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Hamilton  
Jewish

# News

MARCH 2020 | ADAR 5780

The voice of Jewish Hamilton

## Mac Hillel moves to new headquarters in former Baskin family home

Move to former Baskin family home is a game changer for the student organization

STORY BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**,  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

RABBI BERNARD AND Marjorie Baskin's West Hamilton home, once a gathering place for their university aged children's friends back in the 1960s, is coming full circle with the recent announcement by McMaster Hillel that the historic property at 50 Sanders Blvd. will be its new home. Until now, McMaster Hillel, (formerly the Jewish Student Association) has been located in the basement of a student dormitory in a small space allocated to the organization by the university. For years, the dream of an off-campus house for Jewish students seemed out of reach, until a fortuitous set of circumstances came together. First, was Rabbi Baskin's decision last year to move to Toronto after 60 years in his home. Next, was the purchase of the Baskin property by a buyer who had no immediate plans for its development. Third, and most significant, was the role played by Effort Trust President and CEO Tom Weisz, who saw an opportunity for McMaster Hillel and acted on it.

NEW HILLEL HOUSE CONTINUES ON P4



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Mac Hillel students (from l to r) Gal Arnon, Ma'ayan Fadida, Sam Neumark and Josh Arbess, celebrate Hillel's upcoming move to the former Baskin family home at 50 Sanders Blvd.



A still from the Mexican film, Leona, one of three films featured at the Hamilton Jewish Film Festival in March.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

## What do we do about racism and hate in Hamilton?

Ruth Greenspan



MARTIN NIEMÖLLER is best remembered for saying, “First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.”

I am one of the organizers of ‘No Hate in the Hammer,’ a coalition that was launched August 1, 2019 with membership from John Howard Society of Hamilton, the Hamilton Legal Clinic, the Hamilton Round Table Against Poverty, the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, the City of Hamilton, community members, McMaster University, Ghandi Peace March, Beth Jacob Synagogue, and many others. This group formed as a response to the increase in overt incidents of racism and hate in Hamilton. Each week it seemed that incidents of hate were occurring and violence was increasing.

As a coalition we believe everyone needs to stand up and say no more hate in the Hammer. We believe an attack on one is an attack on all, and that there can be no silos that divide us.

We believe that People show bias, discriminate, hate, bully others who are different because they can.

Because we do not stop in.

In her book “White Fragility,” Robin Diangelo writes that racism is a multilayered system embedded in our culture, and that white people are socialized into the system of racism, and are unconsciously invested in racism. Diangelo goes on to say that bias is unconscious and that we, as white people, must work to be aware of our bias. She says that authentic anti-racism work is not comfortable. White comfort maintains that status quo, so discomfort is necessary to create change. As a white person, I may feel guilty about racism and hate, but the antidote is action. It takes courage to break with white solidarity, but I must and other white people must.

So what do we do, now?

Over the last 40 years I have made a personal and professional commitment to end hate and oppression in my home and in the places I work, and the places I live. I have been married for 31 years to a Catholic Pakistani, I have taught and shown my children that diversity, equity and inclusivity are a way of life. There is zero tolerance for oppression in my home and at work. No prejudice is acceptable or tolerated. In all of my workplaces, I have ensured that diversity training and anti-racism and oppression training occur, that materials are accessible, and that all policies and practices reflect the same.

On an ongoing basis I stand up to racism and hate. I work to be an ally and a support as appropriate. I cannot take up too much space and make actions about me. I have to take the time to listen and really hear, stepping in as required and appropriate. I work to be part of the solution, but I do not speak for others.

I identify as a white, Jewish heterosexual woman. In offering support to others who have experienced racism, I can empathize, but not take charge and tell others what they need.

Being a bystander to racism is not a solution for me. It is about being an upstander, standing up to others in the power group and letting them know that their action or words are not acceptable. This is sometimes intimidating, and at times I expect and receive backlash.

Educating myself is my responsibility. I watch documentaries, read, and attend community events to learn and broaden my understanding. It is not the role of those racialized people to teach me, I always strive to be an active learner.

I can not do this work alone. I have to engage other people to get involved and be part of the solution. These people are not just other activists, but neighbours, friends, families, community people. Engaging others is key and working with those outside my comfort zone is essential. I have made a personal and professional commitment to disrupt hate and intolerance at home, the workplace, and within my community.

Currently hate incidents are occurring because they can. It is my personal mission to change the narrative so they cannot.

Ruth Greenspan is the executive director of the John Howard Society of Hamilton and Burlington and area.

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## A visit to Out of the Cold



PHOTO BY NAOMIBERSTEIN, SPECIAL TO THE HJN

Actions speak louder than words. Kehila Heschel students recently visited the Tuesday night Out of the Cold headquarters at St Mary's Church, where they set tables, watched cooking preparations, and learned about poverty and the Jewish values that are in place to help. The students also donated the proceeds of two months of their weekly tzedakah collection to the organization. Pictured above are the Grade 4 class with volunteers (l to r) Cindy Richter, Simone Rotstein and Joanne Manishen.

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## HJN

The Hamilton Jewish News is published six times a year by the Hamilton Jewish Federation

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# New Hillel house a game changer for Mac Jewish students

CONTINUED FROM P1

“The buyer wasn’t going to be using the property right away ... and Hillel had a need,” Tom Weisz told the HJN. “Hillel was looking for some assistance and I wanted to make sure whatever assistance our family gave was something that mattered to us as well as to Hillel.”

Hillel Ontario CEO Marc Newburgh said that having community partners like the Weisz, Asa, and Horwood families is invaluable.

“Tom and Sasha Weisz are so invested in the Jewish community of Hamilton and McMaster Hillel,” he said. “They’ve known for a long time that we’ve wanted to get a proper space for McMaster students, and we’re thrilled that they’re partnering with us on this.”

That partnership has come in the form of the Weisz family financing renovations that have transformed a single-family dwelling into a combined student residence and communal space, using a model based on that used by Moishe House, an organization that operates subsidized homes for Jewish young professionals around the world.

“This will be both a living and learning house,” said McMaster Hillel director, Judith Dworkin, explaining that there will be five rooms available to rent to students who will be chosen for their leadership skills and programming experience.

“There is such a need for our Hillel to be in a space like this because we have grown so much over the last five years,” said Dworkin. “At one time, maybe we would have five to 10 students come out to a bagel lunch. Now we have 50 and 60 ... or 15 to 20 students coming to a Shabbat dinner. Now we have between 80 and 100.”

**McMaster Hillel staff**, (l to r) Rabbi Ben Shefter, Beth Vander Stoep and Hillel director, Judith Dworkin.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCMASTER HILLEL

**Rabbi Bernard Baskin** in front of his Sanders Blvd. shortly before his move to Toronto.



FILE PHOTO: THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Hillel Shabbat dinners currently alternate between the Adas Israel and Temple Anshe Sholom, with Beth Jacob Synagogue being a little too far from campus. That practice will continue.

The majority of McMaster’s approximately 700 Jewish students come from the GTA, a number that continues to rise because of McMaster’s growing reputation as “a great place for Jewish students,” according to Dworkin.

That growth has been so significant that Hillel has hired senior educator

Rabbi Ben Shefter and advocacy coordinator Beth Vander Stoep to work with Dworkin, who, back in 2015, was its solo professional.

With this growth has come increased engagement. Dworkin is especially excited about students having access to a kosher kitchen.

“A lot of our programming and creating community is around food and we’ve been quite limited in how we’ve been able to use food to engage students,” she said. “One of my goals is to showcase the diversity of Jewish population. So what an amazing opportunity it will be to showcase to students Indian, Moroccan and Ethiopian Jewish food.”

“Just as McMaster is growing, so is Hillel,” said Tom Weisz. “In the future, Hillel may well require an even larger location, or move onto campus to successfully fulfil its mandate. Until then, we’re excited to make this first step a reality in the former home of Rabbi Baskin.”

Weisz said the most exciting aspect of the Baskin home/McMaster *shidduch* (Yiddish for an arranged match or negotiation) are the numerous interconnections between his family, the Baskin family and McMaster.

“Our history with the Baskin family goes back to my bar mitzvah,” he said. “Our wedding, our children’s baby namings, brises, bar and bat mitzvahs, and our daughter’s wedding took place at the Temple. My sister, Janet, was a very good friend of Susan Baskin and spent a lot of time in that house as a kid.”

The Baskins, in turn, had strong connections with McMaster throughout the 60-year period they lived on Sanders Boulevard. Weisz said he only recently discovered that Rabbi

Baskin served as a university chaplain back in the 1950s and ’60s, and Marjorie Baskin worked at the university for more than two decades as both a researcher and the communications and public relations officer for the faculty of Health Sciences. The Baskins frequently hosted barbecues at their home for McMaster students, including future celebrities, Martin Short and Eugene Levy.

It’s no wonder, then, that Weisz has taken particular pleasure in seeing the new home called the Baskin Hillel House.

“Rabbi Baskin is important to me and not just because of the family connection, but because of who he is to our overall community. Rabbi Baskin makes me feel proud to be Jewish,” said Weisz.

The news of Mac Hillel’s new home has generated tremendous excitement among the Jewish student body.

“Students are very excited that it is Rabbi Baskin’s old house,” said Dworkin. “They are empowered by that, and they want to take care of it.”

Sam Neumark, McMaster Hillel’s education chair, told the HJN that the acquisition presents “a tremendous opportunity to diversify programming and reach out to more students on campus.”

Hillel president, Josh Arbess and Israel chair, Gal Arnon, agree. “We’re so grateful to have this new hub for Jewish life on campus where we can run programming, events and initiatives,” said Arbess.

“We’re already very tightly knit as it is and having this home base with all this history allows us to strengthen the community we already have,” said Arnon. “It will really change the way things work here.”

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Lawyers in your Corner

# JNF's Negev Dinner honours philanthropic couple

Cindy and Lowell Richter recognized for their selfless service to a number of communal causes

BY **STEVE ARNOLD**  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

LOWELL AND CINDY Richter don't like being the centre of attention, but they will be squarely in the community spotlight at this year's Negev Dinner.

They will be honoured at JNF Hamilton's annual fundraising event for years of volunteer service to the community.

"We're kind of struggling with the recognition because it's not our comfort zone," Lowell said recently. "This isn't something we covet."

The couple, born and bred Hamiltonians, has a long list of community involvements to their credit. Lowell has been co-president of the Jewish Community Centre and is a director of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, while Cindy is co-ordinator of the Out of the Cold effort and served five years as president of Beth Jacob Synagogue. That's in addition to being president of the local Hadassah-WIZO group and other commitments.

For Cindy, the attention being focused on them is a way of bringing awareness to the community efforts they support.

"This is a way to support things we care about," she said. "We hope it will inspire other people to get involved."

For the Richters, being actively involved in good works and seeing the results is almost more important than simply writing a cheque.

"You have to be there to support the cause and to talk about it," Cindy said.

Seeing the results of their work, she added, is especially clear in the Out of the Cold dinners "where people walk

in hungry, defeated and cold but can walk out having received what may be their only meal and smile that day."

For both, their volunteer efforts are also a way of showing gratitude for a good life. "We're lucky enough that we can do this, that we can afford the time," Lowell said while Cindy adds, "It's really important for people who identify as being Jewish to be out there and to be seen in a positive way."

Despite their shunning of the spotlight, their efforts have not gone unnoticed over the years.

Gustavo Rymberg, CEO of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, for example, met Lowell, who was part of the search committee that recruited him, before he even came to Hamilton.

"I think they are excellent community members, the kind of people any Jewish community would be happy to have as members," he said. "They are people you can really count on as friends."

Rabbi Dan Selsberg worked closely with Cindy during the years he held the pulpit at Beth Jacob when she was president of the congregation and remembers the spiritual sense she brought to the job.

"She brought an incredible work ethic and a real sense of responsibility to the position," he said. "We always knew that the buck would stop with her whenever something needed to be done."

"She really cared about the details," he added. "Leading the synagogue was a holy act to her."

As for Lowell, Selsberg remembers a man who lived his values. "He would say Cindy does the do-gooder stuff,

but he has a strong moral compass of his own."

A woman who has worked with Cindy Richter on the Out of the Cold effort, says the passion she brings to the feed-the-hungry campaign shines.

"I think she's a spiritual person and very grateful for her own circumstances in life, for a healthy family," she said. "She often speaks of the need to help other people because of the good fortune we have."

Suzy Polgar, executive director of the JNF of Regional Ontario, said honouring the couple is long overdue.

"They're so deserving and modest, and prefer to be under the radar," she said. "They are the kind of people who roll up their sleeves and get things done. When you go to any event in the Jewish community, they're there."

The Negev Dinner will be held Tuesday, June 2 at LIUNA Station on James Street North. Guest speaker for the evening will be New York Times journalist and author Bari Weiss. She will tackle how to combat antisemitism.

"I think this is important, given the climate of antisemitism today," Polgar said. "I think she is going to be a major draw."

Proceeds raised by the event will support the building of a JNF Canada House of Excellence in Sderot, Israel by Keren Kayemeth L'Yisrael.

That project, Polgar said, is part of an effort to build up the areas in the periphery of Israel.

"The kids out there don't get the opportunities and advantages they receive in the core," she said.

Tickets for the event are available through the JNF Hamilton office or online at JNFHamilton.ca.



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER

**Lowell and Cindy Richter** have led by example by taking on leadership roles in a number of communal causes.

## NEED TO KNOW

- WHAT:**
- Jewish National Fund Negev Dinner
- WHEN:**
- Tuesday, June 2, 2020
- WHERE:**
- LIUNA Station
- TIME:**
- Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
  - Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
- COST:**
- \$180
- IN SUPPORT OF:**
- JNF Canada House of Excellence in Sderot, Israel
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# Temple Anshe Sholom honours its past presidents and longest serving rabbi

BY **STEVE ARNOLD**  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

HAMILTON'S OLDEST synagogue will honour its past presidents and longest-serving rabbi at a gala event March 28.

Past Presidents Future is a major fundraiser to honour the contributions of the 44 men and women who have led Temple Anshe Sholom over its 170 year history.

The event will also celebrate the 100th birthday of Rabbi Bernard Baskin, who served the synagogue for 40 years, until his retirement in 1989.

For the two men who now share the Temple's primary leadership role, acknowledgement of the synagogue's past presidents is long overdue.

"Volunteers are a unique group of people, but our presidents take on an entirely different kind of responsibility and we have never celebrated that," said Yves Apel, who shares the presidency with Mark Levine.

"Being president is like a third-level Jewish ninja. It needs stamina, intensity and tact. There is no textbook, so you have to learn on the job," he added. "It takes a really special person to step up for that and that's who we are celebrating."

Anshe Sholom, the oldest Reform congregation in Canada, has had 44 presidents over its history. The group has included four women, as well as doctors, several lawyers, business owners, real estate brokers, accountants and a pair of brothers who operate a dairy farm just outside the city.

"Until I assumed this mantle, I didn't really understand how much work this is," Levine added. "It's almost a full-time job because we have to be



PHOTO COURTESY OF RABBI BERNARD BASKIN

**Rabbi Bernard Baskin** headed Temple Anshe Sholom for 40 years until his retirement in 1989.

hands-on managers, as well as strategy people."

Anshe Sholom's roots go back to 1850, almost two decades before Canada was even a country. That's when Hamilton's 13 Jewish families started gathering in each other's homes to lay the groundwork for a communal life.

They were all from Germany, and even kept their early records in the German language. Most were merchants who had arrived in Canada looking for a life free from prejudice.

The group eventually named itself the Hebrew Benevolent Society Anshe Sholom of Hamilton. In 1863 the Jewish Congregation Anshe Sholom was incorporated. The first synagogue was over a downtown store, but in 1882 committees were formed and money was raised for the first Temple on Hughson Street South. That

building served until 1952 when it was replaced by the present structure on Cline Avenue North.

Edmund Scheuer, often called the Father of Reform Judaism in Canada, was the first president. He came to Hamilton in 1871 to join his brother-in-law Herman Levy's jewelry business. In 1873 at age 26, he was elected president of the Temple and held the position for the rest of his 15 years in Hamilton.

Among the Temple's 14 religious leaders are names such as Emil Fackenheim, who went on to a distinguished career as a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto and Arthur Feldman, who was a scholar in his own right and a great personal friend of Sigmund Freud, stand out. The name towering above all others, however, is Bernard Baskin.

During his 40 years at the pulpit, it fell to Rabbi Baskin to lead the congregation through two building campaigns, periods of growth and decline and struggles to redefine the nature of Reform Judaism for a world unimagined by his predecessors.

Those struggles included wrestling with questions such as what degree of kashrut would be observed, whether men would cover their heads during worship, what roles the non-Jewish spouses of members would be permitted to play in the life of the Temple, and how to keep a younger generation interested in the faith of their parents.

Sponsorship opportunities and tickets for the March 28 event are available at PastPresidentsFuture.ca or by calling 905-538-0121. The Temple Archives Project will be revealed at the event.

# Terry Fallis will headline popular Na'amat Author Luncheon



**Terry Fallis** is the author of seven bestselling novels.

PREPARE TO LAUGH over your lunch! Terry Fallis, two-time winner of the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour, will be reading from his latest bestselling novel at this year's Na'amat Author Luncheon.

Fallis has written seven bestselling novels, which aside from the Leacock Medal, have won CBC Canada Reads, the Ontario Library Association Evergreen Award and the Canadian Booksellers Association's Libris Award for Author of the Year.

A skilled public speaker, Fallis's latest book, *Albatross*, is the story of Adam Coryell, an average high-school student—with a quirky obsession with fountain pens—whose life suddenly changes forever, when the young man's extraordinary gift at golfing skyrockets him to stardom.

But here's the catch: he doesn't really like golf. And as the life he once knew slips away, including his high school sweetheart and dreams of becoming a writer, he begins to wonder if all the success and fame is worth it.

This popular community event is run by Na'amat, a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance and safeguard women, children and families both in Israel and in Canada.

Na'amat Hamilton's 35th Annual Celebrity Author Luncheon will be held on Monday, April 27, 2020 at noon at the Adas Israel Synagogue, 125 Cline Ave. S., Hamilton. Tickets are \$25 for students and seniors, \$28 in advance or \$30 at the door. Buy yours at Epic Books, 226 Locke St. S., by calling 905-525-6538, or by emailing [authorluncheon@cogeco.ca](mailto:authorluncheon@cogeco.ca).



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# Jewish Film Festival explores themes of following passion as a form of rebellion

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

FOLLOWING ONE'S PASSION as a form of rebellion is a common theme among the three films featured in the upcoming inaugural Hamilton Jewish Film Festival (HJFF), which takes place at the Westdale Theatre on March 22 and 23, 2020.

The festival, a partnership between the Hamilton Jewish Federation and The Westdale, opens on Sunday, Mar. 22 at 4 p.m. with veteran Israeli filmmaker Avi Nesher's film, "The Other Story," a poignant tale of two rebellious young women — one fleeing the chaos of secular hedonism for the disciplined comforts of faith; the other desperate to transcend her religious upbringing for sexual and spiritual freedom — whose paths cross unexpectedly in Jerusalem, to startling consequences.

"Leona," the feature-length directorial debut of Mexico City-based Isaac Cherem, will have two screenings on Sunday, Mar. 22 at 7 p.m. and Monday, March 23 at 4 p.m. The film tells the story of Ariela, a street artist brought up in the sheltered environment of Mexico's Syrian Jewish community, who falls in love with a gentile. Forced to choose between her free spirited nature and the warm embrace of her family, Ariela explores the painful consequences of non-conformism. A special feature of the Sunday night screening will be a Q & A with film director Isaac Cherem, who, like his protagonist, belongs to a community that arrived in Mexico from Syria in the early 20th century, escaping persecution, racism and civil war. Like many other Jews in the diaspora, they found ways to survive and prosper in their new homeland, by relying on traditions and tight-knit social dynamics.

The festival closes on Monday, March 23 with the screening of "Picture of His Life," a stunning true life adventure, filmed in the Canadian Arctic, which documents Israeli photographer Amos Nachoum's quest to swim alongside a polar bear and become the first to capture the encounter on film. His journey brings him face-to-face with painful memories that have shaped his fearless determination. The film is an intimate portrait of a passionate artist and environmental activist who risks life and limb in pursuit of singular beauty.

For more information about the Hamilton Jewish Film Festival, visit [thewestdale.ca](http://thewestdale.ca) or [jewishhamilton.org](http://jewishhamilton.org).

## NEED TO KNOW

WHAT:

- The Hamilton Jewish Film Festival

WHEN:

- Sunday, March 22 and Monday, 23, 2020

WHERE:

- The Westdale, 1014 King St. W., Hamilton

FILMS AND PRICES:

- **The Other Story** – Sunday, March 22 at 4 p.m. Members \$9; Non-Members \$12; Students and Seniors \$9
- **Leona** – Sunday, March 22 at 7 p.m. followed by Q and A with film director Isaac Cherem \$18; Monday, March 23 at 4 p.m. Members \$9; Non-Members \$12; Students and Seniors \$9
- **Picture of His Life** – Monday, March 23 at 7 p.m. Members \$9; Non-Members \$12; Students and Seniors \$9

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# A conversation with Mexico City-based film director Isaac Cherem

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

MEXICAN DIRECTOR Isaac Cherem, 27, will be in Hamilton on Sunday, March 22 at 8:45 p.m. for a Q & A following the screening of his acclaimed film, "Leona." The HJN spoke with Cherem by phone in advance of his Hamilton appearance. What follows is an excerpt from that conversation.

*What motivated you to make this film?*

*IC:* It had to do with moving out of my parents' apartment, getting to know people from outside the community, and seeing places that I'd never seen in a city I'd grown up in. I was angry, and, of course, once I started writing and trying to understand the characters and why they think the way they do, that kind of helped me get through the psychological process of leaving my community.

*How has the film been received in your hometown of Mexico City?*

*IC:* This is the second year that the Mexican Jewish Film Festival didn't invite me to participate, even though they've screened controversial Jewish films from other parts of the world. It's hard to look in the mirror.

*What do they object to?*

*IC:* A lot of people are afraid of assimilation

and feel that the film is giving a dangerous message.

*How has "Leona" been reviewed in other Jewish film festivals?*

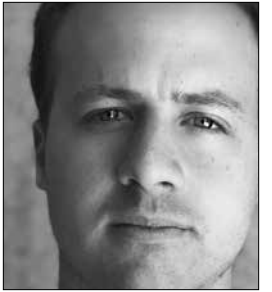
*IC:* People in the US and Canada who are from Jewish communities from Latin America or Mexico have really positive feelings about the film, now that they live in more progressive Jewish communities. They can see both sides of the story.

*Why did you choose to make your protagonist a young woman?*


*IC:* I've always felt that, for my two sisters, it would be harder to go outside what's expected of you. I feel that my family and community have more expectations on women.

*What do you want people to walk away with after seeing your film?*


*IC:* It has to do with self-love over family and community, and respecting other people's choices—especially if you love them.



Isaac Cherem



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PATRICIA TOLKIN EPPEL, 67

## A dedicated professional who left her mark on the Jewish communities she served

BY SIMONE ROTSTEIN AND WENDY SCHNEIDER

THE DISTINCTIVE IRISH brogue, the warmth of her smile and her embracing openness made Trish instantly appealing to all who knew her.

Patricia Tolkin Eppel was a powerhouse of a woman, driven by a love for Judaism and a desire to see Jewish life lived to its fullest in her communities. She grew up in Ireland, the daughter of a family doctor, much beloved by his working class patients, in an environment that fostered her idealism and social activism.

At her funeral, Trish's husband, Alan, recalled his wife's own active role in helping Jews get out of the Former Soviet Union and the intellectual rigour that saw her gain acceptance into Dublin's renowned Trinity College and place second among all students in every Bachelor of Arts degree program at the university.

The Eppels moved to Hamilton from Ireland for Alan to complete a residency in psychiatry and for Trish to begin her graduate work in psychology. The plan was to stay a few years, then make Aliyah to Israel after Alan completed his training.

Through common interests and a need to bond, the Eppels connected with other newcomers to Hamilton, and formed friendships that have lasted 45 years. In the absence of extended families, they formed a group to socialize, celebrate holidays together and help make life easier and more enjoyable for each other. Trish and Alan were central to this group, generous with their time and commitment. When their year in Israel didn't work out as well as they had hoped, they returned to Hamilton and Dundas and quickly resumed their ties. Eventually, Trish brought her family to Canada from Ireland. First, her brothers arrived and then her parents.

Trish was always quick-witted, smart and energetic with a quirky sense of humour and an uncanny ability to mesmerize people. Who can forget her dexterity with card tricks? Her meticulous planning and her poker face inevitably led to the realization that Trish was, one more time, the successful trickster. Trish entertained and had total control of situations. The words 'I goofed' were not part of her lexicon. She was competitive, but ever the gracious winner.



Patricia Tolkin Eppel, in 2011

In the early 1980s, Trish, along with Rivka Shaffir and Shifrah Alleson launched a Na'amat group that continues to this day; a vibrant and important organization in Hamilton. At the time, most of the members were new arrivals to Hamilton and Na'amat became the basis of many attachments. Trish was Na'amat

Hamilton's first president and a significant figure in the development of the chapter.

Professionally, this period marked Trish's entry into the world of Jewish philanthropy and the Federation system. She began with a several year stint as editor of the Hamilton Jewish News, where she covered a wide range of community news and skillfully articulated the case for giving to the annual UJA Campaigns. So fully did Trish identify with Federation's mandate to care for the wellbeing of Jews everywhere, that when the executive director position became available she must have felt that destiny was calling. HJN editor Wendy Schneider and longtime Federation staff member Christine Nusca, who served under Trish during her eight years at the helm of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, remember

her tenure as a time of high morale, productivity and common sense of purpose, a direct result of Trish's energy, vision, and collaborative leadership style.

Trish went on to leave her mark in Toronto where she served as project manager of what would become the

Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in North Toronto, and as a fundraiser for the Mount Sinai Foundation. At her funeral, Alan Eppel said he had learned that a former UJA Federation of Toronto executive director had stated that, had it not been for Trish, the Lebovic campus would never have been built. She excelled at her work at the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation and facilitated a \$20 million donation from one of the donors.

After she left the Hamilton community, Trish made a point of maintaining some of her long-term connections. In the last year, as her cancer prognosis worsened, Trish continued to meet up with close friends, all now older, and still laughing and crying at the recollections of a rich past.

Longtime Federation colleagues remember Trish's tenure at Federation as a time of high morale and a common sense of purpose

HANNA FAULKNER, 97

## A caring, thoughtful, well-informed woman and good friend

BY WILMA ABELES IGGERS, SPECIAL TO HJN

MY LIFELONG FRIEND Hanna was born 97 years ago in a farmhouse in Hlas, in the Bohemian countryside of Czechoslovakia. On Sundays, my family would walk three kilometres to enjoy coffee and cake with her family.

Hanna was always special. Her mother Martha, my mother's sister, had a love for nature and a gift for writing poetry. Hanna's father, my Uncle Hugo, a farmer like my father Karl Abeles, was genuine, honest, and a good farmer.

As there was no primary school near their farm, Hanna, at the age of six, would alternate between living with us or her grandmother Sophie's home across the road on weekdays. My sister Marianne and I would walk with her to the German school in town on a daily basis. When Marianne and I would argue and snipe at each other, Hanna would cross the street.

When my father Karl led an exodus of his extended family to Canada in the fall of 1938, Hanna, her parents and her brother Karli were among them. We left only weeks before the Germans invaded. I was 17, and Hanna was turning 16.

During the war, Hanna and I found jobs in Ottawa reading and censoring letters from German prisoners of war and internees. Hanna was well-liked for her warm, sparkling personality. She became involved with Czech cultural activities in Ottawa and soon found work at the Czechoslovak embassy.

Recently, I found a copy of a letter Hanna wrote to the embassy, in which she informed them that she was regretfully quitting her job to marry John Faulkner, a German-Jewish emigré. They lived in Shawinigan Falls, Quebec and Delhi, Ontario, before returning to Hamilton, closer to her parents' farm. They had two children, Susan and Tommy.

Hanna's house at 47 Vola Ct. on Hamilton mountain was small but comfortable. She lived there long after she and John divorced, tending her garden and her rockery and offering hospitality, good food and plum cake or cookies. We would sit together in the living room, whose shelves were lined with family photos. She volunteered for Jewish organizations, particularly ORT.

Although Hanna had many jobs, she never had a career. But, as a reader, she was well-informed and thoughtful. She attended classes and concerts. Most importantly, she was a genuine and good person. To give just a few examples:

Hanna's mother-in-law had survived the war in Berlin, hidden by her housekeeper. Despite her husband's objections, Hanna brought her to Canada to live with them. She spent many hours sitting with her dear friend Minna Loewith at Shalom Village for months on end, when Minna was bedridden and no longer able to speak.

I always loved her, although my mother's often repeated words, "Why can't you be like Hanna?" still ring in my ears. Our cousin, Mizzi, had sent a container with her belongings to Canada, but she and her family perished in the Holocaust. Her belongings ended up being divided between Hanna and myself. Only recently I found out that Hanna, at great personal expense, had shipped her part of Mizzi's furniture and artwork to Mizzi's surviving relatives in Czechoslovakia. It had never occurred to me to do that.

No one who knew Hanna could come away untouched by the goodness that glowed from within her. As one of my grandchildren said upon learning the sad news, "Hanna was totally the nicest person ever."



Hanna Faulkner with her lifelong friend, Wilma Iggers.

*Wilma Abeles Iggers, 98, is a retired professor, and the author of several books and scholarly papers on the history of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia.*

# Four Jewish women among nominees for YWCA awards

Honourees include community professionals, activist/artist and McMaster student

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

AMONG THIS YEAR'S YWCA Women of Distinction Award nominees are four members of the Jewish community.

Carol Krames, the former executive director of Hamilton Jewish Social Services (recently renamed Jewish Family Services), was nominated in the categories of Community Leadership and Lifetime Achievement; McMaster Hillel director, Judith Dworkin, was nominated in the Community Leadership category; Activist and artist Robin Zilberg was nominated in the Arts, Culture, and Design category; and McMaster student, Cassidy Bereskin was nominated in the category of Young Women of Distinction.

Krames headed Jewish Social Services for more than 42 years.

"We can't think of a more deserving recipient for nomination," said Jewish Family Services (JFS) executive director, Alexis Wenzowski, acknowledging Krames' many achievements which include assisting in the resettlement of more than 200 Soviet Jewish families during the 1970s and 1980s, creating a seniors day program, securing a grant to record Holocaust survivor stories and creating the Hamilton Kosher Food Bank.

JFS president Susan Roth says

Krames is the most compassionate person she knows. "Carol built her life around helping others find their way, empowering them, nurturing them along the way."

Judith Dworkin's students and colleagues praise her as a conscientious community professional who encourages students to connect with learning and advocacy opportunities and empowers them to take on leadership roles.

In Dworkin's nomination letter, one student wrote that Dworkin leads "by supporting those around her to be the best they can be, resulting in a team that is not only collaborative but also high-achieving and dedicated."

"Judith has been a significant role model since the day we started working together. She taught me how to lead kindly, advocate for justice and foster self-compassion. Student leadership at McMaster Hillel would not be what it is today without Judith's warmth, commitment and positivity."

Another student described Dworkin as "a powerful female role model who encourages young women to assert themselves in leadership roles ... including speaking opportunities and governance roles."

Hillel Ontario's chief education and campus officer, Rabbi Seth W. Goren, described Dworkin as a mentor to other Hillel staff and



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER  
**Former JSS director, Carol Krames.**



PHOTO BY SHERYL NADLER  
**Mac Hillel director, Judith Dworkin.**



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER  
**Artist and activist, Robin Zilberg.**



PHOTO BY SHERYL NADLER  
**Cassidy Bereskin, student activist.**

contributor on issues of diversity. "Because of her," he wrote, "Hillel Ontario is a more inclusive organization."

Community activist and artist, Robin Zilberg, is best known in Hamilton circles for her one-woman show and book *BorderLineMe*, an account of her struggles with addiction and abuse as a child and adult survivor of human trafficking. In her unflinching willingness to share

her painful history through one-woman performances, storytelling and inner-child workshops, Zilberg has become a role model and a source of inspiration, wrote her friend, Lisa Millar, in Zilberg's nomination letter.

"She inspires others because she opens herself up to what was, what is, what could be and the endless possibilities for healing and renewal for women with her work."

In her role as a member of Federation's Holocaust Education Committee, Zilberg organized an interactive evening of personal sharing by Holocaust survivors at JHamilton last fall, that was hailed as one of Holocaust Education Week's most successful programs.

Cassidy Bereskin, a political science student at McMaster University, is a student activist and founding partner of Model City Hall, a nonprofit organization aimed at making Hamilton municipal politics accessible to youth.

Bereskin launched the organization in 2015, in response to a local high school student's request that she transplant a similar program from Toronto on which Bereskin had worked.

"The manner in which Cassidy ... developed the project, leading but also opening positions of leadership to others in organizing the event, is an excellent example of how Cassidy leads ... by developing skills and confidence in others," wrote one of her professors who attended its first session.

For her work, Cassidy has been featured as a Global ChangeMaker by We Make Change and in TMX Group's Canada's Next 150 campaign.

The Women of Distinction Awards takes place at the Hamilton Convention Centre on Thursday, March 5, 2020. Cocktail reception and silent auction at 5 p.m. Dinner at 6 p.m. Award ceremony begins at 7:45 p.m. To order tickets, visit [ywcahamilton.org](http://ywcahamilton.org).

## Dr. Sandi Seigel recognized for outstanding teaching, clinical abilities and devotion to patients

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

DR. SANDI SEIGEL, an associate clinical professor in the General Pediatrics Division in the Department of Pediatrics at St. Joseph's Healthcare, was recently awarded the Sister Joan O'Sullivan Award, which recognizes physicians who exemplify outstanding teaching and clinical abilities, "while

maintaining the mission, values and commitment of St. Joseph's Hospital and the Sisters of St Joseph of Hamilton."

Seigel was nominated by her department peers, who described her as "non-judgmental," "kind" and "exceptionally collaborative."

"Dr. Seigel has quietly and conscientiously ensured that

infants, children and their families are consistently treated with dignity and respect. Her most notable career and personal achievements are remarkable for her commitment to serving children and families who are often marginalized," they wrote in her nomination letter.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Seigel manages

her own community consulting pediatric practice, where she follows infants and children with medical, developmental and behavioral complexities.

Seigel was presented with the award on Jan. 17 at the annual St. Joseph's medical staff association dinner at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club.



**Sandi Seigel** with her husband, Joel Yellin, at the St. Joseph's Healthcare award ceremony



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# Why make art about suffering

How artists help shape what we see and feel

BY ELLEN JAFFE  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

*“About suffering,  
they were never wrong,  
The old Masters...”*

SO WROTE W.H. AUDEN in his poem *Musée des Beaux-Arts*, in December 1938, just after Kristallnacht. The poem focuses on Brueghel’s painting, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. In the background of the picture, almost unnoticeable, a boy falls from the sky into the water, while in the foreground people go about their daily lives. The painter and poet help us see with the situation from all points of view.

From cave paintings to the modern day, creative artists in all media (visual art, music, theatre and dance, writing) have used art to express their own feelings and to observe and empathize with the world around them. Artists are witnesses, not in a legal but in an emotional and moral sense, and we use our craft to shape what we see and feel. As humans, we are attuned to story and image and respond to specific emotional and sensory details; as writer Tim O’Brien said, sometimes “story-truth is more real than happening-truth.”

Art can deal with many situations and emotions; love, joy, nature, as well as grief, suffering (person or cultural), and death. The work can be about things the artist herself has experienced, learned from her family and culture, or from reading and observing; it can deal with events in the real world or spring from her imagination. Making art about suffering can be a personal cry from the heart; a communication shedding new light about a political event or natural disaster; or a dialogue (as Mary Oliver wrote in her poem “Wild Geese”: Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine. Sharing feelings and realizing that “meanwhile the world

goes on,” helps us take our “place in the family of things,” in Oliver’s words.

Work created in one historical context can have themes that apply to situations on the news today. And art can show us connections between events that affect different groups of people, with similar human impact. In August 2019, I went to an exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum called *Being Japanese Canadian: reflections on a broken world: “personal perspectives on the exile, dispossession, and internment of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s”* by people who had been interned themselves and by their children and grandchildren. It can take years or decades to create these works: people who experience them are reluctant to tell their stories, partly because they are too painful and partly because they do not want to burden their children with grief and memories; they want to create a new life. But some of these children and grandchildren become artists and need to connect to and understand experiences that have shaped them as well as their relatives. (see [www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/being-japanese-canadian](http://www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/being-japanese-canadian) to see some of the work from the exhibit.) In one work, the “memories” were carefully wrapped in a traditional way — keeping them both cherished and hidden. Through Bryce Kanbara, artist and owner of the You-Me Gallery, 330 James St. N. in Hamilton, who co-curated the exhibit, I was able to correspond with a few of the artists; we talked about the relationship between their experience and that of people in the Holocaust.

It is not only professional, adult artists who do this work. In 1991, when my son was 10, he was frightened by television news of the first Gulf War and drew a picture called “The Third World War:



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

**Ellen Jaffe**, originally from New York, lived in Hamilton for 20 years before moving to Toronto in 2018.

*You tell and retell the old recipes,  
chocolate torte, hamantaschen, goulash with noodles,  
cooking in fantasy, in dreams, stirring the poet  
with seasoned memories of freedom and warmth  
like salt on bread,  
keeping you alive one night, one day,  
one moment longer --  
One kiss one breath.*

*Zisse meydalach, my sweet girls,  
I would hold you in my strong and aching arms,  
closer and closer,  
feed you with my baking, my plants,  
the long-gone milk of my suddenly flowering breasts.*

From “The Day I Saw Willie Mays, and Other Poems,” about the author’s great-grandmother, Mary (who emigrated to the U.S. from Lithuania at age 14) having an imaginary conversation with the women in the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp.

the Day After,” which showed a black sky, a thin line of brown earth, and a red sun. The drawing gave him a certain power over his fears, and a way of expressing them. All over the world, in places torn apart by war or natural disasters, children have been

helped to use art to express their feelings of loss, fear, even bits of beauty, love, and hope for the future. One notable example in recent Jewish history are the drawings and poems by children at Terezein, the concentration camp near Prague, under

the guidance of adult artists also imprisoned there. Many of these artworks survived when the children who created them did not, and were gathered in the book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. Some are also on display at various Holocaust museums. I have used these poems and images to help present-day children think and create art about the Holocaust.

Adults, too, who do not regard themselves as artists can use art in extreme situations. My mother, during her two years in assisted living, wrote a series of poems about her own aging and the lives of people around her, and a friend shared poems after the death of her husband, packed tight with the emotions aroused by everyday life -- going home to an empty house, for example. These touch on situations we can all feel, in our individual ways.

In my own work, I have written poems about the deaths of my parents and other relatives and friends. This does not take away the fact of their death, but helps me remember and honour their lives and the love we felt for each other. I have also written poems inspired by wars and other disasters, and about the illness I am facing, poems that often surprise me with the way they reach toward love and hope as well as tragedy. Love and loss interweave like a moebius strip. In addition, the act of creation itself can be a positive, transformative light in a dark time, even when the subject is sober.

Canadian writer Bronwen Wallace has said that “we never really get over things, we just learn to carry them more gently.” Art can help us do this, and at the same time, make us aware of suffering in the world and within ourselves, rather than deny what is happening. And this can help us envision and create new possibilities. So let us move toward Tikkun Olam.



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# Teen's essay about his family wins HJN contest

Budding writer Emet Mendelson, 15, on why he considers his family unique and special

BY **EMET MENDELSON**  
SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

IT'S FUNNY HOW we rarely take time to think about our families. Your family lives with you but you sort of take them for granted. Like everyone else, I didn't think much about my family or what makes them special and unique. After all, aren't all families unique and special?

But that all changed when I recently found myself at a wedding—my uncle's wedding actually—and I listened to a number of family speeches. Don't get me wrong, I found them to be pretty entertaining! And besides, I am pretty used to family speeches. Most momentous life events seem to include a moment or two to reflect on your family and how they have shaped you.

It isn't just my family that does this — every family seems to. Basketball players and Emmy winners stand with their trophies in their hands, explaining how their parents/ grandparents/ siblings have helped them arrive at this point.

But this wedding speech in particular got me thinking: What role does my family play in shaping who I am? Would I be the same guy if I had been born into a different family or if my 3 siblings had not arrived on the scene after me? While I like to think that I'd be me no matter what, the truth is, the people who I spend most of my time with have had an impact on me.

The way we behave as a family is a lot like most other families. I guess each family changes over time and

is affected by big events and experiences. So why do I think that my family is a bit different than most?

A few things happened to us as a family that make us a bit different than most families we meet. First, we have travelled a lot together. We lived in Switzerland for a number of years and have travelled to five different continents. We have road tripped for months on end and stayed in places with no running water or electricity. Spending time together in remote places where people don't speak the same language as you is a pretty big bonding experience. When we were travelling in Italy, for example, and I was fighting with my brother, we had to quickly get over our fight and play together. You learn a lot about each other travelling as a family because you spend so much time together. We have so many funny shared stories about our travels that we talk about. We spend a lot of time thinking about where we are going next. We take turns choosing destinations, and have a long list of some of the best places we have visited.

We have had some great times as a family but we have also experienced a lot of difficulties. In 2014, one of my sisters was hit by a car on her way to school and was in the intensive care unit for a long time. For a while, we did not know if she would survive. Almost losing a sibling taught me not to worry about little things and focus on what is important. The accident also showed me that I can't always be at the centre of attention. In a family, the person who needs the most help is



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

going to get what they need when they need it.

Another challenge our family has experienced is living apart from the rest of our family. We have a large, fun extended family of cousins, aunts and uncles but we have always lived in a different province or country. We always think about how much fun it would be to live in the same city or on the same street as our cousins. On the other hand, seeing each other rarely means we have to make the most of the time we spend together. So naturally, our get-togethers are epic.

The world is a big place and we have

travelled to a fair bit of it. There are so many awesome places to live, I am thinking that it is unlikely that my siblings and I will all live on the same street. Luckily, my family has shown me that it doesn't matter where you are, family is family no matter where you live. My siblings and I will have to make sure that the time we spend together is momentous. We may not be able to continue our travels together, but you better believe that when we get together, we will have a blast.

After all it's a family tradition.

**Emet Mendelson** (seated centre) with his parents and siblings at their family home.

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## My granddaughter, the philosopher



Phyllis Shragge

PHILOSOPHY IS wisdom about society, the world and existence. Who are the experts in this complicated field of study? Who should we turn to for guidance when seeking the answers about the meaning of life?

There is Aristotle, as well as Plato and Confucius. And then there is my six-year-old granddaughter Lyla. She may not be an expert on all philosophical matters, but then again...

When Lyla was just three years old, her mother asked what she wanted to be when she grew up. Lyla, responded with a solemn look on her face: "A woman," she said. Her succinct answer acknowledged a realistic long-term goal. She was not setting herself up for disappointment.

At the age of four, after delighting in a picture book, she noted: "I like this book. The ending is fabulous!" She knew at an early age that enthusiasm and positive thinking can bode well in life.

And at the same young age, Lyla set an example for our family, and for the world at large, when she told her aunt: "I'll always remember you." Lyla values personal connections.

When Lyla was five, her reaction to a song on the radio demonstrated her realistic attitude. She said, "I'm just not feeling it." Lyla recognizes that our existence has ups and downs. Disappointments are part of life. And also at age five, Lyla assumed the role of prophet. When her brother climbed an outdoor play structure, she warned: "You're risking your life!"

Her comment: "I love driving at night. It sends shivers up my spine," shows an enthusiasm for what others might find mundane.

And she is a good observer of people. Ponder her remarkable line: "No one knows everything, but my daddy thinks he does."

She comprehends how her body reacts to the stresses of everyday life. While trying to fall asleep, she told her mother: "I need my batteries to stop running." Lyla understands herself. Her sense of introspection is admirable.

Lyla has respect for nature's glory. Among her notable quotes is this beautiful phrase: "I can almost smell the fresh, spring air." And I'll never forget: "There's nothing better than toast in the sunlight."

Her sense of the other is profound. Consider this message: "I like Halloween better than my birthday because on my birthday, I'm the only one happy, and on Halloween everyone's happy."

Lyla's philosophy is one for the ages. She realizes that time marches on while we aren't paying attention. At the wise old age of five, Lyla said to her mother, "Tell me about my childhood." And she understands that life can be challenging. One day, shortly after her sixth birthday, she noted: "I had the worst day. It was a travesty!"

Lyla is a great philosopher because she creates her own certainty. When her father said, "I don't see a girl that's behaving," Lyla replied: "Then you need glasses."

Lyla thinks big. She does not settle for minor dreams. When asked about her new year's wishes, Lyla said she hopes to be remembered forever.

The philosophy of children can teach us more than we realize. We think children should follow our guidelines, when in many cases, we should be following theirs.

*Phyllis Shragge is a local writer, mother of five, and grandmother of four.*

## The ethical challenges of climate activism



Miriam Sager

I WAS IN the fifth grade when Israel started bracing for the Six Day War. The men filled sandbags to protect the ground floor air-raid shelter meant to shelter 16 families, while the women prepared provisions, makeshift toilets and crafts for the young children, enough to last for an extended stay in a crowded space. At school, we were drilled in how to file to the communal shelter. For children who had never experienced so much as a fire drill, but many of whose parents had escaped from Europe, this was mystifying and vaguely scary.

Oddly enough, when the first siren went off, our teacher, intent on teaching us a game we could play in the shelter, ignored the warning. When we finally headed down as explosions and pillars of smoke erupted around us, even teacher Edna got it. This was an emergency, and survival superseded everything. In typically Israeli fashion of those days, people looked out for each other, sharing food, water and narrow cots.

Today, we are living with an escalating climate emergency that is recognized by more than 1,000 jurisdictions around the world, including Hamilton. Certainly no Pacific islander or global firefighter would deny that we are living in the midst of an emergency, but in our corner of the world, it is still possible to continue with business as usual. Denial works, sort of, until reality hits us in the face. Worry may be gnawing at us in the back of our minds, but if we ever allow ourselves to wonder whether our children will live out their lives on an inhabitable planet Earth, we are likely to push the thought away in

fright. And anyway, were we to actually allow the reality of the situation to sink in, what could we do about it?

Around the world, young people are refusing to live in denial. They are organizing, going on strike, learning basic survival skills, going vegan or making the decision not to have children because they see a collapsing world awaiting them.

Facing the facts and confronting our feelings is the first step towards taking action. The changes we must make range from the inconvenient, like wasting less food, to more difficult decisions such as taking public transit and travelling less. For those of us who have close family living overseas, the decision to refrain from air travel is a moral dilemma. My own elderly mother lives in Israel. What do I do? What do we do with what we cannot un-know about greenhouse gas emissions?

I do know that even if we, as individuals, cannot yet make some of the necessary changes, truly critical transformations must occur on a much larger scale. Climate scientists maintain that it is not too late to avert the worse impacts of climate change if immediate, far-reaching action is taken. Each of us can work with others to push for the needed systemic changes. We can challenge ourselves to offer our time and skills to the global movement which is fighting to get the climate crisis under control. We can also raise the subject with friends and co-workers and listen to their thoughts, without reproach: we are all coping as best as we have figured out so far, teetering as we are on the edge of unimaginable catastrophe.

*Miriam Sager facilitates sharing circles about climate change. She can be contacted at mirsager@yahoo.ca.*

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**Pictured above, l to r:** Jeff Paikin, dinner co-chair; Hamilton Community Foundation CEO Terry Cooke with Georges St. Pierre; student athlete, Taryn Millar, sporting Tessa Bonhomme's Olympic Medal.

## B'nai Brith Sports Dinner's final chapter

THE 69TH ANNUAL B'nai Brith Sports Celebrity Dinner attracted 750 patrons, student athletes and volunteers in attendance at the Hamilton Convention Centre for a truly unforgettable and uplifting evening.

Sadly, the organizing committee announced shortly after the event that this would be the final instalment of the storied dinner. During its illustrious seven decade tenure as the region's premier sports social event, the B'nai Brith Sports Dinner raised well above \$2 million for various local, national and international causes.

Long-time dinner co-chairs, Jeff Paikin

and Brent Clifford offered bittersweet sentiments about what it has meant to be a part of such a worthwhile endeavour.

"We are so grateful to have been able to put this event on for so many years. It has been deeply rewarding to raise money for so many meaningful causes, while bringing together the best and brightest of our region," said Clifford. Jeff Paikin said that while he is saddened to see the event come to an end, he is excited to explore new avenues "through which we can pool together our resources and efforts to do well for others."

## Little known Holocaust story brought to light



**Roberta Grossman** in conversation with Tom Weisz at the Westdale theatre on Jan. 26 following a screening of her film, "Who Will Write Our History," in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER-HIN

## Hamilton Hebrew Academy

HHA Grade 8 students recently competed in the FIRST Robotics middle school competition. Using Lego Mindstorm hardware and software, the students pooled their knowledge, skills and creativity, tackling challenging tasks in an exceptional manner. Under the guidance of the school's science specialist, Ryan Krafchek, the HHA team chose to address air quality, arguably the most public space of all.

In addition to creating a futuristic, robotic and credible idea to address air pollution within Hamilton, the team presented

their project to the City of Hamilton's chief planner and a representative of Clean Air Hamilton. The students learned from the experts about how to implement the project's goals and technical components of measuring, collecting and storage of pollutants. This visit to City Hall and presentation provided our students an opportunity to hone presentation skills and share their work, one of the core values, as well as a chance to fold primary research into their presentation.

## Kehila Heschel, then and now

BY TALIA KOLLEK  
SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

PART OF RAISING children is seeing them grow up and leave the nest without looking back. While many of us never return to our elementary schools, I am in the lucky position to be Kehila Heschel's first alumna to teach.

Coming back to the school felt a lot like coming home. I was seeing everything from a different perspective as I've grown a couple feet in the last two decades and the space has since been renovated. Nevertheless, everything felt familiar; students wore their blue and white uniforms, sang morning prayers together, and played games in Hebrew. The atmosphere was as inviting as I remembered.

Some things struck me as different. Kehila Heschel has expanded to new classrooms as the number of students increased. The sheer diversity of students is brilliant. Children from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds come together to say *birkat ha-mazon* after their shared meal. The integrated curriculum has developed and expanded, to the point that one of the young students taught me about the latest scientific findings on black holes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEHILA HESCHEL

**Kehila Heschel alumna,** Talia Kollek working as a specialist in the Grade 1/2 classroom.

I feel very lucky to be able to return to Kehila Heschel and give back in other ways. I'll be helping students of all ages put together a performance on the future of tikkun olam. I'm excited to see what this new generation of students comes up with. I hope to continue to be a part of Kehila Heschel as it laid the foundation for my love of learning and a strong Jewish identity. It will always feel like home.

## Temple Anshe Sholom

THERE'S A SAYING that when the month of Adar arrives, our joy increases. The happiest month of the Jewish year contains the holiday of Purim. Filled with laughter and mixed up identities, this is the celebration that brings all of us together to laugh, sing and dance. It's proof that the Jewish people will never succumb to depression and sadness when troubles surround us. Our greatest strength is our ability to smile and laugh at ourselves and our tormentors.

At Temple we craft a hilarious retelling of Megillat Esther each year, complete with

sets, costumes, musical numbers and choreography. It's quite an undertaking and we really have fun preparing it. Because this Hebrew year is 5780, we found inspiration in the popular music of the 1980s. Expect to see boom boxes, Rubix Cubes, mullets and parachute pants and hear Esther sing, "Don't Stop Believin" and Mordechai sing "Beat It." We look forward to seeing you on Monday, March 9 at 6 p.m. A big thank you to our members who have volunteered to step onto the Bimah and make absolute fools of themselves ... Respect!

## Adas Israel Sisterhood



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ADAS ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

The Adas Israel Sisterhood recently partnered with Hamilton Jewish Family Services to launch the 16 Baskets Project. Led by Adas Sisterhood president, Stefanie Waxman, the project's goal was to raise the spirits of Holocaust survivors. The Sisterhood raised more than \$2,500 which they used to create gift baskets with gift cards, hats, scarves and necessities.

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# Investing in Israel



Robert Tick

INVESTMENT IN Israel typically starts with Israel bonds. It did for me. Israel bonds were a frequent topic of conversation in my household. My dad presented the annual bond speech several times and State of Israel bonds honoured my mom at a bond lunch. The success of the Israel bond program over the years has been tremendous and the safety of money invested in State of Israel bonds proven. However, bonds are bonds. They are a loan. Bonds are not ownership of the infrastructure, real estate or businesses.

For those who want to “own” a piece of Israel, there are multiple opportunities for investment beyond State of Israel bonds. That said, as with investing in general, it pays to do your homework and think through the rationale for your investment in Israel and what you expect to get in return. Over the past six or seven years, I have taken several trips to Israel to undertake some primary research into the investment opportunities in oil and gas as well as to learn about the “Blue Chip” companies and several different aspects of the startup economy. These trips have been extremely informative.

The starting point for equity investment in Israel would most likely be the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange [TASE]. The TASE is where most publicly traded Israeli companies list their shares. Like our local stock market, the companies with the largest market capitalizations are the banks, dominant telecom companies and oil refineries and gas stations. Additionally, several Israeli companies list their primary shares in Tel Aviv and subsequently list American Depositary

Receipts “ADRs” in the US. This allows global investors to trade some of Israel’s biggest companies in US dollars on North American exchanges.

Once an investor decides to make an allocation to Israeli equities or take a gamble with a start-up, it is important to determine the objective. The decision is obviously different if the choice is to pick the next homerun start up or if it is to find and hold shares of companies that are core components of Israel’s infrastructure. An additional consideration for international investors is to decide if there are specific gaps in their current portfolio that can be filled with Israeli companies.

A Canadian-based investor with ample exposure to Canada’s big five banks might not see an advantage in investing in the shares of Israel’s banks. However, even with all the recently discovered domestic natural gas, Israel still imports all the raw crude oil that it consumes. From an investment perspective, this presents an opportunity as Israel only has two refineries. They are owned by PAZ Oil Company Ltd. and Bazan Group (Oil Refineries Limited). Both are TASE listed, pay dividends, and, assuming Israel will continue to use oil for its cars and jet fuel for years to come, vitally important to daily life in Israel.

In my opinion, the defensive significance of Israel’s refineries is not to be understated and that is why I hold shares of both.

Rob Tick is an Investment Advisor and Portfolio Manager at Mandeville Private Client Inc.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# Female Jewish pioneers who changed the world

BY BARBARA KAY  
WITH PERMISSION FROM THE CJN



The cover of Jewish Girls Who Dreamed Big...and changed the world by Janice Baryshnik

JANICE BARYSHNIK of Toronto is a psychologist and an educator. Helping adolescents reach their potential has been the focus of her career for 30 years. A deeply committed Jew, Baryshnik found inspiration for realizing her own ambitions in stories about Jewish women who were innovators in their chosen fields of endeavour.

Canvassing her daughter, 43, and her daughter’s circle of friends, however, Baryshnik discovered that their knowledge of famous Jewish role models was alarmingly circumscribed. Having just suffered the loss of her Holocaust-survivor parents-in-law and motivated to ensure her granddaughter and four grandsons were better informed, she wrote the book, Jewish Girls Who Dreamed Big ... and changed the world.

There are 18 chapters in the book, each one a life profile reduced, in brisk and reader-friendly prose, to a few pages, well within a young reader’s attention span. Many names were Jewishly familiar to me, like Ruth Handler (Barbie doll), Jean Nidetch (Weight Watchers) and Simone Veil (first female president of the European Parliament). Other names were familiar, but not Jewishly, like Edith Head (top Hollywood designer) and Hedy Lamarr (movie star and pioneer inventor of wireless technology).

Some names were new to me altogether, like Rita Levi-Montalcini (Nobel prize for medicine), Rabbi Regina Jonas (first female rabbi), Evelyn Berezin (designer of the first word processor), Gertrude Elion (Nobel prize in medicine for a drug that helped cure leukemia in children) and Sonia Terk Delaunay (Russian-born artistic visionary, the first living female artist to have a retrospective exhibit of her work at the Louvre).

Every profile is a tiny tapestry: a warp recounting the trajectory of achievement and a weft of telling anecdotes adding colour and punch to the narrative. Delaunay’s artistic career got its start when she designed a quilt for her son, which got

her interested in the artistic style known as “simultaneism.” Berezin started her own word-processing company, Redaction, in the 1960s, because the board of directors of the New York Stock Exchange rejected her appointment as vice-president in charge of computer systems – on the grounds that “the sometimes profane language on the trading floor was not appropriate for a woman’s ears.”

Regina Jonas, who was ordained as a rabbi in 1935 in an astonishing exception to the male rule, undertook many rabbinic duties after she was deported to Terezinstadt, including the difficult task of “meet(ing) the trainload of Jews at the station and help(ing) the newly arrived Jewish passengers adjust to the shock, disorientation and horrific losses they were experiencing.” Jonas was murdered at Auschwitz when she was 42.

The final entry, Henrietta Szold, is a name every Jewish youngster should know. Szold was a scholar, an essayist and an “early theoretical Zionist.” Baryshnik admits to a special fascination and reverence for Szold’s stunning achievements in shaping Jewish culture in the United States, and Israel, after she made aliyah. Israel’s Hadassah Medical Center and North America’s Hadassah-Wizo are part of Szold’s legacy. It is hard to imagine a more Jewishly inspirational role model.

I was curious to understand Baryshnik’s metrics for triage. Who merited inclusion? Who did not? She told me she conceived each profile as “a slice of Jewish, gender-related history.” She wanted – and got – diversity of achievement. The arts, Jewish scholarship, secular entrepreneurship, technology, medicine, ahavat Yisra’el: the gamut can be found in her book.

But what about modern intellectuals, feminist Jewish icons like Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and Susan Sontag? Too contemporary and too controversial. Baryshnik emphasized her decision to avoid stories grounded in ideology. All of her subjects broke gender barriers, because they had personal dreams they wanted to fulfil, not political change they intended to embody. None of them sought to valorize the transgression of community standards.

That, for me, is one of the book’s most refreshing aspects in this highly politicized era, and a good reason for Jewish educators across the religious spectrum to consider including this little gem in their program of studies.

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# Alyn's Wheels of Love: the best five days of my year

David Shore returns to Israel with his father every year to cycle for a good cause

BY DAVID SHORE  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

FOR THE PAST five years, I've traveled to Israel with my father to participate in the Alyn Wheels of Love five-day fundraiser ride. Alyn Hospital is Israel at its best. As a world leader in pediatric rehabilitative medicine, Alyn is the only facility of its kind in Israel and the Middle East. By combining innovative therapy solutions with the most cutting-edge assistive technology, Alyn is able to help children with the most severe of disabilities live at home among their family and community, attend their local school and become full, active members of society.

Alyn treats all children equally, regardless of religion or race, and is a recognized model facility in providing services in a manner sensitive to the patient's cultural background. Alyn also exports its knowledge and innovation far beyond Israel's borders to help children around the world. On our third ride (2017), we heard about a donated 3D printing department that was developing new prosthetic devices. All creations are uploaded to a free, online repository, for use by anybody around the world. Just last month, 300 wheelchairs, developed specifically for Third World environments, were delivered to the children of Uzbekistan. My father and I raise more than \$10,000 each year to support the hospital; the 350+ riders together raise some \$3 million annually. It is a great cause and a great experience to see the hospital and the country.

The ride is extremely well-organized and offers something for everyone. Each year we ride a different route, alternating between the north and south. There are seven different levels of difficulty including on-road and

off-road options. My father and I are on the touring group. We ride approximately 50 km each day and then spend the afternoon visiting a tourist site in the area. A hiking group has also been introduced. All groups consist of repeat riders with whom we have become close friends. Indeed, on the first ride, I met Berry Smurlick from right here in Hamilton—it's a great feeling seeing him again each year. Together, we see sights and experience Israel in a completely different way—I've learned more on these five rides than the two dozen trips I've taken to Israel previously. (For detail you can visit [www.alynactive.org](http://www.alynactive.org))

However, the most moving experience by far is riding with a group of Alyn children—The Swift and the Bold. These children, with their uniquely tailored bicycles and extensive support teams, train all year long to be able to join us. I rode behind a 12-year old girl using a hand-cranked tricycle who lost the use of her legs. I saw her overcome the challenge of her disability. I saw her parents helping to push her up some of the steeper hills. I saw the whole group celebrate as they showed the world that being disabled does not make you unable. It made my aches and pains from the long rides melt away and seem utterly trivial. If this young girl could overcome the struggle she faced every day of her life, I could certainly overcome my temporary difficulties.

Doing this ride with my dad, raising these funds for the children of Alyn, and experiencing Israel in a unique and inspiring way brings me back every year. The quality time with my dad is a something I will cherish forever. The amazing thing is that I'm typically the one trying to keep up with him—only on the hills do I stand a chance of getting ahead!



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF ALYN HOSPITAL

**Above:** David Shore with Alyn client, 10-year-old Noga.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF ALYN HOSPITAL

**Left:** David Shore takes a break from his ride to pose for a photo with his father.

On the fifth and last day, we ride into Alyn Hospital to the cheers of parents and patients alike—this is as much a highlight of the year for them as it is for us. While the exertion of five days riding seems challenging, the mutual exhilaration experienced as one of the children puts a medallion around my neck makes me both

proud and humbled. Proud to help, and humbled by the sheer effort these children exert every day to overcome their physical challenges.

I did not do this alone. Many community members supported me through donations and encouragement. Thank you to all! Anybody who wants to contribute

in the future, or become a rider/hiker, please feel free to reach out to me at [dishore@me.com](mailto:dishore@me.com). Together, we can change more lives and help show the world how Israel really is a light onto the nations. You can also visit [www.alynactive.org](http://www.alynactive.org) or call Canadian Friends of Alyn Special Projects at 647-558-8522.

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# Hamilton Jewish Film Festival

# 2020

## **The Other Story | Israel 2018 | 117 minutes PG | Hebrew with English subtitles**

The latest from veteran Israeli director Avi Nesher (*Past Life*) is an intricate web of desperate parents, rebellious children, and spouses locked in conflict. Having long ago resettled in the US, Yonatan returns to Israel at the behest of his elderly father, Shlomo, an avowed atheist. Shlomo is determined to stop Yonatan's newly religious daughter, Anat, from marrying Shahar, a popular singer who has recently swapped his infamously libertine persona for that of a devoted Hasid. Meanwhile, Shlomo enlists the help of both Yonatan and Anat in a challenging case at his marriage-counselling practice, in which two parents are fighting ferociously for custody of their child. As the case becomes more complex, the paths of both these troubled families begin to tangle in unexpected ways.

**Sunday, March 22 | 4PM**

## **Leona | Mexico 2018 | 95 minutes R- Nudity | Spanish with English subtitles**

A universal tale of star-crossed lovers is given a uniquely Mexican twist in this intimate portrait of Jewish family life. 25-year-old Ariela (beautifully played by Naian González Norvind) is a creative free spirit chafing against the constraints of her insular community. When she falls in love with a non-Jewish man, her place within her family and the Jewish community is called into question. While religion is the catalyst for the dramatic tension, what distinguishes this film is the way director Isaac Cherem, along with co-writer and star Gonzalez Norvind, portrays Ariela's journey toward becoming her own woman.

**Sunday, March 22 | 7PM**  
Q & A with director Isaac Cherem

**Monday, March 23 | 4PM**

## **Picture of His Life | Israel, Canada, US 2019 71 minutes | Hebrew, English and Inuit with Hebrew and English subtitles**

He swam with crocodiles and killer whales, with anacondas and with great white sharks. But one major predator has always eluded Amos Nachoum. The legendary wildlife stills photographer had always dreamed of swimming underwater with a polar bear and capturing it face-to-face on film. He tried before and barely escaped, but now, as he nears the end of his career, he is determined to give it one last shot. The danger is real, perhaps more real than ever, but this is his last chance to get the picture of a lifetime. As the journey unfolds, Amos contemplates the series of unspoken events that drove him here, to the end of the world. It has been a long and painful journey, but where others find fear, Amos finds redemption.

**Monday, March 23 | 7PM**

**Tickets available at [thewestdale.ca](http://thewestdale.ca)**

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