

BEAVER LAKE AT 40

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What stands out most as a first impression is "mud"! Mud, mud, mud, everywhere. Our first introduction to the Beaver Lake campus was in October, 1982. Our intention was to decide if this was to be a place we would commit to spending our family summers for years to come. What we tried to "see" was a vision of a future community that had to be superimposed upon a muddy, forested expanse with some dilapidated camp bunks. However, there was one overriding element of grace: a spectacular lake, enveloped in a ring of stupendous fall foliage. Cutting to the chase, the impression that that made on both Susie and me sealed our family's fate for summers, for the next several decades!

With those decades come a wealth of memories. For one, introduction to what I was beginning to believe was an official language of Beaver Lake. Being raised and residing in Queens hardly exposed a person to the strange and constant sound of something called "Hungarian." Among my fellow Jews, Yiddish maybe. Hebrew possibly. Hungarian? "Igen, Magyar"!!

Before too long I joined the Board where I remember coming home after virtually every meeting telling Susie I was dumbfounded. Most Board members were friends with each other from Staten Island or from before Beaver Lake. Those early Board meetings were, to say the least, quite contentious. It seemed to me that with friends like these, there was, as the saying goes, no need for enemies. But came the end of the meeting, it was as if the enmity of the past few hours magically never existed.

Annual membership meetings were not any less and, if possible, even more contentious than the Board meetings. Noting Zev Issaroff's allusion, at this year's annual meeting, to the Torah issues that were part of the foundational concerns of Beaver Lake, brings to mind the "discussions" surrounding volleyball on Shabbat. Leave well enough alone by saying the vociferousness accompanying discussions about volleyball have stood the test of time for their primacy in intensity among all Beaver Lake issues.

I cannot forego one of the truly memorable times in my life for an event originating with fellow Beaver Lakers (Moish Puderbutel and Leibel Zisman, zl). How crazy is the thought of a "Kosher Cattle Drive"? The stories about the cattle drive are too many for this vignette, but I am forever grateful I had the foresight to take seven horseriding lessons (in Forest Park, Queens!) before venturing out with twenty-six middle aged Jewish citi-folk to the wilds of Colorado on this cattle drive. It wasn't distressing enough that the number of cattle that suddenly appeared on the day of "the "drive," unexpectedly (to me at least), far out-numbered the participants in our group, but the size of the cattle, all too many with large (to me gigantic) sharp horns, gave me a sense of foreboding. The instructions were really very simple: you can ride to the side of the herd, you can ride to the rear of the herd, but **DON'T UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES RIDE IN FRONT OF THE HERD!** Right then I thanked the RSO I took those lessons, but there wasn't a whole herd of cattle in Forest Park with which to practice. We all survived, as we also did going down the rapids of the LEVEL 5 Arkansas River in Colorado. That was another diddy of an experience, which I will leave for Beaver Lake's 50th anniversary. An admission: in all the pictures, on horseback or in the rafts, you will always see one person

conspicuous by the bicycle helmet he was wearing which admittedly looked strange and out of place. I'll leave it to you to figure out who that _____(supply your own descriptive adjective) was!

The one additional note I feel compelled to share. While there are far too many individuals that must be thanked for having done so very much to bring so much happiness, joy and pure enjoyment to the lives of Susie and me and our family, Tomi Karfunkel is the one that comes as close as I can imagine to the one indispensable ingredient. His combination of character, intelligence and the ability to act with so much "seichel" and diplomacy, in virtually every situation regardless of how sensitive, complicated, contentious, or distressing it may have been, has been at a level I have rarely seen in my now many years spent in a wide variety of life settings. We all, past, present and future residents of Beaver Lake Estates, owe Tommy a very deep debt of gratitude.

May the RSO grant each of us many more years of happiness at Beaver Lake Estates.