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# OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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## Caring for the vulnerable a top priority

Agencies and organizations that serve the vulnerable in the Jewish community are rising to the challenge of meeting their clients' enhanced needs during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Louise Rachlis** reports.

**A**s a health care facility looking after vulnerable seniors, we have had to restrict access to visitors at Hillel Lodge," said Ted Cohen, CEO of The Bess and Moe Greenberg Family Hillel Lodge. "This has included volunteers, families and others that contribute to Hillel Lodge."

However, to help residents stay in touch with their loved ones, the Lodge has implemented scheduled video conferencing and phone calls.

"This has become very popular with many residents and their families," said Cohen. "In addition, Ottawa Public Health permits us to have essential visitors support Hillel Lodge residents. Essential Visitors, under guidance provided by Public Health, are those that provide essential care to residents."

This additional assistance is particularly critical given the pressures on the health care system at this time, he said.

"We are fortunate to have a number of individuals who have opted to play this important role helping to support residents."

At Tamir, which provides services to adults with developmental disabilities, the situation is very complex because Tamir has residential, day and respite services in 10 locations, and 23 different units. As well, some Tamir participants people are quite capable and need less support, while others are medically fragile and need support 24/7.

"Then there's the age difference, the youngest is 23 and the oldest is 83," said Executive Director Mark Palmer of Tamir, which is basing its plans on



Visitors are restricted from dropping in to see Hillel Lodge residents like Fred Fixel, seen last year in his room at the Lodge.

advice from public health authorities.

"We're in lockdown and active screening. No one is allowed into any of the units except residents and staff," said Palmer.

"It's unfortunate to have to do that, but the operative word is protection.

We've implemented active screening – temperatures are taken and you have to pass the test to get in. We have a whole system of constant sanitation, and the use of hand sanitizers. No medically fragile individuals are permitted to leave  
**See Vulnerable on page 2**

## Bulletin to temporarily suspend print edition

BY MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

**P**araphrasing the beginning of the Four Questions in the Haggadah, we all might be asking, "Ma nishtanah ha-Pesach ha-zeh, mi-kol ha-Pesachim – Why is this Passover different from all other Passovers?"

The answer, as everyone knows,

is the COVID-19 pandemic which has gripped the entire planet sending virtually all of us into social-distancing mode and, for many of us, some degree of self-isolation, for weeks now.

The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, of course, has been affected. With our office at the Soloway Jewish Community

Centre (SJCC) closed since March 13, this Passover edition of the paper was produced under difficult circumstances with everyone working from our homes – sharing files electronically as we received submissions, wrote and edited the paper, collected the ads, did the layout and proofreading, made corrections,

had online meetings, etc., all without any direct in-person contact. Much of that would have been impossible not that many years ago before we had high-speed internet connections with sufficient bandwidth to handle the load.

You will, no doubt, also notice that this  
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Jewish Ottawa Helps! Facebook group is helping community members cope > p. 8



HAPPY  
PASSOVER  
חג שמח



# Vulnerable: Agencies are ‘doing what needs to be done’

Continued from page 1

the unit under any circumstances. All nonessential activities are suspended and there are no group meetings.”

Despite the lockdown, staff are connecting residents to family through social media and there are Zoom music and Hebrew classes where people join in online from their homes.

And with Passover coming, Palmer said Jodi Green, Tamir’s Judaic coordinator, has made arrangements for kosher meals to come from A Dashing Pinch so that Passover can be held with remote seders.

“The overdrive kicks in,” said Palmer, “and we have a phenomenal team, doing what needs to be done. Our staff team has demonstrated tremendous grit and determination under very trying circumstances. We’re grateful as well for the outpouring of support from the community.”

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS) is also continuing to serve their clients, despite the closure of their physical office.

“As our community struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, we know the city is worried not only about the health of its friends, families and neighbours, but also about the economic challenges and uncertainty that lie ahead,” said JFS Executive Director Sarah Caspi. “JFS is here to support Ottawa through this and we’re committed to helping in every way we can.”

Despite the unprecedented challenges and an environment that shifts on a daily basis, Caspi explained, JFS continues to provide financial support and case management to its clients, and to community members who need support.

That means “taking care of our most vulnerable seniors by delivering meals,



Tamir participant Debby Applebaum on the runway during the Tamir fashion show, November 4, 2019. Such public events cannot take place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

making wellness calls, organizing grocery and medical drives, whenever possible, and connecting them to available online resources such as grocery and food delivery programs and translation services,” she said.

“We have made a major shift in terms of our counselling services, moving to a secure teletherapy platform. This allows us to continue supporting our clients, including Ottawa Jewish Community School students and their families, during this time of stress and uncertainty. As well, our network of walk-in counselling clinics has made a similar shift in its clinics around the community, moving from in-person sessions to phone

and secure online support,” Caspi said.

Caspi stressed that JFS is committed to the health and well-being of its entire team.

“We cannot support the community if we don’t support ourselves at the same time,” she said. “Even though we are physically not in the office to benefit from social connection, we remain connected to each other, supporting our colleagues through these unprecedented times... The world looks uncertain at the moment, but the power of communities of people pulling together to help each other and to be there for each other can overcome anything.”

Although the JFS office is currently closed, Caspi invites anyone in the community needing help to contact JFS at [info@jfsottawa.com](mailto:info@jfsottawa.com). More information is available at [www.jfsottawa.com](http://www.jfsottawa.com).

Jewish Federation of Ottawa and Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation President and CEO Andrea Freedman paid tribute to all of the community’s agencies providing services to the vulnerable, noting, “The fact that organizations like Hillel Lodge, JFS and Tamir are able to deliver essential services,

under the most trying of circumstances, is a testament to their incredible leadership, and also to the financial support they receive annually from Federation’s Annual Campaign and the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation.”

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank (OKFB), located at Kehillat Beth Israel, has changed its operating model.

“We usually have two or three volunteers and two or three clients in the office, and it’s quite crowded,” said manager Dahlia Milech, who runs the OKFB with a team of dedicated volunteers. “But this month we’re doing Loblaws or Food Basics gift cards and increasing the value. We already do an increased value this time of year for Passover.”

They are also delivering gift cards for those who can’t get out and Milech is trying to do the distribution herself to eliminate the number of people involved.

“And if clients need help shopping for their food, I will find volunteers to assist.”

As for the future, “I just don’t know what it will look like next month, because the gift cards are more expensive, and it’s not entirely sustainable.”

A Passover fundraising campaign raised money that was very helpful, she said adding that donations can still be made online through a link at [www.okfb.ca/donate](http://www.okfb.ca/donate).

Also helping out during this time of crisis is Ten Yad of Ottawa, a volunteer-run organization whose mission is to help individuals and families within the Jewish community during life altering situations. During the COVID-19 crisis, Ten Yad is asking that it be contacted via email at [info@tenyad.ca](mailto:info@tenyad.ca) if you need assistance – or can offer some.

“We are seeking additional volunteers who would be willing to pick up and deliver meals to those facing critical illness. Together we are hoping to limit the spread of the virus while still providing the care we are known for. Therefore, all drop offs would be left at the recipient’s door in order to reduce the risks of further transmission,” notes Ten Yad on its website. “Volunteers will be risk-assessed prior to delivery requests.”

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# Happy Passover

From Your Friends at the

## Soloway JCC

# Advice for Passover 2020: 'Just do your best'

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

**'G**uess what we got in the mail today!" enthused my daughter Naomi in Brampton over FaceTime. "PJ Library Haggadahs!"

The child-friendly sets of Haggadahs sent to PJ Library families were particularly welcome this year as everyone is faced with a different kind of at-home seder because of COVID-19.

Instead of joining us and other relatives in Ottawa, my daughter's seder will be just the four of them, like many nuclear families having seders without extended family members and friends.

Devora and Joseph Caytak have 12 children, nine of them married, and "many, many more grandchildren," so they are accustomed to large seders.

"Everyone is – thank God – OK," she said, "but one of my married daughters and son-in-law did get the virus in New York and had a rough week. They are OK now, but this virus is a very nasty thing. We have children all around the world, and everyone is staying in their own city, except our three single children."

"We will never have had such a small Pesach," she said. "These are really unprecedented times. We are trying to look at the positive side of things and want to give ourselves a positive report card at the end of all of this."

Since everyone is home, Devora said, we have more time to focus on the spiritual side of things, "prayer, mitzvot, and tzedakah."

"At its core, Passover is about family," said Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg of Temple Israel. "We each have memories of seders past with our loved ones. Typically, there are our favourite foods, our beloved melodies, and a little bit of chaos. This year our seders will be especially unique as we're confined to our own homes with our nuclear families.

"For many this is disappointing," said Rabbi Mikelberg. "It's not the type of seder we're craving. And yet, we're called to do the best that we can to have full Passover experiences, just a little



quieter than years past.

"This may be a chance for us to experiment leading a seder for the first time. There are loads of materials online, and the rabbis of our community are preparing resources to build us up. We can also creatively use technology to join our loved ones from afar. Our seders conclude with the words of hope, 'L'shana haba'ah b'Yerushalyim (Next year in Jerusalem).' May the seders of 2020 be fun and meaningful, and may our seders of 2021 return to normalcy," added Rabbi Mikelberg.

In the weeks leading up to Passover, Rabbi Idan Scher of Congregation Machzikei Hadas was collecting ideas on "how to create a feeling of togetherness with our loved ones even without being physically together."

Machzikei Hadas has distributed those ideas via email and on social media. "Prior to Pesach, family members should send written Haggadah insights, stories, words of encouragement and affection to family members for them to open and read at appropriate moments of the seder. Not the same... but maybe the next best thing to being there," read the first message in the series.

"This is obviously a very difficult

time," said Rabbi Scher, "and we are planning for the eventuality of 90-year-old members of our community having a seder alone for the first time in their lives."

Machzikei Hadas, he said, "is doing everything we can to ensure that no one feels alone and has what they need for the seder," he said. "We have been working with Creative Kosher to ensure there are seders-in-a-box for every size seder that will happen this year."

Rabbi Scher and his wife, Shifra, have assembled a print-at-home seder guide, he added, "with our insights and wishes and directions to make sure everyone knows what they are doing and to share a little bit of ourselves at every seder in Ottawa using our guide." [Editor's note: The link to download the guide was not yet available at press time, however it will be added to the online version of this article on the Bulletin website as soon as possible.]

There can be an emotional toll from not celebrating Passover in the normal way.

"Although Passover may be different this year, for many of our clients the holidays are always hard," said Executive Director Sarah Caspi of Jewish Family Services. "Feeling part of the community is a challenge and finding community seders to have our clients join is important. Bringing holidays to our clients is important and as we venture on in Pesach version COVID19, we will be looking at new ways to provide support," this year when community seders are not taking place.

During times of crisis, following spiritual traditions becomes even more important, Caspi said.

"Getting together with people allows them to share the anxiety and attain some peace in the process. With social isolation, it is a challenge to have these benefits met. Many of our clients do not belong to any particular shul but seek out the comfort of tradition for the holidays that are celebrated communally. Many are single and don't have family or friends to support them, or family that lives nearby. Our teams are reaching out

to our clients to offer support and ways to virtually celebrate Passover."

Caspi said the seder question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" will take on a whole new meaning as we prepare ourselves for Passover in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

"Family and community seders, which normally would be a grand festive occasion for the retelling of the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt, will this year be a much smaller event held in people's homes with few if any guests. This year as we temporarily put our ability to move more freely around to the side to ensure the safety of others, the answer to why this night will be different from all other nights is 'Stay at home. Save Lives.'"

Caspi said that however sombre it may be to be isolated from friends, family, support workers and community, "we take great pride in the way communities, both micro and macro, have rallied together to continue to support individuals during this crisis, supporting front line workers for their continued tireless efforts in helping those physically, psychologically and economically affected by COVID19. This Passover we unite to ensure that we are all supported and no one is left behind."

JFS is working hard to engage with their clients in a variety of creative ways over Passover, Caspi said, with Kosher Meals on Wheels, financial support, and maybe some Zoom group activities.

"Follow us on social media to find out more, and if you know someone who needs support let us know," she said. JFS can be reached via email at [info@jfsottawa.com](mailto:info@jfsottawa.com).

"My advice this year is to just do your best," summed up Rabbi Deborah Zuker of Kehillat Beth Israel. "It won't be perfect, we will miss being with our loved ones, and making a seder can be intimidating if you're doing it for the first time. Be gentle with yourself. Find helpful resources to help you prepare – whether online, from your Haggadah, or by talking to friends or your rabbi. Then have fun and make it your own!"



**ANITA**  
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*Chag Sameach*

**Wishing you peace and happiness at Passover!**

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# Ottawa congregations adapt to COVID-19

BY MICHAEL REGENSTREIF  
EDITOR

In view of the social-distancing and self-isolating measures mandated to help flatten the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin surveyed Ottawa's Jewish congregations last month to see how the various congregations are adapting their regular offerings of classes and services to the current reality.

In addition to responses from the various congregations, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa has a central listing of online classes and virtual gatherings – updated weekly – being offered by all Ottawa rabbis to the entire community. Visit <https://jewishottawa.com/rabbis-online> to access Rabbis Online.

Each congregation was asked about holding services and classes online; and how minyan was being interpreted in light of current circumstances – can a group of 10 online be recognized as a minyan? Is a minyan still necessary at this time?

For the purposes of this report, the congregations are presented in alphabetical order.

**Adath Shalom** – Adath Shalom Congregation is a Conservative lay-led congregation.

According to Sherill Besser, Adath Shalom's co-president, "Adath Shalom has suspended services. We have an

online service on Friday afternoons which allows us to pray together and includes a d'var on the Torah portion. Members will be able to participate on Zoom... We will not have Shabbat services online but Adath Shalom members have the opportunity of praying together as a community, albeit virtually and on a weekday."

Besser said that according to the Rabbinical Assembly, online services which include at least 10 individuals do not constitute a minyan, but that Adath Shalom can refer members to a prayer the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative movement "suggests may be used, in exigent circumstances, in lieu of Mourners' Kaddish."

The Adath Shalom website is at [www.adath-shalom.ca](http://www.adath-shalom.ca).

**Beit Tikvah** – Congregation Beit Tikvah of Ottawa (CBTO) is an Orthodox congregation.

According to Bobby Wollock, the CBTO board president, "CBTO has suspended all in-person programs and services until further notice. We are continuing on with many of our programs online via Zoom and Facebook Live," but Shabbat services will not be held online.

"Minyans must still be in person but are not necessary during this outbreak," Wollock said, referring to a directive from the Orthodox Union forbidding

people from congregating until receiving from public health authorities.

The CBTO website is at [www.cbto.org](http://www.cbto.org).

**Chabad of Centrepointe** – Chabad of Centrepointe is a Chabad congregation.

"We have canceled all [in-person] events, classes and services, including our public seder," said Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn, but "we have online options [including] three uplifting and comforting weekly Torah classes on Facebook Live."

According to Rabbi Mendelsohn, it "consistent with Torah law, under these circumstances, that one should not be concerned with regard to prayer with a minyan. Public safety is far more important. During the week, as opposed to Shabbat, one is certainly permitted to pray with others online if it provides them a sense of comfort and community."

Rabbi Mendelsohn said Chabad of Centrepointe will provide "weekly shopping for food and basic necessities for our vulnerable members, regular catered meals for our vulnerable members, and a seder-in-a-box to all of our regulars or members who may need one."

The Chabad of Centrepoint website is at [www.chabadcentrepointe.com](http://www.chabadcentrepointe.com).

**Kehillat Beth Israel** – Kehillat Beth Israel (KBI) is a Conservative congregation.

"We've moved all of our classes and programs to Zoom and Facebook Live. All of our programs are posted on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/kehillatbethisrael](http://www.facebook.com/kehillatbethisrael)," said Rabbi Eytan Kenter.

"We are directing people who require a minyan to say Kaddish to join services that are being livestreamed with a minyan present from around North America. One can recite Kaddish from home if one is joining together with a minyan being held elsewhere. We also have all of our weekday services recorded on Facebook so people can still watch and join together with a recording of our services there," said Rabbi Kenter.

KBI is not planning to hold Shabbat services online.

The KBI website is at [www.kehillatbethisrael.com](http://www.kehillatbethisrael.com).

**Machzikei Hadas** – Congregation Machzikei Hadas (CMH) is an Orthodox congregation.

"We have suspended all in-person gatherings. But we are doing a lot virtually," said Rabbi Idan Scher, noting that emails listing online classes and options for online services have been sent to CMH members.

Many of the listings can be found on the CMH Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/cmhottawa](http://www.facebook.com/cmhottawa) and some are available on Rabbi Scher's website at

See Congregations on page 5

## Happy Passover – Chag Sameach to the Ottawa Jewish Community

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## Congregations: Classes and some services are now online

Continued from page 4  
[www.rabbischer.com](http://www.rabbischer.com).

“We use no tech on Shabbat,” said Rabbi Scher.

The CMH website is at [www.cmhottawa.com](http://www.cmhottawa.com).

**Or Haneshamah** – Or Haneshamah (OrH) is a Reconstructionist congregation.

“Everything in person is cancelled at OrH,” said Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton, “including services, meetings and educational programs. Our board now meets via Zoom and we are developing our tech skills and tools.”

While Rabbi Bolton said OrH has not yet addressed the issue of whether online gatherings can count in forming a minyan, she said Shabbat services may be conducted online.

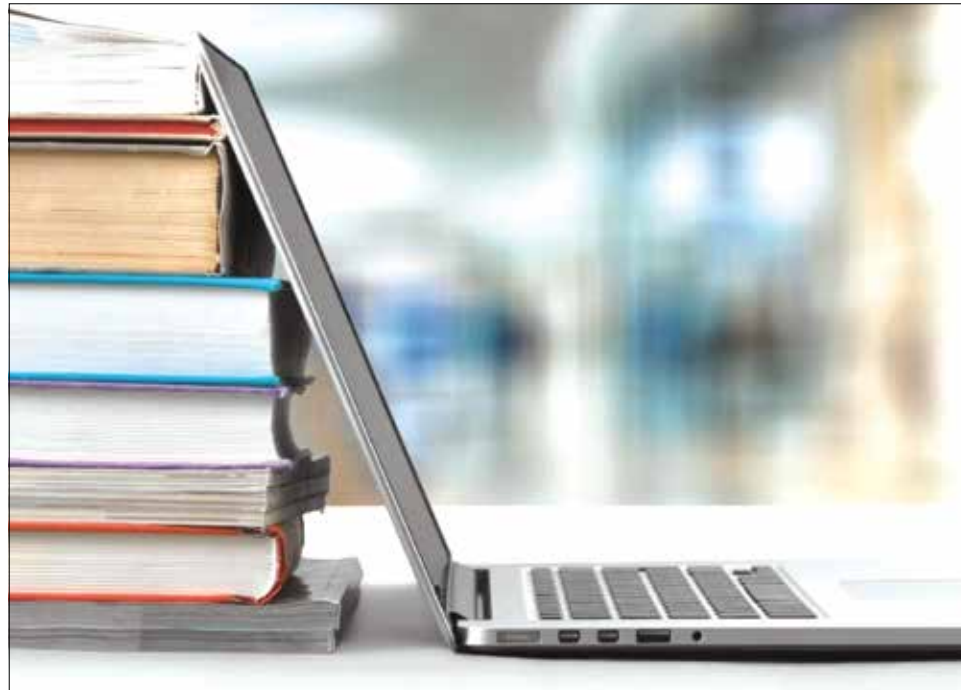
The OrH website is at [www.orh.ca](http://www.orh.ca).

**Ottawa Torah Centre** – Ottawa Torah Centre (OTC) is a Chabad congregation.

“We have suspended all of our services, daycare and in-person classes,” said Rabbi Menachem Blum. “Our facility is closed until further notice.”

“I am offering online classes and words of inspiration on Facebook Live at my page at [www.facebook.com/rabbimblum](http://www.facebook.com/rabbimblum). Our scheduled classes are done on the Zoom platform. We will be offering programs for our Hebrew school students on Zoom, as well,” said Rabbi Blum.

“This is a crisis situation with lives at



stake,” noted Rabbi Blum. “Therefore, people should pray at home without a minyan.”

As well, said Rabbi Blum, “The use of electronic devices and the internet is prohibited on Shabbat. The fact that everyone is at home, with nowhere to go, is a great opportunity for people to experience a real Shabbat.”

The OTC website is at [www.theotc.org](http://www.theotc.org).

**Temple Israel Ottawa** – Temple Israel is a Reform congregation.

“Temple Israel is going online, providing many of our services virtually.

We’ll be using YouTube, Facebook and Zoom to connect with our community in innovative ways. Each of our homes will become a *Mikdash Me’at* – a mini-Temple,” said Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg, adding, “The best way to stay in touch is to ‘like’ our Temple Israel Ottawa Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/OttawaTempleIsrael/](http://www.facebook.com/OttawaTempleIsrael/) or to sign up for our regular e-mails. We also have a very active Caring Group that is reaching out to the vulnerable members of our community for conversation as well as with offers to help

with deliveries.”

The Reform movement, noted Rabbi Mikelberg, cherishes traditional practices while also recognizing the context of the day, so “in these extraordinary times, we are recognizing that one can participate in a minyan virtually.”

Rabbi Mikelberg said Temple Israel has posted pre-recorded videos for Shabbat, but “we hope to be able to go live in future weeks.”

The Temple Israel website is at [www.templeisraelottawa.ca](http://www.templeisraelottawa.ca).

**Young Israel of Ottawa** – Young Israel of Ottawa is an Orthodox congregation.

“Young Israel has suspended all in-person classes and davening,” said Rabbi Gavriel Rudin. “All the [regular] classes that I give, besides Shabbat classes, will take place online.”

Rabbi Rudin suggests contacting him at [rabbi@yiofo.ca](mailto:rabbi@yiofo.ca) or 613-879-6431 for information about his online classes.

“I have also been sending out regular WhatsApp messages to the congregation. We are working on setting up more online or phone-in classes but I do not have details about that yet,” said Rabbi Rudin.

While Young Israel will not hold services online, “I have encouraged my congregants to daven at normal davening times so we can, in some way, be davening together,” he added.

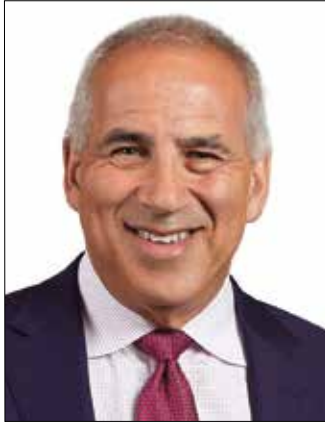
The Young Israel of Ottawa website is at [www.youngisrael.ottawa.on.ca](http://www.youngisrael.ottawa.on.ca).

## ❁ Chag Pesach Sameach ❁

As we celebrate this holiday of freedom, may your life be filled with the blessings of happiness, peace and togetherness.



FEDERATION  
REPORT



**MICHAEL POLOWIN, CHAIR,  
JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA**

**A**s we approach Pesach in the shadow of COVID-19, it is important to think about its impact, beyond the importance of physical health and mortality.

This column was written in mid-March, and fast-moving events between its writing and when you read it may affect its timeliness. In a week, I have had to rewrite this five times to account for events. Ontario has announced a state of emergency, closing non-essential business. Borders are closed. Canadians have been told to come home.

Shuls, schools and the Soloway Jewish Community Centre were ahead of the

## Federation working to ensure community remains strong and vibrant

curve. The Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Jewish Family Services and other agency offices are closed, though the work goes on. Grocery stores are being overwhelmed, and events are cancelled. Seders will shrink this year.

This pandemic will have long-lasting and far reaching effects on how we live as individuals, and how we live as a community. Federation, on your behalf, is already beginning to think and plan for how we get through it, and how we live afterward.

An early action was a decision by the Federation Board to allocate monies from our reserve and other budgeted items to ensure that agencies that help our most vulnerable could be assisted through this time. As a community, this is the most important thing we do. We are working with our schools, shuls and other agencies to ensure that we are speaking in coordination, while recognizing that each organization must make its own decisions.

Community worship, education and information is making the transition

to 21st century methods of communication. Where agencies and Federation can assist each other, we are doing so. Important meetings are following suit, all to allow prudent social distancing while preserving the essence of our community.

Shuls are doing worship online, to say Kaddish, and to learn. Schools are doing remote learning. Meetings are held by phone and video conference. Our community goes on, and copes as best it can. But it is true that for a time, social cohesion will be less than it was. We have organized a Facebook page, "Jewish Ottawa Helps," a forum to allow people to help each other, and we were overwhelmed to see 600 people sign up in less than 24 hours and nearly 1,000 in a week.

As always, we can look to the Torah to find inspiration. In dealing with the problem of *tzaraat* (usually translated as leprosy, but the truth is uncertain) in Vayikra, we see rituals for the welcoming back of former sufferers, and on the reconnection of persons who had been

isolated to the centre of community. The ritual is elaborate, and important, and ensures reintegration.

In using this example, I do not refer only to those diagnosed, but all of those feeling isolation from our community as we cope with this virus.

Social distancing is important to "flatten the curve," but we must not allow it to flatten our community. We must continue to reach out to check on our most vulnerable, and on our friends and neighbours, if only electronically. We can knock on doors and make phone and video calls, while continuing to protect them, and ourselves.

For the moment, we may not be able to hold important community events, but we will again. And we will do so with joy in being able to shake hands, hug each other, and hold each other close. Until that time, rest assured that Federation is working hard to ensure that our community remains strong and vibrant.

From my family to yours, a Happy and most importantly, a Healthy Pesach. Chag Sameach.

FROM THE  
PULPIT



**RABBI GAVRIEL RUDIN  
YOUNG ISRAEL OF OTTAWA**

**I**n these very difficult times we find ourselves in, I struggle to find the proper words to write. Mass illness, confusion, and uncertainty have become our new norm. Jewish organizations, schools, and shuls are dark and empty. In the past, when the Jewish people were faced with tough times, the first place we ran was to our shuls. We would come together as a community and pour our hearts out to our Father in Heaven. Unfortunately, in this crisis, shul gatherings are not an option. I shudder to think of the last time we closed our shuls, not knowing when they would reopen.

At a time like this we must turn to our holy Torah and to the teachings of our sages to guide us. The Talmud tells us, "The Sages taught: If there is

## 'The Jewish people and the world need our prayers'

a plague in the city, gather in your feet and stay home." Aside from the obvious need to protect ourselves from a contagious epidemic, the commentators explain there is another meaning to this statement. When an event of serious magnitude is taking place, we have to stop and go home and think. We must think about what we should do, how we can improve ourselves, and most importantly, what message God is sending us. Everything that happens in our lives is a message from God and we must take the time to stop and listen.

In truth, it is the responsibility of every person to listen to their own message. We must all look deeply into ourselves and discover the areas of our lives that require more attention and effort. Additionally, I would like to share a thought of my own. We have all learned a new concept in the past few weeks: social-distancing. We can no longer socialize as we used to. We can no longer gather in large groups, get together with friends, and certainly, we must limit all physical contact.

This is an opportunity to think about our past social interactions. Were they

appropriate? Were we kind? Did we think before we spoke? Did we think about others' needs and sensitivities or only our own? Was our speech refined? Did we appreciate how lucky we are to have such wonderful families, friends, and communities? It can sometimes be difficult to appreciate what we have until it is taken away.

We also must pray. While we can no longer pray together in shul, we have to pray, now more than ever. The Jewish people and the world need our prayers. When we pray, although we cannot physically pray together, we must pray together nonetheless. We must be united in our prayer and in our thoughts towards each other. The time to end silly divisions which keep us apart is now!

These are certainly trying times, but that is no reason to lose hope. The Jewish community has an incredible ability to step up to the challenge when the going gets tough. I am confident that if we stick together (figuratively, of course) throughout these times of hardship, and inspire ourselves to grow from these difficulties, we will see God's quick salvation, speedily, in our days.

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

Continued from page 1

Passover edition of the Bulletin is much smaller than in years past. The size of the paper always reflects the number of ads that are generated and this spring so many of the events that would normally be advertised are just not taking place, and most of the retail businesses that might have advertised are temporarily closed. As well, many of the organizations that would have normally used the opportunity of the Passover edition to submit articles about their spring activities did not submit such articles, or asked us to withdraw them, because their plans have been put on hold or cancelled.

All of this leads me to announce that we are regretfully suspending the scheduled print editions of the Bulletin until we are back in our office at the SJCC and the community begins

## We are closer together in solidarity

to return to normal activity. All subscriptions will be extended for however many issues we are unable to publish.

However, while the print edition is suspended, we will continue to post articles and columns on the Bulletin website – [www.ottawajewishbulletin.com](http://www.ottawajewishbulletin.com) – and will continue to report on important community initiatives. Many of our columnists will continue to submit their columns on a regular – perhaps even more than regular – basis.

We also welcome your letters, guest columns and articles to share with the community. We particularly welcome articles that will tell the community about how organizations, groups, families and individuals, friends and neighbours, are rising to the occasion of these circumstances. Already, in this edition of the Bulletin, we've published some of those stories about how we and our agencies – although practicing safe social-distancing – have been coming together as a community to help each other, and, especially the vulnerable among us, during the COVID-19 pandemic; and of how classes and discussions, and even some prayer services, are taking place online. I've no doubt there will be more stories to tell in the weeks ahead. Please contact me at [mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com](mailto:mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com)

to make a submission or a suggestion for the online Bulletin.

It's ironic, I suppose, that this year as we observe Passover, a holiday that celebrates freedom, we are adhering to needed measures that restrict our freedom to gather and celebrate as we are used to doing, and as we would like to be doing. Congregations cannot hold their usual communal seders. Friends and extended families cannot gather together for seders as they normally would. For the first time since we moved to Ottawa, my wife Sylvie and I are unable to return to gather around my mother's table in Montreal on the seder nights. Most of us will spend the seder nights with just those in our immediate households. This will be difficult for all of us – but especially difficult for the many among us who live alone.

While we might talk with physically distant family and friends on the phone, and using apps like Skype, Messenger or FaceTime, or keep in touch over Facebook, the holiday this year, just won't be the same.

But while we must keep our physical distance from each other right now, we also know that great challenges can also bring us closer together in our communal solidarity – and we've already seen so much evidence of that.

### ISRAEL

Meanwhile, some commentators in Israel are pointing to needed stability during the COVID-19 crisis for Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz finally – after three inconclusive elections in less than a year – seeming to agree to form a unity government in Israel.

As I write, on March 27, the negotiations are still ongoing but reports are that Netanyahu will remain Israeli prime minister for the next 18 months and then hand the office over to Gantz. (Of course, anyone following Israeli politics knows that no deal is done until it's really done – and even then, you can't always be sure it will hold from one day to the next.)

It appears, though, that Gantz is paying a price for his pact with Netanyahu as the Blue and White factions led by his now-former allies Yair Lapid and Moshe Ya'alon will sit in the opposition benches in the Knesset.

Bear in mind, nothing is simple in Israeli politics and a big what-if are the three corruption indictments facing Netanyahu. The prime minister had done all that he could to avoid going to trial on the charges and was scheduled to be in court last month to finally face them. However, his trial had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

## 'We are all at home wondering what's next'

than the day before.

While it is pointless now to say leadership fell short, history will remember that Trump insisted COVID-19 was a hoax, then he declared it a national emergency, then a war, before going back to minimizing it again. I can't wait for the book to be written that will explain what information led Trump to be briefly truthful. I can speculate it was the scientific projection of so many Americans dying.

To grind our society to a halt in an attempt to better control the time period for people to get sick is so huge it aptly demonstrates the enormity of this. And that's in a Canadian healthcare system whose emergency rooms were already overwhelmed with victims suffering from a normal flu, let alone the plague of COVID-19.

"Social-distancing" is a term I cannot recall ever hearing before – and certainly not in this context. The definition of a pandemic: First China, South Korea and Japan, then Israel, Iran, Italy, Spain, France and Great Britain, then it was us, and virtually the whole world.

The impact of closing down cities for an undetermined amount of time is

hard to minimize. Only a war-measures-like-act could close so many businesses and stop so many people from working. No jobs, no money, no spending. The economy dies and our way of life dies with it.

In recessionary times, governments often say the economy needs to be primed. In these times of COVID-19, the economy needed to be primed, goosed and kick-started. The only way that could be done is to provide the unemployed and their families the cash they need to eat, stay alive and have enough left to buy what they need. Their spending keeps the economy moving.

The Trudeau government's deficit of \$18 billion in a stagnating economy was a problem before COVID-19 became a bigger problem. We are now clearly on problem number two. The deficit is damned – even if the cost of keeping the economy going could possibly triple or quadruple the deficit.

The virus and the economy are both changing our lives in ways we never could have imagined. We all heard the experts using the term "potential pandemic" in December. We all heard it and we all hoped not. Unfortunately,

political leadership in Canada and the U.S. hoped as we did. We all lost the bet.

Three of my children and their families live in three different countries and we have never talked so much on WhatsApp. We are all at home wondering what's next.

I think I have a lasting image of this time of trouble. There was an older woman wearing a mask in Spain on the street in front of a hospital. The poor soul couldn't breathe. Her husband had died of COVID-19 overnight in the hospital. She was on the street, crying out for help between gasps. She had been told that morning that she wasn't sick enough to stay in the hospital. Not sick enough? How about not young enough?

It was clear what happened. If a 40-year-old and a 75-year-old both needed a bed and ventilator, the older person was not going to get it. Whether in Spain, Italy or anywhere in North America, doctors would say they had to make a choice a doctor never likes to make. The image and the sounds of that dying woman in Spain spoke to the life we've been living.

A life of sickness, fear and heartache.

Where to begin? I remember Pierre Trudeau once asking in a difficult constitutional time, "Is this the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?" Maybe the end of the beginning fits where we are with COVID-19. Maybe.

From the moment Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Donald Trump began to take drastic measures, it was clear they both arrived late at realizing the rampaging virus was about to hit us, too – like so many other countries where the numbers around the world total in the hundreds of thousands. The only constant, here and elsewhere, is that each day has been worse

# Jewish Ottawa Helps!

*A rapidly-growing Facebook group is helping community members cope with COVID-19*

BY MICHAEL REGENSTREIF  
EDITOR

**O**n Sunday, March 15, with normal life in the city – indeed, across the country and around the world – on hold as we take social-distancing and self-isolating measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa launched a Facebook group – Jewish Ottawa Helps! – dedicated to matching people in the community who need assistance of some kind with volunteers who can help.

In the first two days, the group swelled to more than 700 members, and as of March 24 was closing in on 1,000 – including volunteers and those seeking some sort of assistance.

“Difficult times also have the tendency to bring out the best in people,” said Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman. “Pauline [Colwin, Federation’s communications director] and I came up with the concept as a way to connect the helpers with the people who need help. I am grateful to the members of the Federation team and

the volunteers who have stepped up to manage the initiative and all those who have been quick with assistance. It makes me so proud to be part of this incredible community.”

And, already, the group has been meeting its goals, says Freedman.

“Every person who has posted with a need, has been met with assistance, often, with multiple people offering to help. It is heartwarming!”

Nikki Shapiro, a Federation board member, is one of the volunteers coordinating Jewish Ottawa Helps!

“Andrea approached me to ask for help Sunday evening [March 15] saying Federation was starting a new group, Jewish Ottawa Helps! She felt it would take off quickly and knows I manage an active social network and I am administrator of another Jewish Ottawa group,” said Shapiro.

“I love helping out our community to continue its vibrancy and unity and this offer to assist is right up my alley so I agreed to help. Social media is a powerful tool and when used effectively can bring greatness to our community



by creating social comfort, unity, and connection.”

Shapiro says the sheer numbers of people in the community ready and willing to lend whatever assistance they can is “heartwarming and restores faith in humanity.

“One needs to just scroll down through our site to see all the goodness and love in our little Ottawa Jewish community.”

For example, Shapiro points out there was post from someone in Barrhaven who was out of toilet paper.

“Within minutes over 20 posts were made to offer spare rolls. Within an hour this community member’s need was met and toilet paper was hand delivered to their door.”

Shapiro also said Jewish Ottawa Helps! is assisting Ten Yad – a vol-

unteer-run organization which keeps kosher pantries in Ottawa’s hospitals – deal with the challenge of stocking the pantries and cleaning them for Passover during a time when Ten Yad’s regular volunteers cannot access the hospitals.

“We have close to 30 volunteers and counting wanting to help Ten Yad anyway they can,” Shapiro said.

Shapiro says her role with Jewish Ottawa Helps is one of coordination by “working hard with our team to make this group as user-friendly as possible,” and by facilitating matches between people needing help and those offering it.

Federation staff is working with the agencies to match volunteers with those in need and is identifying ways people can help.

“I know in the days and weeks  
See Helps on page 9

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Jewish Federation of Ottawa Director of Communications Pauline Colwin worked with President and CEO Andrea Freedman and key staff and volunteers to set up the Jewish Ottawa Helps! Facebook group.



Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board Member Nikki Shapiro says people in the community ready and willing to lend whatever assistance they can is "heartwarming and restores faith in humanity."

**Helps: Facebook group brings people together**

Continued from page 8

ahead more and more people will be isolated and in need of a loving community member's help," Shapiro said. "Whether it will be a phone call and check-in, food delivery, a drive to an appointment or even help accessing resources and service, Jewish Ottawa Helps! will do our best to be there and facilitate assistance."

Shapiro adds she is "humbled by this community" and that "it's very uplifting to be a part of this group. It certainly is keeping me busy and making our time pass quickly!"

Lisa Levitan, another community volunteer helped create central listings to keep track of and ensure that people with needs are matched with someone who can help.

"These are very difficult times and the unknown creates much anxiety," said Levitan, a teacher, who has written an Ottawa Jewish Bulletin guest column – available at <https://tinyurl.com/ojb-LL> – with suggestions on how parents can help their children cope with

COVID-19 isolation.

Of the Facebook group, Levitan said, "I knew our generous Jewish community would be all over it. In only one day, we have over 740 members. Wow! The amount of generous people wanting to help in such a short period of time is truly outstanding. Young or old, everyone can lend a helping hand so that no one has to feel alone. Even those who are at-risk are offering anything they can do from home."

Levitan has nothing but praise for the many community members who have stepped forward to help others.

"Whether you're helping deliver groceries, organizing kosher meals in hospitals, or checking in on those who are self-isolating, you are the best of our Ottawa Jewish community," she said. "Being a small part of it not only humbles me, but also reminds me of how proud I am to be Jewish in Ottawa. This amazing group of people are coming together in the most difficult of circumstances. What's more Jewish than that?"

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# Holocaust survivor becomes successful businessman and artist

For **Maxwell Smart**, Yom HaShoah is the remembrance day for his family, who were all murdered by the Nazis. He tells his story of resilience to **Louise Rachlis**.

**I**t's a very scary thing. My age is very high and I'm very vulnerable," said Holocaust survivor and artist Maxwell Smart of the COVID-19 virus. "But my opinion is that people are getting together to fight this virus. It will kill people, but people will fix it and do everything possible. Maybe more people will die, and it will be worse, but eventually it will be gone," said Smart in a telephone interview with the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin last month from his home in Montreal.

"Antisemitism is not a virus, but it killed more people in the world than all the viruses. There were six million killed just in the Second World War. It is flourishing today, too."

Smart was to have been the keynote speaker at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Yom HaShoah program on April 20. However, the event, like all community gatherings this spring, has been cancelled due to the pandemic and it is now expected that Smart will be part of Holocaust Education Month programming in November, and it is expected there will be a national Yom HaShoah program presented online. **[Editor's Note:** The online version of this article will be updated with the date, time and link as soon as the information



Maxwell Smart, the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust, built a life in Canada after arriving here in 1948 as a teenaged war orphan.

Buczacz, where the Jewish population was respected and life was good. But that changed when the Nazis and their Ukrainian cohorts entered Buczacz and the Jews were forced into ghettos. Of the 15,000 Jews in the town, only 100 survived.

His parents and six-year-old sister were killed by the Nazis, but Smart, miraculously, was able to escape death.

He escaped, suffering hunger, cold, illness, loneliness and fear as he hid in forests, found refuge with a farmer, and lived perilously and precariously from day to day. In 1948, at age 17, Smart arrived in Canada as a penniless war orphan.

"For me," he said, "it was like winning a lottery ticket!"

Smart arrived in Canada as part of a group of 1,000 Jewish war orphans brought by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

His life in Canada was still a struggle.

"To go to school, you needed a family for money, and the Congress had no money for school," Smart said.

Smart worked full-time as a shipper in a store and was soon earning \$18 per week.

"Congress decided it was sufficient to support myself and they said 'you're independent.'"

"I became independent. I supported myself. I had to learn the language, and I had artistic feelings. I have painted since the age of 10."

Smart joined the YM-YWHA in Montreal where they offered English and art classes.

"I really enjoyed myself in the art environment. But I'd been alone since the age of 10. I wanted a home, a bed, children. There were no artists who could afford to buy a home."

He decided he'd have to earn a living and, with two friends, Smart bought a small apartment building and then sold it at a big profit. After that, Smart decided to remain in real estate. He bought a small building and constantly painted.

His memoir, *Chaos to Canvas*, describes how Smart survived the Holocaust and made a new life in Montreal. He began writing the book 10 years ago at the urging of his wife, Tina.

"I didn't want to go back to the horror I lived through," he said.

*Chaos to Canvas* was published in 2018 by the Azrieli Foundation, and he's pleased with his accomplishment and the book's success. Smart is also one of three Canadian Holocaust survivors featured in the documentary, "Cheating Hitler: Surviving the Holocaust," which aired on the History Channel last November.

Visit [www.artbymaxwell.com](http://www.artbymaxwell.com) for more information about Smart and his art.

is available.]

"Yom HaShoah is the remembrance day of my family," said Smart. "I don't know when my family perished [so] I picked Yom HaShoah as the day of their remembrance. When I was in Israel, I went to Yad Vashem and I registered the names of my family. They have no graves."

Born Oziac Fromm in 1930 in Buczacz, Poland (now part of Ukraine). Smart took his name long before the debut of the "Get Smart" TV series with its lead character, "Maxwell Smart," the inept Secret Agent 86.

Before Smart became a real estate developer, he opened all kinds of businesses, and one of them was called Smart Machinery. He used to go to parts auctions and they always called out, "Sold to Smart!" He liked being called "Smart" and took the name, "Maxwell Smart."

Smart grew up happily with his parents and sister in

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# Gantz and Netanyahu seem close to forming unity government

By Marcy Oster

JERUSALEM (JTA) – With the Blue and White party coming apart, its leader, Benny Gantz, was elected speaker of the Israeli Knesset on March 26.

Gantz has been tasked with forming a coalition government following the March 2 election, Israel's third vote in less than a year.

The split in his party is over a debate about joining a unity government led at first by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A unity government would provide Israel with a stable government – something the nation hasn't had for a year – as it battles the COVID-19 crisis. It is not clear how stable the government would be, however. Talks on a unity government are reportedly continuing.

Israeli media reported that Gantz would hold the speaker's position for a short time, until the formation of a unity government. According to reports, Netanyahu would serve first as prime minister for 18 months, with Gantz as foreign minister before taking over from Netanyahu.

Gantz declared himself a candidate to become speaker in order to preserve the option of forming a unity government. He succeeds Yuli Edelstein, who stepped down a day earlier after shutting down the Knesset for several days over losing his post and pressing for a unity government. Critics said Edelstein was undermining Israel's democracy.

The right-wing bloc agreed to support Gantz as speaker, a tacit acknowledgement of support for a unity

*A unity government would provide Israel with a stable government as it battles the COVID-19 crisis.*

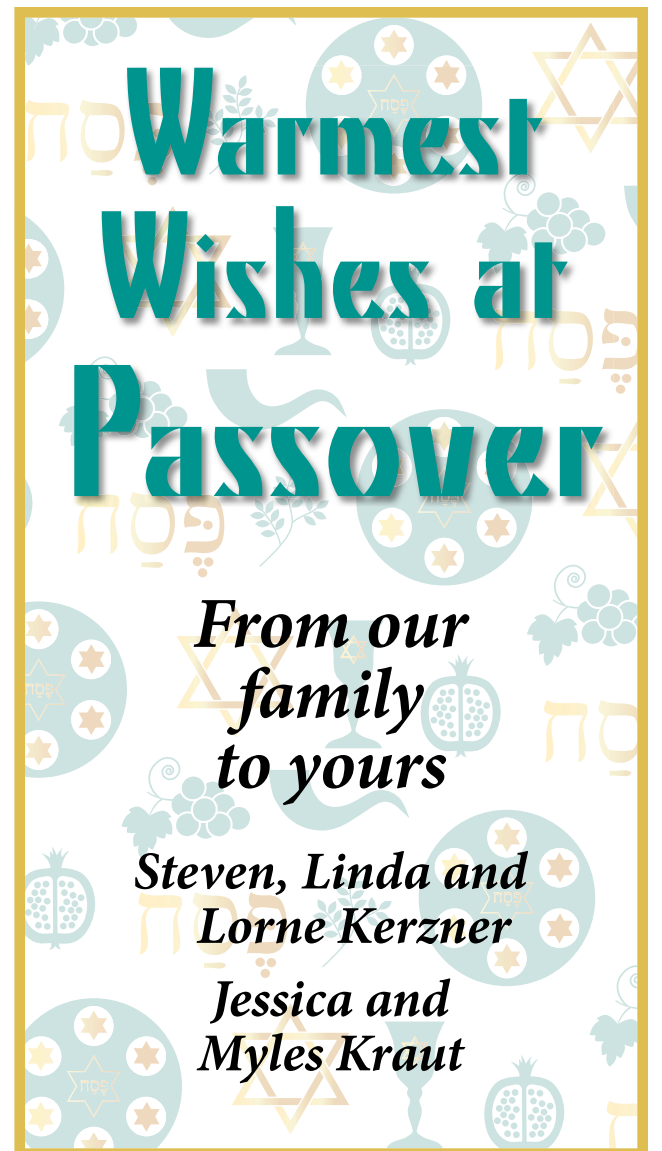
government, while Avigdor Liberman and his Yisrael Beiteinu party, as well as the mostly Arab Joint List, would join a new version of Blue and White in opposition, according to reports.

Yair Lapid and Moshe Ya'alon, the other co-leaders of Blue and White, filed a request in the Knesset to break away from Gantz. Lapid and Ya'alon will reportedly continue to use the name Blue and White, while Gantz likely will use the name of his party, Resilience.

Blue and White had said initially that it would support Meir Cohen of Lapid's Yesh Atid party for speaker. Cohen was to use the position to drive a further wedge with Netanyahu and his Likud party by proposing legislation that would forbid a lawmaker under indictment from forming a government and serving as prime minister. Netanyahu is facing three corruption counts, but his trial has been delayed because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"Gantz decided to crawl into Netanyahu's government," Lapid told his Yesh Atid faction, according to reports.

Reports said that in a unity government, a Likud member would serve as finance minister and Netanyahu agreed to give up the Justice Ministry, with Yecheil Trooper of Blue and White assuming the position.





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# Four questions for Pesach 2020

JAY SOLOMON, CIJA  
GUEST COLUMN

For centuries, Jews everywhere have gathered with family and friends around the seder table to recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt, a narrative that has captured our attention for generations. It is an annual reminder that, even amid uncertainty, we can draw upon our traditions for guidance, for comfort, and for inspiration. It is a reminder that, despite hardship, and in the face of adversity, the faith and spirit of the Jewish people has always – and will



*Best wishes  
for happiness,  
peace and joy  
at Passover*

*From The Staff at  
Wellington Butchery*

always – endure.

No lesson could be more important today.

These are profoundly challenging and uncertain times. The COVID-19 pandemic currently spreading throughout the world provides an important opportunity to pause and reflect on where we've been and remind ourselves that we have persisted as a people for millennia despite incredible hardship. At a time of great stress, Jews know more than most that we should balance our legitimate concerns and challenges with hope about where our journey will take us in the future.

This year, my seder will look, feel and be different than in the past. We will not be gathering in large numbers with extended family. We will not be going to my parents' house. And, we will certainly not sit across the table from my 95-year-old grandparents.

Instead, my wife, our three children, and I will read the Haggadah – while video conferencing with family near and far.

For me, the focal point of the Passover seder has always been the Four Questions – an opportunity to pose difficult questions about our history and our future. This year, our community will be asking many questions. These are the ones that will characterize our seder table.

**How can we support those on the front lines?** As we keep hearing from health care professionals and other essential frontline service workers, the single most effective way to help is to heed the advice of public health authorities and stay home! If you are like me, you will find this very difficult as we are used to springing into action during times of need.

**What should we be doing to advocate for those most in need during these unsettling times?** Maybe it's raising money to ensure our Federations can continue to support the most vulnerable in our community or donating food staples to the local food bank. Perhaps it's donating to ensure there's enough personal protective equipment at our local hospital or urgent care clinic. And it's joining CIJA in our efforts to ensure all levels of government provide charities, non-profits, and social services agencies with the resources they desperately need to continue doing their vital work during these challenging times.

**What will life look like after COVID-19?** Like all things, this pandemic will pass, and with some luck, life will return to something resembling what we used to call normal. But, what will that mean? History has shown that times of great hardship often create opportunities for innovation. Will this pandemic spur the next generation of scientists and doctors to new breakthroughs? Will medical companies produce new technologies to better protect citizens from future viruses like COVID-19? Will corporations continue to encourage flexible workspaces?



Jay Solomon is associate director, campus, at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

*It is a reminder that, despite hardship,  
and in the face of adversity, the faith  
and spirit of the Jewish people has  
always – and will always – endure.*

Will places of worship continue to make their services available online for greater participation?

**And – finally – what lessons can we teach our children and ourselves?** Much of the Jewish Diaspora has been fortunate, of late, to live during times of prosperity in a world of relative safety, security, freedom, and good health. But, as COVID-19 is teaching us, things can change quickly. Each of us has a responsibility to do our part: to take care of each other, and to contribute to repairing our society. My wife and I are using this time to reinforce the concepts of tzedakah and tikkun olam with our children, to imbue them with empathy, humility, and gratitude. And to teach them that we are all – Jews and non-Jews, young and old, near and far – in this together.

Wishing you all good health.  
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# Kanata expansion a highlight of recent growth at NCSY

BY MIRIAM PERL  
NCSY CANADA

When several Jewish teens from Kanata attended last year's teen Purim party, Rabbi Dave Rotenberg, NCSY's Ottawa city director, saw an unexpected opportunity. Introducing himself to all new teens and asking what school they attend, many replied that they go to A.Y. Jackson Secondary School. Previously unaware that there was a significant Jewish population in Kanata, Rabbi Dave was thrilled to welcome these students to enjoy the fun of the holiday, and resolved to bring Jewish programming to teens in that part of town.

After conversations with parents and the school administration, NCSY started a new Jewish culture club at A.Y. Jackson this past fall. A second Kanata club, at Earl of March Secondary School, was introduced in the new year.

Growth into additional suburbs and neighbourhoods represents a new approach to a program that has been a pillar of NCSY for decades. Through the Jewish Student Union (JSU) initiative, NCSY facilitates Jewish culture clubs in over 300 public schools in North America, including over 30 in Canada. The goal of JSU is to inspire positive Jewish identity in Jewish teens by offering low-barrier opportunities to engage in Jewish programming, bringing the program to them at their schools. JSU clubs serve food and run educational activities, touching on topics that include Jewish holidays, ethics and values, Israel, antisemitism, and more.

The growth of JSU in Ottawa since Rabbi Dave's arrival has been rapid. From only two clubs when he joined NCSY last fall, there are now nine JSUs



Leadership students promote the Jewish Student Union at a club fair at Sir Robert Borden High School.

engaging teens across the city on a regular basis. NCSY Ottawa broke new ground last spring, when their new club in the Grade 7/8 division of Sir Robert Borden became the first JSU in a public middle school in Canada. Its foray into Kanata also continues to pick up steam as meetings with parents and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, which provides a substantial portion of funding for Jewish culture clubs, suggests there is an audience and demand for additional JSUs and/or other NCSY programming in Kanata.

Why are teens expressing new interest in exploring their heritage? It could be the food – JSUs serve pizza, bagels and cream cheese, and holiday-related treats. Just as likely, it's the fun activities and educational content that are drawing teens in. At a time when antisemitism is growing and many are feeling disconnected from community life, it is heartwarming to see teens embrace these opportunities.

At the same time, JSU clubs have facilitated partnerships with other groups, educating the broader school

*JSU clubs have facilitated partnerships with other groups, educating the broader school communities on important issues.*

communities on important issues. Multiple times this school year, Rabbi Dave has been invited to Ashbury College as a featured speaker on topics such as bullying, character development, and the meanings of the Jewish holidays.

Last spring, Rabbi Dave was invited to speak at Lisgar Collegiate's "Day Against Injustice," which he attended with a Holocaust survivor and an Israel advocacy expert from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. This was the first time that antisemitism had been featured at this annual event, and the invitation came as a direct result of Rabbi Dave's presence at Lisgar through JSU.

Many Ottawa teens seem to be embracing the opportunity to connect with their Jewish identity, and have sought other avenues to get involved Jewishly. These include Torah High, NCSY's after-school program where Jewish students in public schools earn high school credits in Jewish studies and Hebrew language; social programs; Shabbatons, summer programs to Israel; internships in Israel advocacy; Shabbat dinners; casual learning programs such as Latte & Learning, and more.

For more information about NCSY Ottawa's programs or to find out how to start a JSU in your child's school, contact Rabbi Dave Rotenberg at [rabbidave@ncsy.ca](mailto:rabbidave@ncsy.ca) or 613-889-3283.

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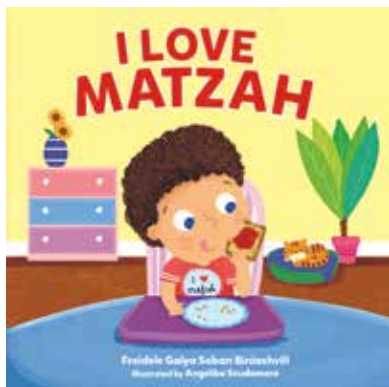
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## Passover kid lit

# New children's books for the holiday

BY PENNY SCHWARTZ  
JTA

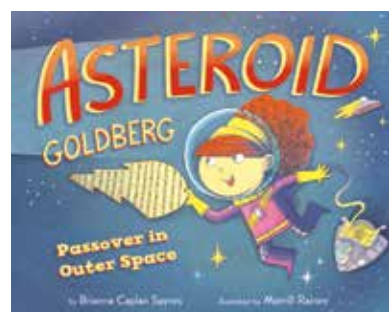


### **I Love Matzah**

By Freidele Galya Soban Biniashvili  
Illustrated by Angelika Scudamore  
Kar-Ben

12 pages, Ages 1-4

A young boy proudly shares all the delicious ways he likes to eat matzah. Rhyming words and bright, cartoon-like illustrations will keep kids hungry for the matzah treats.



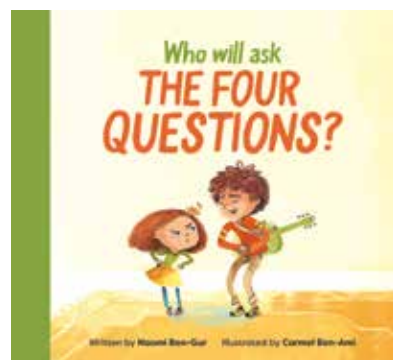
### **Asteroid Goldberg: Passover in Outer Space**

By Brianna Caplan Sayres  
Illustrated by Merrill Rainey  
Intergalactic Afikomen

40 pages, Ages 4-8

When a space-travelling family's rocket ship is delayed for landing right before the holiday, it's no obstacle for the young daughter Asteroid, who fills the spaceship's pantry with Passover food from the far reaches of the Milky Way: matzah balls from Jupiter's moons and crunchy matzah from Saturn's rings. Rainey's large, animated illustrations are a laugh-out-loud blast as Asteroid and her family fly around the zero gravity

seder table. Even the matzah balls float. Relatives pop in from Mars and Venus. A back page includes a glossary and a link for information on Jewish astronauts.



### **Who Will Ask the Four Questions?**

By Naomi Ben-Gur  
Illustrated by Carmel Ben-Ami  
Translated from Hebrew by Gilah Kahn-Hoffmann  
Green Bean Books

32 pages, Ages 4-7

In this endearing story, a young boy named Eitan is eagerly awaiting his family's seder, when he will sing the Ma Nishtanah, traditionally recited by the youngest in the family. But his little sister, Evie, insists it's her turn for the honour. Eitan rejects Grandma Naomi's suggestion that he help his sister learn the questions and tries to persuade Evie to change her mind. Will the quarrelling siblings find a way to join their voices together?



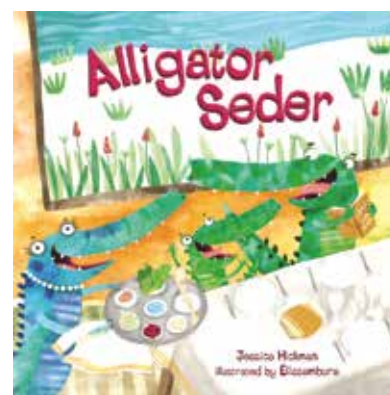
### **Welcoming Elijah: A Passover Tale with a Tail**

By Lesléa Newman  
Illustrated by Susan Gal  
Charlesbridge

32 pages, Ages 5-8

A young boy inside his warm and light-

filled home celebrates the seder with his family and guests while outside, a small white kitten sits alone in the windy darkness of night. With each turn of this poetically written and beautifully illustrated book, the simple verse compares the joyful seder rituals and festivities inside with the lonely kitten outside. When it's time to open the door to welcome Elijah, the boy's favourite holiday ritual, he discovers the kitten meowing at his doorstep. Gal's large, gloriously colored illustrations reflect the story's contrasts between inside and outside. Newman in the author's note explains the custom of filling a cup of wine for Elijah and the holiday's theme of welcoming guests.



### **Alligator Seder**

By Jessica Hickman  
Illustrated by Elissambura  
Kar-Ben

12 pages, Ages 1-4

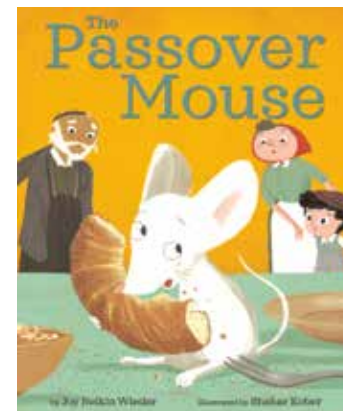
Join the fun with a family of friendly Florida gators who are preparing for Passover in the Sunshine State. In rhyming verse they hunt for chametz, recite the Four Questions and crunch their matzah.

### **The Passover Mouse**

By Joy Nelkin Wieder  
Illustrated by Shahr Kober  
Random House

32 pages, Ages 3-7

This delightful tale inspired by a Talmudic passage features a white mouse scurrying from the home of a widow who has cleaned her home to make it chametz-free before the holiday. When the



mouse races to the cobbler's home, and we meet another mouse and a cat, both with bread, the zaniness ensues.

When the quarrelling villagers race to the rabbi's home and ask, "Do we have to clean our homes again?" A young boy finds the perfect solution.



### **Miriam at the River**

By Jane Yolen  
Illustrated by Khoa Le  
Kar-Ben

32 pages, Ages 5-9

Yolen, a master storyteller, will enchant a new generation of young readers with this imaginative, lyrical retelling of the biblical story of Miriam, the older sister of Moses. Set in ancient times along the banks of the Nile River, a seven-year-old Miriam finds the courage to save the life of her baby brother. The story sets the stage for the future of the Exodus story. Le illustrates with swirls of colour and ripples of water as the basket with baby Moses drifts past a lush landscape of storks and a hippopotamus. An author's note gives the biblical background and explains the recurring ties between Miriam and water in the Exodus story.



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# Standing up to the three-headed monster of Jew-hatred

RUBIN FRIEDMAN  
**BOOK REVIEW**

**How to Fight Anti-Semitism**  
By Bari Weiss  
Crown  
224 pages

The rise of hatred against Jews and things Jewish has increased Jewish community anxiety about this phenomenon and its many manifestations. While the United Nations has reached a point of having to address this reality, of particular concern is the marked rise of hate rhetoric and hate incidents in secular and Western democracies in Europe and around the world.

After the synagogue attacks in the United States, including the one at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, her own hometown congregation, Bari Weiss, a staff writer and editor in the opinion section of the New York Times, felt the urgency of becoming more actively involved in finding ways to combat this rising tide, and wrote *How to Fight Anti-Semitism* as a guide for Jews.

As someone who has been involved

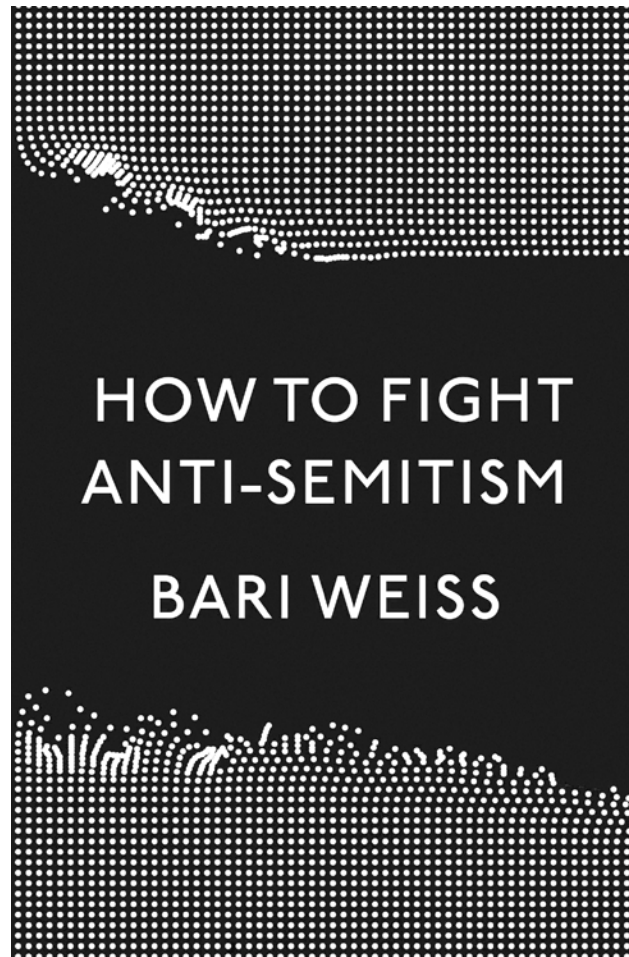
for over 30 years in dealing with antisemitism and other forms of hatred while working in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, there is much in this book I find true and helpful. For Americans, it is even more relevant.

My own experience and awareness do not make me optimistic about the oft-stated goals of such efforts to “eradicate hatred.” Rather, humans are seized with the responsibility to fight hatred even in the knowledge that complete victory cannot be achieved *biz der moshiakh vet kumen tsu geyn*.

As to the book’s ideas, Weiss’s description of a three-headed monster of antisemitism or Jew-hatred coming from “radical Islam, the right and the left provides a general and simple way of discussing various incidents and examples.

But to me, this structure and some of the overlapping examples themselves recall a line in the novel, *The Exorcist*, when the young priest tells the older experienced one that he is trying to figure out the different voices coming out of the possessed girl, and the older one replies, “There is only one demon.”

Antisemitism is, in fact, a single hatred that seizes on various rationales. It is the rationales she categorizes rather than the hatred. In fact, that is why this hatred can appeal to groups with vast-



ly different beliefs in other ways, and often in ways that seem to contradict each other, even within a single person. To rationalize these contradictions often requires belief in a mythos of the “all-powerful Jew” who can take on any disguise – as a fascist, a victim, a communist, a capitalist, etc. – and thus attributes to Jews the desire to manipulate all humans for “their” communal benefit.

These extreme ideas are shared by at least some in each of Weiss’ three heads and can jump from one form of rationale for hating Jews to another. That is what makes them so powerful, so difficult to eradicate, or to counter. That is why David Duke, the former “grand dragon” of the Ku Klux Klan, can complement someone on the extreme left for her perceptions. They share the same myth.

As to Weiss’ measures to combat antisemitism, they are very good and

very well-articulated. They are a practical and useful guide for taking action when adapted to local needs.

Weiss also recognizes the difficulty of actually taking the recommended actions under all circumstances and discusses them. For instance, the myth of “Jewish control” is being spread actively over the internet and in quiet, below-the-radar community gatherings and exchanges. In Canada, various individuals have been spreading these lies quietly at least since the mid-1990s in Indigenous communities, to immigrants and refugees, women’s groups, and in former Green Party circles (by admirers of David Icke) and so on.

Jews involved in such movements have difficult choices: stay quiet; support extreme statements;

or leave and prove that they are not “progressive.” Weiss advises staying and fighting antisemitism as long as possible, and if necessary, with individuals whom one trusts. Local partnerships work better than national ones.

Above all, she advises staying connected to one’s Jewishness and its values. To that end she quotes the Haggadah:

“It is this that has stood by our ancestors and by us. That not one alone has risen up against us to destroy us, but rather in each and every generation they rise up against us to destroy us. And The Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hands.”

But I think the Jewish tradition, as per Rabbi Hillel, also encourages us to act when we can, not only to wait for rescue, and not only alone: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

## OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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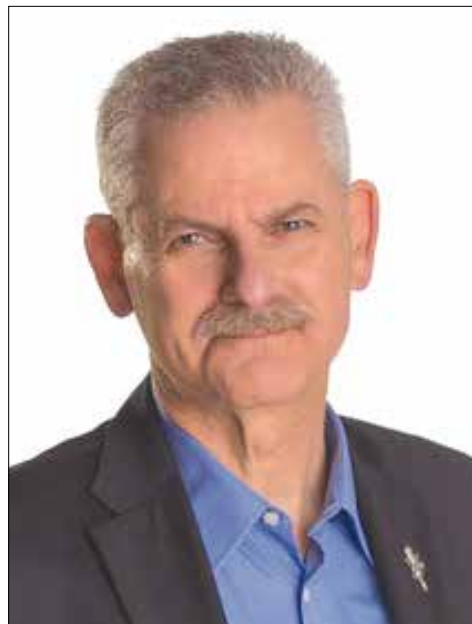
# CHW 'phantom tea' to honour Laurence Wall

BY RUTH KAHANE GOLDBERG  
FOR CHW OTTAWA

BC Radio newscaster Laurence Wall is the honoree of the Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) 2020 Spring Tea in Ottawa. The tea, scheduled for Sunday, June 7, will now be a "phantom tea" because the COVID-19 pandemic prevents us from gathering together. Hopefully, we will all be to raise a cup of tea in Laurence's honour in our own homes.

Laurence jokingly calls himself "the grand old man of CBC Ottawa." But Laurence's 45-year career in journalism has been matched by his volunteerism. He is sought after around Ottawa as a master of ceremonies for his speaking skills and approachable personality and has hosted events for Ottawa Chamberfest, Music and Beyond, the Ottawa Writers Festival, Orkidstra and the CBC Music in Schools competition. He has also hosted many events for Jewish organizations including the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, Musica Ebraica concerts, synagogue programs and Holocaust remembrance ceremonies, to name just a few.

CHW recognizes Laurence's efforts, many associated with children, health-care and women, the three spheres of the organization's projects in Israel and



"You really have to be a part of the community [and] I think you never can do enough," says CBC newscaster Laurence Wall.

Canada.

"You really have to be a part of the community [and] I think you never can do enough. It's an ongoing commitment. I believe passionately in tikkun olam and I think it is a wonderful Jewish philosophy," Laurence said.

"What I do is so utterly insignificant compared to the great work these char-

ities and community groups are doing. They are really the ones who are doing the heavy lifting," he added.

Born in Montreal 65 years ago, Laurence grew up in Winnipeg along with his three brothers. His father, Mark, was an obstetrician/gynecologist who volunteered at a community clinic in the city's north end. His mother, Elsa, an excellent amateur pianist and accompanist, performed dozens of times a year at Jewish seniors' facilities and at the Golden Age Club. She was also an active member of the Winnipeg CHW Israeli Chapter.

Laurence remembers his mother encouraging his musical interest by taking him to Sunday afternoon concerts with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. He began playing cello in his school's junior orchestra 53 years ago and still plays weekly with a string quartet.

Laurence met his wife, Roslyn Nudell from Montreal, when they were both journalism students at Carleton University. They married in 1978. His in-laws, Bella and Gregory, were Holocaust survivors who took great pride in his volunteer work and career.

Laurence started his journalism career as a reporter at the Winnipeg Tribune in 1975. In 1979, he joined CBC Radio in Winnipeg. Laurence later

worked at CBC stations in Saskatoon and Fredericton, where their daughters Elana and Alexa were born. He and Roslyn and the girls settled in Ottawa in 1993 when Laurence joined CBC Ottawa.

With his droll sense of humour, Laurence says he is known as the "guardian of English grammar and pronunciation" at the CBC. He prepares and reads 13 newscasts and updates daily between 11:30 am and 7 pm. You can also catch him at 1 pm, introducing the National Research Council official time signal.

Laurence considers CHW's recognition "a tremendous honour" for simply doing what he loves to do.

For further information, or to request an invitation to the "phantom" tea, contact Anna Bilsky ([humbil@rogers.com](mailto:humbil@rogers.com)), Hedy Gutman ([hedy.gutman@gmail.com](mailto:hedy.gutman@gmail.com)), or Candice Wilder ([candice.wilder@gmail.com](mailto:candice.wilder@gmail.com)). An invitation will be sent in which you will find a reply card with return envelope for your donation. All donations will support the CHW Debbie Eisenberg and Gary Levene Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Shamir Medical Centre in Assaf Harofeh, Israel.

We deeply regret not being able to honour Laurence Wall in person. Donations in his honour are therefore even more appreciated. We hope everyone stays safe and healthy.

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*Happy Passover!*



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A concert by Nefesh Mountain was among the events in the past year supported by the Beth Shalom of Ottawa Legacy Endowment Fund.



*Warm wishes  
to you and  
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Happy  
Passover*

*Oh So Good  
Desserts &  
CoffeeHouse*

## Beth Shalom fund supports unique community projects

BY JANE EHREWORTH SHORE  
CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM OF OTTAWA LEGACY  
ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Last year, the Congregation Beth Shalom of Ottawa (CSBO) Legacy Endowment Fund Committee reached out to the Jewish community to raise awareness that our committee exists and was working very diligently to keep the name and values of Congregation Beth Shalom alive.

The committee's focus is to support unique, one-time projects within the Jewish community, that reflect the values of Congregation Beth Shalom. Values which include inclusion, tolerance and diversity. The fund is focused on providing community-based agencies with seed money for initiatives that cannot be funded from existing operational budgets or that are unique events. Funds are available to eligible Jewish community organizations that have charitable standing with a charitable number.

This committee is chaired by Jane Ehrenworth Shore, a former vice-president of CBSO and includes Jay Amdur, a former vice-president and treasurer; Ian Sherman, the immediate past-president; Morris Schachnow, a past-president, and founding family members Sol Shinder and Arnie Kimmel.

Over the past year the committee has helped support projects associated with a range of community organizations.

Kehillat Beth Israel received support for its adult education program which allowed it to host a bluegrass concert with Nefesh Mountain and a (scheduled) upcoming weekend with Yossi Klein Halevi.

The Ottawa Jewish Community School created a new learning environment for its students called Makespace which brought a new and exciting learning component to the school.

Creative Connections was able to enhance its programming providing providing opportunities for social, emotional and intellectual connections, as well as cultural activities and a fitness component for older seniors.

Hillel Lodge used its grant to replace its existing prayer books, Chumashim and High Holy Day machzorim with modern, large-print editions.

Limmud Ottawa used its grant to bring people together to celebrate Jewish learning.

The Ottawa Torah Centre hosted a community-wide barbecue competition, which not only brought people from across the entire Jewish community together but also pleased their palates.

Support from the CBSO Legacy Endowment Fund has helped these organizations expand programming and bring new and vital programming their constituents have come to rely on and enjoy.

The committee has been delighted to see its positive impact within the community which has helped make our Jewish community stronger and more vibrant.

The committee is looking forward to expanding our support for more unique projects. To apply for funding, contact the committee at [bethshalomlegacyfund@gmail.com](mailto:bethshalomlegacyfund@gmail.com) and we will send an application form. Applications will receive an acknowledgement within three weeks of submission.



*Happy Passover!*



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**Helen & Mayer Alvo**



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FROM US TO YOU  
Warmest wishes for a Happy & Healthy Passover



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Warm wishes to you and your family for a Healthy & Happy Passover

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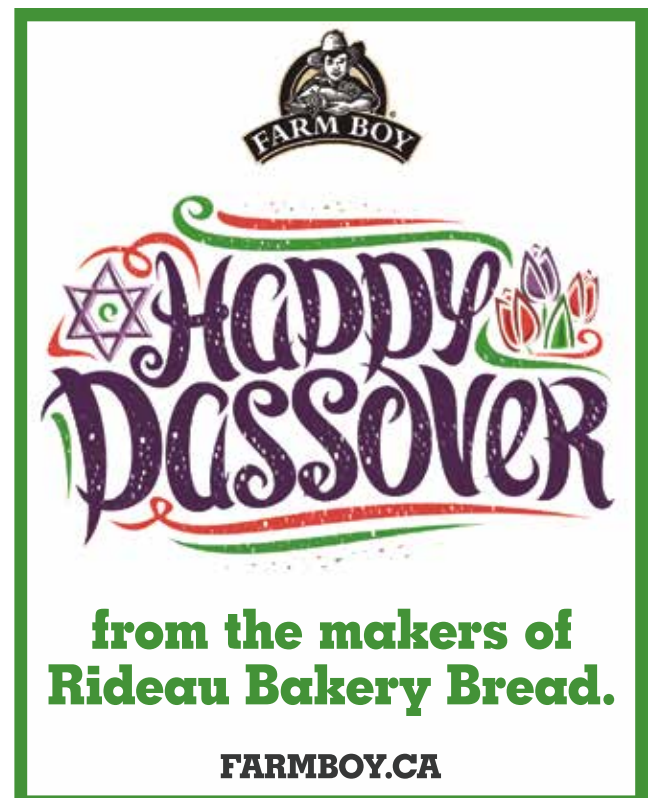
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From the staff of the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin



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**Claims Conference** ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

## ATTENTION HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND SPOUSES

The Claims Conference has negotiated the following liberalizations with the German government.

### Article 2 and CEE Fund

The following Jewish Holocaust survivors, who were persecuted in the open ghettos identified below, for at least three months, may be eligible for a monthly pension from the Article 2 or CEE Fund:

- In Romania, survivors persecuted in Botosani, Galati, Focsani, Tecuci, Roman, Piatra Neamt, Barlad, Vaslui, Alba Iulia, Constanta, Targu Neamt, Harlau, Buzau, Ramnicu Sarat, Stefanesti, Craiova, Pascani or Bacau between August 1941 and August 1944;
- In Bulgaria, survivors persecuted in Plovdiv, between September 1942 and September 1944;
- In the Netherlands, survivors persecuted in the ghetto in Amsterdam, between September 1941 and September 1943.

**Note:** Jewish Nazi victims from these open ghettos in Romania, Bulgaria and Amsterdam may also be entitled to a pension from the ZRBG (Ghetto Pension). This pension is not administered by the Claims Conference.

The maximum annual income and asset limit for the Article 2 Fund and for social welfare services has been changed. The annual maximum income for eligible recipients is now CAD \$66,300 per annum and the maximum allowable assets held by the recipient has been raised to CAD \$1,326,090 (excluding the principle residence of the applicant). The German Ministry of Finance has determined that "old-age pensions and pensions on account of reduced earning capacity, occupational accident, occupational illness, or death, or comparable benefits" should not be included in calculating an applicant's income for the purpose of an application to the Article 2 Fund. For more details see <http://www.claimscon.org/what-we-do/compensation/background/article2/comparable-payments/>.

**NOTE:** It is not possible to receive an Article 2 Fund pension in addition to a pension from the BEG.

Applicants who were a fetus during the time that their mother suffered persecution described may also be eligible. Eligibility is dependent on all the criteria of the fund being met and for a full set of criteria see [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org)

### Child Survivor Fund

The Child Survivor Fund will provide those who took part in the Kindertransport a one-time payment amounting to €2,500 per person.

Participants of the Kindertransport in this sense are deemed to be Jewish persons who met the following cumulative criteria at the time of the transport:

- o they were under 21 years of age at the time of the transport, unaccompanied by their parents and took part in a transport that was organized by third parties, not organized by the German government, in order to escape potentially threatening persecution by German forces;
- o they were transported from somewhere within the German Reich or from territories that had been annexed or occupied at the time;
- o the transport took place between November 9, 1938 and September 1, 1939 or was approved by the German authorities after November 9, 1938 but before September 1, 1939.

In addition, all pension recipients who were in one of the open ghettos in Romania, Bulgaria or Amsterdam named above and born after January 1, 1928, may be entitled to a one-time payment from the Child Survivor Fund administered by the Claims Conference.

### New Payment to Spouses of deceased Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiaries

Beginning January 1, 2020, the Claims Conference will provide payments to eligible spouses of deceased recipients of the Article 2 and Central and Eastern European (CEE) Funds.

A spouse of an Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary may, upon the death of the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary, be entitled to receive €513 per month for up to 9 months, paid in three quarterly installments, if the following conditions apply:

1. The spouse is alive as of January 1, 2020 or the date of application, whichever is the latter; and
2. The spouse is alive at the date of the payment; and
3. The spouse was married to the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary at the time of death of the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary; and
4. The Article 2/CEE Fund recipient passed away at any point while he or she was receiving a payment from the program.

The spouse of a Holocaust survivor must be alive at the time of each payment.

Other heirs, including children, are not entitled to receive any payment in lieu of the spouse.

To download an application from our website, please go to: [www.claimscon.org/apply](http://www.claimscon.org/apply)

**For more information, contact:**

Claims Conference

P.O. Box 1215

New York, NY 10113 Tel: 646-536-9100

Email: [info@claimscon.org](mailto:info@claimscon.org) [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org)

The Claims Conference has an Ombudswoman. To contact the Office of the Ombudswoman, please email [Ombudsman@claimscon.org](mailto:Ombudsman@claimscon.org) or write to The Ombudswoman, PO Box 585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113, USA



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**In Memory of:**

Jacques Gaulin by Cheryle and Manny Gluck  
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**Jeannette and Alden Hallett Family Fund**

**In Honour of:**  
Cathie Slatford wishing you a very Happy Birthday by Mitch Miller

**Evelyn and Isadore Hoffman Family Fund**

**In Honour of:**  
Cathie Slatford wishing you a Happy Birthday by Issie and Evelyn Hoffman

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Jon Braun by Mitch Miller and family

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**In Honour of:**  
Gary and Ellie Greenberg Mazel Tov on the birth of your grandson by Steve Rothman

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Ottawa-based artist Sharon Katz's latest project is a collaboration on an experimental opera that premiered in Israel in February.

## Ottawa artist creates video for experimental opera in Israel

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

**A**s a producer-director of short animated films, animated riffs, and mixed-media artworks, Ottawa artist Sharon Katz exhibits widely in Canada and abroad.

Most recently, she turned her creative talents to collaboration with Israeli composer Kiki Keren-Huss for a new experimental opera. The unique artistic event had two sold-out performances in Israel at the end of February.

Katz made an animated video as a backdrop for the full length of the performance which was projected on the back wall of the stage, across the full width and height.

"Kiki Keren-Huss and I spent a lot of time discussing the music as she developed the opera," said Katz via email from Israel after the performances. "So, when I started working on the video, I was already very familiar with what she was looking for and what would work best for the opera."

The pacing of the opera is very meditative, she said, and so Katz chose to animate the video with "a dramatic time-space for the opera to unfold in. But in this case, it is a sense of time not passing... But the viewers' sense of time is such that it feels like time has stopped. I do this by controlling some of the elements that trigger our sense that time is passing."

The light of the projection also plays

with and manipulates the light on stage, she said, and in doing so it alters colours. For example, in the video you can see the white of the singer's right sleeve.

"That's generated by the stage lights playing against the light of the projection, and it's magical as these elements shift the appearance of the singers' clothing as they move around the stage... In this sense the video creates a very specific space and time for the opera to unpack in."

Katz, who is married to poet and University of Ottawa professor Seymour Mayne, was born in Montreal. She came to Ottawa in the late 1970s to do a BA in visual arts at uOttawa.

On her website, Katz explains that she uses "a variety of media to create marks and images which, presented consecutively, order time and relate a narrative." Her subjects "are primarily common objects and everyday moments. Drawing and animation play a key role in my work."

"The response to the opera was very enthusiastic and people are still talking about it," said Katz. "Tickets were sold out for both performances... We're very pleased with how it went."

Katz added that Musica Nova, the producer in Israel, will be offering the opera to music festivals in Israel and abroad, and that they hope to bring it to Canada and the U.S.



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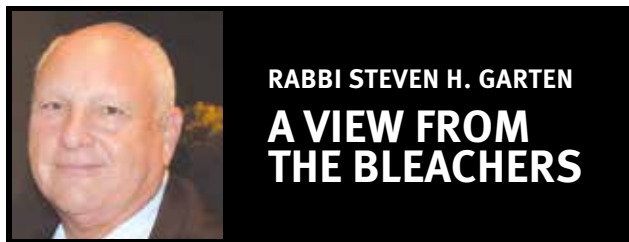
# The possibility for miracles in Israeli politics

I was invited to speak at an Anglican church on the Jewish view of reconciliation for a presentation in a series offered by non-Christian clergy. The request was to present a theological paradigm concerning reconciliation. “Oh, one more request,” said the priest, “could you provide the Hebrew term for reconciliation. Reconciliation usually means the repairing of a relationship that was once strong but now is shattered. There are many instances in *Tanach* where Israel and the Deity are in need of reconciliation.

There is no one Hebrew term used to reflect that process. Sometimes, intimate partners faced with challenges beyond their capacities for resolution need reconciliation counselling. Indeed, it is possible that the final step in repentance, *Teshuvah*, is reconciliation. We know what it is, but what do we call it?

There are a number of phrases in Hebrew that seem to be the equivalent to the English reconciliation. *Hashlama* means completion, complement, fulfilment and its last meaning is reconciliation. *Hitpisut* is often the word used for conciliation or rapprochement. *Pios* is another synonym meaning pacification, appeasement. Of course, one could simply use “rekansile’ashan,” the transliteration of the word into Hebrew. Similar to using transliteration in the siddur, it gives proper pronunciation but no meaning.

I did not find any of this useful so I asked colleagues for help. One suggested using the term *tikkun*. Many of us know the term *tikkun olam* from the Aleynu prayer or from Lurianic Kabbalah. In both cases it is usually used to suggest our obligation to heal the world of its broken parts. Certainly, that might work for my presentation. Another colleague suggested *sheleimut*, wholeness from the same root as *shalom*. These two phrases



brought me closer to the original intention.

Yet, in a conversation with another colleague, we moved away from theology toward modern realities. He informed me that a few years ago, Arzenu, the Zionist organization of the Reform movement introduced a resolution to the World Zionist Organization Congress recommending a reconciliation commission be established jointly composed of Israeli Arabs and Jews. Rather than use the Hebrew translation of reconciliation – since some would argue the conflict remains ongoing – they opted to use the phrase “mutual understanding and justice.” The Hebrew would read in transliteration, “*Havanah Haddit v Tzedek*.” The resolution passed on June 1, 2016 but Arzenu and its allies are still waiting for the commission to be established.

The resolution calling for the commission outlined the following tasks:

a) Listening to each others’ narratives about claims to the same land with genuine concern, compassion and empathy regarding sufferings past and present;

b) Recommending measures to the government of Israel that would include means to facilitate admission of past injustices that both communities have visited upon the other, and designating suggested means through which past injustices can be redressed and future injustices prevented;

c) Recommending a program of sincere, mutual steps toward peace and reconciliation between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, based on equality, respect and mutual recognition.

I am not sure what Hebrew word adequately defines reconciliation, but I do know what it looks like. Were these steps to become the building blocks of a new relationship between all the citizens of Israel, it might look like the “first flowering of redemption.”

Six years ago, the Arab representation in Israel’s Knesset was almost obliterated when the new Governance Law raised the electoral threshold from two to 3.5 per cent, threatening to oust the deeply-divided Arab parties from the Knesset. The law was designed to reduce the number of small parties, which inhibit effective legislative procedures and to limit Israeli Arab representation in the Knesset. The following years brought discord and disharmony to the four Israeli Arab parties.

In the March 2 election, the Arab Israeli parties ran together as the Joint List and won a record 15 seats in the Knesset. In the unstable political environment of Israel that led to three elections in less than 12 months, the possibility now exists for two miracles to occur: a joining of the second and third largest parties to create political stability, and perhaps more importantly, the start of a process toward “mutual understanding and justice.”

Just imagine the symbolic aura that would emanate from a country we love if the Joint List allied with Blue and White to provide services for all Israeli citizens. Just imagine the powerful rebuttal to those who call Israel an apartheid state when a minister of the state is an Israel Arab. Just consider for one moment what pride we who live in Canada would feel watching our beloved Israel begin a journey toward *tikkun* and *sheleimut*.

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# 'Pesach teaches us about healing intergenerational trauma'

**W**e know the importance of reading to and sharing stories with our kids. In addition to developing basic literacy skills, sharing stories transmits knowledge and culture *l'dor v'dor* (from one generation to the next). We use stories to teach, to entertain, and to help us appreciate what we have and where we come from.

Pesach is told as a story that begins with shame and ends with praise. Our lives often follow a similar trajectory. None of us get through life without our share of bumps and bruises. Some of them are ours alone. But many more, far more than we often realize, predate us – sometimes by many generations. It is each of our life's work to identify, process, and hopefully transcend, the shame and trauma that we experience. This includes that into which we are born. This is partly to save ourselves from unnecessary suffering and also, most importantly, to heal on behalf of future generations. We all, whether we are parents or not, have a role to play in actively teaching children how to distinguish between their own 'stuff' and passed on trauma/ issues that don't belong to them but still affect them.

Our stories can define, destroy or strengthen us. It's not the atrociousness of the story that dictates where we fall on that spectrum. Many people who have suffered horrible trauma and tragedies are able to transcend those experiences. Some people who have lived largely sheltered and protected lives are never able to feel true freedom and happiness. Just as we remember the journey from slavery to redemption on Pesach, we are often also slaves to our beliefs, the stories that are passed on through our families and our thoughts.

When we celebrate Pesach, we remember and hold



JENNIFER PERZOW  
**MODERN  
MISHPOCHA**

*Our stories can define, destroy or strengthen us. It's not the atrociousness of the story that dictates where we fall on that spectrum. Many people who have suffered horrible trauma and tragedies are able to transcend those experiences. Some people who have lived largely sheltered and protected lives are never able to feel true freedom and happiness.*

space for the shame and trauma experienced by a generation that predates us by thousands of years. Pesach also teaches us about healing intergenerational trauma. The opportunity in trauma and shame is to transcend it. We tell the story of Pesach as we do because the ultimate message is one of freedom, redemption

and transformation. Just as we now know that trauma can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), we also know that PTSD can lead to an amazing thing: post-traumatic growth.

Long before I became a parent, I knew that I wanted to understand and face as much of the intergenerational trauma that played role in my life, and those of my parents and grandparents. I had a (perhaps naive) desire to distill the pain, understand it, learn from it, grow from it and turn it into a rich fertilizer to pass on to my children. Something like a trauma superhero – trapping all the difficult, muddy stuff and transforming it into gold.

It turns out that's a pretty hard thing to do. Sometimes there are no answers and all we can do is hold space even when what we really want are solutions. A friend recently invited me to join the phenomenal Facebook group Jewish Ottawa Helps! It was launched [by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa] in response to COVID-19 and really does highlight the heart and soul of the Jewish community in Ottawa. Therapist, and daughter of two Holocaust survivors, Esther Perel captured it so perfectly in a 2018 New Yorker interview. <https://tinyurl.com/yc8yrcvw>

"In terms of healing, what we do know is that pain is universal, but the meaning that we give to our pain, and the way we narrate our pain, is highly cultural and contextual. And there is nothing that helps us deal better with those experiences than our connections with others. Social connection is the No. 1 salve for most of the pain, and the hurt, and the trauma that we will experience. And communities that come together naturally will provide that kind of buffer."



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# Get outside and get active to deal with anxiety

I've recently been experiencing some anxiety that I attribute to the constant media coverage about COVID-19. Whether I'm watching the news or other television programs, listening to my car radio or perusing social media, it's COVID-19, 24/7. Many people are feeling anxious, too.

With schools closed and children at home getting bored, many workplaces and most public venues shuttered, and government recommendations to isolate, we're experiencing a new and uncertain reality. People of all ages feel disappointed that special trips and large events have to be cancelled. How can we deal with anxiety about the virus and this new way of life that may last for months? Though I tell myself not to overreact and arm myself with facts (e.g., the majority of affected people recover), sometimes my words ring hollow. That's when I know it's time to disconnect and get some exercise.

Exercise is a natural and proven way to decrease mild anxiety. But what can you do when all recreation and community centres and gyms are closed? I find that going for a run outdoors helps me in several ways. I get fresh air. I'm practicing the recommended social-distancing by staying away from crowds in order to reduce my risk of contracting and spreading the virus. When I run, I'm also mentally distancing myself from the media and from my negative thoughts. I'm distracted by the sights along my route and by my music playlist. I feel much better mentally for the duration of my run as well as for hours afterwards. My anxiety symptoms dissipate.

If you're experiencing mild anxiety, aerobic exercise may be helpful for you, too. Exercise has neurochemical benefits. You don't have to be a runner. Go for a leisure-



GLORIA SCHWARTZ  
**FOCUS ON FITNESS**

*It's important to recognize when you have emotional stress and to be aware of the symptoms which can vary from person to person.*

ly stroll, a brisk walk, a hike, a bike ride or anything else you enjoy, as long as you're allowed out and you avoid close contact. If you cannot get out, open a window for fresh air, listen to the birds and do whatever exercise you can indoors. You can also do strength training exercises if you know what to do when you're not at a gym.

It's important to recognize when you have emotional stress and to be aware of the symptoms which can vary from person to person. The physical manifestations of anxiety are wide-ranging and include, but are not limited to, pounding pulse, chest tightness, clenched jaw, headaches, backaches, tense muscles and intestinal problems. The physical symptoms can cause further distress and then you find yourself in a vicious cycle. <https://tinyurl.com/y4b27qfg>

These are difficult times. Exercise is just one tool. If you need mental health support, call the Ottawa Public Health Distress Centre at 613-238-3311.

It's important for children to stay busy and active during the school closures. Irrational fear based on misinformation can get in the way. I was chatting with a woman while waiting in line to pay at a store. She said she was buying some craft supplies because her 10- and 12-year-old kids are getting bored staying at home. I suggested she have them play outside [while ensuring they practice social-distancing]. I reminded her that spring is almost here and it's already milder and the snow is almost melted. The woman said she doesn't let them go outside because they might get the virus. I informed her that you don't catch the virus from going outdoors. The woman looked perplexed. I tried to encourage her by telling her that it's good physically and mentally for kids and adults to get fresh air and get active rather than stay cooped up indoors for weeks. She shook her head in disbelief as if I didn't know what I was talking about. Irrational fear can be debilitating. To get the facts on how the virus spreads, visit <https://tinyurl.com/sj5ab9c>. Ensure you have the most accurate and up-to-date information so you can deal with stress rather than exacerbate it.

Sometimes I get the best advice from my 96-year-old father. I visited him in mid-March and that same day his retirement residence, like all others, stopped allowing visitors in and residents out. I don't know when I'll see him again. It could be many weeks or months. I felt anxious already and worried he'd be upset. Instead he reminded me that he'd survived the Holocaust. "Don't worry," he said. "It'll all be back to normal soon."

**EMERGENCY APPEAL**

**BGU Coronavirus Task Force**

**In this time of crisis, we ask you to join us in partnership and donate to the BGU Coronavirus Response Task Force.**

Together, we can leverage BGU's talents, inventiveness and resourcefulness to make meaningful contributions to the worldwide campaign underway to mitigate and contain COVID-19, allowing life to return to normal.

As with all research at BGU, this initiative is *"From the desert, for the world"*.

**Wishing all of you a healthy and happy Passover and a joyful Yom Ha'atzmaut!**

Simon Bensimon  
Executive Director

Donations may be made online at [www.bengurion.ca/bgu-coronavirus-task-force/](http://www.bengurion.ca/bgu-coronavirus-task-force/)  
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# Growing up the child of Holocaust survivors prepared me for this pandemic

BY SARA NUSS-GALLES

LAGUNA NIGUEL, Calif. (JTA) – I was born in Dzalalabad, Kyrgyzstan, to Polish Jews who had fled Warsaw following the Nazi onslaught in 1939. When they met up with the Russian forces and refused Russian citizenship, my parents, like thousands of others, were shipped off to Komi SSR, a Siberian work camp where they chopped down trees, froze and starved along with the local population.

I know how blessed my life has been: I'm a writer, teacher, daughter, mother, wife, sister, mother-in-law and now a joyful bubbe.

But today I realize how deeply I've absorbed the trauma of my Holocaust survivor parents. As echoes of past hatred are reverberating from many sides, somehow blaming Jews for the coronavirus' creation, I find myself also fighting those debilitating inherited memories and fears.

My parents and two brothers survived Siberia, and, in 1942, as Polish citizens, they were resettled in Kyrgyzstan, where my sister was later born. Hunger had no borders and they followed the Kyrgyz example, gathering weeds to cook a kind of "stone soup" to fill their stomachs.

I came into the world postwar. The story goes that the local midwives entered and the kids and men were shooed out of the mud-floored hut my parents shared with a Kyrgyz Muslim family. My siblings played outside as I lustily cried into life on March 30, 1946. Truly heroic in body and determination, my mother and I were healthy enough for us all to board a train bound for Poland 10 days later.

Seeing no future in the nameless cemetery that had been their home for generations, my parents somehow smuggled us into the British-occupied zone in Germany. We lived for five years in Displaced Persons' camps – including the SS barracks of the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp – before sailing to glorious America in 1951 on the SS General Muir.

Always high spirited, my parents called me an *alt gemeit* (an old soul). I teased my siblings, dramatized for my parents and beguiled their friends. But behind that *joie de vivre* lurked what Jews are instructed to feel at the seder – that we ourselves came out of Egypt.

While never personally hungry, terrified or party to the horrors that could befall loved ones, I always felt that I, too, had come out of the Shoah. But this COVID-19 pandemic is my first realistic encounter with the hyper-wariness my parents harboured and I long



"Life at this moment has radically changed for much of the world," writes Sara Nuss-Galles.

struggled to squelch inside myself.

I have never been allowed to forget hunger or deprivation. My mother's pantry overflowed with staples, the refrigerator was stuffed with produce, pots of soup and meat, the freezer was crammed. My home is not much different. I'm always prepared for any culinary eventuality – six people could show up for dinner or a catastrophe could hit. Unlike in my "American" friends' homes, no usable item or edible morsel goes to waste.

Life at this moment has radically changed for much of the world, including my little corner of Southern California. Beginning with distant whispers in late 2019, COVID-19 transcended borders, races, genders and the haves and have-nots. We are pummeled by broadcasts, tweets, posts and hourly updates on symptoms, precautions, hoarding, social distancing and shortages. I obsessively check my phone, reading every pronouncement as if my life depended on it. This time I feel it may.

Checking my inventory, I found a glut of last year's post-Passover sale purchases of gefilte fish, matzah meal, farfel and dry soup mixes. Aware that my husband would prefer not to live on this alone, I grabbed my bags and hit every store within five miles. I replen-

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ished my canned goods, rice, pasta and that sudden rarity, toilet paper. I forced myself to draw the line at hoarding.

My 74th birthday is soon. It's going to be an intimate, somewhat austere in-place celebration. But there will be good food, heat, electricity, security, dark chocolate (my indulgence!), and a l'chaim or two.

We will, I hope and pray, look back on this time as a trial that humanity endured and largely overcame. There will be stories shared, some painful, of losses and suffering; some humorous, of closets overflowing with toilet paper and expired sanitizers; some tales of time frittered away and time spent creatively; reminiscences of kindness from friends, neighbours and strangers. We will remember reaching out, seeing need and helping and, also, being helped.

Each day I write, cook simple, creative meals, read prodigiously, walk, binge on shows I never knew existed, FaceTime and talk on the phone with family and keep in virtual contact with friends I usually see in person. In this disconnected time, I have realized that for me and my inherited demons, being engaged and connected is, if not the cure, my comforting balm.

## CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8	AT 7:30 PM
THURSDAY, APRIL 9	AFTER 8:28 PM
FRIDAY, APRIL 10	AT 7:25 PM
TUESDAY, APRIL 14	AT 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15	AFTER 8:36 PM
FRIDAY, APRIL 17	AT 7:34 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 1	AT 7:52 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 8	AT 8:01 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 15	AT 8:09 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 22	AT 8:17 PM
THURSDAY, MAY 28	AT 8:23 PM
FRIDAY, MAY 29	AT 8:24 PM

## CONDOLENCES

**Condolences are extended to the families of:**

**Selma Davis**

**Myrtle "Miki" Sheldon**

**Helen Eisen**

**Ruth Soloway**

**Susan Hart**

**Norman Torontow**

**May their memory be a blessing always.**

*The Condolence Column is offered as a public service to the community. There is no charge. For listing in this column, please call 613 798-4696, ext. 274. Voice mail is available.*



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