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OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 20, 2017 | 24 SHEVAT 577

ESTABLISHED **150** 1937

OTTAWAJEWISHBULLETIN.COM | \$2

Hundreds gather to do good deeds on Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day 2017 was marked by the performance of good deeds by young and old – and those in between – along with a celebration of Canada 150. **Louise Rachlis** reports.

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) and Hillel Lodge were buzzing with activity as hundreds of volunteers – from preschoolers to seniors – gathered, February 5, on the Jewish Community Campus and several off-site locations, to participate in the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's annual Mitzvah Day.

In recognition of Canada's sesquicentennial, a Canada 150 theme was incorporated into many of the good deeds performed.

"Many of the kits assembled this Mitzvah Day were totals of 150 or multiples," said Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman. "We're trying to celebrate Canada's birthday all year round."

A special Canada 150 Mitzvah Day art canvas was set up for participants to sign with red markers.

The packed social hall at the Soloway Jewish Committee Centre echoed with the excitement as children and adults, eager to perform good deeds, gathered for a bagel breakfast and the Mitzvah Day opening ceremony.

Lianne Lang of CTV was MC for the event. She praised the "hard work and dedication" of Mitzvah Day Chair Cindy Smith and her planning committee, and acknowledged the Friends of Mitzvah Day for their support, and GGFL Chartered Professional Accountants, the Mitzvah Day major sponsor for the past eight years.

Hair donations for Hair Donation Ottawa – an organization that provides free wigs for cancer patients experiencing hair loss – was the kick-off mitzvah.

Other mitzvahs included making crafts with residents of Hillel Lodge; a sing-along at the Lodge; assembling soup ingredients in jars for the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank; assembling birthday kits for children living in shelters and Shabbat kits for Ten Yad and the Kosher Food Bank; making therapy puppets for Crossroads Children's Centre for children dealing with mental health issues; making sandwiches for distribution at Ottawa-area homeless shelters; making challahs to be sold to Mitzvah Day participants to benefit the Kosher Food

See Mitzvah Day on page 2



Eli Saikaley of Silver Scissors Salon supervises Mitzvah Day celebrity haircutters (from left) Jeff Miller of GGFL, Mayor Jim Watson and City Councillor Jean Cloutier as they prepare to cut at least six inches of hair from Sarah Massad, Yasmin Vinograd and Liora Shapiro to be used by Hair Donation Ottawa to make wigs for cancer patients experiencing medical hair loss.



Children work together on crafts with Hillel Lodge residents during Mitzvah Day.

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Ottawa athletes heading to Maccabiah Games > p. 13

Barbara Crook on fighting hate and ignorance > p. 20



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Mitzvah Day: Opportunity to give back to the community while having fun

Continued from page 1

Bank; creating care packages for members of Canada's Armed Forces stationed overseas; and bracha bags with warm socks and other needed items that Jewish Family Services distributes to homeless persons in Ottawa.

The One Match program from Canadian Blood Services was on hand at Mitzvah Day to take swabs from people interested in joining the bone marrow registry and to tell people about this important life-saving program.

"Mitzvah Day is a wonderful way to come together as a community," said Sue Potechin of Temple Israel Religious School. "The theme for our school this year is 'Am Echad', One Nation, and it doesn't matter if you're secular, Orthodox or liberal, we must all come together as one Jewish community. It's very important for our kids to know that."

There were also a number of Mitzvah Day activities taking place off-site.

"The Sephardi community put together packages for the Shepherds of

Good Hope," said Mitzvah Day organizer Rena Garshowitz.

Other off-site mitzvahs took place at the NCSY Centre, where high school students prepared meals for Ten Yad; at Temple Israel, where the Quilting Project worked on baby quilts to send to Israeli daycare centres, agencies and nurseries, and to CHEO for premature babies; and at Dovercourt Recreation Centre, where the Kehillat Beth Israel TOV Team made sandwiches for the needy.

"I have two daughters, 15 and 12, and it's important to give back to the community and have fun helping others in need," said Mitzvah Day Chair Cindy Smith in her closing remarks.

"We are very fortunate. It's amazing to see all the people who get up early and participate. It's really special.

"Your efforts help fulfil the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* – repairing the world – and, in doing this, you have brought smiles to many faces and comfort to so many in need," Smith told the assembled Mitzvah Day participants.



Mitzvah Day Chair Cindy Smith makes challah with her niece, Georgia Smith, as volunteers Jenny Glassman and Allison Geffen look on.

HOWARD SANDLER



Rabbi Rob Morais gathers with students of Temple Israel Religious School after a morning of performing good deeds during Mitzvah Day.

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Meet Nimrod Barkan, Israel's new ambassador to Canada

Nimrod Barkan, Israel's new ambassador to Canada, arrived in Ottawa in December to succeed former ambassador Rafael Barak. He sat down with Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Editor **Michael Regenstreif** at the Embassy of Israel in Ottawa to introduce himself to Ottawa's Jewish community.

Ambassador Nimrod Barkan, the State of Israel's new chief diplomat in Canada, arrived in Ottawa in December just as the cold Canadian winter was layering the city in snow.

On December 12, he presented his credentials to Governor General David Johnston at Rideau Hall and was immediately thrust into an ambassador's typically busy schedule of meetings with political leaders and government officials, national media interviews, community and cultural events, and cross-country travel, all the while settling into his new home in Ottawa with his wife, Shlomit Shulov-Barkan, and into his new office at the Embassy of Israel.

Barkan's father, a teenaged Holocaust survivor from Hungary, arrived in pre-state Israel on a clandestine immigration ship after the Second World War. The

future ambassador was born in Tel Aviv in 1952.

After studying international relations and Middle East history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Barkan joined Israel's Foreign Ministry.

"I joined the Foreign Ministry on January 2, 1977, the same day as Rafi Barak," he said, referring to the former Israeli ambassador to Canada whose tenure here ended just before his began.

Barkan's distinguished career has now stretched across four complete decades and has included diplomatic postings in Egypt, the United States and France, as well as high level positions in Israel with the Foreign Ministry.

Among those positions was heading the Ministry's Policy Research Centre in 2006, a time of two major upheavals in the Middle East. The first was the



Israeli Ambassador Nimrod Barkan and his wife, Shlomit Shulov-Barkan, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a holiday reception hosted by then-foreign minister Stéphane Dion.

Palestinian election on January 31.

"Suddenly, Hamas held a majority in the Palestinian parliament ... which completely changed the political reality," he said.

Barkan explained that this shift in the Palestinian political dynamic took the Israeli intelligence community by surprise as no one expected Hamas – a terrorist organization pledged to destroy the Jewish state – to win the election.

The second upheaval came in June when the Second Lebanon War broke out. The Policy Research Centre under Barkan recognized that Israel did not have an exit strategy from the war in place and designed a plan that helped bring the war to a close.

This led to a greatly expanded role for the Policy Research Centre in Israel's policy-making apparatus.

"My biggest contribution to the Foreign Ministry was the four years in which we completely rebuilt and recreated the Policy Research Centre and established it for what it is today," Barkan said.

An earlier position held by Barkan in the Foreign Ministry was heading the Bureau of World Jewish Affairs beginning in 2000. During Barkan's tenure, the

bureau was merged with the Bureau of World Religious Affairs, with responsibility for both falling under his direction.

Barkan's diplomatic experience includes stints as consul in Philadelphia from 1982 to 1985; political consul at Israel's embassy in Cairo from 1985 to 1987, where he survived two terrorist attacks; in Washington as minister of public affairs responsible for the operations of all of Israel's consulates in the United States from 1992 to 1995; consul general in San Francisco from 1995 to 1997; and in Paris from 2010 to 2014 as ambassador to UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Barkan said his first priority as Israeli ambassador to Canada is to preserve and enhance "the excellent relationship and friendship" that Israel enjoys with Canada and "expanding the relationship in as many fields as possible."

Barkan said he expects the signing of a modernized free trade agreement between Israel and Canada to take place within the next two months.

Throughout the interview, Barkan displayed a keen sense of humour, which can be seen in a short YouTube video introducing the ambassador to Canada. <http://tinyurl.com/barkan-video>



Israeli Ambassador Nimrod Barkan speaks at a reception at the National Arts Centre prior to a performance by Israel's acclaimed Batsheva Dance Company, January 11.



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International Holocaust Remembrance Day marked at City Hall ceremony

BY ELANA MOSCOE
JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA

‘T’oday, we peacefully stand together to honour all those who perished and survived the Nazi atrocities,’ said Environment Minister Catherine McKenna.

McKenna, MP for Ottawa Centre, was representing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Ottawa’s International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, January 27, at Ottawa City Hall.

The event was co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the

Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship (CHES) at Carleton University, the Embassy of Romania acting as current chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), International Holocaust Remembrance Day Ottawa, and the Wallenberg Citation Initiative.

Daniel Stringer, the event MC, said it was important that so many organizations worked together on the program.

“The 20th century clearly demonstrated that the results of ignoring the truth are war, racial hatred and genocide. The Romanian Chairmanship of IHRA welcomes and supports the significant



Holocaust survivors and others gathered at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony at Ottawa City Hall, January 27, participate in the “We Remember” campaign on social media.

efforts made by our Canadian partners in keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust and honouring the victims and the survivors,” said Adrian Ligor, chargé d’affaires a.i. at the Romanian Embassy.

“Holocaust remembrance allows us to pause and grow our collective efforts towards achieving inclusion and tolerance,” said Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson.

“Our everyday actions contribute to building a culture of acceptance and reaffirm our collective responsibility to religion tolerance and acceptance.”

Commenting on the importance of Holocaust remembrance, former MP David Kilgour, a noted international human rights activist, quoted the late Elie Wiesel, who said, “To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.”

“On International Holocaust Remembrance Day, we are reminded of the need to ensure that Never Again, means Never Again,” said Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman in a press release.

“CIJA joins our partners to remember the six million Jews who perished in the

Holocaust,” said CIJA CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel, also in the press release. “On this occasion, we renew our call to all signatories to the 2009 Terezin Declaration to honour their commitment to provide restitution to survivors and their families. We also thank the three federal Canadian parties for their leadership on calling for restitution.”

“The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship is joining millions around the world today to become part of the largest organized commemoration ever on social media in a way that has not been done before,” said CHES Director Mina Cohn. “In the digital age, we are aiming to be where the young generation is. We hope, through the “We Remember” campaign [on social media], to raise awareness and to pass the torch to the next generation.”

It is expected that next year’s International Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony in Ottawa will take place at the National Holocaust Monument now under construction near the Canadian War Museum.

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Celebrating Canadian Jews of the last 150 years



A series of profiles throughout 2017 spotlighting the contributions of historically important Jewish Canadians to our country.

Herb Gray 1931 - 2014 Canada's first Jewish federal cabinet minister

The Right Honourable Herb Gray had a distinguished political career that included being Canada's longest continuously serving member of Parliament and the first Jew to serve as a federal cabinet minister. He held many cabinet positions under prime ministers Pierre Trudeau, John Turner and Jean Chrétien, rising to the position of deputy prime minister in Chrétien's cabinet from 1997 until 2002.

Herbert Eser Gray, the son of Fannie and Harry Gray, was born May 25, 1931 in Windsor, Ontario. He received his elementary and high school education in Windsor and went on to earn his bachelor of commerce degree from McGill University in Montreal and his law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto.

A member of the Liberal Party of Canada, Gray was first elected to Parliament in 1962 from the Windsor-area riding of Essex West. He was re-elected in Essex West in

the federal elections of 1963 and 1965. The riding was abolished and absorbed by three other Windsor ridings under redistribution for the 1968 election, and Gray was elected in one of them, Windsor West. He subsequently won re-election in Windsor West in the elections of 1972, 1974, 1979, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2000.

In addition to serving in such cabinet positions as minister of national revenue, minister of consumer and corporate affairs, minister of industry, Government house leader, solicitor general, and deputy prime minister, Gray also served as Opposition house leader from 1984 to 1990 and as interim Opposition leader in the House of Commons for most of 1990 between the resignation of John Turner as Liberal Party leader and the election of the new party leader, Jean Chrétien, to the Commons.

Gray resigned from Parliament on January 14, 2002 to become the



Canadian chair of the International Joint Commission, a binational organization established by Canada and the United States to deal with trans-border issues pertaining to water and air rights. He also served as chancellor of Carleton University beginning in 2008.

On the occasion of his retirement from Parliament, governor general Adrienne Clarkson granted Gray the title "The Right Honourable" in recognition of his distinguished contributions to government and political life. In Canada, the title is generally reserved for current and former prime ministers, governors general and chief justices of the Supreme Court. Gray is one of only



Bronze bust of Herb Gray by sculptor Christopher Rees in Windsor, Ontario.

nine Canadians who did not serve in any of those positions to be granted the title.

Among Gray's many other honours were honorary degrees from the University of Windsor, Assumption University in Windsor, Catholic University of Lublin in Poland, McGill University in Montreal, and the University of Ottawa.

Gray was married to Sharon Sholzberg. They had two children, Jonathan and Elizabeth, and nine grandchildren.

Next in the series

Constance Glube 1931–2016

Justice Constance Glube served as chief justice of Nova Scotia and was the first female chief justice in Canada.



Submit an essay

To help mark Canada's 150th, we are welcoming personal essays from readers. Please share with us! What does it mean to you to be Jewish in Canada? As a Canadian Jew, what do you hope for our future? Is there anything special in our Canadian history that has impacted you as Jew?

Please note, submission should be about 300 words and will be edited for style. Send submissions to: mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com

FEDERATION
REPORT



SABINA WASSERLAUF
SOLOWAY JCC

Join the Soloway JCC: Be part of the heart of our community

Whether you use the SJCC to exercise, learn, educate your children, celebrate Jewish holidays, or for a kibbitz, you quickly realize our facility is the 'town centre' of Ottawa's Jewish community. It is a place where we can all gather and feel a sense of belonging while engaging in programs that enrich the experience of being Jewish.

I love that, when I'm at the SJCC, I can walk by an Orthodox rabbi with a volume of the Talmud under his arm, while someone else is strolling through the building on the way to the outdoor pool in flip flops and a towel. We encompass the full diversity of our community; from a high energy Zumba class to learning about Jewish ethics. The full representation of our Jewish community lives here under one roof. There is no other place else where that happens.

My vision is for every member of our

We need everyone to not only be a user, but be an actual member. Don't just swim in the pool, take a class or join in the fun at the Chanukah Party.

Be connected as a member. It's been an incredible 18 years.

Be part of this amazing place and help us move forward.

Jewish community to feel a sense of connection to the centre. Every Jewish person in Ottawa should feel welcome and see themselves as part of the SJCC. Our community-wide celebrations and commemorations are open to everyone, and our goal is to have each and every member of our community here, together.

There are no obstacles to being part of the SJCC. It is available and open to you.

We have subsidies available for camp, Ganon preschool and membership to make being part of our centre inclusive for all, regardless of financial situation. We are a membership institution, and becoming a member is the best way to support our efforts while being connected to the Jewish community.

During the summer, our centre is filled with the next generation. Summer camps are growing every year, both in the number of children, and in the types of camps we offer. Last summer saw a record number of children with more than 2,500 registrations. We expect to surpass that this summer in Day Camp, Travelling Sports Camp and 20 different one-week Specialty Camps.

Over the past 12 years, the SJCC has been meeting or surpassing our financial goals and, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated board, staff and volunteers, we continuously provide top-notch programs in all our departments.

In order to continue to build upon our success, we need everyone to not only be a user, but be an actual member. Don't just swim in the pool, take a class or join in the fun at the Chanukah Party. Be connected as a member.

It's been an incredible 18 years. Be part of this amazing place and help us move forward and grow so that we can continue to be the centre of Ottawa's Jewish community for generations to come.

When the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) first opened its doors 18 years ago, I often came to swim laps in the pool. Most days, I was the only one swimming back and forth and could take up as many lanes as I wanted. But, it wasn't long before the rest of the Jewish community, and the community at large, discovered this hidden gem tucked away on a side street off Carling and Broadview Avenues, and soon the pool, along with the rest of the building, was bustling with activity.

FROM THE
PULPIT



RABBI IDAN SCHER
MACHZIKEI HADAS

Ancient parables with lessons for today

once seemed like a burden transforms into a source of meaning and empowerment that will truly allow you to soar.

But it's only by taking the time to learn and to understand that we are afforded the opportunity to connect to the richness of our heritage, which brings me to the second parable.

There was once a beloved king, whose court musicians played beautiful music for him. The king loved the music, and the musicians loved to play for him. Every day, for many years, the musicians played with passion and joy, and the king and the musicians developed a deep love for one another. But, eventually, after years of dedicated service, all of the musicians passed away. Their children were called to the king's court and were asked to take their parents' place. Out of loyalty to their parents, the children came to play each morning. But, unlike their parents, the children did not love the music. While they could play the basic tunes, they did not understand the power of their instruments, and played with little enthusiasm. Their resentment grew each day they played.

But, after some time, a few of the children said, "We are not being fair to ourselves. We owe it to ourselves to explore and see if we can discover the incredible love and joy our parents had for playing." And so they did. They learned

and put in the effort and they realized that playing beautiful music was not just something with which to honour their parents' memory and show respect for the king. Rather, they found that making music kindled a fire in their own souls they had never before experienced.

And, the more they learned, the more incredible the experience was for them. They began to experiment with sound, composed new melodies, rediscovered harmony, and produced a music inspired by their own sense of devotion and love. The king witnessed their efforts and was deeply moved. Their music was different from their parents' music but, like them, it came from a place deep within, from a compelling need to give of their spirit and be in touch with their innermost selves.

We each connect to Jewish tradition, Jewish life and Jewish history in our own ways. The music we bring into the symphony of our community may not be the same as our ancestors, and we may be playing for entirely different reasons. Some of us may feel the music of Jewish life deep in our souls, as we have been playing for our entire lives, and others have just begun connecting. But that is the beauty of Jewish learning. We can discover how our Judaism speaks to us. It morphs from continuity just for the sake of continuity, into continuity fuelled by our Judaism truly meaning something to us.

There are two poignant ancient Jewish parables that have particular resonance in modern times.

The first is the story of a bird during the days of the creation of the world. This particular bird was created without wings and, when it looked around at other birds soaring in the heavens, it implored its Creator to allow it to fly. That night, while the bird was asleep, God affixed wings to its body. When the bird awoke and saw two new appendages to its body, it said to God, "God, I asked you to make me fly, not to make me heavier." God replied, "Little bird, just flap them and you will see that you will fly. That which you perceive as a burden is exactly what will allow you to soar."

Being a committed Jew is all too often looked at as a burden. And, at first glance, it may seem that way. But, when you take the time to learn and to understand, what

OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

VOLUME 81 | ISSUE 8

Ottawa Jewish Bulletin Publishing Co. Ltd.
21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, K2A 1R9
Tel: 613 798-4696 | Fax: 613 798-4730
Email: bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com
Published 19 times per year.
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The Bulletin, established in 1937 as "a force for constructive communal consciousness," communicates the messages of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and its agencies and, as the city's only Jewish newspaper, welcomes a diversity of opinion as it strives to inform and enrich the community. Viewpoints expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent the policies and values of the Federation.

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\$36 Local Subscription | \$40 Canada
\$60 USA | \$179 Overseas | \$2 per issue

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



ISSN: 1196-1929
Publication Mail Agreement No. 40018822

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
Ottawa Jewish Bulletin
21 Nadolny Sachs Private,
Ottawa ON K2A 1R9

FROM THE
EDITOR

MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

‘We are committed to ensuring that 2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post voting system,’ said Liberal leader Justin Trudeau during the last federal election campaign. A commitment that was reiterated after the Liberal Party formed a majority government and Trudeau became prime minister.

Trudeau charged his minister of democratic institutions, Maryam Monsef, with finding a consensus that would allow for an alternative system. Trudeau, it was said, favoured a ranked ballot in which voters would somehow rank the candidates so that votes for candidates who don’t cross a threshold would be redistributed to the voter’s second choice.

Conventional wisdom had it that Trudeau favoured a ranked ballot on the

The worst form of democracy ‘except for all those others’

theory that the Liberals would be many voters’ second choice thus almost guaranteeing Liberal majority governments in the future.

Meanwhile the New Democratic Party and the Green Party favoured some sort of proportional representation so that parties would hold the number of seats in Parliament reflective of their share of the popular vote. The theory being that the NDP and Greens would see their share of seats increased in a system of proportional representation.

And the Conservative Party, it seems, was OK with first-past-the post, the system in which the candidate receiving a plurality of votes in a riding wins the seat and the party with the most seats is given the opportunity of forming government.

Monsef – who was moved out of the democratic institutions portfolio in last month’s cabinet shuffle – did not find that elusive consensus, and it was left to her successor, Karina Gould, to announce that the search for an alternative to first-past-the-post was over. Despite Trudeau’s oft-stated commitment, the first-past-the-post system will endure for the next election and, likely, well into the future.

But, most Canadians, it seems, are fine

with first-past-the-post.

Count me among them. I’m reminded of Winston Churchill’s famous quote from 1947, when he said, “No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

That’s the way I think of first-past-the-post. It’s probably the worst form of democracy “except for all those others.”

A ranked ballot system that would permanently favour one party doesn’t seem like a democratic ideal, and I fear that proportional representation would not serve us well.

I say that because I pay a lot of attention to Israeli politics, and the system there is proportional representation, a system that encourages many small, often single-issue parties rather than the kind of big-tent type parties that have to appeal to a broad electorate.

Because the parties are small, it is virtually impossible for any party to win a majority of seats in the Knesset. Coalition governments are always the rule. In the 2015 Israeli election, Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud was first among the many parties with 23.4 per cent of the

vote, and he was able to form a coalition by making deals with the small parties. Thus, we see the two religious parties, which together received just over 10 per cent of the vote, able to impose haredi Orthodox control on many aspects of Israeli society – from who may marry and divorce, to what kind of prayer services may be undertaken at the Western Wall, and much more.

And, when Netanyahu sought to strengthen his weak coalition, Avigdor Liberman – leader of a party that received just five per cent of the vote – was able to demand and receive control of the Defense Ministry, Israel’s most important department.

I’m relieved we won’t be seeing small parties in Canada wheeling and dealing and taking control of important ministries.

RABBI SIMES PASSED AWAY

We were deeply saddened to learn that Rabbi Yehuda Simes z”l, a beloved educator in Ottawa’s Jewish community, passed away on February 7.

Confined to a wheel chair since he was critically injured in a highway accident in 2007, Rabbi Simes was an inspiring figure to all who met him – whether in person or online via his “Rolling Rabbi” blog.

Our condolences are extended to Shaindel Simes and to their children. A full-length tribute to Rabbi Simes is planned for the next issue of the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin.

IDEAS AND
IMPRESSIONS

JASON MOSCOVITZ

‘Being thin-skinned is not a good trait for a leader’

difference. The key is nuance and subtlety, and getting both of them right. It is about grace under pressure. It is about straight-laced thoughtfulness and prudence.

Being on the right or the left has nothing to do with it. Politics should have nothing to do with it. Democracies are designed for people who don’t agree with each other. Respect and decency are supposed to make winners and losers work together to whatever degree possible until the next election when the people decide if they want change.

It was obvious many months ago that lack of respect and decency were at play with Donald Trump, but no one could have imagined the fallout from his bull-in-a-china-shop mentality. It is so omnipresent in everything he says and does. There is no relief. No let up. He so seldom stops being himself.

There are many Trump defenders who say he is just being who he was all through the campaign, and they maintain he is being honest and consistent as president. But then you have to wonder about the people who say that. Is a brash,

impulsive, quick-tempered bully really what they want?

Perhaps the most important lesson of the election for the so-called elites – people like me who thought they knew better – is the steadily growing number of people in the United States, as well as in other western democracies, who, socially and economically, have fallen so far behind that their anger is no longer controllable. No longer do they believe in traditional ways of looking at political solutions.

With social media linking all these unhappy and angry people together, there is a new force that is gobbling up the world as we knew it. So much is on the table. The risks are enormous.

When the president of United States makes crucial decisions without consulting non-elected experts in government, you have to realize how volatile this way of governing is. I am sure Trump knows all about hotels, but he is no expert on at least 95 per cent of what crosses his desk.

His immigration and refugee policies are designed, he says, to keep America safe. And, every time I hear him say that, I

get frightened. The more he loudly proclaims his policies will make America safer, there are any number of trained terrorists, or potential lone wolf terrorists, who would love to prove him wrong. It is like an open invitation to do evil, just to show you can. Embarrassing a boastful, over-confident president would be ‘huge.’

Being thin-skinned is not a good trait for a leader. Most learn not to be because they have to be above the little things. But there is nothing to indicate that Trump can or even wants to.

He is so unpredictable that the hope he will change to better suit the needs of his country, and our world, is quickly slipping away.

There is something in the air, something swirling about that is so unsettling. Fictional movies and books have been produced about conspiracies bringing dangerously unfit people to the Oval Office. “The Manchurian Candidate” comes to mind. This could be the real thing with or without a Russian conspiracy.

Human beings try hard not to think the worst. We are taught from an early age to think the best of people and to move forward believing everything will work out in the end.

But ‘The Donald’ is now president of the United States – and that is just plain scary.

I recently met CBC Radio news anchor Laurence Wall in shul. We were just leaving after Shabbat services and got into a conversation about Donald Trump’s start as U.S. president. We were two news guys trying to make sense of our rapidly changing times. The pace of change can make you dizzy.

Conversations like that are going on everywhere and many lead to a scary uneasiness about a president who does not seem to have a firm grip on the ship of state. There are as many reasons to be fearful as there are trouble spots in the world.

After years of seeing politicians at their best and at their worst, I have learned the

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CIJA conducts grassroots consultations across Canada

One of the most gratifying aspects of working in Jewish advocacy is that our community is, decidedly, not monolithic. The array of backgrounds, political views and Jewish practice one finds within Canadian Jewry is remarkable. The sheer size of our community – third-largest in the Diaspora, behind only American and French Jewry – provides rich diversity.

This variety inevitably shapes our communal advocacy agenda and our work at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the advocacy agent of Jewish Federation of Ottawa and Jewish Federations of Canada-USA. On any given day, I may be engaged in issues as diverse as anti-Semitism, Israel, human rights legislation, palliative care, affordable housing, genetic discrimination and Holocaust remembrance. In a world of limitless opportunities (and distractions), it is more important than ever to determine priorities and establish focused plans to advance them.

This is why, in January, CIJA conducted grassroots consultations with Jewish communities in nine cities across the country – including Ottawa on January 22. While we were not able to hold in-person consultations in every city with a Jewish presence, we have subsequently launched a national, online survey to enable every member of our community to participate. Visit www.cija.ca for more details and to make your voice heard.

Open to any member of the Jewish community, the consultations provided a unique opportunity for grassroots Jewry to meet in person and discuss the issues and concerns that should guide us. In a world in which people are connected online, but all too often do not speak or share ideas “beyond the screen,” the consultations provided a useful platform for meaningful community discussion and debate.

Divided into discussion groups, each consultation session asked participants to list what they believed CIJA’s priorities should be – and propose a priority issue for the table’s consideration. Following a voting process, each discussion group submitted to the entire room their top issue.

Among the wide range of issues discussed were countering hate crimes, challenging anti-Israel bias in the media, ensuring affordable access to Jewish education, building bridges beyond the Jewish community to foster tolerance, improving the security of the Jewish community, and alleviating poverty by increasing funding for Jewish social service agencies.

In the end, fighting anti-Semitism, countering the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, and building the Canada-Israel relationship ranked as the top three choices of community members. To view the full results, visit www.cija.ca.

As a session co-facilitator, I can attest to the remarkable

**STEVE MCDONALD, CIJA
GUEST COLUMN**

diversity of opinions that emerged in this process and empowered every individual to share his or her views with the group. At some tables, a clear consensus emerged; at others, participants were divided as to where CIJA should focus its energies.

We like to say we are guided at CIJA by the principle of “unity not uniformity,” and this certainly emerged as apt in these consultations. Our community cannot afford to overlook that there is far more that unites than divides us. When discussing politics and other contentious issues, we must allow for respectful disagreement and debate. At the same time, we must seek points of consensus that enable us to plan and take timely, effective and unified action.

We’re all familiar with the adage that where one finds two Jews there will be three opinions. Perhaps how one interprets this expression – as a sign of discord or of healthy debate – depends on whether one is a pessimist or an optimist.

For my part, I love that we are a people who, for millennia, have valued ideas, intellectual reflection, reasoned debate, and even disagreement. It is a notable testament to our commitment to intellectual honesty that, in citing decisions, the Talmud records minority opinions for the benefit of future generations. May we always be a people of multiple opinions, so long as we never stop channelling our energies toward the common good.

Steve McDonald is deputy director, communications and public affairs, at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs – the advocacy agent of Jewish Federation of Ottawa and Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA.



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Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month and Therapeutic Recreation Month

Universally accessible KKL-JNF parks and playground is a year round philosophy

February is dedicated to building awareness of the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities. At KKL-JNF, we have adopted the spirit and principle of universal access in accordance with Israel's Equal Rights Law for People with Limitations 1996, which states, "The rights of people with limitations are founded on the recognition of equal rights for all people ... the rights of people with limitations and the commitment of Israeli society to those rights, based on the recognition of the value of people who were created in the divine image, and the principle of respect for humanity ... The purpose of this law is to protect the dignity and liberty of people with limitations, and to firmly establish their rights as equal and active participants in society in all areas of life, and to appropriately provide for their special needs so that they will be able to live their lives with maximum independence, privacy and dignity, and full realization of their potential."

In recent years, KKL-JNF has been investing great efforts and resources, with the help of its friends worldwide, to create forests and recreation areas specially designed for people with physical limitations, taking into consideration their functional needs so that they can get around comfortably and safely. Most KKL-JNF sites, information centres and scenic lookouts are adapted for people with special needs. Every project planned by KKL-JNF takes accessibility considerations into account, and a lot of work is being done to upgrade existing sites and make them accessible in accordance with the conditions of location and the limitations of budget.

How does KKL-JNF make sites universally accessible?

- Marking recreation areas suitable for those who are limited in mobility and improving the access roads to them.
- Avoiding the building of stairs, making roads with moderate slopes (up to 8 per cent) and installing handrails for stairs and ramps.
- Making hard ground surfaces to enable mobility for people who move in wheelchairs or carriages.
- Installing low picnic tables and grill stands close to parking areas. In most picnic areas (that are topographically suitable), about 10 per cent of the picnic tables and grill stands are suitable for those who move in wheelchairs.
- Installing curbstones to prevent wheelchairs from swerving and to enable safe mobility for people whose vision is limited.
- Creating signs, audio stands and aromatic plants, in order to enhance the nature experience for people whose vision is impaired.
- Using induction coils for people whose hearing is impaired (a type of wireless loudspeaker achieved by magnetically transmitting sound to hearing aids and cochlear implants with telecoils).
- Developing hiking trails of different lengths and scenic lookouts suitable for people in wheelchairs.
- Installing playground equipment and sports facilities that are suitable for people with disabilities.
- Installing restroom facilities designed for people in wheelchairs.

A full listing of universally accessible JNF sites in Israel can be found at: <http://www.kkl-jnf.org/tourism-and-recreation/accessible-forests-parks-sites-israel>.

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Learn Yiddish in six weeks at uOttawa's Yiddish Summer Institute

BY REBECCA MARGOLIS
VERED JEWISH CANADIAN
STUDIES PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA



Rebecca Margolis

Yiddish is the language of a thousand years of European Jewish civilization and the shared language of most of the Jewish immigrants who settled in Canada. Over the last century, Yiddish has evolved a rich literature, musical tradition, theatre and cinema. Today, there are many innovative initiatives to explore Yiddish, including the digitization of all of Yiddish literature and new movies and television.

As part of this Yiddish renaissance, the University of Ottawa is offering an exciting opportunity to learn and engage with the language and culture in our Yiddish Summer Institute.

Running daily from May 1 until June 13, this introductory course in Yiddish language and culture will allow diverse students to learn to speak, read, write, sing and explore Yiddish literature and culture in an intensive format that is unique in Canada.

The program consists of daily Yiddish language classes in the mornings plus weekly cultural activities, including theatre workshops, film screenings and performances. It will conclude with a fieldtrip to Yiddish Montreal, including a visit to local Yiddish-speaking Chasidic neighbourhoods and a live theatre performance.

Students who successfully complete the course will receive six university credits and will be able to hold a basic conversation like a native speaker; read a Yiddish

newspaper or other text with the help of a dictionary; write about a variety of topics and in multiple formats (letters, poetry, short film scripts, etc.); and know at least 20 Yiddish songs. They will also be familiar with many aspects of Yiddish culture from Eastern Europe through present-day Canada, including music, literature, theatre and film.

The course is open to current university students and to mature students. No previous background is required aside from a willingness to work hard in a very rigorous university class. It will be of particular interest to students who require Yiddish language reading knowledge for their research; are interested in Yiddish

performance of theatre or music; want to learn more about Eastern European Jewish culture; wish to be able to translate from or into Yiddish; seek to be creative in Yiddish; enjoy learning new languages; or for whom Yiddish is a family or heritage language.

As a scholar and instructor of Yiddish with more than 20 years' experience teaching Yiddish to children and adults in university and community settings, including at New York's YIVO summer program and the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, I am excited to offer this intensive course at my home university. I invite you all to come and *lern zikh yidish!*

Information regarding the program and registration is available at www.yiddishottawa.com. Registration opens in March on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact me at rmargoli@uottawa.ca.

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Letters to the Editor are welcome if they are brief, signed, timely, and of interest to our readership. The *Bulletin* reserves the right to refuse, edit or condense letters. The *Mailbag* column will be published as space permits.

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Ben Karp Volunteer Service Award recipient Bob Wener (centre) and Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Award recipients Tommy Podolsky and Belinda Cantor gather at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre annual general meeting, February 1.

Volunteers honoured at Soloway JCC AGM

BY PAMELA ROSENBERG
SOLOWAY JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Three outstanding Jewish community volunteers were honoured, February 1, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) annual general meeting.

Bob Wener received the Ben Karp Volunteer Service Award. An active member of the SJCC Board of Directors for 16 years, Bob has served as both treasurer and chair.

With Bob at the helm, the SJCC has been successful in individual donor cultivation and recently completed our 12th consecutive year of meeting or surpassing our financial goals. Bob will chair a major capital initiative on behalf of the Centre in the future.

In the broader community, Bob has served as chair of the CHEO Foundation Board and the CHEO Investment Committee, and on the Carleton University Board.

“It has been an honour and pleasure to work with Bob. His exceptional leadership has helped the SJCC in numerous ways,” said SJCC President and COO Barry Sohn. “I have learned much from Bob about community and about striving for excellence.”

The Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Award recipients were Belinda Cantor and Tommy Podolsky.

Belinda Cantor is a Grade 12 student at Sir Robert Borden High School. To fulfil her mandated high school volunteer hours, Belinda worked with the Friendship Circle, a Jewish Youth Library program that matches high school and university students with children with special needs.

What started as an opportunity to get high school volunteer hours turned into a meaningful and fulfilling volunteer experience. Belinda spends an hour each week with a child who has autism. Belinda says spending time with her buddy has had just as large an impact on her as it has on him.

A graduate of the Ottawa Jewish Community School, Belinda is also a student at Torah High and has volunteered with Chai Lifeline, an organization that provides services for Jewish families with a sick child, as well as with Ten Yad, an organization that provides meals and support for those in need. Belinda is a Youth Services leader at Kehillat Beth Israel where she organizes and leads a Shabbat service for elementary school children as well as High Holiday services.

Tommy Podolsky is also in Grade 12 at Sir Robert Borden High School where he is president of the Jewish Culture Club and planner for the Holocaust remembrance assembly. He is also a member of the Sir Robert Borden student council and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board student senate, and captain of the Sir Robert Borden varsity baseball team.

A BBYO Ottawa Chapter president, Tommy received the BBYO Silver Shield of David Award, a historic and prestigious honour awarded to a male, who, throughout his tenure in Aleph Zadik Aleph, displayed outstanding leadership contributions and consistent commitment.

Tommy was one of two Ottawa teens to be part of NCSY's, Jerusalem Journey program and volunteers at Ottawa Jewish community events, including Mitzvah Day and the Chanukah Gift Fair.



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OTTAWA JEWISH
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Ottawa athletes to compete in Maccabiah Games in Israel

BY BILL IZSO
MACCABI CANADA

The 20th Maccabiah Games will take place in Israel from July 4 to 18. Ottawa athletes who will be part of the Canadian delegation held a kick-off event, February 2, at NeXT restaurant in Stittsville.

Surrounded by friends and family, every one of our Ottawa athletes felt like a gold medalist as CTV's Lianne Laing introduced them one by one to loud applause.

Laing also shared her own Maccabiah story. She competed in gymnastics at the 1989 and 1993 Games and talked about the pride she felt walking into the stadium and singing "Hatikvah" with the other Jewish athletes from around the world representing their countries in Israel.

The guest speaker was Tessa Bonhomme of the 2010 Olympic gold medal-winning Canadian women's hockey team. Rather than the usual keynote address, Bonhomme and Laing held a conversation and discussed representing Canada, life after sports and visiting Israel.

Bonhomme described being in Vancouver for the Winter Olympics in 2010. As the host country, Team Canada was the last country to enter the opening ceremonies. When the doors opened, the cheers were so loud that Tessa felt a wave that blew her hair back.

In 2014, Bonhomme visited Israel to teach at the Canada-Israel Hockey School in Metulla. She recalled visiting the Western Wall, Ein Gedi, the Dead Sea, and many other places – and the impression that Masada made on her.

Bonhomme said it was already too hot at 9 am to climb up Masada, so some of the hockey players walked



Ottawa athletes set to compete at the 2017 Maccabiah Games in Israel. (From left) Alexa Shabinsky (track), Haley Miller (rhythmic gymnastics), Jaime Bender-Kerbel (jr. baseball), Coby Pearce (jr. tennis), Jesse Levine (tennis champion), Dan Osterer (softball) and Hayley Bennett (softball). Missing from photo: Rob Osterer (softball), Stephen Osterer (softball), Ken Kaczowski (wrestling), Lauren Shaffer (swimming) and Alex Aronovici (swimming).

down after the tour. She said it was so hot their sweat evaporated before it could stain their jerseys.

A highlight of the evening was Alexa Shabinsky and Hayley Bennett's personal stories about why they chose to become Maccabiah athletes. They cited the thrill of competing internationally and their upcoming first visit to Israel. Shabinsky is a Grade 12 student at Ashbury College who competes in track and field, while Bennett

is a mother of three who plays softball.

This is what Maccabi Canada is all about: showcasing how sport and Israel can help build community and Jewish pride.

Proceeds raised at the event support the Ottawa area athletes competing at the 20th Maccabiah Games. Visit www.maccabicanada.com for more information about Maccabi Canada and the 20th Maccabiah Games.

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Sunday, February 26: Books and Bagels: Rubin Friedman will review "Yiddish for Pirates" by Gary Barwin. Bagels, 9:30 am; review, 10 am.

Most books are available through the Ottawa Public Library and the Greenberg Families Library at the JCC. The Malca Pass Library and the Temple Israel Library also carry some of these titles. For more information please contact Shayla Mindell at booksnbagels@templeisraelottawa.ca

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Professor Rebecca Margolis rmargoli@uottawa.ca



OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

Employment Opportunity

Summer Intern Ottawa Jewish Bulletin

The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin is seeking a university student with a flair for writing and reporting to work with us this summer.

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To apply, please send a cover letter, resumé, and writing samples to:

Michael Regenstreif, Editor
Ottawa Jewish Bulletin
21 Nadolny Sachs Private
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or via e-mail to:
mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com



Chabad Student Network: Carleton University student Sam Goodman lights candles at a Chabad On Campus Shabbaton for students from across Canada held in Niagara Falls, January 27-29. Goodman was part of a busload of students from the Chabad Student Network of Ottawa who journeyed to the event.



Fauda's Lior Raz comes to Ottawa: An evening with Lior Raz, creator and star of the hit Israeli TV show "Fauda," will be presented on Sunday, February 26, 7 pm, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. Tickets are \$10 and available online at www.cija.ca/raz. For more information, contact Sarah Beutel at sbeutel@jewishottawa.com.

Post Tu B'shvat Program

Ages 6-8

Sunday, February 26

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Soloway JCC, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private
\$5 at the door

Join us in the Soloway JCC Teen Lounge for a fun new PJ Library program.

Enjoy Tu B'Shvat stories, paint flower pots, make flowers with dried fruit and play Tu B'Shvat games.

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With full Talmud translation, online library hopes to make sages accessible to all for free

BY BEN SALES

NEW YORK (JTA) – For centuries, studying a page of the Talmud has come with a bevy of barriers to entry.

Written mostly in Aramaic, the Talmud in its most commonly printed form also lacks punctuation or vowels, let alone translation. Its premier explanatory commentary, composed by the medieval sage Rashi, is usually printed in an obscure Hebrew typeface read almost exclusively by religious, learned Jews. Even then, scholars can still spend hours figuring out what the text means.

And that’s not to mention the Talmud’s size and cost: 37 full volumes, called tractates, which can take up an entire shelf of a library.

Helping students and readers crack these barriers and access what amounts to a library of Jewish law, ritual, folklore and moral guidance has been an ongoing endeavour. Milestones include the first (unfinished) attempt at an English translation by American publisher Michael Levi Rodkinson at the turn of the 20th century, an abridged version by Rabbi Chaim Tchernowitz in the 1920s, and “The Soncino Talmud on CD-ROM” from 1995.

Now, a website hopes to build on these earlier breakthroughs and break all the barriers at once.

Sefaria – www.sefaria.org – a website founded in 2013 that aims to put the seemingly infinite Jewish canon online for free, has published an acclaimed translation of the Talmud in English. The translation, which includes explanatory notes in relatively plain language, was

See Talmud on page 17

The interface of the Steinsaltz Talmud on Sefaria includes line-by-line translation, along with links to commentaries and references to a range of Jewish sources, which appear in a separate vertical. COURTESY OF SEFARIA

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OTC Teens: Teens gather with Rabbi Menachem Blum and Ottawa's Shinshinim, February 1, at Unlocked Ottawa Adventure and Game Lounge for the kickoff of Ottawa Torah Centre's CTeen program. Participants created keychains with a prayer for protection of IDF soldiers. CTeen meets monthly for social action projects, discussions with Rabbi Blum, and fun.



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Marilyn Sadowski Goldstein by Bill and Laurie Chochinov
Paul Mintz by Bill and Laurie Chochinov
Ivan Goldman by Golda and Ned Steinman and family
Randy Byskov by the residents, staff and Boards of the Lodge and LTC Foundation
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Talmud: Goal to democratize Jewish religious scholarship

Continued from page 15

started by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz in 1965 and is considered by many to be the best in its class.

The Steinsaltz edition of the Talmud has been in print for decades, in both modern Hebrew and English translation, and parts of it already exist on the Internet. But this is the first time it is being put online in its entirety for free. The online edition also opens up the copyright licence, meaning that anyone is allowed to repurpose it for teaching, literature or anything else.

“Ninety per cent of the world’s Jews speak Hebrew and English,” said Daniel Septimus, Sefaria’s executive director. “The Talmud is in Aramaic. It will now be online in Hebrew and English. From an accessibility point of view, it’s a game changer.”

(Septimus was formerly CEO of MyJewishLearning, one of JTA’s partner sites, and sits on the board of 70 Faces Media, JTA’s parent company.)

Sefaria rolled out 22 tractates of the Steinsaltz English edition on February 7, and will be publishing the entire Hebrew translation over the course of 2017. The rest of the English edition, which is as yet unfinished, will be published online as it is completed. The translation’s publication was made possible by a multimillion-dollar deal with the Steinsaltz edition’s publishers, Milta and Koren Publishers Jerusalem, and financed by the William Davidson Foundation, a family charity. The edition will be known as The William Davidson Talmud.

Translations and explanations of the Talmud already exist online. A range of apps promises free translations that can be unreliable. ArtScroll, the Orthodox Jewish publishing giant, offers a digital version of its own complete English Talmud translation for \$600 US. A comprehensive digital Jewish library published for decades by Israel’s Bar-Ilan University is also available for purchase, but not with English translation.

Besides its edition being free, Sefaria’s founders say its version of the Steinsaltz Talmud is better than competitors because it is untethered to the Talmud’s classic printed form. Since the mid-15th



(From left) Sefaria Executive Director Daniel Septimus with co-founders Brett Lockspeiser and Joshua Foer.

century, the Talmud has been published with unpunctuated text in a column in the middle of the page, its commentaries wrapping around it.

Like all of Sefaria’s texts, which range from the Bible to Chasidic texts and works of Jewish law, the Steinsaltz translation is published sentence by sentence in a mobile-friendly format, with the translation appearing below the original. The format also allows Sefaria to link between the Talmud’s text and the myriad Jewish sources it references, from the Bible to rabbinic literature.

Click on a line of Aramaic, and a string of commentaries, verses or parallel rabbinic sources will pop up. An algorithm Sefaria uses, which just added 50,000 such links to the Talmud, is also reverse engineered: Click on a verse in the Bible and you will see where it’s quoted in the Talmud or other books.

“This entire web of connections opens up to you just by clicking and touching,” said Sefaria’s co-founder and CTO, Brett Lockspeiser. “It’s so clear that the structure of Jewish learning had this network-type experience. This sense of interconnectedness was already there and just needed to be brought out.” The other co-founder is the author Joshua Foer.

The project is the biggest step forward in Sefaria’s larger goal of democratizing Jewish religious scholarship by making it digitized, free and intelligible to everyone. The site also has a tool for Jewish educators to create source sheets, or short study

aids with quotations from a range of Jewish books. Users have already created 50,000 such sheets.

“We have no idea what kind of devices people are going to be learning Torah on in 10 years, but we know those devices will be chomping on digital data; so having a database of these texts that’s open, flexible, free for use and reuse is a good thing,” Septimus said.

Another site which shares that goal, the Open Siddur Project, provides Jewish

prayer text for free so people can put together their own prayer books. Its founder, Aharon Varady, said the modern-day emphasis on intellectual property clashes with the Jewish tradition of sharing knowledge openly and freely.

“It’s the idea that Torah should be transferred without limitations,” Varady said. “Copyright is an innovation with fairly different interests than that of a living culture that is growing by educators sharing material, by teachers making source sheets with others.”

The site already offers thousands of books in open-source code, so anyone can use them, and hopes to add thousands more – the entirety of Judaic literature. Lockspeiser, a former Google software engineer, said that compared to indexing billions of web pages, the Jewish canon is no tall order.

“People can’t get into the Talmud because they don’t know it’s there,” Lockspeiser said. “If it’s not in English and you type in English words in the [online search] query, it’s not going to come up. We’re opening this up just in the sense that people will find it that didn’t even know they were looking for it.”

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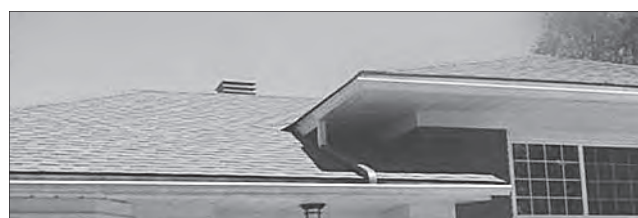
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We need stories about ordinary people fighting hate and ignorance

I really wanted to write about something happy for this issue. No politics, no tantrum-prone U.S. presidents, no talk of settlements or sanctions or sanctimony.

And then I saw something on the New York Times website that stopped me in my tracks. Did you know that the Times runs a weekly feature in its Opinion section called “This Week in Hate”?

It turns out that the paper has done so since Donald Trump – aptly nicknamed “President Me” by columnist Frank Bruni – was elected president in November.

“Reliable data on hate crimes is hard to come by,” the paper’s editorial board wrote on January 17. “As reports of racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic harassment and attacks poured in after the election of Donald Trump, many Americans wondered whether they represented a nationwide increase in hate crime.”

So the paper has teamed with ProPublica, a nonprofit group, and a coalition of other organizations to work on a project called Documenting Hate, which will gather data and information about hate crimes around the U.S.
<http://tinyurl.com/gn5s6ct>

No doubt the folks at the Times would like to prove that the frequency and/or severity of hate crimes have increased since the election of Trump.

After completely misreading the mood of the American electorate during the presidential campaign, the Times has made it its mission to fact-check and/or discredit virtually every Tweet, pronouncement and policy of the new commander-in-chief, as if we need daily reminders that Trump is the least qualified – intellectually, temperamentally and morally – president in U.S. history.

If this feature is just another way of keeping score of Trump’s failures, then it feels more like a stunt than a public service.



But, if, as the ProPublica site claims, this will actually provide policymakers and law enforcement agencies access to more accurate data about hate crimes than in the past, it could be a good thing. And, as ProPublica points out, reporting these incidents will make it harder for those in power to ignore the problem.

It’s not enough, however, for the news media just to keep statistics on hate crimes. We need more analysis of what is motivating these attacks and strategies for making racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views unacceptable.

The Times lauded the Canadian response to the murders at the Quebec City mosque. The paper pointed out that the soul-searching and expressions of solidarity by ordinary Canadians, and by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard were in stark contrast to the knee-jerk response of the Trump administration, which used the shooting to justify its anti-immigrant policies.

It’s sad that there is enough hate crime to keep teams of researchers, journalism students and veteran journalists busy. But, if a recent incident in New York is the result of this kind of scrutiny, then maybe it’s a good thing.

Earlier this month, the windows and posters of a No. 1 subway train were defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti. The

messages included such phrases as “Jews belong in the oven,” and “Destroy Israel, Heil Hitler.”

Many of the passengers were appalled, but no one did anything until a woman wondered out loud if it could be removed. A sous-chef named Jared Nied, who had boarded the train at 42nd Street, remembered that alcohol can remove Sharpie ink.

“A light bulb went on, and I just asked, ‘Does anyone have hand sanitizer?’” he told the Times.

Passengers began searching pockets and purses for wipes, gels and tissues. Within five minutes and before train had reached 96th Street, all the Nazi symbolism was gone.

The incident was never reported to the police. But a New York lawyer named Gregory Locke posted photos and a description that went viral on Facebook.
<http://tinyurl.com/haw7hs8>

Sounds like something out of a Hollywood movie. But wouldn’t it be great if this incident empowers others to take similar action?

We don’t just have to fight hate crimes. Ignorance is also dangerous.

So kudos to B’nai Brith Canada, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for challenging a trade school in British Columbia that had a policy of not admitting Israelis “due to conflict and illegal settlement activity in the region.”

Not only did the school reverse its policy, but the incident mobilized other community organizations to support the Jewish agencies.

So maybe this is a happy column after all. Perhaps for every story about hate and ignorance, we need a story about ordinary people doing their part to fight these plagues – then follow their example.



2016 GJ Cooper Scholarship recipient Shelby Levine was awarded a scholarship of \$16,075 at the Foundation’s Annual General Meeting (presented by Paul Finn, 2016 Scholarship Committee Chair).

For complete details and list of eligible programs, please visit www.ojcf.ca or contact Mike at 613-798-4696 ext 252 or by email at mbazuk@jewishottawa.com

APPLY NOW!

GJ Cooper Scholarship Award

The award, valued at approximately \$15,000, is granted each year to support a member of the Ottawa Jewish Community, or Ottawa student, between the ages of 18 and 30, who has displayed leadership qualities, academic excellence and has an interest in the Jewish Community. As per Mr. Cooper’s wishes, the award must be used to advance one’s formal education or apprenticeship in the fields of artistic, literary or social sciences.

Applications Open!
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Celebrating Canada's Best at 150

Canadian Architects with Hagit Hadaya, Architectural Historian

Early immigration to Canada brought with it European architectural traditions. However, subsequent generations of architects were able to create designs that reflect a more personal, and locally influenced architecture. This four part presentation will take an in-depth look at the work of Ottawa architects such as W.E. Noffke and Francis C. Sullivan, national architects Thomas Fuller and the Maxwell Brothers, and the more contemporary Arthur Erickson, Douglas Cardinal, and Raymond Moriyama, to name a few.

April 24 – May 15
Monday, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
\$95 M • \$110 NM

Celebrating Canadian Authors with Nick Milne, Ph.D

As Canada celebrates its 150th birthday, join us in an exploration of the Canadian literary world since Confederation. We'll explore works by classic authors who helped establish a new Canadian literary identity-like the Confederation Poets, Lucy Maud Montgomery and Stephen Leacock; those who shaped a new literary landscape, like Mordecai Richler, Margaret Atwood and Mavis Gallant; and those, like Thomas King, Lynn Coady and others, who continue to champion Canadian letters at home and abroad.

April 25 – June 6
Tuesday, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
\$125 M • \$140 NM
No Class: May 2

Remembering Leonard Cohen: His Life, His Music

with Professor Natalia Vessalova

The recent loss that Canada and the world has experienced makes us contemplate the artist and the man Cohen was. How was it possible to have a career spanning six decades and end with the crowning achievement of that last telling album? Why do Cohen's songs keep attracting generations of global audiences from all walks of life? This five week course will delve into these questions by looking at Cohen's life and his music.

Thursday, March 30 – April 27
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
\$100 M • \$115 NM



Yiddish Is Alive and Well with Professor Rebecca Margolis

Thursday, April 6 – April 27
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
\$95 M • \$110 NM



Hebrew from Scratch with Sigal Baray

Thursday, April 6 – May 25
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
\$155 M • \$175 NM



Intermediate Spanish with Wendy Ordonez

Thursday, April 6 – May 25
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
\$155 M • \$175 NM



Mixed Media with Violeta Borisonik

Wednesday, April 19 – May 24
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
\$150 M • \$170 NM
(plus a \$30 supply fee payable to instructor on April 19)



Modern Conversational Hebrew – Advanced Beginner with Ella Dagan

Wednesday, March 22 – May 17
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
\$155 M • \$175 NM
No Class: April 12



S'iz Besser in Yiddish / It's Better in Yiddish: For Lovers of Mamaloshen with Shirley Steinberg & Rubin Friedman

Tuesday, 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Free program
March 28, April 25, May 16, June 13



Judaic Papercutting for Beginners with Hy Cooper

Wednesday, May 10 - May 24
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
\$65 M • \$75 NM
(plus supply kit \$15 payable to instructor at first class)



Advanced Beginner Spanish with Wendy Ordonez

Thursday, April 6 – May 25
12:15 pm – 1:45 pm
\$155 M • \$175 NM



The Polish "Blue Police" and the Holocaust with Professor Jan Grabowski

Thursday, March 23
7:30 pm
Free Admission



Please visit www.jccottawa.com/programs-services/adult/cultural-and-education-classes for course descriptions.

Hillel and Chabad offer opportunities for Jewish learning on campus

Last month, Hillel Ottawa unveiled Jewish U, a brand new learning program that has attracted a wide range of students – including myself – who are looking to embark on the next chapter of our Jewish journeys.

Jewish U takes place at Hillel House every Tuesday evening from January 17 to April 4 and is led by Rabbi Eytan Kenter, spiritual leader of Kehillat Beth Israel. After a hearty supper, we sit down each week to discuss contemporary issues in Judaism.

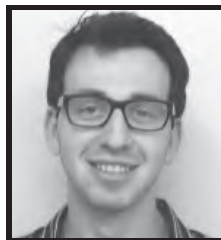
Dovi Chein, Hillel Ottawa's student life co-ordinator, said that when he was first envisioning Jewish U, he had an initial meeting with Rabbi Kenter to iron out the details and was immediately impressed with his enthusiasm and down-to-earth personality.

Rabbi Kenter is a big believer in Jewish education in university because it allows students to think about Judaism from our own independent perspectives during a crucial time in our lives.

Chein said that he hopes the program will become a staple at Hillel each semester.

"To create a curriculum that will be interesting for both ends of the Jewish spectrum is an incredible task," Chein said. "My hope for this program is that all the participants will leave each week feeling like they learned something about Judaism that they didn't know or hadn't thought about, and will actively think about their Judaism throughout the week."

While this is the first time Hillel Ottawa has put together a Jewish learning program such as this, the



MICHAEL AARENAU
CAMPUS LIFE

In the hustle-bustle of daily student life, it can be tough to make time for Judaism, which tends to take a backseat during university for most people my age ... a distinctly odd feeling for those of us who attended Jewish school.

Chabad Student Network has been running its Sinai Scholars program since 2009.

The Sinai Scholars program runs each semester (alternating semesters between Carleton University and the University of Ottawa) and is composed of eight classes, one trip and a final paper.

According to Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky, the Chabad Student Network director, "The purpose of Sinai Scholars is to give students a glimpse into the beauty of the Torah's lessons and how they are practical and inspirational for them in their daily lives."

Sinai Scholars uOttawa alumnus Valerie Sedlezky feels she grew a lot as a person through the program.

"I truly feel that I have gained insight as to what it means to be a Jew, both as an emerging adult and as a woman living in the 21st century," she said. "We would openly debate topics [and we] questioned and doubted statements, which only furthered our discussions. To me, this is what it means to study religion; to dispute and debate ideas in order to encourage curiosity. These conversations resulted in a deeper personal understanding of Judaism. I felt as if I had challenged my previous ways of thought and found answers within the religion."

In the hustle-bustle of daily student life, it can be tough to make time for Judaism, which tends to take a backseat during university for most people my age. This is a distinctly odd feeling for those of us who attended Jewish elementary school and/or high school.

These classes offer an opportunity to re-engage with that missing piece of what once was an integral part of our weekly routine and allow us to continue the never-ending journey we had started when we were younger.

And, for those who didn't have the opportunity for any sort of formal Jewish education growing up, this could be an opportunity to learn what all the fuss is about, and to learn more about your people, your culture and yourself.

And, if you're one of those people who hate the fact you were born Jewish, but have realized you can't escape it because it's such an integral part of who you are on the most microscopic of levels, these are perfect classes for you to challenge those beliefs, or alternatively, embrace them. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Ultimately, no matter where you fall on the Jewish spectrum, these classes offer something unique. After all, you're never too old to learn.

Exercise as a way to develop your personal attributes

At the start of 2017, I made a commitment to myself to re-engage in some fitness practices that I used to feel passionate about but had given up due to circumstances such as evolving interests or scheduling conflicts. I've been feeling stuck or coasting and needed to switch things up a bit. The two forms of exercise I have eased back into are from opposite ends of the spectrum: kickboxing and yoga.

I'm finding that the physical exertion required by kickboxing balances out beautifully with the serenity of yoga. Whether I'm punching and kicking a heavy bag with all of my might or lying on a mat in a quiet room and listening to myself exhale, the outcomes are similar; I leave feeling destressed and energized.

Some of my friends have told me they could never try yoga because they can't sit still. All the more reason to try it! A yin-yoga class where you basically sit or lie still in various poses supported by cushions for prolonged periods of time teaches you how to appreciate your body and mind in a different way. It's so relaxing that in one class the woman next to me started snoring!

While I use rudimentary kickboxing drills to train some of my clients, and also non-contact cardio-kickboxing with the older seniors in my chair-fitness class, I haven't had the opportunity to train in a way that I get a workout. In the class I recently started taking, I happened to partner with a young woman approximately my size, but about half my age. She looked fit, but I felt reassured when she told me she'd never done kickboxing before because this 'old gal' didn't want to get injured. The first time it was my turn to punch and kick while she held the focus pads, she informed me that she's pregnant. I was initially worried



GLORIA SCHWARTZ
FOCUS ON FITNESS

With a bit of introspection, each of us can identify aspects of ourselves we'd like to improve. Exercise can be a mechanism to develop them, although changing one's personality traits is a bit more difficult than changing learned behaviours or states.

about accidentally hurting her, but, once we got into a groove, we both felt confident. When it was her turn to hit, boy could she pack a wallop! I jokingly asked her if she was mad at someone. She told me that kickboxing helps her rid of stress from her busy life.

It's normal to feel muscular soreness a day or two following a challenging workout, but, between the intensity of the moves and the power I was putting into them, I was incredibly sore for a couple of days after the first class. The next week, I confessed to my young training partner how sore I'd felt. I also told her how old I was. I laughed when she told me she'd been really sore, too.

You can transfer whatever you experience in your own fitness activities to other areas of your life. For example, if you could benefit from more self-confidence, or want to feel more powerful, or not get so easily angry or agitated, choose exercises that will help you develop these soft skills or feelings.

The ability to follow through with a goal, or face a challenge, doesn't come naturally to everyone. You can hone those skills at the gym, or outdoors hiking a mountain, or running a race. Pick an activity that requires the characteristics you'd like to build up, such as perseverance, or the ability to release and cleanse yourself of mental and physical tension.

Transferring skills from whatever form of exercise you choose to other areas of your life can be a transformative process. You may not even realize you're developing certain attributes until you find yourself in a situation where you employ them.

Knowing I am capable of holding my own at kickboxing class with a partner young enough to be my daughter makes me feel strong and younger than my age. Being able to temporarily block out the world, unplug, let go of tension and exhale while chanting "om" in unison with other people helps me better cope with or even overlook what I might normally consider day-to-day stressors.

With a bit of introspection, each of us can identify aspects of ourselves we'd like to improve. Exercise can be a mechanism to develop them, although changing one's personality traits is a bit more difficult than changing learned behaviours or states.

We can then access the enhanced components of ourselves and apply what we've learned when needed. Sometimes a change in routine may be the catalyst that gets the ball rolling.

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All donations are acknowledged with a charitable receipt.

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The Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation follows a strong investment policy guiding successful portfolio managers with oversight from

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Contact: Arieh Rosenblum, Director of Development at 613-798-4696 x 270 or arosenblum@jewishottawa.com



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Learn more about how the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation helps the community

Students get quality education while learning love of Torah

Jewish education is more vibrant this year as our community welcomes a new unified Orthodox day school, Torah Day School.

With the unification of Torah Academy and Cheder Rambam, Torah Day has renewed vitality to meet their goal of inspiring and educating children, academically as well as spiritually. In addition, while the separate day schools received just over \$70,000 in Foundation grant commitments last year, now all funding will benefit the unified school.

“Everybody is happy,” explains Board Chair Debbie Scharf about the school’s new enhancements.

To begin with, there is a new administration. Joining the school is Principal Rabbi Eleazar Durden, who has more than 20 years’ experience as an educator and 16 years as a principal. Also new to the school is Sharon Holzschere, the Vice Principal of General Studies, who brings with her a depth of knowledge in special education resources. Rabbi Zischa Shaps, “the tried and true pillar of the school,” remains as the Executive Director and is helping guide its continuity.

Along with the robust new administration, the school, which welcomes Jewish children from all backgrounds and affiliations, has added curriculum that includes an optional enriched French program, weekly music instruction and additional special resource teachers.

The French program, which features an extra period of French daily, is offered to children in Grades 1 to 3, and will be growing to include more grades in future years.

“This means about 25% of the students’ day will be in French,” explains Mrs. Scharf, adding the program was created for families who wanted their children to have access to more in-depth French language studies.

The music program is being taught by professional musicians to Grades 1 to 8 students, and will introduce children to basic concepts of rhythm, pitch, music notation, and harmony.

Another significant addition is that there are now resource teachers for both general and Judaic studies.

“We have more support for children who are having trouble reading Hebrew, for example. Then, on the general studies side, our teachers are equipped to help children with special needs in the classroom. This



program is available now, and we plan on adding further resources as well,” says Mrs. Scharf.

But what makes this school stand out is that not only does it offer a full general studies curriculum, designed to meet or exceed the Ontario education standards, it also offers a full Judaic curriculum.

“The greatest value proposition of our school is that you’re getting a quality Torah education on top of a general studies education,” explains Mrs. Scharf. “The school is guided by Torah values, which means there is a huge emphasis on teaching kids to be good human beings.”

Rabbi Durden explains that Torah education also helps children develop critical thinking skills.

“Torah learning includes a study of the lives of the great Biblical characters who were the founders of the Jewish people and rigorous text-based study. Through this, children develop important analytical and critical thinking skills, and learn how to apply these life-skill lessons to their own lives. They become adept at looking at themselves critically through the lens that the Torah provides,” Rabbi Durden adds.

The school only employs qualified teachers who provide a personal approach to learning. Class sizes are small, allowing each child to get more attention.

“The school maintains that family-feel; there is no one in the school who is a stranger or who is nameless. Everyone is recognized and part of the Torah Day family,” says Mrs. Scharf.

Foundation assists donors in contributing to the long-term financial support of the agencies which serve the Ottawa Jewish community. To find out more, contact Arieh Rosenblum, Director of Development, at arosenblum@jewishottawa.com or 613-798-4696 x270.

Essays explore alternate and counterfactual versions of Jewish history

What Ifs of Jewish History: From Abraham to Zionism
Edited by Gavriel D. Rosenfeld
Cambridge University Press
406 pages (including notes)

What if you had made a different choice at a key moment in your life? A different career, a different school, a different mate. Would your life be significantly different today?

These are the type of questions that are posed in what – according to Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, a respected historical scholar – is the emerging field of study of counterfactual histories. In building counterfactual histories, one must examine the elements of a historical situation at the moment when a key element or decision of the time could have been reversed or changed.

One must then extrapolate into the future known economic, political and social pressures and influences of the time, given a particular change in the key element being looked at, which has itself to be justified by counterfactual possibilities in the history of that period. It is hoped that, in this way, historical processes can be more thoroughly analyzed and understood.

There are other similar attempts in fiction, which Rosenfeld calls “alternate histories.” These include Philip Roth’s *The Plot Against America*, an alternate history of Second World War-era America when anti-Semitic isolationism prevailed, and Michael Chabon’s *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union* in which Yiddish-speaking Jews had been allowed to immigrate en masse to Alaska before the Second World War broke out.

Fictional, they delve much more into the psychology of the individual characters and spend less time explaining and justifying their theory of the origin of their fictional world or the details of why it came about.

What Ifs of Jewish History: From Abraham to Zionism

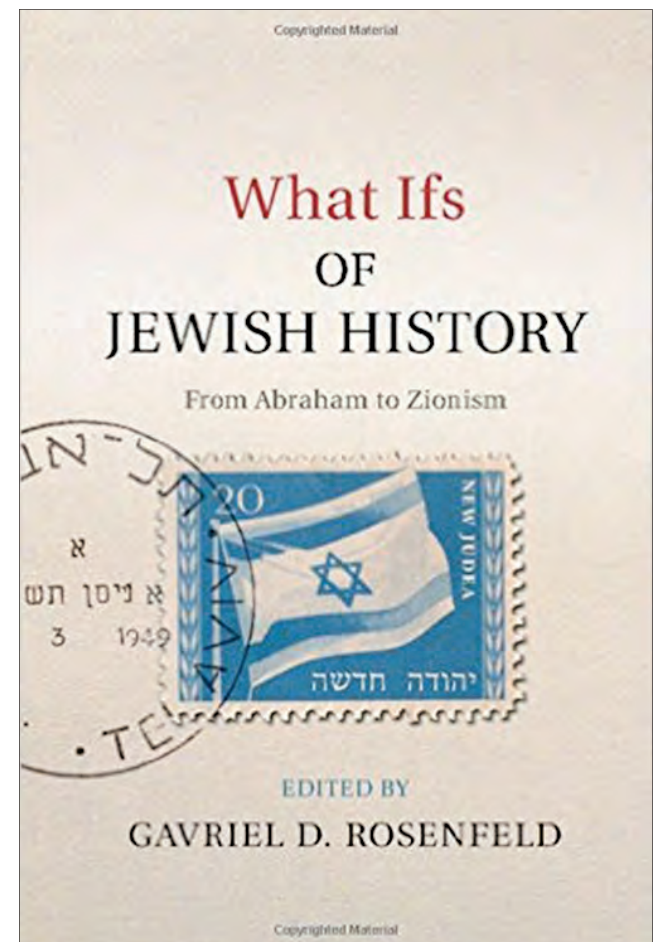
RUBIN FRIEDMAN BOOK REVIEW

contains seven alternate histories and nine counterfactual histories.

The alternate histories include stories of how the Jews were saved from being expelled from Spain in 1492; Spinoza’s repentance and reacceptance into the community; a Jewish state being established in East Africa; Franz Kafka moving to Israel and continuing to write; the establishment of a binational state of Arabs and Jews in place of Israel; the survival of the Weimar Republic, never overthrown by the Nazis; and the successful assassination of Hitler in 1939.

Counterfactual histories include the absence of the Exodus from Jewish history; the non-destruction of the second Temple; no ghettos; no Pale of Settlement; a Christian instead of a Jewish state in Palestine; Arab elite compromise with Zionism; the Nazis win the battle of el Alamein; the Nazis complete their Final Solution; and the Holocaust averted.

A broad span of Jewish history is examined, but the focus is on destruction, survival and a Jewish Land. It does not, however, mention Abraham except in the Introduction. Rather, Exodus is the first key event examined by Steven Weizman, who argues that another history without the Exodus can be found in Chronicles, where it is not mentioned and he proposes what this might mean. All the stories and histories show that each alternate or counterfactual history has unforeseen effects and can sometimes lead to results that are, in a sense,



similar outcomes despite changes.

I found the alternate histories engaging and fascinating in their fictional presentations. To some extent, these are focused on hopeful positive outcomes where a large part of the interest is centred on the motives and characters of key individuals. Why would David Ben-Gurion and his Arab counterpart agree to a binational state? In reality, why did they not?

Although drier in tone for the most part, the counterfactual histories also raise important questions about luck, timing and the persistence of the Jewish character regardless of the changes envisaged. This is one of the most interesting results for me.

Rosenfeld attributes the previous paucity of Jewish counterfactual histories to the Jewish notion that history has a direction and that everything has a cause related to Jewish behaviour or God’s future plans for his people.

In fact, Jewish life is counterfactual. We are the chosen people, yet we have suffered more than many others. As the rabbi in “Fiddler on the Roof” asks, “For once, couldn’t you choose someone else?”

The book shows how successful Jewish historians and writers can be in dealing with the counterfactual. After all, what can be more counterfactual than Maimonides’ statement, reflective of Jewish life and experience: “I believe with complete faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he may delay, nevertheless I wait for his coming every day.”

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WHAT'S GOING ON | February 20 to March 5, 2017
FOR MORE CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Israeli Secrets to a healthy and tasteful life with Zohar Kerem: Join CFHU for an evening about the Israeli secrets to a healthy and tasteful life, exploring the power of the Mediterranean diet; olive oil and wine; gluten friend or foe. Zohar Kerem, olive oil and wine expert, is a faculty member at the Institute of Biochemistry Food Science and Nutrition at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 7 pm.
Info: Orit Tor, 343-998-6418, Otor@cfhu.org

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Saturday Night at the Movies with Chazzan Benlolo: The second film of a three-part film festival: "Dough," an old Jewish baker struggles to keep his business afloat until his young Muslim apprentice drops cannabis into the dough and send sales sky high. Third film: March 4. Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7 pm.
Info/RSVP: Cantor Daniel Benlolo, 613-728-3501, chazzan@kehillatbethisrael.com

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Temple Israel Books and Bagels: "Yiddish for Pirates," by Gary Barwin, will be reviewed by Rubin Friedman. Temple Israel, 1300 Prince of Wales Dr., 09:30 am.
Info: Shayla Mindell, booksnbagels@templeisraelottawa.ca

KLEZ 10: Celebrating a decade in support of the Ottawa Koshers Food Bank: An evening of Klezmer Music performed by A Touch of Klez and Musica Ebraica with

dancing led by the International Folk Dancers of Ottawa. Fundraiser for the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank. Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7 pm.
Info: Paul Adler, 613-521-0170, psadler@psadler.com

An Evening with Lior Raz: Creator and star of the well-known Israeli TV series, "Fauda," 7 pm.
Info: Sarah Beutel, sbeutel@jewishottawa.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

Women's Torah Study with Rabbi Zuker: Join Rabbi Deborah Zuker in her home for a monthly Women's Torah Study. Also March 29, April 26, June 21, 7 pm.
Info/RSVP: Rabbi Deborah Zuker, rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

Shabbat Dinner at KBI: Friday night services followed by a traditional Shabbat dinner. Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 6 pm.
Info: Anita Almstedt, 613-728-3501, anita@kehillatbethisrael.com

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

Saturday Night at the Movies with Chazzan Benlolo: The final film in a three-part Jewish film festival: "Once In A Lifetime," a teacher tries to motivate her students by challenging them to enter a national competition. Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7 pm.
Info/RSVP: Cantor Daniel Benlolo, 613-728-3501, chazzan@kehillatbethisrael.com

COMING SOON

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

Malca Pass Library Book Group Meeting: "And the Birds Rained Down" by Jocelyne Saucier will be reviewed by Gerald Halpern. Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7:30 pm.
Info: Maureen Kaell, 613-224-8649, mkaell@rogers.com

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

Israeli House Purim Party: Israeli House Purim event. Adults only, 7:30 pm.
Info: Ella Dagan, 613-798-9818, ext. 243, edagan@jccottawa.com

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

Soloway JCC Annual Biathlon: Put together your team of 12, or be placed on a team, and spin and swim to help raise funds for the Soloway JCC, 8:30 am.
Info: Carla Gencher, 613-798-9818, ext. 278, cgencher@jccottawa.com

CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

FEBRUARY 24	5:22 PM	MARCH 10	5:41 PM
MARCH 3	5:32 PM	MARCH 17	6:51 PM

BULLETIN DEADLINES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1	FOR MARCH 20
MONDAY, MARCH 13 *	FOR APRIL 3

* Early deadline: Community-wide Issue ** Early deadline: holiday closures

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Esther Baylin
Karen Vera Gunn
Ethel Naor
Rabbi Yehuda Simes
Teddy Sher

Leonard Shifrin
Joan Usheroff
Philip Wexler, Connecticut
(father of Matt Wexler)
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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
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


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