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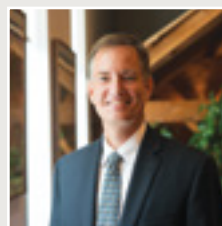
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MAY 2019 | NISAN- IYAR 5779



70 CELEBRATING SEVENTY YEARS
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Renaissance & Ruach
Sunday, May 19
(10-11)

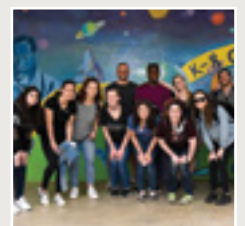
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Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

We begin this month with the JCC's upcoming stellar 70th anniversary celebration on May 19! (See pages 10 & 11). The festivities include an exciting dinner and entertainment evening, including a basket raffle and music all over the Holland Family Building on Delaware Avenue. This will be one of those "don't miss it" spectacular events you will remember for years.

Next, we remember the Holocaust and the Six Million at the Community's Yom Hashoah Commemoration May 5th (see pages 8 & 9). Anti-Semitism will be the topic as nationally-known expert Kenneth Stern addresses the community event that morning at Temple Beth Zion. We then celebrate Israel's 71st birthday at two events, beginning May 5th in the afternoon for families (see page 4) and continuing May 14—Israel's actual birthday—with a visit from the Director of the Harry S. Truman Library, Kurt Graham, complete with a traveling exhibit on Truman's influence on the birth of the Jewish State in May 1948.

Finally, I must mention the passing of so many leaders and loved ones this past winter and early spring. Our Jewish Community and our region were so fortunate to share the benefits of the leadership of Wayne Wisbaum, Dr. Kevin Kulick, Gordon R. Gross (who you can read about on page 43), Arthur (Archie) Glick, who you will be able to read about next month, and Ralph Kushner. They all made positive impacts on Buffalo Jewish Federation and other sister agencies, and they will be greatly missed. The Jewish Federation family suffered the sad loss of Lynn Kantor and Alan Gendler as well. May all of their memories be for a blessing to all of us through their legacies of building Jewish community, and may they rest in peace.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



This month, the JCC celebrates its 70th anniversary May 19! To help illustrate the joy that is the JCC, we shared photos of several of the programs and projects that make the JCC remarkable: swim teams, Camp Centerland, adult classes, Early Childhood Classes, swimming classes, spinning classes, families having fun together, working out, and making friends. Cover art and photos by the JCC.

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



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



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Leslie Shuman Kramer: Owning our Jewish Lives

In February, my niece Gabby got married in Israel. It was the first wedding in my family of that “next generation,” and while the wedding may have been more typical of what happens in Israel, it was different from any wedding I’ve ever attended. The wedding was held on Monday afternoon in an open and airy building on a *moshav* (a small residential and commercial community) outside of Jerusalem, situated among greenery and a luscious lawn-like yard. When we arrived, the white chairs and chupah were all beautifully set up on the lawn. The wedding was called for 4:20 (seriously) but the actual ceremony was called for 6:00 p.m.

I witnessed the “Tisch” where the groom and the men in attendance drink and celebrate the groom’s soon-to-be marriage. I witnessed the “B’deken” where the bride sits on a chair, surrounded by all the women in attendance who bestow blessings on her and vie to be one of the lucky ones upon whom she bestows a blessing. As an aunt, I felt privileged to get close enough, through the throng of women surrounding her, to both give and receive blessings. Eventually Yakov, the groom, was escorted into the room and we all sang and clapped, creating a path down which Yakov approached Gabby. He lovingly lifted her veil from her face to ensure he was marrying the right woman—a tradition dating from when our patriarch Jacob was fooled into marrying Leah when he believed he was marrying Rachel.

Proceeding outside to the chupah, we all bundled up in our jackets because the temperature was in the 40’s and it had just rained during the cocktail hour, leaving the chairs wet. That did not faze the joyous guests, the multitude of friends, some coming dressed in flowy, almost hippie-like dress, and some in costume (the wedding was held on “Purim Katan,” or “Little Purim,” a holiday that was new for me). A few guests brought shofars and blew them at points during the ceremony and later during the dinner and celebration.

While many Jews choose not to include the tradition of the bride circling the groom seven times or the reciting of the *Sheva Brachot* (the Seven Blessings), as they are often viewed as “archaic” or “chauvinistic,” Gabby and Yakov incorporated those customs with pure joy. They bestowed honors on special friends and family to recite their written interpretations of the *Brachot*, and there was much hooting and cheering from the guests after each recitation. While the blessings were read, Gabby and Yakov swayed and danced under the chupah, arms around each other’s



Leslie Shuman Kramer

waist Kumbaya-style as lively music played in celebration after each blessing was recited. While their wedding was Orthodox, it was far from and much more than what we might think of a typical Orthodox wedding.

For me, seeing how Gabby and Yakov incorporated and embraced very old traditions, together with song, dance, shofar and costumes that they chose, was powerful. Without ignoring beautiful traditions, some of which we secular Jews wouldn’t consider doing at our own weddings, they did it their way thoughtfully, intentionally, and consistent with how they live their lives. And their friends were fully part of it all. I experienced how these young people OWN their Judaism. Age-old customs didn’t feel archaic or canned, the way they can seem at other weddings. Rather, the freshness and excitement with which they brought the traditions was the most beautiful part of the whole experience.

In early April, I met Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider when he visited Buffalo as part of a new program called *Amiel BaKehila*, which brings Israeli cultural and religious professionals to Diaspora communities to build connections. Rabbi

Goldscheider shared that something new is happening in how Israelis are “being Jewish”—that they are becoming “so creative”—taking old traditions and customs and putting their own spin on them. For instance, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of reclining during the Passover Seder, many of these Israelis are pulling sofas right up to the dinner table, allowing the guests to fully recline all night. I shared with him my experience at the wedding and he nodded—yes, that is what he was talking about. There is a new energy and creativity happening in Israel with young adults, both *Olim* (immigrants) and native Israelis. They are OWNING their own practice and experiences, rather than having their religious practice dictated to them, which is creating a new energy and passion.

I know that here in the U.S. we too have many Jews who connect authentically with their Judaism. But I also know that American Jews face significant challenges in finding

Urban Miami (See page 39). While embracing the students’ desire to both travel and to fight social injustice, the trip also was an engaging and relationship building experience, tying back to Jewish roots and community.

And, this month, Buffalo Jewish Federation took the bold step of finalizing the creation of the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (CJEL), much of which has been written in previous issues of the Journal. This is not a “new Bureau of Education.” It is much, much more. The vision of the CJEL is for “All Jews, their friends and partners of other faiths, and those exploring Judaism, to have access to authentic and meaningful Jewish experiences that help them thrive.”

Through the guidance and direction of the talented CJEL team of professionals and volunteers, we are making it a priority to provide opportunities for each community member to explore authentic Jewish experiences, both in and outside traditional learning

When I think of how Israelis are finding their own paths to meaningful Jewish life, I know we too must continue to move in that direction.

connection that resonates and feels authentic. Why do some Jews choose to opt-in to community and tradition while others opt-out? There are issues of access to meaningful experiences, limited resources, and minimal contact with Jewish life, to name a few. Based on my own experience, I believe one reason is because people want to OWN their experiences, like Gabby and Yakov and their friends. Rather than being told by someone else how you are “supposed” to be, feel, act, or practice your Judaism, I believe Jewish community will strengthen when more of us connect through Jewish experiences that feel authentic and not programmed. The good news is that here in Buffalo we are addressing this challenge.

At Hillel of Buffalo, the new Organizational Design Lab is an innovative program helping students shape their Jewish experiences in ways that resonate with them, such as through a group service trip to Miami over Spring Break, where 10 Jewish students helped fight education and food injustice in

environments. For more on how CJEL is transforming Jewish Buffalo, read Miriam Abramovich’s piece on page 14.

When I think of how Israelis are finding their own paths to meaningful Jewish life, I know we too must continue to move in that direction. Although we are different from Israel—where simply being there provides, at the least, awareness of Jewish society (like the U.S. at Christmastime, Pesach is preceded with ads, commercials, and grocery stores preparing for the national holiday)—we too strive to be our own Jews, to have meaningful and accessible connections. Through the CJEL and Hillel, and so much more in Jewish Buffalo, I believe we are on to something big and exciting. I hope each of us embraces these initiatives, and that through them, our family and loved ones find authentic, meaningful Jewish experiences.

Buffalo Celebrates Israel @ 71!

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Director of Truman Library to Speak on May 14

The Buffalo Jewish Federation is pleased to welcome Dr. Kurt Graham, director of the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum in Independence, Missouri, who will give a community presentation on Tuesday, May 14th at 7 p.m. at Temple Beth Tzedek for the Community Celebration of Israel's 71st birthday, or Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Graham will be sharing the story of President Truman's decision to extend *de facto* diplomatic recognition to the State of Israel 71 years ago to the day, just eleven minutes after that nation declared independence on May 14, 1948.

In addition to Graham's presentation, an exhibition utilizing documents and photographs from the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum will be on display in the Temple Beth Tzedek community foyer from May 6-17th. The exhibition explores the impact of the US decision to become the first country in the world to recognize the new Jewish State. The exhibit is developed and traveled by the Truman Library Institute.

The event and exhibition and open to public and free of charge. For more information, please contact the Federation offices at 204-2241.

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Buffalo Lions of Judah... the Story Continues



Ellen Serman

Dr. Ellen Serman lives a happy, fulfilled life in Western New York. She is a Gynecologist and one of the original founders of Audubon Women's Medical Associates, which just celebrated its 25th year and now is housed in a beautiful new office at the corner of Millersport Highway and North Forest Road. One of four children of Joe and Toni (z"l) Serman, Ellen grew up in Kenmore, went to Kenmore East High School, and attended SUNY Binghamton. Following college, she attended Hahnemann Medical College / Drexel University in Philadelphia and then went to Chicago for her residency training.

Ellen is a past board member of Temple Shaarey Zedek and the Maria M. Love Convalescent Fund. She is also a member of the Buffalo OB-GYN society and currently serves on the Jewish Family Service Board, Ellen appreciates how JFS is a working board and engaged with refugees. "As I work less, hopefully, I will be more involved in JFS and throughout the community," she said.

Ellen shared what it is like being part of the large, gregarious, generous Serman Family, who remain a close-knit bunch. She and her siblings, Leslie, Gary and Jim, learned much from her family, in particular how to give generously and with a full heart. "We had a large family, and they were poor for many years. My grandfather was a milkman. But despite our financial condition, they instilled in me that being Jewish is important, and if you don't donate or stay involved, the community won't last."

Ellen's talked about the impact her parents had on her and her family. "My mother was involved with Federation's Women's Campaign and she always gave generously, even when she didn't have much. My father is and was always very generous. It is a really big tradition in our

family," she explained. "And that's why giving to our community is just part of my life."

Ellen gives to the Buffalo Jewish Federation at the Lion of Judah level (\$5,000+) because it is part of her genetic make-up. "It is a tradition! I always think that I contribute because of my family," she said. "Growing up, and my dad and his brothers, Avy and Irv, were super-close, and still are."

Being a part of the global Jewish community also matters to Ellen. "I like the idea that my gift is helping people in the community here in Buffalo and also in Israel." Ellen's first trip to Israel was as a teenager in the early 70s. "The most amazing thing I did was to go to the Western Wall," she said, "a place which, a few years before, my grandparents couldn't see; Holocaust survivors couldn't see it; no one could until it was liberated in the '67 War." She spoke about how she returned to Israel in 2016 with her husband, Craig Chertack, a semi-retired orthopedic surgeon. "We participated on the Honeymoon Israel 2 program, a trip inspired by the popular Honeymoon Israel trip for young couples. It was a great experience, in particular our visit to Petra, Jordan."

"Being a Lion for me is really important, and I wanted to be a Lion for many years before I was able to do so. I care about my community and am proud of what I do. I feel good about giving *tzedakah*." She also said that Holly Levy, a Lion of Judah who has endowed her gift in perpetuity, is a role model for her. "I liked how Holly is a leader here in Buffalo in Women's Philanthropy, chaired the Campaign and served as Federation President. She inspired me in such a positive way."

Ellen and Craig have two children: Nathan, who is a first-year urology resident in Dallas, and Allison, who lives in Buffalo and works in the environmental field. Ellen explained how her father has taught her children about *tzedakah*. "At Hanukkah, my Dad insisted that Nathan and Allison give to a charity, instead of to themselves. So they had to tell my father what charities they wanted him to donate to. And they also had to donate to charities themselves at end of year."

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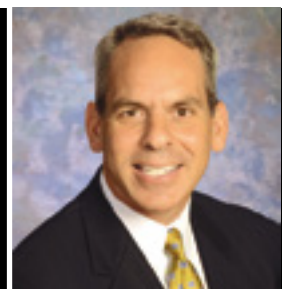
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The BVK: Keeping Buffalo Kosher

By Michael Chaskes

There is an old Jewish joke that is told about how a Rabbi was once passing by a non-kosher restaurant, when he sees his faithful congregant, Morris, enter and place an order. Morris is served a plate full of shrimp and lobster, which he then proceeds to eat with gusto. Shocked by his congregant's behavior, the Rabbi is barely able to stammer, "Morris, how could you...?" Morris responds without batting an eyelash, "Rabbi, did you see me enter the restaurant?" After the affirmative response, he continues, "Did you see me order the food?" When that is confirmed, he asks, "Did you see me put it in my mouth?" When that is confirmed, as well, Morris responds, "Well, in that case, everything from start to finish was under your supervision!"

Last month, we celebrated the holiday of Pesach, and the food that we consumed took up a great deal of time and energy as we prepared for the week-long holiday. One needed only to give a cursory glance at the myriad of ads appearing in Jewish publications to see every imaginable (and even some unimaginable) item produced as kosher for Passover. The Pesach hotels provided twenty-four hour tea rooms, fully stocked with products you didn't even know existed in *Chametz* form. Yet, all of this food requires supervision from the very beginning of its manufacturing process all the way until it's served to the consumer, to ensure that it is strictly kosher.

It is not only relevant for Passover; all



year round, millions of Jews across the globe rely on various kosher agencies to ensure that the food they eat is kosher. Proper kosher certification often requires an intimate knowledge of the machinery used at a food manufacturing plant, and of course, knowledge of the ingredients themselves. How many of us can even pronounce the ten plus letter words on the ingredient labels at any given food plant?! Needless to say, kosher supervision is infinitely more complex than the Rabbi simply 'blessing' the food!

One of Buffalo's most cherished institutions, officially known as the BVK—Buffalo Vaad HaKashrus, and affectionately known as the Vaad, is what ensures a ready supply of kosher food not only here in Buffalo, but in communities beyond, as well. As any traveler will tell you, the presence of a fully stocked kosher bakery and deli at the Tops supermarket, together with a kosher café at the JCC, make Buffalo a preferred

stop for the Jewish tourist. Our kosher caterers are known and contracted by customers from outside of Buffalo. From the recent wedding in Niagara Falls for a Toronto family, to the dinners organized by the various Jewish institutions in Rochester, the BVK's reputation has spread far beyond Buffalo.

All of the various functions and events require an intense regimen of supervision, coordination, and attention to every minute detail. For example, a dinner at the Hyatt typically requires two full days of supervising the event preparations. A *mashgiach* can be on his feet for 15 consecutive hours, checking vegetables for insects, kashering cooking equipment, and simply overseeing all of the other preparations in the kitchen. Sometimes, multiple *mashgichim* are required due to the large scope of the event. At a recent event in Rochester, there were over seventy waiters and waitresses. This necessitated careful planning and preparation for weeks in advance to ensure that all ran smoothly. The *mashgiach* at any given event must have an intimate knowledge of *halacha*, or at least be in contact with the *Rav HaMachshir* (The Chief Supervising Rabbi), as questions

constantly arise.

Beyond the BVK's task of ensuring the availability of kosher food in and around Buffalo, the BVK is involved in what is known as "industrial kosher," playing a role in national *kashrus*. A consumer taking a stroll through Wegmans, will come across the BVK symbol on their sugars, nut butters, and other products. Many ingredients that are used in national brands originate at BVK supervised facilities. In a recent conversation with a *mashgiach* from the Midwest, the Jewish geography we inevitably played was centered around a product which he supervised that utilized a BVK ingredient. A well-known institution, indeed.

As a community resource, anyone who has any *halachic* or *kashrus* related questions can simply go to the BVK website (www.bvkkosher.com) and send in his or her inquiry. When doing your local shopping or enjoying a kosher meal, you can take a moment to appreciate the dedication and commitment of all those involved behind the scenes who are working to ensure that one of Buffalo's premier institutions continues to operate as smoothly and efficiently as always. The BVK wishes to thank the community for all its support and encouragement in assisting to develop the BVK into such a vital institution.

Michael Chaskes is the president of BVK.

Kadimah Academy: Celebrating at ACQUA June 3



Kadimah Academy will hold its Annual Dinner on Monday, June 3, at Acqua Restaurant on the Niagara River. This year's event will look back at 60 years of Kadimah's history in Western New York, as the school celebrates this milestone anniversary while preparing for a major transition for the future. The goal for the evening is to take a nostalgic stroll through Kadimah's history, as alumni and teachers - past and present - share their memories.

The event will recognize former Head of

School, Einav Symons; current Board of Trustees president, Jonathan D. Epstein, who has come to the end of his term; and a beloved teacher, Naomi Cowen, who will be retiring at the end of this school year, after more than 30 years. Current principal, Fran Paskowitz, who stepped up to the plate so willingly this year by volunteering her time and expertise, will also be honored.

After reflecting on the rich history, the event will look to Kadimah's future, as it embarks on a new partnership with The Park School of Buffalo. School's leaders have stepped outside the box to find solutions to problems that many private, not-for-profit schools are experiencing, both locally and nationally. Already, this

innovative relationship is gaining attention from Jewish communities and other day schools around the country, as Kadimah and Park move forward, together, as pioneers.

Kadimah leaders are especially grateful this year to a benevolent benefactor, real estate developer Douglas Jemal, who has not only been generous to the cause for the last three years, but has partially underwritten the dinner this year, enabling Kadimah Academy to make this event extra special.

So come and celebrate Kadimah's 60 years of dedicated service to the Jewish Community of Buffalo. Join with the Kadimah Academy community and all of Jewish Buffalo at the school's largest single fundraiser of the year, which will continue

as a tradition in the future to support the partnership with Park School.

Tickets are \$125 per person, and tables of eight can be purchased for \$1,000. Or join Kadimah's larger philanthropic efforts as a leading supporter of Jewish education with a direct gift toward scholarship assistance at Park that will help ensure its vibrancy for future generations.

To purchase tickets for this year's annual Kadimah Dinner, to make other donations, or for more information, please contact Kadimah Academy at 716-836-6903, or visit www.kadimah.org. To contribute by phone, please contact Rachel Anderson, Dinner Committee Chair, at 716-836-6903 or Rachand74@outlook.com.

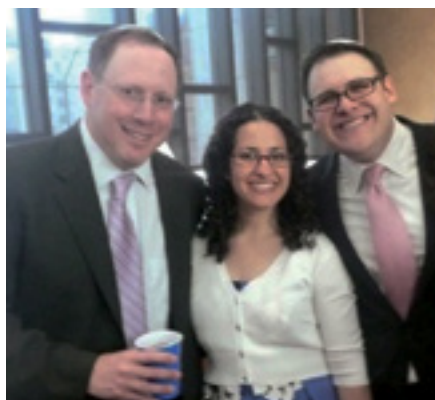
Lessons from My Rabbi, Dr. Aaron Panken, z”l

Rabbi Sara Rich

Six months before I met the Ezra who would eventually become my husband, I sat in the classroom of Rabbi and Professor Aaron D. Panken at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in New York and learned about the Ezra of the Bible, who wrote about the period during which the Jews in exile in Babylonia are allowed by the Persian King Cyrus to return to the land of Israel. The course was Second Temple Literature – a required course for all second year rabbinical students. I would be lying if I claimed that I use the material that I learned in this class in my work each day. However, I found it fascinating to learn the history of the Jewish people from 586 BCE – 70 CE and to discover the literature that teaches us about their mindset, values, and interactions with their Persian and Greek neighbors. Even more importantly, I found a mentor in Rabbi Panken – someone I could look up to as a scholar, a rabbi, and a mensch.

Last year, on May 5th (20th of Iyyar 5778), Rabbi Panken died in a plane crash. He was an experienced recreational pilot, and his sudden death was a horrific shock. At the time of the accident, Rabbi Panken was serving as the President of HUC-JIR, an institute with three campuses in the United States and one in Jerusalem, which is responsible for training Reform rabbis, cantors, educators, non-profit professionals, and students pursuing graduate degrees. He was not yet President during my time in seminary, and so I had the fortune of having him as my professor, the advisor for my senior sermon, and as a mentor that I could come to with educational and personal questions. I would like to take this opportunity, on the anniversary of his passing, to share some of the lessons that I learned from him. I hope they will inspire and enrich you:

Be a scholar: It is too easy to become caught-up with the daily tasks of any job, rabbi or otherwise. This was certainly true for Rabbi Panken, who held many roles in the college administration and yet continued to publish scholarly articles. His dedication to learning encourages me to make time in my schedule as well. I take part in a weekly Talmud class, study Torah with learning partners, read Jewish articles and listen to podcasts. Jewish learning can happen at all levels of background and expertise, it is not just for rabbis and



Rabbi Panken, z”l, with Rabbi Sara and Ezra Rich at her rabbinical ordination in May 2011.

professors, and so I encourage you to make room for Jewish learning in your busy routines too.

Raise Up the Potential in Others – I applied for a fellowship while in rabbinical school and did not make it to the interview round. I was disappointed, but not terribly surprised, as it was a competitive process and I thought highly of my classmates and their talents. I received a phone call a week later from Rabbi Panken. He told me that an interview spot had re-opened, and that if I was still interested, he would put forward my name. To this day, I do not know why he chose to advocate on my behalf, but I was ultimately awarded a spot in the fellowship, and the experience changed the course of my rabbinate. One of my greatest joys in working with college students is identifying their potential, making connections on their behalf and, most importantly, helping them see their own greatest qualities so that they can be confident and aim high. It is not always the case that people are aware of the talents that we see in them. We can make a big difference in people’s lives by sharing with them the potential that we see, and helping them to use their talents in bigger ways.

Build Relationships Across Differences - The fellowship that I mentioned above brought together Reform and Conservative rabbinical students to focus on the future of American Judaism. The underlying premise was that our future communities would be largely similar in their practice and beliefs, and that, as rabbis, we could collaborate across denominations. One of the opening programs was a dialogue between Rabbi Panken and Rabbi Daniel Nevins, the Dean of the Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary. They discussed areas of differences between the Reform and Conservative movements, such as

policies around patrilineal descent and intermarriage. I remember being impressed by the way that they disagreed – honoring one another’s point of view while stating the reasons for their own opinions. They were friends and colleagues, despite their differences. I am proud to have friends and colleagues from every rabbinical school in North America, and as a rabbi in the pluralistic Hillel movement, I frequently collaborate with people who hold a variety of religious views. We can be strong in our beliefs and also engage respectfully in dialogue and partnership with Jews of all opinions and backgrounds.

Be Authentic – Rabbi Panken let his students into his life. He hosted our class in his home for brunch, and would speak with pride about his wife and children. Similarly, when he and I would find time to catch up, he would always start by asking, “How is your family?” At the beginning of my final year of rabbinical school, I was feeling overwhelmed by the tasks that lay before me: planning a wedding, writing a thesis, and finding a job. I knew I could talk to him about these personal, academic,

and professional concerns, because of the way that he presented his holistic and authentic self to his students. Sometimes the support that individuals need falls outside of our literal job descriptions, and while we have to maintain appropriate limits, we can push ourselves to be more open with our lives as a way of inviting others to be open as well.

May his memory be for a blessing.

Rabbi Sara Rich is Executive Director of Hillel of Buffalo.

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Ghosts: French Holocaust Children: A conversation with artist, curator, educator, historian and author Robert Hirsch

By Linda Gellman

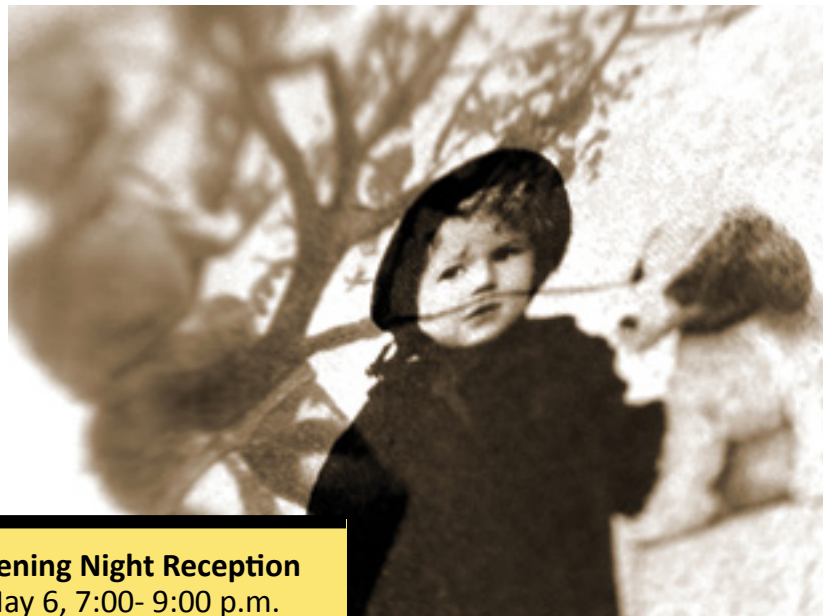
Robert Hirsch's *Ghosts: French Holocaust Children* is a haunting photograph installation that commemorates the lives of French children murdered during the Holocaust. Hirsch is an artist, curator, educator, historian, former Executive Director and Chief Curator of CEPA Gallery, founder of Southern Light Gallery, and co-founder of North Light Gallery. His work has exhibited internationally in over 200 solo and group shows and he is an author whose books include *Seizing the Light: A Social & Aesthetic History of Photography*. The exhibit will be on display in the Bunis Family Art Gallery at the Jewish Community Center Benderson Family Building, 2640 North Forest Road, from Monday May 6 - Friday June 28, and is free and open to the public to tour during JCC business hours.

There will be a Free Opening Night Reception on Monday, May 6, 2019 from 7-9 p.m. in the Lippman Lounge and Bunis Family Art Gallery at the JCC Benderson Family Building. The evening will include a light reception, tours of the gallery, and the opportunity to meet the artist.

In conjunction with the exhibit, and the JCC Book and Arts Fair, Hirsch will deliver a lecture presentation: "Ghosts: An Artistic Mediation on the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism." The lecture and discussion will be held in the Lippman Lounge at the

JCC Benderson Family Building on Wednesday, May 22 from 7-9 p.m. Hirsch will examine the artistic, cultural, political, and personal principals that informed his art exhibit, *Ghosts: French Holocaust Children*. He will discuss how he created the installation, the history that informs the project, and Israel's place on the world stage. Additionally, Hirsch will review the interconnections involving photography and history. For more information visit www.jccbuffalo.org.

Hirsch spoke with Linda Gellman about the photo show and what he hopes viewers will take away from the exhibit.



Opening Night Reception

May 6, 7:00- 9:00 p.m.

Sponsored by

Buffalo Jewish Federation
& Holocaust Resource Center

Robert Hirsch Lecture

May 22, 7:00- 9:00 p.m.

JCC Benderson Building/
Lippman Lounge



Linda Gellman (LG): What is the *Ghosts* backstory?

Robert Hirsch (RH): During World War II, over 11,000 Jewish children were deported from France to Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps in convoys that rolled until the day Paris was liberated by Allies. These children were among more than 75,000 French Jews deported under the Nazi extermination plan called the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." Of all the French Jews transported, only 2,564 survived the Shoah. At most 300 of these Jewish children prevailed. For the rest, all that remains are their photographs.

LG: How would you describe the body of work?

RH: *Ghosts* is a three-dimensional installation that is based on documents and photographs collected by author, lawyer, and Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld, which I have reinterpreted through two- and three-dimensional photographic representations to convey a haunting sense of lost human possibilities. It utilizes what I call a "post-documentary" approach, blending outer and inner realities to construct stories that examine the extreme boundaries of human behavior regarding identity, loss, memory,

and racism.

LG: How did the Holocaust personally affect you?

RH: All of my family members who remained in Europe were murdered by "Hitler's Willing Executioners." I think it is essential that, as the last of the Holocaust survivors die, contemporary artists and historians step forward to serve as the next generation of storytellers who can bear witness and keep alive the memory of what anti-Semitism tried to extinguish.

LG: What would you like the viewers to take away from *Ghosts*?

RH: If the Shoah is allowed to fade, Holocaust deniers and other Jew-haters will seize the opportunity to deliberately conceal, distort, and misapply the truth about the Shoah. *Ghosts* allows viewers to explore the space between art and history from the perspective that expressive, interpretive photo-based imagery can represent and convey a sense of the unimaginable.

LG: What is the significance of exhibiting *Ghosts* here?

RH: The involvement of the Buffalo Jewish Community Center is critical as

2019 YOM HASHOAH 5779

NEVER AGAIN? How Anti-Semitism is Still Alive Today

Speaker: Kenneth Stern
Sunday, May 5, 11:00 am
Temple Beth Zion
805 Delaware Avenue,
Buffalo NY



Kenneth S. Stern is an attorney and award-winning author, and an internationally known expert on hatred and anti-Semitism, who was most recently the executive director of the Justus & Karin Rosenberg Foundation. He has testified before Congress, been an invited presenter at the White House Conference on Hate Crimes, and argued before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Yom Hashoah Committee is co-chaired by Tara Cross and Ellen Dubie. **Anyone who can volunteer to drive people to the service, please contact Kelsey at the HRC Office, 716-634-9535 or kelsey@hrcbuffalo.org.**



change is the result of local action. In this time of rising anti-Semitism and as remaining survivors pass on, it is vital to keep the knowledge about the Shoah alive so that future generations can call out and act to counter barbarous behavior from being inflicted upon any group of people.

LG: Any final reflections?

RH: If we allow this bigotry to target one group without challenging it, it is only a matter of time before other minority groups are pursued and persecuted as

well, affecting everyone's personal freedom. Therefore, combatting anti-Semitism is vital not only for Jewish people, but for anyone who values human life and the pursuit of social justice that transcends borders and epochs.

For more information about Hirsch's visual and written projects visit: www.LightResearch.net.

Linda Gellman is founder of CLICK Artistic Visual Creations and professional photographer

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JCC Past Presidents to be Honored at 70th Anniversary Dinner



This photo was taken in 1995 at the Statler Hilton. Pictured from right to left are JCC past presidents or a family member of a past president: Richard Romer, Lawrence Franco, Robert Berghash, Hyman Nathan, Gary Schuller, Stuart Lerman, Ethel Melzer, Donald Sheldon, Joel Lippman, Richard Ament, Leonard Katz, John Jacobowitz, Gordon Gross, Mrs. Rhea Kaufman for William Kaufman, Harold Kirschenbaum, Mrs. Samuel Sanes for Samuel Sanes, Mrs. Ruth Brock for Jerome Brock, Max Dozoretz, Mrs. Arlene Rochwarger for Leonard Rochwarger and Morris Markel for Joseph Markel.

By Ethel Roblin Melzer,
JCC Past President

I find it hard to believe the 70th Anniversary Dinner of the Jewish Community Center is about to take place on Sunday, May 19, 2019. It truly seems like only yesterday when the JCC celebrated its 50th Anniversary Dinner. Here we are preparing for another big celebration. Can anyone tell me where all that time went?

Once again, we will celebrate our Past Presidents and Jewish Community Center membership at a festive Anniversary Dinner, called *"Renaissance and Ruach."* The dinner will be held from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center's Holland Family Building, 787 Delaware Avenue. The chairs for the evening, Michael and Joanne Berger, are working with a committee that is planning a festive evening of live music, entertainment, food and beverage stations and a great deal of nostalgia!

The Golden Ballroom of the Statler Hotel was the site of the 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. That evening was also in honor of the JCC Past Presidents. Each president had one or two tables surrounded by many other tables filled

with Jewish Center members, along with members of Buffalo's Jewish and general community. The room was packed!

In the photographic journal that was handed out that evening, Michael G. Hyman, Executive Vice President of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo at the time, wrote the following: "Although the challenges of the future may be more complex than those of the past, the three-way partnership consisting of the community, our lay leadership and our professional staff is the strength through which we have endured and will continue to endure." He ended his remarks with, "Our future is 'Golden' as we look towards our next fifty years with the common goal of building a vibrant and involved Jewish

community of tomorrow." His words were prophetic and are as true today as they were then.

Our agency has a very long and proud history, and for those of us who have been along on the journey as Jewish Center members or JCC board members, we are the better for it.

I was the first woman honored to

Gretchen Gross, and our current JCC President, Susan Freed-Oestreicher.

It can be a daunting task to become President of the Jewish Community Center, however, the fact that you share the responsibility with a highly trained member of the agency's professional staff as your partner, makes the job one that can provide a great sense of

"Our future is 'Golden' as we look towards our next fifty years with the common goal of building a vibrant and involved Jewish community of tomorrow."

Former Executive Director Michael Hyman

be elected to serve as President of the Jewish Community Center from 1978 - 1980, and after my term of office ended, one of my goals was to ensure that other women would also serve in that capacity. The agency board had been dominated by men from the community since its very beginning on Jefferson Avenue on the East side of Buffalo. I am pleased to say that my presidency has been followed by Rise' Kulick, Debra Chernoff,

satisfaction and accomplishment. My professional 'partner' was Executive Director, Bill Grossman - a consummate professional, a great teacher and a good friend.

Please join us on Sunday, May 19 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the JCC Holland Family building for a wonderful evening of celebration as the Jewish Community Center commemorates 70 years of service to the community!

JCC's 70th Anniversary Celebration is May 19

Music & Dancing & Food!

The 70th Anniversary celebration, which takes place in the Holland Building May 19 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm is open to all and features live and vibrant entertainment throughout the building for the duration of the program.

Among the entertainment will be Moshe Shulman and members of Buffalo Tango Orkestra, musician Samantha Sugarman, "Buffalo to Broadway" – a multi-talented troupe of crooners, Israeli dancing and a light-up dance floor with a disc jockey. Special appearances include musical numbers by former members of the JCC's Youth Theatre, who will perform show tunes they performed 30+ years ago. A fabulous basket raffle will add to the fun – with beautiful gift packages that guest will take home with them after the party.

Israeli artist Smadar Livne, whose work will be featured in the art gallery, will attend the event to meet guests and talk about her work. Guests will enjoy an array of food stations, including Mediterranean, charcuterie, deli, Asian, salads and desserts as well as beverage stations throughout



the building. All food will be kosher and supervised by the BVK.

"We hope to fill our beautifully renovated JCC with guests from all of our communities," say Chairs Joanne and Michael Berger. "We've heard from people who grew up at our JCC who will be traveling back to Buffalo to join this

exciting event, making our celebration a reunion for many."

Presenting gold level sponsors of Renaissance and Ruach include Delta Sonic Car Wash Systems Inc., Gretchen and Gordon Gross, M&T Bank and the Louis S. and Molly J. Wolk Foundation.



Buy Your Ticket Today!

Renaissance and Ruach, the JCC's 70th anniversary celebration, takes place Sunday, May 19, 6-9 p.m. in the JCC at 787 Delaware Avenue.

Free parking is available on site and at Temple Beth Zion, located next door to the JCC.

Tickets and information at www.jccbuffalo.org.

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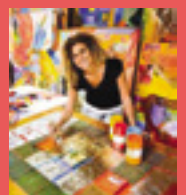
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Israeli Art with Smadar Livne works for sale



JCRC Responds to BPO performance

by Mara Koven-Gelman

"The Passion of Yeshua," written by composer Richard Danielpour and co-commissioned by Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra was performed April 13th and 14th at Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, NY.

The piece, focusing on the last twelve hours of Jesus' life, was performed in Hebrew and English. Passion plays, like this one, highlighting the last hours of Jesus' life have been historically problematic for Jews worldwide. The essential issue is when the Romans present Jesus as the leader to the so-called Jewish crowd, the crowd cries "crucify him!" This has led to centuries of anti-Semitism especially around the Passover/Easter time period. The production uses a full orchestra with a projected libretto on a mega-screen, daunting for any Jew to watch.

Some of the composer's notes language are problematic in this context. He has assembled texts in Hebrew (from the *Tanakh: Isaiah, Psalms, Lamentations*) combined with the Messianic prophecies from the *Book of Isaiah*.

The intention of the composer was to help build understanding between Jews and Christians. Danielpour is Persian, born to Jewish and Christian parents. He said, "Ultimately one of the goals of this piece has been to bring people together in a constructive intelligent, and civilized dialogue about faith." But the JCRC and members of the Jewish Community have concerns, nevertheless.

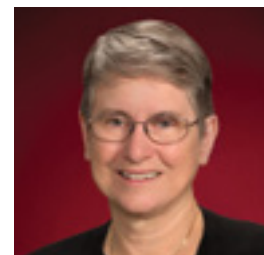
The JCRC and the BPO with Network of Religious Communities have had several good-faith discussions. The outcome of those talks includes two statements (JCRC and BPO) and "A Community Conversation regarding The Passion of Yeshua." held Tuesday April 9th. The following participated in the conversation: Richard Danielpour, composer; JoAnn Falletta, conductor; Dr. Theodore Steinberg, Community Relations Committee, Cantor Irwin Gelman, Ph.D. Congregation Beth Abraham; David Bond, Ph.D., Organist, First Presbyterian Church and Temple Beth Zion, and Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, S.T.D., President Emeritus, St Bonaventure University.

The discussion was not a debate, rather an opportunity to share perspectives regarding the text, the story and the musical composition. The concert went on as scheduled, but the JCRC and Jewish Federation were able to share concerns and objections with members of other faiths, enabling a continuing dialogue and the BPO sent out a statement to all BPO subscribers April 10.

Mara Koven-Gelman is Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Director

My Perspective by Margaret Carney, OSF

I come to the text of this artistic work as a Christian who is a member of the Roman Catholic Church.



I came of age in the church in the era of Pope John XXIII who shook our church with his insistence of moving into the marketplace of the modern world to engage with all people of good will and, in particular, to engage with those of other faiths. Starting with the unprecedented declaration of the Second Vatican Council we have witnessed the growth of inter-religious dialogue, scholarly research, pastoral and local ecumenical collaboration. Some of these efforts have been highly publicized such as the visit of Pope John Paul II at Yad Vashem and his prayer at the Western Wall. (It was a prayer asking forgiveness for the failures of our church through the centuries that he placed in that iconic wall.) Other efforts have not garnered attention from the media. There are the scholars who work in dozens of commissions, research centers, and universities, the local ecumenical officers, many collaborative projects of social justice. All these activities fuel our commitment to a new solidarity with members of the Jewish faith.

One of the most important tasks of these decades has been the liberation of Scripture study and church history from the confines of cloisters and local seminaries to include the historical-critical methods by which new interpretations of Scripture form the basis of modern Christian discipleship. This intellectual rigor undergirds our denunciation of any interpretation of the Passion narratives that implies particular guilt of the Jewish nation for the death of Jesus. While I might cite a lot of evidence for this new state of the question, I will simply tell you what will happen on April 19th, Good Friday, in our churches.

When I arrive for the Good Friday service, I will be given a booklet with the readings of the service. Each year we use a different Gospel text of the Passion so each year it is a freshly printed booklet. In it—at the head of the service—we will read a statement that warns that it is never permissible to use these texts to justify anti-Jewish thought, word or deed. The reading is dramatized with the priest, other ministers and the people all taking part; we in the congregation will be instructed that we must say aloud the words of the crowd at the trial scene. Thus, I—and my neighbors in the pews—will loudly say: Crucify Him!—repeatedly. This change in our service has made it clear that I—we—are the guilty ones whose sins and failures are on trial in this annual drama of remembrance. And that, I think, is precisely what the composers of the reformed Good Friday service intended.

So, when I first read the libretto of Maestro Danielpour, I had no questions or concerns—just an eagerness to experience this work of art which invites me to see Jesus in his Jewish identity—much as the current Broadway production of "Fiddler on the Roof" in Yiddish allows the audience to feel a kinship with the oppressed Russian Jews it depicts.

When I realized that for my Jewish friends of Buffalo there was a deep concern about the oratorio it was a painful shock. I realized that I did not envision this response because of my own rootedness in a modern Catholic intellectual and spiritual interpretation. So sure was I that we share the knowledge that anti-Jewish interpretation is both forbidden and now foreign to us. But then I also had to consider

A Statement from the Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Council

Richard Danielpour's ecumenical intentions in writing "The Passion of Yeshua" are admirable, and yet inevitably the work raises numerous problems that are inherent in the Passion story. He states that he wants "to bring the story of Jesus of Nazareth back to its Jewish origins," which sounds perfectly fine until we think about how differently history can be understood. Just ask someone from New York and someone from Alabama about the Civil War. Jews and Christians differ about history, just as they often use the same words—"salvation," for example, or "messiah"—to mean different things.

Thus, the messianic interpretation of Isaiah 53 is entirely consonant with Christian interpretations of the Hebrew Testament, which often see it as predicting the events of the Greek Testament. It is, however, entirely at odds with Jewish readings of the prophetic passage, which understand that Isaiah is describing the abuse of Israel at the hands of the Babylonians. Many contemporary Bible scholars argue that the passion story in the Greek Testament was intentionally patterned after Isaiah's chapter in order to make it appear prophetic. We have here three interpretations that cannot be reconciled, nor should we try to reconcile them. We need only understand

where the different traditions stand.

Yet another troublesome issue arises when the crowd cries, "Crucify him." Whether such a scene actually took place, the presumption that Jews were somehow responsible for the crucifixion has led to the accusation of deicide, the result of which was almost 2,000 years of anti-Semitic violence. In his program notes, Mr. Danielpour states, idealistically, that "with music no one is excluded and all are invited," but the reference to deicide can hardly be seen as an invitation.

This is not to say that Mr. Danielpour wrote "The Passion of Yeshua" in bad faith or that he intended to be in any way offensive. It is simply to point out the ongoing necessity of dialogue, not so that we can persuade each other but only so that we can understand each other. If we achieve that, then we can begin to approach the ideal that motivates all the Abrahamic faiths, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

**BUFFALO JEWISH
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

that the fifty plus years of reform and repentance in my Catholic community may appear as a very limited attempt alongside millennia of persecution and pogroms.

My voice is that of a highly educated Catholic and one who is also a teacher. I share the conviction stated by the late Franciscan theologian, Alcuin Coyle: "The Church's deepest link to the Jewish people is the humanity of Christ. She cannot and will not forget that when He became man's brother, He was born a Jew. His mother was of the house of David; His apostles and disciples were of Abraham's stock, and so was the ancient church." Yet we see through tears that such conviction has not prevented the explosion of anti-Semitism we witnessed in Charlottesville and my home town of Pittsburgh.

A set of instructions for Catholic educators on how to teach the Shoah includes the following goal:

"To arm Catholics for the ongoing fight against traditional Christian anti-Judaism and modern racial anti-Semitism, by studying the causes and conditions for genocide in order to prevent such atrocities from happening to Jews or any other group in the future."

It is my personal prayer that the performance of Richard Danielpour's "The Passion of Yeshua" will mirror the words of Pope John Paul to artists: "Humanity in every age, and even today, looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and destiny." Here in Buffalo that light has uncovered stumbling blocks in our path. May it also –through the performance of music's power and beauty inspire us to keep working towards our goals of mutual reverence and continued cooperation. In that way we can hope to live into the vision of the prophet Jeremiah: "I know the plans I have in mind for you. Plans for a future not of woe, but of peace." [Paraphrase of Jer. 29: 11]

Sister Margaret Carney, O.S.F., S.T.D., is President Emeritus of St. Bonaventure University.

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The 'Legs' of a Seder Table are a Model for Jewish Learning

by Miriam Abramovich

This article was written for Passover and appeared in the national on-line magazine ejewishphilanthropy.com the week of April 15.

As Passover arrives, we immerse ourselves in the many phases of preparation – dusting off *Hagaddot*, combing through digital resources, and tweaking recipes (vegan gluten-free matzah balls anyone?). When setting my Passover table, I think of Avram Infeld's model of a 5 Legged Table, which encourages each person to choose no less than three of five principles to express their Jewish identity at their Seder: memory, family, covenant, Israel, and Hebrew. Infeld speaks to the great challenge of setting a Jewish table that is “unified without being uniform.”

In Jewish Buffalo, in addition to preparing for Passover, our new *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning* is also

immersed in preparations for launching a new educational model where all Jews, their friends and partners of other faiths, and those exploring Judaism, have access to Jewish living and learning experiences that help them thrive.

Just as Infeld recommends that each five-legged table is an expression of those who are at it, we hope to create an educational ‘table’ where every Jewish living and learning experience is an expression of those who pull up a seat. Inspired by Infeld's construct and the Passover Seder, we are designing Jewish living and learning experiences with at least three of the following five educational ‘legs’: order, customization, tension, engagement, and joy.



Miriam Abramovich



Order: Seders have a beginning and an end, and a framed-out middle. At Passover we do not shoulder the burden of crafting a learning experience from scratch. The *Hagaddah* is our study companion, a road-map and lesson plan that provides both a guide to *Halacha* and a Jewish historical narrative. For the learning experiences supported by the *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning*, we offer a framework of substantive Jewish content so that whoever is facilitating learning, will have a “*Hagaddah*” to teach from.

Customization: No two Seders are the same. As Jonathan Safran Foer and Nathan Englander write in *New American Haggadah*: “As you read these words – as our people's ink stained fingers turn its wine-stained pages – new *Haggadahs* are being written. And as future Jews at future tables read *those Haggadahs*, other *Haggadahs* will be written. New *Haggadahs* will be written until there are no more Jews to write them.” We are challenged to continually reshape the *Hagaddah* to ensure that its lessons are relevant to our modern life experiences as Jews and as humans. At the *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning*, one of our tenets is creating a community that is empowered to shape Jewish learning experiences so that they are personally relevant and meaningful.

Tension: Endemic to the Seder experience is tension at the table. There are matzah crumbs and spilled wine, one guest is feeling too hot or too squeezed in, another is anxious about introducing a new life partner, a toddler is having a tantrum (or the parents are). And many experience the common struggle to

remember the tunes, read the words, or wrestle with a challenging question. But this is what we love about Seder: the beautiful balance of order and disorder. At the *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning*, we know that people learn best when they are both supported but also challenged. Consequently, we aim to support learning experiences that help people achieve a state that psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls ‘Flow’ – where people are in the sweet spot of being challenged with a learning that they don't have yet, but is within their grasp.

Engagement: Another compelling element of Seder is that all are welcome. We are encouraged to open our homes and invite those who are “hungry” for connection and meaning. It's a rare space of entry for someone who has a limited Jewish background and can be a safe space for someone who is Jewishly insecure. The entire framework of a Seder is based on curiosity; everyone has permission to question, and everyone around the Seder table can be both teacher and student. Jewish learning should also serve that same engagement and curiosity. That is why the *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning* supports different learning experiences for the full range of people at different stages of their own Jewish learning pathway, knowing that people come to Jewish learning opportunities with questions, but can also be teachers to each other.

Joy: The best Jewish experiences are often the most joyous. At the Seder one can experience song, laughter, love, growth, acceptance, and the satisfaction that comes with eating a great meal. Through these moments of joy and drinking wine (the symbol of joy), we overflow with delight at our Seder tables. Joyful Jewish learning can happen in any setting and is not bound by walls or formality. The *Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning* creates and supports learning that transcends some of the traditions of didactic learning, where it's sometimes hard to find that joy.

Our goal for all of our Jewish living and learning experiences is to have at least three of the educational ‘table legs’ to ensure our initiatives are joyful, infused with substantive Jewish content, and accessible.

So, as you welcome friends, family, and strangers to your Passover tables, we hope that you embrace the chaos, craft moment of relevance and flow, and dive deep into the joyful retelling of the rich narrative that has shaped our people – and you just might include some of these ‘table legs’ to help you get there.



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- 2» **Celebrate Israel's 71st Birthday** at 2 events: Family BBQ & Fun May 5th from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at Amherst Youth & Rec Center, 5005 Sheridan Drive. Contact Keren Green at shillinggreen@gmail.com for more info. Learn about Israel's birth May 14th at 7:00 p.m. at TBT on North Forest when Truman Library Director Dr. Kurt Graham speaks. **Call Federation for more information at 204-2241.**
- 3» **Care Connection Diaper Drive May 11, 2019** from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The Care Connection Lactation and Wellness Center will be hosting a diaper drive. Last year's event alone, allowed the organization to provide supplies to over 850 children in the Western New York. They are collecting diapers to support Western New York's Diaper Bank, Every Bottom Covered (www.everybottomcovered.org). All disposable diapers from newborn to size 6 are welcome, including open packages. **Bring them to The Care Connection Lactation and Wellness Center, 3991 Harlem Rd. in Amherst.**
- 4» **Dance, eat, celebrate the JCC at 71!** Sunday May 19 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Holland Family Building on Delaware. \$70/per person. **Call 688-4033 or 886-3145 to purchase tickets at either building.**
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No one identified April's photo featured a Harvey Breverman painting that hangs in the JCC Benderson Family Building on the second floor outside of Executive Director Rick Zakalik's office.



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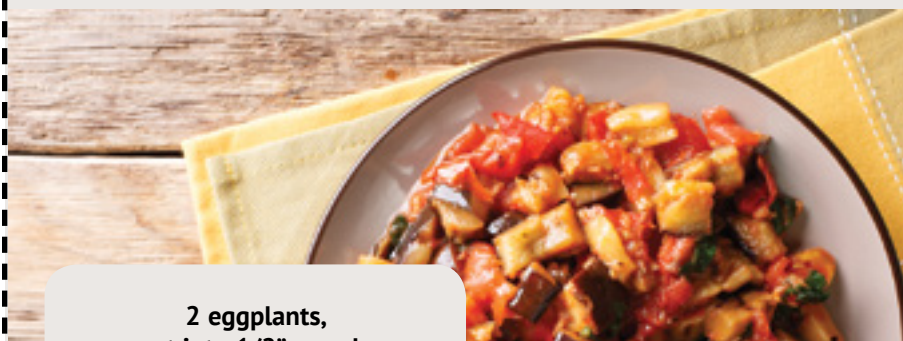
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An Eggplant Treat to Celebrate Israel

By Robin Kurss

When I think of Israeli Food, after hummus and tahini and falafel, I think of eggplant. Here's an easy and delicious appetizer or side dish or snack.

Israeli Eggplant



2 eggplants,
cut into 1/2" rounds

2 T salt

8 T olive oil

1 red onion, chopped

1/2 red pepper and
1/2 green pepper, chopped

1 T coriander

1 t paprika

1/4 c sherry vinegar

1 T lemon juice

1/2 c parsley, chopped

1/4 c cilantro or mint,
chopped

4. Remove from heat and add fresh parsley, cilantro or mint and lemon juice. Stir to combine. Serve with pita and enjoy!

1. Sprinkle eggplant slices with salt, arrange on paper towels, let rest 30 minutes and then pat dry.

2. In large frying pan, sauté eggplant in 6 T oil until deep and golden brown. Remove to paper towel lined plate to drain.

3. Add 2T oil to pan and sauté onion, peppers, coriander and paprika until veggies are soft. Add back eggplant and vinegar and cook until liquid has evaporated...smash eggplant while cooking.

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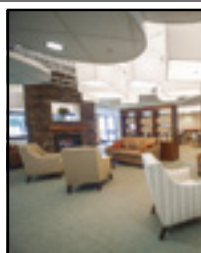
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Attention Snowbirds!

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.

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Criden to Speak @ TBZ Achim May 5

Wine is the topic when Mark Criden speaks at Temple Beth Zion Brotherhood's Achim program Sunday, May 5 at 10:00 a.m. in the Weinberg Campus Meadows Lounge.



Speaking about the history and complexities of wine, Criden is well known as the former Executive Director of Temple Beth Zion and previously was a tax attorney, a writer and business professional. He also has become a maven on

wine, serving as the Chair of the International Wine and Food Society in the 1990s and was the wine columnist for *Buffalo Spree* magazine until 2012. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Achim is a monthly program for the benefit of the residents, and their guests, at the Weinberg Campus and is open to the public at no cost. Please note that this is the first Sunday of the month rather than the usual second Sunday because of Mother's Day. For further information, please contact Ken Graber at 681-9885.

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Singing with Pride

June 1, 7:30 p.m. • 805 Delaware



Temple Beth Zion and the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus have enjoyed a special relationship for many years. The beautiful music they provide in the welcoming and special setting of the Temple Beth Zion sanctuary makes for a harmonious partnership. The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to producing vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing. They seek through song not only to entertain, but to enlighten. They sing to create harmony and celebrate pride in the community and in themselves. TBZ especially looks forward to celebrating Pride with the BGMC in June. Tickets are available at the door or presale at www.buffalogaymenschorus.com.

TBZ Engagement Bagel Brunch

Sunday, May 26 at 10 a.m. • Bagel Jay's @ Hopkins/Klein

The Temple Beth Zion Engagement Committee will host an informal get-together on May 26. Join other members of the community for a relaxed meal and time to schmooze. Contact Jody Goldstein @ jagoldstein827@gmail.com for more info.

Temple Beth Zion is proud to again host

The BBC Band

Featuring the best of the Beatles & '60s Music



Saturday, April 27

Doors open at 6:45 p.m. Music at 7:30 p.m.
805 Delaware Avenue

Concert suitable for all ages

Tickets: \$30 advance sale; \$35 at the door.
Purchase tickets at www.tbz.org or call 716-836-6565

CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM



Friday, May 10, 2019

5:45pm Service

6:15pm Pizza Dinner

Mini Service with joyful singing, crafts, story time and more.
Open to the Community! Complimentary! All are Welcome!



COME AND CELEBRATE
ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH US!



CLEVELAND ROCKS Judaism Bus Trip

Congregation Shir Shalom is hosting a bus trip to explore Jewish Culture in Cleveland July 21st and 22nd. The trip includes a guided tour of the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, a tour of Jewish neighborhoods, a visit to Temple-Tifereth and its artwork collection, and a joint musical performance by Cantor Arlene Frank and a cantor from Cleveland.

The bus departs at 8:00 a.m. from Shir Shalom at 4660 Sheridan Drive. Cost is approximately \$198.00 per person, double occupancy and includes accommodations at the Embassy Suites, 2 lunches, breakfast and dinner. Payment is due by May 16th. **For information call 716.633.8877.**

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus: Joyful at TBZ

By Christopher Treacy

Singing is a healing exercise and, potentially, a portal to something spiritual. This is one of the reasons why BGMC continues to perform concerts in spaces of worship – and, in the spirit of inclusivity, not just one kind. BGMC's final concert of the 2018-19 season is scheduled for June 1, entitled "Singing with Pride," and the group is thrilled to be returning to Temple Beth Zion as part of the upcoming 2019 Stained Glass Concert Series. Over the years, BGMC has enjoyed a fruitful, ongoing relationship with Temple Beth Zion and celebrating Pride with a performance in the sanctuary space is an honor for all concerned.

Cantor Penny Myers of Temple Beth Zion is proud to welcome the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus and said this: "As Temple Beth Zion was one of the religious organizations at the forefront of marriage equality several years ago, celebrating everyone - all of humanity - is central to the mission of Temple Beth Zion. We are

excited to host them again!"

Now, over 17 years from its memorable first gathering, BGMC endures as an important faction of LGBTQ culture in Buffalo. The group stands as a testament to the idea that, indeed, 'family' has more than one meaning. At a time when minority groups continually splinter and divisiveness seems to be the order of the day, BGMC strives to unite and inspire. The Chorus does this by continually welcoming new members via four open house opportunities each season, by partnering with both instrumental and vocal youth ensembles from throughout the WNY area and by forging relationships with other, similarly-minded non-profit organizations and sponsors for cross-promotion opportunities.

Under the current artistic direction team of Garrett F. Martin and Dr. Abigail Rockwood-Puehn, BGMC performs a repertoire that balances heart and humor over a trio of thematically different series of concerts each year. *For more information, please visit www.buffalogaymenschorus.com.*

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Temple Beth Tzedek to Host Annual Tikkun Leyl Shavuot June 8

Temple Beth Tzedek will once again host the Annual Tikkun Leyl Shavuot (overnight study session for Shavuot), and this year will be starting the evening with Ma'ariv services in the beautiful new sanctuary at 1641 North Forest Road in Williamsville.

The committee, chaired by Bernie Weinstein and Rachel Anderson, is putting together an enlightening night of study with Buffalo's finest Rabbis and Cantors. The evening will commence with Ma'ariv at 9:30 p.m. in the sanctuary followed by the keynote speaker, followed by delicious cheese cake and other delectable noshes to sustain attendees throughout the night.

There is an open-door policy. Come when you want and leave when you want. But if you've ever stayed for the sunrise service followed by breakfast, you'll want to do it again. Watch for an upcoming flyer for more detailed information in the weeks to come, or check TBT out on Face book.



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KOT Tidbits

Kehillat Ohr Tzion takes pride in welcoming new members into their family-oriented synagogue. The entire KOT congregation rejoiced recently at the brit milah ceremonies of Zusha Eliezer, son of Rabbi Ori and Nora Bergman, and Shmuel Bezalel, son of Laurent Haccoun and Sophia Balderman. Families and friends traveled great distances to be at the simchas. These new members, their siblings and all children always receive a warm welcome at all KOT functions.

The KOT Kids Program is growing as the word spreads about the fun learning activities that take place once a month. The Chocolate Seder held on April 7 in conjunction with PJ Library was well attended and a huge success. Each child made an afikomen cover and Passover stories were told, and of course there was lots of chocolate. For more information about future programs email KotKids18@gmail.com.

There is always at least one social action project going on at KOT. *Mishloach Manot* bags this year were delivered to residents at Canterbury Woods and the pasta box graggers were delivered to Hearts for the Homeless. In March and April needed items were collected for



the Kevin Guest House, an independent healthcare hospitality house for patients and their families staying in the area.

KOT has continued to coordinate the Amiel Bakehila Program, which has sent Israeli speakers to the Buffalo Jewish Community. With the help of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Barb Chazen and Lori Morrison have worked with all the synagogues and Jewish organizations in the area to plan programs with the Israeli visitors. The speakers in April were Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider, author of *The Night that Unites Hagadah*, Erez Zadok, Illustrator of the *Passover Hagadah Graphic Novel*, and Leah Hecht, Director of the African Refugee Center in Tel Aviv. For more information about the Amiel events in May contact mdchazen@gmail.com

If you are interested in learning about opportunities at KOT or if you just want to check to see if this synagogue might be the place for you, email oribergman@gmail.com

Congregation Shir Shalom

Magic Club

Taught by Magician
Bruce Baum

Have you always been fascinated
by magic?

Do you want to learn how
to do magic?

Here is your chance!!!

The club is for anyone 12 years old up
to 99 years old!

The club will meet on the following
dates from 6-7 p.m.:

Tuesday, May 14th

Tuesday, May 28th

Tuesday, June 11th

Tuesday, June 25th

Adults and kids are most welcome!
The Magic Club is complimentary and
open to the community.

Please RSVP to the Temple Office
at 633-8877.

TBZ Pride Events

Mark your calendars for the annual
**TBZ Pride Shabbat Service and
Parade.** This year, TBZ's Pride Shabbat
service will be held Friday, May 31,
at 7 p.m. at Temple Beth Zion, 805
Delaware Avenue. All members of
the community are invited to kick off
Pride Weekend in downtown Buffalo
with a celebration of our diversity
and joy.

The annual Pride Parade will be
held Sunday, June 2, stepping off
from the corner of Elmwood and
Forest Avenues at noon. If you want
to march in the parade, along with
other representatives of the Jewish
community of Western New York, plan
to assemble at Buffalo State College
at 10 a.m. Otherwise, you can watch
the parade from anywhere along
Elmwood Avenue between Forest
Avenue and North Street.

**For more information about the
parade and other Jewish community
events, like Jewish Pride of WNY
on Facebook, or go to <http://www.jewishpridewny.org/>.**

Temple Beth Zion Halpern Scholars-in-Residence

MAY 17-19

*Sacred Music, Poetry, Prayer, and Learning
The Old Becomes New and the New Becomes Holy*

Temple Beth Zion, with the sponsorship of the Halpern Memorial Fund, enthusiastically welcomes innovative and learned rabbis, Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and Rabbi David Markus, for an exciting weekend of Jewish innovation for mind, heart and spirit. All events are at 805 Delaware Avenue, except where noted.

FRIDAY, MAY 17

6:30 p.m. – Happy Half Hour

7:00 p.m. – Shabbat Evening Service led by Rabbis Barenblat and Markus.

After services, schmooze with our scholars at a special Oneg in honor of Justice Philip Halpern sponsored by the Clergy of TBZ.

SATURDAY, MAY 18

9:15 a.m. – Special Torah Study with Rabbis Barenblat and Markus.: “A Torah of Time.”

Delve into *Parshat Emor's* wisdom on celebrating, bending and transcending time.

10:30 a.m. – Shabbat Morning Service led by Rabbis Barenblat and Markus.

12:30 p.m. – Kiddush Lunch (*RSVP to Becky at 836-6565 or becky@tbz.org no later than May 10*).

2:30 p.m. – Psalms of the Heart: Voices of Tradition, Voices of Today.

Rabbi Barenblat leads a journey through ancient and contemporary Psalms, weaving the emotions and meanings of traditional Psalms from our liturgy, and offering all of us the path of the psalmist for today and tomorrow.

4:00 p.m. – Shul and State: Value Voters and Power in Jewish Community.

Rabbi Markus helps us explore Judaism's “separation of powers” in history and modernity. What are “Jewish values” for voters of yesterday and today, and what are the spiritual implications for Twenty-First Century life?

7:00 p.m. – The Light of Transition: #BeALight Havdalah

Rabbis Barenblat and Markus lead a sunset of poetry, song, and spirit.

***This quick gathering will take place at Broderick Park overlooking the Niagara River*

SUNDAY, MAY 19 – Lag b'Omer Picnic at the Broder Center, 700 Sweet Home Rd.

11:00 a.m. – Rabbis Barenblat and Markus will help inspire our entire community as we celebrate the end of the Religious School Year and Lag b'Omer – the traditional late Spring festival.

With warmth, humor, familiarity and innovation, Rabbis Barenblat and Markus will offer Jewish forms and tools bringing new vitality and relevance to Jewish life. As Senior Builders of Bayit, a spiritual incubator for Jewish “research and development” across all denominations, Rabbis Barenblat and Markus use their nationally recognized Jewish leadership and their deeply lived ethics to help all of us become builders of the Jewish future.

To learn more about these distinguished Rabbis, go to www.tbz.org/about-tbz/happening-now.



Congregation Shir Shalom

ANNE BERNSTEIN MEMORIAL SHABBAT SPEAKER SERIES

“Jewish Buffalo” Presented by Chana Kotzin, Ph.D

Saturday, June 1st

12:00 p.m. Luncheon • 1:00 p.m. Speaker

Chana Kotzin, PhD was born and raised in Great Britain. Since 2007, she has served as the director of the Jewish Buffalo Archives Project. Chana will share her knowledge about Jewish Buffalo.

The program is complimentary but reservations are required by May 28th. Please call the Temple Office at 633.8877 to RSVP.

Thinking Big: Rabbi Alex Lazarus- Klein

By Peter Simon

Extracurricular activities for children have become “incredibly competitive,” and synagogue religious schools must find creative new ways to gain the allegiance of young families and children, said Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein of Congregation Shir Shalom.

“Thirty years ago religious school was the only thing on the agenda, and now there are literally dozens of travel sports, theater groups and academic enrichment activities that dominate our children’s lives,” he said. “We have yet to fully adjust to the new landscape.” Failing to do so, he said, would “risk losing a generation.”



Rabbi Lazarus-Klein’s observations are shared by many, as synagogues have struggled for years to compete with other after-school and weekend activities. Now, with extensive assistance from the national Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI), Rabbi Lazarus-Klein is launching an ambitious initiative to make religious school more attractive and meaningful. While the focus of his efforts will be on Congregation Shir Shalom, he plans to propose a model that could be used at other temples as well.

The New York City-based CLI, which recently chose Rabbi Lazarus-Klein to take part in its selective program of synagogue transformation, will match him up with a rabbinic mentor and a “peer group” of other reform-minded rabbis to provide feedback and advice. He will also take part in study sessions and three national retreats during the two year effort.

CLI says its program is designed for rabbis who are “prepared to dramatically rethink how synagogues function,” and requires each participant to develop an “innovative project” for his or her congregation. “We are looking for rabbis who think big,” the group said. “CLI is less a study program than it is a boot camp for visionary leadership.”

Rabbi Lazarus-Klein said he will focus on a proposal to reform Shir Shalom’s religious education program, with the hope that his plan will spur not only purposeful and productive dialogue, but structural change. Bruce Corris, president of Shir Shalom, said he welcomes Rabbi Lazarus-Klein’s involvement. “I think it will benefit him, and it will benefit us,” Corris said. “Let’s face it: you can’t do the same old thing all the time.”

Rabbi Lazarus-Klein begins his initiative feeling that religious schools unimaginatively mirror traditional public school classroom settings that most pupils already take part in five days a week. Instead, religious schools

might emphasize community involvement, in-depth learning on specific issues and leadership opportunities. Many parents now send their children to religious school out of a sense of obligation, or because it is the traditional path to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

“I think that that’s not enough,” Rabbi Lazarus-Klein said. “In the future, religious schools will have to offer something more flexible and more intensive to reestablish our identity. What that is, I am not sure. But I am incredibly excited to find out.”

TBT Rabbi Isaac Klein

Scholar-in-Residence Weekend With Rabbi Jeffrey Summit

Temple Beth Tzedek will be sponsoring their scholar-in-residence program in memory of Rabbi Isaac Klein from May 30- June 2. This year’s scholar is ethnomusicologist Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, recently retired Executive Director of Tufts Hillel, and Research Professor in Music and Judaic Studies at Tufts University. His research focuses on music and identity, spiritual experience, advocacy and the impact of technology on the transmission of tradition. Rabbi Summit will be in Buffalo to give four talks:



MAY 30- JUNE 2

Thursday 5/30: 7:30 p.m.

“Cabaret at the Edge of the World: Performing in the Shadow of the Holocaust”. This is a multi-media presentation on the cabaret performances in the ghettos and concentration camps.

Dessert Reception- reservations required

Friday 5/31: 6:00 p.m.:

Kabbalat Shabbat: “The Meaning of our Melodies: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship”. Why do Jews have such strong feelings about the music we use in prayer?

Dinner Following - reservations required

Saturday Morning 6/1: 9:00 a.m.:

“Singing God’s Words: Religious Experience, Chant & Sacred Text”

How and why a growing number of American Jews see the public chanting of Biblical texts as one of the most authentic expressions of their religious identity

Kiddush following services open to the community.

6/1: 8:15 p.m.: Minhah services and Se’udah Shlisheet Everyone is welcome. Rabbi Summit will not lead a specific discussion.

Sunday 6/2: 9:30 am: (following morning minyan):

“Coffee, Music, and Inter-religious Harmony in Eastern Uganda.” The Abaydaya (Jewish People) of Uganda set out to build productive, respectful relationships with Muslim and Christian neighbors. In Namonyoni sub-county, 586 Muslim, Jewish and Christian farmers joined together to form the Peace Kawomera (Delicious Peace) Fair Trade Coffee Cooperative. This brunch is co-sponsored by Buffalo Jewish Federation.

Continental Breakfast open to the community- reservations required

For reservations and payment, call the TBT Office at 838-3232 by May 24.



SHABBAT SHALOM, MR. DYLAN

Congregation Shir Shalom

Erev Shabbat Service

Friday, May 24, 2019

7:00pm

Cantor Frank & Tizmeret Ensemble will weave the iconic songs of Bob Dylan into the music of the Erev Shabbat Service.

Oneg Shabbat will follow.



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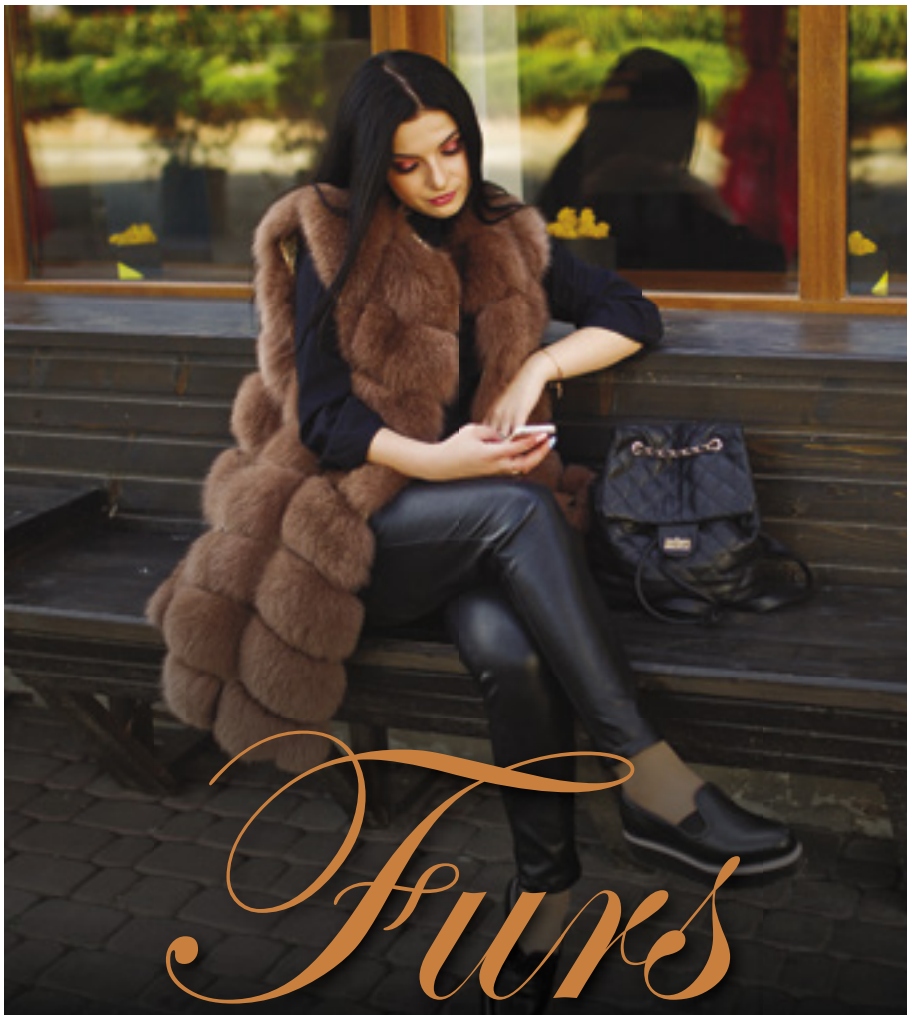


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May 5

Community Yom Hashoah Commemoration

"Never Again? How Anti-Semitism is still alive today"

11:00 a.m.

Temple Beth Zion

805 Delaware Avenue

Call Holocaust Resource Center at 634-9535

Family Israel Celebration

3:30-5:30 p.m.

Amherst Youth & Rec Center

5005 Sheridan Drive

shillinggreen@gmail.com

May 6 – June 24

Jewish Community Book & Arts Fair

Various programs and locations

www.jccbuffalo.org

May 6

Opening of Ghosts: French Holocaust Children photo show

By Robert Hirsch

7:00-9:00 p.m.

JCC, Lippman Lounge & Bunis Family

Art Gallery

2640 North Forest Road

May 7

Sarah's Key Film Screening and Discussion

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Second Floor Board Room,

JCC Benderson Family Building

Free event; Reservations Required

688-4033

May 9-June 2

Jewish Repertory Theatre presents Looking Through Glass

Sellers Theatre

JCC Benderson Building

Box Office: 650-7626

www.jewishrepertorytheatre.com

May 10

Tot Shabbat

Congregation Shir Shalom

5:45 p.m. Service

6:15 p.m. Pizza Dinner

Nicole@buffalojewishfederation.org

May 12

Mother's Day Celebrated in the U.S.

May 14

Yom Ha'atzmaut

(Israel Independence Day)

Community Celebration

7:00 p.m.

Temple Beth Tzedek. FREE

Dr. Kurt Graham, director of the

Harry S. Truman Presidential Library

and Museum will speak

Call Jewish Federation at 204-2241

for more information

May 17-19

Temple Beth Zion Halpern Weekend

See page 26 for schedule & details

Call 836-6565 to register and for info

May 19

Renaissance & Ruach!- Celebrating the JCC's 70 Anniversary

6:00-9:00 p.m.

787 Delaware Ave.

\$70 per person

Contact Jordana Halpern at jhalpern@jccbuffalo.org or purchase tickets at either building's reception desk

May 22

Lag B'Omer BBQ & Celebration

5:30 p.m.

Jewish Discovery Center

757 Hopkins Road

Call 639-7600

Lecture Presentation-

"Ghosts: An Artistic Meditation on the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism"

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Lippman Lounge,

JCC Benderson Family Building

Tickets: \$10.00/general \$5.00/student

May 23

Lag B'Omer Celebrated

May 26

Temple Beth Zion

Engagement Bagel Brunch

10:00 a.m.

Bagel Jay's, Hopkins & Klein Rds.

Questions or info

to jagoldstein827@gmail.com

May 27

Memorial Day Celebrated in U.S.

Most business and organizations closed

May 30- June 2

Temple Beth Tzedek Rabbi Klein

Scholar-in-Residence Weekend

See page 27 for schedule & details

Call 838-3232 for information

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Foundation Offers Academic Scholarships

Lenore J. Levy, Chair of the Academic Scholarship and Financial Assistance Committee of the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, has announced that a limited amount of scholarship funds will be available to provide financial aid to undergraduate and graduate students to help meet the escalating costs of higher education.

The Foundation administers a number of endowment funds which have been established by donors solely for this purpose. The following funds are the primary source of scholarship assistance for Jewish students:



Lenore J. Levy

Sidney & Jeanette Birzon Memorial Fund
Raymond & Sara Ehrenreich Scholarship Fund
Isadore & Bessie Federman Scholarship Fund
Rose H. Frank & Leonard H. Frank Academic Scholarship Fund
Anna E. & Bernard I. Gross Scholarship Fund
Isaac Hoenig Memorial Fund
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Jewish Liberal Arts Club
Edna, Lillian P. and Beatrice J. Kohn Scholarship Fund
Knights of Pythias – Jonathan David Lodge Scholarship Fund
Dr. Harold J. and Arlyne Levy Award in Jewish Studies
Dr. Louis Sklarow Award Fund
Maimonides Medical Society Fund
Sarah & Nettie Nathan Scholarship Fund
Dr. Meyer & Ann S. Riwchun Scholarship Fund
Benjamin & M. Madalene Smith Scholarship Fund
Paul Swados Scholarship Fund
Iola Zeckhauser Scholarship Fund

Some scholarships are awarded in the form of interest-free loans and some in the form of outright grants. Eligibility is generally limited to students who have attended high school in Western New York and scholarships are awarded on the basis of documented financial need.

For applications and information, please contact the Foundation office at 204-1133. The deadline for submission of applications for the coming academic year is June 1st. Applications are processed and reviewed by the Career Services Department of Jewish Family Service. The Foundation's Academic Scholarship and Financial Assistance Committee will determine the nature and amount of any assistance offered, and students will be notified by August 15th.

DR. SIREN FEATURED AT HADASSAH LUNCHEON

By Phyllis Steinberg

Buffalo Hadassah will host a special luncheon with guest speaker Janne Siren. Dr. Siren is a Finnish art historian and the Pierce Elfvig Director of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. The buffet luncheon will be at Sean Patrick's Restaurant on May 16 at 11:30. Dr. Siren will be interviewed at the luncheon by Dr. Annette Magid followed by a Q and A. To make a reservation or for more information email mseller@buffalo.edu or mkatzel@me.com.



Dr. Janne Siren

On April 2, Hadassah hosted an informative talk by Israeli lawyer and civil rights advocate Leah Hecht. She spoke about her work with African refugees in Israel. Ms. Hecht is one of the dynamic speakers from the Amiel Bakehila program, funded by Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.



Leah Hecht

There have been several wonderful art-related programs throughout the year, including one visit to Expressive Glass, a 9 torch glassworking studio on Lakeshore Road in the Southtowns. Glass artist and teacher Vicki Schneider demonstrated how to turn hot glass into some really cool stuff!

For more information about the Buffalo chapter of Hadassah contact nangrnborg@gmail.com.



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Celebrating Mother's Day with the HBLA

**A good woman, who can find?
Her worth is far above rubies....**

This familiar phrase is from the prayer, Woman of Valor, traditionally recited on Friday night as the family gathers for Shabbat. It acknowledges the valuable contributions of a good woman, a good wife, a good mother. This is just one of the many ways we honor women in our tradition and in our society.

Since 1914 the second Sunday in the month of May has been officially designated as Mother's Day in the United States. Cards are sent and gifts are given to mark the occasion and to celebrate the special women in our lives. We may demonstrate our love and appreciation with rubies or pearls, orchids or roses.

But what about a gift that keeps giving for many years to come? Consider honoring the good woman in your life with a Life Membership in the Hebrew Benevolent Loan Association – Buffalo's Free Loan Society. For 120 years, the HBLA has been helping members of our Jewish community move forward when faced with the need for temporary financial assistance.

A Life Membership in the HBLA costs only \$360 and has a lasting effect on generations to come. The money received is invested in our community as interest-free loans to assist with a wide variety of needs such as medical expenses, home or car repairs, family emergencies, educational fees, or to consolidate existing debt.

Your Life Membership gift will be used over and over and as each loan is repaid, it will be made available to loan again and again—an on-going gift more valuable than rubies. To learn more about HBLA, life membership, and our loan policies, please visit our website: www.wnyhbla.org. Onward to our next 120 years!

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Program is funded by the New York State Council on the Art with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; administered by Arts Services Initiative of Western New York.

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www.buffalogaymenschorus.org / Phone: (716) 883-1277 / office@buffalogaymenschorus.org

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Blind Date with a *Yizkor* Book

UB DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH THOUGHT HOSTS ITS SECOND BLIND DATE WITH A JEWISH BOOK

By Cecile E. Minkoff

The UB Department of Jewish Thought's second "Blind Date with a Jewish Book" program featured Dr. Theodore (Ted) Steinberg, distinguished professor emeritus of the faculty of English at SUNY Fredonia, and, since his retirement, a beloved teacher in the local community. He spoke about *Yizkor* books.

Yizkor Books, or Memory Books, represent a unique genre of Jewish literature that blossomed in the wake of the Holocaust (*Shoah*) in an attempt to memorialize the communities that were wiped out: their members, their institutions, their newspapers, clubs, and associations, along with vivid firsthand accounts of the *Shoah* and its aftermath. These are not to be confused with the "Yizkor Books" that we use on the days when *yahrzeit* is observed in synagogues.

Steinberg's interest in Yiddish began early in his career when he published a book about S.Y. Abramovitch, more popularly known as *Mendele Mokher Seforim*, or, Mendele the Book Peddler. More recently, as the idea of "world literature" took hold, and noticing that modern Yiddish literature was rarely, if ever, included in the new anthologies, he started to argue for the inclusion in them of the modern Yiddish novelists and poets. Certainly, if the world didn't know Yiddish literature, all of the great Yiddish writers knew world literature. Like the Jew in the world, Yiddish literature was the orphan child of world literature. But, after he retired from SUNY Fredonia, Ted Steinberg found himself teaching a beginner's class in reading Yiddish. Toward the end of the course, a student approached him saying, "I have a Yiddish book



I'd like you to look at." It was a *yizkor* book from his grandmother's town in Poland, and he asked Steinberg if he would translate it. And so Ted Steinberg found himself immersed in the universe of *yizkor*books.

During the *Shoah*, hundreds of communities were wiped out. But afterwards, survivors of these communities

re-established contact with each other across the globe, and called upon one another to write chapters, and collected them into books. Each book is a memorial to its community, like a tombstone for all the people for whom no tombstone was ever made.

This was a completely voluntary exercise, and Steinberg emphasized that the contributors were not professional writers, and so they often used flowery language in order to sound more sophisticated. The view through these post-*Shoah* lenses is almost always rosy and nostalgic. Steinberg noticed that negative commentary is rare, except perhaps about a teacher or a school. Nevertheless, you get the sense of real cities and towns, real people, and as you read, you gain perspective from multiple points of view, and begin to know individuals and to identify with them. These books describe a vibrant life, and certain topics are regular, beginning with a history of the town, including short vignettes of important, or even famous, people, or of outstanding personalities, and continuing with sections on schools, libraries, political and social clubs, athletic organizations, synagogues, and study houses. Football (i.e. soccer) was popular, and you find accounts of matches played between the Jewish club and a gentile team from nearby; sometimes these games were rough, sometimes clean.

Very often memories will take the reader back to World War I. In our generation, our lives are so deeply branded by the Second World War, that we give little attention to the first, which was as deeply traumatizing and disruptive in its own

way as the second.

Descriptions of life during the *Shoah* and its aftermath were written by Jews who were hidden, or who passed as gentiles. They were also stitched together from letters in the possession of Jews who had been able to flee, and who had received letters with "news from home," until the letters stopped. These descriptions, Steinberg said, are devastating to read, and the work of translation slows, as one can only absorb so much at one time.

Because these are first-hand recollections written by the people who were themselves involved in the lives of their communities, these books represent a valuable primary resource for historical study akin to the Cairo Genizah for offering up details of daily life.

Because these books represented private endeavors and were often privately printed, they can be hard to track down. There are approximately 1,200 *yizkor* books currently extant. The New York Public Library and the National Yiddish Book Center have digitized them and made them available online for free. The Jewish Genealogical Society has committed itself to overseeing their translations into English, a work in progress.

Steinberg finished his presentation by commenting on the moral responsibility to do the work so that they are accessible to future generations. Seven decades after the Nazi murderers were defeated, it is still so hard to grasp the full impact of the *Shoah*. These books, with their vivid descriptions of life before, and their stark lists of the names of the departed, go some way to bridge the gap.

Online resources for *yizkor* books are:

The National Yiddish Book Center Yizkor Book Collection: <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/collections/yizkor-books>

New York Public Library Yizkor Book Collection: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/yizkor-book-collection/#/?tab=about>

Jewish Genealogical Society <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/>

The website of Ted's translation of the book he is/was working on, with an image of the original cover (in Yiddish): <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/wolomin/wolomin.html>



University at Buffalo
Department of Jewish Thought
College of Arts and Sciences

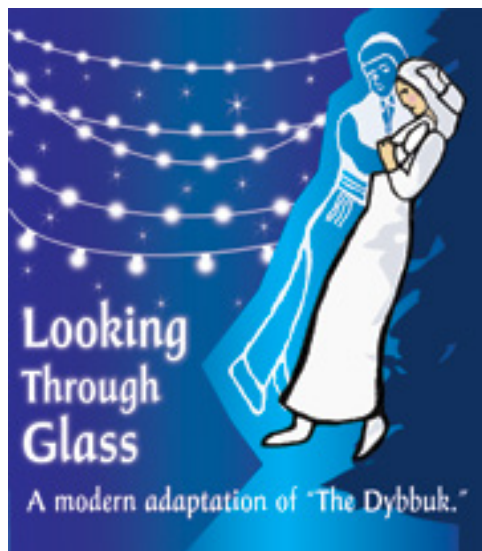
On behalf of the UB Department of Jewish Thought, we send our condolences to the entire Gross family on the passing of Gordon Gross, z"l. We are deeply indebted to his philanthropic contributions which have helped bring to fruition the University at Buffalo's vision of creating an internationally recognized Department of Jewish Thought. His legacy of supporting innovative scholarship will surely have a lasting effect on the advancement of academic scholarship for both the Jewish tradition and humanity at large.

JEWISH REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS

Looking Through Glass

MAY 9 – JUNE 2, 2019

Jewish Repertory Theatre presents *Looking Through Glass*, by Ken Kaiser, May 9 – June 2, at the Maxine and Robert Seller Theatre located in the Jewish Community Center, Benderson Building.



“We are looking forward to bringing audiences a new adaptation of one of the most classical Jewish dramas, S. Ansky’s, *The Dybbuk*, said Saul Elkin, JRT Founding Artistic Director. “We are pleased to bring this extraordinary play to a professional stage for the first time and look forward to seeing our audience’s reaction to this provoking story that carries dramatic historical significance.”

Looking Through Glass tells the story of Leah, who after going against the wishes of her heart and marrying a man to please her parents, is possessed by the soul of her true love whom she has met shortly before her planned wedding. Can an exorcism untangle their souls, or will they be entwined for the rest of eternity? Set in our turbulent times,

this haunting and romantic modern-day rendition of the Jewish classic reminds us love is a destiny which can’t always be escaped.

Looking Through Glass is directed by Saul Elkin and stars Zachary Bellus, Arin Lee Dandes, Angelo J. Heimowitz, David Lundy and Tina Rausa. Playwright Ken Kaiser will join cast and director on stage after the opening night performance for an audience talkback event May 9.

Brian Cavanagh is Lighting Designer, Kari Drozd is Costume Designer, David Dwyer is Set Designer, Christina Serio is Stage Manager, Mike Benoit is Assistant Stage Manager and Property Master, Kathryn Grace Sands and Molly Farber are House Managers and Linda Hanes is Box Office Manager. Jordana Halpern is Managing Director.

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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More information at jhalpern@jccbuffalo.org

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May 6 - June 24, 2019

The JCC Book & Arts Fair is celebrating 53 years. We are once again proud to showcase authors and presenters from Western New York and beyond, with a line-up that offers something for everyone. For a schedule of events visit www.jccbuffalo.org.

You are invited to join us for our

Annual Meeting

June 20, 2019 7:00pm

Meeting followed by Ice Cream Sundae Bar! Everyone Welcome!
Holland Family Building, Buffalo

Theatre for Everyone

JEWISH REPERTORY THEATRE

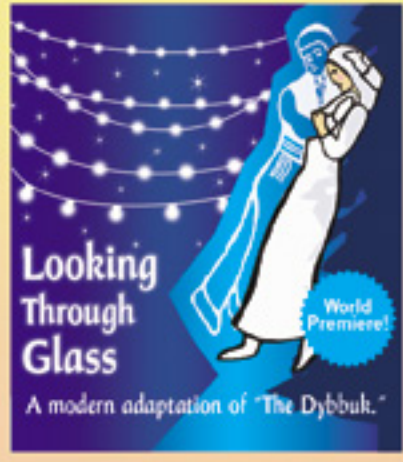
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By Ken Kassis
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Shavuot

Sunday, June 9
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Monday, June 10
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688-4033

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at Summer Street
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JCC Hours

Sun	8:00am - 6:00pm
Mon-Thurs	5:30am - 9:30pm
Friday	5:30am - 7:00pm
Sat	8:00am - 6:00pm

CELEBRATING OUR JCC PROS!

JCC Professional staff members Sam Seiler, Michael Garcia, Pam Marin and Patty Simonson attended the JCCA professional conference in Orlando, Florida recently. Sam Seiler received a JCC Program Excellence Award KOL HAKAVOD Recognition (Honor to you) for his Operation VET (Veterans Exercising Together) – A Program by Veterans for Veterans.



Above: Sam, Michael, Patty and Pam
Right: Sam

This program supports the JCC's mission of strengthening communities and serves to provide a safe and flexible space for veterans to engage in fitness and wellness and build a safe social community that enriches their lives through a program entirely run by veterans. Through local partnerships, the JCC is becoming involved in societal concerns to make a difference, have an impact on a large population of veterans, and give back to the community through training, engagement, and job placement.

In addition, Sam was also given the honor of saying *Hamotzi* (blessing before meals) at the all-conference awards luncheon as one of the 2018 scholarship recipients. Sam will be using his scholarship to attend the Grantsmanship Institute training this year.

Camp Centerland Director Michael Garcia was asked to present at the New Camp Director's Training on ACA (American Camping Association) and led a discussion about "What Keeps Camp Director's Up at Night."

In addition, Pam Marin, Director of Human Resources, was honored for her 25 years at the JCC and Associate Executive Director Patty Simonson was honored for reaching the 40 year mile-stone at the Buffalo JCC. Congratulations and *Mazel Tov* to the Buffalo JCC staff on their accomplishments!

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Kadimah-Park historic partnership advances for next academic year

Leaders of Kadimah Academy and The Park School of Buffalo are continuing to work together toward implementation of their unique and historic partnership. Officials have been meeting regularly since announcing the new relationship between the two private schools in March, addressing matters related to enrollment, curriculum, financial aid and funding.

Both schools remain excited by the partnership, which is drawing attention not only locally but nationally as well. The new partnership will support Kadimah's mission through Park, while expanding its reach to more students and extending its classes through high school.

Under the plan backed by both schools and the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Park will hire teachers for Hebrew and Judaic Studies, with courses offered both during the regular school day and during a supplemental after-school component. Kadimah will not operate its own school next year. Additional after-school study time may also be available for further Jewish education for those families desiring more. Those participating in the "Kadimah Scholars at Park School" program will also be offered time and space for Jewish religious prayer and holiday observances.

Interested students will apply for regular admission to Park, while indicating their desire to participate in the Kadimah program. The teachers, whose positions will be funded with assistance from the Federation, will be members of the Park faculty.

At least 20 students in Kindergarten through 9th grade are currently expected to enroll in the program for next year, with others outside Kadimah already expressing interest. The new classes also will be open to all other students at Park as well.

Jewish students taking part in the program will be eligible for scholarships from Kadimah, which will remain a separate and independent nonprofit organization in support of the partnership. Such funds are in addition to the regular financial aid assistance



that Park provides, to ensure that finances do not prevent a Jewish child from getting a Jewish education. New financial aid policies are now being finalized for the scholarships through Kadimah, and details about the procedures will be available shortly.

The Federation and Kadimah have committed to funding the model while the program is launched. Kadimah does not intend to use any of its reserves, building fund or other endowment dollars for financial aid or teachers, but rather will continue to actively fundraise each year. The organization will continue with its Annual Dinner and Ad Book, as well as its regular Annual Campaign and other activities in the community, and fully expects to cover its obligations with ongoing community support and regular investment earnings.

Kadimah board members and current faculty are assisting Park in developing the Hebrew and Judaic Studies curriculum for the new program, to ensure that participating students receive the same intensive, high-quality education that Kadimah has always provided. The two organizations will also work to integrate the classes and students within the broader Park community. The new teacher positions have been designed and posted in accordance with Park procedures, and resumes are being accepted by Park, which will consult with Kadimah in making hiring decisions.

As previously stated, the partnership with Park covers grades K-12, and will have no impact on Kadimah's separate pre-school partnership with Temple Beth Zion's Play and Learn School, called PALS-Kadimah. That relationship will continue.

HILLEL OF BUFFALO: REPAIRING THE WORLD ONE DAY AT A TIME

By Alexa Zappia, Hillel of Buffalo Innovation Specialist

For the past few months, Hillel of Buffalo has been immersed in an intensive discovery process known as Organizational Design Lab (ODL). As part of this process, members of the Hillel staff met one-on-one with students to learn how we can best serve their interests and needs. We discovered that many students seek opportunities to travel while making a difference. With these insights, we partnered with Repair the World Miami for a week-long Alternative Spring Break trip to fight education and food injustice within Urban Miami. Repair the World "mobilizes tens of thousands of young Jews to volunteer in tackling pressing local needs each year." The work that the volunteers do is rooted in Jewish values, learning, and history.



The application process was competitive and the applications were strong. Our trip took place March 17-24, where each day was planned in detail to include a minimum of five hours of service and one hour of service learning. We worked at sites in Urban Miami including Miami Children's Initiative, Chapman Partnership for the Homeless, The Lotus House, Oleta River State Park, JCS Kosher Food Bank, Camillus House, and Urban Greenworks. For every service site to which we traveled, we were paired with one Repair the World fellow. At the end of site experience, we guided the students through reflection so they were able to see the correlation between their service work and important Jewish values.

One of the first sites we went to was Chapman Partnership for the Homeless. Chapman "provides comprehensive programs and services in collaboration with others that empower [their] residents with dignity and respect to overcome homelessness and achieve and maintain long-term self-sufficiency." Sophomore Jordana Chazan spoke to her very moving experience at Chapman.

"The group was serving lunch at a shelter. I caught the eyes of a man who appeared to be in his sixties sitting at his table with a gleaming smile. When I looked at him I immediately smiled back,

approached him, wondering if he needed anything. He looked at me and pointed to all of us volunteers smiling and nodding his head. I couldn't understand the language he was speaking, but I knew he was saying thank you. When I entered the shelter, I felt pain for the people we were serving. When I saw joy in that man, that pain melted. He served as a reminder that at the root of life there is strength, and the ability to overcome adversity with the help from one another."

As we concluded on our last day, there was not a dry eye in the room. UB Junior Peretz Shuman reflected, "For me it was a lot of simply accepting and acknowledging that our world isn't perfect, but that doesn't mean we can't do something to help it take a step in that direction."

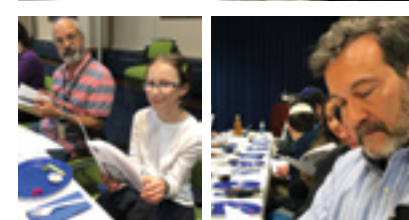
Jewish values are human values. As stated in *Pirkei Avot*, 2:16, "You are not responsible to complete the task, nor are you free to desist from it." When you see an issue in your community, you need to do what you can to advocate and make a change. No voice is too small. Be the change you wish to see within the world, within your community, and within yourself. We may not be able to repair the whole world in one day, but if we can make one person forget about their struggles even for one minute, then we have done our job.

Purim in Buffalo

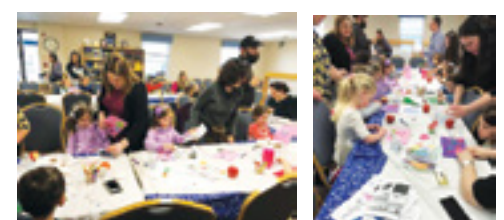
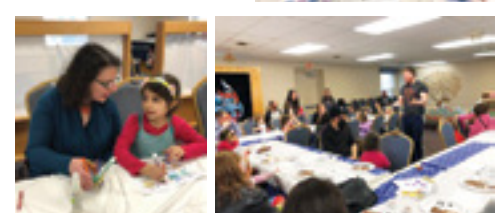


Passover Seder @ Roswell

The Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council coordinated a community Passover seder held at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, through its Diversity Council. Director Mara Koven-Gelman and Chairs Nina Lukin and Ted Steinberg organized the event, and Kadimah Academy students conducted the model seder for the Roswell Park community.



KOT Chocolate Seder



Yum!

May is for Mitzvah at PALS-Kadimah

We have an exciting new project for families to do together at home called the *Mitzvah Box*! Over the next few weeks, each PALS-Kadimah family will have a turn to take the box home and do mitzvot together.

The Mitzvah Box contains special items:

It's a, It's a, It's a Mitzvah - In this wonderful story, the main character is a Meerkat who describes different types of *mitzvot*.

Tzedakah box - (charity box). Families can collect spare change and talk about various organizations that hold special meaning for them. The children will decide as a class to which organization they would like to send their donation.

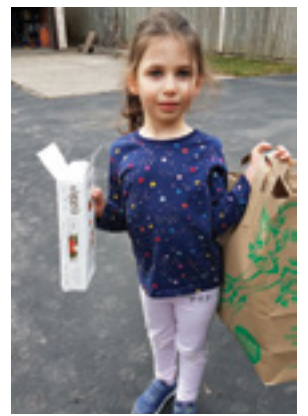
Mitzvah notebook - A special journal for families to document experiences and "*Mitzvah-tunities*."

A Mitzvah Meerkat - A special mascot to take along while doing a *mitzvah*.

The Mitzvah Box is sent home with a different family each Friday.

Here is what one family had to say about their experience with the Mitzvah Box:

"We had a great weekend learning about *mitzvot*! Max and Sylvie took turns making the meerkat feel welcome and comfortable in our home. We even offered "*Mitzvah*" some of our cat, Boozer's, treats. We had lots of chats about the importance of kindness and spreading love and peace around the world. We used this opportunity to talk about what we can donate to help other families in need.



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Sunday, May 19

through Sunday, June 30

No classes on June 9 due to the Shavuot
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@ 11:00 AM - 12:00

Sunday, May 19

through Sunday, June 30

No classes on June 9 due to the Shavuot
holiday

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or call/text 716.400.1550

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Moderator: Jonathan Epstein (Buffalo News)

Tuesday, May 28th

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Instructor: Amherst police

Tuesday, June 4th

Jewish cooking: Shavuot blintzes

Chani Labkovski

The Way We Saw Gordon R. Gross (z”l)

Excerpts from Four Eulogies

Buffalo booster and Jewish Community builder Gordon R. Gross passed away March 25. During his lifetime, he was president of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, Kadimah Academy and the Jewish Community Center, among others. Here are excerpts from some of the eulogies given at his funeral on March 29. They include granddaughter Micki Weiner, law partner Jeffrey Human, Community Foundation of Buffalo Officer Kate Masiello, and Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein.

Micki Weiner

The first, and only other time I’ve spoken in public was on behalf of my grandfather. In 2014 I had the honor of introducing Gordy as the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies. It’s no secret that my grandfather was an incredible man and he truly was my hero. Through his numerous acts of community service and philanthropy, he taught me how important it is to give back; and he always went above and beyond to help those he cared about.

Among my family, my grandfather was affectionately referred to as “Goo” – a nickname coined by me, when as a toddler I was unsuccessful at pronouncing Gordon. Growing up, my grandfather always referred to me as his favorite granddaughter, the joke being that (for a long time) I was his only granddaughter. In recent years he began to tell me he loved being a grandfather, but he wanted to be great. I would always reply, well you’re already great in my eyes. And for those of us that knew and loved Gordy, he really was. Yesterday, my brother Kyle shared the thought that if Goo were here, he’d be the first one to leave his own funeral. I think we all know that would be true, though he’d probably say it was because Gretchen was tired and needed to get home. Big G, since you’ve just left this party, I will miss you...more than you’ll ever know.

Jeffrey Human

More than 60 years ago, Gordon and Irv Shuman started the law firm “Gross Shuman”. In those 60 years, other law firms have come and gone, but their firm has grown and thrived. Gordon and Irv, together with Peter Gilfillan’s



Gordon R. Gross

leadership, created a culture where we care about each other as family and work together to help solve our clients’ legal problems. We deeply appreciate the legacy he and they left to us and we intend to continue that legacy and pass it on.

Gordon’s gratitude and desire to give back extended beyond our law firm of course. With Gretchen, he had an enthusiastic partner in these endeavors and life. I remember the stacks of letters on his desk that he signed personally requesting contributions to the “Ride for Roswell”.

Gordon lived life at high speed. He focused and worked vigorously on the work, job or cause at hand. Then he moved on to another adventure or cause. He was happy to watch the seeds he had planted grow and be cultivated by others. His approach to life is reflected in the lengthy list of the Boards he served on and the honors he received.

When some people look at a glass of water they see it as half empty. Others see it as half full. Gordon saw the glass as overflowing.

Kate Masiello

We have lost a true giant, a determined, purposeful collaborator, an indefatigable, ingenious, irreplaceable man who embodied what it means to be a true gentleman. No matter how far he’d come, Gordy always challenged himself to do more...and in so doing, he inspired everyone around him to reach higher, too. There are so many examples

of the typically understated way that Gordy consistently launched heroic, lasting improvements that will benefit WNY for generations.

In the education field alone, Gordy worked with Read to Succeed Buffalo and our Buffalo and Erie County Public Library system to improve literacy throughout our community. He was a champion for The Park School, Kadimah School, and St. Mary’s School for the Deaf. He served as a SUNY Trustee. And Gordy and Gretchen have been major donors to UB Law School and to the UB School of Dental Medicine, in tribute to his late brother Alan.

Gordy lived his Jewish faith every day by sharing his gifts with others and rolling up his sleeves to advance the mission of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, The Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, The Jewish Community Center, UB’s Department of Jewish Thought, Temple Beth Zion...and many, many more...He served as a board member for 24 non-profit organizations that benefit WNY –and as the board Chair for 12 of them.

I’d like to leave you with 3 things that Gordy shared with me during an interview 10 years ago. To me, they summarize his inspiring philanthropic philosophy. In his own words: **The First:** “We’ve been very fortunate and the WNY community has been good to us. I feel good about knowing that whatever funds we leave behind us will be used to benefit the community and help other people. There’s no sense building monuments.”

The Second: “The most important thing to do -- is to do something. Everybody – or most everybody – has good thoughts. The real issue is translating those thoughts into action.” And **The Third:** “The part I’ve most enjoyed is interacting with people who are optimistic, who are farsighted, who share dreams and desires that go beyond their immediate self or family. I think that’s invigorating – and I’ve enjoyed it very much.” Rest in peace, Gordy. Thank you for showing us all how to fight the good fight.

Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein

When we think of pillars of the community, we think of those that stand on the outside of the community holding us up. Pillars, after all, stand on the corners of a room. But, Gordy wasn’t like that at all. He was inside, among us - loving us, from where we were. He was down to earth and personable. He was funny. He was joyful. He was generous. And, he was passionate about making Western New York better. Not just for one day or one year, but every day, every year of his entire life. And, not just one person, but everybody within his reach. They truly do not make people like Gordy all the time. And, we were lucky to have him right here with us. Thank you, Gordy, for teaching us what it really means to be a pillar of community.

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 individuals in our community passed away during the period from March 19 – April 16. * May their memories forever be a blessing, and may their loved ones be comforted among the mourners of Zion.



Alan Gendler
Arthur (Archie) Glick
Zina Glickson
Nancy Greene
Gordon R. Gross
Lynn Kantor
Ralph Kushner
Norman Morse

Barbara G. Pleskow
Keva Richman
Rochelle Redlo
Morris Rosenthal
Bernice Seidman
Herbert Thier
Esther Yasinow

**If we inadvertently missed printing the listing of your loved one, please write to ellen@buffalojewishfederation.org and we will include the name next month.*

Remembering A Holocaust Hero, ‘Uncle Tibor’ To Me

By Steve Lipman

Righteous Gentile Tibor Baranski saved thousands of Jews in wartime Budapest. But the author came to know him in a deeply personal way.

Uncle Tibor died this week.

Not many people outside of the Hungarian émigré community in the U.S., or some circles of Holocaust survivors or the residents of Buffalo, my hometown where the Budapest native settled several decades ago, know the name of Tibor Baranski.

And no one, besides members of his own devoutly Catholic family would call him “Uncle,” as I, an Orthodox Jew, did.

As he in turn called me Pista, the Hungarian diminutive for Stephen.

Uncle Tibor — it would sound unnatural to refer to him here as Mr. Baranski, which is this newspaper’s (*The Jewish Week*) usual practice in articles of this type — was a hero of the Holocaust. It

would be an exaggeration to call someone who was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile and won several awards from Jewish organizations an unsung hero, but never seeking accolades, he never achieved the same level of fame as someone like Raoul Wallenberg, with whom he worked during World War II saving Jews from the Nazis.

Uncle Tibor, in 1944 a young priest-in-training, did for the Papal Nuncio, the Vatican’s ambassador in Budapest, just what Wallenberg, the Swedish scion of a wealthy banking family, did for the Swedish embassy. He set up safe houses for endangered Jews, printed meaningless but official-looking and lifesaving passes that impressed Nazi soldiers,



pulled Jews out of roundups and defied Nazi officials, risking his life.

Understanding the Nazi mentality, he borrowed the Papal Nuncio’s impressive-looking diplomatic vehicle, a Rolls Royce, and using a combination of bluster, bravado, theatrics and abusive language he ordinarily would not use, outwitted and out-thought Nazi soldiers and anti-Semitic Arrow Cross members.

“I worked night and day and got very little sleep. Some days I didn’t have a second to eat,” he would say. He was 22 then. Besides the grace of God ... I had some courage and some organizational abilities.”

Why did he risk his life?

“Because the physical life is nothing.”

Uncle Tibor was credited with saving 3,000 Jews. Maybe more. “My Jews,” he called them, in the style of many non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Shoah.

He had lived in Buffalo for a few decades — he left his homeland after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, as he was as avidly opposed to the godless communists as he had been to the Nazis. But I never heard his name until 1979, when someone I had known from college mentioned that his landlord was getting some sort of honor from Israel.

Tibor Baranski was to be recognized as a “Righteous Among the Nations,” Yad Vashem’s highest designation for gentiles who had put their lives on the line for Jews, it turned out. I was then serving



Tibor Baranski’s marker at Yad Vashem.

as editor of the *Buffalo Jewish Review*, the city’s weekly Jewish newspaper. I contacted this Baranski, interviewed him, heard him tell stories of how his deep Catholic faith led him to ignore demands by Nazi officers that he stop working on behalf of Jews. And I heard other deeds of bravery, including enduring then defying Nazi demands that were delivered with a pistol held to his head.

“Why do you, a Christian, help Jews?” Uncle Tibor told me the Nazis asked him. “You are either silly or an idiot.” He would answer, “it is because I am a Christian that I help the Jews.”

And I wrote about Uncle Tibor, the first of a series of articles over the years that developed into a friendship between him and his wife Katalin (he had given up his dream of becoming a priest after the War), and my parents.

Uncle Tibor wasn’t bragging when he told these stories; he was simply talking about his life. His only reward, he

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would tell me, would come from God. “If” he was deserving. “I only did what God demanded of me. I’m only a useless servant.”

“Your not-so-lousy uncle,” he would identify himself, in the Hungarian accent he never lost, when phoning me, his form of self-effacing humor.

The Baranskis shared many Shabbat meals and Passover seders with the Lipmans.

That’s when he became my “Uncle Tibor,” the only name I ever called him. He would call me his “dear Nefew” in letters.

When I got married in Brooklyn nearly 30 years ago, the Baranskis came in from Buffalo.

Uncle Tibor, until his health and memory began to fail in recent years, would send me Pesach and Rosh HaShanah greeting cards annually, with messages written in English or Hungarian. As he became weaker, he still insisted on accompanying his family to trips back to Hungary, where he seemed to regain his strength.

Sometimes I would try to schmooze with him in my meager, self-taught Hungarian; he always humored me.

He was a typical product of his generation and upbringing – regal and confident, a man who knew his place in this world and the next world. He was a combination of formality and casualness, an Old World kisser of women’s hands, always dressed in jacket and neatly pressed pants, fluent in German (he also, predictably, knew Latin and some Hebrew), a devotee of classical music and fine art.

Over the decades, including a day I spent with him traveling to the White House in 1981 to attend the ceremony at which Wallenberg (who had been arrested by the Red Army in Budapest in January 1945 and disappeared into the gulag) was made an honorary U.S. citizen, I heard Uncle Tibor tell stories: about working with Wallenberg; about sharing a cell with an Orthodox rabbi in Hungary after being arrested for his anti-communist activities; about being embraced in Israel during a trip there by a then-grown Hungarian-born Jew who recognized his savior from time spent in one of Budapest safe houses when he was a child; about in-effect adopting a young Holocaust survivor; about serving on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The same strength that powered Uncle Tibor’s heroism also made him stub-

born. He was as unbending as steel when his religious or political beliefs were challenged. That stubbornness cost him many jobs, including one as a teacher in the Buffalo public school system, when he refused to compromise his autocratic, no-excuses-accepted teaching style. He would call people who earned his ire, including bosses and prominent politicians, “sh--s,” a decidedly un-Christian term. A conservative Catholic, he could be respectfully critical of the liberal turn he thought the Church was taking, especially during the papacy of John Paul II. A loyal U.S. patriot, he would unapologetically lambaste any number of U.S. politicians.

The Buffalo News, in its obituary this week (he died Jan. 21), called Uncle Tibor a “quiet hero.” I question the adjective. He was anything but quiet. He would let you know if he disagreed with anyone or anything. In Nazi-occupied Budapest, he called Adolf Eichmann, to the infamous Nazi’s face, a scoundrel.

In Israel one year, I wandered around the winding roads of Yad Vashem one afternoon in an attempt to locate the tree, with a plaque bearing Uncle Tibor’s name at the base, which had been planted in his honor. It took hours; no map was available; I finally found it and photographed it; Uncle Tibor was delighted to receive a print as a gift.

My framed print now hangs in my living room.

As a devout Catholic, Uncle Tibor always showed deep respect for my observant Jewish faith; if he would bring me some food, he would make sure it bore a kashrut symbol.

For Uncle Tibor, his own faith, his belief in heaven, was as tangible as the Bible he would frequently hold in his hands.

“He always talked about death as his heavenly birthday,” his stepson, Dr. Peter Forgach, a Buffalo eye surgeon, told me on the phone this week.

Uncle Tibor died at 96, surrounded by family, a rosary in his hands; he had received the last rites a few days earlier.

The last words that passed his lips were a prayer.

Steve Lipman is a staff writer for The New York Jewish Week where the piece was originally printed January 23, 2019. A Buffalo native, he is a former editor of the Buffalo Jewish Review. You may reach him at steve@jewishweek.org. This article is reprinted by permission of the author and of The New York Jewish Week.



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