

# SHALOM! שלום!

Spring 2008 Vol. 33, No. 1

Nisan 5768

## HAPPY PASSOVER



Detail from a coloured engraving *The Prague Haggadah* by David Silverberg

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UIA Federations Canada and the  
Canadian Jewish Federations proudly salute  
Israel on her 60th anniversary.



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*So much to celebrate!*



UIA Federations Canada  
מגבית הפדרציות היהודיות בקנדה

The national address for Jewish Canada and partnership with Israel and world Jewry.  
L'adresse nationale de la communauté juive canadienne et de son partenariat avec Israël et le monde juif.

UIA Federations Canada is supported by the Canadian UJA/CJA Federations.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY KATHY ZILBERT

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SPRING HAS  
FINALLY  
ARRIVED  
AND FOR  
MANY  
COMES THE  
SPRING-  
CLEANING  
EXPERIENCE  
OF ALL  
TIME - Pesach

preparation! The holiday that reminds us of who we are, where we've come from and where we are going, is almost here. It's time to stop in the middle of all the preparations and think about just those things.

We are the Jews of Atlantic Canada, small in number but a force to be reckoned with if we really want to be. We are at a point in the life of our communities when everyone has to decide what the priorities are and how we are going to deal with them. We can not leave our leadership to a few and we can not rely on everyone else to make sure our communities have what they should.

We have come from a time when more people were involved in community in some way; we were larger in numbers and more active in the day-to-day activities.

I think there is little doubt that we still care deeply but in general everyone is busy and would like to think that someone else will do what is needed to keep our communities strong, whether it be for our children, ourselves, the local community or Israel. Sadly, I don't think that is the case.

Where are we going? Each of us must take responsibility for our communities. This includes local programming, local participation in events and the Jewish organizations of our towns and cities such as synagogues, camps etc. as well as our part in the national agenda and of course our responsibility to Israel. It seems a perfect season for us to take a fresh look at our individual lives and our role in Jewish life in particular.

As spring signifies rebirth, a sense of freedom from the drudgery of winter,

Passover signifies our freedom from slavery and the birth of the Jewish people as a nation. It is a perfect opportunity for all of us to dedicate ourselves to the rebirth of our communities.

The Atlantic Jewish council has been fortunate to have individuals like Richard Goldhar on our professional staff and Julie Kristof as a lay leader. Both of these individuals have given significantly to our organization and are now moving on to experience a rebirth of their own. Richard taught us all about dedication to community with his enthusiasm and willingness to put himself out there and try new projects and build on the established ones. Julie took on the young leadership portfolio as a new board member. Valuing community and it's role in the lives of young singles and families, she has set an amazing example for her peers by organizing events, liaising with the national organization and increasing the profile of the Jewish organizations of Atlantic Canada.

Our sincere thanks to both of you. We wish you well in Toronto and Montreal respectively. They are so lucky to get you.

Daniel Pink, president of The Jewish Student Association and Michelle Masters, who spearheaded Holocaust Education week, conclude their campus leadership roles this year as they graduate. These young leaders have been an example to their peers and all of us with their dedication and enthusiasm. Our thanks and appreciation to each of you.

As we leave the holiday of Passover and end our Seders with "Next Year in Jerusalem" let's move forward with "Next week, month and year" in each and every community of Atlantic Canada.

From the sadness and remembrance that goes with Yom HaShoah to the excitement and pride we will experience as we celebrate Israel @60 and all of the events ahead, may we all go from strength to strength together.

Arthur and I wish you all Chag Samach and a Happy and Healthy Passover.

# שלום!

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Detail from a coloured engraving on a metal plate.  
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Three men working to restore the damaged scrolls  
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## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR , JON GOLDBERG

WELCOME  
TO OUR  
PASSOVER  
2008  
EDITION.  
I'D LIKE  
TO THANK  
ALL OF  
YOU WHO  
HAVE  
RENEWED  
YOUR

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO SHALOM  
AND ASK ANY OF YOU WHO  
MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN, TO  
PLEASE DO SO. AS YOU CAN  
SEE FROM THE MAGAZINE, WE  
ARE CONSTANTLY STRIVING TO  
PRODUCE A BIGGER, BETTER  
AND MORE INFORMATIVE  
PUBLICATION. Thanks to our new  
editor, Edna LeVine, I believe we are on  
the way to a great year. My thanks to the  
contributors from around the region  
and to our advertisers for their support.  
Special thanks to David Silverberg for  
your beautiful cover and your continued  
concern and care for the Jewish people.

April is a great month to be living  
in Atlantic Canada. From a weather  
perspective, spring is starting to creep  
into our daily lives. From a Jewish  
perspective, we've celebrated Purim, we're  
moving towards Pesach and then to Yom  
Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut. And of  
course for a sports fan, it's a potpourri of  
hockey playoffs, basketball playoffs and  
the beginning of the baseball season.



This year, thanks to the work of  
committed volunteers throughout our  
region, there are Yom Hashoah programs  
planned in Fredericton, Moncton, Saint  
John, PEI, Cape Breton, Newfoundland  
and Halifax. I do hope that most of you  
will be able to attend. In addition, this  
is Israel's 60th anniversary and there are  
events planned in Fredericton, Moncton  
and Halifax. I have also been able to  
arrange for programs in Newfoundland  
and Cape Breton later in the spring. We  
have a chance to show our solidarity with  
the State of Israel and again, I trust many  
of you will be in attendance at this great  
Simcha.

This past February, I had the opportunity  
to meet with the members of the Saint  
John community to discuss their plans  
for the future for both the Shul and the  
Museum after the present site is sold in  
November of this year. What a small but  
dynamic group of individuals! They are  
working to maintain Jewish continuity in  
Saint John and on behalf of the Atlantic  
Jewish Council we are pleased to offer  
whatever assistance we can. In Moncton  
I met with the President and members  
of the board of the Synagogue and again  
was quite impressed by the dedication  
and commitment of these people to the  
future well-being of the Moncton Jewish  
community. Hopefully, the AJC and our  
national offices (UIAFC) are going to be  
involved in helping to solidify Jewish life  
in Moncton.

Here at the office, things are humming  
as usual. Camp Kadimah is moving  
towards another great season and I  
continue to face the challenge of finding  
the proper staff who can deliver their  
talents to the needs of our Atlantic  
community. Among the initiatives that  
we are proceeding with is immigration.  
Edna LeVine and our Halifax committee  
have had numerous meetings with the  
Province of Nova Scotia and, as I write  
this article, we're hoping to welcome  
families who applied under the Nova  
Scotia Nominee Program, which will  
allow them to come here in about six  
months. In New Brunswick, which  
has somewhat different laws, there are  
people working in Moncton and Fredericton  
to bring Jewish immigrants to  
their communities. Saint John, NB  
has indicated interest in receiving new  
Jewish immigrants, therefore I will ask  
Edna to convene a meeting with the  
representatives of those communities  
in the hopes of coordinating increased  
Jewish immigration to New Brunswick.

As we enter the Passover season, I want  
to wish all our readers a happy, healthy  
and Kosher Pesach. A few reminders, 1)  
check out our new website for changes  
and new information, 2) don't forget  
to attend the Yom Hashoah and Yom  
Ha'atzmaut programs in your community  
3) and finally, please don't forget our  
biennial convention in Halifax from  
November 28th-30th. We appreciate your  
comments, so please communicate with  
us. Hag Semach.

**Congratulations to Stephanie Strug of Halifax and her family, on her participation as the representative of Atlantic Canada in the March of the Living 2008 program.**

IT'S SPRING AGAIN, AND THOUGH SOME PEOPLE WILL DEBATE THIS, I SAY THE FLOWERS DO NOT LIE. FEAR NOT THOUGH, FOR I WILL NOT COMPARE US



TO FLOWERS. I will push a Spring time/ harvesting metaphor a little though: Unlike the farmer, we on campus do not begin our growing season in the Spring, we complete it then. Unlike vegetables, we are not raised by others but we raise ourselves, and also unlike the vegetable, we are not eaten (In this we and the farmers share a deep solidarity - Why raise things if they're only going to eat you?) Deep isn't it? Let me begin by assuring you none of us on the Atlantic Canadian campuses were eaten this year.

Many things were eaten though. We continued our new practice of shipping prepared meals to the small campuses, and this practice has been praised by all. We'll continue next year and these meals will provide a foundation for regular programming on the small campuses. These same meals have been bringing in the students in increasing numbers in Halifax as well. Our smoked meat lunches have evolved nearly to the point of perfection: We bring in whole briskets, steam them, and slice them on our own slicer. Students love them, and we've attracted students who don't normally participate with us. This too will become a regular part of our programming next year and we can expect them to draw even more students into participating and crossing the threshold of our student house for the first time. If you've been debating returning to university, these sandwiches could be the reason you've been looking for.

The development of our student house has progressed marvelously. Our plan if you recall, was to convert our house from a building we used occasionally into a center for Jewish activity on campus, with its own drawing power, and to be able to billet student guests from around the region. It's working. Our new digital projector and big screen are a big hit. For example, we had our first ever Super Bowl party there, which 40 students attended, and loved, and we had an event on trips to Israel for which we used it to run a PowerPoint presentation. Additionally we co-programmed a party there with another Dalhousie society and Jewish students used it for a private a birthday party. All were big successes and were original programs, in addition our regular ones. It's now a very attractive and enjoyable space with much untapped potential. And we're not done yet. We're hoping to add video gaming (which will be a big draw with our projector), fix up our patio with patio heaters, an awning, patio furniture, and make other improvements which increase its usefulness and attractiveness. A sincere thanks to everyone who supported our fundraising campaign and watch out for our new campaign! With out your help these important changes would not have been possible.

We also did as much if not more programming in Halifax and on the small campuses then ever before. Besides those just mentioned and our regular lineup, we brought Israeli soldiers to Acadia for a program with Jewish and non-Jewish students and they made an appearance at Dalhousie too, we ran our first ever program on how to get to Israel for students (which representatives from MASA and the Israel Programming Center attended), we continued our Remembering Dachau to Defend Darfur program at Dalhousie and Acadia for approximately 250 more (mainly non-Jewish) students plus we made an

appearance on Breakfast television, we partnered on a multicultural program at Dalhousie and supported a fundraiser for the Koby Mandell foundation at the Lord Nelson, we hosted two speakers on Israel at Dalhousie, and coordinated a Francophone Israel speaker at the University of Moncton. Additionally our website is seeing impressive traffic and we are increasingly being contacted by students through it.

We have leaders in place at Mt. Allison and Acadia for next year and Dalhousie has a new president and vice-president, plus many other essential leaders. Besides this there is new leadership for Dalhousie's Israel Affairs Committee and we've been supporting a new Israel society trying to make a go of it at Dalhousie. We are in excellent position to keep growing. And we've made some excellent connections on campuses.

Unfortunately for us, as the year ends some of our student leaders move along and we are saddened by the departures of Sam Pikelin at Mt. Allison, Sara Bond at Acadia, Ian Wiseman (of the Israel Affairs Committee) and Daniel Pink at Dalhousie. I would like to offer special thanks to Daniel whose sense of responsibility for the Jewish students went far beyond what was required of him, showed great leadership, and who was a pleasure to work with. Also, a very special thanks to Mathew Godwin with whom I worked on several projects and who is a great friend to our community.

I feel confident telling you we've made positive contributions to our Jewish student communities and to the broader student communities of several campuses as well, plus we've developed important programming infrastructure which will benefit us into the future. It's been a great year and thanks to all who helped us.

## A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF RICHARD GOLDHAR

JUST OVER TWO YEARS AGO JON GOLDBERG TOOK A FLIER ON ME AND OFFERED ME A POSITION to join him at the AJC



has been the backbone for allowing me to use my talents in order to help young professionals bond with one another.

Another achievement that I am very proud of is that I was able to help find new friends in the community to support our local Shalom magazine so that our community is aware of the local businesses that truly care about us. I truly believe in reciprocal relationships and that the community needs to support businesses that support us.

The last achievement that I would like to mention is my work with the United Jewish Appeal. I truly enjoyed all the aspects of meeting many people both in Halifax and throughout Atlantic Canada. I traveled to Moncton, Fredericton, P.E.I. and various out-lying communities to assist with the campaign launches. It was inspiring to see how enthused the community members were to receive fresh new blood, personally, it was an unbelievable experience. I was able to make friends everywhere I went and I truly hope to continue these friendships into the future.

Last spring under my direction Halifax re-launched its Walk with Israel. I thought it was a very successful event and I thank Dr. Howard Conter, our regional chair, for believing in the concept and allowing me to move forward with the idea. (Howard, I am sorry that the police did not work out as planned but if you are ever looking for a new career I am sure the cross walkers union would hire you in a flash!). Working with the Board of United Jewish Appeal has truly been an honor. The entire board always has the communities' best intention at heart and truly does fabulous work. I certainly hope that I can work with you in the future and my heart will always lie with UJA of Atlantic Canada. I will never forget the opportunities you have offered me and will always continue to support, to the best of my ability, the endeavors this

community pursues. Dr. Howard Conter, you were not only my regional chair, my employee review committee member, the 1st Vice President of the AJC, and my personal physician, but you are a mentor and friend to me. Watching you over the past two year in your involvement with so many important charities has made me understand the importance of community and the need for generosity. I truly hope that we can continue our friendship and that in the future I will be able to work with you again.

There have been a number of associates that I have worked with over the last two years and all of them have become close friends of mine. Joanna my three weeks with you down at camp were a blast while they occurred and working with you in the city office has truly has made us more than just associates as we have become close friends outside of work. Rabbi Ellis, Bill, Linda, Joanne, Betsy, Sara, Judy, Jen and Nancy you have also made my experience working at the Atlantic Jewish Council very enjoyable. Since Edna has joined the AJC it has been a blast. Edna your outgoing personality, your encouragement and friendship has meant a lot. I truly believe that our friendship will continue long past my good bye to the AJC.

Well, as always I have lots to say, so I do not want to bore you anymore. To all of my close friends, fellow community members, acquaintances and the AJC, I wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavors and hatzlachah. I will be back to visit all my friends and my brother and I hope that when any of you are in the Toronto area you look me up and I will provide the same Atlantic hospitality that all of you have provided me over the past six and half years. Time has flown by so quickly, it breaks my heart to leave what I now call home but in order to advance my career I must go where the job offer is.

as UJA Campaign Administrator, AJC Administrator, State of Israel Bonds Associate and assistant Young Leadership Professional. Well, I have to say when I first began I thought I would not last here more than six months but as the old story goes only time can tell and today it has been over two years. As I reflect on all the amazing opportunities I had and the learning I experienced, Jon, you have truly become a mentor to me, through all my griping I have to say I truly leave here with sadness as we have become friends and more importantly like family.

The Atlantic Jewish Council has given me the opportunity to grow and meet many of the community members throughout Atlantic Canada, including professionals from various Jewish Federations across Canada. Through this experience I gained the confidence to become a very active member within the Halifax Jewish community sitting on the Board of Directors for the Beth Israel Synagogue as House Chairman, Co-Chairman of the Beth Israel Synagogue 50th Building Celebration, periodically volunteering with Massada Club and just being an active member of the Jewish community.

One of my biggest achievements while working for the AJC was my involvement with the revitalization of the Young Professional movement along with my Chair Julie Kristof, whom I have to say, is an incredible person both in her volunteer life and as a personal friend to me. She

## FROM THE DESK OF

EDNA LEVINE - AJC PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

PAGE 7

THINK OF WHAT YOUR LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF YOU LIVED IN A SOCIETY FREE OF DISCRIMINATION, IN A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHERE ALL INDIVIDUALS LIVED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT. The

Atlantic Jewish Council along with 21 concerned Nova Scotia organizations form Partners for Human Rights, a coalition that works together to raise awareness of human rights issues. I had the privilege of participating in a Canadian Human Rights Commission roundtable discussion with the recently appointed Canadian Human Rights Commission's Commissioner, Jennifer Lynch, Q.C. Ms. Lynch was on an exploratory visit in Halifax to discover the status of human rights issues and needs of our community. Proactive measures, such as public education, were discussed and the creation of a knowledge centre for human rights was determined to be a major necessity to empower people. In March, the Atlantic Jewish Council hosted the Partners for Human Rights meeting and planning is underway for a major community event to celebrate International Human Rights Day.

This spring the 10th National Metropolis Conference was held in Halifax and I attend roundtables and workshops on immigration. The theme for the conference was *Multiple Perspectives on Immigration to Canada* as many of the small communities across Canada face demographic decline. Retention and attraction of immigrants are essential for long term sustainability and discussions revolved around the role of a host community to help newcomers feel welcome. A major challenge for

communities is in the area of social and cultural integration. Particularly in small communities where social groups are often difficult to break into and family = friends. A primary community responsibility, for successful integration of newcomers, was determined to be the

with the Halifax participants attending the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program.

During my trip to Israel this spring I had the opportunity to meet with a group of candidates who had applied for



*Edna Levine, fourth from left, in Israel at candidates meeting*

ability to provide moral leadership and convey a willingness to transform. The more articulate the community's story, the more welcome a newcomer feels.

Holocaust survivors, Philip Riteman, David Korn and Helena Jockel continued to enrich Nova Scotia this winter by responding to requests from educational institutions and community centres. Host institutions gratefully expressed overwhelming appreciation for their efforts and participants were equally appreciative of the knowledge they received. Helena Jockel, despite changeable weather this winter and many school cancellations, willingly accommodated her constantly fluctuating schedule. Her heartfelt warmth and dedicated determination enabled her to fulfill all the requests including a session

immigration to Halifax. Their amicable nature and boundless enthusiasm to join our community was apparent and provided me with a delightful morning of enjoyable discussions. I truly believe that they will be an asset to our community and look forward to welcoming them in the near future.

While in Israel I also met with Craig Fox, of Halifax and now a lone soldier in the IDF (see his story in the previous edition of *Shalom*). His passion for Israel was evident as was his commitment to one of the most elite units in Givati Brigade. On page 29 you will find a brief update on his experience.

*Please see page 29 for Yom Hashoah community information.*

# CAMP KADIMAH 2007

BY JOANNA MIRSKY WEXLER - DIRECTOR

WHEN YOU GO TO WWW.CAMPKADIMAH.COM, THERE IS A COUNTER THAT TELLS YOU HOW MANY DAYS LEFT TO CAMP. As this magazine goes to print, there are less than 80 days until the campers get off the busses and hug their friends from last summer. Less than 80 days to wait until we can smell the pine trees, the ski boats start their engines, and the smells of Friday night challahs and chicken fill the dining hall.

I had the unique and historic opportunity to go to Cuba for a month recently. We travelled through several cities in the country, staying in bed and breakfasts (casas particulares) as we went. The weather and the beaches were beautiful, and we made many friends along the way. My husband Ezra and I both speak Spanish, and our son Boaz was at his cutest, learning to walk and happy to go into everyone's arms. We were there when Fidel Castro stepped down, and being that we were living with Cubans and able to speak their language, it was an incredible experience to be able to have political and economic discussions in a time of living history.

Being in Cuba also affected me as a Jew. Through a Conter connection, I called the synagogue in Havana to ask if I could bring them any medical supplies. The reply was that "there are healthy people here too", and that many people of late from different communities

across Canada have been generous with medical supplies. Instead, we brought pens, pencils, paper and notebooks for the Hebrew school classes. The Havana Jewish community is about the size

of Halifax's, and we happened to be in Havana the same weekend that there was a bat mitzvah in the synagogue. We were invited to attend, and for the celebratory lunch afterwards, and the community was very warm. As we sang prayers in the services, members of their community kept coming over to take Bo for a walk, or to introduce him to their neighbour. It reminded me of my introduction to shul in Halifax, or spending Shabbat in Saint John, NB or Saint John's NFLD. The Cuban community was proud of their strength, of their vision, and of their closeness. It reminded me that I am also proud of those same things in our community.

As the Camp Kadimah director, it is my job for 6 weeks to build a Kadimah community- one that lasts the 323 other days of the year as well. It is a community made up of campers from Europe, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa,



Montreal, Halifax, Charlottetown, Moncton, Fredericton, Israel, and the US. We are Jewish in different locations, but share the same history, culture, religion, identity and pride. The strength of our camp community is the reason why campers come back year after year, and why so many of our staff return to Kadimah to try to recreate the best of their experience as campers to a new generation of kids.

I would encourage you to visit our website to meet our camp staff, watch our pictures and videos as they arrive, or to simply count down the days until we go to our home away from home on the shores of Lake William. A thank you to the everyone on the camp committee for their work and dedication, especially the co-chairs Victor Goldberg, Jim Spatz and Michael Pink who spend countless hours to ensure that Camp is the best it can be. To another terrific season!

Congratulations to **Jared Goldlust**, assistant director at Camp Kadimah, who has been selected as the second recipient of the Robert and Elisa Spungen Bildner Graduate Fellowship to attend Brandeis University this fall. This fellowship allows one graduate student per year to pursue a joint MBA degree in Jewish professional leadership at Brandeis's Heller School for Social Policy and Management and at Hornstein: The Jewish Professional Leadership Program @ Brandeis.



# CAMP KADIMAH

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# YOUNG LEADERSHIP

## BY JULIE KRISTOF- CHAIR

WHEN I'M ASKED TO WRITE ARTICLES FOR THIS MAGAZINE. I WONDER WHAT I CAN SHARE THAT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE. I'VE TAKEN THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY MUSINGS WITH YOU ALL IN THE HOPES THAT WE CAN CONNECT AND FEEL LIKE WE HAVE COMMON HOPES AND CONCERNS.

This will be my last article as my role as Young Leadership Chair comes to an end. My family is moving to Montreal this spring so my husband can pursue his medical training. While we are excited to move back to my hometown, we are also sad to leave Halifax where we feel that our family has put down some roots. We are also proud that we continued

the Yazer family legacy of involvement in the community.

During the last year, I have worked with the staff at the AJC and with volunteers to create programs to bring folks together who fall into the 25-45 age range. It is a wide range with a diverse demographic. We started with a Wine Tasting last spring, had a wonderful BBQ last summer and are looking forward to an evening of Salsa.

From many perspectives, the events have been quite successful – we have seen some new faces, we had some fun and

people seemed excited. Still, it does not feel to me like there is a cohesive movement for our cohort to become involved.

I worry because I believe that we take the work of the AJC and others in the community for granted. It is not a given that Atlantic Canada will continue to contribute to fundraising as it has. It is not a given that Camp Kadimah will exist for our children. It is not a given that anyone will advocate for the



small Jewish communities in the Atlantic Provinces. If we do not act, even on a very small scale, or contribute our thoughts and ideas, who will do it for us? If we do not set goals for ourselves and our families and work towards those goals, what will happen?

The road ahead is definitely one that is uphill – it will take some huffing and puffing to get to the top. I believe though that the sweat is worth it. The other thing is, if there are many people on the road doing just a little bit, awareness will build and the momentum will take us all into the future... with less sweat!

In a few weeks, the Young Leadership Chair will be vacant. Please talk to me about stepping into the role. It's definitely worth it.

I will take this opportunity to express how honoured I am to be part of this community. Wherever we live, my heart will always have roots in the community where my family was born – we were married in Cape Breton and had both kids in Halifax. Thank you for welcoming us and adopting me even though I'm an FA.

*Editor's Note: Julie, we will miss you - all the best in "la Belle Province".*

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Azhar Usman is perhaps the world's most famous American Muslim comedian. He was the subject of an entire episode of ABC Nightline, and was interviewed on NPR's All Things Considered. He hails from Chicago, with roots from the Indian subcontinent, and has performed all over the US and in numerous foreign countries.

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# ONE DAY IN MARCH

BY RABBI DAVID ELLIS, AJC REGIONAL CHAPLAIN

PAGE 11

USUALLY I WILL HAVE STORIES FROM MY TRAVELS AROUND THE REGION OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. BUT AS YOU KNOW, THERE WERE NOT TOO MANY TRAVELS DURING THIS MORE FEROCIOUS THAN USUAL WINTER.

I do want to share one of the most unforgettable days I have had since being the Regional Chaplain. Actually, it covered two days, but as you will see, the days were related.

I went a few weeks ago to Digby to a forum I had been to two years previous. Kim Marshall organizes orientation sessions for caregivers through the hospital and local community college. She called me again to speak of Jewish concerns with caregiving, death and bereavement.

It is always interesting to go to different places. I was that day impressed by the very high quality of the participants and the students in the class. Several of the questions showed extensive knowledge of Jewish practice-where did they get their information-TV, the internet? There is no synagogue and only a few Jews in Digby.

Ah, you say, but why go there? Was it not a long trip, just to convey information they may have known already?

I have never found this to be the case. We need these contacts. As our sages said, we never know the reward of a mitzvah we do. Several years ago, a woman who co-organized this event helped me in arranging to transport back to the States a tourist who had suddenly passed away on vacation in Digby, without the usual requirements for embalming. Now others are even more informed, should an emergency occur.

I am sending out now Haggadahs to someone who is organizing a seder for a number of persons in Annapolis Royal, not far from Digby. Besides the long-established communities in the region,

there are now "mini" Jewish communities coming together in the Annapolis Valley, Antigonish, Truro and several other places. The AJC must be responsive to this new challenge.

As I was returning from Digby, the report broke of the shooting at Merkaz HaRav yeshiva in Jerusalem. I was at this famous yeshiva several times while I was studying in Jerusalem, for conferences and to purchase some of the excellent titles its press publishes.

The timing of this attack was not fortuitous. Terrorists have lists of Jewish holidays and know when to attack to make maximum consternation and grieving.

The time for this one was Rosh Chodesh Adar II. There is the well-known statement, *mi sh'nichnas adar, marbim b'simchah*-as Adar enters, we increase our joy. The murders at Merkaz HaRav were deliberately planned to make this saying appear as a slap in the face to us.

But what do we do? That is where the rest of the day, really the next one, had something to say.

I was invited to two events that Friday. The first was a prayer breakfast at the new chapel at the Stadacona Base. Those attending heard military chaplains speak of the rigours the chaplaincy faces from the war in Afghanistan.

Dr. Jody Clarke, of the Atlantic School of Theology, spoke of the need for reconciliation in the face of wars, genocides, revolutions; indeed, he has been active for many years in such projects. I spoke to him afterwards, asking him what reconciliations needed to take place in the Middle East-specifically after the killings in Jerusalem but for the ongoing conflict in general.

He did not have an answer "on one foot," as the stranger asked Hillel to do years ago. But he said he would think about it and promised us a forum within the Jewish community sometime within the

next few months-look for an upcoming notice.

Some of Dr. Clarke's sources and inspirations such as Gandhi could not, I told him, work for us. Gandhi's assessment of the Jewish situation in Germany and the Middle East was, in the phrase of the philosopher William James, a dead option for the Jewish community.

On the other hand another of his heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King, the anniversary of whose tragic death occurs 40 years to the day I am now writing, is more viable. Besides his eloquent writings and speeches for civil rights, it is not as well known that Dr. King made a very astute assessment of the Six Day War and its meaning for Jews.

Everyone should know Dr. King's words. Seek and ye shall find on the internet, or contact me and I will give you the source.

Which brings me to the rest of the day.

I had the privilege of being invited to a conference on "Pathways through Safer Communities," sponsored by Canadian Heritage and the National Ethnocultural Committee. I have been to similar sounding programs in the past, but this one was very different.

There were a number of speakers who work with minority issues within Canada. The specific issue was keeping minorities out of incarceration or to secure their safe and productive release into society. Everyone had "hands on" experience with some very trying situations-genocides, drug operations, gangs.

Most inspiring was the speech of Pastor Ralph Dartey, originally from Ghana but now pastor of a large church in Ottawa. He spoke of his experience with many trying situations within Africa.

One phrase of his stuck with me-"Wounded people will wound others . . ."

What did that say to the events the night before in Jerusalem?

*continued on page 14*

# A PURIM STORY

BY RABBI YAAKOV WEISS

RABBI, BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, HALIFAX, NS

PAGE 12



WHEN I WAS SPENDING THE YEAR LEARNING IN YESHIVA IN ISRAEL A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, EVERY SHABBOS CARRIED A NEW OPPORTUNITY. One of the weekends that I was in Israel, I chose to visit my cousins in Efrat. We are distantly related, but when you are in Israel you seek out any of the relatives that you can. My cousin Ari happens to be a dentist by trade and profession. He also happens to be involved in many other areas such as his training in Safrut - Jewish Torah calligraphy, Brit Milah, Shechitah - ritual slaughter, artistry and he runs a Matzah Bakery out of his basement as Pesach approaches.

I took the bus from the center of Jerusalem to Efrat and was picked up by my cousins. It was bound to be a great experience. That night, Ari told me that a member of the neighboring Yishuv had a baby boy the previous week and asked my cousin to perform the Brit Milah. He asked me if I would like to join him that Shabbat morning. It seemed like it could be a nice experience, so I went along with him.

That morning, Ari and I woke up early and walked through a few fields, passing a number of farms and traveling up and down several of the beautiful hills of the

region. We arrived at this Yishuv after a while. This was all happening on what is known as Shabbat Zachor - the Shabbat that precedes Purim. Every year on this Shabbat the special Torah portion is read in a few different ways in order to ensure that all those present are able to fulfill the special obligation of Parshat Zachor. There was a Yeminite reading and a Sepharadic reading of this portion. After the Brit I remember having a lavish Kiddush which included a number of traditional Israeli items, and there were many Yeminite delicacies that I had never heard of or tasted before. The experience that my taste palate had that Shabbos was just as exciting as my overall Shabbos with my eclectic cousins, and it was interesting for me to see how people from various parts of the world maintained their own customs while being part of one unified community.

Now, we have just celebrated the great festival of Purim, and it was truly incredible here in Halifax. It started off with a wonderful Megillah reading and feast at the Beth Israel Synagogue at night. On the day of Purim we were privileged to here the Megillah read once more and throughout the day, I and others had the pleasure of delivering mishloach manot - gift baskets and

matanot l'evyonim - gifts to the poor. The joy of Purim was strongly felt in our house as Ilana and I hosted many members of our synagogue, students from the local universities, and others from the broader Halifax community for a lavish Seudat Purim - a festive meal, full of great food, singing and fun.

Pesach is meant to come on the heels of Purim. We are meant to take the great joy and energy from Purim and transfer it towards the holiday of our freedom from Egypt. One of the meaningful messages of Pesach is the importance of all of the Jewish People maintaining a strong bond to the entire community. In Biblical times and in the times of the Beit HaMikdash, the offering for Pesach needed to be roasted in such a way that none of the bones would be broken. This is meant to teach us that while the Jewish People may be "roasted" at times, it is essential that our bones, meaning our unity, never be severed. Just as I had seen a community filled with differences and solidarity on my cousin's Yishuv in Israel, I hope that we in Halifax can celebrate this upcoming Pesach season as we build upon the joy from Purim and celebrate our unity as a People.

mailto: rabbi@thebethisrael.com



*Purim celebration at the Rabbi's home.*



# HATRED ON CANADIAN CAMPUSES UNCOVERED ON FACEBOOK

BY CANTOR ARI ISENBERG

SPIRITUAL LEADER, SHAAR SHALOM CONGREGATION - HALIFAX

PAGE 13

In just six weeks Israel will be celebrating its 60th anniversary; yet, as I sit here in my study writing this editorial, I am quite fearful.

I fear for what is an increasingly alarming rhetoric in the world today questioning Israel's legitimacy as a State and its fundamental right to even exist. Don't get me wrong - like any government on earth, Israel's government may make bad choices and mistakes once in a while. Frankly, Israel's population is the first to speak out at its own government for mistakes made. But there is a significant difference between questioning a government policy and questioning a country's very right to even exist. It is increased rhetoric about the latter that concerns me.

This topic seems to emerge almost everywhere, including on university campuses. Indeed, even some very mainstream and educated Canadians support the notion that Israel is fully to blame for the suffering of the Palestinians and the demise of the entire region. Moreover, they assert that the Palestinians' tactic of launching rockets into Israel is a justified response.

I'm not sure how many of you have heard of an online social networking site called Facebook, but it is a site that has become immensely popular, particularly among the university demographic. This past week, a Dalhousie University student posted an editorial suggesting that Canadian campuses tend to take a left-wing approach when it comes to matters of domestic and international politics and policy. For instance, would the view of a student who staunchly supports the US war in Iraq be the minority view on Canadian campuses? Responses were encouraged.

The discussion that ensued, though, was one on Israel and its surrounding

territories. In my capacity as both a fellow student and associate chaplain of Dalhousie, I was asked to intervene and monitor the message board. Admittedly, I initially didn't understand why my intervention was necessary, especially given the original topic of the editorial. Then I read some of the online entries. I honestly could not believe my eyes! These are seemingly ordinary, educated, and comfortable students on Canadian campuses who have such contempt for Israel. It makes me wonder just how many people out there actually have contempt but perhaps don't always vocalize it - are both Israel and its supporters really up against such a huge hurdle?

Among the tamer yet still quite shocking entries are these:

One student wrote: "of course the palestinians won't recognize israel's right to exist RIGHT ON TOP of where they used to exist, nor should they be forced to recognize Israel."

Yet this student goes on to say: "I am not denying the israeli peoples' right to exist. I agree that the jews were persecuted and oppressed for years. I agree that they deserve a place to live after years of displacement. Why not somewhere in Europe?"

Another student chimed in: "I don't necessarily dislike israel. What i dislike is the nature of its creation, the many costs associated with its creation, and the military dominance that was necessary for such a place to exist. I don't think that years of oppression give a people the right to trample over others. Restitution is one thing, what happened in "palestine" is another."

Other statements included: "Palestine actually just refers to the region between the Jordan river and the mediterranean,



so yes, they (Israelis) technically are occupying palestine."

When asked about that statement, this student wrote: "alright, I agree. it was anti-israel. but what i know you are implying is that it was also anti-semitic. which isn't true. as far as i can tell, you believe that I dislike jews because i dislike israel. this is not the case... just because a british proclamation from 90 years ago says something doesn't make it the law anymore. hm i wonder if people have ever considered, that the reason why israel is where it is now, is because maybe noone in europe wanted to keep the jews? in fact, segregating them in their own country seems extremely anti-semitic."

Indeed, all very alarming! Even Israel's foreign minister noted her concern this past week (a general concern, not specific to Facebook) about escalating anti-Israel rhetoric.

It is never easy to go out there in the world as a minority and engage in discussions on this issue with people who have completely contrasting views. Dialogue with like-minded people is a safe-haven of sorts. Yet, we must force

## HATRED ON CANADIAN CAMPUSES UNCOVERED - CONTINUED

ourselves to engage in discussion with those who hold opposing positions.

I posted a response on the Facebook website – it wasn't anything overly extensive, nor does it address every issue that I could have raised, but I needed to say something. The following is what I wrote:

With over 100 comments on this forum in just a handful of days, it is clear that a nerve has been touched - maybe even a couple. I hope these facts provide some insight.

Fact #1: Mainstream media do not provide enough accuracy and clarity in their reports from Israel and surrounding areas, and we therefore should not rely solely on bits and pieces from news media to form firm positions. Before criticizing and displaying extreme hatred towards something, be sure to go about a thorough process of critical analysis and do your best to discern fact from fiction. For instance, given the hardships that many Palestinians endure, why are the twenty-two Arab states that surround Israel unable to provide some humanitarian support for their own brethren? Why is Egypt unwilling to freely open its border with Gaza? What role does the fighting among the various Palestinian factions play in their struggle as a nation?

Fact #2: It is wrong to draw a moral

equivalence between the work of Israel's military and the work of Hamas and Hezbollah. In chaotic and arbitrary fashion, Hamas and Hezbollah launch rockets into Israel and carry out suicide missions in Israel with the goal of striking at the core of Israeli civilian life.

Israel's Defence Forces (the recognized army of a recognized country) launches systematic and specific military operations aimed at dismantling terrorist outposts. Unfortunately, as a result of these operations, some Palestinian civilian casualties do occur. Perhaps a reason for this is that Hamas prefers to hide among its own civilians and use them as PR bait.

Fact #3: Roughly only 78% of Israel's population is Jewish. It is a fully democratic country with many secular ambitions (artistic, technological, agricultural, and medical among them) that benefit the world. Nevertheless, it is also at the core of the modern Jewish psyche. Judaism and the State of Israel have merged. There is no Judaism without Israel and there is no Israel without Judaism. In this new era, to question the legitimacy of or be against the existence of Israel is to be anti-Semitic.

That last point is something I firmly believe. Today, I strongly believe that modern Judaism is dependent upon the existence of the State of Israel. Many Jews in North America and elsewhere in the Diaspora no longer distinguish between Jewish mitzvot (deeds / obligations) and Zionist practices. Giving tzedakah (charity) to JNF for agricultural sustainability in Israel is just as important as paying dues to a synagogue. Singing the Israeli national anthem is just as important as chanting the Kol Nidre prayer on Yom Kippur. Celebrating Israel's Independence Day is just as poignant an event as celebrating Hanukkah – in fact, we recite Hallel (joyous hymns) on both occasions. Defending negative rhetoric targeting Israel is just as important as defending negative rhetoric targeting Jews. My Judaism today, in practice and ideology, is one that includes the current State of Israel.

So please, when you overhear hatred, try to find the courage within and do what you can to stymie it. Eighteen-year-old Israelis enlist in the army to fight justly, to fight morally, and to defend. Let us fight the verbal hatred of all forms.

## ONE DAY IN MARCH - CONTINUED

It said that whatever was to be, any sort of revenge for the deed was not in order. Though we have been wounded, what good does it do to wound others. We were told centuries ago by Isaiah that we would be the suffering servants of G-d while establishing his ways among the many wrongs of the world.

But we know as well that self-defense and justice are also Jewish demands. Whatever

came out of the tragedy at the yeshiva must be a complex, thought-out response-not a simple, immediate one.

And our record is a remarkable one that we should be proud of. Even in the aftermath of the Shoah, bitter, overarching hatred for Germany and the Europe which had brought the Holocaust was a rare position in Israel. From the beginning of the state, there were discussions with

Germany. Much of early Zionism was the product of German culture. Volkswagens and Mercedes were appearing on the streets of Tel Aviv.

What of our relations with minority communities in Canada? We have formal relations with them through various umbrella groups. But I find a tendency for us to be overly preoccupied with our own affairs. But did not the rabbis say the one

It's family time on the Jewish calendar. Many of us have our most vivid childhood memories of the Passover Seder night. Relatives and friends anxiously wait to gather together with loved ones from far and near to crunch on the Matzah and shed tears from the Maror in great anticipation of the Holiday of our Freedom.

Yet, while the memories of the Seder night linger throughout the year, we must delve into the meaning behind Passover to find a message, deeper than stained tablecloths and tired children. Surely, as every other Jewish holiday, Passover has a message to each one of us to incorporate into our daily lives. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory examines the powerful and unforgettable impressions that the Seder has on the minds and hearts of our children through elaborating on three general themes.

The Matzah that we eat is called Michla D'mihemnusa, bread of faith. The Jewish people's unwavering faith in G-d actually merited their redemption from Egypt. Through backbreaking labor and total humiliation, they never doubted G-d's promise of redemption. At the Seder we remember their faith as we endeavor to apply it in our own lives.

The next idea relates to the children's involvement at the Seder as an essential ingredient of its observance. The Torah explicitly mentions a number of times that

the story of the Exodus should be told to the children. "When your child asks... You shall tell your child..." Although the Torah obligates us to remember the Exodus from Egypt every single day, it is adequate to do it to oneself. However, on Passover night there is the unique obligation of telling this story to our children. Thus, the Seder night is a time to relay our heritage to the next generation, perpetuating the unbroken chain of tradition that extends back all the way to Moses at Mount Sinai. This then is the second facet of the Passover theme, educating our children to have faith and belief in G-d and His Torah.

Finally, regarding the recital of the Haggadah the Torah says, "Vehigadeta Lebincha." you shall relate the Exodus in the form of a story. It is not sufficient to just state the facts and statistics; it must be told in story form. With this command, Torah is teaching us a valuable lesson. If we want to successfully transmit faith and belief to a child, the best way to do so is by telling a story. A story has an extraordinary appeal that leaves a deep impression on all who are listening, primarily children. Therefore, the story of Exodus from Egypt which includes the ideas of faith, miracles, and righteousness makes an indelible impression upon children and adults at the Seder table.

It is these three themes faith, education and storytelling which are the backbone

of Passover night. They come together in the form of the Seder imbuing each participant with pride for the past along with hope and energy for our future. Long after the Passover dishes have been put away, our children will be re-invigorated through the awesome power of faith and courage that the stories have transmitted.

On behalf of Bassie and myself, I would like to wish you and yours, and the entire Maritime Jewish Community a meaningful and enjoyable Passover!



## ONE DAY IN MARCH - CONTINUED

who is wise is he who learns something from everyone?

We need to broaden our knowledge of other religions, cultures and social groups. But we should also be confident in who we are. While we have something to learn from all, we also have much to teach others.

As we come to our seder tables, let this be a time when all of us see ourselves as

having come out of Egypt, appreciating the sorrows and difficulties of all peoples in the world. And let us recall, that despite all the travail and challenge, it is for us to finally end the story with a song of thanksgiving and joy.

Thanks to the Religious Studies Department at St. FX and Bill Chernin, Daniel Pink and others, for arranging interfaith discussions at St. FX and

Dalhousie. There is great interest in these issues; look for many more next year.

Next article, be prepared, in the words of Monty Python, for "something COM-M-M-pletely different."

I am planning, as weather permits me travel a bit more, several activities which I have never done nor has anyone else. Stayed tuned and have a chag sameach!

# THE HAGGADAH TELLS US...

BY RABBI KENNETH P. ZISOOK - SGOOLAI ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE -  
FREDERICTON, NB

THE HAGGADAH TELLS US "IN EVERY SINGLE GENERATION ONE IS OBLIGATED TO LOOK UPON HIMSELF AS IF HE PERSONALLY HAD GONE FORTH OUT OF EGYPT." Jews living in this generation might find the above thought difficult to comprehend. We are living in Canada, living a life of freedom without the physical restraints of persecution, the spiritual shackles of the former Soviet Union, or the evil desires of the Greek and Roman empires to destroy the religious spirit of Judaism.

At the end of Rosh Chodesh Nissan, Israel and the world Jewish community will remember the Holocaust and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The Warsaw Uprising recalls the koach, the physical strength, and the givurah, the spiritual strength that our holy Jewish heroes displayed throughout their battles and struggles with the German Army. The givurah of the Jewish people during the Holocaust is also seen during Pesach, even in the worst conditions of the concentration camps. The faith of the Jewish people was not diminished by the ruthless behavior of the Nazis as

demonstrated by the way heroic Jews valiantly observed Pesach.

Raphael Weiner, in his memoirs, recalls how he and others observed Pesach in Bialistok: "In the last difficult weeks that we spent in this concentrations camp a group of prisoners was working at the railway station unloading wheat for the storage nearby. They succeed in stealing some wheat. In this way, they accumulated a modest amount of grain, which they ground in a most primitive way into flour. That is how they could bake a few matzoth and made it possible for several scores of Jews to celebrate the two Seders."

In Camp Hobenstein, near Chemnitz, they found a sympathetic Gentile cook who kosherized a stove and baked matzoth for the Jews in that camp in order that they might celebrate Passover. One of the survivors wrote: "How wonderful a feeling it was to be able to eat matzoth in a German concentration camp. We had a feeling a part of something and as one of us put: matzoth are now being eaten by millions of free Jews in New York, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Hitler did not

conquer the world and he will not and one day we will also be free."

In Buchenwald, hundreds silently gathered at a Seder conducted with a single Haggadah by Rabbi Avigdor. In another bunk, a group of children between the ages of nine and sixteen gathered and quietly sang the familiar Passover songs and asked each other why this night was different from all of the other nights of the year.

These are just a few of the many stories of how, despite horrific conditions, Jews understood the meaning of the matzot, hope and faith in the future of mankind and the Jewish people.

As we celebrate Pesach this year, let us recall the faith and courage of the Jews who struggled as they defied the Nazis with the givurah, the spiritual strength, to live and die as Jews. Let us remember that in every generation, we as Jews have been tested and persevered to throw off the chains of religious and spiritual bondage.

Shelley and our sons join me in wishing you a Chag Kasher v'Sameach.



*Costumed we came to hear Megillah Purim night. Front: Amanda Brown, Joseph Samuel, Alex Brown Middle: Doris Rauch, Eileen DuGuay, Rabbi Zisook, Shelley Zisook, Michelle Chippin, Carol Airst Back: Larry Finkelman, Steve Rauch, Rose Chippin*



# ISRAELI WINES: THE BEST KEPT SECRET

## BY ROSALIND BELITSKY, SOMMELIER

PAGE 17

WINE TOURING IN ISRAEL? ARE YOU MESHUGAH? My husband Philip and I are both sommeliers, and these were some of the refrains we heard when word got out we were planning an Israeli wine tour. But we had heard great things about the star quality of Israeli wines which are now competing successfully at the international level. So following the Atlantic Jewish Council's mission to Israel in October 2007, the two of us, together with my brother Doug, and our Canadian/Israeli wine guide Jeff Katz set out on a three day wine touring adventure in Israel. We were overwhelmingly surprised & delighted with the high quality of the wineries, winemakers and wines that we found.

One of the first things we learned was that some wineries make kosher wine, some



Tal Pelter sampling from a barrel at his winery on the Golan Heights

not. Kosher and non-kosher wines differ not in quality, character or style, but in the fact that while being made, kosher wine must be handled only by shomer Shabbas Jews before being bottled. The grapes and processes used for winemaking are otherwise the same. So, kosher table wine is indistinguishable in quality or character

from non-Kosher wine. As they say, you don't have to be Jewish to enjoy kosher Israeli wines, and we can drink them any time, not just on holidays. Definitely a far cry from the sweet red Manishevitz kosher sacramental wines we grew up on during Passover Seders of our youth!

The history of wine in Israel dates back to biblical times, but the modern industry can be traced to the mid 19th century when Baron Edmund de Rothschild helped set up a grower's co-op for sacramental wine at Carmel. He brought in experts from Europe, and

imported grape vines from southern France. Unfortunately the industry faced many setbacks, and after the First World War lost its' principal markets. It was not until the mid 1980's that the industry was rejuvenated. A professor from the prestigious wine school at the University of California at Davis visited Israel in the mid 1970's and suggested that the soil & climate of northern Israel, particularly the Golan Heights, would be ideal for growing grapes. American vine stock was purchased, and with the help of young American wine makers, vines were planted in the Golan. In 1984 the Golan Heights Winery produced its first vintage. These wines were a success from the beginning, not only within Israel, but abroad. This success had a great impact on other winemakers, resulting in a dramatic growth in the number of wineries. There are now over 150 wineries in Israel. That's a lot of wineries for a tiny country the size of New Jersey. Israel is now a serious source of quality wine.

Grapes for winemaking do best when they have abundant sunshine, warm days, cool nights, breezes, and well drained soil. This allows the grape's flavors, sugar concentration and acidity - all necessary for good wine - to develop optimally. The places in Israel that fit these criteria best are the Jerusalem Hills, the upper and lower Galilee and the Golan Heights. Wine grapes are also grown in other areas, like Shimshon, Shomron and the Negev, but the vines require special attention when planted there. The proximity of the



Philip, Rosalind and Doug with Ze'ev Dunie (2nd from left), owner of Seahorse Winery



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## ISRAELI WINES: THE BEST KEPT SECRET - CONTINUED



Canadian-Israeli winemaker Barry Saslove  
at his winery

Jerusalem Hills to the large population centers of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv makes for good wine touring for their residents, much like the Niagara Peninsula's popular "Route de Vin" for the Toronto population.

With only three days to tour the wine country we needed help in planning an itinerary of wineries to visit. This help came from two sources. The first was Rogov's 2007 Guide to Israeli Wines, (D. Rogov, Toby Press, New Milford and London) a concise but well written description, analysis and rating of Israeli wineries. We forwarded a list of Rogov's best rated wineries to Jeff Katz, our wine guide and second source of help and advice.

The well planned itinerary Jeff created gave us the opportunity to experience the wide range of Israeli winemaking from very small garage wineries like Seahorse in the Judean Hills, producing only 1000-2000 cases of superb wine per year, through to extremely large and highly sophisticated wineries like Golan Heights Winery producing hundreds of thousands of cases per year. Of the wines we encountered on our Israeli wine odyssey, the variety of styles and their uniformly high quality were eye-openers.

Israeli winemakers have been trained in some of the best wine schools and vineyards of the world. They are creative, daring and innovative in the grapes

they grow and the wines they produce, creating a style that reflects the best of both old world and new world, something uniquely Israeli but at a level making them competitive internationally. Amongst the important contributors to the emerging Israeli wine industry are two Canadians - Barry Saslove, an Ottawa native who established his own winery several years ago and Sam Soroka, a young Montrealer who is one of the chief winemakers at Carmel,

The first & smallest winery that we visited was Sea Horse Winery. It is owned and operated by Ze'ev Dune, a former film maker who became captivated with winemaking zeal from the people he met while making a film about the Israeli wine industry. Most of Ze'ev's wine is produced in traditional hand crafted old world style, with minimal technical intervention. Ze'ev specializes in Syrah & Zinfandel, both excellent. Zinfandel is the signature wine of California, so it was exciting to taste one made so well in another part of the world, particularly Israel.

In contrast, the next winery we visited, Clos de Gat, is a very sophisticated enterprise. Clos de Gat is a play on words, Clos being the French word for enclosed vineyard, and Gat the Hebrew word for a stone wine press. The Gat referred to in the name is a 3,000 year old wine press

found serendipitously on the site of the current vineyard, an astonishing find revealing how far back winemaking took place in this area. Their real treat was a prize winning chardonnay which compares favourably with some of the finest from Burgundy in France, chardonnay's original home.

Not far away we were welcomed at the Flam family winery by brothers Golan & Gilad. They are following in the footsteps of their winemaker father. Golan, the winemaker, learned his trade in the vineyards and wineries of Italy and Australia. The winery is sleek and modern, a winemaker's dream. The grapes from each vineyard are fermented separately, preserving the inherent features of each, and then blended by hand to create the style they want for each wine. Their hard



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work has paid off in quality.

The Golan Heights Winery, one of Israel's largest, is located in Katzrin on the high volcanic Golan plateau. This Kosher winery produces a wide range of single varietals and blends under three different quality labels which many of you may have tasted and enjoyed: Yarden, Gamla & the popular priced Golan. The winery is so high tech, that the optimal harvest time for each vineyard is determined by satellite imaging. One of their many interesting products is a sweet desert wine, the Yarden label Heightswine. Heightswine, a play on the words Ice Wine, is an attempt to emulate our prized Canadian Ice Wine. While ice wine is made from grapes harvested within hours of the first frost, the grapes for Heightswine are frozen in freezers for one month following harvest. Though similar to ice wine and interesting in its own right, Heightswine was not equal to the real thing.

Tal Pelter is the tall handsome young owner of Pelter winery in Merom Golan, also on the Golan Heights. Tal trained in Australia and his wines have a distinctive Australian orientation. Tal's vineyards, like those of many others, are planted near troubled borders. Like his fellow vineyard and winery owners in that situation, Tal seems to shrug much of this off, stays away from the politics and gets on with the job of making wine and also a life for his young family. He has a preference for making wines from grapes that are not yet well known in Israel, but well suited to its climate. We barrel tasted his delicious 2007 Sauvignon Blanc and his fresh crisp Chardonnay. We also enjoyed several elegant reds, and were particularly taken by his yet to be barreled Cabernet Franc.

Canadian Barry Saslove is the owner and winemaker of Saslove Winery in the Upper Galilee. Originally from Ottawa, Barry came to Israel during the Six Day war in 1967, and decided to make Israel

his home. Barry did his wine training in the United States, and has become one of Israel's leading wine educators. His daughter, following in the new family tradition, is studying winemaking at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. He produces three quality levels of wine - the popular priced Aviv label, the higher end Adom, and in better years a reserve.

Margalit Winery, one of Israel's first boutique wineries, is a small operation run by father and son. Its modest, primitive appearance seems to be a total disconnect from the exquisite quality of the wine produced. Dr Yair Margalit, the father, is one of the most revered figures in Israeli wine making, and he also happens to have an Atlantic Canada connection. Trained as a chemical engineer in Israel, he did his post doctoral training at Memorial University in St John's, Newfoundland. After completing his post doc in Canada he went to the University of California at Davis for further study & research. While there, he sat in on a winemaking course and soon began making his own wines. As Yair put it, "I fell in love with wine," and luckily for the wine world he decided on a major career change.

Sitting at a picnic table in the Margalit's lush fruit orchard, the table laden with local cheese and bread, we had the good fortune to taste some very elegant wines. Most exceptional was their full bodied and complex Cabernet Franc.

No Israeli wine tour is complete without a visit to famed Carmel Winery, the most historic winery in Israel. In 1882

Jews emigrating from Russia founded Carmel Winery, with financial assistance from Baron Edmond Rothchild, owner of the famed Chateau Lafitte in Bordeaux. Rishon Le Zion grew up around Carmel Winery, and it is now the fourth largest city in Israel. Carmel is the largest producer of kosher wine in the world. Three Israeli Prime ministers have worked at Carmel, including David Ben Gurion and Ehud Olmert. We again experienced a Canadian connection. We were greeted by winemaker Sam Soroka, originally from Montreal. Sam's formal wine studies were at Brock University's Wine Institute.

Being a kosher winery, we couldn't touch any barrels or tanks. During a barrel tasting we watched with interest as the mashgiach (Orthodox supervisor) followed the ritual of taking wine from a barrel, and spilling a small amount onto the floor to honour the tithe once paid to the Temple of Jerusalem.

Carmel wines are made to satisfy every taste & price range. We had the opportunity to taste delicious wines from several of their labels. This versatile winery also produces Kiddush & sacramental wines for both Jewish & Christian markets, pure grape juice, brandies & orange liqueur.



Scene at entrance to Carmel Winery

Our next visit was to Tulip Winery, named not for the flower itself but for the tulip shaped bowl of a wine tasting glass. This new and very successful high tech winery is owned & run by the Itzhaki brothers. It has penetrated both Israeli and international markets. The combination of price, quality and style puts these wines in great demand. Interestingly, Tulip wines from Israel will be featured at Ottawa's Tulip Festival this year.

Our last stop was Doron Belogolofsky's Vitkin Winery. Doron, an adept handyman, converted a cowshed behind his house into the Vitkin winery. Vitkin winery produces an impressive array of wines using original and innovative combinations of grapes. Because of high demand for his wines, several of which

sell out almost immediately on release, Belogolofsky has the classic problem of needing to decide whether to age his wines optimally, or to release them earlier to satisfy his customers' demands.

Sadly our tour had come to an end, leaving many highly rated wineries that we were unable to visit. We anticipate there will be many new wineries to enjoy when we return as wineries are springing up all the time. Standards continue to climb, and anyone interested in wine will certainly want to spend time in the growing wine country of Israel. Wine touring in Israel is a rewarding experience, and I would encourage visitors to Israel to include a day or two or three of wine touring to their Israeli itinerary. The wineries are accessible, and

they welcome and appreciate tourists. Books like Rogov's and The Wine Route of Israel (Y. Goldfisher and E. Sacks, Cordinata Publishing House, Jerusalem) are extremely useful for planning tours of a day or longer. Touring could be self directed by the adventurous traveller, but it is much easier done with the help of a guide who knows the territory, as some of the vineyards were difficult to find.

Unfortunately these Israeli wines are not yet available in the Atlantic Region, so your chance to taste them will have to wait until they are listed in our region, or better yet while touring yourself in Israeli wine country.

Photos by Philip Belitsky

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# MY MOTHER'S HOUSE

## BY LEA MCKNIGHT

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On February 16, 1939 Otto and Meta Echt, their 3 daughters along with Meta's mother, Rosa Cohn, left their home in Broesen to board a ship for Canada. One of those daughters is my mother, Marianne Ferguson and that day was her 13th birthday. It could have been her bat mitzvah day. My grandfather was a very prosperous pharmacist and had a drugstore with attached general store at Augustastraße 15 called the Adler Drogerie. The store occupied the front of the large house and the family lived in the back and also occupied the upstairs floor. Before they left, my grandfather sold the building to their neighbors, the Ponschke family, whose daughter Elisabeth was my mother's best friend.

Broesen was a small seaside resort outside the city of Danzig, located in the corridor between Germany and Poland on the beautiful Baltic Sea. After World War I, Danzig and surrounding rural districts were designated a Free City by the Treaty of Versailles and placed under the supervision of the League of Nations. Although it had been under both Polish and German control throughout its history, culturally it was very German. Under international protection and with a free port, Danzig became a magnet for thousands of Jewish refugees from Poland and Russia and the Jewish community increased fourfold. Although there was a social and cultural gap between the German Jews and the new refugees, Jewish life in Danzig thrived.

However, by 1933 the Nazi threat was emerging. While the activities of the Nazis were restrained at the outset, life for the Jews of Danzig eventually became intolerable. They suffered the horror of Kristallnacht, my grandfather's store included. His windows were smashed and the Nazis destroyed the interior of the store while my grandparents helplessly watched. The Jewish children were increasingly subjected to hostility within their schools, so a private Jewish elementary school and a high school were opened. The principal

of the elementary school was Sam Echt, brother of my grandfather, who eventually wrote the definitive history of the Jews of Danzig. Once the schools opened, my mother and her sister traveled outside of Broesen by streetcar every morning to attend.

In 1939 with the help of the American Joint Distribution Committee the treasures of the Great Synagogue of Danzig were crated and shipped to The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. A number of years ago, my mother and I were fortunate to visit the permanent display now housed at The Jewish Museum of New York. Among the many beautiful artifacts was a blue velvet wedding bench where, no doubt, my grandparents had sat at their wedding so many years ago.

As life for the Jews of Danzig began to further deteriorate they were encouraged to "agree" to leave. The Nazis wanted a Jew-free city. They found passage to various countries including Canada. My grandfather foreseeing the intolerable life for Jews in Danzig had already been making preparations for the family to leave. By Kristallnacht he knew leaving was the only option. Sam Echt was able to safely transport many of his students to England and then his family left for England as well. Some Jews went to Poland or on illegal transports to Palestine. By 1941 the fate of the remaining Jews of Danzig was sealed amid mass deportation and eventual extermination including many extended Echt family members. Except for a handful of Jews, the Jewish community of Danzig was extinct. After the war, Danzig, in ruins, was returned to Poland and given its previous name of Gdansk.



*Simon McKnight, Matthew McKnight, Randy Ferguson, Lea McKnight and Jamie Ferguson in front of Marianne (Echt) Ferguson's childhood home.*

I can't say when the seed was planted, but I knew I wanted to take my children and walk in the footsteps of my mother's childhood. As time passed that seed took root and grew. When I suggested to Simon, Matt and his wife Jen that we make the trip together they didn't need any convincing and the plans began. Hearing our plans my brothers Jamie and Randy jumped in and thus began our odyssey to find our mother's house. The kids would fly in from their home in Dublin and meet us in Gdansk but the three of us would expand our trip to explore the Jewish communities of Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, and Budapest and include a day at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

One of the challenges we faced in our planning was the fact that all of the places and street names were no longer in German as Mom had known them. Everything was now in Polish. Through one of those crazy flukes on the internet, I found a page from some kind of ledger or phone book from 1942 listing the residents of Augustastraße and it had the current Polish street name attached to it. We had exactly what we needed. Broesen was now Brzezno and Augustastraße was now Josef Conrad Korzeniowskiego Street.

Six weeks before we left, Mom wrote a letter to the resident of Josef Conrad Korzeniowskiego 15 explaining that we would be coming and would like to meet

## MY MOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUED



them. The letter was written in German and kindly translated into Polish by Lily Falk. To our disappointment no reply ever arrived. We knew from relatives who had visited Broesen years ago that Elisabeth Ponszke had continued to live in the house. But many years had passed since then with no updated information. The week before we left, using Google Earth, Jamie zeroed in on the street and thought that number 15 looked like a vacant lot. Hearing that, we knew if that was so, it would be devastating for all of us but the wheels were in motion and we were packed and ready to leave.

On July 29th we flew to Prague, the first stop in our journey and the beginning of an amazing exploration of our Jewish and family roots. August 2nd would be the reunion with my children in Gdansk after a year apart. So with great excitement and anticipation we motored northward to the Baltic.

It's Thursday August 2nd, 10:00 pm, and we finally arrive in Gdansk to a joyful reunion with Simon, Matt and Jen. After catching up on all the news and distributing gifts from home we settle in for the night and dream of our much anticipated journey into the past the next

morning.

When the taxi left us at the top of the former Augustastraße it was with combined feelings of anxiety and excitement that we took our first steps down the street. The buildings at the corner were apartments and obviously built since the war. What would we find further down the street? It was like peeking through a portal to the past; anxious to know what was on the other side but apprehensive about what we might find.

As we continued on and looked ahead there it was - The House - just as it appeared in the Echt family photos. Our steps quickened and hearts pounded as we drew closer. It stood out on its own, unmistakable and unique among all of the other buildings. I felt as though I stopped dead in my tracks and was simply staring; feeling transported back in time. It was in need of some repairs but exuded a certain sense of pride and grandeur having seen better days. It was set apart by the space around it, not crowded in or connected like many of the other buildings, as if it didn't belong on this street. It was overwhelming to all of us just being there. Our first instinct was to call Mom, even though it was very early morning

in Halifax. Matt took a photo with his mobile and sent it immediately to Mom's computer. How we wished she was with us!

A wire fence extended across the front of the house and the gate was padlocked. The strong oak door with the decorative iron grill was obviously no longer used. The keyhole was covered by thick cobwebs. One of the windows in the door was open but we could see only empty space inside. This section of the house had formerly been the pharmacy. The hedge inside the fence was somewhat trimmed but beyond it immediately in front of the house bushes grew unattended. In the midst of the tangle, breaking through the broken pavement in front of the door, there bloomed one red rose. We could read so much symbolism into that rose but Mom's interpretation meant the most to me. She saw the rose as the spirit of her grandmother, Rosa, who came with them to Canada and was always lonely for the old house.

The backyard was a complete overgrown mass of trees and bushes. The place where the Echt children had played and the family kept a garden and some small farm animals now looked as though it had not been entered since they had left decades ago. Beyond the yard apartment buildings now stood where my grandfather once had large fields planted. Those fields had qualified him to gain a Canadian visa as a farmer and bring the family safely to Canada promising to farm on our soil. It seemed a tribute to my grandfather that 60 years later a newer version of the pharmacy was located next to the house where the Adler Drogerie had once existed.

Since we had not received a reply to the letter sent before our arrival, we resisted knocking on the door but were anxious to speak to someone on the street that might be able to tell us who was living in the house. We found a neighbor across the street who spoke German. So, in my limited German I explained who we

were and why we were there. This man remembered the old sign over the door for the Adler Drogerie, proprietor Otto Echt. Imagine our surprise when we learned that Mom's former best friend, Elisabeth Ponske had continued to live in this house. The most shocking news was that she had recently died and had been buried the day before our arrival! Her daughters lived in the house as well. Seeing no car in the yard he told us they were likely at work and offered to leave them a message to call us in the hopes they would be willing to meet. There was still so much we wanted to know and we hoped they would be interested to learn more about their mother's childhood friend.

After spending time absorbing the sight of the house and examining every inch of it from all sides, we continued down the street and through the town to the seashore. Here the Echt children spent their summers playing and picking up amber that had washed ashore. This beautiful Baltic beach with its white sand seemed to go on forever. As the day passed we reluctantly left my mother's birthplace made our way back to our hotel in Gdansk waiting anxiously to hear from the Ponske daughters.



Late that evening the call finally arrived. Assuming they might also know some German from their mother I tried to explain our story. I was speaking German but they spoke only Polish so we said goodbye after our failed attempts to communicate. The next morning I asked the hotel proprietor if she would contact them and explain in Polish that we would like to meet. To our great disappointment

they declined saying they were too sad about their mother's death. We still wonder if there was a fuller explanation.

Later that day we located the old synagogue the Echt family had attended in what was the town of Langfuhr now Wrzeszcz. Badly in need of repairs, it is now a music school. We made several attempts to find the old Jewish cemetery but without success. After several more days in the Gdansk area it was time to say goodbye to the kids and continue our travels.

I think about The House every day as a symbol of lives lived and left behind. This house was the centre of my mother's universe, full of daily activity and celebrations and stands as tangible evidence that the Echt family was there. What stories it could tell. It is an icon of our roots and connects the family across generations. This collective experience with my children and brothers brought new meaning to our lives and will always have a special place in our hearts.

## **Congratulations to the 2008 Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program participants and their families:**

*Lewis Novack, Halifax – Beth Burnstein, Halifax*  
*Leah MacDonald, Halifax – Arianne Cohen, Moncton*  
*Rebecca Wolff, Halifax – Abby Suissa, Halifax*  
*Chelsea Coppel, Moncton – Matthew Burgar, Halifax*  
*Maya Budovitch, Halifax*

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE PEOPLE?



MS. A. GREEN



S. Marcus



Miss M. Resnick



S. C. Glabe



S. J. Turel



J. S. Dresner



**"HARRY THE TICKET" HAD A REPUTATION FOR FUND-RAISING.**

When Harry Levine died in Fredericton April 1, the community, both Jewish and sectarian lost a man who would never take no for an answer, who always had a charitable ticket in his pocket and who generated thousands and thousands of dollars for community projects.

A long-time Rotarian, the retail giant in the city always said, "Charity is part of my life. What better goal could a person have?"

He was renowned for his efforts on behalf of the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital, Rotary Camp for physically challenged youth, YMCA, Salvation Army, as well as chairing United Israel Appeal, United Jewish Appeal and Israel Bond Drive on many occasions. He was a major influence on the expansion of the Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, both in spearheading the fund raising and overseeing the expansion.

The 89-year-old Levine operated Levine's Department Store in downtown Fredericton for more than 50 years, finally closing it in 1990. A major fire destroyed it in 1974 but Levine refused to give up, rebuilding it again into a major part of downtown.

His business associates became part of his family. Daughter Rhona (Allen) Ruben of Toronto says he understood the importance of recognizing and working with each person's strength.

"Everyone wanted to do business with him," she said. "He was always fair. And he always empowered his employees, celebrated their successes with them, and recognized when they needed help. They knew they could go to him when they had problems."

She said he would help people in the Jewish community and outside. "He loved people and liked to help them."

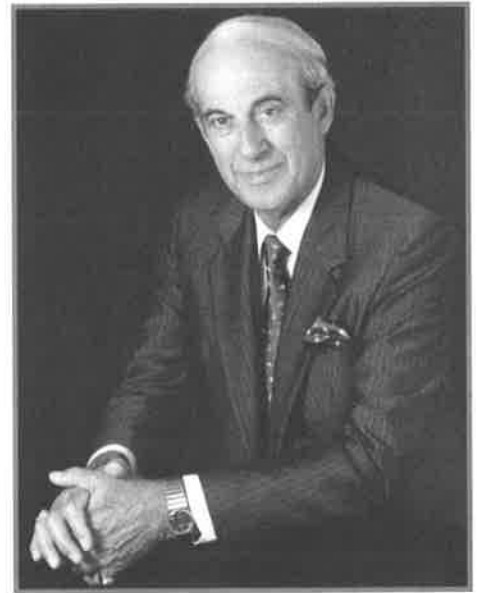
Rhona's daughter, Allana, called her grandfather a "builder. He saw the community as one. He did not separate it into Jew and Gentile. He saw communities giving to each other."

She noted how her grandfather called the Jewish community each week to create minyanim for Friday night and Saturday, and how he took an interest in youth by starting a Safe Grad program at Fredericton High School for teens to celebrate their graduations in safe, non-drinking environments.

Yet it was family – his own and the community around him – that made Levine an icon in Fredericton.

"He loved music, loved to dance, was always the life of a party," recalls son Ivan of Fredericton, who, with Rhona and Harry's four grandchildren, eulogized him at a packed memorial service at McAdams Funeral Home in Fredericton.

"He had a profound love for all of us," Allana says of the family. "For the grandchildren, he modeled leadership, and showed us how to have a love for people. When he died, all we heard from



people at the ceremony and at the shiva house was how everyone loved him and he loved everyone."

Levine was president of B'nai Brith, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, and the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce. Among awards and recognitions, he was one of the first recipients of the Fredericton Distinguished Citizens Award, the Governor General Award for Volunteering, and the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award. Rotary honoured him with the distinguished Paul Harris Fellowship Award, twice, in recognition of a lifetime of service to the Fredericton community.

## **Cape Breton Hadassah - Wizo Bazaar - Wednesday, May 28, 2008**

**We need Better Ladies Clothing, ladies shoes & handbags, costume jewelry, children's clothing, men's sweaters, shirts, winter coats & jackets, linens, fabric, drapes, curtains and dishes.**

*We do NOT need books or tapes, pots or pans.*

**Contact person: Judith Goldberg - Phone: 902-425-6527 - CUT OFF DATE IS MAY 13, 2008.**

**Without your support, our Bazaar would not be successful. We appreciate your efforts on our behalf.**

*Remember the cut-off date - Don't be late !!*

# Around the Region



Paul Michaels CIC, speaking in Halifax



Zev and Eli Davidson, Purim in Moncton



Joseph Samuel and Josh Stephens making hamentaschen with Shelley Stephens watching



Michelle Masters receiving a JSA award from AJC President Kathy Zilbert



Purim in Halifax, Rabbi Weiss, Max and Lauren Fineberg, Ilana Weiss



Lily Samuel making hamentaschen while her mother, Ellen Lupu looks on, Fredericton



Shelley Stephens and Bella Rose braiding challah, Fredericton



David Weinberg at Mt. Pearl Senior High School, NL



Bill Chernin with JSA award recipients



Purim Seudah and Party, playing Jewish pictionary, Fredericton



Tu B'Shvat Seder, Halifax



UIAFC CEO Linda Kislowitz & Perry Romberg at Peggy's Cove



Shabbaton group



Purim in NL, Ruth and John Noel



Aiden Silverberg, Ethan Strong & Zoey Silverberg, Sydney



Shabbat Across Halifax Musical Havdallah



Purim in Halifax, Marcia Kohler and son Sam



Susanne Gulliver in her winning costume as the Cat Lady, NL



Jewish Students Purim Pub Crawl in NL



Ilana Weiss presents best costume award to Max Fineberg

# Around the Region



NL - Ernie Mauskopf reading the Megillah



Daniel Pink, President JSA and Kathy Zilbert



AJC management meeting in Halifax



Marty Chernin, Harold Davis, Darren Strong & son, Sydney



Holocaust survivor, Helena Jockel, speaks with the Halifax participants of the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program



Garson Lecker, Ike David, Martin & Margret Karrel, Edith Lecker, Sydney

*Editor's note: Craig Fox is the son of Cathy and Colin Fox, Halifax. Our previous issue introduced the readers to his IDF experience as a Lone Soldier, a soldier in the army who is not a native of Israel nor has family living there. Craig will complete his service in November 2009.*

FOUR MONTHS LATER AND BASIC TRAINING IS OUT OF THE WAY. I EARNED MY PURPLE BERET AFTER A 13 HOUR HIKE LOADED DOWN WITH MY FULL GEAR AS A NEGEVIST MACHINE GUNNER FOR THE UNIT. I proudly wear the purple beret of Givati on my shoulder that was presented to me by my

commander. The beret which he received from his commander at the end of his basic training.

Ahead lays more training as I move into advanced, and then a few months later I will be in my permanent position for my service. Ahead also is the Pesach holiday. I am lucky enough to have the honor of attending the Pesach seder with the Prime Minister and the Ramatkal of the army. A seder for the Lone Soldiers in the army. Again, an army with a heart shows that their soldiers are more than ID numbers with guns. At every event, at every holiday, there is someone there for us. Just last week The Friends of the

IDF New Jersey chapter met us on base to listen to our stories, give their thanks, and of course some presents on the side.

Unfortunately there is a lot more I would love to talk about, but of course can't. It's one of those things you have to get used to here. You meet someone new, ask them what they do in the army, and end up with the vaguest answer you can ever imagine. So I'll wish everyone a happy and kosher Pesach holiday, and if the army approves my request, hopefully I'll be around in the summer for a while to visit. Thanks for the support.

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## YOM HASHOAH 2008 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY REGIONAL SCHEDULE

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**Halifax, NS** – Thursday, May 1st, 8pm Loyola Conference Hall. Saint Mary's University, 903 Robie Street.

Guest speaker – *Edwin Black*, award-winning author including the international bestseller *IBM and the Holocaust*

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**Sydney, NS** – Sunday, May 4th, 2pm Temple Sons of Israel Synagogue. Guest speaker – Holocaust survivor, *Joseph Tenenbaum*

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**St. John's, NL** – Sunday, May 4th, 7:30pm Inco Innovation Centre, Memorial University. Theme: Children and the Holocaust

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**Charlottetown, PEI** – Saturday, May 3rd, 6:30pm Birchwood Intermediate School, Longworth Avenue.

Guest speaker – *Leo Adler*, L.L.B., Director of National Affairs for Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

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**Moncton, NB** – Sunday, May 4th, 2pm Tiferes Israel Synagogue's Social Hall.

Guest speaker – *Leo Adler*, L.L.B., Director of National Affairs for Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

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**Fredericton, NB** – Sunday, May 4th, 3pm Sgoolai Israel Synagogue.

Guest speaker – Holocaust survivor, *Esther Bem*

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**Saint John, NB** – Monday, May 5th, 7:30pm Shaarei Zedek Synagogue, 76 Carleton Street.

Guest speaker – Holocaust survivor, *Esther Bem*

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# JEWISH LIFE ON PEI

PAGE 30

BY BRIAN GOLOD - PEI JEWISH COMMUNITY REP

HI EVERYONE, I AM BRIAN GOLOD, NOT A WRITER BUT A SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, THOUGH I WRITE THIS FROM MY HEART! I was asked to share with you what Jewish life on PEI is and feels like for me, and it is a pleasure for me to do that. In order to do that though I'd like to introduce myself first so you can feel the way I do.

I was born and raised until I was almost 20 years old in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the 1990s it was estimated that 500,000 Jews were living in the country. The Jewish population grew rapidly in the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century when many Ashkenazi Jews arrived in Argentina from Eastern Europe fleeing persecution. It is very common to find Jewish people in Buenos Aires. Neighborhoods, pubs, bars, schools and street corners can be found with plenty of Jews. Since kindergarten I went to a private Jewish school named Bet-Am, where I would continue to study until I was 11 years old. The popular and cool thing to do in regards to school was to switch at that age to a more technical and highly respected secondary school called ORT Argentina, which offers education all over the world and has companies looking for its graduates constantly. Jewish private schools in Argentina are a luxury not everyone can have, thanks to my parents' hard work I was able to have one. At age 13 I did my Bar-Mitzvah, who doesn't? Since there are so many Jews it's a challenge to find a shul and reception with open dates that you have in mind. There are plenty of shuls in Buenos Aires; unfortunately they all have concrete walls on the sidewalks to protect them from possible terrorist attacks, which already happened twice in the past when two cars in different occasions crashed into a Jewish institution and the Israeli embassy blowing up both of them. 107 people died. I was always proud of being a Jew, though I wasn't sharing that very important part of me with strangers, just in case... you never know.



Believe it or not being a Jew on PEI is a beautiful experience which in my case has strengthened my commitment with the community and Jewish life. It is true that the PEI Jewish Community is a small one, with 100 members at the most, which really reaches its peak in the summer time when regular members come for long holidays year after year. With such a small number of people it could be easy to say that we have no impact outside the community, but luckily most of us are all well known, respected and kept in mind. As a Jew on Prince Edward Island I can only tell you great stories, one from each day I've lived here. In general, the PEI islanders are very caring people and they show you they are when you need it the most. It really makes a difference when the teller at the National Bank wishes you Happy Hanukkah and sends you a card in the mail or when they are sorry for a loss

you've had and send you flowers. It is shocking and beautiful at the same time to see that high school students dedicate a whole year to study what happened to more than 6 million people in the Holocaust and more non Jews than Jews become present in commemorating the end of it every year and burst into tears when they listen to the guest speakers share their life stories. It would be also good to share with you that Prince Edward Island was the first province to commemorate such event and former Premier Patt Binns introduced this in the culture of the island.

Before moving to PEI all we knew was that there was a book called Anne of Green Gables because my mom read the Spanish version of it in school. We were not looking for Argentineans on the

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island, we wanted to be the first ones, though we didn't want to be the only Jews, so we began our research. My mom found the AJC's website and decided to leave an entry in the guestbook page saying who we were and that we would appreciate any kind of guidance in moving to PEI. To our surprise and probably your surprise as well, the only people who got in touch with us were Robert and Heather Putnam from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. It would be worth commenting that they were Mormons, so really there was no Jewish support. Since we know what that feels like, we are making a difference by supporting Jews who are looking forward to living on PEI. All we were looking for was a kind soul to look after us and these angels went above and beyond their plans just because that's their own nature. I wish you could picture us arriving in Moncton from Toronto on December 21, the shortest day of the year and very cold as well, after traveling from Buenos Aires with temperature of 35 degrees when we left. We were tight with money, Argentina had suffered a huge economical and social crisis and the money my parents were counting on to immigrate to Toronto suddenly became half with nothing they could do about it. Flights and places where to stay were unbelievably expensive. We decided to take the train and travel 24 hours to Moncton, where Robert and Heather picked us up to bring us to beautiful PEI. I wish you could picture a family leaving everything behind, memories, smells, family, friends, places and so much more with the hopes that everything would be better in this new life. Let me say thank you once more for opening the doors to your country, which I feel is mine too now and work every day to make sure I add something positive to it. We were offered a home to stay at for 3 months for free when we arrived and we met the owners of the house the night before they left on a trip around the world for that length of time. The kindness and

hospitality we find every day on Prince Edward Island is second to none, I wish you could feel the way we do.

In regards to keeping the tradition alive, I'd like you to know that on PEI we are Jews because we want to be Jews. It would be really easy to assimilate and lose our identity, we choose not to. We are a few compared to every other city in Canada, though we feel there is more passion to keep this going than there is in larger cities perhaps. We celebrate Jewish life, young and adults all together, and no matter where you are from or how long you are staying on the island for, there's always an open door for you to pray. There are many things we don't have, but there are more things that we do, especially the commitment to enjoying this beautiful way of living life. I feel I am a person on the island, not a number. I feel I make a difference in peoples' life and that is the reason why I have settled down here buying my home last November. PEI is as full of opportunities as any other province in Canada and I can say its lifestyle is much better, it's really up to you how you want to live on PEI, there is room for everyone. There is a study group on the island that meets every Tuesday night at one of the members' house to study Torah and a new group is starting anytime soon to study Hibrit. We gather for Rosh Hashanah,

Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesach and last night for Purim, although late, we still celebrated it. My dad is currently the Vice President of the Community and I am the representative for PEI and also the students who are on the island. We are pleased to serve this Community responsibly and committed to make a difference. I hope you enjoyed my story; this is a just a little bit of who I am. If you'd like to hear the rest of it get in touch! And if you'd like to experience what PEI Jewish life is all about, get in touch too, we'll make sure you have a pleasant visit!

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OUR PURIM PARTY WAS HELD ON THE 30TH OF MARCH, AT WHICH ROSALIE SIMEONE RECITED THE STORY OF ESTHER TO MUCH NOISE AND MERRIMENT.

We are looking forward to celebrating the 2nd Sedar of Passover at York Community Center.

President **Dr Sol Feldstein and Mrs. Evelyn Feldstein** are just recovering from severe flu and we wish them a full recovery.

Hebrew School principal **Sheldon Opps** and family are enjoying a vacation in Costa Rico.

Members **Sandra Horne** (Zarwan) and **Barbara and Jim Munves**, as members of Confederation Chorale recently took part in performance of Mozart's Requiem.

Member **Jeannie Leigh** has recovered from severe fall and has moved to Prince Edward Home from where, equipped with mobile chair, she again participates in events all over Charlottetown.

Vice-president **Sergei Golod and his wife Marcela** have been exhibiting their artistic glass (Royal Glass Co.) products widely through Canada with growing recognition.

We are pleased to share with you that **Marcela and Sergio Golod** have won the "Excellence in Product Design" award given at the Atlantic Canada Trade Show in Halifax earlier this month. This award is given in recognition of leadership and excellence in the professional craftsperson's life. Recipients of this prestigious award are craft and giftware artisans throughout Atlantic Canada, who by their example set the standards of excellence within the industry. Their work can be viewed at: [www.royalglassdesign.com](http://www.royalglassdesign.com)

## EARLY JEWISH CAPE BRETON ARCHIVAL INFORMATION TO BE AVAILABLE ON-LINE

BY JACK COLUMBUS

A TREASURE-TROVE OF DOCUMENTARY AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION ON THE EARLY YEARS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CAPE BRETON IS ABOUT TO BE MADE AVAILABLE ON-LINE THROUGH THE CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY'S ARCHIVES, THE BEATON INSTITUTE.

Archivist Jodi McDavid says consultations are under way with members of the Jewish community from Sydney, Whitney Pier, Glace Bay and New Waterford to determine what material should be included in the initial grouping to be accessible on the internet through a program known as the Ethno-Cultural Digitization Project.

The Beaton Institute has hundreds of historical items from the island Jewish communities, ranging from black and white photographs of early social and family gatherings to audio and video tape recordings of some of the original immigrants, describing the difficulties they experienced in making a life in a



*The photo is of Archivist Dr. Jodi McDavid examining material from the Jewish community new country, not knowing the language, customs and mores. The project includes other ethnic groups that settled in Cape Breton, including Mi'kmaw, Ukrainian, Italian, Polish, Belgian, Hungarian, Lebanese, and African Nova Scotian or West Indian. This project will start the much-needed process of preserving these holdings and improving community access to them.*

McDavid says there will be better

accessibility to these records, their deterioration will be stabilized, and representation of aboriginal peoples and under-represented ethno-cultural groups in Canada's archival heritage will be increased.

She says consultations with the ethnic groups included in the inventory are taking place in order to bring some community context to the process of choosing which records to digitize. In addition, they are working in collaboration with the Centre for Cape Breton Studies and the University community to make archival holdings widely available in a safe format. A database will be created that is compliant with provincial and national standards, thereby establishing necessary infrastructure. At least 150 records will be digitized and made available through the Library and Archive Canada's ArchWay website, Memorial University of Newfoundland's Digital Archive Initiative (DAI) website, and Cape Breton University's Beaton Institute site.

# COACH CLEANS HOUSE, TURNS TEAM AROUND

BY PAUL LUNGEN, STAFF REPORTER

PAGE 33

*Editor's note: In the last issue of Shalom, we introduced Phil David of Sydney who earlier this winter had just begun coaching a professional hockey team in England, we are happy to provide you with an update on his career and the amazing success he's had as head coach of the team.*

*When Phil David was plugged into the head coaching job in Peterborough, England, he was faced with a last-place team full of underachievers.*

THERE WAS SOME TALENT ON THE SQUAD TO BE SURE, GOOD SKATERS AND A SCORER OR TWO, INCLUDING ONE OF THE LEAGUE'S BEST. BUT THE TEAM'S MAIN GOAL-GETTER WAS ALSO A PRIMA DONNA WHO PUT HIMSELF FIRST.



FOR  
WHAT  
MATTERS

All the Staff & Employees would  
like to wish the community a  
Happy Pesach!

David knew something had to be done in his first game behind the bench when the player ignored his signal to come off the ice during a power play. Everyone in the crowd saw the insubordination, and though he was on the job for only a day, David realized he'd have to pull the plug on the team's top player. Within a month, he was gone.

David faced a firestorm of criticism in the newspapers, but he could see in the dressing room and on the bench that the team's mood changed. It was like a huge burden had been lifted off players' shoulders, and they responded by going on a 16-1 streak. By early March, Peterborough had amassed a 29-8-3 record since David's arrival. They were 4-4 when he took the job.

For David, 42, it all went to show that the lessons of hockey are universal, whether they're applied in Toronto minor leagues or with professionals in England.

To succeed, you need talent, speed, finesse, hard work and a good attitude, he said. That's how he builds his teams, whether they're midget squads in Toronto or the semi-pro Phantoms in Peterborough, a city of 150,000 that's 86 miles north of London.

The Phantoms play in England's Premier League, the country's second tier that includes Chelmsford



Chieftains, Slough Jets and Bracknell Bee's.

For David, the call to coach the Phantoms came out of the blue and was something of a blessing. In August 2006, he had been diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent emergency surgery. During the subsequent chemotherapy, complications arose and he was hospitalized for weeks. He lost his job in marketing, but by September 2007 he was running his own business and was serving as an assistant with his old team, the Toronto Junior Canadiens, when an old friend from Camp Kadimah, near Halifax, called and told him about a job opening in England.

David, a native of Sydney, N.S., son of Ike and Faye David, was flown over for the interview. He was offered the job, but given only five days in which to start. He hurried back to Toronto, put his personal affairs in order and rushed back to England.

Given all he had been through, he felt it was the right thing to do. The cancer scare "was a life-changing event. It put a lot of things in perspective."

He was no longer as interested in pursuing materialist objectives. Instead, getting back full time to a profession he loved held all the allure he wanted.

Recently, as the season wore down, the Phantoms had secured a playoff spot and were jockeying for position in the post-season seedings. They defeated the Chelmsford Chieftains 8-5 on home ice to vault into third place.

David came to the Phantoms after many years of coaching in Toronto. Like many in the dwindling Jewish community of Cape Breton (it dropped from 150 families in the 1970s when he was growing up to 30-35 today), David left to pursue better opportunities. He cut his coaching teeth in the Toronto minor hockey system.

Starting in 1993 as a goalie coach for a Select team in north Toronto, he caught the coaching bug, or what he calls "a healthy addiction to it."

An avid student of the game ñ he tries to attend at least one coaching seminar every year ñ† he moved from Select to AA hockey, registering some success with the Scarborough Young Bruins, a midget team (16 and 17 year olds) and the North Toronto Midgets. He coached the North York Midgets as well, and two of his three midget teams finished first in their leagues.

In 2003, he moved up to AAA, taking a job with the Junior Canadiens, at the

time, a last-place team.

In three years, they improved from 12th, to 7th and then to 4th in the league. During the 2005-06 season, they were league and provincial champions and competed nationally at the Telus Cup. They lost in the semifinals to the eventual national champions.

Over the years, David developed his own coaching style that demands puck pursuit and forechecking. He looks for good skaters who employ finesse, and he requires his players to put hockey ahead of everything except family and school or work.

"That's the kind of player I love," he said. "On top of that, I look for strength on the puck."

Though physical skills are key, equally important is the right attitude ñ a willingness to learn and take instruction, to put the team first and work hard.


A goalie of no mean skill in his own right, as a youth he played AAA hockey for some very good teams. His midget club went to the national

championships, and he notes with pride he was named tournament all-star ahead of the legendary Patrick Roy. After that, however, their careers diverged. Roy went on to the National Hockey League, Stanley Cups and an award as playoff MVP, while David played intra-mural hockey at Dalhousie University.

"I peaked at 17," he quipped. What's more, looking back, he realizes he didn't have the kind of attitude he now demands of a player. He acknowledges he was too focused on himself and was "an uncoachable kid."

"I would have kicked myself off the team within a week," he said.

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# CAPE BRETON HOSTS FIRST GERMAN-JEWISH EXCHANGE STUDENT

BY JACK COLUMBUS

PAGE 35

16 YEAR OLD BOAS STEFFANI SAYS HE'S HAVING A GREAT TIME IN CAPE BRETON, EVEN THOUGH A FEW MONTHS AGO HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE PLACE.

But that hasn't bothered the 16 year old resident of Hamburg, Germany, who has the distinction of being the first Jewish-German exchange student ever to come to Cape Breton. Boas is the son of Yael and Elyakim Steffani and has two older brothers David and Zvi.

When Boas first thought of becoming an exchange student he knew nothing about Nova Scotia and had to go on-line to Wikipedia to learn something about this part of Canada. The Educational and Consulting Student Exchange, the organization that co-ordinates student



visits, recommended Cape Breton as the section of Nova Scotia that he should consider coming to and he agreed, arriving here on the 2nd of February.

Despite the fact that he's living with a non-Jewish family in New Waterford,

Boas says he's managing to maintain his kosher diet. The Grade 11 student at Breton Education Centre says he would have preferred to stay with a Jewish family, but his billet family is making his stay in Nova Scotia very enjoyable and helped him get in touch with members of the local Jewish community. He has been attending services regularly at Temple Sons of Israel in Sydney.

Boas says although the numbers attending services in Sydney are much smaller than he's used to at home in Hamburg, he's enjoying going to shul in Sydney and the Yiddishkeit of the community. Boas is looking forward to the remainder of his experience in Cape Breton. He returns home at the end of June.



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# CAPE BRETON AJC REP MEETS GEN. UZI DAYAN

PAGE 36

BY JACK COLUMBUS

THE A.J.C.'S CAPE BRETON COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE GOT MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR ON A RECENT WINTER HOLIDAY IN ARIZONA.

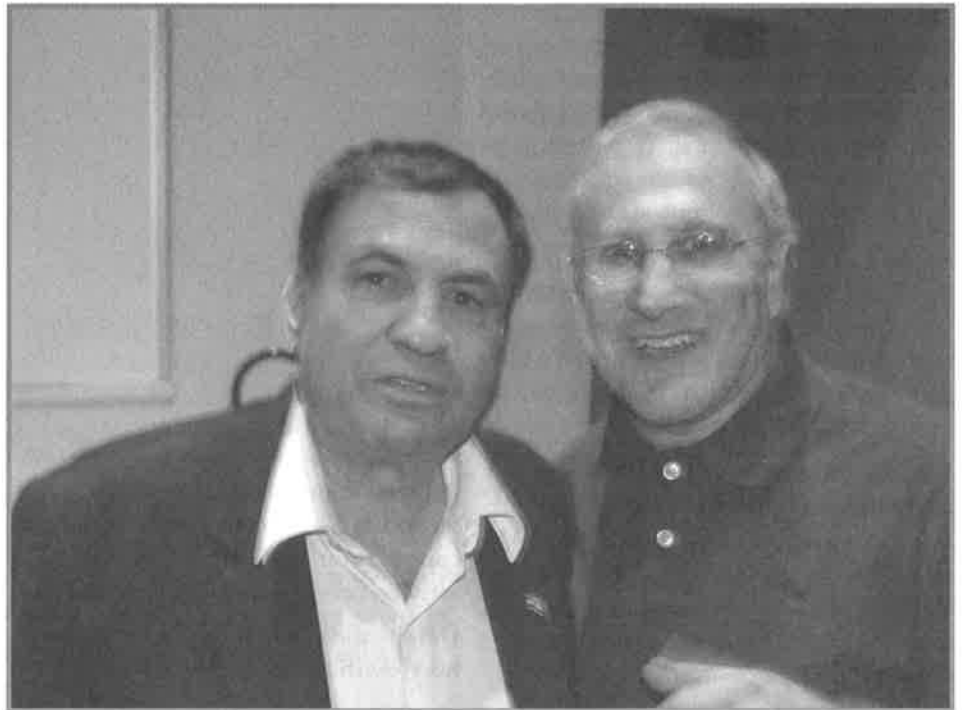
While visiting a tourist bureau to get information on activities in the Phoenix area, Jack Columbus picked up a copy of the Jewish Community Newspaper and noticed an advertisement for an appearance at the Jewish Community Centre in Scottsdale by Maj. Gen. Uzi Dayan on Saturday, March 8th.

With the centre being less than an hour from where he and his wife, Sharon, were staying in Tempe, they decided to go and hear what the retired General had to say.

Uzi Dayan is marking three momentous events, 60 years after they took place. They include his own birth, the death in battle of his father and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Dayan, despite the fact that his family is part and parcel of Israel's Mayflower Generation, did not have a privileged or pampered childhood. He grew up on Moshav Hayogev in the Valley of Jezre'el, in a home that at that stage had neither running water nor paved floors. Like other moshav kids, he was out in the fields day after day, helping to cultivate the fields and harvest the crops. In the absence of TV, computers and video games, he played outdoor games and hiked all over the country.

When it came time to join the armed forces, where his uncle Moshe Dayan was already a key figure, he was determined to be on the front lines, despite the fact that his knee injury restricted his movements, and his status as the only son of a woman whose husband had been killed in battle automatically exempted him from service in a front-line unit.



This didn't deter Dayan, who did everything he could to hide his physical disabilities and to override the usual exemption. In the end, he not only joined a front-line unit, but the toughest commando formation in the Israel Defense Forces, the Sayeret Matkal. He served in the death-defying Sayeret for an extraordinary 15 years and was its commander for part of that time.

Toward the end of his long military career, Dayan was commander of the Central Command and deputy chief of staff. After exchanging his khaki uniform for civilian clothes, he spent two years as chairman of the National Security Council and as national security adviser to Prime Ministers Barak and Sharon.

Now Dayan is a full-time politician and founder of the Tefnit Party. As its Hebrew name indicates, it is determined to take the country in new directions. "After my many years in public service," he declares, "I'd come to the conclusion that it doesn't lack for talented people; it has an abundance of them. But it

lacks leadership: men and woman who have the vision and the charisma to help Israelis fulfill their full potential."

He says that youth are of particular importance. The globalized world is open to them, and unless they feel the country is moving ahead under competent leadership, all too many will choose to live elsewhere.

Dayan's Tefnit Party, which is yet to be represented in the Knesset, emphasizes the need to devote more resources and energy to the solution of social problems and to fighting corruption.

Will Dayan have a chance to fulfill his dream? In the past, new reform parties like Dash and Shinui enjoyed a brief period of success and then faded away. Yet this determined ex-general, who was born and left fatherless 60 years ago, refuses to be discouraged.

# THE NEW FACE OF EVANGELISM: BLESSING ISRAEL WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED

BY MARSHALL SHAPIRO, TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT

PAGE 37

BRANTFORD - RAY AND ROSALIND MACDONALD, NATIVES OF SYDNEY NS, BREAK THE MOLD OF WHAT EVANGELICALS ARE ALL ABOUT.

Around their necks they wear stars of David - not the "messianic" stars with an imbedded cross, but the kind any Jew would be proud to wear. The last thing they want to do is convert Jews.

They do, however, want to convert Christians. Their mission is to teach Christians to live the words of Genesis 12: "They who bless Israel I will bless," the promise God made to Abraham when Judaism was born.

The MacDonalds, who now live in Brantford, ON, have chosen an Israeli organization, Table to Table, as the vehicle by which they serve Israel's needy.

Ray said, "It has been said that feeding the hungry is a work that is eternal. Food, the basis necessity of life, is a driving force behind the organization."

Although the MacDonalds are Christians, Table to Table is "nondenominational," comprising volunteers of all streams of belief.

Over the years, they have taken their pro-Israel message to scores of churches throughout Canada and the US appealing to their coreligionists to observe the mandate upon gentiles to support the Jewish state. Currently, they are taking their message to 16 churches from Ottawa to Halifax.

"Our primary objective," said Rosalind, "is to teach the Church not only their biblical responsibility to the state of Israel but also to instruct others how to fulfill the mandate of performing mitzvot on the land."

Their message is well received by ministers in the various congregations. According to many pastors, Rosalind said, Christians should feel a moral obligation to stand with Israel and the

Jewish people.

Halifax is not their sole destination this year. In the fall, they will be leading a solidarity trip to Israel but with a difference. This trip will have a volunteer element. "For many bible believing Christians, a visit to Israel is a life transforming experience," Ray said. "A growing number of Christians are making Genesis 12 their life theme. It is very encouraging for Jews around the world to know that there are Christians standing shoulder to shoulder with them during these difficult times." Table to Table, like the trips, is a unique exercise in charity.

According to Ray, every year in Israel, millions of pounds of excess prepared and perishable food are thrown in the garbage. Table to Table's function is to ensure that excess food isn't wasted but, rather, ends up at its proper destination: people in need.

Serving as Israel's umbrella organization for the donation of surplus food, Table to Table collects excess, unsold food from catered events, corporate cafeterias, army bases, food manufacturers, bakeries, farms and packing houses and delivers the food to non-profit organizations throughout Israel that serve those in need. This is especially significant in light of the Annual Poverty Report for 2006 by the Israel National Insurance Institute (NII) that showed an increase in the number of people in the country who live below the poverty line.

According to the Jerusalem Post, the number of children living below the poverty line is now 36 per cent - over a third of Israeli children live in poverty. NII representative, Ban-Shalom, declared that if the current trend continued, eventually every second child would be living in poverty.

Today, Table to Table distributes food to 100 NGOs in an area of thousands of square miles from Nahariya in the north

of Israel to Ofakim in the south. With the support of the Jewish Federation of Rockland County the organization opened its Haifa branch in November 2006 to best service NGOs in the north. The branch now services 35 NGOs in the region. Due to the demand on its services, the Haifa branch opened a 110-square-metre warehouse in Nesher on Jan. 1, 2008. Their website is <http://www.tabletotable.org.il> in both Hebrew and English.

In a trip to Israel earlier this year, while other tourists were basking at the beach or shopping, Ray and Rosalind, with the assistance of Yisroel Stefansky of Israel Support Fund, made their way to Hebron where they experienced the front line aspects of the conflict where devout Jews are protecting one of Israel's most cherished sites, the Cave of Machpela where Abraham, Issac, Jacob and their wives are buried.

Stefansky is familiar to Torontonians as one of the founders of Zaka. He has attended as a paramedic at almost every terror attack in Israel.

At a time when antisemitism is rife, when campuses are exploding in anti-Israel rhetoric, the MacDonalds represent the new face of evangelism; joining in the destiny of the Jews to be a light unto the nations.

*Reprinted with permission from  
The Jewish Tribune*

**We at the Atlantic Jewish Council encourage input in the form of articles relating to Jewish life in Atlantic Canada. Please address correspondence to [elevine@theajc.ns.ca](mailto:elevine@theajc.ns.ca)**



## BIRTHPLACE OF SYDNEY JEWISH COMMUNITY COULD BECOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

BY TAMAR ELLIS

THE CULTURAL MELTING POT THAT WAS WHITNEY PIER, CAPE BRETON AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY GAVE BIRTH TO ONE OF THE ISLAND'S EARLY JEWISH COMMUNITIES AND COULD BECOME NOVA SCOTIA'S NEWEST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IF A LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP HAS ITS WAY.

The Whitney Pier Historical Society, which operates out of the former Adath Israel Synagogue in the community, is looking into the idea. Representatives of the society met recently with officials of Parks Canada to discuss what is required to achieve the designation.

Lifelong Pier resident Evelyn Davis, who attended the meeting, describes herself as 50% of the Pier Jewish community (the other 50% being her husband, Harold) says she hopes all the ethnic groups will get on side and begin the lengthy process of applying for the national designation. She notes that despite all the different cultures, religions and ethnic groups who lived in Whitney Pier, everyone got along. "It didn't matter", she said "whether you went to the shul, the Polish Church, the Ukrainian Church, the Croatian Church, whatever, people were friends.



*Harold and Evelyn Davis, the only Jewish Presidents of Whitney Pier*

She notes the former shul has become a popular destination for organized tours and is now an important part of the Jewish Heritage Tours organized for cruise ship passengers and Jewish Youth Groups visiting the area.

The synagogue was built in 1913, and included within the building a Hebrew school. Prior to the establishment of the synagogue, and before there were enough families in Sydney, men were brought in from Glace Bay to form a minyan. The synagogue was the center of social and cultural activities until the establishment of a YMHA several years later, at which

time social activities shifted to The Y. As the Jewish population of Sydney (including Whitney Pier) grew during the first third of the century (From 22 in 1901 to 425 in 1931.), Jewish communal activities increased.

By the mid 1920's, many Jewish families were moving out of Whitney Pier into Sydney proper. Until this time Whitney Pier had more Jewish families than Sydney. During this period a second synagogue was established in Sydney. While both synagogues were initially Orthodox, the Sydney synagogue gradually became Conservative.

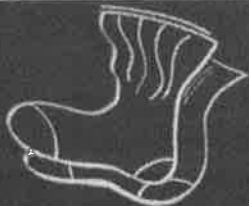
Whitney Pier was settled by people from all over the world who came to work in the steel and coal industries. The ethnic groups represented in the "Pier" include Jewish, Celtic, Newfoundland, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian and Black (both Nova Scotian and West Indian), as well as a small number of First Nation families. Whitney Pier is considered to be one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Eastern Canada. Community institutions, represented by "ethnic" halls and places of worship reflect this diversity. This multicultural community has always retained a strong and proud sense of itself.

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THE CAPE BRETON JEWISH COMMUNITY GOT TOGETHER AT THE CAPE BRETON REGIONAL HOSPITAL IN SYDNEY ON SUNDAY, MARCH 30TH TO SAY "so long" to life-long Sydney resident **Sam Mendleson**, who is moving to new accommodations at Northwood Manor in Halifax.

Sam, who is 91, has been a pillar of the Jewish Community in Sydney and has assisted his congregation in innumerable ways over the decades. Temple Sons

of Israel vice-president Dr. Garson Lecker brought greetings from the shul and best wishes from members of his widespread family of nieces and nephews were read to those in attendance.

In addition, Sam was presented with certificates of appreciation from Premier Rodney MacDonald of Nova Scotia and Lieutenant-Governor Mayann Francis.

## SYDNEY TEMPLE SONS OF ISRAEL IMPROVES SHUL ACCESS

It's a lot easier now for people with mobility difficulties to get to shul in Sydney. The Temple Sons of Israel



*Dr. Garson Lecker presents Sam Mendleson with certificates of appreciation.*

has embarked on a project to improve access for congregants and visitors who have difficulty walking or climbing and descending stairs.

In late March, work crews were busy installing three chair lifts, one going from the building's main entrance up to the first floor which houses the sanctuary;

and two lifts going from entry level to the downstairs meeting and recreation areas.

Congregation president, Martin Chernin, says the membership decided improved access was needed, particularly given the aging population of the community.

He says the project was made possible through the generous assistance of members as well as the provincial government's Community ACCESS-ability Program which provides for cost-shared grants to community groups for accessibility-related capital improvements.

Under this program, the provincial Government

makes grants of up to two thirds of the direct and indirect costs of renovations, installations, and/or equipment, with the sponsoring organization being responsible for raising at least one third of the funding from other sources.

In addition to the chair lifts, the project includes a wheel-chair ramp at the main entrance. The ramp will be constructed later this spring.



*The Conter family enjoying a gourmet kosher culinary experience.*



*Sam Mendleson*

# BOOK BRINGS HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR TO WINDSOR

BY JOEL JACOBSON

A chance discovery of a book led to 240 Windsor-area children hearing a Holocaust survivor tell her story of dread and hope and eventual success.

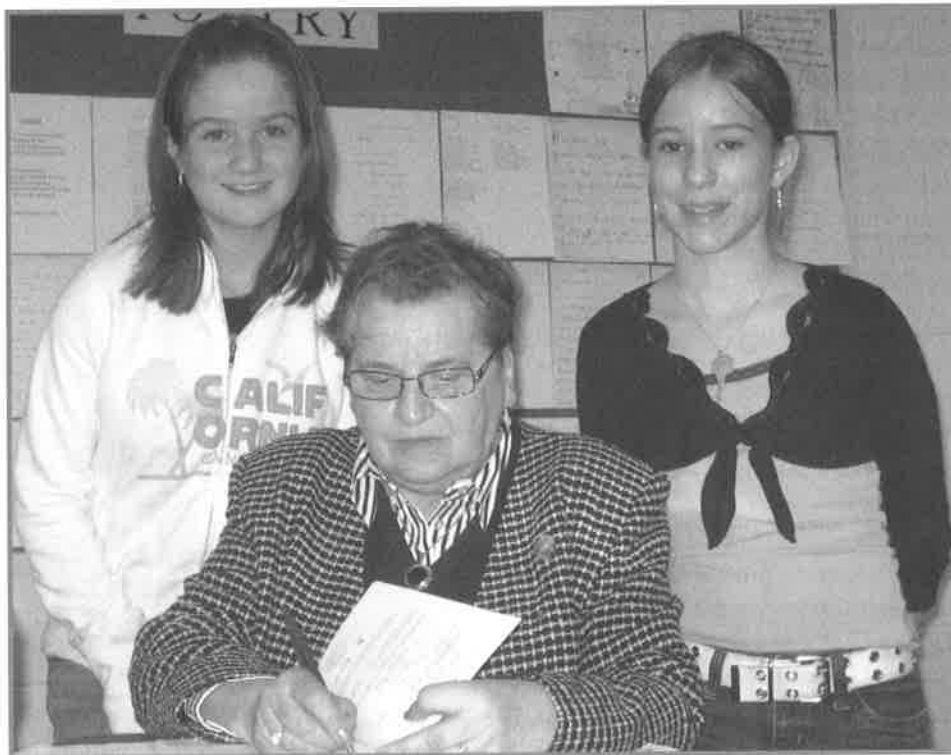
Grade 6 teacher Melissa Fox, of Windsor Forks District School, found *Hiding Edith*, a book by Kathy Kacer of Toronto, on her mother's kitchen counter last summer. "I read the blurb on the back of the book, was interested and read it," she recalls. "I was so captivated I read it to my class last fall and they wrote letters to Edith (Gelbard, of Toronto, the subject of the book). They asked tons of questions and she answered them all. Then they asked her to come to our school to visit."

In mid-April, Edith, 76, told her story of survival, how she was uprooted at age six, with her family, from their home in Austria; how they escaped to Belgium and then to France, as German soldiers made inroads into each country; how she was separated from her mother and father and lived in private homes and on farms, being hidden by fearless people until the end of the war when she was reunited with her mother and sister. She was 13 and had spent almost seven years in hiding.

Just seven years ago, when her husband passed away, Edith began to tell her story, has done it scores of times, and admits it never gets any easier. "I don't sleep much the night before a presentation," she says after speaking at Windsor Forks District School. "But I know I have to do it."

Kathy Kacer heard her speak in Toronto and knew she had to write about Edith. The book, published in 2006, has been re-printed twice. Edith, 76, says the book has been translated into Japanese and Braille. "As part of my trip to Windsor Forks, I was in New Brunswick and met a girl in Campobello who was blind and asked for it in Braille. When I met her and signed the book for her, she was so happy."

She captivates more than 240 children at Windsor Forks, some of whom came from other schools in the area to hear her. They



*Holocaust survivor Edith Gelbard, Toronto, signs copy of a book about her at Windsor Forks District School in Hants Co., N.S. With her are Grade 6 students Melissa Moore and Sara McKee.*

sit silently for more than 40 minutes as she tells them how, as a child, she could no longer go to school, movies, to the park, how stores owned by Jews were closed and Jewish teachers were unable to teach.

She talks about being bullied because she was Jewish and implores the children, "pleased, please, please don't be a bully. Be good to everyone. You're our next generation. Don't let another Hitler come back."

She tells them how protected she was in homes in France, mostly in the small town of Moissac, despite the best efforts of the Gestapo to find Jews. She had to take a new identity at 11 with a new name, new birthplace and tell people she was an orphan. She talks about lacking food and eating rotten carrots she found in garbage. "I still eat carrots today, though," she says with a smile, "but I cook them how I like them." She heard bombs dropping near where she lived and admits "I'm still scared of thunder today."

The students in Grades 4-6 wrote poetry about Edith's experiences and painted pictures of areas where she lived, of her hiding behind bushes, of her eating the carrots behind the outdoor bathrooms.

Hands fly to the air when she asks for questions. One boy asks about her family. She tells him her father was in the Buchenwald concentration camp but was liberated April 10, 1945. "He died the next day," she says, sadly.

Melissa is pleased with the students' reaction.

"When I was reading the book to them, they'd say, every day, 'Don't stop.' As children, they could relate to Edith at a young age. When we invited her to speak to us, I told the kids we wouldn't have this opportunity forever to hear, first hand, from a survivor.

"It's important that the story never be forgotten. These children will be able to carry on the stories of the Holocaust."

**May 14, 2008**  
**Marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Israeli Statehood**  
**THE STORY OF ISRAEL**  
**by Sir Martin Gilbert**  
**chronicles the effort, spirit, and will it took to establish a**  
**sovereign Jewish nation in Palestine**



From Theodor Herzl's fin de siècle efforts to establish a sovereign Jewish nation in Palestine, to the twenty-first century roadmap for peace and beyond, **The Story of Israel**, written by one of the world's leading historians, Sir Martin Gilbert, tells the dramatic story of the founding and development of modern Israel.

Just over 100 years ago, Theodor Herzl launched the Zionist Movement, calling for a Jewish state in its ancestral land, Palestine. Fifty years later, after the Second World War ended, the State of Israel was established, enabling displaced Jews around the world to have a homeland of their own at last. After independence, three quarters of a million Jews from Arab lands were re-settled in the newly-formed state of Israel. Then, as Communism disintegrated, more than a million Jews emigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union. Despite the daily threat of war and terrorist attacks, Israel has sought peace through both secret and public negotiations. These efforts continue to this day, despite two major Palestinian uprisings.

**The Story of Israel** contains 200 powerful photographs and over 30 items of previously unpublished, removable memorabilia, reproduced exactly as it was originally, bringing this extraordinary period of Israel's history to life as never before. Memorabilia includes:

- *Pages of Theodor Herzl's diary*
- *The Balfour Declaration*
- *The Jewish Brigade's Second World War newspaper*
- *Identification papers of an Exodus refugee*
- *Ben Gurion's copy of his Declaration of Independence speech*
- *President Truman's letter recognising the new State of Israel*
- *A letter to her parents from an Israeli frontline soldier about to die in the War of Independence battle for Jerusalem*
- *An Israeli Air Force commander's Order of Day at the start of the Six Day War*
- *The Jerusalem Post issue announcing the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin*

Covering everything from the establishment of the first Kibbutz to the opening of the Hebrew University, to the British restrictions on Jewish immigration, to the numerous wars with its hostile neighbours, massacre at the Olympics, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the ongoing search for peace, **The Story of Israel**, brings to life the continued struggle for existence by this seemingly fearless yet tiny state. **The Story of Israel** is essential reading for both young and old, for both the knowledgeable and those wanting to learn more about this fascinating country.

**AUTHOR**

**Sir Martin Gilbert** is one of the world's most respected historians and a leading expert on Jewish history. He has written 20 books on the subject, including *Arab-Israel Conflict Atlas* (now in its eighth edition) and a *History of Israel*. His *Jewish History Atlas* is a classic work of reference. He was in Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and came under Syrian shellfire on the Golan Heights. He has been a visiting professor at both Tel Aviv and the Hebrew University and spends part of every year in Israel.



## CLUB MASSADA NEWS

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BY BARB ALBERSTAT, PRESIDENT

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY GREAT LUNCHEAS AND MEETINGS SINCE SEPTEMBER, 2007. We have had entertaining singers, a group of four men bringing us the music of a barbershop quartet, a wonderful turnout for our Annual Chanukah Latke Lunch and in February a slide show by Leah McKnight and her brother Jamie Ferguson on their memorable trip to Marianne Ferguson's home town of Gdansk where they found their mother's house still intact. They also visited old synagogues in Prague, Krakow, Budapest and other European centres.

The Chanukah Lunch was a great success as usual with some of our own members providing the delicious latkes as part of

the meal. The hall was decorated with many Chanukah banners and dreidels, and the tables were set with menorahs, candles and holiday tablecloths.

The Gift Shops of the Beth Israel and Shaar

Shalom Synagogues were there for people

to purchase Chanukah candles, cards and gifts.

Everyone enjoyed the afternoon.

Club Massada is one of the oldest organizations operating continuously since before 1985, attending the needs of the senior Jewish

population in the Halifax area. Thankfully, we have been well served by many devoted presidents and boards to bring Jewish seniors together to visit and shmooze for awhile.

We will be meeting in March for Music Month and also in April. We meet in Northwood at 12 noon, the third Thursday of the month, and would welcome everyone to come and enjoy a pleasant few hours. Discussions are underway for the annual closing dinner at Dofsky's restaurant towards the end of May which brings to a close another very successful year. Hope to see you at Club Massada.



Massada Club Executive Feb. 2008  
Beverley Parsons, Shirley Burnstein, Barb Alberstat, Borace Jacobson,  
Mildred Glynn, Mindy Jacobson, Ralph Garson



Massada Club Meeting  
Ginger Sadofsky, Laurence Ferguson, Marianne Ferguson

## CANADIAN HADASSAH-WIZO

BY BETTE ROSS

Have you heard? Convention 2008 will take place in Calgary November 15-18 2008. Come and join us at this, our 39th not-to-be-missed convention. Hear keynote speaker, Globe and Mail's Margaret Wente, see Gail Asper receive the Rebecca Sieff Award, then take a post-convention

trip to Banff. Visit our West Market Shuk, play midnight Mah-jong, bridge, poker or any other games you desire. Our next edition of Orah Magazine will be full of details and convention news.

If you need details right away, call me,

**Bette Ross at 422-9205.** I will be delighted to help you. We have power and energy so start planning now to make our 39th convention a huge success. Lucky Halifax has been allocated 12 delegates so join the rush and register soon. See you in Calgary.

# JNF GOURMET KOSHER CULINARY EXPERIENCE HELD IN HALIFAX

BY LAURA TSINMAN, JNF ATLANTIC REGION

PAGE 43

ON A CHILLY WINTER NIGHT IN LATE JANUARY AN ADVENTUROUS GROUP GATHERED TOGETHER IN HALIFAX TO EXPERIENCE A LITTLE TASTE OF ISRAEL.

Chefs from Israel and Halifax teamed up with the Jewish National Fund on January 30th to present a five-course gourmet kosher dinner at Halifax's beautiful Gio Restaurant in the Prince George hotel.

This dinner, in honour of Tu Bi'Shevat, was an opportunity for JNF to bring Israeli food and culture to Halifax and, for attendees a chance to enjoy the treat of an elegant and kosher meal in one of the city's finest restaurants.

Israeli chefs Ariel Porat and Boaz Sharabi of the Dan Hotel chain worked together

with Ted Grant's team at Gio to prepare delicious dishes such as Olive Oil Poached Halibut and Braised Lamb with Ras el Hannut Spices. This warm and wonderful evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all that attended and many people left already talking about next year's menu!



The Conter family enjoying a gourmet kosher culinary experience.

CELEBRATING ISRAEL'S



Canadian  
**MAGEN DAVID ADOM**  
For ISRAEL



*Chag Sameach to all our Friends, Donors, and  
Supporters during the Passover festivities*

>> Honour your Friends and Family with a special MDA HOLIDAY CARD <<

With **YOUR** help – MDA will continue to provide uninterrupted  
emergency service to the people of Israel.

CANADIAN  
**MAGEN DAVID ADOM**

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ISRAEL CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT MAGEN DAVID ADOM <> MAGEN DAVID ADOM CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU



THE MONCTON COMMUNITY WAS SADDENED BY THE LOSS OF ANOTHER LONG TIME MEMBER STEVE GERGELY WHO PASSED AWAY ON MARCH 30 AFTER A SHORT ILLNESS. Born in Győr, Hungary, Steve was a Holocaust

Survivor, who came to Canada with his family in 1957 during the Hungarian Revolution. He was a European master watchmaker and jeweller, and owned and operated Steve's Watch & Jewellery Ltd. in Moncton for nearly fifty years. Steve is survived by his wife of 61 years,

Sara, his sons, Peter, and Robert and grandchildren, Laura, Andrew, Erika and Michael. He was well known for his generosity and wonderful sense of humour.

## THE PARIS TO MONCTON REPORT

BY BARRIE AND EYV CARNAT

*Editor's note: Barrie and Eyv Carnat, active members of the Moncton Jewish community, are temporarily living in Paris.*

PARIS IS REALLY A JEWISH CITY," SAID THE AMERICAN WE MET IN SHUL, AND WE'VE FOUND THAT'S TRUE. Today, walking along Rue Charles De Gaulle ready for a rest and some shade (a sunny 15 °) and something cold to drink, the first place we came to, was a kosher restaurant. A couple weeks ago in another part of Paris, walking back home after the parade called "Promenade de boeuf gras" the fat cow parade, to celebrate the Brazilian carnival, we had a pleasant surprise seeing a sign for a kosher grocery store. Later today it was another kosher restaurant near our apartment where we bought a falafel. It's a very popular place that's mentioned in some tour books, and there were thirty people lined up outside for take out, and every table was full inside.

We've read that there are 100 synagogues in Paris, but so far we've only been in three. We have found one with lots of wonderful singing that we keep going back to. In fact, we have joined the Tuesday evening choral group, which has turned out to be a nice way to meet people. This coming Shabbat, we are invited to someone's home for the first

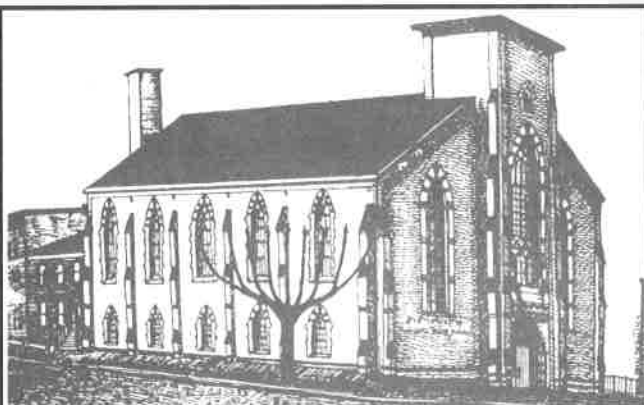
time. In the Jewish press the talk is about the election of the next chief Rabbi of France this year. And in the high schools, the holocaust is becoming part of the curriculum. Walking in Chinatown, we passed a school with a large plaque at the entry in memory of the Jewish students who were taken from this school during the holocaust. Of course Paris is very multicultural, very sophisticated, very

busy, very interesting. We have yet to travel outside the city, there's still enough in Paris to keep our weekends filled. And the weather today was short sleeve warm.

For us so far it's been a good time, Eyv studying French and Barrie learning the wide scope of the World Organization for Animal Health. But we do miss our friends, and thankfully, we get our first Moncton visitors in a week.

Save these  
Dates!

AUGUST  
1-3  
2008



**Come say Shalom (hello) to Saint John  
while we say Shalom (farewell)  
to Shaarei Zedek Synagogue.**

**The property has been sold - and this may be your last chance to experience  
the history of the Saint John Jewish Community in this building  
that has been our Synagogue for almost 100 years!**

A block of rooms is being held at the Delta Brunswick Hotel, Saint John, NB. Call 1-800-335-8233 and ask for "Shaarei Zedek Reunion" or book online at [www.deltabrunswick.com/gdshaa](http://www.deltabrunswick.com/gdshaa)

For more information on this event, email: [delman@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:delman@nbnet.nb.ca) or write to: Susan Isaacs-Lubin, 12 Grantham Road Saint John, NB E2K 0B9

# REPORT FROM AROUND THE REGION: SAINT JOHN JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

BY KATHERINE BIGGS-CRAFT, CURATOR

PAGE 45



*Saint John's Jewish Community Centre.*

AS WINTER LOOSENS ITS GRIP ON SAINT JOHN, THINGS ARE ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY TO PREPARE THE MUSEUM FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMER SEASON.

This includes preparing the exhibits, planning for Yom HaShoah, writing the semi-annual newsletter and applying for the funding and students to keep the doors open.

The major exhibit for the upcoming year will be "Celebrating 150 Years of Jewish Life in Saint John, New Brunswick". The exhibit will tell the story of the community beginning with the arrival of Solomon and Alice Hart in 1858 up to the present day. Along the way, the exhibit will take a peek at the synagogue buildings which have been in the city, recall some of the longest serving congregation presidents, show families through the generations and remember those who were merchants along Saint John's streets and those who served in war. We also recall the memories of summers in Pamdenec (the summer community near Saint John which flourished from the '20s to the 60s) and the Koom Ahaim reunion which took place in July 1984.

This will be an ambitious project to bring so many different things together and to have presented. Large panels will be prepared by a professional graphic designer and hung in the museum on completion. Ultimately the goal is to

create an on-line version of this exhibit so all the world can see it. The exhibit will be open to the public beginning on Monday, May 26, 2008.

On Monday, May 5th, the Museum will host the annual Yom HaShoah service in the Shaarei Zedek Synagogue. The guest speaker will be Esther Bem, of Toronto. She and her family were Yugoslavians but after the arrival of the Germans fled to Italy. Esther and her parents survived the Holocaust by hiding as Christians in Italy in the final years of the war. Two of her sisters joined the partisans in Yugoslavia, one survived, one did not.

At the same time we will recognize the students who have participated in the Holocaust Study Group, a program which we have carried out for several years in partnership with the Enrichment Centre of School District 8 in Saint John. The students are busily working on their projects for presentation, many of them working in small groups. One group is composing music, another a play, another a series of newspaper-style pieces of specific wartime events. Others are working independently on original art and power point presentations, one about the life of the Jews after liberation.

The Museum newsletter will be going out to its members before the middle of April. This is the primary means of contacting our members, most of whom are spread across Canada and the United States and a few to other parts of the world. This is also the opportunity for our members to renew their memberships in the Museum which allows the Museum to operate effectively. We do welcome new members who share an interest in preserving the history of this Jewish community. Those who wish to join are welcome to contact the museum at any time through the year.

The winter and spring are also the times of year when grants for summer students who assist in the museum as guides and

on special projects are filled in, always with the hope that interested students will take advantage of a wonderful employment and learning opportunity. As well there are grants for government funding, some of which covers day to day operations, some of which supports specific projects.

This coming summer promises to be a busy one – there will be nearly eighty cruise ships docking in the city over the coming months and there will be more than thirty Jewish Heritage Bus Tours available to the passengers. These tours are led by a member of the local Jewish community and bring visitors from the dock to see the past and present sites of Jewish activity in Saint John. These tours are always popular and often sell out. As well, we will see many visitors to the area who travel on their own and who seek out the communities on the fringes of Jewish life. All visitors are amazed by what they hear and see and are impressed with what a small group of people can accomplish.

And if you are a former Jewish Saint John resident, we especially look forward to seeing you. Who knows, you or your family's picture or memorabilia may be on display on the walls or in the display cases.

The largest project in the history of the museum will take place once the tourist season draws to a close. The Museum will be relocating to make way for new development in this part of Saint John, but will reopen in the spring of 2009 with G-d's will and be more interesting and more accessible than ever before.



*Saint John's Jewish Community Centre.*

# REPORT FROM SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

## BY DR. JOSEPH ARDITTI

IN THE YEAR OF 2007 OF C.E., THE SYNAGOGUE BUILDING, WHICH HAS BEEN IN THE POSSESSION OF THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1914, AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE BUILDING, WHICH HOUSES THE MUSEUM, WERE BOUGHT BY THE CITY OF SAINT JOHN. This was finalized after a general meeting was held, and the members of the Congregation agreed to the negotiated sum. We will have to vacate the buildings by the end of November 2008.

You can imagine the emotional turmoil that we are facing. First of all, we will have to say good-bye to this old (by the way, Synagogues never grow old!) building that has served us for many years. It is like saying good-bye to a grandfather! Secondly, the Jewish Community Centre will have to close its doors in the fall. This building, which was refurbished in 1975, served as our Hebrew School for many years, through several generations, provided a chapel for daily prayers and since 1986 has been home to the Museum.

When there is sadness, there is always a celebration associated with it. When an elderly person passes away, we always say he lived so many years. So, our buildings lived so many beautiful and memorable years.

Now we have a huge task in front of us. We are looking for a piece of land in the downtown area, to build a new Synagogue, and attached to it, another small building



*Sharrei Zedek Synagogue*

to house the Museum. For all aspects of the move, several committees have been formed and have started to work. The AJC and UJA have been advising us and have been very helpful in this project.

We are planning to have a get-together with former "Saint Johners" to celebrate a final Shabbah during the weekend of August 1st, which is a holiday weekend in New Brunswick. Those who are interested are welcome to return to the Synagogue to say farewell to this magnificent building. The Committee that is involved in this project is preparing the schedule of events and the invitations.

Purim was celebrated in our Chapel where the Megilla was read by Moshe Granik and some parts by the attendees. Afterwards, we had a mini Seuda where we munched on delicious Hamantaschen which were sent to us by the AJC. For this

we thank them and hope to continue to do this in the coming years!

Our Gabbai, Dan Elman, and his wife Anne have just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We wish them many more years of health and happiness. Dan recently wrote a book entitled "Centrum". This book deals with individuals and events during the final years of the Second World War in Belgium. I would highly recommend to the readers of Shalom magazine and your friends to order this book from Amazon.com, and enjoy it.

Before I close this message, I would like to wish Happy Pesach to all of us. Like many, many years ago, when the Jewish People left Egypt and reached the Homeland, so we hope that we in Saint John will leave our Synagogue and reach our new home.

# NEWS FROM FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

## BY RUTH CHIPPIN

PAGE 47

SPRING HAS ARRIVED! WITH SPRING COMES PURIM. THIS YEAR IN PREPARATION FOR PURIM THERE WERE A FEW ACTIVITIES IN FREDERICTON.. Sisterhood had a Challah fun event where everyone got a chance to learn to bake Challah and take home a small Challah for Shabbat. Parents and children were invited to a hamentaschen making afternoon the Sunday before Purim. A Purim fun day was held on Purim itself. There were some very creative costumes this year. Everyone had fun playing Jewish pictionary. Also, since Purim was erev Shabbat, every family who attended the Purim Seudah was given mishloach manot, consisting of 2 challah rolls, kugel and a hamentaschen. Rabbi and Shelley Zisook also delivered Shalach manos on Purim day to the elders/shut ins in Fredericton.

The spring promises to be a busy time with lots of activity. Please keep the following dates open:

- On Thursday evening, **April 10** Paul Michaels, National Director of Communication for The Canada Israel Committee will be in Fredericton. He will be meeting with the community that evening in the Synagogue. His topic will be **"Is the Media coverage of Israel Changing? If so, How?"**
- On the first night of Pesach, Saturday **April 19** there will be a community Sedar at the Synagogue. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Rabbi for details.
- On Sunday, **May 4**, Fredericton will be holding our annual Yom HaShoah event at the synagogue. Esther Bem will be the speaker this year.
- On Thursday evening, **May 7**

Fredericton will be celebrating Yom Ha'Azmout with two Israeli entertainers.

- Plans are in the works for a celebration for Yom Yerushalayim later this spring.

MAZEL TOV TO...

**Marilyn and Seymour Kaufman and Sheila and Harry Chippin** on the birth of a grand daughter/great grand daughter born to their daughter/granddaughter Alexis in Alberta.

**Doris and Steve Rauch** on the birth of a grand daughter born to their daughter Sharon in Ottawa.

**Inna and Leonid Gimmelstein** on the birth of a daughter.

The Fredericton community wishes everyone a **Happy Pesach**.

## NEWS FROM THE ROCK

### BY CLAIRE FRANKEL-SALAMA

SINCE I ARRIVED HERE FROM TORONTO IN 1985, THE QUESTION I HAVE BEEN ASKED MOST FREQUENTLY BY BOTH VISITORS AND NEWFOUNDLANDERS ALIKE is, of course, "How many members do you have?" As those of you in small communities know, it is hard to explain the fact that numbers are not the only important element in building and maintaining a community. Last August, my husband took a number of students from Memorial University to the summer programme he initiated in La Coruña, in northwestern Spain. La Coruña is a small city on the Atlantic, near Santiago de Compostela, and is a day's train ride from Spain's largest

Jewish community in Madrid. In the medieval part of this old city, one can still find the "Street of the Jews" and a building which housed at least one of its synagogues. What made last summer really special for us was our discovery of a fledgling Jewish community, the Havura Ner Tamid, in a city that had not had any Jewish life for over 500 years.

The leader of this Jewish renaissance is Adiel, a convert who has studied long



Chanukah Children's Art Workshop with local artist Tia Connolly

and hard in England, and who has inspired a dozen other Jews, half-Jews and descendants of the crypto-Jews, to come together, learn some prayers and start to live as proud Jews once more. Every Friday evening last August, we met at someone's apartment, prayed in Hebrew (which is taught in weekly classes) and Spanish, said the Kiddush, and shared a home-baked Challah. In the meantime, the executive, Ramón Olivera and Luisa Conde, have managed to lobby the municipality successfully for a place to call their own. The first baby was circumcised and named in January; the first Jewish wedding will take place in June. Not only that, this past month they succeeded in opening the very first kosher restaurant in all of Northwest Spain. It is called "El Alegre Sefardi", or the Sephardic/Spanish Joy. In fact, you can read all about it in the local newspaper.

[http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/coruna/2008/03/07/0003\\_6632329.htm](http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/coruna/2008/03/07/0003_6632329.htm).

We sometimes agonize over the future of our tiny communities. Who will take over? Who knows enough to keep our traditions, to foster continuity? Imagine what it would be like to search among the ruins of a community that has been dormant for half a millennium following the Expulsion of 1492, and to manage to rekindle the fire of Judaism, against all odds? These people (and there are others in Spain and Portugal) are true heroes of our time, and an inspiration to us all. If you are planning a visit to a part of Spain that is green and not overrun by tourists, please contact Ner Tamid and visit them for Shabbat or holiday services. You will experience great admiration for the extent of their dream and their profound commitment. Their website is: [http://www.nertamid.es/Nertamid/Ner\\_Tamid.html](http://www.nertamid.es/Nertamid/Ner_Tamid.html)

On this side of the Atlantic, our little

community has also been busy keeping the Jewish flame alive. A joyous Chanukah party with games and participation of young and old alike started off our winter season. The morning of the party, we welcomed Tia Connolly, a local artist, who came to do a Chanukah workshop with the children as the adults made latkes and set up for the evening. The decorations made by the children served to make our party even more freylich.

At the beginning of January we celebrated the birthday of our most venerable member, **Ernie Mauskopf**, with a Shabbat luncheon following services. That week we were pleased to welcome **David Weinberg**, Israeli Director of the Canada-Israel Committee. Dr. Weinberg accomplished a huge feat of Hasbara in a twenty-four hour period. In the morning he was interviewed by the local CBC, who rebroadcast his entire segment the next afternoon. After lunch and a quick trip to Signal Hill and Quidi Vidi, he spoke to approximately 80 Grade 12 History students at Mount Pearl Senior High. He was warm, funny and informative, which was just the right mixture for these students who had no previous connection to Israel in their lives. That evening, David spoke at St. Thomas' Anglican Church, the largest in the province, to an audience of approximately one hundred adults,



*Several costume wearers at the Purim party*

including a good number of local theologians. After a general summary on the geopolitics in the Middle East, he focused on the strategic situation of the Christian communities in the region. Again, his mixture of hard fact and personal anecdote was very effective. We thank the CIC, the AJC and Canon John Paul Westin for helping us to help Israel in our own little way.

On February 4th, **Dr. Barbara Grandy and I** represented Beth El at the inauguration of the Honourable John C. Crosbie as the 12th Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador. After a ceremony replete with the typical Crosbie wit, he reiterated his continuing support of the Jewish community of our province and of the State of Israel. The following week I was invited to speak at St. Mark's, another Anglican church, by the Reverend Sandra Tilley. The St. Mark's group was very welcoming, and asked many questions, both during the powerpoint presentation, and afterwards.

March arrived with still more snow, but thankfully, the weather systems were on their good behaviour for our



Claire Frankel-Salama and Dr. David Weinberg at St. Thomas' Anglican Church.

Purim party. After a beautiful reading of the Megillah by our own Ernie Mauskopf, punctuated by raucous greggors and other noisemakers, supper and Hamantaschen were enjoyed by all. There were many great costumes but that of the "Cat lady", worn by Susanne Gulliver, was truly creative. The students then donned their "Purim Pub Crawl" t-shirts and headed off to George Street to achieve a state of "Ad lo yada". Oh, to be their age again!

This past week we hosted yet another visit of a group of students from Memorial University, accompanied by their chaplain, David Newman. This type of outreach is extremely important, as most students have never been to a synagogue in their lives, and are quite interested in finding out what we are all about.

As April approaches, we are now getting ready for Pesach, and our very first communal Seder. To this effect we thank Shimon Wilansky who will kasher our kitchen, and who is coordinating the ordering of Passover foods for our community. We are also busy working on the Holocaust Memorial Service scheduled to be held at the University on May 4th.

Our community has experienced its joys and sorrows this past winter. Our long-time member, and former president, Sid Epstein, has been ill and is in hospital. We pray for his refuah shlemah, and hope to have him back with us as soon as he is able. We also wish a refuah shlemah to Dr.

David Mercer.

We mourn the loss of our dear friend and devoted former member, Moshe Kantorowitz.

Moshe lived here with his wife, Ruth, and his family for many years, and was awarded an honorary doctorate by Memorial University for his contributions to the province in the field of Holocaust Education. May his memory be for a blessing. Around here he was known as the "fastest davener in the East" and we miss him terribly.

Although I generally refrain from tooting the Salama horn, I am pleased to report on the success of yet two more Jewish kids from the Rock. Our daughter, Arielle,

is graduating from Medicine at Queen's University, and will be doing a residency in psychiatry at University of Toronto. Our son, Daniel, is finishing off his B.A. at the University of Ottawa, and has been accepted by McGill for their combined Common and Civil Law programme. He is following in the footsteps of Rufina Litvak, who attended Camp Kadimah at least a decade ago, and who is now working in New York City.

As winter draws to a close (are you listening, winter?), we look forward to a meaningful Pesach and hope that the ice in the Straits does not delay our Matzah from its very important destination.



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# NEWS FROM NEWFOUNDLAND'S JEWISH COMMUNITY HAVURA

BY NANCY BENNETT

THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY FOR THE HAVURA. DESPITE THE STORMY WINTER WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE AN ACTIVE, THRIVING COMMUNITY.

**Hanukah** ~ The Sunday before our Hanukah party, ten of us gathered at the Bennetts to make over 300 latkes. About 60 people attended the Hanukah party on Sunday, December 9. We led off with a children's party where each child made and decorated his or her own hanukiah. Then we had candle lighting, a sing-along, a hearty potluck meal with plenty of latkes and homemade applesauce, and dancing to music by the Memorial University klezmer band, *B'ys in da Shtetl*. Many members worked to make the evening a success including **Élizabeth-Anne Malischewski, Nancy & Arnold Bennett, Inbal Bahar, Diane and Marvin Siegel and Gil Shalev**.

**Religious Social Action Coalition** ~ The Jewish Community Havura is playing an important role in the work of the Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador - along with leading Christian groups (Catholic, Anglican, United Church, etc.), Muslims, Hindus and others. The group is busy getting ready for a federal election by creating a Web site and preparing questions for candidates about their stands on poverty and related issues.

**Havura Lecture Series** ~ On January 23, **Dr. Robert Sweeny**, professor of Canadian history at Memorial University and noted Quebec specialist, gave the 3rd in the Havura's public lecture series. He talked about his mapping project on 19th century Jewish immigration to Montreal. It was an interesting lecture which generated many questions and much discussion.

**Interfaith Women's Group** ~ **Ruth Noel and Shari Ritter** continue to participate in the Women's Interfaith Group.



*Arnold and Nancy Bennett at the Jewish community Havura Purim party*

The group is in the process of assisting nursing homes by developing a pamphlet on religious and cultural practices on dietary and death and dying issues.

**Young Adult Sunday Brunch** ~ **Rob and Shari Ritter** hosted a Sunday brunch for some of the young adults of the community. They were especially happy to have fresh bagels and some weren't aware that we have a great bakery in St John's that makes Montreal style bagels. The Ritters' neighbour brought back some Toronto bagels so they satisfied those from Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg, too! When Rob and Shari first arrived in St. John's, we had three young adults for brunch. It was so nice to have 20, five years later.

**Purim** ~ Our annual hamantashen-baking party was thwarted by bad weather but three of us managed to get together the next morning to bake over 200 mohn, prune and apricot cookies before yet another storm struck the city. The weather cooperated for Purim eve and all enjoyed the delicious pot luck

supper, the reading of the Magillah and, of course, the *B'ys in the Shtetl* klezmer band. Havura members and friends **Neil Rosenberg, Terri Thomson, Paul Bendzsa and Terry Rielly** joined in to augment the band and there was much dancing and merriment. The children enjoyed the activity table as well as some of the adults. **Inbal Bahar, Élizabeth-Anne Malischewski, Lisa Bendzsa and Ruth Noel** organized the event. **Arnold Bennett** organized the service and picked up Purim "goodies" in Toronto. **Charlotte-Anne Malischewski** played a beautiful violin melody before the service and set the mood of the reading. **Inbal, Lisa, Gil Shalev, Angelique Myles and Basja Broches** did an animated bilingual reading of the Magillah. Haman's name was definitely drowned out.

Keep up with Havura activities by checking our Web site: [www.havura.org](http://www.havura.org). Or call us at 709-834-7866. Leave your name and number and we'll get back to you. We continue with our services and other cultural activities.

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