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**Hamilton
Jewish**

News

The voice of Jewish Hamilton

THE MUTATING VIRUS OF antisemitism

Michal Cotler-Wunsh and Deborah Lyons on why there is no chance of fighting antisemitism if Jews do not combat the “strain” disguised as anti-Zionism

BY **JAZMIN RYMBERG**
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

ANTI-ZIONISM is the latest form of the ever-evolving virus of antisemitism, reflected in the false accusations that Israel is an apartheid state committing “genocide” against Palestinians. This was the core message delivered in a recent presentation in Hamilton by Israel’s special envoy for combatting antisemitism, Michal Cotler-Wunsh.

VIRUS OF ANTISEMITISM CONTINUES ON P4

“We may, historically speaking, be the canary in the coalmine, but the coalmine does collapse ...”

MICHAL COTLER-WUNSH
ISRAEL’S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR COMBATTING ANTISEMITISM



PHOTO: DONNA WAXMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Standing up against the forces of hate

Deborah Lyons, Canada’s Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and **Michal Cotler-Wunsh**, Israel’s Special Envoy for Combatting Antisemitism jointly addressed a packed house at Federation’s Campaign opening.

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FEDERATION EDITORIAL

Standing strong in the face of antisemitism

IN THE FACE OF UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES WE WILL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR GOOD



Gustavo Rymberg

CEO
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

AS WE reflect on this past year before starting a new annual campaign, we are reminded of the resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to doing good that defines our community. The Hamilton Jewish Federation, with its century-long legacy, continues to be a beacon of hope and solidarity, even in the face of unprecedented challenges.

In a world more divided than ever—where old threats resurface, and new fears take hold—it can be difficult to focus on the good. But for us, good is not just a word; it is the heart of our mission. It is the guiding principle behind everything we do.

Our community has always stood for what is right. We have supported those in need, fostered a sense of belonging, and offered purpose to those who seek it. And even now, in one of the most difficult years we've faced in recent history, we continue to focus on the good we can do together.

But the reality we are facing today is grave. Antisemitism is on the rise, and open hostility toward Jews is becoming increasingly common across Canada. These manifestations of hate are not limited to far corners of society. They have infiltrated our elementary schools, high schools, universities, colleges, unions, and workplaces. It is a troubling reality that cannot be ignored. Words and statements are no longer enough. What we need now is action. We must stand more united, more vigilant, and more determined than ever before.

At the Hamilton Jewish Federation, we understand that our annual campaign is not just about fundraising. It's about fortifying the very core of our community. It's about ensuring that we have the resources to provide the security measures for which we now unfortunately must pay. It's about making our Jewish schools success stories and empowering the next generation of Jewish leaders. It's about ensuring that our most vulnerable—newcomers, seniors, Holocaust survivors, and those who feel alone or in need of care—receive the support they deserve.

We are not simply reacting to hate; we are proactively educating, engaging, and advocating. This campaign will allow us to offer more debates, more conversations, and more education about the dangers of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. We must be the strongest voice in the room—because if we don't speak up for ourselves, who will? No one else will advocate for the existence of the State of Israel or for our survivors, students, seniors, and families. That responsibility lies with us.

We ask for your support now, more than ever.

You know the work we are doing, and you understand why increasing your annual contribution is critical. You have already made a difference during last year's annual campaign, and your continued support will help us reach our goal of \$2.5 million—and perhaps even more. These funds are essential to ensuring our community's safety and strength, to creating a brighter future for our children, and to maintaining the sense of unity that has always been our hallmark.

This community is special. It is resilient. It is strong. And because of that, we will always be here for good. We will stand together, facing the challenges ahead, with the confidence that we will overcome them—just as we have so many times before.

We must be clear: the fight against antisemitism is not just about protecting Jewish people—it is about defending the core values of human rights and democracy. It is a fight we all must join, and it is one that requires vigilance, education, and, above all, action.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to doing the good that is so deeply ingrained in who we are as a Jewish community. But we cannot do it alone. We count on your support to ensure that the Hamilton Jewish community remains strong, vibrant, and united—now and forever.

Thank you for standing with us in this vital work, for supporting our mission, and for being here for good.

The HJN welcomes letters to the editor. To submit a letter for publication, email wschneider@jewishhamilton.org.

Shalom Village staff attend antisemitism seminar



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Shalom Village CEO Marianne Klein (middle row, far right) and 22 members of her senior staff recently attended a two-part seminar on the history of the Holocaust at the Margaret’s Legacy Holocaust and Jewish Advocacy Centre. The seminar was led by Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg and Holocaust historian Dr. Alexandria Fanjoy Silver (middle row, second from right). Klein told the HJN the seminar was “powerful, moving and inspiring to our leaders who will take this learning and further support the residents, our staff, families and volunteers.”

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CIRCULATION
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EDITOR

Wendy Schneider
wschneider@jewishhamilton.org
905-628-0058

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Abigail Cukier

DIGITAL EDITOR

Ben Shragge

HJN CONTRIBUTORS

David Carson, Lance Davis, Nicki Franek, Elena Neiterman, Helaine Ortman, Kaye Prince-Hollenberg, Ben Shragge, Phyllis Shragge, Jazmin Rymberg, Perla Zaltzman

PUBLISHER

Hamilton Jewish Federation

ADVERTISING

Wendy Schneider

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION PRESIDENT

Jason Waxman

CEO

Gustavo Rymberg

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“The modern, mainstream, strain of antisemitism is the new blood libel ...” MICHAL COTLER-WUNSH

Cotler-Wunsh and Lyons emphasized that the battle against antisemitism cannot be fought in isolation

The mutating virus of antisemitism

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Cotler-Wunsh and Deborah Lyons, Canada's Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism were the featured speakers at the launch of Federation's "Here For Good" annual Community Campaign at JHamilton on Sept. 5. Both presentations addressed the global surge in antisemitism and the urgent need for collective action.

Cotler-Wunsh highlighted the existential moment faced not only by the State of Israel but also by Jews worldwide. She examined the mutation and mainstreaming of antisemitism, showing how this ancient hatred has evolved over time. From the 1975 UN resolution stating "Zionism is racism" to today's demonization and delegitimization of Israel, antisemitism has transformed into a multifaceted threat. Cotler-Wunsh underscored the importance of a robust response rooted in the principles of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which, she says, offers a crucial framework for identifying and combating antisemitism, which often masquerades as anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel. She pointed to Natan Sharansky's Three D's: demonization, delegitimization, and double standards, as key indicators of how antisemitism manifests both in rhetoric and action. This framework exposes why singling out Israel for condemnation, while ignoring other global human rights violations, is more than a political stance—it's a manifestation of deep-seated prejudice.

Cotler-Wunsh concluded her remarks by emphasizing that we are in a moment that transcends religious

“Jews now make up more than 70 per cent of religiously motivated hate crimes.”

DEBORAH LYONS
Canada's Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism

“Having courage doesn't mean not being afraid ... What we are is a people, and we are facing an existential moment, but we're facing it together as a people.”

MICHAL COTLER-WUNSH
Israel's Special Envoy for Combatting Antisemitism



PHOTO: DONNA WAXMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Michal Cotler-Wunsh stressed that the fight against antisemitism must be part of a broader effort to combat all forms of hatred and intolerance.

and ethnic identity and that Jews and their allies must take collective action in defense of the universal values of dignity and justice. She invoked the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' distinction between optimism and hope, noting that while optimism is passive, hope requires active participation and courage. Overall, her speech was a clarion call for vigilance and action in the face of an ever-mutating threat.

Deborah Lyons echoed the campaign's "Here For Good" message when she spoke of the devastating murder of six young Israeli hostages by Hamas terrorists on Sept. 1.

“These are very difficult times, but we do what the Jewish community has always done—and what I hope the larger Canadian population will do—we carry on. Because we are here for good.”

Lyons' words struck a particular chord when she described the

strength of the Hamilton Jewish community as having “hearts and spines of steel,” a nod to the city's industrial heritage. Lyons acknowledged the many challenges the Jewish community has faced but expressed admiration for the resilience that continues to define it. “You are here for good. You belong here. This is your city, your street, your parks, your institutions, your schools, your theatres, your film festival. This is the home you have built, and no one has the right to take that sense of belonging or safety from you.”

Lyons went on to paint a picture of the confusion, fear, and uncertainty felt in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world in the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks, which she said emboldened “those filled with hatred ... to act on it, whether on the streets, in schools, on campuses, or online.”

Rejecting the notion that

antisemitism is an inevitable or constant force in society, Lyons stated, “Too often, people speak of antisemitism as a perennial weed—I cannot accept that.” She called for action at all levels of government and society to confront antisemitism with urgency.

Despite the many challenges, Lyons' message remained hopeful. She emphasized that combating antisemitism requires the active involvement of allies across Canadian society, citing Hamilton's Mayor Andrea Horwath as an example of swift action when called upon. “We need allies. The fight against Jew hatred requires all Canadians to stand together.”

Both Cotler-Wunsh and Lyons emphasized that the battle against antisemitism cannot be fought in isolation, and that it must be part of a broader effort to combat all forms of hatred and intolerance. Their presentations reminded the audience of the necessity to fight the virus of antisemitism, with resolve and strength. By standing together—Jews and allies—we not only protect the Jewish community but also contribute to a world where all forms of hatred are challenged. They reminded us that hope is not passive; it is a call to action, and through solidarity and shared effort, we can build a future where dignity and belonging are protected for everyone.

Finally, they reminded us that as we navigate the complexities of contemporary antisemitism, we must draw upon shared values and historical lessons to create a more inclusive and just society. Only through concerted effort can we hope to build a world where the dignity of Jewish people is upheld and protected.

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Harvard grad and activist confronts Jew hatred in Ivy League colleges

Shabbos Kestenbaum is suing Harvard University for its failure to protect Jewish students from campus antisemitism

BY JAZMIN RYMBERG
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

AT A RECENT Hamilton Jewish Federation event, Shabbos Kestenbaum, a Jewish activist and Harvard graduate, discussed the increasing antisemitism on American college campuses. His presentation highlighted the challenges Jewish students face at prestigious institutions, including his own experiences at Harvard University.

Kestenbaum, the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against Harvard University alleging pervasive and systemic antisemitism, described how Jewish students struggled with administrative responses to antisemitism even before the events of Oct. 7.

When a Palestinian student group invited an antisemitic speaker, Jewish students raised concerns, only to be told by the administration that the speaker's rights were protected under the First Amendment. This selective defence of free speech, Kestenbaum argued, reflects a troubling indifference to the safety and well-being of Jewish students. "Harvard is training the next generation of political leaders," he warned, expressing concern that these future leaders might be shaped by a culture that tolerates antisemitism under the guise of free speech.

Kestenbaum recalled flying to Israel after Oct. 7 to assist in the burial of fallen soldiers, only to return to a campus filled with pro-Hamas rallies. Some Harvard professors, he noted, went as far as to describe Hamas as "resistance fighters," a position that stunned him. Kestenbaum's



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Harvard graduate student Shabbos Kesterman gave an impassioned presentation to an audience at JHamilton in August.

experiences highlighted a stark contrast between the university's vocal support for other social justice causes and its silence on antisemitism.

"After George Floyd's death, the administration condemned police violence and white supremacy," Kestenbaum said. "They displayed a large Ukrainian flag when war broke out in Ukraine. But when asked to fly an Israeli flag, they flat out refused."

Kestenbaum also spoke about the harassment that led him to hire private security following his return from assisting in Israel after October 7. He also shared an incident in which an Israeli student was asked to leave a class solely because of her nationality. These issues are not about politics or Israel, he stressed. "They are about the pervasive and unchecked antisemitism that Jewish students face daily."

When an audience member asked whether Jewish donors should continue to contribute financially to create safer spaces for Jewish students,

Kestenbaum's response was unequivocal. "No," he declared, arguing that the responsibility for the safety and security of students should fall on the university, not the donors.

Kestenbaum also addressed concerns about political bias, explaining that his advocacy is centered on combating antisemitism, regardless of political affiliation. He stated, "This isn't about being a Democrat or a Republican. I'd be more comfortable speaking with liberal media, but they don't want me there. The RNC and Fox News have given me a platform, and I would be an idiot not to use it."

Finally, Kestenbaum called on Jewish organizations to do more to support Jewish students and amplify their voices. He emphasized that antisemitism is a human rights issue, urging Jewish communities and institutions to take meaningful actions to protect and support Jewish students.

Beth Jacob dedicates new interfaith section at Stanley Sobel cemetery

Project comes to fruition after years of planning

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

BETH JACOB Synagogue has joined the ranks of a growing number of Conservative synagogues across North America by opening a new interfaith section at its Stanley Sobel Cemetery on Snake Road.

Dan Levy was the driving force behind the synagogue's long-time effort to accommodate Beth Jacob's intermarried couples who wish to be buried together. "Over the last number of years, with the number of Jewish men and women who marry out running as high as 60 per cent in some areas of North America, we felt it was better to include somebody rather than exclude them," he told the HJN.

Discussions with the City of Burlington about the synagogue's fencing off a section of its Stanley Sobel cemetery began in earnest four years ago, but were held up by the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the project was approved, third-generation Beth Jacob member Larry Rosenberg stepped up with a generous donation that allowed the synagogue to develop the new

section, which contains 60 plots.

Rosenberg's motivation for making the donation was personal.

"We're an interfaith family," he told the HJN. "I thought it was a worthwhile thing to do and made the commitment." Rosenberg was also behind the decision to name the new section "Shalom Rav" — or "abundant peace," explaining that he'd always found special meaning in the section of the sidur's Amidah prayer that asks for "abundant peace" not only to the children of Israel, but "to all who dwell on this earth."

"How can a family be granted peace," Rosenberg asked, "if one person is in one place and [the other] is in another and they want to be together?"

Now, they can be. Whereas in the past, Beth Jacob's intermarried families were forced to choose between being buried separately in a Conservative Jewish cemetery or be buried with their partners elsewhere, as of August 25, the date the new section was consecrated in a ceremony officiated by Beth Jacob's Rabbi Beni Wajnberg, they can now be buried side by side.



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

A new monument marks the Shalom Rav interfaith section at Beth Jacob's Stanley Sobel cemetery on Snake Road, Burlington.



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The community mourns the loss of its greatest benefactor

Tom Weisz will be deeply missed by his family and friends while his loss as a business leader and philanthropist will be felt throughout the city



PHOTO: DONNA WAXMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tom Weisz with his daughter Danna Horwood and wife Sasha at the opening of the Margaret's Legacy Holocaust and Jewish Advocacy Centre on May 2 of this year.

TOM WEISZ, HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER, BROTHER, COMMUNITY LEADER. BORN JUNE 12, 1946 IN MOSON HUNGARY. DIED JULY 7, 2024, AT AGE 78.

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Above, Tom and Sasha Weisz and his parents, Arthur and Margaret Weisz at the 2005 Negez Dinner at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

PHOTO: CATHIE COWARD,
THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

DANNA HORWOOD'S phone rang at 7:30 a.m. on the long-awaited morning of May 2, 2024. It was her father, Tom Weisz, calling to tell her he wasn't sure he had the strength to make it to the grand opening of the Margaret's Legacy Holocaust and Jewish Advocacy Centre, a project on which she had worked tirelessly with the Hamilton Jewish Federation to honour the memory of her grandparents, Arthur and Margaret Weisz. "Dad, you have to," she told him. "You're the reason for all of this."

Resilience and stoicism were in Tom Weisz's blood. The first Jewish baby born in the town of Moson, Hungary after the Second World War, his parents, Arthur and Margaret Weisz beat the odds by surviving the Holocaust and opening a business in their hometown, only to risk their lives again two years later by fleeing Hungary's repressive communist regime in the dead of night to reach the Austrian border and a safe haven in a displaced persons camp.

When the Weiszes were finally granted admittance into Canada in March 1951, they settled in Hamilton, where Arthur Weisz's first job was as a bricklayer's assistant. Half a decade earlier, he had been one of Hungary's wealthiest citizens.

Tom and Janet Weisz, like so many children born to Jewish immigrants of that era, lived up to their parents' expectations by excelling academically. Weisz married his high school sweetheart Sasha Swaye, attended McMaster University, stood first in his final year at Osgoode Hall Law

School, and attended Harvard University, while his sister became a doctor.

In 1978, Tom and Sasha Weisz returned to Hamilton, where Weisz and his father would co-found The Effort Trust Company. Over the next several decades, in addition to running his own law firm, Weisz would help transform the family business into one of Ontario's largest privately owned property management, real estate and development companies.

Hamilton lawyer David Smye, who met Weisz during those years and became one of his closest friends, remembers being the only non-Jewish member of a group of lawyers and businessmen who met for lunch every Friday afternoon at either Shakespeare's or Lo Presti's to discuss everything from law gossip to business. Weisz, who may have been the youngest member of the group, which included prominent lawyers Bill Morris, Gerry Swaye, and Stan Tick; judges Norman Bennett and David Steinberg; and local businessmen Bernie Katz, Ernie Mason and Phil Leon, somehow always ended up at the head of the table.

"That just seemed to emerge," said Smye. "Maybe we just bowed to his considerable wisdom and common sense. He certainly was a leader and was usually first there."

Years later, after Smye and his wife became Tom and Sasha Weisz's next-door neighbours, the two men would regale each other with stories while sipping a cocktail in their respective backyards.

"Tom loved to hear stories," said Smye, "and he loved to tell them — a lot of them."

Smye speculates that Weisz's

character was undoubtedly influenced by his being the child of Holocaust survivors. "It carried a tremendous sense of responsibility ... Tom's own history, the incredible story of how his father left communist Hungary and a DP camp to build a real estate company like Hamilton has never seen. All of that imbued him with a sense of responsibility."

While his friend certainly had "big shoes to fill," in joining the family business, Smye remembers Arthur Weisz's focus being more on business, while his son took his community responsibility to another level. "The phone didn't stop ringing for Tom to contribute to the cause of some organization or other. He took it extremely seriously and believed he had an important role to play in Hamilton ... The Tiger Cats, the redevelopment of the community, the waterfront ... all those boards that he sat on."

Weisz's hands-on philanthropy gained him universal regard and respect in the greater Hamilton community, where he served on the boards of McMaster University, St. Joseph's Hospital, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton, but the impact of his philanthropy on Hamilton's Jewish community is nearly impossible to measure. Its reach extended across the denominational spectrum to touch every aspect of Jewish life in this city. Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg has felt that impact on both a professional and personal level.

Shortly after assuming the city's top Jewish communal position in 2017, Rymberg developed a close relationship with Weisz, whom he thought of as both mentor and friend. Rymberg described Weisz as "a great listener" who seemed genuinely interested in hearing his stories about leaving Argentina for a new life in Canada and starting a new career in Jewish communal work. Rymberg recalls one meeting in the early days of his tenure, when he approached Weisz with the idea of creating JHamilton, the community hub on Main Street West.

"I think it's a great idea," he remembers Weisz saying. "It's great for the community, but it's my role as a community leader to make you happy too, because we really want you to succeed."

Rymberg remembers that day as a turning point in their relationship. "For me, that was really, really important. We became partners."

In addition to the creation of JHamilton, that partnership gave birth to Federation's 2022 #nomoreantisemitism conference and the recent establishment of the Margaret's Legacy Holocaust and Jewish Advocacy Centre.

When Rymberg conceived of a conference on antisemitism in Hamilton, many expressed concern about where funding for such an ambitious project would come from. "It was a huge investment for Hamilton and the Federation, but Tom was the first to support it," said Rymberg. "He knew it was important to be the first one in order to create interest among other groups, and it allowed me to say we had the support of Effort Trust and the Weisz Family Foundation before going to other places to ask for funding."

Weisz was equally forthcoming with advice when he felt Rymberg was not on the right track.

"Tom knew how to say no and when he didn't believe in something, he had no problem saying so," said Rymberg, recalling Weisz telling him about one issue or another, "Gustavo, my advice? Don't get involved. It's not Federation's place for that ... It's going to be complicated."

Invariably, said Rymberg, Weisz's advice would prove to be right on the mark. In fact, Weisz's up-front style was one of the things about his mentor that Rymberg most appreciated.

"If he didn't like something that I did or said, he would call me and tell me, while always being very respectful," said Rymberg.

David Horwood, married to Tom and Sasha's daughter Danna, used similar language when describing

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

“Tom believed he had an important role to play in Hamilton ...”

DAVID SMYE, LAWYER

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Weisz’s workplace persona. His father-in-law could be “quite tough or direct,” to the point of coming across as dismissive. “The lucky part about it,” said Horwood, “is that he was normally right. He just told it straight like it was.”

Horwood, who has worked at Effort Trust for the last 27 years, says employees, business partners and politicians alike “knew that they were in the presence of someone who was extremely bright and always two or three steps ahead” in grasping the essence of any given issue. He also believed Weisz valued Horwood and others in the business whom he trusted to handle the details.

While Weisz’s untimely passing is a source of great sadness, Horwood said the family is committed to building on his legacy. “He was quite clear on that. Truthfully, there really isn’t an agency where one of us hasn’t had a major leadership role over the last 15 years, and that isn’t by accident ... We really do recognize that we have a responsibility to give back and to be engaged in ways that will help support the community.”

The greatest gift Tom Weisz was given in his final years was time. When he was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer nearly three years ago, his doctors predicted he had only a couple of months to live.

“We were given such a gift of time with him and that’s why we’re all okay,” said his daughter Danna Horwood, when the HJN reached out to her shortly after the 30-day mourning period. “What we’ve done the last two-and-a-half years together, it’s beyond.” She said her father’s passing leaves a huge void in her life.

“He was the one I went to for advice, when I was broken or when I had the most exciting, fun things to share because he would be so excited for me. He was the one who I drank a martini with every Shabbat. I really lost my best friend.”

Danna says she’s thankful that her father got to spend so much time during his final years with his beloved family in the places he loved most—at her parents’ Hamilton and Florida homes and at the family cottage.

During the last three weeks of her father’s life, Danna Horwood asked her father “every question you could ever imagine—about the business, about the family, about my children, about my husband ... He spent days talking to me about the family foundation and where he thinks we should put the money going forward ... He helped me figure out the future of Margaret’s Legacy.”

David Horwood describes those weeks as “an amazing long goodbye.” “We spent some incredible time together while Tom could still really be engaged. And those are memories that I will recall forever. It’s amazing how much we did together, for how long, and how big a person he was in my life. “The loss is really quite profound.”

Tom Weisz never disappointed his family, and during the morning and evening events that marked the opening of Margaret’s Legacy Holocaust and Jewish Advocacy Centre, it’s unlikely that the hundreds of people in attendance imagined that the man of the hour, glowing with joy and pride and greeting everyone with a huge smile, was feeling anything but the strong community leader they had come to know, love and respect.

Gustavo Rymberg, watching Weisz closely that day, sensed it was to be his mentor’s last community event. Months later, reminiscing about Tom Weisz and their special relationship can still bring tears to his eyes.

After every meeting, Rymberg’s parting words would be, “Tom, I love you. Thank you for everything,” and this straight-shooting, no-nonsense, powerful and eminent presence of a man would always reply, “I love you too.”



PHOTOS: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Above, Tom Weisz in 2019 with German author Jennifer Teege following the author’s presentation about her bestselling book, “My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me: A Black Woman Discovers Her Family’s Nazi Past.”



Left, Tom Weisz lights a candle in memory of his parents at a community commemoration of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.



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Jewish parents concerned about escalating antisemitism

Left to right, Elliot Biro, Elissa Press, Elena Niederman, Zohar Abel Levy



Jewish parents give voice to their children's experience of antisemitism and advocate for safer public schools

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

THE RISE in antisemitic incidents on college campuses has received a lot of attention in recent months, but the last year has also been exceptionally challenging for Jewish public school students.

After months of seeing their children increasingly targeted by antisemitic harassment, Jewish parents were given an opportunity to share their concerns at a meeting last April with representatives from the Hamilton Wentworth School Board (HWDSB), who followed up a month later with a hastily arranged meeting with Jewish students.

Elliot Biro, who spent the last year meticulously documenting all the times (more than 13) his 13-year-old son was the target of bullying or antisemitic harassment, was present at both meetings. At the first meeting, parents recounted specific examples of antisemitism—such as a student's threatening to beat up Biro's son, (who is visibly Jewish) if he didn't say he supported Palestine, teachers' referring to Israel's "committing genocide in Gaza" in the classroom, and a learning environment frequently disrupted by chants calling for Israel's destruction during student walkouts.

But it was the second meeting, attended by 30 Jewish students and a number of parent observers, that Biro said really drove the message home. "Kids opened up with both barrels," he said, recalling how a number of students said something to the effect of, "How can we feel included in the discussion when teachers are leading anti-Israel discussions, everybody's holidays are mentioned but ours, when other people are harassed they get punished, when we're harassed, there's nothing."

When, in answer to a student questioning how the board can allow walkouts to continue, it was suggested that Jewish students organize their own walkouts, students broke out into bitter laughter. "If we do our own walk-out they'll jump us." As the meeting ended, another student told the director of education that the board should be ashamed of themselves. "This is May," he said. "This has been going on since October."

To fully understand the new reality

for Jewish students in public schools, it's helpful to look back to December 2023, when HWDSB trustees adopted a student-led motion calling for the inclusion of "anti-Palestinian racism" (APR) as a complement to the school board's existing initiatives on preventing and rectifying incidents of racism and discrimination.

The motion read as follows: "Therefore, be it further resolved that HWDSB provide training to all school staff on Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and anti-Palestinian racism, with the training to include a focus on how this racism informs disciplinary actions."

Westdale resident, Elissa Press has sent multiple emails to trustees seeking clarification on how the board is defining the term "anti-Palestinian racism," which, on some websites label Israel as a "racist endeavour." Their lack of response suggests to her a vagueness that can leave proudly Zionist Jewish students vulnerable to accusations of anti-Palestinian racism.

"To me that's the crux of it," Press told the HJN, "because if they don't see Israel's right to exist, they can't protect Jewish students in the schools." Press said her two children, who attend Westdale Secondary School "are very well aware that if they don't want to be singled out or attacked, they should not say anything about Israel ... and that's hard because I want them to be proudly and unapologetically Jews, which for me includes being Zionist."

Dundas residents Zohar Abel Levy and Elena Niederman, both active participants in a local Jewish parents WhatsApp group, see the issue of growing antisemitism in the schools as something of a lost cause, given that Jewish students constitute such a small minority in Hamilton area public schools.

"I see a lot of lip service from the trustees, but I don't see them moving on anywhere towards our direction," said Levy, whose eldest daughter refused to return to her Dundas high school after being verbally assaulted on account of her family's Israeli background. "At the end of the day, those are elected officials. We don't have numbers to garner a lot of attention. They're a much larger group and a lot more vocal."

Elena Niederman, who has two sons at Dundas Valley Secondary School, sounds similarly resigned. "As a parent I feel a little bit helpless and hopeless, because ... they seem to empathize with a lot of things that you say ... promise you that things

are going to get better, but nothing changes. Then you go through the same cycle again."

HWDSB director of education Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini declined to be interviewed for this article, but sent an email emphasizing that the motion in question "also includes training for staff relating to antisemitism." The email concluded with a list of new student dress guidelines currently in development, which "will use the principles of anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, equity and inclusion." Among them are those that allow students to "wear dress or headwear ... to support religious/creed accommodations and similar human rights accommodations" and prohibit anything "that incites violence or harassment ... or displays hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected groups."

Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg has been at the forefront of bringing Jewish parents' concerns to the attention of the HWDSB. In a letter he sent to HWDSB trustees on Aug. 26, Rymberg wrote that while Federation recognizes that the past year has been "extraordinarily challenging," the Jewish community "cannot and will not accept another year in which our schools become a breeding ground for localizing geopolitical conflicts, fostering radicalization, or targeting Jewish students."

The Jewish community, he went on to say is "calling on you, as leaders entrusted with the welfare of our children, to take decisive action against any form of hate or discrimination that may arise. This includes implementing robust policies, providing comprehensive education on antisemitism and other forms of bigotry, and fostering an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive without fear of being targeted for their identity."

Rymberg is also in regular contact with the director of education. "I always try to share information with her," Rymberg told the HJN.

During their conversations, Rymberg attempts to educate Petrazzini about the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which he's urged the board to adopt as a counterbalance to the one-sided APR motion. "Do both," he told her.

But Rymberg also understands that the fight to have school boards take a more balanced approach to the Israel/

Palestine conflict will require much greater Jewish participation on the board level. That's why Federation is calling for members of the Jewish community to get involved in municipal and provincial politics and to run for trustee.

"We have to get involved and be part of the conversation, because it's the only way to make change. We cannot trust that others will do the best on our behalf. We have to do it," he said.

A group of Jewish parents who met over the summer came to a similar conclusion when they resolved to be more proactive in their advocacy efforts with local, provincial and federal politicians and school board trustees, according to Zohar Abel Levy. "The problem is that this is a system that has been very slowly taken over by the other side over a length of time and we have hardly any representation there as Jews," she said. "Nobody really noticed or thought that would be a problem until Oct. 7 happened and this great burst of antisemitism came out and suddenly, we were caught very off guard."

In the interest of more efficient communication with the HWDSB, Federation and Jewish parents have joined forces with the local BBYO chapter in establishing a task force whose mandate will be to collect data on antisemitic incidents in public schools. Rymberg will summarize their findings in monthly reports that will be sent to the HWDSB for consideration as agenda items in their board meetings.

If there's a silver lining to be found amidst the dark cloud of antisemitism, it lies in the fact that Jewish students, faculty and parents are publicly and loudly standing up for Israel and the right to live as proud Jews.

"If I don't do it, who will?" said Zohar Abel Levy, while Elena Niederman says that when she feels overwhelmed, she finds strength in the words of the late renowned British chief rabbi, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks who once said that, "despair is not a Jewish emotion."

"We're going through this collective grieving and it's hard to keep up," she said, "but every time I really feel sad, I just say to those words to myself and I tell my kids the same thing."

Elliot Biro says that while he's not sure that any of his efforts will bring real change, he won't stop advocating for Jewish children's right to learn in peace. "I have to do something," he said, "because Hillel was right. If not now, when?"

“As a parent I feel a little bit helpless and hopeless, because ... they seem to empathize with a lot of things that you say and promise that things are going to get better, but nothing changes. Then you go through the same cycle again.”

ELENA NIEDERMAN
Parent of two boys at Dundas Valley Secondary School

JNF appeals CRA decision to revoke its charitable status

“Puzzled and frustrated”: JNF Canada will appeal abrupt ruling by CRA they claim is based on “biased”, “unjust” reasoning



BY **LANCE DAVIS**
CEO, JNF CANADA

FOR MANY Canadians, the Jewish National Fund of Canada is an integral part of the fabric of Canadian society for the good work we do in Canada and for the land and people of Israel. JNF Canada was surprised and disappointed when CRA decided to use its most draconian tool—revocation—with respect to JNF Canada. There were many off-ramps the CRA could have utilized short of revocation, but unfortunately we are in a position where JNF Canada has no choice but to use the appeals process in order to preserve our charitable status.

“... we have demonstrated our willingness to work with the CRA, even on items with which we disagree on their legal nature. When the CRA raised concerns, JNF Canada addressed them..”

The CRA's decision is based on a 2014 audit relating to our work in 2011-2012. Although no issues of significance were raised in four previous audits, the CRA maintains that our original main “charitable object” is unacceptable. The JNF’s “charitable object,” a term that refers to the object of a charity’s fundraising activity, was determined back in 1967, when the organization stated its intention to raise funds for “the employment of indigent labourers” on “various work projects,” i.e. providing new immigrants with employment, such as planting trees or digging reservoirs. At the time Revenue Canada, the predecessor of the CRA, wrote that it had received “satisfactory evidence and assurances that the activities presently carried on in Israel are and will continue to be carried out in a way which meets the requisites

of those principles.” We maintain its unjust for CRA to revoke a charity because a charitable object that it accepted almost 60 years ago is no longer seen as valid.

Notwithstanding the CRA's stated commitment on its website to explore compliance measures through education letters, compliance agreements and sanctions before revoking an organization's charitable status, the CRA neglected to follow their own procedures by going straight to revocation

As a Zionist-inspired organization, JNF Canada has many vociferous antisemitic detractors who, we believe, have influenced CRA's decision-making process. Evidence of bias comes from the CRA's own records, which show that the public pressure on the CRA and the Minister of National Revenue to revoke JNF's status was an important consideration within the chain of authority at the Charities Directorate. A review of the record would leave a reasonable person with the impression that this pressure resulted in a biased decision. As well, we assert that there was a lack of due process in the manner in which CRA treats charities.

There are no opportunities to test the CRA's decision in an independent tribunal or in tax court. Unlike individuals or corporations, charities do not have an opportunity to argue the facts and the law surrounding their cases before an impartial judge. Rather, these cases go to the Federal Court of Appeal, where, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the CRA's position is upheld.

There has been a great deal of misinformation about our situation, among them the accusation that

JNF Canada is complicit in Palestinian suffering. Let me be clear. JNF Canada projects support the environment and vulnerable groups in Israel, regardless of nationality or religion. We build charitable environmental and social infrastructure—such as special needs facilities, therapy centres, and women's shelters—that have improved the lives of thousands of people from all backgrounds. We are proud of this work and the positive impact it's had on communities and people in need.

Some have claimed that JNF projects are built on disputed territory. After informing CRA that, while disagreeing that our projects violate Canadian policy or regulation, we would not advance further projects in these areas, the CRA backed off on this matter.

The most pernicious claim is that JNF Canada funds the IDF. JNF has built charitable projects on IDF bases such as playgrounds, parks, meeting point areas for families to visit, public amenities, etc. These projects account for under one per cent of the funds we sent to Israel to advance projects. It is simply untrue that we provide funding for weapons or military equipment. A swing set is not a military asset. And yet, when CRA informed us that these types of projects did not fall within their guidelines, in order to be cooperative with the audit, we agreed that we would no longer advance these types of projects.

In summary, we have demonstrated our willingness to work with the CRA, even on items with which we disagree on their legal nature. When the CRA raised concerns, JNF Canada addressed them. As a result,

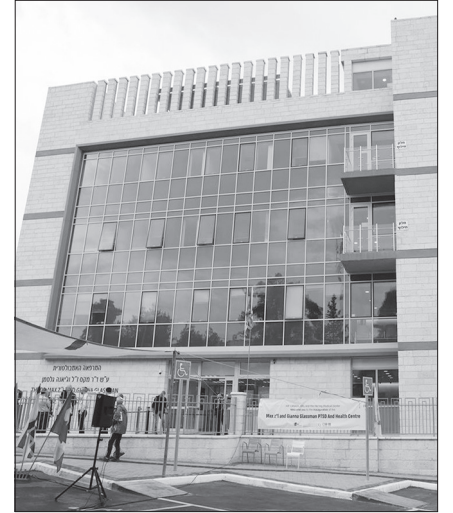


PHOTO: COURTESY JNF CANADA

JNF project: the Max and Gianna Glassman PTSD and Health Centre in Jerusalem, which provides mental health support to a variety of populations including trauma victims, children, and seniors. The project was realized thanks to the generosity of a variety of communities, including Hamilton.

we remain puzzled and frustrated with the CRA's decision to revoke our charitable status and its refusal to enter into a constructive dialogue with us. Why would a venerable organization with decades of history, many CRA audits, more than 100,000 donors, offices across the country, endorsements from religious leaders, thought leaders, and elected officials from across the political spectrum at the federal, provincial and municipal level be issued a letter of revocation without any substantive discussion or negotiation with our leadership?

We thank our dedicated supporters from Hamilton and coast to coast for standing by JNF Canada. In the aftermath of Oct. 7, our work to help rebuild Israel is needed now more than ever.



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Tal and Oli Moreno and their two children were forced to evacuate Kibbutz Yiftach after Oct. 7.



PHOTOS: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Itamar and Orit Zapilyan and family. They were reunited in Hamilton two weeks after Oct. 7

Meet some of Hamilton's new Israeli families

The city's Jewish community delivers as promised with a warm welcome for newcomer Israeli families

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

HAMILTON'S JEWISH community has opened its doors and hearts to newcomer Israeli families who have laid down new roots in the city since the outbreak of war in Israel nearly a year ago. Many have come after hearing about Hamilton's warm and welcoming Jewish community through informal Facebook or WhatsApp groups—an invaluable resource for Israelis taking advantage of

Canada's temporary measures that allow Israeli nationals and Palestinian passport holders to apply for three-year work visas. The three newcomer families profiled below share the circumstances that brought them here, how they've been helped since their arrival, and what support they're still hoping to find.

Oli and Tal Moreno

Oli and Tal Moreno relocated from Israel's busy central region to Kibbutz Yiftach on the

Lebanese border eight years ago in search of a better quality of life for their growing family. But a day after the Oct. 7 attacks when the entire kibbutz was ordered to evacuate, Oli Moreno gathered up her two children and the family dog—her husband Tal was in the US on a business trip—and drove to her parents' home for what she thought would be a three-day visit. The family has not been home since.

Until their arrival in Hamilton last June, the Morenos were among the tens of thousands of internally displaced Israelis who have spent the better part of last year living in hotels. "It was really

hard," Oli told the HJN, attempting to convey what it was like for a family of four (plus the dog) to live in a single hotel room for months. "It was really a shock and the kids really didn't respond very well. Everyone was really depressed and worried. And everyone wanted to go home obviously, and couldn't."

Orit and Itamar Zapilyan

Early in the morning of October 7, 2023, Orit Zapilyan, like many Israelis living near the Gaza Strip, was awakened by the sound of sirens that sent her running for shelter with her two daughters. Her husband Itamar had left for

Canada six months earlier to find work and a place to live while his wife and children stayed on his parents' moshav in the Ashkelon area. Awaking to his wife's frantic messages later that morning, Itamar sprang into action, not resting until he managed to bring his wife and children to safety. Two weeks later, the family was reunited in Hamilton.

Hamutal Niv and Nadav Greenhut

An extended family vacation in Switzerland provided a brief respite for Hamutal Niv and Nadav Greenhut and their two

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Wishing you and your family a year filled with happiness, good health, and prosperity.

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- Moishe, Eli & Gabe Chaimovitz & their families -

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“The environment surrounding us is so peaceful, it really gives us peace of mind” **TAL MORENO**

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

children after the war broke out, but the couple was looking for a long-term plan. “It started with COVID,” said Greenhut, a concert pianist and composer who saw his teaching income decline significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. “The situation in Israel was hard ... and the world started to feel too small and too stressful, and we wanted to get away.”

Niv, a ceramic artist of dual Israeli and American citizenship who does contractual work as a project manager, said the couple chose Canada over the United States because this country’s new immigration measures made it a much more feasible option than waiting seven years for a green card. But it was their daughter’s telling people during that Switzerland vacation that in case of an attack, they “should go to the hallway and put your head between your legs” that had them decide to make the difficult decision to leave. Niv remembers thinking at the time, “Why does a four-year-old need to know that?”



Nadav Greenhut and Hamutal Niv together with their two children.

Community Support

Moving to a new country, mastering a new language, and adapting to unfamiliar surroundings far from cherished family members can be an incredibly daunting experience, and all three families expressed profound gratitude for the overwhelming support they’ve received from Hamilton’s Jewish community.

Local real estate agents Baya Vertes and Augustina Gershkovitz have been extremely helpful

in finding families a place to live, as have Federation’s JWelcome Home coordinator Maggie Norris and the Adas Israel’s Rabbi Daniel Green. When the Zapilyan children exhibited signs of PTSD during their first months in Canada, the Hamilton Hebrew Academy provided them with psychological counselling. With only one month remaining in the school year, Kehila Heschel opened its doors to the Niv/Greenhut children and

Federation provided every newcomer child with a one-week scholarship to Camp Kadimah. Newcomer families from Israel also made up the majority of attendees at two Federation events this summer—a PJ Library event at Churchill Park and a welcome party for newcomers at Shalom Village.

Without a doubt, Hamilton’s local Israeli community and their network of WhatsApp groups have given newcomer families the



PHOTOS: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

HJF provided every newcomer child with a scholarship to Camp Kadimah.

closest feeling to finding a home away from home, offering dinner invitations, family picnics, and ongoing moral support.

Many Israeli families also connect to each other through a Federation WhatsApp group for newcomers administered by Maggie Norris. Norris told the HJN that while a small number of Israeli families are moving to Hamilton with pre-arranged job offers and living accommodation, she has the impression that many are “a little bit culture shocked ... coming from Israel with not very much in place and hoping to secure housing and work upon arrival.” While job placement is not a service that Federation can provide, whenever Norris hears of a job opportunity for newcomers, she makes sure to post it in the group.

Welcome Respite

The rental property where Oli and Tal Moreno spent their first month in Canada had a lovely,

spacious kitchen, but Oli told the HJN it took her a while before it occurred to her to use the oven, “because in my head, I’m still in my hotel room.”

Her assessment on the war’s impact on her and other Israelis was that of a country where “everyone is in need of therapy, but those who were forced to leave their homes, even more so, because no one can imagine what it’s like to leave everything behind.” Nevertheless, starting life over in a new country has not been as difficult as Oli anticipated. “I thought I was going to feel like I don’t belong. But I don’t feel that way,” she said.

Tal Moreno is most grateful to have found some respite from what he described as “living in a pressure cooker.” “We have a lot more stuff to do as a family and things to take care of,” he said, “but the environment surrounding us is so quiet and peaceful, it really reflects on us, and it gives us peace of mind.”

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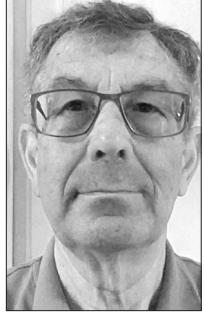
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Wealth, loss and restitution: Story of a looted painting

Dundas resident's family awarded portion of proceeds from sale of Monet painting stolen by Nazis from his German Jewish ancestors



BY DAVID CARSON
SPECIAL TO HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

IT BEGAN with an email. "Was your father Andrew Carlebach? I saw his name on the UK Commando website." So began a chain of discovery that led to new relatives, and to my daughters inheriting a share of a valuable painting by Claude Monet.

My schoolboy father and his parents fled to England from Berlin in 1936. Like many German Jewish refugees to England in 1940, he was first interned as an enemy alien but then freed to join the British Army. His story as an army commando is only relevant here in that his entry on their website enabled researchers to contact me.

Andrew's grandfather Eduard Posen was the son and grandson of luxury leather goods manufacturers from Offenbach, near Frankfurt. With his brother Sidney, they had inherited the business started by their grandfather Eduard Hirsch Posen in 1811.

Eduard and Sidney had two other siblings, Eugenie and Theophil, who have all figured in my discoveries through this story.

But let's jump to the present day (almost). In 1998, a conference was hosted by the United States Department of State and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum which established the Washington Principles. These principles described how art that had been looted by the Nazis should be treated. One stated, *"If the pre-War owners of art that is found*

to have been confiscated by the Nazis and not subsequently restituted, and they, or their heirs, can be identified, steps should be taken expeditiously to achieve a just and fair solution, recognizing this may vary according to the facts and circumstances surrounding a specific case"

Back to that e-mail. It was from a Swiss historian and genealogist, Jürg Nobs, who worked with an Israeli expert in art provenance, Eyal Dolev, and Berlin based lawyer, Lothar Fremy. Together, they work on art restitution cases.

Linking me to my great grandfather Eduard Posen, they told me that his brother Sidney and wife Anna had been the owners of many paintings and art objects. Here is how they are described in the German Lost Art database. "Their Frankfurt villa was furnished in a grand manner. The rooms were furnished with antique furniture, carpets, tapestries and paintings. Over the course of their marriage and thanks to the income from Posen's flourishing leather goods company, Anna and Sidney Posen were able to put together a large collection. The collection's paintings include German paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries and a particular focus on French art, especially impressionist paintings (Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, etc.)."

Sidney died in 1938, his beneficiaries being his wife Anna, and the families of his brother Eduard and sister Eugenie, both of whom had pre-deceased him. He left one other valuable item, his Swiss citizenship. It's not clear how he had acquired this, having been born in Offenbach, but it enabled Anna to flee to Switzerland.

What happened to all the items in their art collection is not known, but for the painting in question, Nazi documentation is clear. Sotheby's provenance record shows that "on March 3, 1942, the Secret State Police informed the foreign exchange office that the "Jew Posen, who has Swiss citizenship," would soon be leaving the country and that she was to be denied permission to take the oil painting "Total View of Amsterdam" by Claude Monet with her "and was to be ordered to deposit the painting in the Municipal Gallery, Frankfurt am Main (...). it was handed over to the Städel Art Institute for "safekeeping" by the company H. & C. Fermont in March 1942." Anna left for Switzerland in April 1942.

The painting next appears in provenance with Gallery Aktuaryus in Zurich. It seems Anna was able, though a strong lawyer, to recover the painting and bring it to Switzerland. But she had to sell it to raise living expenses.

An important Aktuaryus client was arms manufacturer and art collector, Emil Georg Bührle, who acquired the painting from them in 1943. Bührle was the owner of the Oerlikon Armaments company. Wikipedia notes "Between 1940 and 1944 his arms dealing increased his fortune which he used for art-buying sprees in Nazi-occupied Paris, forming the core of his collection".

Now to the present day. The descendants of Emil Bührle, owners of this painting, also titled "View of the Tour Montalban," were required by Sotheby's to address provenance and ownership issues in order to sell it.

After much genealogical work and legal agreements, the painting was

auctioned by Sotheby's on May 15, 2024, and sold for \$US 3.8/ \$CDN5.2 million. The owners had agreed to a settlement that gave a portion of the sale price to the Posen heirs and successors.

You can imagine the family excitement. But hold on. How many descendants of Sidney's beneficiaries are there? And how is it shared?

The selling owners take a large share, the trio of researchers mentioned above take a fee. The many descendants then received their share based on calculations involving their place in the family tree and conditions that had been made in various wills.

I told my daughters not to buy a yacht until this was finalized. This was good advice. Their dividend, more than 80 years after the painting had been seized by the Nazis, was \$8,500 CDN each. A nice surprise, but not yacht territory! But there are another 80 of Sidney and Anna's paintings in the Lost Art database, so who knows what the future holds if they are found?

A postscript to this story; Sidney closed the Posen business in 1930, but today the Eduard Posen 1811 brand name continues to sell luxury leather goods. Armin Johl, whose forbears were friends of Sidney Posen, so admired the brand that he re-established it to sell high end leather goods, though it is no longer under his control. A fine tribute to my ancestors, the Posens of Offenbach.

David Carson is retired after a career in IT and spends his time working with local groups on sustainability and the climate crisis. He's learned to make pottery at the local school of art, fights weeds in his vegetable plot and enjoys researching and writing family history stories.

"...on March 3, 1942, the Secret State Police informed the foreign exchange office that the "Jew Posen, who has Swiss citizenship," would soon be leaving the country and that she was to be denied permission to take the oil painting "Total View of Amsterdam" by Claude Monet with her.

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Tom Weisz

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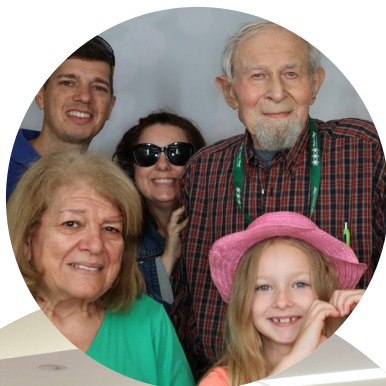
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Gearing up for another year of antisemitism on campus

A Jewish professor's advice to students on how to engage the challenges ahead in this next difficult year

BY **ELENA NEITERMAN**
SPECIAL TO HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

NOT SO LONG AGO, I would rummage through my jewelry box before work to choose a necklace that would look best with my outfit. Today, I no longer have the luxury of choosing. I wear a gold Star of David to make a statement and stand in solidarity with my people in the place where we no longer feel welcome: the university campus.

I've witnessed a lot of hostility towards Jews and Israelis on university campuses over the last 20 years: at McMaster, where I completed my PhD, at the University of Waterloo, where I teach. On both campuses, anti-Israeli posters can pop up like mushrooms after a rainy day. Once a year we're confronted with Israeli Apartheid week, about which I often joke that of all the countries in the world with questionable human rights records, only Israel is deserving of such special recognition.

Just over 18 months ago, University of Waterloo's Jewish faculty fought a motion put forward by our Faculty Association to reject the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism, which some felt would not allow them to exercise their freedom of speech. I told my colleagues that I found it ironic that in the six years I had been at the university, the only time the Association had mentioned anti-semitism was in order to reject any attempt to define it. They didn't think it was funny.

After Oct. 7, hatred towards Jews and Israel on university campuses



PHOTO: EZZIE BENJAMIN

exploded with a force that shocked all of us. Mask-wearing protestors calling for the elimination of the State of Israel became a part of the university experience. Then came the encampments, with their slogans, protests, and demands to boycott Israel. I no longer felt I belonged on campus.

At the University of Waterloo, my Jewish colleagues and I reached out to the University of Waterloo administration, the Faculty Association, Human Resources, and the EDI office with our concerns, but were either dismissed or ignored. At the University of Guelph, my son and his friends had to contact police because of the threats they received for expressing their solidarity with Israel. At McMaster University, pro-Palestinian protests and antisemitic rhetoric

became an integral part of my other son's freshman experience. At Wilfrid Laurier University, where I study social work, I have learned about racism, homophobia, islamophobia, ableism, and ageism, but not about hatred of Jews.

In the face of this, many of us have chosen to fight for our right to feel safe on university campuses: like the Jewish students who came out every day with Israeli flags and pictures of the hostage to eat lunch next to the Waterloo encampment, like my Jewish and non-Jewish coworkers who joined the students—rain or shine—to ensure they were not alone. However terrible the encampment was, it served to create a sense of community and collective identity.

In this new year, I believe there is

McMaster
Hillel president Hayley Kupinsky delivers remarks at a Canadian Women Against Antisemitism rally at Earl Bales Park in Toronto last year.

much that we can do. We need to raise awareness about the reality of antisemitism on campus. We must reclaim our safety, we need to educate, and we need to file complaints about antisemitic incidents (i.e. inappropriate slogans, posters, comments, or course content). We must put the issue of antisemitism on university administrations' radar. Doing nothing is no longer an option—we must act, every time, every occasion.

Our young people need to become more politically active. The universities are governed through myriads of boards and committees, and almost each one of them has a student representative. It is not by chance that the vast majority of students occupying these positions express strong anti-Israel views. Running for elections for student unions and associations, as program representatives, or membership in the student senate will potentially enable Jewish students to be present in the meetings where their voices will be heard.

Jewish parents are rightly concerned about what their children might encounter on campus, but they also have reason to be proud. Our children are exceptionally resilient, and they are not shying away from the fight. Joining other Jews on campus through Chabad, Hillel, or other Jewish organizations and reporting antisemitic incidents is how they can fight and feel a part of the community. This community is tiny, but it is passionate and strong. David was also tiny, but he managed to beat Goliath. Perhaps we can beat Goliath too.

Elena Neiterman is an associate professor at the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Health.

Shana Tova!

Wishing the Jewish community a happy & sweet new year!

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Generously supported by The Weisz Family Foundation and the Hamilton Jewish Federation

Auschwitz to the Gulags: Lessons from my family's past

A Hamilton native reflects on family history that shaped her decision to expose anti-semitism and defend Israel on social media



BY **NICKI FRANEK**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

PRAGUE, 1971. The secret police officers were at it again—raiding my grandfather's library for banned Western literature. It had been a year since he had been relegated to working as a railway gatekeeper after being fired from his job as a university professor for speaking ill of the Soviets. The tenant, who had been ordered by the State to live in my grandparents' apartment—a common practice employed by the communists if you had multiple rooms—watched through the crack of her bedroom door, a smug look on her face. She loved calling the secret police on my grandfather. The (not so) secret police, donned in ill-fitting, drab civilian clothing, and decorated with a variety of communist pins, were brainless and drunk with power, yet my grandfather feigned respect. Witnessing your family get murdered in the gas chambers at the age of 21 will do that to a person.

I wish my grandfather were alive today, so I could tap into his wealth of knowledge and experience. The other day I asked my dad if my Deda ever explained what the antisemitism leading up to the Holocaust was like and how he handled it. "He thought it was funny," my dad replied. "He and his teenage friends would laugh at how stupid everyone was. Antisemites are idiots, Nicki. Their obsessive hate rots their brain. It's hard to take them seriously."

If you knew my grandfather, this

would come as no surprise. After all, his library was filled with Western literature, none of which the secret police ever found.

My name is Nicki Franek, though had history been different, it would be Nicki Frischman. I am the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, and a child of parents who left their families behind to escape Soviet communism. Though I would not be considered Jewish according to rabbinic law, I have Jewish blood and was raised on Jewish history, values, and traditions. As such, I have always deeply identified as Jewish.

After the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel, I realized how important my Jewish identity was to me and began the process of conversion.

I grew up surrounded by Holocaust survivors. To me, they are real people with real stories, each uniquely horrific. I didn't know any survivors who weren't riddled with survivor's guilt, who didn't talk obsessively of the many family members they had lost, particularly siblings. I learned about the Holocaust through these people, not through school.

I also grew up surrounded by people who fled war-torn countries, or authoritarian regimes. In Canada, our immigrant community was our de facto family. I learned about communism and corrupt governments through people who lived that reality, not through ideological manifestos or theoretical study in university, but through stories that illuminated the day-to-day reality and coloured the moments in between the historical events outlined in textbooks.

Holocaust survivors taught me resilience: how to pick yourself up, move on, and build something new;

how to never settle for being the victim. Survivors of communism taught me bravery: How to leave it all behind for a better future; how to speak even when it's dangerous.

That is why I speak today and why I won't stop speaking. Freedom can be taken in the blink of an eye, words silenced into shallow breaths in seconds. I will not let our history be told by those who hate us. I will not sit silently while the story of Jewish emancipation is reframed into origins of evil. Culture is shaped by trends, and I will not allow this rise in antisemitism to be "trendy."

The events of Oct. 7 shattered my heart. But, in all honesty, I wasn't surprised, neither by the attack nor the world's disgusting response. I followed the Israel-Hamas conflict of 2021 closely, and had already taken inventory of the rabid, uninformed antisemitism bubbling just beneath the surface of our progressive and social justice-centred spaces. What I hadn't realized yet, fresh off the Black Lives Matter movement that I was particularly invested in, was the direction our "Liberal Left" was headed. I missed many of the hints of identity politics taking form, much to the chagrin of my father who had easily caught the whiffs of repurposed Marxism. But Oct. 7 changed everything.

The stories I grew up hearing from my family started to breathe with fresh life. Concepts I could only grasp intellectually had become feelings I could relate to. My Deda used to tell me the story of when he returned home from Auschwitz alone.

His house had been ransacked, so he went to the neighbours to ask for help where they sat at their dining room table enjoying a meal with his family's china and cutlery. The betrayal that the Jews of Europe experienced, not by foreign invaders but by friends, colleagues and neighbours who suddenly became lethally hostile, is one of the most misunderstood traumas of the Holocaust. The Nazis and their collaborators were monsters, but so too were friends, colleagues and neighbours who turned against Jews

"I will not let our history be told by those who hate us. I will not sit silently while the story of Jewish emancipation is reframed into origins of evil. Culture is shaped by trends, and I will not allow this rise in antisemitism to be 'trendy.'"

fueled by righteous anger. And what is a silent majority, other than a pass for the radicals to set the agenda?

Since Oct. 7, for the first time, I get it. I can obviously see how the Holocaust happened, how the Soviets convinced the public to flip on the Jewish communists who had supported their Marxist utopian dreams. I can count the people in my life who would comply,

who would remain silent at every escalating step.

This is why I won't stop talking and posting, why I won't stop reading, researching, and sharing — if not to fight the ignorant masses more consumed with their social currency than the cannibalism of their own society, than for my fellow Jews who deserve to hear a strong, confident Jewish voice.

Nicki Franek holds degrees from McMaster University and Centennial College. She lives in Toronto with her husband and two children. You can follow her on [instagram.com/nickifranek](https://www.instagram.com/nickifranek)



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Intellectual complicity or academic oversight?

PhD candidate fights to effect systemic change in academia toward the study of antisemitism

BY PERLA ZALTZMAN
SPECIAL TO HJN

THE ISSUE of antisemitism in academic spaces is far more than just a topic of study; it is a lived reality that affects countless Jewish students, scholars, and community members. Yet, one of the most significant systemic barriers to scholarly research on antisemitism is the glaring absence of dedicated scholars and established academic programs in the field. While the study of prejudice and various forms of discrimination has flourished in recent decades, antisemitism frequently remains overlooked. This academic oversight is not merely a gap in scholarship, but a reflection of a broader societal reluctance to engage with antisemitism as a contemporary issue or even as an issue altogether (there is even an alarming academic trend to universalize the Holocaust and divorce it from discourse on antisemitism). Yet, antisemitism persists, evolving beyond the confines of the Holocaust and emerging from a volatile and dangerous mix of ideologies, including but not limited to Nazism, Marxism, Soviet anti-Zionism, and radical Islamism.

The resurgence of antisemitism became glaringly apparent on Oct. 7, 2023. The world watched as Jews everywhere were thrust into a new, heartbreaking reality. The initial shock and disbelief

gave way to a profound sense of urgency. The resilience of the Jewish people demanded action: what steps could be taken to combat this rising tide of hatred?

In response to the immediate threat facing Israel and Jewish communities worldwide, Jews from around the globe rushed to Tel Aviv to join the reserves, standing in solidarity and preparedness against the existential threat posed by terrorists. Simultaneously, antisemitic outbursts on campuses across the US, Canada, the UK, and parts of Europe spurred Jewish students, scholars, and allies to rally in defence of our community. The cost of inaction was too high, and many of us refused to take that risk. The academic Jewish community responded collectively and viscerally, but we are outnumbered, and all hands are needed on the battlefield of ideas.

Since 2005, I have been actively involved in supporting Jewish students at Brock University, where my husband and I founded the Chabad on Campus chapter. My academic path at Brock began with a BA in psychology and a minor in sociology, a Master's, and now a PhD in social psychology. Through my studies and advocacy work, I came to a sobering realization that antisemitism was glaringly absent from anti-racism training and discussions. Upon raising the issue with Brock's Human Rights and



Perla Zaltzman with famed human rights activist Natan Sharansky.

Equity office, I was asked to lead workshops on antisemitism. When they reviewed my presentation, they described it as "outstanding scholarship" but urged me to be cautious about discussing contemporary antisemitism. That's how my first academic encounter in the field of antisemitism highlighted the boundaries of accepted discourse around antisemitism.

The tragic events of Oct. 7 further exposed systemic flaws within our institutions: The reluctance to acknowledge contemporary antisemitism, the universalization of the Holocaust, and the active promotion of anti-Israel narratives.

When academic institutions become both the source and perpetrator of problematic and dangerous ideas, the responsibility to address and resolve these issues lies within academia itself. Scholars who propagate anti-Zionist rhetoric, regardless of their

motivations, engage in the typical academic practice of presenting and debating ideas. However, when these ideas, whether driven by hate, bias, or sincere belief, are framed in scholarly terms, they gain unwarranted credibility, even if they are fundamentally false.

I am currently researching contemporary antisemitism as a doctoral student at Brock University, where I use linguistic, quantitative, and qualitative methodologies. During a trip to Israel last June, I had the opportunity to meet German scholar Dr. Matthias Becker, who leads the international research project, "Decoding Antisemitism." Dr. Becker urged me to attend the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) Oxford Summer Institute the following month—a recommendation for which I will be forever indebted to him.

At Oxford, I was captivated by the city's historical charm and transported to an alternate universe. The institute's plenary sessions and lectures were transformative. Dr. Charles Small's (ISGAP executive director) opening address on the urgent need to expand the study of contemporary antisemitism felt like coming home; ISGAP chair Natan Sharansky's talk on the "3Ds" framework, i.e. double standards, denial of Jewish identity, and demonization, provided crucial insights, and Sima Vakninn-Gill's (former intelligence officer in IAF) perspective on contemporary antisemitism as "injecting

new software into old hardware" illuminated its rapid and intense evolution.

The ISGAP-Oxford experience was a turning point in my engagement with contemporary antisemitism research. In a world where opportunities to study antisemitism are limited, I quickly realized that ISGAP provides a much-needed resource for scholars committed to mapping and decoding the new wave of antisemitism.

The goal of the conference was to promote the development of courses focusing on antisemitism from multidisciplinary perspectives. Fellow scholars developed curricula aligned with the tenets of their disciplines and research areas. With the guidance of social psychologists and pedagogical experts, I developed a syllabus for a course on the Psychology of Antisemitism to empower psychology students in decoding, identifying, and understanding contemporary antisemitism through the principles of social psychology.

My experience at Oxford deepened my understanding and literacy on the subject and expanded my professional network for scholarly resources, support, and collaboration. ISGAP's important initiatives mark a historic step in effecting systemic change in academia toward the study of antisemitism both locally and around the world. It certainly has equipped me with a wealth of tools and knowledge to confront antisemitism from my lab atop the Niagara Escarpment.



*Wishing you a meaningful,
happy and healthy new year*

שנה טובה

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How I came to America

As I wait for my citizenship papers, Canada is still in my heart



Ben Shragge

“GO FORTH FROM your native land and from your father’s house,” God says to Abraham in the Book of Genesis, “to the land that I will show you.”

God wasn’t so direct with me, but in 2015, I did leave my home and native land — Canada, O’ Canada — to come to the land that TV and movies showed me: the United States of America.

I’m not one to leave a comfy spot — my bed, my couch, to say nothing of my country — very easily.

In my hometown of Hamilton, where I was living, I had friends, family, a library card from when I was 12½, and intimate knowledge of each Tim Hortons and every route to get there. These things, except the library card, are hard to replace.

But I also had an apartment filled with cockroaches. I cleared out my cupboards for the exterminator to lace with poison, multiple times; I filled up every crack and crevice to block their path; I did the dishes right away and maniacally scoured for crumbs; I used the power of positive thinking to visualize setting them all on fire with a flamethrower. But the awful little personal-space invaders kept on coming back. I’m still haunted by the image of drinking a cup of coffee, and then opening the coffeemaker to find a roach squirming in the grounds. Now it’s in your head too. Enjoy.

Around this time, I received an offer from the Hamilton-based medical publisher I worked for to move to Boston, where many of our physician-authors were based. It wasn’t the most lucrative offer — my pay was not commensurate with the higher cost of living — but Boston seemed like a cool place to live for a time and roaches are a great motivator. I was ready to get the hell out of dodge, just as my grandparents fled Europe in the face of pogroms. I put my furniture in storage, my car in a garage, and told the landlord — in a most polite, Canadian way — to screw off. Violent mobs made my ancestors move to Canada; invading roaches drove me away.

I wasn’t planning to stick around for too long, because who wants to put in the time making new friends and family— family being especially tricky to make— and getting familiar with every Tim Hortons again; or “Dunks,” as it’s called here. There’s also having no credit history, needing a work visa, international tax complications, and not being under the protection of the Queen to worry about. But then, there are a lot of jobs in Boston; more, in my industry it seemed, than in all of Canada. Plus I was single then, so both professional and romantic opportunities seemed to beckon.

I met someone in Boston and found a new job, left someone and found a different job, and felt homesick until I went home one time to find it didn’t quite feel like home anymore. I noticed when people said “eh,” whereas before I thought it was natural. I watched coverage of a scandal in which the Prime Minister accidentally knocked someone over, and thought, “How cute, that’s what they think a scandal is.” I realized my friends and family had changed, I had changed, Tim Hortons had changed, and the old saying is true: you can’t go home again. Well, Tim Hortons hadn’t really changed: same old mediocre coffee wrapping itself in hockey and the flag. But everything else felt different.

Now when I catch myself being too polite, I repeat the American mantra, “Don’t tread on me,” and visualize myself as a coiled snake. Now I know people from exotic places I’d only heard about on TV, like Oregon, North Carolina, and Connecticut. Now I think in miles, and after years of denial, have even set my weather app to Fahrenheit. Now, most importantly, I have a wife and two young kids, all of them American (though my kids, by virtue of their father, are dual citizens). I still miss my Canadian family, my childhood friends, and not having to know what a copayment is. But I’m here now, settled, like Abraham in the Promised Land. Though Canada will always be in my heart, my American citizenship application is in the mail.

Ben Shragge was born and raised in Hamilton. He now lives in the Boston area with his wife and two children.

“Where We Lived”

The theme for this year’s “summer camp for Jewish genealogists”



Kaye Prince-Hollenberg

SOMETIMES referred to as the Jewish genealogist’s summer camp, the 44th annual International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies’ (IAJGS) conference took place this August in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Spanning five days, there were approximately 175 sessions, panel discussions, and computer workshops led by some of the best professional genealogists in the field and I was honoured to be among them.

I delivered two sessions – Landscape of Dreams: Jewish Genealogy in Canada and Holocaust Compensation and the United Restitution Organization – and had an amazing experience.

With more than 900 attendees, it was an opportunity to meet many people from all over the world, many of whom I had only conversed with previously via email and social media.

The conference tagline this year was “Where We Lived” with main themes focusing on Tools and Technology, Shoah Rescuers and Holocaust Research, Disappearing Empires of the 19th and 20th Centuries, The Sephardi, Mizrahi and Persian Experience, Building Blocks of Genealogy, and finally Genealogical Research in Philadelphia and Eastern US to recognize the host city.

Sessions and workshops ran the gamut from beginner-focused informational talks to hands-on computer classes focussed on the intricacies of Jewish DNA and endogamy.

I attended a range of sessions, including one with Miriam Weiner whose long-running, syndicated Jewish Genealogy newspaper column, Roots and Branches, inspired me to write this one! I wish I could have had the opportunity to tell her about my column and how she inspired it, but she was frequently surrounded by admirers (as is her due). Lara Diamond’s session, Uncovering Your Jewish Roots in the Russian Empire: A Guide to Research Resources was chock-full of amazing information, and I came away with new

resources to check out and many tips for mining further into available data.

Jennifer Mendelsohn’s Reunited and It Feels So Good: Reconnecting Families Shattered by the Holocaust recounted her and Dr. Adina Newman’s very successful work using DNA to reunite Holocaust Survivors with living family through their non-profit Holocaust Reunion Project (holocaustreunions.org), and I couldn’t be prouder to call them both friends. Obviously, I attended many more talks during my time in Philadelphia, but these three left a deep impression.

The five days included other activities included a game night, evening speakers, informal sessions for researchers with shared interests to chat, film screenings, and a closing gala.

The opening night keynote speaker was renowned cookbook author Joan Nathan. You’ll be very happy to know that I, as a Canadian, won a very American-centric game of Jewpardy (Jewish Jeopardy) during the aforementioned game night!

I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention the exhibitor hall where various organizations, museums, and companies, including Ancestry, Yad Vashem, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (among many others), had booths where attendees could stop to learn more. There were also mentors and translators who graciously volunteered their time to help people with their genealogical research.

Arthur Kurzweil, widely considered America’s foremost Jewish genealogist, was the keynote speaker at the closing gala. His talk, titled The Mitzvot We Do as Genealogists, shared the message that, when we engage in genealogy research, especially Holocaust research, we are not only honouring the dead, but ensuring that their memory continues.

Next year’s conference will be in Fort Wayne, Indiana and I’m already thinking about talks I want to propose. As much as I loved the sessions I attended and learned so much, meeting new friends and nerding out with people who love genealogy as much as I do was the absolute highlight.

To submit a question or if you have some Hamilton Jewish history to share, please email wschneider@jewishhamilton.org.

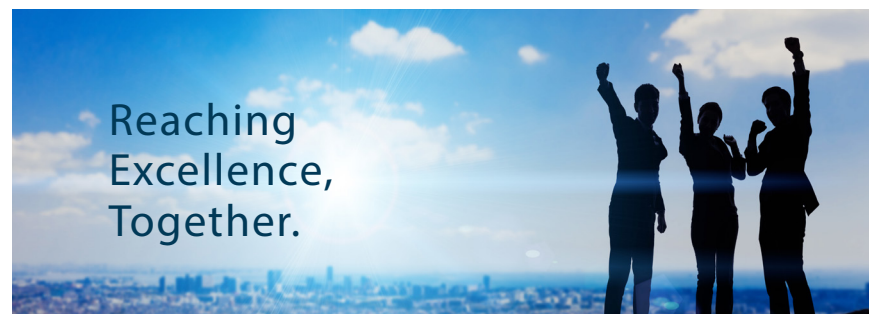
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The ride to somewhere

Our family trip to Saskatchewan was a journey of a lifetime



Helaine Ortmann

I LOVE CAR RIDES. Some of my fondest childhood memories are being packed into the backseat on summer evenings (in pajamas) and winding up at Hutch's on the Burlington Beach strip for French fries; or Stoney Creek Dairy for my one and only favourite, a single-scoop chocolate ice cream cone.

It must be one of the reasons I married my husband. He is at home in a moving vehicle. Over the years, the car has helped us escape stressful and unhappy times, provided an intimate space to be together, and transported us to diverse landscapes near and far.

This summer, however, we experienced the trip of a lifetime: "The Big Ride" to Saskatchewan to see the prairies (my first time), reunite my husband with step-family he had not seen in 40 years, and trace the footsteps of his grandparents who emigrated from the village of Zichydorf in Austria-Hungaria to homestead in south-central Saskatchewan.

Unlike his intrepid and pioneering forbears who voyaged by ship from the "Old Country" (not English speaking, a young family of nine in tow with only the barest necessities), we picked up the trail in Qu'Appelle that in the 1890s-1900s was a terminus for arriving eastern Europeans.

Modern-day adventurers in our 2011 Buick sedan (jammed with suitcases for our clothes and my hair products and a backseat filled with snacks), we travelled south, the same direction that the Ortman family travelled in 1902, by horse and wagon, to get to the barren, wind-swept rural municipality of Francis (then unincorporated) to build shelter (a sod dwelling with an earthen floor), acquire equipment, break land, and make a life in this brave new world.

By good luck (my husband's), our visit to Francis — population 182 as of the 2021 census — coincided with a vintage car show that Saturday afternoon, attracting most of the town to Main Street; wide enough to allow a horse and wagon ... in the 1900s ... to rotate a full turn.

Parked in the centre was an imposing if not pristine tractor and truck attended by its owner.

What began as a conversation about the state of farming in the rural west, the cost of his equipment (the value of our downtown Hamilton house) and property size (his 10,000 acres in contrast to the 160 acres my husband's grandparents were government granted) turned into an introduction to Reggie, the town historian, comfortably ensconced in a golf cart, holding court with a number of locals.

One thing led to another as Reggie ushered us into Francis' administrative building, as unassuming as the town itself, where he asked Mel, the clerk, for two archival publications. Leafing through them, we spotted whole stories and photos about the immigrant Ortman family, matching the memoirs (and filling in spaces) my husband's father wrote in 1968 at age 66.

So emotional and deeply personal was our visit to Francis, deemed by my husband to be the "epicentre" of the Ortman family — where they homesteaded, farmed, and where his father married his mother in 1947 — we could have easily called our trip a success then and there.

But it was only Day 8; and we still had stepfamily to visit in Regina as well as the 12 prairie towns that my husband's father and his family had lived or worked in from 1902 to 1950. Some, vibrant and bustling like Francis; others, like Hardy, Khedive, Peebles and Ceylon, bereft and quiet, as lonely looking as their abandoned grain elevators and railway tracks that once sustained them; still others, as verdant and panoramic as Viceroy and Horizon, where we left stones on the graves of my husband's grandparents.

Seventeen days and 7,070 kilometers under our (seat) belts; bedazzling views north to Thunder Bay and west along the Lake Superior Circle Tour; acres of newly-planted wheat, mustard, canola and flax fields anchoring the province of the living skies where we were often the only car in sight for hours; we two accomplished The Big Ride, a trip back in time that left us breathless for the future.

As a retired person living in Hamilton, Helaine seeks out opportunities in everyday life to nourish mind, body and spirit.

Doodling for control

Apparently, my subconscious doodling is more than it seems



Phyllis Shragge

AS I END my phone call, I glance at a sheet of paper on the kitchen counter. The paper, which was blank just minutes ago, is covered from top to bottom with 3D cubes. Obviously, I've been doodling without realizing it. Barely a smidgen of white space still exists, such is the extent of my doodling.

I hardly recall picking up a pen, but I must be responsible for these coherent and angular lines forming tight 3D shapes. I blame this doodling on my subconscious. Certainly, my conscious mind cannot be held accountable for all this cube-creating nonsense.

Once I determine that my subconscious is to blame, I decide to turn to an expert whose name is Google.

According to Google, there is more than one interpretation of doodling cubes. Apparently, drawing 3D cubes indicates the ability or attempt to see all sides of an issue.

Well, thank you Google. I consider this ability to be positive. I like to think of myself as nonjudgmental and open to varying points of view.

Another analysis of cube doodling suggests the doodler has a desire to be constructive or is currently efficient and analytical. This positive interpretation bodes well, and I think it applies to me. Or does it?

And then I read on. Doodling cubes can be a common sign of feeling trapped or powerless to resolve a situation that one wants to control. Aha! This makes sense. Of course, I want control, and certainly over more than one situation. Who doesn't?

Thankfully though, when I pause and reflect, I decide I'm in the normal range of all this and I'm not concerned about a possible OCD diagnosis.

And yet, I wonder, what's with all those 3D cubes?

As I consider the various interpretations of cube doodling, I realize this last bit, about control, resonates the most with me.

We all wish for control over the important things in our lives, but let's face it, in most cases, we don't have it. We try to control our diet, we can commit to exercise, and we can do our best to sleep well, yet out of the blue our health can go awry. We can try to raise our children to be the best people they can be, but so many factors play into their development. When it comes to external factors that may upset us, like current worldwide events, we are powerless.

We are tiny pinpricks on the global map. Most of the world has zero control over the initiation of war, or its outcome. And as far as politics is concerned, we wish for control in this realm, but unless we are actively involved, our influence is restricted to a single vote.

No wonder I doodle 3D cubes. Control is elusive, sometimes frustratingly out of reach, but it's important to me. Shouldn't all of us have some power over our lives?

Do we have control over anything? Generally, we have control over our own decisions, but outside influences have more power than we care to admit. Sometimes we have control over how we proceed with our day, feeling optimistic or down in the dumps, but only if we haven't been bombarded with calamities, real or perceived.

We can look at the world with a cup-half-full mentality when all has gone well, but often we've had personal challenges that paint our world black.

We can work to control our reactions to disagreements with friends and family. Are the slights in our heads or are they real? We can try to control our patience and our tempers when things don't go our way. We can attempt to control our spending. Do we really need that so-called bargain?

And ultimately, we can try to control our expectations in general, being realistic without losing our optimism.

What I want to control and what I can control seem to be at odds with each other, thus throwing my subconscious mind into turmoil. Or so it seems. I guess doodling cubes is my subconscious's way of coming to terms with this reality, but at least I'm not turning to drugs or drink. What are some 3D cubes in the scheme of things?



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HAMILTON JCC

Exciting fall programs at JHamilton



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

PJ Library will have a new program this fall called “Connections,” an inter-generational series to strengthen the relationships between kids and grandparents.

MAGGIE NORRIS

IF YOU’RE looking for Jewish community programming this fall, look no further than what’s in store at JHamilton. With a lineup of programs that offer a variety of interesting activities, we’re offering something for everyone. Adult fitness classes include beginner/intermediate pilates with Arielle Strub, Yoga Flow with Rebecca, and Krav Maga taught by Israeli-certified instructors (men and women separately).

We will also be offering art workshops that will explore various mediums and styles taught by local artists and a Challah baking club (see next column over for details)

Our children’s activities are equally exciting, and include kid Krav Maga classes (for ages eight and up), as well Chess Club on Sunday mornings (generously sponsored by Dr. Michael Briks and by the City of Hamilton Enrichment Fund.) Stay tuned for more information about our upcoming Family Challah Bake with PJ Library on Sunday, Oct. 6, from 2 to 4 p.m.

PJ Library has many other amazing programs coming up this fall, including “Connections,” a new inter-generational series whose goal is to strengthen the bond between kids and grandparents in activities that promote Jewish learning alongside other Jewish families in our community.

Connections will take place throughout the year at Shalom Village.

We are also thrilled to introduce “Shalom, baby!” made possible through a generous grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Shalom Baby programs include Baby and Me yoga and baby massage classes, stroller walks, and social get-togethers.

For our PJ Our Way readers (ages 9-12), we are offering an opportunity to join a fun and exciting book club, where we’ll discuss important themes and collaborate on a project to benefit the community. This is an amazing way to get your kids involved in shaping their Jewish identity, building a stronger community, and creating the Jewish leaders of the future!

HAMILTON JCC

Yalla! Let’s make Challah



PHOTO: DREAMSTIME

Learn everything you need to know to make, braid and bake wonderful challah loaves and learn the history and significance of this tradition.

HELAINE ORTMANN

LEARNING TO make challah — a bread deeply symbolic in Jewish culture — is an experience to savour; an art to share with your family and friends; and a living legacy to pass on from generation to generation. Join us on Sunday, Sept. 22 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the newly renovated space at JHamilton for the launch of our very own Hamilton Challah Club. This Club is for absolute beginners as well as those who already make challah. Everyone is welcome.

At this inaugural “hands-on” meeting supported by our friends from the Aish Thornhill Community Shul, you will be guided through the steps to make, braid and bake beautiful challah loaves at home, and, understand the history of this tradition that dates back to the Biblical time of Moses.

As a special treat, the Hamilton Jewish Federation is screening the acclaimed 12-minute documentary How To Make Challah in which filmmaker Sarah Rosen captures her 80-year-old aunt Jane

baking challah for the very first time. Rosen includes footage from 1975 of Jane filming her 97-year-old immigrant grandmother baking challah in her tiny kitchen on the Upper West Side, New York. Rosen said, “Most of all, the film is about what we pass on to the next generation and what we leave behind.”

From here, the Hamilton Challah Club plans to meet at 7 – 8:30 p.m. on the following Wednesday evenings: Oct. 30, Dec. 4, Feb. 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4. Each session will include:

- A brief talk to elevate our knowledge of the mitzvah of challah making;
- The act of “taking challah” or separating a portion of the dough;
- The practice of working with our well-tested challah recipe to ensure success in your home baking.

Admission cost is \$25 per person per session or \$136 for the full seven sessions. All challah-making ingredients are included in the price.

For more information, contact Maggie Norris at mnorris@jewishhamilton.org or call 905-648-0605, ext 307.



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Heartfelt condolences to his beloved family.
May his legacy continue to inspire.

ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION

The revival of an iconic tradition



PHOTO: MOSHE GOLD

Adas Israel Men's Club, 1970; Front Row (L to R) - Isaac Katz, Morris Lax, Henry Katz, Rabbi Mordechai Green, Sam Netkin, Samuel Katz, Irving Dulberg, Sheldon Kumer, Abe Hotz. Back Row (L to R) - Bill Lee, Gary Frydman, Morris Waxman, Nate Katz, Harold Bornstein, Aaron Stiglick, Jack Freeman.

OLIVER BORR

IN 1958, the Adas Israel Men's Club launched a social event at the Cannon Street Shul that would become a beloved tradition. Conceived as a fund-raiser to support the construction of the new Adas Israel building, this gathering quickly grew into an annual highlight, drawing attendees from across the broader Jewish community and beyond. Featuring hallmark Jewish cuisine, the event was more than just a dinner—it was a celebration of community, camaraderie, and culture.

For more than six decades, the Adas Israel Men's Club Brotherhood Social was a fixture in the lives of many. Spearheaded in its later years by Jack Katz, with strong representation from the automotive industry, the event maintained a charming, "old-school" atmosphere. A throwback to a bygone era, the night was complete with live auctions, draws, and an open bar, attracting a diverse cross-section of Hamilton life. Attendees took pride in their commitment to never miss a year, and the event became a cherished

tradition, providing a space for connection and celebration.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly halted this streak, ending more than 60 consecutive years of this iconic gathering. The absence of the event was deeply felt, with many community members expressing a longing for its return. In a time when antisemitism is on the rise and the need for cross-denominational support is more crucial than ever, the revival of this event holds even greater significance.

As the Adas Israel congregation experiences a rejuvenation, attracting a younger demographic, there has been a groundswell of interest in revamping and relaunching the Men's Club Brotherhood Social. The goal is to maintain the old-school charm that made the event so beloved while introducing an updated twist that will resonate with a new generation.

Kick off the new year with the return of a classic—join us this January for the Adas Israel Men's Club Brotherhood Social.

KEHILA HESCHEL SCHOOL

Newcomer families join our school



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

Kehila students benefit from being outdoors in nature. Studies have shown this boosts physical health and enhances cognitive development.

JULIA KOLLEK

WE ARE THRILLED to welcome new students to Kehila Heschel School this year! Among our newest families are Hamutal and Nadav Niv, who recently arrived from a small town outside Jerusalem. After researching various local schools, they found Kehila to be the perfect match.

"Our family is secular, and Kehila sounded like a good fit for our kids and for us," Hamutal said. A tour with Anita, our Head of Education, confirmed their choice. "So many things just felt right," she said. "We liked how the whole school takes part in activities together, including meals and recess, so we didn't even bother visiting anywhere else."

Hamutal's children embraced Kehila with enthusiasm. "When the school year ended, both my kids said they were sad and would have loved if it lasted a few more weeks," she added.

Kehila Heschel is one of only four schools across North America honoured with the naming and designation of Rabbi

Abraham Joshua Heschel, a renowned scholar, environmentalist, and social activist. Like other Heschel schools (in Toronto, New York and Los Angeles) Kehila nurtures thoughtful leaders, integrating Jewish values with intellectual exploration and social responsibility.

Our K-Grade 5 program blends the Ontario Curriculum with a trilingual approach, offering instruction in Hebrew, French, and English, enhanced with strong visual arts, drama, music, and movement. Students showcase their learning through creative projects, performances, poetry, and artwork.

As a proud member of EcoSchools Canada, the emphasis on environmental stewardship integrates Judaic principles of caring for the earth into our curriculum.

Limited spaces are still available, so it's not too late to enroll your child in the Kehila family!

For more information, contact our office at 905.529.7725 or email office@kehilaschool.ca.

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Welcome to our 2024 Board Members!

- Carol Adler
- Michelle Daleo
- Miriam Farber Wajnberg
- Gord Garshowitz
- Laura Herman
- Adrian Jaspán
- Geraldine Katz
- Phil Kriszenfeld
- Jeff Levy
- Cindy Mark
- Iris Rinkoff



SHALOM VILLAGE

Reflections on a year of service and community

MARIANNE KLEIN

AS I celebrated my first anniversary as CEO of Shalom Village this July, I found myself deeply humbled and profoundly inspired by the dedication and commitment of our staff, volunteers, and donors. Over the past year, I have witnessed the unwavering support that sustains Shalom Village and the incredible community spirit that defines us.

This was never more evident than during our 50th-anniversary celebration in June. It was a joyous occasion, where residents, staff, family members, donors, volunteers, and our many supporters came together to honor five decades of service to our elders. The event was a beautiful reflection of the love, respect, and togetherness that permeate every aspect of Shalom Village. As I reflect on our 50th anniversary I feel incredibly fortunate to have had our founding CEO Sheila Burman with us for the celebration.

Sheila's legacy of compassion, caring and service to the community is imprinted throughout the halls of Shalom Village and in the hearts of everyone we touch.

Volunteers are the heart and soul



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

of our community. They embody the spirit of our AT HOME values—Acknowledgement, Togetherness, Home, Organization, Memories, and Enablement. It is through their contributions that we can create and sustain a nurturing environment where we truly honor our fathers and our mothers.

As we approach the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah, the

themes of reflection, renewal, and community unity resonate deeply with the work we do at Shalom Village. These holidays remind us of our responsibilities to each other, and to build a community grounded in compassion and support.

Volunteering at Shalom Village offers a unique opportunity to live these values and actively participate in Tikkun Olam, the mending of the world. Whether it's escorting

The late Sheila Burman with Shalom Village CEO Marianne Klein earlier this summer at Shalom Village's 50th anniversary celebration.

residents with mobility challenges to religious services, participating in activities, offering companionship, attending outings, or supporting our fundraising events, each mitzvah contributes to making moments that matter for those we serve.

In that spirit, I encourage past volunteers to return to Shalom Village and invite new volunteers to join our family. Together, we can continue to build a community where every moment is cherished, and every resident feels valued and loved.

To learn more about volunteering, please contact our coordinator of volunteers, Amy Klokoff, at amy.klokoff@shalomvillage.ca or call 905-529-1613, ext 274. Your time and energy will make a lasting impact, and help create a home where older adults can live with dignity, joy, and a sense of belonging.

As I write this, I am acutely aware that 101 people remain hostage—may they be freed and home safely with their loved-ones as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support, and may the coming year bring us all health, happiness, unity and the opportunity to serve others with love and dedication. Shana Tova umetukah.

Dan MUYS
Member of Parliament for Flamborough-Glanbrook

**Shanah Tovah
u'Metukah**

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and your family
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peace.

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TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Join us for family-centred programs



PHOTO: DORA-ANN ELLISON COHEN

Temple students at the synagogue's Jewish Learning Program.

DORA-ANN COHEN ELLISON

SHANAH TOVAH! I am so excited to welcome students back to a new school year on Sept. 18 at Temple Anshe Sholom. I invite your family to learn, celebrate and explore all things Jewish with us on Shabbat mornings and Wednesday evenings.

New this year on Wednesdays, our students will choose from a selection of electives and explore Jewish values and traditions through art, cooking, gardening, STEM, physical education, music and more! Parents can also join in drop in activities, Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m., starting with a book club and visual art in the fall and Mahjong in the winter.

Youth in Grades 8 through 10 are invited to join our Thursday evening class: B'Yachad—Making a Difference in Your Community, a program open to all in our greater Jewish community. Students will also have the opportunity to travel to Montreal in November and Israel in

March with other Toronto, Mississauga and Oakville teens.

Our Rosh Hashanah programs include family erev Rosh Hashanah and morning services, and a family beach picnic on the second day. For Yom Kippur, we invite your family to join the family Kol Nidre and morning services, and a selection of afternoon programs for all ages.

Our drop-in Tot-Shabbat resumes on Saturday Oct. 19 at 11 a.m., where toddlers and a caregiver meet weekly during the school year for songs, storytime and Shabbat activities. Our youth groups, led by Yael Morais, meet monthly for social and social action programming. We also have plans for family hikes, family trivia and a retreat at Canterbury Hills! To register for Temple's Jewish Learning program and High Holiday family programs, visit anshesholom.ca or contact Dora-Ann Cohen Ellison at dacellison@anshesholom.ca or 905-528-0121 ext 30.

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

Transformative changes at Temple

TAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS THE JEWISH new year approaches, Temple Anshe Sholom is abuzz with excitement and renewal. Our historic congregation, deeply rooted in tradition, has embraced a season of transformative changes that reflect its commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

Our members have been hard at work envisioning how our community will evolve into the future and embrace our values in the most meaningful ways. Our 2024 Listening Project has yielded tremendous information and guidance from nearly 300 of our members and friends. Temple Anshe Sholom is expanding its programming to better serve the diverse needs of its congregation. A new series of adult education classes will offer members of all ages an opportunity to deepen their understanding of their faith. The offering of family-friendly services, complete with interactive storytelling and music, aims to engage younger generations and instill a love for Jewish traditions from an early age.

The leadership at Temple Anshe Sholom has also made inclusivity a central focus of their efforts. This year, the synagogue has launched several initiatives to ensure that all members feel welcome and valued. Longtime members are creating a buddy system to help integrate our newer members. Additionally, we have plans established to strengthen ties with local organizations and promote interfaith dialogue. There is much to look forward to.

Our dear Rabbi Jordan Cohen, who has been with the congregation for more than 18 years, is taking a leave to focus on his health. We wish him all the best as he takes the time to recover. With sadness,



PHOTO: KEYNOTE MEDIA

Rabbi Jordan Cohen stepped down from his position due to health reasons.

we announce that Cantor Baruch has taken ill suddenly but is currently recuperating and we expect her to rejoin us in a few months. Our thoughts and prayers are with both of our clergy as they focus on their health and well-being.

In light of these unforeseen circumstances, we are pleased to announce that Rabbi Alan Katz, emeritus of Temple Sinai in Rochester, New York, will be stepping in to lead our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Having served as Rabbi for 35 years, we can all be comforted with the knowledge that we will have experienced clergy to lead us through these High Holy Days.

As Temple Anshe Sholom ushers in the New Year, we honour the historic legacy that serves as the foundation for our continued growth. Today, we continue to demonstrate the resilience and unity that makes Temple Anshe Sholom a strong and vibrant spiritual home. The congregation is ready to embrace the future with open hearts and a renewed sense of purpose.



HAMILTON JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

Living well, embracing possibility



PHOTO: COURTESY HJFS

Seniors earn their yellow bands during the HJFS armchair Chair Karate program.

CARA BENSIMON

AS WE ENTER the sacred period of the Jewish High Holidays, our hearts turn to reflection and renewal. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur provide us with a framework to transform our challenges into gateways for fresh starts, demonstrating that we are stronger for our experiences. As we navigate a world filled with rising antisemitism, it's crucial to maintain a strong and positive Jewish presence. Our community's strength lies in its unity and resilience. Together, we are a powerful force for good, and our voices must be heard, now more than ever.

At Hamilton Jewish Family Services, we remain committed to maintaining a balance between recognizing the global context while staying rooted in the needs of our local community. In this spirit, we are proud to announce the launch of our Seniors Living Well Centre on Tuesday, Oct. 1, coinciding with National Seniors' Day. This initiative is more than just a new program; it's a testament to our dedication to progress and our belief in the power of community to uplift and support our seniors.

At the Seniors Living Well Centre, there's truly something for everyone. Whether you're looking to stay physically active, intellectually engaged, or socially

connected, our diverse range of activities has you covered. You can take part in our Chair Karate classes, where participants can earn their yellow belt while improving flexibility, and strength in a fun and supportive atmosphere. For those eager to stay up-to-date with the latest technology, there's workshops that make learning new tech skills easy and enjoyable. If you have a creative streak, sign up for an art class which can provide a fantastic outlet for self-expression. And, of course, there's always time for socializing over a friendly game of cards or other recreational activities.

The Seniors Living Well Centre will offer a variety of programs aimed at enhancing physical, mental, and emotional well-being, all while promoting social connections and combating loneliness. It will be more than just a place to spend time—it's a community where seniors can continue to learn, grow, and thrive in a supportive and engaging setting. Watch for more details at hamiltonjfs.ca

Our history is rich with stories of resilience. Let us add our own stories of growth and overcoming to this enduring narrative. As we gather to observe Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, let us remember that after pain, there is always potential. May this New Year bring us renewed strength and hope. Shana Tova U'Metuka!

McMASTER HILLEL

Hineinu — We are here



RABBI BEN SHEFTER

AS WE APPROACH Rosh Hashana and the first anniversary of 10/7, Hillel McMaster is dedicated to welcoming students

to campus with the powerful message of "Hineinu: We are here!" After a challenging year and summer, we aim to make students feel proud of their Jewish identity, supported in their endeavours, and prepared for a year of growth and resilience. To achieve this, Hillel McMaster is focusing on three key areas:

Show Up is about building community. At Hillel McMaster, we are dedicated to creating an environment where students feel safe, proud, welcomed, and curious about their Jewish identity. Our vision is for students to proudly represent Jewish life on campus and become future leaders of the Jewish community.

Stand Up means empowering our student leaders to advocate on campus, boldly confront and counter

antisemitism, and increase activism. This can take many forms, such as leading vigils on campus or building coalitions with other clubs.

Speak Up involves highlighting our students' initiatives to make a difference on campus. Whether it's representing the Jewish student body to the administration, drafting statements for or against the student unions, or hosting opportunities for student's voices to be heard, we are committed to proudly showcasing the fantastic work that Jewish students are doing at McMaster.

By empowering students and community members to show up, stand up, and speak up, we work toward erasing hate, antisemitism, and fear from McMaster University.

Community members can support students in the following ways:

- Hosting students for meals
- Calling to check in
- Showing up to events
- Donate to enable students to have a robust and joyful experience in Hamilton.

HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

New athletic centre coming soon



PHOTO: COURTESY HHA

The new Shiffman Athletic Centre will be equipped with the latest sports equipment, bleachers, and a professional AV system.

A NEW ATHLETIC centre is being renovated and built at the Hamilton Hebrew Academy McLean Education Centre, designed to serve both the students of the HHA and the broader Jewish community.

This facility will act as a community hub, accommodating the school's needs while also providing space for sports leagues and youth activities during evenings and weekends.

The gymnasium will be a state-of-the-art facility equipped with the latest sports equipment. From the rafters to the windows, from the scoreboard to the floors, the new venue will enhance the overall experience for all participants. The centre will also feature bleachers for spectators to foster a sense of community, a professional AV system and will host events beyond sports.

The centre will be the home of the HHA Lions as well as other teams for both kids and adults. The need for such a venue has become increasingly critical since the closure of the JCC facility on Lions Club Road. This new centre aspires to fill this significant gap by providing a much-needed space for sports and recreation.

The initiative was spearheaded by David McLean, who insisted on dedicating the new centre in memory of Mr. Aaron Shiffman a'h. Shiffman, a beloved figure in the Jewish community of Hamilton, was deeply involved in all aspects of Jewish communal life throughout his lifetime. He was a pivotal presence

at Shalom Village, the United Hebrew Chapel, and several other organizations, and he also served as the executive director of both the Hamilton Hebrew Academy and Adas Israel Congregation.

While this new centre serves as a tribute to Shiffman's remarkable legacy, McLean shared a touching story that further connects Shiffman to this project. In the 1980s, McLean, along with two classmates, Yishay Waxman, and Kenny Cohen, wanted to play hockey indoors during recess. They approached their principal, Rabbi William Z. Eisenstein a'h, who agreed to their request on the condition they find a staff member to supervise them. Within moments, they were in Mr. Shiffman's office, who readily agreed to supervise. McLean recalled how Shiffman not only agreed once but continued to support them consistently, sacrificing his own time to ensure the boys could enjoy their recess. "I can still picture him sitting against the gym wall with his legs crossed, smiling. At the time, I appreciated the generosity of time, but only after many years did I truly fathom the greatness of this gesture—to sacrifice so much for so long just to put smiles on the faces of children," McLean reflected.

The new Shiffman Athletic Centre is coming at a very timely moment with rising antisemitism. The creation of this athletic centre aims to provide a safe space for Jewish youth to compete and develop as healthy, proud Jews.

BETH JACOB HEBREW SCHOOL

New family-friendly Shabbatot

SOPHIE GEFFROS

BETH JACOB Synagogue has been hard at work developing innovative programming to engage our children and we are excited to share some of those developments with the wider community.

We were delighted to welcome Rabbi Beni Wajnberg to our community in 5784, whose leadership has been instrumental in helping the Beth Jacob family grow. He has also been a keen supporter of our educational initiatives both old and new, including two new Shabbat offerings for pre-school and school-aged children, adult education and seminars, and our long-standing Wednesday night supplementary school.

In response to widespread demand among our young families for Shabbat-morning programming, we have developed a program based on the Hebrew Through Motion curriculum, which uses play and movement to expose preschool

aged children to Hebrew vocabulary and Jewish culture. It is appropriate for all learners aged 3-6, including those whose families are shomrei Shabbos. This program is being co-taught by trained educators from our Hebrew School and young leaders from our community.

Our youth continue to be a force to be reckoned with in the Beth Jacob community, organizing events, participating in our fabulous BJ-USY group, facilitating our Hebrew Through Motion classes, and planning and leading our monthly family services.

We are eager to see where their leadership will bring us in the future.

In 5785, we are looking to build on the strength of those who have come before us, the wisdom of those who continue to work so hard to strengthen our shul community and the bright futures of our children and young people who continue to inspire us all.

L'Shana Tova Tikatevu v'Tchatemu.

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2.99 30-95 g Wissotzky tea selected varieties
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3.99 750 mL Kedem sparkling grape juice selected varieties
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.99 175 g Haddar tea biscuits selected varieties
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FORTINOS

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