



## One of a kind

The legacy of Rabbi Baskin **P9**

## A match made in heaven

Melinda Richter joins the team at Arctic Experience **P16**



# Hamilton Jewish News

THE VOICE OF JEWISH HAMILTON

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## The evolution of Shalom Village

Story and photos by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

Imagine a self-contained village, complete with grocery stores, restaurants and a movie theatre, its low-rise apartments built around a beautiful courtyard garden, where the sounds of flowing water and chirping birds soothe the spirits of all who sit there. Imagine that this village is home to people living with varying stages of Alzheimers disease. Such places exist in the world, the most famous being the village of Hogewey, just outside of Amsterdam, where 150+ residents are cared for by almost double that number of support staff, or as the residents think of them, fellow villagers. The current stewards of Shalom Village have been doing a

lot of imagining lately, having been told by the provincial government that they have 10 years in which to decide and put in place a plan that will see the original building brought up to new government standards governing the province's long-term care facilities.

The mandate, while daunting, is also an exciting opportunity for stakeholders to create something of tremendous value for both the Jewish community and the city itself, and Shalom Village is more than up to the challenge, according to Dr. Larry Levin and Yael Arnold, pictured above. Read more on page 5.

## A tale of three soldiers

WHY THE GRANDCHILDREN OF THREE ICONIC HAMILTON RABBIS JOINED THE IDF



Josh Goldberg and Shmarya Green both served in IDF paratrooper brigades. Rebecca Baskin commanded IDF recruits in their basic training. Photos courtesy of Josh Goldberg and Rebecca Baskin.

Story by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

It began during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, when approximately 3,500 overseas volunteers came to assist the nascent Jewish state in its fight for survival. The group was given the name Machal, an acronym of the Hebrew words, "Mitnadvay Chutz La'aretz", "Volunteers from Abroad." The "Machalniks," as they came to become known, were assigned to virtually every unit in the Israeli army, navy and air force, and played an essential role in the struggles that followed.

Six decades later, Diaspora Jews are still coming by the thousands to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), among them Josh Goldberg, 27, Shmarya Green, 27 and Rebecca Baskin, 25, who, call it coincidence or destiny, happen to be the grandchildren of three of Hamilton's most iconic rabbis. Rabbi Israel Silverman, Rabbi Morton Green and Rabbi Bernard Baskin collectively presided over the Hamilton Jewish community for a 30-year period (and longer!) during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Their influence on their respective

synagogues (their shuls were often referred to by out-of-towners as "the Silverman shul," "the Green shul" and "the Baskin shul") and on generations of Jewish Hamiltonians cannot be overstated. If their grandchildren's sense of idealism and sacrifice is any indication, neither can their influence on generations within their own families.

The three former IDF recruits (all have now completed their military service) share their motivations, experiences and insights in an HJN profile that can be found on **pages 12 and 13**. Prepare to be impressed.

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**YVES APEL,**  
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When I was eight or nine years old, my dad took me to the synagogue in Kishinev, a nondescript building tucked behind a tall wall. He looked around carefully to be sure no one was watching.

Here in Hamilton we come to synagogue wearing our finest; we greet each other; the doors are open. It's a good thing. It's a very good thing.

The year ahead is an open book, full of opportunities. Our High Holidays are a time for serious reflection: what we may have done differently, how we might have acted more thoughtfully, shown more patience, more kindness, or been more decisive, more generous towards ourselves and our community.

A community is like a child. I know, I have three — well, four, counting the community. I am responsible for the support of all four children now, and when I am old, who knows, just maybe they will be there for me too!

You know what I am saying, because thanks to you, our donors and volunteers, Hamilton Jewish Federation extends a hand to those who need assistance with food, housing or employment counselling, and to those who attend Jewish schools and camps but cannot afford to pay the full cost. Through our beneficiary agencies and programs, together we fight anti-Semitism, advocate for all of us on campuses and in the media, and support Jewish outreach. Together with Beth Tikvah, we restore hope to individuals and their families through supported independent living for adults with developmental disabilities. Together we awaken identity by supporting Jewish education for almost 250 students in our Jewish schools. And together we strengthen Israel's promise by helping 1,150 at-risk children in Israel. This is all very good.

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This year our goal is \$1,180,000. It's a meaningful number, and we hope to raise it this winter so that we can begin to distribute it in the spring.

In the world in which we live, our community is responsible for each other, and we count on your gift to the Campaign. Giving to the Community Campaign is an act of Tzedakah that so many depend on. If you haven't yet made your gift, please call the Federation office at 905-648-0605, ext 306 or give online at [www.jewishhamilton.org](http://www.jewishhamilton.org).

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### HAMILTON HISTORY COMES ALIVE

Hamilton Community Foundation CEO Terry Cooke and his wife, Maureen Wilson were among the more than 100 people who came out to Beth Jacob Synagogue on September 20 for the grand opening of The Jewish Voice of Hamilton exhibit. The exhibit's presentation of Hamilton's one-time Yiddish language newspaper and its publisher Henry Balinson is "a powerful and moving part of Hamilton's history, beautifully presented," said Cooke. Pictured above along with Cooke and his wife is Ruth Greenspan (left).

Photo by Wendy Schneider

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#### PASSOVER ISSUE

- Deadline for booking ad space  
Feb. 10, 2016
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy  
Feb. 26, 2016
- Deadline for receiving ad copy  
March 14, 2016
- Estimated Date of Arrival  
April 8, 2016

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# This time was different

FEDERATION CEO REPORTS ON HER RECENT ISRAEL TRIP



Looking east towards the Golan Heights from the rooftop of Tel Hai College.

Photo by Terry Babij

BARB BABIJ, CEO, Hamilton Jewish Federation

Israel, acknowledged as one of the most innovative countries in the world; we love it, we hate some of its policies, whatever our views, none of us are indifferent. Israel is integral to who we are as Jews and how we define ourselves as a people. Israel matters.

At the end of October, we travelled to Israel on holidays, arriving at Ben Gurion on a Thursday morning. The mood was subdued, the atmosphere seemed tense. Fear seemed to be taking its toll, more noticeable in the things we did not see than the things we did. Fewer Israelis were on the streets, the shops were less busy, and on Friday, fewer people shopped at Mahaneh Yehuda; I was not jostled once. A good friend of ours refused to drive from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The reason was the most recent wave of terror in Israel. There are no rules to this conflict; there is no country with whom to negotiate. Attacks can come from anywhere and anyone. And still, Israelis did what Israelis do in the face of extreme adversity. They cope, they create a new normality. "Eatifada" was one typically Israeli response, encouraging people to go out and eat with friends and family and post the good times on social media platforms. And then there was the Tel Aviv restaurateur who offered a discount to any Muslims and Jews eating together at his restaurant.

We also spent two days in the Upper Galilee to visit numerous social services agencies and projects supported by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). We began our tour with a visit to the hydro therapy pool and Schafim School for disabled children. We gained a clearer understanding of the geography of the region as well as its spirit at the Kiryat Shmona lookout. At the Clore Dance and Music Centre, we witnessed a gaga dance master at work with a group of seniors and youth. We were invited to join the Cooking Dreams project

for an amazing dinner cooked by youth at risk who shared their personal success stories. At Tel Hai College, we joined a mission from Winnipeg for a scholarship ceremony and visited the Sydney Warren Academic Science Center for Youth. At Hamagnim Elemen-

agencies to one another and to the college enables integration within the community. It allows students from local schools to volunteer, students from the college to gain field experience, and seniors and those with special needs to feel part of the community.

Time and again during our conversations with regional leaders, I was struck by the similarities between Hamilton and the Upper Galilee. A generosity of spirit pervades the region, much like Hamilton. It exists in the shadow of larger cities, most notably Haifa and Tel Aviv. These larger cities are talent magnets and quality jobs in the region are scarce. Existing transportation infrastructure does not enable people to live in the region and work in the larger cities.

From the rooftop at Tel Hai College, we could see both Lebanon and Syria. The proximity to the borders of both Lebanon and Syria are part of who the people are and what they do, but it does not define them. They are building for the future which may one day include Arabs from Lebanon and Syria as well.

This time was different, and even though by the time we left, the streets of Jerusalem were coming alive again, and Israelis continue to adapt and live normally, we can help. We can advocate for Israel through CIJA's (the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs) Take Action Israel campaign. We can provide relief funds when asked. We can support JAFI in its social services work to strengthen the fabric of Israeli society itself. We can continue to travel to Israel – our presence does make a difference. As the staff and volunteers at Hafuch al Hafuch said: Thank you for coming from afar. We are blessed that our home is as important to you as your own." To quote my colleague Deborah Corber in Montreal: After all, we are a family. Kol Israel arevim zeh l'zeh."

**"We can continue to travel to Israel. Our presence does make a difference"**

tary School in Kiryat Shmona the twelve year olds sang a version of adon olam. We visited Beit Vatihei HaGalil, an elder day care center and were amazed by the range of services and activities. We heard amazing personal stories from kids at risk at Hafuch al Hafuch, a center for teens at risk in Kiryat Shmona. We visited the Tennis Centre, the gateway for another program for youth at risk who, learn tennis as a metaphor for life. Our last stop was the rape crisis centre in Kiryat Shmona. Wherever we went, we were met with open hearts and hospitality.

Two messages were shared repeatedly throughout our stay: inclusivity and integration. The special needs school, Shechafim, was built in close proximity to the college; student dorms were built in the town of Kiryat Shmona. The community center for the aged was also built near the college. The proximity of social service

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# Reenvisioning Shalom Village

NEW GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS MEAN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCITING INNOVATIONS

Story and photo by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

It's Friday night at Shalom Village. In a corner of the room, Shabbat candles have been placed on a table, awaiting your attention. You sit down at a table already occupied by a handful of residents and are served a steaming bowl of matzah ball soup, a piece of challah and a chicken dinner. That your tablemates may not be Jewish, is beside the point. The meal is reminiscent of a lifetime of Jewish customs, observed or not, and you feel a sense of belonging.

This is the new reality at Shalom Village, where non-Jewish residents represent 30 per cent of its apartment population and up to 70 per cent of those in long-term care beds. The shift in demographics has been gradual, according to past chair Larry Levin, and one that's come about as a result of seniors living healthier and longer lives and the desire to move closer to their children and grandchildren as they age, which often means moving out of the area.

Last summer, the newly-appointed Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Dipika Damerla, paid a visit to Shalom Village seeking to learn how culturally-identified nursing homes incorporated their traditions into day to day operations.

"She noticed the mezuzahs on every door, she noticed how the kosher kitchen functions, the rabbi walking around, being set out for the Sabbath," recalled Arnold. At the end of the tour, the minister attended a focus group attended by a representative group of volunteers, residents and staff. When the minister asked the volunteers how they felt about Shalom's changing demographics, "They told her they feel very much at home here, that Shalom

is continuing and respecting their traditions." When she asked a non-Jewish resident how it felt to be living in a Jewish environment, his response, ironic that it may seem, was that he, too, felt very much at home.

"He told her how he attends the Rabbi's lectures and finds them very stimulating. He enjoys taking part in the traditions around him, and that he feels very much included and accepted for who he is," said Arnold. "He grew up a devoted Anglican," said Arnold, "and for him at Shalom is in an environment that respects who he is, where he feels he belongs, that he happily and thankfully calls home. When you speak to the residents, there is never a sense that anybody feels that they're excluded or that they don't belong – it's rather quite the contrary. No matter what their background is."

Demographics at Shalom Village being as they are, is it reasonable to expect that Jewish philanthropy bear the entire burden of funding its redevelopment, or should partnerships with groups outside the Jewish community be cultivated? Is this an opportunity to develop the site into a campus environment, with Shalom Village sharing space with other Jewish communal organizations, or should Shalom position itself as a regional centre of excellence that can offer McMaster University medical and nursing students on-the-ground training in a particular area such as Alzheimer's or palliative care? Charged with the task of exploring these and other options is a dedicated board of directors composed of individuals from both the health care field and business, whose diverse expertise provides "incredible learning

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the current exploration is the seriousness with which the board is researching the kind of innovative models that have transformed geriatric care in Scandinavian countries

opportunities for all of us," said Arnold. A special committee of the board has been appointed to examine "all the relevant data and opportunities," said Levin, adding that while there have been "general" talks with the Federation and JCC, "trying to decide what is it that Shalom needs and how it see its future is our first priority."

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the current exploration is the seriousness with which the board is researching the kind of innovative models that have transformed geriatric care in Scandinavian countries. Creating a Shalom Village that is truly a village would surely put this community and Hamilton in general on the world stage of long-term care facilities. "Why shouldn't we do that here," asked Arnold. "Why not in Hamilton?"

While discussions are still very much in the preliminary stages – after all, the new design standards are not mandated until the year 2025, one thing is clear: The current site is ideally suited for even the boldest of redevelopment plans.

"Our foremothers and forefathers were already forward thinkers. We're not in this huge tall hospital-like industrial building ... The living spaces are very homey ... so even if we were to keep that same environmental feel and just update it, we'd still be ahead of the game," said Arnold. "but if we wanted to switch the model, we have the room to do it."

For years, Shalom Village has been regarded as the jewel in the crown of Hamilton's Jewish communal scene. A place where Jewish residents of any affiliation can feel a sense of belonging, where Jewish volunteers can give back to their community, where Jewish philanthropy has helped it attain the highest levels of excellence, and whose mission and operations have always been guided by the fifth commandment to honour one's mother and father. Will any future redevelopment affect these priorities?

"I really see Jewish life as the breath and the soul of Shalom Village," said Arnold, "and what's mandated to us by the government is the body that it lives in. Our CEO Jeanette O'Leary, the Staff, the Board of Directors, and the volunteers all contribute to infusing it with yiddishkeit for the residents. This is what makes Shalom a gem in our community."

As for whether the community will balk at supporting an institution that doesn't necessarily have a Jewish majority, hasn't Jewish philanthropy been at the forefront

of charitable giving to hospitals, institutions of higher learning and the arts for generations?

"It should be important to all of us to support Shalom even though the percentages might not be what you'd expect," he said, "because it's there and ready for you if you or your loved one needs it."

Change may bring uncertainty, but the exemplary leadership demonstrated by Levin and Arnold, neither of whom are native-born Hamiltonians, in embracing the challenge of re-visioning one of our community's most venerable institutions, is nothing if not reassuring. By way of explanation for her taking on such an important role at a relatively young age, Arnold, a healthcare administrator by profession, allowed that she had a very close relationship with her grandparents.

"Unfortunately, Long Term Care often gets overlooked in terms of increased government funding or services. To my mind, this segment of our population has given us so much that we need to honour and continue the legacy they created. I see being connected to older adults in a volunteer capacity as a privilege. When I am at Shalom Village, I have a true sense that everyone living there is a blessing to our community, because we have a lot to learn from his or her life's experience. What a gift it is to be able to live older, in an environment that prioritizes individual healthy living needs, driven by leaders and caretakers that truly grasp the mission of honouring thy fathers and thy mothers. It's important for me to give in some small way to Shalom Village, because all of these people have so much to give to us."

# A week of Holocaust Education

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING DRAWS LARGE CROWDS

by WENDY SCHNEIDER AND BARB BABIJ, the Hamilton Jewish News

One of the most effective ways to teach the Holocaust is through art and literature, because of the way those disciplines are likely to evoke empathy in students, stimulate emotional understanding and encourage a connection between the individual experience and the collective Jewish experience during the Second World War. That was the main point driven home by a panel of experts in Holocaust education at the opening program of the Hamilton Jewish Federation's Holocaust Education Week held at Temple Anshe Sholom on Nov. 1 to a crowd of almost 200.

Panel members included Kathy Kacer, author of fiction and non-fiction about the Holocaust, for children, Jody Spiegel, director of the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Program at the Azrieli Foundation, Grace Centritto, who heads religious studies at Cardinal Newman Catholic high school and Rob Flossman, assistant head of history at Waterdown District High School. Both Centritto and Flossman are recipients of Federation's Sharon Enkin Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education.

Kacer's children's books are based on the experiences of real people who lived through the Holocaust. It's her way of ensuring that, even after their deaths, their stories will reach an audience.

Similarly Jody Spiegel's team at the Azrieli Foundation publishes first-hand accounts in an easily readable format that they send, free of charge, to libraries and educational institutions across Canada.

Both the educators on the panel agreed that the key to teaching



Moderator Steve Paikin listens intently as Jody Spiegel, head of the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, makes a point. Photo by Terry Babij

the Holocaust is having students engage in meaningful ways with the material. Flossman's Grade 11 genocide class serve as docents at their school's museum dedicated to commemorate the Holocaust, the Ukrainian Holodomor and other atrocities.

Centritto developed a curriculum that has her students learning about the Holocaust through survivors' art, particularly the paintings of Samuel Bak and the photographs of Henryk Ross. Her students were asked to find themes that spoke to them, and then use that style to create their own artwork. The process helped students "empathize with a human story and make it their own and project it and extrapolate to the future," she said.

The theme of making history accessible was picked up by community member Lillian Zack during question period, who

said that her experience of learning about the First World War as a young girl felt no more significant than learning about the Greeks and Romans. "I'm wondering how much good intellectual knowledge gives us," she said, as opposed to having students be given the opportunity to read material similar to The Diary of Anne Frank. "When one experiences things through either dramatic form or other experiential attempts, (it encourages students) to feel rather than just think," she said. "We don't act on our thinking. We act on our feelings."

Sandi Katz Loewith, a member of the Holocaust Education Committee, said she was deeply affected by Zack's comments. The former drama teacher agrees that "change happens through experience," and that the best way to get children, and for that matter, anyone to connect with a subject is through



Holocaust Klezmer Band co-founder Saul Dreier responds to a question from the audience while Ruby Sosnowicz (second from left) looks on. Photo by Wendy Schneider

drama and the arts.

The second event took place before a standing room only crowd at Beth Jacob Synagogue on Nov. 5, and featured Michael Mason, a former Hamiltonian and Holocaust survivor who was interviewed by Elin Beaumont, the senior educational outreach and events coordinator for the Azrieli Foundation survivor memoirs program.

At a time when many survivors have reached a point in their lives when it is too difficult to continue to speak out, Mason's story exemplifies extraordinary fortitude and personal courage by continuing to share his story. His memoir, which focuses as much on rebuilding his life in Canada as on his experiences during the war, is available at the Federation office by calling 905-648-0605.

More than 400 people came out to the Canadian premiere of the Holocaust Survivor Klezmer Band on Nov. 9.

The band's origins go back just over a year ago when Saul Dreier, 90, heard about the death at the age of 110 of Alice Herz-Sommer, who had survived Theresienstadt by playing the piano on orders of the

Nazis to fool the Red Cross. Dreier, who had himself survived several concentration camps by playing in informal choirs, approached fellow musician Ruby Sosnowicz, 87, about starting a Klezmer band.

The concert and asked was truly a celebration of life. The band's repertoire of classic Yiddish songs and other popular tunes had the audience tapping their feet and swaying to the music, their rendition of Ba'Shana Ha'Ba'ah bringing the house down. The positive energy and joy in the room were palpable.

During what was arguably the evening's most poignant moment, Sosnowicz's daughter, Chanarose Sosnowicz, asked the Holocaust survivors among the audience to rise and be acknowledged, at which point a handful of individuals, their faces shining with pride, rose from their seats to resounding applause.

"Our Holocaust Education Week deliberately ended on a high note with a program about triumph over tragedy and rebirth," said Federation CEO, Barb Babij, while praising Dreier and Sosnowicz for their "mission to bring peace to the world through music."

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# The world according to Mordechai Kedar

Leading academic of Arab world sees no chance for peace in the Middle East

by WENDY SCHNEIDER  
the Hamilton Jewish News

**D**r. Mordechai Kedar is a man on a mission. One of Israel's leading experts on the Arab world, the senior lecturer at Bar Ilan University's Department of Arabic was interviewed by the HJN last month ahead of a speaking engagement for lead donors sponsored by the Hamilton Jewish Federation. With the zeal of a missionary, Kedar is intent on getting the message out that the source of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not due to Israel's holding on to territories captured in 1967, but with an Islamic culture that cannot abide the existence of a Jewish state in its midst.

**Can you comment on the current round of violence in Israel and the resulting Israeli discourse?**

The struggle today is not between the 'right' and the 'left.' It is between right and wrong. People with liberal views try to downplay the role of religion in politics, because they themselves don't have a religious point of view, but unfortunately our neighbours remind us again and again that their primary motivation is religious in nature. More and more people in Israel are understanding that the Left's message that claimed our neighbours would accept us one day was wrong, and those who were willing to give peace a chance have lost their faith in the whole thing.

**You yourself were once affiliated with the left. What happened?**

I was an officer in the army in the 1982 Lebanon War and I saw how Ariel Sharon, who was then minister of defense and Rafal Eitan, who was then chief of staff, managed the war and I became leftist in my heart.

After the war I distanced myself from anything connected to Sharon and the Likud party and I joined an organization called Netivot Shalom, the religious sister of Peace Now. I took part in activities, demonstrations and all kinds of things in those years. But a few things happened to change my mind. First was when I was offered by one of the Arab activists from the counterpart of Netivot Shalom to resign from the university and they will pay my salary, so it drew my attention to the question, maybe the whole thing is about money.

Another was the eruption of the Second Intifada at the end of September of 2000. I was slightly injured (by a suicide bomber) but this isn't what changed my mind. What changed my mind was realizing that we were actually facing a jihad and it wasn't about the occupied territories of Judea and Samaria, but about the "occupied territories" of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Beersheba. Little by little I realized that this was a nice dream led by (former prime minister Shimon) Peres and (former Member of Knesset Yossi) Beilin and some others who dragged (the late Israeli prime minister Yitzchak) Rabin into the trap of signing (the Oslo) agreement with the Palestinians without any exit.



Dr. Mordechai Kedar at a speaking engagement sponsored by Hamilton Jewish Federation. Photo by Wendy Schneider

**You've been very critical of Shimon Peres and his vision for peace in the Middle East. Why is that?**

After the Oslo Agreement in 1995, Shimon Peres took two jumbo jets full of Israeli researchers and high tech people to the Casablanca Conference in Morocco to show the Arab world what Israel can give them: medicine, agriculture, industry, infrastructure, water management – every aspect of life, and every one of them made a presentation about what his company can contribute. But afterwards we started to see articles in the Arab papers accusing Peres of wanting to subjugate the Arab world. ... so they interpreted the whole Casablanca conference as a scheme tailored by the Zionists in order to take over the Arab world through all these innovations that they want to insert into our societies. Peres came in good faith ... but they

see things from their culture, not from the Israeli culture. Because the Israeli culture means development at any price, solving problems at any price, because this is who we are, this is what we do ... Peres was the worst statesman because he was basing his policy on dreams rather than reality.

**The Palestinian narrative of displacement and victimhood appears to have more adherents than the Israeli narrative today. What, if anything, can be done about that?**

First of all, I don't like the word narrative because the word narrative is used for political correctness, in order to show, you know, well if you killed your daughter because she brought shame on the family, we understand it, this is your culture. Your narrative. I don't buy it. Look even after 9/11 which happened more or

less a year after the beginning of the Second Intifada, the world didn't want to understand that we are facing the same jihad.

What's that about? Why doesn't the world want to understand?

"Maybe because people were believing that if you just give them the territories, (the Arabs) will love you and kiss you. But the world forgets that before the occupation of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, there was no peace. Jordan occupied the West Bank for 19 years between 1948 and 67, that's 7,000 days. They had 7,000 opportunities to establish a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, so why didn't they do it? The answer is that, the Palestinians are Muslims so if Jordanians rule Jerusalem there's no difference, but when Jews rule Jerusalem, that's the problem.

**Is Netanyahu good or bad for Israel?**

Netanyahu is a necessity. Because Israel must project power and project the fact that it will be resolute in defeating its enemies. Whoever begs for peace in the Middle East is viewed as somebody who has lost the battle and is begging for his life. It is sad to see the lack of real understanding on the part of Israelis and the rest of the world as to what actually is happening in Israel because there is only one word that describes the truth about what the other side sees as reality ... That word, and it is the only applicable word, is "Jihad." This, to many Israelis, is the word "that must not be said" because it tells us is that what we in Israel are experiencing at the present time is an Islamic religious war.

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The B'nai Brith Hamilton Sports Celebrity Dinner bringing the best in sports entertainment to Hamilton.  
Photo by Donna Waxman

## B'NAI BRITH SPORTS DINNER

by BRENT CLIFFORD, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

The B'nai Brith Hamilton Sports Celebrity Dinner, presented by Investors Group, is Hamilton's most anticipated annual charitable fundraising event. For 65 years, we've been bringing the best in sports entertainment to Hamilton, and raised more than \$2 million dollars for local charities. Over the years, the B'nai Brith Sports Celebrity Dinner has supported many worthwhile organizations, including B'nai Brith Canada, the Hamilton Jewish community Centre, UJA, JNF, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, St. Joseph's Healthcare Foundation and many more.

### Did you know?

- At 65 years old, The B'nai Brith Hamilton Sports Celebrity Dinner is one of the oldest annual charity fundraising dinner in Canada.
- One year, Bob Bratina said on the radio that our reception is the best (networking) room in the city. It's a who's who. Everyone wants to be there.
- More than 1,000 people attend the B'nai Brith Sports Celebrity Dinner – making it the largest annual charity fundraising dinner in Hamilton.
- Over the years, the dinner has brought the best of the sporting world to Hamilton, including some notables like Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Sparky Anderson, Doug Gilmour, Jean Beliveau and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.
- The 50th year honoured "Original six" Hall of Famers: Guy Lafleur, Red Kelly, Bobby Hull, Harry Howell, Johnny Bower and Phil Esposito.

We are grateful to have the generous support from Investors Group as the Presenting Sponsor of the dinner, and long-time support from partners like The Hamilton Spectator, Turkstra Lumber, Scarfone Hawkins LLP, Leschuk-Weisz, Dunlop Associates, Scantex Graphic Services, OKD Marketing and New Horizon Development Group.

The organizing committee is 100-per-cent volunteer and generously donates their time and experience to this charitable event. Our committee includes: Paula Andreychuk, Laura Boone, Kelly Braley, Lu Cacioppo, Marvin Cohen, Husein Daya, Kyle Foster, Michelle Foster, Stephen Krieger, Zak Krieger, Richard Levy, Brian Lewis, Ryan McLean, Rebecca Swirsky, Lowell Richter, Gary Waxman and is co-chaired by Brent Clifford and Jeff Paikin. Please support all of our sponsors and volunteers who have demonstrated their commitment to our community.

### Important details:

B'nai Brith Hamilton Sports Celebrity Dinner, Monday February 1, 2016  
Hamilton Convention Centre, Reception at 5 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
www.bbsportsdinner.com

For tickets – Laura Boone, laura@nhdg.ca, 905-777-0000

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*Honouring our fathers and our mothers*

## A Poignant Tribute to Aaron Shiffman

### Our Man for All Seasons

On October 25 Aaron Shiffman, a champion of Jewish traditions and values, who has served as the executive director of Hamilton's Chevra Kadisha, the Hamilton Hebrew Academy, the Adas Israel Synagogue, and as Mashgiach at Shalom Village was honoured at the Adas Israel for his dedication in serving Shalom Village and the Jewish community of Hamilton.

"This recognition is but a small token of our deep appreciation of Aaron's selfless generosity at times of both individual need and community need," says Dr. Larry Levin, Board Member for Shalom. This tribute comes as no surprise as Aaron leaves an indelible mark on all he meets.

Aaron's lifelong devotion to Mitzvot, rooted in Torah, demonstrates how one person, having the compassion to care and the dedication to act, can make a profound difference. Indeed, Aaron

continues to make a profound difference in all of our lives.

Rabbi Green captured this sentiment when he spoke of Aaron Shiffman, "Thank you for being our friend, thank you continuing to inspire us, continuing to lead us, and continuing to show us what a godly man truly is."

Over 300 people gathered to celebrate the legacy of a remarkable man, and learn the lessons of his remarkable life. May he continue to inspire us and be a blessing for us all.

Yasher koach Mr. Shiffman. May you go forward with strength.

It's not too late to honour Aaron with a donation! If you would like to make a donation call 905-529-1613 or visit [www.shalomvillage.ca](http://www.shalomvillage.ca)



Aaron Shiffman celebrated with his family and community.

Photo credit: Wendy Schneider

### A warm welcome to Deanna Levy



Shalom Village is pleased to welcome Deanna Levy to our family as she takes on the role of director of communications and strategic projects. Deanna will work with our executive leadership team to set and guide the strategy and execute the communications to drive and articulate Shalom Village's mission, vision, and messages. Deanna comes with a broad range of work experience in communications in the public, private and government sectors. She is completing a Masters of Communication Management from McMaster University and Syracuse University. We look forward to Deanna bringing her unique experience and talent to the Shalom Village team.

### 2015 Shalom Village Walk/Run

**November 15, 2015** - Hundreds of runners and walkers will be joined by family, friends, volunteers and spectators as they participate in walking and running events at the 14th annual Shalom Village Walk/Run.

It will be a fun-filled fall day for people of all ages. The Shalom Village Walk/Run was an inspirational gathering in support of the Club Fitness Centre and the health and wellness programs that keep Shalom Village residents fit and well.

After the races, smiles and laughter, kosher hot dogs and homemade latkes will be shared with residents, staff and the community in support of Shalom Village.

A special thank you to our volunteers, donors, and participants who make this



The Club supports residents and members from the community over the age of 70.

event a memorable experience every year!

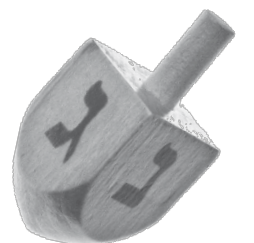
If you would like to support the Club Fitness Centre and Active Living at Shalom Village, please contact the Shalom Village Charitable Foundation at 905-529-1613, ext 264.



*Heartfelt thanks to the families of Jerry Lubieniecki and Jean-Jacques Carsenat, for requesting donations to Shalom Village in lieu of flowers. Memorial donations support the Possibilities Fund at Shalom Village, making many special programs and services possible for our residents.*



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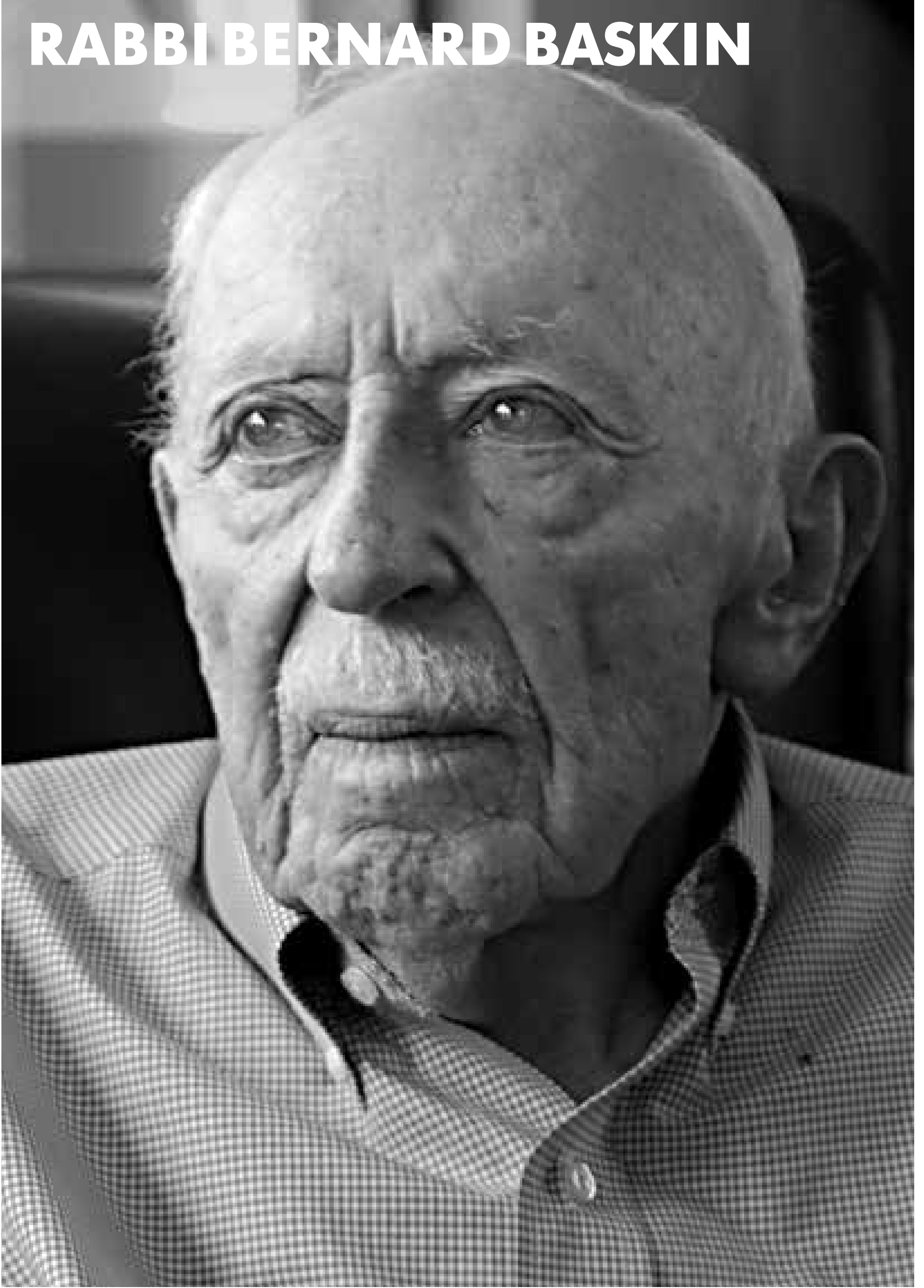


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# RABBI BERNARD BASKIN



Unquestionably the most famous Jewish Hamiltonian, Rabbi Bernard Baskin, at an unbelievable 95 years of age, is as articulate and sharp-witted as he was during his 60-year rabbinical career. The rabbi's thoughtful speculations about the future of synagogue life and the preoccupations of our modern age, demonstrate, without a doubt, that he will always be ...

# One of a Kind

*A series that profiles our community's most interesting people*

Story and photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

## What do you see as your greatest accomplishments?

Well I think there are two of them. Number one is my bringing the message of Judaism to a larger community. And number two, bringing the message of liberal Judaism to the Jewish community. Anshe Sholom is the oldest liberal congregation in Canada. When I got here in 1949 we had maybe 85 families in the congregation. When I gave up my ministry after 40 years we had 450 families. So that, and my interfaith activity probably loom in my mind as the major achievements.

## How did literature come to play such a central part in your career?

My father was very much a scholar. He had a very large library and encouraged reading, so I became a good reader early on. I believe very strongly that if you don't learn to read in your early years, you never come to it. People who find no interest in books and literature are people who unfortunately never learn the kind of wonders they can find in the world of books from an early age. I fortunately did. And I found that there was always an audience receptive to discussion about books. The sisterhood of my first congregation in Denver had a monthly book meeting. Well I found that very good and so I became involved there and in the general community and my interest in literature and what it offers in the widest sense became one of the major things in my ministry. One of the most interesting and unusual venues where I gave book talks was in a government mandated leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana, where there were a number of Jewish residents. Another unforgettable venue was in the local jail in Denver, where I was asked to give book talks to its Jewish prisoners. I found those who came to the lectures for the most part, were quite intelligent, as well as well read. Leprosarium and prison. Books will carry you a long way, into many foreign ports.

## Are we seeing the decline of the synagogue?

Well there's increasingly a falling away from organized religion, which is unfortunate. I think digitalization, news information lead away from the notion of the synagogue. The increasing importance of science in our society, giving answers to ancient questions about what causes all of your ailments and diseases have people looking to psychiatrists and doctors rather than what the rabbis have to say on Friday night, drawing inspiration from the Torah.



Religion is cyclical in the sense that there are times when it draws a great deal of involvement and times when it loses that. If you hang on, like the stock market, it comes back, you know.

Synagogues, certainly Reform and Conservative congregations, and to some degree Orthodox, seem to realize you have to bring in new modes of worship, and ways of understanding Judaism to congregants and I think this will prove successful as time goes on. Religion is cyclical in the sense that there are times when it draws a great deal of involvement and times where it loses that. We're in one of these waning periods when religion is losing out to other things. If you hang on, like the stock market, it comes back, you know.

## What are the greatest challenges facing a rabbi today?

Well one is to keep his or her congregation interested in Judaism. Another thing is to bring younger people into the fold. You know one of the main reasons for religion, apart from doctrine, is community. I mean why does an average person join a shul? To build friendships. A member of your family dies. Members of the congregation come to the funeral. They come to the shiva. So the synagogue, or the church, apart from doctrine, becomes a place where people meet, where people can find answers to some of their questions from others who have suffered in a similar way, or found joy in a similar way. It makes for a kind of involvement which you don't get when you live alone. I think younger people, increasingly don't seem to need that. They find their meaning in Facebook you know, get all the

information they want from their friends. They don't need a synagogue youth group. There's also another answer these days to lack of synagogue membership. People say, we're spiritual. We don't find meaning in prayers which are institutionalized from a prayer book or what our rabbi has to say every week using the Torah as a basis for his sermons. We find our meaning in the cosmos. We find meaning in friends who can give us inspiration, not in a weekly service at a specified hour. In other words a kind of new mood has developed where people think they're spiritual. I think it's just an escape from responsibility in many cases. And the word spirituality becomes a new code word for not getting involved.

## Do you think we are a fragmented community?

I think in some ways the Jewish community is more cohesive today than in the past. There was a time when the congregations thought only in terms of their own future, rather than the Jewish community's future. That's still true of course. Each institution has to think in terms of its future, in terms of its membership. We're a small community and it's very difficult to draw from new people if we don't have enough of them to maintain membership. At the same time, being a small community, we do feel a sense of unity which doesn't exist, for instance, in Toronto. In many ways, especially in activities which involve the total community like Yom HaShoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut, we find a way of getting together, which is very wholesome and useful. When I came to Hamilton 60 years ago there were 3,500 Jews in town. Today there are close to 5,000. 60 years. That's a very, very small growth. Why? Well most of our younger people move to Toronto. It's true of my children. We lose our younger people. And now older people are moving to join their grandchildren in Toronto. Will this change one day? I hope one day it will. Hamilton is becoming much more of a liveable city, much more of a city that offers opportunities, culturally and otherwise. I leave it to other people to make predictions about the future. I won't be here to see it all but I hope what we'll have is a fruitful, growing, livable, vibrant Jewish community until the days to come.

## WEB EXCLUSIVE

Watch *One of a Kind* online: The full interview with Rabbi Baskin at [www.hamiltonjewishnews.com](http://www.hamiltonjewishnews.com).



PRESERVING AND STRENGTHENING THE  
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# Why the grandchildren of Hamilton's

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

**O**n the day of Max Steinberg's funeral, 30,000 Israelis showed up as a gesture of support to his grieving family. The spontaneous and collective response to the death of the 25-year-old American recruit who fell in battle during 2014's Operation Protective Edge, is a dramatic illustration of how Israelis feel about their country's lone soldiers.

The term lone soldier refers to young people serving in the IDF who have no immediate family living in Israel. According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, there were close to 2,000 new immigrant lone soldiers serving in the IDF last year. That number was divided among three enlistment programs that include Machal, now an 18-month program for those who aren't ready to take out Israeli citizenship, Garin Tzabar a two-year program where groups of approximately 20 soldiers live together at a kibbutz and experience their military service together and Hesder, a five-year yeshiva-based program that combines service in the Israeli army with advanced Jewish study.

Josh Goldberg, the son of Hamilton residents Joel and Lanie Goldberg and grandson of the late Rabbi Israel and Gloria Silverman, was in his third year abroad at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem when he first heard about Garin Tzabar. Attracted by the program's kibbutz setting and its offering its recruits a built-in support system had enormous appeal, he decided to finish his degree at York University and return to Israel the following year. In 2011, Goldberg, then 23, boarded a chartered Nefesh b'Nefesh flight out of JFK along with 150 other lone soldiers. His group settled into Kibbutz Sa'ad near the Gaza border, that would be their home away from home for the next two years.

What motivates a person with a terrible fear of needles to sign up for a combat medic course? What does it say about someone who, despite a fear of heights, decides to try out for a paratrooper unit? These are the questions that come to mind as Goldberg cheerfully recounts the time he fainted during a mock trauma exercise on the second day of medic training, or how he got through five parachute jumps.

"You have your parachute on and it hurts your back," he said. "You're nauseous. It's really hot. Then you line up and all your friends just start disappearing out the door of the plane. And you just get to the door, you stick your hands out and you're outside of the plane."

It only takes a few minutes of conversation with Goldberg to grasp that his ability to see the world through an almost child-like lens of enthusiasm and positive thinking has served him well, and given him a level of maturity beyond his years.

Being an IDF soldier, "you overcome lots of psychological and mental blocks," he said. "Lots of weeks when you're in training exercise when you don't get as much nourishment as you're used to. You definitely don't get as much sleep ... but you just have to push through it and paint a smile on your face."

Did coming from a relatively sheltered, North American background put him at a disadvantage? "There are a lot of Americans who feel like that but I personally didn't," he said. "I knew what I was getting into, you know, the volunteer spirit, and I was very excited about getting my ass kicked a little bit."

If anything, Goldberg said he felt at an advantage.

"I was 23 when I first drafted and everyone else was 18 or 19. So I

had a little bit more perspective on life and could joke about things ... If I get punished for an hour, it's only an hour, it's not the end of the world, while these kids are basically just out of high school, an hour extra being on the base instead of getting to go home was a really big deal for a lot of them."

Goldberg was in the regular army during the 2011 Gaza operation and in the reserves during 2014's Operation Protective Edge, but fortunately, he has never seen actual combat. Still, his IDF experiences have brought him a level of acceptance into Israeli society that he feels he wouldn't have had otherwise.

"It's an experience that's a really important part of the country," he said, "and you're just able to relate to people of the same generation a lot easier when you served in the same bases, you understand the same slang."

There was never any doubt in Shmarya Green's mind that one day he would be living in Israel. The son of Moishe and Faigy Green of Toronto, Green made aliyah in 2006 directly after he graduated high school, enrolling in Yeshivat Har Etzion, a Hesder yeshiva located in the south Judean hills outside of Jerusalem.

Green opted to register in the yeshiva's Israeli stream, rather than its American program, "because I knew I was staying and that I wanted to go into the army so I spent a lot of time getting to know the Israelis because in the end you end up going to the army with them."

It was a strategy that served him well when Green was later accepted into the paratroopers brigade along with 10 of his classmates. The support they were able to offer each other was very helpful to him, especially during the difficult adjustment period.



Rebecca Baskin in an April 2011 photo during her days as a basic training commander.

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Baskin

"It was pretty hard in the beginning because you don't know what to expect. The Israelis, I guess, are born growing up knowing that they're going into the army ... and even though I had a lot of friends that went in before me, and I spoke to a lot of people, still nothing was really able to prepare you for (going from) being in charge of your life to being told every single second what to do."

Within a month, Green understood the basic truth about army service, that "if you do what they tell you to do, things are going to be a lot easier."

In the IDF's official doctrine of ethics, The Spirit of the IDF, the code of "purity of arms" states that, "The soldier shall make use of his weaponry and power only for the fulfillment of the mission and solely to the extent required; he

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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# three iconic rabbis joined the IDF



A December 2012 photograph of Josh Goldberg during a training exercise near the Dead Sea. Photo courtesy of Josh Goldberg



Shmarya Green (far right) and his cousin Shami Seidenfeld (left) shown here with their grandparents Rabbi Morton and Sylvia Green in April of 2009. Photo courtesy of Shmarya Green

will maintain his humanity even in combat. The soldier shall not employ his weaponry and power in order to harm non-combatants or prisoners of war, and shall do all he can to avoid harming their lives, body, honor and property."

Asked to comment upon the extent to which he experienced that code being put into practice, Green reflected on a several month period in the territories, where his unit was assigned on anti-terrorism patrols.

"There were times when they were throwing rocks or Molotov cocktails at us, where we were not allowed to use deadly force," he said. "You shoot in the air, you shoot at the ground, only last case scenario you're allowed to shoot at their feet, because they don't want to risk any possible civilian casualties, even if it means putting us more in harm's way. So yes, I one hundred per cent agree that the IDF is a moral army."

Rebecca Baskin agrees. The daughter of David Baskin and Joan

Garson of Toronto, Baskin enrolled in a commander's course after her three months of basic training through the Machal program, and was soon, herself, overseeing basic training for new recruits.

An image of a petite Goldie Hawn shouting out orders in the film Private Benjamin immediately came to mind. But Baskin said her job involved "more than just yelling at them."

"There's really a personal aspect of making sure that everyone is making the adjustment well because it's a huge change," she said. In addition to teaching basic army skills like how to use their weapons, Baskin led sessions on the IDF values.

"There's a list of values that the IDF has decided are important for us to uphold, and as a commander one of the set talks that we would have with our soldiers was to introduce these values and discuss them, and then they were given moral dilemmas and asked to talk about what would be the right thing to do and

the right way to think about it," she said.

"This is not an army that shies away from the difficult questions. They look difficulty in the eye and even soldiers, who are not combat soldiers, who are probably not going to be the ones standing at checkpoints – the army makes sure that they're thinking about these questions. That's it not just empty wearing of a uniform that they know what they're doing and why, that their power is not unlimited."

There is great affection and appreciation, among Israelis and Jews across the world, for the young people who are putting themselves on the line to defend the Jewish State. But when it comes to global media, the opposite is the case. As a new immigrant who chose to serve in the IDF, Baskin was asked how the widespread demonization of Israel in general and the IDF in particular, makes her feel.

"It feels really awful," said Baskin. "Something that's definitely


different now from six years ago when I started living here is that I'm more quiet with people who don't know much about me. Sometimes you just don't want to have to deal with people's reactions and being seen in a certain way and have certain assumptions made of you because of where you live. I think that Israel is deeply misunderstood."

The common thread in the aliyah stories of Goldberg, Green and Baskin is twofold – each of them grew up in families with deeply Zionist roots, and none of them felt the loneliness that can be the reality for some lone soldiers. Goldberg and Green both had the support of a large extended family in Israel, while Baskin was embraced by two separate kibbutz families, one dating back to when she was in Israel the first time during a gap year abroad, and the other that gave her a home away from home during her Machal years. What they also share is an idealism, a love of their new

country and a driving ambition that will undoubtedly serve them well as they pursue the next chapter of their lives.

Goldberg is currently living in Jerusalem where he is enrolled in the Ministry of Tourism's challenging tour guide course. After working for several years for an online payment service, Green is back in school pursuing a law degree at the Academic College of Israel in Ramat-Gan. Baskin, who became an Israeli citizen in 2011, is living in Ma'ale HaHamisha, a beautiful kibbutz located on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and pursuing a law degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is currently considering either a career in the foreign ministry or going into private practice with a specialty in international law.

The life choices made by these three young people serve as the greatest possible affirmation of the values in which they were raised. They do their parents, their grandparents and all of us proud.



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# Not in my name

## A JEWISH WOMAN'S RESPONSE TO THE TRC FINDINGS

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News



A woman comforts a survivor of the residential schools

Photo credit: The Canadian Press/Sean Kilpatrick

The scene, as described to me, sounded eerily familiar. Survivors of unspeakable acts of brutality filing past a display of shoes representing hundreds of children who had died, alone, abandoned and forgotten.

My sister-in-law, Brynah Schneider-Friedman was among approximately 250 Health Canada service providers offering emotional and psychological support to the people who had gathered in Ottawa for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) closing events last May 31 to June 3. A psychologist based in London, Ontario, Brynah's practice lies primarily in treating trauma, and many of her clients are First Nations individuals.

Within a day or two of her return, Brynah called to share her impressions of the four-day event, in which she was likely the only Jewish Health Canada service provider in attendance. Outraged by the many parallels to the Holocaust she perceived in the aboriginal experience, in her mind, there was no question but that the Canadian government-sponsored residential school system that operated from the mid-1800s until 1996 was an attempt at cultural genocide.

The shoes in the above description were actually moccasins, part of the Walking with our Sisters art installation that honours the lives of missing and murdered indigenous women and children. It was there that Brynah had the first of two encounters that would trigger a visceral reaction that left her feeling a sense of deep grief and outrage.

"It took me right to the concentration camps," she told me later. As her support team stood among the viewers on the look out for anyone in distress, Brynah

approached a distraught woman and her husband.

"She was just inconsolable and talked about how, while she had survived (the residential schools), so many of her friends had not." She went on to tell Brynah about a recurring nightmare in which she, the woman, was running through a forest during a blizzard, unable to help her friends who reached out to her. It was not uncommon, Brynah explained, for children, fleeing their residential schools, to freeze to death as they wandered aimlessly trying to find their way back to their homes.

"She hadn't spoken about this nightmare before ... It was heartbreaking."

That my sister-in-law was the first health care professional with whom this woman had an opportunity to speak about a trauma that, decades later, still haunted her dreams, brought home for her the way in which survivors of the residential schools have been utterly abandoned by our government.

The second encounter that most affected Brynah took place during a bus ride to a concert on the last day of the event. Noticing a man sitting alone, Brynah asked if she could take the seat next to him.

"He was an Inuit man," she said. "He started telling me about ... how five of them came from way up north and were promised really good accommodations, but instead found themselves in an apartment with only mattresses on the floor and not even a coffee maker."

"I usually have half a pot of coffee before I do anything," the man told her. "It just feels like it continues."

Signaling to her group leader that she would be delayed, Brynah offered to take him out for a cup of coffee. As they were



At the age of three, Inuit children were branded as a method of identification.

Photo courtesy of Brynah Schneider

**"Would we, as a Jewish community, tolerate that the truth not be in the history books?"**

getting off the bus he asked if he could show her something. Rolling up his sleeve he showed her his arm, revealing an ugly official-looking tattoo that had been branded on his arm by government officials when he was three years old.

"I was absolutely horrified," she said. The practice of branding Inuit children, she later learned, was as a way in which Canadian government chose to keep track of them. The practice started in 1935 and continued right up until 1969.

"I need to tell you that I have a very strong association to that," she told him, "because I'm a Jew." "I know where you associate it and that you know what this must feel like for me," he replied.

Is it reasonable to feel shame for something you had no idea was happening or took place when you were just a child? To my sister-in-law, the answer is an unequivocal yes.

"We're so busy pointing a finger at the Germans, but now and I feel that as a Jew, I have my own knowing of 'I didn't know,'" she said.

With ongoing demands for an inquest into this generation's missing and murdered indigenous women falling on deaf ears, Brynah fears that our collective tolerance of discrimination against our country's First Nations continues.

"I can assure you if this had been white women, there would have been an inquest by now," she said.

Of equal importance is that the truth about the atrocities committed on indigenous children be taught in our nation's schools.

"Would we, as a Jewish community, tolerate that the truth not be in the history books about what happened in the Second World War? I don't think so."



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# Na'amat Hamilton celebrates 35 years

Group honours its long-time members at celebratory meeting

by SIMONE ROTSTEIN, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

The rain was relentless as we gathered in the party room of Annette Richardson's condo. A lovely sukka, erected just outside the patio doors, was inaccessible in the downpour. Members of the Nitsan chapter of Na'amat Canada each brought a dish or drink to share along with warm smiles and enveloping hugs. It was the opening meeting of Na'amat's 35th year in Hamilton as well as a celebration of Na'amat Canada's 90th year. As we enjoyed the potluck dinner, the room was vibrant with laughter and chatting, creating a very congenial ambience.



Some of Na'amat Hamilton's long-time members (Back row, from l to r): Shelley Brown, Simone Rotstein, Adele Wolpert, Vivienne Epstein, Jan Hastie, Helen Mtetz, Wendy Schneider, Judy Caplan, Trish Eppel. Front row, l to r: Agi Meinhard, Dora Fischer. Photo by Anna Shkolnik

To a round of applause, Anna Shkolnik and Ronit Mesterman, the new co-presidents, welcomed new members and announced that Kim Thúy, award-winning author of *Ru and Mān*, would be this year's author at our annual luncheon on April 5, 2015. Also, the very successful Wellness Day would be repeated in 2016. Our year was starting on a positive note.

With flair and good humour, Susan Roth emceed the rest of this special meeting, the recognition of the Nitsan women who have been members for 20 or more years. Judy Caplan recalled meeting Norma Barkin in Toronto more than 35 years ago, "She asked me for help to initiate a Na'amat chapter in Hamilton. I gave her the names of women who I thought might

be interested." Norma nurtured the new Nitsan group for several years. Patricia Eppel remembered being the first co-president with Rivka Shaffir 'ah and, from that group, creating a supportive community for herself and her young family. Agi Meinhard added, "Besides the worthy cause and the pride I have in what the organization does in Israel, for me, Na'amat also stands for friendship and fun." Woman after woman was recognized and shared special memories of Na'amat and the important role our chapter has played in each of their lives.

Dessert, coffee and more schmoozing followed. Na'amat Hamilton is strong in its fundraising for Israel but equally dedicated to its members' well-being. The women of Nitsan have all felt the profound support of the group at difficult times in their lives. Nitsan offers stimulating monthly programs and is always open to new members. For information about our group or upcoming meetings you may write to: mesterm@mcmaster.ca or annashkolnik@hotmail.com. The evening ended with long goodbyes and then we stepped out into a dark but thankfully dry night.

# Wandering Aramean 2.0



Ben Shragge

relating the history of Ashkenazi migration, which is itself only one route of a much longer trek beginning in Canaan, or Ur, or Eden, or Africa, depending on how far back you want to go.

(I once tried answering that my ethnicity is also a religion, prompting my questioner to ask, "Islam?" No shortcuts to understanding there.)

Every Passover, Jews recite a verse from Deuteronomy: My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.

Like my father the wandering Aramean, I recently sojourned to a new land. Jacob went down to Egypt because famine was severe in the land of Canaan, whereas I went down to Boston for work, but still I feel I'm carrying on a tradition.

As a Canadian of ethnically ambiguous appearance, people sometimes ask me where I'm from. If I follow up with Hamilton, they ask where my parents were from. "Winnipeg" rarely settles the line of questioning.

My interviewers are looking for a country of origin along the lines of my favourite, not totally inaccurate opening guess, "You look like you're from Eastern Europe, but really far east." East doesn't typically include Manitoba.

I could explain that my grandparents lived in what was then Russia and Austria-Hungary but is now Ukraine and was previously Polish-Lithuania, but spoke a Germano-Hebraic language, and that their ancestors in turn came from somewhere else, and so on down the line; but saying I'm a nomad seems much simpler than

But while difficult to explain to descendants of settled peoples and cause for the occasional identity crisis, a nomadic background is useful in today's mobile economy where, as the editor of *Fast Company* magazine summarized in an article on millennials: "Our institutions are out of date; the long career is dead; any quest for solid rules is pointless, since we will be constantly rethinking them; you can't rely on an established business model or a corporate ladder to point your way; silos between industries are breaking down; anything settled is vulnerable."

In the world thus described, the willingness, even chutzpah, to leave narrow straits for greener pastures is an evolutionary advantage.

Maybe I'll settle down eventually, after the job drought passes. But it may take 40 years of wandering, subsisting on unleavened wages, to enter the land of milk and honey (or at least a comfortable upper middle class existence). And who knows where that promised position will be?

So now that I've made the trek from Hamilton to Boston, for an indeterminate period, final destination in life unknown, possessions in storage, office in a laptop case, I'll recite that "My father was a wandering Aramean" bit at Passover once more with feeling.

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MELINDA RICHTER

Arctic Experience McNaught Gallery

Janet McNaught, Marvin Cohen and Melinda Richter of the Arctic Experience McNaught Gallery

“It’s like she’s been here forever,” says Marvin Cohen about Melinda Richter, 33, a valued member of the team at Arctic Experience McNaught Gallery. Richter lives in and owns a store in Peterborough, while still working part-time for the folks who have been her mentors and biggest supporters. Theirs is an inspiring collaboration where everyone wins.

Story and photo by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

**How did Melinda come to be associated with the Arctic Experience McNaught Gallery?**

*McNaught:* In 2012 Melinda was finishing her program in museum studies at Fleming College in Peterborough and was looking for an internship. We knew that we needed to have some kind of fresh energy brought into the business and she fit in seamlessly. When Melinda graduated and was looking to do some kind of work in Hamilton as a base, we had her work with us part time.

**How did your business evolve once bringing Melinda on board?**

*McNaught:* At first we wanted to see if Melinda could help us build a business that was more relevant to younger collectors, because that was the model that we had had for years. But it wasn’t working anymore because artists were now representing themselves. At the same time we started to get more calls from people who said they were downsizing, and asking us what they should do with their art. So we began to realize that we needed to look at doing more collection management, consulting and appraising. Increasingly, our clients’ greatest need isn’t to add more artwork to what they own – it’s to know what they need to do with the stuff they have.

**What skills does Melinda bring to the table?**

*McNaught:* We told Melinda that we didn’t have a vested interest in doing anything in a particular way, that if she saw something that she thought could be done better, we’d talk about it and change it. We’re having her do all of our ad design now because she has a different eye. As well, Melinda really has strength in research and report preparation. She’s very good at talking to people and extracting their stories.

**How does it work with Melinda living in Peterborough and working for you part-time?**

*Cohen:* When Melinda told us that she wanted to move to Peterborough, we had to rethink our long-term plans and figure out how she could still be a good fit with us while developing and growing in her own direction. We’ve adapted by making appraisal appointments for days that Melinda is here, and in the interim she does the research and prepares the reports. When she brings them in we review it and make the revisions. So she doesn’t have to be here to do a lot of that work and this arrangement fits into her schedule and with her business.

**It sounds like Melinda is living her dream, in doing exactly what she was trained to do.**

*Richter:* I’m really enjoying my shop in Peterborough where I do appraisals and sell art, antiques and vintage pieces. At the same time, I appreciate that I can still work part time in Hamilton for the people who gave me my start in the business. Janet and Marvin have given me a lot of advice. They’ve helped me out with the difficult appraisals and given me inventory once in a while, so it’s really nice that there’s been a reciprocal relationship.

**What advice do you have for other small businesses interested in accommodating young entrepreneurs?**

*McNaught:* Because we needed Melinda for her skill and expertise, we knew that we had to make the job relevant for her to continue to be interested in working here. Giving Melinda the freedom to develop and explore, combined with our years of experience has really contributed to the success of our business. It’s been a mentoring relationship but we will go to Melinda for advice on lots of things as well, especially about effective communication. At this point, Melinda is irreplaceable in our business. We could never hope to hire someone else with her unique skill set and contribution.

## TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM



Leadership with vision at Temple Anshe Sholom

Photo by Terry Babij

PAULA BARUCH

This is what leadership looks like at Temple Anshe Sholom. Our 5776 board of trustees is well into their year of growing as leaders and as Jews. We are especially pleased this year to gain new Board members from the next generation with the election of Benjamin Levitt and Donald Hill. With representation of the full range of our membership we are indeed blessed at Temple with governance that is passionate, energetic and efficient. As we move into the next 165 years of Temple life we have recognized the need to have vision and courage to embrace changes ahead. We value this so much that we have a vision committee, led by Ginny Levine

and Dr. Richard Levy, dedicated to keeping abreast of our members emerging needs and responding to those needs with creative solutions that take advantage of our talented membership. On our website we share our collective vision and plans for moving into the future. It would be impossible to name all of wonderful volunteers and leaders in our Temple family. Dealing with the financial and business needs of a synagogue is a challenging task. It is a sacred service to guide a centre of religious living and religious action. In this season of light and miracles we certainly feel that our menorah is amply fuelled for a bright and shining year.

## BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

BENSON HONIG

Beth Jacob is delighted to announce the return of its Israeli Film Festival on Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20, 2016. Opening night on March 20 at 8 p.m. will feature the acclaimed film, *Dancing Arabs*. This is a magnetic portrait of a scholarship granted Palestinian-Israeli boy's years in a prestigious boarding school in Jerusalem, where he struggles with issues of language, culture, and identity: He makes friends, falls in love, shares adolescence, and eventually experiences the transitions of his Jewish school friends as they begin their army service. The movie provides some excellent vignettes into what it means to grow up in Israel.

We follow with two excellent Sunday films that take the always-unique 'out of the box' Israeli perspective, with these movies, some very funny Israeli tongue in cheek 'black humor' examining, of all

things, euthanasia, death and suicide. We promise you'll enjoy these surreal romps touching on subjects we normally think of as taboo – but of course – in Israel – few things are sacred!

The Farewell Party, at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, tells the story of residents of a retirement home who build a machine for self-euthanasia in order to help their terminally ill friend.

The second film, *Dr. Pomerantz*, starring legendary Assi Dayan, (son of Moshe Dayan), was Dayan's final work as a director as well as an actor, before his death in May 2014. The film, which will be screened at 2 p.m. on Sunday, tells the story of an unemployed clinical psychologist, who decides to rent out his apartment to potentially suicidal tenants as a money making enterprise.

## TAS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

LAURA WOLFSON

In early November, our students went on a field trip to Shalom Village. As part of their learning about the Jewish Life Cycle, they met first for a lesson on what Jewish tradition teaches us about caring for the elderly. They learned that the phrase "kibbud av v'em" has a meaning that extends beyond honouring and respecting our own parents, and that it is a mitzvah for us all to show proper respect to and care for the elderly members of our community. Then, they helped lead the Shabbat morning service, capably singing joyous Shabbat songs and leading some of the prayers.

Afterwards, they had an opportunity to "mix and mingle" with some of the residents at a Shabbat Kiddush luncheon. The children loved meeting the residents, and the residents loved being with the children. During Chanukah our students will walk over to Shalom Village on a Wednesday afternoon and provide some "dinner theatre entertainment" for the apartment residents. This will include songs and performances that they will have worked



Temple teens stock the kosher food bank shelves. Photo by Rose Bloomberg

on in the weeks preceding Chanukah.

Our TASTY (Temple Anshe Sholom Temple Youth) group also spent a day bringing joy to others when they participated in LovingKindness Day, a local event designed to promote kindness in the community. Our TASTY team, along with others, helped to reach the final goal of 1000 acts of kindness to be performed in one day. Great job, TASTY teens!

## BETH JACOB HEBREW SCHOOL

RINA RODAK

Beth Jacob's Hebrew School has been fruitful and multiplied. The school opened in September with more than 40 students, more than double the number from last year. Wednesday evenings has the shul buzzing with children from kindergarten through Grade 8.

Every week begins with a full school service led by Cantor Eyal. The students learn different prayers and songs related to weekday, Shabbat and holiday services. The school then breaks up into four age-based groups. The younger groups (K-2) are taught by Fay Schmerling and Gila Lawton. The older groups are taught by Cantor Eyal, Inbal Chaimovitz and Rina Rodak.

An optional Hebrew Language Intensive course has also been introduced. Taught by Inbal Chaimovitz, two levels of learning are offered with the goal of building on the students' current level of language knowledge and application.

Our mixed approach of more traditional teaching from Mrs. Schmerling and out-of-the-box arts-based teaching from Ms.

Lawton is proving to be effective and engaging. Each week, Ms. Lawton uses the Torah portion or upcoming holiday as inspiration for an art project. Each student has their own sketch book and at the end of the year they will take home the illustrated masterpieces.

Cantor Eyal will be teaching the Hebrew School students all about Neil Diamond, Bette Midler, Gedde Lee and so many more. The discussions will cover issues of values and identity and lyrics' connection to Jewish themes and values. In Chaimovitz's class, students will be building their Hebrew vocabularies. Rina Rodak's classes will introduce the students to philosophical questions in an effort to unpack the issues with support from Jewish texts and rabbinic opinions.

Over Sukkot we hosted the first of four joint learning programs with Temple Anshe Sholom Hebrew School – that brought another 30 plus students into the building.

What an amazing start to a new phase in the life of our Hebrew school.

*The Hamilton Chapter wishes all our Donors, Families and Friends a Warm and Festive*

# Chag Ha'Chanukah

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# The Top 10 reasons you should plan a visit to Israel

JNF STAFF

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7. Marvel at Israel's unique geography.
8. You will feel like you've come home.
9. See for yourself why people go back time and again.
10. You will fall in love!

The best way to visit Israel for the first time or even if you've been before is to join a group. Take a group tour. The Jewish National Fund offers a variety of missions that will suit almost anyone's interests and needs. We cater to seasoned visitors, first-timers, Jews and non-Jews alike – anyone looking to see why Israel is such an extraordinary country. JNF Missions are experiences unlike any other. Every trip is unique and our itineraries are designed with special interests in mind.

In addition to visiting many of the cultural, religious and historical highlights of Israel, JNF Missions transcend the boundaries of a standard trip and provide participants with a deeper connection to the land

and people of Israel. With access to many sites and places that most tourists are not allowed to visit, participants are guaranteed a unique experience and gain a new perspective on Israel.

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JNF Missions are intensely emotional, educational and spiritual experiences that provide participants with a lifetime of irreplaceable memories. Mission participants return home with a heightened sense of purpose, a deeper connection to the land and the people of Israel, a newfound understanding of what JNF has accomplished in the past 108 years and how JNF plans to continue its work in the future.

Sign up for one of our missions and we promise you a wonderful, positive and unrivaled experience! And, keep in mind that we want you to have an awesome experience so forget the conflict and turmoil all around – you will not be placed in harm's way and you will have the most amazing experience you can imagine.

## ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION



Participants showcase their art at the Adas Ladies Paint Night.

Photo by Tanya Zbili

GOLDIE WEISER

Under the leadership of our new Sisterhood president, Stefanie Waxman, the Adas Israel has launched the new year with a series of innovative and community building projects. Following a successful women's brunch and Simchat Torah program, the group hosted an incredible night of fun and creativity with professional artist Tanya Zbili. The evening proved to be a night of bonding, fun, and expression.

The evening consisted of a guided, step-by-step, painting session. The participants, most of whom had little to no painting experience, were able to produce individual works of art in under two hours. The instructor demonstrated various

techniques, including how to properly blend colours together and how to use an angle brush. Although each participant essentially painted the same picture, there were subtle differences found within each painting that reflected each woman's individuality. More importantly, the evening created an opportunity to cultivate relationships with each other in this diverse and vibrant community.

Other programs that have been organized recently include women's self defense classes, challah baking, Halacha classes and regular brunches. For more information about Sisterhood visit [www.adasisrael.ca](http://www.adasisrael.ca) or email [adasisraelsisterhood@gmail.com](mailto:adasisraelsisterhood@gmail.com).

## JCC Coordinator

JCC of Hamilton and Area has an opening for a full time position for JCC coordinator.

We are looking for a high energy, self-motivated individual who is good at multi-tasking and can function within a team and/or alone. Responsibilities include administrative tasks, public relations, working with the community calendar, development, flyers and e-bulletins, community relations, incentives and outreach, management of all existing programs, camp, fundraising for specific programs, leadership training, first aid administration.

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## JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES

CAROL KRAMES

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[info@jewishfreeloan.ca](mailto:info@jewishfreeloan.ca). Guarantors are required for loans.

Save the date Sunday, March 13, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. for the Hamilton Jewish Social Services annual wine tasting event.

*May your hearts and home be filled with light and joy.*

# Happy Chanukah!



Brad Wiseman

Hon. David Steinberg

Barry Yellin

Jeffrey Manlshen

No other law firm in the city offers as many practice areas or services to our clients. If you have any questions about what we can provide you, feel free to contact us.



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Lawyers in your Corner

## KEHILA JCDS

JULIA KOLLEK



Kehila French teacher, Mme Anne DeClara and SK student Asher Dressler. Photo by Naomi Bernstein

Kehila students are now the first in Hamilton to be learning three languages! This year French has been added to the English and Hebrew curriculum.

Madame Anne DeClara has joined the Kehila family, bringing her 33 years of French immersion teaching experience with the Hamilton-Wentworth Board. Anne received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Toronto and also has her Principal's qualification from Brock University.

Studies have shown that a multilingual brain is nimbler, quicker and better able to deal with ambiguities. Children in particular have all the capacities necessary to master two or more languages at the same time – already evident in countries such as

Switzerland and Belgium where speaking several languages is the norm.

The added bonus is Kehila's integrated curriculum, where studies traditionally taught separately and in isolation are brought together encouraging students make connections and build knowledge. Learning becomes much more engaging and children begin to think critically.

Some other recent and exciting programming at Kehila includes bee-keeper's visit and a field trip to Stratford to see The Diary of Anne Frank onstage.

For more information about Kehila go to our website [kehilaschool.com](http://kehilaschool.com) or call Michele at our office to book a tour 905.529.7725.

## JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

STEVEN BROCK

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 13, 2016 as the Jewish Genealogical Society of Hamilton and Area welcomes Chaim Grafstein, who will explore the evolution of the Moroccan Jewish community in the Toronto area. Grafstein will discuss the specific features that distinguish Jews of Moroccan descent from the broader Sephardic Jewish community at large. He will delve into the history of the community and the ways it has been impacted by being not only part of English-speaking Canadian society, but also as a minority within a larger Jewish community of predominantly European descent.

Grafstein completed his Bachelor's degree in 2014, at the University of Toronto, where his primary research areas were contemporary religion from a social scientific perspective, modern Jewish thought and ancient / medieval Jewish studies. He is continuing his studies by working towards his Master's

degree at McMaster University's Department of Religious Studies here in Hamilton. He has now focused his research on the Moroccan Jewish community of Toronto where he has been assembling an impressive archive of relevant information. As well, he has been conducting extensive interviews with members of the Sephardic Jewish community living in the greater Toronto area, which will be used not only in his own research, but will also be made available for use in future studies on the community.

Moroccan Jewry of the Greater Toronto Area: An Unconventional Case of Sephardic Communities with speaker Chaim Grafstein will begin at 7:30 pm at Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline Avenue N, Hamilton. Subsequent JGSH meetings will be held on February 17 and March 9, 2016. For more information please visit [www.jgsh.org/Events.php](http://www.jgsh.org/Events.php) or by contacting Hazel Boon at [jgshamilton@gmail.com](mailto:jgshamilton@gmail.com) or 905-524-3345.

## HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

YAAKOV MOREL

What defines a great school isn't only what goes on before the final bell rings, but what goes on beyond the classroom walls. At the Hamilton Hebrew Academy, our sports teams once again commenced their season in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Athletic League.

Under the leadership of their new coach, Ms. Taylor Chiarot, students can be seen before school practicing for track and field competitions and after school honing their skills in volleyball and basketball. Ms. Chiarot was the highest-scoring female basketball player in McMaster University history and played professional basketball in Europe. Ms. Chiarot's professionalism

and dedication to our students helps direct them on a disciplined path for success.

The new leaders of our HHA Parent Association have also spearheaded vibrant extra-curricular programs including karate and music. The newly launched "Notes" music program provides an opportunity for children to learn to play the violin or flute. The initiative will culminate in concert performances with the opportunity for students to play in a children's orchestra.

For more information about the HHA or its many afterschool activities please call 905-528-0330 or e-mail [school@hamiltonhebrewacademy.ca](mailto:school@hamiltonhebrewacademy.ca)



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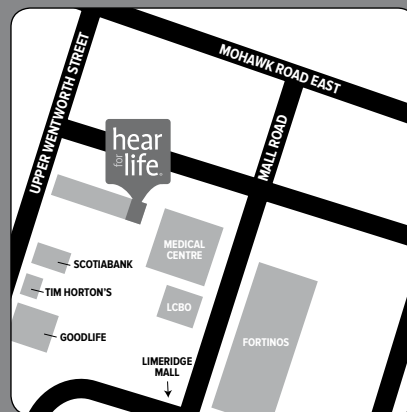
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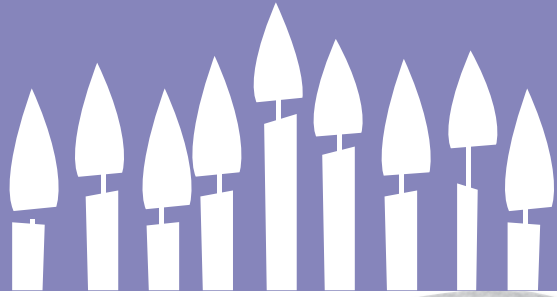
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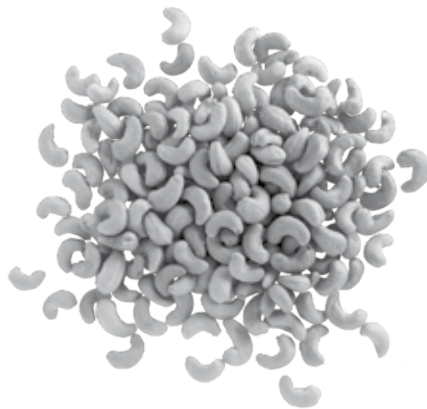
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save 1.70 **4.29** Kineret mini potato latkes frozen 840 g

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