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Cover image: Rosh Hashana© by Shelley Werner

Beth Tzedec Jewish Film Festival starts Nov. 2 with world class entertainment

By Maxine Fischbein

The Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival, taking place the first three weeks of November, will be rolling out the red carpet on opening night, Saturday, November 2, for renowned Israeli director Shemi Zarhin, whose film *Bliss* (*Hemda* in Hebrew) features two of Israel’s best-loved actors, Sasson Gabai and Asi Levy in “a moving, tender and insightful love story set against the diverse and delicate fabric of Israeli society.”

Zarhin, who will introduce his film and participate in a post-screening Q and A, is an acclaimed filmmaker whose films have garnered numerous Ophir Awards—Israel’s equivalent to the Oscars— as well as honours at international film festivals. Gabai and Levy have been nominated for Ophir awards for their stunning performances in *Bliss*, which had its international premiere earlier this month at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Unfortunately, the introduction to the TIFF screening of *Bliss* on September 11 was disrupted by a handful of pro-Palestinian demonstrators who briefly commandeered the stage before being escorted out of the theatre by security as some in the audience responded by chanting “Bring them home,” referencing the 101 hostages remaining in Gaza following the Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7, nearly one year ago.

Both Shemi Zarhin and Sasson Gabai attended the Toronto screening. According to a report in *The Times of Israel*, Zarhin told Channel 12 News that “...the wretched horror show finished and the movie started and went on calmly and beautifully.”

Ironically, *Bliss* is not a political film. Viewers are given glimpses of life in the Northern Galilee—notably the region of Israel supported by the United Jewish

Appeal in both Calgary and Edmonton—including an endearing example of peaceful co-existence between Sassi (portrayed by Gabai), his grandson, and their Arab neighbour.

Two Zarhin films, *Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi* and *Aviva, My Love*, previously screened at the Calgary Jewish Film Festival to the delight of audiences here.

Zarhin, who wrote the screenplay for *Bliss*, is also the author of the award-winning novel *Some Day*, which, like *Bliss*—a heartwarming love story with Israeli *tam*—takes a deep dive into family and community dynamics.

Born in Tiberias, Zarhin graduated from film and TV studies at Tel Aviv University and teaches film studies at the Sam Spiegel Film Academy in Jerusalem.

On his visit to Calgary, Zarhin will be accompanied by his wife, Einat.

As always, the Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival offers world-class entertainment, engaging special guests, education, insight, and great nosh to fuel spirited post-film discussions.

“Usually, we have more documentaries than full-length features. This year, the opposite is true,” says festival founder and director Harvey Cyngiser, who works throughout the year to find the films that will resonate individually and collectively with local audiences. His committee begins pre-screening and discussing films right after Passover, and the lineup is



Israeli A-listers Sasson Gabbai (L) and Asi Levy star in *Bliss*, the opening night film at the 24th Annual Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival in Calgary. Adding even more star power to the event, acclaimed film director Shemi Zarhin will be on hand.

typically finalized by late summer.

Cyngiser and his committee do not shy away from controversial and challenging topics.

A particularly charged discussion took place following the committee’s pre-screening of the documentary *We Will Dance Again*, by acclaimed Israeli filmmaker Yariv Mozer (who also directed the documentary *Golda’s War Diaries*, set to screen on Sunday, November 3).

We Will Dance Again, which will be screened on the evening of Sunday, November 10, is anchored in searing first-hand accounts of survivors of the October 7 Nova Music Festival massacre, deftly interwoven with cell phone video recordings and news coverage of the deadly Hamas terrorist attack that resulted in the tragic deaths of hundreds of young music lovers, the injury of many others and many of the hostage takings that continue to haunt Israelis, the Jewish Diaspora and people of goodwill everywhere.

“Some committee members feel that the material is too graphic and that it is too soon to confront the enormity of the atrocities that the terrorists committed

Continued on page 20



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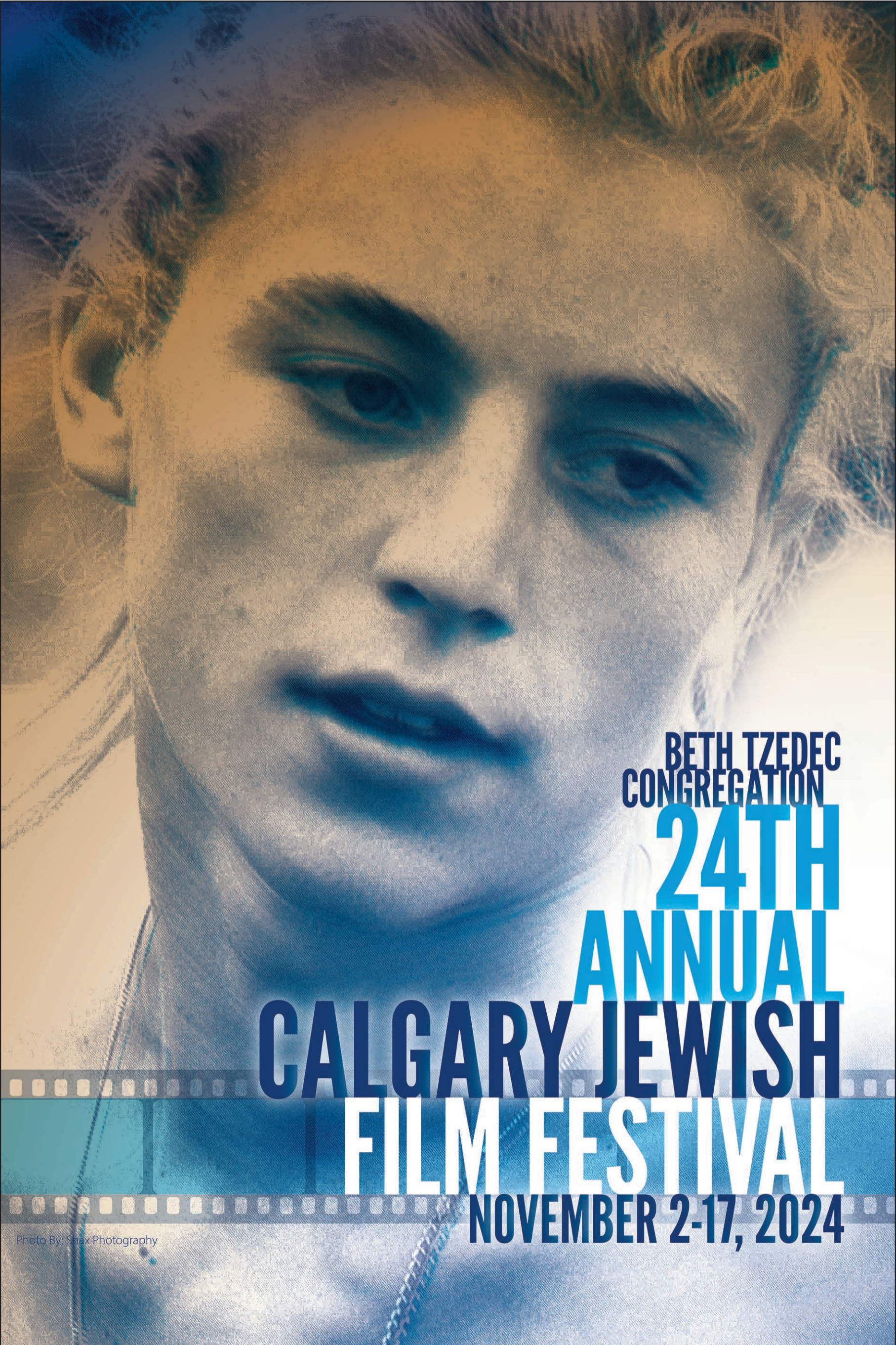


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Rosh Hashanah: A holiday of hope

By Rabbi Russ Jayne

Rosh Hashanah marks the first of the Ten Days of Repentance, or *Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*, culminating on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. During these days, Jewish communities worldwide engage in deep soul-searching, striving to repair relationships with one another, with God, and with the world. This most profound time serves as a yearly wake-up call to self-awareness, moral reckoning, and the need for transformation. It calls for an acknowledgment of past failures and the promise of future growth.



Rabbi Russell Jayne

On October 7, 2023, Israel, and indeed the whole Jewish people, faced one of its darkest days in modern history. A surprise attack by Hamas militants from Gaza claimed the lives of both civilians and soldiers, injured many, and left our people in a state of shock. Entire communities were devastated, hostages were taken, and the scale of the violence created a ripple of grief, horror, and fear that spread not only throughout Israel but globally, touching both Jewish and non-Jewish communities alike. This attack was not merely a military operation; it struck at the heart of civilian life, violating the sanctity of daily existence. The sheer brutality and scope of the attacks shocked the conscience of the Jewish world and forced a re-examination of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For many of us around the world, October 7th has become a symbol of renewed vulnerability, and a painful reminder of the historical threats that have consistently endangered Jewish survival.

The historical experience of the Jewish people has

always been one of enduring cycles of destruction and renewal, exile and return, suffering and redemption. Rosh Hashanah may be, at its core, a celebration of life and creation, but Jewish history has often forced us to place this celebration, and far too many others, in the shadow of destruction. The events of October 7th feel too tragically familiar within our collective history, marked by a far too delicate balance between survival and the hope for peace. This deepens our sense of mourning and reflection and brings the abstract ideas of judgment and renewal so central to the High Holiday liturgy into sharp relief. The introspective question asked during the Ten Days of repentance, “How can we build a better future while acknowledging past failures?” is one we will grapple with this year in ways we might not have ever been called to do before.

One of the central prayers of both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the *Unetaneh Tokef*, a prayer that highlights the fragility of life. “Who will live and who will die?” the prayer asks, in a somber reflection on the unpredictability of fate. October 7th reminded both us and the world just how precarious peace and security truly are, and how quickly life can be shattered by violence. The desire for peace, a cornerstone of the High Holiday prayers, feels more urgent now than ever.

Yet, alongside this hope for peace is the demand for justice. The Jewish tradition teaches that peace cannot exist without justice, and the events of October 7th call for both. How does one respond to an attack of such magnitude while maintaining moral clarity? How can the cycle of violence be broken when the historical wounds run so deep? These are questions that challenge the pursuit of peace not only in Israel but in every region where conflict endures.



Rosh Hashana 2024 begins the evening of Oct. 2.

Despite the profound sorrow that will accompany the beginning of 5785, one of the enduring strengths of our people has been our resilience. Rosh Hashanah, even in the face of tragedy, must remain a holiday of hope. The New Year is a time to envision a better future, one where peace and security can be achieved. The resilience of our people, the global Jewish community, in the wake of October 7th reflects this enduring spirit. The capacity to rebuild, to mourn but also to dream of a brighter future, is at the heart of everything the *Aseret Yemei Teshuvah* stand for.

Let us, therefore, approach this profound moment of reflection and introspection with an equally profound desire for renewal, and the unwavering hope for a year of peace, health, and wholeness. May the shofar’s voice serve not only as a wake-up call to self-awareness, moral reckoning, and the need for transformation, but also as an acknowledgement that the abundance and grace of our God still flows through us, will cast out our brokenness and sorrow, and will make us whole once again.

May the New Year bring renewed light for all!!

Rabbi Cantor Russell Jayne is the spiritual leader and Kol Bo at Beth Tzedec congregation.

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Over 650 people gathered on July 28 for a solidarity Walk with Israel and to support each other during this difficult time. Then on Sept. 4 they gathered once again at Beth Tzedec, for a community vigil in remembrance of the Israeli hostages who were brutally murdered in Gaza this month and for all the lives that were taken since October 7. Photo by Fedele Arcuri, Rum Punch Media. Courtesy CJF.

SHANA TOVAH!



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The Year of “Speak Up”

By Rabbi Mark S. Glickman



Rabbi Mark Glickman

The New Year is coming for us Jews, and, like all years, this one is bound to be like none other: twelve full months of events that have never happened before. For each of us as individuals, for the Jewish people, and for humanity as a whole, the 5785 will be utterly unprecedented.

One factor that will make this year unique will be its very name – 5785. That name (if years can be said to have names) might not sound very unique – it’s a number just like any other. But for us Jews it has special meaning. That’s because, for us Jews, 5785 isn’t just a number, it’s also a word.

Classical Hebrew, you see, has no numerals. As a result, people wanting to express numbers in classical Hebrew need to resort to using letters: *Alef* is 1, *bet* is 2, *gimmel* is 3, etc. The tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is yod, after which the numbers increase by tens: *Kaf* is 20, *lamed* is 30, *mem* is 40, etc. Move a few letters ahead, and we ratchet it up by another power of ten: *Kuf*, 100; *resh*, 200; *shin*, 300; *tav*, 400.

When expressing the numerical names of years, the 5000-part is so large as to make it difficult to express in letters, so that first digit is kind of taken as a given. What’s left, is to come up with the alphabetical expression of the final three digits. There’s no letter for 700, so we use two letters for that – *tav/shin* (400+300). Eighty in Hebrew is the letter *peh* and five is *heh*.

As a result, 5785 is Hebrew is *tav, shin, peh, heh* – four letters that express the number of the year that’s about to begin. What’s notable is that these four letters

Our cover artist Shelley Werner

The whimsical art that appears on the cover of this month’s Alberta Jewish News is by Shelley Werner, a designer and Judaica Illustrator. She is one of the founding members of Art and Scroll Studio and is the host of their live Zoom series featuring the makers and creators of Judaica art. An award- winning speaker, she is passionate about integrating Tikun Olam in all things. Having recently moved from Winnipeg to Calgary, she uses bold colours, watercolour and markers to celebrate her Jewish heritage. Her inspiration is found in the Alberta landscape, which has brought her a new form of meditation on majesty.

The next episode of Art and Scroll Studio will be on Wednesday October 30, 2024 at 7:00 pm Mountain time, featuring Israeli artist Judith Margolis. Israel-based American artist, Judith Margolis, draws on the spiritual when confronting the political. Her paintings, drawings, artist’s books, multimedia collages and essays aim to celebrate, as well as question, to berate and poke a finger at, how utterly unpredictable and unintelligible, LIFE is. Her sense of identity and the essence of her art, spring from a life-long feminist consciousness, a radical educational philosophy of



Shana Tova (Detail) by Shelley Werner

deschooling society, commitment to counter-culture social activism, and an extreme engagement with and ambivalence about religious tradition, especially, but not exclusively Judaism. Mostly, she loves to look at, and is sometimes healed by, how things appear.

Advance tickets at artandscrollstudio@gmail.com

also spell out a Hebrew word – *tishpeh* – which means “speak up.”

For Jews, the upcoming year, 5785, is the Year of Speak Up. (That’s much better than this past year – *t’shaped* – which was the Year of Skewer, but that’s a subject for another column.)

What does it mean to live during the Year of Speak Up? The answer is obvious – do what the year calls upon us to do. When you see a point that needs making, make it. When you see an argument that needs arguing, argue it. When you see words that need uttering, utter them. Be sure what you’re saying is true and constructive of course, for words poorly spoken can be very dangerous. But don’t hesitate to speak when the situation calls for it. God put you here – with all your individuality and uniqueness – for a reason. Not to share what you know is therefore to hide a magnificent divine creation.

Our greatest teacher of all, Moses, struggled with this throughout his life. When God told him at the burning bush to lead his people out of Egypt, Moses didn’t want the job, and used every argument he could to get out of it. “*Lo ish d’varim anochi*,” he pleaded, “I’m not a man of words.” And

indeed, whenever Moses got into trouble, it’s because he didn’t do what this year calls upon us to do – he didn’t speak up, he didn’t use his words. When he saw an Egyptian taskmaster beating an Israelite slave, Moses didn’t tell the taskmaster to stop, he just hauled off and smote him, and as a result Moses had to flee to Midian. When God told Moses to speak to a rock to get water from it, Moses hit the rock, instead. He got the water, all right, but God was so incensed that God punished Moses by having him die before reaching the promised land.

And yet, Moses learned. His final gift to our people was the Book of Deuteronomy – *Sefer D’varim*, in Hebrew...the Book of Words. Over time, evidently, Moses learned how to speak up.

So speak up during this Year of Speak Up. You’ve got things to say, and there will be moments when it would be a downright shame for you to stay silent. Next year will be *tishpu* in Hebrew. That’s the same word as *tishpeh*, but it’s plural. Next year will be the Year of *Yall* Speak Up. Speaking up on our own can be difficult in itself; doing so with one another will be a new challenge altogether.

Let’s start practicing now, for now begins the Year of Speak Up. It will be a year like none other, and if we speak up as we should, it will be utterly magnificent. Shanah Tovah.

Rabbi Mark Glickman is the spiritual leader at Temple B’nai Tikvah.



Shana Tova!

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Changing the past

By Rabbi Leonard Cohen



Rabbi Leonard Cohen

We may not always understand how & why past events unfolded the way they did. But when we take a compassionate view towards the past, we can identify what drove us or others towards choices that were made. This opens doorways to discover new insight and knowledge. It provides us the resilience to survive and adapt to the challenges we face.

In Jewish belief, we CAN change the past, by deriving new meaning and purpose from it. When a person does Teshuva – a genuine repentance and changing of ways – that Teshuva transforms past wrongdoings into mere mistakes or even a preface to great mitzvot.

There is rarely anything as powerful as the force of shame and regret. Imagine if we could take that negative power, all those things that burden our soul, and use that very energy to fuel the lives we are meant to lead.

Rosh Hashanah is the optimal time for this. The occasion of the New Year provides the process for the transformation of guilt to meaningful inspiration.

Viktor Frankl, a renowned psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, is best known for his seminal work, *Man's Search for Meaning*. Central to Frankl's philosophy is the belief that finding purpose is crucial for human survival and psychological well-being. According to Frankl, even in the direst circumstances, such as his experiences in Nazi concentration camps, individuals can endure suffering and find fulfillment through the pursuit of meaning. Frankl posits that meaning can be discovered through work, relationships, and even suffering itself, by choosing how one responds to life's challenges.

The Jewish High Holidays—Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—are profoundly reflective periods that resonate with Frankl's ideas. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is a time for introspection and renewal, urging individuals to evaluate their lives and set intentions for the coming year. This mirrors the notion of finding purpose through self-reflection and setting meaningful goals. It's a period where individuals are encouraged to ponder their life's direction and purpose, much like Frankl advocated for seeking deeper significance in life's trials.

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atone-ment, further aligns with these ideas through its emphasis on atonement and personal growth. This day of fasting and prayer is an opportunity for Jews to confront their

past actions, seek forgiveness, and make amends. The concept of deriving meaning from suffering is relevant here; the process of repentance and seeking forgiveness can be seen as a means to transcend one's past mistakes and cultivate a renewed sense of purpose.

The three major themes of the Rosh Hashana service are *Zichronot*, *Malchuyot*, and *Shofarot*. *Zichronot* means remembrances – we look back on our collective past to gain appreciation of the exceptional, sacred experience of the Jewish people that has brought us to today. *Malchuyot* - majesties - refers to Hashem's kingship which protects and sustains us; we discover strength through the divine power which emanates throughout the universe and in our lives. And *Shofarot*, the sounds of the shofar, signifies a yearly wake-up call to our souls.

At the start of the New Year, our aim is to harness the memories of our past (*Zichronot*) to fuel the sacred power of our present (*Malchuyot*) to inspire us to change our future (*Shofarot*). Through our High Holiday prayer, we confront the overwhelming responsibility Hashem has entrusted to us in granting

An inspirational message



The Junior High students at Calgary Jewish Academy were fortunate to spend some time with two of the speakers brought in for Calgary Jewish Federation's UJA kick off. Their words inspired our students to find their voice. Todah Rabah/Thank you to Amy Albertson and Matthew Nouriel.

us the miracle of Life. We have meaning to uncover, mitzvot to attain, and glory to bring to the world.

May the coming year provide the opportunity to fulfill the great calling Hashem desires for each and every one of us. Shana Tova u'Metuka!

Rabbi Leonard Cohen is the spiritual leader at Kehilat Shalom in Calgary.



2024 (5785)

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A time for reflection and renewal

By Judy Zelikovitz

This year, the High Holidays fall later than usual, with Rosh Hashanah just a few days before the anniversary of October 7, 2023 – the most tragic date in the history of modern-day Israel.

The High Holidays offer special opportunities for reflection and renewal, reaffirming what matters most, pursuing positive change, and strengthening our connections with others.



Judy Zelikovitz

As we look back on 5784, we should examine our own actions, reflecting honestly on our challenges and successes and seeking lessons we can take from our experiences to carry into the year ahead. It's a time to consider which elements of our lives and our relationships with others need improvement.

This leads naturally to an opportunity to contemplate our intentions and priorities and plan for the future. It is a means of charting a course that aligns with our values and contributes to the strength of our families and our communities.

While Canada remains one of the safest places for Jewish communities, CIJA's advocacy –especially since

October 7 – has been fueled by a profound dedication to tackling the disturbing rise in antisemitism with extraordinary resolve.

The alarming surge in antisemitism, both online and on the streets, has been profoundly shocking. Yet it has also driven us to forge essential connections with all levels of government, law enforcement, educational institutions, and community organizations representing Canada's Jewish population and other vulnerable minorities.

Just as the High Holidays are arriving late this year, so too are long-awaited protections from the government. We have seen some progress, but there is much to be done to ensure 'bubble legislation' (safe-access laws to protect defined areas from protests, harassment, and hate) becomes common – if not ubiquitous – across Canada. Vaughan, Ontario, has adopted an encouraging example, and many other municipalities have expressed serious interest in following suit, but there is still much work ahead.

Federal online hate legislation has been in development under various ministries for years. But we are not backing down on contributing to and securing this fundamental legislation that will enhance security measures for the benefit of all.

The accusations against Israel of war crimes from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are both absurd and detrimental to Canada and the West's long-standing policies aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East. If the Canadian government wants to

rescue the reputation of the ICJ, it must denounce this evidence of its politicization.

Antisemitism is not a 'Jewish' problem. Jew-hatred poses a grave danger to all who cherish our core Canadian values. We know from history that, wherever antisemitism is allowed to thrive unchecked, social malaise and political oppression follow. Its defeat requires a concentrated, multi-pronged approach involving many cultural, political, ethnic, and faith organizations, as well as individuals from across the country. Together we are working to combat antisemitism while building relationships with many partner groups, promoting the Canadian values of dialogue and understanding, tolerance, and respect.

As Canada's Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, Deborah Lyons, wrote in her July op-ed in the *National Post*, "Jews did not create antisemitism and...it is not on them to fight it alone."

Nor are we doing so.

As we approach the sad and sombre anniversary of the October 7 massacre, many will join us in honouring the memories of those murdered by Hamas and in praying for the safe return of the hostages and for the restoration of peace to the region. And, if we are so blessed to have welcomed home the hostages by the time you are reading this, we'll have more to celebrate as we begin the New Year.

In the meantime, I wish you a sweet, healthy, peaceful, and happy 5785.

Judy Zelikovitz is Vice President, University and Local Partner Services, at CIJA.

Striving for wholeness in challenging times

By Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein

Shalom, Alberta Jewish community. I am Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein, newly arrived at Beth Shalom in Edmonton. My path to this vibrant community has been filled with unexpected turns, including leaving my home in Ukraine. I'm grateful for the warm welcome I've received here in Alberta.

This Rosh Hashanah, we stand before the Holy One on Yom HaDin, the Day of Judgment. On this day, we read the story of the Binding of Isaac, Akedat Yitzhak. This moment in Abraham's life connects deeply to a fundamental concept from our Torah: wholeness.

In Genesis 17:1, we read God's command to Abraham: "התהלך לפני והיה תמים" - "Walk before Me and be whole." This instruction to Abraham highlights

a key aspect of our relationship with the Divine.

What does it mean to be "whole" or "tamim" in Hebrew? This word carries connotations of completeness, integrity, and sincerity. It suggests a state of being where our actions align with our values, where our inner selves harmonize with our outer expressions.

The Days of Awe invite us to examine our lives critically. Are we living with integrity? Do our deeds

Continued on page 31

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As we approach the High Holy days with hope for a sweet 5785, we cannot forget those still held in Gaza nearly one year after October 7.

Our hearts grieve for the almost 1,200 lives ended by Hamas on that tragic day and ache for the pain suffered by hundreds of families still recovering from their unimaginable loss.

We pray for peace for the people of Israel, for the return of all the hostages, and for the safety and security of the Jewish people worldwide.

CIJA

Investing in Israel Bonds

By Deborah Shatz

I received my first Israel Bond as a Bat Mitzvah gift over 50 years ago. I didn't quite understand how it worked but I was assured that it would grow in value over time and would benefit both me and the State of Israel. Seemed like a great idea and it did! It also taught me a little about patience and investments.

Since that time, I have visited Israel on numerous occasions – as an athlete in the 8th Maccabiah Games, as an adventurous traveller on the beaches of Nwaba and all around Israel, to visit my sister Miriam OBM, who made Aliya as a young adult, to attend my father's unveiling at a cemetery in Jerusalem and to celebrate at my nieces' bat mitzvot and most recently at one of their wedding. Each trip brought something new and each one strengthened my connection with Israel as the ancestral home of the Jewish people (among others).

I understand that the politics in Israel are multilayered and complicated. I understand that many realities can be true at once and that peace or even détente is not a simple undertaking. I'm not wired to comprehend war but I do understand that peace needs to be negotiated among sincere partners.

I don't support many of the things that are going on politically right now in Israel. There are things happening here in Canada that I don't like either. Regardless of my politics, I love Israel and I'm always eager to give Israel bonds as gifts – particularly for Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations. It resonates nostalgic for me and leaves me feeling connected.

You can buy Israel Bonds as an investment for your own portfolio and also as a donation. You can even donate them to a different kind of organization that is doing good work you'd like to support – then it's a double mitzvah.

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Today, investing in Israel bonds supports a nation of extraordinary innovation that continues to push the boundaries of modern technology.

Especially during these days of volatility in the markets, investment in Israel bonds really preserves stability, with a selection of maturities and products. In these difficult times of war and hate, stability sounds pretty good to me.



Alex Edelman wins Emmy for comedy special

By Ben Sales

(JTA) — Alex Edelman won an Emmy for “Just For Us,” his comedy special about attending a white supremacist meeting that put a spotlight on contemporary antisemitism and the place of Jews in the United States.

Edelman took home the Emmy for outstanding writing for a variety special on Sept. 15, in the latest accolade since “Just For Us” premiered on Broadway last year following an off-Broadway run. The Emmy was for the show's move to HBO and Max, where it premiered as a comedy special in April.

The show centers on Edelman's experience attending a meeting of white nationalists in Queens, New York, and weaves in autobiography and ruminations about Jewish identity, assimilation and

whiteness in the United States. Edelman first performed the show in 2018, and it has found ever-larger platforms as antisemitism has continued to rise in the United States and beyond, coupled with a broader Jewish communal reckoning after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7.

For his win on Sept. 15, Edelman beat out nominees including Mike Birbiglia, the standup comedian who produced “Just For Us”; Jacqueline Novak, another Jewish comedian; and the writing team behind The Oscars. The Emmy comes following a Special Tony Edelman received for the show in June.

In his acceptance speech, a breathless Edelman paid tribute to his close friend and collaborator on the show, Adam Brace, who died shortly before “Just For Us” opened on Broadway. (Last month, Edelman wrote in an essay in *The New York Times* that performing the

show after Brace's death “felt painful but appropriate, like reciting Kaddish, the Jewish daily mourning prayer.”)

“Look, this is really, really beautiful, and I really miss Adam,” he said in his acceptance speech. “This is the end of a seven-year journey with the show, but I got to make something really funny with my friend.”

The ceremony was hosted by the Jewish father-son comedy duo Eugene and Dan Levy. Among the other winners was Jon Stewart's “The Daily Show,” which he returned to host after a nine-year hiatus and which took home the Emmy for best talk show. “You have made an old man very happy,” said Stewart, who had previously won more than a dozen Emmys with the show.

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A Days of Awe D'var: It's the small things

By Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidès

The timing of our High Holy Days is so strange this year. September roared in with back-to-school, cooler days, and the smell of lockers and white-out...but Yontef is slow to come. We don't even need to make our chicken soup until the first week of October.



Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidès

But maybe that's not a bad thing this year. It gives us a little extra time to begin the *Yamim Nora'im* - the Days of Awe process of *Cheshbon Hanefesh* – reckoning of the soul.

I have to admit, the spiritual, mental, and emotional work of preparing for the New Year, of looking back on the past year and taking stock of what could have been better, feels a little overwhelming this year.

How can we be introspective when our brothers and sisters in Eretz are literally fighting for their lives, when the threat of antisemitism is no longer an intellectual exercise but an everyday reality? Our limbic, lizard brains are yearning for black and white/right and wrong answers; and we are so exhausted by the onslaught, we can barely manage nuanced conversation much less the interiority of self-reflection. How do we manage a reckoning of our soul in these circumstances?

I was mindlessly scrolling on social media when I came across a video by a Walter Nusbaum, telling the story of a brief experience that really changed his life. It seems that Mr. Nusbaum was in an airport bathroom and as he was standing at the sink washing his hands, he saw another man in a very expensive

three-piece suit had finished washing and proceeded, carefully and intentionally, to wipe down the counters and the fixtures with the paper towel.

This was such unexpected behaviour from someone so obviously in a position of power and privilege, that Mr. Nusbaum cracked a joke: "You been working here long?"

The man in the suit gave a little smile and said, "You know, it's not a bad idea to leave things a little better than how you found them."

Mr. Nusbaum was struck by this and commented in the video, "Wow, can you imagine the impact it would have on our lives if everything we did, we left a little better than we found it?"

I'm not sure why this 45-second TikTok video had such a profound effect on me. Perhaps it's because, the way the world is today, attempting to make it a better place feels so daunting and unlikely. And yet, this man did it with a paper towel and an idea.

It's not a brilliant epiphany but at a time when common sense seems less common, small truths can make a difference: it doesn't take much to practice *Tikkun Olam* - repairing the world - one baby step at a time.

Mother Teresa is not from our faith but her words resonate with me right now: "*Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.*"

We don't have to look far to find similar sentiments in our own tradition:

In Torah, Micah (6:8) teaches: "*You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what God requires of you: to do justice, and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with your God.*"

Centuries later, Rabbi Tarfon in the *Mishnah* reminds us not to give up, especially when the task is daunting:

"*The work is plentiful...It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.*"

("Pirkei Avot" 2:15-16)

My capacity for large gestures and acts of righteousness may be limited these days but I'm going to try and do justice by battling antisemitism when I see it, by supporting my people in their struggle, writing letters, attending programs, educating those that are open to the truth.

But when I run out of steam and feel disheartened, I won't neglect the work. I'm going to try and hold the door for the person behind me at the bank, make eye contact and smile at the cashier at the grocery store, give \$18 to that cause I dismissed, let that car merge in front of me in traffic. Small things with great love.

Last week, I told the story of Choni the Circle maker who saw an old man planting a carob tree. Choni asked the old man when the tree would bear fruit, and the old man answered that it would be at least 70 years. "Why would anyone plant a tree that wasn't even going to bear fruit in their lifetime?" he asked. The old man simply responded, "My grandparents planted a carob tree so that I would be able to reap its fruit. Now I shall do the same for my grandchildren."

It might not be a carob tree, and the direct recipients will not be our grandchildren, but now more than ever we must keep trying to repair the world in small ways that reflect our intention to love goodness and walk modestly with Hashem.

If these tiny acts of Chesed - kindness, of *Tikkun Olam*, are something we all do together, we can indeed usher in a New Year of sweetness, compassion, and peace.

From my family to yours, Good Yontef, Gute Yor!

Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidès is the Assistant Rabbi at the Beth Tzedec Congregation and also has her own independent Rabbinic Practice as the Rocky Mountain Rabbi

UJA hosts successful Kick-Off event

On September 8, the community gathered at Beth Tzedec to hear from three prominent Jewish influencer educators Debbie Lechtman, Amy Albertson, and Matthew Nouriel at the 2024 UJA Kick-Off event, Finding Your Voice.

The guest speakers were dynamic and insightful, participating in an informative and engaging armchair discussion with former Calgary Jewish Federation president Jared Shore.

Amy Albertson is a passionate Jewish advocate and educator from California, known for her impactful online activism and public speaking. Amy inspires young Jews to embrace their Jewish identity confidently in both digital spaces and daily life.

Debbie Lechtman is an Israeli and Latina content creator behind the Instagram account @rootsmetals. Debbie's work focuses on Jewish history and identity, and she actively contributes to educational content for

various organizations.

Matthew Nouriel is the Community Engagement Director at JIMENA, based in Los Angeles. Matthew, an Iranian Jewish digital activist, is dedicated to advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, fighting antisemitism, and supporting equality within the Jewish community.

"The event was truly inspiring, showcasing a range of unique and diverse voices, especially for our younger generation. View our Campaign video to learn more about how you support our remarkable community – it exists thanks to generous donors like you! Donate today and continue to support Jewish Calgary. *With You We Can!*"

שנה טובה



Amy Albertson, Matthew Nouriel and Debbie Lechtman were special guest speakers at the UJA Launch event.

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The CMDA gala was a celebration but also a stark reminder of the life saving work they do. At the gala: Raphael Herbst, Sidney Benizri, Yifat Glassman, Sharon Fraiman and former MLA Richard Gotfried. Right Photo with Lenny and Faigel Shapiro.

An incredible night of Mediterranean delights in Calgary

CMDA gala evening celebrates donors, supporters, and good friends

What a night! This year’s annual CMDA spring gala was not only a sensation for the senses, but a heartfelt celebration of community caring, support and Am Israel Chai. More than 400 guests packed the Carriage House Conference Centre for a fabulous sold-out Israeli themed evening. That included a one-of-a-kind Israeli and Mediterranean Kosher food menu and fabulous live entertainment and artistic demonstrations. But it was not all celebration, as guests heard firsthand-accounts and saw videos from the October 7th massacre. They also heard stories of Magen David Adom (MDA) heroism which brought

home why it was important to celebrate and say thank-you to the Calgary and Western Canadian CMDA Major Donors and supporters.

“We wanted to do something that celebrated Israeli culture and say thank you to our supporters,” says Sharon Fraiman, the tireless and inspirational CMDA Western Region Director, “But at the same time, it was really important to remind ourselves of the reality that MDA responders faced on October 7 and continue to face today.”

Fraiman, whose dedicated team of volunteers - including family - planned and executed the entire event, was the evening’s Emcee. There was a host of elected officials, sponsors, supporters, and special guests attending including Sidney Benizri the National Executive Director of CMDA.

As well as the fabulous dinner, guests were entertained by the song stylings of Israeli musical sensation, Dor Shimon, a real showman, and a runner-up on the TV series *Rising Star to Eurovision*. The ever-versatile Calgary violinist Steven Klevisky played a terrific variety of upbeat tunes and tradition favorites. There was also a surprise performance by live sand show artist, Andrii Pesochnyi.

During the evening, Fraiman told stories from firsthand accounts and played videos of the horrors of October 7, and how MDA paramedics, their ambulances and facilities were targeted by Hamas. She led a moment of silence in honour of Israeli medics

killed in the war. “In less than a week, nearly thirty MDA paramedics and EMTs were killed by Hamas just for doing their jobs. Sixteen ambulances have been destroyed and supplies are being used up at alarming rates. MDA is incurring costs in excess of \$350,000 per day to keep up with the emergency needs around Israel,” said Fraiman.

A CMDA trophy was presented to Bobby Libin who is a great CMDA supporter. The Katz family donated a Medical Scooter and were honouored on the stage for Benny Katz’ 95th birthday.

“It was a great honour to have Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas of Alberta, as our main speaker,” said Fraiman. “We also had the pleasure to host Councillor Dan McLean who represents Ward 13 on Calgary City Council and he was an excellent greeter at the CMDA event, Dan has been a great CMDA supporter for the past 4 years.”

A special ambulance donation was received by Lenny Shapiro to honour his wife Faigel for her 90th birthday. “Lenny is a role model to us all,” said Fraiman. “Lenny, our former CMDA chairman, is a long-time supporter; he thinks that there is nothing more important than saving lives in Israel. In addition to the ambulance donation, Lenny decided to take the life saving boat project upon himself to help save lives in the sea of Galilee. He is a true inspiration.”



MLA Eric Bouchard, Sharon Fraiman, MLA Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, and Dan McLean City Councillor - Ward 13.

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The essence of Teshuvah

By Rabbi Nisan Andrews

As a congregational rabbi, I tend to stick close to home and shul. I focus on attending community events and meetings, speaking engagements, visiting patients at the hospital or their homes, meeting congregants at



Rabbi Nisan Andrews

coffee shops (or anywhere else they choose), answering questions, kashering homes, and preparing and delivering classes. In essence, I don't usually do touristy things and primarily concentrate on my role as a Jewish leader. When my shul in London found out about this, they conspired against me and arranged for synagogue group tours, with me as the guide, to places like Tower Bridge, the Parliament, the Holocaust Museum in Nottingham, and even Buckingham Palace. I always made sure to research these locations so that I could provide "insightful" commentary as we explored the historic city. Our trip to the Queen's residence (when she was the reigning monarch) also included a viewing of the changing of the guards.

I dutifully attended. The music began, and about fifty beautifully trained horses marched out from the Queen's residence in perfect formation. A different set of beautiful horses and riders marched into the palace's gateway a minute or so later. The guard had changed.

Just a few weeks ago, we read a portion from the Torah that states this kind of display should never happen at the palace of the Jewish King in Jerusalem. The Torah prohibits the King of Israel from acquiring

horses for anything other than practical uses. Such a lavish display goes against the values of the Torah.

To be sure, several obligations are placed on a Jewish king that reflects a different set of values. For instance, the Torah mandates that the King must carry a Torah scroll with him wherever he goes, whenever he enters or exits the gates of his palace, when he meets with his ministers and officers, as he walks the battlefield, and even as he strolls in the marketplace. The King of Israel should always have his Torah scroll close to his heart.

The obligations concerning Torah scrolls do not end with just one. In addition to the Torah scroll that the King must carry with him, he also must write a second Sefer Torah to be kept locked up in the palace. This second Torah Scroll never leaves the palace nor is carried on the King's rounds among his people. This raises the question: Why did the King need this additional scroll if it was never to be seen or used?

The commentators explain that the elements took their toll as the King walked and carried his Torah through the marketplace or battlefield. Gradually, letters would fade, crack, or even flake off. The process was so slow that the King may not even realize that the one he carries is no longer the same as the original. Thus, the King doesn't rely on that scroll alone but keeps a mint copy of his Torah in the treasury. This treasury scroll remained sharp and flawless due to its protection from the wind, war, and the corrosive elements of life.

Periodically, the King would bring his copy of the Torah into his private chambers, place both copies side by side on the table, open them, compare them, and make any necessary corrections. It was essential that the Torah remain pristine as it served as the standard, and maintaining that standard was of the utmost importance.

Many of us pause to reflect before embarking on significant life milestones such as marriage, starting a new career, or becoming a parent. We often dream about the type of home we want to create with our partner, the kind of parents we aspire to be, and how we can infuse our work with purpose and meaning.



Back to school at Halpern Akiva Academy

Then reality sets in. The demands of the moment often cloud our view of the bigger picture. The nitty-gritty of life takes over. We find ourselves asking, "Where did I go wrong? What happened?"

We start out like the King of Israel. We have our own very pristine Sifrei Torah. We fashion our lives according to our ideals, unbiased and untainted by the winds and wars of life. As life goes on, we carry our principles and standards with us. But, on this journey, the letters begin to fade, crack, and even fall apart. The elements of life take their toll.

Similar to the King, we should also have a Torah scroll in the treasury of our hearts. The Torah teaches us that, just as the King does, we should occasionally compare what we were to what we are and correct our trajectory. This is the essence of Teshuvah.

Life is full of challenges and obstacles, and we cannot always adhere strictly to a set of rules. As a result, the high standards we set for ourselves can start to fade. The month of Elul provides us with the opportunity to delve into our inner selves and rediscover the clarity with which we began.

Rabbi Nisan Andrews is the spiritual leader at House of Jacob Mikveh Israel, the Jewish Orthodox Congregation in Calgary.



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The Horlick and Vogel families of Calgary wish to express our sincerest gratitude for the overwhelming support expressed in so many ways, while we mourned the loss of our wife, mother, sister, grandmother, aunt, cousin and friend,
Mara Joann Vogel, OBM,
who passed away peacefully on June 22, 2024.

The family wishes to especially acknowledge the medical and nursing staff of both Units 72 and 48 of the Rockyview General Hospital for their care and attention given to Mara over the past 3 years.

We also thank Rabbi Nisan Andrews from House of Jacob - Mikveh Israel, Rabbi Daniel Shimonov from Chabad Lubavitch of Calgary, Ron Bing from Jewish Family Service Calgary, and Rabbi Leonard Cohen from Temple B'nai Tikvah, who provided family support and who made her life more comfortable from their many hospital visits.

May her memory be for a blessing.



Wishing the Jewish community a Happy, Healthy New Year!



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A tribute to Dr. Ruth Westheimer

By Lisa Thomson

Former President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt famously said, “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty... I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.”

Dr. Ruth Westheimer passed away at 96 years old on July 12, 2024, having lived a rich and diversified life. Born in Germany, Dr. Ruth lost her family in the Holocaust, and she emigrated to British Controlled Mandatory Palestine after the war, becoming a sniper in the Haganah. Severely wounded in action, she began her educational journey and eventually earned her doctorate at Columbia University as a Behavioral Therapist. A pop icon, media star and best-selling author, Dr. Ruth was well known for being a ‘Sexpert’, and in her later years, as an Alzheimer’s Caregiving Authority.

In October 2021, JFSC virtually hosted Dr. Ruth Westheimer in “Coping Through Challenging Times”, as part of a Speaker Series. Together with moderator Dave Kelly, Dr. Ruth entertained and inspired as she spoke about her lived experiences and talked about building resilience to cope during challenging times. She also provided health-guided coping and self care

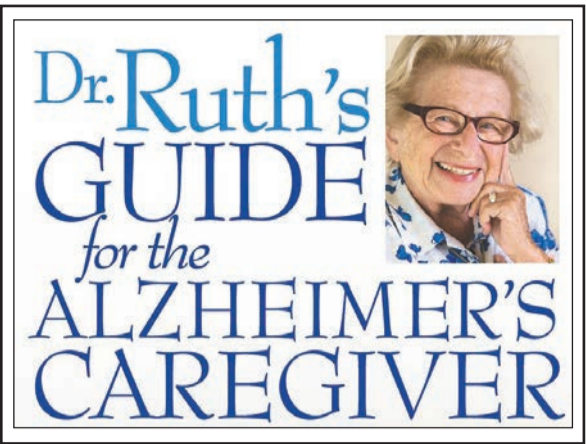
strategies and advice for caregivers looking after loved ones with dementia.

Dr. Ruth’s work on supporting caregivers will live on through her book “Dr Ruth’s Guide for the Alzheimer’s Caregiver: How to Care for your Loved One without Getting Overwhelmed...and without Doing It All Yourself.” A description of this book and other books available for loan through JFSC’s Library for Caregivers can be found on the JFSC website under Caregiver Support Programs (www.jfsc.org/programs--services/caregiver-support-programs/caregiver-library.html).

As our demographic ages, the number of individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia is growing. Aging in place is a priority for many seniors, and there is a growing number of family/unpaid caregivers of seniors needing support as needs and care requirements grow. With one in six Albertans currently aged 65+, stress and caregiver burnout are becoming more prevalent in caregivers without support.

Have you found yourself in a caregiving role and are feeling alone, struggling to cope? JFSC’s Caregiver Support Programs assist caregivers with resource navigation, coping strategies and self care through education, group sessions and individual counselling.

JFSC’s Memory Care Program is another resource for both caregivers and their loved ones with memory



issues. In-home visits can provide some caregiver respite while trained volunteers build relationships and offer individually designed activities for cognitive, physical, social, and emotional support.

For more information on JFSC’s Caregiver Support Programs, Memory Care Programs and Library for Caregivers, go to jfsc.org and look under Programs and Services, contact Samantha at samanthap@jfsc.org or call the JFSC intake line 403-287-3510.

In the words of Rosalynn Carter, American writer, activist, humanitarian, and former First Lady,

"There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers."

Calgary Jewish Federation announces new CEO

Last month the Calgary Jewish Federation announced that Rob Nagus will be joining the team as the new CEO. In a message to the community, CJF President Lisa Libin stated, “It is with great pleasure that we officially announce our new incoming CEO for Calgary Jewish Federation – Rob Nagus.” She introduced Rob to the community with the following:

Rob is currently the Executive Director of Jewish London, since 2021, where he has been an incredibly admired and respected leader amongst his staff and community members. While in this role, Rob has led a community-wide strategic planning process and supported the implementation of Jewish London’s first ever Young Adult Leadership Program. He has an in-depth understanding of both the internal and external challenges our community faces, having to deal with

similar situations himself. As well, Rob independently leads London’s UJA Campaign and secured the community’s first ever individual \$1M donation in October, towards the Israel Emergency Fund.

Although he has spent much of his career in the East, Rob went to high school in Edmonton and grew up attending Camp BB Riback. He is excited to come back to his Alberta roots to be closer to his own family and old friends. We know that many Calgary community members already know Rob from childhood and beyond, and are extremely excited to hear of his

move to Calgary. His passion and excitement towards our Calgary community and his desire to be here will help in ensuring longevity and commitment to his new CEO role.

Also important to note is Rob’s past career in a number of Jewish organizations including Hillel at the University of Toronto and most notably, the Director of Philanthropy for UJA Genesis, UJA of Federation of Greater Toronto’s division committed to the growth

Continued on page 24

Best wishes
to the entire community
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Weizmann hosts physics safe cracking tournaments

By Regan Lipes

Harry Houdini, Jewish by the way, may have been the master of daring escapes, including vaults and safes, but some ingenious and motivated high school students are re-envisioning the craft as an intellectual puzzle. Weizmann Canada is empowering grade 11 and 12 students to think big, think unconventional, and definitely, venture outside the box.

Caroline Daigle, Weizmann Canada’s Associate Director of Marketing, expressed in a recent Zoom interview with the *Alberta Jewish News*, that every year she is more and more amazed with what the students come up with. “Our annual physics safe cracking tournament allows groups of five students to design and build a working safe. Then they have the opportunity to try to open another team’s safe using a one sentence clue, while other teams also try to break into their safe. It’s a lot of fun, and everyone gets quite into it,” she explained. “The goal is to engage scientifically inclined young minds and open them up to the prospect of pursuing STEM oriented fields in post-secondary.”

According to their mission: “The Weizmann Institute of Science is one of the world’s leading multidisciplinary basic research institutions in the natural and exact sciences. Founded in 1934, the Weizmann Institute has a long history of investigation and discovery rooted in a mission of advancing science for the benefit of humanity.” Every year, Weizmann Canada holds their physics tournament to see which two talented teams get sent on to the international finals.

“Each specially designed safe has a clue to help other teams crack it. The safes are meant to be opened;

it’s not about stumping other teams, but creating something innovative, unique, and challenging,” Daigle elaborated. “One representative from the team that designed and constructed the safe is on hand to assist and ensure that everything is functioning as intended, and the other group has ten minutes to problem solve. It’s amazing what the students come up with!”

It is more than just a fun afterschool undertaking for science-minded teens, but a creative way of nurturing the great-thinkers of tomorrow.

“We want the students to see all the possibilities that a career in STEM can hold. This is very advanced work, and they should feel a real sense of achievement participating in this competition.”

Daigle proceeded to recount that last year’s Canadian winners from Montreal “constructed a multifaceted safe with a cylinder suspended in water. There were several stages to opening it.” In fact, the safe was Super Mario themed, making the project whimsical in addition to intellectually challenging. In reviewing the international finalist submissions from 2023, what is striking is that each entry had a theme and narrative to accompany it. For participants

this was far more than a puzzle, but a story to be experienced: saving Mickey Mouse from a box, breaking into a museum, locating Pokémon.

Although each team of five is supported by a teacher, the ideas are their own. Additionally, teams are also able to engage with mentors, often past successful participants, who can answer questions and assist when needed. An esteemed panel of judges evaluates sub-



The winning Canadian team in the Weizmann safe cracking challenge will advance to the final competition at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel.

missions based on diverse criteria including innovation of construction and accessibility for those cracking the safe. “There’s so much excitement when a team finally manages to break into a safe. You see such big smiles.”

Typically, the competition is hosted by one of the schools participating in the competition. Due to COVID, for three years, the tournament was held online. “We are so happy to be back in person. This is a hands-on process, and it just isn’t the same when you can’t interact with your team and the safe.”

Weizmann Canada is looking forward to holding a competition for Western Canada, and another for the East. “We have some established relationships with schools that participate each year, and we are so happy to have this committed engagement. We are also hoping to spread the word and stir up interest from those schools that may not know about us yet.”

Planning for the Canadian semi-finals is already well underway, and organizers are gearing up for another energized and innovative year. “All you need is five motivated physics lovers and an idea,” emphasized Daigle. Even if a student has never thought of themselves as a physics-person, Daigle wants potential participants to know that this may be the experience that ignites their lifelong love of STEM. Enrollment is still open, and teams that wish to register are welcome!

Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



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Canadian Federations have strong historical ties to Israel

By Tammy Vineberg

Sarah Mali has worked in the Jewish world for over 20 years, and she's never witnessed a community so interwoven with Israel like Canada.

"I've never seen a Jewish community so Zionist. You can get loud supporters of Israel, but there's something deep about the Canadian Jewish communities' connection to Israel. Their 30-year-old partnerships with each local Israeli partnership region are deep and personal. These communities have embedded them within their hearts and minds. We're umbilically tied to the people of Israel and when they hurt, we hurt," says Sarah.

Sarah is the director general, Israel, for the Jewish Federations of Canada – United Israel Appeal (JFC – UIA). She grew up in the United Kingdom and has been involved with Jewish communities since her youth. One of her first career placements was with the United Jewish Israel Appeal in London before moving to Israel in 2000. Pioneering an Israel engagement strategy brought her to Toronto for five years until a new opportunity opened to establish the Global Leadership Institute for the Jewish Agency that since merged with Masa Israel Journey.

"Being a bridge between Israel and Jewish communities has never been more important. I'm fascinated by the difference. I enjoy bringing people together across their own differences. I believe diversity is a value, not an obstacle. That's been my entire career," she says.

Sarah has been working for JFC- UIA for the last two years. Someone approached her to apply for her current role and she became more engaged as she learned about the opportunity. "Showing the value of the Canadian Jewish collective as more than the sum of its parts and being dedicated to the Canadian Jewish community was very compelling to me," says Sarah.

In her role, Sarah represents the Canadian Federations in Israel and works with government and partner organizations. She also oversees 130 properties to ensure they are maximized for charitable purposes. Sarah works with the Canadian Federations on where to allocate their funds strategically after receiving recommendations from those professionals embedded in the partner communities.

When Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, Sarah was surprised by how much Canadian Jewish communities came together to help the country. "I was having multiple conversations daily with people who were checking in. They were telling me they were not sleeping, and they were crying with us. Since October 7, the philanthropy has been huge. We are the largest per capita emergency campaign in the world, with \$140 million from Federations large and small across Canada. The Coast-to-Coast communities of which Calgary and Edmonton are leaders raise together \$14 million, which is huge," she says.

Israelis continue to relive October 7, especially in the north where residents are feeling vulnerable with continuous attacks. Families must decide how they will transport their children to school safely. If both children go in a car and a missile hits, then who will survive? Potential attacks prevent children from

playing soccer and other sports.

"There's this persistent and pervasive anxiety and fear. The government has provided no economic support to residents beyond the five-kilometre evacuation line because they have not evacuated them. They have no options to move because they haven't been told to relocate," says Sarah.

JFC-UIA's Coast-to-Coast communities helped 300 of these families receive respite this past summer so they could escape from Hezbollah's daily onslaught. They went on holidays in different areas of Israel. "One mother said to me, 'I was in Jerusalem, and I could just breathe. I had my first night's sleep'," says Sarah.

She encourages Canadians to come to Israel to bear witness to what is happening. "I believe bearing witness is an activity we can all do. Some people think they will be a burden to Israel, but coming to be the carrier of the stories of Israelis since October 7 is critical. We're in the most historic moment we've lived as a Jewish people," says Sarah.

For those who can't travel to Israel, Sarah would like them to maintain a connection with Israelis as the residents are feeling very alone and to do acts of hope. "Connect with people who are not in the community. Stay connected to your Federation. The idea of doing



Sarah Mali, Director General of JFC-UIA Canada in Israel.

hope as an activity is achievable and the (United Jewish Appeal) campaign is doing hope. Use all your feelings of pain and use them for good. Every time you feel like that, put some money aside for campaign, for Israel and the Israeli people," she says.

Tammy Vineberg is Director of Marketing and Communication for Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

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Tishpishti is Sephardi honey cake, but better

By Susan Barocas

Honey cake is a hallmark of Rosh Hashanah and the fall Jewish holidays — Ashkenazi honey cake, that is. But did you know there’s a Sephardi cake traditionally served for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur break fast and during Sukkot? Like its Eastern European counterpart, tishpishti symbolizes wishes for a sweet new year and the fullness of life. The cake is also popular for Purim and adapted for Passover.

Semolina pastries and puddings have been made for centuries throughout the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East. Tishpishti is traditionally made with fine semolina and soaked in a sweet syrup of sugar, honey or a mixture, but beyond these common elements, there are many variations in both the way tishpishti is made — such as nuts or no nuts, eggs or no eggs, flavored with lemon, orange or rose water — and even what it’s called according to different geographic and cultural roots. For example, in Egypt, it’s basboosah or baboussa, namora or namoura in Syria and shamali in Crete.

Tishpishti is perhaps the name most used and, as we know it today, the cake originated in Turkey. In the “Encyclopedia of Jewish Food,” Gil Marks explains that in Israel and for Jews from once-Ottoman Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, the name is probably a nonsense name from the Turkish “tez” (fast/quick) and “pişti” (plane/slope). Put together, it means “quickly done.” In Ladino it might also be called pispiti, tupishti and revani, which Joyce Goldstein in “Sephardic Flavors: Jewish Cooking of the Mediterranean” notes is named after a 16th century Turkish poet “who wrote about the delights of food.”

Many tishpishti recipes use eggs, including ones that instruct you to whip the whites separate from the yolks, a Sephardi contribution to tishpishti. This recipe, however, is based on a very old traditional way of making cakes from a thick dough without eggs. My concession to modernity is adding baking powder and soda, both 19th century products, to lessen the density of the cake. Using ground almonds instead of walnuts will result in a lighter colored cake, which is

traditional at Rosh Hashanah to symbolize a bright new year. Tishpishti is delicious on its own or served with a spoonful of yogurt, labneh or whipped cream and a cup of mint tea or strong Turkish coffee.

Notes: It is best to make the syrup ahead of time so it has time to cool, although you can choose to make it while the cake bakes, then refrigerate it to cool more quickly.

Tishpishti is best when left at room temperature for several hours or overnight so the syrup penetrates the cake.

Store wrapped at room temperature for two days or a week in the refrigerator. The cake can be well-wrapped and frozen for two months. Defrost and then refresh with some drizzles of warm syrup.

Ingredients

For the syrup:

¾ cup sugar, ¾ cup honey, ¾ cup water

1–2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice or orange blossom water

For the cake:

1 cup fine semolina (not semolina flour), 2 cups all-purpose or one-to-one gluten-free flour or almond flour, 1½ cups finely ground walnut or almond meal (not flour), 1 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp baking soda, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 cup good neutral vegetable oil (such as avocado, sunflower or peanut), 2 cups water, ½ cup honey, ½ cup sugar, 2 tsp finely grated lemon or orange zest or a combination, ⅛ tsp salt, about 30 slices blanched almonds, whole almonds or walnuts, or chopped almonds or walnuts

Instructions

To make the syrup, begin by stirring the sugar, honey, water and lemon juice (if using) together in a heavy saucepan over medium heat until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Stop stirring, turn the heat up to medium-high until the mixture begins to boil, then reduce heat to a gentle boil. Cook about 15 minutes until the mixture thickens, but is still syrupy. Remove from the heat and if using orange blossom water, stir it in now. Let the syrup cool to room temperature while the cake bakes.

To make the cake, preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9×13-inch pan.

In a large bowl, whisk together the semolina, flour, nuts, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon until well blended. Set aside.

In a large saucepan, mix the oil, water, honey, sugar, cinnamon, zest and salt. Heat over medium, stirring often. Remove the saucepan from the heat just as it begins to boil. Using a wooden spoon, stir in the flour mixture, about ⅓ at a time, until it is totally absorbed and the batter is well blended. It might seem like the last bit can’t get mixed in, but it will in the end.



The resulting batter will be thick and dough-like.

Scoop the mixture into the greased pan and gently pat to flatten the batter with your hands so it is spread evenly and the edges are straight and even. (An offset spatula can be used to help to smooth the surface evenly and make sharp, clean edges.) Score the cake into small diamond shapes, about 26-30 pieces 1½ inches wide, cutting about half way down. Gently press one almond slice or whole nut on top of each piece in the center. Bake for 40-45 minutes until the edges are just starting to brown.

Take the cake out of the oven, then immediately pour about half the room-temperature syrup slowly and evenly over the hot cake, which will absorb the syrup as it cools. Wait a few minutes, then follow the scoring to cut all the way through the pieces. Pour the rest of the syrup evenly into the cuts and over the whole cake. Tishpishti is best when left at room temperature for several hours or overnight so the syrup penetrates the cake.

This story originally appeared on The Nosh.

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HAPPY ROSH HASHANAH & YOM KIPPUR!

A New Year and lots to celebrate at CJA

By Joseph Tappenden

The start of the school year is always filled with excitement, and this year at the Calgary Jewish Academy has been no different. We are thrilled to share that the beginning of the academic year has been incredibly smooth, thanks to the collective efforts of our dedicated staff, eager students, and supportive parents. Their commitment and enthusiasm have set the tone for what promises to be an enriching year ahead. Our staff have been working tirelessly over the summer to ensure that classrooms were ready to welcome students for another year of meaningful learning. From preparing engaging lessons to creating a warm and inviting classroom atmosphere, our teachers have set the stage for a year filled with



First day of school at CJA.



Celebrating Shabbat at Calgary Jewish Academy.

academic growth and personal development.

The beginning of the school year is always a time for reconnecting with familiar faces and welcoming new ones. We are delighted to have several new families join our school community, and we look forward to watching them thrive here. With this growth in enrollment we are proud to share that many of our grades now have two classes, a testament to the thriving nature of our school community. In addition to new families, we have welcomed several new teachers across various grade levels, each bringing their unique expertise and passion for education.

As we settle into the rhythm of the new school year, we are also eagerly preparing for the upcoming High Holidays. The students will soon begin exploring the rich traditions and meanings behind Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah. These holidays not only offer valuable learning opportunities but also allow us to come together as a community to celebrate and reflect.

We are particularly excited to welcome Rabbi Russell Jayne from Beth Tzedec Congregation, who will be joining us throughout the High Holidays. Rabbi Russ' visit will enhance our classroom learning and we are all looking forward to hearing him blow the Shofar.

For Sukkot, students will learn about the holiday's agricultural and spiritual roots and will also have the opportunity to participate in the mitzvot of Sukkot, including, shaking the Lulav and etrog, and eating in the Sukkah. Spending time in the sukkah, sharing stories and meals, is always a special experience for the students, helping to create a deeper connection to our traditions.

Our celebrations will culminate with Simchat Torah, a joyous holiday that marks the completion and restarting of the annual Torah reading cycle. As part of the festivities, we will gather as a school community for Hakafot, where students and staff will sing, dance, and celebrate with the Torah. This event brings an extra layer of joy to our community, as it highlights the importance of learning and spirituality in a fun, celebratory way.

We are truly excited for what lies ahead this year. The Calgary Jewish Academy is ready for a year of learning, community, and celebration. We can't wait to see what the future holds as we embark on this journey together.

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PRIZMAH

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Camp BB Riback 2025 early bird registration is open

By Maxine Fischbein

Camp BB Riback saw a bumper crop of campers over the summer, with numbers rebounding since the interruptions caused by COVID, says Camp Director Stacy Shaikin. Some 191 campers attended first session alone, bringing the camp much closer to the 215 pre-COVID numbers. Staff numbers rose to 70, 10 more than in the previous year.

The camp is in good shape, having exceeded its projections in every area, Shaikin told *AJNews*, including camper registration, fundraising, and grants. This together with “very positive debt servicing,” including the repayment of the Federal Government CEBA (Canada Emergency Business Account) loan that provided COVID relief, means the camp may soon be debt free, Shaikin said.

This is due, in part, to the camp’s success in generating new revenue streams.

Camp Quality, which serves kids with cancer, sent 15 to 20 kids to Camp BB Riback beginning August 8, together with dedicated volunteers and counsellors as well as medics and a doctor.

Those whose conditions permit, participated—together with Camp BB campers— in some of the regular camp rotations.

Camp Maple Leaf, which caters to kids from military families, was booked to run two one-week sessions at Camp BB in late August after the regular camp sessions have ended.

The organization runs camps across Canada and has their own facility in Ontario. They toured Camp BB Riback in November and instantly saw the potential room for growth, Shaikin said.

“They are particularly impressed with our safety standards,” he added.

Both Camp Quality and Camp Maple Leaf are exploring the possibility of further rentals in the summer of 2025, having already established a business arrangement and a relationship with Camp BB

Riback, Shaikin said.

Camp BB Riback has also benefited from renting their facilities to individuals and organizations within the Jewish community. In June, a former camper held her stagette at the camp, Talmud Torah students had a Shabbaton at camp and BBYO once again held their spring convention there.

“This summer we’ve broken through the wall as a business,” said Shaikin, adding that the camp is a “much smoother operation than it’s ever been.”

In more good news, the camp has received a generous gift from long-time supporters Len and Faigel Shapiro. The \$175 thousand dollar gift, spread over three years, is devoted to a new doctors’ house and infirmary package named in honour of the Eichler family. Aron and Ida Eichler, both of blessed memory, were inaugural directors at the camp.

Shaikin is encouraging other camp supporters to be generous as this is a matching gift.

Past Camp Chair Cory Krygier, who currently serves as chair of the camp facilities committee, is working with Shaikin on a site plan for consideration by the camp board. Once the new building is erected, the current infirmary will be repurposed to accommodate staff.

The camp continues to work on other improvements, including the recent addition of a water chlorination system to the cistern thanks to a “considerable donation” from the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary, Shaikin said.

Another project involves improvements to the mechanics of the camp swimming pool.

In September, five more camper cabins will be renovated, bringing the total so far to 16 cabins over three and a half years. That will leave only three cabins in need of refurbishment.



Discount pricing for Camp 2025 is available until September 30.

On the docket for next spring, is siding and a deck for the newish camp office.

A long-envisioned dockside amphitheatre remains on the camp wish list, says Shaikin.

As always, Shaikin has his eyes on security and says the camp was well prepared even prior to the October 7 attacks in Israel. He regularly reviews camp safety with the RCMP and closely follows updates provided by law enforcement and the Jewish Federations in Edmonton and Calgary.

Registration is now open for the summer of 2025. Campers registered prior to September 30 will get the summer of a lifetime at 2024 prices, Shaikin says.

Wondering which session to choose for your children?

“First session has so much energy, adrenaline and personality,” says Shaikin, adding “Second session is better for some campers because it’s more chill.”

“There are two kinds of experiences, and they are equally awesome,” said Shaikin who has happy memories of attending both sessions as a camper.

He does recommend that kids who do better with less sensory stimulation attend second session.

Shaikin says that about a dozen campers attend both first and second session, depending on the season, but he is a firm believer that the best camp experience is the one in which kids go home wanting more.

For more information about Camp BB Riback, or to register, go to campbb.com.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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Film Festival *Cont. from page 2*

that day,” recalled Cyngiser, “but the majority agree that we, as a community, must empathize, listen and bear witness.”

As these words are written, Israelis and Diaspora Jews are reeling again following the brutal murders of six more hostages whose remains were recovered by the IDF on August 31 in the notorious tunnels beneath Gaza.

Among the dead was 23-year-old American-Israeli Hersh Goldberg-Polin, perhaps the most recognized of the hostages due to the courageous activism of his parents in Israel, the United States and the Vatican.

Goldberg-Polin’s left forearm was blown off when terrorists lobbed grenades into the shelter where he and other Nova attendees sought refuge in the midst of the unprecedented attack. Details of his experiences that day are explored in *We Will Dance Again*.

“The survivors featured in the film experienced unfathomable violence and cruelty. If they are willing to share their painful experiences, it is an obligation on our part to give that film voice,” Cyngiser says, though he urges the audience to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of each movie for themselves, and in particular, their children.

We Will Dance Again is co-sponsored by the Calgary Jewish Federation. Thanks to the generous financial support of Ron and Barb Krell and Joe and Sondra Spier, the special screening is being offered free of charge.

“It is our hope that the community will once again come together to memorialize those who were

murdered, to stand in solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people, and to remind ourselves and each other that we will dance again,” Cyngiser said.

The community is also invited to a special pre-Kristallnacht screening of the American documentary 999: *THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS* on Thursday, November 7, co-sponsored by the Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education Committee, Calgary Jewish Federation.

The Forgotten Girls were 999 Slovak women, mostly teens, recruited by their government to do volunteer work but, instead, illegally deported on the first Jewish transport to Auschwitz in March, 1942.

Adapted for the screen by best-selling author and historian Heather Dune Macadam from her book by the same name, the moving documentary pays tribute to the women, in large part through the testimony of some of the few who managed to endure the notorious death camp until liberation.

Everyone is welcome, free of charge, for the screening which will be preceded by a brief Kristallnacht program.

For the first time ever, Camp BB Riback is teaming up with the Film Festival on the afternoon of November 17 as co-sponsor of *Running on Sand*, a film that balances insights into the plight of migrant workers in Israel with a humorous plot based on a case of mistaken identity.

A special bonus screening sure to delight Calgarians is a six-minute short film produced during the 2024 Camp BB Riback season. The stars of *When I Grow Up* are Cochavim campers (ages 6 – 9) and camp staff. Directed by Jack Walker, Mads Fox and Sarah Giufride, the film pokes good-natured fun at camp staff, says BB-Riback Director Stacy Shaikin, who also serves as the Director of Engagement at Beth Tzedec.

JAC (Jewish Adult Calgary)—powered by Calgary Jewish Federation—will be front and centre as co-sponsors of two feature films on the evening of Saturday, November 16. *Pink Lady*, a nuanced and sensitively-wrought film by Israeli director Nir Bergman, tells the story of an ultra-Orthodox couple, Bati and Lazer, whose family life is upended when they are blackmailed by a gang that sends them photos of Lazer kissing another man. It is impossible to say more about this astonishing film without risk of a spoiler. Suffice it to say that the movie was a rare unanimous choice of the committee and is a



The Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival closes on November 17 with a screening of *Seven Blessings*, a lively drama about a Mizrahi family, and a dark family secret. Courtesy of United King Films.

must-see film.

The second JAC-sponsored feature, the American drama *Unspoken*, tells the story of Noam, a loveable modern Orthodox Jewish teenager who is gay but not out of the closet. When he finds a love letter to his grandfather that appears to have been written by another man, Noah sets out on a journey of discovery that tugs at the heartstrings.

This year’s Dr. Ralph Gurevitch Tikkun Olam screening, *The Stronghold*, is a riveting Israeli war film by director Lior Chefetz that tells the true story of an IDF unit tasked with defending an Israeli outpost in the Sinai during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

“The unit’s young and idealistic commander and the army doctor who is stationed with the unit confront a soul-shattering choice: a desperate, and likely hopeless last stand, or a perilous gamble that could betray everything they stand for.”

This year’s Dr. Martha Cohen Memorial Screening features *The Performance*, a USA/Slovakia co-production directed by Shira Piven and based on a short story by Arthur Miller. Harold May (portrayed by actor Jeremy Piven, best-known for his role in the comedy series *Entourage*) is a skilled tap dancer who, while past his peak, continues to seek the limelight. Though Jewish, May embarks on a European tour in 1937, together with his troupe. While there, the dancers are scouted by a German functionary who offers them a king’s ransom to perform for one night only in Berlin. When it comes to light that the performance is for Adolf Hitler, May is faced with a daunting choice.

This year’s Jay Joffe Memorial Program, sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, features a remarkable American documentary, *Moses Ezekiel: Portrait of a Lost (Cause) Artist*, directed by Steven Pressman.

The film, which will be screened on the afternoon of Sunday, November 17, tells the story of Ezekiel, a once-renowned sculptor who was born in the South and fought under the Confederate flag during the American Civil War. Some of Ezekiel’s sculptures glorifying the “lost cause” of the confederacy have

Continued on page 28

999

THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS OF THE HOLOCAUST

999: The Forgotten Girls screens Nov. 7

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