



# ALBERTA

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## Calgary shuls navigate COVID-19

by Maxine Fischbein

In the immortal words of Monty Python, “nobody expects the Spanish inquisition.” The same can be said of the Spanish Influenza and, in our day, the Coronavirus Pandemic.

While the immediate priority is the preservation of life, Calgary’s Rabbis and Cantor are also working at warp speed to preserve Jewish life, feeding the souls of their congregants and communities even in the face of contagion.

While all Synagogues provide ritual, educational, cultural and pastoral experiences and supports, each has its unique approach due to differences in philosophy, ritual practice and denominational affiliation. The passions and personalities of individual clergy, lay leaders and volunteers also influence the ways in which they serve, in good times and in... less good times.

What follows is an exploration of how Jewish Calgary’s five congregations are navigating the pandemic. There could never be enough space to summarize everything they do; these snapshots (arranged in alphabetical order) are therefore intended to be representational rather than exhaustive.

### Beth Tzedec Congregation: Cantor Russell Jayne

“When we realized it wouldn’t be safe to congregate, our first thought was how will we help congregants to maintain their prayer life,” recalled Cantor Russell Jayne, Spiritual Leader of Beth Tzedec, a United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) affiliate.

Beth Tzedec quickly and seamlessly pivoted to the use of Zoom for interactive weekday services and livestreaming for holidays and Shabbat.

I’m very proud that we have maintained our tradition of twice daily minyanim so that anyone who needs to say Kaddish during this period can do so,” said Cantor Jayne.

Because Shabbat and Holiday livestreaming happens without a minyan (which consists of 10 men and women at Beth Tzedec), a prayer approved by the Committee on

## Visiting Israel's Tennis & Education Centre



In February 2020, Edmonton JNF Negev Honourees Lisa Miller and Farrel Shadlyn, QC visited the Israel Tennis and Education Centre where funds from the 2018 Negev Gala were allocated. They are pictured above with their son Tevyn and Centre Director Sharon Hauzer.

Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS) of the Conservative movement is recited in lieu of the Kaddish.

“This committee has been working tirelessly to help its member congregations bridge the gap by providing virtual prayer services in a manner that our movement’s leading Rabbis have determined to be consistent with Halachah [Jewish Law],” Cantor Jayne added.

To his delight, attendance at Zoom services has been brisk, often exceeding the numbers seen during pre-COVID prayer services. Similarly, more congregants have been stepping up as daveners (prayer leaders) at weekday services.

Zoom adult education classes taught by the Cantor include such topics as The Great Debates, the Siddur, Stories of Music, and Talmud. The monthly Hazak 55+ series features speakers on a wide range of religious and secular topics.

“The board of directors has been contacting congregants since the pandemic took hold and letting me know who could benefit from a phone call,” added Cantor Jayne. “It has allowed me to reach out more quickly to those who

need it most.

“We’ve hit so many different areas... making sure that we connect in some way with each congregant no matter where they are and what their ability is to connect via technology.”

“It is a net positive for us as a synagogue community. The interesting challenge is going to be how all these new things we’ve introduced because of the pandemic are going to become part of our new reality as we move forward.”

### Chabad Lubavitch: Rabbi Menachem Matusof

“We realized right at the beginning that it would not be business as usual,” said Rabbi Menachem Matusof who heads Chabad Alberta (Calgary), part of the worldwide Chasidic movement inspired by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Before Purim I was telling people here that very soon we will have to replace our Aron Kodesh with fridges and stoves in order to feed people. “This is what people need right now.”

*Continued on page 3*

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## Lenny & Faigel Shapiro make major donation to CMDA

Long-time CMDA supporters and Calgary philanthropists Lenny and Faigel Shapiro this month donated a new 4X4 Paramedic Supervisor Vehicle to Canadian Magen David Adom (CMDA). It’s the Shapiros’ fourth major new equipment donation to CMDA.

The CMDA is the Canadian fund-raising arm of Magen David Adom (MDA).

“The MDA is vital. It is Israel’s only ambulance and emergency medical service for all accidents, sickness and casualties,” says Mr. Shapiro. “Faigel and I are so proud to support their tremendous efforts.”

The new 4x4 Paramedic Supervisor Vehicle, valued at \$145,000, is used as an emergency response vehicle to provide additional backup on complex incidents such as mass casualty incidents (MCI) or other incidents requiring a senior incident commander.

It’s also used for lighting and communications and the vehicle is equipped as a MICU (Mobile Intensive Care Unit) and can transport one patient.

In January, the Shapiros donated a \$130,000 standard ambulance to CMDA, and in March, to celebrate Faigel’s 86th birthday, the Shapiros donated a \$38,000 Medi-Cycle Emergency Scooter. It matched the first scooter they donated just a few months earlier.

The scooters, which are driven by paramedics, can get through traffic faster than the Standard Ambulance to provide pre-hospital care. They contain life-saving equipment, including a defibrillator, an oxygen tank, and other essential medical equipment.

The Shapiros are encouraging others to support CMDA. “The need has never been greater, and we strongly urge members of our Jewish community to get involved in helping our precious Israel,” adds Mr. Shapiro.

Mr. Shapiro volunteers as the CMDA’s Calgary Chair supporting the work of Sharon Fraiman, Western Regional Director.

“Lenny is like a superhero and we can’t thank him and Faigel enough, especially in these unprecedented times,” says Fraiman.



“The pandemic forced us to cancel our major fund-raising event in May, and on top of that, MDA is on the front lines helping to prevent the spread of the pandemic throughout Israel. We are being asked to do more than ever before,” adds Fraiman.

For more information or to donate please visit Canadian Magen David Adom Canadian at [www.cmdai.org](http://www.cmdai.org).



# A special visit to the Israel Tennis & Education Center

by Lisa Miller and Farrel Shadlyn QC

(AJNews) – In February 2020, we had the pleasure of visiting our son Tevyn who is studying at the University of Haifa. It was also the perfect opportunity to visit the Israel Tennis & Education Center (ITEC) in Haifa, where funds from the 2018 JNF dinner were allocated.

We were greeted by Sharon Hauzer, the Centre’s director and budding tennis players, who presented the three of us with roses.

It was a gloomy day, the sky was threatening and eventually it rained heavily, but not before we had the chance to walk around the extensive facility. They currently have 18 courts with plans to build two more. That’s where the donation from our dinner comes in. The plans are before the city for a development permit and soon the new courts will be built, along with a full-size soccer pitch.

The centre already has a small soccer field and runs a development program for kids. They also have two full courts inside a bubble and a half court, and that’s a good thing as all the programming had to cram onto those two courts that day, when the skies opened up.

Shortly after our arrival, a bus pulled up with intellectually disabled special needs teens and young adults. They attend this facility twice a week for a program run by Shahar Kima and by a nutritionist. Their session began indoors and was tied to Tu Bishvat. The nutritionist

ran a program teaching the special needs students about eating healthy fruit and using the fruit to build a design. The next part, was the best part, they got to eat their design.

At that point, Osnat Dvorkin from JNF Jerusalem office joined us and we all headed out to the bubble to watch the varied tennis programming. Young up and comers were on one court. An adult learn-to-play class was on the second court and the special needs program was run on the smaller court.

The special needs young adults look forward to the physical outing. Farrel spent time on the court with them and chatting them up and he thoroughly enjoyed his visit with these appreciative young adults.

The ITEC’s are known for developing the best players in the country. What was heart-warming for us is that they also are known for not turning away children that cannot afford a tennis program. In fact, they encourage children from lower socioeconomic families to come to the centers, where they are given not only a tennis racquet but are also provided with counselling, socialization and homework help. We are also encouraged that they welcome children from all religious backgrounds.

“What surprises some people is that the Israel Tennis & Education Centers are about so much more than just tennis,” said Amy Harrington, Executive Director, ITEC Canada. “The vulnerable children and young adults that the ITEC serves through social impact and educational

programs come from all different cultures, socioeconomic status’s, athletic abilities, and may be experiencing intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. Our goal is to ensure that every child in Israel is healthy, educated, equal and equipped to pursue their dreams without religious, economic or social barriers. Regardless of their background, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

For us, we were impressed by the skill of some of the young players that we saw. But we were even more impressed with the programming we took part in with special needs young adults. The dedication and the passion of all the instructors and volunteers is first class.

An expansion of the facilities is needed, and we can’t wait to return someday to see the soon to be completed tennis courts. We are so proud that we were able to play a small part in this worthwhile endeavour.

*“We are so grateful for Lisa and Farrel’s support of the ITEC mission through their JNF Negev Dinner campaign,” says Amy Harrington. “The Lisa Miller & Farrel Shadlyn Q.C. Tennis Court for Peace will help us expand our social impact and educational programs and reach more vulnerable, at risk youth in Haifa.”*

*JNF EDMONTON thanks Lisa and Farrel for visiting this amazing Center! For more information on the ITEC call Jay Cairns at (780)481-7881.*

# Camp BB-Riback closes door on Summer 2020

By Daniel Moser

Camp BB-Riback waited as long as it could, but unfortunately the summer of 2020 for Camp is the latest casualty of the Covid-19 novel Coronavirus. Opened in 1955 in Pine Lake, Alberta, Camp BB-Riback has never missed a summer until now, but with safety concerns Camp Director Stacy Shaikin and his board determined that postponing the 2020 summer was their only option.

For Shaikin, Camp BB-Riback is more than a summer camp, it’s a second home, and family, and deciding to not open for the summer was a difficult and painful decision.

“This was going to be my 15th year at Camp BB-Riback,” says Shaikin. “Many of us have very deep and heartfelt connections to camp and for the experiences we have had there. Whether you were a camper in the 70’s, 80’s, or 2000’s, we all know how it feels to be from Camp BB-Riback. It’s such a soulful place that transcends the generations.”

Shaikin’s love for his second home made the decision all the more difficult, but the recent guidance and information provided by the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Camping Association, as well as consultations with other community organizations and professionals made the probability of missing the summer a certainty. Shaikin explains, “The decision was made with the primary goal of ensuring the health and safety of everyone in our community.”

“We know that the cancellation of camp is most impactful for our kids and to those who come out each summer to take care of them and pass on the experience of

camp from one generation to the next.”

While the focus now must shift to summer 2021, and the 65th summer at Pine Lake, through social media Shaikin is hoping to spread some of the camp experience this summer with virtual programs such as camp Haydallahs, Video Scrapbooks, and a virtual Maccabiah. Staff development programs will also be offered in a virtual setting to make sure that those aging into staff next year are properly trained and prepared.

The financial implications of missing a summer are serious though for an organization like Camp BB-Riback. Revenue from registrations and summer rentals cannot be replaced. Donations to Camp are more important now than ever and every dollar will help make sure that when Camp does return for summer 2021, a beat is not missed, and the magic that takes place every summer at Pine Lake can continue.

For more information on how you can support Camp BB-Riback through the pandemic please visit [campbb.com](http://campbb.com).



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## Calgary shuls navigate

Cont. from page 1

With Pesach fast approaching, Chabad converted their entire facility into a kosher food preparation and distribution hub, extending their kitchen and deploying an army of volunteers to shop, bake, cook, package and deliver kosher for Passover food. Chabad invested in personal protective equipment (PPE) so as to go “above and beyond” the regulations mandated by the government.

Chabad continues to provide kosher food, an effort that is consistent with the words of our sages when they say in Pirkei Avot that there is “... no flour without Torah and no Torah without flour.”

There has been a spike in attendance since Chabad classes and Rabbi Matusof’s Pre-Shabbos messages have been moved online. All classes are geared in some way to coping during these challenging times.

For Halachic reasons, Chabad does not offer online weekday, Shabbat and Holiday services. They have done several online services that don’t require a minyan of 10 men, including an Erev Rosh Chodesh (Eve of the New Month) service that featured recitation of the Sh’ma and laying of Tefillin. A Pre-Passover program was dedicated to commemorating loved ones in lieu of the Yizkor service that ordinarily takes place on the last day of Passover.

Rabbi Matusof sees much good coming out of this challenging time.

“Judaism is only going to grow from this, including acts of goodness and kindness. We are learning, uniting. We need to make sure it isn’t temporary, that we don’t forget who and what we are.”

### House of Jacob – Mikveh Israel: Rabbi Binyomin Halpern

House of Jacob Mikveh Israel, which is affiliated with the Orthodox Union (OU), has embraced the use of technology to continue teaching congregants during the pandemic. According to Rabbi Binyomin Halpern, Torah, Talmud, Mussar (ethics), Festivals, Kashrut and Torah classes are being delivered via Zoom.

Prayer services, however, are on hold, due to Orthodoxy’s strict application of Halacha.

“We have to be there to count. When we are not together, there is no compensation for that. There is no substitute for real people,” said Rabbi Halpern.

“No technology can replace the spirituality and power of coming together.”

While House of Jacob Mikveh Israel has been closed during the COVID lockdown, the community Mikvah (ritual bath), located on the Synagogue’s lower level, is available for human use with some added precautions. The Mikvah, however, cannot currently be used for the immersion of kelim (vessels).

“We are reaching out to one another and figuring out what others need. It has been inspiring to me, a silver lining,” says Rabbi Halpern.

“We are reassessing our lives, priorities and values and seeking to be better Jews and better human beings because of what we are going through.”

### Kehilat Shalom: Rabbi Leonard Cohen

Kehilat Shalom, which ordinarily meets for Shabbat and Holiday services in rented space at the Calgary JCC, is independent, non-denominational and egalitarian. While encouraging the participation of men and women in prayer services, it is often described as “traditional” in its outlook and practices.

“We’ve chosen not to do our regular Shabbat and Holiday services [online] for halachic reasons,” said Rabbi Leonard Cohen, though the congregation is making use of technology in other ways.

For example, during the intermediary days of Passover, Kehilat Shalom held an online Yizkor service so that congregants could honour the memories of loved ones at a time when there were no halachic concerns.

Rabbi Cohen teaches a Monday Talmud class, which previously took place in congregants’ homes, via Zoom.

“This has been a nice way to keep the core community together,” he said, adding that they have seen participation of individuals from out of town, a trend also reported by the other Calgary Synagogues.

Rabbi Cohen alternates with Beth Tzedec’s Cantor Russell Jayne in conducting a Friday Oneg Shabbat for seniors living at the Trinity, and provides a similar program for those at the Renoir. As a result of the lockdown, Kehilat Shalom has taken their Friday afternoon pre-Shabbat Oneg online for their congregants and other interested members of the community.

“We are looking to discover other ways we can keep up our nice community feel,” Rabbi Cohen said, adding that Kehilat Shalom has been exploring the idea of small gatherings that can bring congregants close together without putting each other at risk.

### Temple B’nai Tikvah: Rabbi Mark Glickman

Calgary’s Reform Synagogue, Temple B’nai Tikvah – affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) – is providing Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat services and Saturday morning Shabbat services via Zoom with a view toward live streaming those services in the future. Temple was in the process of purchasing the necessary equipment prior to the pandemic and Rabbi Mark Glickman estimates that the live stream will be up and running within the next couple of months.

“Typically we’ve been getting better turnouts by Zoom,” said Rabbi Glickman.

“Ironically, there is a little more intimacy there, with faces filling the screen. I like it a lot, though I miss seeing everyone in person.”

Thanks to the modern miracle of technology, Temple B’nai Tikvah and Edmonton’s Reform Synagogue, Temple Beth Ora, recently teamed up for what Rabbi Glickman believes to be their first-ever all-Alberta virtual Kabbalat Shabbat service, which he led together with his colleague to the north, Rabbi Gila Caine.

In another first, a young Temple B’nai Tikvah congregant recently Zoomed her way into adulthood. While her family will host a celebratory party when it is

safer to gather in larger numbers, the Bat Mitzvah marked her ritual milestone as previously scheduled, chanting her Torah portion online. Although transportation of their Sifrei Torah is a rare occurrence, one of Temple’s scrolls was taken to the family’s home so the Bat Mitzvah could chant her portion just as she would have done in her spiritual home away from home.

“These are extraordinary times,” said Rabbi Glickman who, like his fellow clergy, is employing extraordinary and creative measures aimed at “... maximum engagement during a time of minimum physical proximity.”

“It’s good that [the pandemic] happened now and not 20 years ago,” mused Rabbi Glickman who is grateful for the solutions found in technology.

“We are working hard to maintain social cohesion even as we maintain social distancing. We need each other now more than ever.”

Calgary kehillot have continued to offer pastoral support and counselling services and to facilitate some lifecycle ceremonies. Postponements are occurring when it comes to most weddings, B’nai Mitzvah and sometimes even brises (circumcisions) mainly because most families are opting to reschedule until it is safer to congregate. There is a consensus among the clergy that lifecycle events will be carried out on a case by case basis, taking into account the specific needs of individuals and families as well as government health directives.

Both Rabbi Menachem Matusof and Cantor Russell Jayne say they have officiated brises, sometimes virtually, with only the immediate family and the mohel in actual attendance. Rabbi Mark Glickman says he has offered congregants the opportunity to share funerals with absent loved ones online.

Chevre Kadisha has instituted additional precautions and upgraded PPE in order to protect the health of volunteers who perform Taharas (ritual cleansing of the deceased) prior to burials. For now, Jewish funerals in Calgary are being held privately at gravesides. Enhanced safety measures have been put in place to protect the bereaved and clergy alike.

### High Holidays in a Time of Contagion

Many of us are already thinking about the High Holidays this September and October, even as health experts warn that there may be a second and potentially deadlier wave of COVID.

United by their shared commitment to pikuach nefesh (preservation of life) each of Calgary’s Rabbis and Cantor Jayne told AJNews that they will not open their doors for services and programs unless they are satisfied it is safe to do so.

So what will Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur 5781 look like in Calgary? As medical experts tell us, it is the Coronavirus itself that will ultimately dictate what is

Continued on page 6

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# L'Chaim: To Your Good Health

## Victoria shul welcomes Matt Ponak



Matt Ponak

Brechner's sabbatical, Congregation Emanu-El announced in mid-May that Ponak would be joining them on a full-

By Daniel Moser

Going as far back as his days with Northwest Canada Region of the Bnai Brith Youth Organization, Matt Ponak has had a passion for the spiritual aspects of Judaism, and now he is bringing that passion to Victoria, British Columbia. Having impressed the Congregation as an interim Rabbi during Rabbi Harry

time basis as Education Director and Assistant Rabbi. Officially his position will begin in June following his graduation and ordination from Hebrew College in Massachusetts.

Matt grew up in Calgary where he attended Jewish day-school at Calgary Jewish Academy, and was a member of Beth Tzedec and Temple B'nai Tikvah congregations. Through high school he was an active member of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization and attended Camp BB Riback as a staff member. Matt's ties to Vancouver Island are also strong, "I grew up in Calgary and spent many summers on the Island growing up. My mother is from Port Alberni and I have many relatives in the area."

Although his spiritual education led him to American schools, and life, Matt explains that he is looking forward to planting roots back in Canada, and making Victoria his

new home. "I'm so excited about this because I get to return to Canada and to live in an incredible city with a community of warm, embracing, open-minded, and dedicated people."

Before rabbinical school, Ponak earned a masters in Contemplative Religions at Naropa University, a Buddhist-inspired institution in Boulder, Colorado. He earned an undergraduate multidisciplinary degree with a minor in Religious Studies from the University of Calgary, and also has a certificate in Spiritual Entrepreneurship through the Glean Network in association with Columbia University.

During Rabbinical School, Ponak interned with the Asiyah Jewish Community in Somerville, Mass., the Common Street Spiritual Center in Natick, Mass., Temple Emanuel in Andover, Mass., and the One River Foundation with renowned author Rabbi Rami Shapiro. He also served as a curator of the Spiritual Paths Institute, working on an interspiritual website for people of all backgrounds who

*Continued on page 9*

## Make postural alignment a priority

By Matt Cairns, MScPT

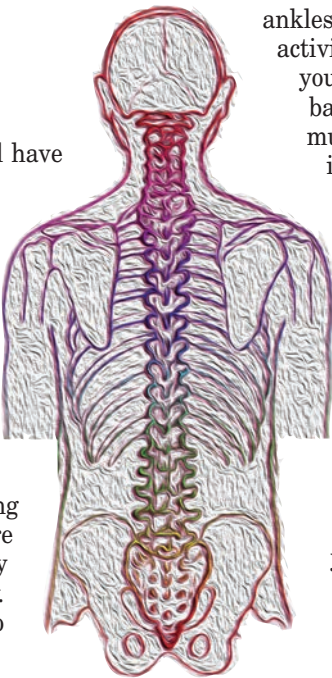
Working as a personal trainer and Physiotherapist for many years has taught me the importance of two key components: Posture and Core Strength. These are concepts of health and wellness that all of us know about but one thing is clear – these are important enough to make them a priority in your life.

Posture and Core Strength should be synonymous; you can't have one without the other. To have proper posture you must have a reasonable level of core strength or adequate conditioning of the core muscles – which include your abdominals, hips, lower back and scapula (shoulderblades). It is not enough to simply have "strong abs," we must move towards thinking of ideal posture and true core strength as a balanced approach to conditioning all of these muscles. I have seen the trend move from training muscles in isolation to training movements, with the latter touted as the preferred method to achieving gains in strength and your ability to maintain improved

postural alignment.

The thing is, both work. Although we all have almost identical anatomy, there is no question that some people respond better to training methods than others. Some people run, walk, weight train, practice yoga or pilates, swim, bike or engage in many other physical activities. It does not mean that one is better than another; they are all exercising muscles, elevating heart rates and giving the person benefit in some way. The point is that they are all training muscles and movements, which is the key to improving core strength and posture. Our patients are always encouraged to engage in an activity that they can sustain and that they enjoy. We then arm them with key principles to get the most out of what they do.

No matter the sport, activity or exercise, you must bring awareness to your spinal position. This is where the difference is made: posture is about improving the alignment of your head, shoulders, hips, knees and



ankles. When you engage in your chosen physical activity, pay attention to your spine – avoid letting your head push forward, shoulders round, upper back slouch, pelvis tuck under or arch back too much, knees hyperextend and feet roll to the inside or outside.

I know this seems like a lot, so start with one thing at a time. It's usually best to start with watching your head and neck position. If your head is squared over top of your shoulders and your neck is allowed to maintain some length rather than being compressed by being pushed forward, than you will help ease a lot of compressive loading of your spine.

If you are already an active person try to incorporate more awareness of your postural alignment during your activity, you will automatically engage your core and will improve your performance. If you're not very active, we encourage you to incorporate these tips into your day. Try maintaining better alignment of your spine with all bending and lifting activities and especially when walking. If you are still having trouble or require more detailed information please come for an assessment at our clinic Renew Physiotherapy, we'd love to see you there.

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# Metro Cinema goes Virtual

By Daniel Moser

Last month the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival went virtual giving attendees the opportunity of watching films in the comfort of their own homes. While circumstances were not optimal, the Festival powered through and had a successful run, engaging the community. One person paying especially close attention to the numbers was Dan Smith, Executive Director of Edmonton’s Metro Cinema.

Since late March Metro Cinema’s doors have been closed, but the not-for-profit film society has remained active, offering weekly virtual screenings though their website. “We shut our doors on March 16th to do our part in flattening the curve,” explains Smith. “Since then we have introduced weekly new release virtual screenings in partnership with a few different film distributors. 50% of the proceeds go to Metro Cinema and it is a great way to support a local theatre, as well as indie filmmakers and distributors.”

“As a team, we are trying to focus on the positives and do everything we can to give Edmontonians alternative film options to typical streaming services.” Couch time and mindlessly scrolling through a streaming service menu has become a regular activity for many people, there is a good chance that Metro Cinema is offering a film option that is not featured on the mainstream platforms. Just like

before the pandemic hit, Metro Cinema continues to program a diverse blend of film and media arts by presenting educational, independent, cultural and innovative works.

Still though, Smith says the theatre experience has always been a major attraction, and attending in person is simply not an option right now. “We are a community organization that unfortunately does not have a place for our community to gather. The challenge has been finding ways to support and foster that same feeling of community through film, in a virtual setting.”

“Choosing from our expanding array of virtual film options is a great way to support Metro Cinema and be entertained at the same time.”

While virtual film screenings are the focal point for Metro right now, their website offers many more “Covid-19 Diversions” including Metro crossword puzzles, a vodcast, suggestions for home-based activities, and articles on film.

“We are also selling gift cards and passes on our website. We are a registered charity and you can make donations through Canada Helps.”

The recent success of the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival proves that this can be accomplished. Checking out a virtual screening though Metro is a great way to experience a unique array of films and art which might otherwise be inaccessible to the public.

Smith also stresses that pandemic issues have been universal, and right now support is vital all around, not just for Metro. “We encourage people to support other local charities, businesses, and arts organizations as well. We know that we can thrive after this, only if our neighbours



and friends in the community do as well.”

For more information on how you can support Metro Cinema, and the historic Garneau Theatre, please visit [www.metrocinema.org](http://www.metrocinema.org) and take part in a virtual screening.

# A sense of belonging

By Jeremy Appel

There aren’t too many Jewish people in Medicine Hat. According to the most recent census, the city of about 62,935 people has 115 Jews — 40 men and 75 women — but I’m told that the figure is greatly overestimated due to the presence of a local Messianic Jewish community.

My culture is not something I boast about, nor is it something I try to conceal. This is a privilege perhaps most unique to Ashkenazi Jews, who can use their white skin to blend in. However, we know all too well from history that this white privilege can be taken away at any time, which is why we must stick together while building bridges with other communities.

Fellow Jews who have lived here much longer than the almost-three years I’ve spent — most of it working at the *Medicine Hat News* — say there was a once-vibrant Jewish community in the Hat, but many of them ended up moving to Calgary and Edmonton.

It’s not particularly easy being a small town Jew, when your neighbours’ perceptions of Judaism are shaped by popular representations in the media. You can’t blame members of the community for moving to bigger centres where there is a larger Jewish presence. It makes the high holidays a lot easier, that’s for certain.

So how did a Greater Toronto Area born-and-raised secular Jew with leftist politics wind up in a deeply conservative town where Messianic Jews may outnumber Jews? It was the desire to do what I’m doing right now.

I realized upon graduating journalism school that if I truly wanted to have a media career, I would have to start in a small town and work my way up. My first full-time newspaper job was at the Postmedia paper in Whitecourt, a town of 9,515 located northwest of Edmonton on the way to Grande Prairie.

It would be an understatement to say moving there from my parents’ house in Thornhill, Ont., probably the most Jewish place in Canada, was a culture shock. I’ve just discovered there are 15 Jews in Whitecourt, none of whom I knowingly encountered, although I was only there for six months. Suffice it to say, there was no shul there.

However, there was once a synagogue in Medicine Hat. Sons of Abraham was built downtown in 1912, when the Hat was known as the booming Gas City.

While researching for this column, I discovered there was a Jewish cemetery established in 1914 in Finn’s Lake, which is about 26.5 kilometres east of the city. Perhaps I’ll pay my prairie ancestors a visit one of these days.

With a significantly declining Jewish population, Sons of Abraham closed its doors in 1999. But 87 years is a strong run for a shul in small town Alberta. There have been efforts to reinvigorate the Jewish community here in the hopes of re-establishing a synagogue or some form of a community centre.

Before COVID, these efforts were quite successful. Rev. Dave Pollard of Fifth Avenue Memorial United Church — one of my favourite Hatters — provided the community with space at his church in December to celebrate Hannukah, not too far from where Sons of Abraham was located.


Fifty Hatters — Jewish and gentile — gathered in the church’s gymnasium, where we lit a Hannukiah, schmoozed, taught the children about the story of Hannukah and, of course, ate a lot.

It was the reverend’s first Hannukah celebration. There’s something very heartening about members of different faiths celebrating their common humanity. We often talk about faith and culture as a means of dividing people, but it can just as easily be used to bring them together.

A few of us Hatter Jews did a pandemic seder online and it went as well as you’d imagine singing *Dayenu* over Zoom would go.

Still, it was nice to have a sense of belonging, particularly in these times of torment.


*Jeremy Appel is a journalist who lives in Medicine Hat, Alberta.*




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## Calgary shuls *Cont. from page 3*

possible. Unfortunately, the virus does not honour Shabbat and Yom Tov.

Here (in reverse alphabetical order) is what our clergy are thinking about this year's High Holidays based on current information. These ideas are snapshots in time and will most certainly morph as the situation evolves.

### Temple B'nai Tikvah: Rabbi Mark Glickman

"We are assuming we won't be able to have everyone together in the same room," says Rabbi Mark Glickman. "Smaller gatherings are currently allowed but you are not allowed sing. For Jewish people that's a deal breaker."

Temple is therefore considering online Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.

"We will probably have service leaders at the Temple, but there won't be a sanctuary full of congregants," Rabbi Glickman said.

For the past few years, Temple has added 20 x 20 talks to their Yom Kippur highlights, during which pre-selected congregants do some visual storytelling based on Pecha Kucha (chit-chat in Japanese). Each speaker tells a story on an annually selected theme that relates in some way to Yom Kippur while they scroll through 20 images at 20 second intervals.

"This will be easier to do online than what we've been doing in person," says Rabbi Glickman.

"If it turns out that we can be together in person, it would be a problem we'd love to have."

### Kehilat Shalom: Rabbi Leonard Cohen

According to Rabbi Cohen it is far too early to say what the High Holidays will look like at Kehilat Shalom.

While taking a wait and see approach, he says that weekly meetings organized by Calgary Jewish Federation have been helpful to him, his fellow clergy and other community leaders when it comes to sharing ideas and information.

"We are trying to be consistent with one another across the community," adds the Rabbi. "I don't see any of us opening unless all the others do. We are committed to consistency across the community."

### House of Jacob Mikveh Israel – Rabbi Binyomin Halpern

When asked what High Holidays 5781 will look like at House of Jacob Mikveh Israel, Rabbi Binyomin Halpern told AJNews he is taking one day at a time. He prefers to

focus on those things that are more immediately in front of the congregation.

"Our sages tell us to do the mitzvah for tomorrow. We really don't know what will happen by Rosh Hashanah," Rabbi Halpern said.

"We will have to look at our options and figure out what we can do in smaller numbers... The first priority is human life. We have to do what is safe while serving our community to the extent we can. This is a challenge for all of us in ways we see and others we can't even fathom."

### Chabad Lubavitch – Rabbi Menachem Matusof

"Shavuot is coming... Camp is a real issue. I'm more worried about that right now than Rosh Hashanah," said Rabbi Matusof, who shares the view that there are plenty of mitzvahs to attend to in the more immediate future.

"Like Maimonides says about Moshiach... we need to believe and we need to say it will happen. In what form will it happen? I have no idea."

"We will have to be very, very careful," added Rabbi Matusof who is concerned about the COVID-related syndromes that are leading to serious illnesses in children.

"It is scary," says the Rabbi. "We are not allowed to play with it."

According to Rabbi Matusof, a possibility for High Holidays at Chabad would be a series of smaller and quicker services that may have to happen without singing if the guidelines that are currently in place are extended.

"The main mitzvah for Rosh Hashanah is Shofar blowing," said Rabbi Matusof, adding that in a worst case scenario Chabad would find a way to get Shofars into every home. "My plan is to hear the Shofar and to pray."

### Beth Tzedec Congregation: Cantor Russell Jayne

"We are all pretty much on the same page that the High Holidays are going to be different this year... We have to think outside the box to preserve the health of our congregants while giving them the High Holidays experience they deserve," said Cantor Russell Jayne.



Rabbi Menachem Matusof

Chabad's Faigel Shapiro Kosher Pantry

recited," the Cantor added.

"We are developing protocols that will allow for aliyahs to the Torah while maintaining appropriate spacing and we plan on reaching out to members of the congregation for honours like chanting of Haftarah which we hope to record in advance and add to the livestream. We are figuring out the technology and even exploring whether it is permissible for this to be done with the Shofar blowing."

In the course of their planning, Calgary Synagogues have benefited from the sharing of information and ideas at virtual Town Hall Meetings for religious leaders of all faiths, hosted by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and Chief Medical Officer Deena Hinshaw.

Calgary Jewish Federation President Yannai Segal and CEO Adam Silver have similarly been bringing together professional and lay leaders for weekly virtual meetings. The process, which is geared to brick and mortar institutions as well as other organizations that meet frequently with their clientele, began in the early days of the lockdown.

"We wanted to set the table for a conversation so that each organization would know what the others are doing, so we could tackle the overall challenge together while each synagogue and agency also addresses its differentiated concerns," said Adam Silver.

"At first, the discussion was about how the various community agencies anticipated modifying their existing programs. With the escalation of the virus and the need to implement new protocols, the conversation shifted because we all had to address how we would be modifying our entire operations."

According to Silver, it has been "... a very positive experience... and a productive effort to ensure that we emerge from COVID even stronger than before."

"These are not easy times, but on the plus side, our community has responded as well as any and better than most. We have done that by putting community first."

*Maxine Fischbein is a Calgary-based freelance writer for Alberta Jewish News who is currently living on Zoom.*

### PLEASE WELCOME CALGARY JEWISH FEDERATION'S NEW HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CO-CHAIRS

**Dahlia Libin and Marnie Bondar** are both granddaughters of four Holocaust Survivors and have been dedicated volunteers for Calgary Jewish Federation for many years. They have learned about the suffering and brutal, tragic loss of essentially their entire families in the Shoah. Their scope of experience includes programs such as L'Dor va Dor, Second Voices Project, and the Annual Holocaust Symposium, to commemorations including Yom HaShoah, Kristallnacht, and International Holocaust Remembrance Day. They remain passionate about ensuring that the horrors experienced during the Shoah are understood, remembered, and learned from, today and for generations to come. Together, Dahlia and Marnie will be overseeing this department to ensure continued programming and commemorations remain an important part of our community's activities.

**Dahlia Libin** has been a community volunteer and Holocaust education advocate for many years. Her surviving family was fortunate to start a new life in Canada, immigrating first to Montreal and eventually Calgary, where Dahlia was born and raised. After completing dual bachelor degrees and a Masters in Social Work with a specialty focus in gerontology, Dahlia supported a variety of organizations including the Alzheimer's Society of Calgary and Alberta Health Services.

**Marnie Bondar** grew up well-fed on chicken soup and extraordinary stories of survival and heroism. She maintained a tight bond with her Babi, Freda Plucer, until Freda's death in January of 2020. The two shared a lifelong commitment to standing up to intolerance and discrimination. After completing degrees in Honours English with Psychology, and obtaining her LLB, Marnie practiced law in Edmonton for many years before becoming Mediation Coordinator for the Alberta Mediation Project for the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. She has always been committed to Holocaust education in both Calgary and Edmonton; once Freda was no longer able to share her experiences from the Holocaust, Marnie stepped in to speak as part of the Second Voices Project. Marnie has spoken to thousands of students across Alberta for the last five years, and considers it an incredible honour to bring her Babi's history to today's youth.

## Calgary Holocaust Survivor Photography Exhibit:

We are excited to announce an upcoming photo exhibit honouring our Calgary Holocaust Survivors. Both living Survivors and those who have deceased will be featured in a unique exhibit that our community can share for many generations to come. This exhibit will show the faces of those who witnessed unimaginable horrors and miraculously survived the atrocities of the Shoah. The faces of men and women who lost so much and yet found the incredible strength to move forward.

This exhibit will give our community an opportunity to see the faces of those whose stories must be heard and never forgotten.

If you or your family would like to feature a loved one in this exhibit or you would like more information, please contact Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin at [holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.com](mailto:holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.com).

For all living Survivors, we will arrange a photo to be taken of you.

For those who are now deceased, we ask the descendants to submit a photo of their loved one.



### Socher Kravitz

Holocaust Survivor Socher was born in Goniadz, Poland on January 1, 1917.

*"The best time in my life was when it was announced that the war was finished. The happiest day of my life. But the results of this war was the worst time in my life.... I lost a lot of family members."*



Have a community announcement or upcoming virtual event or program?

Email: [info@jewishcalgary.org](mailto:info@jewishcalgary.org) to add it to our **Jewish Calgary Together** newsletter and webpage



NEWS, VIEWS AND SCHMOOZE WITH THE CALGARY JEWISH COMMUNITY



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A MESSAGE FROM BETH PRICE

I am honored to serve on the board of Calgary Jewish Federation, and chair our community's Integrated Bursary Program (IBP). I am a co-founder of this program whose goal is to make Jewish educational, social, and cultural experiences such as day school, camp, and Jewish Community Centre membership more accessible for families in need of financial assistance.

IBP was created to remove financial barriers to participation in Jewish life and to make the process of applying for a bursary more dignified, anonymous, equitable, and effective. All schools, programs, and services covered by bursaries are included on one application form, meaning the process is done one time for the entire year for all family members. This shift facilitated a major change in operational procedures making them more respectful and compassionate.

An amazing group of dedicated volunteers support our program. They meet with families in a confidential environment to assure anonymity. Together with the applicants, the volunteer examines objective documentation, and provides an opportunity for families to highlight personal challenges and experiences that are specific to their situation. These conversations encompass the aspirations of each family, combined with an understanding of what is truly affordable in

terms of their contribution level and that of the community to enable their children to participate in various activities.

I am proud that each year IBP helps between 65 and 85 families engage in Jewish communal life including over 100 children enrolled in Jewish day schools, and many who participate in day or overnight camp. As well, dozens of families are able to join the Calgary JCC, helping them to remain connected to our community and to Jewish cultural programs and services. This year is particularly difficult given the extraordinary emotional, financial, and social challenges presented by the coronavirus outbreak. We remain committed to supporting families in their efforts to maintain connections to our Jewish institutions and to each other.

We understand that living an active Jewish life has costs, and that some of us do not have the necessary resources to participate. We are very grateful to our partner IBP organizations – The Calgary Jewish Academy, Calgary JCC, Camp BB Riback, and Halpern Akiva Academy – for sharing this financial responsibility with us. These organizations embrace the principles of IBP and have collectively appointed Federation as their funding and administrative partner in this essential endeavor. Through our collaborative efforts, we strive to build an inclusive Jewish community accessible to everyone

and have, to date, enabled hundreds of families and children to engage in Jewish communal experiences. IBP is made possible by our community's annual UJA campaign, as well as through very generous directed donations from private donors.

During this challenging year, we expect more families to require significant levels of support and we are here to help them. We will continue to put dignity, fairness, and confidentiality at the core of our efforts, as we build on the critical and meaningful legacy of all that we have accomplished since the program's inception 12 years ago. Our work is a labor of love, and we know that it is not easy, especially during these difficult and challenging days. The Integrated Bursary Program renews our pledge and is guided by the principles of Maimonides Ladder of Tzedakah: that is... to give with an open hand in an anonymous manner.

Wishing you a *Chag Shavuot Sameach* and continued good health,

*Beth S. Price*  
Beth Price  
Chair, Integrated Bursary Program and Board Member  
Calgary Jewish Federation



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AS OF MAY 22, 2020, MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE MADE A PROMISE TO LEAVE A LEGACY TO JEWISH CALGARY

Anonymous (22)	Peta Glezerson	Philip & Harriet Libin	Brenda & Garry Sapoznikow
Alice <sup>TM</sup> & Jacob (Jack) Adler	Rabbi Chaim and Yael Greenwald	Susan Light	Norman & Kathy Schachar Family Legacy Fund
Michael Balaban	Dr. Benjamin Grintuch & Jaclyn Horne-Grintuch	Sandra & Harold Lipton	Marina Segal
Dan Balaban & Family	Debbie & Nelson Halpern	Lister Family	Yannai Segal
Cheryl Baron & Robert Shiell	Rabbi Binyomin & Malka Halpern	Megan Macfarland & Tibor Kaldor	Eliezer Segal & Agnes Romer Segal
Ben Zion Be'eri	Hayim Hamborger	David Martin	Leonard Seidman & Kimberly Rothenberg
Jenny Belzberg	Jackie Hamborger	Sheila Martin	Debbie Shaikin
Rebecca Berlin	Annette Hanson	Roz Mendelson & David Hodgins	Shaikin Family
Marnie Besser	Lucille Hanson <sup>TM</sup>	Leah Moldofsky	Betty Sherwood
Judy & Ron Bing	Candice Hanson	Stuart & Elaine Myron	Deborah Shnay
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Amy Bondar	Sara Hastings-Simon	Jack & Donna Newton	Judith Shriar
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Annie Brodsky	Sidney Horovitz	Joe & Robyn Oppenheim	David Silver
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Peter & Kim Cohos	Betsy Jameson	Alex Osten	Beth & Craig Steinberg
Loredana Della Vedova	Barbara Joffe	Mark Paidra & Lisa Welikovitich	Shauna Switzer
Carolyn Devins	Naomi Johansen	Jane Paterson	Sam & Ida Switzer
Nadine and David Drexler	Diana Kalef & Elliott Steinberg	Hindy and Izak Paul	Ruben & Sasha Switzer
Steve Eichler & Tracey Rumig	William Katz	Lorne Pearl	Ted Switzer & Michele Doctoroff
Jennifer Eiserman	Birgit Krausch	Cynthia & David Prasow	Joseph Tappenden
Shilling Family	Ron & Barb Krell	Lynne & Ralph Preston	Linda and Gary Wolf
Joy Feldman	Mel Ksienski	Eugene Ragolsky	Helen & Leonard Zenith
Max Feldman	Malka & Stan Labell	Bonnie Kaplan & Richard Conte	Tamar Zenith & Blair Laven
Sam, Cindy, Rebekah & Josh Feldman	Eddy Lang	Susan Rose	
Milt & Maxine Fischbein	Bruce & Carolyn Libin	Dr. Stuart & Irene Ross	

LOI received 29

LOI received 28

LOI received 25

LOI received 35

LOI received 26

LOI received 29

LOI received 32

LOI received 27

LOI received 30

LOI received 35

OTHER\*  
LOI received 28

\*Legacy gifts can be left to any community organization even if they are not listed above.



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# L'Chaim: To Your Good Health

## Get in-home breastfeeding support and education in YYC

(Calgary) - Nourish Lactation Consulting has provided in-home breastfeeding support and education to families in Calgary and surrounding communities since 2008. Owner and founder Leanne Rzepa became a Registered Nurse in 2000 after graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from the University of Calgary. Rzepa quickly developed a passion for breastfeeding support when she began her career as a postpartum nurse at the Rockyview General Hospital.

In 2006 Rzepa began to focus her nursing practice on breastfeeding support and started studying to become a certified lactation consultant. Rzepa successfully passed her exam in 2007 and became an IBCLC (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant).

In 2008 Nourish Lactation Consulting was open for business. Rzepa, always an entrepreneur at heart, saw a need for in-home support after years of working in the hospital setting. "Women spend such a short time in the hospital after giving birth," she explained. "Most new mothers are exhausted and aren't able to retain the information shared by hospital staff. Breastfeeding is a learned art. It often takes days or even weeks for a new mother to feel confident feeding her baby. Nourish provides support in the home setting which is more conducive for learning and confidence building."

Breast Milk provides many vital health benefits for both babies and mothers. Breastfed babies have lower rates of many diseases such as asthma, allergies, ear infections, obesity and SIDS.

Breast Milk is considered nature's first immunization as it contains important immune factors, proteins, and antibodies that provide lifelong protection. Breast Milk contains Human Milk Oligosaccharides that help to feed good gut bacteria in order to promote a healthy microbiome.

Breast Milk is always served at the right temperature and changes over time to meet baby's growth needs. The benefits for mothers include lower rates of breast and ovarian cancer, increased basal metabolic rate calories are burned faster, quicker uterine involution, promotes bonding, is very cost effective and better for our environment.

Nourish has helped countless mothers meet their breastfeeding goals by providing quality, caring, evidence-based support. Rzepa tries her best to see a mother within 24-48 hours of receiving a consult request. During a home visit, Rzepa starts by taking a thorough history of the mother's birth story and her breastfeeding struggles thus far. Most women Rzepa supports struggle with latch, pain, tongue tie, milk supply issues, poor weight gain, or feeding multiples.

Rzepa has a special scale that allows her to perform accurate pre and post feed weights. The baby is always weighed at the start and end of the feed in order to determine how much milk was consumed. After the baby is done eating, Rzepa collaboratively creates a feeding plan that works best for the family. She is the only Lactation Consultant in Calgary that provides complimentary phone/text support to her clients after the initial consultation for an unlimited amount of time.

In addition to providing in-home support, Rzepa has an on-line store that sells a variety of breastfeeding related products, apparel, and supplements. Nourish also offers a breast pump rental service, monthly workshops, virtual consults, a drop-in clinic and a multitude of services provided by other healthcare professionals such as a sleep consultant, registered dietitian, pelvic floor physio, and postpartum support provided by a Doula.

Rzepa has been featured on *Global News Calgary* numerous times and interviewed by *Today's Parent* and



*Parent's Canada* magazine on a variety of breastfeeding related topics. Rzepa launched Project Angel Pump in the Spring of 2019. Angel pump provides quality closed system breast pumps to women in the Calgary community that can't afford to purchase or rent a pump.

Rzepa believes that all mothers should have the opportunity to provide breast milk for their infants and cost should not have to be a barrier. Angel provides each mother with a brand new pumping kit and a sanitized pump to use for up to 6 months. The cost to participate in the program is \$35. Rzepa has helped new immigrants, refugees, teen moms, and women in domestic abuse situations.

Rzepa is clearly passionate about her job and receives much joy from supporting mothers to achieve their breastfeeding goals. If you are a new mother or know a mother that could benefit from in-home lactation support, please visit [nourishconsulting.net](http://nourishconsulting.net) for more information. Be sure to follow Rzepa @nourishconsulting and @NourishLC on Facebook.

## Wanted... All Cowboys & Cowgirls: June 11

Join JFSC at 'Cowboys & Cocktails' – our virtual fundraiser to honour the memory of Sam Ousher Switzer z"l.

We hope you'll join us on June 11, 2020 at 6 pm Live on Facebook for a virtual evening of celebration and fun, a food option from Grumans Deli, fond memories of Sam, a live performance by country music star George Canyon, Wild West challenges and Line Dancing, all while we tip our hat and toast Sam

as we raise a glass of his favourite drink, the Sam Spritzer Quarantini (Cranberry Soda).

Please head over to [jfsc.org](http://jfsc.org) to buy your tickets and make a donation to enrich the lives of vulnerable Calgarians and strengthen our community.

And if you have stories about or pictures of Sam Ousher Switzer z"l, please share them with us! For more information call 403.287.3510, visit [www.jfsc.org](http://www.jfsc.org) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

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The fun starts at 6 pm. For tickets and information: visit [jfsc.org](http://jfsc.org).  
Contact: 403.692.6389 or [cowboyscocktails@jfsc.org](mailto:cowboyscocktails@jfsc.org).

Seniors Mental Health and Addiction Response Team

JFSC is proud to announce the start of our Seniors Mental Health and Addiction Response Team - an initiative supported by the City of Calgary to work with seniors in our community who are struggling with mental health and addiction. The team is comprised of a social worker and LPN who will be working in an outreach capacity.

This initiative will bridge the gap for seniors accessing mental health or addiction services and will advocate on the needs and specialized resources required to best support this population. The Seniors Mental Health and Addiction Response Team aims to reduce barriers and make services inclusive for all so that every senior is able to get the help they need.

We are open for new referrals, please call our main line at 403-287-3510 for more information or visit our website at [www.jfsc.org](http://www.jfsc.org).

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# L'Chaim: To Your Good Health

## Pelvic Health and Wellness

by Sari Uretsky, BSCPT, CAFCI, IMS

Does pelvic health matter? What does “pelvic health” mean and what can a physiotherapist do to help? Do I have to just learn to live with leaking and heaviness? These are questions I get asked all the time. Pelvic health DOES matter! Physiotherapy CAN help and NO, you do not need to just live with leaks! Although urinary incontinence is common, it should not be considered normal. Physiotherapy for urinary incontinence is successful 80 to 90% of the time.

The pelvic floor supports many muscles and organs, including your bladder, rectum, and reproductive system. When this support weakens, organs begin to prolapse from their normal position, and you may experience pain, incontinence, and other problems that are typical with pelvic floor disorders. These muscles can be strengthened and many people can stop leakage and the heaviness feelings all together.

Not every person has the same issues, therefore it is important for you to seek out a specialist for one-on-one treatment and education. Group classes do not address individual issues and do not allow for the personalized attention required. A physiotherapist that specializes in pelvic health issues can work with you to regain control and move forward with your life. There are multiple approaches to physiotherapy treatments. We use a combination of these at my clinic to best suit your individual needs. Some of these approaches may include Kegel, core muscle progressive strengthening, stretching,

## OPH staying connected at a distance

The restrictions and “new normal” is making us all learn new ways of staying connected while remaining distant.

We at OPH are learning new technology, Zoom, Facetime, Skype and using our “Phone Booth” to keep up our face to face interactions. We got creative with finding a safe way for our residents to finally see their loved ones. Thankfully everyone has worked together - the residents, with the help of their families and our staff have kept everyone safe to date.

OPH residents have still been able to enjoy floor by floor exercises in their doorways, a mobile store and activity deliveries. Our rooftop patio is open with social distancing for our residents to enjoy the sun and fresh air in a safe environment. We are better and stronger by sharing email addresses and phone numbers with each other and staying connected.



electro-muscular stimulation, taping, intra-muscular stimulation (IMS), acupuncture, behavioural techniques and education.

Is pelvic health only for women? Absolutely not. Although more women than men have incontinence issues, men can have them too. Men may also require muscle re-training after a colonoscopy or any colorectal surgery.

Uretsky Physiotherapy is now located in the Edgemont Health Centre in West Edmonton. We offer one-on-one physiotherapy sessions for all pelvic health related issues. Treatment is also offered for a wide range of

musculoskeletal conditions, IMS, acupuncture, pre and post-natal care and infant head-shape disorders. Virtual physiotherapy sessions are now available, enabling us to reach patients wherever they may reside. For more information and to book an appointment, please visit my website [www.uretskyphysiotherapy.com](http://www.uretskyphysiotherapy.com).

Feel Better, Move Better, Be Better.

*Sari Uretsky is a physiotherapist and owner of Uretsky Physiotherapy, located at Edgemont Health Centre, 20170 Lessard Road in Edmonton.*

## Victoria shul *Cont. from page 4*

want to explore their inner lives more deeply. He is one of the founders of Or Chadash, the men’s group at Hebrew College.

Ponak’s capstone project, “Torah for the New Age,” focused on translating and commenting on Jewish mystical texts relevant to contemporary spiritual seekers of all backgrounds. With supervision from Hebrew College Rector Rabbi Arthur Green, Ponak translated and commented on 42 mystical texts and used digital design layouts to make them look like Talmud pages. “It was an absolute pleasure working with Rabbi Green,” said Ponak. “He is one of the leading voices for Jewish mystical theology, commentary and translations in our era.”

Matt is also a very talented banjo player. He specializes in leading niggunim, or wordless melodies from the

Jewish mystical tradition. During his first year of rabbinical school, he released a banjo niggun album entitled “Bridges of Song.” He is also a practitioner of Qi Gong and Focusing, using movement and body-centered contemplation to guide people through inner constrictions and into the emerging stages of their journey.

“I am a teacher, musician, and lover of life. I help spiritual seekers follow the call of their soul. I am passionate about bringing forth ancient Jewish wisdom to meet the needs of today,” says Ponak.

Hebrew College is a college of Jewish studies in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. Founded in 1921, Hebrew College is committed to Jewish scholarship in a pluralistic, trans-denominational academic environment.

Congregation Emanu-El is an egalitarian Conservative Jewish congregation in Victoria, on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia. In 2013 Congregation Emanu-El celebrated its 150th anniversary as Canada’s oldest synagogue in continuous use. It has been designated a national historic site.

Matt Ponak will be ordained on June 7, 2020 from Hebrew College in Newton, Mass, where he will also receive a Masters degree in Jewish Studies.

Mazal tov to Rabbi Matt Ponak, Melina, and their family, and mazal tov to Congregation Emanu-El on a fantastic hire, and great addition to their community.



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from the

Sources

Home Delivery

by Eliezer Segal

If you are one of those folks who was once resistant to online shopping, and preferred brick-and-mortar shops staffed by flesh-and-blood salespersons (eager to offer extended warranties and loyalty cards), it is more than likely that your attitudes were significantly impacted by the advent of social distancing, when visits to the mall became hazardous ventures.

Human societies have long offered some measure of choice between visiting a shop to buy merchandise or having a seller ring your doorbell. Biblical Hebrew had a special root to denote traveling salesmen: *RKhL* - a word that is most frequently employed in its secondary metaphoric sense of tale-bearer or gossip. Rashi noted how a gossip, like a peddler, makes the rounds from house to house, digging up dirt to relay eagerly to the neighbours.

Rabbinic tradition related that at the outset of the Second Commonwealth era, Ezra the Scribe enacted a decree that allowed peddlers to circulate in towns and villages. The Talmud understood that their primary wares consisted of cosmetics and beauty aids for the benefit of the ladies who enjoyed few opportunities to do their shopping outside their houses. Such lightweight products or samples could be conveniently carried from door to door by the Avon men of yore.

The ancient peddler had an unsavoury reputation reminiscent of the traveling salesmen of more recent humour. Thus, as an example of behaviour pointing to marital infidelity, the Talmud mentions a case where a woman is observed adjusting her apron as a peddler sneaks out the back door. Rav Joseph quoted approvingly an admonition from the apocryphal book of Ben Sira: "Many were the wounds of the spice-peddler which led him on to lewdness." Rashi understood that Ben Sira was warning the peddler against being seduced by a desperate housewife, lest he be assaulted by her enraged husband. Other interpreters regarded it as advice to the husband to deny entry to the potential home-wrecker.

The Talmud tells of some prominent rabbinic scholars who earned their livings from door-to-door sales, likely out of economic necessity. Though it was generally understood that Ezra's decree was only designed to protect peddlers

from having their existing franchises closed down, Torah scholars were granted the exceptional privilege of establishing new sales territories lest anxiety about their livelihoods distract them from their learning.

For the most part, it was the nature or the scale of the merchandise that determined whether customers would prefer to make their purchases in a shop, in the street, or from a door-to-door salesman. The diverse options were able to coexist if conditions were appropriate.

However, as in our own days, situations arose when established shopkeepers felt threatened by the initiatives taken by enterprising sellers who were bypassing the shops in order to bring their products directly into the purchasers' houses.

Such a case was dealt with by Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi of Constantinople, a foremost halakhic authority of the Ottoman empire in the early sixteenth century. An inquiry was directed to him by Rabbi Abraham Solomon Treves regarding Jews in "the holy congregation of Jerusalem" who were covertly peddling merchandise, including stolen goods, in violation of government orders. (It is possible that "Jerusalem" was being used, as was customary in the literature of the time, as a generic name for an unidentified locality.) Those black marketers did not operate out of physical premises, but rather would circulate through the streets of the city from house to house. Soon the established sellers of clothing and pepper (these were among the main commodities traded in that locality) convened an assembly at which they protested before the communal authorities that too many consumers were availing themselves of the peddlers' goods, thereby encroaching seriously on the profits of the shopkeepers.

The community's elders realized that perpetuating an illicit retail channel was not only causing economic harm to the veteran Jewish merchants, but was also likely to bring the community into disfavour with the Ottoman government. Therefore they were persuaded to issue an ordinance that prohibited commercial activity on the streets or in customers' houses. Deliveries could be made to private residences only if they were explicitly requested at the time of the purchase. Similar regulations were said

to have been adopted in Hebron and perhaps Salonika.

The Jerusalem agreement was to be automatically renewed every year unless explicitly discontinued. It was not long before a representative of the street vendors was challenging the authority, the legality and the fairness of the shopkeepers' pact. In support of his position he cited the heart-rending precedent of a certain new arrival to the community who had been forced out of his original peddling job and drifted to a criminal gang, which caused considerable harm to the community. The protesters argued that if the community was really concerned about avoiding frictions with the government, then it could restrict the scope of its prohibition to stolen goods and to commodities that were subject to official controls.

At this point the local squabble had to be turned over to world-renowned rabbis to unravel the conflicting arguments.

In more recent times peddling became a stereotypical occupation for unskilled Jews. Many of the newcomers who arrived from central Europe in the immigration wave of the mid-nineteenth century (or their children) began roaming rural America as lowly peddlers; and some of these - like Isidor and Nathan Strauss, Adam Gimbel, Andrew Saks, Carrie and Al Neiman and Herbert Marcus - rose from rags to riches to become the founders of eminent department store empires.

In traditional societies there was not much doubt that it was far more dignified for sellers to work from their own shops, which the shoppers must patronize to make their purchases, than to prowl the streets hunting for customers. Social distancing, online catalogues and drone deliveries are radically changing the rules of the game in ways that are not yet clear.

Now if you'll excuse me, I think a package was just dropped onto my doorstep...

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



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# Or Shalom: YEG Sunday School

Why get up early on a Sunday morning to attend Or Shalom Jewish Sunday school in Edmonton? Good question, and the answer will be different depending on whomever it is that you talk to.

Some students and families enjoy the sense of community.

Others enjoy the stimulating discussions about *middot* such as empathy, freedom and responsibility. While initiated by the teacher and expanded upon by Rabbi Gila Caine, these discussion are always spurred on by the curiosity and creativity of the students.

Some students enjoy creating works of art based on each of the Jewish festivals and holidays. Many members of the Or Shalom community say that a highlight of the 2019-2020 year was the Tu B'Shevat Seder, celebrated with Or Shalom families and seniors at the Jewish Drop-in Centre.

Another highlight for many students was the chance to share their creativity and work as a team to write a Chanukah play and perform it for the congregation. A few months later, students planned and took a leadership role

in the Purim carnival, which was held at the Telus World of Science.

As is often the case when Jewish communities gather, food plays a big role at Or Shalom. Home-made delights such as the Raz family's famous peanut butter oat balls are always a hit. Snack time provides a chance for the students from different grades to mingle, and holidays mean special foods. For some students, making and eating Hamentashen ranks among the top yearly activities. Because of Covid-19, Or Shalom was not in session for Pesach, so while students didn't have the opportunity to make matzah the way they did during the 2018-19 school year, we're looking forward to making matzah again next year.

Some families enjoy finishing the morning with a lively music session led by Debby Waldman. Grade 4 student India Cook sums it up well: "I love Or Shalom because it's nice having Jewish friends. It's nice having friends that know what I'm talking about when I talk about the Jewish holidays. I love my teachers and singing with



Or Shalom in Edmonton on Sunday mornings.

Debby is really fun.”  
So – why get up early on Sunday mornings to attend the Or Shalom Jewish Sunday school?  
Why not come and find out for yourself?

# Knowledge, life and Shavuot

by Rabbi Gila Caine, Temple Beth Ora

Our shul's youth leaders, who deal with our tweens and teens, have lots to say about education. And as they themselves are in their late teens, it's always refreshing to hear them describe their struggles and discoveries. One, Danielle Shaposhnikov, wrote to me "... we are dedicated to provide our participants with a safe community to absorb the skills required to become innovative leaders in a progressive Jewish environment." What an apt statement of Jewish education! We are all teachers and students in the communal project of learning.

Torah is seen as the "Tree of Life" so whenever we teach or study Torah, we sit together at her roots and on her branches. Being in a Reform Jewish community, we understand our duty to tend the Tree of Life as a person tends her garden – we are entrusted with the holy work of knowing the tree, of watering and pruning and enjoying its fruits. There might be other wonderful trees in the garden, but we were given the duty to care for *this* one. Which takes us back to education. The mindset of our educators should be as one who is travelling among the thick branches together with their students. The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman), tells us that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge were both planted in the very same hole in the Garden of Eden. They would have looked like one big tree, not two. If we use this image of the trees, then our Jewish education is about Life in all its manifestations, and knowledge in all its complexity, and the ways in which they are intertwined.

After Purim this year I talked with our other youth leader, Noam Wein, who recounted a complicated learning moment he'd gone through with the kids just before the festival. They were all making Hamentaschen and he was telling them the story of Esther. Suddenly he blanked out on the names of the two guards plotting to kill the king. The story was told perfectly well, but Noam said "...if a leader gives even the smallest mistake in the telling of a story then the people listening to this story might forever make the same mistake! There is a good chance that the kids do not remember those guards' names, but ever since then it has been burned into my head in a way that those names would not leave any time soon...I want to know all those small details because to me knowledge is power!" Teaching Torah is like feeding our children and those we love; we want to make sure they have energy and power to grow – physically and spiritually.

Interestingly, when the rabbis were discussing what kind of plant the Tree of Knowledge was, we find Rabbi Yehuda telling us: "It was wheat, as, the child does not know how to call [his/her] father and mother until he [she] tastes the taste of grain." (BT B'rachot 40a). This midrash ties together knowledge, language, and wheat. We find here another way of tying together the different aspects of Shavuot, the festival of receiving Torah, with the more ancient (and Biblical) festival of the wheat harvest offering. In this sense, our "going off target" vis a vis the Tree of Knowledge is redeemed and even sanctified by our celebration of Shavuot, when we gather



Danielle Shaposhnikov at the Reform Zionist Gathering for young leaders in Jerusalem.

Torah (Tree of Life) and wheat (Tree of Knowledge) and celebrate them together.

The festival of Shavuot invites us to unpack the complicated relationship between knowledge and life and offers us an opportunity to celebrate this complex relationship. The more we study together, the more our roots and branches will join, and the stronger our community will be.

I said nothing about covid-19 up until this moment because this teaching is for all year and every year. How much more so for our times now. May we find in ourselves the creativity, courage and strength to create meeting places or learning and life, and may our community grow stronger and wiser from these moments of Torah.



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