

# ALBERTA Jewish NEWS

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September 27, 2023

## Calgary's Jewish Film Festival: In person and in full swing Nov. 4 - 13

By Maxine Fischbein

It's back!

The 23rd annual Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival will once again be the place to be when it resumes in-person screenings beginning on opening night, Saturday November 4.

"It will be great to be back in person," said Harvey Cyngiser, founder and director of Jewish Calgary's most widely attended cultural event.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Film Festival pivoted to online screenings. While film lovers continued to support and enjoy virtual film festival seasons in 2021 and 2022, there ain't nothing like the reel thing, and excitement is mounting as the crowd returns to Beth Tzedec for the joy of the big screen, special guests, camaraderie and post screening noshery.

"An important element of any film festival is the opportunity to experience the films together," said Cyngiser who, together with his film selection committee, has once again put together an outstanding lineup of films.

The 2023 offerings will be enhanced by the presence of three directors including one of Israel's most renowned filmmakers, Avi Neshet, who will walk the Beth Tzedec "red carpet" on opening night to introduce his most recent film, *The Monkey House*. Neshet will speak about the quirky dramedy that sees an aging has-been novelist recruit an unpredictable young woman in order to carry out an elaborate scam devoted

### See our Film Festival Guide: pages 13 - 20



The 2021 dramedy *Perfect Strangers*, directed by one of Israel's best-loved actors—Lior Ashkenazi—will make for a fun and lighthearted evening on November 11 at the Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival. The film is presented in partnership with JAC—Jewish Adult Calgary.

to repopularizing his books. Suffice it to say, some mayhem ensues.

*The Monkey House* has been nominated for an astonishing 11 Israeli Academy Awards, including best director, best actress and best supporting actress.

Opening night will feature a reception where film lovers can enjoy a nosh while chatting face-to-face with each other—and maybe even Neshet himself.

Over the years, many of Neshet's films have been featured at the Calgary Jewish Film Festival, including *The Matchmaker*, *The Secrets*, *Turn Left at the End of the World* and *The Other Story*. One of his early films, *The Troupe*, became a cult favourite during

the 1970s. Many of the songs featured in that film struck a chord with Israelis, earning rightful spots in Jewish music history. After enjoying great success at home, Neshet lived and worked in the United States, eventually returning to Israel. The country mourned with him and his family in 2018 when his son Ari was tragically killed in a hit and run while biking with a friend on the day he turned 17.

Neshet dedicated *The Monkey House* to Ari's memory, and, in a recent interview on Israeli TV, he spoke about how he has come full circle, hinting that it might be his final film. This year's Calgary Jewish

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## Speaker of the House resigns after applauding a former Nazi soldier

By Jeremy Appel

Federal Speaker of the House Anthony Rota resigned from his position on Sept. 26 after sparking outrage from Jewish groups for inviting a veteran of a Ukrainian Waffen-SS unit to attend Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's address to Parliament.

Yaroslav Hunka, 98, who fought for the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, or the Galicia Division, during the Second World War, after which he moved to Canada, was given a standing ovation by all parties after Rota introduced him as "a Ukrainian-Canadian war veteran from the Second World War who fought for Ukrainian independence against the Russians."

Rota also referred to Hunka, who lives in his Nipissing—Timiskaming riding as "a Ukrainian hero and a Canadian hero."

It was apparently lost on parliamentarians that Hunka was introduced as having fought against a

Canadian ally in the Second World War.

While Canada's 1986 Deschênes Commission found no evidence of war crimes from the Galicia Division, the Nuremberg Trials concluded that the entirety of the Waffen SS is a criminal organization.

"Even a cursory glance at SS Galicia reveals its links to the Nazi campaign of destruction against the Jews and murder of civilians," noted journalist David Pugliese in the October 2020 edition of the *Espirit de Corps* military magazine.

The unit's commander was Oberfuhrer Fritz Freitag, who was directly involved in murdering Jews, as were commanding officers SS Hauptsturmfuhrer Heinrich Wiens, who served with the Einsatzgruppen D murder squad, and SS Obersturmbannfuhrer Franz Magall.

The Galicia Division, which was founded in 1943, included officers from the Ukrainian Nachtigall battalion, which committed mass murders of Jews in 1941.

Perhaps the division's most notorious crime was the 1944 Huta Pieniacka massacre, in which upwards of 1,000 Polish villagers were burned alive.

Despite this history, monuments to the Galicia Division exist in Edmonton, Oakville, Ont., Philadelphia and Detroit.

On Sept. 24, two days after Zelenskyy's speech, Jewish organizations expressed concern about Hunka's reception in the House.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, which represents Jewish federations across the country, said it was "deeply troubled" and "disturbed" that an individual who fought in a unit that "actively participated in the genocide against Jews" receiving a standing ovation.

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre (FSWC) for Holocaust Studies said in a statement that there's no doubt the Galicia Division "was responsible for the mass murder of innocent civilians with a level of brutality and malice that is unimaginable."

"An apology is owed to every Holocaust survivor and veteran of the Second World War who fought the Nazis, and an explanation must be provided as to how this individual entered the hallowed halls of Canadian Parliament and received recognition from

*Continued on page 23*

## Dr. Susannah Heschel will be in Calgary on Oct. 27-28

On October 27-28, Temple B'nai Tikvah is pleased to be hosting the Moshe Yedlin Scholarship in Residence Weekend with Dr. Susannah Heschel as the featured guest.

Dr. Heschel is a leading scholar of Judaism, culture and religion in European history. She is the Eli Black Associate Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Following in the footsteps of her father, Abraham Joshua Heschel, the biblical scholar is at the forefront of the march toward social justice and reframing Judaism in the tradition of the prophets.

The weekend will start with an address at 10:30 am on Friday October 27. The topic is "Arabs and Jews and the construction of modernity: Shared problems, similar responses."

A deli lunch with scholar in residence Susannah Heschel will follow, catered by Grumans.

That night at 7:30 pm, as part of the Friday night Shabbat service, Dr. Heschel will deliver a dvar on "A Palace in Time: Abraham Joshua Heschel and the meaning of Sabbath."

On Saturday, following Shabbat services, Dr. Heschel will provide reflections on "Human Dignity in Judaism: Religious inspiration and political reality."

Dr. Heschel is one of the leading scholars in Judaism of our time. Her scholarship focuses on Jewish-Christian relations in Germany during the 19th and 20th centuries, and her numerous publications include a prize-winning monograph, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (University of Chicago Press), which won a National Jewish Book Award, and a forthcoming book, *The Aryan Jesus: Christianity, Nazis and the*

*Bible* (Princeton University Press).

She has also edited several volumes, starting with *On Being a Jewish Feminist*, published in 1983, and more recently, *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*, with Robert P. Ericksen, and *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, with David Biale and Michael Galchinsky. Several years ago, she published a volume of her father's essays, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays of Abraham Joshua Heschel*, with a biographical introduction.

Visit [templebnaitikvah.ca](http://templebnaitikvah.ca) to register for the October 7 noon luncheon with Dr. Susannah Heschel. Registration is not needed for the other portions of the Moshe Yedlin Scholarship Weekend. For more information contact [office@bnaitikvah.ca](mailto:office@bnaitikvah.ca).

## Unpacking Yom Kippur: The Red Suitcase experience at CJA

By Joseph Tappenden

At the Calgary Jewish Academy, education goes beyond textbooks and classrooms. We believe that learning about important cultural and religious traditions should be engaging and memorable. That's why we've introduced a unique and creative approach to teach our students in grades 1 to 3 about the significance of Yom Kippur using a special Red Suitcase.

The Red Suitcase is a treasure trove of symbols designed to deepen students' understanding of Yom Kippur. It's a hands-on journey that not only educates but also ignites a spark of curiosity and connection in our young learners. Each item carefully chosen to represent an important facet of this holiest day in the Jewish calendar. The Red Suitcase was a project created by Morah Joyce Kerr in 1987 at the Calgary Jewish Academy and after a 35 year stint in Winnipeg it has made its way back to Calgary.

So, what's inside this remarkable Red Suitcase, and how does it bring Yom Kippur to life for our students? To name a few:

Calendar: Right at the beginning of the adventure, students find a calendar that marks the date of Yom Kippur. This isn't just any date; it's a date that carries

profound meaning for our Jewish community. It's a reminder that some days are special and require preparation and reflection.

High Holiday Machzor: A Machzor for the High Holidays is also buried in the Red Suitcase. It introduces students to the special prayers and customs associated with Yom Kippur. This valuable book helps them appreciate the unique spiritual journey that takes place during this time of introspection and repentance.

White Clothing: Also included in the Red Suitcase are white garments, symbolizing the aspiration to purify oneself ethically and morally during the High Holidays. These garments remind students of the tradition of wearing white on Yom Kippur, signifying purity and the opportunity for a fresh start.

The Shofar: The sound of the shofar is a powerful and iconic symbol of hope. In the suitcase, a few shofars are carefully placed to represent the collective hope and prayers for a better future. This teaches students that Yom Kippur is not just about repentance but also about looking forward to a year filled with positivity and growth.

The brilliance of the Red Suitcase lies in its interactive nature. Students actively explore and share



The Red Suitcase helps students experience Yom Kippur on a personal level.

their thoughts about each item fostering a sense of curiosity and engagement. Through hands-on learning, they can connect with the customs and traditions of Yom Kippur on a personal level, making the teachings more meaningful and memorable.

By utilizing the Red Suitcase, we're helping students experience Yom Kippur in a profound and personal way. We're fostering a deep connection to their faith, their traditions, and their community that will stay with them throughout their lives.

The Red Suitcase is a symbol of our commitment to providing a holistic and engaging education that goes beyond the ordinary. It's about nurturing the hearts and minds of our students, helping them appreciate the beauty and significance of Yom Kippur in a whole new light.

Tell us what you see in the Red Suitcase?

## Thank You

*On behalf of my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and myself, please accept our profound gratitude for all your cards, emails, and calls. So many that it would take weeks to respond to all. Your condolences and comforting words mean so much to me and my family.*

*Toby z"l was the centre of the Silverman family and she obviously touched so many of you. We will miss her every day.*

*Thank you. Abe Silverman*

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27

10:30 AM

"Arabs and Jews and the Construction of Modernity: Shared Problem, Similar Responses"

12:00 NOON

Jewish Deli Lunch (Catered by Grumans), \$25 per person. Registration closes October 20.

**REGISTER NOW**

7:30 PM

(during Shabbat Services)  
"A Palace in Time: Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Meaning of the Sabbath"

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28

12:30 PM

(after Shabbat Services)  
"Human Dignity in Judaism: Religious Inspiration, Political Reality"



temple b'nai tikvah  
a reform jewish community

MOSHE YEDLIN

## SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND



## DR. SUSANNAH HESCHEL

Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and Chair of Jewish Studies Program, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

# JNF Edmonton Builders Circle funds two Women's Empowerment Centres

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) of Edmonton is thrilled to announce the generous contribution made by The Dianne & Irving Kipnes Foundation, which will fully fund the establishment of two JNF Canada Women's Empowerment Centres in Israel. These centres, strategically located in Lod (North) and Yerucham (South), hold the promise of fortifying women's economic and social resilience, fostering professional networks for employment and

empowerment, and assisting women seeking independence from destructive relationships. The impact of the Dianne & Irving Kipnes Foundation's dedication to improving the lives of countless individuals is truly commendable, and we express our heartfelt gratitude for their invaluable support.

This transformational donation stands as a pivotal milestone in advancing JNF Canada's mission to bolster social service infrastructure for women in communities across Israel. By empowering women with crucial resources, education, and unwavering support, these projects aim to help them unlock their full potential. With the newfound resources, both centres will expand their programs and services, enabling us to reach and empower an even greater number of women in need. These centres are set to become beacons of hope and inspiration for women from all walks of life, paving the way for a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Dianne and Irving Kipnes, distinguished figures in the Canadian philanthropic landscape, have left their indelible mark on an impressive array of projects, not only



**Jewish National Fund of Canada, Edmonton region receives largest donation towards the Builders Circle from The Dianne & Irving Kipnes Foundation, funding two Women's Empowerment Centres in Israel.**

putting Edmonton on the map but also contributing to national initiatives. As esteemed Members of the Order of Canada, the Kipnes' unwavering commitment to the arts, healthcare, education, and community development has garnered widespread recognition. It is with immense honour and joy that we become part of the Kipnes Foundation's legacy, one that will positively transform lives and cultivate the leaders of tomorrow.

The JNF Edmonton Board and Executive Director Jay Cairns, along with JNF Canada express a sincere thank you to Dianne & Irving Kipnes for their visionary philanthropy and their invaluable partnership with JNF Canada.

## JNF congratulates Solly Singer



JNF Edmonton thanks Solly and the Singer family for their above and beyond tree planting efforts in the 2023 JNF/Talmud Torah Tu Bi' Shevat Campaign. "It is our pleasure to award Solly with the top canvasser award; his efforts broke previous records. JNF Canada will be recognizing the Edmonton Talmud Torah at a plaquing site in the Segev Forest. Thank you for this incredible partnership cultivating the community's future leaders," said Jay Cairns.

Jewish National Fund Of Canada

# Builders Circle

## What is the Builders Circle?

For decades, JNF has cared for Israel and has built the foundations of Israel's social infrastructure, benefitting all Israelis, but particularly those in poor and vulnerable communities.

The Builders Circle extends this mission by connecting donors - you, your family, or a group of friends - with the projects that matter most to them. Support a cause close to your heart such as health-care, education, the environment, a specific vulnerable population or location. With decades of deep relationships in Israel, only JNF has access to such a wide variety of trusted projects to choose from.

The Builders Circle is a wonderful opportunity to support a project with real on-the-ground impact in Israel and leave a legacy for you and your family.



## Jewish National Fund of Canada's connecting Canadians with meaningful, personal projects in Israel

### Make YOUR Mark in Israel today!

Your name, your family name, or your parents' names will be honoured at the project you choose for generations. Imagine the excitement of visiting your project on trips to Israel, meeting the people who will benefit daily from the new services. Imagine proudly showing your grandchildren what you did to support the land of Israel.

Your generosity will be acknowledged at the project site, memorialized forever through a plaque, monument, or signage. As well, you will be recognized in Canada throughout JNF sites and magazines. Full recognition opportunities are listed on the Builders Circle website.



## Recent Builder Testimonials



**Sharon Bookhalter & Jerry Glasser**

"We have been to Israel on multiple occasions and having experienced life there, we feel the Builders Circle projects are an excellent vehicle to support the people of Israel"



**Abe & Joan Goldstein**

"We believe in the power of Holocaust education to ensure that the lessons of history are never forgotten. After hearing about Beit Haedut, we were pleased to be a part of this important project of remembrance and education."

Projects: Beit Haedut, Shuni Field & Forest, Eco - Art Village Terrace

Project: Beit Haedut

## Examples of 2023 available projects:

### Beit Shulamit

### Cancer Centre Gardens

Providing cancer care to northern Israel, this centre needs gardens to provide tranquil, therapeutic outdoor spaces to patients and their families.

### Sustainability Food Market

Helping over 400 impoverished families access food through a food distribution centre, community market, and vegetable garden.

### Beit Haedut Holocaust Museum

This "House of Testimony" is a museum and educational centre built by Holocaust survivors almost 30 years ago, and is expanding its space to host more exhibits and visitors.

See 100+ available projects at [www.jnfbuilderscircle.ca](http://www.jnfbuilderscircle.ca)

See all project opportunities & watch our Builders testimonials



Support a JNF project with your family or friends, and 'Make Your Mark' in Israel while having an immeasurable impact on the people and the land.

Pick a project & join the Builders Circle today, donation levels start at just \$7500!



To learn more about becoming a Builder, Contact Jay Cairns, Executive Director JNF Edmonton [jay.cairns@jnf.ca](mailto:jay.cairns@jnf.ca) | 780.481.7881 | [jnfbuilderscircle.ca](http://jnfbuilderscircle.ca)

# King's Bench Alberta Justice Lisa Silver: A case study in the magic of community

By Maxine Fischbein

It was a proud moment for family, friends and members of the legal and Jewish communities when Court of King's Bench of Alberta Justice Lisa Silver was publically sworn in at the Calgary Courts on Thursday, September 14, the day before Rosh Hashanah.

Welcomed by Chief Justice of the Alberta Court of Appeal Ritu Khullar, those in attendance enjoyed meaningful, warm, poignant and humorous addresses by Alberta Court of King's Bench Chief Justice Mary Moreau; Robert Bassett, Vice President of the Alberta Branch, Canadian Bar Association; Stacy Petriuk on behalf of the Law Society of Alberta; and Aaron Bickman on behalf of the Calgary Bar Association. During the ceremony, Silver recited the oath of allegiance and oaths of office, later delivering a moving address focussed on her passion for the law, respect for colleagues, love for family and friends, and deep appreciation for the individuals and Jewish communal institutions that instilled in her a passion for human rights, the legal profession, and voluntarism within and beyond the Jewish community.

Fittingly, the ceremony took place in Courtroom 1801.

When *AJNews* spoke to Justice Silver ahead of her public swearing in ceremony, what emerged was a sweet love song to family and community.

Lisa Silver was working at her computer on an article she was writing with two colleagues when her phone rang on Sunday, April 23.

Then-Justice Minister and Attorney General, the Honourable David Lametti was on the other end of the phone with great news. The Order in Council appointing Silver to the Court of King's Bench of Alberta had been signed two days before.

Justice Silver was privately sworn in on May 4 so that she could begin hearing cases.

Lisa Silver entered into the detailed and rigorous judicial application process approximately two years ago, subsequently receiving word that she had made it through the committee process. It was music to the ears of her husband and fellow criminal lawyer Markham Silver who, at the time, was battling cancer.

Sadly, Markham Silver, QC—who shared his beshert's passion for the law and community building—did not live long enough to celebrate her remarkable achievement.

"The nice thing was he knew. The sad thing was he wasn't here when they made the announcement," Justice Silver told *AJNews*.

Her journey as a judge began with four weeks of shadowing colleagues. She attended an education conference that took place just after her appointment and plunged into study.

"Once you start sitting you have to do a lot of reading and figuring out what to do," Justice Silver told *AJNews*.

"For about 18 weeks you're on rotations as a new judge," said Silver, adding that those rotations include civil, family and criminal law.

"As a professor, I wrote a lot of blogs which were mostly analysis of cases," said Silver, who is skilled at swiftly synthesizing a great deal of information.

Her blogging and podcasting days are behind her now, as is her cherished role as an associate professor at the University of Calgary, but Justice Silver—

among the first to be appointed to the Court of King's Bench following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II—clearly relishes her new role.

She misses her former interactions with colleagues and students, but is coming together with them in new ways. Justice Silver has officiated calls to the bar, and some former students have already come before her in court. One court clerk is a former student dating back to Justice Silver's time at Mount Royal University.

Fortunately for her peers, Justice Silver plans to continue participating in judicial education, which has been a big part of her non-traditional yet stellar path to the bench.

She told *AJNews* that, in some ways, her new calling is similar to the work she did in academia.

"As a professor, you are part of a team, but you are independent," Justice Silver said.

A fierce advocate for public education about the legal system, Justice Silver says that she has joined a "welcoming bench," where she can email, text or call any of the judges with questions.

"It's very collegial. You definitely have the opportunity to ask questions, and I have, but, in the end, when you are in chambers...you have to have the ability to make decisions, and I find that I have that ability."

"You wrestle with the evidence," says Justice Silver, ever mindful that she is dealing with people's lives.

"You've got the law and the tests that you apply, but it takes reasoning, it takes deliberation, consideration. You've got to be thoughtful, but in the end you need to come to a decision."

Justice Silver says that the will to see justice done and the skills that brought her to the practice of law and now the bench have their genesis in her Jewish upbringing.

That, of course, took a village.

Justice Silver refers to the Calgary Talmud Torah (now The Calgary Jewish Academy/CJA), Camp B'nai Brith (now BB-Riback) and B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) as the "triple threat," that led her to where she is today.

She exudes gratitude for her late parents, Morris and Minnie Kowall, "good people" who showed her the way. Both were very involved in community, and Silver is thankful her parents sent her to Talmud Torah, where she was one of only 10 classmates that remained through Grade 9.

While parents sometimes consider small junior high class sizes a deterrent, Silver's trajectory (and, according to her, those of her also-successful classmates) suggests otherwise.

"It was amazing," recalls Silver. "It was the best.... They gave us time to be with ourselves and each other and to be creative."

"The skills I use as a judge, I learned there... The school gave us some freedom. We had a small class and really good teachers," recalled Justice Silver, among them Mrs. Miller (math), Mrs. Lysing (social studies) and Mr. Alima (Jewish studies). She also fondly recalls former principals, Mr. Goodman and Mr. Sherman.

"School, BBYO and camp turned me into a leader... and into someone who cares about the community.



Court of King's Bench of Alberta Justice Lisa Silver, at the swearing in ceremony, with Rebecca Silver & Aiden Raff and Josh Silver. Photo by Monique de St-Croix.

What I am doing is because of a duty I feel towards my community... My Jewish upbringing and the organizations that I was involved with did that for me."

"BBYO is such a magical organization for a young person. It really opened my eyes to social justice issues and to my identity as a Jewish woman," Justice Silver added.

Rising rapidly to leadership positions in BBYO during her teens in the 1970s, Lisa Kowall—as she was then known—won an MIT (Member in Training) Award and served as treasurer of her Daughters of the Star chapter, eventually serving in multiple other executive positions including the presidencies of both DOTS and the Northwest Canada Region.

Kowall spent summers at Camp BB between the ages of nine and 21, eventually working as a counsellor and co-coordinating the inaugural Leadership Training Program (LTP) together with Edmontonian Jerry Sorokin. She later served on the admin staff, eventually becoming the camp's assistant director.

Camp BB Directors Bill Meloff, OBM, and Rivvy Meloff were role models to Silver—and to an entire generation of campers—as was head staffer Medina Shatz, who remains a lifelong friend. (Notably, Shatz, also a lawyer, was appointed to the King's Counsel just prior to Silver's September 14 swearing in ceremony.)

"Taking on leadership positions in BBYO and camp, and those positions being valued by your peers at the time, is huge. It confirms your identity as a Jewish person, but it also tells you, 'I am a leader. I can do things for the community, and I get what needs to be done,'" Justice Silver said.

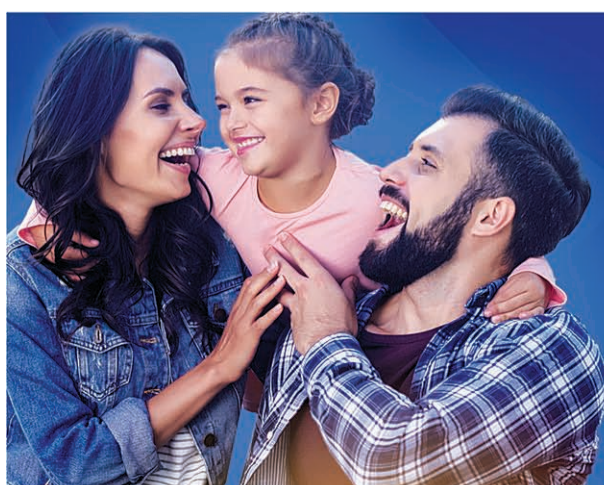
After graduating from Henry Wise Wood High School and a year of general studies at the U of C, Silver earned a degree in economics at the University of Western Ontario and then her LL.B at Osgoode Hall. She later practiced criminal law with legendary criminal lawyers Brian Greenspan and David Humphrey for a decade—arguing cases all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada—before she returned to Calgary in 1998 with Markham and their children, Josh and Rebecca.

Silver immediately circled back to the organizations that had helped to raise her, first serving on the board of Camp BB and, eventually, succeeding Edmontonian (and former Calgarian) Howie Sniderman as board chair.

Silver did some committee work at The Calgary Jewish Academy, later sitting on the board of directors where she served as vice president (external) and then president in the mid-2000s. She later served on the parent advisory board for BBYO.

By then, Silver had earned her Master of Laws at the U of C, worked part-time as a Justice of the Peace and as a part-time instructor at Mount University and had established her own legal research and writing firm. She joined the U of C Faculty of Law as an

*Continued on page 21*



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Check out our community calendar at [jewishedmonton.org](http://jewishedmonton.org)

# The Hub

Your bridge to Jewish Edmonton



## A MESSAGE FROM JOSH RAIZMAN, UJA CO-CHAIR



I want to take this opportunity to tell you a little about myself and why I decided to take on the role of co-chair for the 2023/2024 United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign. I am 42 years old. I am the father of a two-year-old boy. I am a medical director of diagnostic patient laboratories at five hospitals. I grew up in Winnipeg, but did most of my post-graduate education in Ottawa and Toronto. I moved to Edmonton eight years ago with my wife to begin our careers. As a professional in my 40s who is not originally from Edmonton, you may ask why I decided to invest so much time into this campaign when I am already juggling many other responsibilities.

The answer: my Zaidas (my grandfathers).

I am co-chairing this year's campaign because I believe in the importance of tzedakah (charity), not just in the form of dollars, but in the form of giving back to the community. Both of my Zaidas were Holocaust survivors. One was hidden by

righteous gentiles in a potato attic, while the other was a victim of concentration camps. Growing up I watched both of them selflessly volunteer their time as Holocaust educators by courageously recounting their journey of rising from despair in Poland to hope in Canada. Their involvement in the Jewish community and the support they received helped to build their new lives. This has inspired me to continue in their volunteering footsteps. From one generation to the next, l'dor vador, I am now inspired to pass the value of tzedakah onto my children.

In a digital age where distractions are abundant and demands on your time and resources are ever-present, your decision to support this year's UJA campaign is a testament to your commitment to making a difference in people's lives.

At the UJA canvasser training event on August 28, I moderated a round table discussion where three community members shared their stories about how

programs funded by the UJA have directly created positive change to their lives in the city. A generous bursary allowed a student to have a primary Jewish education by attending Talmud Torah school. The Shalom Baby program allowed a newly arrived mom to feel connected with other moms. Aid from the Jewish Family Services allowed a recent refugee family from Ukraine to make a new home here.

As the grandson of Holocaust survivors, I believe we must work together to create a safe, inclusive, and enriching Jewish community that promotes traditions, unity, and education. As a young co-chair of UJA, I believe we must carry the torch of previous generations who helped support and build our community so that we can benefit now and well into the future. Your UJA donation ensures the important work of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton can continue to provide hope, compassion, and the belief that change is possible.

Reach out to us on social media or by emailing [info@edjfed.org](mailto:info@edjfed.org).



### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, The Jewish Community Centre of Edmonton, and The Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation

Will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Commencing at 7 p.m.

Beth Shalom Synagogue Lower Auditorium 11916 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta

For the purpose of:

1. Reviewing the financial results for the fiscal year just ended.
2. Receiving an update on past activity.
3. Elections of slates of Directors for the organizations.
4. Amendment to the Society's bylaws.

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, the Nominating Committee is giving notice that at the upcoming Annual General Meeting, there will be 4 vacancies to the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton for a 3-year term (term expiring 2026).

Any Member of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton (any individual 18 years of age or older who made a contribution between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023 in the sum of at least \$18, or any one individual 18 years of age or older who made a joint contribution with another person between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023 in the sum of at least \$36) who would like to submit their name for consideration by the Nominating Committee to stand for election to the Board of

Directors of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton may do so in writing to [ceo@edjfed.org](mailto:ceo@edjfed.org) on or before October 20, 2023. Additional nominations must be made by three nominating Members and include the signature of the proposed nominee, who must also be a Member. Additional nominations may be made in writing and delivered to the Chief Executive Officer (in person) up to and including November 23, 2023. Please note that the bylaws do not allow for nominations from the floor. All nominations are as set out above.

Any Member who would like to add any additional business to be conducted at the Annual General Meeting may do so in writing to the Chief Executive Officer up to and including November 23, 2023. Any request must be endorsed by signature of 20 Members.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Kristallnacht**  
COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9  
7 P.M.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**REMEMBRANCE DAY**  
CEREMONY

Edmonton Jewish Cemetery  
7622-101 Avenue  
Sunday, November 12  
10:30 a.m.

**Seeking young adults**  
**for Genesis Leadership**  
**Program**

APPLICATION FORM AVAILABLE SOON

Contact Jacqueline at [jmedalye@edjfed.org](mailto:jmedalye@edjfed.org) for more information.

## I Believe...

Please join us in supporting the 2023/24 UJA campaign to sustain thriving and secure Jewish life in Edmonton, Israel, and around the world.



Josh Raizman  
Co-Chair, United Jewish Appeal Campaign  
Clinical Biochemist  
UJA donor



Farrel Shadlyn, KC  
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# Reflecting and Renewing: Tashlich by the Reservoir

By Shula Banchik

As the late summer sun casts its warm embrace over Calgary, two young men stand resolute upon towering rocks overlooking the Glenmore Reservoir. Their faces radiate with purpose, as they clutch bags filled with breadcrumbs, embarking on a profound spiritual journey known as Tashlich.

Surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of a clear, blue sky adorned with fluffy white clouds, the men found themselves at the edge of a windy basin. The shallow waters reveal a mosaic of pebbles beneath its surface, as if the reservoir itself is inviting them to engage in the act of reflection.

In the background, the trees that lined the reservoir's edge, begin their slow transition from lush green to vibrant shades of yellow. The promise of autumn is in the air, a time of change and introspection that perfectly aligns with the Ten Days of Awe.



The sound of the shofar was hauntingly beautiful, a call to reflection that echoed across the Glenmore Reservoir during the Tashlich Service. (Photo from Kehilat Shalom newsletter).

Along this serene scene, another figure emerges. A man stands amidst a patch of tall grass. In his hands, he holds a kudu shofar, the ancient musical instrument and symbol of the Jewish faith. As the younger men cast the crumbs into the water, he raises the shofar to his lips. The tones seem to blend with the rustling of the tall grass and the lapping of the water

against the shore. It is a reminder that Tashlich is not only about letting go of past wrongdoings, but also about sounding a call to awaken the spirit, to embrace the newness of the season and the possibilities it holds.

The strong gusts of wind sweep through the reservoir's shores; its presence felt by all during this sacred ritual. As the tekiahs, shevarim and truahs' echoes fill the air, the author of this composition sits by the water's edge. Her feet immersed in the refreshing embrace of the gentle waves. This intimate moment tells a story of personal contemplation.

A moment of connection with the cleansing power of nature, a reminder that renewal can be found in the smallest of gestures.

In this snapshot of time -surrounded by the beauty of the changing seasons, the rhythmic waves against the shore, the shofar's call, and the wind's strong caresses- we embody the profound significance of Tashlich and the Ten Days of Awe: a timeless journey of the soul towards self-improvement and a yearning for a life filled with love, health, purpose and community.

In the serenity of this moment, by the shores of the Glenmore Reservoir, we all know that our journey had just begun, a journey towards spiritual growth, renewal, and the hope that "may we all be inscribed in the Book of Life."

Shana Tova Umetuka ve Gmar Chatima Tova

Originally published in the Kehilat Shalom newsletter.



Kehilat Shalom

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Claims Conference ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

## ATTENTION HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

If you are a Holocaust survivor who has not received any compensation payment (either from the Claims Conference or German or Austrian governments), please call us immediately. You may be entitled.

The Claims Conference has negotiated the following liberalizations of criteria to compensation funds with the German government. **HARDSHIP FUND – SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT** Jewish Nazi victims eligible for the Hardship Fund have been approved for annual Supplemental Payments of approximately €1,200 in 2023 through 2027. If you already received a Hardship Fund Supplemental Payment (meaning payments over the two years of €2,400), you don't have to apply again. You will only need to provide Proof of Life. Please register with Paneem for the 2023 payment (you will need to do this every year through 2027). You will hear from us to validate via Paneem. If you have moved, or don't hear from us, please contact us. If you have never applied, the deadline for the 2023 payment is December 31, 2023.

Holocaust survivors who were previously ineligible to receive the Supplemental Hardship Fund payments because they received one-time German government payments (for example from Länderhärtefonds) are now eligible to apply for the supplemental payment. Survivors who receive a German or Austrian pension for persecution during the Holocaust (BEG, Article 2 Fund, Regional Specific Program (RSP), Austrian Victims Pension (Opferausweis)) are not eligible to receive the Hardship Supplemental Fund Payment. **NEWLY APPROVED OPEN GHETTOS:** Jewish Holocaust survivors who were persecuted in the open ghettos identified below, for at least three months, may be eligible for a monthly pension from the Article 2 or CEE Fund:

- In Romania, survivors persecuted in Bucharest, Adjud, Beiuș, Blaj, Caracal, Dumbrăveni, Făgăraș, Hațeg, Luduș, Mediaș, Nălaț-Vad, Oravița, Păcliaș, Pitești, Șărmașu, Sighișoara, Târnăveni, Tinca, Turnu Severin, Arad, Braila, Brasov, Buhusi, Călărași, Deva, Dorohoi, Fălticeni, Huși, Iliia, Lugoj, Ploiești, Podul Iloaiei, Sibiu, Suceava, Târgu Frumos, Timisoara, Turda, Alba Iulia, BaCau, Barlad, Botosani, Buzau, Costanta, Craiova, Focasni, Galatz, Harlau, Iasi, Pascani, Piatra Neamt, Roman, Romanicu Sarat, Stefanesti, Targu Mures, Targu Neamt, Tecuci, and Vaslui, between August 1941 and August 1944;
- In Bulgaria, survivors persecuted in Dobrich, Kazanlık, Kürdzhalı, Lovech, Nevrokop (a.k.a. Gotse Delchev), Nikopol, Plovdiv, Popovo, Preslav, Provadiya, Turgovishte, and Yambol (Jambol), between September 1942 and September 1944. In addition, all pension recipients who were in one of the open ghettos in Romania or Bulgaria named above and born after January 1, 1928, may be entitled to a one-time payment from the Child Survivor Fund administered by the Claims Conference.

Note: Jewish Nazi victims from these open ghettos in Romania and Bulgaria may also be entitled to a pension from the ZRBG (Ghetto Pension). This pension is not administered by the Claims Conference. Please contact a German embassy or consulate near you or <https://www.germany.info/us-en/service/07-Pension/ghetto-financial-compensation/920638>

**CHILD SURVIVOR FUND** In addition to the other eligible applicants listed above, the Child Survivor Fund may also provide a one-time payment to those who are among the One Thousand Children amounting to €2,500 (approximately \$2,500) per person. Approximately 1,400 children were forced to leave their parents behind when they were rescued from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied countries and taken to the United States. Please contact us to learn the details of eligibility.

### PAYMENT TO SPOUSES OF DECEASED ARTICLE 2/CEE FUND BENEFICIARIES

The Claims Conference will provide payments to eligible spouses of deceased recipients of the Article 2, Central and Eastern European (CEE) Funds. A spouse of an Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary may, upon the death of the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary, be entitled to receive payments for up to 9 months, paid in three quarterly installments, if the following conditions apply:

1. The spouse is alive at the date of the payment; and
2. The spouse was married to the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary at the time of death of the Article 2/CEE Fund beneficiary; and
3. The Article 2/CEE Fund recipient passed away at any point while he or she was receiving a payment from the program.

The spouse of a Holocaust survivor must be alive at the time of each payment. Other heirs, including children, are not entitled to receive any payment. To download an application from our website, please go to: [www.claimscon.org/apply](http://www.claimscon.org/apply)

The German government established a similar program for surviving spouses of monthly Holocaust compensation pensions made under German Federal Indemnification Law, other German federal compensation laws or governmental programs, (sometimes referred to as Wiedergutmachung), for Holocaust survivors who passed away January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 or later. For more information, please check with the BADV or download the application from the BADV

website at <https://www.badv.bund.de/DE/OffeneVermoegensfragen/UebergangleistungenEhegattenNSOpfer/antrag.html>.

**REGION-SPECIFIC PERSECUTION (RSP) PENSION** A pension program was created for survivors, who currently do not receive pensions who were, for at least three months in: (i) the Leningrad Siege (ii) persecuted in Romania or (iii) hiding in France. Income/Asset criteria of the Article 2/CEE Funds apply. Meeting the RSP persecution criteria shall entitle a survivor to a payment from the Child Survivor Fund if the age criteria (born in or after 1928) is met.

For more information, contact:

CLAIMS CONFERENCE

PO Box 1215, New York, NY 10113, USA


Tel: +1-646-536-9100 Fax: +1-212-679-2126

Email: [info@claimscon.org](mailto:info@claimscon.org)

**community calendar**

Want to know what's going on in Jewish Calgary? Check out the Community Calendar at [jewishcalgary.org](http://jewishcalgary.org)

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



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## A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

I am writing this message on the heels of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*, and slightly before *Sukkot* begins. The High Holidays bring community together but are oriented toward internal reflection and a renewed commitment to be our best individual selves in the coming year. Certainly, there is power in seeing our community come together in attending synagogue services, wishing one another greetings, and committing to a personal reset. However, it's the following *chagim*, *Sukkot*, *Shemini Atzeret*, and *Simchat Torah* that, for me, are much more focused on collective communal experience.

*Sukkot* offers an opportunity for building and nurturing our sense of community. Also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, *Sukkot* is more than just a celebration of harvest; it is a time to come together, share, and strengthen the bonds that unite us.

During *Sukkot*, we build *sukkahs*, temporary booths, in our yards or communal spaces. These simple structures serve as a powerful symbol of unity and togetherness. Just as the *sukkah's* walls are open and welcoming, our hearts and homes should be open to those around us, fostering a sense of belonging and community.

- Here are some ways in which *Sukkot* encourages community building:
- 1. Inviting Others In:** The holiday is a time to invite friends, family, and even strangers into your *sukkah* to share meals and celebrate together. It's an opportunity to connect with others, both within and outside our immediate circles.
  - 2. Shared Traditions:** *Sukkot* comes with unique traditions, such as waving the *lulav* and *etrog* – "Four Species" – and spending time sitting, eating, and even sleeping in the *sukkah*. Engaging in these rituals together with family and friends can create a sense of unity and shared purpose. Jews all over the world are doing similar things at the same time.
  - 3. Reflecting on Gratitude:** *Sukkot* is a time to express gratitude for the harvest and the blessings of life. Sharing these sentiments with others deepens our sense of community and reminds us of the importance of collective thankfulness.
  - 4. Community *Sukkot* Events:** Many of our community's organizations host communal gatherings during *Sukkot*. Participating in these events can help us connect with neighbors and build a stronger local community.

- 5. Acts of Kindness:** Emulating the value of hospitality and kindness demonstrated during *Sukkot* can extend beyond the holiday itself. Engaging in acts of kindness toward others is a way to build and maintain a strong sense of community year-round. This *Sukkot*, let us embrace the opportunity to build and strengthen our community bonds. Reach out to neighbors, invite friends over to your *sukkah*, or join communal celebrations. Use this special time to foster connections, share traditions, and celebrate the beauty of togetherness. May your *Sukkot* be filled with warmth, joy, and a deep sense of community and belonging.

**Chag Sameach!**



Adam Silver, CEO  
Calgary Jewish Federation

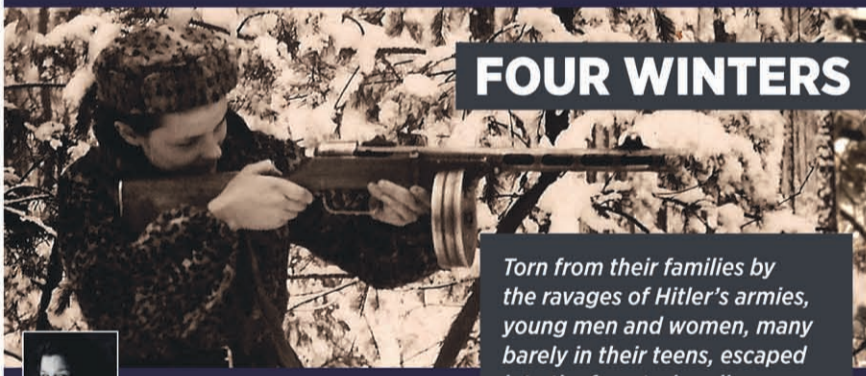


*Building an inclusive community is a priority. Contact us and we will make every effort to meet your needs.*

# Kristallnacht

## THE NIGHT OF BROKEN GLASS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 | 7:00PM | BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION





### FOUR WINTERS

Torn from their families by the ravages of Hitler's armies, young men and women, many barely in their teens, escaped into the forests, banding together in partisan brigades, transforming from young innocents raised in closely knit families to courageous resistance fighters. Shattering the myth of Jewish passivity, some of the last surviving partisans share their inspiring stories of resistance, revealing a heartfelt narrative of heroism, determination, and resilience.

Please join us for our annual Kristallnacht commemoration followed by the screening of **Four Winters: A Story of Jewish Partisan Resistance and Bravery in WWII**.

Julia Mintz, director, writer, and producer of the film will be in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.

**FREE - NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

## It's Moments Like This

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



## PJ LIBRARY® CALGARY IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE OUR FIRST PARENT CONNECTORS!



This new program, made possible through an engagement grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, is designed to help us engage more Jewish families across Calgary. Our goal is to connect with every Jewish family and help foster stronger connections within the community. Our Parent Connectors: Alexis Katzeff, Aliya Tafber, and Andrea Scharfstein, are a group of dedicated and compassionate women who are passionate about building meaningful relationships with other parents in the PJ Library community.



For more information about this initiative or to learn about PJ Library, contact Sydney Truax at [struax@jewishcalgary.org](mailto:struax@jewishcalgary.org) or 403-537-8592.



**Consulate General of ISRAEL TORONTO and Western Canada**

The Consulate General of Israel in Toronto and Western Canada, in collaboration with Calgary Jewish Federation, is pleased to provide Consular services in Calgary.

**OCTOBER 25 & 26, 2023 • 9:30AM - 5:30PM**

## ISRAELI CONSULAR SERVICES

For more information and to register for the listed services, scan QR code or go to [jewishcalgary.org](http://jewishcalgary.org)

- Passport Renewal
- Notary Services
- Life Certificate for Bituach Leumi / Ministry of Defense
- Status Registration (birth, marital status, death, etc.)





**It's Moments Like This.** Calgary Jewish Federation has been providing support in every type of Jewish moment – in times of crisis and in times of calm, we are building community and changing lives.

Your support is vital. Without it, we could not continue to be there, day in and day out, ensuring moments that are not only life-changing but life-saving. Your donation enables us to continue building, strengthening, and protecting our Jewish community.



# It's Moments Like This



**When they feel proud.**

Engagement through schools, camp, JCC, and PJ Library® foster Jewish identity and a love of our community.

View our full Case for Giving



# FASHION FORWARD

*...for a Better Future*

FEATURING OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM YOUNG TO YOUNG AT HEART!

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22**

3PM • PAPERNY FAMILY JCC

**PJ Library**

A PJ LIBRARY® PRODUCTION IN SUPPORT OF UJA

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SYDNEY TRUAX AT 403-537-8592 OR STRUAX@JEWISHCALGARY.ORG

# WALK 'N' ROLL



## SEPTEMBER 10 WAS A GREAT DAY TO WALK 'N' ROLL

Jewish Calgary gathered to walk/run 5km, get their "passports" stamped by UJA partner agencies, and answer community trivia questions all in support of the annual UJA Campaign. Back at the Paperny Family JCC field the party really got rockin' thanks to Sunshine and Broccoli, with families dancing and singing along to the great music! Bouncy castles, face painters, and glitter tattoo artists were on hand along with a photo booth. Todah Rabah to the Balaban Family's generosity along with the support of Halpern Akiva Academy, The Calgary Jewish Academy, JFSC, Camp BB Riback and Paperny Family JCC.

**VIEW MORE PHOTOS AT JEWISHCALGARY.ORG**

## Ways to Give



Online [jewishcalgary.org](http://jewishcalgary.org)

Phone 403.444.3157

Email [lwolf@jewishcalgary.org](mailto:lwolf@jewishcalgary.org)

In-person 1607 90 Avenue SW

Together with our partners we're building and supporting a safe, equitable, inclusive, and healthy Jewish community.



# Renewable Energy Investment Open House: Oct. 12 & 19

By AJNews staff

Join the Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative (BVGEC) and the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley for two informative evenings at Temple B'nai Tikvah.

The first event is a Renewable Energy Investment Open House on Thursday, October 12, at 7 pm (Mountain Daylight Time). This in-person event will be held at Temple B'nai Tikvah (900 47 Avenue Southwest) in Calgary where Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperatives' newest solar installation is scheduled for construction.

Discover the latest opportunities in the renewable energy sector and learn how you can invest in a sustainable future. Hear from the BVGEC team and gain insights into upcoming renewable energy projects and the benefits of community generation.

Network with like-minded individuals and gain a deeper understanding of the potential economic returns, social benefits, and environmental impact of renewable energy investments.

Whether you're an experienced investor or simply curious about sustainable investment options, this open house is a perfect opportunity to explore the world of renewable energy and discover how you can make a positive difference.

This is sure to be an informative and inspiring event!

A second event will be held at Temple B'nai Tikvah on October 19 from 4 – 6 pm to provide information to interested groups and organizations who are wondering if hosting a BVGEC renewable energy installation is right for them. This presentation will provide information on exciting opportunities to partner with BVGEC and power Alberta's renewable energy future.

These events are hosted by The Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley in partnership with the Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative and Temple B'nai Tikvah and funded by the Ecotrust Climate Innovation Fund.

Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative is a grass-

roots, socially responsible organization that aims to facilitate the creation of community-owned renewable energy generation projects in the Bow Valley. They are community lead and volunteer-driven.

BVGEC believes that Albertans can have an inclusive and prosperous local economy while contributing to a healthy environment. That's why they are energizing a community of changemakers to transform Alberta's energy.

To truly make a difference in the fight against climate change everyone must benefit. As a member-owned cooperative, BVGEC installs renewable energy projects – like solar, geothermal, hydro or wind - that create local jobs, support local businesses, and pay dividends to local investors. This clean electricity displaces grid-supplied energy. This reduces the carbon intensity of the AB grid and shrinks our communities' carbon footprint.

Earlier this summer Bow Valley Green Energy Co-op partnered with Temple B'nai Tikvah, the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley and Alberta Ecotrust to launch BVGECs first installation in a Calgary-based project.

As part of their commitment to make environmentally conscious choices, the synagogue council and BVGEC signed agreements to initiate, build and energize a 19 kW photovoltaic system on the rooftop of Temple B'nai Tikvah.

Peter Driftmier, a member of B'nai Tikvah's environmental committee, told *Canadian Jewish News* earlier this year that they have wanted to go solar for a long time.

"We decided to take this action after many years of informal discussions wishing we could go solar. Our congregation members care deeply about our Jewish community and our local, provincial, and federal communities all taking action on the climate crisis in a way that responds to the urgency of emissions reductions," he said.

"We hope that more synagogues build solar on their roofs and I hope that more Canadian Jews join renewable energy cooperative."

As part of the installation, the Biosphere Institute

with funding from the Alberta Ecotrust Climate Innovation Fund is supporting BVGEC with several open house events focused around the installation. They are also implementing a broad-reaching social media campaign and launching a project manual that includes a detailed case study and copies of all resources and templates needed to guide other Albertan communities in the replication of BVGECs success.

To learn more about these exciting initiatives, attend one of the events taking place at Temple B'nai Tikvah on October 12 and 19. Registration is required and can be completed at [bvgreenenergy.org/bvgec-events](http://bvgreenenergy.org/bvgec-events).

## UJA Walk N Roll



On Sept. 10 the Calgary Jewish Community gathered for a fun day in support of the annual UJA Campaign. Photos by CJF.

# RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT OPEN HOUSE

Thu, Oct 12, 2023

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Temple B'nai Tikvah  
900 47 Ave SW Calgary

Explore exciting opportunities to diversify your investment portfolio and lead Alberta's renewable energy future!

Registration required:  
[www.bvgreenenergy.org/bvgec-events](http://www.bvgreenenergy.org/bvgec-events)



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Keep up to date on a weekly basis - delivered right to your inbox.

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## B'nai Brith celebrates Diverse Minds 2023 winners

WINNIPEG – B'nai Brith Canada is delighted to congratulate the latest winners of its exciting educational initiative, the Diverse Minds Creative Writing Competition.

Diverse Minds promotes the valuable lessons of inclusion to elementary and high school students. The Diverse Minds Creative Writing Competition invites Canadian high school students to reflect on the values of diversity and inclusion by writing and illustrating a story for elementary school students (Kindergarten to Grade 5). Through peer-to-peer learning, students lead the way in creating communities where everyone is valued. The goal of Diverse Minds is to empower our youth to become role models for each other and understand that their impact reaches beyond their classrooms.

Amelie Snowdon, a Grade 12 student from Edmonton, took first place and the \$5,000 prize for her book *The Last Garden*, at a National Awards ceremony held last month in Winnipeg. B'nai Brith professionally published Amelie's book and will distribute it to schools and libraries.

Second place (\$2,500) went to Vancouver's Kellen Zeng for her work, *The Capybara's Questions*, and third (\$1,000) to Toronto's Amanda Berlove for *What I Learned from The Forest*. All competition finalists and their families were flown to Winnipeg by B'nai Brith Canada for the prestigious ceremony.

This year's panel of judges included the Honourable Wayne Ewasko, Manitoba Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning; Gail Asper, Chair and Trustee of The Asper Foundation; Isha Khan, President and CEO of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights; Lorrie Goldstein, Senior Editor Emeritus of the Toronto Sun; Cheryl Barish, Diverse Minds Writing Competition National Sponsor, Community Advocate and Member of B'nai Brith's Yachad Couples Lodge; and Lucinda Chodan, former Senior Vice President, Editorial, Postmedia, and former editor-in-chief of the Montreal Gazette.

"We are extremely proud of the young participants for creating these well-written and thoughtful books," said Michael Mostyn, B'nai Brith Canada's Chief Executive Officer, who also served as a judge in the competition.

"Our Diverse Minds Writing Competition is a powerful exercise in encouraging respect and acceptance among our youth. We are thrilled to get the winner's inspiring book published in hardcover, full-colour, and sent to various elementary schools and libraries.

"Imagine being a published author and illustrator before you graduate from high school!"

Winning entries from this year's event as well as



Earl Barish, Diverse Minds Creative Writing Competition national sponsor, congratulates first-prize winner Amelie Snowdon.

previous years, are available for purchase on the Diverse Minds Book Store. They make for a wonderful children's gift!

B'nai Brith is launching the 2023-2024 Diverse Minds Creative Writing Competition now.

If you are an interested Canadian high school student, or if you know someone who may be, be sure to enter this exciting contest! Submissions will be accepted until April 15, 2024. More information is available at [bnaibrith.ca/diverseminids](http://bnaibrith.ca/diverseminids).

## Community Shabbat Dinner will be held on Nov. 3

B'nai Brith Canada's Edmonton office is delighted to invite all those in the area to join them for their second Community Shabbat Dinner Program with Beth Israel Synagogue on Friday, November 3rd. The event is part of a community wide celebration of the Shabbat Project.

The Community Shabbat Dinner will kick off with an exciting half-hour program beginning at 5:00 p.m., followed by a delicious 4 course traditional dinner.

The dinner is priced at \$36 for adults and \$18 for children aged 18 and under. B'nai Brith will be providing subsidies for those who require financial

assistance. To inquire about B'nai Brith subsidies for this program, please contact Meital Siva at Jewish Family Services by calling 780.454.1194 ext. 236.

To reserve your spot, please call Sylvia at Beth Israel at 780-488-2840.

The Shabbat Project is an international grassroots movement that brings together Jews from all walks of life and all levels of observance to keep one Shabbat, celebrated in a spirit of global Jewish unity. First launched in South Africa in 2013, the Shabbat Project has, through a team of trailblazing volunteer partners, spread to over 1500 cities and 100 countries.

The concept is simple: Jews from across the spectrum – religious, secular and traditional, young and old, from all corners of the world – unite to experience one full Shabbat together.

The Shabbat Project is about creating a new Jewish future based on Jewish unity, pride and values. The Shabbat Project transcends the barriers that seem to separate us. It is our opportunity to rejuvenate family and community life, restore Jewish pride and identity, and strengthen Jewish unity across the globe.

**Friday, November 3 • 5:00 pm**

**at Beth Israel Synagogue  
131 Wolf Willow Rd NW**

**Adults - \$36  
Children 6 and older - \$18  
Children under 5 - FREE**

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**The  
Shabbat  
Project  
KEEPING IT TOGETHER**

# COMMUNITY SHABBAT DINNER

**Celebrate The Shabbat Project**

- Half Hour Shabbat Program
- Shabbat Songs
- 4-Course Traditional Dinner

Limited seats. Reservation required in advance. For tickets, contact Sylvia at 780-488-2840 or Abe at 780-951-0322, [asilverman@bnaibrith.ca](mailto:asilverman@bnaibrith.ca)



# Calgary's Jewish Schools Come Together for Tashlich

By Rabbi N. Aaron Kutnowski & Mrs. Avi Meyers

As students from the Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) and Halpern Akiva Academy (HAA) gathered together for Tashlich, Mrs. Avi Meyers expressed her reflections on this event. "We are standing together at a very unique moment in time. We, the CJA and HAA, are standing together in a joint Tashlich program. This unity is emblematic of this time of year, and we are showing Hashem we are one Kehillah - one people."

Several months prior to this gathering, Mrs. Avi Meyers and Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski had stood side by side at a community event. Mrs. Meyers and Rabbi Kutnowski had connected through both being the Heads of Judaic Studies at their respective schools and a shared bond of each moving to Calgary from a different community. Rabbi Kutnowski shared his fresh perspectives as a "newcomer" to Halpern Akiva Academy and the Calgary community. As the two delved deeper in conversation, the concept of joint events between the two Jewish day schools in Calgary began to take shape. Both Mrs. Meyers and Rabbi Kutnowski were eager to collaborate.

The two wanted the first collaboration of this reinvigorated bond to be meaningful and memorable. Through a series of email exchanges, both Mrs. Meyers

and Rabbi Kutnowski agreed that a Tashlich gathering would provide an ideal platform for the two schools to come together.

With a shared vision in mind, both institutions returned to the drawing board to outline the framework for the Tashlich program. Under the guidance of Morah Nechama Rassin, Director of Programming at HAA, a comprehensive schedule was crafted. Morah Nechama shared her vision, stating, "I thought it would be really nice if there was a way to experientially explore the concept of 'Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah' (Repentance, Prayer and Charity - a commitment we make on Rosh Hashanah) at the Tashlich program."

Given CJA's proximity to the Glenmore Reservoir, HAA arranged for a bus to transport the students to the Beth Tzedec parking lot. From there, both schools embarked on a one-kilometer journey together, culminating at the reservoir's edge. This was done to uphold the tradition of being near a body of water when reciting the Tashlich prayer.



Students from Calgary Jewish Academy and Halpern Akiva Academy joined together for a meaningful Tashlich service at the Glenmore Reservoir, followed by interactive games that emphasized the values of Teshuvah and Tzedakah. Photo supplied.

Following the walk, Rabbi Kutnowski led the students in the traditional Tashlich prayer, after which HAA and CJA students engaged in two interactive games that emphasized the values of Teshuvah and Tzedakah.

The collaborative Tashlich program left a profound impression on both students and educators, demonstrating the transformative power of unity in upholding shared values and nurturing spiritual growth. This remarkable partnership between the Calgary Jewish Academy and Halpern Akiva Academy stands as a testament to the strength of unity within the Calgary Jewish community.

# A Talmudic tale gets a twist in children's book aimed at diverse Jewish readers

By Jordyn Haime

TAIPEI, Taiwan (JTA) — Rabbi Akiva's daughter was destined for death on her wedding day, at least according to the star-gazers. So the early Jewish sage seemed resigned to his daughter's fate.

But on the wedding day, Rabbi Akiva's daughter offered a poor old man her portion of the wedding feast.

That night, before going to bed, she removed her hairpin and stuck it in the wall. In the morning, she discovered that the hairpin had pierced the eye of a poisonous snake, which trailed after the pin as she pulled it from the wall.

"Charity saves from death," Rabbi Akiva declared.

Erica Lyons doesn't remember the first time she heard this Talmud story, but she can't forget its many strange omissions and inconsistencies. What rabbi listened to astrologers? Why wasn't Rabbi Akiva worried about his daughter's fate? And why didn't Rabbi Akiva's daughter have a name of her own?

"It sort of made me think of Jephtha's daughter, this other girl who is going to potentially be sacrificed for the sake of a story, of a lesson of some sort," said Lyons, referencing another biblical character from the Book of Judges.

Lyons' new children's book, "Zhen Yu and the Snake," published last week with rich illustrations by Renia Metallinou, seeks to fill in those gaps — with a



twist. The story is set in 12th-century Kaifeng, China, the city where Persian Jewish merchants established China's first Jewish community. Its main characters are all Chinese Jews — Rabbi Akiva becomes Li Jian and his daughter finally gets a name, too: Zhen Yu, which means "precious jade" in Chinese. The astrologer in the story becomes a fortune-teller from the Chinese city of Chengdu, which was home to several famous fortune-tellers at the time.


At the time, Kaifeng was China's vibrant Song Dynasty capital. Its location on the Yellow River, not far from the Silk Road, made it a commercial center bustling with merchants. The Silk Road trading route had attracted hundreds of Jews to China, who settled there around the 9th or 10th century and peacefully worshiped their own god for centuries.

In Lyons' version of the story, Zhen Yu is the main character, who lives a life of virtue long before getting married. Common in Chinese culture, the presence of the fortune-teller feels natural in the Kaifeng market, where he reveals Zhen Yu's fate to Li Jian on an afternoon before Shabbat.

Lyons stays loyal to the source text, highlighting the characters' observance of Jewish law and the importance of Jewish values in their lives. But the setting and characters make the story more accessible to non-Ashkenazi readers, she said.

"The Talmud belongs to all Jews around the world," said Tani Prell, creative director at Be'chol Lashon, a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness about the racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in Judaism, primarily through education. Encouraging teachers to include diverse Jewish stories is "a hard thing to do" when those resources are limited, Prell said. "So I think it's beautiful that Erica is creating the resources that do have such a direct impact on the lived experiences of young Jews of color."

Lyons, who has been living in Hong Kong for over two decades, had always wanted to be a writer. In college, she majored in English and Jewish Studies but began her career as a lawyer for an insurance company



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Continued on page 28



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**23**  
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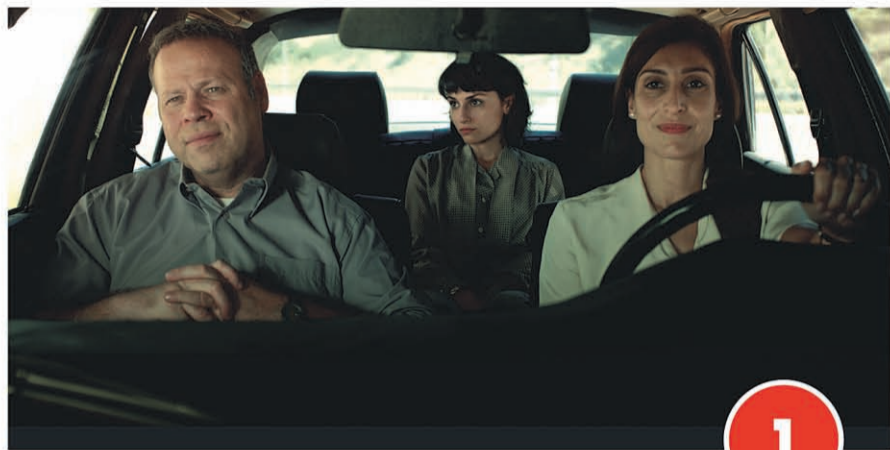


**BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION**  
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**BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION**  
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**1**

**THE MONKEY HOUSE**  
Israel 2023  
Director: Avi Nesher  
Hebrew & Italian with English subtitles  
128 minutes

**SPECIAL GUEST:**  
Avi Nesher, Director



**Comedy/Drama**  
Nominated for 11 Israeli Academy Awards, this heartwarming comedy/drama from acclaimed Israeli director Avi Nesher (Turn Left at the End of the World, The Secrets, The Matchmaker, The Other Story) is a “delightful, sophisticated mixture of a literary mystery, a witty comedy and a moving character study of two lost souls who make a connection” (Jerusalem Post). Set in the late 1980’s, the film follows Amitay Kariv, a novelist whose popularity peaked in the 1960s, only to wane in the decades that followed. Blaming current cultural politics for his lack of success, he decides to fight for what he feels is his rightful place in the Israeli literary canon, and hatches a clever, but scandalous, scheme to mount a career comeback. But to complete his plan he needs an accomplice, someone who is a literary researcher – or can convincingly pretend to be one. When a young woman named Margo takes on his mysterious job offer, their fateful encounter will change both their lives forever.

*Nominated – 11 Israeli Academy Awards including Best Director, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress*

**Saturday, November 4th at 7:30 PM**



**2**

**SAVOY**  
Israel 2022  
Director: Zohar Wagner  
Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles  
78 minutes

**DocuDrama**  
This engrossing hybrid docudrama interweaves never-before-seen archival material and riveting re-enactments to tell the story of Kochava Levy, the forgotten heroine of the deadly 1975 Savoy Hotel terror attack in Tel Aviv. Levy, a young woman of Yemeni descent, was one of the hostages being held by the PLO gunmen on that fateful March 1975 night. Her fluency in Arabic allowed her to serve as mediator between IDF negotiators and the terrorists. Over the course of one night, she transformed herself into a fearless heroine. However, by dawn, she was left with nothing but shame.

*Winner – Best Documentary Director Award and Best Editing Award, Jerusalem International Film Festival 2022  
Winner – Best Editing Award and Best Art Direction Award, Israeli Academy Awards 2022*

**Sunday, November 5th at 1:00 PM**



**3**

**VISHNIAC**  
USA 2023  
Director: Laura Bialis  
English  
90 minutes

**Documentary**  
One of the foremost photographers of the 20th century, Roman Vishniac is best known for photographing Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the 1930s. Intended to raise funds for impoverished Jewish communities, few predicted that these photographs would provide the last visual records of an entire world that, only a few years later, would vanish in the Holocaust. But while Vishniac owes his fame to this specific collection of iconic images (published in the book *A Vanished World*), he was also an avid scientist who made considerable contributions in the field of microscopic photography. Told through the eyes of his daughter Mara, this visually captivating film brings to life Vishniac’s stunning photography while exploring the remarkable career and dramatic life story of this flamboyant and sometimes controversial modernist photographer and preserver of memory. Executive-produced by Nancy Spielberg, Ori Eisen, Mirit Eisen, Taube Philanthropies & Maimonides Fund.

**Sunday, November 5th at 2:45 PM**

 **JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA**  
Proudly co-sponsored by the  
**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA**  
Jay Joffe Memorial Program



**4**

**BARREN**  
Israel 2022  
Director: Mordechai Vardi  
Hebrew with English subtitles  
108 minutes

**Drama**  
A story of secrets, trust, love, and faith, this provocative and beautifully acted drama is centred around Feigi and Naftali, a young childless Hasidic couple living with Naftali’s parents in Tzfat, Israel. Unable to conceive after four years of marriage, they want nothing more than to bring a child into the world. When Naftali pilgrims to Uman, in the Ukraine, over Rosh Hashanah to pray for a child, a guest – a Rabbi who claims to have healing powers - is invited to stay with the family over the holidays. But after the Rabbi offers to help Feigi with a healing treatment for barren women, nothing will remain as it was before. The resulting trauma sets a family crisis into motion, testing their faith in God and their relationships.

**Sunday, November 5th at 7:00 PM**

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**5**

**FOUR WINTERS: A STORY OF JEWISH PARTISAN RESISTANCE & BRAVERY IN WWII**

USA 2020  
 Director: Julia Mintz  
 English  
 97 minutes

**SPECIAL GUEST:**  
 Julia Mintz, Director



**Documentary**

"All I owned was my camera, leopard coat, rifle and a grenade in case I'm captured... the pillow was the rifle, the walls were the trees, and the sky was the roof," says Faye Schulman, one of over 25,000 Jewish partisans, who, against extraordinary odds, fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators from deep within the forests of WWII's Eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Belarus. Torn from their families by the ravages of Hitler's armies, young men and women, many barely in their teens, escaped into the forests, banding together in partisan brigades, transforming from young innocents raised in closely knit families to courageous resistance fighters. Shattering the myth of Jewish passivity, some of the last surviving partisans share their inspiring stories of resistance in *Four Winters*, revealing a heartfelt narrative of heroism, determination, and resilience.

**Thursday, November 9th at 7:00 PM**

Screening of FOUR WINTERS and Special Guest Speaker are open to the entire community, at NO CHARGE, as part of our community-wide KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION



Proudly co-sponsored by  
 CALGARY JEWISH FEDERATION



**6**

**PERFECT STRANGERS**

Israel 2021  
 Director: Lior Ashkenazi  
 Hebrew with English subtitles  
 95 minutes

**Comedy/Drama**

Seven life-long friends with a lot of shared history and experiences, and a mutual death from their past, meet for dinner to watch a rare lunar eclipse. What starts out as a congenial evening takes an unexpected turn when they agree to play a game: every text message, call, or notification that they receive on their cell phones must be shared with the entire group. Betrayals, secrets, and unresolved issues emerge, threatening their long-standing friendships and marriages. Adapted from the hit 2016 Italian film of the same name, this entertaining dramedy is the directorial debut of prolific actor Lior Ashkenazi, who puts a uniquely Israeli spin on a film that has been remade in over 20 countries.

**Saturday, November 11th at 7:00 PM**



Presented in partnership with JAC – Jewish Adult Calgary



**7**

**MARCH '68**

Poland, 2022  
 Director: Krzysztof Lang  
 Polish with English subtitles  
 115 Minutes

**Drama**

Warsaw – March 1968. Hania, a young Jewish theatre student, meets and falls madly in love with Janek as the city is engulfed in protests against the authoritarian regime's crackdown on civil liberties and anti-Semitic policies in Communist-era Poland. While the young lovers are uninterested in politics, they soon find themselves unable to avoid it when Hania's parents lose their respective jobs due to the anti-Semitic purge and are forced to emigrate. Hania wants to stay in Poland with Janek, but after participating in a protest rally at the university, events soon spiral out of control. History, politics and romance collide in this stirring coming-of-age love story as the young couple is forced to choose between love, family and freedom.

**Saturday, November 11th at 9:00 PM**



Presented in partnership with JAC – Jewish Adult Calgary



**8**

**THE NARROW BRIDGE**

Australia 2022  
 Director: Esther Takac  
 English, Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles  
 76 minutes

**Documentary**

*The Narrow Bridge* explores the journeys of four people who, after searing pain and loss, develop strengths they never had before. Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam, Israeli and Palestinian women and men who have lost a child or parent in the prolonged and violent conflict, transform their grief into a bridge for understanding and reconciliation. They belong to a highly controversial grassroots movement - Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Families - who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality. Despite fierce political, social, and family opposition, they refuse to give up. Charting a journey of hope amidst pain, this powerfully moving and thought-provoking film follows their paths from devastating trauma to courageous activism.

**Sunday, November 12th at 1:00 PM**

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**9**

**SHTTL**  
Ukraine/France 2022  
Director: Ady Walter  
Yiddish with English subtitles  
114 minutes

**Drama**  
Entirely in Yiddish, and featuring visually compelling black and white cinematography, *SHTTL* is the story of the inhabitants of a Jewish Ukrainian village at the border of Poland. Mendele, who has been living a secular life in Kyiv, finds himself back in the familiar world of his shtetl where, amid simmering communal tensions between tradition and modernity, he is fighting for the hand of the woman he loves. Set in the 24 hours before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the film captures a day in the life of this unnamed village – a vibrant place brimming with the romance, politics, and intrigue of everyday life – in the context of a world about to disappear. The absence of the letter “e” in the film’s title symbolizes a vacuum, an empty space, a gaping hole, where once a world existed.

**Sunday, November 12th at 2:45 PM**



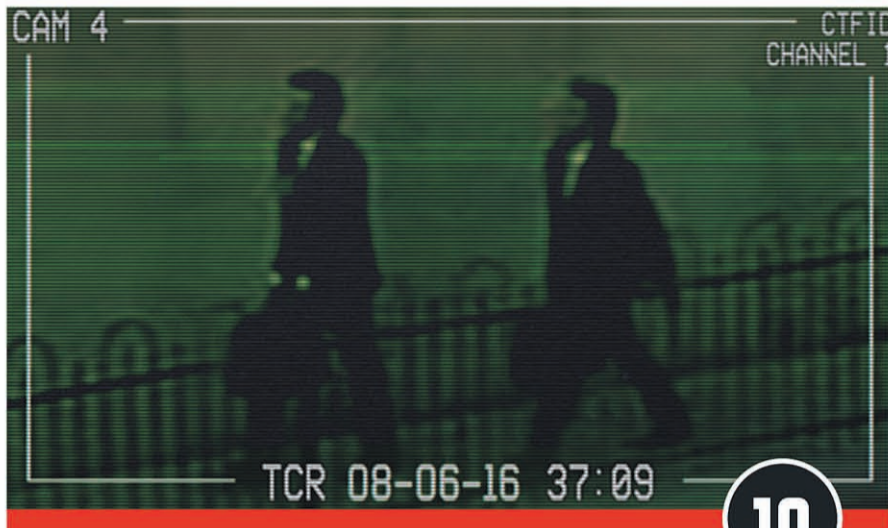
**11**

**THE OTHER WIDOW**  
Israel/France 2022  
Director: Maayan Rypp  
Hebrew with English subtitles  
83 minutes

**Drama**  
A dark comedic drama about Ella, a 34-year-old theater costume designer, who experiences the sudden death of her lover Assaf, a respected but married theatre playwright. Keeping her identity under wraps, she attends his Shiva, where she gets glimpses of aspects of her lover and his life which were hitherto closed off from her. Through intimate encounters with Assaf’s brother, mother, and, most especially, his wife, she examines her place in his life and eventually demands her legitimate right to mourn.

*Nominated – 9 Israeli Academy Awards, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress*

**Saturday, November 18th at 7:00 PM**



**10**

**CLOSED CIRCUIT**  
Israel 2022  
Director: Tal Inbar  
Producer: Nancy Spielberg  
Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles  
54 minutes

**SPECIAL GUEST:**  
**Tal Inbar, Director**



**Documentary**  
Two men in suits sit at a popular café in Tel Aviv. Moments later, they open fire on the shocked diners around them. One customer fights back. Others run to safety. No one escapes unharmed. *Closed Circuit* deconstructs the infamous 2016 terrorist attack at Sarona Market by skilfully weaving together raw footage from closed-circuit security cameras with riveting present-day interviews with survivors of the incident: a father breaking the Ramadan fast with his family, a cop who unknowingly saves one of the fleeing terrorists, a girl who escapes but loses her dad, and restaurant workers, both Arab and Jewish, whose lives were forever changed on that fateful night. Produced by Nancy Spielberg, and directed by award-winning filmmaker Tal Inbar, this searing and heart-pounding documentary offers us insight into the complex Israeli reality and the lasting trauma shared by the victims.

**Sunday, November 12th at 7:00 PM**



**12**

**THE SHADOW OF THE DAY**  
Italy 2022  
Director: Giuseppe Piccioni  
Italian with English subtitles  
125 minutes

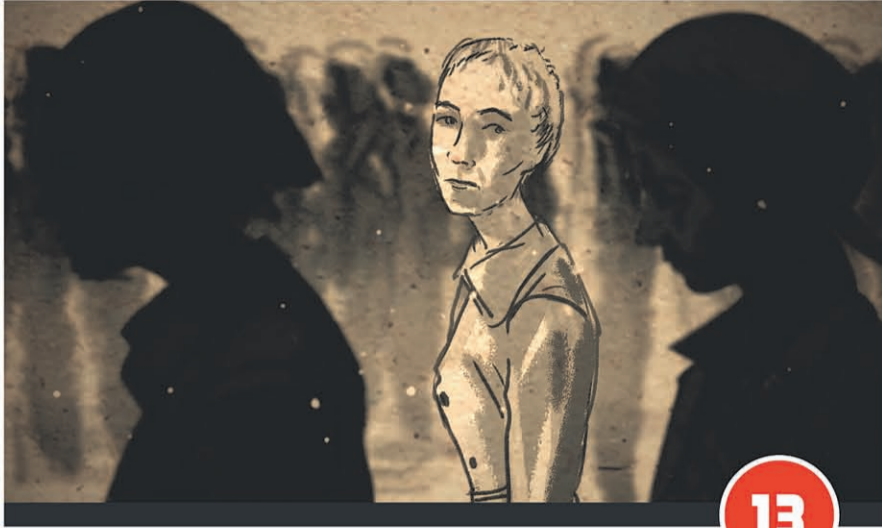
**Drama**  
Beautifully shot and acted, this dramatic and gripping love story is set in late 1930’s Italy, against the backdrop of the rise of fascism and the increasing oppression of the country’s Jewish community. Luciano, a wounded World War I veteran and a sympathizer with fascism, runs an upscale restaurant overlooking the ancient town square in the picturesque provincial town of Ascoli Piceno. He believes he can live his life according to his own set of rules. In this bubble, he observes the world through the window of his pleasant restaurant. Luciano’s world changes, however, when Anna, a young woman with a dangerous secret, arrives in town and is hired to work in his restaurant. Slowly, affection creeps in between the two and among the many dangers Luciano faces, including the onset of WWII, there is the greatest danger of all: love.

**Saturday, November 18th at 8:50 PM**

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13

### SABOTAGE

Israel 2022  
Director: Noa Aharoni  
Hebrew & English with English subtitles  
65 minutes

#### Documentary

January 1945, less than two weeks before the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, four courageous forced laborer women were hanged in public, accused of sabotaging the Nazi war machine. Using a mix of animation, archival footage and witness testimonies, Sabotage tells the dramatic unknown story of the women's underground operation in Auschwitz-Birkenau. It's a story of feminine heroism, resistance, and tragedy told through the eyes of then 16-year-old Anna Wajcblum Heilman, the youngest member of the resistance, whose sister Estusia was one of those hanged, and whose diary forms the basis of the film. Through Anna's diary, we learn of the women's bold and daring resistance, the camaraderie, and the bonds of friendship that formed between these women under the most horrific circumstances.

Winner- Best Mid Length Documentary Award, Israeli Documentary Forum Awards 2022

Sunday, November 19th at 1:00 PM



14

### HOPE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

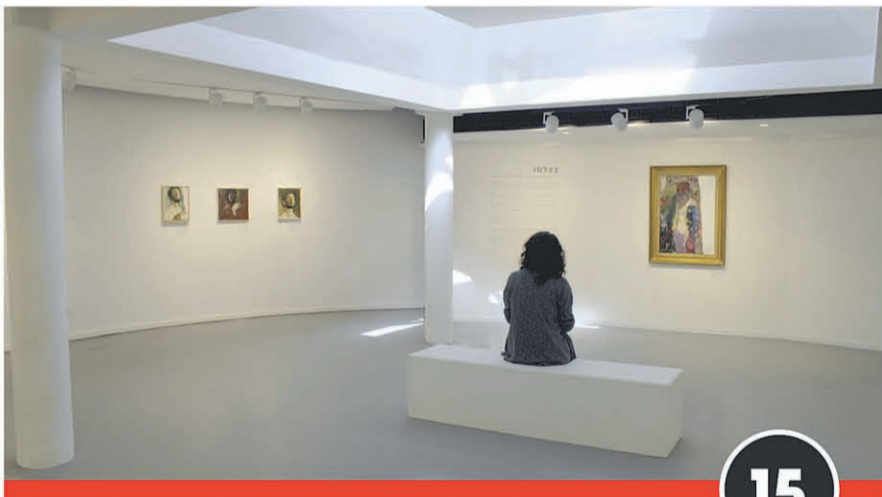
Israel 2023  
Director: Itay Vered  
Hebrew, Ukrainian & English with English subtitles  
65 minutes

#### Documentary

In the midst of the war in Ukraine, an Israeli field hospital is established to care for those affected by the conflict. This timely and inspiring film follows the challenges faced by the medical teams as they treat Ukrainian patients who have lost everything. Amidst the chaos and destruction, the film highlights the intersection of history and culture as the Israeli teams, some descended from Holocaust survivors, offer help and hope to those in need. A touching portrayal of humanity, compassion, and the power of small acts of kindness to bring people together.

Sunday, November 19th at 2:30 PM

THE DR. RALPH GUREVITCH TIKKUN OLAM SCREENING  
Proudly sponsored by  
THE GUREVITCH FAMILY ENDOWMENT FUND



15

### THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER: OIL ON CANVAS

Israel 2022  
Directors: Margarita Linton & Yaniv Linton  
Hebrew & Russian with English subtitles  
60 minutes

#### Documentary

In an effort to better understand her long-estranged father, filmmaker Margarita Linton visits an exhibition of his work in the gallery of a museum in Tel Aviv. Margarita has not seen her father—an esteemed Russian painter known for his intimate and revealing self-portraits—in over a decade, but she is hopeful that this new exhibition could be the opportunity for them to reconnect. She contacts him to share her idea of making a film about their relationship, rekindled by his artwork. But as work on the film progresses, she discovers that actually meeting the man behind the portraits in-person is her real challenge. As she stares at her father's images, Linton feels a great sense of absence. How does one film an absence? Though her father's love eludes her, she remains masterfully determined to make meaning out of the void, hoping to find solace and healing in her work – the results are mystifying and surprising.

Winner – Best Mid-Length Documentary Film, Israeli Academy Awards 2022

Sunday, November 19th at 3:45 PM



16

### WITHOUT PRECEDENT: THE SUPREME LIFE OF ROSALIE ABELLA

Canada 2023  
Director: Barry Avrich  
English  
84 minutes

#### Documentary

The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Rosalie Silberman Abella was determined from a young age to defend the rights of those who faced injustice. Appointed at the age of 29 as the youngest judge in Canadian history, she went on to become Canada's first Jewish female Supreme Court Justice, in an illustrious career that made her a respected human rights hero. With a perspective and point of view shaped from being born in a displaced person's camp following the Holocaust, and being an immigrant to Canada at the age of 4 —Abella has been at the forefront of historic, monumental, and sometimes controversial landmark legal decisions in human rights, religious practices, and sex-discrimination cases. Chronicling her family beginnings, and reflecting on her remarkable life and career, this captivating documentary offers a loving and intimate portrait of a modern, fierce, uncompromising, and gracious champion of equal rights, who has spent her entire life reminding us that we must never forget how the world looks to those who are vulnerable.

Sunday, November 19th at 7:00 PM

THE DR. MARTHA COHEN MEMORIAL SCREENING  
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**SOMETHING FROM NOTHING**

Canada 1999  
Director: Stefan Leblanc  
English  
23 minutes

**Animated Short Film for the Whole Family**

Based on acclaimed author Phoebe Gilman's award-winning book of the same name, this beautifully animated short film is the heartwarming story of a boy named Joseph, his beloved grandfather, and his special friend, Mazel the mouse. Adapted from an old Jewish folktale, and set in a small shtetl, it's an enchanting tale of family love, hope, and renewal that will warm the hearts of young and old alike.

**Sunday, November 12th at 11:00 AM**

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**It is their generosity, community-mindedness and commitment to Jewish culture that enables us to offer this event to the community.**

And we'd like to acknowledge and offer a special thank you to the sponsors of two of the annual highlights of our festival:

**The "Dr. Martha Cohen Memorial Screening",** which this year features the captivating documentary *Without Precedent: The Supreme Life of Rosalie Abella*, is sponsored annually by the **Dr. Martha Cohen bequest to Beth Tzedec Congregation**

**The "Dr. Ralph Gurevitch Tikkun Olam Screening",** which this year features the inspiring documentary *Hope Without Boundaries*, is sponsored annually by the **Gurevitch Family Endowment Fund**

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## Jewish Film Festival

Cont. from page 1

Film Festival provides the opportunity to hear Neshet who, while still at the top of his game, seems poised to open a new chapter in his life.

As usual, Film Festival screenings take place on Saturday evenings and Sundays during the first three weekends in November. A full season pass is only \$80 when purchased in advance or \$90 at the door. Tickets for a full afternoon or evening of screenings are \$20 and can be purchased at the door.

Film Festival is once again partnering with the Calgary Jewish Federation to present a special community-wide *Kristallnacht* screening on Thursday, November 9, when the extraordinary film *Four Winters: A Story of Jewish Partisan Resistance in World War II* will be presented.

American director Julia Mintz will be on hand to discuss the moving documentary, which includes fascinating archival footage, historical documents and interviews with a handful of surviving partisans, the remnant of an estimated 25,000 young Jewish men and women, some of them teenagers at the time, who "...carried out deadly acts of sabotage, staging ambushes, and waging clandestine warfare against the Nazis and their collaborators." The *Kristallnacht* screening is open to the entire community free of charge.

Another gift to the community is a special family movie event in partnership with PJ Library on November 12. The animated Canadian short film *Something from Nothing* will be featured at a special 11 am screening. Directed by Stefan Leblanc and based on author Phoebe Gilman's award-winning children's book by the same name, *Something from Nothing* is a retelling of a beloved Jewish folktale and tells a story about a little boy named Joseph, his grandfather and his friend, Mazel the mouse. Following the film, kids will be invited to take part in a craft activity during which they can "...discover the magic of turning everyday materials into something extraordinary." This special event, perfect for young families, is free of charge. Families are encouraged to preregister at [jewishcalgary.org](http://jewishcalgary.org).

Other notable screenings include the 2023 Dr. Ralph Gurevitch Tikkun Olam screening, *Hope without Boundaries* on the afternoon of Sunday, November 19. The documentary explores the establishment of an Israeli field hospital in Ukraine as that country defends itself against continuing Russian bombardment. "Amidst the chaos and destruction, the film highlights the intersection of history and culture as the Israeli teams, some descended from Holocaust

survivors, offer help and hope to those in need."

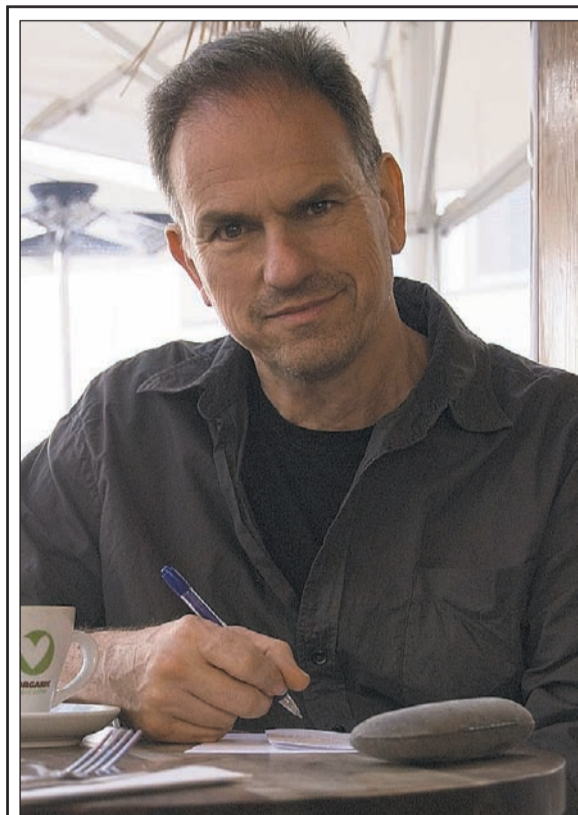
This year's Dr. Martha Cohen Memorial Screening - *Without Precedent: The Supreme Life of Rosalee Abella*— is a must-see exploration of the life and times of the now-retired Canadian Supreme Court Justice. At the age of 29, Abella became the youngest judge in Canadian history and, later, the first Jewish female to serve as a Supreme Court justice. This fast-paced and entertaining documentary provides uplifting glimpses into the career and private life of a multitasking and engaging woman whose devotion to justice and human rights was influenced by her Holocaust survivor parents. *Without Precedent* will bring the Film Festival to a close on a high note on the evening of Sunday, November 19.

Before that, there are many other great films to see, including the compelling documentary *Closed Circuit*, on Sunday evening, November 12. Tel Aviv-based award-winning director Tal Inbar will be on hand to speak about the film, which was produced by Nancy Spielberg, sister of celebrated film director Steven Spielberg.

*Closed Circuit* brings the audience shockingly close to the 2016 terrorist attack that took place in a café at Tel Aviv's popular Saron Market. This unique documentary intertwines closed circuit camera footage from that night with interviews of Jewish and Arab victims, juxtaposing real-time events with the trauma that continues to haunt innocent citizens who had the misfortune of being in the right place at the wrong time.

Nancy Spielberg, who has previously been a special guest at the Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival, is also the executive producer of director Laura Bialis's film *Vishniac*, which will be screened on the afternoon of Sunday, November 5. *Vishniac* is a visually stunning deep dive into the life and times of the legendary Russian/American photographer Roman Vishniac, whose lens captured evocative images of shtetl life between 1935 and 1938, prior to its destruction during the Shoah. The achingly evocative photos live on in the book *A Vanished World*. *Vishniac*— also a scientist—later rose to prominence in microscopic photography, a field in which he is credited as a founder. The screening of *Vishniac*, co-sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, is this year's Jay Joffe Memorial Program.

The Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival is made possible by community partners and the financial support of a growing list of sponsors. This year, there has been a particularly generous outpouring of additional support for the festival in memory of Sidney Cyngiser, OBM, who, together with his wife Bronia, established an endowment fund close to 20 years ago that will continue to support the Film Festival in perpetuity.



Director Avi Neshet will be one of the special guests attending this year's Beth Tzedec Congregation Calgary Jewish Film Festival.

When Sid Cyngiser passed away on June 27, 2023, the entire community mourned his passing. While he was, perhaps, best known as a Holocaust survivor who shared his first-hand testimony with countless Alberta students, teachers and other community groups, Sid Cyngiser's interests were diverse.

Attending and supporting this year's film festival is a fitting tribute to the memory of a man whose diverse interests, Jewish pride, curiosity and hunger for knowledge are some of the key ingredients of a film fest that has delighted thousands of audience members for 23 years...and counting!

For more information about the Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival and to prepurchase season passes, go to [www.CalgaryJewishFilmFestival.com](http://www.CalgaryJewishFilmFestival.com) or call the Beth Tzedec office at 403-255-8688. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

## Documentary features the life and work of Justice Rosalie Abella

Closing the 2023 Calgary Jewish Film Festival on November 19 is a screening of the acclaimed documentary *Without Precedent: The Supreme Life of Rosalie Abella*.

Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella's remarkable judicial career and extraordinary contribution to her community was celebrated this summer during the University of Saskatchewan's (USask) Spring Convocation ceremonies, when she was awarded an honorary degree.

During her acceptance speech, Justice Abella gave

thanks to friends and family and called upon the crowd to applaud the graduates in attendance.

"Justice, not just law, is the transcendent goal if we want a fair society. And it not only belongs to everyone, everyone has a duty to protect and promote it," said Abella during her address.

"Today is a day for celebration and hope. So let me tell you why I am so hopeful and so grateful to Canada for how far we have come. I admit that we still have a lot to do, and smugness should never be on the national agenda. But let's focus today on why we've earned the

right to feel proud of Canada's justice journey so far, and why we need to cherish the ever-increasing Canadian trajectory towards more and more inclusion, fairness, and social justice so that the next generation can look backward and forward with the same pride and hope we feel today."

USask President and Vice-Chancellor Peter Stoicheff said the university was honoured to highlight and celebrate the achievements of Justice Abella's accomplishments.

"Justice Abella is one of the most influential and groundbreaking Supreme Court justices this country has ever known. Her decades-long judicial career devoted to the advancement of justice, equity, and human dignity has significantly shaped Canadian law and society."

# Justice Lisa Silver

*Cont. from page 4*

instructor in 2016, becoming an assistant professor in 2018 and then an associate professor in 2021.

Amazingly, despite her very busy professional and academic life, Silver continued to support multiple Jewish organizations including Beth Tzedec Synagogue and the United Jewish Appeal, where she co-chaired the women's Lion of Judah division together with Raechelle Paperny.

"Nothing I've done has been alone," Justice Silver told *AJNews*, paying tribute to mentors, colleagues, classmates, students and fellow volunteers too numerous to mention.

"Even when you are in leadership, you don't pull people behind you, you're behind the people," she added.

"You learn how to listen to people and build consensus. That's the skill set that you learn. It is vital to those who serve on the bench."

Justice Silver's daughter Rebecca has followed in the footsteps of her parents and her paternal grandfather, Louis B. Silver QC, having been called to the Bar of Upper Canada this past June. Rebecca's husband Aiden Raff is also studying law. Son Josh Silver opted for architecture; he is currently working on his Ph.D and teaching at the University of Manchester in England.

According to Justice Silver, her Jewish leadership roles within the Jewish community naturally led to those she took on in the legal community.

"Because of the experience I had on boards and committees with the Jewish community, I felt I had some expertise and wanted to help the entire community."

Examples abound. Beginning in her first year of law school, Silver became active in the Community Legal Aid Services Program (CLASP), providing legal assistance to low-income people.

That is how she met her husband, who had graduated four years ahead of her.

After that first summer, she became the Criminal Division leader and later the chair of CLASP.

"If it matters to you, you put your feelings in action," says Silver. "This is a very Jewish precept. You don't just talk about kindness... You do an active kindness."

Reflecting further on the value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), she explained, "It's the action. You don't have to do big acts, but you have to act."

In Calgary, Silver served on a Legal Aid appeals



**Court of King's Bench of Alberta Justice Lisa Silver was publicly sworn in at the Calgary Courts on September 14. Photo by Monique de St-Croix.**

committee for a number of years and helped a local coalition against human trafficking write their bylaws. She served on a Law Society Lawyer Competence Committee and on the Criminal Justice Committee of the Canadian Bar Association.

In 2012, Silver was appointed as a Police Commissioner, eventually serving as vice chair. Along the way she chaired the Police Commission's public complaints committee and even served as acting public complaints director during a period of transition.

Many high profile issues emerged during Silver's tenure on the Police Commission including gender issues, a topic she addressed at a Women in Policing conference held in Calgary.

For Silver it is a "no brainer" to give back to the community that welcomed her Polish immigrant grandparents and their extended family when they settled in Calgary in the 1920s, after being sponsored by "the Meema," Bella Singer, a fondly remembered community matriarch who worked hard to bring many family members from Radom, Poland to Calgary in the decades prior to the Holocaust.

Proudly sharing a photo of her maternal grandfather Sam Fishman in his shop—where he eventually made cowboy boots—Justice Silver spoke about how hard both her grandfather and grandmother worked, the latter becoming a businesswoman in her own rite, casting a mold for the strong women that followed.

Justice Silver takes pride in giving back to the greater community that gave her grandparents the opportunity to build a new life in Calgary.

"That's one of the reasons I went into criminal law. To me, being a lawyer was providing a service, and I

believed that everyone had a right to have...their voice represented, because that's what you are doing, you are speaking on behalf of a client."

"There's the social justice that BBYO taught me, that innate sense of fairness and justice."

Citing the text that describes Talmudic analysis in the *Shachrit* (morning) prayer service, Justice Silver told *AJNews*, "...That is statutory interpretation. Those are the rules." In one of her many blogs she references Talmudic analysis and interpretation as an exemplar.

"My career was built on my Jewish identity. Criminal law is also about community. It's about people....They all deserve respect and a fair hearing. That's the bottom line."

Her multifaceted journey as a legal professional and a professional volunteer has well prepared Justice Lisa Silver for an exciting new chapter as a member of the judiciary.

She told those gathered in her honour on September 14, "I am here because of you, and I am here for you."

### Did you know?

The April announcement of Justice Lisa Silver's appointment to the Court of King's Bench of Alberta came just a few days prior to the swearing out of Justice Marina Paperny from the Alberta Court of Appeal on April 26. Justice Paperny was appointed to the Court of Appeal in 2001 after serving five years on the Court of Queen's Bench. Mazel tov and yishar kochech to Justice Paperny on her distinguished service.

*Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.*



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## Students embrace Jewish identity and belonging in 8 transformative sessions

By Chabad of Edmonton

University years are transformative, challenging, and eye-opening. It's a time when young adults explore their identities and form lifelong friendships. For Jewish students at University of Alberta and other Universities in Edmonton, the Sinai Scholars Society program has become an essential stop on this journey. It gives them a welcoming space to probe their roots and gain a profound sense of belonging.

Since 2006, the Sinai Scholars Society—a division of the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute—has offered an immersive eight weeks of Jewish study and real-world experiences on college campuses to strengthen college students' sense of Jewish identity and belonging. Through the 8-week *Think Jewish* course, we empower Jewish college students to feel confident and comfortable embracing their Jewish identity. Our program includes 17 hours of text-based study and discussion and 23 hours of hands-on Jewish experiences.

Rabbi Mendy and Rebbetzin Chaya Sarah Blachman brought Sinai Scholars to Edmonton in 2020, offering students an immersive eight-week experience that combines lively discussions of Jewish identity with visits to local Jewish communities, volunteering, and Shabbat experiences.

Chabad On Campus Edmonton is dedicated to providing the local community with an inclusive environment for Jewish learning, spiritual growth, and social connection. As part of the global Chabad movement, Chabad on Campus Edmonton strives to make Jewish teachings and traditions access-

ible to all, fostering a strong sense of community, shared purpose, and Jewish learning.

Now, they're celebrating their fourth year of the Sinai Scholars experience. "It's a powerful validation of what we're offering," Rabbi Mendy says. "We aim to give students a chance to get comfortable embracing their identity."

Sinai Scholars helps students like Dorit Shternshain from University of Alberta feel more at ease among her campus peers. "I used to feel different," she says. "I'd feel alienated from other students because I'm Jewish. Now I'm proud of it and not afraid to share it."

Gaining a fuller picture of Judaism helps students overcome negative stereotypes and perceptions.

"Sinai Scholars changed my view of Judaism," says Mia Rosengard. "There is no 'correct way' to be Jewish. I was raised to believe that the more observant Jewish community was close-minded, but I realized it was just the opposite."

For others, like Dana Schwartz, Sinai Scholar provides the Jewish education and background they felt they missed early in life.

"I was often forced into educating my teachers on Jewish customs," she says. "This, finally, allowed me to study Jewish teachings as they had never been offered to me before."

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### Back to School at HAA



Staff and students at Halpern Akiva Academy in Calgary headed back to school this month - focussed on rekindling friendships, settling into their studies and celebrating the chagim.

Learning aside, Sinai Scholars creates lifelong friendships and a sense of community for students.


Emily Martin's family moved frequently while she grew up, depriving her of a steady community. "The friendships I created feel more like family," she says of her experience with Sinai Scholars. "I now have a place where I can feel safe and supported. No matter what happens in life, Judaism has my back, and so does my community."

The Edmonton Sinai Scholars experience will be starting in January 2024. Do you know of a Jewish University-age young adult living in Edmonton? Let them know about this incredible opportunity by sharing with them the link to find out more information and to register: [Mysinai.com](http://Mysinai.com)

For more information about Sinai Scholars and other Chabad on Campus activities available to Jewish University-age young adults contact Rabbi Mendy: 780.200.5770



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# Nation-wide conference addresses antisemitism

On October 16 and 17, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and Canada's Jewish Federations will host *Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It*, the first-ever, wide-scale convening of the Jewish community from across Canada for a conference to face, fight, and push back against the single-most important challenge we confront today: antisemitism.

A two-day conference in Ottawa, *Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It* will present a comprehensive agenda including advocacy training, seminars featuring Canadian and international experts, and face-to-face meetings with decision-makers. The conference will mobilize hundreds of Jewish Canadians and community allies (ethnic and faith partners) to become empowered, educated, and united in the fight against hate and antisemitism.

"Jew-hate cannot be permitted to thrive unchecked in Canada; we cannot afford to be complacent," said Gail Adelson-Marcovitz, Chair of the National Board of Directors of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. "This will be Canada's most significant response to antisemitism ever."

"We are going to provide community members and friends with the skills and tools they need to speak up and push back. We must combine our voices, express solidarity, and stand united against hate and antisemitism."

The groundbreaking event will gather Jewish community members from all provinces, political party leaders, parliamentarians, public officeholders, political staff, academics, public service professionals, law enforcement representatives, ethnic and faith leaders, advocacy professionals, and more than 100 student leaders from campuses across Canada to explore two content streams centred on antisemitism: how to *Face It* and how to *Fight It*.

Sessions will cover how to define and identify antisemitism; global best practices in fighting hate; how other ethnic and faith-based community allies can partner with the Jewish community to combat hate; hate crimes and the law; social media literacy and online hate; how to become an activist; how to advocate and engage elected officials; and how to maintain pride

and love for Judaism and Israel in the face of anti-Jewish racism.

Programming highlights include a Parliamentary Gala with key elected officials and decision-makers; meetings on Parliament Hill with MPs and senators; an exclusive live taping of *Curse of Politics: The Herle Burly Political Panel*; and the highly anticipated release of a first-of-its-kind report on the relationship between hate crimes targeting the Jewish community in Canada and online antisemitism co-published by The Network Contagion Research Institute and CIJA.

Attendees will hear from a roster packed with experts from across the world including Arsen Ostrovsky, CEO, The International Legal Forum; Gil Troy, Author and Scholar; Farah Pandith, Senior Advisor, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Author, Foreign Policy Strategist, and Former Diplomat; Dr. Ayelet Kuper, Physician and Interdisciplinary Scholar; Stephen Camp, Retired Staff Sergeant, Edmonton Police Service Hate Crime Unit; Shai Deluca, Interior Designer, Media Personality, and Advocate; Jacqueline Edwards, President, Association of Black Law Enforcers (ABLE); Joel Finkelstein, Co-Founder and Director, The Network Contagion Research Institute; Lord John Mann, Independent Adviser on Antisemitism to the UK Government; Kasim Hafeez, Middle East Analyst, Christians United for Israel; and Canadian political party leaders.

Why Now?

Antisemitism is on the rise around the world, and Canada is not immune. Alarming, Statistics Canada reported that, while religiously motivated hate crimes in Canada in 2022 declined overall, Jew-hatred was the only religious category that showed an increase in the number of incidents reported.

"Antisemitism isn't just a real and present threat today, it's a problem growing at a frightening rate," said CIJA President and CEO, Shimon Koffler Fogel.

"And here's why that should concern you: what



starts with the Jews never ends with the Jews. Hate breeds more hate. So, we have a big choice to make about antisemitism and hate in Canada – ignore its impact and stay silent or come together to push back against it. We are choosing the latter.

"But Canadian Jews cannot conquer antisemitism on our own. It is the responsibility of each of us to combat hatred and antisemitism. We must all be changemakers, united as allies and partners to fight all hate."

"We've all seen enough, we've heard enough, and we've had enough. *Face It, Fight It* is a turning point, a catalyst for change in how this new wave of Jew-hatred will be addressed."

*Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It* will kick off a comprehensive, national initiative to combat antisemitism in Canada. Following two days of discussion and education, participants will leave with a plan of action to ensure the political sector and the public understand the impacts of Jew-hate.

The conference is open to the public, with tickets available for Monday and Tuesday (\$475 + tax), or Tuesday only (\$300 + tax). For more information about *Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It*, including a comprehensive list of speakers, scheduled programming, and to purchase tickets, visit: [fightit.ca](http://fightit.ca).

## Speaker of the House

Cont. from page 1

the Speaker of the House and a standing ovation," said the statement.

Dan Panneton, a director with FSWC, told *CBC News* that division members swore an oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler, so "it doesn't matter if you try and claim that you were defending against communism."

He added that it's important for allied nations to demonstrate "solidarity for the very just cause of Ukraine."

"However, solidarity cannot tolerate the distortion or outright celebration of Nazi collaboration or war crimes," Panneton said.

B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn called Hunka's standing ovation "beyond outrageous."

"Canadian soldiers fought and died to free the world from the evils of Nazi brutality," Mostyn noted.

In response, Rota apologized for inviting Hunka.

"On Friday, September 22, in my remarks following the address of the President of Ukraine, I recognized an individual in the gallery," Rota wrote in a statement, which claimed that it was his decision alone to invite Hunka.

"I have subsequently become aware of more information which causes me to regret my decision to do so."

He expressed his "deepest apologies to Jewish communities in Canada and around the world."

The Prime Minister's Office issued a statement reiterating that Rota acted independently.

"No advance notice was provided to the Prime

Minister's Office, nor the Ukrainian delegation, about the invitation or the recognition," the statement said.

Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, on Sept. 24, blamed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for allowing Hunka, whom Rota introduced as a "war veteran from the Second World War who fought for Ukrainian independence against the Russians," to receive applause from all parties in the House.

"Without warning or context, it was impossible for any parliamentarian in the room (other than Mr. Trudeau) to know of this dark past," Poilievre wrote in a post on X (formerly known as Twitter).

In a statement posted to X, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh said he shares "concerns about the individual honoured with a standing ovation in the House of Commons on Friday."

He added that he wasn't invited by the NDP, nor was the party "aware of his background" and association with the Nazis.

University of Ottawa political scientist Ivan Katchanovski, who has been critical of Western support for Ukraine, told the *Globe and Mail* he found the applause for Hunka to be "beyond comprehension," adding that it will be used to fuel Russian propaganda, which has depicted modern Ukraine as a Nazi state.

Rota announced his resignation on Sept. 26 — the same day FSWC requested it.

FSWC CEO and president Michael Levitt, a former Toronto Liberal MP, called this the "correct decision," but cautioned that "important questions remain as to how this debacle occurred."

"If there's to be any silver lining, it must be the reaffirmation of the critical importance of Holocaust education and remembrance, particularly as the

number of Holocaust survivors dwindles and antisemitism escalates in Canada and around the world," Levitt added.

"We hope all Canadians see this as an example of how important it is to learn from history, including the darkest chapters."

B'nai Brith and FSWC are calling on the government to re-open the aforementioned Deschênes Commission, whose full results have never been made public.

"It's now time for Ottawa to not only release the unredacted files related to the Deschenes Commission, but to also address the stark reality that there are still former Nazis with blood on their hands living in Canada," said Levitt.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, whose Ukrainian grandfather edited a Nazi newspaper in occupied Krakow before immigrating to Canada, was asked about Hunka multiple times at an unrelated announcement on Sept. 26.

"What happened was really terrible and really damaging. It was damaging to communities across Canada, first and foremost the Jewish community, but damaging for us all," Freeland said.

But Freeland wouldn't commit to re-opening the Deschênes Commission.

"As a government, we're going to be thoughtful about any further steps that need to be taken," she said.

In 2021, President Zelenskyy, who joined the applause for Hunka on Sept. 22, condemned a Kyiv march celebrating the Galicia Division.

Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



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# Back to School at Edmonton Talmud Torah

By Natalie Soroka, TT Society

Talmud Torah Society was in fine form this month, with several Society-led initiatives.

The first was a well attended and fun family event for our kindergarten families. The inaugural Kindergarten Welcome Event kicked off the Sunday prior to the first day of school, held in the Don z"l and Myrna Silverberg Lunchroom. Kindergarten teacher, Morah Shira, thrilled children when she arrived wearing an inflatable dinosaur costume. Shortly after, families were gifted their own Welcome to School boards, with fill-in-the-blank statements, such as "My teacher's name is", "When I grow up, I want to be", etc. Children had a blast decorating them and filling them in, with a little help from their parents. When kosher ice cream sundaes were announced, you can bet the children, and even their parents, lined up for this delicious, sweet treat. After an hour and a bit of schmoozing, and children running off their energy in the gym, the final treat was the children meeting and interacting with the Society's new TT mascot, Ari the lion cub! Ari will be out and about at a lot of TT events this school year and many more in the future, thanks to the generosity of Michael Schayer and Natalie and Ken Soroka.

On the first day of school, large photo booth frames brought additional excitement to back-to-school. Students were eager to have their pictures taken with their family and their friends, as they held the frames and grinned from ear to ear.

In the week leading up to Rosh Hashanah, the wonderful smell of apples, honey and cinnamon filled the air as Early Learning center (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) children prepared and ate apples and honey cake. Their small hands were red as they painted apples, while their final artwork beautified the

hallways. ELC students came together for an all-group Rosh Hashanah Shabbat in the gym, where prayers were sung, and each child sampled from plates of challah, apples, honey cake, pomegranate seeds and honey. It was a very sweet and joyous scene.

Naturally, Kindergarten to Grade 6 Hebrew teachers were equally involved in providing interesting curriculum content for Rosh Hashanah. As I walked into the lunchroom one day, I observed Grade 4 students involved in a Rosh Hashanah art lesson, led by Moreh Ari, where they sketched different symbolic objects. One student was up close and personal as they sketched a very detailed wine bottle, while another traced a shofar. It was lovely to watch each student plan and execute their vision.

Talmud Torah's K-6 students had the privilege of meeting and hearing musicians from the Clore Centre for Performing Arts in Kfar Blum, Israel. The talented musicians were in Edmonton as honoured guests for the United Jewish Appeal campaign kick-off, and thanks to Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO, and Susan Schiffman, Director of Development, the Clore musicians took time out of their schedule to visit students at TT. They engaged with our students in a fun, educational way, and performed songs that our students knew sang along to. It was proof that no matter where we live in the world, when Jewish kids and adults come together, there is a commonality that is comforting and powerful.

Bouquets of beautiful fall flowers were in bloom this year as TT Society's Rosh Hashanah flower initiative kicked off. This is always popular among our families and supporters, with parent volunteers personally delivering this year one hundred stunning, splendidly wrapped cut flowers. Each recipient received a card from loved ones, wishing them a *Shana Tova U'metuka*. This year, the initiative supports Society-led Judaic student programming and enrichment at

Talmud Torah School. The organizers thank all those who participated. Our families and community members can look forward to placing their orders when TT ELC organizes the Passover flower program sometime in early March 2024.

The TT ELC and OSC held its traditional welcome event recently, and it did not disappoint! The aroma of chocolate babka filled the air throughout the hallways as educators and bakers extraordinaire, Michal and Livnat, prepared for the event. Held in the gym, families were greeted with activity tables of stickers, paper, crayons, building blocks, along with the always popular face painting. A short introduction was made by Director Sacha Brodie, and Lead Educator, Jennie, welcoming and thanking families for attending. A variety of pasta dishes were served (with gluten free options), as well as salads and garlic bread. Of course, the chocolate babka was a highlight! It was beautiful and heartwarming to see families and children eating together and catching up with each other. New families were welcomed and could be seen chatting and getting to know others. We are looking forward to hosting families again for our annual Chanukah event!

To round out the month of September, this year K-6 students participated in the Yom Kippur ceremony of *Tashlich* at Gold Bar Park. After students completed the Terry Fox Run, they walked to the Ainsworth Dyer footbridge that spans the North Saskatchewan River. Morah Shira led the *Tashlich* blessings, and teachers handed out small pieces of challah from Bliss Bakery. Students were instructed to reflect on behaviour and words that may have been unkind over the year, and to symbolically cast them away by tossing their breadcrumbs into the river. It was lovely to see some students closing their eyes and being so thoughtful. The scene of students and staff outdoors, in such a beautiful setting, sharing this experience together, was truly uplifting.





# Sukkot is the best Jewish holiday. Here's why.

By Lynn Levy

(Kveller via JTA) - I know, I know. The shofar has finally stopped ringing in your ears, you've managed to get the honey out of the couch cushions and you are fully re-hydrated after Yom Kippur's fast.

You want to rest. I get it; I do, too. But hear me out. You may have thought we all peaked at some point during the third minute of "tekiyah gadolaaaaaaah," but we most certainly have not. Welcome to my absolute favorite Jewish holiday: Sukkot.

If you haven't marked the holiday before, allow me to share some background. Sukkot is a glorious outdoor holiday, tucked in between Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. It's a week-long festival in which Jews honor the 40-year journey of the Israelites through the desert after escaping slavery in Egypt. The Israelites stayed in temporary structures during that journey, and so we mark the holiday by building temporary structures — individually, a sukkah, or collectively, sukkot — and by eating, drinking and even sleeping in the sukkah.

Why is Sukkot the best of all the Jewish holidays? I'll try to limit the endless list:

First, Sukkot happens in the fall. Statistically speaking, every person in the world loves fall the most. It's crisp, if not downright chilly! The leaves are on fire! We've collectively survived the utter chaos of back-to-school! Sukkot forces us to get outside — *the entirety of the holiday is outside* — and absorb this splendid season. If you have made the unfortunate decision to live in a part of the world that is not currently experiencing fall, then honestly that's on you. It may be too late to uproot your life and move for this year's Sukkot, but you can start planning for next year.

Second, on Sukkot, we get to build things! There are so many ways to go about building a sukkah. Prefabricated kits, sukkot passed down through generations, PVC pipe creations, repurposed pergolas, the sky is the limit (as long as a bit of sky is showing). My family bought a set of blueprints years ago. That first year of building was a challenge. We tried to fit eight foot planks in our two-door hatchback and cracked the windshield in the process. Then we learned that no member of our nuclear family knew

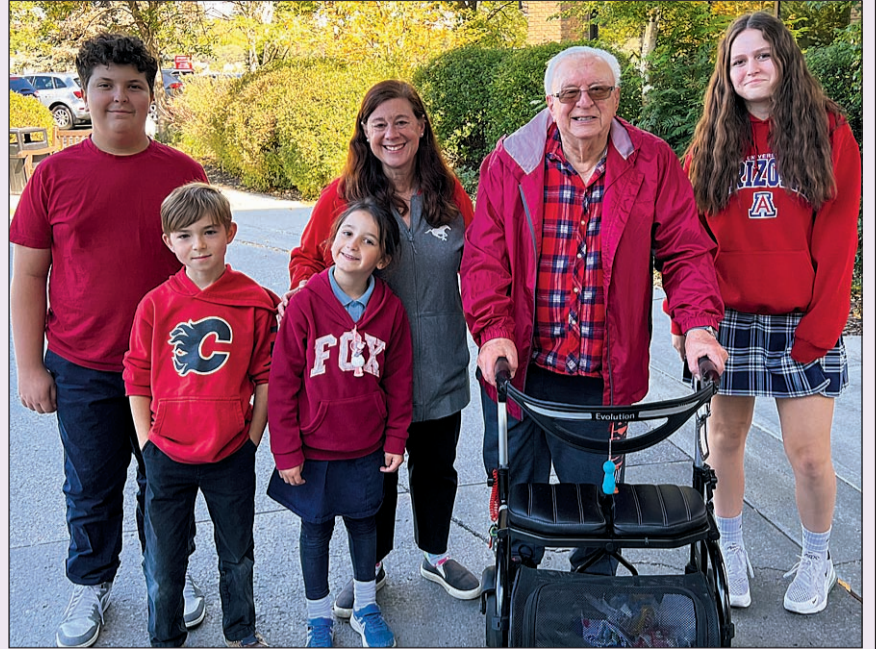
how to operate a drill. But by the time we finished, we'd enlisted the help of neighbors we hadn't caught up with in ages, allowed our kids to paint with abandon, and thoroughly exhausted our inexhaustible toddler. These days, reassembly of our sukkah is a straightforward process, but we cherish the path that got us here.

Third, a sukkah can help you find your fellow Jews! I had no idea how many Jews were in my neighborhood until we built a sukkah. It seemed that every time we were in the yard, a neighbor stopped by to admire our sukkah, asked how we built it and chatted about their Jewish practice. One family even dropped off homemade challah and treats. A sukkah in the yard is a wonderful conversation starter.

Fourth, Sukkot provides an opportunity to let the kids "go camping" *without going camping*. Surely I'm not alone in my fundamental aversion to camping. If I'm going away for a weekend, I want *showers* and *air conditioning* and *sheets* and *amenities* and *no bears* for goodness' sake. And yet, my kids inevitably and relentlessly ask, throughout the year, to lug heavy things around in the woods, all in service of a terrible night of sleep. Gross. But lo and behold! I become mom of the year during Sukkot, when I let them sleep in the sukkah as much as they want, so long as they don't disturb my civilized indoor slumber.

Finally, and best of all, Sukkot provides a beautiful opportunity to welcome your friends and neighbors — Jewish or not — into your customs. Every year, my family invites the whole neighborhood into our tiny

## Fostering connections at CJA



**In recognition of World Alzheimer's Day, CJA Grades 2 and 9 students joined hands with residents of Trinity Lodge in Calgary for an Alzheimer's Society Walk. This heartwarming event served a dual purpose: raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and fostering intergenerational connections.**

yard for an overflowing Sukkot brunch. We make way too much food, invite everyone to bring a dish to share nonetheless, and cede the yard to the kids. One year we hung blank poster paper from our fence and left out a ton of washable paints and brushes — kids and adults alike made gorgeous decorations that still hang in the sukkah. Another year it rained relentlessly and we moved the party mostly indoors. We are still cleaning bagel crumbs out from our carpet, but it was completely worth it. This year we are hoping to return to our pre-COVID practice of inviting way more people than could possibly fit in our space, and enjoying the relationships that grow. The sukkah brunch is now an institution in our neighborhood, and I couldn't be happier about it.

I hope you will consider celebrating Sukkot this year. And if building your own sukkah is just too much, you are always welcome in mine. Chag sameach!

*This story originally appeared on Kveller.*



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# Arliss Miller receives the 2023 Edmonton Kavod Award

By members of the Edmonton UJA Campaign

Each year since 2019, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton has presented the Dianne and Irving Kipnes Kavod Award to an individual or organization who has demonstrated exceptional generosity and commitment to the Edmonton Jewish community. This year's award recipient is Arliss Miller.

"Arliss exemplifies all of the things this award is intended to recognize," said Edmonton UJA co-chair Farrel Shadlyn at the UJA launch event held last month at the Citadel Theatre. "Her commitments to the Jewish community and to the greater Edmonton community are boundless. She has a very deep understanding of what it means to be a philanthropist."

Arliss has touched every facet of Jewish Edmonton through her generosity, he added. She has been a lead donor to the United Jewish Appeal Campaign for many decades and has been recognized as a Lion of Judah for her outstanding support of UJA. Not only does Arliss make very significant annual gifts to UJA, in 2018, she made a transformative gift to the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation, establishing one of the Foundation's largest endowments, to date. Income from this endowment is designated to United Jewish Appeal and will fund her annual UJA gift in perpetuity. In making this gift, she not only provides continuity and stability to our Edmonton Jewish Community, she inspires others to make endowment gifts to provide permanent support for Jewish Edmonton.

"Arliss is a totally committed volunteer who understands that philanthropy means giving of your time and talents, as well as your dollars. She has served in dozens of leadership roles both in the Jewish community and the greater Edmonton community," explained Shadlyn. In Jewish Edmonton, she served as President of the Edmonton Section of the National Council of Jewish Woman, a Member of the National Board of the National Council for Jewish Women and Chair of the Youth Aliyah Campaign of Edmonton Hadassah WIZO.

"Arliss has been described as a 'stunningly successful' fundraiser," continued Shadlyn. "She has had a profound impact on many of our city's greatest

cultural institutions. At the Winspear, she initiated and led an extremely successful 'seat naming' campaign that raised \$1 million - \$1000 per seat for 1000 seats purchased by 1,000 people.

"For the Citadel theatre, along with her dear friend, the late Kayla Shoctor z'l, she created and led tremendously popular fundraising theatre tours to great stages around the world - The Shaw Festival, Broadway and London's Westend, giving Edmonton's theatre lovers a great time, while also raising a substantial amount of money to fund world-class theatre here in Edmonton."

Her roles in the sphere of arts and culture include - President of the Board of the Citadel Theatre, Member of the Board of Governors of the Citadel Theatre, Governor of the National Theatre School, Trustee of the National Arts Centre and member of the Board of the Shaw Festival at Niagara on the Lake. She has received provincial, national and international recognition for her accomplishments. In 1992, Arliss was honoured jointly with her husband Tevie Miller of blessed memory with the Torch of Learning Award by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1999, she was awarded the Order of Canada for her outstanding volunteer contributions. In 2012, she received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work on the Board of Governors at the Citadel Theatre.

"Arliss' contributions do not stop at the world of arts and culture," added Shadlyn. "She also cares deeply about the health and welfare of Canadians." She has served in volunteer roles and gives generously to organizations such as United Way, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the White Cane Foundation. She has also supported research in medicine and bioethics.

"Among her many tremendous gifts to our community is the perfect philanthropic example she,



Arliss Miller received the Kavod Award surrounded by family. Pictured above are Catherine Miller-Dolgoy and Len Dolgoy, Lisa Miller and Farrel Shadlyn and Josh and Michele Miller.

and her late husband Tevie, set for their children," noted Shadlyn. "Catherine, Josh and Lisa have all followed in their parents' footsteps, serving in leadership roles in Jewish Edmonton and providing generous support to UJA and many other important causes. L'dor v'dor."

"In preparing for this evening's presentation I read an article where Arliss was quoted as having said that whenever she walks into the Winspear Centre or the Citadel Theatre, a feeling of happiness wells up inside her," said Shadlyn.

"So, now Arliss, in this very fitting setting here at the Citadel Theatre, it is the community's turn to thank you for enriching our lives. We are so proud of what you have achieved for Jewish Edmonton, for Cultural Edmonton and for Canada. On behalf of the Board of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, your family and friends and our entire community, Kol ha kavod for a lifetime of incredible service and generosity.

"And now," concluded Shadlyn, "I will break with protocol and hug the Kavod Award recipient, who also happens to be my mother-in-law."

*This article was excerpted from UJA campaign co-chair Farrel Shadlyn's speech at the 2023 Edmonton UJA Campaign launch.*

## Edmonton 2023 UJA Campaign kicks off with an inspirational event



Featured at the Edmonton UJA campaign launch were members of the Clore Centre Quintet along with inspirational remarks by Steve Shulman, president and CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada - United Israel Appeal. Photos by Tammy Vineberg.



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# Red Deer Catholic trustee compares 2SLGBTQ+ Pride to Nazism

By Jeremy Appel

A Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) trustee has been denounced by her own school board after sharing an image on Facebook and Instagram likening the 2SLGBTQ+ Pride movement to Nazism, but the board did not require that she resign her post.

Monique LaGrange, whose account has since been made private, posted a meme of two images — a black-and-white photo of children waving Nazi flags and a colour photo of children waving Pride flags — with the caption, “Brainwashing is brainwashing,” on her Facebook and Instagram stories.

Of all people, someone who represents the education system ought to know how historically illiterate and offensive it is to liken 2SLGBTQ+ people to Nazis, says Canadian Anti-Hate Network executive director Evan Balgord.

“The Nazis persecuted and murdered queer people. Everybody, but especially anybody even tangentially involved in education, should understand and respect that history,” Balgord told *Alberta Jewish News*.

Although LaGrange will get to keep her job as school board trustee, she has been given a list of conditions.

“The content of Trustee LaGrange’s social media post does not align with our principles and values that guide our division,” stated Board Chair Murray Hollman to *rdnewsNOW*.

“Our division is committed to fostering learning environments that are inclusive, respectful and considerate of all members of our schools and communities. We deeply regret any distress that Trustee LaGrange’s comments may have caused, and

from the outset we took this matter very serious and explored all avenues available to use as a board to address the situation.”

Chief among the consequences for LaGrange are that she shall: be censured from being part of all and any board committees, and from attending and participating in board committee meetings; that includes all ASBA and ACSTA meetings and conference. She will not represent the board or school division in any official capacity, including to the media and at functions (including graduations and masses). She must within 90 days take sensitivity training on Holocaust, 2SLGBTQ+, use of social media, and human rights and at the end of 90 days, issue a sincere letter of apology. Additionally, she must not post any content of similar nature to the original meme.

Alberta Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaidis weighed in on the subject. “No one should have to live in fear of violence, discrimination, or exclusion,” he said on X (formerly known as Twitter).

“All students deserve to feel safe and welcome in schools across the province. I am beyond disappointed to see this and categorically condemn these actions.”

Canadian Anti-Hate Network’s Balgord said that LaGrange’s post is rooted in a “conspiracy theory that there is a sinister agenda behind teaching health and human rights education about 2SLGBTQ+ persons.”

“I can’t speak to what, exactly, LaGrange believes. But, oftentimes the conspiracy theory says that children are being groomed into becoming queer themselves, or being preyed upon by queer pedophiles,” Balgord said in an email. “It’s all a pack of lies.”

The purpose of 2SLGBTQ+ education is to teach students that it’s OK to be queer, and that queer people deserve the same respect and consideration as everybody else, he said. “The only agenda here is helping kids grow up to be better adults than Ms. LaGrange,” said Balgord.

He added that demanding LaGrange remove her post was insufficient — she should, if possible, be removed from the board by a vote of her colleagues.

The Central Alberta Pride Society called on LaGrange to make a formal apology to Red Deer Catholic teachers, parents and students, and the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

“Along with this, we are also requesting that Ms. Monique LaGrange either step down from her position as a board member or be removed immediately,” the society wrote.

Kristopher Wells, the Canada Research Chair for the Public Understanding of Sexual and Gender Minority Youth at MacEwan University, said LaGrange’s comments could constitute “hate propaganda,” warranting an RCMP investigation.

“Imagine if this same comparison was targeted towards the Jewish, Black or other minority communities in our society? There would be — and rightfully so — widespread outrage. But somehow, here we are in Alberta, where people and elected officials feel that this is appropriate,” Wells added in an interview with *Global News*.

“We need to say loudly and clearly that hate has no place... but those perpetrators are going to be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.”

On Sept. 6, Alberta Teachers Association president Jason Schilling released a statement noting that Monique LaGrange has yet to publicly address her post, which Schilling called “hate speech.”

“LaGrange’s inaction leads us to conclude that the trustee has no understanding of, or remorse for, the harm she has caused,” Schilling said.

He noted that section 33 of the Education Act and the RDCRS Trustee Code of Conduct enables the school board to remove a trustee from all board committees and appointments. If the board declines to do this, Schilling said, Minister Nicolaidis “should launch a formal review.”

“Attacks on sexual and gender diverse students and school staff are increasing to exceptional and troubling levels. All of us must take action and speak out to protect the physical safety and mental well-being of those under threat,” he said.

“Swift, decisive and highly visible action to combat this hatred is the only way forward.”

*Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.*

## Clore Quintet performs in Calgary and Edmonton



The Clore Modern Quartet was in Alberta last month performing at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton for the UJA Campaign launch and the Talmud Torah School and in Calgary at a special concert at the Temple B'nai Tikvah as well as for students at the Calgary Jewish Academy. The group is an ensemble of talented young Israeli musicians from the Clore Centre for the Performing Arts, in Kfar Blum, located in the Jewish Federation’s Partnership2Gether (P2G) partner region in northern Israel.

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## Participate in Orange Shirt Day: Sept. 30 and beyond

By Kinnukana

(ANNNews) – On June 3, 2021, Bill C-5 of the Statutes of Canada received royal assent to add a new holiday, *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*, which is observed on September 30th each year. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a holiday can also be referred to as a “Holy Day: a day on which one is exempt from work specifically: a day marked by a general suspension of work in commemoration of an event.”

According to Bill C-5, the purpose of the Bill is to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s call to action number 80 by creating a holiday called *The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*, which seeks to honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis Survivors and their families and communities and to ensure that public commemoration of their history and the legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Some people question why a ‘holy day’ was created and they don’t understand why it is necessary to take the time to remember this long-lasting, traumatic event. Residential schools tragically impacted Indigenous families in Canada, intergenerationally, for over a hundred years. Here is a factual timeline between 1831 and 1996 when the first residential school was established until the last one was closed:

1831 – The first residential school, *The Mohawk Residential School*, was established in Brantford, Ontario.

1847 – Egerton Ryerson, Ontario Chief Superintendent of Schools, advocates for Indigenous children to be educated separately from white children.

1876 – under Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, the ‘Indian Act’ becomes law, giving the Canadian government the exclusive right to create legislation regarding status First Nations people in Canada.

1879 – Nicholas Flood Davin’s report, ‘Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds,’ advises the federal government to create residential schools for all First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children.

1883 – the federal residential school system is created, funded, and operated by the Government of Canada, and the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches across Canada.

1907 – Public Health Physician Dr. Peter Henderson

Bryce reports on the dire living conditions at 35 residential schools but he was ignored and released from his public role.

1920 – residential school becomes compulsory for all Indigenous adolescent children.

1922 – Dr. Bryce publishes his book *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice for the Indians of Canada* as a concerned public citizen, which continued to be ignored by authorities.

1930 – more than eighty residential schools were in operation across Canada.

1996 – the last residential school, *Gordon’s Residential School*, was closed down in Punnichy, Saskatchewan.

Within the 165 year period, more than 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools in Canada. The purpose of these institutions was to separate Indigenous children from their families and strip them of their cultural practices, languages and ways of life. In 1883, when the residential school system was created, Hector Langevin, Public Works Minister stated, “In order to educate the children properly we must separate them from their families. Some people may say this is hard, but if we want to civilize them, we must do that.”

Documented acts of physical and sexual violence, as well as disease were rampant in residential schools. *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* report estimates that 6,000 Indigenous children taken from their families may have died at residential schools. Today, we are still seeing the impacts through the many searches that are taking place on residential school grounds where unmarked graves are being identified. There is only official documentation for 3,213 children that are reported to have died in residential schools. Archival information shows that record keeping at the schools was sporadic, and the federal government did not have an official policy for the burial of children who died in the residential school system until 1958, that is 75 years after they were established.

The Canadian government used their legislation as a means to enforce their racist ideals on First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families regardless of the deliberate harms they caused. In 1887, Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s First Prime Minister wrote, “The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change.” Now, it only seems right to use the Statutes of Canada to begin righting these wrongs and by having Bill C-5 enforced is one step in the right direction.

On September 30, each year, take time to think about these facts that are clearly documented in numerous ways through actual paper records, audio files, first-hand stories from residential school



survivors, pictures, reports, books, etc. Remember that First Nations, Inuit and Metis people carry the pain of their lost children and relatives every day. Understand that these government policies have led to the many social problems that Indigenous people face today. Many Indigenous people are having to regain their culture, languages, ways of life and identity.

Indigenous people are still healing from the atrocities of residential schools, and you can do your part in reconciliation by truly recognizing the *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* as a ‘Holy Day.’ Use this day to acknowledge the truth, recognize the inter-generational impacts of these attempts of assimilation, let go of negative perceptions, learn more about Indigenous history, show respect for Indigenous individuals, their beliefs, cultures, traditions and worldviews and support the reclamation of Indigenous identity, language and culture.

Participate in Orange Shirt Day on September 30 – a grassroots initiative that was started on September 30, 2013, by Phyllis Webstad to educate people about residential schools and to fight racism and bullying. At the age of six, Phyllis was given an orange shirt by her grandmother for her first day of residential school, but it was taken away at the school and never returned. For Phyllis, the colour orange reminds her of her experiences at residential school and how she felt, like she didn’t matter, and no one cared. September 30 is a day to honour the Indigenous children who were sent away and to ensure that every child matters in the future.

Read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action.

Kinnukana is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

## A Talmudic tale

Cont. from page 12

in New York. When she moved to Hong Kong with her husband in 2002, she saw the opportunity to get back to her undergrad roots.

Today, she is deeply involved with Hong Kong’s historic Jewish community, whose foundations were built by Baghdadi-Jewish dynasties such as the Sassoons and the Kadoories in the 19th and 20th centuries. The city’s Jewish population has fluctuated over the years but remains about 3,000-4,000 strong today with six congregations to choose from. Lyons chairs the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society and serves as the Hong Kong delegate to the World Jewish Congress.

As a Persian-Ashkenazi Jew who is raising Chinese children, Lyons has prioritized the inclusion of Jews of diverse experiences in her work in Hong Kong. As a journalist and founder of *Asian Jewish Life*, a magazine that spotlighted Jewish stories in Asia from 2008 until 2016, she has always been fascinated by “Jewish stories in the margins” – little-known bits of Jewish history or traditions that have gone overlooked by the Jewish majority living in the West.

Today, few families in Kaifeng still observe Judaism and those who do have been forced underground as part of the Chinese Communist Party’s policy of repressing and limiting a range of religions. Judaism

is not one of the country’s five officially recognized religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Daoism and Islam), and Kaifeng’s Jews are seen by the state as part of the Han Chinese ethnic majority – not Jews. Little Jewish iconography remains on the old streets of Kaifeng today, and a majority of the country’s Jewish population are expatriates living in commercial centers such as Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen.

Lyons’ book comes at a time when Jewish stories from Asia – especially stories of Jewish escape and survival in China and Japan during World War II – are receiving a wave of attention. In this year alone, stories about Jewish refugees in Asia have been the subject of multiple novels, an exhibition in New York City, a musical and two high-profile symphony performances.

In these stories, China is often a temporary backdrop against which Western Jewish stories are set. There is less awareness of the history of the Chinese Jewish community in Kaifeng, Lyons said.

“In this way, I was able to educate people without being didactic in any way. I didn’t just pick a random city in China and plopp my characters into it. I picked a Jewish community, and I think a lot of people are not aware that [Kaifeng] was a historic community,” she said.

Books for young readers about Chinese or Asian Jews, in particular, have been rare. But the widening availability of literature about diverse Jews in recent years is creating more demand for these stories, said Prell.

Nicholas Zane, an undergraduate student at Dartmouth whose family immigrated to the United States from China with the help of a Jewish family in the Catskills, has been developing accessible information about the Kaifeng Jews through a website, nonfiction books and picture books in Chinese and English. “Two New Years,” a picture book published last month by Richard Ho, tells the story of a family that celebrates both Rosh Hashanah in the fall and Chinese New Year in the spring.

“There’s these stories that people don’t know, and to be able to tell them and bring them to Jewish children, and children generally, is really incredible,” Lyons said.

But there are still gaps, Lyons said, and she has been busy trying to help fill them with several other forthcoming picture books on the way. “Counting on Naamah,” also released on Sept. 5, turns Noah’s wife Naamah into a mathematical genius. In the coming year, her other releases will tell the stories of an 1881 Yemenite aliyah journey, the Indian Bnei Israel Jews (illustrated by renowned Indian-Jewish artist Siona Benjamin) and a Chinese-Jewish girl who must figure out how to celebrate Sukkot and the mid-Autumn festival on the same night.

“Racial diversity amongst the Jewish people is not a new thing. It has been there. That’s another reason why I also think it’s very, very cool for Erica’s books, that with ‘Zhen Yu and the Snake’ and ‘Naamah,’ it’s these stories that have been part of Jewish tradition over time,” said Prell.

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# Temple Beth Ora congregants participate in blanket exercise

By Jeremy Appel

In the Jewish tradition, the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a time for reflection and atonement on how we've wronged others, whether as an individual or as part of a collective.

The Saturday that occurs during this time is known as "Shabbat T'shuva," or the Sabbath of Repentance.

Members of Edmonton's Reform congregation — Temple Beth Ora (TBO) — used this opportunity to reflect on their role in upholding settler colonialism on Turtle Island by participating in a Sept. 22 blanket exercise, as part of the synagogue's broader commitment to reconciliation.

The aforementioned exercise consists of participants standing on blankets placed on the floor to represent the lands of Turtle Island, with participants able to walk around freely at first, trading artifacts the facilitators distributed to them.

Gradually, the number of blankets are reduced, as are the number of people standing on them, to represent the loss of land and extermination of Indigenous Peoples.

As this occurs, the facilitators read out the history of Turtle Island's colonization while participants, including those who have been asked to leave the shrinking blanket space, are prompted to read quotes from celebrated Indigenous figures.

By the end, several people are crammed onto a couple of blankets, representing the reserve system. Others are sent to another blanket further away to represent forced assimilation institutions.

Donna Hovsepian, a member of the Pimicikamak Crosslake Cree Nation in Manitoba, was brought in by TBO member Sarah Cook to facilitate the event.

Cook, who works as a consultant for Indigenous communities on rights-related and community development issues, told *Alberta Jewish News* that she met Hovsepian when they worked together at the Alberta Energy Regulator.

Hovsepian, who's been conducting blanket exercises since 2019, told *AJNews* that its "experiential part, the role playing, is really impactful," allowing participants to "view the changes as we went through them historically."

She said this was the first time she's conducted a blanket exercise for a faith group.

Cook said she recalls being impressed the first time she heard TBO Rabbah Gila Caine open Shabbat services with a land acknowledgement, but Cook suggested the congregation conduct the exercise to match its words with deeds.

"We're judged on our actions, and so let's take some serious steps that are purposeful and actually moving towards that reconciliation journey," Cook said.

She noted the complexity of Jewish relations with Indigenous Peoples.

"Jews have been persecuted, disrespected and belittled for much of their history. Indigenous people are much the same way. That kinship is really important for me to understand, or at least to try to understand, and empathize with what has happened," Cook said.

Cook described how her family settled in the Prairies through the 1872 Dominion Lands Act, which provided new settlers with 160 acres of free land if they cultivated 10 acres.

Through her work with Indigenous communities, Cook realized that this policy "was a primary way of dispossessing Indigenous people from their lands."

Rabbah Caine observed that the *viduy*, or confession, Jewish people make on Yom Kippur isn't just for



On Sept. 23, members of Temple Beth Ora Reform congregation participated in a blanket exercise to illustrate the impacts of settler colonialism, facilitated by Donna Hovsepian (pictured in hat).

individual wrongs they've done to other people, but collective wrongs we've participated in, whether wittingly or unwittingly.

"Every action that I do as a person influences all of my surroundings and influences my group as well, so *viduy* has to be part of a community effort. It's never just one person doing something for another person. It's always a group's interaction," she explained.

Asher Kirchner, a TBO board member, has spearheaded the synagogue's series of reconciliation activities, including a summer medicine walk at Kihcihkaw Askî.

He said the blanket exercise provided congregants with "a small glimpse, but it's a glimpse, of the harm that was done" by settler society, within which Ashkenazi Jews can "move pretty frictionlessly."

"We understand that if we're part of a collectivity that has participated or passively benefited from a wrong, we've got a responsibility to take steps to make it right, and this is part of that learning process to get us on the road to being able to make things right," said Kirchner.

*Jeremy Appel is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.*

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from the

# Sources

by Eliezer Segal

## Altar Ego

The Mishnah offers us a stirring description of the Sukkot celebration during the days of the second Jerusalem Temple. As is still the practice on joyous festivals, it was customary to recite the chapters from the book of Psalms that are designated “Hallel” [= praise] while the priests encircled the altar—once on each of the first six days, and then seven times on the seventh day.

The rabbis focussed on one particular verse in the Hallel, the one that goes “I beseech thee, O Lord! Save now! I beseech thee, O Lord, send now prosperity!” At this point the Mishnah inserted an alternative version: “Rabbi Judah [ben Ilai] says: “*Ani Vaho*, please save us!”

In order to better understand this odd passage, it is helpful to explain a few basic facts about Hebrew usage and the norms of English translation. For one thing, the convention of rendering the divine name as “Lord” reflects traditional Jewish religious practice, but is not exactly what the Hebrew says. The original text employs the four-letter name of God [the “Tetragrammaton”] that is deemed so sacred that it is not pronounced, for which reason we substitute a less sublime epithet, usually “Adonai” [= Lord]. If somebody were to utter the actual four-letter name, it might have sound something like Rabbi Judah’s “*Vaho*.”

The standard English Bibles employ a rather cumbersome phrase “I beseech thee” to convey the Hebrew particle “*anna*,” which usually has the simple meaning of “please” or another such expression indicating a request or entreaty. Apparently, it is identical to the more common shorter form “*na*.” However, “*anna*” also sounds like the Aramaic pronoun for “I.”

If we combine all these factors, it appears as if Rabbi Judah was playing with the sounds of the Hebrew Psalm to produce a statement along the lines of: “I and he” or “me and him, please save us!”

What in Heaven’s name did he mean by this?

Rashi resorted to numerological mysticism to explain Rabbi Judah’s words. He calculated that the prayer was numerologically equal to the words in Psalms. Furthermore, he found in those words an

allusion to the “seventy-two names of God,” an array of three-letter combinations derived by combining letters from three consecutive verses in the Torah (Exodus 14:19-21). Each of these verses contains exactly seventy-two letters. This obscure bit of arcane mysticism played a significant part in the spiritual and magical lore of medieval Ashkenazic Jewry, and was also known to Spanish scholars like Abraham Ibn Ezra.

A midrashic work taught that the seventy-two-letter name of God was the means through which the Almighty will redeem Israel. From ancient magical papyri and occult manuals, we learn that a similar name could be derived through graphic permutations of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. Tales of its miraculous powers circulated in the medieval Babylonian schools, but the *Ga’on* Rav Hai advised that those reports should be treated with skepticism.

The Tosafot, not satisfied with Rashi’s verbal intricacies and apparent arbitrariness, proposed an alternate explanation that was far more poignant emotionally and theologically: The words, read as “me and him save please!” imply that God suffers personally in exile alongside his beloved people, and therefore is equating our redemption with his own — a boldly touching sentiment that had numerous precedents in the Bible and in rabbinic homilies.

Maimonides cited a similar interpretation in the name of some *Ge’onim*—this is quite surprising, in light of his firm rejection of any notion that imputes human emotion or weakness to the Supreme Being. Indeed, in his *Guide of the Perplexed* he explained that when rabbinic texts mention lengthy names of God, they have in mind sublime metaphysical teachings; and only fools or charlatans would read them as magical formulas.

Maimonides cited commentators who explained that “I” and “He” should be read as abbreviated biblical quotes that serve as epithets for God. He suggested that they were based on verses like “See now that I myself am he!” which appears in Deuteronomy in a promise of deliverance, making it an appropriate way of addressing a prayer for divine salvation.

Rabbi Joseph Engel derived a remarkable insight from the notion that “I” is a name of God. He noted that among the sages of rabbinic literature, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, [= “Rebbi,” the redactor of the Mishnah] had a distinctive custom of beginning his statements with the words “I say.” For other persons this might be taken as a symptom of self-importance, and yet the Talmud states in several places that Rebbi was renowned for his extreme humility!

Rabbi Engel therefore concluded that what Rebbi really meant was that he was not presenting his views as indisputable facts, but only as his tentative personal opinion, analogous to expressions like “in my humble opinion.” It is possible to understand Rebbi’s usage in light of a Hasidic teaching that spiritual giants do not speak by virtue of their own authority, but rather from the divine force—the “I”—that permeates them. Perhaps what he meant was: I cannot claim personal credit for the correctness or wisdom of my teachings, but attribute them to the divine “I” who speaks through me.

Rabbi Samuel Edels (Maharsha) objected that previous interpretations did not explain satisfactorily why Rabbi Judah related only to the Sukkot rites and not to other occasions when Hallel is recited. He therefore argued that the crucial factor here was the encircling of the altar. This, he noted, recalls the battle of Jericho where the Israelites also encircled the city once on each of six days, and then seven times on the seventh day. The ritual thus serves as an archetype of divine protection (for the Israelites, not the Jerichoans), as expressed by the psalmist: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

We can surely use all the protection we can get, as we are enveloped in the physical and spiritual shelter of our frail sukkahs.

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

## Recipe: Stuffed cabbage rolls for Simchat Torah

By Itta Werdiger-Roth

(The Noshers via JTA) - Stuffed cabbage rolls are a traditional Simchat Torah food because two of the little rolls side by side look like a Torah scroll. Even if your cabbage rolls come out in various sizes, you can place a big roll next to a small roll, and together they’ll look just like a Torah at the end of the year, scrolled all the way to the end of Deuteronomy.

Like soup, stuffed cabbage rolls taste just as good (if not better) the next day. So this recipe can be made before Shemini Atzeret begins, and it will be delicious for Simchat Torah. It also freezes well, so it can be made well in advance.

For families that have a tradition to eat dinner after *hakafot*, like mine, cabbage rolls are great soul food to come home to after a raucous night of dancing. When you stumble through the door at midnight, what could be better than finding cabbage rolls simmering away and swimming in a rich tomato sauce?

### Ingredients

1 sprig fresh rosemary plus 1 teaspoon minced rosemary, 3 sprigs fresh thyme plus 1 teaspoon minced thyme, 4 large ripe plum tomatoes or 3 ripe beefsteak tomatoes, 2 1/2 cups water, 3 cloves garlic, 1 28 oz can crushed tomatoes, 1/4 cup red wine (sweet or dry, your preference), salt and pepper to taste, 1 6oz can tomato paste, 2 eggs, 4 yellow onions, 1 green cabbage, leaves intact, 2 lbs ground beef, 1 cup short grain brown rice, 4 Tablespoons grape seed oil

### Directions

#### Make the Filling

Place the rice and 1 3/4 cups of water in a saucepan. When the water boils reduce the heat to medium and cook the rice until all the water has been absorbed. Al dente is ideal.

Meanwhile, mince the onions and saute in grape seed oil in a large heavy-bottomed, oven-proof pot until soft.

In a large bowl, combine half the sauteed onion with the ground beef, eggs, rice, 2 Tablespoons tomato paste, minced thyme and rosemary, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix with your hands until all ingredients are fully combined.

#### Prepare & Stuff the Leaves

Remove the first few outer leaves of the cabbage, then place the entire cabbage in a pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Let boil for 10 minutes to loosen the leaves. (Alternatively, you can put the cabbage in the freezer for three days prior to beginning the dish, which also loosens its leaves.)

Remove the cabbage from the pot and start peeling off leaves, making sure not to tear them. Be careful not to burn yourself from the steam! If you’re having trouble removing leaves without tearing them, put the cabbage back in the pot and boil for another 5-10 minutes to loosen the leaves even more.

Once the soft leaves and filling are both ready to go, start placing spoonfuls of the filling inside each cabbage leaf. Roll each leaf up like a burrito, carefully tucking in the sides of the cabbage as you go. As each roll is finished, set it aside.

Preheat the oven to 300 F.



### Sauce

Peel the garlic cloves, slice thinly, and add them to the pot with the second half of the cooked onions. Cube the fresh tomatoes and saute them with the garlic and onions for a few minutes. Add the crushed tomatoes, water, and the rest of the tomato paste. Add the sprigs of thyme and rosemary, lots of freshly cracked pepper, and a bit of salt. Finally, add the wine.

Place the cabbage rolls one at a time in the pot of sauce, making sure all the rolls are completely covered in sauce. You can certainly add some water to make the sauce go further to cover all. Put the lid on and place in the oven. Cook for at least 3.5 hours, and up to 8.

On Simchat Torah eve, you can put your cabbage rolls in the oven, then go to shul, then another shul, and dance for hours knowing that your cabbage rolls are not drying out. Au contraire! They are simply improving.

*This story was originally published on The Noshers.*

# Meeting between Jewish leaders and Netanyahu broaches judicial overhaul — and gets personal

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) — As they prepared to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on September 22, leaders of U.S. Jewish organizations expected to ask him about his contentious effort to weaken the Israeli judiciary.

They didn't expect to get an answer from Netanyahu's wife, Sara.

But that's what happened when Rabbi Rick Jacobs, the president of the Union for Reform Judaism and an outspoken critic of the overhaul, asked about Netanyahu's condemnation of the protest movement, which the prime minister recently accused of cooperating with Israel's adversaries. Jacobs said he tied his question to Yom Kippur, which begins Sunday evening.

"I said it was almost Erev Yom Kippur, and I'm asking you about the way your government has demonized not only the protesters but so many of the people who are at risk," Jacobs told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "And he gave an answer and Sara Netanyahu asked if she could follow up with asking me a question."

Sara Netanyahu asked if Jacobs would condemn the death threats against her family.

"I heard the emotion," Jacobs said. "She's not wrong."

He said he told her, "Absolutely, but the majority of people have been peaceful, but I would not condone that behavior."

At the meeting, attendees said Netanyahu raised the topics he preferred to discuss, such as the threat from Iran and prospects for a treaty with Saudi Arabia. And the American Jewish leaders brought up topics on their mind as well — among them the judicial overhaul; relations with the Palestinian Authority; Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners; and women's

rights in Israel.

The meeting at the Israeli consulate in New York City took place hours after Netanyahu's address to the U.N. General Assembly, which focused on the potential Israeli-Saudi deal as well as the Iranian threat. Netanyahu met with President Joe Biden earlier in the week.

The meeting included 24 representatives of groups across the Jewish political and denominational spectrum. Most of the groups in attendance have voiced criticism of the judicial overhaul, which aims to sap power and independence from Israel's Supreme Court, in addition to other Israeli government policies. The judicial overhaul has also sparked a mass protest movement in Israel that has offshoots abroad: In New York, a crowd of protesters demonstrated outside of the consulate on Friday.

"There were probably half a dozen questions that were asked and to be honest, everyone was answered whether or not people felt satisfied," Jacobs said. "And I have to say that to me, it was more than I had expected."

One Jewish leader brought up Netanyahu's convivial meeting earlier in the week with Elon Musk, the tech mogul who has relentlessly attacked the Anti-Defamation League on his social media platform, X, formerly known as Twitter. Musk has also interacted with white supremacists on the platform.

Netanyahu and ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt joked about how Musk seems to like Netanyahu better than Greenblatt, one participant said.

Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, called the meeting "warm, actually." Katz said she brought up concerns of increasing gender segregation in public spaces in Israel.

"I asked about the perception of things going backwards and what's at risk, and toxic segregation," she said. She said Netanyahu responded that he did



Sept. 22 protest in New York. (Photo UnXeptable)

not recognize that as happening.

Katz said she valued the opportunity to discuss their different perceptions.

"When we're doing organizing, when we want to change hearts and minds, when we want to collaborate with other people — whatever it might be — you have to understand where people are," she said.

The CEO of the American Jewish Committee, Ted Deutch, said in a statement that the meeting was productive. His statement mentioned the two-state solution, which would entail the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. Large American Jewish groups have historically supported that outcome, though Netanyahu has said he is against it and partners with far-right politicians who vehemently oppose it.

"While the vision of a two-state solution too often seems out of reach, AJC stands firm in our dedication to pursuing a path toward peace and prosperity for all in the region," Deutch said.

"The Abraham Accords once felt impossible — and look where we are today," he said, referring to the normalization agreements with four Middle Eastern countries signed under a previous Netanyahu government. "We remain committed to expanding normalization and supporting programs that promote Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, knowing that these efforts will bring us closer to enduring peace."

May it be your will that the State of Israel be blessed and continue to exist as a liberal democracy, respecting all its inhabitants and all shades of Judaism.

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