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Part of "Jewish on Paper" featured on Art & Scroll Studio on September 17. Reprinted with permission. See story on page 24.







Beth Israel honourees Rhonda Eidelman and Phil Kirman were joined by their families at the 25th Anniversary Shul Gala. Pictured above: Past-president Shane Asbell, gala co-chairs Heather and David Vickar, Rabbi Guy and Fentaye Tal, and entertainer Matt Gore. Photos by Dan Hempel









Beth Israel's 25th Anniversary Gala

Event honoured the building and two special volunteers.

By Paula E. Kirman

On August 17, around 200 people attended Beth Israel Synagogue's silver anniversary gala celebration. A 25th anniversary is a special occasion – and for Beth Israel Synagogue, there were several reasons to celebrate this milestone.

First was the building's quarter of a century in its current location in Wolf Willow. Beth Israel Synagogue was established in 1906 and took possession of the current building – the third location for the synagogue – on May 1, 2000.

The second reason for the gala was to honour two important volunteers who have been working away in the kitchen for the past couple of years to create elaborate and delicious Shabbos kiddushes and other occasions: Rhonda Eidelman and Philip Kirman (who also recently became the shul's president and — as a full disclosure — is the brother of this writer).

After some mixing and mingling in the foyer, the

evening got started off in the social hall where they enjoyed a delicious meal provided by Catering by Ed, including stations with salmon, chicken stir fry, brisket, and a salad bar.

Following dinner, attendees headed into the main sanctuary to watch a commemorative video produced by Reel Mensch Studios in conjunction with the gala's organizing committee. Then, gala co-chair Shane Asbell presented commemorative certificates to Philip and Rhonda, who both made heartfelt speeches. The evening's entertainment was provided via Matt Gore (also known as "The Ginger Ninja"), who wowed the audience with his feats of magic and juggling.

Organizers say that the evening was a great success. Funds raised from the gala will go towards repairs on the building.





The Sacred Lens of the High Holy **Days: 5786**

By Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein



Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein

Rosh Hashanah 5786 calls us to pause and reflect on the year that has passed and the possibilities ahead. We carry with us experiences of joy and challenge, clarity and confusion, connection and searching. So often in our daily lives, we feel lost in a world where the presence of the Holy Blessed One seems hidden from view.

We move through our days surrounded by divine light

we cannot perceive, like stars that shine brilliantly in the daytime sky yet remain invisible to our naked eye. The light is there, constant and radiant, but the brightness of ordinary life conceals what has always been present. We know something greater exists beyond what we can see, yet it remains beyond our ordinary perception.

This beautiful chassidic teaching reveals that we have a way of seeing this divine light:

"The stars, which by day are not visible, can nevertheless be seen by one who uses a proper lens. The holy letters of prayer form such lenses; they may be used as telescopes for seeing into the hidden ways

The High Holy Days offer us that lens. The presence of the Eternal surrounds us like those invisible stars, flowing through our relationships, our struggles, our unexpected moments of grace. The divine hand moves through what appears to be random events, weaving sacred purpose through the ordinary fabric of our lives. Sacred meaning flows through seemingly disconnected experiences. However, we sometimes remain blind to this luminous reality that encompasses everything around us, but our prayers offer us a way to see what has always been present. The Hebrew letters in our

Machzor, the ancient words that have guided our people through millennia, become the lens through which the hidden ways of the Creator emerge from

During these Days of Awe, we gather in synagogue holding this sacred lens in our hands. Each Hebrew word becomes carefully crafted glass that reveals what our ordinary sight cannot perceive. Through these holy letters, we discover that we have never been wandering without direction. The light of the Holy One has been shining on us constantly, blessing our steps, guiding our choices and illuminating meaning in everything we encounter. The stars of divine presence are always there.

May this new year bring clarity and recognition of the divine light that illuminates your path. May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life for a year of health, happiness, and peace.

שנה טובה ומתוקה

May you have a good and sweet new year.

Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein is the Rabbi at Beth Shalom Congregation in Edmonton.

Doing the work of Teshuvah

By Rabbi Russell Jayne

As the season of the High Holidays approaches, we prepare ourselves once again for a sacred journey of return. The Days of Awe invite us to seriously engage with the process of teshuvah, the work of turning inward, upward, and outward. We turn inward in honest reflection on the lives we have lived this past year. We turn upward seeking the Divine, the Source of all being, who guides us with compassion and the assurance of forgiveness. And we turn outward toward our families, our communities, and our people, recognizing that none of us walks alone.

The work of teshuvah is not merely personal; As with all aspects of our tradition, it is deeply communal as well. When we return, we do not return only to ourselves or even to God, we return to one another and to our shared expression of covenant. Teshuvah calls us to reweave the bonds that hold us together, and to strengthen the ties of belonging that sustain us.

For centuries, the synagogue has been the beating heart of Jewish life. It is the place where Jews have gathered to pray, to learn, and to find strength in one another's presence. During the High Holidays, when Jews around the world assemble in synagogues large and small, we affirm that our identity is not only personal but collective.

To walk through the doors of a synagogue at this season is to come home. It is to reconnect with the melodies that stir our souls, the words that lift our spirits, and the community that holds us when we are in need.

This year, the call to deepen our Jewish identity and strengthen our ties to one another continues to feel especially urgent. We are living in a time when Jewish communities face profound challenges here at home, in Israel, and around the world. Everywhere Jewish hearts ache as we witness conflict, division, and uncertainty fueled by senseless hatred.

As always, our prayers and our concerns turn toward Israel, the beating heart of our people. The land of Israel always has been, and always will remain, central to our story. The well-being of Israel is not separate from our own; it is bound up in the destiny of Am Yisrael, the Jewish people everywhere. When we pray for peace, for strength, and for renewal in the year ahead, those prayers must embrace Israel and all who dwell within her borders.

In times like these, it is tempting to feel small, to believe that we are powerless against the forces of history. But the High Holidays remind us of a profound truth: Each of us lives a significant life, and our choices will, ultimately, reverberate far beyond ourselves. The prayers of one Jew rise with the prayers of the entire community, and the actions of even one Jewish com-munity can strengthen the fabric of our people. The wellbeing of one is linked to the wellbeing of all.

Supporting Israel, affirming Jewish life everywhere, and strengthening our local synagogues are not, and

never have been, separate tasks. They are all expressions of our shared responsibility. To Jewish is to know that we are part of something larger than ourselves, and that our lives are intertwined in both visible and invisible ways.

As you prepare your heart and soul for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I invite you to consider what it means for you to return this year. What would it mean to return to prayer, to bring your whole self honestly before God? What would it mean to return to your synagogue, not only on the High Holidays but

throughout the year, to nurture your spiritual life and to strengthen your community? What would it mean to return to the shared destiny of our people, standing in solidarity with Jews in Israel and everywhere?

Each of us carries a unique story, and yet together we are part of one great story. That story has endured for millennia, through trial and triumph, through exile and homecoming, through despair and renewal. As we enter the New Year, may we begin writing the next chapter of that story with courage, compassion, faith, and pride.

May this new year be one of healing for those who suffer, joy for those who celebrate, and peace for our people everywhere we dwell. Shanah Tovah U'Metukah – may you and your loved ones be blessed with a sweet, healthy, peaceful and meaningful new

Rabbi Russell Jayne is Senior Rabbi and Cantor at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Calgary.

The Leaders of High Holidays Services 5786 at Beth Shalom Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein & Cantorial Soloist Bert Malo



Rosh Hashanah Monday, September 22 Erev Rosh Hashanah

Tuesday, September 23 1st Day Rosh Hashanah Shacharit 8:30 a.m. Torah Reading

7:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m.

Mincha (at Beth Shalom) Followed by Tashlikh

Wednesday, September 24 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah Shacharit 8:30 a.m. Torah Reading 9:30 a.m.



Yom Kippur Fast Begins

Erev Yom Kippur/ Kol Nidre

Thursday, October 2 Yom Kippur Shacharit 8:30 a.m. Torah Reading 9:45 a.m. Yizkor Following Torah Service

6:51 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Mincha 5:45 p.m. Neila/Maariv/Havdalah 7:00 p.m. 7:59 p.m. Fast Ends

Newcomers to Edmonton: Beth Shalom is happy to provide complimentary High Holiday tickets to newcomers to Edmonton during the last year

> Please contact Beth Shalom office for more information at 780.488-6333/301 or



info@e-bethshalom.org

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SYNAGOGUE

The Edmonton Beth Shalom is seeking candidates for 2 positions:

Executive Director Part-Time Office Administrator

Please see our website for more information www.edmontonbethshalom.org/jobs

Knowing ourselves

By Rabbah Gila Caine



Rabbah Gila Caine

Last year, my inner focus was on tracing the outline of our organism, the parameters of Jewish community, like skin around the flesh of a living thing. October 7, 2023 and all of its aftermath first made me want to bandage our bleeding gash. Stop the blood-letting and protect ourselves from the poison

freely making its way in. And now that we might be on our way to scarring nicely, I find myself thinking of the next stage: Going deeply in, and getting to know ourselves again.

The Mishnah teaches us that Torah (which I would take to mean a Jewish moral centre, but also so much more!) is acquired by forty-eight things, one of them being a person who "recognises his (her) place" (Mishnah Avot, 6:6). Our sages were not referring here to a geographical or social place but, as Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe helps us understand, by knowing who we are and being close to our inner selves (Alei Shur, book 1, p. 137). Jews need to get to know themselves again.

Why is "knowing ourselves and our place" important, specifically at this moment? In his book on moral injury, Achilles in Vietnam, Jonathan Shav points out that a reason veterans returning from the Second World War fared better psychologically than their children returning from Vietnam was the presence of social cohesion. He explains: "What a returning soldier needs most when leaving war, is not a mental health professional but a living community to whom his experience matters." (Shay, p. 198). And the soldier's experience matters because the community understands it as their own. Of course, they are strong enough to care about their returning warriors, and humble and grateful enough to recognise the sacrifice done in their name. The horrors of war felt by the soldier are ones the community feels in its own being, though of course being on a battlefield is a different degree of pain than hearing about it. But the ability to truly listen to the pain is what eventually

brings healing, not only to those with moral injury but also to the wounded society in which they sit. This is true for any battlefield and any war, and in our case I can think of soldiers fighting to protect Israel, Jews fighting to protect Jewish communities around the world, Jewish students battling antisemitism and "anti-Zionism" on campuses today. The list is long and it's touched many of us in a variety of ways.

I was struck by Shay's explanation for two reasons: The first was that it clarified for me the predicament of those Jews who are unable to remain in Jewish community at this time. Their pathway to healing will be so much harder, and the fracture within them might become much deeper. Remaining within the body of our people, even when there is deep pain, is probably a good indicator of a person's or a group's ability to not only survive this time but also flourish in later days. The second reason Shay's teaching touched me was that he reminded me of the organic nature of community, of how much of a living thing it is – sinewy and thrumming with energy.

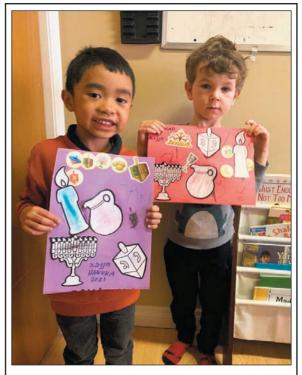
I suspect that for many of us, these past two years have been immensely transformative. Many of us may feel like parts of us have shattered and other parts have disappeared. Our history has been mutilated, our connection to Zion distorted and weaponised against us. Our story is once again appropriated and thrown back at us like a knife. We find ourselves in deep inner disagreement about reality, about our actions, about the way to move forward as one living entity. And that is precisely why we need to dedicate the coming year/s to move inward and relearn ourselves, relearn our own story, truly understand who we are, even if parts of that examination might not be pleasant. (Think of your visits to a physician – are they always delightful?)

At Temple Beth Ora in Edmonton, we plan to make this action of knowing our place, knowing ourselves central to our being as a community this year and in the years to come.

Our Or Shalom Hebrew school (Shabbat mornings, children ages 4 to 12) will continue bringing our youngest members together in celebrating their Jewish identity, learning Hebrew, and creating a community of Jewish children just like them!

For our B'nei Mitzvah children, we once again begin a year-long journey for pre-teens and their parents in which we explore what makes us responsible adult Jews in our community and on this Earth.

And for our adults, we have the usual variety of programming. I would like to highlight the upcoming "Our story: Filling the gaps in our shared Jewish history." This course was created (together with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and Jewish Family



Or Shalom students, aged 3 to 12, get together on Saturday mornings and learn about the holidays and our Jewish traditions in a fun setting.

Services) to do the work of knowing ourselves, since we realised many of us have gaping holes in knowledge of Jewish history and geography. This "Swiss cheese" situation is making us weaker from the inside and weaker on the outside. It is exacerbating our pain and breaking down our cohesion as a people, and cohesion is essential for healing and flourishing, especially in times of trauma and inner strife.

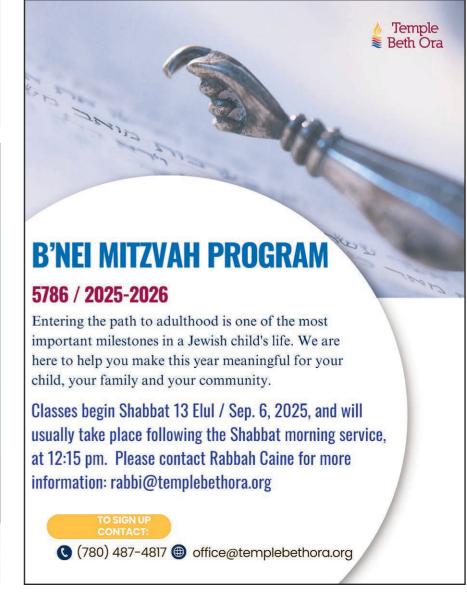
My blessing to us for the upcoming year is that we will see the hostages returned home and peace return to the land of Israel. And, I hope for all of us, that this is a year of revival. I urge us to allow ourselves time for introspection and deepening education in order to rediscover our history and shared story. And I ask that we allow ourselves time to foster strength and cohesion within $Am\ Yisrael$, our own community, and each and every one of us.

Shana Tovah.

Rabbah Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora in Edmonton.







Check out our community calendar at jewishedmonton.org.





A MESSAGE FROM CEO STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

As we enter the month of September and prepare our hearts and homes for the High Holidays, I'm reminded of the strength and resilience of our Jewish community. This season calls us to reflect, renew, and recommit—to our values, to each other, and to the future we are building together.

At the heart of this future is our United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Campaign, As One: Together, which fuels the vital work of our Federation and our partners. From supporting vulnerable populations to strengthening Jewish education and immersive experiences, from countering antisemitism and investing in security and advocacy, your generosity makes it all possible. This year, your support is more critical than ever.

When your volunteer canvasser phones you, asking you to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah

by supporting our community, please answer their call!

We still stand in unwavering solidarity with Israel, especially as we hold in our hearts the hostages who need to be returned to their families. Their plight reminds us of the importance of unity and collective action. We pray for their safe return as we also go on sending strength to our partnership communities in the Galilee Panhandle, who are returning home and are on a long path to rebuilding.

Here in Edmonton, we are proud to be advancing a bold vision with the development of our new Jewish Community Centre—a space that will serve as a hub for connection, culture, and care. We are establishing an endowment for operating purposes, ensuring it is going to be a beacon of Jewish life for generations to

come.

We also maintain a deep commitment to safeguarding our community by working closely with law enforcement and security partners to ensure the protection of our institutions and gatherings. We are actively advocating for policies that uphold our rights, reflect our values, and support the flourishing of Jewish life in Canada.

This is a time for solidarity. Whether through giving, volunteering, or simply showing up for one another, each of us plays a role in shaping a vibrant, secure, and inclusive Jewish future.

May this season bring you and your loved one's strength, sweetness, and peace.

Shanah Tovah

Register for our upcoming events at jewishedmonton.org.















REPORT ANTISEMITISM WHEN YOU SEE IT.



A New Chapter— Let's Take Action Together



Dear community members,

As we head into the Jewish New Year, I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on our community's achievements and look ahead to the incredible impact that we can have as a collective.

Last year alone, we sent 1.2 million messages to our local officials. The results are clear: Safe Access Zones have been instituted in cities in Canada, Hizb ut-Tahrir was prevented from spreading its hateful ideology within our borders, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was listed as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Our collective action has made a real difference and it inspires us to keep going.

Helping drive change is not just about policy, but about people. When thousands of us speak up, we become an undeniable force for change.

On Rosh Hashanah, we begin a new chapter in a very familiar book, and we all have a part to play as Jewish community advocates and dedicated allies. This high holiday season, I'm asking every community member to build a relationship with their Member of Parliament.

Call Your MP. Tell them what matters most to you, and our community.

In our democracy, the greatest force in making positive change happen is you. Tell them how you feel about antisemitism and what needs to be done to keep your family safe.

The government has made important commitments to address public safety concerns of the Jewish community—including increased funding and direct partnership with our community security agencies and federal mandated Safe Access Zones.

In addition to urgently implementing these commitments, there are impactful actions that MPs can support right now to safeguard Canadians and our community, such as boosting security for Jewish communities and banning the glorification of terrorism on our streets.

We need your help. Go to ActionHub.ca to join the movement. Let's keep showing up—for each other and for the future we believe in.

Shana Tova.

Noah Shack CEO, CIJA

Rosh Hashanah **5786:** A new year

By Rabbi Guy Tal



The famous children's song (and for adults?) by the late Naomi Shemer ends with the words:

בָּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לבֵנוּ עָנֶה בִּתְפִּלָה נוֹשָׁנָה שֶׁיָפָה ושׁוֹנָה תְּהֶא הַשָּׁנָה אַשֵּׁר מַתְחִילָה לָהּ בְּשִּׁיר.

Rabbi Guy Tal

(On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah / Our hearts responded with an ancient prayer / That the year

which begins with a song / Will be beautiful and different). To what ancient prayer is Naomi Shemer referring? Perhaps to the famous prayer "Achot Ketana" (Little

> תִּפְלּוֹתֶיהָ אָחוֹת קְטַנָּה תְּהָלּוֹתֶיהָ עוֹרְכָה וְעוֹנָה למחלותיה אָל נא רפא נא וַקַלְלוֹתֵיהַ: תַּכְלֶה שָׁנָה

(A little sister arranges and sings her prayers, O G-d please heal her illnesses, may the year and its curses end)

תָּחֵל שָׁנָה וּבִרְכוֹתֶיהָ

Sister) which begins with the words:

("May the year and its blessings start")

Why do we want the year to be different? What is the secret of the year (Shana=Shinui, year=change)?

Reality and the universe seems on its face to be

circular and self-contained, trapped in the chains of a despairing determinism that invalidates meaning. The world has existed forever, argued Aristotle, and therefore, as Pythagoras, the Stoics, and others added, everything has already happened, and everything will happen again in a kind of endless cycle of meaninglessness. Eternity is a very long time, and if reality has existed forever, everything has already had time to happen and will happen again and again - the eternal recurrence. The most wondrous and despairing description of this anti-creationist Stoic world view is written in the eternal Book of Books.: "Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities, all is vanity... A goes, generation and a generation comes, and the earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun sets; then it hurries back to the place where it rises...

All things are wearied... What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new' It has already existed for ages that were before us.'

This depressing circle is broken by the idea of creation. Like platform 9¾ at King's Cross station in London, like the wardrobe in Professor Digory's house, the idea of creation opens a gateway for us to a magical, different, free world, which is not trapped within itself. The belief in creation is the belief in the ability to renew the world, to repair it, and to create a new world - "Me-ha'olam v'ad ha'olam ata El," ("From everlasting to everlasting, You are G-d"), "Hadashim labekarim rabah emunatecha," ("They are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness"). This is our faith in You, but even more so, it is Your faith in us.

In a process that is long yet short — thousands of years that are as nothing compared to eternity—the



world is being built and repaired, moving toward its complete redemption. The belief in a starting point, before which reality was completely different, is also the belief in an endpoint, after which reality will be completely different. "Or Chadash al Zion Ta'i" (A new light will shine on Zion).

On Rosh Hashanah, the world was created, reality was revitalized, and ever since, each year it is brought into being once more, providing us with the opportunity to renew ourselves. What was is not what will be; the year to come is a fresh and distinct reality we will craft with our own hands. As Naomi Shemer wrote beautifully: "Beautiful and different will be the year that begins with a song.'

Rabbi Guy Tal is the Rabbi at Beth Israel Congregation in Edmonton.



ROSH HASHANAH

Tickets available to non-members.



YOM KIPPUR

Families with children in Kindergarten to Grade 12 can attend Yom Kippur services for FREE.

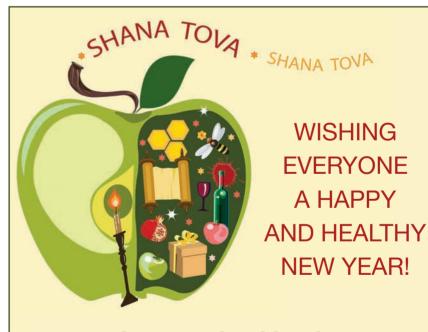
BREAK THE FAST

'Break the Fast" meal for members and ticket holders, ~8:15pm, after Neilah.

NON-MEMBERS, PLEASE REGISTER:

familyshul.org/form/hh-seats-2025.html

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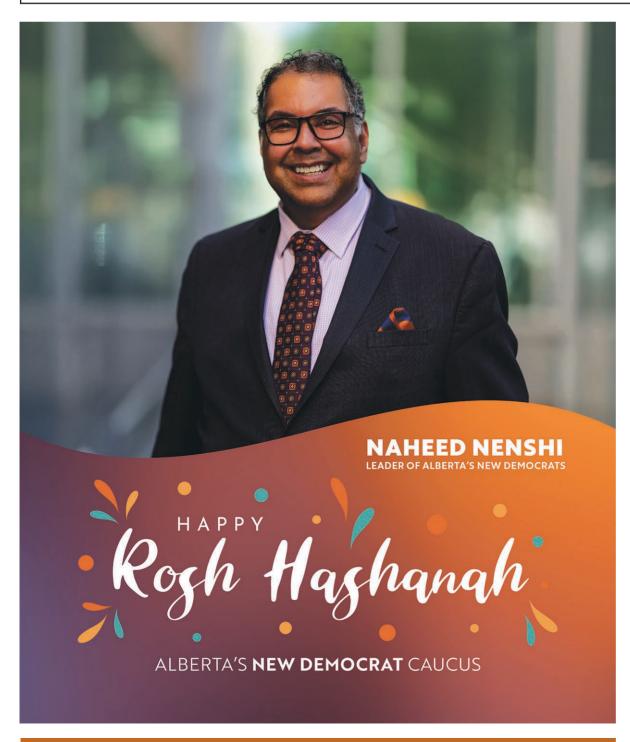
Edmonton Chevra Kadisha honours the departed with No Stone Left Alone







Edmonton Chevra Kadisha organized a beautiful tradition for volunteers to place a stone on every monument in our cemeteries - over 2,400 graves. Chevra leaders said, "Thank you to everyone who took part in No Stone Left Alone and helped carry forward the legacy of Shirley Goldberg z"l. Because of you, every single grave was honoured with a stone. A special thank you to Ken for saying Kaddish for our loved ones. We're so grateful for the turnout and can't wait to see you all again next year."







JNF Calgary hosts a wonderful Pitch for Israel



A great crowd of softball players came out on August 31 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of JNF Calgary's Pitch for Israel slo-pitch tournament. And what better way to celebrate than with good fun on a beautiful hot summer day! Edmonton team Schvitz and Shout once again edged out Matzah Ballers to make it a three-peat win. Thank you Alberta Jewish News and congrats to all the teams for helping make the day a great success.



Friends of JNF Canada launches this month

By AJNews staff

On September 2, the leaders from JNF Canada provided the National Jewish Community with an update on their controversial situation with Revenue Canada and their plans for moving forward.

JNF Canada board president Nathan Disenhouse and CEO Lance Davis sent an important announcement to the community that reads, "This past year has been challenging for JNF Canada and for Jewish communities across the country.

"Even without charitable status and amid an ongoing legal dispute with the CRA, JNF Canada has remained committed to its mission. We proudly hosted our signature events, welcomed thousands of supporters nationwide, and alongside collaborating organizations, we raised significant funds for critical projects in Israel.

"JNF Canada is privileged to have such dedicated supporters who ensured that we could continue our work."

In the announcement the leadership acknowledged that the absence of charitable status has limited the full impact of their programming.

They write, "We know this is not a sustainable path forward. The absence of our charitable status has limited our ability to operate effectively, and our supporters have told us they want their donations to have the full impact, including the ability to receive charitable receipts."

Disenhouse and Davis describe a new non-profit group that will enable JNF Canada supporters to support similar projects – in full compliance with CRA. They explain, "In response, wonderful friends stepped forward to dedicate their charity to carrying out

similar work, and have appropriately re-named it, Friends of JNF Canada. With our Board of Director's full endorsement, this organization will continue supporting the kinds of projects that have always defined JNF Canada's mission: serving Israelis in need through charitable projects that help the vulnerable, enhance environmental sustainability, and support the mental & physical health of Israelis in need. As of Monday, September 8, Friends of JNF Canada will begin its outreach, announcing upcoming programs and campaigns. We hope you will support them too."

In their announcement Davis and Disenhouse are requesting that JNF Canada donors become familiar with the newly formed non-profit group and "stay connected with the important fundraising efforts and events that you have typically seen in JNF Canada communications."

They explain that "JNF Canada will continue to operate as a non-profit as it fights its legal battle against the CRA, for our right to fair treatment. The Board of Directors will continue to update you on our legal battle as matters unfold. In the meantime, we are deeply grateful to *Friends of JNF Canada* for stepping up to ensure our important legacy lives on.

To learn more please visit www.friendsofjnfca.org."

"On behalf of the Board of Directors and Professional Staff of JNF Canada, thank you for standing with us."





Wishing the Jewish Community Health and Happiness



Jay Cairns
Executive Director, JNF Alberta Region
O: 780.481.7881
E: jcairns@friendsofjnfca.org
National Office: 1.800.806.8237
www.friendsofjnfca.org



Jonny Daniels is coming to Alberta for a Deep Dive

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

Next month will bring an influential — and sometimes controversial—individual to the fore as the Jewish Community welcomes former IDF paratrooper, Knesset staffer, and longtime internet influencer Jonny Daniels to Calgary (October 20) and then Edmonton (October 21) for what is billed as a "Deep Dive."

Born and raised in the UK, Daniels made Aliyah to Israel in 2005 at the age of 18. These days he does not spend much time there; his work as a speaker, Holocaust educator, Israel advocate and Jewish Pride ambassador frequently takes the father of two abroad.

In an interview last month, Daniels said he plans to take his Alberta audience behind the scenes in Israel and Gaza while busting myths about the conflict. He is also expected to address Jewish identity and the fight against antisemitism.

The Calgary event, supported by a lengthy list of sponsors within and beyond the Jewish community, will honour one ally in particular, Calgary entrepreneur and philanthropist W. Brett Wilson.

"I'm proud as a Canadian to celebrate Calgary, the West, and the friendships I've built in the Jewish community. I've partnered, invested, and shared the stage with many, and I'm truly delighted to be part of this event," Wilson told the Calgary Jewish Federation last month.

The genesis of the UJA event – which will take place at Beth Tzedec Congregation – underscores what has long been a part of Calgary Jewish Federation's tag line: *The Power of Community*.

In an interview last month, event co-chairs Melissa Mendelman and Tamar Zenith described themselves as the least likely duo to chair a UJA event, explaining that while they are proudly Jewish, they have not previously engaged much within the organized community.

But the story of these women reinforces the adage

that it takes a village. They are now stepping up to benefit both the local Jewish community and the people of Israel.

Mendelman, a restauranteur, and Zenith, co-founder and director of the Newzones Gallery of Contemporary Art, became friends in kindergarten at the school now known as The Calgary Jewish

Academy, a Jewish Federation/UJA partner. They rekindled their relationship a generation later when they brought their toddler sons to the Calgary JCC – also a Federation/UJA partner – for Time for Twos.

Close ever since, Mendelman and Zenith's relationship deepened in new ways following the October 7, 2023 attacks in Israel by Hamas terrorists.

"Post October 7 we were very devastated, and I, for one, was feeling helpless. I just felt a real pull to go [to Israel]," said Mendelman. "People thought I was crazy because it wasn't the safest time to even be thinking about it."

A friend who had just come back from a volunteer stint told Mendelman about Sar-El, a program that deploys volunteers in civilian capacities on IDF bases to free up soldiers from tasks that can be done by other helping hands.

"That's just the call I'm feeling," Mendelman thought. Over coffee with friends, she announced her intention to sign up.

"Both Melissa and I were 54 years old and had never been to Israel," recalls Zenith, who grew up in a proudly Zionist family. "There were always excuses and there were always reasons why we couldn't," said Zenith, who told Mendelman, "Well, you can't go to Israel without me!"

Accepted by Sar-El, the friends booked and rebooked



Tamar Zenith (L), Jonny Daniels and Melissa Mendelman.

multiple times as airlines cancelled flights to Ben Gurion Airport due to multifront hostilities.

Wondering if it was wise to stick with the plan, Mendelman received encouragement from Daniels, whose Instagram page had been brought to her attention thanks to Zenith's son, Zen Laven.

Already following Daniels at the suggestion of friends who had heard him speak in Poland during a March of the Living trip, Laven encouraged his mother to follow Daniels. Soon Mendelman took the lead, posting online questions to Daniels, who encouraged the duo to continue with their plan.

They did two one-week stints with Sar-El, one at an air force base in the Negev Desert and the other at a base near the border with Gaza. The latter was attacked by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023.

"It's an amazing experience, and an amazing organization," Zenith said of Sar-El, adding that a highlight was meeting volunteers from around the world

During some R and R in Tel Aviv, Mendelman and Zenith discovered that Daniels was also there. They invited him to coffee together with a few other Sar-El volunteers. To their surprise, Daniels showed up, and he was receptive when they asked him to consider visiting Calgary.

Continued on page 15

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Jacqui Vital: My daughter Adi was a lioness

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

Her name means jewel, but Adi Vital-Kaploun is also fittingly recalled as a lioness. On October 7, 2023, the 33-year-old mother of two sons – Negev, not quite yet four years of age, and Eshel, six months - rushed with her boys into the family's saferoom at Kibbutz Holit when missiles began to rain down at 6:29am. Hamas terrorists then infiltrated Israel, initially killing some 1,200 Israelis, wounding hundreds more, taking 250 into captivity in Gaza, and sparking the ongoing lethal war in Gaza.

Adi Vital-Kaploun – who, like her mother, was both an Israeli and Canadian citizen – was one of 15 people murdered at Kibbutz Holit that day; her children and father survived, thanks, in large part, to her quick thinking and incredible bravery.

With remarkable composure, Adi's mother, Jacqui Vital, shared her family's story in Edmonton at an Aug. 29 Shabbat Dinner at Beth Shalom, followed by a presentation the next day following services. She then traveled to Calgary and spoke at the Calgary JCC on September 3. For Vital, it was part of an eight-week tour during which she also spoke in Winnipeg. While in Calgary, she also addressed Hillel students at a Shabbaton on Friday, Sept. 6 and participated in the Walk with Israel that kicked off the 2025 Calgary UJA campaign on Sunday, Sept. 7.

In speaking about her third-born daughter, Vital reveals a remarkable young woman who deserves to be remembered not only for the gruesome manner in which she died, but for the meaningful and loving way that she lived.

"Smart, serious, self-disciplined, talented, quiet, modest, sensitive, gentle, strong, independent, nonjudgemental, accepting of others," are some of the adjectives identified and amplified by friends of Adi and her family and shared by Vital with her Calgary and Edmonton audiences.

An engineer who worked in cybersecurity, Adi had diverse interests and talents. She was a dancer, musician and basketball player who had served in an IDF intelligence unit.

She loved living in the desert, which she referred to as her Gan Eden - the Garden of Eden.

In front of an audience so still that it seemed nobody was breathing, Vital - herself a lioness - punctuated her talk with images including family photos and videos capturing good times prior to October 7; news footage of the terrorist attacks; and videos shot by the terrorists themselves.

Adi's husband Anani was on a nature walk with friends that Shabbat and Simchat Torah morning and hid from the terrorists in the fields. Her father, Yaron Vital, who was visiting from Jerusalem, had stayed at a vacant kibbutz guesthouse just across the lane at Adi's suggestion. She did not want his sleep disturbed due to the nocturnal cries of a hungry baby.

In the midst of the air raid, Adi's father called her to say he would come over to help. Adi told him to stay where he was and to lock himself in the saferoom

The fact that the missiles kept coming was unusual. Adi called her husband and asked for a refresher on how to reload the rifle locked in their saferoom (due to Anani's role on the kibbutz security squad).

It was not long before the Hamas terrorists broke through the kibbutz security fence. When the monsters burst into Adi's house, it was not without a fight. She courageously opened fire, killing one of them. Eventually overpowered, she was then murdered in front of her sons.

All of this happened while Jacqui Vital was in her native Ottawa visiting her sister. Amidst a lovely visit, she noticed multiple urgent messages on her cell phone. Though she knew things were terribly wrong, it took hours and then days for all the details to emerge.

One video, from Israeli TV, shows the pioneering role Adi and her husband Anani had played in breathing new life into Kibbutz Holit, located just three kilometres from the Gaza border. There, together with a group of friends, they built what Adi considered an idyllic life. She inspired others who shared a similar mix of idealism and work ethic to embrace kibbutz life on the frontier.

> Another clip, this one filmed by the perpetrators, shows the back of the Vital-Kaploun home where the terrorists entered.

Another horrifying image captures what the safe room looked like after the terrorists murdered Adi and then boobytrapped her body in the hope of multiplying their carnage.

Some photos and videos show the family celeholidays brating lifecycle events during happier times. The juxtaposition tears at the soul, reinforcing the enormity of but one family's loss

Jacqui and Yaron Vital are the parents of three



Jacqui Vital in Alberta this summer.

daughters, a son and eight grandchildren. The last photo of this clan was a selfie taken by Adi who smiles broadly in the foreground.

"It was taken on Rosh Hashanah 2023, three weeks before Adi's murder," Vital said.

Then there was the gorgeous photo of Adi on her wedding day.

"She was a beautiful bride, inside and out," her mother recalled.

Here a photo of Adi as a child with her siblings, there an image taken when she cut her long hair so it could be fashioned into a wig that might improve the life of a cancer patient.

One photo is exceptionally precious. It is the only one that Jacqui Vital has of Adi, Anani, Negev, and Eshel together as they celebrated at a Brit Milah (Bris) just three months before disaster.

In a video made by the terrorists themselves – likely as a propaganda tool - they "tend" to Adi's children after her murder. One rocks Eshel in his stroller. Another gives Negev a glass of water after perversely – no, obscenely – forcing him to say *Bismillah*, Arabic for "In the name of Allah."

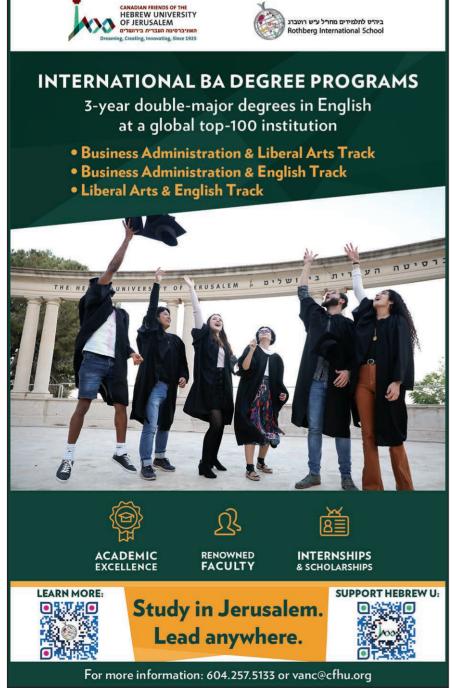
It makes one's skin crawl.

Vital recounted how the terrorists then took the boys and a neighbour, Avital, across the border as hostages.

In what is now understood to have been a publicity stunt, the terrorists let them go just before the notorious tunnels at Rafah, videotaping their made-for-TV "humanitarian" effort. In one of the most searing images, little Negev stands alone on the border.

During her talk, Jacqui Vital described how Avital, who had been Adi's friend, carried Eshel as the three made their way toward home. The journey was perilous. Negev, who had been shot in the foot, was in pain and at one point refused to go any further. Eshel was struggling to breathe due to smoke inhalation. Avital sheltered the boys, hiding behind dunes as other terrorists headed to the bowels of Gaza with more human prey.

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Divine provenance for Yacheh Rashe, OBM

By Regan Lipes

Divine provenance, hashgechah patit, is a foundational tenant of the Jewish spiritual world and am Yisrael's relationship with Hashem. Miracles, in the present day especially, can be difficult to see. The do not manifest like the parting of the Red Sea, or manna from G-d above, but the miracles that are present today are more ordinary, yet still undeniable. Recently, the Edmonton Jewish community was blessed with one such miracle: the kind of ordinary that is in fact extraordinary. Tisha B'Av, 5785 (August 3, 2025), was a rainy Sunday, but one that Rabbi Ari Drelich of Chabad Lubavitch of Edmonton will not soon forget.

On the second most sombre day of the Jewish calendar year, the local community lay Yacheh Rashe (OBM), an 85-year-old Shoah survivor to rest. Born in Kovno, modern day Lithuania, Yacheh Rashe was entrusted to a Polish-Catholic family as an infant; the rest of her family were murder victims of the Shoah. This family cared for her and sheltered her when so many Jews in Europe were being betrayed by long-time friends and neighbours. She was eventually reunited with a grandmother who managed, miraculously, to survive, and Yacheh Rashe would later marry her late husband in a Jewish ceremony in Kovno. The couple was blessed with two sons and a daughter. As a family, they built a life in Montreal after immigrating to Canada.

In December of 2021, Yacheh Rashe relocated from Montreal to Edmonton with her daughter. In her final years, the elderly woman, whose survival of the Shoah was a miracle in and of itself, was cared for by her daughter. "She lived a full life, certainly," commented Rabbi Drelich in a recent interview at the Chabad House in Edmonton. "But it wasn't an easy one." She had no established connection to the Edmonton Jewish community, and Rabbi Drelich and the Chevra Kadisha needed to provide support to the decedent's survi-ving daughter without knowing much about the family.

Tisha B'Av, a fasting day, where unless work is absolutely necessary, a Jew should abstain from labouring, is a day of contemplative mourning, but August 3, 2025 had the added sorrow of being the funeral date for Yacheh Rashe - leaving the world with one less Shoah survivor. "It was raining that morning," recalled Rabbi Drelich. "It was only about an hour before the funeral, and the sky cleared completely."

Approximately at the same time, Rabbi Drelich also received a WhatsApp message that set into

motion something truly miraculous.

"Every year the Ghermezian family sponsors young yeshiva boys, ages between 16 to 18, to come to Edmonton for Yachad Camp. I got a WhatsApp message from the Kolel group letting people on the chat know that the Yachad boys would be going to the Jewish cemetery, in keeping with marking this significant day, to say prayers. There wasn't much of a reason for the message to be sent other than as a general FYI, but really, that in alone was divine provenance." The Edmonton Chevra Kadisha, in its diligence, always ensures a full minyan as required by halacha, but the arrival of this serendipitous text gave Rabbi Drelich an idea. "I wrote to the group right away and asked if they could change their plans slightly. Instead of going to the old cemetery as they were going to do, I asked if they'd be willing to come to the new cemetery instead." The group agreed.

Within the hour, two yellow school buses, packed with yeshiva students, pulled up to the new Jewish cemetery. Accompanied by Rabbi Abramsky, over 100



Yeshiva boys from Camp Yachad were in Edmonton during Tisha B'Av performing mitzvot in the community.

young men poured off the buses, strengthening the existing gathered minyan ten-fold.

Without even a word or a blink of an eye, the Yeshiva boys climbed in to assist the Chevra Kadisha and helped with the digging, commented Rabbi Drelich. "Now, you have to remember that it was a fast day, so these boys hadn't eaten or had even a sip of water for something like 16 hours at that point, but they took this upon themselves." Yacheh Rashe's casket was then lowered to its final resting place. "Usually, how its worked in the past, is that people fill the grave with earth till the point that the casket is covered and no wood is visible, and then the rest of the grave is filled with a machine," explained Rabbi Drelich. "Every bit of earth, each particle of soil that filled her grave was shoveled by hand. The boys took turns."

Yacheh Rashe, a Shoah survivor, with only one family member in town, and no connections to the Jewish community, was buried in a service the likes of

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We appreciate our neighbours

By Joel Reboh

Last month, we were honoured to welcome the Westridge Wolf Willow Country Club Community League Board of Directors to join us for a kiddush lunch at Beth Israel. We recognize them as active volunteers and leaders who dedicate countless hours to making our neighborhood vibrant, safe, and welcoming.

Some of you may remember that in June 2024, the Westridge Board chose to take a clear stand against antisemitism and anti-Canadian values displayed by an organization renting the community hall. The board noticed that some of the materials being shared were unacceptable and simply asked that those particular tables be taken down. Rather than comply, the

organizers shut down their own event.

For several board members, this was the first time they had come face-to-face with such blatant hate... right in their own backyard, and on Canada Day weekend no less. There were flags being waved, yet not a single Canadian flag was present. Their decision to act was not the easiest path, but it was the right one. We commend the Westridge Board for protecting our neighborhood and showing that hate has no place here.

Some of the board members who were present at the event, and dealt with the situation directly, joined us for lunc along with their spouses who also, in their own way, had to deal with the fallout. And it's important to note: this was not a "one and done." For several months after, the board had to endure bullying, intimidation, and bureaucracy, all while justifying why they chose to take a stand.

Many people are surprised to learn just how small the Jewish community is. In Canada, we make up less than 1% of the population. In the Edmonton metro area, we are just 0.3%. Yet despite our size, we are disproportionately targeted. In Toronto this year alone, 40% of all hate crimes... and 80% of all

religiously motivated hate crimes....have been directed at Jews. Since I was a child, we have been the only group that requires full-time security at every single community event.

The rise of anti-Israel rhetoric in the West is often just a new form of an old hatred, dressed up in conspiracy theories. And sadly, because our numbers are so small, it doesn't always "pay" for politicians or the media to stand up for us. That is why neighbors matter so much.

Throughout our 3,500-year history, good neighbors have not been easy to come by. Which is why we are especially grateful for the way the Westridge Board handled things last year. The easier path would have been to ignore it, to look away, to let the event proceed unchecked. But instead, they chose the harder path – to stand up to hate, to step outside their comfort zone, and to risk backlash.

We know from history that when hate is ignored, it grows. When it is tolerated, perpetrators come back again and again. Unfortunately, Jewish communities in eastern Canada have experienced this firsthand. Here in Westridge and Wolf Willow, the board stopped it in its tracks before it could take root – and since then, it has not returned.

Over the past week, many people in our community told me how much they wanted to be here today, but there is a Bar Mitzvah taking place at the downtown synagogue right now. They asked me to share their respect and gratitude to the Westridge Board as well.

On behalf of all of us, thank you, Westridge Board, for your courage – and for being the kind of neighbors who stand with us.









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Jonny Daniels Cont. from page 15

With the support of Holocaust and Human Rights Remembrance and Education Co-Chair Marnie Bondar, and Calgary Jewish Federation Director of Development Diana Kalef, the October 20 UJA program - co-chaired by Mendelman and Zenith - was

"We're thrilled that Melissa and Tamar came forward with a great idea and agreed to co-chair this event," said Kalef. "The fact that they have inspired the support of many of their non-Jewish friends speaks volumes, allowing us to engage not only members of Jewish Calgary but the community at large.

"Melissa and I are very honoured that a lot of our really close friends have stepped up," Zenith said.

Mendelman and Zenith share deep concern at the normalization of antisemitism in the wake of October 7 and the continuing war in Gaza.

"Melissa and I lived for 54 years without encountering antisemitism.... Both of us have been in situations in the last 12 or 18 months when we've had to personally deal with it here in Calgary," Zenith said.

While Daniels will speak to this and other daunting challenges in both Israel and the Diaspora, he promises an uplifting evening.

"The truth is that we are going to be okay.... We're going to get through this," Daniels said.

Edmontonians will have the opportunity to take their own Deep Dive with Daniels on October 21 when he addresses the community in the third of four events comprising Jewish Federation of Edmonton's 2025 UJA Speaker Series.

During his trip to Alberta, Daniels will also be meeting with Holocaust survivors in both Calgary and Edmonton who have been invited to participate in one of his favourite initiatives, the restoration of a Torah scroll discovered by volunteers in Poland.

"The Torah is itself a survivor," Daniels told *AJNews*. "This is a Torah that was hidden by a Polish shepherd in what, unfortunately, turned out to be the final wish of his neighbour, who was the Rabbi in the town of Filipow."

The vast majority of Jews who lived in Filipow prior to the Holocaust were murdered at the Treblinka death camp, and nobody came back to claim the Torah, Daniels said. As time passed, the shepherd began using parchment from the Torah to make insoles for shoes, a handbag for his wife, and even rags. When Daniels first saw the scroll, only about half of it remained.

"Rather than burying it or putting it in a museum, I saw the need to bring it back to life...to restore the missing parts of this Torah, one letter at a time, each with survivors of the Holocaust," Daniels said.

The Torah will eventually have a permanent home in the Synagogue at the official residence of Israel's president.

Through his From the Depths Foundation, Daniels has partnered with other organizations in the restoration of Matzevot (Jewish tombstones) and cemeteries in Poland.

His other passions include sharing the stories of Righteous Among the Nations and supporting both Holocaust survivors and non-Jewish heroes who today live in poverty. From the Depths partnered with the Jewish Agency to help ease suffering in Ukraine early in Russia's war of aggression there, Daniels told

In the aftermath of October 7, Daniels has ramped up his focus on Israel advocacy and Jewish pride.

When Daniels spoke to AJNews, he was in Italy, where he attended a tribute to Catholic citizens of Assisi who, under the leadership of the Bishop of Assisi, Monsignor Giuseppe Placido Nicolini, helped to save the lives of 300 Italian Jews during the Shoah. (Bishop Nicolini was posthumously recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations in 1977, an honour similarly accorded clergy who worked with and for him in the humanitarian effort.)

"It is really very, very important to keep this memory alive...especially at a time where we often wonder who and where our allies are." Daniels said.

Fittingly, allies will be front and centre in Calgary. Organizers hope that the Deep Dive event will also draw younger members of the Jewish community who are engaged in social media, which has become an increasingly toxic environment for supporters of Israel and Jews around the world. At the same time, the internet has become an important front in the fight against antisemitism.



Jonny Daniels

"Melissa and I would have never found Jonny Daniels by ourselves," said Zenith.

It took the next generation to put Daniels on Zenith and Mendelman's radar, and they now want to share him with as many friends and allies as possible.

Their next mission? A second tour of duty with Sar-El in Israel, beginning just a couple of days after Jonny Daniels' Alberta visit.

Tzeitchem l'shalom...may they go toward peace!

A Deep Dive with Jonny Daniels takes place Monday, October 20, 7:00pm, at Beth Tzedec Congregation. To purchase tickets (\$54/\$18 student) and/or donate to the 2025 UJA Campaign, go to jewishcalgary.org.

Calgary Holocaust survivors will participate in the Survivor Torah Project at a by-invitation daytime event on October 20. For more information or to register for this event, contact Marnie Bondar and Dahlia Libin at holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.org.

Daniels' Deep Dive in Edmonton takes place Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00pm, location TBA. For more information go to jewishedmonton.org.

For more information about the Survivor Torah event in Edmonton go to jewishedmonton.org or contact Jennifer Magalnick at magalj@edjfed.org.



For Kosher Food visit Brook's No Frills

By Matthew Levine

When Andy's IGA, (Edmonton's staple Kosher supplier), closed down, much of the Jewish community was left wondering if they could ever host a Rosh Hashanah meal again. For Brook and Kelsey of Brook's No Frills, it was an opportunity to give back to the community they love.

Brook and Kelsey's journeys to find Judaism are very unique and inspiring. Eight years ago, Brook was looking for a connection to faith and stumbled upon Judaism through independent research. He converted shortly after and later met his wife who was also interested in Judaism. She did her own investigation into Judaism with no surrounding pressure and decided that it was best for her as well. She converted around four years ago, Brook and Kelsey got married, and they have never looked back.

"I just felt like I needed something more in my life," says Brook, "a deeper connection to some culture or to something higher."

Interestingly, Brook's favorite Jewish Holiday is Shavuot. He feels a strong parallel between him learning at his Shul on the path to becoming Jewish, and the Israelites receiving the Torah on Mt. Sinai.

"We do the normal celebrations, but it's also a big time of reflection for us both... We chose this on purpose... this is not a mistake. So, it's a really nice reminder."

On the topic of favorite Jewish things, Brook mentioned that his favorite Jewish food is matzo-ball soup. He described it as a comfort food that has a good mix of warmth and carbs that leave him feeling satisfied and full.

No Frills was not an expected venture for Brook. Out of high school, he had his sights set on professional theater. He attended universities in both Calgary and Edmonton, and even took a couple of professional training programs to pursue his dream. With the inconsistencies of full time work in theater, Brook always needed a part-time job, working at Safeway's in different locations over a few years.

While studying theater at the University of Alberta, Brook heard about a No Frills opening up on Whyte Avenue. He applied and worked there throughout the remainder of his degree, and took a gap year solely working there after graduating. With some money in his pocket, Brook went back to Calgary where he had set up a bunch of theater projects to keep him busy. Everything seemed to be working out when, one by one, the projects fell through.

"I had moved away and didn't have any theater jobs. I had just turned 30... I kind of looked at myself in the mirror, and I was like, what am I doing?"

It was hard for Brook to

just give up on his dreams, but he decided it was for the best. He started working at a No Frills in Calgary and transferred his work ethic and focus into that job. Brook started dreaming about becoming an owner. He talked to the right people, and soon the opportunity presented himself. In a full-circle moment, a Franchisee retired at the very first No Frills he worked at in Edmonton.

"I looked at my wife, like, oh my goodness! This is where we need to go, right? Like, this is my neighborhood, these are my people, right?"

The application process followed, and Brook heard back extremely quickly. The rest is history.

When Andy's IGA closed its doors, the entirety of our Edmonton Jewish community felt the absence of Kosher food. When Brook and his wife Kelsey heard the news, they decided to show their support and try to fill the IGA's shoes.

"[We thought] this is our time - this is where we have to step in," says Brook. "More than anything, there were personal texts and phone calls from our community. People were literally worried."

They stepped up, building relationships with Kosher suppliers in Quebec and Ontario, and making minor renovations to open up Kosher shelf space. They now stock a large selection of dry and frozen kosher foods, and fill catering orders for big Jewish dinners. Brook made sure to give kudos to Kelsey for all the work she took on to keep the Kosher operation running smoothly.

"She stocks the shelves, talks to the sales rep, does



Brook with Kosher Tomahawk Steaks, at Brook's No Frills!

the orders... It's a ton of work, and I'm so lucky that she's by my side and willing to take that on."

It truly is a labor of love but Brook claims that the community makes it all worth it. He mentioned how the community has accepted him and his wife with open arms, and how the Kosher operation has made them feel more connected with the community as a whole rather than just their own synagogue.

"It's more than transactional. It's the invites to Shabbat dinners, the songs, the support," says Brook. "We're all more the same than we are different."

Brook's No Frills is located at 10467 80 Avenue in Edmonton. It has rapidly become a staple inside of the Jewish community. Not only a one-stop-shop for all your kosher needs, but as a friendly environment that reflects the kindness and support Brook and Kelsey have felt from all of us.

"We were just overwhelmed again, just with the support of the Jewish community... We're just so happy to try to pay it back a little bit if we can."

Matthew Levine is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Divine provenance

Cont. from page 13

which Edmonton has seldom seen. "This was the kind of funeral that would only be seen in large Jewish communities," Rabbi Drelich said with conviction. "This woman clearly was someone special," he concluded.

The outstanding volunteers at the Edmonton Chevra Kashida do so much to provide for the final needs of every Jew in the community, but also for their loved ones. Even those who are not affiliated, or who sadly lack connection to Jewish Edmonton are treated

with the utmost respect and dignity. Every Jew is afforded their care and dedication.

The miracle of it all is that Yacheh Rashe lived her final years detached from the community of Yiddishkeit, but in death she was paid the respect and reverence typically reserved for prominent figures. The auspicious burial was made possible by a series of events that could not have been predicted or foreseen: the skies clearing, the Ghermezian family generously sponsoring this specific group of Yeshiva students, the WhatsApp message that did not serve any function other than providing information, the slightly too narrow grave, and the dedication of a group of truly pious young men. "Other than the minyan organized

by the Chevra Kadisha, there was her daughter, and a Lithuanian-speaking couple that attend Chabad, but nobody else was expected." Hashem clearly had something else in mind, and although He loves all his children, His divine plan for Yacheh Rashe was much larger.

Moments like these are a reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is hope. Yache Rashe is survived by her daughter and three grandchildren. May her memory be a blessing.

Regan Lipes is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.





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Camp BB-Riback wraps up another special summer!







Summer 2025 at Camp BB-Riback was a wonderful experience for campers and staff. Photos by Jordan Highstead.

CAMP BB-RIBACK is NOW HIRING Camp Director (full time, year-round)



Located on Pine Lake Alberta, Camp BB-Riback is a Jewish summer camp that believes that every child is unique and leserves the opportunity to experience a full, enriching summer. This is a full time, year-round position that requires living onsite at camp throughout the summer season. A competitive total compensation package is offered.

Overview of Camp-Director

Reporting to the Camp BB-Riback Board of Directors, the Camp Director is responsible for all camp-related operations and activities, including community engagement, management of the facilities, food service, staff, and programs. This is a senior management position that partners closely with the Board of Directors on strategic priorities, long range plans, growth

The primary focus areas of this role are camper enrollment and community engagement, operations, and people leadership. The Camp Director will serve as the face of Camp BB-Riback in the community. This position will also lead recruiting efforts to hire and onboard a staff of 70+ seasonal employees.

This person will have a meaningful impact on building the Camp BB-Riback culture and community and will be an influential voice in the future of camp. If you are a camp professional with a proven track record in operations, this is the job for you.

Year-round Activity includes: Camper Recruitment & Marketing, Fundraising & Development, Nonprofit Business Operations, and Camp Operations.

Seasonal Activity includes:

- Oversee youth summer camp operations for 200+ kids in 2 sessions from July-August, as well as additional camp activities or rentals during the summer season (May - end of August).
- Coordinate logistics and set up the site to accommodate the needs of activities.
 Lead a team of seasonal staff members including housekeepers, maintenance workers,
- kitchen crew, medical personnel, assistant directors, program leaders, and counsellors.
- Oversee general appearance and upkeep of camp facilities. Ensure safety and cleanliness of grounds at all times. Partner with maintenance teams to make repairs.
- Conduct routine inventory and procurement of supplies. Work with infirmary staff to manage camper records and log incident reports.
- Oversee all camp program related travel for participants and camp staff.
- Responsible for opening and closing of camp, equipment upkeep, records management, and end-of-season reporting.

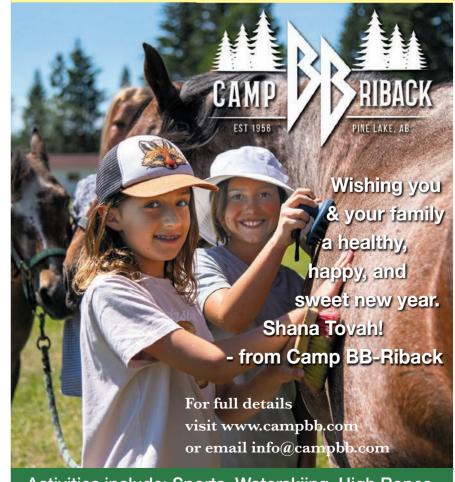
Minimum Qualifications

- Must be able to live onsite at camp in Pine Lake, AB for the summer season and reliably commute throughout the year as needed (middle of May- end of August)
- 4+ years of year-round leadership experience in a nonprofit organization or camp setting. Residential camping experience preferred.
- Experience with business operations & administration, marketing and social media and fundraising / non-profit development.

For a full job description or to apply: contact chair@campbb.com or visit www.campbb.com

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Phil Kirman is the new President of Beth Israel Congregation

By Regan Lipes

The greater Jewish community of Edmonton may remember Philip Kirman from Beth Israel Synagogue's recent gala, where he, and Rhonda Eidelman, were the honorees of the evening. Those who congregate at BI will know Phil from his aliyot to the bimah, but more so, likely, for his magic touch in the kitchen. Phil and Rhonda are the masterminds behind the wonderful kiddish lunches served at BI every Shabbos. The community can now additionally address Phil as, 'Mr. President.' Yes, Philip Kirman, a staple at BI, has just been elected as the new President of the Board of Directors.

An Edmontonian through and through, Phil was born in the City of Champions, earned undergraduate and law degrees at the University of Alberta, built an admirable career, and now assumes the role of President of the Board for the Modern Orthodox shul. "I was Shane Asbell's Vice-President for four years," Phil explained modestly in a recent phone interview with the Alberta Jewish News. "So, I have an amazing example to draw from." Now, every Shabbos, it is a new face, that of Phil, delivering the prayer for Canada and reading out the weekly announcements after

Phil grew up attending BI and has fond memories of walking to shul with his father on Shabbos. "I remember as a preschooler going to synagogue on Shabbos: the old one Downtown. I have many memories of walking there and back with my father," he said dolefully. "I remember the building and playing there. The kids would go to the basement and play. His are the sweet snapshots of a childhood rooted in shul life that many parents now aspire to give their Phil commented nostalgically about children. memories from a bit later in his youth, still at the old location: "I remember being in the main sanctuary with hardwood pews, they weren't like the soft cushioned seats we enjoy now. There was also the beautiful woodwork and stained glass." For those who never got to see the old site, Phil's description paints a textured and nuanced portrait. "Edmonton's always been home for me," he stated with conviction.

"I went to a weekly Sunday school at Beth Shalom in kindergarten and grade-one. That was the formal Jewish education. I learned to read Hebrew from my mother. She was almost fluent having grown up in Brooklyn with access to this education." Phil enjoyed a childhood filled with love and plenty of enriching books provided by his parents. Later, he would celebrate his bar mitzvah at BI, with the simcha officiated by Rabbi Polinsky.

For many years, with the demands of a highpressure career as a lawyer, and helping care for his mother Barbara (OBM), Phil found that his shul attendance waned, especially after the new synagogue opened its doors. "It was just a period of time after the new shul was built and I found I became less active. With my mother's health deteriorated this obviously distracted me from other things going on, and maintaining a life at shul was difficult," he expressed candidly. After his mother's passing, Phil began attending shul to say kaddish daily, and the impressive woman that had shaped his life so lovingly, even in death, continued to guide his path back to the shul he had grown up in. "Many of the long-timers here remembered me as a child, and remembered my dad Joseph," he explained. "And there was a sense of familiarity and belonging that came with this. Like during childhood, so many years later, I was again attending with my father." Phil began to be a regular fixture at BI, and by the time he finished his year of mourning, he found that being active in synagogue life was an integral part of who he

"Then COVID hit, and that changed everything. The shul was closed completely for, what I think, might have been the first time in history." As the world hunkered down in-doors and socially isolated, Phil took the opportunity to contribute to the vitality of BI. "I joined the Board in 2020," he recalled. "There was a bit of cajoling; everyone would casually say that it's always helpful to have a lawyer on the Board. Our meetings were virtual and I got more involved." "When things started opening up, it was all so regimented. People had assigned seats, they'd have to register before attending, everybody was masked; there obviously wasn't going to be any food service happening." The detente of restriction gradually changed. "In late 2021 we started having limited weekly kiddish lunch service, but everyone needed to produce a vaccination card still, and it had limitations. I think the first time there was a 'kiddish' we had crackers and maybe something else also. Even before COVID changed how we gather and worship, unless it was a sponsored kiddish, there wasn't likely to be anything too elaborate."

Phil sees worship as the heartbeat of a shul, but feeding hungry bellies is the way to best fuel this heartbeat. "It started with Rhonda and her son Benji recruiting volunteers, and then a lot of the cooking fell to Rhonda, and I thought: 'I can do this. I'm going to pitch in.' Rhonda and I make a great team, and we started seeing that people were coming back to shul. Many had gotten used to not attending because it had

Rhonda Eidelman and Philip Kirman

been essentially illegal to gather for so long, but our weekly numbers were increasing."

In a wonderful celebration on August 17, BI honoured Phil and Rhonda for their culinary community building as congregants also paid tribute to the 25th anniversary of the new shul building's opening. When asked about what it was like to be in the spotlight for such an auspicious event, Phil commented: "Well it was an extraordinary gala! It was great to see so many people come together to mark the building's anniversary: really deeply moving. The silver anniversary really wasn't just a milestone in years, but also a tribute to generations of families and friendships nurtured here." When pressed to comment about the honouring of his own contributions further, Phil bashfully noted: "I was so touched that Rhonda and I were being recognized. When I found out that we were receiving this honour I was speechless, and my surprise lasted for a while. I was deeply moved and so touched."

Now Phil has taken on the title of President, and all the responsibilities that come with this role. He sees this position as an opportunity to help continue the work exhaustively pursued by his predecessor, Shane Asbell. "I was Shane's VP for four years, so I saw all the work he put in and tried to support him as best I could." When asked about the vision he has for his presidency, Phil declared with conviction: "Engagement is a priority. I want to reach out to younger membership and families, but it's also so important to take care of the needs of our established members who have been with us for decades, and who shaped the BI community we have today. Some families have been contributing to the vitality of the shul for generations." He continued by adding that education plays such an important role in helping a community to flourish. "We are so fortunate to have Rabbi Tal with us. Education is a priority for him too, and he does so much to make classes and learning opportunities available to everyone. I'd like to see this continue and grow and want to help support it too."

The biggest question on every BI congregant's mind now is: will Philip keep on in the kitchen? "When I







"Real estate with results."

By Daniel Starkman, Broker/Agent

Real estate is built on constant change. Interest rates rise and fall, family needs evolve and lifestyles shift. Each change opens the door to new opportunities. Presently Edmonton's market is changing, and we're transitioning from a seller's market to a buyer's market. This means that sellers need more than just a listing; they need the right Realtor with the right attitude towards pricing strategy. In today's competitive market, proper pricing in the first 2-3 weeks can make the difference between a quick sale and a listing that lingers over

The statistics from MLS prove it. As of July 30, 2025 single-family home prices decreased 0.4% to \$463,078, a price 5.2% higher than last year. The MLS home price index was \$427,800 reflecting a 2.7% decrease from June 2025, and a 5.2% increase from July 2024. Good news for sellers.

Statistics from the Edmonton Real Estate Board show apartment condo sales have increased 3.5% from June to July, although activity is still 4.8% lower than the previous year. Condo prices fell 2.4% from the previous month but continue to increase at \$209,711(an average price 2.6% higher than July 2024.) Newly listed condos increased 3.2% from June and 13.9% from July 2024.

What does this mean for you as a seller? Prices are softening, buyers are in the driver's seat, and a property that isn't priced correctly right away risks being overlooked. Success in this market comes down to strategy and that starts with the right price.

Na'amat Tikvah chapter meets



Na'amat Edmonton's Tikvah chapter is off to a great start this year, as they gathered for their start-up Planning Meeting. For information about Na'amat and our Opening Program, please email darlene.bushewsky@naamat.com

At Starkman Realty, I understand that pricing a home realistically is crucial. Unlike larger brokerages that focus on generating sales volume, and massive inventory, my priority is straightforward: selling your home quickly. As your Broker, I work directly with you to determine a strategy that reflects today's market, and positions your property to stand out. In today's competitive market, it's not about listing high and

hoping, it's about pricing smart to capture demand before buyers move on.

Price it right, and the market will respond! A Happy New Year to All.

Contact Daniel Starkman at 780.863.0778, or starkmanrealty@rogers.com.





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albertajewishnews@gmail.com



Wishing you and your loved ones a sweet year, filled with joy, health and peace.

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

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Generations gather at Second Annual "Challah and Hummus" celebration

By Danielle Shaposhnikov

The spirit of community was alive and well at the recent "Challah and Hummus" event by Jewish Family Services Edmonton (JFSE) and its dedicated funders, including the Ort Canada Fund, the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation (EJCCF), the Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Edmonton Jewish Federation, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto – Lewar Fund, Alberta Jewish Pipeline, and Brook's No Frills.

Generations gathered to celebrate connection, culture, and the approach of the Jewish New Year. What began as a simple idea to bring locals and newcomers together blossomed into an outstanding afternoon that perfectly captured the warmth and vibrancy of Edmonton's Jewish community, with over 170 people in attendance, including representatives from the Beth Israel, Beth Ora and Beth Shalom Synagogues.

At the heart of the celebration was the kosher barbecue, filling the air with enticing aromas that drew families from across the city. Tables overflowed with refreshing drinks kindly donated by Brook's No-Frills, delicious food, from traditional Jewish favourites to contemporary treats, ensuring something for every palate. The sight of families sharing meals—grandparents alongside grandchildren, longtime

community members welcoming newcomers from Israel, Ukraine, Ethiopia, and Eritrea – embodied the true essence of Jewish hospitality.

Among the most cherished attendees were Holocaust survivors, supported by the Holocaust Survivors Support Program funded by Claims Conference, whose presence added profound meaning to the gathering. This extraordinary group brought an infectious energy, confidently showcasing their dance moves and enthusiastically encouraging others to join them on the dance floor for spirited salsa dancing to the live mariachi band's vibrant melodies. In a particularly memorable moment, one survivor with a musical background charmed the entire crowd by taking the microphone and singing with such passion that the gathering erupted into thunderous applause. Their joyful participation served as a powerful testament to resilience and the enduring spirit of celebration, reminding everyone of the importance of embracing life's pleasures, community connections, and Jewish traditions.

The Mariachi Loco band was a unique and captivating addition, bringing extra vibrancy to the picnic. Their lively performance provided the perfect soundtrack for dancing, conversation, and celebration, uniting people through music.

Children were not forgotten in the day's festivities. A variety of engaging activities kept them both entertained and educated. Temporary glow-in-

the-dark tattoos were a huge hit, with kids proudly showing off their choices as they ran between activities.

The scavenger hunt. offered in both English and Hebrew, proved to be one of the most exciting highlights of the day. Families teamed up to uncover details about Edmonton's rich Jewish history, exploring the pioneers, institutions, and milestones that have shaped the community over the decades. The Alberta Jewish News and Talmud Torah School partnered with us to host stations along side the



Everyone enjoyed the buffet table before heading outside for music and dancing. Photo by Paula Kirman.

hunt, and who better to help uncover the treasures than Ari, the lovable Talmud Torah Lion? The multilingual aspect of the hunt ensured full participation from newer community members, reinforcing the event's inclusive spirit and JFSE's core values of Healing the World (Tikkun Olam), Fairness (Tzedek), Caring (Chesed), and Respect (Kavod).

As the celebration coincided with the approach of Rosh Hashanah, traditional symbols of the Jewish New Year were woven throughout the event, with tables featuring crisp apples paired with golden, sweet honey.

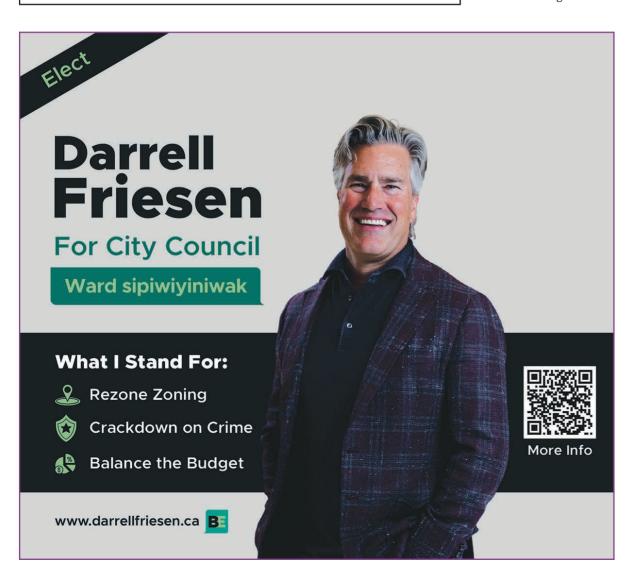
The success of the second annual "Challah and Hummus" lay not just in its excellent food, engaging activities, and dedicated volunteers, but also in the remarkable ability of JFSE's talented staff to cultivate genuine connections across generations, cultures, and languages. Conversations flowed as smoothly as the refreshments, with new friendships forming and existing bonds strengthening throughout the afternoon. The event demonstrated that gathering with intention and openness truly is sweet, creating lasting impacts that extend far beyond the celebration itself

Happy New Year and Shanah Tovah from Jewish Family Services Edmonton to you and yours! May this year be filled with sweetness.





JFSE hosted a fun-filled celebration that brought generations together to enjoy the music, the food and the atmosphere. Photo by Paula Kirman.





Innovative new book explores Russian/Israeli Culture

Book Review

Dual-Diaspora: Post-Soviet Culture in Search of Israeli Identity By Dr. Alex Moshkin

Reviewed by Regan Lipes

The first time that I traveled to Israel was in August of 2009 on my Birthright trip. Landing in Ben Gurion Internation Airport, I was ready for the first words my ears would encounter to be Hebrew ones I would be unable to decipher. Instead, the first words I heard coming off the plane and stepping into the oppressive summer heat were, surprisingly, ones I understood perfectly; they were Russian.

For anyone who has strolled the streets of Tel Aviv, or walked the boardwalk in Eilat, the influence of Russian-speakers on the local Israeli cultural tapestry is undeniable. The 1970s wave of Aliyah immigration brought with it an infusion of Soviet-ness with which the sabrot (Israeli-born population) were unaccustomed. The late 1980s and 1990s saw a exodus of immigration from the former Soviet space to Israel, and the rest is history.

Hot off the Queens-McGill Press publication list is an exciting book by Luxemburg-based, Ivy League educated, Canadian scholar, Dr. Alex Moshkin. Moshkin's book may be an academic one, but it has such insights about the Russian-ness of modern Israel, that it should be a staple of conversation in any Jewish community. Dual-Diaspora: Post-Soviet Culture in Search of Israeli Identity is one of the first Englishlanguage works of its kind. Research in this area has been disseminated in Russian by academics like Larisa Fialkova and in Hebrew by documentarist Peled Smadar, but what Moshkin's manuscript offers to the English-speaking world is unique and innovative.

"Major writers and intellectuals in Israel have anticipated the eventual end of Russophone cultural creativity in the Middle East. I push against these claims," writes Moshkin. "Post-Soviet Israeli culture has not dissolved in Israel's cultural melting pot. Rather the opposite has taken place – it has entered the mainstream of Israeli society and has been successfully transferred to the next generation, albeit having undergone a certain cultural evolution (22)."

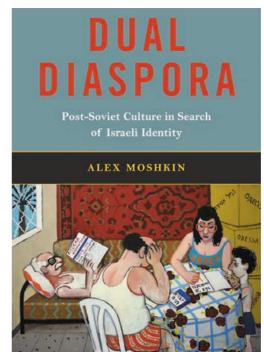
Moshkin's dismissal of claims that the Russophone colour of Israeli society will not fade anytime soon is supported by the popularity of Hebrew-speaking comics like Giora Zinger who only occasionally performs in Russian but has built his success around observationalcomedy focussing on the lives of post-Soviet olim (Aliyah returnees to Israel). Zinger, performed in Edmonton post-COVID to a sold-out house: testament to the considerable influence of immigration from the former Soviet Union on Hebrew-speakers in North America. In this way, work Moshkin's boldly interrogates the validity of the assumption that the Russian-ness of olim from the former Soviet space will give

way to fully Israeli identities within a few generations. Instead, Moshkin posits that as new generations of Israeli-born sabrot enter adulthood, their identities will be a mosaic of inherited cultural influences.

Moshkin does not shy away from exploring the difficult questions surrounding the struggles of immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union. A dedicated chapter: Excuse Me, Are You Jewish? The Newfound Religiosity of Post-Soviet Jews in Israel is an insightful and thought-provoking examination of halacha and the re-claiming of a lost identity. Since 1950, The Law of Return has welcomed and repatriated Jews to the Holy Land, but not only those recognized by halacha. Provided that the individual making Aliyah is the product of at least one Jewish grandparent, immigration is granted under this law. For those seeking to escape the intermittent poverty of the Soviet Union's later years, the Law of Return was less of a desire to return to the Homeland, but to flee persecution and build

more prosperous lives. In this chapter, Moshkin

carefully analyzes a car-



toonish piece of commentary Zoya Cherkassy-Nnadi called Rabbi's Deliquium from 2016. In it, an Orthodox rabbi inspects the kitchen and refrigerator of a young couple with an infant. The couple are from the former Soviet space and are undergoing the rigorous process of giyur (conversion). As Moshkin identifies, what might initially seem like an amusing political cartoon, is a serious commentary on the social integration obstacles faced by Russian-speaking *olim*.

"Through conversion, the couple depicted in the painting, like many immigrants from the USSR, who found themselves unrecognized as Jews in Israel, sought to achieve greater

integration into Israeli society, enhance their civic and economic prospects, and attain rights and benefits reserved for Jewish citizens only" (51). The author explores what it was to be seen as 'Jewish' by Soviet society, and 'Russian' by Israelis. He uses the work Here Comes the Messiah! (1996) by prolific writer Dina Rubina, who visited Calgary in September of 2024, speaking to an impressive crowd, to better explore the many dimensions of 'belonging' and their implications.

This examination builds elegantly into Moshkin's next chapter: Orientalist Cosmopolitanism: Encounters with the Other in Israel. The initial unfamiliarity with Israeli cultural practices, religious traditions, and socially accepted norms certainly led to feelings of isolation with Russian-speakers cast in the role of the exoticized 'other.' Citing "Stalin's notorious 'anticosmopolitan' campaign against Western things in general, and Jews in particular," (82) Moshkin is able

Continued on page 26





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Joanne Berger receives honour

By Matthew Levine

On June 20, Joanne Berger, a lifelong Edmontonian, was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her philanthropic endeavors.

Joanne's family has always been involved in the Edmonton Jewish community, and she takes great pride in representing it.

"It's just such an integral part of who I am and who our family is," she says. "It's the way we live our lives."

Joanne is adamant about how much of a privilege it is to be involved in all of the charitable work she has done. The organization that the philanthropist is most passionate about is The Compassion House Foundation. This project was founded on the belief that women coming into Edmonton for breast cancer treatment deserve more comfort and support than a motel or basement suite had to offer. Joanne was involved in this organization from the ground level, even working on bylaws and the first purchases of pillows for the beds provided. Now the project has come into full fruition, offering many additional services like post-treatment care.

"It was just a home... It was such a simple idea, and I mean, I was fortunate to step out every morning from

a home that was filled with love; people who were interested in what I was doing, and who cared about how my day went... It just seemed like such a simple thing to offer to other people."

Joanne was also involved in the granting committee for a period of time, allowing her to observe the charitable work she is often directly involved in from a vantage point.

"It was interesting because you got to be on the other end of the charitable sector... we weren't able to spend as much as we would

have liked. It's all good stuff, and you want to say yes to everything!"

More recently, Joanne has been involved with the Canadian Mental Health Foundation. She spent time on the Edmonton region's board, and has been heavily involved in the annual local golf tournament they hold. She has also recently been involved in Wellspring, a cancer support organization that opened a house in Edmonton fairly recently. Being involved in the early groundwork of these organizations is something Joanne cherishes.



Joanne Berger with Salma Lakhani, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, on June 20, following her presentation of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

"I like being there at the start, and then letting it evolve!"

Joanne was awarded The King Charles III Coronation medal surrounded by supportive family members. Congratulations for achieving this well-deserved honour.

"It might sound cheesy," says Joanne, "but I really did get more out of the work than I gave."

Matthew Levine is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



the King Charles III Coronation Medal in honour of your hard work and tireless efforts in raising awareness of the need for more Mental Health supports and resources in Edmonton.

We all benefit from your dedication!

Best wishes for continued success from Alberta Jewish News





Phil Kirman Cont. from page 18

was elected and took on the role I told Shane and the rest of the Board, first thing, 'I'm still doing kiddish every week.' Rhonda and I are a great team, and we have some dedicated volunteers, so it isn't just me alone, but Shabbos is healthier, literally, with a good meal after services. This brings people together." A sigh of relief was likely audible in the room at this point, as BI's membership is so accustomed to these wonderful weekly kiddish lunches, that to see their frequency wane would be heartbreaking. Phil hopes that the work he and Rhonda have pioneered week after week has contributed to bringing congregants back following COVID, and he has no intention of slowing down.

The entire Jewish community of Edmonton wishes Philip Kirman a hearty and well-deserved Mazel Tov! May his presidency be a healthy and happy time for him and the membership of Beth Israel Synagogue.



Compassion House Foundation is proud to celebrate our dear friend,
Joanne Berger,
recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Thank you for your compassion, dedication, and the impact you've made in the lives of so many women facing cancer.

We are grateful for you!



Jacqui Vital Cont. from page 12

Eventually rescued by IDF soldiers, Avital, Negev, and Eshel were taken to Kibbutz Gvulot. Soon after, the boys were taken to Jerusalem where doctors operated on Negev's foot and Eshel was given oxygen.

Adi's father, Yaron, survived the massacre at Holit. The guest house where he had spent the night was never entered by the terrorists, who were armed with intelligence about Holit and assumed the house was vacant.

When the IDF went through the pockets of dead terrorists, they found maps that indicated, "...who lived where, who had dogs, where the safe room was in each house, who had children, etcetera," Jacqui Vital said.

When he eventually heard voices in the guesthouse, Yaron listened carefully for any hint of an Arabic accent. But he figured that after 11 hours, his time was up, said Vital who quoted her husband as having said, "Either they'll kill me or they'll save me."

Fortunately, Yaron emerged from the safe room into the presence of IDF soldiers moving house to house to clear the kibbutz of terrorists.

At first, Adi's body was not discovered, and the children were nowhere to be found.

Yaron called Anani who told him where to look for other hiding places but found nobody.

He went to the safe room but saw only a mess. It was dark...the terrorists having shot out most of the lights.

dark...the terrorists having shot out most of the lights.
All three were presumed to have been taken hostage.

The IDF soldiers suggested that Yaron return to his



home in Jerusalem, which he did, wisely driving a circuitous route after a friend living at a nearby Kibbutz told him that there were still terrorists on the roads.

Vital shared photos of other family members who survived on October 7, including her secondborn daughter Ayala and her family. They had moved to Kibbutz Kissufim, also on the Gaza border only two months earlier, in part because Ayala wanted to be closer to her sister Adi.

"They were locked in their safe room for about 14 hours," said Vital. "There were terrorists

around their home all day long, but for some reason, the terrorists did not go into their home, and they were evacuated by the Israeli army."

The rest of the family did not know whether Ayala and her family were dead or alive until 3:00am the following morning. Their power had been cut and, following their rescue, they were evacuated to the Dead Sea area.

Adi Vital-Kaploun was among the first victims of the October 7 attacks to be buried. Following her October 15 funeral, the soldiers who found Adi attended her shiva to pay their respects and share with her family how they had found her, Jacqui Vital said.

'When they got to Adi's safe room, they noticed that there was a grenade on the door, so they asked Yaron if he had tried to open that door," Vital said.

He had.

"You were very lucky," Vital quoted the rescuers as having said. "There was a grenade there, but you were lucky. Because it was defective, it didn't explode."

Assuming that there were other grenades, the soldiers had exited the home and pulled a window from the wall. It was then that one of them saw Adi's hand sticking out from under a bed, closet, and crib that had been piled on top of her.

"Her body had been boobytrapped with 50 grenades," Vital said. "If someone would have walked into that room, the whole room would have exploded."

After Adi's remains were carefully recovered, "She became a number," Vital added. Between the rings on her fingers and her IDF dental records, she was later positively identified.

Jacqui Vital told her audience that she and her



Jacqui Vital in Edmonton with Board Member Benaron Gleiberman, Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright and Beth Israel Congregation President Erin Wright.

family are grateful for the outpouring of kindness and support they have had from countless people since October 7.

An ice cream shop in Herzliya that buys pineapples from Anani and his business partner honour Adi's memory by adding to their merchandise a QR code that takes their customers to a webpage where they can learn about Adi, for whom the pineapples are named.

An Ottawa couple, who Vital did not previously know, created a line drawing of a lioness. Imbedded in the head of the lion is a likeness of Adi and incorporated at the bottom is the word *haleviah* (Hebrew for lioness).

The drawing links Adi to the Biblical verse Behold, a people that rises like a lioness and raises itself like a lion. (Numbers 23:24)

Proceeds from the sale of T-shirts and sweatshirts will go to a trust fund for Negev and Eshel, Vital said. Readers can go to www.irvingrivers.com for more information.

Ending her talk on an uplifting note, Jacqui Vital said, "The boys are fine, and I will put a smile on your face," said Vital, adding that today Avital continues to look after Negev and Eshel together with Anani.

"Everyone is good. They all have each other," Vital said.

That is not to say that their Adi is, or could ever be, forgotten. Negev, said Vital, treasures his own photo album filled with images of his Ima Adi, the lioness who remains the pride of all those who knew and loved her and countless others who now feel honoured to know and share her story.



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Arts & Scroll Studio presents a gorgeous graphic exhibition on September 17: Jewish on Paper

By Shelley Werner



Curator Hillel Smith

On September 17, 2025 at 7:00 pm MDT Art and Scroll Studio will begin their sixth season with a stunning array of a variety of artists' works, curated into the presentation "Jewish on Paper" with graphic artist Hillel Smith.

Art and Scroll Studio is proud to have hosted over 5 seasons since their inception in 2020, having featured 30 artists.

They have over 10,000 views on their YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/@artandscrollstudio). They are looking forward to presenting their first episode of the New year, opening their 6th season

Hillel Smith, the curator of the show is excited to bring this exhibition to a community that appreciates Judaica art. He is a visionary for public spaces and his work enhances the experience of art of a large scale, as well as smaller designs that are appreciated on a more intimate scale.

"Jewish on Paper" is an exhibition that was born in the Jerusalem Bianalle in 2023. The exhibition seeks to elevate posters featuring Jewish texts, holidays, and rituals. These posters include works intended as home décor, as synagogue art, and for display in other formal and informal contexts. They are works for adults and for children. They can be serious, joyful or ironic. Many use typography in their rendering of ancient passages. Their creators are global, hailing from bustling Jewish centers and tiny outlying communities. The desire to make this explicitly Jewish work, in both cases, demonstrates the intense need to connect to our heritage through creative and visual means. Much of this work is intended to be commercial and is sold by the artists in reproduction.

Printed posters have been the most accessible form

of visual media since their introduction in the west nearly six centuries ago, arguably being the earliest mass media. Posters continue to be beloved pieces that allow their owners to express their interests and beautify their environments at low cost.

Curator Hillel Smith comments, "because of the historic segmentation between art and design- the latter seen as a "low art" due to its commercial intent, democratizing sensibilities, and short lifespan-poster design and illustration are frequently ignored as an artistic medium central to our self-expression. In thinking about the spiritual assets and inalienable cultural legacy we are proud to consider forms of art that may be overlooked."

It is often the everyday products we use to decorate our lives- the drawings we hang on our walls, the cards we send to friends, the joys we share and the posts we like- that speak most deeply about what is important to us.

Production methods like silkscreen and etching historically limited colour use and imposed technical hurdles that designers overcame with layering and clever use of inks. Today, digital printing allows limitless options for colour, and some artists, focus on digital displays where colours can be even brighter. Many contemporary designers choose to look back to the minimalism and techniques of previous eras to inform their work. Others look around to the aesthetics of their surroundings, infusing traditional iconography with surprising outside influences.

The common thread is the desire to bring Jewish content to the fore in ways that feel rooted both in Jewish life and modern society. The exhibition exemplifies the message that while the aesthetics we use may change, the act of weaving Judaism into our lives is ever present.

Curator Hillel Smith graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Visual Studies.

Artist Jessica Tamar Deutsch



The stunning image on the cover of the Rosh Hashanah edition is by Jessica Tamar Deutsch. She studied illustration at Parsons and has developed a studio practice where she creates fine art, illustrations, ketubahs, and Judaica. She is passionate about creating art that people are proud to display in their homes and include in their important life cycle moments. She makes work that is created at a high quality, and at a range of price points. Contact Jesstdeutsch@gmail.com and @Jessica_Tamar_Deutsch

He leads workshops on Jewish art, including Jewish street art, at a growing number of institutions, centering on artistic empowerment, continuity, and manifesting identity through the arts. He also teaches Jewish typographic history, using print as a lens for Jewish life and culture. Seeing Hebrew as the visual glue binding Jews together across time and space, his work is both contemporary and timeless.

Jewish on Paper will be the featured presentation on Wednesday September 17, 2025, 7:00 pm MST on Art and Scroll Studio, a live zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaic art.

To register for free tickets visit https://bit.ly/JewishOnPaperTickets To view short preview visit https://bit.ly/JewishOnPaperPreview

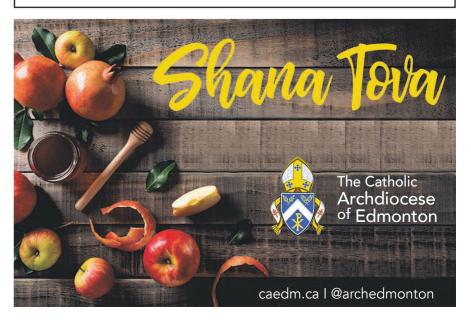
Shelley Werner is the host of Art and Scroll Studio zoom series that celebrates the makers and creators of Judaica Art.







Art by Shana Koppel. Part of the "Jewish on Paper" exhibit featured by Art & Scroll Studio on Sept. 17.















Talmud Torah students, families and teachers are looking forward to a wonderful school year.

Roaring into a new school year at Edmonton Talmud Torah

By: Natalie Soroka

On Wednesday, August 28, Edmonton Talmud Torah (TT) buzzed with excitement as students and families came together for our annual—and always popular—Welcome Back to School event! The hallways were alive with energy as students met their teachers, checked out their classrooms, and dropped off their school supplies, ready to launch into a new year organized and prepared.

It wasn't just about the school prep—this was also a chance for families, both new and returning, to connect with each other and the wider TT community. The Edmonton Talmud Torah Society (TTS), TT School Council, and Jewish Federation of Edmonton were all there to greet everyone, joined by the day's most anticipated guest: Ari the Lion! Our beloved mascot brought smiles, high-fives, hugs, and a big dose of school spirit to students throughout the event.

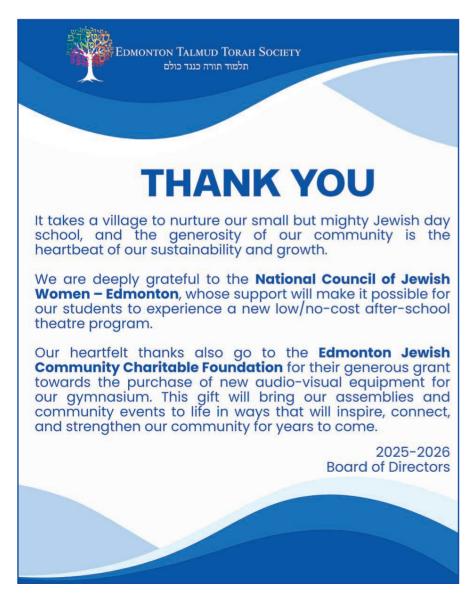
The fun didn't stop there! Students loved filling out

the Society's "First Day of School" boards with answers like "My teacher's name is...", "My favourite subject is...", and "When I grow up I want to be..." (plus a quick height check for future bragging rights!). The alwayspopular Spin the Wheel game had kids lining up for a chance to win some TTS swag, including the crowdfavourite lion stuffies.

A big thank you goes out to our TT alumni volunteers who ran the craft and prize stations—their energy helped make the day a roaring success.

The Welcome Back event was the perfect way to reconnect after summer, celebrate new beginnings, and set a joyful tone for an exciting year of learning, growth, and community.

Here's to a fantastic 2025/26 school year at Talmud Torah—let's make it one to remember!





Op/ed: Normalizing death talk

By Jay Cairns

I'm writing this article to educate, help and hopefully make individuals and families aware of something inevitable, the thing people fear most and want to talk about the least. But it doesn't have to be awkward and doesn't have to be taboo. In the same way a person would save up for a vacation, we should be making the effort and financial plan to be able to cover the expenses of burial and a headstone. If you think life is expensive, it's time to start planning, because death ain't cheap.

Put simply – there are two certainties in life, death and taxes. With proper financial planning, you can put policies in place to cover burial expenses (and headstone erection).

Burial rights are critical in Jewish tradition, historically communities would prioritize two things when looking to establish themselves – land for a synagogue and land for burial. The Chevra Kaddish is a dedicated group of volunteers that handles all preparations from the time they are notified by the family until burial and it is important to understand the role of the Chevra Kaddish and our responsibility as individuals who are part of a community to properly prepare mentally, emotionally, and financially.

We are blessed to have an organization like the Chevra of Edmonton who takes the logistics of burial out of a family's hands from the moment they are notified, so that the family can focus on grieving and taking care of one another at one of the most vulnerable times in a person's life. This is an incredible tradition and service that our community offers... but there is a cost to this service and we as a community need to understand and properly prepare for death, as an inevitable expense of life.

There are mechanisms such as life insurance that can help families pay for funeral services and headstone expenses. If premiums get expensive, children can take over the payment of the policies (if it makes sense to do so), one example of planning ahead and being proactive. Talk to a financial advisor and avoid making an uncomfortable conversation even worse with practical ramifications that are not in line with what should be the last expression of respect, honour, and kindness that a family and community can do for a loved one. It can happen very quickly, unexpectedly, and can be emotionally overwhelming; but the financial side of it doesn't have to be.

EJBL Finals: Team Good Luck Sock Wins





The final game for the 2025 Edmonton Jewish Baseball League was close back and forth between rivals Good Luck Sock and ReMax. Aubrey Uretsky had the catch of the year on a diving play. Good Luck Sock got great defensive plays from league MVP Mike Werner. At the top of the final inning ReMax needed 6 runs to tie but came up one short after rallying for 5 runs. This is the third championship in a row for Good Luck Sock. Yasher Koach to everyone who participated in EJBL games this season!

Innovative new book

Cont. from page 21

to scrutinize the perpetual 'otherness' experienced by so many *olim*, both pre- and post-Aliyah.

"The term tapped into the xenophobic reservoir of Soviet culture and society, associating Jews with global economic conspiracy, Western spies, and double agents. Because of this historical legacy, most Slavic and Jewish studies scholars avoid using the term due to its tainted history" (82). Moshkin, instead, challenges the established approach in order to illustrate the sense of 'otherness' felt on both sides of the Aliyah journey under-taken by Russian-speaking olim.



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"I propose to distinguish between cosmopolitanism as a category of political contest-ation – how political and social actors historically used it in the Soviet context – and cosmopolitanism as a category of analysis, describing how the idea of global identification shapes various cultural, social, and political practices" (83). Moshkin does not pull his punches, so to speak, and confronts the difficult questions surrounding identity and what it means to be 'orientalised.'

In *The Future of Russophone Culture in Israel?* Moshkin draws the conclusion that: "In the realm of history there is a shift in the way Soviet-born Jews think about their history transitioning from narratives shaped by Soviet discrimination, where Israel functions as a Promised Land, to narratives that retrospectively engage with the Soviet-Jewish past

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO THE COMMUNITY FROM

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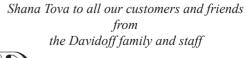
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Suite 2600 10111 - 104 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0J4 through the sentiment of nostalgia and view the Israeli experience as a source of trauma" (145). Moshkin is careful to note that this does not translate to a lack of patriotism, but that there is a nostalgia-driven strength of the enduring Russian-speaking soul that will not be extinguished despite varying levels of assimilation.

I personally read Moshkin's book with eagerness and keen interest. The contributions of Russian-speaking olim are something to be celebrated, and Moshkin thoughtfully examines their struggles and victories with a scholar's objectivity, providing nuanced insights and exciting discussion. The landscape of Jewish Alberta is a reflection of this Russian-speaking influence, making Dual Diaspora: Post-Soviet Culture in Search of Israeli Identity a 'must read'! The topics and themes so intelligently investigated by Moshkin have been the subject of conversation at many a Shabbos table for decades; this book synthesizes these ongoing debates brilliantly.

 $Regan\ Lipes\ is\ a\ Local\ Journalism\ Initiative\ Reporter$





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New High Holiday Books for kids celebrate diversity

By Penny Schwartz

(JTA) – A laugh-out-loud Sukkot story that reimagines the classic tale of the three little pigs; an inspiring work of historical fiction story about a Jewish family in Vienna fleeing Nazi persecution and becoming refugees in Shanghai; and a heartwarming Rosh Hashanah story about two quarreling sisters who promise to be better as the Jewish new year begins.

These are among the titles in the new crop of kids books for the High Holidays that echo the themes of the holidays – a time for celebration and reflection, starting anew and welcoming guests.

Here's a look at some of the notable reads for kids of all ages.

"My Shofar: A Rosh Hashanah Board Book" Ann Diament Koffsky

Apples & Honey Press; ages baby-age 2

In this lively story, a playful young elephant with a pink bow tries hard to blow a very loud blast from her shofar, the kid-size version of the ram's horn blown at synagogues during Rosh Hashanah. Kids will giggle when they discover what's blocking the sound. Finally, the young elephant can blow a loud tekiah.

"Anyada Buena, Shanah Tovah"

Sarah Aroeste; illustrations by Maria Mola Kar-Ben publishing; ages 2-5

As fall begins, a young Sephardic girl and her family welcome Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. "Anyada buena, shanah tovah," she says, using the Ladino holiday greeting. Sarah Aroeste's rhyming story — animated with Maria Mola's colorful illustrations — is sprinkled with Ladino words, the centuries-old Sephardic language that Aroeste is one of the leading voices bringing to life today. She helps her father bake a golden brown round challah, among the special foods that grace her family's Sephardic Rosh Hashanah table.

"Kayla and Kugel's Super Sweet Rosh Hashanah"

Ann Diament Koffsky

Apples & Honey Press; ages 2-5

In the sixth book in a series about a Jewish girl and her canine sidekick, Kayla and Kugel are tasked with getting supplies for Rosh Hashanah. But hijinks ensue when Kugel jumps into the pond where Kayla and her family will carry out the tashlich ritual and otherwise causes mayhem. In the end, the book demonstrates how Rosh Hashanah offers an opportunity for self-improvement.

"Lily's Hong Kong Honey Cake"

Erica Lyons; illustrated by Bonnie Pang

Apples & Honey Press; ages 4-8

In Erica Lyons' inspiring story of historical fiction, kids follow Lily, as her family flees Nazi rule in Vienna, where they own a bakery popular for their Rosh Hashanah honey cake. As Nazi-rule refugees in Shanghai, they open a bakery where they bake honey cake to welcome in a sweet new year. When they are forced to flee again, they must remain temporarily on the ship in the Hong Kong port along with other Jewish refugees. When Rosh Hashanah arrives, the clever Lily and the ship's chef improvise with what they have and surprise everyone with loaves of the sweet honey cake. Lyons' narrative is brought to life in Pang's illustrations that reflect all of the places Lily

Shana Tova



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Ph. 780-425-6311 or Fax 780-426-2281 13623 - 149 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5L 2T3 paulc@edmontongranite.ca edmontongranite.ca learns to call home. Back pages include the history of Jews in Shanghai.

"The Three Little Sheep: A Tale for Sukkot"

Ann Diament Koffsky

Green Bean Books; ages 3-8

Jakey, Joey and Jennie are three adorable little sheep who help build their family's sukkah in this humorous version of the Three Little Pigs. During the seven-day harvest holiday, Jewish families eat their meals in a sukkah – a small, open-roof hut – as a reminder of the dwellings of the ancient Israelites' desert journey after God freed them from slavery. When the sheep grow

too big to fit in their sukkah, mama sheep sends them off to build their own. The two older brothers build sukkahs that the (not-too-scary) wolf blows down. But the youngest sister builds a sturdy one, with room for her brothers. When the wolf shows up, he can't huff and puff and blow it down. Jennie realizes he's lonely and invites him to join them, reflecting Sukkot's theme of welcoming guests.

"Slow Down, Shoshi!: It's Shabbat in Uganda"

Shoshana Nambi; illustrated by Moran Yogev Kalaniot Books; ages 5-7

ANYADA BUENA

SHANAH TOVAH

In Rabbi Shoshana Nambi's heartwarming story, Shoshi, whose family is part of the Jewish Ugandan community – the Abayudaya – is a girl-on-the-go, always excited and in a hurry. She loves to help her grandfather, her Jjajja, harvest her family's special

coffee beans and bring them to the market. On Fridays, Shoshi buys food for her family's Shabbat. "Slow down, Shoshi," her grandmother cautions before she heads off along with her playful goat. But in her haste at the market, Shoshi forgets the Shabbat candles. With the help of her wise grandmother, Shoshi

comes to understand the true meaning of welcoming Shabbat and the joy of being part of the Abayudayah community. Moran Yogev's collage-style illustrations





capture village life and the beautiful East African landscape.

"A Sukkah for Bella"

Jodie Sadowsky; photographs by Frannie Wilson Lovevery publishing; ages 3-8

In Jodie Sadowski's book, brought to life in Frannie Wilson's photographs, kids meet Bella, an endearing girl with special needs who loves to build things. This year, Bella – the youngest in her family – is eager to help build her family's sukkah. Kids will relate when Bella gets frustrated when she can't do everything the older kids do. But Bella brings her flair to the sukkah by decorating it with colorful, handmade paper chains. At the story's end, a beaming Bella holds a lulav and etrog, the fronds and fruit that are part of the holiday ritual.

"Finding Forgiveness"

Rebecca Gardyn Levington; illustrated by Diana Mayo Farrar, Straus & Giroux; ages 4-8

In Rebecca Gardyn Levington's touching — and relatable — story channeling the High Holidays spirit, two sisters have an argument on the day before Rosh Hashanah that leaves them both sulking. The next day, at their synagogue, when Jews reflect on the past year and pray for forgiveness, the older sister notices her sister looking sad. She should have been a better listener, she realizes. When her family gathers at the river with the congregation for tashlich — the ritual tossing away of sins — the older one sees her sister still looking sad. She apologizes and the sisters make up with a hug and promise to be better.



Wishing family and friends

all the best this Rosh Hashanah

from Marcia Bercov

Wishing family and friends

all the best this Rosh Hashanah

from Lauren Baram

and Lawrence Rodnunsky

We wish a Shana Tova

to all our friends and family

from

Ruth and Ben Coppens

Chag Sameach.

Am Yisrael Chai.

from Colin, Jen, Asher,

and Nooni Muscat

Shana Tova.

We stand with Israel,

from Clyde and Karen

Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community

from Robin and Melanie

Fainsinger and family

Wishing family and friends

all the best this Rosh Hashanah

from Sharon and Marshall Hundert





Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community rom Darlene and Gordon Bushewsky & Family

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Robert, Krista, Aliya and Daniel Brick



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Judi Card



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Anita Sky & Howard Davidow

שנה טובה

from Níkkí, Naomí, Stephanie, Jared & Míchla and Malka



Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Joan Juskiw and family



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Jake Kondor & Julia Rivait



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Samuel Koplowicz

Wishing everyone a Rosh Hashanah filled with love, peace and hope.



from the Linetsky **Family**

from The Allen Family

Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community

Wishing everyone a Rosh Hashanah filled with love, peace and hope.



Shane & Rebecca Asbell & Family



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Tamara Aronov and Family



Happy New Year! from Jesse, Eva, Lola and Ella

שנה טובה

from Mark Dolgoy, Francie Ratner & Family



from Leeor, Ohad, Noa, Shai and Daniella



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel, from The Goldsand Family



Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Gabe & Sonia Goldberg and Family

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Mindy Jacobs & Eoin Kenny

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from The Lerner families

from Ari, Faren, Noam, and Maya Sniderman

Shana Tova.

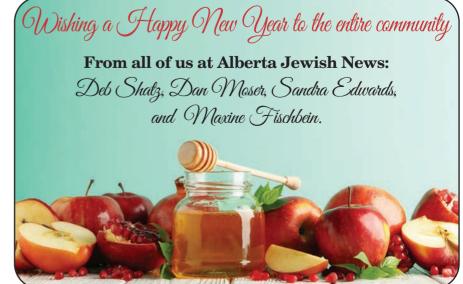


We stand with Israel. from Lesley Jacobson and Family



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Thom & Cindy Jarvis









Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Valda Levin



Happy New Year! from Carter, Ayla, Arielle, Oscar, Léah and Dylan Muscat



Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Dan & Mona Rosenberg and Family

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Yuliya, Alexey, Zach, and Liza Massarsky

Happy New Year! from Sharon Marcus

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Greg, Nomi & Maya

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Sarah, Josh, Jonah, and Samuel Raizman

שנה טובה

from Aubrey and Draytin Rogerville

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Barbara Mandel

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Francie & Jon Nobleman

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community. Love from Jasen, Anna, Mila, Jake & Sadie Reboh

Wishing everyone a Rosh Hashanah filled with love, peace and hope.

Míchele & Josh Miller



Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Anat, Brian, Noah, Eva and Maya

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

from Stacie & Hartley Perlmutter

and family

Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community from

Best wishes to everyone for a healthy and happy New Year



from Norm and Evelyn Schayer



Shana Tova from Dmitriy, Regan, Benji, Jacob, and Tamara

Happy New Year!

from



Esther Sklofsky and Family Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community from Debby & Marshall Shoctor שנה טוכה

from Ríva and Howard Shein and family



Susan and Bruce Mintz

from Kyle, Claire, Jacky, Rosy, & Franky



לשנח טוכח תכתכן from the Soifer Family עם ישראל חי

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from

Beverly and Stephen Shafran



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Sherry and Alfred Muscat

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from Zev, Micah, Becky, and Daniel Shafran

from Carol and Ron Ritch

Wishing family and friends a peaceful and uplifting Rosh Hashanah



Howard & Esther Starkman & family

Dani, Elie, & Nes Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from

Jack & Rowena Schwartzberg

Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai.

from Malkie, Gavi,

Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Jane and Hersh Sobel



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Natalie and Ken Soroka and family

Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community

from Eva and Sam Weisz

שנה טובה from Jonathan Tankel



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Howie & Debbie Sniderman

Happy Rosh Hashanah

to the entire community

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from



Wishing everyone a Shana Tova from Sue Winestock Matthew and Cheyenne



Happy New Year! from Rick & Nikki Vogel, Jordan & Kayla, and Zach & Amanda





Wishing everyone a

Rosh Hashanah filled with

love, peace and hope,

from Dalia, Allan,

Tammy and

Mark Wolinsky

Chaq Sameach,

may the new year bring joy!

Am Yisrael Chai.

Chag Sameach,

may the new year bring joy!

Am Yisrael Chai.

Shana Tova.

We stand with Israel,

from

The Belostotsky Family

Jeff and Shíra Sheckter

& Family

from Allan, Syma

and Steven Uram

from Joel and

Christina Reboh

& Family

Wishing everyone a



Shana Tova from Naomi Wolfman

community from The Huberman Family: Mark & Michelle; Kyle, Jessica & Oliver; Jordan, Kalin & Benjamin

שנה טובה

from Forrest, Anna, Adina, and Naomi

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire

from Grant, Lemore, Nathaniel and Ellie Vogel



Wishing family and friends all this best this Rosh Hashanah from Gaylene Soifer & Jeff Rubin

Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah



from

Wishing everyone a



from Stephen Zepp, Karen Leibovici, Adam and Anika Zepp

Wishing everyone

with love, peace and hope. from Ed Lazar,

from Dan, Jen, Jackson & Josh



Happy New Year! Phillet family

Rosh Hashanah filled with love, peace and hope.



and family

a Rosh Hashanah filled Kim Murch, and family

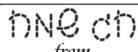
happy, healthy New Year.

Wishing everyone a Rosh Hashanah filled with love, peace and hope.

Connie and Danny



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Jodi and Michael Zabludowski



Andrew, Aliya, Orly and Simon



Wishing family and friends all the best this Rosh Hashanah from David and Robin Marcus and Family



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Jeff, Erica, Liam, Annie (and Ozzy)!

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Lewis Wasel

from Joyce and Sam Galante

Wishing family and friends

all the best this

Rosh Hashanah

from Leor, Melissa, Zoe and Jamie Benjamin



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Kim and Bert Malo



Happy Chanukah to the entire community from Brandy and Rob Graesser

שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה, שְׁנַת שָׁלוֹם ושׁלוַה לכַל עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל from Ariel Kiel, Rabbah Gila Caine & family



Shana Tova

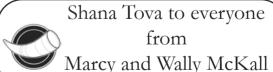
In honour of Sharon & Bobby Cairns z"l from the Cairns Family



Shana Tova. We stand with Israel. from Murray & Marilyn Glick



Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Joel G. Weisz



Wishing family and friends all

from

the best this Rosh Hashanah from



Zoya, Dally, Nikki, and Dan Belostotsky

Happy Rosh Hashanah to the entire community from Jack and Sandy Margolus



from the ourcec by Eliezer Segal

The thin red line

The tractate in the Mishnah tractate that is devoted to the Day of Atonement is quite thorough in describing the festival rituals as outlined in the Torah. Central to that description is the account of how the high priest designated two goats; one was to be burned on the altar as an atoning sin-offering, and the other the original "scapegoat"-was to be symbolically loaded with the sins of the people and then driven off into the wilderness.

At this point the Mishnah inserts an additional detail that is not found in the biblical text: At the time of the scapegoat's selection, as the animal was standing at the temple gate from which it was to emerge, and before the high priest laid his hands on its head to confess the sins of the people, he tied a strip of scarlet wool onto its head.

Later on, Rabbi Ishmael speaks of a scarlet ribbon that was tied to the sanctuary entrance; and attests that when the scapegoat arrived in the wilderness, it would turn white. This was understood as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about Israel's future redemption: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as scarlet, they shall be like wool." Elsewhere, the Mishnah lists the scarlet ribbon as one of the items that were purchased from the temple treasury. A tradition cited in the Talmud states that the person escorting the goat divided the ribbon into two parts, one of which he tied to a rock on the cliff where the animal was released, while the other he tied between its horns.

Scholars have observed that ceremonies involving scarlet threads occur elsewhere in biblical laws and narratives, especially in contexts involving purification or making visible distinctions between degrees of holiness. The Hebrew sources bear a similarity to numerous rites that were practiced in ancient Near Eastern lands, such as Syria and Anatolia (today's Turkey) as recorded in Hittite texts, where scarlet threads served as conduits for the removal of disease, defilement or sin.

The sages of the Talmud proposed diverse explanations for why it was necessary to place the ribbons in various places. According to Rav Joseph, by placing them on different parts of the goats' bodies on the neck of the burnt offering and between the horns of the scapegoat—they could forestall possible confusion between distinct animals that were otherwise similar in their physical appearances.

people might notice the ribbon's auspicious whitening either too early in the atonement process—in which case it might produce overconfidence—or too late, when it might cause them to despair of divine forgiveness.

Although the ritual of the scarlet thread was not attested in the Bible, it was known to an early Christian theological work known as the "Epistle of Barnabas," probably composed in the early second century C.E. in Alexandria. The Epistle's main objective was to demonstrate that the commandments of the Torah were not meant to be performed literally, but rather they were to be understood as allegories for religious doctrines. The author argued that their chief purpose was to prepare the people for the arrival of the Christian saviour, as the laws foreshadow the events of Jesus's life and crucifixion—a trope designated as "prefiguration" in Christian theological parlance.

One of the rituals that he adduced in that connection was that of the Yom Kippur scapegoat. The image of a wretched victim bearing the sins of the people and being cast off in disgrace into the wilderness, provided the Epistle with an apt paradigm for the humiliation of Jesus in the crucifixion narrative.

The Mishnah tells us that as the scapegoat was led out to its destination, the "Babylonians" (identified in a talmudic tradition as Alexandrians) would hurry it along by plucking at its hair and crying: "Take our sins and go, take our sins and go, and do not leave them with us!" The Epistle presented this occurrence—not mentioned in the Bible-as an archetype for the humiliation of Jesus as described in their Gospels. The Roman soldiers, mocking the claim that he was "king of the Jews," stripped him, clothed him in a scarlet robe (a prerogative of royalty) and a crown of thorns, and spat upon him as they led him out to his execution.

Dovetailing precisely with the description in rabbinic oral tradition, Barnabas paraphrases the Yom Kippur scapegoat ceremony:

"And all of you spit upon it, and pierce it, and encircle its head with scarlet wool, and thus let it be driven into the wilderness. And when all this has been done, he who bears the goat brings it into the desert, and takes the wool off from it."

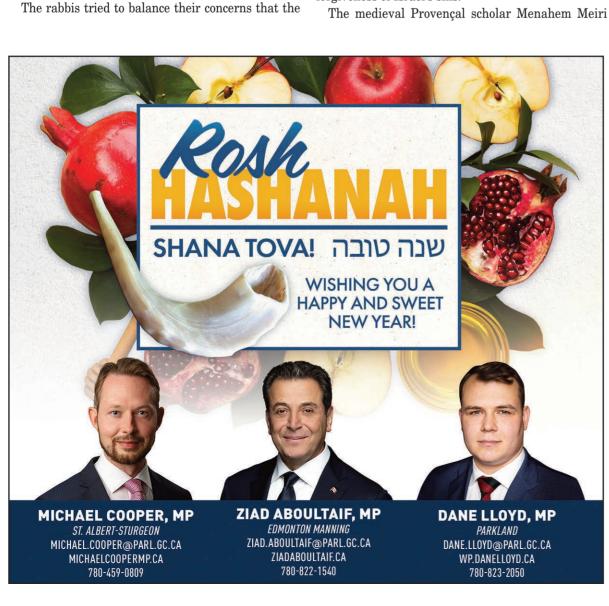
Of course, Jewish interpreters found multiple layers of spiritual symbolism in the ribbon of scarlet wool that turned white as snow to designate the divine forgiveness of Israel's sins.

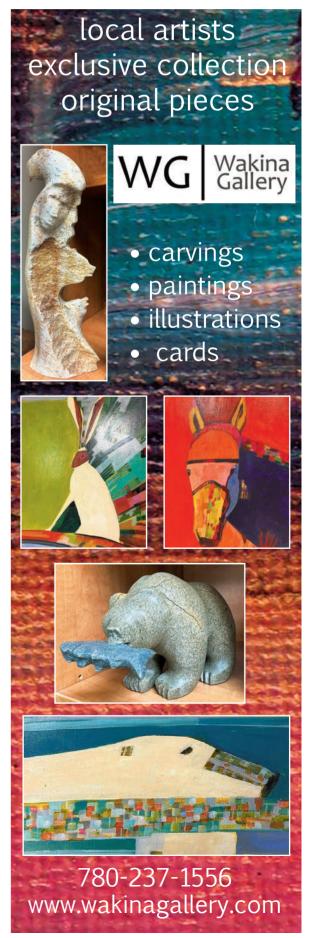
derived homiletical insight from some basic facts about coloured wool: He noted that unprocessed wool is white and only becomes red by means of human intervention, through the process of being dyed. This detail teaches us to always keep in mind that humans were created in an intrinsic state of moral purity, and that we must accept the responsibility for tainting ourselves through our sins. Accordingly, the rite of the scarlet ribbon should inspire us to seek divine forgiveness and restore that primordial state of wool-like innocence that was promised in Isaiah's vision..

Meiri said that he composed his treatise on repentance in response to a challenge from a Christian friend who charged that Judaism did not deal seriously with sinfulness.

Indeed, the rabbi's optimistic viewpoint of humanity's essential goodness marked a powerful antithesis to the Christian doctrine of "original sin."

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Yes Kosher Friendship Monthly Heritage Series

В"Н

The Hebrew Letter Bet - A Season of Renewal

As the days shift toward a new season, many of us feel an inner call a moment to pause, reflect, and realign. This time is more than just a point on the calendar; it is a sacred window inviting us to step into stillness and examine the state of our inner world.

This process of honest self reflection is rooted in the understanding that life is not fixed. We are always in motion, always becoming. Each breath offers a fresh chance to begin again. This is why the story of beginnings does not start with the very first letter Aleph, but with Bet (a) the opening of Bereishit, "In the beginning."

The Midrash Rabbah teaches us that Bet was chosen to start the story because it stands for bracha, blessing. The world itself was created with blessing, and so too, our lives are meant to receive and pass on that blessing. Bet also begins bayit, home a place of peace, presence, and connection. The home is a sacred space, a sanctuary where we are grounded and open to growth.

The shape of Bet, closed on three sides but open to the front, carries deep meaning. The sages in Midrash Tanchuma explain that this form reminds us we cannot fully see what came before or what lies beyond, but our responsibility is to move forward. The path ahead is what matters most: growth, renewal, and light.

Yet moving forward does not mean forgetting. The prophet Malachi shares the Divine call: "Return to Me, and I will return to you." This return is not about shame or regret, but about becoming whole. The Rambam teaches that genuine return nvolves recognition, remorse, confession, and inner resolve. It is a path to healing and wholeness.

This power of return is so fundamental that the Zohar describes it as woven into the fabric of creation itself. It offers forgiveness as a doorway to transformation and elevation.

Bet also begins b'rit, covenant. We are connected, anchored, part of a larger story, one that supports us even when we stumble. While the ultimate beginning represented by Aleph speaks to divine unity beyond, Bet grounds us in the everyday: in building, acting, and becoming.

As the new year approaches, we are each called to build our own mikdash me'at a small sanctuary within our homes and hearts. Every kind word, every act of integrity, every effort toward compassion becomes a foundation stone in this sacred space.

So we pause and ask ourselves:

"Have I created a bayit, a home for peace and meaning within myself?

Have I brought bracha, blessing into the world through my actions and truth?

Have I honoured my b'rit, my commitment, and lived in alignment with it?"

Bet is more than a letter; it is a breath of renewal. It reminds us that life is not about perfection, but participation. Not retreat, but return. To build homes filled with purpose, communities of connection, and lives that shine with light.

May this year be a true Bereishit, a beginning of clarity, healing, and lasting blessing. May each of us be inscribed for peace, for life, and for goodness. And may we witness the day when the world is filled with knowledge and compassion.

Wishing you a sweet, and soul-renewing New Year.

שנה טובה ומתוקה

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