

Valley Stream HERALD



Gather in the kitchen

Start off the New Year with heartwarming winter cuisine
Stepping Out - Page 14



LEGOs at the library

Exhibit on display this month Page 9

Amberley Gajraj, 4

■ Officials celebrate police unit's return Page 2

■ Village trustee resigns Page 5

■ Boy Scouts earn Eagle rank Page 11

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JANUARY 7-13, 2016

\$1.00



Nick Ciccone/Herald

SIXTH-GRADERS IN JOE SCHUMPF'S class at the William L. Buck School are tightly configured in a small classroom.

All eyes on enrollment

Districts consider how to prepare for more students

By **NICK CICCONE** and **MICAH DANNEY**

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Monitoring changes in school enrollment is an unceasing process for school administrations, and each of Valley Stream's four districts is in a different stage of assessment unique to its needs. District 30 already has expansion plans in the works, and District 24 is considering how two new apartment buildings might impact its student population.

"We're at a critical point right now for determining our needs," said District 24 Superintendent Ed Fale. "Throughout the spring, we're going to be discussing how we'll be able to deal with that enrollment growth in

conjunction with how we can deal with our current enrollment."

In the past five years, enrollment in District 24 was at its highest in the 2012-13 school year, with 1,118 students. The number fluctuated by as many as 30, but has increased since 2014. It is expected to continue to grow in the next two years. As of November, the district had 1,097 students enrolled.

District 24's uncertainty is centered on the additions of the Hawthorne Apartments, on South Cottage Street, and the Sun Valley Towers building, on Sunrise Highway. The Hawthorne's 94 units include one- and two-bedroom apartments and are mostly rented, while the Sun Valley

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Author honors grandmother's life and legacy

Local man works to document Holocaust survivors' stories

By **MICAH DANNEY**

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Robert Fried grew up hearing about his grandmother's suffering and survival during the Holocaust. In 2013, he published a book of poems he wrote about her when he was a boy, and is now dedicated to honoring her experience and all of the victims by helping to document more survivors' stories.

"I was always asked as a kid, Why would you want to write such depressing poetry?" said Fried, 37. "I said, 'Well, this is what my interest is.' And 25 years later, I wrote a book that is in museums all around the world."

The book, "From Generation To..." is a collection of poems Fried wrote between the ages of 10 and 17. They are based on his imaginings of the accounts he heard from his grandmother, Rebecca Fried, 85, whose family was sent to concentration camps from their home in Czechoslovakia when the Nazis took control. Rebecca was imprisoned at Aus-



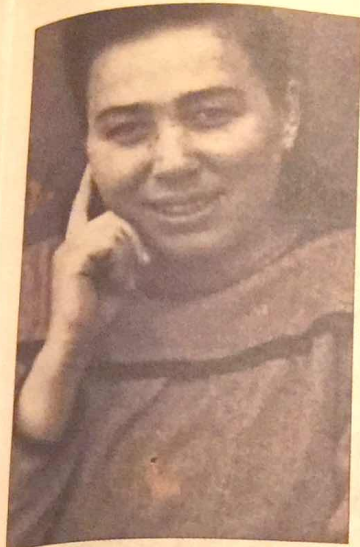
Courtesy Robert Fried

ROBERT FRIED WROTE A BOOK of poems based on his grandmother Rebecca's memories of the Holocaust.

chwitz-Birkenau.

Illustrations in Fried's book recreate poignant scenes that stuck out to him as a boy, like one of a Nazi SS guard speaking to a young Rebecca, who had asked where her parents were. The

See **SURVIVOR'S**, page 13



Courtesy Robert Fried

A TEENAGED REBECCA FRIED after she was liberated from a Nazi concentration camp.



Micah Danney/Herald

REBECCA WAS TATTOOED with an identification number at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Survivor's story is told

Continued from front page

guard is pointing toward the smoke rising from a smokestack in the background.

"Basically, 'This is where they are,'" Fried said. "They're up in the clouds."

The book has been added to the collections at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the library at Yad Vashem in Israel, the Jewish Museum in Prague, Czech Republic, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan.

Gathering information comes naturally to Fried, a forensic scientist who works with digital evidence. He helped arrange the documentation in 2012 of his grandmother's experience aboard the famous SS Exodus, the ship filled with Jewish refugees that attempted to land in British Mandatory Palestine, or present-day Israel, in 1947, only to be sent back to Germany by the British.

Fried also helped Rebecca formally identify her brother, Simcha, after she noticed the 12-year-old in a Czechoslovakian photographer's pre-war photo that was published in a magazine several years ago. Fried worked with the International Center of Photography to officially identify the boy. Simcha died in a Nazi gas chamber. He was one of Rebecca's four brothers. Another died one month before he would have been liberated, shot by a German guard when he could no longer walk. Two brothers survived.

Most recently, Fried provided financial support for an ongoing project by the Jewish Museum in Prague to document survivors' stories. Dozens of interviews have been recorded.

Fried described his commitment to honoring the experience of his grandmother and others like her as a privilege that his parents were denied. "My parents always told us that they didn't have grandparents," he said.

For Fried's father, Alex, of Levittown, delving into the family's tragic past is a noble endeavor best left to his son. "My mother raised me," Alex said, "so I have a more direct, intense relationship, whereas Rob is one generation removed, so he can take a dif-

ferent outlook and be more informative."

Alex remembered caring for his mother in the evenings of his childhood, when his father would leave to work the night shift at a bakery. Rebecca suffered seizures due to a blow to the head from a female SS guard when she was 14. In that way and others, the Holocaust reached from the past to impact Alex's life, and his mother's trauma became his.

For Rebecca, who lives in Brooklyn, her grandson's interest has provided her the opportunity to tell her story in a way that will be preserved, and the process has taught her things about what was going on beyond her personal experience. She noted that other survivors she has talked to prefer not to talk about their experiences, but she wants to. "I want people to know," she said.

Seventy years after she was liberated, the dark memories she carries don't prevent her from finding happiness. She finds it in her family, and especially in her great-grandchild, Rob's infant son, Aaron.

"I look at him and he smile to me. I could just eat him up," Rebecca said in a thick accent. "That's my life. That's my heart."



Courtesy Robert Fried

REBECCA AND HER great-grandson, Aaron Fried.



Viewfinder

By Susan Grieco

THE QUESTION: "What is your 2016 New Year's resolution and how do you plan to keep it?"



I am going to try to get my homework done on time so that I don't have to rush last minute to get it done.

VICTORIA DEVINE
Student



I'm going to try to raise my grades to the best of my ability so that I have a better chance of getting into my choice of colleges.

ANTHONY ARIAS
Student



As the treasurer of our youth council, I'm going to try to implement alternatives for youths by offering events geared toward teens.

MATT DI LUCCIO
Student



As president of the Environment Club at school, I plan on creating more recycling resources, starting with new recycle bins.

CONNOR BYRNE
Student



Spending even more time with my grandchildren by baking with them, taking them out for ice cream and just doing some fun things.

BARBARA BOHAN
Retired



I plan on joining Weight Watchers and exercising a bit to hopefully lose a little weight.

MARTIN ADLER
Retired

ATTENTION STUDENTS & PARENTS



Opportunity is Knockin'!

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Hurry! Application deadline is **March 1, 2016.**

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