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Cover art: The Other Side © by Sheera. See story on page 4. Part of the Flight and Freedom exhibit at TBT Gallery from April 10 to June 30.

CHAG PESACH

Sameach

Happy Passover!

May your holiday be filled with love, light and joy.
Wishing you and your family good health, peace, and prosperity.



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The Passover Seder: Judaism's original classroom

By Rabbi Russell Jayne



Rabbi Russell Jayne

Of all the rituals in the Jewish holiday cycle, the Passover Seder may be the most remarkable. It is not usually conducted in the synagogue, nor is it usually led by clergy. Instead, it unfolds around dining room tables, led by hosts and guests who transform an ordinary meal into one of Judaism's most powerful acts of teaching.

For thousands of years, Jewish families have gathered every spring to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Our journey from slavery to freedom, and our birth as a people bound together by memory and covenant. Yet the genius of the Seder lies not simply in the story we are telling, but in how the story is told.

Rather than presenting the Exodus as a lecture or historical account, the Seder turns this pivotal moment

into an experience. We taste bitterness through the maror, recalling the harshness of slavery. We dip vegetables into salt water to remember tears. We recline like free people, celebrating a dignity restored. Every element of the table becomes a teaching tool.

The Seder is, in many ways, Judaism's original classroom.

And, what makes this classroom unique is its emphasis on curiosity. The evening begins with questions, famously asked by the youngest participant, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The Haggadah does not discourage these questions; rather, it invites them. Jewish tradition understands that identity is not formed through passive listening, but through engagement, wonder, and conversation.

In fact, the ancient rabbis structured the Seder so that children would notice things that seem unusual. Why are we eating matzah instead of bread? Why are we dipping food? Why are we reclining while eating? These small disruptions spark curiosity and invite discussion. The goal is not simply to transmit information, but to cultivate a living relationship with the Jewish story.

And that story is meant to feel personal.

The Haggadah teaches that in every generation, each person must see themselves as if they personally came out of Egypt. It is this instruction that transforms the Exodus from distant history into lived memory. The Seder asks us not only to remember our ancestors' journey, but to imagine our own place within it.

And that act of imaginative empathy is one of the most powerful tools for preserving Jewish identity and

for building a bridge between the generations. A child sitting at a Seder table in Calgary or Edmonton today is participating in the same ritual that shaped their grandparents and great-grandparents. Through this simple act of telling our story together, Jewish continuity is renewed and strengthened.

And, perhaps, that is the deeper wisdom expressed by the Seder. Identity is strengthened not only through belief, but through shared experience.

The Passover story reminds us that our people were not formed merely by ideas, but by a collective journey. And it is one that continues to shape our values today. The memory of slavery teaches empathy. The experience of liberation inspires gratitude. And the act of telling the story together reinforces the bonds of peoplehood.

In a world that often feels fragmented and fast-moving, the Seder invites us to slow down. It asks us to gather around the table, listen to one another's questions, and remember the story that binds us together as a people.

May our Seders this year be filled with thoughtful questions, lively discussion, and the joy of sharing our tradition with the next generation. And may our people, through story, symbol, and conversation make our ancient journey from slavery to freedom come alive once again.

Chag Pesach Sameach.

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

This Passover, four more questions

By Cindy Sher

One of my favorite features about Judaism is the freedom our tradition gives us to ask questions. While wrestling with Jewish text is always encouraged, it is expected on Passover. The youngest guests at our seders will likely ask the four traditional questions, but here are four other questions to chew on over matzah this holiday.

1. Why is there hate?

Like so many other times in our long Jewish history, the plagues of hate, bigotry, fear, and violence occupy our thoughts, along with frogs, hail, locusts, and pestilence.

"In every generation," we read at the seder, some try to "rise up against us to destroy us." Pharaoh tried. Haman tried. Hitler tried. Hamas tried. Ayatollah

Khamenei tried, too. And indeed, today there are unhinged people around the world still trying. But hate doesn't have the power to break us – it never has and never will.

We can't explain why there's hate, and our descendants – I'm sorry to tell you – will still ponder that vexing question for generations from now.

But the upside is that love, ultimately, drowns out hate. When a handful of hateful individuals try to wreak terror and destruction, there are hundreds more kind souls who risk their own lives to help.

For instance, while two pathetic gunmen caused the massacre on Australia's Bondi Beach over Chanukah, heroes – of different faiths – ran toward the danger to save lives. Like Ahmed al Ahmed, a Syrian-Australian shop owner, who fought a gun off one of the attackers. And Reuven Morrison, who died trying to fend off the same attacker; may his memory be a blessing.

2. With so much repair to do in this world, where do we possibly begin?

Anywhere we want. Pirkei Avot's Ethics of Our Fathers—a book of collected ancient Jewish wisdom—teaches us that we are "not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

It's easy to get overwhelmed and retreat from the problems of the world, but what better place to start than in your corner of it, with something you feel passionate about, using a skill you may already have.

For ideas on where to get started, visit juf.org/tov to connect with volunteer opportunities in our community.

Continued on page 22

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It's a Free Country: Passover and the Jewish Understanding of Freedom

By Rabbi Mark Glickman



Rabbi Mark Glickman

I remember it like it was yesterday, and I've been thinking of it a lot in the runup to Passover. It was the early 1970s; recess-time in the playground outside my suburban-Chicago elementary school. My buddies and I were playing kickball, when one of us kicked a high fly ball, arching over our heads and bouncing its way into an area where

Sammy Miller was hanging out with his friends. Immediately, Sammy and his guys grabbed the ball and began playing their own game of kickball with it.

"Hey, Sammy," someone in our group yelled, "give us back our ball!"

"We're playing with it now," Sammy replied.

"But it's our ball – we've got a game going!"

"Too bad," Sammy yelled back. "We've got it now."

"But it's our ball!"

Sammy stopped his game. "Look," he said. "We've got the ball, and we're playing with it. It's a free country, and we can do what we want."

I don't quite remember how – or if – that situation

resolved itself. What I do remember is being struck by what Sammy said. *It's a free country, so he gets to steal our ball? This is what freedom means – permission to steal someone's ball on the playground.* I wasn't an expert in American history, of course, but I couldn't imagine that this is what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they created the nation two centuries earlier.

And had I grown up a decade or more later in Canada, I have a feeling that I would have asked a Canadian version of the same question. *Where in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does it guarantee us the freedom to steal someone else's ball on the playground?*

Indeed, we in the western world tend to define freedom as the ability to do whatever we want. We hear it all the time: It's a free country, so we can say whatever we want. It's a free country, so we can build our houses however we'd like and paint them whatever colour we choose. It's a free country, so nobody can force us to wear a mask, or take a vaccine, or do anything to our bodies that we don't want.

What does all of this have to do with Passover? Quite frankly, nothing, and that's why I've been thinking about it so much these days.

Passover, you see, is the celebration of a very different kind of freedom than the one claimed by Sammy Miller and his friends. On Passover, we remind ourselves that our ancestors were ruled by a tyrant, they escaped to the Red Sea, God intervened and drowned their pursuers, and then they were free.

Notably, however, the Israelites weren't free (as Sammy claimed to be) to do whatever they wanted. To the contrary, their freedom came with obligations – lots of obligations. Remember, close on the heels of the Red Sea came Mt. Sinai. And at Mt. Sinai, the Israelites received the Torah. And the Torah included fully 613 commandments – 613 limitations and restrictions on their behavior.

The Hebrew word for slaves is the same as the Hebrew word for servant – *avadim*. The Israelites had been *avadim* to Pharaoh, but with their Exodus from Egypt they became *avadim* to God. Their freedom, then, was not the freedom to do whatever they wanted, but the freedom to do what God wanted them to do.

The Western notion of freedom is the ability to do what we want. The Jewish notion of freedom is the ability to do what we should. These are two very different understandings of the same idea. In the west, freedom is the lack of control by any ruler. In Judaism, freedom is the privilege to be controlled by One Ruler. In the west, to be free is the ability to do what we want; in Judaism, freedom is the ability to do what we should.

I don't recall whether Sammy Miller was Jewish. But as I recall his playground banter that day, his understanding of freedom wasn't at all aligned with Judaism's understanding of it.

So when we gather around our Seder tables this Passover, perhaps we should consider the many blessings of freedom we enjoy these days, as well as the enormous responsibility that comes with those blessings. You don't have to, of course, but you certainly can, and it might be a good idea. After all, it's a free country, and to us Jews, this is what it means to truly be free.

Rabbi Mark Glickman is Rabbi at Temple B'nai Tikvah in Calgary.

"Flight and Freedom" group art show presented by TBT Gallery

By Shelley Werner

At this time of year, with Passover nearby, our thoughts turn to the hope of spring, with the remembrance of journeys past. From April 10 to June 30 *Flight and Freedom* will be presented in TBT Gallery including seven local artists, with work that features reflections on these themes.

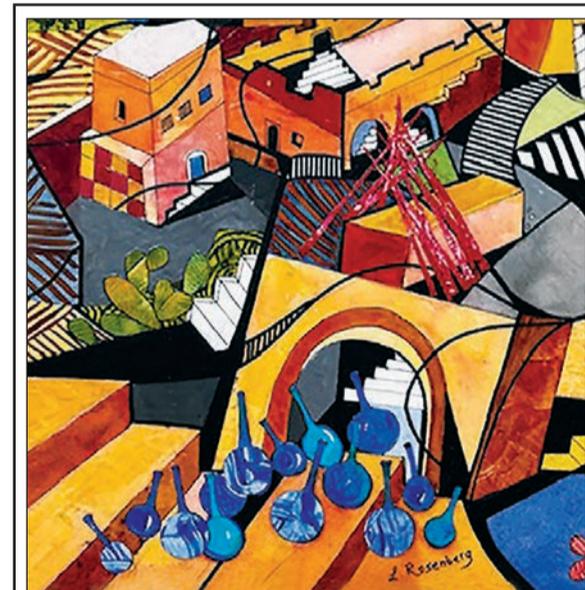
It is always relevant to discuss the topic of migration, of an exodus that takes place somewhere in the world, or in our personal lives. Change is constant, and it is illuminating to consider what makes us move, what chases us, and what do we migrate toward? The idea of freedom is powerful as an impulse that can draw us to uncertain futures. The question remains, do we emerge from a journey to a new reality that is better than the one left behind, or does achieving a

new freedom bring with it unanticipated chains?

Curator Jennifer Eiserman says, "Passover is a holiday that asks the Jewish people to engage in practices that encourage us towards humility, to find the strength to resist oppression, to defend human dignity and to create new visions for a world that embodies Shalom - wholeness and peace. The works in *Flight and Freedom* explore these themes through paint, textile, collage, asking visitors to consider what a world of Shalom might mean to them."

Artists were invited to participate in a group art exhibit that speaks to the the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt as told in the Torah. The annual seders memorialize this journey from bondage to liberation. TBT Gallery welcomed works that relate to this theme, either through art work that is part of an existing collection or newly created works.

The seven artists in the show, Lisa Thomson, Marilyn Samuels, Lily Rosenberg, Branwyn Cookhouse, Jennifer Eiserman, Sheera and Shelley Werner each have very different styles and



(Detail from) Chihuly © in Jerusalem by Lily Rosenberg

use a wide range of media.

Lisa Thomson will present her version of flight in oil. Her time spent in the mountains of Alberta and among ski races inspired her to capture the freedom experienced by those who choose to fly into the wind. "At takeoff, the ski racer crosses a threshold – from force and friction to flight and freedom in the open air.

Continued on page 9



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CMDA Stampede Gala: The purpose is coming together and saving lives

Canadian Magen David Adom's annual Calgary Gala will be held on May 31, and it is one you definitely won't want to miss. The theme for the evening is Stampede with a Purpose. The décor, the entertainment and the cuisine will all be Western inspired - under strict kosher supervision. So it's Cocktail Western, says Sharon Fraiman, CMDA's dynamic Western Regional Director, Major Gifts.

Like all CMDA galas, this one is sure to impress. Fraiman and her dedicated volunteers are planning a

fabulous evening – but the purpose is serious, she explains. "It's to come together and save lives."

The event will feature top-flight country music by Tyler Two Guns, a renowned Tsuut'ina Nation entertainer as well as Palladio Music, a Calgary-based electric and acoustic violin duo featuring Manon Mitchell and Steven (Slava) Klevsky.

Joining the evening as a guest speaker will be Uri Shacham, MDA's Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, who will travel from Tel Aviv to provide an update on

Magen David Adom's life-saving work.

The keynote speaker is Loay Alshareef, an Arab Muslim peace advocate, historian and social media influencer with a mission to champion peace in the Middle East.

Saving lives takes strong community support, notes Fraiman. "Here in Calgary, we've played a huge role. Our community has donated ambulances, emergency scooters, and vital supplies that save lives every single day. I can't say thank you enough."

We are so grateful to our donors and supporters," says Fraiman. "Am Israel Chai!"

Sponsorships, table sales, and tickets are now available. To learn more, contact Sharon at 587-435-5808 or sfraiman@cmdai.org.

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Peace-with-Israel Arab advocate, historian and social media influencer

Sharon Fraiman

Western Region Director, Major Gifts

C: 587-435-5808

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GUEST SPEAKER

Uri Shacham

Deputy Director and Chief of Staff MDA

Moving from slavery to freedom

By Rabbi Nisan Andrews



Rabbi Nisan Andrews

There is a reason why, in the vast library of Jewish thought, two books stand above the rest. They are the twin pulses of our national heart.

The first is the Chumash. It provides the weekly rhythm of our lives – the "what" and "why" of our existence. It's God speaking to us, laying out the moral architecture of the world. But the second is

the Siddur, and in many ways it is more intimate. If the Chumash is God's word to us, the Siddur is our word to God.

According to former Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, zt"l, the Siddur is "a map of the Jewish soul", and for centuries, that's exactly what it was. Whether we were in a

golden age in Spain or the depths of a ghetto, the Siddur was there. It contains the cries of Moshe, the quiet pleas of the Talmudic rabbis, and the collective hopes of a people who refused to stop dreaming.

But the Siddur isn't just for the synagogue. It's also for those raw, unscripted "Jewish moments" where we feel the "wings of the Divine Presence" brushing against our lives, connecting our past to our future, wherever we happen to be standing.

One specific prayer has moved from the quiet corners of the weekday service to the very center of our lives: *Acheinu*.

"As for our brothers of the whole house of Israel who are in distress or captivity... may the All-Present have compassion on them and lead them from distress to relief, from darkness to light..."

Before October 7th, *Acheinu* was a prayer of general empathy. Today, it is our heartbeat. We said it for the hostages in the tunnels of Gaza and for the soldiers on the front lines. But today, the "distress" mentioned in this prayer has taken on a terrifying, high-tech form: the shadow of Iranian missiles.

When we talk about the "suffering" of Israelis today, we aren't just talking about the physical battlefield. We are talking about the psychological weight of living under a sky that can turn into a wall of fire at any moment.

There is a profound connection here to Pesach, the

festival of our liberation. In the Haggadah, we read the words: "In every generation, they rise up against us to destroy us." For those on the receiving end of Iran's drones and missiles, that ancient line isn't history – it's the evening news.

There is a beautiful linguistic depth in *Acheinu*. We address God as HaMakom, the "Omnipresent." HaMakom also means the place, a reference to the Land of Israel. This double entendre requests that God be with us wherever we are, especially in the Land of Israel, and that the Land of Israel should particularly be a place where we find freedom and all of the blessings for which we pray in this prayer.

This is also a central theme of the Seder. We end the night by crying out, *L'shanah Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim* – Next year in Jerusalem. We aren't just praying for a city; we are praying for "The Place" to be a sanctuary.

In *Acheinu*, we ask Hashem to be "The Place" for us – to protect the physical Land and to be present with us in the cramped "places" where we hide for safety. We are asking that the Land of Israel remain a place of "freedom" and "relief," rather than a target for "oppression." It is the same plea our ancestors made: to move from Avdut (slavery/distress) to Cheirut (freedom).

Rabbi Nisan Andrews is Rabbi at Congregation House of Jacob Mikveh Israel in Calgary.

The Sweetness of Liberation

By Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein



Rabbi Alisa Zilbershtein

As we prepare for Pesach this year, we do so at a remarkable moment in Israel's history. The war with Iran has created a genuine possibility – perhaps for the first time in decades – that the existential threat to Israel might be addressed. We approach our seders carrying both hope for what this could mean and grief for what it has cost.

Watching footage from Iran these past weeks – the destroyed buildings, the rubble and dust filling the streets – I found myself thinking about bricks and mortar. The images brought to mind charoset, the mixture we place on our seder plates. The Talmud in Pesachim describes how we prepare charoset thick like

mortar, and when ground together, the mixture resembles the clay our ancestors used for bricks in Egypt. This commemorates the labour of slavery, the exhausting work of building for Pharaoh.

At the same time, we make charoset from apples, dates, figs, pomegranates, nuts, wine, and sweet spices. These ingredients connect to a powerful tradition about Jewish women in Egypt. When Pharaoh ordered Hebrew baby boys killed, women went to the apple orchards to give birth in hiding. Tradition links this to the verse in *Song of Songs*: 'Under the apple tree I awakened you; there your mother conceived you,' understanding it as a reference to these secret births in Egypt.

While labouring under slavery, Jewish women were also bringing children into the world. They chose life and love even under Pharaoh's rule. They acted as though there would be a future worth living in, even when that future seemed distant. The mortar and the apples come from the same chapter of our story – one reflects the oppression, the other reflects the determination to survive it and build beyond it.

Israel now stands at a threshold. Iran's regime has threatened our people for decades, funding terror, building weapons, and openly calling for Israel's destruction. The current conflict may finally end this threat. Israeli children might grow up without this shadow over their futures.

The price has been real. Soldiers have given their

lives. Civilians in both Israel and Iran have died. Families mourn losses that will echo for generations. We acknowledge this grief even as we recognize what might be gained.

When we make charoset, we physically combine these elements. The thickness of mortar and the sweetness of fruit become one substance. You taste both together.

We can make that same choice during uncertain times. We can hold grief for those who have fallen and hope for Israel's security. We can recognize the difficulties of war and still welcome the possibility of lasting peace and safety for our people. Liberation has never arrived neatly wrapped. It comes through struggle, through sacrifice, through difficult decisions made by people who believed the future was worth fighting for.

At our seders this Pesach, when we taste charoset, we taste the legacy of those women in Egypt who refused to let Pharaoh determine their future. They laboured as slaves because they had no choice, but they also chose to bring new life into the world, to love and to hope. They lived in the reality of slavery while actively creating the possibility of freedom.

Chag Pesach Sameach.

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

HOJMI would like to wish the entire Calgary community a

Happy Passover

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Pesach and intermission

By Rabbi Ilana Krieger Lapidés



Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés

Google maps always plays a role when I teach my B'nai Mitzvah kids their Torah portion. Since every Torah portion comes from our Chumash, (the Five Books of Moses) every student's portion is related to our people's redemption from slavery and so every student invariably asks how long it took the Jews to get

from Egypt to Eretz Israel.

A quick Google map search shows that if you walk from what is now Cairo to Jerusalem, it would take an average person one hundred and sixty-three (163) hours. Or basically, just under a week.

Now, even taking into account time to sleep, not walking during peak sunny hours, the slow-moving group, the punishing environment of the desert, traveling without a compass, etc.; even taking ALL of that into account, my students usually come to the conclusion that the journey should take maybe six (6) months. Tops.

And yet, as we all know, it takes our people forty (40) years! Of course, when my students ask, I tell the court-mandated joke that the journey took so long because Moses is a man and didn't want to ask for directions.

But seriously, what took so long? And why is so much of our Torah (three out of the five books!) focussed around that wandering, in-between, liminal time?

As a musical theater kid, I found an answer in the form of a standard intermission; the wandering in the desert is our people's intermission. To flog the analogy: If the biblical history of our people was a play, act one

is the creation of the world, act two is slavery, and act three is entering the Holy Land.

The wandering in the desert? That's the intermission.

And just like during a play's intermission, the wandering is not the end of the story. It's a break in the action. A chance to take in what has unfolded and prepare for what is still to come.

This happens in our day to day lives: there are seasons when everything feels quieter, slower, or uncertain – times when we feel suspended between chapters, between versions of ourselves, between the life we once knew and the one that has not yet fully revealed itself. In those moments it can be easy to believe that the curtain has come down for good and the story is over.

Spiritual artist Jacqueline Whitney writes about the "intermission theory" stating that the pause in the middle of a story is not a failure of the narrative. It is part of the structure of the story itself. The intermission is the moment when we breathe, reset, and gather strength before the next act begins.

In Hebrew, Egypt is *Mitzrayim* coming from a root that suggests narrowness, constriction, tight places. *Mitzrayim* is not only a physical land; it is also a spiritual metaphor. It represents the places in life where we feel trapped, confined, unable to breathe or imagine something different.

At our Seder tables, we retell that sacred moment when, through courage and faith, through signs and wonders, Hashem led our people out of slavery. The story is not only ancient history; it is a reminder that human beings are capable of moving beyond the narrow places that confine us.

So, did we walk directly into the Promised Land after the narrowness of *Mitzrayim*? No. Instead, we enter the wilderness (*Bamidbar*) and wander for forty years. At first glance, this part of the story can feel confusing, even frustrating. Why does the journey take so long?

Because the wilderness is not a detour at all. The wilderness is the intermission.

Just as an intermission in a play allows the audience to pause and reflect before the story continues, the desert becomes the sacred pause between acts in the story of the Jewish people. The Israelites had

physically left *Mitzrayim*, but leaving the land of Egypt did not immediately erase the habits, fears, and limitations that hundreds of years of slavery had carved into their lives.

The wilderness becomes the space where transformation begins to take shape. In the desert, our people receive the Torah at Sinai, we build the Mishkan, we learn to rely on manna that appears each morning. Slowly, step by step, we begin to see ourselves not as a people defined by slavery, but as a community bound by covenant.

And finally, after that loooong intermission, Act Three begins: we enter the land promised to our ancestors. There, the covenant must be lived in everyday life – in fields and villages, in justice and compassion, in the rhythms of a society guided by G-d and Torah.

Seen this way, our wandering in the desert is not empty, wasted time. It is the sacred space that allowed redemption to deepen and mature.

Pesach reminds us that liberation from *Mitzrayim*, from the narrow places, is always possible. The wilderness teaches us that growth often unfolds in the spaces between departure and arrival. We learn that the journey toward freedom is not a single moment, but a process – one that calls for the quiet faith that the next chapter of the journey is still unfolding before us.

When we find ourselves in a season that feels like a pause – between chapters, between identities, between what was and what will be – try not to mistake that stillness for a finale.

Intermission is not the end of the play.

It is the sacred space where we process what has happened, the place where we rest, where our souls quietly prepare for what is unfolding.

And one day we may look back and realize that the intermission was not empty time at all – it was the moment that made our next act possible. The moment that allowed the next chapter of our life to become even more beautiful than the first.

From my family to yours, wishing you all a meaningful and kusher Pesach.

Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés is an independent Rabbi in Calgary. Her Rabbinic Practice is at RockyMountainRabbi.com

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“Flight and Freedom”

Cont. from page 4

In that suspended instant, exposed and committed, we are fully alive. *Finding Your Wings* speaks to the moment we reach beyond our limits to rise beyond what holds us.”

Marilyn Samuels’ fibre art works will add texture to the show. “Yearning for freedom is an age-old quest that is still going on today. My work was inspired by two events. The first is the annual migration of Steppe Eagles which occurs every spring. Hundreds of eagles fly over the Negev desert in Israel on their way from hot Africa to the cooler environs in Europe. The second event happened in late 1949-50 when close to 50,000 Yemenite Jews, a long-oppressed minority, walked across deserts, mountains and borders to arrive in Aden, Yemin from where they were airlifted to the newly formed state of Israel. Most had never seen an airplane and were afraid to enter. They were reminded

of the prophecy in the Book of Isaiah 40:31 “they shall mount up with wings like eagles” and in Exodus 19:4, “I will transport you on eagles’ wings.” And so they flew to freedom. *On Eagles’ Wings* is made from wool, silk and plant fibres that have been wet felted in a process called nuno felting (layers of silk captured by wool fibres). It was then machine and hand embroidered.”

Sheera (the artist formerly known as Sarah Bing) will present “Flight & Freedom.”

This painting explores the chaos and vulnerability of leaving the only home you’ve ever known to wander a desert with no clear destination, echoing the Exodus story remembered at Passover. The warm yellows and browns evoke the scorched landscape, while hidden, hallucination-like figures – including a ghostly white elephant – hint at the way hunger, thirst, and fear can distort our perceptions. In this liminal space between bondage and true freedom, reality blurs, and the psyche becomes as wild and uncharted as the wilderness itself.

Branwyn Cookhouse will present her multimedia work on the theme. Her vision of flight is characterized by urgency, danger and decisiveness; freedom by a weight lifted, liberty of choice, and safety. However, these notions are inherently connected to what they achieved for the Israelites. They were presented with the opportunity to flee, to fly – a critical action necessary for attaining their freedom. Their journey not only freed them from bondage in Egypt, from Mitzrayim, the limitations of their lives and faith, but also unified them as a people.

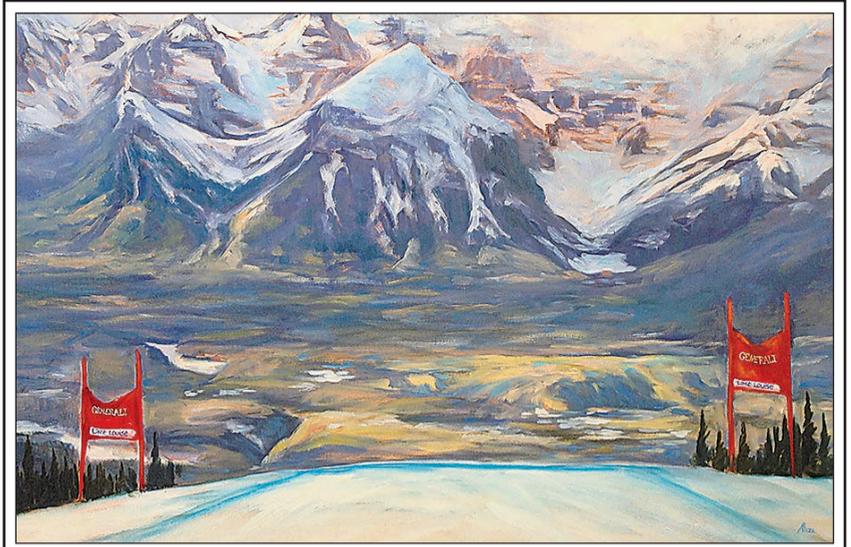
Jennifer Eiserman, curator of the gallery will show two works. “As I enter the last stage of my life, I find myself again at the edge of a wilderness. However, unlike the previous wilderness I have traversed, now I have come to appreciate the value of trusting in the process of becoming. I understand that a lack of

definition can be a positive, exciting quality.”

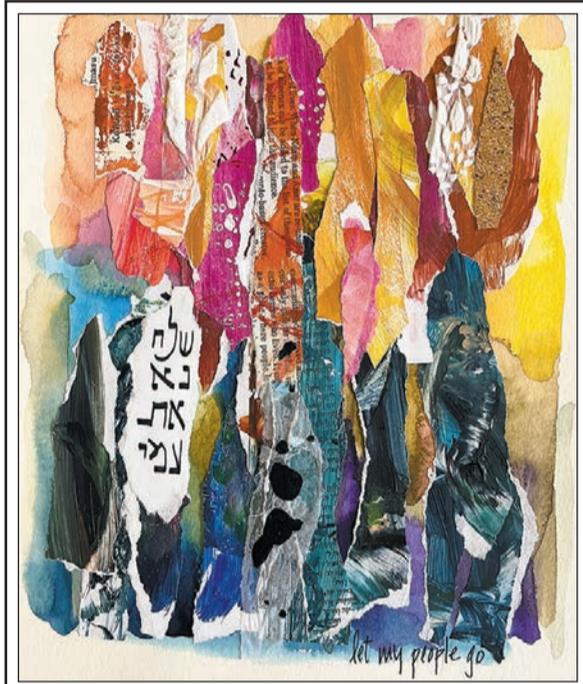
Through an ambivalence of form, the work represents this shifting identity, the fullness of what is and, at the same time, the opening of what will be. By using the traditional female craft technique of crochet to engage the negative space, to bring fragmented, dislocated parts back together, the process of re-weaving the resources of a life lived is made real for the viewer.

The show will also include works by Lily Rosenberg. Her painting which is acrylic and collage was done with the thought of bondage to freedom. It includes the tower of David and modern times, with reference to an exhibition by glass artist Chihuly. Her bold colours and dynamic graphic elements express the exuberance of freedom. She wishes that when people view her work that they feel she has something to say in a whimsical way; to have a sense of “wow” and a feeling of joy.

“Flight and Freedom” can be seen from April 10 to June 30, 2026 at TBT Gallery, Temple B’nai Tikvah, 900 47 Ave SW, Calgary. Monday to Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm / Friday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm or by appointment with Shelley Werner shelleyruthwerner@gmail.com



Finding Your Wings © by Lisa Thomson



Let My People Go © by Shelley Werner

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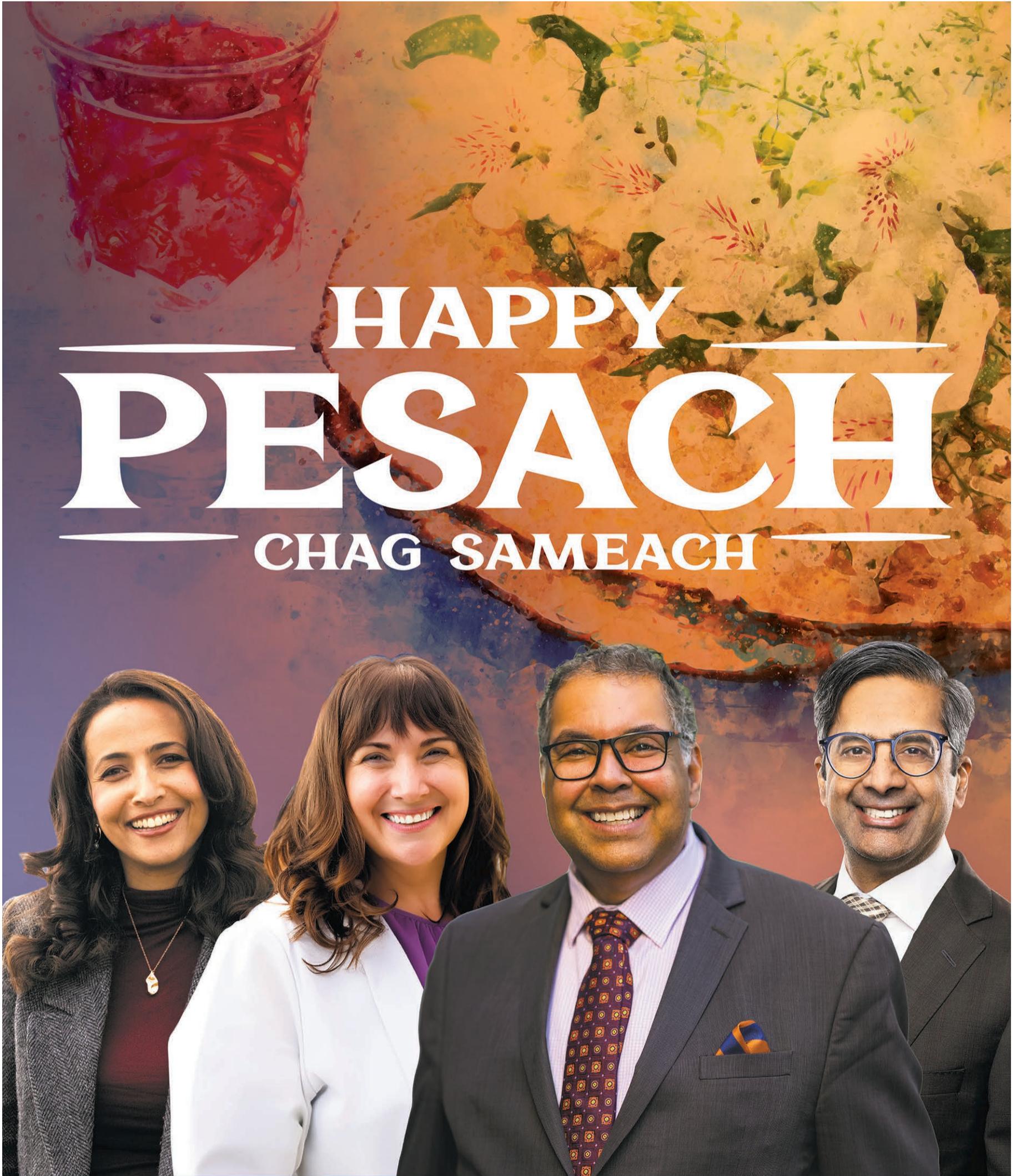
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ALBERTA'S NEW DEMOCRAT CAUCUS

CJF marks Disability Inclusion Month with record-breaking event

By Jana Zalmanowitz, LJI Reporter

Calgary's Jewish community packs a full calendar of programming run by various organizations. Many may not realize the story behind the inception of each of these events. This is often the case with programming run by Calgary Jewish Federation's (CJF) Inclusion Program. On February 22, over 100 people registered for Inclusion's most recent event celebrating Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM). They registered to see a film featuring inclusion, and they left embodying the exact mission of Inclusion's programming; they became a part of the conversation on disability and participation in our community.

Karina Szulc is CJF's Manager of Inclusion of Disabilities. She has been in this role since 2014, doing what she calls "community gardening." To understand this role, means to understand one of Szulc's favourite analogies of inclusion. When you plant a seed, you have the expectation it will grow into a plant. But what if this plant doesn't come out like you expect and doesn't fit with your garden? You could try to change the plant. You can add fake leaves, paint it a different colour, cut off its thorns. Yet none of these will help the plant thrive. Instead, a good gardener changes the plant's environment. It moves it to a different location for light, adds nutrients to the soil, adjusts watering, or places it with other plants that benefit its growth.

Instead of plants, let's apply that concept to people. When people with a disability are part of the Jewish community, the goal is to modify their environment to become barrier free, so that person can thrive. "Inclusion is a birthright," explains Szulc. "Everybody has their right, from birth, to feel welcome in their community. To feel that they belong, are appreciated and that they can participate as themselves." Celebrating JDAIM is one way in which Szulc tends to our "community garden," creating spaces where all members see what it means to consider how every person can participate and be valued.

This year's JDAIM event, "Chair or no Chair" featured the award-winning documentary *Itzhak* about violinist Itzhak Perlman. As a polio survivor, Perlman encountered many barriers in life. As a violinist, he was denied opportunities because it was the norm that violinists stand while they perform and Perlman was unable to do so. When Ed Sullivan welcomed Perlman onto his stage in 1958 with the option to perform seated, Perlman was able to play, and the world received the gift of his talent. "The question is 'chair or no chair?' Who is gaining by providing a chair and who would lose out by not providing it?" Szulc explains, circling back to our community. What would we miss out on by not making space for all people who want to be a part of our Jewish community?

While *Itzhak* was a feature of the afternoon, the lineup included many local nods to inclusion. Benji Weizman, a skilled Torah reader and member of Calgary's Keshet club, began the schedule with the recitation of the prayer for *Meshane Habriyot*. This prayer celebrates the diversity found amongst God's creatures. There was space to honour educator Andrea Scharfstein for her curation of PJ Library's inclusive Simcha Series programming. The program also featured performances by local musicians, violinist Mariya Usachev Bukhta and pianist Rachel Kreyner. It's fitting that an event focusing on disability and inclusion centered around music. "Music is one of the most inclusive experiences," Szulc says. "Music goes beyond words. When we are in a musical experience, we are all the same, together in the same moment." This observation comes from experience, as Szulc brings her background as a musical therapist to her role with Inclusion.

Calgary has joined Jewish communities across the globe in celebrating JDAIM since 2013. "This is not an event that is targeting families with people with disabilities," Szulc emphasizes. "This is an event that is meant to inspire and to reach the general community, to nurture an inclusive mindset." This



Violinist Mariya Usachev Bukhta and pianist Rachel Kreyner performed at the JDAIM event. Facebook photo.

year achieved that goal, with milestone numbers for the celebration. Szulc noted that for only the second time, registration for the JDAIM event was full and even more people showed up than had registered. She noticed the event brought in many new faces, who have not previously attended Inclusion events and may now be inspired to think more about accessibility.

Szulc has always been amazed by the contributions of the community for Inclusion programming and this year surpassed the generosity of previous years. Because cost can be a barrier, the program is free, yet many people chose to contribute. There are some long-time donors, like Mr. Lenny Shapiro, who provide generous annual financial donations that Szulc says are instrumental in continuing Inclusion programming, yet there were a number of new donors as well. Szulc celebrates this not only because it allows her to allocate money to future programs and support but because it signifies success in inclusion awareness. "People in our community donate to many worthy causes such as Israel and Jewish education because we have very generous donors. Donations from this event demonstrate that Inclusion in the Jewish community is also being valued and recognized."

To those who attended the JDAIM afternoon, they experienced a joyful event celebrating inclusion. Kol Hakavod to CJF Inclusion for inviting the community into a vital conversation on what it means to nurture diversity within our community and foster an appreciation for everyone within it. The tone and attendance at the event prove what Szulc is cultivating in the community. "Inclusion is not heavy and it is not specifically for people with disabilities. It is for everyone," she says.



Community leaders honoured educator Andrea Scharfstein for her curation of PJ Library's inclusive Simcha Series programming. Facebook photo.

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Sequence of Investment Returns and inflation Why Most Retirement Plans Fail?

By Robert Rothenberg, CFA, CIWM, FCSI



When new prospects come to see us, they typically ask about our rate of return assumptions when projecting their financial success in retirement.

Many individuals look at the long-term average for the stock market at 10% or a blend of fixed income and equities and average 7% over retirement when calculating the income and portfolio growth of their investments.

When people are working and in the accumulation phase of their life and saving money on a regular basis to fund their retirement, using an average rate of return is fine as it doesn't matter whether your portfolio performs well at the start and underperforms towards the end or underperforms at the start and excels at the end.

In retirement, many other factors come into play when determining if your income is sustainable. One of the major factors is the sequence of returns.

Poor returns at the start of retirement while withdrawing funds may make it extremely difficult to ever catch up. Bad timing can show that funds can be exhausted using a 5% withdrawal rate and an average rate of return of 10% in less than 20 years while the same withdrawal rate and a 7% average rate of return can have more funds than what an investor had initially when returns are strong at the onset.

The following illustration shows three different examples. The first shows a retiree lucky enough to retire in 1989 having started with \$1 million taking out \$50,000 per annum indexed to inflation with their funds growing to over \$3,000,000 in 20 years.

The second example shows the same retiree with the sequence of returns reversed with the same \$1 million

and the same withdrawals. This retiree would run out of money in 18 years even with an identical average return.

The third example shows a retiree earning 7% which is considerably less than 10% but having close to \$1.3 million after 20 years.

A cash wedge strategy would be highly recommended when starting the withdrawal phase of your life. Having 18 – 24 months of income invested in cash equivalents and short-term bonds which is used to fund your withdrawals early in retirement will help ensure success if the market declines dramatically early on.

By having this cash wedge, you won't need to sell any of your equity holdings at low prices to fund your retirement allowing time for them to recover.

In retirement, consider less volatile stocks with decent dividends or dividend growth for most of your equity exposure. When the 2008 meltdown occurred, stocks with less volatility than the overall market performed significantly better in aggregate.

Investing similarly to a pension plan as well having some funds in private infrastructure, private real estate and/or private equity can also support this plan.

The same can be said for inflation which has been a non-factor for the better part of a decade. The historical average has been slightly more than 3% in North America with average annual rates in the 1 – 2% range. Indexing your withdrawals to inflation early on at higher rates will have a similar result as poor returns early in your retirement.

Try to keep the increase of your withdrawals below

Sequence of Returns Comparison			Sequence of Returns Comparison			Steady Return		
Year	Total Return	Balance	Year	Total Return	Balance	Year	Total Return	Balance
1989	31.69%	\$ 1,266,900	1 2008	-37.00%	\$ 580,000	1	7.00%	\$ 1,020,000
1990	-3.11%	\$ 1,175,999	2 2007	5.49%	\$ 560,342	2	7.00%	\$ 1,039,900
1991	30.47%	\$ 1,481,281	3 2006	15.79%	\$ 595,775	3	7.00%	\$ 1,059,648
1992	7.62%	\$ 1,539,519	4 2005	4.91%	\$ 570,391	4	7.00%	\$ 1,079,187
1993	10.08%	\$ 1,638,427	5 2004	10.88%	\$ 576,174	5	7.00%	\$ 1,098,455
1994	1.32%	\$ 1,602,090	6 2003	28.68%	\$ 683,457	6	7.00%	\$ 1,117,383
1995	37.58%	\$ 2,144,453	7 2002	-22.10%	\$ 472,711	7	7.00%	\$ 1,135,897
1996	22.96%	\$ 2,575,326	8 2001	-11.89%	\$ 355,012	8	7.00%	\$ 1,153,916
1997	33.36%	\$ 3,371,116	9 2000	-9.11%	\$ 259,332	9	7.00%	\$ 1,171,352
1998	28.58%	\$ 4,269,343	10 1999	21.04%	\$ 248,656	10	7.00%	\$ 1,188,108
1999	21.04%	\$ 5,100,416	11 1998	28.58%	\$ 252,527	11	7.00%	\$ 1,204,079
2000	-9.11%	\$ 4,566,557	12 1997	33.36%	\$ 267,558	12	7.00%	\$ 1,219,153
2001	-11.89%	\$ 3,952,305	13 1996	22.96%	\$ 257,701	13	7.00%	\$ 1,233,206
2002	-22.10%	\$ 3,005,419	14 1995	37.58%	\$ 281,118	14	7.00%	\$ 1,246,104
2003	28.68%	\$ 3,791,744	15 1994	1.32%	\$ 209,199	15	7.00%	\$ 1,257,701
2004	10.88%	\$ 4,126,387	16 1993	10.08%	\$ 152,388	16	7.00%	\$ 1,267,842
2005	4.91%	\$ 4,248,757	17 1992	7.62%	\$ 83,765	17	7.00%	\$ 1,276,356
2006	15.79%	\$ 4,836,994	18 1991	30.47%	\$ 26,646	18	7.00%	\$ 1,283,058
2007	5.49%	\$ 5,017,423	19 1990	-3.11%	\$ -	19	7.00%	\$ 1,287,751
2008	-37.00%	\$ 3,073,301	20 1989	31.69%	\$ -	20	7.00%	\$ 1,290,218
Avg:	10.36%		Avg:	10.36%		Avg:	7.00%	

Starting value of \$1 million earning S&P historic annual returns with annual withdrawals of \$50,000 indexed for 3% inflation. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

the inflation rate as this can help sustain your capital as most illustrations do index income withdrawals fully with inflation.

Taxation and costs also play a part in the success of your retirement. Maximizing contributions to Tax Free Savings Accounts is a must for individuals with non-registered funds. This can reduce the income tax payable on interest and dividend income along with capital gains substantially.

Consider pulling out some of your RRSP funds prior to age 71 if you are in a relatively low tax bracket to offset paying a higher amount of tax down the road.

Many individuals who do not have a private pension plan should consider taking out a small RRIF or annuity at age 65 to take advantage of the \$2000 pension income credit.

Costs can also affect a successful retirement and eat away at returns. Ensure your overall costs are reasonable for the advice you are receiving.

By reviewing your retirement plan regularly taking into account the variables mentioned above will help you succeed where many fail.



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Happy Passover!

May this season bring joy,
peace, and many blessings
throughout the year.

CJA Grade 6 students learn about the Israeli Olympians

By Krista Wilson

The Grade 6 students at Calgary Jewish Academy recently embraced the excitement of the Olympic Games through a special research project focused on Israeli athletes who compete on the world stage.

Working in small groups, students selected an Israeli Olympic athlete to study, learning about their life journey, training, challenges, accomplishments, and the sport they compete in. Athletes researched included Maria Seniuk, Menachem Chen, Jared Firestone, Adam Edelman, and Omer Katz.

As part of the project, students collaborated to create informative and creative posters highlighting each athlete's story, their path to the Olympics, and what

it takes to compete at an elite level. The posters showcased not only the athletes' achievements but also the hard work, dedication, and perseverance required to reach the Olympic stage.

As a Jewish day school, this project also offered students a meaningful opportunity to connect with Israel. By learning about Israeli athletes representing their country internationally, students explored themes of pride, resilience, and commitment while strengthening their connection to the global Jewish community.

The project was a wonderful way for students to combine research, teamwork, and creativity while celebrating the spirit and values of the Olympic Games.



During the Olympic Games, Grade 6 students at CJA showcased their research on Israeli athletes.


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Stephen Harper to serve as moderator at event honouring Conrad Black & Barbara Amiel

By Irena Karshenbaum, LJI Reporter

February marked the twentieth anniversary of the election of Stephen Harper as prime minister of Canada and the milestone resulted in the former federal leader once again being in the spotlight.

February 3rd saw the unveiling of the official portrait, in Ottawa, of the 22nd Prime Minister of Canada, followed by a gala dinner hosted in his honour the next day in the nation's capital. His alma mater, the University of Calgary, featured him on a cover story of *Alumni News* in their February 10th online edition, which also announced the launch of the Harper Scholarships in economics, the area of study he credits in the article for giving him a "remarkable career," and Canadians being the beneficiaries of an unprecedented prosperity as a result of the fiscal policies he implemented.

While serving as prime minister, Harper even found time to write a book, *A Great Game: The Forgotten Leafs & the Rise of Professional Hockey*.

Maintaining a busy schedule still, Harper who was born in Toronto and served as the country's prime minister from 2006 to 2015 representing Calgary electoral districts, has accepted an invitation to act as special guest moderator at the 73rd Annual B'nai Brith Calgary Dinner, having already been honoured at the 66th Annual B'nai Brith Calgary Dinner in 2017, which was a sold-out event.

This year's gala will be held on Thursday, April 23rd, and will honour both Conrad Black and his wife, Barbara Amiel, as the couple is known to be inseparable.

A scion of a prominent family with roots in Winnipeg, Black was born in Montreal and converted to Catholicism in his forties. He founded *The National Post* in 1998 as a challenge to *The Globe and Mail*, at the time the only other national newspaper in Canada. He remains its frequent contributor and often writes columns shedding light on anti-Semitic and anti-Israel biases in society.

Black first began acquiring newspapers while still a student in university eventually buying *The Jerusalem Post* in 1989. By the last decade of the 20th century, his companies controlled over 400 news publications across North America. Among his many accomplishments, Black was co-host of *The Zoomer*, a television talk show, which ran weekly for two years starting in 2013, where he interviewed Donald J. Trump, Justin Trudeau and Boris Johnson, all of whom went on to become leaders of their respective

countries.

Amiel, born into a Jewish family in Watford, a town north of London, England, is the author of five books, served as a columnist for numerous top-tier news publications in Britain and Canada, including *Maclean's Magazine*, and is known for being a fierce supporter of Israel. In 2001, she famously exposed the antisemitism of then French Ambassador to the United Kingdom who called Israel, "that shitty little country," at an event she hosted.

The conversation between Harper, Black and Amiel – towering figures in politics, business and journalism – promises to make Calgary's oldest fundraising dinner a fascinating event.

The dinner is B'nai Brith Calgary's largest fundraiser, and its proceeds will go towards funding programs and services in the Jewish and broader Calgary community. Among its many traditions, since 1993, B'nai Brith Calgary has bestowed the Ben Docktor Award of Excellence on a worthy individual who has contributed to the growth and development of the city's Jewish and broader community.

This year's recipient, Bill Lister, agrees that it is an exciting line-up of honourees, which will also welcome Jason Kenney, former Premier of Alberta and the 2016 B'nai Brith Calgary Dinner co-honouree, and the city's new mayor, Jeromy Farkas.

Lister has a long history with B'nai Brith Calgary going back to when he was a teenager and played hockey with his father and uncle on the B'nai Brith Men's Hockey League. He explains that he got involved because it brought Jewish youth together from all over western Canada.

That early experience led Lister to become a supporter of B'nai Brith Calgary by being a "large" ticket seller for the dinners and by, as he explains, "Bringing awareness to the general community of the organization's attributes and charitable causes."

Born in Calgary, Lister describes himself as, "A true devoted Calgarian," and adds that his mother, Rose Lister who lived to be 100-years-old, was also born in Calgary. His father, Jack, originally from Winnipeg, met his mother in Calgary while serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. Both sets of Lister's grandparents arrived in Canada from Eastern Europe before the First World War.

Lister had a one-year stint at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, then returned to Canada where he completed degrees in business and law before he "stole



Conrad Black and Barbara Amiel will be honoured at the Calgary BB-Lodge Gala on April 23. Tickets are sold out but a wait list is available.

my future wife (Lily Burstyn of Edmonton) from another boyfriend," and married her in 1980. The couple has two children and two grandchildren.

Appointed a Governor of Tel Aviv University in 2024, Israel's largest university, Lister has served many other Israeli-based charitable organizations as well as being an innovator and co-founder of The Westman School of Real Estate in the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary.

A fellow B'nai Brith Men's Hockey League alumni, Stacy Shaikin, who in 2025 stepped into the role of Calgary Lodge president, commented about "all the enthusiasm" he is hearing about the dinner. He added, "I am looking forward to meeting our guest speaker Conrad Black and his wife, Barbara Amiel, and of course, Stephen Harper. I couldn't be happier honouring Bill Lister."

At press time, the 73rd Annual B'nai Brith Calgary Dinner, to be held Thursday, April 23, 2026, is SOLD OUT. To add your name to the waitlist or make a donation please email the B'nai Brith Calgary office at bbcalgary@telus.net.

HAPPY PASSOVER!

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Happy Passover

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The Chevre Kadisha of Calgary wishes the entire Jewish community a happy and healthy Passover.

May this Festival of Freedom usher in an era of peace, safety and security at home, across Canada, in Israel and around the world.

חג שמח!
עם ישראל חי!

Science Fair Projects at Halpern Akiva Academy

By Halpern Akiva Academy Staff

From Preschool to Grade 4, students worked together as a team to create exciting class science fair projects. Our teachers dedicated a great deal of time and effort to guiding students through their experiments and helping them understand how to complete a science fair project. Students were excited to test their experiments and share their findings with family and friends. They also took time to explain their projects to their peers and demonstrate what they had learned. Experiences like this help build curiosity and

confidence, and many of our younger students are already looking forward to the day when they will complete their own individual science fair projects for the first time.

Students in Grades 5 through 9 created individual science fair projects, researching and experimenting on a wide variety of topics. From testing the strength of different materials to investigating how music can affect sleep, students explored questions that genuinely interested them. Throughout the process, they demonstrated curiosity, creativity, and perseverance as they developed their projects.

During the fair, students confidently presented their work to a panel of judges and enthusiastically shared their discoveries with visitors, showing great pride in all they had accomplished.

The knowledge and skills students gained through this experience will continue to support their learning in the future. At this time, we do not yet know which students will advance to the Calgary Youth Science Fair, but we look forward to sharing that information soon.



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We celebrate freedom, justice and renewal with our community this Passover. Chag Pesach Sameach!

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New book chronicles historical traces of Jewish Calgary

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

At a time when the Jewish community is feeling a particularly urgent need to harness Jewish pride, the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta has given us a *kvell*-worthy publication.

Like the community it showcases, *Building Community: Historical Traces of Jewish Calgary* is small but mighty. Only 62 pages, the geographical telling is packed with evocative details about the “historical places” and “memorable traces” of Jewish Calgary from the 1889 arrival of Stampede City’s first permanent Jewish settlers, Jacob and Rachel Diamond, through to approximately 1950.

“Through exploring various locations that housed community organizations, businesses and people, we hope you will gain a sense of how the community grew and developed,” writes JHSSA President Sandra Lipton in the foreword of *Building Community*.

The project – which celebrates the double-chai (36) anniversary of the JHSSA – was funded by the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary (JCFC) and Alberta’s Heritage Preservation Partnership Program.

The official launch of the book will take place at the Paperny Family JCC on Sunday, April 26 at 2:00 pm when copies will be available for purchase.

For JHSSA Librarian and Archivist Roberta Kerr – who edited *Building Community* together with Judy Shapiro – a photo of the Gerlitz Block was an exciting addition to the book.

Kerr’s *Alte Zaide* (great-grandfather) Jacob Karasik ran a grocery store during the 1920s, but the exact location of the store was no longer recalled by his descendants.

Fast forward to the mid-2020s when Kerr’s eldest daughter was living with her husband in an apartment on the upper level of an historic building in Bridgeland. While flipping through a community newsletter, Kerr’s son-in-law spotted an article about the history of the Gerlitz Block. In it, another name popped. It was that of Jacob Karasik, who had once operated a grocery store on the building’s ground floor.

The Kerr clan knew that Karasik had owned a grocery store in Bridgeland. But they did not know that it was the Gerlitz Block, the very same building in which his great-great granddaughter and her husband were living.

Remarkably, Roberta Kerr’s grandson was born in his parents’ apartment one century after his great-great-great grandfather had operated his grocery downstairs.

Because this *dor l’dor* (generation to generation) story has a contemporary punchline, it is not included

in *Building Community*. But Kerr is thrilled that a historical photo of the Gerlitz block – now proven to have had a Jewish connection – is helping to tell the story of Jewish Calgary’s formative years.

Most of the photographs and archival documents in *Building Community* have been shared in other JHSSA publications, most notably the books *Land of Promise* (1996) and *A Joyful Harvest* (2007) and the journal *Discovery*, published three times a year and distributed to the Jewish community as an insert to *AJNews*. Yet, in *Building Community*, everything old is new again, thanks – in large part – to the geographical organization of the book.

Based on research historian Harry Sanders did for his popular walking tours, *Building Community* is a perfect launchpad for one or more self-guided tours in the Calgary core.

If that sounds like too much work, readers can engage in delightful time travel without moving more muscles than it takes to flip the pages.

Brief chapters about each site lend themselves to bedtime reading...and sweet dreams of a bygone era when the Calgary Jewish community was, as Shapiro puts it, “more tightly knit and interdependent than it is today.”

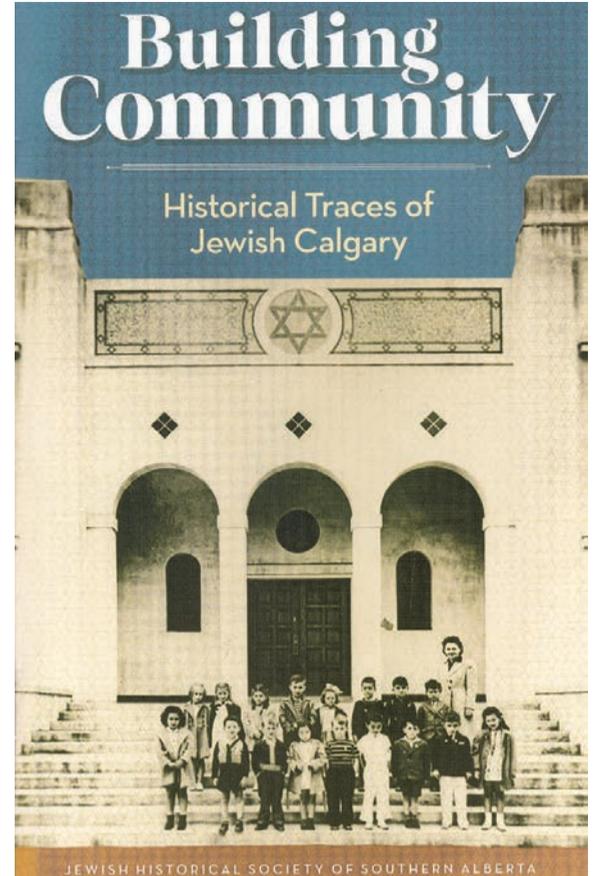
The softcover book, a bargain at the symbolically significant price of \$18, will certainly resonate with those who have deep roots in Calgary and fond memories of some of its early institutions; it will likewise appeal to history geeks, though it is written for a much broader audience.

Kerr and Shapiro have taken great care to ensure that the information is easily understood by newcomers to the Jewish community, converts to Judaism, and family, friends, and neighbours of other faiths.

“We were very cognizant of the fact that we didn’t know who was going to use this, so we wanted to make it accessible to anybody,” Shapiro said. “Non-Jewish people will have terms explained.... For many other people who haven’t been members of the Jewish Historical Society, this is a really nice taste of the history.”

Building Community is full of interesting – sometimes astonishing – insights into the places that defined Jewish Calgary from its establishment through its boom years. Along the way, readers will encounter notable personalities that put the hey (*chai?*) in this community’s heyday.

Small enough to slip into a purse or backpack and containing a sturdy but unobtrusive fold-out map on which are plotted 44 sites of Jewish interest, *Building Community* evolved from a self-guided walking tour the JHSSA added to its website back in 2017 due to



popular demand.

“That was a Harry project,” recalled Kerr, lauding the significant contributions that “Harry the Historian” (a moniker Sanders earned during his frequent spots on the popular CBC Calgary radio show *The Homestretch*) has made in documenting both Jewish and Calgary civic history. A prolific writer and historical consultant, Sanders was honoured in 2012 as Calgary Heritage Authority Historian Laureate.

“Anytime you want to do something on the Jewish history of Calgary, you go to Harry,” said Shapiro, adding that many of the historical tidbits in the book also came from the entertaining and informative anecdotes Sanders has shared over the years during his countless walking tours for Historic Calgary Week and the JHSSA.

Sanders once again served as historical consultant for *Building Community*. Additional consultants and proofreaders included JHSSA Office Manager Katie Baker and JHSSA Director Irena Karshenbaum, President Sandra Lipton, Archivist Emerita Agi Romer Segal, and Past President Betty Sherwood.

For the book, Kerr and Shapiro re-evaluated sites

Continued on page 25

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'Last Known Address' is a valuable resource for Holocaust education

By Ari Sniderman



Author Kathy Kacer

As a teacher and student of Jewish History over the last 20 years, I have come across various methods of teaching Holocaust education. A question, whose answer is always evolving, of course, is: What are the best ways to meaningfully integrate the memory of the Holocaust and Jewish identity-building?

Kathy Kacer's newest Holocaust education book for young readers, *Last*

Known Address: The Stumbling Stones of Europe, will be an important resource going forward. As I read, I saw meaningful ways of utilizing it for Holocaust education not only in my classroom, but in my home and in the community.

Last Known Address begins by introducing the reader to Gunter Demnig's thirty-year-old "Stumbling Stones" project. Demnig has been placing plaques in the streets throughout thirty countries in Europe at the last chosen address of over 100,000 victims of the Holocaust. Kacer then presents the stories of thirteen individuals whose plaques can be stumbled upon by visitors and locals navigating the streets, just as the victims whose names they bear had in the good times.

As mentioned, Kacer frames the book as intended for "young readers." Specifically, the jacket states the intended audience as children between nine and twelve years old. Books suitable for this age bracket include other personal, non-fiction records such as *Hannah's Suitcase* and *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. *Last Known Address* has great value as an abridged anthology. By portraying abridged accounts

of multiple individuals, as opposed to a singular account, there is a broader opportunity to pique curiosity and invite further research from readers. I was especially intrigued by the story of Salman Schocken and ended up taking an extra hour to finish the chapter about him!

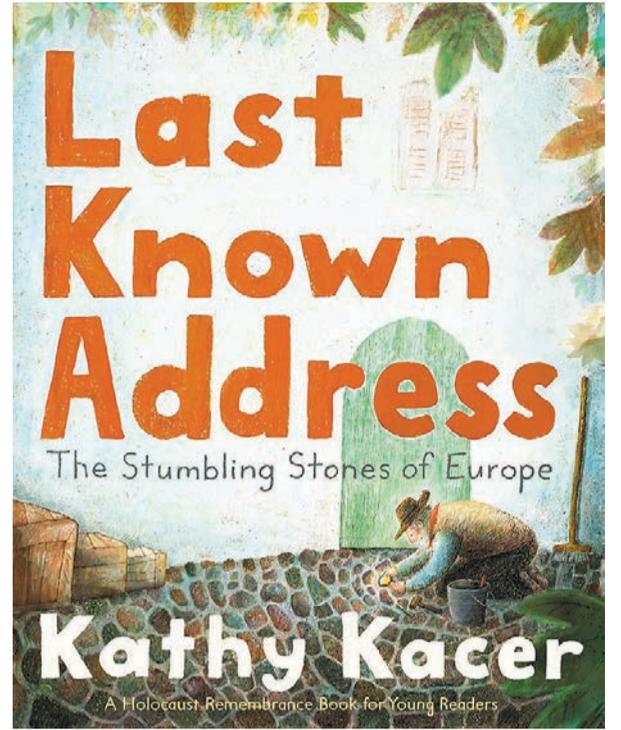
In presenting their stories, Kacer has the reader connecting deeply to the events. Each chapter introduces an individual by name and location of their stumbling stone (or alternative memorial). Many chapters then include the story of the individual told in narrative, after which a short section details the facts of the victim's life.

In each chapter, Kacer outlines the family dynamics, passions, and day-to-day lives of the victims that easily places the reader in the shoes of each. She is able to sensitively and respectfully relay each narrative, daring the reader to hope for a positive outcome to each heart-breaking tale.

In creating an incisive reading experience, Kacer is compelled to use terms and write of subjects which are unfamiliar to children being introduced to Holocaust education. This lends an opportunity for parents and teachers to facilitate discussions, concentrating on facts and feelings. Where Kacer gives the hard truths about Auschwitz and its brutality, adults can address the concepts in a safe space.

Educating young people about the Holocaust always boils down to a balance between age-appropriate truth and oversharing to the point of trauma. This is a hard balance to reach in a group as the threshold is deeply individual. One reason this unique anthology works as a meaningful resource is that the different stories offer different types of revelations about the events of the Holocaust.

Through the eyes of Leone Sabatello and Vera Katz Schiff, readers get a disturbing picture of antisemitism stomping into daily life. Readers realize the bravery of the partisans from Max Windmüller. Jan and Amelie Daniels are a Roma couple whose story focuses on the destruction of numerous communities and culture, and



Matvey Ajzinberg's story conveys vivid descriptions of family separation. Holocaust education often focuses on the above themes, so the presentation of them through the anthology is clearly intentional and curated.

In the community, Kacer's text can be utilized for ceremonies and programming for youth and intercultural exchanges. In my house, I can envision reading *Last Known Address* with my kids as they begin to approach the appropriate age.

In the classroom, a teacher could read sections of *Last Known Address* with their class to introduce the Holocaust in general, or to further understanding through the memory of the individuals introduced by Kacer. I have certainly been waiting for a book like this to add to our program. I trust it will find a good home between Anne Frank's diary and *Hannah's Suitcase* in synagogue and school libraries everywhere.

Ari Sniderman is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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community calendar

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

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



jewishcalgary.org



A MESSAGE FROM ROB NAGUS

As we approach Passover, our community prepares to gather around the seder table to retell the ancient story of our people's journey from slavery to freedom. It is a story that has sustained the Jewish people for thousands of years—one that reminds us that even in times of uncertainty our resilience, faith, and unity carry us forward.

This year, as in recent years, we celebrate Passover with both gratitude and vigilance. Jewish communities around the world continue to face disturbing acts of antisemitism and threats to our safety. Recent incidents targeting Jewish communities in places such as Toronto and Michigan serve as stark reminders that this challenge remains very real. Here in Calgary, we are monitoring developments closely and remain in constant communication with our law enforcement partners at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels to ensure the safety and security of our community.

Protecting our community is among our highest priorities. In the coming weeks, Calgary Jewish Federation (CJF) will also be strengthening our security

infrastructure by welcoming a new Regional Security Director who will help coordinate security efforts across our institutions and deepen our collaboration with authorities and partner organizations.

At the same time, we must remember that vigilance does not mean retreat. The Jewish story is one of courage and perseverance. We will continue to live proudly and openly as Jews, celebrate our traditions, support one another, and contribute meaningfully to the broader Calgary community. We will not compromise who we are.

Passover is also a time to reflect on our shared responsibility to shape the future of Jewish life in our city. Over the past several weeks, many of you participated in our community strategic planning process by completing surveys and attending CJF's town hall with community organizations. I want to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to share their perspectives, ideas, and aspirations.

Your input is invaluable. Our team is currently working to synthesize the feedback we have received,

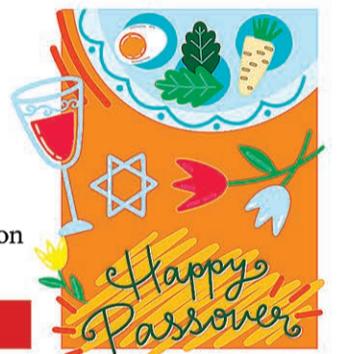
and we will be hosting additional sessions with stakeholders in the weeks ahead. This process will help us develop a clear, forward-looking vision that strengthens Jewish life in Calgary for the years to come.

The Passover story teaches us that freedom is not only something we inherit—it is something we must continually build and protect together. I am deeply grateful for the strength, engagement, and spirit of this community.

On behalf of Calgary Jewish Federation, I wish you and your families a meaningful and joyful Passover.

Chag Pesach Sameach,

Rob Nagus
CEO
Calgary Jewish Federation



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

NEVER FORGET WITH MONTANA Tucker

On February 22, 112 members of our community and beyond tuned in for a virtual evening with singer, dancer and social media star, Montana Tucker.

Hosted by CJF's Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education department and Calgary Public Library, this event was moderated by our community's own Emily Sztabyzb (actress, playwright and third-generation Holocaust survivor). They delved into Montana's journey from entertainer to activist and Holocaust educator. Montana shared her experience boldly and unapologetically advocating for the Jewish people online, on the red-carpet, and through her many projects including her most recent documentary, *The Children of October 7th* and 2022 docuseries, *How to Never Forget* – which follows Montana to Poland as she retraces her grandparents survival in Auschwitz.

If you didn't get a chance to tune into the event, you can view the full program at the QR code. You can also follow Montana across platforms: @Montanatucker



This program was supported by the Balaban Family, Krell Family, Viewpoint Foundation, and donors to the Calgary Public Library Foundation.

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UJA
2025

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Looking for an easy and fun way to connect with other Jewish families? PJ Library Get-Together Grants are open to all current PJ Library and PJ Our Way® subscribers.

Host a playdate, Shabbat dinner, park meet-up, holiday craft, or any casual get-together with at least two other Jewish families, and you can be reimbursed up to \$100 USD for eligible expenses. Even better, families can now take advantage of this grant up to five times in 2026!



Current subscribers should have received a unique application link by email, or you can go to pjlibrary.org/gettogether for more information and details.



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Z'man Herutenu: Our Time of Freedom

By Rabbi Leonard Cohen



Rabbi Leonard Cohen

According to our Sages, we are obliged to commemorate two things every Shabbat: G-d's creation of the Heaven and the Earth; and Yetziat Mitzrayim, the Exodus from Egypt. What is the connection between escaping Egypt and Shabbat? And what makes *Yetziat Mitzrayim* so significant that it stands as the parallel of Creation?

The Aseret Hadibrot (a.k.a. Ten Commandments) are found in two separate versions in the Torah, one in the book of Shemot/Exodus and one in the book of Devarim/Deuteronomy. Shemot 20:8-11 explains the law of observing Shabbat as follows: Remember the Sabbath day... for in six days the Lord made the

heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day.

Devarim 5:12-15 contains a different rationale for Shabbat: Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy... Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your G-d freed you from there with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. Therefore, God, your God, commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

These two different versions of the fourth Commandment are the source of the mitzvah of commemorating both Creation and the Exodus, which we do in the Friday night Kiddush (in the phrases "Zecher lema'aseh beresheet" & "zecher liyetziat mitzrayim").

According to R. Yechezkel Tzvi Taub, in his *Kol Meheichal*, the Exodus reminds us not only of G-d's creative power but our own. As he states, "The core of remembering the Exodus is the meditation that every Jew must perform twice each day, to reflect on the wondrous powers with which the Redeemer of Israel raised and uplifted us, and upon the powerful strengths found in each one of us which we received from Our Creator at the time of the Exodus. This reflection obligates us to examine ourselves and determine whether we are properly using the privilege of these marvelous powers."

Just as Hashem created the World using unlimited

powers, Hashem also created a treasured people, the Jews, with a Divine mission to improve and perfect this World. In experiencing the Exodus, and witnessing G-d's miraculous powers, the Jewish people not only achieved liberation, but the power and responsibility to use this freedom to serve Hashem and bring about greatness. We are constantly receiving the Torah. The work of Creation is not done without our input., nor is the challenge of freedom achieved through *Yetziat Mitzrayim* alone.

Creation culminates in the seventh day of rest, Shabbat. And Shabbat is preparation for the *Olam Haba* (the World-to-Come), a perpetual Shabbat of holiness. We are charged as Jews with bringing Hashem's divine light into this world through performance of mitzvot, and developing harmony between our world as it is and a world of true righteousness and justice. In that manner, we align Hashem's Creation with the ideals and inspiration of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*.

Chag Sameach! May this coming Pesach provide us the opportunity to appreciate anew our liberation from slavery, to experience the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* with all our five senses, and reflect on how to bring greater G-dliness in the world of Hashem's Creation.

Rabbi Leonard Cohen is Rabbi at Kehilat Shalom in Calgary.

This Passover *Cont. from page 3*

3. As we celebrate our freedom from oppression, how do we free ourselves from our to-do lists and screens to be present?

In writer David Foster Wallace's 2005 Kenyon College commencement address, he tells a parable about two young fish swimming along when they happen to meet an older fish swimming in the opposite direction, who nods at them and says "Morning, boys. How's the water?" The young fish swim for a bit, and then one of them asks the other, "What the hell is water?"

Wallace gave the speech 20 years ago, but the lesson resonates now more than ever: Don't miss the big picture. Let's take moments now and then to free

ourselves from the anxiety, stress, and have-tos of daily life – and just be present. Let's untether from our screens to connect with something real – with nature, with G-d, with the people we love.

4. How can I matter?

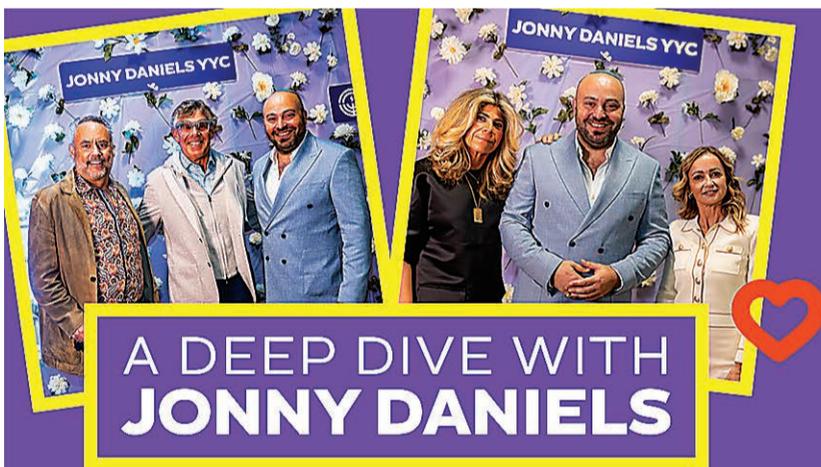
In Rabbi Harold S. Kushner's spiritual guidebook *Living a "Life That Matters,"* he writes that he has tended to many gravely ill people in the final days of their lives, through which he has noticed a pattern: Certain patients were less afraid of dying than others; and whether or not they were afraid to die depended on how they had lived.

The people who had lived fulfilling lives on earth were less afraid to die, while the ones who felt that they hadn't done anything worthwhile – with purpose in their lives – wished G-d could give them just a

couple more years. "It was not death that frightened them," Kushner writes. "It was insignificance, the fear that they would die and leave no mark on the world."

We as human beings are put on earth not to just exist, but to live with intentionality and purpose. Each of us is here to shine our own unique light on the world. Where will you shine yours?

Cindy Sher is the executive editor of *Jewish Chicago: The JUF Magazine*.



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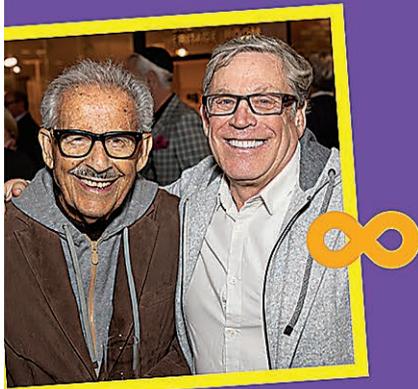
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Stan Mayer and Perry Swenson at the Magen David Adom International Medical Response Seminar in Tel Aviv.

Magen David Adom unites Israeli Society and saves lives

By Stan Mayer and Perry Swenson

December 2025 Magen David Adom (MDA) hosted the 10th International Medical Response Seminar in Tel Aviv. We joined twenty-eight physicians, paramedics, nurses, and other healthcare professionals from eight countries for 5 days of intense learning. Lectures from experts in prehospital medicine, population resilience, blood and human milk banking and disaster response were complemented by mass casualty exercises. Tours of the MDA Ramle dispatch center and meeting with trauma team physicians at Shaare Tzedek Hospital facilitated understanding of the Israel emergency medical system. Spending a day in an ambulance gave a taste of the day-to-day efforts of MDA serving the public.

We visited with MDA staff and residents of Sderot, Kibbutzim Ofakim and Be’eri who graciously shared their experiences and showed us firsthand the carnage and horrors committed on October 7th. We paid respect at the Nova Festival site and learned of countless acts of bravery. The recounting of personal stories and the response from that day under unimaginable stress was humbling. We met with heroes.

Attending the MDA seminar as healthcare practitioners with interests in emergency medicine and prehospital systems as well as long-time supporters and previous volunteers, was an opportunity not to miss. The unfortunate reality is that MDA has extensive experience in dealing with trauma and mass casualty incidents. The ability to adapt and learn from events and then share their learnings allows us to examine and potentially improve our local systems. The adoption of protocols and technology by MDA is second to none. Yet what is more impressive

is the engagement of community and the population to enhance response to all emergencies and lead to a more prepared and resilient nation. Invariably in any conversation with a member of MDA staff or volunteer, the love of vocation was evident.

As part of Klal Yisrael we take pride in such a dynamic organization that unites Israeli society but also shares expertise responding to disasters globally. Training individuals and communities with programs such as the First 7 Minutes builds stronger societies. MDA can bring people together regardless of faith or nationality. There is something that tugs at your heart when you wear the white shirt and hoodie with the Red Star of David on the back and sing Hatikvah at the site of the Nova Music festival or at the Kotel with your new friends and colleagues. We are in this together. Am Yisrael Chai!

Stan Mayer is an Emergency and Family Physician practicing in Alberta and Nunavut

Perry Swenson is a Paramedic with Maskwacis Ambulance Authority and STARS flight Medic in Alberta

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Our own Lenny Shapiro is once again making a life-saving impact by donating a second, even larger rescue boat to the people of Israel. This vital vessel will be deployed on the Sea of Galilee (Kinneret), serving as a lifeline and safeguarding countless lives.

Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel (CMDA) is profoundly grateful for this continued generosity and unwavering support.

Thank you, Lenny and Faigel z'l Shapiro, for your extraordinary commitment and contributions. We deeply appreciate your friendship, kindness, and dedication to saving lives.

Sharon Fraiman
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From the Promised Land to the Prairies

Inesa's Journey from Aliyah to Alberta

By Jana Zalmanowitz

Inesa's connection to Israel began not that long ago. She moved from Ukraine in 2020 through the Masa program which gives people an opportunity to live in Israel through various immersive and professional experiences. After seven months in the program, Inesa was hooked. She decided to make *Aliyah*.

"Israel tests you," she says reflecting on the process of building a new life there. Life in Israel was not easy, but she loved it. She began working as an immigration consultant and soon met Alex. Although not born Jewish, Alex had felt a pull to Israel and moved from Russia a few years before. They enjoyed life in Israel together, surrounded by Jewish culture, sipping Aroma Café coffee by the sea. They got married.

Then October 7th changed everything.

With the outbreak of war, life in Israel became more unpredictable. The couple began to consider moving elsewhere. Inesa still had family in Ukraine, but there was war happening there as well. Once Inesa and Alex found out they were expecting a baby, she especially felt the need to expedite their decision. "I wanted to deliver the baby somewhere safe and not in a shelter," she explains. "I didn't want to worry about that, so we decided to try to come to Canada."

Like many Israelis arriving in Canada, the couple's first stop was Toronto, drawn by its large Jewish population. While the familiar presence of places like Aroma Café provided some familiarity, finding work was difficult. Inesa recalls going into a store to ask about job openings. The owner told her that almost every hour someone came in looking for a job and there weren't any.

After researching other options, they decided Calgary might offer better job prospects and the calm atmosphere they were seeking.

Alex soon found work in his field as a cook. The transition was challenging. Despite his training and

experience, he faced a significant wage difference between Israel and Canada, as well as a very different workplace culture in Canadian kitchens. Over the past few years, however, he has begun to find greater success in his career and was recently promoted.

Outside of work, Alex is also exploring Jewish life more deeply. He is currently taking conversion classes through B'nai Tikvah and hopes to attend synagogue more regularly. Balancing synagogue life with work can be difficult, however. "In Calgary, you really need cooks on Friday and Saturday – exactly when synagogue services are happening," Inesa explains.

Inesa faced her own transition. When she first arrived, she found work in retail but because she moved at 20 weeks pregnant, she soon became a stay-at-home mom to their daughter Ariella. This was a challenging time. Alongside adjusting to motherhood, Inesa was adapting yet again, adapting to life in a new country and working to become more fluent in her third language, English. Despite the difficulties, she made the effort to go out and build connections within the Jewish community. Like many first-time parents, Inesa has found support through programs geared toward young children. She enjoys attending PJ Library's tot Shabbat at the JCC and takes Ariella there for swimming lessons. Having a Jewish space brings a sense of familiarity to her new home.

Another important source of comfort is family. Inesa's parents now live in Calgary as well, having left Ukraine amid the ongoing war. "That's one benefit of Calgary: grandparents," she says.

When discussing the life she and Alex are creating in Alberta, Inesa emphasizes the calm and stability they feel. "We can have a stable life forever here. We can buy a home, a car. For our daughter it's a huge benefit," she says, echoing the hopes of many parents who move to provide future opportunity for their children.

At the same time, preserving their connection to Israel remains deeply important. Inesa says they will prioritize Jewish and Hebrew education for Ariella so that, if she wants, she can return to



Inesa and Alex say they appreciate the stability Calgary offers their family, but still feel a strong pull toward Israel.

Israel. That possibility is something both Inesa and Alex continue to hold close. Inesa says that Israeli society offers a sense of freedom for children that she hasn't yet seen in Canada. "Kids are so loved in Israel," she says, referring to how she feels Israeli society has many aspects that are truly built to include children.

The distinctive Israeli ruach (spirited energy) is also something she misses. "I hated people in Israel when I first came because they were always arguing, yelling and screaming," she says laughing. "But then I got used to it and they're incredible, they're happy. They enjoy every day."

For now, Inesa and Alex appreciate the stability they have found in Calgary. They are doing something they have done before, navigating new friendships, language and work in a new country. Whether Calgary will remain their long-term home is something they have not yet decided.

"I believe, I hope there will be a peaceful time in Israel," says Inesa. Moving to Israel takes a certain amount of chutzpah, and as she described, "Israel tests you." But she's not sure if she's ready to commit to Calgary, feeling the pull of the first place that drew her away from Ukraine. "I don't know how it happens. Israel calls you. It just calls you back home."

Jana Zalmanowitz is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

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New book *Cont. from page 17*

that had been included in the 2017 walking tour. Fewer were chosen, with preference given to sites where historical buildings remain or where places associated with the Jewish community had morphed into notable civic sites.

Though they combined or dropped some of the sites, Kerr and Shapiro were keen to preserve interesting stories connected with them. Many are shared in "Historical Tidbits" liberally sprinkled throughout the book. The tidbits add tam (flavour), painting pictures of colourful individuals and events connected with various sites.

"They're the best because they really bring you into the book," Kerr said.

"Living in the Jewish community of Calgary in 2026, everything is in the south," said Shapiro. "There are a lot of very established institutions, but there are no kosher bakeries and no kosher butchers. If you read [*Building Communities*], you discover that when the community was tiny and downtown...it was a whole different community in terms of the amenities they had and the amenities they didn't have and had to build."

"There was much more of a sense of people being in the same boat," explained Kerr, adding that antisemitism (such as restrictions against Jewish membership in country clubs) often created the impetus for local Jews to develop even their own leisure institutions.

"I think [*Building Community*] gives a really good

sense of how the community grew," Shapiro said, adding that she was fascinated by details of early community milestones, like the purchase of land for the original Jewish cemetery at Erlton.

"It was \$160 bucks. I didn't know that!" said Shapiro, who also loves a historical tidbit about a fundraising event held at the Elks Hall for the construction of the House of Israel Jewish community building on 18 Avenue SW.

Members of the Jewish community have made extraordinary contributions to the local arts scene in every generation. Shapiro was captivated by details shared in *Building Community* about the Jewish roots of Calgary's film industry, from the Allen family who established the Allen and Palace theatres, to the Film Exchange where some notable Jewish Calgarians booked and distributed films, to the Barron Building (still extant), home of the Uptown Theatre.

The carefully curated photos, archival treasures and stories featured in *Building Community* are enhanced by the skilled work of graphic designer Daniel Blais.

"I think he did a masterful job," said Shapiro, "It's a clean, simple, clear, and pleasing design."

No single publication can convey the totality of the Jewish experience in Calgary and Southern Alberta, and, as Saundra Lipton points out in her foreword, the story told in *Building Community* is, thus, "representational rather than exhaustive."

The JHSSA wants all community members to add their family stories to the Jewish historical record, says Roberta Kerr. Those who have not already done so can submit brief family biographies, photos, and



Gerlitz Block in Calgary. (Archival photo).

documents for the JHSSA Southern Alberta Jewish Family Histories Exhibit. The JHSSA also looks forward to hearing from families who have shared their story in the past and wish to provide updates.

To view the online exhibit and guidelines for submitting your family's story, go to <https://jhssa.org/southern-alberta-jewish-family-histories/>.

To purchase your copy of *Building Community: Historical Traces of Jewish Calgary* go to <https://jhssa.org/building-community-historical-traces-of-jewish-calgary/> or call the JHSSA office at 403-444-3171.

Spring is coming! Just in time, the JHSSA has provided a book that will lead to many pleasurable walks down memory lane!

Chag Pesach sameach!

Wishing all who celebrate a meaningful and peaceful Passover.

May this season of reflection and renewal bring you and your loved ones safety, joy, and connection.



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Jonathan Conricus to headline Friends of JNF Calgary Negev Gala

By Mark Cooper, LJI Reporter

(Calgary) - One of the world's most authoritative voices on security and counter-terrorism in the Middle East will make his first public appearance in Calgary — a timely arrival as Jews throughout the Diaspora are forced to confront these sharply escalating threats at home.

Retired IDF Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conricus will headline this year's Friends of JNF Canada Negev Gala Event, offering expert insight into the widespread regional conflict and strategies to combat the sharp rise in local antisemitism.

"In these uncertain times, understanding the complexities of the Middle East isn't just about geopolitics—it's about equipping our community with the truth and the tools to stand tall against rising hate here at home," said Cheryl Gurevitch, the Calgary chapter president of Friends of JNF Canada.

"We are honoured to bring Jonathan Conricus to Calgary to share the frontline perspective our community so urgently needs to hear."

Conricus, now a senior fellow at the Foundation For Defense of Democracies, will headline the June 9

conversational event held at Beth Tzedec Congregation and titled *Truth and Security in an Uncertain World*, moderated by Kevin Libin, Executive Editor of Postmedia Network Inc.

The event will also recognize Postmedia (publishers of *The National Post*) for their commitment to journalistic integrity, particularly in regards to reporting on the Middle East.

"Since the October 7 attacks, many mainstream outlets have let propaganda against Israel and Zionism go unchallenged. Postmedia, however, has remained a beacon of fairness and objectivity," said Gurevitch.

"At a time when truthful, balanced reporting is more vital than ever, we felt Postmedia was a highly deserving honoree."

While it will be Conricus' first time speaking in Calgary, he will be visiting Alberta for the second time in two years, having spoken at the 2024 JNF Negev event in Edmonton.

Conricus served in the IDF for 24 years as a combat commander in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, as a military diplomat, foreign relations expert and international spokesperson. He was the first IDF officer to be seconded to the United Nations headquarters in New York, where he provided strategic analysis for UN Peacekeeping.

During the first three months of the war against Hamas, he represented the IDF in international media in hundreds of interviews across top-tier networks, often explaining complex situations on the ground, in addition to delivering dozens of updates on IDF social media accounts for millions of interested viewers around the world.

As the owner of Conricus Communications, he continues to be a go-to spokesperson and panelist on major international networks, using his blunt, straightforward and often disarming style to explain Israeli military, political and societal perspectives as well as the Iranian axis of evil, and its proxies.

He has recently expressed severe concerns regarding the rise of antisemitism and shifts in foreign policy in Canada.

"If we connect the dots here on how Canada has unravelled since October 7 and what Canadian Jews have faced at home in Toronto, Montreal and other places, its been maybe one of the worst places in the West to be a Jew," he told i24 News soon after Canada last year recognized a Palestinian State, something



Retired Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus

Conricus characterized as "clownish" and "reckless".

When the Calgary Friends of JNF organizing committee was deciding on who to invite to headline this year's gala event, Conricus's name first came up because of the outstanding reception he received in Edmonton.

After the U.S. and Israeli strikes on military targets in Iran and subsequent acts of terror and intimidation in the West, his appearance became highly opportune, said Gurevitch.

Before October 7, Gurevitch said Diaspora Jews had largely lost their sense of danger. "Now we must be vigilant and keep our eyes wide open to the threats around us."

Conricus is among the rare figures with the credibility to turn this fear into a determined resolve to inspire Jews to continue to stand proud and make the case for our safety and security wherever we live, she said.

"He was the voice of Israel right after October 7. Because he earned our trust early on, when you see him now on CNN, or when you listen to him on podcasts or read his articles you know you can trust him."

This year's gala is in support of the Tzfat Child & Family Rehab Centre in Israel.

The centre will allow families in Northern Israel to remain together while children are undergoing serious medical treatments. Alongside a dedicated care team trained to support parents, children, and siblings, families will receive emotional and practical support during uncertain and deeply challenging times.

Donations will help build this residential and rehabilitation centre, including private family suites, playrooms and activity spaces, a gym and fitness room, a recreation room, kitchen and dining areas, and a rooftop terrace with a therapeutic garden.

The Negev gala event begins with a VIP reception at 5:30, followed by the program at 7.

Participants can register for the gala at friendsofjnfca.org/calgarynegev2026/register.asp



Proceeds from the Gala will go to the Child and Family Rehab Centre in Tzfat,

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Calgary writer Danyael Halprin brings Passover magic to children's bookshelves

By Jana Zalmanowitz

Award-winning Calgary journalist and writer Danyael Halprin is no stranger to the writing process. She's been contributing to various publications since she got her start in journalism at *Canadian Living* magazine in Toronto in the '90s. She's taken on roles such as book reviewer, travel writer and running journalist. She's written about everything from the mental health benefits of distance running, to the highs of a THC-infused restaurant dinner, pre-legalization, to the promise of Alberta's wind energy sector. Halprin's work has appeared in magazines such as *Avenue*, *The Calgary Herald*, and *iRun Magazine*. As of March 17, her work is finding a new home, on children's bookshelves and in bedtime story rosters.

"I'm not used to being on this side of the interview," Halprin says with a laugh as she sits down to talk about her first children's book, *A Magical Passover Starring the Tooth Fairy*, published by RE:BOOKS Publishing. The book is the first picture book for Rebecca Eckler's RE:BOOKS Publishing, who describes it as "warm, witty and full of heart." The partnership between Halprin and Eckler is a natural fit, in that it merges the strengths of two Jewish women writers with ties to Alberta. Eckler, a 10x best-selling author, built a successful career in Canadian media. Her expertise in navigating the literary and media landscape was the foundation for launching RE:BOOKS, which provides a platform for emerging female Canadian authors to get their work into the world.

Many families with children will find something they recognize in *A Magical Passover Starring the*

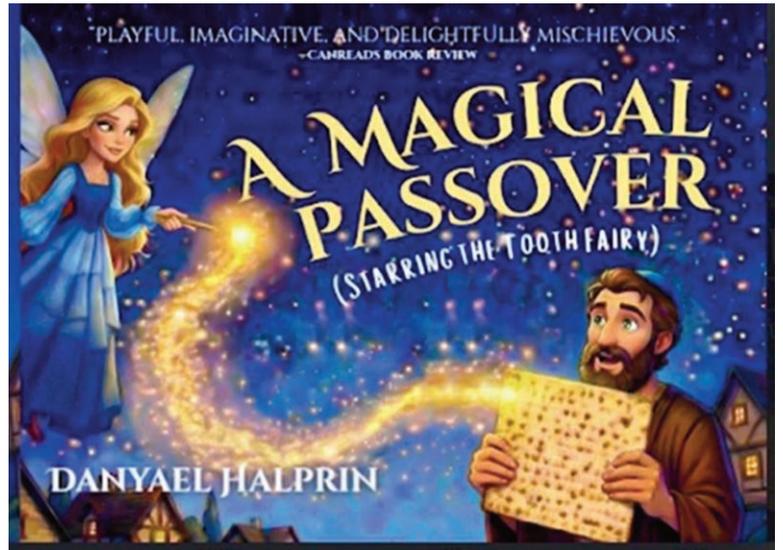
Tooth Fairy. The story brings together two well-known worlds: Jewish tradition and secular folklore. When young Jesse loses a tooth on Passover, readers witness the unexpected meeting between Eliyahu and the Tooth Fairy and the mishaps that ensue. The result is a lively comedy of errors that kids will enjoy, with a meaningful message parents can appreciate. The book shows what can happen when different traditions collide, learn to appreciate one another and ultimately work together. It's a welcome message in today's increasingly diverse families and society.

While the story may seem different from Halprin's previous works, she says it's one of many that swirl around in her creative mind, waiting for the right opportunity. "This story has existed in my mind for a while, waiting to find a home," she explains.

Halprin is a mother to three children, now in their teens. Years ago, her son lost a tooth on the first night of Passover. While he sat there processing the shock of the moment the tooth gave way, Halprin was exclaiming to her kids, "You know what this means? Eliyahu and the tooth fairy are both coming tonight!" And the story was written. The joys of having a creative writer for a parent.

Halprin found a home for her book in Eckler's newly founded Jewish imprint, RIVKAH Books. It was a perfect match. "They loved it immediately," Halprin says. "Rebecca saw the magic in it right away." Like, *A Magical Passover Starring the Tooth Fairy*, RIVKAH Books aims to entertain audiences while also holding a deeper purpose. For RIVKAH Books, that means in a time of rising antisemitism, Jewish authors have a platform that celebrates and amplifies their voices. Says Halprin: "With all the hate and trauma over the past few years, it's more important than ever for the Jewish people to sing louder, be prouder, and shine their beautiful light into the world. I hope my book brings some much-needed joy into our community and the world."

A Magical Passover Starring the Tooth Fairy has been well received. A set of twins has called it "a silly magic mix-up, with a big lesson" and adults have used words like charming and memorable to describe its messaging in how it handles some of life's mysteries. As for Halprin's own family, they're enjoying the now-



illustrated version, delighted to see a childhood story back on centre stage. "We read it together and my daughter was laughing at all the right parts," Halprin says.

Now as Jews around the globe gather to celebrate Passover, many feeling the weight of serious issues facing world Jewry, they can also share a message of hope that resonates with their children. "It's not just a silly story about Eliyahu and the Tooth Fairy," Halprin says. "Yes, it's fun and playful, but there's a deeper message. It's about one culture merging with another and about learning, understanding and embracing each other's traditions."

A Magical Passover Starring the Tooth Fairy by Danyael Halprin is available starting March 17 through Amazon and at select local bookstores. Amazon Link: <https://a.co/d/05B8BVIY>

Jana Zalmanowitz is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Author Danyael Halprin



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The story of Leonard Cohen’s masterpiece, Hallelujah, now told in a children’s book

By Irena Karshenbaum

Hallelujah! The Story of Leonard Cohen

By Alicia Jo Rabins

Illustrated by Gene Pendon

Apples & Honey Press

32 pages

Over a chance conversation last July about my upcoming trip to Montreal, I was advised that I “must” visit the city’s Shaar Hashomayim synagogue for Shabbat services to hear the congregation’s amazing cantor. Some days later, I found myself in that very synagogue on Shabbat, in an airy and bright chapel that seemed to sparkle in clouds of gold where I was told that their talented cantor was away, but this was the synagogue of Leonard Cohen.

The singer, songwriter, poet and novelist was not at Shabbat services that morning either, having passed away almost a decade earlier, but his spirit lingered not only over the country’s oldest Ashkenazi synagogue, founded in 1846, but over the city as well.

I needed no further evidence of the profound mark Leonard Cohen left on Montreal when I was walking along Crescent Street where I looked up and was greeted by the mural of the artist presiding over the city like an emperor. With his hand resting on his heart and casting his serene Mona-Lisa-like smile, Leonard Cohen was gazing at me. It was the mastery of the mural, painted perfectly, like that other masterpiece in the Louvre, that had the effect as if Cohen himself was watching over all the pedestrians, even me, hurrying along Montreal’s busy streets.

The mural was a grand tribute to a man who did much to enrich Montreal’s cultural landscape with such novels as, *Beautiful Losers*, and songs like, *Suzanne* and *Closing Time*. But it is Cohen’s song, *Hallelujah*, which took him ten years to write, that today is considered iconic.

Hallelujah burns with passion from the heat of a consuming love between David and his beloved, and explores themes of desire, love, and religious faith. The repetition of the single ancient word, *Hallelujah*, that is used in both Jewish and Christian prayer, sung like a guttural cry to God has the power to crack open the heart of any listener with its metaphorical battle axe.

With these mature themes, the song is an unconventional work to inspire an illustrated children’s book, especially one for readers so young. And yet, it is a work that first-time children’s book author, Alicia Jo Rabins, weaves skillfully given her other calling, as a poet, which guides her poetic prose.

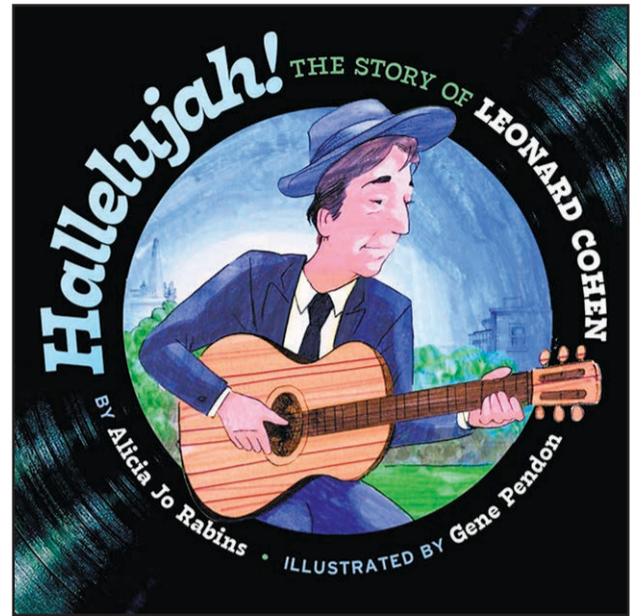
Hallelujah! The Story of Leonard Cohen, written for ages 5 to 8, tells the story of Cohen growing up in Montreal. The pages pull the reader through the boy’s childhood that is a medley of music. He listens to his mother sing folk songs in Yiddish and Russian and his grandfather sing in the Byzantine-Revival-style sanctuary of their synagogue, the Shaar Hashomayim congregation. One day, the young Leonard meets a man who plays the Spanish guitar and asks the musician to teach him to play. Plucking the guitar strings, Rabins writes, “Sounded dark, like a rainy day with thunder... and sweet as a bowl of mint chip ice cream. A rainbow of music flow out of his guitar.”

Leonard writes songs until he has enough to perform a concert. His performances grow in number and his music, “Opened people’s hearts.”

But there is one song, as the story continues, that is dwelling inside of the young man that only he feels he can write. Draft upon draft, years pass and finally the words pour out onto the page that feel right to the songwriter. Completing his masterpiece, Cohen’s struggle does not end there, as his record company does not recognize the song’s brilliance and refuses to produce it. The young musician has only one option. He can share this piece with his audiences, at his live concerts.

Hallelujah was eventually released in 1984 through Cohen’s studio album, *Various Positions*, and was overlooked until a cover version was released by Jeff Buckley, in 1994. That cover then inspired hundreds of covers by various artists and in numerous languages including Hebrew, Japanese and Arabic.

Hallelujah! The Story of Leonard Cohen is a story of perseverance, professional as well as personal. The book presents many mature themes written in a language a child can understand and leaves the adult reader to ponder these same themes again for themselves through the raw power of the deceptively simple story.



The book was illustrated by Gene Pendon who, in 2013, proposed an idea to the City of Montreal to create a mural to honour Leonard Cohen’s vast contributions to the city. Pendon’s hope was to complete the project in time for Cohen’s 80th birthday in 2014. The 21-storey mural, based on a photograph his daughter, Lorca, took of the artist in 2008 while he was on a tour in Europe, was painted by Pendon and fourteen other artists. It was unveiled in 2017, a year after Cohen’s passing. The mural, looking over Crescent Street where Cohen is believed to have spent much of his time, has become a Montreal landmark, and appears, naturally, in *Hallelujah! The Story of Leonard Cohen*.

Published in 2025 by Apples & Honey Press, an imprint of Behrman House, which is a regular supplier of books to the PJ Library program that mails free Jewish-themed books to children, *Hallelujah! The Story of Leonard Cohen* is not available, yet, through the program. This writer sincerely hopes this moving book will soon arrive in mailboxes of PJ Library subscribers.

Irena Karshenbaum is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter. She writes in Calgary. irenakarshenbaum.com



Calgary Jewish Federation staff and the Paperny Family JCC staff members had a great time celebrating Purim.

Best wishes for a Happy Passover

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Beth Tzedec and Temple B'nai Tikvah congregations collaborated on a delightful Purim Shpiel.

A fishy fun Purim Spiel collaboration builds bridges

By Holly Shifrah, LJI Reporter

This March, for the first time, the Conservative Beth Tzedec Congregation (BTZ) and the Reform Temple B'nai Tikvah (TBT) in Calgary joined forces for a collaborative Purim spiel. BTZ's Holly Shifrah and TBT's music director, Katie Baker, acted as co-directors for the Little Mermaid-themed musical spiel written by Shifrah. The cast and crew was comprised of members of both congregations. Shifrah, who also wrote and directed BTZ's Wicked-themed spiel last year, proposed working together with Temple because "like all religious organizations in 2026, we have trouble getting enough volunteers to make something like this happen. After struggling to get enough participants to cast last year's show, I thought it might help if we could pull talent from a larger pool and hopefully build some community-strengthening bridges. Plus, I was familiar with Katie and how talented she is. I knew she'd be lovely to work with, and I was right, she was."

Baker expressed similar positive sentiments about her co-director. She also said that when she first heard the proposal to collaborate, that she was "excited about the idea" and that it was "was appealing to work with the Conservative congregation from the perspective of building a stronger Jewish community (and to break down a bit of the siloing that exists)," a notion that feels ever more relevant as Jewish communities across Canada continue to face hostility from the wider community.

The re-telling of the Purim Story pulled elements from Disney's the *Little Mermaid* to give the story a fishy twist full of aquatic puns and new lyrics to three of Alan Menken's songs from the award winning soundtrack to the 1989 animated film: "Part of Your World," "Poor Unfortunate Souls," and "Kiss The Girl;" which was reimagined as "Tell The King," an ensemble number in which "Mordecrab" (a character combining Mordechai of the Purim story and the crab Sebastian from "The Little Mermaid") and the "Jewfish" denizens of the sea try to convince Esther to plead to the king

on their behalf.

A highlight of the spiel was that it featured Rabbi Mark Glickman of TBT and BTZ's Rabbi Russell G. Jayne in starring roles as Scuttle, the seagull narrator, and "Ursulaman," the sea witch villain of the story, respectively. Both rabbis delighted the audience in humorous costumes and through their enthusiastic willingness to lean into the silliness of the spiel. The excellent on-stage collaboration of the squawking, feathered Rabbi Glickman and the singing, feather-boa'd Rabbi Jayne reflected the success of the collaboration that made the spiel possible and resulted in the largest turnout for the Purim spiel and dinner that BTZ has had in recent memory. According to BTZ Executive Director, Jennifer Girvitz, 130 people in total from both congregations attended the event.

Rabbi Jayne said, "The minute I heard about the idea of a collaboration between the two congregations, I thought it was a magnificent idea." He explained that "Purim is all about transcending...limitations, and it's the easiest holiday for any two congregations to work together," noting that he is "always looking for more ways to get the non-Orthodox congregations working together, and this was a perfect entry point for that." In addition to praising the spiel as "witty" and "very engaging" for all ages, he also described the collaborative aspect as "a wonderful thing for the community."

Rabbi Glickman made clear that the positive assessment was mutual, stating, "Putting on the spiel with our friends at Beth Tzedec was a true joy, and it was wonderful

to be able to share our Purim celebration with both congregations. We were touched by the hospitality that Beth Tzedec showed, and we look forward to allowing the partnership we created to continue to deepen the ties between our two synagogue communities." He also noted that "seeing Rabbi Russ as "Ursulaman" provided a memory that I'll cherish always!"

Though some congregants might have initially found the idea of collaboration between a Conservative shul and a Reform shul worrisome or even alarming, the success of the evening will hopefully put to rest any doubts or fears. The two congregations were easily able to navigate teaming up for an aspect of Purim which, as minhag rather than mitzvah, required neither community to compromise the values of their movements. Despite some uncertainty from some corners, one thing is certain, the on-stage and backstage participants have overwhelmingly expressed that they found it a positive experience and one they look forward to doing again next Purim.

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Halpern Akiva Academy welcomes new principal: Jenna Pappas

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

There is much excitement at Calgary's Halpern Akiva Academy given the recent appointment of Dr. Jenna Pappas as principal.

In the words of Marina Segal – a former secretary of the Akiva Academy board of directors who provided administrative and HR support to the principal search committee – Pappas “ticked all the boxes, even ones we didn't know we had.”

Pappas told *AJNews* that she was warmly welcomed by members of the Akiva community at the Halpern Akiva Academy Gala Dinner, held March 8, and she looks forward to taking up her role as principal next month.

“We had a lot of big conversations during interviews,” said Pappas. “Now, I need to get in there... to understand the vision of the community and how it aligns with what I can bring to it.”

A glance at Pappas' resume suggests that she will bring a great deal to the table.

Born and raised in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Pappas earned her Bachelor of Education (Elementary) at the University of Alberta, later completing both a Master of Education in Bilingual Education and an Educational Doctorate in Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University in Phoenix.

Armed with an impressive resume, both educationally and experientially, Pappas – a mother of three – spent most of the past 25 years abroad, serving in various teaching and administrative capacities in Mexico, the US, Hong Kong, and China.

Along the way, Pappas has been a homeroom teacher, a PE teacher, a reading interventionist (K-8), and a new teacher mentor, to mention just a few of her professional responsibilities.

Pappas speaks with special pride about the 13 years she spent in Hong Kong at the Independent Schools Foundation Academy where she began as English Head of Department (Primary Division) and steadily rose through the ranks to serve as Assistant Principal, and then Deputy Principal.

Notably, the Hong Kong School – like Akiva Academy – delivered a dual curriculum. While Cantonese is typically taught in Hong Kong schools, the Academy delivered a Mandarin and English dual curriculum grounded in the Eight Confucian Virtues.

During Pappas' time at the school, student enrollment went from 400 to well over 2,000 students, an achievement she humbly attributes to the head of school who hired her. Notably, she too was on the front lines of a school that reinvented itself and prospered.

Most recently, here in Calgary, Pappas has taught high school social studies and English language arts at the Gobin Sarvar High School while also serving as

District MAP (an internationally recognized achievement test) Assessment Coordinator and mentor and coach to newly graduated teachers.

The G. Sarvar school, self-described as “...a non-profit independent academic school which follows Alberta's mandated curriculum with Alberta certified teachers,” is open to students of all faiths but mainly serves the Sikh community, providing lessons in its culture, religion, and language in addition to the Alberta curriculum.

Pappas, whose father immigrated to Canada from Greece, has an affinity for tightly knit ethnic communities, which is a bonus for a school like Akiva Academy, said Head of Judaic Studies Hannah Andrews.

Pappas also has an unquenchable curiosity about – and respect for – other cultures.

“I had done that classic backpacking trip with my friends,” Pappas told *AJNews*. We took a semester off and decided to go backpacking for seven months. I came back for my fall semester thinking, “That was wonderful and I want to live overseas’.”

Armed with their degrees, the trio then attended a job fair at the U of A and signed on to teach in Mexico. Pappas served at the Colegio Ingles and at the American School Foundation of Guadalajara.

Following eight years in Mexico, she taught for a couple of years at a school in Phoenix, Arizona, serving kids from low-income backgrounds.

It is serendipitous for the Halpern Akiva Academy community that Pappas chose to relocate to Calgary to spend more time with her aging parents, said Hannah Andrews, adding that the Akiva search committee chose Pappas from an impressive field of candidates.

“She fully understands that she is coming to a Jewish school... that people send their children here because we are a Jewish school, with excellence in both Judaic and secular students,” Andrews said.

“We are a good, strong school,” added Andrews, who is also the Rebbetzin at House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel, the modern Orthodox Synagogue under whose auspices Akiva Academy was established 45 years ago.

Andrews and her colleagues stepped up in a big way this year to ensure that Akiva's tradition of educational excellence continued in the face of unexpected staffing challenges.

Former Principal Caitlyn Cameron was to have returned from a maternity leave but opted to remain at home with her newborn child. Then the Vice Principal who was to have stepped into Cameron's shoes ended up accepting a position at another school.

Fortunately, Reva Faber – a veteran educator and former school principal – agreed to serve as interim principal to help get the Akiva school year off to a good start. Unfortunately, Faber could not remain more



Principal Jenna Pappas

than a couple of months due to a previous commitment she had made at St. Mary's University. On the plus side, she was succeeded by two other capable interim principals, Edie Reichardt and Michael Gallant.

Each helped to ensure that the school year went as smoothly as possible, said Segal and Andrews.

Faber told *AJNews* that she and Andrews worked well together and credited Andrews for having provided continuity, ensuring that the school weathered a period of tremendous Flux.

“They are very lucky to have Hannah there. She is a really a gem for the school,” Faber said.

“Everybody pulled together,” recalled Faber, who has many happy memories from her time at Halpern Akiva Academy.

“I just wish there were more students in the school,” Faber said.

Akiva is tiny, boasting a student population of 56, including the children currently enrolled in its daycare.

“I wish them lots of mazel going forward,” said Faber, who describes Pappas as “... a good fit for the school.”

Pappas is thrilled to begin a new chapter at Halpern Akiva Academy. In addition to knowing a great deal about the challenges and the joys of educating students in dual curricula, her educational philosophy has been informed by the many years she spent as an educator in schools that provide the International Baccalaureate program to kids in primary schools—a practice more common in Asia than here in North America, Pappas says.

“Once you've worked in an IB school, it's hard to leave,” Pappas told *AJNews*, speaking with passion about an educational approach that is “project-based and experiential.”

“You know, we can all sit down and we can all

Continued on page 31



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A message from the Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre

By Danny De Costa and Ron Ghitter

Osten and Victor Alberta Tennis Centre's founding donor and naming partner, Al Osten passed away at the age of 95 on January 23, 2026. In 2023, Al lost his partner Buddy Victor of 65 years who died just five days from his 93rd birthday.

Approximately 13 years ago, over lunch with Al Osten, Ron Ghitter shared his dream of building a badly needed indoor tennis development in Calgary. At that time, the organizing group, spearheaded by Ghitter, had limited funds and were actively seeking financial support to commence construction. Ron mentioned that we were intending to name each of the 8 planned indoor courts and hopefully the building. A few days later, Al called and committed Buddy Victor and Al to a major donation to name the building. Despite having virtually no knowledge of tennis, Al and Buddy's generous donation, helped spearhead the development Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre (ATC).

Once the Tennis Centre opened, Al and Buddy became great supporters of our Tennis Centre, visiting frequently, and taking great interest in our Tennis

Centre's development. Al and Buddy supported numerous activities at the Centre, including the Calgary National Bank Challenger, as well as supporting our Israel Tennis Centre tour which occurred in 2017. He also later sponsored the construction of another tennis centre in Israel.

Since opening its doors in 2016, the Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre has become the crown jewel for Canadian Tennis, servicing over 350,000 players. Today, the Centre, is regarded as Canada's premier tennis facility, winning over 20 industry awards and becoming a beacon of inclusive and accessible tennis in Alberta. The ATC now employs 70 employees, many of whom come from around the world. The Centre also partners with numerous organizations to provide affordable access to tennis. It is also slated to begin expand its facilities in the very near future.

"Al and Buddy were dear friends of my wife Myrna and me. Without their generous financial and



spirited support, the enormously successful Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre likely, would never have come into being. We are immensely grateful for their friendship and support. Their legacy of generosity and philanthropy will be an inspiration," said Ron Ghitter, ATC Founder and Director.

On behalf of the Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre, we would like to extend our sincerest condolences to Al Osten and his family, as well as the Jewish communities in Calgary and Edmonton.

Al greatly contributed to the province of Alberta, and his legacy will carry on for many generations to come.

Danny De Costa is Chief Executive Officer and Ron Ghitter is a Founder of the Osten & Victor Alberta Tennis Centre.

Halpern Akiva *Cont. from page 30*

memorize things," said Pappas.

"The real learning happens when students have to use that knowledge in a certain situation," adds Pappas, who looks for opportunities to take kids "outside of the classroom walls" and into the communities in which they live, providing them with enriching opportunities to put their learning to use.

"As an educator, I really think that is so valuable. A classroom doesn't have to have walls. A classroom can be so much more," said Pappas. "Kids do so well when they're not just sitting in the classroom, but when they're outside, when they're exploring, when they're making meaning out of their learning."

Jenna Pappas will begin her new journey as Halpern

Akiva Academy principal on April 14.

The timing is great, says Segal, because it will allow Pappas to hit the ground running at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.

"We also wanted to make sure that she is in place as we open enrollment for the new school year," said Segal, adding, "Knowing who the new principal will be makes a difference for parents."

While speaking to Pappas' references in Hong Kong, Australia and North America, Segal experienced a small-world moment. After contacting a woman who had been a colleague to Pappas in Hong Kong, Segal learned that though the woman worked at the Independent Schools Foundation Academy, she had sent her own children to a small Jewish school.

"That's interesting," thought Segal, as the woman

went on to describe the Hong Kong Jewish community as having one Orthodox, one Conservative, and one reform congregation.

"Oh, that sounds familiar," said Segal, who could not wait to google the woman following the conversation.

It turns out that the colleague who had spoken so positively of Pappas, also happened to be Hong Kong's Orthodox Rebbetzin.

Praised by one rebbetzin, Jenna Pappas is about to be warmly welcomed by another.

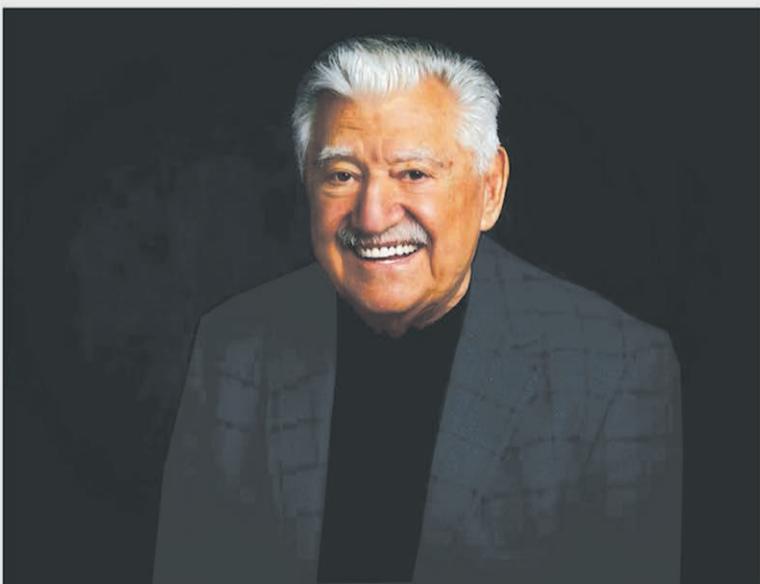
"I look forward to working with her," said Hannah Andrews.

To find out more about Halpern Akiva Academy, go to <https://halpernakiva.ca/> or call 403-258-1312.

Best wishes for a Happy Passover

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for a happy, healthy
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 Wishing family & friends a happy, healthy Passover from Annabelle Bondar

Wishing family & friends a happy, healthy Passover. Am Yisrael Chai.
from Kim, Alex, Adam and Zach


חג פסח שמח
from Jason, Cheryl, Jacob and Gabrielle Gurevitch

Wishing everyone a Passover filled with love, joy, & thoughts of freedom
from Sam, Cindy, Rebekah & Josh Feldman


Wishing our friends and family Peace, Hope, Love from Mickey & Ricki Gelfand

Wishing a kosher and joyous Passover to you & your loved ones from Sharon Batshaw and Family


חג פסח שמח from Renée & Milton Bogoch

Wishing family & friends a happy, healthy Passover from Robbie Babins-Wagner & Neil Wagner & Family

 Happy Pesach to the entire community from Michele Doctoroff, Ted and Sydney Switzer

May Hashem protect us from our enemies and bring peace to Jews everywhere. Am Yisrael Chai.
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 Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai. Marcy, Albert, Gabriella, Aviva & Jazlyn Fialkow

חג פסח שמח from The Crohn - Zalmanowitz Family

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 Wishing family & friends a happy, healthy Passover from Harvey Cyngiser

 Best wishes for a healthy, happy Passover. Am Yisrael Chai.
From the family of Arlein z"l & Dov z"l Chetner

 **Happy Pesach to the entire community** from Phyllis D'Aguiar

Wishing family & friends a happy, healthy Passover
 from Louise Feldman

Have a happy Passover filled with good food, family, and light
from Alvin Libin & Bobby Libin and family


May the Festival of Freedom bring peace & love to our community at home & around the world
from Jenny Belzberg


Happy Passover
to the entire community.
Am Yisrael Chai,

from
Sandy Fayerman



Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai.
Halley Girvitz
and family



Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from
Vivian and Ben Herman

*Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with
love, joy, & thoughts
of freedom
from Therese Groner
and Family*



Wishing everyone a
Passover filled with
love, joy, & thoughts
of freedom
from Eva and Gordon
Hoffman and family



Wishing everyone a Passover filled
with love, joy, & thoughts of freedom



from
Jackie Halpern
and Glenn Solomon

Best wishes for a healthy,
happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai.



from
Jackie & Hayim
Hamborger

Best wishes for a healthy,
happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai.



from
Louise Glin
and family

Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from Susan
and David Inhaber



Best wishes for a healthy,
happy & peaceful Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai,

from Mel and
Gail Ksienski
& Family



הנה נהג ע

from Rabbi Mark
and Dr. Caron Glickman



Wishing you a meaningful
Passover,
from Joan Juskiw
and family

*Best wishes for a healthy,
happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai.*



*Ron and Barb
Krell & Family*

Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael
Chai, from Darryl, Alli,
Joseph and Leo Gurevitch



*Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love, peace and hope*

from
Ruth Dvorkin,
Susan Dvorkin,
Dara, Spencer,
Ivy & Josh



*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover*

from
Dorothy Hanson,
Sheldon Shagal
and family



Happy Passover
from Rhonda Barad,
Steve Kaganov and family



*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover*



from
Marni Besser
and Steve Lipton

Wishing everyone a Passover
filled with love, peace and hope

from
Phil & Harriet Libin,
Michael & Matthew Ackman,
Stuart, Sierra & Thea Libin

*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover*

from
Harold & Sandra
Lipton & family



*Wishing the entire
community a
Happy Passover
from
the Balaban
Family*



May the Festival of Freedom
bring peace & love to our
community at home
& around the world

from Marina Paperny
& Shep Secter
and family



ПОРЯДОК СЕЙДЕРА

קדש קאדדעש
 Произносят Ки д а у ш над бокалом вина.

יְרַחֵץ ירחיץ
 Омыляют руки, но не произносят при этом обычного при омовении рук благословения.

כרפס קארпас
 Обмакивают «карпас» в соленую воду, произносят благословение над овощами и кушают.

יהיץ יחיאץ
 Среднюю мацу, из трех находящихся на «кваре», делают на две части; большую часть прячут для «Афикоман».

מגיד מגיד
 Начинается чтение Агады. До того, как младший в семье задаст вопросы «Ма ништа-на» наполняют второй бокал.

רחצה רחצה
 Омыляют руки для еды, но на этот раз с обычным благословением.

מוציא מצה מוציא מצה
 Произносят благословения «Хамощи» и «Ал ахилас мацо», и кушают кусок мацы, величиной с «казант».

מרור מारор
 Произносят благословение «Ал ахилас морор» и съедают горькую зелень, величиной с «казант», предварительно обмакнув в «харосет».

בורך כורех
 Делают своеобразный сэндвич из двух кусков мацы, прокладывая между ними «хазрет».

שלהן עורך שולхан ОРЕХ
 Праздничная трапеза.

ברך בерах
 Наполняют третий бокал вина и произносят застольную молитву.

צפון צафун
 Съедают «Афикоман», величиной с «казант».

הלל Халлел
 Наполняют четвертый бокал вина и произносят специальную хвалебную молитву «Халлел».

נרצה נирца
 После окончания правильно проведенного Сейдера можно быть уверенным, что он был любим Всевышним.

 Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai,
 from
 Janis, Brian Kowall and Family

Wishing family & friends
 a happy, healthy Passover
 from Michele Moss, Allan Donsky
 and Family

*Wishing everyone a Passover
 filled with love, joy,
 & thoughts of freedom*

 from
**Roz Mendelson
 and David Hodgins**

*Happy Passover
 from
 Ora and Stanley Major* 

Wishing family and friends
 all the best this Passover
 from
 Charlene and Gerry Molotsky & family

*Wishing family & friends
 a happy, healthy Passover*

 from
Walter Moscovitz

Happy Pesach
 to the entire community

from
Jack Lazar Meyer 

Wishing family & friends
 a happy, healthy Passover
 from Cheryl, Rob, Danielle
 & Jarrett Milner

 Happy Passover
 to everyone
 from Laura Moser
 and Mike Fischer

Chag Sameach. Am Yisrael Chai,
 from
**Josh, Michelle, Spencer
 & Jordan Orzech**

Happy Pesach to the entire community
 from
Therese Nagler

*Happy Pesach
 to the entire community*
 from
**Lorne, Raechelle,
 Shoshanna
 & Leo Paperny**

Wishing family & friends
 a happy, healthy Passover
 from Richard, Kimberly,
 Liam & Seth Nagan 

Wishing family & friends
 a happy, healthy Passover
 from Danny & Roz Oppenheim

*Best wishes for a healthy, happy
 Passover. Am Yisrael Chai.*

from **Dr. Stuart
 and Irene z"l Ross
 and family**

חג פסח שמח
 from Judy Shapiro and
 Richard Bronstein and family

Chag Sameach.
 Am Yisrael Chai,
 from **Beth and Lorne Price**

Wishing everyone
 a Passover filled with love,
 joy, & thoughts of freedom

from
**Murray Robins
 and Family** 

Wishing family & friends a
 happy, healthy Passover

 from **Faigel z"l
 & Len Shapiro
 and family**

Wishing everyone a Passover
 filled with love, joy,
 & thoughts of freedom

from
**Pnina and Mark Rubensohn
 and family.**
Michelle and Bronwyn Leifer

Happy Passover
to everyone from
Medina Shatz,
Randy Best, Penny & Bluberry



Wishing everyone
all the best at Passover
from David and Cynthia Prasow
and Family.



Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Rochelle Rabinovitz
& family



*Wishing family
& friends a happy, healthy Passover*

from
*Jim Casquenette
and Betty Sherwood*



Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover from Eugene Shabash,
Psychotherapy & Counselling

Happy Passover
from
Brian and Gail Sidorsky



Happy Pesach to the
entire community from
Cheryl & Morley Shore



חג פסח שמח
from Marg Semel,
Adam Singer, Rachel and Hanna

*Wishing family
& friends a happy,
healthy Passover*

*from Gail, Dean, Bryan,
Ellie, & Matthew Staniloff*



Happy Pesach
to the entire community
from
Esther and Gary Silberg and family



Best wishes for a healthy,
happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai.

חג פסח
from Diana Kalef, Elliott, Jonah,
and Micah Steinberg

from
Hilda & Lenny Smith
and family



Happy Passover
from Jessica,
Joshua, Zoey & Max



*Best wishes for a
healthy, happy Passover.
Am Yisrael Chai.*



Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover
from Ron and Helmi Switzer
and family



*Darlene Switzer-Foster,
Bill Foster
and Family*

*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover*

from
*Stan and Carey
Smith and family*



*Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover*

from
*Harvey and Wynne
Thal*



Wishing a kosher and joyous
Passover to you & your loved ones



Wishing family & friends a happy,
healthy Passover



*Chag Sameach.
Am Yisrael Chai,*

*from Allan
and
Dalia Wolinsky*



Wishing everyone
a Passover filled with
love, joy, & thoughts
of freedom

from Linda & Gary Wolf
and family



Wishing family & friends
a happy, healthy Passover

from the
Zivot Family



חג פסח
Best wishes for a healthy,
happy Passover. Am Yisrael Chai.

from
Ron Plucer
and family



*Have an incredible holiday
filled with laughter & good food.
Wishing everyone a Happy Passover.*

**MHM Professional
Corporation &
The Mandel Family**



*Have an incredible holiday
filled with laughter & good food.*

*Wishing everyone
a Happy Passover.*

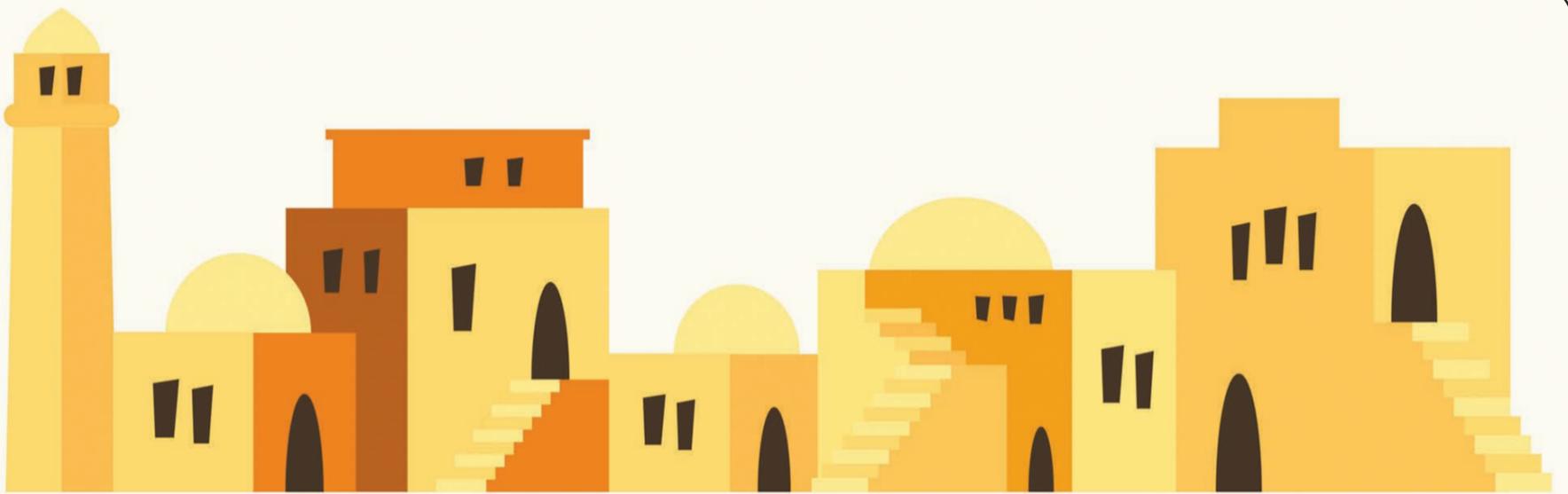
*from Esther and
Sam Plucer*



*May the Festival of Freedom bring
peace & love to our community
at home & around the world.*



*Jerry and Fay z"l
Schwartz*



לְשָׂנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

Wishing everyone in the community a happy and healthy Passover.

Thank you for welcoming Alberta Jewish News into your homes each month and for participating in these holiday greetings. We are proud to be part of the Calgary Jewish Community.

From Deborah Shatz, Daniel Moser, Sandra Fayerman, Maxine Fischbein and Sandra Edwards

Passover Marshmallow Brownie

By Sheri Silver

This recipe came to me by way of my beloved sister, Sharon. She got the recipe from an unidentified friend (if you are reading this, please present yourself, o purveyor of tricky marshmallow goodness!). Not only are these the best Passover brownies you will ever eat — they may just be the best brownies. Period. A smidge of potato starch makes them silky, and the marshmallows caramelize along the surface to create a chewy topography of sweet satisfaction.

A Passover dessert you'll actually enjoy.

Total Time: 45 minutes

Yield: 10-12

Ingredients

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter or margarine plus more for greasing the pan
- 12 oz semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate chips
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 tsp instant coffee granules, dissolved in 1 tsp warm water
- ½ cup matzah cake meal
- 1 Tbsp potato starch
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional, but recommended)

Instructions

Grease an 8 x 8-inch baking pan with butter (or margarine) and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Combine the chocolate chips and butter (or margarine) in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high until the butter and chocolate are melted and smooth when stirred, 60 to 90 seconds total; set aside to cool slightly.

Whisk the eggs, sugar, vanilla, and coffee in a medium bowl and set aside.

In another bowl whisk together the cake meal,

potato starch, and salt.

Whisk the egg mixture into the dry mixture until incorporated, then fold in the melted chocolate mixture until incorporated. Fold in the marshmallows and nuts until just combined.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until the top is slightly cracked and shiny but the center is still slightly soft, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool.



Photo credit: Sheri Silver



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The Canadian Afterlife of the Great Yiddish-Language Holocaust Novelist, Chava Rosenfarb, as told in Letters and Stories - with Goldie Morgentaler

By Regan Lipes, LJI Reporter

Lovers of great literature have a unique opportunity on April 14, Yom HaShoah, to hear one of the country's most important preservers of Yiddish literature, Dr. Goldie Morgentaler, Professor Emerita from the University of Lethbridge. She'll be speaking at an event titled: "The Canadian Afterlife of the Great Yiddish-Language Holocaust Novelist, Chava Rosenfarb, As Told in Letters and Stories."

The lecture is presented in partnership with the University of Calgary's Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies, the University of Calgary Jewish Community and the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta and will be held at The Military Museums.

The event will be open to registrants from the local Jewish, and scholarly communities for a very special public engagement with Dr. Morgentaler – an acclaimed scholar, translator, and the daughter of Chava Rosenfarb.

Dr. Morgentaler built a robust career teaching the works of Charles Dickens, a very different research area than what she focuses on now. She is a noted translator of her mother's numerous works and is herself a native Yiddish speaker. "It can be funny sometimes because I don't even realize that I translate from Yiddish when I say things in English until my husband points it out," she explained to a class of undergraduate Comparative Literature students at MacEwan University. "My husband will mention something that we need to do, and I'll reply: 'But I don't have when' because I'm thinking with Yiddish instincts."

In a recent interview with the *Alberta Jewish News*, Dr. Morgentaler recalled her mother's sentiments. "She wanted her works to be read and appreciated by broad audiences. My mother once wrote that no author writes for the inside of their desk drawer, and she was pessimistic about the future of Yiddish." Dr. Morgentaler elaborated that her mother was not discouraged for lack of deep love for the Yiddish language, but because of the number of readers her writing could potentially reach. "When people tell me they want to learn Hebrew I say, great, go to Israel – learn Hebrew. But with Yiddish it's different. If someone tells me they want to learn Yiddish, I have to say, go to Harvard, go to Oxford, go to McGill, but I can't give them a destination to go live in – just institutions that teach the language still."

In 2024, Dr. Morgentaler was the recipient of a Canadian Jewish Literary Award in the category of translation for *In the Land of the Postscript: The Complete Short Stories of Chava Rosenfarb*. The appearance of Rosenfarb's short fiction in a single collected volume has made her post-immigration to Canada prose more accessible to a diverse readership. In a 2025 article by Dr. Regan Lipes, "What Yiddish Literature Reveals about Canada's Diverse Canon and

Multilingual Identity," published in *The Conversation*, it becomes clear that for her audiences, Rosenfarb is not only a Yiddish writer, but a Canadian one as well. 2023 was declared the 'Year of Chava Rosenfarb' by the City Council of Lodz, Poland, and a street named in her honour signified her importance within the Polish literary consciousness. Canada played a significant role in the author's adult life, and as more North American audiences engage with her work, the impact of Yiddish on the world canon becomes more evident.

For undergraduate Comparative Literature students reading Rosenfarb's work, it is the consistency of the Canadian backdrop that initially stands out to them. "The stories in the collection are all rooted in Canada," Dr. Morgentaler emphasized to an audience of MacEwan University students. "These characters were representative of a generation of survivors who were doing everything they could to rebuild their lives."

One student asked if Rosenfarb's characters were based on real people, to which Dr. Morgentaler responded: "I think parts of these characters were based on people my mother knew, some to a greater extent than others. The struggles they face, and the challenges they encounter come from seeds of truth, and what my mother and others like her were experiencing in those days of building lives in Montreal."

In 2025 *Letters from the Afterlife: The Post-Holocaust Correspondence of Chava Rosenfarb and Zenia Larsson*, was published. The volume was lovingly edited by Dr. Morgentaler, and the Polish letters meticulously translated by Krzysztof Majer, while Sylvia Söderlind translated Zenia Larsson's Swedish text into English. Larsson, a childhood companion of Rosenfarb, survived the camps by her friend's side, and the two remained in contact exchanging letters between Canada and Sweden well into their seventies.

"Polish was their common language," Dr. Morgentaler explained during her interview with *AJNews*. "Zenia didn't speak Yiddish." The collection paints a touching portrait of two female writers whose bond preceded the Shoah but became impenetrable through their shared survival.

In a January 2025 review in *Hadassah Magazine*, Rochelle Saidel comments: "I found myself reflecting on the language challenges that accompany displacement. The friends wrote in Polish, the language of their childhood. Rosenfarb would have preferred Yiddish, but Larsson was not fluent; unlike Rosenfarb, she had not attended a Yiddish-speaking school in Poland. Over time, Larsson began losing her Polish as she grew more comfortable in Swedish, and Rosenfarb's command of Polish also weakened. This correspondence grew more difficult as the years progressed and their facility with a shared language eroded." Saidel also notes: "Their lives



mirror the broader experiences of many Holocaust survivors. They had to adjust to entirely new circumstances, foreign countries and unfamiliar cultures and customs. Both faced economic hardship in the years immediately after the war. Rosenfarb and her husband initially settled in Brussels before immigrating to Montreal, where her husband restarted his professional path by enrolling in medical school. Rosenfarb continued writing in Yiddish, even as she navigated the daily demands of life in English and French."

During her visit to Calgary, Dr. Morgentaler will have both these texts available for purchase. "My mother certainly has many other texts I could recommend. *The Tree of Life* is a three-volume novel after all, so I think I'll just bring the short stories and letters. It's quite appropriate too, because all these writings deal with life after the Holocaust," she added.

Irena Karshenbaum, a Calgary-based writer, cultural producer and historian, has been working to invite Dr. Morgentaler to come and speak for quite some time. Herself an occasional contributor to the *AJNews*, Karshenbaum noted: "This, of course, is about the works of Chava Rosenfarb, but Goldie is the main attraction. Her work as the translator of her mother's writing has been painstaking and masterful," she emphasized. "Listening to Goldie is like eating steak and potatoes; it satiates."

Karshenbaum is a board member with the Jewish Historical Society of Southern which is how she first met Dr. Morgentaler, while conducting an oral history interview with her. Since then, she has been working hard to try to share the works of Chava Rosenfarb, and the scholarly insights of Dr. Morgentaler with wider audiences. This upcoming event has been a longtime in the making, starting as a sapling in Karshenbaum's innovative mind, and now blossoming into a community-wide presentation.

Those planning to attend are kindly asked to pre-register for the event. This event that coincides with Yom HaShoah is made possible by the Centre for Military, Security, and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, the University of Calgary Jewish Community, and the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta. The event is also being graciously supported by the KSW Calgary Holocaust Education and Commemoration Endowment Fund, a part of the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary.

The lecture is free of charge and includes a kosher reception. Books will be available for purchase.

To register online visit events.ucalgary.ca/arts/centres/military-security-strategic-studies/event/512183-the-canadian-afterlife-of-the-great.

Family crafts and much more at the Paperny Family JCC



Mask your Joy at the JCC was a fun and creative Purim activity for the whole family.

from the

Sources

by Eliezer Segal

Dippings and Delicacies

Toward the beginning of the traditional Passover seder, it is customary to partake of a green vegetable dipped in salt water.

As is the usual case when we enjoy food, this act is introduced by a blessing expressing our appreciation to the “creator of the produce of the earth.” In the standard listing of the parts of the seder, this segment is referred to as “*Karpas*.” The word, likely of Persian origin, is variously identified as parsley, celery or other green vegetables.

A twelfth-century Haggadah from the Cairo Genizah, the oldest such surviving text, does not contain instructions for the seder, although it is generally not difficult to reconstruct the actions that are supposed to accompany the words of the liturgy. Here, however, the matter is not so simple. Following the Kiddush, it inserts the blessing for ritual washing of the hands. This conflicts with our prevalent practice of washing *without* a blessing.

After the handwashing, the manuscript inserts a number of blessings specifically related to eating the Karpas, such as the expected “Blessed are you...who creates the produce of the earth.”

But there is more – The Genizah Haggadah also includes the blessing over fruits: “...who creates the fruit of the tree.” This implies that the Jews who followed this rite were eating foods other than green vegetables.

The manuscript then inserts several additional blessings, including more poetic texts, such as: “...who has created mountains and valleys and planted in them trees and all manner of fruit. Blessed are you, Lord, for the land and for the fruit of the tree,” and “who created various kinds of delicacies with which to enhance many living persons.” It is probable that these blessings were meant to be recited after eating the Karpas, though the dominant procedure now is not to recite a closing blessing – and in any case, the accepted text for such a blessing is very different from the ones in the manuscript.

Some scholars deduce from this that there were four separate dippings: for vegetables, fruit, a flavoured

rice dish, and for meat or eggs.

My own understanding is that it was not necessary to consume all those dishes, but merely that vegetables, fruits and other types of “delicacies” were each acceptable options. The important thing was that the participants should dip something before convening the main meal. This is consistent with the central motif of the seder as outlined in the Mishnah and other ancient rabbinic sources, that it is to be modelled after an aristocratic banquet (the prototype of freedom) at which the guests were offered hors d'oeuvres to dunk prior to reclining at their tables for the serious dining. Although it was common at such feasts to distribute lettuce, parsley and other greens, any suitable appetizer would suffice to express the idea of freedom.

We are all familiar with the clause in the “four questions” that points out how “on all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night we dip twice.” This is not quite how the line appears in the Mishnah. In the original version, the contrast is between a single dip on regular nights and a double-dip on Passover. This attests to the fact that in ancient society it was customary to nibble on at least one dipped hors d'oeuvre at any respectable dinner, not just at religious ceremonies. Our amended version about “not even once” was introduced at a later age after such dipping had gone out of fashion.

In the Mishnah it states cryptically that following the Kiddush “one dips with *hazeret* until one gets to the appetizer that accompanies the bread.” It is clear that “*hazeret*” there refers to lettuce, which was a favourite choice of appetizer in the ancient Mediterranean. The Roman author Martial, a contemporary of the Jewish sages whose views were embedded in the Mishnah, wondered why the fashion had changed in recent years: “Tell me why lettuce, which used to be the last item of our ancestors’ meals, now opens our feasts?!”

A complication arose in the Passover context because lettuce was also the vegetable that the rabbis identified as maror, the “bitter herb” that the Torah

requires in commemoration of the bitterness of slavery. When Passover was celebrated in the Temple, the recitation of the Haggadah was probably conducted following the sacrificial meal. After the Temple’s destruction, however, the order was reversed and the festive meal – minus the lamb – was moved to the slot that it occupies in the current traditional practice, after the recitation of the Haggadah. This created a considerable delay before anyone could eat. The sources attest that other foods, such as garden beets or meat, were eaten as the pre-seder snack.

Some scholars have suggested that the combined factors of pre-dinner hunger, the presence of lettuce at the table for maror, and the widespread custom of dipping lettuce appetizers at formal banquets brought about the custom of nibbling some of the lettuce at the beginning of the seder. This led to considerable confusion about why we eat lettuce twice at the same meal (as asked in the Four Questions), which of those occasions was the primary one for fulfilling the precept of maror, and what blessings should accompany them. If the first dipping fulfilled the obligation of maror, why did it have to be eaten again during the meal? It is probable that these difficulties led to the implementation of the current practice (ascribed to a rabbi in the late talmudic era) of using non-lettuce Karpas for the first dip.

The Talmud explained that *hasa*, usually identified as romaine lettuce, was chosen as the preferred vegetable for maror because “it is tender at first and hardens in the end. So too, it was with the Egyptian exile, which initially [e.g., in the time of Joseph] was gentle but ultimately became harsh.”

Therein lies a cautionary lesson that can be taken to heart by Jewish communities who have felt secure in the comfort of their diasporas.

‘From the Sources’ by Eliezer Segal is sponsored by the Zeisler Families of Calgary, Edmonton, New York and Los Angeles

'All Shook Up' for a Purim Pizza Luncheon at the JCC



Purim was celebrated in Calgary at the shuls and schools and Elvis was in the building at the Paperny Family JCC. Thanks to Elvis impersonator Alessandro Votta, the Calgary Jewish Adults 55+ group was “All Shook Up” at their PURIM PIZZA LUNCHEON on March 3. It was a fun and festive afternoon as they celebrated the holiday with delicious food from Karen’s Cafe and Catering, tasty hamantaschen made by JCC volunteers, and mishloach manot bags from Halpern Akiva Academy. Photos from JCC Facebook.

Wishing you and your family a **Happy Passover**



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