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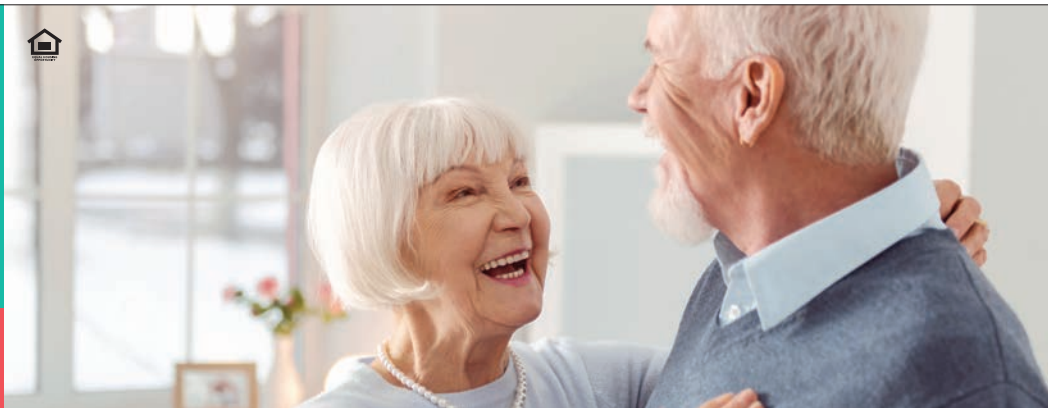
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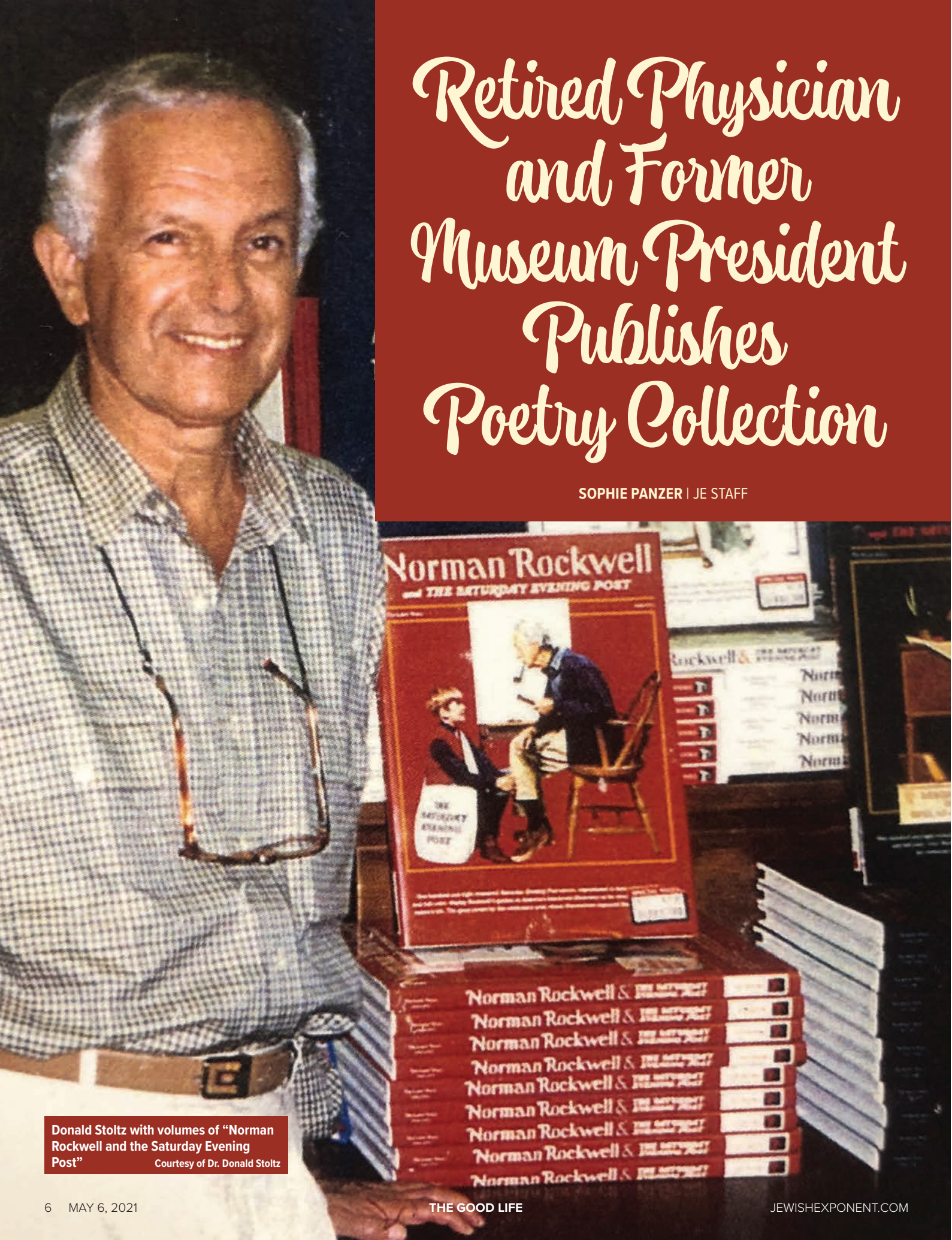


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Retired Physician and Former Museum President Publishes Poetry Collection

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Donald Stoltz with volumes of "Norman Rockwell and the Saturday Evening Post"
Courtesy of Dr. Donald Stoltz



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Memory Care Community

Dr. Donald Stoltz, 85, is used to the thrill of seeing his name in print. The retired doctor and former president of the Curtis Center Museum of Norman Rockwell Art in Philadelphia is also a prolific author who has published 22 books for children and adults over the course of his life.

The Northeast Philadelphia resident self-published his latest book, "It Could Be Verse," in April. The volume is a collection of poems written in the rhyming style he used for many of the children's books he wrote and illustrated in his younger years. The cover is illustrated with a painting of his wife, Phyllis Stoltz.

The poems in the collection range from lighthearted rhymes about birds flying into museums to final goodbyes for a dying friend. There are also poems about Jewish holidays, from helping an old man in need on Chanukah to staff at a Catholic hospital celebrating Passover with a patient while he recovers from surgery.

Stoltz grew up in Northeast Philadelphia, and his parents were founding members of what was then called Congregation Shaare Shamayim. He knew he wanted to be a doctor from a young age and attended Central High School, Temple University and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

After he graduated from PCOM in 1961, he married and opened a family medicine practice in his parents' basement. His initial base of patients was a group of 50 or 60 families in the neighborhood who invited him to their weddings and bar mitzvahs.

When many young parents who went to him for health care told him that their children were struggling with toilet training, he started looking for a children's book that might help them.

"I looked all over, and I couldn't find one about toilet training. So I decided to write it, and I wrote 'The Story of Tommy Toilet,'" he said.

The book sold in local bookstores and pharmacies, and Stoltz said it wasn't long before every house in the neighborhood had a copy.

He discovered that he enjoyed writing to help children learn about challenging topics, so he decided to write more. Next came a book about Nelson Needle, which was written to help children scared of getting shots. Then came "Peter The Very Poor Eater," about picky eating.

One of his favorites was "How Dad and Mother Made My Brother," which covered early sex education.

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"That was a very interesting book, not only to write, but to illustrate," he said.

After 12 years, he joined a new practice with two other doctors located on Roosevelt Boulevard. He went on to write more books, including a book for older children called "The Bubble Trip to Israel," which he created with Al Weisner. Most of them are available on Amazon.

He also compiled the "Norman Rockwell and the Saturday Evening Post," series, which analyzes every cover painting artist Norman Rockwell did for the Saturday Evening Post.

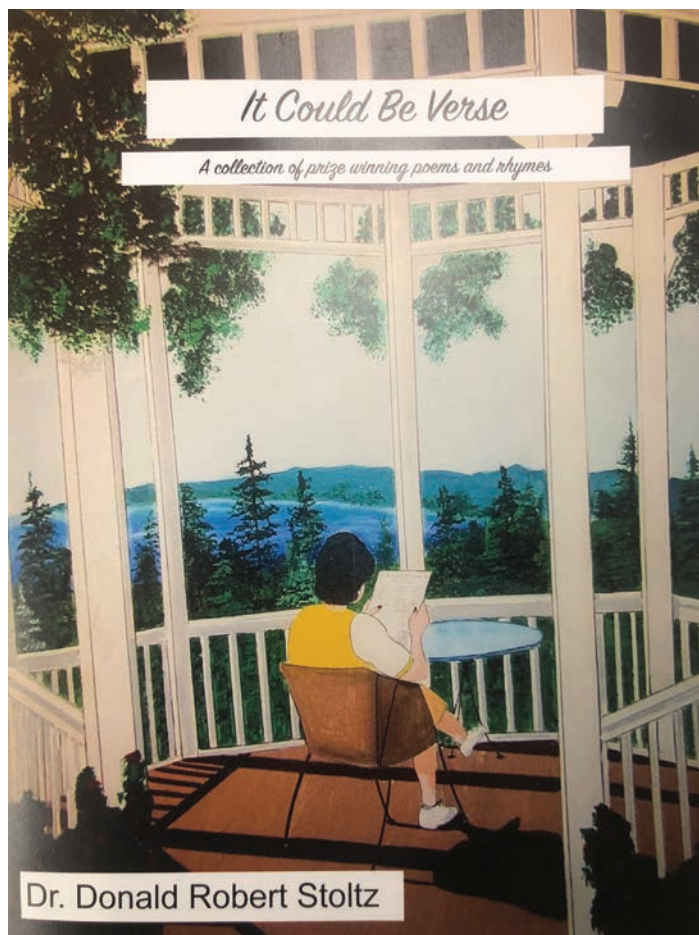
He started the project after he received a book of Rockwell artwork as a gift from his wife. His brother, Marshall Stoltz, tracked down Rockwell's phone number in the hopes of getting it autographed.

To everyone's surprise, Rockwell answered the phone. When he heard that Donald Stoltz was a big fan, a doctor and a fellow artist, he invited the family up to his studio in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

For Stoltz, who saved every issue of the Saturday Evening Post when his father had it delivered to his childhood home, it was a dream come true. He became friendly with Rockwell and visited him several times. During one of the visits, he asked Rockwell if anyone had ever created a compilation of all his Saturday Evening Post covers. When Rockwell said no, Stoltz offered to use his experience in writing and publishing to do it himself.

Over the course of a year, the Stoltz brothers organized and wrote descriptions of every cover Rockwell ever illustrated. The initial print run was 10,000 books. Stoltz said Simon & Schuster later acquired the rights and ran a second printing of

See Poetry, Page 10



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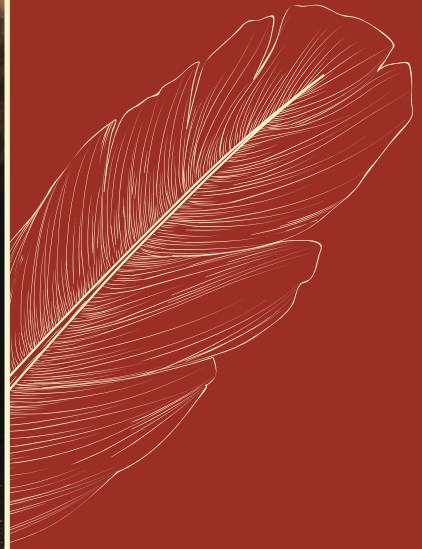
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The museum drew many visitors, including celebrities. One day, Marshall Stoltz told Donald Stoltz to bring his son down to the museum to meet the entire St. Louis Cardinals football team.

Stoltz also remembered the time his father, who often helped curate and guide museum visitors, approached a man, told him he looked familiar and asked if they went to the same synagogue.

"My father said, 'I go to Shaare Shamayim and I live in Northeast Philadelphia.' And the man said, 'No, I live in Los Angeles,'" Stoltz said. "And it turned out it was Dustin Hoffman."

❖❖ I would say he's a very uplifting person. He says he's never depressed, and he's just a very happy person, and he loves people."

PHYLLIS STOLTZ

After running the museum for 22 years, Stoltz said he and his brother closed it when the company that owned their building tripled the rent. They published another book, "The Advertising World of Norman Rockwell," and took the exhibits on the road, giving lectures about Rockwell at various venues across the country.

Stoltz retired from medicine in 1998 and got another job working for a drug company, where he visited medical schools to lecture about new kinds of medicine. Now, he spends his time painting and continues to write books, poems and short stories. His three children and seven grandchildren live in Philadelphia, and he sees them often.

"I would say he's a very uplifting person," Phyllis Stoltz said. "He says he's never depressed, and he's just a very happy person, and he loves people." •

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John Prine Fandom Sparks Musical Connection

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...to be continued

In 1964, Bruce Rits Gilbert saw The Beatles play at the Milwaukee Arena.

It was the type of show that might have sparked a lifetime of obsession, a sold-out show that opened with “Twist and Shout” and ended with a cover of “Long Tall Sally.” Tickets topped out at about \$5, and it was the first and last time that the band ever played in Gilbert’s hometown. It wouldn’t be a stretch to imagine that show fueling a lifetime of Beatlemania for Gilbert.

But Gilbert, 67, escaped mostly unscathed that day (more Beatle-appreciator than maniac). Instead, a musician of a different sort — someone a little quieter, a little weirder, a little funnier and a whole lot more country — caught his attention. From the first time Gilbert heard the singer-songwriter John Prine’s music in 1973, he was hooked.

“I’ve had dalliances with a whole lot of other singer-songwriters and groups and the like,” Gilbert said. “But John Prine has always been my favorite. I’ve seen him a whole lot of times, and he’s just a remarkable musician.”

From Milwaukee to his current home in Penn Valley, and through a decades-long career as a lawyer, a marriage, the task of raising three daughters and now, a pandemic, Gilbert has held Prine close and spread the word about his music far and wide.



Boo Rits and The Missing Years perform at the Bryn Mawr Twilight Concerts. From left: Nick Gunty, Bruce Rits Gilbert and Matt Lyons

Photo by Nick Penney

During the pandemic, Gilbert started two Prine-related projects: a self-published tribute book called “John Prine: One Song At A Time” that serves as a comprehensive introduction to Prine and his music, and the appropriately-titled John Prine Album Club, where newly isolated family members would gather once a week via Zoom to discuss another Prine record.

“It was a really nice way for us to honor and remember John Prine and his music,” Gilbert said.

Gilbert grew up outside of Milwaukee, and attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison before heading to the now-defunct Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. He met his wife, Andrea, the longtime president of Bryn Mawr Hospital, during his undergraduate years, and they’ll celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this August.

Gilbert spent more than 20 years as general counsel for Universal Health Services in King of Prussia, and spent the last few years working for smaller health care startups. As his legal career wound down, Gilbert found himself with lots of time on

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Musical

Continued from Page 13

his hands and energy to fill it; for the first time in his life, he picked up a guitar, and along with a few friends and musicians he's met over the years, he records and performs as Boo Rits and The Missing Years.

For Gilbert, Prine's music — 18 studio albums, five live recordings, two compilations and one video album — has served as a mile marker for his own life. In the spring semester of 1973, he heard Prine's self-titled album for the first time, "which includes some of the best songs ever written," Gilbert writes in the introduction to his book. As he raised his three daughters, Molly, Emily and Casey, he instilled in them an appreciation for Prine and what he sang about, to the extent that a father can. Now that he's mostly retired, the inspiration he's gotten from Prine is what keeps him hard at work writing and recording new music.

And when Prine died at 73 last spring, felled by COVID-19, the totality of his output weighed on Gilbert. How could he express the loss that he felt, the pain that he experienced on April 7, 2020 when news of Prine's death hit his phone? "It hit me as if a dear friend had died," Gilbert recalls. To process Prine's death and keep his extended family connected, Gilbert started the Album Club.

Beginning the next week, Gilbert and his wife began weekly calls with their daughters, a few nephews and other extended family members. They would go album by album, song by song, and everyone would have a chance to talk about what the music

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Bruce Rits Gilbert with his grandson, Jack

Photo by Molly Gilbert Zulauf



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Musical

Continued from Page 14

meant to them.

Molly Gilbert Zulauf, Gilbert's eldest daughter, would call from Seattle to talk about the songs that had been "the soundtrack of my youth," she said. Each week was another mini-education and discussion, and with the family reconvened, everyone would fall back into their familiar roles. When Gilbert started telling everyone about the music he was recording, too, Gilbert Zulauf knew that it was only a natural progression.

"I never really thought he would turn into much more than a hobby, but I guess I should have known better, because my dad, when he does something, he really commits," she said.

Nicholas Gunty, part of a band called




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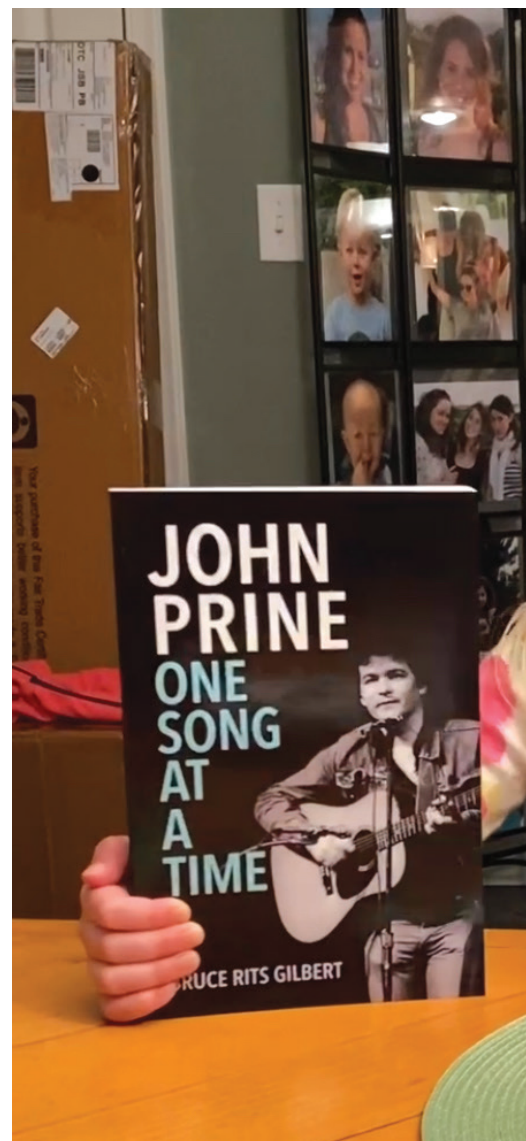
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Frances Luke Accord, helps produce the songs for Boo Rits and The Missing Years, and became closer with Gilbert as he gave notes on “John Prine: One Song At a Time.” Gilbert’s energy and creativity, he said, were infectious.

“He doesn’t sound like a senior,” Gunty laughed. “He doesn’t sound like an old person. He sounds younger than his age.”

The album-writing and recording process has been long, and Gilbert is hoping to release it this June. It’s a family affair; all three of his daughters and his granddaughter, Jane, appear on the album, and so does his nephew, a musician named Teddy Grossman.

Gilbert tries his best to write Bruce Rits Gilbert songs, but somehow, Prine-like songs come out now and then. The album will even have a few Prine covers. Who were you expecting, The Beatles? ●

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**Bruce Gilbert’s granddaughter, Jane,
with Gilbert’s book**

Photo by Bruce Rits Gilbert



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Every year, Steven Horwits asks himself if he wants to keep teaching Hebrew school at Congregation Or Ami in Lafayette Hill.

By the time he gets his new contract, the answer is always “yes.”

This year marks Horwits’ 60th year in Or Ami’s classrooms. He has taught generations of families, and many students tell him he had their older siblings, parents and even grandparents in his classes.

“Steve has been an amazing teacher and is a much-loved member of our congregation,” said Stefanie Bock, education director at the synagogue.

Horwits, who turns 78 this month, was born in Manayunk. His parents were founding members of the synagogue where

he now teaches, which was previously known as Ivy Ridge Jewish Community Center. He lives in the home they bought in Roxborough when he was 13.

Horwits was one of the only Jewish students at Roxborough High School, and while he made friends with his non-Jewish classmates, he valued the sense of community he found at his synagogue.

When he was still enrolled in high school, his mother encouraged him to attend a Jewish teacher training program, thinking it would be a nice side job he could always turn to in the future. He said the program focused more on classroom management than on Judaism, and he took the bus from Roxborough to the class at the corner of Broad and Pine streets every Sunday.

In September of 1961, he was called to Or Ami to substitute

See Teach, Page 22

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Teach

Continued from **Page 9**

for an ill teacher.

"I thought, 'Well, gee, that worked out nicely,'" he said.

It turned into a permanent teaching position when the teacher never returned, and 18-year-old Horwits was put in charge of a class of 14-year-olds.

"Every year after that, it just continued," he said. "I saw that I got a lot of satisfaction out of it, and I just continued and continued, and to this day, I'm still doing it."

"I saw that I got a lot of satisfaction out of it, and I just continued and continued, and to this day, I'm still doing it."

STEVEN HORWITS

His mother, who was a Hebrew school coordinator at the synagogue, was especially pleased when he took up teaching, and they worked together on organizing events for the students.

He's taught a wide range of ages throughout his time at Or Ami, but has spent the past 10 years working with fourth, fifth and sixth graders. It's a part-time job on Sundays and Tuesdays, and he worked full time at the Veterans Administration, now known as the Department of Veterans Affairs, for 35 years. He also now works part time in sales at a retail store in Chestnut Hill.

Horwits found teaching extremely rewarding, but it wasn't always easy. Some students showed no interest in their classes, and some parents showed no interest in their children's classes beyond bar and bat mitzvah preparation. The latter could be especially frustrating, since it left him trying to find a way to boost students' interest in the subject matter without causing conflict within the families.

His goal is to get kids to value their

See Teach, **Page 22**

Steven Horwits holds artwork
at Congregation Or Ami.

Courtesy of Stefanie Bock



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Jewish education as more than a means to an end. He said many of them come from Reform backgrounds and have plenty of Jewish friends and neighbors, so he shares stories about growing up as one of the only Jewish kids at his school to give them a different perspective on the meaning of community.

"If you get involved and be a part of it, it's going to be a lot more enjoyable for you," he said. "I'm not over-religious, but I do like the holidays and the customs, and this is what I try to pass on to them."

He appreciates when students come back to visit years later and tell him how his classes impacted them.

"When you're there, you don't really see how much of an impact you have on them. But when you see them 10, 15 years later, and they come back to you and say, 'You know, it was a great year and I really learned something from you,' I feel I'm a better Jewish person for it," he said.

He is even more excited when his pupils join him in the field. Five of his former students are now his colleagues as Hebrew school teachers at Or Ami.

"Some students, when I first had them, had absolutely no interest in anything to do with Judaism," he said. "And now

when they come to me and want to be my classroom aide, I know I did do something that impacted them. Even if they're in high school or in college, they want to come in, they want to be a part of it, and that's really exciting for me."

Excitement and challenge often go hand-in-hand in the classroom, and the need to switch to remote learning has made this year especially challenging. Horwits learned how to use Zoom, but many students don't turn on their cameras or get distracted at home during classes, which can be frustrating.

When parents approached him and said their children felt lost and needed extra support with their Hebrew, Horwits gave tutoring sessions on Zoom to three or four students at a time. The smaller group size is helpful for kids who get easily distracted or feel shy speaking in a class of 10. In spite of the obstacles, he can tell they are learning when they show him their reading skills.

He said Or Ami brought students back for some in-person instruction in April. Although it is near the end of the Hebrew school year, he is excited to see his students again now that he is fully vaccinated. ●



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BRUCE RUBIN KEEPS IT MOVIN'

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Bruce Rubin, 77, started running in the '80s and has no plans to stop as he approaches his own 80s.

Back then, it was to get in shape and, to this day, he can tell you the exact number on the scale that prompted him to get off the couch. Today, running plays a different role in his life.

From the streets of Lansdale to up and down the basketball courts at a tournament at Stanford University, from the National Senior Games to the Penn Relays at Franklin Field, Rubin has run and run. Alone or with a team, running is one of the things that's helped give shape to his life from the first time he put sole to hardwood or pavement, and surely the only arena where he once held a national record (4x400 for 75- to 79-year-olds).

Rubin was born in Brooklyn, and spent the early part of his childhood in the East Flatbush neighborhood. He worked at his parents' bakery, taking orders at the counter when he wasn't out playing stickball in the P.S. 135 schoolyard. After he graduated Brooklyn Technical High School, Rubin's parents sold the bakery and moved to North Jersey, first Passaic,

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MOVIN'

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then East Rutherford.

A year at Northeastern University ended prematurely — “mathematics and some of the other subjects caught up to me,” Rubin recalled — and he soon ended up closer to home, at Fairleigh Dickinson University. He graduated in 1969 with a B.S. in economics, later earned an MBA from Temple University and has worked as a consultant, adviser and executive ever since.

Today, he’s a principal in the consulting company BHR Global Associates.

It was around his college era when Rubin met the woman that would become his wife, Gail Mandel. At the Surf City Hotel bar on Long Beach Island, New



▲ Bruce Rubin in competition mode.

Courtesy of Bruce Rubin

Jersey, the two hit it off before she had to return to Philadelphia for a week. He was spending the next week at the shore, and told her that she should come back to see him when she could. One week of spectacular weather and bottles upon bottles of Coppertone later, she screamed when she saw Rubin on the beach — he’d gotten so tan, she barely recognized him.

They started dating, and Rubin would come down to see her from his home in North Jersey. Soon, they married, and moved to Bensalem. Together, they had one son, Brad.

Brad Brooks-Rubin, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., remembers when his

father began to run. Enough time has elapsed that Brooks-Rubin is comfortable saying that he wasn't sure how much to expect of his dad's bid for fitness.

"I didn't expect it to be something that he would really focus on so much," Brooks-Rubin said. At the least, it wasn't something that he expected his dad to be talking about in a magazine article 30 years later.

But Rubin came to enjoy running, much to his own surprise. The pounds came off, and the first time he was able to run the whole 4.5 miles around his development without stopping was a day that he cherishes still. His successes didn't move Gail much — she was a tennis player, and quite happy with that — but



▲ With grandsons Eliav and Adiv after a meet in Maryland
Courtesy of Brad Brooks-Rubin

it did catch the eye of Brooks-Rubin. In his 20s, he decided to join Rubin for a few runs and was "left in the dust," he said, by his surprisingly speedy father.

It motivated Brooks-Rubin, who eventually ran three marathons. Today, he and his father still share a connection through running and competition; when Rubin comes to down the D.C. area to run or play basketball, he looks to Brooks-Rubin and two grandsons for encouragement.

"It's pretty cool for them to see their granddad competing," Brooks-Rubin said of his sons, Eliav and Adiv. He also sees his father's running as helpful to him after the mother's death in 2017.

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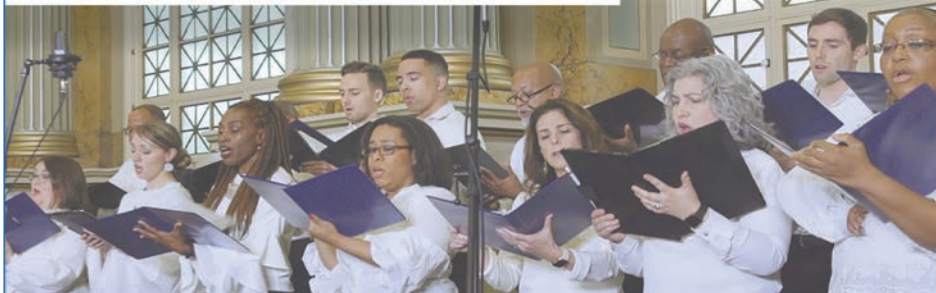


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MOVIN'

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"The athletics and the competition, the teamwork, the camaraderie, all of the things that go along with competing in sport, really helped my dad take care of my mom and get through a number of really hard years," Brooks-Rubin said.

Rubin, though proud of what he's accomplished in sports and business, isn't the type to try sell you on himself. So you'll have to let the people who know him best give the pitch.

Dave Marovich runs and plays basketball with Rubin, and was part of the 4x400 team with Rubin at the 2019 Penn Relays. Rubin, Marovich said, is the straw that stirs the drink, a playmaker on the floor who takes on a similar role off of it, organizing transportation, tournament entries and jerseys for the basketball team.

"We might not be the best athletes in that event," Marovich said, "but Bruce makes up for a lot of that by just his desire to compete."

Another friend of Rubin's, Jim Van Horn, has nothing but praise for Rubin as a teammate away from any sport, too. The two met when they served together on the board of Beacon4Life,



▲ Grandson Adiv Brooks-Rubin and Bruce Rubin

a professional networking organization in Philadelphia. It was clear from the first time he met Rubin, Van Horn said, that he was dealing with someone he could trust.

"The thing that interested me most, and also impressed me most, about Bruce, was his dedication and his sincerity about things," Van Horn said. "He clearly was a person of his word. He demonstrated a very high level of values and ethics."

The pandemic has put a stop to team competition for now, but Rubin sees hope on the horizon. Recently vaccinated and looking ahead to the 2022 National Senior Games in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Rubin reports that his 3-on-3 basketball team is seeking a 6'5" baller born no later than Dec. 31, 1946, and preferably, in 1943. In other words, he said, "a tall old guy." •

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