

Kol Bogrei Rambam is the Alumni Council's monthly e-newsletter for and about Maimonides School graduates. Each month we share information on individual graduates' ventures and accomplishments, as well as general news notes, all reflecting the school's mission of preparing educated, observant Jews to be contributing members of society. Your ideas and accomplishments will help sustain and strengthen this key communications tool; please forward to alumni@maimonides.org.

Alumna Strives to Stay on the Cutting Edge of Website Design

Leora Wenger '80 has been designing websites longer than almost everybody in the industry. But that doesn't mean she can relax. "You can't stop with this," she said about learning new technologies. "If you stop, you will be out of date in a second. You have to learn every system they throw at you."



Leora Wenger '80

Leora and her family live in Highland Park, NJ, and these days she does most of her work for nearby Rutgers University. "They pay me to learn, and sometimes the learning is longer than the doing," she said.

Growing up in the 1960s and '70s, Leora said, computers were part of the household because both parents worked with them. "We had exposure to computers when we were young." However, that didn't extend to school. "I have this vague memory that there was a computer avail-

able, and nobody made it interesting to me."

Leora was an artist in high school and served as an assistant yearbook editor. After Maimonides graduation, she enrolled in the Boston University School for the Arts. "I discovered that art school was different than I expected, so I took a lot of liberal arts classes," she said. Now, "the work I do is more technical, though I have an interest in art."

She graduated with a double major in urban planning and art history. After a stint with the City of Boston planning office, she worked as an administrative assistant at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Laboratory for Computer Science. "In my group at the Laboratory for Computer Science, people realized I could do technical support, so it became part of my job. That really boosted my confidence," she noted. In 1990 "I was working with a secretary who knew how to program, and together we wrote a program so people in the Lab could access the Lab phone directory with just a few keystrokes."

At MIT, she recalled, "everybody knew about computers." She began taking programming courses, financed by her employer. "Then the Web came around and I said, 'Well, I am going to teach myself that.'" It was 1993, the year Leora left MIT. "I didn't think I would like it — until I did it," she said of computer coding. "Now my son has taught himself coding."

After mastering HTML, "I started learning how to build a website," she related. Her

first project was as a volunteer, some 20 years ago — a site for her son's school. She moved on to a local commission, then small businesses, and, beginning in 2002, Rutgers University.

"Initially, I used to do the whole website myself. Now, I almost always work as part of a team — better websites are usually a teamwork effort," Leora explained. Her approach is to "design how the information can be presented. For example, a home page can have a variety of links, subtitles and what I call home stories, and the content publisher just edits a series of forms to update those stories."

"I especially like building sites with Drupal, a content management system, because the system itself has so many components," Leora said. "For Rutgers sites, we are moving toward having sites built in Drupal 8; those providing the content, faculty or staff, are given a form built specifically for their needs, and pages can have different views of similar information, organized in unique ways."

She still does some site-building for small businesses, and "I often have to start at the most elementary level at explaining what is needed for a website. When I build a website for faculty members at Rutgers, they have often worked on other sites and have their own ideas on how to present the information. For the Highland Park Public Library, every few years I work with the director, and we tweak the design and the way the site is maintained."

continued on page 4



Visit Maimonides on **Facebook**



Follow our **Twitter** feed, **KolRambam**



Subscribe to our **YouTube** channel, **MaimoTube**

Graduate Finds a Market in Israel for His Construction Skills

A week after **Dov Kram '95** formally launched his new company in Israel, he already had been asked to submit bids on three projects. Still, he said, "The advice I would offer to anyone looking to move to Israel and start a company of their own is to be patient, confident in their skills

them and didn't understand what they were looking for, due to things being lost in translation, and others that found the process of selecting and engaging all the various professionals needed to complete a project overwhelming."

that we are blessed to have living here in Israel."

Through an acquaintance of Toby's, Dov met Avi Grumet, a builder whom Dov says "focuses on the minute details of the project, responds quickly to questions or concerns and takes immense pride in his work. He understood that teaming up with me would help him access the 'Anglo' market that he had very limited access to on his own." They began to plan a potential working relationship.

"When it became clear that this was an opportunity for me to work in Israel and deliver an end product on par with the work I had been doing in Boston for so many years, the notion of making aliyah seemed not just like a possibility but an opportunity," Dov said. "We essentially started packing that day." They arrived in Israel on July 20, 2016, and now reside in Efrat.

Establishing a company in Israel "took a lot of effort, but the process itself was very fulfilling," he said. "There were a lot of unknowns but my attitude of 'expect the best but plan for the worst' came in very handy, having designed a logo, built a website, printed business cards and brochures, registered the company with the proper authorities, engaged a lawyer and an accountant, opened a company bank account, got a company stamp, and more."

"It can be confusing, at times, to navigate the system here where everything is geared towards fluent Hebrew speakers and where the processes are unfamiliar," he observed. "Surround yourself with people you trust and keep your eye on the prize."

"I don't expect immediate success and I know that I will make mistakes along the way, but at the end of the day I have my priorities straight, so much of my immediate and extended family close by, a roof over my head and my feet firmly planted in the ground of *Eretz Yisrael*," Dov said.

So he decided to expand his reach beyond construction. "I began building an internal network of professionals who are fluent English speakers and work in related services — real estate brokers, mortgage brokers, architects, interior designers, landscape architects, real estate attorneys, property/building managers and suppliers," he said.

The move to Israel happened fast for Dov, his wife **Jessica (Dollinger) Kram '95**, and their children. "As things with my career in Boston progressed I became more and more focused on my career goals with the company, in which I had become a partner," he said. "While I liked the idea of moving to Israel it was never a big priority for me; it was something I thought we might do in retirement."

Then in May 2015, "my father, z'l, passed away and everything changed. I found myself thinking about how short life is for all of us and what my priorities in life were. I spoke at length with Jess about this. A couple of months went by and we concluded that family was our number one priority and Israel was a close second. It was very obvious to both of us that we wanted to move to Israel to be closer to my two siblings, **Toby '98** and **Tamar (Kram) Shafner '06** and their families and a very large extended family

and to remain determined in terms of the potential success of their new venture."

Dov, an experienced building contractor, has launched Dov Kram Ltd. less than six months after making aliyah. The company, targeting the "Anglo" community in Israel, doesn't just build. It also "allows for potential clients to find all the professionals they need to see their project from concept through completion, and beyond as it relates to both short and long term maintenance."

"I realized as I assembled the components needed to open my company, that there was need for more than just a builder to service the high-end English-speaking market," Dov said. "Having talked with Anglos who have built in Israel, it became clear that they have not been able to achieve the same level of detail or finish as what they had come to expect overseas. Others have chosen not to build, some for fear that the Israeli builders couldn't relate to



Dov '95 and Jessica (Dollinger) Kram '95 and family.

Decades Ago, Maimonides Laid the Groundwork for Floor Hockey

The *New York Times* in early January published a feature story on the popular and intense boys' floor hockey competition in a league composed of Metro New York yeshivas and day schools.

Like many things, Boston was the proving ground for this sport — specifically, Maimonides School in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some even wonder whether it was imported from Maimonides.

"I know that my Maimonides classmates who entered Yeshiva College in 1971 brought the game from Maimonides to YU," recalled **Abe Katz '71**. "I would argue that Maimonides may have been the first day school at which the sport was played."

"We called it the MHL, the Maimonides Hockey League," confirmed **Jack Gottlieb '69**. "It involved the classes between 1968 and 1970, mostly boys." The venue was an outdoor basketball court that was sacrificed in 1985 for the construction of Fox Gymnasium. "We used to ice over the basketball court and play in rubbers on our shoes," said **Rabbi Ed Goldstein '71**.



A circa-1970 floor hockey contest on the outdoor asphalt that is now the site of Judge J. John Fox Athletic Center.

"I believe we were playing street hockey on the court well before the other schools were," said **Allan Goldstein '69** (no relation). "In fact, I think I brought the first hockey stick to school while everybody was still using their feet."

Although it was always intramural, veterans say floor hockey engendered the

intensity and enthusiasm that the article describes.

"Our class had to wait for the '69 class to graduate before we could play on the basketball court," said Rabbi Goldstein. "We made do with a space by the kindergarten near the back entrance to the school."



Current members and graduates of the Maimonides Jazz Band pose with Director Michael Maleson to celebrate his more than 18 years of leadership: (front, from left): Benjamin Fisher '19, Akiva Jacobs '17, Rafi Kaplan '19, Michael Maleson and his brother Leon, and Doron Bloomfield '08; (rear, from left): Uriya Durani '17, David Thumim '18, Jonathan Fisher '08, Jeremy Fisher '13, Dani Baronofsky '04, Avinoam Stillman '12 and Yoni Kirby '05. The event was hosted by Drs. Claire and David Fisher and family.

Biography Replete with Praise

A biography of **Rabbi Mosheh Twersky '73, zt"l**, who was murdered by terrorists while praying in a Jerusalem shul on Nov. 20, 2014, is now available.

The book, *A Malach in Our Midst*, is subtitled "The Legacy of a Treasured Rabbi" and is published by Feldheim. The author, Rabbi Yehoshua Berman of Ramat Beit Shemesh, describes himself as a *talmid* of Rabbi Twersky. Rabbi Berman is a *rosh kollel* and publishes the weekly feature "Reflections on the *Parsha*."

The biography is replete with anecdotes, impressions and reflections of hundreds of students, family, friends and acquaintances. After chapters on Rabbi Twersky's childhood and ancestry, including the family of his revered grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *zt"l*, the book addresses several themes central to his life: study, instruction, Shabbat, holidays, family life, *middot*.

Many of those interviewed mention Rabbi Twersky's modesty, and Rabbi Berman attempts to reconcile that with his book project. "As intense as rebbi's humility was, his care for others was just as strong," he wrote. "That being the case, I think it is safe to say that, were he to be here now, he most probably would tell us, 'If this is what you need as a comfort, then go right ahead.'"

In his introduction the author said his research had the approval and participation of Rabbi Twersky's widow, who provided access to photos and documents, as well as other members of the family.

Among the dedications in the book's end pages are two by Rena and **Sol Langermann '77**. One is in honor of the marriage of their niece **Miriam (Langermann) '04** to Judah Rosenblatt, nephew of Rabbi Twersky. It also cited the "deep and very special relationship" of Miriam's father **Danny Langermann '69** with the Twersky family.



Posing for a photograph at the Temple Mount Sifting Project are, from left, Renee Blechner-Hirsch '86, Phyllis (Weiner) Miller '69 and her sister Debra Weiner Solomont '74. The project welcomes volunteers who sift through the thousands of tons of dirt illegally removed from the Temple Mount by Islamic authorities several years ago. Invaluable archaeological artifacts have been uncovered.

Cutting Edge of Website Design

continued from page 1

The client provides the content, Leora said. "With WordPress, a content management system, I am changing more complicated sites with new tools so clients can easily update pages on their own. Drupal 8 has more of these tools built in, but it is more costly to maintain, so I don't recommend it to small businesses."

"I often refer my clients to graphic designers, photographers or writers — there are a lot of talented people who can help build a sophisticated site," she added.

Rutgers has a student population well over 50,000, and Leora said the university's approach to its Web identity is somewhat decentralized. "There are basic guidelines but not much more than that," she explained. Her work over the past 12 years includes a range of disciplines, including the Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and components of the Schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering. She currently works for the Rutgers School of Communication and Information.

Over the years she has met the "challenge of a woman doing freelance work in what is still a male-dominated field," Leora said. She also feels like a pioneer in the workplace. A little over 20 years ago, "I was working for this little company after my oldest child was born. I remember saying to them how much I could produce if I could work at home — at that time people in the industry weren't yet working at home much." Today she handles most of her projects from home.

Leora and her husband Aaron Epstein have three children.



Mordechai de la Fuente '65, left, joins Director of Alumni Relations Mike Rosenberg for a presentation to Elementary School student ambassadors on the school's history. Mordechai, who lives in Ra'anana, has three grandchildren enrolled in the school this year.