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Birthday USA!

The Award Winning

# THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

BUFFALO, ISRAEL & THE JEWISH WORLD | BUFFALOJEWISHFEDERATION.ORG

JULY 2021 | TAMMUZ-AV 5781

# LAUNCHING

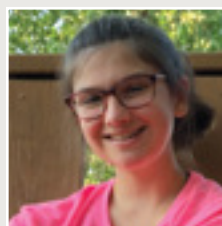
## THE NEW COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS SCHOOL



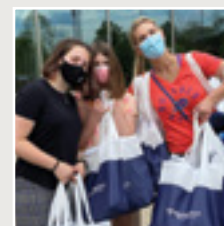
# September 2021

( 4 - 5 )

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# July 2021

## Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

**July is the month** we traditionally celebrate freedom as Americans. The Fourth of July has always been a joyous, fun, and exciting celebration in my family, whether in Buffalo at the Waterfront, in Canada at the beach or at camp with friends. And I know it will be especially dazzling this year because together, whether as a community, city, or country, we are celebrating Freedom from COVID as well as the 245th birthday of the United States!

I am so looking forward to enjoying more dining and personal connection with friends and family, both outside and inside; eating at restaurants all over WNY; going to many more cultural and community events than last summer; participating in Shabbat services in person; visiting many more gardens than last year, and simply hanging out with friends and family.

I know everything won't be back to "normal" yet this summer. I'll still miss going to Canada, especially to Niagara-on-the-Lake and the beaches nearby. I'll still wear my mask when I go grocery shopping and visit crowded venues. I won't take friendship and celebrations for granted, either. I will be more present with friends and at events. I am so grateful our Jewish community, who again, through its many organizations, leadership, families and individuals helped to bring us through these frightening, dangerous and unprecedented (at least in my lifetime) 16 months of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Jewish Journal*. There's a great deal to celebrate this summer, from the new Community Religious School (pages 4-5), Dr. Gil Wolfe's position as the new Campaign for Jewish Buffalo Chair (page 3), our new collaboration with UB (page 10), comedian Benji Lovitt's visit to Buffalo (page 14) and so much more!

So Woohoo! Bring it on! Happy Freedom to your family from my family! Stay well.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

## On The Cover



Buffalo synagogues prepare to launch the new Community Religious School.

Graphic design by Jill Komm.

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# Federation Addresses Antisemitism Everyday

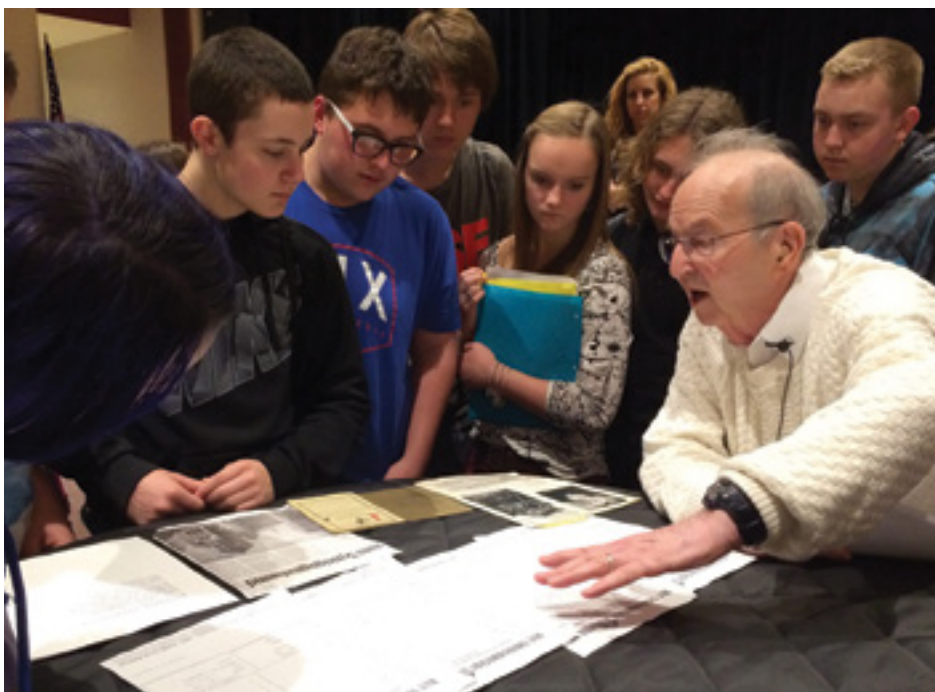
**A Special Message from Federation President Shelly Yellen and CEO Rob Goldberg**

In recent weeks, we have witnessed an alarming rise in antisemitism around the world. While some of it can be attributed to Israel's recent *Operation Guardian of the Walls*, the recently released "Study on American Jewry" by the Pew Research Center highlights the concern of growing antisemitism (e.g., 75% of American Jews think there is more antisemitism in the U.S. than five years ago).

The Buffalo Jewish Federation has called, and will continue to call on civic leadership at all levels to strongly condemn antisemitism. We will also proudly demonstrate to our community and the world that we will never allow antisemitism to diminish us. To this end, we will continue our deep investment in efforts to combat antisemitism through education, security, and forging alliances and building bridges of greater understanding with our neighbors so we can stand united against hate.

## Education

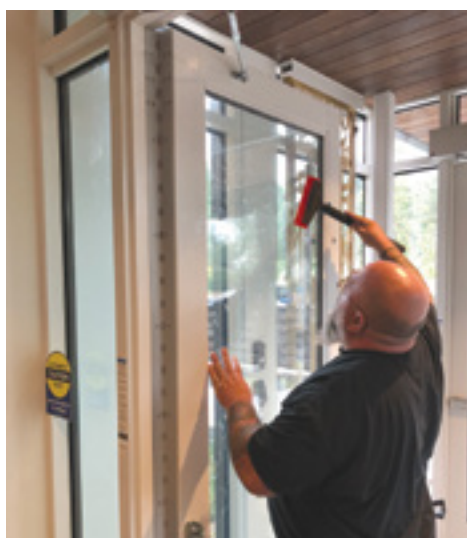
While antisemitism is often driven by hate, perhaps the most effective way to address it is by educating the community about Judaism, Jews, and Israel. Our "Student to Student" teen initiative led by the **Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (CJEL)** is fostering greater understanding of our people. Our **Holocaust Resource Center (HRC)** provides ongoing education and supports a highly effective speaker series. And, through programs on campus including Hillel and our recent collaboration with the University at Buffalo, we empower college students to advocate against anti-Zionism.



Holocaust Survivor Herman Stone talking with High School students

## Bridge Building

There is nothing harder than addressing a problem alone. We need friends, partners, and those who decry hate as vociferously as



Installing protective film over glass windows at Temple Beth Tzedek

we do. The **Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC)** works tirelessly to address the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam* with social justice and to collaborate with other communities and leaders. The JCRC is fostering closer relationships with the African American, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Muslim communities to foster a more civil and caring community for all Buffalonians.

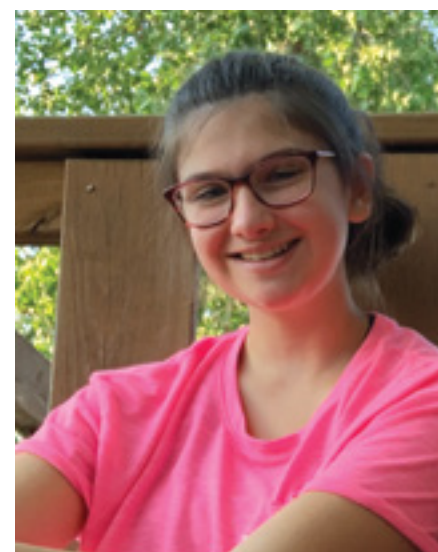
## Security

We're investing in the safety of our community so we can live full and meaningful Jewish lives. In response to the tragic attack at the Tree of Life Congregation, Federation created the **Secure Jewish Buffalo** initiative that raised funds to hire a dedicated security professional working closely with local law enforcement to keep our community safe. We have also used those dollars and

government funds to physically secure our synagogues and agency facilities.

## Upstanders

A valuable role we can all play in these challenging times is to be an Upstander, calling out antisemitism and injustice. As Elie Wiesel (z"l) famously noted, "Silence encourages the tormenter, never the tormented." Last month in our *My Jewish Buffalo* we highlighted one local high schooler, Jenna Hecht (<https://buffalojewishfederation.org/jenna-hecht/>) who recently exhibited what it means to be an Upstander when she confronted a classmate who posted an antisemitic message on her social media page. If you have experienced antisemitism in any form, please contact us.



Jenna Hecht, High School Upstander

We are grateful to our professional and volunteer partners at the HRC, JCRC, CJEL, Secure Jewish Buffalo, Hillel and many other agencies and synagogues. **Our community is ready; we are committed; and we are confident in our collective ability to confront antisemitism.**

## SAVE THE DATE

## CAMPAIGN FOR JEWISH BUFFALO KICK OFF EVENT

## Sunday, September 19



# CAMPAIGN for JEWISH BUFFALO

## OUR VISION

A robust, caring and connected Jewish Buffalo where every Jew and their loved ones can access a welcoming and thriving network of communities, engage in meaningful collective Jewish experiences, and explore their own personal Jewish journey.

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JUST SOCIETY

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TO ISRAEL  
AND GLOBAL  
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PRESERVING  
OUR LEGACY

SUSTAINING &  
SECURING OUR  
COMMUNITY

## YOUR GENEROSITY

Allows the Buffalo Jewish Federation to make our vision a reality. This month we are highlighting another one of our impact areas to illustrate some of the exciting things happening because of your support in our community.

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Caring for each other is what the Campaign for Jewish Buffalo makes possible, every minute of every day. And we've been doing this for over a century. Your support helps us continue the important work of Preserving our Legacy and so much more.

Please consider making your gift today: [BUFFALOJEWISHFEDERATION.ORG/DONATE](http://BUFFALOJEWISHFEDERATION.ORG/DONATE)



# Dr. Gil Wolfe to Chair Campaign for Jewish Buffalo

Neurologist Dr. Gil Wolfe leads both at work and throughout Jewish Buffalo. His many volunteer roles include serving on the Buffalo Jewish Federation Board of Governors and Federation's Partnership 2Gether Leadership Council. This summer, Gil will succeed Howard Rosenhoch as General Campaign Chair for Federation's Campaign for Jewish Buffalo.

"I am honored to be asked to take on this role for the Federation Campaign. I have been involved with Campaigns in Dallas and Buffalo for many years, but never at this level of leadership. I am learning from professional staff and dedicated volunteers like Howard Rosenhoch and Joni Shatkin the best ways to engage our Jewish community. I really hope to relay the message here and to our Snowbird families in other places the integral role the Federation plays in supporting people and programs locally and overseas. Both prior to and during the pandemic, we can point to ways Federation support has made a real difference in people's lives. In kind, our community's support of the Campaign is crucial."

Originally, from New York City, Gil moved with his family to Dallas, Texas right before his Bar Mitzvah in the mid-1970s. Gil's mother, who was born in Poland, grew up in Haifa, Israel after the war. As a child, Gil visited Israel frequently and attended summer camp there for several summers with his cousins, where he became semi-fluent in Hebrew. After attending Princeton University, he returned home to do his medical training in Dallas and then came back east to complete his neurology residency and neuromuscular fellowship training at the University of Pennsylvania. After returning to Dallas where he served on the faculty at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School for 18 years, Gil moved to Buffalo to take on his current role as Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurology at University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, where he serves as the Irvin and Rosemary Smith Endowed Chair and is a University at Buffalo Distinguished Professor.

While in Dallas, Gil became engaged at the Dallas Federation and the Partnership2Gether program that, like Buffalo, was connected to Israel's Western Galilee. Gil worked as an ambassador, helping to organize training exchange programs between doctors in Dallas and those at the Galilee Medical Center (then called the Western Galilee Medical Center) in Nahariya. These exchange programs were ongoing for about five years where doctors would come for 1-2 months at a time, working closely, and learning from fellow physicians. Gil even continued his relationship with



Dr. Gil Wolfe

one of the Israeli doctors, Chair of Neurology Dr. Bella Gross, with whom he published an article in *The Journal of Clinical Neuromuscular Disease* (2004). Dr. Gross has since come to visit and work with Dr. Wolfe and his department's stroke division headed by Dr. Robert Sawyer here in Buffalo as well.

Since relocation to Buffalo in 2012, Gil has continued to build and deepen his relationship with the Galilee Medical Center, returning to give lectures there as well as for other academic medical centers throughout Israel, including Tel Aviv University, Meir Medical Center in Kfar Saba and the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot. Since the Buffalo Jewish Federation became part of the Partnership 2Gether Central Area Consortium four years ago, Gil has been able to continue his involvement with the Western Galilee region and hopes to re-establish connections with the various medical communities throughout the Partnership, an effort that is being relaunched now.

Gil is looking forward to the 2022 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo's Kick-Off Event Sunday, September 19. More details about this event will follow in next month's *Jewish Journal*.

**For more information, contact Assistant Executive Director Randi Morkisz at 716-628-3431.**

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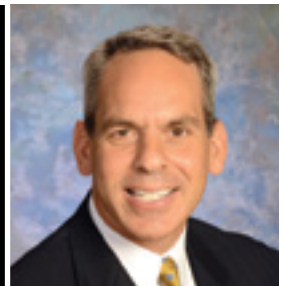
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# Buffalo Synagogues Collaborate to Launch Community Religious School

BY EZRA N. RICH

In addition to disrupting regular life, the COVID pandemic has also proven as a launching pad for new ways of learning, connecting, and exploring. This fall, Buffalo's three largest synagogues—Temple Beth Zion, Congregation Shir Shalom, and Temple Beth Tzedek—are coming together to launch a community-wide religious school on Sunday, September 12 that is open to all families of Jewish Buffalo. The combined effort will bring all their students together under one roof and will also be open to Jewish families that are not currently members of one of the participating congregations. Led by co-directors Beth Steinberg and Einav Symons, the school will meet in-person at Congregation Shir Shalom with potential experiential experiences across Western New York. Both Mrs. Symons, the director of the Shir Shalom/Beth Tzedek Geshar Religious School, and Mrs. Steinberg, director of the Temple Beth Zion Religious School are veteran educators who worked together for many years at Kadimah Academy.

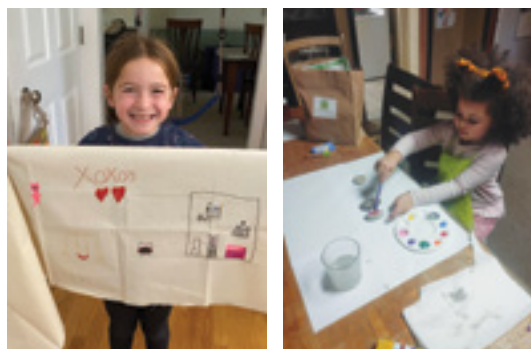
The Community Religious School initiative began pre-COVID with a task force co-chaired by Gretchen Gross and Evie Weinstein, two longtime youth education leaders in Jewish Buffalo, in tandem with the rabbinic and lay leadership of all three synagogues and the guidance of the Buffalo Jewish Federation.

"The work of the Community Religious School Task Force laid the groundwork for the establishment of this exciting effort of TBZ, CSS and TBT to merge their religious schools. The task force created a mission statement and values statement based on Jewish ethics and *middot* (behavior traits)," says Evie Weinstein. "The task force is proud to know that the Community Religious School will be ready to open and look forward to an exciting year with the three synagogues working together for the betterment of Jewish education in our community."

## Fostering Community

One of the special elements of the Community Religious School will be having all children learning and socializing together under one roof. While many local youths may be the only Jewish child or just one of a few in their grade at school, the Community Religious School plans to have over 130 Jewish children enrolled from across Western New York.

"The School will meet every Sunday morning from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.," says Mrs. Symons. "There will be one-on-one Hebrew tutoring for students in Grades 3 through 7 to be scheduled sometime during the week



based on the student's and tutor's schedules. Grades 1 and 2 will receive Hebrew instruction on Sunday mornings in small groups," she adds.

"This merging of schools, of traditions, cultures, people, and priorities is a long-term process that will continue throughout our first year and beyond," says Mrs. Steinberg. "As Co-Directors of the new school, Einav and I are working together to take the best aspects from each of our programs and weave them together into a model of excellence in Jewish education: an innovative, inspirational, meaningful, and authentic experience for all of our students that leads them to *tikkun middot* (personal growth and self-discovery) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)."

Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein of Congregation Shir Shalom, Rabbi Adam J. Rosenbaum of Temple Beth Tzedek, and Rabbi Sharon L. Sobel of Temple Beth Zion, have been working closely with the religious



school Co-Directors on the curriculum and how it will both educate the students as well as expose them to a range of Jewish and Israeli traditions, cultures, and experiences. There are preliminary discussions for optional Tuesday afternoon opportunities beyond the Community Religious School's Sunday schedule and one-on-one Hebrew tutoring. These may involve experiential education and learning sessions with other local Jewish agencies, individual synagogues, and other partners.

## A Gateway

While many local families are already affiliated with a synagogue, the Community Religious School is open to all families and seeks to reach those who are not currently members at the participating congregations. "A key value of this new model is to have it open to all corners of our community," explains Buffalo Jewish Federation CEO Rob Goldberg.

## Council of Presidents

The creation of the Community Religious School has involved the

presidents and executive leaders of Temple Beth Zion, Congregation Shir Shalom, and Temple Beth Tzedek coming together to put the needs and opportunities for local Jewish students first. It has been a winding road as COVID and unforeseen financial clouds appeared on the horizon. Fortunately, the details for the inaugural year were finalized and approved by the congregations this spring in advance of school beginning in the fall of 2021.

"This new Community Religious School is a huge step forward in the spirit of collaboration between our congregations," notes Temple Beth Zion President David Goldberg. "Our children live in the same neighborhoods and go to the same schools, then they go to their separate synagogues for their Jewish education. Now, they can learn together about their religion, and learn Hebrew together. It is very exciting."

This is an exciting and historic new chapter in Jewish education in WNY," says Congregation Shir Shalom President Bruce Corris. "Preparing our kids to lead fulfilling Jewish lives is the most important thing we can do. By creating this new school and combining our resources, we'll be able to do that. We all know about the challenges facing synagogues when it comes to maintaining and growing their religious schools. We're excited



about how this community school will help us not just meet those challenges, but create new opportunities.”

“I am truly excited for the collaboration of our incredible Buffalo Jewish community in creating a school to meet the needs of ALL our children,” adds Temple Beth Tzedek President Marcia H. Goldstein. “With this new Community Religious School, our children will be able to join together no matter their observance level, to study, socialize and pray. As Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, (z”l) said, ‘For Jews, education is not what we know. It’s who we are.’”



## Parental Participation

After a tumultuous school year where most students were virtual or in hybrid models and the local religious schools were online, a Community Religious School with in-person instruction is a breath of fresh air. “I look forward to the Community Religious School bringing Jewish Buffalo together again in a COVID-safe way this fall,” says Rebecca Shaw, a parent of two participating students and a member of the Congregation Shir Shalom Board of Trustees. “I appreciate the caution observed this past year-and-a-half in the CSS/Gesher religious school and I trust that decisions will continue to be made based on the best interest of our children. My sons loved virtual Hebrew and cooking classes, and I know that the new Community Religious School will offer this and so much more.”

**Registration information will be shared with existing Religious School families this summer. For additional information, please contact Co-Directors Beth Steinberg at [beth@tbz.org](mailto:beth@tbz.org) or Einav Symons at [einav.symons@shirshalombuffalo.org](mailto:einav.symons@shirshalombuffalo.org).**

Ezra N. Rich—the father of three daughters in the CSS-Gesher religious school—is marketing communications manager at Uniland Development Company and proudly serves on the boards of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Temple Beth Tzedek, and the Hebrew Benevolent Loan Association of WNY.

# Buffalo Women join Dignity Grows™ Project

During May, the local **Dignity Grows™** chapter, a program of the Women’s Philanthropy of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, held its first tote-packing party. The event, hosted by Women’s Philanthropy Chair Joni Shatkin, opened with a fun ice breaker, followed by a presentation from **Dignity Grows™** Chair Nina Lukin. Each tote bag was filled with a month’s supply of soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, along with menstrual and/or shaving products. The group of 12 volunteers packed 125 totes that were delivered to Jewish Family Services of Western New York to be distributed to our neighbors in need.

**Dignity Grows™**, founded by leaders of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford, empowers our neighbors in need by providing menstrual and hygiene supplies for everybody who needs them. The program removes obstacles to better self-esteem and health by providing personal hygiene essentials each and every month by mobilizing volunteers to organize, assemble, and distribute free, reusable zipper-top totes filled with personal care products. Twenty percent (20%) of menstruators in the US suffer from period poverty, lacking the financial resources to purchase these basic necessities.

**Do you want to help? For as little as \$10, you can impact a neighbor’s life for an entire month. Donate today: <https://bit.ly/DIGNITYGROWSBFLO>. You can also volunteer today by hosting or volunteering to help at a Dignity Grows™ packing party: <https://bit.ly/DIGNITYGROWSVOLUNTEER>. To learn more contact: Stacey Block [stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org) 716-463-5052.**



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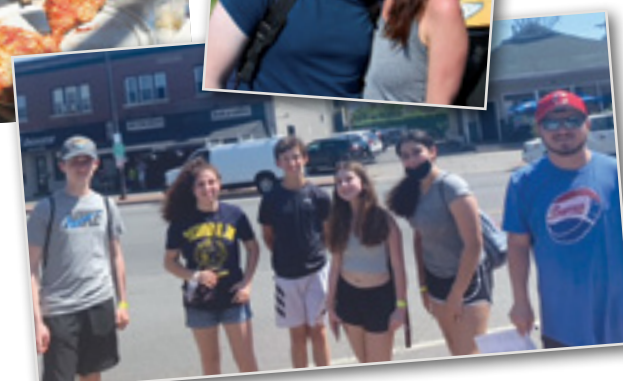
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# JTI Mystery Bus Tour was Fun!

The Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative (JTI), a project of the CJEL and the JCC, provided an opportunity last month for 32 teens to participate in a Mystery Bus Tour. The program was a full-day field trip with food, Jewish learning, and adventurous stops all over the City. ***Want to learn more about the Jewish Teen Initiative? Looking to get your teen connected? Reach out to Ben Wolfson: [ben@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:ben@buffalojewishfederation.org).***



SAVE THE DATE

## TEEN RETREAT

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29

Open to grades 8-12

Questions? Contact:  
[ben@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:ben@buffalojewishfederation.org)



SAVE THE DATE

## CAMPAIGN FOR JEWISH BUFFALO

*Kick Off Event!*

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 19



# Welcome Ben Wolfson, New Manager of Jewish Teen Experience

Ben Wolfson, a Buffalo native and recent graduate of the University of Michigan, has been appointed Manager of Jewish Teen Experience (JTI), a joint position between The Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (CJEL) and the Jewish Community Center. Ben spent the last year serving as a CJEL intern overseeing many aspects of JTI. During his internship, Ben created the Teen Leadership Council, co-facilitated “Being Jewish in 2020” and Mussar for Teens, collaborated with teens to create multiple virtual and in-person events, led the community Purim Carnival and served as the lead professional for the *Box of Love* and the *Box of Light* projects. Before interning with CJEL, Ben was a mentor and engagement intern



JTI Experience Manager Ben Wolfson

for University of Michigan Hillel and a long-time camper and staff member at Camp Seneca Lake.

Upon beginning this new role, Ben shared “I want to give back to the community that

made me who I am - and that gave me the friends that I am still in touch with today.” His goals are to “engage more teens through innovative programs and insightful conversations.” The focus of Ben’s work in his new role will be building relationships with, and building extraordinary experiences for, Jewish teens — and growing the Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative. JTI offers one-time and ongoing experiences to help Buffalo’s teens (Grades 8-12) authentically encounter Judaism. JTI experiences are designed to support Jewish teens in building their knowledge, self-esteem, leadership and life skills, and shape their identities.

**Ben would love to connect with you or your teen; he can be reached at [ben@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:ben@buffalojewishfederation.org).**

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## Dr. Gerhard Falk Publishes Latest Book

Dr. Gerhard Falk published his latest book, *The American Jewish Community from the Ghetto to the Mansion: In the 20th and 21st Centuries* last month. Dr. Falk taught criminology, sociology of religion, juvenile delinquency, and the treatment of offenders at Buffalo State and retired in late 2016. He is the author of 24 books and 42 journal articles. He has been awarded the New York State Research Foundation's Award for Scholarship; the Buffalo State College President's Award for Creativity; and The New York State University Chancellor's Award for Excellence. You can purchase a copy of the book by calling 716-754-2788 or go to [mellenpress.com](http://mellenpress.com).

Dr. Falk explained that his newest book reviews the major institutions which comprise the Jewish community in America, including: religion, the family and the role of Jewish women, education, Jews in the military, politics, film, music, literature and sports.

Written from the sociological point of view, the book is a contribution to the scientific study of religion and therefore avoids theology. It is also a study in social change, as seen through the lens of Jewish life in the "Ghetto" of the Jewish immigrants of the early 20th century, as well as the major changes in American Jewish life in the 21st century.

"This is also a study of American ethnicity, since much of what has happened to Jewish Americans has also happened to all Americans," Dr. Falk remarked. "The lesson drawn from this book is that Winston Churchill was quite



Dr. Gerhard Falk

right when he wrote: 'Democracy is the worst form of government - except for all the others.' This applies particularly to the Jewish community, the descendants of those persecuted in Europe for 1,600 years and finally liberated by the American spirit."

Dr. Falk concludes his book by speculating on the future of the American Jewish Community. "Predicting the future is risky and possibly foolish in light of events that could not be foreseen. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, and the virus nightmare in 2020 were all outside any possibility of prediction. Nevertheless, there are "normal" conditions which are at least partially predictable, and which are examined at the end of the book."

## HRC presents Toby Ticktin Back Award

The Holocaust Resource Center (HRC) recently honored teacher Jim Gang as the 2021 winner of the Toby Ticktin Back Education and Excellence Award. Named after the founder of the HRC, the Toby Ticktin Back Award is given each year to an outstanding educator who has dedicated a significant amount of time and energy teaching the history and lessons of the Holocaust. Jim, a Social Studies teacher at Hamburg High School for 20 years, has made it his life's work to bring the story of the Holocaust to the lives of his students.

Jim's friend and colleague, Andrew Beiter noted, "For Jim, it is not enough simply to have his classes study the event from an academic perspective; but rather, he uses this important material to inspire his students to make a difference in their communities, nation, and world. Through the creation of a Holocaust and Genocide Studies elective and Students for Humanity Club a few years ago, he has provided a platform that has reached and inspired hundreds of students, culminating in them doing acts of public service that are remarkable and inspiring."

In addition, Jim served as a founding member of HRC's New Generation Education Initiative where he spent three years videotaping and producing classroom-ready films that feature the stories of 12 local Holocaust Survivors. He also attended the Belfer Conference for Educators and was named a National Teacher Fellow by the U.S. Holocaust



Jim Gang, 2021 Toby Ticktin Back Award recipient

Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

When Jim's colleague, Lori Raybold (Recipient of the 2020 Toby Ticktin Back Award) asked a his students what they loved about Mr. Gang, one of them said: "He cherishes his students' ideas and values the opinions of everyone he encounters," and another added: "He is one of those teachers that you know will never give the same lesson twice, because every single one is tailored to the interests of the students in front of him."

The HRC is deeply grateful for the incredible work and dedication Jim Gang has shown in Holocaust and human rights education.

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## Celebrating the 2021 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo

Members of the Jewish Federation's Campaign Cabinet celebrated the 2021 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Camp Centerland, Irving M. Shuman Campground. Howard Rosenhoch was honored for his tenure as General Campaign Chair and presented with an original piece of art designed for him by artist Terri Katz Kasimov. Joni Shatkin, Women's Philanthropy Chair, was also recognized for her role. Both Howard and Joni expressed their appreciation to the entire cabinet for the work they have done to raise the funds that impact our community.



## Lewis Shaevel Honored with Brandeis Book Award

Williamsville East High School student Lewis Shaevel was recently awarded the coveted Brandeis University Book Award. This award is for Juniors that are in the top 10% of their class and have demonstrated a commitment to civic engagement, community service, political activism, social justice or volunteer work. Mazal Tov to Lewis and his proud parents, Amy and Andy.



This month we are excited to highlight our new Partnership collaboration with the JCC that will support a higher level of Israel programming for Jewish Buffalo. The work will be led by Gon Erez, recently appointed JCC Chief Program Officer. Gon joins the Center from Youngstown, where he oversaw the JCC's program team, consisting of cultural arts, performing arts, Camp JCC, school age care, older adult, youth, Israel, and Jewish programming.

Gon has a passion for Israel advocacy and community engagement. He enjoys using the skills he gained in the Israel Defense Forces as a lieutenant in the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. Gon graduated from Ben Gurion University of the Negev, where he studied psychology and economics. He is currently finishing a Master of Science in Non-profit Management at Gratz College. We are very excited to be working so closely with Gon and the JCC to expand the



Gon Erez

horizons of our Partnership and engage even more Buffalonians with Israel and the Western Galilee!

**For more information or any questions about P2G, please contact Mandy Weiss at [mandy@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:mandy@buffalojewishfederation.org).**

## Upcoming P2G Programs

Thursday, July 8th @ 11:00 a.m.

### Nigun2Gether Concert

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# New Partnership with UB Brings Community Closer to Campus

The Buffalo Jewish Federation, University at Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences, and Hillel of Buffalo have forged a new partnership that will help connect UB students with opportunities in the region, both on and off campus. The partnership brings Alexander Green, Ph.D., into a new role as Community Jewish Educator, a position that will focus on developing programming, internships and experiential learning opportunities that engage students and help to address important topics in the Jewish community.

"I see myself as a bridge between the University, Hillel and students," shared Green. "I've been working with students for the past eight years and I'm excited about creating even more opportunities for them to do Jewish things, now on a full-time basis."

Starting in August, Green will step into this new role and help to build a vibrant home hub with Hillel, develop key partnerships between constituents that will address the needs of students, and create opportunities to enhance Jewish life on campus and throughout the community.

"We are excited by the promise of this partnership and the opportunities this position will provide our students and the Jewish community," said Robin Schulze, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

In his new role, Dr. Green will enhance the connection between the College, Hillel, the Buffalo Jewish Federation and Jewish Buffalo in an effort to address a series of important issues facing the



The Green family

Jewish community. Specifically, the Community Jewish Educator's initiatives will be based on the following six objectives:

- **Develop Jewish cultural identity, faith and practice in a multicultural, blended society,**
- **Support Jewish literacy,**
- **Innovate organizational structures to address declining affiliation and Jewish demographic trends,**
- **Understand and contextualize Israel's complexity,**
- **Appreciate the contributions of Jews in civic life and support continuing engagement, specifically in relation to issues of social justice and racial equity, and**
- **Prepare future leaders for the greater Jewish community.**

"I'm excited about some of the program opportunities such as creating a 'Day of Jewish Learning' that will connect students to community and faculty," remarked Green. "Another opportunity is to leverage Jewish American Heritage

Month in May and have that be part of the diversity of our campus. We'll be able to show that Jewish issues and Jewish American heritage are part of contemporary culture."

"Alex's new role, along with the support of the brilliant UB faculty, will help us to address our shared challenges and discover creative solutions that shape our future," said Rabbi Sara Rich, Hillel's Executive Director. "The students, the University and the Buffalo Jewish community all have so much to gain by working more closely together. Having this type of role and level of collaboration with the University, Federation and Hillel is a highly coveted arrangement within the Hillel movement and we are proud to have it here in Buffalo."

"Hillel has strong leadership in place and is now a critical player on campus," added Green. "I've served on the Hillel board and now look forward to this new role working in partnership with Rabbi Sara and her team."

The new shared endeavor is funded jointly by the University, Federation and donors throughout the community. "This unique partnership shows how interconnected we are with the campus community," observed Shelly Yellen, President of the Federation.

Green has served as Assistant Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies for UB's Department of Jewish Thought. He holds an MA in Jewish Thought from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a doctorate in Religion from the University of Toronto.

"I'm particularly excited that this new role enables Alex and his family to stay in Buffalo," commented Rob Goldberg, CEO of Buffalo Jewish Federation. "The Greens have enriched Jewish Buffalo beyond measure, from their participation and leadership at Young Israel, Kadimah Academy and Ohr Temimim, to Alex's wife Keren's energy leading our Jewbilee two summers ago, to all they do to welcome both students and community members into their home."

"Keren and I love Buffalo and we happy to be able to continue to contribute to this community," Green said. "We always try to break down the divisions within our own community – we are friendly to everyone and pleased to open our home and our hearts on campus and throughout the community."

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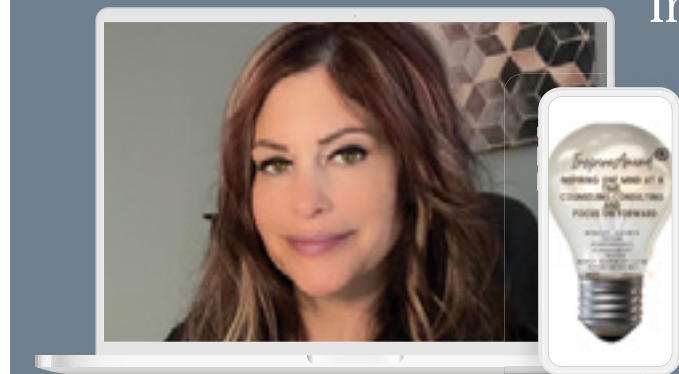
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# Work Hard/Rest Well

BY RABBI ADAM ROSENBAUM

According to the popular song, “There ain’t no cure for the summertime blues.” Whereas that was Eddie Cochran’s lament back in 1958, this complaint can now be heard from just about everyone in the United States. From now until Labor Day, the summer is thought of as a time of leisure – but when was the last time we truly embraced leisure? A recent survey indicates that only 14 percent of Americans take a vacation lasting at least two weeks during the summer, trips that used to be commonplace in years past. By contrast, more than half of adults living in European Union countries take off for this amount of time, or longer. Whether or not this says something about Americans’ job performance compared to that of our European counterparts is unclear; what does seem to be clear is that the endless summer of yore now barely gets off the ground.

I wonder whether the refrain we keep hearing every August – that the summer just flew by – is laced not so much with nostalgia,



Rabbi Adam Rosenbaum

but perhaps also with regret. What is it that stops most Americans from taking kind of breaks they used to?

Certainly, many people are limited by the rules of their place of employment. Others feel that taking such a long break from work will greatly hurt them financially. And many others just feel too attached

to their work, worrying that if they leave it for any substantial period of time they may get so far behind that they will never find their way back. In response to these sentiments, it may be enlightening to learn about relaxation methods at the end of the very first work-week in our history.

The Torah simply tells us that after the six days of Creation, God ceases from work. But there are several *Midrashim* (textual interpretations) which allege that God is especially busy at sunset of the sixth day. One such story posits that, in those final moments, God creates several items that would play a key role in subsequent biblical history. These items are: the hole in the earth that would later swallow the rebellious Korah and his followers; the mouth of the well that supplies the Israelites with water in the wilderness; the *mannah*, which is the food the Israelites eat in the wilderness; the mouth of the donkey that miraculously speaks to the Moabite prophet Balaam; the rainbow that represents the end of the story of Noah and the flood; Moses’ walking stick; the tablets of the Ten Commandments; and a mythical creature known as the *shamir*, who is said to have split the stones

that are used in the construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem.

There are different variations of this list, but regardless of the items, it is clear from this story that God crams a lot of work just before a planned vacation, thinking ahead as to what will be needed in the days and years to come. Working ahead ensures that God won’t have to look back during the very first Shabbat.

God’s challenge is, indeed, our challenge. All of us value the concept of rest, but we don’t always know the best way to approach it. The approach explained in this rabbinic story hints that we are best served if we both work hard and rest well, making the most of our work-time and our downtime. It doesn’t necessarily prescribe vacations of two weeks, or one week, but when we do relax for even a day – even just on Shabbat – we hope to be satisfied that we have done everything we can to briefly leave our life at work in the rear-view mirror.

May our coming weeks be blessed with true *menucha*, rest and satisfaction with a job well-done.

*Rabbi Adam Rosenbaum is rabbi at Temple Beth Tzedek.*

## Thank you, Chief Askey!

Susan Case DeMari, Buffalo Jewish Federation’s Community Security Coordinator, presented John C. Askey, retiring Chief of the Amherst Police Department (APD), with a plaque of appreciation from the Jewish community. Askey, who retired April 3 after 14 years as Amherst Chief, has been succeeded by Scott P. Chamberlin, a 27-year veteran of the department. The plaque read: “To Chief John Askey, in recognition and appreciation of his exceptional effort, dedication, and commitment to safety and helping to make the Jewish Community a safer place.”



Pictured from left to right: New Chief of Police Scott P. Chamberlin, Town of Amherst Council Member Jacqui G. Berger, Chief John Askey, Susan Case DeMari, and APD Captain James McNamara.

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# Summer Days

BY CHANA R. KOTZIN, PH D.

The heat of summer has arrived! As the pandemic eases, outdoor living and recreation is returning. For many Buffalonians, summer was (and still is) a time to head for the beach! From the late 1920s to the height of its popularity in the 1950s, through as late as the 1980s, no summer was complete without at least one trip to Crystal Beach located near Fort Erie, Ontario.

The cross-border connections with Canada and Buffalo are multi-generational and some families can trace their roots to Canada along one or more lines of their family trees. But even without family and friend connections, Canada has been a second home to many of Buffalo's Jews, especially during the summer. Some Jewish Buffalonians rented summer homes on an annual basis and over time, small communities formed along sections of the Fort Erie shore, but most Jewish Buffalonians took day trips, and often recall a special place that is now a part of treasured Buffalo memories.

Crystal Beach Amusement Park originally opened near Point Abino,

Ontario in 1890. This attraction, that eventually grew to offer iconic rides, a ballroom and unique concessions, was dominated by Buffalonians even though it was located across the Niagara River in Canada. Many Buffalo visitors arrived at the Crystal Beach dock as passengers having sailed on the steamship, the *Americana*, that ran until 1929 or the *Canadiana* that operated through the mid 1950s. And the trips there and back on the passenger ships were an extension of summer recreation and entertainment. One performer, Hyman Arluck who would later become the legendary composer and arranger Harold Arlen, worked aboard the *Canadiana* with a group known as the



*Edelmans and friends at Crystal Beach, c. late 1920s. Courtesy of Joyce Greenspan*

*Southbound Shufflers*, formerly the *Buffalodians*. (To learn more about Harold Arlen, check: <https://jewishbuffalohistory.org/a-z/arlen-harold/>).

At the peak of Crystal Beach's popularity during the 1950s, several thousand individuals visited each weekend. Famous singers and bands came to perform at the Crystal Ballroom. The Comet roller coaster was a legend among rides, and many became hooked on the sugar waffles, Hall's Original Suckers and PJ's Crystal Beach Loganberry drink!

In November, we will begin unveiling thematic sections of the Jewish Buffalo History Center website, one of which focuses on leisure and we would like to include images from your summer trips to Crystal Beach and its environs. Please contact me if you have memorabilia you can share on the website via email at: [Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org). Currently we have just a few images from the 1920s and 1930s and would like to expand this small number, as well as our chronological coverage through to the 1950s.

New materials are added on a monthly basis to the website and you can now read more about two Buffalo architects highlighted in the last column: Louis Greenstein and Milton Milstein, part of an ongoing



*Anne Sull, Crystal Beach, 1920s. Courtesy of Elaine Kellick. 2*

"Building Buffalo" series. We are also researching the first part of a series about families who settled in Buffalo, beginning with descendants of families who were part of the earliest families to settle in Western New York. ***If your family came to Greater Buffalo between the 1840s and the 1870s and you have materials you'd like to share through the website, please contact me at: [Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org).*** In the meantime, over the next five months, we will be featuring articles about fraternal and women's organizations, Hillel, and updates about the East Side and North Buffalo. ***If you have images that relate to any of these areas of Buffalo Jewish history, you can submit them through the website at <https://jewishbuffalohistory.org> or contact me, the website coordinator directly, via email at: [Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:Chana@buffalojewishfederation.org).***

Chana Revell Kotzin, Ph.D. is the coordinator of the Jewish Buffalo History Center website, which you can find at <https://jewishbuffalohistory.org/>

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# Life & Legacy® Program Launching in Buffalo

The Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, in partnership with the Buffalo Jewish Federation, has been selected to join 71 other communities across North America participating in a national Jewish legacy giving initiative, that to date has secured more than 30,000 permanently endowed commitments of more than ONE BILLION DOLLARS.

Through LIFE & LEGACY®, the Foundation and the Federation are partnering with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) in launching a community-wide legacy giving initiative. The four-year program for agencies and synagogues provides coaching, training, and incentive grants to ensure that culture of philanthropy and legacy giving becomes an integral part of the Buffalo Jewish community.

The following organizations and team leaders are participating in LIFE & LEGACY® at Buffalo:

- Buffalo Jewish Federation – Howard Rosenhoch
- Center for Jewish Life – Harold Star
- Congregation Shir Shalom – Dan Kester
- Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies – Alison Keane
- Hillel of Buffalo – Jeff Goldberg
- Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo – Andy Deyell
- Jewish Discovery Center – Sonia Young
- Jewish Family Services – Blaine Schwartz
- Kadimah Scholars – Alan Rosenhoch
- Temple Beth Tzedek – Leon Komm
- Temple Beth Zion – Ken Polk

The initial year of the program includes five workshops, which began earlier this spring. Each participating organization is dedicating the efforts of their leaders who will be trained and actively engaged in the legacy development program over the next four years.

“This is an amazing program and a tremendous opportunity for our community. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, our partners at the Grinspoon Foundation have done this in nearly 70 other communities and they have done so with great success,” said Alison Keane, Chair of the Foundation Legacy Team and the LIFE & LEGACY® FJP/



BJF Joint Committee. “We will learn from Jewish Communities across our nation, uniting with others of similar values in something larger than today. Future generations will benefit from the legacies we are creating and the seeds that we are planting. I can’t think of a better alignment with Jewish values.”

“Our partnership with the Foundation and our focus on helping our agencies and synagogues secure a sustainable future is central to the Federation’s mission. I, along with the entire Federation team, could not be more excited to work with the Foundation in bringing these valuable resources to our

community,” added Rob Goldberg, CEO, Buffalo Jewish Federation.

“The Harold Grinspoon Foundation recognizes the potential of Buffalo’s Jewish community and is excited to be partnering with the Foundation and the Federation to enhance a culture of philanthropy and legacy giving in Buffalo and Western New York,” said Arlene D. Schiff, National Director of the LIFE & LEGACY® program. “The time is right, and Buffalo is right!”

“Providing Jewish communities with proven tools and training to help them secure their long-term financial goals is absolutely vital. Through the LIFE & LEGACY® program, I am hopeful that we will be able to help sustain vibrant communities that allow future generations to enjoy our rich Jewish culture and heritage,” said Harold Grinspoon, the founder of HGF.

*For more information on how you can participate in the LIFE & LEGACY® program, please contact Mandy Weiss, LIFE & LEGACY® Coordinator for the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies at [legacy@jewishphilanthropies.org](mailto:legacy@jewishphilanthropies.org) or 716-463-5064.*

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## A Night of Comedy with Israeli Comedian Benji Lovitt

The JCC is proud to present Israeli comedian Benji Lovitt at A Night of Comedy on July 25th at the Rein Family Amphitheatre at the JCC's Camp Centerland. Lovitt's observations on Israeli society, combined with his lifelong involvement in Jewish education, create a hilarious narrative that has brought smiles to faces all over the world.

Since making *Aliyah* in 2006, comedian Benji Lovitt has performed for audiences around the world including Birthright Israel, Jewish Federations, synagogues, and Hillels, and opened up for Jim Gaffigan and Elon Gold during their visits to Israel.

Before his U.S. tour, the JCC was able to catch up with Benji to ask him some personal questions.

### What caused you to make Aliyah?

I grew up in the Young Judea youth movement and spent many years at summer camp, leading up to my year abroad before college. I was very connected to Israel after that, finally moving from a corporate job to one in the Jewish world in my late 20s. It didn't happen overnight but at some point, I just knew that if I didn't give it a shot, I'd regret it forever. 14+ years later, I'm still here!

### How do you come up with your material?

It's pretty easy to come up with ideas as an immigrant and there's no shortage of material in this crazy country. Pandemics, wars, 4 elections in 2 years, and an endless number of new experiences.

### How do you use your comedy to connect Israel and Diaspora Jews?



Benji Lovitt

We all know that the real Israel isn't the one you see on the nightly news. I think my comedy reminds Diaspora Jews that this is a magical place and that even the things that drive us crazy can be laughed at. Israelis are fascinated by my perspective which makes them see things in a way they never thought of before. Comedy is truly an international arena these days. Turn on *Netflix* and you can find international comics who joke about America, making you see things in a new light.

### Has your humor changed since becoming "Israeli"?

Oh, definitely. Humor is a reflection of your identity. A lot of the stuff I used to joke about just seems stale to me and no longer clever, like making fun of El Al. "Stale", because they were shallow, obvious observations that everyone makes, and also not representative of

who I am. If I were still making "new immigrant" jokes bashing Israelis after all my time here, it would mean that I hadn't acclimated at all. Now I make fun of myself and Americans as much as Israelis.

### How do you find Israeli humor different from American humor?

It's darker, edgier, and less politically correct. Israelis are better at understanding: one, that "they're just jokes" and two, what's being made fun of.

### Israel seems to always been connected with serious issues, so how do you find the humor?

I suspect this year has helped America and the world catch up to Israel and the Jewish world. We have always laughed to keep from crying. A year ago, the internet was flooded with "pandemic humor". While there's nothing funny about millions dying, if we couldn't laugh at the situations we find ourselves in, we'd lose our minds.

### How has the last year been personally for you?

Actually, not bad! I'm healthy, my family's healthy, I survived... I was able to make a living doing standup online. It doesn't compare to the real thing but if you can raise people's spirits from across the world without having to get on a plane, it could be a lot worse.

**For more information and to purchase tickets visit [www.jccbuffalo.org](http://www.jccbuffalo.org).** The event is co-sponsored by The Buffalo Jewish Federation and Congregation Beth Abraham in partnership with Congregation Shir Shalom and Temple Beth Zion. **Contact Katie Wzontek with questions at [kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org](mailto:kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org).**

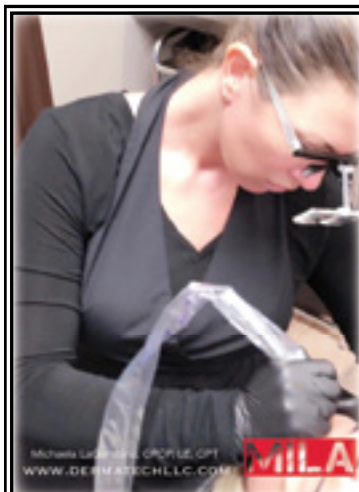
## Sam Sugarman releases first record

One of Jewish Buffalo's own, Sam Sugarman, lead singer-songwriter of Ki's Garden has just released her first EP, 'Lion's Den,' now available on Spotify, i-Tunes, Amazon Music, YouTube and on all other streaming platforms. The music of Ki's Garden is soulful, authentic, with lyrics inspired by the folky, gritty canyon sounds and meaningful storytelling of the 1960's and 70's.



Sam has collaborated with some of Buffalo's most beloved musicians in both the recording and live performance spaces, most notably with her co-producer, Frank Grizanti. She took up a performance residency with Buffalo Distilling Company from 2017-2019, was invited to perform in the lineup for the city of Buffalo's first music festival, "Cobblestone Live," for the East Aurora Music Festival, for Buffalo's annual showcase, "Music is Art," and was commissioned to write an original song along with a collaborative visual interpretation for local artist, Galia Binder. In 2017, Sam's original, "Golden," made its radio debut on Buffalo's local station 107.7. She was a recipient of the Difference Maker Award and named one of Buffalo's 18 under 36 by the Buffalo Jewish Federation for her work as a musician and activist. In 2019, Sam created "7-1-6 Music Gives Back" that partners with nonprofits to raise money through benefit concerts. In November 2019, she and her team raised over \$2,000 for the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo. She hopes to continue with this work when it is safe to gather in community once again.

**Find out more about what's in store for Ki's Garden at [kisgarden.com](http://kisgarden.com) and connect with her on social media on Instagram ([instagram.com/kisgarden](https://www.instagram.com/kisgarden)) and through her Facebook Page, Ki's Garden.**



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**1»** Celebrate our American freedom on the 4th of July this year! One way to do that is by attending a lunch discussion on "Liberty, Independence & BBQ" with the Jewish Discovery Center July 4 at 11:30 a.m. at 831 Maple Road. **Go to [jewishdiscovery.org](http://jewishdiscovery.org) or call 716-245-9520.**

**2»** PJ Library moves outdoors for summer after a virtual year. (See ad on page 7.) Check out events July 16 at 5:30 p.m. in Bassett Park and August 8 at 10 a.m. at Canalside near Clinton's Dish. **Contact Susan Goldberg Schwartz at [susan@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:susan@buffalojewishfederation.org).**

**3»** Laugh a lot with Israeli comedian Benji Lovitt and the JCC Sunday, July 25 at Camp Centerland's Rein Amphitheatre. Check in at 5:00 p.m. Show starts at 6:00 p.m. \$14 tickets for members/\$18 for non-members. **Register at [jccbuffalo.org](http://jccbuffalo.org), and read more on page 14.**

**4»** Families in WNY are hungry and there are still food scarcities during this difficult time. **You can help by donating to Feedmore WNY**, which now encompasses Meals on Wheels and the Food Bank. **Go to [feedmorewny.org](http://feedmorewny.org) to donate online, volunteer or learn more.**

**5»** Don't miss GardenWalk Buffalo July 24-25 and the many other local garden walks during July. **Go to [gardensbuffaloniagara.com](http://gardensbuffaloniagara.com) to check the dates, times and areas where you can see amazing local gardens throughout the summer in the 716.**

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in Jewish Buffalo?**

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to correctly  
identify the location  
will be mentioned  
in next month's  
*Jewish Journal*.

Last month, Linda Boxer and Michael & Fran Paskowitz correctly identified the location of the plaque with the Nathan Benderson Community Service Award Winners names listed as the boardroom of the JCC/ Benderson Family Building on North Forest Road.

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# President's Award at Congregation Shir Shalom

In another unique year, it was another unique President's Award presentation at Congregation Shir Shalom (CSS). Last year, Temple president Bruce Corris presented the award to the entire congregation. This year, he presented two awards, one to the Temple's Community Committee and a second to Harvey Horowitz. Here are his remarks, delivered via Zoom at the annual congregational meeting May 26<sup>th</sup>.

"Now it's time for my favorite part of the meeting. The President's Award. And this year, it's the President's Awards, plural. I know I can't top what I did last year in presenting the award to absolutely everyone, but I can still do something special. This year, I'm presenting two awards. Both are going to people who really stepped up in this past year. I should point out, that's not unusual; they've been doing that for years, but this past year had some unique challenges and they rose to the occasion.

First, as you know, it's so important to keep our members connected to each other and to the Temple. And doing that means keeping you informed of



Harvey Horowitz

everything that's happening. So how do we do that? Let me count the ways. Emails, social media, the newsletter, phone calls, letters. We didn't use carrier pigeons because they're not kosher. And the reason we're able to do all this is because of the efforts of our communication committee. Julia Cohan, Phil Herzbrun, Larry Horwitz, Dan Kester, Joanne Marquisee, Nancy McGory, Robin

Raphael and Marc Slonim. They work tirelessly and creatively, and you get the benefit of their efforts week in and week out.

This plaque, which will hang in the Temple lobby, says this: "During this pandemic, keeping our members informed and connected has been crucial. The Congregation Shir Shalom Communication Committee has risen to the task. It is with great gratitude that this President's Award is presented to these dedicated and creative committee members."

Thank you for your efforts and your passion. Special thanks to Dan Kester and particularly Larry Horwitz for everything you do for our live stream. We know how important it's been this past year to be able to stream our services, and these two guys have done so much to make it happen.

And now the second award. I'm going to do something a little different when I present this one. Joanne, please unmute everyone so we can hear the applause.

Let me get right to it. The President's Award goes to Harvey Horowitz. There is no bigger day in a Jewish child's life than their B'nai Mitzvah. And no one does a

better job of tutoring them than Harvey. As you know, I'm on the Bimah for many of our B'nai Mitzvahs, and when you hear the kids do their thank yous, they thank the Rabbi and Cantor and their parents...but they always say I REALLY WANT TO THANK MR. HOROWITZ.

We all know what Harvey went through this past year. But he never let it keep him from making sure CSS kids were ready for their big day. His plaque says this: "A B'nai Mitzvah is one of the most important days in the life of a Jewish child and their family. The students who achieve this milestone at Congregation Shir Shalom are not just well prepared, they are motivated and excited thanks to the tutoring they receive. This President's Award is presented to Harvey Horowitz with appreciation for your efforts and for making a difference in the lives of so many Temple families."

Harvey, your students love you, and so does your Temple family. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients, and thank you for everything you do to make this Temple the special place it is."

# Meir Greenberg wins Prestigious Championship

For the 6<sup>th</sup> year, Ohr Temimim School of Buffalo has participated in the International *Chidon* of Jewish Knowledge. This worldwide "*chidon*" or "competition" requires students to study the 613 Biblical Commandments or "*Mitzvot*" with all their intrinsic details, Biblical sources, and practical applications. A 5-book cycle covers all the material over a 5-year period.

After a long period of rigorous study, those students who pass a series of preliminary tests on their respective books are invited to compete on a grand level at the final Game Show. The latter is the highlight of the *Chidon* experience, where the finalists from around the world compete against each other, showcasing their vast knowledge. This year, the Game Show was watched by thousands of people virtually. Over five thousand students from 6 continents, 33 countries and 274 schools, all came together to compete for a medal. This year, Ohr Temimim proudly boasted 24 contestants, out of which there were 3 finalists who had the opportunity to bring home the ultimate prize!

"I am so beyond proud of our students," said Mrs. Yehudis Lorber, *Chidon* coordinator. "The



Meir Greenberg joins his parents, Rivky and Rabbi Levi Greenberg, proudly holding his Silver Trophy after receiving his International Award last week.

number of hours they have dedicated to learning this curriculum of 613 *Mitzvot* in detail is just unbelievable!

What a positive atmosphere in the school, seeing "every child" learning "every *Mitzvah*" with so much excitement."

Last month, the students gathered at the Chabad House, where the stage was set to watch the virtual Award Ceremony together. The excitement in the air was palpable! Sure enough, small town Buffalo was celebrated on the world stage as 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Meir Greenberg, the 12-year old son of Rabbi Levi and Rivky Greenberg and the grandson of Rabbi Heschel and Lea Greenberg of Williamsville, won second place, earning the International Silver Trophy Award! The Grade 8 finalist was Esther Zingorenko and the Grade 7 finalist student was Nessa Grol-Norris.

"Mazel Tov, Meir! What a tremendous accomplishment," exclaimed *Chidon* coordinator, Rabbi Mendel Munitz, "To go up against the world's very best and win is just amazing!!" "What an incredible achievement," added Rabbi Shmuel Shanowitz, principal of Ohr Temimim School. "I can't express how proud I am of Meir and of the dedication and achievements of all the students who participated."





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# KOT Completes the Children's Unity Torah

Sunday, May 16, Kehillat Ohr Tzion gathered for the completion of their Children's Unity Torah, dedicated by Al and Julie Aroeste in memory of Howard Lapides (z"l) and in honor of Irv and Cheryl Stein's 30th wedding anniversary. It was an event that transcended barriers, making it truly, a commUNITY celebration.



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## Buffalo Tango Orchestra to appear August 5 in Springville Series



Moshe and Miranda Shulman's Buffalo Tango Orchestra will appear Thursday, August 5 in the Village of Springville's free Summer Concert Series from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Springville Center for the Arts, on Factory Street. Opening Acts begin at 6:00 p.m. Bring a lawn chair. This program is supported in part by the New York State Council on the Arts and Erie County. Details subject to change. Please check the website for details before the event. **Please note: All NYS Covid-19 guidelines will be followed. Go to [buffalotangoorkestra.com](https://buffalotangoorkestra.com) or <https://springvillearts.org/sca/events/thursdays-downtown-2/>**

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## COMMUNITY

# Festive 4th of July Watermelon, Mango and Corn Salad

BY ROBIN KURSS

Here's a yummy salad that's great as a side dish or as a topping for grilled fish or chicken.

## Ingredients:

### Salad:

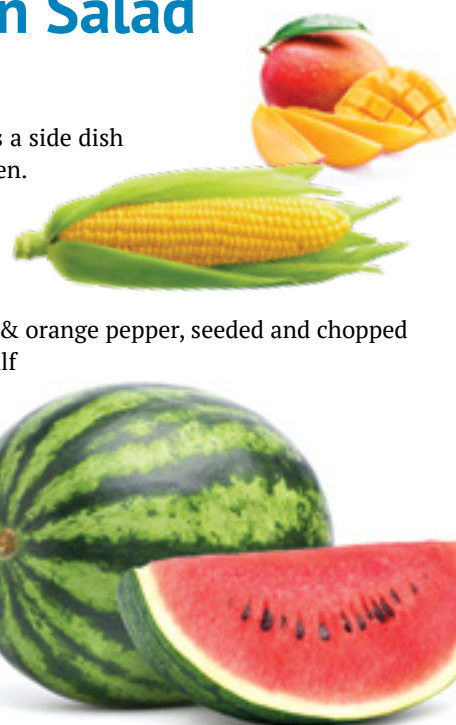
- 2 mangos, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 each: red pepper, yellow pepper & orange pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 c mixed cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 c fresh corn, off the cob
- 3 c seedless watermelon, cubed
- 1/2 c cilantro, chopped
- 4 scallions, chopped

### Dressing:

- 1Tbsp oil
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp lime juice plus, lime zest from the lime
- 1 Tbsp honey

## Directions:

In a small bowl mix dressing. In large bowl, mix all other ingredients together. Pour dressing over and let sit in fridge for 1 hour to let flavors blend. Then enjoy before the fireworks!



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# Making it through a Challenging Year with Gesher

BY AARON BLUM

Although this year with COVID-19 has been so challenging and difficult in so many ways, there have been some silver linings. In March, 2020 when the world shut down, the CSS Gesher Religious School transitioned to remote learning. In order to continue Hebrew education, a new model of individualized Hebrew tutoring was created. Each student received one 30-minute session per week with their own Hebrew teacher via Zoom. This allowed learning to be tailored to each student's level and customized to achieve maximum learning. This model has been continued throughout this current school year as well.

All of my students thrived using this model, each making significant progress as I was better able to meet their individual needs and learning styles I am so very proud of each and every one of my students. However, one student in particular, soared to new heights



Gesher students and parents

using this approach. Fourth grader Hannah Cunningham was able to learn and master a record 14 prayers from September through May. She found this one-on-one tutoring to be a great match for her learning style and really made remarkable gains in her skills.

Yasher Koach to Hannah and to all of the CSS-Gesher students, who continued

to learn and make excellent progress in their Hebrew abilities despite the pandemic.

*Aaron Blum is a teacher in the Shir Shalom Gesher religious school, a teacher's assistant in the JCC's Early Childhood program, and a counselor in the JCC's After-School program.*

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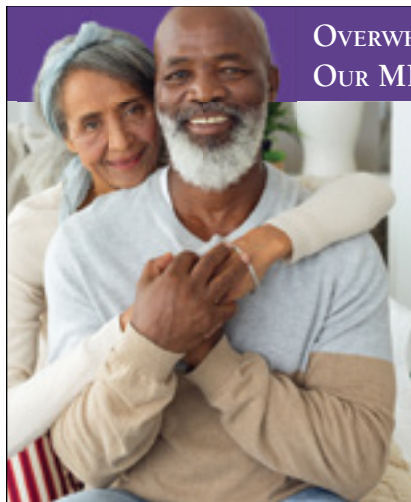
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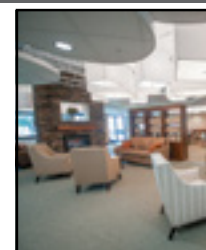
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### Duker, Roberta "Bobbie" Lillian (Katz)

formerly of Mineola, NY, Pittsburgh, PA, Buffalo, NY and Delray Beach, FL, passed away on May 20, 2021. Beloved wife of the late Jonathan J. Duker. Devoted mother of Jonina Duker and her spouse Alan D. Lichtman, Jay S. Duker and his wife Julie Starr-Duker, and Judith Duker Rosenberg and her husband Ken Rosenberg. Cherished grandmother of Jacob and his wife Claire, Bear and his wife Becca, Sam and his wife Colette, Adam, Jess, Jared, and Elly. Great-Grandmother to Leo, Lily, and Jon. Donations in Bobbie's memory may be made to Hadassah hadassah.org, for whom she volunteered tirelessly and served as the City of Buffalo's President among other many positions, and/or Alzheimer's Association, [act.alz.org](http://act.alz.org), with the hopes of helping and maybe preventing others from experiencing her and her family's struggles over these past many years.

## Remembering Robert A. Milch: 1943-2021

The following are excerpts from a eulogy delivered by Christopher Kerr, MD, PhD, on June 6, 2021 for his friend and mentor, Dr. Robert A. Milch.

I have often thought that one of the most interesting and historic places and times to visit would be the kitchen table in the home of the young Bob Milch. I am not sure what they were feeding those boys, Robert and David, but something very special happened there. These young men were clearly dissatisfied with our common language and expressions- they needed poetry, prose, language that was lyrical and that captured the richness of their minds and hearts. Both men would go on to influence, move and motivate others with one flick of a word or the turn of a phrase. It must have been magical.

We all inherit scripts and stories from our families. Bob's inheritance included the struggles of immigrants and the shadows of antisemitism. But these adversities were outmatched by his family and his people's search for knowledge and beauty. With that legacy, he learned to live with purpose, lead with kindness, in devotion to family and with concern for others.

Bob learned all these lessons well.

Of course, having been raised well, Bob would have thought it imprudent to list his many achievements and accolades. And that is unfortunate. Because Bob was an uncommon man who was either blessed or cursed with being



Brothers Bob Milch (left) and David Milch (right)

better than most at just about everything and adoration followed him throughout life.

...Perhaps more important than the achievements or summits Bob reached, were the paths he chose throughout his life. He always searched for the largest burden to bear, and he carried it each time- not for himself, but for others. Many years ago, someone asked me to describe what motivated Bob and I replied, "***well he just sleeps better at night if he slays some Dragons during the day.***"

He loved art, language, medicine, and justice but only insofar as he could find humanity in them. About the care of patients, he wrote "***If you would meet the patient's needs, you must go beyond the mere proficiencies of your training, listen to what you are hearing, see the world with their vision, and understand their fears, for their fears are the manifestations of their needs.***"

Where Bob found humanity lacking, he sought change with purpose and purity. Why else would a talented young surgeon, at the height of his skill and prominence, leave the prestige of the OR to care for patients in their homes, patients beyond intervention or cure, patients in need of a simple presence? I always assumed that he had no choice- he was compelled by the potential for something more humane and he held a vision that few could see. So, he put down the scalpel

and with the same proficiency and determination as when he was holding it, he picked up the sword of advocacy.

...In 1977, the Dragon he set out to fight was in the form of a CEO at the Buffalo General Hospital and the injustice he rose against was patient suffering. That year there were exactly zero hospital-based Palliative Care Units in the United States. So, Bob approached the CEO about a dedicated Palliative Care Unit and the CEO expressed concern about revenue-generating bed loss. Like all heroes, Bob was inspired rather than deterred by being told "no". So, he signed a blank check and told the CEO to fill it in at the end of the year to cover the loss.

That moment of defiance helped launch the momentum towards hospital-based Palliative Care and today over 70 percent of US hospitals offer Palliative Care programs. He also helped launch the first free standing Hospice Inpatient Unit- which is situated across the street. In fact, Hospice Buffalo was the 11th established Hospice in the nation and today there are over 5,500 such organizations which collectively served over 1.6 million patients last year.

In 1999, I sat across from Bob during a job interview that showed the same level of undeterred advocacy, an interview that would change my life. I asked Bob what qualities he was looking for in a doctor entering his field and without missing a beat, he answered, "***righteous indignation.***"

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Bob's advocacy for more humane care never stopped- same fight just different Dragons...from advocating for Universal Health Care to the Medical Aid in Dying Act. His writings are a plea to better align the workings of healthcare to the true needs of the patient, to get closer to the patient's bedside and to understand the view from the bed. In a recent article, he began with a Spanish proverb: ***"As one moves from the stands to the arena, the perspective on the bull changes."*** He then wrote ***"I cannot in good conscience dictate to someone else when they reach an intolerable point of suffering, when the ravages of irreversible disease demand only its endurance, often inconsistent with the values and philosophy with which one has lived."*** You can see why it is that he was built for such heavy work- with his fierce intellect surpassed by an even bigger heart and of course his beautiful language. What was so defining about this article was how he ended it ... with 4 simple words- ***"Bring on the bull."***

One of my favorite memories of Bob is that whenever we had a new medical student or resident he would block off several hours to sit with them- this was his sacred time, where he would truly get to know these students as people, their uniqueness, their hopes and their experience with loss. He more than taught- he inspired.

In a speech to medical students, Bob memorably said ***"When our work is at its finest, together we have seen in those entrusted to our care the emergence of the best of human nature- the courage, grace, dignity and love of which one is capable. To the extent that we are able to play a part in that wonder, we are ourselves elevated and transformed. It may be that recognition which should be foremost in what we need to teach, for what happens at the bedside is not just a function of what we know, but of what we are."***

One of Bob's greatest gifts was knowing when: *when* to listen, *when* to guide, *when* to express concern, *when* to laugh and *when* to hug...My lifelong passion has been horses. Bob would often sit quietly as I went on and on about all things having to do with horses. One day I commented to him that I didn't realize how much he also loved talking about horses. He smiled and said ***"I don't. I love you when you talk about horses."***

Many of the people he loved, he did so because- rather despite their frailties and shortcomings- he embraced those who walked the lines between madness

and genius, those with struggles of addiction or depression, those who are often marginalized or misunderstood. Again, his belief was that our most redeeming quality is in our shared struggle to remain humane.

How those we love leave us at the end of their lives is an extension of our relationship with them- it matters; it informs and guides us as we struggle through grief and embrace their remembrance. Bob's end of life journey is not just a story to remember, it is one worthy of reverence. Bob left us with the same eloquence, principle and strength which had carried him throughout life; he could not be reduced or defined by illness. Dying didn't alter his core principles or passions. While in hospital, he was distressed by the care he witnessed- through his eyes, those in need always deserved care that was more dignified and humane.

...Bob also remained dutiful till the very end. He was incapable of being an imposition which made him a horrible patient. He refused to call me during the night last week when he was suffering. He told Linda that he didn't want to wake me. His son Mike remarked that his cause of death could be ***"failure to impose."*** In his last hours, he openly expressed regret at not being able to finish his thank you notes. And true to the richness of his soul, he sought beauty and in the waning minutes of life, he recited Shakespeare.

As in life, he was compelled to express in words the warmth that was in his heart. He wrote beautiful letters to his children and grandchildren. One passage reads..." ***You will find me when you least expect to, in your words and gestures, your stories recollected and retold, when a sight or sound or smell calls our moments together in memory. Listen for my voice when days are long, decisions are difficult, times hard, knowing that my love and encouragement endure forever; your values and instincts are good- your inner voice sounds a lot like mine."***

On May 9th, Mother's Day, he wrote his beloved wife Linda that ***"my last conscious thought will be of you and the last word on my lips will be your name."*** As promised, when that moment called, he turned his head and gazed into her eyes- leaving us as gracefully as he lived.

## In Remembrance

The following individuals in our community passed away during the period from May 17; June 21, 2021\*. May their memories forever be a blessing, and may their loved ones be comforted among the mourners of Zion.



**Pauline Brummer**  
**Sybil D. Cherbow**  
**Barry Cohen**  
**Hal Dubin**  
**Thelma Greenspan**  
**Ilene Ruth Gund**  
**Marilynn Kregal**  
**Dr. Robert Milch**  
**Sally Moss**

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



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## (NOT) THE LAST WORD

### Overcoming Adversity

BY MITCH STEINHORN

According to Google, “adversity” is defined as “difficulties and misfortune.” During my collegiate period/post-secondary education in 1993 I found myself attending Erie Community College. As I was not certain as to what profession I wanted to explore, I wanted to pursue educational opportunities that circulated around both business and funeral service education. I found myself selecting an **Intro to Biology** course. While taking the course, my professor, who resembled the late Sonny Bono, was not as supportive as I would have hoped. While I always had difficulty and challenges in my schooling and was never a great test-taker, I found myself facing adversity in trying to accept the challenges before me.

One day following class, I accompanied the professor back to his office, and I asked him for some help. I asked if there was any opportunity to do extra credit, and perhaps after class, spend some additional study time at his convenience. Alas, he did not allow me the opportunity, nor was he willing to put me in the right direction. He simply stated that I was “on my own.”

I continued having challenges and was not passing the class. While I was on the verge of dropping the class, I made another attempt at asking for help, and again my professor declined to assist. He then asked me what my future plans were. I informed him I was contemplating becoming a Funeral Director. He looked at me and said “Forget it! I would not recommend it!” I asked why? He said with my grades and the difficulty I was



Mitch Steinhorn

currently having, I would not be able to successfully complete the requirements. I thanked him for his time and walked out. I was then determined to prove him wrong. I ended up dropping the class, but took another biology class, with another professor, and passed. I put my mind to being successful and overcame the adversity.

Fast forward about ten years. I had completed my funeral service education, my national boards, my 1-year residency, along with passing the New York State licensure (today, I am not only licensed in New York, but I hold inactive licenses also in the states of Massachusetts, and New Jersey). I started my career as a

freelance funeral director.

One of the firms I was representing sent me down to a hospital in Springville, NY to transfer a decedent. As I was *en route*, my memory was juggling different things, because the name of the decedent sounded very familiar. Sure enough, the person was my former professor who had just passed away (I will not divulge the details). As I continued driving, I recalled how in fact, his advice -if you can call it that - may have been a blessing in disguise. His negativity encouraged me to study extra harder on my own.

Back then, I think I took his rejection to mean that he really did not want to do the extra work to help me succeed. However, I now realize that he was, in fact, doing me a favor by forcing me to be the better person, to take advantage of the situation by putting my best foot forward and truly do something positive to overcome my educational challenges. Along with my parent’s upbringing, this particular life experience taught me to never give up, to face my challenges, and to overcome any and all obstacles that may come in my direction in life. Overcoming adversity is always attainable.

Mitch Steinhorn is Funeral Director and Owner of Amherst Memorial Chapel LLC. He delivered these comments at Kehillat Ohr Tzion’s Tikkun Leil Shavuot earlier this spring.

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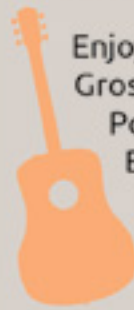


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