SEPTEMBER 2012

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Optimism returns for residential projects

Elder advocates for environment, good causes

Story and photo by Peter Korchnak

MURRAY KAUFMAN, 94, WANTS PEOPLE TO BECOME ADVOCATES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. A *NEW YORK TIMES* OP-ED OUTLINING THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CANADIAN TAR SAND EXPLOITATION SPURRED KAUFMAN TO ENERGIZE HIS FELLOW ROSE SCHNITZER MANOR RESIDENTS TO STAND UP FOR CONSERVATION.

"There are always important issues to support," said Kaufman, who writes at least one letter every month to the president, a congressional representative or secretary of the interior. Most recently, he told them that "as a member of The Wilderness Society, I stand with its efforts to protect America's Arctic and all of our nation's wild places from harmful oil and gas development."

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A LIFETIME OF ACTIVISM

Kaufman has been an ardent activist for good causes since 1957. A teacher at Roslyn High School on Long Island, he discovered a factory was exploiting a legal loophole to pollute a nearby lake.

> **"Long after graduation kids would stop me on the street, telling me they went into environment-related careers because of my classes."**
>
> — *Murray Kaufman*

For the next class project he had students write alternative regulations. A local assemblyman was so impressed with the students' drafts he introduced a bill in the state legislature.

"It took another three or four years to get the law passed," Kaufman said. But watching legislators discuss their work felt very empowering to the kids in the gallery.

He said, "Long after graduation kids would stop me on the street, telling me they went into environment-related careers because of my classes."

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Darfur

by Murray Kaufman

The outstretched hand, the thin trembling fingers –
O so minuscule! If you touch them, they might break –
Or kiss them, and they burn with desire –

O Darfur! The world is numb and your pain
finds death, and those tiny baby fingers
caress your lips one last time – and desire flees...

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NO REST IN RETIREMENT

Kaufman retired from teaching in 1982. In 1996 he and his wife moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he volunteered to submit water samples from area lakes to laboratories. He would then report any pollution to the authorities.

In his retirement, Kaufman also has worked as a political activist. After his wife's passing in 1999, he answered the call of California Democratic Party officials to help candidates in Oregon's close presidential election. In 2000 he moved to Salem.

Kaufman is gearing up to join the re-election campaign. He said, "I'm a good campaigner. I'll support him but I'm not afraid to criticize the president. Right now he needs a push."

Soon after moving to Rose Schnitzer Manor at Cedar Sinai Park in 2006, Kaufman helped form the Social Action Club, which, until its demise in early 2012, fund-raised for good causes. He has now joined 20 other residents in contributing monthly to the Itafari Foundation to help Rwandan children attend school.

NATURE IN POETRY AND JUDAISM

Nature wends its way into Kaufman's poetry. In "If I Were Young Again," for example, he writes, "…for here was one human being who/proudly bonds with nature's throwaways."

Judaism underpins Kaufman's activism. He said, "'If I am only for myself, what am I?' That's the Jewish principle. We're here to help everyone, not just us."

Peter Korchnak is the online communications manager for Cedar Sinai Park. He writes about the experience of immigration from Central Europe at AmericanRobotnik.com.

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TORAH TREK – Congregation Kol Ami members celebrate as they walk their Torah 4.9 miles to their new synagogue home at 7800 NE 119th St. in Vancouver, WA, Aug. 19. Above, Jan Herson (holding the Torah), followed by Rabbi Elizabeth Dunsker, lead the trek to the congregation's new home designed by Richard Brown Architect.

ROBISON PICNIC – The Aug. 1 Cedar Sinai Park Community Barbeque at Robison Jewish Health Center included live music, cotton candy, a bouncy house, face painting, and hot food and cool drinks. Above right, Robison residents distributed school supplies to grade-school-aged children of staff. Robison residents, seated from left, Edith Levitt and Ruth Omenn, with CSP employee Gospa Saric and two of her three children, Ramo and Ejla. CSP employee Ana Smetana looks on in the background. Above left, Weatherly Ballaris checks her new face painting as her brother William gets his face painted by artist Kim Millen of UB Painted. Photos by Peter Korchnak

MOMMY AND ME OUTINGS – Jewish moms have been connecting with each other and enjoying Oregon outdoor parks with their children most Thursdays this summer at gatherings of Mommy and Me with a Jewish Twist. In addition to this gathering at Summer Lake Park, the group has met at the Oregon Zoo, Tanner Creek Park, Raleigh Park, George Rogers Park and The Children's Museum. Summer outings have been organized by Mommy and Me with a Jewish Twist in conjunction with the PJ Library.

COMMUNITY PRE-SHABBAT PICNIC – Callie and Noah Barrish with their infant, at left, were among some 200 people to enjoy a pre-Shabbat celebration at a picnic in Laurelhurst Park Aug. 17 as they listened to music from the Klezmonauts, comedy by Betsy Kaufman, blessings by Rabbi Ariel Stone and a greeting from Marc Blattner, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, which sponsored the event and provided challot for families. Children's activities were provided by Camp SEED and Rabbi Dov Bialo.