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TISHREI 5780

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# News

The voice of Jewish Hamilton Sept 2019

## FEDERATION CONSIDERS NEW PRIORITIES FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

Focus group recommendations concentrate on five main areas

STORY BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER** AND **WENDY SCHNEIDER**, THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

**TIMES CHANGE. COMMUNITIES CHANGE.** Results from recent focus group consultations and community-wide surveys is leading Federation to re-evaluate the four pillars that have guided the organization over the last nine years. Those pillars — assisting the vulnerable, strengthening Jewish identity through Jewish education, supporting Israel, and community development — were established in 2010. “We started this exercise to understand whether the pillars were still valid,” said Gustavo Rymberg, CEO of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, explaining that the organization brought in an external consultant to conduct focus group discussions that targeted seniors, young professionals, parents with young children and young adults. Communal leaders and major donors were also consulted. “We expected to see major changes in community priorities,” said Federation president Jacki Levin. She was not mistaken.

NEW PRIORITIES CONTINUES ON P4



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Welcoming newcomers came near the top of a list of priorities made by focus groups as part of Federation's strategic planning process. Above: Recent arrivals pose for a group photo at a welcome barbecue hosted by Federation's Grow Hamilton committee in August.

SEE GROW HAMILTON UPDATE P7



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CAPLAN FAMILY

A family photo of Marvin Caplan at his son Aaron's wedding.

### JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Federation inaugurates book festival that honours the memory of Marvin Caplan

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“First impressions are hard to overcome.”

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# OUR COMMUNITY. OURSELVES.

BY **GUSTAVO RYMBERG**  
CEO, HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

**IT'S SAID THAT OUR** external world is a mirror of our internal world. I'd like to take that concept one step further by saying that a community is a mirror of its members and its leadership.

Over my two years in Hamilton, I've had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know hundreds of community members. As a relative newcomer myself, I've been curious by some of the comments I've heard people say:

"I will not attend that program because the organizer made a mistake with my ticket last year."

"I will not join your organization because of an argument I had with its leadership 10 years ago."

"I will not support your campaign because I don't believe in the causes it's supported over the past 30 years."



The moments in my life when I felt most myself were when I felt part of a community.

**GUSTAVO RYMBERG**

It seems to me that holding on to past disagreements is not serving anyone. If we want a strong, resilient, and caring community, we need to set aside our differences, stop focusing on negatives and start focusing on how we can work together to create the kind of coherent and unified community we want. As a community, we can't start the next chapter if we keep living in the past.

There's this awesome thing that happens when you're part of a community. You feel that you belong, and you share that sense of belonging with others who feel the same way. It doesn't happen immediately, but when you start to really feel like you belong, and when that feeling is validated by others, you start to feel more comfortable being yourself. I've come to realize that the moments in my life when I've felt most myself without trying to be someone else were when I felt part of a community, whether it was in Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto or now in Hamilton.

How do you get that feeling? All you have to do is start contributing. Join a committee. Attend events. Advocate for the issues you care about. Offer your help to others. Do something to positively impact the community as a whole. Let others in. Listen. Participate. Connect. That's when you feel truly part of a community ... and it's an amazing feeling.

Our community is growing. Over the past three months alone, 13 new families have moved to Hamilton and members of Federation's Grow Hamilton committee came out in full force to greet them at a beautiful welcoming event held at the Loewith farm in August. We know — because they told us — how happy each family felt to be joining such a caring and welcoming community.

Federation has been at the forefront of welcoming newcomers and opening doors of opportunity. Our goal is to touch the lives of every member of our community and to connect them with each other, and with fellow Jews around the world. We are committed to adapt to evolving community priorities by listening to what you have to say about what's important to you and your families.

We're fashioning new approaches to solve the most pressing challenges of our day. To care for people in need. Respond to growing antisemitism close to home and far away. To engage the next generation in Jewish life.

But we can't do it alone. This is your Federation. We need motivated, forward-thinking people to help realize our purpose and create the community of which we want to be a part.

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, may each of us answer the call to better ourselves and our community. It's up to us. Let's write our story. On behalf of all of us at Federation we wish you a *Shana Tova u'Metuka*, a sweet and Happy New Year.



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PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNIEDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

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PHOTO BY ELAINE LEVINE

A CARING GESTURE

MP David Sweet stopped by JHamilton on August 28 to drop off 12 backpacks filled with school supplies for Hamilton Jewish Social Services and the Jewish Community Centre's Mitzvah of The Month project. Community response to the initiative was "incredible" according to JSS executive director Alexis Wenzowski, pictured left, along with JCC program coordinator Aimee Wigley and MP David Sweet. All supplies were donated to families in need.

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NOVEMBER ISSUE

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- Deadline for receiving editorial copy Sept. 27, 2019
- Deadline for receiving ad copy Oct. 10, 2019
- Estimated date of arrival Oct. 29, 2019

HJN

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EDITOR

Wendy Schneider

[wschneider@jewishhamilton.org](mailto:wschneider@jewishhamilton.org)  
905-628-0058

PUBLISHER

Hamilton Jewish Federation

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Abigail Cukier

DIGITAL EDITOR

Ben Shragge

CONSULTING ART DIRECTOR

John Bullock

HJN CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Arnold, Steven Brock, Abigail Cukier, Barry Rosen, Simone Rotstein, Ben Shragge, Phyllis Shragge

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## JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL HONOURS MEMORY OF MARVIN CAPLAN

BY WADE HEMSWORTH  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

A new Hamilton Jewish book festival featuring personal appearances by leading authors will honour the memory of Marvin Caplan, an avid reader and gregarious figure who left an indelible mark as a clothier, politician, realtor and volunteer.

The Marvin Caplan Jewish Book Festival, presented by the Hamilton Jewish Federation, will welcome authors of popular new books to Hamilton from Nov. 16 to 24, where they will participate in readings and other public events that are open to the entire community.

The festival is to feature books with Jewish themes or that are written by Jewish authors and is timed to coincide with Jewish Book Month in North America.

Festival events will also feature an extensive collection of new books, music and Chanukah gifts for sale.

Gustavo Rymberg, chief executive officer of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, was involved in similar festivals in Winnipeg and Toronto.

“They were always my favourite events to organize and to attend, and they gave everyone the opportunity to meet incredible authors and hear amazing stories,” Rymberg said. “I always learned something new from the inspirational, interesting and sometimes challenging topics that these authors took on.”

A panel of community volunteers, including Caplan’s widow Judi, reviewed information about 250 books from the 2019-20



A treasured family photo of Marvin Caplan.

publishing season to select the international authors who were invited for the opening year of the festival.

Rymberg anticipates the Hamilton festival will be an annual celebration and become one of the federation’s leading cultural events.

Caplan, who died suddenly in January 2017, was a proud, devoted and active Jew and a strong promoter of reading and literacy who loved to discuss and debate almost any subject, drawing material from his own reading.

Judi Caplan recalls that he would have several books on the go at once, in a revolving stack on his bedside table.

The former Ward 1 city councillor was a familiar figure at the Locke Street branch of the Hamilton Public Library and Judi recalls returning a hefty stack of his borrowed books after the shiva.

Caplan helped to instill a love of reading in his and Judi’s four sons, and later in their grandchildren,

### NEED TO KNOW

**WHAT:** Marvin Caplan Jewish Book Festival

**WHEN:** Nov. 16 to 24, 2019.

**WHO:** Participating authors include: **Jack Fairweather** (The Volunteer), Nov. 16. Time TBA.

**Yousef Bashir** (The Words of My Father), Nov 18. Time TBA

**Meg Waite Clayton** (The Last Train to London), Nov. 20. Time TBA.

**Ariel Burger** (Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel’s Classroom), Nov. 24. Time TBA

**WHERE:** JHamilton, 1605 Main St. W.

**REGISTER:** jewishhamilton.org

by reading aloud to them and encouraging discussions about what they read.

“Our house was always full of books, and from the time the boys were small, story time was a special time in our house,” she recalls. “He read mainly non-fiction books about religion, politics, history and sales, though he also loved science fiction. Books, reading, studying and discussion were all part of Marvin’s life.”

Judy says that a Jewish book festival is an ideal tribute to her husband.

Among his many volunteer roles, Caplan was active with Hamilton’s Telling Tales Festival.

And Judi says one of her most treasured photos of him was taken there in September 2016, less than four months before he died. It shows him grinning widely as books spill from his hands.

## NEW PRIORITIES FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The top five new recommended priorities that have come out of the strategic planning process are protecting the vulnerable, holding community-wide events, fighting antisemitism, welcoming newcomers and engaging young adults in Jewish life. The most significant change is that support for Israel was not perceived by the more than 200 people who participated in the process as a priority. Whether this is due to Israel no longer being perceived as a country dependent on diaspora support or disenchantment with the policies of the current Israeli government is unclear.

“Pew research studies across North America showed that millennials are not joiners and that they don’t feel a close attachment either to Jewish community or to Israel,” said Levin by way of explanation. “The Hamilton Jewish community, in some ways, reflects these trends.”

Howard Eisenberg, who chairs Federation’s strategic planning committee, said that for him, the three biggest insights “were a real desire to come together as a community no matter what shul you go to, fighting antisemitism, and a huge desire to involve the young people in our community.”

Judy Rochweg, a focus group participant said, “I feel like the participants were listened to.” She advocated that Federation continue to prioritize funding educational programs such as Yom HaShoah (Holocaust

Remembrance Day), March of the Living and the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program. Rochweg also spoke of the need to engage 20 to 40-year-olds.

One area that has maintained its position at the head of community priorities is the imperative to take care of the most vulnerable members of the community.

“It was good to see that the community is steadfast in its insistence on assisting the vulnerable,” said Levin. “This is a basic Jewish value and has always been supported by the Federation.”

As for fighting antisemitism, back in 2010 the issue rarely came up as a concern. That it was identified among the top five of this year’s priorities “reflects the sad reality that Jews are facing throughout the world today,” said Levin.

Federation’s overarching goal is bringing the community together, and both Rymberg and Levin believe that community unity is the key to addressing all of the identified priorities.

The final strategic plan will not be ready until later this year.

“We need to take the time to make sure we have the proper plan,” said Rymberg. “We not only want to identify priorities but establish how we will achieve them. Our doors are always open and we welcome any feedback. This is community money and we have to spend it according to identified needs and priorities.”

The lawyers and staff at Ross & McBride LLP wish the entire community a happy and healthy New Year.

# L'Shanah Tovah.

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# HAMILTON ACTIVISTS TAKE A STAND AGAINST HATE

Rise in antisemitic and other hate crimes spurs call among community groups for government action

BY **STEVE ARNOLD**  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

**SWASTIKAS SCRATCHED** into playground equipment, hate messages written on cars or posted on the door of Burlington City Hall, insults being yelled at Jews on the street and yellow-vested hatemongers crowding into a public space every week to shout against gay marriage and Jews.

Against that evidence it's not hard to understand, and fear, recent statistics branding Hamilton as the hate crime capital of Canada.

That's how Kojo Dampthey, program director of the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion sees it.

"Hamilton seems to be a breeding ground for hate and alt-right groups," he said in a recent interview ahead of the launch of the No Hate in the Hammer campaign. "What's happening today is very, very frightening."

The available numbers bear out Dampthey's fear. Statistics Canada recently reported a 6.6 per cent increase in hate incidents in Hamilton, compared to an overall 13 per cent decrease across the country (from 2,073 incidents to 1,798). The local rate followed a hike of 30 per cent in 2017.

With reported incidents averaging 17.1 per 100,000 population, the rate in Hamilton was more than three times the national average.

Jews remain near the top of the target list. The 2018 statistical report by the Hamilton Police Service shows 125 hate-related incidents reported in 2018 – that's down eight per cent from 2017. The list includes 49 incidents where people were targeted because of their religion – 30 of those events targeted Jews.

Of the 125 incidents reported in Hamilton, only five are recorded as actual crimes, including assault, assault with a weapon, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle and sexual assault. The balance are recorded as incidents where hate appeared to be a motivating factor.

A similar 2018 report for neighbouring Halton Region, with a Jewish population of about 2,500, notes 34 hated-related incidents in the region. The incidents are not broken down by motivation.

Most hate-related incidents involve

"petty" crimes, such as property damage, including graffiti, and the vast majority remain unsolved even when they are reported to police.

Sgt. Paul Corrigan, of the Hamilton Police Service, Hate Crime and Extremism Unit, said in an email exchange that all of the antisemitic incidents in Hamilton in 2018 involved mischief graffiti, a crime that's difficult to solve.

"The clearance rate is low because this type of offence is invariably committed at night, in an area without CCTV, at the back of the school or park, and without witnesses. Mischief graffiti is a criminal offence and the antisemitic nature of it makes it even more odious," he wrote. "I think that this type of offence has an effect on the wider community and can instill fear in community members. This is why it is recorded by the Hamilton Police Service and treated with a high priority."

While these events may be considered "just vandalism," he said, "the wider effect can be hurtful to the community. Educating young people and attempting to identify the perpetrators of this type of crime will help in bringing these numbers down."

For Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, education and community activism remain key elements.

"Unfortunately, prejudice against groups and individuals because of their race, religion or sexual orientation is a human condition," he said in an email exchange. "For me, the good news is that here in Hamilton people are rising up against hate, and standing up to promote tolerance and inclusion."

Most importantly, Rymberg continued, "is not to stand by in silence. Apathy will be interpreted as endorsement. It's our responsibility to expose and denounce hate towards any group. We should also look deep inside ourselves and examine our own biases to see how we may inadvertently be contributing to intolerance. It all starts with us."

One incident that gained widespread attention happened in June when anti-Semitic graffiti was scrawled across the doors and playground of St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary School on Governors Road in Dundas. A short distance away,

the same filth was etched into playground equipment at a Dundas park.

Another incident, across the bay in Burlington, saw six separate events in which antisemitic hate messages were scattered around the city. A Burlington resident has been arrested in connection with that spate of hate crimes and police continue their hunt for a second man.

Also raising local fears was the revelation that a man with a history of ties to a racist and white supremacist group was working in the City of Hamilton's information technology department. Marc Lemire, a former leader of the virulent neo-Nazi Heritage Front, has since resigned.

Local leaders admit they are puzzled to explain this stain on Hamilton's reputation as a good place to live. Corrigan, for one, puts the increase down to the overall increase in global antisemitism.

"I think there is an increase in anti-Semitism worldwide. This, coupled with ignorance of the hurt that this type of offence causes has contributed to a steady stream of antisemitic graffiti over the last few years."

"There's no clear answer as to why," said Rabbi Jordan Cohen, of Temple Anshe Sholom. "Nobody really gets it. Maybe it's because there has been a change in the area's population and there's a segment of society that always finds that frightening."

While all of the city's Jewish institutions have suffered some anti-Semitic incidents, Cohen cautions the community to be vigilant but not to over-react.

"The Temple has been the target of some pretty terrifying hate mail, but the information we're getting from the local police and CIJA is that those things very rarely lead to something more," he said.

Whatever the causes of the hate spike in Hamilton, community activists are clear

governments at all levels have to take firm action to let opponents of diversity know their views are not welcome.

"What's happening is obviously alarming to a lot of people who live here," said Hugh Tye, executive director of the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic. "As a community, we're starting to say this is not OK, that Hamilton is not a place of hate, that we're not going to sit here quietly and let them go about their business."

The legal clinic, along with the John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington and Area, the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, with financial support from the Hamilton Community Foundation, recently staged the No Hate in the Hammer meeting to bring together groups opposed to the current trend.

"We have to start somewhere. That means talking about it, figuring it out and talking about the actions we need to take," Tye said. "We've collected a lot of names of leaders in the community, people who actually want to see action, not just talk about the effects of hate, they want to see some action."

Hate issues in Hamilton will also be the focus of a peace conference planned for Oct. 4 to 5, where former Ontario Premier Bob Rae is a keynote speaker, along with Dr. Barbara Perry, director of the Centre on Hate, Bias, and Extremism and Bernie Farber, of the Anti-Hate Network.

While community groups plan meetings and conferences and call for clear statements from government, a group of Dundas moms took more direct action when they heard of the vandalism at their school. After one posted pictures of the ugly words on Facebook a group rushed to the school, scrub brushes, in hand and removed the hate.

## INTRODUCING THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

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**Level 1:** Jewish students living in Greater Hamilton or Burlington in **Grades 7-9**  
**Level 2:** Jewish students living in Greater Hamilton or Burlington **Grades 10-12**

### Guidelines:

- Level 1 essays must be a minimum of 500 words and not exceed 750 words. Level 2 essays must be a minimum of 750 words and not exceed 1,000 words.
- Essays will be judged on originality, creativity and writing style.
- Email submissions to [wschneider@jewishhamilton.org](mailto:wschneider@jewishhamilton.org) before or on the deadline of Oct. 31, 2019.
- Finalists will be notified by Nov. 22, 2019.
- Prizes will be awarded by Dec. 15, 2019.

### Prizes:

The first-place winners in Level 1 and Level 2 will each be awarded \$100 and have their essays published on the Hamilton Jewish News online edition. Second-place finalists in each level will receive \$50 and have their essays published on the Hamilton Jewish News online edition. Third-place finalists will have their essays published on the Hamilton Jewish News online edition.

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My project is about giving voice to the two and a half million Jews who were killed in the Soviet Union whom Hitler and Stalin tried to silence. **ANNA SHTERNISH** University of Toronto professor



**Psoy Korolenko and Anna Shternshis** will present their lecture-concert of lost Yiddish songs at this year's Lillian and Marvin Goldblatt Lecture in Jewish Studies at McMaster.

PHOTO: DAN ROSENBERG

## GRAMMY NOMINATED YIDDISH SONGS SHOWCASED IN THIS YEAR'S GOLDBLATT LECTURE

BY **DANA HOLLANDER**, SPECIAL TO THE HJN

**MCMASTER UNIVERSITY'S** Department of Religious Studies has teamed up with the Socrates Project at McMaster to host an exceptional program as this year's Lillian and Marvin Goldblatt Lecture in Jewish Studies: Anna Shternshis (University of Toronto) and Psoy Korolenko (Moscow – New York) will present a lecture-concert, "Singing and Laughing Against Fascism: Lost and Found Soviet Yiddish Songs of World War II." The Yiddish songs to be performed—which also have been compiled as the Grammy-nominated album *Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II*—are drawn from a remarkable archival find: Professor Shternshis, a specialist in Russian/Soviet Jewish history and Yiddish studies, unearthed them in the National Library of Ukraine. They were part of a collection, thought to have been lost, that had been compiled in the midst of the

Second World War by a team of ethnomusicologists from the Kiev Cabinet for Jewish Culture. After the war, when Jewish and Yiddish culture came under attack under Stalinism, the lead researcher Moisei Beregovsky was arrested, and his archive confiscated.

The songs to be presented offer a view onto a facet of Jewish experience during the Second World War that has not received much attention from historians: that of Soviet Jewry, the largest community in Europe after the war. These Jews comprised both victims of the Holocaust and heroes in the Red Army who liberated Auschwitz—and both these aspects are reflected in the songs to be presented at McMaster on Wednesday, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. This event will be held in the impressive Concert Hall in the recently built L. R. Wilson Hall, which is now the first building when entering the campus from Sterling Street. The *Yiddish Glory* CD will be available for sale, along with books by Shternshis, courtesy of

### NEED TO KNOW

**WHAT:** Singing and Laughing Against Fascism: Lost and Found Soviet Yiddish Songs of World War II

**WHEN:** Wednesday, Oct. 23

**WHERE:** Concert Hall, L.R. Wilson Hall, McMaster University

**TICKETS:** The event is free, but registration is strongly recommended at [socrates.mcmaster.ca/goldblatt2019](http://socrates.mcmaster.ca/goldblatt2019), or 905-525-9140 ext 26848.

the Campus Store at McMaster. There will be a reception in the lobby afterwards.

McMaster University's annual lecture in Jewish Studies was initiated in 2002, largely through the initiative and support of Herb Schreiber. In 2004, the series was renamed in honour of the Goldblatt family, whose generous contributions now support the series in perpetuity.

## FILM FETES WOMEN'S HEALTH TRAILBLAZER MAY COHEN

BY **DR. CHERYL LEVITT** SPECIAL TO THE HJN

**WHEN DR. MAY COHEN** moved to McMaster University from Toronto in 1977, "the doors just opened up" for her. Today, Cohen is a member of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and an Officer of the Order of Canada. Her life has been chronicled in an award-winning new documentary, "The Gender Lady: The Fabulous May Cohen."

When May Cohen started her medical training in 1950s Toronto, medicine was a male preserve. Although she had graduated at the top of her class, Cohen faced a professional culture steeped in gender discrimination. The 70 kg male body was the model from which all diagnoses and treatments were made, and the concept of women's health did not exist. Since then, May has tirelessly advocated for women's rights, abortion rights, LGBTQ+ rights and human sexuality in Canada and internationally.

Using archival materials and interviews with Cohen's close colleagues and friends from Hamilton and Toronto, the film explores how influential and inspirational Cohen has been in promoting the role of female doctors throughout the health sector. Her impact in Canada and internationally simply cannot be overstated. May has demonstrated that it is possible for women to balance professional, family and personal interests — and change the world.

Physicians and first-time filmmakers Cheryl Levitt (McMaster Department of Family Medicine) and Barbara Lent (Western Department of Family Medicine) are the



**Dr. May Cohen**

film's directors and producers. Executive producers are cinematographer Zoe Dirse and Sharon Hampson of "Sharon Lois and Bram."

The film premiered at the 2019 Toronto Jewish Film Festival and was a co-winner of a People's Choice award. Tickets sold out on the first day, and many disappointed individuals who could not get tickets have been clamouring to see the film.

A special screening sponsored by the McMaster Department of Family Medicine and co-sponsored by the Hamilton Jewish Federation and Na'amat Canada, will take place on Sunday, Oct. 27, 2019 at The Westdale theatre, from 1-3 p.m., during McMaster University's 50th anniversary weekend celebrations. Tickets are available from [jewishhamilton.org](http://jewishhamilton.org) and all proceeds from the event will go towards programs supported by Na'amat Canada and the Special Needs Action Project of the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

## PROFESSOR ANNA SHTERNSHIS ON GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

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

*Anna Shternshis could scarcely have imagined that her brief encounter with a librarian at the National Library of Ukraine back in the early 2000s would see her play a pivotal role in resurrecting the voices of a lost generation. The University of Toronto professor spoke to the HJN about the history behind her upcoming lecture/concert at McMaster University*

### What can people expect from your presentation?

My project is about giving voice to the two and a half million Jews who were killed in the Soviet Union during the Second World War whom Hitler and Stalin tried to silence. This is also a story about Soviet Jewish ethnomusicologist

Moisei Bergovsky and his team of scholars who risked their lives and their careers in order to collect and preserve their music in what is essentially the first artistic document of the Holocaust in the Ukraine.

### What is the genesis of the lecture/concert format?

When I started looking at these documents, I thought it would be really fun to have someone sing them. The songs are very pro-Stalin and Red Army oriented, but also very heartbreaking. But because Beregovsky didn't finish the project, many of the songs didn't have tunes. So I called my friend Psoy Korolenko who used his knowledge of Soviet culture and 1940s Yiddish music to write tunes.

After our first presentation (in Toronto in 2015), a producer named Dan Rosenberg helped us put together a group of musicians that included jazz singer Sophie Millman. We recorded a CD that was nominated for a Grammy. At the same time, Psoy and I developed a smaller format of this presentation that we've shown about 40 times around the world.

### Who wrote these songs?

When Beregovsky came back to the Ukraine in 1944 looking to document songs, nobody wanted to talk to him. The Soviet government had put out a memo that if a Jew had survived under German occupation, it must have been because they collaborated and therefore they should be punished. When he had

no luck with adults, Beregovsky went to schools, and that's how a lot of materials in this collection came to be. Based on his notes, a lot of the songs were written by women and children.

### How has your presentation been received around the world?

We're getting a lot of non-Jewish audiences. I think the reason for the interest is that the story of children as victims of war and violence is not just a story about Jews. It's the story of the horrific nature of war, violence and discrimination against people just because of who they are. These are issues that Europeans are thinking and talking about all the time. This story, unfortunately, is not irrelevant.

In the past three months we've welcomed 13 new Jewish families to our community and fielded inquiries from an additional five." **LAURA WOLFSON** Chair, Grow Hamilton Committee



PHOTOS BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

Anna Tied and Laura and Rabbi Ben Shefter and their families are among a number of new members of Hamilton's Jewish community.

## GROW HAMILTON UPDATE



LAURA WOLFSON

**THESE ARE EXCITING** times in our community. In the past three months, Hamilton Jewish Federation's Grow Hamilton Committee welcomed 13 new Jewish families to Hamilton, and fielded inquiries from an additional five families considering a move to Hamilton. We also "welcomed back" two people who moved back to Hamilton after many years living away.

Where do they come from? Recent Jewish newcomers have come from Montreal, Owen Sound, Toronto, Winnipeg, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Fredericton, New York, and Israel. Some of the newcomers came from other countries (Israel, Brazil) to one of these other cities first, and then after a year or more, decided to move to Hamilton.

Why are they choosing Hamilton? Some have found work in the GTA or right in Hamilton. Some would like to be in the GTA and have found Hamilton more affordable than Toronto. But more than that, there is a great buzz in the air about Hamilton. If people are interested in proximity to the GTA, they could settle in any number of locations but they chose here because they are hearing great things about Hamilton's

Jewish community. Not only do we have a beautiful city with excellent employment opportunities, a wonderful arts scene, easy access to major highways, and beautiful natural surroundings, we have three active synagogues, two Jewish day schools, three supplementary Hebrew schools, a well-run Jewish summer day camp for kids, and social, educational, fundraising and political networking activities for adults of all ages. There is a lot going on here, and we are a welcoming community.

How can you help? If you know of a Jewish person or family who is moving to the Hamilton area, please direct them to [jewishhamilton.org/growhamilton](http://jewishhamilton.org/growhamilton). If you're willing to pick up newcomers at the airport, deliver a home-cooked meal for their first night in Hamilton, or help with unpacking their moving truck, please contact the Grow Hamilton Committee at [byrnewolfson@gmail.com](mailto:byrnewolfson@gmail.com).

Finally, if you know of anyone considering a move to Hamilton, tell them how great it is to live here. Let's continue to get the word out that Hamilton is an excellent, affordable destination.

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On taking the GO bus from Toronto, Kanfer would immediately feel an “immediate sense of chill and calm” as she approached the city.

## A NEW HOME IN HAMILTON: NEWCOMER STORIES

Hamilton’s Jewish community is seeing a surge of newcomers. Below, the first in a series of profiles by Tory Metzger

BY **TORY METZGER**  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

“**SOMETHING JUST** pulled me in.”

Not a comment you’d expect to hear from a 30-something millennial living in Toronto and visiting Hamilton for the first time. But Deborah Kanfer, a photographic artist and entrepreneur who had emigrated to Toronto from South Africa with her family years earlier, was unexpectedly enamored by her introduction to this city four years ago.

Kanfer’s initial visit to Hamilton for a musical theatre concert put on by good friends at Beth Jacob Synagogue was more impactful than she could have realized. She was hesitant upon receiving the invite. Like many, her impression of the city was largely limited to non-resident descriptions of industrial buildings and smokestacks, and crossing the Skyway on the way to somewhere else — nothing that would have elicited a desire to explore the location further. But as Kanfer says now, despite her initial reluctance to take the journey, friendship won out and she made the trip, realizing later that it turned out to be a “a night that actually changed my whole life.” She recalls coming into the city on what was a beautiful late spring evening from York Road, passing the Hamilton Spectator building, and remarking to herself that she could not believe it was Hamilton. That was quickly

followed by an inner voice saying, “Oh my gosh, I need to learn more about this place!”

After that first trip, Kanfer arranged for more visits over the next several weeks, always feeling a positivity and excitement about Hamilton. On taking the GO bus from Toronto, she would feel an “immediate sense of chill and calm” as she approached the city. It was a particularly “honest” place with a genuineness about it and its inhabitants that she had not found in the bigger metropolis to the east.

A mere four months later, Kanfer moved her possessions to an apartment in the Durand neighbourhood, became involved in the developing art scene, and established professional connections for teaching and marketing across Hamilton and Halton.

Today, Kanfer says her somewhat impulsive, instinctive decision to relocate to a new and largely unfamiliar community, continues to be the right one for her. With an adventurous and self-described restless spirit, she has found Hamilton to be a place that allows for exploration and innovation. She is deeply involved in the creative arts community (including many studio showings), plays violin in a musical group, teaches at the Burlington Art Gallery, and continues to pursue opportunities that incorporate photography, her greatest creative passion.

Kanfer’s artwork is created through a variety of analogue



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

**Deborah Kanfer** relaxing in her North End living room.

processes and techniques, including the use of mixed media elements, multiple and split exposures, contact and lumen printing. The latter harkens back nearly two centuries to an era of cameraless photography, which allowed for the capturing of a strength and physicality of images. No two pieces of her artworks are the same, each being created from

unique compilations.

Kanfer is looking at new ways to combine her skill sets and interests in the area of wedding photography and real estate, where she hopes one day to combine her design and marketing talents. She has moved to a new home on James Street North, very much enjoying the creative vibe the location provides, along with opportunities

to explore the natural beauty afforded by the lake, hiking and biking trails, and escarpment landscapes. Regarding Hamilton, Kanfer has no regrets, noting that she does not see herself moving away “anytime soon.” She has found the community as warm, welcoming, and inclusive as she did on her first visit four years ago and, while she now enjoys her trips back to Toronto to see family and friends, she feels a relief in returning home to Hamilton. Kanfer is among a seemingly statistically rare subset of individuals in her generation who are touting to parents the advantages of leaving Toronto for Hamilton!

Kanfer is a wonderful example of someone who has seen and embraced the rich benefits of living in Hamilton. She continues to find ways to contribute to, and be part of, this city through her spark, creative talents, and enthusiastic participation in all that it has to offer. It looks to be a great match.

*Tory Metzger is a psycho-educational consultant and a longtime Hamilton resident.*

# Shana Tova!

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## MIXED MEDIA ARTIST JOINS DUNDAS STUDIO TOUR

BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER**  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

**TZVIA DEVOR DOESN'T** remember choosing to pursue art. She just always knew it was what she wanted to do.

Growing up in Haifa, Devor was always making art and she remembers that whenever she came across artwork at people's homes or in public places, she always wanted to look at it and figure it out.

In 1979, when she was 18, Devor moved to Oakland to attend the California College of Arts and Crafts where she "took as many classes as possible."

After four years, she moved to Canada, living with her dad and stepmom in Hamilton. She attended Sheridan College to study ceramics.

"I did not want to be a potter. I wanted to study completely non-traditional and almost unheard of techniques, like making your own clay and colourizing it and making pictures out of clay," said Devor.

After a year at the Dundas Valley School of Art, Devor tried to figure out how she could apply her art education to a career. She enrolled in the pastry course at George Brown College. "I ended up being really good at it."

Devor had apprenticeships in five-star hotels working with European chefs. In 1986, she won the Taste of Canada competition with her puff pastry fruit tarts. She spent a year as head pastry chef for the dairy kitchen at the luxury Laromme hotel in Israel, now the Inbal Jerusalem Hotel.

Now living in downtown Hamilton, Devor runs Tzvia's Treats, preparing made-to-order desserts and creates art that appears in galleries and private collections.

"I am interested in mixed media art," she said. "It is like cooking and baking—mixing techniques together and seeing what happens. It is a real joy for me, just to always try new things."

Devor's work includes outer space or water themes. She combines mixed media



PHOTO: DONNA WAXMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tzvia Devor's art includes old symbols from the Middle East.

with ancient art, including old symbols from the Middle East. Her favourite colors to work in are blue, purple and turquoise.

"Those colours really resonate with me and blue is also the colour of peace and calm. I am trying to bring the feeling of peacefulness and calm to my art," Devor said, adding that she is "100 per cent influenced by growing up in Israel."

"I love being here. My son and my friends are here. I have made a life here, but I am in Israel mode in my head."

On Oct. 5-6, Devor will be a featured artist on the Dundas Studio Tour. This year's tour includes eight studio locations and 32 artists. Devor will be featuring her boho style earrings, necklaces and small hanging objects of Middle Eastern symbols, including the pomegranate and hamsa.

"If a work can intrigue you to want to reach out and run your fingers over it, I am a fan," Kristina Kirkwood, artist and member of the tour selection committee, says of Devor's work.

Devor, who was also part of the tour last year, is happy to be a part of the event. "I felt really at home last year. The other artists are incredible and inspiring," she said. "It just feels like the right fit."

## LIFELONG LEARNING

### DOING JEWISH IN HAMILTON

#### JEWISH STUDIES AT MCMASTER

The Department of Religious Studies at McMaster is offering an array of exciting courses on topics related to Judaism this academic year. Members of the community are warmly welcomed to join these courses as listeners. To view complete course outlines, go to: [religiousstudies.mcmaster.ca/courses](http://religiousstudies.mcmaster.ca/courses). The following courses are offered during the fall semester:

#### Archaeology and the Bible RELIGST 1AB3

Mon and Wed 2:30-3:20 p.m.

Instructor: John VanMaaren

What archaeological evidence exists for the stories and characters of the Bible? In this course, we will focus on major archaeological discoveries from the land of Israel in connection with the Jewish and Christian Bibles.

#### Women in the Biblical Tradition RELIGST 2B03

Tues and Fri, 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Instructor: Professor Hanna Tervanotko

In this course we will analyze the portrayal of women in biblical literature, taking into consideration some material artifacts.

#### The Bible and Film RELIGST 2YY3

Thurs 7-9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Professor Philippa Carter

In this course we turn our attention to the themes of the "Promised Land" and the "Chosen People" as presented in the Hebrew Bible and in mainstream Hollywood cinema with particular attention to the work of Irish-American director, John Ford.

#### Death and the Afterlife in Early Judaism and Christianity RELIGST 3R03

Thursdays and Fridays, 2:30-3:20 p.m.

Instructor: Professor Hanna Tervanotko

In this course, we will compare the

Jewish and Christian concepts of immortality with the ideas of ancient Eastern Mediterranean world.

#### Introduction to Biblical Hebrew I RELIGST 2HC3

Mon and Thurs, 12:30-2:20 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Nick Meyer

#### TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

**Breakfast Club** - Presentations of contemporary and Jewish interest; Breakfast is available at 10:15 a.m. for \$10.00 and the presentation will begin at 11 a.m. Dates: Nov. 10, 17, 24 and Dec. 1 and 8.

**Lunch and Learn and So Much More** TAS's program for seniors, takes place on alternating Mondays twice a month at Shalom Village and Temple Anshe Sholom. Light lunch at 11:30 a.m. followed by speaker or film. Stay on to enjoy time with friends.

#### Spiritual Preparation for the High Holy Days

This three-session course that takes place on Sept. 9, 16 and 23 is designed to inspire deep self-reflection using texts and techniques derived from the rabbinic tradition.

#### Continuing Hebrew Courses

Hebrew language courses for those who know none and those who know some. Both evening and daytime options available.

#### Talkin' Torah

Join us each Shabbat morning downstairs in the Kiddush Lounge for an informal discussion of the week's Torah portion with an emphasis on applications to the world in which we live today. Beginning Oct. 26.

Visit [anshesholom.ca](http://anshesholom.ca) for details about all of the above programs.

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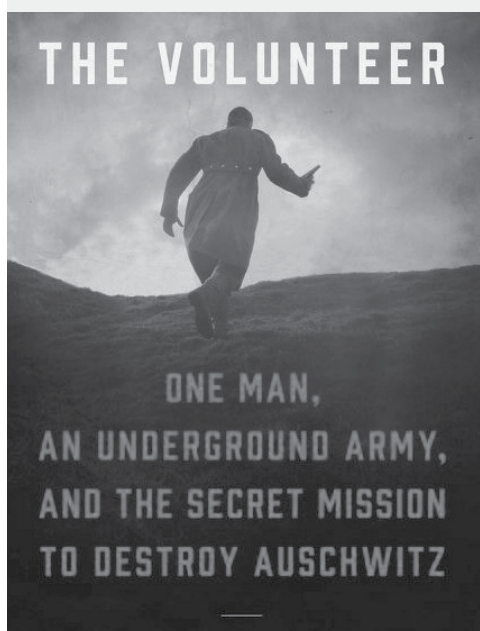
November 16 - 24, 2019 at JHamilton

Jack Fairweather | "The Volunteer" | Saturday, November 16

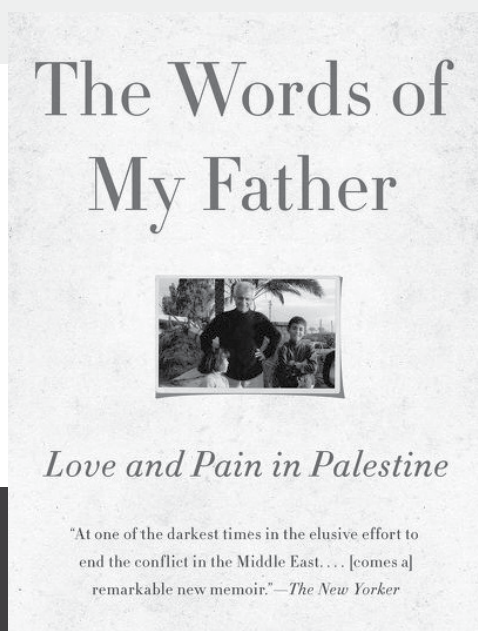
Yousef Bashir | "The Words of My Father" | Monday, November 18

Meg Clayton | "The Last Train to London" | Wednesday, November 20

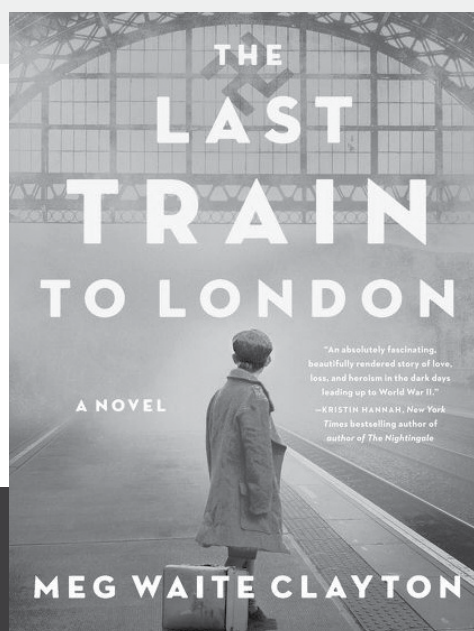
Ariel Burger | "Witness" | Sunday, November 24



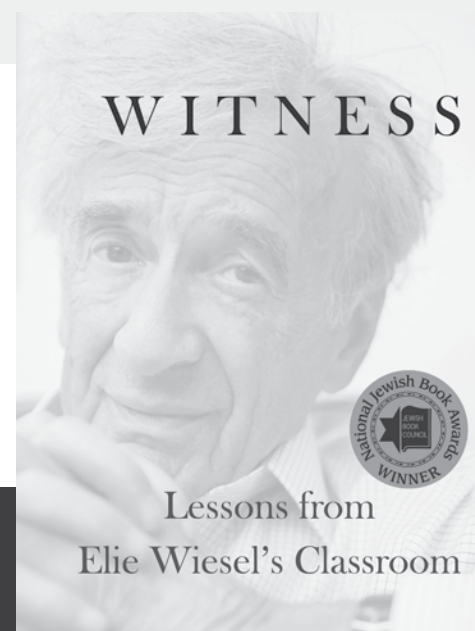
The incredible true story of a Polish resistance fighter's infiltration of Auschwitz to sabotage the camp from within, and his death-defying attempt to warn the Allies about the Nazi plan for a "Final Solution" before it was too late.



A Palestinian-American activist recalls his adolescence in Gaza during the Second Intifada. While an Israeli soldier shot him, it was Israeli doctors who saved Yousef and helped him eventually learn to walk again. In the wake of that experience, Yousef was forced to reckon with the words of his father, whose belief in coexisting peacefully with his Israeli neighbours was unshakeable, and whose commitment to peace was absolute.



Based on true events, this novel tells the story of a Dutchwoman who, working with British and Austrian Jews, faces down Adolf Eichmann to rescue thousands of children from Nazi-occupied Vienna.



Witness opens an intimate window into Elie Wiesel's classroom, in which conversations about ethics, activism, spirituality, and literature transformed the lives of students from around the world. Burger, one of Wiesel's closest students, recounts his story of meeting the Nobel laureate at age 15, becoming his student, and then teaching assistant, and eventually a teacher in his own right.

For more information please contact Leslie Selevan at 905.648.0605 x 301.

For tickets, visit [jewishhamilton.org/bookfestival](http://jewishhamilton.org/bookfestival)

“On Rosh Hashanah there is no mention of guilt or regret. Our focus is on the future and the big picture.” **RABBI DANIEL GREEN** Adas Israel Synagogue

# Rosh Hashanah Reflections

Rosh Hashanah is a time to scrutinize our lives, to discover where we have been blind, and where we have fallen asleep. Below, members of Hamilton’s Jewish clergy reflect on the ways in which this year’s High Holy Days present us with a wake-up call.



**Cantor Paula Baruch**  
Temple Anshe Sholom

**THE SHOFAR**, the most primal of instruments, fashioned from the horn of a ram, produces a sound that shakes the heart. The sound is produced, as in other reed-less instruments, with the pursing of lips and the buzzing blasts of air into a small hole that resonates through a funnel to produce a stirring and loud tonal sound. The pitch of the sound can be altered by the embouchure of the blower.

This combination of breath, intention and nature is in itself a synthesis of our highest calling. The Torah commands us to ‘listen’ to the blasts of the Shofar to mark our return and repentance at the beginning of each new year. It is no small thing! Our liturgy asks us to ‘wake up’ when we hear this sacred call. How should we awaken and to what?

The most powerful spiritual learning is growth towards an understanding that trying to change or ‘fix’ others around us will not fix ourselves or our own situations. It is truly a great illusion that anything else is even possible.

In fact, being presented with other people who seem greatly in need of change is a tremendous growth opportunity for the observer. My hope is that we will not remain asleep to this reality. Let the sound of the shofar spur us all to acts of introspection and a resolve to improve ourselves.



**Rabbi Jordan Cohen**  
Temple Anshe Sholom

**ROSH HASHANAH** is generally understood as the Jewish New Year. The first day of Tishrei, however, carries numerous other names that help define the meaning of the day: Yom Harat Olam, meaning “the Birthday of the World,” Yom Hazikaron, meaning “the Day of Remembering,” Yom Hadin, meaning “the Day of Judgment” and Yom Teruah, meaning “the Day of Sounding”.

Of all these names, Yom Harat Olam suggests that all the possibilities of the coming year exist as an embryo. Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev taught that “Conception is bringing creation into being. In human relationships, conception is enacted in loving relationships that foster trust and intimacy.”

Yom Teruah is the actual name used for Rosh Hashanah in the Torah. For the Rambam, this is the wake-up call.

“Even though the sounding of the shofar ... is a decree from God, it still contains a personal message: It is as if the shofar’s call is telling us, “Awaken from your slumber! Examine your actions, return to your true selves ... Improve your ways and abandon ...negativity.”

In an era when we debate the meaning of truth and the very nature of justice and redemption, the message of Rosh Hashanah is perhaps more relevant than ever. On this holiday, we celebrate the potential of the future, while scrutinizing our past, engaging in deep self-reflection and identifying the points of light on which we can base our correction. Creative effort, mindful remembrance, dispassionate self-judgment and blindingly honest introspection, as individuals and as a community, can only lead to better things for the year to come.



**Rabbi Daniel Green**  
Adas Israel Synagogue

**EVERY CHILD KNOWS** that “Rosh Hashana” means “New Year.” Yet, the Torah itself never mentions it at all. In fact, the date for the holiday is listed as, “the first day of the seventh month,” with the springtime month of Nissan counted as the first! So how did this all begin?

The Talmud shares a debate on this very issue: “Rabbi Eliezer says that the world was created in Tishrei (the month of Rosh Hashanah.) Rabbi Joshua says the world was created in Nissan.” While one would assume that our tradition rejected the opinion of Rabbi Joshua outright, the Talmud concludes that his opinion was accepted. If so, how do we reconcile this with our commonly held perceptions?

The great medieval commentators point out that creation has two stages: the idea and the reality. The idea of a new world began on Rosh Hashanah. The reality materialized later, in the month of Nissan. The debate among the sages is one of emphasis. How important is an idea when there is no reality yet to speak of?

This is precisely what we champion on Rosh Hashana. We celebrate the power of ideas and believe in our power to create a new world. It is the day that we focus on our plan for life. On Rosh Hashanah, there is no mention of guilt or regret. Our focus is on the future and the big picture. We are judged not by what has been done but what we plan to do.

Whether the day of Rosh Hashanah marks an actual new beginning is left in our hands. The Torah simply gives us an opportunity and leaves the naming rights to us. Rosh Hashanah is the “New Year of Ideas.” Let us all have the power to dream and to imagine what we truly could be.

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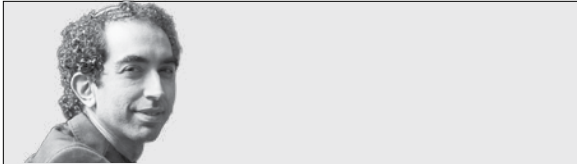
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# Rosh Hashanah Reflections



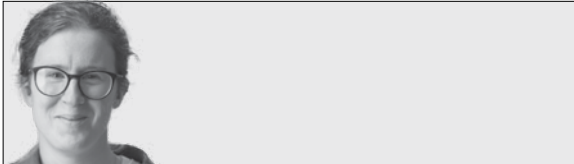
**Rabbi Hillel Lavery-Yisraeli**  
Beth Jacob Synagogue

**THIS YEAR'S** Rosh Hashanah should inspire us to rethink the standards by which we judge ourselves. A lot has changed in the short time each of us has been here on Earth. There have been so many discoveries about the earth and the universe, about who we are as human beings and how we think, and even about Judaism itself. It takes faith to understand that these new discoveries originate from God. It takes courage to decide and commit to incorporating them into our personal and communal world views. Each year on the High Holidays, we need to evaluate our actions, but we also need to evaluate the measuring stick by which we evaluate our actions; in our era perhaps more than ever.

And yet while the particulars may change, the core values remain the same as always: being kind and helpful to others, and treating others in the way we would want to be treated.

Knowing what we know now, we must increase our commitment to improving the plights of all those around us – within our community and without. We must fight poverty and oppression, and ensure dignity for all, especially the marginalized. We must create space where everyone is welcome and valued for their uniqueness. We must learn to see each person as they are now, not as tainted by past choices. And we must revolutionize our relationship with the earth we live on so that our descendants still have an earth on which they can live.

We bless ourselves and each other with a good and sweet year. But in the end, it is our collective choices that will determine whether or not the year is good and sweet. God gives us the knowledge and ability; let's make it so!



**Rabbi Yonah Lavery-Yisraeli**  
Beth Jacob Synagogue

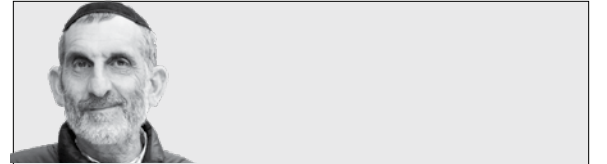
**FOR ME**, the idea that I can tell the myriad of individuals in our community how to wake up is almost funny. The idea that others might look to clergy to tell them how to wake up is perhaps even melancholy. We are all bombarded with buzzing alarms every moment of the day. I am not sure that the role of the sage is to add to that din.

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we read about the expulsion of Hagar and her son Yishmael, and their trauma in the wilderness. It is only when Hagar gives up all hope, all comfort, and all human company that her eyes are opened to the answers before her. Her moment of awakening comes when she is sitting in complete solitude. This is not Hagar's first round of divine enlightenment; she has heard a divine voice before (Bereshith 16:7-12), also at a time when she was alone.

In our Rosh Hashanah story, Hagar's vision is acutely sensitive to political consequence, but the plan of action revealed to her is bracingly simple: to walk over and hold her son's hand.

My thinking is this: that we all have something we already know we need to do. We might even be avoiding doing it by accepting an endless parade of wake-up calls, the better to drown out that quiet voice that asks nothing more or less of us than the true extension of our hand.

We joke about the length of our High Holiday services as though it is not by design. May we use that gift of time wisely this year, with stillness and quietude, and wake down.



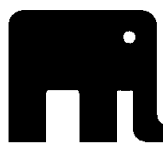
**Rabbi Aaron Selevan**  
Shalom Village

**AS THE HIGH HOLIDAYS** are quickly approaching us, it conjures up fond memories of my youth; watching my mother bake round challahs with raisins, going with my father to the tailor to buy a new suit, and eating apples dipped in honey.

As I grew older and began to study our sacred books of the Torah, I realized that this was not just any holiday. It was a day of judgment. I had to examine my deeds of the past year and hope and pray that I would be worthy of surviving another year. Suddenly, the pendulum had swung and those feelings of happiness and excitement were now being filled with fear and trepidation.

For years I tried to reconcile these two opposing emotions, until I realized the answer can be found in the shofar, which is an inarticulate cry to Hashem. Rav Tzadok HaCohen explains that the *Shevarim* and *Teruahs* are the broken sounds of the shofar representing the crying out of a broken spirit that is ready to repent for our past misdeeds. But, those blows must always be sandwiched between two *Tekiahs*, which are a firm and unbroken sound that represent strength and happiness. This captures the dual essence of the day: Recognizing that it is a time to change and grow, but realizing that I am not alone; God is by my side ready and willing to help me.

I hope the New Year of 5780 brings peace and blessings to everyone and may we all merit to hear our own personal messages of the shofar.



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“I am very aware of the desperate need there is to educate people about the Holocaust.” **GALE HALPERN**

## FAMILY DONATES PARENTS' RESTITUTION FUNDS TO COMMUNITY

Gale Halpern and her brother decided to honour their parents' memory in the most meaningful way possible

BY **EMET MENDELSON**  
GRADE 9 STUDENT

**EVERY ONCE** in a while, you hear a story that stops you in your tracks. In May of 2019, I stumbled across the story of Gale Halpern and Peter Jacobs. I learned that Gale and Peter made a donation to the Erwin Jacobs Holocaust Education Fund, founded by their father in 1996. What makes this donation remarkable is not just how the Holocaust education fund enables our community to promote tolerance and understanding, it is the story behind it that makes it truly extraordinary.

This summer, I interviewed Gale Halpern from her home in Ithaca, NY. She spent more than an hour with me, explaining the history of her family's restitution. Her family received compensation for their Berlin factory that was taken by the Nazis. Her father's parents owned a women's coat factory, and his cousin's parents owned a dress factory in the same building — manufacturing was a way of life for the family. The Nazis took this all away and the coat factory was given to an employee who was a Nazi.

Halpern shared with me that receiving the restitution funds was “something really painful” for her family. She explained the long and costly bureaucratic process of applying for restitution and how the family was told its claim had been denied. By the time the

funds were granted, her father Erwin had died and her mother was very ill. When the restitution came through, it was a surprise, as the family had given up pursuing its claim. Halpern said it was “both shocking and depressing” to receive news that the claim had been approved after 30 years and neither of her parents could benefit from it.

Gale and Peter gave a lot of thought about what to do with the money and decided to donate it towards Holocaust education.

“It's a really important subject to me,” said Halpern, explaining their decision. “I've done a fair amount locally in the field of Holocaust education and I am very aware of the desperate need there is to educate people about the Holocaust.”

I felt a strong connection with Halpern and the story of her family. My great grandparents were Holocaust survivors and I understand that no money can make up for the losses experienced by the families of those who lost not only businesses, but their families and their way of life. While money cannot make up for what has been lost, it can be used to promote understanding of the Holocaust to future generations.

I learned a lot from my discussion with Gale. She talked about her father's experience in Birmingham, where he was arrested as an enemy alien and sent to the Peperil internment



PHOTO COURTESY OF GALE HALPERN

he was able to meet older Jewish refugees at the internment camp and formed a community where there were lectures and concerts in the camp. After the year, he was released to work at an engineering firm in Berlin that repaired airplane engines. At a refugee club at Singer's Hill synagogue in Birmingham, he met Halpern's mother Lore who was four years younger. Lore had escaped Frankfurt, Germany on a Kindertransport, and been housed with a Quaker family in Northampton, England. They married and lived in Birmingham throughout the war, before moving to Toronto in 1953 and eventually settling in Hamilton in 1956.

Speaking with Halpern taught me the importance of asking questions and exploring ideas in more depth. On the surface, Halpern and Jacobs made a contribution to Holocaust education here in Hamilton. Yet their story is so much greater and more profound. Because Halpern herself asked questions and was tenacious in her pursuit of justice, our community will benefit, not just from additional Holocaust programs, but from an understanding of what her family went through.

Halpern and her family have been able to use the restitution funds towards the only thing that combats hatred, ignorance and intolerance: Knowledge.

*Emet Mendelson, 14, is a student at Westmount High School, who loves sailing, swimming, legal discourse and debate. He can usually be found creating memes to amuse his three younger siblings.*



**Gale Halpern's parents**, Lore and Erwin Jacobs in Birmingham, England, ca. 1950 were among the lucky German-born Jews who escaped the Holocaust.

Gale Halpern at Federation's AGM last spring, holds up a certificate of recognition for her family's Holocaust education endowment fund.

camp on the Isle of Man for more than a year. I couldn't believe that German Jews who were escaping persecution in Germany were thrown into detention camps with Nazis because they were German residents. In effect, while the Nazis said, “You're not a German; you're a Jew,” the British said,

“You're not a Jew, you're German.” When I shared my dismay about her father's treatment, Halpern said that being interned actually opened up some intellectual opportunity for him. He had not attended school since he was 15 and apprenticed as a tool-maker in Berlin. At the age of 20,

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“As a friend and a longtime supporter of David Sweet, I admire his honest hard work on behalf of the constituents and of Canada. David is an attentive and ethical individual. Conservative principles of smaller government, of accountability, of responsible free enterprise, of standing up for Israel as a democratic and free ally compel my family to volunteer for his campaign and campaigns of other conservative candidates. I wish David Sweet's and Bert Laranjo's teams success in the upcoming Federal elections!”

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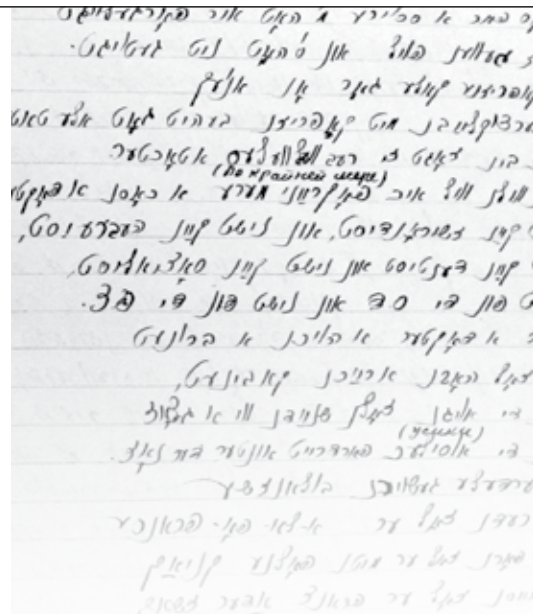
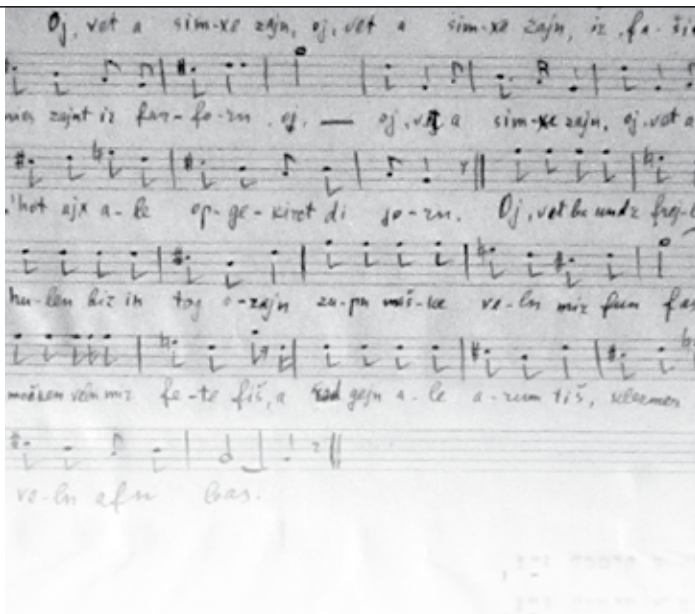
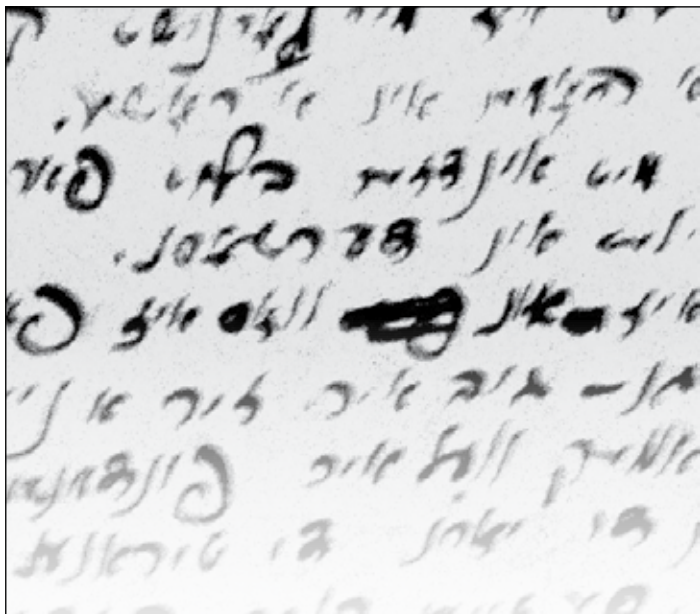
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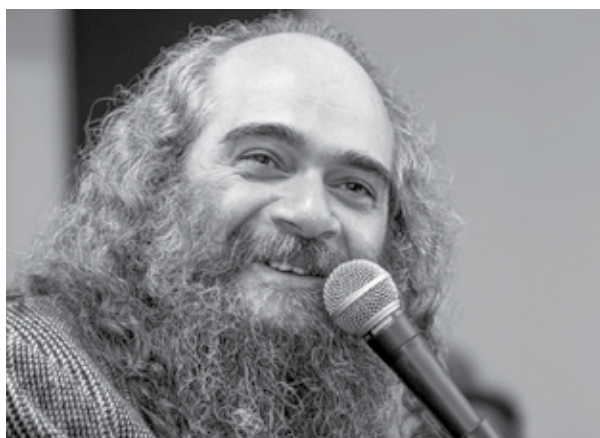




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# Lost and Found Soviet Yiddish Songs of World War II



Psoy Korolenko



Anna Shternshis

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*“Haunting.... Remarkable.” – CBC’s As It Happens*

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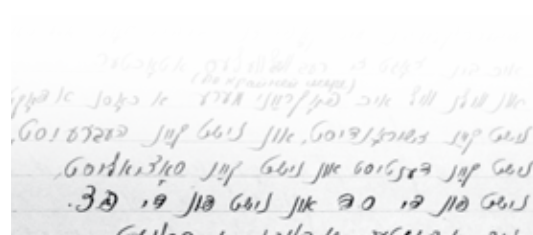
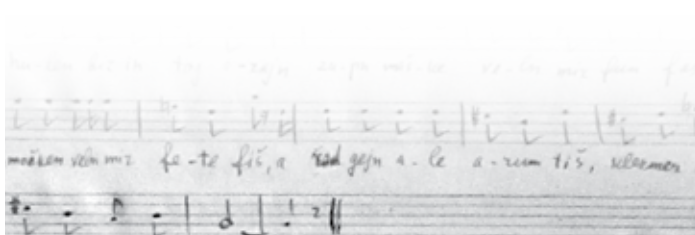
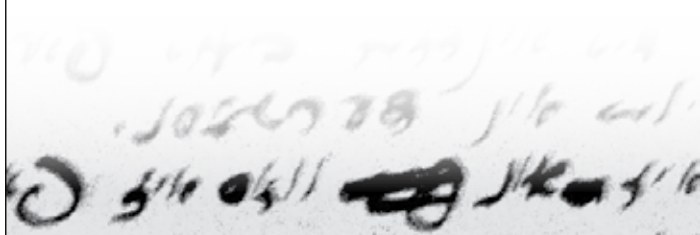
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“I can see a longer run at a regional theatre, then bringing it back to New York, off Broadway or even a Broadway production.” **JENNY WAXMAN** Playwright and producer

## BROADWAY MAY BECKON FOR JENNY WAXMAN'S WINNING PLAY

Hamilton native's play wins big at prestigious musical festival

BY **STEVE ARNOLD**  
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

A **SECOND HAMILTON** star is ready to dawn on Broadway.

Hamilton's reigning Queen of the Great White Way, Caissie Levy, may soon have some competition after Hamilton native Jenny Waxman has carried away the top prize at the prestigious New York Musical Festival.

The 15-year-old festival is considered the birthplace of many a Broadway hit. Over those years 105 of the festival's 447 have gone on to Broadway productions, and Waxman hopes *Leaving Eden* will be one of the new crop to make that transition.

"Leaving Eden," written by Waxman and Sheridan College theatre student Ben Page, was rated the Best Musical of the festival. It also won three other first prizes and five runner-up honours, the highest total of any show in the festival.

"This is just all very, very exciting," Waxman said after the awards ceremony she couldn't attend because of a law school commitment. She found out about the win through a text message.

"Members of the team were texting me as the awards happened," she said. "It was really nail-biting but it was really exciting because almost everyone got recognized."

*Leaving Eden* also took top prize for overall design; actress Sarah Anne Martinez tied for top prize



**Jenny Waxman and Ben Page's play *Leaving Eden* earned four first place prizes and five runner-up honours in the New York Musical Festival.**

for best lead performance and Waxman was honoured for best lyrics.

The show also garnered runner-up honours for best lead performance, direction book, music and outstanding ensemble.

"To get affirmation like this from the New York community is pretty stellar. I don't really think it has sunk in yet," she said.

For Waxman, a veteran of local theatre camp and university shows, the experience and the win are just one step toward getting the major production she wants for the show. It's also a significant boost to her own dream of a career as a Broadway producer.

"Our first next step is to get the team together and start doing some rewrites," she said. "This was our first time seeing actors perform it without music stands in front of them. We learned a lot by listening to the audience and seeing where they laughed and where they didn't.

"People really responded to the show," she added. "It wasn't perfect the first time but I'm proud

that it made people think and talk. That was the goal of it."

While the show and its songs are being tweaked, meetings are being planned with potential backers for a regional, off Broadway or even a Broadway production.

"We have meetings with people interested in taking it places, so we're putting together footage and press kits and proposals for institutions," she said. "Sometimes it's an investor, sometimes it's a producer with connections, sometimes it's a theatre, a regional theatre that wants to champion it. That's the next step and we have meetings with all of those kinds of people."

Waxman said a regional theatre production, in Canada or the United States, is the likely next step as the show continues to develop into something people will pay \$150 US per seat to see on Broadway. That's the price to see Levy rule the stage as Elsa in the Disney hit *Frozen*.

"I can see a longer run at a regional theatre, then bringing it back to New York either off

Broadway, or off Broadway and then Broadway," she said.

While she was liberal in praise for everyone connected with the festival production, Waxman was especially effusive about co-author Ben Page.

"Ben and I have an almost sibling relationship. For two months we worked in the tiniest one bedroom apartment with him sleeping in the living room and me in the bedroom," she said. "It's hard to find such a communicative and supportive artistic relationship. I adore him and wouldn't want to work with anyone else. His music is really good."

Waxman didn't know it when she and Page started working together, but his musical pedigree

is pretty impressive on its own. His father, Steven, is a founder and former front man of the Canadian super group *Barenaked Ladies*.

*Leaving Eden* tells the story of Adam and his first wife Lilith, who has some questions about the many rules Adam has for their relationship – including the one that says he always has to be on top.

In a parallel story line, a modern Adam and Eve struggle with their own friend Lilith and their desire to become parents.

Waxman, 28, has earned graduate and under-graduate degrees in fine arts from New York University and now entering her second year at Georgetown University law school.



This November, the Jewish community of Hamilton will embark on our 20th year striving to eliminate hunger in our community through its participation in Hamilton Out of the Cold. Every Tuesday, we provide hot nutritious meals for those in need, served with dignity and compassion. The way we gather matters because how we gather is how we live our Jewish values.

Please consider sponsoring a dinner, sponsoring a guest for the season, donating toiletries, warm hats and gloves for adults, sending a donation card or Shana Tova greeting in honour or in memory of a special someone by calling Beth Jacob Synagogue at 905-522-1351. Volunteer positions include shopping and delivery of groceries and minding the meal process in the afternoon.

For more information, please contact Cindy Richter at [c-richter@sympatico.ca](mailto:c-richter@sympatico.ca).  
Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

# Shana Tova from Shalom Village

Honour your loved ones with a tribute card



The Shalom Village Charitable Foundation invites you to send one of our personalized Rosh Hashanah greeting and tribute cards this new year, featuring artwork by our residents. By reaching out to family, friends and loved ones this Jewish new year through the purchase of our Rosh Hashanah 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](http://www.ShalomVillage.ca/Giving) or contact [kathleen@shalomvillage.ca](mailto:kathleen@shalomvillage.ca)

As we come together to celebrate the High Holidays, Shalom Village extends our warmest wishes for this new year, 5780. Rosh Hashanah marks the start of a new year – a time of humble prayer, joyful celebration, and hope for a new beginning. At the heart of this holiday, is the belief that the power of personal transformation is not outside us but lies within.

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

From all of us at Shalom Village, **L'Shana Tova Tikatevu. May this year be a year of blessing, good health, and peace for you and those you love and may you be inscribed for blessing in the Book of Life.**



### Shalom Village Ladies Auxiliary Tea

This year's Tea takes place on Sept. 18. Funds raised will support the critically important care provided by Shalom Village. Bring your friends and family and enjoy our famous scones, party sandwiches and delectable desserts. To make a donation or purchase a ticket, contact Kathleen Thomas at [Kathleen@ShalomVillage.ca](mailto:Kathleen@ShalomVillage.ca) or call 905-529-1613, ext 264.

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“This stage is too small for the Sound of Music, and this social hall is too bare and cold.” **MURIEL BACK** Lyricist extraordinaire

## COMEDIC MUSICAL THEATRE PART OF BACK FAMILY'S DNA

Wordsmith Amy Back prides herself on walking in her creative mother's footsteps

BY **STEVEN BROCK**  
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

In 2000, Hamilton native Amy Back staged her first parody musical for Beth Jacob Synagogue. In doing so, she continued a tradition started by her mother more than 50 years earlier. Over the course of two generations, Amy and Muriel Back have been staging comical, musical theatre productions for an appreciative Hamilton Jewish community.

Born in 1920s Brooklyn, Muriel Wald always loved the theatre, performing in some Yiddish shows during the golden age of New York's Jewish theatre scene. Frequenting Broadway shows in her youth, Muriel easily learned many of the tunes featured in the productions. Then with her acerbic wit, she would reconfigure the lyrics with her own, often silly, lines.

During a visit to Canada in the 1940s, Muriel was introduced to Torontonians Harold Back. The two hit it off immediately and after a long distance courtship, the couple married in 1947. Originally living in Toronto, the Backs relocated to Hamilton in 1955.

After joining Beth Jacob Synagogue, it wasn't long before Muriel began using her comedic talents to benefit the shul. Having seen the smash musical My Fair Lady when it first hit the stage in the mid-1950s, Muriel revived her old hobby of revamping the words of the show's musical numbers. She reimagined the play with Eliza working to eliminate her European Yiddish accent. With songs like "The Chrain in Spain," "The Shul Where you Live" and "Just You Wait Tyrone Ginsberg," Muriel's production of My Feh Lady was born.

After discovering the theatrical talent in the Jewish Hamilton community, Muriel no longer performed in her own shows.

Retreating behind the scenes, she wrote, directed and choreographed the productions, allowing the gifted performers to shine. With a skilled group of actors, singers and dancers, such as Helen Greenbaum, Hy Caplan, Lillian, Sondi and Barbara Goldblatt, Marvin Karon, Helen Levy, Sandi Fuss, Max, Nancy and Sharon Mintz, Andy Back and Al Foreman among others, over the next several years, Muriel wrote and produced several shows for Beth Jacob Synagogue and the Beverley Golf and Country Club, including Westdale Story and Hans Chaim Anderson, a satire of the Danny Kaye film Hans Christian Andersen.

One of Muriel's most memorable projects was an extravaganza that featured restaurateur Max Mintz singing "Avinu, We Need a Shul" to the tune of the Yom Kippur prayer "Avinu Malkeinu" and soprano Lillian Goldblatt belting out:

*This stage is too small for the Sound of Music/And this social hall is too bare and cold/There's no room to dance to the Sound of Music/At the evening affairs, the drapes are too old.*

As Amy entered adulthood, she left Hamilton for more than 25 years, pursuing an acting career and completing a degree in sociology and theatre in Boston. Eventually withdrawing backstage, she shifted her focus to theatre management. After leaving the theatre, she spent time living in both New York and Miami.

Amy returned to Hamilton after her father's death in 1994 and began caring for Muriel, who was experiencing health issues. Despite her illness, in 1996, Muriel decided that she wanted to create a new show for Beth Jacob.

"She had taken a break from doing shows, but she started writing the Phantom of the Synagogue," recalls Amy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY BACK



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY BACK



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Amy Back (front centre) and cast of a 2013 UJA Campaign opening flash mob at the Lower Lions Club JCC.

Above left: The late Muriel Back and her daughter Amy have used their talent of rewriting song lyrics in a poignant and humorous fashion to entertain the Hamilton Jewish community for more than six decades. Their shows and parodies of popular songs have become a mainstay of the local theatre culture.

Above Left: A Muriel Back production featured (r to l) Sondi Goldblatt, Helen Levy, Muriel Back, Molly Schreiber, Samieth Mintz and Dorothy Adler.

Muriel enlisted Amy's help to develop the show. "I had never participated until then. Other than a poem here and there, I had not written anything."

In their rendition, the Phantom had been burned by the Shabbos lights, which was why he was living in the synagogue basement. Christine had been adopted and eventually discovers that she is Jewish. So as she becomes involved at the synagogue, the Phantom kidnaps her in order to force her to sing Kol Nidre. "We didn't have a full script. We had some songs partially done and that was as far as it went." Sadly Muriel died in October 1997 and the show was never produced.

Within 10 years, Amy had lost her entire immediate family. Her brother, Andy died in 1988, followed by her brother Michael in 1991. Her father Harold died three years later, with Muriel three years after that.

Amy persevered by adopting her mother's enthusiasm for staging productions. "At that point, I had not set foot on stage or done any theatre for 25 years."

In 2000, Amy produced her first show, a charitable benefit for Beth Jacob. There's No Business like Shul Business became a roaring success. Selling out more than 600 tickets for the show's only performance, Amy had to relocate to a larger venue at the last minute.

"Although I had directed scenes at university for my degree, it was my first time directing a whole show. It was a great experience for everyone involved."

Amy has since staged several shul and community productions, including Purim spiels, kick-off shows for several Hamilton Jewish Federation and UJA fundraising campaigns and a flash mob event for Beth Jacob's 125th anniversary.

In 2015, Amy established a computer support company and scaled back many of her creative activities, but she has written and performed two one-woman plays in Toronto and has published some of her poetry.

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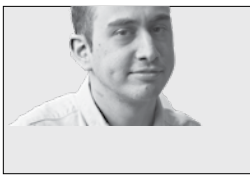


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**BEN SHRAGGE**

## HAMILTON'S IMAGE PROBLEM

**YOU CARRY YOUR** hometown with you, in your passport and in your heart. Here in the US, by necessity, I usually tell people I'm from "near Toronto." But oh, how it pains me. "Near Toronto" is a suburban, amorphous blob. I'm from Hamilton, a city with its own personality, coliseum, and mountain.

Unfortunately, Americans in the Northeast assume "Hamilton" means the one in New York or New Jersey, and correcting them usually results in a blank stare. McMaster does get recognition in refined circles. I met an engineer in Massachusetts who came to America via China and Russia (where he gathered secrets from the collapsing Soviet Union to kick-start China's space program) and had spent three years living in Dundas, attending what he called the "MIT of Canada." In esoteric junior hockey circles, too, Hamilton holds some recognition as the home of the Bulldogs. But to most, I have to explain that between Niagara Falls and Toronto is a shining city on a mountain that they simply must visit next time they cross the border.

When I told my girlfriend that Hamilton has more than half a million people, she didn't believe me. She's from upstate New York, and didn't understand how such a large, relatively close city could be completely unknown to her. To most Americans, there are only three cities in Canada: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. But to be unknown is better than to be known for the wrong things, which is how Hamilton still stands for many Canadians.

One example: We were seeing a comedy show in Burlington, Vermont. The comedian was from Kingston, and asked if any Canadians were in the house. When I responded and said I was from Hamilton, she told the crowd "Everyone, visit Hamilton!" before assuring us she was kidding: "Please, don't visit Hamilton." This wasn't a joke said for the benefit of the American crowd, which clearly didn't get it. It was just a typical automatic, negative reaction to Hamilton from a supposed neighbour.

Another example: A water taxi ticket seller in Victoria, BC, asked where I was from. When I said I'd moved from Hamilton to Boston, she said with feeling that I'd made the right choice. Obviously I do think I made the right choice, or I wouldn't still be in Boston after four years. But I resented her clear contempt for Hamilton, which I was somewhat surprised to witness in farthest BC.

Where does this contempt come from? Sometimes it's from an outdated notion of Hamilton as "Steeltown," embodied by the apocalyptic smokestacks visible from

“ We can speak up about our world-class university, escarpment, arts scene, and waterfalls, but most visitors are going to see our downtown first, and first impressions are hard to overcome.

the highway. But all too often, it's about the people—specifically, the people who tend to congregate downtown—as illustrated by popular American podcaster Marc Maron on his June 27 show.

Maron, who was in town for a film shoot, remarked: "I think I am supported by many people I've spoken to from Toronto and other parts of Canada that Hamilton is not—it's not a high-water mark for Canada." (Note that his negative impressions were first implanted by Canadians—and probably only Torontonians who claimed, as usual, to speak for the rest of Canada.)

Maron went on to say "there just seems to be a sort of ongoing ragtag parade of frenetic sadness in many manifestations. . . . You can really kind of zero in on people and there's definitely a bit of a—a lot of humans twisted by soul sickness of one kind or another wandering the streets here."

In New Orleans, I've been randomly and uncomfortably hugged by a sweaty drug addict. In São Paulo, I've been followed by a homeless man with a shopping cart repeatedly pointing to his bloody finger. By comparison, Hamilton's lost souls are a gentle lot. But, yes, our downtown holds an unusually large concentration of electric scooter jockeys, cigarette-butt scavengers, and young men eagerly limiting their future career options via neck tattoos.

We can speak up about our world-class university, escarpment, arts scene, and waterfalls, but most visitors are going to see our downtown first, and first impressions are hard to overcome. Hamilton has the economic benefit of proximity to Toronto, coupled with a priceless benefit that faceless Toronto suburbs lack: character. But in Canada, a history of bad first impressions has congealed to form a casual contempt that is then passed along to outsiders, like Maron, who are given no reason to scratch beneath the grime for our city's soul. Hamilton could incentivize business development, and more evenly distribute social services throughout the city, to change the atmosphere downtown. Hamilton could also simply declare Westdale the new downtown and be done with it. There's work to do to change Canadians' impression of Hamilton, but Canada (geography aside) is only a small part of the world. Living in Boston, where our Hamilton is unknown, has reinforced that for me. Let's think big: the benefit of being unknown is that millions of first impressions haven't yet been made.

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

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PHYLLIS SHRAGGE

“When you reach the other side of 60 or 70 or even 80, and if you are blessed with good health, you can do what you want. You have the freedom to focus on yourself, to do what makes you happy.

## THE WISDOM OF AGING WITH GRACE

**BEATING SUN**, torrential rains, whipping wind and driving ice pellets pound the cliff's smooth surface, creating deep crevices that enlarge as the years go by. Time is the antagonist of nature's glory.

The cliff and our aging faces have much in common. Time ravages our façade as we slide (unwillingly) into our elder years.

As we lose the seemingly flawless complexions of our youth, women, and many men, are horrified by time's determination to steal our once youthful glow. "Who is that person in the mirror," we wonder. "What happened to the young person I know I am?"

I am a grandmother now, struggling to accept reality: I am no longer young. Yes, 60 is the new 50, and 70 is the new 60, but as we age, creaky knees and sore backs suggest otherwise.

Inevitable deterioration aside, I believe that a positive attitude can ward off many problems associated with old age.

Many problems, but not all. Why can't I remember the plot of a novel I read two weeks ago? Why do I forget simple nouns?

I'm not alone. In my circle, it is common to hear the following refrain: "What's his name? You know, he was in the movie with what's her name? It took place in Italy. I think it was Italy. Maybe it was Greece. During the Second World War. It was nominated for an Oscar."

Another friend responds: "Right. That guy. He was also in a movie with that blonde actress, the one in that series on TV. What's it called?"

"I know which series you mean. It's on Thursday nights."

And on and on.

The name of the actor in the movie

that took place in Italy (or was it Greece?) remains a mystery.

Everyone sighs.

Hours later, when I'm home in bed, about to fall asleep, the actor's name comes to me in a flash. But by that time, who cares?

I've been told that this type of memory loss is normal and it's common among older folks. I don't think my friends and I have true cognitive impairment, thank goodness. Apparently, fuzzy brains are typical in our age group.

Getting older does have some benefits. Maybe. When you reach a certain age, you don't care what people think about you. No, that's a lie. You always care. Another thought: When you reach the other side of 60 or 70 or even 80, and if you are blessed with good health, you can do what you want. You have the freedom to focus on yourself, to do what makes you happy. You don't have young children. You aren't climbing the corporate ladder.

Now is the time to travel, if you can. You might hike through Italy's Amalfi Coast, or climb to the top of Machu Picchu, or trek through India or Asia. Or, realistically, you might take a cruise.

Let's face it, there's no time to waste. We all need to enjoy each day.

For now, I will try putting aging into perspective. I will tell myself that an aging face reflects life experiences. I will tell myself that an old brain is filled to the brim with information, so it rejects extraneous details. I have learned from the muddled days of my youth. I am no longer trying to find myself. This is as good as it gets.

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



MIRIAM SAGER

“Now is the time to offer our ability to act powerfully on hopeful dreams to humanity's biggest challenge yet, one that has been described as the most important moral issue of our time.

## HA'TIKVAH: A JEWISH GIFT FOR HARD TIMES

**YOU MAY BE** aware of the intense discussion that is taking place among climate scientists and activists about whether we can still stop the global climate breakdown from getting out of control. Many are finding it hard to hold onto a hopeful perspective that will allow them to continue to fight for the science to be recognized and acted upon by governments, corporations, and fellow citizens.

Regardless of where you stand on the question of global warming, it is clear that the Jewish people know a thing or two about hope, even hope against all odds.

Jews have survived and held onto their unique identity and culture despite millennia of persecution and pressures to disappear. Faith in the coming of the mMessiah, "even though he may delay", is one of Maimonides' 13 principles of the Jewish faith. We do not wait passively: the religious pray and practise mitzvot; others work to repair the world in a myriad of other ways; and one Jewish dreamer inspired a broad movement that turned his dream of a national home for the Jewish people into reality: "If you will it, it is no dream." The monumental task of Zionism was driven at least in part by hope, with desperation making up for what was lacking in the way of actually believing it could be done.

The brilliant young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg speaks about hope in response to adults who turn to her for inspiration: "Hope is not something you have. Hope is something you create with your actions. Hope is something you manifest into the world. And once one person has hope, it can be contagious. Other

people start acting in a way that has more hope ... Act. Do something."

Young people who act hopefully are often belittled by adults who have given up. We call them naive. Indeed, there are many serious dangers again today, from white nationalism and anti-Semitism to the twin environmental crises - the climate crisis and the massive loss of biodiversity. We don't know if we will succeed. But the future hasn't happened yet, and in times of uncertainty there is no reason to choose doom as the only certain outcome. We are always free to think and choose our perspective, if nothing else, so why not choose one that will challenge any feelings of discouragement and powerlessness? Isn't it better to choose the one that will allow us to fight hard and will lead to the more interesting, more positive outcomes?

Now is the time to offer our ability to act powerfully on hopeful dreams to humanity's biggest challenge yet, one that has been described as the most important moral issue of our time. The ability to choose hope, and other gifts of the Jewish people such as our heritage of integrity and seeking justice are needed now, to help pull off another seemingly impossible feat. If we do not fight with everything we've got to protect our life support systems on Earth, we will never know what we might have accomplished.

May the year and its curses come to an end. May the New Year and its blessings begin! And let us roll up our sleeves and help make it happen.

*Miriam Sager works at the Hamilton Sexual Assault Centre and leads support groups.*

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# *Shanah Tovah u'Metukah* שנה טובה ומתוקה



## **BERT LARANJO, Federal Conservative Candidate, Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas**

- Registered Nurse – managing a busy hospital emergency department
- Lives in Dundas with his wife Joanna and their two daughters Kylie (9) and Lyla (6)
- Immigrated to Canada from Portugal with his family when he was nine years old
- Successfully balanced a budget and reduced wait times in his hospital's emergency department as manager
- Will work closely with David Sweet as fellow Hamilton area MP – send both David and Bert to Ottawa as a strong voice for us

## **DAVID SWEET, Federal Conservative Candidate for Re-Election, Flamborough-Glanbrook**

- 13 year track-record as a strong voice for the Hamilton Jewish community on Parliament Hill
- Recipient of Hamilton Jewish Federation's Humanitarian Award
- Chair and Vice-Chair of the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group
- Founding Member, Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism
- Vice-Chair, House of Commons Sub-Committee on International Human Rights
- National Conservative Caucus Chair

***Bert and David will always be strong voices:***

- ✓ ***For the Hamilton Jewish Community***
- ✓ ***For Israel***
- ✓ ***Against the rise of anti-Semitism***

Authorized by the CFOs for the Bert Laranjo Campaign and the David Sweet Campaign.

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- ✓ Donate to support local signs, brochures and offices
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**Bert Laranjo Campaign**  
(905) 912-BERT (2378)  
BertLaranjo.ca

**David Sweet Campaign**  
(905) 912-2019  
VoteDavidSweet.ca



## JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES

**ALEXIS WENZOWSKI,**  
JSS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fall is going to be busy here at Hamilton Jewish Social Services and we are hoping that you can join us. Let's take a look below at just two of the interesting programs we will have running:

### Take Control Take Charge

These are two free separate daytime courses: Chronic Disease Management and Chronic Pain Management, offered in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences. They run six weeks, and are all about building your support system, developing your own tools for wellness, and gaining new insights. Even more exciting is that you can have a friend or caretaker come too!

### Memory Café

We are delighted about this opportunity with the Alzheimer Society. On a monthly basis, we'll be offering refreshments, activities, and supports for those living with dementia and their friends or family. We also invite the broader community to attend, and learn about creating a

dementia-friendly environment. If you're interested in volunteering, we welcome your help.

Throughout the fall, we are collaborating with community partners. There are exciting things in the works with the schools, the JCC, the shuls, and Shalom Village. Stay tuned for more details upcoming. Together we continue to make Jewish life in Hamilton strong.

Looking to register? Please give us a call at 905-627-9922 x 23 or send us an email at alexisw.jss@gmail.com.

Wondering when our programs are offered? We invite you to visit our website athamiltonjss.com, or on Facebook (/HamiltonJSS). Our website includes a weekly calendar that shows you the times that everything is offered. We have an e-newsletter sent out at the start of each month. Go to our website to sign up.

Of special note, we invite Holocaust survivors and their families to connect with us about supports through the Claims Conference. Of note, for low-income seniors, access to cleaning, food supports, and case management can make a big difference. If there are questions, please reach out.

## TAS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

**DORA ANN COHEN ELLISON**  
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Temple Anshe Sholom Religious School has amazing new programs for 2019-2020! Among them: a new prayer service called Families in the Forest in which we take some of our Shabbat morning and Wednesday afternoon services outside on the trail, for a spiritual and educational service surrounded by nature. For a list of Family Shabbat dates, please consult our Temple calendar at anshesholom.ca/events

Temple Religious School students are an extended family and work together to explore and learn. In multi-age groupings, students work through a program that is experiential and hands on, learning Hebrew, studying Torah and connecting the rich traditions of Judaism. History, ethics, traditions, Israel and community are taught each year, Students explore their Jewish heritage through music, art, drama, cooking, discussion and active Hebrew classes.

Our kick-off family program is Saturday, Sept. 21 for children in Grades JK through 7. We begin at 9:15 a.m. with an energetic Shabbat song session. Shabbat Tot Drop-in also resumes on Sept. 21, where children from babies to age five are invited to join us at 11 a.m. (with a caregiver) for our first Families in the Forest service.



PHOTO: DORA-ANN COHEN ELLISON

Students exploring Hebrew at Tot-Shabbat

The first YoFi Shabbat of the year takes place on Friday, Sept. 20 from 5:15-6:00 p.m. Please join Rabbi Cohen and Cantor Baruch for Shabbat songs, stories and snacks. We look forward to welcoming Shabbat with our many families with young children.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur family programs will take place on Sept. 30 and Oct. 9. Please call Jo-Anne at 905-528-0121, ext. 21 for more information. Please join us to "Learn Jewish, Live Jewish, Love Jewish." We welcome all families. For more information, email dacellison@anshesholom.ca or call 905-528-0121, ext 29.

## HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

ALY OSTROWSKI

**IMAGINE GOING TO A CAFÉ**, ordering a cup of coffee with your friends only to find that the only seating option available is a row of desks that are, at best, arranged in small groups. How would your conversations evolve? Could you effectively collaborate on a shared task? What if you needed to do independent work?

Just as many modern establishments where customers have a wide range of seating opportunities according to comfort level and type of activity, why shouldn't elementary classrooms offer the same approach?

After months of careful planning in which a team of educators and members of the HHA Student Success Team consulted with a progressive occupational therapist the HHA has launched its first flexible seating model. As a pilot project, the Grade 1 class replaced its desks with new furniture to support movement, collaboration and, most importantly, choice.

Studies show that when students are active, their minds can sustain more focus. This means that they are more receptive to teacher instruction, and are more likely to initiate and complete tasks in an organized, efficient, and diligent manner. Furthermore, with group tables replete with adjustable heights and varied seating preferences (cushions, stools, "scoop rockers," traditional chairs, etc.), comfort is paired with the natural inclination to collaborate, socialize and creatively problem

solve. Finally, when students have a choice, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning processes. If a group wants to work in a quiet corner of the room, sectioned off by a moveable bookcase, they can grab wobbly seats and clipboards and get started right away. The classroom environment becomes a fun, empowering, and engaging learning climate for students to do their best work and establish collaborative partnerships.

The HHA Grade 1 class will also become more equitable with regards to how various learners access instruction and perform assignments. Hyperactive students may choose to sit on stools or wobbly cushions, while students who work best in quiet environments may choose to prop up some patio cushions and read and write independently. Having students choose their own seating arrangements will promote self-reflection, body awareness and problem solving. A core component of this pedagogical approach is having the teacher coach students at a U-shaped conference table according to their learning styles.

Our hope is that this pilot project will give HHA students the skills to collaborate and problem solve throughout their grade school years, as they continue to refine their work habits and build a strong sense of social cohesion.

*Aly Ostrowski is the director of the HHA's Student Success Team.*

## TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

RABBI JORDAN COHEN

**AT A SPECIAL** general meeting held on July 21, Temple Anshe Sholom completed a series of changes to its by-laws, which will allow for implementation of a new governance structure. The new governance model, which was based on the recommendations of the TAS's task force on governance, which was established more than a year ago, removes the division between the executive committee and the board of trustees, reduces the number of positions on the board, and encourages more members to get involved in leadership positions. All standing committees of the Temple are transitioning either into reconfigured "working groups" or "task forces" with very specific mandates. The position of chairperson for each working group will be elected along with the trustee positions at the Temple's annual general meeting.

Discussions of our governance model have been going on for more than 10 years and we knew it was time to make some

significant changes. The hope is that the new model will be less demanding of time and effort while making leadership involvement more meaningful and attractive.

The task force on governance was convened by current president Virginia Mendes da Costa and chaired by Anna-Rae Fishman. Over one year, the task force worked diligently to review best practices in synagogue governance, interviewed leadership of other congregations, and held numerous congregational consultation meetings. Frequent reports were submitted to the board and congregation, culminating in the comprehensive recommendations that were accepted by the current board in the spring. The recommendations emphasized greater engagement across the congregation as a whole, with special attention on encouraging involvement among newer and younger members. A transition team has been established to facilitate the implementation of the new governance model by the AGM in September.

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The HJN acknowledges the generous support of the Allen and Milli Gould Foundation, sponsors of its Community section.



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## KEHILA HESCHEL

ANITA BERNSTEIN

**IN THE 2019-2020** school year, Kehila Heschel School is entering the second of a multi-year expansion of its curriculum to include the educational philosophy of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. This year's focus will be to augment the integration of outdoor education and environmental learning across all curriculum areas. To support this goal, Kehila Heschel has joined the Ontario ECO Schools, an organization that helps students develop ecological literacy, become environmentally responsible citizens and reduce their environmental footprint.

Kehila Heschel students have been involved in outdoor education projects in the Temple Anshe Sholom teaching gardens. In the fall of 2018, students planted

a pear tree in celebration of joining the Heschel family of schools. Students have been caring for their tree, tracking its growth and observing its seasonal changes.

In the spring of 2019, as part of their science curriculum, students planted and tended a vegetable and herb garden. Throughout the summer, Kehila Heschel students and families continued to nurture their garden and share their bounty with JSS Hamilton to support that organization's commitment to end hunger in our community.

There is much excitement at Kehila Heschel as our school continues to grow – welcoming new students and staff members as well as expanding and enhancing its curriculum. The Kehila Heschel School community wishes everyone a Shana Tova U'metuka.

## JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

HAZEL BOON

**HER NAME IS** Claudia and she's younger than I am but old enough to have grown children of her own. Most of the time when people researching one of my family's surnames contact me, they don't have enough research on their family line to make a connection with mine. This time it was different and Claudia was able to connect with a line in my Sadowsky tree for which I had no information more recent than 1834. Claudia had done a great job of researching and we have shared information, stories, pictures and more.

Now here's the odd thing: We both had already taken DNA tests, but we didn't match. Even stranger, I did match her son. I wanted to understand how this could be so I contacted FamilyTreeDNA but wasn't pleased with their answer, mostly because it didn't make sense to me. So I contacted Howard Goldstein, a member of our Jewish

Genealogy group here in Hamilton. His explanation made much more sense to me and he made a suggestion that Claudia and I pursued and that showed us as a match.

The bottom line is that if you take a DNA test, you'll likely wind up with thousands of matches for which you can't prove a paper connection. Due to endogamy (common for some Ashkenazi Jews) some matches may be false matches. It's also possible that, depending on which company does the testing, some third, fourth, etc. cousins won't show up as a match. Each company has its own algorithm for determining matches and so different results are possible from different sources.

Our Jewish genealogy group meets in at Temple Anshe Sholom on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 23 and Nov. 20. For more information contact Hazel Boon at 905-524-3345 or jgshamilton@gmail.com.

## SHALOM VILLAGE

LAURIE PRINGLE

**JUST OVER FIVE** years ago Donna Kryshoski realized her life was changing and that she would have to leave her home to ensure that she and her husband, Rudy, could receive the care they required. Rudy required more assistance than homecare could provide. Kryshoski's eyesight was failing and she could no longer drive.

Fortunately, Kryshoski discovered Shalom Village. At Shalom Village, she was able to have Rudy admitted into Long Term Care, while she took an apartment in one of Shalom Village's many supportive housing apartments. This was an ideal solution. Kryshoski could live in the same building with Rudy and spend time as much time with him as she wished.

Kryshoski soon realized that living at Shalom Village gave her the chance to enjoy new activities and meet new people. She felt comfortable knowing that her husband was receiving the best possible care while she could enjoy living in her own apartment.

When Kryshoski arrived at Shalom Village, she was dealing with a variety of her own health issues. Here she had access to all the healthcare resources she needed.

"Without the Shalom Village Fitness Club, I wouldn't be walking today, and I may well have required long term care," said Donna.

If you want to see Kryshoski today, you'll need to make an appointment. On any



Donna Kryshoski

given day, you may find her enjoying the local nature and wildlife, dancing in a "walkercise class," or on an outing courtesy of Shalom Village's MilliMobile.

For seniors who are hesitating to move out of their homes, Kryshoski has this advice: "Shalom Village isn't the original home that I spent my life in, but it's most certainly a close second. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now."

To learn more about Shalom Village's Fitness Club, convalescent care, adult day programs, supportive housing or long term care, call Angela at 905-529-1613 ext 268 or email inquiries@shalomvillage.ca

Call for a supportive housing tour today, and receive \$100 off your first month's rent when you sign your lease. The Shalom Village Fitness Club is open to all Hamilton seniors over 65, and is supported, in part, by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

## BETH JACOB HEBREW SCHOOL

**EINAV SYMONS,**  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**AT BETH JACOB** Hebrew School, we aspire for our students to emerge as lifelong learners with the connectedness, knowledge and skills necessary to participate actively and meaningfully in Jewish life.

Our program provides an experiential approach to Jewish education. Our teachers tailor the program to the needs of their students, and our small class sizes promote a sense of closeness and allow for considerable one-on-one attention.

Beth Jacob Hebrew School meets on Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:15 p.m. beginning on Sept. 18. The school opens at 3:45 pm to welcome students for an after-school snack and structured social time. Students are grouped in pods based on their ages. The curriculum for students

from Kindergarten through Grade 7 is divided into Hebrew and Judaic studies. Students in the younger grades learn phonetic decoding as they build Hebrew reading skills. Students in Grades 5 through 7 focus on mastering their Hebrew and prayer proficiency, along with intense Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. The Judaic component includes holidays, lifecycles, mitzvot and values. Students will participate in four collaborative learning programs with Temple Anshe Sholom Religious School on Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Tu Bishvat and Yom Yerushalayim.

On Mondays from 4:15-5:15 p.m. optional Hebrew Enrichment Classes are offered. For more program information and registration, please visit [bethjacobsynagogue.ca/learn/hebrew-school](http://bethjacobsynagogue.ca/learn/hebrew-school) or email [einav@bethjacobsynagogue.ca](mailto:einav@bethjacobsynagogue.ca)



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## JNF CANADA HOUSE WILL HELP SDEROT YOUTH EXCEL



PHOTO COURTESY OF JNF CANADA

The new KKL-JNF Canada House in Sderot will be a focus of educational enrichment and empowerment of Sderot's young people.

BY **ALI MARTELL**  
JNF TORONTO

**"I FEEL THAT** I've really been seen for the first time." — Hannah, a student at Beit KKL-JNF Canada House in Nazareth said.

Jewish National Fund of Canada has always been at the forefront of helping the Land of Israel transform its bleak deserts into beautiful blooming green forests and lush parks. But now JNF Canada is planting a different kind of seed; we are deeply committed to supporting both Israel's land and its people.

This High Holiday season, JNF Canada is raising funds to help build the Beit KKL-JNF Canada House in Sderot, to help close the educational achievement gap and foster academic success and empower periphery youth.

"We believe that every child has the potential to achieve great things no matter where in Israel he or she was born, and that our role is to make the resources required for this available to them," said Avi Musan, KKL-JNF Houses director. "The houses will be open to every teenager who wants to succeed, and we will provide them with all assistance so that they can develop their capabilities. This is a one-of-a-kind anchor that is unparalleled in the State of Israel."

The Beit KKL-JNF Canada House in Sderot, the city closest to the Gaza border, will serve as an after-school education, empowerment, and enrichment centre for high school students from Sderot and its surroundings, who will be provided with the necessary tools and skills for academic and personal success.

The building will be fortified, protecting students and staff from rocket and mortar attacks and will also be accessible to people with disabilities. Its design will be invitingly clean and bright, with large windows to let in natural light, colourful wall illustrations, and open spaces, creating an environment and ambiance unlike that of a school.

The Beit KKL-JNF Canada House will be surrounded by a courtyard for outdoor studies and comprise learning spaces of different sizes and relaxation areas equipped with a variety of educational and multimedia resources to encourage creative learning based on the edutainment model of informal education. The House will be divided into classrooms, a multipurpose hall, meeting room, patio, kitchenette and a unique experiential learning hub. The classrooms are designed to contain small learning groups, except for one large classroom (that can be divided into two), and a computer lab with the latest equipment. The multipurpose hall will be used for workshops, lectures, performances and film screenings. The hub is an open space with poufs, armchairs, sofas, and video game consoles.

"We hope that each of the participants will start believing that not even the sky is the limit for them. The young people are enthusiastic and motivated to be partners in this process," said Omer Harpaz, director of the Upper Nazareth house.

Join JNF and help impact the lives of Sderot's youth and reduce prevailing social and educational disparities in order to create a healthier society.

## BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

BY **SHIRA KATES**  
SYNAGOGUE MANAGER

**HI HAMILTON!** The two months since I moved here to join the Beth Jacob team have flown by, and I am amazed every day at the vibrancy of this city. You're friendly, passionate, and engaged, and I'm so happy to call Hamilton my new home.

As I work with Rabbi Hillel, our staff, and membership on programming, we've been asked the following questions: Shouldn't you be focusing more on Judaism? Why are these broader social justice issues worth your time? It's a good question, so we thought we'd address it here.

From a Jewish perspective, social justice is a Jewish theme. With a duty to be a "light unto the nations," to spread "chesed," to "repair the world," and especially to remember "Never Again," it seems clear that our role is to fight against injustices wherever we see them. When we create a better environment for our neighbours, we also create a better environment for ourselves.

From a continuity perspective, social justice is our ticket to stability. Reaching a broader audience improves our image, helping us overcome negative stereotypes. Reaching a broader audience also helps us connect to unaffiliated Jews. We know that young Jews are engaged in their cities and the issues that matter to them. When we

meet them on their terms and build trusting relationships, when we show that we care about the things they care about — this is how we can prove that a connection to Beth Jacob is of value. This outreach is where our most recent new members have come from.

We haven't, of course, forgotten our existing members and their desire to "do Jewish," and we're working hard to create some great Jewish programming for the whole family this fall. Please stay tuned to our website and social media for upcoming events, including:

A visiting professor lecturing on the history of Jews in China (in partnership with our friends at Temple Anshe Sholom); an engaging talk from Rabbi Chuck Diamond of Pittsburgh and Camp Ramah fame; hands-on caregiver and baby classes with rotating facilitators, including yoga, baby massage, sing-a-long guitar with Rabbi Hillel; Shabbat programming for Grades 1 through 9; weekly Hebrew School with an optional second day per week of Hebrew enrichment; a Torah campaign where you can take part in writing your very own letter in our Torah.

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, I appreciate the opportunity to grow in empathy everywhere I can. When we practise this skill "out there," we become better prepared to turn that seasoned energy inward and cook ourselves up the most compassionate, successful year yet.

## ADAS ISRAEL

BY **LESLIE SELEVAN AND JOY ZIANS**

**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT** once said, "Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people."

God created the universe through the power of speech and endowed mankind with a similar capacity. We have the ability to build or destroy the worlds of others with the words we choose. A quick comment can often lift spirits or crush self-esteem. In the words of King Solomon, "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

As we approach the Jewish new year, the Adas is launching a campaign to foster sensitive and uplifting speech within our community. Eleanor Roosevelt described

those who speak about others as having "small minds." In contrast, the initiative seeks to create an expansion of our awareness. The campaign will share practise guidelines of what is considered appropriate speech based on classic Jewish teachings.

Each week, we will email a practical guide with relevant and contemporary issues that can be applied to our daily speech. The content will also be posted on our website. Our goal is to foster a healthy, unified and secure community. If you would like to join, please contact [office@adasisrael.ca](mailto:office@adasisrael.ca).

*Wishing the community a  
Happy and Healthy New Year*

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## THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

Volunteer sings praises of her Sar-El experience

BY CHARLEEN GLAUN

AT LAST I WAS on the plane to Israel. Was this really happening? I had waited so long for this day and here I was, after 32 years, finally returning.

Arriving at Ben Gurion Airport, I proceeded to go through the security check-in. The first question asked of me was, "What is the purpose of your trip?"

"I'm coming on Sar-El," I replied.

"What is Sar-El?" the security person asked.

"Volunteers for Israel," I said, a little surprised he did not know the organization.

I waited for his reaction, but there was silence. I blurted out, "I've been away for 32 years and this is my first trip back."

He looked up from examining my passport and said, "What took you so long? Welcome back!"

I smiled and said to myself, "This is going to be the best adventure of my life! Thank you, God, for getting me here safely."

Once I had my luggage, I found the sunglasses stand where volunteers typically meet, and Sar-El facilitator, Pam Lazarus, an expat who had made aliya 17 years ago. Since its founding in 1987 by General Davidi, volunteers come from around the globe for one to three-week stints on an army base. Qualifications include a love of Israel, being of sound mind, a clean bill of health, and being physically fit and able to carry your own luggage. You do not have to be Jewish. There is a registration fee and the flight to Israel is paid by the volunteer. Weekends are the responsibility of the individual. Each person is assigned a room they will typically share with one or more persons, and is given three meals a day. Some bases organize free day trips to somewhere of interest.

I was assigned to a medical supply base near Tel Aviv. This base does not have soldiers on it but rather reservists and full-time employees.

Upon my arrival, I was given my army uniform. The correct size is not high on the priority list. I spent the next three weeks in a very roomy pair of pants, which I held up with a belt, a khaki T-shirt, and an army jacket. I felt so proud wearing this uniform. Then it was time to see where I was going to live for the next while. I had a roommate for my first four days, but had the space to myself for the remainder of my stay. Women are housed on the upper level of a two-storey building. Both floors have a washing machine. (Apparently this is a luxury and not the norm.) All rooms have an air-conditioning/heating system and basic storage units. Three shower stalls delivered hot water at all times. I was at the Hilton of army bases!

A typical day is as follows: Breakfast in the main dining room is at 7:15 a.m. At 7:45 a.m., we meet up with our 19-year-old madrichot (counsellors) in the courtyard for the raising of the flag and the singing of the national anthem. Then it is off to work until midday, when we make our way to the dining hall for lunch.

This base is Israel's main military medical base and primary depot. Every 18 months, complete medical supplies are dropped off. Those with expiry dates between six to 18 months are used in hospitals and emergency rooms, while supplies with a six-month expiry date are utilized for training purposes and donations to Third World countries.

I had a great boss, who patiently explained exactly how to do things. Israel is a first-generation Sabra, whose family emigrated from Bucharia. He never stopped thanking us for our service, as did many Israelis I met off the base. It was so gratifying knowing that we were making a difference by giving back just a little to the country. It was an even better feeling when medical backpacks were returned to us with medical supplies unused.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLEEN GLAUN

Author Charleen Glaun, centre, receives her certificate of service from Sar-El counsellors.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN BEER

Dundas resident Karen Beer on an earlier Sar-El trip.

The workday ends at 4 p.m., when you are free to do whatever you like within the confines of the base. Dinners are eaten early. Thereafter, the madrichot hold discussion groups or show movies. By 9 p.m., most people are ready for bed.

On the weekends, we may go anywhere in Israel as long as we are at Tel Aviv's main train station on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m., when the volunteers are taken back to their base. At present there is a hostel in Tel Aviv specifically for Sar-El volunteers' weekend stay. Accommodation is free, with meals included. This is a great alternative for those who are on a tight budget. It is not fancy, but central to Tel Aviv's hub and the beach.

One tends to forget one is in a country in a constant state of war. The zest for life in Tel-Aviv is unbelievable. The bustling traffic; people sitting at coffee shops and in restaurants; shopping at the Carmel Market; youngsters speeding down busy main intersections on their electric scooters; hip-looking men and women walking along the beautiful promenade with their dogs; beachgoers laughing and listening to music; picnickers on the lawn with little children frolicking nearby; buskers entertaining the passing throng. What a beautiful, perfect picture it painted in an imperfect world.

Three weeks went by in a flash and soon it was time to return to Toronto. I looked for any reason that would enable me to stay, but as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. But it doesn't have to end here; I will return to Israel. In fact, I am already looking at calendar dates.

I would highly recommend Sar-El for anyone who loves Israel and wants to do something worthwhile. Israel will welcome you with open arms and she will thank you.

To learn more about how you can experience your own adventure of a lifetime, go to [toronto@sarelcanada.org](mailto:toronto@sarelcanada.org).

Charleen Glaun lives in Toronto. This article has been reprinted with permission by the author.



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~ Moishe, Eli & Gabe Chaimovitz & their families ~

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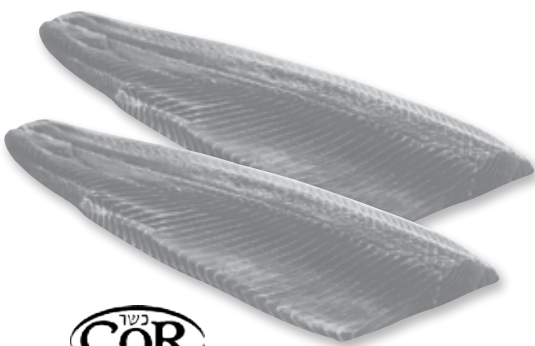
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