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## Former CNN correspondent describes her 'unlikely journey'

*Linda Scherzer tells Choices audience about moving from reporting on Israel to advocating on its behalf*

**By Ilana Belfer**

Life choices are what led Linda Scherzer, a Jewish girl from Montreal, to the front lines of "one of the most bitter and protracted conflicts on the international scene," as a CNN correspondent in Israel.

More than 250 women were on hand, October 8, at Agudath Israel Congregation, to hear Scherzer's keynote address at the seventh annual *Choices* dinner in support of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa Women's Campaign.

"It was an unlikely journey," said Scherzer, who noted she dropped out of the Shaar Hashomayim Hebrew School just before her bat mitzvah.

After studies at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and Northwestern University in Illinois, she began her career as a television journalist with a local station in Burlington, Vermont – all the while removed from the Jewish community and aspects of Jewish identity.

"I was on that path," she said, pointing to the recent Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews that shows 32 per cent of Jews born after 1980 do not identify as Jewish by religion, and an intermarriage rate of 58 per cent, with many intermarried couples not raising their children as Jews.

Until, she said, something

"miraculous" happened when she picked up the book *Exodus* by Leon Uris and was so inspired, she felt compelled to see Israel for herself. In 1987, she went on a Jewish singles mission only to fall in love with her Israeli tour guide.

He was part of the reason she chose to return to Israel a year later.

Although the romance eventually hit a snag, her career and love for the country flourished. CNN was only eight years old at the time and, thus, she said, "Somebody like me with a little bit of chutzpah and a grand sense of adventure was able to knock on their door and get hired as a junior correspondent."

Just like that, she went from covering cow watches, teachers' strikes and city council meetings in Burlington to a full-blown in-

(Continued on page 2)



(From left) *Choices* Chair Shari Silber, keynote speaker Linda Scherzer, and Women's Campaign Chair Leiba Krantzberg at the *Choices* event, October 8, at Agudath Israel Congregation.

(Photo: Howard Sandler)

## Grants will support preservation of video testimonies of Holocaust survivors

Video testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust will be preserved, thanks to funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Minister for Multiculturalism Jason Kenney announced on October 10.

"Canada has been profoundly shaped by approximately 40,000 Holocaust survivors who resettled across our country after World War II," said Kenney.

"As Canadians, it is our responsibility to learn from these

brave individuals and ensure that the horrible events of the Holocaust are not forgotten, and ensure that such atrocities never happen again."

Through Inter-Action, Canada's multiculturalism grants and contributions program, support will be provided to four organizations to preserve Holocaust survivors' testimonials.

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre will support the preservation, access and use of

Holocaust survivor testimonies in schools; the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto will work in partnership to digitize existing footage of Holocaust survivors' testimonies; and a digital archive of Holocaust survivor testimonies taken during the March of the Living will be created by the Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal of Canada.

March of the Living is an annual educational program that brings students from around the world to explore the remnants of the Holocaust, and the March of the Living Digital Archive Project, chaired by Evan Zelikovitz of Ottawa, will receive \$132,000 in funding.

"It's a great start and gives us the momentum to begin to carry this important project forward," Zelikovitz told the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, when news of the funding was announced.

A statement from Citizenship and Immigration Canada noted "these projects support Canada's goal, as 2013 Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, to promote Holocaust remembrance, research and education across Canada. Federal support will enable these organizations to educate Canadians on what Holocaust survivors went through and to make essential teaching tools more accessible to Holocaust educators."

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# Choices moved Scherzer away from journalism

(Continued from page 1)

tifada. As Barbara Crook noted in introducing her to the *Choices* audience, Scherzer is, perhaps, best known for an interview with Benjamin Netanyahu through a gas mask while Israel was undergoing a scud missile attack.

Scherzer described those years as “intensely difficult” and touched on the need to keep “private feelings and professional responsibility in two separate boxes,” but she did not recall stories of witnessing bloodshed or experiencing life-threatening danger.

Rather, her focus and greatest challenge seemed to be a more personal battle over the backlash against the media from North American audiences.

“You felt as though you represented a network and an industry that was grossly unbalanced ... If we were Jewish reporters, we were self-hating Jews; if we were non-Jewish reporters, we were all anti-Semites,” she said.

Scherzer came to the defence of the press, arguing that, although some reporters can be ill informed and ignorant, and nothing excuses that, she believes the majority of journalists in Canada and the United States approach their jobs with honesty and integrity.

She also painted a picture for the audience of what it’s like to be



Keynote speaker Linda Scherzer speaks at the Choices event, October 8, at Agudath Israel Congregation. (Photo: Howard Sandler)

a TV journalist, especially in Israel, dealing with the a complicated history, tight deadlines – especially with the pressures brought on by new technologies and a constant, 24-hour news cycle – and having

to edit up to 10 hours of video footage down to a 90-second report.

“The perceived bias of any reporter or news network often depends on who is watching the story,” she said.

In 1993, facing reassignment elsewhere, Scherzer chose to leave CNN so she could stay in Israel, and became the only North American to work as an on-air correspondent for *Mabat*, a Hebrew-language news program.

Scherzer, who, for about a decade, had “a front row seat to history,” used her experience and expertise to share some observations about changes within the Israeli dynamic and its current affairs, touching on the Oslo Accord, Egypt and Syria, and her opinion that a two-state solution is in Israel’s best interest, but only once there is a Palestinian leader who acknowledges Israel’s right to exist.

Scherzer noted her political views have changed over the years veering from being left-of-centre to a more conservative right-of-centre. She retains her Israeli passport, but now lives in New Jersey and has chosen to send her three children to Jewish day school.

In her career, she has embraced subjectivity, working as a media and public relations consultant with clients that include the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, where she advises Jewish community leaders on how to combat negative media images of Israel.

She also started a program called *Write On for Israel* with

the *New York Jewish Week*, which seeks to engage, educate and empower high school juniors to become defenders of Israel when they get to college. She spoke about the anti-Israel climate on many campuses.

“I stand here today as an unapologetic former correspondent for CNN, but one who is today a proud supporter of the State of Israel,” she said.

“The choices I have made in the last 15 years have steered me away from journalism but closer to the Jewish community, a place I never imagined I would want to be,” Scherzer said.

“Our choices define us,” said *Choices* Chair Shari Silber, reminding the crowd of the *Choices* motto. She asked guests to consider the motivation and impact of their choices – whether choosing to donate to the campaign or volunteer at a critical community event.

Women’s Campaign Chair Leiba Krantzberg gave an update on the status of the Federation’s 2014 Annual Campaign. At the six-week point, she said, the Campaign had raised \$1,842,000, a 10.3 per cent increase on a gift by gift basis from last year.

Each of the women attending *Choices* had made a minimum gift of \$150 to the Women’s Campaign.

# Leslie Kaufman appointed to new Federation and Foundation position

By Louise Rachlis

Enthusiastic and bubbly, Leslie Kaufman began her second morning on the job at 7:15 am, attending the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation’s Power Breakfast.

“I don’t usually get excited so early in the morning,” laughed Kaufman, 54, the newly appointed vice-president, corporate services of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and Ottawa Jewish Community

Foundation.

The position is one of two vice-presidencies created in the Federation’s recent management restructuring. Bram Bregman’s appointment as vice-president of community building was announced in August. The two positions replaced the former positions of a director of planning and a chief development officer and are revenue neutral.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Kaufman moved to Ottawa just over 10 years ago. Prior to her move, she held senior IT positions at Point Park and Carlow Universities in the United States.

In Ottawa, she switched focus and quickly rose through the ranks to serve as president & COO of Decision Academic Inc., a software company that provides curriculum management and academic advising solutions to a range of clients.

“This job interested me both for the professional challenge and the ability to use my business background,” she said. “The other



Leslie Kaufman

(Photo: Michael Regenstreif)

component is the ability to support and assist the Jewish community of Ottawa. I find a lot of friendliness and generosity in Ottawa’s Jewish community.”

Married with an 18-year-old stepson, Kaufman is an avid fol-

lower of sports teams in Pittsburgh and Ottawa, and also loves travelling, photography, reading, cooking and gardening.

As for her new position, “I’m still learning my priorities,” she said. “Andrea (Freedman) has said

she wants some staff facing inward in the community and some facing outward. I am more inward.”

With an MBA and more than 25 years of progressively responsible management and leadership experience, Kaufman is an established senior manager, an effective communicator, successful team-builder, with strong negotiation and relationship skills.

She has a long history of volunteer and leadership roles with Jewish youth groups, camps, and synagogue life in the U.S.

“It is important that our new vice-president of corporate services bring strong business acumen, excellent management skills and the ability to move multiple agendas forward simultaneously,” said Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the Federation and Foundation, in a statement announcing Kaufman’s appointment. “Leslie fits our needs perfectly, and we are so fortunate that she is joining our team.”

“Everyone here has been terrific,” said Kaufman. “I’m looking forward to working with them.”

**Time changes Sunday November 3, 2:00 am**

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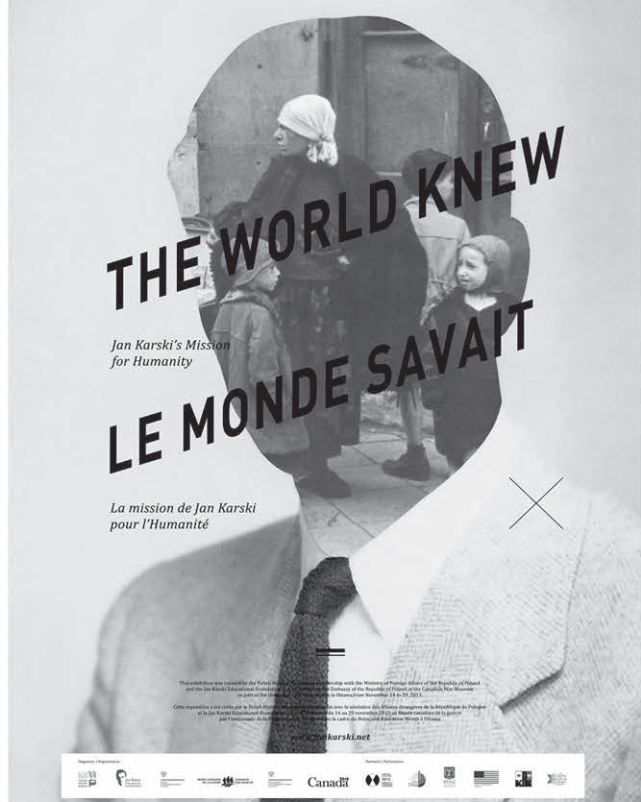
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 Reception to follow. A program of the Shoah Committee of the Jewish  
 Federation of Ottawa, the Belgian Embassy and the Vered Israel Cultural and  
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November 14-29, 2013 | Du 14 au 29 novembre 2013  
 Canadian War Museum | Musée canadien de la guerre  
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**LE MONDE SAVAIT**

Jan Karski's Mission  
for Humanity

La mission de Jan Karski  
pour l'Humanité

This exhibition was created by the Polish History Museum in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Jan Karski Educational Foundation. It is presented by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland at the Canadian War Museum. The Canadian Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, The Shoah Committee of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, The Embassy of Israel, The Embassy of the United States of America, the Canadian Polish Congress, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

**November 14 - 29**  
**Exhibit "Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity"** at the Canadian War Museum. Exhibit is free of charge (a fee to enter the other exhibits at the Museum). Open to the public. Guided tours available contact: sbeutel@jewishottawa.com. This exhibition was created by the Polish History Museum in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Jan Karski Educational Foundation. It is presented by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland at the Canadian War Museum. The Canadian Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, The Shoah Committee of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, The Embassy of Israel, The Embassy of the United States of America, the Canadian Polish Congress, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

# HOLOCAUST EDUCATION MONTH LAUNCH EVENT NOVEMBER 10

Agudath Israel • 7pm

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kristallnacht



### THE CONTEXT OF KRISTALLNACHT: POLAND, POLISH JEWRY, AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS



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A program of the Shoah (Holocaust)  
 Committee of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa

Campus Outreach Lecture Program of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, supported by the Jerome A. Yavitz Charitable Foundation, Inc. and Arlyn S. and Stephen H. Cypen.

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# Project seeks to designate Jewish Heritage Conservation District

By Ilana Belfer  
for the Zelikovitz Centre

Lowertown East could be designated a Jewish Heritage Conservation District with the help of the Ottawa Jewish Historical Society (OJHS) and interns from the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies' Developing Future Leaders (DFL) program at Carleton University.

The Lowertown Community Association approached the OJHS last year for assistance in developing a case to prove the region's historical significance. This was in the wake of a redevelopment proposal that would see several buildings demolished to make way for condominiums.

If the area is deemed a heritage district under the Ontario Heritage Act, further development would be required to take the act into account.

"The early Ottawa Jewish community had a significant physical, social and economic presence in Lowertown East but ... this history is not

widely known today," said Joel Weiner. He is co-leading the project with Sylvia Kershman, a former "Lowertowner," whose old house is one that's scheduled for demolition.

"There's a tremendously rich but still largely uncovered story to tell," Weiner said.

Lowertown is the area north of Rideau Street, east of the Rideau Canal, south of the Ottawa River and west of the Rideau River, according to the Lowertown Community Association constitution. Lowertown West includes the ByWard Market. Lowertown East is on the other side of King Edward Avenue.

At the turn of the 20th century, Jews made up only 1.92 per cent of Ottawa's population, but, in Lowertown, it was 70 per cent. As the Jewish population of Ottawa ballooned from 20 families in 1889 to approximately 5,000 in 1961, so did the Jews of Lowertown and their contributions to it.

"The way it was when



Lithwick's Grocery Store, circa 1930. The owners were Abraham and Dora Lithwick.

(Photo courtesy of Ottawa Jewish Archives)

they were living there, pretty much every store, whether it was a grocery or clothing store, was owned by a Jewish family," said DFL intern Dana Murray, a master's candidate in religion and public life at Carleton.

"The railway station would be full with people waiting there, seeking out new Jewish immigrants in order to help them settle," added intern Benita Arora, a fourth-year religion and French student.

They've gleaned such details by sifting through old city directories and archival material, and through interviews with community members.

The OJHS will produce a report on their findings this fall, which aims to document

Lowertown's Jewish roots from the 1800s onward, and to describe the achievements of its Jewish residents and their progeny.

Murray and Arora, who have been interning at the OJHS since September, follow in the footsteps of summer intern Arik Gershoig, and Melanie Guertin, who started as their first intern last November and has remained involved as a volunteer.

The DFL program pairs Carleton students with Jewish agencies in the city for a paid work placement, and provides them with leadership training, which allows the students to gain practical experience while adding value to the partner agency.

At the same time, it builds bridges between Ottawa's

Jewish community and the emerging generation.

The program is currently endowed for only one more academic year and is in need of funders to ensure it continues beyond 2015 to the benefit of projects, such as this – a project Weiner said will be successful whether or not the government approves the Lowertown Community Association's proposal.

"The report will be a first step in what we think is going to be an exciting, ongoing adventure of documenting the rich history of Jews in Lowertown," he said.

Anyone with stories or memorabilia relating to the Jewish history of Lowertown is encouraged to contact the Ottawa Jewish Historical Society at 613-798-9818, ext. 264.

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## Talking with Ottawa Jewish community leaders

# Rhoda Levitan: Dedicated to ensuring Jewish future ‘for all the kids in the community’

By Ilana Belfer

**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.

Rhoda Levitan knows how to take charge.

“I like organizing stuff and I’m good at it,” she said with unsurprising candour. Rhoda is also characteristically outspoken.

She’s put those skills, and many others, to work in the community since her arrival here in 1992.

A Toronto native, Rhoda said she’d been in Ottawa only one month when she got a call from Carol Greenberg about the Young Women’s Leadership Council.

“She had one spot and she could get me in. Would I come? ... I didn’t know a soul. And I said ‘yes,’” recalled Rhoda, who was looking to meet people and was motivated by her children to get involved in the community.

She had also been influenced by her mother, who was active in synagogue life, a leader in a vibrant sisterhood, and raised her “to believe in the power of women.”

Within two years, Rhoda was president of the PTA at her children’s school, Hillel Academy, now the Ottawa Jewish Community School, and a member of the board, on



Rhoda Levitan

(Photo: Ilana Belfer)

which she eventually served as treasurer.

When Rhoda took over as JCC Day Camp director in 1996, following a two-year stint on the Jewish Community Centre’s board, she set out to provide the kids with more of a “real camp experience,” a goal she said was achieved throughout her four years there by implementing new programs, purchasing new equipment, improving the swim program, introducing special outings and staff incentives, and by bringing in new people – good ones.

After chairing the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Women’s Campaign in 2001, spearheading numerous Walkathons and chaperoning the Ottawa contingent of March of the Living in 2006 and 2008, Rhoda received the Jewish Federation of Ottawa’s 75th anniversary volunteer award in 2009.

But her devotion to community didn’t stop there. A few years ago, excited by the prospect of young families receiving a free Jewish book each month, Rhoda raised more than \$50,000 from other women in the community to fund the first three years of the PJ Library program. It took the Schulich School of Business graduate merely one week to complete the task.

She also recently joined the board of Agudath Israel Congregation.

With so much of Rhoda’s community service having been geared toward youth, rebuilding the community school, which has significantly fewer students than it did it when her own kids attended, is particularly important to her.

The rising cost of tuition, she said, is of concern to many parents, but, in her opinion, it’s not the biggest problem.

“Value is price divided by experience. I think we need a superb, really good school, providing a great experience and strong

graduates. You have to deliver value. It’s not ‘build it and they will come,’” she said.

Rhoda, speaking generally, said a school of value would offer strong academics, be relevant, nurture world citizens who are proud to be Jewish and desire to live Jewishly, and be run by strong management and leadership. She said she is hopeful the school has now turned a corner and is going in the right direction.

“We have the kids in the community. Now, we need to build the perception that the Ottawa Jewish Community School is truly a great place for your kids to be educated,” said Rhoda. “We have a great Jewish community in Ottawa. Now, we need the next generation to realize that, to care and to get involved for the benefit of their own kids.”

Rhoda’s hope for the future is a strong, cohesive community with the financial resources to make living Jewishly enticing to young people.

That, perhaps, might even bring her Toronto-dwelling daughter, son-in-law and beloved 16-month-old granddaughter, Elishava, back to Ottawa.

“Yes, I would like to see all these things for my granddaughter,” Rhoda said, “but [more so] for all the kids in the community.”

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## MEMBERS MEETING

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# We are obligated to fight discrimination and the spread of hatred

In March, I was honoured to assume the role of chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on behalf of Canada. IHRA comprises 31 countries devoted to Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

Over the past 10 years, IHRA has undertaken significant efforts to promote the development of civil society through an annual grant program of approximately €500,000. The program helps fund training for teacher trainers, best practices in Holocaust commemoration and remembrance days, and seminars and academic conferences in both IHRA member states and non-member countries affected by the Holocaust.

I have had the privilege of visiting many of IHRA's 31 member countries, and engaging with a broad range of students, educators, government officials and community members, across countries with diverse histories and cultural backgrounds. I have been deeply inspired by a common dedication to Holocaust education and remembrance.

However, nothing has inspired me more than the work being done right here in Canada. Holocaust Education Month in Ottawa is a powerful example of the important work being done in communities



## Federation Report

Mario Silva, PhD  
IHRA

across the country to support Holocaust education. Holocaust Education Month in Ottawa will officially launch on November 10 with a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

This will be followed by a number of other events, including the November 14 opening of the *Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity* exhibit at the Canadian War Museum. I was pleased to provide support to this exhibit, which tells the story of Jan Karski, a Roman Catholic who served as a courier for the Polish Underground State and provided information to Allied leaders about Nazi Germany, for which he was awarded the honour of Righteous Among the Nations.

Learning about the Holocaust encourages students and learners of all ages to think about the uses and abuses of power, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations and nations when confronted

with human rights violations. Furthermore, it can lead to an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, anti-Semitism and stereotyping in any society. It helps individuals to develop an awareness of the value of diversity in a pluralistic society and encourages sensitivity to the positions of minorities.

With the support of active community partners, the Government of Canada has invested significantly in Holocaust education, remembrance and research, including major projects such as the creation of a National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa and the Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg. In conjunction with the Chair year, Canada is supporting a number of new initiatives aimed at increasing the understanding of the Holocaust across Canada.

Just a few weeks ago, at an event honouring Holocaust Survivor educators, Jason Kenney, minister for Multiculturalism, awarded the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education. In total, six Canadian teachers were recognized for their outstanding commitment to Holocaust education, including an honourable mention for an Ottawa-area teacher, Tricia Leduc of Sir Wilfred Laurier

Secondary School in Orleans.

Knowledge about the background, purpose and significance of the Holocaust is essential to raise public awareness and mobilize forces to push back against the prejudices and stereotypes that led to it. Hate crimes, be they based on xenophobia, anti-Semitism or Holocaust denial, are a global phenomenon. Individually and collectively, we have an obligation to fight discrimination that leads to the exclusion of groups of people and spreads hatred.

As Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated in 2010, "Remembering the Holocaust is not merely an act of historical recognition. It must also be an understanding and an undertaking: an understanding that the same threats exist today, and an undertaking of a solemn responsibility to fight those threats."

As IHRA chair for 2013, I strive to live up to the prime minister's words. As long as discrimination based on ethnic, religious and other grounds exists in the world, there is a role for education, research and remembrance of the Holocaust. To this end, IHRA will continue to play a major role as an intergovernmental body dedicated to learning from and sharing the lessons of the Holocaust with political and social leaders around the world.

# How can a synagogue be more like a summer camp?

Reading Mira Sucharov's column on Jewish summer camps (*Values, Ethics, Community*, August 26) evoked mixed emotions for me.

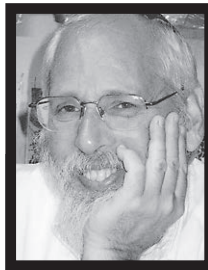
On one hand, I was extremely saddened to read of the unfortunate tragedies at the Jewish camps in Indiana and California. On the other hand, however, I was really inspired to read that the end of Camp Tawonga's mission statement proudly boasts, "You haven't really seen it all until you've been to a Tawonga Torah service."

After reading that, I asked myself, "Could I say the same thing about my shul's Torah service?"

For a long time, I've been thinking about how the Jewish camps, which are committed to Jewish education and to exposing our kids to Jewish cultural and religious experiences, are doing amazing things during the summer months. But I am perplexed at the clear disconnect between what the children are doing at camp and their lack of involvement in synagogue life between September and June.

The key question I'd like to ask Camp Tawonga is, "What actually stands behind your awesome Torah service?"

But I am sure I know that the root of their successful Torah service is that it is led by a bunch of soulful, creative, engaged, empowered, self-reliant young people – campers and counsellors – who are challenged to take charge and express their love of Torah and tradition in their



## From the pulpit

Rabbi Barry Schlesinger  
Agudath Israel

own way.

It is no secret that "Jewish camps are effective instruments of Jewish education and socialization [in] that they engender very positive feelings about Judaism and the Jewish community," as Steven M. Cohen and Judith Veinstein note in their 2009 study, "Jewish Overnight Camps: A Study of the Greater Toronto Market," which references two earlier studies.

I only wish our shuls were as successful. Our children return home and turn off, or at least 'put their Jewish spirit on hold' until next summer. This should not be acceptable to us. We are missing so much.

I fully understand that synagogues cannot replicate the holistic camp experience. But we should strive to bridge the Jewish experiential gap between summers by picking up where camp leaves off.

What can we do to enjoy the company of our kids and see them involved, excited and enthusiastic about performing Jewish rituals, leading *tefillot*, actively discussing the message of a parsha, dancing, and singing Hebrew songs and *zemirot*?

We would love to see them leading us in a spirited "Birkat Hamazon" with all the camp shtick and table banging, and actually experience them rocking and rolling to a musical Havdallah à la the late Debbie Friedman.

In order for our shuls to provide the kids with optimal Jewish experiences, Jeffrey S. Kress encourages shuls to ask how a congregation can be more like a summer camp.

We should recognize that, just like camp, a synagogue is an organization,

which shares similar educational, cultural, social and religious goals. It has space, various fields of activity (prayer, study and tikkun olam), leadership opportunities and staff and volunteers, who should all be committed to our child-oriented Jewish goals and objectives ("A More Accurate Analogy? Thinking About Synagogues, not Schools, and Camps," *eJewish Philanthropy*, June 16).

"It is acknowledged that everyone

Continued on page 8



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# From DP camp to the Supreme Court, Abella discusses her remarkable life

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) began a series of “community conversations,” October 17, with an extraordinary evening featuring the Honourable Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella of the Supreme Court of Canada, one of this country’s most accomplished and impressive individuals.

Guided by moderator Adam Dodek, a University of Ottawa law professor and a member of the Soloway JCC board of directors, Abella talked about her life, her family and her work with wit, humour and emotion, displaying an astonishing memory as she recalled people, incidents and cases – even the minute details of cases and case law (whether she was involved in them or not) – with ease.

Abella was born in a displaced persons (DP) camp in Germany in 1946. Her Polish Jewish parents had been married in 1939. Her father, Jacob Silberman, a lawyer, was liberated from Theresienstadt, while her mother, Fanny, had survived several Nazi camps and was liberated from Buchenwald. They were reunited after the war. In the DP camp, her father represented the legal interests of fellow residents.

When the family came to Canada as refugees and settled in Toronto in 1950, Silberman discovered he was ineligible to



**Editor**

**Michael Regenstreif**

practise law because he was not a Canadian citizen. He became a successful insurance agent, but young Rosalie determined then she would grow up to become a lawyer. One of the most poignant and emotional moments of the evening came when she discussed the Supreme Court ruling that overturned the provision that only citizens could practise law in Canada. Wiping a tear away, she said she wished her father, who died in 1970, had still been alive to see that day.

Also a classical piano prodigy, she graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1964.

By then married to historian Irving Abella – who would later co-write the essential book, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, and serve as president of the Canadian Jewish Congress – Abella graduated from the University of Toronto law school in 1970 and established a practice in civil and crim-



**Justice Rosalie Abella speaks at the Soloway JCC, October 17.**

inal law. In 1976, at age 29, Abella was appointed a judge of the Ontario Family Court, where she broke ground as the first Jewish woman to become a judge in Canada, the youngest ever judge in Canada and the first pregnant judge in Canadian history.

Her later judicial appointments – among many other accomplishments – would include the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1992 and the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004. She was the first Jewish woman to serve as a justice on our Supreme Court.

Abella was the sole commissioner of the federal government’s 1984 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment. In her report, she coined the term “employ-

ment equity” and conceived the equity strategy of removing barriers to employment faced by women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and the disabled. A Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 1989 added Abella’s recommendations to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms – and those recommendations have also been subsequently adopted by the governments of several other countries.

The stories and anecdotes Abella told kept the full house enthralled. She was particularly inspired when she talked about her parents and how they built new lives for themselves in Canada after surviving the Holocaust. Relatively late in life – after she was widowed – Abella’s mother became a successful real estate agent in Toronto.

Abella said her parents, who lost their first child in the Holocaust, never allowed the tragic events they lived through cast a pall over their lives. The Silberman home, she said, was the happiest of anyone she knew growing up.

Abella said she feels very much a part of Ottawa’s Jewish community, noting that her grandchild attends the Soloway JCC’s Ganon Preschool. She also took great pride in mentioning that her two sons, Jacob, who was in the audience, and Zachary both grew up to become lawyers.

## Unexpected opposition to Quebec’s Charter of Values

If there is one single truth about politics it is that winning is everything. Politicians do what it takes to win. They would do almost anything to win.

Jean Chrétien, on two separate occasions, called general elections after only three years in power, despite having strong majority governments. With the right-wing opposition divided between the Reform Party and the Progressive Conservative Party, with the polls confirming the popularity of his government, he threw away the four-year convention and did what he wanted. He won in 1997 and again in 2000.

I recall being a senior political journalist at the time and yet naively thinking there was something unfair about this. How could longstanding conventions be cast aside just because there is an almost assured election win by using your power to do what you want?

After the 2000 election, I interviewed Reform Party leader Stockwell Day and asked if he thought it was unfair of Chrétien to call an election after only three years.

Day’s answer stunned me and taught me something. Without hesitation, he said he would have done the same thing, had he been prime minister. Indeed, winning



**Jason Moscovitz**

is all that counts. Even losers understand that.

When the minority Parti Québécois (PQ) government in Quebec recently unveiled (no pun intended) it’s Charter of Values, there was a strong electoral flavour to it. So strong it was as if the charter was as much a well-thought-out mechanism to turn a minority government into a majority by pitting people against people, once again, under the premise of the end justifying the means.

The PQ learned a long time ago how to win elections in Quebec. They learned it from the master himself - Maurice Duplessis of the long moribund Union Nationale party. Then and now, it is possible to win a majority government in Quebec by losing the heavily populated island of Montreal and winning the francophone vote everywhere else.

In Duplessis’ time, the 1940s and ‘50s,

the equation was simpler. It was conservative rural French Quebec against the more liberal-thinking, urban French and English vote in Montreal. Today, the equation is much more complicated, but the math is the same. With so much recent immigration in Montreal it is, more than ever, an us-versus-you scenario. There doesn’t have to be anything subtle about winning elections.

In the ‘70s, the PQ first came to power promising a Charter of the French Language. By exploiting long-held resentments over the lack of primacy of French, particularly in Montreal, the PQ took power and used that power to pass what many people still consider a draconian language law.

Draconian or not, the one thing that is not disputed is the effectiveness of the law. It is hard to make language a political issue anymore – so the PQ had to invent something else. That brought us to the Charter of Values.

What is interesting is that the new charter has run into several roadblocks and the PQ has not been as successful as it hoped in reaping an automatic and huge electoral gain. While it is still a fluid situation, it is clear there is considerable opposition to the charter from a lot of

unexpected places.

When hardline separatist Jacques Parizeau comes out against it, you have to scratch your head in disbelief. This was the same Parizeau who so harshly blamed the ‘yes’ side’s 1995 referendum defeat on “money and the ethnic vote.” Yet, here he was saying the present PQ government has gone too far in curtailing religious expression.

Lucien Bouchard, another former PQ premier, has joined Parizeau in speaking out against the charter. There have been many nationalist feminist organizations who have also sounded the alarm that the charter would move the women’s movement back a generation. Many union groups have said the same thing.

This opposition, coming from the surprising places it has, is not what the Parti Québécois envisioned. It has become apparent that the opposition, once it started, seemed to grow expeditiously and the talk of a December election call seemed to cool. As I write, an election appears to be a long shot.

What is a certainty is that, whenever the next election is held, rallying French Quebec to the trumpet of the Charter of Values will not work the way the PQ had hoped and planned.

# Mailbag

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- \* 3% increase in MLS listing inventory over last month, and 8% higher than September 2012
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#### Inez Zelikovitz

In "Philanthropist Inez Zelikovitz passes away at age 96 (September 30)," Inez is narrowly described as a generous philanthropist, who kept her pact with her football playing husband, Joe Zelikovitz, "The Flying Hebrew," to give away their wealth to the sick and the needy.

However, this description fails to understand and recognize the devoted and loyal person I knew.

Opinionated, strong-willed, and traditional (the man always knew best), she had a feistiness and rebellious nature, which instantly drew me to her.

Inez was a woman determined to maintain her independence despite her failing health and, when events took place that found her in the very ward of Hillel Lodge that bears her and Joe's name, I extolled on the virtues of her being there.

Without a second of hesitation, she retorted, "David, if you like it so much here, why don't you get into bed."

The community has lost a vital link to its past and a most generous soul, and I have lost a second mother who always had my back, no matter the circumstances.

How else to explain the determination and love of a recently hospitalized 96-year-old woman who came on her own to see me when I was hospitalized at the Ottawa Heart Institute?

How else to explain how a woman, after my book was published last year, used her considerable influence to try to have it reviewed. After her efforts proved unsuccessful, she whis-

pered in my ear, "You know David, I think we couldn't get it reviewed because you had in the title a swear word starting with 'B.'"

Inez had no greater love than for her husband Joe, who remained the singular purpose of her life. Yet, despite her devotion to him, she remained a wonderful friend and ally, who clearly understood her role in the community. She suffered no fools lightly. When asked to give a blank cheque to a cause, she quickly responded, "I won't give a blank cheque to my own mother."

Inez could be difficult and single-minded, yet she was a woman who loved me unconditionally, and I will forever be grateful for her presence in my life.

Inez, you are finally reunited with Joe, and I know you are at peace. God Bless.

David Nozick

## 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](mailto:bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com).

## Pulpit: 'We must be creative'

Continued from page 6

– from the bunk counsellor to the van driver – has the potential to impact, positively or negatively, the Jewish experience of youth," wrote Kress.

It must be clear to all of us at Shul that we all can contribute to the enhancement of the synagogue experience of our youth. The clergy, professional and office staff, board members, ushers, gabbays and parnassim must all see themselves as part of the synagogue's Jewish educational team.

Kress explained that, in the Jewish camp educational process, children take on roles and responsibilities, moving in an incremental way from the periphery of the community to the centre. The shul is the community "centre" and should provide the children with opportunities to exercise their synagogue skills and share and exhibit their unique talents in their own shul, their "home court."

In this week's parsha, *Toldot*, we will read (Brisheet 26:18), "And Yitzchak again dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of his father, Abraham, and the Philistines had stopped them up after Avraham's death."

It seems that there was a constant and tiring struggle with the Philistines. Yitzchak would dig wells and the Philistines would fill them up with earth and render them

useless. The Torah teaches us about Yitzchak's perseverance and commitment. He wasn't going to let those Philistines pointlessly stop up the sources of water from which everyone was going to benefit.

But this story also emphasizes that Yitzchak was digging the wells his father Avraham had dug. These were "traditional" wells, which serve as a metaphor for us today. Although getting our kids to be excited about shul is a difficult task, we must continue digging and persevere, just as Yitzchak did.

We must dig until we get to the source, the *Mayim Chaim*, the waters of Jewish life, which sustain and nourish us and our children. We can't give up. We must be creative, and see ourselves as educational partners working together with summer camps in order to turn the shul into a child-friendly, exciting and engaging place where the kids feel welcome and take ownership of the sacred space afforded them in the synagogue.

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-The Diary of Anne Frank, February 23, 1944

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Designed by Piet Cohen, the memorial contains an engraved image of the famed chestnut tree that Anne Frank wrote about. The viewing experience is meant to recreate the feeling of imprisonment, isolation and discomfort, while looking longingly through a window at the world outside.



Contact Lynda Taller-Wakter, our Executive Director, to visit this and other sites on a JNF Mission. For tree cards, inscriptions and donations, call Ilana at 613-798-2411, or email us at [ottawa@jnf.ca](mailto:ottawa@jnf.ca).

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# Free Thinking Film Festival to include films of special interest to Jewish community

By Fred Litwin  
Free Thinking  
Film Society

The fourth annual Free Thinking Film Festival will take place from October 31 to November 3 at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street. The festival features films and speakers on freedom, liberty and democracy and will include more than 20 films, two book launches and lots of speakers.

Several of the festival's films and speakers on Sunday, November 3 will be of particular interest to members of the Jewish community.

At 7 pm, our featured closing event will be a screening of *Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean*, a documentary that looks at how Christians, Muslims and Jews work together in a coffee co-operative in Uganda.

JJ Keki, a leader of Uganda's Abayudaya Jewish community, will be at the event to speak, answer questions and perform music. Coffee from the Delicious Peace Coffee Co-operative will be served and will be on sale.

Earlier on November 3, at 11 am, we'll show two Polish television documentaries, never before seen in Canada, about the 1941 massacre of Jews in Jedwabne that was perpetrated not by the Nazis, but by Poles in the community. In the films, witnesses,



Violinist Bronislaw Huberman, who rescued nearly 1,000 Jews from the Holocaust, as seen in the documentary, *Orchestra of Exiles*, being shown November 3 during the Free Thinking Film Festival.

participants and survivors are interviewed. An estimated 1,600 Jews were killed in Jedwabne, and another 800 in Radzilow and other nearby villages, in the massacre.

At noon, we will screen *An Unlikely Obsession: The True Story of Winston Churchill & the Jews*. Based on Sir Martin Gilbert's book, the film examines Churchill's relationship to Jews and to Jewish issues and includes interviews with Conrad Black, Sir Martin Gilbert, Alan Dershowitz, John Spencer-Churchill, and many others.

At 1:30 pm, following the Churchill film, we will show *Orchestra of Exiles*, one of

the finest documentaries in many years. The film tells the thrilling story of how one man, violinist Bronislaw Huberman, saved almost 1,000 Jews, including many of the premier musicians in Europe, from the Holocaust and then formed an orchestra that would become the Israel Philharmonic.

Our opening film on Thursday, October 31, 7 pm, will be *Collision! Free Speech and Religion*, a documentary that looks at the world-wide reaction to the cartoons depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammad published in Denmark in 2005. A panel discussion with Danish human rights lawyer Jacob

Mchangama will follow the screening. The panel will also discuss the Quebec government's proposed Charter of Values.

There are many other film screenings and other events taking place during the four-day festival.

Visit [freethinkingfilmfest.ca](http://freethinkingfilmfest.ca) for more information, including the complete schedule.

Tickets are \$12 (\$8 for students) for films being shown during the daytime and \$20 (\$10 for students) for evening events. A full festival pass is \$80 (\$40 for students) and single day passes are \$30 (\$15 for students).

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# Tefilateinu: Our own Shabbat program

By Lucy Gitter,  
Rachel Lyman,  
Leetal Shelemay,  
and Abby Shmorgun  
Agudath Israel youth

All of us belong to Agudath Israel Congregation and, believe it or not, we really love going there on Shabbat mornings. The biggest reason we like going is *Tefilateinu*.

*Tefilateinu* is a program for kids in senior kindergarten and older, but we let our little sisters and brothers come too, if they want. At *Tefilateinu*, we do some Shabbat prayers, then we play some fun games and have snacks. It is really fun for us to be able to lead the services at *Tefilateinu* and try out different tunes for the songs.

The best part is when we get to go onto the bimah near the end of the main service

and sing “Aleinu” and “Adon Olam.” We get candies from Cantor Jeremy Burko while we’re on the bimah.

The teenagers who run *Tefilateinu* are pretty great. This year, most of them are boys. That’s too bad, but we like them anyway. They are really nice and make it fun.

Malachi Handler is the youth director at our shul. He is super nice and is a really good teacher.

He and the other staff find neat ways to teach us about the *parasha* of the week. Sometimes we do games related to the story in the *parasha* and sometimes we have discussions about what the stories mean.

It is cool for us to be able to talk about these things with people who are not our parents or teachers. Our moms like the teenagers who

run the program, too. They say they’re good role models for us because they go to shul on Shabbat and take time to teach us and hang out with us.

Another great thing about *Tefilateinu* is the friends we make there. Some of the kids are in other grades at our school, the Ottawa Jewish Community School. Others don’t go to our school, so seeing them at *Tefilateinu* is like having a play date with someone we don’t get to see all the time. It is neat because, when our bat mitzvahs come, we will have friends that we grew up with in shul who will be there.

We are writing this article because we want more kids to come to *Tefilateinu*. That way, we will have more friends in shul, and the games and activities will be even



The authors (from left): Abby Shmorgun, 8, Leetal Shelemay, 9, Lucy Gitter, 9, and Rachel Lyman, 10.

more fun. Rachel’s brother Zev also comes to *Tefilateinu* and he wanted to say that he really likes the games and snacks, but wishes there were more boys there.

Our moms wanted us to also write about why they like *Tefilateinu*.

“I like the authenticity of the programming. As a teacher, I can see that the kids respond so well to all the parts of the service, when they are presented in a way that is appropriate for their age,” said Lucy’s mom, Jodi.

Jackie, Rachel and Zev’s mom, thinks anything that keeps kids coming to shul is great. She is also really glad that her kids are learning the services because their bat and

bar mitzvahs are coming up.

“I like that the kids have a place of their own in the shul. This gives me time and space to engage in the Shabbat services in the sanctuary without worrying about my kids. It also gives them some ownership of their own spirituality,” said Elianna,


Abby’s mom.

We think our moms are happy we go to *Tefilateinu*, that we are learning and having fun. If you want to ask us questions about *Tefilateinu*, send an email to Malachi at [youth@agudathisrael.net](mailto:youth@agudathisrael.net) and he will get us to answer them.



## Best of Hebrew University

Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (CFHU) presented its annual Best of Hebrew U program, October 6, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. (From left) event co-chair Esther Rosenberg-Paritzky; Hebrew University faculty members Alex Yakobson, Shaul Stampfer and Ronit Sharon; and Susan Katz, event co-chair and CFHU Ottawa Chapter president. (Photo: Peter Waiser)



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Gitta and Cantor David Aptowitzer will live in Motza, near Jerusalem.

## Cantor David and Gitta Aptowitzer to make aliyah

*Shalom/L’Hitraot reception to be held November 17*

By Cynthia Nyman Engel for Agudath Israel

Cantor David Aptowitzer’s eyes twinkled as he recounted the story of the day his son, Yitzhak Tzvi, was born.

“It was the second day of Rosh Hashanah, 1955,” he said. “That year, Rosh Hashanah fell on September 17 and 18, but my Gitta and Bess Greenberg weren’t in shul. They were both in the Civic Hospital waiting to give birth.

“I finished davening the Shacharit service and had just sat down for the Torah reading when Gilbert Greenberg came running into shul and straight up the aisle to where I was sitting at the side of the bimah.

“Gilbert was beaming. “Mazel tov, David! Mazel tov,” he said breathlessly, ‘Gitta gave birth!’

“What news! I was thrilled. I was overjoyed. I was jumping out of my skin.

“What did she have?” I asked eagerly.

“There was a long moment of silence and then, with a chagrined look on his face, Gilbert said, ‘Oy, David, I was so excited I forgot to ask!’”

Thus began a long, close

friendship between the Aptowitzer and Greenberg families. Roger Greenberg and Yitzhak Aptowitzer, born within a half-hour of each other, attended Hillel Academy together and became bar mitzvah a week apart, both under the expert tutelage of Cantor Aptowitzer.

That delightful tale is but one of the thousands of memories Cantor David and Gitta Aptowitzer will carry in their hearts when, on November 26, they fly off to begin life in Israel close to their cherished 14 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren, all of whom live there.

“And there are more on the way,” Cantor Aptowitzer said happily.

It has been 61 years since a newly minted chazzan stood before the bimah at Agudath Israel – then on Rosemount Avenue – and raised his voice in song. The recently married, 27-year-old Holocaust survivor was fresh out of Montreal’s Merkaz HaTorah Yeshiva and McGill University’s School of Music. For six decades, Cantor Aptowitzer served his congregants and members of the extended Ottawa Jewish community with compassion, caring and great dis-

tion. Forty-two of those years were spent as chazzan of Agudath Israel Congregation, the past 19 years as cantor emeritus.

The esteemed cantor wore many other hats, all of them with grace and elegance. He taught classes in the Jewish community’s day and supplementary schools. He prepared hundreds of youngsters to become bar and bat mitzvah. He performed many a brit milah on many a newborn male. He has officiated at countless simchas and at countless sorrowful occasions. For 60 years, whenever the call went out, he was there to answer – and, always, with the full support of his beloved wife, Gitta.

As they make aliyah, the Aptowitzers take with them myriad rich memories and leave in their wake an admiring, appreciative community brimming with equally rich memories of the special couple who lived among them.

The Aptowitzers will reside in Motza, a community approximately 10 miles from Jerusalem.

The community is invited to attend a Shalom/L’Hitraot reception to bid farewell to Cantor David and Gitta Aptowitzer at Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, on Sunday, November 17, from 3 to 6 pm.

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Deborah Silverman, Gina Camel-Toueg  
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*Table Captains*

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# OJCS introduces leadership course for Grade 6 students

By Sara-Lynne Levine  
Ottawa Jewish  
Community School

The Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) is offering a new year-long leadership program to our Grade 6 students. The goal is to engage and empower our

students and develop confidence and leadership skills.

“OJCS has always created strong community leaders,” said Principal Sheldon Friedman. “Our graduates often go on to be leaders at university campuses and in their respective fields of study, pro-

fession or community. This program is formalizing what we have previously done and ensuring our students are prepared to lead in whatever arena they feel comfortable.”

The foundation of this course comes from Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner’s model of *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*. It is a cross-curricular course that also integrates Jewish concepts and values into lessons, discussions, and assignments.

“This course provides students with the tools that they need to turn challenging opportunities into incredible successes, no matter how big or small those successes may be, in hopes of improving the world in which we live,” said instructor and middle school teacher Stacy Veaudry.

Every student can benefit from developing leadership skills and an awareness of his or her own leadership potential. The course aims to teach students that leadership is for everyone and does



Matan Buchler, Yehuda Goldstein and Kayla Sabloff work on a small group activity during their Grade 6 leadership class at OJCS.

not solely involve those of power, position or prosperity. It also aims to develop active and responsible citizens who can think critically about present and future challenges, and in all other aspects of their lives.

“I like the class because

it’s teaching me how to be a leader and stand up for what I believe in,” said student Kayla Sabloff. “The course is helping me know what to do in certain situations and how to work with others.”

Students learn about themselves, their communi-

ty and the world through an interactive format of field trips, speakers, group work, and hands-on practical applications.

To learn more, contact Andréa Black at [andrea.black@theojcs.ca](mailto:andrea.black@theojcs.ca) or 613 722-0020.



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# Rabbi Berger's memory to be honoured with learning institute for women

*Inaugural lecture of Machon Mordechai to take place Sunday, November 17*

**By Suri Levitan  
for Chabad  
of Centrepointe**

We experienced a devastating loss when Rabbi Mordechai Berger, a devoted rabbi, mentor and teacher for more than 35 years, passed away. He had an impact on hundreds of members of Ottawa's Jewish community since his arrival here in 1976.

His beloved wife, Chaye Leah Berger, and his daughter, Bassy Mendelsohn, co-director of Chabad of Centrepointe, strongly believe in the teachings of our

sages, based on the passage "The living shall take it to heart" (Ecclesiastes 7, 2). This statement teaches that, on the passing of an individual, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to carry on their positive spirit by remaining committed to the ideas and ideals of the departed, ensuring their legacy lives on.

Rabbi Berger's passion was Jewish education. He believed the study of Torah was the key to strengthening Jewish homes and communities. Based on this, Chabad

of Centrepointe has established Machon Mordechai, a new women's learning institute in Rabbi Berger's memory.

Machon Mordechai will offer stimulating opportunities for learning, inspiration and advancement in Torah studies and will host regular events, programs, activities and classes for women.

The inaugural event will be a lecture entitled "Total Immersion: Thoughts on God and Intimacy from the Deep" to be given by Rivkah Slonim.

Rivka Slonim and her husband, Rabbi Aaron Slonim, run the Chabad Student Centre in Binghamton, New York. She is an internationally known teacher, lecturer and activist with a special focus on inspiring contemporary women in Jewish life. She is the editor of *Total Immersion: A Mikvah Anthology* and *Bread and Fire; Jewish Women Find God in the Everyday*.

The lecture will take place Sunday, November 17, 5:30 pm, at Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Drive. Admission is \$10 and refreshments will be served.

All women are invited to join us, to honour the memory of Rabbi Berger, to grow, learn, be inspired and find out a little bit more of the mystery of God, intimacy and our unique and important role as Jewish women.

Visit [chabadcentrepointe.com](http://chabadcentrepointe.com) for more information about Machon Mordechai or to reserve a seat for the lecture.



Jewish education was the late Rabbi Mordechai Berger's passion.



## OTC construction

Construction has begun on the Ottawa Torah Centre's new building on Lamplighters Drive in Barrhaven. Rabbi Menachem Blum is seen on the site in his hardhat, October 15.

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Guest column

# Finding the brother we thought was lost in the Holocaust

By Ilona Mauskopf

A few weeks ago, I lost my brother Beni. He was a brother who was lost to our family even before I was born, and then miraculously found, only to lose touch again and finally reconnect last year. It is a story of loss, hope, will to live and life's incredible miracles.

The story begins in May 1941 in Szöllös, Hungary (now Vinogradov, Ukraine).

My father, Jenö (Yakov) Breiner and his first wife, Ilona, had a baby boy. They named him Gusztav, but everyone called him Guszti. My father only saw little Guszti for a few weeks, before he, along with other Jewish men in town, was drafted by the pro-Nazi Hungarian government to the *labour force* attached to the Hungarian army.

Life was not easy under

the Hungarian regime, but the worst was still to come.

In March 1944, the Nazis occupied Hungary and Hungarian Jews were deported to concentration camps. Ilona was with my father's parents, his younger sister and little three-year-old Guszti. It did not look promising for the elderly and the very young children. When they arrived at Auschwitz, a mysterious woman took the little

boy from his mother's arms and handed him to the grandmother. When Ilona protested she was told to shut up. The mysterious woman actually saved Ilona's life, but with that, condemned the little boy to almost certain death.

Ilona was taken to the work camp and never saw little Guszti again.

Ilona came back from the hell that was the Holocaust

and was reunited with her husband. They mourned the loss of a son who was presumed dead, along with one million other children murdered during the Holocaust. They had another son Gyuri (Yuri). Sadly, my father's first wife died of heart failure in 1961, leaving behind a 13-year-old. My father remarried and, three years later, I was born in 1964. They say that Ilona never stopped believing and feeling that somewhere, somehow, her Guszti was still alive.

In the meantime, the border shifted and our town became part of the Soviet Union. In 1965, a friend of the family received rare permission to visit Israel. She met a young relative of hers who questioned her about the remaining Jewish families in town. She mentioned the name Breiner.

His response was very interesting. He said he had a friend with the same last name who doesn't know who his parents are or where he is from. His name is Ben Ami (the son of my people).

When my father heard this, he immediately wrote to his first wife's brothers

who lived in Israel. Skeptical at first, they found Ben Ami (Beni) and wrote back, "This is our boy!"

There was no DNA testing in 1965 and complicated blood tests were needed to confirm his identity. The process took about 18 months, but the results were clear. Ben Ami was Guszti!

I wish I knew what goes on in a person's heart when someone shows up on their doorstep and says he is his uncle, that he knows everything about his family. But I didn't ask and Beni did not want to discuss the past for a long time. And now it is too late.

Now to the other part of the story. How did it happen that a little child survived the Holocaust?

When Guszti, a cute little boy with blond curly hair and his father's blue eyes, was torn from his mother and given to his grandmother, they were taken to Bergen-Belsen to one of the model camps the Nazis established to show the world they don't kill Jews. A very fortunate few were taken to a camp like that.

(Continued on page 18)



## OTTAWA OPEN HOUSE

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# Leader of Uganda's small Jewish community to speak and sing in Ottawa

*JJ Keki's Abayudaya Jewish music gained fame on a Grammy-nominated CD*

**By Dvora Rotenberg  
Canadian Friends  
of Pearl Children**

Joab Jonadeb "JJ" Keki, a leader of the Abayudaya (Jewish) community in eastern Uganda, and an accomplished musical performer, will be speaking and singing at several venues during a visit to Ottawa arranged by Canadian Friends of Pearl Children (CFPC).

An accomplished singer and musician, JJ was a major contributor to *Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda*, which received a 2005 Grammy nomination in the Traditional World Music category. His other recordings include *Lecha Dodi: Songs of the Abayudaya Sabbath*.

JJ is currently a member of the Abayudaya Congregation's board of directors

and its elders committee. He was a leader of the Abayudaya youth movement in the 1980s, the first chair of the Abayudaya community from 1986 to 1999, and is the founder and a director of the interfaith Delicious Peace Coffee Co-operative.

JJ was honoured with an award from Tufts University's Global Leadership Institute for his work on the coffee co-op. The coffee co-op currently boasts 2,000 Jewish, Christian and Muslim coffee farmers working together to better the lives of their communities. His co-op's success was featured in *O, the Oprah Magazine*, ("Not Just a Cup but a Just Cup," August 2008).

JJ will perform a concert and singalong with the Ottawa Simcha Band on Tuesday, November 5, 7:15 pm, at the

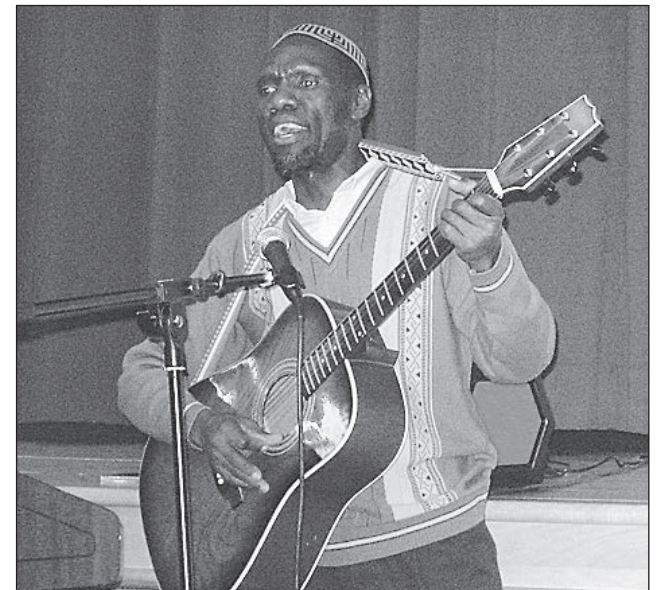
Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC). Original Ugandan crafts, including jewelry, kippot and other surprises, along with freshly roasted coffee will be available for sale and guests are welcome to stay for dancing and song after the program. Admission is a suggested donation of \$20 to help support the education of the children of JJ's community.

Throughout JJ's visit to Ottawa, he will present a CFPC dynamic multi-media program discussing how Jewish, Christian and Muslim children study together in peace, as well as giving musical performances. He will highlight the work that CFPC has done in the area of public health and women's empowerment programs as well as our work toward establishing micro-financing projects. He

will also describe CFPC's work toward self-sustainability with the young leadership program. Crafts and coffee will be for sale at all events.

Canadian Friends of Pearl Children is a non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of orphans, disadvantaged children and impoverished families throughout Uganda. Our goals are to provide a safe and healthy living environment, proper nutrition, health care and quality education. We are guided by the belief that these children and families can escape poverty, reach their true potential and contribute to their communities, country, continent and the world.

JJ will also be leading Kabbalat Shabbat services with his Abayudaya melodies and guitar at Adath Shalom Congregation before sundown on Friday November 1, 5:00 pm. Contact Joel Yan



**JJ Keki performs at the Soloway JCC during a 2009 visit to Ottawa.**  
(Photo: Michael Regenstreif)

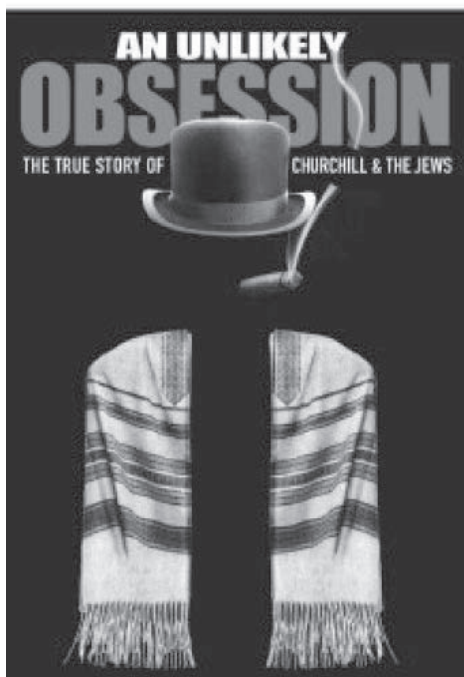
at 613-224-4560 or [joelyan@rogers.com](mailto:joelyan@rogers.com) for information on the Kabbalat Shabbat.

JJ's other appearances in Ottawa will include a visit to Temple Israel on Sunday, November 3, 9:30 am; an appearance at the Free Thinking Film Festival on Sunday, November 3, 7 pm; a musical program and multimedia presentation for Creative Connections on Tuesday, Novem-

ber 5, 1 pm, at the Soloway JCC; and a visit with Talmud Torah Afternoon School students on Sunday, November 10.

For more information, or to arrange a program with JJ Keki while he is in Ottawa, contact Dvora Rotenberg, executive director, Canadian Friends of Pearl Children, at [info@pearlchildren.ca](mailto:info@pearlchildren.ca) or 613-366-1770.

## Don't Miss These Two Incredible Films!

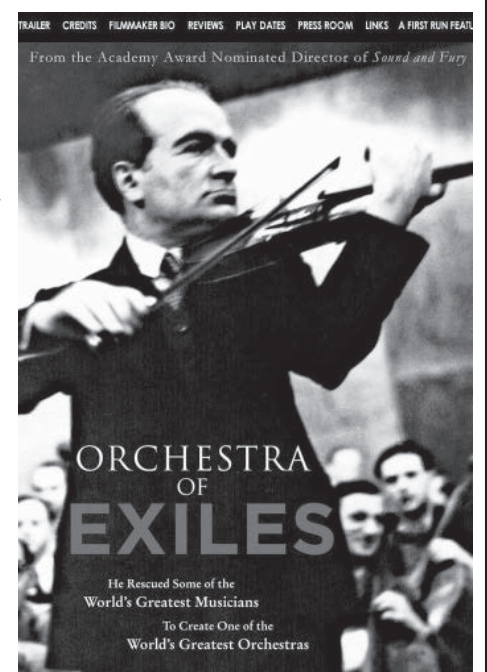


### **Winston Churchill & The Jews, November 3rd, 12:00 PM**

A powerful documentary that examines Winston Churchill's relationship to Jews and Jewish issues. Drawing on a treasure trove of interviews featuring Churchill family members, Lord Conrad Black, Sir Martin Gilbert, Alan Dershowitz and others, the film shows how Churchill grew beyond the kind of friendship with individual British Jews to an unlikely obsession in becoming a supporter of Jewish causes—most notably being responsible for determining the future status of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

### **Orchestra of Exiles, November 3rd, 1:30 PM**

The thrilling story of how one man helped save Europe's premiere Jewish musicians from obliteration by the Nazis. In the early 1930s, Hitler began firing Jewish musicians across Europe. Violinist Bronislaw Huberman moved these great musicians to Palestine and formed a symphony that would become the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. With courage, resourcefulness an entourage of allies including Arturo Toscanini and Albert Einstein, Huberman saved nearly 1000 Jews—and guaranteed the survival of Europe's musical heritage. After the film, Floralove Katz will sing some songs of the Holocaust.



**An Unlikely Obsession: Winston Churchill & The Jews, November 3rd, 12:00 PM**

**Orchestra of Exiles, November 3rd, 1:30 PM**

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As part of a community service project, the girls' division of the Chabad Student Network baked dozens of honey cakes and delivered them to Ottawa fire fighters. CSN co-director Yocheved Boyarsky (far left) and Carleton student Tal Klachook are seen here delivering honey cakes to Station 13, September 12.

## CSN is 'a home away from home' at Jewish holiday time

By Tal Klachook  
for Chabad  
Student Network

Holidays, like Shabbat dinners, are treasured moments we often take for granted. They are times for families and friends to reconnect and reminisce – and they are also times to celebrate and connect to our Jewish heritage.

Many students living away from home, like myself, often find keeping up with both schoolwork and the holidays can feel overwhelming. Luckily, the Chabad Student Network

(CSN) makes it easy to reconnect to our roots by offering holiday services and dinners to us.

Before finding out about CSN, I spent my first Rosh Hashanah dinner away from home in a cafeteria at Carleton University wishing I was with my family. I missed my mother's cooking and the kvetching before the guests arrived. But, most of all, I missed the sense of connection to my Jewish traditions.

Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky and his wife Yocheved have opened the doors to their house and welcomed every

student with open arms. I cannot imagine how different my student experience would have been had I not attended one of their community service events last year.

I was immediately drawn to the warm, welcoming atmosphere at the event. The Boyarskys' contribution to enriching Jewish life on campus, to bringing students together and to creating a sense of community is inspiring.

With every holiday event, students are not only provided with a delicious

four-course meal, but with a chance to learn more about the holiday. Using stories from the Talmud and Torah, Rabbi Boyarsky engages and educates students with his sermon about the mean-

ing of the particular holiday. "Celebrating the holidays away from home can be hard, but, thanks to the wonderful Chabad team, I feel like now I have family here on campus," said Zack

Allen, a student at the University of Ottawa.

CSN allows students to meet new people and engage in Jewish traditions. It has truly become my 'home away from home.'

## Mauskopf's lost brother had become a proud Israeli

(Continued from page 16)

His grandmother died about six months after their arrival and a teenage boy, Shmuel Cohen, took charge of the toddler. He took Guszt with him wherever he went.

After they were liberated by the American troops, they eventually arrived in Israel. Shmuel put the child in a kibbutz, where he was raised.

In a way, Guszt actually did cease to exist. He emerged as Ben Ami (Beni), a proud Israeli who felt a sense of belonging to his kibbutz, and to Israeli society, and wanted nothing to do with the past.

When our father and his eldest son finally were reunited, there was a world and a lifetime between them.

Last year, I met Beni and Gyuri in Israel. And Beni, at age 71, made a trip to Ukraine and visited the town where he was born and his mother's grave. He finally

made peace with his past – with "Guszt."

Almost exactly a year after his trip to Ukraine, Beni passed away suddenly after suffering a heart attack.

He was lost, found, lost again, and found again.

"Don't get lost again," were my last words to him, and he promised he wouldn't.

So many words were left unsaid. Relationships were missed and questions not asked. But at least I am happy I went to Israel and had a chance to reconnect with my brothers.



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Amanda, and Josh.

Mazel Tov Bubby and Saba!  
Love, Charlie and Matthew,  
and Brayden and Asher.



# Rubin Friedman tells his family's story of surviving the Holocaust

By Louise Rachlis

When I called Rubin Friedman to discuss his newly published book about his family's Holocaust history, he was *Skyping* with a cousin in New York who had just come back from Radom, Poland, where their parents were from.

"He explained to me we're still dealing with microfiche, and locating information is laborious," said Friedman.

Friedman's book, *Our Family Holocaust Chronicle: Part I - Running for their lives*, will be launched with a Greenberg Families Library author talk on Sunday, November 3, 2:00 pm, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

"My book is based on what I was told by my parents ever since I could ask them questions," he said. "I could check with my uncle and my brother to confirm details or find out more. My uncle told me a bit of his story as well."

While the stories have been accumulating over a lifetime, Friedman began working on the book about 18 months ago. He was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia a few years ago and needed chemotherapy in 2011.

"That was a big incentive to hurry up," he said.

Well known in the Ottawa Jewish community,

Friedman worked as senior planner for the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and wrote more than 140 humour columns for the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*. He has also held senior positions in national Jewish organizations and has been active locally in Yiddish activities, Jewish education and Holocaust education.

After many years of dealing with multiculturalism in government, he has been a trainer on issues relating to diversity and was appointed in 2012 to the board of directors of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Friedman published the book through University of Toronto Bookstore's print-on-demand service in order to get it into readers' hands as soon as possible.

This volume is "a story of how one family, and, ultimately, their children were torn from a milieu where they and their many relatives and friends had lived for generations and then were thrown into the chaotic storm of the Second World War and its aftermath," he explained.

"It is about their luck in escaping from the Nazis and their struggle to live through the war in the Soviet Union. It is about their return to a destroyed world and their decision to flee again toward the west ... It is about the courage involved in

leaving everything behind and rebuilding a normal life in a new home."

Friedman said part two of his chronicle will deal with the downstream effects of this experience, combined with the challenges of integration in a new land. He already has a first draft of the text.

He calls the first volume his "pre-history." The stories were told to him by his parents, his uncle and aunt, his cousin and brother.

"Perhaps they all intended to give me a gift for me to pass on," he said. "I need to tell this story because, now that I am 67, it feels as if I have carried it for a long time."

It is a story he wants future generations to have because of his compulsion "to tell and retell what I've been told, and what I've lived, with as much love and truth as I can muster."

Friedman also wants to ensure that his new book and the forthcoming second volume serve an educational purpose, "so that readers can understand what individuals went through. We must fight racism and anti-Semitism in all their forms."

For information about the book launch and author talk on November 3, contact the Greenberg Families Library at [library@jccottawa.com](mailto:library@jccottawa.com) or 613-798-9818, ext. 245.



Rubin Friedman will launch his new book, November 3, 2 pm, at the SJCC.



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# Acclaimed classical guitarist to play at Temple Israel

By Mort Bercovitch  
for Temple Israel

Temple Israel will present Canadian classical guitarist Laura Young in concert on Sunday, November

10, 7:30 pm.

As noted at [laurayoung-guitar.com](http://laurayoung-guitar.com), Laura was born in Toronto and “began her study of music studies at the age of seven and became an

educated student of the guitar when she was nine years old ...

“From the time she was just a young girl and at every step of her career, Laura has

been recognized as a gifted artist; winning prestigious prizes at international competitions such as the ‘Andrés Segovia’ in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, and the ‘Jacinto e Inocencio Guerero’ in Madrid, Spain, among many others.

“At the University of Toronto, Laura earned her music degree under the direction of Eli Kassner. Grants from ... the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council provided an opportunity for Laura to continue her studies with some of the world’s finest guitarists, including David Russel and Leo Brouwer. Studying with Hubert Kaepfel at the Hochschule in Cologne, Germany she received her master’s degree.

“As a soloist, Laura has given widely acclaimed performances ... in concert halls around the world, from the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Germany, to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, to the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, Spain. She’s also a regularly invited performer and teach-



Classical guitarist Laura Young will perform at Temple Israel, November 10.

er in international guitar festivals: Iserlohn, Germany; Toronto; Ezstergom, Hungary; Gdansk, Poland; Cologne, Germany; and Volos, Greece – to name but a few.

“In addition to her solo career, Laura was a founding member of the very successful Trio de Cologne, which performed throughout the 1990s in Europe and the Americas. Laura is currently working in duo with the Greek-Canadian singer Frances Pappas in the ensemble Lagrimosa Belta, which presents pieces specially written

for them by contemporary composers all based on explorations of traditional folk music.

“From 1997 to 2001, Laura was the founder and artistic director of the Amsterdam International Guitar Festival. Laura was awarded professorship at the Escuela Superior de Musica en Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain in 2003.”

Tickets are \$20 (adults) and \$15 (students) and may be obtained by calling Nancy Bercovitch at 613-731-9278 or Temple Israel at 613-224-1802.

## Come to the community-wide Chanukah Ball, November 30

*It's the last dance at Chapel Street*

By Elaine Vininsky  
Chanukah Ball  
Organizing Committee

Mark your calendars, book the sitter, dust off your dancing shoes and come say goodbye to 151 Chapel Street!

The Jewish Community Chanukah Ball is set for Saturday, November 30, 7 pm, at Congregation Beth Shalom. You won't want to miss this community-wide gala event!

The elegant evening will feature live entertainment, dancing and door prizes as well as an extravagant buffet



prepared by Creative Kosher Catering.

Tickets are \$60 (adults and seniors), \$45 (young professionals) and \$30 (students) and are available in advance through sponsoring congregations Adath Shalom, Agudath Israel, Beit Tikvah, Beth Shalom, Glebe

Minyan, Machzikei Hadas, Or Haneshamah and Temple Israel.

Tables for eight to 10 people may be booked in advance.

For more information, contact Suzi Shore Sauvé at [suzishoresauve@gmail.com](mailto:suzishoresauve@gmail.com) or 613-878-4235.

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## Author Talk and Book Launch *Our Family Holocaust Chronicle*

*Part I – Running for their lives*

By Rubin Friedman

**Sunday, November 3**

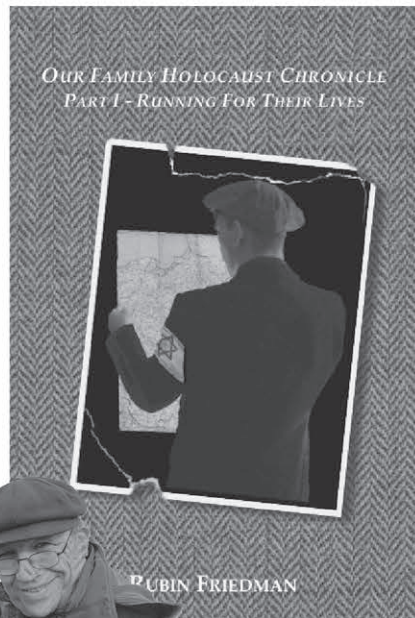
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At the Soloway JCC

"I found gripping the story of how Fayge, Nuchim, Harsh-Layb and Eda escaped Nazi-occupied Radom, how they survived travails and dangers in the Soviet Union, and how they searched for a safe haven afterward. It is a story that shows the courage and determination of those who survived as well as how they suffered emotional, physical and psychological scars that would continue to affect them. A good read and a valuable resource."

– Rochelle Wilner, former President of B'nai Brith Canada, former Chair of its Holocaust Education Committee

Books will be available for sale. There is no admission charge.



RUBIN FRIEDMAN

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An examination of the constitutional crisis in Egypt, the Syrian quagmire and its implications in the region, the role of Iran as a major actor in the area and the road to the peace process in the Israel-Palestine dilemma.

**Wednesday, November 6**

**Tuesday, November 12**

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Soloway JCC

**Admission**

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## ***It all amounts to a hill of beans***

I have always been a canned bean user. I am just not that organized to know what I am going to cook a day ahead of time, so, to remember to soak the beans overnight is just asking too much.

Canned beans are a great convenience, and I never really gave it that much thought. That is until I started reading about Italian white beans in a jar. First Jamie Oliver, and then Giada De Laurentiis, waxing poetic on the superiority of beans in a jar imported from Italy over domestic canned beans. Who even knew you could get beans in a jar? Could they really be that much better than canned? Of course, I had to see for myself.

For the canned beans, I chose my usual white kidney beans by Unico. The trouble started when I tried to find Italian beans in a jar. They did not carry them in the supermarket. Then, I checked at Nicastro's. But I could not find white kidney beans in a jar. They only had cannellini beans. They sure looked the same as my canned white



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kidney beans. With a little research, I discovered that Italian cannellini beans are exactly what we call white kidney beans in North America. I opened the can and jar, drained, rinsed and tasted.

In a side-by-side comparison, I preferred the beans from the jar. The skins were tenderer and the beans were creamier and smoother than the canned. The taste was quite similar. Try it for yourself and see which ones you like better.

I also bought a jar of Italian tuna packed in olive oil to try. Quite yummy, but I felt so indulgent using it instead of my regular canned tuna packed in water. It really packs a flavour punch!

I was inspired to dress this pasta with a creamy lemon vinaigrette created by Toronto chef Keith Froggett. This has a thick, almost mayonnaise-like consistency that would also be wonderful with asparagus. He suggests blanching the lemon zest in boiling water to remove any bitterness.

Once the dressing is made, it's just a simple matter of assembly.

### **Pasta with White Beans and Tuna**

- 1/4 medium purple onion, finely diced
- 12 ounces dried whole-wheat pasta
- 3 cups arugula
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 jar Italian cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 jar Italian tuna in oil, drained, and broken into chunks
- 1/3 cup pitted green olives, sliced
- 8 basil leaves, finely sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup creamy lemon vinaigrette (recipe below)
- Shavings of Parmesan Reggiano cheese made with vegetable peeler (optional)

Soak the diced purple onion in ice water for about 30 minutes to make it not quite as strong. Drain and pat dry before adding to the pasta.

Bring a large pot of water and 2 tablespoons of salt to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions.

Drain pasta and pour into a large mixing bowl. Add arugula and toss with hot pasta to slightly wilt the arugula.

Mix in onion, grape tomatoes, beans, tuna, olives, basil, salt, pepper and vinaigrette.

Taste and add additional dressing or salt and pepper, if needed.

Serve in bowls garnished with parmesan shavings.

#### **Notes:**

If you can't find Italian cannellini beans in a jar and Italian tuna packed in oil, go ahead and use canned. It will still be delicious.

Italians would not add any Parmesan cheese for garnish, as they do not believe pasta dishes containing fish should have cheese in them. But, in this case, I think the saltiness of the cheese really complements the creamy but relatively bland flavour of the beans.

### **Creamy Lemon Vinaigrette**

This recipe is adapted from Toronto chef Keith Froggett. He intended it to be served with gravlax and asparagus. This can be made a day ahead.

- 1 medium lemon
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup mild tasting extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 tablespoons hot water
- Salt and cayenne pepper, to taste

Remove zest from lemon in broad strips using a vegetable peeler. Blanch the peel by bringing it to a boil in about 2 cups of water, 3 separate times, changing the water each time to eliminate bitterness.

In blender, combine the zest with the cold water, yolk, Dijon, lemon juice and vinegar and blend until smooth.

With blender running, slowly pour in both oils to make an emulsion.

Add hot water, salt and cayenne and blend for another 5 seconds. Keep at room temperature, or refrigerate if using later. Return to room temperature before using.

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# Rethinking the bar and bat mitzvah experience

Recently, there has been a flurry of media activity around the subject of the bar and bat mitzvah.

First, there was the Las Vegas-style dance number performed by a young Sam Horowitz in Dallas, which gave rise to a stern public rebuke from Rabbi David Wolpe in the August 15 issue of the *Washington Post*, in which he called the dance number “an historical outrage.”

In an August 21 post to the *Daily Beast's Open Zion* blog, I responded by suggesting that rather than simply representing crass materialism, Sam's dance number suggested a laudable attempt by one adolescent to “write his own script.” After all, adolescence is often a scary time when life can feel out of one's control. Watching the YouTube video, one can see Sam totally inhabits the brief experience of displaying his passion. He was making the night his own.

Soon after, I was invited onto *Huffpost Live*, along with a panel of commentators, to discuss the contemporary state of the bar and bat mitzvah. One of the panellists was Rabbi Bradley Solmsen, who, as director of youth engagement at the Union for Reform Judaism, is helping pilot a program called *B'nai Mitzvah Revolution* in which participating congregations will re-examine the bar and bat mitzvah experience. Many are trying to involve parents and are emphasizing social action projects, sometimes at the expense of Hebrew and prayer mastery. The initiative was recently discussed in the *New York Times* (“Bar Mitzvahs Get New Look to Build Faith,” September 3).

What strikes me from all of this is the need for a two-pronged approach. We need to keep the child – and his or her particular needs, dreams, interests and abilities – front and centre and, at the same time, we need to think carefully about how we can encourage our b'nai mitzvah kids to find their voice. And finding their social conscience may be the best way to reach their inner core and help them chart their own future, both individually and collectively.

One of the best ways we can do this is through encouraging a deeper form of social and political engagement than what is typically done through the charity-based mitzvah projects that are now typical in many congregations. This kind of fundraising or volunteer effort kids are encouraged to engage in with their mitzvah projects far surpasses any kind of expectation my peers and I had as we approached b'nai mitzvah age decades ago. And they should certainly be applauded.

At the same time, I'm struck by stories like that of William, a bar mitzvah boy in Atlanta. As he studied his Torah portion, “Chayei Sarah,” he was disturbed by the depiction of slavery in the Bible. Being both Jewish and African American, William was encouraged by Rabbi Joshua Lesser to learn about the pockets of slavery and exploitation still existing in his own country, particularly in the agriculture sector. William soon lent his protest skills to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Rabbi Lesser told this story in an October 7 blog post at [ritualwell.org/blog/seeds-change](http://ritualwell.org/blog/seeds-change).

What moves me in considering this anecdote is the apparent desire to link knowledge with action. Sam danced his way across his bar mitzvah year – and later news reports indicated he donated a significant amount of his gift money to an Israeli youth village as well. Though thinking not only of philanthropy, as important as that is, but of praying with one's feet, in the immortalized words of Abraham Joshua Heschel as he marched from Selma to Alabama in 1965, enables us to cultivate tomorrow's community leaders.

As a parent, I've long pictured my first-born's bat mitzvah with a mixture of great anticipation and some trepidation. My daughter's birthday falls in late-April, and there's a chance her Torah portion could include that most infamous of phrases, “And with a male you shall not lie the lyings of a woman, it is an abomination.”



## Values, Ethics, Community

Mira Sucharov

It's a biblical passage that has led to inordinate amounts of pain and suffering as the healthy variation of human sexuality has been a source of discrimination and hatred. But reading about William makes me think that one need not

mumble through the uncomfortable parts of our tradition, simply counting the minutes until the smoked salmon and kugel. One can take the opportunity to condemn prejudice and humiliation, and embrace dignity and diversity.

When faced with messages of moral ambivalence, one can embrace the opportunity to make change. One can view painful passages as platforms from which we can shine light into dark corners. As they grow, I hope my daughter and son will find within them their voice to contribute to their community and to seek change wherever change is needed. A bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah may be the perfect place to begin.

Mira Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, blogs at [Haaretz.com](http://Haaretz.com).

## There's a difference between 'listening' and 'really listening'

*Community Conversations* is both the title of a book by Paul Born, which I'm reading for school, and a concept from which our community can benefit.

In my September 30 column, I asked some big questions surrounding what is perceived to be one of our community's greatest challenges: how do we engage the emerging generation in their 20s and 30s in order to ensure our future sustainability and viability?

This is particularly pertinent given that the Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews, released this month, revealed that nearly one-third of American Jews under 32 does not identify as Jewish by religion, a number that's grown with each successive generation, and that American Jews are intermarrying at a rate of 58 per cent (71 per cent of non-Orthodox).

I also mentioned that many longtime community leaders I've interviewed feel a conversation needs to take place between the two parties (people like them and people like me) in order to come up with some answers to those questions.

Born would definitely agree.

My class recently spoke with the author via *Skype*. He told us that, in his personal life, he's seen success in the realm of poverty reduction. How? By bringing powerful, influential people and poor people together for the sake of dialogue.

In his book, he argues the same principles can be applied to finding comprehensive solutions to pretty well any complex community issue. But the key is community conversation, which he divides into four building blocks: converse, engage, collaborate and cast a vision.

Essentially, it's about “engaging people from all sectors as never before to work together as equals to improve their quality of life,” as stated on the back of the book – getting the “unusual suspects together” for a common goal, if you will.

You may be thinking, “But we've tried that before!”

It's true. In 2007, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa held a community symposium with the theme, “Will We Have Jewish Grandchildren?”

Then there was the openOttawa symposium the Federation held in 2011 to discuss the needs of young Jewish adults in Ottawa. This led to vast improvements in terms of funding and facilitating programs and initiatives directed at the emerging generation.

However, Born is not advocating for communities to have one or two conversations and then call it a day.

When he said “conversations lead to” and then paused, I expected him to say “solutions.” Instead, he said “more conversations.” Evidently, it can take time before anything major is accomplished.

At the same time, quality is just as important as quantity and Born offers several techniques for effective community conversations.

One technique I found particularly interesting is listening.



## Emerging Gen

Ilana Belfer

“Duh,” you're thinking. “That's a given.” But there's a difference between ‘listening’ and ‘really listening.’

“When listening to others, we have to stop the judging about whether that idea fits within your own world view,” Born said.

He explained that often, when we're supposed to be listening to someone else, we're actually just comparing everything they say to our own beliefs and either accepting or rejecting, depending whether or not they fit.

In order to truly listen, we must suspend what we know for a little while and construct the other person's worldview in our own heads, he said.

I'm not suggesting the community-at-large hasn't been listening to the emerging generation. I'm suggesting that, perhaps, there are ways we can make our community conversations more effective – ways that seem so obvious, we tend to ignore or neglect them.

Born's book is basically a compilation of the obvious; things that seem so basic they aren't usually reinforced. These things need to be written down for people to pay attention to them and realize how useful they can be.

As my professor pointed out, some people might discredit the book's value because it's written in plain language, and in a manner that's easy to understand. But Born takes pride in its simplicity.

He tells the story of a conversation he had with Father Cavanaugh, who managed to create a thriving community centre in Northern Ireland, which served everyone in the community, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, at the height of the conflict between the Irish Republican Army and Ulster Freedom Fighters.

When asked how he had done it, Father Cavanaugh responded, “We listened and gained a corner on the obvious.”

“If you really want to understand what people need and want and change the world,” Born said, “you've got to listen and then figure out from there what to do. Once you've figured out what to do and it's obvious, that's the greatest compliment anyone could ever give you.”

Obvious means it's the next natural, logical step. Obvious means necessary.

Maybe, if we listen, we'll find the answers to my questions are right under our noses.

# Thin or heavy, your weight may belie your inner health

My husband and I recently checked out the new Target store at Billings Bridge mall and then went to the food court for a cup of coffee. As we sat and chatted, I couldn't help but notice that so many of the patrons and food service workers were not just overweight, but obese. I noticed that even slim people were consuming greasy, salty food.

You really are what you eat. Observing heavy people at the food court can give a slender individual a false sense of security. "I don't look like that, so I can order whatever I want." And any of us can fall prey to a phenomenon known as the *licensing effect*, where we feel we've recently been *good* with our diet or exercise, and therefore, are entitled to order junk food.

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, as cited by the *Huffington Post's* "Healthy Living" blog (October 7), more than two-thirds of Americans are obese and pre-diabetic or have Type 2 diabetes. Canadians aren't far behind. More shocking is that one in four skinny people has high blood pressure, high blood sugar and abnormal levels of cholesterol.

'Normal-weight obesity' or 'skinny-fat' are terms used to describe people who are of a normal weight or have a normal body mass index, not a lot of adipose tissue – the kind of fat you can see and pinch – but who have a high amount of visceral or internal body fat. Visceral fat is dangerous because it's deep inside the abdomen and surrounds the organs. Like their obese counterparts, these skinny-fat people are at an increased risk for disease.

Back to the food court, where offerings include the obviously unhealthy choices – poutine, burgers and fries and deep-fried Asian fare. Even more dangerous are the seemingly innocuous choices like submarine sandwiches. Remember the commercials for Subway that featured a young man named Jared who lost 245 pounds by eating at the sub shop every day? Supposedly, he ate a 6-inch turkey sub for lunch and a full-length veggie sub for dinner, both meals with a bag of baked potato chips and a diet soda, every day for 11 months.

Yes, he lost a tremendous amount of weight, but his dietary selections were not really healthy. Relative to what he'd previously eaten – double cheeseburgers, super-sized portions of fries, and up to 20 cans of soda pop per day – his Subway choices seem better. Because his overall caloric intake dropped considerably and he started exercising, the weight came off. Thinking that all calories are created equal and that diet soda and baked chips are suitable for consumption twice daily is just wrong. Poor misguided Jared ate the same thing every day for nearly a year – meals consisting of low fibre, processed bread and chips and deli meat laden with sodium.

When Jared peaked at 425 pounds, he probably wasn't considering long-term consequences and was more focused on the immediate, urgent need to lose weight, no matter what. Losing all that excess weight has tremendous health benefits. Still, I feel sad that he didn't know better, that he didn't fuel his body with quality food.

Jared has made millions of dollars as Subway's spokesperson and he's managed to keep his weight at a healthy num-



## Focus on Fitness

Gloria Schwartz

ber, although I don't know what he's been eating since losing that weight. If you want to be healthier, don't follow Jared's example with regard to food. A good thing he has done is engaging in regular exercise, and working out with a personal trainer. He even ran a marathon in 2010.

Before I changed my lifestyle, I often ate at food courts, but you'll rarely catch me eating there anymore. I'm not saying I'm perfect. I just make more mindful choices. I eat lunch at home before I head to the mall. That way, I don't get a hunger pang and impulsively buy something unhealthy. I often bring a water bottle and even a small snack in my purse, so I have something handy, if I do feel thirsty or hungry. I do stop for a turkey or veggie sub the odd time when I'm on a road trip and find my brown bag empty.

Whatever you look like on the outside, take care of your inner health. Don't presume you're immune to disease just because you're thin. Everyone should get regular physicals. Know your numbers. If you have risk factors, learn what you can do to get on a healthier track. Start by saying "no" to fast food and soda pop. Eat real, unprocessed food most of the time and engage in aerobic and strength training exercises several times per week.

Gloria Schwartz is a certified personal trainer at the Soloway JCC.

# Making connections and building relationships

## Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community

By Ron Wolfson

Jewish Lights Publishing  
262 pages

The decades-old debate about Jewish continuity is fast evolving into discussions of how best to engage Jews and revitalize communities. In *Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community*, Ron Wolfson, professor of education at American Jewish University and a co-founder of the Synagogue 3000 project, presents an approach that he terms "relational Judaism." This is less a new theology or ideology as it is a simple, time-tested strategy: connect with people, build relationships with them, and they will come.

The first half of the book draws on an array of Jewish textual sources with a sprinkling of social theory to buttress the view that relationships should be at the heart of Jewish communal life. He bases his core idea on the concept of *brit* (covenant). In Jewish parlance, we are used to *brit* referring to the state of being bound to God's demands. But Wolfson broadens this to conceive of *brit* as a social contract, and so, he writes, "we are obligated to one another by a system of *mitzvot*." He gives as examples everything from attending funerals to dinners where a friend is being honoured by a Jewish communal organization, to attending protest rallies against the genocide in Darfur.

What brings the book to life are the mini-case studies and the series of best practices Wolfson provides in the second half. He spotlights two organizations he argues owe their success to a relational approach – Chabad and Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

Chabad rabbis are sent to all corners of the world where their primary task is to connect with Jews. Instead of a fixed dues structure, Chabad relies on fundraising and donations, typically garnered from those who have – you guessed it –

## Book Review

Mira Sucharov

enjoyed a relationship with a Chabad rabbi.

Hillel, for its part, recently launched an emissary campaign of sorts, recruiting students on campus to make connections with scores of others. These representatives are given "coffee money" to host students for chats and dinners.

Wolfson lists an array of other best practices from other organizations, many of which come from extended quotes from Jewish communal professionals. Ikar, the Los Angeles-based spiritual community Ikar encourages members to write reflections of their deceased loved ones in their annual Yizkor book. Some *kehillot* (spiritual communities, including traditional congregations) hold intimate salon gatherings in people's homes, where the facilitator asks, "What keeps you up at night?" or "What gets you up in the morning?"

One Jewish communal leader Wolfson cites eats three breakfasts per day, so he can meet with an array of stakeholders in one-on-one meetings throughout the week. One pulpit rabbi asked for a catering budget in his contract so he could regularly host congregants at his home for Shabbat dinner throughout the year. Other congregations prioritize funding a Shabbat lunch each week so members can mix and mingle. The rabbi at these lunches might invite a rotating group of people to join him at his table, akin to a *rabbi's tisch*, Wolfson suggests. Still other rabbis stop the Shabbat service, midway, and ask congregants to turn to someone behind them to talk, or turn to family members to "ask forgive-

ness from each other before asking forgiveness from God."

Wolfson suggests rabbis attend fewer committee meetings in favour of building personal relationships – including pastoral care – and generally connecting off-site with individuals. He suggests adding dedicated staff people in a given organization to specifically work on relationships. He notes how surprised congregants are, if they happen to receive a *Shana Tova* phone call from their synagogue staff not tied to

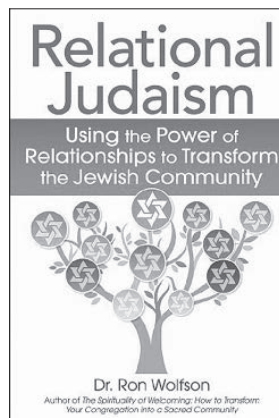
any questions about overdue dues. And he is right to acknowledge non-traditional constellations of Jews, including GLBT Jews, those who are intermarried and even Jewish atheists. It may be, however, that these respective groupings require slightly different approaches.

Little of this will seem new to those of us who are active in community organizations. But it strikes me that so much of it still needs to be restated. How many newcomers arrive at a shul and are greeted? How many congregants in a given shul have a chance – outside of bar and bat mitzvah lessons, weddings or

funerals – to interact with their rabbi? How many people feel they are truly connected with other members of the Jewish communal organizations they are involved with? How many feel their personal hopes and dreams are heard and recognized and that they have a voice in shaping their community's future?

Given that some of the most successful outreach and relational efforts have relatively low institutional overhead in favour of a high degree of connecting – for example, Moishe House, where young adults, living communally, are given program funding to host Jewish events, or Chabad or, here in Ottawa, JET and Glebe Shul – one wonders how Wolfson ultimately squares his "belief in institutions," even in the age of downsizing and mergers, with this relational approach.

Can it all be done? To my mind, it can't hurt to try.



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Continued on page 26

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### WEEKLY EVENTS TUESDAYS

**Israeli Folkdancing:** Learn contemporary Israeli dances in a friendly atmosphere. No partner required. Introductory Steps - 6:30 pm; Beginners and Requests - 7:00 pm; Intermediate and Advanced Requests - 8:30 pm, Ottawa Jewish Community School Gymnasium, 31 Nadolny Sachs

Private. Info: 613-256-6272.

613-798-2411.

7:00 pm. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

### WEDNESDAYS

**Drop-In Playgroup** for newborn to 3 years of age, 9:00 am. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 263.

### FRIDAYS

**Shabbat Drop-in:** After playtime, recite blessings, sing songs and enjoy a snack of challah and juice, 9:30 am. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 263.

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

**Greenberg Families Library presents Author Talk and Book Launch**, with Rubin Friedman, who will discuss his book "Our Family Holocaust Chronicle, Part 1 – Running for their lives," 2:00 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 245.

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

**Dr. Henri Habib** analyzes Middle East issues, 7:30 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 243. (Also Tuesday, November 12.)

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

**JJ Keki and the Ottawa Simcha Band** perform, 7:15 pm. Info: 613-366-1770.

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

**Launch of Holocaust Education Month on 75th Anniversary of Kristallnacht.** Keynote address by David Engel of New York University. Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 7:00 pm. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

**Classical guitarist Laura Young** performs, 7:30 pm, Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Drive. Info: 613-224-1802.

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 28

**Shalom Ottawa** community TV show on Rogers 22. 6:00 pm. (Repeats November 1 at 6:00 pm.)

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29

**2013 JNF Negev Dinner** honouring Dr. Robert Roberts, president and CEO of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau Street. Info:

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

**Free Thinking Film Festival** presents several films of interest to the Jewish community. Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street. Info: freethinkingfilmfest.ca.

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4

**Documentary, "Children without a Shadow,"** a program of Holocaust Education Month. Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street,

## COMING SOON

### NOVEMBER 14 TO 29

**Exhibit: "Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity,"** part of Holocaust Education Month, and presented by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and the Shoah Committee. Created by the Polish History Museum. Guided tours begin November 18, Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Place. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 253.

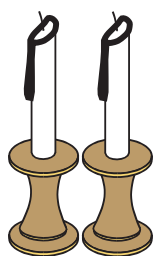
### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

**SJCC Chanukah Gift Fair:** Pick up unique gifts and all your Chanukah supplies, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Includes Author Talk with Nancy Richler, who will discuss her novel, "Imposter Bride" (2:00 pm). Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 243.

**PJ Library and Family Life Centre Chanukah Party**, for children aged 6 and under, 10:00 am. Info: 613-798-4644.

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26

**Jewish Federation of Ottawa Members' Meeting**, featuring the unveiling of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin's* new format and fresh content. Columnists Jason Moscovitz, Barbara Crook and Mira Sucharov will speak. All welcome, 7:00 pm. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 236.



### CANDLELIGHTING BEFORE

Nov 1 ☆ 5:29 pm  
Nov 8 ☆ 4:20 pm

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 co-ordinator Benita Siemiatycki via e-mail at [bsiemiatycki@jewishottawa.com](mailto: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:*

**Kenneth Victor Chernick**

**Marcia Dworkin (née Weidman), Toronto**  
(sister of Roslyn Taller)

**Lewis E. Levy, QC**

**Rebecca Liff (née Schlossberg)**

**Roslyn Rose, Toronto** (mother of Dr. Edward Rose)

*May their memory be a blessing always.*

The  
CONDOLENCE

COLUMN

is offered as a public service to the community. There is no charge.

For a listing in this column, please call 613-798-4696, ext. 274.

Voice mail is available.

## BULLETIN DEADLINES

NOVEMBER 4  
FOR NOVEMBER 25 \*

NOVEMBER 20  
FOR DECEMBER 9

JANUARY 2  
FOR JANUARY 20

\* Community-wide Issue  
(all dates subject to change)

## JEWISH MEMORIAL GARDENS

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[www.jewishmemorialgardens.org](http://www.jewishmemorialgardens.org)



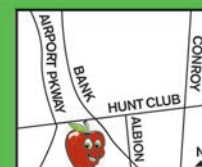
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