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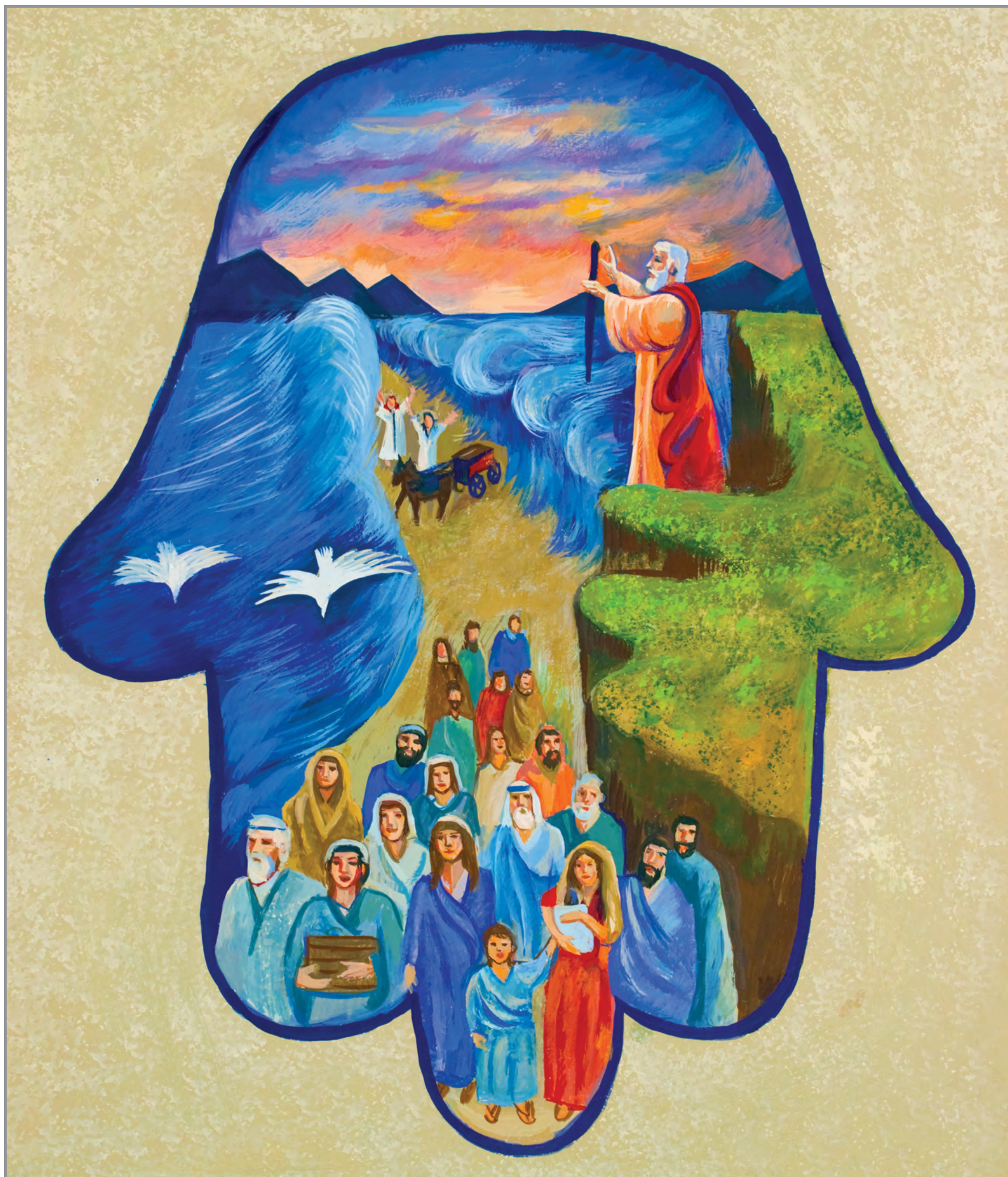
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How are we coping with COVID?

By Maxine Fischbein



Allan Donsky



Farrel Greenspan

We turn the pages of barren calendars as COVID-19 continues to threaten and disrupt our lives and those of billions worldwide.

Even as shots are going into arms, health restrictions are expected to continue for some time. Almost everyone is coping with grief and loss – often on multiple levels – and the horizon is full of unknowns.

If you aren't feeling great right now, you've got good reasons. And you are not alone.

"Research in Canada and internationally shows a significant decline in wellbeing," says Calgary Psychiatrist Allan Donsky.

But there are things we can do to ensure we are doing more than merely surviving or coping, he adds. "The first step involves recognition that this is a long haul."

Another is accepting – and not resisting – what is.

"There is so much we want to be in control over, but we're not," says Donsky.

When we resist what is, it is a problem, because "we are trying to negotiate non-negotiables," he adds.

Instead, Donsky urges everyone to "...recognize, accept and investigate what we have control over and what we don't."

"When we recognize we have choice, we can set an intention," Donsky says, based on the simple question: "What's called for now?"

"What's called for might be stopping what's not working or what's not helpful, nourishing or productive. Because until we stop what's not working, or what's making us miserable, there's no room for something else to emerge."

It is not about ignoring or denying very real feelings or sucking it up and getting on with things, says Donsky. It is about recognizing and working with those feelings, seeing what arises and, often, leaning into the very things we think we'd rather avoid... like the grief we've all experienced on some level during the pandemic.

"For things we've lost, we should sanction grief," says Donsky. This would most obviously include the loss of loved ones, but we also grieve COVID's collateral damage, including job losses and isolation from family.

One year into the pandemic, many are also feeling a lot of unsanctioned grief – those things we had looked forward to that did not come to pass, Donsky adds.

"There is also the distress and the pain of isolation. Even though we have ways of optimizing connection through technology, there is a real sense of isolation."

What has settled in, for many, says Donsky, is "ennui," a weariness or listlessness that is hard to shake.

When the COVID-19 pandemic was first declared, many individuals "took COVID by the horns," really availing themselves of technology like Zoom so that they could stay engaged, says Edmonton Registered Psychologist Farrel Greenspan.

But as the health emergency drags on, things have changed.

"A lot of the stuff that people were doing to manage has fallen by the wayside," Greenspan told *Alberta Jewish News*, adding that the more protracted the need for physical isolation has become, the more habituated people have become to hunkering down in less-than-splendid isolation.

Getting back to embracing technology would be beneficial, says Greenspan, because it provides social and recreational outlets that are easily accessible from the safety of home. The offerings have increased since the early days of the pandemic, Greenspan adds, pointing to innovations like Zoom paint and pottery nights and online escape rooms and murder mysteries.

While that sounds like fun, technology can sometimes have a downside too. For example, excessive focus on COVID news can take a toll on some of us.

"Some people need to know. The anxiety is too much if they're not checking the news," Greenspan notes.

But if you are a person that is negatively impacted by

the bombardment of information, Greenspan suggests limiting exposure by tuning in less frequently.

Similarly, Greenspan cautions against "doom scrolling through twitter and other social media platforms."

"You have to find that balance of being informed... but not to the point where it is creating additional stress or overwhelming you."

"So often we are consumed by the worries and stresses of COVID, and it lingers in our minds," says Greenspan. "That can be incredibly overwhelming and draining, making you tired just because you are thinking about it so much."

When that happens, Greenspan suggests identifying one or two activities that keep you present and engaged in the moment.

"When you get a break from the stresses of COVID by doing something for yourself mentally, physically or socially, that's a very good thing to do. It's something I don't think people are doing a lot of."

For Greenspan, puzzles do the trick, but he says the important thing is for each individual to find the activities that work best for them.

Now that the pandemic has become a marathon, Greenspan is noticing that many individuals, while filled with good intentions, are slower to connect with friends, having turned inwards.

"People should put reminders on their phones or calendars so they make time to reach out," says Greenspan.

"It's so easy to say I'll do it tomorrow, but tomorrow never comes."

If you make a "concrete plan," you are more likely to follow through as intended, Greenspan says.

While it is easy to focus on the negativity of the health crisis, especially after more than a year of isolation, it is beneficial to also look on the bright side of life.

"One of the goals in counselling is to find meaning and positives... to grow from negative experiences and create more balance," Greenspan says.

In that spirit, Greenspan counsels his patients to focus on the good things that have come out of their pandemic experiences.

For some people, it might be the opportunity for more family interaction. Some may be learning more about and, hence, drawing closer to their partners. Still others may be learning how to find contentment in being with

Continued on page 18

Happy Passover

David Shepherd
MLA, Edmonton-City Centre

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Our commitment to each other has strengthened

By Rabbi Steven Schwarzman



Rabbi Steven Schwarzman

Passover - the festival of freedom! Yet, like last year, we are still in the pandemic, and many of us may not feel very free right now. We have been through a lot this past year, and the losses have been all too real.

Our tradition gives us a helpful perspective: as we read in the Haggadah, in every generation, we are all to see ourselves as if we, personally, had left Egypt. It is a profound teaching. Until we actually experience something, or at least try really hard to imagine it and feel it, we can't really understand it. And once we have experienced something, it changes us forever.

None of us imagined a pandemic until it happened. Now we have all experienced it, and especially on Pesach, a time normally of gathering friends and family and inviting all who are hungry to come eat with us, we are going to have to experience the holiday household by household for the second year in a row.

But the end is now in sight as vaccines arrive. Even as we feel the pain of our losses, we can also see how miraculous it is for these vaccines to be developed and produced in less than a year. And, like weary warriors, we can begin to think about what life will be like when the pandemic is over.

Some aspects of our lives will be changed. But others, including Jewish life, will continue to be the anchors that help us make sense of our lives. At Beth Shalom, we have been gathering online for weekday minyans, and while it's not the same as being together in person, there are also some positive surprises. It may seem obvious now, but who knew that making it possible for people to pray in the (virtual) company of their friends each weekday morning without leaving their living rooms or kitchen tables would result in more people - a lot more people! - taking part? And who knew that, by setting up a livestream before Shabbat, we could bring our Shabbat services to our regulars, and to homebound people and people far away from this or any Jewish community?

There have been so many changes to life, and to Jewish life, from the beginning of the modern period a few

hundred years ago, and the pace of change only accelerates. And the pandemic took that pace of acceleration and added rocket fuel to make it even faster. There will be ongoing changes in how we work and shop even after the pandemic.

But some things remain unchanged. Our commitment to each other, and to our people, and to Judaism all remain the same, and if anything, this commitment is even stronger now that we have experienced the isolation of a pandemic. We have found ways to connect using tools that didn't exist even a few years ago, because sustaining this connection is central to who we are.

Perhaps future generations will struggle to understand what it was like for us this past year. They will have their own challenges and achievements to experience. For us, we can now hope and expect that Pesach next year will bring us back together around the same tables for our seders. And our persevering through the last months of the pandemic, keeping and nurturing our Jewish identities even as we keep ourselves and others safe, will make the experience of future years all the richer. This year, we are still isolated. Next year, may we all be together again.

May we all be blessed with a *chag kasher vesameach* - a joyful, kosher, meaningful, and wonderful Pesach.

Rabbi Steven Schwarzman is the spiritual leader at Beth Shalom Synagogue, Edmonton's Egalitarian Conservative Congregation.

Edmonton-Strathcona MP stresses the need for action against racism

By Jeremy Appel

Alberta's lone non-Conservative MP — the NDP's Heather McPherson in Edmonton-Strathcona — says her party is best suited to combat the rising global tide of hatred, which of course includes anti-Semitism.

"We need to name it. We need to call it out. We need to acknowledge it and we need to find ways to push back on it," McPherson says of the "brutal" increase in hate across the country, including recent rallies in Calgary and Edmonton where participants carried tiki torches and where several attacks have taken place against women who wear hijabs.

"That, to me, is the biggest issue we're looking at in Edmonton-Strathcona."

While the Alberta NDP recently deleted a tweet where they proclaimed themselves anti-fascists, McPherson has no such hesitancy.

"Anti-fascism is not something anyone should be ashamed of," McPherson said.

She says the federal government needs to take action to stem the tide, citing the addition of the white supremacist Proud Boys gang to the official terror watch list, which NDP leader Jagmeet Singh had urged the Liberals to do. However, that move has been criticized by those who see terror watch lists as an inherent infringement upon civil liberties.

Parliament is still waiting to hear the details of the federal government's anti-racism strategy, which it announced two years ago, McPherson added. "They haven't done the work that needs to be done," she said. "It's another typical example of talking about the strategy and failing to do the work that needs to be done."

In addition to representing her constituents in Edmonton-Strathcona, McPherson sees her role as representing the 30 percent of Albertans who didn't vote Conservative in the last election.

"I have a much wider scope of issues that I really do need to represent my

constituents on, because I get calls from constituents all across the province," she said, citing the provincial government's coal policy in particular. "I'm an MP from an urban riding in Edmonton and I've spent a lot of time, because this is something my constituents asked me to do, (bringing) the coal mining issues forward to the federal government."

She says the Conservatives are politicizing human rights when they attack New Democrats for criticizing Israel's policies towards the Palestinians, as Conservative nomination candidate Rick Peterson did in these pages recently.

"It's disappointing, because what it does is make this a very polarizing issue, which isn't in any looking for solutions or a way forward," said McPherson, who is a member of the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group, which hasn't met since May 2019, as well as the vice chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association and the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group.

"When we're talking about human rights, when we're talking about Canada's role globally, there has to be a discussion about when we don't think things are being done correctly. There has to be a way to bring that forward without it becoming, 'You are anti-Israel' or 'You're pro-Palestine.'"

Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



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Join JNF Edmonton in honouring Gayle Tallman

By AJNews staff

Gayle Tallman is the honouree of the 2021 Edmonton Negev Gala which will be held virtually this summer on June 22, 2021. The JNF team is issuing a call out to everyone - from coast to coast - whose life was impacted by Gayle's amazing work.

"Gayle is a most deserving JNF honouree and we are thrilled to announce and invite you to join us in celebrating such a special member of our community," stated Edmonton JNF Executive Director Jay Cairns, along with Negev Gala campaign team leaders Michael Schayer, Heather Vickar and Jack Schwartzberg.

Gayle exemplifies what it means to be a true community builder within the Jewish Community of Edmonton. She has contributed in a significant way to the Jewish education of a generation of community members, sharing with them her love of Israel, and her commitment to community service and human rights.

"JNF is honouring Gayle Tallman this year in a virtual gala that allows for everyone, 'Coast to Coast,' to participate and gather together to pay tribute to an outstanding member of the Edmonton community who dedicated her life to teaching compassion and inclusivity," explained Cairns.

"We need your help gathering photos and videos to honour her. Send in your favourite photo/video clip of you with Gayle when you were in a BBYO program, at Camp

BB, in the JCC or from a March of the Living trip."

Tributes should be sent by email to edm@jnf.ca or they can be posted on the JNF Edmonton Facebook page.

Negev Gala Co-Chair Michael Schayer offered this testimonial: "Gayle means the world to me and my family. Speaking for myself personally, she was instrumental in me being able to cope with the many emotions I had prior to, during and after the March of the Living – a very difficult and troubling experience for myself. Aside from that, whenever I used to visit the old JCC, Gayle's door was always open and inviting for me to come in and chat about whatever. I always enjoyed those conversations and Gayle's silly grin and infectious laugh. I personally am so happy that JNF is honouring Gayle this year as the Negev honouree, I can't think of anyone in our community more deserving. I love you Gayle."

Howie Sniderman wrote: "I just read the article today about the upcoming Negev event honouring our friend Gayle Tallman – we are delighted to see her so very appropriately honoured for her many years of dedication to our community. She accompanied our daughter Liz on her 'March of the Living' and I think there are a generation or two of young adults (and their parents) in our community who owe Gayle a great debt of gratitude for the time, effort and expertise she put into everything she did – especially taking on the annual role of playing 'parent in situ' for teenagers dealing with one of the most difficult but meaningful experiences in their lives."



If you have any questions or would like more information about the Negev Gala, please leave a voice-mail for Executive Director, Jay Cairns at the office: 780.481.7881. Messages will be returned within 24 hours and for more timely responses email edm@jnf.ca.

In the interest of safety and compliance with provincial regulations, the JNF Edmonton office has transitioned to a phone message system and office visits are by appointment only.

Five notable Jewish nominees for 2021 Oscars

By Emily Burak

(JTA) — "Mank," the black-and-white Netflix film about Jewish screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz, leads the slate of Academy Award nominations in a year when most Americans viewed movies via streaming services.

"Mank" earned 10 Oscar nods, including for best picture, making up nearly half of Netflix's total nominations. The company also drew six nominations for "The Trial of the Chicago 7." Meanwhile, Amazon's nominations were bolstered by Regina King's film "One Night in Miami" and "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" — one of two movies that earned creator Sacha Baron Cohen an Oscar nomination.

Here's what you need to know about the notable Jewish nominees. The awards will be presented in a ceremony April 25.

"Mank" dominates

Starring Gary Oldman as Herman Mankiewicz, "Mank" was tapped for best picture among its nominations. Oldman and co-star Amanda Seyfried, as well as director David Fincher, are in the running. There are also nominations for original score, cinematography, costume design and more.

"Mank" focuses on the story behind Mankiewicz writing the classic film "Citizen Kane," and trying to get credit for his work following its success.

Sacha Baron Cohen is recognized for two very different films.

Cohen was nominated for his portrayal of the Jewish activist Abbie Hoffman in "The Trial of the Chicago 7" and for best adapted screenplay for the Borat sequel, "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm." Maria Bakalova, the Bulgarian actress who plays Borat's daughter in the latter, scored a nod for best supporting actress.

"Trial of the Chicago 7"

garnered six nominations, including for best original screenplay by the Jewish writer-director Aaron Sorkin.

"Crip Camp" is recognized

The Netflix documentary, nominated for best documentary feature, is the story of teenagers with disabilities who attend Camp Jened in upstate New York during the summer of 1971. The film, executive produced by President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, follows a group of campers and counselors who become activists for the disability rights movement, including the Jewish activist Judy Heumann.

Following the nominations Heumann tweeted, "Make this year the first of MANY where the Oscars is accessible to all disabled people."

Continued on page 16

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Kosher alert



Whereas the pictured Liver being sold at Sobeys is technically kosher, the company (Glatts) accidentally forgot to enclose the instructions outlining the unique requirements for eating kosher liver, that being, that it must be broiled over an open fire (Not in your home oven) until it is completely free of any blood, thereafter rinsed and then it should not be cooked in a pot.

Pesach in Edmonton

Chabad of Edmonton is pleased to offer many of the requirements for Pesach in Edmonton, such as hand baked Shmurah Matza, the ability to sell your Chometz, downloadable Haggadot, and Pesach booklets with local times for lighting candles etc.



Please feel free to visit us at chabadedmonton.org

For Shmurah Matzah (limited supply left) please call Rabbi Dovid 780-299-0066

For all other Pesach matters please call Rabbi Ari 780-993-1818

Wishing the entire Community a very Happy and Healthy Pesach

Sincerely, Rabbi Ari Drelich, Chabad of Edmonton

Mathewson Brothers fix AHS software bugs so vaccine sign up can proceed

By AJNews staff

Yasher Koach to Kory Mathewson (Edmonton Talmud Torah alum) and his brothers Kyle and Keyfer (also Talmud Torah alumni) for discovering a flaw with the Alberta Government's electronic form for 75-year-olds + to book vaccination appointments in Alberta – and for fixing it. And thank you for then making the fix available to everyone.

The AHS sign up system for COVID vaccinations for people born in 1946 or earlier, was released on Feb. 24. It immediately flooded and jammed and resulted in hours of frustration and stress for thousands of seniors and their family members who were trying to book appointments.

Luckily, one of the people attempting to sign up was Kyle Mathewson, trying to book the lifesaving vaccination for his grandparents. Kyle, who has a Ph.D in Cognitive Neuroscience recognized that there must be a problem with the AHS software and contacted his brother in Montreal – Kory Mathewson – who has a Ph.D. in Computing Science and his brother Keyfer Mathewson, who is a Software Engineer in Ottawa, and described the problem to them.

Kory, a research scientist with Deep Minds AI, said he looked at the form and the hair on the back of his neck stood up. He tweeted, “I thinks to myself, hmm I wonder which part of the tool is slow.”

Alright, he said to himself, “let’s try opening the form and seeing if I can book this life saving vaccine for my

nearly ancient grandparents. That would be good, right? Try to help them live as long and happy as possible?”

Kory found that a broken barker was the source of the problem.

He tweeted – “Well there seems to be a CSS class called .startHidden (much like the virus)...but I can find it and track it down, thank you to the fact that (when I was a kid) my grandparents bought me a computer and let me play videogames and use the internet.”

Within minutes, the brothers determined the fix, tested it and were able to book their grandparents for a COVID vaccination.

That is amazing in itself, but the story gets better!

They then sent easy to follow directions out on twitter so that thousands of others could do the same, and like magic, people were able to book their appointments.

Kory received a flood of “likes” and thank you’s from appreciative seniors and their families – many of them describing the frustration they had been feeling with the AHS form and the relief they felt with being able to get an



EdmontonTalmud Torah and Camp BB-Riback alum Kory Mathewson with his grandparents.

appointment for the vaccination.

“I feel uplifted by the whole Twitter community that was able to jump on board and make this happen,” said Kory. “All the credit doesn’t go to me; it goes to them and it goes to my older brother and my younger brother.”

He tweeted, “Thank you to Kyle for raising the alarm on this one and to Keyfer for being the best developer, advocate and manager that I know. Now, get that vaccine gran and gramps and let’s hug again.”

Kol Hakavod to the Mathewson brothers and while we’re grateful that the vaccine rollout is well underway in Alberta, let’s hope that it goes a little more seamlessly for the rest of the age groups.

YEG Virtual Yom HaShoah Ceremony: April 8

By Colin Muscat

The Holocaust Education Committee of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton would like to invite you to join to a virtual Yom HaShoah Commemoration on Thursday April 8 at 7:00 pm.

As the pandemic of 2020 spills over into 2021, we find ourselves facing yet another important community event that must be modified to meet the necessities of public

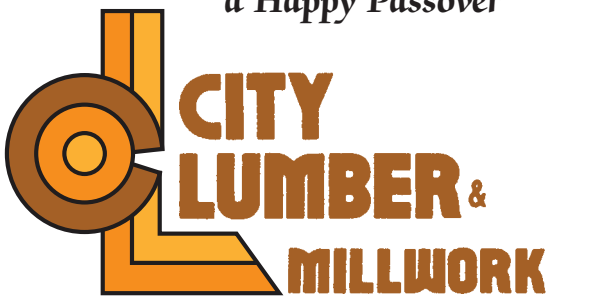
health restrictions. We have partnered with Jared Paul and Reel Mensch Productions inc. to produce a unique and distinctly Edmonton-centred production.

This year’s commemoration is titled “Legacy: Keeping the Flame Alive”. It will feature Holocaust Survivors from our community and their families. It will explore the responsibility of our younger generations to carry forth the legacy of those who survived the Holocaust. We have worked hard to bring you a meaningful and engaging

production that intertwines original content with our traditional Yom HaShoah ceremony. While this year’s commemoration will be virtual, we hope that everyone viewing it at the same moment in time will bring us a sense of experiencing it together as a community.

Please register at jewishedmonton.org

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Passover: Celebrating Jewish values and genesis



Rabbi Zolly Claman

By Rabbi Zolly Claman

Water turning into blood, Pharaoh's stubbornness, Moshe's courage and the splitting of the Red Sea – we are familiar with the general story of the Exodus. After all, for thousands of years Jewish families have been gathering on the night of the 15th of the month of Nissan, to retell and re-experience the Exodus story.

When I was growing up, my family always aimed to make these ancient events

come to life in real-time; red dye in our glasses of water, plastic frogs flying everywhere (often gracefully knocking over cups of wine) and songs that continued well into the wee hours of the morning, reliving the joy and liberty that

was felt by the generation that left Egypt. However, what many of us don't necessarily realize, is that there are many details in the story that are of supreme importance yet are often overlooked. One of these often 'neglected' details, in particular, contextualizes the seder-night for us in a very relevant and impactful way. In preparation for the very first Passover-seder in history, (which was observed by the Jewish people in Egypt the night the Exodus took place) the Jews were commanded to slaughter a lamb, put its blood on their doorposts, and then eat the lamb at their seder. This became the annual practice of the pascal lamb offering, which is referenced heavily in the Hagadda on seder-night. Why were they specifically told to use a lamb, and what is the message of painting blood on the doorposts?

Jewish sources reveal that the lamb was chosen because the Egyptians worshipped the sheep. Placing the sheep's blood on the doorpost was a way for the Jews to clearly state that, in their houses, the people didn't follow the Egyptians or their gods.

But this explanation only brings about a new question, just as significant as the first: Why did the Egyptian nation, the greatest civilization of its time, worship sheep as gods? Was it just an empty source of spirituality, or did they actually find meaning in something that Jewish values denied?

Perhaps the Egyptians worshipped the sheep not

because they saw them as divine beings, but rather because there was a character trait belonging to sheep that was considered one worthy of worship: the herd mentality. The sheep is a quintessential follower, a species in the habit of walking with the group and being directed by the staff of its shepherd. This mentality adopted by a society leaves no room for moral dilemmas or the temptation to forge a supreme ethical pathway.

The very start of the exodus began with the Jews as a nation rejecting these ideals, and striving to do what's right, not what is politically, emotionally or intellectually easier. This has been the legacy of the Jewish people, a nation that forges its own path, and doesn't simply follow the mores of the time.

Passover is a celebration of the genesis of our people and the values that made us who we are. The seder is when we focus on our responsibility to search out truth and follow it, regardless of the challenges it presents. The map to those truths were given to us at Sinai, just a few days after the Exodus, and have been the Jewish people's guiding light ever since.

With today's struggles, the concept of herd immunity is something we all long for, but in fact maybe what we really need is a dose of a spiritual-vaccination to give us the confidence and courage to remain out of the herd – and continue marching to the beat of our own drum.

Rabbi Zolly Claman is the spiritual leader at Beth Israel Synagogue, Edmonton's Modern Orthodox Congregation.

TT Class of 1979 Reunion - Warm Memories, Laughter and Reflection

By Gary Wolch

On February 28, 2021 the Talmud Torah graduating class of 1979 gathered online for their first reunion since graduating 42 years earlier. Organizers, Gary Wolch and Michelle Gerber (Jampolsky), found it truly heartwarming to see the enthusiasm and interest this reunion generated. Sixteen of twenty-four classmates joined in and others sent updates and well-wishes. Participants 'zoomed in' from three continents and four countries (Canada, USA, Switzerland and Israel).

The reunion began with a musical slideshow bringing back memories of beloved teachers, Purim carnivals, birthday parties and our grade 6 graduation. We reminisced about tongues stuck to frozen monkey bars, hard crusty macaroni and classmates climbing onto the roof of the gym... you really do seem to pick up where you left off.

Each alumni took turns sharing updates and stories about their respective families. We reminisced fondly about our classmate Bonnie Blayways who sadly passed away in 1985. It was a time to boast of success, acknowledge adversity, and occasionally shed a tear.

Since the pandemic started, online TT reunions have become a bit of a phenomenon; in these times of isolation, the warmth of connecting with classmates has taken hold. Should you or your TT class desire assistance in organiz-ing an online reunion please contact Natalie Soroka at the Talmud Torah Society office at (780) 481 3377.



TT Class of 1979 Reunion, February 28, 2021

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Rejoice in the arrival of Spring



Rabbi Gila Caine

By Rabbi Gila Caine

As a child, mornings of the *Seder* night held my favorite moments of preparing for Pesach. As my mom completed any last-minute tasks, my dad, my siblings, and I would burn Chametz in the beautiful Jerusalem springtime.

Like so many others on the street, we would make our little fire and happily throw in all the old bits of bread and cookies. It was always fascinating to watch them char and then disappear in the fire. Often enough we would also add our Lulav, left over from Sukkot, and watch it be consumed in flames.

Why the Lulav? Do you have this custom in your home? If you do not, I invite you to read on to find out how this small act can become a very satisfying way to enhance your understanding of what Pesach is all about. It is also a great way of transforming the burning of food into a much deeper act of leaving winter behind. To unpack it, we first need to understand something about burning

Chametz, and secondly about what function the Lulav and the whole set of *Arbah Minim* / Four Species play in the ritual of Sukkot.

Chametz in this practice has come to symbolize our Yetzer Ha-Ra, that is, our bad inclination getting out of control. In the same way as yeast causes dough to rise, the Yetzer Ha-Ra causes our ego to balloon out of proportion. Pesach is a time to remember that being in true freedom is containing our ego, not being enslaved to it. We do not want to eliminate our ego, just bring it back to its true size. Another understanding speaks to the idea that the Chametz we burn is like leftover sacrificial meat. Meat remaining after the sacrifice could not be consumed, so it had to be burned on the altar. Here chametz isn't a bad thing, but rather a once useful, even holy, thing that has arrived at the end of its time and must be ritually consumed.

Now, for the Lulav, let us remember why we use the Four Species. The festival of Sukkot opens the rainy season in Eretz Israel. (Incidentally, Sukkot used to be the high point of the Autumn festivals now known as the High Holidays.) The Lulav (palm branch), Aravah (willow), Etrog (citrus fruit), and Haddas (myrtle) are central components in the ritual and prayer to bring down rain. Beneath the layers of symbolism built up in the past two millennia, the Four Species are rainmaking tools, probably like the rain sticks in other religious traditions.

So, why do we burn the Lulav, and in some cases the Aravah, with our Chametz? In both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi traditions, the most common answer is that

whatever has been used for sacred work cannot be thrown away disrespectfully. Instead, we must find a respectful way to dispose of it--very much like the sacrificial meat--which is why either the Aravah or the Lulav is used to kindle the fires to burn Chametz, as well as to fire the ovens for baking Matzot.

But why now? Why at Pesach?

At Sukkot we prepare ourselves and begin praying for rain, but at Pesach we stop praying for rain and begin our prayers for dew. Pesach marks the opening of the dry season, when the fields need the warm sun to ripen the barley and wheat, and when every drop of rain might ruin the crop. By burning the Lulav and Aravah in the fire of Chametz (or of Matzah), we recognize what had been useful for us, but must now go and make way for the new thing. We are grateful for the plenty and blessings the winter rains brought into our lives, and we wait to welcome them back again when autumn returns.

But for now we say goodbye, and rejoice in the new fresh life arriving with the spring. Enjoy the freedom to walk around without winter coats, massive boots, or frostbite and the sight of trees and plants (and children and adults) blooming again.

With wishes for a wonderful life-giving Pesach, to you and all your family.

Rabbi Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Congregation.

Reel Mensch Studio creatively meets new needs

By Jared Paull

Reel Mensch Studio celebrated our tenth year in business by involuntarily conducting an experiment: What would happen if we went a full year without being able to gather to film anything. Until the pandemic, we had made our living filming at businesses, weddings, sporting events and the likes. Having that portion of work swiftly taken away was scary. What we didn't anticipate last March was that the shutdown would introduce great opportunity to offer different services that wouldn't have otherwise happened. The Jewish community was integral to this adjustment, just as it had been in helping us get through our very first years in business.

Last March we quickly began to turn some of the community gatherings into virtual events. Along with the highly creative Jay Cairns, we created a very enjoyable JNF Virtual Negev Gala. The forum allowed us to have even more fun with certain characters like honorees Jacob

and Odette Masliyah, and also learn more about their history than we could have at a traditional dinner. This event set the framework for the rest of the year. We decided to use the medium of video and the covid restrictions to offer unique privileged experiences.

This was certainly the year of the live stream. Just within our community, we were proud to offer live streams for JNF, Yom Hashoah, Chabad Chanukah, TBO's high holidays, Aviv's Festival Hatzafon, Bar mitzvahs and weddings. We were proud to be involved with setting up Beth Shalom with their own internal streaming equipment in the sanctuary where my grandparents were married in 1950.

The shutdown also saw many people organizing their homes and many video tapes ended up at our Studio for digitization. So now many more families are enjoying scenes from a time when family could get together. Media digitization was a market I was very hesitant to enter, especially since our competition is Costco.

My partner Mike Kravetsky was insistent we do, and without this market, the year would have been very difficult. We are now one of Western Canada's highest volume media digitization stores. We transfer everything from VHS and camcorder tapes, to 8mm silent film and photo slides so you can share them with family via email or memory stick. Many families told me they spent their holidays watching home movies on zoom together.

As we look forward to better times, and it feels as though they are coming, we are very grateful to the community who has patronized and supported our biz especially this year, but for the entire decade. The support began for me personally when Deb Shatz (founder of this newspaper) gave me my first paid videography gig when I was 9 years old. The support from the Jewish institutions and individuals has been consistent since then, and is immensely appreciated.

Jared Paull is President and Head Producer at Reel Mensch Studio, reelmensch.com.



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For more information, visit jewishedmonton.org or contact Tal Toubiana at talt@edjfed.org



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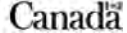
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JFED: Together – as a community – we can persevere

By Steve Shafir and Stacey Leavitt-Wright



Steve Shafir



Stacey Leavitt-Wright

Passover is upon us, and a swift year has passed since we all had to pivot and switch to seders with extended family and friends over zoom and face time. From a holiday that focuses on freedom, we can find much needed inspiration as we slowly emerge from this pandemic with feelings of liberation with looming vaccinations and anticipated interactions and activities with friends and loved ones. Just like our ancestors coming out of Egypt, we are not sure where we are going and what our new reality will be as a society and as a community. Together, as a community, we can persevere.

We in Canada are blessed to have many freedoms, including the ability to elect our leaders, practice our religion, travel and more. As many of you will recall this was not the case for the Jewry in the Soviet Union. 44 years ago, Natan Sharansky was arrested by the KGB and accused of being a traitor to the communist state and party. The unity of the world-wide movement to free Soviet Jewry was a discussion we had with Natan's daughter Rachel Sharansky Danziger as part of our Jewish speakers series.

While we were youth in that era, we remember the letter writing campaigns and the bracelets being worn with "dissident" names on them. People now lament that was a unifying time for Jews and wonder what it will take to bring us that sense of unity once more.

It was poignant to listen to Rachel tell us of her parents' story and explain that although the movement was a time of unity, there was much dissension and disagreement on how to achieve their goals. She informed us of how she has since grappled with the concept of unity and what this means in current times. The 'aha moment' came when reflecting on an experience she had as a teen in support of her father seeking, of all things, unity within the Israeli government. As a result of the political discord, Natan Sharansky left the Knesset and pitched a 'unity tent' across the street. Rachel joined her father and learned a great deal interacting with the public. She conversed with people who supported her father's push for unity and heard the venomous shouting from those who opposed him. This clarified for her that one can choose to be a shouter or one can choose to be part of the tent. She quickly learned that Unity is not Uniformity. Unity does not mean we share the same opinion, but that we share the same commitment to a cause.

The tent Rachel spoke of, literally and now metaphorically, is one that we are striving for at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. We share a commitment to a common cause: We want a healthy and sustainable Jewish Edmonton now and into the future.

The Jewish people have a history filled with tents – from Jacob, to Moshe, to the holiday of Sukkot. It is now time for us at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, to pitch our tent. Just like family, we intend to listen and to engage in conversation with the entire community. Our philosophy and approach is to share the tent.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is embarking on a strategic planning process. We have currently formed a committee and are working with a consultant, former CEO of the Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal (JFC-UIA) Linda Kislowicz, to assist us in this endeavour. A combination of data collection methods will include focus groups and a broad community survey. We are seeking input as we determine what our strategic priorities will be as we move forward and consider the needs and priorities of the community as we emerge from the pandemic. We hope that you will join us in the tent and be part of this conversation.

We would like to wish you a Chag Pesach Sameach, that you are able to celebrate Passover in a way that is meaningful to you and your families. Not only will we say "Next Year in Jerusalem," we might even add "Beyachad," as together, we can get through this unprecedented time, and hopefully, just hopefully, we will be able to congregate "Beyachad" in the months to come.

Steve Shafir is the President of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and Stacey Leavitt-Wright is the CEO.

JFSC Speaker Series

Cont. from page 2

social prescriptions versus medical prescriptions. And then let's just sing...

We are thrilled to have Tom return to JFSC, lending us positive energy during these difficult times, inspiring us with his passion for mental health, the importance of philan-thropy and showcasing his enormous talents. He has the gift to motivate us to be active members of our communities. Special thank you to our sponsor Jenny Belzberg.

Karen Gosbee had it all – a successful husband, three beautiful children, the homes, the cars, the jewelry, the A-list invitations. Her life looked perfect, and as her husband George liked to say, "appearances are everything." But they're not.

Having been exposed to mental health and substance

abuse both in her childhood and adult life, Karen has extensive lived experience.

We are honoured to have Karen Gosbee join us on May 6, 2021 to speak about mental health, reducing stigmas and building community resiliency. Karen took her challenging high-profile life experiences and made a personal commitment to improve the quality of life for those directly and indirectly affected by mental illness and addiction. Special thank you to sponsors Raechelle and Lorne Paperny and Rose Zivot.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer may best be known for having pioneered talking explicitly about sex on radio and television, but as it turns out, that is only a small part of her rich and diversified life.

An Alzheimer's Caregiving Authority, Dr. Ruth has done extensive work on developing effective coping strategies for Alzheimer's care. She provides health-guided advice and coping strategies for caregivers looking after loved ones with this devastating illness.

With our new Memory Care Program in place, we are excited to hear Dr. Ruth's sage advice on October 17, 2021 in this growing social service area. Special thank you to our Anonymous Donor.

We are grateful for the support from the Sam Ousher Switzer z"l Charitable Foundation. Proceeds from "Making a Difference" will support JFSC's Family Enrichment Program, which provides a wide variety of services for individuals and families, with the goal of strengthening skills and connections while decreasing risk factors.

Although our Passover Seders will look a lot different again this year, we have the opportunity to look at the silver linings from our Covid experiences and we see hope for our future.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים! Next year in Jerusalem!

To Purchase Tickets for "Making a Difference", or for more information on our programs and services www.jfsc.org, or contact Peta at petag@jfsc.org, 403-692-6389.

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Our cover artist: Lori Loebelsohn



Lori Loebelsohn

Lori Loebelsohn’s art can be seen as storytelling through the careful application of color and form; with the use of symbols and details it becomes a “life story map” that features significant moments and events fashioning the portrait of a life. Although her paintings are complex, she keeps the composition flowing by preparing several preliminary sketches until she achieves an overall harmony in the design. When completed the finished work reads as a tenderly created whole that tells a delicate story.

Lori is a professional artist who specializes in creating Ketubot and other Judaic art. She enjoys working collaboratively with her clients to achieve unique painterly designs that blend ritual with important personal symbols. These works include a personalized Haggadah, home blessings, and many unique pieces for major life cycle events such as weddings, b’nai mitzvot, births, and milestone birthdays and anniversaries. Lori received her BFA from the Cooper Union School of Art.

“I was fortunate to have had wonderful and encouraging art teachers not only in art school, but also in public school. They exposed me to the Old Masters, Modern art and the importance of art in society. I watched my mother work painstakingly in her studio creating beautiful fashion

illustrations for Vogue and Bergdorf Goodman. I could feel the love of art in my blood. The idea of creating something brand new that has never existed before, especially when so many things are now mass produced, has always been extremely satisfying.”

Since 2005, she has focused on creating symbolic portraits that she calls, “Life Cycle Portraits”. These paintings include stories, memories and images that are symbolic representations of a person’s life or an important life cycle event. Her work has been greatly influenced by early American quilts, medieval Ketubot, stained glass and illuminated manuscripts. This body of work has evolved to include both religious and secular themes, as well as personal symbols.

Lori thoroughly contemplates the “family” of colors and the kind of mood she wants to create, with the main goal of maintaining a sense of color harmony in the overall painting. Her palette is determined by the subject matter and the feeling that she wants to achieve.

She views it as an honor that her work is being used as part of many life-cycle celebrations. Long after the celebration is over, her painting remains as a reminder of that special time.

“My wish is that when people look at their painting through the years it brings back the feeling they had of that happy occasion,” says Lori. “I am glad that my work is accessible to so many people. Also, I enjoy integrating seemingly disparate influences like stained glass and illuminated manuscripts into a painting and still have the painting feel whole. I plan to continue working in this way, but I hope to continue to evolve by experimenting with new techniques and materials in the future.”

Art and Scroll Studio is a monthly live Zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Arts.



Plagues by Lori Loebelsohn

Each episode features an outstanding artist as they “show and tell” the arc of their career and their work. The artist answers questions about their passion, their history and their craft. The backstory of the work accompanies presentation of the images with interesting and engaging dialogue.

Lori Loebelsohn is the featured guest artist on Art and Scroll Studio March 17,2021 at 7:00 pm MST. For free tickets please register at <http://bit.ly/Getticketshere>

Jewish Studies Week returns to U of A virtually: March 23-25

Jewish Studies Week returns to the University of Alberta - virtually – from March 23 to 25. Presented by the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, this annual series brings together three expert speakers in a trio of virtual lectures and Q&A sessions to explore a breadth of topics across Jewish history, literature, and culture.

This year’s lineup includes renowned historian Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator, POLIN Museum Core Exhibition and University Professor Emerita and Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at New York University. Professor Kirshenblatt-Gimblett will deliver the 2021 Tova Yedlin lecture “Coming of Age: Jewish Youth in Poland between the War” on March 23 live via Zoom.

On March 24, hosted by Dr. Peter Sabo, Belzberg Lecturer of Jewish Studies at the University of Alberta, Professor Vered Weiss, Israel Institute Teaching Fellow in the Department of Jewish Studies at SF State, will present “Juda and the New Jew: Undead Jewish Israeli Identities.” This virtual talk will explore the 2017 Israeli television series *Juda* as a platform for social critique, and exposes the productive use of the vampire as means to address

antisemitism and reconsider social boundaries. Content warning: the presentation will discuss sex and violence and will contain spoilers for first season of *Juda*.

The Annual Central European Art History Lecture concludes the series on March 25. In her talk “Rethinking Jewish Space in Vienna before 1938” Professor Lisa Silverman explores how texts including newspaper articles, novels, caricatures, and maps created by both Jews and non-Jews reveal the significance of the coding of space as “Jewish” or “not Jewish,” both inside and outside

Vienna, particularly after the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918. Professor Silverman is associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Contributing Editor of the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book for Central European Jewish history. This talk is co-sponsored by the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta.

Registration is required but all events are free to attend and open to the general public.



Best wishes for a Happy Passover,
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Jewish Studies Week 2021

Tuesday, March 23 @ 3:00 pm MST
Annual Tova Yedlin Lecture
Live Zoom Webinar and Q&A

**Coming of Age:
Jewish Youth
in Poland
between the Wars**



Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator, POLIN Museum Core Exhibition and University Professor Emerita and Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at New York University.

Wednesday, March 24 @ 3:00 pm MST
Live Zoom Webinar and Q&A



**Juda and the New Jew:
Undead Jewish Israeli Identities**

Vered Weiss is the Israel Institute Teaching Fellow in the Department of Jewish Studies at SF State.

Thursday, March 25 @ 1:30 pm MST
Live Zoom Webinar and Q&A



**Rethinking Jewish Space in
Vienna before 1938**

Lisa Silverman is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Contributing Editor of the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book for Central European Jewish history and culture.

Visit ualberta.ca/wirth-institute to register!

Online Hate Has Gone Viral During COVID



Judy Zelikovitz

By Judy Zelikovitz

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been confronted by two viruses: COVID-19 and, in its wake, the rampant spread of online hate.

As much of the world has been forced indoors, our time on the Internet using social media has increased, which has advantages. We have found news ways to engage, stay in touch with our loved

ones, and maintain and transform our connections to our workplaces and the world.

But the same technologies that have allowed us keep connected have also served as springboards for the spread of online hate and conspiracy theories, which form the perfect Venn diagram of antisemitism. Since the pandemic broke, we have witnessed the emergence of ludicrous conspiracy theories accusing Jews of being responsible for the spread of COVID-19 or of profiting from the havoc. As a community that has consistently encouraged compliance with public health measures, we may be

tempted to dismiss these outlandish conspiracy theories as nonsense. It is a type of nonsense, however, that spreads quickly and remains a cause for great concern.

Recent history has taught us that what begins online as the absurd mutterings of a few haters can, and too often does, turn into real-world violence.

What we witnessed in Pittsburgh, Christchurch, and Halle can certainly happen again. The threat is even greater today because people are spending more time online while also under considerable financial and emotional stress, a combination that makes people even more susceptible to messages online hate-mongers are peddling.

Curbing online hate has been a priority for our community – and therefore for CIJA – for nearly a decade. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have remain-ed on high alert, monitoring the emergence of anti-semitic and hateful activity and bringing it to the attention of law enforcement and social media platforms.

Recently, we launched *Stop the Transmission!* a campaign powered by CIJA and funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Anti-Racism Action Program. The campaign has provided practical tools and tips to hundreds of thousands of Canadians to identify and slow the spread of conspir-acy theories, misinfor-mation, and deliberate disinformation.

We have also engaged directly with social media giants and are proud to have collaborated with our colleagues at the World Jewish Congress to urge Facebook to ban Holocaust denial, one of the most pernicious forms of Jew-hatred, from their platform, an action they took earlier this year.

We continue to call on social media companies to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the most widely

accepted definition in use today, including by the Government of Canada who adopted it as formal policy in its 2019 Anti-Racism Strategy. In response to the global collective effort of our community, Facebook’s COO Sheryl Sandberg said that “the IHRA’s working definition of anti-Semitism has been invaluable – both in informing our own approach” and that Facebook would “continue to refine” its “policy lines as speech and society evolve.”

A continuing aspect of our work is advocating for governments to advance policies to address online hate directly. Federally, we continue our call for a national strategy on online hate that includes clear, harmonized, and uniform regulations that apply to platforms and providers operating in Canada as well as an independent regulator to enforce them.

You can help by visiting www.notonmyfeed.ca and Taking Action!

CIJA is also working with the Department of Canadian Heritage to host the *Action Summit to Combat Online Hate*, scheduled for April 14-15. You can pre-register here.

The Action Summit will feature discussions with renowned experts, law enforcement, industry leaders, and community groups like ours. The goals are to create greater understanding of the issue and develop concrete actions to address it.

Even once the pandemic is over, our migration to the digital world will endure. We therefore must stay committed and united in our efforts to combat antisemitism and other forms of hatred online.

Judy Zelikovitz is the Vice President, University and Local Partner Services at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Our Parents Home offers a fresh take

By Jay Somerset

For Edmonton seniors looking for a fresh take on retirement living, it doesn’t get any better than Our Parents’ Home. Designed for seniors living active, independent lives, the 14-storey residence offers breathtaking views and modern style—conveniently located right near the heart of downtown Edmonton.

First opened in 2015, Our Parents’ Home was recently acquired by Revera. For the residents who call it home, this change in management transformed what it means to live in a retirement community. But while the change brought updated features and services, the building retains its Jewish heritage—with a kosher kitchen, well-stocked library featuring a Jewish section, and a close relationship with Edmonton’s Jewish community.

Ideal for seniors who wish to fully enjoy their freedom, privacy and independence, Our Parents’ Home features an array of on-site amenities, including hair salon, art studio, library, theater area and fitness centre. There’s also a full-time concierge, private-car service, and heated underground parking. There’s also a large boardroom that residents can book for family meetings.

Chic and stylish, Our Parents’ Home reflects the spirited lifestyle of its residents. Stroll the hallways and large, open spaces and you’ll encounter original paintings by artist Morry Marcovitch. But it’s not until you take one of the three elevators to the 14th floor that the sense of community is fully revealed.

It’s on the top floor where the action is. Here, residents enjoy everything from a leisurely continental breakfast in the bistro, to summertime barbecues served up by our chefs in the rooftop outdoor terrace. It’s here that residents toast each other during the weekly happy hour, or sing along to the sweet tones reverberating from the grand piano. The space also includes a theatre area for watching movies, and room for activities including yoga, bingo, and Zumba. For those keen on some quiet time, there’s plenty of comfy nooks and cozy chairs to settle in with your favourite book, or to take in the panoramic views of the cityscape.

The suites are equally impressive, with lots of natural light thanks to the large windows, and a range of living

options depending on your preferences and needs. Of the 132 units, 84 are designated for independent living, with full kitchens, a choice of one or two bedrooms, in-suite laundry walk-in showers. All rooms include climate control, basic cable, 24/7 nursing and on-site LPN staff. There’s also specially designed suites for designated assisted living or memory care—with a dedicated doctor.

Like all Revera residences, Our Parents’ Home offers resident-centric care designed to meet your changing needs. The LiveWell program takes a holistic approach to health and wellness, taking into account the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of each resident. The residence also offers onsite healthcare and wellness services, including 24-hour nursing and an onsite doctor for memory care and designed assisted living residents.

When it comes to dining, it’s all about choice and delicious, chef-made meals prepared in either our kosher kitchen or our large commercial kitchen. There’s daily and seasonal specials, as well as monthly menus. Residents enjoy plated service in the main dining room, and can also order room service or enjoy a bite up in the bistro. Feel like cooking? The in-suite kitchens are fully equipped with everything you need.

Ideal for seniors living an active, social lifestyle, Our Parents’ Home offers the best in retirement living.

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CMDA conversation with Lenny Shapiro

Mr. Lenny Shapiro and his wife Faigel have supported CMDA for almost 50 years. Recently they donated an emergency medical scooter and an emergency ambulance.

CMDA interviewed Mr. Shapiro for the Passover edition of Lifeline. Their conversation appears below.

CMDA: Thank you to you and Faigel for your many years of support for CMDA. Why did you pick CMDA?

Shapiro: It is a remarkable organization, founded 90 years with the mandate to save the lives of all citizens of Israel, regardless of race, colour or social-economic group. CMDA is there for all Israelis.

CMDA: The organization relies on the work and efforts of volunteers like yourself.

Shapiro: There are dozens of Canadians doing their part for CMDA but what is amazing is the story in Israel. Most people do not realize that MDA has more than 25,000 volunteers helping to run the organization. Without these volunteers, MDA could not function.

CMDA: While Israel has been, a world leader in getting its citizens vaccinated against COVID-19, for MDA the challenge continues.

Shapiro: That's right. MDA has been on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19 in Israel from the very beginning. Of course as first responders to most emergency medical incidents, our staff and volunteers are coming face to face with many COVID patients every day. That does take a toll on the staff both mentally

and physically.

CMDA: Why is the work of CMDA so vital?

Shapiro: Let us remember that MDA is Israeli's national emergency medical service but it is funded through donations and the generosity of supporters. The money we raise in Canada is used to purchase ambulances, emergency medical scooters, and countless other pieces of essential medical equipment.

CMDA: What is the focus for you this Passover?

Shapiro: The need is always growing, but this Pesach we're asking people to support CMDA by contributing to the purchase of life saving portable defibrillators. We know how effective these devices are at saving lives. Unfortunately, there is a shortage in Israel so we are asking Canadians for help end that shortage.

CMDA: What other things are CMDA doing in Western Canada?

Shapiro: We are reaching out to the community as often as we can. In fact, I am so proud of the efforts of Sharon Fraiman, CMDA Director, Western Canada and Don Sharp, Alberta Health Services Paramedic for their dedication in pre-senting our "First 7 Minutes" program to community leaders and supporters through the west. While COVID has slowed things down in 2020, the program has been presented to leaders in dozens of communities.



Honourary Chair of the CMDA Calgary Chapter, Lenny & Faigel Shapiro with Sharon Fraiman, CMDA Canadian Western Regional Director.

CMDA: is there anything you would like to add "Mr. Shapiro?"

Shapiro: On behalf of Faigel and myself, I want to wish everyone a very happy Pesach. It looks like this will be another year of virtual Seders but things are looking better. I would also like to encourage both past and new donors to find out more about CMDA and to support our efforts in Israel.

CMDA: Thank you and Chag Pesach samaiach to you as well.

Jewish highlights at the Grammys

By Emily Burack

(JTA) — When the Jewish sister act Haim took the stage at the 2021 Grammy Awards on Sunday night, Americans began googling "hime."

That's how host Trevor Noah pronounced the group's name, which is the last name of the sisters and the Hebrew word for life. Though the sisters did not win in either of the categories in which they were nominated, they celebrated their friend Taylor Swift's win backstage.

The ceremony, of course, was unusual: There was no audience, the nominees sat outdoors at socially distant tables and the awards were announced by people involved

with local music venues across the country.

Yet it was still a riveting spectacle, and other awards shows held during the COVID-19 pandemic pale in comparison: By having attendees in person, viewers were treated to a mix of incredible performances and live acceptance speeches that were not streamed from a living room.

There were stand-out Jewish performers, though not many Jewish musicians took home trophies.

The performances

For Haim's first-ever Grammy's performance, the group chose "The Steps" from their album "Women in Music Pt. III."

Doja Cat, making her Grammys debut, performed her hit "Say So" near the end of the show in a futuristic latex suit, including the TikTok dance that helped the song go viral. She also teased her next album, "Planet Her."

Jack Antonoff, the Jewish producer, joined Taylor Swift

for her performance along with Jewish musician Aaron Dessner.

"We've only gotten to be together in the same room once, so this is really awesome to get to be together with them again," Swift said of performing with Antonoff and Dessner. "We're quarantining in the same house, we're getting tested every day. It's just really exciting, honestly, to play music with your collaborators. That's something that I will never, ever take for granted again."

The winners

Though many Jewish artists were nominated — from Haim to Doja Cat — not many won. The notable Jewish winners were Antonoff and Dessner, who were key parts of Swift's Album of the Year win for "Folklore."

Ahead of the ceremony, comedian Tiffany Haddish won for best comedy album for her Netflix special "Black Mitzvah" released in December 2019. Haddish celebrated her bat mitzvah on the same day the Netflix

Continued on page 22

Shalom! Happy Passover



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EJFF celebrates 25 years: Save the dates May 2 - 11

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

Hey Edmonton Jewish community, it's that time again. You can start getting excited, and mark your calendars for May 2 - 11, because the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival is gearing up for its 25th anniversary – and the 2021 lineup promises to be a smash hit.

The films selected for this momentous year are as diverse as they are gripping; seven full-length features, four shorts, and two Earl Parker Award winning short-films. Festivalgoers will be able to take in this audio-visual voyage from the comfort of their own sofas and participate in virtual discussions – and all this, entirely free of charge!

Sam Koplowicz, the Festival's Chair explained that because of last year's free virtual delivery, attendees were not limited to Edmontonians.

"We had viewers from across Canada, the US, and some from Israel. We didn't anticipate another online year, but we have adapted," remarked Koplowicz. "I'm focused on the fact that we have seven really interesting full-length films, and some compelling shorts. We've achieved an amazing balance of narratives and documentaries."


"Last year, to ensure that the Festival happened we needed to make an eleventh-hour pivot," commented Susan Schiffman, the Director of Development at the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival.

"Many other festivals were forced to cancel in 2020, while we had our most well attended year to date." Schiffman attributes some of this success to last year's completely virtual festival format, which she believes, was able to engage wider demographic.

"Parents didn't need to schedule babysitters, they could pause the films if they needed to, while seniors who preferred not to drive downtown were able to attend from home. So, we had people participating who normally may



The 2020 Human Rights documentary "Shared Legacies" will be one of the feature films of the upcoming Edmonton Jewish Film Festival.



Edmonton's New Jewish Cemetery The Next 100 Years

Site work for Edmonton's new Jewish Cemetery got underway in Summer 2020.

The current Jewish Cemetery has served the needs of the community for more than 100 years, but will soon run out of room for new burials.

Fortunately, the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha has been preparing for this time.

Land for the new Cemetery was purchased almost 20 years ago and two-thirds of the anticipated cost is already in place.

An additional \$1 million needs to be raised this year.

This is your opportunity to participate in the next historic chapter; laying the foundation for the next 100 years of the Edmonton Jewish Cemetery.

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not have. Not to mention that we provided all of this for free in order to uplift our community."

"The Landmark Cinema, the theatre we usually rent, seats 200 people, and with our virtual delivery last year we had something around 5,000 attendees," explained Koplowicz.

The Jewish Federation is committed to supporting those in need of positive experiences during this tumultuous time.

"People just need to register once," he noted, "and then they will be able to access all of the films we are featuring, each during a designated ten-hour window. We will host, what we are calling, Virtual Lobby sessions so that after the film they can still chat about their impressions, just as we would have if we were at the Downtown theatre."

Schiffman explained that even in isolation people will still be able to experience the robustness of the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival – just with some small adaptations. "It is our 25th anniversary, so it is disappointing to have some very obvious limita-tions, but with the success of last year, we are anticipating some record-breaking attendance."

"We are so lucky, because we have an extremely enthusiastic community," said Koplowicz with pride. "The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival is the second most attended community event of the year (after Heritage Festival)."

The Federation will be approaching other community-based groups that may share interest in some of the themes dealt with in this year's lineup.

"The film we will be showing on the first night of the Festival is called *Shared Legacies: The African-American Jewish Civil Rights Alliance*," continued Schiffman. "When we were previewing films, everyone was especially enthusiastic about this one."

Koplowicz added that: "Some of us are old enough to remember the Civil Rights Movement, and seeing what an impact American Jews had on supporting these efforts was truly inspiring – this film is a timely addition to this year's Festival."



Festival Chair Sam Koplowicz

The Federation hopes that their efforts will allow community members to feel a sense of togetherness through a shared, enriching online experience. Schiffman believes that even when it is possible to organize an in-person festival again, that they may still choose to schedule some virtual content.

"People have asked me if we might consider a hybrid delivery in the future."

Those who wish to offer their sponsorship to the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival are still encouraged to contribute if possible. "We hope to cover the costs of delivery, but we are also collecting for the Federation's COVID Resiliency and Recovery Program." The Program would support those from the community adversely impacted by the pandemic and suffering financial strain. This year's milestone Edmonton Jewish Film Festival may be free, but those who would like to give, are invited to contact Susan Schiffman at susans@edjfed.org.

To register to watch the Festival, visit JewishEdmonton.org.

Alberta Jewish News extends a hearty mazel tov to the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival on 25 amazing years, and many more to come. Stay tuned for more updates and announcements from the Festival's team of dedicated organizers.

Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

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Did Moshe have to pay tax to Pharoh?

By Michael Sadovnick

I was reviewing the story of Passover when I thought about a taxpayer who I spoke to a number of years ago, who lived in Canada for 170 days, another country for 170 days and travelled for 25 days a year. According to him, this means he is not resident of any country and does not have to pay taxes in Canada or the other country. He thought he was a genius (I disagreed). This story got me thinking that it may be fun to write about tax residency – so let’s apply the tests to our Passover hero Moshe who was born and raised in Egypt (he likely had citizenship as he was adopted by the daughter of the Pharaoh). Moshe fled Egypt in his youth, returning when he was around 80, only to come back and free a good chunk of the slave population. While he may have been banished for this, immigration rules and tax rules do not always match up.

Let’s also assume that Canadian tax rules apply to Egypt and the Sinai desert 2500 years ago.

The reason residency is so important for tax is because countries generally like to tax people on their worldwide income, regardless of where they earned the income. However, that privilege is only available to the country in which you are tax resident. The other country, gets to tax the income you earn in their country but not your worldwide income. (Of course the US is an exemption as they tax worldwide income of US persons, but I am pretty sure Moshe was not a US person).

To determine where Moshe has to pay tax, we first have to look at the domestic tax rules. We will assume that 2500 years ago the rules mirrored Canada’s current rules - but of course that may not be true.

We know that Moshe has been living in Sinai since he fled Egypt after killing a fellow Egyptian. Moshe left behind his sister (Miriam) and brother (Aaron). While he was gone though, he did marry Tzipora and had two sons. While living away from Egypt, one could argue that Moshe never really left Egypt (he never severed his ties), as he would return to free his relatives from slavery - although maybe this was not something he intended to do when he left, the fact he did return though would likely be an important factor to consider.

One way to be resident is to be “ordinarily resident”

which CRA interprets as “the place where in the settled routine of [one’s] life [one] regularly, normally or customarily lives.” Given that Moshe was gone long enough from Egypt for them to forget that he killed an Egyptian and a new Pharaoh rose to power, this should indicate that Moshe was resident in Sinai. However, CRA also states that “ordinary residence can best be appreciated by considering its antithesis, occasional or casual or deviatory residence. The latter would seem clearly to be not only temporary in time and exceptional in circumstances, but also accompanied by a sense of transitoriness and of return.” [Common issue for students abroad]. Moshe’s time in Sinai was likely transitory for not just him but the entire world; he was really just on his way to Israel was he not? Maybe Egypt does have a case that he is still taxable in that country – after all he is a citizen and lives a temporary nomadic lifestyle in the desert.

Also working against Moshe is the fact that he probably maintains residential ties to Egypt given that his siblings are still there and of course he is the one who is going to deliver the slaves from Egypt. A downside of a tax audit is that the auditor often has the benefit of hindsight. But, then again, the fact that Moshe’s wife and kids are outside of Egypt probably counteracts this issue.

However, Moshe may actually want to argue he is taxable in Egypt as the clerics have been exempt from tax since the time of Joseph. OK – let’s say that it is not quite clear. He could be resident of either. The next test is normally where does he have a permanent home?

Well, he has a home in the Sinai, but does he not also have a home in Egypt (perhaps even a palace) or a place he can stay with his siblings? Likely the argument would point to Sinai based on the permanent home test – but for fun let’s say it is inconclusive.

Next big test is generally where is the center of Moshe’s vital interests. In this test we look at his personal and economic ties. While his wife and children are in Sinai, he is also employed by G-d, to free his family and relatives from slavery and lead them to get the Torah and take them to Israel – was that job based in Egypt, Sinai or Israel? Maybe he only left Egypt temporarily because he was away for training for his job? Ok – let’s hope the third test helps.

Where are you a National? Wow – what a loaded a question for Jews. While Moshe is likely a national and citizen of Egypt, maybe his nationality is more tied to the Jews in slavery (who are in Egypt).

Final test? If agreement cannot be reached, then it is up to the two countries to mutually decide. In this case, after

Purim at TT



This Talmud Torah student won our hearts for best Purim costume. Did he know we need a student intern?

the plagues, I assume Pharaoh will abide by G-d’s decision, and I expect G-d will determine Moshe only has to pay taxes to the temple not a foreign power.

With that, I want to wish everyone a Happy Passover and a Chag Purim Sameach!

Michael Sadovnick CPA, CA, CPA(AZ), TEP, FEA is a Tax Partner at Sadovnick Morgan LLP serving BC and Alberta clients and can be reached at michael@smllp.ca



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To register for the event, email Dr. Peter Sabo at psabo@ualberta.ca



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Just in time for Passover – a kosher instant pot cookbook

By Deborah Shatz

The first Instant Pot® cookbook to feature kosher food has hit the market - just in time for Pesach - and it is definitely a winner! Cooking maven Paula Shoyer has expertly developed a robust array of both traditional and contemporary kosher recipes for the king of all kitchen appliances: the Instant Pot®!

Buy it for yourself or get it for a friend or family member. It's a win win for everyone.

Jewish food and the Instant Pot® are a natural fit, explains Shoyer. So many traditional Jewish dishes are soups and stews—prepared before Friday night and kept warm throughout Shabbat, when observant Jews aren't allowed to cook—and that's the sweet spot of the Instant Pot®.

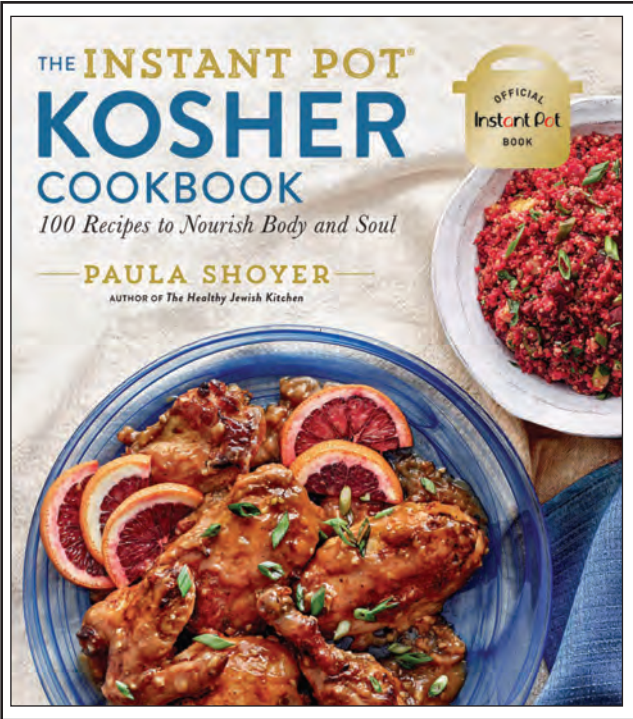
For decades, Jewish families have relied on slow cookers to achieve the soft, flavor-filled stews of their ancestors, but they lamented the time required. Now, the Instant Pot® allows for vastly shorter cooking times without compromising flavor or texture.

The Instant Pot ® Kosher Cookbook, published by Sterling Publishing, includes timeless Jewish favorites

tailored to this modern appliance: stuffed cabbage, Israeli cooked salads, corned beef, brisket, cholent, Yemenite and Persian beef and lamb stews, chicken soup, beet soup, kasha varnishkes, tzimmes, even apple cake. There are weeknight meals as well as recipes for Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, and Passover, along with kosher versions of international classics such as lasagna, sesame noodles, arroz con pollo, Asian noodle soups, and risotto - all expertly and deliciously adapted to the Instant Pot®.

Paula Shoyer graduated from the Ritz Escoffier pastry program in Paris and teaches French and Jewish baking classes in the Washington, DC, area. She conducts large-scale baking demonstrations across the United States and Canada.

Paula is the author of *The New Passover Menu*, *The Holiday Kosher Baker*, *The Kosher Baker*, and *The Healthy Jewish Kitchen*. She is a contributing editor to *kosherscoop.com*, as well *Joy of Kosher with Jamie Geller*, *Whisk*, and *Hadassah*. She has appeared on major TV cooking shows, is a frequent TV news guest, and edited the popular cookbooks *Kosher by Design Entertains* and *Kosher by Design Kids in the Kitchen*. Shoyer lives in Chevy Chase, MD. To learn more about Paula Shoyer, visit thekosherbaker.com.



Jewish nominees

Cont. from page 5

Israeli and Palestinian short films score nominations

The Israeli short film “White Eye” is up for best live-action short film. It’s the story of Omer (Daniel Gad), a Mizrahi man whose bicycle is stolen. He spots his bike outside a factory and calls the police on an African migrant worker, Yunes (Dawit Tekelaeb), setting off a chain of events out of Omer’s control.

“The story actually happened to me,” Tomer Shushan, the film’s writer and director, told Jewish Insider. “I found myself fighting to get my bike back, and I almost made a man go to jail, to be deported from Israel. I just sat down like one hour after the situation and I wrote the script in 40 minutes.”

Competing against “White Eye” in the same category is the Palestinian short film “The Present,” which is directed by the Palestinian British filmmaker Farah Nabulsi. It tells the tale of Yusuf (Saleh Bakri) and his daughter,

Yasmine (Mariam Kanj), who set out to buy his wife a gift. They navigate Israeli soldiers and military checkpoints in their frustrating attempt.

“You can portray checkpoints with all the facts and figures – a woman can give birth at a checkpoint; people can’t get to work or whatever. But you go stand at a checkpoint, it’s a very different perception to what the facts and figures provide. It was this life-changing trip, it had such an impact on me and I came back and battled with it for two years,” Nabulsi explained of her inspiration to make the film.

The first scene in “The Present” is filmed at a Bethlehem checkpoint.

Diane Warren gets her 12th best original song nomination

The Jewish songwriter Diane Warren was nominated for “To si (Seen)” for the Sophia Loren Holocaust film “The Life Ahead.” She shares the nomination with singer Laura Pausini; it was the film’s only nomination.

Warren has been nominated a dozen times over three decades but failed to take home a statuette. This could be the year: She won a Golden Globe in February.



Sacha Baron Cohen as Abbie Hoffman in "The Trial of the Chicago 7." (Nico Tavernise/Netflix)

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Switzer Foundation provides tablets to Calgary seniors

By Maxine Fischbein

During his long and remarkable life, the late Sam “Ousher” Switzer generously supported those in need; initiatives geared toward the most vulnerable, including seniors, were a priority for the larger-than-life and fondly-remembered Calgary entrepreneur and philanthropist who passed away in June, 2018 at the age of 92.

In keeping with his track record as a community builder – and an avid Beth Tzedec “regular” – the Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation has been helping seniors at Calgary’s Beth Tzedec Synagogue tune in to Shabbat and Holiday live streaming prayer services with the push of a button on customized, user-friendly Microsoft Surface tablets.

The project is the brainchild of Calgary lawyer Joshua Switzer, one of Ousher's grandchildren. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread last spring, making in-person attendance at Shul services a risky choice for older adults and those with underlying health conditions, Joshua Switzer wanted to find a way to keep seniors connected with their congregational family.

The tablets purchased by Beth Tzedec, with the generous support of the Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation, are lent to congregants on a temporary basis. For now, the devices are pre-loaded with an app that takes them to live streaming Shabbat and Holiday prayer services only, though the foundation and Beth Tzedec are contemplating future value-adds, including access to synagogue classes and cultural programs.

Even when the COVID-19 pandemic becomes a thing of the past, congregants with mobility or other health issues can benefit from the tablets says Ousher Switzer's daughter, Darlene Switzer Foster, who chairs her father's eponymous foundation with the assistance of her daughter, Edmonton-based pediatrician Dr. Sarah Foster, and her nephew, Joshua Switzer.

"It is important as our elderly age that they can continue to participate meaningfully in our Synagogue and community while staying safe," Joshua Switzer told *Alberta Jewish News*.

Beth Tzedec Executive Director Max Lipsman had previously envisioned the funding of big-screen smart TVs in dedicated spaces at local seniors facilities with Jewish residents. That way, Jewish seniors could maintain their sense of community by coming together to celebrate Shabbat and Holidays face-to-face while participating in the live streaming services.

That vision had to morph as COVID-19 outbreaks in seniors homes led to lockdowns, leaving residents isolated in their own living spaces.

Beth Tzedec pivoted quickly to the use of technology shortly after the declaration of the pandemic in March 2020. It got the Switzer family wondering how they could help make the technology accessible for seniors so they could remain safe while attending Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services virtually if they were unable, or unwilling, to risk in-person shul attendance.

Lipsman began to work with a tech firm to come up with a tablet that would be simple to use, eliminating potential

frustration for first-time users. An initial three tablets were purchased and ready for lending prior to Rosh Hashanah 5781.

"I'm so proud of the congregation for embracing the technology that allows us to do this," says Darlene Switzer Foster.

"Seniors and others who are shut in due to illness or convalescence can also benefit from the lending program," Switzer Foster said.

It is her hope that, whenever possible, family members will join seniors living at home or in independent living and care facilities, so that they can enjoy the live streaming services together and break down the isolation so many have felt due to intermittent COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdowns.

Right now, the tablets can only be used to access live streaming Synagogue services on Shabbat and Holidays; users cannot access the internet or apps other than the one that is pre-loaded by Beth Tzedec.

"We wanted to keep it simple and avoid viruses," Switzer-Foster said.

Amen to that, in more ways than one!

The lending of tablets is administered by Beth Tzedec, which recently ordered four more devices. There is potential for future expansion as demand grows.

“Anyone who is housebound and wants to borrow one of these tablets should contact us at Beth Tzedec,” says Max Lipsman, who provides the necessary siddurim and chumashim with each tablet. The entire service is provided to congregants free of charge.

What would Ousher Switzer think of the program?

“My Dad was Mr. Plug and Play,” said Darlene Switzer Foster. “He loved what a computer could do and he would have loved this.”

“He would be proud of it,” says Josh Switzer. Seniors were always top of his mind and he really focussed his efforts on protection of the community.”

The Sam Ousher Switzer Foundation actively supports a diverse range of charitable good works with specific focus on advancement of religion and spirituality, poverty relief, and education.

Some initiatives recently funded by the foundation have

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included the purchase of COVID-19 related equipment and supplies for Jewish day schools in Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal. According to Dr. Sarah Foster, the foundation provided grants of \$100 per student to the Edmonton Talmud Torah School, the Edmonton Talmud Torah Early Learning Centre, Calgary's Halpern Akiva Academy, The Calgary Jewish Academy and Montreal's JPPS-Bialik School toward the purchase of COVID-19-related supplies and equipment.

“At the Talmud Torah Day School, we funded touchless water stations and air purifiers,” Foster told *Alberta Jewish News*.

Other schools chose to invest in such safety items as Plexiglas barriers, touchless taps and doors, and hand sanitizer.

The Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation recently gifted Camp BB Riback with significant funds earmarked toward the building of a new dock on the shores of Pine Lake.


In Edmonton, the foundation presented the Jewish Seniors Drop-in Centre with a donation prior to the High Holidays.

Active in both Jewish and civic charitable initiatives, the Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation has also supported the Edmonton Food Bank and Kids Cottage, Foster said, adding that while the previous focus of her grandfather's philanthropy was in Calgary, the foundation wants to also play an active role in supporting the Edmonton community.

Charitable organizations wishing to submit grant applications are encouraged to go to the foundation website at www.samousherswitzercharitablefoundation.com.

Individuals interested in finding out more about virtual synagogue services and the tablet lending program can contact the Beth Tzedec office at info@bethtzedec.ca or 403-255-8688.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.




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Coping *Cont. from page 3*

themselves, Greenspan says.

“Often we put pressure on ourselves to function as we always have and then beat ourselves up when we can’t.”

Greenspan urges us to lower expectations while building confidence in our ability to navigate the pandemic.

“There is no complete health without mental health,” adds Donsky. “And it’s certainly true that there is no mental health without spiritual health. To feel spiritually healthy requires spirit, heart and energy.”

The easily-remembered acronyms SPK (slow, patient, kind) and PBJ (peace, beauty, joy) can guide us through the process of finding the light in the darkness, Donsky says.

Often when we are irritated and stressed, we speed things up, says Donsky. We try to leap into the future so we can fix it. In the process, we run away from what is. Unfortunately, however, it can’t be outrun.

“When we speed it up, we don’t do a good job of navigating anything,” Donsky says. In such situations, we are likely to skid out of control, doing things that are rash, impulsive and even harmful. That is why we need to slow it all down,” Donsky adds.

As we slow it down, it is easier to be patient.

“Impatience makes me miserable and it doesn’t help,” says Donsky. “Once I’m slower and patient, I’m automatically kinder to myself.”

Once we have achieved the SPK part of the equation, the PBJ can emerge.

Seeking peace when we are irritable or annoyed, beauty when we see ugliness in ourselves and the world, and joy when we are sad can help us to navigate challenges like COVID.

“We mustn’t forget PBJ in our lives,” says Donsky, most of all because they work.”

“You don’t deny that things are difficult or try to make the ugly pretty, but there is a way to navigate this that is gentle, human, kind, forgiving, passionate and loving,” Donsky adds.

On that road, it helps to remember that we are human beings and not human doings, despite the many jobs, tasks and chores we must do in order to live.

An important question we need to ask ourselves, says Donsky, is “How am I being while I’m doing my doing?”

There are ways of bringing being and doing into harmony, says Donsky. However, problems can arise when one over-dominates the other. The undulating symbol of the yin and yang underscores the importance of

maintaining a balance between the two, Donsky adds.

“This is an ongoing conversation... I don’t know anyone who doesn’t want to improve the quality of their being, emotionally, mentally, spiritually.”

Donsky suggests that we use the disruption created by the pandemic to re-evaluate our lives and zero in on what is valuable and important, what is working and what is not, thus taking “...an intra-psyche dive” into where we are at.

“Of course some people are having a hard time because if they don’t have a healthy enough ego, if they don’t have enough connections, if they’re really isolated, depressed or addicted, then they’ve had another three straws that have broken their back.”

Given the challenges of the pandemic, it important to monitor ourselves and our loved ones for warning signs that help is needed. These could include:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Significant changes in sleep and appetite
- Low energy
- Sustained feelings of emptiness, hopelessness and helplessness
- Irritability, confusion and anger (beyond one’s typical baseline)
- Changes in function (neglecting self-care, absence of routine)
- Absence of desire to connect with family and friends
- Noticeable slide in the quality of work
- Repeated expressions of worry from loved ones
- Substance abuse

While some of us are getting by with a little help from our friends, others may benefit from the many mental health resources available in Alberta.

“I always recommend that people start with their family doc,” says Donsky. “They know what’s available locally.”

In addition to seeking the guidance of mental health professionals, he points out that spiritual advice and support is also beneficial.

“In both Edmonton and Calgary there is a tremendous range of spiritual guidance,” Donsky says.

“A lot of what people are going through right now relates to deep existential questions, including the meaning of life and fundamental questions about identity.”

“The good news is we are actually called creatures, which comes from the same root as creation, so we have the capacity to create ourselves again . . . moving from order through chaos to reorder.

Help is available

In Emergency/life-threatening situations, call 911
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/amh.aspx>
Access 24/7 (Edmonton): 780-424-2424

Canada Suicide Prevention Service: 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645

Canadian Mental Health Association (Edmonton Region): <https://edmonton.cmha.ca/>

CMHA Distress Line (Edmonton): 780-482-HELP (4357)

Jewish Family Services Edmonton:
<https://www.jfse.org/> 780.454.1194

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

Momentum Walk-in Counselling (Edmonton): <https://www.momentumcounselling.org/>
www.teenmentalhealth.org

Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support: <https://ca.portal.gs/>

Donsky likens the experiences to walking from one room to another. “We’ve got this mix of feelings, of leaving and arriving but being in neither place at the same time, and not being quite sure what is coming.”

“Analyzing that experience is important,” says Donsky, adding that the journey requires compassion. “Co means to be together. Passion’s root is pathos, or suffering,” adds Donsky, an avid student of etymology.

Thus, compassion literally means being with suffering. Why do that?


“Because it’s here,” says Donsky. “We must come together in our suffering. The question is, how do we do that in a life-affirming or healing way?”

Doing for others is a helpful path, Donsky says, because when we engage in tikkun olam – healing the world – we also heal ourselves.

As always, though, charity begins at home.

“Self-care is sometimes misperceived as selfish,” Donsky adds, “but we need to put our oxygen masks on first to be of help to others.”

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.



Eli Oliver Broyde

was born in Calgary
on February 26, 2021
to parents
Jackie Bass & Gregory Broyde
- a brother for Benjamin.

It's a boy!

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Delighted grandparents are
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New Passover children’s books

By Penny Schwartz

BOSTON (JTA) — On the eve of Passover during the Depression, a juggler in ragged clothes is invited into the home of a poor family that has a bare Seder table. It’s a poignant scene in “The Passover Guest,” the captivating debut picture book by author Susan Kusel, a longtime Judaica librarian who was inspired by a classic Yiddish tale, “The Magician,” by I.L. Peretz.

By lovely coincidence, readers have that rare opportunity to enjoy another retelling of the beloved story in a new publication of “The Magician’s Visit,” adapted by Barbara Diamond Goldin, with new illustrations by Eva Sanchez Gomez. The original 1993 edition was among the earliest books by Goldin, now one of the country’s most acclaimed writers of Jewish children’s books.

A different Seder table takes center stage in “The Four Questions,” where a bespectacled lion reads from a Haggadah at a lavish ceremonial meal with guests that include a zebra, a young monkey and other whimsical animals. The gloriously illustrated book is a new edition of the 1989 classic by the late artist Ori Sherman with text by the acclaimed novelist and poet Lynne Sharon Schwartz.

These are some of the standouts in this spring’s crop of engaging new children’s books for Passover, the eight-day Festival of Freedom that begins this year on the evening of March 27.

Other titles feature lighthearted humorous stories and a lively interactive family Hagaddah with tips for this COVID-19 era, when many Seder guests may be joining remotely.

“Baby Moses in a Basket”
By Caryn Yacowitz; illustrated by Julie Downing
Candlewick; ages 3 to 7

In simple rhyming verse, Yacowitz reimagines the biblical story of baby Moses as his mother sets him adrift in a basket on the Nile to save him from harm from the Egyptian Pharaoh. The river’s creatures protect baby Moses until he is discovered by Pharaoh’s daughter. Downing’s beautifully colored double-page illustrations of a wide-winged ibis, a hippo, crocodile and an escort of butterflies bring the story to life.

“Seder in Motion: A Haggadah to Move Body and Soul”
By Rabbi Ron Isaacs and Dr. Leora Isaacs; illustrated by Martin Wickstrom
Behrman House; all ages

Here’s a lively family Haggadah that encourages Seder participants of any age to feel a personal connection to the Passover story. The engaging style follows the traditional order of the Seder and features Jewish customs from around the world along with thought-provoking questions. There are plenty of tips to include Remote guests.

“Meet the Matzah: A Passover Story”
By Alan Silberberg
Viking; ages 3 to 5

In this playful and zany story, the award-winning cartoonist Silberberg sets the humorous action in an imaginary classroom where the “students” are types of breads. Alfie Koman, a shy matzah, tries to retell the story of Passover, but the school sourdough, Loaf, takes over and stirs trouble. Alfie must decide whether to leave his hiding place to confront the mean-spirited Loaf. Expect lots of laughs from Loaf’s made-up version of the Ten Plagues (among them no WiFi and broccoli for dessert).

“Matzah Craze”
Jamie Kiffel-Alcheh; illustrated by Lauren Gallegos
Kar-Ben; ages 4-9

At Noa’s multicultural school, the kids like to swap what’s in their lunch boxes. But during Passover, when Noa has an unusual looking cracker – her matzah – she explains to her friends that she can’t swap. In Kiffel-Alcheh’s delightful rhyming story, the spunky Noa, with copper-toned skin and frizzy red hair, figures out how to share her favorite ways to eat matzah.

“The Great Passover Escape”
Pamela Moritz; illustrated by Florence Weiser
By Kar-Ben; ages 4-9

It’s the eve of Passover at the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem, and Elle the elephant and Kang the kangaroo are eager to find a way to escape and find a Seder. Their friend Chimp answers their Passover questions and joins the adventure. Will the trio get past the locked zoo gate and find a ritual meal? Pamela Moritz’s humor-filled story is embellished with Florence Weiser’s brightly colored illustrations.

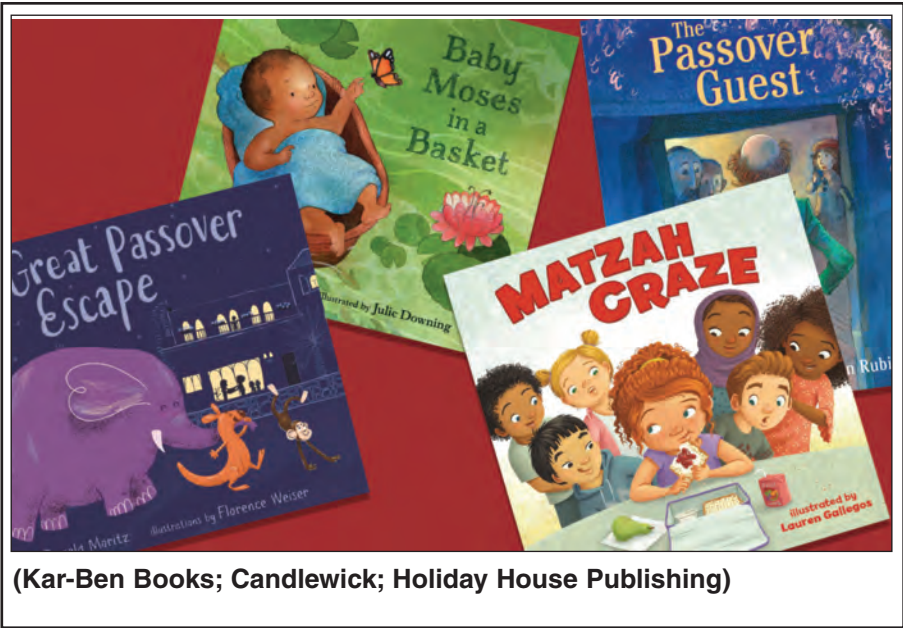
“The Passover Guest”
By Susan Kusel; illustrated by Sean Rubin
Neal Porter Books / Holiday House; ages 4 to 8

Set in Washington, D.C., in 1933, during the Depression, Kusel’s warmhearted story takes its inspiration from Uri Shulevitz’s version of Peretz’s Yiddish tale “The Magician,” which she loved as a child. On the eve of Passover, a young girl named Muriel wanders around her favorite sites in the nation’s capital. She’s in no hurry to go home because her family does not have enough money for a Seder.

At the Lincoln Memorial, Muriel is enchanted by a juggling magician dressed in rags. When the stranger turns up at her family’s door and is invited in for Passover, their bare table miraculously fills with an abundance of food for the Seder. Could the mysterious guest have been Elijah? Sean Rubin’s vibrant, expressive illustrations pay tribute to Marc Chagall, Rubin writes in an artist’s note.

“The Magician’s Visit”
Based on a story by I.L. Peretz; adapted by Barbara Diamond Goldin; illustrations by Eva Sanchez Gomez
Green Bean Books; ages 4-8

In this masterful retelling of Peretz’s Yiddish tale, Goldin takes readers back to an old world shtetl. In the days before Passover, a stranger dressed in rags mesmerizes the villagers with his spellbinding magic. When he turns up at the door of a couple who have become too poor to make their own Seder, the magician produces a



wondrous and full table. May they partake in this Seder? the couple asks. And who is the stranger, who has disappeared when they return. Gomez’s colorful illustrations capture the era and the magic of the story.

“Moses Could Have Been Selfish”
By MJ Wexler
MJ Wexler Books; ages 3 to 7

In this simply told rhyming story, Wexler retells the story of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt in an accessible style for young kids, emphasizing standing up against injustice. Questions at the end encourage discussion.

“The Four Questions”
Illustrated by Ori Sherman;
text by Lynne Sharon Schwartz
By Levine Querido; ages 8 and up

In this exquisite pairing of text and art, Sherman and Schwartz captivate readers – kids and adults – with the Four Questions traditionally recited by the youngest child at the beginning of the Seder. The lavishly illustrated book is a new printing of the original first published in 1989.

Like the Seder itself, the book has the air of mystery and intrigue. Schwartz answers the Four Questions with a lyrical narrative of the Passover story and its rituals. Sherman fills the bordered pages with gloriously colored illustrations of whimsical elephants, monkeys, fish, goats and birds. Turn the book upside down for a view of the Four Questions written in Hebrew calligraphy and other illustrations.

A back page note by Ori Z. Soltes, a scholar of Jewish art, explains that Sherman’s dazzling art carries forth traditions from hieroglyphics to illuminated Jewish manuscripts and the centuries-old painted murals of Eastern Europe’s wooden synagogues.



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and healthy Passover
from the Bass - Haines family

Wishing the entire community
a Passover filled with love
& good health
from Bernie Adler



Happy Passover
from Sharon Bookhalter
& Jerry Glasser

חג פסח שמח

Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy and
healthy Pesach
from Karen & Clyde





Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love & good health
from
Ivy & Dave Broesky



Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach from
Ruth & Ben Coppens

Happy Passover
from the Deutsch Family

חג פסח שמח



Wishing the entire community
a Passover filled with love
& good health
from Becky Hapton and family



Happy Passover
from
Faith & Stan Greenspan

Pesach Sameach from Judi Card

חג פסח שמח



Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach from Louise
and the Kagen Family

Wishing the entire community
a Passover filled with love & good health
from Shirley Goldberg, children, grandchildren
and great grandchildren



Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach
from the
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Happy Passover
- Happy Spring
from the HeAtBaGs



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& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach from Gabe
& Sonia Goldberg & family



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& good health
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& family for a
happy and healthy Pesach
from Sharon, Mark, Alexis, Sam
and Dara Katzeff

Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love & good health
from Rachelle Marmur
& Brandon Jacoby



Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love and good health

from
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& Stan Kitay





Best wishes to my family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach
from Hinda Lipshitz

Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love & good health
from Samuel Koplowicz



Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach
from the
Kerzerle - Yager Family



Wishing everyone
a Passover
filled with love
and good health

from
Arlein Hoffman Chetner
and family



Best wishes to my family &
friends for a happy, healthy
Pesach from Sandy &
Moe Litman and family

Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love and good health
from Faren Hochman
& Ari and Noam Sniderman

ברכות לחג הפסח
from Dimitry & Regan, Benji
and Jacob Lipas

Wishing the entire community
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& Luba Kolominski



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from Stacey, Erin, Jordyn,
Abby & Zoe





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filled with love & good health
from Jennifer, Colin, Asber
and Noonie Muscat

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a Passover
filled with love
& good health
from Michele &
Josh Miller



Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with love
and good health from
Mindy Jacobs & Eoin Kenny





פסח כשר ושמח
Pesach Sameach from Beryl Nahornick

Happy Passover
from the Mozeson Family

חג פסח שמח

פסח שמח לכולם
*from Yuliya, Alexey, Zachary
and Elizabeth Massarsky*


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healthy and happy Pesach
from Renee & Errol Raff
and family*


*Wishing the entire community
a Passover filled with love
& good health
from Carol & Ron Ritch* 

חג פסח שמח
*from Aubrey & Draytin
Rogerville*

חג שמח
*from Andrew Gergely, Aliya Seigelman
and family*


ברכות לחג הפסח
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and family*

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a Passover filled with love & good health
from Eva & Sam Weisz*

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a Passover filled with love & good health
from Angela Topping, Lonnie, Zoe, Emma,
Ethan and Jonah Zwaigenbaum*


*Best wishes to our family & friends
for a happy and healthy Pesach
from Christina Tsipora & Joel Reboh
and family*

Pesach Sameach
from Lewis & Freya Wasel
חג פסח שמח


 *Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love & good health
from Jodi, Michael
and Rebecca Zabudowski*


*Best wishes to our friends & family
for a happy and healthy Pesach
from Naomi & Ron Wolch*


*Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love & good health*


*from
Connie & Danny
Zalmanowitz
and family* 


*Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love
and good health*

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the
Steiner Family*

 *Best wishes to our family & friends
for a happy and healthy Pesach
from Shira & Jeff Shecker
and family*


 *Best wishes to our friends
& family for a happy and
healthy Passover from Debbie
& Howie Sniderman and family*


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a Passover filled with love &
good health from Anita Sky
& Howard Davidow*

 *Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach from
Natalie, Ken, Marlee and Jenna Soroka*

Pesach Sameach
from Jonathan, Zac and Gabriella Tankel
חג פסח שמח

ברכות לחג הפסח
*from Nili Talmor
& Michael Handman*

 *Wishing the entire community
a Passover filled with love
& good health
from Naomi Wolfman*

 *Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love
& good health
from the Weil Family*

*Best wishes to our family & friends
for a happy, healthy Pesach
from Sue & Alvin Winestock*


איחולים לחג האביב
*from
Osnat Wine*

*Best wishes to our family
& friends for a happy,
healthy Pesach
from Dalia, Allan,
Tammy & Mark wolinsky*


פסח כשר ושמח
from Meirau Or


Pesach Sameach
from Susan & Bruce Mintz
חג פסח שמח

*Happy Passover
from Mona & Dan Rosenberg & family*
חג פסח שמח

 *Best wishes to our friends &
family for a happy and healthy
Pesach from Reisa & Murray
Schechter and Shayna Segal*

Pesach Sameach
from Jane & Hersk Sobel
פסח שמח לכולם

 *Best wishes to my family
& friends for a happy
and healthy Pesach
from Esther Sklofsky*


*Best wishes to my family
& friends for a happy and
healthy Pesach
from Boris Sukalsky* 

Pesach Sameach
from Lauren & Keithe Tankel
חג פסח שמח

פסח שמח!

**Pesach
Sameach**

*from
Riva &
Howard Shein
and family*



New MacEwan U Award is a tribute to Bobby and Sharon Cairns z”l

Bobby Cairns was a giant of Alberta music. When both he and his wife Sharon died in November of COVID-19 complications, it was impossible for the family and the community to gather for a memorial. However, a brand new MacEwan University scholarship honours their memory, and will help to foster the growth of music students in the future.

The Bobby and Sharon Cairns Memorial Award has been created to honour Bobby and Sharon Cairns. Bobby's lifelong commitment to music and education and Sharon's community engagement and activities will be remembered by supporting students enrolled in the Music Program at MacEwan University's Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications.

As head of Guitar at the MacEwan Music program, Bobby dedicated 36 years, helping to shape the future of young musicians. Cairns' own career kicked off when he was only 15 years old with an invitation to play with the legendary Tommy Banks.

His career as an educator, which spanned four decades, saw him create and oversee the program's guitar curriculum, teach countless courses and direct music ensembles, including the Guitar Ensemble, unique among North American university and college music programs.

"Bobby fully engaged in teaching and brought all of his energy, imagination, expertise and musicianship to the enterprise of teaching and learning," says Dr. William Richards, chair of the Department of Music. "He was a true

pedagogue, a master of the instrument and found many innovative and fruitful approaches to teaching."

Sharon began her professional career as an Executive Assistant at Edmonton's ITV station, but later decided to stay home and raise two children while taking on various volunteer leadership positions in the Jewish Community. She went on to work as the Executive Director of the Jewish National Fund Edmonton for over 20 years.

Sharon was Bobby's biggest fan and vice versa. She had an incredible sense of humour and was social by nature. She was the backbone of the Cairns family and a relationship builder; she was dearly loved by her many friends.

"Thank you to the Royal Alex Hospital Staff for your care, for your compassion, for your sacrifice so that people like our parents are treated with respect and the dignity they deserved in their final days," said brothers Jay and Matt Cairns.

"Our mother instilled in us a strong Jewish identity, a love for Israel, a commitment to community and to love your kids like no other. We loved her so much. To say that we are heartbroken is the understatement of a lifetime.

"We do find comfort in that Mom and Dad are reunited, soul mates that continue their love affair seamlessly, and for all eternity."

This award honours Bobby's vision and Sharon's passion, providing a legacy to others to build their own careers in music.



Bobby and Sharon Cairns OBM

"We are pleased to share with you the launch of the Bobby and Sharon Cairns Scholarship," said Jay and Matt & Tami Cairns.

"Thank you in advance for your support and generosity towards this living legacy honouring our parents."

All donations are 100% tax deductible and online donation receive an immediate tax receipt.

For more information, contact the MacEwan Alumni and Development Office at giving@macewan.ca or 780-497-5410.

Grammys *Cont. from page 13*

special premiered.

Director, actor and writer Taika Waititi won the Grammy for best compilation soundtrack for visual media for his film "Jojo Rabbit," much to his confusion.

"I guess they're just giving Grammys to anyone now! I'll take it, thank you," the Jewish Māori filmmaker joked. "What can I say? It was so long ago, I can barely remember anything about making that movie — but it seems like it's never going to go away, and I'm happy about that."

Waititi was in a trailer on a movie set while he accepted the award — likely "Thor: Love and Thunder," featuring Natalie Portman as Thor — and tweeted later that he was "happy" about the Grammy win.

Joanie Leeds, a singer-songwriter who frequently leads children's Shabbat programming and has released albums of Jewish children's music, won the Grammy for best children's album for "All the Ladies," which contains a musical ode to the late Jewish Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Finally, an orchestral adaptation of "The Diary of Anne Frank & Meditations On Rilke" narrated by Isabel

Leonard and conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra won best classical compendium. Thomas produced the work back in 1990 with the help of Audrey Hepburn, who originally read Frank's words in performance.

Looking ahead ...

A new trailer for "In the Heights" that aired during the broadcast set the internet abuzz. With a screenplay by the Jewish Puerto Rican playwright Quiara Alegría Hudes, with music by Lin-Manuel Miranda, the musical is poised to become the film of the summer once theaters reopen.

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Wishing everyone a healthy and happy Passover!

From all of us at Alberta Jewish News:
Deb Shatz, Dan Moser,
Sandy Fayerman and Maxine Fischbein

This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School




It has been a very busy month at Talmud Torah School. We are now preparing for Passover but our Purim celebration was definitely a highlight for all school staff and students. With everyone being very mindful of the COVID safety measures it was hard to tell where the health masks stopped and the Purim masks started. All in all, everyone had a safe and joyful Purim.

Best wishes to the Jewish community
as you celebrate Passover -
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Strategic Plan Update #5 - March 2021

INFORM
Summer-Fall 2020


CONSIDER
Winter 2020-21


STRATEGIZE
Winter-Spring 2021


COMMIT
Summer 2021
3-5 year plan


Current Phase: CONSIDER

New Vision and Values

The Talmud Torah Society is pleased to announce our new **VISION** and **VALUES**. You can find them, along with our new mission, at: <https://talmudtorahsociety.com/about-us/vision-and-mission/>.

We would like to thank the community for your feedback in validating these important strategic items. Key thoughts we heard from you in our survey were:

- The majority of you supported our direction as written (>85%)
- The Top 3 values were Jewish Identity, Educational Excellence and Community

Several important themes arose from the comments, with recommendations that we:

- Be more inspirational
- Include support of the Jewish value Tikkun Olam (making a positive difference in the world)
- Increase our focus on character development and academics
- Include reference to Jewish religion and connection with Israel

These suggestions have been reflected in our finalized vision and values, shared on our website above.

Next Steps

The Society continues to work through the survey outcomes with intention to share more of the key themes with the community soon. With this, we will also be moving to the STRATEGIZE phase, as we take these outcomes, along with other key inputs (e.g. current environment, fiscal responsibility, governance best practices, etc.), to begin the work of forming our strategic plan.

Thank you again to those who continue to be engaged with and support our organization. We look forward to sharing more information soon.

Pesach Sameach שמח פסח
The Talmud Torah Society Board

Missed some info? See all our strategic plan updates at:

<https://talmudtorahsociety.com/about-us/planning-for-the-future/>



Wishing a happy
and kosher Passover
to Alberta's Jewish
community!