

The Game of Life in Ten Short Stories

Local Charlotte Author Explores the Human Condition in New Anthology

Noted philosopher Kierkegaard said, "Life must be lived forwards, but can only be understood backwards." Exploring the human condition has long intrigued everyone from philosophers to authors – particularly when reflecting back on past experiences. In "Short, Short Tales," author David Pliner uses ten short stories to delve into the array of human emotions and experiences that accompany everyday life.

A mix of fiction and non-fiction, "Short, Short Tales" features a wide variety of characters, including: a corrupt bookkeeper, an inquisitive dog named Duke, a bereft business owner, a young man at his Bar Mitzvah, and more. All the characters in "Short, Short Tales" were based on people Pliner met throughout the course



of his life.

"Every story is inspired by a personal experience," said Pliner. "I've encountered and observed so many people and emotions throughout my life, so my stories

are inspired by themes like corruption, nostalgia, love, friendship, and laughter – things every person could experience."

After an extensive career working with people in the real estate industry, Pliner sought to share some of his life's most interesting experiences, which led to the creation of "Short, Short Tales." He is now currently working on his first full-length novel, which he anticipates will be a sequel to one of the stories in the anthology.

"The stories may be short, but they were written to make you think," said Pliner.

The book can be purchased directly from Pliner for 1/3 the price of a direct purchase. He can be contacted at dpliner@carolina.rr.com or 704-234-0050. ☆

ing place for both the young and old. I loved the Amity Club and fondly remember the many sports such as swimming, tennis, and softball and playing with friends in the pool. I enjoyed many dinners there with my immediate and extended Jewish family. It was such a warm and welcoming environment. As a result, I never realized we were there because Jews were not accepted at other clubs. Perhaps this was a good thing.

This community "mishpacha" created one large family that provided us with close friends, great educational opportunities, and continued acts of generosity and charity for the health and growth of the Jewish community. We had inspiring examples of how to live as Jews. These role models were my parents, Donna and Norman, as well as Aunt Max and Uncle Al, Aunt Renee and Uncle Shelton, Aunt Marion and Uncle David, Aunt Paula and Uncle Norman, Aunt Vera and Uncle Jack, Aunt Connie and Uncle Paul, Aunt Barbara and Uncle Jerry, Aunt Peggy and Uncle Buddy, Aunt Charlene and Uncle Mike, Aunt Alene and Uncle Sammy, and so many, many more. It is in this sense of Jewish family and community that defines my Jewish life. For that reason, I have established my Jewish Legacy with thanks in their honor. ☆

celebrations that typically included a post-service Oneg and an evening dinner dance with a mix of locals and out of towners. The memories of these celebrations and tradition, honoring the transition to adulthood, remain important to me.

The Amity Club (which would evolve into the community's first JCC) was located in the Cotswold area and was a wonderful gather-



Ross C. Levin is among the 350 individuals and families in our community who have created 721 unique legacy gifts to support its future. Please take the time to read his story and thank him for his generosity. It is our hope that you will be inspired and encouraged to join Ross and others who have created legacy gifts to help sustain our Jewish community.

By Ross C. Levin

Growing up Jewish in Charlotte during the 60s and 70s, I was fortunate to have been a part of Jewish life that was not just a community, but more like an extended family. At the time, there certainly was no Shalom Park, and for a while there was no Jewish Community Center. Temple Beth El was located on Providence Road near Queens and Temple Israel was on Morehead near McDowell Street. While the two congregations were separated from one another by a greater distance than they are today, they were part of a smaller community, so religious and social events drew those of one to the other. Especially memorable was my generation's Bar and Bat Mitzvah



From left to right: Front row: Vera Mendel, Jack Mendel, Maxine Levine (OBM), Al Levine (OBM), 2nd row: Marion Kronovet, Mike Scharf, Leo Grosswald, Charlene Scharf, Stan Grey, 3rd row: David Kronovet, Donna Levin (OBM), 4th row Norman Levin, Alene Strause (OBM), Barbara Levin, Jerry Levin, 5th row: Arlene Karp, Sam Strause (OBM), Paula Musler, Back row: Ed Karp, Shelton Gorelick (OBM), Norman Musler (OBM)

Community Mourns the Loss of Hilbert Fuerstman

Like the character Edward Bloom from the movie *Big Fish*, Hilbert Fuerstman had a lot of stories to tell. "You couldn't believe them, but they were true," says Kevin Levine, executive director of the Foundation of Shalom Park, who worked alongside Fuerstman in his (Levine's) capacity as president of the Hebrew Cemetery Association. "Well," Levine demures, "at least part of it was true."

Fuerstman indeed had a wealth of experiences. He was a co-founder and one of the original members of Temple Beth El. In his capacity as a Jewish scholar and teacher, he collected thousands of books which he donated to the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library. This great scholarship was evident in the stories he told. "He had insights the he shared frequently, both solicited and unsolicited," laughs Levine.

Fuerstman was a prolific tennis player and created a group to play

in Dilworth at a time when Jews were not allowed to join country clubs. This group grew over many years and eventually a plaque was dedicated to the Hilbert Fuerstman/Dilworth Tennis Courts at Latta Park.

Fuerstman, though, is best known to most of the community as the director of the Hebrew Cemetery. Any visitor there could expect a detailed tour of the famous and interesting graves. From the Civil War veterans, to the "peach pit" sculpture, to the resting place of Harry Golden, Fuerstman knew the cemetery well.

"Dad was a cornerstone of our Jewish community," says his son, Leland. "He was a leader of men."

"Sometimes his lessons come back to me unbidden," Levine says. "The deeper meaning of some of his stories relate to the many things that often happen to me. It was an honor to learn from his vast experience in life." ☆



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