

Nat'l solidarity mission brings a message of hope

By AJNews staff

In November, several Jewish community leaders from Alberta, traveled to Israel for an emergency solidarity mission as part of a delegation of Canadian Federations. They came back with a renewed sense of urgency for Hamas and other terror groups to return the hostages that were brutally abducted during the Oct. 7 massacre. They felt conflicting emotions - sadness, anger, solidarity and also respect for the Israelis for their resiliency and their commitment to prevent future terror attacks.

The Alberta delegation included Calgary Jewish Federation CEO Adam Silver, President Lisa Libin, Past-President Jordan Balaban, along with Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright and Past-President Steven Shafir.

In Israel, they spent three, long and difficult days meeting with experts and political leaders, visiting some of the attacked Gaza envelope towns, and meeting with survivors of Kfar Azza and family members of the hostages.

The group was joined by several members of parliament including Calgary Nose Hill MP Michelle Rempel Garner, with the hope that sharing these experiences on the ground with leaders from our Jewish communities can help further drive change here in our own country. There was also an opportunity to see the incredible work in action that our communities support through their generous donations to the UJA Israel Emergency Fund.



Alberta delegates of the Solidarity Mission included Jordan Balaban, Adam Silver, Steven Shafir, Stacey Leavitt-Wright, Michelle Rempel Garner and Lisa Libin. Photo: Calgary Jewish Federation.

On the first day of the Canadian National Leadership Solidarity Mission to Israel, the Alberta delegation engaged with representatives including Jewish Federation board and committee volunteers and CEOs from across Canada, as well as several MPs. The group was joined and supported by volunteer and professional leadership from CIJA, Jewish Federations of Canada - UIA, The Jewish Agency for Israel, and JDC.

Following introductions and tone setting for the mission (including an inspiring address by Professor

Gil Troy), the delegation left for Kibbutz Shefayim, where members of Kfar Azza are temporarily living after the Hamas terror attack on their community.

In a meta post, the delegation from Calgary wrote, "We met with survivors and heroes of October 7, some whose family members were murdered or kidnapped, and others who engaged in heroic actions. It was an honour and responsibility to listen to their pain, comfort them, and assure them that we will not forget what they shared with us."

Continued on page 4

Calgary knitters send warmth and comfort to IDF soldiers

On January 8, a group of women met at the Beth Tzedec Congregation to put the final touches on a project that began in mid-November in response to a worldwide call for hand knitted hats (toques) for soldiers in Israel.

This is not the first time that knitted hats are being sent to the IDF. In 2007 a grass roots project was started in Israel by Channah Koppel, a mother whose son was in the IDF and saw a need for better warm hats for the soldiers. By the time the project was suspended in 2022, over 75,000 hats had been distributed. After October 7, it became clear there was a need once again.

News of the project spread quickly, and within a few days Michele Doctoroff, Jennifer Mackenzie, and Kathie Wainer, heard of the need for knitters and separately started to put out feelers for interest within the community. They connected, met and the Knitzvah Project was created.

A call for knitters went out via word of mouth and synagogue and community newsletters; yarn shops were scoured for the appropriate yarn, and the pattern was distributed to knitters. Bringing this

project to Calgary connects to Jewish women knitting worldwide, including those in Israel. Love and concern are expressed through each stitch that will connect personally to many of the IDF soldiers.

The result of this collective effort is 62 hats, knitted by 15 women, that are now on their way to Israel. The hats will be delivered by a Calgary community member who is volunteering in Israel. Each hat has a personal note attached with a message of gratitude, strength, and the hope for peace, sent with love from a group of women in Calgary. "When we hear from our Israeli friends and family that they may not feel that the world is listening and hearing, we hope that our heartfelt enclosure cards will touch the hearts of IDF soldiers and they will know they are not alone," shares Doctoroff.



Calgary knitters with their Knitzvah Project.

The Knitzvah project will continue and now includes crocheters. There are plans for another shipment in April. If you would like to join us, please contact Michele Doctoroff at switzert@telus.net



Calgary families enjoy PJ Library activities. (Photo Calgary Jewish Federation).

What Jews are feeling now is an inheritance of values — and trauma

By Rabbi Dr. Tirzah Firestone

This story was originally published on My Jewish Learning.

(JTA) — As we enter 2024, many of us are feeling a sense of uncertainty, even wariness, in our bones.

The events that exploded onto the world stage during the last months of 2023 — the brutal attacks on Israeli Jews by Hamas on Oct. 7, followed by Israel’s incursion into Gaza and the ensuing rise of antisemitic incidents around the world — have set off waves of shock, grief and apprehension for Jewish people everywhere. As a rabbi and psychotherapist, I have received many anxious calls and notes.

“I barely identify as Jewish,” one business executive confessed to me over the phone. “Yet I’m unbelievably triggered. Can you help me understand why?”

“For the first time in my life I feel unsafe,” a Jewish student wrote to me. “I suddenly know what my ancestors felt when they had to hide their true identity.”

“I feel ‘re-traumatized’ by all the violence and the resurgence of antisemitism, even though I’ve never directly experienced either one in my lifetime,” a client reported.

Emotions are, by definition, non-rational. But for many of us, our strong reactions to the recent events in and around Israel have felt disproportionate, confusing and sometimes uncanny. One way to understand this is to see them as having roots in earlier times. In this sense, the attacks on innocent Jews on Oct. 7 reverberate with a kind of biological memory of traumas that we ourselves may never have experienced, but whose residues nevertheless live within us.

Sound like a bubbe mayseh (grandmother’s tale)? Or a teaching from an obscure kabbalistic text? In fact, the notion that trauma residues can be transmitted intergenerationally is based on clinical studies in a relatively new field called behavioral epigenetics. These multi-decade studies demonstrate that younger generations can be deeply imprinted by the extreme life experiences that their ancestors endured, years before they themselves arrived on the scene.

This means, for example, that Jews whose great-grandparents survived the violence of the Russian pogroms, or whose grandparents hid from the Nazis with little food or light, or whose parents witnessed the bloody Farhud in Iraq in 1941, may carry within them a kind of cellular byproduct of their ancestors’ adverse life experiences. These molecular vestiges hold fast to genetic scaffolding. Though the DNA itself remains unchanged, how those genes express themselves can indeed be affected. Such epigenetic changes may make us more vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder, more sensitive to stresses in the environment, and can at times leave us with a predisposition to anxiety or depression.

Because I am more poet than scientist, the following vivid description by journalist Dan Hurley brought epigenetics to life for me. It also struck me as exceedingly Jewish: “Like silt deposited on the cogs of a finely tuned machine after the seawater of a tsunami recedes, our experiences, and those of our forebears, are never gone, even if they have been forgotten.”

For me, the phenomenon of intergenerational trauma is a reflection of the Hebrew phrase “mi dor l’dor,” which describes the Jewish tradition flowing “from generation to generation.” You may have heard these words sung in synagogue, or discussed in the context of Jewish tradition. Perhaps you’ve been to a bar or bat mitzvah at which a young Jewish person is celebrated as they are officially called to the Torah for the first time.

One of the most emotional moments of the way this ritual is observed in my congregation is when the Torah scroll is taken out of the ark and lovingly passed down from the most senior relative to the next generation (typically aunts and uncles) to the parents, and perhaps to the older siblings of the bar/bat mitzvah. Finally, the Torah arrives into the arms of the young initiate, the newest link in an ancient chain of heritage. At that moment, the celebrant makes a silent commitment to uphold the ancestral values that have been passed down for thousands of years: uprightness and justice, lifelong learning, loyalty to family, and the fierce determination to protect and repair the world we have been given.

This ritual reenactment of mi dor l’dor is often the moment when tears are shed. One can feel the power of ancient heritage in the room. One can sense those who have passed but are with us still in spirit. And one can recognize that however connected or disconnected we are from the Jewish path, somehow we each play a part in this time-honored tradition that so many of our ancestors wrestled to preserve — and all too often, gave their lives for.

The legacies that come down to us are a rich and complex mixture of noble values and the painful trauma residues of our fraught history. All of these reverberate within our very cells. In our generation, both science and the still-unfathomed events of these past months teach us once again just how deep our connection is to our ancestors, and how their lives continue to echo within us, from generation to generation, mi dor l’dor.

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



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grandmother, sister,
aunt and friend.
She is unbearably missed.*

*We would like to thank all those
who phoned, sent cards,
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*Albert, Marcy, Gabriella,
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JNF Tu Bi'Shevat Campaign

By Jay Cairns, JNF Edmonton

Tu Bi'Shevat, the New Year for the trees, is celebrated this year on January 25. The JNF Canada 2024 Tu Bi'Shevat project, is to plant a memorial forest in the area of Kibbutz Be'eri in Southern Israel. It was amongst the kibbutzim that suffered horribly during the heinous attacks on October 7.

This project is more than just planting trees. It symbolizes rebirth and resilience in the face of terror. It says that while some seek to destroy the Jewish people, we will remember, pay tribute and seed the land of Israel.

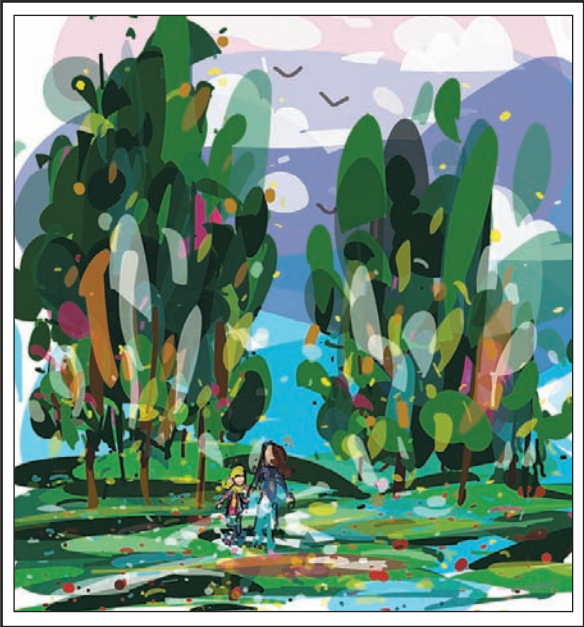
Jewish people have been planting trees in Israel for

thousands of years, the roots of this tradition are in taking care of the land and of each other. We have many challenges that are going to be challenging this year and moving forward, the simple act of planting a tree this coming Tu Bi'Shevat will do so much. Now, tomorrow, and for generations to come these trees will reinforce our commitment to Israel's strength and resilience.

On an environmental level planting trees helps to combat the footprint that each one of us continues to make in the world, a small act of kindness to the planet earth for providing sustenance.

Tu Bi'Shevat themes of renewal and hope are especially meaningful this year. We are all looking for ways to make sense of what happened and find ways to cope. In memory of the lives lost on October 7th, a Memorial Forest will be planted near Kibbutz Be'eri. These trees will be a lasting memorial in honour of those who passed on that dark day.

For information about the campaign, contact edm@jnf.ca.



Halvah Granola for Tu B' Shevat

By Micah (Grobman) Siva

My grandparents loved halvah, a sweet confection made with sesame butter and sugar, because it reminded them of their time spent in Israel. Individually wrapped halvah candies could always be found in the depths of their candy drawer. Despite halvah being a sweet confection, sesame seeds are incredibly nutritious and can be a part of a healthy breakfast, so it inspired me to toss halvah into my granola in place of dried fruit, for a granola that pays homage to my grandparents' candy drawer and tastes a whole lot better than the raisin-filled granola of my childhood.

If you want to add dried fruit to your granola to enhance it for Tu B' Shevat, toss it in as soon as the sheet pan is removed from the oven. The heat from the granola will soften the dried fruit and help it stick to the pieces. Don't bake the dried fruit with the nuts and seeds, though, because the high sugar content of dried fruits will cause them to burn.

This recipe is from "Nosh: Plant-forward recipes celebrating modern Jewish cuisine" by Micah Siva. It serves 10 to 12 people and the prep and cook time is one hour and 10 minutes.

Ingredients

3 cups rolled oats, gluten-free, if preferred

- 1/2 cup shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds
- 2/3 cup pistachios
- 2/3 cup raw cashews
- 1/3 cup maple syrup, honey, or agave syrup
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- Pinch sea salt
- 3/4 cup crumbled halvah

Directions

Preheat the oven to 275°F. Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the oats, coconut, chia seeds, sesame seeds, pistachios, and cashews.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the maple syrup, olive oil, tahini, vanilla, cinnamon, cardamom, and salt. Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and stir until combined.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared sheet pan and spread it out in an even layer. Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes.

Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the halvah. Let cool on the sheet pan.

Transfer the granola to an airtight container and store at room temperature for up to 10 days.

Variation: Add an egg white to the liquid ingredients in your granola to make it even crunchier with larger



clusters. Egg whites act as a binder, and the addition can help the components stick together. Love cardamom? Add an extra 1/4 teaspoon!

Micah Siva is a Jewish, Canadian born Registered Dietitian and chef living in Northern California, specializing in recipe writing, food photography and story telling through food. She has strong roots to Alberta and is a Camp BB (Riback) and NWC BBYO alum.

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Annual Tu Bi'Shevat Campaign 2024/5784

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Israel in trauma. The Diaspora in shock. How do we come back from this? The Jewish response to trauma has always been to help someone else in need.

- Burnt house in Kibbutz Kissufim

In memory of the lives lost on October 7th, a Memorial Forest will be planted near Kibbutz Be'eri. These trees will be a lasting memorial to those murdered on that dark day.

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Delegates from the Emergency Solidarity Mission to Israel shared their photos and reflections of the trip. "The buildings in Kfar Azza show signs of bullets, grenade shrapnel, blood stains, broken windows, and more. To even contemplate what occurred there on October 7 is tragic and sickening." Photos by Calgary Jewish Federation.

Solidarity *Cont. from page 1*

“After an emotional visit and a renewed commitment to honour and keep alive the testimonies we heard, a quick visit to the Old City and Kotel was a perfect energy boost and soother of emotions. One thing is clear: although Israel is in the fight of its life, it remains a remarkable beacon of hope – a country built and defended by its people. It is amazing to see how Israel has come together during this time of great darkness; even more determined to drive out hate and terror and be a model of hope and resilience.”

The second day of the Canadian National Leadership Solidarity Mission was a mix of extremely painful and inspiring feelings.

“We began with a visit to Sderot (the largest city close to Gaza), where rockets upon rockets fall each and every year, and where Hamas terrorists attacked on October 7, taking control of the police station. We met with Mayor Alon Davidi and some of his staff and community members. They continue to envision a thriving city, a dream they earnestly pursue even in the wake of recent events.

“We then proceeded to Kfar Azza, the site of horrific attacks by Hamas – including murder, torture, and kidnapping. It was an extremely difficult visit as it was once a thriving and energetic community, which is (at least for now) a place of death and destruction. The buildings show signs of bullets, grenade shrapnel, broken windows, and more. To even contemplate what occurred there on October 7 is tragic and sickening.”

The delegation was joined by Speaker of the Knesset, Amir Ohana, MK who was presented with a gift from the Speaker of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, Nathan Cooper - the flag of Alberta that was

flown at the Legislature in solidarity with Israel.

“Even with all of the pain and sorrow, there is a sense of commitment and resilience, and a clear desire to rebuild and re-establish the community once it is safe to do so. Our sense is that morale is very high – despite a long road ahead. To close the evening, we joined displaced members of Kiryat Shmona, and experienced their hope and optimism while participating in a sing-a-long. Israel might be bruised and in pain, but its spirit is alive and well. Am Yisrael Chai!”

“The purpose of our trip to Israel was to see, learn from and experience the country and the Israelis in solidarity following the horrific events of October 7,” stated Jordan Balaban at the Community Menorah Lighting at Calgary City Hall. “We had the opportunity to meet with some of the 300,000 Israelis who are displaced by the conflict, to hear from survivors of Hamas’ brutal and inhumane attacks, to grieve with family members of those murdered by Hamas, to tour some the devastated communities overtaken on October 7 and to convene with community leaders. Our solidarity at this time with the people of Israel who share our democratic Canadian values was deeply impactful by all those we spent time with.”

“Israelis feel very alone right now,” continued Balaban, “and so do we all collectively as Jews. Israelis are, one step at a time, processing their collective trauma, as well as facing up to the eventual challenge of healing, and making difficult choices to ensure their security.

“Israelis are some of the best in building and innovating...They are strong, resilient and resolute in ensuring a safe and secure future for their citizens.”

Stacey Leavitt-Wright said, “Most striking to me

abroad.

“What I witnessed- has strengthened my resolve to assist, and to have a strong Jewish Edmonton - to keep us connected and ensure we have a Jewish homeland.”

In her remarks at the Menorah Lighting in Edmonton at the Legislature Grounds, she said, “When I stood in Kibbutz Kfar Azza, among the destruction and ashes...there were three things that struck me: First, that we must bear witness, and continue to tell the stories, of the survivors, the heroes, the victims, the displaced and those who remain hostage.

“Second, that Jewish Alberta and Israel are closely tied and deeply impact one another. We were able to express solidarity with people of Israel who share our Canadian democratic values in reading a strong letter of support and solidarity from the Honourable Nathan Cooper, to the Speaker of the Knesset Mr. Amir Ohana with an Albertan MP, Michelle Rempel-Garner at our side.

“And third, while standing in the aftermath of the massacre, declaring that life and laughter will return to Kibbutz Kfar Azza, as well as other communities across Israel, that the Canadian Jewish community will be there to help make it so. What further jolted me in that moment, was how important it is that we as Jewish Edmontonians continue to live public and proud Jewish lives in the city our community has called home since 1893.”

Balaban concluded his remarks by saying, “While our trip was just for a few short days, the road ahead for peaceful co-existence will be long. As Canadians, we should do our part in making that road as short as possible to promoting understanding, respect, and peace.

“We are praying for the return of all the hostages to their families and for conditions that allow for peace and dignity between Israel and the Palestinian people. Together we can overcome the darkness, death and devastation of this horrible conflict and we can reject divisive ideologies like the rising antisemitism. Together we can focus on our common humanity.”

“You can’t go and be unchanged,” said Adam Silver to Global News. “You also can’t go and not see the resilience and the morale and commitment to living life and not letting these terrorists defeat us. It gives me great hope for the future.”

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was the unity, the determination and clarity [that we saw] on the mission and seeing this through, to get hostages released and to live in security. While the country is in pain, there is much heroism and resilience. And they were equally concerned about us and antisemitism

ALBERTA Jewish News

Publication Mail Agreement No. 40050628
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
#206, 8944 182 Street, Edmonton AB T5T 2E3
E-mail: albertajewishnews@gmail.com
Tel: (780) 421-7966

Volume 35, Number 1, January 11, 2024

PUBLISHER: Deborah Shatz
EDITOR: Daniel Moser
PAST PUBLISHERS: Barry Slawsky, David Moser, Judy Shapiro, Richard Bronstein

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

Next Deadline: February 9, 2024

albertajewishnews.com
Subscriptions in Canada: \$37.80 per year
Subscriptions outside Canada: \$72 USD per year

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

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Calgary Jewish Academy fosters community, character, confidence and Jewish values in their students.

A journey through the CJA

By Joseph Tappenden

When you walk through the doors of the CJA for the first time, you will see that we are more than just a school. We are an educational community that lays the foundation for lifelong learning and empowers students to engineer the future. As a school, we continue to grow and innovate as a result of the partnership we share with our families. Our mission is to foster community, character and confidence. Jewish Values and Tikkun Olam are integrated in everything that we do, whether it be at school, at home or within our community.

Our Early Years program focuses on teaching our youngest a love for learning and intellectual curiosity through open ended play. We put an emphasis on teaching the value of menschleket (striving to be a

good person) which includes teaching the foundations of friendship, diversity and inclusion. With the CJA being a safe space, our students are encouraged to take risks with their learning, which is necessary for reflection, feedback and accelerated growth. We equip our students with behaviors and mindsets to inspire an entrepreneurial spirit, become ethical citizens and achieve their full potential of becoming the next generation of community leaders.

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When students enter Junior High, their journey at the CJA becomes more focused & empowering. Students are given the opportunity to effect change in our school and community. With the benefit of smaller class sizes and the work they do with their academic specialists, students are provided the ability to lead and inspire others. With a focus on critical thinking, evaluation and academics, students are empowered to advocate for themselves and community as they move beyond the CJA classroom.

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CJA is more than just a school, and your child is more than just a student.

Should you wish to learn more about the Calgary Jewish Academy, visit: www.cja.ab.ca

Jewish books to read in 2024

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) — When I spoke with novelist Elizabeth Graver in August about her novel “*Kantika*” — inspired by her own Turkish Jewish family — I asked her how she managed to breathe life into a tired genre like the Jewish family saga.

“I want the characters to be flawed and complex, and for the turns that they take to come out of their

intersections with both history and their own very particular circumstances,” she told me.

The flawed and the complex; the historic and the particular. These are the qualities that I look for in a good book. Below are some of the Jewish books I read and enjoyed in 2023. Nearly all reflect Jewish reality before Oct. 7; I suspect next year’s list will include a slew of books dealing with the crisis in Israel or will be read through the lens of the war.

Nonfiction

Jonathan Rosen’s memoir, “*The Best Minds: A Story Of Friendship, Madness, And The Tragedy Of Good Intentions*,” deserves all the accolades it has received. The former arts editor of the *Forward* writes about his friendship with Michael Laudor, a Yale Law School

graduate whose brilliance and schizophrenia made him a sort of poster child for the successful mainstreaming of the mentally ill until it all went tragically, shockingly wrong. It’s also a beautifully told story about growing up precocious and Jewish in suburban New Rochelle, New York, and how Judaism can be both a balm and an astringent for those under the throes of psychosis.

In “*Happily*,” fairy tales are the prompts for a series of dreamy and rigorous biographical essays by Sabrina Orah Mark on “motherhood, and marriage, and America, and weather, and loneliness, and failure, and inheritance, and love.” And, as the *New York Times* noted, Mark deals with raising two “Black Jewish boys in a time of rising antisemitism.”

I also enjoyed another collection of biographical essays, “*Immigrant Baggage*,” by Boston College professor Maxim Shrayer. A former Soviet refusenik who immigrated to the United States in 1987, Shrayer writes about life as a “translingual” father, husband and writer who finds wisdom and the absurd in all the languages that he speaks.

“*Bruno Schulz: An Artist, a Murder, and the Hijacking of History*” is a page-turning literary

Continued on page 7

A photograph of a two-story house with a dark roof covered in solar panels. A green van with the SkyFireEnergy logo is parked in front of the house. The background shows a lush green landscape with trees.

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A black and white portrait of Adam Singer, a man with glasses, wearing a suit and tie.

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Best wishes for 2024!

Pro-Semitism: A conversation with Caroline D'Amore

By Matthew Levine, LJI Reporter

As a non-Jewish advocate for Israel, Caroline D'Amore is uniquely positioned to help educate a global demographic. She is an influencer and an ally who is speaking out against antisemitism and on behalf of the 130 hostages who are still being held captive by terrorists in Gaza.

The heinous attacks by Hamas on October 7, including the sexual and gender-based assaults, left global Jewish communities feeling alone and in pain. The war that has unfolded since, has left Jewish communities feeling alienated by both friends and family (in some cases). The loneliness felt by Jewish people comes not only from being separated from Israel, but also from many non-Jewish friends who are uninformed and unable to properly support the Jewish people in their lives.

"Many non-Jewish friends don't really have the tools or know how to speak on our behalf," says Michael Sachs, Director of JNF Pacific Region. "A lot of times they want to speak up and express that they're not happy with what's happening but don't feel empowered or comfortable."

On January 29, D'Amore and Sachs will be visiting Edmonton, featured in an event that brings the Jewish community and friends together, to discuss her moral clarity and unequivocal support of Israel at this difficult time. This event, which takes place at 7:30 pm at the Fantasyland Hotel in conference room 6 is called *Pro-Semitism* and will run like a fireside chat between the two guest speakers. It will focus on the common ground that can bring our Jewish community together: the fight against antisemitism and the horrific October 7 terror attacks that took place in Southern Israel.

The tragedy that took place on October 7 and the bombings and the ensuing war has sparked a massive incline in antisemitism across the world. "Never before have we seen the Jewish communities across Canada so united, organizations coming together to present events such as this one... there is a need and desire to stand together despite our possible differences," says Sachs. "There is a thirst for common ground," he

explains. "Events like this provide the space for those discussions and for communities to come together. We are strong when we come together. We are even stronger when we come together, shoulder to shoulder with our allies."

This event is presented by JNF Canada, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, and Stand With Us- all coming together to raise awareness and facilitate a comfortable discussion. Jewish people across Edmonton are encouraged to attend this event, but also to bring a couple of their non-Jewish friends. "It will provide our non-Jewish friends with an opportunity to learn and feel at the same time as we do," Sachs added.

Caroline D'Amore is an accomplished business-woman, the founder and CEO of Pizza Girl Inc., a mother, and an ally of the Jewish community. She speaks against antisemitism and raises awareness about the sexual and gender-based abuses that happened on October 7.

"Caroline is extremely successful and taking a risk to speak out and protect us. Sitting and watching this rise of antisemitism that, even in Canada we're not immune to, is very disturbing, so she has chosen to start speaking out on behalf of her Jewish friends," says Sachs.

"She is making herself a target and needs the community to be there to support her as she supports us."

D'Amore flew to Israel on December 13 to bear witness to the atrocities of Oct. 7th. She journeyed to the site of the Nova Music Festival and met with a family member of a victim of the attacks.

"Oct 7th was not a fight for freedom," she wrote in the post from the Nova festival site. "It was a group of terrorists trying to kill as many innocent Jewish people as possible and then call home so their parents could be proud of them. This is the truth. This is the terrifying truth of what happened on Oct. 7th."

"Attacking innocent party goers is not a fight for freedom," she wrote. "It's cowardice and cruel and pure evil. Anyone who celebrates this is gone and needs serious help."



Caroline D'Amore in Israel. Instagram photo.

"You've lost your humanity," she added. "Anyone who says this was a resistance to their oppressor is an extremely lost soul."

Vancouver held its own *Pro-Semitism* event featuring D'Amore not too long ago, Sachs reported, that both Jews and non-Jews left feeling empowered, confident, and with a better understanding.

"All we can ask from this event is that our Jewish and non-Jewish allies have the opportunity to learn and feel at the same time," concludes Sachs.

"Please join us for this event, there is no charge and it's an excellent opportunity to invite and engage our non-Jewish friends in a meaningful discussion about what we are going through right now and how they can support us; Caroline is an expert in the field," says Jay Cairns, Director of JNF Edmonton.

Pro-Semitism takes place on January 29 at 7:30 pm at the Fantasyland Hotel, Conference Room 6. Register at jnf.ca/Edmonton or email edm@jnf.ca.

Jewish books *Cont. from page 6*

detective story by Benjamin Balint, exploring the all-too-short life and unlikely legacy of enigmatic Polish-Jewish writer and artist Bruno Schulz. Balint's book prompted me to finally read Schulz's best-known book, the hallucinatory "The Street of Crocodiles," and two contemporary works of fiction that draw on Schulz's biography: "The Prague Orgy" by Philip Roth and "The Messiah of Stockholm" by Cynthia Ozick.

In "The Literary Mafia: Jews, Publishing, and Postwar American Literature," Joshua Lambert debunks the myth that Jewish intellectuals had an iron grip on what was read and reviewed in the post-war years — even as he celebrates the era's undeniable burst of Jewish creativity and influence. One of those influential figures was Robert Gottlieb, the legendary editor at Simon & Schuster, Alfred A. Knopf and *The New Yorker*, whose charming, gossipy memoir, "Avid Reader," I avidly read (actually, listened to: Gottlieb narrated the audiobook) after he died in June. That led me to Gottlieb's 2013 biography, "Sarah: The Life of Sarah Bernhardt," which helps the reader understand the appeal of the beloved French Jewish actress in the context of the theatrical conventions of her day.

Bernhardt's florid stagecraft couldn't have been more different from the naturalistic acting style that Isaac Butler describes in "The Method: How the Twentieth Century Learned to Act." The Jewish acting teachers Stella Adler, Lee Strasberg and Harold Klurman play central roles in Butler's engaging history of the modern theater.

And just before the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas, I read "A Day in the Life of Abed Salama" by the Jerusalem-based Jewish writer Nathan Thrall. The book, a challenging account of a deadly school bus crash in East Jerusalem, is a forensic examination of

the inequalities and indignities that stateless Palestinians face on a daily basis. You don't have to agree with Thrall's politics to learn from the realities and complexities that he describes.

Continued on page 14

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PRO-SEMITISM

Please join us for an enlightening and refreshing conversation with social media and business sensation Caroline D'Amore. From speaking out against antisemitism to her recent trip to Israel, we will explore her moral clarity to stand with Israel at this difficult time.

with CAROLINE D'AMORE

Monday, January 29

7:30 p.m.

Fantasyland Hotel

Conference Room 6

No charge

Coffee and tea will be served

Register at www.jnf.ca/edmonton

edm@jnf.ca

In conversation with Michael Sachs
JNF Pacific Region

IHRD virtual event will focus on the importance of moral leadership

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

On January 25, the Calgary Jewish Federation Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education department will team up with the Calgary Public Library, along with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Edmonton Public Library to welcome a virtual presentation by Susan Eisenhower, author of *How Ike Led: The Principles Behind Eisenhower's Biggest Decisions*.

Susan Eisenhower, a respected policy analyst, business consultant, educator, speaker and writer whose specialties include national security, leadership and related strategic issues, will speak about what her grandfather – Dwight Eisenhower - saw in the concentration camps and what antisemitism looks like today.

She has written a compelling story,” said Jared Shore, former co-president of Calgary Jewish Federation and the moderator of the online event.

In 1945, General Eisenhower famously stated, "Get it all on record now... somewhere down the road of history some bastard will get up and say that this never happened."

"Dwight Eisenhower had the foresight at an emotionally charged time to say we need to document this for the future. That compulsion was so important and has proven even more important as time marches on," Shore told *AJNews*.

Also compelling are Susan Eisenhower's insights into the leadership style of her grandfather, the heart and soul of her book, published in 2020 to national and international acclaim.

"The book speaks to who he was as a leader," said Shore, from Ike's military leadership to his presidency of Columbia University, his command of NATO and, eventually, his service as president of the United States between 1953 and 1961.

"We cannot take leadership for granted," said Shore. "People we count on for moral leadership have

utterly failed."

In the pages of her book, Susan Eisenhower paints the picture of a man to whom character mattered. Billed as "part leadership book, part history, and part memoir," it gives insight into a man who, while a Republican, was uniquely non-partisan, always aiming for middle ground.

Susan Eisenhower has described her grandfather as fearing the time when "...extremes on the left and the right would dominate the public space."

These eerily prescient insights are reason enough to register for the talk by Susan Eisenhower, whose exploration of her beloved grandfather's legacy is a much-needed tonic in a world that is more and more given to extremes and less and less discerning when it comes to leadership.

"The relevance today is so apparent," says Shore. "We as Canadians need to be aware of and concerned about matters of leadership. Expectations of our leaders is something this talk will shed some light on."

Never Again: International Holocaust Remembrance Day with Susan Eisenhower takes place virtually on January 25 from 7:00-8:30 pm MST.

The event kicks off a fourth season of Holocaust programming organized by the Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education department of Calgary Jewish Federation and presented by the Calgary Public Library in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Edmonton Public Library.

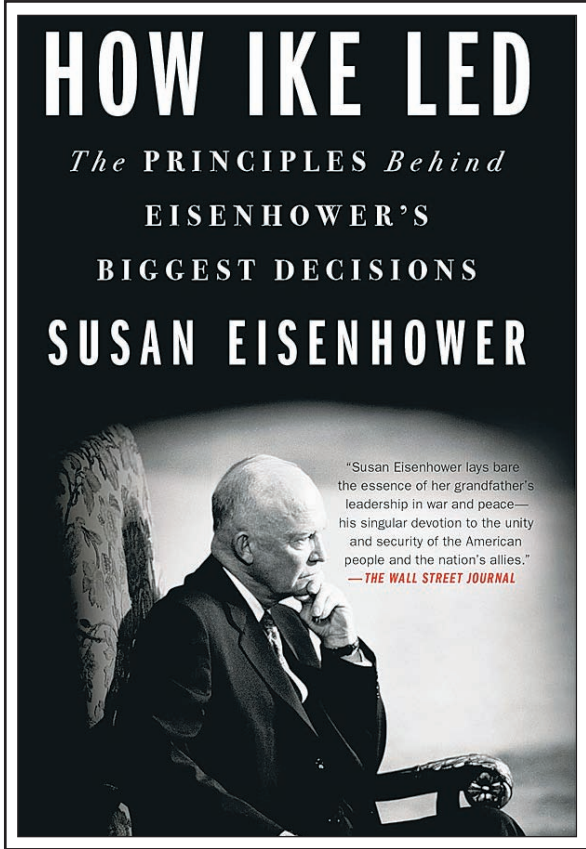
The program is generously supported by the Isadore and Florence Burstyn Memorial Fund, the KSW Holocaust Education and Commemoration Endowment Fund, and donors to the Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund at the Calgary Public Library Foundation. To register, go to jewishcalgary.org.

There are other important dates to save for events taking place within the Alberta Jewish community. The Calgary Jewish Federation Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education department and Calgary Public Library proudly present

historian and New York Times-best-selling author Max Wallace on **March 7** taking place at the Central Library in Calgary. Wallace, a Canadian, is the author of *In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*.

"Wallace reveals an incredible story involving the secret negotiations of an unlikely trio—a former fascist President of Switzerland, a courageous Orthodox Jewish woman, and a Finnish osteopath—to end the Holocaust, aided by clandestine Swedish and American efforts. He documents their efforts to deceive Himmler, successfully prevent the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Jews during the last months of the Second World War, and thwart Hitler's plan to take "every last Jew" down with the Reich. These are revelations that will help rewrite the history of the Holocaust and the Second World War."

Find out about the role Recha Sternbuch, an inspiring Swiss Orthodox woman, played in rescuing thousands of Jews and preventing the



extermination of many more toward the end of World War II.

Watch for more information about this event at www.jewishcalgary.org and in future issues of *AJNews*.

From March 21 through mid-July, *Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors* will be on exhibit in Edmonton at the Art Gallery of Alberta.

This compelling exhibit, featuring evocative black and white photographs and biographies of Alberta-connected Holocaust survivors, was first shown in Calgary at the Glenbow at the Edison in Calgary from May to July, 2023. A curated portion of the original 161 subjects will be available for viewing at the Art Gallery of Alberta, including survivors who made Edmonton their home.

Accompanying the exhibit will be the eponymous documentary film produced by Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin, the visionaries behind the *Here to Tell* project. Having documented more than 200 Calgary-connected survivors, *Here to Tell* will be reaching out to survivors and their descendants in Edmonton so as to add their images and stories to the historical record.

For more information about *Here to Tell*, including the hardcover book, go to www.heretotell.com.

In **May 2024**, *Violins of Hope* will be coming to the National Music Centre at Studio Bell in Calgary, culminating with a very special performance on May 15 by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Calgary Jewish Federation Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education department has partnered with Studio Bell and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra to bring the *Violins of Hope* to Calgary this spring. A private collection owned by father and son violin makers Amnon Weinstein and Avshi Weinstein, the *Violins of Hope* include some 76 string instruments that were donated or purchased from survivors and descendants or plucked from the ruins of ghettos and concentration camps and later repaired and restored.

"All instruments in this collection have a common denominator: they are symbols of hope and a way to say: remember me, remember us. Life is good, celebrate it for those who perished, for those who survived. For all people."

The *Violins of Hope* will be exhibited at Studio Bell for 10 weeks, during which visitors can see the instruments, learn their histories and listen to their haunting and hopeful sounds.

On May 15, the CPO will play the violins in a "musical journey from Holocaust to hope" conducted by Juliane Gallant and personally narrated by Avshi Weinstein.

These precious instruments are a powerful means by which to share music and history while engaging in remembrance. They will surely maximize the impact of this year's Holocaust Education Symposium which will be taking place at Studio Bell.

Stay tuned for information about *Violins of Hope* at www.jewishcalgary.org and www.studiobell.ca.

For tickets to the CPO *Violins of Hope* Concert on May 15, go to Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra - *Violins of Hope*, calgaryphil.com

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

NEVER AGAIN

VIRTUAL PROGRAM WITH SUSAN EISENHOWER

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2024 | 7:00 - 8:30PM

In recognition of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, please join author and educator, Susan Eisenhower, as she discusses what her grandfather, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, saw first-hand in the concentration camps at liberation in 1945. She will explore what antisemitism looks like today and how never again is now.





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Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund
at the Calgary Public Library Foundation

Register at: bit.ly/neveragain_ihrd2024 or scan QR code



Photo credit:
Robert Iseni

community calendar

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

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





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A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER

This month brings *Tu B'Shevat*, the New Year of the Trees, and next month is JDAIM – Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month. What an exciting back-to-back two months!

During *Tu B'Shevat*, we celebrate the season during which Israel's early-blooming trees and plants blossom and spring to life. A relatively well known custom is to eat a new fruit on this day (something one hasn't eaten before or for a long time), or to eat from the Seven Species (*shivat haminim*) described in the Bible as being abundant in the land of Israel. The *shivat haminim* (Deuteronomy 8:8) are: wheat, barley, grapes (vines), figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. This time of year is not only a reset of sorts, but prescribes for us to slow down, mindfully appreciate the incredible bounty found in Israel, as well as introduce ourselves to new fruits. We are encouraged to appreciate some very special fruits, and to take a chance on new ones. It is a *chag* (holiday) of joy, celebration, and recognition – one that I encourage you and your families to explore and experience through the many programs being offered in our community.

As a stretch of an analogy, indulge my connection of *Tu B'Shevat* to JDAIM. Established in 2009 by the


Jewish Special Education International Consortium, JDAIM is observed each February with the mission of uniting Jewish communities worldwide to raise awareness and champion the rights of all Jews to be accepted and included in all aspects of Jewish life like anyone else. JDAIM is not only intended to ensure Jewish communities around the world have one month focused on diverse programming for those with special needs. Rather, the intention, like *Tu B'Shevat's* appreciation of wonderful and unique fruit, is to provide us with an opportunity to refocus our efforts to include and celebrate people of all abilities in our Jewish community.

There are many ways each of us can and should include those with varying abilities in our Jewish community, and JDAIM tasks us with just that directive. We each have the opportunity and responsibility to bring others into our circles, to not only adapt programming and services, but to apply new ways of thinking. If we apply a strengths-based perspective, we view each difference and need as a potential strength as opposed to a liability needing to be addressed. Acknowledging the different abilities and needs of others helps us build unique and innovative programming, and inspires us to apply

different lenses to existing offerings. Doing so not only expands our active Jewish community, but improves it. Please be sure to participate in JDAIM events in the month of February and maintain an inclusive mindset yearround.

This is my first *Pom* message of 2024, so I want to wish everyone reading this a year filled with good health and an abundance of *simcha*. The last three months have been a horrific time for Jews and their allies around the globe and here too, in Calgary. May 2024 bring the safe return of all remaining hostages, the eradication of Hamas, peace and stability to Israel, and safety and sanity to communities around the world that continue to experience antisemitism at its highest level in decades. Our diverse, caring, and strong Jewish community has been strained but not broken - we have continued to stand together and to be proud, be resolute, and be Jewish.

B'Shalom,


Adam Silver
CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation

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

PJ LIBRARY® CALGARY IS PARTNERING WITH OUR FRIENDS TO CELEBRATE TU B'SHEVAT!

TERRARIUM MAKING

Sunday, January 21

1-3PM • Paperny Family JCC

Join PJ Our Way® and Keshet as we create beautiful terrariums! Snacks provided.





A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR THE TREES

Sunday, January 28

10AM-12PM • HOJMI

Join PJ Library and House of Jacob Mikveh Israel for a birthday party for the trees! We'll enjoy games, crafts – and of course, birthday treats!









REGISTER AT QR CODE OR GO TO JEWISHCALGARY.ORG

SAVE THE DATES FOR JDAIM AND JOIN CALGARY JEWISH FEDERATION AS WE RECOGNIZE THIS SPECIAL MONTH!

JDAIM

FEBRUARY 2023

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month



YOUR BRAIN ON FOOD: CULTIVATING WELLNESS AND A PEACEFUL HOME

Sunday, February 4

3-5PM | Paperny Family JCC

Join us in the exploration of a paradigm-shifting approach to preventing and improving moodiness, stress, behaviour, meltdowns, and more. Learn different ways to harness the transformative power of food and nutrients. Renowned scientist and author **Bonnie Kaplan** will share pioneering research, with an emphasis on practical tools to enrich your mental health and bring peace to your home, one bite at a time. Healthy snacks and childcare provided.





NORMAL SCHMORMAL!

Sunday, February 25

3-5PM | Paperny Family JCC

Join us for a stand-up comedy event, where **Ashely Blaker** will share the challenges and joys of parenting children with additional needs, and inspire us all and make us all feel "Normal Schmormal". Childcare provided, plus fun activities for the kids – Lego, art, and more! This is a family-friendly experience you won't want to miss!







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Focus on Finance

Fine tune your finances in 2024

(NC) After the joy of the holidays has passed, you might be facing a bit of sticker shock when your bills start coming in. To avoid the pain of overspending, make this the year you finally get on top of your finances. Here are three things to keep in mind.

Build a budget

You've likely heard it before, but the only way you can truly understand your finances is to create a thorough budget that tracks all your income and all your spending. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada has a free online budget planner.

Start by adding up recurring fixed budget items, like your mortgage or rent, car payments and transit costs, and subscriptions and memberships. Then, create a list

of discretionary spending, like restaurant meals, gifts and nights out with friends. Next, tally up all your monthly income. If the expenses column is more than your total income, analyze your budget for areas where you can cut back.

Check your credit report

Your credit report is a very important document. It's used by lenders to determine if you're eligible for a credit card, loan or mortgage and, if so, what interest rate you'll be charged. But sometimes the reports contain errors that can negatively affect your credit. You should regularly check yours and report any errors to the two credit reporting agencies in Canada: Equifax and TransUnion. Both are required to give you a free

copy of your report.

Consider consolidating your loans

When you're short of money, it can be hard to know which bills and loans to pay off first. Generally, you're going to want to pay down the ones with the highest interest rates, such as credit cards. But if you're really struggling to make your payments, talk to your financial institution about your options for consolidating your loans. This way, you'll have only one monthly payment to make and it will usually be at a lower interest rate.

In some cases, you might need professional guidance on how to get out of debt. A certified financial advisor or credit counsellor can help get you onto the path of financial success.

More tips and financial advice at canada.ca/money.

Why some Golden Globes attendees wore yellow ribbons

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) — One of the movies up for best picture at the 2024 Golden Globes awards was about the Holocaust. One of the most notable displays during the ceremony alludes to a current attack on Jews.

In the lead-up to the awards ceremony Sunday Jan. 7, advocates for Israeli hostages in Gaza worked to supply attendees with yellow ribbon pins to affix to their red-carpet garb. Terror groups in Gaza are still holding approximately 136 hostages, who were kidnapped when Hamas invaded Israel on Oct. 7, sparking the ongoing war.

Yellow ribbons are a longstanding symbol of readiness to welcome home prisoners or hostages. The Bring Them Home movement, which advocates for the Israelis held in Gaza, is distributing the pins as part of its effort to keep the hostages in public view.

It was unclear in the days ahead of the ceremony

how widely the ribbons would be taken up. Stars on the red carpet largely were not wearing the ribbons on Sunday night, although a handful, including the "Succession" star J. Smith-Cameron, bore one, as did Jesse Siskind, president of Skydance Media, and Jon Weinbach, writer of "Air," a movie up for best comedy. (It did not win.)

The ribbons represented a significant reference to contemporary politics during awards season, which has been expected as the Israel-Hamas war has gained widespread attention — and has sowed conflict — in the arts world. Local police were reportedly gearing up for potential protests outside the awards ceremony in Los Angeles, after protesters in favor of a ceasefire have sought to disrupt high-profile public events across the country over the last three months.

Few of the films up for Golden Globe awards prominently feature Jewish stories or actors. Two exceptions are up for best picture: "Oppenheimer," the biopic about the Jewish father of the atomic bomb, and



J. Smith-Cameron. (Gilbert Flores/Golden Globes 2024/ via Getty Images).

"Zone of Interest," about the Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoss. "Oppenheimer" won for best dramatic movie, as well as for best actor (Cillian Murphy), best supporting actor (Robert Downey Jr.), best director (Christopher Nolan) and best original score.

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Focus on Finance

Navigating the road to ownership:
A guide to buying a vehicle

By Paul Valentine



Paul Valentine

Purchasing a car is a significant financial decision that requires careful consideration. With numerous financing options available, it is crucial for customers to make an informed choice that aligns with their financial goals. In this brief guide, we will delve deeper into the pros and cons of the three most common methods of acquiring a vehicle: cash, financing, and leasing.

Cash: The Power of Ownership

Paying for your car in cash provides the ultimate sense of ownership and financial freedom. Without monthly payments or interest charges, you can enjoy the full value of your vehicle from the moment you drive off the lot. The satisfaction of outright ownership can't be overstated – this method is particularly appealing to those who value simplicity in their financial transactions.

Despite many advantages, paying in cash may not be the optimal choice for all buyers. Depending on your financial situation, tying up cash in a depreciating asset such as a vehicle, rather than applying it to an

appreciating asset (like your house or stocks), might not provide the most benefit long term. A simple rule of thumb is to own assets that increase in value and to rent those that depreciate.

Financing: Building Equity

When you choose to finance a vehicle, your monthly payments contribute to the overall ownership of the vehicle, and once the loan is paid off, the vehicle is yours to keep. Financing, unlike leasing, removes mileage restrictions and generally provides flexibility of ownership regardless of your commute time or propensity for road trips. This method allows you to build equity in your vehicle over time, making it a viable option for those looking at long-term investments.

It is important to understand that financing typically involves higher monthly payments than leasing, and that initial down payments can vary from zero to substantial. Additionally, in the unfortunate event of an accident, you may end up owing more on your vehicle than what it is valued at, making comprehensive insurance coverage truly important.

Leasing: Unlocking Flexibility

One of the main benefits of leasing a vehicle is the low monthly payment, especially when compared to financing. This makes leasing an attractive option for those who prefer to drive a new car but are afraid of long-term commitments. When you lease, the ownership of the vehicle stays with the leasing company, offering the flexibility to return it at the end of the lease term. Moreover, if you grow attached to the vehicle during the initial lease period, there is always the option to purchase when your term is done.

Leasing does come with its own set of considerations. A leased vehicle may have mileage restrictions and rather specific wear-and-tear guidelines. In the event you go over the allocated mileage or damage the vehicle you may be faced with unanticipated financial penalties. It is therefore important to carefully assess your driving habits and preferences before opting for a lease.

Interest Rates: The Variable

When financing a car, interest rates play a crucial role in determining the overall cost of the vehicle. Interest rates vary from brand to brand and may be influenced by individual credit scores as well as financial histories. Brand loyalty is often rewarded, and returning customers often qualify for preferred rates. Shopping around is the best approach to secure the most competitive deal, as a lower interest rate not only translates to lower monthly payments but also reduces the overall cost of ownership over the life of the loan.

To alleviate some of the stress associated with buying a car, seek recommendations from trusted friends and supplement that advice with your own research. Ask plenty of questions as you navigate through the buying process and avoid rushing your decision. While buying a vehicle may seem overwhelming, conducting a bit of research before entering the showroom will increase your chances of making the right choice.

Vehicle ownership can be achieved in several ways and each approach comes with advantages and considerations. Identifying your financial priorities and preferences is key to making an informed decision that aligns with your long-term goals.

Paul Valentine is the Dealer Principal of Valentine Volvo, Volvo Cars Royal Oak, and Jaguar Land Rover Royal Oak.

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Focus on Finance

Get your retirement plans in order this year

(NC) Whether you're just starting out in the job market or you're approaching the end of your career, it's never too late or too early to plan for your retirement. Make this the year you get those plans in order. Here are four things to consider.

Full stop or semi-retirement?

For some of us, one of the joys of retirement is that it means you'll never have to work again. Others plan to continue working part-time or seasonally to keep themselves active or to bring in some extra income. If your goal is to stop working completely, you'll need to make sure you have enough investments to fund the lifestyle you seek for as long as you're alive. An investment planner can help you determine how much money you'll need for the retirement of your dreams.

Downsize or age in place?

For many of us, our homes are our biggest investment. As such, some homeowners have it in the back of their minds to downsize when they retire and use the proceeds from the sale to help fund their

retirement. But older Canadians are increasingly opting to "age in place" in the home where they lived or raised their family. If that's what you plan on doing, there may be options to draw on the equity of the home without selling. A financial advisor can walk you through your choices.

Diversify your investments

Fewer and fewer jobs come with pensions that can fully – or mostly – fund a retirement. As a result, people increasingly need to invest for their retirement on their own. The most common option is to invest in a Registered Retirement Savings Plan, or RRSP. But note that any funds withdrawn from an RRSP are considered taxable income for that year. With a Tax-Free Savings Account, or TFSA, any earnings on your investments are non-taxable, so you don't have to pay any taxes when you withdraw them. Other options include investing in the stock market or real estate, both of which come with risk and potentially significant returns. Do your research to decide what

options are best for you.

Reap the rewards of your working years


If you can think back to your first-ever paycheck, it was probably a bit of a shock to see how much money was deducted for various taxes. The good news is that once you retire, you benefit from many of the programs that that money helped fund. This includes Old Age Security, a monthly payment you'll start to receive once you turn 65.

Another is the Canada Pension Plan. CPP Investments, the professional investment management organization that manages the Fund, recently reported a 10-year annualized return of 9.6 per cent, growing the Fund to a total of \$576 billion. CPP Investments was the best-performing pension fund in the world from 2013 to 2022, according to Global SWF, and an independent review concluded the plan is sustainable for at least 75 years at current funding rates.

Find out more at cppinvestments.com.





In partnership with JFSC, the annual Golden Age Chanukah luncheon was held at the JCC. (Facebook photos).




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Focus on Finance

From hero to host:
The role of North American
philanthropy in moving
Israel forward

By Sarah Mali



Sarah Mali

I have a dear friend who was run over by a car this past summer. A popular woman, her time in the ER was accompanied by a cacophony of WhatsApp groups, visits, flowers and gifts. The hardest part, she told me, was when she came home and the real work of rehabilitation started. That was when she needed her friends.

When the horrific events of Simchat Torah unfolded, world Jewry, in a move that can only be described as covenantal in nature, swooped to Israel's aid. Jewish Federations of North America reports that \$650 million were raised in a little over a month, of which the Canadian Jewish community raised close to \$100 million.

In those first moments and weeks, we needed what the anthropologists Margaret Wheatley and Debbie Frieze call "heroic leadership." Heroic leadership assumes that we are somewhat in control, that we can fix things — or at least help fix things. I love this type of leadership for its sense of clarity and cohesion. It is unequivocal, umbilical and immediate.

This period of heroic philanthropic leadership is drawing to a close as the most acute period of crisis draws to a close (barring the outbreak of a full-out war in the north, Heaven forbid). The marathon for Israel's survival and recovery, however, has only just begun.

In addition to the sprawling physical destruction and infrastructure damage, the Israeli populace presently faces incredible insecurity in its border regions. This means that the 130,000 displaced people

from the north and south of the country will not return home in the foreseeable future. Border communities are splintering in an attempt to find semi-permanent residences as a next step out of their temporary dwellings. There is an inestimable amount of trauma and need for psychological support and treatment; and we know that in this environment, weaker elements of the population are left behind.

In this mid- to long-term phase of recovery and rebirth, the philanthropic community should set its hero cape aside and begin to act as leaders who are, to continue using Wheatley and Frieze's language, hosts.

Here are four principles for leading as hosts in this moment:

Hosts bring all stakeholders around the table, particularly those with the most to gain or lose, such as the Israeli populations on Israel's borders, to take part in tangible discussions about their mid- to long-term futures, discussions about their evolving needs and how they imagine their communities looking different following Oct. 7.

Hosts know that time is the most valuable resource, one required to ensure that data is gathered from the field and the right systemic and long-term assessments are made with the experts. In the case of Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA (JFC-UIA), these are made largely by the representatives on the ground in their respective regions with their local peers.

Hosts are active learners, drawing from past experiences of emergency campaigns and allocations as well as day-to-day trial and error through check-ins

and reporting. At JFC-UIA, we know that these feedback loops help make our impact more deliberate and precise.

Hosts offer unequivocal support throughout the long process to restoration and healthy societies. Be present. Listen carefully. Be patient. Be forgiving. And be willing to step up and contribute, for the long haul.

At JFC-UIA, we apply these principles for the intermediate- and long-term recovery of Israel and serve as trusted guardians and stewards to ensure the best use of funds over time in accordance with Canadian communities' wishes. Simply put: We ought to slow down, listen to the people and make smart, systemic moves. At the same time, we must continue to give — passionately and with the same resolve. We must be able to act swiftly, but we must also pace ourselves to allow emergent processes to develop out of the crisis situation. As we embark on a long journey of rehabilitation, let us be sure not to let our own need for immediate action and results get in the way of the timeline Israel needs.

Sarah Mali is the director general of the Jewish Federations of Canada and lives in Israel.

Interfaith Advocacy in Motion



Catholic Archdiocese Of Edmonton Archbishop Richard W. Smith admires the Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic at the Federation office in Edmonton. Photo Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

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ALBERTA
Jewish News

Next Print Date: February 14, 2024
Next Deadline: February 9, 2024

Jewish books *Cont. from page 7*

Fiction

Many of the short stories in Iddo Gefen’s collection “*Jerusalem Beach*” start with a high concept — What if a start-up could manufacture dreams? Or a radio could pick up the thoughts of passers-by? — but they are always grounded in the Israeli reality. Indeed, one of his concepts, about a geriatric soldier who returns to the front, foreshadowed a real-life event, when retired general Noam Tibon raced from Tel Aviv to Kibbutz Nahal Oz to rescue his son’s family from Hamas terrorists.

James McBride’s “*The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*” was inspired by his own Jewish grandmother, who ran a grocery store in a predominantly Black neighborhood of Pottstown, Pennsylvania in the 1930s and ’40s. McBride’s recreation of the place and time is a rollicking story of two communities coming together around a common, racist enemy.

I love how “*The Golem of Brooklyn*” starts with a summary of a novel that Adam Mansbach decided not to write, then literally lurches into a hilarious imagining of an avenging Jewish Frankenstein’s monster coming to life in one of the less-hip neighborhoods of Brooklyn. It’s a Jewish road trip novel that confronts the persistence of antisemitism.

If you are yearning for a sprawling satirical novel about a liberal Jewish family making spectacularly bad choices, then “*Hope*” by Andrew Ridker is the book for you. Set in Brookline, Massachusetts, “*Hope*” has good, smart fun with synagogue social justice committees, Birthright Israel trips and Obama-era optimism.

Authors

I interviewed a number of authors this year about their books:

Eric Alterman took a deep dive into the political and personal relationships between American Jews and Israel in “*We Are Not One: A History of America’s Fight Over Israel*.”

Jenny Caplan’s book, “*Funny, You Don’t Look Funny: Judaism and Humor from the Silent Generation to Millennials*,” deals with the way North American Jewish comedy has evolved since World War II, with a focus on how humorists relate to Judaism as a religion.

In “*Mel Brooks: Disobedient Jew*,” Jeremy Dauber describes the parody Brooks mastered as “nothing less than the essential statement of American Jewish tension between them and us, culturally speaking; between affection for the mainstream and alienation from it.”

In “*The Undertow: Scenes from a Slow Civil War*,” the religion reporter and writing professor Jeff Sharlet chronicled his recent journeys across America interviewing QAnon acolytes, Christian nationalists, proud misogynists, unrepentant January 6ers, armed militia men and strict anti-abortion activists — all still in thrall to Donald Trump.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin’s latest book, “*Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy*,” is about a generation of Jews and new Americans “bent on saving face and determined to be, if not exemplary, at least impeccably respectable.”

Rabbi Diana Fersko wrote “*We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*” in response to congregants who were experiencing anti-Jewish hatred as they never had before.



In “*Dwell Time: A Memoir of Art, Exile, and Repair*,” art conservator Rosa Lowinger, uses the tools and materials of her profession — stone, tile, metal, marble — as metaphors to tell how her Jewish family came to Cuba and fled after the revolution, and what they found and lost when they settled in Miami. “Try as I might,” she writes, “I can never get my mother to understand that conservation is not about repairing what is old. It’s about sustaining all fabric of human endeavor, what people treasure, where we live, and what we honor, no matter when it was made.”

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

JNF Alberta Cup takes place Feb. 24 & 25: Register today!

The 6th Annual JNF Alberta Cup is around the corner and we’re very excited to offer a new format that encourages mixing, focuses on fun, and attracts greater participation from hockey players in the Jewish community. Teams will be created by the team captains and assistants who volunteer to lead, with assistance

from an advisory committee to help balance teams and ensure competitive play.

The tournament will be held in Edmonton on Feb. 24-25. We are also excited to introduce a “mixed dressing room format” which will enable players to change in locker rooms with whomever they like and have the opportunity to play with different people than year’s past.

Join us for a weekend of friends, fun, and great hockey. Games begin Saturday night (after Shabbat) followed by a Saturday night pub mixer. Sunday is jammed packed with games, BBYO shoot out, and a community free skate!

Player registration is available at jnfedmonton.ca



The JNF Alberta Cup will be held on Feb. 24 and 25 in Edmonton.

Questions? Contact Jay Cairns at edm@jnf.ca or call 780-481-7881.

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JNF CANADA

from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

Under the apple tree

The apple is not mentioned in the Torah, nor does it figure among the fruits in which the holy land took special pride. It does, however, appear quite frequently in later books of the Bible—although its identification as the Hebrew “*tapuah*” is not completely certain.

At any rate, in the sensuous poetry of *Song of Songs*, the female speaker praises her beau admiringly: “As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight, I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Why should an apple tree be a fitting metaphor for a lover?

The sages of the Midrash identified a number of specific botanical features that distinguish it from other trees in the forest.

Thus, Rabbi Yosé ben Zimra noted that it does not provide much shade. Possibly, he was referring to a feature that allows it, during periods of extreme heat and dryness, to turn its leaves downwards to protect the fruit from intense sunlight. Some varieties even shed their leaves in the summer. When this happens, people will avoid the apple trees in favour of species that offer more substantial protection.

This fact provided the ancient Jewish preachers with a convenient segue to an edifying parable. According to the standard midrashic premise, the male and female lovers in the *Song of Songs* symbolize respectively G-d and the people of Israel; and the romantic relationship between the two sides expressed itself in the turbulent events of Jewish history.

Rabbi Yosé applied the image of the pleasing apple tree to a familiar tradition about how the Almighty offered the Torah to the heathen nations of the world, but they rejected it because it did not offer them the immediate satisfaction of tangible “shade.” Only the people of Israel, recognizing the true beauty of the tree and the appetizing flavour of its fruit, chose faithfully to linger in the metaphoric shade of the apple tree, rather than other trees that do not bear fruit.

Another unusual characteristic of the apple tree was observed by some rabbis (though in fact, this claim

does not seem to fit the known botanical facts): Whereas most trees flower before they grow their leaves, the apple tree reverses that sequence. This reversal could parallel the famous tradition about how the Israelites at Sinai declared first “We will obey” (the Torah’s commandments), and only afterwards “We will hear” (the details of its contents).

Furthermore, the rabbis calculated that the ripening of an apple tree lasts fifty days culminating in the month of Sivan, which coincides with the timespan between the Exodus and the revelation at Mount Sinai.

The medieval Jewish philosophers proposed a novel way of understanding the imagery of the *Song of Songs*. The allegory refers not (or, at least: not *only*) to the history of Israel, but to the intellectual love of G-d that was cultivated through metaphysical contemplation. Thinkers like Maimonides held that the highest level of human perfection is achieved by refining one’s mind to a state where it can conceive of a deity that transcends space and time. The exceptional minds who reach that level, through a lifetime of scientific and metaphysical study, may become receptive to revelations from the “absolute intelligence,” the realm of metaphysical being that was equated with the biblical angels.

Maimonides’ like-minded contemporary Joseph Ibn Aknin composed a detailed Arabic exposition on the *Song of Songs*. In his allegorical interpretation, the poem personifies the absolute intelligence as the male lover eager to unite with the female beloved, equated with the human rational soul. However, the course of metaphysical love does not run smooth, owing to humans’ physical constitution which constantly distracts us from our spiritual vocation.

Ibn Aknin explained that apple trees have several specific features that inspired the Bible to liken the rational mind to an apple tree. For example, the intangible quality its fragrance is comparable to the sublime abstraction of metaphysical ideas, and its delicious flavour evokes the balanced moderation that is essential to philosophical and ethical discipline.

Furthermore, in medieval times, apples were known

for their numerous medicinal and health benefits. In this respect, Ibn Aknin argued that they are comparable to the healing effects of philosophical study on the health of the soul. They can eliminate spiritual ailments and restore intellectual balance. The bestowing of such precious benefits is surely analogous to the gifts that a passionate suitor would bestow upon his lovely sweetheart. In these respects, the apple tree is manifestly superior to all those lesser trees in the “forest” who are out for nothing more than a superficial good time as they pursue their fruitless desires and impulses.

The image of the apple as a model for allegorical teaching was also central to Maimonides’ explanation of the different layers of scriptural interpretation. His discussion focused on a passage in the book of Proverbs that says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in images of silver.” He understood this simile as referring to a molded figurine of an apple crafted in gold and encased in a network or filigree of silver. Onlookers can only view the precious metal object that stands in its centre through the gaps in the mesh, so observers standing at a distance will think the object they are viewing is silver, and even those who study it from up close will only see disconnected pointillist dots.

This, says Maimonides, illustrates the profound genius of biblical parables and prophetic imagery. Whereas most normal readers will read them at a perfectly coherent “silver” level, teaching about straightforward moral or social subjects, a select few can penetrate the outer wrapping to grasp the sublime spiritual teaching that is the ultimate core of Jewish spiritual life.

But let us not forget that the literal, physical apple is also a tasty and nutritious fruit that grows on delightfully attractive trees.

Take a bite and enjoy one. It’s good for you.

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HAA students: Back from winter break and ready to learn



Halpern Akiva Academy students in Calgary are exploring, learning, and having fun after just returning to school from winter break.

This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



During the school's winter break children in Early Learning and Out of School care kept busy learning and growing. OSC kids were excited to make ice cream and pasta. For information contact Talmud Torah Society Exec. Assistant Natalie Soroka at 780-481-3377.



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