



ALBERTA

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The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival Re-envisioned

By Susan Schiffman

This year, as in the past, The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival Committee (EJFF) had a grand vision for our Festival. In mid-February, after several months of screening films, we were excited about our final selection and began the process of pairing films and shorts, seeking sponsorships and planning events. We had a great lead on the European director of one of our films, who was potentially interested in speaking at the EJFF, in conjunction with a planned trip to the New York opening of his film. We emailed his agent to confirm the plan and got an unexpected reply, "I cannot confirm anything. Things are bad with COVID-19 in Europe, and he may not be able to get into the US." That was my first inkling that our vision for the Festival would soon be transformed.

The rest is now a familiar story. Travel restrictions. No big gatherings. And a few short weeks later, the EJFF as we knew it was cancelled. But film is a very adaptable medium, and Jewish people, not least of all film lovers, are very resourceful. Pretty soon, Jewish film festival organizers from around North America were huddling in Zoom meetings, exchanging ideas about how to deliver our films virtually. Within a few weeks, many new virtual Jewish film festivals were born. With the help of the EJFF Committee, our sponsors and advertisers, and the distributors who quickly granted us rights for online screenings, we were among the first Jewish film festivals to announce that we would "go virtual." And thanks to our generous sponsors, advertisers, and donors, we can offer the festival free to the public for the first time!

So, this year, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton is excited to bring you our carefully selected Jewish films, right in the comfort of your own homes. Though we cannot be together physically, we will be together in spirit, sharing experiences, ideas and conversations virtually. Our virtual Festival will open on the original date, Sunday, May 3, with *Golda's Balcony, the Film*, an engaging and inspirational hybrid of a film and the smash hit, one-woman Broadway play. Viewers will have the rare treat of seeing an exceptional theatrical performance by Tova Feldshuh, combined with a history lesson and total immersion in

Zionist pride. Don't miss it! One of the great advantages of a virtual festival is that we have easy access to

speakers who are far away. At 8 pm on May 3, David Fishelson, the play's producer, a man who lives and breathes the play, the film, and all things Golda, will give a virtual pub talk via Zoom to our audience, from his home in NYC.

The next film, *Picture of His Life*, is also about an Israeli with a colossal vision, but it is a vision of a very different nature. The film profiles Amos Nachoum, Israeli nature photographer, and his obsessive quest to swim alongside the great white Canadian polar bear, and shoot a photo. The film is suspenseful and the photography sensational. With this film, we go local for our speaker, since the expertise is right here in Edmonton. The U of A Department of Biological Science's, Professor Andy Derocher will give a Zoom pub talk on his work with polar bears in the Canadian Arctic.

On Tuesday, May 5, we will show the beautiful and troubling Hungarian post-holocaust drama *Those Who Remained*. This complex and haunting story of trauma, love and selflessness is a masterpiece! The following night, we also have a Holocaust-related story, the documentary *The House on Wannsee Street*, a provocative exploration of themes of exile and identity. Filmmaker Poli Martinez Kaplun delves into the story of her German Jewish family, who fled the Nazis and decades later, is scattered across Europe and Latin America, largely disconnected from its Jewish roots. Through her interviews with various family members, she unearths very different and sometimes unsettling views of Jewish identity.

We will close with *The Keeper*. Based on the true story of a German prisoner of war in England who stays on after the war to become a soccer star, the movie offers something for everyone: period drama, English accents, a handsome

leading man and lady and plenty of soccer (football). Though there are almost no Jewish characters on screen, the film delivers a very important Jewish message of forgiveness and reconciliation. To explore the film's historical and social context, we once again take advantage of the virtual format, bringing you a speaker live from England, the very charming and erudite David Herman, a free-lance journalist who has written hundreds of articles about film, art, books and TV in both Britain's Jewish and mainstream press. David will be speaking via Zoom at noon on May 8, the day after the film.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is very grateful to our sponsors and advertisers who sustained their support as we transformed this festival into a virtual one. To join us for the Virtual EJFF, you can register at jewishedmonton.org. The Festival is free to everyone, to bring comfort and community at a difficult time. Donations, however, are appreciated, and can be made when you register.

Susan Schiffman is the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival Coordinator.



Baking is a blessing at Bliss

By Daniel Moser

Social distancing, and cleanliness are the new driving forces in our day to day lives, but the more things change the more they stay the same, for the neighbourhood baker, providing the essentials is still the number one priority. For Lawrence Bliss of Bliss Baked Goods, very little of his daily routine has changed, though if you drop by the bakery, you'll notice a few changes to fit with the times. The Bliss day still starts bright and early, with countless items on the baking agenda from bread, to donuts, to custom cakes and more. In the front end of the bakery seating has been removed, sneeze guards and barriers have been installed to encourage safe social practices and to follow the government's outlines for cleanliness and food handling.

Lawrence has been a key ingredient in the baking world of Edmonton for a long time now, and long-time customers continue to feel confident shopping with Bliss. If you've visited Bliss Baked Goods in the past it should come as no surprise to you that in many ways it's business as usual, the volume of custom cake orders and donuts have always flown off the shelf. While wholesale orders have slowed, to coincide with restaurant closures, more and more people are having more meals at home, so bread and other baked goods for household consumption continue to be essential to family life. Many young families, seniors, and community members have grown to count on Bliss Baked Goods for a dozen bagels in a pinch, a birthday

cake for a special day, or that challah loaf for shabbat.

In professional baking there is no time for low spirits, the bake must go on, everyday there are new orders and new customers.

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Bliss Baked Goods shows appreciation to the staff at Stn 30, Cross Cancer Institute.

Business Spotlight: Grumans Delicatessen

The covid-19 pandemic has been difficult for all people and all businesses. In light of many small businesses changing and adapting their practices to fit new social norms, *Alberta Jewish News* is going to speak to some of your local favourites, to find out how they are coping, and how they are continuing to serve the community during these strange times. If you know of a small business we should feature in our next business spotlight please e-mail Dan at albertajewishnews@shaw.ca.

In this edition we spoke to Gail from Grumans Delicatessen. Grumans has been serving the Calgary area delicious Jewish-inspired deli food since 2005. Started by Peter Fraiberg, and named after his mother's side of the family, he is now joined by his sister Gail at their new location in Britannia. Grumans is a true deli featuring lots of take-out foods such as knishes, latkes, verenikes, Montreal smoked meat, assorted soups, slow oven roasted beef brisket, cabbage rolls and much more. Grumans serves breakfast and lunch in both locations and there's catering too for entertaining at home or for your business.

What changes have you made to your business to cope with the pandemic?

A: We've added delivery and curb side pick-up, this has been very helpful, especially for our customers self-isolating or concerned about being in public spaces. Our downtown location is also offering delivery via Doordash and Skip the Dishes.

We've enhanced our cleaning and sanitizing protocols (which were already strict), making sure all surfaces are disinfected throughout the day, sanitizing the credit card machine after every transaction, etc.

We've also reduced our hours slightly to help control our labour costs and give our staff a much needed rest. Our new hours at Britannia are Tues-Sun 10-3, closed on Mondays. Our Downtown location is closed Sun and Mon, open Tues-Sat 10-3.

What has been the most popular item you sell or service you are offering?

A: We have a wide range of home-style soups and meals that we sell from our freezer. They've definitely become our

best sellers, especially the Chicken Noodle Soup, Mac 'n Cheese, and Cabbage Rolls. Everything's made in house from scratch and most of the recipes are inspired by my Mom's incredible home cooking.

What are some of the new challenges that your business is facing?

A: Like most businesses right now, the biggest challenge is paying the bills so we can get through this crazy time and still be in business when it's all over.

How are you keeping spirits up?

A: We're extremely lucky to have incredible people working with us. They're our extended family, and we all feel blessed to be able to go to work every day. We also have wonderful customers who appreciate that we are still open and able to feed them.

How can customers and community members support your business?

A: Come to the restaurants, order ahead and pick up, or have it delivered. Whichever way, as long as people continue to buy our food, we will be able to stay afloat and keep cooking. We also ask everyone to please spread the word. If you like our food, then please let your friends and family know about us, especially through social media.

Share a positive experience you've had recently through your business

A: Every day is a positive experience. I get to go to work and spend the day with people I love, and do what I love to do. I'm very lucky. There are a couple of specific things that come to mind that stand out:

All the customers who thank us for being open. The show of appreciation has been amazing.

Our landlord at the Britannia location (Opus) has been incredibly kind, caring and generous, working with us in various ways to ensure that the business survives this crazy time. We have not had to ask for anything, but instead they have come to us with creative and thoughtful offers.

What advice would you like to pass along to our readers?



Challah French Toast infused with cinnamon and vanilla - available for pick up or delivery.

A: First and foremost, this is a time to be kind to each other. Times of crisis tend to bring out the best and the worst in people, but it seems like I'm mostly seeing the best. It's a beautiful thing to help and to be helped.

What are you most looking forward to once a sense of normalcy returns?

A: I'm looking forward to the restaurant one day being filled with happy customers, enjoying a bowl of Matzo ball soup and a smoked meat sandwich, and kibitzing with their friends at the next table. Grumans is more than a sandwich shop. It's a social gathering place and has become a hub for the Jewish Community in Calgary. We look forward to all of us socializing over a good meal together soon.

Thank you to Gail for taking the time to discuss Grumans and for making us all crave a smoked meat sandwich immediately.

If you know of a business Alberta Jewish News should spotlight in our next edition please e-mail Dan at albertajewishnews@shaw.ca.

Mourning amidst the 11th plague



**Morley Wolfman
1936 – 2020**

by Maxine Fischbein

(AJNews) - There are countless people around the globe mourning loved ones in isolation due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. When my father suddenly passed away in March, I became one of them.

When he was rushed to hospital in Edmonton with a high fever and difficulty breathing, the terminology of talking heads on countless news briefings became

frighteningly real for my Mom and all our family. Among other things, Dad had a "presumptive" case of COVID-19.

It had already been a week since the lockdown of the home where he had been living; it must have seemed like an eternity to a man who so loved daily visits with his wife of 63 years.

Because of COVID, we were advised against going to the hospital. We agreed that this was reasonable and

necessary. Good citizens do not put others at risk in the face of this still-mysterious contagion.

So we waited by the telephone praying for good news and fighting the fear each time it rang.

Assisted by oxygen to help him breathe, Dad fought for two days, slipping from lucidity into delirium and back again. On the second day, one of his doctors was pleased to report that Dad was responding well to treatment, needed very little oxygen and could be expected to recover. We went to sleep hopeful.

Very early the next morning, the phone rang. We knew. Nobody calls at the crack of dawn with anything good to say. Our loving father, the man who had dried our eyes when we were heartbroken, and held our little hands when we were sick or frightened, died alone. We did not have the privilege of holding his hand, of hearing what he might have told us and saying what we would have hoped to say.

Ironically, the doctor told us we could come to the hospital to say posthumous goodbyes. Too little too late, but still it was something. We donned the required PPE and reluctantly entered the room where Dad had waged his final health battle.

Thankfully, Dad looked serene. The worst of his final passage had been 10 minutes from beginning to end, the doctor had said. We were hungry for, and pounced upon, that scrap of mercy.

Some two hours after Dad's passing, his COVID test came back negative.

While it was a relief to us, Dad and all his loved ones were, nonetheless, victims of the collateral damage in the war against an invisible but deadly enemy.

Fortunately, being a "Member of the Tribe" has many privileges. Under ordinary circumstances (when we have the luxury of taking such things for granted) Jews know how to bury and mourn their loved ones. The extended family gathers. Time-honoured ritual laws and traditions kick in, telling mourners and those who wish to console them what must be done and when.

So we contacted the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha and broke the sad news to our family and friends, making funeral and Shiva arrangements that mutated as surely as viruses do. Too worried to board an airplane during this time of contagion, my brother and sister began a long and sad drive from Vancouver in perilous winter driving conditions, the lesser of two evils.

During his heyday, my Father was larger than life. He made a difference to so many people through numerous acts of kindness and more than a few outrageous escapades. We literally felt the need of others to pay their respects to Dad.

But, given the requirement for social distancing and restrictions on large gatherings, only immediate family members were permitted to attend the funeral. So there we stood, shivering, six representatives of a much larger and loving clan. COVID said no to cherished grandchildren, a devoted son and daughter-in-law, brothers, cousins, nieces, nephews and many, many friends.

But they WERE there. It felt like Bronia – a Holocaust survivor and dear friend – was at my side. When my

Continued on page 7

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Why Victory Day is important to us

By Greg Storozhakov

For many of the Jewish people who emigrated from the former Soviet Union recently or many years ago, the victory over Nazi Germany remains the most significant of all the official and unofficial holidays.

While the rest of the world acknowledges May 8 as V.E. day (Victory in Europe day), May 9 is recognized as Victory day; the official day to celebrate the commemoration of the Soviet Union defeating Nazi German.

During what is known as the Great Patriotic War of 1941- 1945, it is said that 27 million people were killed. This number included troops, civilians, and prisoners of war who perished as a result of military action, mass killings, starvation and diseases. As is often the case, the number of people who lost their lives could be much higher than stated. Regrettably, the role played by the USSR's allies (Great Britain, France – except during the German occupation, 1940-44, Poland, USA, and Canada) in WWII was not emphasized until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In recent years however, with the change in both foreign and internal politics and growing domestic demand for ‘greatness’ and military power synonymous with Russia’s current dictatorship, the allies’ contribution towards overcoming the terrible enemy has also been understated. Understandably therefore, the Great Patriotic War has been at the forefront of people’s personal experience and knowledge (as well as the “Soviet’s” collective memory in general) about World War II. However, it is not even because of factors such as political isolation and propaganda of the USSR and modern Russia’s state-owned media, but rather due to the severe impact the war had on practically every family, and on the subsequent literature, music, cinema and other art forms.

For Jewish people in particular, Victory Day is of the utmost importance and significance because of the fact that one of the most compelling reasons Hitler entered in to war in the first place was not his desire to gain world

dominance and power, but rather to heed his obsessive determination of entirely ridding the world of Jewish people. This fact and the subsequent events that took place in the Western parts of what was then the Soviet Union - made up of Baltic countries, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia - such as mass shootings of Jews, the creation of ghettos, migration and evacuation of Jewish people to the East wherever and whenever possible that were reported by official Soviet sources of information as persecution of civilians in general.

As we know, the fact that the Jews were specifically being targeted by the Nazis and local collaborators was hardly ever acknowledged. That said, behind closed doors, Jewish families preserved and cherished the memories and stories of their family members who had passed or who had survived, who had fought in the Red Army or as partisans, and those who worked for the state or who raised children. Jewish holidays, even High Holidays, were still celebrated by many families, even though Judaism was practically forbidden by the totalitarian Soviet regime.

But it was Victory Day that symbolised to the Russians the win of life over death and terror. There are many veterans and their survivors living in Calgary today. This holiday, even after all this time, continues to be very meaningful to them. In an attempt to help preserve the significance, experience and memories associated with Victory Day and to promote the feeling of community and belonging, JFSC (Jewish Family Service Calgary) has organized May 9 celebrations for Russians living in Calgary; a community that is tightly intertwined with its Jewish Community. By holding these celebrations, Jewish seniors, war veterans and Holocaust Survivors know they are supported in a way that is meaningful to them and that empowers them to accept and work through the current life challenges.

Over the past few years, JFSC has been supporting its clients and the Jewish community through the coordination of a variety of projects that include the publication of two books of stories of Holocaust Survivors



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*Желаем Вам души покоя,
Здоровья, радости, добра,
И Дня Победы! Вы - герои!
Тогда, сейчас и навсегда!*

*Happy Victory Day!
May every day bring you good health, peace and happiness!
from JFSC Staff and Board Members*

living in Calgary, “Voices of Resilience” and “Sharing Our Memories,” as well as a series of social gatherings known as Café Europa, funded by The Claims Conference.

Along with the support of Claims Conference, JFSC also administers two additional programs that are invaluable for Survivors of the Holocaust – Home Support and Emergency Financial Assistance - ensuring that clients are able to live their lives aging in place, with dignity and independence.

Greg Storozhakov is Claims Conference Case Mgr. at JFSC.

JFSC is virtually open

Jewish Family Services of Calgary is working hard to support the needs of the community!

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, JFSC has created several new services that support and strengthen our community during this difficult time. This includes our Mental Health Support Line, a short term, brief-intervention therapy service delivered online or over the phone FREE of charge for up to three sessions. All services are delivered through trained, registered psychologists.

As well, we started our In-Home Memory Care program. A one on one service for individuals diagnosed with memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer’s. Staff engage with the client to deliver brain boosting activities that support them with their diagnosis, while also providing respite opportunities for the caregiver to engage in self-care during what is otherwise a very isolating and difficult time.

JFSC will also be presenting Community Connection Café – a virtual space for parents, guardians and natural

supports to engage remotely to share experiences and learn from one another. Each gathering will be facilitated by mental health professionals and give participants a chance to gain awareness and knowledge about areas of interest that will help promote healthy dynamics among the family unit. More details will be coming soon.

For further information, visit www.jfsc.org or call 403.287.3510. “We are here to support you and will work

with you to put you in touch with the help and resources you need. We truly are in this together and at times like this, we band together to make sure no one is left behind.”

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JFSC’s Response to COVID-19

JFSC is working hard to support the needs of the community!
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, JFSC has created several new services that support and strengthen our community during this difficult time

Mental Health Support Line
Free Food delivery for isolated people
Community Connection Café
In-Home Memory care

For information on any of these programs or if you need help in any form or know of anyone in Calgary who requires support, please call us at (403) 287-3510.

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Home and Garden Feature

Home is where you hang your hat

By Murray and Seth Glick

Home is where you hang your hat, and it's where you feel safe. These days that means a little extra cleaning and sanitizing to ensure all is well and good. Luckily, Spring is here and with it comes many of our favourite past times, including small and large home renovations like working in the yard, painting the fence and making everything look fresh. Whether it is just to make your nest look and feel better or to prepare to enter the Real Estate Market there are many 'do it yourself' projects you can consider, especially if you now find yourself with some extra time around the house (and some extra helpers too).

Some of the most basic home chores can be simple to accomplish, and also greatly satisfying. For example, raking the lawn and trimming trees and bushes will go a long way to getting things ready for growing season. Prepping flower beds and deciding what plants you will sow or buy as seedlings. One new lawn idea I am trying this year is to over seed the lawn with micro clover. Micro clover is much hardier, requires less watering and maintenance once established, and actually feeds the lawn with nitrogen to keep it green all season. Keeping that lawn green is an accomplishment in it of itself. Local stores and greenhouses allow for online ordering and curbside pickup so you can easily get the supplies you need with a minimum of fuss and muss.

Every home is different, and requires a different level of upkeep. Maybe the wood trim needs a paint touch up? Are your windows getting dusty? Clean the windows to let all the sun in. Also, as April showers bring May flowers it is a good time to make sure the eaves troughs are clean and flowing right. Now remember, if you are going to use a ladder be extra careful and if you are not comfortable

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TT teachers rise to the challenge

By Moreh Ari Sniderman

Moving classrooms online challenged teachers, students, parents, and administration to train themselves very quickly for an unprecedented learning dynamic. It has rapidly turned teachers into YouTube stars, students into independent learners, and parents into juggling machines as they try to navigate work, childcare, and homeschooling.

As a teacher, it has been inspiring to see students adapting with confidence and to see them delight in each other's company. My basement guestroom has turned into a YouTube studio complete with tripod and greenscreen. Other teachers are hosting class meetings like the ones pictured while spoon-feeding toddlers.

There is no doubt that the task the pandemic has foisted upon us has been monumental and has come with immense struggles mentally and pedagogically. However, despite the physical distancing, rising to this challenge has undoubtedly connected the school community in unexpected and heartwarming ways.

climbing there are lots of companies that can do that for you.

Have a look at your driveway, and sidewalks. Check to see if any cracks need to be sealed or caulked to look nicer and to keep water from eroding the soil under the cement. Also, pressure washing vinyl siding and cement work can quickly improve the look of your home, with minimal effort and cost.

One area of home maintenance we often take for granted is the air conditioning. Spray your air conditioner to remove fuzz and dust, to allow for efficient operation as the temperatures climb. And when was the last time you had the ducts cleaned? Keeping the air inside your home fresh and dust free is a smart and healthy decision that is sure to make everyone breathe easier.

Most outside upkeep is not expensive and when done routinely each spring can keep much costlier replacements at bay.

Upkeep is also essential when putting your house on the market. The classic saying "if we can't see it, we can't sell it" rings very true, so cut the trees up and the shrubs down.



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A family posted this TT Home School mascot on their facebook page.

Lighting outside is as important as inside so switch bulbs to daylight LED so they are pennies to run and enhance the look of your house. As a bonus they can be left on through the evening hours to deter any nocturnal shenanigans.

It is not necessary to spend a lot to make your home look like the castle it is. "Yes Virginia, there really is a Spring Market," says Murray. And with the Spring Real Estate Market upon us, feel free to call with any questions you might have and to hear how we can make sure you can be comfortable selling in this time of Social Distancing and Sanitizing. Video tours, great photos and more to get the home exposed to the market with minimum exposure to you.

"Remember," adds Seth, "in these viral times we are operating fully - utilizing electronic signing of forms, video chats and video walkthroughs all to maximize exposure of your house with minimum exposure to you. Contact us at (780) 990-4313 or at murray@glickandglick.com for the complete Covid-19 home buying and selling operating standard."

*Best wishes
to the Jewish Community*

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A MESSAGE FROM ADAM

Chaverim, As a Jewish people, we are currently in the process of ‘counting the omer’ – marking the seven weeks between the second night of Pesach and the beginning of Shavuot. This time represents our journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai, culminating in receiving the Torah and making our formal agreement or covenant with G-d as a people. As we count the omer each day and each week, we focus on various themes.

At the time I am sharing my thoughts with you, the week’s theme is *tiferet* (beauty), which many scholars examine as a healthy and constructive tension between forces that might seem contradictory. *Tiferet* is about harmony and balance, and is the ideal combination of *chesed* (love) on the one side and *gevurah* (strength, discipline, or judgment) on the other side. That is, it is focused on compassion rather than pity.

When we assess and react to the needs of others, are we acting with care and thought, or are we motivated to act because we ‘feel sorry’ for those we are helping? Are we acting with care, or are we acting with condescension?

Most of all, are we acting with kindness?

During these difficult last few weeks, I have been saddened by many things including the personal and professional challenges experienced by members of our community, the pressures placed on some of our most cherished and central organizations, the uncertainty and fear experienced by all of us, and the general dark cloud that has been hanging over many of our heads. I have been equally moved and inspired by an outpouring of support – people asking about helping and looking to make a difference. I have seen thoughtful action from our community’s synagogues, schools, and social service providers, who have all stepped up their efforts to ensure gaps are filled, seniors are cared for, students are educated, and that those of us experiencing depression and frustration have outlets to connect with each other and with professional care.

In the spirit of *tiferet* – of balancing seemingly conflicting sentiments – I hope that as we struggle through these challenging days of physical isolation and reduced

social connection, we do so collectively and supportively, and maintain positive aspirations for our future. I also wish for all of us to truly appreciate the opportunity we now have available to spend more time with our families, and the occasion we have for more intentional reflection and self-care.

As we continue to count the omer and work toward personal maturity and elevation, I hope we will all renew our commitment to empathy and compassion. I am certain that we will emerge from these darker times a kinder, even more dedicated community.

Wishing you and yours continued good health and a meaningful Chag Shavuot Sameach.

Adam Silver
Chief Executive Officer
Calgary Jewish Federation

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To learn more about LIFE & LEGACY® and what it means to leave a legacy gift to our community, please email Diana Kalef at dkalef@jewishcalgary.org

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Todah Rabah and Yasher Koach to all of the outstanding healthcare and essential service professionals on the front lines!

Calgary Jewish Federation thanks and commends you for your dedication, compassion, and selflessness during these unprecedented times – you truly are modern day superheroes!

YOM HASHOAH
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY
MONDAY APRIL 20, 2020 | 26 NISAN 5780

Thank you to Marnie Bondar, Dahlia Libin, and Paula Lexier for their contributions to our Calgary Yom HaShoah commemoration video, as well as taking time to reach out to our local Survivors and their families to connect and let them know we are thinking about them. Although we were unable to say Kaddish as a community, we hope that you found meaning and solace in our local and national ceremonies.

Yasher Koach to Ilana Krygier Lapides

who, after 13 years of exceptional service at Calgary Jewish Federation will be moving on to pursue other professional adventures, including pursuing rabbinical ordination. Through Ilana’s dedicated efforts as a Holocaust educator, over 4,000 students and teachers are reached annually through critical Holocaust and human rights education programs, including the Holocaust Education Symposium and 2nd Voices Project. Ilana has also acted as a leader and advocate in our community, championing initiatives such as the landmark *Combating Antisemitism in Calgary* notice of motion, and planning vital commemoration events such as *Yom HaShoah* and *Kristallnacht*. Becoming a rabbi has been a lifelong dream for Ilana, which she was finally able to pursue at the Jewish Spiritual Leaders Institute. We sincerely thank her for many years of service and dedication to the community and wish Ilana all the best on her new journey as a rabbi!

In honour of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, **PJ Our Way® Calgary** joined nearly 100 participants from across North America for an exciting and lively *Celebrate Earth Day* webinar with the Jane Goodall Institute on April 22. Attendees, who were challenged to share their eco-friendly recipes and ideas, awed and inspired us with their creativity and passion!

PJ Our Way is the next chapter of PJ Library for children 8½ to 12 years old. For information and to register visit pjourway.org or email Kathie Wainer at kwainer@jewishcalgary.org.

Jewish Calgary Together

CONNECT WITH US FOR THE LATEST COMMUNITY UPDATES, RESOURCES, VIRTUAL EVENTS, AND PROGRAMS

jewishcalgary.org

All activities on this page are made possible by your gifts to Federation’s annual UJA Campaign

from the

Sources

Notes from outside the camp

by Eliezer Segal

As I sit here at home in self-isolation, following my return to Canada from an abbreviated visit to Israel, I find myself intrigued by the phenomenon of quarantines.

Jewish tradition speaks of several situations when persons are required to dwell in solitude for designated time-periods.

According to the Mishnah, the High Priest was sequestered for the week preceding the Day of Atonement as a precaution against becoming ritually impure in a way that would prevent him from fulfilling his duties on the holy day. The most severe level of defilement, that deriving from contact with a corpse, requires seven days to complete its purification procedures, and hence that was designated as the period of his separation.

Similar considerations account for the High Priest's week-long separation prior to the elaborate ceremony of preparing the purifying ashes of the red heifer. This precaution is consistent with numerous stringencies that the sages introduced to that rite in order to maintain the highest standards of purity. The consecration of the priests in Moses's time also required a seven-day confinement in the tabernacle.

In the above examples, the social distancing was not really comparable to quarantines that are imposed in cases of infectious diseases. For a more pertinent analogy we may refer to the Torah's detailed procedures for dealing with the phenomenon of "zara at," an affliction that is usually translated "leprosy" but whose symptoms do not match the medical definition of Hansen's disease—and in fact includes various growths on garments and walls that have nothing to do with physiological leprosy. The Torah approaches the topic from the perspectives of ritual purity and the roles of the priests, not as medical treatment.

There are two principal stages of quarantine for zara at. The first ("hesger") is for purposes of observation, in order to determine whether or not the symptoms are serious. The patient is confined to home for a week to establish whether the visible signs are spreading. Rabbis Abraham Ibn Ezra and Joseph Bekhor Shor explained that the

designation of a week for the observation is because that is how long it takes to recognize when symptoms have undergone significant or lasting changes. If there has been an observable expansion of the symptoms, the patient is declared "confirmed" ["muhlat "] and is subject to a more rigorous isolation outside the camp until the symptoms diminish. Presumably this is intended to prevent spreading the infection to others.

The Torah's zara at does not fit any known medical condition. For this reason, several Jewish commentators who would otherwise strive to interpret scripture on its own terms were impelled here to explain zara at as a supernatural plague that was divinely imposed as a punishment for sins. This approach was preferred by a diverse group of exegetes including Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), Maimonides, Don Isaac Abravanel and others who expounded zara at and its treatment as a divine retribution for evil speech and informing.

There were nonetheless several medieval Jewish exegetes who preferred to explain the afflictions as clinical diseases whose prescribed treatments were grounded in medical science. Thus Gersonides, when describing the prophet Elisha's successful cure of the Syrian general Naaman, assumed that the disease in question was actual leprosy, and that the prescribed treatment of immersion in the waters of the Jordan was founded on a valid medical concern to reduce the noxious fever that was overpowering the body's healing warmth.

A similar approach underlies the comments of Ibn Ezra. With reference to the Torah's requirement that the zara 'at patient "shall put a covering upon his upper lip," Ibn Ezra observed that "the reason is so that he should not infect others with his breath." No doubt, Ibn Ezra would be careful to wear a respirator or face mask in our current pandemic. In a similar vein, he commends the Torah's requirement that victims broadcast their approach by calling out multiple times "Unclean! Unclean!": "Sometimes the person will have to repeat the call several times when passing through a populated neighbourhood,

to ensure that people will take precautions to avoid physical contact."

Rabbi Nissim of Marseilles, the fourteenth-century author of a rationalist commentary to the Torah, repeated Ibn Ezra's explanation (albeit without attribution) and provided an explicit medical rationale: "All of this is because zara at is an infectious disease, and those who have contracted it can harm others by means of the exhalations emanating from the nose and the vapours from the mouth." Bekhor Shor also wrote that distancing is necessary because the illness would otherwise propagate through one's social network.

Another Provençal rationalist, Rabbi Levi ben Abraham (c. 1245–c. 1315), had an even more spirited argument for respecting the quarantines regarding contagious illnesses. He invoked the words of Deuteronomy: "Take heed of the plague of zara at, that thou observe diligently and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you." This fervent admonition reflects how harmful that disease is in all respects, "for it is a grievous illness, extremely contagious and communicable."

But that's not all. Scripture goes on to state, "Remember what the Lord thy G-d did unto Miriam." Conventional commentators took this as a reminder that Miriam was afflicted with zara at for slandering or speaking critically about her brother Moses. Rabbi Levi, on the other hand, derived from it a lesson that is strikingly relevant to our present situation: We do not allow exceptions for any individual, no matter how well-connected. "Remember that when Miriam was afflicted with zara at, G-d commanded that she be removed outside of all three camps and placed in quarantine—even though she was the sister of the 'king'."

This, my friends, means you. Viruses have no respect for social or economic entitlement. So too, the regimens for fighting them must be followed with equal rigour by each and every one of us.

Now go wash your hands.

'From the Sources' by Eliezer Segal is sponsored by the Zeisler Families of Edmonton, Calgary and New York City



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The Calgary Jewish Academy
בית הספר היהודי בקלגרי

Jewish Justice Work at CJA

By Lesley Machon

When stigma, stereotype and marginalization prevail, none of us are free. The importance of Jewish voice and oration was the foundation of the Calgary Jewish Academy's Speech Café, held on February 28, 2020, as students committed to finding their voices, and using them.

An act of location and oration; an act of protest, courage, and faith. Act after act after act. The title of the café was: "From Lincoln to Infamy: Orators who shaped history."

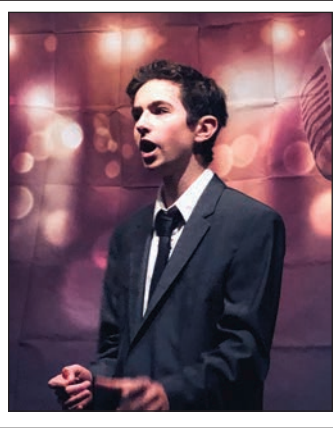
After learning about famous speeches throughout history and the impact those speeches had on the world, each student went in search of a speech they could personally get behind. They had the freedom to choose any topic, and thus speeches ranged from a public address by Oprah, to a memorial to Kobe, to Lenin promoting communism. They researched the biography of their individual, why the speech was made, and the impact it had. Students also analyzed each speech for rhetorical devices such as repetition and alliteration, and then set to work memorizing. Each worked on pausing, intonation, and projecting their voice. Afterwards, they came together in a powerful two-hour performance attended by staff, parents, and grandparents.

Borrowing the words of others can be a powerful practice in finding voice. Social Cognitive Theory posits that self-efficacy is built through exercises which involve risk and ownership, and are moderated by social safety factors, such as practicing passionate delivery of another's words (which is less vulnerable than pre-senting one's own thoughts) and performing together. Impersonating the bravado of a predecessor to practice delivering an idea with confidence, is an important step in finding and honing one's own voice. And so: no notes. Memorization as an academic exercise and an artform was also a focus of the café this year. Memor-izing longform content improves neuroplasticity, making the brain more adaptable to change. In addition to resilience, practicing memorization and recitation has also been shown to improve focus and attention-span. Thus, recollection and reminiscence ensued.

Though many have tried to silence us, Jewish voices refuse to be muted. As rhythm and blues soul singer Solomon Burke sang, in protest of an anti-black America: "When one of us is chained, none of us is free."

So here we are. In pursuit of freer futures, this is us, your CJA students, dropping chains and grabbing mics.

Lesley Machon is the Grade 7-9 Humanities Teacher at the CJA.



Mourning *Cont. from page 2*

grandmother had died some two decades earlier, Bronia was one of the first to call me.

“You’re lucky,” she said... an odd opener for a bereavement call!

What she told me that day forever altered my attitude when laying a loved one to rest.

“You were able to bury your grandmother,” Bronia told me. You were surrounded by a community. You have a place where you can cry for her and remember her. We did not have that.”

Too many times in the history of our people, we have been robbed of that dignity. And right now we need look no further than the nightly news to know that hundreds of thousands around the world are prevented from carrying out that final act of loving kindness for their kin. So high is the Coronavirus death toll that victims are being placed in mass graves as close to home as New York City.

I stood before my father’s grave in sorrow, of course. But, because of Bronia’s words all those years ago, I was grateful to the Rabbi who officiated in a caring and meaningful way and to the volunteers of Edmonton Chevra Kadisha, those angels of mercy whose wings didn’t quite touch one another’s since they had to stand six feet apart.

They took the risk in assembling so we would have a minyan to recite the Kaddish over Dad. Because the Edmonton shtetl is relatively small, we knew the Chevra volunteers and, most importantly, they had known Dad. Some shared moving recollections from a safe distance as we left the always-cold cemetery and dragged our resistant feet into Shiva. Fortunately, my husband had the presence of mind to videotape the funeral so that family members prevented from joining us – especially seven heartbroken grandchildren – could see Big Mo laid to rest.

Our individual experiences of grief resemble snowflakes and fingerprints in that no two are alike. Yet there are some things that most people share in common at the loss of a loved one – the need for comforting rituals and a supportive network to pull you through what is already, by its very definition, a painful and surreal experience.

The comfort of a community cannot be exaggerated, especially at a time when we must close our doors tightly to uphold the greatest Jewish value of them all – the preservation of life. My mother, siblings, husband and I returned to the home where I grew up wondering how the

Baking is a blessing

Cont. from page 1

“We feel supported by Edmonton, and the Jewish Community.” Said Bliss, “We are grateful for business, and grateful for our wonderful customers, new and old, who rely on us every day. We are also grateful for the strong team we have at Bliss Baked Goods that make everything possible.”

“Every day is an opportunity for us to receive blessings from above in the form of customers.”

In terms of difficulties though no one is completely untouched by the pandemic. A morning Minyan has always been an important part of Lawrence’s routine, an activity he misses not only for his spiritual well-being, but also the social aspect, interacting with the other participants, learning and sharing. Raw ingredients have been a little harder to come by too, but Bliss powers on and is proud to be a part of the ongoing supply chain.

Staying upbeat and positive has been key to the success of Bliss but the severity of the current pandemic continues

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Beth Israel: Twenty years in Wolf Willow

By Marv Soroka

This May 2020 the Edmonton Jewish Community can celebrate the 20th Anniversary of taking possession of the current Beth Israel Synagogue building.

In April 1999, construction of the new Beth Israel Synagogue Building by Rescom Inc. began at the Wolf Willow site. The official sod-turning event took place on June 20, 1999. In the meantime, I, Marv Soroka, a realtor at Sutton Group-Challenge Realty (now known as MaxWell-Challenge Realty) was chosen to list, market and sell 2 properties for the Shul - the Shul Building and the Shul Office house next door. I focused my time and energy on finding a suitable buyer and arranging several showing appointments. It paid off because the Shul Properties sold quickly in less than 60 Days, despite the depressed market economy at that time. The Board of Directors of the Edmonton Hebrew Association selected the best of the 3 offers!

Even now, when one drives by the renovated 10205-119 Street location, one can clearly marvel at how beautiful

five of us could endure a Shiva with no callers. Prepared for silence, what we experienced instead was an outpouring of support. Extended family, friends, neighbours, fellow congregants and community members opened windows when doors were forced shut. They sent or dropped fortifying Shiva meals at the door. We took turns sharing the many emails, texts, and condolence cards from those who share our current flight patterns and from old friends who reached out across time and distance. Memories from better days began to ease the sorrow. The five of us cried but we also smiled. We were not alone.

My sister’s Vancouver Synagogue hastily convened its first-ever Shiva room via Zoom. At first the virtual experience seemed intimidating, but it was incredibly comforting.

Our shul in Calgary moved very quickly to twice-daily virtual prayer services where we could experience the comforting cadences of Kad-dish surrounded by friends and fellow congregants.

Dad’s Shiva and Shloshim period are behind us, but

to linger in the background. “This is serious,” Bliss says “we need to take this [covid-19] very seriously. It’s not going away anytime soon. We must stay positive, but be smart at the same time.”

For the team at Bliss, no matter the circumstance, positivity can be found because “we love what we do!”



The old Beth Israel site is now renovated.

the exterior upgrades are. It was very important to me that the Buyer would keep most of the exterior intact.

Mazel Tov Beth Israel Synagogue Congregation members! May we hold Shabbat Services, Holiday Services, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Services, Lectures, and important Functions and Simchas there for many more years (say another 55 more years) to come. I wish the Beth Israel Synagogue much continued happiness, good health, great strength and safety!

sorrow doesn’t respond to timetables or calendars. We have good days and bad days.

Being a newsaholic, I can’t stop following the daily health updates and political briefings on TV and radio. The death toll from COVID continues to rise daily. The magnitude of the loss is particularly raw for my family at this crazy time. But (with apologies to Oprah) this is what I know for sure: Those who have built a life enriched by community and faith-based connections can count on others to help steady them when the world feels like it has toppled from its axis. We must, in turn, reach out to those who are not similarly blessed.

As the Song of Solomon tells us, “Love is as strong as death.” I also believe that community is as strong as, if not stronger than, the 11th plague. All that remains is to do something about it – wash our hands frequently, safely engage in acts of kindness, and infuse the world with love that lights the path when the journey is darkest.

Maxine Fischbein is a Calgary-based freelance writer.

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SHORT - WITH SLIGHT STEPS
PUB TALK, 8:00 PM: DAVID FISHelson, PRODUCER

MONDAY, MAY 4 PICTURE OF HIS LIFE
SHORTS - HOW TO SWIM & GOLDEN GYM
PUB TALK, 8:00 PM: PROF. ANDY DEROCHEr, POLAR BEAR SPECIALIST, U OF A

TUESDAY, MAY 5 THOSE WHO REMAINED
SHORT - HOPE DIES LAST

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 THE HOUSE ON WANNSEE STREET

THURSDAY, MAY 7 THE KEEPER
LUNCH TIME TALK, FRIDAY, MAY 8TH, NOON: DAVID HERMAN, JOURNALIST, UK

**** ALL FILMS WILL PLAY FROM 3:00 - 10:00 PM ON SCHEDULED DATES ****