

Shalom

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SPRING 2017

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Tolerance First

Lt-Gen. Roméo Dallaire
speaks in Halifax



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COMMEMORATED IN ATLANTIC CANADA





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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.

Shalom

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Yolana Wassersug reads the Opening Remarks from Yom HaShoah, Halifax. Page 18

ON THE COVER



Mezuzah and The Scribe's Case by David Silverberg

DAVID SILVERBERG,
B.A., R.C.A., F.R.S.A.,

an internationally acclaimed artist/printmaker, was born in Montreal in 1936. He studied with Arthur Lismer and received his B.A. from McGill University in 1957. That same year he studied engraving in Paris with William Hayter at Atelier 17 and was influenced by those around him, including Max Ernst, Mark Chagall and Matta.



Silverberg's passion for art and travel is legendary. He has worked in 86 countries. His critically appreciated work has been the subject of over 200 solo exhibitions around the world. His interest and research into his heritage is evident in many of his engravings and folios "The Song of Songs" and "The Psalms of David". After 32 years as a professor of Fine Arts at Mount Allison University, Silverberg was appointed Acadia University's first Artist in Residence in 1995-2000. He lives in and has his studio in Wolfville, N.S. He has been fortunate enough to have been to Israel on 6 occasions. Silverberg has many friends in Halifax, where he has exhibited often and given presentations both in galleries and synagogues and has contributed regularly to *Shalom* magazine.

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MICHAEL ARGAND

President of the Atlantic Jewish Council

If the first few months of 2017 at the AJC have taught me one thing, *it's that the times they are a-changing*. I'm confident that these changes will help strengthen our organization and our community for years to come.

First, we have strategically changed the way we communicate with our constituency in an attempt to better provide information and clarity. In what used to be a clearing-house of endless unorganized information, our weekly newsletter is now a succinct and concise report, highlighting six upcoming Jewish events and one general community event we feel would be of interest to you. In so doing, we have increased our readership from 600 people to over 1,300 people across the region.

As part of this same initiative to enhance our communications, we have also significantly improved our web presence. Now, our website is an up-to-date tool that allows Jews from all over Atlantic Canada to learn both about our institutions and our upcoming events. My favourite new page, our *events calendar*, gives a calendar view of all the Jewish holidays as well as all the Jewish events in our region. You can even add this calendar to your preferred scheduling tool (Google, Outlook, etc.) by simply subscribing to it. Overall, our new communications initiative




has been a huge success and is emblematic of some of the larger changes we are working to implement at the AJC.

Another change happening at the AJC has been a concrete decision to prioritize programming for “the next generation” – youth, teens, young adults, and families with young children. We believe this programming will pave the way for a strong Jewish future in Atlantic Canada. With this priority in mind over the last few months, we ran a hugely successful teen Shabbat dinner out of our house on Walnut Street with Canadian Young Judea's *JOLT* program, we danced the night away at the Lord Nelson with our young adults and university students at Hillel's beautiful Purim Masquerade Ball, we sang with children's musical-sensation *Sonshine & Broccoli* at our Yom Ha'atzmaut

party, we sent seven teen boys to Winnipeg as part of the Asper Foundation's *Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program*, and we're in the midst of organizing a trip to Israel for 20 mothers of young children from Halifax and New Brunswick.

Finally, we're changing up the way we educate and advocate on behalf of Israel and other Jewish causes to the community at-large. In January, we co-hosted our first-ever *Atlantic Canadian Advocacy Grassroots Consultation* with our national partners the *Centre for Israel & Jewish Affairs*. Through these important initiatives, we heard from our community members what they thought were the most important advocacy issues we needed to address. Furthermore, last month, we hosted more than 15 politicians and public figures, as well as a huge contingent of friends from the LGBTQ+ community in Halifax, at our Yom HaShoah event – allowing our message of the importance of Holocaust education and awareness to reach even further.

I want to thank the ever hard-working team of staff at the AJC and my fellow board members – in particular my fellow members of the management committee – for partaking in this process of transformation with me. I could not be more excited to see where the AJC goes from here! 

Congratulations to the students and families of the 2017 Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program:

Jacob Appleton
Benjamin Berman
Jordan Collins
Joseph Lecker-Evans
Gilad Maianski
Aidan Rittenberg
Adar Svidler

Thank you to the volunteer educators:

Dawn Frail
Judith Goldberg
Lewis Novack

And educator and chaperone:

Craig Fox

From The Desk Of NAOMI ROSENFELD

Executive Director

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REGION?

Earlier this year, I sat in a meeting of executives of “small Jewish federations” in Atlanta. As you may know, the AJC represents Atlantic Canada in the Jewish Federation movement, working with national and international partner organizations to help accomplish our goals of supporting our local communities, fostering Jewish identity, and supporting the State of Israel – among other things. Each year, Jewish Federations of North America, the continental umbrella organization of the federation movement, convenes a series of meetings of “small federations” – federations that represent less than 5,000 Jews. When I introduced myself and our organization to my colleagues, they were shocked to learn that the AJC represents four distinct provinces. The vast majority of Jewish Federations represent and serve Jewish people within a particular city. Occasionally, in America, there are federations that represent and serve whole states. However, four different provinces? This is unheard of in the Federation movement. My response to each surprised colleague was the same, “we may be four different provinces, but we are one region.”

But, *what does it mean to be a region?*

In general, from what I’ve learned over the last few months, the Atlantic Canadian provinces tend to be labelled as a region for three reasons: geographic proximity, industrial similarities (esp. nautical activities), and



shared isolation (both linguistic and geographic) from central Canada. *But are these the factors that unite us as a Jewish community?*

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I was cleaning out the AJC’s basement storage locker when an old picture in a damaged frame caught my eye. It was a picture of over 100 youth, dressed to the nines: full suits with the pocket squares for the men and skirts and fancy hats for the ladies. At the bottom of the image, in cursive handwriting, read the caption, “Third Biennial Maritime Judean Conference, Cape Breton 1936”. I have to tell you, I was *very* surprised to learn that the Atlantic Jewish community had been gathering as a region since before 1936. Even more surprised than discovering that Jewish youth in the 30’s dressed nicer for a Young Judea conference than I did for my Bat Mitzvah.

And again, looking at this photo, I found myself wondering, *what is it that makes us a region? What has been tying us together for almost a century?*

As I often do during moments of reflection on the Atlantic Jewish community, I turned to my experiences at Camp

Kadimah for some clarity.

Many of you reading this know that my first introduction to Atlantic Canada was the time I spent at Camp Kadimah; however, many of you probably don’t know how I ended up there.

In the summer of 1977, my mom found herself on a plane surrounded by a cohort of Jewish 17-year-olds from across Canada – including a large contingent from Atlantic Canada. These teenagers, including my mom, were off to experience Israel for the first time as part of Canadian Young Judea’s *Biluim Israel* summer program. My mother did not know many people on the trip; however, she was quickly embraced by the warm and welcoming Kadimah crew.

One year later, and once again, my mom found herself traveling with a contingent of Atlantic Canadians. This time, she was on a ferry from Saint John to Digby, on her way to Camp Kadimah for the first time, having spent a week visiting her new friends across the Maritimes.

To this day, when I talk to those lifelong family-friends, they always ask me about camp. Moreover, they always ask me about the Atlantic Region as a whole. I found this strange at first: why would someone who grew up in Saint John and now lives in Israel care about Cape Breton? Why would a man who grew up in Chicago with family from Woodstock care about Halifax?

I soon came to realize that this feeling of unity and collective responsibility is a key factor in making Atlantic Canada a *region* when it comes to Jewish communal life.

In the spirit of this regional mindset, I’ve spent the last few months determined to meet my goal of familiarizing myself with the region, and falling in love with the various places that make up our community-of-communities here in Atlantic Canada. I noshed on some latkes in Moncton, walked the streets of Antigonish, spent a wonderful Shabbas morning in Sydney, enjoyed a



Continue on page 34

Atlantic Jewish Film Festival

INVITES YOU TO A FREE SCREENING OF: **Mr. Gaga**
WITH A SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

THURSDAY, JUNE 8 | 6:30PM | PAUL O'REGAN HALL | HALIFAX CENTRAL LIBRARY

Enter the world of Ohad Naharin, renowned choreographer and artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company. Meeting him at a critical turning point in his personal life, this spirited and insightful documentary will introduce you to a man with great artistic integrity and an extraordinary vision.

"Mr. Gaga", eight years in the making, captures the elusive beauty of contemporary dance and immerses the audience in the creative process behind Batsheva's unique performances.

Using intimate rehearsal footage, extensive unseen archive materials and stunning dance sequences, acclaimed director Tomer Heymann tells the fascinating story of an artistic genius who redefined the language of modern dance and is guaranteed to leave you skipping.

Documentary | 100 min. | English and Hebrew with subtitles | Israel, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands | 2015



WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



AJFF.ca

From The Desk Of EDNA LEVINE

Director of Community Engagement

In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Since 2009 the Atlantic Jewish Council has commemorated the date and presented programs to contribute to a shared culture of remembrance. The commemoration this year, in Halifax, was a tribute to Elie Wiesel and Yaffa Eliach. Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize-winning author and Holocaust survivor, whose work for Holocaust remembrance continues to influence, passed away on July 2 2016. Dr. Yaffa Eliach, prominent and pioneering scholar of the Holocaust and survivor who launched the first Center for Holocaust Studies Documentation and Research in the USA, passed away on November 8 2016. The program highlighted Wiesel's and Eliach's significant contributions to Holocaust memory as well as the influence of storytelling from their Hasidic upbringing. Readings from their respective Hasidic Tales collections were performed by Olga Milosevich, retired CBC Radio broadcaster and Garry Williams, Artistic Director of DaPoPo Theatre. Dr. Yolana Wassersug, Dr. Dorota Glowacka, University of King's College, and David Korn, Holocaust survivor, provided biographical details as well as a personal connection. For further information please refer to the article, "Tolerance First", in the centerfold of this issue. This event was presented by the Atlantic Jewish Council and the University of King's College with the support of the Halifax Central Library.

The B'nai B'rith International Holocaust memorial project "Unto Every Person There is a Name", now in its twenty-eighth consecutive year, is a unique project designed to perpetuate the memory of the six million Jews who were murdered while the world remained silent. This year on Yom HaShoah, on the front plaza of the Halifax Central Library, we continued our tradition of commemoration with a two hour



public recitation of names, one at a time, to remember the victims, not only as a collective, but rather as individuals. The evening program included a special theatrical presentation of excerpts from an original, locally written and composed (in progress) musical production, KAMP, by Garry Williams and Jamie Bradley. A longer version of KAMP is scheduled to be performed as part of our Holocaust Education Week programming, in Halifax, on November 5 at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Information on the Yom HaShoah program in Halifax, including the musical KAMP, is in the article by Dr. Yolana Wassersug, in this magazine. The complete Holocaust Education Week fall schedule will be released this summer, with details posted on: Holocaust-Education.ca.

This spring seven students from Halifax completed the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, culminating in a trip to Winnipeg to visit the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The Asper Foundation created the program using a curriculum specifically developed by Holocaust and human rights educators. Students are required to participate in nine educational sessions and complete ten hours of independent community service prior to their trip to Winnipeg. In our community we organize this program in alternate years, for students in grades 8, 9 or 10.

The Family Shabbaton weekend returns to Camp Kadimah this summer from August 25 – 27! After another extremely popular program last summer, families once again are eagerly awaiting a return to the shores of

beautiful Lake William. Are you interested in a fun family weekend, meeting new families, connecting with friends and strengthening our Atlantic Jewish community? If so, please send me an email: elevine@theajc.ns.ca.

Spur festival, hosted by the Literary Review of Canada and based on a collaborative model to bring together the general public with a wide variety of presentations, in an effort to encourage dialogue and re-create a vision of society, returns to Halifax this fall. The AJC will once again partner and present a thought provoking program as part of their festival in Halifax.

The 4th Atlantic Jewish Film Festival (AJFF) in Halifax opens October 19 screening international award-winning films for four days. Working with returning chair Lynn Rotin and the organizing committee, Phil Belitsky, Rosalind Belitsky, Jon Goldberg, Anna Hazankin, Linda Law, Peggy Walt and Bobbi Zahra, to ensure filmgoers an engaging line-up of films, relevant programming and partygoers an outstanding gala party. For information and details on how you can support the festival please refer to the film festival website: AJFF.ca.

On June 8 the Atlantic Jewish Film Festival is excited to present the Halifax premiere of the film Mr. Gaga, with the support of Halifax Dance and the Halifax Central Library. "Mesmerizing", "Riveting", "A Masterpiece" are some of the words used to describe Ohad Naharin's (Artistic Director of the Batsheva Dance Company, Israel) original dance movement Gaga. Please join us for this free screening at the Halifax Central Library (6:30pm) and discover a new way of gaining knowledge and self-awareness from movement – Gaga. For communities outside of Halifax, if you are interested in screening this film in your community, please contact me for information: elevine@theajc.ns.ca 📧

CAMP KADIMAH NEWS



KADIMAH 2017 PRE-SUMMER UPDATE

It's already May and season #75 is upon us. On July 2, we will welcome a record number of campers to a full camp in Barss Corner with over 100 staff hailing from Cape Breton to BC, Boston to California and contingents who will make the long trek from Australia, Singapore and England, not to mention our delegation from Israel.

BY PHIL DAVID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAMP KADIMAH



A TASTE OF THE MARITIMES

As we become more international, we always remember we are a camp based in the Maritimes so we are excited to welcome 75 campers and 20 staff members from our region.

A shout-out to Halifax natives – Bronia Myer, Zane Brown and Roy Maïanski – as they make the shift from beloved counsellors to first-time section heads. They will work directly with our Camper Care team – led by Paula Gaum Lipkus – who is joined by Halifax native, Robyn Budovitch.

We are thrilled to welcome Anna Sadofsky back to camp after a year's hiatus. Anna will help lead our new, grant-funded CIT Leadership Program, outlined below. And Nadia Kashetsky joins Ethan Goldsmith, both of Saint John, on our Senior Specialty team as heads of Swim and Sports respectively.

And we welcome rookie staff members to their first and greatest job – Bailey Karrel of Sydney; Liran Kazakster, Ally Pedvis and Karin Reznikov of Halifax; and Josh Makarov and Michal Langleben from Moncton.

Our newbie staff will be joining a fantastic team of veteran counsellors who will no doubt inject their own distinct taste of the Maritimes into our internationally diverse camp. Speaking of veteran staff, we know this cohort has choices and opportunities to get city jobs but chose camp instead and for that we are grateful – Yael Gazit, Hiyam Gedalia, Lola Leving, Jonah MacDonald, Kass Palter and Jacob Suissa.

INTRODUCING OUR CIT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Last Fall, Kadimah earned a generous grant from New York based, *The Foundation for*



Jewish Camp (FJC). The FJC is an innovative public foundation dedicated solely to the support and advancement of the Jewish overnight camp movement. The purpose of the grant was to provide seed money for camps to create programs that retain and increase the number of children attending Jewish camp and in a more deeply, engaging way.

Like any camp in this generation, we actually recognized a longer term need to grow and better train our staff base since we know it is our staff – particularly cabin counsellors – who have the greatest influence on campers' summer experience; their desire to return; and their likelihood of becoming an ambassador for Kadimah amongst their peer group back in the city.

So rather than focus on camper initiatives, we went back to the source – our CIT Program for Grade 10 graduates. Launched in 1987, our CIT program has spent 30 years evolving into a reputable *camp within a camp*; however, there is a rapidly growing trend evident amongst today's older teens who leave camp and use their summer break as a means to get ahead so they can create their own point of differentiation – knowing how competitive university admissions has become.

The reality is, Kadimah now competes not just with other camps for the attention of our 16 year old's, but moreso with *for-profit*

companies who create mobile classrooms at exotic destinations around the world where kids can study, volunteer and add something a little different to their resume and university application.

Of course, we believe the holistic experience gained running a cabin, specialty activity or section of 70 campers in a dynamic environment that moves at warp speed over six weeks is second-to-none in preparing our staff for the start of their career, a career that will likely change multiple times over the decades and require not just a strong IQ, but a strong EQ.

The re-launch and re-branding of the new Kadimah CIT Leadership Program will support our commitment to developing a pipeline of future Jewish leaders. With increased focus on teaching leadership principles, Kadimah has partnered with *Max People Perform*, a well-known performance training company led by Julie Ruben Rodney, originally of Fredericton. MPP has developed engaging and practical training content – customized for 16-year olds – which will benefit them both in the camp setting and in the city once the summer ends.

To launch our new initiative, we are pleased to welcome CIT leaders, Elad Ben-Eli, a Jewish educator from Montreal, who will be joined by Kadimah veterans – Noah Friedman of Montreal and Anna Sadofsky of Halifax.

If you know of Grade 10 graduates interested in our new initiative, please connect them with the Camp Kadimah office.

UPCOMING KADIMAH EVENTS

Read below to get caught up about upcoming Kadimah sponsored activities in the Maritimes' region. Contact the camp office for more details: info@campkadimah.com.

Kadimah in the City: Sunday, May 21

If you are a Kadimah-aged child (7 to 16) from the Maritimes, please join us for our Spring KITEC event at Stadacona where we'll do a little bowling and run a fun Kadimah experience as we gear up for Summer, 2017. Please register with the camp office.

Visiting Day Weekend: July 22, 23

Our annual Visiting Day celebration will begin with a parents' get together at the Farmers' Market on Marginal Road starting on Saturday, July 22 at 8 pm. Camp opens for Visiting Day on Sunday, July 23 at 11:00



a.m. and the day will come to an end at 4:30 p.m.

Pre-Gibbie Day: July 25, 10:30AM – 3:00PM

If you have a child between ages 6 to 9 and you are interested in sending them to camp within the next two summers, please join us for our annual *Pre-Gibbie Day* event. Experience a day in the life of a Gibbie while touring our site and learning more about the lifetime value of the Kadimah experience for your child.

Family Weekend: August 25-27

Whether your child attends camp during the summer season or not, please join us for our 4th annual family camp weekend between Aug 25-27. Contact the AJC office for more details. We hope to see you down in Barss Corner as you wind up your summer season.

CK 75 CELEBRATIONS: SUMMER, 2018

Has time ever flown! It seems like yesterday since we celebrated our 50th anniversary back in 1993. And now, we're just a year away from celebrating #75 in 2018. We are so pleased to welcome Howard and Karen Conter as our event chairpersons in the lead-up to our milestone birthday.

Lots more will be shared in the coming months about our 75th but at this point, please be sure to save the date for the July 27-29 weekend during summer 2018. It promises to be a memorable event, both in the city and on site at Camp Kadimah.

RENTALS



With 35 pristine acres nestled on Lake William just over an hour from Halifax, Kadimah continues to be one of the region's

unique rental spots during our shoulder seasons before and after camp. If you know of a group, association, company or wedding party looking for a retreat venue, please contact the camp office.

SPRING CLEANING

With the upcoming camp season coinciding with many families' annual Spring cleaning ritual, we always include a shout out to members of the local community to reach out to the camp office before discarding used items like furniture (couches, love seats), sports equipment, electronics like flatscreen TV's, projectors and screens, musical instruments and the like. What may be out of style in your home is often considered a luxury or much-needed item at summer camp so please connect with us.

STAY CONNECTED TO KADIMAH



Speaking of connecting, each year, we are happy to attract more and more 'friends' on our Facebook page in our ongoing effort to engage campers, parents and alumni who wish to keep up to date on what's happening during the summer and at our "Kadimah-in-the-City" events through the off-season.

Kadimah has established a very robust social media presence on Facebook as well as Twitter and Instagram. We encourage you to join our Camp Kadimah Facebook page so you can stay in touch and up to date on everything that is Kadimah ([Facebook.com/campkadimah](https://www.facebook.com/campkadimah))

Finally, don't forget to watch for our daily photos and weekly videos posted on the Camp Kadimah website throughout the summer. It's a great way to stay connected with Kadimah. Simply register on the Kadimah website: www.campkadimah.com.

Have a wonderful summer. We hope to see you all this summer at beautiful Camp Kadimah. ☺

CIJA SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SECURITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES

BY **STEVE McDONALD**, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AT THE CENTRE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH AFFAIRS (CIJA)
THE ADVOCACY AGENT OF CANADA'S JEWISH FEDERATIONS

Events in the past few months have brought the issue of Jewish community security to the forefront.

Since January alone, more than 150 Jewish community institutions across North America, including in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, London (Ontario), and Toronto, were targeted with false bomb threats. While no physical harm manifested itself in these incidents, repeated evacuations of Jewish facilities have inevitably led to heightened community anxieties. Added to this have been various incidents of antisemitic vandalism at cemeteries and other Jewish sites.

At the time of writing this column, Israeli authorities have apprehended an individual – allegedly an American-Israeli teenager – believed to be responsible for most of the bomb threats. I imagine you were as stunned and upset as I was when you heard the news that the suspect is a member of our own community. Reports in the media, including comments from the suspect's lawyer, reveal the strong possibility of mental health being a prominent factor in this case. It is a troubling end (at least, we hope it is the conclusion) to a worrisome few months for the North American Jewish community.

CIJA has worked proactively to support our community institutions in responding to these and other hate crimes. Given that the JCC threats were designed to spread fear, we have emphasized that the best response is to maintain existing security protocols while enjoying our JCCs and institutions without fear. All the more so, given that our community has always had robust security systems and procedures.

Jewish communities across Canada, for

example, benefit from the National Community Security Program coordinated by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). The Program provides a hub for incident support, security training and tools, liaison with police agencies, and the sharing of intelligence and trends. Just as we benefit from a close working relationship with law enforcement at all levels, no Jewish institution should feel isolated when it comes to protecting their facilities.

At the same time, there is a vital role for government to play in supporting our community's security needs, alongside those of other minority groups targeted for hate. Every Jewish institution should be aware of the financial support available through the federal government's Security Infrastructure Program (SIP).

This program allows at-risk community institutions, including places of worship, community centres, and religious schools, to apply for funding to offset the costs of essential security upgrades. The Jewish community has benefited immensely from the SIP, though security costs continue to pose a burden to shuls, day schools, and JCCs.

The federal government's 2017 budget allocated an additional \$5 Million over the next five years for the SIP. This infusion of funds represents a doubling of the SIP's budget and reflects the dedication of Canada's elected officials to protect at-risk communities such as ours.

"This has the potential to be transformative, making a substantial upgrade to the program possible to maximize its effectiveness in addressing the evolving security challenges faced by communities at-risk,"

noted Noah Shack, CIJA's Director of Policy. "Expanding the SIP in this way has been a cornerstone of CIJA's advocacy activities over the last year, and we look forward to the translation of these additional resources into tangible improvements."

Antisemitism, the world's oldest hatred, has always managed to adapt itself to local conditions and changing times. While Canada is a remarkably safe and welcoming country for minorities, Canadian society is not immune from antisemitism or other forms of bigotry. Fighting antisemitism requires vigilance, awareness, education, and proactive engagement with leaders in all communities.

At the same time, we must maintain a healthy dose of optimism rooted in the fact that we have many allies, exceptional support from government and law enforcement, and a national community security infrastructure to assist our institutions. Behind all of this is the knowledge that the Jewish people are no longer defenseless; we have in Israel a strong, national homeland that remains a haven for Jews seeking to leave troubled lands.

This issue is especially poignant at this time of year. The Passover seder is in many ways a metaphor for how we must handle these challenges today. In the seder, we teach our children to remember the threats and suffering we have faced, but we do so with a sense of gratitude for our blessings today and hope for the future. ●

CAMPUS NEWS

BY CRAIG FOX, DIRECTOR, HILLEL ATLANTIC CANADA

With the winter semester behind us, it is time to both look back and look forward.

This year has been an amazing and transformative one for Hillel Atlantic. Attendance was up over 300% at events consistently throughout the year, and student engagement has been incredible. The popularity of our Shabbat dinners continued into the second semester, and will continue as a staple of Hillel Atlantic. Some new events were also seen this semester which even I was surprised by how well they were received by students.

Tu B'Shevat was celebrated this year through generous funding by both CIJA and the JNF. We partnered with the Dalhousie Urban Garden Society, and brought over 120 students to the Hillel House in an afternoon. We built terrariums in everything from fishbowls, to coffee pots, to juice jugs. While building the terrariums, the students learned about the significance of the holiday we were celebrating as well as the incredible work Israel does in regards to environmental sustainability.

The place to be this year though was the Purim Masquerade Ball! Our partners at CIJA and CJPAC helped us in creating not just the political event of the year for students, but THE event of the year for students. We had a full house at the Lord Nelson dressed to the nines and celebrating Purim behind masquerade masks. Local politicians were also in attendance including Tony Ince, the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. We were also greatly honoured to have Rotem Segev, the Deputy Consul General of Israel in Montreal in attendance. This event really solidified Hillel Atlantic's place on campus as a legitimate society, and not just a niche social club. The students in the city have stood up and taken notice of our Jewish student community.

Going forward, a strong base was built to continue building in the fall semester. It will be a busy summer full of planning and preparing to make the next year even greater.



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I have already started planning with the new Student Board for the fall semester, including bringing our terrarium event back in September in order to reach out to our incoming first year students and send them home with something green for their dorm rooms. The backyard of the Hillel House is already being cleaned up in preparation for the annual kick-off BBQ after a long and hard Halifax winter. We will be hitting the ground running just as we did last September. We look forward to welcoming our students both new and returning.

On the advocacy side of things, there is a lot to report on.

There was an unfortunate event this year at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. I am pleased to say that the event was handled well by the university, the persons came forward and admitted guilt, and it turned out to be motivated as a protest to American politics, and the persons involved were high school students who did not realize how the incident would effect the Jewish community. I met personally with the University President and had a very positive and constructive conversation and am optimistic

PHOTOS: (1-3) Tu B'Shevat celebrations with a terrarium making workshop; (4-5) Purim Masquerade Ball!

in our future relationship with the campus administration.

At Dalhousie University I continued to work on our relationships with both faculty and administration. Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) have been an anti-Israel group on campus for years, and every year have hosted an Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) in the second semester. After a very positive meeting with campus administration, SJP is no longer listed as a ratified society at Dal. I can gladly inform the community that IAW did not happen this year at Dalhousie.

All of this incredible work wouldn't have been possible this year without the incredible Volunteers on our Student Board. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Molly, Yasmine, Ben, Naomi, Sidney, Shael, and Liane for their hard work all year in supporting me in my role. Hillel can only succeed with passionate and engaged Jewish students. 5



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CAMPUS NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM A STUDENT

BY MOLLY ROOKWOOD, INTERNAL PRESIDENT OF HILLEL ATLANTIC CANADA

My name is Molly Rookwood, and for the past year, I have had the honour to act as the internal president of Hillel Atlantic Canada. I am a third year student at the University of King's College, and when I moved to Halifax from Boston three years ago, I found with a surprise that the patchy-but-present Jewish community that I had always taken for granted in Boston was far different from the situation here. For the first (and second, and third, and forty-fifth) time, I was told by someone who asked what my star necklace meant that I was the first Jewish person they had ever met. My town in suburban Boston certainly wasn't one of the main hubs of Jewish life, but I had never even been in a class where I was the only Jew, and suddenly I found myself an exotic rarity.

Somewhere in my first year in Halifax, I found Hillel. A friend from King's brought me to a Shabbat dinner, and there it was: this group of people who understood where I was coming from, who knew what kugel was, who also wound up on this side of the Atlantic because of the persecution that their grandparents or great-grandparents had faced, who shared my history. A group of people who made the same jokes and have mirroring stories about their time at Jewish summer camp, despite our various start-ing locations. A group of people who each also claim that their mother makes the best brisket (no matter what anyone else says, mine really does and always will make the best brisket). Hillel became a family away from home for me, a home base in Halifax where I could slide right into the Jewish community I know and love.

In my second year, I joined the board as Hillel's Jewish Life Chair, and I loved this further integration into the heart of Jewish student life. Much of the work we did involved cooking, good Jews that we are; we cooked Rosh HaShanah dinner for those of us who couldn't go home for the holidays and we cooked Shabbat dinner once a month. We ran programs throughout the year to educate and involve students, always trying to find the balance of fun to education to food. Hillel rose up there among my top priorities, and when the board structure shifted around a year ago, I happily took the position of internal president.

Acting as the internal president (or the board monkey-wrangler, as my co-president, Yasmine, lovingly calls me), has been wonderful. This year, in addition to our standard dinners, we hosted a number of events that garnered far more interest than we had ever dreamed of, especially our Tu B'Shvat terrarium building event and our Purim Masquerade Ball, both of which were enormous successes. The support and enthusiasm that we've seen this year has been astounding, and I am beyond thrilled to have been a part of it. My incredible board truly did become a family for me this year — seven people with whom I laughed, organized, studied, and cooked, and I am so grateful for them and for the opportunity to help make Hillel Atlantic Canada what it is today. Despite our relatively tiny Jewish population, we proudly welcome around seventy people to our Shabbat dinners every month, and we work hard to maintain a strong, thriving community. Hillel is my connection to my people, to my culture, to my heritage, and to a self-created family that I am honoured to be a part of. I will be continuing as the internal president for this coming year, and I am so excited to see what the new year, with a new board will bring. 🌟

TRYING TO IMAGINE WHAT WOULD MARTIN BUBER HAVE SAID ABOUT ROMÉO DALLAIRE'S LECTURE: ***“ALL HUMANS ARE HUMAN”***

BY JANET KRAVETZ


When Lt-Gen. Roméo Dallaire received the call to serve as Force Commander of the United Nations (UN) intervention in Rwanda in 1993, he thought he was embarking on a modest and straightforward peacekeeping mission. Thirteen months later he returned home from Rwanda, broken, disillusioned, and suicidal, having witnessed the 100-day slaughter of 800,000 Rwandans. During this slaughter, the UN took no action despite Dallaire's opportune warnings. Listening to Dallaire, I note how strongly his personal journey mirrors the writing of the influential Jewish philosopher Martin Buber “all journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware.”

What struck me the most when hearing Dallaire speak at the Dalhousie University/Shaar Shalom Synagogue lecture on April 5, 2017 was his humanity, his unwavering optimism and commitment to act on what he believes must happen, yet he cannot achieve on his own. He has committed himself to ending genocides from ever occurring again. He identified a possible solution – if child soldiers are not readily available, there will be no unpaid armies to commit genocide. This results in the Peace Corps being more resilient and effective since they will not have to kill the child soldiers. In his sincere and quiet demeanor, Dallaire demonstrates the heart of a warrior and the compassion of a humanitarian. Today Romeo Dallaire is a retired General, a former Senator, and an international symbol of compassionate heroism and human rights activism. Dallaire inspires people through his words and more importantly, his actions, promoting awareness and creating partnerships. Dallaire is racing against the clock to prevent future genocides with his simple and undeniable message “Never Again”. Through his Dalhousie-University-based ongoing successful child-soldier initiatives in Africa, he strives to educate children with the help of former child-soldiers, about the consequences of becoming child soldiers. Dallaire is determined to protect the high-risk children from becoming either victims or tools of genocide. Once again Martin Buber's words came to my mind, “the real struggle is not between East and West, or capitalism and communism, but between education and propaganda”.

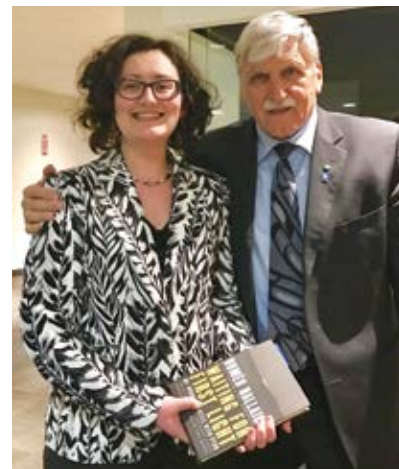
Amid the ongoing brutal genocide in Rwanda, Dallaire found one lost Rwandan boy. Dallaire looked into the eyes of the dying boy and saw his own seven-year-old son. At that haunting moment, Dallaire's life was changed forever. In this moment Dallaire's heart spoke to him, saying, all humans are human. So, it was Dallaire's love of humanity that caused him to refuse the UN order to stop the mission and to return home to his family. In the name of love for humanity Dallaire picked up his weapons, risking his and his troops' lives while outnumbered and outgunned, to protect the victims of this genocide. His actions are credited with directly saving the lives of 32,000 people. For his bravery in the face of genocide, he was awarded the

highest order of military merits and lifelong contribution merits in Canada.

Dallaire chose to stay in Rwanda amid the genocide, slowly torturing his own compassionate heart, while witnessing the atrocious genocidal acts. He stayed, sacrificing his own mental health to save others. Risking the punishable offence of insubordination, he launched a battle for history. A battle for preserving the painful memories of the Rwandan genocide for the World. To Dallaire, his mission would be worth it if even only a single child were saved. One child who could tell the world their story in a way that Dallaire knew he himself could not. Dallaire has been retelling his stories of genocide since his return from Rwanda. Stories about innocent people who were brutally tortured and murdered in grotesque violation of international war treaties. I am sure Dallaire would have preferred to be telling stories of peace and love instead, but humanity's failure to protect the innocent in Rwanda denied him of this. Dallaire has dedicated his life to the struggle for human rights, in the name of his profound inner feeling that all humans are human. Perhaps this is what Martin Buber meant when he said, “this is the eternal origin of art that a human being confronts a form that wants to become a work through him. Not a figment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands the soul's creative power. What is required is a deed that a man does with his whole being.”

Finally, Dallaire is a relentless advocate for all those who serve Canada and all veterans who, like him, suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His book *Waiting For First Light: My Ongoing Battle with PTSD* is a torch of light for many ‘life-heroes’, who battle darkness alone in silence through small, discrete, daily triumphs. One thing is obvious to me, Roméo Dallaire “walks the talk”. 

Janet Kravetz was born in Ukraine, moved to Israel with her family when she was 7 years old and immigrated to Canada in 2009. She is a member of the Israel Bar and a Policy Analyst for the Government of Nova Scotia.



CANADIAN YOUNG JUDAEA CELEBRATES 100 YEARS!

Many members of the Atlantic Jewish community are familiar with Canadian Young Judaea (CYJ). But the memories of CYJ date back even further than most anyone can recall because CYJ is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

CYJ's founder, Dov Joseph, was a young boy from Montreal who dreamt of a National Zionist Movement across Canada. Thanks to his efforts CYJ was officially proclaimed at the 15th Zionist Convention in Winnipeg in 1917. Within eight years, there were 75 clubs across Canada and, by 1935, national membership reached 5,000. Jews in small towns across the country were organized into *kenim* and participating in organized programs.

"There was a *ken* (group) in every city that had a Jewish population," said CYJ National Director, Risa Epstein about the organization at its peak. "In the Atlantic Region alone, CYJ was active in St. John's, Moncton, Halifax and even Sydney to name a few. In the West, you could find CYJ in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Regina and many smaller communities and, of course, it was in every small towns across Ontario and Quebec.

In the beginning, the appeal of CYJ was its purpose, its focus on Zionism at a time when antisemitism was rampant throughout Europe and in Canada (and elsewhere) as well. The

Zionist dream was that of young Jews taking control of their fate, according to acclaimed Canadian poet A.M. Klein, who served as the editor of *The Judaeans* from 1928-32. Klein wrote in 1931, "Jewish life, as at present constituted, with barrenness and emptiness, its utter meaninglessness, its haphazard activity, stands as an imperious challenge to Canadian Jewish youth."

Epstein described the nature of CYJ in less fiery terms. "It was born out of the desire of young Jews in Montreal to have a group to come to and discuss and dream about a Jewish homeland," she said. "It later grew from a city-based organization to summer camps and Israel programs."

The camps were established as early as 1942 in Quebec, followed by Camp Kadimah in Nova Scotia in 1943. Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta also had CYJ-affiliated camps. British Columbia was the last to add a camp, in 1956, known originally as

Camp Hatikvah-Massada in Oyama.

Today, according to Epstein, CYJ has more than 2,000 members (7 to 18 years old) from across Canada. As the concentration of the Jewish population has shifted, so have the active centres for CYJ activities. They are now active in the major centres of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver and are still operating in Halifax. Their summer programming engages close to 750 staff (18 to 22 years old), many of whom are alumni of CYJ camps.

CYJ has an historic link with another uniquely Canadian grassroots Zionist organization: Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW). CYJ is and has always been the youth arm of CHW. Epstein said the Biluim Israel trip raises funds for CHW daycares in Israel and includes a day spent volunteering at one of those daycares. In turn, CHW provides funding for some CYJ activities.

"It was born out of the desire of young Jews in Montreal to have a group to come to and discuss and dream about a Jewish homeland,"

Along with this year's regular programming, including camps and trips to Israel with Biluim Israel, national CYJ is planning a **centennial celebration on Aug. 27 at Camp Shalom in Gravenhurst, Ontario**. The event will run from 11 a.m.-4 p.m and is intended for CYJ families and alumni. "There will be food, camp-like activities, displays, *shira* [singing] and *rikud* [dancing]. It will be an amazing event and we are hoping that there will be over 400 people," said Epstein. ⑤

All Young Judaeans are invited to the celebration. For more information, contact the national CYJ office at 416-781-5156 or e-mail Risa Epstein at risa@youngjudaea.ca

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CHABAD NEWFOUNDLAND

BY JOEL JACOBSON, ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Rabbi Chanan Chernitsky has come to Newfoundland with very open eyes.

The 27-year-old Chabad rabbi, originally from Winnipeg and most recently living in Montreal, has moved to the capital city, St. John's, with his 26-year-old wife Tuba, and three children, all three years old and under. He is well aware the small community of about 500 Jews has a Conservative synagogue and a Havurah congregation, both of which observe somewhat distant from his very strong Orthodox roots.

Rabbi Chernitsky and his family see the untapped potential and a certain promise in the Jewish people of the province that is on the far east of Canada, a bit isolated from the rest of the country, and offering little in the way of kosher food and the strict observance demanded by Chabad principles.

"We came here twice in 2016 to be sure this is where we wanted to be," the rabbi said in a recent telephone conversation. "We were here for Tu Bishvat 2016, held a community party, and stayed for a week. We were welcomed warmly"

They returned a few weeks later and stayed a month, through Purim and Pesach and again held community events – a party and a seder – that were well-attended. The couple distributed handmade *shmurah matzah*, conducted a children's program, chatted with residents and began to feel that this place might just become their home.

They moved February 12, 2017, knowing there is a great deal they want to do but also only so much they can do.

"With three small children, we are very busy, of course, but we're reaching out to people, calling, e-mailing, inviting people to our home, delivering home-made Challah (by Tuba) and hamantashen (brought from Montreal) to members of the community, and getting a warm reception," he said. "People have responded enthusiastically, telling us they haven't seen (home delivery and kosher goods like this) in a very long time."

Rabbi Chernitsky knows there are many non-affiliated Jews in St. John's and surrounding area. He'd like to gather them at classes, fun events like a Challah bake, and other activities.

The rabbi wants to offer a range of Torah classes and establish a full Jewish presence at Memorial University of Newfoundland, in addition to holding Jewish holiday programs and celebrations.

Their very first event in their new, permanent home was last Sunday (March 5) when their oldest child, son Menachem Mendel, had his *upsheerin*, his first haircut at the age of 3. It was the first such event on the island in about 40 years.


"We had about 10 people attend," said the rabbi. "We haven't really begun yet but we're excited."

When asked how he'll measure success, he paused, and said, "Success is one Jew putting a Mezuzah on his door, one Jew putting on tefillin, holding one bar mitzvah. Sure, we'd like to have a big story, a big turnout, but we start small and grow."

"The challenge is to meet people, bring Yiddishkeit to them, make sure they have a good experience with Judaism, for some have had bad experiences and others very good ones."

A Purim party is planned for Sunday (March 12) and a seder is scheduled for the first night of Pesach "for anyone who wants to be there and celebrate with us."

He stressed Chabad doesn't put labels on people. "We work with everyone. In St. John's, we'll make programs for both groups that are now established and for anyone else, too."

How long will he stay? "It's a Chabad tradition that when you move somewhere, you move there until the Moshiach comes," said a very content Rabbi Chernitsky. 

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OPENING REMARKS FROM YOM HASHOAH, HALIFAX

BY YOLANA WASSERSUG, PhD

Each year, to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day, the organization B'nai B'rith International announces a theme around which people worldwide can focus their observance of the day. The theme for 2017 strikes me as being both timely and topical, but also enduring. It is *"Restoring Their Identities: The Fate of the Individual During the Holocaust."* In their documents describing their theme, B'nai B'rith describes the tragic death of a woman named Chaniu Awruch.¹

Chaniu Awruch was murdered when the Nazis liquidated the Kowel ghetto in Volhynia (which is now part of Ukraine). During the liquidation, Jews who were caught trying to escape the ghetto were held, without food or water, in the ghetto's synagogue. Awaiting their inevitable deaths, many of these Jews inscribed their last words on the synagogue's walls. Chaniu Awruch was one of these tortured souls. "Farewell, my beautiful world," she wrote. "Your friend, Chaniu Awruch."

The reason that we know anything about Awruch today is a result of the fact that she signed her name. By doing this, she undermined Nazi efforts to erase her life, seeking instead to be remembered. Another reason that we are able to know about her life is because of a Page of Testimony document, filled out by her surviving brother-in-law. A Page of Testimony is a unique biographical record, stored at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem. Each Page of Testimony records facts about an individual victim's life. In Chaniu Awruch's Page of Testimony, we can find the names of her parents, husband, and children. We can also find her occupation, her date and place of birth, and her date of death. For obvious reasons, not every victim of the Shoah has a Page of Testimony dedicated to their life. But because of the diligent work of archivists at Yad Vashem, nearly 4.2 million Pages of Testimony have been made and are available on Yad Vashem's database. Each one of those 4.2 million documents represents the unique identity of one life. These records are vitally important to the task of restoring Chaniu Awruch's identity, as well as the identity of every other victim of the Holocaust.

All of us are indebted to the Yad Vashem Archives and its archivists for taking and recording testimonies. Because of their diligent record keeping, and because of the bravery of survivors and their families who are willing to come forward and give testimony, we know now where Chaniu was born, and we know when and how she died. We know that she was a teacher at a Jewish school; she was a wife; she was the mother of two children. (In those respects, she was not unlike my own grandmother.) And with these details—place of birth, name, job, marital status—we can begin to understand a fraction of who she was.

But what is an identity, truly? What does it mean to have your identity forcibly and violently taken from you? And what does it

mean to have it restored? I've been thinking about these questions a lot lately.

Consider your own identity. How do you define yourself? I am a person made up of details. My parents are Jana and Richard; my grandparents were Helena and Emil, Joseph and Leona. I was born in Halifax; I got an education; I got a job. All of these things are part of me, but they are *not*, in sum, my identity. There is a frequently cited principle in both Jewish and Islamic teaching that states that when a person takes a life, it is though he has destroyed the whole world, and when a person saves a life, it is as though the whole world is saved. If we adhere to this teaching, then surely each person contains a world within them. Each identity is as vast and complex and beautiful as our own planet.

If that is true, then surely identity is more than we can document in one Page of Testimony.

I don't mean to diminish the work of historians and archivists who collect these details. I just want to make the case that despite their efforts, they cannot be said to be truly restoring Chaniu Awruch's identity with merely the names of her parents and daughters and a grainy photograph. Parts of her are in these things, but she, herself, was more than the sum of these fragments.

That being said, these details are also incredibly important. The information engraved on a person's tombstone is not their identity in whole; however, if a person is given a number instead of a name, or a ragged uniform instead of clothing, if they are forced in a labour

I would like to suggest that we have at hand the tools to help us more fully restore lost identities. These tools are not documents in a museum, library, or archive, but rather the art and creativity that those documents inspire.



PAGE OF TESTIMONY DOCUMENT

camp to work to death, or if their body is unceremoniously left in an unmarked mass grave, if their flesh is incinerated so that nothing remains but ash and smoke, all of us would agree that these actions are an attack on their very identity.

And so we cling to the details that can be recovered. But we must, ultimately, mourn for the details which simply can not be restored.

I would like to suggest that we have at hand the tools to help us more fully restore lost identities. These tools are not documents in a museum, library, or archive, but rather the art and creativity that those documents inspire.

When documents and archival materials fall short, we rely on art to restore identities for us. When the death toll is so high, and so many lives were destroyed, we turn to our architects and sculptors to build monuments. When personal narratives are lost, we turn to authors and beg them to fill in the details with plays, novels, and poems. When words alone are not enough to tell the story of a life, then we turn to composers and musicians to help fill the silence. Artists have the power to help us more fully recover what we have lost.

KAMP: The Musical explores the identities of a group of men imprisoned during the holocaust. In 1935, the Nazi regime re-wrote Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code, and under the new law, a wide range of “lewd and lascivious” behaviour between men was deemed criminal. Between 1932-1945, an estimated 100,000 men were arrested in Germany for suspected homosexuality. Some 50,000 were sentenced, and anywhere between 5,000-15,000 men were incarcerated in concentration camps. There is a paucity of historical study of these men’s suffering, but one leading scholar, Reudiger Lautmann, believes that the death rate for these incarcerated men was as high as 60%. At camps such as Buchenwald, SS physicians subjected gay men to humiliating and painful experimentation. For far too long, traditional narratives of Holocaust studies have claimed that lesbians, unlike gay men, were free from persecution, but it is increasingly clear that this was not the case. Lesbian women were often arrested on the grounds that they were “asocial” or they were accused of prostitution.



After the war, homosexual survivors of the Nazi regime were consistently denied formal acknowledgement of their suffering and were barred from receiving reparations. Many gay and lesbian victims of the holocaust were too ashamed to come forward or too traumatized to speak about their experiences. For all these reasons, historians lack documented testimonies.

Therefore, the identities of homosexuals in the holocaust is particularly in need of restoration. As KAMP’s composer Garry Williams notes: “the particular history of the Gay Isolation Block and its prisoners has occupied a marginal place in traditional narratives of the Holocaust.” Plays like Kamp help to centralize this history. The importance of this work, especially now, cannot be understated. Mass, organized violent persecution of gay men is still very much a lived experience. As I write these remarks, gays in Chechnya and the North Caucasus are in “lethal danger”, according to the director of Russian LGBT network.²

Garry Williams wrote to me recently, saying “while inspired by actual persons and events, the story, characters, and character names, in KAMP are fictitious.” But the fact that the story in the play is fictitious doesn’t change the fact that this play, and works of art like it, are vitally important in the overall task of restoring identities to gay holocaust victims. We simply *do not* have enough documentary evidence and archival material about persecution of gays and lesbians during the holocaust. Because decades were wasted while governments buried their heads in the sand and pretended that these murders never occurred, we may never have detailed archives and testimonies about the lives and deaths these men and women.

Works of art, such as KAMP: the Musical, help us envision the richness of these lives, the complexity and beauty of these identities, painting a full sense of the identity and individualism that each victim possessed. Through art, we are all given a window into lives we otherwise could not have imagined. Though art, they are restored. 5

1. You can read the entire B’Nai B’rith document at: <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/2017/pdf/texts.pdf>

2. This quote from the director Russian LGBT Network and more information about the humanitarian crisis in Chechnya can be found in Andrew E. Kramer’s article from the *New York Times*. (April 21, 2017)



Nova Scotia MLA Stephen Gough, his wife Leah, and Jewish students at Hillel Atlantic's *Purim Masquerade Ball*



Jewish teens cooking their own Shabbat dinner at the AJC + JOLT's *Teen Shabbat Dinner*.



Olga Lerner & Ortal Kernerman presenting about Israel to their NSCC classmates.



Leo Mednick & Winston Macgregor preparing seder plates at PEIJC's annual Potluck Seder in Charlottetown.



Halifax's Hebrew School students eating lunch before heading to the AJC's Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration.



Kids rocking out with musical sensation Sonshine & Broccoli at the AJC's Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration.



Olga Milosovich, Dr. Yolana Wassersug, Garry Williams, Naomi Shaw, David Korn and Dr. Dorota Glowacka presented at the AJC's Tribute in memory of Holocaust survivors Elie Wiesel and Yaffa Eliach for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day program at the Halifax Central Library.



Jason Brown participated in the AJC's Yom HaShoah program, in the front plaza of the Halifax Central Library, reading names of victims of the Holocaust, as part of the B'nai B'rith program "Unto Every Person There Is A Name".



Rabbi Yakov Kerzner, participated in the AJC's Yom HaShoah program, in the front plaza of the Halifax Central Library, reading names of victims of the Holocaust, as part of the B'nai B'rith program "Unto Every Person There Is A Name".



Actors performing excerpts from the original musical *KAMP* as part of the AJC's Yom HaShoah program, Halifax Central Library.



Naomi Rosenfeld, Craig Fox, and CIJA's Associate Director of University and Provincial Government Relations Matthew Godwin meeting with the Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, MP, in Moncton.



Naomi Rosenfeld, Craig Fox, and CUA's Associate Director of University and Provincial Government Relations Matthew Godwin meeting with Chris Collins, MLA and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

TOLERANCE FIRST

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

BY DIANA FOXALL

David Korn's life has taken him from the orphanages of Slovakia to the Halifax Citadel, but he says the most universal element of humanity is acceptance.

Above all else, David Korn's life as a Holocaust survivor has shown him that tolerance is the only way forward.

His story begins in Slovakia, where he and his brother, Jacob, were hidden in a Christian orphanage during the war. After the war ended, his parents were dead, and getting out of the orphanage was more complicated than anticipated.

"Our priest let us go because my uncle brought a picture of us," he said to *The Signal* in a measured, lightly accented voice, adding that many Catholic institutions were reluctant to release children from their care after the danger had lifted.

"We were taken out of the orphanage, and I was with my uncle and aunt, and everything was good and prosperous — then the communists came."

Korn was one of five people speaking at the Halifax Central Library about the tragedies of World War II on Thursday evening, in honour of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The United Nations named Jan. 27 as the day of remembrance in 2005, and events have been hosted in Halifax since 2007.

This year's event celebrated the legacies of two leading educators in Holocaust history who passed away in 2016, Elie Wiesel and Yaffa Eliach. Speaking to a crowd of about 200 people, David Korn said he knew Yaffa Eliach personally — "although for me, she is Yaffa Shemesh."

In 1948, Korn, his brother and his aunt and uncle fled Slovakia in favour of Israel. It was a long journey, delayed by Israel's War of Independence, with several stops. The first was in France where Korn learned to speak French. He narrowly missed crossing

paths with Wiesel in Paris, as the writer had been there a year earlier, also learning the language.

It was in Israel that he met Yaffa Eliach. The two were in high school together in the early 1950s. Eventually, he joined the army and became a paratrooper. Following his time in the military, he decided to study at Technion, the country's most prestigious engineering university.

Upon graduating, he received an offer to go to Canada for his masters.

"I got a scholarship on the condition that my English was good. So I knew that my English was good, so I left Israel and came to Canada. And (when I arrived) I was told that I was not accepted to the university there because I don't know how to speak any English," he said after the talk, still amused — and thankful — that he did not make it to study in Guelph.

He ended up in Montreal two years before the Expo, and instead of pursuing further education made use of his engineering degree and went to work there.

In time, he ended up working on hydroelectric dams, something that served him well when he made his way to Halifax and directed the restoration of the Halifax Citadel.

"There were many walls (in the cavalry building) that were leaning, and I devised a system where I could predict if the wall would fall or not," he said. "I avoided rebuilding something that didn't have to be rebuilt."

These days, Korn helps educate local residents on Holocaust history. He shares his experiences — often at high schools — and he works with Edna LeVine, director of community engagement at the Atlantic Jewish



David Korn speaks during the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Halifax

Council, a key player in promoting Holocaust education and organized the event.

He also stresses the importance of acceptance of different people and cultures. "You have to learn that if there is no tolerance between people, it will be bad."

When speaking of intolerance in 2017, David Korn gives the example of the turmoil in Syria. But for himself and other Holocaust survivors, living through injustice and wars means that they must also continue speaking to remember those who have been lost. ⑤

Diana Foxall is a graduate of the journalism program at the University of King's College. Originally from Vancouver, she has written for a number of publications including the Dalhousie Gazette and Canadian Running, and produced radio for CBC.

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CAPE BRETON NEWS

Cape Breton –
Always Rising...

BY SHARON JACOBSON

Having been away for most of the winter, I proceed tentatively with the news of our community. But one thing I can say for sure – “We Are Still Here!”

The Shul functioned and, although sporadic, services were often held during the winter.

A FEW ITEMS TO MENTION:

A sure sign of Spring, was the opening of Captain Capers! Barrie Carnat informed me that Enie and Moe were back from Toronto, and Moe was providing his special and humorous touch to a foodie phenomenon that makes Cape Breton unique. (The Trump Bump in the road should take you here.)



The adventures of Barrie & Bailey: Two ends of the age spectrum participated and will be participating in distinctive Israel experiences.

Barrie Carnat, respectfully retired, spent 2 weeks involved with the SAR-EL program in Israel. (Service to Our Nation). He and 23 other volunteers packed medical supplies for medics, ambulances, and technicians. This service frees up soldiers for other duties. People from Canada, US, Britain, Australia, Brazil, Hungary; from all walks of life; different faiths; and ages came together in this adult camp near Tel Aviv. They were bunked at an army base where they arose for breakfast at 7 and ended the day of work with an evening program which was fun and informative.

Bailey Karrel, a young graduate from high school, will be part of the Advark Israel program spending 5 months volunteering and studying. She will be exposed to Israeli society and culture, and will choose classes at a university level that include such topics as the history of Zionism to the Hebrew language.

She feels an understanding of Jewish identity through her personal Israeli experience is time well-spent in one's Gap Year!

No matter where you are in life's journey, here are – Two people, two worthwhile projects, too wonderful...

Sadly, we lost Marta (Mahini) Chernin, the daughter of Shirley and Joe Chernin, sister to Mark. I corresponded with her cousin, Susan whose eulogy for Marta was all encompassing. To me, Marta Sue will always be that sweet little girl with the face of a cherub coming into our Glacé Bay Shul and Talmud Torah. Her untimely passing was deeply felt by the “shtetl”, an apt analogy alluded to by Susan Chernin.

Holocaust Memorial Observance- Yom HaShoah 2017: Betty Shore updated me about the April 23rd ceremony held in the Sydney Shul that is held each year thanks to the Holocaust Education Committee whose members also include people from the community at large, which I find particularly gratifying...

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, Atlantic Region missionary, kindled the first of the 6 candles representing the death of 6 million Jewish lives. The Breton SongBirds, our guest choir ended the program with Leon Dubinsky's “We'll Rise Again”!

Hedy Bohm was the official speaker whose story unfolded in a compelling and rhythmic flow from week to week and month to month of a young girl whose life was hit so tragically. From Rumania/ Hungary she eventually braved the ocean to come to Pier

21. She said this was the legacy she wanted to give her children. Canada. It reminded me of a visit I made to Auschwitz, where, a building was pointed out to us which contained all the possessions and goods of the Jews who were forced into the camp. The building was called Canada by the inmates because “All good things are in Canada”...

Minions: Having just spent some good time with my grandsons who introduced me to the movies, *Despicable Me 1&2*, I could not forget the Sydney Synagogue back home... There were all these little characters running amok called The Minions!

We had Minion Balloons, a Minion Birthday Party, and Minion socks.

I was never far from wondering how we were doing with “getting a minyan” in Shul!

I even thought of bringing back pairs of Minion socks to remind our locals to come to services on Saturday? Actually it is usually the person who brings back the salami that has the most success!

Finally, I just happened to glance at an Instant Karma Book in a bookstore,

Its advice: “hold a KOAN in your mind while meditating”....

Maybe we will get a minyan? ☺

NEWFOUNDLAND NEWS

Jewish Community Havura of Newfoundland and Labrador

BY RUTH NOEL AND NANCY BENNETT

Winter came with a vengeance this year; the snow did not stop. Some winter storms which hit the Maritimes bypassed us, but not all of them. The bad weather was a challenge for our Friday night services but we never cancelled. We left it to members to decide if they could brave the weather. At one service we had only five people and at another only nine, but we still held a service and had our Shabbat dinner together. Neither snow nor sleet nor storms kept a brave few away. They were indeed special Shabbats.

PURIM

Purim began in the kitchen with a hamantaschen-making party the weekend before, including a very capable 7-year-old. Purim, itself, was a real challenge. Over 70 members had signed up to come. Our falafel chef came down with a virus and Nancy Bennett picked up the groceries from her and spent the rest of the day chopping, mixing, and shaping enough for our crowd. By noon, a pending storm hit the area with hurricane-plus winds, knocking out power throughout the city. Traffic lights were flying around and shingles and siding were blowing like paper. In one part of the province the winds clocked 163 kilometers per hour!

We had to cancel and hope the power would come on the next day. It did, and so Sunday evening we held the Purim party. Even though only about half the original number could attend, everyone enjoyed themselves. Members brought side dishes and desserts, made the children's baskets, organized the Purim play, provided the music, etc. Our new Israeli dancing group performed for the first time and many of the members joined in. We won't forget this Purim for a long time.

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

The Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue was held a few days after Purim and once again, our representative Nancy Bennett, as well as the Christian and Muslim representatives, organized a thought provoking event that



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brought the three religions together in a very positive way. Nancy arranged for her nephew, Rabbi Jim Bennett of St. Louis, Missouri, to speak, using Skype. Gil Shalev provided the technical wherewithal and Skype worked, flawlessly. The topic was "Religion's Place in a Secular Society." Dr. Sean McGrath, chair of Memorial University's Philosophy Department and Dr. Mahmoud Haddara, former Imam and president of the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador were the other two speakers. Rabbi Bennett spoke about the then-recent desecration of the Jewish Cemetery in St. Louis, where his wife's grandparents are buried, and of how his synagogue has reached out to churches in Ferguson, Missouri, the site of racial upheaval after Michael Brown was shot and killed by police in 2014. Dr. McGrath turned the topic on its head by questioning secular society's place in religion.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

In early April, just before Pesach, Havura President, Jonathan Richler, in cooperation with the Religious Social Action Coalition, hosted a Holocaust speaker, Nate Leipziger. Sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation, Mr. Leipziger told his story to an overflowing crowd. Gil Shalev also spoke, recounting his family history. Members of the Christian and Muslim communities also spoke. During his visit, Mr. Leipziger was scheduled to speak at several schools but this was cancelled as schools were closed due to a snowstorm. Mr. Leipziger was interviewed on the local media, however.

PASSOVER

Passover Seders were held in many members' homes and a local store brought in the essential food required for the holiday. Each Seder was conducted in its own unique way and from all reports members pitched in with innovative recipes.

YOM HASHOAH

The Holocaust Memorial Service was held Sunday afternoon, April 23rd. The Committee put together a thoughtful programme on the theme "Why We Remember." Sharon Roseman introduced the theme and set the tone for the evening, not only talking about the Holocaust but remembering other groups who have been recently targeted -- Jews, Muslims, Coptic Christians, indigenous women, and members of the LGBT community. This year, in addition to lighting six candles for the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust, we lit an eighth candle for those more recent victims of hate crimes. A representative from the St. John's Native Friendship Centre lit the eighth candle. It was a somber moment as we were reminded that hatred towards members of some groups still continues today.

Music was very much part of the evening with a rendition of Shalom Aleichem played on clarinet and guitar by Paul and Nicki Bendzsa and Elizabeth Loder singing Makh tsu di eygelekh (Close Your Eyes), written in the Lodz Ghetto. This year we showed excerpts from The Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memories Programme. The

excerpts were short but powerful and many people commented on them after the service. One of the excerpts was by Nate Leipziger who spoke here in March. The traditional prayers of Kaddish and the Shema were said and the 23rd Psalm, read by Justin Tobin, rounded out the programme. Thanks to the Atlantic Jewish Council for their support of this annual service.

ISRAELI DANCING

We have recently started an Israeli and Yiddish dancing group, led by Ruth Noel. Eight of us meet every two weeks and we're having great fun learning new dances. Our next performance will be at the end of the year party in June.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our members continue to speak in schools and to other groups and two members participated in a school's Multicultural Day by teaching Israeli dances to students from grades four to eight.

NEWS AND NOTES

Look out for an updated website for the Havura. We're working on it!

Mazel tov to Dr. Katherine Side who was recently made a full Professor. Dr. Side



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PHOTOS:

1. Concentration does the job at our hamantaschen-making session.
2. This year we lit eight candles, the eighth for recent victims of hate crimes.
3. Elizabeth Loder performs a song written in the Lodz Ghetto while moderator Steve Wolinetz and the audience listen.
4. Plenty of delicious cookies ready for the Havura Purim Party.

teaches in the General Studies Programme.

Mazel tov to Dr. Noreen Golfman, who was celebrated by ACTRA NL on International Women's Day. Dr. Golfman is the founding director and chair of the St. John's International Women's Film Festival, one of the longest running women's film festivals in the world. She is vice-chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation and chair of the board of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. Since 2011, she has co-chaired the board of directors of Business and the Arts NL, an

organization that brokers relationships and funding between the arts and the corporate and private sectors.

Congratulations to Marc and Brenda Rishea on the marriage of their daughter Faith to Jamie Payette this April in Milton, Ontario. The happy couple will reside in Burlington, Ontario.

If you are visiting us, please contact us at info@havura.org or 709-834-7866. We would love to meet you and welcome you into our Havura family. ☺

MONCTON NEWS

BY NANCY COHEN

A lively brunch followed the Megillah reading on Purim. The brunch featured a falafel station with delicious, authentic falafel and Israeli style hamentashen. Once again several of our newest members have shown their prowess in the kitchen. The kids all had fun running around in their costumes and playing the various games organized by Rebbetzin Yagod.

On April 26 several members came out to meet with Naomi Rosenfeld, Craig Fox and Matthew Godwin. We were all impressed by the enthusiasm and optimism of these three young adults. We discussed some of the problems we have as a community and although we may not have resolved our issues, such as the difficulty of retaining new immigrants due to a lack of employment, it is good to make connections and to know that we are not alone.

Our annual Holocaust Memorial was held on April 30 with Michael Steinitz, Professor Emeritus at St. Francis Xavier University as our guest speaker. Michael's parents were refugees from Nazi Germany. Michael reminded us that we should never judge people's reaction to trauma and suggest they should "move-on", because everyone reacts differently. He focused on some of the positive stories that came out of the Shoah, such as the professor that arranged for Michael's father to escape. Approximately 80 people attended, including Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the MP for Moncton Riverview Dieppe, Alaina Lockhart the MP for Fundy Royal, Cathy Rogers, MLA for Moncton South, Mme Laurence Monmayrant from the French consulate and several veterans.



MAZEL TOV TO:

Nicole Druckman, who was honoured as an exceptional woman at "Together We Shine" a special luncheon held in celebration of International Women's Day.

Carole and Jennifer Savage on Lewis' marriage to Melanie. ☺

FREDERICTON NEWS

We have had a busy time since the beginning of January

BY MARILYN KAUFMAN

The chedar class which is held every Sunday morning, learned all about Tu B'shevat, (The Festival of Trees), and each child received a bag of fruit containing the kinds of fruit grown in Israel.

As Purim and Pesach approached, kid activities centered round the Megillah reading, (story of Esther), and the reading of the Haggadah (the Jewish exodus from Egypt). The various foods for these holidays and traditional preparations were discussed as well. The hamentashen for Purim were yummy! And of course, let us not forget about the Fer Kashes and the search for the afikoimen at Pesach time.

A tip to the grandparents out there. One complaint the children had was that you are not making the search for the afikoimen challenging enough, although they do appreciate the reward for finding it.

A community Purim party was held at the shul where children participated in a costume parade and took part in a number of games before eating the kiddish provided by the Sisterhood.

And once again Sisterhood hosted a successful community Passover seder on the first night of Pesach. Our traditional volunteers

from the Knights of Columbus were ever present to help with the smooth food service.

A big thank you to all the volunteers, both men and women who helped with the set up, preparations and clean up for both community events.

In March, Rabbi Goldman and Marilyn Kaufman participated in the Mayor's round table discussions on the city's Homeless. Other discussions are to follow.

Dr. Costanza Musu, University of Ottawa, presented a lecture at STU on Israel and the Middle East. She has an expertise on the Middle East and Foreign relations. CIJA supported our request to have a speaker present a balanced perspective on Israel and Human Rights in response to a Fall lecture, which was felt by some of us who attended, to be pure Israel bashing.

Alex Shaulov initiated a free income tax assistance help program at the Synagogue for members of the congregation. Sanctioned by the CRA, this is the first year we have made this service available to individuals needing help filling out their income tax forms.

The Sgoolai Israel Synagogue and AJC

partnered with the Capital Community Church to host this year's Holocaust Memorial Observance. There were about 550 people in attendance to hear guest speaker Gershon Willinger.

Gershon was born in Amsterdam in 1942 of Jewish parents who had fled Nazi Germany. His personal account of his survival began when he was an infant and he was hidden by a non-Jewish family of the Dutch resistance. He was transported to several concentration camps prior to his liberation at the age of three, by the Red Army in 1945. He and his older sister survived, but his parents were murdered in Sobibor.

Gershon returned to Holland where after several difficult years he was adopted. Eventually he immigrated to Israel at the age of 18 and, served in the paratroopers of the IDF. On completion of his military service he pursued a degree in Social Work and worked with rehabilitating young offenders and street gangs.

He finished his Master of Science degree in the U.S. He met his wife Jane in London and they married in Israel. In 1977 they came to live in Canada. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

Today Gershon serves as a speaker for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto and the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal center. As well, he volunteers at Baycrest in Toronto, working with the elderly.

Thank you to Committee Chairs, Israel Unger, Pastor Jack Leaman and Pastor Raymond Woodward for putting together the program. As well, special recognition is given to Marlene Unger (z'l) for her work on this project.

CONDOLENCES:

Condolences to Harry Chippin and Family, Gordon, David, Arthur and Marilyn Kaufman on the passing of Sheila Chippin.

Condolences to Israel Unger and Family, Sharon and Sheila on the passing of Marlene Unger. ☺

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SAINT JOHN NEWS

BY SUSAN ISAACS LUBIN

All of our Snowbirds have returned from the sunny south, and everyone had a good winter and they are all ready to get back into the Saint John “groove”.

On Wednesday, April 26th, Naomi Rosenfeld paid her first visit to Saint John. She was accompanied by Craig Fox, and Matthew Godwin. Although the turnout for her visit was small, we had a very informative visit and I think we will work well with Naomi. She is full of enthusiasm and has a lot of good suggestions.

On Sunday, April 30th, we had a joint program – commemorating Memorial Day, and celebrating Israeli Independence Day. This is the second year that Orly Melech and Hila Aharon have organized this program, and it is well received.

On May 12th, we are planning our second pizza party. The first time we had this, we had a very full room, with over 50 people attending. With the many more families who have arrived since then, we expect even more in attendance. This is a fun event that is held in our Acker Room after Services on Friday evening.

We are so proud of our Israeli families who seem to be settling to the way of life in Canada, and who have already put down roots by buying homes. We look forward to a very long and happy friendship with all of the families.

We have started two Hebrew School classes – one for Hebrew speaking children, and the other for those children who have no Hebrew. Anna Vinizer, a teacher from Israel, is teaching both classes. So far, we have had very good reviews from both the parents and the students.

We had a wonderful turnout for Purim. The Megillah was read by Joe Arditti and Uzi




1.

Michaelov, and both the children and the adults came dressed in costume.

A fun day filled with Arts and Crafts, and learning about the holiday was held to a capacity crowd on Tu B'Shevat.

CONDOLENCES:

Our condolences to the families of Babs Green and Joanne Morrison, who died this winter. 



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PHOTOS:

1. Putting makeup on for Purim
2. Uzi Michaelov and Joe Arditti reading the Megillah.
3. Fun dressing up for Purim.



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SAINT JOHN JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

BY KATHERINE BIGGS-CRAFT

Yom Hashoah

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum was honoured by the visit to Saint John of Gershon and Jane Willinger. Gershon Willinger shared his survivor's story at the annual commemoration of the Holocaust.

His parents, Guido and Edith Helene Rothschild-Willinger were married in 1937 and he was born in Amsterdam in 1942. When Gershon was only five months old, his parents placed him with a Christian family in the hopes that he would survive the Holocaust. His parents were murdered in Sobibor on July 2, 1943 at ages 34 and 35. He described them as resistance fighters for their decision to give up their son. Some time later his name was given to collaborators and he was taken to the Children's Home at Camp Westerbork. On September 13, 1944, he was sent on the last train transport from Westerbork, Holland to Bergen-Belsen with 50 other children between the ages of 18 months and six years. He noted that Anne Frank travelled on the same train. The children were placed under the care of four young women who remained with them in the camps until the end of the war. The children were later transported to Theresienstadt, which was liberated in 1945 by the Russian Army. All of the children survived and now live in countries around the world. They had been categorized as the "unknown children".

Gershon Willinger was returned to Holland by truck and was reunited with the family who had taken him in at 5 months of age. From 1946 to 1947 he lived in an orphanage and was then taken to a foster family in 1950, who later adopted him. At the age of eight he met his sister Rita who was ten – she had survived in hiding and was living with their paternal aunt. Rita was taken to the United States two years later and they were never able to establish a normal sibling relationship. Gershon received mental health treatment through most of his teen age years to deal with the damage done to him during the Holocaust. Only on his adoption in 1959 did he cease to be a stateless person.

He left Holland for Israel in 1960 and lived there until 1977. He spent a year on

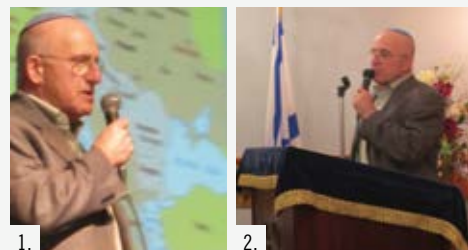
a kibbutz and then joined the Israeli army where he served as a paratrooper and in the reserves. He trained in social work and provided counselling to soldiers. He came to Canada with his wife, Jane and his two daughters and son in 1977. For many years he worked with juvenile delinquents and other troubled youth. He now has seven grandchildren and describes his family photograph as "the war Hitler did not win".

Mr. Willinger shared his story with students in four Saint John area high schools and told them that they are now witnesses to the events of the Holocaust and should share his story. He also reminded them to stand up for people who are being mistreated, to be interested in the world and to get involved. Many students at each school came forward at the end of the presentation to thank him for his presentation.

EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

On May 11, the Museum will present its Fifth Annual Spring Variety Concert at Grace Presbyterian Church on Coburg Street in Saint John. This one of the Museum's annual fundraising events. The program will feature several well known Saint John musicians including Claire Driscoll, David Dow, Maureen Beckwith and Calvin McDonald, as well as several young vocalists who study with Deantha Edmunds Ramsey and Elaine Boulanger. The program will include classical and popular pieces. We would like to thank the church for allowing us to use their space at no charge, as well as the participants who have donated their time and talent to our program.

A new exhibit is being prepared for the summer season – *Habonim, Hadassah and Hope: Building a Jewish Homeland*. The exhibit will describe the support provided by the Saint John Jewish community to the development of Israel. This began with the assistance given to the men travelling through Saint John in the spring and summer of 1918 on their way to join the Jewish Legion. Among those who passed through Saint John were David Ben-Gurion, who would become the first Prime Minister of Israel in 1948 and Itzhak Ben Zvi who would be Israel's second President. They went to Windsor, Nova



PHOTOS:

1. Gershon Willinger at Hampton High School
2. Gershon Willinger at Shaarei Zedek Synagogue
3. Katherine Biggs-Craft and members of the Holocaust Study Group
4. Bruce Washburn, president of Congregation Shaarei Zedek lighting memorial candle

Scotia for military training before being sent overseas, where they served in Palestine near the end of the First World War. Saint John members of the Habonim, Hadassah and Young Judaea met regularly from the 1920s to the 1980s to learn more about Israel and to plan events, including dinners, fashion shows, and thrift shops, to raise funds for many organizations which supported the people and land of Israel. The exhibit will include photographs, programs, certificates and other memorabilia.

The Museum will be open for the summer season from May 23 to November 3. We expect more than 60 cruise ships to arrive in the city over these months and many passengers will be coming through to learn about the city's Jewish history. Visitors from the local area are also expected and encouraged. If you are in the area over the summer please drop by – it would be wonderful to see you. ☺

PEI NEWS

BY ERNEST SCHLEICHKORN

The PEIJC is proud to report on the latest events in the community:

1. Purim Celebration
2. Community Passover Seder
3. Yom HaShoah Ceremony

PURIM

This was hosted by the Ifrach family in their home. The Story of Purim was told, and there was a reading of the Megillah.

PASSOVER SEDER

We held our annual community Seder on the first night. Over 25 people attended. Kudos to Rosalie Simone and Leo Mednick who co-chaired the reading of the Hagadah, the recanting of the Passover Story and the singing of the numerous Passover songs especially Chad Gadya. Our Seder was graced by the presence of our AJC executive Director Naomi Rosenfeld who came to visit our little shtetl. A kosher meal was served.

YOM HASHOAH

It was my first time attending this event, and I was honored to attend as the guest speaker. There were over 100 people in attendance many of them non-Jews.

Sandra Ireland and Rosalie Simeone did an awesome job in organizing and we received much publicity. Prior to the event I had a radio interview with CBC, and then I was interviewed by the Charlottetown Guardian and we made the Front Page news.

Mine is a story of 3 survivors of the Holocaust (my family members), the slaughter of their families by the Nazi regime and the question they've asked themselves "Why did we survive?". Below is short synopsis of my family history.

My dad, Armin Schleichkorn, grew up in Gnazda, Czechoslovakia with his siblings Anna, Moritz and Ethelka (see photo). No pictures of his parents Soloman Schleichkorn and Antonia nee Goldberger, remains. His uncle Josef Goldberger, wife Eva, and much younger cousins Amelia, Morita and Berta also lived in Gnazda.

On my Mom's side, my grandfather – Wilhelm Muller worked for the Red Cross in Russia after WWI. He met Lia Wieger (my grandmother) a Russian Jew from Siberia. They subsequently immigrated to Germany

circa 1920, and hid the fact that Lia was Jewish. Mom (Gertrude) was born in 1922 and never knew she was of the Jewish faith.

Anna Duklauer, my father's cousin, born in 1922 grew up in Poland along with her brother Moritz, her sister Erna and parents Julius and Sofia (see photo).

My dad at first fought the Germans, He was part of the Slovak army and that conflict didn't last long. Germany annexed part of the country, and then just occupied the remainder. His sister Anna convinced him to go to Palestine. Along with other boys from Gnazda, my dad escaped on the ship Nelly. He remained in Palestine during the conflict, and afterwards took part in the Normandy Invasion.

My mom was a teacher in a remote village of Germany. A Nazi friend of my grandfather's knew they were Jewish but said nothing, even though he turned in his own Jewish wife. She taught all the grades and is still known as the heroine of the village. When the Americans arrived, she was able to translate for them and ensured no pillaging took place. She felt remorse at the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime and wanted to do a Mitzvah for the Jewish people, and it was at that time my grandmother informed her that she was Jewish.

Anna Duklauer was in a Polish concentration camp (Plaszow). She accepted an offer to work in Oscar Schindler's factory. Brother Moritz and Sofia had already disappeared. Later on she was on a train which was diverted to Auschwitz by mistake, when Schindler moved his operation from Poland to Czechoslovakia. Schindler came into the camp, bribed the commandant, and stated "die Sind meine Kinder" and they are coming with me and Anna survived she was #34 on Schindler's list.

The Schleichkorn family (grandparents uncle, aunts) and my great-uncle's family also from Gnazda (Joseph Goldberger & Eva, children Amelia, Moritz and Berta) were slaughtered in the Shoah. The Duklauer family were also slaughtered.

Following the war Anna Duklauer and my dad were reunited while searching for their respective families, not knowing they had been slaughtered in the Shoah.



My dad left Czechoslovakia in 1948 when the Russians invaded. He met my mom in a refugee camp in Germany. They married, came to Canada (USA was closed to people from communist countries). They had 4 boys. Hence 11 grandchildren! My dad lived to 101, surviving a heart attack, brain bleed and getting hit by an SUV. "A true survivor".

Anna (dad's cousin) came to the USA with her family circa 1970. Never spoke about the war. When the film Schindler's List was released she began to tell her story, she was # 34 on Schindler's list, concentration camp No. 76235. Anna received an invitation to the White House to share the podium with Spielberg.

Anna had 3 children 12 grandchildren and at the time of her death and one great-grandchild.

My message to the readers is let's carry on the mitzvah of "pay it forward". Cast a pebble in a pond and it will create a ripple, which will multiply until it reaches the other shore.

Links to interviews and photos are available on the PEI Jewish Community's website: www.peijc.org.

THE MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

BY RABBI DAVID ELLIS, AJC REGIONAL CHAPLAIN

A strange request. Last January.

Someone in Sydney, originally from the States, who had just moved there from Newfoundland.

The man, not Jewish, had bought a home in Sydney which had once belonged to a Jewish family. He found out through some research, that the architect who had designed the home also designed the Shaar Shalom synagogue in Halifax, both at some time in the early 50s. And, being interested in architecture and design, he wondered if he could visit the Shaar Shalom. My name was given him as a contact from the Beaton Institute in Cape Breton. I said, sure, come on down. He came in a few weeks, with a young lady from New Glasgow similarly interested. We looked at what people usually look at during a tour of the synagogue--the sanctuary, the ark, the small chapel. But after quickly noting these, I saw they were not curious. What they wished to see was--the building. So we went literally everywhere in the Shaar Shalom. Oh, look at these chairs--they're from an old company.

They took a photograph of the label. Look at the linoleum, it's from this time. Another photograph. How about these coat racks? The windows--not original, they'd been replaced. Too modern, no history. The wood on the doors, the door knobs, the cabinets in the kitchen. All photographed. We went upstairs. Here's this and that. More photographs. Finally--well, I see you're interested in everything. There are some washrooms down the hall. And, sure enough, they went in. Oh, these faucets were made by so-and-so. They even went down and got a picture of the label on the toilet itself! We came back downstairs. Well, you saw the one upstairs--here are the washrooms downstairs. Oh, yes, some remodeling, but look--some original tiles. The door handles on the stalls. Different faucets. More photographs. And so it went on, for an hour or so. As I thought about it, I said to myself--interesting, but not of special importance. Certainly nothing "religious" about it. And then I thought again. In a few

weeks in the synagogue, we would be reading the chapters in Exodus, which described the building of the *mishkan*, the portable sanctuary the children of Israel carried in the wilderness. There are detailed descriptions of all the materials, precisely how they were all put together. While the sanctuary in the wilderness did not have a part for personal needs, the later temple in Jerusalem did. It was called the "toilet of honour." What was its honour? That if someone came and found it locked, it was known to be in use. And, of course, we have the blessing in our siddur, *asher yatzar*, which we say after our bodily functions.

So let's give things full consideration. Our synagogue is to be a *mikdash m'at*, a small sanctuary. Nothing is superfluous. The Torah is not just in the ark and sanctuary, but should be exemplified in all we do, wherever we are in our buildings. Let us make every moment in our buildings one of holiness. Make your own tour there. 3

HUMBLE PRIDE

BY RABBI MENDEL FELDMAN, CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF THE MARITIMES

We are now in the weeks leading up to the Holiday of Shavuot, the day when we received the Torah at Sinai.

Our sages ask why was it important to inform us the exact location and description where the Torah was given, that it was particularly on Mt. Sinai.

The Midrash explains: Before G-d gave the Torah on Mt. Sinai, several mountains argued that they deserved that the Torah be presented on them. Each of these mountains exclaimed its grander, tallness and greatness, while Mt. Sinai remained silent feeling unworthy that this most awesome

G-dly Revelation take place upon it. Subsequently however, G-d chose the smallest and "humblest" of all mountains; Mt. Sinai.

This emphasizes the important virtue of

being humble like Mt. Sinai. However, there is another important lesson here as well.

While the Torah was presented on the lowest mountain, it was not granted to us in a valley. A low mountain still stands higher than the desert around it, this symbolizes the notion of pride!

Thus, the lesson from Sinai in "receiving the Torah" and growing Jewishly is twofold: While humility is an essential character trait and a prerequisite in serving our Creator, (it says that G-d does not reside among the arrogant), at the same time one must have a sense of pride in his Yiddishkeit.

Humility should not be confused with low self-esteem. 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. In order for one to be strong and follow through with his Torah inspired convictions, one needs a sense of Jewish pride.

This kind of pride does not stem from arrogance, but rather from a determination to fulfill the Will of G-d. We can be humble -- like Mt. Sinai -- we can view others as being better than we are. Yet, at the same time, we should be firm like a mountain when facing obstacles in practicing our Mitzvot.

This is why the Torah does not tell us that G-d gave the Torah merely at Sinai, but rather, at Mount Sinai.

Happy Shavuot and best wishes for receiving the Torah anew joyfully and internalising it. 3



MAKING A BLESSING EVEN WHEN IT'S DIFFICULT

BY RABBI YOSEF GOLDMAN, SGOOLAI ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, FREDERICTON

The Mishnah (Berachot Chapter 9 Mishnah 5) says the following:

“A person must make a blessing on ‘bad news’, just as you must say a blessing on ‘good news’”.

Many people (including myself) find this law very difficult to understand and accept.

We all go through many ‘ups & downs’ in our life, and, of course it is good to know that G-d is with us always, but the hard times can be very challenging.



We must remember one thing, that the Rabbis, before making such a statement, have thought it through, and are not, by any means, trying to pile more obligations on us. The Prophet Jeremiah, who wrote the Book of Lamentations asked a rhetorical question: “MIPI ELYON LO TEZTE HARA'OT VE'HATOV?! – From the Most High's mouth, will not (both) the bad and good emanate (or (different translation) come forth)?!” (Lamentations 3:38). During the ancient times, almost every country and people believed that there are two or more ‘Higher Powers’ that control what happens in the world. There was a ‘good god’ and a ‘bad god’ AKA the Devil, and they were in constant competition. Judaism does not accept this idea! When we proclaim the Shema, we affirm that there is only One G-d! This One G-d has many manifestations, and therefore we may think that someone else is in charge, when bad things happen to good people, but we are not allowed to say this (it is not a wrong thought, we just mustn't act on it, even in speech), instead, we must say with the same intent: “BARUCH DAYAN HA'EMET” – “Blessed is the Truthful Judge”.

This law is mentioned also in the Shulchan Aruch – The Code of Jewish Law, and there is even a scenario (as strange as this may sound), that a person will have to say both blessings – Dayan Ha'emet and Hatov Ve'Hameitiv. The example Rabbi Yosef Caro gives is if a person receives news of the passing of a relative (which we would consider ‘bad news’) and immediately afterwards hears that they left behind a good size inheritance. The law is (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 222) that this person must say both blessings: 1. DAYAN HA'EMET – for the passing of the relative; 2. HATOV VE'HAMEITIV – for the news about the inheritance. The order is probably the order in which the news was received.

Bottom line, this is a very good way to remember that everything that happens to us, whether good or bad should awaken us to search our ways and behaviours, and make an effort to improve. The true definition of TE-SHUVAH (repentance) is to return to our original state which is when we very young and didn't sin, and didn't have a problem with trust. My favourite

example is a scenario we all know very well. What is the natural reaction of a baby/toddler when we throw them in the air? It is not screaming in fear or crying! It is a bunch of laughter and giggles! Right? When we grow up, for some reason, we forget that natural state of trust.

Three verses later, Jeremiah says: “we shall search our ways, and return to Hashem!”

Wishing you all a very good summer, filled with trust and opportunities. ☺

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FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

BY RABBI RAYSH WEISS,
CONGREGATION SHAAR SHALOM, HALIFAX



The Jewish calendar is punctuated, not only by a procession of holidays, but also, as befits a people known as “The People of the Book,” to the study of a succession of classic texts, at appropriate seasons of the year. One such text is called “Pirkei Avot,” “Ethics of the Fathers” or “Teachings of the Sages.”

These teachings were studied, traditionally, between the weeks of Passover and Shavuot, the holiday which celebrates the giving of the Torah; but it has also been the custom of Jewish communities to study Pirkei Avot through the summer, which is why I mention it here. These texts became the vehicle for the shaping of a common, ethical vocabulary within the Jewish community, so that the learned and the untutored would share a common idiom and a basic ethical and religious orientation to life.

What made these teachings classic is that while they addressed their own generation, they also spoke to the ages beyond their own. A text that does not speak to its own generation is an abstract principle without roots. On the other hand, one that speaks only to the present is ephemeral and has no meaning for subsequent generations.

“Ethics of the Fathers” or “Teachings of the Sages” meets these criteria. This rabbinic text spoke not only to its own generation, but these teachings have remained relevant to subsequent ages.

The study of Torah, and the fulfillment of a life predicated on Torah, are presented in these texts as being available to every individual. A sampling of these teachings follows:

“The world exists because of the study of Torah, prayer, and deeds of loving kindness.”

“Judge all people favorably.”

“Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace.”

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I care only for myself, who am I? And if not now, when?”

“Do not keep aloof from the community; do not judge your fellow man until you have been in his position.”

“In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.”

“One who puts his fellow human being to shame has no place in the world to come.”

“Who is wise? One who learns from everyone. Who is rich? One who is content. Who is strong? One who subdues his evil impulse.”

“Who is honored? One who honors others.”

The above is only a small sample of these ethical teachings or texts of wisdom. With the (gradual!) arrival of warmer weather here in the Maritimes, we have great opportunities for growing Jewishly. The ‘wisdom of the sages’ invites you to participate in the wisdom of the ages. ☺

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

BY RABBI YAKOV KERZNER,
BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, HALIFAX



The Jewish calendar provides us many avenues for reflection throughout the year. The days of “Sefirah”, counting the days from Passover to Shavuot, is an ideal time to reflect on the balance necessary between our need for conformity and our constant quest for individuality. On the one hand, Judaism demands of us constant compliance to societal norms. The performance of the Commandments involves us in many rituals, the details of which are meticulously outlined. Our prayer book even directs our interactions with God with formulas and words, not of our own choosing. Passover demands of us to eat mouthfuls of matzah, to taste the marmor, and in Temple times to eat of the Paschal Lamb. Although we all introduce slight variations as an expression of our individuality, much of the holiday rules prescribe for us to remain within the parameters set by an ancient tradition. Shavuot on the other hand, has no mitzvot associated with it. Our tradition tells us that it is a celebration of the reception of the Torah on Mount Sinai. But, besides the regular holiday prayers and the constant indulging in feasts, there are no set rituals to guide us through the holiday.

Our mystical tradition ascribes the following labels to the two holidays. Passover is called “Kneset Israel”, the “Congregation of Israel”. Shavuot is titled “Binah”, simply translated as “Understanding”. When we think of Torah and receiving it, we think of laws, rituals, and hundreds of mitzvot. We are clearly being directed to the heights of conformity. So, why is it Passover, not Shavuot, that we are describing as related to a congregation, to community, to a larger unit? In other words, conformity. The answer lies in a deeper understanding of the word Binah. In Hebrew, Binah, is much more than just raw knowledge. It connotes insight, a deeper understanding of the knowledge that we have attained. Every individual will have their unique perspective and personal understanding of the values of the Torah, the meanings of the stories, the purpose of the mitzvot, and the ethics and morals that one is to learn from the myriad Commandments and the multitude of stories that are contained within its pages.

The mystics are teaching us a profound lesson. Although Judaism demands much conformity; without a sense of individuality, without our own personal filters, without an individualistic reading of the Torah, we have not really received the Torah. Superficiality and conformity are an important point of departure in the journey of life and in our experience of Judaism. But, if one really wants to truly receive the Torah, to create meaning in one's life, and to have an impact on the world around us, we need to approach the Torah with our own fresh view of its deeper meaning. It is not an easy task. It takes time and effort to create our own personal Torah, to translate the stories and the Torah's demands so that it has meaning for us every day of our lives. Let us use these days to create or recreate a Judaism that is more than skin deep. It will require more than a periodical visit to the synagogue. You will need study, reflection, and intellectual honesty to uncover the message intended for every individual. Hopefully, that will be the beginning of a Judaism and a relationship with God that is meaningful to each and every one of us. ☺

THE CHARM OF THE SMALL TOWN

BY REBBETZIN FRIMET YAGOD, CONGREGATION TIFERES ISRAEL, MONCTON, NB

The charm of the small town. We can smell the scent of flowers and the crisp ocean air after a rainstorm (especially here in Moncton). The quiet envelopes us at night after a busy day at work. We hear the laughter of the children in the parks, backyards and on the street playing together. We see children riding their bikes, playing hide and go seek or any original game they have dreamed up in their innocence of youth. Couples are taking a leisurely stroll on the board walks and pathways of the river fronts. Young mothers are pushing their baby carriages. Even the traffic seems to be in tune with the rhythm of the place. (This is certainly not Toronto Traffic!) Who would not want to live in such a place?!

The above scenario conjures up the image and emotions of peace and tranquility. Alas, the Traditional Jew could not even contemplate the thought of living in such a picturesque place. How will one get Kosher food, descent Jewish Education for one's children, a Mikvah, Judaica books, Torah lectures and the plethora of necessities for an Observant Jewish life? Up until a few years ago, this was the reality. Once all the stationary necessities are fulfilled, technology has made all the other venues possible.

Kosher food is no longer a challenge. One can have their choice foods shipped to them either via the provinces' s Kosher store, a ground shipping company that will deliver those mouth-watering Montreal Knishes from the favourite Montreal store, or an array of online Kosher food services that will drop ship anywhere in the world. It, of course, makes it easier if a relative or a friend is regularly going to an urban Jewish center and can return with a treasure trove of Kosher goodies.

Judaica has taken the same route as the Kosher food industry albeit much earlier. One can order any Judaica item or Torah Book and have it drop shipped right to one's door. Torah books or the Judaica specials in Israel that were once prohibitive, are now readily accessible with reasonable shipping at the click of a button and if you need a specialized Torah book and have a 7:00 am next day deadline, one need not panic anymore as

hebrewbooks.org will provide most of those rare gems. They are even downloadable free of charge.

One misses an very interesting Shiur (Torah Lecture) given by once's favourite speaker/Rabbi/Rebbetzin or need to research a topic in Judaism – no problem. Click on youtube.com, koshertube.com, torahanytime.com or The charm of the Small Town. the panorama of online sites, either via the web or facebook, and one will find a whole litany of choices.


As for Jewish Education, many small towns provide a Cheder and parents supplement in the home via personal teaching and/or the world wide web.

Today, there are a number of excellent Judaic studies programs for children on line where they will receive the same education, both in quality and quantity, as an Observant Jewish Day School. Home schooling has become a popular option among Observant parents and many small town Cheders are catering their curriculums to this population as they are the ones that will continue their Judaic studies well into university. Some even return to their home towns and become the lay and/or Rabbinic Leadership of the next generation.

Another group that would most benefit from a small town and that is our honoured seniors. A person can sell their home in a major city in Canada (usually worth well over \$1,500,000 especially in Toronto) and live very comfortably in their new domicile.

They also bring with them a wealth of knowledge from their individual professions as well as their life experiences. They even come with the added benefit of being Shul goers and contribute to the Community Minyan. Many of them can lead Services and some are even Torah Readers. Experience has shown that they can be of benefit to the lay leadership, as well, as many of them have had very successful businesses/professions and lucrative investments.

Aside from what our Ziknei HaDor (Elders of our Generation) can contribute, there are many beautiful Jewish programs that they can tap into via the web. Whether it is the Geriatric Jewish programming in the major cities (e.g. Baycrest in Toronto) Jewish Music, Yiddish films, Torah lectures (especially in Yiddish) – the opportunities are boundless. This is aside from the programming the community provides for them.

What was once not even on the radar screen, is now a very viable option for the Observant Jew. The charm of the small town. The smell of the ocean air is very invigorating! 






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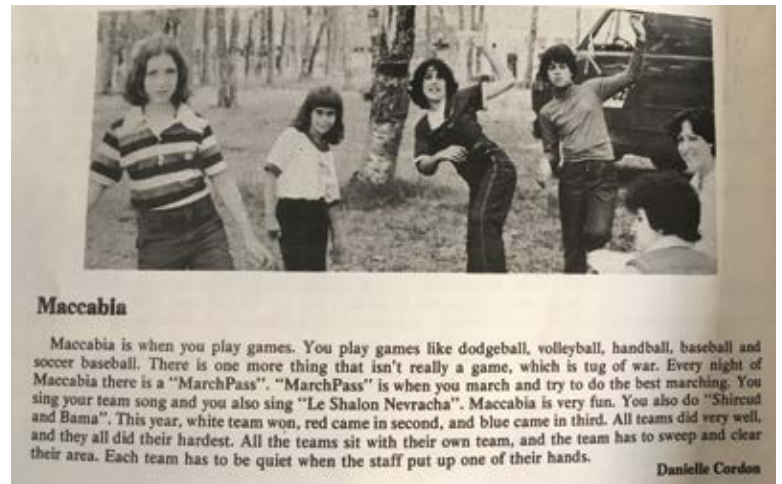
Continued from page 5

yummy Passover Seder in Charlottetown, explored beautiful 91 Leinster St. in Saint John, toured immersive campuses in Fredericton, and became inspired at the Silverberg Studio in Wolfville. All the while speaking to as many Jewish community members as I could, trying to learn each community's individual highlights and challenges.

Do you know what I learned? As much as each Jewish community in Atlantic Canada is unique, we are all facing similar challenges. We are all struggling with how to engage our younger generations, how to welcome and embrace our newcomer communities, and how to ensure the sustainability of our synagogues and institutions well into the future.

Over the next few months, I hope to make my way to the rest of our Atlantic Canadian communities and enhance the AJC's ability to support each of our Atlantic communities individually and act as a *convener* of our communities – either physically or electronically – so we can come together, engage with our common issues, brainstorm solutions and, of course, bond as a region. I see no better time or place to start than during our *family shabbaton* at Camp Kadimah, scheduled for this coming August 25th-27th, 2017. I do hope you'll join us for this wonderful opportunity!

While my 'small federation' colleagues may never understand,



I know that, in the Atlantic Canadian Jewish community, there is a strong force uniting us together, with our diversity and geographic distance only making us stronger. And, just in case I ever wonder about the uniqueness of our 'region', I now have the participants of the *Third Biennial Maritime Judean Conference* displayed proudly in the entranceway of the AJC offices to provide a gentle but constant reminder. 5

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