

Bibas family is finally home

By Lior Zaltzman

(Kveller) - This isn't the ending we wanted for Shiri Bibas and her children, but after 16 months, Shiri's body is finally home and laid to rest with her two beloved children, Ariel, 4, and baby Kfir, less than a year old when he was murdered. Shiri was 32 when she was killed, 32 when she became a harrowing symbol of the October 7 Hamas attack, holding her sweet redheaded boys while being taken into Gaza.

Shiri's body was meant to have been returned on Thursday along with the bodies of her boys and Oded Lifshitz, one of the founders of Kibbutz Nir Oz, where they lived. However, the body that was found inside the casket meant to be hers turned out to be that of an unknown woman from Gaza, agonizingly prolonging her family's uncertainty and anguish. In the late hours of Friday evening and early Saturday morning, it was announced that a body believed to be Shiri's was on its way to Israel. Despite the time, dozens of Israelis gathered at Abu Kabir Institute of Forensic Medicine with flags and yellow ribbons, hoping to give Shiri all the love and solidarity they could on that final journey, making sure she wasn't alone. And in the early hours of Shabbat, the news we all dreaded about her death became official.

"Tonight, our Shiri has returned home," the Bibas family revealed in a statement. "After the identification process at the Institute of Forensic Medicine, this morning we received the news we feared the most. Our Shiri was murdered in captivity and has now returned home to her sons, husband, sister, and all her family to rest. Despite our fears for their fate, we kept hoping we would get to hug them again, and now we are broken and grieving."

"For 16 months, we sought certainty, and now that we have it, there is no comfort in it, but we hope for the beginning of a closure," they continued. "Shiri was a wonderful mother to Ariel and Kfir, a loving partner

Team Dustpans clean up at JNF Tourney



Team Dustpans emerged victorious at the JNF Edmonton Floor Hockey Tournament on Feb. 23. Yasher Koach to the organizers, sponsors, volunteers, team captains and players. Everyone had a great day of friendly competition!

to Yarden, a devoted sister and aunt, and an amazing friend. In this difficult time, we continue to demand the immediate return of all the remaining hostages. Nothing is more important than that. There will be no healing without them."

Her beloved Kibbutz Nir Oz community shared a moving eulogy for the woman who touched so many of them.

"Shiri, who was kidnapped when she was 32, was born and grew up in Nir Oz," it reads. "Through the years, she was a devoted caretaker of the children of the kibbutz as part of the Department of Education and was deeply loved by anyone who knew her. In the past two years, she worked as an accountant for the kibbutz, but before everything, she was a doting mother, who devoted herself to parenting with endless love."

"Shiri, Yarden, Ariel and Kfir loved their home in Nir Oz," the statement continues, "the patio, the grass, where they spend countless happy moments as a family and from which they were all taken hostage on October 7. Shiri's parents, Yossi and Margit Silberman, were killed that terrible day. Today, after 16 unbearable months, the impossibly painful circle has closed for the family, and in the next days, she will be laid, together with her little boys, to eternal rest in Israeli soil. Shiri leaves behind a husband, a sister, nephews, family and friends who love and remember her always through her smile, her kindness, the joy of life that she spread everywhere. May her memory, and Ariel and Kfir's, be a blessing."

While that video of Shiri's capture will be impossible to forget, so are the other images of her we've seen in

Continued on page 29

Calgary Jewish Academy celebrates a fun-filled Tu B'Shevat



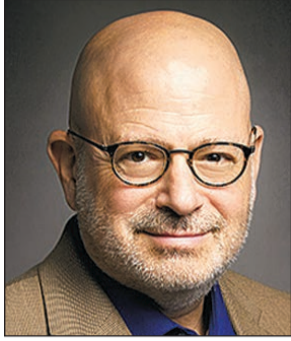
Tu B'Shevat at the CJA was a celebration of nature, community, and tradition! From planting seeds with the Jewish National Fund to a vibrant Grade 3-led celebration, students connected with the holiday's message of growth and responsibility. Everyone enjoyed a snack featuring the seven species of Israel, reflecting on our shared commitment to nurture and protect the earth.

Faith and Fabric on Art and Scroll Studio: March 5

By Shelley Werner



Diane Fredgant



Rabbi Mark Glickman

On Wednesday March 5, 2025 Art and Scroll Studio and the American Guild of Judaic Art welcome Rabbi Mark Glickman as he explains the significance behind Judaic coverings, and artist Diane Fredgant who delves into the intersection of faith and creativity through her silk paintings. Her work as an artist represents a wide range of Jewish beliefs, from Kabbalistic ideas to Torah commandments. She specializes in custom works of functional art, combining custom designs and spirituality with millennia of Jewish tradition.

Rabbi Mark Glickman is spiritual leader of Temple B'nai Tikvah in Calgary and has both a keen appreciation for Judaic art and expertise in the interpretation of Torah texts. Rabbi Glickman will share his deep understanding of Judaic coverings, focusing on the talit, challah and torah covers.

Calgary's Temple B'nai Tikvah welcomed Rabbi Mark S. Glickman as their Rabbi in July 2016. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio and raised in suburban Chicago, Rabbi Glickman graduated cum laude from Washington University in St. Louis in 1985. He received his rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati in 1990. His first book *Sacred Treasure: The Cairo Genizah* (Jewish Lights Publishing)

was published in 2011. His second book *Stolen Words: The Nazi Plunder of Jewish Books* (Jewish Publication Society) was released in 2016.

Portland based artist Diane Fredgant's work as a silk artist represents a wide range of Jewish beliefs, from Kabbalistic ideas to Torah commandments. For the last 25 years she has specialized in custom works satisfying each customer's desires and spirituality to create chuppahs, challah covers, and tallitot, among other forms. Her recent work focuses on the Modern Mishkan installation: an artistically interactive, educational, and spiritual experience designed to honour the Mishkan of the Torah and the key commandments that regulate Jewish life.

At age 23, she began her career as a stone and clay sculptor. Making use of her advertising degree, she worked in Los Angeles as a print production manager, where she developed her eye for detail and colour. After moving to Albuquerque, she redefined her artistic path by learning the art of silk painting and is still fascinated by the medium and learning new techniques 25 years later. Silk's unique qualities make it perfect for the wearable, practical art that Diane flavours. Pulling inspiration from Jewish texts, the natural world, and conversation, she mixes holiness and beauty in her art. Diane strives to capture each person's unique relationship with the divine. She is honoured to be able to share her art with those around her. Diane is a past president of ORA Northwest Jewish Artists and is a member of the American Guild of Judaic Art.

In creating her custom work she says, "It begins with a conversation." People engage her to create designs for the milestones in their lives. Often she is asked to create a tallit (prayer shawl) for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but people also commission her to make other heirlooms, like the chuppah (canopy) for a wedding.

After someone commissions her, Diane asks them questions and listens until they trust her and open up. The moment they let her in, she can see what they see. Then she captures their vision on fabric to create a design that is uniquely significant to them.

Diane's special project is a "Modern Mishkan." The Torah speaks of a portable holy space called the Mishkan. G-d dwelled in the rooms, and priests performed their sacred tasks between the walls. In biblical times, we offered G-d sacrifices. Today, we offer prayer.

Ten years ago, a vision came to her, and with it a calling: I would build a modern version of the Mishkan. "Imagine walking into the Torah, an eight-foot-tall scroll embracing you, covered with the 613 Mitzvot in English on the outside and Hebrew on the inside. The Modern Mishkan connects art and faith, which I have strived to achieve my whole career."

After silk painting for 25 years, silk still amazes her. She says she is lucky she gets to help people refine and define their spirituality and then find the right shapes and colours to capture elements of their relationship to Judaism. A lengthy stint as a print production manager at an advertising firm heightened her innate attention to detail and sense of colour. But what she feels best about is that she creates every piece with care and love. "I get to work on things that are meaningful to my clients, and that adds meaning to my life."

Faith and Fabric will be the featured show on Wednesday March 5 2025, 7:00 pm MST on Art and Scroll Studio, a live zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaic art.

To view short preview: <https://bit.ly/FaithandFabricPreview>

To register for free tickets: <https://bit.ly/FaithandFabricTickets>



Rainbow Leaves by fabric artist Diane Fredgant

REGISTRATION AND HIRING IS NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER OF 2025

July Session: July 6 - 27 August Session: July 30 - Aug. 13

Wonder Week: July 6 - 13, July 30 - Aug. 6

Wonder Week 1 & 2: July 6 - 20. Wonder Weekend: Aug. 6 - 10



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Team Israel makes history at the Invictus Games

By AJNews Staff

We already know that Israel's injured heroes are champions and they were true to form at the 2025 Invictus Games held in Canada this month.

From February 6 – 16, 2025, 28 national teams made up of 500 athletes competed in the Invictus Games Vancouver | Whistler 2025. This year, competing across multiple sports, Team Israel was exclusively represented by a total of 22 Beit Halochem members proving that resilience knows no limits! The athletes ranged in ages from the youngest – just 20 years old – to the oldest, 53.

With representation from each Beit Halochem Centre, Team Israel brought home gold, silver, and bronze; but, winning medals at the Invictus Games Vancouver | Whistler 2025 was just a bonus. Team Israel rose to unexpected challenges – forming a Wheelchair Curling team without any experience or training and joining a multi-national Sitting Volleyball squad – demonstrating that teamwork is without borders.

Perseverance, determination, and strength was on full display by Team Israel at the Invictus Games 2025!

All four centres of Beit Halochem were represented among the athletes: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Be'er Sheva, and Haifa. They competed in 6 sports including:

Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding, coached by Inbal Yahav, Indoor Rowing, Sitting Volleyball, Swimming, coached by Eran Groumi, Wheelchair Basketball, coached by Ariel Ottolenghi and Wheelchair Curling, coached by Eran Groumi. Of the members on Beit Halochem.- Team Israel, 7 were wounded in the current *Swords of Iron* war. The team won 13 medals including 6 gold – 5 of which were in swimming events. The sixth was in Wheelchair Basketball.

Once again the Israeli team demonstrated the true inclusive spirit of the Invictus Games.

Although Team Israel was not registered to compete in Wheelchair Curling, it was approached by the Canadian hosts with the opportunity to compete in this year's Invictus Games. Without any experience or exposure to curling, four swimmers accepted the challenge and formed a team led by swimming coach, Eran Groumi. After just a few hours of training, Team Israel's athletes went on to defeat the Canadian hosts for a Bronze medal win!



Team Israel, powered by Beit Halochem won 13 medals at the 2025 Invictus Games at Whistler this month. Photo supplied.

Another sport for which Israel hadn't originally registered was Sitting Volleyball. The team, once again, was approached by the Canadian hosts and encouraged to join an "Unconquered" team, made up of competitors from various nations without enough competitors to form a single national team. Five members of Team Israel volunteered. The "Unconquered" team was made up of the Israeli competitors, two from the team of Afghani Exiles, a Lithuanian, an Italian, and a Ukrainian. The team was coached by a Ukrainian coach.

Yasher Koach to the athletes and coaches and to everyone at Beit Halochem and the Invictus Games!

Alberta's Junior High students will learn about the realities of antisemitism in new social studies curriculum

In an effort to make sure all students, including those from the Jewish community, feel safe, welcome and cared for in classrooms, the Government of Alberta will begin to ensure that the new draft Grades 7 to 9 social studies curriculum will teach students

about the prejudice that groups face – including antisemitism.

As a part of the curriculum development, Alberta officials say the province engaged extensively with education partners and Jewish organizations over 2023-24 to inform the development of the curriculum. Later this winter, additional engagement is expected, to ensure that inclusion of the content will enable

students to take a stand against rising antisemitism.

"I firmly believe we must do everything possible to combat rising antisemitism and educate young Albertans about the realities of antisemitism. Ensuring all students learn about the injustices faced by those who historically were, and continue to be, marginalized, or who have experienced discrimination will help us confront hate and build stronger communities," said Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides.

The inclusion of antisemitism in the new draft

Continued on page 13

BEIT HALOCHEM CANADA

DISABLED VETERANS OF ISRAEL

PRESENTS

beyond the 7th

STRONGER TOGETHER

SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY, MAY 22

Returning to Calgary – directly from Israel!

Join us for an inspiring evening with Israel's courageous Heroes injured on October 7 and beyond. Their stories of determination and triumph are accompanied by exceptional Israeli musicians.

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Be part of a team that makes a difference! Go to calgaryjcc.com/employment to find out more or scan QR code.

A Magical Evening awaits

By Shael Gelfand

The CMDA Western team, under the dynamic leadership of CMDA Western Region Director Sharon Fraiman, is already hard at work planning for the annual spring fund-raising gala.

“We’re calling it CMDA’s Magical Garden Gala and I’m so excited about this year’s event on May 4,” says Fraiman, adding, “It’s going to be a spectacular evening with fantastic food, lively entertainment, captivating speakers and many opportunities to support CMDA.”

Don Schapira, who was born in Israel and now living in Calgary will be the Gala Emcee. Schapira is an international speaker advocating for Israel throughout Canada and around the world. “Like so many of us,

my family has been directly impacted by the attack on October 7,” says Schapira. “It’s so important that we give back, and supporting CMDA is one of the best things we can do for the people in Israel. Let’s all make a commitment”.

Sharon Fraiman always brings some unique performers to every gala and this year is no exception. Israeli Mentalist Nevo Abutbul, touted as the youngest mentalist in the world, will demonstrate his unique talents in a most entertaining way. At just 17 he was a finalist on Israel’s Got Talent, a cast member of Hadshot-Hboker-CH12, a professional mind reader-performing all over the world.

The Gala will also feature a special performance by pianist Dr. Thomas Yu, one of the world’s most accomplished amateur musicians, who has performed with symphonies from South Africa to Paris and Calgary.

An important part of the Gala will be updating guests on the situation on the ground in Israel and guests will get the latest from Keynote speaker Uri Shacham, MDA’s Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, and MDA’s liaison to the Red Cross/Red Crescent. A

trained paramedic who has responded to attacks throughout Israel and to disasters around the world, Mr. Shacham plays a critical role in Israel’s international relief efforts and was among the first medical responders to arrive in Haiti after the devastating earthquake in 2010.

Ticket for the Gala which features a Kosher reception and dinner cost \$180 and there are some tremendous sponsorship opportunities as well.

“Every year the community shows its support for CMDA with hundreds attending our gala, but the need in Israel has never been greater,” says Sharon Fraiman, adding, “MDA volunteers and staff continue to put their lives on the line insuring emergency medical services are just minutes away for every Israeli. Our support helps by providing the ambulances, medi-scooters, and medical equipment so the pros can do their jobs.”

This year an EV First Responders was generously donated by Lenny Shapiro in memory of Dr. Fanny Wedro Z"L.

For tickets and details call 587-435-5808 or email sfraiman@cmdai.org.

SAVE THE DATE



Canadian
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CALGARY CHAPTER

TICKETS:
\$180
Kosher Dinner
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CMDA's Magical Garden GALA





May 4th, 2025

The Carriage House Hotel & Conference Center
Reception: 6 p.m. | Evening Program: 7 p.m.



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CEREMONIES

Don
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ENTERTAINMENT

Dr. Thomas
Yu



FEATURING

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First Response EV
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Dr. Fanny Wedro Z"L





It's been a busy month at Talmud Torah. In addition to their classroom studies and celebration of Tu B'Shvat, the staff and students enjoyed a fun wacky hair day. Everyone got into the spirit of the day including Principal Darin Johnson and Teacher Shira Spring (pictured above). Despite the snowy weather, many interested families attended last month's Kindergarten open house. Families learned about the single-track Hebrew Bilingual and Judaic Studies program for grades K-6, about the board's role and its partnership with Edmonton Public Schools.

TTS open house was cold outside but warm inside

By Natalie Soroka

On a very cold and snowy evening in late January, Talmud Torah School and Talmud Torah Society hosted a Kindergarten Open House, warmly welcoming parents and children to explore our inviting learning environment. The event highlighted the school's commitment to individualized learning, Jewish values, independent thinking, and creative expression, offering families a glimpse into daily routines and the nurturing atmosphere that supports young learners.

Principal Darin Johnson, teacher Shira Spring, and

Edmonton Talmud Torah (Society) President Noga Vaisblat were on hand to greet families. Adding to the excitement, Ari, the TT lion mascot, welcomed families with high-fives, while children had the chance to spin the wheel and win fun prizes!

Attendees had the opportunity to learn about a day in the life of a Kindergarten student at TT and explore our unique, inclusive K-6 single-track integrated Hebrew Bilingual and Judaic Studies program through Edmonton Public Schools.

Families also discovered that Edmonton Talmud Torah has been a cornerstone of Jewish education for over 125 years. They learned about the Talmud Torah Society's longstanding partnership with Edmonton Public Schools since 1975, which embraces the values of accountability, collaboration, integrity, and equity, alongside the core values of Jewish living.

Attendees also had an opportunity to learn all about the Society's Kinder Out of School Care (OSC) program, which complements the half-day Kindergarten through Hebrew immersion, creative play, arts and crafts, science experiments, music, movement, and special events. Kinder OSC follows a learn-through-play philosophy, fostering an environment that encourages self-expression, creativity, and success. Director Sacha Brodie was available to answer questions and provide additional information.

In addition to welcoming our current Early Learning Centre families, it was wonderful to reconnect with TT alumni who now have Kindergarten-aged children, as well as meet brand-new families interested in joining the TT community.

Come home to TT for Kindergarten! If your child was born in 2020, they are eligible to register for Kindergarten, and we welcome you to reach out to us for more information. Please call the Society office at 780-481-3377 or email nataliesoroka@talmudtorahsociety.com.



Spinning the wheel and winning prizes at the TT Open House.

Important Notice

The Edmonton Chevra Kadisha overwhelmingly passed the following motion at their February 23 Special Meeting of Society members: "Establishing an interfaith section under the auspices of the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha in the unconsecrated section of the new north cemetery." More information about this new initiative to come.

Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association festivalHATZAFON EDMONTON Jewish Community Charitable Foundation

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Enjoy AIFDA's annual Israeli dance showcase featuring the Rikud & Aviv dancers and guest performance by the South Asian Arts Movement!

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Check out our community calendar at jewishedmonton.org

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Your bridge to Jewish Edmonton



A MESSAGE FROM CEO STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

We are approaching the holiday of Purim, a time of celebration, reflection, and unity, commemorating the bravery of Queen Esther and the triumph of good over evil. It is a reminder of the strength and resilience that has always been a hallmark of the Jewish people.

The courage of Queen Esther, who risked her life to save her people, is a timeless example of bravery. In Edmonton, we are seeing fortitude and courage among our youth, who face antisemitism in school, on social media, and on campus. It is crucial that we help them navigate challenges and stand proud of their heritage. With community partners, we continue to empower them with education and a strong sense of identity.

On March 12, Hillel will welcome author Ben Freeman, whose talk about Jewish Indigeneity: resilience, identity, and

combating antisemitism is based on the latest book in his trilogy. A grant from the Government of Alberta to combat antisemitism, cultivate resilience in our Jewish residents, and foster empathy among Alberta's diverse population supported this event. We have invited Indigenous representatives who will take part in the evening. Registrants under the age of 22 will receive a copy of his new book.

Through the United Jewish Appeal campaign, we consistently support our teens and young adults, strengthening their Jewish identity through annual funding to BBYO and Camp BB Riback. I look forward to providing physical safe spaces in the new Jewish Community Centre and running into teens as they come after school to hang out in their lounge.

We are thrilled to announce that Be The

Narrative: Student to Student has chosen us as a community.

Student to Student® is an educational outreach program that helps increase the understanding of Judaism and reduce stereotypes among high school students. It empowers diverse Jewish teens to work together and share personal experiences with non-Jewish peers to expand knowledge and dispel stereotypes. We will roll this out into the fall.

Let us all take a moment of Jewish joy and pride this Purim, whether you are taking part in the Megillah's reading, sharing mishloach manot with friends and family, or giving to those in need through matanot la'evyonim, may this festival bring you happiness and a sense of community. Together, we are creating a thriving caring, engaged and connected Jewish community.

Reach out to us on social media or by emailing info@edjfed.org.

2025 Earl Parker Award for Jewish Film

Open to all Canadian filmmakers, students, schools, and organizations.

Submission deadline: March 31, 2025
Learn more and enter at jewishedmonton.org

Winner to be announced May 6 at Opening Night of:



SAVE THE DATE - OPENING NIGHT: MAY 6, 2025



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DEADLINE APRIL 17, 2025

IBP opens doors

Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Integrated Bursary Program can help.

If you are having a financial struggle to have your children participate fully in Jewish life in our community, apply today at jewishedmonton.org.



An evening with BEN M. FREEMAN

Jewish Indigeneity: Resilience, Identity, and Combating Antisemitism

Wednesday, March 12
5:30 p.m.
Edmonton Clinic Health Academy L1-490
University of Alberta
Free

Register today at jewishedmonton.org



Young Adult Purim Party

Saturday, March 15
9 p.m.
\$5 entry for ages 18 to 30
RSVP at jewishedmonton.org

Drinks & snacks
Prizes for costumes



Jewish Studies Week at the University of Alberta

The Wirth Institute is hosting the Winter 2025 Jewish Studies week from March 2–7 and it includes a number of activities including a piano recital and reception on March 2, the Annual Tova Yedlin Lecture on March 4 and both a lecture and an informal discussion by the incoming Belzberg Family and Jewish Federation of Edmonton assistant professor of Jewish Studies on March 7.

The Tova Yedlin lecture will be held March 4 at 12 noon at the Arts Lounge in the University of Alberta Arts and Convocation Hall. The topic of the lecture is “Nostalgia and Homecoming in the 20th-Century Hasidism.” The keynote speaker is Wojciech Tworek, Head of the Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław.

He is the author of *Eternity Now* (SUNY, 2019) which examines the teachings of Shneur Zalman of Liady, the founder of Chabad Hasidism. Currently he is completing a book on the Chabad communities in interwar Poland and – together with Marcin Wodziński – an anthology of Hasidic stories.

The lecture looks at making sense of exile and displacement and coming to terms with the loss of one’s hometown and community. This talk explores the stories of Joseph Isaac Schneersohn (1880–1950), the leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement, and their role in the survival and flourishing of his community through the First and Second World Wars.

Focusing on the social and performative function of these stories, Tworek examines how the nostalgic

depictions of the Chabad ancestral home in the Russian townlet of Lubavitch was translated into ideas, collective memories, foodways, tangible practices, and brick-and-mortar institutions. These elements helped forge a new Chabad community in interwar Poland and safeguarded its survival in 1940s America. In effect, the literary reworking of the trauma of loss and displacement prepared the ground for the resurgence of Hasidism after the tragedies of the First World War and the Holocaust, first in Poland and later in North America and Israel.

On March 5 at 1 pm a lecture focused on “Travels in the Jewish/German Orient: Histories and Historiographies” will be delivered by Alexander W. Marcus, the incoming Belzberg Family and Jewish Federation of Edmonton Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Alberta. His primary research focuses on Jewish communities of late antiquity (~2nd-7th c. CE), examining the Babylonian Talmud alongside contemporaneous literary sources and artifacts deriving from Sasanian Mesopotamia.

He is the editor of a forthcoming volume entitled *The Aramaic Incantation Bowls in their Late Antique Jewish Contexts* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2025). He holds a PhD in Religious Studies from Stanford University and an MA in Jewish Studies from the Graduate Theological Union. He was previously the Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Postdoctoral Associate in Jewish History at Yale University and a researcher in Ancient Judaism at the Herbert D. Katz

Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught at Stanford University, Grinnell College, Yale University, Western Kentucky University, and Franklin & Marshall College.

Marcus’ scholarly interests extend from ancient and medieval religious traditions to contemporary topics in religious life and culture, interreligious interactions, and issues of historical memory and representation. His pedagogical interests include historical and contemporary hermeneutics, the transmission and development of knowledge traditions, Christian-Jewish and Muslim-Jewish relations, gender/sexuality and religion, religion in popular culture, and intersections of religion and power.

He has also worked in the realms of Jewish education and conflict transformation. He has organized and participated in international conferences pertaining to Muslim-Jewish dialogue and the Israel-Palestine conflict, and he sits on the Academic Advisory Council of American Friends of Combatants for Peace.

On March 7 from 2-3:30 guest speaker Alexander Warren Marcus will be present for a lively discussion at the Central European Café located in the Arts (Student) Lounge in Arts and Convocation Hall. A delicious assortment of beverages and European-style pastries will also be available. As always, the Central European Cafe is free to attend, open to the public, and does not require registration.

Piano recital kicks off Jewish Studies Week at UofA

The abundance of talented Jewish composers at the onset of the 20th century is indeed astounding, and because of the hostile political landscape of Europe leading up to the Second World War, many of these emerging talents were lost all too soon. The historical significance of Arnold Schoenberg marks a milestone in the development of Classical music during the interwar period, and his legacy is of lasting importance on the composers of the so-called 2nd Viennese School. Because of his Jewish heritage, Schoenberg, like so

many others, needed to emigrate to America to survive. In an intimate concert setting, on March 2 at 1 pm at the University of Alberta Timms Centre for the Arts in Edmonton (87 Avenue, 112 St NW), renowned pianist Mikolaj Warszynski will present a programme showcasing varying musical styles from avant-garde to jazz, featuring composers of Jewish heritage from Central European countries. This piano recital will feature works by György Ligeti, Erwin Schulhoff, Władysław Szpilmann, and George Gershwin. A reception will follow.

Dr. Mikolaj Warszynski (D.Mus) enjoys a versatile career as pianist, lecturer, and pedagogue. Currently teaching at the Chopin piano studio in Edmonton, he has taught piano in Quebec at the University of Montreal



and at the Cégep de Drummondville, at the University of Daegu in South Korea, Brno conservatory in Seoul; and at the Flaine Opus74 Academy in the French Alps. Canadian pianist of Polish origin, Mikolaj Warszynski released a debut CD for the Parisian Anima Records in 2015, with music by Haydn, Liszt, Szymanowski, and Chopin, and his most recent album *Lisztomania*

Continued on page 14

JEWISH STUDIES WEEK WINTER 2025

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
WIRTH INSTITUTE FOR AUSTRIAN
AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

2025 ANNUAL
TOVA YEDLIN
LECTURE

Nostalgia and Homecoming in 20th-Century Hasidism

Tuesday, March 4th @ 12:00 pm
Arts (Student) Lounge
Arts & Convocation Hall

Lunch provided, free to attend.
Registration not required.

How does one make sense of **exile and displacement**?

How does one come to terms with the loss of one’s **hometown and community**?

This talk explores the stories of Joseph Isaac Schneersohn (1880–1950), the leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement, and their role in the survival and flourishing of his community through the First and Second World Wars. Focusing on the social and performative function of these stories, I examine how the nostalgic depictions of the Chabad ancestral home in the Russian townlet of Lubavitch was translated into ideas, collective memories, foodways, tangible practices, and brick-and-mortar institutions. These elements helped forge a new Chabad community in interwar Poland and safeguarded its survival in 1940s America. In effect, the literary reworking of the trauma of loss and displacement prepared the ground for the resurgence of Hasidism after the tragedies of the First World War and the Holocaust, first in Poland and later in North America and Israel.

Wojciech Tworek is the Head of the Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław. He is the author of *Eternity Now* (SUNY, 2019) which examines the teachings of Shneur Zalman of Liady, the founder of Chabad Hasidism. Currently he is completing a book on the Chabad communities in interwar Poland and – together with Marcin Wodziński – an anthology of Hasidic stories.

Scan for more details on Jewish Studies Week Winter 2025!

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The winds of change at Calgary Chevra

Some six hundred years ago, the author Geoffrey Chaucer wrote that “time and tide wait for no man.” The inevitability of change continues to play out at the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary.

After forty-six years of dedication to the Chevra Kadisha, including nearly five years as president, and nine years as Executive Director, Louis Bracey is retiring from an active role at the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary. At a recent Board of Directors meeting, when Lou announced he was stepping down, he made reference to a book authored by Lewis Carroll that he read as a child that spoke of flying pigs, as if to say that it seemed impossible that this day would come. The importance of the work of the Chevra has been dear to Lou’s heart for many years. Lou’s volunteer colleagues and the Chevra staff can surely vouch for the many hours that he has spent in a wide variety of tasks. He leaves the organization in a very stable position, both financially and operationally. Under his leadership, the Chevra Kadisha recently passed its 120th anniversary of service to the Calgary Jewish community.

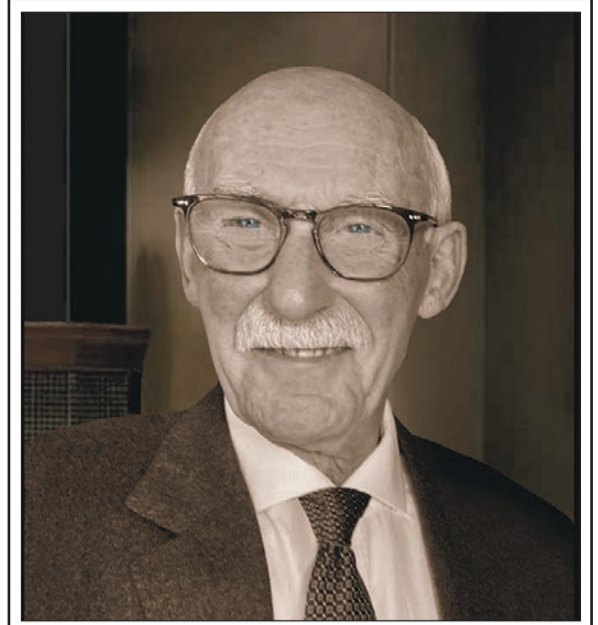
“Our Chevra Kadisha is quite unique,” said Lou. “Other than the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha which is quite similar to Calgary, very few chevrot provide end of life care and own and operate their own cemetery. Our women volunteers continue to hand sew our shrouds, something that is also rare today,” added Lou. He acknowledged the many men and women who have also volunteered their efforts over the years in “kavod ha’mait” (honouring the deceased) and “nichum aveilim” (comforting the mourners) in the spirit of “chesed shel emet”, deeds often performed in anonymity without expectation of reward. Volunteers will be saluted soon in the annual Chevra volunteer luncheon where Lou will serve as guest speaker and honouree.

While Lou will continue to support the Chevra in a consultative capacity, he turns the reins of leadership over to Susan Dvorkin and Harold Lipton who will assume the co-presidents office. The incoming presidents noted that “the influence of tradition in our work remains very strong. We remain committed to serving the entire community, and so we are challenged to meet the diversity of beliefs and social changes within our community.”

As the longest serving Jewish organization in Calgary dedicated to end of life care, the Chevra has done its utmost to maintain the traditions established 120 years ago while recognizing that times have changed over the years. “Jewish death and burial are looked upon differently by some these days, and we will always strive to provide all we are able to for a family who wishes to honour their loved one with a Jewish burial,” said the co-presidents.

Both incoming presidents are also no strangers to the Chevra Kadisha. Harold Lipton has been a volunteer as well as a board and executive member for over 25 years and Susan Dvorkin is the third generation in her family to serve the Chevra. The leadership of co-presidents is new for the Chevra but both Susan and Harold look forward to working collaboratively with each other. “While we cannot fill Lou’s shoes, we hope to follow in his footsteps to continue to service Jewish Calgary in their time of need.” With a transition of executive positions mid-term, the co-presidents are also pleased with the appointment of Sam Gutman as vice president and Deborah Katz as treasurer. Both have a strong financial background which will ensure that the finances of the society will remain strong. Darlene Switzer Foster, Darryl Gurevitch, Ted Switzer and Jessica Miller Switzer round out an active and solid executive.

One challenge the Chevra is facing is the need for more volunteers. Many of those currently serving are also approaching retirement, and the need to find replacements to carry on this valuable work is



Yasher Koach Lou Bracey. Photo courtesy Ron Switzer Studio.

growing. Lou points out that there are many opportunities to help out, such as helping to make up a minyan at a funeral, helping to fill a grave at a funeral, helping to provide tahara (ritual purification) on the deceased, or serving on a committee or on the board of directors. While it is recognized that volunteering for the Chevra is not as inter-generational as it once was, a new generation of volunteers is needed to ensure that the Chevra will continue to serve the community in the way it currently does.

Tu B'Shevat at Calgary JCC

Celebrating Tu B'Shevat at the JCC with (delicious) fruit art. (Photo JCC Facebook).



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University of Calgary welcomes Israel Scholar Ofer Idels

By Maxine Fischbein

There has not been much happy news emanating from University campuses so far as Israel is concerned, especially since the lethal attacks on Israelis perpetrated by Hamas and other Muslim terrorist groups on October 7, 2023. But there is something to celebrate with the recent arrival at the University of Calgary of Dr. Ofer Idels, a historian who specializes in the history of Zionism, with particular focus on the Yishuv—the Hebrew Settlement in Palestine preceding Israeli independence in 1948.

Idels succeeds Dr. Anny Cohen as the second scholar to be named a Postdoctoral Associate in the Dr. Jenny and Hy Belzberg Israeli Scholar Program at University of Calgary.

The passion Idels exudes for walking alongside Yishuv members in the nascent State of Israel during the early 20th Century and letting their lived experiences “breathe” will, no doubt, spark interest in the academic community and among community members seeking a deeper understanding of Israel past and present.

“What does it mean for people who came mostly from Eastern Europe, who decide to go along on this ride, very uncertain at the time, and move to Palestine and live in what we can call a Zionist society, a Zionist culture?” asks Idels, who explores the “selfhood, senses and emotions” of members of the Yishuv by “lingering in the moment.”

Idels says that his approach “challenges current trends in academia,” where it is more common to deconstruct history.

Having earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees including his Ph. D. at the University of Tel Aviv, Idels served as Humboldt Fellow in the History Department at the University of Munich.

“I am very much looking forward to the next chapter,” Idels said.

Those living today in an end of history era, says Idels, “have difficulties imagining, believing and understanding” the experiences of those who lived in the Yishuv.

“They were building something new. They didn’t

want to be the old, ghetto Jews. They didn’t want to be weak. They wanted something else,” Idels said.

“How were they able to create a language? When they talk about it, they talk a lot about...the experience of hearing Hebrew, speaking Hebrew, feeling Hebrew, which...at the time was pretty much a new language.”

“We are now using the word revived,” said Idels, but added that Modern Hebrew was, actually in the very process of being created.

Zionists left their countries and moved to a new place where they did not know what would happen. They didn’t yet speak the language, but they made the bold decision to educate their children in this new language, says Idels, even though they had no certainty that they would achieve statehood or that their budding language would be spoken years hence.

The words and texts of Yishuv members are often treated as “schmaltzy or exaggerated,” says Idels. As a result they are easily overlooked or dismissed by many, he says.

But Idels says that much can be learned from the accounts of grassroots Israelis, “not just from the top down,” though he acknowledges that the distance between the citizens of the Yishuv and the historian can never really be fully bridged.

Ironically, Idels says his work may be more accepted in the general community than in academia, especially in the current political climate.

“In...some circles of academia, it is pretty much blasphemy right now, because it gives breath to Zionism, to Jewish identity. It takes it seriously.”

By doing so, says Idels, one can reflect upon one’s own humanity, society and culture.

Cambridge University Press published his first book, *Zionism: Emotions, Language and Experience*, in 2024. This fall his second book, *Embodying the Revolution: The New Jew and the Globalization of Modern Sports in Interwar Palestine* (Rutgers University Press) will be published. In it, Idels further develops his dissertation about sports and the Yishuv in the interwar period.

“When we think about Zionism, we keep thinking



Dr. Ofer Idels is the Postdoctoral Associate in the Dr. Jenny and Hy Belzberg Israeli Scholar Program at University of Calgary.

about the new Jew, all the clichés: strong, healthy, masculine,” says Idels, referencing “muscular Judaism,” a vision popularized by Max Nordau, co-founder, together with Theodor Herzl, of the World Zionist Union.

“Jewish sport was much more advanced and successful and part of Jewish life in Europe and America than it was in the Yishuv,” Idels said. “There is a developing sporting culture in the Yishuv, which happens almost simultaneously in the rest of the world during the interwar period between 1918 and 1949.”

“So it’s developing, you see the process going on, but the athlete is not becoming a “leading figure” of the Yishuv culture, said Idels, adding that athletes were in the margins, something he believes largely remains the case in Israel today where athletes are not widely perceived within their own country as achieving international levels.

Intuitively Israelis think first of soldiers and Mossad agents as notable figures, Idels added, which is reflected, for example, in Israeli cinema which more often depicts military victories than athletic ones.

“In the 20s and 30s, there was a lot of rejection and discussions in the Yishuv about what we should do with sports,” said Idels. “Is it going to be part of our national ethos? Is it going to be in the front, or is it going to be something on the side?”

“[Athletes and coaches] want to be part of this Zionist creation of new selfhood and experience, but they are also not sure if sports are the right way to do it, or at least how sports can contribute, so they are conflicted as well,” explains Idels. “Everybody is taking this seriously, embodying the revolution, creating a new experience of selfhood.”

Idels offers the example of a delegation of female Jewish athletes from Palestine who competed in the

Continued on page 26

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Calgary Real Estate Market poised for a busy spring

The Calgary real estate market is poised for a busy spring season, and both buyers and sellers can benefit from strategic insights. As a Realtor team in Calgary, Alberta, led by award-winning agents Daniel and Tali Kowall, Kowall Boutique Real Estate brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table. Recognized with the 2024 ICON Award from eXp Realty, a prestigious honor awarded to the top 5% of eXp agents worldwide for outstanding production and meaningful contributions to the real estate community

Daniel and Tali, both born and raised in Calgary's southwest, have witnessed the city's transformation over the years. "Growing up in Calgary, many communities that exist today didn't even exist," says Tali. "Now, we have vibrant, state-of-the-art communities that are drawing people from all over Canada." Communities such as Mahogany and Auburn Bay offer lake access, shopping, dining, and high-quality living, reflecting the city's significant growth. Tali adds, "This city now offers a variety of options for lifestyle, budget, and amenities—choices we never had before."

Calgary's urban development, particularly over the last two decades, has been remarkable. "Twenty years ago, in 2005, our population was under 1 million. Today, we're a city of 1.6 million, marking a 60% growth," explains Daniel. "Since the COVID-19 era, we've seen nearly a 20% increase in population. People are coming to Calgary from across Canada and around the world." Calgary's ranking as the 5th most livable city in North America in 2024, with a strong economy, job growth, and proximity to the Rocky Mountains, has solidified its appeal. "It's an exciting time to witness the city's growth," Daniel elaborates.

With continued population growth and recently lowered interest rates, the spring market is shaping up to be particularly active. "Historically, spring is when we see more buyers entering the market, and sellers listing their properties to capitalize on the increased activity," says Tali. "The spring season typically begins in March and extends into summer, where similar trends continue." Tali explains that the spring market is driven by several factors, including families who want to finalize moves before the next school season and the more favorable weather conditions for viewing homes and relocating.

For sellers, Daniel emphasizes the importance of preparation: "Boost curb appeal, take care of maintenance and necessary fixes, and meet with your realtor early to ensure you're fully prepared before listing." Pricing it competitively is crucial, and listing early in the season can give you an edge before the market becomes saturated." He also advises sellers to highlight unique features of their homes, such as outdoor spaces or neighborhood amenities. "Using high-quality photos and social media marketing can generate greater interest," Daniel adds, ensuring we also reach out-of-town buyers, including those relocating from markets like Vancouver and Toronto. "Sellers should also be prepared for quick offers and be flexible in negotiations, as spring buyers tend to act fast." Daniel further explains that Kowall

Boutique Real Estate provides comprehensive listing packages that include all of these services.

For buyers, Tali recommends getting pre-approved for financing early and starting the search sooner rather than later. "In a hot market, being pre-approved gives you a competitive edge, and starting early ensures you have more options before the market gets too busy," she advises. "Buyers should be ready to act quickly when they find the right property and stick to their budget to avoid overspending." Tali emphasizes that Kowall Boutique Real Estate helps buyers navigate the competitive landscape, making strategic offers and staying informed on market trends. "Being open to different property options can help buyers capitalize on the opportunities this busy season offers," she says.

In summary, whether you are buying or selling in Calgary this spring, it's essential to be prepared and act strategically. Sellers should focus on preparing their homes, pricing accurately, and using effective marketing strategies. Buyers should be proactive, get pre-approved, and work with experts to make informed decisions in a competitive market. At Kowall Boutique Real Estate, Daniel and Tali Kowall, along with their team, are dedicated to helping you navigate the Calgary market with confidence. Contact us today to take the next step toward achieving your real estate goals.

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Impact giving through the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary

By Joseph Tappenden

Since 1990, the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary (JCFC) has been providing support to the local Jewish community, working with fundholders to fund specific initiatives that make a lasting impact. Working collaboratively, the JCFC empowers both groups to bring innovative and meaningful projects to life.

The JCFC's grants & scholarships initiatives are aimed at funding innovative ideas brought forward by community organizations supporting community programs and post-secondary students in advancing their education. The JCFC works closely with both fundholders and community organizations to identify projects that add meaningful value and strengthen the community. Through this collaborative approach our



fundholders have been able to support a number of transformative projects.

In 2024, nearly 20 students from Calgary received scholarships for post-secondary education. This support was made possible by the foresight and generosity of fundholders who believe in the power of education. Their investment ensures that these students can thrive as future community leaders, professionals, and changemakers.

In addition to scholarships, JCFC funds have supported impactful initiatives through community program grants. The Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) was able to construct a greenhouse in their science lab, offering students an interactive way to explore Israeli agricultural technology practices and innovations. The CJA also created an initiative that focuses on craftsmanship and community building by refurbishing a table and chairs which will be donated to Jewish Family Service Calgary to support a family in need. The Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta revitalized their rotating photo display at the JCC. This display, which is available for public viewing, preserves and shares the rich history of Jewish life in Calgary.

The JCFC remains committed to funding innovative initiatives that deliver real value to the community.

Grants and Scholarship applications are now open. Community organizations and post-secondary students can apply at www.jcfc.ca.

Establishing a fund with the JCFC is a simple yet powerful way to support charitable causes that are important to you. Whether it's ensuring the sustainability of community institutions and



CJA students refurbishing furniture.

organizations, investing in post-secondary students through scholarships, or supporting other meaningful initiatives aligned with your values, your philanthropy can make a lasting impact.

As a fundholder, you have the flexibility to direct how your funds are distributed, ensuring your contributions align with your vision for the community. Additionally, the JCFC offers tax-efficient giving options, helping you maximize the impact of your generosity. By partnering with the JCFC, you can leave a lasting legacy and help ensure a vibrant, thriving Jewish community for generations to come.

For more information about how the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary can inspire your philanthropy, contact Joseph Tappenden at josephappenden@jcfc.ca.

Alberta curriculum

Cont. from page 4

grades 7 to 9 social studies curriculum is intended to build on the Alberta government's commitment to have students learn about injustices faced by those who historically were, and continue to be, marginalized, or who have experienced discrimination. In November 2023, Alberta's government made Holocaust education a mandatory component of the social studies curriculum and the newly developed draft K to 6 social studies curriculum also includes content on antisemitism.

"The Calgary Jewish Federation applauds Alberta's government for taking meaningful action in combating the spread of antisemitism through this critical

initiative," stated Rob Nagus, CEO of Calgary Jewish Federation. "We also look forward to continuing to work with Alberta's government on the implementation of Holocaust education in our schools."

"The Jewish Federation of Edmonton commends the Alberta government for both reaffirming its commitment to mandatory Holocaust education and for equipping students to take a stand against rising antisemitism," added Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO, Jewish Federation of Edmonton. "By ensuring these critical lessons are part of the learning experience for students, we are fostering empathy, understanding and resilience in future generations. We look forward to further collaborating with Alberta Education in making sure these important teachings are delivered effectively across all grades."

Alberta Education states that it will continue engaging with the Calgary Jewish Federation, Jewish Federation of Edmonton, and other Jewish organizations as work on the draft social studies curriculum continues. Feedback from these organizations will be used in the decision-making process about when and where students learn about antisemitism in junior high.

In Alberta's current K to 12 social studies curriculum, students learn about injustices faced by those who historically were, and continue to be, marginalized, or who have experienced discrimination. The new draft grades K to 6 social studies curriculum was released in April 2024 for optional classroom piloting, which began in September 2024 before implementation during the 2025-26 school year.

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Comedian Michael Rapaport brings his Jewish pride to Edmonton

By Stacy Shaikin

American actor and Comedian Michael Rapaport is bringing his Jewish pride to Edmonton.

The 55-year-old entertainer is famous for his roles in *True Romance*, *Copland*, *Boston Public* and dozens of other titles to his credit, over the course of a 30 plus year career in show business.

Since October 7, the New Yorker and father of two has been very outspoken in support of Israel and Jewish people all over the world. On social media he has been a proud voice in support of Jews in Israel and North America and he visited Israel after the war broke out.

"The stance against Israel is a big thick line in the sand that is unforgivable," he exclaimed on our zoom meeting on February 20.

"It's been a very trying time, a very frustrating time," he continued. "Today with the return of four hostages in coffins, it is a historical, monumental, heartbreaking and unprecedented day. Everyday has been challenging in the last 500 plus days. All I can do is stay close to my family and my community, and when I have an opportunity to perform to the best of my ability as I am in your city."

Rapaport is coming to Edmonton on March 6, 7 and 8th at Rick Bronsons – The Comic Strip.

"I am going to talk a lot of s**t, about myself, being married, being a father, being divorced, politics, social commentary. I like to engage with the audience. Add some pop culture and everything in between. The gist is where I am at as a 55-year-old man."

Rapaport's brother teaches at a university in Halifax, so he is acquainted with Canada and plans to make fun of our current strife as it pertains to US president Donald Trump and his eye towards our country.

When it comes to our similarities, he is very disappointed with the treatment of Jews in both Canada and the US.

"What's going on in New York is embarrassing, the lack of response from the Governor is unforgivable," he exclaimed. "It's a stain on New York, my country and Canada. I see what's going on in Toronto and Montreal and it is embarrassing."

Since October 7th Rapaport has been very vocal and

expressed his feelings at length.

"I am extremely surprised and frustrated by the lack of understanding and compassion of the history of the situation. People have had more than enough time to educate themselves. I am not worried or concerning myself about those people anymore. The silence has been deafening."

He continues with his opinion on geopolitics and how it has been reflected.

"The facts are the facts, there are two sides to every story but if you know the reality and history, it's a long story but a pretty simple story. One has preceded to thrive in unprecedented ways in Israel. In 77 years not one good thing has come out of the Gaza. That's why they celebrate the most despicable days like Oct 7 or come out in droves when dead bodies are brought out there like they are going to a circus, a museum or soccer game."

He maintains he is very satisfied with the federal leadership change in America.

"For me I simplified what was important for me as a voter, it was protection of Israel, of Jews and my money," he says. "A big change for me from Oct 7. You're never going to get everything you want, hopefully you get a few things that are important to you." The actor continues, "I don't think anyone had it on their bingo card it was going to be such a landslide for Trump but thus far I am happy and satisfied. You always want more, but in regards to the antisemitism and the support of Israel I am satisfied and I think a lot of people are."

The comedian believes we are in crazy times, and it is imperative we stick together.

"Jews are going nowhere; Israel is going nowhere. Be loud and be proud." He went on, "I like to call it anti Jewishness. Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are part of the same stew. It's unacceptable."

Beyond Israel, the Jewish people and American and Canadian differences, we had a chance to talk show business and sports - particularly hockey.

"I think hockey is insane, as soon as the puck drops you can take out your grudges. A bare-knuckle fight. This is f**king far out," he said.

As for his career, he loves dabbling in front of the camera as much as he does on stage in front of a live audience.



Actor/Comedian Michael Rapaport

"I love acting, I will always love acting. I started as a comedian first. There is no end to it. As long as you're living and you have a point of view on life you can do it forever. When you're on stage alone, you're the actor, the director and the writer as opposed to just being an actor, you have less to worry about. They are both something I appreciate the opportunity to do."

He says he is always trying to dig further. Keep himself interested and keep it better and better. He points to some of the great comedians out there as his influences like Jerry Seinfeld and Chris Rock.

Rapid Fire

Larry David or Jerry Seinfeld – Seinfeld
Apple Sauce or Sour Cream on Latkes – Apple Sauce
Favorite Jewish Holiday – Purim in Israel.

Matzah Balls or Kreplach – Matzo Balls
Smoked meat or corned beef - Damn, it depends on who's smoking the meat or making the corned beef. It depends on who's making it. It's an art.

Adam Fox or Jack Hughes – "I don't know who the f**k they are." When I told him they were Jewish players in the New York area, he said, "I like them both. I am coming to Edmonton. Wayne Gretzky, I like Mark Messier...I like Zach Hyman too."

Stacy Shaikin is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Concert recital *Cont. from page 8*

was released for the Wirth Institute label in 2018. Invitations to many prominent music festivals and societies have led to masterclasses and recent

performances in China, Italy, France, Czech, South Korea, Poland, Austria, Hungary and across Canada. Warszynski has performed in Warsaw at the Royal Łazienki Park under the Chopin monument and at the Chopin Festival in Gdansk at the Baltic Philharmonic; in 2010 as part of the Chopin bicentennial celebrations,

Warszynski toured with Chopin Concerto No. 2 across Canada. As a soloist, Warszynski has performed with the Kielce Philharmonic Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton and most recently the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra. As part of the ZUMI Duo with piano duet partner Zuzana Simurdova,

Mikolaj has recently completed a recording of the complete Dvorak Legends. As a recipient of a doctorate scholarship from Quebec in support of his dissertation entitled "Exoticism and intercultural influences in the piano cycle Metopes (1915) by Karol Szymanowski", Dr. Warszynski has gone on to perform lecture-recitals at Universities in Canada for *Congress for the Humanities*, and in the USA for the *College of Music Society*. Mikolaj completed studies with distinction at the University of Alberta with Marek Jablonski, and "cum laude" at the Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands with Aquiles Delle Vigne, before completing both his master's and doctorate degrees at the University of Montreal with Marc Durand and Paul Stewart. Warszynski has been an artist-in-residence in Banff, Aspen, Salzburg and Paris. Currently, Warszynski is the artistic director of the Mazurka Music and Art Society and is the Music Liaison at the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the U of A.

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Kathleen Jacob, LIT

Focus on Real Estate

Preparing your home for a successful sale

By Tanya Eklund of the Tanya Eklund Group

When selling your home, first impressions are everything. A well-prepared home can attract buyers, increase its perceived value, and even sell faster. From curb appeal to staging, here's how to make your home market ready.

Curb Appeal: The First Impression

The exterior of your home sets the tone for potential buyers. Ensure that front steps, doors, and decks are in good repair. In warmer months, maintain lush lawns and tidy gardens, while in fall, clear leaves and debris. In winter, keep walkways shoveled and consider adding a pop of color, such as a seasonal wreath or potted plants. If your home is vacant, arrange for regular lawn care and snow removal to keep it looking its best year-round.

Deep Cleaning: A Must-Do

A sparkling clean home reassures buyers that it has been well-maintained. Dust and vacuum thoroughly, including light fixtures, cabinets, and beneath furniture. Pay special attention to kitchens and bathrooms—clean sinks, de-grease stovetops, and



scrub grout. Don't forget to replace furnace filters and wipe down vent covers. If time is tight, hiring a professional cleaning service can reduce stress and ensure a spotless finish.

Decluttering: Creating a Spacious Feel

A clutter-free home feels more open and inviting. Store non-essential items in the garage, basement, or an external storage unit. In the kitchen, clear countertops of small appliances, soap, and cleaning supplies. Tidy up bathrooms by tucking away personal items and ensuring that only neutral décor, such as fresh towels, is on display. Keep laundry rooms, general living areas, and outdoor spaces free of excessive personal items, pet accessories, and clutter.

Staging: Showcasing the Potential

Staging doesn't have to be an expensive overhaul. Small touches like fresh flowers, a bowl of fruit, or well-placed throw blankets can enhance warmth and appeal. Consider hiding electrical cords, removing personal photographs, and ensuring furniture placement maximizes the flow of each room. For vacant homes, professional staging can create an inviting atmosphere and help buyers visualize their future home.

Preparing for Professional Photography

High-quality photographs are crucial in today's digital-driven market. Before your photographer arrives, turn on all lights to enhance brightness. Ensure light bulbs are working, clutter is out of sight, and pets are secured. While minor adjustments may be made during the shoot, a thorough pre-photo preparation ensures your home looks its absolute best.

Selling your home is an exciting journey, and the right preparation can make all the difference. By focusing on cleanliness, organization, and presentation, you can set the stage for a smooth and successful sale.

Remembering Michael Mostyn

By B'nai Brith Canada

It was with profound sadness that B'nai Brith Canada announced the passing of Michael Mostyn, z"l, on February 6 at the age of 50. He was a dynamic leader, a passionate advocate, and above all, a genuine mensch. Michael's life was dedicated to tikkun olam—repairing the world—a mission he embraced with every position he held and with every life he touched.

As the CEO of B'nai Brith Canada since 2014, Michael's vision and leadership revitalized the organization, transforming it into a formidable voice in combating antisemitism and defending the rights of the Jewish community across Canada. His passion for justice was deeply rooted in Torah values, and

whatever he did in life, was undertaken with tremendous respect and unwavering integrity.

Born to a family committed to Jewish tradition and values, Michael was a staunch defender of Am Yisrael and his faith guided him in everything he did. His presence was not limited to boardrooms or podiums; he was equally at home at synagogue and public events, sharing a warm smile and a thoughtful word with friends and community members alike.

Michael was not only a dynamic leader and visionary, but also a wonderful listener. His ability to hear the concerns and needs of others, combined with his savvy skills as a barrister and public servant, enabled him to effect real change. Whether standing up to hate or standing up for the vulnerable, Michael embodied the Jewish value of pursuing justice — "Tzedek, tzedek tirdof."

Under Michael's leadership, B'nai Brith's Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents became a vital resource for addressing hate in Canada, and his advocacy in the



Michael Mostyn z"l was CEO of B'nai Brith Canada.

courts and with governments strengthened protections for our community and other marginalized

Continued on page 28

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



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A REFLECTION ON MY FIRST FEW WEEKS: A COMMUNITY TO BE PROUD OF

I'm so very proud to be part of Calgary Jewish Federation (CJF) and to call this incredible community my home.

In a few short weeks, I've been deeply inspired by the strength, warmth, and resilience of Jewish Calgary.

From day one, I've been welcomed with open arms, and I'm so grateful for the kindness and generosity I've experienced. This is a community that shows up for one another, that takes pride in its history while embracing growth and change.

Of course, no community is without opportunities for growth. But that's a testament to the strong foundation built by generations of leaders before us. As I continue my "listening tour," a few priorities are starting to take shape and I wanted to share three key areas that stand out to me so far.

Advocacy & Education

Since October 7, the need for CJF to continue to be a strong and leading voice on antisemitism and anti-Zionism has never been clearer. Our leadership has built important relationships at the municipal, provincial, and national levels, and strengthening these partnerships will remain a critical priority.

Beyond government and advocacy, education is key. We're looking to expand our work at the post-secondary level while also deepening engagement with public and private school boards. Jewish students and teachers are facing new challenges in classrooms and schoolyards, and it's essential that we show up for them. While educating the broader community about Judaism is essential, there must also be a renewed effort to educate our own community about our shared history and values.

Security & Safety

Advocacy alone isn't enough—we also need to ensure the security and safety of our community. CJF and the Paperny Family JCC have built strong partnerships with law enforcement at both local and federal levels, and we are committed to reinforcing those efforts.

At the same time, we recognize that our security infrastructure can always be stronger. Working with Jewish communities in Toronto, Montreal, and beyond, we'll explore new security models and funding opportunities to ensure a coordinated, sustainable approach to keeping Jewish Calgary safe.

Community & Growth

At the heart of everything we do is one simple goal:

ensuring the long-term sustainability of Jewish life in Calgary. That means supporting the organizations that make up our community—helping them grow, evolve, and adapt to changing needs. This is a challenge every community faces, and we are committed to meeting it head-on.

In the coming months, we'll be launching a new Strategic Plan to guide us forward. The first step will be listening—to all of you. Through one-on-one conversations, focus groups, and surveys, we'll be gathering insights from as many community members as possible. Your voice matters, and I hope you'll take the opportunity to help shape the future of our Federation and our Jewish community.

If we haven't met yet, I look forward to seeing you soon at one of our events. And if we're already old friends—I promise, we'll catch up soon!

Together, we won't just face the challenges ahead—we'll thrive in spite of them.

B'Shalom,



Rob Nagus Chief Executive Officer Calgary Jewish Federation

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



February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM), a time dedicated to fostering a more inclusive community.

We had the privilege of hosting the incredible Rabbi Hazan Daniel Benlolo for an inspiring event that left our hearts feeling light, motivated, and ready to take action in making Calgary inclusive for all. Todah rabah to Benji Weizman and Rebecca Sussman for shining their light on JDAIM and sharing with us in song!

Rabbi Hazan Benlolo also visited our two Jewish day schools, Halpern Akiva Academy and The Calgary Jewish Academy, where he delivered powerful and uplifting presentations to the students.

Throughout the month, we continued our tradition of celebrating inclusion with a special Welcome Shabbat and various other activities that promote belonging and accessibility.

Inclusion is not just something we recognize once a year—it's a commitment we uphold every day. Inclusion is a birthright, ensuring that everyone feels welcome and valued in our community.



APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2025

IBP opens doors

Calgary Jewish Federation's Integrated Bursary Program can help you, if you find it's a financial struggle to participate fully in Jewish life in our community.

With a single application followed by a discreet, personalized session with a Federation volunteer, you can access subsidies for day schools, and summer camp - depending on your need.

More information and application form available online at: jewishcalgary.org/ibp or by email to: ibp@jewishcalgary.org



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Mark Your Calendars for Our Next PJ Library® Events!



Craft-a-Palooza Bounce-a-Palooza Purim! Sunday, March 9 2:00 - 4:00PM Halpern Akiva Academy



A Choco-licious Passover Sunday, April 6 3:00 - 6:00PM Paperny Family JCC



Questions? Contact Sydney Truax struax@jewishcalgary.org

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

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With You We Are paving the way for a strong and vibrant Jewish future. Our community shines as a source of hope – offering programs that inspire Jewish identity, develop leadership, and celebrate our rich cultural heritage.

Your contributions make a difference – YOU strengthen our community, empower lives, and secure our future. Together, we are building a resilient, compassionate, and united Jewish Calgary.

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Life & Legacy is about honoring a commitment to being Jewish and living out the values passed down by parents and grandparents. It's about giving back, making a difference, and being part of something larger than ourselves. It fosters unity with others who share similar values, commemorates loved ones, shares good fortune, and supports organizations that strengthen the community and uphold what matters most.

Have you thought about the future of Jewish Calgary and your legacy?

Contact Diana Kalef or Joseph Tappenden to learn about legacy giving
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Thank you for assuring our Jewish tomorrows today.



Here to Tell concludes its run in Edmonton

By Regan Lipes

In Edmonton, on January 27, community members, friends, allies and local dignitaries gathered at the Art Gallery of Alberta for a somber program to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day and mark the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Red Army's liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton hosted a special evening of remembrance that included a brief program and an opportunity to view the Here to Tell: Faces of Holocaust Survivors exhibition which was on display until February 9.

Dr. Francie Cyngiser, daughter of survivors Bronia and Sidney Cyngiser of blessed memory, gave an emotional description of the history and meaning of the exhibit – which was the brainchild of Dahlia Libin and Marnie Bondar - co-chairs of the Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education department of the Calgary Jewish Federation and each the granddaughter of four Holocaust survivors. They were responsible for bringing the exhibit to Edmonton with the help of several generous donors. The original Here to Tell exhibit was first shown at the Glenbow at the Edison in Calgary in May 2022, attracting more than 10,000 visitors. A curated second exhibit at the Calgary Public Library in January 2023 was seen by 90,000 people.

The 'Here to Tell' exhibit is aimed at preserving the testimonies of Holocaust survivors with connections to Alberta. At AGA, it was comprised of 50 evocative portraits of survivors, photographed in the hands of their descendants holding the image of their family



Photo of Florence Burstyn, OBM. Photo by Marnie Jazwicki, from 'Here to Tell' exhibit.



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member. The striking photos which capture a world of lived experience, were taken by Calgary-based photographer Marnie Jazwicki (formerly Burkhart) - the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. Each of the photos was accompanied by a brief biography about each survivor, that was thoughtfully written by lead writer and senior Here to Tell editor Maxine Fischbein.

The displayed photos of the survivors with their decedents emphasizes the chronological proximity of the Holocaust.

From January 27 to February 9, Dr. Francie Cyngiser, gave presentations to several different groups, each with varying levels of understanding about the Holocaust. Attendees at the Holocaust Memorial Day program on Jan. 27 were all people with a nuanced knowledge of the Holocaust and its legacy. This tone stood in vivid contrast to the atmosphere of the exhibition on the morning of February 5 when a group of twenty-two eleventh grade students came to visit the same exhibition. The brilliance of the 'Here to Tell' photo exhibition and accompanying documentary is that it engaged such diverse audiences: those attending with prior knowledge, and Gen-Z learners who are statistically proven to be less informed about this not-so-distant global tragedy.

Francie greeted the group of EPSB students and introduced herself and her connection to the exhibition. "In the next room, you will see portraits of both my parents," she began. "They were both still with us when 'Here to Tell' was being put together. You can read a bit about their stories," Francie continued with audible emotion. "You'll notice that the biographies for each of the survivors pictured gives information about how they lived before the war, and after. This was done to give you a fuller picture of their lives."

Accompanied by their social studies teacher, the students had not yet begun their unit on the Second World War but with the exhibition scheduled to close on February 9, time was of the essence. "We are still studying the inter-war period," explained their teacher when Francie informally asked students how many of them felt they were familiar with the Holocaust. A few teens sheepishly raised non-committal hands, as others tried not to make eye-contact. Francie proceeded to give a bit of information about her parents, but also about herself and what it meant to be the child of survivors. The group became visibly more engaged when Francie told them about an experience she had earlier in the week: "I was speaking to a group of students here at the gallery, and one young lady shared with me that her father is a Holocaust denier." This heavy dose of reality was enough to wake up even the sleepest teenager. "There was a teacher in rural Alberta in the 80s who taught his students that the Holocaust never happened. These people are out there, and it isn't just about those who deny the history altogether, but those who distort the facts about what happened."

Following the presentation, the students and their teacher filed into a small screening area where the 'Here to Tell' documentary was played for them.

Indeed the film, which brought to life the voices of the survivors' pictures on the walls, was moving and meaningful from beginning to end: with memories from before the Shoah, testimonies of atrocities that took place during the Holocaust, and gripping accounts of hearing the UN vote to recognize the Jewish Homeland. Those within the Alberta Jewish



Dr. Frances Cyngiser in front of images of her parents Sidney and Bronia Cyngiser z'l. The Here to Tell exhibit was on display at the Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton until Feb. 9.

community could also recognize the faces and voices of generational survivors remembering their passed loved ones: emphasizing that there must always remain someone here to tell.

Typically, one might expect students on a class trip to fidget with phones or whisper to their friends during an educational documentary, but all twenty-two sets of eyes were focused and attentive with sincerity and respect. After, their teacher encouraged them to tour the gallery at their own pace, and Francie invited anybody with questions to come approach her – some took her up on this. The youths shuffled from portrait to portrait and intently examined the faces of those staring back at them. It was clear that biographical texts were being read and digested thoughtfully. Some students mopped at their eyes with shirtsleeves, and others took cellphone pictures of text to be reflected upon later.

The content and testimonies visibly resonated with the group of Gen-Z learners. Some may have known about the Holocaust from films or books previously, others may have not known much at all, but following the film and their own exploration of the exhibition everyone appeared to have connected impactfully with the memories being transmitted. As Kit Ramgopal of NBC noted in 2020, that 63% of American students surveyed "did not know 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Over half of those thought the toll was under 2 million." In 2021, a survey conducted by Liberation75 and Western University assessed the Holocaust knowledge of 3,593 teenagers across Canada and the United States. The findings revealed that one in three students believed the Holocaust was fabricated or exaggerated or were unsure if it occurred.

This illustrates with horrifying clarity exactly what Francie Cyngiser explained to the group: that once the main concern that society battled was Holocaust denial, but there is now the need to additionally combat the misinformation of those who distort the history as well. Holocaust education must address denial on one front, and distortion on the other. 'Here to Tell' did its part to ensure that these twenty-two young Edmontonians and many others would not be part of a statistical majority that illustrate a generational lack of accurate information.

Survivors or descendants who wish to become part of *Here to Tell* are encouraged to contact Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin at holaustedu@jewishcalgary.org. "We had another 25 submissions given to us while we were in Edmonton!" says Marnie Bondar.

Curated, produced and directed by Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin, Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education department of the Calgary Jewish Federation, the Here to Tell exhibit at the Alberta Art Gallery was supported by Dr. Frances Cyngiser and family in loving memory of Dr. Sidney and Bronia Cyngiser, Nora and Lawrence Lyman in loving memory of Isadore & Florence Burstyn, Elizabeth Regan and Robert Abells, Dr. Eric Schloss and Elexis Schloss z'l, Barry Zalmanowitz and June Ross. For more information visit www.heretotell.com.



Photo of Isadore Burstyn, OBM. Photo by Marnie Jazwicki, from 'Here to Tell' exhibit.

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Simchas and Celebrations



Tu B'Shvat comes alive at Halpern Akiva Academy

Halpern Akiva Academy was buzzing with joy and creativity on Tuesday, February 11, as we celebrated our Tu B'Shvat Grandparents and Special Friends Event! Families and special friends joined us for a hands-on, immersive experience that brought the beauty of trees and nature to life in honour of Tu B'Shvat. Each classroom created a vibrant craft station, offering activities inspired by the theme of

trees, while the highlight of the day was our Tu B'Shvat seder, thoughtfully organized by JNF Canada.

A heartfelt thank you to JNF Canada's Elliot Steinberg and his staff for their support, generous sponsorship of our seder and parsley plants, and for sharing their knowledge about the vital work of JNF throughout Israel. Their dedication to education and environmental stewardship continues to inspire our

students and community!

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