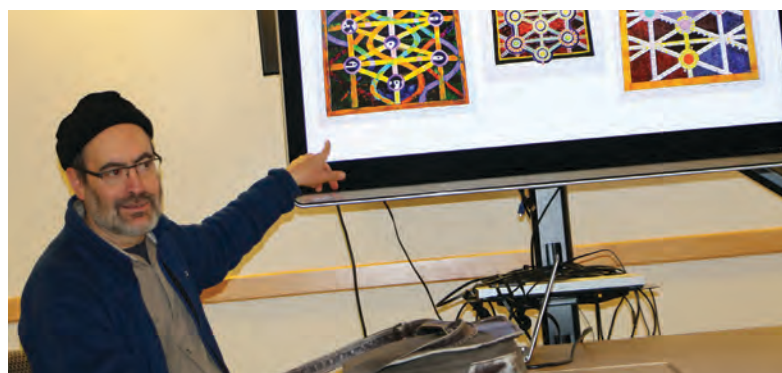
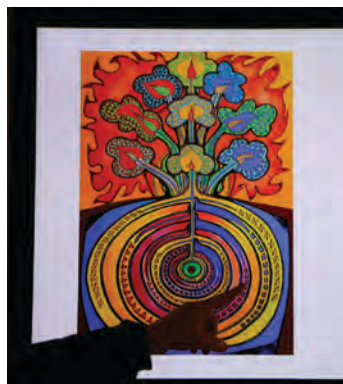
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ISRAELI ARTIST DAVID FRIEDMAN IN BUFFALO

As part of the Amiel BaKehila project of Israel's Ministry of the Diaspora Affairs, artist David Friedman visited Buffalo in December. A painter living in Tzfat, Israel, David brings his love of Kaballah and nature into his work. He was able to share his work and art classes with Hadassah, Jewish Federation Apartments tenants, Jewish Federation staff, middle school and high school students, and several synagogue groups. **For more information on Amiel BaKehila programs this month, with security expert Jordan Herzberg (see p.7), email rob@buffalojewishfederation.org.**



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Film Producer & Buffalo Native Linda Reisman returns March 9 for Film Festival

By Rick Kollins

Williamsville native and award-winning film producer Linda Reisman will be guest speaker at a special fundraising kick-off for the 34th annual Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival at the Benderson Family Building in Amherst, Saturday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. The evening includes Ms. Reisman's talk and some clips from her films, as well as a reception.

One of Reisman's most notable films was *The Danish Girl*, which received four Academy Award nominations and an Oscar for best supporting actress Alicia Vikander in 2016. Her recent project *Leave No Trace* won best director for Debra Granik in the Los Angeles Film Critics Association selections, and has been nominated for several other prestigious awards.

Reisman's interest in the arts came naturally as her mother Rena was an accomplished visual artist recognized for her abstract naturalistic landscapes. "My parents were completely supportive of my artistic interests and pursuits when I was in high school," Reisman recalled. "We spent a lot of time at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and I took classes in photography at CEPA" (The Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art located in the Market Arcade).

After graduating from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Reisman earned a Master's degree from the San Francisco Art Institute, and was in the process of applying to PhD programs when "sheer good luck", as she put it, changed the course of her life.

"I did some work for a film journal in San Francisco, and it just so happened that the office was located in the same building where Francis Ford Coppola had his production headquarters," Reisman explained. "That's where I met producer Tom Luddy, who invited me to be his assistant when an opening came up and, of course, I jumped at the opportunity."

Reisman started out working on "special projects" with Luddy, who is best known as director and co-founder of the Telluride Film Festival. Then she worked with writer/director Paul Schrader (*Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *American Gigolo*) as a researcher and assistant during post production for the 1985 film *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, a biographical drama based on the life and work of Japanese writer Yukio Mishima.

After *Mishima*, Reisman moved to New York to continue working with Schrader



Linda Reisman

and received her first credits as an associate producer for *Patty Hearst* (1988) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1989), both of which had their premieres at the Cannes Film Festival. Her first film as a lead producer was Schrader's *Light Sleeper*, which premiered at the Berlin and Sundance Film Festivals in 1992.

Reisman collected her first award for the 1997 film *Affliction*, which received six Film Independent Spirit awards, including best picture. For their roles, James Coburn also won the Oscar for best supporting actor and Nick Nolte was nominated for best actor and received the New York Film Critics Circle award.

In 1999, Reisman rejoined Coppola's company American Zoetrope as Head of Production and served as Executive Producer for *Jeepers Creepers*, *No Such Thing*, *Pumpkin* and *Assassination Tango*.

Reisman explained the different types of movie producers. "There are executive producers, who put up the financing but can also be line producers or creative producers. Line producers do the nuts and bolts, including budgets, schedules and hiring the crews. I consider myself

a creative producer originating and developing material and overseeing the production and post-production. This involves finding good material, helping develop the screenplay, hiring the actors and being involved in the marketing, distribution and publicity. The job really never ends."

Leave No Trace has been nominated for three independent film Spirit Awards as best feature, best director Granik and best supporting female, 18-year-old New Zealander Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie, who has already been named breakthrough performer by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures and best young actress by the Broadcast Film Critics Association.

The film is based on Peter Rock's 2010 novel "My Abandonment," which was inspired by the true-life story of a man and his teenaged daughter living for years in a nature preserve in Portland, Oregon. The movie was co-written by Granik, whose 2010 film *Winter's Bone* earned Jennifer Lawrence her first Oscar nomination for best actress. The Spirit Award winners will be announced February 23, the day before the Academy Awards.

Reisman is also Senior Distinguished Producer-in-Residence at Boston's Emerson College, which is regarded as one of the country's premier institutions of higher learning devoted to communication and the arts.

"After Coppola shut down his operation in 2003 and my son Jack was born, I decided to try something different, and teaching was appealing," Reisman said. "First, I moved back to Buffalo and set up a special graduate program in film and performance at UB, then commuted to Boston when I got the position at Emerson."

Reisman moved to Boston in 2013 and has been able to balance teaching with her own film projects since then. She indicated that *The Danish Girl* actually took about 12 years to complete. "It's not unusual, directors fall out and actors fall out," she said. "I remind my students it took Steven Spielberg 20 years to make *Lincoln*."

Reisman still considers Buffalo home and visits often. She lost her father, allergist Dr. Robert Reisman, in 2012 and her mother, artist Rena Reisman, in 2014, but still has her brother David and his family and her aunt Janet Gross living here.

At the March 9 fundraiser, sponsored by the Hurwitz and Fine law firm, Reisman will discuss her career and the role of the movie producer. A limited number of tickets are available at \$36 each and includes a wine and dessert reception and admission to a screening at the Film Festival. Contact Katie Wzontek at (716) 204-2084 for reservations.

The Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival runs from March 22-28 at the Dipson Amherst Theatre on Main Street. This year's lineup includes five feature films from Israel and Germany and six documentaries from the US, Canada, Australia and Austria.

Canadian director Matthew Shoychet will attend and conduct a Q and A following the screening of his documentary *The Accountant of Auschwitz* on Sunday, March 24. The film tells the story of Oskar Groning, one of the last surviving members of the SS who went on trial in 2015 for complicity in the murder of 300,000 Jews at Auschwitz.

Rick Kollins is a member of the Film Festival committee.

For complete information on the Film Festival, please visit www.bijff.com.

Congregation Havurah @ South Buffalo Community Table Soup Kitchen & Durham AME Church



Mitzvah Tank at Hanukkah

Mendy Greenberg, 19, currently a Yeshiva student in Brooklyn, once again organized a wonderful "Mitzvah Tank" for the Buffalo community this Hanukkah. People had a chance to pop in for a quick hello, to lay Tefillin, to learn about the holiday, to receive a Menorah, a delicious doughnut or latke and enjoy a dreidel game. The Hanukkah RV drove around town playing lively Hanukkah music, displaying the number of candles to light and spreading the light and joy of the holiday. The Mitzvah Tank also made stops at the hospital, bringing the light of Hanukkah (and some doughnuts) to those who are unable to experience it elsewhere. Mendy is the son of Rabbi Levi and Rivky Greenberg of the Jewish Discovery Center. **Learn more about the JDC at www.JewishDiscovery.org**



Last night of Hanukkah get-together for women!

Rivky Greenberg hosted a women's event on the last night of Hanukkah. After lighting the menorah together, Rivky shared some words of inspiration about using our "Muscle of Impossibility"... how G-d granted us that unique power of the soul allowing us to achieve the seemingly impossible when challenges arise in life. Rivky ended the evening with a story and song illustrating this point and everyone enjoyed a delicious buffet and schmoozing with friends! **For more information about monthly inspirational gatherings for women, please contact Rivky at TorahandTea@gmail.com or (716) 906-8890.**



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BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION

“Uncle Wayne” Wisbaum Taught Lessons in Life and Joy

By Kenneth Polk

As I grew into adulthood, I started calling my relatives by their first name. About 20 years ago, I recall my uncle, Wayne Wisbaum, pulling me aside. “Less than one percent,” my uncle told me. As I leaned in to better understand him, my uncle proceeded by saying, “80% of the people in this world call me ‘Mr. Wisbaum.’ Maybe another 20% call me ‘Wayne.’ You, on the other hand, are less than one percent of those who can call me ‘uncle.’ Please do that.”

Rest in peace, Uncle Wayne. My uncle, Wayne D. Wisbaum, was a well-known member of the Buffalo community. He was a prominent attorney with an indefatigable work ethic. He was respected, smart, and philanthropic – giving both his time and his money to those in need. Whether it was a Jewish organization or another non-profit, he left quite a legacy. Giving tirelessly to so many organizations for over 60 years, he was recognized for his efforts and won so many awards that I’ve lost count. What I do know is that, as a father figure and mentor, he taught me many important life lessons.

First, love where you live. Having grown up in Niagara Falls before attending Cornell for his undergraduate degree and then Harvard Law School, my uncle never forgot where he came from. He was well grounded and his love for his hometown never diminished. He truly hoped that Niagara Falls would one day have a similar revival to what downtown Buffalo is going through right now. He also never wanted to move. He loved Buffalo through and through.

Second, work hard. He despised the word retirement and loved practicing law. He went to bed late and rose early, saying all he needed was a good five hours of sleep! He was always busy and attended



thousands of committee and board meetings, even while in his early 80s. His hard work was not just relegated to his professional life, but as an involved member of the community.

Third, and probably most important, enjoy the fruits of your labor. My uncle traveled the world and loved spending time with his family. He was very proud of his three daughters and was happiest when they came home to visit. He loved playing golf with his sons in law and grandchildren. He also loved eating good food, always finishing meals with an ice cream sundae! He certainly lived life to its fullest and embodied the “work hard, play hard” mentality.

As hard as he worked, Sundays were for football. My uncle loved the Buffalo Bills, having been a season ticket holder for 40 years. He had a funny ritual of leaving his house in Amherst at 12:25, boasting that he had never missed a 1:00pm kickoff. I had the joy of being his guest at the AFC Championship game vs. the Raiders in 1991 when the Bills would begin their incredible journey of making four straight Super Bowls. What stands out about that game is not that the Bills were winning 41-3 at halftime but that my uncle missed the first half because of a delayed flight home from New York City. I’ll never forget the joy on his face when he realized the Bills would finally be going to the Super Bowl, even though he missed that first half dominance! Looking back, it was that moment that I cherished the most with my uncle.

I want to thank Uncle Wayne for teaching me these life lessons. I want to thank him for setting

an example for me. I want to thank him for being a mensch and for always being someone this community could rely on. But most importantly, I want to thank him for being my mentor. There is no doubt that his legacy and impact that many in the WNY community felt are more personal for me. After all, while you knew him as ‘Mr. Wisbaum’ or maybe called him by first name, to me he was and always will be ‘Uncle Wayne.’

Wayne Wisbaum passed away December 30, 2018 in Buffalo, New York. Kenneth Polk is his nephew. This piece appeared in the “My View” Column of *The Buffalo News* January 9, 2019. It is reprinted with permission from the author.

Deena Risman



Deena Risman, former editor of *Federation News* and Public Relations Director of the Buffalo Jewish Federation for 18 years, passed away November 19, 2018 in her home in Buffalo. During her tenure at Federation, she produced marketing materials for the former United Jewish Fund Campaign, oversaw Shalom Buffalo and the Disabled Israeli Vets program for several years, and co-staffed Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha’atzmaut with the Jewish Center and Holocaust Resource Center. She was known to everyone as the Federation photographer, documented every important event, and snapped great shots at Super Sunday over the years. A memorial service will be held in the spring. May her memory be for a blessing.

Each month we will feature a eulogy of a member of our own community who has recently died. Please contact Ellen Goldstein at ellen@buffalojewishfederation.org if you would like to share your words.

In Remembrance

The following people in our community passed away during the period from December 12, 2018 - January 21, 2019.* May their memories forever be a blessing, and may their loved ones be comforted among the mourners of Zion.



- | | |
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| Samuel Balderman | Gloria Kurland |
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*If we inadvertently missed printing the listing of your loved one, please write to ellen@buffalojewishfederstion.org and we will include the name next month.

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