



Ed Asner and Sam Kaufman during their first year at college. From left: Milton Bergman, Sam Kaufman, Ed Asner, Andrew Metal, and Malcolm Eisenberg at the University of Chicago's Burton Judson Dormitory in September 1947.

Ed Asner with his good friends Liza and Sam Kaufman who live at The Garlands of Barrington.

Tough Guy, Big Heart

ED ASNER AND HIS COLLEGE ROOMMATE REUNITE

ED ASNER BROUGHT his one-man show, “A Man and His Prostate,” to The Garlands of Barrington in May. Based on a true-life experience and written and co-created by Ed Weinberger, it’s a comedy about a man who faces a life-changing week in a foreign hospital after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Weinberg collapsed while on vacation in Italy, which led to the discovery of his prostate problem, and he wrote a script about it and showed it to Asner, who decided to turn it into an act. Asner, who is 87, has been touring with the show nationally for the past year, performing on stage with hospital scenes in which he plays the patient projected onto a screen.

Asner offers more than a comedy about a serious subject in his show—it’s as much public service about an under discussed topic as it is entertainment. The television legend knows how to traverse drama to comedy. He is the most Emmy-awarded male performer in TV history, as well as the first actor to win Emmys playing the same role in two

different series (“The Mary Tyler More Show,” and “Lou Grant”). Asner credits acting as a form of therapy, transporting him from where he is, to where he would rather be.

Asner was one of only a few Jewish boys where he grew up in Kansas City, Mo. His family was encouraged to move there to join the other landsmen—Jewish compatriots from the same area of origin as another. His parents immigrated to Boston first, but then it was encouraged that they move to Kansas City. Asner explained that they were called removalites, having been told to relocate to avoid ghettos being created in and near New York City with its fast-rising Jewish population. “My dad was a reclamer, he collected junk,” Asner said. The family name, Asner, was derived from Eisener, or “iron monger”. By September 1947, he was college age, and more than ready to leave his hometown.

Sam Kaufman’s family came to the United States in the mid-1860s from a small town in Germany. “They were cattle brokers. My family landed in

Montgomery, Ala., when I was 14,” he said. “In the old days, Jews couldn’t own property, so they all picked a business name to describe their work. Kaufman means “sales”.

“We lived in the same dorm room” Sam Kaufman said of his classmate as the two spoke about college over lunch at The Garlands, where Kaufman and his wife Liza live. “Ed was always friendly and he was the star of the football team, a tackler. He was very friendly and active, a great roommate,” Kaufman said. And the dramatic side of Asner showed as well. “If Ed went out on a date, he would come back and in great detail describe the date, sometimes taking an hour,” he said.

Of college, Asner recalled, “It was a lovely existence. We were not treated like children. Had a lot of late night bull sessions, and we learned more from the students—didn’t really need to go to class.” After his first year, Asner moved into his own apartment on the edge of 63rd Street in Chicago. “It was the original grunge movement,” he said.

Asner pursued the dramatic arts in his college years, and his career took him from the Playwrights in Chicago—a predecessor of The Second City—eventually to Los Angeles, where he landed limited roles on serial TV shows until he became a household name as the character Lou Grant on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show”.

Kaufman and Asner’s paths crossed without much effort or planning over the years. “In 1977, I was out in LA and we spent the evening at the old Republic Studios (now CBS) watching Ed during the filming of The Mary Tyler Moore show,”

Kaufman said. His wife Liza added, “It was a wonderful experience. We were just a few feet away from the actors on set, and they would come over and talk with us.” The second time the college roommates connected was at an ARZA convention in Montgomery. Ed was in town playing a one-man show about FDR and we got together.”

The lunch and time shared together this May was the third chance meeting for Asner and Kaufman. Both were at ease and shared a strong sense of the familiar. For Asner, he shared his ups and downs, with few regrets in life. He took childhood longings and unique life experiences and turned them into a series of unsurpassed career accomplishments. His college roommate of many years ago concurred. “You could throw Ed a curve ball, and he could always throw it back.”



Congratulations to Carmel Catholic's Varsity Robotics Team, NYAN Robotics

TWELVE STUDENTS from Carmel Catholic's varsity robotics team, NYAN (Not Your Average Nerds) Robotics, advanced to the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) World Championship Robotics Tournament, held April 26–29 in St. Louis. Competing with 158 teams from the United States and around the world, NYAN finished in 13th place. From left: Jake Tripp (Wauconda HS), Debbie Donahoe, Danny Donahoe '17, Aaron White '17, Carmel Catholic High School Principal Sue Crook, Kevin Coda '17, Jason Hajduk '17, Brendan Collins '20, Thomas Donahoe '19, Jonathan Paulson '17, Eric Machamer '17, Brian Donahoe '83.

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