



The Finkelstein Brothers: Mort, Raleigh and Ed Make A Generous Gift to JFGR



Mort, Raleigh and Ed Finkelstein

“Tzedakah and acts of kindness are the equivalent of all the mitzvot of the Torah”

– Jerusalem Talmud, Pe’ah 1:1.

I consider myself to be a very fortunate person. Since I moved to Grand Rapids a year and half ago, I have met some of the most incredible people and I’m blessed to have them in my life. For me, my position at the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids, is more than just a job. It is based on relationships with people who I value dearly and will respect forever.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Peg and Mort Finkelstein. Despite the distance between us, as they are in Florida, due to COVID, we talk regularly. Through our conversations, I have learned so much about business, the stock market, golf, Florida weather, Mort’s pilot skills, Teslas, snakes native to Michigan, Peg’s talent for decorating and her passion for collecting historical documents and even more about the Florida weather! An added perk is that Peg and Mort have introduced me to their family members Raleigh, Kay and Ed who I have enjoyed getting to know.

What I have learned through conversations with Peg and Mort is that they are deeply connected to the Grand Rapids Jewish community and have spent years volunteering and engaging in leadership roles. Their intentions are pure and come from a place of tenderness, compassion and love.

It is with the greatest respect that I share that the Finkelstein brothers, Mort, Ed and Raleigh have made a most generous gift to the Federation and our community. Their gift will educate the general population, about the Jewish families that settled in West Michigan through programs and community based projects.

Todah Rabah, to these amazing brothers, Mort, Ed and Raleigh Finkelstein (Peg and Kay, you are truly amazing, Thank You!!!)

LShalom,
Nicole Katzman, Executive Director

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Our Mission:

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids unites the local Jewish community to sustain and strengthen Jews locally, in Israel, and around the world.

This mission is accomplished by providing services to the community and through fundraising and allocation efforts.

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GOAL: \$500,000.00
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\$452,000

*We're thrilled to have 27 new gifts
from community members.
Thank you to all who have participated.*

Chad Zagel

The Jewish Federation is here for our community, Israel and the world. Please make a difference and support Campaign 2020. Every gift is meaningful and can positively change the life of a person or family in need. Todah Rabah, Thank You!

Remember, any amount you increase – and any NEW pledges – will be matched by a generous grant from the Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation. And, if you are under 50 years of age, it will ALSO be matched by a generous grant from the Hy and Greta Berkowitz Foundation. A special thank you to Peg and Mort Finkelstein for matching the first \$5,000 raised in Campaign 2020.

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The Finkelstein Family

Written by Mort Finkelstein Editing by Peg Finkelstein

The story of the *Finkelstein Family* and their company, **MC Sporting Goods**, is a testament of being an *American*. That with hard work, and the right timing, the American dream is very possible. It started when *Aaron, our grandfather*, emigrated from *Russia in 1904* to escape the **Pogroms** for a better life for himself and his family. Aaron first traveled alone to *America*, and after arriving at *Ellis Island*, he then made his way to *Grand Rapids, MI.*, where he settled and started working as a lady's tailor. After being in Grand Rapids for about a year, he sent word for his wife and four children to join him in the *New World*. The additional four children were born here in Grand Rapids, becoming a family of ten.



In the mid 1920's our grandfather, dad and uncle started the "Sterling Clothing Co.," that was a thriving store for men's, women's and children's shoes and clothing. The business operated on a credit principle, whereby the customer paid off their purchases by weekly payments. The business was doing very well until the *"Great Depression of 1929"*. History has

depicted how devastating the Depression was, as most of their customers became unemployed, had no income, and were then unable to make their weekly payments to the company. The fallout caused by it, forced the family business to declare bankruptcy! **Jack** would get married that year to **Genevieve (Gen) Stein, of Chicago**.

Several years later our father (*Jack*), with the help of our mother again opened, on Division, a men's clothing store called *"Jack's Cut Rate."* They both worked together and **Gen** used her **Business degree** from the *University of Chicago* and participated in running the business. And at the same time the family started to grow with the birth of their *first son Morton in 1930, then Raleigh in 1933 and Edward in 1936*. The family was able to live very modestly until the country was forced into **World War II**.





By the beginning of the war "**Jack's Cut Rate**" had moved to a new location on *Monroe Ave.* With the country at war, manufacturing of men's clothing ceased and production from those factories went to making uniforms and items for the war effort. With no new merchandise being available and what little remained in stock was soon depleted, leaving the family without a source of income.

"Raleigh remembered, going down to the store at around 10 years old. Saying that he would straighten pants, dusted suits, and sweep the floor stating, "I did it, because I wanted to do it!"

"Grand Rapids learned in November of 1942 that the Army Air Force Weather School would be established here in January of 1943. It would house, feed, drill, train, and otherwise care for about 7,000 trainees. It was also expected to employ about 1600 civilians.

On January 4th, 400 cadets, with 30 instructors, began their nine-month course in meteorology, and the number would soon increase to 700. Classes were held on the main floor of the Civic Auditorium."

<http://www.historygrandrapids.org/>

The army had a weather school in **GR** that was billeted at both the *Pantlind & Old Rowe Hotels*, so with a modest savings and tailoring work from the soldiers, our folks were able to sustain our family during the war years. After the war with help from family and previous manufacturers, **Gen and Jack** were once again able to develop a men's clothing business using the name *Michigan Clothiers, at 132 S. Division in 1946.*

Gen was the one who worked with the banks and brokered deals alongside her husband Jack. With the war over and the soldiers coming home and with whatever merchandise that started to become available business was good.

Along with the end of **World War II**, came the opportunity to buy surplus military goods to sell to the public. This was the turning point for the family business and the forerunner with a giant step into the world of Sporting Goods. But, four other business in **GR** also started to sell surplus military goods. As it turned out, all of these businesses were run by Jewish members of the community and there was fierce competition among the companies.

During the hay days of the surplus business **Michigan Clothiers** was the second largest of the four and the only one that survived and remained in business. As the surplus business started to decline the **Finkelstein Family** started to add **Sporting Goods** items to their clothing and surplus lines of merchandise.

Before and after the war, most stores selling sporting goods, bought their merchandise from jobbers, or a middleman. The **Finkelstein's brothers** wanted to elevate their business by **buying direct** from the **manufacturerers**.

The first opportunity to buy directly from a manufacturer presented itself when **Mort** became friendly with the **Shakespeare** salesman. As **Mort** recalls, **Don Culp**, the salesman said that if **MC** could come up with an order, totaling \$2,500 worth of their products, fishing reel, rods and fishing line, their company would open **MC** as a customer. In today's dollars that would be a simple task, but back in the "60's" that amounted to over 250 items for a single store.



“Mort stated that, we owe everything to our mother “Gen”. She always kept all of us in line!”

Avenue close to downtown. The business at **132 S. Division** started to decline with the inability of customers not finding reasonable, close parking.

Before the parking issue, the family had bought a piece of land on **Lake Michigan Dr. in Standale**, with the idea, and hope, of building a store in the future. But, because of this parking issue it now

became a reality. **Bob Fryling**, later known as the **Fryling Construction Co.**, was hired to build the 60,000 sq. ft. building. After a couple of years, the brothers expanded into operating lease sporting goods department in a big box store called **Miracle Mart, with stores in GR, Muskegon, Phoenix, AZ and Salt Lake, UT.**

When **Rogers Dept. Store** moved into their new building, the brothers quickly saw an opportunity to expand their business on to the busy retail corridor of **28th St. SW, in Wyoming**. Along with that move came the name change from **Michigan Clothiers to MC Sporting Goods**. After the company



moved to the Roger’s site more items were added to the growing sporting goods company. Guns and ammo were add to make it a more complete one stop shopping for the hunting enthusiast in MI. During that period of time, ski equipment was mostly sold in so called “Ski

Shops”, and rarely was found in a sporting goods store. The brothers felt that they want to add ski

A second store was opened on **Division Ave. in Burton Heights** after Mort returned from military service during the **Korean War**. Again, at the time it seemed to the small company a big step, but in reality, it was a one person, operation with Mort as the only employee. After a couple of years, the family business suffered a devastating disaster when the city of GR decided to remove street parking on Division





hard good and a soft goods to their sporting goods store to emphasize their concept of a one shop store for all anyone needed in the way of sporting goods.

It was an uphill endeavor, as many of the ski manufacturers at first resisted selling merchandise to our company. After a few years of persistent talking to the ski manufacturer's, they all began to see the benefit of selling direct to **Sporting Goods Retailers**. In 1984 cross country skiing became a huge fad, especially in Western Michigan. In one of the Ski publications, it is noted that **MC Sporting Goods** was the largest purchaser of cross-country skis in the world. In the following years, MC soon became one of the biggest ski retailers in the country. In 1989 MC was honored as being **The Ski Retailer of The Year**.

The **Company** started once again to expand with its second land purchase. This was added to the real estate portfolio with the purchase of **11 acres on 28th East. Fryling Construction Company** was called upon to build a new store and warehouse on the newly acquired land. During that time period we opened new stores in *Muskegon, Kalamazoo, Lansing and Detroit*. Along with the growing company came the need for more warehouse capacity.

As we continued to grow retail wise, more warehousing space continued to be needed, over a period of time two different warehouses were added which were soon out grown. **Raleigh and Edward** were looking for an **off-site premise** to hold a large winter goods sale one year. It was suggested to them that they look at the recently vacated **Lawhon Furniture** building on **Shaffer just off 28th St.**, Edward & Raleigh liked it so much that they made an offer to buy the building. After a short period of negotiation, the building was added to the **REM Real Estate Co.** After several years of reconfiguring the building, it became the headquarters for the **Company** with 20,000 sq. ft. of office space on two floors and close to a ½ million sq. ft. of warehouse on three levels.

Ed noted: "All three of us felt the same, we couldn't wait to wake up in the morning, to find out what was next. We were the biggest in the Midwest in full line Sporting Goods."

As the **Co.** grew it was divided into three parts, **REM Real Estate Co.**, **MC Sporting Goods** (retail stores) and the **MC Trucking Co.** It should be noted that the three brothers bought **Gen and Jack** out in **1986** when the stores and the trucking Co. were sold to **PG&E, Pacific Enterprises** the public gas utility of Los Angeles, CA. The brothers retained the **REM Real Estate Co. as equal partners** and they remain so to this day.

Mort, Raleigh & Edward, stayed on to operate the **Company**, for the next four years. In **1990** it was decided among the brothers that the time was right to move on and concentrate solely on their real estate business.



23rd Annual **JEWISH**
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Coming in May 2021



Happenings and More

Marisa Krishef, Director of Programming

Get ready for Bingo! January 3, 11:00 a.m. Ahavas Israel, Temple Emanuel and Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids invite

you to join us for Jewish Community Bingo on Sunday, January 3, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. Rabbi Krishef and Rabbi Schadick will be your hosts and number callers.



To join the Bingo game, you'll go to this link on your phone, tablet, or computer, <https://mfbc.us/v/ufcnewk>, to get your Bingo cards, two per person. You can either watch and listen to the Bingo calling on Zoom on one device, and play on a second device; or, if you prefer, you can switch between your Bingo card and the Zoom window on the same device. When you play online, you tap on the bingo number on your card when you hear the number called, and an X appears over the number. You will reuse the same bingo card for multiple games, by clicking Reset at the top of the screen.

If you prefer to play with a paper bingo card and mark your card with something you have at home (coins, beans), you can print out your bingo cards in advance. Go to the link above to get your card and click on print at the top of the screen. If you need help, contact Marisa Krishef, Director of Programming at JFGR at markay@jfgr.org or 616-942-5553, ext. 205. She can print your Bingo card page and send it to you. Please remember that it will take several days to get the Bingo card to you in the mail.

To RSVP visit: www.jfgr.org.



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Welcome to Grand Rapids, B'nai Mitzvah, and Shalom Baby Gift Bags are getting a Make-Over!

When a new Jewish family moves to the Grand Rapids area, a teenager celebrates B'nai Mitzvah, or a Jewish family has a new baby, JFGR delivers a personalized gift bag to celebrate



the special occasion. Currently, we are in the process of updating these adorable bags. We recently ordered JFGR tote bags that are reusable and environmentally friendly. In addition, we are updating the contents of the bag to include current information on JFGR, our synagogues and local shops. If you know of a family new to the Grand Rapids area, had a new baby or if you are a business and would like to include information on your shop, email Marisa Krishef at markay@jfgr.org or call 616-942-5553.



Marisa Krishef

A Tu B'Shevat Seder in YOUR Home

JFGR, Ahavas Israel, Chabad of Western MI and Temple Emanuel invite our Jewish community to celebrate Tu B'Shevat with our Rabbis on Wednesday evening, January 27, 2021 at 6:00 pm from the comfort and warmth of your home. Our Rabbis will be leading a virtual seder for everyone to view and participate in as the 15th day of Shevat begins.

Tu B'Shevat requires dried fruits, nuts, and juice. All of these items will either be delivered to your home or will be available for pick up. RSVP at the link below or contact Marisa Krishef, Director of Programming, at markay@jfgr.org or 616-942-5553, ext.205.

To RSVP visit:
www.jfgr.org





Ask Julianna

by Julianna Schrier, Community Connector



Julianna Schrier

Shalom! Here is a question I received this past month:

As the pandemic continues into the new year, and there are still such limited things I can do safely with my kids, I am running out of creative ideas to keep them (and myself) occupied. Got any suggestions?

There are so many safe activities to do indoors with your family. Here are five ideas:

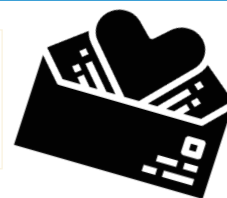
1. Plant an indoor garden! In honor of Tu B'Shvat, which is in late January, why not add a little green to your house? There are plenty of indoor garden kits to get you started, or you can simply buy a few plants from the store and go from there. Succulents like aloe vera are easy to care for, and herbs like rosemary and thyme are able to be kept in pots, and can also be used in cooking!
2. There is an abundance of crafts that can be done with just a few materials. One suggestion is to create a forest out of sticks you find in your backyard. Collect some twigs, bring them inside, and dip one long end of them in paint. Press the painted side onto a piece of paper to make an impression. Repeat this process, either with the same twig or with a variety of them, and you can make a pattern! If you want to turn them into trees, dip your fingertips into the paint as well, and make fingerprint

leaves.

3. Watch a movie as a family! There is endless content available at our fingertips these days, which means there has to be something out there for your entire family. Pick a category on your streaming service of choice and scroll until there is something that interests everyone. Choose a movie from when you were younger and turn it on. Whatever you end up watching, pop up some popcorn to go along with, and make an evening of it!
4. Cook, there are so many recipes that can be done with the help of smaller hands. In the middle of winter, maybe it is a good time for a soup, or a warm pasta dish. Even if it's past the holiday season, who says you can't make cookies? Utilize the fresh herbs in your brand new indoor garden!
5. Make paper, the process only involves a few things: old paper (receipts, notes, newspaper, things that would be recycled anyways), a bucket of water, a mesh screen, and a sponge. There are many tutorials available online on how to make both the screen tool and the entire process of paper making, and it's an activity that the whole family can take part in! Dye your pieces of paper different colors, then use the resulting pages to write a story - maybe about trees and Tu B'Shvat.

If you have any additional information or thoughts about this topic, please reach out to me at julianna@jfgr.org or call the Federation at (616) 942-5553 ext. 206.

Community Pen Pal Program



Would you like to have a pen pal? The Federation wants to bring people in the community together through letter writing. If you are interested in sending or receiving a letter, contact:

julianna@jfgr.org or call the Federation at (616) 942-5553. This is a unique way to connect with people and show them that you care. This program is open to all ages! We hope you participate and make a new friend.



Interfaith and Interwoven Win-Win-Win

by Yehudit Newman

Interfaith and Interwoven recently delivered 224 items, hats, scarves, and pairs of mittens we knitted and crocheted to Godfrey Elementary in Wyoming. We were, sadly, unable to deliver in person this year. It is a delight to watch the children select their gifts of warmth and caring and bring them the lesson that this diverse group of women are all friends. I like to write about generations, recalling those who went before me. As I was hoping that these children remember us when they are older, I was surprised to realize that in this story, I am the older generation!

I organized this group with Kaufman Interfaith Institute shortly after I arrived in Grand Rapids in response to the rise in divisiveness I saw around us, for we are all stronger together. After the first year we felt we needed a goal and began to knit and crochet for the children at Godfrey Elementary School, where many of the children live in homes that cannot afford to keep the heat on and the warm items are very welcome. Besides that obvious 'good thing' there are so many others, there is the Muslim woman who told me on her first visit she had never met a Jew before and now greets me with a big hug every time we meet and there is the woman who said she had never had friends outside her faith community before.

We now meet on zoom and as some of our young mothers are busy supervising children learning from home and some of our older knitters do not want to learn to zoom. We could use new members and this is where some of you could help. Please

join us, we can help you learn to knit or crochet if you don't know how. We can also use donations of washable yarn. This is a win-win-win as it gets, the kids get warm things and a lesson in caring, the knitters form warm friendships and learn about each other, and as Kaufman Interfaith Institute enters its Year of Healing we can experience the stress relief knitting and crocheting and helping others brings.

How would you like to be remembered?

Please visit: <https://www.gvsu.edu/interfaith/interfaith-and-interwoven-61.htm>

Deet is the Art teacher at United Jewish School. She studied occupational therapy at Eastern Michigan University and live in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

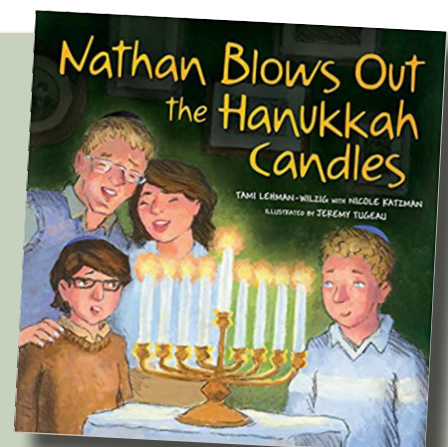


Yehudit Newman



Mazel Tov to Nicole Katzman JFGR Executive Director

Nicole Katzman's children's book, *Nathan Blows Out the Hanukkah Candles*, was included in a list of "Best books 2020: Inclusive holiday books for children" on NBC News.





GENESIS: THE FIRST THREE WORDS



Rabbi Al Lewis will present a special 2-part class online on
Monday, January 11th and January 18th
from 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

This will be an exploration of the following ideas:

- How are we to understand IN THE BEGINNING?
- Was any of the Hebrew creation story borrowed from other sources?
- How are we to understand the God of early Genesis?
- When and where was the Book of Genesis written, and by whom and why?
- The "Big Bang" occurred about 13.7 billion years ago. How old is the Earth? (Orthodox and Scientific responses)
- What is the meaning of "Abbra C'Dabera" and how is it understood in Judaism and Christianity?
- What part of Genesis is the "Jewish Narrative" and what is "Universal?"
- How are we TODAY to understand "Beginnings and Endings"
- Our Earth is about 6,000,000 years old; but "civilization" is only about 200,000 years old. What happened before "civilization"?
- Why are there two creation stories in Genesis?
- What are the meanings of the names "Adam" and "Eve"?
- Why is the "snake" so reviled; and what is the verb attached to it?

RSVP to the Temple Office to receive the link to attend this class online. Space is limited. If the discussion is not complete on January 18th a third class may be added.

Thank you

**On behalf of JFGR
Thank you to community members
who supported
Hanukkah-Adopt-A-Family 2020.
A special THANK YOU to MEIJER for their
continued generosity to our
Jewish Community.
Todah Rabah to all!**

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Financial Focus

Time for New Year's Financial Resolutions

By Chad Zagel, CFP®, AAMS®, JFGR Board Member

Many of us probably felt that 2020 lasted a very long time. But now that 2021 is upon us, we can make a fresh start – and one way to do that is to make some New Year's resolutions. Of course, you can make these resolutions for all parts of your life – physical, emotional, intellectual – but have you ever considered some *financial* resolutions?

Here are a few such resolutions to consider:

- **Don't overreact to events.** When the coronavirus pandemic hit in mid-February, the financial markets took a big hit. Many people, convinced that we were in for a prolonged slump, decided to take a “time out” and headed to the investment sidelines. But it didn't take long for the markets to rally, rewarding those patient investors who stayed the course. Nothing is a certainty in the investment world, but the events of 2020 followed a familiar historical pattern: major crisis followed by market drop followed by strong recovery. The lesson for investors? Don't overreact to today's news – because tomorrow may look quite different.

- **Be prepared.** At the beginning of 2020, nobody was anticipating a worldwide pandemic and its terrible consequences, both to individuals' health and to their economic well-being. None of us can foretell the future, either, but we can be prepared, and one way to do so is by building an emergency fund. Ideally, such a fund should be kept in liquid, low-risk vehicles and contain at least six months' worth of living expenses.

- **Focus on moves you can control.** In response to pandemic-related economic pressures, some employers cut their matching contributions to

401(k) plans in 2020. Will some future event cause another such reduction? No one knows – and even if it happens, there's probably nothing you can do about it. Instead of worrying about things you *can't* control, focus on those you *can*. When it comes to your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan, put in as much as you can afford this year, and if your salary goes up, increase your contribution.

- **Recognize your ability to build savings.** During the pandemic, the personal savings rate shot up, hitting a record of 33% in April, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economy Analysis. It fell over the next several months, but still remained about twice as high as the rate of the past few years. Of course, much of this surge in Americans' proclivity to save money was due to our lack of options for spending it, as the coronavirus caused either complete or partial shutdowns in physical retail establishments, as well as dining and entertainment venues. But if you did manage to boost your own personal savings when your spending was constrained, is it possible to remain a good saver when restrictions are lifted? Probably. And the greater your savings, the greater your financial freedoms – including the freedom to invest and freedom from excessive debt. When we reach a post-pandemic world, see if you can continue saving more than you did in previous years – and use your savings wisely.

These aren't the only financial resolutions you can make – but following them may help you develop habits that could benefit you in 2021 and beyond.

Chad Zagel, CFP®, AAMS®, is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, a University of Michigan graduate, and in his free time, Chad enjoys spending time with his family and volunteering.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.



Chad Zagel
JFGR Board Member





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Rob Franciosi

Mapping the Past

by Rob Franciosi

When editing *Good Morning* by Joseph Stevens, I felt it important to give the memoir's readers a visual sense of his many escapes during the war. Besides including photographs from the period, my Grand Valley colleagues and I copied a rudimentary map of Poland

and Lithuania to which we added lines tracing Joe's movements—lines I recall drawing with the assistance of a large ruler.

Twenty years later that map seems a relic from the century that was ending as we completed our work. Yet for all its simplicity, the map of Joseph Stevens's journeys during the war reminds me of just how important locality is to Holocaust stories. This past term I attempted to convey this idea to my students by assigning them StoryMap projects linked to three diaries from the period: two by survivors, a third by a perpetrator. Using a model map built around Anne Frank's diary as a guide, they confronted the differences between her Amsterdam and the Warsaw of Mary Berg or the Prague of Helga Weis—or the Munster of SS Doctor Johann Kremer.

Scholars of the Holocaust, in fact, have begun exploring spatial dimensions beyond simple maps. Employing Geographic information systems (GIS) technology, they have deepened our understanding, as one book notes, of "the spaces and places that people created, occupied, passed through, and endured—the material landscapes that were essential to the implementation of the Holocaust and inseparable from people's experience of it."

Although the StoryMaps we intend to create for Holocaust survivors who settled in Grand Rapids cannot approach the geographical sophistication of cutting-edge scholarship, they can nevertheless open our eyes to the complex spatial dimensions of those particular stories. This point was reinforced for me as soon as I began working on a new map for the Joseph Stevens story.

Late in his memoir he recounts returning to Kalisz, the home in western Poland he had left as the war began in 1939. He hoped to find surviving members of his family, or at least news of their fate. Yet at their apartment Stevens encountered a half-drunk man who slammed the door in his face. "I can still hear the loud boom it made,"

he wrote five decades later.

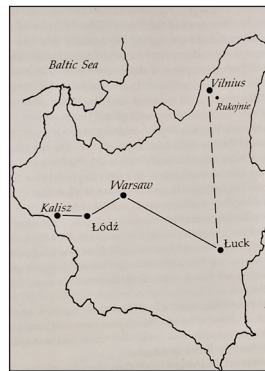
I knew that Kalisz had to be the starting point for any StoryMap devoted to Joe Stevens. In describing his return, however, he noted that the central street on which the family had lived, Piłsudski, after the great Polish leader, had been changed to Stalin. Yet my search for a Piłsudski in Kalisz yielded only a highway on the outskirts of town. After the fall of communism a great many Polish streets had been purged of their Stalin-era names, but there was no consistent practice across the country; indeed, citizens of Warsaw continue to argue whether cleansing such associations is worth the inconvenience of changing decades-old street names.

Fortunately for me, I knew that Stevens and his older son, Jack, had returned to Kalisz in 2004, a visit which appears in the film *Defying Hitler*. An e-mail exchange soon yielded the new address: Śródmiejska 6, a name indicating its place as the "city center."

Using ArcGIS software, I can not only point viewers to the very building where Stevens and his family once lived, but embed pre and post-war photographs, link to a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum article on Jewish life in Kalisz during the inter-war period, or even share video clips from 2004. The possibilities are both extensive and exciting.

Yet without the help of Jack Stevens, without the memories and records he preserves, something as simple—and essential—as an old address could easily be lost. "There is no Jewish community in Kalisz today," the USHMM article concludes, but there once was. Remembering it and all the other places from which survivors began their never-expected journeys to Grand Rapids is where we must begin—and where help from those who knew them is most urgently needed.

Rob Franciosi is a professor of English and Honors at GVSU where he teaches courses on the Holocaust and American Literature. Rob welcomes questions or comments about his article. You may contact him at francior@gvsu.edu





American & Israeli Women in Grand Rapids – Building Connections & Making Friendships

“Cousins in the Living Room” is an engaging program that brings together Israeli women living in Grand Rapids with the American women who attended the MOMENTum trips to Israel, which were sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

The “Cousins” program is based on the Israeli TV show, “Sorry for Asking” which gives people the chance to talk to each other honestly about any and all topics, sharing questions we always wanted to ask but never dared. The goal of the program is to build relationships

and develop a more nuanced understanding of one another.

During our meetings in November and December, we’ve had open discussions about life in Israel, the army, cultural differences, adjusting to life in a new country, and more.

This program is sponsored by the Federation’s Partnership2Gether (P2G), strengthening people-to-people relationships with our community and Israel.



Top row: Marni Vyn, Sandi Simms, Adar Tal, Tracy Miller, Tina Murua
Section row: Dafna Kaufman, Yaarit Regev, Amy Ostrow, Amy Winkelman, Elizabeth Christopherson
Third row: Helayne Sherman, Lisa Rose, Liat Okanin, Mei Mah, Michal Ravid
Bottom row: Danielle Remes

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A Recipe for Mom's Rice Pudding

Family recipes are an important part of identity, heritage, and tradition, as well as a way to remember and honor those family members no longer with us. I still make my late mother's rice pudding, which is more of a custard than a traditional rice pudding or kheer. This is a great use of leftover rice. The recipe can be halved easily.



Evan Rossio



Shelly (Dad), Sandy (Mom) Rossio with their son Evan. Picture taken 1963.

Mom's Rice Pudding

½ c cooked rice
2 T sugar
Cinnamon, white raisins
4 eggs
½ c sugar
2 t vanilla
4 c milk

Cook rice. Put in greased large Pyrex dish. Add 2 T sugar, raisins & cinnamon to cover bottom of pan. Flatten out.

Beat 4 eggs add ½ c sugar, 2 t vanilla, and 4 c milk. Pour over rice. Don't mix into rice. Set dish in hot water on cookie sheet. Sprinkle more cinnamon on top. Bake 350 degrees for about 1 hour. Keep adding water so it doesn't dry up

Evan D. Rossio is an attorney from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Married to wife and successful Realtor Julie for 32+ years, they have two children; son Jordan and daughter Emily. Evan's love for cooking began 30 years ago, when he discovered it was good stress relief after a day at work. He now splits his time between an estate planning practice and the occasional cooking gig. If not in the kitchen, he can be found in front of the TV cheering for his beloved Ohio State Buckeyes or perusing his vast cookbook collection.

We are excited to announce a

Collaborative Cookbook Project

with JFGR, Temple Emanuel, Congregation Ahavas Israel
and Chabad House of Western Michigan.

Our committee will begin gathering recipes from all corners of our Grand Rapids Jewish community. Whether they are your favorite recipes, family recipes, or cherished recipes you would be willing to share, start thinking!

We will be reaching out to you early in the new year. More information will be coming soon on how to submit your recipes, photographs and drawings. We are so excited for this community-wide project to kick-off!

Happy Eating!

Cookbook Committee: Judy Joseph, Nicole Katzman, Michal Ravid, Rhonda Reider, Karen Reifler, Evan Rossio, Kristin Siegel, Sandi Simms, and Rabbi Yosef Weingarten





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Stephanie's clients know that they are her top priority. She has lived in Ada and East Grand Rapids over the past 27 years and is your local expert willing to share her knowledge and expertise about the Greater Grand Rapids area. Her professionalism, attention to detail, and pride in her work ensures each client receives the height of service. Stephanie prides herself on being efficient, knowledgeable, and responsible while going above and beyond any expectations her clients have. She was selected as one of *Grand Rapids Magazine's* **REAL ESTATE ALL STARS** for 2019 which recognizes the top 5% of real estate agents in the greater Grand Rapids area. Stephanie helps both buyers and sellers achieve their real estate goals and specializes in everything from modest living spaces to luxury homes. Call Stephanie today and let her help you make your real estate goals a reality.



JFGR is thrilled to welcome back Kay Finkelstein to the Lion of Judah program.

Kay, who now resides in Boca Raton, Florida, has a deep connection to the Grand Rapids Jewish Community and supporting Jewish women's philanthropy.

Created in 1972 in Miami, the Lion of Judah program has brought together women of all ages and from many walks of life in order to play an essential role in creating social justice, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, preserving human dignity and building Jewish identity.

Contact Nicole Katzman, Executive Director at nicole@jfgr.org or 616-942-5780 for more information on women's philanthropy.

Introducing the new logo, designed and created by Peg Finkelstein that will be the seal for the Finkelstein Brothers Archives and the newly created West Michigan Jewish History (WMJH). The logo is a symbol of Mort, Raleigh and Edward's commitment to educate the general population about the Jewish families that settled in West Michigan.



"In designing this Logo, I put a great deal of thought into every symbol that was added. The outer chain represents no beginning and no end. L'dor V'dor Generation to Generation. The circle of dots represents infinity and is endless. Broken Pieces of Glass, is how fragile our life can be, but the colors keep us safe! Our Star of David continues to shine for us all...and give us hope.

Designed by: Peg Finkelstein

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United Jewish School classes were held virtually on Sunday, December 6 and Sunday, December 13. Many of our classes talked about Chanukah and bringing light into the world during the darkest days of the year.

We are blessed with a dedicated teaching staff that has worked hard throughout the fall to engage our students during these challenging times. The school purchased a special curriculum for at-home learning which has been in use since we transitioned to an all-virtual format in the fall.

We thank our teachers for their creativity and energy and their commitment to our children. It is sacred work they do each week and it is not an easy task. We appreciate all they do for the next generation.

We are hoping to be able to welcome our students back to in-person classes later this winter. Our Board meets every month and will make this decision in consultation with our teachers, parents, and medical advisors. Classes resume on Sunday, January 10.

Rabbi David Krishef and Rabbi Michael Schadick
Interim Directors, United Jewish School

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INSTAGRAM: @CHABADWM | PHONE: 616-957-0770 | EMAIL:
CHABADWESTERNMICHIGAN@GMAIL.COM

All events are subject to change. Please stay safe and reach out if there is anything we can do for you.

CHECK FACEBOOK @CHABADWM FOR VIRTUAL ZOOM LINKS AND PASSWORDS OR TEXT RIVKA AT 616.206.9654!

CKids Club/Mini Chefs Upcoming Events: (For Jewish boys & girls, Ages 5-11)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22ND | TUESDAY, JANUARY 19TH | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH

Mini Chefs is a unique culinary experience that gives your children the opportunity to cook, bake and decorate fabulous Jewish themed foods and enjoy their own handmade creations. Experience the joy of Kosher Cooking! RSVP to receive recipe and zoom information.

TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM

Virtual Mini Chefs via Zoom | To RSVP to Rivka at 616.206.9654 or rivkahweingarten@gmail.com

JEWISH WOMEN'S CIRCLE Upcoming Events:

MONDAY, JANUARY 11TH: Writing Workshop - Explore the power of the written word and rediscover yourself in the process.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH: Paint Night - Reveal your inner artist and create a canv masterpiece.

The Jewish Women's Circle is an ever growing group of Jewish

Women from the Grand Rapids area who come together to learn, laugh, socialize and connect. Join us!
Email Nechamy at Nechamy8@gmail.com for more information and to RSVP.

CTeen Junior Upcoming Events: (Grades 6TH-8TH)

Enrich your Jewish Pride & Explore Judaism while giving back to the Community.

RSVP to receive zoom information.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17TH • 4:00PM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST • 4:00PM

CTeen Grand Rapids Upcoming Events:

The place for ALL Jewish high school teens!

Part of the Fastest Growing Teen Network in the World!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17TH • 1:00PM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST • 1:00PM

JTEXT ~ JEWISH TRIVIA for Teens!

EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY AT 7:00PM.

Be the 7th to answer correctly and win a \$20 AMAZON GIFT CARD straight to your phone!

Are you a Jewish teen in grades 6-12 that lives in West Michigan and would like to join?! Text "CTEENGR" to 616-207-1218 to be let in on the fun!

JLI CLASSES - "JOURNEY OF THE SOUL"

Who hasn't wondered what happens when we die? We know what happens to the body. But what happens to the soul at birth and again at death?

- Is there really a "better" place after this one? - Do our loved ones continue to connect with us? - Can I relate to an afterlife if I'm not spiritual?

At once practical and powerful, reflective and relatable, Journey of the Soul teaches a Jewish perspective on life that begins before birth and lasts well after a person's passing.

It's a journey we all take, and it's yours to explore this winter.

SIX WEDNESDAY EVENINGS: 7:30-9:00PM | BEGINNING ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD 2021

Fee: \$99 (textbook included) | \$180 Sponsor

For more Info or to register please contact Rabbi Mordechai at 269.903.2770 or Rabbihaller@chabadwestmichigan.com

WEEKLY VIRTUAL TORAH & TEA

For the connection we all need right now.

A Torah Study for ladies with Nechamy.

MONDAY EVENINGS ON ZOOM AT 8:00PM

Meeting ID: 966 6623 3600 Password: jwc

JEWISH TRIVIA GAME FOR ADULTS IN WESTERN MICHIGAN!!

It's fun, it's quick, it will stimulate your mind- and best part is? YOU ARE COMPETING TOGETHER WITH OUR COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS!

The 7th player to answer correctly will win a FREE bottle of Kosher wine delivered straight to your doorstep!

Every **SUNDAY & WEDNESDAY AT 7:00PM SHARP** you will receive a TRIVIA question via text message!

Reply with the number you think is correct. The 7th participant to answer correctly wins!

It is amazing watching our community unite together to play, connect, and learn.

To Join: text "CHABADWM" to 616-207-1218!



Introduction to Judaism Class

This year our Introduction to Judaism class will be held virtually. The first class will take place on Saturday, January 9 at 11:30 AM. The class will meet for 15 sessions. 12 of the 15 of the classes will be held on Shabbat morning. The times for the other 3 will be discussed in class. These will be opportunities for participants to celebrate Tu B'Shevat, Purim, and Passover together. In the class we will discuss Jewish worship, Jewish holidays, Jewish life cycle events, and Jewish history. Please contact the Temple office to receive a syllabus and the link to the class. 459-5976 or info@grtemple.org.

Food Bank Update

The next food bank distribution will be Wednesday, January 20th from 9 AM to 11 AM. Thank you to all who supported our food bank last year. We certainly are seeing an increased need in our community because of the difficult economic times. Supporting our neighbors is a great way to Tikkun Olam! If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please contact mcubed4300@gmail.com or bbach2137@gmail.com.

Workout with the Rabbi

How about joining Rabbi Schadick at one of his favorite local gyms on the afternoon of Sunday, January 17? The Rabbi is looking for 18 members, from 10 years of age or older, for a FUNCTIONAL FITNESS EXPERIENCE at FRICTION, 3390 Broadmoor Ave SE, from 2:00 to 3:00 PM.

Co-Owner Bobby Armock will instruct the group in a variety of heart-pumping exercises. The gym is small and Temple members will be the only ones in the building. Temperatures will be

taken and health questions will need to be answered upon entry. MASKS are required.

FRICTION is opening exclusively for Temple on this date. 18 is the maximum number of people that can participate. 15 is the minimum number of people that are needed to allow us to offer this program with FRICTION. RSVP to the Temple office on or before Wednesday, January 13.

The cost is \$15. RSVP is a MUST. First Come/First Serve! All participants will be required to fill out a liability form in advance of the work out date. Because we are working with FRICTION, and we need to guarantee them 15 people, those who sign up and either cancel or do not show up for the workout will still be responsible for the \$15. If payment is made in advance of the program and the requisite number of participants is not reached payments will be gladly returned. Sign up today and get ready to sweat.

Celebrate Tu B'Shevat in your Home

Join with our local Rabbis in a special Tu B'Shevat Seder in the comfort of your home. Our Rabbis will be pre-taping a seder before the holiday and sharing it with anyone in our community that wants to participate. The Virtual Seder will be available for viewing beginning on Wednesday evening, January 27.

What's a Tu B'Shevat Seder without nuts and fruit and a special haggadah? Don't worry. We have you covered. We are creating Tu B'Shevat Seder bags for all those interested. These bags will allow you and your family to be full participants in the seder. Simply contact Marisa in the Federation office and to RVSP. She can be reached at markay@jfg.org.

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*Sue Douglas in honor of her grandson,
Dan Ravitch's engagement*

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Jerry & Judy Subar Endowment Fund

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David & Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund

Lois and Sheldon Kahn Health Help Fund

Donna G. Boorstein Memorial Fund

Sam and Jane Kravitz Social Services Fund

In honor of Bluma Herman

Barbara and Norm Kravitz

Fox Family Fund

The Finkelstein Brothers Fund

Life cycle times, both happy and sad, are traditional times to make donations to Jewish causes. You can make a donation of \$10 or more to the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids in honor or in memory of members of our community.

We then will acknowledge that donation with a card to that individual or family. This is a wonderful way to send your good wishes and be able to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah.

Please be sure to indicate what the occasion is and who is to receive the card. Please specify which of the following funds you would like your donation to be credited to:

Woman of Valor Fund To honor the women in our lives who have made a difference personally, locally or nationally.

Federation General Endowment/L'Dor Vador Fund To help ensure the continued work of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids for now and the future.

Julian and Judith Joseph Fund To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund To provide scholarships to Jewish sleep away camps and experiences.

Charles and Maxine Shapiro Fund To help ensure long-term aid to Israel and Jews around the world.

Louis and Louise Weiner Fund To help ensure local programming for seniors in the Grand Rapids Jewish community.

Jerry and Judy Subar Fund To help ensure funding for overseas Jewish communities' needs.

Leven Family Fund To establish and provide Jewish facilities, and support for cooperative programming among the congregations that support Jewish education for our youth.

Sam and Jane Kravitz Social Services Fund To support Jewish social services in Grand Rapids.

Donna G. Boorstein Memorial Fund To help ensure funding for Jewish arts, culture and history in Greater Grand Rapids.

Lois and Sheldon Kahn Health Help Fund To support health services for Jewish community members not covered by other financial resources.

Fox Family Fund To provide educational and cultural programming for our Jewish community.

The Finkelstein Brothers Fund Mort, Raleigh and Edward's commitment to educate the residents of Michigan about the Jewish families that settled in West Michigan during the mid 1800s through community events and educational programs.

Make a tribute gift to
Thank, Honor, Memorialize
friends and loved ones.

JFGR Endowment Fund Donation Form

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Donor Address _____

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Donor City/St/Zip _____

In memory of _____

Send card to: Name _____

Notes: _____

Send card to address _____

Send your donation and this form to:

Send card to City/St/Zip _____

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