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Hockey legend Daniel Alfredsson honoured at JNF Negev Dinner

BY BENITA BAKER

A capacity crowd of more than 500 people filled the Infinity Convention Centre, November 13, to honour Daniel Alfredsson at the 2018 Jewish National Fund (JNF) of Ottawa Negev Dinner.

Alfredsson, the Ottawa Senators' captain for 13 seasons, was inducted into the International Hockey Hall of Fame in 2018. The beloved retired hockey player, who now calls Ottawa home, has been active in raising awareness about mental health, most notably as the public face of the Royal Ottawa's "You know Who I Am" campaign.

Funds raised by this year's Negev Dinner will support the Daniel Alfredsson Social Services Centre at the Israel Tennis Centre (ITC) in Kiryat Shmona. One of Israel's largest social service organizations for children, the ITC offers at-risk youth free access to social programs via tennis, social workers and help with language skills in a caring and safe environment.

"The Israel Tennis Centre in Kiryat Shmona feeds the minds, bodies and souls of its young participants," said Honorary Dinner Co-Chair Barbara Crook. "Tennis is just the starting point for young people to learn to make healthy and positive choices in life, from socialization and teamwork to overcoming challenges."

Alfredsson, who was welcomed by the crowd to cheers of "Alfie, Alfie," said the ITC "struck a chord" with him. "It teaches youth the necessary tools and skills, not just for sport, but for life in general," he said.

"I am an advocate for mental health, so naturally I will be supporting a project that is at the forefront of anti-stigma in mental health," said Alfredsson in the evening's commemorative program. "Israel is a leader in medical innovation, so I am confident my project will be an example of innovation in integrating at-risk youth into society."

Now a Canadian citizen, Alfredsson talked about how welcoming the community was to him and his family.

"You made me part of your community and all around me I saw and met people whose values aligned with mine, who believed in the importance of giving back to the community in any way you can," he said. "You call it tzedakah – fairness, righteousness and justice. This room is full of tzedakah. Our community is full of tzedakah."

The enthusiastic audience applauded when Alfredsson, speaking about his hockey career in both Sweden and Canada said, "I look at my resumé... its pretty good, but there was something missing – the Jewish connection."

Israeli tennis legend and former ITC student, Andy Ram, was the evening's



ROBIN CHERNICK

(From left) Honorary Negev Dinner Co-Chairs Dan Greenberg and Barbara Crook; MC Rabbi Reuven Bulka; honouree Daniel Alfredsson; JNF Ottawa President Dan Mader; JNF Canada CEO Lance Davis; JNF Ottawa Executive Director Lynda Taller-Wakter; and Negev Dinner Chair Bill Johnston, at the presentation of the Negev Dinner citation to Alfredsson, November 13, at the Infinity Convention Centre.

"Israel is a leader in medical innovation, so I am confident my project will be an example of innovation in integrating at-risk youth into society."

keynote speaker. Ram represented Israel at three Olympics – Athens (2004), Beijing (2008) and London (2012). The first Israeli to win a grand slam title (Wimbledon 2006), Ram also won the mixed doubles at the French Open (2007) and the Australian Open (2008), and beat Russia at the Davis Cup (2009).

Born in Uruguay, Ram immigrated

to Israel as a child and had a difficult adjustment to a new country and a new language. His parents sent him to the ITC, where he thrived.

"I am grateful for all the support you give Israel," Ram told the audience. "Because of people like you, I had the chance to achieve my dreams and the children of Israel who watched me on TV have the chance to achieve their dreams."

In his closing remarks, Rabbi Reuven Bulka, the Negev Dinner MC, told Alfredsson, "When you are inducted into the NHL Hall of Fame, you will be the first one to have been a Negev Dinner honouree."

As a souvenir of the event, guests received an appropriately redesigned JNF "blue box" – a bright red box bearing Alfredsson's photo.

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Stephanie Shefrin on kitsch and community building > p. 21

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Challenge Fund closes in on 80 per cent as Annual Campaign hits new bold goals

BY MICAH GARTEN
JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA

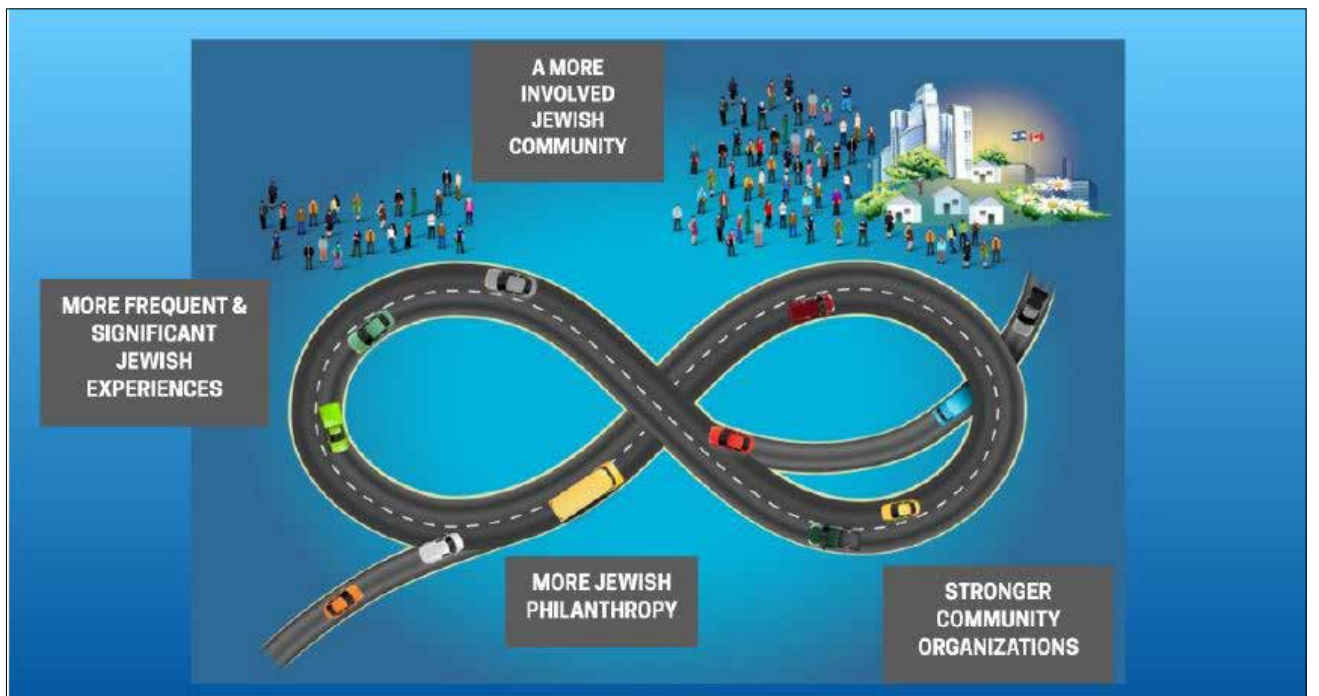
This year, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa launched an extraordinary Annual Campaign. Led by Campaign Chairs Rabbi Reuven Bulka and Aviva Ben-Choreen, the entire team was determined to pull out all the stops to ensure that the entire \$500,000 Challenge Fund, which matches new and increased gifts to the Campaign, was fully utilized.

Increasing fundraising in one year by 25 per cent was an audacious goal and is now within reach!

This bold endeavour began when three generous donor families agreed to provide \$500,000 for a matching-donation fund. Their leadership put in motion a wide-spanning community drive signalling that this year's Campaign would not be business as usual.

Here are a few examples:

- The annual golf tournament held a unique auction wherein players did not bid on luxury items, but rather on special education in Jewish day school, raising \$51,000 in a matter of minutes;
- The Campaign Kickoff featured a brand new community-driven event. Under the leadership of the Zaret family, our agencies showcased their energy, talent and drive in an entertaining and inclusive lip-sync battle;
- Determined to help donors follow their passion, a new program was created to allow donors to designate the increased portion of their gift to a specific outcome of the Jewish Superhighway (Jewish experiences, Safety and Security, the Vulnerable and Jewish Education);
- Synagogues, such as Kehillat Beth Israel, Temple Israel, and Congregation Machzikei Hadas have stepped up and hosted call nights for the Campaign.



Additional funds raised by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa Annual Campaign will help realize the vision of the Jewish Superhighway where Jewish life is vibrant and no one is left behind.

Clearly, the Challenge Fund has infused the Campaign with renewed energy and spirit. There are now 120 new donors and counting. Additionally, 58 per cent of this year's Campaign donors increased their gift.

To date, there have been \$400,000 in new and increased gifts to the Campaign, which means that our community now has \$800,000 additional dollars to realize the vision of the Jewish Superhighway where Jewish life is vibrant and no one is left behind.

"Having lived in Ottawa for so many years, I know first-hand what a generous community we have. We

are thrilled to be 80 per cent of the way to our goal and grateful to all our wonderful donors. If you have already made your gift, thank you. If you have not yet made a gift, there is still time and perhaps your gift will be the one that gets us to the goal!" said Rabbi Bulka.

Visit www.jewishottawa.com to donate online, or call 613-798-4685, ext. 272. Thank you!

Micah Garten is director of development of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. He can be reached at mgarten@jewishottawa.com.

Camp B'nai Brith donation to help rebuild burned Jewish camps in California

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

Three Jewish summer camps near Malibu, California – Ginding Hilltop, Camp Shalom, and Camp Hess Kramer – were destroyed last month in the California wildfires and Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa (CBB) is doing what it can to help.

On November 15, the CBB executive committee decided to donate \$5,000 from its surplus funds to help rebuild the three camps.

"Like other organizations, we really do watch every penny closely, and so we were a little worried about

how the optics would be perceived," said CBB Board Chair Adam Tanner.

"But at the end of the day, it's the right thing to do," he said. "Anything we can do is meaningful."

He hopes other organizations follow suit, and that the CBB donation sets a precedent for others. "From our perspective, we want Jewish kids to go to camp," said Tanner, who attended CBB from 1979 to 1995. "There are longer term ramifications here and some children will lose that opportunity for Jewish camping."

Tanner stressed that the money for the donation is being drawn from CBB's surplus funds.

"We've been extremely fortunate over the past few years to be able to put some money in the bank, and this will come out of operations not from donor donations."

"I have no recollection of doing anything like this before," said past-board chair Michael Polowin, although board members did organize a fundraising drive for the nearby Tim Hortons Camp des Voyageurs

See CBB donation on page 4



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Federation members' meeting: Panel says more resources are needed to deal with mental health issues

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

There is no stigma associated with having cancer, observed Dr. Hartley Stern, a surgeon who is now executive director and CEO of the Canadian Medical Protective Association. However with mental health, "in many ways it was considered your fault. While role models like Clara Hughes and Michael Wilson have come out to speak about mental illness, have they moved the needle?"

Stern, chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, made those comments while moderating a panel discussion, "Breaking the Mental Health Stigma in the Jewish Community," during the Federation members' meeting, November 20, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

The panelists were Dr. Kathi Kovacs, chief of psychiatry at the Queensway Carleton Hospital; Rabbi Robert Morais, spiritual leader of Temple Israel; and Sarah Caspi, a social worker and assistant executive director of Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS).

Regarding the stigma of mental health issues, "while the courageous stories of Clara Hughes and Michael Wilson have helped a lot," said Kovacs, "there is still the individual stigma. People often don't know what's going on, they feel worse about themselves, and it grows and grows and grows. They feel flawed and broken and that they're fraudulent... The process of actually getting help is very difficult in Ottawa and across the country."

And then there's public stigma.

"If you have to take time off, what do you tell your boss? It's a long journey... It's a very difficult road," Kovacs explained.

"Funding in mental health is seriously lacking," she said. At her hospital, she explained, "the mental health area



(From left) Panelists Dr. Kathi Kovacs, Rabbi Robert Morais and social worker Sarah Caspi discussed mental health issues in the Jewish community at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa members' meeting, November 20, at the SJCC.

is old and grungy, with no privacy... It's the last place to be renovated."

Kovacs said a study found no difference in rates of mental health problems between Jews and non-Jews, but that Jews were more likely to seek help for their problems.

Rabbi Morais said there is a long tradition in Jewish texts about aspects of healing that are relevant to mental health issues, explaining that Maimonides wrote about "sickness of the soul."

"There are experts in the field who can help us heal our 'soul,' which I believe is code for treating mental illness," he said.

As well, Rabbi Morais noted Jewish tradition has created responses to grief.

"Our history and our traditions show grief is not something you get over, it's a part of who you are," he said.

Rabbi Morais also observed that some

people who have experienced difficulty in getting help for mental health issues will turn to their rabbi for help.

Caspi said JFS has a large team of social workers and support psychologists who offer mental health services,

such as the Walk-In Counselling Clinic, Shalom Bayit, and The Counselling Group, which provide counselling and support services for individuals, couples, children, families, schools and organizations. Any Jewish person in need of assistance can call 613-722-2225 and ask for Tikvah intake.

"One of our biggest concerns is people not having access to psychiatry," said Caspi, who noted that JFS provides help at all stages of people lives.

The panelists agreed there is more awareness of mental health issues, but that not enough funding, access or resources are being provided.

The meeting also included a presentation by Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman on Federation's project to build the "Jewish superhighway" to "create meaningful experiences and Jewish journeys – where Jewish life is vibrant and no one is left behind."

She asked the audience to image a "virtuous community cycle" along the superhighway of more Jewish philanthropy, stronger community organizations, more frequent and significant Jewish experiences, and a more involved Jewish community.



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CAMP HESS KRAMER/FACEBOOK

A view of Camp Hess Kramer in Malibu, Calif., shows how devastating the wildfires have been.

CBB donation

Continued from page 2

in Quyon.

Polowin, who is currently vice-chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa explained that he learned of the camps' emergency appeal from Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman.

"I had a conversation with Adam and the camp board executive. We discussed how unique this was, and how close to home it comes... The primary mission of the camp is to provide camping to Jewish kids without regard to financial ability. When we saw three Jewish summer camps burn to the ground, and a desire to get them up and running for 2019, that is a tall order," said Polowin.

"It's not a huge help, but it's something," he added. "If we can get other people and organizations to come on board, maybe those children will be able to come to camp. These are camps that are like ours. Communities need these camps."

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Ottawa teen to sing with international Jewish choir

BY MATTHEW HORWOOD

Zev Green, a Grade 10 student at Sir Robert Borden High School, is one of 33 North Americans – and the only Canadian – to be accepted into the HaZamir Chamber Choir.

HaZamir is a Jewish musical youth movement made up of 38 choral chapters spread across the United States and Israel. Its elite Chamber Choir features singers from North America and Israel who are "more musically advanced and are ready for more challenging music." The Chamber Choir performs as a select ensemble at major events.

Zev, 15, the son of Cantor Jason Green of Kehillat Beth Israel, has been singing since he was five years old, and has participated in choirs since he was nine. Zev said he auditioned for HaZamir because he wanted to join a Jewish-based choir. He was encouraged, he said, by his friend Aden, of HaZamir's Baltimore chapter.

"[Aden] has been singing in HaZamir for two years, and he was always telling me how incredible it is singing with other Jewish teens, so I really wanted to be a part of that," Zev said.

Zev's mother, Jodi, said that because he is Canadian – and therefore could not attend weekly practices with any of the U.S. chapters – he was told his only option was to join the Chamber Choir.

In order to audition, Zev had to submit an audio recording of his singing – which could not be altered in any way – to HaZamir. A week later, he received an email congratulating him on being accepted into the HaZamir Chamber Choir.

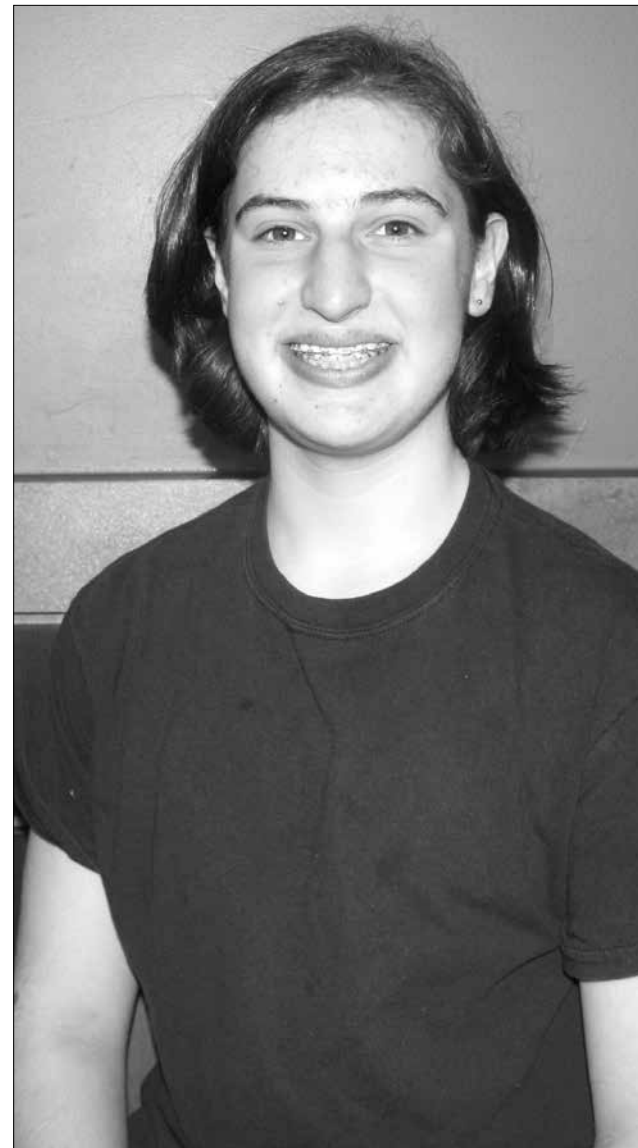
Zev said he is "really excited" to be representing Canada in the HaZamir Chamber Choir.

Zev will be learning the music at home, with the added support of his dad and his voice coach. He will then attend two large conventions in New York and Baltimore, as well as some "special trips or gigs they haven't told us about yet," said Jodi.

Zev said HaZamir will give him the opportunity to learn Jewish music and sing with other Jewish teens, something he had not done before in previous choirs.

"I am hoping I will fit in really well, and I think it will be really great," he said.

HaZamir holds new auditions every year, according to Zev, and having been in the Chamber Choir previously "does not get you extra points," as everyone auditions again annually. "Some kids who have been



MATTHEW HORWOOD

Zev Green is the only Canadian who will be part of the HaZamir Chamber Choir over the coming year.

in it for three years might not come back for the fourth year," Zev explained.

Cantor Green said he anticipated his son having "amazing experiences" with HaZamir, and was impressed with how far he had come musically in the last few years. "Zev is flying. His sight reading has gotten better, I have watched him navigate the changing of his voice, and so we want to support him and let him go as far as he wants to go with this," he said.

Jodi agreed that she wanted to see her son succeed in HaZamir.

"As a mom, you just want your kids to be happy, feel accomplished and have opportunities to grow, and

this is really awesome way to do that," she said.

The Green family has started a GoFundMe campaign to help pay the fees associated with HaZamir and for expenses travelling to events in the U.S. Visit www.gofundme.com/sponsor-zev-to-participate-in-hazamir for more information.

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FEDERATION
REPORT



ADAM TANNER, CHAIR
CAMP B'NAI BRITH OF OTTAWA

CBB upholds Jewish values, traditions in support of camps destroyed by wildfires

who live down the street from the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and most recently, former Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa (CBB) campers and staff who find themselves without a summer camp due to the California fires.

To date, three Jewish camps in the Los Angeles area have been burned to the ground. Yes, those affected will find alternatives while these institutions vow to rebuild. And yes, the residents of the area have more pressing concerns than the freedom that summer offers their children six months from now.

While structures impacted by fire are lost forever, I can guarantee that the memories will survive. Like our CBB – where generations have walked through our gates, dined in our mess hall, swam in either the Ottawa River or our pool, and maybe even experienced their first kiss – Jewish summer camp leaves an indelible mark in our minds and hearts. It facilitates our children's independence and fosters their growth, all while creating and crystaliz-

Jewish summer camp leaves an indelible mark in our minds and hearts. It facilitates our children's independence and fosters their growth.

ing memories.

While they plan to rebuild out west, we continue to rejuvenate our facility, striking the delicate balance between preservation and replacement. Thanks in part to a generous donation, we constructed a new infirmary that was completed and in use last summer. This year, our cabin renewal program continues and we inch slowly towards a new multi-purpose gymnasium.

As our landscape continues to evolve, who we are and what we do remains our priority. We provide children with a Jewish camping experience, in an environment where they learn

new skills and develop lifelong friendships, all while enhancing Jewish affiliation, values, traditions and community. For these reasons, we will always stand with our friends in Israel, and we will continue our support of other communities like Pittsburgh and those in California.

All children should have the opportunity to attend summer camp, feel safe, learn the ability to make an impact, and form memories that will endure any level of violence, hatred or devastation. We understand the love of camp, and the need for Jewish children to go to Jewish summer camps. As a result, we wanted to help our friends out west, and have pledged \$5,000 from our accumulated surplus to a fund to help rebuild those camps and build new memories. Our thanks to Andrea Freedman and the Jewish Federation of Ottawa for facilitating our pledge.

Visit www.cbbottawa.com for more information about Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa.

Over the past few months, the news headlines have been filled with images of violence, hatred and catastrophic devastation. Israel continues to protect itself, our friends in Pittsburgh have returned to daily life, and first responders in California have been fighting an ongoing battle against wildfires.

Closer to home, we have begun to battle snow – a stark contrast of events, but in some way, and within a few degrees of separation, we all know friends or family that have been impacted. I have many friends in Israel, friends

FROM THE
PULPIT



RABBI EYTAN KENTER
KEHILLAT BETH ISRAEL

We need to 'meet people where they are'

that we are actually trying to present. Calling a Jewish communal organization a "non-profit" is an accurate description legally of what the institution may be, but poorly represents the character of the organization. It describes what the institution isn't rather than what it is: an organization singularly focused on repairing the world rather than advancing its own financial interests. What would it mean to refer to our Jewish communal organizations as "for a cause" or "community-minded" rather than simply referring to it as a non-profit?

Perhaps my least favourite term that is used in relation to Jewish life is "unaffiliated." That word is often used to describe people who are not members of a synagogue, who in the Christian world would be referred to as the "unchurched." While we refer to these individuals as unaffiliated, they may still have a very deep relationship with their Judaism. They may still send their children to day school or religious school. They may be members of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre or support Jewish Family Services. They celebrate Chanukah, Passover, and other Jewish holidays with family members and friends. These people are not unaffiliated. They feel a very deep connection to their faith, but it manifests itself in the most meaningful ways for them. We are belit-

ting their connection to their people and their religion by calling them unaffiliated.

I believe that anyone who is a participant in a Jewish communal organization should be considered affiliated with the Jewish community. Donors to the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, supplementary school parents, and synagogue members are all affiliating with Jewish life in some way. People who choose not to join synagogues are "un-shuled" but that is not the only way to access meaningful Jewish life.

All too often, Jewish communities are convinced that their institutions are the singular path to meaningful Jewish engagement. We see the value in our participation and cannot understand why others are not following suit. A 21st century Jewish institution cannot expect everyone to come to us or even attempt to bring everyone within their organization. We need to follow the teaching of the Divine, who found Ishmael "where he was" (Genesis 21:17) and meet people where they are. Rather than expecting them to live up to our expectations, we need to do a better job of living up to theirs. Then we can truly do our work of reaching and inspiring those within our community, rather than being concerned about whether they are affiliated or not. Let us bring Jewish life to them.

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

We can't be complacent as hate crimes increase

uled well in advance to take place just before the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the anti-Jewish pogrom in Nazi Germany and Austria that signalled the start of the Holocaust, it also took place while Jewish communities around the world were in shock from the anti-Semitic Shabbat morning massacre at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in which 11 worshippers were murdered – the single worst case of anti-Semitic violence in American history.

Trudeau pledged to bolster the Security Infrastructure Program so that synagogues and other places at risk for hate crimes are better protected.

“We must guard our communities and institutions against the kinds of evils that took hold in the hearts of so many more than 70 years ago, for they did not end with the war,” he said.

On November 29, three weeks after Trudeau spoke in Parliament, Statistics Canada released its report on police-reported hate crime for 2017 and the figure for anti-Semitic hate crimes had actually worsened from the earlier statistic the prime minister quoted.

Hate crimes against Jews accounted for 18 per cent of all hate crimes reported to police in Canada in 2017 (while Jews represent only about one per cent of Canada's population). Ontario and British Columbia were the provinces with the largest

increases of hate crimes against Jews.

By contrast, hate crimes against Muslims accounted for 17 per cent of all hate crimes reported to police in Canada in 2017, while there are about three times as many Muslims than Jews in Canada. Although it must be noted that the single worst hate crime in Canada in 2017 was the massacre at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City when six worshippers were murdered and 19 others were wounded.

Other groups that suffered from significant numbers of police-reported hate crimes in 2017 included Black Canadians (16 per cent) and the LGBTQ community (10 per cent).

While Canada is one of the world's most enlightened and highly educated countries, it is clear that anti-Semitism and other forms of irrational hatred have not disappeared in the decades since the Holocaust and civil rights movement – that the situation continues to worsen.

In response to the latest figures from Statistics Canada, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel released a statement expressing alarm about the “spike in hate crimes against the Jewish community and other groups in Canada. It is disturbing to think an anti-Semitic hate crime takes place every 24 hours in our country. History demonstrates

that those who target Jews and other minorities pose a threat to society as a whole. All Canadians should be vigilant in standing against hate.”

The CIJA statement went on to call on the federal government to expand the Security Infrastructure Program to cover training costs; to develop a national strategy to combat online hate; and to increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat hate crimes – including enhancing measures against hate speech.

CIJA began a campaign on the first night of Chanukah urging members of the Jewish community to contact the federal government in support of those proposals. It is important that we must not be complacent.

UPDATE TO PREVIOUS COLUMN

My November 26 column (written on November 16) discussed the fragility of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition after former defence minister Avigdor Liberman took his Yisrael Beiteinu party out of the coalition with several other ministers and parties threatening to follow suit. The other parties – most notably Education Minister Naftali Bennett's Jewish Home – backed down, thus preserving the coalition's slim majority, now at 61 of the Knesset's 120 seats, for the time being.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

‘Leave the cellphone in the back seat’

ly have their minds on driving?

I can say I have never texted in the car. I can say I never in recent memory held the phone while talking in the car. I can even say I don't always answer the phone, hands-free or not. What I cannot say is that my cellphone is not always on me or right beside me when I am driving.

I recently left the gym after a vigorous workout in a great mood and was looking forward to lunching with a friend. Driving north on Woodroffe, approaching Baseline, I encountered a problem with the music from my phone. It was frustrating me. End of the world! My “car play” wasn't working.

At the red light next to College Square I heard a “voice” telling me not to touch my phone. I didn't listen. I took the phone and I don't know how many seconds it took before there was a loud thump coming from the passenger window. Lo and behold, a policeman caught holier-than-thou-me breaking the law.

I pulled over as instructed. I showed him all my documentation and told him how I never do this. I actually told him ticketing distracted drivers was something

I fully supported. I knew he couldn't let it go and I didn't think telling him I wasn't texting would help. He went to his unmarked white van to write the ticket.

When he came back he acknowledged I had had a perfect driving record and, in a kind of caring way, he advised that distracted driving was an expensive ticket. I knew that but was stunned when he told me it was \$490. Simultaneously the body punch hit my head and my stomach.

I think the officer might have actually felt badly as he thanked me for my cooperation. It was at that point I told him I was adjusting the music, not texting, and he said the phone was in my hand, my eyes were looking down, and that is distracted driving. He suggested I mount my cellphone on the dashboard.

I never thought of a need to mount my phone on the dashboard but I did once consider tinting my windows. I wonder if I had done that would my breaking the law have gone undetected. Tinting would have been less expensive, with no demerit points, but as we all know, life is full of would-haves and

should-haves.

I realize that fixing the music on my phone at a red light is not the same as changing the station on the radio and that arguing that is silly. My eyes were looking down at my phone and they shouldn't have been while behind the wheel. Period.

Friends told me if I went to see a justice of the peace and pled guilty that I might be able to get the huge fine reduced. I got in line and in less than an hour saw a totally humourless justice of the peace who told me in future to leave the cellphone in the back seat. She reduced the penalty from \$490 to \$290 and kindly gave me three months to pay.

I was recently FaceTiming with my daughter in Israel. She told me that a few days prior, her husband, with a perfect driving record, was at a red light in Jerusalem singing to himself while looking for music on his cellphone when he was pulled over. She told me it was an enormous ticket of 1,000 shekels, roughly \$350 Canadian.

I guess it's called “all in the family,” albeit, a world apart.

It's a daily occurrence. We look out from behind our steering wheels at red lights and see drivers who are texting as if they are doing nothing wrong. In their minds, being at a red light must make it innocent and safe – that is until a police officer sees them, stops them, and tells them it's not.

I have never seen a motorist ticketed at a red light and I often mutter how dangerous it is for people to text – even when not moving. I often wish those people would be ticketed. When the light turns green, do the driving texters instantly, perhaps in mid-sentence, real-

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**Negev Dinner Honouree Daniel
Alfredsson and Keynote Andy Ram**

Two champions, two different backgrounds, one message

“There’s a lot of tzedakah in this room tonight and in this community,” said Honouree Daniel Alfredsson to a supportive and cheering crowd of over 500 people at the JNF Ottawa Negev Dinner. Dinner Chair Bill Johnston presented the citation – the official document given to an Honouree – sealing the relationship between Daniel and his project.

On November 13, JNF Ottawa linked Alfie’s name with the Daniel Alfredsson Social Services Centre at the Israel Tennis Centre in Kiryat Shmona. Alfie noted that playing hockey in a new city and a new culture “helps to feel like you belong.” In like fashion, the ITC’s program of tennis for new immigrants and at-risk youth helps the kids feel like they have a home away from home.

Keynote Speaker and Israeli tennis legend Andy Ram echoed this sentiment in his address, citing the ITC as his home and the reason for his success both in life and in tennis. Honorary Dinner Chairs Barbara Crook and Dan Greenberg welcomed Alfie to the stage and lauded his community involvement via the anti-stigma “You know who I am” campaign. *To see more photos, like us on Facebook.*



Andy vs. Alfie

Alfie and Andy compared how many Olympics each had attended: Alfie 5, Andy 3. It was a bit more challenging to keep score at the Alfie vs. Andy exhibition tennis match held on November 14 at the Ottawa Athletic Club. Lianne Lang, former CTV host and herself a gymnast who competed in the Maccabi Games in Israel, kibbitzed with the athletes during the match. Alfie, who was working up a healthy sweat against Andy, confessed to having had his last major cardio workout in the summer. Andy took some impressive shots from Alfie who proved to be a solid amateur competitor. The intimate crowd enjoyed watching these two champions continue to battle it out for at-risk youth. *To see photos, like us on Facebook.*

**Mazel tov! Sefer Bar and Bat Mitzvah
Inscriptions**

- Simon Carroll** (June 2, 2018), by his parents, Keren Gordon and Adam Carroll.
- Jacob Spanglet** (Aug. 25, 2018), by his parents, Andrea and Yaron Spanglet.
- Eliana Mitzmacher** (Sept. 1, 2018), by her parents, Jon and Jaimee Mitzmacher.

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Jewish Family Services launches search for new executive director

BY JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES
OF OTTAWA BOARD

The Board of Directors of Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS) has begun an immediate search for a new executive director. To ensure that the best new leader is found, an executive recruitment firm is heading the search. Board Chair Jack Shinder said that “he is proud of the organization, in particular, the very dedicated staff. It is thanks to their efforts and talents that JFS is able to provide a vast array of programs and services to support the most vulnerable in our community.

Since Mark Zarecki’s retirement, the Board and senior management have been working to ensure ongoing operations and a smooth transition. Jewish Family Services is fortunate to have three highly qualified and experienced assistant executive directors: Rebecca Fromowitz, Andrea Gardner and Sarah Caspi. Together, they are providing valuable professional leadership to JFS by serving as interim executive directors.

“During this transition, JFS is fortunate to have an actively engaged Board, staff, passionate donors and supporters. All aspects of JFS’ mandate continue to be fulfilled at the highest level,” said Shinder.

MAILBAG | bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com

ADULT JEWISH EDUCATION

I am writing in response to Stephanie Shefrin’s Modern Mishpocha column in the November 12 edition (“We sign up our kids for Jewish school. But What About the Parents”) in which she referred to a common situation in that we provide Jewish education to our children but we may not continue our own Jewish education. As she noted by analogy, our actions may be perceived as Rabbi Steven Garten said in his A View from the Bleachers column (October 29), as way to “avoid the vibrant realities of our existence.”

Providing Jewish education for our children, as Shefrin does, is very important. Perhaps that is sufficient, especially considering the schedules of parents of young families. But, for those seeking more, the Soloway Jewish Community Centre offers the opportunity to deepen one’s understanding of Judaism through lectures, courses taught by university professors, some of which may be taken online, and the Florence Melton courses.

Approximately 40,000 Jews have studied the Melton core curriculum, which challenges assumptions and provides an understanding of Judaism from different perspectives. The Melton curriculum is taught to ensure that it provides a broad spectrum of views on Jewish principles, practice, ethics and history in a setting that encourages discussion and further thought. As a Melton graduate, I know that the course provides a wonderful opportunity to study, to learn, to discuss and to confront the question of what it means to be a Jew, historically and in terms of personal identity.

Sherill Besser

RESPONSE TO TRUDEAU

Editor’s note: After the Pittsburgh tragedy, the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin published the letter Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wrote to the Canadian Jewish community in our November 12 issue. The following letter is one reader’s response to the prime minister. The author is solely responsible for the opinions expressed.

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,
I would like to take up the offer in your letter appearing in the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin. You asked what you can personally do to support me in light of the difficult times arising from the attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Canada continues to support the activities of the United Nations, despite its lack of balance and its unwillingness to commit to its charter. Canada, through its financial support of \$10 million, condones the position of UNESCO and supports its agenda, even though [I believe] it is clearly anti-Semitic. While its head states she is trying to modify its views, UNESCO continues to seek, as Shimon Samuels noted in the Jerusalem Post, “the de-Judaization of the Temple Mount, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and even the Western Wall.” It supports the view that there is no Jewish history in Israel, despite obvious physical existence dating back 3,000 years. It is blatant revisionism of history, and generates an intense sense of anti-Semitism that spreads from the Middle East.

Canada also supports UNRWA, and our commitment of \$25 million has been restored. There is evidence that funds are being used to produce textbooks and provide education that vilifies Israelis and Jews. Children are indoctrinated into believing that Israelis and Jews are inferior and that they intentionally harm Arabs and Muslims. It supports “the struggle,” which justifies and glorifies armed resistance through hatred and terrorism. It denies the right of the State of Israel to exist.

Canada should terminate its support of the above two organizations until there is evidence that they are no longer corrupt, biased organizations that abuse the funds entrusted to it.

The shooter in Pittsburgh was not a direct product of the hatred engendered in the Middle East, but I believe he was influenced by the efforts of the United Nations to normalize anti-Israel and anti-Semitic beliefs.

We are accepting far too many people whose beliefs are not compatible with Canadian values – people who are bringing their anti-Semitic bias. Those who have been educated by UNRWA believe that their opinions on Jews, their rejection of Israel, their belief that Jews are evil, manipulating, controlling of the finances of the world are right. Just as I believe that my Canadian values are right.

Closing the border to them is not the long term solution. Education and tolerance is. Support of the United Nations, as it currently is operated, prevents the achievement of these goals. It endangers me, my family and my community.

Barry Bokhaut

Adult Education & Cultural Programs

Winter 2019

For full course descriptions please visit jccottawa.com under **Adult Cultural and Educational Programs**

Contact: Roslyn Brozovsky Wollock, Adult Education & Cultural Programs Manager | 613-798-9818 x254 | rwollock@jccottawa.com

JEWISH EDUCATION

Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning - Scholars Course

The Star and the Crescent: The Long Relationship of Judaism and Islam with *Rabbi Steven Garten*

Thursdays, March 28 – June 13, 2019
10:00 am - 11:30 am
No Class: Thursday, April 11 & 18

Registration for *The Star and the Crescent* begins **February 1** through the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning at www.events.org/MeltonOttawa

The Bible and Archaeology – Text in Context

with *Dr. Shawna Dolansky*

Classes will be recorded for those registered but unable to attend in person.

Tuesdays, January 29–March 5
10:00 am-11:30 am
\$145 SJCC Members
\$169 SJCC Non Members



How We Make Jewish Choices (The Jewish Way) – From Birth to Death with Rabbi Idan Scher

Mondays, January 21 – February 11
10:00 am – 11:30 am
\$77 SJCC Members
\$87 SJCC Non Members



LITERATURE

Jewish Identity in English Literature with Gefen Bar-On Santor

Mondays, January 21 – March 4
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
\$145 SJCC Members
\$169 SJCC Non Members
No Class: February 18



GENERAL EDUCATION

Current Events

with *Professor Elliot Tepper*

Tuesdays, January 15–February 19
1:00 pm–3:00 pm
\$145 SJCC Members
\$169 SJCC Non Members



New! The New Far Right

with *Allan Kagedan*

Thursdays, January 17–February 14
1:00 pm–2:30 pm
\$125 SJCC Members
\$145 SJCC Non Members



MUSIC

SJCC Ottawa Jewish Chorus

with *Rachel Eugster and Aviva Lightstone*

Thursdays, January 17 – May 2
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm
\$100 (13 weeks)
No Choir: March 21, April 25



Music Concert Series

Anna Baksheeva, violinist & Andrew Mah, classical guitarist

Tuesday, January 22
Program TBA



Pianist Katherine Addleman & Daniel Parker, cellist

Tuesday, March 5
1:30 pm– 2:30 pm
\$15 at the door
SJCC Social Hall



ART

Drawing with the Right Side of the Brain with Jinny Slyfield: Member of the Canadian Institute of Portrait Artists, Associate Member of the Society of Canadian Artists

Mondays, February 25 – April 1
11:00 pm – 3:00 pm
\$145 SJCC Members
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LANGUAGE

Conversational Hebrew from Scratch: Evening with Yochi Sirota

Beginner Level 2

Wednesdays, January 16–March 6
7:00 pm–8:30 pm
\$165 SJCC Members
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Conversational Hebrew for Beginners: Daytime with Ella Dagan

Wednesdays, January 16 – March 6
10:00 am – 11:30 am
\$165 SJCC Members
\$189 SJCC Non Members



S'iz Besser Oyf Yiddish (It's Better in Yiddish) – For Lovers of Mamaloshen

with *Shirley Steinberg and Rubin Friedman*

Tuesday, January 22
Tuesday, March 12
10:00 am–11:30 am



Yiddish Conversation Circle

Wednesdays 1:00 pm–2:30 pm
Bi-weekly

- January 16, 30
- February 13, 27
- March 13, 27
- April 10, 24
- May 8, 22
- June 5, 19

\$50 SJCC Members
\$65 SJCC Non Members

Cooking from the heart at Machzikei Hadas

BY ODELIA SCHER
FOR CONGREGATION MACHZIKEI HADAS

On November 18, I had the pleasure of partaking in a community chesed initiative, the second annual “Machzikei Cooks: Supporting Ten Yad of Ottawa.”

Ten Yad was founded in 2008 by Esti Fogel and a group of women with one goal: to provide support and assistance to Ottawa’s Jewish families in time of need. Since its inception, Ten Yad has provided thousands of meals to families in transition, whether after the birth of a child, when dealing with an illness in the family, or after a relocation to Ottawa. At these junctions, volunteers for Ten Yad dedicate their time to organize, cater or cook, and distribute homemade meals to families in need.

Ten Yad also organizes visits to patients in hospitals through its Bikkur Cholim program and maintains kosher pantries at all Ottawa hospitals. Ten Yad has truly thought of every way to ease people’s burdens during the most difficult and stressful times of their lives.

Two years ago, Rabbi Idan Scher – my brother-in-law and a recipient of Ten Yad meals following the birth of his daughter – had an idea. He wanted to create an event in which individuals from all over Ottawa could dedicate their time to helping the organization that has helped so many. How wonderful would it be to create an evening in which everyone could partake, no matter their backgrounds or affiliations, with a shared goal of helping others?

With the help of the endless energy and wisdom of Stacy Goldstein, “Machzikei Cooks: Supporting Ten Yad of Ottawa” was born.

Ten Yad has truly thought of every way to ease people’s burdens during the most difficult and stressful times of their lives.

When I walked into the room, I was moved to tears. As a member of Machzikei Hadas, I enter the main social hall weekly. I’ve never once cried upon walking in. Why now? Was it the sight of the cookie baking table, all set up to create chocolate chip cookies? No, I believe it was the site of so many people I’ve never met before, smiling, laughing and preparing to create the most delicious meals – for someone else.

The event, MCed by Sari Zelenietz, began with loud and boisterous meal preparation followed by a delicious dinner for all the volunteers. Then we heard beautiful and moving speeches by Anna Tal and Shira Goldberg, recent recipients of Ten Yad meals, and ended with the packing and labelling of the many family-sized meals consisting of soup, entrée and desserts that had been prepared that evening.

What we all experienced that night exposed the love and support that is the hallmark of the Ottawa Jewish community. “Machzikei Cooks” provided more than just meals for those in need: it built a community of volunteers guided by their selflessness and desire to help. A community in which the only requisition for membership is kindness.

I’m so proud to have been a part of such a wonderful event.

Visit www.tenyad.ca for more information about Ten Yad of Ottawa.



HOWARD SANDLER

A roomful of volunteers helps prepare meals for Ten Yad of Ottawa, November 18, at Congregation Machzikei Hadas.

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‘Building bridges of peace through healthcare’

BY MATTHEW HORWOOD

Two healthcare professionals – one Israeli, the other Palestinian – were in Ottawa, November 21, and discussed “building bridges of peace” at Church of Bartholomew.

Dr. Sagit Arbel-Alon, deputy director of the Reut Rehabilitation Medical Centre in Tel Aviv, and Akram Armo, PhD, CEO of the Green Land Society for Health Development in Hebron, spoke about their work saving patients’ lives by developing healthcare capacity and building trust and mutual respect in Palestinian and Israeli communities.

The event was hosted by Project Rozana, an international initiative which raises funds for the transport and treatment of critically ill Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank to Israeli hospitals. It also funds the training of Palestinian doctors, nurses and therapists in Israel in order to improve healthcare in Palestinian communities.

Arbel-Alon said Project Rozana, which was founded in 2013, depends on three Ts: *Training* Palestinian doctors, nurses and therapists; *Transporting* critically-ill Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank to Israeli hospitals; and, *Treating* Palestinian children in Israel with levels of care unavailable or not readily accessible in Palestinian hospitals.

The fourth, unofficial ‘T’ that Arbel-Alon cited was *Tikkun Olam*, the Jewish imperative for repair of the world.



Akram Armo (left), CEO of the Green Land Society for Health Development in Hebron, and Dr. Sagit Arbel-Alon, deputy director of the Reut Rehabilitation Medical Centre in Tel Aviv, were in Ottawa, November 21, to discuss their work together on Project Rozana.

“As a patriotic Israeli, I can’t turn a blind eye to the situation,” she said. “I want to find solutions and live alongside my neighbours with as much love and care as I can, and medicine is the best opportunity for me to show that.”

Armo said that in 2017, 1,000 volunteers travelled a combined total of more than one million km bringing Palestinian patients to Israeli hospitals. Transporting Palestinians to hospitals in Israel is “much more complicated than

it looks,” he explained, as the costs are prohibitive for most Palestinian families.

“These are people with severe chronic illnesses, from cancer to kidney failure,” Armo said. “The organization found there was a greater and greater need for patients to be transferred to Israeli hospitals.”

Another Project Rozana initiative is “Patient Navigators,” which involves guiding patients and caregivers during interactions with medical staff in order

to overcome language and cultural obstacles that could disrupt care.

Jon Allen, a former Canadian ambassador to Israel who sits on the Project Rozana board, said Patient Navigators provide psychosocial counselling and language interpretations in Israeli hospitals, in order to avoid the “foreignness” many Palestinian children face when they arrive in Israeli hospitals where people speak Hebrew.

Allen said Rozana is also seeking to raise the capacity of Palestinian healthcare by training specialists in Israel.

“The problem is that Palestinian doctors who make their specialty in the United States or Europe tend to not come back, as they can enjoy a better socio-economic status,” Allen explained. “This way, they train in Israel, but they can return home on the weekends or on a daily basis,” he said.

“You don’t build resilience and capacity in your community if your best and brightest are leaving,” Allen said.

Arbel-Alon said she believes Israelis and Palestinians need to come together and, “look to find a solution that will give us all a secure access to all healthcare, and allow us to find a way to live prosperous lives together.

“It can be done, and the way we practice medicine together shows how it can be done,” she said.

Visit <https://canada.projectrozana.org> for more information about Project Rozana.

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO installs new president and board

BY LINDA SENZILET
CHW

At our annual general meeting held on October 28 in Toronto, Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) installed Marilyn Libin as our 24th national president. The new board of directors includes members from across the country, including Ottawa’s own Lynn Gillman.

Lynn, a long-time member of CHW, has held many portfolios both at the

chapter level and at council level. She has been president of CHW Ottawa Centre since 2016 and recently completed two terms on the CHW National Leaders Assembly (NLA), CHW’s national leadership forum. It was during her tenure on the NLA that she saw the importance of the work of the board of directors and wanted to be part of a strong team that delves deep into many important issues.

Marilyn Libin was born in Edmonton

and has lived in Calgary for most of her life. She worked as the principal of Calgary Jewish Academy, dedicating many years to education and child welfare. She brings to the position of national president a passion for Israel as well as many years of volunteer experience with CHW and other non-profit organizations. During the course of her two-year presidency, Marilyn’s goal is to increase the general community’s appreciation for CHW’s work.

“Hopefully, as we educate the community about our mission, this will not only significantly increase enthusiasm for CHW, it will also increase support, participation, and fundraising,” she said.

Founded in 1917 by Lillian Freiman of Ottawa, CHW is a non-political, volunteer-led, philanthropic organization with more than 20 centres across Canada. The organization supports programs and services for children, healthcare and women in Israel and Canada.

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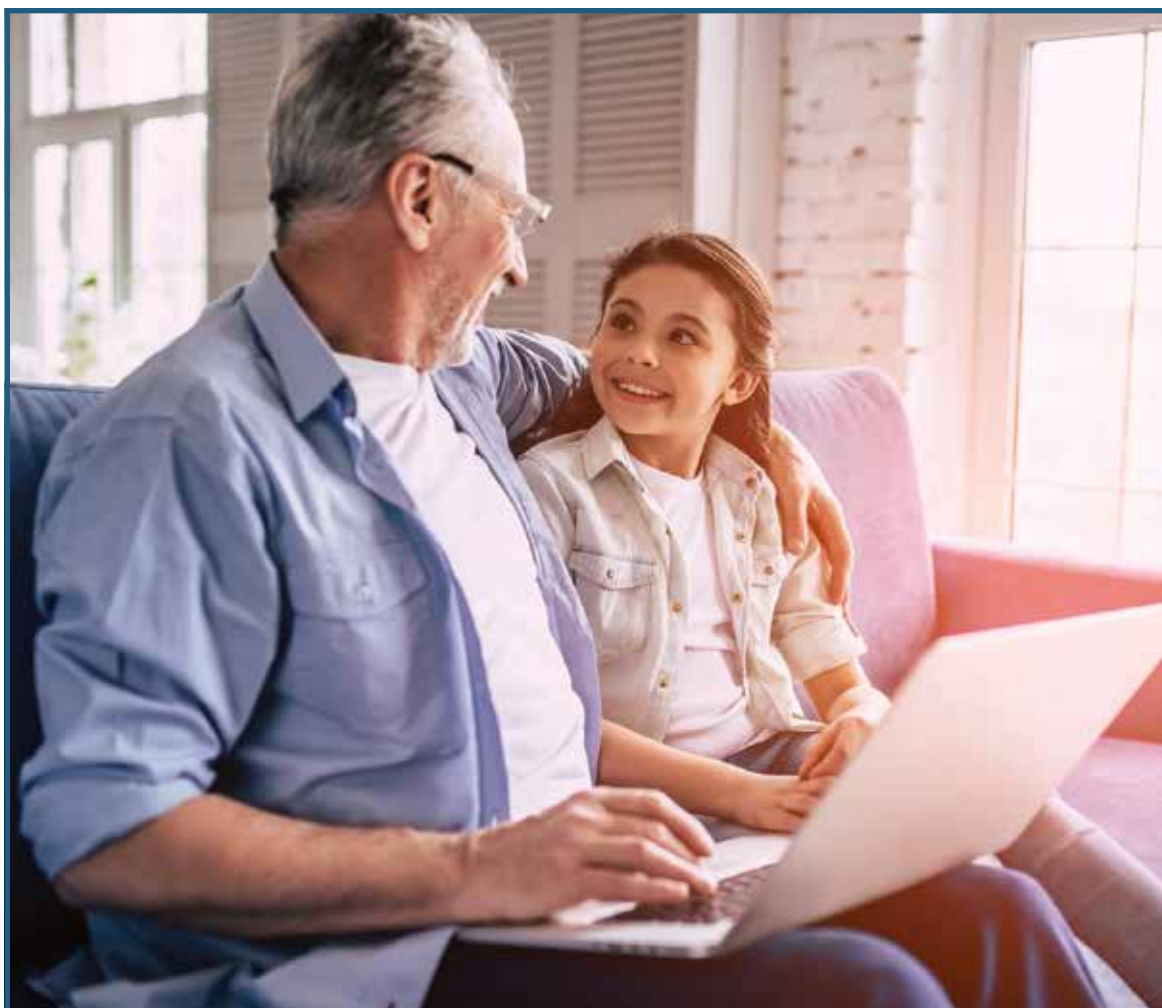
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Thank you for investing in our future.



This is the perfect time to top off your fund as all donations made by Dec. 31, 2018, will generate a 2018 tax receipt.

Contact Micah Garten at 613-796-4696, ext. 270
or email mgarten@jewishottawa.com

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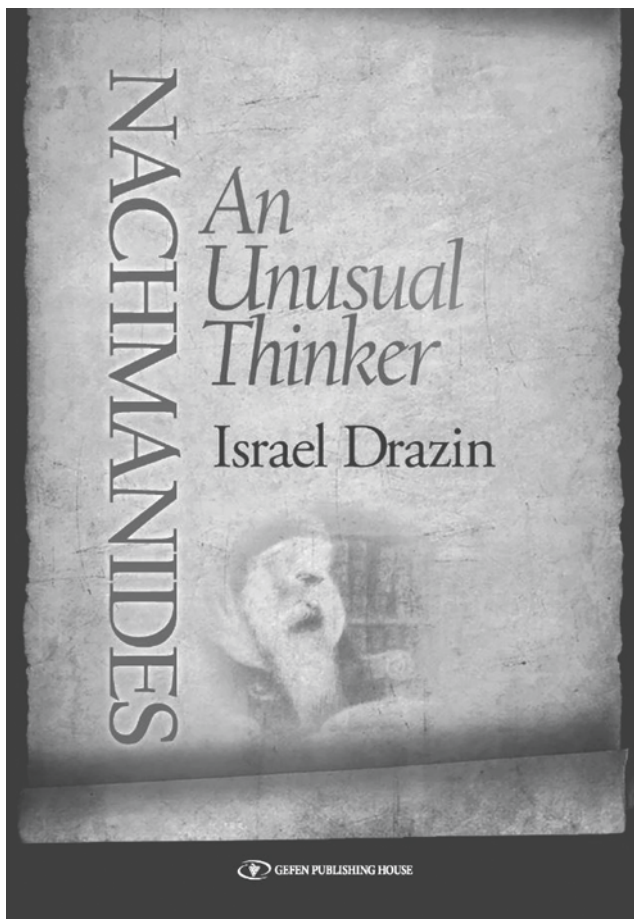
**RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN
THE REPORTER, VESTAL NY
BOOK REVIEW**

Nachmanides: An Unusual Thinker
By Rabbi Israel Drazin
Gefen Publishing House
200 pages

Perhaps the two most famous Torah commentators from the medieval period are Rashi and Maimonides (also known as Rambam). However, there were many other religious commentators during that time and, in his latest work, *Nachmanides: An Unusual Thinker*, Rabbi Israel Drazin offers contemporary readers a look at the way one of them – Nachmanides – differed and/or agreed with his contemporaries. Rabbi Drazin also notes how many modern readers may find Nachmanides’ biblical interpretations and thoughts about Judaism very different from their own.

While Rabbi Drazin’s prose is easy to read, the subject matter he discusses is more difficult for the casual reader. In order to understand Nachmanides’ interpretations of the biblical text, one needs to be familiar with the translated text on which he based many of his thoughts: the Targum Onkeles, an Aramaic version of the Bible that proposes to be a literal translation, but, according to Rabbi Drazin, is not. The author also expects readers to have an in-depth knowledge of the biblical text, for example, discussing how commentators’ ideas differ about a particular verse without including the original verse. Those who are not scholars will need a copy of the Torah beside them when they read. In addition, when discussing Nachmanides’ ideas, Rabbi Drazin often compares them to those of Maimonides; readers who are not familiar with Maimonidian thought may need to learn about his ideas before they can understand the difference.

Rabbi Drazin divides his work into three parts. First, he discusses Nachmanides in general before looking



at the Targum Onkelos. Then he explores the ways he feels that Nachmanides “misunderstands” the Onkelos. This latter section includes an almost verse by verse look at when Rabbi Drazin feels Nachmanides went astray in his commentary. For those unfamiliar with Nachmanides, the first section of the book will be of the greatest interest.

For example, Rabbi Drazin notes that “Nachmanides frequently ignores the text’s plain meaning and selects a mystical interpretation, and the logic he uses to prove his analysis does not appear to be reasonable.” For example, Nachmanides does not accept what we would call the laws of nature. Drazin writes that Nachmanides believes “God is constantly and directly involved in every human act and thought and frequently interferes

and even controls them. He calls these divine manipulations ‘hidden miracles.’” The author notes that this differs from Maimonides, who downplayed miracles and God’s interactions in the world.

Nachmanides doesn’t seem to have a high opinion of women, particularly menstruating women. Rabbi Drazin notes that Nachmanides believes people should distance themselves from women who are menstruating and quotes from Nachmanides’ writings: “She contaminates even the earth upon which she steps. One should not benefit from her. Even otherwise innocuous speech from such a woman is impure. A proper person does not even speak about such a woman or even ask about her health. Her contamination radiates from her: if she looks in a mirror for some time, red blood-spots appear in the glass.” The idea that menstruation is a natural function of a woman’s body does not seem to be acknowledged by, or interest, Nachmanides.

Nachmanides also accepts the existence of supernatural creatures outside of God; Rabbi Drazin writes that Nachmanides believes “that people living outside the land... are under the influence and power of these supernatural beings and even if they try to worship God it is as if they have no God.” His interpretation seems to limit God’s power to affect people outside the land, something he might not state so boldly. Similarly, Nachmanides believed in magic and divination, and treated astrology as a working science.

These ideas are just some of the reasons why Rabbi Drazin suggests that contemporary Jews would have difficulty with Nachmanides’ interpretations. His book is filled with so much detail that it’s impossible to discuss even a small part of it. My main difficulty with *Nachmanides: An Unusual Thinker* can be understood by comparing this work with three others of Rabbi Drazin’s – *Who Was the Real Biblical David?*, *The Tragedies of King David* and *The Authentic King Solomon* – I read recently. What I enjoyed about those works were Rabbi Drazin’s interpretations of the text. His in-depth discussion of individual verses as commented on by Nachmanides simply weren’t as interesting to me. However, those interested in this commentator – because they already know of his work or are intrigued by these ideas – should enjoy this work.

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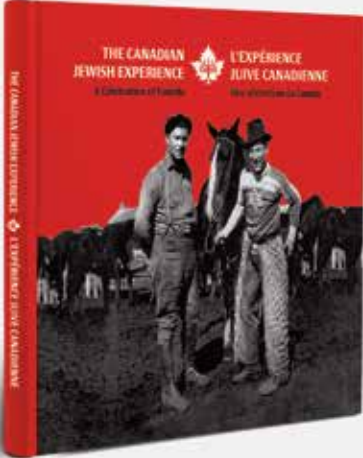
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AJA 50+ announces programs for winter session

BY MAUREEN R. KATZ
FOR AJA 50+

Nowbirds may want to rethink their plans for heading south as the AJA (Active Jewish Adults) 50+ winter session is set to begin with talks, tours, workshops and courses that promise to delight, inform and provide fresh insights into many subjects, taking place between January and April.

The winter session begins with registration in person on Monday, December 17, 9:30 am to noon, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC). Registrants can introduce themselves, meet with the AJA 50+ Board and friends, and enjoy refreshments. Registration and membership purchase can also be done online – www.aja50plus.ca – but some programs have limited capacity and early registration is recommended.

The winter session will feature popular weekly games AJA 50+ offers for a nominal fee including drop-in bridge, drop-in mah-jong, Scrabble with friends, chess for fun, and ping-pong are all available. The weekly Ottawa Jewish Chorus, a joint AJA 50+/SJCC program, continues on Thursday afternoons, as well as the weekly, member-led “Sharing the Music That Moves You.” Select



Ukulele classes with Jamie Anderson are among the AJA 50+ offerings this winter.

monthly movies with refreshments will be shown in conjunction with the Greenberg Families Library.

Among the AJA 50+ speakers this winter will be Michael Allen on the

development and use of the periodic table; Lauren Shaps on the role and function of the mikvah and toivelling room at the SJCC and their importance in Judaism; and *Lost Ottawa* author David

McGee on true stories and the unrecorded history of the nation’s capital.

There will also be a bread-making workshop at Loblaws College Square led by one of Loblaws’ chefs, and a talk on fraud by Brock Godfrey, who received the Superintendent’s Award of Distinction from the RCMP for his work on educating Canadians about the dangers of fraud.

Among the programs on art will be a presentation on famous art and details that the average person would not notice by Mary Majors; an opportunity to see the work of Paul Klee from the Berggruen Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the National Gallery of Canada; a talk by Victor Rabinovitch on “Frauds, Fakes and Hoaxes in Galleries and Museums.”

Other programs will include the Silflay String Quartet; “Vietnam through a Photographer’s Lens”; African Dance 4 Fitness; ukulele classes with Jamie Anderson; a sugar bush outing in mid-March, and many others. There is truly something for everybody.

The AJA 50+ Winter Program Guide will be available in both print and online at www.aja50plus.ca on December 10. We look forward to your joining us in many of our programs.

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Get To Know Us



Sylvia and Morton Pleet

It’s birthday season for the Pleets.

Morton Pleet recently celebrated his 90th birthday at the Lodge in November and Sylvia will be celebrating her 87th in December. When I interviewed Sylvia, she proudly told me that it’s not just her and Morton’s birthdays, but their younger

son Harris also has one in December and Jeff will literally kick-off the New Year with his birthday on January 1st. There is lots of cake in the Pleets’ future when you include Aurete, Felice and their four grandchildren and great grandson.

Morton and Sylvia are both Ottawa natives - born in the nation’s capital to parents who had immigrated to Canada from Russia and Poland. Sylvia’s parents were Laika (Zunder) and Menashe Greenberg. Morton’s parents were Edith (Cooper) and Archie Pleet. Sylvie and Morton lived their entire lives here and have so many stories to share about Ottawa that a half page doesn’t provide enough space. Sylvia refers to herself as a “Lowertown” Greenberg and tells me who she and Morton are related to in Ottawa including fellow Lodge resident Nancy Pleet. They always enjoy when Nancy’s grandson Jonah Spungin comes to sing and entertain at the Lodge – he’s very talented and he’s family.

Sylvia and Morton met at the King Street shul. When I asked Sylvia if they met after the synagogue’s Shabbat services – perhaps at the Kiddush, she smiled and said “no, we met at a dance – the shul was our community center.” As someone who grew up in Ottawa, I almost forgot that there was a time before the JCC existed on Chapel Street...and it makes sense that the Jewish Community would have met in

the local synagogues.

Sylvia left school early to work in the market for one of the Jewish produce vendors. She tells me that she can still pick the freshest fruit and vegetables. November 9, 1952 is when Morton and Sylvia were married (as Sylvia was just shy of her 21st Birthday, they had to wait for her father to give his permission for her to marry). Morton supported his family for over 35 years working for the Federal Government’s Energy, Mines and Resources trying to get the oil out of the Alberta tar sands. At home, Morton was always calm and was known as “Mr. Fixit”...he could fix almost anything.

At the Lodge, you’ll find Morton attending weekly Shabbat services, and other activities. Sylvia will tell you that she used to volunteer at the Lodge on Wurtemberg Street. “I used to work the bingos. I’m a people person”. I asked her if that’s why she likes to Kibbitz with Joel Diener at the Monday night Bingo, and she responds quickly “Joel, I’ve known him since he was born. I knew his parents before they were married”. Sylvia added that she enjoys being at the Lodge for many reasons, including that her and Morton are still under the same roof and they are still in a kosher home. Sylvia says it best, “I grew up in a kosher home, we always kept a kosher home and the Lodge is the only place in Ottawa we could be together and still have a kosher home.”

Harris and Jeff support the Lodge through tribute cards to celebrate life’s highs and to honour life’s more challenging moments. In addition, Jeff has been a leader in the Bess and More Greenberg Family Hillel Lodge’s Biking for Bubbies – he’s on the organizing committee and the #1 fundraiser.

By Mitch Miller, Executive Director, Hillel Lodge LTC Foundation



The mitzvah heroes who make a difference

In 1938, American Jewish writer Jerry Siegel and Canadian-American Jewish artist Joe Shuster introduced the world to Superman, a new type of hero. It is universally recognized that Siegel and Shuster were motivated by the plight of European Jews to offer an alternative to common portrayal of Jews as creatures meek, sheep-like and afraid to confront their persecutors. Superman would be by day a timid, shy, self-effacing newspaper reporter, but when confronted with a danger that threatened the people of Metropolis, he was able to leap tall buildings, stop a speeding train and run faster than a bullet. Superman went on to become the star of comic books, radio, television and film.

In 1962, another American Jew, Stan Lee, introduced the world to Spider-Man. Like Superman, this comic book hero would be by day a shy student whose life was filled with teenage angst. However, when needed, he donned his costume and swinging from his secreted webs, fought for justice and the rights of the undefended.

Lee, who died last month, was no doubt also motivated to create a heroic figure that resonated with an imperilled and persecuted Jewish population whose rabbis had exercised physical heroism from the pantheon of Jewish heroes and replaced them with rabbinic figures whose heroism was a cloak of faith. For much of the 20th century, and now due to the popularity of the Marvel Comics films, these Jewish comic book icons turned the Greek portrayal of heroism on its head. Heroes need not be born of the gods, circumstances could create heroes even out of everyday men and women.

The establishment of the State of Israel provided an



RABBI STEVEN H. GARTEN
A VIEW FROM THE BLEACHERS

opportunity for a more traditional representation heroism. The military leaders of the Haganah, Palmach, and Stern Gang would be idolized by their followers for their bravery and audacious courage in the face of overwhelming odds. The leaders of the Israel Defense Forces, would be lionized for their victories in June 1967 and October 1973 and their military successes would be instrumental in their political successes.

The heroes of the comic books and the heroes of the State of Israel remain the paradigm of Jewish heroism in the modern age. But in the 1980s, a young poet, writer and Conservative Jewish youth leader, introduced a new term to our concept of heroism. Danny Siegel, an American, urged North American Jews to see individuals who lived the values of *tzedakah* (righteous giving) *gemelut chasadim* (loving kindness) and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) as "mitzvah heroes." They are individuals in the business of changing lives by small, medium or big mitzvah deeds. They don't have superpowers but they are super people.

Danny spent two decades travelling in Israel and North America finding individuals who devoted their lives to saving the lives of others, not with a costume, but with heart and soul. Danny was the

first of many to identify the Rabbanit Bracha Kapach of Keren Segulat Naomi. This woman single handedly raised money to provide bridal dresses for the poor, provide summer camp scholarships to Israel's poorest families, Pesach baskets and weekly food baskets for Shabbat. Today, her followers serve over 1,500 families per week with Shabbat baskets. Danny discovered Ruth Schlossman of Gift of Comfort who offers massage therapy and alternative therapies to survivors of terror. He brought to our attention Joseph Gitier of Table to Table, Israel's premier food recycling program which includes Leket. Miriam Mendela who began Yad L'Kashish, a program for the elderly of Jerusalem that helped them learn usable skills that now produces talitot, mezzuzot, table cloths and chanukiyot. Danny's publicity helped Life Line for the Aged to now serve over 300 elderly per day and provide transportation and a hot meal to individuals from 16 countries.

The list of mitzvah heroes never seemed to end. There are individuals who collected out-of-date shoes from stores for the homeless, individuals who volunteered their horses to help the handicapped recover from PTSD, etc.

As our secular year comes to a close and a new set of superhero movies is ready to grace the screens of our local theatres or TVs, maybe we should see if we can identify some mitzvah heroes in our city, province and country and make a donation before the tax year ends. Movie and popcorn cost nearly \$18 dollars. An \$18 donation to one of the charities mentioned, or to any other mitzvah hero, lasts for more than two hours.

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On kitsch and community building

So, before we go further, full disclosure: I have a pillow with the words “Oy Vey” written in gold sequins. My husband owns an “Ugly Chanukah” sweater. And for the past couple of weeks, I haven’t stopped giggling at a onesie a friend showed me on Etsy that reads “Chai, I’m new here.”

In short – I like what I call Judaikitsch. It’s not Judaica, per se. To me, that’s a title reserved for our ritual items, like menorahs and mezuzot. Nor do I consider items like special plates for apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah as kitsch, per se.

Judaikitsch is what I call those everyday items bedazzled with a bit of a Jewish twist. Like the pillow, or the onesie. And it is clear it is becoming more of a trend.

I remember as a kid going to the JCC on Chapel Street at this time of year for what was then called the “Chanukah Book Fair.” The tables were nearly collapsing under the weight of so many Jewish books. Now, the event is called the “Chanukah Gift Fair” and I was struck this year by how few books were actually for sale, and how much kitsch.

Of course, we can buy Jewish books online any day of the year, so perhaps it makes sense there weren’t so many for sale. And also of course, much of the kitsch at the fair was Chanukah themed, snapped up by people – including me – eager to decorate their homes or find crafts appropriate for the season.

Indeed, one of the most popular uses of the ever-growing Ottawa Jewish Parents Facebook page is for people to post photos of where they’ve seen Chanukah merchandise around town. Through our collective love of kitsch, it appears, we also build community.

Which isn’t entirely surprising. Consider a statistic



STEPHANIE SHEFRIN
**MODERN
MISHPOCHA**

Judaikitsch is what I call those everyday items bedazzled with a bit of a Jewish twist.

writer Gal Beckerman reports in a recent piece in the New York Times. <https://tinyurl.com/y9ug9ggr>

In a 2013 survey by the American Pew Research Center, 42 per cent of American Jews surveyed rated “having a good sense of humour” as essential to what it means to them to be Jewish. So perhaps no surprise then that everyone loves a serving platter with a good pun, or cards that say “Happy Challah Days.”

The context for Beckerman’s article was not so much a laughing matter. His piece appeared after the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in November, and he was reviewing five recent books on American Jewish life in the context of questions many people have found themselves asking in its aftermath.

I had a lot of anger in the days immediately after the shooting. Some of it was a product of our social media times. I didn’t understand why friends, Jews and non-Jews, people who change their status updates for “Je Suis Charlie” and #TorontoStrong, were saying absolutely nothing about the heinous anti-Semitism that motivated that attack.

Then, at the community vigil we had in Ottawa, a truly rare sight – rabbis from nearly every congregation in the city on the stage, together. And a few days later, synagogues packed tightly with so much love and support. I can say the show of unity, of togetherness, helped calm me down.

It’s a point Beckerman makes in his piece too – that the Pittsburgh attacks unified Jews everywhere. But he asks, what’s next? While anti-Semitism is real and horrid and ugly, in and of itself it is not the most pressing threat to Jewish life.

He uses the statistic about humour to make a broader point: Jews rate humour and intellectual curiosity higher than community and religious practice as indicators of their Jewishness. This, Beckerman writes, has us on a path to what’s known as “terminal ethnic identity.”

The condition, such as it is, was defined in the 1970s by sociologist Herbert Gans exploring the transmission of identity among white ethnic groups – such as Jews or Irish – who came to America at the turn of the last century. He predicted that by the third generation, people are likely to view their heritage as more of a leisure-time activity, and by the seventh generation their culture becomes a dim memory.

So, Beckerman notes: “At this rate, American Jews are two or three generations away from being as Jewish as ‘Irish’ people whose Irishness consists of drinking green beer on St. Patrick’s Day.”

I love my Judaikitsch. But to think that one day that’s maybe all that will be left? To imagine a time where one of our joyous festivals becomes the “Jewish” holiday just like the “Irish” go drinking on St. Patrick’s Day? Like the pillow says, oy vey.

Recognize Soloway JCC Volunteers & Leaders

Call for Nominations

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

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

Nominations must be submitted to the selection committee by Monday, January 14, 2019 and should include a resume of the nominee’s involvement in the Soloway JCC and the Jewish community. Please send nominations to Maxine Miska, mmiska@jccottawa.com.

Please join us at the
Soloway JCC Annual General Meeting & Awards Night

Monday, February 4, 2019, 7:00 pm
Soloway JCC, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private



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Jewish Life Happens Here

What will your defining moments be in the coming year?

Everything has a beginning and an end. Whether it's a book, a relationship or a life, there are chapters or phases to everything. I'm thinking about beginnings and endings as 2018 quickly draws to a close. My birthday happens to fall on the last day of the year so I find it especially meaningful to examine how my experiences of the past year helped shape me and impacted my personal growth. Reviewing your own experiences of the past year can be a mechanism for moving forward more productively and with clarity.

Perhaps the most defining moment in my life this past year was when my husband and I became empty-nesters. Our youngest son made the decision to move to another city for his university studies.

I'd found it emotionally difficult at first when our older son moved away a few years ago to pursue his studies. I felt sad in the weeks leading up to my younger son's move. I was a bit depressed and anxious. However, I reminded myself that the mother bird must let her baby birds spread their wings and fly.

After we moved him to the University of Waterloo for his engineering studies, I quickly accepted the situation and became accustomed to the quiet. In fact, I was able to appreciate some of the new benefits of empty-nester life: I don't need to do large grocery orders or chauffeur anyone.

I remember when my little boys were both in diapers and I told my father I couldn't wait for the day when I'd no longer have to change one. He told me the years will go by quickly. He was right. Now both of my sons are young men. Does this mean I'm growing old? On a recent Sunday outing with my husband,



GLORIA SCHWARTZ
FOCUS ON FITNESS

I felt sad in the weeks leading up to my younger son's move. I was a bit depressed and anxious. However, I reminded myself that the mother bird must let her baby birds spread their wings and fly.

I quipped that it's a sign we're getting old age when our "date" is a trip to Costco to buy cheese and get flu shots.

If I had a crystal ball, I'd be tempted to gaze into it and preview my defining moments for the upcoming year. But I don't have such a device and I'm not a clairvoyant so I can't know for sure what those moments will be. I can anticipate certain things based on plans and expectations and I can use what I've learned from past mistakes to try to avoid future ones. So can you.

Some years we experience great pride and joy and I was fortunate to have plenty of such times this past year. Some years are more difficult than others such as when we experience health concerns, losses, rela-

tionship strains or other stressors and struggles. I had some of those difficulties in the past year, too. Everyone has something to deal with at some point.

Starting the year fresh with a hopeful and optimistic attitude – despite our lives' imperfections and challenges – can lead to better physical and emotional health. We can't control every aspect of our lives. As Doris Day sang, "Que sera sera, whatever will be, will be."

For some people, faith or spirituality sustains them and enables them to carry on. For others, introspection and a review of the past year allows them to figure out strategies for moving forward. You can use the knowledge you glean from the past year to mentally prepare for the coming year – what worked well for you and what didn't work so well. Lack of reflection can make it more difficult to navigate your way through life.

With 2019 around the corner, I'm reminded of my childhood and what it felt like to start a new school year. It was an opportunity to meet new people, learn new things and experience new adventures. There was anticipation. The innocence of childhood is something we should try to maintain to some degree in adulthood. We should try not to let our inhibitions or fears prevent us from enjoying life to the fullest, taking risks, pursuing goals or working to make our dreams a reality.

In his poem "Introduction" from *Songs of Innocence*, 18th-century poet William Blake wrote: "And I pluck'd a hollow reed/ And I made a rural pen/ And I stain'd the water clear/ And I wrote my happy songs/ Every child may joy to hear." May we all write "happy songs" for 2019 and bring them to fruition.

Mitzvah Day 2019

save the date! save the date!

February 3, 2019

Chairs: Jonathan and Naomi Mitchell

Register today at mitzvahdayottawa.com

Info: Tanya at tpoirier@jewishottawa.com
or 613-798-4696 x241

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WHAT'S GOING ON | December 11, 2018 to January 20, 2019
FOR MORE CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

Chanting and Chocolate

7:30PM - 9 pm, monthly on the 1st Sunday, Or Hanesamah, 30 Cleary Ave.
Contact: Michael Salter learning@orh.ca
An evening of sacred Jewish chant, followed by chocolate treats! Led by OrH Rabbi Liz Bolton with accompaniment by the Chanting & Chocolate Band.

Ottawa Israeli Dance

6:30 - 10 pm, Tuesdays until June 25
Ottawa Jewish Community School gym
31 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
More info: judy@ottawaisraelidance.ca

Mah-Jong at KBI

1:30 - 3:30 pm Thursdays until December 27, 2018
Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave.
More info: Deborah Zuker rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com

Kol Miriam

7:30 - 9:30 pm, Thursdays until June 20,
Hillel Lodge, 10 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
More info: Froma Rose fromarnold@yahoo.com
A choir of women singing traditional and contemporary Jewish music.

Guf Va'Nefesh – Body-Mind-Spirit Integration Classes

7:30 - 9 pm, first Wednesday of the month until June 5, 2019, Or Hanesamah 30 Cleary Ave.
Contact: Tana.saler@rogers.com
Gentle movement, verbal and non-verbal interaction, conscious breathing styles and visualization. Each class will have a life theme – including health, effective communication, relationships and conflict resolution.

JBaby Oneg Shabbat at Hillel Lodge

10:30 - 12:30 pm, monthly on the 1st Friday until June 2, 2019, Hillel Lodge 10 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
Contact: Ranit Braun ranitb@hotmail.com
An inclusive baby and parent Shabbat morning program. Music, song, play, snack and kvell. Meet others with babies and toddlers under 24 months.
Sponsor: Temple Israel & TIRS.

MONDAY, DEC. 10

Jewish Federation of Ottawa Call Night with Congregation Machzikei Hadas

6:30 - 8:30 pm
Contact: Ariel Aronson afainer@jewishottawa.com
Federation will be making calls for the 2019 Annual Campaign with the help of Congregation Machzikei Hadas. Answer the call between 6:30-8:30 pm and make a gift to ensure the vision of the Jewish Superhighway becomes a reality. If you are interested in making calls, please contact Ari Aronson.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 12

Beit Midrash Night at Machzikei

8:15 - 9:15 pm, Congregation Machzikei Hadas, 2310 Virginia Dr.
Contact: office@cmhottawa.com
Topic: Contemporary Halakhah
Instructor: Rabbi Moishele Fogel, drawing from the vast expanse of Halachic sources to explore fundamental and relevant topics in Jewish law.

SUNDAY, DEC. 16

Book launch:

The Canadian Jewish Experience
2 - 4 pm, Library and Archives Canada
RSVP: <https://event.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/>

Events/Register/84

Contact: Nadia Haddad Nadia.haddad@canada.ca
A record of the *Canadian Jewish Experience* exhibition and of the activities associated with its journey.

Bids & Bites

7 - 10 pm, Glebe Community Centre 175 Third Ave.
Contact: Sara-Lynne Levine sllevine@torahday.ca
Cost: \$ 36. A new, event in support of Torah Day School of Ottawa, in partnership with Ottawa Kosher Foodies.

MONDAY, DEC. 17

Paint Night with special guest artist, David Friedman

7 - 9 pm, Congregation Machzikei Hadas 2310 Virginia Dr.
Info: office@cmhottawa.com
Cost: \$36. David Friedman joins us from Israel, under the OTS Amiel Bakehila program. David's art translates kabbalistic concepts into graphic shapes and colours based mostly on Sefer Yetzirah (the Book of Creation), but also inspired from other texts.

TUESDAY, DEC. 18

Beit Ha'am Talks - IDF the People's Army

7 - 8:30 pm, Kehillat Beth Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Ave.
RSVP: droytenberg@yahoo.com
A program of the World Zionist Organization devoted to discussing the relationship between Canadian Jews and the State of Israel.
Topic: "IDF - The People's Army" – Discussion of Operation Protective Edge and the Israeli Military

WEEDSDAY, DEC. 19

Beit Midrash Night at Machzikei
8:15 - 9:15 pm, Congregation Machzikei Hadas, 2310 Virginia Dr.
Contact: office@cmhottawa.com
Topic: Gemarah Chaburah - Significant Topics and Concepts in the Talmud
Instructors: Rabbi Idan Scher and Daniel Bierstone.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26

Beit Midrash Night at Machzikei
8:15 - 9:15 pm, Congregation Machzikei Hadas, 2310 Virginia Dr.
Contact: office@cmhottawa.com
Topic: Contemporary Halakhah
Instructor: Rabbi Moishele Fogel · Join Rabbi Fogel as he draws from the vast expanse of Halachic sources to explore fundamental and relevant topics in Jewish law.

SUNDAY, JAN. 20

JNF Ottawa Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon
10 - 4 pm, 205 - 11 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
Contact: Ilana Albert-Novick ottawa@jnf.ca
Celebrate Tu Bi'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat, by planting trees in Eretz Israel.

CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

DECEMBER 14	4:02
DECEMBER 21	4:04
DECEMBER 28	4:09
JANUARY 4	4:15
JANUARY 11	4:23
JANUARY 18	4:32

BULLETIN DEADLINES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2	FOR JANUARY 21
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16	FOR FEBRUARY 4
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 30	FOR FEBRUARY 18
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11*	FOR MARCH 4
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27	FOR MARCH 18

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE AT THE JOSEPH AND ROSE AGES FAMILY BUILDING, 21 NADOLNY SACHS PRIVATE

CONDOLENCES

Condolences are extended to the families of:

Norman Feder, Toronto (father of Harold Feder)

Helen Kahane, Winnipeg (mother of Ruth Kahane Goldberg)

Roza Lang

Lillian Matyas

Ernie Potechin

Hyman Yanofsky

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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