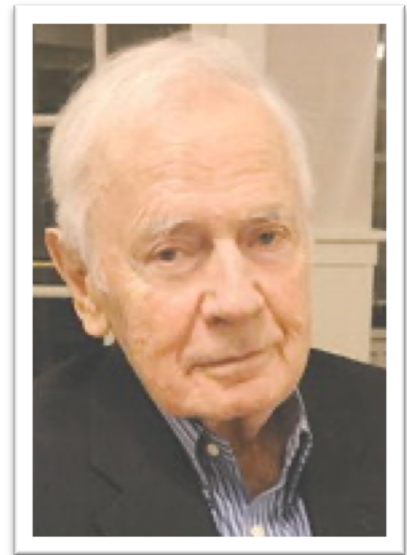


# Sam Oliner

PWR's June 2021  
Author of the Month

## Author of the Month

What kind of future will our children inherit? Samuel Oliner, PWR's June author of the month sums up the answer to the question this way: "It is a future like all futures – it contains both an evolution of our species towards a higher level of consciousness and a resistance to such change. This has been the balancing act throughout human history. It will be incumbent upon our children to make sure that the glass of the future is half full."



When asked what the impetus was for a book about the future, he responded that as a grandfather to seven grandchildren, he began to wonder what kind of future he was bequeathing to them. He realized that there were things that needed to be said about the future. Depicting only the negative would lead one to think that there is nothing positive moving us forward; depicting only the positive would suggest that we have no further work to do states Sam. I felt it was important to show both sides of the future they are about to inherit.

## Bio

Waterford resident Samuel Oliner has never been one to let any grass grow under his feet. Sam, an Emeritus Professor of Sociology from Humboldt State University and Founder, together with his wife Pearl, of the Altruistic Behavior Institute at Humboldt, has authored many important publications over the years on such topics as the Holocaust, altruism, prosocial behavior, race and ethnic relations. While his previous works concerned themes of altruism, kindness, empathy and moral

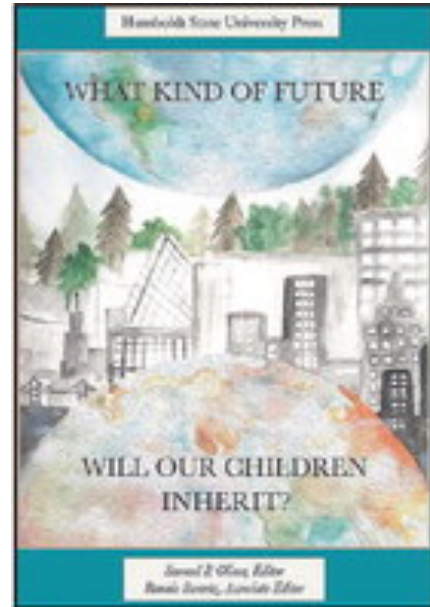
responsibility for the other in society, his newest book “What Kind of Future Will our Children Inherit – the Glass Half Empty – The Glass Half Full,” concentrates on the future of our species.

Sam is a long-established resident of Rossmoor. He moved here with his wife Pearl (now deceased) ten years ago, settling into a unit on Cactus Court. According to Sam, they wanted to be closer to two of their three sons who live nearby. Soon after arrival, Sam joined the Published Writer’s Club of Rossmoor. As a writer, one of his first publications was a memoir of his childhood years as a Holocaust survivor in Poland entitled “Narrow Escapes - A Boy’s Holocaust Memories and their Legacy” (1979). Sam was born in the Polish village of Zyndranowa in southern Poland where life was fairly normal until the Nazis came and transferred all the Jewish families to a ghetto. A year later the Nazis returned to take them away to be executed. In his memoir, Sam recalls how as a twelve-year old boy, he followed the demands of his stepmother to run and save himself. His written account portrays his rescue by a Polish Catholic woman who lived near his grandfather’s village who took him into her home and taught him the skills he would need in order to survive. Sam often talks about how the kindness of his Polish friend Balwina saved his life and enabled him to live out the war years working as a stable boy on a nearby farm while disguising his Jewish identity. He lost all of his family in the Holocaust. This childhood experience would later influence his life’s quest of trying to understand human behavior and the human condition.

After the war, Sam was sent to England with other refugee children and was able to complete his education. He later came to the States, was drafted into the Army and sent to Korea. Serving in the military provided a pathway to U.S. citizenship for him. Upon his discharge from the Army, he met and married his wife Pearl who also came from a Jewish-Polish background. They both had strong academic aspirations. Pearl went into the field of education while Sam had a natural affinity for sociology. They managed to raise three sons while pursuing a Ph.D. in their respective fields at U.C. Berkeley. Upon completion of his doctorate, Sam accepted a position in the Sociology Department at Humboldt State University and Pearl accepted a teaching position in the Education Department. In the course of their teaching careers at Humboldt, they both reached full professorship status. Sam eventually headed the Department of Sociology. In addition, Sam and Pearl also conducted a major study on altruism while with the Altruistic Behavior Institute at Humboldt. Taking place over the course of seven years, interviews were conducted in several languages and travel to multiple countries was involved. Their results are contained in their co-authored book “The Altruistic Personality” (1988).

## Books

“What Kind of Future Will Our Children Inherit?” is co-edited with Prof. Ronnie Swartz, Director of the Altruistic Behavior Institute at Humboldt State and professor in the Social Work Department. It contains a compilation of writings written by Oliner and Swartz as well as by other contributors associated with the Altruistic Behavior Institute and elsewhere that explore the glass half empty, glass half full future theme. There is a broad range of writings from climate change, the Holocaust and the future of genocide to the status of women and religious ecumenism to name a few. Oliner’s chapters focus on the importance of apology and forgiveness, heroic acts of ordinary citizens, the elimination of suffering and an exploration of sociologist Sorokins’s Vision of Love and Altruism.



The book is available on Amazon:

- [amazon.com/What-Kind-Future-Children-Inherit/dp/1947112511](https://www.amazon.com/What-Kind-Future-Children-Inherit/dp/1947112511)

A digital copy is also available through Humboldt State University Press:

- [digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/monographs/9/](https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/monographs/9/)

Other books written by Sam include: “Do Unto Others: Extraordinary Acts of Ordinary People” (2004); “Who Shall Live: The Wilhelm Bachner Story” co-authored with Kathleen Lee (2010); “Altruism, Intergroup Apology, Forgiveness and Reconciliation” assisted by Piotr Olaf Zylicz (2008); “The Nature of Good and Evil” (2011). Sam credits his wife Pearl for helping him to bring to fruition many of his writing endeavors. Not one to rest on his laurels, Sam two years ago began working on his latest book project.