

# TODAY'S MENSCHION: STEVE FINE

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## What are other indications of melanoma?

Bleeding, itching, ulceration – if it ever spreads to an internal organ you'd have pain or some sign that something bad is going on. But the thing is that it's easy to cure if you get it while it's thin, and it's one of the easiest cancers to self-detect. People who do monthly self skin exams and act reasonably promptly if they find anything suspicious almost never die from melanoma.

## Can you tell us your story?

My son Dan was working on a job out in California and he paid us a surprise visit; I think it was Memorial Day weekend of 1996. As he was coming out of the shower I noticed a large mole on his back and it was raised. I didn't know anything about melanoma, but I just didn't like the looks of it, so I told him, "Dan, you've got to get that checked out right away." Three days later he was back in California, went to a dermatologist that day, and about 10 days later the bad news came back that he had a melanoma that would need further treatment. Two years later he passed away from it.

## What was that two year process?

He moved back here from California and he was treated initially at Mass. General Hospital. Back then the only treatment they had was Interferon, which is an immune system stimulant. That's a year long process, and during that time you typically experience flu-like symptoms the whole time, so that's a harrowing time. After the treatment was over, he seemed okay for a few months, but then

he started complaining of pain in his abdomen. It turned out that the melanoma had spread to his liver and was inoperable.

## In retrospect, could this have been prevented?

It developed from a mole that he had most of his life. Originally that mole was slightly raised, but it started getting raised more and by the time I saw it, it was raised well above the skin. But because it was in the mid-lower back it got fairly far along before it was noticed. He'd had some bleeding from that mole, which he attributed to a new computer chair, so he thought nothing of it. In retrospect, that was a warning sign.

## If you knew then what you know now, would you have reacted differently to his mole when he was a boy?

I think so. I think parents should check their children's skin and if they see anything that looks out of the ordinary, or if there are any of the warning signs of melanoma, that they should have it checked out. If we had acted earlier it probably would have been diagnosed as an atypical mole, a precursor to melanoma. And that would have prompted us, probably, to recommend that he see a specialist. The lesson is to check your kids' skin and make sure that there's nothing that could be cause for concern.

*Please send your suggestions for "Menschions" to Journal publisher/editor Todd Feinburg via email: todd@jewish-journal.org.*

## FINKEL LEAVES MARBLEHEAD FOR MORITT HOCK & HAMROFF

Attorney **Robert Finkel** of Marblehead, who specializes in advising Israeli high tech firms, is leaving town for New York city as he becomes a partner in the firm of Moritt Hock & Hamroff LLP. He will also serve as a Co-Chair of the firm's Tax Practice Group. "My partners and I are pleased to welcome Robert Finkel to the firm," said Marc Hamroff, managing partner of the firm. "Robert's outstanding reputation and 30 plus years of experience as a leader in the tax law sector is a tremendous asset to the firm and adds exceptional strength to our corporate, securities, real estate and tax planning practices," he added.

Finkel concentrates his practice in all aspects of complex tax law. He advises Israel-based high tech companies on US operations and financings, and advises not-for-profit and charitable organizations on a variety of issues. Finkel earned his LL.M. in Taxation and his Juris Doctorate from Boston University School of Law. Prior to private practice, Mr. Finkel was a senior trial attorney with the Office of the Chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service.



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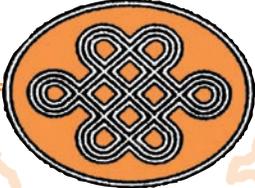
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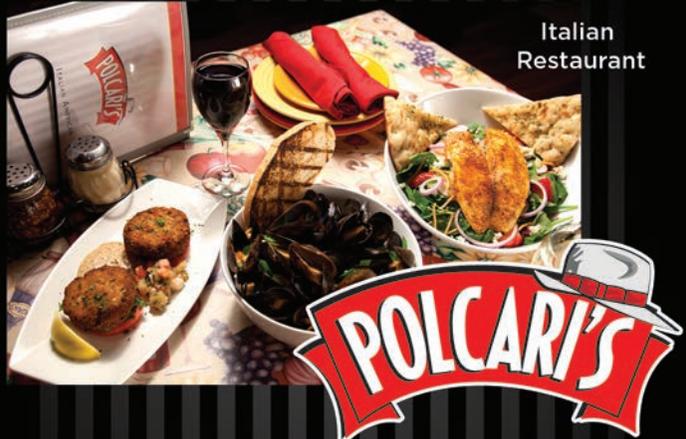
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