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50 years and counting
Honouring Fay Schmerling
P8



Hamilton Jewish News

THE VOICE OF JEWISH HAMILTON

MARCH 2018 VOL 32:3/ NISSAN 5778

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A family's experience with assisted dying

by MARK EISENBERG Special to the HJN

Considering the length and breadth of one person's life is a tricky business, particularly when the person in question is your father. My father, Saul Eisenberg, or Sonny as many of his friends called him, was a multifaceted man and more than just a father; he was my confidante and best friend. My long standing nickname for him was Boogie, and I of course became Moishe Ben Boogie.

Growing up in the fifties and sixties when many of my friends' fathers seemed somewhat distant or remote from the joys and trials that formed their kids' lives, my dad and I relished and valued our time together. Whether it was working at his Liberty House furniture store, horseback riding,

or sailing on the myriad of boats that he owned with his best buddy Wilfred Gerofsky, Dad taught me the true meaning and importance of both work and play.

Dad knew the meaning of hard work from shining shoes and selling soda pop at ten years old to help his family in the Bronx of the late thirties. When he moved to his beloved bride Mollie Wright's hometown of Hamilton, he encountered what it meant to write "Jewish" on job application forms and the resultant lack of work. Play came naturally to dad and it was this simple yet unparalleled gift he imparted that lends joy and meaning to every aspect of my life and relationships.

See also **A DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE** in **COVER STORIES**, page 4

Passover Memories



Above: The Rosenberg/Rosenblood family seder circa 1947 or 1948. The seder was hosted by Leibish and Sarah Rosenberg at their home on Napier Street. The photo evokes wonderful Passover memories for their grandson, Norman Rosenblood (seated left at the end of the table.) Read more on page 9.

CELEBRATING

Israel @70 brings Jewish Hamilton together

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

Hamilton's 2018 celebration of 70 years of Israel's independence marks a fresh rethink of the annual Yom Ha'atzmaut event to maximize community involvement. This year's program, co-sponsored by the Jewish National Fund, Jewish Community Centre and the Hamilton Jewish Federation, will have something for everyone.

Representatives from Hamilton's synagogues and Israeli community also took part in the planning of this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut event. Since the sale of the JCC, Hamilton's synagogues have taken turns hosting the annual festivities and this year it's Temple Anshe Sholom's turn.

JNF executive director Suzy Polgar said it's been very rewarding to see the city's Jewish organizations come together for a common cause. "It's made me feel really good because it's been a true partnership," she said, "We're all working together to celebrate Israel."

The event, which is free of charge, will take place at Temple Anshe Sholom at 6 p.m., and feature musical entertainment by Israeli DJ Emil and his fusion band, Israeli folk dancing

and singing, and children's activities. For those looking for a more contemplative experience, a lounge will be made available for people to share their Israel experiences. Food prepared by Hamilton's kosher caterers will be available for purchase.

Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg is delighted to see such widespread community support given that communal organizations have been so busy planning their own Israel@70 events, including Temple Anshe Sholom's Women's Stories of the Holy Land concert, the Hamilton Hebrew Academy's Yom HaZikaron commemoration, and Beth Jacob's Israeli Film Festival. You can read about all of these events and more on pages 10 and 11.



All of us at the Hamilton Jewish Federation extend to you and your loved ones best wishes for a joyous and meaningful Passover. We stand eternally united in seeking to fulfill our commitment to meeting Jewish needs and enriching Jewish life in Hamilton, in Israel and worldwide.

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**FEDERATION
REPORT**



JACKI LEVIN, PRESIDENT,
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

GUSTAVO RYMBERG, CEO
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

For the past seven months we have been working hard with one goal in mind: transforming Jewish life in Hamilton. We are not doing this alone: the board of directors, the annual campaign cabinet, our committed professional staff, a great group of passionate volunteers and our loyal donors are all playing a critical role in accomplishing this transformation. The Hamilton Jewish Federation board recognizes that the challenges facing our community requires strategic action. The following new committees are now in place to address these challenges:

The Grow Hamilton Committee, chaired by Laura Wolfson, whose main focus will be to outreach to those who would consider moving to Hamilton, and welcoming families and individuals who have moved or are in the process of moving to Hamilton.

The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Howard Eisenberg, will address the future needs of our community, establish new goals and look at how Hamilton Jewish Federation has to change in order to meet the needs of the new generations.

The Advocacy and Community Engagement Committee, chaired by Gerry Fisher, will work at developing good relations with other faith and cultural groups in the community; deal with media when necessary and develop an emergency response team and protocol to deal with urgent issues relating to our community.

The Jewish Education Committee, chaired by Alice Mendelson, will be dedicated to strengthening, enriching, and promoting the quality of Jewish education in our community; and will ensure its continuity by providing leadership and supporting a sustainable system of quality programs.

Meeting our community's many needs is dependent on a more robust Community Campaign. Federation has a critical role to play as a provider of consistent and predictable funding for our beneficiary agencies. In many cases, the Hamilton Jewish Federation is the primary source of ongoing funding for their programs and services.

Every single one of our 14 beneficiary agencies relies on yearly funding from the annual Community Campaign to do their important work.

We are revitalizing the Hamilton Jewish Federation brand to make it more approachable, modern and relevant. We are creating events, programs and partnerships to increase participation, engagement and create a stronger community.

We will develop a strategic plan and an effective engagement strategy for all age groups in the community and for people in different life stages. A life journey, a Jewish journey, is ongoing – and Hamilton Jewish Federation has a role to play every step of the way. Insights about different age cohorts and other group-defining characteristics will help us be even more effective in creating vibrant Jewish life in Hamilton.

It's not an overstatement to say that Jewish life in North America is changing. Fewer and fewer Jews are affiliating with traditional institutions, yet we also know that this decrease in affiliation doesn't mean they don't care about being Jewish. The same research that demonstrates low affiliation demonstrates high levels of pride. But pride does not equate community involvement. What are we trying to do?

- strengthen the Hamilton Jewish Federation's ability to serve as the community leader and change agent to improve the quality of life in our Jewish community.
- help more people live meaningfully Jewish lives.
- create Jewish activities on terms that work for them, that are personally meaningful, within the context of Jewish tradition.
- ensure the future of our Jewish community by strengthening Jewish education.
- connect with those who are on the outskirts of our community

We deeply believe that Hamilton Jewish Federation has the potential to create this connection and to create a vibrant Jewish community. We can engage more people in Jewish life, we can build relationships that add value, relevance, tradition, and joy to all they do.

We are at our best as a community when we all work together to face challenges, share strengths and build bridges of opportunities.

Chag Pesach Sameach
Jacki Levin
President, Board of Director

Gustavo Rymberg
Chief Executive Officer

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On May 14, 1948, the day the British Mandate over Palestine expired, the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum, and declared the establishment of the State of Israel. The Hamilton Jewish News is marking Israel's 70th anniversary in this special edition by changing from our signature purple to blue. Our community will be coming together to celebrate this significant milestone at a series of events that you can find on page 10 and 11.

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- Deadline for booking ad space - April 25, 2018
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy - May 15, 2018
- Deadline for receiving ad copy - June 6, 2018
- Estimated date of arrival - June 22, 2018

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A family's experience with assisted dying

Continued from page 1

It was also this attitude towards work and play, and understanding our short time here on earth as a balancing act between responsibility and celebration, that helped both my father and me embrace his decision concerning medically-assisted dying last year. It allowed us to make peace with saying goodbye, rather than clinging selfishly, and smiling in the knowledge that life had been one exhilarating heck of a ride. After having lived 89 fruitful years, married to my dear mother Mollie for almost 60 years and then finding new love and marriage with Sandra Yanover for 10 years, Dad knew a bit about how he had been blessed and the manner in which he wanted to say farewell.

Eight months after having been diagnosed with lung cancer and enduring surgery, various other treatments and debilitating pain, the eternal optimist and fighter begged his children and Sandra to let him die peacefully and with dignity at home in the manner which he chose. As each of us looked into his pleading eyes and our own broken hearts, we gracefully granted the man who had given us so much this final wish.

We were fortunate to have dad's family doctor, Leslie Solomon, care for him with great skill and dedication through the trials and tribulations of cancer treatment. When Dad told his doctor that he'd had enough, Dr. Solomon referred him to Dr. Shelly Sender of Hamilton, a tremendous source of knowledge and support for Dad and our family. She confirmed that Dad's condition placed him within the legal guidelines for medically-assisted dying and that he was

making a fully informed decision, free of doubts, undue pressure, or confusion.

She also assured us that there were no hard and fast rules concerning the mood or spirit of what we were planning and that it should reflect our priorities and values. Dad liked her immediately, as she was also originally from New York, not to mention her patience and genuine interest in Dad's love of a new audience for the old stories we had heard over and over.

Rabbi Jordan Cohen's sage advice, kindness, support and understanding reassured me that my Jewish roots were there to help guide me through a challenging and emotional time. Our United Hebrew Memorial Chapel was there for us and Hamilton's Jewish community is undoubtedly grateful for the respectful and compassionate work they do.

I was also comforted in the knowledge that my sister, who lives in Israel, valued the opinion of an Orthodox Rabbi and scholar and was told that while Orthodox Judaism's focus on the sanctity of life is at odds with assisted dying, love and respect for one's parents and their wishes is also fundamentally important. While I found this to be a nuanced and thoughtful view of a complicated issue, I think my dad embodied the Halachic principle of the sanctity of life through the joy with which he embraced each and every day. My father was always the captain of his own ship and would retain that position with dignity and strength until the very end, including his final voyage.

I understand and appreciate the difficulty that some in our community experience at



A favourite photograph: Mark and Saul Eisenberg
Photo courtesy of Mark Eisenberg

the thought of assisted dying. I can only say that while palliative care is a sufficient option for many, assisted dying can be a compassionate and dignified gift for those who face prolonged suffering, but who are able to make a conscious and informed decision. I am heartened by Canada's leadership in enacting cautious yet pioneering legislation that will continue to evolve prudently, and particularly with the recent court ruling that doctors who do not want to be part of the process for either personal or religious beliefs, are still obliged under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to refer their patients

in a straightforward and timely manner to another doctor who can help.

While it is always sad to say goodbye, we chose to make my father's final days a celebration of a life well lived. His friends all visited and shared stories as he lay in his own bed with his loving and courageous wife Sandra doing everything possible to keep him comfortable. His children, grandchildren and great grandchildren gathered around him and took dozens of photographs as Dad entertained us all with memories, pearls of wisdom and tall tales.

On his final morning, with Sandra's family and our family gathered together, we all raised a glass of whisky with dad intoning his favourite toast:

Here's to me
And here's to thee
And should we disagree
Well, here's to me.

Soon after, Dr. Sender arrived. She was a familiar and comforting presence as she asked dad if he had any reservations or change of heart. He said no and that he was ready. With his partner Sandra and me holding him, and with my wife Shelli and our children surrounding us, our brave warrior calmly laid back, closed his eyes and smiled as the injections did their deed in a gentle manner.

Farewell Captain. May gentle breezes, starlit skies and God's grace guide you as you set sail into the great beyond.

A Jewish physician's perspective on medically assisted death

by DR. RACHELLE SENDER, PhD, MD, CCFP
Special to the HJN

In June 2016, with the passage of Bill C-14, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) became legal in Canada. Bill C-14, which is far more restrictive than the original Supreme Court decision on the topic, allows for an assisted death provided all of the following conditions are met:

The patient is suffering from a 'grievous and irremediable' medical condition; there is an advanced state of irreversible decline; death is 'reasonably foreseeable'; the patient is experiencing enduring physical and/or psychological suffering that cannot be relieved by any means that the patient considers acceptable; the patient is capable of providing informed consent; minors and patients whose suffering is related to a mental illness are not eligible for MAiD; neither are patients with dementia, since advance directives are not allowed. There is also provision for healthcare providers who are conscientious objectors.

The procedure for arranging a medically assisted death is challenging; patients must fill out a formal, written request witnessed by two people not part of their health care team and not included in their will. They must also undergo two separate, detailed assessments, by two unrelated medical practitioners, as to whether or not they are eligible. There is also a 10-day waiting period after a formal request is made.

At present, the vast majority of assisted deaths in Canada are by euthanasia: a combination of lethal drugs are administered intravenously. However, death by oral medications, which patients can self-administer, is also legal.

The passage of Bill C-14 unleashed a storm of controversy in Canada. In particular there have been strong objections from religious groups. Jewish law traditionally has opposed suicide and assisted suicide.

However, some Reform rabbis, such as Rabbi Peter Knobel, have pointed out that Judaism does not make a virtue of suffering. Knobel argues that "assisted suicide is permitted when the decision is rational and can be demonstrated to be consistent with the person's own biography".

In Hamilton, Temple Anshe Shalom's Rabbi Jordan Cohen stated during a sermon on Yom Kippur, this past October, that he personally has changed his opinion on assisted suicide. Having spoken with the families of congregants who have died by MAiD in the past year he now believes that assisted death is consistent with Jewish values inasmuch as it is compassionate and relieves suffering.

There is no formal breakdown available on MAiD deaths in Hamilton by religion but it appears, anecdotally, that Jews are likely overrepresented among patients who have received a MAiD death (and perhaps underrepresented among MAiD providers). Such overrepresentation is likely due to the fact that patients requesting and receiving MAiD tend to be better educated and more affluent than the population as a whole. Still, overall, total MAiD deaths in Hamilton are a very small proportion, less than one per cent of total deaths.

I am a family physician and have been involved with MAiD assessments and provisions since June 2016. I did this because I believe my role as a physician is to relieve suffering and provide compassionate care. MAiD does exactly that. In healthcare one often gives lip service to the ideal of 'patient centered care' but the steps leading up to a MAiD death truly exemplify such care since the whole process is driven by patients' requests.

As a Jewish physician, I have struggled with the disconnect between my strong personal belief in the morality of MAiD and the official position of much of Judaism.



As a Jewish physician, I have struggled with the disconnect between my strong personal belief in the morality of MAiD and the official position of much of Judaism.

Along my journey, I have received support from many Jewish friends and colleagues. I am also comforted by the belief that my mother, Blanka Sender MD, a physician who escaped Poland in 1939, would have agreed with this work. Finally, I found Rabbi Cohen's sermon and the support of other members of TAS immensely comforting.

The typical patients requesting MAiD are dying of metastatic cancer; they have been ill for months or years and have undergone surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. This is not a request made lightly, because of some passing indisposition. In Hamilton, every patient I have assessed has been offered and (most often received) high quality palliative care to help control their pain and other symptoms.

When a patient is assessed and found eligible for MAiD, the relief and even joy he or she expresses is remarkable, as if having been given the best gift possible as a huge weight of dread and fear has been removed. Indeed many patients, knowing that they now have a way out, are able to put up with

things that previously seemed unbearable. Even the act of signing the request for MAiD form can be comforting, as it gives back control to people who have had none for a long time: one recent patient signed his MAiD request months ago but, having that 'insurance,' was able to live a fulfilling life for another half a year.

Opponents of MAiD often warn that MAiD is a slippery slope in which the poorest and most vulnerable patients will be coerced into having such deaths. There is, however, not a shred of evidence for this; the real situation is quite the opposite. In every jurisdiction where MAiD is legal, it has been found (as mentioned above) that patients receiving such deaths are more affluent and better educated than the average. In Canada, Vancouver Island, which has more than its share of affluent seniors, has the highest percentage of MAiD deaths in the country, 10 times the rate in Hamilton.

One final issue about MAiD that pertains to the Jewish community is the issue of whether Holocaust survivors would be particularly offended by the legalization and implementation of MAiD. Again, there is no evidence to support this view. One patient expressed that MAiD was actually anathema to Hitler's plan as it restored his autonomy to make his own life choices. Another survivor, in choosing MAiD, stated that she had already suffered enough.

MAiD deaths are obviously not for everyone. But, having witnessed many difficult 'natural' deaths, I strongly believe that MAiD can provide a peaceful, dignified and compassionate alternative to those who desire it. The availability of MAiD is inconsistent across the country; in Hamilton, patients are lucky to have access to MAiD both through Hamilton Health Sciences (primarily for hospital in-patients) and through the Hamilton Family Health Team.

Hollywood comes to Hamilton

JNF honours hometown boy Eugene Levy

GERALDINE KATZ-ROSE, JNF HAMILTON

This year the JNF Hamilton Negev Dinner will glitter with a touch of theatrical magic! The Dinner, created by JNF Canada to honour outstanding communal leaders, distinguished citizens, and significant events in Canadian Jewish life, will take place on Thursday, May 17 at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

JNF Hamilton is excited to be honouring the gifted comic actor, producer, and writer Eugene Levy, who was born and raised in Hamilton. It is also proud to announce that the chairs of this year's dinner are Fred Levy, Jeff Paikin, and Gary Waxman. With honorary chairs Marnie and Larry Paikin, it is expected to be a sell-out.

After attending Central and Westdale Secondary Schools, Levy attended McMaster University, where his friends included fellow students Martin Short, Ivan Reitman, and Dave Thomas. Life-long friendships resulted, as they all pursued what became successful careers, first in Toronto, then in Hollywood.

Levy has won countless entertainment awards, including a New York Film Critics Circle Award, a Grammy Award, two Emmys for his writing on SCTV, and a Golden Globe nomination.

Levy's early work in Toronto also solidified lifetime friendships with fellow Canadians Paul Schaefer, Andrea Martin, and long-time collaborator Catherine O'Hara. In

2013, after appearing in more than 60 films, Levy formed Not A Real Company Productions with his son Daniel Levy and brother Fred Levy, to produce Schitt's Creek, a TV series filmed in Toronto and Goodwood, ON. He co-created, co-executive produces, and co-stars in the multiple award-winning show with son Daniel, daughter Sarah Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Annie Murphy and Chris Elliott.

Eugene Levy is a member of the Order of Canada and a recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, the foremost Canadian honour presented for excellence in the performing arts. In 2005, he was presented with an honorary Doctor of Letters by McMaster University.

Proceeds from this year's dinner will support ALEH Jerusalem. ALEH provides therapeutic services to children and young adults who have severe complex disabilities in four locations, making it the largest network in Israel for residential and outpatient care. The Jerusalem ALEH facility currently provides 82 children and young adults with comprehensive residential care and 250 outpatients with treatment and recreational programs.

For advertising and sponsorship opportunities, tickets, or more information, please call the JNF Hamilton office at 905-527-5516 or visit jnfhilton.ca.



NEED TO KNOW

What: JNF Negev Dinner
When: Thursday, May 17, 2018
What Time: Reception 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Where: Hamilton Convention Centre
Contact: 905-527-5516

GARY BARWIN HEADLINES NA'AMAT AUTHOR LUNCHEON

Na'amat is delighted to announce that Gary Barwin, will be the 33rd Celebrity Author who will speak at the annual luncheon on Monday, April 23, 2018.

Gary Barwin is a writer, composer, and multidisciplinary artist and the author of 21 books of poetry, fiction, and books for children. His latest book is the poetry collection "No TV for Woodpeckers". Writers Trust of Canada has listed it as one of the best books of 2017.

Barwin's recent national bestselling novel, "Yiddish for Pirates," won the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour as well as the Canadian Jewish Literary Award. It was a finalist for both the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the Scotiabank Giller Prize.

"Yiddish for Pirates" has placed Barwin on the world stage of novel writing. Set in the years around 1492, Yiddish for Pirates recounts the compelling story of Moishe, a Bar Mitzvah boy who leaves home to join a ship's crew, where he meets Aaron, the polyglot parrot who becomes his near-constant companion.

A PhD in music composition, Barwin has been writer-in-residence at Western University and Young Voices e-writer-in-residence at the Toronto Public Library, and is currently writer-in-residence at McMaster University and at the Hamilton Public Library.



Photo by Adele Talbot

Na'amat is a non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to enhance and safeguard the status of women, children and families in Israel and in Canada. Na'amat programs benefit all Israeli women by providing shelters for abused women and children, legal counselling, recreational and retraining programs, and a countrywide network of daycare centres.

The luncheon will take place at the Adas Israel at 125 Cline Ave. S. at noon. Tickets can be purchased at Bryan Prince Bookseller, 1060 King St. W., online at www.naamat.com/hamilton or by emailing authorluncheon@cogeco.ca.

STORIES OF LOVE, HATE AND BETRAYAL

SATURDAY, JUNE 9 AT 2 P.M.
 BRYAN PRINCE BOOKSELLER



Take a step back in time with Elena Clark as she presents a short film and reads excerpts from her dramatic and popular historical novels. Clark's powerful stories of love, hate and betrayal are set against a backdrop of real Second World War events that took place in her Ukrainian homeland. Follow Jewish families as they face wrenching hardships – yet still manage to find hope, fall in love and build new lives for themselves. Event takes place on Saturday June 9 at 2 p.m. at Bryan Prince Bookseller. Watch for further details.

City Hall to host Yom HaShoah and Holocaust exhibit

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the March of the Living, an event that brings thousands of participants from all over the world on Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, to march at the site of the largest mass murder in history. The March of the Living stands in stark contrast to the horrific death marches of the winter of 1944-45, when thousands of starving prisoners were forced to walk long distances in bitter cold, with little or no food, water, or rest. Those who could not keep up were shot.

Hamiltonians will have an opportunity to learn about the March of the Living at this year's Yom HaShoah commemoration, which is being held at City Hall on Thursday, April 12. Organized by the Hamilton Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Centre in collaboration with the City of Hamilton, the event will coincide with the opening of Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations, an exhibit that features moving images and reflections gleaned from 30 years of the March of the Living.

"Holding the Yom HaShoah commemoration and Witness exhibit at City Hall is an opportunity for the City of Hamilton to honour our community's survivors and to educate the general public about the Holocaust," said Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg.

Federation will be organizing tours of the exhibit for Hamilton area students. "We hope that younger generations of Hamiltonians will take to heart the exhibit's main message of bearing witness to the horrors of the Holocaust," said Rymberg. "Holocaust survivors are aging. Once they are no longer able to, who will tell their stories? Young people are humanity's best hope for preventing atrocities wherever they may occur."

Watch for further details at www.jewish-hamilton.org.

All welcome at the
**Hamilton Jewish Federation
 Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday, May 24
 Hamilton Spector
 Auditorium**

Watch for further details



Happy Passover to you and your family!

From our family to yours.



Slaves to the inbox



Ben Shragge

“Once we were slaves in Egypt, and now we are free,” so the Passover story goes.

I’m grateful for not having to do unpaid manual labour all day, and for not living in Egypt, but still, I’m not quite free.

Last summer I was lying on a beach in Cape Cod, facing the majestic Atlantic Ocean, on holiday. Kids were filling buckets with sand, making castles; free in paradise. Meanwhile, all I could think about was my work inbox filling up with unread emails I’d have to answer. I had added my work email to my phone, and, in slave-like fashion, couldn’t resist checking it on the beach.

What was so urgent that I had to check my email then and there, taking me away from the place I was at and the person I was with? It felt very urgent at the time, but now I don’t remember. I just remember the feeling of enslavement.

The poet William Blake spoke of “mind forg’d manacles” we carry with us, and I felt their weight then. No Pharaoh was there commanding me to check my work email on the beach. I wasn’t told before I left that I needed to check emails on holiday. I was my own taskmaster, serving that little circled number above the mail icon, and its implied command of “Check me now! Check me now!”

I’m not alone. The American Psychological Association found that 53 percent of employed Americans check work messages on the weekend, 52 percent before or after work on weekdays, 54 percent when home sick, and 44 percent while on vacation. Researchers at the University of British Columbia compared the stress levels of adults instructed to limit checking email three times a day with those told to check as often as they could. They found that “People find it difficult to resist the temptation of checking email, and yet resisting this temptation reduces their stress.”

With our cellphones in hand, we’re always connected, always theoretically “free” to be contacted and available to respond, and so never actually free. There’s always another email to answer,

update to check, and alert to swipe. Clive Thompson, in *Mother Jones* magazine, writes that this “digital tether” leads to “a Heisenbergian uncertainty to one’s putative off-hours, a nagging sense that you can never quite be present in the here and now, because hey, work might intrude at any moment. You’re not officially working, yet you remain entangled—never quite able to relax and detach.”

Even Israelite slaves, hauling bricks for Egypt’s infrastructure program, didn’t feel pressured to check email after-hours. Even God, after six long days of world creation, allowed himself some rest on the seventh. We should allow ourselves the same.

It would have felt liberating to have thrown my phone into the ocean, but that wouldn’t have gotten rid of the emails. They’d still be there, up in the Cloud, raining down on my parade.

Ultimately you need to strike down your inner taskmaster to be free. To do so is to recognize that mentally being at work all the time is not only detrimental to your life; it’s detrimental to your work. Someone who works all the time is stressed all the time, and stress elevates cortisol levels, leading to low energy, scattered focus, poor decision-making, and diminished productivity.

Sacrificing life for work is really sacrificing both, because a productive worker is a happy worker, and a happy worker has a life outside of work. “Good moods,” writes psychologist Daniel Goleman, “enhance the ability to think flexibly and with more complexity, thus making it easier to find solutions to problems.” Inbox slavery does not lead to good moods and creative solutions.

A productive worker takes real vacations, because breaks allow our brains to recharge and ultimately improve our job performance. Also, because a study found that men and women who don’t take vacations are 30 to 50 percent more likely to suffer heart attacks than those who do, and it’s a lot more productive to be alive than dead.


My planned exodus this year is to go from lying on a beach in Cape Cod, thinking about an ever-growing inbox, to lying on a beach in Brazil, thinking, “Here I am, lying on a beach in Brazil.”

Ben Shragge is the digital editor of the Hamilton Jewish News. He currently resides in Boston.


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YOUTH VOICES



B'Yachad Program's Kieran Gorsk (second from left) is pictured with his classmates Julian O., Bram O., Eli S. and session leader Geoff Zalter. Photo by Rina Rodak

Why I volunteer

by KIERAN GORSKY

Volunteerism has existed for centuries. The act of volunteering is defined as investing one’s time or talents for charitable, educational or beneficial purposes.

Volunteering is the idea that, no matter how great its impact, any beneficial act is important, because it creates good in the world.

Throughout this year, both at my religious school and in my life in general, I have learned a lot about this idea. For example, I helped my religious school make phone calls on behalf of the Jewish National Fund. The job was simple: Make phone calls to people who had donated to the organization in the past to help raise money to plant trees in Israel. At the beginning of the session, I had a long list of potential donors and a script. I made the calls, but in the end, only one person answered the phone.

Earlier in the year I helped serve food at Out of the Cold (OOTC), a wonderful organization that serves food to Hamilton’s less fortunate. My volunteer experiences there have been among the best of my life. There is an indefinable feeling of fulfillment that comes from such simple tasks like serving food. It may sound like a cliché, but there really are experiences in life that are far more rewarding than any amount of money you could receive. The feeling that you are helping people, not for your own benefit, but for a greater cause is what makes volunteering so appealing.

What can we learn from these two examples? Volunteering may not always be rewarding. You have to be persistent, a lot of people will dismiss you, and often, you’re not going to get anything tangible in return. Not every second will be filled with feelings of contentedness and joy. However, in my short experience on earth, the feeling of good will always wins out in the end. If you don’t think about the grand scale of things, but focus on the idea of assisting someone else, you always get a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. And so, I feel that volunteerism is a wonderful thing. In the process of helping other people, you yourself become fulfilled. By volunteering, you help yourself as much as you help everyone else.

Kieran Gorsky, 15, is a B'Yachad student, a joint Temple Anshe Sholom/Beth Jacob Synagogue program for post B'nai Mitzvah students that focuses on volunteerism. Kieran takes a great interest in world events and politics.

The story behind Hamilton's storytelling circle

Story and photo by STEVE BROCK, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

"Sigmund Freud walked into Tim Horton's. The customers thought he was an actor on a lunch break from a film shoot. But he wasn't an actor. He was the real deal. Sigmund Freud."

I sat captivated at the monthly meeting of The Hamilton Storytelling Circle, as Barry Rosen related his classic, nonsensical tale of the father of psychoanalysis being served at a local coffee shop by none other than Elvis Presley.

The Circle is just one of many storytelling venues for adults to have popped up in recent years around Southern Ontario. Originally founded in 2002 by Rosen, a recently retired social worker, the group has been co-hosted since 2013 by a trio of eclectic storytellers; Brenda Byers, Ellen Jaffe and Mary Love.

Offering a warm and inviting atmosphere, the Circle provides a fun and relaxing evening of listening to a wide range of stories, coupled with an opportunity to tell one of your own, if you so desire. "With no pressure," noted Byers in a recent interview, "the Hamilton Circle is a very safe place to try something out. There isn't any criticism."

The rules are simple. The attendees sit facing each other in a circle – hence the name – and pass around a "talking stone." Once the stone comes around, you can either tell a story or pass it on to the



Members of Hamilton's Story Telling Circle: Top Row l to r: Brenda Byers, Barb Vollick, Carl Ingram, Mary Helwig-Hall; Sitting l to r: Marina Lloyd, Mary Love, Ellen Jaffe, Barry Rosen

next person. The stories can be anything from folklore, fairy tales, tall tales, or even original personal stories. They should last no more than 10 minutes in order to allow everyone else to have a turn. The other rule is that the stories cannot be read. "We tell by heart. That's the golden rule of story telling," said Byers.

Since the dawn of prehistory, humans have used oral story telling as a means to impart

knowledge, emotions and to keep local histories and traditions alive in their communities through the generations. With the advent of the written word in books and newspapers, story telling began to wane, becoming a dying art. However, a resurgence took place in the 1970s as story telling circles, guilds and groups emerged throughout North America and the world and endures to the present day. Today the Story

Tellers of Canada – Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC) website lists 63 different story telling clubs across the country, with no less than 29 in Ontario alone.

Always harbouring a fascination with words, stories and jokes, Rosen recounts how he once attended a workshop given by noted Canadian storyteller, Dan Yashinsky at a Jewish literary festival in Toronto. Upon his return home, he told his wife, Leslie, that he wanted to do something similar in Hamilton. Thus the Hamilton Storytelling Circle was born. Throughout its 15-year history, aside from their monthly meetings, the modest group has also held events showcasing renowned local and international story tellers like Yashinsky, Peninnah Schram, and Charly Chiarelli. In 2007, the Circle hosted the SC-CC's national conference. During the four-day convention, the Circle's team arranged an assortment of events around several venues throughout the Hamilton area.

In addition to co-leading the Circle for the past four years, Byers, a professional storyteller, has offered her services since 1996 through her company Story Wyse (www.storywyse.com). She puts together programs for schools, festivals, corporate functions, public concerts and special interest groups. As well she also acts as coordinator for the SC-CC's

popular House Concert Network, which offers people the opportunity to host private story telling events in their homes.

Aside from their duties with the Circle, Ellen Jaffe is a child psychotherapist and an accomplished author of several books, including the award-winning young-adult novel "Feast of Lights", while Mary Love works for the Student Accessibility Services office at McMaster University.

Sadly, by the end of Rosen's story, the King of Rock and Roll was unable to fill Freud's order for a Vienna-style coffee, and the good doctor left the coffee shop unsatisfied. Fortunately, after a couple of hours listening to a wide selection of equally entertaining stories, judging by the smiles all around, no one left the Circle disappointed.

Need to know

What: The Hamilton Storytelling Circle

When: The third Monday of every month from September to June.

Where: Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline Ave. N. Hamilton.

Cost: Attendees are asked to contribute a loonie to help offset costs.



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50 years a teacher

Beth Jacob honours long time Jewish educator Fay Schmerling

Story and photo by WENDY SCHNEIDER, The Hamilton Jewish News

Nothing makes Fay Schmerling happier than knowing that she made a difference in one of her students' lives. After 50 years of teaching at Beth Jacob's Hebrew School, that works out to a lot of happy moments.

Schmerling began her teaching career in 1964 with Beth Jacob's first after-school class of eighteen 10-year-old girls. Amy Back was among them.

"Fay was wonderful. She was so enthusiastic," said Back. "Even though we had gone to Sunday school for so many years (before that) we really didn't know a lot because we were so misbehaved ... but Fay inspired us, and all of a sudden we were really reading Hebrew and really getting into the stories she told us."

More than 50 years later, Schmerling has lost none of that enthusiasm as she continues to inspire a new generation of Beth Jacob students, among them children of former students. Schmerling's solid teaching skills and steadfast commitment to her students have remained a constant over five decades that have seen a great many changes in the school. Not least of the changes is a marked decrease in the amount of classroom time. In the past Schmerling was teaching Hebrew reading skills to Kindergraten and Grade One students three times a week, but today's demographic realities have her teaching two combined classes for 30 minutes a week. If that sounds easy, think again.

"I plan my lessons awfully carefully. I only have a short time with them ... so I go from activity to activity to see if I can get the children to work with me," said Schmerling. That Schmerling still manages to impart Hebrew reading skills to her students despite these challenges is a credit to her teaching skills, says Beth Jacob education director Rina Rodak.



Fay Schmerling proudly displays photos of her first Beth Jacob Hebrew school class.

"I think that Fay's style of teaching has been the secret to her longevity. She's very firm in her expectations and the kids really respect that. They know exactly what is going to happen in her class each and every week, and they really look forward to being with her and learning from her," said Rodak.

Schmerling herself attributes much of her success to her practice of assigning homework.

"Young children are very excited to have homework but the parents have to help," said Schmerling. "It shows the child that this is important for them too." In cases where parents don't know Hebrew, homework gives children an opportunity to teach their parents. That, says Schmerling, is just as valuable. "It makes them feel important."

Daniella Khayutin is a case in point. Khayutin, a 17 year old high school student, is the first Canadian-born member of her Russian immigrant family. At the age of five, she began begging her parents to find her a Hebrew teacher so that she could better communicate with her grandfather, who lived in Israel. After making some inquiries, her

father Eugene was told that Beth Jacob's Fay Schmerling was the person to talk to. Would his daughter be able to study at the school, he asked Schmerling, despite their not being synagogue members. Of course, was Schmerling's response, and so began a relationship that continued right through to Khayutin's Bat Mitzvah and continues to this day.

"Fay taught me how to read and sing in Hebrew, but not only that — she taught me that I could love someone outside of my family," said Khayutin. "She was my role model basically growing up. She was caring of everyone, no matter what situation, and an accepting human ... There aren't many of those nowadays and she's definitely a special person."

Beth Jacob Synagogue is honouring Fay Schmerling on Saturday, May 5 at a special Shabbat service followed by a festive kiddush in her honour. Past and current students and their families are encouraged to attend. For more information call 905-522.1351 or email school@bethjacobsynagogue.ca.

From Dundas to the IDF

Story and photo by WENDY SCHNEIDER

Jamie Ennis, 21, has an air of quiet and self confident humility for one so young. The youngest of four sons born to Dundas residents Gilda and Jeff Ennis, the recently graduated paratrooper was on a month's leave from the Israel Defense Forces when he met with the HJN.

Ennis's journey from typical Canadian suburban kid to the IDF began five years ago, when he was a participant on Camp Ramah's Israel Seminar. Impressed by the Israeli soldiers he met on that trip, Ennis returned home determined to do something "that served a bigger purpose than just myself." He promptly signed up for a military co-op, spending his final years in high school as a part time reservist with the Canadian army. Despite having to put up with the occasional antisemitic remark from "guys who had never seen a Jew in their lives," Ennis enjoyed the mental and physical challenges of military life, and after a single semester at university, decided that it made sense to serve somewhere "where I felt more of a connection."

Gaining entry into Machal, the IDF division for foreign volunteers, is not as easy as one might think. Suspecting that his application had been overlooked, Ennis spent hours at Machal's Tel Aviv office pleading with anyone who would listen to review his file.

"I had to be really Israeli about it," he said.

In the end his persistence paid off. Ennis was drafted into Machal in December 2016, and three months later, succeeded in passing an intense selection process that saw him gain acceptance into Israel's elite paratrooper brigade.

Up to this point Ennis's single-minded focus on achieving his goals had served him well, but paratrooper basic training



Jamie Ennis at his parents' home

would sorely test his limits. Of the 110 original recruits in his unit, only 70 remained at the end of the eight-months of grueling combat training. Most of those who dropped out did so during the final field exercise Ennis described as "two weeks of almost no food, no water, no sleep and shooting live ammo with tanks and helicopters."

"I don't know how I did that. I just found my limit," was a common refrain among the recruits, only to be faced with an even greater challenge the following day. The final challenge was the "beret march" a 60-kilometre hike in full combat gear that would earn those who completed it the coveted red beret of the paratroopers unit.

"For those of us who finished that training, we realized that all the limits we set for ourselves are artificial," said Ennis. Things had come full circle since his first encounter with the self-assured soldiers who had made such a lasting impression on his 16-year-old self. Now he was one of them.

Now that basic training is over, does he think things are going to get easier?

"I doubt it," said Ennis. "You're never done training."

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PASSOVER MEMORIES



The Goldblatt Family Seder

JERRY GOLDBLATT

My father, Wilfred Goldblatt came over to Canada from Lithuania in 1925, via Quebec City. In 1928, he brought over the rest of the family, including his mother Raisa, his sisters Rochel, Tzvia and Sarah, and his brothers Labol, Eli and Abe. They were all sponsored by Jacob Norman Goldblatt who lived at 73 Robert St. in Hamilton. This Goldblatt Family seder, pictured above, took place on Tisdale Street in 1945 at Abe Goldblatt's house where Bubbie Raisa lived. We were an extremely close-knit family and every Saturday night the families got together to play cards. Because I was an infant at the time, I was not present at this seder but remember many family

gatherings over the years. The first cousins, their children and their grandchildren still get together every year at the Goldblatt family picnic. Pictured above from l to r: Sarah Goldblatt (Eber), Beverly Eber, Charles Eber, Gail Eber, Bessie Rotman (Goldblatt), Labol Goldblatt, Tzvia Goldblatt (Cohen), Ethel Cohen, Benny Cohen, Rochel Goldblatt (Vine), Sarah Cohen, Bubbie Raisa holding Elaine Vine, Louis Vine, Goldie Vine, Henry Vine, Ann Caplan (Goldblatt), Eli Goldblatt, Abe Goldblatt, Naomi Goldblatt, Mary Ovsey (Goldblatt), Harold Goldblatt and Wilfred Goldblatt.



The Rosenberg/Rosenblood Family Seder

AS TOLD TO WENDY SCHNEIDER BY NORMAN ROSENBLLOOD

"They were pretty joyous. The cooking was wonderful. There was homemade gefilte fish, lots of wine, and a good optimistic spirit about it." This is how octogenarian Norman Rosenblood describes family seders at the home of his maternal grandparents, Leibish and Sarah Rosenberg back in the 1940s. This photo was taken after his grandparents moved the seder from the little kitchen of their recently sold York Street grocery store (the famous "Rosenbergs") to their Napier Street home.

The seders, led by Rosenberg's grandfather, were conducted in Hebrew and lasted until about 11 p.m. Did the family members understand what was being read?

"Of course not. The only time we understood anything was when they put the finger in the wine and said 'dahm' (meaning 'blood,' the first of the 10 plagues).

Rosenblood remembers two particularly memorable seder nights.

"My grandmother used to always rent a room to any itinerant rabbi. One year she rented to a rabbi during Pesach who insisted on reading the Haggadah until three in the morning." Then there was the time the family dog strolled in when they opened the door for Elijah. "That was a memorable event," said Rosenblood.

In the photo above, Rosenblood is the young boy sitting at the left back end of the table.

"I look like I'm ready to go to the principal's office."

That's his little brother Fred sitting next to him and his sister Myrna, at the end of the table. Also pictured (l to r) are Mamie Kamin, Jennie Kamin, Howard Kamin, Phil Kamin, Sylvia Rosenblood, Murray Rosenblood, Sarah Rosenberg, Louis Rosenberg, Howard Rosenberg, Abe Rosenberg, Bernice Rosenberg, Sarah Rosenblood and Louis Rosenblood.

When it's ok to bend the "no phone at the seder" rule

JOY FOSTER

"Please! No phones at the table," was the usual rule in our home, except in 1997. Our older daughter Mindi, had taken her first job in North Dakota. Unfortunately, that was the year of their 100 year flood! Pesach was coming up fast, and Mindi couldn't come home.

The telephone innovation at that time was the speaker phone. Sadly no face time or Skype. And so, it was decided that front and centre along with the Seder plate and all its symbols (made by Marni, our younger daughter years ago) was our telephone. Now both daughters

could be with us all and included in reading the Haggadah

via loudspeaker. Sometimes bending the rules brings wonderful memories.



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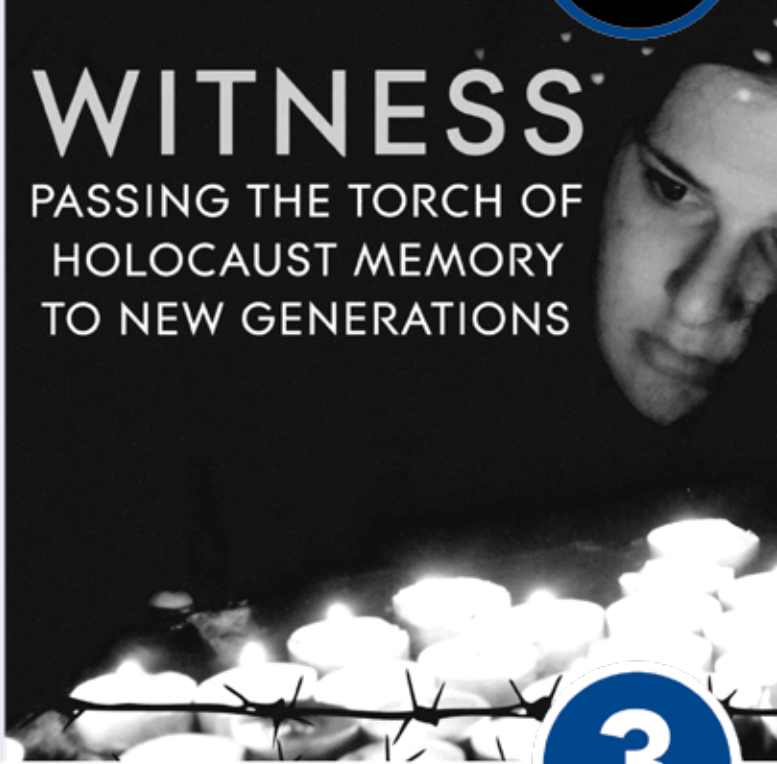
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Hamilton
JEWISH FEDERATION



Louis Stroud and Jody Boston look forward to welcoming Hamilton's Jewish "under 40s" to an improv night. Photo courtesy of Louis Stroud

THE UNDER-40 MOVEMENT

by LOUIS STROUD, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Since the birth of the Hamilton Jewish Federation's "Under-40 Movement" (U40M) last summer, there have been ongoing efforts to bring new activities for this demographic to the Hamilton Jewish community. Aside from hosting a few gatherings to discuss ideas, the U40M recently held a social at Fairweather Brewing which connected a lot of young Jews in the community to each other. Looking to have a fun night out and meet some new people? This might be just for you. Have you ever had the urge to try your hand at improv? Well here is your chance. Arts educator and community artist Jody Boston is hosting a hilarious evening filled with engaging activities that will help you let loose and learn to think on your feet in a comfortable, judgement-free setting. Work on becoming a master of communication skills in this fun-filled event. Boston, a classically trained actor, therapeutic clown and graduate of the Second City Improvisation Program, is a recipient of the 2016 City of Hamilton Arts Innovation Award. The Under 40 Improv Night will take place on Wednesday, March 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. at 142 James Street N. (inside Hotti Biscotti) in Hamilton. The cost is \$10. Space is limited so please reserve your space in advance by emailing David at dfquezada@jewishhamilton.org.

Hamilton area students will travel to Winnipeg on this year's Asper Program

For the first time since 2014, 12 Hamilton area students (both Jewish and non-Jewish) are participating in the Asper Foundation Holocaust and Human Rights Program, culminating with a trip to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. The program's objectives are to promote respect for others and sensitize Canadian students to the consequences of racism through a specially designed education program. Asper students are required to take an 18-hour education program on human rights and the Holocaust with an added emphasis on Canadian history

and the current situation in the world today. Students are also required to volunteer for 10 hours on community or social service projects. The last component of the program is a graduation ceremony in which each student is presented with a Memorandum for Personal Responsibility as a way of reminding them that they have a personal responsibility for the world community. Thanks to the support of generous donors and your contribution to the annual Community Campaign, a significant portion of the costs of the program are borne by the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

Help us grow Hamilton's PJ Library program

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor and annual Community Campaign, 115 Hamilton area children (29 more than in the previous year) are participating in PJ Library, a program that delivers Jewish books to participating families throughout North America on a monthly basis. These deliveries result in countless moments that celebrate Jewish values, culture and traditions, and help families feel connected to their Jewish community. Hamilton Jewish Federation offers regular PJ Library programs that connect Hamilton's young Jewish families with each other and with their tradition. For more information contact David at dfquezada@jewishhamilton.org. PJ Library is funded by the Hamilton Jewish Federation, generous donors, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. To enable us to add more children to our PJ Library program, additional funds are needed. For more information on how you can donate to this wonderful program please call Gustavo Rymberg at 905-648-0605.



The CeCe Schreiber Leadership Award

Hamilton Jewish Federation is accepting nominations for the CeCe Schreiber Volunteer Leadership Award. Established in 2007, the award was named in recognition of Cece's dedication to building a stronger and more inclusive Jewish community through outstanding and long term volunteer commitment. Nominees should meet the following criteria:



- have many years of outstanding volunteer service in various roles with multiple organizations
- possess inspirational leadership, dedication and enthusiasm, creativity and Innovation
- serve the Federation's mission to ensure vibrant Jewish life in Hamilton
- be members in good standing with Federation's annual Community Campaign

The award will be presented at the Hamilton Jewish Federation AGM on Thursday, May 24, 2018. Nominations should include detailed information that speaks to each of the stated criteria and be sent to Gustavo Rymberg, grymberg@jewishhamilton.org. The nomination deadline is Monday, April 16, 2018.



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Historic Liuna Station is located in the heart of downtown Hamilton with 3 stunning ballrooms.

Shalom Village fitness centre boosted by Trillium grant

Influx of funds enhances services and leads to 80 per cent increase in membership

by LOUIS STROUD, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

There is a beaming energy inside The Club Fitness Centre at Shalom Village, and with great reason. In the fall of 2017 The Club received a \$321,500 Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Fund to help implement its Active Across the Ages program, aimed at increasing its equipment, staffing, and capacity to deliver customized age-appropriate training.

On Jan. 19, the health club was packed with new and longtime members, some seated in folding chairs while others rhythmically worked away on gym equipment. Amongst them stood Shalom Village's staff and head coach Mike Nielsen, local politicians, Anne Tennier from the Ontario Trillium Fund and Shalom Village CEO Jeanette O'Leary. Everyone was there to hear firsthand how the grant has aided in the progress of the program, and nothing speaks better than having members share their personal stories.

Since receiving the grant last fall, The Club has added 56 new members, which is impressive considering the program previously had around 70 members. They have also cut down on wait times for new enrolment by adding two new staff members and five volunteers. Shannon Terry's name was on the lips of many of those heaping praises on the program that afternoon. Terry was initially hired as an assistant coach on a five-month contract, but thanks to the grant her full time position has been extended, which is great news for The Club members.

When I had a chance to chat with her I had a question for Terry. "People love you around here," I said, "What's your secret?" Before she had a chance to reply, Shirley Staples Hutton, walked up to us, beaming. "Shannon is amazing," she said. "I broke my femur and was using a walker when I came here. I didn't think that I was going to be able to walk again. Well here I am today, all thanks to Shannon."

"People are afraid to push seniors," said Terry. "You can't treat them like a frail senior, you have to treat them like a client."

Ellen Hoffman is another client of Terry's who has undergone a life-changing transformation. Since coming to Shalom Village in April of 2017, Hoffman has lost more than 170 lbs.

"Shannon has me on a fitness and diet plan of high protein and low carbohydrates," said Hoffman. One of Hoffman's first goals was to walk to the top of the hill outside Shalom Village. She started off slowly on the treadmill twice a day and built herself up, gaining strength one day at a time. "Ellen made it to the top of that hill," said Terry, "and then she just kept on going. I was shouting her on, cheering, jumping up and down."

These are the kind of relationships that are being forged at Shalom Village, and it's clear the grant is going to make it possible for even more lives to be positively impacted.

On a personal note, I must say it is truly inspirational watching seniors working out. I couldn't help but think that I am half their age, at best, and I struggle to



Shalom Village assistant coach Shannon Terry and head coach Mike Nielsen with Ellen Hoffman.

Photo by Wendy Schneider

make my way to the gym. When Shalom Village CEO Jeanette O'Leary said that day that being independent and mobile adds to people's quality of life, it made so much sense. At 34, I take for granted that I can get around with ease, but what The Club is doing for these people is allowing them to claim their freedom through fitness, and they are flooding to the machines in droves. As soon as the speeches were over the members moved straight from their from their folding chairs to the equipment and began working away.

It is so refreshing to see a grant going to such great use. It's

"People are afraid to push seniors ... you have to treat them like (any) client."

Shannon Terry
Assistant Coach
The Club Fitness Centre

seldom you are in the presence of such a success story leaves you in a state of awe, but that's exactly how I felt walking amongst the people of Shalom Village.

In addition to more than 200 Shalom Village residents, The Club is open to all individuals from the wider community over the age of 70. There is an initial \$20 assessment fee and a 4 month membership fee of \$100 (\$25/month). Members can continually renew their membership every 4 months at \$100. For more information visit www.shalom-village.ca or call 905.529.1613 ext. 220 and speak with head coach Mike Nielsen.

The lawyers and staff at Ross & McBride LLP wish the entire community a

Happy Passover.



Jeffrey Manishen

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Barry Yellin

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Ben Levitt

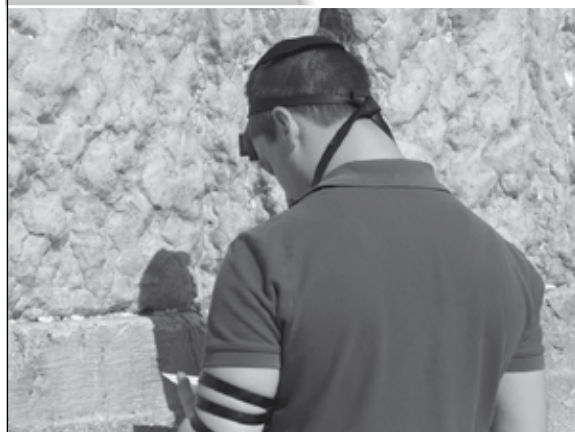
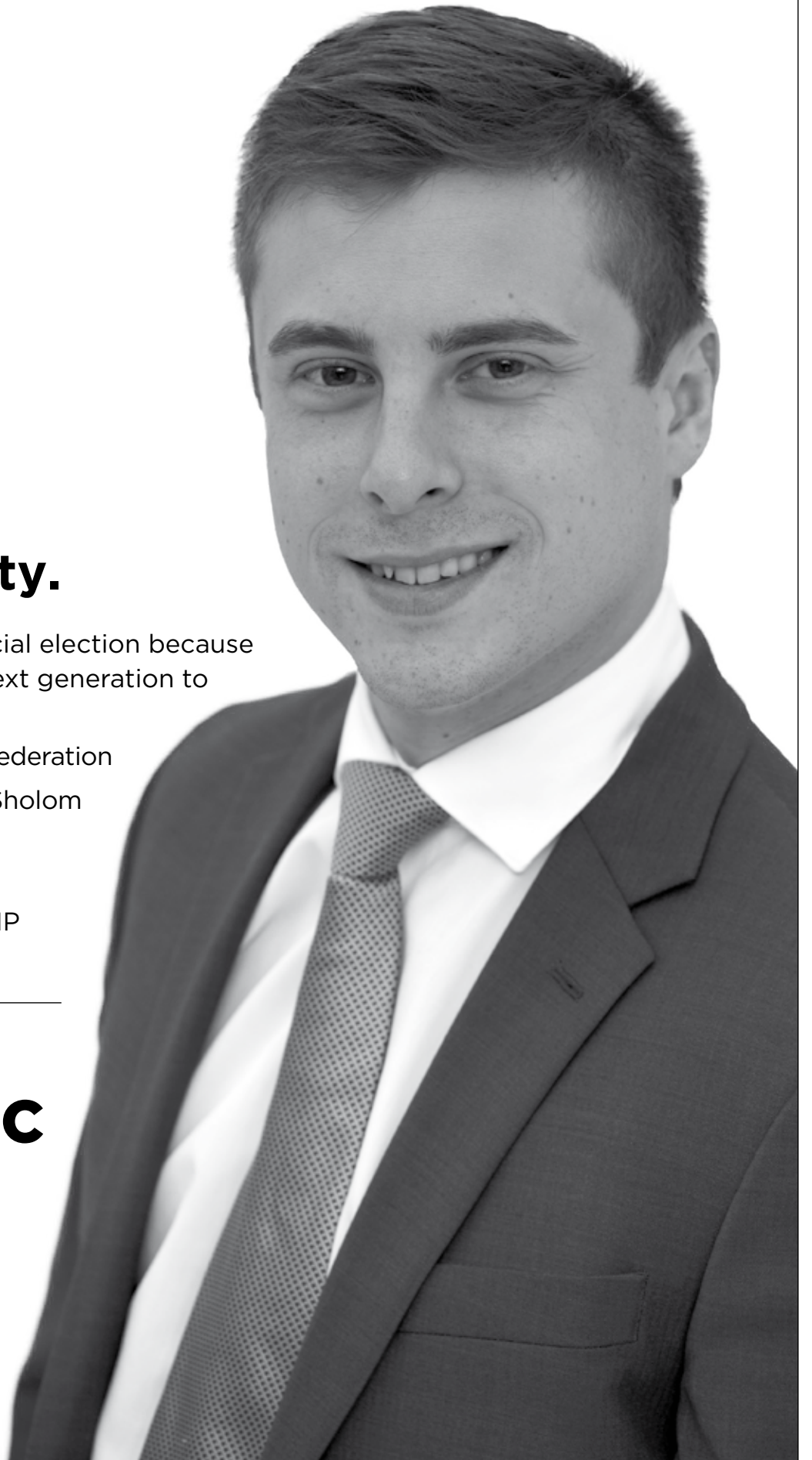
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- Ben also serves on the Board of Temple Anshe Sholom
- He volunteers with Out of the Cold Hamilton and B'nai Brith
- Ben works in the Constituency Office of local MP David Sweet



Contact Ben at:
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info@benlevitt.ca
Facebook: Ben Levitt 2018
Twitter: @BenLevitt2018



Praying at the Kotel.



A trip to Israel included a celebration of Israeli culture and heritage - connecting Ben to his roots and deepening his faith.



Volunteering at a children's summer camp in Tel Aviv.

DOING JEWISH IN HAMILTON

Upcoming Events

HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY LIBRARY LEARNING COMMONS RIBBON CUTTING

for HHA parents and prospective parents Sunday, March 18 ; 7 p.m.: Reception 7:45 p.m.: Information Sessions for parents of children entering Kindergarten, Grade 1 and middle school. For more information email admissions@hamiltonhebrewacademy.ca

Culture

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM ISRAELI FILM SERIES

Temple Anshe Sholom Israeli Film Series beginning Sunday, May 6 at 1:30 p.m. and continues the first Sunday afternoon monthly. Free admission.

ISRAELI FOLK DANCING

Thursdays 5:30 - 7 p.m. at Wendy's Yoga Studio in Dundas. \$10; www.wendysyogastudio.ca.

For Parents & Tots

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM (TAS) SHABBAT LIVE

A toe-tapping and musically engaging Shabbat experience for all ages with Paula Baruch, Rabbi Cohen, Jordan Abraham; April 20, May 18 and June 15 at 5:45 p.m. followed by Shabbat dinner at 7:30 p.m. Dinner reservations required

TAS YOFI SHABBAT a kid friendly Oneg Shabbat- April 4, May 6, June 1, 5:15-5:45 p.m.

TAS TOT SHABBAT DROP IN Activities and songs and YoFi Tunes; Saturdays 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

For Kids & Families

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

Religious School JK-Grade 7: Wednesdays 4-6 p.m. Saturdays 9:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. B'yachad Grade 8-10: Wednesdays 4 - 6:10 p.m.

BETH JACOB FAMILY PROGRAMS

March 25, 2 to 4 p.m. Paint your very own Elijah's Cup at Crock a Doodle Dundas. \$20/person includes a paint your own wine goblet and light refreshments.

April 8, 2 to 4 p.m. Spend an afternoon at Beth Jacob for movies, snacks and games! PJ's welcome! \$5/person.

May 5, 10 a.m. Join us at a special Shabbat Service and kiddush to celebrate Fay Schmerling's incredible 50 years of teaching at Beth Jacob.

May 27, 11 a.m. to 1p.m. Join us for a guided hike through the beautiful trails of the RBG leaving from Churchill Park in Westdale.

June 10, 3 to 5 p.m. Ice Cream Carnival in Beulah Park. Games, snacks and an ice cream sundae bar to start summer off on the right foot! RSVP all programs tova@bethjacobsynagogue.ca.

For Seniors

TAS LUNCH & LEARN

Mondays at 11:30 a.m. Presentations alternate between Shalom Village and TAS

TAS BREAKFAST CLUB Sunday mornings beginning April 8. Breakfast available at 10:15 a.m. for \$10. Presentation begins at 11 a.m.

JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES CHAI CHOIR

Tuesday mornings at 30 King St. E. in Dundas; 10 a.m. - noon. Lunch served.

Lifelong Learning

TAS ACADEMY FOR ADULT JEWISH LEARNING

Monday Evenings April 9 to May 28; Conversational Hebrew at 7 p.m. Study the Books of Solomon with Rabbi Jordan Cohen at 8 p.m.

For Everyone

MAHJONGG AND BRIDGE

Save the date for Beth Jacob's Annual Games Day, Thurs. May 24, 11:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch, friendly competition, raffles and prizes. For more information call 905-522-1351.

B'NAI BRITH MIXED BOWLING LEAGUE

Monday evenings at Burlington Bowling Lanes on Harvester Road. We welcome new members. Call Moishe at 905-516-5599.

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF HAMILTON

Wednesday, March 14

Where Should I Store My Family Tree? But Mostly About Legacy and My Heritage with Hazel Boon

Wednesday, April 11

From Lithuania to South Africa - the Jewish Emigration with Maureen Price

Wednesday, May 9

Creating A Legacy For Future Generations: Discovering The Story Of Holocaust Survivors With Jerry Scherer *All meetings take place at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline N.*

Passover

TAS PASSOVER LUNCHEONS Join us after Festival services for a joyous luncheon on March 31 at 12:30 p.m. and April 6 at 12:30 p.m.

TAS COMMUNITY SEDER

Saturday, March 31 at 6 p.m. we gather for a family fun Passover Seder led by Rabbi Cohen and Paula Baruch. \$20 per person and \$50 per family unit. Call 905-528-0121.

BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE COMMUNAL SEDER

Saturday, March 31 at 8:30 p.m. led by Rabbi Hillel Lavery-Israeli. Family-friendly. Deadline for registration It's March 13. Adults (members) \$36 (non-members) \$50; Youth (members) \$18 (non-members) \$25. Nuclear family (members) \$100 (non-members) \$120. Students \$25. Reserve by Tuesday, March 13 at 905-522-1351.



Illustration by Cee Lavery

A new Beit Midrash in Hamilton

RABBI YONAH LAVERY-YISRAELI

When I was a young woman living in Canada, there was nothing I wanted to do more than learn Talmud, but there was nowhere to do it. A few places in Toronto offered an hour-long discussion about once a week, but nothing that delved into the mechanics of the text, into the depths of its language. I didn't want simply to enjoy Talmud - I wanted to build real skills that would enable me to turn it round and round and inside-out, to learn how to think like a sage. Programs like that exist in Canada, but they are open to men only, usually men living in a particular kind of Orthodox community. Anyone outside this category must go to Jerusalem or to New York.

That is precisely what I did. I went to Jerusalem to learn at the Conservative Yeshiva, the Pardes Institute of Jewish Learning, and, briefly, Matan. In this way I immersed myself in learning rabbinic literature from morning to night for around four years. It was exactly what I craved, and it gave me the tools I needed to keep on learning Talmud and halachic literature independently. I eventually also received rabbinic ordination from my closest teacher, a modern Orthodox rabbi on the forefront of the Orthodox movement to ordain women.

Now that I am back in Canada, I see that the situation here cries out for new growth. Torah is like water: it must be available to everybody and in every place. Because I have had the privilege of learning, I am happy to do the work of digging the well in our community, knowing that not everyone who wants to learn can get up and move to another country. To that end, I am starting a beit midrash (study hall) right here in Hamilton, a place where Jews can learn Talmud seriously, no matter what their gender, orientation, or background.

Our pilot program will take place from August 26 to 30. It will start on a Sunday, so that even those who cannot get time off work will be able to get a substantial taste. The program will finish with a celebratory gathering Thursday night, open to the wider community, when students will present what they have learned.

The last week of August will be in Elul, the month of inner reckoning which leads to responsible transformation. Do you worry that you have passed the stage of life where you can learn deeply? Do you have the feeling that authentic Judaism is not for "people like you"? Do you worry that your Hebrew skill level prevents you from ever grappling with Torah in its original language? I promise you that this is not the case. The Talmudic tradition is your inheritance, and you are able to become literate in it. It will be difficult, delightful work, and you are invited. For more information, visit <http://shaharuth.blogspot.ca/p/hamiltonbeitmidrash.html>.



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What's next for the JCC?

LOWELL RICHTER, JCC CO-PRESIDENT

Some time has passed since we left the envelope of the Lower Lions Club Road building. We have had a chance to look at different models to increase our relevance and to better serve the community.

I am pleased to report that at our AGM in January, we presented a healthy financial position, a welcome change from the last few decades. Our 2018 board of directors is largely carryover with Jason Waxman now becoming the co-president along with myself. Our current "Virtual" or "without walls" concept has left us wanting more. While several programs including the Morris Black Speaking contest, the Max Rotman Humanitarian Awards, Camp Kadimah, as well as several other events have

been rewarding, well attended and well supported, we feel we need to have more of an impact. Information and opinions gathered from groups including the "Doing Jewish in Hamilton" under 40 crowd have indicated the desire to have a Jewish presence in the form of a physical JCC.

With all this in mind, the JCC is endeavouring to find a suitable, sustainable space, accessible and meaningful for the whole community while not being a burden of the financial constraints of the limited resources we currently have.

We will have much more to talk about in the near future and will seek opinions and advice from the community.

Stay tuned.

Free children's books and more at Imagine in the Park

by JUDY MENDELSON, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Free seems to be the magic word when describing Hamilton's arts and literary Festival Imagine in the Park. Last year more than 4,000 children attended the festival, returning home with a free book and a bag of homemade crafts. More importantly, their spark of creativity was ignited and their imaginations allowed to run wild.

This year's festival will take place at Gage Park on **Saturday, June 2 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.** Officially, the festival is for children ranging from ages 5 to 12, but parents, grandparents, and teenage siblings are also welcome.

As children and their parents arrive at the festival, they choose a free book. Books are organized according to skill level and age group. After registration, children can choose from 17 free activities ranging from pottery to T-shirt printing, dance, creating musical instruments, story writing, poetry, and more. Another feature of this year's festival is a performance by well-known children's entertainer Dan Devion.

Sharon Levy-Cohen is the creator and mastermind of the festival.

"I wanted to contribute in some way to the children of Hamilton," said the teacher and librarian. "Because art is one of my passions, I decided it was a good fit for Hamilton to have an arts and literacy festival. It was also very important to work with like-minded people because I knew I couldn't do it all by myself."

Art and literature are a natural mix, said Levy-Cohen. She believes both are important creative elements of schooling, citing research that consistently shows



Imagine in the Park organizer Sharon Levy-Cohen
Photo courtesy of Imagine in the Park

that without the arts, children accomplish much less in school.

"I want children to learn and create in an alternate setting," she said.

The festival makes a special effort to include children with physical or learning deficits. One of the pre-requisites is for artists to modify the expectation of activities for children with special needs.

Gabriella, 11, has attended Imagine in the Park for the last four years. "The festival is so cool," she said. "It's special because you get to do all this cool stuff for free and bring home a book and lots of fun pieces of artwork."

If you'd like to join the 27 teenage and 25 adult volunteers to create Imagine in the Park, email judymendelson@aol.com or call (905) 572-6679.



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BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

RABBI HILLEL LAVERY-YISRAELI

Beth Jacob is a warm and close family that takes pride in seeing itself as part of the greater Hamilton and broader global community. 'Tzedek' (justice) is one of its top priorities. Our Out of the Cold program continues to bring hot meals weekly, during the fall and winter months, to those who can't afford them. Last year, Beth Jacob volunteers worked tirelessly to fundraise and support a large Syrian refugee family as to resettle in Hamilton. Both of these projects are rooted in a fundamental commitment to tikkun olam.

Our social justice committee decided that Tastebuds Hamilton would be our next beneficiary. Tastebuds provides healthy meals to more than 34,400 Hamilton schoolchildren daily. Their guiding principle is that our communities have a collective responsibility for our children and that nutrition is a primary determinant of healthy child development. On Jan. 21, more than 300 people attended our Tastebuds Cabaret. This was a community celebration

of music and dance enhanced with the most delightful desserts with all profits going directly to Tastebuds. Our special gratitude to Sweet Noshings, Chocolate Tales, Joe Loewith and Sons Ltd. and Vintage Coffee Roasters; the Canadian Dance Company – Burlington, Not Just Another Dance Studio, Niagara Jhankaar and the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts; the Mixed Blessings; Deirdre Pike and her team from the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton; and Brenda Burjaw who headed Beth Jacob's team of volunteers, ensuring the evening ran smoothly.

The Tastebuds Cabaret was just the beginning. Next comes the baking! We will be gathering together on a monthly basis to bake healthy, kosher muffins to be distributed at a Hamilton school.

We would love to have you as part of our team! To get involved in this or other Beth Jacob Social Justice projects, contact Beth Jacob office at office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca or call 905.522.1351.

BETH JACOB HEBREW SCHOOL

Beth Jacob Hebrew School has recently welcomed some very exciting guest teachers. Judith Dworkin spoke to our students about what Judaism is like in India; Ralph Benmergui worked with the B'nai Mitzvah class to unpack the concept of spirituality. Laura Wolfson shared an Israel themed escape activity with our oldest students. In the next few months, the students will bake with Andrea Levy and Marc Schwartz, learn with Geoff Zalter,

Elliot Biro and Cindy Richter. The older students will also volunteer at Out of the Cold. We have barely recovered from our very fun and family-friendly Havdalah service led by David Gershon, and are now looking forward to upcoming family programs (see Doing Jewish in Hamilton section) as well as a special Shabbat morning service and Kiddush on May 5 celebrating Mrs. Fay Schmerling's five decades of teaching at our Hebrew School.



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HAMILTON HEBREW HIGH
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TAS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Story and photo by
DORA-ANN COHEN-ELLISON

At Temple Anshe Sholom, we believe that students who are engaged in hands-on experiential activities and have fun while learning about Jewish culture and values will continue to love being Jewish as they grow and mature. This winter, our teachers set out with the goal to instill the value of community service and the concepts of a Tzedakah ladder and being a 'Mensch'. While learning about these values through drama, music, and art, we also learned how we are connected to the Hamilton Jewish Federation and Jewish National Fund. For example, students learned that, without giving Tzedakah money or time to support the Hamilton Jewish Federation, we wouldn't have a school and there would be no community kids programming to enjoy! Our school also teamed up with Hamilton JNF for two days of in-class activities. Our primary school planted parsley for Pesach



JK/SK students work with Eli S. to repurpose boxes into baskets for Baby Moses.

while learning about the many projects that JNF supports in Israel, and all of our students worked to take old materials and repurpose them into new ideas as part of the 'JNF Upcycling Project'. Mazel Tov to Evie Ellison on her second place

finish; she made a beautiful bird house and bird feeder out of a juice container and strawberry basket! To top off the learning, our Senior (Temple-Beth Jacob) students held a JNF Tu B'Shevat telethon and sold more than 60 trees! Thank you to Geraldine Katz-Rose and Roberta Katz for helping us learn and 'grow'! This month we will continue our experiential learning with another visit to Shalom Village where students will sing for residents during the week of Passover. In May, students will research different cities in Israel and take a virtual trip to Jerusalem for an Israel fair. It is never too late to join us. Temple Religious School offers programming for students in JK-Grade 10, as well as free Shabbat drop in programs for families with young children. Please email Dora-Ann Cohen Ellison at dacellison@anshesholom.ca or call for more information; 905-528-0121 Ext 29.

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Toby Berkel from Tzafona Cellars, Niagara on the Lake serves guests at the JSS wine-tasting event in February. Photo by Wendy Schneider

Our wine tasting event on Feb. 25 in support of the Kasher Food Bank enjoyed higher ticket sales and donations than in any previous year. Organized by volunteers, the Golden Horseshoe's only kosher food bank helps more than 50 families a month. Volunteers shop for and provide delivery service on a monthly basis to people who are unable to get to the Jewish Social Services office. Among those who rely on our food bank are people on disability pensions living on \$1,200 a month, seniors with a monthly income of \$1,300, families and students. In addition to providing non-perishable food items the Kasher Food Bank serves 25 hot lunches a day to people who attend our day program. This goes a long way towards

helping those faced with the difficult choice of paying the rent or feeding their families. Count Yourself In ... Support the Kasher Food Bank by:

1. including food bank items on your shopping list ... We provide a tax receipt.
2. Join our "Chicken Club" for a minimum donation of \$25 a month,
3. Organize a food drive at your next simcha or community meeting.
4. Tell friends and family about our services, take the lead and show your children how you are helping.

JSS sees a rise in our food bank clients during Passover. We would really appreciate community support at this time. Please contact Carol Krames at Hamilton Jewish Social Services, 905-627-9922, ext 21.

HAMILTON HEBREW HIGH

In addition to our regularly scheduled extraordinary classes, Hamilton Hebrew High has enjoyed a variety of tremendous programming over the past few months. HHH students benefited from the expertise of career counselor Dina Honig, who generously shared her time and advice with students on navigating volunteer opportunities, applying to University, and exploring potential career paths. In late February, HHH students took the nation's

capital by storm via a non-stop action-packed weekend in Ottawa. Students met with MPs on Parliament Hill, skated down the Rideau canal, and made deep tracks with either skis or snow-tubes. Breaks in the action were enjoyed at the Crowne Plaza hotel, where engaging educational programming was hosted over the Sabbath. "Students really appreciate the experiential education portions of our courses," said

HHH principal Sam Weisbrod. "It's fantastic that our students have opportunities to interact with their teachers as role models outside the walls of the classroom." Registration for the upcoming academic year is now open, featuring a new Ministry of Education approved curriculum. Interested students are encouraged to apply early to take advantage of the early registration tuition discount. For more information visit www.hcubed.ca.



Hamilton Hebrew Academy

Hamilton Hebrew Academy's Grade One and Two classes recently enjoyed important milestones. Top photo: Grade One students receive their first siddurim at their "Mesibat Siddur." Bottom photo: Grade Two students holding their first Chumashim (Five books of Moses) at their on their mesibat Chumash. Photos by Rabbi Yaakov Morel



Adas Israel

The launch of Adas Israel's weekly Sunday A-Yo club was a huge success! Maggie Norris and Oliver Borr ran a very fun family paint party. Different activities take place each week. For more information about the Adas A-Yo Club, email Oli@adasisrael.ca. Photo credit Oliver Borr

As we come together to celebrate Passover,

Shalom Village extends our warmest wishes for a joyous and reflective holiday

In this season of renewal, we celebrate that spirit; we honour our fathers and our mothers; and commit ourselves to the work of Tikkun Olam, repairing the world for ourselves and for generations to come.

Honour your loved ones with Shalom Village Tribute Cards



The Shalom Village Charitable Foundation invites you to send one of our beautiful, personalized Passover greetings and tribute cards, featuring artwork by our residents. By reaching out to family, friends, and loved one this Passover through the purchase of our Passover cards, you touch not only the recipients, but also the lives of our residents at Shalom Village.

To make your donation and send your card visit www.shalomvillage.ca/giving or contact Kathleen Thomas at kathleen@shalomvillage.ca 905-529-1613, ext 264.



The Hustle for Health is moving to May!

The same great event—but warmer

We've moved the Hustle for Health to May 27, to allow even more people to "support seniors and celebrate family." The 2018 Hustle for Health continues to offer participants the option to walk or run on a 1k, 5k or 10k course. The Hamilton Spectator returns as our print-media sponsor.

New this year

K-lite FM will live broadcast from the event!

Visit www.Hustle4Health.ca to register online. Join the fun as an individual or create a team and invite friends to join you. Individuals who raise more than \$100 will receive a free registration refund.

Support Seniors. Celebrate Family.

Sunday, May 27, 2018 at 9 a.m. 70 Macklin St. N. Hamilton



For sponsorship information contact Laurie Pringle at 905-529-1613, ext 227



Second year Mac students, Shirelle Belmont and Rebecca Buckler at Hillel's Israeli wine and cheese event. Photo by Melanie Wasser

MCMASTER HILLEL

LEOR NAFTALI, MCMASTER HILLEL AND HASBARA FELLOW

This past semester, McMaster Hillel's annual Israeli Wine and Cheese event was a great success. The overall theme varies from year to year, highlighting different aspects about Israel such as its booming technological development and innovative agricultural production, to name a few. This year, McMaster Hillel decided to highlight the humanitarian aid that Israel provides on a global scale. There was an extraordinary turnout from members of our diverse student body, faculty, as well as members of the local Jewish community. This event not only provided delicious kosher wine and cheese, but attendees also had the opportunity to learn from many informative and interesting presentations created by Hillel students. Guests were able to visit the numerous stations, and learn about the many Israeli humanitarian organizations and the incredible lifesaving aid they provide worldwide. Special acknowledgment goes out to Max Librach and the Israel committee for all of their hard work that made this such a wonderful evening, to Hasbara Fellowships for providing the research materials used to display the information and to CIJA for helping us to fund the event.

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

PAULA BARUCH

As early as the Exodus from Egypt, Jewish history records that the voices of woman contributed songs to the people. Miriam led the women in hand drumming and in song to celebrate God's saving power. Later in our scriptures, Deborah the Jewish prophet led her people into battle with song and writings describing the coronation of King David recount processions of dancing and singing women.

Why then did a tradition of silencing the singing of women begin? One Talmudic source cites the singing voice of a woman as revealing her naked-



Paula Baruch

ness. Apparently, some Rabbis were concerned about the inability of men to control their passions while engaging in prayer if a woman's voice was heard. Instead of teaching and imploring the men to be more disciplined and conquer their sexual urges, they punished women instead. As a result, Jewish women were not participants in the creation and voicing of liturgy for and with the Jewish community until the past hundred years.

Some melodies were written however, even during these dark times for Jewish women. As a cantorial student who is completing her studies this year at Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music, the seminary with such notable teachers as Cantors Katchko and Alter, who notated nusach from the Ashkenazi tradition, I have been fascinated by researching this lost music. I look forward to sharing stories about, and in, the voices of Jewish women at my graduation concert on Thursday, March 22 at 7:30 p.m.

KEHILA JCDS

ANNA LILLIMAN

Pesach at Kehila has always been an incredible experience for both students and parents. Every year there's an opportunity for students to learn about the Exodus from Egypt in a new and meaningful way. This year students are comparing community life in ancient Egypt with life in modern Israel and Canada, as well as exploring racial prejudices and inequalities. Our students integrate their learning through songs and stories in French and Hebrew, through math and science and through craft projects and model seders.

Kehila means families and community gathering together, as we do for board meetings, parent-teacher nights, information sessions, fundraising events and for a Kehila Pesach seder. I am incredibly grateful that my children have had the experience, the opportunity to grow, develop and blossom at Kehila – no other school could have been the home away from home that this one has been.

2018 marks Kehila's CHAI year – 18 years of providing non-denominational and innovative, academic excellence to the Hamilton Jewish community. Our festivities begin this spring with a literary extravaganza of storytelling and conclude this fall with a gala celebration thanking the community that has made our school thrive. The celebration will also include a live feed of Kehila graduates from around the world sharing their educational journey. Watch our website for updates.

Registration is now open for the 2018-2019. Book your visit with interim principal Leia Ger by calling 905-529-7725.



Kehila model seder
Photo by Naomi Bernstein

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