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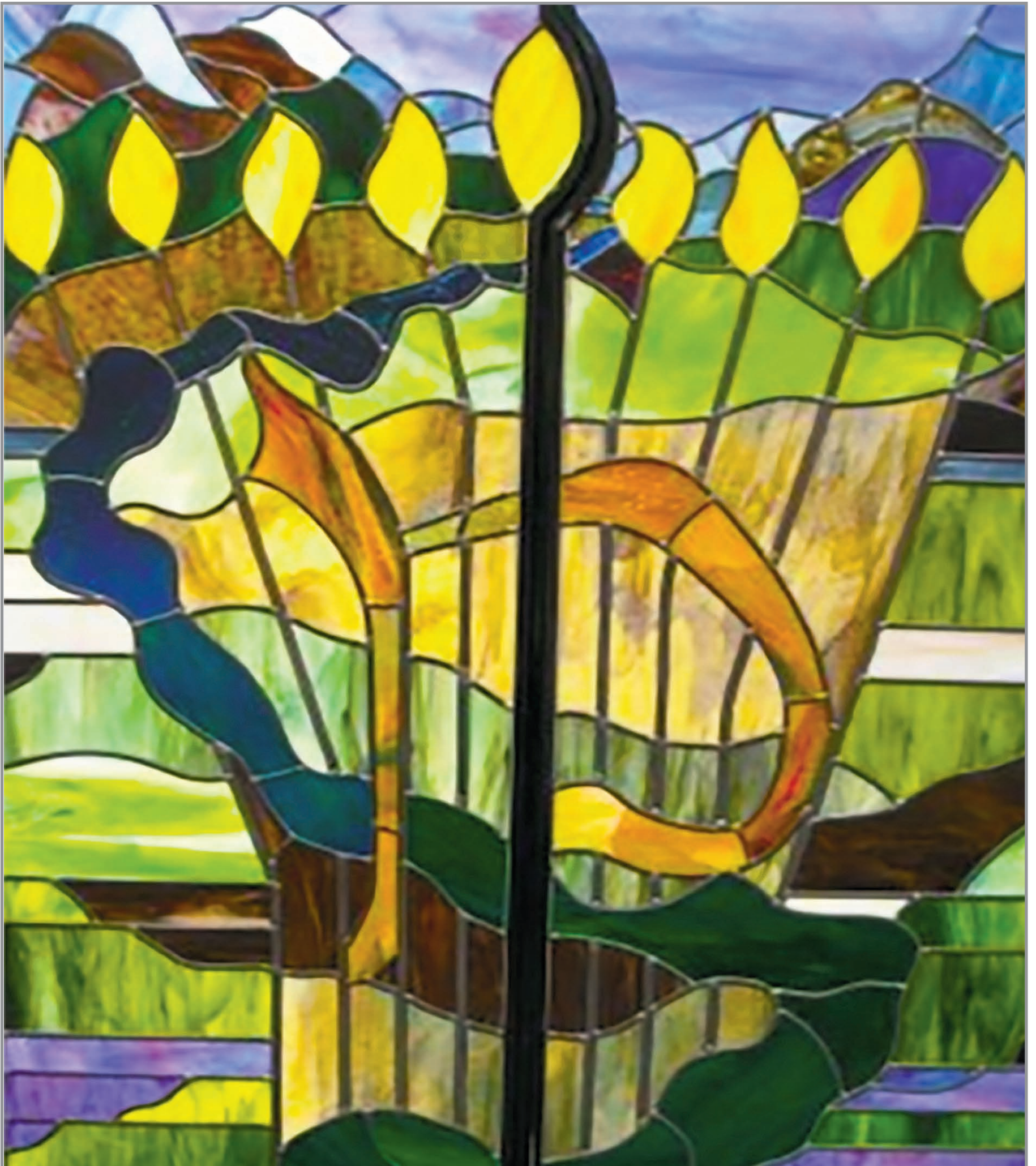
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Cover image: Stained glass Chanukiya © by Alan Briks.
See story page 11. Currently on exhibit at TBT Gallery at Temple B'nai Tikvah.

Alberta teen killed in Jerusalem terror attack

By AJNews Staff

On November 23, Jerusalem was rocked by coordinated twin terror attacks that killed an Israeli-Canadian teenager who had ties to the Alberta Jewish community and wounded 19 others.

Two explosions, 30 minutes apart, targeted popular bus stations, one at the entrance to the city near the Central Bus Station and the other in the Ramot neighbourhood, during rush hour as civilians made their way to work and school. Initial assessments from police suggest the bombs were detonated remotely and were reportedly packed with nails and bolts to maximize casualties.

Sixteen-year-old Aryeh Schupak, z”l, an Israeli-Canadian citizen who lived in the capital’s Har Nof neighbourhood and who was on his way to a yeshiva in a nearby community when the explosion occurred, lost his life in the attack.

Though this was the first bombing targeting civilians in Jerusalem since April 2016 – where a Hamas suicide bomber injured 21 people – these terror attacks follow months of shootings, stabbings, and car rammings that have killed a total of 30 Jewish, Christian, and Druze Israelis (both soldiers and civilians), with hundreds more injured in thousands of incidents.

Stacey Leavitt-Wright CEO of The Jewish Federation of Edmonton issued this statement to community members. “On behalf of the executive and board, it is with a heavy heart that we are writing to inform you of the loss of 16-year-old Aryeh Schupak z”l, whose life was tragically taken by a terrorist bus bombing in Jerusalem.

“This is devastating news, especially to our local community. Aryeh spent formative years in Edmonton, having attended Menorah Academy prior to the family making Aliyah. May his memory be for a blessing.

“We offer our condolences on behalf of the Edmonton Jewish community to the family. We join our Jewish communities across Canada in condemning this attack and wish a speedy recovery to the 19 victims who were injured.”

Edmonton Chabad Rabbi Ari Drelich told *Canadian Jewish News* that he had connected recently with Aryeh’s father Moshe, who had been in Edmonton visiting his ailing mother.

“He was very happy. He was working, his kids were going to school. They were fully immersed in Jewish life there,” Rabbi Drelich told CJN. “He certainly seemed to indicate this was the right decision for his family... Unfortunately, this tragedy happened.”

Rabbi Drelich said that coming from the former Soviet Union, with little knowledge about Yiddishkeit, the family really embraced their Judaism. “They grew in their observance and became *shomer Shabbat*, *shomer kosher*. They felt they wanted more and they decided to make aliyah and became very involved in the community there.”

According to the *Jerusalem Post*: “Though no group has taken responsibility for the attack, Hamas praised it with its spokesperson Abd al-Latif al-Qanua saying that it was “in response to the occupation and its settlers’ crimes against our people and Al-Aqsa Mosque.”

Several Canadian politicians condemned the attacks, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeting: “Incredibly saddened to learn about the death of a young Canadian in the terrorist attack in Jerusalem. I’m sending his family and friends my deepest condolences. I’m also thinking of those who were injured. Canada condemns this violence in the strongest possible terms.”

Canadian Ambassador to Israel Lisa Stadelbauer tweeted: “Heartbroken to confirm that a young Canadian lost his life in this morning’s reprehensible terror attack in Jerusalem. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends, and to others wounded in this attack. Canada continues to condemn all forms of terror.”

On behalf of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Shimon Koffler Fogel, President and CEO, condemned this vicious terrorist attack: “Today, Israeli civilians were targeted in the most horrific way; people who were just starting their day, on their way to work or school, were met by devastating hatred that has



forever changed their lives and the lives of all Israelis.

“Aryeh Schupak, z”l, of blessed memory, was an innocent victim. Just a boy, on his way to school. We convey our condolences and prayers to his family and pray those injured will have a full and speedy recovery. Our hearts are with the entire Israeli community who have, once again, been reminded that senseless hatred targets the innocent.

“Terrorist attacks have one goal: to spread fear in civilian populations, deliberately targeting civilians to push forward an agenda of chaos and violence.

“Israelis are known for their resiliency, having faced countless terror attacks, yet this is not a ‘norm’ any civilian should be asked to live with.

“As more and more countries seek peace with Israel through the Abraham Accords, we hope that local Palestinian leadership will also see the opportunities that come with such peace and support their populations in moving in this direction. The terror groups that glorify violence will only serve to continue this horrific bloodshed.

“We condemn these cowardly acts and remind Israelis that Canada’s Jewish community stands with them.”



Happy Hanukkah!
Best wishes for a Happy Hanukkah

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Shifting our focus

By Rabbi Russel Jayne



Rabbi Russell Jayne

When we tell the story of Hanukkah, we tend to focus on the miracle itself.

We talk about the Maccabees lighting the menorah with only enough oil to burn for a single day, but finding that it stayed lit for eight nights. We point to the ways our traditions – lighting candles, reciting the blessings, frying latkes in oil – symbolically retell that story, and we focus on the awe and wonder it inspires.

Miracles are important. They give us hope and fill us with an understanding of G-d’s glory, but this year, when I think about the Hanukkah story, I’m thinking

about the lead up to that miracle. I’m thinking about King Antiochus outlawing our faith and trying to crush the Jewish spirit. I’m thinking about him erecting an altar to Zeus in the Second Temple and ordering pigs to be sacrificed at its altar. I’m thinking about the rebellion that followed, and the Maccabees’ efforts to liberate and cleanse the Temple.

We are once again facing a world which threatens the Jewish spirit. Rising incidences of anti-Semitism – at home and abroad, online and in-person – are making it increasingly difficult for us to proclaim our Jewishness. We debate the wisdom of wearing kippot in public or affixing a mezuzah to our front door. We worry that putting a menorah on the window might attract the wrong kind of attention, or possibly even violence. We decide it’s better not to speak up when we hear anti-Semitic “jokes” repeated as though they don’t represent generations of Jews who have been persecuted for their faith.

No one is worshiping Zeus in our temples, but there is a rising fear of what might come if we are seen as being too Jewish to be acceptable to the larger world.

But silence is not an effective defence against hatred. Ignoring the issue won’t keep it from your front door. Speaking out against anti-Semitism may be a

risk, but it is a necessary act of courage. When you speak out against ignorance, when you light your menorah and debate where it belongs, know that placing it on the windowsill is like your own personal liberation – a direct strike against the darkness of ignorance and enmity.

In *Daring Greatly*, Brene Brown writes that “nothing is as uncomfortable, dangerous, and hurtful as believing that I’m standing on the outside of my life looking in and wondering what it would have been like if I had the courage to show up and let myself be seen.” The story of Hanukkah reminds us of the courage we need to take action in the fight against anti-Semitism. It reminds us of the courage necessary to show up and be seen – as Jews, as individuals, and as a community of people who will not stay silent against those who threaten our spirit.

And that, at the end of the day, is a miracle worth celebrating.

Rabbi Cantor Russ Jayne is the Kolbo and spiritual leader of Beth Tzedec Congregation, an egalitarian conservative synagogue in Calgary.

Editor of antisemitic newspaper invited to event hosted by Canadian MPs on Parliament Hill

(Toronto) - Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) is deeply disturbed and seeking answers after the editor of a notoriously antisemitic newspaper was invited to an event hosted by Canadian members of Parliament.

On November 29, Nazih Khatatba, editor-in-chief of *Meshwar*, an Arabic newspaper based in Toronto, was in Ottawa as a guest at an event hosted by the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group, chaired by MP Salma Zahid.

Khatatba has come under fire on numerous occasions for promoting Holocaust denial and distortion, pushing antisemitic conspiracy theories and celebrating terrorist attacks in Israel through his *Meshwar* newspaper.

In a series of tweets in response to Khatatba’s attendance, MP Zahid failed to show any accountability or denounce Khatatba’s antisemitism and attendance, stating, “We are not able to research the history of every attendee.”

FSWC notes that Minister of Transport Omar Alghabra, who attended the event, released a statement denouncing Khatatba’s antisemitism, stating, “The individual who attended the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group event should not have been invited” and “What this individual said is offensive and antisemitic and must be condemned.” MP Larry Brock, also in attendance, denounced Khatatba, tweeting, “I deeply regret and apologise for the harm and hurt this has caused. I am a strong supporter of our Jewish community in Canada and the world and reject racism and anti-Semitism in all their forms.”

FSWC has reached out to MP Zahid asking for an explanation of how and why an individual with such a long and well-documented history of promoting antisemitism could have been invited to

take part in a parliamentary event, and what steps will be taken to ensure that something like this doesn’t happen again.

“It is disturbing that an individual with such a long history of promoting antisemitism could be invited to such an event,” said Dan Panneton, Director of Allyship and Community Engagement. “The rhetoric that Nazih Khatatba espouses makes our society a less safe place for Canadian Jews, and his presence on Parliament Hill, hobnobbing with Canadian political leaders, is reprehensible.”

Wishing the Community a Happy Chanukah



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In a matter of weeks, CJA students used their new skills to turn a rundown dresser set that was destined for the landfill into a beautiful navy and gold furniture set that could be donated to a family in need.

A Little Elbow Grease Goes a Long Way at the CJA

By Joseph Tappenden

At the CJA, through the months of September to November, 14 students in grades 6 to 9 had made the decision that they wanted to learn how to safely use hand and power tools. A newly established Workshop class, taught by Mr. Evan Gelman, provided students with the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone, try something new, and remove the intimidation associated with using power tools. From your basic hammer to a more complex table saw, students took the time to learn new skills that they can carry into the future and will last them a lifetime. As a part of the experience, students looked forward to the culmination of their Workshop class which was collectively refinishing a vintage dresser set.

As a class, students made very important decisions as to what they wanted the final product to look like, right down to the details of the hardware. They also had the difficult task of deciding their work assignments as it was important to the class that everyone pulled their weight and had a meaningful task. After countless hours of sanding, repairing, priming and painting, students were in awe with

where their hard work had led them. In a matter of weeks, students had turned this rundown dresser set that was destined for the landfill into a beautiful navy and gold furniture set with a long new-found life ahead of it.

Now that the project was complete, the students needed to determine what they wanted to do with the newly refinished dresser set. This was their labour of love, so our students felt it was important to gift this dresser set to a family that may not have the means to acquire one otherwise. They reached out to Jewish Family Service Calgary who will help find a home for their project. Roxanne Droppo, Executive Director of JFSC, came to the school to speak to our students about the impact their *mitzvah* will have on a family in need.

These 14 students in grades 6 to 9 are *kvelling*. Tikkun Olam is at the very root of what we teach at the CJA. Our students continuously embody the value of doing for others for the purpose of making the world a better place. With their new skills, students hope to work on more reclamation projects and work closely with Jewish Family Service Calgary to ensure they go to people in need.



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with their love, support,
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of our beloved daughter,
sister, aunt and niece, Mara.

May her memory
always be
for a blessing.
Thank you one and all.



The great message of Chanukah: “Just Deal With It!”

By Rabbi Mark S. Glickman



Rabbi Mark Glickman

I am a religious Jew. I feel passionately committed to Judaism – to its holidays, its rituals, its transformative ideas and perspectives. But despite this passionate embrace of my tradition, I need to make a confession:

I don’t get Chanukah.

Of course, I know what they *tell* me it should mean: Chanukah recalls the Jewish triumph in the Maccabean Revolt of the second century BCE. It’s a celebration of our ancestors’ victory over oppression, of God’s miraculous intervention in our history, of religious freedom, and of very oily foods. But as a student of Judaism, none of this makes much sense to me. Rather, it seems to me that many of the things our tradition encourages us to celebrate during this festival don’t seem very...Jewish. Let’s look at some examples:

Miracles. The Talmud relates the story that when the Maccabees took over the Temple and went to dedicate it, they found just one small jar of oil there – enough to last for only a single day. But a great miracle happened, and the oil lasted for eight days, giving them time to refresh their supplies. Thank God for that miracle, the message seems to be. (*Literally!*) We Jews need God’s miracles if we are to be able to do what we need to do.

Really? We’re supposed to rely on miracles? Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, echoing longstanding Jewish theology, taught that we should “[P]ray as if everything depended on God. Act as if everything depended on you.” Judaism has always taught that, while we should acknowledge God’s miracles, we should never depend on them. That’s why Abraham, knowing that God had promised him the land of Israel, still negotiated with its inhabitants to secure Sarah’s burial place. That’s why Joseph, having prophesied his ascent to power, still worked to ensure his rise to authority in Egypt.

That’s why so many pious Israeli soldiers, having studied divine assurances of Jewish sovereignty over the land, have still fought so courageously to ensure it. To put it differently, if Chanukah teaches us to rely on miracles, that teaching flies in the face of many centuries of Jewish teaching to the contrary.

Heroism. Let’s be clear here, the heroism that Chanukah celebrates is *military* heroism. And while it is important to honour our military heroes, Judaism has long been inclined to celebrate spiritual and intellectual heroes far more readily than military ones. That’s why the Haftarah for Chanukah is from Zechariah: “It is not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.”

Indeed, there have been many other wars in Jewish history, and they’ve yielded heroes aplenty – wars against Babylonia and Rome, uprisings during the Holocaust, and others. These were astoundingly courageous people, but we don’t celebrate them with holidays. Perhaps that’s because Judaism is so ambivalent about war. Necessary though it sometimes is, war is at best a necessary evil. To celebrate those who distinguish themselves in war runs the risk of glorifying war itself.

Zealotry: The Maccabees were religious Zealots. Unlike other Jews during their time, they refused to compromise, and were willing to resort to bloodshed in order to defend the Temple’s purity. Perhaps that was necessary, but, again, is such zealotry something we should celebrate?

Light. Chanukah, they say, is the Festival of Light. That’s an evocative image, but I’m not sure what it means. Light can be beautiful, of course, but so can darkness. Light was necessary for Temple rituals, and we light beautiful candles for many of our festivals. And although Chanukah has long been described as *chag urim* – the Light Holiday – I can’t help but think that the recent popularity of this image is simply a way of providing a Jewish parallel to another non-Jewish holiday that features beautiful lights at this time of year – a holiday that will remain...uh...Christmas.

So, I guess I echo the words that the Talmud used to begin its discussion of this holiday – “*Mai Chanukah?* What is Chanukah – what’s it all about?”

For me, the most meaningful answer to that question can be found in history. Contrary to what many of us learned as children, the original reason that Chanukah was eight days long did not have anything to do with a miraculous jar of oil. Instead, many historians suggest Chanukah is eight days long because it began a late celebration of Sukkot – another holiday of the same length. As it turns out, the siege of Jerusalem during the Maccabean revolt prevented the Jews of that time from making their Sukkot sacrifices that year – they couldn’t get to the Temple because of the conflict. As a result, that year, they offered



'Chanson' by Alan Briks is part of an exhibit that is currently on display at TBT Gallery at Temple B'nai Tikvah. (Story p. 11)

their celebrations late, and what we now call Chanukah originally started as “*Sukkot B’kislev*” – December Sukkot.

Think about it. When the Maccabees first took back the Temple, they could have just ignored their recent Sukkot frustrations. Or, they could have despaired, bemoaning their inability to celebrate it. But instead, they made do. They responded to their past struggles in a way that allowed them to come as close as they could to obeying God’s command for Sukkot offerings. It wasn’t perfect, but life rarely is. Especially when you’ve just rebelled against one of the most powerful empires in the world.

Chanukah, then, recalls this great moment in Jewish history – a moment when we did the best we could. We didn’t do everything we wanted, but we did all that was possible. We made do in a very difficult situation. This, I believe, is something worth celebrating. Because in the real world, making do is often the best we can do. Making do is often what it takes to guarantee our future.

So happy Chanukah. And this year, in this flawed world of ours, may you do your best just as our ancestors did. You probably won’t be perfect, but if you do it right, you can do great simply by doing all you can.

Happy Chanukah!

Rabbi Mark Glickman is the spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Tikvah, Calgary's Reform Jewish Congregation.



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Happy Chanukah!

With best wishes,
Rabbi Mark Glickman and the Board of Trustees

Camp BB-Riback: Camper Registration is open!

By AJNews Staff

Excitement is in the air at the Camp BB-Riback office as plans are taking shape for Summer of 2023 at Pine Lake, AB. Registration and hiring are open now. First session takes place July 9-30 and second Session is August 2-21. This year, Wonderweek is August 2-10 and Wonderweekend is August 9-13.

Camp BB-Riback, on the beautiful shores of Pine Lake Alberta is a magical place that provides an amazing opportunity for youth to connect their roots in Judaism with the natural world. Combining tradition, innovation, leadership and the arts, Camp BB-Riback offers not only an unforgettable Jewish camp experience – but an unforgettable life experience as well.

Camp Director Stacy Shaikin says, “We are so excited to open the 2023 camp season. We are thrilled to continue to evolve our programs as we have in the past two seasons. Our performing arts and creative programming has taken massive steps forward and we look forward to doing the same with our sports program.”

Shaikin advises parents that the Early Bird Discount is currently open until December 15. You must pay in full to qualify. He also notes that subsidies are available from both Calgary and

Edmonton Federations. Applications will be open in the early spring. Those waiting on subsidy will automatically receive the Early Bird Discount until their application is reviewed, he adds.

There are also a few notable changes this year, says Shaikin. “There is no CIT (Counsellors in Training) program offered for 2023,” he explained. “It will return in 2024 for students completing grade 11. LTP (Leadership Training Program) is now a 2 year program and is open to students who have completed grades 9 and 10.

“This year, our Wonderweek Program is a feature of Second Session,” he continued. “It is highly suggested for first timers and campers in grades 1 – 4, however the option to enrol in first session for one and two weeks is still available at an extra cost for children in grades 1 through 6.”

Once again, camp will provide our campers with an awesome array of activities, notes Shaikin. But parents can rest assured that the health and happiness of their children is the camp’s first priority and that Camp BB-Riback is accredited by the Alberta



For information or to register for Summer of 2023 visit campbb.com

Camping Association.

“We take great pride in creating a loving, welcoming environment for all of our campers,” concluded Shaikin. “The Camp Staff are trained at childcare and parents can be assured that their children are in the capable hands of caring, friendly counsellors. Every young person who stays at Camp BB Riback can be assured they will have an amazing summer in an atmosphere of tolerance, safety, inclusiveness and, of course, fun.”

So if you’re looking for an amazing summer camp experience for your children, look no further. Camper registration and staff hiring at Camp BB-Riback is open. Visit campbb.com.

Growing up in Iran, Hanukkah just wasn’t on my radar

By Orly Minazad

(JTA) — I have zero recollection of having celebrated Hanukkah as a kid in Iran. I don’t recollect it because it didn’t happen.

“We lit the menorah,” my mom says, almost in self defense. “We didn’t throw parties or exchange gifts, but we celebrated.”

My mom has a very loose definition of what celebrating means. (Her favorite “celebration” is fasting on Yom Kippur.) We observed Hanukkah by lighting the candles and saying the Hebrew prayers, I’m told.

Like many Jews, I was raised to believe that Hanukkah is the least important Jewish holiday. There are many reasons for that, but for immigrant families like mine, I suspect is that a big one is that Hanukkah is associated with joy and merriment. For Persian Jews, if you’re not suffering, you’re not doing it right.

Not only do I not have a recollection of Hanukkah, I don’t even remember being Jewish in Iran. I went to a Muslim school, so it’s possible I was taught to not flaunt my Judaism. My family knew and trusted our teachers, neighbors and parents from school but there was always that feeling of “just in case.” This was the late ’80s, early ’90s, when the Islamic revolution was still fresh and tensions were high. Iranians, of all religious backgrounds, not only Jews, were leaving. We had been in the process of leaving since before my younger brother and I were born.

Once we were in America, there was no unseeing what we’d missed those years in Tehran — and what we continued to miss, as we attended an Orthodox Jewish school, where it was forbidden to say the word “Jesus” let alone deck any halls for his birthday.

While my older siblings were content with business as usual in America, my younger brother and I, 6 and 8 respectively, loved Christmas, with all of its trappings: tacky lights and blow-up Santas on the

lawn, “Jingle Bells” on blast, candy canes, cookies, toys, snowmen, “Home Alone” and a friendly obese man whose sole purpose in life is to bring presents. To this day, we are still moved by the song “O Holy Night.”

When my husband and I had our first child, I knew I wanted to give my son that kind of Hanukkah. Even though ours is a Jewish home through and through, I’ve been collecting blue and white ornaments since he was born, storing them in a giant plastic bin, just waiting for the day I’ll have a house big enough for a proper “Chrismukkah” tree. In this fantasy, my husband, son and I are dressed up in matching family onesie pajamas, delicately placing ornaments on the tree, listening to warm holiday music. We’ll hear a magical jingle and my son will run to the window, his eye catching a hint of a red vehicle whizzing by as he watches, in awe, as the first snowflakes fall.

We did move to a house that can accommodate a tree, but as for the rest, well — we live in Los Angeles where it’s sunny and warm all year round. As for the matching pajamas, my husband isn’t into them — and he keeps insisting we’re Jewish, and Jews just don’t do jingles and bells.

Don’t get me wrong. Iranians party just as hard as we repent. One constant and clear memory I have are our parties back in our home in Tehran. There is always someone playing an instrument, an aunt singing while another tries to chime in off-key, my older sister dancing wearing colorful headbands and wraps around her waist and kids passed out on couches, chairs and piano benches. We are jubilant by nature.

But not when it comes to G-d. G-d is not fun and he isn’t your friend, I was told. He is fickle and volatile. One day he’ll save you from slavery and the next day he’ll ask you to tie up and butcher your son just to test your loyalty. Jews and Muslims have this kind of G-d in common, the petty insecure one for whom the holidays are a validation of his omnipotence. The more the holiday calls for suffering, the more important it is. So in Iran it was easy to not celebrate Hanukkah. We were all on the same sad page.

And when in America I started attending Jewish school in the third grade, it was the same ideals. At my school, religion was serious business, and if you didn’t observe it properly you would — we were told at every assembly — be separated from all your loved ones in the afterlife.

Religion to me as a child was being obedient out of fear and obligation, everything Christmas seemed to not be.

It’s no wonder my friends and siblings spent years as adults trying to achieve that level of joy. It’s also no

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Continued on page 16

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Chanukah and the glass of water

By Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapides



Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapides

time knowing what to say. There is nothing specific to complain about but I still don't feel 'fine'. With the days so cold and so dark (so, so early!), it feels like the weather and the short days are conspiring to exacerbate the stress that so many of us are feeling lately. We are living in a post-Covid world but many people are still getting sick. Our economy isn't all bad news, but many of us feel pinched financially. Our social circles have opened up but many of us, for one reason or another, are still feeling lonely. And into

"At this time of year, when the sun is most hidden, the holiday of Chanukah celebrates the rays of hope and light. Often, it is through simple and unrecognized miracles that we are able to feel the warmth of hope and light," says Rafael Goldstein

When people (sweetly) ask me how I am doing these days, I have a hard

that equation, stir in some relentless, pop-culture Jew-hatred and you've got yourself a tried-and-true recipe for a grim holiday season.

Thank goodness for Chanukah, which arrives to split up the cold winter with warmth and to light a candle in the deep darkness. How does the anticipation of Chanukah help us? Studies have shown that the anticipation of a holiday or vacation can be even more mood-boosting than the actual upcoming occasion. Our brains look forward to something in the future and that releases feel-good hormones that can relieve crankiness in the present. For us, the anticipation of Chanukah can help reroute the old neural pathways and make us feel happy and excited.

American internet personality, Meir Kay (aka Rabbi Meir Kalmonson) created a wonderful teaching: 'Understanding stress with a glass of water.' It's a very short video (easy to find on YouTube) and basically it begins with a professor holding up a glass of water and speaking to his class:

"How heavy is this glass of water?" he asks. The students take turns guessing, "12 ounces?" "16 ounces?"

The professor listens and then waves away their suggestions, "The absolute weight of the glass doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold onto it," he says, "If I hold it up for a minute, nothing happens. If I hold it up for an hour, my arm will begin to ache. If I hold it all day long, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. The weight of the glass hasn't changed but the longer I hold onto it the heavier it becomes."

The professor explains the metaphor, "The stresses

and the worries of life are like this glass of water. You can think about them for a little while and there's no problem but you think for a little bit longer, it begins to hurt you. Think about them all day long and you'll feel paralyzed, incapable of doing anything." And as his final point, "Remember, put the glass down."

I like to think that Chanukah can be our version of putting the glass down. Chanukah allows us to depart from our everyday as we light candles, chant the brachot, sing a few songs. The house smells like latkes, the kids crow over who is winning at dreidel, and we pretend that our Timmy's jelly doughnut holes are mini-sufganiyot.

Chanukah, at its core, is a victory of freedom and a miracle of light. The story we tell and the way we celebrate can create a small, warm bubble that wards off the cold and the dark and all the other 'things' that are in our glass.

May this Chanukah season help us to remember the rich, beautiful tradition from which we come, to look forward to lighter skies, and friendlier moments, and to remind us to put the glass down once in a while so we can appreciate the unrecognized small miracles of our present.

From my family to yours, Chag Chanukah Sameach, A Freylechen Chanukah, Happy Chanukah!

Rabbi Ilana is the Beth Tzedec Congregation's assistant Rabbi, the Jewish Community Chaplain for Jewish Family Service Calgary, and has her own small Rabbinic practice at Rocky MountainRabbi.com

Northwest Territories enacts Holocaust Education

By B'nai Brith Canada

(Yellowknife) - The Northwest Territories, in response to B'nai Brith Canada advocacy, has decided to follow Ontario's lead and incorporate Holocaust education into their Grade 6 curriculum.

In the past month, B'nai Brith has engaged with senior education officials across the country in a push to ensure provinces and territories include robust Holocaust education in their curriculums. B'nai Brith recently received a letter from the Northwest Territories' Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, R. J. Simpson, acknowledging our

encouragement and confirming that his jurisdiction will implement Holocaust education in 2023.

Earlier this month, Ontario adopted mandatory Holocaust education in Grade 6. Letters sent to education ministers nationwide by B'nai Brith referred to the decision and encouraged provinces

and territories to follow suit. The move came as studies continue to emerge of declining knowledge about the Holocaust, including one that found one in five students were unaware of the Holocaust and its horrors.

"We are excited about working with provinces and territories across Canada in our efforts to ensure every student learns about the Holocaust," said Marvin Rotrand, National Director of B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights. "There are promising developments emerging from numerous jurisdictions, including as far as the Northwest Territories."

"We are thrilled that Minister Simpson has informed us that the Northwest Territories are following Ontario's lead and adding Holocaust education," said Michael Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer of B'nai Brith Canada. "The Holocaust is a tragic epoch that serves as a lesson on the importance of respect for human dignity. We want students across the country to know about details of the Holocaust so that we can ensure its horrors are understood and the antisemitism at its core has a better chance of being rejected by Canadians."





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The Chesed Shel Emet of Chevra Kadisha Calgary

By Maxine Fischbein

Editor’s note: Because the work of Chevra Kadisha is typically carried out anonymously, most of the individuals cited in this article have not been identified with their real names. Those referred to by first and last name are identified because they are the public faces of the organization.

While “Rina” was always aware of the work done by Chevra Kadisha (Holy Society), it was when she went home to bury her much-loved bubbie that the sacred and comforting efforts of Chevra volunteers came into sharp focus.

Knowing that it was traditional for *Tehillim* (Psalms) to be recited by a *Shomer* (literally a guard) over the deceased prior to burial, Rina asked the Chevra Kadisha if she could perform that mitzvah. They agreed, and Rina spent the night fulfilling her last act of lovingkindness for her grandmother.

While that was, in itself, a profound experience, something that happened in the early hours of the following morning proved life-changing. Rina encountered three “angels of mercy” as they arrived to perform her Bubbie’s Tahara (ritual preparation of the deceased prior to burial).

“It was 25 years ago, but I remember it like yesterday,” Rina recalled.

In that moment, Rina knew that she and her family were not alone in their grief. More importantly, she knew that her Bubbie’s final journey would take place in an atmosphere of love and dignity.

The work of Chevra Kadisha volunteers is typically carried out anonymously as the *chesed shel emet* (the truest act of lovingkindness because it cannot be repaid). Stirred by the rare window into the mitzvahs of those three women, Rina instantly knew that she wanted to pay the kindness forward by becoming a Chevra Kadisha volunteer in Calgary.

The Calgary Chevra continues to operate as a volunteer-driven organization, bucking a North American trend toward private and for-profit funeral homes. Roles currently carried out by some 90 Calgary Chevra Kadisha volunteers vary.

Separate teams of women and men perform Tahara, which includes prayers, gentle cleansing, purification, dressing of the deceased in *tachrichim*, and their placement in a plain coffin in which sand from Israel is sprinkled.

Other volunteers find solace and meaning in cutting and sewing the white cotton or linen tachrichim. Notably, Calgary is one of the few places where tachrichim are still sewn strictly by hand.

Prior to COVID, the stitchers came together at the Chevra Kadisha, usually once a month. With cotton thread that must never be knotted, their fingers fly, forming running stitches in the coffin-liners, pants, shirts, overshirts, hoods and top sheets that comprise the tachrichim.

Sewing was “Sharon’s” first labour of love on behalf of the Chevra Kadisha some 12 years ago.

“I wanted to do some volunteer work and I knew how to sew,” Sharon told *AJNews*.

Even novice stitchers are encouraged to take up needle and thread. Newbies struggling to sew a straight line have been put at ease by a succession of Chevra leaders with words previously attributed to Lilian Zuidema, of blessed memory, a long-serving president of the Women’s Auxiliary who once quipped, “Nobody has ever made a return.”

Sharon began bringing her aging mother with her when she headed to the Chevra to sew.

One day, while driving home together, her mother shared what at first seemed a dark speculation when she wondered aloud, “I wonder if I sewed my own shrouds today.”

Sharon recalled those words as she participated in her mother’s Tahara and wondered whether her mom’s words had perhaps been prescient.

The presence of family at Taharas has traditionally been discouraged by some rabbinical authorities, but qualified individuals have, in some circumstances, been permitted to participate. Sharon says that she felt immense comfort when accorded the privilege of honouring her mother and other family members in that way.

Confronting her own mortality, Sharon says, “The biggest fear for me is being alone. I don’t want that to happen to me or anyone else.”

This sentiment motivates those Chevra volunteers

who step up to ensure funeral minyanim (quorums of 10), fill graves and act as pallbearers when the deceased have few or no loved ones to perform those final acts of chesed.

For an astonishing seven decades, “Rose” has been a Chevra volunteer, following in the footsteps of her parents. While they endeavoured to keep their good deeds a secret— even within their own household— Rose proved adept at tuning in to her parents’ Yiddish whisperings.

Rose’s father never went out much. When he did, his departure was often preceded by the words “*Oifn gitten ort*”—on this good earth—a clear signal that he was about to embark on a mission for the Chevra. Rose recalls that her father was one of the men who arranged the purchase of additional “good earth”—cemetery lands for Jewish burials, probably in the 1940s. (By then, the work of the Chevra Kadisha was well established. The Holy Society was born in 1904 in response to the first local Jewish death—that of



Erlton Cemetery gates. (Photo courtesy JHSSA).

Continued on page 29



Chanukah at HAA

This is a very special time of year, as we move closer to Chanukah and the midpoint of the academic school year. As daylight becomes the shortest part of the day, we are all too familiar with the time crush this causes to our busy routines. It is now, during this time, that the Jewish people remind ourselves and the world to be mindful of increasing the light and joy in our lives. Though the Jewish nation was engulfed by a different ideology, they rose to the occasion and expressed their Jewish pride by rededicating their holy Temple in Jerusalem, which we commemorate through the lighting of the Chanukiyah.

Through this lens, students at Halpern Akiva Academy have been exploring the importance of Jewish pride, a central lesson of the Chanukah story. "It is so nice to see so many of us show off our school pride by regularly wearing our amazing new school hoodies," expressed one student. Special thanks to Mrs. Naomi Reid, office manager of HAA for coordinating their production. "Demand has only increased since our first run, and I've been approached by many community members to find out if we will make another order," commented Mrs. Reid. If there is enough interest and stock, we will be looking into a



Some of HAA staff and students rocking their new hoodies. Email office@akiva.ca with 'HAA SWAG 2' as the subject line if interested in ordering: Baseball caps also available.

second run.

Students are also gearing up for our forthcoming in-person Community Chanukkah Event on December 21st. This event will feature student Chanukkah artwork, live performances, a student film, and a

delicious dairy dinner. We hope that everyone will be able to join us as we celebrate the lessons of Chanukah and the Jewish Education we provide the families of Halpern Akiva Academy.

The Shamash

By Rabbi Nachum Aron Kutnowski

One small candle stands apart, different from all the others. It is not a Mitzvah candle, yet it seems so indispensable. Yes; let us discuss the Shamash - the helper candle of the Chanukiyah.



Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski

is in order to make the Chanukah candles recognizably for a Mitzvah purpose.

The custom to have a Shamash with our other Chanukah candles can be traced to a single sentence in a Gemara in Tractate Shabbat, Folio 21b. There, the Amoraic Sage named Rava (c. 280 – 352) states that another candle is needed to use for its light. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, commonly referred to by the acronym Rashi (1040-1105), explains that this

Let us take a moment to contextualize Rashi's explanation. The common electrical structure and grid we rely on today for our lighting needs, did not exist at the time of the Gemara's compilation (c. 500). As such, candles and oil were relied upon as sources of light in one's home once the sun had set. That being the case, when the custom was to light a Chanukah candle in the home, it would not be easily identified as being done for a Mitzvah purpose. Instead, it would simply look like a person providing themselves light after dusk. If the Chanukah candle is accompanied by another distinct light - by the Shamash, then the redundancy of lights allows onlookers to understand that the Chanukah light is something unique; that it is for a Mitzvah purpose.

The Ra"N (Rabbi Nisim ben Reuven 1320-1376) suggests another reason for the Shamash. He highlights that the necessity for another candle, according to Rava, is due to the light of the Chanukiyah being for-bidden for personal use. Since when lighting in one's home one will inevitably use its light, an additional candle is added to circumvent the Mitzvah candle's use.

Another reason cited for the need of the Shamash candle is that it is best to use a different candle than a Mitzvah candle to actually light the Mitzvah candles (see Rama on Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 674:1 and the wording of Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 139:13).

Now, exactly when the Shamash received its name cannot be stated precisely, but one of the earliest texts which utilizes this term is the Arba Turim, written by Rabbi Yaakov (c. 1269 - 1343). He quotes a question in the name of

Rabbi Yechiel, his brother, that was posed to their father, the Talmidist Halachasist Rabbi Asher (RoSh, 1250 - 1328), in which the language of Shamash is employed (see the Arba Turim, Orach Chaim 673:1). In modern times, the helper candle is regularly referred to as the Shamash.

Besides the technical Jewish legal ramifications, is there anything else we can learn from the custom of the Shamash candle?

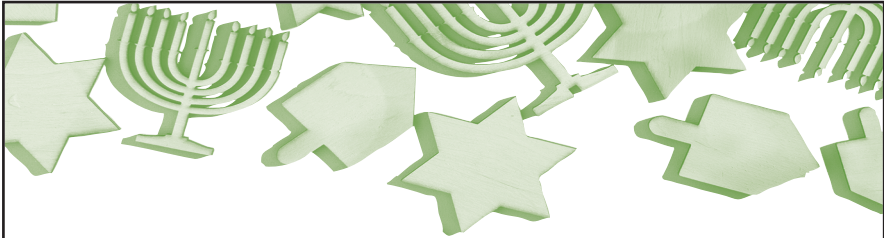
The Kav HaYashar, composed by Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kaidanover (c. 1650-1712), shares a very bold idea about the importance of the Shamash. He states: "The custom is to place the Shamash higher than the Chanukah candles. If so, in accordance with this, there is a great holiness also in the light of the Shamash candle, that they are even a bit greater than the Chanukah candles. And the light of the Shamash is similar to the Kohen that would perform the lighting of the candles on the Menorah in the Bet HaMikdash, creating the light before Hashem's Throne of Glory, may He be blessed." (Kav HaYashar, Chapter 96, Paragraph 6).

From here, we can learn a very profound idea: just as the Shamash helps us accomplish our Mitzvah of lighting the Chanukiyah, so, too, are we urged to be like a Shamash candle and extend help to others. This is especially so with regards to facilitating a Mitzvah purpose. If we do so, the Kav HaYashar says this is equal to the Divine service of the Kohen lighting the Menorah in the Bef HaMakidash, may it be speedily built in our days.

May we all be blessed to be like the Shamash, being there for our fellow Jews in helping them kindle their internal and external flame.

Chanukah Sameach.

Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski is the Head of Judaic Studies at Halpern Akiva Academy.



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Artist Alan Briks takes a “Leap of Faith” at TBT Gallery



Alan Briks

By Shelley Werner

Exploring the inner landscape is something that artist Alan Briks is familiar with. An art therapist by training, his work takes the viewer on a journey of self-discovery. TBT Gallery at Temple B’nai Tikvah is currently hosting his new show “Leap of Faith” with a series of both landscape and abstract works

designed to invite the viewer to respond in an emotional way.

“The title is ‘Leap of Faith,’ I thought it to be appropriate in that painting takes you into a place that may be experimental, fresh, unknown,” explains Briks. “My works have a spiritual aspect to them, as art is a spiritual endeavour. For me it’s a meditation, it’s a way of doing landscapes, of connecting with nature; an endeavour in a more abstract realm and it might be a way of connecting with the inner self, or even connecting in a more spiritual level. Art connects me with aspects of my inner world.”

Gallery curator Jennifer Eiserman comments, “Briks reminds us to approach Creation with wonder and awe, ways of relating to the world that we have forgotten in the contemporary time of Twitter and Instagram and immediate gratification. To lose oneself in the experience of awe is to take that leap of faith to a place where maybe there is something greater than ourselves behind all of this.”

Briks got his start working with stained glass – a stunning example can be seen on the cover of this month’s *Alberta Jewish News* - but he has turned his focus to other media. He thinks of the work, the “play” that he does now as very much relating to initial architectural stained-glass design. He finds painting

to be liberating: with stained-glass art you are dealing with certain rules of glass; with painting there is a great freedom. He thinks of his painting imagery as being stained glass without the lead or glass.

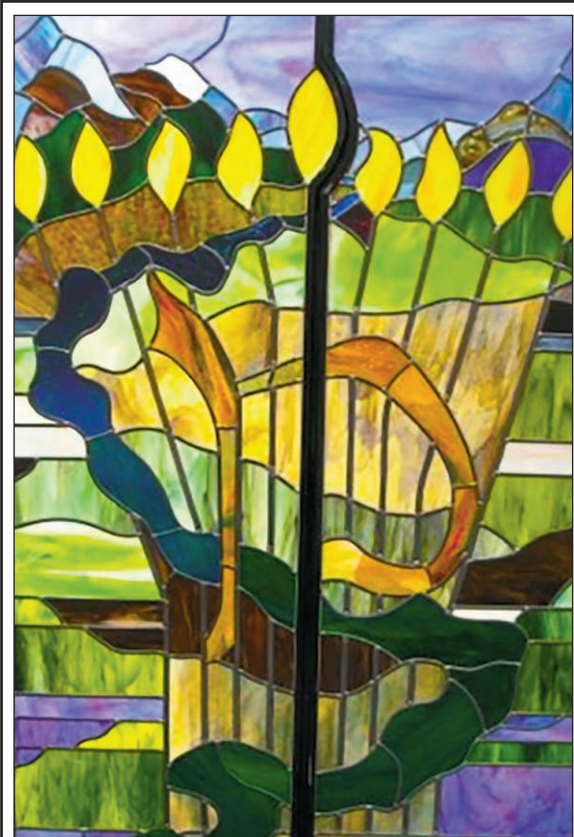
After viewing the work Briks hopes that if the work is successful, it will be something that somebody can relate to. In another sense it may be something that people have an opportunity to contemplate and not have a definite idea of viewing a “pretty setting.” They may ask why a piece is titled in a certain way and wonder how it can have a relation to their experience in some way. Perhaps, says Briks, there’s some discomfort in that it might not.

The titles of the pieces can help give something of a reference. There is a difference between representational art and more abstract art which has symbolic aspects. It also may have many meanings interfused. The title may act as a hint to the artist’s process.

“I say I’m more easily representational; the paintings that I do representationally are a joy,” he notes. “I go into nature and I see a scene and I go into a meditation or a trance usually with a sense of ease. With the more abstract works there is more of an internal process involved, relating to spontaneous art. It’s not planned. It’s developing a life of its own through the process. Somewhere within the process I get a suggestion of where it wants to go: it lets me know.”

He further states that a landscape can take about two hours; a “process piece,” which is his term for an abstract art work, may take a day, often a month. As spontaneous as it might be, it’s returning to the piece again and again over time.

Briks has commented that the very abstract pieces in the show are done in studio, sometimes with Jazz or Classical music playing. The process pieces refer to his intuition, sense of adventure and problem solving. The common element to the landscapes, process pieces and figures is an appreciation of spontaneous art. This nourishes the imagination and symbol formation



"Stained Glass Chanukiya" by Alan Briks is the cover image of our Chanukah edition.

which is the pathway to our internal understanding and stories.

“A leap of faith is about risk, it’s about the unknown, it’s about trying something new and different without knowing what the result is going to be. Maybe it’s going to work, and maybe it’s not. The leap of faith is trusting the process, and as you continue to evolve, the process nourishes you and the painting informs you.”

Leap of Faith” can be seen from November 27, 2022 to January 27, 2023 at TBT Gallery, Temple B’nai Tikvah, 900 47 Ave SW, Calgary. Monday to Thursday 9 am to 4 pm / Friday 9 am to 2 pm or by appointment with the artist: a_bri@shaw.ca and (403-828-7360).

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Potato Latkes with Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce

Our friends at the Carriage House Hotel and Conference Centre have graciously shared this special Chanukah recipe for potato latkes with spiced apple-pear sauce. It's a delicious treat that can also be enjoyed year-round.

Yield: 10-12 Latkes
Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes
Total time: 1 HR 15 minutes

Ingredients

2 pounds russet potatoes, 1 small yellow onion
3 tablespoons matzo meal, 1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/4 teaspoon baking powder, 2 teaspoons kosher salt
Vegetable oil, for frying, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs, such as chives or parsley, for garnish,
Sour cream, for serving
Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce, for serving, recipe follows

Ingredients - Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce
3 McIntosh apples, peeled, cored and chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
3 ripe Bartlett pears, peeled, cored and chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
6 cinnamon sticks
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 to 2 tablespoons sugar

Instructions

Peel the potatoes and shred them in a food processor fitted with the shredding blade; transfer the potatoes to a large bowl as the food processor fills up. Repeat with the onion. Transfer the onion to the bowl with the potatoes and stir in the matzo meal, egg, baking powder and salt.
Fill a large skillet with 1/2 inch oil. Heat over medium-high heat until the oil is very hot but not smoking. To test if the oil is hot enough, drop a small piece of potato into the oil; if the potato sizzles steadily, the oil is ready.
Working in batches, scoop the potato mixture by 1/4-cupfuls and add them carefully to the skillet, flattening



each latke slightly with a spatula. Fry, turning the latkes once, until golden brown and cooked through, about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Remove any loose bits of potato mixture between batches with a slotted spoon.
Serve the latkes immediately, or keep them warm in a 200 degree F oven. Garnish with fresh herbs and serve with sour cream and Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce.

Instructions - Spiced Apple-Pear Sauce

Combine the apples, pears, lemon juice, cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/4 cup water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook until the apples and pears are very soft but still a bit chunky, 15 to 20 minutes. Taste the mixture and add the remaining tablespoon of sugar if desired.
Remove the sauce from the heat and stir a few times until the sauce is well combined with small chunks. Cool to room temperature. Remove the cinnamon sticks and serve. (For a smoother sauce, remove from heat, remove the cinnamon sticks and then whisk the mixture until smooth before cooling.)

This recipe was courtesy of the Carriage House Hotel and Conference Centre.

Chesed on Chanukah



Rabbi Gila Caine

By Rabbah Gila Caine

In North America many people use the word “menorah” in reference to the chanukiah in which we light candles on Chanukah. Usually, however, the menorah is the sacred seven-branched lamp of old. There is one place in Tanach where the word “menorah” points towards a humble article of furniture, not at the golden one used in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) and later in the *Mikdash* (Temple). Nestled within the stories about the prophet Elisha, a menorah is an actual lamp inside someone’s home:
“One day Elisha visited Shunem. A wealthy woman

lived there, and she urged him to have a meal; and whenever he passed by, he would stop there for a meal. Once she said to her husband: I am sure it is a holy man of G-d who comes this way regularly. Let us make a small enclosed upper chamber and place a bed, a table, a chair, and a menorah (lampstand) there for him, so that he can stop there whenever he comes to us.” (Kings 4:8-10).
What did these people do? They created a comfy space for their guest so that he had his basic needs taken care of, because he was on the road doing Hashem’s work. I often read this story (and the one before it in the book) around Chanukah (and we’ll study it at shul this year), because they tell of oil and light and miracles within the home. These stories are about personal miracles, and “small” acts of chesed (loving-kindness) and compassion that lead to lives being saved.
We learn in Torah that part of the act of taking care of others involves noticing what they actually need, even when it might be surprising or even confusing for us: “But you shall surely open your hand to him and surely lend to him enough for his want that he has.” (D’varim 15:8).
R’ Shlomo Wolbe teaches us that we take part in creation through performing acts of *chesed*. He uses the verse I just quoted to remind us how complicated

this can actually be. We don’t have to make other people rich (...lend him enough), but as we are giving, we must learn to pause and listen closely to the person’s situation so that we can understand what their innermost being lacks and is crying out for. *Chesed* isn’t quantifiable. Any act of kindness can be chesed - whether you are visiting a newborn, giving money, making cookies for a sad friend or listening calmly to a grumpy teenager. *Chesed* demands that we pause in our assumptions about who is in need and who can fend for themselves. It calls us to bring compassion and understanding to our care for others.
People all around us in our communities and city are lonelier, poorer, less healthy, and much colder than in previous years. Chanukah is the perfect moment to celebrate the chesed done to us and the *chesed* we can perform for those around us. When we light Chanukah candles we often refer back to the golden Menorah, the one that sent out its light from within the Temple walls to light the whole world with its pure flames.
I suggest this year we all add another image as we light our chanukiot and remember the small menorah in the Shunammite woman’s home, a menorah that teaches us about the miracle of attentive kindness.
Happy Chanukah.
Rabbah Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton’s Reform Jewish congregation.

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CJF hosts Blanket Exercise and Sharing Circle



On Sunday, November 20 the CJF Community Relations Committee hosted a very special program at Calgary JCC, Journey into Truth and Reconciliation: Blanket Exercise and Sharing Circle. Facilitated by Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Eileen Clearsky, and educator Sulyn Bodnaresko, participants enjoyed a kosher spin on traditional berry soup and bannock, followed by education on the impact of land acknowledgement statements, a blanket exercise demonstrating the colonization of Indigenous land by settlers, and a sharing circle to decompress everything learned. Photos courtesy of Calgary Jewish Federation.

Hereditary cancers aren’t just a women’s problem

By Larry Luxner

Bill Harris, a veteran Los Angeles photojournalist, didn’t think much of it when one morning in 2012 he woke up and found a tiny blood spot on the T-shirt he’d slept in. The next morning, he found blood in the same place on his chest — and went straight to his computer.

“Online, I could find only three things that would cause a man’s nipple to discharge blood: being an avid runner, which I wasn’t; having a subtropical fungus, which I didn’t; and breast cancer,” he said. “That was a pretty big shock.”

Harris, then just a few weeks shy of his 61st birthday, immediately called his doctor, who ordered a mammogram and ultrasound. They confirmed a cancerous growth in his right breast. Ten days later, a biopsy came back positive. The next month Harris got a right mastectomy, followed by the removal of his left

breast half a year later.

“I walked into a woman’s imaging center and had to get into a pink paper robe,” he recalled. “All the women in the waiting room were staring at me.”

Like many other Ashkenazi men, Harris never had considered that he might have been born with a harmful mutation of the BRCA gene, which elevates the risk not only of breast cancer, but also of melanoma and prostate, ovarian and pancreatic cancer.

“Hundreds of other mutations in the BRCA gene are just as dangerous, but they’re not specific to Ashkenazim,” said Dr. Robert Sidlow, director of the Male BRCA Genetic Risk Program at New York’s Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. About 1 in 40 Ashkenazi Jews (those of Eastern European descent) carries the harmful mutation, compared to about 1 in 400 in the general population.

“The vast majority of patients I see are relatives of

women who have breast or ovarian cancer and then get tested,” he said. Of BRCA mutation carriers, Sidlow added, “Most men are pretty happy to enroll in some kind of surveillance program once they get over the initial shock.”

Sidlow is on the Men’s Leadership Council at Sharsheret, the national Jewish nonprofit organization that educates the community about cancer risks and supports those with breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Elana Silber, CEO of Sharsheret (Hebrew for “chain”), says it’s crucial that men with a family history of cancer undergo genetic counseling screening for BRCA and other hereditary cancer mutations.

Genetic testing is possible via a standard blood or saliva sample.

While Sharsheret is primarily considered a women’s organization, it has been using November —

Continued on page 22



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Roxanne Droppo Receives Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal

By Lisa Thomson

A hearty Mazel Tov to Roxanne Droppo, JFSC Executive Director and one of Calgary’s Jewish Community leaders, for recently being awarded the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal, in recognition of her significant contributions to the Province of Alberta.

“I’m honoured to receive this award alongside many other dedicated Albertans. I am grateful to everyone who has supported me along this journey – my family, friends, supervisors, colleagues and most importantly my teams,” says Droppo.

For more than 35 years, Roxanne has dedicated her life to helping others, both professionally and in her personal life, working in social services with children, families and seniors.

“I chose this profession because I believe every child has the right to a family, every individual has the right to have their basic needs met and every person needs a helping hand at some point in their life,” says Droppo. “I want to be that helping hand.”

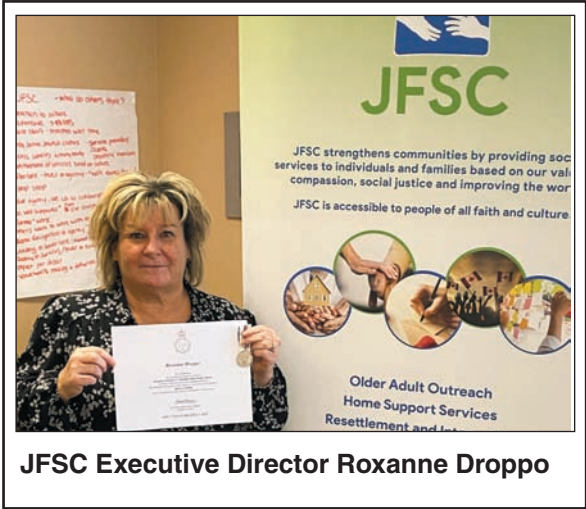
When she stepped into her JFSC role in 2017, Roxanne had a strong vision and seized the opportunity to grow the agency, strengthen programs and achieve financial stability. Roxanne embraces the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam and strives to identify gaps in care, tackle emerging social needs, ensure service excellence and provide inclusive accessibility

for people needing assistance. Over the past five years the agency has introduced nine robust programs to meet emerging needs, and 99% of clients feel they are treated with dignity and respect.

“I feel very strongly that in order to make a big impact on people’s lives, we must work together to make that happen,” says Droppo. “Collaborating and partnering with other organizations is so important. To quote Hellen Keller, ‘Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much.’”

Roxanne leads with curiosity and questions why we do things the way we do – all with the intent and purpose to grow, learn and strive for excellence. It is this curiosity that has helped Roxanne make such an impact on the individuals she leads and the communities she supports. Her ability to quickly pivot directions to respond to emerging needs was demonstrated through her leadership during Covid. JFSC not only persevered, it grew significantly, and supported other organizations during this difficult time with service delivery and concrete supports such as food security.

Adversity is not a barrier for Roxanne – she welcomes the challenge. With her boundless energy, Roxanne demonstrates leadership qualities with her peers and staff – she is inspiring, thought provoking, creative, and brings out the motivation in others. She challenges the people around her, making them grow and inspiring them to be the best they can be.



Roxanne also demonstrates her passion to make the world a better place in her personal life. For 16 years she was a foster parent, taking in 56 high risk infants and their families. She has been an active community volunteer for over 20 years in various roles that include being a Caregiver Allegation Support Team member with Alberta Foster and Kinship Association, Board Member with FFCA, Chair of her children’s Parent Council Association and a parent volunteer for different community associations.

The Queen’s Jubilee Medal celebrates the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s accession to the Throne. As part of the Platinum Jubilee year celebrations, medals will be presented to 7000 exceptional Albertans who have demonstrated significant contributions to the province.

Lithuania proposes setting aside nearly \$40M for Holocaust survivors and their heirs

By David I. Klein

(JTA) — Lithuania’s prime minister made what one Jewish organization called an “important step” by introducing legislation to allocate more than \$38 million as restitution for Holocaust survivors and their heirs.

Ingrida Šimonytė introduced the bill in the Seimas, Lithuania’s legislature, earlier this month. If passed it would nearly double the money the government had already set aside for restitution claims in a country where 90% of Jews were killed in the Holocaust. Today only 5,000 Jews remain in the country.

“Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė’s proposal is an

important step to providing a measure of justice to Lithuanian Holocaust survivors and their families for the horrors they suffered during World War II and its aftermath,” the World Jewish Restitution Organization said in a statement. “We look forward to the opportunity to review this new legislation that would continue the process of property restitution and support Jewish life in Lithuania.”

Lithuania has a checkered history when it comes to reckoning with its Holocaust history. The Nazis’ Lithuanian collaborators were involved in many atrocities, including the massacres at Paneriai, a present-day suburb of the capital of Vilnius, where 70,000 Jews were killed between 1941 and 1944. Lithuanian battalions also performed guard duty and

organized deportations at the Majdanek death camp in Poland and the Warsaw ghetto.

Jewish leaders objected when, in 2020, Lithuanian lawmakers considered a law that would have declared that neither Lithuania nor its leaders could be blamed for participating in the Holocaust because the country was occupied. And amid the rise in nationalism across Eastern Europe, streets, schools and monuments have been named for Lithuanian collaborators.

The Lithuanian government has previously acted before to compensate Holocaust victims. Over a decade ago, the parliament passed legislation to allocate 36 million Euros, then worth about \$72 million, for a Good

Continued on page 24

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Happy Chanukah!



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From Internalized Hatred to Jewish Pride

By David Sklar

On November 10th, Ben M. Freeman, a Jewish leader, thinker and educator sat down with Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin at the Calgary Public Library to discuss Jewish pride, combatting Jew-hatred and re-centring holocaust awareness. The title of the event was, *The Enemy From Within: The Impact of Internalized Racism*.

Freeman, born in Glasgow, Scotland, is an internationally renowned author, DEI specialist (Diversity, Equity and inclusion) and founder of the modern Jewish Pride Movement.

He began the talk by referencing his childhood and how growing up in a small Jewish community shaped his outlook. “There was one Jewish elementary school (but) no Jewish High School,” he explained. Despite that, his parents instilled in him Jewish values. As a gay man, growing up in the shadow of the AIDS epidemic, and when it was still illegal to discuss homosexuality in the UK, he felt shame and guilt. “I learned that LGBTQ+ people were not happy, successful or whole. That is what I internalized (and) these things stay with you. I eventually had to go on a journey to not allow the wider world to tell me what it meant to be gay.”

This form of self-discovery also converged with his Judaism and Jewish expression. He always wanted to be considered the palatable or “Good Jew” by the outside world for fear of sticking out. “I used to say, I’m Jewish but... (or) I’m a Zionist but,” he noted. What ultimately gave him strength was to reject how non-Jews define Jews. “The wider world feels comfortable telling us what we are...and we accept it. We conform, but the world we are trying to live in (in the West) was partially built in opposition to Jews.”

Freeman broke down Jewish self-hatred into the three D's: Diminishment, denial and deployment. "Diminishment is making our Jewishness smaller. We are told if we stand up for ourselves, we are not for universal values. So we diminish ourselves and it's a survival technique that never works out. We deny our Jewishness since we can easily reject our faith today. And finally, when Jews deploy their faith as a weapon. It's not enough for Jews to state, I'm an anti-Zionist. They have to spend the rest of life demonizing the rest of the Jewish community. Before, the path of redemption was Christ. Today in a leftist context it is the path of anti-Zionism. If I just disavow Israel more intensely, if I conform more, then maybe I will be saved."

Freeman reverted to his original point when asked what the solution for internalized hatred both for Jews and non-Jews alike should be. "Pride," he said. "Pride is not a feeling of saying, I like myself. It is an understanding of your basic integrity as a human being. We are not victims. We are powerful resilient survivors. I, as a Scottish Jew, am in Calgary discussing Jewish identity. It's a miracle. Even holocaust education (should be filled) with pride. People who were stolen in the holocaust are more than that experience. They were Jews living lives before that monstrosity. We need to build a defence system from all the messages that are constantly bombarding us." And how can non-Jewish allies help? "Ask and listen with humility," was Freeman's response. "You might not understand, but continue to engage (with us)."

People in attendance, both in person and online, were able to ask pre-selected questions by the moderators. From seeking advice on how to engage with

politicians regarding the rise of anti-Semitism to criticizing Israel, Freeman responded by making sure Jews as a community were centred in any conversation. Listen to us...(and) centre us in the conversation. Israel is a country like any other. You should be able to criticize Israeli policy. I'm not happy about it (the election). I'm not happy that there are real homophobes in this administration but I do not doubt Israel's right to exist. Its right to exist is not rooted in our perception of its morality. Even as Jews, when one wants to criticize Israel, we have to do so responsibly."

Freeman is on a publicity tour promoting his second book, *Reclaiming our Story: The Pursuit of Jewish pride*. His third book, as part of a trilogy, will be released in 2024 focusing on Jewish indigeneity.



Ben Freeman with CJF moderators Dahlia Libin and Marnie Bondar.

The event took place with support from The Isadore and Florence Burstyn Memorial Fund for Human Rights & Holocaust Education, KSW Calgary Holocaust Education & Commemoration Endowment Fund, Viewpoint Foundation and Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund at the Calgary Public Library Foundation.

David Sklar is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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Celebrating Hanukkah

By Rabbi Nisan Andrews



Rabbi Nisan Andrews

There is a comment I recently saw from the Midrash (Books of Jewish Legends) that is as much confusing as it is enthralling. It elucidates a verse from Shir Ha'Shirim (Song of Songs): "The mandrakes yield their fragrance, At our doors are all choice fruits (7:14)."

"The mandrakes yield their fragrance," the Midrash explains, are the flowers Reuven picked for his mother, Leah, which she then traded with Rachel in exchange for an extra opportunity to spend time with Yaakov (Jacob).

"At our doors are all choice fruits," continues the Midrash, refers to the Hanukkah candles that are kindled by the entrances of Jewish dwellings.

The question is obvious, in what way do Reuven's mandrakes connect to the miracle of Hanukkah?

Besides the hundreds of years of separation, these two historical events seem entirely unrelated. What would the correlation between the flowers of a child given to a mother and squabbles between sisters be with the rituals of a holiday celebrating Jewish freedom from tyrannical external rule?

I recently shared from the pulpit an idea I found from Rabbi Lord Johnathan Sacks zt"l.

"After Sarah's death, Abraham possesses not a single inch of the land and has only one child who will continue the covenant currently unmarried. Neither promise of ownership of the land nor countless descendants have been fulfilled.

"What follows in the Torah is a flurry of activity, the purchase of land and the finding of a wife for Isaac. The moral lesson is clear, G-d promises, but we have to act. Abraham had to buy the first field and ensure that his son was married to a woman who would share the life of the covenant.

"Despite all the promises, G-d does not and will not do it alone. By the very act of self-limitation (tzimtzum) through which He creates the space for human freedom, He gives us responsibility, and only by exercising it do we reach our full stature as human beings. G-d saved Noah from the flood, but Noah had to make the ark. He gave the land of Israel to the people of Israel, but they had to fight the battles. G-d gives us the strength to act, but we have to do the deed. What changes the world, what fulfils our destiny, is not what G-d does for us but what we do for G-d."

A result of this exchange of the mandrakes was the birth of the two additional tribes of Yisachar and Zevulun. The Rabbis often use these two tribes as the paradigm of ultimate partnership, whereby Yisachar

takes a portion of Zevulun's income and Zevulun shares in the reward of Yisachar's Torah study. This arrangement is necessary because, while Hashem can support the Torah scholar through supernatural means, G-d desires that we act here in the physical world to allow His divine providence to sustain us without resorting to paranormal phenomena. We create a platform for Hashem to achieve His plan.

Thus, Reuven's mandrakes parallels the story of Hanukkah. On this holiday, we celebrate the overthrow of the superpower of their day by a small and poorly trained yet, fervent Jewish guerilla force. Their victory was indeed a miracle, but not of the otherworldly variety, manifesting due to their activities. The Maccabees did not wait for a heavenly hand to swoop down to defeat their enemies for them. Similarly, Hashem provided Zevulun with the necessary prosperity to afford enough sustenance allowing Yisachar to continue his study of Torah. A non-miraculous miracle, requiring human involvement as a catalyst.

Hanukkah is a festival that celebrates the creation of conditions via our agency through which G-d's purpose can be fulfilled. Hanukkah teaches us that we must be the catalyst for growth and change in our lives. The absence of this crucial ingredient will ensure that even Hashem's miracles will not manifest. If there is a problem or need in your life, family, or community, be the one to act. Don't wait for G-d to fix it for you; it is He who is waiting for you. Miracles can happen, but only if you enable them.

Rabbi Nisan Andrews is spiritual leader at Congregation House of Jacob Mikveh Israel.

Growing up *Cont. from page 6*

wonder that American Hanukkah traditions have come to include a slew of sugar and gifts. You just cannot have your child sitting there eating potato pancakes and remembering the plight of the Maccabees while the Christian kids are opening piles of presents and drinking hot chocolate with marshmallows.

So last Hanukkah, I made it a point to buy a small tree, wrap eight presents for my son in appropriate

Hanukkah paper and put on Hanukkah songs.

This year the first thing he asked was about his eight presents. And I could not help but echo my dad's incredulous reaction from when I was a kid and mentioned other kids were getting eight presents. "Eight presents? For what?! Here's a dollar."

I'm not going full immigrant Persian dad on him, but yes, I'm drawing boundaries between Christmas and Hanukkah. We are going to put up decorations, do a Shabbat white elephant Hanukkah gift exchange, eat

jelly donuts and listen to Mariah Carey until our ears bleed. But I'll be distancing myself from other elements of the Christmas spirit — and the American Hanukkah one.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.



HAPPY CHANUKAH

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'Unlearn Antisemitism' launches in Ontario Schools

By CIJA

(Toronto, ON) - During the last school year, on average, more than two antisemitic incidents per week were reported in GTA schools. Many of these incidents impacted children in grades 6-8. To support middle school educators and parents in the face of this concerning trend, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, in partnership with the Toronto Holocaust Museum and Facing History & Ourselves Canada, created *Unlearn Antisemitism* – an online resource hub to learn about, identify, and take action to address antisemitism.

Funded by Ontario's Ministry of Education, *Unlearn Antisemitism* provides educators and parents with short educational videos and discussion guides to frame constructive, courageous conversations – at home or in the classroom – centred on Ontario middle school students' real lived experiences of antisemitism and online hate. These tools can be used proactively, or reactively when an incident occurs.

Antisemitic events are on the rise in schools across Ontario, with over 50 incidents involving antisemitic hate symbols occurring in the Toronto District School Board alone in the 2021-22 school year. Additionally, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) 2021 hate crimes report revealed that, despite being only 3.8 percent of Toronto's population, the Jewish community was victimized in 22 percent of reported hate crimes.

In Canada, according to Statistics Canada, more than one hate incident targeted Canada's Jewish community every single day in 2021, on average. That's more than nine per week or 40 per month.

“Antisemitism is on the rise in Canada and around the world, with an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents in spaces where children spend their time: at school, online, or during extracurricular activities,” said Noah Shack, Vice President, Centre for Israel

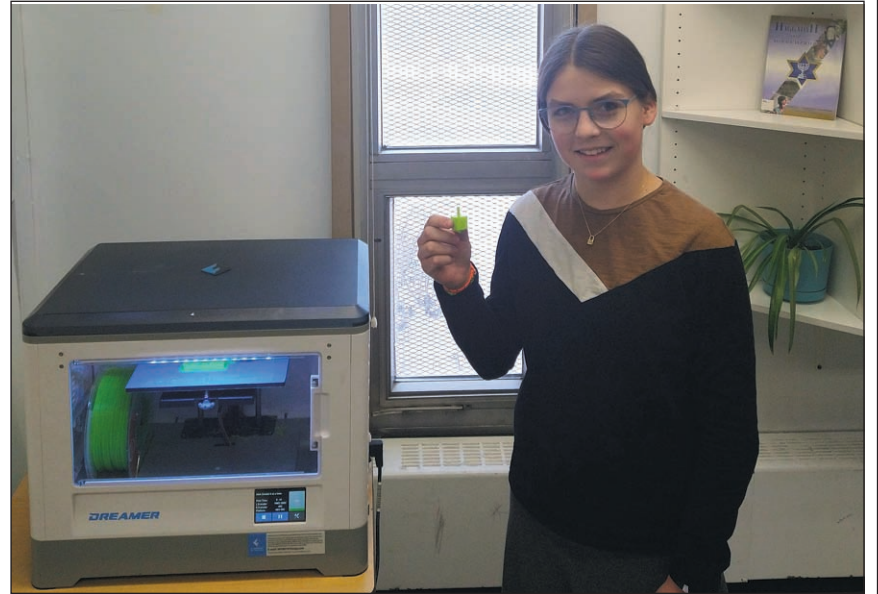
and Jewish Affairs. “Educating teachers and parents about how antisemitism manifests, its impact on students, and providing tools for meaningful learning are essential for stopping its spread.”

The launch of the *Unlearn Antisemitism* program aligns with Ontario Minister of Education Stephen Lecce's recent announcement unveiling a series of reforms to combat rising antisemitism across Ontario schools, including the introduction of mandatory Holocaust learning for the first time

Beginning in September 2023, Ontario will implement the first mandatory learning requirement on Holocaust education in the Grade 6 curriculum to help younger students gain a deeper understanding of the significance of the Holocaust. Additionally, the Ministry of Education will work with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to develop professional learning, also known as an Additional Qualification, for teachers so they can further support efforts to educate students on the Holocaust.

“We are taking action to counter antisemitism and hate, because those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it,” said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. “With antisemitism on the rise, we are introducing mandatory Holocaust education in elementary schools, expanding resources and strengthening anti-hate training for Ontario students,

High Tech Dreidels at HAA



What's cooking in the 3D printer at this time of year at Halpern Akiva Academy? It's a chai tech draidel! (Photo supplied)

educators, and families.”

“We applaud Minister Lecce’s initiative to include Holocaust education in the grade 6 social studies curriculum and develop professional learning for educators. With antisemitic incidents among middle school children on the rise, this will provide an important educational foundation at a formative stage. Teaching the lessons of the Holocaust is crucial for preventing all forms of hate and discrimination from taking root, and for preserving the values of respect, inclusion, and diversity we hold dear as Canadians,” said Shack.

Unlearn Antisemitism is a free, bilingual resource hub for educators, parents, and all who wish to learn more about antisemitism. It is available at unlearnit.ca.

For more information, or to bring it to your classroom, contact info@cija.ca.

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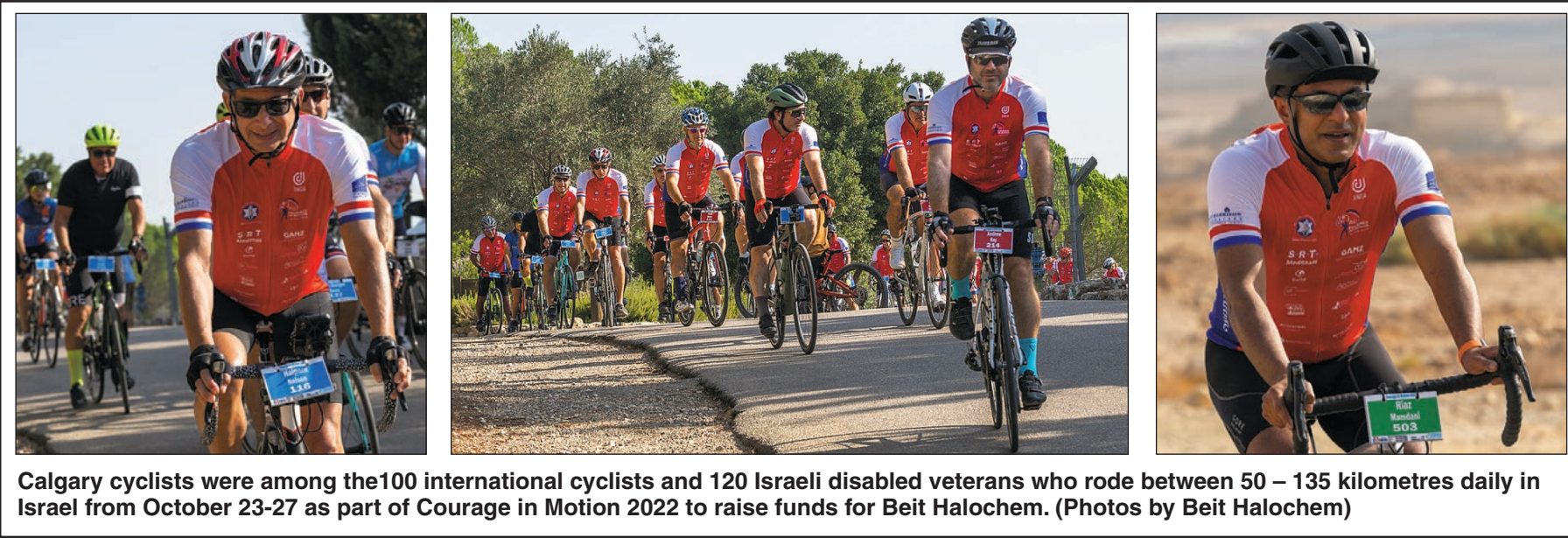
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Calgary cyclists were among the 100 international cyclists and 120 Israeli disabled veterans who rode between 50 – 135 kilometres daily in Israel from October 23-27 as part of Courage in Motion 2022 to raise funds for Beit Halochem. (Photos by Beit Halochem)

Sold-out Courage in Motion rolled through southern Israel

Solidarity and friendship as Canadian and international cyclists rode alongside Israel's injured veterans on a five-day magical journey

(Toronto) – Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel rolled through southern Israel on a sold-out **Courage in Motion** (CIM) 2022 from October 23 – 27. During the five-day ride, cyclists from across Canada, as well as the US and the UK, rode alongside Israel's injured veterans, victims of terror, and members of the Israel-Premier Tech Pro Cycling Team.

This year, 100 international cyclists and 120 Israeli disabled veterans rode between 50 – 135 kilometres daily. The fully-supported routes offered varying degrees of challenge and each showcased Israel's diverse landscapes, including the Negev Desert's rugged formations, magnificent views of the Dead Sea, and the hills of Jerusalem.

The ride's fundraising goal was \$500,000 and,

to date, cyclists have raised over \$650,000 with fundraising open until December 31, 2022. Their efforts support the purchase of biking equipment and fund activities, including the popular cycling program, at Israel's four leading-edge Beit Halochem rehabilitation centres. Sponsorships – at all levels - facilitate the injured Israeli veterans' experiencing this remarkable journey.

Outstanding hospitality, including luxurious accommodations in beautiful settings, delicious, gourmet meals enjoyed in nature, and nutritious snacks were offered throughout the ride. Group activities included floating in the Dead Sea, an interactive military experience, Jerusalem night tour, and inspiring evenings, some around the campfire in the desert under the stars, with Israel's Heroes who shared their stories of challenge and triumph.

Lisa Levy is Beit Halochem Canada's Executive Director, CIM founder, and annual participant. She says, "Courage in Motion not only raises much-needed funds for Beit Halochem. It is also a challenging and highly beneficial rehabilitative

program for our disabled veterans. Each participant intensively trains for it all year as they look forward to our arrival. A personal highlight for me was welcoming, for the first time, a group of visually-impaired and blind veterans who joined the Off-Road route. Their joy was hard to miss!"

Courage in Motion 2022 participants were moved to write –

What a wonderful week. We loved the experience. The ride was incredibly organized, the food fantastic, the people outstanding, and the cause inspiring. The attention to details – both big and small – ensured the experience was fantastic for everyone. It was greatly appreciated. Shkoyach and thank you. - Rena and Michael Buckstein, Toronto.

We want to thank you and the team for your hard work, care, passion and attention in organizing CIM. We had a tremendous experience that we won't forget. - Brian Green and Marcy Flomen, Toronto.

The ride was a great success. We rode approximately 450 km and climbed over 3000 metres over five days, alongside injured Israeli war veterans. I, myself, rode in a group that included those who were blind, disfigured, and missing limbs. Getting to know some of their stories was inspiring. – Andrew Kay, Toronto.

The 16th annual ride rolls through northern Israel from October 15-19, 2023. Information and registration is expected to open in March 2023.



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Courage in Motion 2022. Photo by Beit Halochem

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The astounding impact of Coast-to-Coast P2G

By Jenna Soroka

The Coast-to-Coast Partnership2Gether (CTC-P2G) program, formerly known as Partnership 2000, has dedicated 20+ years to building *gesher chai* (living bridges) between Jewish communities around the world and Israeli communities to help generate innovative projects and meaningful connections. Canadian communities that are part of the Partnership include Edmonton, Calgary, Atlantic Canada, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. These six communities work as a system with five communities in Israel, including Kiryat Shmona, Metulla, Yesod HaMa’ala, Upper Galilee, and Mevo’ot Hermon, to enhance capacity building and relationships in the region.

For Calgary Jewish Academy and Edmonton Talmud Torah alumni, CTC-P2G brings up memories of Israeli pen pals and an exchange trip to grow in-person connections with Israeli students. When looking at the full scope of the CTC-P2G program though, its impact is truly astounding. In addition to these *mifgashim* (meetings), the Partnership creates countless education initiatives that support youth and educators as well as projects that focus on leadership development, mental health, artistic expression, innovations in agricultural technology, relationship building, and more.

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), in partnership with the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and Keren Hayesod (KH), outlines their vision for CTC-P2G as creating a “global and united Jewish people made up of a tapestry of strong, lively, flourishing and interconnected Jewish individuals, families and communities working together to enrich Jewish continuity, identity and cultural understanding between Jews in Israel and their peers around the world.”

This work is made possible through volunteer



Group shot: Stacey Leavitt-Wright CEO Federation of Edmonton, Steven Shulman Pres & CEO Jewish Federations of Canada, Elaine Goldstine CEO Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, Lisa Stadelbauer, Ambassador of Canada to Israel, Abby Flackman, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, Cathy Cole, Chair P2G Calgary, and Adam Silver CEO Calgary Jewish Federation.

chairpersons, staff, and lay people who are part of the Partnership joint steering committees and subcommittees. Twice each year the Partnership meets - once in Canada and once in Israel - to visit projects they have funded, discuss future allocations, and nurture connections. CEOs of the Edmonton and Calgary Jewish Federations, Stacey Leavitt-Wright and Adam Silver, recently came back from one of these meetings in Israel which Stacey described as a “big family reunion.” Erin Wright and Cathy Cole, Chairs of the CTC-P2G program in Edmonton and Calgary respectively, also attended this annual meeting.

Adam Silver explained that the Partnership’s strength is derived from the people involved. “It’s about building *gesher chai* between all the eleven communities. There is room for community members to get involved,” he said. It is the countless hours of dedication from people, such as those mentioned above, that helps fuel CTC-P2G and keeps a flame of

kindness, passion, and philanthropy burning brightly in partnered communities around the globe.

Tal Toubiana, who had the role of Israel Engagement and Director of Security for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton for a combined total of 12 years, was in Israel at the time of the meetings. He was given a special thank you for his support of the Partnership over the years.

Other attendees included Ambassador of Canada to Israel, Lisa Stadelbauer in addition to representatives from Jewish Federations across Canada.

The itinerary of the trip included visiting various projects and learning about supported programs to see their impact on the partnership and local communities, hearing a security update by the IDF General Moshe “Chico” Tamir, and listening to a briefing on the Israeli elections by Yaron Deckel, JAFI Regional Director to

Continued on page 32

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Supporting the Vulnerable • Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)
Welcoming Newcomers • Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration • Shalom Baby
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A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

In a typical year, many of us build anticipation for Chanukah well in advance of its actual arrival. We anticipate the fun and meaning we derive in sharing the *chag* (holiday) with family and friends, and we note that Chanukah is either a precursor to, or embedded in, winter vacation. This special holiday includes communal and individual customs, storytelling from generation to generation, the taste of delicious *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (donuts), and the related feelings we experience consuming too many of each. And, of course, we light the *Chanukiah*, or *Chanukah menorah* for eight nights, marking the entire term of the holiday, and representing the miracle of the tiny bit of oil that lasted for eight nights.

The holiday is anchored by fun and family, reminiscing, visiting, and seeing happiness in the eyes of future generations – our children, and grandchildren. In some cases, we are fortunate to have great grandchildren. However, the story of Chanukah is also one of resistance against those who would do us harm, of maintaining and celebrating Jewish pride, and of a battle in which the Maccabees and Jews were greatly outnumbered by their enemies. As we know, the world is experiencing a significant spike in

antisemitism – through words and actions, and from anywhere and everywhere.

Expressions of Jew hatred and antisemitism have long been a consistent form of discrimination and hate, and it is frightening how commonplace and normalized these behaviours currently are. From our neighbours next door to political officials to the world's most influential celebrities and athletes, we continue to hear conspiracy theories, despise for Israel, antisemitic tropes, and overt and unfounded dislike aimed at us. The initiators and spreaders of this hate cannot be isolated to one group, and their actions cannot be summarily dismissed. They would have us be fearful, demoralized, and even gone.

Now, more than ever, we must be brave, bold, resilient, and support one another. We must be one community. As *Chag Urim* (the festival of lights), another name for Chanukah, emerges, we should share our light with the world, and especially with one another. Our children and youth need us, our older adults need us, and certainly our entire community needs each and every one of us to stand tall and proud – not to shrink in fear. And, yes, it might be scary or uncomfortable at this particular time to place our *Chanukiyot* prominently in our windows, to wear our

Chai (life) or *Magen David* (Jewish star – shield of David) jewelry, to say our *brachot* (blessings) loudly for all to hear. But now is exactly the time to do so – to show our family, friends, community members, and allies that we are here and we are not shrinking. We are glowing proudly, and sharing that glow.

The need remains for continuing Jewish advocacy and security efforts to assist our community's organizations in keeping students, congregants, members, and participants safe. We must continue to be active members of Jewish Calgary. I am appealing to each and every reader to stand together, and to be proud of our incredible Jewish heritage. Light illuminates the darkness, making it a little less scary as the light intensifies. This Chanukah, each of us, and all of us together, can send a very clear message in the current darkness we are feeling – there is no room for hate and we will not cower. We will stand together and continue to shine bright!

From my family to Jewish Calgary, *Chag Chanukah Sameach!*

Adam Silver
Adam Silver
CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation

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Hereditary cancers

Cont. from page 13

nicknamed Movember for its focus on men’s health — for an awareness campaign focused on Jewish men’s cancer risks.

“This is not only a women’s issue,” Silber said. “Family history is so important. When a man shares his family history with his doctor, he may not realize that he should mention that his mother had breast cancer or that his sister had ovarian cancer, as these are not generally ‘men’s diseases.’ They are not aware that these cancers could mean that they themselves are at increased risk for cancer and that they can pass on these mutations to the next generation – their daughters and their sons.”

If someone discovers he (or she) is a carrier of one of the genetic mutations with elevated cancer risks — not just BRCA but also such mutations as ATM, TP53, CHEK2, and PALB2 — there are various precautions they can take for themselves and their children. They can monitor their own health more closely, they can encourage their children to test to see if they are carriers and, for any future children, take steps to prevent the mutated genes from being passed down.

For example, couples can conceive via in vitro fertilization, or IVF, and then test the embryos before implantation to ensure that only those unaffected by the genetic mutation are implanted.

While most women are aware of the risks of breast cancer, men generally are not — even though the disease strikes 2,500 men in the U.S. every year and kills about 500 of them, according to Sidlow. About 1-2% of men with the BRCA1 mutation and 6-7% of men with the BRCA2 mutation will develop cancer by age 80.

“This is why we recommend periodic mammograms starting at about age 50 for men who carry a BRCA2 mutation,” Sidlow said. “We like to educate these men on how to check their chests once a month and have a clinician do a breast checkup on them once a year.”

Since the BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations also make prostate cancer more likely, men with either mutation should get PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels in their blood tested annually beginning at age 40, rather than 50, the age at which screening generally

begins, Sidlow said. Sharsheret has been promoting the importance of learning one’s family history, genetic counseling and screening among both men and women. The 20-year-old organization also runs various peer support networks, offers financial assistance to cancer patients, provides mental health counseling and guidance to patients, caregivers, and their friends, and seeks to educate the broader Jewish community about cancer risks and support.

Peggy Cottrell, a certified genetic counselor at Sharsheret, said men in general are more reluctant to get regular checkups than women.

Ashkenazi Jewish men are at elevated risk not just of breast and prostate cancer but also of pancreatic cancer. Pancreatic cancer is particularly difficult because it’s tough to detect early enough and hard to treat. The five-year survival rate is only 11%. About 2% of BRCA1 carriers and 4% of BRCA2 carriers will develop pancreatic cancer, Sidlow estimated.

“Usually by the time pancreas cancer is clinically detected it has already spread microscopically to the liver,” Sidlow said. “But pancreas cancer is potentially curable if caught when the tumor is extremely small.”

Even among those with elevated risks, certain behaviors can improve one’s odds, such as avoiding obesity, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Harris, the California photojournalist, is still fighting at age 71. While he overcame breast cancer 10 years ago, last year he was diagnosed with

JNF Calgary in Sderot



JNF Calgary Executive Director Elliott Steinberg, Board member Dr. Jim Cohen, and Sderot Mayor Alon Davidi (wearing his JNF Canada Bervin House t-shirt) were pleased to be able to unveil the plaque for the Calgary Treatment Room at the Sderot Resilience Centre in late October. The room was financed thanks to generous donors to the 2021 JNF Calgary Negev Gala, in honour of Diane Colley-Urquhart. Cutting-edge PTSD treatments will be performed in this new room to help citizens of Sderot cope with the trauma of rocket and tunnel attacks.

participation in a UCLA study. Surgeons have removed his gall bladder, half his pancreas and part of his small intestine, and he has had to endure eight rounds of chemotherapy.

“I’m still working through the aftereffects of the chemo. I have to eat smaller quantities than before and take enzymes to supplement my digestive processes,” Harris said.

Meanwhile, his 37-year-old son discovered that he, too, carries the BRCA2 mutation, and he had a double prophylactic mastectomy and reconstruction at age 30 — just to be on the safe side.

“If there’s any history of breast, ovarian or prostate cancer in your family, get tested genetically so that you’re informed,” Harris advised. “Diagnoses happen way too late for men, and the danger is too big.”

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with Sharsheret, the national Jewish breast cancer and ovarian cancer organization. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team.



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Olga Muradov: A local hero

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

On September 25, 2021, when Olga Muradov, an active member of the Edmonton Jewish community, dropped her two sons off at the park for extra-curricular sports training, she could not have known that before the day’s end, she would perform the greatest mitzvah of all – the saving of a human life. “I remember so distinctly – it was 3:51, and the boys’ trainer called to tell me that a vehicle had just smashed into my parked car,” Muradov recounted during a recent phone interview. She had been walking a nearby trail when the call came in. “I’m a runner, so I rushed back and got to the spot quite quickly and it was clear right away that my car was not going to be salvageable.”

She seldom drives to the park, opting to walk the short distance with her boys usually, but on that particular afternoon, Muradov parked her car near a tree and set off for a leisurely stroll. “Once I arrived on the scene, I approached the vehicle of the person who had crashed into me,” she continued. “At first, I’ll admit, I had a few choice words to share, but I instantly realized that the man behind the wheel was unconscious.” It may not seem like it, but this man would later come to be grateful that it was Muradov’s car he ran into.

Olga Muradov is a career healthcare provider. She graduated from nursing school in 2008 and worked as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit for many years at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton. In 2020, during the height of the global pandemic, she completed a Masters Degree in Nursing and attained the distinguished designation of nurse practitioner.

“Many people are still not clear about the difference between RNs and NPs,” explained Muradov. Nurse practitioners play a vital role in the medical field and share the same privileges and responsibilities as physicians. “A nurse practitioner is someone who has considerable experience working with patients as an RN and goes on to complete an MA or PhD in this area. We need to be recognized by our professional college, and complete extensive additional training and certification. Nurse practitioners function autonomously, just from a nursing background while physicians receive a different kind of training,” she elaborated.

The general public may not know, but nurse practitioners are able to diagnose, order tests, prescribe, and even run their own clinics providing ongoing care just as a doctor would. After more than a decade in the ICU, Muradov now specializes in general internal medicine.

“Once I saw that the driver was unconscious something switched, and my professional training kicked in.” She tried to rouse the man using all of the techniques and standard procedures she has performed so many times in the ICU. “Honestly, it was like instinct,” stated Muradov confidently. “He was nonresponsive, and I saw immediately that he displayed an agonal breathing pattern. This is not how people normally breathe,” she explained. “This is a reflexive type of breathing most often resulting from cardiac arrest.”

With a small crowd beginning to gather Muradov

took charge of the situation just in time. She instructed someone to call 911 for emergency medical services and got other bystanders to help her extricate the man from the driver seat. “It took some effort to dislodge him and get him out. We laid him on the ground, and I started CPR. I didn’t have an airway.” While the 911 operator counted out the necessary intervals, Muradov attended to the man performing chest compressions. But, this time, there was no medical team, no vital sign monitors, no defibrillator, and no respiratory therapist on hand – just her.

“I was really worried for him,” said Muradov. “He was in serious medical distress, and I had no way of knowing, being there in the park, if his brain was receiving enough oxygen.” Despite the medical TV shows, and dramatic scenes played out in so many Hollywood films, CPR performed outside of a hospital is no guarantee of survival. “Only 1 in 10 patients who receive CPR outside of a hospital ever make it to discharge,” explained Muradov gravely.

“And that’s ‘discharge.’ That doesn’t mean they go home. Many suffer permanent brain injury because of oxygen deprivation and go on to long-term care facilities with round-the-clock monitoring.” She herself has seen it too many times, and so her concerns as the ambulance drove away were very real.

Within a few minutes, a woman identifying herself as the man’s wife rushed up with their dog. The two had been walking in the park, and her husband had gone to the car to drive and pick up their son. “I asked her to take down my number,” commented Muradov thoughtfully. “I told her that if she would be comfortable sharing information with me, I would really like to know how he is.” Muradov obviously did not share the dire statistics she knows only too well, but quietly hoped and prayed for the best.

Because of her quick response and lifesaving actions, the man was released from hospital after an astounding two weeks. “I did break a few of his ribs while performing the chest compressions,” admitted Muradov meekly, but because of her, this patient defied the statistics, and now leads a healthy, normal life with his loving family. “They are such warm people. They send me pictures: the first time he went golfing after the incident, their trip to San Francisco, and he recently turned 60.”



Olga Muradov was honoured to receive a 2022 Edmonton Police Commissioner's Citizen Award. (Photo supplied)

Humble through and through, Muradov emphasized: “I only did what I was trained to do.”

One of the police officers who arrived on the scene to record witness statements later nominated Olga Muradov for the Edmonton Police Commissioner’s 2022 Citizen Award. She and eighteen other exceptional Edmontonians were honoured in a ceremony and awards gala on November 18th – an auspicious number to be sure. “It was incredible, and so humbling to be there,” she said. “I was able to attend with my older son, and I was so grateful that he got be exposed to so many incredible stories. For a boy just past bar mitzvah, this teaches so many valuable lessons he will remember throughout his life.”

If there is a larger takeaway that she would like to have result from this story, it would be to encourage people to get certified in CPR. “The man’s wife and son have now done their CPR training,” offered Muradov. “It’s important because it can make all the difference. I’m just grateful that I was there at that moment, and I feel incredibly blessed that I was given the opportunity to contribute in this way,” she concluded meaningfully. Pikuach nefesh, the preservation of human life is a great honour, but one that Olga Muradov still recounts with modesty and grace. She and the man she saved remain friends to this day.

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Panel discussion deals with police accountability in Alberta

By Jeremy Appel

A screening of the documentary “No Visible Trauma,” which details three cases of police brutality from the Calgary Police Service (CPS), took place at Edmonton’s Metro Cinema on Nov. 9. The film, directed by Marc Serpa Francoeur and Robinder Uppal, documents several allegations of abuse of power against the CPS.

The film was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Ward Papastew Coun. Michael Janz, featuring University of Alberta criminologist Temitope Oriola, *The Progress Report* editor-in-chief Duncan Kinney, Climate Justice Edmonton (CJE) co-founder Emma Jackson and Edmonton Police Services whistleblower Dan Behiels.

Oriola, who served as a special advisor for the Alberta government’s proposed Police Act review last year, said the film explored a “troubling constellation of realities to see on the screen,” exposing a “militaristic, toxic, hypermasculine” culture within the CPS, as well as a culture that protects officers engaged in misconduct.

Only a small percentage of officers are engaged in violent misconduct, the vast majority of whom are poorly educated, he added.

“The problem is this protectionist racket that is constantly woven around those who are in fact involved in brutality towards civilians,” said Oriola, who writes a regular column for the *Edmonton Journal*.

He said Alberta needs a “one-stop shop” to make it easier for people to complain about police misconduct, with independent civilian-led oversight overseen by a judge.

Behiels, the EPS whistleblower, said it was striking to him how the film showed other officers standing by while their colleagues engaged in gross misconduct, which speaks to a broader problem with policing culture.

We can’t simply rely on a bystander who films instances of misconduct on their phone, because there

isn’t always going to be a member of the public present to do so, Behiels added.

“The only chance we have for justice is a consistent report from other police officers who witnessed wrongdoing,” he said.

In order to encourage officers to come forward, they need to be protected from reprisals for speaking out, Behiels said.

However, the Whistleblower Act doesn’t apply to municipal employees as it’s currently written.

“The laws need to change first, and then we need a fair application of those laws and a functional oversight body, [which] unfortunately we don’t have today,” said Behiels.

Kinney of *The Progress Report* said that if a member of the public wants to hold police to account, “the deck is stacked against you in a thousand little ways.”

When there are police disciplinary hearings, for example, the names of the officers are never publicly listed. “Media organizations aren’t going to dedicate resources to go to a hearing if they don’t know who it is,” Kinney said.

These hearings, which have to be accessible to the public by law, are often rescheduled without notice, which serves as another disincentive to covering police misconduct.

Kinney is currently facing two mischief charges for allegedly vandalizing two monuments of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators before reporting on these vandalisms in *The Progress Report* as the acts of unknown persons.

He maintains the charges are an effort by Edmonton police to silence him for his adversarial reporting and vows a “vigorous defence, if it comes to that.”



The Calgary documentary film "No Visible Trauma" was screened last month in Edmonton at Metro Cinema. A panel discussion about systemic racism in Alberta followed the screening.

Kinney’s lawyer, Tom Engel, himself an outspoken advocate for police accountability, was in the audience.

Jackson, the CJE organizer, said the documentary demonstrates that police accountability bodies cannot be depended on to pursue justice.

It’s up to “people-powered movements” to shift the conversation and, by doing so, put pressure on the powers that be to enact the necessary change, because they’re not going to do it of their own volition, she added.

“We’ve seen within the past few years, how much more critical and sharpened the conversation on policing has become,” Jackson said, attributing this discursive shift to the power of social movements.

“We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Black and Indigenous organizers who have been pushing this conversation for decades, who have been pointing out the violence, the systemic discrimination and the daily abuse since the very foundation of policing as an institution.”

“No Visible Trauma” is based on a short film called “Above the Law,” which you can view on YouTube or CBC Gen.

Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Lithuania *Cont. from page 14*

Will Foundation that funds projects to benefit the country’s Jewish population. The money was

considered restitution for communal property seized from Lithuania’s Jewish community under the Nazi occupation.

“This payment represented only partial value of the properties,” the WJRO explained. However, “it provided

much needed funds to support Jewish communal life in Lithuania, restored several Jewish heritage sites, and offered modest payments to needy survivors.”

The new bill would allow survivors and their heirs to apply for restitution for personal property as well, according to an AFP Report, and also continue to fund the Good Will Foundation.

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Over 300 people attended an epic “Honour Israel Night” in Calgary, jointly hosted by Canadian Magen David Adom and Friends of Israel, Canada. (Photos supplied).

CMDA and FOI host special event

Friends of Israel Canada (FOI) partnered with CMDA on two very successful “Honour Israel Night” events in support of Magen David Adom Israel (MDA). On September 22, the first of the two events took place in Winnipeg with a large crowd of Jewish and Christian community members in attendance. It was an uplifting evening filled with music and inspiring words and there was even a special presentation where Ami Bakerman of CMDA along with Andrew Voth and John Plantz of FOI accepted a large cheque of \$39,000 on behalf of CMDA. During the evening, one lady very emotionally commented, “I am recording this on my phone to send to Israel because they will never believe something like this is happening!”

The following month, more than 300 people filled a large community-hall for an epic “Honour Israel Night” in Calgary. “This is our opportunity to bring the Jewish and Christian communities together,” said Robert Gottselig, Canadian Director of FOI, who traveled from Regina to Calgary for the special evening.

Mr. Gottselig’s heartfelt message included an apology to the Jewish community for wrongdoings in the past. It was very moving and brought Fanny Wedro, 95-year-old Holocaust survivor and founder of the CMDA Calgary chapter, to tears.

There were wonderful live performances, including some original music by John and Irene Plantz who made a special trip from Winnipeg for the celebration. John and Irene were there because they coordinated a fundraising campaign with FOI in Manitoba and Winnipeg philanthropists Larry and Tova Vickar. The Vickars graciously donated \$19,500 to CMDA which was matched dollar-for-dollar by FOI for the purchase of an Emergency Medi-Cycle.

With the substantial help of FOI in Alberta, CMDA Western Region also raised funds to donate an Emergency Medi-Cycle, which will soon be on its way to Israel. “We’re so grateful to the wonderful people from Friends of Israel for their friendship and support. They are making a real difference,” said Sharon Fraiman CMDA Western Region Director.

“This is what makes a

night like this worthwhile, everyone working together to ensure not only lives are being saved but a message to people of Israel that they are loved and supported from places as far away as Canada. The Friends of Israel plans to do this again for Israel’s 75 th birthday next year,” said John Plantz, FOI Director of Field & Staff in Canada.

CMDA Western Region Paramedic Don Sharpe also spoke about his experiences while serving with MDA in Israel and the valuable lessons we can learn in Alberta about emergency response. “It was a very special and wonderful evening,” said CMDA Western Director Sharon Fraiman who credits volunteers including Larry Mitchell, Jeff Shaw, Haim and Josette Fraiman, Itzik Likver and Robert Soto for making it so successful. She also had a special thank-you to bakers Caulin Shaw and Eleanor Mitchell for the wonderful cakes and refreshments.

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Beth Israel celebrates Sigd

By Deborah Shatz

Beth Israel Congregation (affectionately known as the Family Shul) welcomed Rabbi Guy and Fentaye Tal and their family to Edmonton in August and they are quickly adjusting to the city and the community. Members of the congregation are helping them with the transition and showing them the warmth and kindness that makes our community so special.

On November 22, in a celebration of joy and culture, the Tal family turned the tables and welcomed the congregation to the Ethiopian Jewish holiday of Sigd with a wonderful feast and an engaging presentation.

Sigd was largely unknown to the congregation and it had definitely never been celebrated here before so it was a new and exciting program for everyone. As in most Jewish celebrations, food is at the centre of the holiday. Rebbitzen Fentaye organized the preparation of a gorgeous feast that included an Ethiopian flatbread called injera that was used to “spoon up” a variety of sauces and vegetable dishes that were delicious. The buffet table was decorated with beautiful and colourful baskets that set the stage for a taste bud adventure. She was ably assisted by Michal Balay who set up an amazing, tranquil coffee station with pillows on the floor and she served Ethiopian coffee to congregants.

People visited, ate, drank coffee and enjoyed themselves in a relaxed atmosphere for the first part of the program. The shul ballroom felt transformed by the beauty of the event. There were about 85 people in attendance – including 15 or so kids so it was a busy and noisy program. Posted on the shul’s walls were some information sheets about the history of Ethiopian Jewry and their difficult and traumatic journey to Israel.

The second part of the program featured a shiur by Rabbi Tal about Ethiopian Jewry and the holiday of Sigd. He explained that Ethiopian Jews can be traced back to the lost tribe of Dan.

The Ethiopian Jewish community lived in complete isolation from other Jewish communities for many centuries, until the mid-20th century when many Ethiopians were air-lifted to Israel. For this reason, the Ethiopian Jewish community, called the Beta Israel, developed many holidays and celebrations that do not exist in other Jewish communities. Sigd is one of these holidays - celebrated on the 29th of Cheshvan, exactly 50 days after Yom Kippur.

Sigd is about accepting the Torah and yearning for Israel and the Temple. It is thought to be the date on which G-d first revealed himself to Moses.

Traditionally, members of the Beta Israel community fast on Sigd, read from their scriptures (which are called the Octateuch, the five books of Moses plus Joshua, Judges and Ruth), recite psalms, and pray for the rebuilding of the Temple. It is also a time for renewing the Israelite covenant with G-d. The fast ends mid-day with a feast and dancing.

Since 2008, Sigd has been recognized as a state holiday in Israel. In Israel today, it is an opportunity to raise Ethiopian Jewish visibility and educate Israeli



An amazing Sigd celebration was held in Edmonton at Beth Israel Shul on November 22 which included a delicious Ethiopian feast and an engaging presentation by Rabbi Guy and Fentaye Tal, assisted by Michal Balay.

Jews about Beta Israel customs. It is also a time to recognize and remember all the people who lost their lives trying to leave Ethiopia and immigrate to Israel.

Rabbi Tal’s presentation was interesting and informative. He showed a video of a Sigd celebration that featured music, dancing and devotion. He described the history of Ethiopian immigration to Israel. In 1991 over 14000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel as part of a massive rescue mission called Operation Solomon but there has been little movement for family members or others since then. Many people have died trying to make the journey and life has not been easy in Israel. There are still thousands of Ethiopian Jews waiting to make Aliya. Rabbi Tal wove the story of Fentaye’s family’s immigration from Ethiopia to Israel with the historical information that made the presentation both personal and factual. His admiration for their journey was heartwarming.

Congregants came away with a better understanding of the joy and the hardships of Ethiopian Jews both in Ethiopia and in Israel. They also came away with new insight, warm feelings and a stronger bond with Rabbi Guy and Fentaye Tal.

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A feminist Hanukkah story

By Ora Damelin

Most of the women in the Bible fall into a few distinct categories. There are the wise wives and mothers like Sarah, Rebecca and Yocheved, required to make hard decisions to protect their children. Then there are the tragic romantic damsels, the ready-for-soap-opera players: Rachel, Leah and Bathsheba. Silent sufferers who survive humiliation, poverty and assault with grace — like Tamar, Ruth and Esther — are credited with saving Jewish continuity and tradition. But supporting figures who speak their minds, women like Miriam and Michal, often pay for their unruliness, their misdeeds defined in the eternal text as a warning for generations to come.

And then there's Judith.

Most people learn about Judith in art history class from Artemisia Gentileschi's iconic Baroque painting, "Judith Beheading Holofernes" (1620). I learned about her in day school as a third grader. I must have been 8 or 9; my teacher, probably Rabbi Gold or Gordon, went over the story of Hanukkah for the umpteenth time. Greeks, Maccabees, teensy weensy bottle of oil — I'd been there before. But then he started to add in new details: a tyrannical Greek general named Holofernes, the sort of military leader who never rides out into battle but still claims his legion's body count as a personal victory. The scale of his wickedness is rivaled only by that of his security detail. Somebody needs to kill him (and take his army down with him), but nobody can get close enough.

Enter Judith. She sweet-talks her way into his tent, plies him with cheese and wine until he passes out, lops off his head and brings it back to the Jewish resistance on a pike.

I can pinpoint the exact moment my pre-adolescent heart short-circuited.

Growing up in a tight-knit Orthodox community and attending Jewish day school, I learned a lot of stories from Tanakh, the Hebrew bible. The ones I didn't learn in school, I read on my own time whenever I ran out of children's fiction. I quickly learned that the women in these stories were not — could not be — like the outspoken warrior-princesses of my favorite grade-school fantasy novels.

When Miriam dares to criticize Moses' treatment of his wife, G-d infects her with a spiritual malady and she is forced outside of the camp, banished from the presence of G-d. Bathsheba does not play an active role in her relationship with King David: she neither protests when King David makes advances upon her, nor does she aid him in plotting to kill her husband. Ruth's plan to save herself and her family from poverty hangs on the involvement of a man. These are stories of women existing, manipulating the rules of, and suffering through a man's world. Either they live to

support righteous men, or they need men to save them and act for them.

Judith is the exception.

In the storybook narrative fed to me as a child, she takes orders from no one but herself. She's oddly detached from the male figures of the Hanukkah story, the Hasmoneans. There is no male military leader behind her assination mission. Judith doesn't have a husband; she's a widow who never remarries. Even better, while she gains Holofernes' trust by seductive means, she never actively seduces him. Unlike Yael, the other woman in the Jewish tradition to slay a general, the Sages do not hypersexualize her in their commentary. She's never married off to some righteous man as a reward or scolded by the midrashim for some mild infraction. She exists in her own right, independent of and unhindered by the men around her.

As an adult, I sought out Judith's story at its source, "The Book of Judith." In this version, Holofernes has besieged Judith's city. Unable to watch his people die of thirst and starvation, the local leader, Uzziah, makes a public demand that G-d help them or he'll surrender the city to their enemies. It is Judith who criticizes Uzziah for this dangerous ultimatum, and it is Judith, portrayed as devout yet practical, who refuses to wait for G-d or to let desperate men decide the fate of her city.

In her painting, Artemisia Gentileschi depicts a mixture of the two stories, the fairytale and the ancient text. On the canvas, Judith holds down Holofernes with the help of a handmaid. Neither woman is beautiful, and neither is the murder being committed. Judith slowly saws through the general's neck, her eyes filled with fury and determination. There is nothing gentle or modest or even heroic about her. This is a woman doing what she believes she has to do; she does not shirk her responsibility, but she also does not revel in the bloody act. Nobody showed me that picture when I was eight. If they had, I would have known that Judith was more complex and more real than the sexy warrior princesses of my favorite novels.

Already, at 8, the idea that my influence on my world was limited to my influence on the men around me, that I could never directly alter destiny by myself, was

Ben Freeman at Beth Tzedec



Jewish pride educator and activist Ben Freeman was the guest speaker at a Beth Tzedec Shabbat dinner for young adults with members of Hillel Calgary moderating. The event was very successful and provided an insightful and inspiring conversation.

frightening. The quiet message that you cannot just be, but must become a wife and mother, instead, followed me from my elementary school classroom into an ultra-Orthodox high school where I was taught that a woman's role was to rule through whispers and hints, to lead only in the shadows, to speak through the men around whom her life revolves. One teacher told me that women were created in the image of G-d — but the version of G-d that did not perform open miracles, the G-d who preferred to let human beings believe they controlled the narrative.

And yet, still, there was Judith. Judith who takes no orders, who invades a man's tent and walks out with his head on her pike. Judith who attacks alone, who is neither punished nor silenced. Judith, who alters the destiny of her people, my people, independently of her generation's male heroes. Judith, who does the work of the G-d of open miracles, the G-d who splits the sea — the G-d who does not merely influence, but acts.

Every Hanukkah since I learned her story, I do not just commemorate the victory of the small against the mighty, the miracle of a small bottle of oil lasting for eight nights. I celebrate the human miracle of a Jewish woman defined not by her marriage or children, but by her actions alone. And I pray that even in the ultra-Orthodox community of my youth, this may cease to be a miracle during my lifetime.

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UAlberta students attend JNF USA conference

By Carmel Erlich and Josie Coutain-Segall

On November 4-6, the Jewish National Fund USA (JNF-USA) held their first in-person National Conference since pre-pandemic. They welcomed 1300 Jewish and Zionist attendees from across North America. A little under half of these attendees were post-secondary students, who attended the College Summit. With a focus on antisemitism on campuses and Zionist advocacy, the College Summit's main theme was being proudly Jewish and/or Zionist in an era of increasing Jew-hatred and anti-Zionism.

Carmel Erlich and Josie Coutain-Segall, students at the University of Alberta, were thrilled to attend the conference as College Summit participants. Both students are active members in the Edmonton Jewish community, serving as members of the Hillel Edmonton Executive Committee, and participating in Chabad on Campus programming. The students approached JNF Edmonton Executive Director Jay Cairns for guidance with navigating the logistics of participation. He drew on his experience with Hillel and young Jewish adults and provided them with the help and encouragement they needed to make it happen.

The conference was heavily subsidized for college students, and JNF Canada generously offered a further subsidy for their travel expenses. Some sessions Carmel and Josie attended included, Champions for Zionism, JNF-USA Shark Tank: The Successes of Today and Our Vision for the Future, Let's Hear From the Students: Being a Zionist on Campus Today, Jewish Pride, and Confronting Jew Hatred in the 21st Century. A special performance by members of the Israel Defence Force's Special in Uniform Band kicked off the event. Special in Uniform is a program which provides Israelis with disabilities an opportunity to serve in the military. Notable speakers included authors and activists Ben Freeman, Hen

Mazzig, and Dr. Rachel Fish. Also present were Caravan for Democracy alumni, non-Jewish students who have travelled to Israel to see the country for themselves, and have dedicated themselves to being Zionist activists on their respective campuses.

"The conference was just such an incredible experience to be around other like-minded individuals and celebrate our Jewish pride together," says Josie. A moment which really resonated with her was a story told by Mike Leven, founder of the Jewish Future Pledge. He recounted the story of one Shabbat that he experienced at the age of ten years old. His grandfather had the radio on and was writing notes, breaking laws of Shabbat which he usually observed. After inquiring as to why he was doing this, Mike's grandfather looked up with tears in his eyes, and said "We have a home!" The date was Saturday, November 29, 1947 - the day the United Nations approved the creation of the State of Israel in what was then the British Mandate of Palestine.

Carmel says that "the JNF College Summit was an enriching experience which allowed me to further delve into the roots of Zionism. Most importantly, this conference showed me that I am not alone in the battle against antisemitism and empowered me to continue this journey on campus!"

Carmel further stated that her most memorable moment was during Scott Gendall's speech during the opening ceremony where he discussed the blatant reality of antisemitism in contemporary society. Most importantly, Carmel shared that his speech regarding the increase in antisemitism and violence against Jews hardened the reality that the battle of antisemitism is not limited to physical hate, but also hate on social



Carmel Erlich and Josie Coutain-Segall

media. A quote that resonated with her by Scott Gendall was, "Today, Shabbat Shalom is more of a prayer than a greeting."

The conference also highlighted many of JNF's current projects, including the \$350 million World Zionist Village project, which will be a place where Jewish people and Zionists from across the world can meet to have discussions. Its aim is to build a rich village for Jewish people everywhere, to host international interns, collaborate with Israelis, host gap year programs, be home to Zionist education programs, and act as an additional space for JNF's highly successful Alexander Muss High School program, among other initiatives.

Next year's conference will be held in Denver, Colorado from November 30 - December 3. More information can be found at jnf-usa.force.com.

The holiday of hope

By Rabbi Guy Tal

The reasons for celebrating Chanukah are very well known. On these days we commemorate the astonishing victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Empire as described in the books of Maccabees, and the miracle of the jar of oil, as described in the Talmud (Shabbat 21b).

Interestingly, in another place the Talmud associates these occurrences with a natural phenomenon: "The Sages taught: When Adam, the first man, saw that the day was progressively diminishing, (as the days become shorter from the autumnal equinox until the winter solstice, he did not yet know that this is a normal phenomenon, and therefore he) said: Woe is me; perhaps because I sinned the world is becoming dark

around me and will return to chaos and disorder. And this is the death that was sentenced upon me from Heaven. He arose and spent eight days in fasting and in prayer.

"Once he saw the season of Tevet and saw that the day was progressively lengthening, he said: this is the order of the world. He went and observed a festival for eight days. Upon the next year, he observed both: these (the eight days on which he had fasted on the previous year), and these (the eight days of his celebration) as days of festivities. He established these festivals for the sake of Heaven, but they, established them for the sake of idol worship (Avoda Zara 8)."

The Talmud alludes to an ancient holiday celebrated by the gentiles around the date of 21st of December, the shortest day of the year, when the days begin to lengthen. However, the relationship between this ancient forgotten holiday and Chanukah is notable. Not only the number of days is consistent (eight days of Chanukah, and eight days of the Holiday of Adam), as well as the time of year – around the end of December, but also the idea of the light growing bigger and the salvation that it brings with it. We can say that the holiday of Chanukah, except of the memory of the historical events of the Hasmonean period, is also a "tikkun" – a correction – of that pagan

holiday to help us to celebrate correctly and in a holy way this natural phenomenon.

Additionally, we can see the parallel between the idea of Chanukah and this Talmudic legend: In the midrash the first man faces a crisis, a fall, apparently, as a result of his sin. The light gradually disappears, and he thinks that the end of the world is coming. In the same way, Am Yisrael, also committed sins and was punished, losing our independence. Our power and greatness gradually disappeared, and we lost our identity beneath the powerful tide of Hellenization. The Jewish people forgot their roots, their values and their tradition and it looked like the world had gone back to the days before "matan torah" – the giving of the Torah – to a spiritual chaos.

But in that precise moment, when everything seems lost, and that we are in the last moments of a total collapse, the momentum is reversed. Suddenly, a small light appears and reminds us that we still have hope and after any crisis there will be recovery and growth. That is why in the middle of the winter, in the days of the greatest darkness and cold we celebrate the holiday of light, hope and faith. This hope has never left the people of Israel even in the darkest times in our history. In the ghettos, the pogroms, the Crusades, the Inquisition and all the other persecutions we suffered, there has always appeared this small light of hope to remind us that after the darkest moment the light always starts to shine again.

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Chevra Kadisha

Cont. from page 9

infant Goldie Bell.)

On those rare occasions when her mother got dressed up, Rose knew her parents were off to the annual Chevra Kadisha Dinner, the one time each year when volunteers are honoured for their commitment.

As a young mother, Rose began making patterns for tachrichim and stood for hours cutting fabric. Today a great-grandmother, she continues to sew. Throughout COVID, Rose and other Chevra volunteers have continued stitching in the safety of their own homes, occasionally meeting at outdoor swaps to exchange completed tachrichim for more fabric and thread.

“It is very important to me,” says Rose who often sews the collars to the men’s tachrichim.

“When I sew, it is always for someone. For me, it’s personal,” adds Rose. “Some man will wear this, and I always hope he will be comfortable in it.”

While many communities now rely on privately owned funeral homes, Calgary is one of a dwindling number of Jewish communities that continues to take care of its own, treating each deceased person, and their kin, with respect and honour and always without differences based on status or the ability to pay.

This monumental calling hinges upon successfully recruiting new volunteers, a goal that is particularly challenging for an organization that operates humbly, encouraging anonymity.

Chevra members sometimes quietly put feelers out to individuals they think would be a good fit.

Some 17 years ago, “Neville” was approached by a friend already serving the Chevra. Neville has never looked back, serving on the men’s Tahara committee, helping as necessary to ensure a minyan is present at funerals, helping to operate the lowering mechanism at graves, participating in committee work and serving on the Chevra board of directors.

“I felt it would be nice to give something back to the community in a way where it is not monetary but giving of myself. I feel good about that.”

Neville has also turned his personal attention to planning his succession, quietly putting a bug in the ear of younger people to consider serving the Jewish community through Chevra Kadisha.

Some feel skittish, but Neville urges them to keep an open mind.

“It’s not for everybody, but unless you try, you’re not going to know,” says Neville. “It’s not so bad; it’s quite peaceful actually... I’m doing something worthwhile on this earth.”

Although Neville was not raised in a traditional Jewish home and never engaged much in Jewish ritual, he believes wholeheartedly that he has a duty to serve others in the ways that preceding generations looked after his family and the Jewish community as a whole.

“Jacob” was approached about 12 years ago by a man who thought he would be an ideal Chevra volunteer likely because of his previous community service and a career in science that included experience with cadavers at the U of C medical school.

Jacob says his Chevra experience has been “very positive.”

“I view it as a big responsibility on behalf of the Jewish community to be involved this way, especially with Taharas,” adds Jacob who also serves on the Chevra board of directors.

“It doesn’t happen automatically, it takes people who volunteer hours of their personal time to do all the work that needs to be done.”

Not everybody is in a position to volunteer, adds Jacob, who nonetheless urges everyone to think about how they can support the work of the Chevra in other ways, including charitable donations.

“Chana,” has been a Chevra volunteer for at least 20 years.

“I was born and raised in Calgary, and while I may not have been joined at the hip with the women [for whom Tahara is performed], I certainly know who most



Historical photo of Men's Chevra Kadisha members and Chevra Kadisha Ladies Auxilliary members. Photos courtesy of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta

of them are.”

“For me, this is the final show of respect I can give them. They don’t have to know me, but I am happy because I can show this respect for them, for their family.”

“I don’t need anyone to know what I am doing. I know what I am doing,” adds Chana. “If I can help someone out, that, to me, is the greatest gift I can give.”

Chevra needs volunteers to step up in numerous other capacities. Like the community they serve, Chevra volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds and possess many different skill sets. They are a diverse bunch, hailing from every corner of the community—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, post-denominational and unaffiliated, united by their devotion to honouring the dead.

Susan Dvorkin (who is identified by her actual name because her work as Chevra VP Communications often puts her in the public eye) is urging individuals with IT, legal, business, or accounting expertise to consider volunteering for the Chevra on an ongoing, project or as-needed basis.

Having volunteered for a decade or more, Dvorkin says that she had considered serving the Chevra—where she has deep family roots—for a long time. At first, she found the thought “daunting.” She sewed tachrichim for a while, but then life got busy. Returning several years later, she was recruited to the board of directors where she has served for the past five or six years, devoting herself to sharing with the Jewish public the vital role the Chevra plays and the pressing need to recruit new generations of committed volunteers.

“There is always a role to play within your

comfort zone,” says Dvorkin, adding that it is “something special... to provide for our own.”

“It’s about heart, it’s about giving back,” adds Dvorkin. “We would love to have more people step up.

After all, as Dvorkin says, “Nobody lives forever.”

Individuals interested in finding out more about volunteering for the Chevra Kadisha are urged to speak with Harold Lipton, First Vice President and Co-Chair of Men’s Tahara; Darlene Switzer Foster, President of the Ladies’ Auxiliary and Chair of Women’s Tahara; Susan Dvorkin, VP Communications; or Calgary Chevra Kadisha Executive Director Rick Pollick. The Calgary Chevra Kadisha can be reached at Chevraofcalgary@yahoo.ca or 403-244-4717.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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New children’s books for Hanukkah

PJ Library is hard at work year-round, finding the best books, beautiful illustrations, compelling stories and values to share with your children. They exemplify the best of Jewish children's literature.

Calgary Jewish Federation has been a longtime participant with PJ Library, holding numerous programs and activities for young families throughout the year. For information about upcoming events, contact Sydney Truax, PJ Library® and Family Engagement Coordinator 403-537-8592.

The PJ Library Book Selection committee is devoted to making book choices that represent the broad spectrum of today's Jewish families. Working with authors, agents, publishers, and editors, the committee strives to ensure that the finest Jewish books for children find their way each month into the mailboxes of all PJ Library families.

Many of the PJ selected books have won prestigious awards, including the Caldecott Medal and the Sydney Taylor Book Award. Several have been named as finalists for the National Jewish Book Award.

Because PJ Library's Book Selection Committee is always on the prowl for new books, they were delighted to stumble across a non-illustrated version of "Hanukkah in Alaska," which was tucked into an anthology of Hanukkah stories edited by Eric Kimmel. At PJ Library's request, Macmillan's Children's Publishing Group, the original publisher of Kimmel's *A Hanukkah Treasury* (1988), enthusiastically agreed to create a stand-alone picture book of Barbara Brown's delightful tale.

This lovely story gives families an intimate, up-close look at winter in Alaska. Stacy Schuett's gently glowing illustrations combined with Brown's humorous, matter-of-fact text paint a vivid portrait of what happens when a marauding moose takes up residency in a family's snowy back yard, threatening to destroy the young narrator's swing set and ruin her Hanukkah. When the girl's father takes her outside to spy the aurora borealis, her Hanukkah blues instantly dissipate.

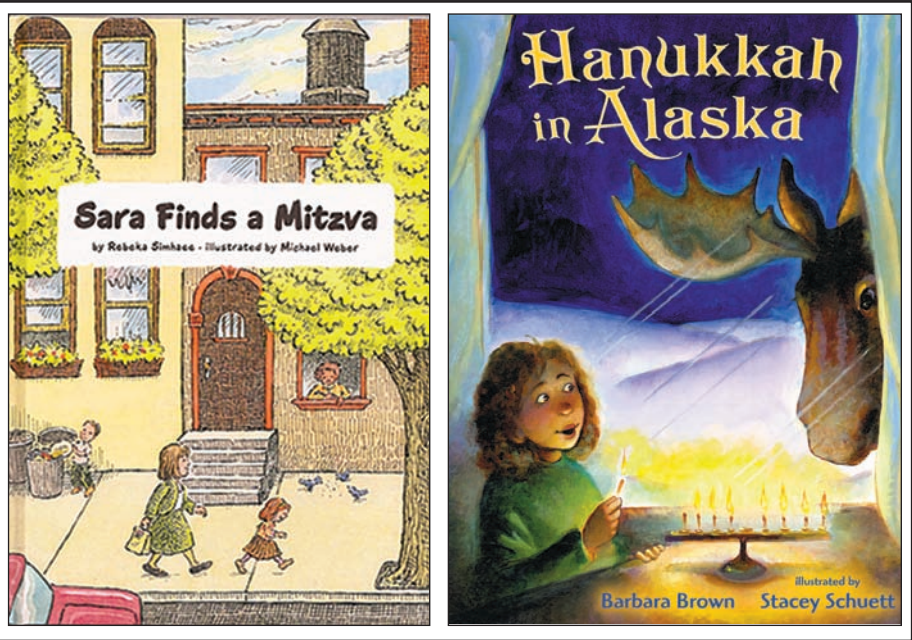
Inspired by the miraculous, rainbow-colored lights that remind the girl of melting Hanukkah candles, she, at long last, figures out a way to lure the moose out of her back yard. (Spoiler alert: Her solution involves latkes.) In addition to conveying fascinating information about Alaska, the Northern lights, and Hanukkah traditions, this story introduces readers to the idea that miracles, both large and small, "can happen in many different ways," perhaps inspiring families to reflect on the many miracles that fill their own lives.

Another new offering, Rebeka Simhaee's *Sara Finds a Mitzva* offers a beautifully told lesson on the Jewish value of returning lost objects. When Sara

finds a toy duck, she's tempted to keep it - until her *bubby* explains that returning a lost object to its owner is a *mitzvah*, which literally means "commandment" in Hebrew but is often understood to mean a good deed.

The PJ Library Book Selection Committee admired the clever way in which Sara and her bubby follow clues to find the duck's owner, taking the reader on a journey and teaching along the way. But what they loved most about this book was its ability to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Michael Weber's detailed crosshatch illustrations invite readers to stroll through a bustling inner-city Jewish neighborhood. Readers who have never visited an Orthodox neighborhood will enjoy the bird's-eye view of the Orthodox experience, while readers who live in communities like Sara's will appreciate the book's thoughtful depiction of their everyday lives. All children will be able to empathize with Sara's desire to keep her newly found treasure, as well as the satisfaction that comes from returning a lost object to its owner.

Celebrate Hanukkah with PJ Library by visiting their Hanukkah Hub that has been designed to help families get ready for the Festival of Lights. This year they are delighted to share Hanukkah activities featuring some special guests - the characters from 'Who Stole Hanukkah?' For information,



visit pjlibrary.org. This year, Hanukkah begins in the evening on Sunday, December 18, 2022 and ends in the evening on Monday, December 26, 2022. Be sure to join the fun!

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Jewish Studies Week at Wirth Institute covers diverse themes

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

Last month’s Jewish Studies Week at the University of Alberta’s Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies in Edmonton was yet another raving success! With two sensational lectures by leaders in the field of Jewish scholarship, community members and academics alike were able to engage with some fascinating topics, and highly relevant societal questions. The Wirth Institute welcomed Dr. Melanie Schmoll, a research fellow from Bar Ilan University in Israel, and veteran Yiddishist, Professor Justin Cammy of Smith College.

Dr. Schmoll’s lecture was delivered in person on November 14, within the auspicious setting of the University of Alberta’s Senate Chambers. The occasion was attended by a diverse crowd of students, faculty, and members of the greater community. Seated around the iconic grand ovular polished wood table, the atmosphere was collegial with a great deal of excitement to be gathered together face-to-face once again. Many within the Jewish community were already acquainted with Dr. Schmoll having attended her lecture marking the remembrance of Kristallnacht on November 9 held at the Stanley A. Milner Public Library in Downtown Edmonton.

Her lecture, titled “Learning from the Past? Holocaust Education and its Impact on Antisemitism” presented the culmination of many years of Schmoll’s pedagogical investigation across three continents. German-born, and educated in Hamburg, Schmoll has long been involved in the examination of Holocaust awareness pedagogy in her home country. In her extensive research dealing with security issues in Israel, she has used this knowledge to further explore the topic in depth. Then, following her time as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Calgary, Schmoll became extremely interested in how Alberta teaches students about the Holocaust at the secondary-school level. For the audience of Edmontonians it was this evaluation of Alberta’s educational approach that struck a significant chord.

Dr. Schmoll’s findings have concluded that there is significant work that can be done in Alberta to better support secondary-school teachers as they approach discussions around the Holocaust. While some educators introduce the history of the Holocaust when studying the Second World War, Schmoll has found that too often, this seems to be treated more as a footnote rather than critical subject. According to Schmoll students are thus left with a highly superficial understanding by and large. She noted that any nuanced understanding of the Holocaust acquired by students, was usually thanks to the efforts of local Jewish communities and their contributions to schools.

Dr. Schmoll herself had occasion to work in a Jewish school and also within the secular education system in Hamburg. She is intimately familiar with the shortcomings of Holocaust education in her own country, and has long been troubled by the almost singular focus of German history books on the rise of nationalism, with only cursory

descriptions of deportations and locations of camps. She noted, however, that in the south of Germany, in Bavaria, secondary-school students are at least required to visit a concentration camp as part of the World War II historical education. Nevertheless, Schmoll’s prognosis for the direction of literacy on topics related to the Holocaust is grim. Her findings show that Antisemitism is on the rise.

Anecdotally, Schmoll described her own experiences speaking with teachers and students. Sadly, she continues to be dismayed by the predominant lack of knowledge, and has even experienced pushback from educators unwilling to deal with discussions surrounding the Holocaust. She recounted one such incident where parents at a secular school in Hamburg complained to the principal after Scholl showed her history class *Schindler’s List*. The principal supported Schmoll’s approach, and subsequently many students were absent from school for the duration of the unit.

The second lecture, on Nov. 15 was the Annual Toby and Saul Reichert Holocaust Lecture - “From the Vilna Ghetto to Nuremberg: Yiddish Poetry and Witnessing.” It was delivered via Zoom by the Harvard-educated, 2022 Canadian Jewish Literary Award winner, and Smith College Sherrerd Prize for Distinguished Teaching recipient, Professor Justin Cammy. Professor Cammy’s accolades present as an impressive list of Jewish scholarship’s highest honours. In his elegant presentation, he brought into focus the lasting significance of a Yiddish writer that the *New York Times* once referred to as: “the greatest poet of the Holocaust.” Cammy insightfully commented at the beginning of his talk that studying this topic necessitates understanding the lives of European Jewry prior to the onslaught of the Holocaust devastation.

Professor Cammy began with an introduction to the life of celebrated poet Abraham Sutzkever, followed by an in-depth contextualization of his works, and an examination of his lasting legacy. Sutzkever, born in modern day Belarus, came of age and received his education in Vilnius. He suffered unspeakable losses at the hands of Nazi occupiers, survived the horrors of the Vilna Ghetto and became a partisan living in forest. He survived and was able to provide testimony at the Nuremberg Trial against those who murdered his infant son, mother, and extended family. It was the writing that Sutzkever produced while in Moscow, and its translation that Cammy is principally focussed on. Regardless, anyone not previously familiar with the writings of Abraham Sutzkever will certainly be visiting their local library or place an online order following this nuanced and gripping literary

Rimon Calgary Needlework Guild



Rimon Calgary is a Jewish women’s needlework guild that has been engaged in the community since September 2007. Members gather once a month to share, learn and strengthen their skills. The guild is open to all members of the Jewish community who have an interest in needlework. Their members are sewers, beaders, quilters, knitters, embroiderers and more. The atmosphere is friendly, fun and supportive. At each meeting members bring projects they are working on to show and share. They also engage in group projects such as the Blessings from the Earth quilt currently on display at the Calgary Jewish Centre, Shades of Blue, permanently on display at the Chevra Kadisha and the community Chuppah available for loan to community members.

Rimon Calgary is privileged to have distinguished historians, textile workers, quilters, knitters and artisans of notable reputation in their chosen field in house as members. They provide mentorship to the diverse skill level membership. They welcome all levels of ability, from beginners to experts and love to share their creative passion with each other.

If this sounds appealing to you, come out to one of the community displays and see what the group is all about.

To get involved, or just ask questions, contact:
Rimon Calgary Judaic Needlework Guild at 403-2813617

investigation.
Jewish Studies Week at the Wirth Institute continues to be a highlight of the Edmonton Jewish community’s yearly activities. The engaging topics and subject matter covered by Dr. Schmoll and Professor Cammy were enlightening and provocative. Those who missed Professor Cammy’s lecture can watch the lecture online through the Wirth Institute’s YouTube channel.

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Good Hanukkah shows and movies for kids are hard to find — but these few were worth the search

By Jay Deitcher

(JTA) — “Arthur’s Perfect Christmas,” the 2000 TV movie, begins with Arthur sitting at the piano in his jammies singing about how this Christmas is going to be magical — the best one yet. It’s clear what holiday is center stage in Arthur’s world.

But it’s the B plot about the show’s Jewish character Francine that speaks to a legitimate Jewish experience — truer than any current kids’ Hanukkah specials on TV. Francine’s best friend, Muffy, refuses to accept that Francine can’t attend her Christmas party. Francine tells Muffy 28 times, literally 28 times, that it’s on the same night as her family’s Hanukkah party, but Muffy ignores her, buying her a Christmas gift.

Muffy storms from her party to scream at Francine through the phone.

“But you can see your family any old day,” she says. “Besides, it’s not like Hanukkah is as important as Christmas.”

Before my kids were born, I shrugged when people complained about how suffocating Christmas was. I thought they should just get over it: We live in a Christian world. But this year, I realized the influence that television would wield over holidays when my 2 1/2-year-old son Avishai became obsessed with costumes because Mickey Mouse loves Halloween. Suddenly I realized Christmas was racing toward us with a ho, ho, ho.

The problem isn’t the lack of Hanukkah programming — it’s the programming itself. Hanukkah specials feature guest characters educating the stars and non-Jewish audience about menorahs and dreidels. Christmas specials feature stars getting presents and chillin’ with Santa and reindeer. Joy!

Avishai’s favorite channel is Disney Junior. Three of the past four years, the main show to tackle Hanukkah has been “Puppy Dog Pals,” which juxtaposed segments of Christmas jolliness and Hanukkah blah back to back. On Christmas segments, Bingo and Rolly zip off on adventures with elves. The stories never explain why gold shoots out the backs of sleighs, the magic just is, so it’s straight into the fun: making and searching for toys. Meanwhile, on their first Hanukkah segment, “The Latke Kerfuffle,” the pups hunt for eggs and potatoes for latkes, which they find out are “those potato pancakes... a special Hanukkah food.” Their Jewish neighbors appear only to explain everything to them. They are barely characters, so you have no reason to invest in them.

On the second “Puppy Dog Pals” Hanukkah half-episode, “The Dreidel Dilemma,” the pups search for a dreidel, which they learn is a “spiny top toy that families play with during the holiday of Hanukkah.” This year’s segment, “Nine Lights Tonight!” is about the pups being called upon by Mrs. Claus — yes, that Mrs. Claus — to save Hanukkah. You see, Mrs. Claus has a best friend named Miriam, who we barely meet, and she needs bulbs for her hanukkiyah. The pups

team with Randy the reindeer in training, searching for bulbs in a flying sled.

Elsewhere in the Disney Junior universe, last year, “Elena of Avalor” did slightly better with its episode “Festival of Lights.” Unlike “Puppy Dog Pals,” the Elena episode portrays Hanukkah as cool, featuring delicious food and tons of gold stuff. Plus, Princess Rebecca of Galonia has an amazing tiara that seconds as a crowbar.

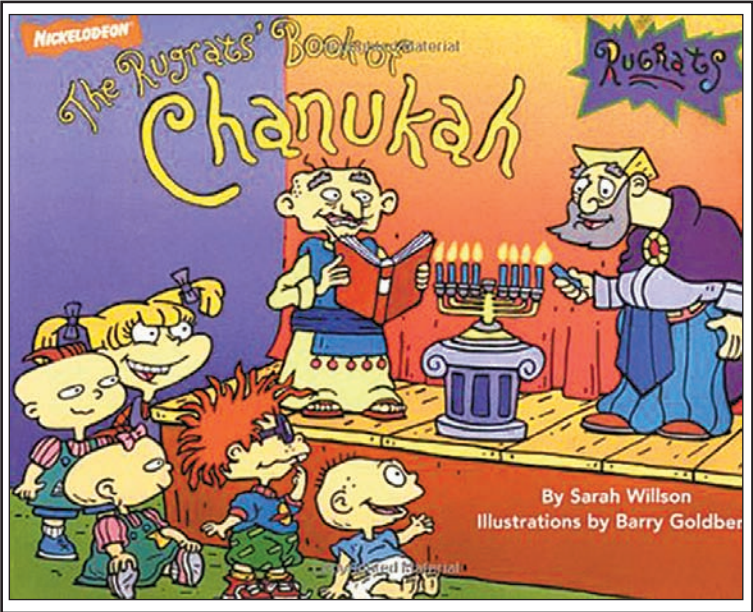
The episode introduces the royal family of Galonia, who halt the plot to teach Elena and her family about menorahs and gelt. These are all Latin American characters, but the episode shows only a couple cultural similarities. Instead, the Galonians act as tour guides through the foreign Jewish world. There’s an emphasis on the Galonians’ language, with Elena and her family confused by their weird Yiddish words. While it’s true that many Latin American Jews are Ashkenazim, the constant definitions emphasized the culture gap between the Galonians and Avalorans.

To find decent Hanukkah programming you need to search. So my family is making our own playlist, watching Jewish characters worth investing in. They may feel alien within the greater culture, but they aren’t portrayed as aliens. They don’t lecture because they are also figuring things out. Each episode is an adventure my kids love. It’s not available on current channels, so your kids’ non-Jewish friends won’t be in tune with it. Good programming features Jewish protagonists. It isn’t aimed at non-Jewish audiences. It portrays Jewish life, uncensored.

The best blueprint is “A Rugrats Hanukkah,” which debuted in 1996. It features the Rugrats crew finding the “meanie” of Hanukkah at the Pickles family’s temple. The temple’s Hanukkah party resembles every temple Hanukkah party I’ve attended, with multiple activity tables and a play starring people named Boris and Shlomo, who can’t stand each other. Jewish characters butcher aspects of Judaism, babies wonder what’s going on, everyone kvetches, all to traditional tunes. Chuckie’s dad, the inquisitive non-Jewish character, wonders, “What’s a Shlomo?”

Another household fave is “Shalom Sesame Hanukkah: The Missing Menorah,” released in 2010, featuring Grover, The Count, Baby Bear and Israeli children visiting Israel landmarks, practicing Hebrew and making olive oil.

“The Hanukkah Shaboom! Special” by BimBam, a defunct YouTube channel that used “digital storytelling to spark connections to Judaism,” is a recent gem. The main characters, the Plony family, attempt to impress their non-Jewish guests,



the Baloneys, by making Hanukkah seem cool. Like “Rugrats,” it features traditional songs. With animation clearly inspired by “The Fairly OddParents,” characters come from diverse racial backgrounds, resembling my own household (I’m Ashkenazi and my wife is Nigerian and Jamaican). Unlike Elana’s attempt at showing the diversity of Jewish and Latin American communities while having the Jewish characters explain themselves, the “Shaboom! Special” normalizes diversity within the Jewish community as something that simply exists, no explanation needed.

At the end of “Arthur’s Perfect Christmas,” most everyone is disappointed. Christmas didn’t live up to Arthur’s expectations.

The self-proclaimed “Princess of Christmas” Muffy received 37 gifts, but has no one to brag to because she and Francine are no longer friends. Muffy realizes it’s all her fault. On Christmas Day, her family appears at Francine’s door bearing ham, which Francine’s dad dubiously accepts, saying “uh, thanks.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t listen to you,” Muffy says, followed by the butts.

“Come with me,” Francine says, grabbing her friend by her wrist and pulling her to a menorah that her great-grandmother brought from Poland. She explains that once a year her family gathers for a potluck, lighting the candles and placing the menorah in the window for the world to see.

“Do you understand why that’s really important to me?” Francine asks her friend.

Muffy pauses and blinks.

“I’m sorry. I should have listened to you,” she says and puts her hand on Francine’s shoulder.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

P2G *Cont. from page 19*

Canada. The three subcommittees of CTC-P2G, Geshar Chai, Youth & Education, and Capacity Building, also met to discuss funding around projects like the Terry Fox Run and the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) multidisciplinary learning program for elementary and junior high schools.

During the height of Covid, the CTC-P2G joint steering committee and subcommittees committed to providing funds to a youth mental health centre in Israel whose crisis response team was overrun. This allowed for hiring a clinical psychiatrist and dietitians, updating the clinic, and making a huge impact on their waiting list to help many families. This was one of the many projects the group visited while in Israel. Stacey shared that “it was such a wonderful experience and feeling knowing that we were able to make this happen and have such an impact.”

Adam expressed how many other partnerships between Israel and North America stalled during Covid. “We’ve had significant virtual *mifgashim* around *chagim* (holidays) and education with sometimes over 100 people jumping on the call.” It is this commitment from all parties that maintains these

important connections which facilitate and initiate important projects such as the one mentioned above.

Volunteering and fundraising through UJA campaigns, the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival, directed donations to Calgary Jewish Federation for Israel projects, as well as support from the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary are various ways people and organizations can contribute to CTC-P2G’s continued initiatives and programming.

You can also take advantage of the program by reaching out to the Jewish Federation. They can help connect you with the necessary people to enhance your experiences and time in Israel. “If people are planning a trip to Israel, I can without a doubt tell you that they will be warmly welcomed into the region, and we are very happy to make that connection for them,” Stacey commented.

Cathy Cole, who has been intimately involved with the program for 8+ years as chairperson of the Calgary Jewish Federation CTC-P2G, added that if anyone is planning a visit to Israel, they should definitely visit up north and take in the amazing projects they have been involved in to understand the impact these projects are having in the communities. “I always tell people, ‘You get a big bang for your buck’ up there.”

When further discussing CTC-P2G projects, Stacey recalled a particular project that impacted her greatly.

A social worker reached out to the Jewish Federation because she does a social outreach program for those on the autism spectrum. Through this program, one of the individuals was able to find self-expression through rapping and showcased their talent at one of the Partnership dinners during their trip. She described it as a “get you in the *Kishka* moment.” This is one example of how money pulled together by the communities can directly impact the lives of those within them.

CTC-P2G is a unique program, and you can feel the pride of everyone who is involved. Adam, Stacey, and Cathy all emphasized that true, authentic partnership is at the program’s core. From regional to local levels, CTC-P2G’s scope and commitment ensures communities in the partnered regions receive support that makes a significant difference. Through opportunities to become directly involved with projects and initiatives, ideas are shared to build Jewish identity and thriving communities. If the program feels like a good fit for you, don’t hesitate to contact Adam Silver (asilver@jewishcalgary.org) or Stacey Leavitt-Wright (ceo@edjfed.org) to speak with them about getting involved.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

This fried Filipino delicacy is perfect for Hanukkah

By Abby Ricarte

(Noshers) - There's no question that the most delicious, comforting recipes are the simplest, especially if they come with a bushel of history and soul. My Jewish husband Miki's grandmother (Grandma Esta) made the best brisket I've ever tasted.

My own Filipina mother makes the best lumpia. Hands down. World's best, even. Lumpia is a Filipino spring roll filled with meat (or vegetables) rolled skillfully and fried to golden perfection. My earliest food memories include platters of lumpia at family parties with relatives raving while inhaling as my mom basked in the compliments. Preparing for parties typically meant that my mom would make the filling ahead of time. Eventually, I would lose many of my weekend mornings to hours of rolling lumpia for her in front of that never-ending bowl of filling. I had no idea what was in the filling. It wasn't until I was an adult, throwing my own parties, that I was able to pull back the curtain on the mysterious, world's best lumpia recipe and call my mom to just ask.

After Rosh Hashanah, when I have leftover brisket in my fridge and guests coming over, my first thought is: let's turn this into lumpia! Lumpia is always a crowd-pleaser and easy to fry ahead and

serve at room temperature. My brisket lumpia was merely a quick Filipino/Jewish experiment, but it tasted so wonderfully familiar. I had forgotten that my mom's lumpia's recipe is really mostly carrots and onions just like Grandma Esta's brisket. As I look forward to creating my own special Jewish home with my husband, I'm comforted by these unexpected connections between his family and my own.

Note: You can find spring roll pastry for this recipe in the freezer aisle at Asian food markets. It is similar to phyllo dough, but not the same as egg roll wrappers.

Ingredients

1 pound ground beef, 1 cup raw walnuts, 2 yellow onions, roughly chopped, 1 carrot, roughly chopped, 1 teaspoon of salt (plus more to taste), 1 packet spring roll pastry (found in the freezer aisle at Asian grocery stores—similar to phyllo dough), 2 Tbsp neutral oil (i.e., avocado, grapeseed, vegetable) plus about ½ cup more for shallow frying, Store-bought sweet chili sauce for dipping

Directions

To make the filling:

1. In a food processor, add walnuts, onions, and carrot. Pulse until finely minced.
2. In a large wok or sauté pan on medium high heat, heat 2 tablespoons of oil. Add vegetable mixture and saute for 2 minutes.
3. Add ground beef to the pan and combine thoroughly. Cook until beef is just about brown and there is no more red. Add salt to taste. Remove the filling from the pan and set aside to cool.
4. Roll the lumpia. Place a single pastry sheet onto a cutting board or clean counter. Point one corner



towards you so that the sheet is positioned like a diamond. Add about two teaspoons of the cooled filling to the lower triangle that is closest to you. Use your fingers to shape the filling into a log. Pull the bottom corner up and over the filling and roll tightly, tucking in the sides like a burrito.

5. Use a dab of water on your finger to seal the final edge. Repeat and roll the rest of the lumpia.
6. To a large wok or pan on medium high heat, add enough oil so that it reaches about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the bottom of the pan. Gently heat the oil and fry the lumpia until golden brown.

Serve lumpia with a side of sweet chili sauce for dipping.

This story was originally published on the Nosh, a division of 70 Faces Media.

Roasted Carrot Tsimmes

Our good friends at Gruman's Delicatessen recommend this recipe for Roasted Carrot Tsimmes for a year-round side dish. It's great with any meal – at any time. We think it's perfect for Chanukah because of the olive oil. Of course, the honey makes it a winner for Rosh Hashana, and the ingredients themselves

make it ideal for Pesach. This recipe is easy to make and it yields 6 servings.

Ingredients:

1 kg whole carrots, ¼ cup olive oil, 2 tbsp honey, 1 tbsp chopped rosemary, 1 tsp minced garlic, 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice, Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Peel carrots and cut into 1" chunks. Combine olive oil, honey, garlic, and rosemary. Add the carrots and toss to coat. Transfer to a baking tray lined

with parchment, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for approximately 30 minutes or until the carrots are tender and golden brown. Toss with lemon juice and adjust seasoning if needed. If you like your carrots sweeter, you add more honey.

Gruman's menu can be viewed at
grumansbritannia.ca or drop by their
convenient location: 5103 Elbow Dr. SW. Calgary.
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The advertisement features a central white rectangular area with the 'Wakina Gallery' logo. The logo consists of the letters 'WKG' in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a vertical line and the words 'Wakina Gallery' in a similar font. Below the logo are four small images of artwork: a stone carving of a bird-like figure, a painting of a boat on water, a stone carving of a human figure, and a black and white illustration of a person's face. The background of the entire advertisement is a dark, textured, abstract painting with various colors like red, blue, and white.

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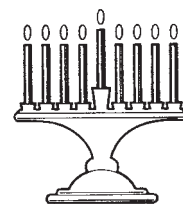
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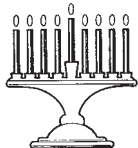
Wishing family & friends a joyful
and illuminating Chanukah



from Marnie,
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חג חנוכה שמח

from Judy Shapiro and
Richard Bronstein and family



חג חנוכה שמח

Happy Chanukah
to the entire community!

from Sandy & Bernie Corenblum
and family

Wishing family & friends all the
best this Chanukah from
Sheila Bermack and family



Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Bronia & Sid Cyngiser

Chag Sameach
- Happy Chanukah
from Shirley & Al Chafetz



Chag sameach! Let the light shine this
Chanukah and every day this year!

from
Kim, Alex,
Adam, and
Zach Chulsky



Wishing the community
a very happy Chanukah



from
Phyllis D'Aguir

Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah
from Harvey Cyngiser



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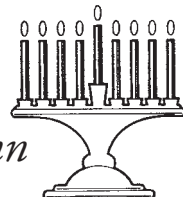
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and Josh

Chag sameach!
Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day this year!

from
Judith Hagan-Conn



We wish everyone a happy
& healthy Chanukah



from Sam, Cindy,
Rebekah &
Josh Feldman



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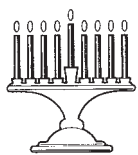
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חנוכה שמח

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Happy Chanukah
to the entire community

from Dr. Caron & Rabbi Mark Glickman



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Chanukah filled with good
food, family and light




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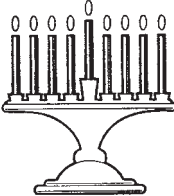
from
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Wishing family & friends a joyful
and illuminating Chanukah




from
Louise Glin
and family

Wishing family and friends a joyful
and illuminating Chanukah



from
Jackie and
Hayim Hamborger
& family

Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah!
from Halley & Bruce Girvitz




Wishing the community
all the best for this Chanukah!
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& Mr. Russ Janiger

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Happy Chanukah
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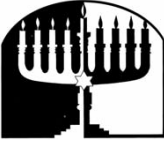



from
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Chetner & family

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Happy Chanukah from
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Chag sameach!
Let the light shine this Chanukah
and every day this year!

from
Janis & Brian Kowall
and Family






Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah!
from Lea Kohn & family

Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah!
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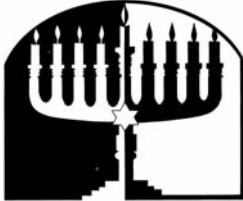
from
Roz Mendelson
& David Hodgins



Wishing family & friends
all the best this Chanukah!
from Therese Nagler

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health and laughter

from Eva &
Gordy Hoffman
and family




Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah
from the Molotsky Family

Wishing family & friends all the best
this Chanukah

Love from
Mel and
Gail Ksienski
& Family



Wishing family & friends all
the best this Chanukah
from Karen Levitt & David Kelly



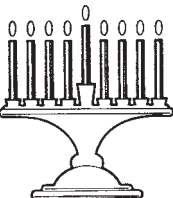


Chag Sameach
- Happy Chanukah
from Helena Barker
& Israel Lachovsky

Chag Sameach
- Happy Chanukah
from Daniel Moser




Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health and laughter




from
Miriam Milavsky
and family

Wishing family & friends a joyful
and illuminating Chanukah



from
Walter Moscovitz


Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health and laughter



from
Sandy &
Larry Martin
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Have a warm and happy
Chanukah filled with good
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from
The Oppenheim
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In loving memory of our beloved
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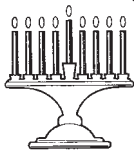
Chag Sameach!
Let the light shine
this Chanukah and
every day this year.



Esther and Sam Plucer

Wishing family & friends all the best this Chanukah! from Cheryl, Rob, Danielle, and Jarrett Milner

Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah from Frances Pearlman



Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah from Cynthia and David Prasow

Wishing family & friends a joyful and illuminating Chanukah from Al Osten



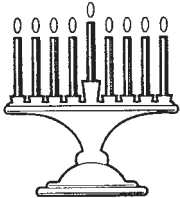
Wishing family & friends all the best this Chanukah! from Roz & Danny Oppenheim



Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah from Beth & Lorne Price and family



Wishing family and friends a joyful and illuminating Chanukah from Hilda and Lenny Smith and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and laughter from Ron Plucer and family



Happy Chanukah to the entire community from Robert, Jennifer, Brixton, and Harrison Preece



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and laughter from Esther & Gary Silberg



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and laughter from Murray Robins and family



Wishing family and friends all the best this Chanukah from Rochelle Rabinovitz and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and laughter from Gail & Brian Sidorsky and family



Happy Chanukah to the entire community from Eugene Shabash



Wishing family & friends all the best this Chanukah! from Diana Kalef, Elliott, Jonah and Micah Steinberg

Wishing family & friends a joyful and illuminating Chanukah from Dorothy Hanson & Sheldon Shagal



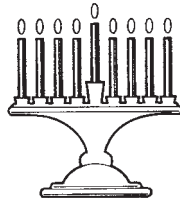
Wishing family & friends a joyful and illuminating Chanukah from Evelyn Sheftel Shapiro & family



Have a warm and happy Chanukah filled with good food, family and light from Stan and Carey Smith and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, light, health and laughter from Raechelle, Lorne, Shoshana and Leo Paperny



Wishing family and friends all the best this Chanukah from Betty Sherwood & Jim Casquenne



חנוכה שמח from Darlene Switzer Foster, Bill Foster and family



Wishing family & friends all the best this Chanukah from Alvin Libin and Bobby Libin and family



Wishing the entire community a Happy Chanukah from the Balaban family






חנוכה שמח
from
Gail, Dean, Bryan,
Ellie, Matthew,
& Rayna Staniloff

Happy Chanukah to everyone!
from Medina Shatz, Randy
Best, Scout and Blu

*Wishing the entire
community a Happy Chanukah*



from
Deborah Shatz


*Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah
from Lenny & Faigel Shapiro*

Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah
from Rosslyn & Norman Steinberg
and family

*Chag sameach! Let the light shine this
Chanukah and every day this year!*

from
**the Zivot
Family**



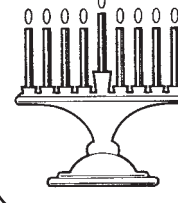


Chag Sameach - Happy Chanukah!
from
Linda & Gary Wolf

Happy Chanukah
from
Mary & Ken Taub




*Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health and laughter*



from
**Dalia, Allan,
Tammy and
Mark Wolinsky**


*Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, light, health and laughter*




from
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Harvey Thal**

חנוכה שמח
*Wishing the entire community
a Happy Chanukah
from Zohar
& David Wallach*

*Have a warm and happy Chanukah
filled with good food, family and light*



from
**Sandra &
Harold Lipton
& family**



*Chag sameach!
Let the light shine
this Chanukah and
every day this year!*

from
Jenny Belzberg

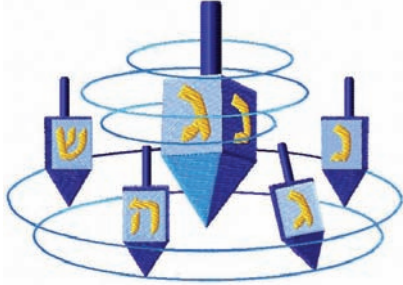
**Happy Chanukah from
Alberta Jewish News**


from **Deb Shatz,
Dan Moser,
Sandy Fayerman,
Maxine Fischbein
& Sandra Edwards**




*Have a warm and happy
Chanukah filled with
good food, family and light*

from
**Marilyn Libin
and
Jed Gaines**





*Thank you to everyone who participated with a
Chanukah greeting this month. We appreciate you!
Happy Chanukah and be well!*



from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

Fuel for a festival

It is no easy matter to initiate a new holiday.

Although the ancient Israelites could base their festival calendar on spectacular miracles and prophetic revelations, later generations could face more difficult challenges when it came to establishing days to commemorate more recent occurrences.

We see how Jewish communities today cannot reach a consensus regarding the observance of civil or religious holidays to commemorate the Holocaust or the founding of the state of Israel. Even where a date has been determined, there is rarely much agreement about the proper mode of observance. Similar issues arise in connection with assorted war memorials, the days of Truth and Reconciliation and similar occasions.

Problems of this sort arose in the second century B.C.E. when the Jewish leadership decided to institute an annual festival to memorialize the triumph over the Seleucid persecutors and the rededication of the defiled sanctuary in Jerusalem. The main chronicles that we have of the Hanukkah saga, the First and Second Books [1 and 2] of Maccabees, were likely composed for that purpose: to convince the Jews of Israel and the diaspora to adopt this new holiday.

In fact, 2 Maccabees opens by quoting two letters that were sent from Jerusalem to the Jews of Egypt urging them to adopt the new holiday. It is not clear what the relationship is between those letters and the book's main narrative, which was abridged from a five-volume history by a certain Jason of Cyrene.

The second of those letters is an enigmatic document that introduces several surprising details. Some of these items deviate so significantly from the mainstream account as to suggest that they were garbled in transmission; whereas other details offer valuable glimpses into how contemporary Jews regarded the religious significance of Hanukkah and its links to earlier milestones in Israel's sacred history.

The document opens: "Inasmuch as we are about to celebrate, on the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the purification of the Temple, we thought we ought to let you know, so that you too might celebrate it as the Days of Tabernacles and the days of the fire, as when

Nehemiah, the builder of the temple and the altar, brought sacrifices." Other than the starting date, which coincides with that of the Rabbinic Hanukkah, there is scarcely a word in this passage that does not strike us as surprising or problematic.

Let us examine a few of these matters.

Arguably, the central point of the celebration in this version of the story consisted of the restoration of the fire to the sacrificial altar.

The focus on the purification of the Temple is indeed consistent with the general tenor of 2 Maccabees, whose narrative is focused largely on the Jerusalem Temple and the priesthood. There is less emphasis on the military exploits of the small band of Jewish warriors against the massive Greek forces.

The comparison of the new holiday with Tabernacles (Sukkot), which does not fall in Kislev, has stumped generations of scholars. Some emend the Greek text slightly so that the comparison relates only to their eight-day length. Others point to a passage that told how, during the war, the Jewish guerrillas had been compelled to spend Sukkot "like wild beasts in the mountains and in the caves" —though the same problem would presumably have applied to all the holidays during the three-year campaign.

In any case, there is no suggestion here that the newly declared holiday was yet named Hanukkah or "feast of dedication." The alternative is "days of fire." This resembles the modern usage "festival of lights" that derives from the rabbinic association with lamps and candles.

In reality, to understand the importance of fire, we must look not to the candelabrum (as in the familiar legend from the Babylonian Talmud) but to the altar itself. According to the Torah, back in the days of Moses an elaborate seven-day process of consecrating the priests and the tabernacle culminated on the eighth day, when "the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord." This heavenly fire continued to burn in the Israelite sanctuaries through much of the biblical era. The Bible also tells how the same miracle occurred at

the inauguration of Solomon's Temple in a celebration that overlapped Sukkot, when "the fire came down from heaven...and the glory of the Lord filled the house"; and then "on the eighth day he sent the people away."

A tradition unique to the letter in 2 Maccabees stated that, when the first Temple was destroyed, some pious priests hid its most sacred furnishings—including the altar and its heavenly flame—in a deep cistern! After the second Temple was built, the descendants of those priests found in the cistern a liquid substance that, when ignited by sunlight, burst into flames on the altar. Nehemiah instructed that the remaining fluid be poured out to be absorbed into large rocks. The miracle became so famous that the Persian king established a lucrative shrine in its honour.

The text adds that Nehemiah and his companions named the flammable liquid "*nephthar*" allegedly from a Hebrew root designating release or purity; which evolved into "*naphtha*," the Greek and Latin term for a combustible liquid hydrocarbon mixture.

The author of 2 Maccabees did not state that Judah Maccabee found that original divine fire and restored it to the new purified altar. He did however write later that they made use of fire produced from flint, which might well have derived from those rocks that Nehemiah had doused in the lighter fluid.

Taken together, all these historical and legendary details demonstrated that the new festival celebrating the Temple's rededication was in fact an integral link in an age-old chain of events that extended from the appearance of the supernatural fire in Moses's Tabernacle, through the temples of Solomon and Nehemiah, and their commemorations in eight-day celebrations.

And as a special bonus, they might even hold the secret of an affordable energy source.

From the Sources by Eliezer Segal
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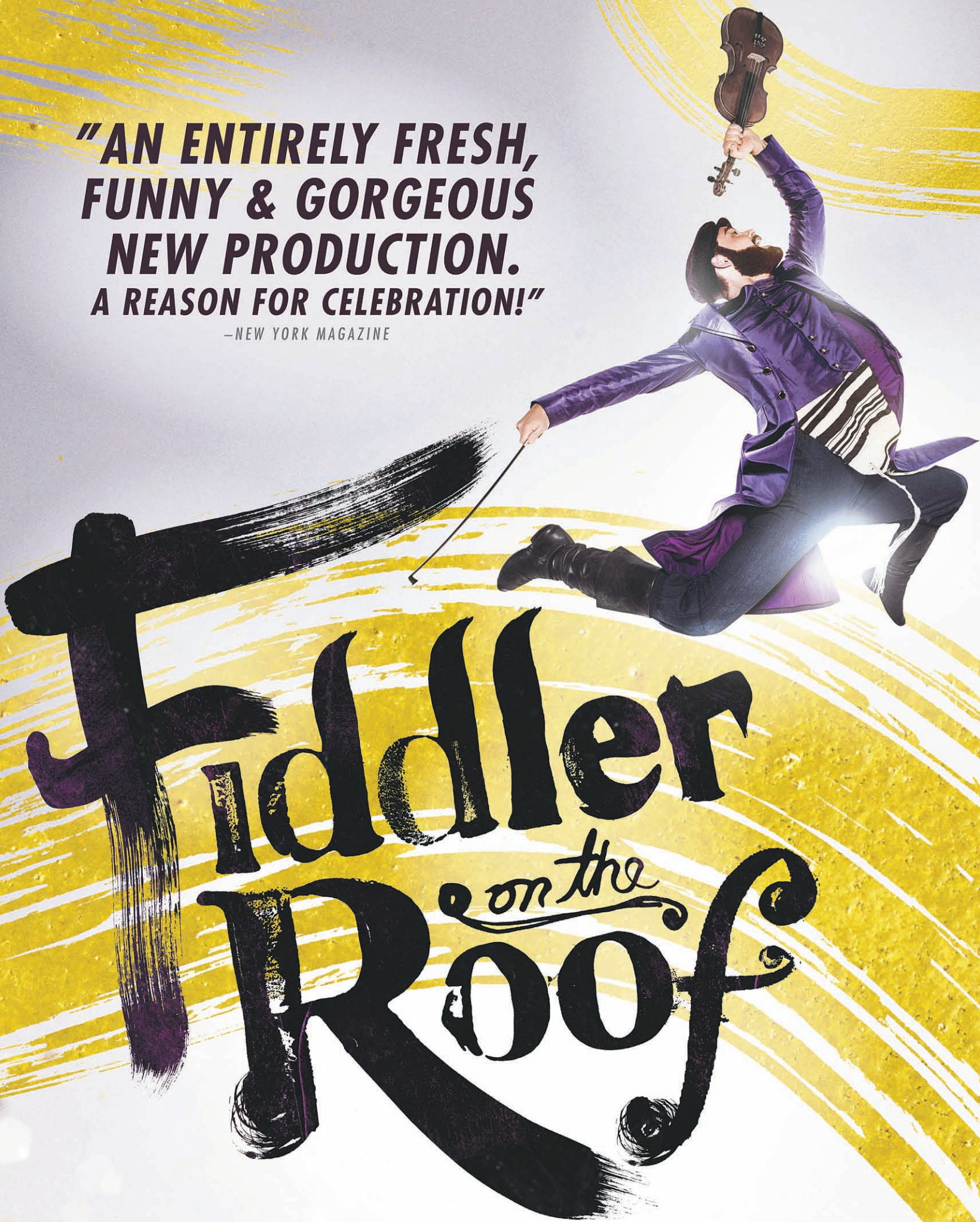
Calgary UJA women's event celebrates community and the arts



On October 27, over 40 women came together for a special United Jewish Appeal viewing event of "Away We Go" - Alberta Ballet's first performance of the season. (Photos courtesy of Calgary Jewish Federation).

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