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Rabbi Bulka to become rabbi emeritus after almost half a century in the pulpit

Machzikei Hadas hopes to install new spiritual leader by Rosh Hashanah 2015

BY MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas since 1967, will retire as the synagogue's pulpit rabbi, probably before Rosh Hashanah in 2015.

In a November 18 letter to congregants, Rabbi Bulka explained he will "graduate" to become rabbi emeritus of the modern Orthodox congregation, "a new role ... which will keep me connected to the shul and to you."

Jonah Rabinovitch, president of Machzikei Hadas, has announced a succession plan in which a search will be undertaken immediately. If all goes according to the plan, the search committee will identify three or four top candidates who will visit the congregation over the next few months. Members will then vote on their choice.

Machzikei Hadas' rabbinical search committee, co-chaired by David Appotive and Bram Bregman, includes Bonnie Fainer, Adele Sidney, Charlie Wiseman, Lawrence Weinstein, Cybele Hamburg, Tamara Fathi, Sari Zelenietz and Rabinovitch.

It is hoped the new rabbi will be settled in Ottawa by next Rosh Hashanah and will work with Rabbi Bulka as associate

rabbi for a transitional year before being installed as pulpit rabbi by the following Rosh Hashanah.

However, Rabinovitch noted, "if the right candidate does not come along, Rabbi Bulka will remain as rabbi until we have the appropriate candidate in place."

When a brief article appeared in the October 3, 1967 edition of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* announcing that Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka of New York had been appointed as the new spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, few could have imagined it would be the beginning of one of the longest and most remarkable rabbinic tenures in Jewish Canadian history.

In 1967, when Rabbi Bulka arrived in Ottawa at age 23, Machzikei Hadas was a Lowertown congregation of less than 100 families. Founded in 1907 and located at the corner of Murray Street and King Edward Avenue since 1923, it was struggling because much of Ottawa's Jewish community had already moved away from the neighbourhoods it had been centred in since early in the 20th century.

The congregation, though, was revitalized by the charismatic young rabbi and, by 1973, had built a new synagogue on Virginia Drive in Alta Vista that



PHOTO: ASHLEY FRASER

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka expects to become rabbi emeritus of Congregation Machzikei Hadas by Rosh Hashanah in 2015. By then, he will have been spiritual leader of the modern Orthodox congregation for 48 years.

eventually grew to encompass more than 500 families.

Over the years, Rabbi Bulka has become legendary for the scope of his many activities as both a clergyman and a leader in the Jewish community and in the broader civic community at the local, provincial, national and international levels. Somehow finding time to earn his

PhD and to write or edit more than 30 books and countless newspaper, magazine and journal articles, he has been a tireless leader in many organizations – including the Canadian Jewish Congress, where he served as co-president from 2007 to 2009 – and a crusader for many worthy causes.

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New look celebrated and new website revealed at Ottawa Jewish Bulletin launch event

BY MONIQUE ELLIOT

The November 25 print issue of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* was the first to arrive in subscribers' mailboxes with the 76-year-old community newspaper's new design.

The launch of new design was celebrated, and the *Bulletin's* new online edition at www.ottawajewishbulletin.com was "revealed" at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's members meeting, November 26, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

Andrea Freedman, Federation president and CEO, said revamping the *Bulletin* has been "a labour of love."

"It has been a two-year process to get us where we are today," she said, noting the Federation Board acknowledged the need to change and put the process in motion.

The relaunch of the *Bulletin* means a major change in four key areas, Freedman said. Among the most noticeable changes is the layout with a "crisp, clean, newer, terrific" look, she said.

The editorial direction for the *Bulletin* is also going to be more about dialogue within the community, Freedman said.

"It will really delve into the key issues we deal with on a day-to-day basis," she said, adding that articles and columns will analyze more divisive issues in order to encourage the community to engage in its own problem solving.

"The *Bulletin* has joined the conversation," she said.

Jason Moscovitz agreed it was time for the *Bulletin* to join the online news community.

"I think it's a big change, I think it's a very positive change, but being online now, we're not reinventing the wheel, we're catching up with the rest of the world," said the *Ideas and Impressions* columnist.

"The *Bulletin* is really one of my

favourite outlets in which I write because I know I'm writing for my community and that there may be letters to the editor," said *Values, Ethics, Community* columnist Mira Sucharov, who reached a personal milestone of 100 columns for the *Bulletin* this year.

My *Israel* columnist Barbara Crook emphasized the need for a more open and engaging dialogue between readers and the *Bulletin*.

"We need more voices," she said. "We don't need fewer voices."

Dissenting views would not weaken community ties, she emphasized; rather, it is important to hear and consider opinions of community members in order to challenge one's own ideas in order to grow and learn.

Editor Michael Regenstreif emphasized that the changes to the paper are a natural progression of its history.

"The *Bulletin* has gone through many changes over these past 76 years, always striving to keep up with technology, with society as a whole, and with the Jewish community in particular," he said.

The launch of the new *Bulletin* website is seen by many involved in the project to be the most significant update to the paper, which will make it fully accessible to anyone on the Internet and on platforms ranging from smartphones and tablets to computers.

David Berman, whose company, David Berman Communications, was commissioned to redesign the 76-year-old newspaper, walked the crowd through many of the new online features, including functional links to advertisers' websites, moderated comment boards, the event calendar, archives of back issues, and website accessibility functions such as language selection and text-



PHOTO: ASHLEY FRASER

Bulletin columnist Jason Moscovitz pointed out that many of the publications that inspired him to become a journalist, such as the *Montreal Star*, the *Ottawa Journal* and *Life* magazine, have disappeared while the 76-year-old *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* has continued to adapt and reinvent itself for the changing times.

to-voice options.

Berman said he is very excited about the level of accessibility the *Bulletin* now offers to Ottawa's Jewish community.

He said the online issues would make it easier for persons with disabilities to stay informed and involved in the community while simultaneously reaching younger adults who prefer to get their news online.

Berman said he hopes the revamp will "create a culture that leaves no one behind," emphasizing that the assistive technology implemented in the website will not alienate any particular demographic or discourage persons with disabilities from staying informed.

One of the features Berman demonstrated is ZoomText, which allows a person to enlarge the text and clearly read articles.

"That's a game-changer," he said.

"For some in our community, that's the whole game."

While newspapers generating content for both print and online is nothing new, Berman said Ottawa Jewish community members continue to be pioneers in their quest for improvement and innovation when it comes to engagement, and praised their ability to keep a community institution afloat, even during tough times.

"It's absolutely been a privilege for me and my team" to be involved in the revamp, he said.

Established in 1937 as "a force for constructive communal consciousness," those involved in the project said they see the *Bulletin* changes as continuing a process of renewal, hope, and sharing within Ottawa's Jewish community.



PHOTO: ASHLEY FRASER

The look of the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin has changed several times over the newspaper's 76-year history.

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CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

DEC 13	3:59 pm	JAN 10	4:19 pm
DEC 20	4:01 pm	JAN 17	4:28 pm
DEC 27	4:06 pm	JAN 24	4:38 pm
JAN 3	4:12 pm	JAN 31	4:48 pm

BULLETIN DEADLINES

JANUARY 2	FOR JANUARY 20
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JANUARY 29	FOR FEBRUARY 17
FEBRUARY 12	FOR MARCH 3

Tikkun olam: 'We can all do a small part to repair the world'

In this guest column, **Joshua Finn** talks about his inspiring trip to Thailand with a Jewish social justice group.

Thailand: a country that conjures up images of beautiful beaches, ancient temples, elephants, bustling markets and exotic food. I discovered all these and more on my recent trip there. Yet, beneath the surface in what is often called the *Land of Smiles*, lies a different reality.

I travelled to Thailand with Justifi, an organization that organizes social justice trips for Jewish students and young professionals. The trip, from July 2 to 11, focused on issues of human trafficking and child exploitation which are persistent problems in the Asia-Pacific region, home to half of the estimated 21 million people in forced labour worldwide.

To learn first-hand about these difficult issues, we first met with Bonita Thompson, founder of Bangkok's House of New Beginnings. Bonita has made it her life's mission to rescue Thai girls – some as young as 11 – from the immense sex trade in Bangkok's infamous red light districts.

Bonita explained that most of the victims come from the poorer regions of Northern Thailand. With cultural pressure to provide for the family, an all-too-common downward spiral begins with a move to Bangkok, frequently leading to prostitution often combined with drug and alcohol abuse.

In Northern Thailand, we were

inspired by a number of strongly passionate people working hard to change this reality for their community's children and to help ensure Thailand's youth enjoy a more promising future.

We met people such as Boom Bean, who began the Big Brother project in which children living on the streets of Chiang Mai – Thailand's second-largest city – participate in activities with members of the local police force. We were lucky enough to join them on a bowling excursion. These outings are designed to build trust and mutual understanding between the youth and the police.

Thanks to Justifi, we had the chance to meet people ... who saw a problem and had the courage and initiative to do something about it.

In the rural area around Chiang Rai, near the border with Myanmar, we met Sakkawan Sommuang – a.k.a. Tom – a jovial and inspiring man who literally built the Tom Karen Centre from the ground up.

The centre is an after-school facility for children from the Karen Hill tribe to learn English. Proficiency in English is a key to ensuring a greater chance for youth in Thailand to achieve success later in life. Tom himself only recently began to learn English (with the help of the film *Good Will Hunting*). He runs the centre with few resources and little money, but easily makes up for this with a fervent passion and desire to make a difference for his people. The Tom Karen Centre is growing and is seeing positive results



Joshua Finn (far right) and other Justifi volunteers with Sakkawan Sommuang – a.k.a. Tom – at the Tom Karen Centre near Chiang Rai, Thailand.



Joshua Finn of Ottawa with students at a school in Northern Thailand.

from its programs.

In Chiang Rai, we also met Nathan Ritter, an American who moved to Thailand four years ago to work with the SOLD Project. This organization provides scholarships and resources to children at risk of entering prostitution and forced labour and was founded by Rachel Sparks, a documentary filmmaker who, while producing *The SOLD Project: Thailand*, a film about child prostitution, found that common themes of poverty, lack of education and an overall lack of other viable options were responsible for leading many children into that life.

Before the trip, I was somewhat skeptical about the difference we could really make in such a short period of time. While we didn't change the world in 10 days, we did witness the genuine appreciation of those we worked with, and the excitement of the kids who had the opportunity to build their confidence by practicing their English. I believe we did make a difference.

Through games of soccer and volleyball at local elementary and high schools, mixing concrete to build the outside of a frog pond, tying bamboo together to make fences at the Tom Karen Centre and teaching English through drama and dance, in our short time in Thailand, we

bonded with the youth and gained a deeper appreciation about some of the tragic issues facing children in this part of the world, and more specifically, this part of Thailand.

Rabbi Jamie Cowland, who led the trip, founded the Justifi organization to provide an experience for Jewish students and young professionals to "experience the struggle for basic human rights, idealism, leadership and the Jewish approach to tikkun olam (repairing the world)."

Thanks to Justifi, we had the chance to meet people like Bonita, Boom, Tom and Nathan: individuals who saw a problem and had the courage and initiative to do something about it. These people dedicate their lives to providing opportunities and a brighter future for their community's children. They are doing their part to repair a little piece of the world.

Not all of us can be Boom or Tom, but we can all do a small part to repair the world – here at home and around the world. My experiences in Thailand with Justifi showed me how much each of us really can do, and how one person really can make a difference.

Visit www.justifi.org for more information about Justifi and its social action initiatives.

Pearls of Wisdom event offers insight into financial planning and philanthropy for women

BY EILEEN MELNICK-MCCARTHY
WCPP MEMBER

“We often hear, ‘If you don’t have your health, then what do you have?’” said Janet Dollin, an Ottawa family physician. “I will expand that to say, ‘If you don’t have control of your wealth, however little or much there might be of it, then you will never have your health.’”

Dollin, a board member of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation’s Women’s Collective Philanthropy Program (WCPP), was speaking at the WCPP’s annual Pearls of Wisdom event, October 27 at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. The theme this year was *Women and Our Money: Knowing It; Growing It and Giving It*.

Our spending and savings habits and attitudes can literally make us ill, according to Dollin.

“I regularly see young women with



PHOTO: REBECCA NAGRODSKI

(From left) Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation; WCPP co-chairs Erica Sher and Yaffa Greenbaum; panelists Janet Dollin, Foundation Chair Lynne Oreck-Wener and Diane Koven; and Eileen Melnick-McCarthy at the Pearls of Wisdom event, October 27.

irritable bowels or headaches, mid-life women with anxiety or depressed moods, older women with insomnia, as just a few lifecycle examples, relating to their financial insecurity,” she said.

There are many reasons women are resistant to knowing their finances and taking control of their money and Moira Somers, a Winnipeg-based psychologist, coach and financial change expert, provided some practical advice for getting past their initial trepidation in a video-taped message.

Other speakers at the Pearls of Wisdom event included Diane Koven, a certified financial planner and WCPP member, who discussed the practical side of financial planning and how women,

regardless of their financial circumstances, can take the first steps in getting on track; and Lynne Oreck-Wener, chair of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation, who gave examples of the many ways women can empower themselves to be philanthropic, regardless of the size of their donation.

Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, moderated the discussion.

“Our Pearls of Wisdom event is an important fundraising vehicle for the Women’s Collective Philanthropy Program, and it does two things really well,” said Yaffa Greenbaum, who co-chairs the WCPP with Erica Sher. “It gives us the opportunity to share information we believe is of interest to the women of our community, and it provides us with an opportunity to profile and support of our cause. We’re thrilled with this year’s turnout and event.”

Pearls of Wisdom attendees also had an opportunity to purchase local jewelry creations from True Bijoux, Beads! by Erica, and Wearable Art by Linda Goldberg with partial proceeds from the sale donated to the WCPP.

The WCPP has begun to provide financial support to deserving community projects. Our first grant was awarded last spring to JET (Jewish Education through Torah) and its Ottawa division of the Jewish Women’s Renaissance Program. The grant provided partial funding for *From Head and Heart to Helping Hand*, a program designed to provide Jewish women between the ages of 30 and 60 with increased information, training and skills to enable them to become active volunteers and leaders in Ottawa’s Jewish community.

The Women’s Collective Endowment Fund (WCEF) is a fund of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation. WCEF capital is invested annually, with a portion of the income disbursed to causes that benefit women and children in Ottawa.

The mission of the WCPP is to educate and empower women to speak about issues that matter to our membership, to learn from each other’s experiences and seek ways to solve identified problems. To learn more about the WCPP, to become a member, or to donate to the WCEF, contact Rebecca Nagrodski at 613-798-4696, ext. 252 or rnagrodski@ojcf.ca, or visit www.ojcf.ca.

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Rabbi Bulka: Looking forward to becoming rabbi emeritus

Continued from page 1

In an interview with the *Bulletin*, Rabbi Bulka said he was looking forward to assuming his role as rabbi emeritus,

although the specifics of his duties remain to be determined.

"I'll be available to fill the congregational needs," he said.

RABBI BULKA TIMELINE

COMPILED BY EMILY LEONOFF
OTTAWA JEWISH ARCHIVES

- 1944 – Born in London, England.
- 1946 – Family moved to New York.
- 1965 – Graduated from City University in New York and ordained at the Rabbi Jacob Joseph Rabbinical Seminary.
- 1967 – Invited to come lead the Congregation of Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa.
- 1970-2006 – Host of the TV series, *In Good Faith*.
- 1971 – Received his PhD from the University of Ottawa with a concentration in Logotherapy.
- 1976 – Founded the Centre for the Study of Psychology and Judaism. He was also founder and editor of the *Journal of Psychology and Judaism*.
- 1993 – Recipient of the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada Medal.
- 1994 – Started as host of the weekly radio program, *Sunday Night with Rabbi Bulka* on CFRA.
- 1995 – Became a regular contributor to the Ottawa Citizen's "Ask the Religion Experts" column.
- 1998 – Recipient of the Beryl Plumtre Award of Excellence from the Kidney Foundation of Canada.
- 1999 – Recipient of the Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award, the highest honour bestowed by the Jewish community of Ottawa.
- 1999 – Recipient of the Mayor's Award for Community Service.

- 2001 – Recipient of the Scouts Canada National Salute award.
 - 2004 – Recipient of the Bronfman Medal from the Canadian Jewish Congress.
 - 2006 – Named "outstanding volunteer fundraiser" when he chaired the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation's Courage Campaign.
 - 2006 – Awarded an honorary doctorate of laws from Carleton University.
 - 2007 – Served as chair of the Trillium Gift of Life Network (responsible for organ and tissue donation in Ontario).
 - 2007-2009 – Served as co-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress.
 - 2009 – Named honorary principal of Salanter Akiba Riverdale Academy in Riverdale, NY.
 - 2010 – Awarded the Key to the City of Ottawa, the highest honour bestowed by the city.
 - 2013 – Appointed to the Order of Canada.
- He is also the author of numerous books, journal and newspaper articles on Jewish philosophy, psychology and the relationship between psychology and religion and psychology and Judaism.
- Rabbi Bulka was also chair of the Religious and Inter-Religious Affairs Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, chair of the Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation, co-chair of the Ottawa World Jewry Committee (formerly Ottawa Soviet Jewry Committee), chair of the State of Israel Bonds National Rabbinic Cabinet, and a number of other service organizations – and much more.

"I hope to," Rabbi Bulka said, when asked if he planned to continue with such activities as hosting his popular weekly radio program, *Sunday Night with Rabbi Bulka*, on CFRA, providing the Jewish perspective to the "Ask the Religion Experts" column in the *Ottawa Citizen*, and his many charitable involvements.

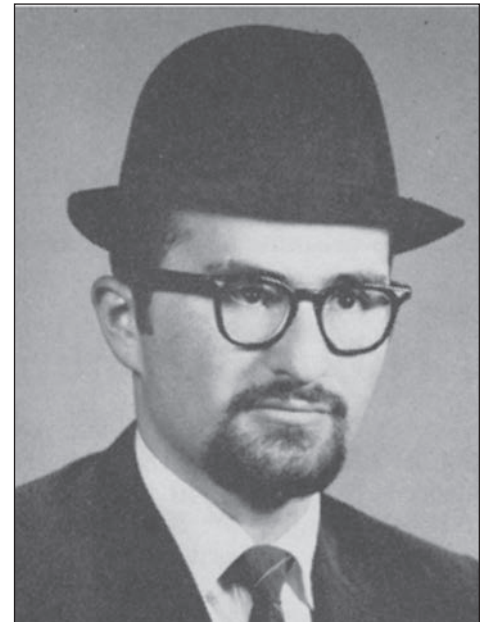
Looking back at a long career in which he has performed lifecycle events for generations of many of the same families, the rabbi was philosophical as he contemplated this next step in his long career.

"Nothing lasts forever – nor should it, because there needs to be room for succession, for new energies, and I'm happy that that will be happening and that it will unfold well," he said. "Every rabbinate has its challenges – and we've had challenges here – but the [Ottawa] community has been super-duper and my experience in the rabbinate here, on the basis of comparisons with other colleagues of mine, has been right at the top."

Rabbi Bulka said he is most definitely looking forward to opportunities to spend more time with his children and grandchildren, none of whom live in Ottawa.

"I have two girls and three boys," he said. "Most of them are in the New York area, although one is in Baltimore and another is in Jerusalem."

Rabbi Bulka noted that, among his five children and his wife Leah's two children, the couple has more than 30 grandchildren and he's looking forward to being with them on a more leisurely basis.



This photo from the October 3, 1967 edition of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* accompanied an article announcing Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka as the new spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas.

While Rabbi Bulka speaks of the inevitability of his retirement, it will surely not be easy for a congregation that has known no other spiritual leader for almost half a century.

"I speak for all of us when I say that Rabbi Bulka is a first-class mensch and that it will be difficult to see him transition," wrote Rabinovitch. "He has touched every one of our lives and has always been there for us."

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FEDERATION
REPORT



LISA ROSENKRANTZ
PARTNERSHIP 2GETHER

Partnership 2Gether links our community with the Upper Galilee

Jewish communities in Canada and Israel; and to develop the Galilee Panhandle and improve the living standards for its residents. In particular, P2G has identified the development of high quality educational opportunities for children and youth as the region's highest priority.

One such educational project is the new medical school in Safed. We visited the school while in Israel for the P2G annual meeting last month. There we met a renowned biologist who grew up in the north of Israel. He attended the Hanadiv school in Metulla, which partners with the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS), completed his undergraduate degree at Tel Hai college, also in the north, and then completed graduate degrees at Cornell University in the United States. He was recently recruited to teach at the medical school. This biologist returned to the

north because of programs like P2G, which have helped the medical school attract world-class physicians and scientists. The quality and scope of the school's new lab facilities will enable him to conduct exciting research into understanding the role of bacteria in health and wellness.

During our recent visit to Israel, Barbara Crook, the incoming chair of the P2G Committee, my husband Michael Walsh and I were warmly welcomed at the Hanadiv School as students and teachers shared an overview of special programs and performed songs. This visit was particularly sweet for Barbara and Michael as they had participated in a community mission to Israel in August 2006 after the Second Lebanon War ended. During that visit, they helped to clean up damage caused by rockets.

The P2G Committee is also involved in a number of exciting activities in Ottawa,

including the partnership between the Hanadiv School and OJCS. Grade 5 and 6 students from the Hanadiv School visited here last May in a *mifgash* (meeting) and were hosted by Ottawa families. This year, the students will communicate electronically in a special project about Jewish Canadian and Israeli authors and poets aimed at teaching the students more about each other's culture and language.

Another big upcoming project is the Social Action Mission to Israel from December 26 to January 5. P2G is sending a group of young Ottawa adults to our partner region where they will be home-hosted by Israeli young adults. Together they will visit P2G initiatives and undertake a social action project at a youth club house in Metulla. It is a neglected building that used to be a kindergarten, and the plan is for them to create a small garden, do renovations such as painting, and organize the club house so that it can be enjoyed by youth. Our Ottawa community is providing the funding for the supplies, and will work along Israelis to do the work.

To learn about P2G programs, or to get involved, please contact Sarah Beutel at sbeutel@jewishottawa.com.

As chair of the Partnership 2Gether (P2G) Committee, I have had the pleasure and honour to see many important initiatives come to fruition and have seen first-hand the progress that is being made in several of our Canadian-funded projects located in northern Israel in the *Etzvah Hagalil*.

P2G is a program that unites smaller Jewish communities from across Canada with communities in the northern part of Israel known as the Galilee Panhandle. P2G has a two-fold mandate: to strengthen the relationship between

FROM THE
PULPIT



RABBI STEVEN GARTEN
TEMPLE ISRAEL

In the diaspora, we fight and struggle to define our Jewishness

country that I hope will be explored. I am interested in the personal Jewish journey each person makes.

This is a land that prods and pricks one's Jewish self. Shabbat here is unlike Shabbat anywhere else, but what of a Jerusalem Shabbat can we bring home?

If travelling here is to be more than a visit to the *Jewish Disneyland*, each of us should find how to internalize and synthesize the experience in a way that makes us a different Jew from the one who got on the plane.

As I write, it is a few days before we will light the *chanukiyah*. Here, in Israel, we may light the candles six hours earlier than those at home in Ottawa, but that will not be the most significant difference in our experiences. Nor will the *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts) we eat versus the latkes you fry be the variable in our experiences.

No, what will mark our celebrations is the recognition that, in this land, the battle between the forces of assimilation and an exclusive Jewish identity were resolved 2,200 years ago.

The Maccabees' victory was one in which the forces of a singular unassimil-

ated Jewish identity defeated the proponents of a shared Greek Jewish identity.

That battle is no longer fought in this land. In Ottawa, however, we fight and struggle to define our Jewishness. We wrestle with definitions such as religious, secular, cultural, ethnic and genetic. We actively or passively search for meaning in our Chanukah celebrations. Dreidels, latkes, childhood songs and fairy tale stories do not make for mature understandings and deep committed identities.

When we light the candles on the first night of Chanukah on a kibbutz near the Lebanese border, we will hear kibbutzniks sing of a victory in the name of Jewish externality. But, when we sing the blessings and songs of the Maccabees, will we be as sure of why we are singing?

Due to deadlines and production schedules, I'm writing this column just before Chanukah and you'll be reading it just afterward. In any case, let me wish you a belated "Happy Chanukah!" from the land of Judah, Judith, Abraham, Sarah and a thousand other Jewish role models.

Shalom. Although I will be back in Ottawa by the time you read this edition of the *Bulletin*, I am writing from the holy city of Jerusalem where I am accompanying 25 members of Ottawa's Jewish community on an 11-day journey that began the week before Chanukah.

There are many ways to traverse this land. Some trips focus on the miracle known as the *Start-up Nation*, the vibrant technological industry for which Israel has become well known.

There are trips that focus on the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and there are, of course, many missions sponsored by institutions and organizations. All of them are wonderful and provide great opportunities to explore the new and old Israel.

Yet, when I am here, it is not the

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PUBLISHER
Andrea Freedman

EDITOR
Michael Regenstreif

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Brenda Van Vliet

BUSINESS MANAGER
Barry Silverman

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

A rabbinic career that has become truly legendary

extensively with the *Canadian Jewish News* and became well aware of Rabbi Bulka and the impact he has had on the national stage as a Jewish community leader – and as one of the best known and most respected rabbis in the country. His long tenure with Machzikei Hadas is unprecedented in Ottawa and has very few precedents anywhere.

And I soon found out that Rabbi Bulka's stature extends far beyond the Jewish community. His dedication to so many worthy causes, his radio show and newspaper columns, his idea to establish Kindness Week, and so much more, have made him one of the best known and most respected figures in Ottawa – and far beyond.

In 2007, I was talking with Terry Eagan, a non-Jewish friend of mine who lives in the Boston area. When I told Terry I was about to move to Ottawa to work at the *Bulletin*, he surprised me by saying, "You'll get to meet my friend Rabbi Bulka."

How would Terry even know a rabbi in a city hundreds of miles and an international border away?

Terry is a cancer survivor and lost his wife, Mary, to leukemia in 1992. Since then, he has been dedicated to raising the necessary funds and then building healing gardens for patients at cancer centres in the United States and Canada.

And Rabbi Bulka has dedicated so much time and energy to many health-related efforts, including chairing the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation's Courage Campaign. I now know I shouldn't have been surprised that Terry would have known the rabbi and had so much fond affection for him. (By the way, there is now a Mary Eagan Healing Garden on the grounds of the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park in Ottawa.)

THANK YOU CINDY

With this issue, the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* bids a fond farewell to Cindy Feingold and her *Made with Love* food column, which has appeared in our pages for the past 11 years.

Back in February, Cindy let me know she planned to stop writing the column at the end of 2013 because she and her husband, Roger, are hoping to spend

much of the next few years travelling.

While not being much of a cook myself, I've always enjoyed reading *Made with Love* and seeing how creative one can be in the kitchen. And it's always been fascinating to see how Cindy has tied stories and anecdotes from her life to the recipes she's presented.

Bon Voyage and safe travels, Cindy and Roger!

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

It's now been a couple of weeks since the newly redesigned print edition and our all-new online edition at www.ottawajewishbulletin.com were revealed. I'm pleased to say the initial reaction has been great.

We want the *Bulletin*, both in print and online, to be a forum for constructive discussion about the issues of concern to our community. So, join the conversation and let your voice be heard. We welcome your comments, letters, guest columns, articles and photos. You can submit them online via the website or by email to bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com.

While there is sometimes not enough space in the print edition to publish all that we'd like to, the format of our new website allows us to publish *web extras*. So, check the site regularly for breaking news and bonus articles not in the print edition.

A few days after our November 25 issue went to press on November 15, I received word that Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka was announcing his plan to step down as spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas to become rabbi emeritus by Rosh Hashanah in 2015.

Despite the fact that his picture was on that November 25 front page illustrating an article about the current state of Ottawa's synagogues, I knew this *breaking news* meant Rabbi Bulka would be back on the front page again this issue. Such is the stature Rabbi Bulka has earned in a career that has become truly legendary.

Before I moved to Ottawa to work at the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, I worked

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

The blood sport of covering politics

Pamela Wallin and Mike Duffy bring reality TV up a level or two. They make it celebrity reality TV and people can't stop themselves from following it. And there are so many moving parts. Political drama played out in the highest office in the land with that distinct scent of political scandal that has the blood hounds barking. Prime Minister Stephen Harper is no longer the same leader because he no longer has the same invincible leadership mystique he had before. The Nixon questions – "What did he know?" and "When did he know it?" – are being asked.

Celebrity, power and a crack smoking mayor in Toronto have pushed up ratings on all of the cable news channels. So, give the people more and more of what they want and keep the ratings in the stratosphere.

It is often said that all-news television drives the news agenda for all the other media. It was interesting to see last month how the thousands of deaths in the Philippines was not always the lead item on the news. It depended on what happened with Ford and what new development there was in the Senate saga. It is not to say the Philippines were

ignored, it is more of an examination of what is seen to be of more interest to news consumers.

News channels and their viewers love their juicy stories and once they start telling them they can't stop. There is an adrenalin drive that goes with having celebrities in trouble, and the biggest adrenalin rush comes from having the most powerful person in the country in political difficulty. The blood sport of covering politics is often about getting to the top, getting to prove rot, corruption and untruths in the highest of places. It doesn't mean there is rot, corruption and untruths in high office, but it does mean every journalist dreams of being the one to expose them, if there were.

Politics is "the *Sopranos* without guns," wrote the *National Post's* Andrew Coyne in his October 23 column. What an apt description. What happens to the leader of a crime organization, a political organization, any organization, when things go wrong? Those leaders, let's say nine times out of 10, are never as strong again.

The clock begins ticking toward their leadership ending and the television networks are in a feeding frenzy looking

for their own Watergates. But the rules of engagement are very different now than they were in the 1970s. There were no all-news channels to drive the agenda back then. If there were, all those Watergate secrets would never have remained secret for as long as they did.

As the damage piles up from the Ford saga, the celebrity senators and questionable credibility in high office, there is the little known Liberal senator who seems to have slipped away from public scrutiny. Mac Harb resigned his Senate seat after paying back more than \$231,000 he allegedly owed the government. While his case remains under RCMP investigation, the former senator can thank his lack of national profile for being moved off the radar screen.

Before being appointed to the Senate by Jean Chrétien in 2003, Harb spent almost 15 years as MP for Ottawa Centre. His combined Commons/Senate pension is worth \$125,000 annually. By resigning, his pension is guaranteed, even if he is charged and convicted of any wrong doing. Had he not resigned, and if he were to be convicted, his pension would not be guaranteed. Resigning first was a well-thought-out business decision as his pension is almost as big as his Senate paycheque.

In today's world of 24-hour all-news channels, the luckiest senators are the non-celebrities who will leave this mess with a handsome, guaranteed, fully indexed pension, regardless.

Between Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, the Senate, and all those questions about credibility in the Prime Minister's Office, these have been stupendously interesting times. It would be enough to make grown men and women cry, if we weren't so cynical. Maybe crying would actually make us feel better.

With Ford, we all witnessed true blue raw reality TV. The personal demons and abuses made it, in a sick way, kind of funny at the beginning and just oh-so-sad as it continued to unravel. And the world watched: when was the last time a Canadian politician was featured so prominently on CNN, or a skit about him or her opened *Saturday Night Live*?

As for the ongoing saga in the Senate, that story seems to write itself. Senators



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Students visibly moved by stories shared by Holocaust survivors

BY ILANA BELFER
FOR HILLEL OTTAWA

A group of wide-eyed students and community members huddle around 80-year-old Vera Gara. As she speaks they hold their breath, and hold back tears.

“When we arrived at Bergen-Belsen there were lots of people yelling and telling us, ‘Be careful when you go to have a shower because we come from Auschwitz and our people are all gassed,’” she recalled.

She was 11 years old at the time. “What? Gassed? We’d never heard of this.”

Gara was one of about a dozen survivors who were on-hand, November 7 at Congregation Beth Shalom, to share a meal and their story with guests at Hillel Ottawa’s annual Dinner with Holocaust Survivors during Holocaust Education Month.

Over the past few years, Hillel has moved away from holding the dinner on Shabbat to allow for the use of electronics. Documentation via photographs and video and audio recordings have become increasingly important as survivors age. This year there were three last-minute cancellations by survivors this year due to illness.

This also meant that Gara could bring her iPad, which contained photos from a recent, incredible reunion with a woman named Mitzl Lagler Reithmayer in Austria. In 1944, when Gara and her family were imprisoned in a forestry work camp in Loitzendorf, then 12-year-old Mitzl, who lived on a nearby farm, snuck them milk every night after dark.

For Feyza Celik, who attended the event, hearing survivors’ stories first-hand was a unique opportunity. Celik, a third year public affairs and policy management student at Carleton University is president of the Intercultural Dialogue Club. She said she spent Grade 10 in Saudi Arabia and therefore missed the part of the high school history curriculum that teaches about the Holocaust.

“I’ll be honest, I have minimal knowledge about the Holocaust itself and the Second World War in general,” she said.

“I thought this would be good chance to learn about history and promote dialogue ... I’m a Muslim, so I thought it would be a good chance to come together.”

However, an evening with the witnesses of the Shoah themselves provided more of a history lesson than any class ever could.

“It was a whole other feeling to have that first-hand experience ... You felt like you were there,” Celik said.

“We, the younger generation, need to spread knowledge of the Holocaust and spread understanding and appreciation.”

Other Hillel Ottawa events during Holocaust Education Month included a screening of *Pink Triangles* on November 12 and an evening with survivor Louis Lemkow telling his story, both at the University of Ottawa, and interactive Holocaust education exhibits at Carleton University and uOttawa.

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**Save the Date:
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**Adding security plantings
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Whenever you are in Israel and you see an abundance of trees and forests, realize that they were planted by JNF with the support of many communities around the world. Over the past few years, JNF telethons have raised funds to plant trees for future generations, to restore parklands that have been the targets of rockets, or to reseed forests that were the victims of wildfires and arson. Specifically, JNF Ottawa telethons have raised money for key projects in Israel including the restoration of mountain terraces on Mount Carmel, the reforestation of recreation areas in Sderot, the transformation of dry river beds in Be'er Sheva to a huge national 1,700-acre park paradise, and many more.

Just as the trees didn't appear without hard work, JNF telethons couldn't happen without tremendous leadership and support. After five years of leading the JNF Ottawa Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon to new levels of fundraising success, Jane and Martin Gordon are passing the torch.

"It was an honour to co-chair the Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon for the past five years and work with so many dedicated volunteers. We are part-time Israelis, and JNF has a special meaning for us because of the work it does to improve the quality of life in Israel. It was a pleasure to assist the Ottawa Jewish community in generously supporting such a worthy cause," said Jane.

Penny Torontow, the former chair of Ottawa's Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration, and Debbie Silverman, an active community volunteer, are taking over as co-chairs.

"I care deeply about all things to do with Israel. Most of my family lives in Israel and I know that JNF impacts the lives of Israelis directly. I'm looking forward to a wonderful 2014 campaign, to working with our volunteers and connecting people with JNF projects in Israel. I hope that our community participates actively in this year's effort," said Penny.

"Anything that I can do to help Israel flourish is important to me. We need to ensure that Israel will be safe and secure for our children and for generations to come," added Debbie.

Funds raised this year will go towards the planting of a security road along the Israel-Lebanon border. More details to come.

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To help you return your full JNF Blue Boxes, we have several drop-off locations including our JNF office. Thank you to our JNF Blue Box location participants: Congregation Machzikei Hadas, Congregation Beit Tikvah, Congregation Beth Shalom, Agudath Israel Congregation, and Assist2Sell 1st Options Realty in the Greenbank Plaza.

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SJCC offers many opportunities for adult learning this winter

BY ROSLYN WOLLOCK
SOLOWAY JCC

In keeping with our tradition of providing high calibre adult education options, the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) has gathered some of the most respected and engaging professors, writers and artists in Ottawa to provide high level courses for the 2014 winter session.

Our adult learning courses cover a wide spectrum of subjects, including new Jewish content, music, drama, literature and art, to complement our highly successful Judaic core programs and art and music programs. The scope of this programming is evident in a few examples of upcoming courses.

Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton of Or Haneshamah, Ottawa's Reconstructionist congregation, will join our Judaic program's roster of instructors this winter. A much-sought-after speaker, performer and instructor at local, national and international Jewish programs, "Rabbi Liz" will offer a fresh look at Purim during her four-week course, "Purim and the *Book of Esther*: For Mature Audiences Only," emphasizing among other interesting elements, the historical improbabilities and oddly named characters found in the *Book of Esther*.

In a second class, "From Talmud to Today – Music and Liturgy," Rabbi Liz will employ her extensive music background to explore the fascinating history and development of Jewish liturgical music. Students will learn how the sounds heard in North American Ashkenazi congregations evolved from their rabbinic origins into a "nusah America."

University of Ottawa professor Pierre Anctil returns in January with a six-week course, "Contemporary Jewish History," a look at Jewish history from the French Revolution of 1789 to the Six Day War. The evolution of several Jewish communities in different countries and under different political regimes in France, Germany, Eastern Europe, North America and Israel will be examined.

In an intriguing six-week course, "From Gorbachev to Putin: Russian Writers & Society," University of Ottawa professor Douglas Clayton will combine lectures with short readings and discussion of some of the most interesting works of Russian writers from 1980 to 2000.

The theme of tribal migration to Ottawa by the Irish,



Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton joins the Soloway JCC's Judaic program with a four-week course on Purim.

Italian, Jewish and Chinese communities will be discussed by Ottawa historian, author and columnist Phil Jenkins in his newly researched four-week series, "Here to Stay: Tribal Migration to Ottawa."

If classical music is your passion, you'll find pleasure in "Music at Midday." A stimulating noon hour can be yours by joining pianist Katherine Addleman as she performs and talks about the lives of Bach, Scarlatti and Fanny Mendelssohn, among others.

Robert Sauvé's "Gustav Klimt's Vienna" will offer art history aficionados a look at why there remains an enduring fascination with the work of Gustav Klimt.

And lovers of the written word will see why Nobel Prize laureate Alice Munro has been lauded for her short stories. In "Alice Munro and the Discovery of Self," Lindsay Foran will trace Munro's career from her first collection, *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968), to her latest, *Dear Life* (2013).

For further information about these and other language, art, music and special interest courses this winter, visit www.jccottawa.com or contact Roslyn Wollock at rwollock@jccottawa.com.

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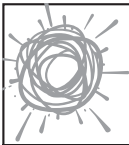
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Is the two-state solution really an illusion?

On September 14, Professor Ian Lustick of the University of Pennsylvania published an article, "Two State Illusion," in the *New York Times*.

Beyond arguing that Israel is a failing if not yet failed state, his main point was that diplomats, journalists and academics who cling to the two-state solution are actually impeding progress on a one-state solution to the region's problems. Thus, "Secretary of State John Kerry is merely the latest in a long line of well-meaning American diplomats wedded to an idea whose time is now past."

As with most others who argue for one state in the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, Lustick provides precious little indication of how such a state would come into being beyond such extraordinary statements as, "Untethered to statist Zionism in a rapidly changing Middle East, Israelis whose families came from Arab countries might find new reasons to think of themselves not as 'Eastern,' but as Arab." And that "many Israelis see the demise of the country as not just possible, but probable."

Presumably, proponents of one state are unaware that a one-state region was under British oversight for nearly 30 years and failed miserably; and that survey after survey shows neither Israelis nor Palestinians want a single state. Indeed, why should Israelis, whether left, right or centre, consent to minority status and to giving up Jewish statehood, particularly considering the long, bloody history of Jews in the Diaspora and the reason for the birth of Zionism in the first place; to say nothing of the history of strife with Arab neighbours?

Lustick goes on to say, "These days no one suggests that a negotiated two-state solution is probable."

He might better have argued that these days no one suggests that a negotiated two-state solution is easy. No doubt it will be difficult for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Many Palestinians have become convinced that one state will quickly result in an Arab majority and, over time, an Islamist government.

Arguably, negotiating for a two-state solution will be even harder for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The increasing number of settlements scattered across the West Bank is a major impediment to a two-state solution.

The settlements just east of Jerusalem are unlikely to pose a problem, as they will almost surely remain inside Israel once final borders are negotiated.

The others, in contrast, will have to be evacuated or the residents accept that they are going to live under Palestinian control with the IDF no longer there to protect them

It is not a pretty future, nor one that will remain bloodless, but population displacement is part of the

DAVID BROOKS
GUEST COLUMN

trade-offs in a final-status agreement inherent to initiating a two-state solution.

The right of return is Abbas' main problem. He will have to convince the people who voted for him that the right is restricted to returning to the new Palestinian state.

Except for a few tens of thousands excepted for reasons of family reunion, immigration doors into Israel will not be open to them. This is another of the trade-offs that will have to appear in that final-status agreement.

It is only naiveté that allows one to believe any of these problems will be avoided by a one-state solution. Among that state's first problems would be dealing with Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the perception that Palestinians still in refugee camps in surrounding areas will be immediately able to return to areas and homes that today look nothing like those they left. In addition, along with Israel, that fledgling state might be asked to contribute to funding compensation for Jews who were forced to leave their homes in Arab nations when Israel was voted into existence by the United Nations – yet another trade-off.

No, Professor Lustick, the two-state solution is neither an illusion nor out of date.

Rather, to paraphrase Winston Churchill's famous dictum that "democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others," the two-state solution is the worst possible solution for Israel and Palestine – except for all the others.

David Brooks is co-chair of the Ottawa chapter of Canadian Friends of Peace Now.



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Brunch and learn speakers to discuss creating a plan to end homelessness in Ottawa

BY BARBARA LEVINE
FOR AGUDATH ISRAEL

Did you know that an estimated 30,000 Canadians are homeless on any given night, while more than 150,000 households in Ontario alone are waiting for affordable housing? As citizens in a wealthy country, and as Jews who believe in the values of compassion and tikkun olam, we yearn for a time when ending homelessness is no longer a dream, but a reality.

To realize the dream, we need to know more about the problem, what others are doing to solve it, and how we can become part of the solution. All community members are invited to "Living in Dignity: Homelessness in Our Community," a *brunch and learn* organized by the Tov Team at Agudath Israel Congregation on Sunday, January 19, at 9:30 am.

Three dedicated community leaders will talk about the issue and how, working together, we can rid Ottawa of homelessness.

Anna Silverman, executive director of Shepherds of Good Hope Foundation, will be joined by Peter Tilley, executive director of the Ottawa Mission, and Marsha Wilson, who heads up St. Joe's Women's Centre, which provides a variety of support services to women and children who live in poverty, are at risk of homelessness or are victims of violence.

The moderator will be Barbara Levine, a member of Agudath Israel and a board member of the Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI), a grassroots organization dedicated to addressing homelessness in Ottawa by

mobilizing resources from various faith groups. Agudath joined MHI two years ago, adding another Jewish presence to the longstanding involvement of Temple Israel. Support from more than 30 Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Unitarian and Hindu congregations enables MHI to provide safe and affordable permanent housing to almost 100 adults and children in Ottawa who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

But there is more that needs to be done.

Governments, social service agencies, funders and researchers have recognized that homelessness in Canada isn't a passing short-term phenomenon, but an often chronic response to poverty, mental illness and a lack of safe, secure affordable housing. While the stereotype may be the single, addicted male panhandling downtown, the number of adults with children in need of shelter and food continues to rise in our cities.

The good news is that research and experience in Canada, the United States and Europe suggest it's more economical to provide safe and affordable housing than to provide a patchwork of emergency services to those living on the street. While the solutions are becoming more obvious, the challenge is to make them happen on a scale large enough to make a real difference.

Participants in the MHI want to be part of the solution. Come out for brunch on January 19 and learn how you can get involved. To attend, please RSVP to Susan Grossner in the Agudath Israel office at 613-728-3501.

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The Three Musketeers presented at OJCS

The Ottawa Jewish Community School presented *The Three Musketeers* as this year's high school drama production.

Four performances were held at the school from November 25 to 28. PHOTOS BY HOWARD SANDLER



▲ D'Artagnan (Matthew Rosenthal) jumps to avoid the sword of Rochefort (Eric Buckshon).



▼ The Three Musketeers: Aramis (Ethan Sabourin), Porthos (Shmuel Prizant) and Athos (Yona Steinman).



▲ Queen Anne (Emma Hamer) and King Louis XIII (Gabriel Hamburg) play chess.



▼ Milady (Cassandra Starosta) poisons Constance (Meera Landau).

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Recognize Soloway JCC Volunteers and Leaders

The Ben Karp Soloway JCC Volunteer Service Award: Presented by the Ben Karp Family and the Soloway JCC for the volunteer or person who best exemplifies communal concern and sets an ongoing example for others.

Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Award: Presented by the Grossman-Klein Family and the Soloway JCC to one male and one female youth who have shown outstanding dedication and service to the Jewish community throughout their teenage years.

Nominations must be submitted to the selection committee by **Friday, December 20, 2013** and should include a resume of the nominee's involvement in the Soloway JCC and the Jewish Community. Address nominations to the Soloway JCC Ben Karp Award Selection Committee or the Grossman-Klein Family Youth Award Selection Committee, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9, Attention: Maxine Miska – mmiska@jccottawa.com.

Awards will be presented at the **Soloway JCC Annual General Meeting and Awards Night** Monday, February 6, 2014, 7:00 pm at the SJCC.

Soloway JCC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre is seeking candidates to serve up to a three-year term as a member of the SJCC Board of Directors. All candidates must be members of the SJCC and in good standing in the Jewish community of Ottawa.

If you are interested in being on the SJCC Board of Directors please contact Soloway JCC President and COO Barry Sohn by Monday, December 23 at bsohn@jccottawa.com or 613-798-9818 x268.

Lecture series on women's health issues launched

BY SARA LOEWENTHAL
THE WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

The Women's Health Initiative, a new health-oriented lecture series for Jewish women, has been launched in Ottawa.

The initiative was organized by Dr. Elianna Saidenberg, Sara Loewenthal, Nili Szilagyi and a committee of five other women to better educate Jewish women about the health concerns we may face.

Although the lectures are designed with Halacha and sensitivity to meet the needs of Orthodox women, all Jewish women, regardless of affiliation, are welcome.

The lectures take place in the Teen Lounge at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. The first session took place on November 13 when Dr. Tannys Vaus spoke about menstruation and was joined by Rochel

Goldbaum of JET for the discussion period.

"I came away much more informed than when I entered," said Devora Caytak, a member of the Women's Health Initiative committee. "It was a professional evening, with intelligent speakers."

Our next lecture will take place Wednesday, January 8, 7 pm, when Dr. Paul Claman, professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of the Division of Reproductive Medicine at the University of Ottawa, and an attending physician at the Ottawa Hospital, will address the topic, "Testing and Treatment Issues in Halacha."

Among the other speakers scheduled are Dr. Radmilla Lenz on post-partum depression on February 5, and Dr. Peggy Keinplatz on intimate marital relations on April 30.

The cost is \$10 per lecture. Visit www.whiottawa.ca for more information or to register to attend.



Dr. Tannys Vaus (left) and Rochel Goldbaum.



PHOTO: ELY BOLLEGRAAF

Karski panel discussion

A panel discussion – *Karski: The World Knew/What Have We Learned?* – took place November 17 at the Canadian War Museum in conjunction with the exhibit, *Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity*. (From left) MP Irwin Cotler; Holocaust survivor Pinchas Gutter; Wanda Urbanska, president of the Jan Karski Educational Foundation; Professor Andrzej Zbikowski of the University of Warsaw and the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland; Professor Jan Grabowski of the University of Ottawa; and historian Gideon Greif of Yad Vashem.

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Na'amat leadership workshop reignites passion and commitment

BY SHARON REICHSTEIN
NA'AMAT

Growth, commitment, enthusiasm – this is what all charitable organizations want for their membership. And like other Jewish organizations in Ottawa, the work Na'amat does – improving the lives of disadvantaged women and families, both locally and in Israel – is too important to let a few challenges keep us from our mission.

This conviction brought together a group of dedicated women from various Na'amat Ottawa chapters at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, November 3, for an inspiring leadership workshop facilitated by Doris Wexler-Charow, Na'amat Canada's national membership chair, whose expertise helps groups brainstorm and come up with new ideas to strengthen their organizations.



Participants in the Na'amat Ottawa leadership workshop. (Front, from left) Rose Krackower, Eileen Barak, Annette Albert, (Second row) Andrea Malek, Marilyn Schwartz, Marian Lederman, Doris Wexler-Charow, Deana Schildkraut, Rosalie Schwartz, Sharon Reichstein, Sandra Bitton, (top) Ilana Albert-Novick, Sarah Beutel, Danielle Schneiderman and Toby Herscovitch.-

The workshop reinforced participants' resolve to rejuvenate our chapters' membership and level of engagement. Most of all, Wexler-Charow reminded us that passion and commitment are contagious.

And so is the cause. Na'amat serves more than 18,000 youngsters of all cultural backgrounds at 233 day care centres across Israel and educates more than 3,500

students annually at 20 technological high schools, giving them a second chance to succeed. And Na'amat's Perpetual Scholarship program awards nearly 200 university scholarships to Israeli women each year.

Established in 1993, the Na'amat Canada Glickman Centre for Family Violence Prevention in Tel Aviv is a safe haven for victims of domestic abuse. This award-winning centre shelters up to 14 women and 16 children at one time, while the counselling and guidance units serve up to 150 women each month. Here at home, Na'amat Ottawa's *School Supplies for Kids* project donates more than 200 backpacks filled with supplies to local women's shelters.

Na'amat has four chapters in Ottawa. Monthly social programs range from fun cooking demos to expert speakers on matters of concern to women, such as parenting, relationships and health issues. There are also private museum tours,

lively book chats, caring volunteer activities and much more. Na'amat chapters are known for their inclusive and inviting feel and atmosphere. It's all about women here helping women and children in need – in Canada and Israel.

"Joining Na'amat was a way of connecting to women who share similar interests," said Danielle Schneiderman. "I've met some of my closest friends through Na'amat."


"The women in my chapter were such a strong support system for me as a single mom of young children," recalled Deana Schildkraut. "They used to drive home my babysitter for me after a meeting or let me hold meetings at my house so I didn't need a babysitter at all. I will always remember their friendship and support."

If you are interested in joining one of the Na'amat chapters in Ottawa, contact Membership Chair Andrea Malek at andreamalek@rogers.com.

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▲ Cheryl Kardish-Levitan (left) was honoured, October 14, as one of the top fundraisers for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF) Run for the Cure. Cheryl, a breast cancer survivor, has raised more than \$175,000 over the past decade for this very worthy cause and received the award from CBCF honorary chairs Laureen Harper (centre) and Catherine Marion.

Send us notices of your significant milestones or events and they will be published on a space-available basis.

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PHOTO: CPL. CARBE ORELLANA, RIDEAU HALL ©HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA REPRESENTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL (2013)

New Israeli Ambassador

Ambassador Rafael Barak (left), Israel's new ambassador to Canada, presented his credentials to Governor General David Johnston at Rideau Hall, November 25. Until recently, Barak was director-general of Israel's Foreign Ministry. He has previously served Israel as the number two diplomat in Washington, as chargé d'affaires in Paris, and as Foreign Ministry deputy director-general responsible for Western Europe.

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'I wanted to integrate my Jewish heart with Buddhist mindfulness'

In this guest column, **Joyce Schacter** reflects on the Jewish Buddhist retreat she organized, November 1 to 4, in Aylmer.

I awoke to morning bells chiming outside my room, rolled out of bed, dived into yogic sun salutations and shuffled to the 6:45 am meditation at the recent Jewish Buddhist retreat in Aylmer, Quebec.

Thirty-five of us, of various denominations and affiliations, from 27 to 90, and from various locales, converged on La Maison Bruyère to contemplate Jewish and Buddhist practices on gratitude. Jews and Buddhists, both and neither, engaged in a supportive, inclusive, safe environment. On zafus and zabatons, benches or chairs, our main hall became the heart centre for a rich weekend of study, prayer, chanting, meditation, silence, discussions and chevruta/dharma buddy exercises.

Sponsored by Or Hanesamah, Ottawa's Reconstructionist congregation, this was the first such gathering in the country. As a yoga and meditation retreat junkie, I wanted to integrate my Jewish heart with Buddhist mindfulness in a one-stop spiritual booster. When such a retreat was absent from Google searches, I opted for the DIY approach. One thing led to another and, *shehechyanu*, the retreat became reality.

Led by Shōken Michael Stone, a Jewish Buddhist monk, and Reconstructionist Rabbi Miriam Margles, both of Toronto, the retreat opened with Shabbat candle lighting, blessings and challah. Michael, in kippah and tallit, read along in Hebrew and Rabbi Miriam bowed graciously. Our newly created community embodied Shabbat as an "Abraham Joshua Heschel sacred pause in time." Rabbi Liz Bolton, spiritual leader of Or Hanesamah, brilliantly chanted Torah with simultaneous English translation.

Shining modern light on ancient

incantations, Rabbi Miriam's *brachos* struck truths, layering meaning and kindling joy, epitomizing contemplative Judaism. Michael taught impermanence of body-mind, urgent real-time boundaries and commitment to life. Between Rabbi Miriam pointing heavenward and Michael's earthbound gaze, we stretched and opened into the moment. Their co-leadership conjured a synergy of heart and mind, feeling and intellect, *Eyn Sof* and *Shekhinah*, yin and yang.

I found my breath and followed it, chanted prayers of praise, recalled boundless love bestowed on us always, felt my body breathe in intimate exchange with God, framed with straight spine, hand mudra and stillness. Oriented outward with blessing to the world in relationship with God and community, we seamlessly turned inward to awareness of internal spiritual anatomy in relationship with ourselves and each other.

"I see no conflict being Jewish and embracing Buddhist meditation techniques," said participant Len Shore of Ottawa.

We are hardly first to discover Jewish Buddhist complementarity. These religions likely crossed paths from ancient times. A Jewish Buddhist phenomenon in North America was articulated by Rodger Kamenetz in *The Jew in the Lotus*, an account of Jewish spiritual leaders meeting the Dalai Lama in the early-1990s. They discussed culture, beliefs and wisdoms, including opening Jewish mysticism to universal access and teaching.

Do Buddhist practices help us appreciate our Jewishness? Does silent meditation cultivate receptivity to Jewish prayer? Have we forgotten a vision of Judaism as a contemplative practice? What is it about the language of Buddhist meditation that makes mindfulness more accessible to some spiritually inclined Jews than our own Torah? Can we find spiritual depth within Judaism or do we have to order out?

The recent Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews suggests that American Jewish identity and practice are waning. How is Judaism relevant in our modern lives? Does Judaism have



Rabbi Miriam Margles and Shōken Michael Stone lead a session at the Jewish Buddhist retreat last month in Aylmer, QC. PHOTO: AARON ROTENBERG

techniques for personal growth, transformation and mental fitness analogous to Buddhist meditation practices? Twenty years ago, the Dalai Lama challenged community leaders to share Judaism's spiritual richness in a forum of inclusivity.

In our non-monastic tradition, do meditation sanghas provide spiritual friendship and community that values egalitarianism, acceptance and purposeful engagement that's missing in western

ideals of romance, nuclear family and materialism for the Hin-Jews and Jew-Bus among us? What is the role of silence, the spaces between the words and lines for the people of the book? How can we *shema* (listen) our daily lives? At the Jewish Buddhist retreat, we asked questions, built bridges and crossed them.

Joyce Schacter is a dedicated yogini and meditator, and mother of two. She practises gynecology during the day.

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Punk Jews: 'A piece of the Jewish mosaic'

Despite Jews being a tribal community whose members have travelled through history together across the millennia, bound together by elaborate rituals and ancient and modern texts, there are many ways to be Jewish. Even ways that might involve punk rock.

So suggests the new documentary, *Punk Jews*, coming to the ByTowne Cinema on Thursday, January 16, at 9 pm. The producer, Evan Kleinman, will be present for a Q-and-A following the screening. Thanks to a micro-grant from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Eric Trottier has worked to bring the film to Ottawa. And, in talking with Eric, I found that themes around Jewish community, identity and belonging came to the fore in intriguing ways.

At 28, Eric, who also goes by his Hebrew name Aharon Yaakov, considers himself a bit of a punk Jew. He likes to go clubbing. He doesn't want kids. Some days, he wears his hair in a mohawk, which artfully complements the modern, stainless-steel *chai* he wears around his neck.

The website for *Punk Jews* has a tagline, "create YOUR culture." According to the site, *Punk Jews* "explores an emerging movement of provocateurs and committed Jews who are asking, each in his or her own way, what it means to be Jewish in the 21st century. Jewish artists, activists and musicians from diverse backgrounds and communities are defying norms and expressing their Jewish identities in unconventional ways. In the process, they are challenging stereotypes and breaking down barriers."

Eric is aware of the challenges of expressing his multiple identities through a communal framework, especially when being Jewish is so intrinsically tied to a sense of community.

"You cannot do it alone," was one of the main lessons in Jewish life Eric took away from his Jewish conversion process the summer before last.

Eric was drawn to the Jewish tradition while researching Judaism for a high school comparative religion class he was teaching. He soon found himself "having Torah debates over lunch" with a Jewish guidance counsellor at the same school and liked that he could interpret the text and try to wrestle with it.

"I was at a point in my life when I wanted a spiritual community and rituals to mark my life and keep me grounded," Eric told me. "I attended my first synagogue service, and it clicked and made sense."

For Eric, integrating his gay and Jewish identities has proven challenging, but taking a course through the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies program at the University of Ottawa helped him clarify those personal themes.

"When I walk into the gay world, I have no problems integrating and sharing my dual-identity. When I walk into the Jewish world, however, I feel like I need to censor some aspects of myself for social acceptance and support. I won't lie about my queer identity and lifestyle choices, but I will de-emphasize them to allow for other aspects of my identity and personality to shine through."

At a more concrete level, Eric has noticed problematic gender-messaging at the official Jewish community level. "At Mitzvah Day, for example, you can either give



MIRA SUCHAROV
VALUES, ETHICS,
COMMUNITY

female items for a girls-night-out, or sports gear for a boys' sports day. When I see examples of that, I and other queer-identifying people, question how welcome we are."

To his credit, Eric hasn't simply waited on the sidelines to find out. In October, he hosted a session at Limmud Ottawa on the topic of Jewish diversity – including

discussions of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, conversion, denominations, and minority-majority cultures. In a twist of fate, Eric's Franco-Ontarian heritage proved helpful as he served as an impromptu translator for an Orthodox Jewish panellist from France.

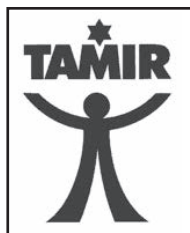
"I want to share my experiences and to create space for others to share theirs," Eric told me.

I asked Eric why he wanted to bring *Punk Jews* to Ottawa.

"Because it shows a piece of the Jewish mosaic," he said. "The Jewish community is comprised of a diverse membership, each one exploring the meaning of Jewishness in various ways. I feel that this is a point that is becoming known to more people, but still has a long way to go. Who says you can't scream 'Shema Yisrael' to aggressive punk rock?"

Tickets to *Punk Jews* are \$10.

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



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General

My family and I miss you Jordan Finn and we are thinking of you by Jacob Ibhgy
Thanking Martin and Frances Moss for your wonderful hospitality by Sharon and Paul Finn

Many thanks to Mr. Harry Prizant for your kindness, attention and patience by Lee Curry

Thanking Malcolm and Vera Glube for hosting the Friday night dinner before my Bar Mitzvah and by Noah Reichstein

Thanking Hymie and Marlene Reichstein for hosting the Thursday morning breakfast for my first Aliyah by Noah Reichstein

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Observations of a food columnist

I have written 207 *Made with Love* food columns for the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* over the past 11 years. This one is my 208th and final. I have tried to share my passion for food with you and hope that you have learned a few things along the way. It has been a wonderful journey for me, and I have discovered a few surprising things about my family, our community and myself.

I've discovered that not all my family members appreciate reading about their hilarious/embarrassing escapades. I have tried explaining to them that all the literary experts advise budding writers to "write about what they know." However, my family would prefer that I learn and write about something or someone else and keep their dirty laundry hidden in the hamper where it belongs.

Since I've been writing this column, I've noticed, while shopping at Loblaws, more than a few curious glances into my cart to see what the food writer is buying. I have to hide the Twizzlers and M&Ms underneath the kale and brown rice. Several friends have admitted that initially they were too intimidated to invite me over for dinner. I put an end to that when I told them I was so grateful to have a meal cooked for me that I didn't really care what it was, as long as I didn't have to cook it.

Personally, I have discovered that I love working in my pyjamas. Writing a column from home has got to be one of the best gigs out there. No office politics to deal with, no meetings to attend. It's really a pretty sweet deal. I've only ever met Michael Regenstreif, my wonderful editor, once face to face.

I have discovered that I love the craft of writing. It is a wonderful outlet for my creative energy. It is through writing this column that I marshalled up the confidence to start my own food blog – www.saltandserenity.com – in 2009. I discovered a love of photography and food

styling, and blogging continues to nourish my creative soul.

For my final column, I would like to leave you with a recipe that wraps you up and comforts you this winter. My perfect path to winter comfort is braised beef short ribs heaped high over a mound of mashed potatoes. This is not instant food. It takes about four hours to make these ribs, but the active cooking time is only about 45 minutes. The oven does the rest of the work. Red wine is my liquid of choice for braising. A Barolo, Valpolicella or Côtes du Rhône would be perfect.

The recipe calls for 2-3 cups of red wine, and then recommends topping up the casserole dish with water. Since a bottle of wine contains 3 cups, you can use the whole thing, and then there would be no waste. However, if you are following my comfort plan, pour 2 cups of wine into the pot and the third cup into a glass for yourself!

A little primer here on beef short ribs. We are talking about ribs from the chuck shoulder area, not the rib area. Fatty and flavourful, they are available bone-in or bone-out. Short ribs come two ways: "Cross-cut" with two or three sections of bone in each piece. These are also called flanken when sliced 2 inches thick and Miami or Korean ribs when sliced 1/2 inch thick; and "English-cut," made up of one long bone and a stack of meat on top of it. Sometimes these ribs are sold as "shorties," cut into individual bone sections ranging from 1 to 6 inches long. This is what my butcher sent me when I asked for short ribs. For this recipe, I prefer the English-cut ribs.

As this gurgles away in your oven, your house will fill with the most amazing aromas, and you will feel loved and cared for, I promise. About halfway through the cooking time, check on the ribs to stir them and add more liquid, if they need it. Resist the urge to stick a straw into the bubbling liquid and drink it all up. It's that good!



CINDY FEINGOLD
MADE WITH LOVE

BRAISED BEEF SHORT RIBS

Recipe courtesy of Anne Burrell from *Secrets of a Restaurant Chef*.

Serves 6

These ribs can be made a day or two ahead and refrigerated. Scrape off any fat that comes to the top after chilling and remove before reheating.

- 5 pounds bone-in beef short ribs (English-cut)
- Kosher salt
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 yellow onions, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 ribs celery, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled, cut in 1/2 lengthwise, then cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 1/2 cups tomato paste
- 2 to 3 cups hearty red wine
- 2 cups water
- 1 bunch fresh thyme, tied with kitchen string
- 2 bay leaves

Season short ribs generously with salt. Coat a pot large enough to accommodate all the meat and vegetables with olive oil and bring to a high heat. Add the short ribs to the pan and brown very well, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Do not overcrowd pan. Cook in batches, if necessary.

Preheat the oven to 375 F.

While the short ribs are browning, purée all the vegetables and garlic in the food processor until it forms a coarse paste.

When the short ribs are very brown on all sides, remove them from the pan. Drain the fat, coat the bottom of same pan with fresh oil and add the puréed vegetables.

Season the vegetables generously with salt and brown until they are very dark and a crust has formed on the bottom of the pan, approximately 5 to 7 minutes.

Scrape the crust and let it reform. Scrape the crust again and add the tomato paste. Brown the tomato paste for 4 to 5 minutes. Add the wine and scrape the bottom of the pan. Lower the heat, if things start to burn. Reduce the mixture by half.

Return the short ribs to the pan and add 2 cups of water or until the water has just about covered the meat. Add the thyme bundle and bay leaves. Cover the pan and place in the preheated oven for 3 hours. Check periodically during the cooking process and add more water, if needed. Turn the ribs over halfway through the cooking time. Remove the lid during the last 20 minutes of cooking to let things get nice and brown and to let the sauce reduce. When done, the meat should be very tender, but not falling apart. Serve with the braising liquid.

These ribs are delicious served with mashed potatoes or creamy polenta or even some crusty bread to soak up all the flavourful sauce.

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Ottawa's synagogues tackle existential challenges
Congregations face varied problems from declining membership to building and staffing issues, while several alternative models are succeeding

Loneliness, cost, clergy and cluelessness

inside: Emerging Gen command welcomes us to a bridge p. 3 | The Bulletin is like the little engine that could, writes Horowitz p. 7 | David Berman on redesign and community renewal p. 30

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Partnership with Upper Galilee helps many, including those with special needs

Mevo'ot HaHermon, Israel – It's said that you can judge a community by the way it treats its most vulnerable members.

You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who believes this more than Beni Ben-Movhar.

The mayor of the Mevo'ot HaHermon Regional Council, which encompasses 13 agricultural settlements (*moshavim*) in the Upper Galilee region of Israel, has been blessed with able-bodied offspring.

But there's a special place in his heart for children with profound physical and mental handicaps, who will need special education and therapy for their entire lives. So, amidst all the competing priorities and demands of northern communities facing economic hardships and social flux, "Mayor Beni" finds a way to take care of those who have no voice.

"When I die, I don't want a monument or a building named after me," said Ben-Movhar, a larger-than-life figure who's been mayor since 1997 and appears to know what's going on in every corner of the region.

"I want to know that these children will be taken care of. That will be my legacy."

The Shechafim School provides hands-on education to special-needs children from throughout the region. It includes a park and playground with wheelchair-accessible paths, and play structures that often double as musical instruments. The slats on top of one of the picnic tables, for example, form an oversized xylophone that can be played by a child with limited manual dexterity.

The school is steps away from the community swimming pool and from Ben-Movhar's latest project, a hydrotherapy pool that is used by children and adults. The wheelchair-accessible pool is heated to tropical temperatures that wouldn't be suitable for regular swimmers but



are ideal for physiotherapy and pain relief.

"I come here every day," said one of the pool's users. "It really helps with my Parkinson's disease."

The regional council's new headquarters were the site of the most recent meetings of Partnership 2Gether (P2G), which links the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and other Canadian Jewish federations with Israeli regions to strengthen Israeli society and promote unity and Jewish identity.

I wrote about our partnership with Tel Hai College in my November 25 column and Lisa Rosenkrantz has more on the P2G meetings on page 6. But our special connection with the Upper Galilee region is worth a few more words because we help change so many lives with relatively modest contributions from the Israel portion of the annual Federation campaign.

(Full disclosure: I will succeed Lisa as chair of the Ottawa P2G committee in June).

As Lisa writes, a key component of the program is *Gesher Chai* (Living Bridge). This people-to-people initiative includes such elements as our partnership with Hanadiv School in Metulla, student exchanges and the upcoming Social Action Mission.

But we're also involved in youth and education programs, such as *Kav Hazinuk* (Starting Line), a 10-year

program that coaches talented youth between 15 and 25 to become true leaders in their regions and, ultimately, in Israeli society.

Participants are mentored in high school, the army and beyond. The emphasis is on hands-on projects that focus on social change. One participant, for example, organized an organ donor drive at voting stations during a recent election.

Shira Or's group recently organized a citizenship seminar that included meetings with Palestinians and Israelis who had lost relatives or friends because of the conflict.

"It was a tough discussion," says Or, 18, who has travelled to Vancouver as part of *Gesher Chai* and was a counsellor at Camp Kadimah in Nova Scotia.

"But being able to articulate our thoughts coherently, not emotionally, had a very positive outcome."

The third pillar of P2G is capacity building, a fancy term for regional development. That's where the hydrotherapy pool fits in.

But, this time around, we're not funding bricks and mortar. If you've been lucky enough to visit the north of Israel, you know that its towns, kibbutzim and moshavim are scattered throughout the region. It's not enough to have a great treatment facility – there has to be a way to get the 140 special-needs clients (who include Druze and Israeli Arabs) to the pool.

So Ottawa and the other Canadian federations (outside Montreal and Toronto) are funding the transportation element of the hydrotherapy program.

At the time of writing, the U.S. and other world powers have signed a seriously flawed interim nuclear accord with Iran, the latest round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks is crumbling and Israel's relations with the U.S. are increasingly strained.

There'll be lots of time to write about those issues in 2014. But it's just as important to share stories of Israelis coming together to take care of each other – especially when there are such strong Canadian and Ottawa connections to celebrate.

Ten tips to succeed with New Year's Resolutions

With 2014 just around the corner, some of you may be pondering New Year's resolutions. Statistics vary, but it seems about 85 per cent of people make New Year's resolutions but only five to 10 per cent are successful. A whopping 90 to 95 per cent fail by January 20.

With the right strategies, you can increase your odds of success. Don't wait for January 1. Start planning now. Here are my top 10 tips to help you with your resolutions.

1. Write resolutions in the form of goals. Writing your resolutions helps you clarify and commit to them. Articulate them in the form of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound goals that you can use to monitor your progress. Example: Instead of "Drink more water in 2014," write "Drink six to eight glasses of water per day for the next three months."

2. Declare your goals. Inform friends and family members about your plans for self-improvement. Declaring your goals is an effective motivator. It takes courage to share with others, especially if you have a fear of failure. By making your goals known, you may even inspire others. While you're at it, why not create a New Year's challenge on social media? Post your goals and ask friends to post theirs. You can follow each other's progress and provide each other with positive reinforcement.

3. Keep a journal. It's easier to stay motivated and stick to your goals, if you keep track of your interim accomplishments. Example: Make a check mark on your digital or paper calendar at the end of each day, if you drank six to eight glasses of water. At the end of each month, look at your calendar. If you have a check mark on

the majority of days, consider yourself a success.

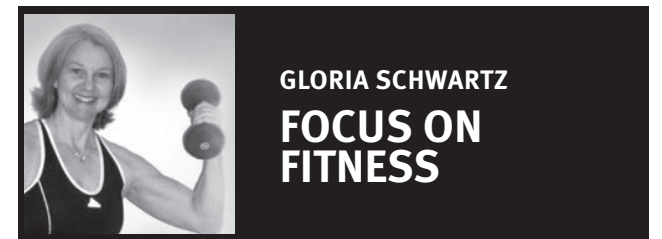
4. Have a contingency plan. Many people dump their resolutions as soon as they slip up. Don't give up so easily. Anything important is worth fighting for. An ice cream binge or a week without exercise is a setback, not a failure. If you have more blanks than check marks on your calendar – that is, fewer days where you worked towards your goal – think of different strategies to help you do better the next month.

5. Take ownership. Instead of complaining about your problems or blaming others for them – neither of which gets real results – work on developing an internal locus of control. You have the power to help yourself in many ways. Set some realistic goals and work towards them.

6. Make your health a priority. You deserve the best health possible. Give yourself permission to spend time taking care of yourself. Put exercise high on your list of priorities. Set aside time to prepare healthy food. Find a way to de-stress. If you aren't already looking after your physical and mental health, ensure that your resolutions address these essential needs.

7. Drop the excuses. It's all too easy to come up with excuses for why you cannot do something. Instead, think about why you *can* do it. Replace negative thinking with positive thoughts. It takes conscious effort and repeated practice. Instead of telling yourself you can't go for a walk because it's cold outside, remind yourself that, if you dress properly, you'll warm up after a few minutes.

8. Focus on rewards and benefits. Focus on all the good that working towards your goals does for your body – inside and out – and you'll be more motivated. A brisk



walk on a cold winter's day will give you a great cardiovascular workout. Reward yourself afterwards with a cup of aromatic tea.

9. Go for gold. Don't accept mediocrity. You deserve to look and feel terrific. Push yourself and be consistent. Remember, the more effort you give, the more results you'll get.

10. Spread goals out. Instead of setting multiple goals on January 1, spread them out throughout the year. Trying to change several deeply ingrained habits all at once can be overwhelming.

The New Year symbolizes a fresh start. Use it as an opportunity to make some significant and lasting changes. As Canadian crooner Michael Bublé sings, "It's a new dawn. It's a new day. It's a new life. For me. And I'm feeling good!"

Speaking of feeling good, I'll be turning 50 on the last day of 2013 and I feel fit, fantastic and very blessed. Let's all pledge to make 2014 our best year ever by making fitness and health a priority.

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

A strong, diverse Jewish voice on campus is important

Two recent events at North American campuses left me perplexed and with many questions about the state of Jewish and Israeli politics on campus in Canada.

Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, has suspended its longstanding partnership with Al-Quds University, following an anti-Semitic and anti-Israel protest at the Palestinian university, where protesters marched with weapons, portrayed dead Israeli soldiers and raised the Nazi salute. Brandeis, which has partnered with Al-Quds for 15 years, released a statement that it “cannot, and will not, turn a blind eye to intolerance.”

At the University of Toronto’s Scarborough campus, the student union voted in favour of a motion to officially endorse Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), an annual hate-filled week that aims to demonize Israel. This is the same student union that officially endorsed the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel last April. Despite strong outcries and condemnations from several Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, the University of Toronto has not intervened in the decision to endorse IAW.

These contrasting situations lead me to wonder what would have happened if Al-Quds University had been a sister school of the University of Toronto – or Carleton University or the University of Ottawa. Would the schools have taken the same strong step against anti-Semitism and intolerance that Brandeis did? Would there have been a statement released or a condemnation? As much as I would like to be sure that there would have been, after three years at Carleton, I am not sure.

At first, I thought Brandeis’ action might have been



RANDY FOX
CAMPUS LIFE

motivated by its having been founded under Jewish community sponsorship and its large proportion of Jewish students. But, while Brandeis does have a large Jewish community, so, too, does the University of Toronto. So, how to explain the differing approaches?

In my years at Carleton, there has been an ongoing struggle between the supporters of IAW and BDS and the school’s student union and, occasionally, the administration. Yet, the voice of Jewish students on campus has been quieter than some of the others. Whether due to a lack of knowledge on how to speak up against hatred, or to indifference and apathy, it is one of the biggest enablers of the spreading of hatred on university campuses.

There are several Jewish groups on campus, including Hillel Ottawa and the Israel Awareness Committee (IAC), that hold events and promote dialogue relating to Jewish life on campus and Israeli advocacy – but only a small minority of the Jewish students on Ottawa’s university campuses actually go to these events.

Looking at the variety of Hillel and IAC events, and in talking with many Jewish students, it became clear to me that many Jewish students actively avoid Jewish and pro-Israel events, because they do not feel comfortable.

They often feel they are looked down on if they don’t agree with all Israeli government policies or actions. This is what prevents greater Jewish student involvement on our campuses and leaves us weaker as a Jewish student community.

So, I’ve identified the problem, but what solution am I proposing?

Those responsible for Jewish life on Ottawa’s campuses should change their focus on Israel-oriented programming to put a stronger emphasis on encouraging a wider array of dialogue and a stronger effort on community engagement. (In full disclosure, I am the social media and publicity director on Hillel Ottawa’s student leadership board.)

Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are very real problems on Canadian campuses, but by focusing only on a core group of Jewish students, and by not attempting to foster all different types of opinions on Israel, Israel-Canada relations and Judaism itself, we foster divisiveness and only hurt ourselves from within. More diverse voices will make us stronger.

When I read about the recent events at Brandeis and the University of Toronto, I was perplexed by the University of Toronto’s decision to not intervene when the Scarborough campus student union endorsed IAW. But what bothered me even more was my lack of faith in what my own school would have done under the circumstances.

If Carleton or the University of Ottawa is ever in such a position, a strong and active Jewish voice will be the difference between following in the footsteps of the University of Toronto or of Brandeis University. I, for one, hope it will be the latter.

Genealogical society meetings can help you with your research

I am going to begin this column with an apology. Since starting to write about Jewish genealogy for the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* more than three years ago, I have received calls and emails from many people seeking assistance researching their family trees. To my surprise, I have even been approached by strangers at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) and at other community venues, who recognized me from the small picture that appears with the column.

I have always attempted to answer questions where I could, and, in some cases, have gotten quite involved in actually doing some of the research. Often times, these new cases have been very interesting, and quite rewarding for me to work on, especially when my contribution has resulted in a major breakthrough for someone. Lately, though, there has been a significant increase in the number of people looking for help, which has made it very difficult for me to assist all of those who have asked. To those of you who have requested assistance and to whom I haven’t yet responded, I do apologize.

Where should one go, then, for help doing genealogical research? The best place to start is to attend a meeting of a local genealogical society. The Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa (JGSO) meets monthly, except for July and August, at the Soloway JCC. Occasionally, we have guest speakers talking about something specific, but most of our meetings are reserved for research.

The meetings generally begin with Hymie Reichstein, the JGSO president, presenting information on new resources that have become available. Hymie monitors many genealogical digests and is very aware of new resources. Invariably, the introduction of some of these

new sites leads to questions and a discussion amongst those in attendance. Members also have the opportunity to talk about their own projects and to ask questions of the group. Those in attendance with more experience can often point someone who is stuck in the right direction.

We then move into the Library, where we can actually access the computers and use the facilities there to assist the members with their own specific research. JGSO has subscriptions to a number of pay sites that are very important tools. They include *Ancestry.com*, *Fold3*, *Newspapers.com*, *findmypast.com*, *genealogybank.com* and *Jewishdata.com*. By telling us the specifics of your research, we can log you in to the website that might have something of value to you, and, if lucky, you may find that elusive missing piece of information.

What does it cost to attend a meeting? JGSO is certainly happy to have visitors attend, and, if you feel it is worthwhile, an annual membership is only \$20. When you consider that a full subscription to *Ancestry.com* can cost about \$400 annually, it is a very reasonable price to pay. Unfortunately, though, access to the society’s subscriptions is only available at meetings. To find out when meetings are being held, or to be put on the JGSO mailing list, you can email reichstein@magma.ca or jgsottawa@gmail.com.

NEW RESOURCES

One of the best sources for research is census records. In Canada, our privacy laws allow census records to be released after 92 years (in the U.S., they are kept sealed for only 72 years). Several months ago, Library and Archives Canada released the 1921 Canadian Census.



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THE BRANCHES

Initially, it was not indexed, which meant you would have to go to the section for a specific geographical region, and then browse page by page to find the people you were looking for. In a matter of a few months, though, *Ancestry.com*, indexed the complete census, which means now you can actually search for the names you are looking for.

Unfortunately, it appears the indexing was done overseas by Ancestry staff who may not have been familiar with Jewish names, so the deciphering of the census officer’s recording of information was not always accurate. In many cases, the handwriting on the forms was also difficult to read, which means a genealogical researcher has to be creative when doing a search. There are tips to overcoming these obstacles, so, if you are interested, let us know, and we can advise you on ways to get around that problem.

Another important census website is the Montefiore Censuses at www.montefioreendowment.org.uk/census. This website has information from the Montefiore Censuses conducted between 1839 and 1875 in what was to become modern day Israel. If you have family members who made aliyah in the 19th century, you may find them in one of these censuses. The information was organized by the Israel Genealogical Society, which has undertaken many important database projects. They have a very informative website, located at www.isragen.org.il/.

These are only two of the recent additions to materials available online. Come to a JGSO meeting to learn more.

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Analysis of Jewish humour is less than convincing

No Joke: Making Jewish Humor

By Ruth R. Wisse
Princeton University Press
296 pages

Reactions to humour can be extremely personal. Something that makes one person laugh so hard they can't speak may strike another as unfunny or pathetic. Cultural influences also affect people's reactions; for example, humour can vary over time as groups become more or less acceptable as targets for satire or ridicule.

In *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*, Ruth R. Wisse explores different examples of Jewish humour and debates whether humour – particularly self-mockery – might be dangerous to Jewish survival.

Wisse – a professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature at Harvard University who grew up in Montreal and taught at McGill University for many years – doesn't try to analyze Jewish humour as if it were uniform across time and culture.

Focusing on modern times, she instead offers “a descriptive map of some of the centres where Jewish humour thrived and where it still prospers” in order to show “how the benefits of Jewish humour are reaped from the paradoxes of Jewish life.”

Chapters look at pre-Nazi Germany, pre-Second World War Eastern European communities, Great Britain, the United States, Israel and the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin. However, readers may have trouble recognizing the examples she offers as humour. For example, I didn't find the selections she quoted from Heinrich Heine and Franz Kafka funny.

Her description and quote from Isaac Babel's work also struck me as unfunny, even though Wisse says the only time in her adult life that she was “reduced to such laughter that I had to put down the book” was while reading one of his stories.

During the age of nationalism, different Jewish types of humour grew, which either made fun of other Jews or the non-Jews who surrounded them.

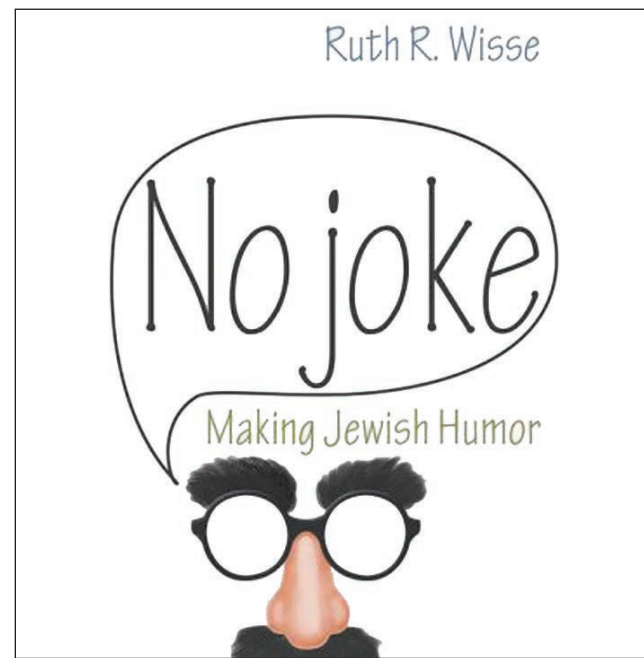
Among the different types of humour Wisse discusses are *Haskalah* humour, Jewish Enlightenment satire that skewered Chasidic rebbes; *Chasidic* humour, which featured beggars or simpletons who outwit secular wise men; *Misnagdic* humour, in which traditional rabbis of Eastern European yeshivas outsmart their opponents; and *Women or folk* humour, including proverbs and folk wisdom that also served as insults.

Folk humour is often considered the same as Yiddish humour. However, Wisse notes that one of the best-known Yiddish writers, Sholem Aleichem, accomplished something far more complex: “He invented a Jewish people that laughed its way through crisis.” His characters became “national prototypes” with later generations believing all their shtetl ancestors had an “innate capacity for transmuted humiliation, subjugation, misery and dread into funniness.”

The professionalization of Jewish humour came during a later period, when Jews were allowed to become citizens of the countries in which they lived. Since Jews were already targets of mockery in these nations, it wasn't difficult for them to use self-mockery as a way of dealing with the non-Jews with whom they interacted.

Then, “once liberal culture began ascribing a positive value to humour and comedy became king, the toleration of humour was overtaken by the expectation of

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN
BOOK REVIEW



humour, and Jews rushed in where they could earn their bread.” This was especially true in the United States, where many Jews found their niche in vaudeville, theatre, film and television.

The discussion of humour in Israel focuses on two separate issues: whether or not Israeli humour is Jewish humour, and whether the self-deprecating humour of the Diaspora would appear in the Jewish state.

Although the first question is still under debate, self-mocking humour can be found in Israel. Wisse also makes note of the black humour favoured by the younger generation, which seems to be a result of living in a country surrounded by enemies and vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Wisse ends with a warning about the dangers of Jewish humour, particularly self-mocking humour, which she sees as harmful. The author believes this humour may prevent the Jewish people from protecting themselves. Her argument was not particularly convincing, although that may be due to its not being thoroughly developed over the course of her book.

No Joke also struck me as disjointed. Wisse seems to randomly jump from topic to topic. The underlying question – whether the humour she notes is Jewish humour or just humour by Jews – was never convincingly answered, all of which made me less than satisfied with her work.

This review originally appeared in *The Reporter*, Vestal, NY.

Correction

Due to an editing error in the review of *Hans and Rudolf: The True Story of the German Jew Who Caught the Kommandant of Auschwitz* (November 25), part of the review mistakenly identified Hans as the kommandant and Rudolf as his Jewish pursuer. In fact, the reverse is true. We apologize for the error.

WHAT'S GOING ON | December 9, 2013 to January 19, 2014

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MONDAYS

Drop-In Playgroup for newborn to 3 years of age.

9:00 am.

Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 263.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

Books and Bagels will feature a review by Rabbi Steven Garten of "Louisa," by Simone Zelitz. Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Drive, 9:30 am.

Info: 613-594-4556.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Ottawa Jewish Community School Open House. 9 to 11 am. 31 Nadolny Sachs Private.

Info: 613-722-0020.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27

Kabbalat Shabbat and Dinner. The Glebe Minyan, 91A Fourth Avenue, 6:00 pm.

Info: 613-867-5505.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

The Women's Health Initiative features a talk: "Infertility - Testing and Treatment in Halacha," with infertility specialist Dr. Paul Claman. 7:00 pm.

Info: 613-722-4062.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

"Punk Jews," a movie by Jesse Zook Mann and Evan

Kleinman. Bytowne Cinema, 325 Rideau Street, 9:00 pm. Info: 613-853-1344.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

Jewish National Fund Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon

Info: 613-798-2411.

Books and Bagels will feature a review by Andrea Lobel of "The Innocents," by Francesca Segal. Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Drive, 9:30 am.

Info: 613-594-4556.

"Living in Dignity: Homelessness in Our Community," brunch and learn, organized by Tov Team, Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 9:30 am.

Info: 613-728-3501

COMING SOON

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21

Open House at the Ottawa Jewish Community School, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private. 9 to 11 am.

Info: 613-722-0020

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

"Schmaltz - A Greased Purim," SJCC Purim shpiel, directed by Pierre Brault, 7:00 pm.

Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 254.

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Remembrance Day

Irving Aaron laid a wreath on behalf of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Ottawa Post and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, at the Remembrance Day ceremony, November 11, at the National War Memorial.

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Ida Sheila (Singer) Miller, Montreal

Elaine Scales

Pearl Torontow (née Tanzer)

Louise Wolfe

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Persimmons

Persimmons are high in beta carotene and minerals such as sodium, magnesium, calcium and iron, and studies have found that they also contain twice as much dietary fibre per 100g as apples, plus more of the phenolic compounds thought to ward off heart disease. Some persimmon varieties have a soft gelatinous flesh which is eaten by spooning it directly out of the skin, while others have a harder and firmer texture and can be eaten like an apple. Stop by your local Produce Depot and we'll help you select some delicious persimmons today.

FOR GREAT RECIPES & WEEKLY SPECIALS, VISIT US ONLINE AT PRODUCEDEPOT.CA



2446 BANK @ HUNT CLUB



1855 CARLING @ MAITLAND

Crafts and
Sing-a-long
at Hillel Lodge

Mishloach
Manot making

Chairs: Linda, Warren
Jacob & Michael
Melamed

Cards for
the sick

Decorate
Tzedakah
boxes

Helping out
with Tamir

Locks
of Love

Letters to
children
in Israel

Extreme
Football
Tournament

Sandwich
making at
the Mission

Mitzvah
projects
for all ages

What will your Mitzvah be?

Building
community
one good deed
at a time



Mitzvah Day

Sunday,
Feb. 9, 2014

Info or to get involved: Ariel at 613-798-4696 x 241 or afainer@jewishottawa.com