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Here to Tell exhibit honours Holocaust Survivors in YYC

By Maxine Fischbein

The searing black and white portraits speak to the heart with a power that transcends words.

Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors - an exhibit honouring 161 Holocaust survivors who made their homes in Calgary or are otherwise connected to the city - opens at the Edison Building, the pop-up location of the Glenbow Museum, on May 27.

Glenbow VP Engagement and COO Melanie Kjorlien recalls the Zoom meeting when she and Glenbow CEO Nicholas Bell first met Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin, co-chairs of the Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education Department of Calgary Jewish Federation and Remembrance Department of Calgary Jewish Federation and the visionaries behind the *Here to Tell* exhibit and book.

"We were really captivated emotionally by the content of the exhibition and the passion of Marnie and Dahlia to bring these stories to Calgarians," Kjorlien told *AJNews*. "I was brought to tears."

"What an important educational moment, to really bring forward the stories and lived experiences so that people never forget about what happened and just really understand and embrace these individuals and recognize who they are, what they lived through and what they overcame."

The Glenbow is dedicated to ongoing programming despite the closure of its main site for renovations.



"We spent some time looking for a space that would be really well equipped to host traveling exhibitions from other museums and countries," Kjorlien told *AJNews*. "We also wanted to showcase local community-focused programming, and that's where the *Here to Tell* project fit really well within our vision for that satellite space."

While the hardcover book features the same photos and stories as the exhibit, Kjorlien encourages Calgarians, and others to experience *Here to Tell* in person.

Bondar and Libin worked closely with photographer Marnie Burkhart and a local printer that specializes in high-end high-resolution printing of photographic images, said Kjorlien.

"It's worthwhile to make the trip. You are going to experience it in a much bigger way than you would by looking at the book."

It is, of course, painful to confront the humiliation, brutality and loss that Holocaust survivors experienced at

the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. But in a world still darkened by antisemitism, racism, xenophobia and totalitarianism, we must contemplate the faces and stories of those who courageously bear witness and compel us to do no less.

Many were the sole survivors of their families. They lost their homes, families, communities and ways of life. Yet they resisted and endured, dared to hope and love, and built new families, lives and communities.

The resiliency and hope exemplified by the survivors is what will remain long after one has experienced *Here to Tell*.

The making of the book and exhibit

It was Bondar and Libin's goal to honour Holocaust survivors by capturing their images in the fullness of lives well-lived.

In the initial stages of the project, they reached out to

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Edmonton Jewish Film Festival starts May 10 with exciting line-up

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

It is that exciting time again, and this year the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival (EJFF) celebrates its 26th year bringing the latest in innovative Jewish-themed filmmaking to the silver screen. For its 2022 program, the EJFF will roll out the proverbial 'red carpet,' but this year audience members can look forward to two in-person screenings, giving Edmontonians a much-

needed chance to once again enjoy a classic night out at the movies - what could be better!

Susan Schiffman, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton Director of Development and EJFF Coordinator, is extremely excited to be able to accommodate a wide demographic of attendees through this season's hybrid delivery format.

"We got a lot of feedback after last year's film festival,

and people really liked the flexibility of the online screenings, so in our planning, we always knew that the virtual format would need to be present," said Schiffman. "This accommodates those in the community with small children who are suddenly able to watch without getting babysitters, our aging population that might not feel comfortable driving at night, and youth who juggle the

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Calgary and Edmonton JHL season wraps up with new champions!



Hockey season wrapped up with the Monkeys crowned the EJHL Champs and Team Wolf winning the CJHL Finals.

Camp BB-Riback gears up for first full summer since COVID

By Maxine Fischbein

Excitement is mounting as veteran and first-time campers count down to the first full opening of Camp BB-Riback since 2019.

First session goes July 10 – 31 and second session August 3 – 21. Wonder Week and Wonder Weekend options for younger campers are set for August.

Last summer's partial opening of Camp BB-Riback - for a Leadership Training Conference for teen campers - provided an ideal opportunity to beta test new programming, says Camp Director Stacy Shaikin.

One exciting new initiative was a film program. There was a role for each camper, from screenwriting to directing, acting, film editing and technical support.

The program will be rolled out for campers of all ages during summer 2022.

"Things like the film program help bring camp into the 21st Century and update our programming to reflect the interests and talents of our campers," says Camp Assistant Director (AD) Jordyn Wright. "These Gen Z campers have diverse interests. We want to give all of them the opportunity to express their talents and interests."

Camp leaders including Shaikin, Wright and AD Micah Allen - who heads programming and oversees the camp coordinators and camper units - are tweaking sports programming with some units to culminate in weekly competitions.

Everything old will be new again as staff throw open the gates to the camp, welcoming kids who already know the ropes and a larger-than-usual group of novice campers who will put on their blue and white sweaters for the first time.

"We are really looking at every aspect of land, aquatic and fine arts activities and our general programming and working on how we can elevate it and help kids develop their skills and their interests with friends who will be at camp for years to come," Wright told *AJNews*.

Some 140 campers were already registered when *AJNews* spoke with Shaikin in early April.

"We will see a steady uptick in camper registrations

throughout May, June and even July," Shaikin predicted, adding that registration is closing in on pre-pandemic numbers.

Safety is always job one at camp, with protocols currently under review including those related to COVID-19.

"We've put together a health and safety policy committee made up of a diverse group of individuals from both Edmonton and Calgary," Shaikin said.

Staffing Innovations

There is a mix of old and new on the staff roster. Like ADs Allen and Wright, the camp cook is returning and a number of veteran counsellors are stepping into coordinator and specialist roles. The return of well-seasoned local staff ensures the continuity of camp traditions 66 years in the making.

Mads Fox, who piloted the highly-anticipated film program, is one of a growing cadre of overseas staff. Fox will be returning from the UK to serve as the AD responsible for all arts-related programming. She is also a skilled lifeguard.

Shaikin, Allen and Wright marvel at the depth, diversity and dedication brought to the camp by international staff serving in a variety of specialty areas. "International staff this year hail from the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Cyprus, Mexico, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand," says Wright.

"We partner with Camp Canada, a program run by Nyquest, who extensively screen and organize applicants based on their skills."

International staff are recruited based on current camp needs and complement the skills and talents of local staff.

Continuing great work together



Executive directors and program staff came together pre-Peach to discuss partnership opportunities to further strengthen the Calgary Jewish Community, and support one another in navigating a return to in-person programming. (Facebook photo).

International camp staffers for 2022 include qualified lifeguards and operators for high ropes, the rock climbing wall and zipline, Wright said.

They come with a great work ethic," Shaikin told *AJNews*. "For many, camp is not their first job. It's great to get to know them and see how seamlessly they fit into the camp experience."

"They are really such assets in the tone that they set day to day. They provide great role modeling and mentoring for our local staff," said Shaikin. "It makes them more comfortable knowing that the weight of caring for campers is not only on them."

"We pride ourselves on being a safe Jewish space for the campers and counsellors in our home community of Alberta, but bringing in staff from other countries and cultures facilitates an exchange I don't think we could get anywhere else," says Wright.

"There is something so special about showing people

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JNF Edmonton Honouring Robin and David Marcus

Jeff Rubin and Gaylene Soifer are co-chairs of this year's JNF Edmonton Negev Gala, honouring Robin and David Marcus. The virtual event will be held on August 18 at 7 pm.

The Negev Gala is a wonderful opportunity to pay tribute and honour Robin and David for their outstanding volunteerism, commitment to building a strong Jewish community and love for Israel, said Jeff.

"When Gaylene and I were first approached to co-chair this year's JNF Gala, we eagerly agreed. Mostly, because we think the world of Robin and David, as they are the nicest and kindest individuals you will ever meet. But also, and more importantly, because we mutually agree that that they are very well deserving JNF honourees due to their love of Israel and for their many involvements within the Jewish community."

"For myself, it was an additional mitzvah because David's parents were also very dear friends of my parents,"

noted Jeff. "Additionally, David and I have worked very closely together over the many past years, most notably with the Chevra Kadisha, and I have always been very impressed with David's energy, motivation, and commitment to the Chevra Kadisha, as well as all of the other Jewish organizations in which he has been involved. Very few individuals could match David's involvement and commitment to all the various organizations with which he has been connected."

Gaylene said that she and Jeff are honoured to chair the Negev Gala. She spoke further of her relationship with Robin, both as a teacher and as a volunteer.

"After many years of teaching in several schools throughout Edmonton, I had the opportunity to work at the school that I attended as a child," said Gaylene. "When I first arrived at Talmud Torah School, Robin Marcus was there to greet me. She calmly yet expertly prepared me for the challenges and joys that lay ahead. That began a relationship of teamwork and mutual respect that still remains strong after 15 years."

Gaylene has always been astonished by Robin's energy and enthusiasm for Talmud Torah and the many other Jewish Community organizations in which she is involved.

"At Talmud Torah, Robin is passionate and committed to fostering within her students an appreciation and love for Judaism, Torah and Israel," elaborated Gaylene. "In addition to running her own classroom, Robin is the first to volunteer her time and energy to organize school field trips, orchestrate entire school concerts, plan school wide holiday events and coordinate groups of students travelling to and from Israel."



Gala co-chairs Gaylene Soifer and Jeff Rubin

Robin attends most of the Jewish Community events taking place in our city and often involves herself in their planning, Gaylene added.

"After a full day of teaching, most teachers usually drag themselves home for dinner and an evening on the couch. Robin, on the other hand, grabs a quick bite before cheerfully rushing off for a meeting at the shul, a planning committee get-together, or an evening of volunteering. Robin never hesitates to raise her hand when she sees a need in our community and we all benefit from her tireless efforts," concluded Gaylene.

Proceeds from this year's Negev Gala will support the Clore Center for the Performing Arts, the only centre of its kind, offering formal training in music and dance in northern Israel, explained JNF Edmonton Executive Director Jay Cairns. It is available to all denominations, providing scholarships and support programs to promising students as well as rehearsal and ensemble spaces for all students and residents in the region. It plays a crucial role in creating harmony in the region, hosting cultural and music events that bring people together from all walks of life.

Invitations for the Negev Gala will be sent by mail soon, added Cairns. "For information about becoming a donor or advertiser in the virtual event and the printed Tribute Book, or if you have any questions, please contact the office at (780) 481-7881, email edm@jnf.ca and a member of the campaign team will follow up with you."



JNF Edmonton Executive Director Jay Cairns works with organizations, synagogues and Talmud Torah School to keep the community engaged in the activities and programs of Jewish National Fund. He is pictured above with Robin Marcus at Talmud Torah School distributing JNF Passover Activity Books for the students.

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EJFF *Cont. from page 1*

demands of school, but also want to see the films.”

As the manifestation of the pandemic has changed several times over in the past year, organizers at the EJFF have had much to take into careful consideration during their months of preparation. “We surveyed the community after last year’s festival. Understandably, many really missed the ability to get together to watch the films and talk about them after. There were also quite a few people who communicated to us that they are still concerned about the idea of social gathering. We have found a way to respect the comfort levels of everyone.”

EJFF will be presenting all its seven feature films and four shorts online, including two features that will be offered in-person as well as virtually – nobody will miss out. “Being online widened our audience. It gave us the ability to reach people outside of Edmonton. We had people sign in from all over, so our reach was quite expansive. We had geographic distribution, demographic distribution; just in general a lot of people who had not been able to attend the festival in previous years were engaged for the first time. We wanted to continue to build on this,” Schiffman explained enthusiastically.

The season kicks off on Tuesday, May 10 at the Stanley A. Milner Edmonton Public Library with a live screening of *Neighbours*, a heartwarming yet challenging film from Syria.

“We are all thrilled to be able to offer this flexibility of format,” explained Schiffman. “We really have found a great way, I think, of recognizing everyone’s needs. As soon as it appeared that in-person could happen, we wanted to make sure that opening night would be a live screening. This film really is perfect for the occasion, and the Edmonton Public Library is an ideal venue for bringing people and communities together. *Neighbours* has a human rights message, something that everyone would appreciate, and we are so happy that we can collaborate with the Edmonton Public Library to offer this.”

The EJFF is hopeful to expand its viewership further and engage people who are not necessarily connected to the Jewish community. “These are excellent films, and they can be appreciated and enjoyed by diverse audiences for sure.”

The EJFF will also be offering four Zoom question and

answer sessions with filmmakers. “For *Neighbours*, our Q&A event will take place the day after the screening because the director Mano Khalil will be joining us from Europe,” explained Schiffman. These virtual events will give movie-goers an opportunity to delve deeper into the films and the creative visions that brought them to be.

The second film that will be offered live is the documentary *Fiddler’s Journey to the Big Screen* on May 15. “Who doesn’t love *Fiddler*? We thought this would be an exceptional one for people to be able to share together in-person,” Schiffman explained. Certainly, with such an iconic cinematic phenomenon as *Fiddler on the Roof*, audience members will instantly be drawn in by the behind-the-scenes insights. “A great many of us have strong memories attached to Fiddler, so there will be something special about a shared group experience of watching this documentary I think,” Schiffman concluded.

The independent film *Tiger Within* will be the EJFF’s closing night feature. Audience members will instantly recognize the familiar face of Ed Asner from late-night reruns of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, but *Tiger Within*, sadly, was one of the career actor’s final performances before his death in 2021. The story is touching and raises significant questions about the importance of passing on history to younger generations.

The Zoom Q&A following will allow viewers to virtually meet the film’s screenwriter Gina Wendkos and the young ingenue, Margot Josefsohn who played opposite Asner. The EJFF has arranged for community member Becca Cogan-Grahn to moderate the panel along with her father, EJFF Committee member Neil Grahn. Cogan-Grahn is not a seasoned cinema aficionada, but a young Edmontonian with a passion for good films.

“We have always been committed to engaging younger members of the Jewish community,” said Schiffman. “We know that the future of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton is in the hands of our younger generation.”

Organizers are pleased to be able to offer this year’s Edmonton Jewish Film Festival free of charge. “This is only possible because of our exceedingly generous sponsors and donors,” explained Schiffman. “We are so grateful for their generosity.” After several difficult years of pandemic pivots, Schiffman and her colleagues know that offering the festival free of charge is something that will do incredibly positive things for the Edmonton Jewish community and beyond. “The films we present are not available in theatres or through subscription streaming.



The EJFF opens on May 10 with 'Neighbours' screening at Stanley Milner Library Theatre in Edmonton and online.

Our selections are Edmonton premieres, so we are really bringing exciting content to our viewers.”

Last year, a portion of donations and sponsorships collected went to support the COVID Relief Fund operated by the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. This year, the festival will return to its roots. “For many years now, the festival has supported the Edmonton Partnership Together Program. P2G is a capacity building partnership between the Edmonton Jewish community and our partners region in the Northern Galilee Panhandle of Israel. In 2022, the EJFF will support a youth centre in Yesod ha’mala and an Arab and Israeli youth partnership program in Metullah.”

Although there is no price for admission, virtual or otherwise, donations to the EJFF are always welcome and greatly appreciated. Register now and sign up for a whirlwind tour of contemporary international Jewish-themed cinema. This year, audience members will travel, through film, and be introduced to works from the United States, Israel, France, Switzerland, Germany, and even Belarus! Do not miss out!

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

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Tuesday, May 10

Neighbours (7 p.m. at the Stanley A. Milner Edmonton Public Library and online)

Wednesday, May 11

The Last Chapter of A.B. Yehoshua (online)
Masel Tov Cocktail (short film, online)
 Q&A with *Neighbours* director Mano Khalil, moderated by Sheba Birhanu, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (12 p.m. on Zoom)

Thursday, May 12

Plan A (online)

Sunday, May 15

Fiddler's Journey to the Big Screen (7 p.m., the Stanley A. Milner Edmonton Public Library & online)
Space Torah (short film, 7 p.m., the Stanley A. Milner Edmonton Public Library & online)

Monday, May 16

Persian Lessons (online)
 Q&A with *Fiddler's Journey to the Big Screen* director Daniel Raim, moderated by Neil Grahn, director, writer and EJFF committee member (12 p.m. on Zoom)

Tuesday, May 17

What If? Ehud Barak on War and Peace (online)
Holy Holocaust (short film, online)
 Q&A with *Persian Lessons* director Vadim Perelman, moderated by Sam Koplowicz, Chair, EJFF (12 p.m. on Zoom)

Wednesday, May 18

Tiger Within (online)
The Schnoz (short film, online)
 Q&A with *Tiger Within* screenwriter Gina Wendkos & actress Margot Josefsohn, moderated by Becca Cogan-Grahn and Neil Grahn (8:30 p.m. on Zoom)

2022 SCHEDULE

All films and shorts play online from noon to 10 p.m. on scheduled date. Tickets are free.

Register at jewishedmonton.org



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Here to Tell *Cont. from page 1*

the survivors and descendants they already knew, encouraging them to take part in *Here to Tell*. Ads were placed in Jewish Federation publications and in the Jewish media and news of the project quickly spread by word of mouth.

Participating survivors and descendants responded to a questionnaire that asked for a few sentences about the survivors’ lives before, during and after the Holocaust and their words of wisdom for subsequent generations.

Armed with that information, individuals guided by volunteer coordinator and second generation survivor Sylvie Hepner began shaping the brief biographies that would accompany the photos.

“Our volunteers did an amazing job in creating those initial drafts,” recalls Libin. “Next, we needed a professional who could bring a unified voice and style to the project.”

That is when I became part of the story I now write.

Close to two years ago, Bondar asked me if I could recommend someone to edit the exhibit and book.

“I think I can help you with that.”

The words flew out of my mouth before I could even consider the enormity of the journey I was about to take. I spent the first few months just reading and thinking about how to do justice to the lived experiences of the survivors - how to convey their essence and make each stand out as the extraordinary and whole individual they are or were.

Guided by my own curiosity, I spoke to as many of the survivors and descendants as I could in order to bring additional details and stories to the telling.

It was not long before I was shaken to the core by the story of Leopold Jazwicky.

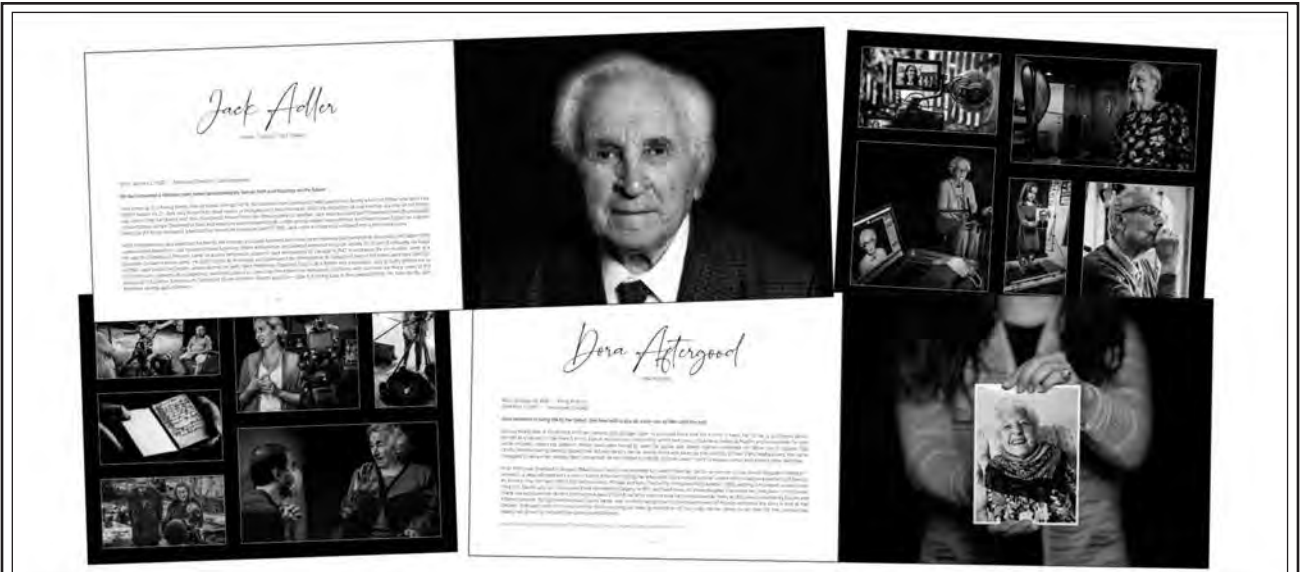
A survivor of numerous concentration and slave labour camps and a death march, Leopold made it through the war only to be savagely stabbed in the head, left for dead and very nearly buried alive during the Kielce pogrom in 1946. Shattered by his experiences, Jazwicky - the sole survivor of his family - nonetheless chose life, immigrating to Canada, marrying and raising a family in Ontario.

Jazwicky’s daughter, Marnie Burkhart, is the Calgary photographer who produced the unforgettable portraits for *Here to Tell*.

“When we met her, we knew right away that Marnie had the talent, personality and background to actualize our vision,” said Dahlia Libin.

“We wanted black and white photos that would focus sharply on the eyes of the survivors and capture every line in their faces,” recalled Marnie Bondar.

Those wrinkles form the roadmaps to exceptional souls



Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors books are now available for purchase at heretotell.com

and are a source of celebration; many local survivors achieved what six million, or two thirds of European Jewry, were denied - the privilege of growing old.

“The lives of Holocaust survivors are an extreme contrast to the lives of most people who will see these photos,” Burkhart said. “Black and white sets the photos apart. It takes us out of the normal, everyday realm.”

Delivering on Libin and Bondar’s specs, Burkhart took what she describes as “tight-in headshots with selective focus where the eyes are sharpest.”

“Everything else falls away, because this is about what those eyes have seen,” Burkhart says.

Here to Tell does not end with the horrors seen by all those eyes. It was of paramount importance to Bondar and Libin that Burkhart’s lens would capture the sparks of hope that propelled the vast majority of survivors to move forward and live life as fully as possible.

While the survivors she met inspired her, the assignment was emotional for Burkhart who cannot remember a time she was not aware of the tragedy that befell her father and his slain family.

“It is scary when you are a little child and you learn about this even from day one,” Burkhart said.

While she knows a great deal about her late father’s experiences, Burkhart now regrets that she did not ask him more questions.

“I think my father would have been so proud that I photographed survivors,” Burkhart says, adding that she was moved, in particular, by Holocaust survivors from Poland like Lea Kohn and Bronia and Sidney Cyngiser, who lived not too far away from her father and made her

think of him with longing.

“When I told Sid that I was the daughter of a survivor, he started to cry and I clicked the button...and that is the photo we used,” Burkhart said.

The photoshoots got underway in the spring of 2020. COVID-19 was running rampant, but Bondar and Libin knew they could not wait for it to pass. Many survivors had already passed away and several more were lost in the interval between the launch of the project and the photoshoots.

Bondar and Libin worked quickly, preparing for photoshoots in garages and backyards, well-ventilated locations that reduced the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

After Burkhart photographed each living survivor, she harmonized those portraits with vintage photos of survivors who had passed away. Often she had to extract survivors’ images from group photos. The quality of images varied, and Burkhart worked painstakingly to improve the look of the vintage photos.

Burkhart then photographed those images in the hands of second, third and even fourth generation survivors, having created a system for invisibly suspending the photos so that they were perfectly straight.

Bondar and Libin encouraged descendants to wear treasured jewellery or other items that had belonged to their loved ones, adding additional layers of meaning to the images.

During the photoshoots, videographer Fidele Arcuri and photographer Adam Brener captured compelling behind-the-scenes images of survivors. Those unscripted moments led to a powerful 30 minute documentary that will be screened in conjunction with the *Here to Tell* exhibit and poignant behind-the-scenes photographs that grace both

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66 Anniversary Camp Reunion

By Maxine Fischbein

Camp BB-Riback will celebrate 66 years serving the youth of Alberta and Saskatchewan at a camp reunion taking place on the shores of Pine Lake June 24 – 26.

The festivities are open to camp alumni and friends and will feature fun activities for people of all ages.

Flexibility is the name of the game, says camp board member and reunion committee volunteer Miriam Staav who spent summers at the camp between 1996 and 2007 as a camper and then Machon counsellor, CIT (counsellor-in-training) staff and CIT coordinator.

“The hope is to have a weekend when we can gather people together on camp after an odd two years when camp wasn’t able to operate as it had for 63 years before,” said Staav. “We will celebrate just being able to do that and what we hope camp will be like going forward.”

Individuals and families can choose to stay on or off camp and to participate for the entire weekend or on presentation day, Sunday, June 26.

The event is guaranteed to be a multigenerational homecoming with the camp having now served three generations of Jewish campers.

A highlight of the reunion weekend will be the opportunity for individuals, families and groups to participate in the camp rotations while getting a bird’s eye view of improvements to the camp, including cabin refurbishments.

Camp Director Stacy Shaikin, the board of directors, volunteers, alumni and friends of the camp are partnering to upgrade 17 cabins over the next three years at an estimated cost of \$20,000 per cabin. Plans include new rooves, siding, drywall, doors, windows, flooring and bunks.

The template is the Benjamin Cabin which was fully redone in 2019 thanks to the generosity of Calgarian Ronnie Ploit and Edmontonian Steve Shafir. The work was done at a discount by The Exteriors Group, owned by camp alum Adam Girvitz, of Calgary.

“We got a lot of positive feedback from parents who got to see it last summer while dropping off their kids for LTC (Leadership Training Conference) last year,” Shaikin told *AJNews*.

“It’s one of the coolest cabins to be in because of the metal roof,” he added.

Individuals, families and groups donating to the cabin project can leverage their contributions thanks to a generous matching grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation which will provide \$1 for every \$2 raised by the camp to a total of \$20,500 USD, said Shaikin who added that the camp will also receive an additional bonus from the foundation if they achieve their fundraising goal.

While the cause is an important one, the weekend is definitely not all work and no play!

“We’re hoping to have live music on Saturday night and there are going to be Shabbat services, sing-songs, and a campfire,” promises Shaikin, adding that participants can busy themselves with their favourite camp activities or “just hang around camp and do their own thing.”

The price is right at just \$200 per adult for the weekend (\$72 for each kid between the ages of three and 18; babies and toddlers free). Families of four get a break at \$500 for the entire weekend. One-day adult admission is only \$54.

“The weekend is a chance for people to get to camp and either experience it the way they remember it when they were campers or staff or to experience it for the first time if they’ve never been,” says Miriam Staav. “I find it particularly exciting that there will be people there who haven’t had a chance to participate in camp activities before.”

Organizers are aiming to have most - if not all - camp rotations up and running for the reunion weekend as well as classic camp activities that will prompt more than a little nostalgia for camp alumni. Staav’s personal list

Calgary Good Deeds Day



On April 3, over 40 volunteers participated in Good Deeds Day, organized by Paperny Family JCC and Calgary Jewish Federation. 175 hygiene kits were packed with donated supplies for the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and \$665 was raised. (Facebook photo).

includes “eating in the Hadar, bonfires at night, and all those things that former campers and staff look back on with fondness.”

Staav says she has received positive feedback from camp alumni and first-timers who are excited at the idea of spending time at the camp, having endured two years of disruption and isolation due to COVID.

She and her husband - camp alum and former staffer Josh Staav - look forward to introducing their one-year-old son to the wonders of Camp BB-Riback during the reunion weekend and encourage other parents with young families to join them.

In the blink of an eye, those kids will be swapping their onesies for blue and white sweaters and hopping on the bus for their first summer at Camp BB!

To register for the camp reunion, go to <https://campbb.campbrainregistration.com/>

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

CMDA Annual Gala: May 29

The Calgary Chapter of Canadian Magen David Adom is celebrating their Annual Gala on May 29, 2022 at the Carriage House Inn. It is going to be an engaging and enjoyable event for a wonderful cause, Israel’s national

ambulance and disaster relief organization.

Special guest speaker will be Dr. Shafir Botner, Director of Magen David Adom’s Paramedic School. Dr. Botner has been a veteran MDA paramedic for nearly 20 years. He oversees a comprehensive program that trains more than 90,000 people annually.

The gala will also feature Rabbi Russel Jayne, as well as guest speaker Chief Lee Crowchild, a third generation Chief of Tsuu’tina. Chief Crowchild is a passionate advocate for the environment and sustainable energy

practices and he led the charge to protect the water that runs through his nation and on into Calgary.


A special performance by jazz and swing singer Barry Shaw will be another highlight of the gala. The reception will include interludes by violinist Steven Klevisky.

“Help us save lives in Israel,” says event chair Leonard Shapiro. A full kosher meal will be served and COVID safety measures will be observed. For tickets and information, contact sfraiman@cmdai.org or call 587.435.5808.



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community calendar

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

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A MESSAGE FROM JARED SHORE

With our Passover Seders now behind us, I hope that many can reflect on the holiday as a wonderful return to *simchas* (joyful events) with friends and family. And although it likely brought on moments of trepidation and stress, celebrating Pesach within larger gatherings was surely something that reminded us of the importance of these traditions, as a community. The lives that we've lived as individuals, and individual families are now returning to life as a community.

While *Pesach* is a holiday of exceptional importance to the Jews around the world, the upcoming "Yoms" are also of critical importance to the fabric of who we are, as a community and as a people. Today in Israel, many describe the triumvirate of *Yom HaShoah*, *Yom HaZikaron*, and *Yom HaAtzmaut* as the new high holidays. They are also a reminder of our need to rise up, as a community.

For the past two years, Jewish Calgary has been privileged to host Deborah Lipstadt and Ben Freeman, respectively, for International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD). Jewish Calgary has used IHRD as an opportunity to educate both ourselves, and the wider Calgary community, on the history of the Holocaust. Conversely, *Yom HaShoah* is our Jewish community's opportunity to remember the six million murdered, and

honour our survivors, internally. Although steeped in Holocaust expertise, both Lipstadt and Freeman shared a critical take-home message, which I will get to in a moment.

Yom HaZikaron, is our opportunity to mourn the soldiers and victims of terror, who have died or been injured in service to the State of Israel. There is hardly an Israeli who has not been touched with the death of a loved one, in battle or in a terror attack. We must understand however, that those individuals are mourned by their family and friends year-round. *Yom HaZikaron* is a time for us to mourn these individuals collectively, as a community. For it is their bravery and sacrifice that has enabled the State of Israel's survival.


The final "Yom", *Yom HaAtzmaut* is the last of our holidays, and carries with it the imperative expressed by Deborah Lipstadt and Ben Freeman. We must celebrate who we are and what we've achieved. Israel's 74th birthday is truly reason to celebrate. Despite her warts, Israel is a beacon of hope and freedom for our people and those outside of the Jewish community. Israel provides religious freedom to all her citizens, compelling Muslims, Druze, Christians, and others to call Israel home, alongside Israel's Jewish citizens. And despite the relentless attempts to destroy her, Israel has thrived. Israel's birth

and survival is no less a miracle than our exodus from Egypt.

In Jewish Calgary, our obligation to these holidays is not a small one. As we look Holocaust denial in the face, as we see the murder of Israeli civilians celebrated on the streets of Gaza and the hallways of academia, as we witness the ongoing demonization of Israel in classrooms and social media, we simply cannot be silent and complacent. As individuals, we must take up the call to engage in these holidays, and educate ourselves on our past and our present, and envision our future with hope. Our collective honoring and celebration, are built on the work that each of us must take on, as individuals, to have a voice as a community.

The sequence of *Yoms* is our modern day reminder of where hate can lead and our reminder that we must be strong and determined in the face of it. For the final piece of never forgetting, is celebrating exactly who we are.

B'Shalom,


Jared Shore
Co-President, Calgary Jewish Federation



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

- 175 Good Deeds Day kits were created by community volunteers for victims of domestic violence seeking refuge at the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.
- 120 Children received PJ Library® Pesach Break Matzah Mania Chagim @ Home packages.
- Community members joined members of the Keshet Inclusion group to create Afikoman bags at the JCC.
- Hillel students gathered together for a Prince of Egypt movie night at the JCC to celebrate Passover.



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jewishcalgary.org/life-and-legacy

AS OF MARCH 31, 2022, THESE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE MADE A PROMISE TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF JEWISH CALGARY

Anonymous (33)	Stephanie Feldman	Susan Light	Brenda & Garry Sapoznikow
Alice^{ztl} & Jacob (Jack) Adler	Barry Finkelman	Caroline & Alex Linetsky	Kathy & Norman Schachar Family
Batyah Yisach Aguinaldo	Maxine & Milt Fischbein	Saundra & Harold Lipton	Legacy Fund
Dan Balaban & Family	Jana & Bryant Frydberg	Steven Lipton	Agnes Romer Segal & Eliezer Segal
Michael Balaban	Evan Gelman	Monica & Gustavo Lis	Marina & Yannai Segal
Judith & Christopher Baron-Bown	Sarah & Ben Ginzberg	The Lister Family	Kimberly Rothenberg & Leonard Seidman
Gerry Barron	Halley & Bruce Givritz	Margie Sills-Maerov & Adam Maerov	Dorothy Hanson & Sheldon Shagal
Cathy Basskin	Peta Glezerson	Ellen Magidson	Debbie Shaikin
Debbie & Steve Baylin	Dr. Caron & Rabbi Mark Glickman	Amalia & Mark Mandel	The Shaikin Family
Ben Zion Be'eri	Yael & Rabbi Chaim Greenwald	Sharon Marcus	Daniel Shapiro
Mona & Howard Bell	Dr. Benjamin Grintuch	Sahbra Markus	Betty Sherwood
Jenny Belzberg	Cheryl & Jason Gurevitch	Sheila & David Martin	Cheryl Baron & Robert Shiel
Rebecca Berlin	Sheila & Dr. Ralph Gurevitch	Ralph Maybaum	The Shilling Family
Marni Besser	Malka & Rabbi Binyomin Halpern	Daniel Merson	Deborah Shnay
Judy & Ron Bing	Debbie & Nelson Halpern	Leah Moldofsky	Cheryl & Morley Shore
Rachel & Jerrad Blanchard	Jackie & Hayim Hamborger	Deborah Yedlin & Martin Molyneaux	Christina Ellerbeck & Jared Shore
Melissa & Dan Blitt	Annette Hanson	Elaine & Stuart Myron	Judith Shriar
Renee & Milton Bogoch	Candice Hanson	Kimberly & Richard Nagan	Laura Shuler
Amy Bondar	Lucille Hanson ^{ztl}	Donna & Jack Newton	Sandy Shuler
Marnie & Darren Bondar	Elaine & Jerry Hashman	Claude Oppenheim	Esther Allman Silberg & Gary Silberg
Val & Lou Bracey	Sara Hastings-Simon	Roslyn & Daniel Oppenheim	Deborah & Adam Silver
Annie Brodsky^{ztl}	Vivian & Benjamin Herman	Robyn & Joe Oppenheim	Jemmie & Neil Silver
Sandy & Dr. Stuart Brown	Josh Hesslein	Beth & Rob Ordman	Jennifer & David Silver
Jackie & David Busheikin	Roz Mendelson & David Hodgins	Shifra & Yehuda Ortega	Rebecca J. Silverberg
The Charbonneau Family	Sidney Horovitz	Joshua Orzech	Lorraine Spector
Judy Chetner	Josh Inhaber	Alex Osten	Becky & Brad Spier
Michael Tavel Clarke	Susan & David Inhaber	Ashley Runka Owens & Dustin Owens	Sondra & Joe Spier
Gertrude Cohos	Betsy Jameson	Lisa Welikovitich & Mark Paidra	Tina & Larry Stanleigh
Kim & Peter Cohos	Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne	Jane Paterson	Beth & Craig Steinberg
Marty Cole	Barbara Joffe	Hindy and Izak Paul	Diana Kalef & Elliott Steinberg
Bonnie Kaplan & Richard Conte	Naomi Johansen	Lorne Pearl	Helen & Mark Swartz
Debbie & Cam Cousins	Sharla Stoffman & Malcolm Jubinville	Rick Phillips	Ida & Sam Switzer
Batyah Rivkah Cristobal	Megan Macfarland & Tibor Kaldor	Ron Plucer	Michele Doctoroff & Ted Switzer
Alana & Shane Devlin & family	William Katz	Cynthia & David Prasow	Sasha & Ruben Switzer
Abigail Draper	Rabbi Rick Kline	Debora Prussick	Shauna L. Switzer
Nadine & David Drexler	Anna Lourie Kostousov	Dr. Earl Raber	Darlene Switzer-Foster
Tracey Rumig & Steve Eichler	Barb & Ron Krell	Eugene Ragolsky	Mira & Joseph Tappenden
Jennifer Eiserman	Gail & Mel Ksienski	Gayla & Brian Rogers	Loredana Della Vedova
Ayala Roudstein & Marc Ereshefsky	Malka & Stan Labell	Susan Rose	Nadine & Hartley Waldman
Jeff Faber	Eddy Lang	Irene & Dr. Stuart Ross	Shelley Werner
Carol Feldman	Tamar Zenith & Blair Laven	Jane & Phil Rotman	Sandra Morton Weizman
Joy Feldman	Carolyn & Bruce Libin	Pnina & Mark Rubensohn	Linda & Gary Wolf
Max Feldman	Harriet & Philip Libin	Harry Sanders	Helen & Leonard Zenith
Sam, Cindy, Rebekah & Josh Feldman			Susan Klassen & Jonathan Zyto

Bold indicates LOI has been formalized

 LOI received 54 % formalized 54	 LOI received 49 % formalized 71	 LOI received 38 % formalized 53	 LOI received 65 % formalized 71	 LOI received 47 % formalized 57	 LOI received 46 % formalized 54	 LOI received 66 % formalized 65	 LOI received 49 % formalized 67	 LOI received 59 % formalized 58	 LOI received 65 % formalized 54
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AIFDA performs live at their Spring Show 2022



The Aviv and Shemesh Dancers of the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association performed beautifully at their year end dance recital at Beth Shalom Synagogue in Edmonton on April 4. Photos by Jenna Soroka.

By Jenna Soroka

For the past two years, the performing arts has been greatly affected due to a variety of limitations, including the ability to gather for in-person rehearsals as well as perform live for the community.

The Aviv and Shemesh dancers of the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association (AIFDA) have navigated such barriers for some time now, so it was extra special when, on Sunday, April 4 2022, they performed at their end-of-the-year dance recital at Beth Shalom Synagogue. Artistic Director, Sari Uretsky, explained how leading up to the show, there were times where “we had to cancel classes, have classes online, then in-person classes, all while masking the entire time, and it’s not easy.”

The show began at 4 pm and the dancers showcased seven different dance numbers for the audience members. People clapped along and enjoyed the performances throughout the show, especially after two years without

seeing these dancers live. Performing in front of an audience brings a whole different energy, and you could feel the dancers’ excitement and joy throughout the show. A Shemesh dancer shared post-show, “I love doing Israeli dance and it’s so fun! I really like dancing on stage.”

To many of these dancers, Israeli dance is a way for them to express themselves, connect back to their Jewish heritage and community, and retain friendships. “I think that Israeli dance is such a great opportunity to learn more about our Jewish background, and it was really fun [to perform]!” one dancer expressed after the show.

Before the show, attendees were encouraged to drop-off donations for the organization Basically Babies in support of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton’s Good Deeds Day Drive.

Sari shared how proud she was of all the dancers. “The kids have been so resilient...they had to put up with the unknown all the time.” She went on to say that they “did an amazing job; they were wonderful. They persevered.

They did it.”

A small reception was held after the show for people to have a little nosh. Individual boxes of cookies and drinks, organized by Beth Shalom Synagogue, were available for people to enjoy.

Sari extended special thanks to the AIFDA executive led by President, Natalie Soroka; Jayden Leung for creating the show’s beautiful video presentation; everyone who dropped off donations for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton’s Good Deeds Day Initiative; as well as family, friends, and the community for coming out to support the AIFDA dancers. Sari presented flowers to the instructors and expressed her appreciation for how they navigated the uncertainties throughout the dance year.

After two years without a recital, Sari commented how she feels “blessed and lucky [for the dancers] to be able to perform live.” She looks forward to more opportunities for the dancers to share their love of Israeli dance with the local community and beyond.

For parents of kids from K-6, Sari hopes to be able to start Rikud Academy classes back up at Talmud Torah School after the high holidays. Stay tuned for more information to come over the next few months.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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New play by Leonard Stone to debut at Beth Israel: May 23

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

The electric force of artistic creativity is a wave that long-time ‘show biz’ veteran Leonard David Stone continues to ride as his playwriting career gains momentum. Many in the Edmonton Jewish community may remember Stone as the author of *Truman’s Jew*, which debuted as a staged-reading at Beth Israel Synagogue in December of 2017. *Truman’s Jew* chronicled the celebrated narrative of President Harry Truman’s historic actions to support the founding of the State of Israel, and the lesser-known story of the Bostonian Jew, David Niles, who had his ear. The performance was met with great enthusiasm by theatrical connoisseurs and history buffs alike. Stone’s first foray into the limitless world of dramaturgy was hailed as a success!

Several years, and one global pandemic later, Stone is still bringing significant moments in Jewish history to the theatrical stage through a combination of creative vision and meticulous research – but this time, it is a far darker chapter he has chosen to undertake.

“Growing up I had interactions with young men and women who were Holocaust survivors. They came to Canada, and many other places too. They would enrol in schools and start new lives, and I became very aware of the tattooed numbers on arms,” said Stone in a recent phone interview.

“While the Holocaust was taking place, I was very comfortable and very secure in my parents’ home in Winnipeg, and so only knew about it from my interactions with survivors and reading history.”

Approaching literary creation with the Holocaust as a backdrop or as inspiration for expression is a monumental undertaking. Much like Leonard David Stone, acclaimed Jewish novelist and short-story writer Cynthia Ozick also felt compelled to envision a fictionalized narrative dealing with this horrendous period of human history when she wrote “The Shawl” in 1989. “When I look back and see 1942 to 1945, I am bewildered by my own happiness,” Ozick once said when describing her adolescent years in New York. In a similar way Stone describes feelings of being deeply haunted by the perpetration of modern history’s most ghastly crime against humanity, so far away, and yet so close to home. He needed to find an outlet for everything he had to express.

The inception of his latest play, *The Girl from Treblinka*, can be traced back to 1984, Berlin, in what was then West Germany. “While I was in Berlin, I went to a place that I was told was, in a sense, a Jewish museum – for Jewish artifacts and history – a preservation of

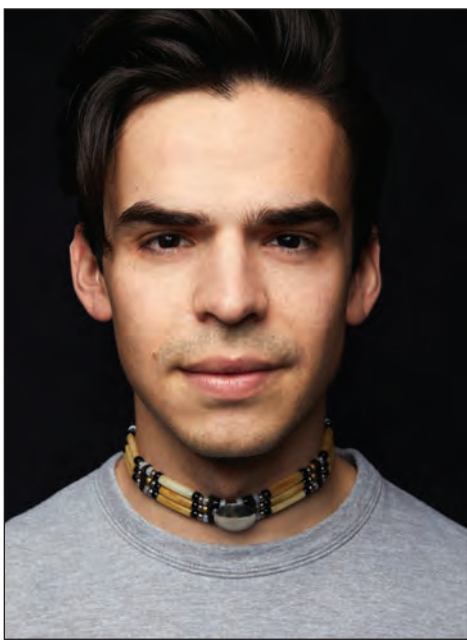
Jews of Berlin. It wasn’t an exclusive museum,” explained Stone remembering the meagre offerings on display. “It was a few rooms attached to an existing municipal museum.”

“In one of the displays there were a series of diaries that had been rescued from the rubble of bombed Berlin. And since I couldn’t read German, I didn’t have any idea what the diaries were about” he said chuckling. “So, I called one of the security people over and asked him if he was aware of their contents. In his broken English and my Yiddish, we were somehow able to communicate. I pointed to one diary, and I have no idea why I pointed to that specific one, but he said he was familiar with it and its contents and that it had been written by a young Jewish woman in Berlin.”

“The diary ended after Kristallnacht,” said Stone pausing for a moment of reflection and recollection. “And every now and then, going through the years, I would ask myself, why did it specifically end after Kristallnacht? Like almost all the other Jews in Berlin, she would have eventually been sent on to the camps – this is just supposition on my part.”

Decades later, Stone, a self-described “night hawk,” was watching television at 2 am. “CSPAN was televising, live, the Polish government’s, commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. It was done with grace, sincerity, and with dignity. And at that point I said to myself, ‘self, you are now a writer, you have this diary haunting you – why don’t you write about it?’ So, that was the genesis; this is why I needed to write about the Holocaust,” concluded Stone.

On May 23, *The Girl from Treblinka*, Stone’s second play, will make its debut at Beth Israel Synagogue as a staged-reading. Beth Israel’s President, Shane Asbell commented: “We are so grateful for Leonard Stone’s creativity, talent and especially for his generosity in enabling us to produce his play.”



Actors Hunter Cardinal and Kayla Asbell will be featured at a staged reading premiere of Leonard Stone’s new play *The Girl from Treblinka* at the Beth Israel in Edmonton on May 23. The performance will also be live streamed.

This time, as the actors ascend to the bimah turned stage, there will be a familiar face to note. Kayla Asbell, Shane Asbell’s sister, will assume the leading role of Frida Blume. Kayla Asbell, a graduate of New York University’s prestigious Tisch School of the Arts, is based in Brooklyn, and along with her fellow actors, will take on the challenges of Stone’s gripping and poignant subject matter for one night only.

“We will all arrive early in the morning, we will move what is moveable from the bimah to transform it into a stage, we will read through the script, do blocking, rehearse – and then perform in the evening – then we pack it all in,” Stone said with an audible smile. “Between now and the day *The Girl from Treblinka* is to be staged, the actors all have my number in case they have questions,” finished Stone with dramatic flare.

“When the Holocaust is discussed ‘Auschwitz’ is the immediate word that enters the dialog,” said Stone with gravity. “And rightfully so,” he added. “However, Treblinka, in my mind at least, was unique because it had a very short lifespan – just fifteen months. Most camps operated for several years, and in Treblinka’s fifteen-month timespan they murdered 900,000. This set Treblinka out singularly as the most horrifically efficient of the extermination centres,” expressed Stone. “Unlike many of

Continued on page 13



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SEAN SONEGO

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CJA student to head to National Science Fair

By Evan Gelman

(Calgary) - Rachel Simantov, a CJA student in grade 9, is headed to the National Science Fair.

Every year the Calgary Jewish Academy has a delegation of students representing their school at the Calgary Youth Science Fair (CYSF). The CYSF is the largest local science fair in Canada, totaling to over 500 project submissions. Out of all submissions, Rachel stood out from the crowd. Her project, titled *Framework of Optimal Pandemic Management*, models a pandemic management system blending aspects of science, finance and social justice. The algorithm that she developed could help officials find the most cost effective ways for deploying vaccines and medication for any infectious disease,

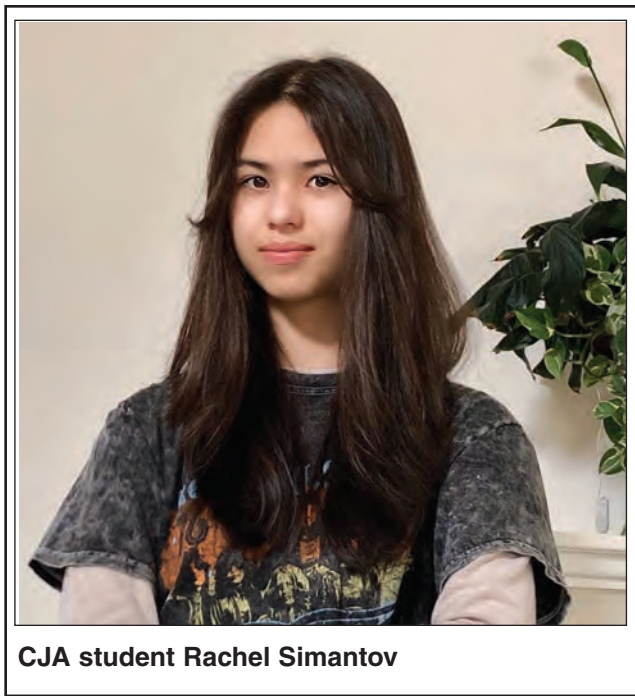
increasing countries' abilities to send medical aid to the areas that need it most.

In addition to heading to the National Science Fair, Rachel also received a gold medal for her project and a plethora of awards including: University of Calgary Schulich School of Engineering First; CYSF Travel Award; CYSF Top Intermediate Award; and University of Calgary Office of the Chancellor's Award.

The University of Calgary Office of the Chancellor's Award goes to the top overall project from all divisions within the CYSF. Rachel's project will move forward to the 2022 Canada Wide Science Fair.

As Rachel prepares, she has many ideas for future applications from her research. She is working on a strategy for global allocation of COVID-19 vaccine in Africa, which honours equality and yields sustainable coexistence with COVID-19 across countries. Her strategy is aligned with the OECD Policy responses on COVID-19 and will potentially increase the effectiveness of Canada's donations of vaccines worldwide.

For Rachel, having the ability to showcase her work at the National Science Fair is the first step to her helping more people gain access to vaccines worldwide.



Here to Tell *Cont. from page 6*

the exhibit and the book.

The descendants

While laser-focused on sharing survivors' stories, Bondar and Libin have a few of their own.

Bondar was motivated by the unbreakable bond she shared with her grandmother, Freda Plucer, who passed away shortly before the pandemic.

"I had just finished treatment for breast cancer," recalls Bondar, "and my Babi got me through it."

"The whole time I was sick, she was my person. When I lost my hair, I told myself that hers had been forcibly shaven. When I was tattooed for radiation, I remembered that she was tattooed under duress at Auschwitz," Bondar said.

When Plucer passed away, Bondar was devastated.

"Now I had to be my Babi Freda's person," she recalls.

The words of writer and film director Jamie Anderson - *Grief is just love with no place to go* - resonated with Bondar.

Working with Libin every step of the way, Bondar - the granddaughter of four Holocaust survivors - poured all that pent up love into a living tribute to her Babi Freda, encompassing as many other Holocaust survivors as possible.

"There was no better way to honour my Babi's tremendous legacy," Bondar said.

Dahlia Libin is also motivated and centred by the immense love with which she was showered by her grandparents, all of them Holocaust survivors.

"I was always very close with my grandparents. They were an active part of my life. We didn't even leave a room without saying *I love you*," Libin said.

"When they passed away, the reality that I didn't know enough about them really hit me full force," added Libin, who began to explore her roots in earnest.

"Learning the truth about where our family came from, the slavery and the sadness and the trauma, is part of our identities," Libin said.

"We understand very well the reality of having family ripped away. My parents didn't know the love of grandparents and extended family, so we are all just incredibly grateful to have family."

"*Here to Tell* is the opportunity to honour my remarkable grandparents in a public setting. I'm really proud to do that," Libin said. "I am part of their legacy, and to be able to honour them and so many other survivors on such a large scale is meaningful beyond words."

Libin and Bondar are devoted to educating and empowering second, third and fourth generation descendants.

"Very soon we will live in a world without Holocaust survivors," notes Libin, "But their stories remain. They live within us."

Fourth generation descendants will be the first that may not personally know the survivors. Transmitting their stories will require increasing effort as generations come and go.

journey; they are lovingly but anonymously acknowledged in both the exhibit and the book.

Thankfully, the Dancygers stayed the course. They believe *Here to Tell* is a Holocaust remembrance initiative that is very different than most that have preceded it.

"The stories are very personal," says Ann, adding that this approach is more relatable than history lessons that emphasize statistics too enormous for most people to comprehend.

"We are absolutely humbled by the book and by the whole project from start to finish: the emotion, tenderness, sensitivity and attention to detail," says Yvetta Sunderland, daughter of Holocaust survivor Eva Muskovitch.

"You can feel the consciousness of the intent and it is so, so powerful," said Sunderland. "I can hear the book talking to me, see and feel the way it all came together."

At first Eva Muskovitch was reticent to share her book with her caregiver and friends. She didn't want anyone to touch it, so sacred did she consider the contents.

Sunderland, on the other hand, plans to share *Here to Tell* with as many friends, neighbours and colleagues as possible.

"I hope that we wear these books out by sharing them," says Sunderland, who looks forward to taking her mother as well as friends to the exhibit in the hope of sparking meaningful conversation.

Sunderland was deeply affected by the words of one survivor who expressed the simple hope that her children would never experience war.

"It broke my heart," Sunderland recalls. "Just look where we are at today."

Indeed, images of another war in Europe bombard us together with other assaults on democracy and human rights, many of them disconcertingly close to home. If there was ever a time that we need to reflect on the experiences and the wisdom of Holocaust survivors, that time is now.

Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors opens in Calgary at the Glenbow at the Edison (150 – 9 Avenue SW) on May 27 and runs through July 3. Hours of Operation: Wednesdays noon to 5 pm; Thursdays and Fridays noon to 7 pm; Saturdays and Sundays noon to 5 pm.

For more information, go to www.heretotell.com and www.glenbow.org.

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



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Camp BB-Riback

Cont. from page 2

from around the world what the Jewish community of Alberta has to offer and imparting positive, meaningful experiences within the Jewish community to people who will go home and share that experience with their friends and family, especially in a time where antisemitism is so pervasive in the world,” adds Wright.

“International staff also bring a fresh set of eyes and tremendous creativity to our camp community. They are so grateful to be here with us and it shows in how well-run activities are and how well they engage with our campers. Our Israeli Shlichim also bring fresh Judaic programming and a strong connection to Israel in many aspects of camp life.”

Back to BB-Riback

“We are getting back in the groove and will be maximizing the fun factor in 2022,” promises Stacy Shaikin.

According to Jordyn Wright, the question guiding staff efforts is, “How can we bring an extra something to every aspect of camp life that makes it more meaningful for the kids?”

“We are in the midst of working closely with every activity specialist and program planner to elevate each experience,” adds Wright. “No activity will look quite the same. We have a brand-new generation of campers who deserve programming that incorporates their interests and challenges them to grow in a safe, healthy way.”

Campers can look forward to a change in the dance rotation, says Micah Allen, including a new focus on mindfulness and yoga.

“It will be meaningful for the kids to learn meditation, mindfulness and gratitude, and just slow things down in a really fast-paced environment. These skills can really help them in the future too, not just in an isolated camp environment,” Allen says.

In addition to camp highlights like the ropes course, horseback riding, sports and other classic camp rotations, there are facility improvements that 2022 campers can look forward to, says Shaikin.

There is a new dock and deck at the waterfront and the camp swimming pool is getting a new liner. Other projects currently underway are the completion of a new camp office and the highly-anticipated refurbishment of cabins. Beginning in May, the west side cabins will receive new flooring.

Inclusion Initiatives

Over the past few years, Micah Allen and Jordyn Wright have been the driving forces behind inclusion training for Camp BB-Riback staff.

“Creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe to express themselves, make friends, and try new things is so important.... By implementing longer, more involved staff training, we can give our counsellors more tools to create and maintain a safe environment,” Wright told *AJNews*.

“The LEAD [Let’s Educate, Advocate and Do] program emphasizes mental health advocacy and training,” Allen said, describing an all day, intensive workshop that arms staff with a variety of examples, activities and skills.

“I saw a huge change in staff attitudes toward situations that can occur and their responses to them, which is very encouraging to see,” Allen said.

Between Friends also provides training so that camp staff are better able to support campers with disabilities, Allen said.

Staff training sessions also focus on awareness and information about ADHD and learning disabilities.

You’ll have the time of your life

“We’ve missed our campers over the past two years. Many are returning and we are excited to see them and all the new campers including younger siblings. It is always nice to see that familial chain,” says Micah Allen.

“We are excited to welcome the kids back, have some true normalcy, and just celebrate that we’ve managed two years of this virus,” adds Allen. “We are going to have an awesome summer like we did a few years ago.”

“This summer is going to be incredible and full of some truly special moments for each camper,” echoes Wright, who has an important message for parents:



The race is on for Camp BB-Riback Summer 2022. There will be some exciting new innovations mixed with all time favourite camp activities. (Facebook photo). To register your kids, visit campbb.com

“If you want your kids and teens to develop their Jewish identity, reconnect with themselves and the outdoors, and spend some face-to-face time with their friends, Camp BB is the place to send them!”

Wright knows this from years of experience as a camper and a camp professional.

“I wouldn’t be the person I am without having gone to camp and given myself to the community. Especially in such an isolated and tech-heavy time in the world, camp is a place where kids and teens can try new things, spend real quality time with their peers, and connect to nature and their community without the pressures and surveillances of the modern world,” Wright says.

If that leaves adult readers craving a do-over - or the opportunity to experience Camp BB-Riback for the first time - make sure to sign up for the 66 anniversary camp reunion taking place June 24-26 (see page 7 for details).

For more information about Camp BB-Riback, or to register your kids, go to <https://campbb.com/>.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

New play Cont. from page 11

the other camps, nothing of the original Treblinka exists. All you have is a huge field.”

Indeed, visitors to Treblinka are not met with the same lines of tourists or security checks as those found at the Auschwitz-Birkenau site. There is little more than a small visitor’s centre with a modest museum to indicate any official administrative body at a place where so many were brutally murdered. Uniform rectangular stone slabs indicate where a train track once lay. To reach the main camp location one must follow this shadow of the train’s path to an open field surrounded by forests where a sea of small, jagged stones encircle one taller stone monument – upon each stone is the name of a place from which victims were transported.

Nazi perpetrators did all they could to conceal the unimaginable magnitude of their heinous crimes by raising to the ground sites like Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Chelmno. Currently, researchers like Professor Carline Sturdy Colls, of Staffordshire University are working to archaeologically uncover what lies beneath the stained soil of the Treblinka. As the greater global consciousness of Holocaust history continues to be influenced largely by Hollywood renderings, stories from locations like Treblinka are far less prolific.

On February 19, 2016, Samuel Willenberg passed away at the age of 93 in Israel. He was the final survivor of the Treblinka death camp. As the number of survivors left to share their testimonies dwindles with each passing year, diligent research-minded artistic innovators like Stone assume the role of historical guardians. Works like *The Girl from Treblinka* will play a prominent role in

promoting understanding and awareness of this excruciating era in modern memory. This is most definitely a not-to-be-missed Edmonton event! Ticket proceeds will help Beth Israel Synagogue continue to engage the Edmonton Jewish community with enriching programming and outreach.

Tickets for *The Girl from Treblinka* are available for an

in-person performance on May 23 at Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton and live stream tickets are also available. For more information visit familyshul.org.

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

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from the

Sources

Show me the money

by Eliezer Segal

There is only a slight exaggeration in the observation that you can hardly poke a toe into Israeli soil - especially in Jerusalem or another locality with a long history - without displacing an ancient archeological relic. The visceral excitement of touching tangible artifacts from bygone eras has been shared by pilgrims, visitors and immigrants to the holy land over the generations.

One of the most distinguished of the Jewish immigrants to the land of Israel was Rabbi Moses ben Naman - Ramban or Nahmanides - the Catalan sage who was arguably the foremost Jewish religious scholar of the thirteenth century. The centrality of the homeland occupied a pivotal place in his outlook, and he took issue with Maimonides for not counting the obligation to settle the land as one of the commandments in the Torah that continues to be obligatory through all generations.

In 1267 Ramban himself took the step of forsaking his respected position in Spain and enduring the hardships of immigration to the holy land. His decision was likely facilitated by the difficulties that were being placed in his way by powerful figures in the Catholic church as a result of his impressive performance in the 1263 disputation of Barcelona against the apostate Friar Pablo Christiani. Although he spent a brief time in Jerusalem, where he was instrumental in bringing new vitality to the moribund Jewish community and its institutions, he made his home until his death in 1270 in Acre, the Crusader capital of Palestine.

The briefness of Nahmanides' sojourn in the land of Israel underscores the intense pace of his scholarly activity during that time. In addition to the various new discourses and treatises that he composed there, he continued to revise earlier works and mailed out hundreds of additions and revisions to his readers in Spain.

Of particular interest were the emendations that he introduced as a result of his encounters with physical realities that he had hitherto known only from reading texts. For example, his original discussion about the circumstances surrounding the matriarch Rachel's burial site was founded on the premise (inferred from linguistic

usages elsewhere in scripture) that her tomb was a considerable distance from Bethlehem; however, his tangible experience of their close proximity required him to rethink his previous interpretation.

In connection with the passage in Exodus in which all Israelites were commanded to donate a half-shekel as a way of conducting a census, Ramban digressed into an extensive discussion about the value of the shekel coin. He cited several commentators and codifiers who calculated its value based on information provided in the sources about its equivalence to other silver or gold denominations. He found fault with several interpreters who based their calculations on the coins that were current in their own generations without taking into account that the currencies had undergone continual devaluing of their precious metal content, a phenomenon that was attested in talmudic sources and continued into the medieval era.

Nahmanides' research into these questions was given an exciting new stimulus by his experience in the land of Israel: "The Lord has blessed me with the privilege of arriving in Acre where I found that the local elders were in possession of an engraved silver coin." He provided a description of the images on the two sides, which he identified as a rod from an almond tree and a sort of bowl. As for the inscriptions, although they were very clear he was unable to decipher them. They were in fact written in the proto-Hebrew script that had largely been abandoned by Jews in favour of the familiar square letters of the "Assyrian" Aramaic alphabet. However, a similar script is still in use among the Samaritans (who are referred to in rabbinic literature as "Cutheans"); so the coins were shown to some obliging Samaritans who were able to decipher them. The Samaritans were also able to identify the images as Aaron's almond-wood rod (that blossomed miraculously in the dispute with Korach) and the vial containing the manna.

As it happens, the medieval Samaritan script was not completely identical to the ancient Hebrew one, resulting in some inaccuracies in their translation. They read one

inscription as the awkward "shekel of shekels," whereas we now know it should actually be "shekel of Israel."

True to the spirit of Renaissance humanism, Don Isaac Abravanel, who had held high financial posts in the governments of Portugal and Castile, made thorough use of ancient coins in order to enrich his investigations into biblical archeology. Affirming Nahmanides' story about the shekel coin, he reported that he himself was in possession of an ancient shekel which he carefully weighed and compared with the currencies that were circulating in Europe. He made use of these for calculating the values of the Torah's shekel and of the gold plating in Solomon's Temple.

The sixteenth-century historian Azariah de Rossi also had an opportunity to study and describe one of those shekel coins that was in the possession of a widow in Ferrara whose husband had died near Jerusalem. De Rossi gives an accurate reading of the inscriptions and images, but admits to being stumped by a cryptic acronym that we now recognize as the date declaring "Year 4" of Israelite independence during the Great Revolt against Rome.

The fifteenth-century Spanish philosopher Rabbi Joseph Albo had previously invoked Nahmanides' testimony about the revised alphabet to support his contention that Jewish tradition was generally receptive to changes that occurred over the generations. He pointed out how, in order to commemorate their redemption from the Babylonian exile, the Jews switched to the "Assyrian" alphabet, as well as adopting a new calendar structure with named months.

Indeed, like so much of the archeological evidence that attests to the Jewish presence in the land of Israel, these ancient Hebrew shekel coins provide us with a powerful illustration of how the tradition maintains its vitality - by adapting to changing circumstances while still keeping its solid foundations in ancestral soil.

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

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JAHSENA welcomes new president






Gillian Horwitz

Eric Schloss

The Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is happy to announce that long-time community volunteer, Gillian Horwitz, is its new President. Gillian says she is dedicated to continuing to preserve the Jewish heritage of Edmonton and Northern Alberta communities, and invites you to contact her or Colleen Paull at the Jewish Archives office, 780 489-2809, if you have items you wish to donate.

JAHSENA is excited to announce that Eric Schloss is the featured speaker at their upcoming brunch on June 26, 2022. Details to follow.



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This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



Passover activities were a highlight at Talmud Torah School last month. Jay Cairns from JNF Edmonton distributed Passover activity books to classrooms and Out of School Care students prepared and ate Matzah Pizza. Grade 5 students built machines in their Science Class. For information about TTS call Natalie at 780-481-3377.



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About Talmud Torah Society
The TTS has been a steward of Jewish learning in Edmonton since its creation in 1912. In partnership with Edmonton Public School Board, TTS delivers Judaic and secular programming for grades K-6, and offers an Early Learning and Out of School Care program.

Board Benefits
Joining the TTS Board provides board members the opportunity to impact the Society's short and long-term objectives, as well as develop leadership abilities, expand skill sets, and enhance their community network.

Board Composition, Roles and Terms
The TTS Board is elected from TTS Membership and is responsible for establishing board policy and objectives. Central to the board's role is its fiduciary duty. Term durations range from 1-3 years, set annually according to board needs. The TTS Board is looking for proactive team players who are willing to advance the Society's work and that of the broader Jewish community. The Talmud Torah Society is particularly seeking individuals with the following skills: Judaic/Secular Curriculum, accounting, legal, marketing, fundraising, HR, community building, and Languages (Hebrew/Russian). For more information, please contact Natalie at (780)481-3377, nataliesoroka@talmudtorahsociety.com, or visit our website: <https://talmudtorahsociety.com/>.

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