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Bryna Paston with her books about being a perfect grandparent
Photo by Marissa Stern

Passions Fraught with Rejection

MARISSA STERN | JE STAFF

BRYNA PASTON **LIKES** to say her two passions in life — writing and acting — have been fraught with rejection.

But with an acting resume that includes features commercials for DKNY with model Emily Ratajkowski and an ad for Jdate, as well as a writing portfolio including cover stories about the Russian Jewish mafia and serving as an editor of a local paper, it hasn't been all that bad.



"As long as you can deal with rejection, if you can just say, 'You know what, there'll be another day. I'll get another job.' And if I don't, it's not the end of the world, and I'm having a good time and so what?" the 80-year-old Paston said, her voice as airy and carefree as her vibrant personality.

She grew up in State College, where her father was an accounting professor at Penn State University, and she was the only Jewish student in her class at State College High School.

"I tried my best to be one of the gang, but there was always that little barrier, always," she said.

Her family was influential in the town's small Jewish com-

munity. Her father was a part-time cantor and later became the coordinator of religious affairs for the school. There wasn't a synagogue like there is now, so the community shared a worship space. A plaque dedicated to him is mounted on the walls of the Hillel.

She studied journalism and theater at Penn State, but couldn't wait to leave and chase her dreams in New York City.

Though she admitted she was scared, off she went after her parents laid out a few ground rules, including that she have a job before she moves and she live with a roommate. So, "green as green can be," she moved in with a roommate and worked for an advertising agency, but quit after about three months as all she was doing was getting people coffee.

She moved to Brooklyn and worked for the now-defunct department store Abraham & Straus.

Along the way, she started dating her husband, Alan, whom she reconnected with after moving to New York.

The two met when they worked as counselors at a B'nai Brith camp in the Poconos for two summers — but had both been with other people. After she moved to New York, the camp director had a get-together; Alan showed up and they started dating shortly thereafter.

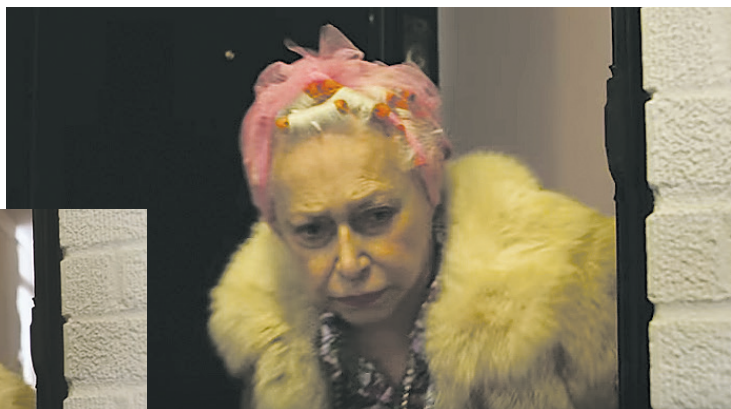
"Do you want to hear the first date story? Because it's great," she asked eagerly. "I couldn't invent this one."

On a freezing cold March day, not unlike this most recent March, they took a trip to Coney Island for a Nathan's hot dog, which she'd never had.

So they went to Coney Island and were the only ones there but as ever, Nathan's was open — and it was "terrific," she said.

"And he says to me two things: He says to me, 'One, I'm never getting married until I'm 30. Two, if I don't have anything important to say, I don't talk,'" Paston recalled, making an incredulous face.

"I didn't think that started off on a very good note," she laughed.



Bryna Paston in a Donna Karan New York web commercial.

But of course, they continued dating and eventually married in 1962. Breaking his first rule, they were 24, not 30, "so there, take that," Paston teased.

They eventually moved to Dresher where Paston worked as the Bucks County editor for what was then *The Jewish Times*. She hadn't found luck in journalism in New York, as there were limited roles for women in the field.

She met with an editor for a job at a newspaper in New Jersey, but was told they "already had their society editor," as that was the position women held. In advertising, the jobs were more plentiful she said, but her passion was writing.

"I went to my father at one point and I said, 'OK, there are three things that I love: music, theater and writing.' And he pauses and he says, 'Please pick the one that you can get a job,'" she laughed.

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PASSIONS

Continued from Page 5

She worked for the Northeast Philadelphia-based *Jewish Times* for about 10 years, and in that time, she also did freelance work for the *Baltimore Jewish Times* as well as the *Jewish Exponent*, including an interview with Elie Wiesel.

For the Baltimore paper, she and her Philly *Jewish Times* colleague Alan Jaffe wrote a February 1984 cover story investigating the Soviet-Jewish mafia. The cover image is a striking all black background with a large gun and red print along the left side in all-caps: Murder. Extortion. Kidnapping. Forgery. Arson.

"Is There a Soviet-Jewish Mafia in the United States?" the headline reads. She met with sources Deep Throat-style at midnight in parking lots because people were afraid to talk to them.

Over about six months, they talked with police departments and sources across the country with large Russian Jewish populations, from Los Angeles to New York, to write the story. Despite some threats they received, "it was a great story to do," she said.

After she stopped working for the paper, something happened that led to another phase: She became a grandmother.

Her son Michael — one of her two kids in addition to daughter Dina — had his first of three children, Rachel, and suddenly he became the only one who knew how to be a parent, she laughed. Paston thought there could be a book in there somewhere, which became *How to be the Perfect Grandma*. A companion — *How to be the Perfect Grandpa* — came out a few years later.

The book, which was published in 2001 and just had a cover redesign, is chock full of short, humorous anecdotes from her family and rules on how to be the perfect grandma. (Rule 18: Grandma's house should always be stocked with the good stuff.)

"There are stories in the book about him and his ridiculous rules and regulations for me — not for his father, just for me. Because I didn't know anything about raising children," she said.

A standout story to her was when he didn't want her taking Rachel on the boardwalk during a trip to the beach because it was windy, so he didn't give his mother a stroller to take with her. (She bought a new one and took Rachel on the boardwalk anyway.)

"She did not blow out to sea. She's 27 and got married this past August, so I think she survived.")

Now the grandmother to six "brilliant and wonderful" grandchildren, being a grandmother led to another opportunity: becoming a yenta for Jdate.

The dating service recently launched an ad campaign in which five Jewish grandmothers serve as the new faces, or "yentas," of the company. They were called back for video interviews and asked about dating stories and advice they'd give to those signing up for Jdate.

Her first piece of advice to anyone venturing into the dating world is to be safe. Her second? Trade up.

"Find somebody that you really admire," she added, "that you really feel can complement you, that you feel can add something to your life, but that you could be independent, self-sufficient, on your own. ... Be your own person. Be secure. Be happy. It's not easy, this world, and dating is tough."

As she waits to see what happens with the videos, she continues to audition for other jobs and work on her next writing piece, teasing that it will be about the funny parts of getting older.

"It's just been a hoot," she reflected. •

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MAY 10, 2018 7

At 105, This Centenarian Has Traveled World Twice His Age

RACHEL KURLAND | JE STAFF

NUMBERS HAVE CERTAINLY become less important to Eli Zebooker as he has aged.

But in his 105 years, he's quick to point out the nearly 200 trips and more than 60 countries he's traveled to in his lifetime, always accompanied with his wife, Janet, who is 95.

He circumnavigated South America three times. They climbed the Great Wall of China. The pair have even revisited a few, like Greece, Italy, Sardinia — “every European country. They're all great,” he said.

In their later years, they opted for cruise ships, making travel a tad easier. Plus, they get to meet and schmooze with other people onboard.

While in a foreign country, Zebooker likes “to go around the countryside and talk to people,” he said, “to see how they're doing, how they get along.”



Janet and Eli Zebooker near the Iguazu Falls in South America. The pair traveled from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to Lima, Peru, in 1986.

Photos provided, courtesy of the Zebookers' photo album



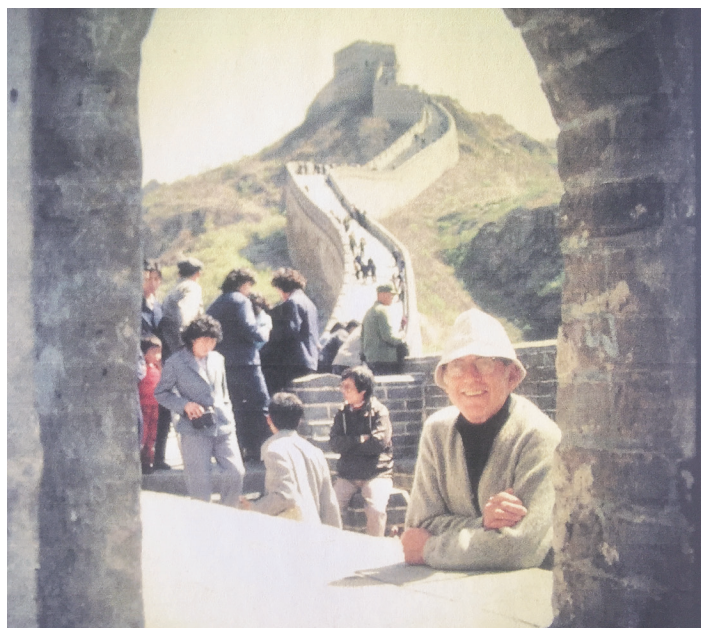
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Eli Zebooker at the Great Wall of China

And on every adventure, the Zebookers always made sure to take lots of pictures of themselves with a unique background (pre-selfie days) to cherish the memories for the years to come.

Those memories now reside in a huge photo album on Zebooker's coffee table, a scrapbook of sorts he put together, featuring every trip they've been on since their honeymoon around Gloucester, Mass.; Maine; Georgetown, Md.; Split Rock in Pennsylvania; and Lake Pine, N.J. Eight hefty passports also weigh down the back inside cover of the photo book (though more are scattered throughout storage his condo).

They spent a lot of time in Israel — in the Negev, before it was really built into what it is now — as well as the Jewish quarter of a few countries like Italy.

"Janet went swimming — well, floating — in the Dead Sea," he said. "I didn't feel like going in that day, but it was a nice trip.

"Every trip I had was with my wife, except during the war," he joked. Zebooker was already a practicing dentist when he was called to active duty in 1940. He received his undergraduate degree from Franklin & Marshall College and then went on to Penn Dental School. As an officer in the 20th Armored Division and the 9th Infantry Division, he ended up in Munich during World War II.

"It was also very close to the extermination camp," he said somberly. "It's about 6 miles from Munich. We were the first people — my Army group — who went into that area."

After the war, the couple married. Their most recent cruise trip was five years ago to South Africa. (If you're doing the math, Zebooker was 100 years old at the time.) They spent some time visiting Cape Town, Zambia and the Victoria Falls.

For him, traveling as a centenarian is simple. "It's not difficult under any condition if you don't expect too much. You find out there's a lot there for you to see and do," said the Delaware Valley native.

Any time they went somewhere, Zebooker would usually rent a car and drive through the countryside of Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Wales — you name it.

But cruising is definitely the way to travel for older people, he said. They took their first cruise in the 1970s and became hooked.

SEE CENTENARIAN | Page 10



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CENTENARIAN

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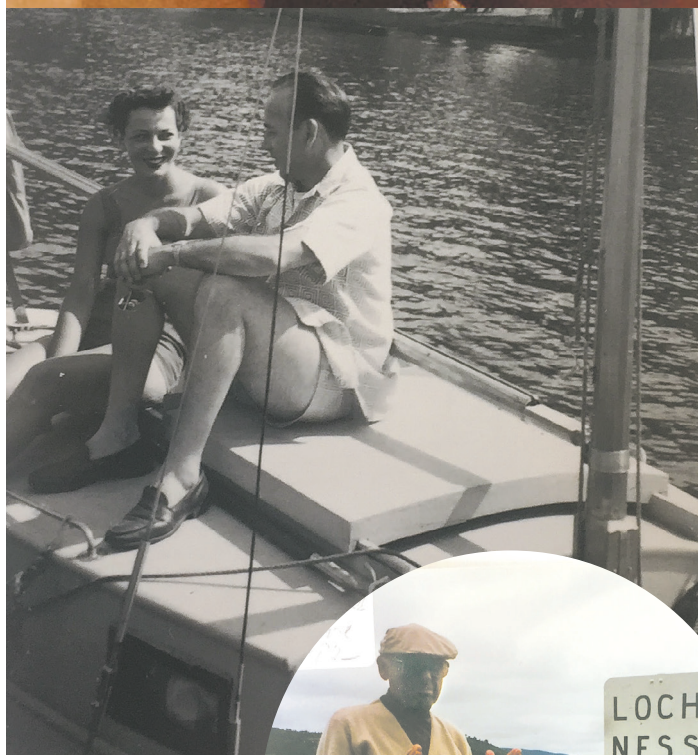
Eli and Janet Zebooker in Israel

“It’s not too expensive. They offer you many, many, many places to visit, which you wouldn’t normally visit on a trip, and you have food available.” They’ve taken a variety of different cruise lines, totaling 36 trips by ship.

Although no future trips are in the works, the Zebookers are proud to look at the memories they’ve made together, along with their family — two children and three grandchildren. In addition to photos, 10,000-plus slides occupy a sliver of Zebooker’s closet in his reference room.

The room is filled with a collection of history books and atlases, as well as a couch upholstered with a print of a map.

In his free time, he’s working on articles about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Previously, he authored two books on



Janet and Eli Zebooker on their honeymoon around New England

Eli Zebooker in Scotland

Photos provided, courtesy of the Zebookers’ photo album



Eli Zebooker collects all his passports in a huge photo album.

Photo by Rachel Kurland



Janet and Eli Zebooker at a cafe in Spain

the topics of ancient Greece, the Trojan War and Heracles, and Charles I of England.

Zebooker's father immigrated to the U.S. from Russia in 1903. Born on April 4, 1913, Zebooker was joined this year by about 40 of his friends and family members for a birthday party, gold and white balloons still floating behind the couch in the aftermath of the celebration.

The couple, who belong to Congregation Keshet Israel, celebrated their 71st anniversary just a few weeks before Zebooker's birthday.

Also in his proud possession are dozens of (now outdated) world maps and globes.

A map of the Mediterranean, for instance — about the size of an average flat-screen TV — is one of roughly 40 framed maps adorning his walls. His collection comes from an atlas that was printed in 1730.

He found the first bunch in a random shop in Philadelphia. The second batch came from another store, but it turned out both collections are from the same 18th-century atlas.

Zebooker also came across maps of antique Philadelphia of the pre-Revolution era, discovered in old bookshops or second-hand stores. "I collected hundreds of old drawings, lithographs," he said, "copies of printed items."

Worth a pretty penny centuries later, he donated them — including a 12-mile circle map of the city — to the Athenaeum of Philadelphia about 10 years ago.

Whether he's traveling the world on a ship or in books, Zebooker has plenty of history to explore in the comfort of his own home.

"I always find something to do," he laughed. •

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Lawyer Teaches Philosophy with **CRIME NOVEL**

SELAH MAYA ZIGHELBOIM | JE STAFF

LLOYD ZANE REMICK supposes everyone has that one novel they want to write.


But what not everyone has done is take the next step in writing and publishing that novel. In December, Remick fulfilled that dream and published *Two Times Platinum*, available on Amazon and at Barnes and Noble.

"I decided to write a lawyer crime novel," Remick said, "that deals with the glamour and the glitz that people suppose is the entertainment world, but from the practical, seedy side, the underside, of how a lot of this operates."




Two Times Platinum gives an insider's perspective on the sports and entertainment industries. It follows Dex Randle, an entertainment lawyer in Philadelphia. A young singer from a poor background named Val Clifton aligns herself with a seedy, mob character to achieve fame. When Randle takes her on as a client, he finds his life drastically changed.


Remick, 80, a member of Adath Israel, has worked as an entertainment and sports lawyer for more than 50 years, during which time he has represented award-winning artists, writers



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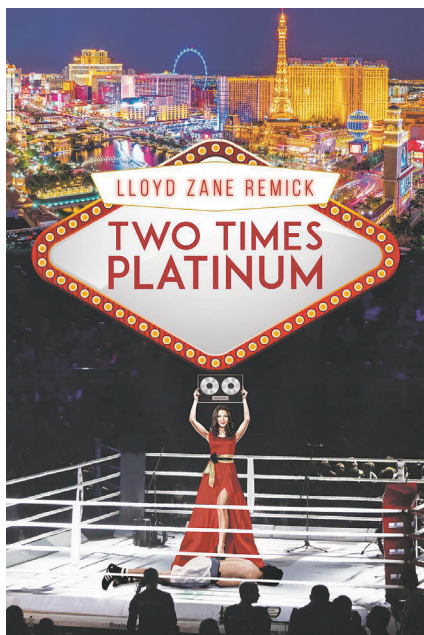
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and producers, as well as television, radio and entertainment personalities and professional athletes; those clients have included jazz musician Grover Washington Jr. He is also the CEO of Zane Management Inc., a communication consulting firm, and an adjunct professor of entertainment law at Temple University.

He has deep roots in Philadelphia, having gotten his bachelor's degree at Wharton, his JD from Temple University and his LLM from Villanova University.

He only lived away from the area for a period after law school, when he served as a judge advocate general in the Army during



Cover of *Two Times Platinum*

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CRIME

Continued from Page 13

the Cuban Missile Crisis and the early years of the Vietnam War.

"Some of my younger associates think that I started practicing law with Abraham Lincoln," Remick said. "[Since I started practicing,] the evolution of sports and the music world and entertainment has become

much more sophisticated with managers and agents and large corporations. ... What has really changed the whole music world is the evolution of technology. Whereas, when you were younger, you went out and bought a CD, now you go on iTunes or CD Baby or Spotify, and it's changed the whole world and the way you have to approach things."

Remick noted that his life shares enough similarities with the novel's protagonist for readers to make the assumption that his own life inspired *Two Times Platinum*, but he stressed that the book is fictional.

"Let's just say that the book is a fictionalized account and that there are some, obviously, elements I have experienced but not, am I, disclosing any particular clients or anything," Remick said. "There's a whole side of the entertainment, music and sports world about how deals get done, and I have portrayed some of that in my book."

Remick has been published before — law review articles, contract books and even a book of poetry. But *Two Times Platinum*

is much different.

Several years ago, he started to put the novel together. For about nine months, Monday through Friday, he worked on it from midnight to exactly 3 a.m. He chose to write during those hours because he found he had uninterrupted time and was able to concentrate fully.

He said he had to teach himself to better use a computer to write it. At one point, he accidentally deleted an entire night's work.

After letting the book sit for a while, Remick sought a publisher, eventually signing with Austin Macauley Publishers.

"Once the editorial board learned of [Remick's] background, they were quickly intrigued by how these experiences would translate into his writing, and they were not disappointed," said Cassidy Colarik, marketing assistant at Austin Macauley. "*Two Times Platinum* takes its readers on a glamorous and thrilling adventure intertwining the posh lifestyles of celebrities and the dark underbelly of organized crime, which we believe would appeal to a wide variety of readers."

Remick wanted to find a publisher that would allow the book to not only include exciting illicitness, but also offer readers lessons on ethics and philosophy — a nod to his teaching background.

"Those who are young lawyers, and especially those who are interested in the entertainment and sports field, can learn a great deal," Remick said. "There is a lot of teaching woven within the fabric of this storyline, but what I tried to do is implant some form of philosophy."

One example is a theme throughout *Two Times Platinum*, that the practice of law is fraught with peril. Remick said this serves

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[Remick] said he had to teach himself to better use a computer to write it. At one point, he accidentally deleted an entire night's work.



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as a warning to those in the field to keep a high moral standard.

"Life is a continual learning curve of experiences," he said, "and from each experience that you have, you can look at in a positive manner to extract learning and a learning curve from it, and as you mature and develop, you learn more of what life is about and how you learn from your various experiences."

Remick wants to work on bringing the book's philosophy into law classrooms, such as at a fall lecture planned at Villanova University. He is also hoping to have a lunch and learn at Adath Israel on the book's philosophy and Judaism.

Because of his professional and academic background, he often has speaking engagements and has added the book into those talks. He also has been interviewed on several radio shows.

Though *Two Times Platinum* might offer lessons for those interested in entertainment and sports law, the novel is for everyone. In fact, Remick pictured it as a fast read, maybe even as a movie.

"In my mind, I see Al Pacino as the crime boss," Remick said. "I see Jamie Foxx or Will Smith as the producer. I have a couple of people in mind for the singer. I'm not quite sure who should be the lawyer, but Kevin Bacon and his wife make a perfect couple. So yes, I've really thought about it." •

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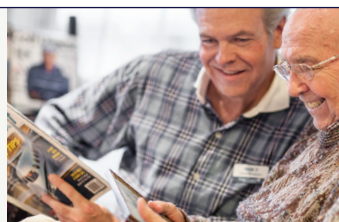
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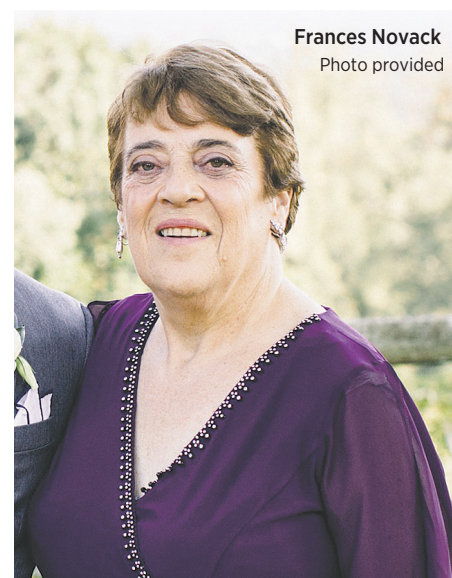
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Frances Novack
Photo provided

RACHEL KURLAND | JE STAFF

WHILE PUSHING AGAINST a lying leg press in the weight room, Frances Novack has exercised enough over the past four years to lift more than 200 pounds.

Oh, and she's only 70 years old.

The former professor of French language, literature and culture at Ursinus College, where she taught for 35 years, became interested in daily exercise when she retired more than four years ago.

She modestly wouldn't describe herself as athletic, she laughed through her strong Brooklyn accent.

"All kidding aside, it's very clear that going [to the gym] regularly since I retired, which I couldn't do before I retired," she noted, "I can tell that I'm fitter. I can push things with more resis-

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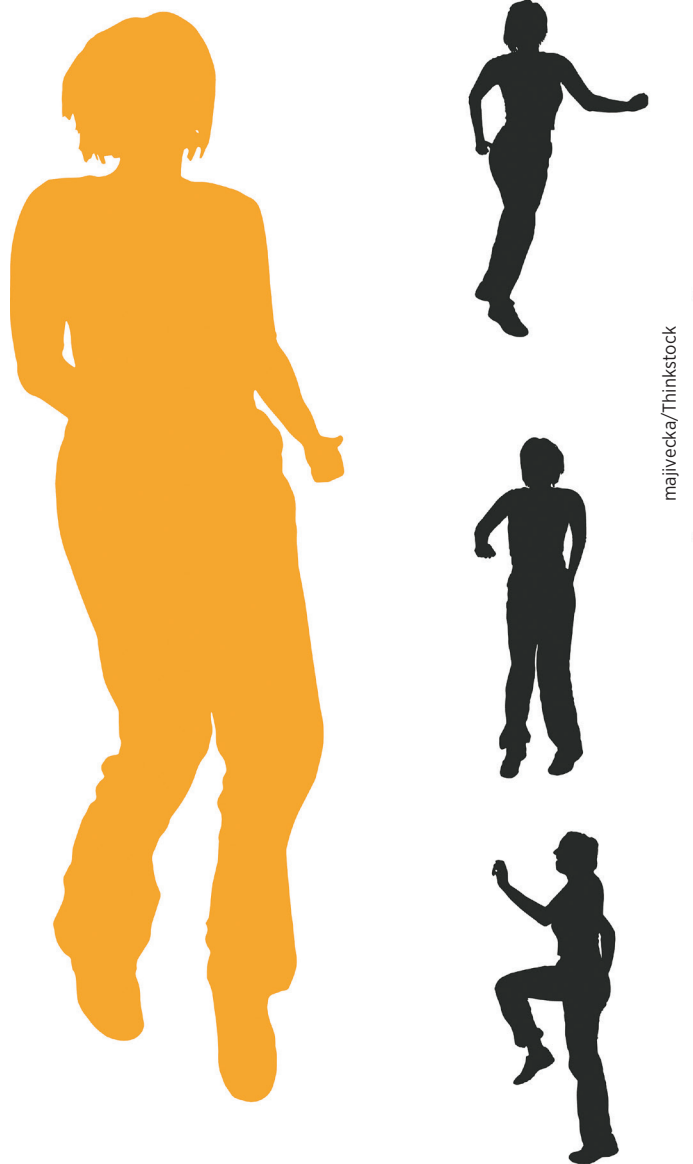
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SEE CARDIO | Page 18

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CARDIO

Continued from Page 17

tance and push harder. And I can tell — slowly, but I can tell — that I'm better, and also I feel well, which is the major reason I go."

When Zumba dance classes became all the rage at a local gym while she was still teaching at Ursinus, she jumped at the chance.

"It was so much fun that I signed up at the JCC," she said, for Sunday and Tuesday mornings.

The Havertown resident now mainly attends fitness classes at Kaiserman JCC.

She still does the cardio-centric dance classes as her sole workout regimen, whether it be aerobics-style, Zumba or even hip-hop.

"Specifically at synagogue where there's always a pew in front of you, everybody holds on. I began to do [the exercise]. It's a small thing, but it improves your general abilities." She offered the advice to her friends, who didn't even realize they were holding onto something to stand.

"It's fun to watch [hip-hop] because [the instructor] has very intelligently done different things on Sunday and Tuesday," she noted, considering the Sunday class often has more young people "leaping around."

"The people my age mostly don't go leaping around," she joked. "It wasn't something that I knew anything about, and I have to say that I like the music of Zumba much better than I like the music of hip-hop, but it's great fun."

The class is a bit more low-tempo on Tuesdays, but Novack said it's easy enough to follow.

During the week, she said, most class attendees are her age — though some have reached 100 — and are usually all women, too. A pleasant staff and positive group, they dance at their own individual skill levels — "you don't get graded on this," Novack reiterated of what an instructor told her.

"People do what they can do, and whatever you're doing, you're doing something." Hip-hop instructor once dropped to the floor and popped back up in a class, she recalled, to which women in the class burst out laughing, exclaiming, "If we did that, would somebody help us up?"

They keep up with each other's personal lives, too, meeting for lunches or catching up around town.

When the classes aren't available, she settles for the weight room.

She volunteers her time as a docent at the National Museum of American Jewish History on Wednesday mornings, pushing off meeting with her personal trainer until later that afternoon.

SEE CARDIO | Page 20



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CARDIO

Continued from Page 18

They meet for just half an hour, doing some resistance training on machines or step ups, like the lying leg press, which she demonstrated by sitting back in her chair and lifting her legs with ease, pushing up into the air.

“Do I do it perfectly? I don’t think so. But I can tell the difference that I can do more weight now” after four years of practice.

But her preferred classes “contribute both to making me feel good physically and mentally,” she said of the social element. “You see all these articles saying you should be exercising, so you might as well do something you like.”

Growing up in New York, she walked everywhere, since driving was relatively not an option in her generation.

Exercising at the gym has added a couple healthy elements into her lifestyle. “First of all, it means that unlike some of my friends, I have to get up and move every single day. So I do.”

While some older adults center their exercise on taking brisk walks around the neighborhood, Novack said she walks for the sake of transportation.

Although she drives, she tries to walk or take public transportation as much as possible.

“Some of my friends already say, ‘It’s a flight of stairs, let’s take the elevator,’” she said, but she has no problem tackling a few flights on her own.

For her younger relatives or friends, Novack has noticed how busy their lives are. Fitness isn’t a high priority on their lists, or they simply don’t have the time.

She keeps kosher, so she tries to maintain a healthy diet when she can — not too far from the Mediterranean diet — and rarely eats meat aside from chicken. But she’s not afraid to take a few excursions to the dark side (i.e. chocolate).

“Because my mother pushed vegetables [growing up] without our knowing that she was pushing vegetables, I used to get a carrot, lettuce and tomato every single night at dinner. I thought the great American meal was that everybody had a carrot,” she laughed. “It turned out to be because my father did not like cooked carrots but he liked the raw carrot.”

There’s been clear progress, she said, especially with balance. Her personal trainer advised a few years ago to try to stand up from a seated position without using your hands or holding onto any-



Frances Novack
Photo provided

thing — it's more difficult than it sounds. She looked around her synagogue, Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El, and noticed other people were holding onto the chair in front of them to stand up.

"Specifically at synagogue where there's always a pew in front of you, everybody holds on. I began to do [the exercise]. It's a small thing, but it improves your general abilities."

She offered the advice her friends, who didn't even realize they were holding on to something to stand.

"It wasn't that you couldn't, it's that you didn't," she said. "That kind of thing has been very helpful."

Novack suggests easing into a new exercise routine — and make sure it's something you like to do — and see where that takes you.

"Starting by doing something you like and then working up," she added, plus in the group class setting, "it helps to have the other people and because of the music."

"It just makes it a more pleasant experience." •

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HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, PALMACH FIGHTER REFLECTS ON WARS



Ezra Sherman, his wife Sara and their six grandchildren

Photo provided

SELAH MAYA ZIGHELBOIM | JE STAFF

EZRA SHERMAN WITNESSED some of the 20th century's most transformational moments.

The 87-year-old survived the Holocaust, saw Auschwitz as part of a Soviet brigade, participated in the Battle of Berlin and fought in Israel's War of Independence under Yitzhak Rabin.

In Israel, he married and started a family and eventually moved to Philadelphia in the '70s.

"I was one of the lackeys that could survive the war in Europe and hiding for 18 months, and then all the wars in Israel,"

SEE SURVIVOR | Page 24

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SURVIVOR

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Sherman said. "I took part in all the wars. I was a fighter."

Sherman was born the youngest of four siblings in a small town in Poland, now Ukraine, called Mlynov. His father worked as a kosher butcher in the town, which was mostly comprised of Jews, though it had a diverse population that included Poles, Ukrainians and Czechs. In a 2014 interview with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Sherman described Mlynov as similar to Anatevka in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The Soviet Union took over Mlynov in 1939 when Sherman was 8, resulting in an almost immediate shortage of foods and goods. His father found ways to get things for people, which eventually landed him in trouble with the Soviet government.

The family was forced to move to Dubno, Ukraine, where his father worked taking care of a commandant's horses.

Two years later, when Sherman was in Mlynov visiting his grandmother, planes flew overhead and bombed a military airport near the town in the middle of the night. Later that day, planes bombed again. Some of the bombs fell in the town, and a few people died.

"In the morning, we got up," Sherman said to the Holocaust museum. "Everybody knew it — a war."

Just a few days later, Germans came into the town, and there was a shootout between them and the Soviets. Soon after, the Germans took over Mlynov.

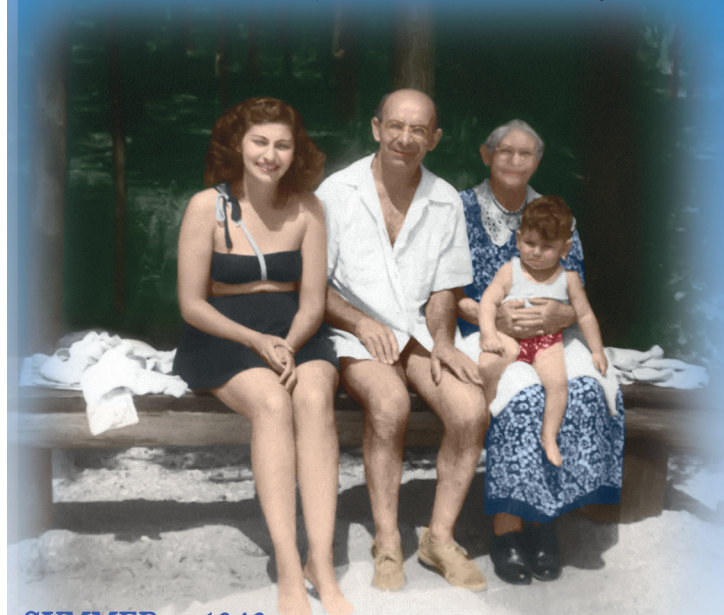
One of the first things the Germans did was kill the rabbi. Slowly, they began to establish a *judenrat*.



Ezra Sherman in the Palmach

Photo provided

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(l to r) Ceila Goldberg Kozek, with her father, Louis Goldberg, her Grandma Tille (Tyba Goldberg), and her son Stuart.

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About two months after the Germans invaded, Sherman went back to Dubno, where his siblings and father were. They lived near a cemetery, where he witnessed mass executions of Jews. He was 11 years old, and it was the first time he saw someone killed. After the second execution, where 300 were killed, he returned to Mlynov.

In April 1942, the Germans established a ghetto in the town. Sherman slept there at night, but during the day, he crawled out under the fence and helped gentile farmers in exchange for food.

One day, the Germans began rounding up the Jews near the synagogue and taking people into a house across the street to search them for their belongings, before they directed them onto a truck and, from there, to a killing field. Everyone knew what was about to happen — they had dug the graves themselves just a few weeks before.

Sherman went to hide in a shack in the ghetto. When Ukrainian police began to search the ghetto, he fled.

“When I ran away from the killing area, I was 12 years old,” Sherman said. “The next night after that, I already didn’t think like a 12-year-old boy, and I start to think like 30 years.”

Sherman eventually went into the woods and spent several months surviving with the help of mostly Czech farmers. He lived that way for more than a year, until 1944, when Soviets liberated the area.

Sherman no longer had to hide. He befriended the colonel of the Soviet troops staying in the area and, one day, the colonel asked Sherman to join them and become the son of the brigade. They made a uniform for him, and Sherman made the troops vodka. He went with the brigade as they liberated Ukraine and Poland, from Mlynov, to Lviv, Krakow, and final-

ly to Berlin. He saw Auschwitz just a few days after it had been liberated and was in Berlin for the battle that ended World War II’s European theater.

At 14 years old, Sherman had already seen things most people never do during an entire lifetime. But his story was still not over.

After the war, Sherman reconnected with his oldest brother, who had survived by fleeing to Russia. The two moved illegally to the Mandate of Palestine in 1946.

Sherman ended up on a kibbutz, which also served as a training ground for the Palmach. When the Israel War for Independence broke out in 1948, he worked securing kibbutzim. He found that his familiarity with weapons from his time traveling with the Soviet brigade helped.

“We didn’t have a choice,” Sherman said. “We fight for our lives. We didn’t have anywhere to run. We couldn’t retreat. Where, where will we retreat? To the ocean? That was the mood from all the soldiers.”

During this time, Sherman knew Yitzhak Rabin, Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres. Rabin, he said, was a brilliant and honest person, while Dayan was a great fighter and Peres, not much of a fighter, did other great things.

When the war ended, Sherman said he and the other soldiers didn’t have time to reflect. His main preoccupation was where to sleep and eat.

“We used to, every night, go out for operation, and during the morning, we used to come back ... and we always got dead, one soldier or two, and we used to bury them and then go to sleep because in the evening, again, we used to prepare to go out for

SEE SURVIVOR | Page 26



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SURVIVOR

Continued from Page 25



Ezra Sherman in the Palmach

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another operation," Sherman said. "We were very little soldiers. I was 17 years old. We didn't have time to think."

In the ensuing decades, Sherman also fought in the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

In 1956, Sherman married Sara Lamdan, another Holocaust survivor who came to Israel on the Exodus. They lived in Haifa, where Sherman owned a trucking company, and had three children. In 1974, they moved to New York and then to Philadelphia, where Sherman bought a tire center.

Estee Solar, Sherman's daughter who was 5 when the family moved to the United States, said the family moved to the U.S. because her father had had enough of wars.

"We were all taught to be able to stand on our own two feet," she said. "You take a potato; you can make food out of it. The Israeli way was, 'You don't have it? Go grow it yourself.'"

Solar said her father didn't really start talking about the Holocaust until he started having grandchildren, of which he now has six. Sherman has done some Holocaust remembrance work, having spoken at schools in addition to the Holocaust museum.

"I'm lucky I'm still alive," Sherman said. "I'm 87, thank God, and that's it. I'm not complaining." •

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'No Complaints': From Life in Poland to Philadelphia

MARISSA STERN | JE STAFF

ROSA KORNSGOLD GOT a call from her granddaughter a few months ago excitedly telling her, "Bubbe, you're famous!"

Kornsgold's picture was featured in the Sept. 28, 2017 issue of the *Jewish Exponent* for a flashback story about 200 refugee children who began attending public schools in Philadelphia. The accompanying photo featured a smiling 9-year-old Rosa Korntager, who was looking at a globe, surrounded by classmates and their teacher.

The Sept. 16, 1949 article detailed the first day in city schools for Kornsgold and her brother, Gerson, who was

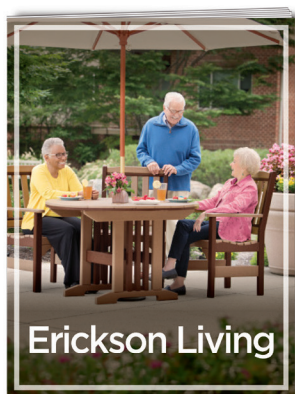


SEE REFUGEE | Page 28

Rosa and Morris Kornsgold with frames of their children and grandchildren

Marissa Stern

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REFUGEE

Continued from Page 27

6 at the time. They attended Kirkbride Elementary School in South Philadelphia.

Kornsgold, who will be 78 in May, doesn't remember that picture being taken, but her granddaughter was more than happy to call and tell her she was in the *Exponent*.

She was born in Stanislav, Poland, but when she was 6 weeks old, she and her family were taken to Russia and then sent back to Poland after the war. "Exactly where they sent us back after the war, I do not know," she said, as she was 5 or 6 years old then.

At that point, her mother had become a widow. Kornsgold's father was killed three weeks before the war ended.

"In Russia, they formed a second Polish front. They took my father into — this was in 1943 — so they took him and a friend of his also was taken into the army," she said. "And my father's friend said to him, 'You're blond, blue-eyed, you speak a perfect Polish — go as a gentile.' My father said, 'I'm a Jew, and I'm going as a Jew.'"

His friend told her mother there was an officer who did not like him, and would send her father on missions where he thought her father would be killed, but he came back. One night, he woke up in the middle of the night with severe headaches and, at 38, he died.

While the rest of her family perished during the war, her father's death is the only one whose details she knows because his friend who was with him wrote to her mother.

After the war, there were few Jews left in Poland, so her

mother decided to leave. She put Kornsgold and her brother briefly in an orphanage, destroyed her papers showing she was Jewish and snuck over the border into Germany. She picked up her children after a brief stint of sickness and then they were in Freiman, a displaced persons camp in Germany, for three years.

On May 19, 1949 they boarded a former army ship — the SS General Stewart — to America. It happened to also be her ninth birthday. The journey took 11 days and she spent one of those sick from nausea. One thing she remembers is her mother telling her, "I don't care if you don't eat, but you've got to go get an orange," because that was a big thing," she recalled with a laugh. "I remember that."

They stayed one night in a hotel before ultimately making their way to Philadelphia, where HIAS had registered for them to go, and she's been in the city ever since.

"If you didn't want to go where they sent you, if you wanted to go somewhere else, they were not responsible for you," she explained of why they settled in Philadelphia. "And for my mother, it didn't make any difference. Her whole family was lost. My father's family was lost. So to her what difference did it make where she went? She didn't know the language, she didn't know any friends, so they said Philadelphia and she said fine."

They settled in South Philly in a house with three or four other families at Seventh and Dickinson streets. Her mother started working at a factory while looking for an apartment.

"I didn't speak any English," Kornsgold noted, "so whatever little bit of English I learned I learned playing with the kids in the neighborhood."

They eventually found an apartment at Fourth and Tasker streets, and Kornsgold and her brother started school — which was detailed in the 1949 *Exponent* article.

At 9, she was supposed to be in fourth grade but she was placed in third as she didn't yet know English. There was no English as a second language for elementary school kids at that time, she noted. She was only graded on math for the first few report periods.

"I remember when we had to have our eyes checked they said read the alphabet — I couldn't read the alphabet," she laughed. "So they did for the E you go this way or that way, so that was the way I had my eyes checked."

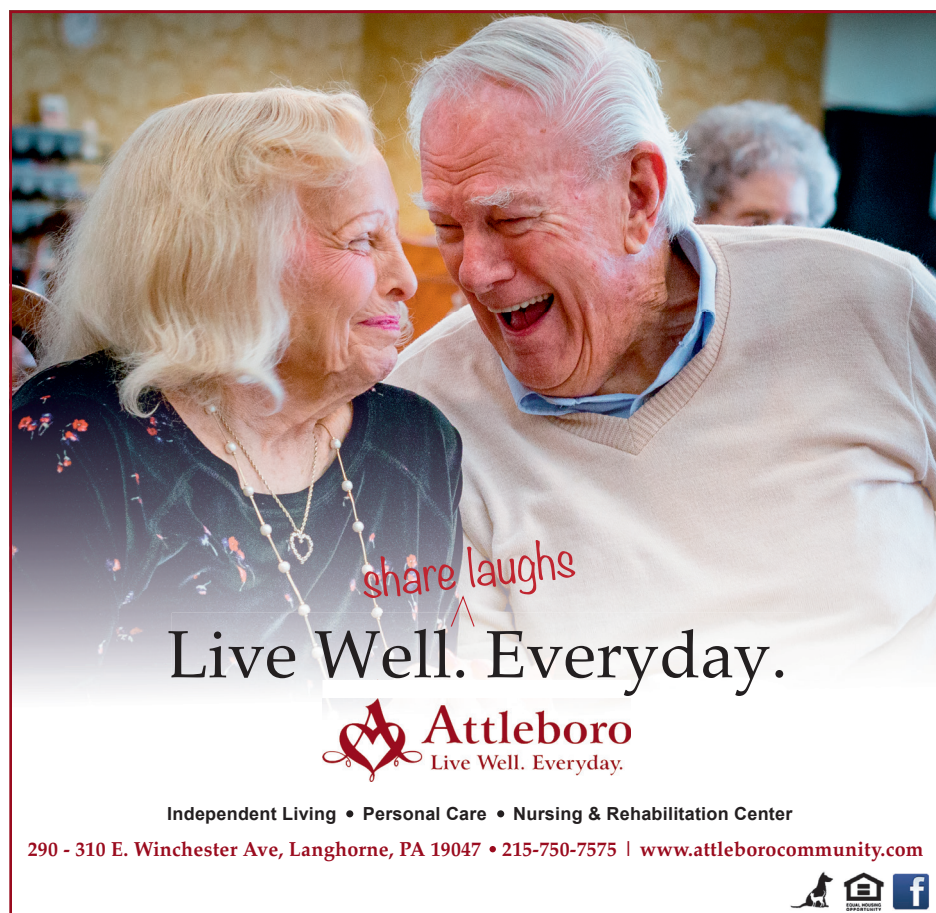
She went on to middle school and then graduated from South Philadelphia High School before starting work as a legal secretary, which she did for five years.

Along the way, she met her husband, Morris Kornsgold, 82 — "Right? 82?" "Whatever you say" — who sat patiently at the dining room table of their Northeast Philadelphia home as she related her story. He also came to America from Poland and Germany in 1951.

They met on erev Yom Kippur when she was 19 years old and was taking a walk with her mother in their South Philly neighborhood on a hot night.


"He was standing outside and I walked by with my mom, and we met and a year later we got married," she said simply.

At that time, you had to be 21 to get married, she noted, so since she was only




share laughs

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JEWISH EXPONENT, September 16, 1949

First Full Day in a Free American School



Rosa Korntrager (center), 9, Polish-born DP youngster who has been in the United States only since May 30, shows her classmates in Grade 3B of the Kirkbride Elementary School, 7th and Dickinson Streets, her route across the Atlantic. Shown here on the first full day of school last Friday are (left to right): Theresa Aversa, 8; Rosa Korntrager; Wing Ng, 9; and Elsie Barnes, 8. Mrs. Helen Neal, their teacher, is looking on. Rosa is one of more than 200 DP children who came to this country with the help of the Allied Jewish Appeal and who were enrolled for the first time in Philadelphia's public schools last week.

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The photo in the September 1949 *Jewish Exponent* about Rosa and Gerson's first days in school in Philadelphia.

20, her mother had to go with her to City Hall as she needed a parent's permission.

They stayed in South Philly until 1966, after their son, Jay, was born, and they moved to the Northeast. After they had two more kids, Laura and Helene, she worked for the school board as a secretary and eventually retired from Northeast High School.

Two of her children are rabbis, another is a pediatrician, and she is the proud grandmother of six grandchildren.

"To me, family is very important. Growing up without any — in fact, I always said I didn't realize what I missed until I became a grandmother and then I realized all the things I missed, so that's why to me family is very important," she said.

Reflecting on her life, though, she has no complaints.

Judaism played a central role in her and her husband's life when building their family, as they had both lost theirs and with them, their family traditions. They've belonged to several congregations in Northeast Philly that have since closed or merged, and are now members of Congregations of Shaare Shamayim.

The only milestone she'd like to accomplish is a Bat Mitzvah, as her husband will have a second Bar Mitzvah at their synagogue soon.

But being with family and having her children and grandchildren involved in Jewish life is enough for her in the meantime.

"It's like we had to start from the beginning, and I figured this way I feel like our relatives didn't die for nothing," she said. "For us, it was very important so they'll know where they came from and what they have to adhere to. We had to make our own traditions, our own everything. And we did pretty good. I can't complain." •

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Double Duty Dinner a Deux



Roasted salmon

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COOKING FOR TWO can be a challenge, especially for those of us who have spent decades feeding a family. The shift from high volume to small portion can be a bumpy transition, with much food going to waste.

However, this need not be the case. With just a bit of planning, you can cook once and eat twice without feeling like you're stuck with leftovers.

But first, a few notes on nutrition at this golden stage of life.

As we age, we need the same nutrients as we always have — in some cases even more of things like calcium and vitamin B12. But we tend to burn less energy as physical activity declines and our metabolism slows, so we require a lower calorie intake to maintain (not gain) weight. Yet another gift of aging, but let's remember that it beats the alternative.

The strategy is simple: Choose lean proteins, whole grains and a wide array of fruits and vegetables. Also, consuming a variety of deeply colored vegetables and fruits is a tasty (and pretty) way to ensure that you are getting the necessary vitamins. Think kale over iceberg lettuce, or sweet potatoes over white potatoes.

The following recipes enable you to cook dinner tonight and set up dinner (or lunch) tomorrow. The salmon, sautéed vegetables and roasted sweet potatoes offer a delicious and healthy repast tonight.

The oven temperature is the same for both the salmon and sweet potatoes; simply prep the spuds first, pop them in the oven and, 25 minutes later, roast the fish. Both will come out at the same time, ready to go. And fear not if the fish needs a bit longer — you can't really overcook the sweet potatoes; a few more minutes in the oven will do them just fine.

For tomorrow, you will assemble a salad using the leftovers. Two for the price of one.

If you are one of those people who loves a sweet after a meal, consider a small piece of dark chocolate, a scoop of sorbet, or some in-season fruit like berries or melon. Satisfying, delicious and not overly caloric.

ROASTED SALMON

Serves two with leftovers for tomorrow's meal

A word on the fish: I enjoy the taste and texture of farmed North Atlantic salmon, and the price is right, too. However, I have recently learned from research and my fishmonger that organic and wild salmon are far superior nutritionally and environmentally.

They are a bit trickier to cook because they are leaner and can tend to dry out. But vigilance and some oil or butter ensure a good result.

Here's another nifty trick — the marinade you make for the salmon will do double duty on tomorrow's salad.

- 4 salmon filets
- ½ cup olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon (approximately ¼ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Generous dousing of fresh cracked pepper

Heat your oven to 400 degrees.

In a small bowl, mix the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper.

Coat the salmon with three tablespoons of the mixture, and let it sit for 20 minutes. Save the remaining mixture for tomorrow's salad.

Roast the salmon in the oven for about 20 minutes until done.

SAUTEED RED CABBAGE AND KALE

Serves two

- ½ head red cabbage
- 1 bunch kale
- 2 tablespoons oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Generous dousing of fresh cracked pepper

Slice the red cabbage into thin ribbons.

Remove the stalks from the kale and slice the leaves into thin ribbons.

Heat the oil in a large skillet with the salt and pepper.

Take about three handfuls of the sliced vegetables and place them in the skillet. Place the remaining vegetables in a Ziploc bag for tomorrow's salad with salad dressing. Give it a good shake and store it in your fridge overnight.

Cook the cabbage and kale over medium heat until wilted and soft, stirring frequently; this should take about 10 minutes.

ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

Serves two with leftovers for tomorrow

- 4 sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat your oven to 400 degrees. Peel the sweet potatoes and cut them into bite-sized chunks.

Toss the sweet potatoes in a baking dish with the oil, salt and pepper.

Roast them in the oven for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the edges are browning and the sweet potatoes are soft throughout. Serve two portions with the meal, and put two portions in the fridge for tomorrow.

For tomorrow, you are prepped and ready to make the following:

SALMON SALAD

This is a delightful light lunch or supper, and best of all, you've done the work — it's just a matter of dumping everything onto the plate and, voila, a gourmet meal in a minute. You may wish to add a spritz of lemon, a drizzle of olive oil and a dash of salt and pepper to the top of this if the kale and cabbage have absorbed all of the dressing; give it a taste first and see.

2 fillets cooked salmon
Dressed kale/cabbage mixture
Roasted sweet potatoes

Place the dressed kale/cabbage mixture in a large, shallow bowl.
Place the salmon filets in the center of the dish and surround them with sweet potatoes.

Dinner is served. ●

Roasted sweet potatoes

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