

OJCS embarks on five-year plan to achieve financial sustainability

With special funding already pledged, parents are now being asked to support new tuition model to ensure school thrives

Faced with challenging financial times, the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) Board of Directors and administration have created a plan to ensure the school is "positioned for success," according to Board President Lisa Miller.

School officials, donors and parents now need to work together to ensure the plan, which aims to balance the budget and make the school financially self-sustaining within five years, achieves its goals, Miller said.

There is a lot of optimism and excitement about the school's future, she added. A fundraising campaign has already received pledges for millions of dollars intended to help meet the goals of the sustainability plan.

Other steps have been taken to revitalize the school, which is facing enrolment and financial challenges similar to those at day

schools in many Jewish communities in North America.

The OJCS board, working with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, which has maintained Jewish education as a top priority for the community, has taken a number of important, positive steps – beginning with the amalgamation of Hillel Academy and Yitzhak Rabin High School and moving the high school onto the Jewish Community Campus – to ensure the long-term viability of the school.

Over the past two years, under the direction of Principal Sheldon Friedman – a veteran educator who was principal of the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto for 15 years – the school has successfully solidified and enhanced its academic programs in secular and Judaic studies; this includes innovative programs and a revital-



Plans have been put in place to ensure the sustainability of the Ottawa Jewish Community School.

ized teaching staff, upgrades to its educational technology, and enhanced extra-curricular athletic and cultural activities for students.

Another change is a "differentiated instruction" teaching method in the class-

room, which recognizes that all students have different learning needs and abilities, and tailors instruction for students accordingly with more group work, shared learning and individual learning. For example,

(Continued on page 2)

Guest Column

Our school is getting better and better

By Sheldon Friedman
OJCS Principal

Jewish day schools in North America are facing financial restraints, rising deficits and declining enrolment. The Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) has been struggling with these issues over the past decade.

The OJCS Board and administration have worked diligently to create a plan that will ensure the long-

term financial sustainability of the school. It is a five-year plan that will gradually reduce the school's operating deficit and eradicate its debt. By increasing enrolment and charging real-cost tuition fees, we will be able to continue delivering an excellent education to our students.

The school now requires the assistance of our parent body and community supporters to help OJCS make this plan work. We be-

lieve OJCS is a valuable asset to the community and an educational institution worth celebrating and promoting.

Over the past few years, OJCS has initiated many successful structural and curriculum changes to reflect our move toward a more pluralistic institution with a student body which reflects the diversity and rich tapestry that is today's Ottawa Jewish community. OJCS is a

school for all Jewish children, regardless of their family's affiliation or level of observance. It is a place where students have a sense of belonging, where they feel comfortable speaking with others and learning about their differences.

OJCS has revitalized our academic curriculum across a wide spectrum of courses supported by a strong resource department. The math program, reinforced by our

math expert, focuses on problem-solving, which helps prepare our students for future success.

Students at OJCS acquire a strong connection to Judaism through the concept of Tefillah and by learning about Jewish history, customs and values. In the middle and high school, English is used to make Torah and Jewish history more relevant, connecting the past

(Continued on page 2)

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Halton-Weiss: 'OJCS is a valuable institution worth fighting for'

(Continued from page 1)

using the differentiated instruction model, gifted students are able to remain with their peers while the teacher increases the level of difficulty in their studies, assignments and projects.

Emphasis has also been placed on what Friedman has referred to as the OJCS's "extended or hidden curriculum," which includes special events for Jewish holidays and such unique programs as mock stock markets, moot beit dein, tikkun olam projects and social programs. As well, OJCS students have distinguished themselves in science fairs, athletic competitions with other schools and the Cappies theatre productions.

The school continues to aim for excellence, with plans to constantly evaluate and improve all areas of its educational programming. But delivering high-level private school education is expensive. And with declining enrolment and tuition fees below the real cost per student, the school has been running deficits for several years.

In that context, "difficult decisions needed to be made," Miller said.

Over the past five years, the OJCS deficits have been covered by the Federation over and above the school's allocation as a beneficiary of the Federation's Annual Campaign. Support of this magnitude to cover future deficits was no longer feasible for the Federation. The Federation's regular OJCS allocation – which was \$554,526 last year – is the largest single allocation of all local beneficiary agencies.

So the OJCS has taken major steps to address the deficit and make the school self-sufficient within five years.

A major fundraising campaign, chaired by OJCS board member Richard Sachs, targeting major donors in Ottawa's Jewish community, was launched in November with a goal of raising \$6 million, half of which would be used

to cover the annual operating deficits over the five-year campaign. The other half would be used to repay the Federation.

The campaign has been highly successful. Associate campaign chair Stephen Victor told the *Bulletin* that about \$5 million has already been pledged and he expects the goal will soon be exceeded.

The funds from the major donors are contingent on the school adopting the financial plan, which relies on a new tuition model and increasing enrolment, through aggressive recruitment, to achieve financial sustainability within five years.

The success of the campaign, Victor said, reflects the value and importance the community places on having an excellent Jewish day school at the heart of Ottawa's Jewish community – even for many who will not have children or grandchildren attend the school.

The fundraising campaign has given the school the time its board feels it needs to become sustainable; but the board also needs parents to support the plan for it to

work.

That's where the new tuition model comes in. The school has announced a new sliding-scale fee structure, to be implemented for the 2013-2014 school year, which will move tuition fees closer to the school's real costs.

This year, it is costing OJCS about \$14,500 to educate each of its students, but parents are paying an average of \$4,000 less than that in tuition. This gap, which led to the deficits, is what the new tuition plan aims to correct.

Under the sliding scale, base tuition will rise from \$10,520 to between \$10,800 and \$12,900, depending on family income. There will also be graduated discounts for second, third and fourth children from the same family. A confidential tuition-assistance program, primarily geared to families with lower income, will be open to families that need help paying for their children's schooling, OJCS board member Gianni Donatucci assured parents at a February 6 meeting.

The meeting was one of three the OJCS held with parents to ex-

plain the new tuition model and five-year plan for sustainability.

"Although the increase is difficult and challenging, our hope is that people will recognize this was a necessity," said Miller. "Tuition needs to reflect the true cost of education."

Donatucci said the sliding-tuition scale approach has been adopted successfully by many other Jewish day schools in North America faced with similar funding dilemmas.

In addition to the tuition increase, a second component to making the school sustainable is to increase the enrolment levels within the five-year period the fundraising campaign will support. For the first time, the school will hire a recruiter dedicated to enhancing enrolment.

Federation Chair Debbie Halton-Weiss told the *Bulletin* the Federation supports the school's plan and the actions taken to achieve sustainability.

"I have confidence in the work the OJCS board and administration has done to put the school back on the path to financial via-

bility, and I'm inspired by the people who have already stepped up to pledge their support," Halton-Weiss said.

"The Federation, in partnership with the OJCS lay and professional leadership, donors and top stakeholders, supports the OJCS in its efforts to become a self-sustaining school of excellence. To do this successfully, it had to develop an effective and fair tuition model that reflects recovery of the full costs associated with an OJCS education. Families attending OJCS will play a crucial role for the plan to fully succeed. Parents will choose to enrol their children with a better understanding of the true costs of receiving a quality Jewish education. Hopefully, they will become more involved and committed by spreading the word among their peers in the community that OJCS is a valuable institution worth fighting for."

With the five-year sustainability plan now in place, the OJCS has invited parents to register students now for the 2013-2014 school year. The school also welcomes new students at all grade levels.

'Students receive the best in education'

(Continued from page 1)

with the present. While the school embraces kashrut, Shabbat, holidays and traditions, our students foster a deeper connection while developing their own Jewish identities.

Standardized testing indicates that our differentiated instruction approach leads to positive results. In math and English, our students exceed the Ontario Ministry standards. And in our extended French program, students reach levels where they can seamlessly transition into French immersion programs. Many of our students are well prepared to speak Hebrew while visiting Israel.

Our streaming in French and Hebrew as of Grade 4 allows students to work at their own pace with their peers. They develop a strong grasp of language and the ability to communicate in three languages.

Structural changes, in both the physical appearance of our building, and in how the school operates, have led to better use of facilities and a more professional well-run institution.

Changes in the timetable have created purposeful scheduling for kindergarten, elementary, middle school and high school. This allows the school to respond to the physical and educational needs of children of different age levels. In middle school, for example, the new schedule allows OJCS to offer more physical education, music, English and science. These changes have opened up the possibility for students to join OJCS at multiple entry points. Lack of prior Hebrew knowledge is no longer a barrier to joining the OJCS community at any age or grade level.

Our improved computer networks have provided better access for students and for teachers who use interactive programs in their instruction. Our administration ensures the needs of our students are met, the curriculum is followed, and that our teachers perform at high standards. We believe the school is on the



Sheldon Friedman

right track toward continued success.

Parents and students value the modifications and improvements we have been made so far. We are appreciative of a community that recognizes the value of our school, especially the most recent affirmation from donors who recognize the need for a thriving community school.

All the structural and curriculum changes, from kindergarten to Grade 12, have enhanced the deep sense of *klal Yisrael* that permeated the rich history of Hillel Academy and Yitzhak Rabin High School, and is now an important part of OJCS. Our students receive the best in education and the training they need to become our community's leaders of tomorrow.

To learn more about OJCS, or to arrange a visit, contact Sara-Lynne Levine at sl.levine@theojcs.ca.

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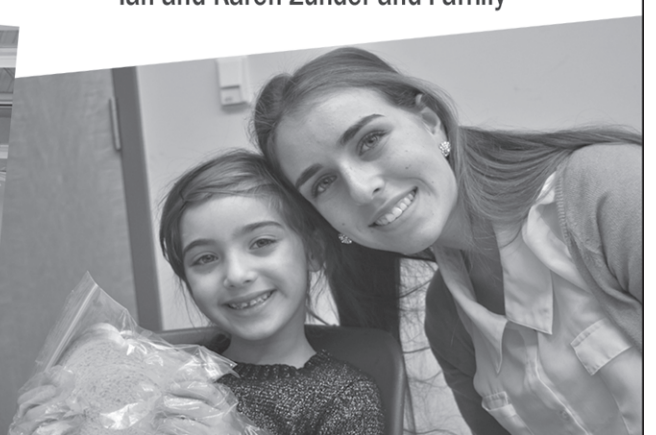
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Women's Seder continues to educate about domestic abuse

By Maggie Lederman
Ottawa Women's
Seder Committee

The eighth annual Ottawa Women's Seder, aimed at bringing awareness to the issue of domestic abuse in the Jewish community, will be held Sunday, March 17, 5:00 pm, at Agudath Israel Synagogue.

Yaffa Greenbaum, who founded the Ottawa Women's Seder, is still moved by its effect on those in attendance.

"Every year, there are people who come forward and say the seder has brought them new awareness of the issue of domestic violence in the Jewish community. They have that spark of recognition that it's closer than they

realize," said Greenbaum last year (Louise Rachlis, "Shalom Bayit Seder continues to educate about domestic abuse," *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, April 23, 2012).

This year's Ottawa Women's Seder will support organizations serving women facing violence.

Seder participants are asked to bring toiletries, new socks and underwear for the

shelters and there will be *gift bags* on every chair to receive these much-needed articles.

"I have attended the Women's Seder for the past six years with my friends and with my daughter, both to broaden my knowledge and to celebrate of the role of women in our community," said Rachel Schachter.

"The energy in the room,

the singing, the dancing and our strong voices, we hope, will one day remove the threat of domestic violence against all women.

"My late father always put a half lemon on our seder plate. He knew that Miriam and her mother saved Moses' life long before he could ever save a single Israelite.

"The seder has also inspired new discussions at our

own family seders and new readings. They have infused our traditions with new life."

As in previous years, there will be singing throughout the seder, led by Shaina Lipsey.

Among the many organizations and agencies that will be featured is the Shalom Bayit Project of Jewish Family Services. Specially designated counsellors at Jewish

Family Services offer confidential and anonymous services for women experiencing abuse.

For more information on Shalom Bayit services, contact Sarah Caspi at scaspi@jfsottawa.com or 613-722-2225, ext. 246.

For information or tickets for the Ottawa Women's Seder, contact Sarah Beutel at 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

Passover Fair to honour Israel's 65th birthday

By Marilyn Schwartz and
Ruth Kahane Goldberg
CHW Ottawa Centre

In honour of Israel's 65th birthday, this year's Passover Fair will feature many Israeli products as well as holiday handcrafted items by Amit Chapter CHW, Kosher for Passover wines from Na'amat, Designs by Sharron, Pampered Chef products, Marvalee Jewelry, gift shop items from Beit Tikvah and other synagogues, books by Jewish authors and much more.

The Passover Fair is a

collaboration of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW), Na'amat Canada and Congregation Beit Tikvah. Open to the entire community, it will take place on Sunday, March 17, 10:30 am to 4:00 pm at Congregation Beit Tikvah, 15 Chartwell Avenue in Craig Henry.

Crafts made by seniors of Yad LaKashish, Jerusalem, an organization supporting elderly and disabled Israelis, are being brought to Ottawa on behalf of CHW by Jane and Martin

Gordon who will be on hand to discuss the project.

Creations made by Amit Chapter of CHW will include an array of matzo covers, afikoman bags, aprons for children and adults, and gift wine bags in holiday fabrics. Watch out

for the herd of stuffed animals wearing crocheted kippot.

Forms will be available from Beit Tikvah to arrange for the sale of your chametz.

Proceeds from the Fair will benefit the groups' pro-

jects locally and in Israel.

For further information, contact Beit Tikvah at 613-723-1800 or shul@cbto.org; Deana Schildkraut of Na'amat at 613-726-9595; or Marilyn Schwartz of CHW at Marilyn_sch1970@yahoo.ca.

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To download the 2013 WCPP grant application and guideline information, please visit: www.ojcf.ca or contact Rebecca Nagrodski, Foundation Associate, at rnagrodski@jewishottawa.com, or call 613-798-4696, ext. 252.

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Talking with Ottawa Jewish community leaders

Ruth and Ron Levitan:

Carrying sense of community to the next generation

By Louise Rachlis

Editor's note: Throughout 2013, the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin is speaking with a number of longtime community leaders about some of their leadership accomplishments and about challenges the community faces now and will face in the future.

Ruth and Ron Levitan both grew up in Ottawa where their families were active members of synagogues and various community organizations and they've followed their family tradition of participating actively in the Jewish community.

"Having learned the lessons of our parents, we felt it was our duty to support the community as best we could," said Ruth.

Ron Levitan spent 10 years on the board of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation and was its chair for two years. Ruth has served on what was the Talmud Torah Board, and was chair of programming at Agudath Israel, chair of the Malca Pass Library and chair of the Greenberg Families Library.

She was also the founding president of Active Jewish Adults 50+ (AJA 50+). It is her pride and joy that, after more than 10 years of strong leadership, AJA 50+ is still going strong with programs for 50-plus people in the Jewish community.



Ruth and Ron Levitan have been active in many Jewish community organizations.

Through the years, they have been active in Agudath Israel Synagogue.

"We are proud to have seen the bar mitzvahs of our two eldest grandsons and were pleased to welcome our two youngest grandsons, two-and-a-half years, and six months,"

said Ruth. "We have a sense of satisfaction in seeing our children carrying on the sense of community that we tried to imbue in them."

Both agree the strength of Ottawa's Jewish community lies in the people and their support of the community organizations.

"Hillel Lodge, the Ottawa Jewish Community Day School, the JCC and numerous synagogues speak to the network of Jewish services that are available to the community. This is especially gratifying when considering the small size of our community."

Among the community's challenges, they said, are "maintaining the interest and involvement of the younger generation in the activities of the community. Also, we need to educate the young parents of today to recognize the need for a solid Jewish education."

Another challenge is to build support for subsidized Jewish housing for the community's senior population.

One of the projects they are most proud of is PJ Library, which they support. Ottawa's PJ Library program for young children from six months to five-and-a-half years old is made possible through the generous donations of a local group of inspired women who, along with the support of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, wish to ensure that the Jewish community continues and thrives.

"It has been a wonderful addition to inspire our young families to keep the flame of Jewish communal commitment alive," Ruth said.



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Registration is through the roof this year at Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa

Like the old DJs used to say, at Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa (CBB), the hits just keep on coming.

Six or seven years ago, CBB had suffered through years of dropping registration, was losing money and had infrastructure badly in need of repair and facelift. In the past five years, all of that has been turned around. We have had five consecutive years of year-over-year increase in registration – to the point that we had to turn kids away last summer. Our financial problems have been completely fixed, and the camp now operates without any debt.

In terms of infrastructure, over the past five years, we have spent in excess of \$500,000 on repair, replacement and expansion of facilities, including a new water system, a new hockey rink, new climbing walls at the pool, new ski boats, new sailboats, new equipment for the dining hall, new bikes, kayaks and lots of other things. And we're not stopping there.

This summer, we are resurfacing the tennis courts and one of the basketball courts. We are adding lights to the volleyball court, and new sailboats and canoes. And there is even more on the drawing



Federation Report

Michael Polowin
CBB

board that I can't talk about yet.

Registration is again through the roof. Last summer was a record year in our modern era. So what are we doing for an encore? At last check, registration was running two months ahead of last year. Some units are at or close to being filled for the first half – so, if you haven't got your child's registration in yet, better hurry. Go on-line to cbbottawa.com and get that registration done! We want to see your child's smiling face at camp this summer.

We've had a lot of change in our leadership this year as well. New members of our Board of Directors so far include Jenny Shinder of Ottawa and Leslie Pokrass Ornstein of Montreal. Both bring a lot of experience and skill to our Board table, and we look forward to working with them into the future. We are explor-

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ing new Board membership in Ottawa and Toronto as well, so, if you're interested, let me know.

There will be new leadership at camp this summer as well. We believe our success rests with the quality of our staff. Our senior leadership team, led by returning Ottawa natives Director Jonathan Pivnick, in his sixth year since his return, and Assistant Director Justin Shulman and our Aussie head of waterfront, Jill Roberts. Piv, Justin and Jill are all experienced teachers.

To add to that strong team, we are thrilled to announce that Assistant Direc-

tor Cindy Presser Benedek, an Ottawa native and Toronto resident, and Head of Operations Jacob Polowin, an Ottawa resident, are joining our leadership team.

Cindy, a mother of three, joins us from an extensive background in administration and childcare. She has worked at the Leo Baeck School in Toronto, the Jewish Day School of Seattle and the Kids Country Daycare in Washington State.

Jacob (full disclosure – he's my son, and *nachas* is about to be expressed) is in his 16th summer at CBB. He has previously been our head of swim and of our Pathfinder program and is in his first year at Osgoode Hall Law School.

If you are interested in Camp B'nai Brith, but feel you don't know enough about us, I invite you to explore our website, at cbbottawa.com. There are lots of pictures, videos and information there. Once you have done that, contact our director, Jonathan Pivnick, at director@cbbottawa.com. He will be happy to meet with you and your family, or to organize a larger group of people, if that works.

We are really proud of what we do at CBB, and we invite you to become part of our *mishpacha*.

Thoughts for the 'sandwich generation'

I write this column on a flight to Paris, France, where I grew up. Flying to Paris to visit my parents, while thinking about my own family at home in Ottawa, brings me to understand, finally, what it means to belong to the 'sandwich generation.' I now have to care for my aging parents in France, while raising and supporting my family in Ottawa.

You see, for some reason, the love and care parents have for children is not naturally reciprocated; it is channelled instead to the next generation. I therefore share the following thoughts with you about the obligation of honouring our parents in Jewish tradition.

Honouring our parents is one of the cardinal mitzvot/commandments in the Torah, which occupies a prominent place within the foundational Ten Commandments. The reason for this prominence is because the Torah's requirements in the ways we have to honour our parents is quite rigorous, demanding and sometimes counterintuitive to the human mind.

The importance of parental respect is underscored by the reward the Torah promises for the observance of this Mitzvah: longevity. The Torah rarely discusses the nature of the reward one merits for the observance of a particular mitzvah, but here the incentive and encouragement is needed.



From the pulpit

Rabbi Menachem Blum
OTC Chabad

On a basic level, the reason for this commandment is to express gratitude to our parents for everything they have done for us. They brought us to this world, they took care of us and loved us as children, and they gave us the tools to prepare us for life.

Rabbi Abraham Danzig, one of the great codifiers of Jewish law, argues that all children's obligations towards their parents are considered the payment of a debt. Children are duty-bound to repay their parents for all the good they did for them. This has great practical implications, for then it's not enough for me express 'some sort' of appreciation to my parents, but rather I have to repay them in kind. I have to treat them just as they treated me. Paying back a debt with a pretty smile or some random favour will not cut it.

On a deeper level, honouring our parents is connected to our relationship with God. God chose to embed the Godly talent of 'creating' within our parents. There are,

therefore, three partners involved in the creation of each child: the two parents themselves along with the creative divine energy implanted within them. We honour our parents because we recognize that these two individuals have hosted the creative energy of God.

Additionally, our parents are the ones who have passed on Jewish traditions and values to us. Judaism has survived for

thousands of years because children were attentive to their parents as they explained and demonstrated to them what it means to live as a Jew. We can only accept the traditions from them, if we respect and honour them. In this light, we honour our parents because they are the vehicle through which God's teachings are passed down.

I take these thoughts to heart as I prepare to land in Paris and meet my parents.



Owned by The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd., 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, K2A 1R9.
Tel: (613) 798-4696. Fax: (613) 798-4730. Email: bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com. Published 19 times per year.
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PUBLISHER: The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd. **EDITOR:** Michael Regenstreif
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Brenda Van Vliet **BUSINESS MANAGER:** Barry Silverman

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Local subscription \$30.00. Canada \$36.00. International \$50.00. \$2.00 per issue.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada
through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Netanyahu is having a difficult time building a coalition

My February 4 column centred on speculation and possible scenarios for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as he works to put together a governing coalition following the January 22 election. I said then the next few weeks would be most interesting – and, indeed, they have been.

Things may have changed considerably by the time you read this as the initial deadline for forming a coalition is February 28 (a four-week extension could then be granted). But, as I write this on February 21, only one party has signed on so far: Tzipi Livni's Hatunah Party, which holds six seats in the Knesset.

Netanyahu has announced Livni will be justice minister in the new government and has been tapped to lead peace negotiations with the Palestinians. Livni's prime issue in the election campaign was the need to revive peace talks leading to a two-state solution, thus preserving Israel's defining characteristics as both Jewish and democratic.

That Livni will have this role is certain to please Israel's important allies in Washington and major European capitals – and even here in Ottawa where Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Foreign Minister John Baird, Israel's staunchest supporters on the international stage, continue to stress the importance of a negotiated two-state solution.

The announcement of Hatunah as the



Editor

Michael
Regenstreif

first coalition partner for Netanyahu – whose Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu alliance won 31 seats – was somewhat of a surprise. A month ago, it was widely assumed the first building block of the coalition would be Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid (There is a Future), a new centrist party that captured 19 seats.

One of Lapid's central planks in the election campaign – as Barbara Crook notes in her *My Israel* column on page 19 – was that the haredi population assume a fair share of the burden for national service. According to reports in the Israeli media, coalition talks with Lapid, and also with Naftali Bennett's right wing HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home) party, which won 12 seats, have stalled over this issue. Apparently, Lapid and Bennett – who would seem to agree on few other issues – both feel that Netanyahu's plan to address the haredi issue does not go far enough.

Some reports have suggested Lapid and Bennett have entered into a pact that they would only join the coalition together – a move aimed at freezing out the religious

*Nothing is
ever simple
in Israeli politics ...
something
will have to give,
one way or another,
if Netanyahu is
to form a coalition.*

parties who have been traditional allies of Netanyahu's Likud in previous coalitions.

Israeli coalition building can make for some fascinating bedfellows. Beyond the haredi issue, Lapid and Bennett do not appear to be natural allies. Will their pact hold as coalition deadlines come closer? Will Netanyahu agree to bend on the haredi issue and meet the demands of Lapid and Bennett? Or will he look to other alternatives to come up with the 61 seats he needs to stay in power?

And, if Netanyahu bends on the haredi issue to clear the way for Lapid and Bennett to join the coalition, it's hard to imagine Bennett – who categorically rejects a two-state solution with the Palestinians – sitting at the cabinet table with Livni.

A workable scenario for Israel to move

forward on many important dossiers would be for Lapid to find a way to join the coalition. Then bring in Labor with its 15 seats and Kadima with its two and Netanyahu's got a 73-seat coalition of the centre-right to centre-left that is not beholden to the religious parties. Possible personality clashes aside, Lapid, Livni, Labor Party leader Shelly Yachimovich and Kadima leader Shaul Mofaz would seem to be natural allies on most of the important issues facing Israel.

But nothing is ever that simple in Israeli politics. There are strong factions within Netanyahu's Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu alliance, which would be more much naturally allied to Bennett's HaBayit HaYehudi on the right.

Something will have to give, one way or another, if Netanyahu is to form a coalition. The alternative is new elections much sooner than anyone wants them. The situation over the next few weeks remains fascinating.

Letters to the editor

At all times, there are important issues facing our community and your opinion is always important to us. If there is a matter of concern you would like to share with the community, if you want to dispute or applaud something you read in the *Bulletin*, please do so. Write a letter-to-the-editor or submit a guest column. We always want to hear from you.

Gender equality in politics should be the way things are

Almost 35 years ago, a member of Parliament stood up in the House of Commons to table a report on domestic violence. As he finished his preamble, the chamber echoed with catcalls from both sides of the House. It sounded like this, "Tom, Richard, Harry, why do you still beat your wife?" The laughter was deafening.

The boys' club was amusing itself, which was easy to do in those days. The handful of women MPs was literally powerless to even shame any of those men to alter their behaviour. But things were about to change.

A CBC colleague of mine looked at the tape of the House of Commons proceedings. Usually the microphones were cut as soon as someone finished speaking. Catcalls were not usually taped. But, somehow, on that day, the sound was left on and there on tape for the record was a whole bunch of male politicians poking fun at domestic violence.

A report was filed that night on the CBC *National News*. Shame was finally delivered to those responsible and everyone knew respect for women was going to be several degrees higher in the House of Commons from that moment on. It has been a long struggle, and it is far from



Jason
Moscovitz

over, but mountains have been built in 35 years.

There are 13 provincial and territorial governments in this country and, with the Ontario Liberal Party's selection of Kathleen Wynne as the province's new premier, six of those governments are now led by women. It is almost half, and yet it has happened so quietly. It used to be really messy.

In 1979, prime minister Joe Clark asked Flora MacDonald to be Canada's foreign affairs minister. It was the most significant cabinet post for a woman in Canadian history. In her first visit to the United Nations, MacDonald was mistakenly introduced in a receiving line as the spouse of the man who accompanied her. He was introduced as the minister and she quickly corrected the record stating she, in fact, was the minister.

And then, of course, there was that

time in 1984 during the Liberal leadership race, when candidate John Turner was introduced and, as he said hello to the party president, he patted her behind with the cameras rolling.

Today, the country's biggest provinces – Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia – are run by women. However, Quebec and Ontario are minority governments, while an election must be held this spring in British Columbia. All to say that, while this woman-power may not last for long, the prospect diminishes nothing from the achievement. The achievement proves what is possible.

Politics is still a tougher road for women. That is why there are still so many more men in politics than women. Just have a look at Prime Minister Stephen Harper's cabinet. Only nine of the 37 members are women.

Years ago, the NDP made it a priority to have as many women candidates as men in federal elections. The party was never able to achieve that lofty goal, but the NDP was, and remains, worthy in its efforts of aiming high. The dream of gender equality – in terms of numbers – was actually first achieved by Jean Charest's former government in Quebec. His cabinet contained an equal number of men

and women.

When there are as many, or almost as many, women as men in politics, other doors will open in other workplaces. When it looks right and natural in the public domain, it will begin to feel right in all domains. That's when the last barriers will come down everywhere.

Wishful thinking? Let's indulge ourselves in believing it is a way to get there.

Of course, we know that women leaders are nothing new. We can always be especially proud of Golda Meir and other women, such as Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi, who led their countries in the last century. But they governed in a man's world of politics. It may have made their achievement that much greater but, it also made them rare exceptions.

The idea today is that women in politics should not be the exceptions – it should be the way things are. When it is normal and natural to have six of the 13 governments in Canada run by women, we can almost allow ourselves to believe there is no difference between men and women in Canadian politics.

The point is we're getting there and the pace is picking up.

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Mailbag

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Stand with Israel

Mira Sucharov seems to be asking whether standing with Israel means agreeing with all of its political decisions (*Values, Ethics, Community*, February 4). Is it ever possible to agree with *all* of any country's political decisions? Is supporting a country contingent on its government doing what we want or what we think is proper?

I object to Sucharov's apparently narrow definition of democracy.

When a Muslim acquaintance told me he cannot 'friend' me on *Facebook* because if he does, 80 per cent of his friends will stop talking to him, he said it is because 'Israel is an undemocratic country.' He said he gets that information from Jewish people themselves – people, perhaps, like Sucharov.

I struggle to answer him. Israel is a democratic country that is struggling with very complex issues. But my Muslim acquaintance knew nothing of the positive sides of Israel. He only knows the negative. We may not agree with everything Israel does. Sometimes the Israeli government's decisions frustrate and embarrass us. I do not propose we lie and say we agree with everything, but then what do we do? What do we say? How do we deal with this and remain supportive?

Mira, I have taken your mini-course, I have read your articles, and I know that many agree that some of Israel's actions are difficult to take. Unfortunately, my Muslim friend and his friends read words like yours, blow them way out of proportion and use them to stab us. Please, Mira, don't stop sharing your thoughts, but we know the problems. Bring us your ideas, bring us solutions! We need creative, intelligent political scientists like you to help us make sense of it all, to be able to "stand with," to support our beloved democratic Israel and do whatever we can to help it find its way through this quagmire. Help us, Mira, to find ways to voice our concerns in supportive ways, and avoid inadvertently giving ammunition to those who seek our destruction.

Sharon Letovsky

Entitled to thoughts

Ilana Belfer's column helps us stay in touch with the emerging generation's issues on campus, and has often provided us with food for thought. Her column on tweeting (*Campus Life*, February 4) is a timely reminder of the need to slow down and take a moment to consider the byproducts of freedom-of-expression. She is not the first to point out that how we express ourselves may mean more than we think to others. A seemingly thoughtless comment by Zane Colt had unexpected results for him.

She wisely cautions her readers about the downside of broadcasting your thoughts to the world, since misinterpretation is a real possibility, and mistakes and miscommunication

will occur. However, she takes matters one step further when she suggests one should "keep such remarks from even popping up into our heads."

I would suggest people are perfectly entitled to their thoughts, or "remarks," as she calls them, and the more possibilities they consider, the better able they will be to understand themselves and the world around them. This is one of the traditional benefits of higher education – to be exposed to many ideas and thoughts, and learn to examine them.

Colt learned some hard lessons about the need to control what he says out loud, in print or online, and when and where he does so. But I do hope he continues to feel free to think whatever he likes.

Barbara Okun

Ottawa softball star Mottie Feldman

One of the finest pitchers to ever play in Ottawa's Jewish Men's Softball League lost his long, courageous battle with prostate cancer on December 29. Mottie Feldman was interred in Toronto's Pardes Chayim Cemetery on January 1.

Feldman's *mishpacha* had its roots in Western Canada. His professional career as an agricultural engineer brought him and his young family to Ottawa in 1977.

One of the first things Feldman did to get involved with his new community was join the Jewish Men's Softball League. Mottie was in his mid-40s when he took the mound for the Osterer's Soft Drink Service Nine. He had a terrific delivery that gave opposing players fits. He could dial it up a notch when he needed a strikeout and was also a terrific hitter.

In his first season, Mottie pitched both ends of a double header in the finals to win his first championship. He went on to capture a number of league MVP and all-star honours as he hurled for more than a decade and led his teams to two more Jewish Men's Softball titles.

Mottie was well respected by every player in the league not only for his prowess on the mound, but also for his sense of sportsmanship and fair play. He will be remembered fondly by all those who had the privilege of playing with and against him.

May his memory always be a blessing.

Irv Osterer

Letters welcome

Letters to the Editor are welcome if they are brief, signed, timely and of interest to our readership.

The *Bulletin* reserves the right to refuse, edit or condense letters. The *Mailbag* column will be published as space permits. Send your letters to Michael Regenstreif, Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9; or by e-mail to bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com.

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Thanks again to all who worked with us at our Tu Bi'Shevat Tree-a-Thon and to those who donated trees and bought Tree Banks. Many trees will be planted in Israel as a result of our work and your giving. When we talk about planting trees in Israel, we are not just talking about a pine tree here and there. JNF used to be known for our pine trees, but now when JNF plants trees, we think about how to work with the complex ecosystems of forests and how to use our trees for the most benefit.

The more than 240 million trees JNF has planted and the more than 100,000 acres of natural woodland JNF supports take a lot of thought and a lot of science to maintain. They also contribute to Israel's environmental health. JNF forests are among the largest planted forests in the Mediterranean Middle East and are a source of substantial carbon sequestration. JNF's Yatir Forest carbon monitoring station is the only such monitoring station in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Tikkun Olam: Tree planting quotas repair our carbon footprint

Each tree, whether planted by JNF or not, absorbs about half a ton of atmosphere-polluting carbon dioxide during its life. I checked the JNF Carbon Calculator – found at elysium.co.il/kakal/cc.html – to see what the current Canadian carbon footprint is. We are at 16.92 tons of CO2 per year per Canadian, which means we all need to plant 24 trees per year to make up for it. Many members of Ottawa's Jewish community spend time in Israel, so, if you spend enough time there, you might be able to count yourself in for the Israeli tree-planting quota of 14 trees. Spending lots of time in Florida this winter? Sorry, you are looking at 28 trees. To help meet the United Nations *Plant the Planet* program goal of planting a billion trees, JNF has committed to planting six million trees in Israel. But I digress. And I'm not doing the math on what Ottawa's share of that would be.

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JNF plantings also serve many other purposes, from rainwater conservation to erosion control to simple recreation. Our plantings may be large, creating or filling out forests. They may be small, perhaps a cluster of trees to both benefit from and help support run-off rainwater collection in a terrace or liman. One of the Negev's biggest environmental problems is soil erosion. Trees can help slow down the erosion. Trees also provide a habitat for other plants and for animals and a nice backdrop for hiking. Whether your one tree ends up alone in a liman or in the company of hundreds of others in the Carmel Forest, know that your donation of a tree has done more good than you might have thought.

For more information on JNF's projects or programs or to find out how you can do the mitzvah of Tikkun Olam with JNF trees, please call Susan Schwartzman or Lynda Taller-Wakter, Executive Director, Ottawa and Atlantic Canada, at 613-798-2411. Email us at ottawa@jnf.ca and "like" us on Facebook. Purchase trees online at jnf.ca.

On a daily basis you can plant trees for all occasions. An attractive card is sent to the recipient. To order, call the JNF office (613.798.2411).



Guest column

The Levy Report and what it means

By Bernard Shinder

The Report on the Legal Status of Building in Judea and Samaria – popularly known as the Levy Report – was delivered to the Israeli government last year. It was commissioned by the government – that is to say Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – to examine the legality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. It was expected to be a whitewash of current government policy, but turned out to be a bit more than the government expected.

The government had previously taken the position that the occupation of the West Bank was 'temporary' and therefore it was allowed to administer the area. Housing was part of its administrative presence in the area.

Almost everyone knew this was a legalistic pretext. Civil libertarians in Israel decried the fact that many years have elapsed since 1967 when the territory was taken from the Jordanians. Since then, Israel has held the land in legal limbo. In fact, during the 1967 war, there was considerable sentiment, expressed by both the military and the government, that Israel should not lay claim to the West Bank.

Had this sentiment prevailed, Jordan would have retained sovereign rights over the land. Israel, in doing what it did, did Jordan a great favour. Jordan no longer had responsibility for the land and the Palestinians were no longer Jordan's problem.

From a legal standpoint, Jerusalem was never a problem. Israel won the 1967 war and promptly annexed Jerusalem and the surrounding area as the spoils of war. Annexing the West Bank would have been unthinkable because the Arab occupants would have overwhelmed Jewish voters at the polls. Remember, in 1967, there was very little pressure on the Israeli government to popu-

late the West Bank. It was only after the religious parties began to have significant political clout that populating the West Bank became both a political and religious imperative. The Israeli government was on the horns of a dilemma. It could not claim the land as part of their sovereign right because this would empower the indigenous population. So, they claimed their right to build settlements was part of the 'temporary' occupation.

The three-person commission – including former Israeli ambassador to Canada Alan Baker who was interviewed by the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* ("Former Israeli ambassador expects Levy Report will be adopted," January 21) – was expected to put clothes on the king. However, one of the findings of the report was that the occupation of the West Bank was hardly temporary. The Israelis did not annex the territory. So, what was the justification for the Israelis being there? The Balfour Declaration stated that Palestine would be a homeland for the Jews provided that the religious and other rights of other inhabitants would be respected.

The commission found that the Balfour Declaration designated all of Palestine [as the Jewish homeland] and there-

fore the possession of the West Bank by Jordan, as the result of the 1948 War of Independence, was illegal. In fact, Jordan renounced its claims to the West Bank under pressure from other Arab states. The commission found that the "liberation" of the West Bank in 1967 merely brought the geography back to the position it was during the Balfour Declaration. Therefore, Israel had a legal right to the West Bank and, consequently, the right to build there.

What was not discussed (hardly surprisingly) was the following: If Israel has a legal right to the West Bank and makes that claim through the Balfour Declaration, what about the part that says that the religious and other rights of the indigenous occupation had to be respected? This has not gone unnoticed by Israeli liberals who say that, in accepting the Levy Report, the Israeli government has walked away from the two-state solution and must give the Palestinians the vote and the benefits that accrue to all Israeli citizens.

As ever in the Middle East, nothing is easy.

Editor's note: As of the time this issue of the Bulletin went to press, the Israeli government had not yet adopted the Levy Report.

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Students from across Ontario gather in London for Chabad Shabbaton at Western University

By Sammy Hudes

Chabad Student Network

A mission of Chabad centres around the world is to bring as many Jews as possible together and have them fulfil a single mitzvah at a time.

For some, this mitzvah might be wrapping tefillin, while for others it could be giving food to the poor. But one of the main mitzvot that any Chabad strives to achieve is simply to attract Jewish people to come to a Friday night Shabbat dinner, where they can have a kosher meal, and interact with fellow Jews.

As easy as that may sound, it can sometimes be a challenge for us at the Chabad Student Network of Ottawa (CSN), where we serve students at both the University of Ottawa and Carleton University.

Although estimates suggest there are more than



Delegates from the Chabad Student Network of Ottawa in London, Ontario for a Shabbaton hosted by Chabad at Western University.

1,000 Jewish students on the two campuses, many, unfortunately, are apathetic when it comes to Judaism.

I witnessed a sharp contrast to our situation while taking part in Chabad's first-ever Ontario-wide Shabba-

ton for students, January 25 to 27, at Western University in London, Ontario.

As I learned on the trip, Western University, which is attended by more than 2,000 Jewish students, has a very active Jewish community.

Approximately 200 to 300 Jewish students come to the Chabad House each week for a Shabbat meal, according to Rabbi Mordechai Silberberg, director of Chabad at Western.

However, unlike our main attractions in Ottawa, such as the annual Shabbat 200 dinner and community service activities throughout

the week, Chabad at Western is able to attract its large numbers with little or no social media reminders. People simply know, and want to come.

For me and the other delegates on the trip from Ottawa, the energy of a typical Shabbat at Western could be felt from the moment we entered the Chabad House and

took part in a very uplifting Shabbat service on Friday night.

That energy carried on throughout the entire weekend, where we had the opportunity to mix with hundreds of Jewish students during Shabbat dinner, listen to Dvar Torahs, and take part in meaningful workshops along with our peers

from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Toronto, Queen's University, Brock University and the University of Windsor.

From my experience at Western, I was able to draw inspiration to keep working toward expanding CSN Ottawa throughout my time here at university.

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Torah Academy students hold learning fair

By Rabbi Yisroel Goldbaum
Torah Academy
of Ottawa

COLE – SLAW (Celebration of Learning Expo – Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Wow!) is the catchy name of Torah Academy of Ottawa's learning fair. After many weeks of preparation by students and teachers, the fair was held at the school on Thursday, January 31 as students, their families, friends and relatives came together in the school's recreation room to share wonderful learning projects with one another and to celebrate knowledge and inquiry.

The exhibits were numerous and varied. Many were the work of individual students while some were done in partnership and class projects were produced by the younger grades.

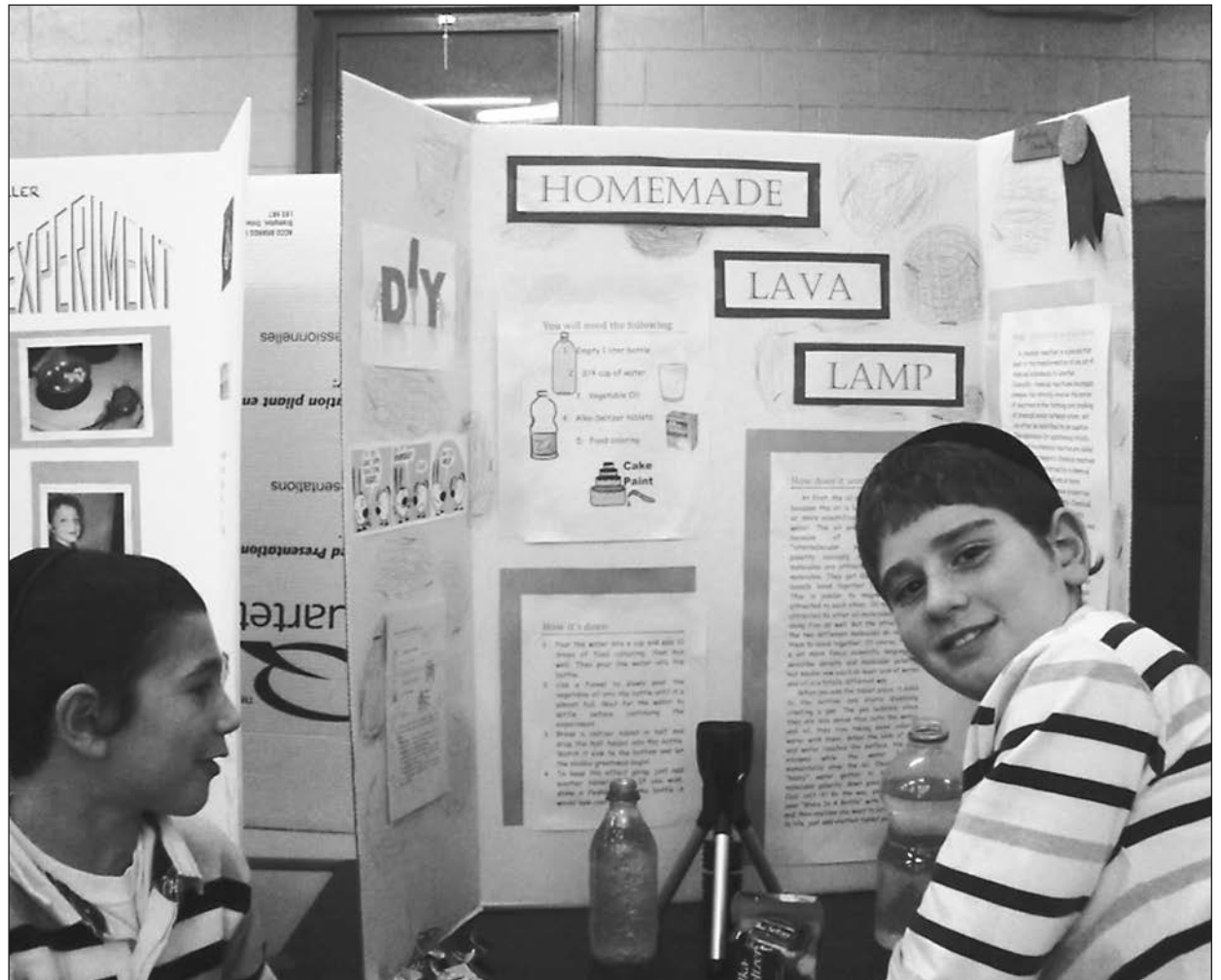
There were many science projects, a number of exhibits on the social sciences, and all had elements of language arts mixed in. The common denominator was the high degree of effort and attention to detail invested in each project.

Exhibits included a polar ice floe, complete with a wide range of arctic animals, a model city built during the course of a unit on community, a geography exhibit based on the travels of *Flat Stanley*, 15 posters depicting a wide range of day-to-day activities in pioneer times, a lemon battery, a gerbil maze, optical illusions, the properties of crystals and many more.

The fine showing of Torah Academy's students at the fair may be attributed to the dedicated efforts of our excellent general studies teaching staff. Torah Academy is proud of our veteran staff and of the low turnover rate of our teachers.

The experience of participating in COLE – SLAW is one that is sure to inspire and motivate students to use their curiosity to continue to learn, explore and discover the wide world of knowledge that surrounds them every day of their lives.

Visit torahacademyofottawa.com or call 613-274-0110 for more information about Torah Academy of Ottawa.



Students Shalom Freidman (left) and Zecharya Greiniman at the lava lamp exhibit at Torah Academy's COLE – SLAW learning fair.

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CIJA visit to Israel

The national and local leadership of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) spent four days in Israel meeting with representatives of most of the major political parties as well as senior diplomats and members of Israel's ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program was designed to better inform CIJA leadership on a wide array of pressing issues such as security, the changing political landscape and the Canada-Israel relationship. (From left) Naftali Bennett, leader of the Jewish Home Party, CIJA board member Jonathan Freedman of Ottawa, and Jeff Smith, of the Local Partnership Council in Calgary.



CIJA Chair David Koschitzky (left) with Yair Lapid, leader of Yesh Atid. (Photos: Philip Touitou)



JNF Tree-a-Thon

Longstanding Jewish National Fund of Ottawa Tu Bi'Shevat Tree-a-Thon volunteer Harold Schwartz (centre) is thanked with a Loblaws gift card by Tree-a-Thon co-chairs Jane and Martin Gordon.

Ottawa's first Sephardi Festival a success

By Clemy Srour

Sephardi Association of Ottawa

More than 500 members of Ottawa's Jewish community experienced the richness of Sephardi culture, music and food at Ottawa's first Sephardi Festival, November 22 to 25.

"We are very proud of the program we developed for this four-day celebration of Sephardi culture in Ottawa," said Eva Amzallag, president of the Sephardi Association of Ottawa. "I am so pleased with the results of our efforts to share our traditions with all of the Ottawa Jewish community."

"Our association's very first Sephardi Festival is a great example of successful partnership between a small volunteer organization and community partners."

The festival was launched, Thursday, November 22, with an exhibition of Sephardi and Israeli art at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) held in partnership with Aliyah Arts Galerie of Montreal. Some 150 people attended and experienced such unique artworks as Menashe Kadishman's haunting portraits of sheep and Eden Chouraki's deeply moving portraits of Jewish faith and experience.

Most unique was the opportunity to meet two of the artists exhibiting their work. Haim Sherff described his journey as a Chassidic painter and artist, while Michel D'Anastasio, a French calligrapher and painter, explained how he integrates Hebrew letters in a message that conveys deep spiritual meaning.



Israeli singer-songwriter David Broza performs at his sold-out concert at the SJCC during the Sephardi Festival. (Photo: Howard Sandler)

On Friday, November 23, a traditional Sephardi Shabbaton at the Ottawa Torah Centre featured guest speaker Rabbi Yamin Levy from New York City. Rabbi Levy, an expert on the great sage Maimonides, spoke to a sold-out Shabbat dinner and expounded on the heritage that Maimonides left us today through his *Mishneh Torah*, the first systematic codification of Jewish law.

Following the Shabbaton, the Soloway

JCC was packed on Saturday night, November 24, for the centrepiece event of the festival as Israeli superstar David Broza gave an electrifying concert of new songs and old Israeli favourites. The sold-out event was dazzling as Broza demonstrated his incredible guitar skills, sometimes using his guitar as a drum while simultaneously strumming out tunes at lightning speed.

On Sunday, November 25, the focus was

on a more reflective program of lectures regarding Sephardic traditions and history. Rabbi Levy spoke about the spiritual aspects of being Sephardic as well as some of the differences between Sephardi and Ashkenazi traditions. David Bensoussan presented an extensive review of Moroccan Jewish history, showing evidence of a continued Jewish presence in that country going back more than 2,000 years. Lucien Chelly and Albert Hakim discussed movements in Sephardi-Israeli art.

At the same time, some members of the community participated in a Hebrew calligraphy workshop given by D'Anastasio. Workshop participants were delighted by their experience and the unique opportunity to be taught by this artist.

The Festival concluded with a Sephardic tea and concert featuring Cantor Daniel Benlolo. The audience clapped and sang along as Cantor Benlolo sang tunes based on the *piyyutim* tradition – music based on Sephardi liturgical poetry.

"This Festival was about celebrating the diversity of Jewish culture in Ottawa. After such a successful response to this celebration of Sephardi culture, we are inspired to organize more exciting Sephardi events," said Amzallag.

Contact the Sephardi Association of Ottawa at ottawasephardiassociation@yahoo.com to be added to our mailing list or follow us at [Facebook.com/OttawaSephardic](https://www.facebook.com/OttawaSephardic).

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Michael H. shares his painting techniques with other artists in Tamir's Visual Arts Program

By Katherine Carter
Tamir

Tamir welcomed two new faces to our Visual Arts Program this winter. Carmel Whittle of H'Art of Ottawa is our guest visual arts teacher overseeing classes for Fortunée Shugar who will return this month and Michael H., a participant artist, who is a guest facilitator for the Tamir Visual Art Program. Michael shares new techniques and colour combinations with the other artists. But, most importantly, he shows what is possible and inspires others to never give up.

When speaking with Michael, there is no question he is passionate about art. His paintings are inspired by past experiences as well as everyday musings, from the beautiful flowers in his mother's garden, to the colours he remembers from trips to New Zealand.

Michael began his foray into the arts shortly after joining Tamir. Through dedication to his art and the encouragement and support he received from the partnership of Tamir and H'Art, Michael is begin-



Participating artist Michael H. (left) and instructor Carmel Whittle show paintings to the class at Tamir's Visual Arts Program.

ning enjoy great success.

Michael's philosophy on painting is to keep an open mind.

"I don't really have a favourite thing that inspires me," he said. "When I see something beautiful or even just when I'm feeling a certain way, I just paint it, and I love painting."

The results are paintings of various sizes with vibrant colours and images that are poignant and share a story.

Whittle has been an art teacher at H'Art for 10 years. When she is not teaching, she can be found in her own studio sculpting or working on new abstract paintings.

Whittle also knows the impact introducing art can have for individuals with disabilities. Through her work at H'Art, an artist studio that also supports and trains people with disabilities, she has seen numerous transformations.

"It's been a pleasure to work with Tamir," she said. "It's really

amazing what art brings out in people and it's incredible when you look back with your students and recall some who, for the first little while, wouldn't touch a paint brush, but are now flourishing. It lifts people's confidence to bring them out of their shell."

Participants in Tamir's Visual Arts Program bring their own unique perspective and language to each creation, a reason why support of the arts has been an integral part of Tamir's programs.

For participants, art creates a new medium for expression in which energies can be channelled and the final product can be admired. For the community, there is the opportunity to celebrate creativity and the potential to learn about the experiences of those with disabilities.

Tamir is proud to share these works with our community through the introduction of new tribute cards featuring artwork produced by members of the Tamir Visual Arts Program. The cards will be available for purchase at tamir.ca by the end of March

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Machzikei Hadas team at *Walk for Memories*

Team Vehadarta, 14 members of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, raised more than \$11,000.00 for the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County's *Walk for Memories*, January 27.

(From left) Jonah Rabinovitch, Shalom Benzaquen, Reuben Goldberg, team captain Norma Freeman, Ariella Segal, Gavi Stulberg, Charlie Wiseman, Roger Keen, Claire-Jehanne Wilner, Frayda Wiseman, Rabbi Reuven Bulka, Hennie Palmer and Murray Citron. Missing: Bonnie Engel.

(Photo: Geoff Abbott)



Religion class visits Beth Shalom

Grade 11 students from Holy Trinity Catholic High School visit Congregation Beth Shalom, December 19, as part of their world religion class. The students also visited St. Xenia of Petersburg Russian Orthodox Church, Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica, and the Ottawa Mosque that day.



Mitzvah Day at Agudath Israel

Agudath Israel Congregation was a busy hive of activity, February 10, as the congregation participated in several Mitzvah Day projects.

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World Wide Wrap event celebrates mitzvah of wearing tefillin

By Malachi Handler
Agudath Israel

Early in the morning on Sunday, February 3, young and old alike came together in common purpose – to celebrate the mitzvah of wearing tefillin. The World Wide Wrap, now in its 13th year, is an international event put on by the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs.

The purpose of the day is for communities to come together to further their knowledge about wearing tefillin and to take part in the mitzvah itself. This year, thanks to the vision of synagogue member Hal Grossner, Agudath Israel Congregation put a unique spin on the program, creating a joint day of celebration between the men's club and our Kadima youth group. This allowed for a particularly special event of inter-generational observance, highlighted by the teachings of Rabbi Barry Schlesinger who gave a lesson on the mitzvah of wearing tefillin featuring in-depth display with detailed pictures and actual tefillin in different stages of assemblage.



Agudath Israel Congregation participates in the World Wide Wrap, February 3, an international event celebrating the mitzvah of wearing tefillin.

The rabbi's lesson was followed by the Shacharit service and a communal brunch. The youth were aided in their preparations for prayers by Cantor Jeremy Burko and Kadima adviser Josh Taylor.

"It was truly a Yom Chag, a day of celebrating the performance of

a mitzvah," said Rabbi Schlesinger.

Whether it was learning the difference between *batim* (black boxes) and *retsuot* (tefillin straps) or spending time together with family and friends, the World Wide Wrap event at Agudath Is-

rael offered a chance for men and women and people of all ages to come together for an important cause.

For grade school students who haven't yet started studying for their bar or bat mitzvah, or for adults who never had the chance,

the World Wide Wrap was an opportunity to experience a mitzvah that helps define Jews around the world. Hopefully, this event will also serve as the first occasion of what will become another great annual event on the Agudath Israel calendar.



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NAC musicians visit Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool

By Devora Caytak

Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool

The Ayorama Wind Quintet, members of the NAC Orchestra, visited the Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool on February 7 with their *WINDerful Musical Zoo* presentation. They entertained our students with animals of every stripe and colour during their visit. Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Mussorgsky's *Ballet of the Chickens in their Shells* were among the musical works that came to life during their musical zoo.

With narrator Marjolaine Fournier, they also performed *How Tiger Made Spider Build a Web*, a story and composition by Canadian Stewart Grant created especially for them.

During the performance there was much laughter and a lot of smiles. Our students were able to ask the musicians questions and touch and play the instruments.

The Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool is open to children from 18 months to age 6 with half- and full-day programs. The curriculum includes math, science, botany, geography, reading, baking, Jewish holidays, the Hebrew alphabet, and much more.

Registration is now open for September 2013. For more information, contact director Devora Caytak at 613-729-7712 or visit jewishyouthlibrary.com.

The Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool is located at 192 Switzer Avenue. Call for a no-obligation tour.



The Ayorama Wind Quintet performs at the Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool.



Musician Jill Kirwan shows her French horn to fascinated students at the Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool.

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Claims Conference offers last chance for East Germany property heirs

(JTA) – Jews who owned property seized by the Nazis in what became East Germany have a last chance to receive compensation for it.

For the first time in a decade, the Claims Conference has agreed to review new claims by potential heirs to Jewish-owned properties in the former East Germany.

The organization announced it is

establishing a \$67 million fund for eligible heirs. The Late Applicants Fund will be open to claimants until December 31, 2014.

After German reunification in 1990, Jewish heirs had until 1993 to file their claims to properties in the former East Germany. All properties for which no heir could be established were handed over to the Claims Conference under a

1990 agreement.

The deal has netted the Claims Conference \$3 billion in recovered real estate assets, not including properties that went to heirs who could be found. The Claims Conference has sold most of the properties it received and spent more than \$1.6 billion of the proceeds on home care for elderly Holocaust survivors, grants for organizations that

benefit survivors, and Holocaust education and documentation.

Another \$940 million went to a Goodwill Fund set up for claimants who missed the deadline to file their claims. The fund enabled them to receive proceeds from the sale of the properties Germany already had restituted to the Claims Conference and subsequently were sold.

Detailed rules and applications

for the Late Applicants Fund are available at *claimscon.org*. The website also features a list of thousands of Jews who owned property in what would become East Germany before the beginning of the Nazi era.

Since its Holocaust reparations programs began, Germany has paid out more than \$70 billion to survivors and programs to help survivors.



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Accommodations must be made if haredis are to 'share the burden'

"Share the burden," was one of the main messages the Israeli electorate delivered to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the new and returning members of the Knesset in the January 22 election.

Despite their differences on many other issues, both Yair Lapid's secular Yesh Atid (There is a Future) party and Naf-tali Bennett's religious Zionist party, HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home) – which at the time of writing are expected to play major roles in the next coalition government – are in agreement on one key demand:

Haredi Jews, often called ultra-Orthodox Jews, will have to make a tangible contribution to Israeli society by eschewing government handouts, paying taxes and enlisting in the army or performing national service.

This is not a new issue in a country where near-universal military or national service is the backbone of national identity. But, because ultra-Orthodox parties have held the balance of power in so many governments, there has never been the political will or the negotiating room within previous coalitions to change the status quo. Depending on the composition of Netanyahu's new government, we may finally see some progress on this question.

But what form will that progress take? And is enforced-conscription the only way to make these 700,000 Israelis, at least half of whom live in what critics describe as "willful poverty," pay their way?

The exemptions for haredi Jews began with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Because so many Jewish scholars perished in the Holocaust, prime minister David Ben-Gurion waived military service requirements for 400 yeshiva students.

But, because these Jews have especially large families – their average birthrate in 2010 was 6.5 children per family – that original population of full-time Torah scholars has ballooned. Today, at least 54,000 yeshiva students are not only granted military exemptions, they collectively receive \$7.4 million per month in government support payments.

The difficulties of accommodating large numbers of haredi Jews in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are myriad. Even if haredi rabbis were to allow the young men in their communities to exchange full-time Torah and Talmud study for military service, the need for complete segregation between the sexes, extensive time for Torah study, a different standard for kosher food and other restrictions would be very difficult to accommodate.

And, because this population has also been allowed a separate educational system that emphasizes religious study over basic mathematics and other core subjects, there is a serious gap in skills required for many army jobs.

But these accommodations can and must be made, especially if national service is included as an option, and if the government and the IDF are realistic about phasing in haredi military service, rather than expecting overnight change.

One promising model is the IDF's Shoham program – Shoham is the Hebrew acronym for *shiluv haredim* (ultra-Orthodox integration). This program allows haredi men aged 22 to 26 to serve in the army for about a year-and-a-half.

At the beginning of their service, they study math and English. Then they move on to training geared to their army service – generally in fields involving technology, where their prodigious memories and discipline from years of Torah study are huge assets. This training and service also give them marketable post-army skills.

However, no initiatives to force haredi Jews to "share the burden" can fully succeed unless the government simultaneously makes a serious investment in higher education for this population – both men and women. About 6,000 haredi men and women are currently studying in higher education pro-



My Israel

Barbara Crook

grams in Israel, but these programs need to be expanded and supported.

Ono Academic College (OAC), a private, non-profit institution outside Tel Aviv, offers programs in law and business for 2,500 haredi men and women at special campuses in nearby Or Yehuda and in Jerusalem. (Participants in past Jewish Federation of Ottawa missions to Israel have met students from these programs and from OAC's outstanding programs for Ethiopian-Israelis.)

Rabbi Yehezkel Fogel, director of OAC's haredi programs, estimates that 90 per cent of its almost 2,000 graduates are employed.

Rabbi Fogel, an author and publisher who also served as an Israeli army chaplain for seven years, established Israel's first vocational training institute for haredis in Jerusalem in 1996. Four years later, he started the first haredi programs at Mivchar College in Bnei Brak, where the University of Haifa's very successful occupational therapy program for women has recently been joined by a new speech therapy program.

Shelley Marcus is the academic co-ordinator of the Mivchar occupational therapy program, now in its eighth year.

"This program has changed these women's lives," says Marcus. "The success of the women has a strong positive effect on the entire family, and is causing a ripple effect in their communities."

Last summer, the Israeli government announced plans to add 12 new haredi campuses associated with existing colleges and universities. The \$47-million program is expected to double the number of haredi students by 2017.

Rabbi Fogel sees a promising future in combined army and educational programs that would allow haredi Jews to spend 60 per cent of their time in non-combat military service, and the remaining 40 per cent in academic or vocational training that will lead to post-army employment.

All these options require creative thinking and compromise to replace the hatred, ignorance and mistrust that have too often characterized both sides of this debate.

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Reservations must be made before March 18
Sliding scale available

Catholics, Jews, and Jewish Catholics

Book Review

From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933-1965

By John Connelly
Harvard University Press
384 pages

Daniel
Johnson

(Jewish Ideas Daily) – Jews and Catholics have so much in common they ought to make common cause more often than they do. The friction between them is often based on mutual ignorance and mistrust. On the Jewish side, given 2,000 years of the Church's anti-Judaism, that is hardly surprising. Only after the Holocaust did a small group of Catholic thinkers – most of them converts from Judaism – have any success in persuading the Church to rethink its anti-Jewish doctrine.

It was a process that culminated in 1965's *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Age), the declaration of the Second Vatican Council that definitively repudiated the ancient accusation against the Jews of deicide, and stated that the Church "decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed at the Jews at any time and by anyone." Thus the Church, which had always seen itself as the *new Israel*, at last gave the people of Israel its due place in the history of salvation. The duty of Catholics to "Abraham's sons" was not conversion but reconciliation.

This dramatic story forms the subject of John Connelly's remarkable new book, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933-1965*. Connelly's book is largely peopled with "border-crossers": Catholics who had converted or were in the process of converting from Judaism or Protestantism, inhabiting an uncomfortable no-man's-land, accepted neither by their adoptive faith nor by their former community. Some, such as the later French Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, continued to see themselves as Jews, even when the chief rabbi of Paris objected that he had turned his back on Judaism.

Perhaps the most important of these Jewish-Catholic border-crossers was John (formerly Johannes) Oesterreicher, who helped draft *Nostra Aetate*. Connelly relies heavily on Oesterreicher's vast correspondence with the rest of this vanguard to unearth the tensions and quarrels of the struggle for reform. Reflecting on the death of his Jewish parents at the hands of the Nazis, Oesterreicher rediscovered forgotten teachings of the Church: all who lived good lives, Jews as well as Christians, could attain salvation, and the guilt for Jesus' death was shared by all, not just the Jews.

Among other surprising discoveries, Connelly shows that several major Catholic opponents of anti-Semitism were women, at a time when religious controversy was still very much a male pursuit.

Connelly also contrasts German Catholic prelates – marginalized by the Protestant majority for generations and in hock to fashionable racist and eugenicist ideology – with their American counterparts, who confidently

held the Judeo-Christian belief that all human beings are created in God's image. Rabbi James Rudin reinforces this point in a short, illuminating study of three leading American Catholics, *Cushing, Spellman, O'Connor: The Surprising Story of How Three American Cardinals Transformed Catholic-Jewish Relations* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing).

Rabbi Rudin shows how the American cardinals influenced the Vatican Council to ensure that *Nostra Aetate* broke with the anti-Judaism of the past. In the United States, a nation of immigrants, Catholics and Jews were more likely to make common cause than in the Old World, enduring anti-Semitism notwithstanding. According to Rabbi Rudin, the influence of the American cardinals was also mobilized after 1945 to strengthen Catholic relations with Israel.

But doctrine evolves at the level of deep thought, not diplomacy, and it is this change in the theological climate that interests Connelly, though he does not attempt to resolve the vexed question of Pope Pius XII's "silence" on the Holocaust.

This, however, does not save him from an intemperate attack from another Catholic writer, Justus George Lawler. In *Were the Popes Against the Jews?* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing), Lawler denounces Connelly for having signed a petition to Pope Benedict XVI appealing against the canonization of Pius XII. Lawler goes on to link Israel and its Catholic defenders with the historical question of Pius XII and the Church's conduct in the Holocaust, all but accusing Israelis of treating Palestinians as badly as anti-Semites have treated Jews. Such incongruous comparisons are as odious as they are common in public discourse today.

We cannot know what might have happened had Pius XII acted more vigorously on behalf of the Jews. What Connelly shows is that the small network of Catholics who were actively seeking to change attitudes toward the Jews, at the time believed that Pius should have done more. The crude caricature of "Hitler's Pope" that had its origins in Soviet Cold War propaganda is as false as the uncritical dogmatism of those who want Pius XII canonized without proper scrutiny of the evidence, still only partially open to scholars. Connelly's book, while it has no direct bearing on the papal controversy, hugely enriches its historical context. Catholics and Jews alike should welcome such a scholarly reappraisal of the most painful chapter in the history of their relationship.

This review was first published by Jewish Ideas Daily – jewishideasdaily.com – and is reprinted with permission.

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israel at 65 Ottawa Celebrates

Ottawa Israeli Film Festival 10th Anniversary Pre-Festival Event Israeli Cinema: The Women of Israel A lecture with Professor Amy Kronish

In recent years, we have been seeing more complex Israeli narrative films about women and women's issues, portraying unique stories and issues that are central to the lives of contemporary Israeli women – both Jewish and Arab. In this lecture, we will review clips and offer analysis of the portrayal of women in recent Israeli films.

Amy Kronish writes and lectures widely on subjects dealing with contemporary Israeli society as seen through film and is the author of two books on the subject *World Cinema: Israel* and *Israeli Film: A Reference Guide*.

Thursday, March 7 • Free

7:30 pm

Carleton University, 132 Azrieli Pavilion

Sponsored by the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies and Temple Israel

For more information visit www.carleton.ca/jewishstudies

In Search of Peace – Film Screening

In Search of Peace chronicles Israel's first two decades, offering new insights on the origins of the Middle East conflict. Combining a rich tapestry of rare archival film and photos, the film offers a unique global perspective on one of the seminal events in the 3,500-year history of the Jewish people. Featuring Michael Douglas (narrator) and the voices of Edward Asner, Anne Bancroft, Richard Dreyfuss, Miriam Margolyes and Michael York.

Sunday, March 17 • Free

7:00 pm

Soloway JCC

Presented by the Vered Israel Cultural and Educational Program

Yom Hazikaron - Soloway JCC

Community members are invited to gather at the Soloway JCC for Yom Hazikaron, Israel's national Memorial Day ceremony for fallen soldiers and victims of terror.

Sunday, April 14

7:00 pm

Flag Raising Ceremony

Help us pay tribute to Israel's 65th year of independence with a flag raising ceremony. Join community members, dignitaries and Jewish community leaders at City Hall as we raise the Israeli flag in honor of Yom Ha'atzmaut. A bus will be available to take people to and from the event.

Tuesday, April 16

11:30 am, Ottawa City Hall's Marion Dewar Square (110 Laurier Avenue)

Yom Ha'atzmaut Community Wide Celebration

Thursday, April 16

5:00 pm

Ernst & Young Centre (formerly CE Centre) 4899 Uplands Dr.

Celebrate with live music by Jaffa Road, Israeli food from Creative Kosher Catering (available for purchase) and tons of family fun.



For more information on these and other
events happening across the city visit
www.israel65ottawa.ca





For further details please contact: Roslyn Brozovsky Wollock | 613-798-9818 x254 | rwollock@jccottawa.com

ADULTS & ZOOMERS SPRING 2013

Religious & Cultural Traditions of India: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Judaism.

This class explores the religious and cultural traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Judaism in India. The focus of the course will be on the diverse understandings, experiences, and practices of "the sacred" in each of the traditions, from the diverse polytheism of Hindu devotionism, to the ardent monotheism of Judaism, and Sikhism to the outright rejection of a creator God from the domain of the sacred in Buddhism and Jainism. The course will explore both historical and contemporary expressions of the religions of India.

April 29 – June 24
Monday 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm
\$120 M • \$140 NM
Instructor: Professor Anne Vallely,
University of Ottawa
No class: May 20, June 3

Civil Religion – A Modern Form of Jewish Life

When discussing the Jewish people and its covenant there are usually two forms discussed: Israelite religion and Rabbinic Judaism. This course investigates these two early forms of covenantal commitment as well as other variants, and then delves into the newest form of covenant: Civil religion. For those who love history and for those who love to understand the modern construct of Jewish life. In partnership with AJA50+

April 25 – May 30
Thursday 10:00 am – 11:30 am
\$95 M • \$110 NM
Instructor: Rabbi Steven Garten
No class: May 16

New! Evening Course: What is the New Testament & Where Did it Come From? Everything You Wanted to Know About Christian Origins but Were Afraid to Ask

This class explores the ways in which early Christians drew on various Jewish concepts and symbols to craft a variety of Christianities that flourished during the first few centuries of the Common Era.

Tuesday 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
April 30 – June 25
\$120 M • \$140 NM
Instructor: Professor Shawna Dolansky

Yiddish – Beyond the Basics

Professor Rebecca Margolis takes students beyond the basics during this four week course, offering participants the opportunity to move past a beginner level through a variety of approaches: conversation practice, media (film, music and radio), and a variety of print materials (newspaper articles, short excerpts of literary works, etc).

April 11–May 2
Thursday 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm
\$95 M • \$110 NM
Instructor: Rebecca Margolis
Associate Professor with the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies program at the University of Ottawa

New! Israeli Literature

Understanding Society Through Literature

Israeli short stories depict the collective passions and tensions that animate Israeli life. Readings will take students into the daily lives and psyches of the individual characters encountered during those readings. Students will develop a vivid and detailed understanding of literature as a mirror of Israeli society.

April 22 – June 17
Monday 9:30 am – 11:00 am
\$120 M • \$140 NM
Instructor: Professor Geffen Bar-On
Santor, University of Ottawa
No class: May 20

Music

Leonard Cohen Part II

How Canada's Beloved Artist Continues to Amaze Us (1980 – Present)

Observe how Cohen's exceptional artistic abilities and talent continue to capture not only his faithful followers, but a whole new generation of fans and admirers as recently witnessed throughout the world by his sold-out concerts. **Part I not a prerequisite.**

Thursday, April 4 – April 25
1:30 pm -3:30 pm
or
Sunday, April 7 – April 28
10:30 pm –12:30 pm

\$110 M • \$120 NM

Art

New! Batik - Painting on Silk

Create your own hand-made painting, scarf and shawl on natural silk as you learn the basics of traditional batik, using wax and paraffin, as well as more advanced techniques. Batik is the art of creating decorative patterns and images on fabric by isolating various parts of the fabric by melted wax, painting the fabric and then removing the wax to reveal the unpainted pattern. **Please bring the following supplies to the first class: a foam sheet –no less than 16x20", 4-5 sheets of white drawing paper, natural brushes, soft pencils, eraser and as many old newspapers as possible.**

April 8 – June 3
Monday 9:15 am – 11:30 am
\$125 M • \$145 NM
Additional supply cost of \$50 payable to teacher at first class.
Instructor: Olga Radushkevich
No class: May 20

Dare to Draw

Explore traditional and non-traditional drawing techniques while being inspired by great modern and contemporary artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh and Georgia O'Keeffe. This beginner to intermediate level course will expand your artistic boundaries while exploring materials such as charcoal, oil pastels, pencils and paint. Students will learn essential components of visual art such as line, color and composition. **Supplies required for first class: Pencils 2b, 4b, soft willow charcoal/grey gum eraser, large size block of drawing paper. Additional optional material suggestions will be provided during the first class.**

April 11 – June 6
Thursday 9:30 am–12:15 pm
\$125 M • \$145 NM
Instructor: Tammy Galili, Ottawa School of Art
No class: May 16

Film: Hava Nagila

This film explores the phenomenon behind the iconic folksong and seeks to explain why the melody has been so beloved over the years.

Monday, May 6 • 7:30 pm
Soloway JCC – Social Hall A
Admission: \$10

Your Centre for Language

New! Daytime Spanish for Beginners

Experience the fun and flair of Spanish culture by learning everyday language with instructor Laura Gutierrez. Emphasis will be on vocabulary, conversation and grammar. An ideal introduction for those planning to travel to Spain or South America.

April 23 – June 11
Tuesday 9:30 am – 11:00 am
\$100 M • \$115 NM
Instructor: Laura Gutierrez

Hebrew Courses with Mina Cohn

New! Daytime Level 1 - Modern Conversational Hebrew

April 8 – June 3
Monday
9:30 am – 11:00 am
\$130 M • \$150 NM
No class: May 20

Biblical Hebrew

April 10 – June 5
Wednesday
9:30 am – 11:00 am
\$130 M • \$150 NM
No class: May 15

Ulpan – Sunday Morning Intermediate

April 14 – June 9
Sunday
9:30 am – 11:30 pm
\$165 M • \$190 NM
No class: May 20



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Mazal Tov to:

Arnie Vered on receiving the Ben Carp
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Sunday

October 27, 2013

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A nurturing community is a better community

As noted in the February 18 issue of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, Keshet's "GLBT safe zone" stickers now adorn the entrance and other high-traffic areas of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. Our community has come a long way toward wider and more public acceptance of the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities that comprise our broad community. I feel good knowing I'm raising my kids in a communal atmosphere in which diversity is celebrated.

There have been other examples of recent attempts at inclusion. Members of Ottawa's Jewish community joined the local Keshet group in marching at Capital Pride last summer. I was proud to see my own shul marching under the shul banner, a year after we invited Rabbi Steven Greenberg, an openly gay Orthodox rabbi, to spend a Shabbat with our community discussing issues around inclusion.

Several weeks ago, I spoke with Joy Ladin, another strong and inspiring GLBT voice in the North American Jewish community.

I asked Ladin, author of *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders* and a professor at Yeshiva University's Stern College, what she thinks Jewish institutions can do for gays and lesbians, as well as for transgender individuals. Ladin told me about the Jewish Organization Equality Index, a recent project funded by the Schusterman Foundation that surveyed American Jewish organizations about their policies of openness and inclusion. She was on the advisory board.

"One of the things I always wonder is, 'Am I safe?' Few people want to be pigeonholed when they walk in," Ladin said.

She also mentioned that "seeing a welcome policy, or a GLBT-friendly sticker, or an announcement for events that re-



Values, Ethics, Community

Mira Sucharov

flect GLBT interests," can help instill a spirit of inclusion. Conversely, "if I walk in the door and everything I see reflects a hetero-normative idea of Jewish families, then I get nervous."

Ladin helped me dig deeper into what it means to be inclusive.

"If you really want to be inclusive," she said, "then you have to do more than just tolerate people. You have to talk about them. The community has to discuss it. Do we know any of these folks?"

Ladin added, "There is much in secular Jewish life that is gendered: the men's club, the women's club. I identify as female, but I might not meet all your criteria. Am I welcome?"

But there is another side to the inclusion coin, she acknowledged.

"I think a full process also means giving community members who are uncomfortable with transgender people [a way] to express their concerns."

As an example, she described a scenario in which someone might feel threatened by the sight of a transgender woman in a female washroom. The community needs to process what the transgender experience means.

The results of the Jewish Organization Equality Index sur-

vey can be seen at tinyurl.com/equality-index. While Canadian institutions were not surveyed, the Ottawa Jewish community may wish to take a look at the results as a point of discussion.

How, in the very-gendered experience that is organized Judaism, can we expand the tent to include various expressions of sexual identity and gender identity? How can we do better at ensuring our community is not just a community for straights, and is not just a community for those whose gender is experienced in conventional ways?

Are we ensuring our youth groups are spaces where our community's teens can engage in open and healthy discussions of sexuality? Are they free to *come out*? Or are our teens made to feel that to *come out* means to exit Jewish life? As they contemplate their Jewish future, will they realize that the chuppah is open to them? Will some shuls, conversely, see an exodus and others an increase in members as the next generation votes with the values of inclusion?

Making space for voices like Ladin's and Rabbi Greenberg's is a good start. Through sharing their own intense personal struggles, they are examples of steadfastness, openness and inspiring leadership.

But we must ensure the many individuals who aren't lucky enough to possess the rare gifts of a Ladin or Rabbi Greenberg – the ability to stand apart and be scrutinized, to shout the ethic of inclusion from the rooftops while they struggle with occupying two stripes on the diversity rainbow that mainstream Judaism often ignores – are nurtured and protected. Since, of course, a nurturing community is ultimately a better community for everyone.

Mira Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, blogs at Haaretz.com.

Seven typical days in the Middle East

The Middle East has always been a tough neighbourhood. It was tough when all sorts of dictators were on the job and it is today when it is engulfed in an almost anarchic state of existence. The entire region, including Turkey, is filled with strife and anti-Israel, if not anti-Semitic, feelings. While the interminable internal anarchy has taken the focus off of Israel domestically, the politicians and Islamists can't resist bringing the Jews and Israel into the equation at the slightest opening. Here is a sample of events during one week.

On January 25, a mysterious twin-car bomb explosion at the Syrian regional intelligence headquarters in Quneitra on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights killed eight high-ranking Iranian Quds Force and Hezbollah officers. A chain reaction by Syrian and Iranian forces caused an all-out offensive against Syrian rebels.

On January 29, Major General Amir Eshel of the Israel Defense Forces warned that Syria is falling apart and that Israeli intelligence confirmed Hezbollah forces had surrounded Syrian chemical weapons storage sites. This was not only to protect the sites from the rebels, but potentially to facilitate transfer of the weapons. Israel would have to decide whether, when and how to attack the sites.

On January 30, Israeli air force planes struck the Hezbollah arms convoy that included sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles. There were further reports indicating the Jamraya military research centre near Damascus was also hit.

On January 31, the White House warned Syria not to transfer weapons to Hezbollah so as not to further destabilize the region. At the same time, Russian President Vladimir Putin called on Syrian President Bashar Assad to refrain from taking any aggressive posture toward Israel for fear of further destabilization. Not to miss an opportunity, the Iranian deputy foreign minister said the Israeli assault on Syria would have "serious consequences." He called on

the UN secretary general to adopt an effective and practical measure against the attack.

That same day, Iran announced the upgrade of its Natanz uranium enrichment plant with IR2M centrifuges. Some analysts interpreted the Israeli attack as a proxy message from the United States responding to the Iranian upgrade of the Natanz facility. It certainly did seem that the U.S. had decided to push the Iranians a little since talks weren't going anywhere. To make it an even busier day, Russia announced its strong condemnation, saying that Israel's action "blatantly violates the UN Charter and is unacceptable, no matter the motives to justify it."

Packing yet more into the day, Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's foreign minister, claimed that Syria didn't hit back at Israeli warplanes at the Jamraya military site because of "a secret deal between the two countries." While blaming Iran and Israel, neither Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan or Davutoglu responded to critics as to why Turkey was idle in removing the Hezbollah threat and had to leave it to Israel to strike Assad's military facilities.

On February 1, a Bulgarian interior ministry probe linked the terrorist bus attack on Israeli tourists in Burgas last July to Hezbollah. This was followed on February 5 by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's call to world governments to crack down on Hezbollah.

On February 6, we heard rumours – which turned out to be true – that U.S. President Barack Obama would visit Israel in the spring. That news was followed by a response from Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on February 7 saying the nuclear talks offered by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden "would solve nothing," a further indication of the Obama administration's inability to make a serious headway with this problem.

On February 3, Assad provided assurances to Iran's National Security Director Saeed Jalilee that Syria would resume weapons shipments to Hezbollah despite heightened



World Affairs

Oliver Javanpour

tensions and Israel's continued diligence on the border.

I would be remiss in not mentioning some of the ongoing challenges in Africa, as French troops continued pushing back the al-Qaida groups in Mali. However, the whole of Africa remains a perfect environment for terror and Islamism to flourish, particularly in places like Ivory Coast, Somalia, Mali, Algeria and Congo. In fact, the so-called rebels from the Afghan, Iraq and Libyan wars are now spreading their wings across Africa.

These are but a sampling of events meant to offer a bird's eye view of a week in a troubled neighbourhood. I didn't mention the democratic deficits and challenges brought on as the result of Arab Spring, including the challenges faced by minorities and women.

Let us hope and pray for all Middle Easterners – Jews, Persians, Turks, Arabs, Pashtuns, Kurds and indigenous Africans – to achieve lasting peace and friendship.

Oliver Javanpour is CEO at Cyrus Echo, a public policy and international relations consulting firm in Ottawa.

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Carleton students vote for A Better Carleton again

About this time last year in *Campus Life*, I reported on a political victory for the Jewish community at Carleton University.

A Better Carleton (ABC), the slate Hillel Ottawa endorsed, had defied precedent and swept all six executive positions in the Carleton Undergraduate Students' Association (CUSA) elections.

Prepare for déjà-vu: ABC has swept the CUSA elections again.

Three of the six current execs, including President Alexander Golovko, will return for a second term in 2013-2014, along with three newcomers to the ABC slate.

While their victories may not seem like that big a deal, it is. It matters who's in charge of our universities' student unions.

CUSA executives are responsible for a budget of more than \$1 million, with a portion of the funds coming from students' tuition fees.

CUSA also runs campus businesses such as Oliver's Pub and Rooster's Coffeehouse and student service centres. They provide funding and space to our clubs and societies. All in all, they play an integral role in student life, hosting events and lobbying for certain causes.

As a minority and, therefore, a marginalized group on campus, it's all the more important for the CUSA leadership to be on our side – or, at least, not working against us. In the past, there was a sense that the latter was a reality.

The road to success was long and winding. Emile Scheffel, now Hillel Ottawa's Israel advocacy co-ordinator, has been along for much of the ride. He was an undergraduate student at Carleton from 2007 to 2011.

"Since I arrived at Carleton, and for years before, CUSA has been run by a consistently unaccountable, relentlessly ideological, and constantly self-perpetuating clique of students we've referred to as 'the Establishment'," he wrote in a *Facebook* note, reposted on the *CUSA Truth* blog.

In my own words, I'd describe what Scheffel calls "the Establishment" as a group of allied students who used to get re-elected year after year and often held the same pro-Canadian



Campus Life

Ilana Belfer

Federation of Students and left-leaning viewpoints. Some people, including Scheffel, have accused them of using shady measures – like rigging, bullying and intimidating – to stay in power.

The Establishment's shared beliefs also tended to be against Israel. Past executives and slates were sympathetic and actively affiliated with Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA), Scheffel said.

For example, he recalled the spring of 2011, when the clubs/societies office displayed a massive Israel Apartheid Week banner for weeks.

In the note that was re-posted to *CUSA Truth*, Scheffel also tells a story in which a supporter of the non-ABC slate warned his *Facebook* friends not to vote for the team "run by Zionists."

Since ABC came to power, however, Scheffel tells me there's been a shift from "barely concealed hostility" toward Jewish and pro-Israel groups to openness and a spirit of co-operation.

"CUSA used to consistently turn a blind eye to our community's concerns about student safety and equality on campus. Under ABC, the student union has an open-door policy to us and has shown it cares about our concerns," he said. "We have a close relationship with them. They listen to us."

Lorne Geller, the Israel Awareness Committee's vice-president at Carleton added that members of ABC's exec have attended many Hillel and Israel Awareness Committee events.

If Golovko hadn't won the presidency this year, the role

would have gone to opposing candidate Odai Horani, president of Palestinian Students of Carleton University. Geller said Horani's slate was backed by many supporters of "the hateful and divisive" Israel Apartheid Week, which makes some Jewish students feel threatened.

Horani's online activity includes signing a petition at *change.org* that urged the United Church of Canada to boycott Israeli settlements.

While we don't know for a fact that he would have brought an anti-Israel bias into the CUSA boardroom, it's not irrational to consider the possibility. It's happened before and it can happen again.

Last year, SAIA brought a motion to CUSA seeking support for their campaign asking Carleton to divest from companies it has invested in through its pension fund that SAIA claims "support the illegal occupation of Palestine."

Members of last year's non-ABC slate emphasized binding socially responsible investment policies and said "we're currently invested in war, occupation and other violations of human rights." Some of them even appeared in an SAIA pro-divestment video.

On the other hand, ABC members vowed to remain neutral and to unify a divided campus.

So, it seems like the major transition occurred following last year's elections. Why the ABC hype this year? Been there done that, right? Wrong.

It was a lengthy and gradual journey. Change started with Obed Okyere's win for Students First in 2011. He was the only member of a non-Establishment slate to get elected that year. That was followed by ABC's first victory a year ago.

This second consecutive ABC victory suggests it was not a fluke or a one-time deal. ABC didn't win by small margins. Golovko won the CUSA presidency by 1,200 votes and the smallest margin of victory for the other positions was 400.

It looks like the Jewish community's choice could be around for the long haul – and, in the Carleton climate, that counts for something.

Transform your midsection for improved health and appearance

Abdominal muscles or *abs* serve many important functions. They help protect the internal organs and are involved in posture, bending, rotating and supporting the trunk and spine.

The abs consist of different muscles: the rectus abdominis which, when well-defined, is commonly referred to as a six-pack (although on a very toned person with a low percentage of body fat it looks more like an eight-pack); the transverse abdominis, which is a deeper muscle; and the external and internal obliques, which are on the sides of the abdomen.

You may think you don't have abs. Let me assure you that you do. Whether they're strong or weak, they won't be visible if they're hidden by excess belly fat.

Subcutaneous fat or adipose tissue lies right under the skin. It serves important biological functions, but too much can stretch the skin and cause cellulite.

Visceral fat, which is deep inside the abdominal cavity, also serves important function. But too much of this type of fat is dangerous because it surrounds the internal organs. Visceral fat, especially in large amounts, is associated with health issues such as Type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and some cancers. Chronic stress, lack of sleep, a sedentary lifestyle and an unhealthy diet contribute to visceral fat.

An apple-shaped body, as opposed to pear-shaped, is highly correlated with disease, regardless of your overall weight.

In my February 18 column, I provided information about the body mass index (BMI), a tool for assessing whether you're of normal weight. The waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) is another

tool that much research indicates is a better predictor of cardiovascular health risks than the BMI.

You can figure out your WHR with a tape measure. Place the tape measure around your midsection against your bare skin. Exhale so you're not sucking in your tummy. Take note of the measurement around your belly button or just above it. Now measure your hip circumference at its widest part. Using a calculator, divide the waist by the hip measurement. For example, a woman with a 34 inch waist and 40 inch hips has a ratio of .88. The rule of thumb is that women with a ratio greater than .84 and men with a ratio greater than .89 are at increased risk.

The Mayo Clinic (*mayoclinic.com*) uses a simplified model and advises that a woman with a waistline of 35 inches or greater and a man with 40 inches or greater has an unhealthy concentration of belly fat.

If you have too much fat around the midsection, reducing your intake of calories and increasing your caloric expenditure will help. You can't really spot reduce, but you can lose weight all over.

At the same time that you're working on weight loss through improved eating habits and cardiovascular exercise, you can work on toning and strengthening your abdominal muscles.

Common exercises that target the abs are crunches and the plank. The following are a few of my favourite abs exercises. I suggest you do these as part of a full body strength training program at least two or three times per week. Remember to



Focus on Fitness

Gloria Schwartz

warm up before you begin.

Exercise 1: Lie on the floor face up. Lean back on your forearms, lift your legs a few inches off of the ground and criss-cross them in a scissor fashion parallel to the floor. Repeat as many times as you can. Rest for 30 seconds.

Exercise 2: Lay flat on your back. Lift your legs straight up in the air. Inhale and lower both legs slowly towards the floor. Exhale and raise them all the way back up. Do as many reps as you can. If this is too difficult, alternate your legs so one goes down while the other stays up, then switch. Rest for 30 seconds.

Exercise 3: Lay on your back with your legs straight up in the air. Tighten your abs and keep your arms out to the sides on the floor for balance. Slowly move your legs side to side in a controlled manner, like windshield-wipers. Go back and forth as many times as you can. Rest for 30 seconds. Repeat all three exercises.

Whether you call it a beer belly or a muffin top, excess belly fat is no laughing matter. By shedding belly fat, you'll lower your risk for diseases. You'll also reveal strong, sexy abs. You may be amazed to discover that what you thought didn't exist was there all along.

Gloria Schwartz is a certified personal trainer at the Soloway JCC

Time of the year to be mad about maple

I'm feeling a little feverish and it's not due to H3N2 (this season's strain of the flu). No, my malady is maple madness. Every year about this time, as winter begins winding down, I know the sap will soon begin to flow. When the temperature is below freezing at night and above freezing during the day, an internal pressure is created that causes the sap to flow through the tree.

I always marvel at the miracle that is maple syrup. You have to wonder who first decided to taste the sticky liquid that was oozing from the maple tree. That surely was an act of bravery and also stupidity. What if that trickling discharge was poison?

The process of extracting sap from the tree is really quite simple. The sugar farmer drills a small hole into the tree, about 3 inches deep, and inserts a tap (called a spile, if you want to sound really savvy the next time you visit a sugar bush) into the hole. Then he hangs a bucket from a hook on the spout to catch the dripping sap. If it's a really good season,

meaning the weather co-operates, each hole will yield about 40 litres of sap. Keep in mind this sap is only two per cent sugar and 98 per cent water. It needs to be boiled down and concentrated to produce maple syrup. It takes 40 litres of sap to produce one litre of maple syrup. That's why real the real stuff is so expensive.

The potent, rich and intense taste of pure maple syrup is worth the cost. It continually amazes me that something so sweet tastes so remarkably clean. 'Pancake syrup' and 'imitation syrup' are poor facsimiles of the real thing. There's no way they can even hope to compete since they're made from high fructose corn syrup.

If you're a thrill seeker, give birch syrup a try. I ordered mine online from Escuminac (escuminac.com), a Quebec company. Birch syrup is nothing like maple syrup. The taste is sometimes described as combining the flavours of honey, caramel, licorice and molasses, with a spicy, balsamic after-taste. Quite intense, a little goes a long way. It is wonderful as a glaze for salmon or chicken, and can wake up any salad dressing. It can be used as an extract, like vanilla, in desserts. A teaspoon in your cake or cupcake batter would be really yummy.

We have a friend near our cottage with a sugar bush. Every spring, he gives us a two litre jug of maple syrup. Last summer I baked some raspberry tarts for him. He asked me if I had ever made maple tarts. He said they're just like butter tarts, but instead of corn syrup, you use maple syrup. I felt my insides do a little flip! Was this actually a real thing? Could it possibly be true? He brought me a recipe and I tucked it away, vowing to try them as soon as the sap began running again in the spring. It just seemed wrong to make maple tarts in the summer.

Well, I am thrilled to report that, yes, maple tarts are real, and they're spectacular!

I fiddled a little bit with Harold's recipe and added some whole wheat flour. I like the earthy depth of flavour it contributes. I also browned the butter in the filling. Browned butter has an intense aroma and nutty flavour that really complements the maple syrup in the filling.



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Brown Butter Maple Tarts

Pastry

7 ounces (14 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

Filling

3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup maple syrup
2 eggs
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup butter
1/2 cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
1/2 cup golden raisins

Position rack in centre of oven and preheat to 350 F. Set out a muffin tin with 12 cups. Use a regular-sized muffin tin, not mini or jumbo.

Prepare pastry: Using a rubber spatula mix melted butter, sugar, and vanilla in a medium bowl.

Add all purpose and whole wheat flour and salt and stir until incorporated.

Transfer dough to the muffin tins. Using your thumbs, press dough evenly onto sides and bottom of pan. You want the dough to be about 1/8-inch thick. If there are any holes, patch with more dough.

Prepare filling: Whisk brown sugar, maple syrup, eggs, cider vinegar and salt together in a medium sized bowl, until smooth. Set aside.

Cook butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat until deep nutty brown (careful not to burn), about 4-6 minutes. Use a light-coloured bottom saucepan to gauge the colour of the butter.

Immediately pour browned butter into a glass measuring cup to stop the cooking process. Gradually whisk the browned butter into the sugar-egg mixture. Whisk until well blended.

Divide pecans and raisins evenly among pastry shells. Spoon scant 1/4 cup filling into each shell.

Bake in centre of 350 F oven until filling is set and pastry is golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Run thin knife blade around edges to release tarts. Let cool in pan on rack for 20 minutes. Transfer to rack and let cool. These can be stored in a single layer, in an airtight container at room-temperature for up to 1 day, or refrigerated for up to 3 days.



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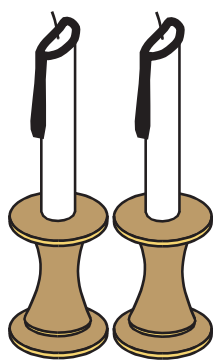
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CANDLELIGHTING BEFORE

Mar 8 ☆ 6:38 pm
Mar 15 ☆ 6:47 pm
Mar 22 ☆ 6:56 pm
FIRST SEDER
Mar 25 ☆ 7:00 pm
SECOND SEDER
Mar 26 AFTER
☆ 8:04 pm
Mar 29 ☆ 7:05 pm

WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAYS

Motorin Munchkins drop-in program for children 5 and under. Kids expend lots of energy, supervised by a parent or guardian, 9:00 am to 11:45 am. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 294.

Chaverim, offered by Jewish Family Services for Jewish seniors with mild cognitive impairment, 2255 Carling Avenue, 11:00 am. Info: 613-722-2225, ext. 392.

TUESDAYS

Israeli Folkdancing: No experience or partner necessary, Ottawa Jewish Community School, 881 Broadview Avenue, 6:30 pm. Info: judy@ottawaisraelidance.ca.

WEDNESDAYS

Drop-in Playgroup for newborn to 3 years old. Parents and kids romp and play and make new friends, 9:00 to 11:00 am. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 294.

FRIDAYS

Shabbat Shalom for children 5 years and under, sponsored by the SJCC's Family Life Centre. Bracha Bear welcomes the Sabbath with your children as they learn about Shabbat and other holidays through crafts, songs, stories and games. All children must be supervised by an adult. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 294.

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

"Iran, Political Islam and Israel," a talk by David Menashri, professor emeritus of Tel Aviv University's department of Middle Eastern and African History, and founding director of its Alliance Center for Iranian Studies, presented by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, the Vered Israel Cultural and Educational Program and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, 7:00 pm. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 255.

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

Montreal Yiddish Theatre Singers. Enjoy a *freilach* afternoon of Broadway and Yiddish theatre tunes with long-time members of Montreal's Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre, followed by the presentation of the Ethel Cooper Yiddish Award of Excellence by Prof. Rebecca Margolis from the University of Ottawa, 2:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 254.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

Malca Pass Book Club, a program of Congregation Agudath Israel. Jack Schechter will review "Requiem," by Frances Itani, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 7:30 pm. Info: 613-829-2455.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

"Love at Second Sight," a feature film about Nina, a promising young Israeli newspaper photographer, who sets out to find the man who appears in

one of her photos. Presented as part of the Greenberg Families Library Film Series, 1:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 245.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

PJ Library Family Passover Program, co-sponsored with the Ottawa Jewish Community School: "Let My People Play: A Plethora of Plagues," activities for children aged up to six years, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private, 10:00 am. Info: 613-722-0020.

2nd Annual Passover Fair, organized by Congregation Beit Tikvah, in collaboration with Canadian Hadassah-Wizo and

Na'Amat Canada, celebrates Israel's 65th birthday with many Israeli products and vendors, books, handcrafted items, and more. Kosher for Passover wines available for pick up. Congregation Beit Tikvah, 15 Chartwell Avenue, 10:30 am to 4:00 pm. Info: 613-723-1800.

Ottawa Women's Seder 2013: Jewish Women Against Domestic Abuse, presented by caring Jewish women supporting options for women at risk. Congregation Agudath Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 5:00 pm. Info and tickets: 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

COMING SOON

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

Community Yom HaShoah 2013 ceremony
featuring speakers, music and candlelighting.
Everyone welcome, 7:00 pm.
Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

Unless otherwise noted, activities take place at The Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private.

This information is taken from the community calendar maintained by the Jewish Ottawa InfoCentre. Organizations which would like their events to be listed, no matter where they are to be held, should send the information to InfoCentre coordinator Benita Siemiatycki via e-mail at bsiemiatycki@jewishottawa.com or fax at 613-798-4695. She can also be reached by telephone at 613-798-4644. Accurate details must be provided and all events must be open to the Jewish public.

Condolences

Condolences are extended to the families of:

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Beatrice Norma Hock (née Sabbath)

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Samuel Paul, Nanaimo, BC
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Joel Schaefer, Montreal
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