

Ambitious course studies 33 centuries of classic Jewish Literature: JLI

You are invited to explore eight genres of Jewish Literature with a diverse group of community members in both Edmonton and Calgary.

To study the history of most cultures, you need to learn about wars and empires, warriors and city builders, and great works of art. But the history of Judaism is overwhelmingly a history of books. Books form the core of Judaism’s culture. But even if they’re known as “the People of the Book,” much of Judaism’s classic literature remains closed to contemporary Jews.




This month, Rabbi Mendy Blachman of Chabad of Edmonton will open Jewish literature to a contemporary audience, leading a class of Jews of many affiliations and backgrounds as they explore the history, authors, and content of Judaism’s most important titles in a new course entitled *Book Smart*.

“It’s an ambitious undertaking,” Rabbi Blachman says, “I’m excited because I think the course will give us a richer understanding of what Judaism meant throughout the centuries and what it can mean for us today.”

When *Book Smart*’s first ninety-minute session kicks off on Monday, January 30, at 7:30 pm, at the Fantasyland Hotel, students will begin their six-week

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Giant Menorah lit at the Alberta Legislature

The Edmonton Jewish community and friends once again celebrated the first night of Chanukah with a gala lighting of the Giant Menorah at the Legislative Grounds. It was amazing! Kol Hakavod to Chabad Rabbi Ari Drelich and his team!

Calgary celebrates Chanukah at City Hall with all the trimmings







Chanukah at City Hall was wonderful with treats and activities for everyone. Yasher Koach to Chabad of Alberta. Photos: Zeev Abosh, PhotoArt4U

CJA Jr. High students teach mindfulness to Kindergarteners

By Lesley Machon

Mindfulness, in its simplest definition, is the act of being present. Paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, sensations and environment; noticing what is going on inside and outside of us. Practicing mindfulness allows us to engage with the world consciously and intentionally, instead of operating from default programming. In this way we are freed up to *respond* to our surroundings instead of *blindly reacting*.

Breath and body awareness is the foundation for many other skills, including focus, impulse-control, stress and anxiety management, emotion regulation, decision-making, executive function, and compassion. As adults, this practice is new to many of us, but the sooner our children learn mindfulness, the more choice, power, and inner freedom they have access to.

Recently at the CJA, junior high students began working with kindergarten classes, helping the little ones cultivate awareness of their inner worlds. For one hour a week, older students give their full attention to younger ones, centering their time together around art, breathwork exercises, and reading stories. So far, the students have painted mandalas, made feeling storms, created breathing wands, made watercolour images of their magic breath, made photo garlands of their favourite memories, and read books that explore the concepts of presence and inner peace in fun and age-appropriate ways.

Together they learned the alphabreaths and

practiced pairing visualization with breathwork through Heart Breaths, Wish Breaths, and Mountain Breaths. Each outbreath is a united effort, teenage respirations mixing with the audible exhales of kindergarten students.

The older kids have also learned how to read storybooks to the little ones – pausing to engage them with each page, and playing with pacing and intonation to bring each book to life. They have learned how to explain the mindful projects to their buddy, and do the breaths alongside them.

This kind of work is mutually beneficial, supporting the healthy development of younger children, while also serving the mental and emotional health of teens. Mindfulness skills can be taught to all learners at all ages, helping students better understand their own experiences and learn healthy ways to navigate challenges. Research validates how mindfulness skills can buffer teens against stress reactivity and common mental health struggles such as anxiety and depression. One study of mindfulness in schools found that students who learned mindfulness-based conflict resolution strategies were able to use them outside of school with siblings and friends. Mindfulness improves self-awareness and self-regulation skills that are associated with positive learning outcomes and success in school.

From a teacher’s perspective, it’s been incredible to witness the way younger kids are taking their experiences home. Parents are sharing stories with me about the way their young ones explain different



Teaching mindfulness to a Kindergarten buddy at Calgary Jewish Academy.

breathing techniques, and sending photos of projects hanging proudly from bedroom walls. It seems evident that this initiative is meaningful for students in tangible ways.

The work we do at the Calgary Jewish Academy evidences a continuous effort to support students beyond simply meeting academic goals, to realizing their full potential. On that note, everyone involved in incorporating mindfulness into our educational environment is breathing deeper and with more ease these days.

Leslie Machon is the Humanities instructor at CJA.

Celebrating Centenarian Jack Adler

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

When Jack Adler fell seriously ill at the age of five, his *Zayde* was hastily summoned from his nearby town. As was the custom, the *Zayde* blessed his little

grandson, renaming him Alte Yenkal, in the hope that Jack might live to a ripe old age.

It seems that the Zayde’s prayers found G-d’s ear.

On December 31, Mr. Adler began his birthday celebrations by chanting the Haftarah during Shabbat services at Beth Tzedec Synagogue. Standing steady and proud, and *leining* in a strong voice, the 100-year-young Holo-

caust survivor accomplished what is believed to have been a first on the Beth Tzedec *bimah*.


Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne - who had just celebrated his 50th birthday - saluted Adler as an inspiration and role model at twice his own age.

Those who know Jack Adler are keenly aware that his longevity was by no means guaranteed.

The Nazis certainly had other plans for him.

Born on January 2, 1923 in Berezovo, Czechoslovakia - today part of Ukraine - Adler was one of seven siblings raised in a strictly Orthodox home.

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The Calgary Jewish Academy
בית הספר היהודי בקלגרי

Head of School/Principal


The Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) is a Jewish Day school that was founded in 1987 as a result of the amalgamation of the Calgary Hebrew School (1912) and the I.L. Peretz School (1927). The CJA has over a century-long legacy educating children who have and will continue to shape the future of Calgary, Canada and beyond. From Nursery through to Grade 9, CJA provides a safe, supportive and challenging environment. Their goal is to explore with students the concepts of Jewish community, identity as well as put Jewish values and beliefs into action. CJA students are challenged in a rigorous dual curriculum program focused on Alberta Curriculum and Judaic Studies.

CJA is seeking a new leader for the role of Head of School/Principal (“Head of School”). The Head of School will embody the mission and vision of the Calgary Jewish Academy, to be a leader in engaging, educating and empowering Jewish children, and articulate and communicate the strategic and operational goals for all aspects of the school. This collaborative and passionate leader will be a strategic thinker, excellent communicator and foster the traditions, relationships, and practices that determine and uphold the school’s unique culture. As the sole employee of the Board of Directors, the Head of School is responsible for the overall management of the school, in accordance with Board policies. As a strong relationship builder, with experience in stakeholder engagement, the Head of School will serve as an inspirational leader responsible for ensuring a collaborative environment, focused on implementing CJA values.

With strong organizational leadership and administrative management skills, the Head of School will lead an extraordinary team of dedicated faculty and staff, oversee curriculum development, and ensure financial and human resource needs are managed efficiently and effectively. This forward-thinking individual will support the development and implementation of CJA policies, procedures and governance structures, to ensure the realization of the school’s goals and strategic priorities such as creative and meaningful programming centered around English and Judaic education and the support of increased enrollment. To encourage and support financial sustainability, this innovative and community-oriented leader will assist and lead fund development initiatives at CJA that include donor relations and major gift initiatives.

The ideal candidate is a visionary, collaborative leader with a strong business acumen who has demonstrated a passion and commitment to the field of education. The successful candidate will hold a degree in education (Masters preferred, but not required) at least 10 years experience teaching, including a minimum of 5 years in progressively responsible senior administrative, management or executive roles. As well, the successful candidate will be eligible to obtain both an Alberta Teacher Certification and Leadership Quality Standards. They will have extensive experience in managing and growing an educational institution with proven capacity to create and implement a strategic direction while maintaining deep community connections.

Janet Soles and Associates has been retained to conduct this search on behalf of the Calgary Jewish Academy. For more information about this opportunity or to apply, please send your curriculum vitae and letter of interest in confidence to CJA@jssearch.ca



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SJ Kerr-Lapsley & Boris Karn welcomed their beautiful son Arlo Noah (Aron Noah) on the morning of December 21st 2022.

A big mazel tov to baba Roberta Kerr and alte-baba Naomi 'Buddy' Kerr.

Family and friends are shepping naches near and far!

Shine A Light Mosaic is touring Edmonton

By Jenna Soroka

It is month three of Jewish Federation of Edmonton’s (JFE) Shine A Light on Antisemitism mosaic tour. The tour kicked off in November of last year at the Alberta Legislature and then spent some time at Edmonton Beth Israel Family Shul in December. The artwork is now available for viewing at City Hall until February 6. This tour was made possible through one of Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) grants and is continuing to help grow public awareness of antisemitism.

When you go to City Hall to view the artwork this month, you will also get the opportunity to learn about the history and its relevance in the 21st century through one of Yad Vashem Canada’s ten panel exhibitions. *Shoah: How was it Humanly Possible?* is the one on display at City Hall with the mosaic currently. Both are meaningful opportunities to explore leading up to International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Friday, January 27. Jennifer Magalnick, Associate Director of Holocaust Education and Community Engagement at JFE, shared that they have also taken the *Stars Without a Heaven: Children in the Holocaust* exhibit to local high schools and *They Say There is a Land: Longings for Eretz Yisrael during the Holocaust* to Beth Israel during Yom Haatzmaut last year. Panel exhibits are available for display if people are interested in hosting them.

Prior to the mosaic’s current residency at City Hall, people attending Broadway Across Canada’s production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Northern Jubilee Auditorium were able to experience this thought-provoking mosaic. In a CTV Edmonton

news report, Jonathan Hashmonay who plays ‘Tevye’ in this production, commented that it was “striking to see so much sadness and so much anger within such a beautiful art piece.” Cast member Elliot Lazar, who plays ‘Mendel,’ emphasized the importance of this type of cross-community project to help combat antisemitism.

The mosaic, created in 2021, brought together people of all ages to express their personal experiences with antisemitism through words and illustrations. Fast forward to 2023, and the collaborative art project continues to nurture this powerful awareness campaign. The impact is evident when reading through the guestbook (present at each site of the artwork) which captures people’s impressions of the art. “The mosaic is both beautiful and important. Antisemitism is a great evil that must be stamped out,” one individual wrote. “Beautiful tribute”, “stunning”, “speechless”, “inspiring” others jotted down.

Tammy Vineberg, Associate Director of Marketing and Communications for JFE, commented that their organization initially thought the mosaic would just tour within the local Jewish community. However, after they displayed it this past summer at K-days, they were inspired to identify other locations within the city where it could have a positive impact.

On March 20, it will be displayed at Roger’s Place during the Oiler’s game for Jewish Heritage Night.



Fiddler on the Roof stars Jonathan Hashmonay and Elliot Lazar with JFE staff members. Photo courtesy Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

Additionally, thanks to the city’s Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Grant, the Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic will visit junior and senior high schools in the upcoming school year to raise awareness and act as a launching point for discussions around antisemitism between educators and students. The grant will enable the mosaic to be featured in libraries across the city as well.

Tammy encourages people to go visit City Hall if they have yet to see the artwork. “Take a picture, tag @jewishedmonton on social media, and share it.” Shining a light on the current impact of antisemitism is an ongoing process which requires awareness, education, and community collaboration.

For an even richer experience of the artwork, be sure to watch the videos in the interactive virtual exhibit on Jewish Federation of Edmonton’s website jewishedmonton.org under Featured Events: Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic art project.

Additionally, as part of the JFNA grant, JFE has built a page on their website which houses a variety of informative and educational resources on how to combat antisemitism in today’s society.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Edmonton partners with ADL database

By Jeremy Appel LJI Reporter

The City of Edmonton has announced a partnership with the New York-based Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to develop technology for identifying and reporting hate symbols locally.

The city announced the partnership on Jan. 6 - the two-year anniversary of the Capitol riot in Washington, D.C. that sought to overturn the results of the 2020 U.S. election prior to President Joe Biden’s inauguration, in which white nationalist groups participated.

The Lighthouse tool, which the city is currently piloting, consists of three components: An app for people to take photos of suspected hate symbols; an online gallery that analyzes the symbols through the ADL’s Hate on Display symbol database to see if there’s a match; and

A dashboard that shows the symbols, and where and when they’ve appeared to assist policymakers in making informed decisions.

At the launch announcement, deputy city manager

for community services Jennifer Flaman said the city is motivated by the rising tide of anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-immigrant, anti-Indigenous, anti-Muslim, antisemitic and anti-LGBTQ+ hate.

“Words matter. Images are powerful, and these hate symbols can attack our sense of belonging and do considerable harm,” Flaman said.

In 2021, city council approved an update to its public places bylaw to include hate symbols as a form of harassment.

Flaman said Lighthouse will provide a valuable tool to assist law enforcement in enforcing the updated bylaw so symbols can be “identified, tracked and removed.”

Ben Gready, a data scientist with the city who helped develop Lighthouse, provided a demonstration of how the

technology works for media in attendance.

He emphasized those who use the app “don’t have to know it’s a hate symbol, they just have to have an inkling that it’s a hate symbol.”

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PRESENTS

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BBYO: Leadership training & more

By Maxine Fischbein, LJL Reporter

One can literally hear the pride in Stacy Shaikin’s voice as the Regional Director of BBYO (B’nai Brith Youth Organization) recounts highlights of the organization’s Leadership Training Institute (LTI) held December 9-11 at the Wyndham Hotel in Edmonton.

The annual event - one of four regional conventions that bring together BBG (B’nai Brith Girls) and their male peers AZA (Aleph Zadik Aleph) - boasted the highest number of attendees in recent memory, as 78 teens from Edmonton, Calgary and Saskatoon converged on the Wyndham hotel.

While fun is a key ingredient in any BBYO gathering, this one had a serious side as the organization continued its efforts to educate youth on antisemitism with a view toward strengthening their abilities to address the world’s oldest hatred.

Notably, a program that tugged at the heartstrings of participants while providing them with important information was organized by StandWithUs Interns Keira Seidman, of Calgary, and Ellie Vogel of Edmonton.

Since 2001, StandwithUs has partnered with an extraordinarily long list of organizations within and beyond Jewish communities in North America and around the world to advocate for Israel and fight antisemitism.

According to Seidman - a Grade 11 student at E.P. Scarlett High School in Calgary - approximately 150 high school students throughout North America are chosen as StandWithUs interns prior to each school year. They are nominated by previous interns and interviewed prior to being selected for the all-expenses paid experience which includes online group meetings, one-on-one guidance by a regional coordinator and two trips to Los Angeles for training.

Each intern is then required to create and implement four programs during the year of their internship.

The program conducted by Seidman and Vogel at LTI included a talk by Edmonton Holocaust survivor Abe Silverman, who currently serves as B’nai Brith Canada’s Manager of Public Affairs in Alberta.

“Listening to Abe’s story was powerful,” recalled Shaikin, adding that Silverman spoke of the effects of intergenerational trauma due to the humiliations, privations and tragic losses his family experienced at

the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators, including Silverman’s separation from his parents for months while a young child.

“I think that is a big part of why Abe is so into speaking to teens and other members of the community about his experiences,” Shaikin said.

Silverman urged his young audience “...never to use their fists, to become knowledgeable and get their facts straight,” Shaikin told *AJNews*, adding that Silverman painted a picture of how his experiences “shaped his community participation.”

In light of the vicious onslaught of online expressions of antisemitism, Silverman urged LTI participants to be vocal on social media, speaking to antisemitism with context.

Shaikin says the Jewish community can take much pride in BBYO members who are leading the charge in advocating for the local community and Israel and speaking out against racism, xenophobia and antisemitism.

Ellie Vogel and Keira Seidman are two of approximately 20 Canadian interns whose one-year Kenneth Leventhal StandWithUs High School Internships began just prior to the school year and will continue until June. They were nominated by previous StandWithUs intern Amy Shlomovitch (Edmonton).

Following Silverman’s talk, Vogel and Seidman distributed wooden butterflies to LTI participants together with the name of an individual who perished in the Holocaust. Participants then decorated their butterflies with details that would make them think of the person whose life was extinguished during the Shoah.

“The Butterfly Project is an international organization that uses their project as a symbol for remembrance and hope,” Vogel told *AJNews*.

“We wanted the teens to have something in common with the person who passed. Often it was having a similar name or sometimes being the same age. This made the teens feel more connected and that it wasn’t just a name but a person.”

Vogel and Seidman encouraged their peers to honour the murdered teens by committing to specific actions in their memory.

“It could be standing up to antisemitism or doing an activity you wish they could have experienced,” Vogel said.

Prior to LTI, Seidman fulfilled part of her StandWithUs programming commitment by organizing a program for students in her high school social studies class.

In the lead-up to a unit on the Holocaust that was to be taught by their teacher, Seidman arranged for Matt Lebovic, Director of the StandWithUs Holocaust Education Centre, to speak with her class.

Students were encouraged to write down what they knew about the Holocaust, what they hoped to find out and, finally, what they learned during the Zoom session, Seidman said.

“It was insane how little everyone knew,” recalled



BBYO members at LTI in Edmonton. Photo courtesy Keira Seidman

Seidman.

The good news is that participants filled pages with the information they learned during Lebovic’s talk, Seidman said.

For her first StandWithUs program, Vogel organized “Israel 101” during which she shared with Jewish peers a presentation on the history of Israel and the “Israel Palestine conflict.” During the discussion that followed, participants talked about the places that they had been in Israel or where they would choose to explore and talked about why they feel a personal connection to the state.

Vogel is currently doing the think work for her next StandWithUs Program in Edmonton. Seidman has organized a field trip for BBYO, NCSY (National Conference of Synagogue Youth) and CTeen (Chabad Teen Network) members in Calgary who will be touring the *Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors* exhibit, which is on display at the Central Library throughout January.

“After, I’ll be giving everyone a talk on antisemitism and how to fight it,” said Seidman, adding that she will be encouraging her peers to share their own experiences with antisemitism.

Seidman speaks passionately about the power of education to conquer ignorance.

“It’s very important that this work is done so that people learn, know how to fight back and how to embrace themselves and their culture,” she added.

Vogel and Seidman are discussing the possibility of teaming up for their fourth and final StandWithUs program later this spring.

“Between now and our spring convention in June we want everyone to do something in honour of the person they were given, whether its standing up to antisemitism or something of the sort,” added Seidman.

“It’s a difficult thing to grasp that these kinds of horrible things happened to just ordinary, everyday people, Seidman said.

Regional Director Stacy Shaikin says he remains dedicated to providing tools for BBYO members

Continued on page 6

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Thank you to my dear friends and family for your good wishes and generous donations to the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary to honour me on my recent birthday.

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Thank you
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CALGARY CHEVRA KADISHA

Calgary Chevra Kadisha is seeking an individual to assist in planning, scheduling and delivering funeral services. Reporting to the Executive Committee, and working together with operations staff, the individual in this permanent position will be responsible for meeting with bereaved families to arrange funerals. Knowledge of Jewish practices (preferably relating to burial) is desirable. These duties require sensitivity and compassion to the needs of the bereaved, flexibility and adaptiveness, and the ability to work with others including staff and volunteers.

Applications and resumes can be mailed to the attention of the Search Committee at 101, 17818 – 37 St. SW, Calgary T2Y 0M9 or emailed to chevraofcalgary@yahoo.ca

HOJMI officially welcomes Rabbi Andrews on Feb. 26

By Marina Segal

Whenever Rabbi Nisan Andrews comes to work at House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel (HOJMI), the TV show theme music of *Welcome Back, Kotter* seems to come to mind. While the congregants of HOJMI aren't nearly as rambunctious as the lovable Sweathogs, they are very excited to have Rabbi Andrews as their new spiritual leader!

Born in Canada and raised in Calgary, Rabbi Andrews attended Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago, where he received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Rabbis. After ordination, his first Rabbinic role was as Assistant Rabbi at HOJMI. He then honed his skills in the US and UK. While employed as the Associate Rabbi of Finchley United Synagogue in London, a flagship congregation of the United Synagogue with over 1,800 member families, he began innovative social and educational programming. In all his positions, Rabbi Andrews worked tirelessly to strengthen the engagement of his communities.

Rabbi Andrews is thrilled to be back in Calgary at such an opportune time - after nearly 3 years of restrictions and isolation, HOJMI and the greater Calgary Jewish community are eager for a return to vibrancy and growth. He firmly believes that you cannot build a community on Zoom - you can deliver sermons, or offer classes - but a community needs interpersonal connections and real-life interactions.

Rabbi Andrews is joined by his wife Hannah,

and their 4 children. Hannah is a certified Judaics Teacher and Kallah Teacher. She is delighted to be back as a Morah at Halpern Akiva Academy, while also taking on many roles within HOJMI. She is an inspiration and friend to the women of the community and is passionate about making personal connections.

The Andrews have the privilege of being both "old-timers" and "new-comers." While they were both able to jump right in and immediately engage with the greater Calgary Jewish community, they were also able to see opportunities with fresh perspectives. For example, Rabbi Andrews had established numerous connections with people in the food industry with his past kashrut work, and was now able to reach out to those same contacts to do private drink tastings as social programs at HOJMI.

The Andrews also have the perspective to appreciate the Jewish infrastructure that Calgary has for a community of its size. They have high praise for the builders of the community who came before them and want to encourage more builders to come forward, to further expand on these communal successes.



Rabbi Nisan and Hannah Andrews and family.

Looking ahead, the Andrews have a vision for the shul as they recognize that a synagogue is more than just a house of worship, to be used 1/7th of the week. They want to see HOJMI as a centre for learning, praying, social connection, and above all else, a community. They want to be ambassadors and ensure the growth and vibrancy of the entire Jewish community.

House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel will be officially installing Rabbi Nisan and Hannah Andrews at their 2023 Gala Dinner on February 26 at the Carriage House Inn. The evening will also feature a special message from Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth (who mentored Rabbi Andrews during his time in England). For tickets and donations, please contact the HOJMI Office at 403-259-3230 or email hojmi.calgary@gmail.com

JLI covers *Cont. from page 1*

survey of traditional Jewish literature, covering; Torah, Talmud, Midrash, Halachah, ethics, and philosophy, as well as kabbalah and Chasidic mysticism. "We'll meet the authors behind the big ideas of Jewish history over a period of thirty-three centuries,"

The history of Jewish literature is a broad subject, but Rabbi Blachman says the course will also go deep. "We're not just going to learn why these works were written. We're actually going to get a taste of what it's

like to participate in a Talmudic debate, unpack a philosophical conundrum, and decipher a kabbalistic text from the *Zohar*."

Book Smart was developed by The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute, headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, which has a sterling reputation for producing high-quality and engaging courses. Over 400,000 people have participated in JLI's courses since the organization was founded in 1998.

Rabbi Blachman says he isn't promising students overnight expertise on the works discussed in the

course. "But I can assure them it will be an enjoyable and intellectually engaging journey, giving us valuable context for all our future Jewish learning."

For more information and to register contact: Rabbi Mendy Blachman at 780-200-5770 or email JLI@ChabadEdmonton.org

This course will also be taking place in Calgary on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings.

For more information call Chabad of Alberta at 403-281-3770.



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Edmonton's Beth Israel Shul hosts Chanukah on Ice



The WEM Ice Palace was a hub for Chanukah activity - lighting the fourth candle and more.

JNF: Enriching the quality of life in the Galilee

In the spirit of this year’s JNF Tu BiShevat theme “Planting with Love – Protecting the Environment,” JNF Edmonton Director Jay Cairns is focused on the renewal of the Segev Forest. The campaign is designed to help rejuvenate a beloved forest, improve quality of life for local communities and create a sustainable forest that will serve both people and wildlife now and in the future.

For over 70 years, the Segev Forest has served as a local green lung for residents of the Lower Galilee, enriching the quality of life and preserving the evergreen Galilee landscapes. JNF is planning to renew parts of the forests as part of the 2023 planting season; this renewal will ensure the forest's wellbeing and durability so it can continue serving both people and wildlife.

Segev Forest, planted by JNF in the 1950s-1960s,

serves as a green belt for over 15 various communities, Jewish, Arab and Bedouin, and provides them and visitors from all over Israel with recreation areas, cycling and walking trails and local historical and archaeological sites. It is also home to local flora and fauna unique to the Galilee, creating a diverse ecosystem and natural habitats.

Rosh Zayit, a fortress from the 10th century BC, and the Beza ruins, a village from the Hasmonean and Roman eras, can be found in the forest - a testament to the rich history of the Galilee that JNF has been a part of for over 120 years. JNF helped establish many of the Gush Segev communities during the 1970s-1980s, that today get to enjoy and benefit from the forest - adding to their quality of life and local scenery.

After completing special ecological surveys and evaluations in the Segev Forest, JNF found grazing

and other damages that brought about the need to replant and renew the forest with more sustainable and compatible tree species.

Therefore, this winter (2023), JNF will renew acres of land while restoring tree orchards and ancient terraces.

For JNF – it means being part of the solution. Trees are efficient in capturing carbon dioxide, which is the main greenhouse gas harming our planet, and thus make a significant contribution to combatting global warming and climate change. By planting trees and expanding forests, JNF is strengthening Israel's resilience to climate and environmental changes.

For more information on this year’s Edmonton Tu BiShevat campaign as well as other JNF projects contact jay.cairns@jnf.ca or visit jnf.ca.

BBYO teens *Cont. from page 4*

dealing with antisemitism in their schools and online.

“It’s rampant. I think our community is well aware of that,” said Shaikin who is working with Jewish Family Service Calgary toward a session at the Spring Convention in June that will feature role play in an effort to further educate BBYO members on effectively responding to antisemitism.

The enduring popularity of local and regional BBYO activities among Jewish teens in Alberta and Saskatchewan has much to do with the fact that meaningful programs are built by and for young adults including emerging leaders like Vogel and Seidman.

Regional *Shlichim* Lilah Silver (Calgary) and Noam Rosenblum (Edmonton), shared the responsibility for Judaic programming at LTI, assisted by BBYO International staffer Jeff Silverstein. Highlights included Friday night *Kabbalat Shabbat* services and

the always-popular *Havdalah* service that marks the end of Shabbat with prayer and song.

“Havdalah is emotional and meaningful to a lot of people,” Silver said, adding that after the service, participants sang songs including *Daniel*, in remembrance of two former BBYO members - both named Daniel - who died under tragic circumstances 15 years apart.

For Ellie Vogel, Havdalah was a personal highlight of LTI, in more ways than one.

“Especially after a day with programming talking about antisemitism in our world, it is really special to sit surrounded by Jewish teens and have a Havdalah service all together celebrating our Judaism proudly,” Vogel said.

Vogel was this year’s recipient of the Daniel Award - given annually to a third-year BBYO member with outstanding leadership skills. The award was originally dedicated to the memory of Daniel Arato, one of seven Strathcona-Tweedsmuir students killed in an avalanche during a school ski trip in 2003. Arato, 15 years old at the time, was an avid and cherished Calgary BBYO member.

suicide in 2018. A former BBYO leader who went on to become a beloved counsellor at Camp BB-Riback, Weig touched the lives of many peers who continue to honour his memory.

While LTI coordinators did not shy away from serious themes and topics, they infused the convention with plenty of fun, including a Saturday night paintball experience. According to Seidman, Vogel and Silver, one of the best parts of LTI was the opportunity to hang with friends, in particular catching up with those who live elsewhere in the region.

The next BBYO convention will take place in Calgary March 17-19. Featured themes include Mind, Body, Attitude and Sno-boy, including a new slant on the usual hockey tournament: A three-on-three round robin tournament with alumni participation. A silent auction will also be held in order to raise funds for the region.

Still basking in the afterglow of a very successful LTI, Shaikin praised the work of BBYO staff and convention coordinators Adi Boorhaven (Edmonton), Samantha Rabin (Calgary), Keira Seidman (Calgary), Benji Silver (Calgary), and Ellie Vogel (Edmonton) and the participants themselves who, according to Shaikin, did their respective communities proud.

For more information about BBYO, contact: Barry Pechet, Calgary at bpechet@bbyo.org Eliyana Forbes, Edmonton at eforbes@bbyo.org Malvina Rapko, Saskatoon at mrappko@bbyo.org

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For change of address, please send both old and new addresses. We welcome your stories, pictures, artwork and opinions. Please send submissions to our office at the address above.

Next Deadline: February 17, 2023

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TT Early Learning Centre welcomes new director and lead educator

By Natalie Soroka

The Talmud Torah Early Learning Centre (TTELC) is excited to announce that the Talmud Torah Society Board has hired a new Director and Lead Educator.

Sacha Brodie, the new Director, is a level 3 certified educator with vast experience in the daycare classroom as an educator, as a supervisor/administrative staff, and most recently as a daycare Director. Sacha is passionate about early childhood education, and prides herself on open communication and team collaboration. Her role is managing the administrative side of the TTELC, which includes both the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) programs, including the program's budget, and human resources duties.

Sacha is thrilled to be working at the TTELC, stating “I can see that this is a unique, family-oriented, cultural environment with a rich history, and I look forward to being a part of it!”

Jennie Leonard, the new Lead Educator, is also level 3 certified and has been with the TTELC for 2 years. She stepped up as interim lead educator/director during the recruitment period. Jennie has a wealth of knowledge in the early child care field from her experience in our ELC/OSC, and previous years as a supervisor in a day home agency. Jennie's role focuses on being in each classroom daily to support the educators and children, providing mentorship and enabling staff breaks. Jennie will provide curriculum support, incorporate Hebrew and Jewish content into the curriculum (along with support from our education committee), and fill in for the Director, as required.

Jennie is excited for the opportunity to work with educators in the classrooms, commenting that “being in the classrooms is a joy, and guiding, mentoring and working as a team with our experienced educators is something I look forward to.”

Both Sacha and Jennie hit the ground running early



Jennie Leonard and Sacha Brodie

in December as they collaborated with educators and established routines and expectations. They connected with parents, children and educators to ensure a smooth transition and continue to deliver the high quality of care, enrichment and warmth the ELC and OSC is known for.

Jack Adler *Cont. from page 2*

At the age of 16, he rushed home from the nearby Yeshiva where he had been studying. His father had been sent into forced labour, and the family now relied on Adler to help support them.

At 21, Adler was also forced into heavy labour. Transported by the Nazis and their collaborators from one labour camp to another, he also managed to survive the Flossenbug and Buchenwald concentration camps, though barely. Backbreaking work, meagre rations and brutal conditions - including a death march with no food or water - left Adler so severely depleted that he fell into a two-week coma following his liberation by American troops on April 11, 1945.

Searching for family after his recovery, Adler made the horrifying discovery that his mother, youngest brothers, and most of his extended family had been murdered at Auschwitz. Fortunately, his three sisters and one brother had survived. Taking on work wherever he could find it, Adler helped his sisters and eventually made his way to a Displaced Persons camp to seek emigration assistance.

Gaining entry to Canada in exchange for his promise to work six months at a lumber camp in Northern Ontario, Adler later lived in Winnipeg. Working overtime whenever possible, he saved enough to sponsor the immigration of two of his sisters and their families.

Settling in Calgary in 1950, Adler soon met and married Alice Madorsky, of blessed memory. Together they built their glass business while raising two children, Sherry and Irvin, and eventually welcoming their spouses, Dilan Perera and Sandy (née boxer). Jack and Alice Adler were later blessed with three granddaughters and two grandsons. All were on hand together with friends and neighbours to fete their beloved patriarch at his New Year's Day birthday party.

Fastidious and nattily dressed, Adler, who still

boasts a thick head of hair, is a respected and beloved member of the community. He has always supported Jewish causes, especially those geared to people in need. As a former *yeshiva bocher*, he is particularly generous when it comes to Jewish education.

Though it never became easier in the telling, Adler regularly spoke to students and teachers at the Holocaust Education Symposium, held annually at Mount Royal University. His portrait and biography is the first you encounter in the recently published *Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors*, companion book to the exhibit launched at the Glenbow at the Edison this past spring.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Adler was a “regular” at Shabbat services, often gracing the bimah. Despite his physically demanding occupation as a glazier, he enjoyed regular workouts at the JCC, maintaining his regimen until he moved into a retirement home.

It is fitting that Adler chanted his birthday Haftarah on a Shabbat when the remarkable journey of his biblical namesake, Jacob, was the focus of the Torah reading. When asked his secret to longevity, Adler said, “Work hard, walk a lot and exercise every



Jack Adler - 100 years young.

day.” Of course receiving and counting his blessings did not hurt!

Biz hundert & tzvanzig Jack, may you live to 120.

It's a boy!

Zale and Caroline Rosenberg along with big sister Aria proudly welcomed Levi Asher on November 28th.

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community calendar

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

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





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A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

Each year, the month of February ushers in Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM). The initiative's co-founder, Shelly Christensen (who has visited and presented to Jewish Calgary in the past), highlights JDAIM's mission is to unite Jewish communities worldwide to raise awareness and champion the rights of all Jews to be accepted and included in all aspects of Jewish and community life. This inclusion does not simply mean creating specific programs for those who are different. Rather, our goal as a community is to provide accommodations for enhanced participation in programming and, from a strengths-based perspective, showcase the incredible talents and contributions of Jewish Calgarians who are neuro-diverse or have various disabilities.


It is our collective responsibility and opportunity to ensure all members of Jewish Calgary feel welcome, and our community organizations continue to

commit to being growingly more inclusive. Many organizations are now offering accessible options enhanced audio and visual support, sensory-aware options for programs and services, and free admission for aids/companions who accompany community members to assist them. It is not enough to simply open the doors, however. It is critical for us all to address any preconceived notions we have, and to act with kindness, empathy, and appreciation. Judaism commands us to not insult the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of someone who is blind (Leviticus 19:14). Removing barriers and including each and every person in the *Kehillah* (community) are core tenets of our faith, and certainly drivers of Jewish Calgary.

Though JDAIM comes only one month a year, inclusion is a year-round and evolving practice. As we imagine ways our community can and does embrace those who are different, we must all make

time to reflect on ways our families and homes can do the same. What can we learn from those who have different cognitive or physical abilities? Can we slow down and, in the moment, see their beautiful and talented souls? In what ways can we include those with diverse needs and abilities in our lives and community practices? While we continue to remove barriers and make programs and services more accessible, we still have much work to do. It is my commitment that we will continue to learn and grow, making Jewish Calgary the welcoming and inclusive home I know it can and wants to be.

B'Shalom,


Adam Silver
CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation

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

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CELEBRATE AND JOIN US AT OUR FEATURED EVENTS AT THE PAPERNY FAMILY JCC



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ART EXHIBIT: THROUGH MY EYES
February 12-28
Opening Reception: February 12



SPECIAL IN UNIFORM: WHEN NO IS NOT AN OPTION
Sunday, February 26
1:00PM

A coming-of-age story about a boy and his family who overcame great challenges by turning Disney animated movies into a language to express love, loss, kinship, and brotherhood. Dinner: \$25 • Movie: FREE

View the work of **Yehudit Chayil** and her inspirational message that "no challenge is too great." Meet this talented artist at the opening reception on Sunday, February 12 from 3:00 to 5:30PM.

Featuring guest speaker **Lt. Col. (Res.) Tiran Attia**, Director of Special in Uniform. Be inspired with how adults with disabilities are fully included, and find pride and joy in the Israel Defence Forces.



JDAIM
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In her latest book, **Dara Horn** explores a pointed question: Why do people seem to love dead Jews, but not living ones? The Holocaust continues to make headlines and fill our films and fiction. Yet ignorance and indifference towards Jew-hatred seems to be higher than ever. Join Dara as she discusses what exactly is going on here.

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Combining vivid storytelling and masterful performances of classics by Bach, Beethoven, and Rachmaninoff, *The Children of Willesden Lane* is a critically acclaimed one-woman show that illustrates how music can bring light and hope to even the darkest of times.

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THIS IS MY JEWISH CALGARY

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Focus on Finance

A special afternoon at JFSC Café Europa

By Peta Glezerson

We've heard stories about Holocaust survivors reconnecting after many years, in October the JFSC Claims Conference Team saw it happen.

Tivia David and Mircea Weiner were among the 120 guests at the recent Café Europa luncheon for Holocaust survivors at the Carriage House in Calgary. After the meal, guests started socializing and dancing, and it was then that they recognized each other. Both from Bucharest, Romania, Tivia and Mircea had lived in in the same apartment building as children. After the war, they connected in Toronto for a time, but then lost touch. Both eventually ended up in Calgary. At the luncheon they recognized each other and were delighted to reconnect. Tivia thought that she had lost contact with Mircea forever!

JFSC hosted its second Café Europa luncheon in October 2022, the highly anticipated event brought Calgary Holocaust survivors together to socialize and enjoy food and music in the company of old friends and possibly, new friends. This event was an opportunity for Survivors to share, openly or silently, memories that will never fully leave them - memories that they strive to forget, but at the same time make sure are passed down for future generations. These gatherings provide an immeasurable positive impact on their quality of life.

One hundred and twenty Survivors attended the event, dressed in their best clothes with their hair styled. They were brought together because of their shared wartime experience and without having to say a word, it was clear they share a common bond. There was a warmth in the room that felt like the luxuriousness of a long sigh. Café Europa is the kind of event akin to a warm embrace.

Rabbi Ilana delivered blessings and a D'Var Torah, guests were treated to a delicious spread that befits a high tea party – a variety of dainty sandwiches, salad, and the ever-popular apple strudel dessert.

During the meal, guests enjoyed live music, songs

from the 40s and 50s, by Adam Brousseau and Claire Butler with Trio Clicquot, a classic jazz trio. After the meal, the guests took to the dance floor lost in the familiarity of the feelings that the music inspired. Couples swayed effortlessly to the songs of their youth and singles danced with friends and caregivers alike. To anyone on the outside, one would be hard pressed to know that this group of people had experienced such hardships during the war.

Certainly, the highlight of the event was when the band played Hava Nagila. The first few beats of the song lured everyone from their tables to the dance floor and they danced the Hora in a way that brought to life, the meaning of the song, 'Let us Rejoice', just as the song suggests. The joy in their hearts, the smiles on their faces, were enough to show how deep their appreciation was for this much anticipated event.

The pandemic was especially tough on Survivors; this gathering went a long way towards easing the isolation felt by so many, enabling them to come together with people who can relate to their pasts.

Café Europa is one of the programs for Holocaust survivors internationally, funded by Claims Conference, to come together, socialize and form community. The name, Café Europa, is after a Café founded by Holocaust survivor Hédi Fried in Stockholm, Sweden, where survivors would meet after the war to try and find family and friends.

JFSC's Claims Conference team put on the event - Angela, Antonina, Natalia, Olena, Michaela, Greg, and Ekaterina. This kind and caring team works tirelessly



Dancing the Hora at JFSC's Café Europa 2022.

for the well-being of their clients. They are loud advocates for their clients to be able to maintain their dignity and live independently in their homes for as long as they can.

Through Claims Conference funding, JFSC supports its clients and the Jewish community through the coordination of a variety of projects that include the publication of two books of stories of Holocaust survivors living in Calgary, "Voices of Resilience" and "Sharing Our Memories," as well as hosting Café Europa. JFSC also administers two additional programs for Survivors Home Care and Emergency Financial Assistance - ensuring that clients live their lives with dignity and independence.

For more than 70 years, Claims Conference (the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany), a non-profit organization, has secured material compensation from the German government for Survivors around the world.

As per Tivia's quote in the *Here to Tell* commemorative book, "Tomorrow is another day and it will be a better day."

ADL Cont. from page 3

In addition to taking photos of potential hate symbols, the app provides the option of drawing them. Once an image is sent to the database, it's peer-reviewed by an expert to see if there's a match.

The app is only available to bylaw enforcement officers by design, said Keith Scott, the city's director of complaints and investigations.

"The [ADL], in discussions with them, suggested it's not a good idea to release this kind of database out to the public," said Scott.

Flaman said the ADL was selected as a partner because their database is the "largest in the world."

At this point, the app is only designed for symbols seen in public, not social

media, where many hate symbols proliferate, because social media posts don't include specific, local location data, Gready explained.

Mark Pitcavage, a senior research fellow with the ADL's Center on Extremism, told CBC News that the group's database can "help a community understand when a new extremist threat might be emerging, identify trends and tactics among hateful extremists, and to better protect the community."

"Haters unfortunately innovate so it is important that people of good will innovate, too," he added.

Tracking hate symbols is necessary because many community members "just don't know what that means or what might be coming along with that," Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright told the CBC.

She added that it's important for the public to stay up to date with the constant evolution of hate symbology.

"New hate symbols, new understandings - then it's a much quicker, easier way of adapting," Leavitt-Wright said.

Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

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Focus on Insurance

Wilson M. Beck Insurance: Escaping Average

By Sam Feldman

Let's have an honest conversation...

What would you say if someone came into your business and told you that *'everything that you are doing is completely average'*? Obviously, you don't believe that you, your employees, your product, and your business are average. If you did believe this, how would you ever compete in your industry?

But my guess is that you are being discretely told that your business is average by your current insurance broker. Let me explain why I believe this.

We need to get technical for a moment...

Insurance is an industry that uses large loss data to price the likelihood of future events. The stages of the creation of insurance policies, in simplified form, is something like:

First, actuaries and statisticians' study historical loss information and develop *rate books*, indicating a range of how much needs to be charged to provide protection for a particular asset or circumstance. This is simple math on the surface but gets very complicated as insurers look for competitive advantages.

Next, underwriters *apply the rates* to potential clients that are presented to them by brokers, based on the perceived risk at hand. Underwriters will first establish what rate group the potential client fits into, and then they modify the base rate up (by adding loadings) or down (by adding discounts) based on how they believe the operations compare to the standard business in the specific rate group. For example, if two nearly identical properties are presented, but one has a sprinkler system and the other doesn't, the underwriter would apply a *rate discount* for the property with a sprinkler system.

From here a good broker will review the details, pricing, and fine print of each option and select the best option for the client's individual needs.

On the surface, this looks like a simple process, but in practice this process has many nuances that can complicate each step, and it also requires a lot of delicate negotiation.

So, let's get back to average...

Your broker asks you some questions, submits your business profile to the underwriter, and waits for answers. If your broker has not supplied enough information and has not taken the time and attention to truly understand your business, *you will get exactly average rates*. The underwriter will simply lump you in with the base rate and try to get your file off their desk as quickly as possible. So the most important thing for us to understand is how your business is different from your competitors. When we explain this and tell your story, *you escape average*.

Every day we are contacted by businesses looking to obtain insurance. As we look to build the business profile for them, it is so common that we learn that they are doing amazing risk mitigation, but their current underwriter has no clue about it, so they are not rewarded in their insurance rates. Things like COR Compliance, GPS on their vehicles, security systems, management protocols, additional drivetraining, and anything you are doing to mitigate risk is important

JAC celebrates Chanukah in YYC



JAC enjoyed Chanukah at the Calgary JCC with good cheer - latkes, sufganiyot and a shot of vodka! (Photo by David Sklar)

for us to know, which is why we seek to be your partner in the process.

Building an attractive business profile that underwriters will drool over is a bit like speed-dating: First impressions are everything. Remember Fiddler on the Roof? Remember the famous *'Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match'*? The matchmaker needs a detailed understanding of the suiters on both sides. Without this understanding, the matches would not be very good.

Our process is much more in-depth. When we build a relationship with a business, we look to understand what makes that business special, why that business should be considered a superior risk. This requires a lot of time and effort, but the reward is worth it.

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Focus on Finance

Joshua Sadovnick on the gift of giving back

By David Sklar

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal Ceremony was held on January 5 in Calgary; the guests were all smiles.

Inside the prestigious sandstone McDougall Centre in downtown Calgary, the third floor was full of families, friends and well-wishers; there to honour 31 exceptional Albertans who gave their time and talents to serve their communities. The commemorative medal was created by the Government of Alberta to mark the 70th anniversary of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada.

Nicholas Milliken, MLA for Calgary-Currie, on hand to present the medals, stated that "today's medal recipients lead rather than wait to be led, they tackle challenges head on. They see problems as opportunities instead of as obstacles." During the Platinum Jubilee year, 7000 deserving Albertans will be recognized throughout the province.

Joshua Sadovnick was among those who were honoured this year. As Sadovnick approached the front to receive his medal and pose for photos, Rebecca Schulz, MLA for Calgary-Shaw spoke of his volunteer work with The SHARP Foundation. "(Sadovnick) has provided outstanding leadership and support to Calgary's most vulnerable populations, he is a vision of absolute dignity, compassion and respect, a true humanitarian and deserving community leader." But that just scratched the surface of the work he does.

The Sharp Foundation is over 30 years old and was started by Walter Beswick back at the height of the AIDS pandemic when people diagnosed with HIV generally ended up with a death sentence. The Beswick House, as it was soon to be called, was established as a place where people could live and die with dignity.

"Our mandate has expanded and provides permanent housing, social and medical supports for people who have a trifecta of issues," Sadovnick tells me. "Our program allows people to have fulfilling lives and live with a sense of dignity. We currently have approximately 50 to 60 people who we are currently housing. And another 30 or so on the waiting list."

What was it about this issue that made him want to get involved in the first place?

"Honestly, it started off as a guilt trip. I had just joined a large law firm. A friend of mine came to me and said: Well now that you're the sell-out corporate lawyer, it's time for you to give back to the community."

"But," Sadovnick stresses, "my parents instilled in me and my siblings very early on the importance of giving back. At age five I basically sat for hours stuffing envelopes for the MS Society and then one organization after the other. So I went in with an open mind, something I didn't know much about, didn't have any real experience, and I figured, let's check it out. I got really invested."

The opportunity of giving people the intrinsic value of seeing themselves as worthwhile led him to continue this work. "You're doing more than just giving a hand-out or doing a one-time fundraiser event. You're giving them something that they can carry. And we've had people who have graduated and been able to reconnect with family. But unfortunately, there's still a lot of stigmas. We don't advertise where we are."

This type of stigma usually referred to as nimbyism, is when residents are upset that such an organization might be located in their neighbourhood. Fears of vandalism, break-ins or illegal activities are often

brought up as reasons to reject applications.

"A lot of it is based on preconception," Sadovnick states. "I would say when we've opened up new locations, the first six months of the year are rough. There is a lot of backlash. People come and say, you guys are making a mess; you're not making it safe for the children. But after a while, you start to see a big shift because people have actually gotten to know some of the residents that we work with and have seen that they are members of the community."

Did Judaism have any part in establishing this sense of belonging and community outreach?

"I would say I'd always recognized myself more as a cultural Jew for a variety of reasons such as my terrible Hebrew," he jokes. "But Judaism has always played a very big part in my life. I went to Talmud Torah in Vancouver. My parents were founders of a synagogue in Richmond, B.C. And I grew up going to camp Hatikvah where my kids now go and where I'm on the board. That played a huge role in my development. One of the things instilled in us is that if you are in a position to give back, you do it. It's about learning who you are and how to make that place better."

Sadovnick's father flew into Calgary from Vancouver to be there to support his son. "I'm proud of what he's accomplished. He does a lot. He works very hard. He takes care of his family and his work. He's a man who gives back a lot to the community."

David Sklar is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Josh Sadovnick with MLAs Nicholas Milliken and Rebecca Schulz.

Congratulations to Josh Sadovnick,
one of our original clients, on being awarded
the Jubilee medal. We are all proud of him.

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Focus on Finance

The Many Dreams of Ron Bing

By David Sklar

On December 24, at Temple B’nai Tikvah in Calgary, Ron Bing invited family, friends, and temple members to his bar mitzvah. Or rather his re-bar mitzvah. At age 80, Ron last performed his torah portion when he was 65 at Temple B’nai Tikvah and before that as a 13-year-old at Temple Emmanuel in Montreal, where he grew up.

What prompted this move to re-re-recite parsha miketz, the story of Joseph and his prophetic dreams to Pharaoh?

“Celebrating my bar mitzvah brings me closer to G-d, to my religion. Rabbi Glickman tells me that one can celebrate a bar mitzvah at age 13 and again at age 83. So, you might be invited to a fourth celebration in 2025!” But Ron didn’t want to take any chances in case he didn’t make it to 83.

The rabbi provided context of this tradition. The psalms say you get to have a second bar mitzvah when you’re 83. “The years of a man’s life are three score or if you’re fortunate, three score and 10. So you’re first life is for 70 years. And if you’re fortunate, 70 plus an extra 13, it’s time for your second (bar mitzvah).”

At first Bing didn’t see any parallels in his torah portion and his own life. It wasn’t until Rabbi Glickman asked him to prepare his d’var torah (a torah commentary shared with others) that he began to see the links.

“Joseph gets thrown into the pit by his brothers. He is sold into slavery. Later he gets tossed into jail. A few weeks after my 14th birthday, my father suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of 48. I believed that I was responsible for his death. This was because I used to fight with my younger sister, causing stress to my father. In my teenage years, his death and my reaction to it brought me into my own pit of despair. But G-d then speaks to Joseph through dreams. He was able to

pull himself out of the depth of despair. And during my teenage years, I climbed out of my pit and was fortunate to receive the help that I needed. We all go through periods in our life when we find ourselves in a pit.”

Bing turned his life around, became an engineer and eventually moved with his new partner, Judy, to Calgary.

Was establishing the first reform synagogue in Calgary part of his dreams too?

“Not at all. It was Judy’s dream not mine,” he explained. “We came in 1974 and joined the conservative synagogue. Judy had a cold, wasn’t feeling well and we were having a baby naming for our newborn, Lisa. Judy talked to the Rabbi and asked if we could postpone the ceremony. The rabbi said: No, you don’t have to be there, it’s not important.

“I don’t know if that was because she was a woman and wasn’t considered important but that was the inference. And she got upset and told me, “We need to start our own temple!”

In April 1979, with help from the Canadian Reform Movement and many people, The Bings held their first Shabbat service in their living room.

Many other dreams were fulfilled for the Bings with two other children and a growing and thriving community. Temple eventually moved from basements to a library and finally to their own building. “But,” according to Bing, “the building isn’t important. It’s the people. When we started up, we had to debate, do we want a rabbi or a building first?” They opted for the rabbi.



TBT co-founder Ron Bing chanting his bar mitzvah haftorah.

Bing speaks fondly of his time cultivating and developing what he sees as a family-centred temple. One of his colleagues, Roz Mendelson, a Temple board member, couldn’t agree more. “Ron’s heart is in temple. From the get-go, he thinks about what he can do, how he can nurture it. But he also has the big picture and what the needs are. And he consistently works towards making sure that those issues are addressed. And he will always speak his mind. He’s not embarrassed to speak up. He will do what he thinks needs to be done without seeking approval from others. It’s not that he’s insensitive, but he knows what needs to be done and will act to do it. And what leads him is the love of Temple and the community. And you gotta love him. I mean, that’s it with Ron. Everybody will say you gotta love and respect him.”

“Do you remember your dreams?” Ron asked the congregation as his voice filled the room with emotion. “We’re told that dreams are a reflection of our subconscious. They are of our soul. Like Joseph, we can learn how to interpret our dreams, but it takes hard work.”

Rabbi Glickman concurred and added. “One of the amazing things about the Joseph story is that G-d doesn’t ever appear as a character. G-d is invoked. G-d

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Focus on Finance

JNF "Sips and Sweets" with hometown hero Orna Richter

By Matthew Levine

Jewish National Fund Edmonton recently hosted a “Sips & Sweets” event led by Jason Cairns and Orna Richter, two executive directors for JNF. There were a wide variety of both sips and sweets on hand including wine, fruits and vegetables, and donuts supplied by Bliss Baked Goods. It was nice to see so many friendly and familiar faces from the Edmonton Jewish community in attendance.

Jay introduced Orna as a “hometown hero” who grew up in Edmonton and worked her way to becoming the youngest executive director of the Jewish National Fund. Orna’s hour-long speech gave insight into her life’s journey and dove into themes of generosity and the stigma around money.

Orna explained how she adopted her “trace origins of generosity” through three different people. Her Bubbe was always generous and gave food to friends and neighbours, her Zaida exemplified volunteer service, and her mother opened the door to anyone in need. As she grew up, she became involved in NCSY which showed her the importance of fundraising, making cold calls, arranging Purim baskets, and organizing fundraising events.

She went on to talk about her most memorable volunteering experience: working in Kiryat Moshe. Orna worked at a summer camp there, tutoring underprivileged children in English. She emphasized how much these kids needed role models and how volunteering with them helped them stay on a positive path.

After getting her biology degree at York University, she moved back to Edmonton and became involved in the Jewish Community as a Synagogue youth director. She tried pursuing lab work with her biology degree, but when she found she did not enjoy the work, Orna

applied for and was hired as a director with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton (JFE). She then moved to Hamilton and got a job working at the McMaster Children’s Hospital, while still maintaining a board position with JFE.

While working for JFE she discovered the fundraising stigma; she learned “people are afraid to talk about, and ask for money.” Later, working at the children’s hospital with investors, Orna learned about the negative mindset associated with money. Orna explained that terms like “loaded” and “filthy rich” create a negative mindset that takes away from the beauty and excitement of what money can do.

The most insightful part of Orna’s speech came when she talked about the ethics involved in asking for money. She insisted that too many organizations use guilt to influence investors, but that she has learned to evoke hope instead. Orna claimed that through the evocation of hope, long-standing relationships can be built, whereas guilt does not create these relationships.

Orna concluded her speech by talking about the complicated history of Israel and the most recent projects that she has worked on. She emphasized the importance of supporting Israel even if you do not support what is going on there politically. Israel is important to Orna; her biological father lives there and even fought in the Yom Kippur War. She described Israel’s history as complicated and insisted that its past and present are by no means perfect. She believes that because of this we have a duty to engage in communicative conversations about Israel, and insists that JNF has, and will continue to build Israel into a better place through hard work and determination.

In October, Orna took a trip to Israel with Jay Cairns and shared some of the projects they worked on. She was able to see the Restores of Jerusalem project that her Zaida worked on. This was emotional for her



JNF Edmonton Executive Director Jay Cairns with Orna Richter.

as she saw the amazing work her Zaida had done and saw a plaque in his name. She mentioned a hospital-building project (Bait Shelonit), where JNF arranged to have gardens surrounding every access point rather than just concrete. This allows patients the ability to see and enjoy the outdoors, boosting their mental health in the worst of circumstances. She went on to talk about Bait Cham, a home for orthodox girls suffering from mental health issues. Many of these girls are kicked out of their homes because their personal beliefs clash with those of their parents. Children come to Bait Cham for hot meals, and to enjoy therapy sessions. JNF is also rebuilding the outdoor garden area surrounding this clinic.

Orna truly is a hometown hero whose presentation was informative and impactful for everyone in attendance. “Leave a positive footprint in the way that is most meaningful to you,” she concluded.

Matthew Levine is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Ron Bing *Cont. from page 13*

is perceived, but G-d doesn't act as a character. Joseph, in other words, exhibited great strength by seeing the events surrounding him as the hand of G-d at work. And this is really the essence I believe of the religious quest. It is to see G-d at work (in our lives). And you (Ron) did that today. And in all your dreams

(coming true).”

Bing isn’t interested in slowing down any time soon. He is still active both physically and spiritually and is pushing a fund-raising drive to replace Temple’s 1955 cast iron boiler. “A friend of mine once said, we all should give the way we live. If you can donate... consider it in honour of my 80th birthday!”

After Ron concluded his reading, the Rabbi wanted

to stress that while this special day isn’t an official “Bar Mitzvah” and rather a Torah reading, one thing Glickman could agree upon was that “Ron Bing has finally become a man.”

Donations for the new boiler can be made by calling Temple B’nai Tikvah at 403-252-1654 or online at templebnaitikvah.org under the Al Osten Building Fund.

David Sklar is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



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TTELC Hanukkah Party: A warm and inviting event!

By Natalie Soroka

Over 150 parents, grandparents and children of the Talmud Torah Early Learning Centre (ELC) attended its Hanukkah event December 22, 2022. Educators took to their stations as the kids enjoyed getting their faces painted, decorating Hanukkah items, playing, and reading books.

Educators Michal and Livnat worked the entire day preparing a delicious kosher hot meal for hungry attendees. They enjoyed latkes (including gluten free options), two varieties of pastas, salad, challah and sufganyiot. Our new Director, Sacha, helped serve the food, while Jennie, our new Lead Educator, manned the tattoo station.

While some families had the chance to get to know one another, others enjoyed an opportunity to chat and catch up. It was a warm and inviting event celebrating the holiday of light and thanking families for choosing us to care for their most precious cargo.

Todah Rabah to Marit and Jay for organizing the silent auction and 50/50 raffle, which resulted in almost \$2,700 for program enrichment in the TTELC. We appreciate all our fabulous donors as well as those who placed bids!

Thanks also to the rest of our Educators, Vishu, Alpha, Arleen, Birzena, Cristina, Julie, Shirley, Sofia, Jeaneth, Elena, and Yodit for their efforts in helping make the event a huge success!

We look forward to another get together in the summer!



The TTELC Hanukkah party was a family friendly event with treats and activities that everyone enjoyed.

Yiddish-Canadian author is honoured in Poland

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

Lodz, the third largest city in Poland, has just taken a significant and commendable step of paying tribute to Chana Rosenfarb, a Jewish-Canadian author who once called the city ‘home.’ The Yiddish novelist, was also a gifted writer of poetry, short-fiction, essays, and plays. Her three-volume novel, *The Tree of Life: A Trilogy of Life in the Lodz Ghetto*, is a substantial contribution to scholarship and world literature. For those who live in Lodz, the industrial city that once bustled with Jewish life, and now only houses a grim memorial where the ghetto once stood and a cemetery as stark echoes of that world, 2023 is a year dedicated to remembering Chava Rosenfarb.

Local activist for the preservation of Jewish memory in Poland, Joanna Podolska, has been working for years to increase awareness and appreciation for Rosenfarb’s work within the greater Lodz community. Through her tireless efforts, the City Council recently named 2023 the Year of Chava Rosenfarb to honour and commemorate one hundred years since the author’s birth. Lodz features prominently in many of Rosenfarb’s works, and all three volumes of *The Tree of Life* have been translated into Polish, as have several of Rosenfarb’s other works. Her last novel, *Letters to Abrasha*, is currently being translated into Polish. With the exception of the latter, all of Rosenfarb’s works are also available in English translation. There is an academic conference planned to take place in October at the Centre for the Study of Jewish Culture in the Faculty of Philology at the University of Lodz as a part of this recognition.

Along with names like Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Anita Badami, and Kim Thuy, Canadian literature by female authors continues to ferment a richly textured tradition of compelling storytelling. In growing numbers, avid readers of Canadian works, literati, and bookworms alike are becoming familiar with Rosenfarb, whose name has long been celebrated within the world of Yiddish literature. Rosenfarb, a contemporary of post-War Canadian Jewish creative contributors like Mordecai Richler, Adele Wiseman, and Leonard Cohen, was a staple in the Montreal-Jewish creative scene. But, unlike her Canadian-born counterparts, Rosenfarb’s journey was one of insurmountable suffering and harrowing perseverance. After Rosenfarb’s passing, her daughter discovered an untitled and undated essay. Rosenfarb commented: “We newcomers to Canada, if we love this country, we love it more, if possible, than the native born, precisely because we were not born here.” It would certainly not be an exaggeration to call her oeuvre of Yiddish writings a collective masterful tribute devoted to survival.

Rosenfarb was born February 9, 1923 to Bundist parents living in Lodz. In a recent interview with Rosenfarb’s daughter, Dr. Goldie Morgentaler, young Chava was described as “a precocious and bright eight-year-old who managed to have her poetry

published in a Yiddish literary magazine.” Morgentaler continued, “My grandparents were working-class. My grandmother mended fabric in a factory, and my grandfather was a waiter in a restaurant; they were Bundists, and education was very important to them.”

As a child, Rosenfarb attended the Bundist Medem School where the language of instruction was Yiddish. These early Yiddish seeds solidified and flourished, and even after immigrating to Canada in 1950, this would continue to be Rosenfarb’s language within her creative community and her home life. In Poland she had also attended a Polish-language high school run by Jews who were otherwise barred from attending Polish high schools and universities.

Even within the oppressive and stiflingly impoverished conditions of the infamous Lodz Ghetto, Rosenfarb’s passion for the written word was not extinguished. In a biographical summary about her mother, Morgentaler said: “In the ghetto she began to write poetry, waking up at dawn from her bed of chairs to compose her poems in bookkeeping registers in the hours before going to work at her various ghetto jobs.”

Rosenfarb, her younger sister, and her mother would be the family’s sole survivors of the Holocaust, enduring the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto, deportation to Auschwitz, forced labor at Sasel, and a death march to Bergen-Belsen. The feverish nightmare that Rosenfarb experienced would colour, inspire, and haunt her writings to come. As she recovered from typhus, Rosenfarb befriended an English soldier, a member of the British Army that liberated Bergen-Belsen. She would translate for him, as he was not Jewish, not knowing that the conversational English she spoke casually with him would later be one of the national languages of her new home in Canada.

Rosenfarb’s high school sweetheart, and eventual first husband, Henry Morgentaler, would later find her in a displaced persons camp, having himself survived imprisonment at Dachau. Along with Rosenfarb’s mother and sister, the couple made their way to Brussels where they lived without legal status for five years. Morgentaler recounted that her mother returned to Poland only once after the Holocaust. “She went back secretly. She memorized a long list of names, and she was on a mission to find these people to let them know that they had travel visas awaiting them in Belgium.” Remarkably brave, Rosenfarb returned to Communist Poland alone.

While in Brussels the writer continued her work having lost her poems in Auschwitz when her satchel was thrown by the kapos onto a pile to be disposed of as refuse. Her work caught the eye of Moshe Oved, a Yiddish writer living in London who was then the official jeweler to the Queen of England. Rosenfarb’s first collection of poetry *Di balade fun nekhtikn vald* (The ballad of yesterday’s forest) was published with his support. This is how her writing made its way across the pond, prompting Harry Herschman, a Jewish philanthropist in Montreal, to sponsor the newly married Rosenfarb and her husband Henry

Morgentaler for Canadian immigration.

Having lost both her maternal and paternal grandfathers in the Holocaust, Goldie Morgentaler grew up calling Harry Herschman “Zeida” and still speaks his name with tenderness and admiration. Herschman revered Rosenfarb’s writing and was eager to bring her to Canada. Goldie Morgentaler explained: “Their boat docked in Halifax, and they took the train to Montreal. It was snowing outside, but when they got to the station, there was a party there to greet them. Snow was falling, and there was a celebration for their arrival.”

Montreal became home to more Holocaust survivors than any other Canadian city in the decade following the Second World War. Many of these European arrivals were speakers of Yiddish and infused Montreal with new creative Jewish energy. Every year on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Chava Rosenfarb would deliver a lecture in Yiddish for the community. Montreal would come to feature prominently in her consciousness.

In case the name Henry Morgentaler sounds familiar, Rosenfarb’s first husband was indeed the noted political activist and proponent for abortion rights. In the early years after their immigration, as her husband studied medicine, Rosenfarb worked to support their young growing family. She still felt the call of her typewriter, and her daughter nostalgically remembers watching her mother as she composed.

The child of exceedingly accomplished parents, Dr. Goldie Morgentaler went on to build a significant and noteworthy career in academia. She is a celebrated educator but has contributed to Canadian literature tremendously as the primary translator for the bulk of her mother’s works to English. Rosenfarb’s short story collection *Survivors: Seven Short Stories* won the 2006 Modern Language Association’s Fenia and Yakov Leviant Memorial Prize for Yiddish Studies, and the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Award to name but of few of her many accolades. Rosenfarb was awarded an honorary degree by her daughter’s university, the University of Lethbridge, in 2006. “My mother genuinely loved Lethbridge,” commented Morgentaler when asked about her mother’s relocation to the southern Alberta city.

Chava Rosenfarb passed away in 2011. Her literary legacy is one that Dr. Goldie Morgentaler has worked hard to preserve and make linguistically accessible to Canadians through her extensive translation work. Many of Chava’s original papers are now housed in an archive at the University of Toronto – a testament to her significant literary achievements. As Lodz observes 2023 in Rosenfarb’s honour, Canadians too must pay tribute to this accomplished, inspiring, creative woman as one of the bright stars of twentieth-century Jewish literature.

Regan Treewater-Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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Upcoming *Cont. from page 8*

who want us to provide Holocaust and human rights programs for employees, especially around International Holocaust Remembrance Day,” Libin said.

“When we pivoted to online programming due to COVID, there was an unforeseen benefit,” added Bondar. “It extended our reach well beyond Calgary.”

Auschwitz Album: Online Tour by Yad Vashem

Mark your calendar now for this deeply emotional and insightful online tour by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Museum. This second program in the CJF / CPL Holocaust Education Series is set for Sunday, February 5 at 11 am. This time, the emphasis will be on the Auschwitz death camp, depicting arrivals, selections, and life and death inside the camp.

Through an exploration of archives including photographs, letters from prisoners, the testimony of survivors, and a pre-recorded tour of Block 27 (the Jewish block), participants will gain a more thorough understanding of what it really meant to be a prisoner at Auschwitz.

Ben M. Freeman: In-person in Edmonton

Jewish Federation of Edmonton is presenting Ben M. Freeman live on February 9 at the Creative Hive, from 5:30 to 8 pm for a community conversation about reclaiming our Jewish story and developing Jewish pride as an antidote to antisemitism.

Freeman is an internationally acclaimed Jewish leader, thinker, educator, and author. His works focus on Jewish identity and historical and contemporary Jew-Hate. Registration is open at jewishedmonton.org and a light dinner is included with the event. Creative Hive is located in Edmonton at 16819 111 Ave NW.

Plunder: A Memoir of Family Property and Nazi Treasure

The third installment of the Federation/CPL Holocaust Education series will be an in-person talk at the Calgary Central Library on Tuesday, March 14 at 7 pm by award-winning Canadian author Menachem Kaiser. His quirky and compelling book *Plunder* details Kaiser’s journey to reclaim the property of his grandfather, a Holocaust survivor from Poland. Surprise discoveries, Nazi treasure hunters, a secret Nazi tunnel complex - and a host of other jaw-dropping details - will be shared by Kaiser during a 60 minute interview-style talk. The presentation will be followed by a Q and A session and book signing, coordinated by Owls Nest Books.

For more information about Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education programs email holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.org or go to jewishcalgary.org. To find out more about *Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors* go to heretotell.com. For information about Edmonton programs visit jewishedmonton.org or email magalj@edjfed.org.


Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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