



## Living the Dream

Stories to inspire

P11

## Jewish Literary Festival

See upcoming events

P9



# Hamilton Jewish News

THE JEWISH VOICE OF HAMILTON

FEBRUARY 2012 VOL 26:3/ SHVAT/ADAR 5772

AGREEMENT #40007180

## Veteran journalist optimistic about Israel

WENDY SCHNEIDER

Israeli author and journalist Hirsh Goodman is optimistic about the country's future and he is coming to Hamilton to discuss his views.

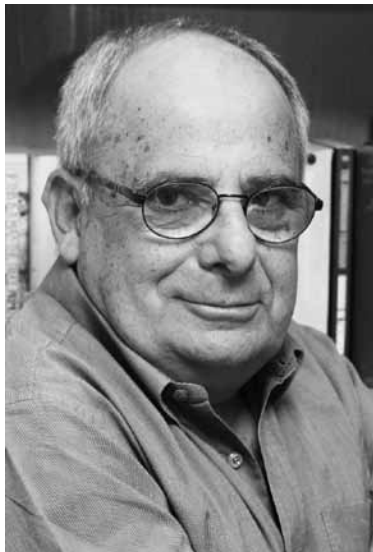
"We all know there are huge problems ... but my point of view is that ... this is an evolving society and countries aren't made overnight.

"From a country of immigrants, today over 70 per cent of the population was born in Israel with a new national identity ..."

A senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, Goodman directs the Bronfman Program on Media Strategy. He also writes a popular weekly column for the Jerusalem Post.

Goodman was born South Africa in 1946 and moved to Israel in 1965. He began his career in journalism in the mid-1970s as the defense correspondent of the Jerusalem Post and in 1990 founded The Jerusalem Report, serving as its editor-in-chief for nine years.

During his career Goodman has served as the Israel correspondent of the Sunday Times of London, and written for a broad array of international journals,



Author and journalist, Hirsh Goodman  
Photo courtesy Hirsh Goodman

including the New Republic, the Atlantic Journal and many other leading international publications.

Goodman, whose latest book, *The Anatomy of Israel's Survival*, was recently awarded a 2011 National Jewish Book Award, will cover a range of topics in his talk.

"My talk will analyse the current situation, taking into account the very tumultuous events that are taking place here in the context of what's happening in the Arab world," he told the HJN in a telephone interview. "And then I will try to give a perspective on Iran and on how Israel sees American policy."

Goodman ultimately feels hopeful about Israel's survival.

"I think Israel can survive its enemies," he said. "The question is what type of Israel will survive."

## We're almost there!

UJA CAMPAIGN SURPASSES \$1 MILLION MARK



Federation congratulates Hamilton Hebrew Academy and Hamilton Jewish Middle School students for raising \$360 for the UJA Campaign. Students and staff raised \$180 which was doubled to \$360 by matching gifts from two donors. Above, UJA student chairs Sari Horwood and Abby Shore present a cheque to Lisa Morris and Danna Horwood. Looking on is Rabbi Eliot Feldman, the HHA's Head of School.  
Photo courtesy of the Hamilton Hebrew Academy

Jewish Hamilton is responding with open hearts to the 2012 UJA Campaign, which has now surpassed the \$1 million mark.

"I want to thank everyone who has made their UJA commitment for this year and I especially thank all of the volunteers and staff who have worked so hard to ensure the campaign's success," said Federation president Larry Szpirglas.

With the Campaign goal set at \$1.2 million, there is still a significant amount to be raised.

"Last year, partner agencies worked tirelessly to provide the essentials for a good, strong Jewish Hamilton," said Szpirglas, "If we don't meet our campaign goals, we may have very difficult choices to make. Who doesn't get funding? Kids who want a Jewish education? Families that can't put enough food on the table? Combating antisemitism? We have no choice but to raise the money."

"Services funded by UJA touch the lives of every member of the Hamilton Jewish

community directly or indirectly," said UJA Campaign Chair, Jay State.

"Because UJA Federation supports a network of community-based agencies, you can give to all the causes you care about with just one gift," said Federation executive director, Gerry Fisher.

By giving to one charity – UJA-Federation – you are actually donating to charities in Hamilton, in Israel, and in more than 60 countries around the world. You are helping to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and train the unemployed. You are providing humanitarian relief to distressed communities around the world. And you are embracing the Jewish community's time-honored traditions of charity and justice.

If you have not yet made your UJA commitment, please call the Federation office at 905-648-0605, ext 306 or donate online at [www.jewishhamilton.org](http://www.jewishhamilton.org). Our community's future depends on your generosity.

### Need to know

**When:** Thursday Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Beth Jacob Synagogue

**Call:** The Federation office for more information, 905-648-0605, ext 305.



## Hamiltonians in Israel

P6, 7



**Waterhouse**  
Wealth of Experience

**FOWLER & ASSOCIATES**  
Complete Investment & Estate Planning

Scott Thomson  
Investment Advisor  
Investment Advisor  
905-528-6349

Dwight A. Fowler  
Vice President, Investment Advisor  
905-528-4254

Shane Fowler  
905-528-0113

Toll Free: 1-800-775-0037  
Fax: 905-528-6897

**TEN STAR**

**INSURANCE**

**GROUP BENEFITS**

**RETIREMENT PLANNING**

**GUARANTEED INVESTMENTS**



**www.tenstar.ca**

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**LARRY SZPIRGLAS,**  
PRESIDENT,  
UJA FEDERATION OF HAMILTON



Part of my life experience includes being a builder, developer and real estate agent in the greater Hamilton Burlington area. In these professions you learn quickly that the most invisible components – the foundation, structure and interior detailing for home comfort – turn out to be the most valuable. They make a huge difference in the home's functionality, comfort and longevity (read- sustainability.) In the same vein– that which sustains the foundation and durability of a community, can be invisible to the naked eye.

This year the board of directors has developed a strategic directions that we hope will continue to build upon and solidify the positive aspects of our community endeavors. These activities may not be visible to the community at large, but without pursuing them our community will not be able to function optimally.

We recognize that we have to generate more financial resources, not only to keep pace with the requirements of our beneficiary agencies, but because we have to do better than that if we are to grow our community. That challenge has been accepted by the board of directors – specifically Jay State and his campaign committee. The planning and execution of the campaign, the time and intellect involved, are not seen; however the results are there and for this we are thankful for Jay's involvement and that of the other volunteers invested in creating a successful campaign. Please support them by contributing generously if you have not done so already.

We recognize that we have to operate at the highest standards of governance to ensure that the current board of directors will function as excellent stewards of our community. That means we have to rework our current bylaws (circa 1989) to ensure that we will have continuity and excellence in leadership. Without this foundation the future of our community is at risk. Leading the charge on this incredibly important and strategic direction is vice president of administration, Cindy Mark. Cindy and her committee, consisting of Jay Rosenblatt and Paul Roth, have been relentless in getting this job done. A special meeting of the community membership is being entertained given the importance of this change.

The board of directors had also established a community planning and priorities task force. This group is still in the process of defining the scope of its work. Suffice it to say that their work is a critical piece of Federation's business – the creation of priorities to guide our community into the future. Their work will also support the commitment made by Federation leadership to our donors that every dollar spent is well spent.

Another important element of our success is our staff. They are the behind the scenes folks. You do not see the work they do, but without them, realizing our communal goals and directions would be nearly impossible. They are an integral part of the foundation of our enterprise and we are thankful for them. We are especially pleased and grateful that our executive director, Gerry Fisher is back in action after successful surgery and we are back in full force on a staff level.

We are hoping that by the time we have our next annual meeting, the strategic goals and directions we have undertaken for the benefit and growth of our community will be well under way and visible to all.

**Bob Hemberger**  
**FINE CATERING**  
Corporate & Special Events

**KOSHER CATERING**  
Bar & Bat Mitzvahs • Weddings • Anniversaries  
905-643-1244 905-664-1933

## Table of Contents

### HJN FEBRUARY 2012 IN THIS ISSUE:

4 SHULS, SCHOOLS & ORGANIZATIONS  
NEGEV DINNER HONOUREES  
JNF honours Larry and Jacki Levin

6 FEATURE  
HAMILTONIANS IN ISRAEL  
Profile on the Jonah family

11 SPECIAL MENTSCHEN  
LIVING THE DREAM  
Three women tell how they're doing it

12 SPECIAL MENTSCHEN  
THE ART OF LEONARD BASKIN



PAGE 12



PICTURED ABOVE: Jay State, 2012 UJA Campaign Chair, local artist Maya Eventov and Monte Levy, winner of this year's donor incentive draw for an original painting donated by Eventov to UJA Federation. On behalf of UJA Federation, congratulations to the winner and thank you to Maya Eventov for her generous contribution to the UJA Campaign.

#### FEATURES

Shuls, Schools & Organizations	4, 5
Federation	2, 8
Hamiltonians in Israel	6, 7
Upcoming Events	9
Shalom Village	10
Special Mentschen	11, 12

#### COMING UP

PASSOVER ISSUE

- Deadline for booking ad space Feb. 23, 2012
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy Mar. 2, 2012
- Deadline for receiving ad copy Mar. 12, 2012
- Estimated date of arrival Mar. 21, 2012

How is your seder different than any other seder?

If you think your seder is unlike any other, the Hamilton Jewish News wants to know!

Contact [w Schneider@jewishhamilton.org](mailto:w Schneider@jewishhamilton.org).

#### Hamilton Jewish News

**PLEASE RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:**  
P.O. Box 81203  
1030 Lower Lions Club Road  
Ancaster ON L9G 4X1  
Agreement # 40007180

**HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS** is published five times a year by Hamilton Jewish News Inc. and Wendy Schneider  
Circulation 2,000

#### EDITORIAL POLICY

The HJN invites members of the community to contribute letters, articles or guest editorials. Written submissions must be forwarded by the deadline indicated in each issue. This newspaper reserves the right to edit, condense or reject any contribution for brevity or legal purposes.

**PUBLISHER**  
Hamilton Jewish News Inc.

**EDITOR**  
Wendy Schneider  
[w Schneider@jewishhamilton.org](mailto:w Schneider@jewishhamilton.org)

**TELEPHONE**  
905-628-0058

**FAX**  
905-627-7099

#### UJA FEDERATION OF HAMILTON

**PRESIDENT**  
Larry Szpirglas  
**PAST PRESIDENT**  
Dr. Larry Levin

**UJA CAMPAIGN CHAIR**  
Jay State

**VP FINANCIAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**  
Sharon Lax

**VP HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**  
Sandy Sable

**TREASURER**  
Alex Kepecs

**UJA FEDERATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Gerald Fisher

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Yves Apel, Steve Dembe, Allan Fein, Lorne Finkelstein, Jill Gaffe, Alex Kepecs, Sharon Lax, Jacki Levin, Monte Levy, Cindy Mark, Ron Richter, Geraldine Rose, Ira Rosen, Paul Roth, Jay Rosenblatt, Avi Shapiro, David Shore, David Streiner.

**HJN ADVISORY BOARD**  
Susan Denburg, Jeff Manishen, Celia Rothenberg, Wade Hemsworth

**HJN EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**  
Aviva Boxer, Steven Dembe, Brenda Deskin.

**Phil Leon** insurance broker inc.  
Est. 1965

**David A. Leon, FCIP**  
Vice President

21 Hunter Street East,  
Suite #103  
P.O. Box 1053  
Hamilton, ON L8N 3R4

Bus: 905.525.0001  
1.800.734.6362  
Fax: 905.525.1690  
dleon@philleon.ca

Discount rates available for B'nai Brith members.  
Plan underwritten by Novex Group Insurance

**McCANN**  
PROFESSIONAL  
**DOG TRAINERS**

Visitors  
Welcome!

Quick Results!

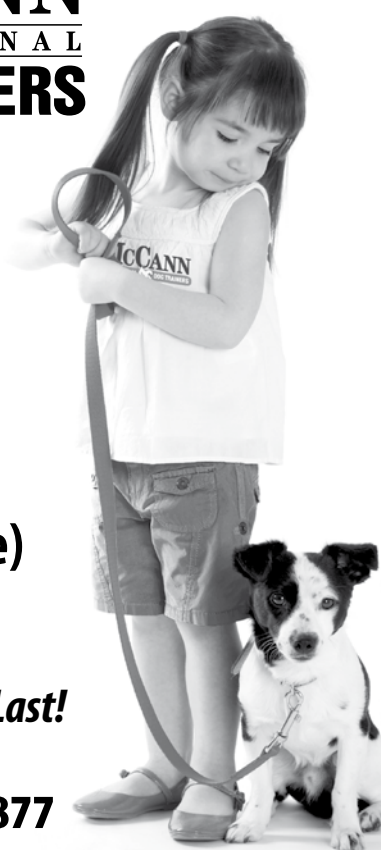
Puppies and  
Older Dogs!

Expert (People)  
Trainers!

Please Phone Us Last!

T: 905.659.1888

TF: 1.888.681.7877



**www.McCannDogs.com**

**ALBERT SNOW**  
HAIR DESIGN GROUP

1036 KING WEST HAMILTON  
WWW.ALBERTSNOW.COM  
905-525-0831

**DARE to be YOU**

**EXCLUSIVE**  
TECHNIQUES | DESIGN | IMAGINATION



## JNF Negev Dinner honours Larry and Jacki Levin

Hamilton's Jewish National Fund is pleased to announce that Dr. Larry and Jacki Levin will be the 2012 Negev Dinner honourees.

Over the years, the Levins have generously given their time and leadership to key institutions in our community. Jacki is a past president of Shalom Village and Larry served as president of the Hamilton Federation United Jewish Appeal. Both presently sit on the board and executive of the Federation, as well as on the board of directors at Shalom Village.

Larry has been equally involved in his professional life as a dentist and has an extensive relationship with the Ontario Dental Association where he served as president.

Hamilton's Negev Dinner attracts more than 600 guests each year and brings together members of the Jewish as well as broader community to strengthen and celebrate our bond with Israel.

This year marks a special anniversary for the JNF's Hamilton office: for the past 60 years the JNF has hosted the prestigious Negev Dinner and the tradition continues on Sunday, June 10 when the Levins will be honoured at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

The name for the Negev Dinner was originally coined at Canada's first event back in 1948 when proceeds were directed to projects in the Negev Desert. The name has stuck and 10 Jewish communities across Canada hold an annual Negev Dinner that simultaneously honours deserving community leaders – as well as raising funds for vital infrastructure projects in Israel.

Since its inception with Theodore Herzl's support in 1901, the JNF has championed the principle of sustainable development and has evolved into a global environmental leader, most notably with its afforestation programs, planting trees where none existed before, creating parks and recreation areas and in the development of innovative water recycling and storage techniques.

For more information about making a donation to JNF and to buy tickets for the 60th anniversary dinner, please contact Frank Simkevitz at 905 527-5516 or email fdsimkevitz@jnf.ca.



Larry and Jacki Levin Photo courtesy of the JNF

## ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION

On Feb. 23, 2012, the Hamilton Mikvah will be celebrating 50 years of serving the greater Hamilton region at the 2012 Festival of Life Concert to be held at the Adas Israel Congregation.

The Festival of Life will feature Zemirof Amenu, an evening of Jewish celebratory melodies with acclaimed musicians, flutist Suzanne Shulman, violinist Michael Schulte and pianist Shoshana Telner.

The ensemble will include well-known Jewish composers: Ernest Bloch, Erwin Schulhoff, Paul Ben-Haim, Marc Lavry, Paul Schoenfield and Gary Schocker. The evening will comprise various songs and Jewish dance including, Three Jewish Dances (Sher, Yemenite Wedding and Hora), Simchas Torah from Baal Shem, Achat Sha'alti and Ufaratsta.

In addition, the elegant annual event will feature local Jewish artists, a Jewish craft show and cocktails.

Renovated in 1995, the Hamilton Mikvah is a community jewel facilitating the spiritual needs of community members most evenings as well as young brides and converts.

It provides an essential service to the greater Hamilton area, including smaller Jewish communities in the region, and all community synagogues.

Proceeds from the mikvah concert fund 80 per cent of the mikvah's operating budget. This includes daily maintenance, building infrastructure, costs associated with the spa bath, two reservoirs, and filtering systems, hydro, and taxes.

Join us as on Feb. 23 as we celebrate The Festival of Life. Tickets are available for \$25, seniors and students \$18, at the Adas Israel, Westdale Delicatessen, Hamilton Kosher and online at [www.adasisrael.ca/mikvah.html](http://www.adasisrael.ca/mikvah.html).

## MAGEN DAVID ADOM

Canadian Magen David Adom's Hamilton representative Hilda Rosen is happy to report that the scooter donated by our community to Israel in December of 2008 has responded to dozens of calls for help. Like any major piece of equipment, Hamilton's scooter requires continuous maintenance. With your continued help our scooter can be maintained on a regular basis. To make a donation please send a cheque to Canadian Magen David Adom at 6900 Decarie Blvd, Suite 3155, Montreal, Quebec H3X 2T8 or call Hilda Rosen at 905-529-4824.

## BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Beth Jacob Synagogue announces the return of its annual Israeli Film Festival and photography contest on Saturday night, March 3 and Sunday, March 4. The festival opens at 8 p.m. with the acclaimed film The Human Resources Manager. Sunday morning at 11 a.m. we will screen Precious Life, a documentary that chronicles the struggle of an Israeli pediatrician and a Palestinian mother to get treatment for her baby. The festival continues at 1 p.m. with the wildly popular Israeli TV mini-series Srugim, Season One, that follows a group of 30-something modern religious singles in the Katamon neighbourhood of Jerusalem as they attempt to navigate the frequently contradictory worlds of contemporary Israel and traditional observance.

Photography buffs are invited to enter the Israel photography competition. This year, the theme is Nature. For competition rules please visit [www.bethjacobsynagogue.ca](http://www.bethjacobsynagogue.ca).

The cost for the festival is \$30 including all the films, Saturday night refreshments and a delicious Israeli lunch on Sunday. The cost for one day only is \$20. Students and seniors are welcome for the entire weekend for \$20. For tickets or more information call 905-522-1351 or email [office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca](mailto:office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca).

Kehila Jewish Day School is currently seeking an experienced Office Administrator to join our team. This person plays an integral role in the operations of our school by providing all of the administrative support necessary for the running of the school.

If you are interested in this exciting career opportunity, please forward your resume and covering letter to: [office@kehilaschool.ca](mailto:office@kehilaschool.ca). For more information visit our website at: [www.kehilaschool.ca](http://www.kehilaschool.ca)

## BackWords

Word creations for any occasion

If you have a special occasion And want a gift unique I'll write a poem or song for you Which you can sing or speak

You'll tell me all about them It will be personal and fun You can put it in a fancy frame Their hearts' you will have won

Make any occasion special! Birthday • Graduation • Toasts Retirement • Thank you's • Invitations Candlelighting • Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Amy Back [amybackwords@gmail.com](mailto:amybackwords@gmail.com) 905 527-7897

## Save the Date!

### "Nosh with Norene"

An afternoon with celebrity chef Norene Gilletz

April 29 at 1:00 p.m. at Temple Anshe Sholem

Food samples, book signing, vendor market and more...

## KEHILA JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL



Kehila students at their drum circle. Drumming can be a powerful tool for learning.

Photo by Paula Baruch

This year Kehila embarked on a school wide drum project. "Beating a drum is like exploring your own heartbeat," said music teacher, Paula Baruch. "It is a primal connection with our very essence. Drumming can be a powerful tool for learning, self-discovery and healing. When you drum with others, connections are palpable and it is no surprise that drums are used to gather people together. Musically, having class sets of drums is an invaluable tool to teach the concepts of beat and rhythm so integral to enjoying and making music."

Under the supervision of art teacher Janus McBride, Kehila students built and decorated their own djembe style drums. "In the coming months we will continue to study drums and learn about Ojibway

traditions," said McBride. "We will also create beaters/drum sticks, look at cave pictographs and recreate our own by incorporating Hebrew onto them."

"We initially saw this as a way to integrate music and art," said Baruch. "however the outcomes have sparked exciting learning in other areas of our curriculum as well. Reciting addition facts and multiplication tables is fun when accompanied by drums. Rhythm can help teach what a syllable is and enhance storytelling. Every area of our learning has been enriched by our school-wide drum project."

Thursday, March 1 is our school-wide Open House from 6 to 7:30 p.m.; Come drum with us!

## HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY



HHA and HJMS students participate in the National Post-sponsored spelling bee.

Photo by Rebecca Shapir

Hamilton Hebrew Academy students continue to gain recognition in both general and Judaic studies.

During the week of Chanukah, HHA and Hamilton Jewish Middle School students participated in the PostMedia CanSpell Spelling Bee, a nation-wide spelling challenge sponsored by the National Post. Grade 5 student Moshe Tzvi Shapiro triumphed over challengers from the upper grades to emerge the school winner, correctly spelling the word "waiver." He now moves on to the regional competition written qualifier level.

Also during Chanukah week, the Mishnah Club finished learning an entire tractate of Mishnah. These motivated students meet daily after school with Rabbi David Teller to learn this classic text. This is the second year of this group that last year successfully completed four tractates of Mishnah. They will mark their current achievement with a traditional siyum – a celebratory meal at which D'verei Torah, or words of Torah, are shared, as well as a special activity to reward their accomplishment.

## HAMILTON JEWISH MIDDLE SCHOOL



ABOVE: HJMS senior boys take the Hamilton Wentworth District championship title. BELOW: HJMS students deliver their collection of donated winter clothing to Out of the Cold coordinator, Cindy Richter.

Photos courtesy of the Hamilton Jewish Middle School

Students from the Hamilton Jewish Middle School took time from their Chanukah celebrations to "go the distance" for those in need by collecting some necessary cold weather articles. When arriving at the school's annual Chanukah Dinner, guests were asked to bring scarves and mittens, new or gently used, to be given to those who would benefit. Two container loads were presented to Out of the Cold coordinator, Cindy Richter.

On another front, watching our senior boys volleyball team go the distance at the Hamilton Wentworth District championship game was awe-inspiring. It was incredible to watch our small team in a big gym, playing a skilled team whose players were taller. Those of us who cheered on our team experienced a roller coaster of emotions as we watched the score move



up and down before our team took the championship in three straight games. Our 2011/2012 team was very proud to hang up their banner on the gymnasium wall, joining champion teams of past years.

## JSS Wine Tasting Event



Hamilton Jewish Social Services presents a **Kosher Wine & Food Pairing**

Hosted by: Simcha Wines

**Sunday, February 26, 2012**

7:30 pm at 30 King Street E. in Dundas

You will have an opportunity to order your wine for Passover Enjoy sampling of wines Socialize with friends

All proceeds will support our Kosher Food Bank. There are approximately 50 families who use our services during the month. Your support and participation will help ensure the needs of these families. \$18 per person OR \$100 donation (\$80 tax receipt and two tickets to event)

# Hamiltonians in Israel

In the HJN's continuing series on former Hamiltonians living in Israel, this issue features an interview with Alice and Effry Jonah and their daughter, Ruthie. The Jonahs made aliyah from Hamilton in 1979 with their four children. Today, the entire family (including 12 grandchildren) resides in Jerusalem within walking distance one from the other.

Story and photos by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News



Pictured left, the Jonah family (minus spouses and grandchildren). Front row, Alice and Effry Jonah. Back row, left to right, their children Ruthie, Rachel, J.J. and Stefanie.

**Tell me about your family's aliyah experience.**

**Effry:** The aliyah process for us was not very difficult because we chose not to go to an absorption centre. We rented an apartment and ultimately bought our own apartment. The only help we got was a reduced mortgage from the government which eased the burden on us. And we lived among Israelis. This is a mixed community, Israelis and people from all over the world living here, including North Americans so that helped our absorption into Israeli society. The only problem was that we were middle aged when we came, so learning the language was very hard for us. Although I can get by, I still don't know Hebrew fluently.

**How did your time in Hamilton impact on your decision to make aliyah?**

**Effry:** I believe that Hamilton has contributed more people on aliyah per capita than any other community in the whole of North America.

**How do you explain that?**

**Effry:** I believe that the Hamilton Hebrew Academy was a very strong element in that ... and Rabbi Green's influence.

**Ruthie:** Rabbi Green believed in it very strongly and he would push it ... I've noticed in other communities it's a taboo thing ... they don't like it. And the rabbis even if they feel that way, they don't say it.

**What's it like being a Canadian born, mother of four Israeli children?**

**Ruthie:** I don't know if it's any different than anything else. At first I gravitated more

towards Israelis, but eventually I found myself more comfortable with other North Americans who had made aliyah. I married a North American and our children all speak English as well as they speak Hebrew. It's the language we speak at home and our children have also become friends with children who are born from North American parents.

**How is raising children in North America different than raising children in Israel?**

**Ruthie:** We were sitting at our eldest son's high school graduation recently and we were saying to ourselves it's such a different experience than graduating high school in America where everything's about academics and where they're going to go for university and what they're going to make of themselves scholastically and professionally. Here, those things didn't even come up. All they spoke about was what kind of person they should be, and what kind of values. And my husband was noticing how enormous and different this juxtaposition was. I mean, of course they're kids that like to watch TV and play computer and everything else that their North American counterparts do but I just think there are so many other things that concern them and that they think about. The issues that are happening around them are much more life connected than a lot of those issues being brought up in North America are going through.

**Can you speak about the challenges of living in Israel.**

**Alice:** Well as everybody's seeing in the media, one of the greatest challenges is financial life, which is pretty stressful because of the inequities of salary compared to the cost of living. But in spite of all that most of us manage and it's a given already, but maybe it will improve after all these demonstrations

which we are now experiencing. On other levels, I feel like I'm still on holiday here. There are just so many more dimensions to everyday life that I did not have before. We were very happy in Hamilton, Ontario, but the enrichment that we've experienced here, not financially, but otherwise, has been phenomenal.

**Give me an example.**

**Alice:** Small things. Sitting on the bus, which we do frequently and just seeing people saying their prayers, quietly, as they travel from place to place. Religion does permeate our everyday lives, but in nice ways. Somebody says something to you and says Baruch Hashem.

**Ruthie:** The policeman will tell you to pay your ticket to tzedakah instead of giving it to him. That's happened a few times.

**Effry:** There's a feeling of family here, even with strangers. You're among fellow Jews and some of them are not nice but most people in Israel are nice. Part of the challenge is getting along with other people. And even though we live with tension all the time because we have enemies around us who want to destroy us ... people are still nice.

**Alice:** Living under tension helps heighten your feeling of being alive and that's part of it.

**Ruthie:** The way I remember it and from what I've observed in friends who still live in North America is that everybody goes through life more of a bubble to themselves. How can I get the things that make me most comfortable? It's a much more egocentric life. And here, whether you want it or not, you're merged all the time with everybody, whether on a national level, on

a community level or on a neighbourhood level. It's not even a choice. It just is and I think that makes it more intense and more meaningful. I think that the merging of the people has a purpose as far as, even tikkun olam. I mean that's what achdut (unity) is all about. It all becomes one and you're not just you. You never are, here.

**Would you say this is a more altruistic society?**

**Ruthie:** I think in the end it is ... Not necessarily in giving, but they're just merged because the country is so small. When something happens to the son of somebody in the north and you know your children are going to the army, you connect to it as if it were happening to your own. I think Jewish communities all over the world are conditioned to give and look after the community. I think that's something very Jewish. For those of us who like to be merged and connected, it's good. For some I think it's more challenging.

**Alice:** I think that most of us live on several levels. It's somewhat schizophrenic in this country because if we dwell on this tension and these problems all the time, we really wouldn't be able to sleep at night. But we can't and we have to live our lives and we have all sorts of daily challenges and problems and events that involve us so therefore we exist on several levels. That's the way life is here.

**What aspect of Israeli society do you feel most has to change, improve?**

**Effry:** I'd like to see more tolerance between the secular and the religious. That to me is the number 1 issue.

**Are you concerned about some of the**

**inequities in Israeli society, particularly as they relate to Israel's Arab citizens?**

**Ruthie:** I'm a clinical social worker and I've worked for many years with addicts, and part of that population are Arabs. Some of my co-workers were Arabs and we did a lot of things together. I'm in pain for everybody, whoever they are, who are having hard times and are not getting their fair share or who have been dealt bad cards. I feel the pain. For the man in the street who is an Arab, I think that life's dealt him a lot of not easy cards, but the solutions are not, unfortunately, in the hands of those of us who are just living our lives. It's in the hand of politicians who have other interests.

**What's it like having to send your children and grandchildren to the army.**

**Alice:** In a nutshell, it isn't easy. When our son was in the army, any time there was something happening near where he was, I remember mentally putting a plastic shield around him when anything was going on. That was the way I got through three years of his being in the army. And as for our grandchildren - our granddaughter is finishing the army. And one grandson is due to go in in a few months and Ruthie's son in another year. I had hoped we wouldn't have to go through this kind of thing again but that's where it's at.

**Effry:** It's really very mixed feelings because on the one hand you're proud that they are serving in the army and doing their bit for Israel and defending the country but at the same time you're scared that something will happen to them.

**Ruthie:** With the political situation, with the way the world sees us, with the financial strains that there are, with the army and all the fears, all that being here does is it strengthens my emunah, our belief in God. Because with everything that's happening all the time, that's the only thing really you can do a lot of the time. Like when your children are in the army or when the world is lashing out in a way that seems

completely illogical. For me what it's done is it's brought up my level of emunah. And made it much much, much, much stronger. And that's what carries you through and enriches you at the same time.

**Effry:** And a sense of humour. That is essential.

**Alice:** And be open to and to recognize lots of small miracles that are happening all the time.

**Need to know**

- Ephraim (Effry) Jonah, 77, a retired accountant, was born and raised in Calcutta, India.
- Alice Jonah, 74, was born in Czechoslovakia to a family imbued with Zionist values. Her great-grandfather attended the First Zionist Congress in Basel Switzerland, chaired by Theodor Herzl. Her father made aliyah in 1920, helping to establish a kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley. He eventually returned to Czechoslovakia due to illness, married and started a family. When the Jewish community of Czechoslovakia came under threat following the German annexation of the Sudetenland, her father's kibbutz experience ended up being the key factor that gained them entry into Canada, which briefly opened its doors in 1939 to Jewish refugees with farming experience.
- The Jonahs met in Toronto and later moved to Hamilton, where Effry worked as a chartered accountant. Their children were all raised in Hamilton, where they attended the Hamilton Hebrew Academy.
- The family made aliyah in 1979, where Effry continued to work as an accountant and where Alice dedicates her time to working with immigrant seniors from the former Soviet Union.
- The four Jonah children all live in Jerusalem. Stefanie 50, is currently studying architecture; Rachel, 48, is a yoga instructor and massage therapist; Ruthie, 46, is a social worker; and Jacob (JJ) is a tour guide and travel consultant.

**“THE MORE YOU PRAISE & CELEBRATE YOUR LIFE THE MORE THERE IS IN LIFE to celebrate.”**  
OPRAH WINFREY

**DAVID SWEET M.P.**  
**905 627 9169**  
**DAVIDSWEET.CA**  
Ancaster - Dundas - Flamborough - Westdale #3-59 Kirby Ave., Greensville, ON L9H 6P3

**Because you care, HomeWell is there.**

**HomeWell SENIOR CARE**  
*Trusted Providers of Hourly, Overnight and Live-in Care*

- ♥ Companionship/Supervision
- ♥ Dressing/Bathing
- ♥ Meal Preparation
- ♥ Incontinence Care
- ♥ Transportation/Errands
- ♥ Personal care
- ♥ Light Housekeeping
- ♥ Palliative Care
- ♥ Medication Reminders
- ♥ Alzheimer's / Dementia
- ♥ In-home Hair Care/Foot Care
- ♥ Life Enhancement Activities Program

*and much more!*

Call today for a free no obligation in-home consultation

**1-888-845-2228**  
**(905) 639-HELP**  
(4357)

Canadian Home Care Association  
Association canadienne de soins et services à domicile

**Veterans Affairs Canada Health Cards Accepted**  
**www.homewellseniorcare.ca**

**ISRAEL 2012-2013**

**FAMILY TOURS**

**COMPARE APPLES TO APPLES**

**Inc. 5 star Hotels Eilat and Petra options**  
 Call us for recent references

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony included**  
*All-inclusive deluxe hotels*

- More days of sightseeing
- More meals
- A true family itinerary

**MARCH BREAK 2012**  
 March 7 - 19

**PASSOVER 2012**  
 April 4 - 19

**SUMMER 2012**  
 June 24 - July 8  
 July 1 - July 15  
 July 8 - July 22  
 July 15 - July 29  
 July 29 - Aug. 12  
 Aug. 5 - Aug. 19  
 Aug. 19 - Sept. 2

**WINTER 2012 - 2013**  
 Dec. 20, 2012 - Jan. 3, 2013  
 Dec. 23, 2012 - Jan. 6, 2013  
**www.israelfamilytours.com**  
 Call Kathy Ext 345

**BEST AIRFARE TO ISRAEL - WINTER DIRECT FLIGHT** FROM **485** +TAX  
 Don't book with anyone else before talking to us first!

**PEERLESS TRAVEL & CRUISES**  
 YOUR FULL SERVICE TRAVEL AGENCY

**905.886.5610**  
**800.294.1663**  
 info@peerlesstravel.com

**7117 Bathurst St., Just N. of Steeles. Thornhill, ON L4J 2J6**

**L'Shana Tova!**  
**Mitch Sherman**  
*wants you to know ...*  
 that when you buy or lease any new or pre-owned vehicle from me you will receive **FREE OIL CHANGES FOR AS LONG AS YOU OWN THE VEHICLE!** *Such a deal!*

Call Mitch today at 905-387-9287 or email [msherman@upperjamestoyota.ca](mailto:msherman@upperjamestoyota.ca) or visit him at Upper James Toyota

**UPPER JAMES TOYOTA**  
 999 Upper James St., Hamilton  
[www.upperjamestoyota.ca](http://www.upperjamestoyota.ca)

**TAYLOR LEIBOW**  
 ACCOUNTANTS AND ADVISORS

**... THE DIFFERENCE IS LEADERSHIP**

**HAMILTON** Tel: (905) 523-0000  
**BURLINGTON** Tel: (905) 637-9959

[www.taylorleibow.com](http://www.taylorleibow.com)

INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF **DFK**

- Auditing & Accounting
- Business Consulting
- Succession & Estate Planning
- Tax Minimization
- Litigation Support
- Business Valuations
- Corporate Finance
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- SR&ED Tax Credits
- Corporate & Personal Bankruptcy
- Corporate & Personal Debt Restructuring

**Your Best Move Yet.**

**tanishall**  
 sales representative

1122 Wilson St. West  
 Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9  
**905.648.4451**

**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
 STATE REALTY BROKERAGE  
 INDEPENDENTLY OWNED & OPERATED

[www.tanishall.com](http://www.tanishall.com)

## PJ Library arrives in Hamilton!



UJA Federation is thrilled to launch THE PJ LIBRARY® (PJ, as in pajamas), a program that provides families raising Jewish children with a FREE treasury of Jewish books and music! Every month, families enrolled in the THE PJ LIBRARY® will receive a free, high-quality, expert-selected and kid-tested Jewish book or CD as a gift from the community. Through the generosity of the Shirley and Morris Waxman Family, UJA Federation's Lion of Judah Division and with support of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, UJA Federation of Hamilton is making 150 subscriptions available on a first-come, first-served basis to children in Hamilton and the surrounding area. If you have children six months through five years old, we invite you sign up by following the links on [jewishhamilton.org](http://jewishhamilton.org) and join a growing global community of more than 100,000 PJ families throughout North America and Israel. Sign up your own family. Then, invite friends and neighbours to enroll and share in the PJ experience as well. For more information, contact Elaine Levine 905-627-9922 ext. 24 or [jdembe@jewishhamilton.org](mailto:jdembe@jewishhamilton.org). Happy reading!

## CIJA pushes national advocacy strategy

WENDY SCHNEIDER

In an effort to bring responsibility for national policy under one roof and to make better use of limited resources, the Canadian Federation movement launched CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, in 2011. The newly created organization merged the Canada Israel Committee and Canadian Jewish Congress into one entity.

In its next initiative to bring greater coherence to national Jewish advocacy policy and strategic decision making, CIJA has asked every Federation in Canada to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, a document that identifies core advocacy issues and frames the mutual obligations and expectations between CIJA and participating Federations.

During a recent conference call with CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel, Dr. Lorne Finkelstein, chair of the Hamilton Jewish Federation's Public Relations Committee, raised questions about the implications of signing a formal agreement. Finkelstein was concerned that signing such a memorandum might mean giving up our local Federation's autonomy in choosing when and how to respond to anti-Israel op-eds that have appeared in The Hamilton Spectator with increased frequency in recent weeks.

A recent case in point occurred when CIJA advised against the committee's decision to submit a formal response to an op-ed piece written by a member of Hamilton's Jewish community that was critical of Israel.

"CIJA's media experts suggested that the committee should not submit any formal article at this time. They felt that would just enhance the writer's sense of self-importance and they felt we should reserve our efforts for more relevant topics," said Finkelstein. The committee agreed with CIJA's advice and will submit an article on a topic of its own choosing in the near future.

Although there is general agreement in the public relations committee that the Memorandum should be signed, a formal decision will be deferred until meeting with a senior staff member of CIJA, which is scheduled in mid-February.

## Upcoming Events

### Jewish literary festival returns

LIL BLUME AND ELLEN JAFFE

"Listen," say the figures in the old pictures. "We were here. We married, we travelled, and we had one another."

So begins the introduction to Letters & Pictures from the Old Suitcase, co-edited by Lil Blume and Ellen S. Jaffe (Pinking Shears Publications, 2011), who will launch this book at a literary festival Sunday, June 3, 2012 at Temple Anshe Sholom.

This event will be the third Hamilton Jewish Literary Festival, co-organized by Lil and Ellen and held at the Temple. The first took place in 2002 and the second in 2009, also accompanied by an anthology, From Sinai to the Shtetl and Beyond: Where Is Home for the Jewish Writer?

From Sinai to the Shtetl and Letters and Pictures were both printed by Allegra Marketing PrintMail of Hamilton. Allegra provides generous grants through their FootPRINTS fund to support community-building events.

The anthology features poetry and prose by 32 authors who responded to a call for submissions asking them to "open their old suitcases," to discover the letters, documents, photographs, and memories hidden inside, and then dialogue with these voices from the past. Many people have trunks, drawers, or albums full of these mementoes – faded letters, photographs without names or dates, meal-cards from immigrant ships. A grandmother's blue bowl sits in the kitchen cupboard. An old prayer shawl gathers dust in the garage. What will these things reveal – even if they sometimes raise more questions than answers? Two writers tell us about coming to Canada with no suitcases – escaping with their lives, their memories and DNA, their sorrows and their skills.

The stories and poems resonate with each other – some are about weddings, others about fleeing pogroms or surviving the World Wars. There is a set of letters home written from Israel in 1948, followed by another letter written in 1969, on the day of the moon landing. A rabbi in Russia writes to his son in the U.S.; an immigrant father in Ottawa writes to his son in the Canadian army. These pieces show the writers reflecting on their past, wondering and imagining, listening and responding.

Put Sunday, June 3, in your calendar now! The day-long festival is open to the entire community, Hamilton and beyond, and everyone will receive a copy of this beautiful anthology, illustrated with many of the photographs and documents described in the writing. The festival will include readings from the authors, discussions, and workshops. One session will involve participants bringing their own treasures from their old suitcases to share and turn into creative pieces. We will also show the Jewish Hamilton Project by Wendy Schneider and Billy Shafir.

Program details will be announced in future issues of the Hamilton Jewish News and at [www.jewishhamilton.org](http://www.jewishhamilton.org). You can also contact [pinkingshearspublications@gmail.com](mailto:pinkingshearspublications@gmail.com) for more information.

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

## Gift & Glam brings Judaica to Locke Street

After 13 successful years in retail in Thornhill, owners Maya Gold and Howard Sobel have brought their unique one-stop shop concept to Locke Street. Gift & Glam Boutique is truly a wow experience.

For Howard, the move marks a return to his home town and whose family roots in the city run deep.

"We heard about the city's new momentum," said Sobel, "and we wanted to be a part of it."

Gold and Sobel have established a reputation for making their stores jam-packed with the latest fashions, fun giftware for ladies, men, home and baby. You will find a huge selection of jewellery and accessories, unique novelty, bar and corporate gifts – and Judaica. Specializing in providing a vast selection of the things they love, you will truly find that perfect gift for yourself and everyone else on your list.

"We believe there's nothing like Gift & Glam's unique and eclectic collection," said Gold. "We're particularly excited to show customers our extensive Judaica section, that includes mezuzot, chanukiot, hamsas and other fabulous items that are perfect for Bat Mitzvah gifts."

Since their opening last fall, Sobel has enjoyed reconnecting with people he hasn't seen in years. "Everyone's been so supportive and welcoming," said Sobel, "and it's been really wonderful coming back to Hamilton."

Personal service, a sense of humour and complimentary gift-wrapping complete your experience in this funky boutique. With so much to look at allow yourselves enough time to shop!

Gift & Glam is located at 195 Locke Street South, Suite 2, in Hamilton. 289-396-3830 [www.giftandglam.com](http://www.giftandglam.com)



ABOVE: Maya Gold and Howard Sobel showing off the wide range of Judaica at Gift & Glam

BELOW: These items make great Bat Mitzvah or baby gifts.



PROFILE YOUR BUSINESS – To be part of this advertising feature call 905.628.0058

**TRIBEFEST**  
**MARCH 25-27 2012, LAS VEGAS**

Connect. Explore. Celebrate.

The premiere event for young North American Jews ages 22-45. Discover Jewish culture, food, music, spirituality and new friends.

TribeFest will include over one thousand young Jews, ages 22-45. We expect a very diverse group - people from all across North America, from many backgrounds, involved in a myriad of professions and volunteer activities, married and single, with and without children, and of all sexual orientations.

The Jewish Federations of North America's National Young Leadership is a local, national and international network of socially conscious Jews in their 20s, 30s and early 40s.

YAD Hamilton is where it all starts. YAD Hamilton is a team of people who care enough to want to improve an imperfect world. It's the place to get involved if you want to be one of those people. For more information about TribeFest, call Elaine Levine at 905-627-9922 or email [ellevine@jewish-hamilton.org](mailto:ellevine@jewish-hamilton.org)

## Did we get your attention?

If **you** want the attention of Hamilton's Jewish community ... advertise in the **Hamilton Jewish News**

For advertising rates visit [www.hamiltonjewishnews.com](http://www.hamiltonjewishnews.com)



**Shalom Village**  
shalomvillage.ca

# Thank you!

**Thanks to your support** in 2011 many possibilities were realized at Shalom Village. Things like active living at The Club Fitness Centre, art and music therapy, drama programs with the Shalom Village Players and music with our glee club.

You helped our kitchens produce more than 175,000 kosher meals for our residents!

Our residents enjoyed outings in our two Millimobiles and movies in the Classic Theatre. Many of you joined them for an evening of fine kosher dining at Samuel's Bistro.

Your support of our fundraising tribute to retiring CEO Pat Morden helped us provide many educational opportunities for our team members.

The friendly crowd enjoying fancy sandwiches and elegant desserts at our 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Tea in July helped our Ladies Auxiliary once again reach their goal. Do you know that these dedicated volunteers have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for our residents over the last three decades?

A record number of you turned out for the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Hannukah Hustle in November, where more than 90 of our residents participated in the race!

**More possibilities to come**  
We're looking forward to partnering with you to make even more possibilities possible in 2012. Thank you sincerely for your support!

## The Ann Silverman Wellness Project for hospice care at Shalom Village



Ann wants to help others get the most out of each and every day

Ann Silverman lives at Shalom Village where Dr. Alan Taniguchi directs her care. Silverman has been diagnosed with a serious heart condition. She was told that she could expect to live three to five years

with this condition. That was four years ago.

**Quality of life**  
As a former nurse, Silverman knows that health care professionals will do a wonderful job managing her physical symptoms, but she saw a need to address the "quality of life" issues that make each day worth living. Things like art, music, alternative therapies like reiki and massage, scrapbooking, writing – "everything that makes you really feel good."

**The Ann Silverman Wellness Project**  
Silverman wanted her legacy to reflect her own values and help others get the most out of each and every day. As a result, she and her family have established the Ann Silverman Wellness Project for Hospice Care at Shalom Village.

**Blog—Ann's Journey**  
Silverman is chronicling her journey in a blog. You can read *Ann's Journey* when you visit our website at shalomvillage.ca.

**More information**  
Call Trish Mongeon at 905-529-1613 ext. 231 for more information.

### Did you know?

## Corner Store = Education at Shalom



When you shop at the Corner Store at Shalom Village you are not only choosing from a unique variety of items that you will not find anywhere else, you are also helping our staff improve the skills they

need to provide the best possible care to our residents.

Many people do not realize that all profits from the Corner Store go to support staff education at Shalom Village. Over the years thousands of dollars have helped provide educational opportunities to many team members.

The Corner Store at Shalom Village is operated entirely by volunteers and offers cold drinks and snacks as well as a selection of unique gift items.

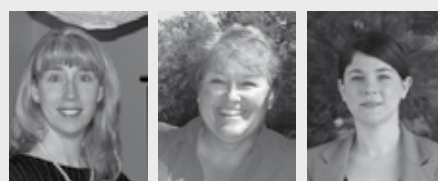
Tell your friends to "meet you at the corner" where you can visit with our friendly volunteers as you check out the fabulous merchandise!

## Thank you

Grateful thanks to the families of **Ruth Rosenblatt, Harold Lucas** and **Doris Houston** for requesting donations to Shalom Village in lieu of flowers.

Memorial donations support the *Possibilities Fund* at Shalom Village, making many special programs and services possible for our residents.

### Your Foundation Team



Kathleen Thomas, Trish Mongeon and Kate Buchanan are the faces behind the Shalom Village Charitable Foundation. Contact them to learn more about how you can help make possibilities possible at Shalom Village.

## You can choose how your gift helps

*Three possibilities, no waiting!*

When you make a donation to Shalom Village you can choose to direct your gift to one or more streams, or *Possibility Funds*. This allows you to match your support to the projects and services that reflect your own philanthropic goals.

The projects supported by the Shalom Village Charitable Foundation fall under the following *Possibilities Funds*:

#### Resident Possibilities

These are the things that directly benefit our residents. Palliative care, music, art and drama, fitness programs, alternative therapies, and Jewish Life at Shalom Village are included in this category.

#### Staff Possibilities

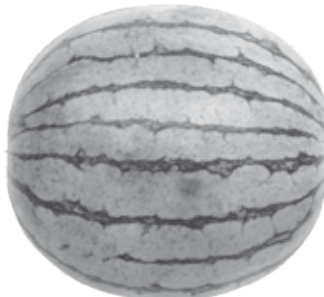
This Possibilities Fund helps us furnish our team members with the tools that they need to provide the best possible care to our residents. This includes things like staff education, bursaries and the SHALOM Staff Awards.

#### AT HOME Possibilities

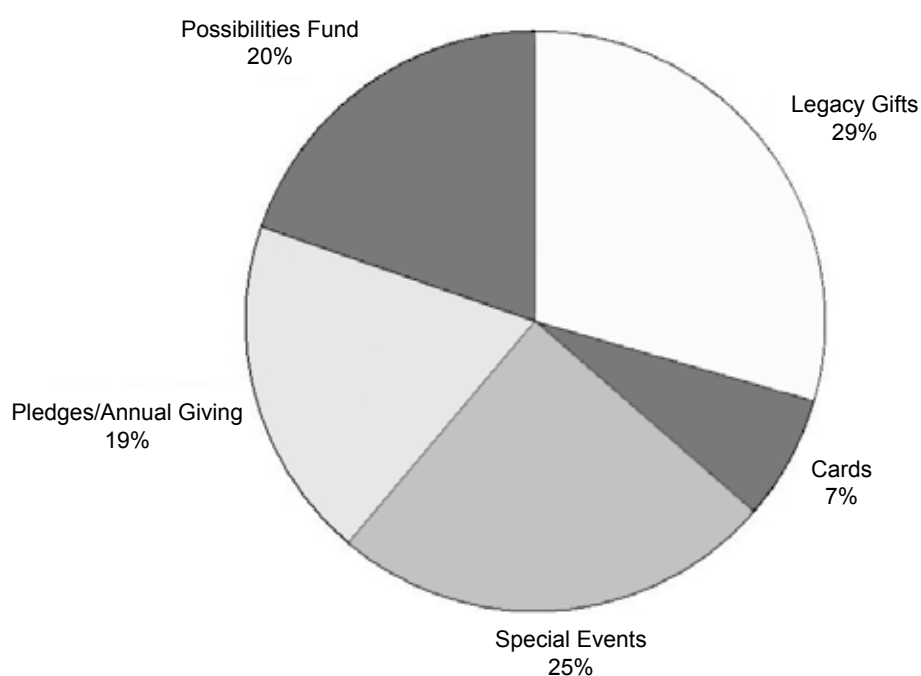
These are the physical things that make our house a home. Things like comfortable furniture and decor, gardens, technology, specialized medical equipment, vehicles and other resources.

## 10 things you can do today to help make possibilities possible

1. Send Shalom Village tribute cards to mark special occasions
2. Make a targeted donation through our *Possibilities Fund*
3. Leave a bequest to Shalom Village in your will
4. Sponsor a Kiddush lunch or non-denominational church service
5. Shop at the Corner Store at Shalom Village
6. Sponsor an issue of the *Shalom Village Grapevine*
7. Name Shalom Village as a beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF, pension plan or insurance policy
8. Designate Shalom Village as your charity of choice when a loved one dies
9. Support the Ladies Auxiliary Tea and the Hannukah Hustle
10. Volunteer your time to help



## Where do our donations come from? You!



**Contact info:**  
Kathleen Thomas  
Executive Director  
905-529-1613 ext. 264  
email: kathleen@shalomvillage.ca

Trish Mongeon  
Major and Legacy Giving Coach  
905-529-1613 ext. 231  
email: trish@shalomvillage.ca

Kate Buchanan  
Executive Assistant  
905-529-1613 ext. 356  
email: kate@shalomvillage.ca



**Shalom Village**  
shalomvillage.ca  
70 Macklin Street North  
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 3S1  
P: 905-529-1613 F: 905-529-7542  
E: info@shalomvillage.ca

# Living the dream

What is between you and your dreams? Fear? Doubt? Lack of belief in yourself? Below, three women explain how they pushed through all of the above by keeping their eye on the dream.

Story and photos by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

### AMY BACK WORDSMITH AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST



Amy Back is back on stage reciting her own words.

Amy Back's favourite childhood memories are associated with summer camp, where she was often cast as the lead in its big theatrical productions. At 16, she left small-town Hamilton for the big city of Boston, with a dream of having a career in theatre. Then, to paraphrase John Lennon, life happened while she was busy making other plans. In 1997, fate brought her back to the Hammer, precipitating a series of events that would change the direction of her life. First was an unexpected romance with an old friend from high school. Next came domesticity and a satisfying business partnership. But while Back was content with her new circumstances, a remark by a long-time family friend propelled her into taking a bold step.

"You're wasting your brain," he said. "Go back to school." And so, Back registered for a writing class at Mohawk College, where she soon discovered she had a gift for writing verse. To long-time Hamiltonians who were familiar with the brilliant parodies penned in the 1950s and '60s by Back's mother, the late Muriel Back, this would hardly come as a surprise.

Excited about her new-found talent, Back decided to try her own hand at writing a show.

"I was asked by the Beth Jacob to do a show," said Back. "I started off by writing song parodies and then I realized I needed a story to pull the songs together. So I came up with an idea ... and ended up writing *There's no business like shul business*." *Shul Business*, a hit with both cast and audience, was a tonic to Back's growing self-confidence.

"It's so empowering to be the one writing those words and getting to see them come to life on stage is so exciting, to see other people speaking your dialogue and singing your songs."

Energized by the show's success Back's creative juices continued to flow, as she responded to friends' requests for poems, songs, candle-lighting ceremonies and anniversary tributes and her synagogue's request for a Purim shpiel. Throughout this period,

she edged closer to her dream of performing, by taking singing lessons, theatre workshops and a master class on writing and performing one-person shows based on life experience. In December, in a Toronto theatre, Back took the leap by performing a brave and edgy one-woman show recounting her journey away from and back to Hamilton. In the audience were some of her closest friends, cheering her on through tears of empathy and pride.

Back took another leap last summer in launching the aptly named *BackWords*. "I'm moving towards my dream. I've been doing it step by step and now I feel brave enough and ready enough to try to make it my business as well."

In coming around full circle to where it all began, Back has discovered the true meaning of home – doing what she loves. Does it get any better than this?

### NILI GOLAN STUDENT OF LIFE

Nili Golan can identify the exact moment when she decided to embark on a new path and return to school. It was the death of her father.

"My father was very ill with cancer and he really needed help the last year of his life," she said. "I really wanted to be there for him, but I couldn't because he was in Israel and I was here."

Golan, a mother of three, whose prior work experience was in Israel's cellular phone industry, moved to North America eleven years ago, because of her husband's work opportunities. They moved to Hamilton five years ago.

After her father's death, she felt a strong urge to be in a profession where she could help others the way those who cared for her father helped him.

"It was always a dream of mine to be in a profession that helped people to enhance their ability and skills and give them an opportunity to do something for themselves."

Today, Golan is well ensconced in Mohawk College's social service program, which has given her placements with Jewish Social Services and UJA Federation.

"This is my way of giving back to people in need. Something that anyway I'm passionate about and love to do," she said.

But to travel the distance between clarifying her vision for herself and taking the first step meant confronting a very real fear.

"I was scared to death about how I was going to get along in school," she said. "My English wasn't that great and I didn't know how I was going to manage."  
Luckily, providing support for foreign

### JODY JOSEPH ARTIST



Jody Joseph in her Dundas art studio.

Jody Joseph, an American transplant living in Dundas, never seriously considered becoming an artist, even though she displayed serious talent in her youth.

"Some of it had to do with the women's movement and wanting to be self-supporting and have a career," she said, "and some of it had to do with the realization that very few people could make a living at it and that I had to sort of grow up and make some choices."

Joseph grew up in Chicago, later moving to San Francisco, where she worked as a lawyer with a small civil and criminal litigation firm, before moving on to work for the Bar Association of San Francisco, where she recruited, trained and supervised lawyers willing to represent poor people in civil cases without pay.

Offered a three-month paid sabbatical after five years with the organization, Joseph has no explanation for the fact that the first thought that popped into her mind was that she wanted to go to art school in Italy. What followed was

a series of serendipitous events that began with walking by a bookstore where she spotted an art magazine to finding an ad for the kind of school she had envisioned and having her portfolio accepted.

The dizzying speed with which things fell into place precipitated a temporary crisis of confidence.

"Confronting your dream means you also have to confront the risk of failing," she said. "Maybe you wouldn't like it and then what happens to your dream? I was really scared about that."

But Joseph ended up loving the school and she returned home with a rekindled love of painting, nurtured by weekend and evening art classes and return trips to Italy.

"I got the chance to study with different kinds of artists who came to the school in the summer as a mecca."

Still working full-time as a lawyer, Joseph began showing and selling her work, a development that was forcing her to make a choice.

"I felt like it would be terribly self-indulgent to do something I liked so much ... I had a much easier time feeling I was contributing to the world and living a lot of my ideals about repairing the world," she recalled. "So to switch from helping battered women and homeless people, people with AIDS and immigrants ... to painting ... felt a bit absurd."

Joseph eventually did make a choice, the decision setting in motion a series of events that included meeting the man who would become her husband, moving to Dundas and painting full-time. What words of wisdom does she have for people facing similar life-changing choices?

"I honestly think that it's not necessary that you abandon one thing for the other, but if you have a dream you should at least confront it and nurture it ... Take yourself seriously and put yourself in the position where you can nurture your dream. You might be surprised."



Nili Golan at Hamilton's Jewish Social Services

students is something Mohawk takes very seriously, and Golan is flourishing.

During her placement at Jewish Social Services last year Golan found she could easily identify with the immigrant seniors from the Former Soviet Union, who participate in the agency's ESL classes and sheltered workshop.

"I understand their struggles and problems ... I also enjoyed being in their ESL classes and exploring topics and information with them that they weren't aware of. It was a great experience."

Golan, whose confidence levels received a big boost based on her two years at Mohawk, hopes to pursue a Bachelors degree in the coming years.

Her advice to others?  
"You need to reach for what you want and ... and if you feel you need to start all over again, go for it ... Chase your dream and don't give up."

# The art of Leonard Baskin

Multi-talented sculptor, wood-engraver, writer, teacher was truly a man for all seasons

by STEVEN BROCK, special to the Hamilton Jewish News

For more than six decades the writings and teachings of Rabbi Bernard Baskin have been esteemed by Hamilton's Jewish and general communities. Perhaps it is not surprising that the same level of commitment was displayed, albeit in a different direction by the Rabbi's brother, who died in 2000 at the age of 77.

As one of the eminent American artists of the 20th century, Leonard Baskin was a source of inspiration to a generation of sculptors, print-makers and typographers. Today his legacy remains secure throughout the art world.

The Baskin brothers were born in the early 1920s in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where their father was rabbi of an orthodox congregation. In 1929, the family moved to the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn when Rabbi Samuel Baskin accepted a position with a large congregation. Both boys attended yeshiva throughout their formative years. While Bernard continued in his father's renowned footsteps, Leonard was displaying other interests.

At the age of 14, Leonard happened upon a demonstration of sculpture at Macy's department store. It made such a profound impression that he returned home with five pounds of plasticine and announced to his stunned family, his intention to become a sculptor.

He soon underwent a regimen of study under the mentorship of Maurice Glickman, a well known and accomplished artist. In 1939, at the tender age of 17, Leonard held his first public exhibition. With an impressive portfolio of work already under his belt, he attended New York University's School of Architecture and Allied Arts, before winning a scholarship to study at Yale.

At Yale, Leonard developed a strong interest in printing and founded the Gehenna Press, devoted to the production of finely crafted books. Often referred to as the most successful private press in America, over a 50-year period it published 100 titles – now sought after by knowledgeable collectors.

The name Gehenna is a pun on a line in John Milton's Paradise Lost: "And black Gehenna called the type of Hell".

Leonard was not an observant Jew, but proudly declared his Jewish background and the values he derived from it culture and history. Many of his works derive their inspiration from the Bible. He declared "It is to Yiddish that my



Leonard Baskin's sculpture at the 1994 Holocaust Memorial unveiling in Ann Arbor. Photo courtesy of Rabbi Bernard Baskin

**"It is to Yiddish that my spirit warms ... not religion..."**

Leonard Baskin

spirit warms ... not religion, but religious texts: not beliefs or superstition, fear or malignant custom but the literacy, artistic, cultural and human relics of that religion."

Toward the end of his life, he produced six large woodcuts depicting the horror of the Holocaust with bitter ironic Yiddish titles. He said, "These woodcuts make but a faint stab at the appalling actuality of the Holocaust, but they have granted me a gesture to somehow deal with the crushing reality of the Holocaust."

After numerous awards, he began a 21-year tenure as Professor of Art at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. At Smith, Leonard became close friends with Ted Hughes and his wife Sylvia Plath, both famous poets. After Plath's suicide Leonard and Hughes remained devoted friends. In order to maintain their partnership as poet and artist, Leonard moved his family to England. Ted and Leonard collaborated on more

than 30 books. It has been said that Baskin and Hughes shared a special type of creative synergy, where "image inspired poem and poem inspired image."

In 1994, Leonard created a series of sculptures for the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The centerpiece of the series is a 7-foot tall seated figure with a fist over its averted face and the other hand raised in defiance to the sky. In 1997, he accepted a commission to create a 30-foot bas-relief as part of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. As an enthusiastic philatelist he seemed an ideal choice to design the arresting 1967 commemorative stamp honouring Henry David Thoreau.

Leonard wrote and lectured against the popularity of abstract expressionist art. He believed in the objective, and in the supreme importance of the human form. For him, art had to carry a message that touched on social justice,

morality and the ultimate supremacy of the human will.

Leonard's political leanings were left of centre. He wrote, "My sculptures are memorials to ordinary human beings, gigantic monuments to the unnoticed dead; the exhausted factory worker; the forgotten tailor, the unsung poet."

The range of his work is wide: woodcuts, engravings, lithography and etchings. His subjects include predatory birds, insects, portraits, flower studies as well as biblical, classical and mythological scenes.

In addition to his multiple artistic achievements, Leonard was an avid bibliophile, a noted collector of prints and antiquarian books as well as scholar and teacher. After receiving eight honorary university degrees, he indicated that he would accept no others, "Because I don't want to die by degree."

His two series of images of Native Americans, commissioned by the U.S. National Park Service was a successful effort to portray great Indian leaders as well as to expose

their blatant mistreatment while under federal control.

Today, galleries and collections the world over include his work. From the British Museum and Tate Gallery in London, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, to the Vatican Museum in Rome and to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Hamilton holds a special place in its heart for this famous and prolific artist. Largely through the generosity of his brother, Leonard's work is proudly exhibited at the Art Gallery of Hamilton and at the McMaster University Museum of Art. There is no question that the positive impact two very different brothers have made on our city will be felt for years to come.

*The author wishes to thank Rabbi Bernard Baskin without whose input, this article would not have been possible. For information on the Jewish Genealogical Society of Hamilton & Area (JGSH), check our website, [www.jgsb.org](http://www.jgsb.org) or phone Hazel Boon 905-524-3345.*

## A different kind of camp reunion

WENDY SCHNEIDER

Hynda Halpren is off to Germany this May to attend a camp reunion – but this reunion is not of the summer camp variety. Rather, it will reunite children born at the end of the Second World War in a displaced persons camp in the town of Hofgeismar.

Halpren's parents were Polish Jews who stayed one step ahead of the Nazi war machine by fleeing to Russia just before the German invasion of Poland. They spent the war years living under wretched conditions in a Russian labour camp, where Halpren's elder sister was



Hynda Halpren in the arms of her father hours after her birth. Photo courtesy of Hynda Halpren

born. On returning to Poland at the end of the war and discovering that most of their family members had been murdered, Halpren's parents made their way to Germany, finding refuge in a DP camp in Hofgeismar. It was here that Halpren's mother gave birth to her second child. Three days later she died from an infection. She was 32 years of age.

"My father was only 28, left with a three-year-old and a newborn," said Halpren. Eventually the family came to Canada, with the aid of her father's elder sister, who had moved to this country years earlier.

The reunion is being organized by the Hofgeismar Museum, which was built on the ruins of the former DP camp.

"The Germans are trying to do the best they can now," said Halpren. According to museum staff, an estimated 900 babies were born at the camp in the months following the war and she is looking forward to meeting some of them. But above all, Halpren is grateful, that after all these years, she will finally have an opportunity to visit her mother's grave.