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May 17, 2023

Calgary celebrates Israel @ 75 united

By Hannah Silver

The room fell silent as the siren sounded - a blaring reminder that the battle to obtain, and retain, independence has not come without great loss. On April 24, over 130 members of Calgary's Jewish and Israeli community joined in solidarity to commemorate Yom HaZikaron (Israeli Remembrance Day), and honour the 24,213 fallen soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces and 4,255 victims of terror. The service was hosted by the Paperny Family JCC in partnership with Temple B'nai Tikvah and Calgary Jewish Federation.

Beginning with a flag procession carried by BBYO leadership, opening remarks from Yom HaZikaron Committee Chair Lana Tsalkovich Hewitt and JCC Board Chair Jerrad Blanchard reminded attendees of the sacrifices made daily to maintain a Jewish homeland. Calgary congregations from across denominational spectrums came together to take part, with Rabbis Jayne, Andrews, Glickman, Matusof, and Cohen, Temple B'nai Tikvah's Music Director Katie Baker, and committee member Eran Gilboa leading prayers. *New York Times* best selling author Douglas Century shared the miraculous story behind Hannah Senesh's last poem *Ashrei HeGafrur/Blessed is the Match*, written after parachuting into Yugoslavia on her mission to save Hungarian Jews. He and Hanit Jacobs then recited Natan Alterman's *The Silver Platter*. Moving songs were performed by community and Yom HaZikaron committee members Nelli Horvat, Eran Gilboa, Meirav Stavi, Uma Fourman, Ilana Fourman, and guest pianist Deb Finkleman.

The following evening, on April 25, the fifth day of the Hebrew month of Iyar, along with communities around the world, we transitioned from the solemn and meaningful Yom HaZikaron into joyous Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day). Energy filled the

Yom Haatzmaut: Celebration in Edmonton



In Edmonton a somber Yom Hazikaron service was held on April 24 to remember and honour the fallen soldiers who have died while fighting for Israel. Then on April 25 a festive Israeli concert and dance party was held to celebrate Israel's 75th Anniversary. The event featured entertainment by Michael Einav and Rony Goffer, pictured above with Stacey Leavitt-Wright, Meirav Or and Jacqueline Medalye. Photo by Tammy Vineberg

"Jewish community living room," as did a sea of Israeli flags, hats, and young painted faces as over 300 community members of all ages gathered at the Paperny Family JCC to celebrate 75 years of Israel. Attendees enjoyed performances from JCC's Voices Choir, Sharim JCC Children's Choir, and live Israeli music from Heebster throughout the evening, and devoured falafel and sabich from Karen's Café, followed by birthday cake and popsicles.

The party was a collaborative effort by many organizations, including Calgary Jewish Federation, The Paperny Family JCC, and JNF, with tables also

run by Israel Bonds, Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, and PJ Library. Financial support was provided for Israel@75 by the Martha and Harry Cohen Foundation, and the Israel Engagement Fund: A JCC Association of North America Program Accelerator. It was wonderful to see all generations of our community come together in both commemoration and celebration, with great excitement and love for Israel and our community; from Israeli born to diaspora raised, the sentiment remained the same - Am Israel Chai.

Hannah Silver is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter with Alberta Jewish News.

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Diana Kalef is recipient of the Gail Littman z'l Leadership Award

Yasher kochech to Diana Kalef for receiving the Gail Littman z'l Leadership Award at this year's LIFE & LEGACY® Leadership Gathering. As Jewish Calgary's Legacy Coordinator, Diana was distinguished from her 72 other peers as first in class and a "dugma" (example) for others. She has tirelessly applied her talent and passion for our community to lead Calgary in being an exemplary LIFE & LEGACY community. Under Diana's mentorship, the program's 10 partners have secured 584 after-life gifts worth an estimated \$17+ million, to date. The future of Jewish Calgary is bright – todah rabah and kol hakavod to Diana for all of her efforts!

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation established the Gail Littman Leadership award in Gail's memory to honor a LIFE & LEGACY coordinator who shares Gail's passion for legacy giving, and has worked tirelessly to spread the legacy message, coach and mentor partner organizations, assist donors in defining what aspects of Jewish communal life are most important to them, facilitate legacy commitments and integrate legacy giving into the community culture.



TBT Gallery presents fibre art: ‘In the shelter of trees’

By Shelley Werner

As nature begins to reveal its hidden gems, emerging from the long winter comes an art exhibit that celebrates the depth of nature. Marilyn Samuels celebrates the magic of the forest, the mountains and the seas in her fiber art creations. The various textures and rich color palette of felt and silk convey the layers of leaves and bark experienced in the woods or the silky salmon found in the ocean. Each piece invites the viewer to experience Marilyn’s journeys to various outdoor adventures and glorious vistas she has visited.

TBT Gallery at Temple B’nai Tikvah in Calgary is celebrating its 6th art exhibition, “In the Shelter of Trees” which represents a year of shows since opening in 2022. Curator Jennifer Eiserman states, “Marilyn Samuels’ work immerses the viewer in the rich textures and colours of the natural world. When one steps into the gallery, one steps into the forests that the works explore. One can almost smell the soil and green growth, one can almost hear the rustle of wind through the trees and the calls of the animals that live there. Samuels’ works pulse with life.”

Marilyn chose the name of the show because she realized how important trees have been not only to her artistic life but to her life in general. Trees are prominent in her art, and she feels a sense of safety under their shelter. “I feel most like myself when I am in nature and when I’m going on a trail.” In the rainforest in BC’s north west coast she had a chance encounter with a unique bear.

“BC is home to the ‘spirit bears’ which are black bears that have a double recessive gene for white. These are very important bears to Indigenous people; they are white, and they are very rare. We were very lucky to actually have a white bear walk out of the forest and walk along the river directly in front of us. It is probably one of the most special experiences of my life.”

She says that when going through a trail, through

nature, she feels at peace with a sense that this is where she is meant to be. She is often trying to capture special moments, and the feeling that she had when she visited a place.

In recent years she primarily works with homemade felt. She starts with raw wool that has already been dyed. She lays that out along with plant fibers, silk fibers of various kinds, and then she adds water and agitation and gets all those materials to shrink down together and make felt.

“Some of my work is quilted and that would have a top that I have either appliquéd or worked on or painted and then a batting layer and another layer below. I use my sewing machine to draw lines and stitch in a very traditional way. Felt is thick enough that they just create that wonderful texture with the lines.”

One of her pieces is entitled “Oceans Alive” which was made after a 10- day trip up to the great bear rainforest. What became so apparent to her is the importance of salmon, and how they were underlying all of the wildlife. She wanted to show how critical the circle of life is: bears eat the salmon; they then fertilize the forest and the bear is the king pin. If one looks carefully at the bottom of the piece, one can see that it’s all salmon shapes that are forming the bottom layer.

She loves drawing houses, and it came very naturally to create an imaginary village street during her grandmother’s time in the shtetel. There’s a little rooster at the bottom because she always imagined there’d be some wandering around the village. It’s a good example of how the felt appears quilted when in



'Shtetl' - Fibre art by Marilyn Samuels is part of the 'In the Shelter of Trees' exhibit at TBT Gallery at Temple B'nai Tikvah in Calgary until June 21.

reality it has a thickness that gives the appearance of quilting.

“I hope when people view my work they get a sense of a place, they get a feeling, they can relate to what I’m trying to portray. I think one of the nicest compliments I ever had was when two women were in my studio looking at a piece and one said to the other, ‘I feel like I can smell the forest.’ That was probably the nicest compliment anyone could give me.”

When viewing the exhibit, one is struck by the depth of passion that Samuels brings to her work. The textures and patterns are intricate, and the colors are intense. It seems as though the gallery is alive with fresh flowers, with blossoming branches and the colors of nature; a refreshing bouquet to welcome Spring.

“In the Shelter of Trees” can be seen until June 21, 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: mtsamuels@gmail.com

Shelley Werner is the host of Art and Scroll Studio zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Art. Watch for the premier of Season 4 in the fall of 2023.



SARAH KEMPLER was an Intelligence Corps officer when she was injured in a Jerusalem truck-ramming in 2017.



AMIT GINAT was injured in a Hezbollah ambush during the Second Lebanon War (2006).



NADAV YAISH, a fighter in the Duvdevan elite unit between 2010 and 2016, was injured during classified operational activity.



OFIR ANIDGAR was wounded while serving as a commander in Operation Protective Edge (2014).



LIRAN HADAD was wounded in the Gaza Strip in 2004 while serving in the Givati Brigade.

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A Journey North: Grade 2 students learn about Indigenous culture

By Joseph Tappenden

Grade two students at CJA recently completed a cross-curricular project that combined art and social studies. The project focused on Iqaluit, a city located in the north of Canada, and was inspired by the famous Canadian artist, Ted Harrison.

Through the project, students learned about the unique weather patterns of the north, Indigenous culture and traditions, and the significance of an Inukshuk. They also had the opportunity to explore different painting techniques using watercolors, identify warm and cool colors, and practice Ted Harrison's unique painting style.

Ted Harrison was one of Canada's most beloved artists, known for his love of the land and people of the Yukon. His style is recognized by bold and simple colors, and his art highlights warm and cool colors beside each other with lines to outline the land and sky.

The students were inspired by Ted Harrison's art and used it as a reference to create their own paintings of Iqaluit. They started by researching the city and learning about its unique geography and climate.

They then used their knowledge to create their own artwork, using a combination of warm and cool colors to represent the land, sky, and water.

The students also learned about the Inukshuk, which is a traditional Inuit structure made of stacked stones. They discovered that the Inukshuk is used as a directional marker and as a symbol of hope and friendship. The students then created their own Inukshuk using stones and incorporated it into their artwork.

Overall, the project was a great success, as it allowed the students to combine different subjects and skills. They were able to learn about a new city, explore different painting techniques, and gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture and traditions. The project also allowed the students to express their creativity and showcase their artwork, which was proudly displayed in the classroom.

The CJA grade two students enjoyed this inventive project that combined art and social studies. Through a Ted Harrison art focus, the students learned about Iqaluit, the unique weather patterns of the north of Canada, Indigenous culture and traditions, as well as the significance and meaning of an Inukshuk.



Learning about artist Ted Harrison.

The project allowed the students to explore different painting techniques and express their creativity, while also gaining a deeper understanding of important topics. It was a wonderful example of how combining different subjects and skills can lead to a meaningful and enriching learning experience.

CJA Board welcomes new principal

By Shannon Albert and Bryant Frydberg



Joyce Kerr

The Board of Directors of the CJA is excited to announce the hiring of the next Head of School/Principal, Joyce Kerr. Morah Joyce is currently serving as Elementary School Principal with Gray Academy of Jewish Education in Winnipeg, where she has held a leadership position since 2005. Morah Joyce will be joining the CJA effective August 1, 2023.

Morah Joyce was born and raised in Calgary, graduated from the Calgary Hebrew School, and later began her teaching career at the CJA before moving to Winnipeg. She is thrilled to be returning home to Calgary. Morah Joyce is an exceptional educator and administrator and brings over 35 years of experience in general and Judaic studies. She is passionate, future-focused, inspiring, and collaborative. Morah Joyce is determined to help our students, faculty, and families succeed, and is excited to begin building positive relationships to support our continuous evolution and growth. She is looking forward to working with the board on the final design and implementation of our new strategic plan as we continue to strengthen the core values of the CJA.

In her 18 years of leadership experience with Gray Academy, Morah Joyce has formed strong bonds with

students, staff, parents and community members. Relationships and Judaic Studies are at the core of her teaching and leadership philosophy and guide her daily interactions and decisions. Her passion and motivation for a positive school culture is unwavering. She believes building a culture of excellence is a collective effort. She is very excited to join the CJA team!

"My decision to leave Gray Academy was not an easy one," stated Morah Joyce, "but the role at CJA presented a very exciting opportunity. This new role provides me the chance to return to the city, and school, where it all began for me, in a role that will allow me to give back to the place that gave me so much. I was a student at CJA beginning in nursery and graduating in 1978. I also began my teaching career at the CJA in 1987.

"This move also allows my husband, Jeffrey, and me to return home to be near our parents, whom we have lived two provinces away from for many years. I am excited to come home and share all that I love doing with everyone at CJA, in the same halls where I learned to love being an educator so many

years ago."

Ms. English has done a tremendous job during her tenure with the CJA, and her presence in the hallways will be missed. Ms. English's dedication and commitment to our school and community has been and continues to be steadfast. Her leadership has been instrumental in maintaining our excellent dual-curriculum program. Ms. English has generously offered to support Morah Joyce in her transition to her new role. We look forward to celebrating Ms. English's retirement with the entire CJA community on June 22. Visit cja.ab.ca for more information.

Shannon Albert and Bryant Frydberg are co-chairs of the Calgary Jewish Academy Board of Directors.

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Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic to tour EPL branches

By Tammy Vineberg

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is pleased to announce that the Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic will be touring several Edmonton Public Library (EPL) branches in the coming weeks. The mosaic, created by local artist Lewis Lavoie, is a powerful and thought-provoking representation of the impact of antisemitism on individuals.

The mosaic was commissioned by the Federation as part of its ongoing commitment to raise awareness about the importance of Jew hate and the need to combat hate and discrimination in all its forms. It features hundreds of individually crafted tiles, each one representing a person who has been affected by antisemitism in some way.

The mosaic was on display at the Jasper Place Branch from April 4 to May 4. It moved to the Stanley A. Milner Library from May 4 – 19 to coincide with the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival which featured four “in-person” films at the EPL as well as an array of films streaming online.

The mosaic will next be on display at: Calder Branch – June 10 to July 12, Clareview Branch – July 10 to

August 8, and Meadows Branch – August 8 to September 7.

The Library believes that art is a powerful tool for education and understanding and hopes that the Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic will inspire visitors to learn more about the history of the Jewish hate and its impact on our world today.

"We are honoured to host the ‘Shine a Light on Antisemitism’ mosaic at our libraries," said Pilar Martinez, EPL's Chief Executive Officer. "We believe that it is important to provide our communities with opportunities to learn about the experiences of others and to reflect on the impact of hate and discrimination in our society."

The tour of the mosaic is part of the Federation's goal to raise awareness about classic and contemporary forms of antisemitism, making Edmonton a safe and inclusive space. We invite all members of the community to visit the mosaic.



Francie Cyngiser points at her tile in the mosaic. (Photo courtesy Jewish Federation of Edmonton)

The Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic tour is presented with support from the City of Edmonton's Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Grant Program.

Visit jewishedmonton.org for more information.

Tammy Vineberg is Associate Director, Marketing and Communications at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.



Opening night at the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival featured a reception for donors and volunteers, the screening of "Karaoke" and an amazing zoom talk with the film's showrunner. Photos by Tammy Vineberg

WE ARE BACK!

A photograph of a Shabbat dinner setup. In the foreground, there is a large, golden-brown braided challah. Behind it, two white candles are lit in glass holders. To the right, there is a silver Kiddush cup. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

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PJ Library

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Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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A photograph of Debby Waldman, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a striped shirt. She is sitting and playing an acoustic guitar.

Celebrating volunteers at the YEG Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre

By Elaine Salkie

Editor's note: The end of April marks National Volunteer Week across the country and it is a great time to show special appreciation to the many people who give their time and dedication to our organizations. They keep our community vibrant!

The following article is by Elaine Salkie, who has dedicated 23 years as a volunteer with the Edmonton Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre.

It was the year 2000 and my husband Mark and I had just returned to Edmonton from a couple of years in Saskatoon when Sue Winestock said to me: "Your parents were so involved with the Centre - what about you?" My parents, Edna and Julius Davis z"l, came to join us in Edmonton in 1982 (we came from England in 1975) and they had found friendship and companionship at the Edmonton Jewish Senior Centre. In fact, my Dad served on the Board in the years immediately before the opening of the present building. Now it was my turn to give back to our community. So, Mark and I joined the Centre.

At that time the operation was much smaller than it is today. Joyce Galante was the Administrator – our only employee (except for a cleaner). The Centre was open 3 days a week, but lunch was only served on Tuesday and Thursday and all programs took place on those two days. In addition, there was, and still is, our Sunday Club which programs in Russian for senior Soviet bloc immigrants, many of whom are Holocaust survivors. Sunday Club participants enjoy a wonderful lunch, live music and interesting lectures about art and culture.

My first volunteer job was on the program committee, chaired at that time by Esther Baram z"l. I was fairly newly retired, and I was grateful to have an interest. After a while Rosemary Kitay joined Joyce in the office as Program Co-ordinator and at the same time I took over as chair of the program committee. For a short time neither of us really knew what we were doing, but we quickly learnt. It was during Rosemary's years that, with initial assistance from Grant MacEwan, we started our annual Learning in Retirement Lecture Series.

At this time Paula Snyder was President and somewhere along the line I was asked, and agreed, to join the Board. The Board was twice as large as it is today and there was also an Executive Committee. After Paula, Ed Mickelson became President and then it was my turn. There is an Installation in the Centre's dining room which lists the names and dates of all the Presidents - you might like to look at it when you next join us for lunch.

Over the course of the years the attitude towards volunteering has changed and consequently the availability of volunteers has gradually decreased. For many years we had a roster of volunteer drivers willing to bring members to the Centre on Tuesday or Thursday and the task of organizing this was capably overseen by Diane Markovitch. However, the

Continued on page 15



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Letters to the Editor

A different trip to Israel

For the last several months I have been preparing to go on a very different trip to Israel and, yes, the Occupied Territories. Different from all the previous trips I have made there, which I think number around 25 - 30. In all of those previous trips, I have gotten to know and love the country, appreciate its incredible diversity and complexity, its vibrant cultures, its countless historic sites, its beautiful natural places, and some of its energetic and impressive people.

In all of those trips, I have also come to an understanding of the unbearable costs to the country and its society in maintaining a military regime and control over the lives of millions of Palestinians, in denying them the fundamental human and civil rights that we all, in our comfortable lives here, take for granted as a given. As high as those costs are to Israeli society, as corrosive and destructive as the mechanisms of maintaining the occupation for more than 5 decades have been to Israeli society, the people who are enduring the worst of it and bearing by far the highest costs, are the Palestinians.

This coming trip, organized by the Center for Jewish Nonviolence, will be an opportunity for me and the approximately 30 other participants (Jews from North America & Europe) to spend time in Palestinian communities in Masafer Yatta (South Hebron Hills), listening to those people who are bearing the brunt of the brutality of the occupation, learning from them, trying to gain an understanding of their reality. We will be guests in their communities, at their invitation despite the risks that our presence can create for them, and our role is to see with our eyes what they deal with on a daily basis, and bring that understanding back to our communities.

I believe that this terrible conflict will not be solved by more violence and oppression and bloodshed. More house demolitions and school demolitions and population displacements will not bring Israelis any closer to true security and safety. This agonizing conflict may only be solved, justly and fairly and with dignity for all involved, when we learn to see one another as human beings, and learn to - as one wise person said to me recently - listen to each other more than we speak.

I am not naive, I am well aware of the depth of mistrust and hatred on all sides of this conflict, and I certainly understand that this small act of mine, in isolation, will be of no significance. My hope, as an

optimist and a humanist, is that small steps taken together by more and more people, may lead to meaningful change that improves the lives of Palestinians, and therefore Israelis.

— Norm Hanson, Edmonton

A hard week for Albertans

This has been a hard week for many Albertans. Comments from Danielle Smith surfaced where she compared vaccinated Albertans to followers of Hitler, and said she wasn't wearing a poppy because people who followed public health measures ruined it for her. These comments are completely unacceptable and should have no place in modern discourse.

I know many in the Jewish community are alarmed by the rise of anti-semitism in Calgary and Canada. Sadly, it's no longer uncommon to see Nazi symbols displayed in public, and a study last year found that one in three Canadian and American students think the Holocaust was fabricated.

Most heartbreaking are the stories I hear from parents about the antisemitism their children face at school. As a mom myself, it is excruciating to imagine any child facing discrimination.

Public figures — elected or not — must use their platforms responsibly to build and uphold an inclusive society, and to above all, avoid hate. We cannot overlook the role people like Danielle Smith play in shaping public discourse. The comments she made dishonor the memory of our soldiers, and disrespect the survivors and the more than six million Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust. They also normalize antisemitism, and make it just a little bit easier for people to express or spread hate.

People of all political stripes should be coming together to fight the rise of anti-semitism that we are seeing across Canada and the world. As leaders, politicians have a duty to act, to call out anti-semitism and to help educate our neighbours and our communities.

When a UCP candidate in Livingstone-MacLeod compared vaccine passports to the policies of the Nazi regime, she was rightly disqualified. We absolutely must not tolerate this sort of bigotry.

But when Smith herself espoused such views, when she suggested vaccinated Albertans were like followers of Hitler - silence for the UCP, not one candidate has

called it out. No apology.

We need stronger action to fight antisemitism in Alberta. That's why an Alberta NDP will pass an Anti-Racism Act and establish an anti-racism office to collect data, report on incidents of hate speech, and recommend actions to combat all hate and discrimination, including antisemitism.

I believe in a better Alberta. I think you do too.

— Kathleen Ganley, Alberta NDP Candidate for Calgary-Mountain View

Did Leopold Bloom visit my family for Shabbat?

According to family lore and Joyce scholarship... maybe...

Dear Eliezer Segal: My great-grandparents were Yehude-Meshe Shillman and his wife Ada of Dublin's Little Jerusa-lem. They arrived in Ireland as a newly-married Litvak couple in 1882 and became part of a nucleus of Litvak migrants who settled in Cork & Dublin from the late 1870s to the outbreak of WWI. Yehude-Meshe was an apothecary and scholar. Ada was the midwife to the Little Jerusalem community of Dublin into the 1920s.

Yehude-Meshe & Ada were, like most of the Irish Litvaks, early adopters of Zionism and the mitzvah of Diaspora support for the Yishuv. Here's a photo of Yehude-Meshe in his Grand Order of Israel (Max Nordau Chapter) grandmaster's regalia c. 1905. Perhaps earlier.

Joyce had Jewish social connections and Jewish cultural knowledge, as you pointed out in your "Making The Desert Bloom" article last month. Among his pals was the oddball Jewish writer and dedicated Dublin schicker, Joe Edelman.

Edelman is said to have been the model (or a model) for Bloom. And Joe is also known to have turned up drunk at the Shillman home on a Shabbas evening in search of conversation, a free meal and someplace to sleep it off. Being the "village" midwife, Ada was a somebody -- known by all in the community. They say she disliked drunks, but Joe...well, Joe had a way about him. "He could talk the hind leg of a donkey," as the Irish say. A natural talker is always welcome at an Irish table.

People also came to the Shillman table to speak with Yehude-Meshe. Sometimes about natural medicine. Or world affairs, Irish politics and also the Jewish moment. I imagine Joe & Yehude-Meshe tucking into the Slivovitz after the Shabbas meal and talking fulsomely about the multifoliate ills and assets of Jewish life on Planet Earth. Further, I imagine Joe sharing some of this recondite Jewish material with his erudite goyishe friend James, who sponged it all up.

Imaginations prove nothing, but no one likes to get in the way of a good Jewish story. And so I prefer to believe this is exactly how it was!

I'm an avid reader of your column. Keep educating me.

— Stu Woolley, Edmonton



Yehude-Meshe Shillman (1858-1920) - Dublin C. 1900

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Evening

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JNF Edmonton Negev Gala: June 25 with special guest Elan Isaacson

Over the last week, Israel was bombarded by over 1200+ rockets fired by the Palestinian Jihad from the Gaza Strip.

It is at these times that local organizations, groups and individuals ask the question “what can I do to help?” One of the ways we can help is by preparing vulnerable communities for future attacks.

On Sunday June 25th, join JNF Edmonton in honouring Rosemary and Stan Kitay in support of building a bomb resistant Education and Play Centre that can serve as a safe reprieve for families living in a number of communities in the Eshkol region, along the envelope with Gaza.

JNF Edmonton has an incredibly dynamic evening planned, hosting Elan Isaacson, Head of Security for the Eshkol region who will provide a unique insight into what it is like to live in the area. Meet Isaacson in person when he visits Edmonton at the JNF Gala, and hear firsthand what his community faces daily living on the Gaza border. He will share an update on how the current attacks are affecting the communities in this region. Thanks to shelters the residents are relatively safe, but there is constant fear and destruction of property.

Isaacson comes from a farming background and did not intend on a career in security but he stepped up when the need arose and became the Head of Security coordinating volunteers across the Eshkol region to serve and protect their communities. He fully understands the destruction in the area and

sent a recent video describing the recent impact. On May 16, he sent a videoclip and said, “We just finished planting trees on a kibbutz that was hit 15 times by molotovs. Each molotov made a hole when it hit, and in each hole, we have now planted a tree.”

Isaacson’s presentation will be followed by comedian and author Joel Chasnoff who always delivers!

Chasnoff is a renowned stand-up comedian, TV and podcast host, and author of three books, including the bestselling memoir The 188th Crybaby Brigade. His newest book, Israel 201 will be available at the Gala.

VIPs who donate \$6000+ will receive a signed copy of the book and will be invited to a Meet & Greet with Joel before the dinner. Major contributors of \$6000+ will also be recognized on a plaque at the project site in Israel. Donations of \$6000+ are 100% tax deductible.

JNF Negev Honourees Rosemary and Stan Kitay were born in South Africa to traditional Jewish families that shared a passion for Israel and involvement in their Jewish community. Their journey began on a tour of Israel where they met, fell in love, and five years later were married and began a beautiful life together in Johannesburg.

In 1991, the Kitays immigrated to Edmonton with their three children and immersed themselves in the Jewish community. Over the years, the couple has been active in supporting various organizations, both locally and abroad. Their unwavering support for Israel has been a driving force in their volunteerism and board positions in Jewish organizations.

The Kitays are delighted to support the Eshkol Educational Center, a community building initiative aimed at enhancing the mental health and safety of residents in the Eshkol region of Israel. Their commitment to this project is a testament to their love



Elan Isaacson, Head of Security for the Eshkol Region, along the envelope with Gaza, will give a first hand report of the impact of the rockets on the communities in Israel.

and devotion to the people and the land of Israel.

The JNF Edmonton Negev Gala will be held on June 25, 2023 at the Beth Israel Ballroom. The doors open at 6 and a delicious kosher dinner will be served, at 6:30 pm. There are lots of ways to participate through sponsorship, advertising, by donation or purchasing tickets (a portion of which is tax deductible). Visit jnfedmonton.ca for more information and to order your tickets today.



Children in the Eshkol region of Israel are planting trees to help offset the devastation caused by molotovs and fires. In every hole caused by a molotov, they work together as a community to plant a tree.

ACT NOW: RSVP and/or DONATE TODAY!

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND OF EDMONTON

NEGEV GALA

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2023

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Hidden Heroes: Canada’s Jewish Soldiers in WWII

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

On May 11, author, veteran journalist and podcaster Ellin Bessner pulled back the veil for Calgarians on the proud yet little-known history of Canadian Jews in uniform during World War II.

Bessner’s multimedia presentation, *Hidden Heroes: Honouring Canada’s Jewish Soldiers of the Second World War*, was part of a Jewish Heritage Month program co-sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta (JHSSA) and The Military Museums. The evening - moderated by museum director Dave Peabody - included addresses by John Hart and Karen Bassie, who spoke about the courageous campaigns of the First Special Services Force (FSSF), also known as the Devil’s Brigade.

Bessner’s 2015 book, *Double Threat: Canadian Jews, the Military and World War II*, was the culmination of six years of research and travel after Bessner’s curiosity was sparked by the epitaph of a Canadian Jewish serviceman in Normandy: *He died so Jewry should suffer no more*.

Remembrance is part of Bessner’s birthright. Nine of her own family members - including one who fell - enlisted during World War II.

For the 17,000+ Jews who served (Bessner says the number may be as high as 20,000) the fight was personal.

Bessner saluted those who served “then and now,” adding a *kol hakavod* to military members currently deployed to fight the wildfires plaguing Northern Alberta.

Her multimedia presentation began with Rabbi Samuel Cass - one of 16 Jewish chaplains - who led prayers in March 1945 in Cleve, just before Canadian soldiers crossed the Rhine.

“It was Passover and they had a Jewish service to give the finger to Hitler after five-and-a-half or six years of war,” Bessner said, later sharing a clip of the service.

Bessner also shared a historically significant and poignant letter sent by Gerald Levenston - then a Major - to his mother in Toronto, relating his surprising role in a German surrender ceremony in Bad Zwischenahn, Germany.

When Canadian Brigadier Darrell Laing summoned him, Levenston wondered why someone of his rank would be asked to participate.

Reading from Levenston’s letter, Bessner shared Laing’s no-uncertain reply: “I want a Jew to go tell those bastards what to do.”

More often, those who served did not share their wartime experiences with their kin, Bessner said.

“Many spoke of the fun stuff,” she explained, referencing her Uncle Al Singer’s recollection of speaking Yiddish while capturing Germans.

The rest, she said, they took to the grave.

“Tonight we are remembering not only the victory but also what it cost,” Bessner said, adding, “44,000 Canadians were killed in the Second World War. Of those, 450 were Jews, and many, many more were wounded.”

Bessner’s book title came from a post-war letter to Canadian Jewry from Canada’s Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in which he acknowledged that the war had been a “double threat” because Jews were also trying to save their people.

“It’s true....For the Jewish community, this war was the most important war. They were also going because it was their duty and to be loyal to Canada, of course, but they knew that the lives of their people were at stake.”

Illustrating that point, Bessner shared a page from



On May 11, Ellin Bessner gave a fascinating presentation on Canada's Jewish soldiers who served in the Second World War.

a book once cherished by Hitler (and now in the collection of the Library and Archives of Canada) that ominously listed Jewish population figures in cities across Canada.

“It wasn’t just a war over there,” said Bessner. “It was coming here too.”

“There were Fascist sympathizers all over Canada, especially in Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta too,” added Bessner, who described other acts of antisemitism on Canadian soil including the infamous 1933 Christie Pits riot in Toronto and the firebombing of a Quebec Synagogue.

It was a time when Canadian Jews were turned away from hotels and refused rental and employment opportunities.

“There were no Jews on the Toronto Stock Exchange Board of Directors at all,” said Bessner. “Universities had quotas.”

Canada was one of the countries that turned away the St. Louis. That ship, later dubbed the “Voyage of the Damned” was forced to return to Nazi-occupied Europe, where all but 200 of the 900 Jewish refugees perished in the camps.

“It took until 2018 for the Prime Minister [Justin Trudeau] to issue an apology,” Bessner said.

Bessner shared anecdotes about some famous Canadian Jews who served.

Monty Hall - the Winnipegger who later rose to fame

Continued on page 14



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Chinese Dinner

June 11, 2023
5:00PM @ Carriage House
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UNVEILING NOTICE

The unveiling for
Isaac Moses Rotstein z"l
will be held on
Sunday July 2, 2023
at 11:30 am
at the
Chevra Kadisha Cemetery
37th Street SW
on HWY 22X



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Serving the Edmonton Jewish community since 1991

This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School
















It's been a busy month at Talmud Torah learning about and commemorating Yom HaShoah and Yom Hazikaron, celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut, and Lag B'Omer and of course, enjoying the great weather!

Abigail Eden Swersky was born on April 18, 2023 in Toronto to parents Sarah and Kevin Swersky.

She is a wonderful little bundle of joy!






ALBERTA Jewish News

Next print date is June 21, 2023

Next Deadline: June 16, 2023



NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Talmud Torah Society shall be held in person at Talmud Torah School in the Don & Myrna Silverberg Lunchroom on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, commencing at 7:00 pm.

The Agenda for the Meeting shall include the following:

1. President's Report
2. Principal's Report
3. ELC Director's Report
4. Financial Report
5. Election of Board Members

Relevant documents will be posted to: www.talmudtorahsociety.com

Any parent or guardian of a child who attends the school, any person 18 years of age or older who has contributed a minimum of \$18 to the Edmonton Talmud Torah between June 17, 2022 and May 21, 2023, and any member of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton as of May 21, 2022 is eligible to attend the meeting. Each member in good standing is entitled to one (1) vote. There are three (3) board positions open for election, each for a three-year term. A person is not eligible to be elected if they are engaged as an employee of the Edmonton Talmud Torah Society or if they have an outstanding debt or obligation to the Edmonton Talmud Torah Society, and have not put in place an approved payment proposal.

Any person who is eligible to run for the Board must complete the Nomination form and submit it to the Secretary not later than one week prior to the Annual General Meeting. Nomination forms may be obtained from Natalie in the Society office. Please contact Natalie at 780-481-3377 or nataliesoroka@talmudtorahsociety.com to make arrangements to access and drop off the forms.

There will be no ability to nominate from the floor. You are encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting in order to become more fully informed about the affairs and activities of the Society. To register, please email nataliesoroka@talmudtorahsociety.com

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





Calgary
Jewish Federation
The strength of a people.
The power of community.

jewishcalgary.org



A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

I recently returned from this year's LIFE & LEGACY® 2023 Leadership Conference, where I was joined by eight other community professionals and volunteers from our Calgary partners. We were by far the largest group of the two-hundred or so participants, and we held our heads up high, knowing we were graduating from the program with very strong and collaborative results. These results – 245 donors to date, pledging close to 600 legacy gifts to many of our Jewish organizations estimated at more than \$17 million, carried Calgary through the conference with great pride.

We began our time at the conference with a private meeting with Harold Grinspoon, innovative philanthropist and patriarch of The Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) – our partners and funders in LIFE & LEGACY and PJ Library®. We were also joined by Winnie Sandler Grinspoon, president of HGF, herself a force of nature and the next generation of leadership for HGF. I have had the fortune of spending time with both individuals over the years and discussing some of the bigger challenges in Jewish communal life. I am always struck by their level of interest – not just in what works, but they are equally interested in what can be improved.

In similar fashion, our private Calgary meeting and ongoing conversations throughout the conference with Harold, Winnie, HGF staff, and colleagues from across North America included questions about what would work better, which families are being left out of

the legacy conversation, if HGF is providing enough support, etc. In addition, Harold and Winnie sat and participated in many sessions; they didn't simply pop-in to each room just to say a quick hello. Rather, they engaged in the conversations and made sure they heard constructive feedback, not just accolades. The focus of the conference was leadership, with a particular lens applied through a model of adaptive leadership. How can we productively pivot when we see challenges or opportunities? How do we enable people of all roles and talents to lead? How do we apply higher level, strategic thinking to seemingly tactical problems?

During the conference's program, one evening focused on the handful of cohorts (we are in Cohort 7) graduating from four years of LIFE & LEGACY, and in most cases moving on to LIFE & LEGACY Plus – a follow-up initiative to keep momentum in our community with the help of HGF's training and financial support. It was during that evening that our dedicated effort, co-led with the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary – and only successful due to the amazing collaboration of 10 partners – was recognized. Perhaps the icing on the cake, and a very well-deserved acknowledgement, was HGF's celebration of Diana Kalef as this year's Gail Littman²¹ Leadership Award winner. The award recognizes the LIFE & LEGACY coordinator who displays excellence and dedication in their leadership and support of their community's legacy program. Diana has been able to position Calgary's program and relationship with HGF

as one of the best in the system, and was rightfully distinguished from her 72 other peer coordinators currently leading communities in LIFE & LEGACY.

Leadership is not a position, it is an action or way of being, and can be assumed by anyone in any hierarchical role in an organization. We have many professionals and volunteers engaging in leadership activities, and they truly power Jewish Calgary. LIFE & LEGACY is reliant on this very notion – who will step up, who will ensure the vibrancy of Jewish Calgary for generations to come, and who will inspire others? We have many reasons to celebrate, and many reasons to plan for a bright future. Please consider joining our community with YOUR legacy promise – there is no limit to our aspirations or to the picture we can paint for the future – but it is greatly dependent upon you.

To learn more or to begin your legacy journey, please contact Diana Kalef at 403-444-3154 or dkalef@jewishcalgary.org. Take that step, add your voice and commitment, and ensure we have continuity and strength *l'dor v'dor* – from generation to generation!

Take good care – wishing you all an upcoming Chag Shavuot Sameach!

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.

POPSICLES
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SUNDAY, JUNE 25
10AM - 12PM
PAPERNY FAMILY JCC FIELD

FREE

Join PJ Library® for our annual year-end event filled with bouncy castles, face painting, pony rides, petting zoo, and more!

PLUS Delicious Popsicles!



Registration is not required for this FREE community event!


For more information contact Sydney Truax at struax@jewishcalgary.org or 403-537-8592.



HOLOCAUST EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

On May 2 and 3, Calgary Jewish Federation's Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education department was pleased to welcome over 1,000 high school students from Calgary and surrounding areas to the Holocaust Education Symposium at Mount Royal University (MRU). This annual event has been happening in Calgary for over 40 years and was held in person for the first time since 2019. Students and educators had the privilege to hear first-hand from survivors and learn about the Holocaust from a historian. From May 8 to 12, we were joined by 30 classrooms and 1,445 students and educators from across Alberta for our bi-annual Virtual Holocaust Education Symposium in partnership with MRU, Calgary Public Library, and The Jewish Federation of Edmonton. During the week, classrooms were given access to a lecture on the Holocaust by a historian and a documentary, which they could view at their own pace. On May 12, participants came together on Zoom for a special presentation featuring Holocaust survivor Freda Plucer, with a live Q&A from her granddaughter Marnie Bondar. Thank you to all of our volunteers and partners who made this important program possible.





SAVE THE DATE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21
7:00 - 8:30PM
PAPERNY FAMILY JCC

AGM
AND COMMUNITY
SHEM TOV AWARDS



THIS IS MY
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CALGARY

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

MRU disassociates itself from Calgary Peace Prize

Members of the Jewish community were outraged to learn recently that the Calgary Peace Prize will be awarded this month to Mohammed El-Kurd, a man who celebrated suicide bombers as “martyrs”, openly compared the State of Israel to the Nazi regime in Germany, celebrated the deadly Palestinian Intifadas and has publicly called for violence against Jews.

Calgary Jewish Federation stated on their website that “We are aware that Mohammed El-Kurd is set to receive a “Peace Prize” listed under the Peace Studies Initiative at Mount Royal University. The prize is promoted by its selection committee to recognize outstanding individuals from the global community whose work has made the world a safer and less violent place. El-Kurd is a promoter of virulent antisemitism and condoned violence targeting Jews – he is clearly and wholly unfit for such an award. We are in direct contact with Mount Royal University administration and we continue to make our position very clear.”

Michael Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer of B’nai Brith, expressed these same concerns and others to Mount Royal University’s Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Jennifer Pettit, who responded that the prize is an initiative of an independent faculty member and not of the university itself. The dean further assured B’nai Brith that the views of El-Kurd were not representative of Mount Royal University (MRU). Pettit also stated that MRU opposes antisemitism and that it understands the Jewish community’s concern with this year’s recipient of the prize.

The Calgary Peace Prize was established at the University of Calgary in 2006 and moved to MRU in 2016 as part of the John de Chastelain Peace Initiative. Past recipients include humanitarian, retired senator and Canadian Forces Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner and Judge Murray Sinclair, and Supreme Court of Canada Justice Rosalie Abella, whose parents both survived the Holocaust.

“The Calgary Peace Prize was once a reputable

award, while under the purview of academic institutions,” stated B’nai Brith Canada in a press release. “This week’s presentation by MRU faculty member Mark Ayyash to El-Kurd degrades the prize into a theatrical exercise where one controversial individual commends another. Since 2019, Ayyash has been administering the award independent of any institutional oversight and consequently the award no longer possesses the prestige it once had when associated with the University of Calgary or MRU.”

“It is important that the public realize that the Calgary Peace Prize is no longer the esteemed accolade it once was,” said Michael Mostyn. “This current rendition of the award is an affront to its past recipients and it should no longer be characterized as a celebration of peace-loving persons.”

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) is calling on MRU to publicly repudiate this year’s Calgary Peace Prize and its recipient, and clarify its past association with the award after attempting to distance itself from it.

In a letter sent to FSWC on May 11, MRU Dean Pettit reiterated that the Calgary Peace Prize is not an initiative of Mount Royal University, but rather an independent initiative of a faculty member. “In order to make this more clear, wrote Dean Pettit, “Calgary Peace Prize content no longer resides on MRU’s website. MRU did not choose the recipient and academic initiatives and events hosted and led by faculty members are not endorsed by the University simply because the University permits events to occur and views to be expressed.”

Yet according to FSWC, previous announcements of Calgary Peace Prize recipients, in 2022 and in years past, remain on the university’s website, declaring the prize is “awarded by the Peace Studies Initiative at Mount Royal University.” In 2018, a Calgary Peace Prize ceremony for then Justice Rosalie Abella featured Dean Pettit, who said, “the Faculty of Arts is proud to back such an important undertaking.”

A poster shared by MRU Professor Mark Ayyash,



who, according to the newly established Calgary Peace Prize website, “independently oversees the prize, lecture and award ceremony,” features the MRU logo.

FSWC Director of Allyship and Community Engagement Dan Panneton issued the following statement: “Mount Royal University has not been completely transparent in terms of its association with the Calgary Peace Prize, claiming the award is not an initiative of the university despite its long history of supporting the award through its Peace Studies Initiative and participating in award ceremonies. While the university has distanced itself from the award, its past involvement in the award raises questions and requires clarification. If MRU indeed does not have any association with the Calgary Peace Prize, it must make this very clear to its entire community by renouncing the Calgary Peace Prize and assuring to the public that there will be no association in the future.”

FSWC has written to MRU President Tim Rahilly calling for the university to clarify its past relationship with the Calgary Peace Prize and issue a public statement renouncing the Peace Prize and disavowing this year’s recipient.

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LET'S MOVE ALBERTA FORWARD TOGETHER

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Daniel Heikkinen

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Angela Wood

Edmonton-Rutherford
Laine Larson

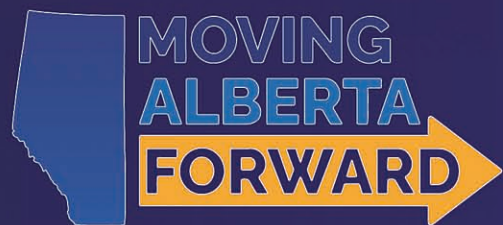
Edmonton-City Centre
Richard Wong

Edmonton-Ellerslie
Ranjit Bath

Edmonton-South
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On May 29th, vote for your local UCP Candidate!

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Mickey Amery



Calgary-Currie
Nicholas Milliken



Calgary-East
Peter Singh



Calgary-Edgemont
Prasad Panda



Calgary-Elbow
Chris Davis



Calgary-Falconridge
Devinder Toor



Calgary-Fish Creek
Myles McDougall



Calgary-Foothills
Jason Luan



Calgary-Glenmore
Whitney Issik



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Ric McIver



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Jeremy Nixon



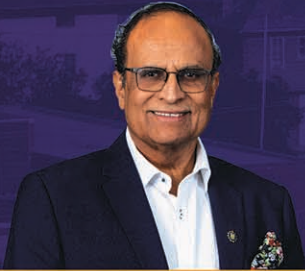
Calgary-Lougheed
Eric Bouchard



Calgary-Bhullar-McCall
Amanpreet Gill



Calgary-Mountain View
Pamela Rath



Calgary-North
Muhammed Yaseen



Calgary-North East
Inderjit Grewal



Calgary-North West
Rajan Sawhney



Calgary-Peigan
Tanya Fir



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What’s new at Calgary Chevra Kadisha

By Susan Dvorkin and Harold Lipton

By the time this article goes to print and is read, Pesach dishes will have been packed away for another year and all crumbs of matzah will have been swept and cleaned. We hope that the community had a meaningful Passover and that the retelling of the story of the Israelites’ redemption from slavery to freedom found relevance in everyday day life.

Many new and exciting changes have been happening at the Calgary Chevra Kadisha. We said goodbye to our former Executive Director Rick Pollick on March 31. Rick came to us during a very difficult time at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and helped us navigate through some very challenging times. We thank him for his professionalism, sensitivity to bereaved families and for all his input during the last three years.

Going forward, the Chevra’s executive made the decision to split the role of Executive Director into two distinct positions: funeral planner and office administrator. It was felt that this distinction would allow for a better focus on the duties of each position and create a more efficient flow within our organization.

We are pleased to welcome Michael Switzer to the Chevra in the role of funeral planner. Michael, a lifelong Calgarian with many family roots in the city, comes to us with the strengths and assets we

feel will assist him as he grows into this role. Michael has experience in the funeral industry and was able to spend a month shadowing our Executive Director as he transitioned into the role.

We are also delighted to welcome Teresa Sofocleous as our new office administrator. Teresa comes to us from the Beth Tzedec synagogue where she was the office manager for the past 13 years. She has a wealth of experience in office and cemetery management having worked on various tasks relating to the Beth Tzedec cemetery.

Welcome Michael and Teresa!!

Both Michael and Teresa join our long time facilities manager, Scott Seimens, to complete what we feel is a very strong professional team. All staff will be supported by our President, Lou Bracey, as well as our executive and board members.

The Chevra has also recently registered with Canada Helps, a charitable organization that assists not for profit organizations with their donations and fundraising. People can now donate directly to the Chevra online either through our website using the Canada Helps link or through the Canada Helps site on the Chevra Kadisha page. The Chevra does not



At the annual volunteer appreciation event, President Lou Bracey presented outgoing Executive Director Rick Pollick with a token of appreciation to acknowledge his years of dedicated service. Rick retired on March 31st and the Chevra, as well as the entire community, wishes him long life and good health.

normally engage in fundraising campaigns, but we welcome the community’s support in assisting families who are challenged by the cost of funerals, in the perpetual maintenance of our cemeteries, or in special projects. We invite the community to engage in the mitzvah of donating in honour or in memory of loved ones. All donations are income tax deductible. A beautiful tribute card has been created incorporating art generously donated by Lily Rosenberg. Donors can request that this card be sent to people they wish to honour.

For more information visit chevraofcalgary.org.

Heroes *Cont. from page 8*

as the original host of *Let’s Make a Deal* - was told “they weren’t taking Jews” when he showed up at a recruiting centre; he later toured Manitoba, entertaining troops stationed there.

“He became a super famous Hollywood personality, but he always regretted that he couldn’t go overseas because he was Jewish,” Bessner said.

Popular Canadian comedians Wayne and Shuster - who later rocketed to wider fame on the Ed Sullivan show - enlisted, entertaining troops at home and abroad.

“Forty days after D-Day they were entertaining them in [France] with bullets flying,” noted Bessner. “They always liked to say they were the only Canadians who got shot up from both sides, the Germans and their own men.”

Ben Dunkelman - of Tip Top Tailors fame - who later served as a *Mahalnik* (overseas volunteer) in Israel’s War of Independence, enlisted during World War II, saying “I have a score to settle with Hitler.”

Barney Danson, who lost three close friends and an eye in Normandy, later served as Canada’s Minister of National Defence in Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s cabinet.

Edmontonian Arthur Hiller, who was a flight navigator, went on to direct many iconic Hollywood films, including *Love Story*.

David Croll - who had already served as the first Jewish mayor of Windsor and would later serve as

Canada’s first Jewish senator and federal Jewish cabinet minister - enlisted as a “Buck Private” in the Essex Scottish Regiment.

“He wanted to prove to the world that Jews were not just sitting at desks pushing paper, they were at the pointy end of the stick,” Bessner said.

When the war began just before Rosh Hashanah, Rabbis took advantage of full synagogues to encourage young men to enlist. Many Jewish boys attended *Yom Tov* meals in their uniforms, provoking in their parents a mix of pride and anxiety, Bessner said.

Allan (Curly) Gurevitch from Rumsey, Alberta served, as did his brother.

According to Bessner, Curly said, “We have to do our part to save the Jews of Europe.”

A few years ago when Jarome Iginla was the honouree at the Calgary JCC Sports dinner, he was given a copy of *Double Threat* and a letter from Bessner. In it, she wrote:

“I imagine you will be particularly interested to read about Samuel Moses Hurwitz. Moe grew up in Lachine and he played hockey for the Lachine Rapide in the ’38-’39 and ’39-’40 seasons.”

Hurwitz was invited to an NHL tryout in Boston. According to Bessner, he told his family, “There is no time to play hockey when millions of my brothers are getting killed in Europe.”

Hurwitz became a tank commander and the most highly-decorated non-commissioned officer in the army corps, Bessner said, adding that his larger-than-life

persona was portrayed in the Brad Pitt movie *Fury*.

Shot in the back and captured by the Germans in Holland, Hurwitz died a hero at 25.

180 Calgarians served during World War II, Bessner said, adding that at the time there were only 168,000 Jews in Canada, a mere 1.5 percent of the country’s population.

Because Jews faced rejection, the Canadian Jewish Congress opened centres in Toronto and Montreal where they provided information about which branches were accepting Jewish recruits, “...and what to say and what not to say,” Bessner said.

Self-identifying as a Jew on one’s dog tag was dangerous in the event of capture, pointed out Bessner. Nevertheless, most Jews in uniform embraced the “H” for Hebrew.

Sadly, they were often targeted by their comrades-in-arms.

Bessner’s uncle Leo Guttman grabbed a top bunk whenever possible. “He was afraid to sleep on the bottom, because he used to be kicked in the stomach and called dirty Jew when the boys came home drunk,” Bessner said.

“If you were a woman it was worse,” said Bessner, citing the personnel file of Rose Goodman, Adjutant Section Officer at RCAF Claresholm.

“She practically ran the base where they were training people to be fighter pilots, and yet they asked

Continued on page 22

You are invited!

Annual General Meeting

Monday June 26, 2023 | 7:00 pm

Temple B’nai Tikvah, 900 47 Avenue SW

To register, please contact Tammy at tammyo@jfsc.org or 403-692-6391

SAVE THE DATE!

8th Annual Martin, Staniloff, & Thal Charity Golf Classic

August 17, 2023

Sponsorship and registration information available soon.

Questions? Contact Roxanne at roxanned@jfsc.org or call 403-287-3510

YEG Seniors *Cont. from page 5*

volunteers themselves grew older and it was hard to replace them.

One of the jobs of the President is to attend the Edmonton Jewish Federation Board meetings. At my first Federation meeting I spoke of the need for and the cost of providing transport for our Seniors, and Federation responded by giving us a grant towards the cost of that transport. We are grateful to Federation which still continues to fund our transport program! That was our first grant ... but not the last by any means.

Today, our Executive Director Svetlana Pavlenko spends much of her time applying for grant money and, for the record, writing grant applications with Svetlana is another of my volunteer activities. The best part of that is how much fun we have together.

Around this time Bella Brenman z”l, the volunteer Director of our Choir – the Goldenaires - moved to Toronto and the choir was disbanded for the lack of a Director. Fortunately, in 2009 we found our excellent choir Director - Deanna Clee, and the Young at Heart Choir was born. Perhaps, you heard and enjoyed our choir performing at the Opening of the Jewish Film Festival 2023. Why not join our choir for fun and friendship?

Before 2010, our lunch program was run by volunteers. Hanna Pollak z”l was in charge of lunch on Tuesday with a varied menu and Dasha Zottenberg z”l was in charge of Thursday lunch which always consisted of delicious sandwiches plus, of course, soup and dessert. But they too were getting older and there came a time when neither were available and we were desperately trying to find a cook. Bozena Szopiak said... “I can do that”... and she could! What a blessed relief it was, and she managed our kitchen amazingly for the next 20 years. When Bozena retired, we were pleased to welcome Daniella Drisdell as our Chef Extraordinaire with a Mediterranean twist!

Our first ever Executive Director Svetlana Pavlenko joined us 13 years ago, just as the world changed for Edmonton Seniors’ Centres and specifically for us. The City of Edmonton, which had been giving us operating grant money annually for some years, produced their “Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton – Action Plan.” Suddenly we were required to be open daily – with lunch 5 days a week – office staff working 5 days a week – programming 5 days a week, and so on. Since we are closed on Friday and Shabbat, we are fortunate that we are open on Sunday with lunch for the Sunday Club.

Visualize this! A new Executive Director needing to handle the reorganization... and the increased costs. We had to transition to paid kitchen staff (thankfully with great volunteer assistants), paid winter transport program, a paid choir Director, and a paid accountant (we had been blessed to have David Levine as our volunteer accountant for many years). And of course, the building and the furnishings were all aging and needing repair and replacement.

So, in comes Svetlana and she gradually starts to enlarge the scope and variety of our operations. We still had all our traditional programs (except for Bingo) but Svetlana was busy making contacts in the outside community and inviting her new contacts to present to us. She has been with us now for 13 years and we are lucky to have her. She is an exceptionally talented young woman who constantly works to grow and expand the Centre’s operations.

She introduced “Cultural Days” where we invite other ethnic groups to the Centre to share with us their culture and history, and recipes for authentic food which are adapted and produced in our kitchen with kashrut observed. Svetlana made contact with the Edmonton Opera and, before Covid, groups went to every production at a special price. There have been many in-house musical performances of different genres, including the Opera Nuova. We have had university professors delivering courses outside of Learning in Retirement and speakers from many walks of life. We celebrate Jewish holidays and have an annual Purim Spiel, directed by Beryl Nahornick, with a dedicated group of volunteer players. Amazingly, thanks to Svetlana, throughout the many months of Covid, our Centre continued to provide programming, exercise classes and even Learning in Retirement, via Zoom. We also started a take-out food program at this time.

Now the Centre is delighted to welcome everybody back in-person and we have expanded the availability of our very popular and appreciated take-home food program by always having extra lunch items available for sale.

The ageing building has required a lot of attention, much of which has been accomplished through grants from the City of Edmonton. For example, all the bathrooms have been updated and the parking lot resurfaced. Money for the new roof was raised in the Jewish community by means of a fund-raising campaign: “Raise the Roof” – the brainchild of Miriam Rabinovitch z”l with President Hal Simons z”l doing graphics. Our new kitchen was funded and installed by generous donors who provided planning assistance, fixtures and installation. We have replaced furnaces, washing machines, freezers and much, much more.

I mentioned earlier how large the Board used to be. In 2015, Svetlana, Mark and I rewrote many of our bylaws including abolishing the Executive committee and reducing the size of the Board. We acknowledge with thanks how fortunate we are to have Karen Oshry as our long-term volunteer lawyer. Her advice is invaluable for the Centre.

A couple of years ago we were fortunate to have Luba Allen join us as Executive Assistant. The program committee was not renewed after Covid and Luba is now doing an excellent job of programming for us.

She is much appreciated for her warmth and energy.

I encourage you to consider what you can do for our Centre. Recently one of our University student volunteers asked some of our members why people should volunteer at the Centre. The replies were amazingly similar: “the Centre connects people”, “because you can do something good for somebody else and you make new friends”, “it gives me something productive to do, the people here are wonderful and when I come home, I just feel so good”, “everybody is so welcoming”. And above everything else volunteering can be fun! Ask the kitchen and lunch time servers.

I strongly believe that you receive more than you give when volunteering - and this has certainly proved true for me. And please don’t say, “The Centre is only for old people” – we need younger Seniors to keep us up to date. Remember membership is open to all over 55 and we need your energy! I am delighted to report that the average age of the Board is lower now than it was 5 years ago, and this is critically important for the healthy continuation of your Centre.

And so the Centre moves on.
Wishing you all the best, Elaine Salkie, Treasurer

Daniel Heikkinen

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I have proudly lived in the McClung riding for over 30 years and believe it is time to have a strong dedicated local member of the legislature addressing the issues within our riding. As a local business owner I bring an understanding of fiscal responsibility and the role that business plays in building a stronger community.

The UCP party is the only government in Canada that has come out and publicly adopted the standards of the IHRA against anti semitism. This acknowledgment is to stand with the Jewish community against the rampant advance of antisemitism in Canada. I personally, along with the UCP Government, stand with you and the Nation of Israel.



I pledge to be a voice for your community within the Alberta legislature.

I respectfully ask you to vote Daniel Heikkinen on May 29th

Wishing the Jewish Community a Shavuot Sameach this year.

*Sincerely, Daniel Heikkinen
CP Candidate Edmonton McClung*

Danielheikkinen.ca

780-717-6722

Edmonton McClung Campaign Office: 18212 - 84 Ave., Edmonton

Full profile at: votemate.org

Authorized by the Daniel Heikkinen campaign 780-717-6722

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Conservatives

Join TBO and Rabbi Matthew Ponak for a special evening

Temple Beth Ora will be welcoming special guest Rabbi Matthew Ponak to Edmonton on June 1 at 7 pm for an evening of movement, meditation, music, and mysticism. The evening will begin with a Four Worlds Contemplative Service. Following light refreshments, Rabbi Matthew will share teachings from his new book, *Embodied Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism for All People*. Afterward, there will be time for discussion and Q + A.

The Contemplative Service is beautiful, unique and uplifting.

In Kabbalah, the Four Worlds are the (1) physical, (2) emotional, (3) intellectual, and (4) spiritual dimensions of all reality—including ourselves. Through movement (body), chanting *nigunim* [wordless melodies] (heart), poetic reading (mind), and silent meditation (soul), we will journey through all four stages together.

This innovative service is inspired by traditional Jewish prayer but is *non-liturgical*: it connects with many of the underlying themes the *siddur* points towards but uses other forms of meditative practice to get there.

Rabbi Matthew Ponak is a teacher of Jewish mysticism, a spiritual counselor, and the author of *Embodied Kabbalah*. Ordained with honours at the neo-Hasidic Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, he also holds a Master's degree in Contemplative Religions from the Buddhist-inspired Naropa University. Rabbi Matthew is certified as a

Focusing Professional and guides others to deeper self-knowledge and healing through accessing the wisdom of their bodies. Originally from Alberta, he now lives in Victoria, BC with his wife Melina and their two joyful children.

When describing his spiritual journey, Rabbi Matthew says, “When I was a child in Calgary, the adults around me thought I would be anything from a doctor to a mathematician, or perhaps a professional ping-pong player. Up until my mid-teens, when I wasn’t competing in racket sports or dribbling a basketball, I was focusing on school work with a special fondness for the hard sciences. At the age of sixteen, however, I stepped into a class on Jewish mysticism that changed my life forever.

“That fortuitous moment began my inner and outer search for transformational wisdom that has lasted until this day. Along the way, I explored practices and beliefs from spiritual traditions of the East and West, gained insight from a multitude of psychological approaches, and found unique beauty in each of the denominations of Judaism. I also learned the immeasurable value of being honest with myself and found tools and lifestyle choices to support inner growth and self-awareness.

“As a teacher and counsellor, I draw on this experience and knowledge to help students of diverse backgrounds tap into their own essential truths. In this ever-evolving information age, where big ideas and advice abound, the skills of a spiritual ally - sharing



Rabbi Matthew Ponak

teachings with no-strings-attached and empowering people to become their most authentic selves - are a precious commodity. I deeply value the balance between presenting esoteric teachings in a way that is readily accessible (and in English!), while also creating the context for individuals to find their own voice and thrive. It is incredibly important for me to be able to provide access to Jewish mysticism and wisdom to those who feel alienated, confused, or intimidated by traditional routes.”

Temple Beth Ora is Edmonton’s Reform Jewish congregation located at 12313 105 Ave in Edmonton. Register for the event at templebethora.org.

Op/Ed: Who would compare COVID to the Holocaust?

By Deborah Shatz

The Alberta Election will be held on May 29 and the rhetoric is heating up. Earlier this month, a video from 2021 resurfaced that featured Alberta Premier Danielle Smith comparing Albertans who had been vaccinated against COVID-19 with supporters of Nazi Germany.

Of course, this is a red flag topic for our community.

In the November 2021 video, filmed 6 months before Smith began her run for leader of the UCP, she discussed watching a Netflix documentary *How to*

Become a Tyrant, and drew a parallel between the majority of Albertans who received the COVID-19 vaccine and supporters of Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich.

She suggested that the “75 percent of the public” who received a COVID vaccine “succumbed to the charms of a tyrant,” specifically referencing Adolf Hitler. (The figure in Alberta is actually over 90% who received a vaccine – including Premier Danielle Smith).

The Premier’s remarks in the resurfaced video were met with condemnation from NDP Leader Rachel Notley who called Smith’s comments “utterly horrifying.”

Notley said that invoking Nazi Germany when discussing Albertans

who took the COVID-19 shot is evidence why Albertans can’t trust Smith’s leadership.

“She’s comparing those [vaccinated] Albertans... to the architects of an antisemitic genocide,” Notley said. “Some comments demonstrate a set of values that no level of apology can ever make up for.”

In response to the resurfaced video, Smith issued a carefully worded statement to explain her comments, “As everyone knows, I was against the use of vaccine mandates during COVID,” she stated.

“However, the horrors of the Holocaust are without precedent, and no one should make any modern-day comparisons that minimize the experience of the Holocaust and suffering under Hitler, nor the sacrifice of our veterans.

Continued on page 19

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Slight decline in antisemitic incidents is far from reassuring

By Marvin Rotrand

The Canadian Jewish community can take some solace in the numbers reported in the 2022 *B'nai Brith Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents*. The total incidents recorded for the year was 2,769, down 1.1% from the 2,799 incidents logged in 2021. Notably, this is the first year-over-year decrease we have seen since 2015, when the Audit reported a 21.5% decline from 2014.

When viewed from a historical perspective, however, the numbers are less reassuring. In 2012, the Jewish community sounded the alarm when that Audit noted 1345 antisemitic incidents, the highest ever since we first began auditing in 1982. Ten years later, the number is an alarming 105.9% higher than that reported in 2012, and the second highest total since we started tracking 41 years ago.

The nature of antisemitism has changed as well. Social media has become the largest medium for antisemitic narratives, giving purveyors of hate a global audience and limitless reach. Of the 2,769 total incidents recorded last year, 2,056 – or 74.3% – occurred online. Canada's laws have failed to keep pace with the explosion of antisemitism in online spaces, allowing this phenomenon to go unchecked. Law reforms similar to those enacted by Germany and France will be necessary to blunt this growing threat.

The 2022 Audit numbers do offer some welcome news. Documentable violent incidents targeting Jews

decreased from 75 in 2021 to 25 in 2022. A variety of factors likely contributed to this decline. After the 2021 Israel-Hamas conflict that led to a record number of attacks on Jews in Canada, relative peace in the region in 2022 resulted in far less violence.

The Government of Canada has also begun to implement the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, and four additional provinces adopted the definition in 2022. Since 2020, Canada has had a Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, which will receive \$5.6 million from the Government over the next five years.

Following through on its pledges at the 2021 Malmö Forum, the Government of Canada passed legislation to criminalize Holocaust denial and distortion other than in private conversation. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security provided clear guidance on how to tackle the ideologically motivated violent extremism that thrives online. Lastly, the Government acknowledged the need for a foreign agent registry to prevent foreign influence over Canadian society, institutions and democracy, and we expect legislation to be tabled in 2023.

Ontario announced that it would commence mandatory Holocaust education in Grade 6 as of the



2023-2024 school year. The Northwest Territories indicated it would follow suit, and several provinces are considering re-examining their curricula to address the limited awareness of the Holocaust among young people.


The challenges before us are profound, but there is reason to be optimistic. Developments from the past year reveal a growing appreciation of the threat of antisemitism and the need to tackle it head on. In 2023, we will continue to focus our efforts on urging all remaining provinces to enact IHRA, and on partnering with government and law enforcement to fight the rot of antisemitism wherever and whenever it happens.

Marvin Rotrand is the National Director of the League for Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada's advocacy arm, which compiles the annual audit.



Sammy Cisek and Keyfer Mathewson welcomed baby Della into the world during Game 1 of the Oilers Playoff Run, April 17th.

Mazel tov to Baba Michele Siderson, and Alte-Bobi Goldie Love.




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Home and Garden Feature

The particular Jewish meaning of my hamsa collection

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) — I tend to get to Israel every two or three years, and every time I come home with a hamsa. The latest, which I picked up last year (along with a case of COVID — another story) is a lovely teal ceramic design from a workshop in the Golan Heights. We have a wall of these hand-shaped amulets in our house — less for good luck or spiritual karma than to advertise our connection to Israel.

But to advertise what, exactly? The hamsa’s Jewish roots are slightly tenuous, or at least secondhand. The “hand of Fatima” is a Muslim symbol, perhaps pagan before that, and possibly Christian. According to one interpretation, the five fingers are meant to represent the five pillars of Islam (faith, fasting, pilgrimage, prayer and tithing). Like a number of folk customs, it was absorbed into Sephardic Jewish culture in the lands where Jews and Muslims lived and worked side by side, and where it came to suggest the hand of G-d, or a talisman used to ward off the Evil Eye. I have hamsas with an eye motif worked into the palm of the hand, others with fish designs — Jewish symbols of both fertility and luck.

What they don’t have are overtly “Jewish” symbols: I avoid the ones with stars of David or menorah decorations. To some degree that’s my rebellion against Jewish kitsch — the gaudy, insistent aesthetic I associate with old-fashioned synagogue Judaica shops and well-meaning bar and bat mitzvah presents. I think it is also virtue-signaling on my part: The hamsa says I support the multicultural Israel that includes Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Sephardim. “Cool” Jews like me don’t display exclusionary tchotchkes studded with Jewish stars or hang paintings of bearded dancing Hasids. (I mean, I have lots of Judaica with both — we just don’t put them on the top shelf.)

It’s the same sort of insidery, too-cool-for-shul aesthetic that I have long associated with the Wissotzky Magic Tea Chest. I am guessing you have seen this or even have one: It’s a wooden box filled with tea sachets from Wissotzky, the Tel Aviv-based company that has roots in tsarist Russia. Before it was widely available on Amazon, the tea box was a popular

souvenir for repeat travelers to Israel.

At one point I started calling it the “first post-modern Israeli souvenir”: Instead of celebrating Zionism or Judaism, the box’s decorations feature imagery from the Indian subcontinent. The writing is Hebrew but the message is international. Maybe first-timers bring home olive-wood camels and gaudy mezuzahs shaped like the Jerusalem skyline. Old hands like me know that a box of supermarket tea, like that delicately filigreed hamsa, says the “real Israel.”

I know that’s putting a lot on a souvenir, and sometimes a hamsa is just a hamsa. But there is a whole field of scholarship that examines the deep meanings of everyday objects. Jenna Weissman Joselit, the doyenne of Jewish material culture, writes about how even Mordecai Kaplan, the influential 20th-century rabbi “not generally known for his interest in the material side of Jewish life,” counseled Jews to fill their homes with Jewish signifiers.

“Jewish appointments were intended to convey a moral statement that went far beyond the physical: Manifestations of group identity, they served as constant reminders of ideals and practices,” Joselit writes in her study of Jewish consumerism, “The Wonders of America.”

Besides, others are going to attach moral statements to your bric-a-brac that you may not even have intended. Search “hamsa” and one of the first things Google delivers is the question, “Is it disrespectful to wear a hamsa?” The answer comes from a jewelry seller, who advises, “it can be culturally insensitive to wear it without knowing what the symbol means.” Insensitive to whom is not clear, although presumably there are Jews and Muslims who object to seeing the symbol dangling from the wrists or necks of celebrities who are neither. At the very least, as one Mizrahi Jew has written, Ashkenazi Jews who embrace the hamsa as a symbol of Jewish or Zionist pride should be aware of and acknowledge its distinct meaning for Jews from the Middle East and North Africa.

I don’t think there was anything culturally insensitive about the artists who recently carved an elaborate hamsa into the sands at California’s



Newport Beach. Or the Jewish environmental activist who places a clay hamsa along the shore of San Francisco Bay as an “offering to the water.”

I prefer to think of the hamsa as a wonderfully ecumenical symbol. The hand is a blank canvas on which artists can project their own meanings, and the wearer their own statements. My statement is a little smug (“You won’t catch me with a dancing rabbi on the wall”) but also extremely hopeful: The open hand celebrates Israel’s unlikely blend of cultures and faiths, even as it wards off those who refuse to accommodate coexistence.

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.

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Home and Garden Feature

JNF Edmonton Gifts Mezuzah to TT

By Natalie Soroka, TT Society

With the sun streaming through the front doors of Talmud Torah School the morning of April 26, 2023, Jay Cairns, Executive Director of JNF Edmonton, presented TT students and staff with a beautiful Mezuzah.

The Mezuzah is the creation of Israeli artist Yaron Bob, a world-renowned metal artist.

When Jay Cairns invited Yaron to Edmonton to give a talk to TT families and the Jewish community this time last year, he purchased the Mezuzah with the idea of gifting it to TT. It was decided that Yom Ha'atzmaut would be a suitable time for the dedication, as it easily tied to celebrating Israel's independence. Jay also

brought a copy of Israel's declaration and spoke about Israel, so that the significance of the day (Israel's independence and the Mezuzah and what it's made from) was underscored.

Student representatives from each grade took part in the ceremony and it was live streamed to all classes. Jay offered to set up the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel display outside the Don z'l & Myrna Silverberg Lunchroom. He encouraged students to take a few minutes to read through this important document since, as Jay stated, "everything that represents the Jewish people and the formation of the State of Israel" is written here.

It was a heartwarming and meaningful way to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut.



JNF Edmonton Executive Director Jay Cairns

Op/Ed Cont. from page 16

"I have always been and remain a friend to the Jewish community [and] Israel and I apologize for any offensive language used regarding this issue made while on talk radio or podcasts during my previous career."

She added that Covid-19 was a divisive issue and "I would hope we can all move on to talk about issues that currently matter to Albertans and their families."

National Jewish organizations condemned the 2021 remarks and reminded Albertans about how offensive and disturbing the comments are.

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a Canadian Jewish human rights organization, says Smith's apology "doesn't fix the harm caused."

"Holocaust comparisons are inappropriate, disrespectful to the victims and minimize one of the darkest times in human history – which the Jewish community has been outspoken about since the start of the pandemic," the organization said of the comments.

B'nai Brith Canada also tweeted a response, saying its position remains clear. "There is no justification for politicians to make contemporaneous comparisons to the Nazi regime," the tweet read. "Our leaders

must do better."

Bernie Farber, chair of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, said Smith was either "wilfully ignorant or is in dire need of participating in our workshops on understanding the roots of antisemitism."

"No, premier, those who followed science were not like Hitler and other tyrants," he wrote on Twitter. "Claiming such is to minimize and distort the Holocaust. Six million Jews, amongst them 1.5 million children, were mass murdered by Hitler and his ideology. Millions of other innocents were also murdered, premier."

The Calgary Jewish Community responded to the video and subsequent statement by Smith by saying, "We are aware of the 2021 podcast that has resurfaced. We feel it is important to note to our community that we made clear comments about these comparisons back when they were made including via an op-ed developed by our current president, Lisa Libin.

"In today's campaign climate it is important that our community is not used as a wedge between political parties and with this, we will not be commenting further on this issue at this time."

Unfortunately, the 2021 video was not the only time that (not yet) Premier Smith referenced the Holocaust and COVID vaccines. Libin's op/ed was in response

to a 2021 *Calgary Herald* column written by Smith in which she likened COVID vaccinations to the torturous experiments conducted by Nazis in concentration camps.

In the past, the UCP has not tolerated theses type of comments. In November 2022, the UCP board disqualified a potential candidate who had compared vaccine passports to policies enacted by Hitler and the Nazi regime.

Like the Calgary Jewish Federation, Alberta Jewish News would prefer not to comment on this issue. It happened a couple of years ago and was dealt with. However, when the Holocaust is being discussed in the mainstream it is our responsibility to listen carefully and speak out. We can't be silently offended and leave it to others to speak out on our behalf. Danielle Smith's comments were abhorrent. They were horrifying if she meant them and equally offensive if they were said to curry favour with like-minded people.

In her "apology" Premier Smith said that she hoped "we can all move on to talk about issues that currently matter to Albertans and their families." Distorting the Holocaust and the monsters that engineered the Holocaust, is a red flag. It is always going to be an issue that matters to Jewish Albertans and their families.



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Home and Garden Feature

Strawberry and Cream Rugelach is a delicious treat for Shavuot

By Chaya Rappoport

(The Noshers via JTA) -- I had never been much of a rugelach baker until this recipe. While I gravitated toward challah and babka, I always found store-bought rugelach to be a bit bland and disappointing.

But to my great delight, rugelach are supremely easy to make. Most recipes rely on a 1-to-1 ratio of butter and cream cheese in the dough for flavor and flakiness. I stick with that classic method (don't mess with perfection!), but also add a bit of sour cream for an extra tender texture. The dough comes together in seconds with the help of a mixer (or food processor) and, after a short rest, it's ready to be rolled out. But don't forget to rest and chill your dough!

These rugelach are perfect for spring, for Shavuot, or just because homemade rugelach are delicious.

Notes: These will store well in an airtight container for up to 1 week at room temperature, and will freeze well for up to 3 months.

Ingredients:

For the dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt
- 1/2 pound cream cheese, chilled and cubed
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- raw sugar, for decorating

For the strawberry filling:

- 3/4 cup good strawberry jam
- 2 tablespoons sour cream

- 3 ounces cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons sugar,
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- pinch salt,
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Directions:

Add your cubed butter and flour to your mixer with the paddle attachment and mix until the butter is broken up well and the mixture looks like wet sand.

To the mixing bowl, add in the salt, cream cheese, sour cream and sugar. With the paddle attachment on medium speed, mix everything together quickly, until the mixture is crumbly, wet and mostly coming together.

Turn the dough out onto a sheet of foil, press down on it slightly, and form the dough into a thick disk. Wrap the disk tightly in the foil and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Make the filling: Using a stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat the sour cream, cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and salt on low speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, add 1/4 teaspoon of lemon juice and mix to combine. Taste filling — add more juice if needed. Transfer to a bowl, cover with plastic and refrigerate until ready to use.

When your dough has chilled, preheat your oven to 375 F. and line a few baking trays with parchment paper.

Sprinkle the parchment paper with some raw sugar.

Remove the dough from the fridge and unwrap the dough. Flour your work surface extremely well, roll the dough into a ball, then press it down until it's about 3/4-inch thick. The sides may crack a bit at first, but just keep working it until you have a smooth sided disk, adding more flour as needed.



Roll the dough out into a 13- to 14-inch circle of even thickness.

Fold the dough into a half-moon and use a pizza cutter or sharp knife to cut away any uneven sides, as you want the circle to be as symmetrical as possible for even cookies. Unfold the dough so it's a full circle again.

Brush the dough with the cheese filling and then top with the strawberry jam. Swirl the jam over the cheese.

Use a pizza cutter or sharp knife to cut the circle into 16 equal-sized wedges.

Roll up each wedge, starting with the bigger side, tightly and carefully, to make the classic rugelach shape. Place the rugelach seam side down onto your parchment.

Brush each cookie with egg wash and sprinkle with raw sugar.

Bake for 20-25 minutes, rotating the trays halfway through baking, until the cookies are a nice golden brown. Allow to cool before moving and serving.

Chaya Rappoport is the blogger, baker and picture taker behind retrolillies.wordpress.com and a writer at [Hey Alma](http://HeyAlma.com). The Noshers food blog offers a dazzling array of new and classic Jewish recipes and food news, from Europe to Yemen, from challah to shakshuka and beyond. Check it out at www.TheNoshers.com.



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Home and Garden Feature

For lactose intolerant Jews, Shavuot’s diet is a test of intestinal fortitude

By Sarah Gold

(JTA) — Many modern-day Jews aren’t all that familiar with Shavuot, which celebrates the day when the Israelites first received the Torah from G-d and falls seven weeks after Passover marked their Exodus from Egypt.

Jews with some familiarity of Shavuot probably know the holiday as a day for eating cheesecake – along with other creamy, dairy-rich dishes, like cheese blintzes and kugel for Ashkenazim and soutlach and boyikos de keso for Mizrachim.

There are varying theories about the significance of dairy in Shavuot celebrations. Some invoke the idea that since the Torah laid out the dietary restrictions on non-kosher meat for the first time, the Israelites celebrated with the only foods that conformed to the new laws of kashrut (until they purchased meat-only dishes, that is). Others involve mystical numerology (in particular, the Kabbalistic interpretation of the Hebrew letters spelling “milk”) or scriptural passages in which G-d promises the Israelites a “land of milk and honey.”

Still other theories offer a more practical explanation: The holiday falls during the spring, when calves are weaned and cows produce a surfeit of milk.

Whatever the reason, dairy dishes have become part of Shavuot celebrations among nearly all parts of the Jewish Diaspora. According to the New York-based culinary authors and Jewish food historians Jayne Cohen and Jennifer Abadi, while cheesecake, blintzes and kugel are traditional Ashkenazi preparations,

Sephardim and Mizrahim mark the holiday with similarly creamy dishes. These include bourekas (flaky, originally Turkish pastries filled with sweet and savory cheeses), Syrian calsones (ravioli-like, cheese-filled pasta dumplings), buttery North African couscous and Levantine mujaderrah – a sort of pilaf made with rice, lentils or fava beans, generously slathered with labneh. Soutlach is a Turkish rice pudding and boyikos de keso are cheese biscuits.

What’s ironic about the apparently universal love among Jews for dairy-rich dishes is, of course, that we Jews are largely predisposed to lactose intolerance. Several studies suggest that 60 to 80 percent of Ashkenazim are lactase-deficient (lacking the enzyme that allows for easy digestion of the lactose sugar in milk products). Though less studied, the condition is also considered prevalent among Sephardic and Mediterranean Jews.

Explanations for this genetic tendency abound, but many seem to indicate that pastoral peoples, who stayed rooted in place long enough to cultivate and graze livestock, more easily developed dairy tolerance, while more nomadic subcultures – whose members may have relied more on sheep and goats than cows, and who may have preferred fermented dairy products for portability purposes – did not.

According to Jeffrey Yoskowitz, a Brooklyn-based author specializing in Jewish foodways, that particular clue – about how our ancestors likely enjoyed dairy foods that were fermented or cultured – may actually hold the key to how Jews developed our paradoxical affinity for, and intolerance of, the dairy-rich dishes

enjoyed on Shavuot.

“The issue isn’t that we’re somehow destined to have bad digestion,” Yoskowitz says – or that we’re doomed to have a tortured relationship with the dairy dishes we love. “It’s how bastardized Jewish food – especially Ashkenazi food – is today in this country.”

Centuries ago, he says, Jews had a lot of gustatory wisdom about how to produce, and pair, foods for optimal digestion – making cultured dairy products like sour cream, and fermented foods like pickles and horseradish, at home. But mass-produced versions of these items, especially pasteurized dairy products, are a far cry from those our ancestors likely consumed. Little wonder we’ve inherited the love, but not the same tolerance, for dairy.

As a way to savour the original traditions of Shavuot, Yoskowitz recommends that modern-day Jews try making some of these preparations from scratch.

“Making your own farmer’s cheese, or cream cheese, or even your own butter, and using them to make hamantaschen or pierogi is a great way to see how different these dishes can taste from what we’re used to,” he says.

Such treats may also go down a bit easier than their more convenient counterparts. Studies have shown that fermented or cultured products, like kefir, sour cream and labneh, tend to have less lactose and more lactase than the non-cultured varieties.

Of course, for those who aren’t keen to get creative in the kitchen, there’s also always the fallback option plenty of us already use: popping a dietary aid along with our cheesecake.

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.

Israeli military apologizes for death of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

By Ben Sales

(JTA) — A spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces apologized for the death of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on May 12, one year after she was killed while on assignment covering clashes in the West Bank city of Jenin.

“I think it’s an opportunity for me to say here that we are very sorry of the death of the late Shireen Abu Akleh,” said Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the IDF’s chief spokesman, in an appearance Thursday night on CNN. “She was a journalist, a very established journalist. In Israel we are a democracy and in a democracy we

see high value in journalism and in a free press. And we want journalists to feel safe in Israel, especially in war time. And even if they criticize us, we want them to feel safe.”



The apology came as Israel is engaged in a conflict with Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, which the United States has designated as a terror group.


The apology is the latest stage in Israel’s shifting response to Abu Akleh’s death. At first, the IDF said it was likely not responsible for her death. But following multiple investigations by third parties indicating that Israeli forces likely killed Abu Akleh, the military acknowledged after its own probe that

“there is a high probability” that an Israeli soldier fired the bullet. Israel maintains that her death was an accident.

Abu Akleh was an American citizen, and the U.S. government faced pressure to investigate her death. The United States endorsed Israel’s findings but the FBI opened an investigation into the incident months later. Israel criticized that probe and did not cooperate with it.

This month, the Committee to Protect Journalists released a report examining the deaths of 20 journalists in the West Bank and Gaza since 2001 at the hands of the IDF. Eighteen of the 20 were Palestinian. The report criticized Israel’s investigations of the killings as lackluster and said, “No one has ever been charged or held accountable for these deaths.”

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Heroes *Cont. from page 14*

how much her father was worth,” Bessner said.

Notes on her file described Goodman as “attractive” and “Hebrew,” also noting that she went to Dalhousie University and that her father owned a New Glasgow, Nova Scotia department store.

Goodman was killed in a plane crash in January 1943. She was 23, engaged to be married, and the only Canadian woman killed in the RCAF during World War II, Bessner said.

Manny Raber, of Medicine Hat, was shot down, betrayed and imprisoned by the Gestapo.

“The only way out for him was execution,” said Bessner. “You have to read my book to found out how his Jewish identity played in and how a very sympathetic Catholic Padre saved his life.”

It was not unusual for multiple members of the same family to serve. Examples shared by Bessner included four Hanson brothers from Alberta; seven of nine sons of Ottawa Rabbi Max Maser; and five Altman brothers from Kamsack, Saskatchewan, one of whom was killed.

Denied entry to medical school because he was Jewish, Montreal-born Sydney Shulemson became an aeronautical engineer, later pioneering bombing techniques that destroyed numerous enemy jets and ships.

Described by Bessner as Canada’s “flying ace,” Shulemson was not promoted beyond flight lieutenant because someone called up the base asking, “What kind of name is Shulemson?”

He lived to the age of 97, getting married for the first time at 73. “He was a player, I guess,” chuckled Bessner.

Private Jack Marcovitch, of Montreal, helped to liberate Bergen-Belsen. Enraged by what he saw there, he nearly shot the German Commandant, Josef Kramer, who had swapped out his uniform in an attempt to escape, but a British soldier told Marcovitch to keep Kramer for the war crimes trial.

Kramer was found guilty and executed.

Markovich never spoke about his experiences, but in the 1980s, his son spotted him in wartime footage preserved by Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation and used in a documentary film. Fortuitously, the camera

caught the very moment Marcovitch arrested Kramer.

“As the camp was liberated, more and more people of Jewish faith were able to get there and they did what they could to help the survivors,” Bessner said.

Forbidden from giving the skeletal survivors “substantial foods” - which often proved deadly - they offered chocolate and candies.

Canadian Jewish personnel assisted survivors with the “great hunt,” helping them to search for any surviving kin, often posting letters via army mail.

Val Rimer - long-serving commander of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada: Post #2 - was himself part of the great search, Bessner said.

Rimer found an aunt who lived in France and learned her husband had been murdered, leaving her alone with five children. Rimer eventually brought her to Canada.

Sam Boroditsky of Winnipeg - who had served in the Devil’s Brigade - remained in Europe after the war, near Dachau.

“He stayed for eight months to help the refugees,” said Bessner, adding that Boroditsky requisitioned necessities of life from Germans living nearby, personally taking food from their houses to feed hungry survivors sheltered in a monastery.

“He was also told to give medical sustenance to a German officer who had been shot,” Bessner said.

Trained to administer only half a vial of morphine, “He emptied a whole vial into the guy anyway,” said Bessner, adding that Boroditsky “regretted the fact” that the man somehow survived.

Bessner spoke to the efforts of Jewish soldiers to restore Jewish life after the war. A newsreel clip

Holocaust Education in Calgary



Over 1,000 high school students from Calgary and surrounding areas attended the 2023 Holocaust Education Symposium at Mount Royal University (MRU) in Calgary.

showed some of them forcing Dutch “quislings” to help rebuild a damaged Synagogue.

Jewish servicemen and women arranged picnics and parties for survivors. A photo included in a display by the JHSSA showed Rabbi Cass and Albertan Mimi Friedman distributing care packages to orphans for Chanukah.

Calgarian Stanley Winfield took stockings and lipstick to women at the DP camp near Bergen-Belsen because he “wanted them to feel human again.” Winfield had allies, Bessner noted, including his non-Jewish Squadron Leader and folks in Calgary who sent care packages for their boys and for the women.

Bessner concluded with some marching orders of her own.

“Remembering is an active verb, she said.

Citing a B’nai Brith report, Bessner noted that 120 hate crimes were committed against Jews in Alberta last year, the highest in the prairie provinces and the fourth highest in all of Canada.

“We have work to do,” Bessner said, decrying recent inappropriate remarks by politicians—including one in Alberta (she left her unnamed) - trivializing the Holocaust.

Bessner lauded the province’s recent adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the City of Calgary’s rollout of their antiracism strategy.

“We have to think of the 450 Jewish boys who didn’t come home,” said Bessner. “If we don’t do this work, they may have died in vain.”

Bessner acknowledged audience member Shael Gelfand, whose father Robert served in the RCAF. Notably, Doug Foulkes, also in the audience, is the nephew of Guy Foulkes, the Canadian General who accepted the German surrender at a May 5, 1945 ceremony in Wageningen, Holland.

Fittingly, the evening concluded with the recitation by Temple B’nai Tikvah Rabbi Mark Glickman of the *El Maleh Rachamim* prayer in honour of the fallen.

For more information about Ellin Bessner and *Double Threat*, go to ellinbessner.com/.

To find out more about The Military Museums, go to themilitarymuseums.ca/.

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by Eliezer Segal

Sinai with subtitles

According to Jewish tradition, the revelation at Mount Sinai was a unique and unprecedented event. The Bible describes the encounter as primarily an oral phenomenon: the Almighty’s speaking the words of the Ten Commandments. Jewish thinkers over the ages have speculated about deeper dimensions of that event when the transcendent divinity communicated through a medium that could be heard and understood by human ears.

To be sure, the scriptural narrative refers to other features of the revelation besides the divine speech—including lightning, thunder and shofar blasts. We can scarcely begin to imagine the overwhelming impact of these pyrotechnics on the Israelites, so recently released from years of brutalizing slavery.

At the conclusion of that momentous pronouncement, the Torah describes the people’s reaction: “All the people saw the sounds, and the flames, and the noise of the shofar and the mountain smoking.”

“Saw the sounds.” Really? What is going on here? Indeed, an early midrash observed: “Normally it is impossible to see a sound - and yet here it juxtaposes ‘the sounds’ and ‘the flames.’ Even as they saw the flames, so did they see the sounds!”

A dispute about this text arose between the two most prominent Jewish exegetes in the early generations of rabbis. “They saw what was visible and heard what was audible; these are the words of Rabbi Ishmael. Whereas Rabbi Akiva says: they both saw and heard what was audible.”

It would appear that Rabbis Ishmael and Akiva were both consistent with their respective theories about how to read biblical expressions. Rabbi Ishmael, who was distinguished for his rational approach to scriptural language and theology, and his conviction that “the Torah spoke in human language,” argued here that we must read the complete verse, which mentions not only the sounds of thunder and trumpeting, but also flames or lightning. For each of these phenomena the reader should supply the appropriate sensory verb: thus, the people saw what was visible and heard what was audible.

Rabbi Akiva took a different approach. He believed that the holy language in which the Torah was revealed was not subject to the prosaic limitations of rational human discourse. He also preferred to magnify the proportions of miracles (You might still recall that passage in the Passover Haggadah where he multiplied the Egyptian plagues to a total of 250). Hence his assertion that the Israelites were literally seeing the sounds that issued from Mount Sinai was fully consistent with his views.

The precise details of Rabbi Akiva’s scenario were open to diverse interpretations, and the sages proposed several embellishments designed to enhance the revelation’s wondrous dimensions. I find it intriguing to observe how most of these features, which once astonished their audiences, have become commonplace achievements of modern technology.

For example, the rabbis noted that alternative versions of the wording of the Sabbath commandment (“remember” it in Exodus, but “observe” it in Deuteronomy) “were both uttered in the same pronouncement - something beyond the possibilities of human speech” (we would now simply call this “stereophonic”). Similarly: “in our normal experience in the world, it is impossible to see a sound, but here they saw the sounds and the flames” (a routine job for

an AV projector). The audible words transformed themselves into legible letters as they were spoken, and subsequently were engraved on the tablets (speech-to-text conversion, and subtitles). The inscription was readable from both sides of the tablets (an ability that is easily achieved on digital billboards).

Most medieval commentators seemed to side with Rabbi Ishmael, insisting that the “seeing” should be attached grammatically to the flames and not to the sounds. They adduced numerous examples of scriptural usages where the Hebrew word for “see” (*R’H*) denotes perception through other senses, such as taste or smell, or as a synonym for “understanding.” As Ibn Ezra explained, it is because all five senses coalesce in a single place: on the brow.”

The first-century philosopher Philo of Alexandria dismissed any suggestion that the sound issuing at Sinai was at all comparable to a human voice, which is produced by a physical mouth, tongue and windpipe. God is incorporeal and therefore has no such organs. Rather, he created for this occasion a unique metaphysical entity, perfectly harmonious, that reconfigured the air and transformed it into flame. Unlike feeble human voices, this divine sound did not fade as it proceeded farther from its source, but rather it maintained its volume and brilliance even as it spread. Unlike the hearing of physical ears, which is “a sluggish sense, inactive until aroused by the impact of the air,” this was a communication of pure abstract rationality. It took the form of a flame streaming from heaven, which “became articulate speech in the language familiar to the audience. And so clearly and distinctly were the words formed by it that they seemed to see rather than hear them.”

A millennium later, another Jewish philosopher in Egypt interpreted the passage in a very similar manner. Moses Maimonides asserted that the divinely created “voice” at Sinai expressed a pure metaphysical abstraction that was unintelligible to anyone but Moses, the most sublime of philosophers and prophets. It was Moses who translated the revelation into a sequence of grammatical sentences that could be grasped by normal Israelites who (with the exception of the first two commandments) heard only an undifferentiated sound. “G-d spoke to Moses, and the people only heard the mighty sound, not distinct words...”

Maimonides’ son Abraham found support for his father’s interpretation in the Torah’s wording about the people seeing, rather than hearing, the sounds,” as

would have been the case when hearing normal conversation.

The kabbalist author of the Zohar enhanced the vivid imagery and took it even further. “They beheld what was visible and heard what was audible from within the darkness, fog and cloud. ...They shone with celestial light, and they had knowledge of things that would remain unknown to subsequent generations.”

Maybe our own generation will merit hearing some of that enlightening wisdom.

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