



A MESSAGE FROM LISA LIBIN

This past September 8 was such an incredible day for our community. Within the span of one day we welcomed an influx of Israeli families through an incredible event that was nothing short of inspiring with support from all of our agencies and partners. This was followed hours later by the official launch of our 2024 UJA Campaign.

This year’s Campaign slogan is *With You We Can* – meaning that as a community, we can, and will, take on the challenges and embrace the opportunities that we will face in Jewish Calgary this year. The following are just some of the areas your important UJA dollars will go towards this year:

- With the influx of Israeli families escaping the war and moving to our city, Calgary Jewish Federation (CJF) and our agency partners must ensure they have access to Jewish day schools, programs, and essential resources to help them settle and become part of our Jewish family.
- Security will remain a focus for CJF. We are

committed to working closely with Calgary Police Service and the RCMP to ensure our community remains a safe place for us all.

- We also know that as costs of schools, JCC memberships, and camps continue to increase, so does the need for bursary support for members of our community. Many Jewish children in Calgary may not otherwise be attending Halpern Akiva Academy or The Calgary Jewish Academy, spending summers at Paperny Family JCC day camps or Camp BB Riback without the support of generous donors like you who help provide financial assistance to those in need.

With You We Can make sure that all Jews in Calgary feel safe and engaged. Last year, with the horrific events of October 7, and the subsequent explosion of antisemitism in our city and country, our community came together to support our Campaign. Where we could, we all dug a little deeper into our pockets or made our first UJA donation to help support

the growing needs of Jewish Calgary while also supporting Israel in its time of most need.

And this year, *With You We Can* do it again. No matter what age or affiliation you are, I can guarantee you that our UJA funds impact you or someone close to you, in some way. From university students in Hillel and young professionals in JAC, to parents and their children enrolled in PJ Library®, our robust seniors programs, and accessibility programs, your generous UJA dollars not only fund our community, but they ARE our community – and I want to thank everyone for any contribution they can make to ensure this year’s 2024 Campaign is more successful than ever.

Todah Rabah and Shana Tova!

Lisa Libin

Lisa Libin, President
Calgary Jewish Federation

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

October 7th

Marking One Year

Monday, October 7

7:00PM

Beth Tzedec Congregation

Register at QR code

or jewishcalgary.org

Calgary Jewish Federation is seeking a dynamic, motivated community builder to serve the 18 to 40 demographic.

The **Emerging Gen Coordinator**, overseeing JAC and Hillel, will be a talented relationship builder, and have a strong understanding of Jewish young adult and young professional engagement as it relates to the Jewish community. Our ideal candidate will have a strong understanding of Jewish religion and culture, including issues relating to Israel and international Jewry.

For information about this full-time go to jewishcalgary.org/employment-opportunities

Welcome To Jewish

CALGARY

Over 250 people gathered for our **Welcome to Jewish Calgary** event on September 8. While community members welcomed newcomers, various Jewish organizations spoke with people about the services they offer and how they can help our new members find a loving, safe, supportive community far away from home. Thank you to every individual – new and old – who came to show our newcomers that Jewish Calgary IS their home. A special *todah rabah* to our generous donors who made this event possible.

with you

WE CAN

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

Voices

for Peace

A Concert for Community, Unity, and Healing

Sunday, October 27 | 3:30PM

Beth Tzedec Congregation

\$10

Stunning portraits of survivors on exhibit at TBT Gallery

By Shelley Werner

Artist Carol Wylie provides a window into survivors of the Holocaust and Residential Schools.

They didn't know we were seeds is an exhibit that brings to life profiles of suffering and survival as experienced in the trauma of the past by Holocaust survivors, and present, by Residential School survivors. Carol Wylie realized that through her art she could shine a light on the resilience of those that have undergone great personal tragedy and emerged from darkness into breaking sunlight with strength. In large format oil paintings, she carefully documents the faces of people who have undergone immeasurable suffering, resulting in arresting portraits of the triumphant life force.

"They buried us, they didn't know we were seeds" is written by a Greek philosopher, "and as soon as I saw it, I thought that's exactly what this exhibition is about. It's about darkness how people have taken the darkness that they've lived through and they've grown these wonderful lives out of them. A lot of these people are educators, and they are making sure that these

things that happened to them are not forgotten; coming from darkness into a beautiful life was the perfect metaphor for the title of the exhibition."

According to curator Jennifer Eiserman, the survivors pictured in Carol Wylie's portraits confront us with a challenging question: "How will you be seeds?" During the three-month exhibition, we will address their question through programming that supports teshuva, reconciliation, and growth.

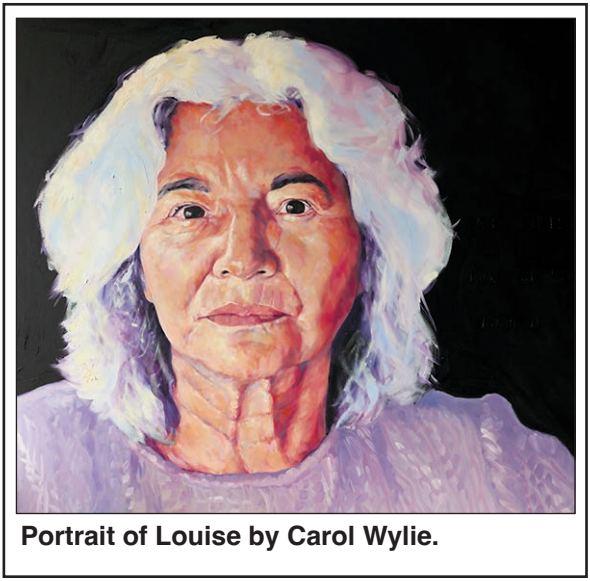
Wylie realized she'd have to travel to find Holocaust survivors to interview and paint. Saskatchewan however is such a hot bed for Residential Schools that there are many survivors. Many of them are educators. They spend a lot of time educating the public about their experiences and drawing parallels to the Holocaust.

"I was taking Indigenous sensitivity training and I found out for the first time that the Residential School System was referred to as the "final solution" before Hitler used that term for getting rid of the Jews. This dates back to the early part of the century and it was startling to hear that terminology had been used. Then I thought about the other connections of cutting hair, removing children from her families, all the kinds of methods of oppression that were similar in each group of people that is being oppressed."

The project is not about comparing experiences. It's about individuals, and how they have risen above the kind of oppression that they dealt with, the kind of cruelty that they've been exposed to and rise above that. They have grown past it and have lives, and have families. Understanding that when you hear numbers like six million or a hundred and fifty thousand, they don't have impact. However, if you think about one individual's experience, that is something that you can relate to and can be moved by. It might bring a little bit of compassion to understand those stories. That was the idea of bringing those two communities together for her.

She knew when she entered into this project, there were going to be two big stumbling blocks: number one was going to be the sense that people might think that she was exploiting the Indigenous community and the other was the idea of people thinking she was comparing the two experiences.

"For most Jews that identify with their own ethnicity, the Holocaust is a focus and something that we want to make sure is never forgotten, particularly in the face of rising Semitism. I, as a settler in a province that has so many Residential Schools, that didn't close until 1997 in Saskatchewan, felt like I needed to make a step, in terms of reconciliation." She



Portrait of Louise by Carol Wylie.

wanted to understand that experience better, to hear about it personally from those who experienced it and to get a sense of truth, as far as coming from those who experienced being in those Residential Schools.

It really is not about comparing these two historical events, but rather about individuals and their experience of oppression, and how they endure it and how they rise above it.

As a portrait artist she has heard the process described as if someone "reached in and touched the consciousness of another." Most of her portraits are directly looking back at the viewer. She encourages viewers to engage with the subject, and the subject to engage with a viewer. She wants to present viewers with some kind of challenge, hoping that people will get some sense of the experience of each of these sitters.

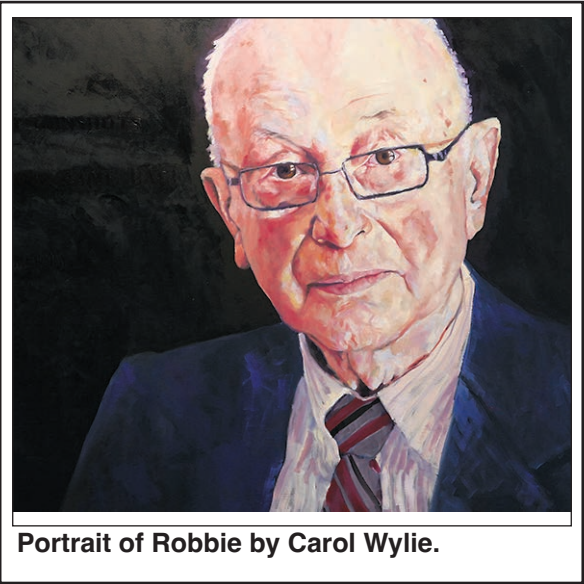
"The portrait has the sitter engaging with the viewer directly with eye contact, which was very important to the experience. The works are 4' x 3' so that when you get in front of them, they're larger than life and so you can't ignore them you can't walk away; you must engage."

She wanted to convey the sense of the importance of their stories, the importance of their history, and the understanding of what one individual may have endured over the course of this experience will make people think twice before they enter into the possibility of cruelty, rudeness or mistreatment of people in their lives. She wishes the viewer to identify these people with their commonality as human beings.

"I hope they'll be a moment of understanding that we're all the same. We all feel the same if we are oppressed, that there is nothing different about these people, I have tried to make a connection that will build some compassion. It's big ask, but essentially that's what it is all about."

"They Didn't Know We Were Seeds" can be seen at TBT Gallery, Temple B'nai Tikvah, 900 47 Ave SW, Calgary until December 1, 2024. Monday to Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm/ Friday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm or by appointment with the artist.

Shelley Werner is the host of Art and Scroll Studio zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Art. Next episode is on October 30, with featured artist Judith Margolis. Email artandscrollstudio@gmail.com for advance tickets.



Portrait of Robbie by Carol Wylie.

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All the Jewish medalists at the 2024 Paris Olympics

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) — The 2024 Paris Olympics were held last month, and at least 21 Jewish athletes from the United States, Australia and Israel returned home with some new hardware: The tally includes six golds (with one athlete winning two), seven silvers and five bronzes. The medal total of 18 is more than all but 15 countries.

Israel in particular racked up a historic medal collection, with seven total medals, its most ever in a single Olympics. Israel won three medals on Aug. 3 alone, its most medals in one day. The country now has 20 total Olympic medals, including nine in judo and five in sailing.

Australian paddler Jessica Fox has added to her legacy, and is considered the greatest canoeist of all time, winning two gold medals in Paris in canoe and kayak races. Her younger sister Noemie also won a gold medal, her first, in the brand-new kayak cross event.

Read on for more about all the Jewish and Israeli medalists, alphabetized and in order of medal type.

Gold medalists

Jackie Dubrovich and Maia Weintraub

The U.S. women’s foil team won gold, giving Jackie Dubrovich and Maia Weintraub their first-ever medals. Dubrovich had narrowly missed a medal in Tokyo, while Weintraub is making her Olympic debut. Weintraub, who deferred her final year at Princeton University to train for the Olympics, was the alternate but subbed in for Dubrovich briefly so that she would be eligible to share in the team medal. Lee Kiefer and Lauren Scruggs, who each won medals in the individual foil competition, rounded out the U.S. team. Out of the 20 total members of the U.S. fencing team, six are Jewish or come from Jewish families.

Amit Elor

U.S. wrestler Amit Elor entered the Paris Olympics, her first Games, on a winning streak dating back to 2019. That undefeated stretch continued this week as she captured the gold medal in the women’s 68-kilogram weight class. Elor is 20, making her the all-time youngest U.S. gold medalist in wrestling. The daughter of Israeli immigrants, Elor experienced both online antisemitism and the sudden deaths of both her father and a brother during the years when she broke into the elite ranks of U.S. women’s wrestlers.

Jessica Fox (two gold medals)

Australian canoe paddler Jessica Fox entered these Olympics already regarded by many as the best ever in her sport. Fox, 30, added two more gold medals to her collection in Paris, one in the women’s kayak slalom and one in the canoe slalom. She now has six career medals: three gold, one silver and two bronze. She is the most decorated Olympic canoe slalom competitor ever, and the only Australian Olympian in history with six individual medals. She had served as one of Australia’s flag bearers in the Paris opening ceremony.

Noemie Fox

Noemie Fox, Jessica Fox’s younger sister, won her first-ever Olympic medal, a gold in the inaugural kayak cross event. Fox, 27, and her sister join a rare class of Jewish siblings to win medals at the same Olympics. They are likely the first Jewish siblings to



L-R: Tom Reuveny, Jessica Fox, Artem Dolgopyat and Jemima Montag are among the Jewish medalists at the Paris Olympics. (Getty Images via JTA)

each win gold at the same Games since sisters Tamara and Irina Press did so in 1960 and 1964 in track and field events for the Soviet Union.

Tom Reuveny

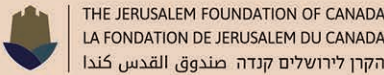
Windsurfer Tom Reuveny won Israel’s first, and so far only, gold medal of the Paris Olympics in the men’s iQFoil windsurfing final. Reuveny’s gold — Israel’s fourth ever — comes 20 years after his coach, Gal Fridman, won Israel’s first-ever gold medal at the 2004 Athens Games in the men’s sailboard competition. Reuveny, whose brother is serving in combat in the Israel-Hamas war, said his win brought some much needed celebration during a difficult year. “It’s been so hard and I still had to put my head down and keep training and it’s all for this moment,” he said.

Silver medalists

Artem Dolgopyat

Ukrainian-born Israeli gymnast Artem Dolgopyat entered the Paris Olympics as a medal favorite in the floor exercise, the event in which he captured gold in

Continued on page 25



Happy New Year & Shana Tova שנה טובה from Jerusalem! תשפ"ה

Wishing you and yours a sweet and healthy New Year full of hope for a better year ahead.
The Jerusalem Foundation continues to build a future for the city of Jerusalem by supporting creative culture, communal strength and shared society and developing young leaders who will work together for a shared future.



For more information about the Jerusalem Foundation:
Nomi Yeshua, Executive Director: nomiy@jerusalemfoundation.ca
Tania Haas, Donor Relations Coordinator: thaas@jerusalemfoundation.ca Tel: 416 922 0000
The Jerusalem Foundation of Canada: 130 Queens Quay East, Suite 1110 – West Tower, Toronto, ON M5A 0P6

www.jerusalemfoundation.org

Na'amat packs School Supplies for Kids Program

More than 60 volunteers gathered on Sunday, September 22, to fill backpacks with essential school supplies for more than 900 school-aged children who will take refuge in Calgary and southern Alberta domestic violence and homeless shelters over the coming school year. At the conclusion of this year's efforts, the School Supplies for Kids community project, held annually since 1998, will have equipped over 26,000 children in the care of Alberta shelters with backpacks stocked with school supplies.

Every day of the week children take refuge in Alberta shelters to escape domestic violence and/or homelessness. Typically, these children arrive at the shelters with little more than the clothes on their backs and then are faced with re-entering the school system within days of their arrival. Worries such as not having their own pencil or notebook or a bag to carry their schoolbooks are put to rest when the children receive a backpack stocked with school supplies courtesy of Na'amat Canada Calgary's School Supplies for Kids program.

"The staff from the shelters repeatedly tell us how the children in their care light up when they receive one of our backpacks filled with school supplies. Our program not only equips these vulnerable children

with the tools they need to succeed in school, but also helps strengthen their self-esteem, which is so important. Fortunately, the funds raised from our 50/50 raffle, along with the generous support of Rogers Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink, and our donors and sponsors made it possible for our program to continue to meet the needs of these children who have gone through so much," says Stephanie Sacks, School Supplies for Kids Chairperson.

"It's heartwarming to see how many people of all ages come together to volunteer at our mega packing day. We definitely couldn't do it without them," notes Linda Gutman, School Supplies for Kids Volunteer Coordinator.



Na'amat has been providing back packs filled with an assortment of school supplies for kids and their families since 1998.

Established in 1925, Na'amat Canada is a Jewish women's non-profit organization that is dedicated to empowering the lives of women and children of all faiths and denominations in Canada and Israel. For more information go to: www.naamat.com/calgary.

New CEO *Cont. from page 13*

of donors under the age of 40 – a key priority for our own community.

Given his in-depth involvement with their campaign, Rob and his board have requested that he stay in London until campaign is wrapped-up in December. As believers in always ensuring you are leaving your previous role in a better place than when you started, we have granted their desire for him to stay. Diana Kalef and Rhona Shore have both been doing a great job with their interim responsibilities, and we are grateful that they are willing to continue these roles until Rob is officially moved to Calgary. Our UJA Campaign is in strong hands with Diana and her team, and we are confident Rob's arrival will be worth the wait!

Rob will also be in Calgary during pre-scheduled times that will be valuable for his in-person presence, so we hope that everyone will get an opportunity to meet or reconnect with Rob very soon!

Libin concluded her message by thanking "everyone who has been involved in this very extensive hiring process particularly Cali Oppenheim, who led the executive search. We were fortunate to receive interest from across Canada and the US, with a variety of proficiencies. Rob's experience combined with his

personality and passion is what put him over the top. We know he will bring so much new energy to our community, and I am very excited to see it!"

Rob Nagus responded to the welcome with this message:

"My name is Rob Nagus, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as the incoming CEO of Calgary Jewish Federation. As someone whose Jewish identity was deeply shaped in Alberta – whether as a high school student and BBYO member in Edmonton, an undergraduate at the University of Calgary, or a camper at Camp BB Riback – this is a profound and meaningful homecoming for me.

"For the past few years, I have had the privilege of leading the Jewish community in London, Ontario, as the Executive Director of Jewish London. Over the past 16 years, I've dedicated my career to strengthening Jewish organizations across Ontario, and now I am honoured to bring my experience and passion back to Calgary, where I look forward to collaborating with all of you to lead our community into a vibrant and secure future."

"I am eager to work together with the dedicated leaders, professionals, and stakeholders who sustain our institutions. Together, we will ensure that Calgary's Jewish life continues to thrive with vision, enthusiasm, and pride.



Rob Nagus

"Thank you for welcoming me back to Wild Rose Country. I am excited to get started and to serve this incredible city."



Wishing the entire community
a Shana Tova filled with the blessings
of peace, health, and contentment.

Na'amat Canada stands with Israel!
We hope and pray for everlasting peace.

Help make a difference
this Rosh Hashana for
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Medalists *Cont. from page 23*

Tokyo. After a difficult showing in the qualifying round, Dolgopyat rebounded to win the silver medal, becoming the first Israeli athlete to medal at consecutive Olympics.

Sienna Green

Jewish water polo star Sienna Green won a silver medal with Australia, as her country fell 11-9 to Spain in the gold medal match. Green, who is making her Olympics debut at 19 years old, is the youngest woman to represent Australia in women’s water polo. Both of Green’s parents are former water polo players, and her father Antony represented Australia at the 1989 and 1993 Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Raz Hershko

Israeli judoka Raz Hershko claimed the silver medal in the women’s over-78-kilogram competition, her second career Olympic medal. She had won bronze with Israel’s mixed judo team in Tokyo. Hershko, 26, is the No. 2 ranked judoka in her category in the world, according to the International Judo Federation.

Israel’s rhythmic gymnastics team

Israel’s rhythmic gymnastics team won the silver medal in the all-around team competition, earning Israel’s seventh medal at the Paris Olympics. The group, which is captained by Romi Paritzki and also includes Ofir Shaham, Diana Svartsov, Adar Friedmann and Shani Bakanov, finished with a combined score of 68.850, behind gold medal-winning China’s 69.800. The group had won its first-ever gold medals at the 2023 Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships.

Sharon Kantor

On the same day that Reuveny won gold and Dolgopyat won silver, Sharon Kantor won silver in the women’s iQFoil windsurfing competition, her first-ever medal. Kantor, 21, is the first Israeli woman to win a sailing medal.

Inbar Lanir

Inbar Lanir also won a silver medal in judo for Israel, in the 78-kilogram weight class. The win earned Lanir her first individual medal; she had won bronze in Tokyo with Israel’s mixed team. Lanir, 24, wore a yellow scrunchie to signify advocacy for Israeli

hostages in Gaza, and had gone viral at home after she babysat for her neighbor — who did not know she was an Olympian — in the days after Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack. “Instead of training for the Olympics, she’s babysitting,” Sheizaf Tal Meshulam wrote in a Facebook post. “So just know that behind a well-deserved medal stands a woman with a heart of gold.”

Claire Weinstein

Swimmer Claire Weinstein won silver as part of the women’s 4×200-meter freestyle relay, alongside U.S. Olympic legend Katie Ledecky. Weinstein, 17, is making her Olympics debut in Paris and is the youngest Jewish medalist. The New York native, who celebrated her bat mitzvah at Reform Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains, swam the first leg of the U.S. team’s relay. Erin Gemmell and Paige Madden rounded out the team.

Bronze medalists

Nick Itkin

Foil fencer Nick Itkin won bronze early on in the Paris Olympics, improving on his 12th-place finish in the individual competition in Tokyo. He had won bronze with the U.S. men’s foil team at the Tokyo Games. Itkin, 24, whose father is a Jewish immigrant from Ukraine, is also a two-time NCAA champion and the No. 2-ranked men’s foil fencer in the world. Last year he became the first American man, and third U.S. fencer overall, to win individual medals at back-to-back world championships.

Sarah Levy

San Diego native Sarah Levy earned a bronze medal with the U.S. women’s rugby sevens team, which stunned Australia in the final to win its first-ever Olympic medal. Levy, 28, appeared in three of the



Israel's rhythmic gymnastics team celebrates on the podium during the rhythmic gymnastics group all-around medal ceremony at the 2024 Paris Olympics, Aug. 10, 2024, in Paris. (Jamie Squire/Getty Images via JTA)

team’s six games as she made her Olympics debut. Levy, who had also competed in the JCC Maccabi Games as a teenager, earned the medal alongside the U.S. team’s Jewish assistant coach, former Olympic athlete Zack Test.

Jemima Montag (two bronze medals)

Race walker Jemima Montag joins fellow Aussie Jessica Fox as a two-time medalist in Paris. She won her first medal in the 20-kilometer race walk, an event in which she already owned her country’s record. Montag won another bronze Wednesday in the inaugural marathon mixed relay event. Montag, 26, is the first Australian woman in 52 years to win two medals in track and field’s athletics category at the same Olympics.

Peter Paltchik

Israeli judoka Peter Paltchik won bronze in the 100-kilogram weight class, his first individual medal. Paltchik also won bronze, alongside Hershko and Lanir, with the Israeli mixed judo team in Tokyo. Paltchik, who had served as one of Israel’s flag bearers at the Paris opening ceremony, was born in Ukraine. He won gold at the 2020 European championship.

Magen David Adom saves lives



Enjoying the CMDA Mediterranean Gala with Sharon Fraiman. Top: Israel Lachovsky, Kim Levenson, Marian Washburn and Rose Oloan. Bottom: Sidney Benizri, Haim Fraiman and Josette Fraiman.

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MPs comment on CRA revocation of JNF-Canada’s charitable status

A letter to Winnipeg’s Jewish community from two Members of Parliament appeared in a recent edition of *Jewish Post and News*. The letter, from MP for Mount Royal, Anthony Housefather and MP for Winnipeg South Centre, Ben Carr, addressed the ongoing controversy between JNF Canada and Canada Revenue Agency. In August, CRA abruptly announced that it had revoked the charitable status of JNF Canada. *Canadian Jewish News* has published a series of articles covering the controversy from all angles.

MPs Carr and Housefather, both members of the Liberal Party of Canada wrote: “For decades, the Jewish National Fund has inspired hope, optimism, and pride within our community. Thousands have fond memories of blue boxes and tree planting initiatives that have made you feel closer to Israel and the community.

“As many of you are aware, there have been substantial developments regarding JNF over the past [month]. In the lead up to the recent decision by the Canada Revenue Agency to revoke JNF’s charitable status, and since its publication that confirmed that decision in the *Canada Gazette*, we have been engaging with the senior leadership of JNF, CIJA, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, our colleagues in Ottawa, and the grassroots of our community.

“It is important for us to note a few key aspects of

this case that may help provide context for members of the community who are trying to make sense of what has happened.

“This process started with a 2014 audit under the previous government, leading to the auditor making a recommendation to revoke JNF’s status. That was appealed to the charitable branch at CRA and last month a letter signaling CRA’s intention to strike was sent to JNF, leading to the appeal. The core issue for the revocation appears to be the CRA’s assertion that JNF’s original founding charitable object that it accepted almost 60 years ago is now no longer considered to be a charitable object.

“We can deeply appreciate how this has left many of you feeling, particularly against the backdrop of all that has happened over the past year.

“We have heard your concerns related specifically to the JNF issue. In addition, we want to assure you that the feelings of isolation, disillusionment, and fear that the Jewish community in Canada is experiencing by virtue of a rising tide of antisemitism and targeted hatred is being expressed regularly by us to colleagues in Ottawa. As we continue our advocacy to support and protect the Jewish community, your voices are at the forefront of our discussions and actions

“We will stay closely attuned to the JNF court challenge as it proceeds.”

Meanwhile, JNF is calling on the elected representatives to take responsibility.

In a release, they stated, “To date, Liberal MPs have situated the actions of CRA as a bureaucratic response to JNF’s charitable objects because of audits undertaken in 2014. If elected officials are arguing that unelected bureaucrats have been delegated the authority to make a decision of this magnitude, that was a mistake. The Government should take responsibility. The Minister of National Revenue and the Government of Canada should put the revocation of our charitable status on hold until the courts have ruled, as is customary in situations like ours (based on our lawyer’s review of over 200 cases). JNF Canada should be provided the fundamental value of the presumption of innocence, especially because we are not an aggravated case.”

JNF reassured their donors by stating, “While for the time being we are not allowed to issue charitable receipts, please rest assured that we will continue to raise funds in support of building Israel’s social infrastructure to the benefit of vulnerable populations such as youth-at-risk, victims of domestic abuse, children with special needs, veterans and the disadvantaged. Hurting JNF hurts Israelis who need our help the most, especially as they try to recover from the horrors of October 7.

“There were many opportunities to solve this issue short of the draconian penalty of revocation. JNF would welcome the opportunity to find an off-ramp and will, as demonstrated many times before, continue to do whatever is necessary to satisfy the expectations of CRA.”



SHANA TOVA!

Wishing you a year of health, happiness and prosperity on behalf of everyone at the **Calgary Police Service.**



Film Festival *Cont. from page 20*

caused his nearly-forgotten name to re-emerge as a new generation navigates the uncomfortable question about how to best deal with public art that glorifies racism.

These are just some of the cinematic treasures film lovers can expect at the 24th Annual Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival which will close on a high note with the screening of *Seven Blessings* on Sunday evening, November 17. Winner of 10 Ophir awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Actress, this film, directed by Ayelet Menahemi was Israel’s submission to the 2024 Academy Awards for best international film.

Told in seven parts, each representing one of the seven meals where a bride and groom are blessed following a traditional Jewish wedding, this gem of a film captures the often humorous though increasingly tense family dynamics as a Moroccan-Jewish bride and her French-Ashkenazi husband navigate the fault lines caused by a fraught Jewish-Moroccan practice the repercussions of which threaten to overwhelm them. Can love conquer all?

For a second consecutive year, Film Festival will be a bittersweet moment for the Cyngiser family and their community. Bronia Cyngiser, OBM, passed away on July 26, just a little more than a year after her husband Sid (Sucher) Cyngiser, OBM, was

laid to rest. The Cyngisers lovingly and generously supported their son Harvey’s cultural gift to the Jewish community. During their good years, Bronia and Sid attended most, if not all, of the annual screenings and generously created an endowment fund so as to support the festival in perpetuity. While their presence is missed, their incredible legacy continues.

The 24th Annual Beth Tzedec Congregation Jewish Film Festival opens on Saturday, November 2 and runs until Sunday, November 17. Thanks to a growing list of film sponsors, ticket prices remain the same as last year. A full festival pass is only \$80 per person when purchased prior to November 2 or \$90 at the door, and only \$20 for college and university students. Ala carte tickets good for one afternoon or one evening are \$20 per adult. Children and youth attend free of charge. All ticket holders are invited to enjoy complimentary nosh and beverages either between or after screenings, a great opportunity to discuss the films with other movie lovers!

Sponsorship opportunities are available; please contact the Beth Tzedec Synagogue at 403-255-8688. For more information about the 2024 film festival season and to purchase tickets online, go to www.bethtzedec.ca or www.CalgaryJewishFilmFestival.com.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Running on Sand is a Nov. 17 matinee.

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Why is New Years so late?

Many people associate Rosh Hashanah with September and back-to-school, but some years the Jewish new year falls out in October and other years it falls in August. Why is that?

The short answer: Because some Jewish years are leap years, in which an entire extra month is added to the calendar, which can in turn result in certain Jewish holidays falling out much later than in non-leap years.

Just as the secular leap year corrects a problem in the Gregorian calendar — that the earth’s revolution around the sun takes 365 1/4 days, not 365 days — the Jewish leap year corrects a problem in Judaism’s mostly lunar calendar. Because the 12-month lunar year is a few days shorter than a solar year, strict adherence to a lunar calendar would mean that the timing of the Jewish holidays would shift over time and eventually take place in different seasons. This would mean that every now and then we would celebrate Hanukkah, the mid-winter festival of lights, in the middle of summer and Sukkot, the autumn harvest festival, in the early spring.

The Jewish leap year is more complicated than having an extra day in February every four years. Instead, to ensure that the lunar year and the solar year are never too far out of phase with each other, Judaism worked out a system of 19-year cycles, during which there are seven leap years. And instead of adding a day, the Jewish calendar adds a full month to the year.

In this manner, the Jewish holidays fluctuate by about a month or so in relationship to the Gregorian calendar, but always fall during the same general season. In contrast, Islam, which also follows a lunar calendar, made no such corrections. Thus, over the course of time, holidays such as Ramadan, occur at different seasons.

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CMDA welcomes the Rotary Club

CMDA and Rotary are spreading the magic over the world.

The Western Region of Canadian David Adom recently welcomes the new Board Members of Calgary Chinook Rotary Club.

“It was great pleasure meeting all my fellow Rotarians,” said CMDA Western Region Director Sharon Fraiman. “Calgary Chinook Rotary Club is making a difference in Calgary and around the world. It is our job to create hope in this world.”

“I’m so excited to work with our new president Robert Wolfson,” she added, “he is definitely a brilliant leader and a great person. Stay tuned for special projects, and events that are coming soon.”

Rotarians are very supportive of CMDA, explained Fraiman, and the Jewish people.

“They believe that there is nothing more important



Canadian Magen David Adom Western Director Sharon Fraiman with board members of the Calgary Chinook Rotary Club.

than saving lives in Israel and around the world.”

The club knows everything about CMDA and MDA in Israel, she explained.

In addition to her position as the Western Region Director & Major Gifts of CMDA, Fraiman is also the Director for Membership at Rotary.

“Rotary Club is a community service club that

focuses on volunteer work, organizing community service projects and raising funds to support local and international charities,” says Fraiman. “We are sociable people who work together to make our community better.”

“It is extremely important to have Rotarians on board with CMDA.”

New book depicts the humanity behind the horror of Oct. 7

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) — Lee Yaron was in New York on Oct. 7, doing a fellowship at Columbia University, when news broke of an unimaginable attack on southern Israel by Hamas. Like many Israelis living abroad, she felt helpless and frustrated. Unlike most Israelis, she is a journalist, a longtime contributor to the Israeli daily Haaretz, and she had an outlet for her fear and anger.

Within days, she was on a plane to Israel, where she spent the next four months interviewing survivors, first-responders and eyewitnesses to the attacks. The result is “10/7: 100 Human Stories,” a book that documents perhaps the single most traumatic day in Israeli history through intimate profiles of some of the 1,200 people killed and hundreds of people taken hostage.

“I was still very much overwhelmed with my own grief and sense of shock and just this deep feeling that I need to do something,” Yaron, 30, said in an interview this week. “On the one hand, it was very traumatic, and I feel it now, even more than I felt it when I was writing the book. At the same time, I had a mission, I knew what I needed to do, and I was focused on this. The book helped me to deal with my grief and my sense of hopelessness.”

“10/7: 100 Human Stories” joins a number of works of nearly “instant” reporting and documentation of the attack on Israel, including the documentary film “Supernova-The Music Festival Massacre”; a forthcoming documentary on Paramount+, “We Will Dance Again”; a play, “October 7: In Their Own Words,” based on firsthand testimony; and a museum-style exhibit, “The Nova Exhibition,” that was staged in Israel, New York and now Los Angeles.

On Thursday, Yaron will be appearing on a virtual panel, sponsored by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the National Library of Israel, with Amir Tibon, the Haaretz journalist whose new book, “The Gates of Gaza,” describes how he was rescued from Kibbutz Nahal Oz on Oct. 7 by his own father.

“10/7” is, however, the most expansive account yet of the day, capturing the diversity of the victims and survivors and, by extension, of Israel as a whole. There are stories of Jewish refugees who fled the war in Ukraine, and Mizrahi Jews who escaped their countries to come to Israel in the 1950s. Hamas didn’t discriminate among left-wing kibbutzniks, blissed-out club kids or right-wing followers of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Nor did they spare Bedouins, Thai and Nepalese migrant workers, or the Christian and Muslim Arabs who, she writes, “had the gall to live among Jews as fellow citizens.”

Often in her research, one story would lead to another, a chain of family, friends and neighbors who died at the hands of terrorists, or survived huddled in safe rooms or simply sheltering in places the attackers overlooked.

Yaron, who divides her time between New York and Israel, has been a journalist with Haaretz for nearly a decade, focusing on what she calls people on the

margins of Israeli society: asylum seekers, the LGBT community, victims of sexual violence and the poor. In all these stories, she said, she tries to describe a situation from the “bottom up.”

“We’ve been flooded with information about Israel and Palestine, but we’re hearing from the politicians, from the Israeli government, from Hamas — from the people that created the conflict, not from the people affected by it,” she said.

In an afterword to “10/7,” Yaron’s husband, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Joshua Cohen, compares the book to the Yizker-bikher, or memorial books, written by Holocaust survivors to document the history of Jewish communities destroyed by the Nazis — an effort, writes Cohen, “that seeks to reclaim the dead, at least some of them, from numeric anonymity and political exploitation.”

Yaron accepts the comparison, but with a caveat. Survivors created memorial books so “people wouldn’t deny these crimes and so the stories will be documented,” she said. “But here the main difference is that Hamas documented everything. They weren’t trying to deny it.”

She also intends the book as a corrective to those who seek to exploit the tragedy, whatever their politics. The book is dedicated to Gal Eisenkot, the son of Israeli government minister Gadi Eisenkot, who was killed in December in northern Gaza during an operation that led to the recovery of two hostages’ bodies.

“He was a very dear friend of mine since we were kids,” said Yaron, who was born in Tel Aviv. “One of the most difficult things after we got the message that Gal died was to see how his death was politicized and used by so many different politicians with different agendas, making him some kind of a symbol and eliding who he was as a person, his humanity, his personality, the unique things that made Gal Gal.”

“I think that’s the difference between the reporting I’m doing and most of the coverage we’re reading, in that I am trying to keep people alive on paper, to keep the sense of humanity of who they were,” she continued.

She extends that sense of humanity to Israelis from across the religious and political spectrum, and finds disillusionment on all sides. She talks to Oct. 7 survivors who are appalled and furious and who in many cases became radicalized by what Hamas did and what they stand for, but who also feel betrayed by an army and government that did not protect them.

“When this fence was broken on Oct. 7, I think for a lot of Israelis, our sense of security was broken, too,” said Yaron. For her parents and grandparents — Romanian on her father’s side, Portuguese and Turkish on her mother’s — Israel meant safety. Yaron is now pained to see Israelis, perhaps 40,000 or more, who have left the country since Oct. 7 and have no immediate plans to return. “They’re all saying ‘we don’t trust Israel anymore to protect our kids. We don’t want to live with this anxiety of the army not being there to protect us, while we pay incredibly

high taxes.”

Does Yaron worry that books and films that focus on the horrors of Oct. 7 contribute to this sense of disillusionment, or perhaps harden readers and viewers to the suffering of Palestinians and the possibilities for peace?

“I write about the horrible situation in Gaza in the introduction to the book. It’s devastating that so many innocent people that had nothing to do with the crimes of Hamas paid the heaviest price: the deaths, the hunger, the disease. Most of Gaza is destroyed,” she said. “But primarily, I focus on the Israeli stories out of respect and recognition that the Palestinian stories, especially now, are not my stories to tell, and I do wait for my Palestinian colleagues to do this important work and tell the Palestinian stories.”

And Yaron hasn’t given up on her own hopes that Israel and its neighbors might one day live in peace. In the book she tells the story of Maoz Inon, originally from the Netiv HaAsara moshav on the border with Gaza, who runs a hospitality company that promotes Jewish-Arab coexistence. On Oct. 6, his parents Yakovi and Bilha returned to the moshav after a Friday-night dinner with their five children and 11 grandchildren in Tel Aviv. They died the next day after Hamas fired a rocket-propelled grenade into their house.

Maoz, who after the attack started a demonstration in front of the Knesset that turned into a protest camp, tells Yaron that his parents would have wanted him “to forgive, not to seek revenge.”

“It’s time for Israeli and Palestinians to understand each other’s narratives and pain, to unite in opposition to their politicians, and advocate for peace,” he says.

Yaron is aware that many Jewish authors have been ostracized by pro-Palestinian activists who see no distinction between hawkish nationalists or liberal Israelis who support coexistence with the Palestinians. As she begins promoting her book, she is wary of extremists on both sides, including Palestinian and Jews who seek a one-state solution that excludes one side or the other.

“The places where I met people chanting ‘from the river to the sea’ were in the West Bank by Jewish extremists and in Columbia University by the people from the global left,” she said.

“For me, justice is a compromise. As much as I would like to change some of the mistakes that early Zionism made, we can’t change the past. We can only think about the future and fight about the future. And I wish these [pro-Palestinian activists] would fight on the side of the Israeli left with the people that are trying to promote a solution and a peaceful life for all sides.”

As a liberal Zionist, Yaron said, “I’m alone inside of Israel, and I’m alone here. I really hope these people that I know that want justice, will learn to distinguish between people and their governments and understand that people are never to blame. I really hope this book will be also translated to Arabic, and I really hope it will be a first step of recognizing the humanity.”

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Living InTension amidst the tensions of life

By Lesley Machon

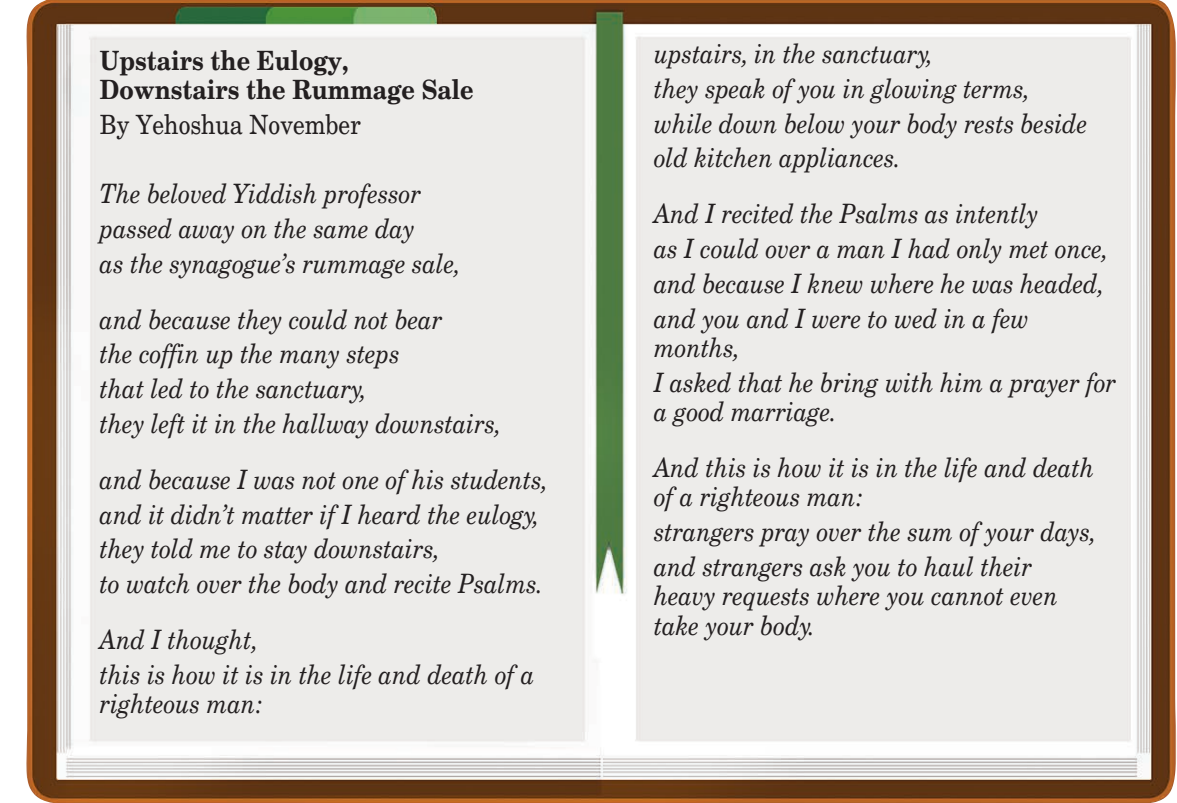


Leslie Machon

We have just started the new month of Elul. The High Holidays are fast approaching, and it is a traditional time for reflection. As I write, I find myself perched at a slightly wobbly table, balancing a cup of chai over my laptop. Outside my window the seasons are shifting, a reality which resonates deeper within many of us. As the seasons change, we watch with despair the events unfolding in Israel and the rising aggression towards Jews around the world.

Since this is my first column as JFSC’s new Jewish Community Chaplain, I will take this opportunity to express how this role has filled me with a deep sense of purpose and gratitude. As our community navigates vulnerable experiences and complex emotions, it is a great privilege to be present throughout blessing, adversity, and everything else in between. Over the years, I’ve supported individuals from infancy to their final moments, and I’m honoured to journey with our community through every stage of life.

I hold a graduate degree in education and have over a decade of experience teaching both teens and adults. My ethical sensitivity and attention to persons has been shaped through experiences accompanying the dying and their loved ones. Volunteering with the Alberta Children’s hospital and being a part of NODA (No One Dies Alone) program inspired me to train as a palliative care chaplain and to pursue certification in thanatology (the study of death from physical, ethical, spiritual, medical, sociological, and psychological perspectives) so that I can better accompany those contending with end of life. I am also



participating in graduate interfaith courses, as I am passionate about interreligious and intercultural dialogue, exchange, and cooperation. I can often be found exploring end-of-life rituals from the standpoint of Canada’s many distinct communities.

Though I have many titles, I am committed to moving slowly and occupying each seat with presence of mind and heart.

Amid the fast pace of today’s world, attention is often compounded by distractions and fragmentation. The simple act of being present—truly present—is profound. Presence is not just about the proximity of physical closeness; it’s about being emotionally and spiritually available. Being available to sharing space and quiet moments with others opens the possibility of deeper connections, attuned listening, and the privilege of being imperfectly human together.

I am eager to make a positive impact on our Jewish kehillah through a range of meaningful initiatives, particularly by leveraging the humanities and the arts to nurture people’s lives and wellbeing. I plan to organize volunteer sessions where youth engage with seniors in art-based activities at various care homes in Calgary. Additionally, I will facilitate a monthly book club for adults, focusing on works by Jewish authors, beginning with Leon Wieseltier’s *Kaddish*. I will also coordinate a hospital visitation program and represent

Jewish interests on Calgary’s Spiritual Care Advisory Committee to ensure comprehensive support for Jewish patients. Furthermore, I will provide grief resources for a range of loss experiences, from the death of a family pet to the passing of loved ones.

In reflecting on how best to introduce myself, I have considered the value I place on presence and my deep belief in the sacred nature of grief and death. Communities benefit from open discussions on these often-taboo topics. Avoiding these universal truths denies us the gifts and wisdom they offer. Addressing grief, difficulties, and death directly helps prevent unresolved emotions, anxiety, and isolation. By encouraging open communication, we foster greater connection and support.

So that is a bit about me...though I’d love to know more about you!

Each month to close this column, I’ll share a resource to explore—a book, film, poem, or painting. This month, I’m highlighting Hasidic poet Yehoshua November, whose work captures the complexities and paradoxes of life and death. One of my favourites is his poem titled: *Upstairs the Eulogy, Downstairs the Rummage Sale*. It is brief yet impactful.

Thank you for welcoming me into this sacred work. I look forward to walking with you.

Please contact me with any questions or ideas, if you would like to get involved, or if you or someone you know would like a hospital, hospice, or continuing care home visit. I’m always up for a tea, so feel free to reach out if you’d like to chat over a cuppa!

Lesley Machon is Chaplain at Jewish Family Services Calgary. She can be reached at Lesleym@jfsc.org



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Hughes brothers to grace cover of NHL video game

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Jack and Luke Hughes play for the New Jersey Devils, and their brother Quinn plays for the Vancouver Canucks, so the trio of NHL stars are no strangers to sibling rivalry.

But there’s at least one place where the brothers won’t have to compete: All three Hughes will grace the cover of the 2025 edition of EA Sports’ popular NHL video game.

They are the first brothers to earn cover honors on the series, whose latest edition is called “NHL 25.” According to ESPN, they are believed to be the first family featured on the cover of any sports video game franchise. The game’s deluxe version will feature all three brothers together, while the U.S. version will showcase Jack and the Canadian and international editions will spotlight Quinn.

“I think all of us are just honored because it’s a hard thing to be on the cover and there’s so many great players in the league,” Quinn Hughes, 24, told ESPN. “For them to decide to attach their brand with the three of us was pretty cool.”

This is not the first time the brothers have made familial NHL history. On Dec. 5, 2023, all three Hughes appeared in the same NHL game when Jack and Luke’s New Jersey Devils beat Quinn’s Vancouver Canucks 6-5 in what was dubbed the “Hughes Bowl.” Jack tallied three points, Luke scored a goal and Quinn had two points of his own.

They were the first trio of Jewish brothers to play in the same NHL game, the second American family to

accomplish the feat, and the ninth set of brothers to do it in the sport’s history.

Hockey runs in the Hughes family. Their father Jim, who is not Jewish, played hockey for Providence College and has worked as an assistant coach and front office executive for NHL teams. Their mother, Ellen Weinberg-Hughes, who is Jewish, was a three-sport athlete at the University of New Hampshire and played for the U.S. women’s hockey team at the 1992 Women’s World Championships. Weinberg-Hughes was inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame this year.

The Hughes are also the first American family to have three siblings picked in the first round of the NHL draft. Quinn was selected seventh in 2018, Jack became the first Jewish player to go No. 1 overall in 2019 and Luke was drafted fourth in 2021.

Since the three brothers broke into the league, they have each enjoyed considerable success, leading to their star turn on the cover of “NHL 25.”

Quinn, who was named captain of the Canucks prior to last season – making him the youngest active captain in the NHL – was an All-Star and won the NHL’s James Norris Memorial Trophy as the league’s



Jack, Luke, and Quinn Hughes on the EA Sports NHL 25 cover.

best defenseman last season. Jack, 23, is a two-time All-Star who in 2022-2023 set a Devils franchise record with 99 points. Luke, 20, was named to the NHL’s All-Rookie team last season after a record-breaking career at the University of Michigan.

Now, each brother can add “video game cover athlete” to their resumes.

“This is obviously a pretty special accolade and something I think every NHLer wants to accomplish or grows up and thinks, ‘Wow, it’d be really cool to be on the cover,’” Jack Hughes said. “We were the same way growing up, and it’s another really special opportunity that we grabbed at when it came toward us, and I think we’re really excited with the final product.”

Striving *Cont. from page 7*

align with our beliefs? How can we strive for wholeness in our relationships with others, with ourselves, and with God?

This introspection takes on added weight given the challenges our global Jewish community faces. Israel grapples with war and internal divisions. In the Diaspora, we confront rising antisemitism and questions about our place in increasingly polarized societies. These realities can leave us feeling fragmented, anxious, and incomplete.

The call to be "tamim" - whole - rings out even more clearly amidst these difficulties. It reminds us that our strength lies not in perfection but in our continual striving for integrity and authenticity. It encourages us to face our challenges with honesty and courage, acknowledging our fears and shortcomings while working to overcome them.

The shofar's blast serves as a call to this journey

towards wholeness. Its piercing sound cuts through our complacency, urging us to mend the fractures in our lives and in our world. It calls us to reunite the scattered pieces of ourselves and our community.

This Rosh Hashanah offers an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the pursuit of "tamim" - wholeness - in our personal lives, in our relationships, and in our shared mission as a people.

The year ahead may hold both joys and sorrows, triumphs and setbacks. By embracing the concept of “tamim”, we equip ourselves to face whatever comes with grace and authenticity. We Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein Beth Shalom 5784 can find the courage to confront our imperfections and the strength to work towards positive change.

Our tradition teaches that supporting one another is crucial in this journey. Together, we can create spaces of understanding, compassion, and growth. We can approach the new year with hope, recognizing that even in challenging times, we have the capacity to heal and to create a more complete and just world. By

striving for personal wholeness, we contribute to the strength and unity of our entire community.

As I begin my journey with this community, I am inspired by the resilience and warmth I've encountered. Together, let us support each other as we strive to fulfill the divine call:

"Walk before Me and be whole."

שנה טובה ומחוקה - May you have a good and sweet new year.

Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein, Beth Shalom, Edmonton



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High Holiday kids’ books are a celebration of Jewish diversity

By Penny Schwartz

This story originally appeared on JTA.

The enduring traditions of the High Holiday season take shape across time and place in the latest crop of children’s books about Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

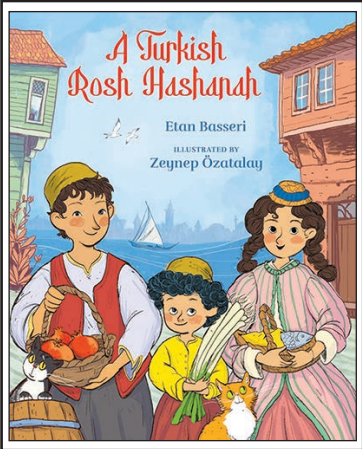
This year’s books transport readers back to biblical times; whiz them to the old-world streets of Istanbul; remember the etrog trade in 18th-century New York City; and celebrate harvest festivals from very different culture. All of them beckon families with stories that display the rich diversity in Jewish culture.

Here’s your roundup of new children’s High Holidays books for 2024.

“A Turkish Rosh Hashanah”

Etan Basseri; illustrated by Zeynep Özatalay
Kalaniot Books; ages 5-9

In this heartwarming story, Rafael, a young Jewish boy in Istanbul, wishes his grandmother Nona, and his cousins Alegra and Leon, “anyada buena,” the Judeo-Spanish greeting for a happy new year shared by Sephardic Jews at Rosh Hashanah. Kids follow the cousins at the bustling outdoor market, where they help Nona shop for the ceremonial foods they will enjoy that evening at their traditional Sephardic meal. The cousins’ excitement is briefly dampened when an older kid bullies them while they shop. But Alegra courageously uses her voice to stand up to him, leading the way for Rafael and Leon to speak out, as well. A playful pack of friendly cats gets in on the action, keeping it light. When the family gathers for the holiday, Nona praises the kids for their team work. The book concludes with an author’s note about Sepharic customs and a handy glossary.

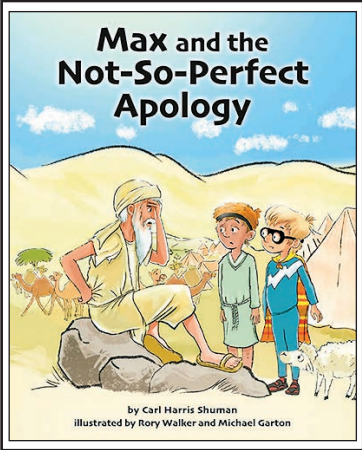


“Max and the Not-So-Perfect Apology”

Carl Harris Shuman;
illustrated by Rory Walker and Michael Garton
Apples & Honey Press; ages 6-8

In this cartoon-style page-turner, readers meet Max, a young inventor who saves time in the morning by

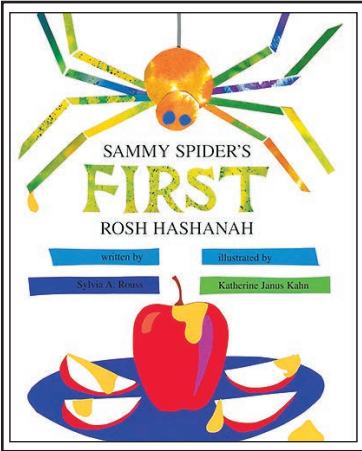
washing only one side of his face. When Max and his best friend Emma join forces for their Torah-class project about the biblical story of Jacob and his brother Esau, Max is determined to win first prize. But when their teacher arranges different teams, jealousy and feelings of being left out threaten their friendship. It’s a perfect set-up for a fun-filled adventure when Max powers up his time-travel machine, this time without his co-pilot Jin Emma. He lands in Ancient Israel, where plenty of jokes between Max and Jacob, his son Joseph and Esau will have kids chuckling. There are meaningful lessons to be shared about forgiveness that reflect the themes of Yom Kippur.



“An Etrog from Across the Sea”

Deborah Bodin Cohen and Kerry Olitzky;
illustrated by Stacey Dressen McQueen
Kar-Ben; ages 4-10

Award-winning authors Deborah Bodin Cohen and Kerry Olitzky team up in a charming Sukkot tale lavishly illustrated by Stacey Dressen. Set in the early 18th century, a Sephardic Jewish family travels by stagecoach from their country home to New York City to their grandfather Luis’ large house. Leah, her brother Aaron and their mother eagerly await Papa’s return from his travels from Corsica in time for Rosh Hashanah. In a postcard, Papa has promised to bring home a perfect etrog — the fragrant citrus fruit used during Sukkot. But when Papa doesn’t arrive, they fear something is wrong. Grandpapa Luis comforts Rachel with a beautiful silver etrog cup. But will her papa return for Sukkot, bringing the promised etrog? To everyone’s relief, Papa returns home just in time, and the etrog finds its home in Leah’s silver cup. In an author’s note,



families learn that the story is based on the life of Luis Moises Gomez (1660-1740), a prosperous merchant and trader from Britain who settled in New York.

“Mixed-Up Mooncakes”

Christina Matula and Erica Lyons;
illustrated by Tracy Subisak
Quill-Tree Books; ages 4-8

A Jewish mother who lives in Hong Kong is one of the co-authors of a story featuring a young girl whose family celebrates two harvest holidays: Sukkot and the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. Ruby shops separately with her Chinese Nainai and her Jewish Zayde for supplies for the holidays, but she craves some way to combine them. Like other recent books such as “Two New Years” and “The Very Best Sukkah,” the book illuminates connections between different traditions for readers who appreciate learning about the world and want to see contemporary models of Jewish family represented in children’s literature.

“Sammy Spider’s First Book of Jewish Holidays”

Sylvia A. Rouss; illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn
Kar-Ben; ages 1-4

Possibly the most famous character in Jewish children’s literature, Sammy Spider is back in board-book form in an introductory text about the Jewish holiday cycle. Starting with the fall holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah, the book continues through Shavuot in spring, showing the friendly young arachnid who enjoys spinning his web in the home of a Jewish family.

“One More Story, Tata!”

Julie Salamon; illustrated by Jill Weber
Minerva Books; ages 4-8

In their newest collaboration, Julie Salamon and Jill Weber hit the mark with a charming, beautifully illustrated intergenerational story about a young girl named Ruby, her grandparents, and great grandmother Tata. Every weekend, when Ruby visits, Tata enchants her with stories imagined from her dreams. On Friday nights, they gather around the Shabbat table and light candles, share challah and enjoy a festive meal.

“Ping-Pong Shabbat: The True Story of Champion Estee Ackerman”

Ann Diamant Koffsky; illustrated by Abigail Rajunov
Little Bee Books; ages 4-8

Kids will cheer as they follow a rising young ping-pong star named Estee who aces all her competitions. Every Shabbat, Estee takes a break from the fast-paced game to go to synagogue and later, to enjoy the company of her family and friends. But when Estee qualifies for the National championship that will be held on a Saturday, she faces a hard choice. In the back pages of this action-packed, cartoon-style book, readers discover the real-life story of Estee Ackerman, who gave up the chance to compete in the national table tennis championship when she was just 11-years-old, because it was held on a Saturday. The following year, Estee won the gold medal at the nationals, gratified by the knowledge that she had honored her values and her religion.

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A Jewish burial in rural Saskatchewan

By Tzemach Feller

It started with a phone call. Rabbi Avrohom Simmonds got a call from an American phone number. The caller was reaching out on behalf of her sister Amy*, who lived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her husband of 35 years, Max* had passed away, and his final requests had been to be buried in Rural Saskatchewan—and in a simple pine box.

Simmonds is the Chabad representative in Regina, Saskatchewan. It made sense to call a rabbi, the sister thought. She had done some research and learned that burial in a simple pine box is a Jewish practice.

But Amy had no idea that Max was Jewish. Not once, in 35 years of marriage, had he mentioned it. Why would his final request be to be buried like a Jew?

Could it be? Simmonds put them in touch with his colleague, Rabbi Raphael Kats, of Chabad of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Rabbi Kats now did his own research, confirming Max was Jewish and even learning his Jewish name. Incredibly, Max and his parents had belonged to the same Cleveland, Ohio synagogue where Rabbi Kats and his wife Sarah had been married. Max's widow had found a rural, Christian cemetery, and now, as she looked into the simple pine box, she had gotten in touch with Chabad. The rabbis, of course, suggested that Max receive a full Jewish burial.

"For me the most important thing is that it's a pine box and a rural cemetery," Amy told Rabbi Kats. "I want to honor him by giving him a Jewish burial, but that's secondary to me; Judaism wasn't a big part of his life."

The first Jewish burial in Lipton, Saskatchewan, in more than 70 years

Amy was willing to follow the *halachic* guide-lines for Jewish burial in a non-Jewish cemetery, which include purchasing the nearby plots and putting up a fence—essentially creating a Jewish cemetery within the existing one. But then the cemetery told her that they'd need a week's notice to open a grave.

As it happens, Saskatchewan, of all places, has multiple rural Jewish cemeteries. They trace their existence to the beginning of the 20th century, when Baron Maurice de Hirsch founded Jewish farming settlements across the Canadian prairie. One such cemetery is located in the tiny village of Lipton, Saskatchewan, which was once home to a Jewish farming colony. The last time someone had been buried there was in 1951.

Rabbis Kats and Simmonds had each independently suggested Lipton. Then they got another call from the sister, who'd been doing her own research, and suggested a cemetery she had discovered—the one in

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Lipton. Now they turned to that option. Rabbi Simmonds called Beth Jacob, the Regina synagogue that tends to the cemetery, and asked about the possibility of someone being buried there. They gave the green light.

"I told the widow, 'Look, we're not prophets. G-d communicates with us through different events, serendipity, Divine personal providence.'" Kats related. "Max and his parents belonged to the same shul where Sarah and I got married—what are the chances of that? What are the chances you contact a rabbi who has that connection to the family? What are the chances that two rabbis—and your sister—each came up with the Lipton Jewish Cemetery independently?"

Amy agreed.

Rabbi Kats, who is a *kohen*, could not be directly

involved in the process of preparing the deceased for burial. So two of Rabbi Simmonds' nephews, rabbinical students Chaim Yitzchok and Menachem Mendel Heidingsfeld, drove six hours from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Regina, where they met up with Rabbi Simmonds. The trio then drove another three hours to Outlook, Saskatchewan, where the deceased was located and where they performed the *taharah*, the ritual cleansing of the body.

They then drove another three hours to the Jewish cemetery in Lipton, where—for the first time in more than 70 years—a Jewish person was laid to rest.

As was his final request, Yehuda Dovid Ben Nosson was brought to his eternal rest in a Jewish rural cemetery, in a simple pine box.

**These names in the article were changed by request.*

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filled with love, peace
and hope.*



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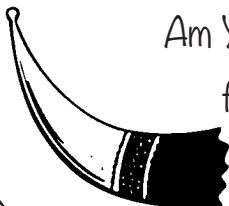


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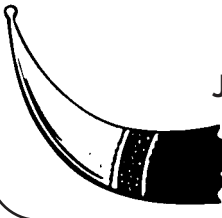



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& Family



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filled with love,
peace and hope.
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filled with love,
peace and hope
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& Jed Gaines





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Rosh Hashanah filled with
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from Miriam Milavsky
and family



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to everyone
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the best this Rosh Hashanah
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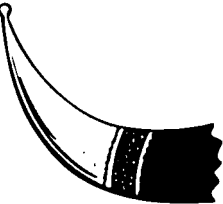
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from Al Osten

Best wishes for a healthy, happy
New Year. Am Yisrael Chai,



from
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Family

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Am Yisrael Chai.



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bring joy!
Am Yisrael Chai.


from
Faigel & Len Shapiro
and family




Wishing everyone
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love, peace and hope.
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Dorothy Hanson,
Sheldon Shagal and family

Wishing everyone a sweet New Year
filled with love, peace & hope

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Rosh Hashanah filled with love,
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May we all be inscribed
in the Book of Life.
Wishing you and yours
all the joys of a Happy New Year.

לשנה טובה תכתבו

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love, peace and hope.

from Marina Paperny
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bring joy!
Am Yisrael Chai.

from
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Wishing the entire community,
a Happy New Year

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Shana Tova from
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love, peace and hope

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a New Year filled with love
and happiness



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love, peace and hope

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Wishing family and friends
all the best this Rosh Hashanah



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שנה טובה

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filled with love, peace and hope.

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a Rosh Hashanah filled with
love, peace and hope.

from Jeff Eichler
& Rich Eichler



Best wishes for a year
filled with good health,
peace and happiness



from
Louise Glin
and family

Wishing a Happy New Year to the entire community

From all of us at
Alberta Jewish News:

Deb Shatz, Dan Moser, Sandra Edwards,
Sandy Fayerman and
Maxine Fischbein.



BRING THEM HOME NOW

from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

Holiness by the Numbers

The Torah is not very informative about how it chose the date for the holiday that we celebrate as “Rosh Hashanah,” which has no obvious historical or agricultural explanation.

Among the Jewish commentators who tried to deal with this question was the eminent twelfth-century philosopher, poet and grammarian Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra—who was firmly convinced of the scientific validity of mathematical astrology. His observations appear in his commentary to the brief passage in the book of Leviticus that mentions among the holy days of the calendar the annual “day of the sounding of horns”.

He introduces his explanation as a confidential secret: “I shall be giving to you hints of mysteries. If you pay careful attention, then perhaps you might understand them.”

Ibn Ezra’s exposition is wrapped in obscure mathematical terminology, but the gist of his reasoning seems to go as follows: The principal dates on the Hebrew religious calendar follow an arithmetic logic, coinciding with the beginning, quarter-points and the mid-point (days 1, 7, 15) of the months. Whereas the concluding days of Passover and Sukkot mark the beginnings of the respective fourth quarters of the first and seventh months, the fact that Sukkot has an additional eighth day, while the last day of Passover is the seventh, has esoteric numerological significance.

There is no question that the Torah treats the beginning of the first month, the one that later came to be called “Nissan,” as the real starting point of the religious year. Interestingly, Ibn Ezra derives its importance not from its being the anniversary of the exodus, as mainly from its association with the construction of the Tabernacle, which was completed at the beginning of that month—and will again be the case for the third Temple according to the prophecies of Ezekiel.

The dates of the Spring festivals are paralleled in the Fall. Each of those months is the seventh one since its predecessor, an indication of the special metaphysical status that the Torah assigns to the number seven. “Hence Rosh Hashanah is the greatest

of them all” by virtue of its identification with the seventh month.

As it happens, Ibn Ezra was not the first Jewish interpreter to adopt this approach to explaining the Hebrew festival calendar. A strikingly similar theory was professed by Philo of Alexandria, the first-century Jewish philosopher. Philo was strongly influenced by the teachings of the philosophical school known as “neo-Pythagoreanism” which held that the mathematical structure of reality furnishes the basis for a mystical understanding of creation, in accordance with a system called “arithmology.” He reports that he composed a separate treatise to the subject, but that work has not survived.

To the best of our knowledge, Philo and his writings were not known to Abraham Ibn Ezra or his Jewish contemporaries in the Middle Ages; though they were quite popular among Christian scholars who were strongly attracted to his allegorical method of scriptural interpretation. Nevertheless, it would appear that Ibn Ezra had access to translations of ancient neo-Pythagorean works, and that he applied them independently to the study of Jewish texts, producing results that were remarkably similar to Philo’s.

Thus, when Philo discusses the Sabbath in his commentary to the Ten Commandments, he does not focus on its overt themes as a commemoration of the creation or of the liberation from Egyptian slavery—but rather on the significance of observing it on “the sacred seventh day.” The metaphysical, arithmological quality of this primary numeral is what makes it the appropriate key to understanding the many ethical and social laws that are linked to the seventh year, such as the release of Hebrew bondmen, forgiveness of debts, and allowing the earth to rest on the sabbatical and Jubilee years. Multiplying seven by four gives us twenty-eight, which Philo—not quite accurately—identifies as the total of days in a lunar cycle.

Because the world was created in six days, it was fitting for the creator to praise and sanctify the seventh day. Philo rhapsodizes: “I doubt whether anyone could adequately celebrate the properties of the number seven, for they are beyond all words.” He goes

on to show how this magnificent number—including its squares, cubes and other derivatives and combinations—reflects patterns of geometry, astronomy (such as the numbers of known planets and of stars in major constellations), the distribution of equinoxes, lengths of biological gestation, stages of personality development, and much more.

The fact that the Torah commands the observance of the major public festivals at the times of the equinoxes, each of which falls in the seventh month since its predecessor, is thus consistent with the logic of nature and with mathematics.

The number ten also occupies an honoured position in Philo’s theory of numbers. He enumerates ten holy days in the Hebrew calendar. These include (1) the sabbath, (2) the monthly new moon, (3) Passover and (4) the feast of unleavened bread (which he counts separately), (5) the day of the “sacred sheaf” (when the ‘omer of barley is offered), (6) the feast of seven sevens (Shavuot, concluding a count of seven weeks); and the holy days of the seventh month: (7) the festival of the sacred moon, or the feast of trumpets; (8) the fast (Yom Kippur) and (9) Tabernacles (Sukkot). The total reaches ten if we accept his assertion that the first festival “is that which anyone will perhaps be astonished to hear called a festival. This festival is every day”!

As a loyal Jew, Philo admired Moses as a prophet, philosopher and lawgiver. But sometimes it seems that his greatest accomplishment lay in the fact that he “always adhered to the principles of numerical science, which he knew by close observation to be a paramount factor in all that exists. Therefore Moses never enacted any law great or small without calling to his aid—and, as it were, accommodating to his enactment—its appropriate number.”

In preparation for the holiday season, maybe we should brush up on our mathematical skills—if only to count our blessings.

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For info contact Sydney Truax: struax@jewishcalgary.org.



We kicked-off the 2024 UJA Campaign with *Finding Your Voice* on September 8

The community gathered to hear from Debbie Lechtman, Matthew Nouriel, and Amy Albertson (pictured above, from left). The event was truly inspiring, showcasing a range of unique and diverse voices, especially for our younger generation.

View event photos at our Facebook page: [@CalgaryJewishFederation](https://www.facebook.com/CalgaryJewishFederation)

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