

VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE

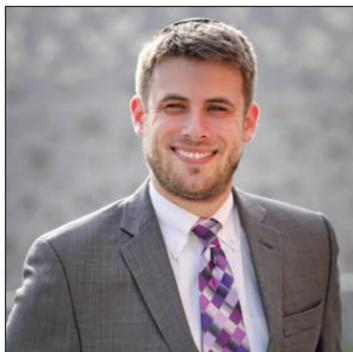
OCTOBER 19, 2018



VIP New Faces VIP



15 UNDER 40 YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



SENIOR *Lifestyles*

Shalom Park's kosher kitchen

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New Faces



REBECCA SALTZMAN



of the Young Leadership Network. She was a B'nai B'rith delegate to the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem, 2009-2012.

Rebecca received the national B'nai B'rith Label A. Katz young leadership award in 2012, making Rebecca and Gary Saltzman the only parent-child pair to receive this honor.

You grew up in a B'nai B'rith family.

I think growing up in a B'nai B'rith family naturally set me on a path to become a Jewish leader in my community. My parents taught me the importance of Jewish values of *zedakah* and *tikun olam*. I embraced those values, always looking for ways to practice them and had an easy outlet with my involvement in B'nai B'rith.

I traveled quite a bit with my parents around the country attending district and international events.

What activities led to you receiving the Label A. Katz young leadership award?

As a member of the Denver Lodge, I created programs to assist low-income families during the holidays. I organized toy drives for kids at the Kunsberg School for Chronically Ill Children (now called Morgridge Academy) on the National Jewish campus, and a gift box program for people to sponsor families at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless.

I was able to put a smile on the

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RABBI SAMUEL SPECTOR



RABBI • BY ANDREA JACOBS

Samuel Spector, 30, is the senior rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in Salt Lake, Utah. Born in 1988 in Seattle, Wash., he majored in Judaic studies and minored in behavioral psychology at UC-San Diego, where he was active in Alpha Epsilon Pi. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa and cum laude.

Rabbi Spector earned an MA in Hebrew letters and was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish

Institute of Religion in Los Angeles.

Why, despite your youth, did Kol Ami chose you as its spiritual leader?

I saw tremendous potential in Kol Ami. It has a rich history in a beautiful city with a young population in a state where religious affiliation

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B'NAI B'RITH • BY LARRY HANKIN

In March, 1986, this reporter interviewed Gary and Judy Saltzman who were presidents, respectively of B'nai B'rith Denver Lodge 171 and B'nai B'rith Women of Metro Denver. They were the first couple to hold that distinction since Judge Saul and Rose Pinchick in 1951. The interview was held over lunch, and squirming in a high chair was the Saltzman's two-year-old daughter Rebecca. Fast forward three decades. Gary

Saltzman has just finished his three-year run as president of B'nai B'rith International (BBI). B'nai B'rith Denver is now co-ed, and Rebecca, 35, has become a B'nai B'rith leader. Just this week she was elected senior vice president of BBI.

Rebecca began with B'nai B'rith's previous programs, Teen Connection, BBYO and Hillel, before joining the Denver Lodge, serving on its board at age 24.

She is immediate past president

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New Faces



MEGAN ZIEMKE

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example, in the spring at UCLA there was a panel discussion about the Middle East with a Kurd, an Israeli and an Armenian. Students for Justice in Palestine got in the face of the Armenian student and

‘ **Being part of ROI made me want to invest more** ’

ripped his flag down. It was frightening. We want universities to be places where there’s a free exchange of ideas. We want to talk about everything that’s happening in Israel, the good and the bad. You don’t get to just shut someone down.

I would lump that in with BDS: It’s an entire move to delegitimize the state of Israel.

We give microgrants to students to put on events. The more open the dialogue, the less likely these nasty elements will succeed.

What on campuses makes you feel positive?

For Israel at 70 we launched an initiative for students to have a purely happy celebration. There wound up being 160 events at campuses

across the country. It was on campuses you would expect, but also really small places.

Your personal hero?

My parents, Richard and Karen Nathan. Watching them as a true partnership and seeing how they followed their passions in their careers as well as being leaders in the community. My father has been active in the Jewish community and in Israel. My mom teaches English to refugees from Afghanistan.

What do you do in your leisure time?

I recently got married! That was really happy and kept me busy. I’m passionate about issues like social justice and women’s rights and I try to be engaged with those issues.

How was ROI?

ROI was inspirational and overwhelming in a really good way.

We had little pods. The people in mine were from Argentina, Israel and Italy. Right away, it was such an open environment. It created a network. It made me take a step back and think, what am I doing in the Jewish community, what’s my best way to support these efforts? It made me want to invest more and get others to do the same.

RABBI LEHRFIELD

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mate survivor, or will it be a smorgasbord of different forms of Jewish expression?

We have a promise from the Almighty that Jewish people will be around for all time. As a people, we’ve been through everything imaginable and despite all of our challenges, we have come out stronger each time. We are currently facing the challenges of apathy and assimilation. I have no doubt that we will come out of this stronger as well.

‘ **Judaism is everything to me — it makes me a better person** ’

There needs to be a change in focus among Jews from labels and denominations, the very things that divide us, to what we have in common — we are all human beings and Jews. By placing ourselves in “boxes,” we have come to create rigidity and barriers that prevent vulnerability, open conversation, mutual respect and growth opportunities.

The long-term future of American Jewry is one where we are not defined by labels but by our commitment to the Torah and the Jewish people as expressed in our own unique ways.

Do you have a personal hero?

My father. Someone once told me that they describe my father to others as the “Perfect Jew.” He is a unique individual who is wholly devoted to Judaism and the Jewish people.

He is a partner at one of the country’s top law firms and still devotes countless hours a day to his own personal Torah study. He gives his time and resources not just to the charitable organizations and causes that he supports but to our family as well.

What do you like most — and least — about living Denver?

I love everything about Denver! It has been so amazing living here. I grew up in Miami, so I love the change of seasons here. I miss the ocean, but I will trade the mountains for the ocean any day. I love snowboarding, rock climbing and hiking and how health-conscious and friendly people are.

The one hard thing for us is being so far from family. We moved from Israel to be closer to family but I think we saw them more when we lived in Israel than we do now.

How important is Judaism in your life?

Judaism is everything to me. Literally every aspect of my life is seen and lived through a Jewish lens. Jewish values and teachings and law are woven into every facet of my life and they have enhanced my relationships with myself, G-d and others. I am a better spouse, father, professional and human being because of it.

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with family and friends.

It also helps sometimes to think about the good calls and to remember that not everyday or every week is difficult. Remembering that I’m helping people during a tough time for them also helps.

When I’m not at work I enjoy watching movies, going to concerts, going for hikes, playing sports or just chilling and relaxing.

Do you see yourself doing this

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is greatly important. Being senior rabbi of a congregation like Kol Ami in a city like Salt Lake was my dream job. It also is the place I would like to raise a family. I jumped on the opportunity.

Describe your rabbinic and personal strengths.

I feel that I have an ability to talk with people on a human level. Unfortunately, many people have had experiences where the clergy is unapproachable, or talks as if he or she is smarter or holier than others.

I think that’s why my ability to admit my mistakes is important. I also believe that laughter and fun can be incorporated as a way of drawing people into Judaism. Who doesn’t like to laugh and have fun?

Kol Ami is a merged Reform-Conservative congregation. How do you balance the needs and requirements on each side?

We make sure we provide services for both movements, while upholding the traditions of the Conservative movement for holidays, Shabbat and *kashrut*. At the same time, we recognize patrilineal descent and welcome interfaith and LGBTQ families with open arms.

You began contemplating the rabbinate around the age of 14 or 15. How were you able to possess such inner certainty in a traditionally chaotic period?

I was in the midst of my own chaos at that age. I discovered in my Jewish community an outlet for every person to express his or her uniqueness. I saw that through the Jewish community I could be involved in advocacy, lifelong learning and the stories of others, while simultaneously connecting to my own family’s stories.

I have never wanted to do anything else.

Do you believe G-d is an active participant in our lives?

Yes. When we see holiness in others and have a desire to help others, realizing that there is more to this life than our own well being — that is when G-d is present and active in our lives.

What do you love about baseball? Any life metaphors in the game?

I am a huge Mariners fan (I’m a glutton for punishment). Anything can happen at any point in baseball to change the outcome of the game; every moment is holy and every moment matters.

In one pitch, a city can rise to its feet or fall to its knees. The game

URI COHEN

kind of work for a long time?

Yes. I would like to make a career out of this by becoming a paramedic, and working as a fire medic for a fire department.

What kind of person is best suited for your profession?

It is not easy to be an EMT. When you go on a call you have to turn off your emotions and just do what needs to be done, and that can be difficult and stressful. But

if you enjoy helping people, like being outdoors and having the adrenaline rush of an emergency situation in which you’re challenged and have to think on your feet, you may enjoy being an EMT.

Just like most lines of work, it’s important to have other interests outside of work so you’re not living and breathing your work. If someone is interested in becoming an EMT, I would suggest they talk to current first responders and apply for a ride along so they can see what it’s really like.

RABBI SAMUEL SPECTOR

represents the Jewish hope that regardless of our situation, things can always improve and change in a single moment.

‘ **My ability to admit mistakes helps me connect with congregants** ’

What is the secret to Jewish continuity?

I think it’s showing that Judaism is not an heirloom but a living fountain. Judaism celebrates your individual uniqueness — but Judaism also is something that

will make not only your life but the entire world better through your contributions to our ancient story.

What’s your favorite book?
Exodus by Leon Uris.

Your favorite film?

“Forrest Gump.”

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?

That people would not see each other’s differences as barriers, but rather view our alternative narratives as insights into the richness and beauty of the diverse world surrounding us.

In doing so, we can see holiness in one another. Then we can create greater holiness in our world.

REBECCA SALTZMAN

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kids’ faces as well as help extremely low-income families provide gifts for their children.

There is a quote I heard when I was 16 while participating on a March of the Living trip that stuck with me: “To the world you may only be one person, but to one person you may be the world.” I continue to be reminded the truth in this daily as it continues to inspire me in much of what I do.

‘ **It’s rewarding to see how volunteers can make a difference** ’

I served on the lodge’s board as chair of the young professional and outreach committee and as vice president of programming. During that time, I reached my goals in increasing membership and boosting fundraising and programming on both local and national levels demonstrating my commitment to the organization.

Do you see yourself climbing up through the ranks of BBI leadership to the top like your father?

Who knows what the future holds? I’ve already reached the most senior officer position I can hold at this time. Becoming a COE (chairman of the executive) or president could be a very long-term goal, not only due to the time and financial commitment those positions demand, but also the knowledge, expertise and diplomacy needed to lead an international service organization.

I’ll be spending several more years becoming more versed in all of our pillars, including human rights

and public policy, supporting and defending Israel, senior advocacy and housing and helping all communities through our humanitarian aid.

Besides, I would have very big shoes to fill!

What are the rewards — and the frustrations — of communal organization work?

It’s always rewarding to see how a volunteer-led organization can make a difference in so many ways and also to witness the respect we are given around the world by top leaders including past US presidents, prime ministers of Israel and even popes. The world not only recognizes our humanitarian work but our stances on public policy, fighting anti-Semitism and the BDS movement.

I believe we live up to our motto: “The Global Voice of the Jewish Community.”

With all volunteer-led organizations we face several barriers that make it difficult to reach those high aspirations of doing good. The biggest frustration for me is not being able to accomplish everything I want when I want it, or not being able to do enough.

What are your other interests?

I’ve been working in mental health for the past 11 years and as a professional counselor for about seven years. I work full time for the Colorado Crisis Connection through the Aurora Mental Health Center as well as see clients in my private practice, where I specialize in working with teens and young adults.

When my time isn’t consumed by my energetic and loving three-year-old, I like to stay active by swimming, rock climbing or skiing. I also really enjoy traveling, good restaurants and spending time with my family and friends who mean the world to me.

