

Chanukah at the Ledge: an amazing celebration in YEG

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

"New normal" - who among us has not heard this emerging cliché? "New normal," for many, is a euphemism for extreme compromise, but on the evening of December 28, the first night of the Hanukkah, Festival of Lights, Edmontonians, Jewish and non-Jewish, got a much needed taste of communal celebration - something we have all long hungered for. Thirty-seven cars with giant menorahs atop their roofs fell into formation starting from the Edmonton Chabad House. The menorahs themselves were created, built, and wired by local CTeens participants.

"The idea of spreading light through the city is an answer, in part, to darkness in the forms of anti-semitism, apathy, and depression," explained Rabbi Dovid Pinson, of Chabad Lubavitcher of Edmonton.

"To combat darkness you don't need to fight, you just need to add light!"

Foam light-up Hanukkah wands were distributed to each vehicle, and small toddlers, teenagers, and grownups alike began waving the strobing party favours jubilantly from their car windows. Zooming down the Whitemud, then Fox Drive, and along Whyte Avenue, the festive Hanukkah motor parade received enthusiastic honks from fellow motorists, and exuberant waves from shivering pedestrians. The row of lit up menorahs atop participating vehicles weaved its way through the streets of central Edmonton, illuminating the skyline with a glow befitting the holiday.

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Chabad of Edmonton Rabbi Ari Drelich and Edmonton Oiler Zach Hyman lit the first candle of the Giant Menorah at an amazing celebration on the Alberta Legislative Grounds, including dignitaries, dreidel parachutes, gift bags, sufganiyot and more. Photos by Paula Kirman and AJNews.



Calgary celebrated its 33rd annual Menorah Lighting with an amazing event that included an incredible 120-car parade as Rabbi and Rebbetzen Matusof lit the Giant Menorah at Heritage Park. Photos supplied.

By Shael Gelfand

One hundred and twenty cars, trucks and SUVs of all shapes and sizes, including 2 police cruisers & a fire truck! all with brightly lit LED Menorah's mounted on their roofs paraded through the streets of Calgary on the first night of Chanukah in a fabulous display of Jewish pride.

"We invited the community to Say YES to Light and the response was simply overwhelming, Let's remember that Calgary's Jewish community is small in size, but nonetheless 120 cars have joined Calgary's 1st ever car menorah parade," said Chabad Lubavitch of Alberta Executive Director Rabbi Menachem Matusof, Alberta's Senior Rabbi.

To begin the festivities Rabbi Matusof and Co-executive Director Rebbetzen Rochel Matusof, were hoisted on a crane to light the giant 18' Menorah at Calgary's Heritage Park. Hundreds watched the ceremony from their cars on giant video screens, and thousands more from communities around the world watched the live stream

broadcast from the comfort of home.

For the second year in a row, COVID restrictions meant the community could not gather in person for the annual Menorah lighting ceremony at Calgary City Hall. "But that didn't mean we couldn't celebrate together as a community and demonstrate our Jewish pride," added Rabbi Matusof. "We just had to do things a bit differently."

Chabad mailed out more than 2,500 Chanukah kits to

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December, 2021

A conversation with author, educator Ben M. Freeman

By Maxine Fischbein

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Ben M. Freeman - author of Jewish Pride: Rebuilding a People - will speak to Albertans in a live virtual event on January 27, 2022, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The webinar, titled The History of Jew Hate: The Never Ending Story, is presented by Calgary Public Library in partnership with Calgary Jewish Federation, Jewish Federation of Edmonton and Edmonton Public Library. The program is generously supported by the Isadore and Florence Burstyn Memorial Fund, KSW Calgary Holocaust Education & Commemoration Endowment Fund, and donors to the Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund at the Calgary Public Library Foundation.

Freeman brings a unique perspective on Jewish pride, having cut his teeth in the LGBTQ+ community as he came to terms with his own identity as a proud gay man. Unapologetic in his support for Zionism, Freeman - who will celebrate his 35th birthday on the day he speaks to Albertans - devotes his life to engaging Jews and non-Jews in thoughtful discussions about Judaism, Israel and Holocaust awareness.

"It's been a kind of a wild ride," Freeman told *AJNews*, describing a packed personal schedule that includes his full time job heading up the humanities program at the Harbour School in Hong Kong; multiple international speaking engagements; diversity, equity and inclusion training for high profile organizations including Facebook; and consultation and content creation for clients like the Jim Henson Company, of Muppets fame.

Meanwhile, Freeman is completing another book, the second in his planned trilogy, which is slated for publication in October 2022.

A Glaswegian with the charming Scottish brogue to prove it, Freeman previously worked for the United Jewish Israel Appeal in Glasgow and the Holocaust Education Centre in Hong Kong, where he led education programs for teachers and students and organized events for the Jewish community.

It was fitting that Freeman spoke to *AJNews* during the first day of Chanukah, a holiday that celebrates the power of light over darkness.

"[Chanukah] has become prominent because it speaks to our experience having to fight, having to be modern-day Maccabees, having to stand up and reclaim Jewish identity and... stave off the pressures of



Tu B'Shvat Art Party

assimilation from the non-Jewish world," Freeman said.

"What an incredible expression of Jewish pride that we put [the Chanukiyah] this everlasting symbol of Judaism and Jewishness in our windows for the world to see," Freeman said.

Freeman is on a mission to improve Holocaust education and inculcate Jewish pride through

historical contextualization and reclamation of Jewish traditions, customs and narratives in all their glorious diversity.

"I believe that the Holocaust is a solely Jewish experience," Freeman told *AJNews*. "While it happened simultaneously to other crimes against humanity...it is important not to universalize [our] story to the extent that it becomes everyone's story."

"There are universal lessons from every experience, but we have to honour the specificity. [Jew hate] was a policy that was central to Nazi ideology. It was an essential component of their ideology, and it was almost more important than the war effort," Freeman said.

"The story of Jew hate did not begin with the Shoah. It began two thousand years previously and it is still being written today," Freeman added.

While he resists fearmongering, Freeman is direct in his message.

"I think it would be enormously naive for Jews not to think that it could happen again. There's a continuous thread of Jew hate running through our entire history," Freeman said.

"When we start in 1933 and end in 1945, people think that that's all that it was."

While Freeman notes a rise in antisemitism in North America and around the world, he maintains that it is not a Jewish problem.

"It obviously impacts us and shapes our experience, but it's not our problem; it's a problem of the non-Jewish worlds in which we live."

An antidote, says Freeman, is Jewish pride.

"We're going to honour our dead, we're going to tell our stories, we're going to mark our traditions, we're going to feel pride regardless of what the non-Jewish worlds say about us."

Freeman rues the unfortunate reflex that causes many Jews to hunker down and avoid attracting attention when feeling under siege.

"Jewish people are often told 'Sit down, keep your head down, don't say anything, your struggles are not as important, now is not the time," Freeman said, adding "Now is the time."

One impediment is "internalized antisemitism" that, in its extreme, leads some Jews to embrace anti-Zionism, Freeman says. Even more insidious, he adds, is a growing tendency for some Jews who remain proudly Jewish and Zionist to say "I'm Jewish, but..." or "I'm Zionist, but..." before distancing themselves from other Jews in order to fit into societies that are, according to Freeman, "ideologically hostile to us."

While proud of the international impact his first book is making Freeman is quick to share the gradit



On Jan. 27, join renowned author Ben M. Freeman for a virtual conversation about Jewish identity, Holocaust awareness and combatting antisemitism.

"I don't think a heterosexual Jew could have written this book," Freeman added, referring to the intersectionality in his own life that has made him particularly adept at harmonizing dual identities.

"We may live our lives slightly differently, but actually we are not so different after all. I think that brings us all closer."

Freeman urges Jews to embrace one another regardless of personal politics and differences in the way they observe their Judaism.

"The Jewish community is bigger than us," says Freeman. "It's something that doesn't belong to us. We are caretakers of it and we are nurturing it, maintaining it and, hopefully improving it for next generations."

Freeman even urges compassion for those co-religionists - often the more traditional among us - who are not LGBTQ+ friendly.

"They are very intolerant, and that's really a shame, but I still have empathy for them....Regardless of our differences in religiosity, our differences in beliefs, we are really part of a family."

"There are many Orthodox Jews who are fully supportive," Freeman is quick to add, noting that one mustn't paint all religiously-observant Jews with the same brush.

He points out that the Orthodox - often more easily identifiable as Jews - are most vulnerable to anti-Jewish attacks.

"When Jews are being attacked, that's the priority," Freeman said.

Freeman's January 27 talk is expected to attract a large audience beyond the Jewish community.

"My work with regards to non-Jewish people is about, of course, helping them to think about their own identities but, primarily, it's about empowering them through knowledge, giving them space to learn in a non-judgemental way," said Freeman.

"Jew hate is baked into society, so of course people are socialized into these ideas....Hopefully non-Jewish people who attend this event will be learning about the Jewish experience, will understand Jewish people better, and feel empowered, educated and inspired to become active allies to the Jewish people."

Freeman points out that intolerance is not always born of hate. Sometimes the culprit is a lack of knowledge. That is one reason he endeavours to educate both Jews and non-Jews about history and the diversity of Jewish experience.

Holocaust education and commemoration is important on multiple levels according to Freeman.

"The entire world conspired by action or inaction to annihilate six million Jewish people. This was not just a European experience. The Americans were refusing refugees, the British, the Canadians, the Australians."



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making, Freeman is quick to share the credit.

"You know it's really a testament to my parents, to the community in which I grew up, Freeman told *AJNews*.

Like his friend and fellow Glaswegian Eve Barlow another rising Jewish pride advocate - Freeman knows what it is like to navigate communities in which he is part of a small minority.

"It trained us. We were a very small [Jewish] community, in a very small country....a country where we were a tiny minority," Freeman said. "Being LGBTQ+ Jews you learn how to navigate, and that's where my writing on pride came from."



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"We are living in a post-Holocaust world and that has impacted how we see our Jewish identity, how we see our interactions with the non-Jewish world...even in ways that we're not aware."

But Freeman cautions against allowing Holocaust remembrance and the fight against antisemitism to become the sum total of our Jewish identities.

"Jew hate is just one Jewish story. It's not *the* Jewish story... We're a rich, culturally diverse, ancient civilization," Freeman adds.

"Our ancient contemporaries were the Babylonians, the Romans, the Assyrians, the Greeks....None of them exist anymore, or if they do, they exist in states of greatly diminished power."

"So it's about celebrating the beauty and the resilience and the survival and the commitment to Jewish life as well as remembering what was done to us, what was stolen from us."

Freeman says that the organized Jewish community has sometimes missed the mark in terms of Jewish education, particularly as it relates to the Holocaust, but he

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Shining a light on Antisemitism with hope and resilience

By Jenna Soroka

During the month of December, the first Shine a Light on Antisemitism campaign held a multitude of awareness-raising events and projects across North America as a way to illuminate the impact of antisemitism. Microgrants offered by the Jewish Federations of North America to organizations across Canada and the United States allowed communities to participate in this campaign in unique and meaningful ways.

Edmonton's mosaic art project brought forward stories of resilience and hope across a spectrum of ages, cultures, and lived experiences. A menorah-shaped mosaic formed from painted tiles done by community members, illustrating antisemitism's impact on their lives, will be the resulting visual message aiming to capture these countless stories. Lewis Lavoie, a visual artist from St. Albert, has been tasked with assembling all the pieces. The artwork will be unveiled at Edmonton City Hall on January 12th where it will remain on display until January 31st.

Talmud Torah School, the Jewish Senior Citizens' Centre, Hillel, and B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) received supply packages so they could contribute to this collaborative effort. An instructional video, example tiles, and prompts were also provided which Talmud Torah Principal, Sandra Marianicz, commented how it allowed even the youngest grades to participate in a meaningful way. Students helped shine a light on antisemitism with messages of positivity and hope. Marianicz appreciated the use of the powerful story of Chanukah to champion this message. She also reflected on the pride each student had for their tile creations throughout this empowering experience.

In addition to providing supplies to local Jewish organizations to participate during the week of Chanukah, the Federation of Edmonton also held a drop-in event on December 5th for community members to create their own personal tile for the project.

Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, was thrilled with the turnout as it allowed a broad cross section of the community to participate. Children from six years of age to seniors illustrated tiles with messages of strength, hope, and peaceful interactions. Leavitt-Wright also commented how she is excited to see the final product and "the kinds of conversations we can have as a result."

Officials, including Senator Paula Simons, MLA Lorne Dach, Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, as well as Councilors Jennifer Rice and Sarah Hamilton, attended the Westridge Community League Hall event which took place on the last night of Chanukah. They had the opportunity to sit down and chat with attendees, including a group of high school students who shared their experiences of hate, oppression, and hope. After the event, Mayor Sohi reflected on the bravery of these students in a Twitter post and how he "learned about how meaningful community and solidarity is to them as young Jewish women." He ended his Tweet with the hashtag #ShineALight, indicating the need to continue to share these stories and create safe spaces for all.

BBYO's regional President of Northwest Canada, Leah Campbell, was one of those students who had the opportunity to chat with some of these leaders. With antisemitism still prevalent in our community today, she expressed how glad she was to take part in this initiative and how validating it was to have "the support and participation of dignitaries in our community who listened to and empathized with the youth as we shared our experiences with antisemitism."

Showing up and holding space for one another with open hearts is a powerful way to fight back against all forms of hatred. The mosaic art project, as part of the Shine a Light on Antisemitism campaign, demonstrates how important it is to speak up against the ongoing battle of implicit and explicit acts of antisemitism.

Even in the presence of darkness, love, faith, and community continue to bring joy to Jewish families around the world.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



MLA Lorne Dach, Senator Paula Simons and Mayor Amarjeet Sohi were among the politicians who joined the community in painting tiles for the Shine A Light project. (Photos by Tammy Vineberg and Talmud Torah)

33rd annual Cont. from page 1

Jewish families throughout Alberta and the Yukon so everyone could participate in the community Menorah lighting from home. Those in the Menorah Mobile parade received a box of Chanukah treats as well as latkes kept warm and fresh in special individual foil packages.

After kindling the first candle, a small army of Chabad volunteers organized all the vehicles for the parade which stretched on for several kilometers, weaving its way through the streets, including a tour of downtown Calgary. With offices in Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, we are here to help you with all your Estate-related needs: from preparing or updating a Will, Power of Attorney, or Personal Directive, to helping you navigate the administration of a loved one's Estate, or the stresses of Estate litigation.



Dozens of onlookers stopped to watch and the local news media provided extensive coverage.

"My Mum was in the parade tonight and now has a Chanukiah on her car. A momentous moment indeed for a family of Soviet emigrants who used to hide the fact they were Jewish." Rachel Kryener said in an online post.

There were hundreds of other poignant online comments as the event quickly went viral. "Loved our 120 strong Chanukah parade as a community and celebrating with friends. Happy Chanukah full of love, peace and latke grease," said Shira Yael Kogut who added 23 photos and 6 videos to her Facebook post.

Luba Okun Harris posted, "Mazal Tov to everyone involved in making the first annual Menorah car parade such a huge success. It was so well run. It was so much fun and I felt honoured and privileged to have taken part in the parade."

As part of Chabad Alberta's annual Chanukah outreach, Menorahs are also on display at hospitals and other public facilities throughout the province including the Alberta Legislature Building.

"We want to thank everyone for joining us in this special Chanukah celebration," said Rebetzen Rochel Matusof. "Now more than ever we encourage you to join us and say yes to light.

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Literacy and Love from Calgary to the Caribbean: CJA teen scribes put Ahava into Action

By Lesley Machon

Junior High students at the Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) are reaching across cultures and classrooms to connect with students in the Caribbean. This year, students are learning about Haiti through poetry, novels written by Haitian authors, art, and film. Infusing our curriculum with the authentic voices of authors and artists from different cultures is an important element of literacy at the CJA. To us, literacy is about more than simply reading and writing, it's the ability to engage with language in a way that allows us to communicate and connect with other human beings, and make sense of the world around us.

At the CJA, our approach to literacy is unique. We focus on amplifying the voices of artists and authors from different cultural backgrounds, so instead of third-party textbook perspectives telling us *about* other cultures, we learn *from* them. We seek out marginalized and historically minimized voices, and we listen as they tell their own stories. This kind of deep listening expands students' awareness of other cultures, and invites critical engagement with our own.

Research demonstrates that cross-cultural exploration



CJA students with photos of their GLA pen pals in Haiti.

reduces stereotypes, increases curiosity and cohesion within a diverse classroom, facilitates deep self-reflection, and engenders appre-ciation for oneself as a product and subject of cultural influences (Jerrold Frank). Students engage more fully with their own identity as Jewish members of society, while deepening their capacity for empathy and dissolving barriers to connection. This process also tends to draw in even the most reluctant readers, by engaging their curiosity and expanding their minds in new ways.

This year, in addition to our unconventional curriculum, students were also paired with a pal at God's Littlest

Angels (GLA), a school and orphanage in Haiti. Pals ranged from babies to older teens, and each month CJA students received an update about their Haitian pals. When letters arrived, students eagerly shared the images and news of their friends overseas. They also wrote business letters to local individuals and companies to fundraise for school supplies and Christmas presents for the children – and raised close to \$2,000! Much gratitude to all who donated.

Included below are a few notes from Myriam, the Haitian orphanage director:

"Praise G-d! Thank you so much for supporting our kids at GLA. We are thankful for your students' interest in wanting to help our kids."

"Thank you, your class, and your community for advocating for the kids at GLA and bringing aware-ness to kids' educational needs in Haiti. We are humbled by your generosity!"

Prior to our exchanges, our pals hadn't even heard of



Children at the GLA school and orphanage in Haiti wish their Calgary Jewish Academy pen pals a Happy Hanukkah.

Hanukkah; there are no Jews in Haiti. And yet, they sent Hanukkah cards and messages to honour our traditions and celebrate alongside us. As the days get darker here, we are spending some time reflecting on the darkness Haitian people navigate daily: kidnappings, poverty, violence, fuel shortage and food crisis. Children offer so much light. Brighter, more just futures are built through efforts to reach for one another, communicate, empathize, explore, and connect.

Not only did students learn from Haitian authors and filmmakers this year, they imagined a future where poverty and injustice around the globe mattered deeply to all humans, regardless of background, skin colour, or cultural heritage. This is what literacy is really about: understanding the ways we interact with the world around us, how we shape it and are shaped by it. The students at the CJA are pedagogues among teenagers, and truly, well-read.

Lesley Machon is a Humanities Teacher at Calgary Jewish Academy.

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2006. As his unit took cover in an abandoned house, Hezbollah launched an anti-tank missile. The direct hit killed nine soldiers and **critically injured David**. With his arm dangling by tissue and entire body pierced by shrapnel, he was rushed to Israel's border. **David awoke 10 days later at Sheba Hospital where, one month earlier, he had been delivering babies.**





Doctors reattached David's arm in a series of surgeries but, **despite their best efforts, he lost the use of his right hand**. Along with its function, his dream of combining surgery and gynaecology was gone. Supported by Beit Halochem, David has accomplished much, including marriage, three children, degrees in Medical Engineering and Business Administration, and the launch of a highly successful, innovative medical start-up.

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JNF launches **Builders Circle**

By Jay Cairns and Elliott Steinberg

JNF Canada has launched a new initiative - the Builders Circle which affords you the opportunity to develop a project in Israel with naming rights. The Builders Circle offers you and your family the chance to Make Your Mark in Israel to help build the healthcare, education, community development and environmental

projects Israel will need for generations to come.

Dedicating a JNF project is a great way to honour or remember loved ones, or celebrate milestones like a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or anniversary, and strengthen your family's connection with Israel. Imagine the excitement of visiting Israel, and proudly showing your grandchildren your family's name on your project, your contribution to building up the land and people of Israel. JNF has a uniquely large list of projects you can choose from, by price, location, or cause. The possibilities are endless!

To participate as a Builder, projects start at \$6,000 and over. We hope you'll consider joining donors across Canada in 'Building Israel Together' and strengthening the link to



Israel for you, your family and future generations. To see JNF's wide variety of projects all over Israel, please check out the Builders Circle website at jnfbuilderscircle.ca

Introducing the Canadian Jewish Community Forum

By Hal Joffe

Please allow me to introduce you to the Canadian Jewish Community Forum. The CJCF is a recently formed national organization created as a space to discuss, and debate issues of interest and concern, both regional and national, that impact Canada and the Canadian Jewish community and to educate each other about those issues and develop advocacy for our community. Its goal is to promote participation in, engagement with, and a sense of ownership of the Jewish agenda in Canada by all members of the Canadian Jewish community. We aim to build a big tent democratic organization where Jewish Canadians of diverse views will have a space to raise and discuss the community's important issues with each other.

The Steering Committee of CJCF, of which I am a member, was formed by a group of former Canadian Jewish Congress leaders from coast to coast as well as some new young community leadership. We are guided by the principle that the Canadian Jewish community should decide what issues are important for our community to discuss and pursue.

CJCF's first major undertaking is to survey the Jewish community of Canada. The purpose of the survey is to go beyond assumptions of what issues or concerns are of key importance to individual members of the community. Rather, it is an attempt to take the pulse of Canadian Jews right now and ask you directly what your community priorities are. This will be an opportunity for as many Jews as we can canvass from across the country to share with us the issues that concern you most. The survey is designed to canvass a prioritization of the issues themselves rather

than seek approval or disapproval of the means of engagement and/or involvement. addressing those issues.

The Survey is accessible either directly at www.research.net/r/CJCFSurvey or from the Survey page on CJCF's website: canadian-jewish-community-forum.ca. The survey will be confidential. We will not be collecting any identifying information. At the end of the survey there will be an option for people to opt-in to our mailing list. We intend to make the survey results available to any Jewish organization that requests it.

The results of the survey will better inform us where to put our resources for programming and advocacy. Once we have the results of the survey, we plan to create forums and other opportunities for Canadian Jews across the country to engage with each other to discuss and explore topics that our community identifies as being important to us and the various ways we can approach those issues.

If we have learned anything from the pandemic it is that available technology allows us to engage with each other easily and productively regardless of where in the country we are. The CJCF's forums will be a safe place for Jews to respectfully discuss and debate with each other, from our differing perspectives, issues of concern both regional, national and international that impact Canada, the Canadian Jewish community and Israel. Our goal is to truly be a democratic Forum for Canadian Jews. We hope that open, yet respectful, discussion of important communal issues will give all members of our community an opportunity to engage with the community- those who are currently engaged, those who are seeking a way to engage and especially those who, for whatever reason, have so far chosen not to engage or be involved in communal activities or have backed away from

It is vitally important that members of the Alberta Jewish community have and take the opportunity to express their priorities. We hope to include in the survey results the opinions of as many members of the Alberta Jewish community as possible. Please take the survey and ask your family, friends, and contacts to do so as well. Please help us open a new channel of communication and discussion amongst the members of the Alberta and greater Canadian Jewish community.

Beyond issues that are specific to our community we believe that we are committed, as Jews, to engage with other faith, Indigenous, racial, ethnic, and cultural communities to find common cause in matters of promoting civil discourse, tolerance, and mutual understanding and to fight against antisemitism, discrimination, racism and hatred in all their forms. Many important issues facing our society at large are viewed as being relevant to the Jewish Community. If we are to have a voice in the society we are creating together, we must discuss and address existing issues together with our fellow Canadians and, together, address new issues as they emerge.

CJCF is a wholly volunteer driven organization. Please 'opt-in' to our mailing list when you finish taking the survey. One of our goals is to further develop our volunteer base through the involvement of those who are interested in what we are doing.

For more information about the CJCF, who we are and more background on our initiative we invite you to look at our website: canadian-jewish-community-forum.ca and to contact us at thecjcf@gmail.com.



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Ben Springer



"Israel is so important to our young family" and to all the Jewish people. We are proud to support JNF through the Builders Circle and cannot wait to be able to travel to Israel with our boys one day so they can see firsthand all the important work JNF

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Holocaust Education has an impact across Alberta

By Maxine Fischbein

In addition to the January 27 live virtual conversation with Ben M. Freeman, author of *Jewish Pride*, Jewish community members and the community at large can look forward to a series of Holocaust-related programming organized by Calgary Jewish Federation in conjunction with the Calgary Public Library:

A tour of Yad Vashem will take attendees behind the scenes at Israel's Holocaust Museum on February 20. Those who enjoyed last year's virtual tour should plan to participate, say Calgary Jewish Federation Holocaust Education and Commemoration Co-Chairs Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin, as this tour will concentrate on different parts of the museum's collection.

Rebecca Donner, author of the critically acclaimed biography All the Frequent Troubles of Our Day: The True Story of the American Woman at the Heart of the German Resistance to Hitler, will speak on March 22 about the story of her remarkable great-great-aunt, Mildred Harnack.

On April 24, former Mossad agent Avraham Avner will speak about Israel's hunt for Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann.

All of these programs have been made possible through the generous financial support of the Isadore and Florence Burstyn Memorial Fund, KSW Calgary Holocaust Education & Commemoration Endowment Fund, and donors to the Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund at the Calgary Public Library Foundation.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Edmonton Public Library are partnering on the January 27 program and are eager to continue working closely with Calgary on programming in the future. Dr. Colin Muscat, who chairs the Jewish Federation of Edmonton Holocaust Education Committee, told AJNews that he "...appreciates the generosity of Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin" in sharing Calgary Holocaust programs and encouraging Albertawide initiatives.

Yom HaShoah

Yom HaShoah begins on Wednesday, April 27.

Organizers in both Calgary and Edmonton are hoping their respective that communities will be able to come together in person, COVID permitting. Jewish Federation of Edmonton is currently considering a socially-distanced commemoration at the Holocaust memorial site on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature. In Calgary the theme of resistance will be explored on Yom Hashoah and in related programming throughout Shoah Week.

Holocaust Education Symposia

The Jewish Federations in both Edmonton and Calgary have traditionally organized in-person Holocaust symposia for high school students and teachers. When COVID-19 closed the door in 2020, a window opened

thanks to Calgary Jewish Federation's swift transition to a virtual spring symposium which they opened to students in Edmonton and other locations throughout the province.

When Calgary added a fall virtual symposium this past November, Jewish Federation of Edmonton recruited participation from nine Edmonton and area schools including Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. A total of 4,900 Alberta students from 95 schools participated in the first-ever fall symposium.

There will be a spring Holocaust Symposium. Details are pending.

Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors

Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors will be featured at the Glenbow

Museum satellite location



Over the eight days of Hanukkah, CJA students took it upon themselves to collect items for Wynne's Pantry at Jewish Family Service of Calgary. This act of chesed (kindness) shows students how a community can come together to make a big impact to help those in need. Pictured above: Wynne Thal and her grandchildren.

> from May 27 through July 3. Produced by Calgary Jewish Federation's Holocaust Education and Commemoration Department, the exhibit features evocative black and white photographs of Holocaust survivors who made Calgary their home, or are otherwise connected to the city, and a short but powerful film about the making of the exhibit. A companion hardcover book will be launched in conjunction with the exhibit and available for purchase.

> *Here to Tell* was designed to travel and has already garnered international interest.

For more information including volunteer opportunities, go to www.heretotell.com.

They Didn't Know We Were Seeds

Jewish Federation of Edmonton is working with Edmonton Public Library toward Holocaust-related

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Holocaust Education

Cont. from page 6

programming including an exhibit featuring 18 captivating paintings by Saskatchewan artist Carol Wylie whose subjects include nine Holocaust survivors and nine residential school survivors. It is anticipated that They Didn't Know We Were Seeds will be displayed at the Edmonton Public Library in September 2022.

Additional Holocaust-related Initiatives

When the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem secured a Maspik (Hebrew for "enough") grant through the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton was one of three Canadian Jewish Federations that applied for and received ready-to-print exhibits from Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum. The multi-panel exhibits are intended for use in public spaces and are being shared with other organizations and communities, says Jenn Magalnick, Associate Director, Holocaust Education and Community Engagement at Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

To date, Stars without a Heaven: Children of the Holocaust has been displayed at two Edmonton schools and will be sent to the Calgary Public Library as an adjunct to the January 27 conversation with Ben M. Freeman. Another exhibit - Shoah: How was it Humanly Possible? - will be displayed at Edmonton Public Library in conjunction with the Freeman event. The Maspik grant was made possible by a broad coalition of Jewish organizations and is funded by the Wendy Eisen and

Carole Zucker JNF Fund.

A Chanukah initiative spearheaded by the Holocaust Education and Commemoration Department of Calgary Jewish Federation saw students at The Calgary Jewish Academy make latkes while their peers at the Halpern Akiva Academy made Chanukah cards. The goodies, delivered by a team of volunteers, brought smiles to the faces of local Holocaust survivors.

Calgary Holocaust survivor Fanny Wedro recently traveled to Toronto where her Holocaust testimony and image were recorded by the USC Shoah Foundation so that she can speak to future generations via hologram. In addition to sharing her story with Alberta high school students, Wedro recently spoke at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City and at the Teaneck International Film Festival where My Name is Sara - a movie depicting the Holocaust experiences of her childhood friend and fellow survivor Sara Goralnik Shapiro - was screened.

Calgary Jewish Federation continues to support next generation volunteers in sharing the Holocaust testimony of loved ones. Second Voices presentations have been completed for survivors Eva Davis, Benek Herman, Oscar Kirshner and Bronia and Sidney Cyngiser. The Cyngiser presentations were funded in both Calgary and Edmonton and will be shared by family members in each city. The Second Voices project was funded, in part, by a generous grant from the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

The Jewish Federations in Edmonton and Calgary are encouraging local participation in two international Holocaust remembrance initiatives. While neither community is organizing local March of the Living cohorts



Edmonton Mayor Amarjeet Sohi speaks with BBYO teens about their experiences with antisemitism. Photo by Tammy Vineberg.

this spring, they are facilitating the participation of teens and adults who wish to join a Toronto contingent that will spend Yom HaShoah in Poland and Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel.

Liberation 75 and the USC Shoah Foundation are working with local Jewish Federations to connect with Holocaust survivors who have not already shared their oral testimonies. Holocaust survivors willing to be interviewed are asked to contact their local Jewish Federation office for details.

For more information on Holocaust education and commemoration initiatives in Calgary and Edmonton, go to www.jewishcalgary.org and www.jewishedmonton.org.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Literacy at Talmud Torah School

By the Edmonton TT Board

Literacy is the keystone of our modern world. It is part of a student's earliest learning, enabling them to be able to read, listen and communicate. At Talmud Torah School we strive to equip our students with the tools necessary to set them up for a lifetime of success at all levels. With the support of the Talmud Torah Society (TTS), the Edmonton Talmud Torah has brought in a literacy specialist.

Effective November 1, 2021, Ms. Jessica Holtzman has taken on the role of Talmud Torah's literacy support teacher. The role in our school is to provide support and instruction to those students that could most benefit from targeted reading intervention. Jessica will be working with students and collaborating with faculty to build and enhance learning strategies to ensure students get the most out of their

education. The strategies used during these sessions will assist students with decoding (sounding out words), comprehension skills and fluency. These small group intervention sessions are meant to build upon the instruction that children receive within their classroom and will add another layer of support to ensure students develop the literacy skills they need to be successful.



Talmud Torah students enjoying reading.



Shoah: How was it humanly possible

The Jewish Federation of



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sust survivors immigrated to Israel, with the g freedom – as Jews, and as human beings

16

Edmonton is seeking volunteer guides for an upcoming panel exhibit.

> January 21-30, 2022 Stanley A. Milner Library (Downtown) Contact: Jenn at holocaustedu@edjfed.org





Next print date is January 24, 2022 **Next Deadline: January 19, 2022**

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community calendar

Want to know what's going on in Jewish Calgary? Check out the Community Calendar at jewishcalgary.org

Have an event? Click on "Suggest an Event" to add it to the calendar





A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

This time of the year often inspires us to reflect back on the year that was, as well as envision the year that's ahead of us. More often than not, we are quick to develop a list of things left unfinished, or not even started. Sometimes, we discount our achievements because we are either too quickly looking forward to the next year, or due to the fact they might have turned out other than we planned. This last year, in particular, has been very difficult for many in our Jewish community. The never-ending COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation and loss it continued to bring, as well as the tensions we experienced in the spring as Israel defended her citizens from Hamas terror attacks which resonated back home with a barrage of increased antisemitic sentiment, made 2021 very challenging.

I am hoping, though, that you will join me in celebrating and being grateful for the milestones we did reach, the meaningful things we did achieve, and the time we might have taken to reflect, slow down, and be appreciative. We found new ways to express our Judaism, and didn't let distance or limitations of gathering with others stop us from having *Pesach Seders*, welcoming *Shabbat*, participating in virtual or in-person programs and lectures, and lighting *Chanukah* candles. Sadly, we also had to find new ways to mourn, to spend virtual visits with family and friends great distances apart, and we haven't been able to fully gather as a *kehillah*, a community.

One thing that became clear is that we can never be thankful enough, never express enough gratitude. So, I would like to acknowledge our amazing Federation staff team and volunteer leaders, along with all of our community's dedicated and talented Jewish communal professionals, volunteers, and educators. I know our community is well aware of the pressure and demands placed on them and on our organizations this year, and the staff, boards, and volunteer committee members have worked extremely hard to ensure Jewish Calgary continued to thrive. Of course, an equal Todah Rabah should be expressed to anyone who still participated in community - those who gave generously, who attended events, who found ways to "do Jewish" in their homes in innovative ways, and to those who checked in on neighbours, friends, and family to keep them connected.

As we savour a last pause before 2021 leaves us, and we rustle up the energy and excitement we require to begin 2022 with a strong start, I'm hoping all of our plans include being counted in community. I'm dreaming of a year filled with celebrations and successes, with mini and large milestones, and with even more opportunities to come together as Am Echad, one

people. While we cannot predict what the continuation of COVID-19 will mean for our new year, we can and should certainly rededicate ourselves to being even more active in our community, more generous, more caring – and we should live proud Jewish lives... together.

L'fum tzara agra – according to the effort is the reward (*Pirkei Avot* - Ethics of Our Fathers, 5:26), meaning we must put in the work and care to enhance the payoff of our efforts. As members of a special community, that of Jewish Calgary, I am inviting you to join me, our incredible staff team, and our wonderful board and committee volunteers in action, in caring, and in making a difference. Only when we leverage everyone's abilities and spirit will we fully live up to our potential.

Wishing you and yours a safe and enjoyable close to 2021, and an inspiring beginning to 2022.

B'Shalom,

Din She

Adam Silver CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation

Building an inclusive community is a priority. Contact us and we will make every effort to meet your needs.







A

Learn how to create your Jewish legacy Contact Diana Kalef 403-444-3154 • dkalef@jewishcalgary.org

CASINO VOLUNTEERS FEBRUARY 6 AND 7, 2022 DEERFOOT INN AND CASINO

Please consider volunteering for a shift at our upcoming casino. Funds raised support programs such as Holocaust Education Symposium, Yom HaShoah commemorations, and ensuring our community mikveh is available for use. Positions (banker, general manager, cashier, chiprunner) available on Sunday and Monday from 6:45PM to 3:30AM.

Contact Lori at Iwolf@jewishcalgary.org or 403-444-3157 to lend your time to this important fundraising cause.

and Jewish educator. Born in Scotland, Ben is a gay Jewish author and internationally renowned educator focusing on Jewish identity, combating antisemitism, and raising awareness of the Holocaust. His first book, *Jewish Pride: Rebuilding a People*, was released in February 2021.

Currently based in Hong Kong, Ben now heads up the Humanities Team at an American International School and lectures on antisemitism at Hong Kong universities. Through his work, he aims to educate, inspire and empower both Jewish and non-Jewish people from all over the world.

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This spring, as rockets rained down in Israel, Jews

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in the diaspora faced one of the worst spikes in antisemitism in the last decade - especially our students and young people. Unfortunately our community is grappling with this on an ongoing basis. Your support provides funding for year-round important programs such as community security, government relations initiatives, and support programs for students and young people, such as Hillel Calgary.

Your UJA gift is vital as we provide our community with the resources it needs to stay strong, safe, and united even in the most difficult situations.

Whether you are part of an agency or institution, volunteering your time to help someone in need, or simply bringing joy with your presence, YOU are important to our community. As a UJA donor, you are supporting valuable programs and services, and helping individuals in need. You are the glue that binds each aspect of our community together creating the home that we know as Jewish Calgary. You make a profound difference.

Your UJA gift is vital to maintaining, caring for, and unifying our community.

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In an after-dinner conversation between two Babylonian sages, Rav Nahman invited his colleague Rabbi Isaac to share a Torah insight. Rabbi Isaac responded by quoting an astonishing declaration in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: "Our forefather Jacob never died!"

Rav Nahman retorted by pointing out how this assertion contradicted the explicit words of the Bible which details the very elaborate funeral and mourning rites that were performed for Jacob, and his burial in the ancestral Machpelah tomb. Rabbi Isaac dismissed those problematic texts and said that he had was expounding a scriptural verse of his own, from the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel. For, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity."

Although it is clear that the name "Jacob" is being employed in very different ways in the two passages - in one as the name of an individual, and in the other as the nation of his descendants six centuries later -Rabbi Isaac insisted that the Bible wants us to draw a direct comparison: just as Jeremiah assured the exiled people of Israel that they shall survive and be restored to a peaceful existence in their homeland, so should we infer that Grandpa Jacob was given a divine assurance of his immortality.

Rabbi Isaac's homily is as puzzling as it is uplifting. Such interpretative comparisons usually work in the opposite direction, with the virtues of the ancestors providing a source of inspiration for the later generations. And in any case, the Talmud's story does not make clear what we are supposed to conclude regarding the apparent death and funeral of the patriarch.

Rashi found justification for a literal reading of the statement of Rabbis Yohanan and Isaac in a precise reading of the Torah's account of Jacob's demise: "He expired, and was gathered unto his people." That verse does not use the normal Hebrew word for dying (vayyamot).

Nahmanides and other commentators objected that the word for death is indeed found in several other places in

the story; but suggested that those instances may not convey the objective facts but only the perspectives of the characters, including Jacob's sons, and even the patriarch himself ("Israel said unto Joseph: behold, I die") who might not have been cognizant of —or was too modest to mention— that he was destined for immortality. Rabbi Josiah Pinto speculated that Jacob's immobile body remains secured against natural decomposition until the time of resurrection.

This episode brings to mind the legendary exchange between the first-century philosopher Apollonius of Tyana and a court clerk prior to Apollonius' trial before the emperor Domitian. The philosopher supposedly revealed that he planned to maintain silence, as Socrates had done at his trial. When the clerk reminded him that Socrates had in fact been sentenced to death, Apollonius retorted enigmatically, "He did not die; the Athenians only thought he did."

Nahmanides' disciple Rabbi Solomon Ibn Adret concluded that the statement must have a secret meaning, noting that Jacob was the first of our biblical ancestors whose progeny were entirely worthy, untainted by the likes of an Ishmael or an Esau.

The thirteenth-century Italian scholar Rabbi Isaiah di Trani cited this passage in support of his insistence that midrashic homilies should not be confused with actual exegesis. The consummate divine Author who composed the Torah instilled in it a single primary meaning, but (as is to be expected even from mortal authors) allowed for multiple levels of secondary interpretation. Accordingly, Rabbi Isaac should be understood as saying "Yes, I am perfectly aware that Jacob died, but my intention was to interpret the verse in every possible manner, even if it clashes with its literal sense. It likely contains an allusion to the teaching that 'the righteous are deemed to be alive even after their deaths,' in that their renown, their memories and their deeds are everlasting."

In addition to his commentaries to the Bible and Talmud, Nahmanides was an exponent of the esoteric doctrines of the Kabbalah. In his hands the Talmud's puzzling statement about Jacob's not dying became a vehicle for expounding a fascinating belief about the soul's nature and its destiny following death. The souls of "normal" righteous individuals are removed from our world and relocated directly to paradise (the "garden of Eden") until the time of the resurrection. There is however a class of the holiest souls who continue to hover about our world, especially around their graves. To them are given ethereal spiritual garments which they can don in order to make periodic appearances in the mortal realms. Some later kabbalists explained that Jacob belonged to an exclusive group who kept their ethereal garments on at all times so that they could always be available to benefit the lower world by drawing down divine mercy.

The Zohar teaches that every person receives a spiritual garment in the next world, one that is woven from the good deeds and intentions that we amass during our lifetimes. In Jewish literature, the earliest mention of this garment of good deeds is found in the tenth-century Arabic collection of inspirational tales, the Book of Comfort by Rabbi Nissim Ibn Shahin of Kairouan. Some scholars trace this notion, which has no known equivalent in ancient Jewish sources, to ideas from the Persian Avesta where the reward for a virtuous life takes the form of a maiden whose charms increase in proportion to one's righteousness. It also echoes themes from the concept of Karma in Mahayana Buddhism. Even philosophically orientated commentators like Rabbis Isaac Arama and Manasseh ben Israel favoured this approach, regarding it as consistent with Plato's belief that the soul is essentially independent of the body (in opposition to the Aristotelian theory that body and soul make up an inseparable unity).

Indeed, aspiring to the exquisite robes of righteous souls like Jacob's became a powerful motif in Jewish legend truly a garment to die for.

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



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OF ALBERTA

Focus on Finance

Sponsored article

The value of holistic wealth management

By Megan Martin, ©2021 Postmedia Network Inc.

Does your financial advisor only help you with your investments? If the answer is yes, you may be missing out on opportunities to better your financial position and the financial well-being of your family. That's because the scope of traditional financial planning is too narrow to capture all the different elements of your wealth equation.

This is where holistic wealth management comes in. The traditional way of managing wealth has focused on straightforward financial solutions like a TFSA or RRSP to meet a client's financial goals. Holistic wealth management is a more modern approach and involves creating a made-to-measure wealth plan that draws on a combination of products and services.

With this in mind, an advisor following the holistic approach seeks to achieve a complete picture of your life, looking at a variety of factors outside of investments that can impact your overall financial well-being. This can include not-so-obvious factors like lifestyle choices, family health and any furry friends, but also your personality, hobbies and causes close to your heart.

"We take the time to get to know a client's unique situation from every angle, beyond just the numbers," says Robert Rothenberg, CEO of Rothenberg Capital Management. "A client's vision for their future, past experiences, current interests and personal values become just as important to us as the current state of their finances and the performance of their investments."

Only by considering all aspects of your profile, both financial and human, can your advisor develop an in-depth understanding of you and your needs and effectively support you in your wealth journey. The result: A custom wealth plan that integrates and coordinates all aspects of your life and can adapt to your evolving goals and aspirations and any unexpected life events.

"Such an approach is 'holistic' in the sense that it involves going beyond investments and managing risk. We simultaneously address tax, insurance and estate planning needs as well," says Rothenberg. "Clients also stand to benefit from services like business succession planning, education planning for family members, longterm care solutions and charitable giving strategies. By aligning all these areas in a cohesive strategy, we can better your chances of achieving your wealth goals."

Maintaining an open line of communication from the onset of the client-advisor relationship is therefore critical to the success of this approach. By engaging in honest conversations, your advisor gains valuable insights that can make all the difference for your long-term wealth plan. This means that no topic is off-limits and being honest and open is essential.

"New clients are often taken aback by the questions we ask as we try to get to know them on a personal level," says Rothenberg. "Some conversations can be uncomfortable, but it's important not to hold back. Sensitive subjects, like family health struggles, debt or divorce, are inevitable topics of discussion. The idea is, the more we know, the better we can help you."

While some information may not seem relevant now, it can have critical implications for your wealth plan. For example, suppose you have a parent with Alzheimer's who may require financial support for caregiving. In that case, your advisor needs to know to ensure the strategy developed for you covers this eventuality.

However, you should not be worried if you forget to mention something or if your circumstances change. In many ways, the holistic approach to wealth management is a continuous process that requires evaluations and adjustments as a client's plans change, and new factors come into play at different stages of their lives.

"In having such conversations, advisors come to know each client, and often their families, on a deeply personal level, with relationships often spanning generations," says Rothenberg.

One of the most significant benefits you stand to gain from the holistic approach is reaching true peace of mind and fulfillment, knowing you have a solid, personalized plan in place to meet your wealth goals. With no aspect of your life neglected and unbiased guidance on a continuous



Rothenberg Capital Management CEO Robert Rothenberg

basis, you can feel confident to enjoy life.

"It's really rewarding to help our clients achieve this peace of mind," says Rothenberg. "Working with our clients, and often their children and even grandchildren, and knowing that the solutions we provide deliver not just measurable results but also intangible benefits for their overall wellness is paramount to what we do."

For more information, visit Rothenberg.ca/holisticwealth-management or call 1-800-811-0527 (Montreal) or 1-800-546-0949 (Calgary).

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— Focus on Finance-

Tips for managing finances as a post-secondary student

(NC) Student life can be exciting, but it can also be expensive. As college and university students return to class this fall, it's a good idea for parents to get them to look over how they're managing their finances. This can help students avoid unnecessary debt and eventually graduate with more freedom.

Research from the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada shows that when people use a budget, they are better at managing their money. As a parent, one of the best things you can do for the student in your life is help them create a budget.

Start by identifying all the costs of student life, from tuition fees and course materials, to living expenses, transportation and entertainment. Then identify sources of income, from grants and bursaries to part-time jobs.

Think about ways your student could cut costs - for example, by making their own meals or shopping at stores that offer student discounts on certain days of the week.

Advise your children to be cautious when considering getting a student credit card. Credit cards are a very expensive way to borrow money if you don't pay off the balance in full each month. The average annual interest rate for student credit cards in Canada is over 18 per cent.

A budget-planning tool like the one available on FCAC's website can be a great resource, helping your student track their income and spending, set goals and plan for expenses that are easy to miss, like entertainment.

If you teach your child how to take charge of their finances, they will be able to graduate with more opportunities than obstacles.

Calgary Menorah Lighting Photo Gallery by Chabad Alberta



The Calgary Menorah Lighting at Heritage Park was a wonderful community and city-wide event - even the Calgary Police and Fire Department participated in the Giant Menorah parade.

A conversation Cont. from page 2

urges empathy, pointing out that it took time for educators and community leaders to cope with their own post-Shoah trauma.

He adds that more work needs to be done to correctly contextualize Zionism too.

"Why don't we know that we are indigenous? [When] we talk about Israel being our homeland, we have to use specific words that people understand that also relate to our experience," Freeman said. "That is where we as a people emerged and...developed our ancient culture and civilization for 2,000 years."

Freeman says that being Jewish is "cool," but he adds that our community finds itself in "a moment of reckoning.'

"Our community, our organizations need to be really considering where we're putting our resources, which voices we're uplifting, and how we create and spread Jewish pride as a movement which is multigenerational and sustainable... we can't drop the ball."

"We will define ourselves," Freeman says, inviting us to take inspiration from those

"The lambs-to-the-slaughter narrative is false," Freeman said. "Jews in every single place stood up and they defended themselves, if not physically then spiritually. They lit chanukiyot. Some even fasted in Auschwitz. They got married. There is a continuous, unending Jewish commitment to Jewish life and that alone is inspiring enough."

The conversation with Ben M. Freeman begins at 7 pm on Thursday, January 27. It will be moderated by Jared Shore, co-president of Calgary Jewish Federation, and Edmontonian Jordyn Wright, an emerging young leader who is currently studying at McGill University.

Best wishes good health and success in 2022. nelson halpern FCPA, FCAITEP

elizabeth marshall CPA, CA

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who came before us, including the Jews who defined themselves and bravely practiced their Judaism, even in the midst of the Shoah.





Leah Goldstein Campbell* MBA Tel: 403-970-9313

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To register, go to bit.ly/HistoryJewHate

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

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Focus on Finance

Taking charge of your finances

(NC) About half of Canadians experienced a financial impact due to COVID-19. And women were disproportionally affected by the pandemic.

If keeping up with bills and financial obligations has become a challenge, you're not alone. There are ways you can begin to take charge of your personal finances once again.

If you're having trouble paying for ongoing expenses or anticipate challenges in making ends meet in the near future, contact your financial institution to find out how they can help.

During the pandemic, many banks provided their customers with financial relief programs, including the option to temporarily defer mortgage payments. While many of these programs have ended, banks continue to encourage customers to discuss other relief options with them.

A budget can help you stick to a debt repayment plan and establish spending priorities. It can also incorporate a savings plan tailored to your needs.

You can use the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada's free interactive online budget planner to create a personalized budget. It includes tips, advice and alerts to help you take charge of your finances.

If you must borrow money, make sure you understand the cost of different credit products before you decide, and



borrow only what you need.

Certain credit products are more expensive than others due to their high interest rates and fees. For example, a payday loan should be your absolute last resort, as they often have very high fees.

Find more information at canada.ca/money.





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WESTERN CANADA'S LAW FIRM

Calgary JCC hosts successful Literary Festival

By Jenna Soroka

Through a combination of virtual and in-person events, writers and storytellers covered a spectrum of topics in this year's Calgary JCC Literary Festival. During the second week of December, people tuned into author discussions, took part in letter writing, engaged in meaningful conversations, and more.

The remarkable authors and creators who joined this year's festival included Ayelet Tsabari, Maddison Tory, Paul Alster, Bonnie Kaplan, Alan Scott Haft, Barb Brittain-Marshall, and Kres Mersky.

In addition to the authors and participants, the successful event was made possible by Festival Chair, Danyael Halprin, along with support from JCC Arts and Culture Manager, Shula Banchik, and Director of Engagement Programs, Danielle Braitman.

As an established writer and editor, Halprin lives and breathes books. She also knows that a lot of ideas can come from a single book and found authors who would expose participants to a wide array of perspectives. To help guide the selection for this year's event, the contributors needed to fit the criteria of Jewish author and/or Jewish content.

Ayelet Tsabari, recipient of the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards and The Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature recipient, kicked off the first night in a conversation about her memoir, *The Art of Leaving*. Tsabari's book helps open the dialogue around discrimination against marginalized communities within Israel, as she records her experiences growing up in Israel and explores her Yemeni heritage in later years. The Literary Festival provided a forum for people, including a local book club, to send in their questions for the author to deepen their understanding of the topics mentioned in the book. Dr. Angy Cohen, Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Calgary, was the moderator of this conversation.

Youth Social Activist and Grade 12 student, Maddison Tory, shared her powerful message of "[there is] no person too young and no idea too small to make a difference," with the hope of inspiring a younger audience and the next generation of positive change-makers. Tory is also a motivational speaker, and her book, *Your Secret Superpower: Ignite your SPARK*, is an empowering read for youth. All proceeds from Tory's book will be donated to children's hospitals across Canada.

Other impactful books included in the Calgary JCC Literary Festival were *Harry Haft: Survivor of Auschwitz, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* by Alan Scott Haft, Kin or Country by Paul Alster, and *The Better Brain: Overcome Anxiety, Combat Depression, and Reduce ADHD and Stress with Nutrition* by Bonnie Kaplan. Barb Brittain-Marshall hosted a unique typewriter event and Kres Mersky rounded out the festival with a discussion on her one-woman play, *The Life and Times of A. Einstein -* a "hilarious and touching portrait of Albert Einstein as well as a humanizing look into the great thinker's life through the people around him."



Author Ayelet Tsabari kicked off the first night of the Calgary Literary Festival with a conversation about her memoir "The Art of Leaving."

people's minds around certain issues and inspired others to write their own stories. She encourages others to "keep learning and keep exploring more of these issues."

Halprin hopes the Calgary JCC Literary Festival opened

YEG Chanukah at the Ledge *Cont. from page 1*

Finally, the procession arrived at the Alberta Legislature, greeted by the resonating baritone voice of the unmistakeable Bert Malo. Volunteers handed out gift boxes stuffed with Hanukkah goodies to wee ones and adults too – nobody was left out! Emceed by the amazing Mike Sobel, of Global News, the occasion was an auspicious one – punctuated by the attendance of political dignitaries, and the newest Oiler on the scene – number 18, Zach Hyman.

Hanukkah 2021 marked the 30th public candle lighting in Edmonton. Steven Shafir of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton commented that this year we celebrate a "rededication to community life," a beautiful sentiment as families gathered and greeted friends they had not physically socialized with in years. Those who were not comfortable attending in person were able to live stream the event from the comfort of their cozy couches, enjoying the light of their own menorahs. Meanwhile, the largest menorah in Alberta was lit by Chabad Lubavitch of Edmonton's, Rabbi Ari Drelich and Oiler star, Zach Hyman.

Amarjeet Sohi, Edmonton's mayor, wished the local Jewish community a happy Hanukkah. After so much isolation, he emphasized that, "It is nice to see us celebrate light and talk about how we can work together to overcome darkness and the anxiety the darkness brings in difficult times and if there's one community that understand the importance of resiliency and the importance of overcoming hardship and adversity it is the Jewish community."

The event was attended not only by Edmonton's mayor, but by Alberta's Premier Jason Kenney, and MLAs David Shepherd, Lorne Dach and Christina Gray, Minister of Justice Kaycee Madu and Speaker of the House Nathan Cooper.

Taking the podium, Rabbi Ari Drelich, a man who needs no introduction, mused: "I'll have to speak like a New Yorker so you can all hear me." He greeted eager onlookers with words of hope and healing for times to come: "We live in a day and age where it's very dark out there, we are all very fatigued... G-d is sending us a message. He wants us all to be united; he is forcing us to be united. And we all need to take the message of Hanukkah to dare to care. With G-d's help the lights of Hanukkah will continue to grow brighter day by day."

Jenna Soroka is a local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Then, attached to copious amounts of safety equipment, Rabbi Drelich, and Edmonton Oiler Zach Hyman ascended to the sky to light the first candle of the holiday. Rabbi Drelich joked playfully that he would not call Hyman by his first name, but by his Hebrew name, Zvi Moshe. So, the candles of the first night of Hanukkah we're ignited by Rabbi Drelich, and number 18 – Zvi Moshe.

Perhaps we all find ourselves unconsciously rolling our eyes when we hear the words "new normal," but if this year's community Hanukkah celebration is any indication, we are all closer than we think to the light at the end of the tunnel.

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.







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JFED CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright and President Steve Shafir with Zach Hyman at the Menorah Lighting. Photo by Jim Moses

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This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



It has been a busy month at Edmonton's Talmud Torah School. In addition to their EPSB studies, students have participated in a Chanukiah Stem Challenge. They also designed and painted tiles for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Shine a Light on Antisemitism project. They enjoyed a Fancy Day and also celebrated with Chanukah parties and activities. For information about the school call 780-481-3377 or email information@talmudtorahsociety.com



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