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July 26, 2023

JNF Gala honours Rosemary and Stan Kitay

By Deborah Shatz

The JNF Edmonton Negev Gala was held on June 25th at the Beth Israel “family shul” and it was a huge success. Two hundred and thirty friends, family and JNF supporters were treated to a warm, welcoming, relaxing and thoroughly enjoyable evening that celebrated the dedication and contributions of Rosemary and Stan Kitay. It was the first “in person” Negev Gala celebrated in Edmonton in several years and it was truly a joyful and haymashe event that included a delicious meal as well as the hilarious stand-up comedy of Joel Chasnoff and a remarkable presentation by Elan Isaacson, head of security for the Eshkol Region of Israel.

JNF Canada President Beth Price kicked off the evening, lauding the Kitays - “a dedicated couple with an unwavering commitment and love for their community and Israel. They epitomize the values of community service and Jewish continuity. We are thrilled to have them join a circle of hundreds of other

honourees over the past 7 decades from across the country.”

Negev Gala co-chairs Esther and Howard Starkman said that the Kitays are “stellar members of both the general and the Jewish communities in Edmonton. Their commitment... as volunteers working for the betterment of Edmonton and to enhance our community’s relationship with Israel is worthy of recognition and praise. Kudos to the JNF for selecting this incredible, dynamic duo for this significant honour.”

JNF co-presidents Sharon Bookhalter and Laurie



Howard and Esther Starkman with Rosemary and Stan Kitay.

Mozeson added, “Mazel Tov to our honourees! Since arriving in Edmonton in 1991 with their family from

Continued on page 11

Susan Inhaber to become President of Na’amat Canada

By Maxine Fischbein

For the first time ever, a Na’amat National Convention will be held in Alberta as Calgary welcomes local, national and international participants and speakers October 13-15 at the Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Calgary. That is when Calgary’s Susan Inhaber will ascend to the presidency of the organization - formerly known as Pioneer Women - which has deep roots in the Labour Zionist movement.

It will be the first time that an Albertan - or any woman living west of Winnipeg - takes the reins of the national organization, a point of pride for Stephanie Sacks, who currently serves as president of Calgary’s Yachad chapter and as the Calgary convention chair, in tandem with Torontonian Doris Wexler-Charow, the national convention chair.

Sacks, an avid Na’amat volunteer for close to 40 years, says she expects the convention will attract some 60 Na’amat members from across Canada as well as guests from Israel and the United States. It is anticipated that many Calgaryans will choose to register for the convention in whole or part, especially the Sunday night banquet where Inhaber will be

installed as Na’amat Canada president.

“She is quite amazing,” said Sacks, adding that Inhaber is organized, productive and “great at delegating.”

Born and raised in Calgary, Inhaber says that the convention (tagline *Get Inspired*) will offer programs and activities that affirm Na’amat members’ commitment to supporting the women and children of Israel. She is particularly proud to showcase her city and extend time-honoured western hospitality to delegates, guests and interested members of the community at large.

Local speakers of distinction and made-in-Calgary programs and activities will help those coming from a geographical distance to *feel the energy*, as the City of Calgary’s tagline promises.

Keynote speakers on Saturday, October 14 will be Josie Nepinak who will speak on the history of residential schools and their impact on her own life. Dr. Robbie Babins Wagner, CEO of the Calgary Counselling Centre, will address *Mental Health in Uncertain Times*. Deborah Yedlin, CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, will speak about *Breaking the Glass Ceiling*. The president of Na’amat Israel, Hagit

Pe’er will bring attendees up to date on *What’s new in Israel*.

Sunday speakers include outgoing Na’amat National President Sandi Seigel, who will provide her closing report; Director of Overseas Division Shirli Shavit, who will speak about Na’amat projects, updates and stories; and Dignity Forum founder and board member Ron Ghitter, who will address *Antisemitism and Human Rights Nationally and Globally*.

Convention attendees can also look forward to great entertainment, including drum songs by mother and daughter duo Cheryle Chagnon-Greyeyes and Chantal Chagnon, a performance by the Chinook Country Line Dancers, Israeli dancing with Edmontonian Robin Marcus, music by Calgary’s Zeev Berger and the Schmoozers, and comedy by local duo Rent a Yenta, AKA Linda Gutman and Joy Feldman.

Activities are also being arranged for men who are planning to join their wives for the convention, Inhaber told *AJNews*.

“I’m so excited that the convention is happening here,” said Inhaber. “I’m proud of my city and happy to share our warm western hospitality.”

Continued on page 21

Book your Rosh Hashana Greeting in Alberta Jewish News

Rosh Hashana is right around the corner and Alberta Jewish News is once again celebrating with two special editions - one for Calgary and one for Edmonton. We’re proud to be the newspaper of the Alberta Jewish Community by publishing interesting and relevant original community news on a print platform, as well as our online weekly “Schmooze,” and daily posts on our website, facebook and twitter.

It is more important now than ever that we have a community newspaper to connect us and you can show your appreciation by purchasing holiday greetings in the newspaper three times a year – Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah and Passover.

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Sid Cyngiser z'l taught generations of students about the Holocaust

By Sam Margolis, Canadian Jewish News

(CJN) – Sidney (Sucher) Cyngiser, an indefatigable proponent of Holocaust education, who was often viewed as Calgary's Elie Wiesel, died on June 27. He was 99. Cyngiser continued to share his story of hardship and tenacity with generations of Alberta students and educators well into his 90s.

"He has inspired thousands, especially young students, advocating for basic human rights, democracy, kindness, tolerance, multiculturalism and interfaith dialogue. The magnitude of his impact can be found in the many boxes of letters in his house which were sent to him by grateful students and teachers over the years," his daughter Frances Cyngiser said.

Born in Lodz on March 15, 1924, Cyngiser's memories were those of a happy childhood spent in Radom, Poland. His idyllic youth was abruptly shattered and turned into a living nightmare, however, upon the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, and he performed slave labour throughout much of the Second World War.

After arriving at Auschwitz, Cyngiser survived a *selektion*, the process of determining which inmates would be executed and which forced into labour, by pinching his cheeks and brushing his clothes to make himself appear as healthy as possible.

He was later moved to the Vaihingen an der Enz camp along with his father, who died there from starvation and exhaustion. He was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. Cyngiser learned after the war that his mother and three sisters were murdered at Treblinka.

Having endured beatings, malnutrition and disease, Cyngiser weighed a mere 72 pounds when liberated by French troops on April 7, 1945. He spent nearly three years convalescing, first in a hospital, where he met his wife, Bronia, and afterward in a displaced persons camp. In 1949, through the sponsorship of his father's aunt, Bella Singer, he immigrated to Canada. Bronia followed in 1951 and they were married soon after.

A proud Canadian citizen, Cyngiser found professional success in the furniture business and subsequently in real estate.

"He chose not to let his life be defined by the devastation of the Holocaust, but rather by his response to it," said his daughter Frances. "Rather than being filled with bitterness anger and resentment, he chose to give meaning to his life by filling it with love, tolerance and understanding and a fervent wish for *tikun olam*—repairing our broken world.

"In the face of Holocaust denial," she said, "he dedicated his life to bearing witness, believing that hope for the future begins with truth about the past."

His commitment to educating future generations about the Shoah, led him to become a regular presence at schools, churches, community organizations and at Calgary's Holocaust Education Symposium each year.

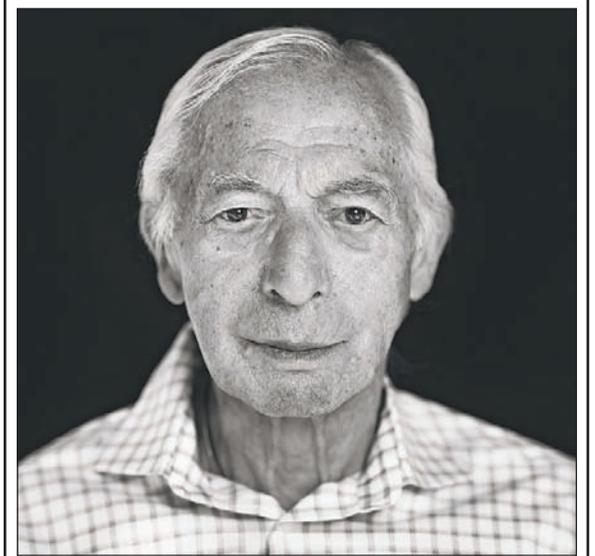
Consistently described as a gentle and generous soul, Cyngiser backed numerous organizations as an avid volunteer and philanthropist. Together with Bronia, he provided financial support to both the Jewish and broader Calgary community and was an ardent champion of Israel.

In addition to a Citizenship Award at the Calgary Jewish Academy and an annual scholarship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Cyngisers endowed a Multicultural Education Scholarship at Mount Royal University's Bachelor of Education Program in recognition of student contributions to multicultural understanding.

The pair were involved with United Jewish Appeal and State of Israel Bonds, each having served as UJA division chairs and Israel Bond co-chairs. They also established a Holocaust Education Collection at Mount Royal University's library and an endowment fund for Calgary's Beth Tzedec Congregation's Jewish Film Festival.

Cyngiser's efforts were recognized on several occasions throughout his life. Among the awards and accolades he received were the Alberta Centennial Medal, the Immigrant of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award from Immigrant Services Calgary and an honorary doctorate from University of Calgary in 2006 for his contribution to Canadian society in promoting tolerance and understanding through Holocaust education.

On obtaining his honorary doctorate, Cyngiser urged the graduating class, "Do not choose to be bystanders. Rather, count yourselves among those who make a difference. Be engaged in your community and our society. Be aware of what's happening in the world. Do not choose to remain silent or indifferent in the face of intolerance, hatred or injustice. Speak out. Take action. Not to speak out, not to act, is to be an accomplice."



Sid Cyngiser z'l. Photo Credit: Marnie Burkhart for Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors, photo exhibit and book.

In 1998, Cyngiser was among 50 Holocaust survivors across Canada to receive the Zachor Award, jointly created by the federal government and prominent Canadian Jewish organizations.

Echoing the sentiments of many in Calgary, Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés said, "Our community has lost a giant, a man of integrity, brilliance, kindness, and *menschlichkeit*. I had the honour and immense privilege of spending large chunks of my professional life with Sid. I watched him inspire, literally, thousands of adults and young people to respect one another's basic human rights, to cherish democracy, and to treat others with kindness, regardless of their faith, ethnic background or religion."

"When Sid would tell his Holocaust story, normally cynical 'too cool for school' high school students would line up for ages just to have the opportunity to shake his hand. And he would treat every single one like they were a treasure. He would show them pictures of his family and genuinely smile at each student. Every person who heard Sid speak was changed for the better," added Rabbi Krygier Lapidés, who currently serves as assistant rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation and was formerly the director of programming and Holocaust and human rights education for the Calgary Jewish Federation.

Rabbi Krygier Lapidés recalled hearing Cyngiser's story hundreds of times. "Every time it was a revelation. He touched the hearts and minds of everyone who had the privilege to hear him. They only had to listen for a few minutes to realize how blessed they were to be in the presence of this humble, sweet, great man. Sid Cyngiser dedicated his life to making the world a better place. We cannot fill his shoes but we can live by his example."

Cyngiser is survived by his wife Bronia; his children Harvey and Frances (David); grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

This article is reprinted from Canadian Jewish News.



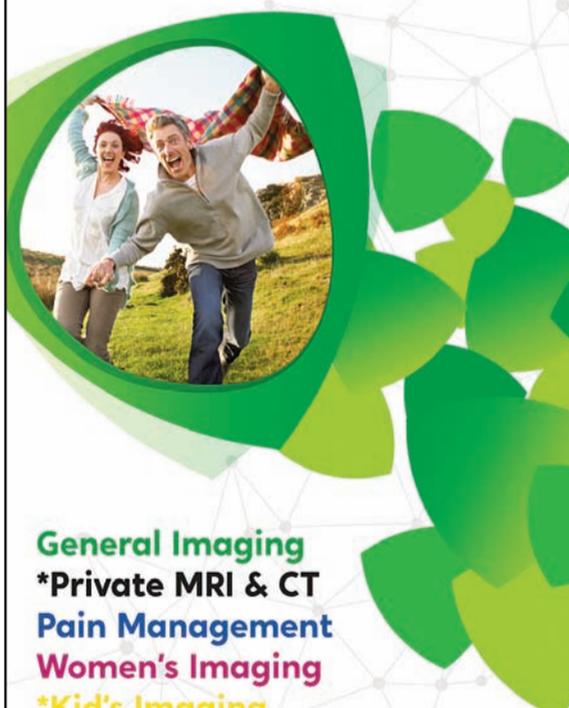
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Having fun at Camp Gan Izzy in Edmonton.

Camp Gan Izzy: Registration is open

By Regan Lipes

Camp Gan Izzy has been a staple of the Edmonton Jewish community for decades! It remains a key resource for families seeking to enrich their children's Jewish identities through fun, friendship, and lasting memories. The majority of kids who grew up in Edmonton, or anywhere with Chabad youth programming, will have passed through Camp Gan Izzy at some point, whether it be yearly enrollment or a precious summer to be cherished. This year camp has received a bit of a makeover, and Jewish families should know that Chabad Lubavitch of Edmonton has not missed a beat in providing exceptional community outreach.

"We knew that camp would be happening, and yes, we had to get everything prepared in less than three weeks, but we've made it work and exceeded our own expectations," commented Rebbetzin Rifka Drelich who is the director, coordinator, and hands-on planner for all things camp this year.

"We originally anticipated we would have around ten children in camp this year, but with a bit of variation from week to week, we have somewhere around thirty registered," the Rebbetzin elaborated excitedly. "We also have a number of CITs (Counselors in Training) who lend a hand with the younger kids and act as mentors. Initially I had one family interested in signing their child up as a CIT, but before I knew it, fourteen families were interested."

This year Camp Gan Izzy is being held in the main gathering space at the Chabad House, and regular service attendees would be surprised

to see the space so transformed. The atmosphere is electric with a backdrop of posted camp activities and schedules and a soundtrack of laughing and jubilant exertion. When campers are at the Chabad House they sit around nicely organized tables armed with a plethora of art supplies and creativity.

"We value insourcing as opposed to outsourcing," said the Rebbetzin. "I always start by asking people where their interests lie, and we find a place for them to put their talents to work. If somebody has a passion for art then they can facilitate the painting activities, you see." This year a fourteen-year-old member of the community has donated his time to running a basketball program for the campers, and another performs weekly magic shows to the delight of all in attendance.

Several times a week a big yellow bus is loaded up with bouncing campers bound for exciting field trips: the Edmonton Valley Zoo, the trampoline park, indoor playgrounds, Galaxyland, and more! The Rebbetzin has strived for continuity for the children and families that look forward to attending Camp Gan Izzy each year, and the activity line-up will not disappoint.

"Look," said the Rebbetzin gesturing to a brightly decorated table with the remnants of a clearly successful artistic endeavor. "Our girls just had a beauty salon. The older girls gave manicures to the younger ones." Indeed, upon further inspection, all of



Campers at Chabad Edmonton's Camp Gan Izzy are enjoying their summer with field trips and a wide range of fun activities in a Jewish environment.

the girls' nails were adorned with carefully applied polish and even masterfully created designs. But even brighter than the fluorescent colours on their nails were all their smiles.

Camp is overseen by a team of staff members and volunteers who take care of everything from daily kosher food preparation, to guiding children through davening. "They may not realize right away that they are learning because we introduce concepts through games and activities, but it is there. We teach the Hebrew alphabet, the kids learn bruchot, and it's all integrated with fun and friendship. The other afternoon all the children lined up for freezies, and all of them were able to recite the correct brucha!" added the Rebbetzin joyfully.

It has been more than twenty years since Rebbetzin Drelich has held the reins of Camp Gan Izzy, but she has stepped back into the role gracefully and with renewed energy. Once camp has wrapped up for the Summer of 2023, the Rebbetzin will turn her attention to CKids and CTeens programming for the year. "It may look a bit different, but this an important source of Jewish community building, and we have to maintain the momentum."

Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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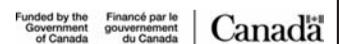
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Family friendly fun with the YEG Jewish Seniors Centre

Submitted by Svetlana Pavlenko

On Sunday, July 9 many guests and volunteers met at Victoria Park in Edmonton to enjoy the Bagel Loop: Walk/Run/Roll event to support the Edmonton Jewish Senior Centre's programs and services. It was such a fun day!

Registration started at 10 a.m. with coffee, tea and a variety of delicious pareve muffins, baked by our chef Daniella Drisdell. Then our amazing fitness instructor Bonnie Austen, who has been keeping our members fit and healthy for more than 25 years, led a warm-up and our new yoga instructor Ashley Blackwood, who has been sharing yoga secrets in weekly classes at the Centre, helped everyone to stretch and prepare for the walk.

At 11 a.m. more than 100 guests started to walk with loud, inspirational support from our volunteer-cheerleaders. Many balloons in the hands of walkers, runners and rollers made our walk very celebratory and cheerful! Our youngest participant was 1 year old and our oldest one - 95! So, now you know why we



Mummy game at the Bagel Loop!

have rollers and runners!

The balloons held by the adults were part of our Balloon Pop Raffle. At the finish line the incredible prizes were displayed on a table and all participants popped their balloons with excitement to find out what amazing item they had won (the tickets were hidden inside the balloons). Every balloon was a winner!

Prizes included: two portable BBQs, diamond earrings, opera tickets, lunch card (for the Centre's famous lunches), thermos bags and many gift cards for our neighbourhood businesses. Thank you to all the amazing sponsors who provided prizes. We will publish a full list of our supporters in the upcoming issue of our "Schmooze & News" Newsletter. Thank you also to our event co-chairs Barb Mickelson and Hans Pilz who knocked on many doors to collect such beautiful items.

Special thank you to our second chef Elie Adylova who surprised our participants with elegant and enjoyable picnic food options. We all enjoyed kosher beef dogs and veggie dogs, potato salad and coleslaw, chips, and a remarkable variety of parve pastries and fruits. The Centre will be happy to cater your next event - just call us!

We are sure you will notice many youngish participants who came to support us. Thank you to the "Connecting Seniors with Care" UofA students' group who volunteered for the event. Eric Kotlyarov and Chester Lau were an essential part of our organizing committee. If you want to connect with this



On July 9, over 100 friends, family and supporters participated in the Edmonton Bagel Loop to have some fun, get some fresh air and exercise and raise money for the Jewish Senior Citizens Centre. (Photo supplied).

great group that implements wonderful projects connecting youth with seniors, please email them at csc.ualberta@gmail.com.

The fun games and beautiful multicultural entertainment were provided by our friends from the Kyrgyz Association in Canada who support the Bagel Loop event every year. Our guests had so much fun trying to knock water bottles over - no hands - using a potato in pantyhose worn on your head (see our photos on Facebook to envision this unique game) and creating toilet papers mummies! All members of our devoted team of volunteers made every moment of our event smooth and entertaining.

The Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre breaks stereotypes and unites different generations through educational, entertaining, and fun programs and events. Don't wait until you are 120 years old because you think you are too young now, - join our vibrant and warm Centre and you will add so much enjoyment into your life!

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Anglicans, Lutherans alter their resolution on Israel

By Jeremy Appel

The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) passed two resolutions of interest to the Jewish community at its 43rd General Synod, which occurred from June 27 to July 2 in Calgary, with input from rabbinical leaders in Vancouver and Edmonton.

The first replaced an Anglican prayer calling for the conversion of Jews to Christianity with a prayer for reconciliation with the Jewish people; the second was a contentious motion calling for "peace and justice in Israel and Palestine."

The Anglican synod was convened as an assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Special Convention.

The Israel and Palestine resolution, which was a joint initiative of the Anglicans and Lutherans, raised the ire of rabbinical leaders, because section four of its initial text referenced the "parallels between the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and lands and the experience of broken treaties and the occupation of unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada."

Continued on page 21



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Spuds and Suds Stampede Event

By AJNews staff

The Jewish community had a boot stompin' good time once again this year at the Spuds and Suds Stampede Breakfast, held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Calgary. The event brought elected politicians, staffers, academics, Rabbis and other professional and lay community leaders together for a fabulous meet and greet on July 7.

Spuds and Suds was a collaboration of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), Calgary Jewish Federation, and for the second year, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. The annual event is an opportunity for Jewish community leaders – including representatives from Hillel and JAC (Jewish Adult Calgary) – to schmooze with local, provincial and federal leaders and leadership candidates from across the political spectrum, in addition to building meaningful connections with one another and our community. Everyone enjoyed Stampede fare with a Jewish twist, including mini latkes and lox, and entertainment by the Calgary Police Pipe Band and the Calgary Fiddlers.

Under the helm of Calgary Jewish Federation CEO



Leaders and staff from CIJA and CJPAC joined leaders and staff from Calgary Jewish Federation and Jewish Federation of Edmonton for a boot stompin' good time at the Spuds and Suds Stampede Breakfast with local, regional and federal politicians. Photos courtesy of Calgary Jewish Federation.

Adam Silver, a wide range of community professionals and volunteers enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere to network and celebrate in the true spirit of Stampede. Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright headed up a group of Federation leaders and volunteers who travelled from Edmonton for their second time as event co-sponsors.

Attendees got to say shalom to Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, Alberta NDP Caucus Chair Joe Ceci, Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek, Calgary and Edmonton City Councillors, Alberta MLAs and MPs from Alberta and beyond.

There were a lot of familiar faces at the event but some new ones as well. "It was a younger demographic this year, as seasoned politicians step away and young, eager

changemakers make the move to fill their shoes," remarked CJF Director of Engagement Programs Danielle Braitman.

For Jacqueline Medalye, Jewish Federation of Edmonton Associate Director, Next Generation Leadership & Advocacy, highlights included the opportunity for Jewish community members to meet with Premier Danielle Smith. "Despite her exceptionally busy schedule, she made it a priority to attend," said Medalye.

"We also had the opportunity to take the bus down together and have engaging conversations with each other, the opportunity to congratulate MLAs in person post-election, and the opportunity to meet with allied communities, and industry in a relaxed and fun setting with great food and entertainment. And of course, the chance to exchange our city clothes for cowboy/cowgirl gear for the day."

The two Alberta CEOs - Stacey Leavitt-Wright and Adam Silver - joined members of the community at the NDP Stampede breakfast that same day, where they schmoozed with several additional politicians including Alberta Opposition Leader Rachel Notley.



Shane and Karen were part of the Edmonton delegation who enjoyed the schmooze at the Spuds and Suds Stampede Breakfast.



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Transforming Perspectives: A Journey of Compassion

By Lesley Machon

Toward the end of the school year during Junior High English Language Arts class, CJA students were honoured to connect with the esteemed palliative care physician, cognitive behavioural therapist, and acclaimed author, Dr. Kathryn Mannix, via Zoom all the way from Northumberland, England. Throughout the school year, students engaged with her novel, *With the End in Mind: Dying, Death, and Wisdom in an Age of Denial*, as part of their curriculum focused on Dying, Grieving, and Healing.

With cups of tea in hand, students had the opportunity to hear stories and ask Dr. Mannix a wide range of questions, from her favorite football team to deathbed visions and the unconventional methods she has employed to bring comfort to her patients.

Dr. Mannix's account of *Pins and Needles*, where she assisted Sylvie in sewing her legacy pillow for her parents while enabling her to receive chemotherapy treatment at home, resonated deeply with us. The tale of Sanjeev, who believed he was on a train to India to



Calgary Jewish Academy Jr. High students on a Zoom call with Dr. Kathryn Mannix.

see his parents, and her acknowledgment of his journey as an honoured guest, taught us about compassionate witnessing. Her willingness to take care of Bob's (a man with no friends or family) cat, ensuring his peaceful passing with the knowledge that his beloved friend would be well cared for, and her act of allowing Billy to curl up beside his mom after freeing him from his mandated prison handcuffs, left a lasting impression on us.

Furthermore, when Dr. Mannix was asked about her favorite fiction book, she revealed it to be *Harry Potter*. She shared a unique perspective on reading the series

through a lens of death, bereavement, and healing. Her insights have forever transformed our perception of iconic elements like the *Dementors* and the .

Most importantly, through Dr. Mannix's stories, students realized that it is about the person first and foremost—emphasizing their heart and their needs—rather than just their medical condition.

CJA staff and students extend our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable lessons Dr. Mannix has taught us and for the immense impact she had on our learning this year.

Calgary Chevra Kadisha: The cost of a funeral

By Susan Dvorkin and Harold Lipton

The Chevra Kadisha of Calgary has always been a proponent of pre-purchasing a burial plot in advance of need, as this frees the grieving family from making some difficult decisions at a time of great stress. It relieves the family of the decision of where the deceased wishes their final resting place to be, and it also eases one of the financial burdens of the total funeral cost.

As a not for profit society, the Chevra Kadisha is Calgary's only community organization dedicated to providing end of life care to all members of the Jewish faith, regardless of denomination, affiliation, or financial situation. Even as the cost of living has steadily grown over the years, the Chevra has not raised its fees for over twenty years. Unfortunately, inflation has caught up with us and reluctantly we have had to raise our fees to keep up with the rising costs of providing service.

The fee to reserve a plot in our 37th Street cemetery remains the same for now at \$5000 and again, we

encourage the community to consider pre-purchasing their plot to ease some of the emotional and financial burden on the family at the time of loss. As this fee will undoubtedly rise in the future, it makes financial sense to reserve a plot now. Payment plans for reserved plots can be arranged at the time of reservation to aid in the purchase. The fee for pre-purchased plots does not include actual funeral costs at the time of burial.

Funeral costs include fees for services that are contracted out and over which the Chevra has no control. These include transportation of the deceased to the chapel and later to the cemetery, opening and closing a grave, the officiant's fee, and the fee for the Shomer (guardian). These costs can run up to \$5000 and become due very shortly after burial. In the past, the Chevra covered these costs and then billed the family later. These costs are also rising, and since the Chevra cannot be expected to carry them indefinitely, we now must ask families for a deposit at the time a funeral is planned or within seven days of burial in order to ensure our contractors are paid in a timely fashion.

The remaining fees are for those services provided

directly by the Chevra Kadisha and include professional and administration fees, the cost of a casket and tahara (preparation of the deceased for burial) and perpetual care of the cemetery. These costs may total approximately \$7,000 and are invoiced to the family after the shloshim (30 day) period of mourning has concluded. These fees do not include the cost of purchasing and installing a monument, which remains the sole responsibility of the family.

Before a monument can be installed, a permit must be purchased from the Chevra Kadisha, and the funeral account must be made current. All monument maintenance, including repairs, are the sole responsibility of the family. It is recommended that families delay monument installation for up to a year to permit the ground to settle properly, and after installation, to periodically inspect their monuments to ensure they are in good repair.

A survey of other Jewish communities in Canada has indicated that, even with these increases, our fees remain very comparable to other jurisdictions. Terms of payment can be discussed with the funeral planner.



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A MESSAGE FROM STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

In the age of information, we are all inundated with people trying to get our attention. I confess that the Jewish Federation of Edmonton is guilty of this too. However, as a small community, it's important that we stay connected and at times, the only way to get everyone's attention is find different avenues or shout it from the rooftops.

As you may know, the Federation uses various communication tools such as our website, social media, our weekly e-newsletter, *The Bridge*, and *Hakol*.

We're adding another tool to ensure you are receiving

all the information that you need to know about Jewish Edmonton. In the past, we have advertised in the Alberta Jewish News but it wasn't all in one page. We understand you have limited time and require to get the news you need quickly.

This is where *The Hub* fits in. You can pick up this newspaper, find this page, and discover news and upcoming events that you might have missed elsewhere. We still plan to have other ads in the Alberta Jewish News since there are times of the year where so much is going on! Stay connected with us as we strive to be your bridge to Jewish Edmonton.



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Camp BB-Riback marks 40 years since the 'Keegstra Affair'

By Maxine Fischbein

A July 15 reunion at Camp BB-Riback, co-sponsored by JNF Edmonton, underscored how former Camp B'nai Brith Director Bill Meloff, of blessed memory, and Rivvy Meloff - who worked shoulder to shoulder with him at the camp - helped turn adversity into a teachable moment that continues to inspire 40 years later.

In 1983, Jim Keegstra - an Eckville, Alberta social studies teacher who also served as town mayor - was fired from his teaching position for teaching antisemitism and holocaust denial to grade nine and 12 students. The "Keegstra Affair," created a maelstrom of emotion in the Alberta Jewish community.

Remarkably, Bill Meloff had a response that might seem counterintuitive today, in a world increasing given to extremes. Why not invite some of Keegstra's former students to Camp BB to get to know some of their Jewish peers?

And so, on July 10, 1983, a busload of Eckville kids, and some of their parents, joined BB campers for a "Day of Fun and Fellowship" that featured conversation, a picnic and a basketball game.

Hart Snider - who was nine years old at the time - returned to Camp BB Riback on July 15 to talk about that day and to share his 2011 four-time Leo-nominated animated short film *The Basketball Game*, based on the emotions he experienced as events unfolded.

"It was about my first real attempt to understand what antisemitism is," Snider told campers. "This was something I really had to figure out, even as a nine-year-old."

"This story is about how antisemitism spreads, but also how two communities work together to try and stop it," Snider added. "It's an uncomfortable topic, I know, but because it's out there, it helps to talk about it."

The five-minute film depicts the range of emotions Snider and his sidekicks Barry Cooper and Danny Freedman experienced that day.

Snider described how Freedman expressed sympathy for Keegstra's students, saying that what happened in Eckville was not their fault.

"I didn't understand that, I just thought they hated us," Snider said. "We've gone to school and learned

about the Holocaust. They've gone to school and only learned this lie that the Holocaust was a hoax."

The film is better seen than retold. Suffice it to say that nine-year-old Hart, remarkably channeled by his 40-something self, conjures comic-book villains reflecting the worst fears that the kids from both communities had when they first met. Fortunately, Snider's actual interactions with the Eckville kids eventually got him to a less scary place.

Snider did not name Keegstra in the film. Neither did he mire viewers in dates and details. What is notable is the emotional and psychological atmosphere created by Snider and vivified through the skilled animation of his colleague Sean Covernton.

While speaking to campers, Snider fleshed out some of the history, including how Eckville mother Susan Maddox lodged a complaint about Keegstra's teachings and pulled her son from his class.

"For more than a decade, Jim Keegstra had been referring to Jewish people using ugly antisemitic terms in his classroom and teaching his students to believe in conspiracy theories, that shadowy figures were secretly holding the puppet strings, controlling current events," Snider said.

After Keegstra was fired in December 1982, the media descended on Eckville, recalled Snider. The story garnered local and international interest, sparking fears in the Jewish community that Keegstra now had a vast platform to share his views.

Some 75 kids - half the student body at Eckville High - signed a petition asking for Keegstra's reinstatement, Snider said.

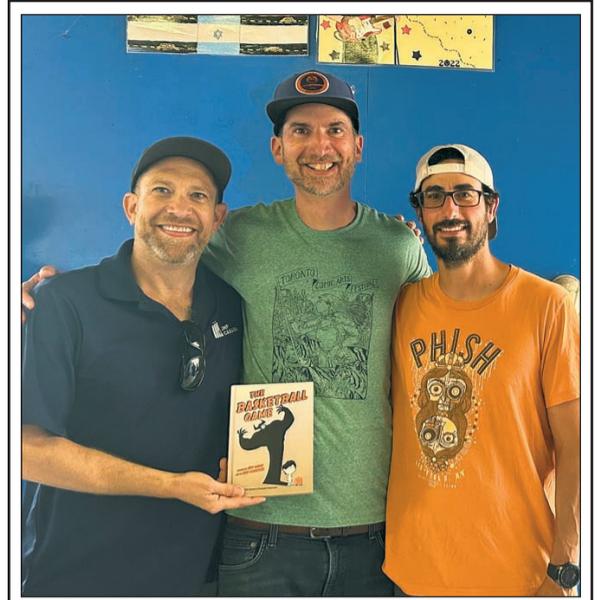
The situation grew from bad to worse when Conservative MLA Stephen Stiles publically stated that the murder of European Jews by the Nazis had never been proven.

Snider spoke of the emergency rally held at the Edmonton Jewish Community Centre when a committee reported their efforts to have Premier Peter Lougheed address antisemitism and Keegstra in the legislature.

A Vancouver B'nai Brith Lodge brought six of Keegstra's former students to a Holocaust Education Symposium in Vancouver.

"One student wrote afterwards, 'The most impressive thing I experienced were the talks with the survivors. I'll never forget these people,'" Snider said.

"Another student wrote about the experience of



Stacy Shaikin and Jay Cairns with author and filmmaker Hart Snider.

staying with a Vancouver Jewish family and said it was nice to be greeted kindly, treated like people and not like bigots or freaks."

Keegstra was not re-elected as Eckville mayor and was eventually charged with inciting hatred against an identifiable group. The trial took place in Red Deer.

"His trial was an awful thing to witness," said Snider, adding that many members of the Jewish community attended.

Snider's Grade 6 Talmud Torah teacher, Tslila Barzel, took her students to Red Deer.

"For her, that day, we weren't just a busload of Jewish kids on a field trip to Red Deer. We were a symbol of Jewish perseverance and strength," Snider said.

"Personally I was terrified of Keegstra actually looking at me and being in the same room as him. I worried about what he'd be talking about. I wondered if we'd be on TV. I thought it was officially the worst field trip of all time."

Snider and his classmates were deemed too young to be in a courtroom and Barzel and her class returned to Edmonton.

"In the end Keegstra was successfully convicted of criminally promoting hate. His story forced Canadians to have an uncomfortable public debate about antisemitism in our society, and it reminded everyone about the importance of thinking critically and that we all have a responsibility to stand up to hate."

But to Snider the story is not so much about Keegstra.

"To me it's about his former students, what happened to them... It's shocking. They were lied to and robbed of proper education," Snider told campers.

"And just by hanging out together, talking and playing a simple game of basketball, it helped dispel fear and prejudice."

Snider pitched his animated film through an NFB program for emerging filmmakers. They opted to fund the film, but gave it a small budget, Snider said. He and Sean Covernton simplified the project, working mainly in black and white and using colour only when depicting nine-year-old Snider's worst fears.

The animated depiction of Snider was based on a photo of him at the time. Anyone who knew Bill Meloff

Continued on page 24

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Students reflect on their March of Living experience

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

Hearts spoke to hearts at Beth Tzedec Synagogue on June 19, as Calgary high school students Mika Raber, Alyssa Rzepa and Lilah Silver shared reflections from the April 2023 March of the Living (MOL) trip to Poland and Israel and honoured the memory of Holocaust survivor Alex Buckman, of Vancouver, who passed away while sharing his testimony in Warsaw.

The three young women and four of their peers from Edmonton were among 50 teens in the first Coast to Coast (CTC) MOL trip to Poland and Israel since 2018. The smaller-than-usual cohort - consisting of approximately 50 Canadian kids living outside Toronto and Montreal - were among 10,000 Jewish students from around the world who marched from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Yom HaShoah and later marked Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel.

Always an emotional rite of passage, the 2023 trip proved more challenging than usual, said Calgary Jewish Federation Director of Development Diana Kalef and her Edmonton colleague Jennifer Magalnick, who attended the June 19 Calgary event.

In addition to coordinating Edmonton participation in the CTC trip and serving on the planning committee, Magalnick - who is the Jewish Federation of Edmonton Associate Director, Holocaust Education and Community Engagement - served as a trip chaperone.

It was the first CTC trip since the COVID-19 pandemic, noted Kalef. A Toronto and Montreal trip was cancelled last year due to security concerns arising from Russia's war on Ukraine.

As always, the 2023 MOL was preceded by months of intensive education about the history of European Jewry, antisemitism, and the attempted destruction of the Jewish people.

It is important to help youth "integrate what they have witnessed and experienced," said Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne, who served as a chaperone on the 2018

trip... Their community has their backs, and we're there to help them every step of the way."

"Landing in Poland, the 2023 marchers toured Krakow, commemorated Yom HaShoah, and the next day they donned their blue jackets and walked the three kilometres from Auschwitz to Birkenau with thousands of others from around the world," Kalef said.

Buckman was with them every step of the way and traveled with the group to Warsaw, where he collapsed during a Q and A session.

"It is still incomprehensible to us that we went from marching with Alex to marching for Alex," said Mika Raber.

For Lilah Silver, the journey was deeply personal.

"While we were in Warsaw, I turned 17, the age my great-bubbie was when she survived the Warsaw Ghetto uprising," Silver said. "We have heard the stories, seen the camps and the unmarked graves, and now we have become witnesses....We will not be bystanders, and we will continue to carry the stories and live through the legacies of Alex and my bubbie and every other survivor."

"I'm so thankful that I went on this trip and have never felt more proud to be Jewish," said Alyssa Rzepa. "I know that Alex was a big part of my pride and hopefully sharing our experience to all of you will encourage you to spread kindness, just like Alex would want."

Fedele Arcuri first heard a Holocaust survivor speak in 2020, when he filmed the moving documentary that complemented the made-in-Calgary photographic exhibit *Here to Tell: The Faces of Holocaust Survivors*.

"It froze me then and it still freezes me today," said Arcuri, who served as CTC photographer and videographer, also pitching in as a chaperone.



March of the Living participants: Alyssa Rzepa (L), Mika Raber and Lilah Silver.

Arcuri recorded all the interactions Buckman had with the students on the day he passed.

"Alex [asked] the exact same question to every single student ... 'When you go home, will you speak about the things that you saw today?'" Arcuri said.

Arcuri captured the sorrow of the MOL as well as the pride and even levity as the young adults belted out *Hatikvah* and *O Canada* in the former Jewish shtetl of Tykocin, sang *Sweet Caroline* on the tour bus, enjoyed their first falafels in Israel and sang *Am Yisrael Chai* (the people of Israel live) with gusto.

Buckman would have wanted it that way. When he accompanied youth on the 2010 MOL, he mourned in Poland but celebrated in Israel, recalled Kalef, then a chaperone on the trip.

"He didn't want to miss a single moment with the students. He shared his story of survival while we sat in an orphanage not unlike where he was hidden. He walked into the gas chambers of Auschwitz and mourned the place where his family was killed," Kalef said.

"Then we arrived in Israel and Alex didn't stop smiling...He rafted on the Jordan and danced at Yom Ha'atzmaut. He was so full of life."

Jennifer Magalnick saluted the 2023 participants.

Continued on page 10

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Henry Wisewood class of '73 reunites after 50 years

By Deborah Shatz

Henry Wisewood class of '73 celebrated its 50th anniversary with a reunion this summer. For those who have kept in touch over the years, it was an amazing party, celebrating a huge milestone. But for many of us who have lost touch with just about everyone from that era, it was a real blast from the past, trying to match faces to names to memories.

It was a large class – upwards of 600 students – and there were some 125 people at the reunion. I recognized the names of many and the faces of some and flashed back to numerous memories throughout the evening. A highlight of the event was one classmate apologizing to me for some bad behaviour at my bat mitzvah – I remember the 13-year-old boys from my new group of friends smirking every time I sang 'debartah bum' but I'm not sure that's what elicited the apology. It's more likely that they took some wine off the tables and tied one on. After 54 years, the apology was heartfelt and endearing.

It was a fun evening, but the reunion took some work on my part; I scrutinized every face and name and tried to jog my memory – that in itself was both challenging and enjoyable.

It was great to see so many names from the past, and splitting up into feeder schools was a reminder of the journey. Attending Milton Williams after the Calgary Hebrew School was a huge step to unrestrained freedom into the larger world that expanded even more

with three years at Henry Wisewood. There were lots of new people to meet and a ton of new things to experience.

The real highlight of the reunion for me was attending a pre-reunion event organized by some of the "kids" who attended elementary school with me. Fifteen of us – grade 6 grads from the Hebrew School and IL Peretz School Class of '67 – gathered for brunch. Of the fifteen, I've only kept in touch with one person but there was something very familiar about everyone there.

I was very good friends with only a handful of those Jewish classmates over the 11 years of schooling that I had in Calgary, (I moved there from Winnipeg in grade 2). But I felt a warm camaraderie to them all. We'd been in the same cohort for all those years – through community activities and camp for some, BBYO, USY, and/or NCSY for others and yes Wisewood for us all. Regardless of what was going on in our formative years, at the brunch I felt a bond of shared experience and common values.



Henry Wisewood Class of '73 celebrated their 50th reunion this summer and a pre-reunion brunch was held for classmates who attended Calgary Hebrew School and IL Peretz School (CJA Grade 6 Class of '67).

At the end of the day, unlike when we were high schoolers, after 50 years, I think our similarities are much stronger than our differences. I got a sense that our lived experiences have taught each of us humility, kindness and compassion – to care for ourselves, our children and grandchildren and our aging parents. Are we community builders, committed to the preservation of our community and our planet? I'm not sure – hopefully some of us are.

Regardless, I certainly enjoyed seeing everyone who attended. As my big-haired friend Patty Silver said – that brunch was like a big group hug. It felt like home.

Students reflect

Cont. from page 9

"I know that it's a hard thing to do," said Magalnick, who was a youth participant on the 1990 MOL.

"It's painful to see that you have to do this at such a young age, and I am also, at the same time, so proud of you all for doing it," Magalnick told the teens.

Despite the pain of losing Buckman, a highlight of the trip was experiencing it with him, Magalnick said.

"It was just so powerful to be able to have had that experience with him, to have had the experience with these wonderful students, to be able to hear them speak about the experience when it is still so fresh and so difficult.... "It really speaks to the March of the Living as a program, so affecting and effective on so many levels."

Alumni Alison Numerow and Daniel Birnbaum, who were accompanied by Buckman during the 2010 MOL, shared an excerpt from his memoirs.

Following Arcuri's video tribute to Buckman, Rabbi Jayne chanted the *El Maleh Rachamim* memorial prayer.

Attendees were treated to *gâteau à l'orange* - orange cake - from a recipe Buckman's aunt had surreptitiously written down, at great personal risk, while a prisoner at Ravensbruck. Buckman had shared the recipe with students wherever he spoke - including the annual Holocaust Education Symposium in Calgary. He urged kids to keep both the recipe and his testimony alive by sharing it with their loved ones.

Reflections from Edmonton

Earlier this month, Edmontonian Ellie Vogel shared with *AJNews* the impact of the MOL on herself and her peers.

"I would highly encourage every Jewish teen to go on the trip," said Vogel, stressing the vital importance of her generation learning and sharing the testimony of Holocaust survivors.

Vogel says she will never forget Buckman.

"Alex was one of the kindest people I've ever met," said Vogel as she recalled that many on the March, herself included, broke down and cried while touring Auschwitz.

"No matter how hard it was for us, it was 100 times harder for Alex. Yet he would go up to us and give hugs and say... 'I'm proud of you for doing this,' and 'you are

so strong.' I think this shows his character and how much he cared about us and making sure that we all never forget," recalled Vogel.

Vogel valued the opportunity to debrief with peers.

"We would talk about how certain things made us feel and found out that many of us were having similar reactions."

What they saw on the trip will inform how participants respond to antisemitism, Vogel said.

The MOL "...gives you a great appreciation for Israel and how truly important it is to the Jewish people," Vogel told *AJNews*, adding, "Once the plane landed, it felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, I felt at home."

"But some of my favourite moments were ones that showed why we were [on the MOL]...like singing *Hatikvah* in Majdanek, or the teens deciding to say the *Mourners' Kaddish* at the unmarked graves," added Vogel. "Seeing so many Jewish teens stand in the same place that our people were once murdered...was so empowering."

Dr. Erin Wright, the Edmontonian who accompanied MOL participants as CTC physician, characterized the experience as "hard at times, but at the same time affirming and uplifting."

"There were issues," noted Wright, who knew that better than most. He was the first responder when Alex Buckman collapsed and, sadly, could not be revived.

Wright praised the rapid and skilled response of Polish EMTs.

Magalnick had similar praise for International MOL staff and leaders of other delegations who pitched in to support CTC marchers as they coped with the sudden loss of a man they had drawn so close to in the all-too-brief time they had together.

A delegation head who is a clinical psychologist pitched in - as did a Toronto Rabbi - to help support the CTC marchers, ensuring that they got the support they needed as a group and one-on-one.

The MOL is a highly structured and well-planned trip, noted Magalnick, but time was made to allow for those who had traveled in Buckman's company to support one another as staff and volunteers made thoughtful decisions about how to carry on.

Notably, Patrick Buckman rejoined the group for Shabbat services.

"He really wanted to be with the group, and we

wanted to support him in any way we could," Magalnick said.

By all accounts, MOL participants enjoyed their time in Israel, though they narrowly missed another horrifying situation when five people were injured in a car ramming attack near the Machane Yehuda market just 20 minutes after the marchers had left the popular tourist destination, Wright told *AJNews*.

Abby Flackman, the Winnipeg staffer who led the CTC delegation was in constant communication with the security team on the ground, said Wright.

"We had to make changes on the go," added Wright, who said that the adult leadership team was "rock solid."

"Our kids were great," he added, "I am really impressed with how they handled everything... They were a real source of pride."

It is important that the March of the Living continue, Wright said, especially in a world that will soon be without living Holocaust survivors.

"People say never again," when referring to the Holocaust, he added, "but we need to ensure that it doesn't happen again."

There are other important takeaways for marchers, said Magalnick, emphasizing that seeing thousands of young Jewish people in the same place "isn't a typical Alberta Jewish experience."

"It's just amazing that they are there from all over the world, and yet there's this common thread."

Perhaps most important, says Magalnick, is that Jewish kids are "...really taking back the power."

Visiting death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka and Majdanek, and many places where Jewish life once thrived, gives marchers insight into all that was lost, said Magalnick.

"We are proud... and we are here," said Magalnick, adding that the marchers delighted in celebrating their heritage, especially in the very places where deeply-rooted Jewish communities were obliterated or very nearly destroyed.

"The strength of the organization, the group and the students themselves was breathtaking... This isn't an experience anybody would have wanted for anyone else, but at the same time, the kids grew immensely in so many ways throughout the trip and bonded closely with one another.

"It was a really powerful immersive experience."

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The 2023 Edmonton JNF Negev Gala was a wonderful event, honouring Rosemary and Stan Kitay. Pictured above Comedian Joel Chasnoff, the honourees with their daughters Andrea and Nikki and a round of applause from the crowd including guest speaker Elan Isaacson, JNF Canada president Beth Price and many others.

JNF Gala *Cont. from page 1*

South Africa, the Kitays have been active in the Jewish community, serving and supporting institutions and causes that are important to us all. Through word and deed, Rosemary and Stan have been unwavering in their support for Israel.

In addition to their commitment to community and Klal Yisrael, the Kitays shine as wonderful role models for their children on the importance of strong family love and values. As Rosemary and Stan learned from their parents, family and community are central to everything. Andrea, Nikki and Marc all spoke glowingly about the bonds that were formed in their early years that have continued into their adulthood. They emphasized that they are so appreciative of the lessons and the values that they learned from their parents.

On the subject of family values, Rosemary explained why she and Stan chose the Beth Israel as the venue for the Negev Gala. She said, "Twenty-eight years ago, our family joined Beth Israel Synagogue after settling in Edmonton. This family centred Shul and community became central to our lives. We are proud to have celebrated life's milestones, Chagim, attended services, engaged in various programs, and forged long lasting friendships within its warm embrace. Hence, when deciding upon the location for this event, the choice of Beth Israel was immediate and resolute."

Proceeds from the Edmonton Negev Gala will support the construction of the Eshkol Educational Activity Centre located in the western part of the Negev bordering with Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

The centre will provide students with a much-needed secure place to take part in educational activities.

"As you are well aware, the communities face many security challenges," explained Stan. "Despite these challenges, the population continues to grow demographically, with many young families choosing to locate there... This project is very essential as a means to protect and support the growth of a strong vibrant community for these vulnerable families. It is incomprehensible for us living in the diaspora, to conceptualize what it is like living under these life and death conditions, and the impact that it has on mental and physical health, causing increased anxiety and post-traumatic stress."

"Elan, I would like you to take the following message back to Eshkol," added Stan, speaking directly to Elan Isaacson. "Our community stands with you during your times of crises and escalations. While we cannot control the security challenges you have to endure, we are grateful to make a difference in your physical and mental wellbeing."

Volunteering has been an important part of Rosemary and Stan's lives. "For us, volunteering came naturally," explained Rosemary. "We witnessed our parents and grandparents volunteer for various organizations that mainly benefited Israel and our Johannesburg community at large."

"We are eternally grateful, having been afforded the opportunity to begin anew in Edmonton in 1991. We chose to offer our three children a safe life... [and] we felt the need to give back to our community. We have participated in a wide range of activities, including assisting non-profit organizations, and community projects. Overall, volunteering embodies

compassion, generosity and solidarity, which highlights the power of individuals coming together. We have acquired valuable skills, and strive to create positive change to help build a better world for Klal Yisroel and the diaspora."

"To be chosen as Negev Gala honourees is an extraordinary distinction, one that fills us with a deep sense of humility and profound sense of honour," added Stan. "We are humbled not only by this award, but also by the inspiring individuals, and cause that surrounds us this evening. This accolade is not just about us; it is a tribute to every individual who has collaborated, contributed, and shared their invaluable support along this journey. It is also a tremendous acknowledgement to be held in the same esteem as the many honourees who have stood at this podium during previous Negev galas."

"As we revel in the joy of this moment, let us pledge to use this glory as a catalyst for future endeavours. Together, we can shape a future that is brighter, more inclusive, and filled with endless possibilities."

Together Stan and Rosemary thanked the many people who worked hard to make the gala campaign a success – organizing and planning every aspect of the event.

"Thank you for being a part of our recognition and may our shared commitment to JNF continue to make a difference," they concluded. "May this 2023 Negev Gala be an evening of inspiration, celebration and limitless hope."

If you'd like to contribute to this important project, you can still donate here: <https://bit.ly/3CEZVLO>

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Edmonton Federation is planning for the future

By Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO
Stacey Leavitt-Wright

Imagine a room brimming with the energy of 32 adults ranging in age from 20 to 35, some new to the city, others having returned after university or living here their whole life, looking to reconnect with the Jewish community and meet new people. Among them are two emissaries from the Jewish Agency for Israel, holding space for their questions and concerns about Israel, our Jewish homeland.

It is no stretch of the imagination. This event actually took place last month with the new young adult cohort we have established this year, called Genesis. We eagerly anticipate more events, volunteer opportunities, and engagement of these young adults. With the newly launched microgrants program, we can foster connections in ways most meaningful to them and continue to reach out to unaffiliated Jews in Edmonton.

In February 2021, we set out to ask the community a few questions; what was top of mind? What was important to you, and how should the Jewish Federation of Edmonton refocus as it emerged from the pandemic? Given our restricted capability and resources, where should we centre our efforts?

The strategic plan identified both capacity and content priorities. Building the capacity of staff and volunteer talent has allowed us to expand our reach and build upon the foundations of successful programs and events that we have supported for many years. Genesis is one example; Holocaust Education is another, where we are now offering a program to junior high schools. We are further developing relationships with the Edmonton Public School Board and the Edmonton Public Library to ensure that awareness and education have a broad reach. The award-winning Shine A Light Mosaic will tour city schools with a teacher resource guide (generated by staff and a teacher advisory board) once it has completed the library tour.

One of the principle aims of our strategic plan, revealed in December 2021, is to engage with unaffiliated groups who are not yet part of the community. Shalom Baby is in its second year and Genesis is growing. We have connected and

supported many young adults and families with each other, synagogues and Talmud Torah school. As a professional who got her start in community volunteering, it gives me great pleasure to welcome so many new volunteers to events and programs.

Establishing a leadership pipeline is another priority of our strategic plan, while engaging seasoned volunteers who can mentor newer ones. We are seeing this both at our board and sub-committees and look forward to instituting a leadership program for people across our community later this year.

The strategic plan survey revealed that we needed to work on communications. We have been establishing a strong and diverse communication strategy, with a sophisticated approach to telling the Federation story across all platforms. This has been a key area of focus that we are continuously building and improving upon.

We have enhanced connections with the media and elected officials across all levels of government, ensuring the Jewish Federation of Edmonton is seen as a trusted partner and resource on local issues of concern to the community. Providing opportunities for community members to take part in advocacy is an area we have been addressing and I am excited about travelling with many of you to the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' Face It, Fight It conference in Ottawa this October. If you are concerned about antisemitism in Canada, this is your opportunity to be more informed and to act alongside hundreds of others from across Canada. Please contact Jacqueline or myself to find out more about the conference and what subsidies may be available for you to attend.

Of the many questions our strategic plan set out to answer, the one capacity priority I am asked about frequently is facility. Will we have a community gathering place, and what are the plans for the



Federation's Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic recently took home four 2023 Capital awards for outstanding communication in Edmonton – pictured above with Tammy Vineberg, Associate Director of Communication. The menorah mosaic is currently touring prominent places throughout the city of Edmonton.

Federation offices? Now that we are at the midway point of the implementation of the strategic plan, we are taking measured steps towards establishing a facility plan by the end of the three years.

While in its early stages, the board has established a facility and space committee, chaired by Karen Leibovici. This committee has been tasked with finding an actionable recommendation to bring to the board that will meet the space needs of the community. This new group met regularly this spring to review prior considerations and consider and explore potential options. We are eagerly anticipating to informing you about their progress once their work has advanced further.

The Torah emphasizes the importance of leadership grounded in humility, honouring established leadership structures, and promoting unity. When personal agendas overshadow the greater good, it disrupts the harmony we seek within a community. True to our values, I endeavour to work with each of you, with grace and humility, in a transparent, accountable, and collaborative manner for the betterment of our community. It is a privilege to work with passionate volunteers and committed colleagues from across Jewish Edmonton to ensure a strong and thriving Federation and community.

Edmonton celebrates Pride Shabbat

By Matthew Levine

On June 23rd the Jewish Federation of Edmonton hosted a Pride Shabbat at a campsite in Laurier Park. Members of the Jewish community, MLAs, allies from CHEW project, the Queer and Trans Health Collective, and the ISCWR joined together to create a turnout of over 90 attendees. The festivities included numerous speeches, a dvar torah, songs, readings, and prayers. There was also a light dinner provided as well as numerous delicious rainbow dyed loaves of challah.

Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, introduced the event with a speech that emphasized its importance. She began by thanking volunteers, staff, and attendees, and reading a Treaty Six land acknowledgement. Stacey then highlighted the importance of intersectionality within the queer-Jewish community.

"We must build spaces that do not require our community members to choose between aspects of their identities," she said.

She went on to talk about CIJA standing up to the recent Anti-Homosexuality act in Uganda, and advocating for international aid to help queer Ugandans immigrate to Canada. The Jewish community also played a role in removing the gbMSM blood ban and supporting the banning of conversion therapy in Canada.

"Rights are not guaranteed, they are fought for,"

added Stacey.

JFED's CEO finalized her speech with a strong take home message that set a warm and welcoming tone for the rest of the event. "It is my deepest and sincerest wish that you come as you are, in your fullest, most authentic selves and feel that there is a place for you in our community," she proclaimed.

Two of the MLA's representing the NDP spoke after Stacey. Lori Sigurdson spoke about pride calling it "a celebration of love, acceptance and equality." Brooks Arcand-Paul spoke about our connection to the land and standing against hate.

"Like a flowing river, we all have to move in the same direction," stated MLA Arcand-Paul.

"We must stand against hate every single day in every way that we can."

Rabbah Gila of the Temple Beth Ora Synagogue, then lead the attendees in song, readings, and prayers that related to queer pride, struggles, and the intersection of Jewish and queer identities. This Kabbalah Shabbat was engaging and different attendees were welcomed to the front to perform readings in both English and Hebrew.

Cas Allen, a JFED summer student in 2022, created and read a dvar torah that highlighted the benefits of living in a space in-between binaries imposed on us. It is centered on a poem read during the Kabbalah Shabbat titled *Twilight People* which is an ode to trans Jewish people and the space they exist in.

"The beauty of finding shades of gray within blacks and whites. Some people may be afraid of these in-between because they have programmed us to view the world in binaries. Of course, this might make life easier, but it also enslaves us to a life so narrow in our own perceptions that we lose sight of the beauty in exploring uncharted territory."

Cas related finding meaning in one's identity to Jewish scholars deriving meaning from ancient texts. "What this scholar says is not the same as what this scholar says, but here is where they overlap and here is where they separate and here is where you can decide on what YOU think is right."

Cas went on to describe what living in this "in-between" can do for us, and how it can unlock a different lens with which to explore each other and the world.

"I would see fewer colours. I would be numb to the joys of a life without constraint. I would imagine fewer possibilities. I would view people with less empathy," stated Cas.

"My vision is less tunneled and my mind remains open to the thousands of possibilities that life offers... Here, as Shabbat wraps her warm embrace over this community, perhaps we can look at each other in a new light and accept how wonderfully beautiful our in-betweens are."

A copy of this speech is available on the Jewish Federation of Edmonton Facebook page or through this link: <https://ow.ly/b5gl50P1N6w>.

Matthew Levine is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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community calendar

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

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



jewishcalgary.org



A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

Chaverim (friends), I hope you and your families are keeping well and enjoying the summer. For many, this time of the year means a break from the monotony of everyday life, a respite from schoolwork, and plans to do at least one thing that is different or out of the ordinary (i.e. acquisition of a new skill, embarking on a special trip, etc.). We promise ourselves to slow down and smell the roses. We also know that just as quickly as the summer begins, it seems to pass by on fast forward, and well before it's true, we comment that *Rosh HaShanah* is "just around the corner."

Summer camp –day and sleep away– provides all the thoughts and feelings I've mentioned above. Many of our community's children and young adults participate in some form of camp over the course of the summer. Two of Calgary Jewish Federation's key beneficiary partners are the Paperny Family JCC and Camp BB Riback, both of which provide amazing camp experiences for our children and youth to connect, build skills, develop leadership potential, and engage in meaningful programming.

The Federation offices are housed in the JCC, and every day I see smiling day camp children having fun, building their social skills, and joyfully engaging in a safe Jewish environment. The counselors lead their

groups in creative programming including arts and crafts, games, and special theme days. The care they provide is evident. So too, is the pride the campers demonstrate when they create something new, achieve something they've not done before, and make a new friend. Every single day, the JCC is buzzing with children of all ages co-mingling with each other, with seniors in the building, and with people from all backgrounds – Jewish and non-Jewish.

Camp BB Riback provides an immersive, sleep away, nurturing summer home for many children and youth from Alberta (and beyond). Campers can stay for a very short visit or stay for up to the entire summer. I recently visited the camp with colleagues from Edmonton, and we witnessed campers of all ages doing 'fun' things such as crafts, horseback riding, waterfront activities, and more. We also noted the *kehillah* (community) that was continuously being cultivated, the *ruach* (spirit) the campers showed for Camp BB Riback, and the feeling was one of togetherness. One of our purposes to visit camp was to spend time with the LTP (Leadership Training Program) group, teens who have just completed grade nine and will be entering high school in the coming year. We had a chance to discuss community – what it is, what it looks like, what they need from it, and what they want to give

to it. We were so impressed by these young leaders, their commitment to one another, and their dedication to their Jewish home communities (in Alberta and beyond).

So, while summer is a time to slow down, rejuvenate, and prepare for the school and Jewish lunar year ahead, it is also a time during which our community's children and youth are enjoying time together, building friendships, honing their skills, and cultivating their leadership. I would like to acknowledge the staff who care for our children and youth over the summer. I would like to share our appreciation for the parents who entrust their children to the camps and organizations that provide meaningful programs over the summer. I would like to say *todah rabah* (thank you very much) to the donors and volunteers who power these camps and organizations.

In moments like this, we see the very best of our community and envision how bright our future looks.

B'Shalom,

Adam Silver, CEO
Calgary Jewish Federation

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Inspirational Women

Inspiring women in the field of law

By Jackie Halpern

The field of law has traditionally been male dominated, with women facing numerous challenges in pursuing legal careers. However, over the past few decades, the legal landscape in Alberta has seen a remarkable transformation as women continue to challenge conventions, overcome obstacles, and thrive in their legal careers.

Currently in Alberta, approximately 43% of active lawyers identify as female, with even more encouraging numbers of female law school applicants.

In 2022, the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law admission statistics show female students now outnumber their male counterparts with 57% of the class identifying as female.

This positive shift has been instrumental in fostering a more inclusive

and diverse legal community in the province. When women have access to quality education, they gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue their dreams, challenge social norms, and become agents of change. For law school graduates who do not practice law in the traditional sense, a law degree opens up a wide range of career opportunities within the corporate world and in public service, as well as making significant contributions to charitable and professional organizations.

Like in any profession, women in law often face unique challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives. Juggling long hours, courtroom appearances, and family responsibilities can be daunting. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to finding a balance that suits your needs and allows you to thrive both personally and professionally. Achieving work-life balance is an ongoing process, and it may require adjustments and adaptations along the way. I have been very fortunate to find a way to practice law and try to be the best Mom I could be.

In 1996, after six years of full-time private practice, I sought out a more flexible work schedule to prioritize my growing family. Three years later, and with two young children, I was once again re-evaluating my priorities. Deciding to take a break from private practice to be a full-time mom is a personal choice and one that I fully embraced. For me, being a full-time mom during those formative years was what I envisioned for our family.

When my children started school, I returned to private practice when McLeod Law invited me to work part-time. Considering this was almost 20 years ago, it was remarkable how accommodating they were for a mother with two young children. They understood it was important for me to adjust my hours so I would never miss important milestones and be there to pick them up from school and so much more. I have enjoyed

enormous support from the people I work with, and in turn, they gained a loyal and happier lawyer. Once my children graduated, I returned to practicing law full-time, became a partner and served as head of the Personal Injury group at McLeod Law as well as volunteering for many organizations within our Jewish community.

I believe the law is a helping profession. As a personal injury lawyer, I find it a privilege to help people through an incredibly challenging time. I genuinely care about my clients and am never afraid to fight for their rights. All my life experiences, from law school to motherhood, have helped me become a strong advocate not only for my clients, but for numerous charitable and professional organizations over the years.

One project that is meaningful to me has been arguing against a 'no fault' auto insurance regime for Alberta. There are people in Alberta lobbying for this, and through my work with the Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association (I was Chair, and still remain on the Board), I hope to educate people that there are ways to keep automobile insurance in Alberta affordable, yet still maintain the tort system that we have. I have proudly used my legal skills and knowledge to drive meaningful change within the legal profession and society as a whole.

For anyone considering a career in law, I encourage you to plan early. Law school's focus on the character and intentions of an applicant and your whole life will be analyzed during the process. Finally, connect with people, find your own support system, and be active in your community through networking and in giving back. I hope my story encourages women to be true to themselves and know they still make an impact in whatever they choose to do.

Jackie Halpern is a partner at McLeod Law LLP in Calgary. She is a recognized leader in the area of serious personal injury.



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Inspirational Women

Empowering Women – Sari Uretsky

By Jenna Soroka

Sari Uretsky is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association (AIFDA), as well as a mother of three teenagers. She is also the owner of Uretsky Physiotherapy. Through each chapter of her life, she has used her passions and hardships to build a business, a not-for-profit organization, and a life she takes great pride in.

A constant thread throughout Sari's life has been dance. Since the age of four, dance has played a significant role in her physical and mental health. Her mom initially enrolled her into dance to build her confidence, which included lessons in tap, jazz, and ballet. It was love at first plié. Sari describes herself as an introverted person, but dance allowed her to channel a different, more outgoing, side



of her personality.

In junior high, Sari injured her Achilles tendon and began going to a physiotherapist for rehabilitation. It was this therapist who sparked Sari's curiosity and interest in a possible career in physiotherapy. Fast forward to 1999, and Sari graduated with a Bachelor in Rehabilitative Medicine from the University of Alberta. After gaining experience as a head trainer for the Golden Bears basketball team and as an assistant trainer with the Edmonton Eskimos (now Elks), she moved to Vancouver, BC for her first physiotherapy job. "People in your life empower you and change you in different ways," noted Sari, while sharing deep gratitude for her family's support growing up and their willingness to help her work towards her goals and passions.

A big shift occurred in her life when she was diagnosed with a chronic disease at the age of 14. When she was admitted to the hospital during the middle of dance competition season, Sari recalled a memory of her dad where he told her "You will never let this control your life. You will control this disease." This message uplifted Sari during a time of uncertainty, to remind her that she was strong enough to not only move forward but thrive. As an adult, she appreciates the power these words have had throughout her life.

In addition to her parents' unwavering support, her aunts played a significant role in her introduction to the world of Israeli dance. Her first exposure was during high school through her aunt Karen Hering's Israeli dance classes in Edmonton. When Sari moved to Vancouver for work as an adult, she then joined her other aunt's Israeli dance program. She was part of Trudy Harowitz's Israeli dance group for almost 10 years in Vancouver where she danced, choreographed numbers, and learned how to organize shows.

When Sari started having children, she moved back to Edmonton to be closer to family but missed the Israeli dance community she had been part of in Vancouver. Outside of some basic instruction kids at the Edmonton Talmud Torah School were exposed to, there was no structured Israeli dance program in Edmonton. In the spring of 2006, Sari formed the Aviv Israeli dance group which started off as six volunteer adults with classes held at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC). At the time, the Jewish Federation of

Edmonton provided rehearsal space at the JCC for free as the dance program began as a free program. Dancers and volunteers helped to sew their first costumes using fabric donated by Fabric Land. "The costumes were rough, but we [did have] a costume," Sari recalled with a chuckle. During this time, she was working full time as a physiotherapist, raising three children, and running this program.

Sari credits Stacey Leavitt-Wright, current CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, for being a driving force in creating the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association (AIFDA) dance program we see today. In 2012, with the help of other key individuals, Sari and Stacey decided to make the group into a not-for-profit association with Stacey becoming the first President on the Executive Board. Two years later Festival Hatzafon (Festival of the North) was born. Edmonton's Israeli dance festival has evolved throughout the years, always showcasing the hard work, dedication, and talent of AIFDA's dance community. This coming year, Festival Hatzafon is planning a two-day event to celebrate 18 years since the start of the Aviv dancers. It will be a unique celebration with alumni planning to return for a special performance.

Sari's Israeli dance program has grown to provide an enriched cultural experience for the Edmonton community. AIFDA has brought dance choreographers to Edmonton from around the world to teach new choreographies and lead workshops. In 2014, with the help of a grant from Karen Hering, Sari and Stacey traveled to Israel for an Israeli dance teacher workshop. After-school dance classes at the Talmud Torah school were made available for kindergarten to grade 6 students, and Meirav and Doron Or began leading drop-in circle dance lessons. Aviv and the other performing groups have traveled across North America to perform in front of wide-ranging audiences.

AIFDA strives to provide its participants with a place to explore and deepen their connection to their heritage, in a safe and welcoming environment, while providing them with instruction in folk dance as well as a place to make new friends and strengthen existing ones. Furthermore, AIFDA aims to enrich the cultural mosaic of Edmonton and its people by exposing them to Jewish and Israeli culture through the art of dance. By participating in various festivals and multicultural events, their goal is to spread peace and tolerance to as many people as possible.

This mission, as described on their website, has been the guiding force throughout the years of AIFDA's existence. Alongside the incredible growth of Sari's

Continued on page 20



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Inspirational Women

Smiles, surprises and rewards of a wonderful career

By Dr. Caron Glickman

Sarah had been a patient of mine for several years. Originally, she had come in suffering from jaw pain due to clenching, and I had treated her using procedures both simple and conservative - a custom night guard and a little bit of Botox to relax her chewing muscles did the trick. Her headaches improved, too.

Now, five years later, Sarah had just sent the last of her children off to university, and was helping her aging parents navigate health issues, all while at the height of her career. She mentioned that she was quite busy, but that, overall, life was going well for her. Still, a couple of girlfriends had told her that she looked tired lately. When she looks in the mirror, Sarah told me, the person she sees looking back at her looks older than she actually feels. This opened up a conversation about non-surgical facial aesthetic procedures.

When I first embarked on a career in dentistry several decades ago, I never dreamed that I would eventually have the opportunity to put down my dental drill and focus on helping people feel and look better. I started this transition over a decade ago in my dental practice in Seattle, so when I moved with my husband to Calgary in 2016, I decided to limit my practice to treating head and neck pain and offering facial aesthetic treatments. After passing the Canadian dental board exams (Oy!), I became one of the twenty-or-so dentists in Alberta credentialed to offer advanced facial aesthetic services. Later, I was thrilled to join a dental office that shared my vision and met my standards for patient care.

I'll confess, however, that this was never the path I imagined my career would take. At the beginning of my post-doctoral training, my plan was only to help patients with their head and neck pain and to keep them from breaking their teeth, not to work with facial aesthetics. But my patients objected. 'I trust you

to provide natural-looking results and discrete treatment,' they told me. 'I'd rather get my Botox treatment at the same time I get my teeth cleaned, and I really like the way you give injections.'

They liked the way I gave injections? It was true. Dentists *do* know how to give injections—we do it all the time. As a group, we have a fine-tuned sense of aesthetic beauty and harmony. Helping people become their best selves, I remembered, is what got me into this work to begin with.

Thinking about it, I also realized that being a woman might be an advantage. I understand what it is like for a woman to have an empty nest; I understand the challenges of caring for aging parents; I too have felt weary.

Maybe it shouldn't be a surprise, then, that currently, a majority of dental students are women (it was only 25-30 percent when I was in school). Dentistry is a wonderful career for women. It offers flexible schedules, predictable structure and long-lasting, meaningful relationships. Also, as a doctoral healthcare career, we generally don't experience very many life-threatening emergencies and accompanying late night phone calls.

Sarah asked several questions about the treatments I could provide to help her look less tired and worn. I assured her that she would still look like herself after her treatment, just fresher—as if we turned the clock back a little bit. We scheduled her appointment, and she soon returned for a 30-minute, pain-free treatment. Two weeks later, Sarah came in for her follow-up appointment with a radiant smile on her face. When I showed her the before and after photos, she smiled even bigger. "Wow!" She said. "If I'd known I'd be so happy with the results, I would have come in years ago!"

Leaving my office, Sarah still wore her smile of empowerment. And that made two of us.



Dr. Caron Glickman practices at Spackman Dental in Calgary and in the Seattle area. She also teaches healthcare professionals as a faculty member of the American Academy of Facial Esthetics. She and her husband have four grown children and three adorable grandchildren.

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Inspirational Women

Women In Process – Empowerment, Mentorship and Leadership

By Heather Andrews

Womanition features women in business to create collaboration and connection with our community. Through our magazine of 17+ years, *Womanition Magazine* has consistently showcased thousands of female entrepreneurs in a professional manner and classic style to elevate their business profiles. Its purpose is to connect the world to these successful women who are ready and willing to help people with their every need.

With featuring our amazing women in business, they are stepping into visibility. A favorite saying of ours is “You can’t be a success and a secret at the same time.” If you want a different life, you have to do things differently. Making that choice will change the trajectory of your life. By making the decision, 9 years ago to attend a Womanition Luncheon, I found a community of like-minded women. Womanition offered hope. After being restructured from my Healthcare Management role, my identity changed. Womanition welcomed me with open arms. Dorothy Briggs, the founder, is a heartfelt



businesswoman who created Womanition for Women in Process and transition; A home to find empowerment, mentorship and leadership. Lives are forever changed here by learning from others who have gone before them.

Womanition helps women step into their brilliance. We support a nonprofit organization called ACES founded by Dorothy Briggs. Womanition helped create the success, which led me to purchasing the license for Alberta South, Calgary and area. If you are reading this, you will understand that by stepping into visibility, a network and mentorship, your life can change. Women are powerful. When accompanied with support, community, and growth, this equals magical empowerment for us all. We are always in the process of learning and evolving and that is why our six pillars are so important.

Our six-pillars support a women’s journey to empowerment.

1. Womanition Magazine: It is a tangible, first class publication that is pertinent and essential to doing business in today’s world despite being in a digital dominated world.

2. Womanition Biz Brigade Conferences: Networking is a key component to building your business. By being featured in the magazine, a steppingstone into the world of visibility, you gain opportunities to speak at our conferences. When people hear your story, your wisdom, it connects with them so they can grow from your experiences, that is where the beautiful empowerment journey begins. We host four conferences per year, two in Edmonton and two in Calgary. Our next one in Calgary will be held on November 4, 2023.

3. Womanition Connect monthly luncheons: Surrounding yourself with like-minded women will help your mindset stay empowered and your business grow.

4. Womanition Business Briefs

5. Womanition Mentorship: What better place to learn from each other and women who have experienced obstacles, wisdom and knowledge. They openly share this with you as their protégé.

6. SuPEARLative Awards are a celebration of Women’s accomplishments. We celebrate the following categories: New Citizen, New Business Venture, Health & Wellness, Special Skills, Philanthropy, Education & Mentorship, Spirit of Youth, Professional Trade and the climax is the Female Entrepreneur of the Year Award! We thank our sponsors and corporations that support this event.

It takes a village to grow and a dream to create but it takes tenacity to show up to that dream each day. That is empowerment.

Womanition has borne witness to help women in transition to learn, grow, and launch successful businesses, friendship and support. It’s not a business here because we live, laugh and have fun along the way. The soulful women who have grown in our community share their stories of personal and professional success. It is heart warming and inspiring to see what we can do together.

We are a 100% collaboration of like-minded people who are working together to build the best world possible. The greatest women’s empowerment community is found here.

We are excited to invite you to our November 4, 2023 Bizbrigade in Calgary to begin your journey to your empowered vision.

Heather Andrews is Alberta South License Holder of Womanition.





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Inspirational Women

Celebrating Women leadership in Alberta's Jewish Community

In the heart of Edmonton's Jewish Community, an inspiring individual named Frida Karpulis Pesin has dedicated 25 years to promoting the significance of women's leadership and empowerment. With a diverse work background and an unwavering commitment to the cause, Frida has contributed to the community's growth and taken a remarkable step in creating a nurturing space for children and families. Today, we delve into Frida's journey, exploring the transformative power of encouraging, inspiring, and mentoring women in leadership roles.

Frida's journey began as a counsellor at Daycamp Shalom, where she witnessed the profound impact of positive mentorship on young minds. This early experience instilled in her a passion for encouraging young girls to embrace leadership roles and believe in their potential.

Among her esteemed mentors in the community, Frida acknowledges the pivotal role of her amazing Mother Rozalia Karpulis, Gayle Tallman, Jodi Zabludowski, Miriam Cooper, Lesley Jacobson, Sharon Cairns z"l, Carole Rutwind and Johanna Steinfeld, formerly Aziman. Their guidance and leadership were instrumental in shaping Frida's vision of empowering women in the community.

Over the years, Frida held various crucial positions within the community, from being a front desk attendant at the Jewish Community Centre to serving as an Executive Director at Talmud Torah Society and Beth Israel Synagogue. These roles provided her with a comprehensive understanding of community dynamics and women leaders' pivotal role in shaping the community's fabric.

From Executive Assistant positions at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and Chabad Lubavitch of Edmonton to being a Young Leadership Director at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Frida has been a driving force in cultivating future leaders. As an Integration Worker at Jewish Family Services and a Board Assistant at the National Council of Jewish Women, she championed inclusivity and empowerment, ensuring every individual felt valued and supported.

A milestone achievement: Mama Roza Garden Childcare

In 2019, fueled by the invaluable experiences gained over the years, Frida and her sister, Esta, embarked on an inspiring venture. They opened Mama Roza Garden Childcare, a daycare centre named after their remarkable mother, Rozalia Karpulis. Rozalia's entrepreneurial spirit, having run her successful business for over 35 years, served as a beacon of inspiration for the sisters.

Located at the Hys Centre, adjacent to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Mama Roza Garden Childcare primarily serves healthcare professionals at the three surrounding hospitals. The centre's strategic location underscores Frida's deep understanding of working mothers' needs and challenges in demanding professions.

A legacy of excellence and care:

Mama Roza Garden Childcare quickly garnered recognition for its exceptional childcare and education services. However, the centre's customer-centric approach sets it apart, offering unwavering support to young working mothers. By prioritizing the children's and their parent's needs, the centre has become a cornerstone of support for families juggling work and parenthood.

A proud moment of service during the pandemic:

During the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, Mama Roza Garden Childcare was called upon by Alberta Health to serve frontline workers and first

responders. This act of selflessness exemplified the sisters' unwavering dedication to community service and their readiness to step up in times of need.

Mentoring and Supporting Women Entrepreneurs:

Frida's passion for empowering women extends beyond her Mama Roza Garden Childcare role. She has taken the initiative to mentor and support women who aspire to open their daycares across the province. Recognizing the value of positive mentorship and guidance, Frida is now paying it forward, creating a network of empowered women entrepreneurs who are making a difference in the lives of children and families.

Nurturing a brighter future:

Frida has inspired women aspiring to lead and make a difference through her various roles and the establishment of Mama Roza Garden Childcare. Her journey is a testament to the transformative power of women's leadership and empowerment, showcasing that when women are encouraged and mentored, they can positively impact their communities and beyond.

Frida Karpulis Pesin's inspiring journey in the Alberta Jewish Community demonstrates the profound importance of women's leadership and empowerment. Her dedication to nurturing the next



Frida Karpulis Pesin is Executive Director of Mama Roza's Garden Childcare Centre. She and her sister Esta Karpulis are co-founders of the centre.

generation of leaders, supporting working mothers, and mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs showcases the enduring legacy of charge. As we celebrate her achievements and the guidance of her esteemed mentor, Gayle Tallman, we are reminded of the immense potential of encouraging, inspiring, and mentoring women, empowering them to rise and lead in every sphere of life.



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City of Edmonton names park in honour of Karen Leibovici

The City of Edmonton's Naming Committee has proudly announced the naming of a city park to honour the leadership and community spirit of Karen Leibovici, a highly respected Edmonton woman who is a member of our community.

"This is a very great honour and I am grateful to the many Edmontonians who have supported me throughout my career," said Leibovici. "I am blessed to have a loving family and friends who have stood by me through thick and thin."

A four-term Edmonton City Councillor and former MLA for Edmonton Meadowlark, Karen was born and raised in Montreal to immigrant parents. A social worker by training, she was instrumental in leading a variety of City of Edmonton initiatives including the Transforming Edmonton initiative, the Centre for Public Involvement, the Affordable Housing Strategy, the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, among others. She was involved in the creation of the City Hall School and worked hard to promote the establishment of Big Island Provincial Park.

Karen was a strong advocate for the needs of her constituency in the former Wards 1 and 5. She fought to prevent the operation of a gravel pit along the North Saskatchewan River, and for the retention of natural areas in Edmonton. She was a President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and a

Chair of the FCM Green Municipal Fund.

"I entered politics some 40 years ago because I felt I could make a difference and have a positive impact on my community," remarked Karen. "I look forward to continuing to serve in any capacity I can and want to say Thank You!"

Through her years living in Edmonton, Leibovici has been involved in many nonprofit organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Concordia University, Events Edmonton and Hadassah. Just recently, she has served as the vice-chair of the Civilian Review and Complaint Commission for the RCMP, as a board member at Canada Energy Regulator and she is currently chairing the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Facility and Space Committee.

"Karen Leibovici's life and career have been motivated by a strong sense of social justice, the determination to do what is right and the heart to champion what needs to be done to build a better community," said her son Adam Zepp, who nominated her for the park recognition. "She continues to look forward to serving and making Edmonton, Alberta and Canada a better place."

Karen is very proud of her Jewish roots. Her early years were spent in Jewish neighbourhoods in Montreal and Yiddish was her first language. During



Karen Leibovici

her time in office, she called upon Rabbi Ari Drelich to place mezuzot on both her Legislature and City Hall offices – a first in Alberta. She was proud to be the first Jewish woman elected to the Alberta legislature and would routinely rise in the Assembly to make note of the upcoming Jewish holidays.

Highlights of Karen's political career included lighting the Menorah on the Legislative grounds, assisting with the passage of the Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembrance Act and rallying support for Council to provide funding for the Chevra Kadisha.

Karen Leibovici Park is in the Edgemont Neighbourhood on the corner of East Gate NW and Edgemont Road NW.

Sari Uretsky *Cont. from page 16*

Israeli dance program, she was making a difference in the physiotherapy world as well. She worked in sport rehabilitation and chronic pain for many years and describes how her practice has evolved into what it is today. In addition to pediatrics, acupuncture and IMS, pelvic health is a big focus of her practice.

"I have had my own company for three years now," explained Sari, "and I have created this practice specifically so that I can have one-on-one time with my patients and give them the attention they deserve." She recently spoke at the 2023 Alberta Wellness Summit, a CDA, ADA, and CDSA joint convention. She

did two talks that educated attendees on how physiotherapy can help them feel better, stronger, and more confident in their daily life. "Helping people with pelvic floor issues can make a huge difference in their lives, and that is so rewarding," Sari added.

After years of experience in the rehabilitation medicine industry, starting her own business has allowed her to give the best care to her patients. It has also given her the freedom to prioritize her children and focus on her dance career. "I did step out of my comfort zone to do it," Sari emphasized. She had three teenage kids all in different activities, and she was running a dance program all while navigating life's stressors when she decided to make this shift in her physiotherapy practice. "I knew I needed to make my career something that I would really enjoy and that would allow me the time I wanted to be there for my children."

Sari's physiotherapy and dance careers have grown into a synergistic relationship with one another. Lessons from one have flowed into lessons for the other, which have contributed to the success in these areas of her life. In addition to her own internal strength, Sari recognizes how the encouragement from

family, friends, and her partner have all propelled her toward her goals.

Behind an empowered woman is a team of empowering people. Sari's life tells a story of passion, perseverance, dedication, and love which has been supported by a network of incredible people along the way. "If you have a vision and you let others help, you can reap all the benefits. You don't have to do it alone."

Book a physiotherapy consultation with Sari by visiting www.uretskyphysiotherapy.com.

If you would also like to experience AIFDA's loving community for its 18th anniversary, Sari encourages you to register for the 2023/2024 dance year! Explore their website at www.aifda.ca to learn more about their dance programs. Additionally, students enrolled in AIFDA's performing dance program (grades 6 to adult) will have the opportunity to travel to Miami and Disney in May 2024, for an incredible dance and community-building experience. Please email aifdaedmonton@gmail.com with any questions.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Yasher Koach to Arliss Miller on her generous donation to Beth Shalom Synagogue to cover the cost of creating new bronze member plaques for the congregation - in honour of her beloved husband Tevie Miller z"l.

Arliss has been a patron of the arts and the Jewish community her whole life and at age 93, she is still giving. Toda Raba Arliss.

Susan Inhaber

Cont. from page 1

Inhaber is the daughter of Hungarian Holocaust survivors Charles and Helen Feher, both of blessed memory, who settled in Calgary in 1957. A graduate of the University of Calgary, Inhaber taught elementary school students in a variety of grades for 34 years, until her retirement in 2014.

A Na'amat member since 2000, it was not long before Inhaber took on a chapter presidency and, a few years later, the presidency of the Yachad chapter, an amalgamation of two previous chapters. Along the way, Inhaber served in various capacities including stints as bingo, casino, grocery store gift card, and annual fundraising chair.

Inhaber began her rise to national prominence when she joined the Na'amat Canada board of directors as member-at-large, later serving as education chair, national vice president and membership engagement and leadership development chair.

An active congregant at Calgary Beth Tzedec Congregation, Inhaber has served for several years as commissioner of the National Minyan League, helping to ensure a quorum of 10 for twice-daily prayer services. A leader by example, she regularly *davens* weekday morning services and *leins* Torah portions.

Susan and her husband David have been married for 37 years and are proud parents to sons Jon and Josh and parents-in-law to Josh's wife, Yanna. Susan and David recently embraced new job descriptions with the birth of their first grandchild.

An avid traveler, Inhaber enjoys visits to Israel and, in particular, tours of Na'amat institutions and projects, some of which she has played direct roles in supporting. She enjoys cruising with her husband—they have seen most, if not all, of the seven seas—though she takes her volunteer work with her wherever she goes.

Inhaber's eyes twinkle when she speaks about Na'amat. She is effusive in her praise of outgoing National President Dr. Sandi Seigel, a pediatrician from Hamilton, Ontario.

"She had the COVID presidency," recalled Inhaber. "Her biggest regret was that she didn't get to meet the people in person. She was just thrilled when even just a few of us were able to get together."

"Sandi is a people person with a love for the children of Israel. Her favourite thing is to go and talk to the children at the Kanot Youth Village and hear their stories. She has a real passion for Na'amat's *Pajama to Pajama*, or multi-purpose day cares for children at risk," Inhaber added.

Inhaber shares Seigel's passion for these and other Na'amat institutions in Israel, including the Glickman

Centre for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, legal counselling centres, and technological high schools, many of which serve Arab villages. She has worked shoulder to shoulder with Seigel for years, especially in the lead-up to the upcoming leadership transition.

"I call myself her barnacle," quips Inhaber, adding that she "attached" herself to Seigel—even rooming with her on trips to visit Na'amat projects in Israel—as she learned the organizational ropes.

A proud Zionist, Inhaber has traveled to Israel some 10 times, five of them with Na'amat. She looks forward to returning in March 2024 when she will lead the Na'amat Canada Leadership Seminar. The program was deferred by a year in lieu of last year's 125th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland (where Inhaber was among the Canadian delegates who later participated in an adjunct solidarity trip to Israel in celebration of the 75th anniversary of independence).

Inhaber's plans for her presidency include the engagement of Na'amat Canada's members (currently numbering approximately 400), outreach to potential members across the country, expansion of the organization's donor base, and increasing awareness about Na'amat and its projects in Israel, especially those supporting at-risk youth and women and children fleeing domestic violence.

We try to mirror the work that we do in Israel here in our local communities," Inhaber told *AJNews*.

One notable example is Na'amat Canada Calgary's highly-successful School Supplies for Kids program, initiated by Stephanie Sacks more than 25 years ago. Since then, some 24,000 kids living in domestic violence shelters have received backpacks filled with school supplies lovingly assembled by caring volunteers and generously supported by local businesses and donors. The project has been emulated by Na'amat in Edmonton and other Canadian centres.

In Edmonton, Na'amat members have raised funds to support educational scholarships at Olds College, MacEwan University and NAIT Polytechnic. In Calgary, Na'amat volunteers and donors support bursaries for second-year students in the Early Childhood Care Program at Bow Valley College.

Sacks is encouraging Na'amat faithful and other interested members of the Jewish community at large to register for the 20th Triennial Na'amat National Convention as soon as possible and no later than the August 28 deadline. There are a number of options including full-weekend in-person participation, virtual participation (pending a minimum of 25 online registrants) and an array of daily or individual events, including the Sunday evening banquet and installation.

It will be quite a celebration for Jewish Alberta, says Maya Feldman, who has served as president of the Tikvah chapter in Edmonton for approximately



Susan Inhaber

15 years and a member of the national convention committee.

While Edmonton and Calgary are well known for their sports rivalries, the Na'amat National Convention is no battle of Alberta. Feldman is devoted to bringing as many Edmonton women as possible to celebrate Inhaber's presidency.

"It is so important to support our western president," said Feldman, who predicted that Inhaber's capable leadership will give the organization a significant boost, especially in the west.

"This is an opportunity for us to grow," Feldman said.

"It's so important for Edmonton to support Calgary. You know, we aren't that big, but us Susan always says, we are mighty."

Feldman can't say enough good things about Inhaber.

"She is a humble, caring person, which I think is so rare today," said Feldman, who has personally experienced Inhaber's kindness during times of illness in the Feldman family.

"She just goes about doing good deeds quietly, without an announcement," added Feldman, who is pumping up enthusiasm for the convention.

"We have to go," says Feldman. "This is our time. This is our opportunity... this is going to be a new start for us."

For more information about Na'amat Canada, or to register for the 20th Triennial National Convention, go to www.naamat.com.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

Anglicans *Cont. from page 4*

Rabbah Gila Caine of Edmonton's Temple Beth Ora reform congregation spoke at the assembly to explain why she believes the resolution's language ought to be toned down.

"I would like to remind us that the whole world is not Canada and cannot be read through the Canadian experience," she told the synod on June 30.

Rabbah Caine told *Alberta Jewish News* that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Canadian colonialism are "two different stories," and that conflating the two undermines the validity of Jewish connection to Israel.

Conceding that there may be some parallels between Israel's treatment of the Palestinians and the Canadian state, in terms of removing people from their homes and restrictions on movement, she said these are the product of a constant state of war, not colonialism, adding that there are also restrictions on Israeli Jews' movement.

"It's a package deal, this story. When people talk about settler colonialism, they're not talking about restrictions on movement. They're talking about one group of people infiltrating another space that they have no connection to," Rabbah Caine explained. "That is not the case in Israel."

She said the language of settler colonialism is alienating towards Israelis who may otherwise be sympathetic to the cause of justice and peace in Israel

and Palestine.

Rabbah Caine said that while she believes it's misguided, she doesn't believe calling Israel a settler colonial state is inherently antisemitic.

"People know a certain narrative about the world. They're often trying their best to bring goodness into the world and they know one way of doing it. But I think part of being in a global society is to learn that there are many different stories," she said.

After Rabbah Caine's speech, the assembly agreed to strike the passage in question from the resolution.

"There was definitely a feeling of being listened to in the room," she said. "And the fact that a part of it did change was I thought a really good sign."

A second amendment was added "to study and reflect upon the longstanding history of antisemitism within Christianity and the ongoing legacy of antisemitism in our biblical interpretation and theology."

Rabbi Adam Stein of Vancouver's conservative Congregation Beth Israel made the case for a new reconciliatory prayer to replace the prayer for Jews' conversion to Christianity at the Anglican synod.

Rabbi Stein told *Alberta Jewish News* that efforts to change the prayer have been years in the making, and that he entered the process relatively "late in the game."

The Canadian Rabbinic Caucus worked with ACC director of interfaith relations, Rev. Bruce Myers, to get

a resolution on the floor of its 2016 synod calling for the removal of its prayer for the conversion of Jews.

"It wasn't presented in the right way, it was very sudden, and so it didn't get enough votes," explained Rabbi Stein, who became involved in the process after the new prayer was drafted.

But, he added, the motion's narrow rejection was "probably a blessing in disguise."

The church's interfaith leaders decided that instead of simply asking to remove the prayer, they would work with Jewish leaders to write a new one.

The original prayer read, in part: "Look, we beseech thee, upon thine ancient people; open their hearts that they may see and confess the Lord Jesus to be thy son and their true Messiah ... Take away all pride and prejudice in us that may hinder their understanding of the Gospel, and hasten the time when all Israel shall be saved."

The Prayer for Reconciliation with the Jews reads, in part: "Have mercy upon us and forgive us for violence and wickedness against our brother Jacob; the arrogance of our hearts and minds hath deceived us and shame hath covered our face. Take away all pride and prejudice in us, and grant that we, together with the people whom thou didst first make thine own, may attain to the fullness of redemption which thou hast promised."

Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

from the Sources

by Eliezer Segal

Weasels, wells and wedding worries

It is important to be trustworthy, taught Rabbi Ammi in the *Talmud*.

“How do we learn this? From the weasel and the pit. And if this is true for a weasel and a well, then how much more so with respect to one who trusts in the Holy One!”

No doubt trustworthiness is an admiral quality, whether in our relations with the Almighty or with our fellow humans. But what is this business about a weasel [or maybe: rat, or mole] and a well?

The medieval commentators tried to fill in the missing details by citing a tale of obscure origin. Its earliest known version was recorded by Rabbi Nathan of Rome in the eleventh century:

Once upon a time, a fair young maiden from a noble family was wandering in the desert and came upon a well. She lowered herself in a bucket to drink from its water but was unable to climb out. A young bachelor of priestly lineage offered to rescue her (after satisfying himself that she was not a demon) - on condition that she consent to marry him. They pledged that neither would wed any other partner. When (in keeping with respectable Jewish practice) she insisted that he provide witnesses to validate their commitment, a weasel passed near the well, so the suitor assured her that the weasel and the well could serve as witnesses for the purpose.

After returning home, the maiden, faithful to her pledge, fended off suitors by feigning insanity. The man, on the other hand, forgot his pledge, married another woman and fathered two sons. Tragically, both children came to untimely ends: one fell into a well and the other succumbed to a fatal weasel bite. These calamities reminded him of how he had betrayed his pledge. His wife then insisted that he divorce her and marry his original fiancée. He found her and married her, and they lived happily ever after.

In significant respects, this strange tale dovetails neatly with legal developments that were being confronted by Jewish communities in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In ancient times, the Jewish marriage procedure consisted of two stages that were originally quite distinct: the betrothal - known as *eirusin* or *kiddushin*

- and the actual marriage (*nissu'in*).

The *eirusin* is in fact a legally and religiously binding relationship, in that it cannot be dissolved without a formal divorce; and infidelity would be subject to the severe laws governing marital adultery. In order to minimize the possibility of such situations arising, medieval rabbinic authorities moved the *kiddushin* ceremony—when the groom bestows the ring upon the bride—to the actual wedding ceremony, thereby precluding any suspicions of violations during the betrothal period. This practice became widespread by the eleventh and twelfth centuries in France, Germany, Spain and North Africa; and it remains the norm in almost all communities. Historians have connected it to the uncertainties facing Jews because of persecution, expulsions or poverty.

The fact remained, however, that the original betrothal arrangement did serve an important purpose by strengthening the commitment to go through with the marriage. If prospective spouses too easily weaselled out of the scheduled nuptials, it could cause grave psychological and moral distress, as well as heavy financial costs when wedding expenses had already been paid.

This eventuality was addressed by resorting to a contractual mechanism of “*shiddukhin*”—a mutual agreement between the prospective in-laws to carry out the wedding. Unlike the talmudic betrothal, the *shiddukhin* did not create a ritually defined marriage relationship. The contracting parties would normally stipulate financial penalties for failure to uphold one’s commitments. These took numerous different forms. As with Christian practice at the time, the obligation was confirmed by guarantors (though not by weasels or wells).

Documents from Egypt, Spain and elsewhere described how prospective grooms conveyed three “*shiddukhin*,” in the guise of seal-rings—two silver and one gold, representing the three stages in the marriage process. These were entrusted to a guardian as a kind of security deposit to be delivered, returned or forfeited at the time of the actual marriage. A compendium of legal forms from Barcelona also stipulates severe penalties in cash and real estate that

would be exacted from the defaulting party, even if it required resorting to non-Jewish courts for enforcement - an extraordinary departure from the norms of Jewish law. In other respects, the *shiddukh* agreement was treated as a business contract, and there was no religious stigma to retracting from the agreement as long as one was ready to pay the fines.

In Germany and France, on the other hand, some distinctly religious penalties were invoked for non-compliance. Violators were subject to the severe sanctions of the *herem*, a writ of excommunication and social ostracism. When Rashi was called to deal with a case of someone who reneged and wanted to reclaim his deposit, he ruled that the matter must be adjudicated stringently, even to the point of imposing corporal punishment; for “the early authorities adopted this policy in order to avoid humiliating the daughters of Israel.” Though in principle the law applied to violations by either side, it was normally assumed that the women were the ones who needed protection.

Of particular interest was the standard practice of confirming the match by means of a handshake, an option which had no firm precedents in prior Jewish law but became common in commercial transactions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The ancient Greeks and Romans used to confirm marital matches in this way, and the practice was adopted by the Christian church until it became standard procedure in medieval Germanic law.

Whether through handshakes, excommunications or cautionary tales about fair maidens in wells—this seems like a lot of effort to devote to enforcing simple honesty. And most of it would be unnecessary if prospective spouses just followed Rabbi Ami’s directive about being trustworthy.

Unfortunately, we unreliable humans still have much to learn from the solid dependability of pits and weasels.

‘From the Sources’ by Eliezer Segal is sponsored by the Zeisler Families of Calgary, Edmonton, New York and Los Angeles

Beth Israel offering free Yom Kippur tickets to families with school-aged children

By Jeremy Appel, LJI Reporter

For the first time, the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB), which includes Talmud Torah Jewish day school, has scheduled a PD Day for Yom Kippur to accommodate Jewish students. In response, Beth Israel Synagogue is offering free tickets for Yom Kippur to families with children in the K-12 school system.

Michael Sadovnick, Beth Israel’s treasurer, told *Alberta Jewish News* they have considered making Yom Kippur tickets free for some time “as a way to get people into our doors and to experience Yom Kippur for all those people that may not go to services during the year.”

EPSB’s decision to give students at all its schools the day off proved the perfect catalyst for putting his plan into action as a pilot project.

Sadovnick noted the importance of giving students the day off at all EPSB schools, not just Talmud Torah, because Jewish parents with kids in public schools are likely to be reluctant to have their children miss a day of school to attend shul.

“There’s more and more people who are not going to Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah or being connected to their synagogues in their communities,” he said. “Synagogues everywhere have declining membership.”

Previously, synagogues were Jewish people’s main connection to their community, out of which came the Jewish federations, day schools and family services.

But now that there are various Jewish community institutions outside the shul, synagogues are no longer the community hubs they used to be.

It doesn’t help that membership fees in many communities are prohibitively expensive, particularly for those who only attend on the high holidays. At Beth Israel, for example, tickets for non-members who want to attend Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur cost \$570 for a family, but the cost of high holiday tickets are included in the price of membership.

“That’s why we’re hoping that this program will remove the barrier from Yom Kippur attendance,” Sadovnick said.

“We’re going to celebrate it with a nice break-the-fast at the shul to try to show to these families that this is an institution that’s integral to the community, from Yom Kippur, of course, to brises, weddings, and funerals.”

In June 2022, the EPSB voted to approve the calendar for the 2023/24 school year, which includes six cultural “dates of significance” - Yom Kippur (Sept. 25), Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas (Nov. 12), Lunar New Year (Feb. 10), Eid al-Fitr (April 10), Eid al-Adha (June



Enjoying the TTELC summer program!

17), and Summer Solstice and National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21).

“The Board of Trustees is committed to exploring the incorporation of these days where feasible, with the goal of creating a more inclusive school year calendar,” reads a recommendation report from EPSB Superintendent of Schools Darrell Robertson.

As a result, a PD day was scheduled on Sept. 25 for Yom Kippur, a non-instructional day and PD day were scheduled on Nov. 13 and 14, respectively, for Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas, and an operational day was scheduled June 21 for Summer Solstice and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha occur on exam days, but the board wrote to Alberta Education to inquire about moving the exams to accommodate Muslim students.



Anthony Antoine's beautiful soapstone carvings are currently on sale at Wakina Gallery. See wakinagallery.com

Anthony Antoine's art is featured at Wakina Gallery

By Deborah Shatz

Anthony Antoine is a gifted Dene sculptor who uses his hands to create beautiful art and his spirit to bring life to his carvings which often tell a wondrous story of nature and culture. His art is being featured this summer at Wakina Gallery's boutique pop-up location at Suite 206, 8944 182 Street in Edmonton. For a peek at some of the offerings visit wakinagallery.com. To view the entire collection in person call Dan at 780-237-1556 or email wakinagallery@gmail.com to book an appointment.

"Carving is my life and it's how I make a living," explains the 58-year-old artist. "Although I have dabbled in such things as painting over the years, my greatest pleasure and the one that gives me the most satisfaction is sculpting and carving."

Antoine was born in the Northwest Territories but has been firmly rooted in Edmonton for the past 22 years. His large creations appear in many corporate offices and private collections throughout the city (and surrounding area). While most of Anthony's work is sold privately, some of his masterpieces have also been exhibited and sold in galleries in both northern and western Canada.

Anthony is renowned for his carvings of muskox, bison and of course bears - his large polar bears, his stunning bears on inukshuks, his fishing grizzly bears, his black bears with glorious striations and of course his whimsical dancing, drumming and marching bears of all sizes. Each bear seems to have its own personality.

He is masterful at creating wildlife and many stones speak to him in the voice of the animal that they will become but he also enjoys creating abstracts. "Each abstract is definitely one of a kind - there is no

duplication. The rock guides the carving," he said.

"I like telling a story through the art that I am creating - sometimes that can be achieved with simplicity, other times it is the fine detail that brings out the meaning I am trying to portray."

To look at Anthony, one would not think that he is a spiritual person but his spirit soars when he is describing the thought process behind his abstracts, describing transitions and transformations, such as lifecycles from youth to elders, tears for missing and murdered Indigenous people, and honouring lost children.

Antoine's artistic prowess wasn't inherited and his skills weren't passed down to him from other artists in the family. Like both his father and mother, Anthony was a victim of the Indian Residential School System.

"I was part of the 60's Scoop," he explained. "I was taken away from my parents when I was just two years old and was a ward of the government until I was 16. When I was 18 and in Edmonton I learned that there was an Aboriginal liaison from the Northwest Territories in the city; the people at the Herb Jameson Centre suggested I contact him. I did and found out that he knew two of my uncles - my Uncle Rene was working with the NWT Government and my Uncle Jim was Chief at the time."

A phone call and an airline ticket later and Anthony was back home.

"I arrived there in September of 1982 and met my dad; my mother had passed on when I was just 10 years old; I didn't find out until I was 13. I met so many of my cousins and other relatives; I could hardly believe it, but it was good, real good."

He stayed for nine years before moving on to Yellowknife, where he met his wife, and together they moved to Edmonton.

Anthony's artistic side was discovered by chance - he ran into some trouble with the law and found himself incarcerated. There wasn't a great deal of opportunity for self-improvement in jail, but the opportunity that did come his way is one he took advantage of.

"They had a carving program going on at the facility when I got there," he explained, and he knew some people who were participating.

"I told them that I wanted to try it and they encouraged me to give it a try. I had just got my income tax check back so I bought my first piece of rock and did just that."

The rest is history.

"My first sculptures took me a full two weeks to complete," he explained, "and I was told not to expect them to sell."

Their predictions would not prevail, noted Antoine. "Within a week of the sculptures being put up for sale, I sold them both. I was very happy to make the \$1800 and said 'wow this is what I'm going to do to keep myself out of jail.'"

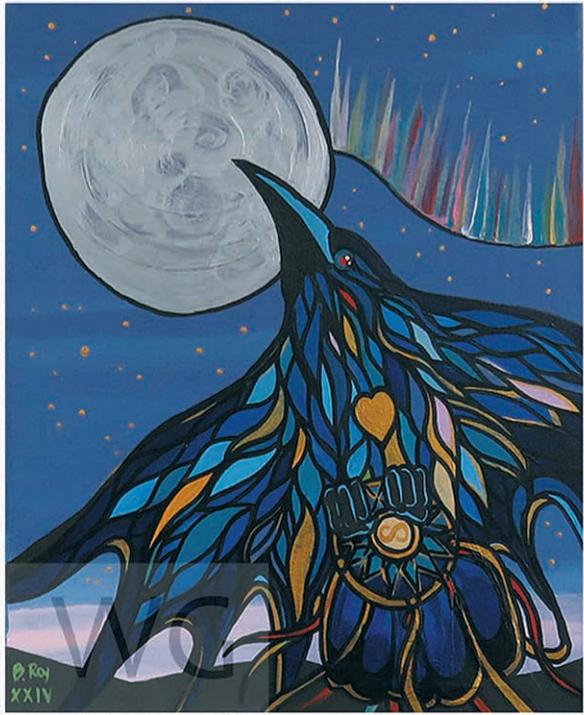
And, with the exception of some minor scrapes, it's been that way ever since.

Anthony loves carving with soapstone and he loves sharing his culture through his art. He tries to keep his art affordable and accessible to everyone.

"Costs have gone up in recent days but I still manage to keep my prices within most budgets," he assured.

Anthony's art is beautiful, affordable, unique and authentic - so when you need a great piece of art for yourself, or as a personal or corporate gift for a special occasion, visit wakinagallery.com or call 780-237-1556 for a viewing.

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Camp BB-Riback

Cont. from page 8

back in the day can attest that Snider (who dedicated the film in memory of Meloff) and animator Sean Covernton brilliantly captured the essence of a man who was truly larger than life.

When *The Basketball Game* premiered in Edmonton, MLA Janice Sarich was there. She spoke of it in the Alberta Legislature the following day.

"I was so proud to be standing there, in the same spot where the premier finally did address antisemitism back in 1984," Snider recalled, adding that his animated short later screened at film festivals worldwide and was aired nationally by CBC.

Paying tribute to the NFB, Firefly Books and the talented colleagues who helped bring his movie and graphic novel to fruition, Snider praised the efforts of Mastai, who recently collaborated with him on a study guide for the graphic novel - also titled *The Basketball Game*.

As Snider points out, the story started with a teacher. Fittingly, he is dedicated to helping other teachers by providing trusted resources that mitigate against antisemitism and hate.

Notably, Snider - who eventually served on the camp staff and as Regional AZA president - cut his teeth as a filmmaker when Meloff put a video camera in his hands at the camp. Snider later taught filmmaking to campers in a program called BB TV.

Thrilled to return to Pine Lake after 30 years, Snider shared his favourite spots with his daughter, who looks forward to her first Jewish camp experience in BC next summer. It was also a full-circle day for Snider's father, Earl, who was among the first campers when the camp opened in 1956. Hart's mother, Ruth, also attended the camp.

While Ruach, and LTP (Leadership Training Program) campers and staff attended Snider's talk, Cochavim campers (grades one through four) enjoyed a basketball clinic led by Camp BB alumnus and veteran basketball player Jordan Balaban.

Balaban - who first competed at the Maccabi Games at the age of 16 - serves on the board of Maccabi Canada and is on a mission to encourage Western Canadian Jewish youth to become involved in the games, held every four years in Israel.

Special guests at the camp-wide program included the Meloffs' daughter and son-in-law, Lauren and

Geoff Sky, and Lew Hamburger, former executive director of the Edmonton JCC, each of whom were at the camp on July 10, 1983. Hamburger - who helped facilitate the discussions between the Eckville and Edmonton youth - was delighted to return to the camp with his wife Patty, their children Debbie and Howie Sniderman, grand-children and great-grandchildren.

Hamburger told *AJNews* that in 1983 the camp was chosen as the location for rapprochement between Jewish kids and their Eckville peers because "...there was no other place we could get away from the press...so that the participants could feel they were very safe."

Kids were encouraged to begin their dialogue by discussing their daily lives rather than hate, antisemitism and preconceived notions of one another, he said. People were cautious at first in their interactions, said Hamburger, "But then humour entered the picture, and they started joking with each other."

Hamburger praised the camp's continuing efforts to teach kids about antisemitism and how to respond to it. "Protecting kids from uncomfortable stuff... just prolongs the agony," Hamburger said. "It just means you leave them unprepared when they encounter it."

LTP campers Shayna Cairns (Edmonton) and Elle Delaney (Saskatoon) told *AJNews* that they have been on the receiving end of antisemitic remarks.

Cairns has been asked by classmates whether Jews control Hollywood. Delaney was targeted by classmates with Holocaust jokes. She reported one incident to her teacher and school principal. While telling her errant classmates how they made her feel, they broke down in tears. Delaney said she was glad that they grasped the seriousness of their actions.

On another occasion, an individual with whom she was interacting on Snapchat learned that Delaney was Jewish and spammed her with hateful messages including "Gas the Jews."

Delaney registered a complaint with the instant-messaging app.

"They said they'd investigate, and if it was against



The Hamburger and Sniderman family at Camp BB-Riback.

their community guidelines they'd get back to me," said Delaney, who never did hear back from Snapchat.

"I don't know how that doesn't go against community guidelines for hate speech," she said.

Both Cairns and Delaney expressed appreciation for Snider's talk and his film.

"I really liked how he showed his perspective, how it showed the other peoples' perspectives and how it didn't end in a bad way. It ended in some people getting clarity and having a loving mindset," said Cairns.

"It's interesting to me that the basketball game took place 40 years ago and it's still very relevant," Delaney said.

Camp Director Stacy Shaikin agrees, and he has arranged for the camp to give a copy of Snider's graphic novel to kids celebrating their b'nai mitzvah. Sponsors of the initiative include Edmontonians Teddy Braun and Edward Lazar, JNF Edmonton and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

Shaikin hopes other individuals and organizations will step up to support the book initiative and other important projects that keep kids safe, including the Camp BB Riback cabin refurbishment campaign.

To watch *The Basketball Game*, go to https://www.nfb.ca/film/basketball_game/.

To find out more about Camp BB Riback or to make a donation, go to www.campbb.com.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter


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