

SHALOM! שלום



Spring 2012 Vol. 37 No.1

SIVAN 5772



MARCELA ROSEMBERG

A piece of the Kotel and Menorah, Cast glass, 15 cm x 15 cm x 3 cm

- MISSION 2010: A GENEROUS GIFT
- TITANIC GRAVES IN HALIFAX
- NEWS FROM AROUND OUR REGION



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Marcela Rosemberg

Marcela Rosemberg is originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina and has been involved in various art forms all her life. Her love for glass began when she started experiencing the magic of fusing and kilnforming. She realized then that it was going to be her every day source of energy. She combines her work as an artist with teaching and researching. Glass was the key to start living in Prince Edward Island eight years ago, soon becoming part of the fabric of this tiny Canadian Island province. Infusing her compelling love and respect for nature, her Jewish faith, and her own sensitivity, she expresses her emotions and creates each piece as a "one of a kind". Galleries, art circles, and private collectors have Marcela's original works of art. Beauty, simplicity, elegance and function are essential components in her glass designs. She seeks that special blend of colours and textures that leads her to each piece of glass she carefully designs.
<http://marcelarosemberg.com>

שלום!

President: Shulamith Medjuck

The Atlantic Jewish Council

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NOTE TO OUR READERS

Our Atlantic Jewish community is losing more and more members as the years go on.

In the past, Shalom has printed stories of regional community members who have passed away.

While we try to acknowledge the major contributions of many of our late friends and family members, we request that you inform Shalom of passings of which we may be unaware so we may recognize these individuals.

Shalom's editorial staff reserves the right to determine the length of memorial pieces to be printed in the magazine.

Written articles are the opinion of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the AJC.

President's Message

by Shulamith Medjuck

We have begun the counting of the Omer, the days between Pesach and Shavuot. It is a time to reflect on our ancestry and its message to us. There are two aspects of the challenges that Moses was facing - one being the relationship of Jews to non-Jews and the second being the future survival of Jews as a community. The issue of anti-Semitism/anti-Israel continues to bedevil us. In response to the first challenge, a new national Jewish organization has been established, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) to provide advocacy support. On a local level a Local Partnership Committee has been established to assist in fighting anti-Semitism on a regional basis. If you experience anti-Semitism I would encourage you to contact your community representative on the committee or Mark David at ajc@cija.ca

The second aspect of Moses' challenge was the continuity of Jews as a community. When Moses was in the desert, the Hagadah tells us that the Jewish population was bountiful. As Jews of Atlantic Canada, we do not have that blessing. We are demographically challenged. A few years ago, Jewish parents were complaining that their children had no friends. As a response to these demographic changes, some of the communities in this region have worked diligently to bring new Jewish immigrants to their communities. Recently, the CBC did a program on the success of the Saint John community and I am aware that other communities also have active recruitment plans.

I think that these immigrant efforts have been for the most part successful. For example, in Halifax, there have been over 50 new Jewish families. The number of families that have joined the synagogues is 30 and 20 children are attending Hebrew school. No endeavor, no matter how

successful, is without hiccups. We need to give more thought to how we can ensure that new immigrants have the opportunity to be with people who are going through the same new world experience, while at the same time making them feel a part of our Kehillah, our Jewish community. If we all do this right the rewards will ensure the continuity of Jewish life in our community. We are reaping the benefits to our community already. For example, at the Halifax Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations with approximately 250 Jews, significant numbers of immigrant families not only attended the celebration but also helped plan the event. It was especially heartwarming to see how easily the children accepted each other as they ran around the gym together. We can learn a lot from these children about the true meaning of Kehillah. We need to ensure that all members of our community feel a part of our Kehillah. I am sure that the



Jewish communities of Atlantic Canada are up to the challenge of increasing their numbers by bringing people who want to be Jewish to our communities and making them feel that they are an important part of our community.

On Pesach we celebrated our freedom from oppression and slavery. Judaism insists that freedom is a precious gift, but that ultimately it is meaningless if it does not inspire collective responsibility. As we move from Passover to Shavuot, we are invited to count the days. I hope that we will also be inspired to be counted upon to ensure that our Jewish community continues to grow and thrive.

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From the Desk of Jon Goldberg, Executive Director

Welcome to our spring 2012 issue of *Shalom*. I want to thank everyone who renewed their subscription, in particular, the hundreds of former Maritimers, without whose support our magazine would be in a great deal of difficulty. We have loyal readers from all over Canada, the US and Israel who rely on *Shalom* to keep in touch and stay in touch with the Jewish community in Atlantic Canada.

It's been a busy winter at the AJC, in particular our move from the 5th floor to the 3rd floor, which was completed by March 1st. We are in the same building but please note our new address is **SUITE 309, 5670 SPRING GARDEN ROAD, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, B3J 1H6.**

We downsized by approximately 1/3. That was no small accomplishment as the staff and I were hard-pressed to find room for everything. However, the good news is that we did clean up a lot of the old papers and files, which we had been keeping. It was important for the organization that we find a smaller space, in order to save on rent in a time of budgetary pressure.

In late February, I participated at a roundtable in Toronto during the 14th National Metropolis Conference. I spoke about our collaborative immigration program in Halifax, its history and progress to date. By the end of 2012, we will have over 100 new families moving into Atlantic Canada, over the last five years, at least 80 of whom have settled into the greater Halifax area. In addition, Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John continue to welcome newcomers to their Jewish communities. Obviously settlement is the key factor for all the newcomers. The process of becoming productive members of our cities and our Jewish communities can be difficult and a challenge for both the newcomers and those of us, both staff and volunteers, who work with them. I want to thank all of the volunteers in New Brunswick, in

particular, Dan Elman, Sydelle Grobe, Nicole Druckman and their various committees.

In Halifax, thanks to Edna LeVine and all of the volunteers for their

efforts in helping to grow our Jewish community. We have also had various levels of support from local and provincial governments, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (JIAS), Camp Kadimah and our synagogues. I know that many of our resources have been stretched, both financially and personnel-wise, yet I ask your patience and understanding. From personal experience, I am pleased to say how delighted I am with the contribution already being made by the newcomers in our Jewish community. They are involved in aspects of community programming and in some cases are becoming active in various boards and committees that help run the Jewish community.

Yom HaShoah was commemorated throughout the region and I congratulate the respective organizing committees (see articles in this issue). Another major happening over the last few months has been the formation of CIJA and its effect on the AJC. For many years, the Canadian Jewish Congress had funded the AJC as the Congress office in Atlantic Canada. This past fall, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs has taken over the previous activities of CJC, CIC and is now the national organization that controls the funding that we originally received from CJC. From an AJC perspective, this funding is almost 15% of operating budget. Mark David was appointed Consultant, Advocacy, for CIJA in Atlantic Canada and works closely with me at the AJC. In this issue, Mark has written an article



about CIJA and the Atlantic region connection. There are some basic changes in our budgeting process required, along with new directions on Israel advocacy proposed for our campuses. Our President recently signed a memorandum of understanding with CIJA on behalf of the AJC as its local partner. I hope these changes will bear fruit in our region.

A few weeks ago, we attended a preview of the new exhibit on the St. Louis at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax. This is a unique travelling exhibit financed by the Federal Government Community Historical Recognition Program. It is our hope that this exhibit will be shown throughout the country in the next few years. I will keep you informed. My special thanks to the staff of the Maritime Museum, headed by John Hennigar Shuh, for being instrumental in building this exhibit.

The Atlantic Jewish Foundation, under the direction of Kathy Zilbert, has held a number of meetings of trustees, with an exciting new investment policy so stay tuned for a major announcement on the new initiative this fall.

Just seven weeks until Camp Kadimah. Co-chair Michael Pink and Director Jared Goldlust are looking forward to an excellent season. Enrollment is up and we have a great staff.

In closing, I want to wish all of our readers and their families a happy and healthy summer.

Tom Forrestall 35 Days in Israel

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or contact Jon Goldberg
jgoldberg@theajc.ns.ca**

From the Desk of Edna LeVine, Director of Community Engagement

This year, in Halifax, International Holocaust Remembrance Day was commemorated in a joint program with the University of King's College. Dorota Glowacka, Director of Contemporary Studies Programme, invited Toronto poet Jacquie Buncel, daughter of Holocaust survivors, to launch her first book of prose in Halifax. The program included first hand testimony from local Holocaust survivors David Korn, Michael Falk, Natan Nevo and Philip Riteman with music from violinist Yulia Medvedchuk.

The increasing demand for Holocaust education resources continues, including requests for survivor speakers. Educators as well as community-based organizations in all the Atlantic Provinces are interested in hosting sessions to inform and share knowledge about this part of our past to inspire action with awareness.

Yom HaShoah commemoration programs were held in all seven Atlantic Canada communities and details on each event are in the Around Our Region section. In Halifax the program revolved around the theme, suggested by Yad Vashem, "My Brother's Keeper - Jewish Solidarity during the Holocaust". Veteran Affairs Canada (co-sponsored all the Atlantic community events) created a film from excerpts of an

interview with Jewish war veteran Bernard Finestone, and distributed the film to each of our communities.

This spring Philip Riteman will speak at the TEDx St. John's conference with the theme *Overcoming Adversity*. This event is part of the community-based conferences of TED, "*Ideas worth spreading*" (www.ted.com). The talk will be recorded, and when available, the link will be on the AJC website in the Holocaust Education section. In the fall, we will continue with a successful Holocaust education fundraiser, the sale of Philip Riteman's memoirs, *Millions of Souls*, the books are also available, directly from the publisher, as a fundraiser in all our Atlantic communities.

The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program was successfully completed this year by nine Maritime students. Community volunteers Lysa Appleton, Dawn Frail, Judith Goldberg, Josh David and Rabbi Yosef Goldman made this valuable learning opportunity possible with their willingness to commit their time and effort to educating the students.



Jon Goldberg, Kim Reinhardt, manager, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and Edna LeVine attended the launch of the St. Louis Cross-Canada tour.

Holocaust Education Week in Halifax will begin the last week in October through the first week in November. Events and programs with community partners are in the initial planning stage. This year, in addition to the 2012 AJC co-sponsored programs in Halifax, Sydney and Moncton, partnerships in other Atlantic communities are being developed to expand HEW.

Newcomers continue to arrive in our Maritime communities and perhaps the most brilliant effect of their settlement is the increased energy in our community programs. The Newcomers Committee in Halifax is busy planning a summer 2012 Newcomers Maritime Family Shabbaton, at Camp Kadimah, during the last weekend in August, and program details will be available soon.

I would like to express my gratitude to the numerous newcomers who have volunteered throughout the year to help me with programs and to facilitate the settlement of other newcomers. I would also like to acknowledge, with warmest thanks, Neli Shpoker and Elena Hazankin who generously gave their time to assist me in the office during the year.



Jacquie Buncel, 3rd from left, with, L-r, Edna LeVine, Lillian Falk, Michael Falk, Dorota Glowacka and Jacob Koren at International Holocaust Remembrance Day, University of King's College, Halifax.

The Treasure That's Ruth Goldbloom

by Joel Jacobson

It's well known that if you want something done well, ask Ruth Goldbloom.

Whether you call, e-mail, or meet her on the street, you will find the same Ruth Goldbloom. Happy, giving, genuine, and dealing with you as if you're the only person in existence.

New Waterford-born, Ruth learned the importance of giving back very early in life. Her father passed away at a young age, leaving a 30-something mother to run a retail business and raise six children.

"I quickly learned hierarchy meant nothing," Ruth recalls. "Whatever needed to be done, at home or in the community, you did it and did it gladly."

What's important, she says today, is to "Be aware of your fellow citizen, see where there is a need and see what you can do help. You go the extra mile to get something done."

She became involved in community activities as a young, newly-married woman in Montreal, working part-time and volunteering, after earning a physical education degree from McGill University where she met husband, Richard.

For decades Ruth has been there for people and now, at 88 and facing some health issues, she isn't stopping.

Ruth is still active on boards and commissions, and not just as a figurehead. When she speaks, people listen. They've been listening and learning from the master for decades.

She's raised three children along with husband Richard (they just celebrated 65 years of marriage) as he became one of the top paediatric minds in North America, and is still a respected advisor at age 87.

Her most noted accomplishment is ensuring the refurbishing of Pier 21 and the memories it has for more than one million newcomers to Canada.

Yes, her resume is impressive. She was



chair of the board at Mount St. Vincent University, chair of Dalhousie University's Annual Fund and Regent of Mount Allison University. She is a past member of the Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation and past chancellor emeritus of Technical University of Nova Scotia, past board member of the Foundation for Heritage and the Arts, and on the Chairperson's Advisory Group of the Canadian Judicial Council, as well as on the Advisory Committee of the Order of Canada.

"I've been a volunteer all my adult life and can't imagine not being involved," she says as she pores over correspondence from a current interest as a board trustee of Canada's National Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

"Everyone needs a *raison d'être* when they open their eyes in the morning, especially the elderly," she says with a wink, hinting she's not elderly and has years of volunteer service left in her. "I just can't say no, but slowly I'm learning how."

Whatever she's done, she admits she gets totally committed to the project. "After I convince myself it's the most worthwhile thing I could do, then I can go out and sell it."

One example is the Metro Halifax United Way. When asked to be the first female chair of the campaign, Ruth asked for a few days to visit all 50-plus agencies before she would say yes.

"I wanted to see why I should do this. By

the time I visited half a dozen, I developed a passion for what they were doing and said yes."

Yet, for 24 years, her "baby" was Pier 21.

"I was most privileged to be able to do that project, to fund raise across the country, to knock on doors of business executives I didn't even know and get support from them. It was a huge fundraising effort - \$9 million initially - but all I needed was a few people to open doors for me and I was off and running."

Pier 21 welcomed a million immigrants and many thousand war brides, children and returning World War II soldiers between 1928 and 1971 - and then shut its doors. When Ruth walked into the old shed on the Halifax waterfront in 1990, she saw desolation, but also saw the hope that resonated through the building from all those decades before.

She carried it from that worn-out building to its now being one of two Canadian National Museums outside Ottawa (the other is the Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg).

She's received eight honorary degrees, is an officer of the Order of Canada, member of the Order of Nova Scotia, holds a Queens Jubilee Medal, Canadian Red Cross Humanitarian Award and a Heritage Canada Achievement Award.

Yet nothing gives her more satisfaction than still leading occasional tours at Pier 21 and seeing the joy on faces of people whose ancestors arrived through that portal to make better lives for themselves and their families in Canada.

Ruth concludes. "As a youth volunteer in Cape Breton through all the other things I've done, I've learned it's as important to stay up all night to help a neighbour, or take time to read into a microphone to help a visually-impaired student get an education, as it is to run a major corporate campaign."

A Generous Gift from the AJC 2010 Mission Participants: The Keshet Program

Special Classroom for Autistic Youth in "Emek Ha'Hula" School Upper Galil, Israel

by Perry Romberg, Jewish Federations Canada-UIA



The "Keshet" Class, a class for teenagers defined as autistic, was established six years ago and started off with four pupils in a renovated building that temporarily served the special requirements of the pupils. The Class provides a solution for those who function on a higher level, and enables the pupils to gain from and enjoy both worlds - to obtain the special response for their needs in the communication classes, and, in parallel, to gain the opportunity to become integrated both socially and in the field of study within the framework of regular school. The work method structured in the Class is quite complex in order to allow work in individual programs, as far as possible. The "Keshet" Classes pupils are drawn from a wide area of the North - there are those that travel up to one and a half hours to reach the classes, as there is no similar framework in the whole region. The demand is constantly growing. Even during the course of the academic year, we receive many requests for admission.

Since its inception, the "Keshet" Class has grown fast, and currently there are three classes running, with 18 pupils of various ages, from 7th to 14th Grade. The current forecast for next year is the absorption of four

new pupils into 7th Grade, from the autistic classes in Mevo Galil. The three classes are conducted in the one building that was constructed 50 years ago and due to the generosity of donors like those on the AJC 2010 Mission to Israel, the entire building is being renovated to fit the needs of these special youth. The new building will have classrooms for study, therapy rooms, a Quiet Room, and a general meeting place where all the Keshet pupils can assemble.

Moreover, the renovation will allow for additional classrooms so that students can be grouped by age, skill/learning level as opposed to the current overcrowding which causes the pupils discomfort, over-exposure for their senses and emotions, and everyday difficulties that harm their ability to function at their best.

The Keshet Class team comprises 11 members, including teachers, assistants and a Shnat Sherut pre-army Voluntary Service Year worker. In addition, therapists and psychologists come to the Class on various days of the week.

The work method in a class for autistic pupils requires a unique physical structure and special conditions suited to their needs, including:

- A Quiet Room that creates a quiet space where the children can take time out in an intimate and private place where they can readjust and calm down from the "over-exposure" of school life.
- A large space for communication lessons held with all the Class assembled together (18 pupils), or according to age group (one group of six pupils from 7th-8th Grade and the second group of 12 pupils

from 9th -14th Grade).

- Treatment Rooms: Art and Drama therapy, occupational therapy, clinical psychologist.
- Adjacent staff room.
- Separate toilet facilities for the boys and girls.

The newly renovated building will allow for these needs and will allow the program to expand to 20 high-school students from the Galilee and the Golan Heights regions. Not only will the autistic children and their parents benefit from the project, the children in the regular classes into which the autistic pupils have been integrated, gain a special experience promoting openness in acceptance of the "other" and the different, and his/her integration into regular society. The parents of the regular pupils also support the project and testify to its contribution to their children's lives.

The other Project Partners are:

- Israel Ministry of Education
 - Upper Galilee Regional Council
 - The Jewish Federation of Edmonton
 - The AJC 2010 Mission participants
 - Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA
- additional institutions and donors

The AJC has laid another building block in the development of the Galil Elyon (Upper Galilee) by its investment in the Keshet Program.





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The Atlantic Jewish Foundation supports:

- The Atlantic Chaplaincy program
- Services for new immigrants to the Atlantic region
- Camp Kadimah
- Israel Experience programs for Canadian youth & young adults
- Programs and services to communities in northern Israel



For more information contact Perry Romberg
Director Financial Resource Development, UIA Federations Canada
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Atlantic Jewish Foundation Chair: Kathy Zilbert
Immediate past Co-Chairs: Victor Goldberg & Jim Spatz



Knesset Member Speaks in Halifax

by Joel Jacobson

A whirlwind visit to Halifax gained Knesset member Einat Wilf dozens of new friends.

Bright and effervescent, the dark-haired chair of the Israel Parliament's education committee spoke openly on a wide range of topics during an April 2 evening session at Beth Israel Synagogue after spending a few hours meeting government officials and media.

The visit to Halifax, followed by time in Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa, enabled Wilf to cement relations between her government and the people of one of Israel's most loyal supporting countries. The mother of a one-and-a-half-year-old son, Wilf was in Canada for four days, returning home for Pesach.

"My purpose on this trip is to focus on building our alliances, to help build a positive public opinion image of Israel in the world," she said in impeccable English, learned as a student in her native Israel as well as abroad when she studied at Harvard University, University of Cambridge (England) and INSEAD (France). She holds BA, MBA and PhD degrees and is fluent in Hebrew, English, can handle French and is learning German.

Her Canadian tour was sponsored by Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs. In Halifax, she was hosted by Atlantic Jewish Council.

During her time in Halifax, Wilf stressed the importance of women in political life and decision making, and touched on foreign policy and education.

Elected to the Knesset 18 months ago, Wilf stated that 24 women in Israeli's Parliament (20 per cent of the 120 members) exceeded the numbers in similar governing bodies in the United States, Britain, and France, and is close to Canada's 25 per cent ratio.

"It's no longer unique in Israel to have women in stronger positions, although the



business sector still lags behind in female leadership.... but it's improving," she said.

An admitted feminist, she said she didn't realize those feelings until attending university, and then working, in the United States after her mostly Israeli upbringing.

"My home was egalitarian (both parents were teachers) and I was allowed to let my ambitions take me as far as I wanted. I served four years in the army, in intelligence, where brains were more important than brawn and had more equality (as a woman) than in many other units."

But when she studied at Harvard University and then worked in New York, "I sensed the cusp of women moving forward very quickly. When I came back to Israel in 1998, I didn't feel the same. I considered us more 20th century rather than moving into the 21st century."

Now, 14 years later, she said Israel has caught up and is doing well. "It's a good time to be a woman in Israel," she said. "I think we're in the 21st century in seeing women's role in leadership grow, but still in the 20th as far as equal pay, ability to balance home and career, and sexual harassment. Yet strides are being made. Of course, we're still in the 10th century when you look at the way women are treated in the Arab minority and the ultra-orthodox minority, both of whom see themselves threatened by the majority culture. That's certainly a challenge for feminists."

Women's issues, education and foreign policy have been Wilf's main interests, who, as a teenager, dreamed of being Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

"I haven't given up that dream yet," she smiled. "But to do what I wanted to do, I had to get into politics."

She joined the Labour party, moved up in the ranking, and in February 2009, was listed 14th. Labour won 13 seats so "I was the 'lady-in-waiting'. I watched the swearing in from home but, when a member resigned soon afterwards, I was moved into a seat."

Now, as a member of the recently-formed Independent Party headed by Ehud Barak, Wilf is one of five party members in the Knesset, of whom two are female. She fights for women's rights and better educational opportunities.

"I think I've had some influence in education which is now the second largest budget item, after defense. Yet I think we have a long way to go in building a good education system."

"I'm not the official spokesperson for the government but in Israel, I'm among the top three, who are not men, who engage in foreign affairs for the government," she said. "I'm able to articulate the classical Zionist position which sadly needs that articulation. I believe in partition. Jews and Arabs both have claims to the land, but while Jews have acknowledged it, the Arabs have never been willing to accept that Jews have claims (to the land). The fundamentals are attacked, distorted and lied about."

"This is a war fought with words," she continued, "in op-ed pieces, and by academics and in supermarkets, not with guns and tanks. We need to fight this war and win it – and I think we can. We can't just be nice and think the truth will come out. We have to fight back and meet the lies head-on."

Report from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs

by Mark David Consultant, Advocacy (AJC)

Last year, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs was created to enhance Canadian Jewish advocacy through the establishment of a strengthened, integrated, national strategy and structure that places local Jewish communities at the forefront. This was especially important at a time when the distinction between antisemitism (which fell largely under the auspices of the Canadian Jewish Congress) and anti-Zionism (which was largely the responsibility of the Canada-Israel Committee) is becoming increasingly, and often deliberately, merged and blurred.

Shortly after its creation, the Centre mandated the creation of Local Partner Councils to specifically address local advocacy needs in the different regions of Canada. A Local Partner Council, working in close coordination with the Atlantic Jewish Council, was created to serve the advocacy needs of the Atlantic Canadian Jewish community.

The current members of the Atlantic Canada Local Partner Council are:

- Marilyn Kaufman – Fredericton
- Mitchell Budovitch – Fredericton
- Gail Walsh – Saint John
- Audrey Lampert – Moncton
- Daniel Pink – Halifax
- Hart Stoffman – Halifax
- Peggy Walt – Halifax
- Nadia Bobak – Halifax
- Avvie Druker – Cape Breton
- Katherine Side – NL
- Claire Frankel-Salama – NL
- Jon Goldberg – ex officio
- Shulamith Medjuck – ex officio
- Hillel Professional – ex officio

Membership on the LPC is also extended to a student representative and a representative from PEI; presently these



slots are open. I serve as the staff person to the LPC.

In the short time since its inception, the LPC has been very busy, although limited space does not permit a full description of all of the LPC's activities. Two particular highlights were the visits of Dr. David Menashri, considered to be Israel's leading academic expert on Iran, and Israeli Knesset Member Einat Wilf, an expert on matters pertaining to the Israeli education system and the role of women in Israeli

society.

As the popular saying goes – "many hands make light work." It is no different with Israel and Jewish advocacy – the demands are enormous, but the resources, especially the human resources, are considerable. Take the time to learn more about the Centre at www.cija.ca, attend events sponsored by the LPC and the Atlantic Jewish Council, and get engaged in your community. Be sure to be in touch with either a local LPC member or me, and let us know how the Atlantic Jewish community can come together and make an even greater and more positive impact.

In closing, this Yiddish proverb seems especially appropriate – "Alain iz di neshomeh rain" – "don't depend upon others—do it yourself". The best part about advocacy is that you don't have to do it yourself. You can do it as part of the Atlantic Canadian Jewish family – through our team.

So whatever you do, get involved in a manner comfortable to you – but be sure to get involved.

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Visitors Flood Baron De Hirsch Cemetery To See Titanic Graves

by Joel Jacobson

The skies were cloudy. A light wind blew across Baron de Hirsch Cemetery in Halifax.

Tuesday April 17, 2012 was a gray day, typical of the somber mood of visitors to this cemetery where 10 Titanic victims are buried.

This marked 100 years since the great ship went down in the North Atlantic Ocean, on its way from Southampton, England to New York. Thought to be "unsinkable, the Titanic carried 2,223 passengers and crew on its maiden voyage.

At 11:40 p.m. April 14, 1912, the ship hit an iceberg and started to capsize. At 2:26 a.m. April 15, almost three hours later, it sunk into the sea. Just over 1,500 (two-thirds of those aboard) perished in the sinking, most dying from exposure in the cold waters of the ocean (0 C). Few, it has been reported, went down with the ship. Most drifted away, and died, wearing life jackets.

Hundreds of visitors made the pilgrimage to Halifax where 150 Titanic victims are buried in three Halifax cemeteries, the Baron de Hirsch among them.

The British liner, MS Balmoral, tracked the original route from Southampton to New York, leaving April 8, making a day-long stop in Halifax, where hundreds of passengers could visit museums and sites associated with the Titanic, and landing in New York April 19.

Its passengers, booking two years ahead, came from more than 25 countries. On board, they heard noted lecturers and writers speak of the ship, ate meals identical to those served 100 years before, many dressing in period outfits. Bands played music from the early 1900s, duplicating what the original passengers heard.

At 2:20 a.m. on April 16, the ship stopped above where the Titanic sits on the ocean floor. Wreaths and flowers were tossed from the ship, prayers were said and songs sung. "I looked up on this clear night and saw the



Gerry Mendleson, Halifax, helped show Titanic graves to British visitor Ann Ackland of Devon, England at the Beth Israel Synagogue. Ackland travelled on the Titanic's route from Southampton to New York, with a stop in Halifax.

same stars, in probably the same positions, that people saw 100 years ago," remarks Ann Ackland of Devon, England. "It was a beautiful moment, quite moving and very uplifting as we remembered the courage of the people who were on that ship."

Ann and her husband Rod have been fascinated with everything Titanic for the past 20 years or more. Both in their 50s, they have read voraciously about it and planned to go to the wreck site three years ago but that trip fell through. This time, says Ann, "we realized this was the closest we'd get."

Rod noted he did a project on the Titanic as a young school boy but "basically it was about a ship hitting an iceberg. Then my father and I built a model of the Mauritania (a magnificent ship launched in 1907) and he told me stories of the Titanic and that grabbed my interest. I learned about the ship itself and then the human interest stories took more importance.

He smiled and said his "bucket list" of things to do during his life included a trans-Atlantic voyage, visiting New York, and seeing where the Titanic went down.

"We accomplished all of these in one trip."

Brian Hansen and Tautra Romig travelled from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Southampton to trace the Titanic's route to New York.

"We wanted to complete the voyage (to New York) for those who didn't," says Tautra, tears welling in her eyes.

Brian is fascinated how the Titanic's sinking changed Maritime safety. "From that was created SOS as a universal disaster call, for example."

It's been recorded that, after the disaster, ice patrols on the North Atlantic Ocean became more frequent and rigorous, stricter rules regarding on-board radios were introduced, requiring crews to man them at all times, and lifeboat safety drills were made mandatory.

Brian continued. "It's interesting that the people didn't die in vain because of so many safety measures in place now. (Our voyage) was a way for us to give thanks for the sacrifice the passengers and crew made for future travelers."

Tautra said the 2:20 a.m. ceremony Monday April 16, while beautiful and meaningful, was "emotionally draining. At breakfast that morning, there was mostly silence or people talking in hushed voices."

The 10 people buried at the Baron de Hirsch Cemetery, all men, are believed to be Jewish, identified at the time by Rabbi Jacob Walter who inspected as many coffins as he was able, and decided who was Jewish. Initially, according to historians, he identified eight men, then added 10 more. Members of the Halifax Jewish community hastily prepared to dig graves and inter the remains properly before the Sabbath would begin that evening.

Walter was later allowed to inspect all other bodies at the morgue. He declared there were 44 Jewish bodies in all, but his skills at determining who was Jewish weren't always reliable.

Eventually, authorities declared two more men to be Jewish and the 10 were buried. It was discovered later that one victim buried at Baron de Hirsch was a Catholic, Michel Navratil, who traveled under the name "Hoffman." Others also may not be Jewish.

The Living Bridge Between Camp Kadimah and Israel

by Jared Goldlust, Director, Camp Kadimah

Before the Passover holiday, I had the opportunity to travel to Israel to meet with our camp partners in the northern part of Israel. In preparation for the trip, I started to crunch some numbers and do some research, investigating who were the Israelis that have made the trek to Nova Scotia to spend a summer at Camp since the turn of the century. As part of Partnership 2000 Geshar Chai Program (P2G), the Atlantic Jewish Council has supported an average of six of the top youth leaders from the Upper Galilee to participate in Camp Kadimah's Counselor-In-Training (CIT) program every summer. As well, Camp has brought over several campers of all ages and many Israeli shlichim ("emissaries") throughout the years to be staff members at camp - many of whom I know personally.

Initially, I thought this would be an easy process and I would be able to reach out to a short list of Israelis while on my trip. But by the time I finished gathering the names and contacts of these young Israelis, I was floored just looking at the results. Since the summer of 2000, Camp Kadimah has been a summer home to over 100 Israeli campers/CITs and over 30 Israeli staff. It is an astonishing figure. However I felt it was important to look beyond the quantitative measures. I knew as I embarked on my trip to Israel, one of my goals was to gain a deeper understanding from the Israeli side on the impact the Camp Kadimah experience had on them.

On the plane, I first considered the impact from the North American perspective. I had a lot of my own experience to draw from. In the summer of 2000 when I was a CIT, I had pleasure of spending the summer

with four Israelis who were part of the inaugural P2K program. This was truly the first time in my life that I had the chance to meet, socialize and live with Israeli peers my age in a real way. For me this was my "aha!" moment, that Israelis are in fact not all that different from their Jewish

talked about the experience as a whole. But almost all of the memories shared were centered around their Canadian friends and the lasting friendships they had formed at Camp. Almost all have expressed a strong desire to return to camp sooner than later to reunite with their Canadian friends

and also to give back to a community they now feel part of. Over the course of my trip I had the pleasure of meeting with more Israeli camp alumni and their families and it was vocalized in every conversation that Kadimah was a life changing experience.

At Kadimah, our program is infused with Israeli culture and the Hebrew language. However, where the living bridge and lasting connection is truly created is through

the relationships forged between Canadian youth and Israeli youth. The *mifgash* ("meeting") component of camp can serve as a powerful tool for developing a love for Israel and a greater understanding of what it means to be a part of a global Jewish community.

This summer, Kadimah is proud to keep the bridge alive with 15 Israelis (including campers, CITs and staff) who will be joining us on Lake William. The new friendships that will be formed will serve all of our youth well, not only this summer but for years to come.

Registration for Camp Kadimah 2012 is now closed! This summer we are excited to have the most Atlantic Canadian children at camp than we have had in many summers. If you are interested in having your child attend our Pre-Gibbie Day program (ages 6-9) this summer, or want to inquire about Summer 2013, please call me at 1866-KADIMAH (523-4624), visit us online at www.campkadimah.com or email jared@campkadimah.com.



peers living across the world and that the similarities and values we share are much greater than any differences we may have. And as I reflected on where my foundation for developing a love for Israel and the people of Israel all started, I concluded it was undoubtedly at Camp Kadimah. Fast forward to when I was a staff member and I saw the powerful connections my campers began to create with the Israelis. These relationships were not limited to one summer but stretched to online communication throughout the school year and in some instances visits to see each other in Israel. Over the past two years, I have received multiple messages from Canadian campers who are inquiring as to how they can get their Israeli friend back at camp next summer.

When I arrived in Qiryat Shmona in the North of Israel, I immediately found that the feeling was mutual. At an alumni event that Camp hosted, Israelis started sharing their profound memories from camp. Some of the stories related to specific programs they experienced at camp and others

Family Changes

by Tanya Svidler

About five years ago, when we started thinking about moving to Canada, we had to decide exactly where we want to move to. Like most immigrants, we went through a lot of information online that told us about life in the Country of the Maple Leaf.

Nova Scotia beckoned us with its beautiful lighthouses and mysterious fogs, as if the pages from a Stephen King novel came to life. We had decided that we do not want to live in large city, like Toronto or Vancouver, but at the same time we also wanted our children to grow within a Jewish community. That's why Nova Scotia was perfect for us. And that is why we were delighted to learn that the AJC has started a program that supports the immigration of Jews to Halifax. We were aware, when we moved here, that the Nova Scotia job market was not quite as brisk as in other bigger cities, and we knew we had to be

prepared to be more flexible in our job search. Therefore, we reacted calmly to the fact that you can completely change your field, learn a new profession and try something new.

The Jewish community is growing and we always enjoy welcoming new people. We have met new, great friends with whom we can share the joys and difficulties that we all go through settling in a new city. We were particularly happy that our kids loved Canada and Nova Scotia and also found new friends here. Camp Kadimah played an important role in helping our children meet new friends. Last summer our two sons went to camp for the first time. We were very worried whether our boys could survive without us, the parents. But as it turned out, this was exactly the experience they needed and the summer ended up being the memory of a lifetime.

Last month our oldest son went to Washington



Tanya Svidler, right, helps in the kitchen for Yom Haatzmaut with Julia Shvartzman.

DC as part of the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program. It was an unforgettable program and an unforgettable trip for him and he is very grateful to the AJC for coordinating this program for young Atlantic Jews.

We sometimes ask each other if Nova Scotia was the right place for us to move to. And now, 2.5 years after we landed in Halifax, we can honestly say that we have gained much more than we have lost.

A New Beginning

by Neli Shpoker

About nine month ago I came to Halifax from Israel with my husband and two kids, my daughter was five and my son had just turned 1.

Like many other newcomers, when we decided to come to Canada we were thirsty to find as much information as possible about Halifax. We searched the web and spoke with family and friends. A helpful source of information was the website rusatlantic.com. Rusatlantic along with other websites have lots of information and lots of it is true. However, some information is questionable and outdated. The best way to find out how realistic the information is - is to experience Halifax yourself, and that's exactly what we did! On August 1st 2011, my family and I arrived in Halifax. As I mentioned before, my little angel was five years old and spoke no English and my son had just celebrated his first birthday, so as you can imagine he didn't speak any language in particular!

Upon arrival, we found ourselves in a very welcoming, warm and helpful Halifax Jewish Community, where Jon, Edna and the whole AJC staff tried to make our move here as smooth as possible. In addition, when we moved into our first home in Canada, a rental apartment, we were welcomed by very kind and helpful building manager. In the fall, my kids went to school and daycare, where the staff also made the impossible possible, to help both our kids feel at home.

Kids naturally welcome life changes with open arms and now my kids feel happy and at home in Halifax. They speak English and the whole world around them is full of joy. After nine months in Canada I feel a sense of pride when I hear my daughter speaking English, as if it were her native language! And my son's first words were in English!

As for the adults, well, it surely does take time to adjust. But, as the time goes by, we make friends, help each other, improve our English, find jobs, purchase a home and enjoy



Neli Shpoker prepares for Yom Haatzmaut with Mark Shvartzman and Oksana Franzman.

life. Nobody promised us a fairy tale but it can become on. You just really have to wish and work for it, and it will happen. For now, we are very pleased we decided to come to Halifax. The people are very nice and thrilled to help, the weather - well, it's a very nice change after 360 days of summer in Israel to be able to enjoy the four seasons.

I would like to take this opportunity and thank each and every person I met in Halifax. You made me feel at home right from the start and I consider myself a very lucky person to have all of you in my life.

AISH Ha-Torah – Discovering Judaism

by Sylvia Mendleson

Since my two-time experience with Sar-el, I had a strong desire to experience another program in Israel and pursue my interest in learning more about Judaism. I registered with the Aish Ha Torah, Gem program, a ten-day spiritual journey that came into being in May, 2005 for women who range in age from 30 to 120.

In the group of 10 women, I was the only Canadian among eight from the United States, and our madricha who resided in Jerusalem.

From downtown Jerusalem, we proceeded to Ticho House for a meet and greet evening. Ticho House, an historical building, was one of the first houses in Jerusalem to be built outside the Old City walls in the second half of the 19th century. It is now the location of one of my favorite restaurants in Israel. It's surrounded by trees and flowers on the outdoor patio. On certain days, they arrange for performing musicians to play for the patrons. If you google Ticho House, you will learn about Anna, an artist, who died in 1980 and her husband, Avraham Ticho, an ophthalmologist, who died in 1960. Upon her death, she bequeathed the house to the people of the city to serve as a public centre for the arts.

Aish Ha Torah was founded in 1974 by Rabbi Noah Weinberg who had a vision of training teachers and creating educational programs that would demonstrate the relevance, beauty, and meaning of Judaism.

Aish Ha Torah has established 30 branches in North America, South America, South

Africa, Europe and Australia. The Canadian branch is in Toronto. Currently, about 100,000 people participate annually in educational programs throughout the world.

The Aish Ha Torah International World Centre is located in Jerusalem across

The DAN family of CANADA, Discovery Seminar is a significant Aish Ha Torah program which was originally created for Israelis. However, the program was adapted to present seminars for other audiences. Discovery has become the best introduction to Judaism for people seeking a rational

explanation of Jewish thought.

Some of the Discovery topics that were presented were Jewish philosophy, Love, Dating and Marriage, Codes: The Hidden Genius of the Torah, God's Role in History, kabbalah, history of Israel, and personal growth. We spent many hours listening to great lecturers in English and were left with so much information to absorb. Since our departure from the program, we have been



Sylvia Mendleson, 4th from right, with her Aish HaTorah group in Jerusalem.

from the Kotel in the Old City overlooking the Temple Mount. Elements of the building date back to the second Temple period. There is running water through an exterior wall which was an aqueduct that was used to bring water to the Holy Temple. Throughout the building, there are reconstructed arches from the Crusader period.

I was particularly impressed with a two storey tall chandelier, designed by glass artist, Dale Chihuly, called Fire and Water. This is one of his world-famous pieces and he received this inspiration from the Midrash. Aish Ha Torah literally means Fire of the Torah - the blue/gray glass colors of the chandelier illustrate the blue water of the Torah; the red/yellow colors illustrate the likeness of fire. The fire of Torah is captured in this chandelier that hangs magnificently in this building's atrium.

given the opportunity to listen to these lectures that were taped for the participants and are now temporarily available via our computers.

Eyaht for Women is Aish's College of Jewish studies founded by Rebbetzin Weinberg to help women reach their full potential. The office is in an older building in a religious neighbourhood. The hope is to raise sufficient funds to build a more modern building to continue to provide drop-in and full time programs. The female teaching staff presented topics that nourished the soul; topics that were of particular interest to women, including a one-on-one session to address situations pertaining to our personal lives.

Our madricha arranged for the group to see a Mikvah. We talked about the laws

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of Nidah (spiritual separation) with Ilana Cowland, a lecturer, who pointed out that women are in control of their physical life and that a husband is responsible to give physically to his wife to provide her with pleasure. The two-week monthly absence of intimacy generates passionate renewal in the relationship between a man and a woman. Procreation is not necessarily the issue according to Ilana.

Rebbetzen Meira Svirsky, a psychologist, addressed love, dating and marriage in Judaism. In an interesting discussion, she defined the importance of relationship commitment between a man and a woman before marriage, then to build the love that is important in the marriage from that commitment. The commitment that comes from love/infatuation first, based on physical attraction, could be considered risky business. In the non-religious world, the latter could be indicative of a higher divorce rate in the secular world. She recommended a book: *Women Who Love Too Much* by Robin Norwood. Meira also wrote a book called, *A Woman's Mitzvah*.

Raise Guttman, a very pleasant, knowledgeable religious woman welcomed our group to her home in Jerusalem. She explained the three mitzvahs for women, one of which is the joy of baking challah. We had an actual hands on opportunity to assist in the preparation of challah which also included her young son, Avigdor, who enthusiastically helped me and others with this mitzvah.

Raise is also involved with Gem participants in a 45-minute inspirational class every Sunday morning via Skype. She includes a topic to expand one's perception of the parsha reading. It is a live class, with an opportunity to listen at another time. It seems to be well attended by women who attended the Gem program at one time or another.

VISIT TO HEBRON

Rabbi Simcha Hochbaum, a deeply moving spiritual tour guide, accompanied our group to Hebron. At first I felt cautious and skeptical about travelling there. We went in a bullet-proof bus from Jerusalem to Hebron, with a stop in Bethlehem where we visited the tomb of Rachel and saw the controversial security fence.

Rabbi Hochbaum told the group about the area's long history of struggle. Hebron, the capital of Judah, is considered the second holiest city in Judaism after Jerusalem. The group visited the burial location of the Matriarchs and Patriarchs known as

inhabitants are determined to stay, and cope with the uncertainty of living in this region. However, only 20 percent of the area is inhabited by Jews and 80 percent by Palestinians.

TOURING OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

We experienced a remarkable Old City tour with Rabbi Hochbaum as we walked around the whole periphery of the city walls known as the Kidron Valley. This area runs north and south between the Mount of Olives and the eastern wall of the Temple Mount and the City of David and continues all the way to the Dead Sea.

He discussed the significance of several historical sites including the area at the Shushan Gate where our Messiah was expected to appear. However, a burial site was established by the Arabs in front of the gate arches which will prevent the Messiah from coming in this direction.

Jewish graves fill the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Prior to 1948, the area was occupied by the Jordanians until the War of 1967. We noticed several ancient tombstones that were scattered around. In the future, this area will be restored.

In the congested Muslim quarter, the largest quarter in the Old City, we learned that

approximately one hundred and seventy Jewish families live in the area, and attend yeshivas and synagogues which shows a small Jewish presence among the larger Arab population.

It was interesting to see a small section of the Kotel in the Muslim quarter that is not frequented by the majority of Jewish tourists. Located off of the main road of the Muslim quarter, it would be difficult to find. Many of us prayed there and placed notes between the openings in the stones. I stood in awe of this very special place in such an unwelcomed neighbourhood. As we continued to walk, our group came very close to the entrance of the controversial Temple Mount. The actual entrance way was located down an alley way off the main thoroughfare. We saw an arched doorway in the distance leading to the open area of the



The Aish HaTorah World International Center in Jerusalem.

Ma'arat (Cave) of HaMachpela. In addition, we walked through the neighbourhood of Hebron, visited with a family, went to The Avraham Avinu Synagogue and the Hebron Jewish Community's archives. We visited the Beit Hadasa complex, a former medical facility used for Arabs and Jews in the late 1800's. This facility was used after the six-day war in 1979 to house Jewish families wanting to return to Hebron. Currently, this structure continues to be home to families living in this area.

Many tourists visiting Israel do not visit Hebron and base their information about the area from books and/or the internet. As a result, they miss the opportunity to explore and learn more about this very historical place. The present Jewish

Temple Mount, a meaningful area for Jews, but could go no further other than viewing this location from the main road.

This very meaningful, unique experience really nourished my heart and soul, provided me with the opportunity to hear great lectures, visit historical sites, spend more time in the Old City, and especially share Shabbat with hospitable families in the Jewish quarter, the smallest quarter of the Old City.

On Saturday, I attended services at the Hurva Shul in the Jewish quarter which has a significant, historical past from 1855. In 2002, the government of Israel started to rebuild the synagogue which was destroyed in 1948 by the Jordanian Legion soldiers. In 2010, restorative work was completed and it is now open to the Jewish people after being denied access for Jews for many years.



*Sylvia made bagels
with her new best friend Avigdor Guttman*

This enriching ten-day Gem program added to my appreciation of my Jewish heritage. I would strongly recommend it to others who

want a truly Jewish educational experience and meet others who share the same interest.

There is an on-going educational opportunity to continue to learn through weekly tele-torah Skype conference calls, offered to all the participants, that address practical discussion vis-a-vis the parsha of the week. If you remain in Israel for a short or longer time, anyone is able to make use of the walk-in programs at Aish Ha Torah, College of Jewish Studies known as Essentials.

Aish is offering a Gem program from June 11-20, 2012 and from October 22-31, 2012. To apply or obtain information, register at GemIsraeltrips.com or contact Necha Golda Dubinsky at ndubinsky@aish.edu. There are

also programs only for men and Necha's husband, Mendel, would be able to provide you with information.



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An Inspirational International Holocaust Remembrance Day

by Laura Hubbard

Editor's Note: Laura Hubbard is a third year Journalism and Canadian Studies student at the University of King's College. You can read her blog charting her trip overseas at www.pilgrimagetopoland.blogspot.com

International Holocaust Remembrance Day falls on Jan. 27 each year, marking the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This year, the Atlantic Jewish Council and the University of King's College worked together to commemorate victims and recognize Human Rights, as well as to inspire others to speak out against hatred.

The evening was successful in both attendance and the inspiration passed on from survivors.

The small lecture hall at King's was full: other survivors, families, adults and a handful of students filed in, filling seats and sitting on the floor to listen to four Holocaust survivors speak. They were accompanied by Jacquie Buncel, a poet and second-generation survivor.

Jacquie's poems reflected on the struggles and life as a second-generation Holocaust survivor, bringing ideas to the table that the survivors could not offer. Jacquie's poems revealed the impact of the Holocaust and its ever-prevalent effects, displayed through children and grandchildren who try and understand the histories of their grandparents and parents.

Survivors Michael Falk, David Korn, Natan Nevo and Philip Riteman each spoke on something different, constructing an evening of inspiration through their personal yet miraculous stories.

I spent last May traveling throughout Germany and Poland studying the

Holocaust: we visited historic synagogues, famous sites, such as the Babel Platz in Berlin, and five different concentration and extermination camps in Poland. I was honoured to meet Philip Riteman and hear his story firsthand before traveling overseas, and thrilled to be

situations.

Michael Falk talked specifically on why it is so difficult for survivors to speak of their experiences.

"The short answer is that these are very, very sad memories," he said. "Every time we speak, we miss a night's sleep."

It was obvious with each survivor's speech that laughter is crucial in the healing process. David laughed with the audience as he remembered his life in a Christian orphanage and the clever actions of the administrator.

Natan recalls returning to Poland at the age of 16 and continuously being called names.

"I was a teenager with hot blood, and I got beat," he said.

"But you should have seen them!"

The stories shared by each survivor were inspiring. The danger of violence was shared, and the emotional, physical and psychological aftermath was expressed through narratives. It is these personal stories that are so crucial in ensuring the Holocaust is "Never Again." They enrich history lessons and allow visuals, which bring the history to life.

Enriching my own experiences through Holocaust survivor stories and furthering my knowledge through their personal accounts has proved inspirational to me, and I hope that those in attendance for International Holocaust Remembrance Day feel the same.

The evening's events concluded with small conversation with the survivors at a reception following the program. I, however, walked home repeating Philip Riteman's lesson:

"I beg you – don't ever hate anyone."



Jacquie Buncel, Toronto, centre, daughter of Holocaust survivors read some of her poetry at International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Halifax. Survivors living in Halifax also recalled their experience. From left, David Korn, Natan Nevo, Philip Riteman and Michael Falk.

given the opportunity to travel with two survivors in Europe: Faigie, a survivor of Birkenau, and Pinchas, a survivor of Majdanek. Visiting the camps they had been imprisoned in years prior made the experience richer. Their personal narratives came to life and it will be their stories that I remember above the factual information.

I was, then, delighted to see the lecture hall at King's fill with interested citizens: members of both the Jewish and Christian communities.

Philip's actions showed the difficulty that accompanies sharing survivor stories: his emotions could not be hidden as he recounted the hatred and abuse he witnessed and experienced in Auschwitz. His raw memories and stories invoked gasps of horror from the audience as he told of the minimalistic 'food' given to prisoners and the routines of eating, washing and going to the washroom. One simply cannot imagine the horror of these

Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program

by Robyn Budovitch

Editor's note: In May 2010, 15 students from the Maritimes travelled to the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington DC through the Asper program. All students wrote thoughtful pieces about their experiences. This is the last reflection from that group. Another nine students have experienced this program in the last few weeks and their stories will appear in future issues of Shalom.

What is the true meaning of equality? As familiar as I thought I was with this word and the general meaning of it, after my trip to Washington, I came to realize that I had no sufficient idea for what the true meaning was, nor did I realize its significance.

We've learned about the Holocaust within school, as well as in Hebrew school. Each of us has this generalization in our heads from what we've learned about, however; I always believed I understood beyond the classes generalization, and I was convinced I knew most of what there was to know.

What I didn't know at the time, was how big of an impact inequality is able to have on a person or a family's life from just one opportunity, which for me, happened to be this trip to Washington, D.C. Not only did it truly give me a reality check for what I thought I knew, but it also taught me all the aspects I didn't fully grasp prior to this trip.

As I entered the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, I did not even realize how much information was standing before me that I never stopped to think about. Exhibits, signs, and memorials; I could not even believe how much more there was to gain knowledge of. As I walked through the exhibits, I gradually began to grasp more of an understanding and sincere appreciation for not only the Jews in the Holocaust, but for all people who have ever faced any form of inequality.

Every part of the Holocaust Memorial Museum was incredibly well done, and extremely moving. I think my most vivid and powerful memory from the museum

was the train car. This was a real train car, which was used during the Holocaust to transport the Jews to work or death camps; this cattle car was essentially a sentence to death for many Jews.

As I stood in this train car with five or so of my fellow classmates, I realized how close together we were in this enclosed space. There were only five of us; I could not even begin to imagine 100 bodies being squished into this transportation vehicle. It was terrifying, standing in the same place where the fates of so many Jews were helplessly decided.

Throughout our trip to Washington I know I've learned much about the Holocaust, but I've also learned a lot about myself. I've learned what can happen if you're uneducated and unwilling, and I've learned a lot about the kind of person I want to be. I'm very thankful that I was able to have this experience, and I feel like I have learned a lot about a huge part of my identity and history.

*Congratulations to the participants and families, and volunteer chaperones and educators of the
2012 Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program.*

*Participants: Jacob Suissa, Peter Svidler, Ben Kovacs, Lev Rayson,
Roy Maianski, Zane Brown and Jonah MacDonald, Halifax,
Kass Palter, PEI and Jonathan Lazarev, Fredericton.*

*Educators: Dawn Frail, Lysa Appleton and Judith Goldberg, Halifax.
Chaperone & Educator Rabbi Yosef Goldman, Fredericton
and Chaperone Josh David, Halifax.*



Penny Project Rolls Along in Moncton

by Joel Jacobson

Almost two years ago, Moncton teacher Karen Horsman had a dream.

She wanted to generate interest in her Grade 8 students at Riverview Middle School in tolerance, empathy and diversity. Karen says The Power of a Penny was the students' idea in 2010 to collect six million pennies to commemorate each life lost in the Holocaust.

She had assigned readings on the atrocities of the Holocaust and showed a video of a Paper Clip project in Tennessee where students amassed six million clips to symbolize each of the victims.

The students at Riverview collected 75,000 pennies in the last couple of months of that 2010 school term. With a goal of raising \$60,000 (six million pennies), the plan is for the students to visit Poland's Holocaust sites, then return to educate others about what happened and stress why it should not happen again.

The project continued last year with a new group of Grade 8s and, as they have now moved on to high school, another class of students has taken the responsibility.

"We were at 500,000 pennies a few weeks ago," Horsman notes as the pennies pour in from students, the general public and even companies. A story appeared in the Moncton Times and Transcript April 17 and, within two weeks, another 100,000 pennies came in.

Horsman says they're at about 10 per cent of their goal. "At this rate, it will take 12 years and I'll be a senior citizen going to Poland. I want to get this escalated."

There is little doubt the students are excited. Most knew little of the Holocaust when they started this project, and Horsman is a great part of that excitement with her enthusiasm for educating them.

Student Jacqueline Horne is on the Power of a Penny committee. "I joined this year because I wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, and to understand what these people went through," she wrote in an e-mail. "I wanted to learn how they coped, how some survived, and I wanted to learn through the amazing stories (of survival), what mankind can handle."

Karen says fund raising activity at the school, including barbecues, rockathons and monthly crazy days generate pennies from the entire student body. She's also made contacts with businesses in Fredericton and Moncton for support and anxiously awaits positive response.

"I'm hoping to get my hands on a couple of thousand boxes of pennies (on loan) with which we can build a wall on the school's stage. Maybe the lender will allow us to keep them," she smiles.

With the government dropping the manufacture of the penny, Karen hopes people will give their surplus to the school for this project.

So does Jacqueline, so Riverview students in the future will have the opportunity she's been given to learn what they can about one of the world's darkest period.

"Since I began participating, we have learned the importance of never forgetting things that happened, such as the Holocaust. Mrs. Horsman has told us how if we forget, it can easily happen again. We have learned about the Rwanda genocide, something that is so similar to the Holocaust, something that happened not too long ago, something that killed 800 000 innocent people. People need to be informed about such things, such real things that happen in our world."

"This project strikes a little close to home for me, too. My aunt and uncle are Jewish, and realizing something so awful could happen to people like them just sickens me. I know a little about their religion, and I find it disgusting that people could do something like this to people who are not different from themselves."

Karen concluded. "This project hopefully will instill in the students a sense of morality and the virtues of empathy, tolerance and diversity. This is all in the curriculum I'm teaching, not just the Holocaust, which isn't really part of the proscribed teaching program. Teaching morality and virtues make it a vital part of teaching young people."

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Viktoria Brunets and Yulia Medvedchuk entertained 250 people attending the celebration!



Tamara Damian, upper right, and her daughters Lilia & Nikol, enjoy the evening.



Daniel Pink, Jenna Conter (holding Briella Robinson) Ariela Thaw and Kayla Wexler Robinson at Yom Haatzmaut.



Halifax residents Hedda Medjuck, Fanny Nathanson, Rita Pink and Frank Medjuck celebrate.



Nana Shteinberg, right, and Tanya Svidler, 2nd right, help organize the event for, from left, Sharon Shteinberg, Stanislava with daughter Miya Mardakhaev and Alexandra Shtainberg.



Florrie Fineberg and Mindy Jacobson led an impromptu version of Happy Birthday to Israel.



Mark Shvartzman and Slava Svidler prepared coleslaw for the BBQ.



Shelly Shpoker shows an Israeli flag she made on Yom Haatzmaut



Philip Riteman and Leonard Preyra, MLA, Halifax-Sable Island, talk after Yom HaShoah program in Halifax.



Judith and Victor Goldberg chat with Halifax senator Jim Cowan, who lit a memorial candle.



The St. Louis traveling exhibit was developed through a partnership between the AJC and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.



Mark Stein reads names of Holocaust victims at Halifax's Victoria Park.



Nancy Regan, MLA Bedford, and survivor Lillian Falk read Holocaust victims' names.



Arthur and Kathy Zilbert interact with a hands-on St. Louis travelling exhibit, supported by the AJC for a Cross-Canada tour.



Marianne Ferguson and Molly Rechmitzer attend the St. Louis event.



Jim Spatz and Victor Goldberg spoke to a community breakfast after a Nova Scotia trade mission to Israel.



Einat Wilf, 3rd from right, member of the Israeli Knesset, met with women in Halifax at a breakfast. From left Kathy Zilbert, Peggy Walt, Shulamith Medjuck, Edna LeVine, Judith Goldberg, Myra Freeman and Karen Conter.



Rabbi Mendel Feldman coordinates the Menorah lighting at Grand Parade.



Members of the newcomers program committee plan community activities, from left Neli Shpoker, Nana Shteinberg, Miry Mikaelov, Tanya Svidler (behind Miry), Slava Svidler, Shai Aharoni, Mark Shvartzman and AJC executive director Jon Goldberg.



Chanukah celebrations attracted Sergey Erlich with daughter Lior and wife Genny, along with Svetlana Kogas.



Ariel Geifman does face painting at the Chanukah party.



Miry Mikaelov helps her sons Lev and David, with a Chanukah art project.

News from JNF Atlantic

by Lea McKnight, Atlantic Region Coordinator

Once again this year our annual Tu B'Shevat Treeathon was a huge success. Many thanks to all of our enthusiastic canvassers, Jane Alexander, Mark Appleton, Mark Berish, Nancy Cieplinski, Jamie Ferguson, Marianne Ferguson, Florie Fineberg, Bonnie Katz-Webber, Ethel Kostman, Eric MacKenzie, Simon McKnight, Sylvia and Gerry Mendleson, Beverly Parsons, Gail Prime, Molly Rechnitzer, Michael Shugar, Bill and Gerry Styles, Leo Weniger, Steven Zatzman and of course to all of our generous supporters across the Atlantic region. Thanks as well to Jim Spatz and Southwest Properties for once again giving us the use of their

offices for the day.

Our theme this year was Adopt an Acacia, helping to replant the Arava with acacia trees to preserve the environment and provide shelter for wildlife. We were especially pleased that our new executive director from Montreal, Gail Grief, joined us for this event.

Our Halifax Talmud Torah has also been active in supporting the Adopt an Acacia project purchasing leaves for their acacia tree posters. We thank them for their enthusiasm and support of JNF. In the spirit of tzedakah, they will now be forging ties with a school in Beit Shemesh, fundraising to build a garden for the students as well as collecting books to help develop an English library

in the school. We look forward to connecting with our new friends in Beit Shemesh.

For 110 years, JNF has been nurturing the Land of Israel. Our research is recognized worldwide. Become a Facebook friend of JNF Atlantic and read about our ongoing projects and the global recognition of JNF expertise. Find out how you can participate in JNF activities including an exciting mission to Israel and a visit to Berlin from October 14-29, 2012 on our website at www.jnf.ca.

For trees please contact me at atlantic@jnf.ca or 902 444-4563.

Many thanks for your ongoing support.



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For more information, contact Lea McKnight at (902) 444-4JNF (4563) atlantic@jnf.ca or Gail Grief, Executive Director, JNF Eastern Canada at (514) 934-0313 gail.grief@jnf.ca • www.jnf.ca



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Are You From The Pier Dear?

by Gerry Mendleson

Gerry Mendleson (left) and David Weiner (right) two former residents of Sydney's Whitney Pier district meet in Jerusalem during Gerry & Sylvia's recent trip to Israel after not seeing each other in over 40 years. Both Gerry and David were the last two people to have had their Bar Mitzvah held in Whitney Pier's Adath Esther Shul (Orthodox)

David lives in Jerusalem along with his wife Beth and their three children - Naava,



Michal and Yael. After many years spent in the hi-tech computer industry, David recently changed his profession to launch a web site featuring baking techniques of many different kinds of bread - including of course, delicious Challah. Families in Whitney Pier were always accustomed to enjoying home baked goods ... so David you might say has re-discovered his Cape Breton roots.

Check out David's Web Site for some great recipes www.breadmantalking.blogspot.com

David left Whitney Pier in 1971 after his family decided to make Aliyah to Israel when his late father Norman Weiner decided to give up his engineering position with the Sydney Steel plant and move to Haifa to take a position in the Israeli steel industry. David's mother, Shirley Weiner still lives in Haifa where she does important volunteer work for Israeli soldiers. David also has two siblings,

Lawrence (London, England) and Nancy (Israel).



Chanukah arrives in Sydney! Aidyn (11) and Zoë (7) Silverberg-Ceresne helped Shirley Chernin decorate a table at her apartment building on King's Road in Sydney to share their excitement about Chanukah and some Judaica with the community. Shirley was invited by people in her building to put up the display to educate families about Chanukah and share our festival of lights.

Fredericton News

by Marilyn Kaufman, AJC Community Representative

Once again the Sgoolai Israel Synagogue held its Pesach Seder on the first night of Passover. It was a huge success. We had 50 people come and everyone participated. Everyone had the opportunity to read from the Haggada in the language of their choice. Ziv was our main chef and Yana was our sous-chef. We even had homemade gefilte fish made from scratch by our very own Bassy. Rabbi Goldman led the reading of the Haggada. The community participated in the singing of the traditional songs. The Knights of Columbus served the meal. They volunteer their services every year to our seder. It is wonderful. I chaired



Jasmine Kranat holding challah at the potluck lunch for Unity in Diversity Celebration.

the event, but I could not do it without the support of our community. There were so many volunteers that I cannot list them all. Thanks to everyone.

For the second year, St. Thomas University, in conjunction with Fredericton's Faith communities, held an open forum, April 4th, for its

students and the public to join together in Celebration of Faith in Diversity. The theme this year, was The Celebration of Youth.

The all day event was opened by New Brunswick's Lieutenant-Governor, Graydon Nicholas. He was followed by a number of young people representing their Faith communities, who spoke of how their religious values and beliefs impact their daily lives. Some spoke of the difficulties they face as they attempt to integrate into the broader Canadian culture while upholding their own ethnic traditions.

Jasmine Kranat, a political science

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student at St. Thomas University, told the assembly about how recently as a youth, she'd come from a large Jewish community in London, England, to a small one, here in Fredericton, and some of the challenges it presented. How far more effort was needed in this smaller community to have any involvement, as in the larger community it was right there "in front" of you every day.

She said that she was pleased to have learned a lot about other students' faiths

and practices. Jasmine also mentioned that she is often asked by her friends who like to be invited for Friday Shabbat dinners. She is always happy to share it with them.

Jasmine's light hearted presentation, was, as at the previous event, greeted with plenty of laughter from the audience.

The noon potluck meal provided by the participating Faith communities, featured several ethnic dishes including challahs and noodle kugels made by Ayten Kranat. (Scrumptiously delicious!)

Afternoon celebrations included songs, poetry, dance and prayers...all focused upon the experience of youth in Fredericton. It was here that Jasmine fully demonstrated the Kiddush for Rosh Hashanah, giving a running translation and explanation of the symbolism involved.

Those of us from the public who attended the event found it a very enriching experience, and are looking forward to next year's.

Holocaust Remembrance

by Marilyn Kaufman, AJC Community Representative

Fredericton's Mayor, Brad Woodside, was the guest speaker at this year's Holocaust Memorial Service held at the Sgoollai Israel Synagogue, Sunday, April 22nd. Also in attendance was MP Keith Ashfield. President Louis Budovitch welcomed the public and Cary Grobe presided over the program of integrated readings and psalms presented by members of the congregation.

As a yearly attendee to the Holocaust Memorial Service, Mayor Woodside recalled at one such service being told by an elder that the survivors are getting "old, weak and feeble. It's going to be up to you to make sure you carry on the message."

In the Autumn of 2011, Mayor Woodside took those words to heart when he accepted an invitation from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre to travel to Poland and Germany to witness firsthand man's inhumanity to man.... to become a witness of the Holocaust for future generations.

He made the journey to the ghettos in Krakow, to Track 17, to Berlin and to the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Berkenau. He spoke of the horrific events

which resulted in the Nazi state sponsored systematic genocide of six million European Jewish men, women and children.

At the beginning of his journey, Mayor Woodside attempted to catch much of what he saw on his camera, but, toward the end of it, he said, "The images indelibly fried in my mind. I could no longer take my camera out of my pocket."

"I've seen the ovens....I've stood at the place....It's hard to comprehend this had ever happened... trying to imagine the unimaginable." And each night when the group would attend a debriefing session, the lingering question always remained.... "Do you think it could

ever happen again? Where were the bystanders? The neighbours? The businesses?"

He quoted from poet, educator, human rights activist and survivor of five death camps Sonia Weitz (Poland) who lost 83 members of her family in the Holocaust leaving only herself and her sister, Blanca.

From her memoir, *I Promised I Would Tell* - the poem - *Where Was Man?*

"Because Your inner silence drove me mad

I climbed the walls and tore my hair
My lungs were spitting blood and yet
You wouldn't listen to my prayer.

I called on You in torment wild
And desperately cursed Your name

Then I was nothing but a child
And then there was no one else
to blame.

But now I feel G-d wasn't dead
And where was man? I ask
instead."

Winston Churchill said, "The Holocaust is probably the greatest and most terrible crime in the whole history of the world."

Mayor Woodside reiterated how important it is to be a witness of the Holocaust for "if you don't remember history, we will be



Mayor Woodside at the Holocaust Memorial Service, Fredericton.

allowing history to repeat itself. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.

G-d Bless the people of Israel!

G-d Bless the Jews of the world.... this is not a safe world which we live in. Help us be better people. Help everybody have a dream and be able to fulfill that dream....And never ever forget!"

Candles were lit representing today's Jewish community, honouring The Royal Canadian Legion, honouring the Righteous Gentiles, representing Newcomers, Children of Survivors, in memory of the Six Million Jews murdered in the Holocaust and for the youth, our hope for the future. Israel Unger then led the assembly in Mourner's Kaddish.

The public was extended an invitation to speak further with Mayor Woodside and view the display set up in the social hall.

Thank you to Israel Unger and his committee.



The Atlantic Jewish Council is thrilled to launch PJ LIBRARY (PJ, as in pajamas), a program that provides families raising Jewish children (ages 6 months to 5.5 years) in Atlantic Canada with a **FREE treasury of Jewish books and music!** Every month, families enrolled in PJ LIBRARY receive a high-quality, expert-selected and kid-tested (!) Jewish book or CD (one per family) as a **gift** from the community.

Through the generosity of The Atlantic Jewish Foundation and with support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation the Atlantic Jewish Council is making this available on a first-come, first-served basis to one book per family in Atlantic Canada.

Look for further details, coming soon to your mailbox, direct from PJ Library



Saint John News

by Dr. Joseph Arditti, AJC Community Representative

The High Holidays in Saint John were ushered in by regular and not-so-regular attendants. As in the past several years, Cantor Jeff Spitzer performed the services

This year, the Kol Nidre Appeal was collected to refurbish some of the forest of Carmel which was burned.

We welcome newcomers to our Community. Hannan and Alina Asor arrived from Israel. They have been very helpful to our Community. Also, we welcome from Israel, Marcelo and Claudia and their sons. The parents are originally from Uruguay. They have been attending the services regularly. Their sons are students at the Rothesay Netherwood School. Their older son, Ronen, who is fluent in English, Hebrew and Spanish, is planning to be an instructor at Camp Kadimah this coming summer. Their younger son Jodi is preparing for his Bar Mitzvah this spring.

In the last year, we had a number of new arrivals from Israel, with Russian

background. We are somewhat disappointed that several of these new arrivals have left, after such a short time in Saint John. Although we were warned before about expectations, this has been a learning experience for us. I guess that this is happening to all of the cities in the Maritimes. Danny Elman has worked so hard to facilitate interviews with candidates and nomination appointments in

Fredericton. In addition, he made sure that all were settled once they arrived in Saint John, and he needs to be congratulated.

As in years before, we had a very successful Hanukkah Celebration. Ron and Sandra Levine were the chairpersons for the dinner. A week before Hanukkah, some of us went to the Synagogue kitchen to peel potatoes and onions. The next day, another

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group prepared the latkes for the chicken, kugel, tzimmes, latkes and salad dinner which took place on Sunday December 18, 2011. The rolls were baked by Elizabeth Koven, of course, in our kitchen. Sandra Levine baked a cake decorated with a Hannukia for dessert. There were close to 100 persons who enjoyed the dinner prepared and served by the Sisterhood.

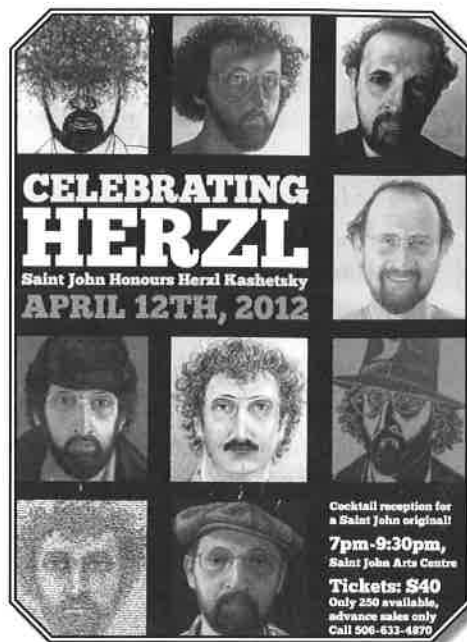
The lighting of the first candle was celebrated in front of the Synagogue on a crispy winter night, by the people of the Jewish community as well as Saint John citizens at large. After lighting the Hannukia, we all sang "Me Otsur". Then, we returned indoors where some of the children sang Hanukah songs, accompanied by Tatiana Kehman on the piano. Our Sanctuary was absolutely packed with people from all denominations within Saint John.

We thank ATV News for providing the opportunity to view Hanukah Celebrations inside a Halifax home. It was a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about this Holiday. We also thank the AJC for promoting, in advance, the air-time for this feature.

We celebrated Purim in our Synagogue with a very large attendance, consisting of Jewish, local citizens and our newcomers. Some of the children, who had attended the Hebrew School, talked and explained the history of Purim. Moshe Granik, our Hebrew School teacher, read part of the Megillah in Hebrew and some of the attendants took their turn by reading in Hebrew and English. We enjoyed very much the last-minute provision of Hammantachen sent to us by AJC.

Passover Holidays were celebrated in our city. We were able to have services on the first and last days of Pesah. These were well-attended by our regular and not-so-regular individuals.

Yom Hashoa observances in our Synagogue took place on April 18th. Our guest speaker was Mrs. Ronnie Leighton Weston from Portland, Maine. Her parents were Holocaust survivors who escaped from Vienna in 1938. She is committed to making sure that the Holocaust is memorialized beyond a few photographs in the history



books. She is the author of Edith Pagelson's memoirs, "Against All Odds, A Miracle of Holocaust Survival". Her presentation was entitled "Make Memories Matter - Stories that Speak and Images that Stick".

Memorial candles were lit by the guest speaker, followed by our President, Bruce Washburn; by Jacqueline Meltzer, a Holocaust survivor; Lorne Daltrup, son of an internee; I.J. Davis, a Jewish War Veteran; Christopher Barbara, from the Holocaust Study Group; and Jordi Chaffer, representing the Youth/Future.

There were 33 students from different local High Schools who participated in the Holocaust Study Group present during the ceremony, and they received certificates for their study, and some received prizes.

Following the ceremony, a short video was played, showing the interview with Bernard Finestone, a War Veteran who lives in Montreal. The entire audience watched with interest. At the end, the video received large applause. As in the past, this was a very well-attended event. Our Sanctuary was full, and people were standing in the hallways.

We thank the Atlantic Jewish Council for providing us with the video, which came from the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, who also sponsored our guest speaker.

The Lord Beaverbrook Gallery in Fredericton exhibited a collection of Herzl Kashetsky's sketches and drawings from June 30-September 9, 2011. The Sheila

MacKay Foundation published the book, "Glitter and Gloom", which consists of drawings and sketches by Herzl from the age of 15 to the present time. This book has hundreds of images and three essays. It was launched at the dinner party, where Herzl hosted a signing. The book can be purchased for \$35.00 from the Beaverbrook Gallery in Fredericton, or the Peter Buckland Gallery in Saint John.

All of these events to honour Herzl and his work took place in Fredericton, but not in his hometown of Saint John. That, however, was remedied on April 12, 2012. The Cultural Affairs Office of the City of Saint John paid tribute to our native son, hosting a "Celebrating Herzl - Saint John Honours Herzl Kashetsky". This was a cocktail reception at the Saint John Arts Centre, and it was very well-attended. Herzl has been nominated for the Visual Arts Award for Saint John Originals, which recognizes outstanding contribution to the arts in the community. The awards gala will be held on Thursday, May 31, 2012.

We congratulate Erminie Cohen, who was the winner of this year's YM-YWCA "Red Triangle Award", at their annual dinner. The award recognizes long and meritorious service and outstanding contribution and achievement in the community.

"The Butterfly Project" explores the artwork, stories and poems created by the 15,000 children imprisoned in the Terezin Concentration Camp during the Second World War. The collection was later published in the book "I Never Saw Another Butterfly". Themes of compassion, hope, fear and creativity will be seen through modern dance, text and live music, performed by members of InterAction School of Performing Arts, choreographed by Kate Elman-Wilcott. The performance will take place on May 2, 2012 at the Sanctuary Theatre, 228 Germain Street in Saint John. In addition to the full performance, pieces of the show will be toured to the Saint John Free Public Library on April 28th, and the Fredericton Free Public Library on May 5th, 2012. School groups, libraries and audience members will be encouraged to write their feeling responses to the themes on paper butterflies which will become part of the travelling set and will be sent to Houston, Texas to be displayed as part of their

Museum's Holocaust Memorial Exhibit.

We are happy that several members of our congregation are gradually returning home from their winter visit to the south. Throughout the winter, we had some difficulty establishing a minyan for Friday and Shabbat services. Once everyone is home, we shall return to our uninterrupted services.

As Shavuot approaches, I reflect upon the tradition, that Jewish people make a pilgrimage to Temple (in the "old days") and today, to the Wailing Wall. This was not and is not considered a ceremony. I have read that Judaism does not stand on ceremonies. Jewish piety is an answer to God, expressed in the language of mitzvot, rather than in the language of ceremonies. The mitzvah,

rather than ceremony, is ingrained within us. What is the difference between the two? Ceremonies, whether in the form of things, or in the form of actions, are required by customs and conventions. Mitzvot are required by Torah. Ceremonies are relevant to men; mitzvot are relevant to God. Ceremonies are folkways; mitzvot are ways to God.

Commemoration of Yom Hashoah in Saint John

by Katherine Biggs-Craft. Curator, Saint John Jewish Historical Museum

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum welcomed Mrs. Ronnie Leighton Weston as the keynote speaker on Wednesday, April 18th for its Yom Hashoah Programme. Mrs. Weston is the daughter of survivors who escaped from Vienna in 1938. As a nonprofit fundraising consultant, author, mother and grandmother, Ronnie is committed to making sure that the Holocaust is memorialized beyond a few paragraphs in the history textbooks. "The way in which we remember the Holocaust will determine our future," says Ronnie, former board member of the Florida Holocaust Museum and currently the development consultant to the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine and writer of Edith Pagelson's memoirs, *Against All Odds, A Miracle of Holocaust Survival*, to be published later this month. A graduate of Washington University, Cum Laude and Hofstra University School of Law, Ronnie is an accomplished public speaker. Her presentation is entitled, *Make Memories Matter-Stories that Speak and Images that Stick*. Ronnie resides in Harpswell, Maine with her husband Evan.

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum worked with the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine to extend the invitation to Mrs. Weston and we look forward to the development of a strong relationship with this organization to bring in other speakers and to share information

in the future.

Mrs. Weston's presentation included the story of Kurt and Sylvia Limberger (changed to Leighton on arrival in the United States) who travelled through Europe from Austria to Germany to Belgium to Luxembourg to France in 1938 and 1939 before emigrating to the U.S. in August 1939. As a young couple in their 20s, they had realized that Austria was no longer safe and they made up their minds to leave after ensuring that their mothers were safe elsewhere. They relied upon a number of smugglers to convey them from place to place as they endeavoured to avoid the Gestapo. The story is one of courage.

The message delivered to those who attended the service in the Shaarei Zedek and to more than 600 high schools in three area schools is that memory is important and that it is incumbent upon the members of the second generation to carry forward the survival stories of their parents to a new generation of people. In this way, the stories of the Holocaust are not forgotten. Mrs. Weston also urged her listeners, particularly the students, to be "upstanders" – to

stand up for what is right against the bullies an injustice. All have been given a great deal to think about.

As part of the programme in Saint John, thirty-one high school students were recognized for their participation in the Holocaust Study Group, sponsored by the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum and School District 8 in Saint John. A number of these students received Beatrice Cummings Mayer Prizes for their projects. Over six day-long meetings held between January and April these young people heard from a number of guest speakers including Dr. Francis Weil of Moncton, Gary Davis, Herzl Kashetsky and Dr. Cheryl Fury, watched a number of documentary films, and engaged in hands-on learning activities and presentations, including a book review,

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A packed and attentive audience at Yom Hashoah

AROUND OUR REGION: SAINT JOHN

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Ronnie Leighton Weston – guest speaker

making a butterfly to remember those Interned in Thereisenstadt and creating individual and group projects on a number of Holocaust themes. Students expressed themselves through poetry, journals, essays, art and power point presentations.

This programme is made possible with financial assistance from The Atlantic

Jewish Council through Veterans Affairs Canada, Congregation Shaarei Zedek, and the Harry and Mary Selick Cohen Memorial Fund (Saint John Jewish Historical Museum).

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum will be opening for the summer tourist season on Tuesday, May 29th and will remain open until Tuesday, October 30th. We anticipate as many as 70 cruise ships in port over the coming months which bring us large numbers of visitors. Visitors to the museum also come by car, bus and airplane, while others are in the city for conferences or other activities.

The feature exhibit for the 2012 is Pencils, Paints and Pianos : Jewish Art in Saint John. The exhibit covers a full range of creative activities from art to writing to drama by a number of individuals including the Kashetsky brothers (Joseph, Ancil, Herzl and Jerome), Clint Wiesel, Toby Graser, Anne Selby, Lawrence Earl, Anne Elman, Monica Guss and Robert Selby. The exhibit will be composed of more than twenty interpretive panels and a large number of items created by the

artists and writers from the community. We are also truly grateful to the many people who have helped with collecting and editing the biographies of the many artistic people from the community and with the loan of art works for the exhibit room walls. The exhibit has been funded by the Exhibit Renewal Program, Heritage Branch, Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport, Province of New Brunswick and the Community Arts Funding Program, Community Arts Board, Saint John.

You are cordially invited to visit our




Jacqueline Meltzer – lighting memorial candle

museum to see what will be a wonderful exhibit.

Behind the scenes, museum staff continued to work on the archives and library by accessioning and organizing material donated to the collections and answering numerous genealogical requests from across Canada and the United States. Katherine Biggs-Craft, Museum Curator, is always amazed at how far the reach of this community can be. "There are connections to be found everywhere it seems," she says.

Museum president, Gary Davis says : "When we had our 25th Anniversary Dinner last year, we were encouraged by the very large number of non-Jews who attended. Their enthusiasm for what we do is sincere, and their support is welcomed. A good number of our members are not Jewish, which is very positive. We continue to establish cooperative relationships with other organizations involved with museums and Jewish studies. This year we will count on private donations to make up the difference. If you can help, it will be most appreciated. You can donate online through our website using your credit card, or you can send us something through the mail."

More information about the museum can be found on the Museum's website <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/sjhm> and on the Museum's Facebook page. Check regularly for updates on events and notes of community or historical interest.





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Moncton News

by Nancy Cohen, AJC Community Representative

In January a special Kiddush was held to say goodbye to Barrie and Evy Carnat who have moved to Cape Breton. Barrie and Evy contributed a great deal of time to the community. Barrie could always be counted on to help out with services and also served on the shul board. Evy was an active member of Sisterhood, as well as president for one year. Over the years they taught children in the Cheder and led a synagogue choir as well as an Israeli dance group. They shared their love of Judaism with the community and will be greatly missed.

In February there was both a bris and a baby naming when twins were born to Michael Makarov and Victoria Volkanova. Benjamin and Isabella (Bella-Hannah) are the brother and sister of Joshua, Adam and Sophie. Mazel tov to the entire family.

To celebrate Purim, a party was held on the Sunday before Purim and featured a

delicious brunch prepared by Sisterhood. The children and some adults wore costumes and Cheder students put on a pageant with each child representing a character from the Megillah.

Moncton's annual Holocaust Memorial Service took place on Yom Hashoah and featured guest speaker Jacquie Buncel. Jacquie, the daughter of survivors and the author of the book "Turning the Corner at Dusk", read several of the very moving poems from her book. There were some special guests at the memorial including Gilles Courrégelongue, Consul General of France, Robert Goguen, MP for Moncton - Dieppe - Riverview, Dominic LeBlanc, MP for Beauséjour, George LeBlanc, mayor of Moncton, and several councillors from Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview. Karen Horsman, a teacher at Riverview Middle School, also attended with some of her students. Karen's students are working on a very special project "The Power of

a Penny" with the goal of collecting six million pennies to donate to the museum at Auschwitz. We were pleased to hear that they have reached a milestone and have now collected 500,000 pennies. More information on this project can be found at <http://powerofapenny.webs.com/>

The Jochelman, Gorber and Rose families have purchased a Toval for the shul. A Toval is a memorial board to hold the memorial plaques. Their generous donation is greatly appreciated.

Sincere condolences to Linda Coleman and family on the loss of Linda's father, Robert Kaplan.

Mazel tov to Irwin and Audrey Lampert and family on the marriage of their daughter Mindy to Derek Applebaum.

Mazel tov to David and Margie Attis and family on the engagement of their daughter Aviva to Jeremy Poriah.

Report from the Rock

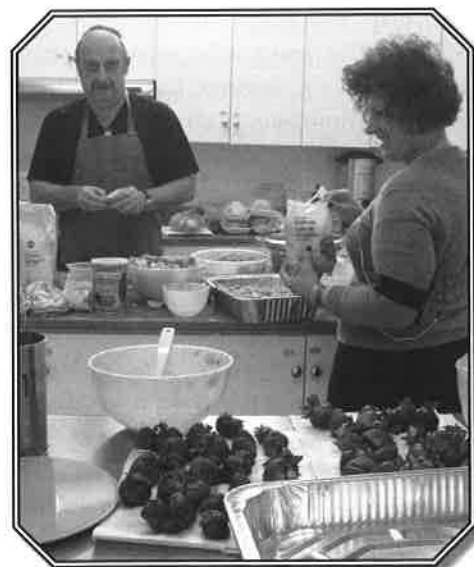
by Claire Frankel-Salama

It is really quite amazing that whenever we get down, something usually happens to bring us joy and put things back into perspective. Certainly the press about Israel, from Catherine Ashton to Günther Grass, is enough to depress all those of us who love Israel. Thankfully, this past Yom HaAtzmaut reminded us that we are still here, "chazak u-baruch", and that we should be alright in the end. We have many enemies, but we also have many friends. One such friend is Max Dawe, a member of the Pentecostal Assembly of Conception Bay South, who visited Israel in February as part of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus. That visit was

written up in the Canadian Jewish News in February: < <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=256932> > .

Yet another friend is the Rev. Peter Young, the Associate Priest at St. Thomas' Anglican Church in St. John's. Last Sunday, my husband, Messod and I were invited to a talk he and his wife gave to approximately 70 parishioners about his trip to Israel as part of a Christian inter-denominational tour during Purim. Their positive portrayal of a modern, vibrant country safeguarding their Christian holy sites and treasures and their recognition of the rockets fired into southern Israel just because it was a Jewish holiday made

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Dan Downey and Claire Frankel-Salama preparing for the Community Seder at Beth El



Children performing at the Chanukah party on December 26th



Ernie Mauskopf chanting the Megillah on Purim

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us realize that not everyone is unaware of the situation beyond what the mainstream media chooses to report.

Indeed, we often despair over those who seek Israel's delegitimization, particularly Jews, and groups such as B.D.S (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions). It is in that spirit that here at Beth El Synagogue we make sure that we buy and use as many Israeli products as possible. Our last major event was a traditional community Seder featuring Israeli wines, Jaffa clementines, Yehuda matza and as many Israeli-grown herbs as possible. As per usual, we open our Seder to all, free of charge, although donations are gratefully received. We make sure that everyone has a place to go, not only for Seders, but for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and the other holidays. This year's Seder, which had a great attendance, featured Kosher lamb brought in from Montreal by another friend of the synagogue, Dan Downey of Halifax. Thanks to Natasha and Christina de Beer, Bonnie Leyton and Messod Salama who set up the social hall to look so beautifully festive and to Dan Downey who cooked the meal with Bonnie and me.

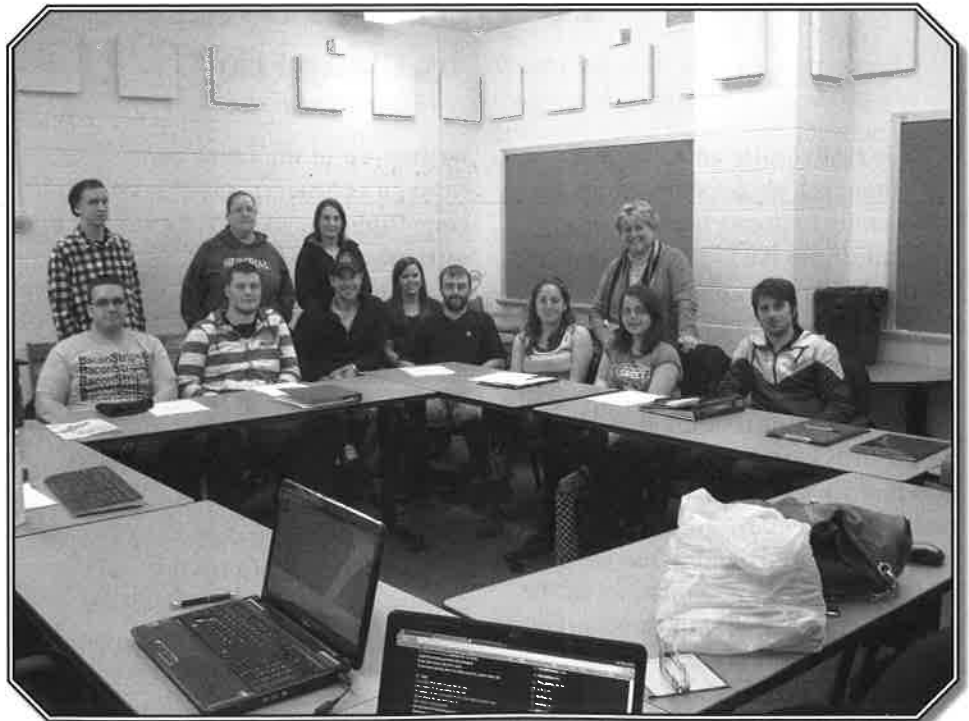
For our previous holiday, Purim, we were grateful to hear Ernie Mauskopf chant the Megillah, recounting of the story of Esther, Ahasuerus, Mordecai and Haman in ancient Persia, and its positive outcome for the Jews, while, in the morning newspaper, we read about the threats of Ahmadinejad to get rid of the Jews

yet again. The service and "concert" of groggers was followed by a light supper and Hamantashen baked by Bonnie Leyton and Barbara Grandy.

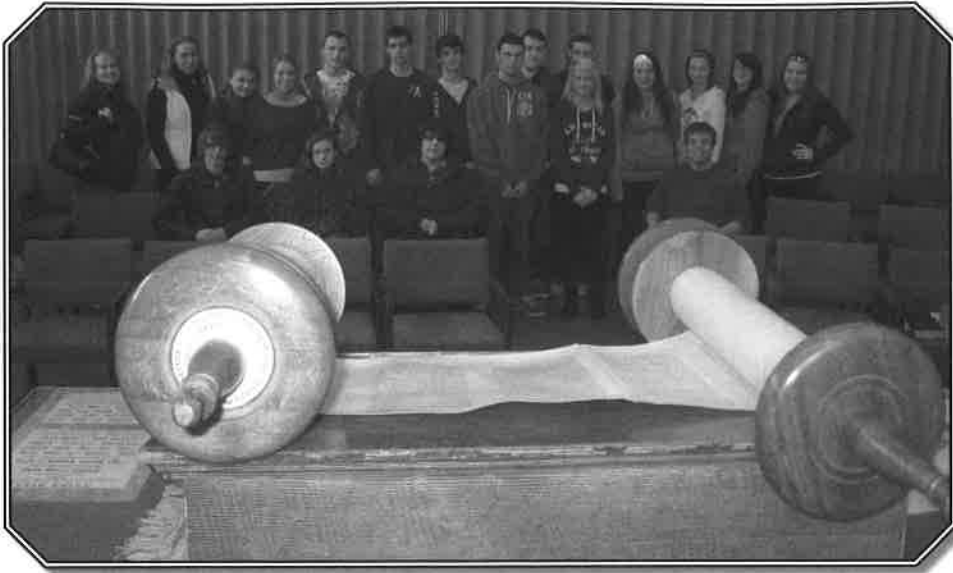
This past December we were saddened by the untimely death of a young Israeli student, Michael Seider, who had been studying for his Master's Degree in Economics here at Memorial. As his family wished to have him buried in Israel, his remains were sent, at great cost, to Montreal and then back to Haifa. I am so proud that our little congregation was able to raise \$850 that we sent to his mother,

Lilya Seider, to help with the burial costs. Following the funeral, I heard back from Michael's brother, Oleg, and another young Israeli, Yossi Abkin, who traveled in Newfoundland several years ago, and who stayed with us. Yossi is now an architect, and as a friend of the Seider family, he designed Michael's Matzevah. We are all truly linked together.

Other than that, we have been busy with visits to and from schools and youth groups. We have been pleased to welcome the youth group from St. Thomas' Church and the Rector John Paul Westin, and



The Fourth Year Seminar on the Holocaust at Memorial University and Professor Edita Bosak



Students from Holy Trinity High School visiting Beth El Synagogue

two classes of Religious Studies students from Holy Trinity High School in Torbay, Newfoundland. In early April, I spoke to the fourth year seminar course on the Holocaust, taught by Professor Edita Bosak, at Memorial University. On April 3rd

Professor Messod Salama gave a university-wide lecture on Ben-Zion Netanyahu: and the Spanish Inquisition: What were its real motives? This is particularly poignant given the news that Professor Netanyahu, father of Israel's Prime Minister and expert

on the Conversos, has passed away at the venerable age of 102.

This past Shabbat we welcomed Rabbi Julia Appel of Temple Emmanu-el-Beth Sholom, and her husband. Several members of our synagogue received Jewish education and instruction for conversion from their recently retired rabbi, Leigh Lerner. Services were followed by an Oneg Shabbat in honour of Rabbi Appel and her husband, Aaron Wenner.

Finally, we are pleased to announce the resumption of our little Hebrew School and wish them all a great learning experience. We have a new, enthusiastic young teacher who will be continuing the classes all summer.

In conclusion, we wish a Refuah Shleimah to June Mercer and Barbara Grandy, and congratulations to Daniel Salama who is graduating from the Faculty of Law at McGill.

Jewish Community Havura

by Ruth Noel and Nancy Bennett

As you are reading this article we are looking forward to summer with the arrival of warm weather, whales, puffins, and summer sports, theatre and musical events. We are also looking forward to the many visitors who may come our way. The Jewish Community Havura has had a very busy winter and spring.

Our annual latka-making party was at Nancy Bennett's home. The usual camaraderie was evident as potatoes were washed, grated and fried. There was lots of laughter and "taste tests" while the pancakes were being made. A couple of weeks later, members and visiting family and friends celebrated Hanukkah together, lit candles, ate the scrumptious potluck meal, danced, kibitzed and watched the kids have a great time.

During the winter, our services continued with healthy attendance. Members look forward to our bi-weekly services with Oneg Shabbat dinners following the

service. Several members have started leading the services as well as giving D'var Torahs. Our new prayer books with optional readings are making our services a joy to attend. The Hammel/Kitzen family has been hosting the services for most of the winter.

The Social Committee organized our first ever film night with the showing of the Israeli film, *Turn Left at the End of the World*. The interaction between the Indian and Moroccan Jews living side by side in Israel made for an amusing show. Delicious popcorn in movie popcorn bags made us feel like we were in our local theatre. We look forward to the next event organized by this committee. Inbal Bahar, Kari Brown and Lisa Bendzsa were our social conveners, and Angelique Myles hosted the event.

Commonwealth Day this year marked Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. Nancy Bennett was invited to speak at the Anglican Cathedral. She read

an ancient prayer for the Queen that reflects how dependent English Jews once were on protection from the sovereign. She ended with the prayer for the Queen and other officials that Canadian Jews recite every Sabbath.

The weekend before Purim, we had our annual hamantashen and grogger-making party at the home of Karen Lippold and Steven Wolinetz. Such a variety of fillings we never had before and the groggers the children made were works of art. The children had fun making the cookies and there was much laughter over our creations. After frequent taste tests, we all went home with full tummies.

The night before Purim, a storm brought snow which kept falling until about noon. Plows were busy opening the roads and clearing the parking lots. Luckily, by the time we headed out for our evening of fun, the roads were passable and the room was ready. Everyone enjoyed themselves.

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The audience stands to welcome Lt. Gov. John Crosbie.

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Elizabeth Loder led the service and members took turns reading the Magilla. The stamping of feet and shaking of groggers could be heard far and wide. The Havura supplied the falafel and pita main course and members brought delicious salads and desserts (and spirits) and a good time was had by all.

We were approached by a local Anglican church to host some of their members for a service. During Lent, they like to visit other religious groups to learn about other religions. They enjoyed our service, finding it meaningful and participated in some of the readings. We all shared a meal afterwards and the time went by quickly. A beautiful thank you note from the Minister confirmed how meaningful the service was for them and how they enjoyed our

hospitality.

Passover goods have been a problem in St. John's for the past number of years. Members of both the Havura and Synagogue have tried to arrange orders with two local stores. However, even when both groups gave amounts to those in charge of ordering, they either ignored the order and brought in too much, or the order did not arrive in time for the holiday. This year, Nancy Bennett and another member worked with Belbin's, an independent grocery, which agreed to order Passover products. The process went smoothly and we will continue to work with Belbin's in the future. Problem solved.

Our Holocaust Memorial Service was amazing. Alison Pick, winner of the 2011 Canadian Jewish Book Award for Fiction for her novel *Far to Go*, based on her family's Holocaust experience in Czechoslovakia, was our guest speaker. Alison was raised as a Christian and when she found out her father was Jewish she decided to explore her roots. While studying in St. John's, she became a member of the Jewish Community Havura. She and her husband converted to Judaism after they moved to Toronto, where they now live. Our committee was led by Jonathan Richler who was also the moderator. Other hardworking members were Karen Lippold, Nancy Bennett, Ruth Noel, Susanne Gulliver, Gil Shalev, Elena Hanna, Shari Ritter and Chava Finkler.



Ruth Noel lights the second candle while Elizabeth and Jacob Siegel, Rob Ritter, Nancy Bennett and Steve Wolinetz look on.

Elizabeth-Anne Malischewski was away but in contact via e-mail. Concert pianist and Havura member Elena Hammel accompanied the singing. The beautiful poster and program were designed by Martin Connolly. The publicity was fantastic, with Facebook, radio, television, the web, and a full-page article in the newspaper.

As in past years, there were representatives from the provincial and municipal governments as well as religious leaders. This year, the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable John Crosbie, Q.C. and the Hon. Felix Collins, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, representing the Premier, were in attendance. Mr. Collins spoke on behalf of the Provincial Government. The Hon. Tom Marshall, Minister of Finance, was also in attendance, along with several Members of the House of Assembly and the St. John's City Council. The auditorium was filled to capacity with standing room only. During the service we showed a three minute tape of veteran James Coffey, talking about what he saw when he walked into Bergen-Belsen. His testimony was riveting and set the tone for the evening. Several members were told by friends and even strangers how moving the ceremony was. We appreciate the support of the Atlantic Jewish Council, Veterans Affairs Canada and Dr. Wayne Gulliver.



Moderator Jonathan Richler opens the service.

Earlier that same day, Elena Hammel and Nancy Bennett were invited to Government House for a reception to commemorate Volunteer Day and had met Lt. Gov. Crosbie and his wife. Elena barely had time to pick up her children and get them settled for the evening before leaving again for the Holocaust Memorial Service.

The Havura is having a baby boom. Elena Hammel hosted a double shower for Jillian Gould and Angelique Myles. It is so nice to welcome these youngest members.

Our spring and summer will be busy, the highlight being the Bar Mitzvah of Nicki Bendzsa at the end of June. Services, speaking engagements and other events will keep our members busy and connected.

Dave Jerome and Jonathan Richler have stepped in to replace Arnold Bennett as representatives on the Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador (RSAC). RSAC is currently focusing on two projects: the Living Wage project and the Fairness Prism. The living wage is a region-specific calculation of the minimum full-time wage a person needs to be able to afford housing, food, utilities, transport and health care. RSAC is working with academics to calculate the living wage in Newfoundland and Labrador, after which they will work with politicians and policymakers to implement it.

A Fairness Prism is a mechanism by which government policies and legislation are studied to ascertain their impact on the gap between the rich and the poor. Most poverty reduction strategies only assist people to live in poverty. To truly eliminate poverty requires a more even distribution of resources and benefits. RSAC is working to determine the specific components that would be included in a Fairness Prism, after which they will work with politicians and others to implement a province-wide Fairness Prism.

Mazel tov to Jillian Gould and Jeremy Citrome and sister Sally Rose on the birth of Max Russell Citrome.

Shalom to Martin Connolly and Emily Wilson, who were here from Maine while Emily was enrolled in a Master's programme at MUN. They were very active members in the Havura. Katherine



Featured speaker Alison Pick at the podium.

Side and Brad Gibb hosted a going away open house for Martin and Emily. We shall miss them.

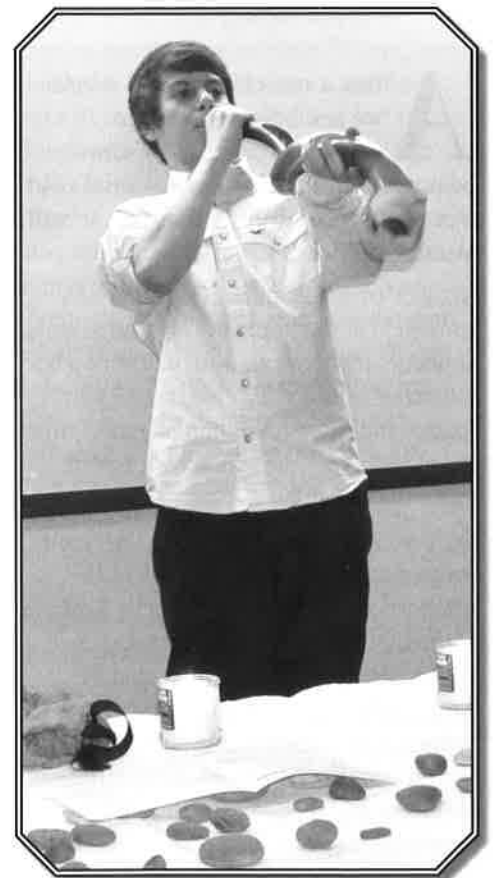
Timothy Margolis who came to us from Zimbabwe to complete a Business Degree at MUN, left for Calgary where he is now working and living with his brother Matthew. We were sorry to see him leave. We wish him well in Calgary and hope he can adapt to the weather.

In December, we lost Michael Sieder, a graduate student from Israel who was here to take his Masters in Economics. He contracted an illness that seemed to evade diagnosis and was in and out of hospital several times before he died. He often attended Havura services and events and had been looking forward to the Hanukah party. Memorial's Graduate Studies were supportive to Michael and to his mother who came to visit during one of his hospital stays. Also extremely supportive were John and Ruth Noel who drove him when needed and arranged for a translator when his mother was in town. What an amazing community!

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Faiza Enanny, the wife of the former Imam of the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mahmoud Haddara. Faiza and Mahmoud had

moved to London, Ontario to be near their children. After an operation, Faiza contracted an aggressive infection which

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Nicki Bendzsa sounds the shofar as the service comes to a close.

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did not yield to antibiotics and she passed away on April 19. Faiza was a warm, loving and conscientious person and a friend to many. When they left the province, the Havura honoured the Haddaras at our annual picnic. Faiza was active in several organizations including the St. John's Interfaith Women's Group and the Women's Association of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. She touched all who knew her and she will be missed.

If you are in the neighbourhood, please contact us at info@havura.org or call 834-7866. We would love to welcome you and to give you an opportunity to meet our group. Have a good summer.

An Orthodox Passover: Report by Jonathan Richler: Every Passover, the younger members of the Jewish Community Havura of NL hold a communal Seder organized by Jonathan Richler, Susanne

Gulliver and Gil Shalev. The Seder is held at one of our homes and caters to university students and young working professionals within the city limits.

Three days before Passover, Havura members received a phone call from Brooklyn, New York, from a young twenty-something Chabad rabbinical student named Yisroel Silman. He and fellow student Menachem Grossman were determined to provide a Kosher for Passover Seder to any Jew who needed one in St. John's. The call was passed to me, and after a short conversation we decided to combine efforts to create a unique experience for our community.

Torontonian David Levine had offered up Kosher for Passover food, wine, lodgings and space for the two Seders, held in an empty commercial restaurant property. Despite setbacks such as a delayed flight [read: fog] and a restaurant kitchen depleted of everything except

a new kosher fridge, everything came together rather quickly. Havura members donated working tables, kosher cooking implements, and a little sweat in the kitchen. Small grills and coil heaters were purchased and then dipped into the river for mikvah, and an abundance of local vegetables were purchased, given that the majority of our young members are vegetarians.

Yisroel and Menachem led two successful Seders and provided over 20 Havura members with an unforgettable Chabad Pesach. The Haggadah tells of Seders that crept into the wee hours of the morning, with questions and answers volleying around the table and cups of wine being refilled. This is just what St. John's received in 2012. In return, the two New York rabbinical students both fulfilled their mission, and also experienced the Five-Star Havura tour, including spotting a few icebergs after Shabbat.

Prince Edward Island Jewish Community

by Leo Mednick and Rosalie Simeone

After a mercifully mild winter we are being treated to an early spring with some beautiful days and the occasional cold wet blast to remind us that this is still, after all, PEI.

October 16, 2012 Sukkoth Celebrations were held at the home of Don and Rosalie Simeone. It was a beautiful day with a few too many bees around. We had a Lulav (palm) and Etrog (ceremonial lemon) from Israel and everyone was shown how to make the blessing.

On October 31, 2011 a Naming Ceremony was conducted for Ethan Epshtein the newborn son of Ariel and Isabelle Epshtein at the house of Rachel Kassner and Joel Palter. The service was conducted by Ariel Epshtein, Leo Mednick, and David Solomon. An unbelievable buffet was served after the ceremony for community members and relatives, including grandparents of the newborn, and friends of the family.

Chanukah - December 26, 2011 - This

year's Chanukah celebration was hosted by Andrew and Karen Melzer in New London, PEI. Their farm house style Century home was the perfect spot to host the community and fortunately the weather cooperated. Lots of good food including a great supply of latkes was available. After the lighting of the candles, a sing along of Chanukah songs was aided by Heather Evans and Rosalie Simeone doing a flute and piano accompaniment. Pictures of the event can be seen on our website. www.peijc.org

PEI's Celebration of Island Life was held at the Stratford City Hall on February



Natan Nevo looking at table with names of Holocaust victims with memorial stones and candles

25, 2012. The event seems to center around food (of course) with all the ethnic cultures on PEI having booths to offer the best of their cultural cuisine and many providing entertainment as well. The Jewish community contribution was made by Leslee Sack who made cheese blintzes, fruit challah, Jewish onion rye with liptau, lokshin kugel, latkes,

bowtie cookies, honey cake, mandelbrot and babka. Leo Mednick also contributed Montreal style bagels. Various community members manned the table and the food was gone in an hour. Islanders have healthy appetites. What's best is that all the food is free and they even pay the community members to make the food for the event.

Purim - March 11, 2012 - It's about the kids. Leslee Sack hosted the event and Rosalie Simeone entertained the kids by putting on a Purim play especially scripted for the event. The only flaw came when none of the children wanted to be the designated Haman. One of the fathers, Darryl Bloom, was firmly conscripted to take on the role and of course, his end (as Haman) was sad. But there was a lot of food and everyone had a great time.

Passover Community Seder - April 7, 2012 - This year's Community Passover Seder (held on the second Seder night this year) was smaller than other years as more people are having the Seder in their own homes and family is what it's all about. The community Seder was held at the York Community Center and the very large snowstorm that was scheduled to hit PEI delayed itself until just after the Seder finished, literally. Organization of Passover supplies is always difficult for PEI but this year was a little bit more difficult because of the Acadian Bus strike which disrupted the usual Passover order from the Fredericton Scoop and Save. Heather Evans made a special road trip

to get the supplies order in. The Seder itself was conducted by Leo Mednick, the current PEIJC President. There was a lot of singing and we are finally getting the hang of making a really good brisket, gefilte fish and matzo ball soup. As usual, Leslee Sack, Sandra Ireland, Heather Evans, Rosalie Simeone and Hilde Haber worked hard behind the scenes to get all the preparations done.

Yom Ha Shoah - Took place on Wednesday April 18th. This year's Yom Ha Shoah event was truly memorable. Rosalie Simeone and Sandra Ireland organized the event and, along with support from the Department of Veteran Affairs department, the AJC and the PEIJC turned this into not just a PEI Jewish community event but an Island Community event. Seventeen Birchwood Intermediate School students, participants in the Asper Foundations Holocaust and Human Rights Study Group, added greatly to the Yom Hashoah memorial. Their presentation, represented a culmination of their learning, and included background information about the Nazis and Germany in the Second World War, as well as a moving dramatic presentation.

For the Yom Ha Shoah day's events students from Donagh and Vernon River schools were bused into Birchwood Intermediate School where a group of students from Birchwood Intermediate School presented a small play that depicted the way life was for Jewish

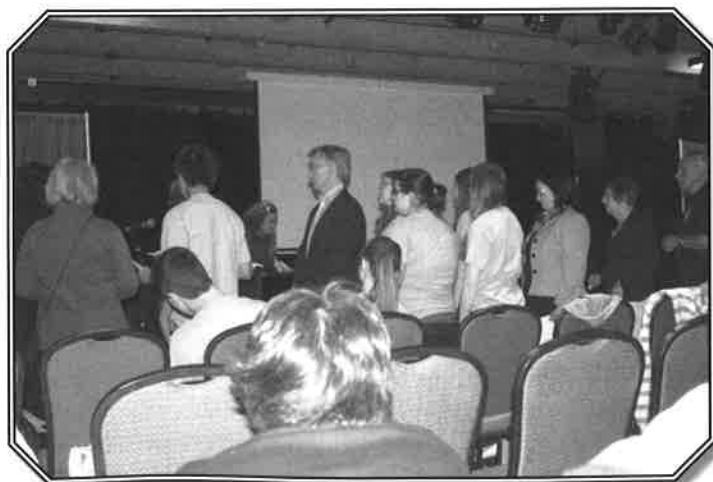


Natan Nevo reliving his experience with the Holocaust and reading excerpts from his autobiography

students in Nazi-ruled countries in Europe. In addition, the students listened to the speaker, Natan Nevo, talk about his wartime experiences. The Birchwood students also performed at the Confederation Center for the main Yom Ha Shoah Memorial Service.

The Yom Ha Shoah Memorial Service started with a few welcoming words from Rosalie Simeone, a rendition of Oh Canada and then Kathleen Casey, Liberal Provincial MLA, said a few words to express government support for the Yom Ha Shoah observances. Seven candles were lit in memory of all those lost in the Holocaust. The Birchwood Junior High Students group then performed their Yom Ha Shoah presentation. A beautiful song was sung by one of the students in memory of the victims and the ceremony continued with each student speaking on behalf of an individual Holocaust victim, indicating who they were representing along with their dreams and aspirations that were lost forever. Seven students then turned their back to the audience to represent the six million Jews lost and the over one million non Jews lost in the camps. The final act of the ceremony involved each person in the audience getting up and reading the name of an individual Holocaust victim and then placing a stone on the slip of paper with that name on a table similar to the Jewish custom to place a stone on the headstone of a grave when visiting a cemetery. The highlight of the day's event and the culminating the end of the program

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Members of the audience including government officials Federal Liberal MP Sean Casey and Kathleen Casey Provincial Liberal MLA read the name of a holocaust victim from a small piece of paper and then placed a small stone on the slip of paper on a memorial table.

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was the talk given by the lead Yom Ha Shoah presenter Natan Nevo, a holocaust survivor from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Natan, whose energy, enthusiasm and good humor surprised us all, spent a long day giving interviews to CBC radio, the local news television show, Compass, talks at two Charlottetown Schools and finally appearing at the Confederation Center for the Community Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony.

Natan Nevo was born in Warsaw, Poland, October 11, 1930, and by the end of 1939, he had fled to the Soviet Union to escape the Holocaust. He lived in Siberia until 1946, and in March 1948, he reached and lived in Palestine. He took part in the War of Independence and the creation of the State of Israel, and became a founding member of Kibbutz Megiddo. While there, Natan worked on sculptures in wood and organized theater productions for five years. He then went to live, study and work in Tel-Aviv and in Eilat until 1962, before moving to France to study at the

Sorbonne. During this time, he visited art galleries and attended a few classes of drawing and painting at the art studios of "La Grande Chaumiere" in Paris. In 1965, Natan emigrated to Canada where he became a teacher of French at a Junior High school, Russian at Dalhousie University from 1966 - 78, and at Acadia University from 1980 - 98. Nevo began to paint seriously after his retirement in 1999. With acrylic as his main medium, his art content ranges from landscapes to a new focus of modern geometric painting, using caricature and satirical connotation to depict human eccentricities in real-life situations. He has a studio in Halifax. Natan Nevo has lived in Halifax, NS, since 1965, is married to Denise.

During Natan's presentation he read from his autobiography about his experiences in Warsaw during the German occupation and his escape to Russia. He also recounted many personal memories as an eight-year-old child confronted by the brutality of war and his early years as a refugee in Siberia. He also talked about

his many life experiences as a soldier in the War of Independence in Israel in 1948 and later as a teacher in France. Natan answered questions of the audience, some of which inquired about his thoughts on whether there was still ongoing anti-Semitism in Europe. The conclusion of the program was the singing of Hatikvah.

Finally, a new website was put into place in late 2011 to help with community communication. With pictures of some of the community events and notice of ongoing community programs and projects it will allow anyone in and outside of the community to contact us and keep track of ongoing community events. Follow the PEI Jewish community at www.peijc.org. Visiting us on PEI would be nice too.

Our thanks to Anna Serapin for all her work over the past few years. Anna, who has been the AJC representative and PEI events contributor for Shalom Magazine, has returned to Montreal to be with her family. *Bon Chance.*

Remembrance

by Rabbi David Ellis, AJC Regional Chaplain

My Best Friend, Your Best Friend

Mother-in-law jokes have been around for all ages. Comedies and even songs were written about her, always in the negative. Indeed one who was much better informed than I once told me that the word has such connotation in almost every language. Except Hebrew. The word for mother-in-law is *chamah*, from the same word as *cham*-warm. Contrary to usual opinion, the Jewish tradition sees the potential of very special relations between a child and his/her mother-in-law.

Certainly, my late mother-in-law, Mrs. Rae Cohen, fulfilled the role of a *chamah* to me. We didn't see each other often, she being far across the sea. But she did come to visit us twice here in the Maritimes and called us regularly.

Her calls always started the same way. "David, it is so good to hear your voice . . . Rose is so lucky to have you . . . and the kids . . ." I tried to tell her that I was doing

a few things wrong or incomplete, but she never wanted to hear it.

And then she would intone in an intense and serious voice. "David, how are those people you go to see in those small towns? How are the folks in Cape Breton, PEI, etc.?" She wanted to hear the details of each and every one of them. So though you may not have known or met my mother-in-law, she knew about you and was deeply interested and concerned about your lives and well-being.

Rose, Sarah and Leah went to see her over the winter break. They were only there for a few days, when she left us, on the first day of Hanukkah. It was a hard time for all of us, including Tamar in Jerusalem, who had to hear the news from a distance. They are all back now, but things are not the same. We're all making the adjustments.

But I see the glass much more than half full. She led a long life and was lucid till the last day. She had her own way of piety, of

getting up every day and thanking G-d for the privilege of that day. We have so many good stories to tell and hear over again.

So while the family lost a mother and grandmother, I lost my best friend. So did you.

May Mrs. Cohen's memory always be for a blessing.

Zichrono Livrachah: Ken Mayer

Did anyone ever contribute more to the Moncton Jewish community than our friend, Ken Mayer?

I believe you would be hard-pressed to find as well-rounded, consistent and fervent a giver of time, talent and resources as Ken.

Some come to services. Many have been generous financially. Others volunteer for various activities. And there are those who have served on the board and leadership of the community.

Ken Mayer served all of these tasks with

dedication to the maximum, as well as so many other ones.

He was always a fixture at the services. Taking hours of lessons with Yosef Kahn and others, he obtained a full mastery of the synagogue traditions. He spent hours going through our sacred literature, mastering ideas and texts.

You could sometimes find him up on the roof of the building—trying to fix a roof leak, repairing the air-conditioning, replacing the plumbing and fixtures. I told him that he should at least recover his material costs from the general community. I don't believe he ever did so. That was his contribution, he said.

But that contribution was a double one. It saved the community money. And it also provided, from anyone who would learn from it, a role model for what we all should be doing and teaching our children.

These are some of the so many roles that we saw Ken acting publicly.

But Ken's great hero from the Bible, Abraham, also knew that G-d must be served privately as well.

Hence our Sages' reading of the story of the binding of Isaac. Abraham had gone through other tests, they say, but these were always in the public arena. You might think that he was a devotee only when the collective eye of his family and community was upon him.

And so G-d gave him the test of the Akedah—away from his wife, his servants, his followers—to see if he would be obedient without an acknowledged reward.

Just as Abraham passed the "privacy" test, so Ken Mayer did as well.

There were numerous people whom Ken

helped in the community. Many of you do not know who these persons were or the extent of his involvement. It would not be consistent with his character or wishes to elaborate. I would only note that this sometimes required hours of commitment, from someone who had a full-time job and a family life.

There wasn't anything that Ken wouldn't have a go at. He served consistently on the chevra kadisha. You could count upon him to help in the kitchen. He would give you a ride somewhere. He was always ready to visit someone in the hospital. Once he even came with me to visit a prisoner.

I last saw him a couple years ago. It was apparent that his "Book of Life" was drawing to a close, that he was finishing up the last chapter, perhaps even the last paragraph.

It was not an easy time for someone with such an active verve for Jewish life. But he knew the stories of the Fathers—and Mothers. Our rabbis say their lives are signs to our own. I'm sure that all of his learning remained with him to the end as a guide light through the trying times.

Personally, I would conclude by noting two things.

I have been talking about Ken Mayer. But, of course, he wasn't really Ken. He was a hyphenated person—(t)he(y) was (were) "Ken-Joan Mayer."

Never did you have one doing something without the other being far behind. They were interchangeable, mutually supportive and always at hand for encouragement and counsel.

And my best memories will be their role as "bubbe" and "zaide" to my children.

They would always share insights from

the Bible with Leah. Ken would get into vehement arguments with Tamar, claiming that a prayerbook really belonged to him and not her. And Sarah, whose last day of high school is today—well, she didn't say much then. But she loved it when Joan picked her up, Sossie, as she called her, and bounced her around our house or the shul.

And so this is a tough day for all of us. Not only the sadness of the loss so much, though that is there. No, something more.

To recall a life so well-lived and directed toward helping others should put a measure before us. Are we doing what we can to help the community? Are we mindful of the little guy who might be left out of mind? Are there activities that we should be putting our efforts into?

I think all of us today, will find ourselves deficient in at least several ways, if we compare our efforts with those of Ken.

Let us hope that in recalling and making this permanent memorial, that we leave today, look around our homes, the synagogue, our work—and become the "Ken Mayers" to meet the challenges of those situations.

May Joan Mayer, daughters Sharon and Joanne, all the grandchildren, and the Moncton community be comforted among the mourners for Zion and Jerusalem.

Rabbi David Ellis is available for introducing persons looking for Jewish mates in the region.

All inquiries and discussions are strictly confidential.

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A Jerusalem For All

by Ari Isenberg, Spiritual Leader of the Shaar Shalom Synagogue, Halifax

On Friday afternoon (March 30th), a group of Haligonians participated in a global initiative (called "Global March to Jerusalem") to delegitimize the State of Israel and dismiss its very right to exist. This rhetoric has sadly become

all too familiar.

If you were in the downtown core, you would have heard calls for "the end of the racist Zionist State" and "an end to the apartheid, ethnic cleansing and Judaisation policies affecting the people, land and sanctity of Jerusalem". Yet, the ever-

apparent irony is that their own slogans and chants calling for the abolishment of the State of Israel is demonstrative of precisely the type of ethnic cleansing they claim to be protesting.

Moreover, I wonder how many of Friday's
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protesters have, themselves, visited Jerusalem. When visiting Israel's Capital city, this is what you discover:

If you are Christian, you can gather freely at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, walk the Stations of Jesus Christ, and visit the dozens upon dozens of churches. The Municipality of Jerusalem and the State of Israel preserve, maintain, and protect your sites.

If you are Muslim, you are free to gather and pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and all other mosques. In fact, the Waqf (the Jerusalem Islamic Trust) manages and controls the



Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. This point deserves emphasis: The State of Israel grants authority to the Waqf to manage those sites based on Islamic law. Last year, when I went up to visit the plaza adjacent the mosque (non-Muslims are unable to actually enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque), I walked through a Waqf security checkpoint. Does this sound like an apartheid country to you? What's more, stroll into the beautiful Jerusalem neighbourhood of Rechavia and, prominently beside the Jerusalem Theatre, you'll find the Museum for Islamic Art.

If you are Armenian, Hindu, Baha'i, or Buddhist, you have absolute freedom to practice your religion and worship in your sacred spaces.

Indeed, there is not a single religious faith that does not enjoy full freedom of expression and worship in Jerusalem and the rest of Israel.

This moral imperative, this democratic and ideological ideal flies in the face of all

those who purposefully choose to tarnish and demonize Israel. Actually, what Israel's critics seem to be describing is more accurately a reflection of Jerusalem five decades ago, under Jordanian control. Jewish visitors were persona non grata, and many synagogues were bulldozed. The freedom to exercise religious rights was not of high moral imperative and the sacred spaces of all faiths were certainly not protected by the Hashemite Kingdom.

Today, Israel continues to treat all sacred spaces within its borders equally. Many decent and sensible people around the world are well aware and have heeded the call, flocking to Israel on religious pilgrimages by the millions every year.

May Israel continue to protect the sacred sites so meaningful to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. May those who blindly accept, as gospel, the propaganda and lies that delegitimize Israel seek a path to an unobscured truth. Let truth replace hatred. Let truth pave the way to respect, and love.

Do You Know What "M.P.W.T.A" Stands For?

by Rabbi Ari Sherbill, Beth Israel Synagogue, Halifax, NS

How does one effect positive change? How does one leverage the power of relationships to empower and create a greater good? How does a community become a unified self with so many different ideologies, personalities and groups? It's actually simple, but now is not time to reveal everything - so we'll start with the 1st step: MPWTA

The only way to appreciate the power of MPWTA is by sitting back and hearing the following story:

There was once a King who had an incredible son for a Prince. The Prince was extremely intelligent, very strong and possessed leadership qualities that ensured he would be as successful as his Father the King.

Then, suddenly, something terrifying

happened. The Prince went crazy. He thought he was no longer a Prince, but a Turkey.

So he took off all his clothes, went under the table and acted just like a Turkey. He gobbled and pecked and only ate scraps from what the royal family didn't finish. The King didn't know what to do, so he called all his advisors and doctors.

One advisor said that the Prince truly is mad and must be locked up lest he cause more harm to the family name. Another advisor said to make sure no one knows about this lest it ruin the



reputation of the King.

Then a doctor came along and gave the Prince some medicine, but it didn't have any effect. Another doctor thought to talk to him and ask him why he's a Turkey and what the problem is - but the Prince just pecked at him.

Finally a wise man came to the King and said that he will save his son.

The King asked the wise man, "Well, what will you do?"

The wise man responded, "My King, if you'll allow me to do this I will save him. But if you will, please do not be shocked." The King allowed the wise man in and was horribly shocked at what the wise man did.

The wise man took off all his clothes, began to gobble and peck and went underneath the table with the Prince. The two of them spent time together

being Turkeys, eating the scraps and making noise.

After a while the wise man put on a pair of pants. The Prince was astonished and asked, "Turkeys don't wear pants!" To which the wise man replied, "Well, you can still be a Turkey and wear pants." So the Prince put on pants as well.

Then the wise man put on a shirt, to which the Prince alerted, "Turkeys don't wear shirts!" To which the wise man said, "Well, you can still be a Turkey and wear pants." So the Prince put on a shirt as well.

Soon after that, the wise man sat at the table and explained that you can still be a Turkey and sit at the table. Slowly, the Prince stopped acting like a Turkey

entirely and began to act like his royal self.

If you've ever wondered the secret of relationships, it's hidden within this story. For the essence of relationship begins with thinking about what the other needs. Not what do I want from people - but how can I serve others? Not what can I get from people - but what can I give to people? Not what aren't people doing - but how can I help them in achieving their goals? The essence of relationship then is not me, but we.

When the Torah was given to the Jewish people on Shavuot, the Torah wasn't given to sporadic cliques, groups, denominations or classes. "As one person with one heart" is how the Torah

describes the essence of Judaism and the essence of our wisdom.

There is an entire step-by-step process of how to achieve this. For now, let's begin with the 1st step that is at the core of the Turkey-Prince story: MPWTA. MPWTA stands for: Meet People Where They're At.

MPWTA means asking a different question, and it's all focused on adding value to others and being a person of service. Not me, but we and it begins with meeting people where they're at, just as God does with every one of us - which is why God is awesome.

Wishing you a Chag Sameach & much health, nachas & success.

Make Your Mark

by Rabbi Yosef Goldman, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, Fredericton

This title is probably copyrighted, but I am not trying to sell anything, so please forgive me.

When the people of Israel left Egypt, Hashem said to them: "and you shall be for me a kingdom of ministers (or priests) and a holy nation" (Exodus 19, 6). How can we all be holy? How can we all be ministers?

I think the answer is very simple. If we all truly believe in ourselves, and we don't ever say: 'I can't do this or that', we will succeed.

The Talmud, when discussing the end time for reciting the Shema in the morning, says that this time is determined by when the Kings' sons & daughters wake up. This suggests that we are all, the King's sons and daughters. Most of us have never experienced what it truly means to be free of worries (you know, Jewish guilt and all that), but at least once a day we have to concentrate on how much Hashem loves us and expects of us. These two qualities must go hand in hand with each other. If we realize that Hashem loves us, we will know how to

do what G-d expects from us.

The Midrash very often compares G-d to a king and the people of Israel to princes and princesses.

These parables are so rich in messages for any given situation.

But, I would like to discuss a parable from about 300 years ago.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman explained why he felt that Jewish Mysticism (or Kaballah) should be taught to the public with the following parable:

A king had an only son who became ill and could not eat or drink anything. All the attending doctors were at a loss of how to heal him. A wise person understood the only possible cure. He told the king that he would have to desecrate the royal crown by removing its most precious jewel. This would have to be ground up and fed to the king's



son. The king regretted the loss to his majesty but immediately agreed that the life of his son was more important. The jewel was ground and the solution was fed to the son. Most of the cure fell to the ground, but the son received a few drops and became cured. Concluded Rabbi Schneur Zalman in defense of Hasidic ideas being publicly exposed, the king represents God, and the son represents the Jewish community, who recognize the "God of Israel". At the time of the emerging Hasidic movement, the Jewish people were at a physical and spiritual low ebb. The only cure would be the dissemination of the inner Divine teachings of Hasidic thought. Even though this would also involve their desecration, this would fully be justified in order to heal the people.

We are going to celebrate Lag Baomer very soon, and this day teaches me that even if there are many obstacles on our spiritual path, we can (and must) overcome them.

Pessimists see difficulty in every opportunity; Optimists see opportunity in every difficulty.

Rut's Story - the Epitome of Geirut/Conversion

by Rebbetzin Frimet Yagod, Tiferes Israel Synagogue, Moncton

As we approach the Holiday of Shavuot/Festival of Weeks, the first images in our mind are the delicious cheese cakes and Dairy Lokshin Kugels that our mothers make. Yet Shavuot, like Pesach/Passover is a Holiday that is fundamental to Judaism itself.

Seven weeks after our Exodus from Egypt, Hashem/G-d gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai. The Torah has been and constantly is our guide throughout the ages. The Siniatic Experience was the beginning of our Jewish nation. There has never been such an occurrence in the world before or since then. The Torah and Judaism have survived throughout the multitude of beautiful occasions and personal and national tragedies for the last 3324 years. Because of this, it behooves us to understand its importance.

Hashem/G-d charged us with a mission to be "Mamlechet Kohanim v'Goy Kadosh" to be a kingdom of priest and a holy nation (Shemot 19:6). Our behaviour has to reflect an exalted refinement regardless of that which is present in the populous that we find ourselves. To accomplish this, Hashem/G-d gave us and

obligatory set of Mitzvot (613) and teachings to guide us to this elevated goal called Torah.

It was this refinement and elevated goal that Rut recognized in the family she married into. Even when her husband died (Rut 1:5), Rut did not want to leave her mother-in-law, Naomi. Rut could not see her future back in her native, Moav/Moab. She had experienced and understood their lifes' aspirations and behaviours. Their lifestyle was diametrically opposed to that of the Jewish Nation and could not see herself return to it nor remain on its land.

Naomi tried to dissuade her three times. She explained to Rut quite graphically what her life would look like if she joined the Jewish Nation and her obligation to accept the Mitzvot without compromise (see Rashi 1:16-17). Naomi saw there was no possible way to shift Rut from her position (1:18). Rut was resolute and determined to join her fate with our nation as is expressed in her famous quote:

"Where you will go, I will go. Where you will sleep, I will sleep.

Your G-d is my G-d and your nation is my nation. Where you will die, I will be buried. So should G-d do to me and so should He add. Only the death will separate between you and I."

Rut could not see herself living a life without this exalted goal of refined behaviour. She understood that her commitment to all the Mitzvot was binding forever and there was no retreating. It was with this strength, Rut lived her life and was rewarded with being the great grandmother of David Hamelech/King David.

It is for this reason that Megillat Rut/The Scroll of Rut is read on Shavuot/Festival of Weeks. When we stood at Mount Sinai, the same resoluteness was shown when we answered "Naaseh V'Nishma/we will do and we will listen." Rut started her life with full commitment to Torah as we had when we stood at the Siniatic Experience. It is with this resoluteness that we have endured for the last almost two thousand years outside the land of Israel.

Best wishes for a beautiful and meaningful Shavuot.

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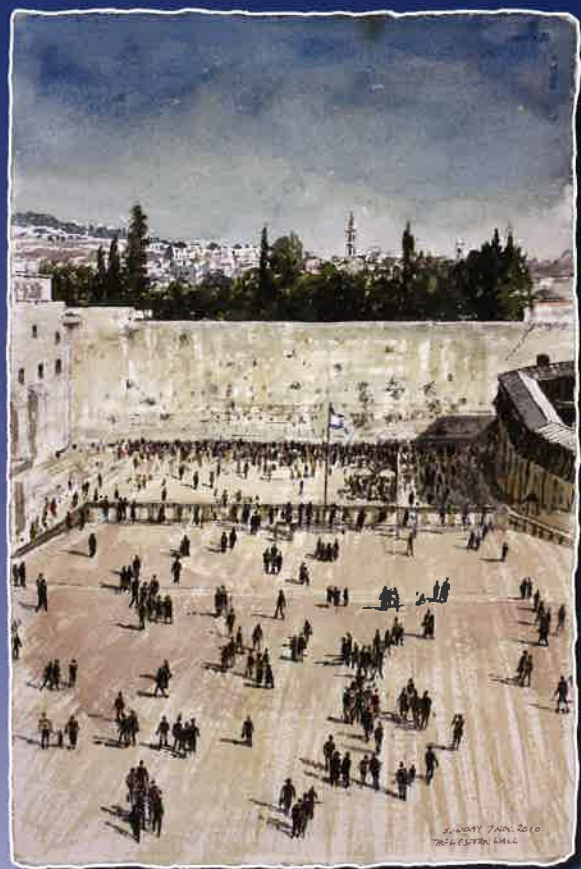
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