

Baytown Jewish Community News

FEBRUARY 2012

‘I just enjoy helping people’ — Don Teter, 1925-2012

Jean and I have been very good friends of Gertrude and Don since we arrived in Baytown in November 1955. We did many things together, including Sunday school carpooling to Emanu El, playing in the same bridge club for decades and going to elderhostels together.

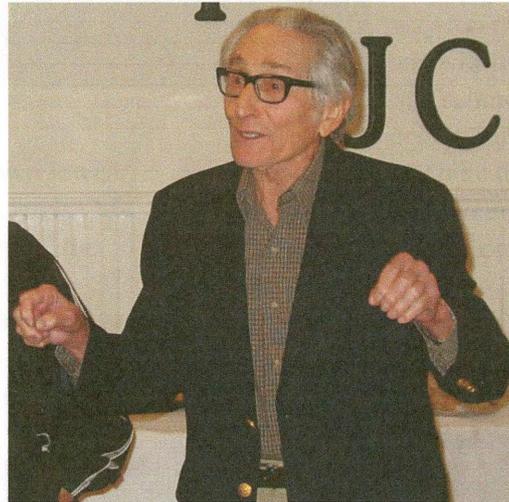
Don was always a pleasure to be with. He was the focal point of our synagogue for many years. Whenever anyone from outside wanted to contact the Jewish community, Don would be called. He held most of the CKI offices at least twice. He played a major role in implementing many major CKI improvements, including the sanctuary carpeting, restroom addition and the kitchen modernization.

He and Gertrude compiled the book, “Texas Jewish Burials,” a much-used genealogical source, by visiting cemeteries throughout the state, many in out-of-the-way places. For this effort he received awards from the Texas Historical Foundation and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. He was a past president of the Texas Jewish Historical Society.

His contributions extended far beyond the Jewish community. He was a founding member and involved for many years with the Baytown Opportunity Center. He received the Docent of the Year award from the Baytown Historical Museum and in 2002 was a finalist for Baytown Citizen of the Year. He also was very active politically. A staunch Democrat, he was a long-time precinct election judge and a founding member and officer of the I-10 East Democrats.

When asked as a finalist for Citizen of the Year how he could be involved in so many activities, he said, “I can’t seem to say no. I just enjoy helping people.”

Don was a true “*mensch*.” It was a privilege to have known him and worked with him for so many years.



— Merv Rosenbaum

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Don was very supportive of our congregation. I’m so appreciative of all the time, effort and commitment he gave to CKI throughout the years. And his family has been a special part of my

family. Through he and Gertrude, I met my husband, Scott. Don will always hold a special place in my heart.

— Karen Aarons

Editor’s note:

Don Teter, a longtime member of Congregation K’neseth Israel and leader in the Baytown Jewish community who also was active in many civic organizations and initiatives, passed away peacefully at his home on Jan. 26 at age 86. This issue features some remembrances from CKI members and friends.

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Don and Gertrude were the first people I met at CKI. They welcomed me into their home, taught me to embrace Judaism, watched Steven and I bring three sons into the world, grieved with us through our losses, encouraged me through many projects and never lost their desire to preserve CKI. Steven, myself and our sons are honored to have called Don our dear friend. “Earth you are, and to earth you will return.” (Genesis 3:19)

— Janet Bright

Authentic!

— Denise Havenar



More memories of Don Teter



Along with the Baytown Jewish community, my family and I mourn the loss of Don Teter. When my husband, Thomas Aczel, of blessed memory, came to Baytown, Don, and his wonderful Gertrude were among those who welcomed him and helped him to transition into life in the United States. They also welcomed me when Thomas and I married and moved to Baytown, and our children as well when they were born. Both Don and Gertrude have been the staunch holders of the local Jewish community, whether it be maintaining Hadasah, K'nesseth Israel or the history of the Baytown Jewish community. Don's legacy is the continuation of Jewish life in Baytown. May God comfort Don's family among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.



— Mollie Aczel

My earliest memory of Baytown was in the summer of 1948 before Dick and I were married, when we were invited to the Jacobs' home and were introduced to Don and Gertrude Teter. It has been a long and wonderful friendship.

— Beverly Manne

Mr. Don was very passionate about his community and his religion, family and the telling of the history of each. I will miss him. It was a delight to walk into the community building and see his smiling face and get a hug and kiss.

— Ruth Cornelius

When visiting Don last week, Joan told him I was there. He opened his eyes and said, "Hi," pause, "Bye," then he puckered up for a kiss. That was our last kiss. Rest in peace, Don. We love you, we miss you, and may your memory always be a blessing.

— Shana Bauman

I really got to know Don when we spent way too much time together in the attics of the shul and community building, schmoozing while installing the air conditioning system and duct work. We

also rode the MS 150 bike ride from Houston to Austin, and roomed together in La Grange. He was a good friend and he will be missed in our community.

— Ed Bauman

When we moved to Baytown, Don and Gertrude welcomed us to join the Jewish community and invited us to their home on holidays. It became a tradition that we and our sons will cherish.

— Lana and David Berkowitz

We are so sorry to hear about Don. He was such a wonderful man and we will miss him.

— Aaron and Sheryl Karolinski

News briefs

Monthly service

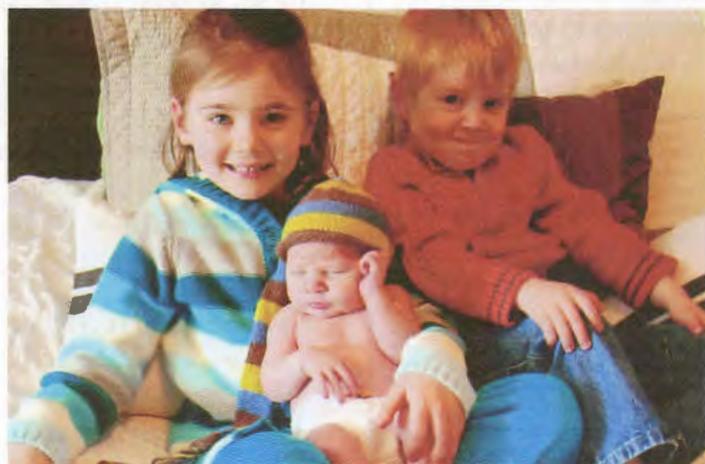
Please plan to attend the first-Friday service this month. It will be held on Feb. 3 at 7:45 p.m.

New life members

We have more new life members of Hadassah. They are Robin Mendelovitz Irwin and daughters Eliana and Samarah.

February birthdays

Happy birthday to those celebrating in February: Merv Rosenbaum (4th), Pam Bernick (12th), Shana Bauman (17th), Stephanie Havenar (23rd), Steven Havenar (23rd), Alex Bernick (24th), Joan Linares (25th) and Jim Bernick (27th).



If you remember Michelle and David Lee, who were CKI members for a few years while they lived in Baytown, you may be interested in seeing their children: Julia (4), Hudson (3) and Owen (1 week). They now live at 381 Park Creeke Lane, Salt Lake City, UT 84115.