



## Celebrating Israel

A host of community celebrations

P10

## The tefillin of Qumran

A surprise discovery brings insight

P14



# Hamilton Jewish News

THE VOICE OF JEWISH HAMILTON

JULY 2018 VOL 32:4/ SIVAN 5778

AGREEMENT #40007180

## INTRODUCING JHAMILTON

### A NEW CENTRE OF JEWISH LIFE

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, The Hamilton Jewish News

Necessity, to paraphrase the well-known adage, is the mother of collaboration. After years of discussion among Hamilton's Jewish communal organizations about the need to share resources and reduce costs, the Hamilton Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community Centre, the Jewish National Fund, and the Beth Tikvah Foundation have moved into a shared space on 1605 Main St. W. The new community hub, named J Hamilton, its occupants anticipate, will stimulate cross-fertilization of ideas that will invigorate this city's Jewish communal landscape.

The announcement about the new facility was made at the Hamilton Jewish Federation's Annual General Meeting on May 24 by the organization's president, Jacki Levin. "The Jewish Community Centre will once again have a home where community members can go to relax and have programs, and where community agencies can host lectures and movies and board meetings," she said, adding, "The possibilities are endless."

J HAMILTON CONTINUES ON P4



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER

Meet the new occupants of J Hamilton: From left to right: JNF executive director, Suzy Polgar, with her staff, Geraldine Katz Rose (sitting), Clare Gajdo, Roberta Katz; Federation IT specialist Frehiwot Pochae, Jewish Community Centre's Camp Kadimah director Oliver Borr, Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, Federation campaign director, Elaine Levine, Beth Tikvah Foundation executive director Chris Barone and human resources supervisor Kayla Logue (Missing from photo are Federation program coordinator David Fonseca Quezada and Federation financial administrator Ron Nusca, and Beth Tikvah resource coordinator Anna Fisher.)



PHOTO: LEIA GER

Art is an important part of Kehila's curriculum. Above, Kehila art specialist Janus McBride encourages her students to bring out their inner artist.

## A NEW DIRECTION FOR KEHILA

Eighteen years after a group of parents founded Hamilton's first pluralistic, unaffiliated Jewish day school, Kehila is taking on a new name as it deepens its connection with the philosophy of Abraham Joshua Heschel.

WENDY SCHNEIDER REPORTS: P4

“A truly spectacular, architecturally beautiful, interactive experience.”

Twelve students from the Hamilton area travel to Winnipeg on Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies program.

LAURA WOLFSON REPORTS: P5

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Meeting Holocaust survivors put a face to all the statistics, which made the entire experience surreal.

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**CONNECTING YOUTH TO THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST**



**DEB BROWN, HISTORY TEACHER, SIR ALLAN MACNAB HWDSB**

As an educator of history in the 21st century, it is sometimes challenging to approach historical events that will allow students to create meaningful connections in today's world. However, in Holocaust education, youth today powerfully connect and understand the lessons of this atrocity and the significance of these lessons in our world today. Over the past 22 years of my teaching career, I have found the most powerful strategy for students to create meaningful connections to history is through the voices of the generations that have lived through significant moments; moments such as the Holocaust.

Eight years ago I introduced the Grade 11 elective, Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course into our department. Within this course students are able to critically explore various atrocities, both past and present; including an intensive unit of study on the Holocaust. As an educator who had previously taught these lessons in a smaller scope and sequence, I was now presented with the welcoming challenge of developing unit material that would allow an intensive study of not only the Holocaust, but also multiple aspects of Jewish life that were an essential part of this narrative. I was very fortunate to access support, resources, workshops and even international travel through two incredible organizations in Holocaust education: Yad Vashem and Facing History and Ourselves. Through my work with these two organizations, I have been able to access multiple primary sources that have allowed my students to engage in this history through the use of primary source testimony and artifacts.

Through the dedication and generosity of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, I have also been able to offer unique experiential learning opportunities to my students. The annual Student Seminar on the Holocaust at Mohawk College is a learning experience that many of my students say will be with them for the rest of their lives.

The following student reflections from this year's seminar testify to the profound impact of the program.

"Meeting and hearing a Holocaust survivor speak about their experiences made the Holocaust more personal. Understanding how survivors felt during and after the Holocaust allowed me to be able to relate to those feelings if not the experiences. It moved the Holocaust beyond being just numbers and facts to being about the individuals with lives and dreams and loved ones of their own."

"We get to hear not only their experiences, but their view on the world today and lessons on how we should treat our fellow human beings."

"Meeting Holocaust survivors put a face to all the statistics, which made the entire experience surreal. As well, seeing how survivors continued with their lives after facing such unimaginable horrors, was inspiring. It made me realize that I can overcome my own hardships. It might take time, but it is possible to move forward."

As students personally engage in listening to survivor testimony, they actively connect to their role in bearing witness and willingly take on the responsibility of sharing their learning and using it to make choices that will change and impact lives for the better.

Over the past 20 years, I have had the honour of taking hundreds of students to these events; and each year as we return to school and reflect on the day, I continue to be very moved by their responses.

It is my hope that I, and other educators alike, continue to use the personal testimony of individuals who experienced not only the Holocaust, but the many other atrocities our communities have faced, and continue to face. Whether those communities are international, national or local, using the voices of the past and present has the power to engage and connect our youth to the issues of our world, connections that will allow them to see that the choices they make are important and that by "bearing witness" they can make a difference in making the world a better place.

*Deb Brown is a history teacher and head of the Canadian and World Studies Department at Sir Allan MacNab Secondary School. She is a recipient of Hamilton Jewish Federation's 2013 Sharon Enkin Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education and the 2018 Legacy Award for Continued Excellence in Holocaust Education.*

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**NEXT ISSUE**

**ROSH HASHANAH ISSUE**

- Deadline for booking ad space - July 9, 2018
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy - July 27, 2018
- Deadline for receiving ad copy - Aug. 9, 2018
- Estimated date of arrival - Aug. 21, 2018



**40 YEARS OF BOOKS AND IDEAS**

Celebrating the completion of 40 years of his popular Books and Ideas club, Rabbi Baskin read selections from the second volume of *The Essential Bernard Baskin*, to a packed crowd on May 30. The event, emceed by Susan Baskin, included accolades by Rabbi Jordan Cohen and local authors, tribute songs sung by Cantor Paula Baruch and Catherine Silverglen, a preview of a film about Rabbi Baskin's impact on the community, and a lovely luncheon in his honour. Copies of the book may be ordered by calling Temple Anshe Sholom.

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I think the fact that there are two schools is a draw for families coming to Hamilton.

## A NEW DIRECTION FOR KEHILA

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

Hamilton's little Jewish day school that could be about to enter a new phase of its 18-year history with a name change and an expanded curriculum that places a greater emphasis on environmental stewardship, social justice and community activism.

Kehila Heschel will open its doors this fall as an affiliated Abraham Joshua Heschel School, along with those in Toronto and New York. The collaboration between Kehila and the Heschel schools is a natural fit, according to board member, Anita Bernstein, who says that Kehila's educational philosophy and curriculum has always been similar to that of the Heschel family of schools.

"At Kehila, as in all Heschel schools, the curriculum is integrated to promote learning across all disciplines," she said. "Learning never happens in isolation, and students are encouraged to make meaningful connections and think about global issues."

Bernstein explained that, as a Heschel-affiliated school, Kehila teachers will be able to benefit from professional development opportunities in New York and Toronto that will assist them in incorporating social justice activities into the curriculum.

The current spirit of optimism at Kehila hearkens back to its early years when enrolment peaked at 50 students. In more recent years, the school has struggled with low numbers, and very nearly shut its doors back in 2013. Mike Dressler remembers how the then board's decision to close the school galvanized a cohort of younger parents to step into leadership positions and "work our hardest so our kids could go into JK."

Over the last five years, the Kehila board, overseen by Dressler, has

focused its attention on recruitment and developing a new tuition fee structure that has made the school more affordable. As a result of their efforts, enrolment levels have sharply increased, with the school offering classes from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 in the coming year. The school's new affiliation, board members believe, has the potential to grow the school to new levels.

"The Heschel educational philosophy is well known and we are anticipating that it will attract people to move to our community," said Bernstein.

For Mike Dressler, the role that Kehila plays in keeping children in the Jewish education system, cannot be overstated. "There's a place for the Hamilton Hebrew Academy and a place for Kehila ... The fact that we can provide families with this option is needed in this community, otherwise some families might decide to send their children to alternative private schools or public schools," he said.

To mark the next phase of its evolution, Kehila will host a gala reunion for all its alumni, teachers, principals and donors this September. Organizers have invited Susannah Heschel, daughter of the legendary Rabbi Heschel, as their special guest.

Bernstein is optimistic that parents who have previously held back from enrolling their children at Kehila because of concerns about its small size will be encouraged to reconsider and help Kehila grow," she said. "We built it. Now they can come."

For more information about Kehila, visit [www.kehilaschool.com](http://www.kehilaschool.com) or call 905-529-7725.

## J HAMILTON: A TEMPLATE FOR THE FUTURE

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

Since the sale of the Jewish Community Centre in 2016, Federation, the JCC and the Beth Tikvah Foundation have shared office space at the Effort Trust building at 105 Main St. E. down the hall from the Jewish National Fund office. The move downtown was seen as a temporary solution until a more appropriate site located closer to where Hamilton's Jews tend to congregate could be found. Over the last several months, Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, Jacki Levin and JCC co-president Lowell Richter looked at a number of sites, but none compared to the Main West building both in terms of location (just in front of Fortinos) and space.

The concept of J Hamilton is loosely modeled after "1 Open Door," a communal space located at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan that's shared by several UJA Toronto's partner social service agencies.

"J Hamilton represents a new model of efficiency that will save money for the community," said Rymberg, adding that the goal is to eventually hire a human resources manager and marketing director that all the organizations will share.

The building layout maximizes the use of the space. In addition to separate areas for each of the four agencies, there's a common board room, lounge, play area geared to families with young children, kitchen and multi-purpose room that can be used for programming, lectures or other events. As for the walls, Rymberg envisions a gallery featuring rotating exhibits by local Jewish artists.

"This is going to be a centre where a lot of things are happening at the same time," he said. "It's been two years since there's been a neutral place in Jewish Hamilton where both the unaffiliated and people from across the religious spectrum can come together for social and cultural events. J Hamilton, in being a new home for the Jewish Community Centre, will fill that void."

"This is a great opportunity to reenergize, reinvigorate, recharge and reinvent our Hamilton JCC, that has been and will continue to be a strong part of the Hamilton Jewish landscape," said JCC co-president Lowell Richter, who has

been instrumental in implementing the move to the new site. Watch for a slew of new JCC programming at the new site beginning in September.

Jewish National Fund executive director Suzy Polgar is excited to see the JNF move to west Hamilton. "Ever since I started working in Hamilton I always felt that there should be one location for all of the Jewish organizations," she said. "I just feel that we're all stronger together. We're a small community and, rather than compete with each other, I think that everybody is better off working together and sharing resources."

The Beth Tikvah Foundation, which provides services to adults with developmental disabilities, is similarly delighted with its new home. "Because we're a smaller agency, we haven't really been out there, so this move is a great opportunity to inform the Jewish community about the support we can offer to individuals in the realm of developmental services," said Beth Tikvah executive director, Chris Barone. "It's great for all four agencies and it's fantastic for the Hamilton Jewish community."

To Gustavo Rymberg and Jacki Levin, the most exciting aspect of a shared communal space that promotes collaboration and stimulates cross-fertilization of ideas lies in its potential to invigorate the entire Jewish Hamilton landscape. That vision is undoubtedly what brought Tom Weisz on board.

"Without Tom's support, this couldn't have happened," said Rymberg.

While many in Jewish Hamilton have dreamed of a state-of-the-art community campus, Rymberg believes that J Hamilton is a more realistic investment at this point in our community's history.

"It's going to be a good test for the community towards visualizing the next step. Let's see how people respond and how they support this project."

Community members will have an opportunity to do just that at an upcoming open house to launch the 2019 Community Campaign, whose tagline is aptly named, "Together."

Oliver's experience in youth programming and marketing provide the perfect platform as we rebrand the JCC.



Hamilton participants on the 2018 Asper program pose in front of Winnipeg's Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

## ASPER STUDENTS VISIT WINNIPEG

by LAURA WOLFSON, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

I recently returned from a trip to Winnipeg, during which I co-chaperoned a group of 11 Hamilton area high school student participants in the Asper Human Rights and Holocaust Studies program. For eight weeks prior to the trip, students explored themes such as the Holocaust in literature, in film, and in the media. Expanding on the lessons of the Holocaust, they also studied the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and learned about Canada's history of human rights failures and successes. The sessions ended with a discussion of leadership values in relation to human rights.

In Winnipeg, the students went to see the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights. A truly spectacular, architecturally beautiful, high-tech, interactive experience awaited us. In addition to the one floor dedicated to the study of genocide (including the Holocaust) there are entire floors exploring the history and relationship of Canada's Indigenous

peoples with this country, understanding human rights turning points in both Canada and in the world, stories of inspiring human rights change leaders, and reflections upon how rights are protected in Canada.

In addition, we visited a number of other sites. We went on a fascinating tour of the Manitoba Legislature, led by a high-energy tour guide who had spent 10 years unlocking the architectural codes of the building and had discovered that the building was, in fact, intended to be a reflection of the biblical First Temple in Jerusalem. We visited Winnipeg Harvest, an independent food bank that runs a variety of unique and engaging programs in the community.

After eight weeks of getting to know each other in a class setting, these students committed themselves to be leaders in their own schools and help others develop an awareness of human rights. It was an honour and a pleasure for me to accompany them on this journey.

## Meet Camp Kadimah's new director

Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

The JCC is excited to welcome its new program coordinator and Camp Kadimah director, Oliver Borr. Born in Manchester, England, Borr has lived in Calgary, Vancouver, and Toronto, before settling into Hamilton with his wife and baby girl in August, 2016. Borr says there's something about Hamilton that feels different from other places he's lived.

"There's something about the youth and vibrancy of the Hamilton Jewish community that's very exciting. There's a rich history here that has to be respected, and I'm looking forward to building on it. It's really an honour to be a part of that process," said Borr.

"Oliver's enthusiasm and passion were obvious from the moment he walked in the room," said JCC co-president Jason Waxman. "His excitement and youthful approach to the JCC and Camp Kadimah made him the ideal fit. Oliver's experience in youth programming and marketing provide the perfect platform as we re-brand the JCC."

"It's all about not being stagnant," said Borr. "Camp Kadimah has been doing this for more than 50 years and has seen much success. But I hope to look back at those years, and find a way to make an already amazing camp even better."

Borr has no intentions of adjusting everything, though. "If I tried to change the Bingeman's trip, I'd have a riot on my hands," he joked, "but there's always room to improve."

Since starting, Borr has created the new JCC Hamilton website at [hamiltonjcc.com](http://hamiltonjcc.com), and hopes to keep things moving in the right direction.

Next up? Camp Kadimah. And what a summer it will be. For more information about Camp Kadimah email [oliver@hamiltonjcc.com](mailto:oliver@hamiltonjcc.com) or call 905-648-0613 ext 307.



Oliver Borr

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Lawyers in your Corner

Cars aren't just imprinted in the DNA of the Richter clan; they're a serious passion.

## CARS IN THEIR BLOOD

Secrets of a third generation family business

BY OLGA KWAK SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

What was the best car you ever owned? You must remember it. Maybe it was the first one. Maybe your parents helped you buy it. Maybe you got it with your own coin. Maybe you drive it now. Maybe after years of buying used beaters, you've finally put down the money for a new one.

Did you put your kids into it? Did it take you across the country? Did you find a hidden spot that showed you the beauty of our almighty universe? Did it save your life?

The Richter Group has been selling these opportunities for more than 60 years. When I sat down with Lance Richter of Eastgate Ford, I asked him what his favourite sale was. He was quick to tell me: "The first one." He swivels his chair to reach into a cabinet behind him and pulls out a photo album. For the first three years of his career, as the third generation of Richter automotive sales, he took a picture of every sale he made, including the first one. The customer was an older Italian gentleman named Ettore Zille. He bought a 1998 Ford Taurus SE for \$20,000, plus tax, with a plastic bag full of cash.

Lance started working in the family business in 1998 after graduating from Western with a degree in economics. A vintage Eastgate Ford ad hangs in his office with three photos in it: one is of his grandfather Frank Richter, who began the business, the second is of his father Lorne, who succeeded Frank as president, and the third? A toddler Lance astride a Ford tractor. The caption beneath his picture reads: *Lance Richter: Future Ford Dealer.*

"Who knew?" he mused. It's clear that the Richter Group is proud of being three generations deep into a business that is still succeeding despite the

price of gas, numerous competitors, and other environmental and economic changes, both worldwide and here in Hamilton itself, that have made the automotive industry adjust rapidly to fluctuating changes. The LRT looms ahead, ready to be started. Nation-states are now making electric cars mandatory. Yet the Eastgate Ford dealership on Parkdale Avenue N. still hums with activity. People purchase both new and used cars, and bring their rides in for tune-ups and oil changes. On a previous trip to the tire centre, I spy a vintage Ford truck, my guess is from the 1930s, through the service bay window, getting its tires changed.

The Richters emigrated to Canada in the late 19th century. Originally a family of blacksmiths, horsepower was already deeply engrained in the family tradition when Frank opened the first of his used car lots on Barton St. in the 1940s. Lance shows me a blown-up photograph of one of the earliest lots, located at Main Street West and Hess. We look up the address on Google Maps to find that the mooring and wrought-iron fence still exists, even though the house behind the line-up of what look like Studebakers is now bigger and covered in yellow stucco. It's a dentist's office now.

After years of running used car lots, Frank became a Ford dealer, opening his first showroom in Stoney Creek in 1957 before moving it to its current location at Barton and Parkdale in 1964. Frank's brother, Hy Richter, opened his own dealership – Bay/King Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep – in the 1960s. In another vintage ad that Lance shows me, it's clear that although Eastgate's showroom has expanded in the last six decades, much of the original 1950s design is still in there.

But it's the cars that demand your attention. As I wait for Lance, my eye veers towards a



Lance Richter in the Eastgate Ford showroom.

brand new Ford Fusion with a mind-bending rotary dial gear shift that looks like it would be more comfortable setting the temperature on a convection oven instead of getting you from zero to 60 in 10 seconds. As we're searching for the ads, I skirt past a Ford Lariat. To be honest, I thought they stopped making Lariats in the eighties. Lance quickly corrects me: they've been making these top-notch, all-the-bells-and-whistles trucks for decades with no end in sight.

Lance also informs me that Ford's bringing the Bronco back in 2020. That's a personal favourite of his. He's got a red and white 1976 Ford Bronco parked in his garage. In between my questions, we spend time Googling cars. We both love them. I show him pictures of the one-of-a-kind aluminum Bugatti Atlantic I saw over the summer at the Canadian Warplane Museum. We laugh over Deadmou5's silly custom Ferraris and Lamborghinis.

Cars aren't just imprinted in the DNA of the Richter clan; they're a serious passion.

Lance remembers his grandfather smoking cigars and playing cards with his friends. Not exactly a kid-friendly environment. When his father Lorne and his

uncles Lowell and Ron came on board, they strived to create a more professional climate. Lance and his brother Jamie, who runs the Bay-King Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep dealership, continue that tradition.

I first met the Richter family as a young girl whose parents, Krystyna and Czeslaw, were the custodians of the Beth Jacob Synagogue. They were always welcoming individuals and clearly a big part of the community at Beth Jacob.

In the mid-2000s the synagogue purchased a vehicle for my father, a 1980 something hunter green Ford F-150 that, inexplicably, had pennies painted on the cab doors. I nicknamed it the Penny Truck, obviously, and drove it on occasion, when Dad let me, to my part-time job selling burgers out of the drive-thru window at the Dundurn McDonalds.

When it was time to get rid of the Penny Truck, my father was directed to Eastgate Ford, where he was introduced to Lance. Dad had exacting taste and Lance found a ruby red 2003 Dodge Dakota, with a full six-foot bed, that my father required, for the

price he could afford.

Dad drove the Dakota until he passed away in 2013. As if knowing its master had gone, the Dakota began to fail shortly after and lasted about a year later under the hands of my brother-in-law.

I know how much that truck meant to my dad. He treated it like a third child. And I remember the rides I took in that Dakota. And I am forever grateful that the Richter Group gave my father, and countless other people, that same opportunity. That feeling of pride of owning something so big, so mechanical, so important to them. It didn't just get them from place to place. It became a part of their family.

I bought my own car for the first time this year. She's a magnetic blue 2011 Ford Focus SE. I named her Joni, after Joni Mitchell. Lance reassured me that 2011 was a good year for Focuses. Already in my short time with Joni I have seen just how much opportunity she has given me, simply by being my four wheels. That's the kind of freedom Lance and his brother Jamie, together with everyone in the Richter family who has come before and will come after, provide Hamiltonians.



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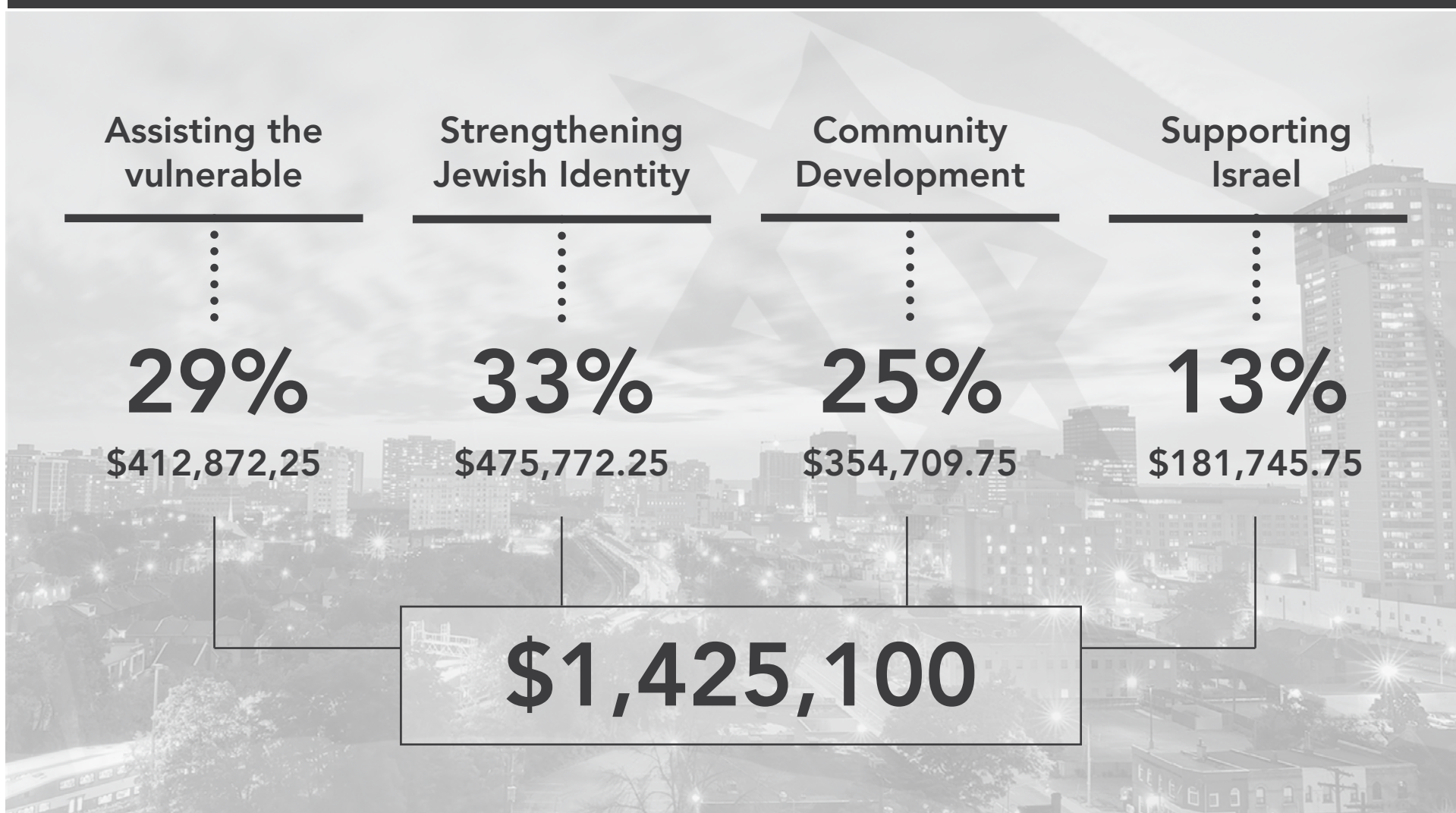
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# ALLOCATIONS REPORT | L'CHAYIM CAMPAIGN 2018



Beth Tikvah Foundation	\$15,600
Jewish Social Services	\$205,000
Hamilton Hebrew Academy	\$165,000
Kehila Community Day School	\$36,000
Anshe Sholom Afternoon School	\$21,000
Beth Jacob Afternoon School	\$21,000
Beth Jacob   Anshe Sholom Joint Program	\$1,000
Midrasha Community High School	\$18,500
Shuttle Service	\$10,000
Hamilton Jewish Community Centre	\$125,000
Camp Kadimah	\$10,000
Hillel   McMaster	\$10,000
Vaad Ha Kashrut	\$10,500
Shalom Village	\$10,000
Chabad House Hamilton	\$2,000
Administration and Campaign	\$387,200
Programming	\$129,250
Moving	\$10,000
Hamilton Jewish News	\$35,000
Designated gifts	\$50,000
Contingency	\$15,728
UIA   NCR	\$118,161
Birthright	\$9,161
Jewish Agency For Israel	\$10,000

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At certain times, we are reminded of what it means to be a community in the best sense of that word.



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNEIDER



PHOTO: CHANNAH FONSECA QUEZADA

## YOM HASHOAH AND YOM HA'ATZMAUT

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER  
The Hamilton Jewish News

At certain times we are reminded what it means to be a community in the best sense of that word. This year's Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration and Israel's 70th anniversary celebration were, each in their own way, profoundly uplifting collective experiences that left Jewish Hamiltonians feeling a renewed sense of solidarity and pride.

The air in Hamilton City Hall's second floor lobby was filled with subdued excitement and anticipation on April 12 as community members filed past a March of the Living exhibit on their way to Council Chambers for a Holocaust Remembrance Day event. The hour-long program that followed, while containing many familiar elements — readings, prayers and a candle-lighting ceremony in memory of the six million — somehow felt different than in the past, as if the theme of bearing witness to the most heinous crime of modern history held particular significance in a public setting. The closing video of 600 Holocaust survivors and their families

singing the uplifting and triumphant song, Chai (Israel's 1983 entry to the Eurovision contest) brought many audience members to tears and ended the program on an emotional high note.

More than 300 people from across the community spectrum danced and sang to the beat of lively Israeli music at the community Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration, held on April 19 at Temple Anshe Sholom. Organized by the Hamilton Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community Centre and the Jewish National Fund, the multi-media extravaganza by Toronto's Party Crew Entertainment, was the culminating event of a month of Israel@70 programs held across the community this spring (see facing page.)

Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, who was the driving force behind the collaborative event, could not have been more pleased by its outcome. "Seeing Jewish Hamiltonians coming together to commemorate and celebrate, I felt a deep sense of satisfaction knowing that we at Federation are giving the community what it needs and deserves," he said.



PHOTO: CHANNAH FONSECA QUEZADA



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## SPRING EVENTS IN JEWISH HAMILTON

The community calendar was full in April and May with fundraising and cultural events put on by a host of Hamilton's Jewish organizations. Well done and Yashar Koach!

**1. WOMEN'S STORIES OF THE HOLY LAND**  
Cantor Paula Baruch Photo: Wendy Schneider

**2. JNF NEGEV DINNER**  
Eugene Levy and Martin Short Photo: Lawrence Yanover

**3. BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE'S ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL**  
Simone Rotstein enjoys burekas prepared by Chef Micky Kent  
Photo: Wendy Schneider

**4. MCMASTER HILLEL ISRAEL DAY**  
Front row, l to r: Sarah Levy, Max Librach, Zev Winegust, Max Greenberg; Back row, l to r: Ayinadis Darbow, Josh Arbess, and Tali Fedorovsky Photo: Judith Dworkin

**5. SHALOM VILLAGE HUSTLE4HEALTH**  
The 17th annual Shalom Village Hustle 4 Health an enormous success! Participants had a great time hustling in shorts and T-shirts during the new springtime Hustle. They look forward to seeing every one again next year, on May 26, 2019.  
Photo: Russell Druiven, Bankomedia

**6. HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY**  
The HHA choir led by principal Yaakov Morel Photo: Donna Waxman

**7. HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION'S 20TH ANNUAL STUDENT SYMPOSIUM ON THE HOLOCAUST AT MOHAWK COLLEGE**  
Keynote speakers Pinchas Gutter and Eli Rubenstein presented before more than 800 Hamilton area high school students.  
Photo: Wendy Schneider

**8. BEIT HALOCHEM FUNDRAISER** - Eleven IDF veterans spoke to a large crowd at Temple Anshe Sholom on June 6 about their experiences with Beit HaLochem. Photo: Judy Mendelson

**9. HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION'S LION OF JUDAH LUNCHEON**  
From l to r: Liz Tick, Elaine Katz, Batia Phillips, Lorraine Cohen, Sasha Weisz, guest speaker Janice Kaplan, Lisa Morris, Marisa Rymberg, Danna Horwood, Millie Gould, Shirley Molot Photo: Elaine Levine



While there are many benefits, there is also the potential to unearth long lost secrets that could have devastating effects on families.

## POTENTIAL PITFALLS OF GENEALOGICAL DNA TESTING

BY STEVEN BROCK  
Reprinted with permission from  
Treasured Times: the newsletter  
of the JGSH

How would you feel if you suddenly discovered that you were not who you thought you were? Ever since scientists mapped out the human genome in 2003, huge leaps in the technology of genetics have been made. The potential to scientifically determine your family's DNA sequence has been of special significance to genealogists. In the past decade, several companies have capitalized on this interest and now offer inexpensive home testing kits. Upon receiving a small sample of saliva, these labs can map out your DNA and determine among other things, ethnicity and ancestral migrations. But are people fully

prepared for what they might discover?

Over the past months TV stations have aired commercials touting the benefits of this genealogy-based DNA Testing to the mass public. The marketing campaign has been as relentless as it has been appealing.

In one popular commercial a smiling man relates to the television audience, "We always thought we were German. But since we took the DNA test we now know that we are Scottish. So I traded in my Lederhosen for a kilt."

The first time I saw this, I thought it was clever and effective. Once the company maps out your DNA sequence, they compare and match patterns with other samples in their ever growing database from known ethnicities and parts of the world. So if parts of your gene chains have shown up in samples of

people from Scotland but not from Germany, then it may well be time for a wardrobe change.

But then I began to question "Why DID you think you were German?" It is likely because the parents and grandparents who raised you were German. So now, how does it come to pass that you are in fact, Scottish? If both you and your natural parents all take the test, it will indicate that you have about a 50 per cent match to each of them. Similarly each of your natural siblings would also have inherited a 50 per cent of their DNA from each parent. However it is unlikely that each sibling would have gotten the exact same half of each parent's DNA. So most natural brothers and sisters only share between 34 to 52 per cent of their DNA with each other.

In at least three instances over the past 12 months, people have

confided in me that they have no genetic match to the person that they always believed to be their father. How could this happen? While there is always a chance for errors in the testing, genetic matching to other people is usually pretty accurate.

The answer to this question may be perfectly innocent or equally horrifying. Were they adopted and never told? Were they and another baby switched at birth (in which case, neither known parent would be a match)? Or even more disturbing, was their mother unfaithful or assaulted resulting in a pregnancy? There are many possibilities as to what may have transpired.

While there are many benefits to doing this testing, there is also the potential to unearth long lost secrets that could have devastating effects on families. Subsequently, if the person/people involved are no longer alive or otherwise able to explain the situations or defend their actions, then the details of the uncovered secrets may be lost forever.

Another increasingly common scenario involves a natural father having had relations with someone other than his wife. While this could have happened before or during a marriage, children might suddenly discover that they have half siblings of which they were never aware. These discoveries happen, because the testing company compares your sequences with other test samples in their database. When matches occur, they will offer to put you in touch with relatives you may or may not have known you had. Over the years their databases have become quite extensive. AncestryDNA, for instance, has more than six million people in

its DNA database. The company also reported sales of more than 1.7 million home test kits during the 2017 Black Friday weekend alone. So the numbers will inevitably grow.

In the vast majority of cases, it is likely that most people undertaking this sort of test discover exactly what they were expecting. Even unexpected results, culminating in the discovery of relatives that you never knew existed, can be viewed as a blessing. In all three cases confided to me, the people were happy and excited to find out about their new familial links.

However, before taking the test on a lark, based on the entertainment aspects publicized in the advertising, one should be aware of the possibility of discovering unexpected results and irrefutably exposing secrets that have the very real prospect of tearing apart a family.

To that end, the advertising suggesting that these test kits be given to people as gifts is – in my personal opinion – misguided. People should only embark on this type of testing on their own volition and only once they are aware of the possibilities they might discover.

◆◆◆

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Hamilton and Area (JGSH) meets monthly between September and June at Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline Ave. N, Hamilton. All are welcome. First meeting is free for non-members. For more information, please check our website at [www.jgsh.org](http://www.jgsh.org) or contact Hazel Boon at 905-524-3345 / [jgshamilton@gmail.com](mailto:jgshamilton@gmail.com).

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Walking among the rows of graves, Bessner encountered one stone that would change the course of her life.

### DOUBLE THREAT: CANADIAN JEWS, THE MILITARY, AND WORLD WAR II

by *Ellin Bessner*

REVIEWED BY STEVEN BROCK

As the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion approaches next year, journalist and professor Ellin Bessner has just released an important yet mostly untold account of Canada's Second World War history. In *Double Threat, Canadian Jews, The Military, and World War II*, Bessner comprehensively covers the experiences of the more than 17,000 Canadian Jews that served our country during the years of devastating conflict. Packed full of individual accounts, Bessner presents a fascinating and extremely readable narrative of the victories, defeats, trials and tribulations of our Jewish service-men and women during the war.

Bessner got the name of the book from a letter that wartime Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King wrote to the Canadian Jewish Congress after the war. Expressing the nation's gratitude for the contribution made by Jewish troops to the Allied victory, he described the Nazis as a "double threat", one, not only to the world at large, but as importantly to the "survival of the Jewish nation".

While much has been written about the Jewish wartime experience, *Double Threat* is poised to become the definitive source

to understanding the Canadian Jewish contribution to the war effort. After selling out its initial run in only four weeks, the book is already in its second printing.

Bessner's mission began almost seven years ago during a family vacation to France. On the advice of a friend, they visited Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery. "It's one thing to see it on a computer screen or on Google Maps, it's another thing to be there, and touch and feel it and get the immense scope of the loss and sacrifice among thousands of these tombstones. It sticks into your bones", recounted Bessner during a recent interview.

Walking among the rows of graves on a grey, drizzly day in July 2011, Bessner encountered one stone that would change the course of her life. She became mesmerized by the monument of Canadian soldier G. Meltz. It was emblazoned with a Star of David and the epitaph "He died so Jewry shall suffer no more". Bessner made it her personal mission to discover who he was and what happened to him. Bessner investigated, documented and published the story of 25-year-old George Meltz upon her return to Canada, and eventually acquainted the members of his now extended family to his long forgotten story.

Born in Toronto, Meltz enlisted in the Canadian army in 1940. Assigned to the Third Anti-Tank Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery, Meltz was one of 160,000 Allied troops who stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. A month later, on July 8, 1944, he was shot and killed by a German sniper.

Over the next seven years, Bessner's quest expanded into a full fledged obsession to discover and document the experiences of the 39 per cent of all eligible Canadian Jewish men (a number comparable to the overall population at large) that donned uniforms in service of the Canadian war machine.

Interviewing close to 300 veterans or their descendants, Bessner extensively quotes these conversations to paint a picture of the lives of the Jews who served. From their experiences enduring the rampant Anti-Semitism of the time while signing up, training and eventually being deployed overseas, *Double Threat* crafts a vibrant record of their individual stories. "I thought, let these people speak for themselves. It is better to hear it in their words, than in mine."

In addition to the extensive interviews, Bessner meticulously researched the era by poring through thousands of books, articles, family mementos and

by working her way through the more than 1.1 million Second World War military records stored in the Library and Archives Canada facility in Hull, Quebec.

Bessner's research took her across the country and through Europe in search of stories that fit the narrative. She balanced it by including accounts from the Maritimes all the way to Vancouver. Among the communities detailed throughout, Hamilton does figure prominently. From the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry who fought so bravely at the Dieppe, to names familiar within the Hamilton Jewish community, like Balinson, Garshowitz, Minden and Goldberg.

Bessner is now out on an extensive book tour, which brought her to Hamilton in late May and will last until at least November. "I feel I owe it to all the people who shared their stories". "Service men and women

should not have to beg for recognition. They deserve it."

"Double Threat" tells the stories of the many Jews who bravely fought for Canada during the Second World War. As the former CBC anchor Peter Mansbridge has written in his back cover endorsement, "Bessner's writing brings this part of our history out of the shadows". Said Bessner, "They weren't forced into the shadows. It is just that nobody paid attention. And I did."

"Double Threat: Canadian Jews, The Military, and WWII" is published by New Jewish Press, the publishing arm of the University of Toronto's Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies. The book is available at all the major bookstores including Chapters, Indigo and Amazon, as well as A Different Drummer books in Burlington. To order the book or contact Bessner, visit her website at [ellinbessner.com](http://ellinbessner.com).

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There, in the caves, God reminded me that His presence is not a “Big Reveal.”

## THE TEFILLIN OF QUMRAN



BY ALICE MENDELSON

When we left for Israel to mark my son's bar mitzvah, I kind of expected that God would be waiting there for us at the Western Wall.

Never mind that you probably won't see me much at shul. I am likely to arrive late or leave early. I know that one of my children will come and fetch me anyway during davening. So I don't push myself to arrive early, to focus, to daven. I sit in the back row, on the edge of the bench, ready to make a quick exit.

In spite of all of this, I expected that God at the Wall would be a given. Jews and non-Jews from all corners of the world trek to the Wall. We fight over how much access we have to it, how easy it is to reach, who can pray and when. We wedge notes into its crevices, a testament to our belief that God is there.

I had wanted to bring my grandmother's siddur to the Wall. The one she was married with. But we packed light and I didn't want to lose it, so it remained by my bedside table. I wanted to focus on my son as he read his Torah portion, but my girls were tired and crabby and wanted to be held, so my attention was divided. I wanted at least to touch the Wall when we arrived,



Emet Mendelson and his father, Simon, share a moment at the Wall.

but I had to elbow my way through the throngs of women who had taken a front row seat, and remained there, huddled protectively around their prayer books. But this was not about me; it was about my son, and he was so happy. Relieved to have layned (read Torah) well, ecstatic to place the Torah back in its holy place at the Wall. I didn't ask him if this was a spiritually meaningful moment. I certainly didn't ask him if he spoke with God, but I know that it was and that he did. Looking over our photos

from that day, I can see it from all images of him in quiet reflection, from the way in which he leans against the wall, the box of tefillin on his forehead resting against the warm stones of the Wall.

I didn't have such a moment but was able to revel in his.

We moved on to our travels and sightseeing and I forgot about the Wall. From Tel Aviv, to Akko, to the West Bank, we explored and experienced Israel. We went to see the Qumran caves, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in 1947. We joined

the tours to view the mikvahs and milk bowls of the people who lived there 2,000 ago. What no one mentioned though, and what did not join the Dead Sea scroll touring exhibition, is the pile of tefillin discovered in the same area. Yet, for some reason, these ancient dusty boxes gave me pause.

Those pieces of leather look exactly like the ones worn by my husband, and now my son, as they pray each morning. My son's tefillin took months to locate, as we travelled from

Montreal to Toronto, to Israel, searching for tefillin of the right quality, the correct size, the correct minhag (custom). These same tefillin crowd my kitchen island each morning and test my patience as they must be cleared and put away before breakfast can be served. And there, almost 10,000 kilometres away, the same black straps lay coiled in the soil, rolled parchment tucked neatly inside their boxes. Incredibly, the tefillin at the Qumran caves signify the continuity of Jewish customs spanning two millennia. They stand as testament to the incredible tenacity of Jewish practice and are a tangible link of the Jewish people, through time, to God and to one another.

And so, here was my greatest, humbling insight. There, in the caves, God reminded me that His presence is not a “Big Reveal.” God is not waiting only at the Wall or in the pages of my grandmother's siddur. Rather, the divine presence is in the mundane details of everyday life. God is with me when I find gratitude in my crowded kitchen, when I relish that the tefillin clattering my counter are not just holy objects, but constant reminders of who we are and of those who came before us.

*Alice Mendelson is a mother of four and former teacher and day school principal turned college professor. Originally from Montreal, she and her family have lived in Toronto and Zurich, Switzerland, and are now happy to call Hamilton home.*

## DANCING TO THE END OF LOVE



BY BARRY ROSEN

My mother-in-law Pearl had gone out shopping. She arrived home in a very excited manner.

“It happened again!” she said. She then told my wife Leslie and me the familiar story of how she had met yet another stranger while out in the community. The stranger had asked Pearl how long she's been married. When she told him that she and her husband Dave will soon be celebrating their 75th anniversary, “he just couldn't believe it! He also couldn't believe that I am 92 years old!”

It soon became clear as we continued the conversation that it was Pearl who had initiated the discussion with the stranger. It was also Pearl who had elicited his responses by asking “guess how long I've been married?” and “guess how old I am?”

It is likely that this stranger would have been equally

incredulous to discover that my in-laws recently celebrated their 75th anniversary.

Pearl is 92 and Dave is 93. When they got married in 1943 Pearl was 17 and Dave had recently turned 19. They have three children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

The Viners' current lives are not without some of the challenges associated with being older adults, but they are capable of so many things, especially connecting with family and engaging in interesting discussions about their present and past lives, news of the day, and other topics too numerous to mention.

A little while ago, I had the pleasure of conducting separate interviews with Pearl and Dave, whom I asked about their first impressions on meeting each other.

Pearl told me she was 16 when she first met Dave briefly in a Toronto delicatessen. She met him again a short time later at a party that she attended with a friend. They danced together and told each other that they were good dancers. After a while, she said, “Dave started telling me he liked me, and months

later he asked me to go steady.” Pearl described Dave as a good talker as well as a good listener. They had a lot of fun together, with dancing being their main focus.

Because they were both “underage” my in-laws had to get permission from their parents to get married. Pearl's mom loved Dave from the beginning and always treated him as if he were her son. Her dad, being very protective of his daughter, had some initial difficulty with the relationship but eventually grew to accept Dave as well.

My father-in-law has a gentle nature and a very kind heart. He is less outgoing than Pearl but is a good conversationalist once you draw him out. Dave earned his living as a scrap dealer and still tells stories about all the deals that he scored and how much he enjoyed his work. After retiring many years ago, he participated in various hobbies such as woodcarving.

While Dave didn't recall the specific location where he and Pearl first met, he, too, emphasized the importance of dancing in their early relationship. He shared an especially fond memory of a late-night dance



Pearl and Dave Viner at a 75th anniversary party thrown in their honour.

cruise they once took from Toronto to Port Dalhousie. When they arrived back in Toronto it was three in the morning and they were scared to go back to Pearl's house, for fear of her dad's reaction.

As in Pearl's version, Dave described his wife's father as “kind of scary, as he wasn't too keen on guys coming around, but eventually he accepted me.”

When I asked Dave when he knew that Pearl was the one for him, he told me “I loved her from the minute I saw her.” He wasn't sure if she would have similar feelings for him and he was elated when things worked out.

Dave and Pearl find it hard to believe that they have been married for as long as they have. A true romantic, Dave said, “I'll never know if we would have ended up getting married if not for the dancing,” adding that his and Pearl's relationship “is really all about love.”

Should you have the opportunity to meet Pearl and Dave it is very likely that you would agree.

*Barry Rosen, a social worker, has loved words, stories and books almost since birth, and was the founder of the Hamilton Storytelling Circle.*

## SOCIAL IDOLS



BY BEN SHRAGGE

In 2013, FOMO (fear of missing out) was added to the Oxford English Dictionary. It's defined as “Anxiety that an exciting or interesting event may currently be happening elsewhere, often aroused by posts seen on social media.”

For thousands of years, more exciting events have been happening elsewhere—divine revelation at Sinai, intellectual revolution in Athens, and, more to our current taste, mass blood-sports in Rome. Back in the day, though, most of humanity was blissfully unaware of what they were missing out on. Only recently, with the rise of social media and smartphones, have we had our noses rubbed in it quite so much.

We check in to social media and see shiny happy people jet-setting to Iceland, genuflecting before the perfect brunch, partying on ever-higher rooftops, and basking in each other's shiny happiness. Meanwhile, we're still half-asleep in our pajamas, alone, vacantly dipping anything we can find in hummus, trying to muster the energy to water the cactus. And even the cactus seems to be doing more with its life than us. Reflective unhappiness comes as no surprise.

Of course, the seemingly shiny happy people are only showcasing their shiny happy moments—editing by omission the long stretches between trips to Iceland

when they're catatonic on the couch, half-dressed, flicking through a feed of people shinier and happier than themselves. Data scientist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz notes that while Americans spend roughly six times as much time doing dishes as they do golfing, there are about twice as many golf tweets as there are dishwashing tweets. And while as many people in Las Vegas stay at budget hotel Circus Circus as the posh Bellagio, the Bellagio gets about three times as many Facebook check-ins.

We know this—that social media is only a selective representation of reality—on a theoretical level, but on a practical level we forget. Philosopher Owen Barfield, writing before Instagram, nicely defines the problem: “when the nature and limitations of artificial images are forgotten, they become idols.” The rooftop partier lives in her parents' basement. The traveler to Iceland was cold and homesick half the trip. The Sunday bruncher had a microwave burrito for dinner last night. Their pictures are all cropped and filtered anyway. When FOMO creeps into consciousness, we need to remember that social media selves aren't ourselves. They have eyes, but cannot see. They have mouths, but cannot speak. They have ears, but cannot hear. They're idols.

When we fixate on idols, we forget the flesh-and-blood people around us. Instead of saying hello to a potential friend in front of us, we anonymously lurk a Facebook “friend” we never speak with. Midway through a real-life conversation, we're distracted by an alert to a virtual conversation we could be having. Even

if we don't pick up the phone, FOMO shifts our attention from the present potential for some small but real human interaction to distant possibilities that will almost certainly disappoint. We're driven to idol worship by the muezzin call of the ping.

Fear of missing out on a possibility means we miss out on reality. Is there, at all times, somewhere better we could be, something better we could be doing? Yes, probably. But grasping for the phone doesn't take us anywhere better; it only takes us away from where we are now. And whatever better things we could be doing on a Saturday night, spectating at what other people are doing on a Saturday night isn't among them. George Orwell said that to see what is in front of one's nose needs a constant struggle. Our phones aid and abet the enemy in that struggle.

FOMO results from fixating on false representations of people instead of people. By offering a vicarious connection to a more glamorous, but artificial, reality, our phones disconnect us from the reality right in front of us. Sometimes, they very literally disconnect us from that reality. Bloomberg reports that traffic fatalities rose by 14.4 per cent over the past two years, an increase linked to an upsurge in smartphone usage. No matter where we'd rather be, we should keep this memento mori in mind: Life is here and now, and death is the ultimate form of missing out.

*Ben Shragge is the digital editor of the HJN. He currently lives in Boston.*

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# SCHEDULE A *PRESENTATION- DRIVE-DELIVERY* TODAY

PICK



1. PICK ANY  
TOYOTA OR  
NISSAN

DROP

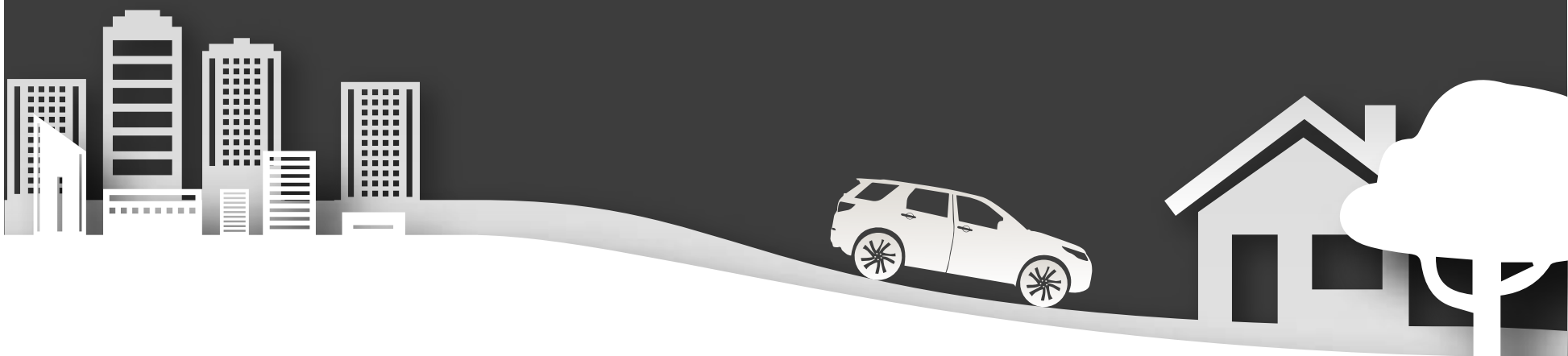


2. GET YOUR  
CHOSEN CAR  
DELIVERED TO  
YOUR HOME

DRIVE



3. ENJOY THE  
EASIEST TEST  
DRIVE EVER



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