

SHALOM! שלום

Spring 2014 Vol. 39 No.1

SIVAN 5774



LYNN ROTIN

THE KEYS, FROM THE SERIES HOLOCAUST AND MEMORY, OIL ON CANVAS, 36 x 48 INCHES

- SPECIAL FEATURES:
- ATLANTIC JEWISH FOUNDATION
- YOM HASHOAH IN ATLANTIC CANADA
- NEWS FROM AROUND OUR REGION





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Cover Artist
Lynn Rotin

Lynn Rotin paints and draws from a studio attached to her fisherman's cottage in West Pennant, a small community near Sambro and Crystal Crescent Beach. She holds a BA from York University, a BFA from NSCAD University and a graphic design diploma from George Brown College in Toronto. Her work can be found at Art Sales and Rental at the AGNS as well as her own home studio. Several pieces are in the collection of the Art Bank of Nova Scotia, many others are in private collections in Canada, the United States and Mexico. "Holocaust and Memory" seeks to address the present by exploring the past and to describe the experiences of some elderly Holocaust survivors. At the same time it invites meditation and reflection on the continued impact of crimes against humanity. Three drawings from this series travelled to Clermont Ferrand in central France as part of an exhibition showcasing several Nova Scotia artists.

שלום!

President: Michael Argand

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 Michael Argand

Welcome to our spring edition of the Shalom magazine. I know we have already given up on any decent weather for spring, let's hope for a warm summer. I was away for most of January and February but I have been very busy the last few months attending numerous events.

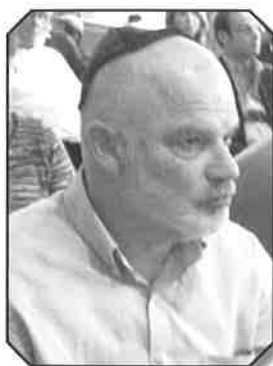
The Yom HaShoah program in Halifax was held at Saint Mary's University. The Azrieli Foundation recently published the memoirs of Helena Jockel and she was honoured during the program. The following is about her memoirs from the Azrieli Foundation:

"When the Nazis invade Hungary on March 19, 1944 all elementary school teacher Helena Jockel can think about is how to save "her" children. She accompanies them to Auschwitz only to see them taken to the gas chamber".

It was a standing room only event and I was privileged to talk about Helena's bravery along with Dr. Dorota Glowacka who delivered a moving talk from the heart about her connection and love for Helena. The program also featured the play, 937, presented by Two Planks and a Passion Theatre about the voyage of the St. Louis. If you have an opportunity to see the play, I highly recommend it as it is extremely moving.

Halifax had two events for Yom Ha'atzmaut. We had a large gathering at the Beth Israel Synagogue with Israeli food and singing and games for the children. I want to thank all the volunteers especially Maya Moscovich who has been with the AJC for the past 2 years. Maya has recently left the AJC to work for Nova Scotia Power and we wish her much success in her new job. Maya was a wonderful employee and we will miss her greatly.

Also for our Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations, for the founding of Israel (66 years), we were pleased to have Consul General



Joel Lion present a very informative talk using short films on the cultural life of a new and modern Israel. Thank you to the volunteers of the upcoming Atlantic Jewish Film Festival for providing those attending with popcorn and Soda Stream beverages.

Bassie and Rabbi Mendel Feldman organized a successful Lag B'omer BBQ and celebration at Conrose Park. A big crowd turned out despite the cold weather and a fun time was had by all.

The AJC was honoured to participate in an exhibition presented by the Canadian Armed Forces celebrating Nova Scotia's involvement in WWI. There was not only a Jewish Brigade but the first Prime Minister of Israel, Ben Gurion, attended a training camp in Windsor, NS in 1917. The exhibit, which is located at the Citadel, has the letter from Ben Gurion, written in 1977 thanking the Armed Forces for the training and for presenting him with the rank of corporal. I highly recommend all of you to visit the exhibit as it is extremely well presented.

The AJC was also involved with the Jan Karski exhibit that was held at Saint Mary's University and also in attendance was Consul General Joel Lion.

On May 23rd, JNF honoured Dr. Jim Spatz with over 600 hundred people in attendance. A significant amount of money was raised to honour Jim for the generous financial contributions he has made to our community, the State of Israel and to many local charities. JNF will be dedicating a bike path in Jim's honour in Tel Aviv. Jim has not only made significant financial contributions but has represented our community on the Canada Israel Committee, CIJA and for many years was co-chair along with Victor Goldberg of Camp Kadimah. I was honoured to speak on behalf of the AJC at the event. Thank you to Howard Conter, chair of the dinner and Sue David our representative for JNF and her committee for a job well done.

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From the Desk of Jon Goldberg, Executive Director

Looks like winter is finally over here in Halifax. I didn't think the sun would ever shine again. However things have finally warmed up and we can begin to look forward to the summer. Welcome to our spring 2014 edition and thank you to our subscribers both new and old. This year we will begin to put Shalom online for many of you. The AJC is turning "green".

This past winter has seen many activities throughout the region most of which are reported in this edition. There are however a number of people and happenings which I want to highlight. Congratulations to Tom Marshall of Corner Brook, Newfoundland who became the first Jewish Premier in the history of Atlantic Canada.

Congratulations:

To Jim Spatz on being honoured by JNF with a Negev dinner.

To Marilyn Kaufman on accepting the position of chair of LPC for CIJA Atlantic.

To Lee Cohen, a past president of the AJC, on receiving an honorary doctorate from the Atlantic School of Theology.

To Consul General of Israel for Quebec and Atlantic Canada, Mr. Joel Lion, for his care and concern for our region during his tenure in Montreal. Not only has he visited Atlantic Canada on numerous occasions, he has provided assistance with programs, and visited Camp Kadimah a number of times. Consul General Lion will be leaving his position sometime before Yom Tov, I want to thank him both personally and on behalf of our communities for all that he has done and I wish him and his lovely wife Rivka good health, happiness and continued success in his future endeavors.

To Kathy and Arthur Zilbert who returned from retirement to chair the Committee of Partnership2gether formerly (P2K).

To Katherine Biggs-Craft, curator Saint John Jewish Historical Museum, for her contribution to the Saint John Jewish

community and her communications with the AJC.

To all the organizers of the Yom HaShoah programs throughout the region, your efforts help "keep the memories alive" for thousands of Atlantic Canadians every year.

To Ralph and Shirlee Medjuck for providing a three-month subscription to the Canadian Jewish News for every Jewish home in Atlantic Canada.

To Howard and Karen Conter, our UJA co-chairs in Atlantic Canada, and all the canvassers who give of their time throughout the region to help make the United Jewish Appeal campaign of Atlantic Canada a success.

To all the members of the Atlantic Jewish community who support our campaign I want to thank you for caring about your fellow Jews here in Canada and throughout the world.

As is the case every year our AJC staff turns over to some extent. I want to thank Maya Moscovich for her two and a half years as UJA campaign administrator and AJC program associate who has recently taken a position with Nova Scotia Power. Naomi Rosenfeld, our director of Jewish student life (Hillel) will be leaving in August for graduate school at Brandeis University. Naomi was only with us for less than a year but I shall miss her enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to her work. In my mind she was one of the best Hillel staff we've ever had here and I'm sorry to see her leave.

Camp Kadimah is less than six weeks away and it looks like a great season. Enrollment is up and congratulations to director Jared Goldlust and the camp committee co-chaired by Michael Pink, Michael Soberman and Lynda Suissa.

I want to thank Edna LeVine, our director community engagement and editor of Shalom, for her continued fine work both on this magazine and many other areas of

our operations. Thank you to Svetlana Ratchinski, our controller and to Mark David, the CIJA Atlantic staff, both of whom do terrific jobs in their fields. To the AJC

board of directors and particularly Michael Argand, our president, thank you for your support. And to all our readers I wish you a pleasant summer full of good health and happiness for you and your families.



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The Atlantic Jewish Foundation: Scholarships & Bursaries for 2015

All applications must be received by April 30th, 2015

The Noa & Sarah Heinish Scholarship

Throughout their lives, Noa and Sarah Heinish devoted themselves to the betterment of their community, their house of worship and the state of Israel.

Passover of 1943 found Noa and Sarah Assisting in the preparation of a Seder for hundreds of young Jewish servicemen stationed in Halifax before shipping out to Europe.

At the end of WWII, Noa was one of a group of interpreters who met the ships which brought Holocaust survivors from Europe to the shores of Halifax. Speaking in Yiddish, he helped them transfer to the trains which took them to family members waiting their arrival in Upper Canada.

Noa Heinish was one of the founders of Shaar Shalom Congregation and served as its first president. Together with Sarah they lent their support to every arm of the congregation.

Sarah Heinish was an active member of Women's League, Hadassah, Neptune Theatre, the Soroptomists and the Nova Scotia Institute for the Blind. Both Noa and Sarah gave generously of their time and resources in the support of Israel Bond drives, United Jewish Appeal, Camp Kadimah and other groups and were leaders in the Canadian Jewish Congress. For many years they operated a successful clothing business on Gottingen Street in downtown Halifax which closed in 1972.

To carry on their good works, the Heinish family established the Noa and Sarah Heinish Foundation. This charitable foundation has provided endowments supporting Jewish educational and health care institutions in Canada and Israel. A portion of the funds has been allocated to the Atlantic Jewish Foundation to provide an annual merit scholarship for a student from the Maritime Jewish Community to study in Israel. Dependent upon the vagaries of the market, the scholarship should provide a stipend of one to a maximum of two thousand dollars to the successful recipient.

Noa and Sarah Heinish Foundation Trust – One scholarship per year for study in Israel

The Miasnik-Rein Trust

A limited number of scholarships of \$2,000 each are available to worthy students, one or both of whose parents profess the Jewish faith. The scholarship is open to students of the Atlantic Region for the purpose of establishing or continuing exposure to their Jewish heritage by means of study, travel, community service or other suitable means.

Miasnik - \$2000 each (Maximum 5 scholarships per year)

Halifax Endowment Fund (Jayson Greenblatt Bursary)

A \$500 bursary awarded to Jewish individuals from Atlantic Canada to further Jewish studies in Israel or in the Diaspora.

Jayson Greenblatt Bursary - \$500 each (Maximum 2 scholarships per year)

- Scholarships will be awarded on merit and on the availability of funds.
- Priority will be given to first time applicants.
- Submitting a scholarship application does not confirm automatic receipt of a scholarship.

**For further information and applications please contact the Atlantic Jewish Foundation
(scholarships and bursaries) in c/o Jon Goldberg, jgoldberg@theajc.ns.ca**

Applications are available online from our website: <http://theajc.ns.ca/mission-statement/>

From the Desk of

Edna LeVine, Director of Community Engagement

Jews "On the Edge" 1944: Between Annihilation and Liberation, was the 2014 central theme, selected by Yad Vashem, for Holocaust Remembrance Day. Seventy years ago over four hundred thousand Jews in Hungary were deported, primarily to Auschwitz, and the majority were murdered. Helena Jockel remembers the day the German soldiers came to her home and rounded up all the Jews in her community. During Passover 1944 Helena was in a ghetto on the outside of her town, prior to being herded into a freight car on "a journey to hell". At the Yom HaShoah service in Halifax Helena Jockel was honoured, with over three hundred people in attendance. Her dedication throughout the years to bear witness, speaking in schools and to community groups, reflects her commitment as an educator. The Yom HaShoah program included the book launch of Helena Jockel's memoirs, published by the Azrieli Foundation. Her memoirs were transcribed by Carolyn Ferstman Conde, who diligently worked with Helena for over two years to record her first hand testimony as a witness to the Holocaust. It is through Carolyn's efforts and the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, *We Sang in Hushed Voices* was published. Dr. Dorota Glowacka wrote the introduction to Helena's book and an article on Helena's story is on page 16.

This spring the Atlantic Jewish Council co-sponsored a provincial tour of the play, *937: Voyage of the St. Louis*. This performance was presented to over three thousand people across Nova Scotia including those attending the Yom HaShoah program in Halifax. The 937 project reflects our commitment to Holocaust education and to fighting Antisemitism through education and activities that contribute to a more tolerant and aware society. 937 highlights the dangers of Antisemitism and demonstrates Canada's involvement in the plight of Jewish refugees in 1939. It also holds great contemporary significance as a reflection of current racism and discrimination in Canadian society at a time when immigration is a vital reality in our current society. Please refer to the article on page 12 for further information on this production.

I am the AJC representative for the group Partners for Human Rights, a partnership of organizations, with the support of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, dedicated to working towards a respectful and inclusive community. The group is a community-based voice to promote human rights issues and we are presently planning a program for International Human Rights Day, December 10th, to be held at Cole Harbour Place.

This year Massada Club co-hosted two events with the efforts of Barb and Phil Alberstat and Mindy Jacobson. Amili Gelbman, an Israeli artist living in northern Israel, visited Nova Scotia this spring, and she had the opportunity to discuss her art projects with members of the Jewish community at an afternoon tea. Her inspirational presentation included her work and the work of her collaborators, an interdisciplinary group



of Israeli artists and their examination of identity and culture in contemporary Israel. Her visit to Nova Scotia was hosted by the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, for more information please see page 13. Massada Club also co-hosted a luncheon this winter at the Beth Israel Synagogue. Recently arrived newcomer to Halifax Olga Shepshelevich entertained the attendees with classic and contemporary Israeli songs.

I continue to meet with newcomers and local settlement organizations in Halifax to facilitate settlement and implement pre-arrival plans. The success of our program has attracted local attention and this spring Jamie Baille, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia, was keen to meet with us to discuss and support our efforts.



Jamie Baille (L) leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of NS, met with Edna LeVine and Jon Goldberg.

The Atlantic Jewish Film Festival committee has been meeting regularly for almost a year to organize the festival in Halifax. November 13th – 16th aims to be a weekend offering film lovers entertaining and topical films in an effort to reach out and celebrate diversity and help build bridges to better understanding. For more information on how you can support our festival please visit www.ajff.ca or contact me at the AJC office.



Israeli Artist Amili Gelbman (L) at an afternoon tea, Beth Israel Synagogue.

Atlantic Jewish Foundation

by Kathy Zilbert, Chair, AJF

The Atlantic Jewish Foundation is the Bequest and Endowment arm of the Atlantic Jewish Council. It works independently with its own Board of Trustees. Quarterly meetings are held to deal with the business of the foundation.

The graph below shows the fund and its divisions for 2013. Although small, this fund has shown consistent growth over the year allowing us to modestly build principle while spending the investment gains on scholarships, projects, metro family services and

operational expenses.

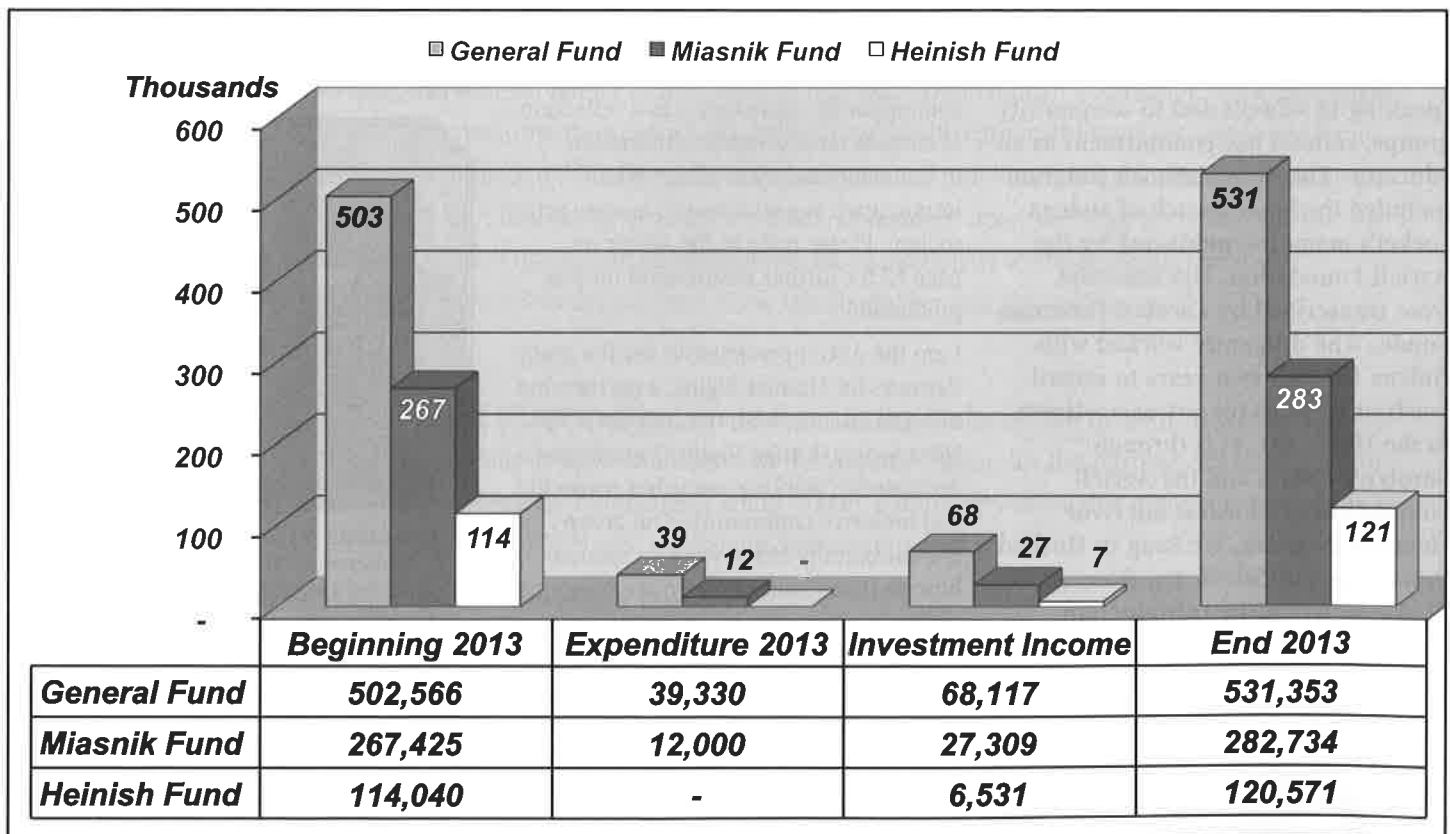
The scholarships, respecting the guidelines of the funds that generate them, assist individuals from the Atlantic region to participate in programs that enhance their Jewish life and education at home and in Israel.

PJ Library has been running very successfully in Atlantic Canada for



almost two years. The Atlantic Jewish Foundation is very pleased and proud to sponsor 50 young children who receive a Jewish book each month.

The foundation would be pleased to speak with all individuals who are interested in making a gift, bequest or endowment to ensure continued support of priorities that we have identified for our region. We would also be happy to facilitate any gifts, bequests and/or endowments focusing on projects in Israel or national Jewish initiatives.



You decide how your gift will be used.

You can create a self-designated donor-advised fund or direct your gift to one of our many existing programs and initiatives, such as:

- The Chaplaincy program
- Community Development
- Camp Kadimah
- Partnership 2Gether with Israel

Camp Kadimah

One camper at a time

It's proven that children who go to Jewish summer camp are more likely as adults to:

- Feel that being Jewish is very important
- Be emotionally attached to Israel
- Marry a Jewish partner
- Attend synagogue
- Donate to a Jewish charity

Thousands of children from Canada, Israel and overseas have enjoyed a dynamic experience at Camp Kadimah.

Since 1943, unique programming has built a foundation of Jewish knowledge and identity and a love for Israel in generations of campers and staff.

Community Development

One family at a time

The Atlantic Jewish Immigrant Outreach Program builds a stronger Atlantic Canada and Jewish community of today and tomorrow. Programming focuses on the retention

and stimulation of the present population and on providing support to new immigrants.

Outreach programming focused on Jewish culture and education helps integrate newcomers into the mainstream community.

The Atlantic Jewish population of 3,000 represents 1% of the national total. Recent initiatives have brought many newcomers to the area.

Your gift will guarantee a vibrant future for Jewish communities in the Atlantic region.

The Chaplaincy Fund

One spiritual connection at a time

Over the years, the demographics of the Atlantic Jewish community have changed dramatically.

The number of elderly is growing while the

total local Jewish population is shrinking. Many communities are without synagogues or rabbis for spiritual leadership.

The chaplaincy program, dedicated to the wellbeing of every Jew in the Atlantic region works closely with communities, seniors' institutions, families and individuals to provide:

- Spiritual care to those in need
- Jewish programming and holiday services
- Educational presentations
- Religious services and rabbinic consultation and counselling

Partnership 2Gether

Coast-to-Coast/Galilee Panhandle

In Israel, as part of the Coast-to-Coast Partnership 2Gether, the Atlantic Jewish Community is changing lives by responding to the needs of youth living in towns and cities in the peripheral regions with support for programs like:

- Kav Hazinuk leadership program
- Educational initiatives
- Exchanges through Camp Kadimah
- Special projects - e.g. Shechafim School for severely disabled youth

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Please contact: **Kathy Zilbert**, AJF Chair
kathyzilbert@gmail.com or 902-422-3886

or **Jon Goldberg**, AJC Executive Director
jgoldberg@theajc.ns.ca or 902-422-7491 x222

CIJA Invites Community to Evaluate and Engage

by Mark David - Consultant, Advocacy (AJC)

Advocacy is in many ways a core element of Jewish identity, and one that transcends religious-secular lines within the community. From generation to generation, the Jewish people have always been at the forefront of social and political change. Standing up and making our collective voice heard is in our communal DNA. We can be enormously proud of the legacy of activism set by those who marched for civil rights in the US South, emigration rights for Soviet "refuseniks", and the national rights of the Jewish people in the State of Israel. This is the legacy that inspires our work at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) - as represented itself by CIJA's advocacy before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on the subject of Jewish refugees from Arab countries - to cite but one example.

As the non-partisan advocacy agent of the Atlantic Jewish Council and its partner Federations across Canada, CIJA is engaged in a range of initiatives in keeping with our communal legacy of advocacy. But our efforts depend on the involvement of our stakeholders. We owe the community a transparent report of our work and an opportunity for the grassroots to evaluate our performance and let us know their

issue priorities. It is for these reasons that we recently published our Impact Report.

The Impact Report aims for an entirely new way of communicating with stakeholders, quite unlike the format for annual reports typically used by businesses and non-profit organizations. Its online version (at cija.ca/impact) asks readers to review our efforts over the past two years across a range of issues, evaluate results, and understand our intended next steps. Using an online survey, readers are encouraged to offer comments on each issue.

In all, the Impact Report strives to use technology to strengthen community accountability and invite Jewish Canadians to get involved in advocacy at the local level. Whether you are most interested in social justice policies, Israel's image in Canada, or freedom of religion - to name just a few - there are limitless issues on which to speak up and make a difference.

Atlantic Canada is an important focal point on campus activism. Home to numerous universities that include a significant number of Jewish students from across Canada, the region saw a general decline in anti-Israel campus activism in 2013-14. Based on our local monitoring, campus activities surrounding the offensive "Israeli Apartheid Week" were quiet, uneventful, and ill-attended. This is an encouraging trend, and one that should motivate us to do even more to build relations between

Canadians and Israelis on campus and elsewhere in the Atlantic region.

This academic year, CIJA launched a series of local internships on campuses across the country, providing resources to pro-Israel students looking to create their own impactful programs to promote Israel as a vibrant, multicultural, liberal democracy. To cite one example, an intern at Dalhousie brought examples of the wonderful work of Israeli photographer Rudi Weissenstein to Halifax for a week-long exhibit at a popular campus coffee house, culminating in a great evening event with art, food, and Size Doesn't Matter swag. This is the sort of positive and practical initiative that connects Israel to the broader student community that tends to tune out debates over the Middle East conflict. And it's the sort of grassroots-driven advocacy that CIJA is proud to support in Atlantic Canada and across Canada.

I urge you to take a few moments to review our Impact Report at cija.ca/impact. More importantly, I encourage you to get involved.

In closing, on behalf of CIJA, Kol HaKavod to Jim Spatz, former Canada-Israel Committee Board member, on being the honoree at the Jewish National Fund (Atlantic) Negev Dinner in Halifax on May 22, 2014. Jim's many years of volunteer service embody the legacy of advocacy that makes us proud to be Jewish Canadians.

CIJA Building Support for Israel through Fact-Finding Missions

by Steve McDonald, Associate Director of Communications, (CIJA)

A trip to Israel can have a profound impact on one's life. Believe me, I know firsthand.

In 2007, I participated in a parliamentary staff mission to Israel hosted by the

Canada-Israel Committee, a predecessor organization of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). In the years since, I have converted to Judaism, started a Jewish family, and moved into a career in Jewish

and pro-Israel advocacy. While my trip to Israel was not the only factor in these events, it was a critical milestone in the awakening of my Zionist identity.

A core component of CIJA's work continues

to revolve around missions to Israel, which serve as an invaluable educational and relationship-building tool. As CIJA Chair David Koschitzky recently wrote:

There are few experiences as compelling for our fellow Canadians as seeing Israel firsthand. ...In 2012-13 alone, CIJA brought more than 400 current and potential influencers – virtually all non-Jewish Canadians – on missions to Israel.

In addition to Members of Parliament and their staff, mission participants have included journalists, entrepreneurs, student leaders, academics, and civil society activists. In the case of our 2013 university presidents mission (co-hosted with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the trip included the signing of an historic partnership agreement between university associations in Canada and Israel – a significant enhancement of academic ties.

This February, I led a mission with an impressive group of graduate students in public policy and MBA programs, many with already-established careers. Our itinerary enabled them to meet with, among others, a variety of professors, Members of the Knesset, and economic and security experts. They learned about

Israel's experience as a leading high-tech innovator, toured Israel's borders, walked the streets of Jerusalem's Old City, and revisited the horrors of the Shoah at Yad Vashem.

The questions they asked and the conversations we shared spoke to the impact of a brief, but intense, seven days in Israel. As Blake Leew, one of the MBA students, stated later:

I finished the trip not only with increased understanding of the issues but also with an increased conviction to ensure that they are discussed and resolved in a manner that is moderate, balanced, and fair. For many participants, including myself, the trip was a life-changing experience that will have long-lasting effects on the choices we make after finishing school...

While those in our community who follow current events in the Middle East may be forgiven a dose of cynicism, we should not forget how fundamentally inspiring Israel remains – especially for those experiencing it for the first time. Within hours of landing at Ben-Gurion Airport, visitors are astonished by how green, modern, safe, and “normal” the country is, considering the chaos unfolding just kilometres from

its borders. This is the first experience mission participants have with a theme that recurs throughout their journey: the many paradoxes that make up life in Israel.

A country with limited resources and hostile neighbours evolves into a “start-up nation” that sells high-tech knowledge around the globe. A state with mandatory military service builds what is perhaps the most informal army in the developed world, in which superior officers are referred to by their first name (or even nickname). A land identified with the ancient cities of the Bible is also home to Tel Aviv – one of the most open, liberal, and vibrant cities in the world. And a nation gathered to its ancestral land after centuries of systemic oppression, pogroms, and genocide, renews itself as a youthful, forward-thinking society in which polls show high levels of optimism and happiness.

Indeed, Israel's power as a source of inspiration rests to a great extent in these and other paradoxes, which can only be truly witnessed firsthand and on-the-ground. Whatever you call it – eye-opening or life-changing – missions are at the core of effective advocacy.

➤ GET CONNECTED. GET INVOLVED.



The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) serves as the advocacy arm of the Atlantic Jewish Council and the Jewish Federations of Canada. Here are three ways you can get involved in advancing policies that strengthen the Jewish people in Canada, in Israel, and around the world.

1

Learn more.

To learn about the issues and policies we are involved in, go to www.cija.ca and sign up for email updates.

2

Make your voice heard.

Take our survey at www.cija.ca/survey to let us know the issues that matter to you.

3

Volunteer.

Consider volunteering through CIJA's Atlantic Local Partner Council by contacting Mark David at ajc@cija.ca.

Campus News

by Naomi Rosenfeld, Director of Jewish Student Life – Atlantic Canada

Campuses may be quiet now, but this past semester was certainly an active one for Jewish students across Atlantic Canada!

Continuing on the success of Fall 2014, the Jewish students began to plan larger-scale events, both on their own campuses and throughout the region as a whole, helping to unify the Jewish student community right across Atlantic Canada.

Of course, we continued to host our traditional Jewish-holiday themed and social events in Halifax, ranging from Shabbat dinners and Seders to Mooseheads games and pub nights. We also held our second annual, very successful, Multi-faith Shabbat dinner, co-hosted with the Dalhousie Muslim Student Association.

Jewish students from around the region came together for the first time from Jan. 17th-19th with a regional shabbaton



conference that brought students from PEI, St. John's, Fredericton, Sackville, Moncton and Wolfville to Halifax. Including social, Jewish, and Israel-advocacy programming, the shabbaton was very successful – the students reported learning a great deal and enjoying themselves immensely. As a follow-up to the shabbaton, we had our first ever Shabbat Across the Maritimes (SHABAM) program. Hillel provided students with "Shabbat kits", including candles, grape juice, challahs, kosher meat, kippot, and a manual, and encouraged students across the region to host their Jewish friends for Shabbat dinner. In total, we helped 16 dinners spanning 6 cities happen, with over 100 Jewish students across the region participating.

The students also planned several successful large-scale outreach events in Halifax. As part of the shabbaton, we held a fundraiser for Phoenix House, a local drop-in Centre for at-risk and homeless youth. We later used that money to purchase and cook a full dinner for the youth of the House. We also brought in Navonel Glick, Program Director of



Celebrating in St. John's, NL.

Israeli international aid and development organization IsraAID, to speak to students at campuses across the region about the organization's work. Finally, our biggest outreach event of the year was our "Variety Show" – an open-mic-style fundraiser held at the Grawood Pub on campus in March. The show incorporated acts from Jewish students as well as several student groups. We raised enough money to purchase an AED for Dalhousie, which is being donated to the Killam Library atrium. Overall, it was a very successful year for Jewish Students on campus, and we're excited to see what the upcoming year will bring.

Hope everyone enjoys their well-deserved summers!

Kadimah Celebrates 70 Amazing Years

by Jared Goldlust, Director, Camp Kadimah

Summer is finally in the air, which means Camp is just around the corner! In just a few weeks time, campers from the Atlantic region and around the world will join together in Barss Corner, NS for Camp Kadimah 2014.

And what a great summer it is shaping up to be...Camp has had its largest year for enrollment in a number of years with an expected camp size of 240 campers. Perhaps the most exciting number is that there will be over 50 Gibbies (ages 7-9) at Camp this summer! On the staff side, we are pleased to be welcoming back Atlantic

Canada's very own, Nathan Pink and Josh David to the Head Staff team as well as the Director of Jewish Student Life in Atlantic Canada, Naomi Rosenfeld.

There are a few important dates to mark on your calendar that we urge you to come get involved with Kadimah. Visitors Day will be on July 20 from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., when all are invited to join us at Camp. On July 27,



we will be having our annual Pre-Gibbie Day program for future campers aged 6-9. If you would like more information on these days or want more to find out more about camp, please email us at info@campkadimah.com

To view all the exciting moments of Kadimah 2014 through daily pictures and weekly videos, go to our new website (www.campkadimah.com) or follow Camp Kadimah on Facebook. We wish you a fantastic summer filled with sunshine, great moments and lots of smiles!

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937 Tours Nova Scotia

by Ken Schwartz, Artistic Director, Two Planks and a Passion Theatre

Two Planks and a Passion Theatre recently toured Nova Scotia with a production of "937" - which tells the story of the St. Louis voyage and its passengers in a unique way- with support from the Atlantic Jewish Council. The production played to over 3000 people in Yarmouth, Wolfville, Halifax and Truro.

937 refers to the number of passengers aboard the ocean liner St. Louis, which in 1939 left Hamburg, Germany for Cuba. The purpose of the voyage was a desperate one, as nearly all of the 937 passengers were Jews who were fleeing Hitler's Germany for the relative safety of Cuba. Armed with visas and what they could carry with them, they were leaving for good. What followed was a roller coaster of dashed hopes and reprehensible callousness as many nations refused

to accept the passengers. No country, Canada included, would accept nearly 1000 Jewish refugees. The St. Louis was turned away from every port it sought asylum in (including Halifax and Canada as a nation) and was forced to return with all its passengers to Germany. Hundreds of these passengers died in the Holocaust. The actual number of deaths will never be known.

The inspiration for 937 came from the artifacts that have been preserved worldwide in order that future generations can comprehend, in some way, the incomprehensible. As creators we asked ourselves: What if these artifacts could speak? Not with words, but through movement? What stories could they tell?

In 937 a group of performers enter a space to discover old luggage covered in dust and blankets. As they quietly open trunks

and suitcases they discover clothing, photos, shoes and hats. These artifacts somehow demand articulation, and one by one the family emerges from hiding. Through precise puppetry and a wordless soundscape a story that is narratively clear and emotionally immediate emerges.

It's the story of one family- a young Jewish couple and their small boy- who attempt to escape Germany on the St. Louis. Visa in hand, they board the ship with great hope. Over several weeks the stark reality- that no nation will accept



Actors perform in 937.

them- slowly emerges and they return to Germany and a terrible fate.

The company plans to continue developing the piece and tour internationally. Because the work has no language, the potential for this piece to be a Canadian contribution to Holocaust education internationally is potentially great. We will be working on taking the piece to Israel in the next two years.

For more information about 937 visit www.twoplanks.ca or e-mail me at: artisticdirectors@twoplanks.ca

Israeli artist Amili Gelbman in Nova Scotia

by Ms. Chris O'Neill, Executive Director, Ross Creek Centre for the Arts

The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts is a research and development centre for the arts of all disciplines and cultures, and is proud to help facilitate the development of new art from around the world in wonderful facilities on a spectacular farm in rural Nova Scotia. Located just north of Canning, Nova Scotia, Ross Creek is a part of a larger organisation, CoastArts Association, which has a board of directors, along with an honorary board which advises management of the Centre.

The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts was recently delighted to welcome back Israeli artist Amili Gelbman for a 2 week residency. The Israeli artist has been at the Centre on residency twice in the past two years and each time spends her time creating new works inspired by our landscape and exhibiting the work of her

fellow Israeli artists.

She says she comes to Ross Creek to explore the culture of a community so different from her Israeli home while getting to know other artists and exchanging ideas and inspiration from Israel. This time she was able to attend the Two Planks and a Passion Theatre production of 937, supported by the AJC; celebrate the Israeli Independence Day at the Jewish community celebration in Halifax with Israeli Consul General Joel Lion and to give a talk to the Jewish community, hosted by Massada Club



Amili Gelbman, third from left, with from l to r, Shimon Walt, Natan Nevo, Peggy Walt & Shoshana Katz at the Masada Club afternoon tea.

and coordinated by the AJC. Ross Creek hopes that we can have Amili and other Israeli artists of all disciplines in the future to foster cultural exchange and understanding.

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Book Review: *The Metamorphosis*

Reviewed by Peggy Walt

THE METAMORPHOSIS

The Apprenticeship of Harry Houdini

Bruce MacNab, Goose Lane Editions, 2012

Atlantic Canadians love our local history. From the plethora of new books each season about shipwrecks, the Titanic or other disasters, to local histories and biographies, we really can't get enough of our own. Which is why it's so refreshing to read some local history of a different type – the kind involving handcuffs, magic and the world of travelling theatre folks.

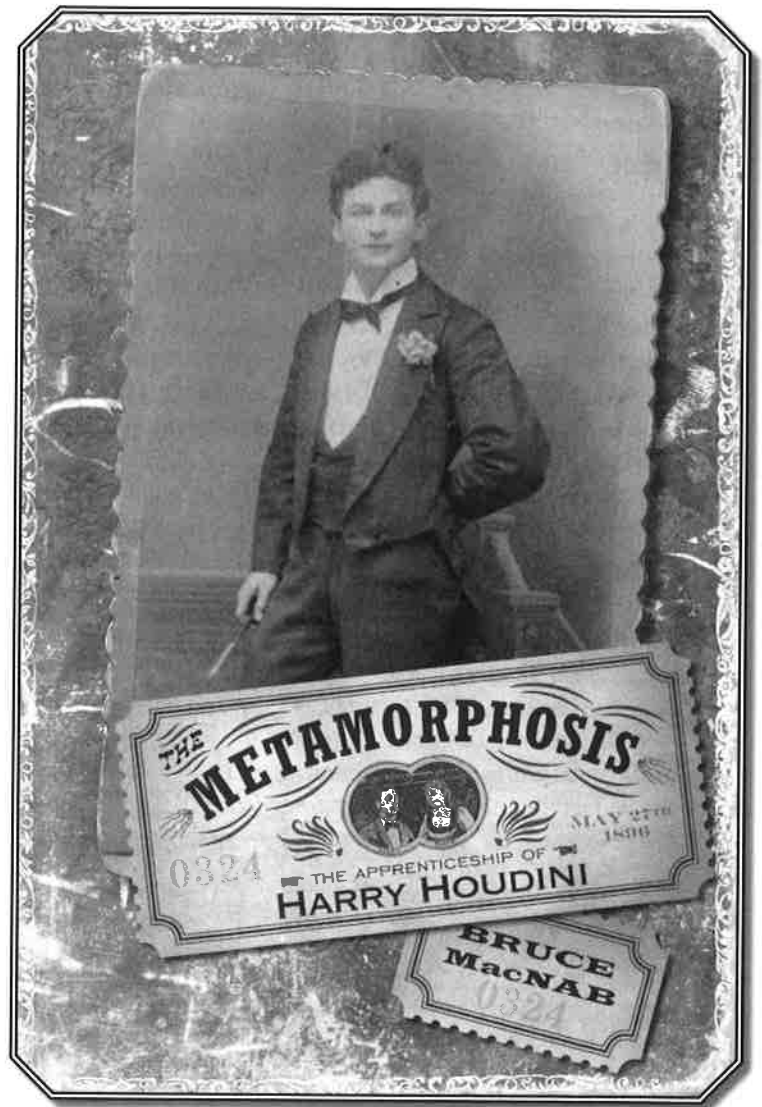
Bruce MacNab traces the previously undocumented early years of the great showman Harry Houdini and his first international tour, to Maritime Canada in 1896, in his detailed, entertaining and very well-written book, *The Metamorphosis: The Apprenticeship of Harry Houdini*. In it, he reveals many previously unknown facts (did you know that Houdini escaped from the local Halifax jail under City Hall and walked around downtown wearing only a bathing suit?) and presents lots of never-before-published photographs. It's fascinating to think of Houdini and his young wife Bessie staying at the Carleton House Hotel and strolling around Halifax, Dartmouth, Yarmouth, Saint John (where he discovered his famous straitjacket in the Lunatics Asylum), Moncton, Fredericton, Amherst and other locations, all of which had gorgeous theatres or "make do" local halls regularly visited by touring international artists.

Not only is this book fascinating, but it's beautiful to look at, having won the 2013 Best Atlantic-Published Book prize for the care and attention to the design which lends a period feel.

Born Erik Weisz, Harry Houdini was a Hungarian Jew who immigrated to the U.S. in 1878 with his family at the age of four. His father was a lawyer turned rabbi in charge of a small shul above a harness shop in Appleton, Wisconsin.

With a wife and seven children to support, Rabbi Weisz moved to Milwaukee looking for more work, but the family fell on hard times. This was where young Erik (renamed Ehrich by immigration officials, and called Ehrie by his family) saw his first circus. Eventually relocating to New York, Ehrie permanently became Harry and chose the name Houdini after a famous French magician he'd read of, Robert Houdin. Houdini and his friend came up with the name while working on a factory floor in the garment district. Houdini made his first solo theatrical appearance as "Houdini" in downtown Dartmouth, with tickets at fifteen, twenty-five and thirty-five cents, and where, as MacNab laments, there is now only a parking lot and nothing to mark the spot.

Houdini and Bessie had a summer of adventures in the Maritimes, and MacNab paints it all: describing the intense seasickness Houdini experienced on the Boston to Yarmouth steamship, including local newspaper reviews of the day and lots of photos. He presents a slice of life on the road for touring performers in the days



before cell phones and social media. Doing stunts like the jail escape and then making sure all the papers took your picture was de rigeur. This is a great summer read, and you'll find yourself looking again at places like the Saint John Opera House (still standing) and Dartmouth's Ochterloney Street and thinking, "Houdini was here!"

MacNab writes that after the first performance of the tour, the Yarmouth Times published a small notice about Houdini's handcuff escape and Houdini put this press clipping in his scrapbook and proudly wrote "Canada" above the story. Nice that we are now able to remember him here too.

The Road to Vimy and Beyond: The Jewish Legion

Submitted by the Army Museum, Halifax Citadel

Editor's note: The Army Museum, located at the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site in Halifax, recently unveiled the exhibit, The Road to Vimy and Beyond. This exhibit commemorates the service and sacrifice of the soldiers in the First World War.

Although far removed from the upheaval of the First World War, Nova Scotia played a significant role in training some of those who fought for King and Country, including a sizeable contingent of Jewish volunteers, a number of whom went on to create the modern State of Israel, three decades later.

Our province's contribution to these two history changing events is part of a major exhibition mounted by the Army Museum Halifax Citadel. The exhibition, named "The Road to Vimy and Beyond," runs from May 2014 until November 2018, and honours the role that Canada, especially Nova Scotia, played in the Allied victory in 1918.

Nova Scotia's close connection with Jewish volunteers who fought in the First World War almost didn't happen, due to the intransigence of the British Army. At the time, Jewish activists were eager to join the Allied war effort and help liberate Palestine, which they wished to restore as a homeland for Jewish people.

When the war started, Palestine was controlled by the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire which was aligned with Germany and her allies. In December, 1914, with hostilities just a few months old, the Jewish activists urged Britain to create a Jewish unit to be part of the British effort to liberate Palestine. Britain refused because it did not allow foreign nationals to serve in its army. London did agree, however, to establish the Zion Mule Corps,

a unit of Jewish volunteers tasked with transporting supplies by mules during the 1915 Dardanelles Campaign in northwest Turkey. Unfortunately, the campaign was a disaster and one of the casualties was the Zion Mule Corps, which was all but disbanded.

Two years later, with the war bogged down in bloody trench warfare in Europe, the British finally relented to Jewish pressure and agreed to create five Jewish-based infantry battalions as part of the Royal Fusiliers. Collectively, these battalions were known as the Jewish Legion and had the distinction of being the first Jewish military fighting formation in over 2,000 years. Members wore the badges of the Royal Fusiliers but with a Star of David patch on their sleeves.

One of these units was the 39th Battalion. It was recruited from American and Canadian volunteers and assembled in Nova Scotia, the closest embarkation point to Europe. Training took place at Camp Edward in Windsor under a Jewish Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Eliezer Margolin. By all accounts, the soldiers lived in tents pitched below the Fort Edward blockhouse, a structure which still stands today. During its 10 months of operation, more than 1,100 American and Canadian Jewish volunteers went through Camp Edward.

When training was complete, the 39th



Jon Goldberg, AJC executive director, in front of the Jewish Legion display at the opening of the exhibit at the Army Museum.

Battalion was shipped to England and then Palestine, where it joined the 38th Battalion and saw action in the Jordan Valley and at the Battle of Megiddo, a decisive victory on the Ottoman front.

In all, 50,000 members of the Jewish faith served in the First World War. They were awarded 5 Victoria Crosses, and 50 Distinguished Conduct Medals. Many founders of the State of Israel served in the Jewish Legion including the first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, who trained at Camp Edward in Windsor and served with the 39th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers; the second President, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi; and the third Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol.

In later life, Ben-Gurion, who is known as the "the father of his country," sent a letter to the Mayor of Windsor and said, "I will never forget Windsor where I received my first military training as a soldier and when I became a Corporal". The Jewish Legion was disbanded following the Armistice in November, 1918.

We Sang in Hushed Voices: The memoirs of Helena Jockel

Editor's note: Dr. Dorota Glowacka provided this short excerpt from her introduction to Helena Jockel's memoirs.

In 1997, I attended a Yom HaShoah commemoration in Halifax, Nova Scotia and this is where I first heard Helena Jockel's harrowing story: in halting words, she described the Nazi murderers, whom she saw as the epitome of evil that defied comprehension. She spoke of the inferno of Auschwitz in which the most fundamental values that define us as human beings ceased to exist. Yet, to conclude her powerful presentation, she read the following quote from The Diary of Anne Frank: "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death." When I first invited Helena to speak about her experiences to my students at the University of King's College, she closed her moving exposé with the same quote. In Helena's reading, this expression of belief in the fundamental goodness of men and women does not alleviate the disastrous, traumatizing impact of learning about such horrors; there is nothing redemptive in her story. Instead, she offers a powerful lesson about who we are, who we should be and who we should want to become if we are to call ourselves "human."

Helena begins her memoir *We Sang in Hushed Voices* with a chapter entitled "My Muka evo." This is the town where she was born, and the memory of that place still tugs at her heartstrings. A hundred and thirty kilometers east of Muka evo lies Sighet, a town in present-day Romania, which is the birthplace of Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Just a little further is Czernovitz, in the present-day Ukraine, where Paul

Celan, another Holocaust survivor and the greatest contemporary poet of the German language, penned his first poems. Yet despite its illustrious sons, we know very little about Jewish life in this remote part of Eastern Europe, tucked between the Carpathian Mountains and the Hungarian plains. The first chapters of Helena's memoir give us a precious glimpse into that life.



Elin Beaumont, Outreach and Communications Manager, Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, Azrieli Foundation, with Helena Jockel, holding a copy of her memoirs at the Yom HaShoah program in Halifax.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Subcarpathian region belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but, after World War I and the Peace Treaty of Versailles, it became part of the newly created country of Czechoslovakia. Following Hitler's rise to power, Muka evo was annexed by Hungary, an ally of Nazi Germany, as a result of the Munich Agreement in 1938. In 1944, Germany broke off its pact with Hungary and invaded the country and all the territories under its rule. Within three months, the entire region was made Judenrein. On March 18, the day of Passover, all of the Uzhgorod's Jews were rounded up and forcibly relocated to a make-shift ghetto in an old brick factory on the outskirts of the town. A few days later,

the majority of the ghetto's inhabitants were transported to Auschwitz and murdered. Helena was one of the few from those transports who survived.

In her recollections of the horrors she went through, Helena tries to fathom the SS camp guards' capacity for evil and the "coldness and arrogance" of Nazi bureaucrats such as Adolf Eichmann (whom she once saw with her own eyes). Yet she prefers to dwell on those who helped her, even if that assistance meant diminishing their own chances of survival. Her memoir conveys to us that even in the most degrading circumstances, in the anus mundi if Auschwitz, it was still possible to remain human and not lose faith in human values and ideals. If kindness was possible there, it should certainly be possible here, and this is the belief she wants to instill in the children and youth she teaches today. She offers lessons not only about the events of the Holocaust but also about the resilience of human spirit, love of life and love of beauty, and about respect for all people. Sometimes what you sing in a hushed voice can be most clearly heard.

Helena Jockel's memoir, We Sang in Hushed Voices, was published by the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program and is part of their 6th series of books. The Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program was established by the Azrieli Foundation in 2005 to collect, preserve and share the memoirs and diaries written by survivors of the twentieth-century Nazi genocide of the Jews of Europe who later made their way to Canada. The program is guided by the conviction that such stories play an important role in education about tolerance and diversity. The memoirs are distributed free of charge to libraries, educational institutions across Canada, and are for sale at bookstores. For additional information and to view a short film profile of Helena Jockel please visit:

www.azrielifoundation.org/memoirs



AJC President Michael Argand provided the opening remarks at the Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) program at Saint Mary's University in Halifax.



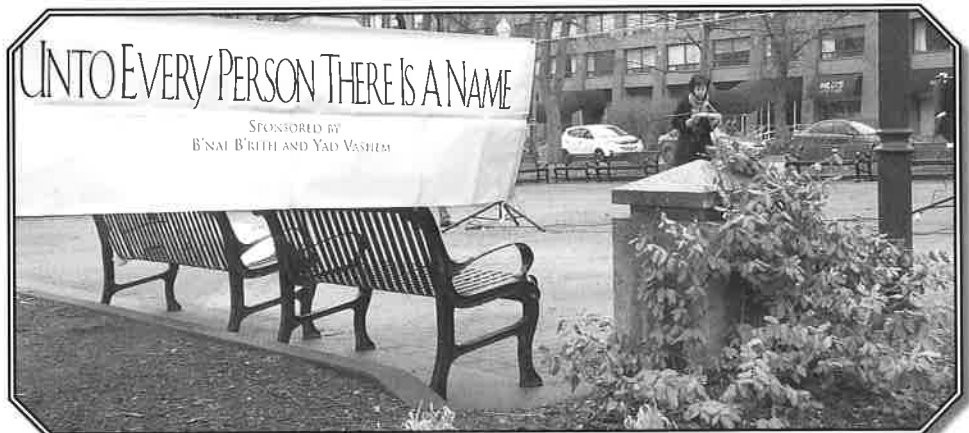
Colonel George Thomson, Commander, Canadian Brigade Group, right, lights a memorial candle during the Holocaust Remembrance Day program at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, pictured with Schuyler Smith.



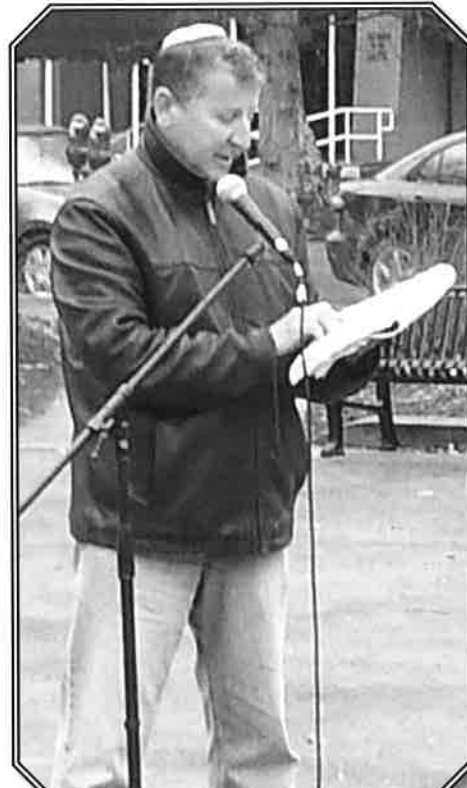
Helena Jockel, Holocaust survivor and honoured guest, lights a memorial candle during the service.



Helena Jockel was honoured at the Yom HaShoah program (Saint Mary's University, Halifax), launching her memoirs, published by the Azrieli Foundation. Pictured with her daughter, Dr. Jana Wieder.



Professor Dorota Glowacka gave a heartfelt introduction and provided historical context for the story of Helena Jockel during the Yom HaShoah program at Saint Mary's University.



Mark Stein, an annual participant in the program "Unto Every Person There is a Name", Victoria Park, Halifax.



Rabbi Ari Isenberg, reads names of those murdered during the Holocaust, as part of the "Unto Every Person There is a Name" program, Victoria Park, Halifax.

AROUND OUR REGION: HALIFAX



Jon Goldberg, AJC Executive Director, was recognized for the support the AJC provided to Dalhousie University Commerce Program Co-op students at an Employer Appreciation Breakfast pictured with AJC Co-op Student Jing Tang (R).



Olga Shepshelevich, right, entertained the crowd with Israeli songs at the Masada Club luncheon.



The Atlantic Jewish Film Committee co-hosted the Yom Haatzmaut celebration with Israeli Consul General Joel Lion, from l to r: Roz Belitsky, Anna Epshtein, Lynn Rotin and Elena Lyubocky.



Philip & Dorothy Riteman pictured with AJC President Michael Argand and Israeli Consul General Joel Lion and JoAnne Nozick at the Yom Haatzmaut evening celebration.



Viewing the Jan Karski exhibit, from l to r, Morris Strug, visiting Israeli artist Amili Gelbman and Shoshana Katz.



Sylvia Mendleson & Joyce Barak enjoy the Yom Haatzmaut program!



Attending the opening of the Jan Karski exhibit at Saint Mary's University, from l to r, Lawrence Freeman, the Honourable Myra A. Freeman, Israeli Consul General Joel Lion and the Honourable Lena Diab, Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Immigration.

HALIFAX CELEBRATES PURIM & ISRAEL'S 66TH INDEPENDENCE DAY



Students perform during Yom Haatzmaut celebration.



Enjoying the celebration, from l to r: Paul Lyashko, Rabbi Amram Maccabi, Mark Shvartzman and Genadi Shpoker.



Celebrating Purim in costume.



Rabbi Amram Maccabi (L) beside Yosef and Helen Vaida, & with Julia Shvartzman enjoy the Purim festivities.



Neli Shpoker celebrates Yom Haatzmaut with her son Daniel.



Wonderful costumes at the Purim party.



Rabbi Amram & Avia Maccabi & family celebrating Purim.



Marsha Astroff enjoying the celebration.



Heather Astroff & David Anderson, with Julia Sultan-Shah, in costume at the Purim Celebration, Beth Israel Synagogue.

Cape Breton News

by Evy and Barrie Carnat

The Cape Breton Jewish community had a great Purim celebration. Rabbi Ellis was here to read the megillah. Sharon Jacobson cast and directed and provided costumes for a community reenactment of the Purim story with new lyrics to familiar songs. And of course we concluded our celebration with a fine meal.

Our guest for this year's holocaust memorial was Edith Gelbard Schwalb, a child survivor. Edith moved the full house at the synagogue with her story, focusing on the approximately fifty children present, who made up the children's choir. Her joy of life shone through, captivating the people in attendance. In addition to the mayor, council members, religious leaders and other dignitaries, the synagogue was full, reminiscent of Yom

Kippur in the old days, with chairs to the very back of the synagogue. Edith, as she asked to be called, also addressed students at the Nova Scotia Community College, and at two public schools. The coverage in The Cape Breton Post was excellent. Thank you Shirley Chernin for your expert organization.

We are sad to see Avie and Evie Drucker leave for Toronto. Avie has been the vice president of the shul for many years, we will miss his humour and wit in making the announcements t the end of services. Avie and Evie were the backbone of the holocaust education committee, who arranged a farewell party for the Druckers to thank them for their dedication and long service. We wish them well in the next chapter of their lives.

Judy and Sandra Schachter are also leaving Glace Bay to move to Toronto. Good luck and best wishes.

We also celebrated Jack Yazer's 101st birthday at a special Kiddush. Jack is a regular at shul, and in the absence of a Kohain, is usually called for the first Aliyah. However, on the one occasion when Jack couldn't be at shul, and without another



Jack Yazer's 101st birthday, l to r: Jack's daughter, Karen, Jack Yazer, Rebecca Trueman, Jack's son, Harold.

Kohain present, Avvie Drucker was given the first Aliyah. He remarked afterwards, that he had always assumed that Jack was given the honour because of the respect the community had for him. Only after he was called did he realize it was because he was the oldest member present.

Our regular Shabbat services continue to be well attended for the size of our community, and the Kiddush after remains a warm friendly community gathering. We welcome visitors, and would love to have you join us. If you'd like to receive the shul bulletin please contact Evy Carnat at evnbar@yahoo.com.

And as the snow is melting and the temperature slowly climbing, we look forward to the summer, the return of some snow birds, and the annual migration of summer visitors.



Enjoying the Purim festivities!



Edith Gelbard speaks with students.



Edith Gelbard, Yom HaShoah keynote speaker.

Saint John News

by Susan Isaacs-Lubin

Congregation Shaarei Zedek is alive and thriving!! In the past number of years, Saint John has struggled in the winter particularly to get Minyonim, with all of the Snowbirds in Florida.. This year is different. This year, we have our newcomers who are not only helping to make a Minyan on Shabbat, but also helping to conduct Services.

Our Israeli community in Saint John is growing. We now have the Asors, Khayats, Davids, Muskals, Shaloms, and the Zilbersteins living here, all with children and we have three more families who are arriving in May to settle.

With so many children, we are able to have more and more activities. Since January, we have had a Tu B'Shevat celebration - with miniature plants for each of the children and an abundance of dried fruit and Halvah ; a Games day at the Synagogue; a new Maccabee Chess Club, and a Purim holiday the likes of which has never been seen in Saint John. Everyone dressed in costume (adults and children), and, along with our Saint John regulars, came for Services led by Joe Arditti and the reading of the Megillah by Isaac David with everyone participating in either English or Hebrew. Much singing and dancing took place. Hamantanschen was baked in the Shul with the help of the children. The following day some of the Israeli children took baskets of goodies to all of our shut-ins. What a thoughtful

gesture particularly since the children knew none of our community elders.

Future plans include the refurbishment of a large space in the Synagogue building into a Multi-purpose room for all the children's activities. There are also plans afoot for a major Israeli Independence Day celebration.

Approximately seven years ago, Danny Elman had a dream of reviving our community with the help of Israeli immigrants. After much hard work and some false starts, Dan's dream is a reality and continues to grow. Dan - you are now living your dream!!!!

In December, we held an election for the new Synagogue Board. Mazeltov to Ron Levine on being elected President. We wish everyone on the new Board good health to be able to perform their duties.

Our condolences to Esta Dekel and her family on the sudden death of her beloved husband, Shlomo.

Spring is finally in sight



Games Day at Shaarei Zedek.



Purim celebration.

after a long and very difficult winter. Our Snowbirds are making their way home, and we look forward to seeing everyone again.



Maccabi Chess Club led by Dan Elman.

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Saint John Jewish Historical Museum

by Katherine Biggs-Craft, Curator

Yom Hashoah

Mrs. Hedy Bohm, a speaker with the Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto, travelled to Saint John as the keynote speaker for the Yom Hashoah service held in the Shaarei Zedek Synagogue on Monday, April 28. She shared her personal story with a standing room only multicultural crowd of nearly 200 people of all ages. Her parents had protected her from news of the Holocaust until they experienced anti-Semitism first hand in their hometown of Oradea, Romania. By March 1944, the town's Jews were required to wear the yellow star and the Jewish school Hedy attended was closed. In April, Oradea's 30,000 Jews were moved to a ghetto and within a month they were being taken by cattle car to Auschwitz. As soon as Hedy and her parents arrived in Auschwitz, Hedy saw her parents for

the last time. Both were taken to the gas chambers upon arrival and Hedy was left alone. She spent three months in the camp and was able to find an aunt and some cousins among the inmates. In August 1944, these women were taken to Germany where they worked as slave labourers in munitions and rocket factories. Only the hope of seeing her mother again kept Hedy alive. After liberation by the Americans on April 14, 1945, Hedy made her way back to Oradea where one aunt, who had married



Hedy Bohm in Shaarei Zedek Synagogue.

a Gentile, had remained through the war. She met Imre Bohm and they married in 1947. Shortly after marriage they made their way from communist Romania across Europe until help came from the Canadian Jewish Congress to bring them to Canada. They arrived in Halifax in 1948 and were immediately put on a train to Toronto where they settled. After working in factories and offices, they opened a small shoe store which they built into a successful operation and raised two children. It has only been in recent years that Mrs. Bohm has felt able to share her story. Many stayed after the programme to speak with her and ask her questions about her life and experience.

Mrs. Bohm also spoke to more than 600 students at three Saint John area high schools. In addition to telling her story

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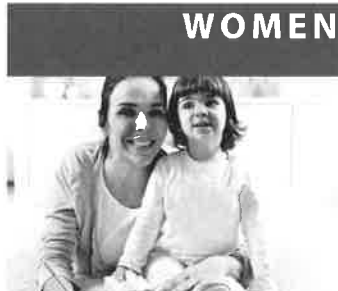
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- Youth Clubs
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- Parental Hotline
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ABOUT US

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) is Canada's leading Jewish women's philanthropic organization. Founded in 1917, CHW is non-political, volunteer driven and funds a multitude of programs and projects for Children, Healthcare and Women in Israel and Canada.



*Painting by student participant,
Holocaust Study Group.*

she told them to value their Canadian citizenship and freedom. She also warned them to be watchful for bullies and to act to stop them. The students listened attentively and asked good questions. Many students, after reflecting on the presentation, discussed what they had heard with their teachers.

Memorial candles were lit by Hedy Bohm, Ron Levine, Jacqueline Meltzer, Lorne Daltrop, Philip Bloom, Emily Muskal, Andrew Hall and Jon Veysey.

Recognition was given to nineteen high school students from the Saint John area who had participated in a Holocaust Study Group sponsored by the Museum in partnership with Anglophone School District South.

Spring Variety Concert

Our second annual Spring Variety Concert was held on May 7. Six professional musicians from the Saint John area volunteered their time and talent to present a varied evening of musical selections. Robert Selby helped with the organization of the evening and was master of ceremonies. Admission to the event was by donation. It was an enjoyable evening.

Summer Exhibits

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum will be open for the summer season from June 2 to October 31. Visitors will have

the opportunity to view our permanent and new exhibits. The Jewish Way of Life from the Cradle to the Grave has been a very popular exhibit where visitors can see artifacts from many different time periods and learn about the major rituals and holidays of Jewish life. We are bringing back and expanding one of our most popular exhibits, Jewish Immigration to Saint John, with updated information on the Jewish Loyalist who came in 1783 and the new families who have recently arrived in the city. Another popular exhibit, Open For Business, which tells the story of the Jewish-owned stores which dominated the commercial landscape of the city from the 1920s to the 1970s. This exhibit will share space with the brief biographies of 18 exceptional men and 18 exceptional women from the Jewish community.

Last year we created an exhibit on Saint John's connections to the Holocaust. We have added to that exhibit with new photographs and information on the families and individuals who arrived in Saint John between 1938 and 1948. A collection of videos is also being added.

Our new major exhibit is an exploration of the former summer community of Pampdenec, a suburb of Saint John. From the early 1920s to the end of the 1960s, more than fifty Jewish families from Saint John travelled twelve miles out the city to their cottages on the St. John River. Three generations of Jewish children played, swam, and explored the woods and shorelines and made memories to last a lifetime. Husbands and fathers often had to work in the city to run businesses and



*Julia Isaacs, Bertie Elman and Ruth Isaacs in
Pampdenec, ca. 1920s.*

stores and they made their way by train or car to join their families and to bring news and supplies. The exhibit will include maps, photographs, home movies, personal stories and memorabilia. In addition, we have received funding to create a diorama to recreate Pampdenec as it existed in the 1950s and visitors through July and August will be able to watch the diorama take shape.

Visitors will also see the Hebrew School classroom and the Shaarei Zedek Synagogue.

The Museum will be open from Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. During July and August, the Museum will also be open on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.



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Moncton News

by Nancy Cohen

Purim was celebrated with a delicious brunch prepared by Sisterhood. There was a good turnout, including several families that are new to Moncton. With all of the children and several adults in costume there was a real festive atmosphere.



Theodore Lewis.

The brunch was followed by a carnival for the kids organized by Rebbitzin Yagod. They

enjoyed card games, board games, basket ball and some Purim inspired fun such as "pin Haman on the horse" and try to knock Haman over with a ball. There were lots of prizes and the kids all had a great time.

To teach the children about Pesach, Rebbitzin Yagod held a Passover themed treasure hunt. The kids were put on teams and each team was given a set of clues that they had to solve. While they solved the clues they also learned about the holiday. The winning team was decided by some distinguished judges -Moses, Aaron, Nachon and Yaacov, played by various members of the congregation.

Prizes were awarded to everyone and all the kids had a great time!

This year's Yom Hashoah service featured our own Francis Weil as the guest speaker. Francis spoke about his childhood experience escaping from Nazi occupied France with his parents. Another special guest was Master



The Maicas kids.

Harpist Dorothy Brzezicki who played the harp as everyone arrived and later in the program played some traditional and contemporary Jewish music. Thanks to the Azrieli Foundation we were also able to show the videotaped interview of survivor Helena Jockel. The audience appreciated getting a copy of her book *We Sang In Hushed Voices*.

We look forward to greeting in June the first of four families that are planning to move to Moncton.



Francis Weil.



Samuel Haller and Eli Davidson.



Isabella Makarov.

News from Fredericton

by Ayten Kranat

Passover Seder Report

I have many people to be thankful for. There are too many to mention here. This year's Seder was very successful. For the first time we had homemade matzos. Larry

Finkelman and his crew came to the shul Thursday prior to the Seder and made close to 100 matzos. They were very well received. We used the buffet style for our Seder once again. Super idea! Ziv Iancou-Halevi is our master chef and wow she

does a fantastic job. Without her, there would be no Seder like the one we have. We also rearranged the tables, switching from a horizontal to a vertical situation. This allowed for more room for the servers and better line of vision for the attendees.



Purim celebration.

People liked it so we will use it again next year. Knights of Columbus volunteer year after year to come serve at the Seder. They leave the kitchen spotless. A great group of men! They do this out of the goodness of their hearts. They are our unsung heroes. Again we had a big crowd – over 65 people. Rabbi Goldman led the Seder and gave everyone a chance to participate. It made for a lively evening. If any other communities are thinking of making a Seder, a huge help is having a grocery list like the one we prepared after our last Seder in 2013. We tweaked it a little and it enabled us to have very little leftover. We have a new list for 2015. We are looking ahead to Passover 2015. I'd say we have come a long way since my early days with this project. I cannot thank Ziv and Rabbi Goldman enough for their assistance for without them we would not be where we are today. I want to thank all of you and everyone else who has contributed along the way.

Education News

This year, the Early Childhood Education Committee has put together a "Tot Shabbat" service complete with handbook of songs and prayers for young children. As of May 23rd, we will be able to boast of 4 successful gatherings of young families celebrating



Rabbi Yosef Goldman celebrating Purim.



Purim celebration.

Shabbat at our Friday night program. To date each "Tot Shabbat" has been attended by 8 to 10 children making our social hall quite lively with song and prayer. Services have been led by Howie and Naomi Lear. Following the service, the parents of these families prepare a light supper and spend some time chatting and socializing. On these occasions coffee and sweets have been provided for those adults attending the regular Friday night Shabbos service in the main sanctuary, giving opportunity for all families to get to know one another. Anne Israeli has taken the lead in organizing parents for these Oneg Shabbats.

Sgoolai Israel looks forward to working with parents in continuing to offer a Jewish Education for all its children.

Fredericton Holocaust Memorial Service

The Sgoolai Israel Synagogue and B'nai Brith Fredericton, once again hosted its annual Holocaust memorial service, Sunday afternoon on April 27th, almost to the day, the anniversary of liberation for Hedy Bohm, from the Auschwitz - Birkenau concentration camp. The daughter of Hungarian Jews, she grew up within a large warm loving family, never encountering anti-Semitism, until 1944, when all Hungarian Jews were forced to wear the yellow star. She went to the ghetto with her family, an area encompassing two blocks, to live in a corner of a room shared by three other families. Her school principal, she recalls, told her he hoped to meet her after the war, when she would continue her education. Her father died there. Hedy addressed her remarks to the crowd of over three hundred people in a soft, sometimes hesitant, voice. The degradation and brutality she witnessed firsthand at



Matzoh makers.

the young age of sixteen, speaks of man's inhumanity to man. Three days travelling, people both young and old, packed into a cattle car, "no food, nothing to drink, no facilities, just a tiny window for a bit of air." Upon arrival at Auschwitz - Birkenau, she recalls, "It was mass confusion... attack dogs on leashes, Nazis with guns, men running around in pyjamas, large spaces separated by barbed wire." Men, women and children were separated from one another. Hedy's mother, she recalls, turned to look back at her as she walked away. It wasn't until much later, that Hedy wondered if her mother knew where she was going. It was the last time Hedy would see her mother alive. Each day there were selections. No one knew what happened to these people. They were never seen again. After three months in Auschwitz she was selected for forced labour in a munitions factory in Fallersleben, Germany. Of that time, she said there were lots of air raids. "It was the happiest moment in my life when I heard the sirens as I saw fear in the eyes of Nazi guards ...and that was worth dying for." One week before the war ended, she was among the one thousand people taken eastward back to Auschwitz - Birkenau, having only the ground to sleep on. April 14, 1945, was a beautiful sunny day. It was the day the

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Purim celebration.

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Americans entered the camp to liberate the people there. Eventually, Hedy married, and she and her husband left Hungary in 1947 and immigrated to Canada under the sponsorship of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Hedy says, "Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism are once again spreading their poison again in the world. That gave me the conviction to tell my story to young students. It is important for young people

to make their own decisions in life and take action to stand up to bullying, racism and discrimination. It is important to believe in oneself, one's strength and the power of one".

Thank you to Israel Unger, Hedy Bohm, Arnold Chippin, Bar Shalbo, Cary Grobe, Marilyn Kaufman, Sydelle Grobe, David Besner, and Rabbi Goldman for participation in the afternoon program and Israel's committee for light refreshments following.

Mazel Tov and Condolences

Condolences to: Leonid Gimshtein and family on the recent loss of his father; to Anita Adilman on the recent loss of her uncle Hymie Rinzler; to Eileen Duguay on the recent loss of her Uncle Norvel.

Mazel Tov to: Harry Chippin on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Best wishes: for a speedy recovery to Rabbi Goldman; and for a speedy recovery to Alexis Kaufman.

Greetings from PEI

by Sandra Ireland, PEI Holocaust Education Committee

Yom HaShoah in PEI began with the lighting of the memorial candles and the reading of a poem that emphasizes our promise to remember those who were murdered in the Holocaust.

We had two speakers this year, Dr. Jacob Schwartz (Ph.D.) and Dr. Michal Schwartz Ph.D.

Dr. Jacob told the story of his family and 300,000-400,000 other Jews who were displaced from their home in Moldavia, and forced on a Death March to Transnistria, where those who survived managed to barely exist by hiding, fighting off the weather, starvation and illnesses for two years. Only a few thousand survived and almost none returned to their previous lives and homes.

Dr. Jacob concluded his family's story by showing a film of a Jewish cemetery in Moldavia, now neglected but not forgotten. This portion of Dr. Schwartz's presentation underscored the devastation that not only



*Leo Mednick and Kim Dormaar
lighting a memorial candle.*

his family endured, but also the thousands of other Jews who were forced into these dire circumstances by the Nazis and their collaborators.

Dr. Michal Schwartz, concluded the presentations by describing in beautiful detail, the life and works of poet, writer, singer, composer Ilse Herlinger Weber, specifically drawing from the translation of her letters that had been saved and found later following her death, and the death of her son Thomas. There was also description of a compilation book of her writings: *Jewish Fairy Tales for Children*,



Dr. Jacob Schwartz.

published with the help of publisher Jim Munves.

Dr. Michal said that Ilse worked with children in the infirmary at Theresienstadt before she and her son Thomas were gassed at Auschwitz. Others who survived the camps where Ilse had been have said that Ilse's songs and poems brought some comfort during these horrific times.

Books donated by the Azrieli Foundation were also made available to those who attended Yom HaShoah which was held in Studio one at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, PEI.

Report from The Rock

by Claire Frankel-Salama, President, Beth El, St. John's, Newfoundland

Despite the fact that we have just celebrated "Chag ha-Aviv", the Festival of Spring, we in Newfoundland feel somewhat trapped in an overlong episode of "Game of Thrones". Will winter never end? After a brief respite around Pesach, we are

once again staring balefully at the weather report and wishing we had elected to spend this holiday period in Israel.

Our year started off with a warm thank you from Haim and Michal Karel of Mevasseret Zion who spent last Yom

Kippur with our congregation. We met as I tried to leave the synagogue after making a huge pot of soup for the breaking of the fast. Blocked by an RV whose driver was waving frantically, I exited the car only to be asked when services started for Kol Nidre. The rest is happy history. Haim,

who teaches tour guides, and his wife, an artist, have kept in touch, and as a gesture of thanks, they sent some beautiful sculptures of pomegranates and hamsas to the members of the congregation. A little virtual sunshine from ha-Aretz to brighten the short days of January.

On March 8th we were privileged to welcome Navonel Glick, the program coordinator of IsraAID, an Israeli relief organization that provides humanitarian aid across the world, and Naomi Rosenfeld, Director of Hillel Canada, to Beth El. After speaking to Political Science students at Memorial University, Voni and Naomi attended Friday night services. This was followed by an Oneg Shabbat supper in their honour during which we had the pleasure of hearing about IsraAID and Voni's experiences working in Haiti, Africa and Jordan. Sincere thanks go to the AJC and CIJA for bringing in such an inspiring speaker.

On Saturday March 14th we celebrated Purim at Beth El. We are thankful that the senior member of our synagogue, Ernie Mauskopf, continues to read the Megillah,



Mendy Grossbaum and Aharon Cohen with some members of the shul.

a tradition we have observed for decades here at Beth El (see photo). Following services we enjoyed a buffet including homemade Hamantaschen (see photo). On Sunday morning, we were pleased to welcome Mendy Grossbaum and Aharon Cohen from Chabad who again read Megillat Esther with some members of the Shul.

On April 3rd we opened our doors to 55 Grade 11 and 12 students of World Religions from St. Kevin's High School in the Goulds. As usual, they were full of good questions, and left with one of our leftover boxes of 2013 matzah to enrich their discussion of Passover (and to help us rid the kitchen of Chametz). A win-win situation. (see photo) The following week, on April 8th, I visited St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School to talk to two groups of Grade 2 students about Judaism in general, and about Passover in particular. Thanks to teacher Patricia Murray for her invitation (see photo).

On April 7th, Professor Messod Salama gave a talk on the murder of the Spanish inquisitor, Pedro Arbués, in the Cathedral

of Zaragoza by Converso Jews and Christian conspirators as part of the "Arts and Violence" symposium held during the last weeks of the Winter 2014 term. His presentation helped to elucidate the complex issues surrounding the Spanish inquisition, Jews, Conversos and regional autonomy, and dealt with historical, literary and political elements. In particular he focused on the dire consequences of this act on the Jewish population of Aragon.

This year we again depended on Belbin's Grocery, and in particular, Gerry Tuck, to order our Passover foods. We thank Gerry and Belbin's for their kind attention and excellent service to the community. And again, we welcomed Dan Downey of Halifax, Nova Scotia, who helped tremendously with the cooking for the Community Seder which was held on the first night of Pesach. Thirty members and friends joined together to read the Haggadah and to partake of a three course Kosher meal complete with Israeli wines. Not bad for a tiny community on the edge of Iceberg alley!

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Dr. Michael Paul giving the keynote address at the Yom Hashoah service.



Claire Frankel-Salama hold a tray of homemade Hamantaschen!



Explaining Passover to pupils at St. Francis of Assisi, St. John's, NL.



Students from St. Kevin's H.S., the Goulds, NL, visiting the synagogue.



Dr. David Mercer at the Yom Hashoah commemoration.

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Our last organized community event was the Yom Hashoah commemoration on April 27th. Our speaker was Dr. Michael Paul who spoke about "Medicine Perverted- Medicine under Nazi Rule, 1933-45". (see photo) Well-researched and informative, his talk inspired many questions, both during the presentation and afterwards during the coffee reception which was held in the Social Hall at Beth El. Thank you to Dr. Barbara Grandy for organizing the event and to all participants in this important commemoration.



Ernie Mauskopf reading the Megillah on Purim.

Jewish Community Havura

by Ruth Noel and Nancy Bennett

Most of Canada had a long, cold winter and St. John's was no exception. Power outages and snow days for students and many businesses began in December. In April, we still faced heavy snow and freezing rain. Visiting schools became a challenge but we managed to speak to several classes in spite of these obstacles. We are hoping for compensation in the form of a warm summer.

Our bi-weekly Shabbat services continued in spite of the weather and those warm Shabbat meals were extra special during the cold winter nights. We are holding periodic child orientated services and a monthly birthday Shabbat, both of which have been a hit, as has our recently revived Hebrew School for ages 0 and up.

Our Jewish Premier

On Jan. 24th, The Hon. Tom Marshall, Q.C., became the second Jewish Premier



Presenters at this year's Holocaust Memorial Service in St. John's, Jennifer Marcus, Trina Rosenzweig, Gil Shalev, Linda Wilansky, Jonathan Richler and Shimon Wilansky.

in Canadian history. He was sworn in as Newfoundland and Labrador's 11th Premier after Kathy Dunderdale resigned. Mr. Marshall, who lives in Corner Brook, has had a distinguished career in politics. He was elected in 2003 to represent the District of Humber East and served in numerous cabinet positions including Finance Minister. He took office having previously stated he would not run in the next provincial election. Though his tenure will not be long, he is leaving quite a legacy as Premier.

The Dialogue

The annual Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue took place on March 11. The topic was God, Dignity and Human Rights. This year, the Havura brought in a scholar, Dr. Barry Levy, Professor of Jewish Studies at McGill University, to speak from a Jewish perspective. The Dialogue brings together speakers for the three Abrahamic religions to foster greater understanding and to explore both differences and similarities between the three religions.

Nancy Bennett was one of the organizers of the well-attended event, which took place on the Memorial University campus. It was sponsored by the St. John's and Area Council of Churches, Jewish Community Havura, Muslim Association of NL, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Muslim Student Association of Memorial University and the University's Department of Religious Studies.

Purim

Our members look forward to Purim and this year was no exception. We had a hamantashen-making party, this year hosted by Elizabeth Loder, and we had an exceptional variety of fillings. Naomi Rosenfeld (Director, Hillel of Atlantic Canada) and Voni Glick (IsraAID), were in town to give a presentation at Memorial University and dropped by to help with the cookie-making. They had also participated in a student dinner hosted by Havura member Carina Trasmundi.

Over 70 people attended the Havura's Purim Party. We started early so our young members could attend. This year, we had several more, due to our increasing population of babies. The Havura provided falafel, pita and toppings while members brought salads, other dishes and desserts. This year, instead of purchasing ready-made falafel, Carina Trasmundi, who is a master baker and chef, made the falafel. She baked these delicious and healthful low sodium treats with only a little oil.

Elizabeth-Anne Malischewski made mishloach manot bags for the children, which included groggers ordered from Toronto. The children loved the groggers and used them throughout the evening, especially when drowning out Haman's name. Elizabeth Loder organized a short play recounting the story of Esther, and everyone got into the spirit of the occasion. There was also a table where

children could colour and draw.

The klezmer band played for us again this Purim and we all agreed they get better and better. As at Hanukah, the children loved the music and were hopping up and down. Visitors from the Halifax Chabad dropped by and they danced to the music in traditional European fashion. The band's last song, Hava Nagila, was a highlight of the evening. They started off very slowly and then played faster and faster. The violinist and clarinetist joined the dancing so they were playing and dancing at the same time. We were all getting dizzy dancing in the circle. The Chabad visitors led a reading of the Magilla and gave candies and hamantashen to our members.

Kudos to Jonathan Richler, Master of Ceremonies for the evening, who kept the programme on track. Ruth Noel organized the meal and many Havura members helped to set up and clean up. All in all, it was a successful community affair.

Passover

Immediately after Purim, the Havura started preparing for Passover. This year, our Passover orders were placed through Belbin's Grocery. Nancy Bennett coordinated the order and Ruth and John Noel ensured the orders were distributed in a timely manner and we provided matzo to many of the students. Families hosted Seders and invited other members to join them. Chabad also hosted two seders.

Yom Hashoah

The Holocaust Memorial Service was held on Sunday, April 27th. This year, we held a smaller, more private service without a guest speaker. After all the work connected with last year's service, which featured Philip Riteman as guest speaker and attracted an audience of 1,500, we felt

the need for a smaller service this year. Trina Rosenzweig and Gil Shalev organized a moving service. Our president, Jonathan Richler, spoke about his trip as to several concentration camps, including Majdanek, near Lublin. He was chaperoning a large group of 16-year-olds. In July of 1944, the Russians advanced so quickly to the area in Poland where Majdanek was located that the Nazis didn't have time to destroy their records and the gas chambers to cover up their crimes, as they did at Auschwitz-Birkenau and other camps. He described the enormous pile of shoes on exhibit there, and his thoughts as he imagined who had worn the high topped women's shoes, the labourer's boots and, standing out in the drab pile, a pair of elegant red shoes.

Kosher Poultry is Back

Since Chai Kosher Poultry of Toronto closed its doors, Kosher poultry has been unavailable in St. John's at the one store that had carried it. Recently, the Howley Estates Sobeys has begun carrying Kosher poultry again, this time from Montreal's Marvid Poultry.

Oscar Night

Have you ever held a genuine Academy Award "Oscar" in your hand! People in St. John's had this opportunity during the second week of March when Havura member and documentary filmmaker Jonathan Kitzen brought home his Oscar for Best Documentary for "The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved My Life." The film features the story of Alice Herz-Sommer, an elderly concentration camp survivor, pianist and music teacher. Unfortunately, Alice died at the end of February, just one week before the Oscars. The screenings were done at the Geo Centre and Havura members volunteered to sell tickets and help usher. Those attending could have their picture taken with "Oscar."

Jonathan was one of the thousands who landed in St. John's unexpectedly after the 9/11 bombing in New York. He liked the place so much that he and his family moved here. Commuting from St. John's to Los Angeles became too difficult, so reluctantly they moved to British Columbia two years ago. They still own a home here and come back every summer.



*Purim party recital by
Noam and Daphna Koubi.*

Jonathan and co-producer Nicholas Reed were in St. John's to show this film and another film of rare 3D footage taken in World War I. They were also here to start another film with a Newfoundland and Labrador connection. It was a memorable evening and we look forward to seeing Jonathan, his wife Elena and their two children, again this summer.

News and Notes

Mazel tov to big sister Esmé and parents Angelique Myles and Carl Schofield on the birth of their son Julian Myles.

Mazel tov to Rachel Shapiro on her MBA from Memorial University.

Matthew Bendzsa participated in a programme offered by CJPAC for Jewish Youth across the country to discuss political issues in Canada. They met through internet conferencing a number of times, and then all the students were funded to attend a two-day programme in Ottawa, where they attended talks by politicians, met the Israeli ambassador, had lunch with MPs from the three main parties, and attended question period. Matthew also had other exposure to politics while attending the four-day Francophone Youth Parliament in Ottawa and attending the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament, and Model U.N.

Please let us know if you are in St. John's. We welcome visitors to our services. You can write to us at info@havura.org or check out our website at havura.org.



*The play was the thing at this year's
Havura Purim party.*

Holocaust Remembrance at Bass River, Nova Scotia

by Rabbi David Ellis, Regional Chaplain, Atlantic Jewish Council

Editor's Note: The following is a copy of the speech that Rabbi David Ellis gave at Bass River.

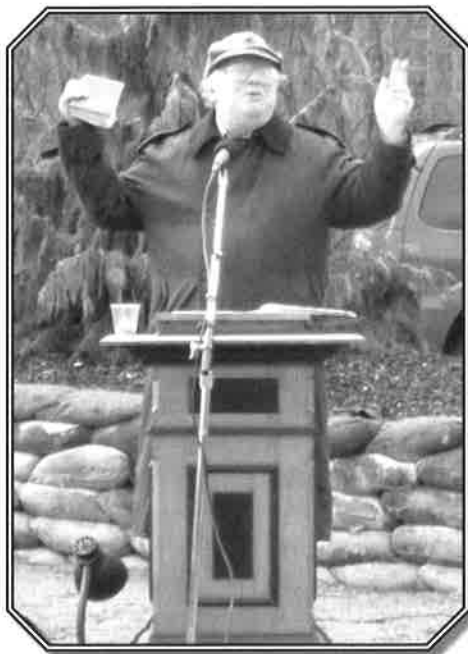
The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel noted a strange occurrence around Paris and many other European cities in the aftermath of World War II.

All cities had camps for "DPs"--displaced persons. They were grim, tragic survivors of the recent conflict, emaciated physically and personally. Many would have been Jewish, but there would have been others as well. One would have thought that there would have been some fellow feeling on the part of the local populace toward these unfortunates, some *rachmanus*, as we say in Yiddish.

Yet Marcel notes that was not at all the reaction of the general public. To the contrary, not only was there a lack of sympathy for these persons. There was often outright contempt at their presence.

How could people possibly be so unkind?

Marcel surmises that these people brought something deeply troubling to the mentality of the average man. They had nothing. All had been taken from them and destroyed. But--the healthy man in the street--he also had "nothing." More often than not, his life was lived around small values, petty political beliefs, futile strivings for more material goods, pleasure and life's many vanities. The displaced person, the survivor presented an uncomfortable reflection of the human condition back to those who did not share their experience. We have come here to acknowledge our memories of those who died and suffered during the Holocaust.



But we must admit--we do it at a distance. What if survivors from a present disaster--Syria, Central Africa, wherever--were to be brought as refugees and settled in areas around Halifax, Truro, Yarmouth in significant numbers. What would our response be? When we speak of the Holocaust, the word itself is misleading, though we cannot change accepted usage. It is more proper to speak of it in the plural, as "holocausts." I base this upon David Wyman's authoritative book, *The Abandonment of the Jews*. Wyman makes clear that there was not just one great enormous event in capital letters, a Blob-like destruction which irresistibly captured Europe. Rather there were a series of conflagrations. The first started in Polish territory, moving into Soviet and Baltic lands. Then there were the destructions of central Europe and the massacres in Ukraine. The point is--the Holocaust was not one event. It was a continued line of catastrophes. At any time, someone, some nation could have said--No! We will not do this. But they did not, most of them. But some did, and these we must not forget.

Most noteworthy, of course, was the king of Denmark, who himself wore a yellow star. The monarchy in Bulgaria managed to save many of its Jews. And then--who'd 'a thunk it?--but someone closely allied to the rise of Hitler, General Franco of Spain, actually saved a number of French Jews during the war.

Last year I noted that there were those who found a different side of the tragedy. Let's go back to them again, because they give us an insight into what the Jewish response in our day should be to the Holocaust. North America had a period of prosperity following the war. Folks settled down, built homes, raised families. What did Jews do? Much the same as anyone else. But of course many had much to reconstruct, much to account for. But then there were other Jews--dozens of them. In film and comedy--Jack Benny, Milton Berle, the late Sid Caesar. They were making everyone laugh. Was this incongruous and in poor taste, in light of the recent tragedies of their people? How could people be laughing just a few years after such events? No, there was more to it. These Jewish comedians and others were people of high values, if you read their biographies. Do you think they were unaware of what happened to their brethren just recently? Of course they weren't. But their message was a subtle, silent, implicit one, not articulated in words. They said, in so many words, some have wrought great tragedy of late. Let's see if there is not a better way. In spite of all our wounds and sorrows, there is to time to laugh as well as cry. Let us--begin to heal. Last of all, a right way for our times was also being pointed by those geniuses of the silver screen, Rodgers and Hammerstein. They produced a musical during the war itself called "Oklahoma." You would have to remember your history to know the significance of the

Rabbi David Ellis is available for introducing persons looking for Jewish mates in the region. All inquiries and discussions are strictly confidential.

Rabbi David Ellis • 902-422-7491, ext. 228
rabbiellis@theajc.ns.ca

title. Oklahoma was probably the poorest state in the US during the Depression. The land was devastated by the Dust Bowl, as thousands of "Okies" may their way to California, as per John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. And yet two Jews write a marvelous musical score with unforgettable songs to this looked-down-upon state. Then shortly afterwards they dared to write another musical showing empathy and understanding to another despised group, Asians and Orientals. The disdain towards them is well-chronicled

in Western sources. And yet—a boy from the South Pacific comes to tell us "You've got to be taught to learn how to hate. . ." Finally their last production speaks to our day. Again, with the memorable "sound of music," we learn, as many did not know or would not admit at the time, that in fact not all Germans and Austrians were wicked ogres. A few courageous souls there would up to the Nazi menace, at enormous challenge to their lives. It was building on this trustful remnant which has formed reconciliation between Jews

and Israel and the German people.

So let us in Nova Scotia keep this record alive.

Let us hope our gathering here at Bass River gives us a guideline as we live with the many peoples—Native, Anglo, Acadian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu—from all nations, whether as refugees or just coming to enjoy our shores and lands, who are coming to our province.

Life is not easy nor fair, LIFE IS HOLY

by Rabbi Amram Maccabi, Beth Israel Synagogue, Halifax

In Canada, suicide is the second-highest cause of death for youth aged 10 to 34. It is preceded only by car accidents casualties! (Statistics Canada, kidsmentalhealth.ca). In 1972 Canadian legislators debated on the large scale phenomena of suicides and, thank you very much, decided that suicidal acts should not be treated as legal crimes. Probably because of the obvious inability to exhort penalty measures to the criminal who executed such a "crime"...(although physician-assisted suicide is illegal (Criminal code of Canada 241)).

Moreover, the Canadian Medical Association stated their somewhat ambivalent policy that although not in support of euthanasia, "...these issues must be approached cautiously and deliberately by the profession and society" (<http://policybase.cma.ca/>)

The above information along with Nova Scotia Province plans for possible new legislation for mandatory organ donations, incited me to write a little about WHAT IS 'LIFE' ACCORDING TO JUDAISM.

This is how it all started according to the book of Genesis:

"And G-d created man in His image; in the image of G-d He created him.." (Bereshit 1:27)

This verse which is coined in such a festive manner calls for special attention.

It seems and sounds from this verse, as from many others, that the creation of man was a divine and festive moment, a celebration of creation. A less common verse shortly after cites another fact, perhaps less illuminated by us, human beings. G-d states in the narrative that He created Man "...in order to) leovda uleshomra"(to work and keep His land; our home- earth). So Man (and this obviously includes woman) was not put in this world for the mere sake of living off his/her days. There is purpose to life. It comes with a tag/check whether we like it or not.

Apparently this is the very first coincidence in which title and honour inevitably bring about *responsibility*. In other words, in order to fulfill our claim to existence, we are expected to contribute to the world.

Consequently, a human beings life would not be measured in terms of personal quantity – "how much time do I have left?" nor by the standard quality measurement we're used to i.e. how much pleasure, suffering, Q.O.L (Quality Of Life) we can absorb. It doesn't even end with one's accomplishments, as we don't know what G-d destined us to accomplish in this



world. – *Life is an absolute value!*

Life in Judaism is a gift one is committed to.

Being created in the image and likeness of G-d, grants us the potential of holiness. Therefore, every human being deserves his/her right for dignity, for freedom of will and for equality.

Another ramification is that we are completely prohibited from taking one's life, including our own. (For exceptions, see Talmud Sanhedrin 74:1).

Taking away one's life is considered so severe, that a person that kills him/herself is punished with eternal excommunication. One who commits suicide will not be buried therefore, in a Jewish cemetery. His/her body will be buried "outside the fence" (Shulchan A. Yo'de 362:5).

You might ask: well if one has already decided to end his/her life, it is doubtful he would give a damn about where he/she will be buried. Well, this is but one detail of the whole picture that God is trying to show us through the paintbrush of Halacha. It is up to each of us to look at the picture and pass it down to those we care and love. To learn the art of cherishing life is done, also, by learning about the gravity of offending life. Ours or others.

This fundamental understanding, already at the beginning of the Bible, must be the

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first inspiration for understanding how dear it is to be born to humankind. What a great and awesome opportunity to be created by the image(!) of G-d himself. What we do with this opportunity and how we take the most advantage of it is for us to learn and exercise. Apparently, it is not always apparent.

This verse is also a milestone in addressing

issues like: Stopping one's life (Passively or actively). What responsibilities do we have when we help people emigrate from other places in the world to Canada (is it like regular merchandise, or do we have responsibility over their integration into the society?). At what exact point a person's damaged brain will be declared dead in order to donate his/her organs to save another's life? Can we stop a suffering person's basic nutrition if he/she suffers

and hasn't got much time to live?

There is much to learn. There is even more to appreciate and to act.

Life is not easy, life is not fair, life is meaningful, life is holy!

It is our duty towards the next generations, our offspring's, to teach and illustrate just what it entails and how we should celebrate LIFE.

The Three Modern Days

by Rabbi Ari Isenberg, Shaar Shalom Congregation, Halifax

Three critically important dates entered our annual cycle of festivals, celebrations, and observances in the 20th century. I am proud to report that our community in Halifax marked these dates with unprecedented participation and engagement.

It began with Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. This year, my congregant and Holocaust survivor Helena Jockel was honoured for the recent publication of her memoir. If you have yet to read her memoir, don't delay. It is evocative, transcendent, and moving.

While we were commemorating the day in Halifax, thousands were on the March of the Living. Here is a memory of mine that I carry from my own participation on the march:

On Yom HaShoah, we marched, in silence, from Auschwitz concentration camp to Birkenau extermination camp.

Preparing for the march, however, was all but silent. Perhaps the emotion and anxiety were initially too overwhelming for the participants; as we prepared for the march, people were complaining, smoking, listening to music, laughing, arguing – there was noise, a sense of impatience, and chaos.

Then all of a sudden, seemingly out of nowhere, the blast of the shofar! One long tekiah gedolah.

Cigarettes fell to the ground, jaws dropped, silence overtook the crowd.

Nothing needed to be said. The sound of the shofar said it all. I have never heard the shofar the way I did that morning. Could the Jews buried in mass graves in Poland's forests hear that tekiah gedolah, I wondered? I hoped so. Could our enemies who wished and many who still wish to wipe us off the map hear that shofar? I hoped so. I thought about all who have heard the shofar throughout our vast history as a People, and its prominence in every single generation dating back to the children of Israel wandering in the desert. It was the blast of the shofar that brought me to tears and beyond that day.

With dignity and in remembrance, we

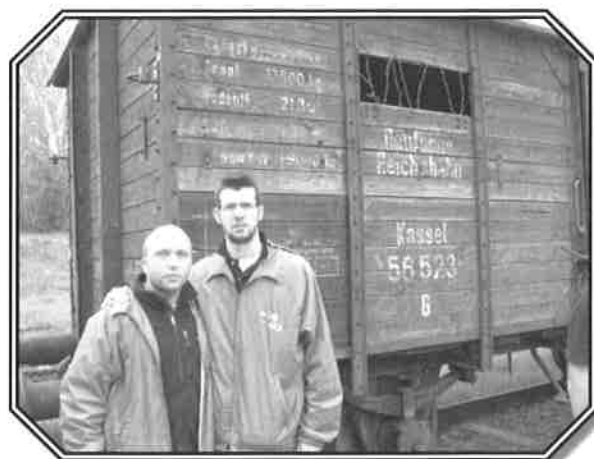


marched.

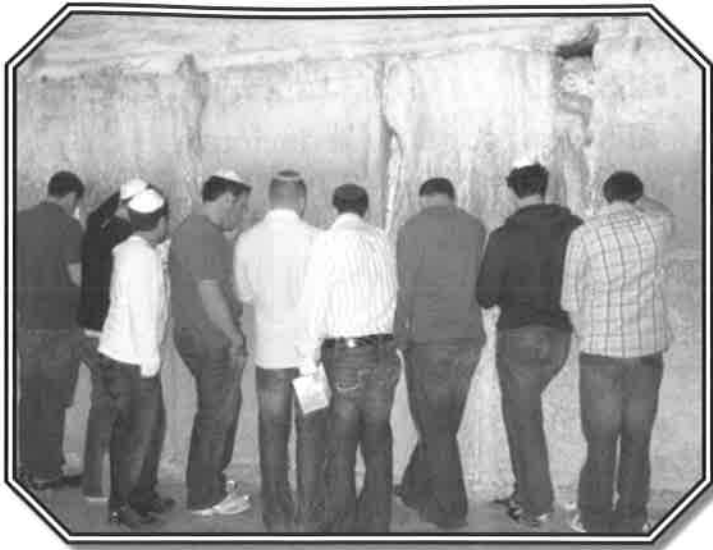
A week after Yom HaShoah, the Jewish world commemorates Israel's Memorial Day, Yom HaZikaron. I am still haunted by my first-hand witnessing of a bombing in Jerusalem back in 2011. Here is my account of that day:

Rabbi Ariel Russo and I were walking towards Machane Yehudah ("The Shuk") at 3:10pm when we heard the loud bang. Since it was just days after Purim, we convinced ourselves that this awful sound was probably just a firecracker ignited by some teenagers after school. Who were we kidding? The sound was so intense, causing an ever-brief tremor, like an earthquake. Moments later we reached the top of the hill, on Harav Shmuel Baruch Street just opposite the entrance to the shuk. It was then that our fears were realized. We had a unique vantage point, able to look down Rechov Baruch right to where the incident had occurred. The seconds of aftershock gave way to an endless barrage of sirens. One emergency vehicle after the other raced right by us, as ordinary civilians were clearing traffic to ensure the vehicles could gain speedy access.

The shuk emptied. Pedestrians stood still, frozen. Eyes welling with tearing. Parents shielded their children. Strangers stood close to each other, providing comfort by way of physical proximity. Faces were long, panicked. Phones were ringing.



Rabbi Ari Isenberg with Jared Goldlust, Director of Camp Kadimah



Rabbi Ari Isenberg (tanned shirt) leading a group of university students in the Shema, our proclamation of faith, on Yom HaZikaron, at the Kotel.

hear the bomb blast, watch emergency vehicles fly by, and see the facial expressions of fellow citizens, it's hard not to be rocked to the core.

Echoing the sentiment in Psalm 122, Sha'alu Shelom Yerushalayim.

Separated by a sunset, reflection and remembrance turn to joy and elation as Memorial Day morphs into Independence Day.

How blessed we are to live in a time of a modern miracle, reclaiming our birthright through the State of Israel. Today, I strongly believe

that modern Judaism is dependent upon the existence of the State of Israel. Our Jewish psyche and the ideals of Zionism have merged. Many Jews in North America and elsewhere in the Diaspora no longer distinguish between Jewish mitzvot and Zionist practices and causes. Giving tzedakah to JNF is just as important as paying dues to a synagogue. Singing the Israeli national anthem is just as important as chanting the Kol Nidre. Celebrating Israel's Independence Day is just as poignant an event as celebrating Hanukkah – in fact, we recite Hallel on both occasions. Defending negative rhetoric targeting Israel is just as important as defending negative rhetoric targeting Jews. My Judaism today, in practice and ideology, is one that includes the current State of Israel.

I wish the entire Jewish Community of Atlantic Canada a fulfilling summer.

Yesterday's bombing most definitely evoked emotions not yet experienced - for me, at least. It's one thing to read about a bombing; but, to be out in the streets,

are to live in a time of a modern miracle, reclaiming our birthright through the State of Israel. Today, I strongly believe

Sefirat Ha'Omer: Make the Days Count

By Rebbetzin Frimet S. Yagod, Congregation Tiferes Israel, Moncton

Sefirat Ha'Omer, the Mitzvah of counting the days and the weeks of the seven week period between Pesach-Passover and Shavu'ot,¹ has historically been associated with mourning as we remember the deaths of Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students. In actuality, Sefirat Ha'Omer has a whole different dimension to it - preparing us to receive the Torah.

Ever wonder, why did Hashem make us wait seven weeks to receive the Torah on Mount Sinai? He created and performed all the miracles of the Exodus, why not instantly give us our "Guide of Life"? Why wait?

The Exodus was certainly the seminal event that made us the Nation of Israel.

Upon leaving Egypt though, we were just exiting slavery. Hashem, in His mercy, gave us the space to transition from slave mentality to the mind set of free, individual people who would now be responsible for their own lives. Once

we achieved that psychological and emotional frame of mind, we would then be ready to accept all the precepts of the Torah, as individuals and as a nation. Not one day of this process could be deleted or surpassed.

"When the Jews were delivered from the Egyptian oppression and Moses rose to undertake the almost impossible task of metamorphosing a tribe of slaves into a nation of priests, he was told by G-d that the path leading from the holiday of Pesach to Shavu'ot, from initial liberation to consummate freedom, leads through the medium of time. The commandment of sefirah was entrusted to the Jew; the wondrous test of counting forty nine



successive days was put to him. These forty-nine days must be whole. If one day is missed, the act of numeration is invalidated."

If one looks at the Counting of the Omer Prayer, we remember this development by the assignment of a different character trait to each week. The first week is Chessed - Kindness, second week is Gevurah - discipline with the third week being Tiferet- Beauty which is the synthesis of Chessed and Gevurah. The fourth week is Netzach-Endurance followed by the fifth week of Hod-Humility. The sixth week is Yesod - Foundation and Bonding, and finally the seventh week is Malchut - Kingship. Each of these character traits with their sub character traits for each specific Omer day is our present day process of development to achieve readiness of accepting the Torah each Shavuot. More than just counting Omer, we must make the days count.

Faith and Fear as Opposites

by Rabbi Yosef Goldman, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, Fredericton

There is a parable I would like to share with you. "Fear knocked on the door; Faith answered; Nobody was there". In our relationship with G-d, there are many opportunities that we may use this special gift from G-d and understand, or at least face, life's challenges in a better way.

Immediately following the Mount Sinai experience, where the Children of Israel heard G-d's voice, Moses has a short statement to make. According to our Rabbis, the people heard the first two Commandments from Hashem, and then wanted Moses to tell them the remaining Eight Commandments, because they were afraid. Moses informs them: "Do not fear, for in order to elevate you has G-d come; so that awe of Him shall be upon your faces, so that you shall not sin" (Exodus 20, 17). It seems like a contradiction, a paradox – the word awe can be translated as "fear", and, in fact, the same exact noun is used in the

Hebrew; so, should we fear, or not?

Nachmanedes answers this question in the following manner: "now that they (the Children of Israel) had seen the G-d's greatness first hand, they would resist the normal human temptation to sin, or whether they would serve G-d unselfishly, like a loyal servant, whose interest is what is best to serve his master, not for himself". So, according to Nachmanedes, there is no contradiction, - you shall not fear, because you now know how to worship G-d, how not to stray away & sin, and how much Hashem gives in appreciation for our awe & respect.

The first person who ever showed faith in Hashem was our Forfather Abraham. In the "Covenant Between the Parts" (Genesis 15, 7-21), Abraham experienced the same "multi media" affects that our people experienced at Mount Sinai – fire, smoke, loud noises & total fear that was about to consume him. But, Abraham "trusted in Hashem, and

He reckoned it to him as righteousness". I believe that he endowed us, his descendants, with this faithfulness, he led the way for us to have a greater amount of faith than the fear we may experience at times.

With our rich history, we can find how previous generations dealt with fear. A more recent example is how, during the Holocaust, facing one of our worst experiences as a people, the men & women in the death camps sang ANI MA`AMIN – I Believe, I trust! May we all grow in our faith in Hashem!



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What I learned from Prime Minister Harper

by Rabbi Mendel Feldman, Chabad Lubavitch of the Maritimes

Of all the subjects it could have begun with, the Code of Jewish Law opens with the caution not to be ashamed of those who mock us. When we begin studying and leading a Jewish way of life, we are cautioned from the outset to be on guard against social pressure.



Many of you know I had the privilege of being part of Prime Minister Harper's delegation on his official visit to Israel this past January. Indeed it was an extraordinary and monumental experience and we were all prouder than ever to be Jewish Canadians, yet, after all is said and done if there is one thing that I learned from this remarkable trip, it is moral courage.

Prime Minister Harper's historic speech in the Kneset and his monumental statement "through fire and water Canada will stand with you" is truly encouraging and uplifting, but his fearless courage to stand by his convictions regardless of being politically correct (pun intended) is what makes him a true leader and hero.

In the traditional blessing that we bless our sons on the eve of Yom Kippur (some have this tradition on the eve of every Shabbat) we say "may G-d bless you to be like Ephraim and Menashe (Joseph's sons). Would it not make more sense to bless them to be like our Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, why were Ephraim and Menashe singled out? In fact the blessing we say to our daughters is "may G-d bless you to be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah (our Matriarchs). Our Sages give the following explanation; it is because unlike Isaac and Jacob (and Jacob's children the twelve tribes), Ephraim

& Menashe (Jacob's grandchildren) as well as our Matriarchs grew up and were raised in a completely assimilated environment yet they had the character strength to follow their ideals and beliefs despite their negative social surroundings.

Indeed may we be blessed to be like Ephraim and Menashe and always have the courage to follow our moral convictions as well as the call of our inner Soul and lead proud Jewish lives despite what our neighbors, friends and co-workers might say.



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