

Shalom

CONNECTING THE ATLANTIC JEWISH COMMUNITY



SPRING 2021

THE "HONOURING
RUTH" PROJECT

LIFE &
LEGACY®
IN ATLANTIC
CANADA

INTERVIEW WITH
GARY BARWIN

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IN ATLANTIC CANADA

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“As my ancestors planted for me, so do I plant for those who will come after me”—The Talmud





SHALOM MAGAZINE

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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

SPRING 2021
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TEVET 5781



ON THE COVER



Caves-of-Qumran
(Israel),
by Tom Forrestall

This beautiful, original watercolour is 15" x 22" on paper, from the series 35 Days in Israel is available for purchase

from the AJC: \$4,100 framed (plus delivery), please contact Naomi Rosenfeld, AJC executive director, nrosenfeld@theajc.ca

In March 2021, eighty fragments of parchment were the first new pieces of Dead Sea Scrolls found by archeologists in the desert caves of Qumran in 60 years.

Tom Forrestall is one of Canada's most acclaimed and exciting realist painters. Forrestall was born in Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia in 1936. In 1965, he held his first solo show at Roberts Gallery in Toronto and has since continued to show in galleries and museums across Canada. He completed a large outdoor piece for Expo '67. He was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy in 1973.



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From The Desk Of **MARILYN KAUFMAN**

President of the Atlantic Jewish Council

Spring is a time of transition. It was our hope, that this Spring, we would be experiencing a transition recovery phase from the COVID pandemic with months of research and vaccine development behind us and shots in arms. While variants play havoc with our country's provincial border openings, we remain cautiously optimistic, here in Atlantic Canada, that we will prevail. **We look to Israel, a world leader in research in this pandemic, as our inspiration.** It has its population well vaccinated and its once decimated tourism sector expects to open its borders to other countries in May, under strict public health guidelines.

MEANWHILE, MUCH HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN OUR MIDST.

CJIA co-sponsored a world's **Mayor's Summit on Combating Antisemitism**, which saw participating mayors from major cities around the world, present, via Zoom, their plans to join in solidarity in confronting this fight. I had extended a number of invitations to local mayors in our region and also took part myself. It was an excellent forum and very informative. Another Zoom conference backed by a CJIA coalition dealing with **combating on-line hate** took place mid-April. One of the speakers concluded that, "one must understand all the interactions of hate, in order to take steps to combat it." **Martin Luther King III** spoke eloquently of the historical Black/Jewish coalition. He said, *"It is important where one stands in time of controversy, and one should be continually reaching out in friendship, beginning with the premise of dignity and respect."* Several workshops were conducted citing education as a key tool that should be used to combat on-line hate.

I also attended an on-line public lecture at the University of Virginia, entitled, **International Jewish Humanitarianism in The Age of the Great War**, based on the book of the same name, by author, Dr. Jacklin Granick. This provides an interesting history of the migration of Russian Jews and the

origins of the Joint Distribution Committee which brings to light the humanitarianism of world Jewry.

Tu B'shevat was quickly followed by **Purim**, where in many of our communities homemade hamentashen were the norm. This story of Jewish oppression under Haman and the Assyrian King, Antiochus, shines the light on our heroine Queen Esther, who liberated the Jews with the help of Mordechai. This was followed by the celebration of our Spring festival of Passover, another period of Jewish oppression and liberation.

Many Atlantic communities celebrated the **Passover** festival this year in much smaller home gatherings, some via Zoom, which gave us that family connection we could not have in person.

We have had many opportunities to participate in a number of Regional/Canadian sponsored virtual programs... arts and crafts for children, musical concerts, cooking tips for the holidays, language seminars, video documentaries, virtual world tours, essay contests, book launches and human interest stories. All of these help us stay connected to our communities. Shul services continue to take place, adapting to the level dictated by the COVID pandemic.

Many of us observed **International Holocaust Day** in January. There has been much optimism regarding the acceptance of the IHRA definition as it garners new members.

New Brunswick, in a bi-partisan show of legislative cooperation, has most recently signed on. University campuses across Canada continue to combat hatred and racism. **Concordia's Student Union** has recently offered an apology to its Jewish students for fostering an atmosphere of antisemitism.

Yom Hazikaron, the day of national mourning in Israel, was once again observed world wide during a pandemic, via Zoom. The siren blares and we recognize the solemn silence of a nation, remembering all Israeli soldiers who died in defence of their country as well as those who were victims of terror attacks.

In the JFC-UIA Cross Canada Remembrance ceremony held April 7th, I had the privilege of lighting a candle in memory of the six million Jews who perished at the hands of the Nazis.

In another Cross-Canada Commemoration Ceremony of Ha Shoah, we are reminded by David Levy, "that hateful words, when not confronted, lead to horrible acts." Eli Weisel said, "We must always take sides."

We remember the victims, and honour the survivors of the holocaust.

We are their heirs. We must remember their story, for their story is our story. And their story is our history. The ability to re-root their lives is proof of the resiliency of the Jewish spirit. *"Our hope must be stronger than the will to die."* (Ella Ross z"l)

Although unable to personally attend the Commemoration, walking in the footsteps of MASA participants and singing Hatikvah with thousands of other Jews across Canada via Zoom, was a very emotional experience for me. **Jewish Solidarity**... a feeling of oneness, a feeling of continuity, a feeling of family. Very shortly, we are proud to celebrate with Israel, Yom Ha'atzmaut—Independence Day. We have come full circle **"to be a free nation in our land, where once we were the victims."**

A sincere thank you to **Edna LeVine** who has done an outstanding job with Holocaust programming and education and the Shalom publications this past year. Also, to our Executive Director, **Naomi Rosenfeld** for keeping us abreast of all the virtual programs available and enabling us access. Thank you to **Svetlana Ratchinski** for keeping the office running smoothly, particularly with the move to our new premises.

Thank you to all our supporters, both donors and volunteers in your communities, for without you, the AJC could not function.

The AJC will be having its biennial shortly, and I am pleased that **Michael Argand**, our immediate past president, has agreed to chair the nominations committee.

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From The Desk Of NAOMI ROSENFELD

Executive Director

WHY LIFE & LEGACY® IN ATLANTIC CANADA? WHY NOW?

As you've hopefully heard, the AJC recently launched our 'LIFE & LEGACY in Atlantic Canada' initiative. This program aims to promote legacy giving to benefit the Atlantic Canadian Jewish community.

When we talk about *legacy gifts*, we mean after-lifetime commitments (e.g. a gift in your will, trust, retirement plan or life insurance policy) to Atlantic Canadian Jewish organizations' endowment funds.

Later in this Shalom Magazine, you will find more information about the specifics of this program. However, I thought it might be helpful to explain why I—a 29-year-old, Toronto native—have spent the last two years fighting tooth and nail to have our Atlantic Canadian Jewish community accepted into this prestigious program, why I will do everything in my power to ensure its success, and why I have personally chosen to make a legacy gift to our community.

I BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF ATLANTIC CANADIAN JEWRY

Ultimately, a legacy gift is an act of faith.

As has been so blatantly clear in the past year, we do not have the luxury of knowing exactly what the future holds. We cannot fathom the challenges our community may face from now until then or even what our community will look like.

However, simply put, I am 100% confident that there will continue to exist a Jewish community in Atlantic Canada. And my belief in the future of the Jewish community of Atlantic Canada has driven my desire to bring LIFE & LEGACY here.

I BENEFITED FROM THE GENEROSITY OF PAST LEGACY DONORS

Throughout my life, I benefited greatly from a number of Jewish institutions: synagogues, day schools, federations, and Camp Kadimah, to name a few. My experiences with each of these institutions helped shape my Jewish identity and made me into the Jewish leader that I am today.

It is not lost on me that I was only able to experience the full impact of each institution because of the tireless hard work and philanthropic efforts made by those who came before me.

In a way, legacy giving is a bond that links us, our ancestors, and our descendants, together: We are all the beneficiaries of generous acts made by those who came before us and it is our generosity today that ensures this same gift to future generations.

ENDOWMENTS ARE NO LONGER A JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL LUXURY

An endowment fund is a permanently restricted fund invested to generate interest. The principal is never spent; it is added to as more people contribute. The interest income can be used at the discretion of the organization, unless the donor creates terms restricting its use.

Why are we focusing our efforts on permanently restricted gifts, especially when the current needs of our community are so great?

While in the past, endowment funds were considered an organizational luxury, it is now widely agreed that a strong endowment fund is an essential ingredient of any non-profit's long-term financial stability. In a world with decreased philanthropic giving, fewer government grants, and more people requiring non-profit services at reduced or no cost, endowments are a proven way of making a non-profit organization resilient. Philanthropic advisors state that if 20% of a non-profit's operating budget does not come from their endowment, then that organization is at risk for a future financial crisis. In Atlantic Canada, our Jewish organizations fall far below that benchmark.

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

So legacy giving, after-lifetime gift commitments to Jewish organizations' endowment funds, is important. *But why did I fight to bring LIFE & LEGACY—a cooperative and collaborative community-wide effort—to*

Atlantic Canada? Why did I not simply create a legacy giving program for just the AJC?

To use a very maritime-appropriate, cliché—a rising tide lifts all boats. The goal of LIFE & LEGACY in Atlantic Canada is not only to help individual organizations; it is to secure the Jewish future of our ENTIRE community. To thrive in the future, the Jewish community of Atlantic Canada will require all our institutions: our synagogues, Camp Kadimah, the AJC, and more. By working together on LIFE & LEGACY, our whole community will benefit.

Additionally, philanthropic research is clear: when a donor decides to leave one charitable bequest in their will (the most common form of legacy gift), they often make bequeathments to multiple charitable organizations. Given that most of our Jewish community members support more than one Jewish cause annually, through LIFE & LEGACY, we hope you will support more than one Jewish cause with an after-lifetime commitment.

Throughout this article, I have shared my reasons for committing to a legacy gift to the Jewish community of Atlantic Canada. However, you might find yourself motivated to commit to a legacy gift for other reasons:

- To express your **passion and commitment** to being Jewish and/or a valued Jewish organization
- To live up to the **values instilled** by your parents and grandparents
- To **give back/to share** your good fortune
- To make a meaningful **difference**
- To be a part of something **larger** than yourself
- To feel **united** with others of similar commitment and **values**
- To **commemorate** loved ones
- To create **significant tax benefits** for you/your estate/your family

Whatever your reason, I hope you will join me in making your legacy commitment to a Jewish institution in Atlantic Canada today! ⑤

THE AZRIELI FOUNDATION'S HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR MEMOIRS PROGRAM

<https://memoirs.azrielifoundation.org>





From The Desk Of **EDNA LEVINE**

Director of Community Engagement

This winter we continued to offer virtual programs in Atlantic Canada, as we “stayed safe” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On International Holocaust Remembrance Day, we presented a virtual program in partnership with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Dr. Rohini Bannerjee, Saint Mary’s University, educated us on the Jewish experience in Mauritius during World War II. Saint Mary’s University President Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray introduced the programs, first presented in English and then in French.

The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21’s new virtual tour “Jewish Immigration to Canada” was enthusiastically received by our community. We hosted two “sold-out” tours, attracting participants from across Canada. This 45-minute “live and interactive” tour included memoirs, oral history interviews, and a lively Q&A, to tell the story of Jewish immigration to Canada.

In early spring the Atlantic Jewish Film Festival (AJFF) presented, virtually, the highly entertaining mini-series Shabbabniks—The New Black, an award-winning Israeli dramedy. From November 18 – 21, our 8th annual AJFF will offer movie-goers in Atlantic Canada the opportunity to view international films both virtually, and at “in-person” screenings in Halifax, in accordance with the NS Health guidelines. Our modest festival offers us the opportunity to share our values and culture with the broader community while providing programming that would otherwise not be available in our area.

Yom HaShoah programs in our region were once again presented virtually and we partnered with organizations to offer three programs. On April 8, the Cross-Canada online commemoration for Yom HaShoah, coordinated by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, included

Jewish communities from across Canada. The Montreal Holocaust Museum hosted a virtual program on April 7 with candle-lighting participants from coast-to-coast. On April 11 we hosted, in partnership with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, filmmaker Eric Bednarski, in conversation with Dr. Dorota Glowacka, University of King’s College, after the live-streamed screening of Bednarski’s film “Warsaw: A City Divided”. An interesting Q&A concluded the virtual program and all those who registered (450+) for the program received additional access to view the film after the program.

COVID-19 presented a few challenges coordinating our annual outreach to provide hot meals to Out of the Cold, a Halifax-based community organization that provides shelter and meals during the winter months to people who are homeless or precariously housed. We renewed our partnerships with the Shambhala Community, the Shaar Shalom Synagogue’s Tikkun Olam Group, and Spencer House Seniors Centre, to provide 150+ hot meals. Volunteers in our community home-baked desserts, and a few came together (with masks on and socially distanced) to cook. This is the fourth year Spencer House Seniors Centre has partnered with us on this initiative and we are grateful for the use of their commercial kitchen to prepare and cook the meals. Out of the Cold received additional funding to continue their services until the end of June. Meal deliveries are required to be booked in advance and if you are interested in contributing, please contact me: engagement@theajc.ca.

This year the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) annual conference was hosted virtually with attendees and presenters from across Canada, USA, and Israel. The conference highlighted the benefits of sharing agency information and best practices, as well as

addressing issues surrounding equity and balance for a growing diverse community.

The Cumming Centre, Montreal, transitioned many of their existing programs to Zoom during the pandemic, and developed many new virtual programs for seniors. This spring they created a new virtual membership category for seniors, and we are pleased to partner with them on this new opportunity. For registration information please email:

information@cummingscentre.org.

We were delighted to partner with the Azrieli Foundation to host Holocaust survivor, Halifax, David Korn’s virtual book launch on May 2. During Holocaust Education Week, November 1-7, we will host an in-depth program with David Korn, in partnership with the Azrieli Foundation, and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, information will be posted on HolocaustEducation.ca and shared in our AJC newsletter. 📧



PHOTO: Volunteers (l to r) Dave Hanson, Schuyler Smith, and Lynn Rotin cooking for the Out of the Cold shelter, in the kitchen at Spencer House Seniors Centre. The meals included homemade desserts from Nancy Cieplinski, Sharon Waxman, Inbal Bahar, and Paige MacPherson Marsh.

JEWISH?

Have you received your census invitation? It's easy to fill out and completely confidential.

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CIJA

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ONLINE HATE HAS GONE VIRAL DURING COVID

BY JUDY ZELIKOVITZ, VICE PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY AND LOCAL PARTNER SERVICES AT CIJA, THE CENTRE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH AFFAIRS

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been confronted by two viruses: COVID-19 and, in its wake, the rampant spread of online hate. As much of the world has been forced indoors, our time on the Internet using social media has increased, which has advantages. We have found new ways to engage, stay in touch with our loved ones, and maintain and transform our connections to our workplaces and the world.

But the same technologies that have allowed us to keep connected have also served as springboards for the spread of online hate and conspiracy theories, which form the perfect Venn diagram of antisemitism. Since the pandemic broke, we have witnessed the emergence of ludicrous conspiracy theories accusing Jews of being responsible for the spread of COVID-19 or of profiting from the havoc. As a community that has consistently encouraged compliance with public health measures, we may be tempted to dismiss these outlandish conspiracy theories as nonsense. It is a type of nonsense, however, that spreads quickly and remains a cause for great concern.

Recent history has taught us that what begins online as the absurd mutterings of a few haters can, and too often does, turn into real-world violence.

What we witnessed in Pittsburgh, Christchurch, and Halle can certainly happen again. The threat is even greater today because people are spending more time online while also under considerable financial and emotional stress, a combination that makes people even more susceptible to messages online hate-mongers are peddling.

Curbing online hate has been a priority for our community—and therefore for CIJA—for nearly a decade. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have remained on

high alert, monitoring the emergence of antisemitic and hateful activity and bringing it to the attention of law enforcement and social media platforms.

Recently, we launched **Stop the Transmission!** (cija.ca/stop-the-transmission) a campaign powered by CIJA and funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Anti-Racism Action Program. The campaign has provided practical tools and tips to hundreds of thousands of Canadians to identify and slow the spread of conspiracy theories, misinformation, and deliberate disinformation.

We have also engaged directly with social media giants and are proud to have collaborated with our colleagues at the World Jewish Congress to urge Facebook to ban Holocaust denial, one of the most pernicious forms of Jew-hatred, from their platform, an action they took earlier this year.

We continue to call on social media companies to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the most widely accepted definition in use today, including by the Government of Canada who adopted it as formal policy in its 2019 Anti-Racism Strategy. In response to the global collective effort of our community, Facebook's COO Sheryl Sandberg said that "the IHRA's working definition of anti-Semitism has been invaluable—both in informing our own approach" and that Facebook would "continue to refine" its "policy lines as speech and society evolve."

A continuing aspect of our work is advocating for governments to advance policies to address online hate directly. Federally, we continue our call for a national strategy on online hate that includes clear, harmonized, and uniform regulations that




Judy Zelikovitz

apply to platforms and providers operating in Canada as well as an independent regulator to enforce them.

You can help by visiting notonmyfeed.ca and Taking Action!

CIJA also worked with the Department of Canadian Heritage to host the **Action Summit to Combat Online Hate**, (actionsummit.ca) held April 14-15.

The Action Summit featured discussions with renowned experts including keynote speakers Martin Luther King III and Arndrea Waters King, law enforcement, industry leaders, and community groups like ours. The goals were to create greater understanding of the issue and develop concrete actions to further determine regulatory solutions to further determine regulatory solutions regarding online hate; remedies and redress; and raising public awareness.

Even once the pandemic is over, our migration to the digital world will endure. We therefore must stay committed and united in our efforts to combat antisemitism and other forms of hatred online. 

SEND A Partnership2Gether GIFT CARD TO CELEBRATE!

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Contact Naomi Rosenfeld, executive director: 902-422-7493 | norsenfeld@theajc.ca



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Morrie Frydberg at
morriefrydberg@gmail.com

CAMP KADIMAH

BY SARAH ATKINS, DIRECTOR

“Each affects the other, and the other affects the next, and the world is full of stories, but the stories are all one.”—Mitch Albom

During these uncertain times, we must remind ourselves of all those wonderful things that will one day return. These memories and stories collectively tell the story of our camp and of our community. Rather than focus on the current reality, we wanted to remind you of the magic of Camp Kadimah and how it has impacted each camper and staff who has spent time on our grounds. We hope you enjoy hearing the voices of some of our current campers as they share: why they love camp, what Kadimah means to them, a special memory, and their family connections.



I was an 8-year-old girl who hopped on a plane to a foreign country, not knowing a

single soul. My mom continuously tells me to this day that I climbed into that blazing, yellow bus, full of my soon to be family, with the brightest smile on my face. I vividly remember sitting next to another girl who looked to be my age and we immediately began a conversation. Soon as you know it, we were already friends. Once the bus pulled up behind the Chadar, I saw crowds of people cheering and hugging one another. The atmosphere was heartwarming and welcoming. I had not known much about Camp Kadimah at the time, except from the stories my mother had told me. She was a former camper at Kadimah along with her sister. Although I wasn't sure of what I was getting into, I was not hesitant to spend 6 weeks at a summer camp in a different country. Not everyone enjoys spending time away from their families or from the outside world, but camp has been a way for me to disconnect from anything going on at home and to just enjoy myself.

Attending a Jewish camp, while having grown up in a nonreligious household was a huge change for me but ended up being one of the things I love most about Kadimah.

Learning more about my religion each year has been an amazing experience for me. The town I live in, which is located north of Boston, Massachusetts doesn't offer the same type of Jewish culture in contrast to some of the larger communities. Many of the people at camp have grown up surrounded by an open Jewish community and are deeply engaged in their religion. These people have truly made me want to engage and learn more about my religion. I have had the opportunity to learn about certain traditions or stories from people I have become extremely close with, and I don't believe many people get to experience that bond between friendship and religion, like I have been able to.

I have met the most incredible people at camp. I have made the most amazing memories at camp. I have experienced pure happiness at camp. The accepting environment allowed me to just let loose and be myself and I can genuinely say that I found “my people” at camp. Over the last few years numerous staff and campers have made a huge impact on me. Living with people for weeks at a time allows anyone to connect on a different level that most people don't get to experience at home. Living in America while spending months in Canada has been challenging at times. A border separated myself from my best friends and I wasn't able to pack my bags and fly up any time I wanted. Seeing camp events and people getting together during the year was hard because I was not able to be a part of it, but over time I've learned to appreciate the distance. It makes camp even more special for me. Time at camp is so valuable because it's so short, but it has taught me to make the most out of every moment. Not being able to see my friends throughout the school year has made my bonds even stronger because I'm not surrounded by them all the time. My connections from camp hold great importance to me and I can proudly say that living in another country has positively

CHECK OUT CAMP KADIMAH ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM FOR GAMES AND MORE!

CampKadimah campkadimah



Re: 1953 Camp Kadimah Staff

Front Row (left to right)

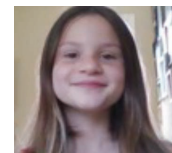
Mrs. Yanofsky (Cook), Sally Ben Ezra (Hebrew song and dance), Harvey Marol (Boys' Head Counsellor), Faye Abbot (Girls' Head Counsellor), Ernie Abbot (Camp Director), Joanne Everette (Secretary), Alf Johnson (Waterfront Director), Joyce Plisko (Nurse).
Middle Row Marion Blonder, Gertrude Melnick, Stan Heinich, Carol Bond, Paul Zive, Hannah Hoffman, Paul Goldman, Kenny Offman, Sandra Jacobson, Unknown, Gerry Green, Unknown.
Back Row Reva Schreiber, Marty Hitchen, Richard Sberman, Aaron Cohen, Phyllis Goldberg, Ronnie Swirsky, David Silverman, Sylvia Fransblow, Moe Cohen, Marty Brown.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melvin Brown

Camp Kadimah (1948—1962)

affected that. Camp has influenced me tremendously; I'm so beyond grateful to have found my second home.—*Lily Gould (CIT), Marblehead, Massachusetts*



Why I love Camp Kadimah.

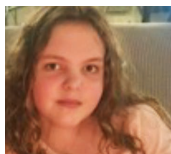
Camp Kadimah is the most special place on earth. I love camp because it's so welcoming. This year

will be my 6th year going to Kadimah, and every day I get overwhelmed with happiness because I know I am one day closer to getting on the plane and going to my second home. At Kadimah you make lifelong friends, and I know this for a fact because that's where my parents met (17 years married). Camp Kadimah is a beautiful place; it has the most breathtaking sunsets you will ever see. My favourite memory of Kadimah was the first day of camp in 2019 when I was so happy to be back that I started to cry. It was the happiest I have ever felt in my life. In my family I am the 3rd generation on both my

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mom and dad's sides of my family to go to camp so it's always really fun to see all their names on the walls and to know that Kadimah is my home. Kadimah will always have a special place in my heart, and I will one day send my children who will then send their children and so on.—*Samarah Lipkus (Kochot), Thornhill, Ontario*



It's been hard not being at camp for a while now. With the summer getting closer I've been thinking about camp a lot and the things I miss and am looking forward to most. Here is a top 5 list in no order. They are all great!

1. Waking up and being with all of my friends.
2. Hanging out in the Mel Yad building and crafting with friends. The staff always come up with great ideas for crafts we can do.
3. Free swim!
4. Shabbat dinners (when we all get up on the benches.)
5. Haganah night (getting sorted into families and making it to the basketball courts.)

Camp for me is about being with friends, laughing, having fun. It's not easy to describe the feeling of being there because there's nothing else like it. I can't wait to hopefully go back to camp this year and see all my friends again soon!—*Freya Neilson, (Kochot), Halifax, Nova Scotia*



There are so many things I love about camp, from Mac-cabia to tetherball, but what really makes camp worth it every year is seeing all my friends and spending 6 weeks with them.

Among all the countless great memories from the summer, one of my favourite moments has to be getting off the bus on the first day of camp. As we get closer to camp the entire bus gets super excited, with everyone sharing their favourite parts of camp and singing the camp song. As the busses pull into the gates, there is a sea of people waiting to greet us, and I can feel my heart pound a bit faster as I look through the window to try and spot all of my friends. Finally, the doors open, and everyone floods out of the bus to run to their friends that they've waited so long to see. With all the hugs and cheers, I get that feeling that the thing that I have been waiting for all year is finally here!—*Ethan Friedberg (Kochot), Toronto, Ontario* 📍

YOUTH AND FAMILY NEWS

BY **MAYA LOTAN**, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & YOUNG FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

About a year and a half ago, I came with my family to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Many of my friends and family do not know where Nova Scotia is. But I always knew. As a teenager, I grew up on the Anne of Green Gables book series so I knew where Halifax was and even told my partner he would have to take me on a visit to Prince Edward Island (and believe it or not—Pandemic and all, he took me when there was an Atlantic bubble last summer).

My name is Maya and I have been the Director of Youth & Young Family Engagement for the AJC since January of 2021. I am a tour guide by training and have always been involved with Jewish education. I have a teaching certificate, a Master's degree in Israel studies specializing in modern history, and a tour guide license from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

I have been to Jewish summer camps across the U.S and have worked with 'semester in Israel' programs, Israel summer programs, birthright tours and many more programs that build and strengthen the connection between Jewish communities around the world and Israel.

Since I started my role at the AJC, I have discovered a diverse Jewish community in Atlantic Canada. I have been in touch with Jewish families who came from Russia, Israel and across Canada as well as families who grew up here in Atlantic Canada. It is a slow process, but slowly I am getting to know our Jewish community and how I can better serve you as the AJC's Director of Youth & Young Family Engagement.

Already, since January, we have had a slew of virtual programs including "Welcoming Shabbat b'Zoom" and online activities for Passover to allow families from across the Atlantic region to engage with one another (and, indeed, I immediately found myself sending activity packages to New Brunswick, PEI and Newfoundland). In Halifax, we even held an in-person outdoor Purim "Car-nival" (and, in the process, I'm still discovering how



Maya Lotan

unreliable the weather is here in Atlantic Canada). Shavuot is around the corner and the annual holiday calendar cycle will begin again in early September with Rosh HaShanah. Until then, we plan to have more virtual and in-person activities around Jewish themes, PJ library books, shabbat, and more. And of course, we will continue to welcome the new babies who join the Atlantic Jewish community (and their parents) with our new "Shalom Baby" program that we recently launched.

I am very excited about working with the families in our community and creating a sense of the annual Jewish calendar that includes access to content and activities that connect us as Jews. And I have big dreams of expanding our activities to include more encounters around books, hobbies and in fact—anything that connects us as people. As you read through the pages of this magazine, I invite you to be in touch, to offer ideas, and to volunteer. So much of my work depends on you, your desires, and your requests. Sometimes a simple conversation starts rolling the ball for our next project and the next step in building our community. Just so you know, my door (or phone or Zoom account) is always open. Even if it takes time, it is possible. We'll make it happen! 📍

CAMPUS NEWS

BY RAN BEN SHABAT, DIRECTOR OF HILLEL AND NEXT GENERATION ENGAGEMENT

This semester was just the beginning.

Wow, how did this academic year end already? I feel like I am just beginning to understand the magnitude of the task ahead of me. Only now do I know what I want to create for the Jewish students of Atlantic Canada to suit their needs and desires and be relevant to their lives. This article is a summary of a period of about 4 months, but for me this is just the beginning of a path. A path that I will pave jointly with student leadership in order to create a rich and diverse community life for Jewish students throughout Atlantic Canada.

This is also a good opportunity for me to reflect on my own personal journey (and that of my wife). We moved from Israel to Halifax, Nova Scotia in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Coming to a new place and getting to know a different culture and a language that breaks our teeth... it's not easy. Additionally, starting to work as a Hillel Director and entering the Canadian student world—very different from the Israeli one—has been a refreshing new challenge. Therefore, I spent my first month on the job learning as much as possible about the city, its universities, and the wonderful Jewish community that lives here.

I then decided that the best course of action for me as a Hillel Director would be to meet in-person with as many students as possible for introductory conversations that would allow me to understand what they seek from Hillel. What interests them? What do they care about? What is bothering them? And how can I positively challenge them?

I would like to say thank you to all the wonderful students I met during this time:

you have been a great help to me! I would also like to say a big thank you especially to (the legendary) Bill Chernin and to the wonderful Naomi Rosenfeld for the trust and support you have been providing me in this transition.

IT HAS NOT BEEN AN IDEAL YEAR TO SAY THE LEAST!

A year of coronavirus, social distancing, and restrictions on gatherings have created difficulties in being able to conduct ourselves in the way we would like. Thank God there's Zoom! We were all required to reinvent ourselves and to find new ways of communicating with and meeting one another. We tried to compensate for the challenges that came our way: closing of campuses and moving to online learning, canceling of major events in which we missed the opportunity to meet new students and reconnect with returning ones, and, let us not forget, dealing with the seemingly never-ending uncertainty and loneliness. And yet, we were able to achieve quite a bit despite the "not-so-good" conditions, such as Shabbat To-Go! events, Purim celebrations, and a Passover seder held across two different locations.

In addition, we held several virtual events on a variety of topics. For example, in consultation with a student committee, we launched an online learning group format called "Open Dialogue". The main idea behind this format was that every month, the students would choose a topic that interested and engaged them, and we would hold a series of meetings on it. In March, we held an "open dialogue" on Jewish identity and

antisemitism. In these meetings, the students shared their experiences and opinions around this topic. We discussed the different ways we can promote the awareness of antisemitism on our campuses and how we can form coalitions to combat it.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Plan, prepare, and build for next year! Continue working towards our goal of building a community of Jewish students in Atlantic Canada.

Please note that although, currently, Hillel's activity is mainly located in Halifax, Hillel Atlantic is here for all Jewish students in Atlantic Canada. That is one of my main goals for next year: to reach and engage those Jewish students studying throughout Atlantic Canada and present them with the opportunity to participate in Hillel. Here in Halifax too, there is much more to be done to reach the Jewish students studying at the various universities around the city.

I have a personal request to anyone who is reading my humble article. If you are familiar with a Jewish student studying at one of Atlantic Canada's universities and you think they would benefit in taking part in Hillel activities, please direct them to me (by email, by phone) so that I can get the chance to know them!

To all of our students, I would like to wish you a wonderful vacation, and I hope to see you all soon with a lot of renewed energy.

Stay safe! 📧



RAN BEN SHABAT

Continued from page 4

Let me offer best wishes for a speedy recovery to our **first vice-president, Adam Conter** who recently tore his Achilles tendon. This has been a difficult year for our communities who have had to confront

loss of their members. Funeral and shiva arrangements have been made complicated by the pandemic times in which we live. On behalf of the AJC Board we offer our sincere condolences. For those who celebrated simchas, mazel tov.

Our Atlantic Bubble opening has been

delayed at the present time. Hopefully by the time the Shalom is published, we will once again be able to "be on the road again." *Bashana Ha Baah B' Yerushalayim.*

Be well and keep safe.—Marilyn 📧

“ I will always be a Maritimer. I grew up in Moncton and attended Dalhousie University for my Law and MBA degrees. I spent 19 summers at Camp Kadimah and continue to spend my summers in one of my favourite places, Shediac, New Brunswick. I am always happy to connect with my fellow “East Coasters” to see how I can assist them with their legal and business needs. ”

—LEIGH LAMPERT



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The “Honouring Ruth” Project

IS TAKING FORM BY JOEL JACOBSON

Small in physical stature but huge in heart and energy, Ruth Goldbloom left a lasting legacy to Halifax, to Nova Scotia, to Canada and to their Jewish communities.

By spearheading the development of Pier 21 on Halifax’s historic waterfront, later re-named The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Ruth left a permanent legacy. Pier 21 opened the doors to Canada for 1.5 million immigrants from 1928 through 1971.

Ruth has been honored in many ways—with titles, honorary degrees, Orders of Canada and her home province of Nova Scotia, and dozens of plaques of thanks and recognition.

Nothing permanent has been done, however.

To solidify recognition of her massive effort to raise \$4.5 million to build a unique place where we can all learn about the roots, ideals, hopes and aspirations that have made Canada so unique, a movement has started to create a sculpture of Ruth Goldbloom at the entrance of Pier 21. This spectacular piece will allow all visitors to Pier 21 an opportunity sit with Ruth, snap a picture, and find out more about this amazing woman.

A June 27, 2021 unveiling is planned at the right of the entrance of Pier 21. In the sculpture, Ruth will be sitting on a park bench in front of a concrete wall with a piece of vintage luggage and her well-known tap shoes. The latter will bring in Ruth’s sunny and vivacious personality, as well as the person she was.

“I pushed this idea at Ruth’s family, then the Port Authority and Pier 21,” said Karen Conter of Halifax, who developed a golf tournament in Ruth’s name to raise funds for Kid’s Help Phone as children’s welfare was one of Ruth’s passions. That event has raised over \$1 million in its first 10 years.

“They were all for it and we brought AJC aboard to assist with the fundraising component,” Conter added.

Morgan MacDonald, a St. John’s NL sculptor will do the piece, his first to be created for a Nova Scotia subject.

To see this project through, the Halifax Port Authority and Pier 21 have partnered with the Atlantic Jewish Council. All are very supportive of ‘Honouring Ruth’—both the name and intention of this project.

Ruth, born and raised in New Waterford, was also dedicated to education. To this end, there will also be created an



educational bursary open to all Canadians who wish to improve their knowledge of Canadian Immigration and the wonderful multicultural mosaic that Canada represents. The promoting group also intends to fund further research into Canadian immigration.

The goal is to raise \$250,000 which will cover the costs of the sculpture and make a significant contribution to the bursary.

“Ruth was always at Pier 21,” Conter says. “She would often be found around the entrance or halls of Pier 21 greeting guests and taking great interest in their stories. However, since she passed away at age 88 in August 2012 there has been something missing at Pier 21, Ruth.”

She continued. “For Ruthie, it was nothing to pack up, hop in the car, and head in any direction that would allow her to move her project closer to fruition. From that seed of passion grew a nationally recognized museum. Ruth’s efforts were endless. She was known to travel the country, at her own expense, to raise funds for Pier 21—and in July of 1999 her vision was unveiled.

Now, also unveiled, will be an image of Ruth who had a dream, and with a penchant for raising money, worked tirelessly to realize her dream. 📍

To participate in the “Honouring Ruth” project, please contact Naomi Rosenfeld at the AJC office: executivedirector@theajc.ca

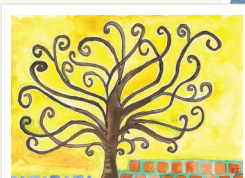
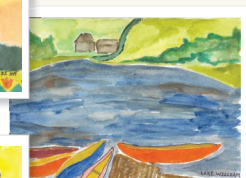
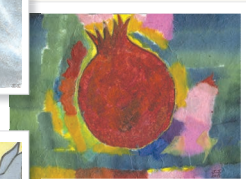
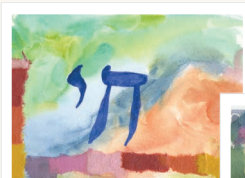
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INTERVIEW WITH GARY BARWIN

BY PEGGY WALT

Peggy Walt is a recipient of the AJC's Abraham Leventhal Memorial Scholarship and completing an MFA in Creative Nonfiction at King's University. She spoke with Hamilton author and composer Gary Barwin about his new novel, *Nothing the Same, Everything Haunted: The Ballad of Motl the Cowboy*

“Why should Germans worry that the soil that made their bread was won by the sword? When we eat wheat from Canada, do we think of murdered Indians?”

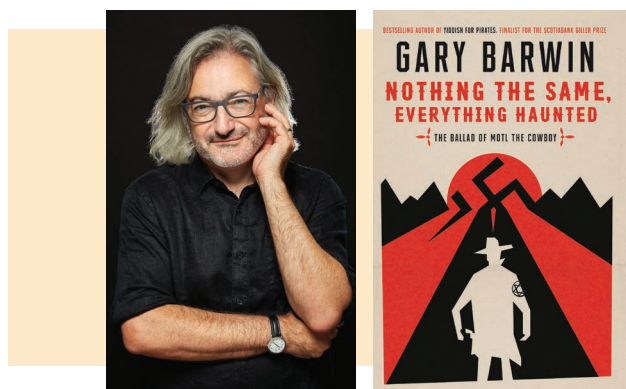
Award-winning author Gary Barwin has written a complex and fantastic new novel. The title character dreams of adventures, inspired by his favourite Karl May westerns in 1941 Vilna, the “Jerusalem of Lithuania.” But unlike his cowboy heroes, Motl is “a gunslinger without a gun.” As the Nazis advance, he must escape Vilna with his aging mother, towards Switzerland, where he’s left a vital piece of himself (no spoilers).

It’s a magic tale filled with pathos, humour, and real “Indianders.” Barwin brings all his considerable wisecracking shtick to *Nothing the Same* in vivid scenes of the Vilna Ghetto, literal close shaves, the Pony Express and the tragic destruction of Lithuania’s once-vibrant Jewish community.

Three of Gary Barwin’s four grandparents came from Lithuania, and like many survivor families, they didn’t talk about it. He decided to learn more, because the story of Lithuania’s Jews is not widely known; he read survivor testimonies and diaries to help infuse his book. He writes a heartbreaking scene at the Ponar killing pits, where over 100,000 people (mostly Jews) went to their deaths. “Every part of the story feels haunted by these stories,” the author says, referencing his title. “My grandfather said, before the war, ‘we lived together,’ meaning with the Lithuanians; Barwin wanted to understand the complexity of their complicity in the Holocaust.

In what might be a first for a fictional work, Barwin also paints parallels between the Holocaust and the history of Indigenous people, noting that Hitler borrowed specific models from North America, such as settling people in regions, ghettos or reservations and clearing the land of them. As Motl says to a group of Indigenous students: “Natives and Jews... We’re like a rash. Try to get rid of us, sure, but you never can. We refuse to die... But A Jewish cowboy isn’t a regular one. He’s more like you First Nations, because he knows something about being rounded up, about not being able to live where you want. About being run off by the cavalry. Hunted by regular cowboys. Though they were wearing brown shirts and jackboots...”

We discuss the removal of the Edward Cornwallis statue in Halifax; Barwin hopes the two histories (Jewish and Indigenous) can speak to each other meaningfully. By weaving his own family’s history with stories of First Nations trauma, “maybe it could help unpack Indigenous genocide for us who know about the Holocaust. Because we are complicit as Europeans who now live here on this land.” There’s a lot of inter-generational traumas amongst both people: “It’s passed down, even to me, in thinking about the world. It’s a shadow passed down to me,” Barwin explains.



The question of identity runs throughout the novel. Jews are in hiding or in disguise, and Barwin asks us to consider history’s obsession with who’s a real Indian, an Aryan, a Jew. “The Nazi project of categorizing people, that kind of essentialism, it marked you for life or death. It was ridiculous, they made native people honorary Aryans,” he says. Who are the real heroes? “Motl thinks he’s supposed to be very macho, this heroic Cowboy, courageous. He really is heroic, but not in that toxic masculinity kind of way. Ultimately he shows deeper courage.” Barwin thinks that “part of our task as people is to find out who we actually are. And then to negotiate that with our tradition.”

Books play an important role in Jewish tradition, and as in other Barwin works, they’re in the novel’s most poignant scenes, such as when a beautiful library is about to be set on fire: “The books around them were beautiful. A leather forest. Flights of like-coloured volumes bound by bands of gold and brown.” And when Motl looks for a beloved Rabbi: “Motl rushed by her, as if it were not too late. He ran into the rabbi’s study. The fireless grate. Like an autumn forest—a Hebrew forest of yellowed leaves—books and scrolls and papers were scattered across tables and chairs and in stacks on the carpets.”

Books are smuggled, burned, destroyed, cherished and hidden, as they were in Barwin’s *Yiddish for Pirates*. “We’re the people of the Book, deeply connected to books, learning, stories, language,” he explains. “Jews being landless, (they) brought their history and language in books...” “There’s a saying in Yiddish,” he continues, ‘the tongue is not in exile,’ meaning you can always bring your culture, your language with you.” Motl meets Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever of Vilna’s Paper Brigade, a group who risked their lives to smuggle

Continue on page 18

Continued from page 17

books, Torah scrolls and precious diaries into underground bunkers in the Ghetto. And then there are those cowboy novels by Karl May, beloved by many, (including my husband, as a boy growing up in Poland); Barwin says they were also Hitler's favourites, brought into his bunker and sent for inspiration to German troops.

Despite its serious subject matter, the book is filled with Barwin's signature humour. Humour helps alleviate discomfort, he says, noting that Rabbis do this all the time, often beginning sermons with a joke, and "even stories in the Talmud are structured like that." Sometimes it's a tag added to a familiar joke, but often it's his unique wordplay, puns and wisecracks: "The Jew shall die though every dog in Europe barks in his favour," they said, not that many dogs were currently barking." For Barwin, "Jokes do dynamic work. They help people make it through just because it's so grim, you can take agency."

Asked if he's free to write whatever he wants, or if any of his lines get censored by his publisher, he replies, "No, nobody has questioned it. I think the humour is, I'm not lampooning it, I feel it deeply, and I think the character feels it deeply. It's consoling, it's making connections with the reader... This is our oral tradition. If we can somehow begin to talk about it, we can begin to heal, to think about it, to reckon with it. To make your peace with it."

There are the familiar Jewish mother jokes: "Maybe my mother's up there," Motl said, pointing. "Which is the 'Don't worry about me' constellation? Soon she'll figure how to make the clouds pour soup, though there'll be a chance of matzo balls." But Barwin acknowledges that the Jewish mother, "when it comes down to it, she is a fearlessly powerful woman."

Real life characters besides Sutzkever show up in this fantastic world: Heinrich Himmler visits a circus (with Jews hiding in plain sight, dressed as clowns); there's Hitler fan/British aristocrat Unity Mitford, and a nod to sleazy Swiss financier "Monsieur Genoud," a fake name used by the disguised Motl to enter a bank.

In what might be a first for a fictional work, Barwin also paints parallels between the Holocaust and the history of Indigenous people, noting that Hitler borrowed specific models from North America, such as settling people in regions, ghettos or reservations and clearing the land of them.

We end our chat acknowledging how the complexities of history make it hard to untangle who are the good guys and who the bad, and the trend to revisionism in so many countries, including Lithuania. Barwin notes that as he learned more about Lithuanian complicity, he was careful about assigning blame, getting another take from Lithuanian Canadian writer friend Antanas Sileika. He also talked to Indigenous authors like Drew Hayden Taylor. He thought a lot about how he would construct his novel; one thing Gary Barwin really likes about the Jewish tradition is asking questions.

"That's what a novel does, it asks questions. People are not cartoon characters. Humans are complex and often contradictory. There were heroic non-Jews in the Holocaust, just like there were terrible perpetrators, and people caught in between for all kinds of reasons." Ultimately, the role of the author is about "not flattening it out, it's not like good guy, bad guy, white hat/black hat." Still, "it doesn't mean you are not accountable."

As a final example, Barwin muses, "If I was a German, and my children were going to die, what would I do for (them)? I would do quite a lot. People can be many things... a mix of both good and bad, virtuous and heroic and very flawed. That's the work of the novelist, to open things up to discussion." ☺

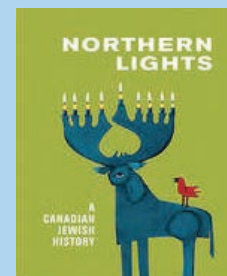
Learn more at: www.garybarwin.com

In the Spring of 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic,

The Canadian Jewish News, the Lola Stein Institute, and the Toronto Heschel School published

NORTHERN LIGHTS: A CANADIAN JEWISH HISTORY

A collection of essays and photographs reflecting Canadian history through the legacy of its Jewish citizens. It tells of the opportunities and camaraderie that Jews have experienced in Canada, hurdles that they faced, and the ingenuity with which they responded. The collaboration on this beautiful hardcover coffee-table book began in 2017 in an attempt to create a history of Jewish Canada in honour of the nation's 150th birthday. Authors who contributed chapters include Myra Freeman, Ellin Bessner, Gil Troy, Marsha Lederman, Irwin Cotler, and Jay Teitel. Halifax native Pam Medjuck Stein was instrumental in this book's publication.



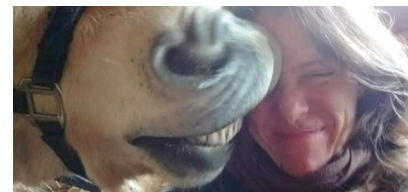
Limited copies are available for purchase directly from the AJC. The cost is \$50 per book + shipping and there is a limit of one book per household. Please email Naomi Rosenfeld at executivedirector@theajc.ca to purchase your copy.

IN SEARCH OF KOL KEHILA

BY KELLY NEWMAN

KOSHER. ORGANIC. LOCAL.

TO ME, THAT'S AS GOOD AS IT GETS. IT IS THE GOLD SEAL OF QUALITY,
NOURISHING SOUL, BODY, AND MIND.



Our relationship with food is both complex and simple. We simply need it to survive. But it also touches upon our lives in so many different ways, both subtly and otherwise at times.


Food is interwoven into our human experience on so many levels. We are what we eat... and we are as we eat as well. Our well-being is intricately linked to food, poor diet being a major cause/factor in many ailments.

It is concerning to see how quickly our society has become removed from knowing food and where it comes from. Few from our most recent generations have memories and experiences of time spent growing food or wildcrafting. My experiences with both, and observations from living on a small-scale farm, show me that these connections are very important, on very deep levels, for people to have.

Over 90% of Maritime food is imported. We are very disconnected. There are some things that are simply not available in our region (yet!) and must be brought in if to be had at all.

But much can be sourced closer to home. And there is more than food to be gained by establishing food security through a food buyer's group. The network of people, communities, skills, and resources that come together bring ideas and opportunities that benefit all.

Food quality and security will not be a priority to everyone, but it matters none the less. A warning relevant for today can be found in Kissinger's famous observation "If you control the food, you control the people..." We cannot eat money. The closer we are to our sustenance, knowing the farms and gardens (farmers/gardeners) that feed us, the more we are empowered.

Within this week's parashah (Parashat Shmini), some kosher laws are discussed. Rabbis may differ on what makes this observance significant (to HaShem and to us), and how best to observe it, but all agree it is significant. I quite agree, which leaves me searching for kol kehila. 

Ms. Newman resides in Southwestern NB, enjoying the rural ways and pace of life. She can be reached at: knewman5737@outlook.com

The Abraham Leventhal Memorial Scholarships

The Atlantic Jewish Council invites applications from residents of Atlantic Canada for Abraham Leventhal Memorial Scholarships towards tuition fees for future post-secondary studies in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The award will normally be to a maximum of \$5000.00 for each application. The biannual application deadlines are May 31st (for studies beginning the following September, or later) and September 30th (for studies beginning the following January, or later).

Applicants can apply once in any 12-month period.

Abraham Leventhal Memorial Scholarships may be used towards either part-time or full-time studies.

Starting in January of 2021, in order to receive this scholarship, all successful applicants must agree to volunteer a minimum of 18 hours to a/several qualifying Jewish organization(s) in Atlantic Canada in the 12 months following receipt of this scholarship. Up to 8 of these hours may be spent attending Hillel Atlantic Canada events for post-secondary students.

Successful applicants will be provided more details about this volunteering commitment.

Applications available at: theajc.ca/scholarships

MY FAVOURITE TASTES OF ISRAEL

A SHORT STORY

BY RON OMESSI

For many Israeli newcomers like myself, there is no food that brings back nostalgic tastes of home like Hummus. Soaked in an extra virgin olive oil, seasoned with any combination of sweet paprika, pine nuts or parsley, and most preferably, topped with a sprinkle of boiled chickpeas. Not less important than the Hummus dish itself, is the pita bread that would accompany the dish; A freshly baked “regular” pita or even better, the larger Iraqi version.

But Hummus was not always my number one choice. When I was growing up in Haifa, during the seventies, it was actually the Falafel that ruled the dome as my “go to” street food. As a young boy, I would not turn down an offer from my Mum to join her on a ride to Haifa’s downtown or to the neighborhood of “Hadar” for the mere promise to stop for a delicious Falafel dish. Whether at “Falafel—the Brothers” on the corner of “Ha’halutz” (the pioneer) and “Ha’neviim (the prophets), or at “Abraham the Falafel King” on “General Allenby” Street.

These were not more than what you may call “greasy spoon street food joints” but the taste was simply divine. The man at the counter would usually juggle the Falafel balls in the air with a pair of metal tongs, catching them on the way down straight into the pocket of a pita, while creating an orchestra of sounds by rapidly banging on an assortment of metal plates where pickles, purple eggplants, sauerkraut, and other salads were stored. At an increasing rhythm he would add those salads one after the other into the pita, finishing the ritual with a decent squeeze of a watery tahini sauce.

Several freebies were always available at the counter; from spicy hot peppers to deep fried cuts of pita bread that you would typically dip in Tahini or Mango sauces (aka “Amba”). If you had to wait in line (which was usually the case), there was always a good chance to receive a complimentary fresh falafel ball, (just to make sure you will not fall into a hasty decision to abandon their counter and move on to the guy next door). I was probably 6 or 7 years old, mesmerised by the show and more likely by the smells. There was no way I would even consider going anywhere else. The waiting always proved worthy and not before long we were busy with our portions. Always a “full” portion, as only the weak would settle for the “half” option.

After devouring our dish, my Mum and I would walk up the alley towards “Hertzel” Street and catch a service taxi or a bus back to our neighborhood higher up on the mountain.

Several decades have gone by since then and I can still feel the taste of those childhood falafels. Google is telling me that the stand of “The Brothers” is still there on the corner of “Ha’neviim” and “Ha’halutz” and that “The King of Falafel” is still open on “General Allenby” Street. I should probably pay them a visit the next time I am there.

So, when did I shift to Hummus you may ask? I’m not even sure.

Probably during my high school years in Haifa of the mid-eighties. My friends and I used to dine out every now and then, and among the limited alternatives available within walking distance from



Ron Omessi and family moved to Nova Scotia in 2017 from Israel. Einat and Ron are mostly busy with real estate investments and developments while their two teenage sons Roei and Saar are busy with acquiring education; Roei at Dalhousie and Saar at CP Allen. “We love exploring new places and have been in many corners of the world so far...and yes, we all love Hummus!”

our neighborhood were two local gas station restaurants offering “Eastern/Arabian” cuisine. Certainly not a street stand but still fitting very well within the definition of a “greasy spoon place”. As teenagers we would usually order the cheaper combo meal that included Hummus, pitas, and hand-cut French fries. The meal would have been served with an assortment of pickles and olives and sealed with a complementary cup of Turkish coffee and a sweet cut of Baklava. Returning home involved a 1.5km uphill walk which was always challenging after the heavy meal.

When I joined the army and was stationed at the northern tip of the Golan Heights, I got to know some of the Hummus restaurants in the Druze villages of “Majdal Shams”, “Buka’ata” and “Massade”. Going home for Shabbat on every third weekend, also included some pretty regular lunch stops in any one of the Arab restaurants on my way south. “Nimmer” was my favorite even though “Yunes” was more famous. That’s where I got to try other forms of Hummus dishes like Hummus with Ful (Fava beans), seasoned with lemon and fresh parsley, or “Masabacha”/“Mashawsha” where whole chickpeas are cooked longer and mixed with Tahini and with a sour spicy sauce. For me, the simple original version always prevailed.

My army days are long gone but the affection to Hummus remained. With the lack of good Hummus restaurants in Halifax, I learned to make my own Hummus at home and if to judge by the reviews it received from my wife, kids, and friends, it does get some high marks on the “Hummus scale”.

High marks or not, no trip to Israel can be considered complete without at least one visit (and preferably a couple of them) to a decent Hummus place. For me, its probably “Maroon Brothers” In Haifa’s downtown but for others it may be “Hummus Abu Gosh” near Jerusalem, “Hummus Halil” in Ramleh near the market or “Hummus Sa’eed” in the old city of Acre. The list of excellent Hummus restaurants is practically endless. You should certainly try one of them next time you are there, and don’t forget to tell them that I’ve sent you. 5



HOMEMADE HUMMUS

All rights reserved to a YouTuber I came to follow, named Max Malkiel

INGREDIENTS

- > 200 grams of dry chickpea seeds
- > 175 grams raw Tahini
- > 1 tsp of soda powder
- > ½ an onion
- > 2-3 garlic cloves
- > 80 grams of ground ice (yes, ice)
- > 15 grams olive oil
- > 25 grams lemon juice, squeezed
- > 1 tsp of salt
- > A sprinkle of Cumin

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Put the chickpeas in a bowl and cover with water. The water should be 2-4 cm above the chickpeas, and you may need to add more water as it absorbs into the peas.
- 2 After 24 hours, add the soda powder, move the peas and the water to a pot over high heat and bring to a boil. Add more water to cover the peas if needed.
- 3 Reduce to low heat and set the timer to 1 hour with a partial cover. (now and then, you may need to dispose of the white foam that may surface up. Add more water if needed).
- 4 After 1 hour, add half an onion and the garlic cloves.
- 5 Set the timer for another thirty minutes (depending on the chickpeas). When the time has elapsed, you should be seeing some yellow residue on the sides of the pot (some chickpeas may need another thirty minutes or more). At this point, feel free to give it a gentle stir and dispose of some of the chickpea shells that may float on the surface.
- 6 Turn off the heat and let cool.
- 7 Filter the water with a strainer and pour the mix into a food processor. While processing at medium speed, add the ice, olive oil, lemon tahini and spices.

The texture should resemble mayonnaise, and hummus will harden more in the fridge. However, if it's too watery, add more raw Tahini. If it's too solid, add ice.

Keep refrigerated. It can probably stay fresh for up to four days, but if it lasts that long, you probably did something wrong!



LIFE & LEGACY[®]

IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Securing our Jewish Future

About LIFE & LEGACY[®] in Atlantic Canada

THE PROGRAM	A COMMUNITY EFFORT	LEGACY GIVING
LIFE & LEGACY [®] in Atlantic Canada is a two-year partnership between the Atlantic Jewish Council, Camp Kadimah, the Beth Israel Synagogue, the Shaar Shalom Synagogue, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (of Agawam, MA) to promote and support legacy giving to benefit the Atlantic Canadian Jewish community. Participating organizations are receiving training and coaching along with financial incentives to secure legacy gifts.	Since the LIFE & LEGACY program is a cooperative and collaborative community-wide effort, the whole community will benefit. Legacy team members' conversations are focused on what is important to the donor; thus, the conversation can result in multiple commitments. Most Jewish community members support more than one Jewish cause or organization annually and will likely support more than one Jewish cause or organization with a legacy gift.	A legacy gift is a way for members of the community to express their passion, purpose, and commitment to valued Jewish organizations. Legacy gifts are either current or after-lifetime commitments to organizations' endowments. Strong endowments are proven to help sustain Jewish organizations and make them resilient—and thus will secure our vibrant Jewish community for the next generation and beyond.

Legacy Giving to Benefit the Atlantic Canadian Jewish Community

By leaving your legacy gift to one or multiple Jewish institutions in Atlantic Canada, you can assure that the traditions and institutions that mean so much to you today will exist for future generations.



Beth Israel Synagogue



Some Ways to Make a Legacy Gift

BEQUEST (A GIFT IN YOUR WILL)

The most common legacy gift, a charitable bequest, is a donation made through your will. You can choose to leave a specific piece of property, a pre-determined sum of money or a percentage of your estate. A gift like this costs nothing today, and if it is a percentage, it will adjust over time as your circumstances change. By carefully planning your will, you can eliminate significant taxes payable upon your death.

LIFE INSURANCE

A gift of life insurance is a creative way for you to build our community's long term financial strength without diminishing your own—even a relatively small commitment can provide significant benefits. You can leave a percentage of the policy to your selected Jewish organization(s) while leaving the majority to your family to take care of their needs.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOR YOU TO MAKE A GIFT USING LIFE INSURANCE:

- You may donate a paid-up life insurance policy that has now outlived its original purpose by naming your selected Jewish organization(s) as the owner and beneficiary of your policy and receive an immediate tax receipt for the cash surrender value of the policy.
- You may gift an existing policy on which premiums are still being paid by transferring ownership to your selected Jewish organization(s) and receiving tax receipts for all future premium payments.
- You may make a gift by purchasing a new policy on your life, naming your selected Jewish organization(s) as the owner and beneficiary and receiving tax receipts for all future premium payments.
- You may also choose to retain ownership of your policy and name your selected Jewish organization(s) as the direct beneficiary and, upon your passing, your estate will receive a tax receipt for the value of the policy.



RETIREMENT PLAN FUNDS (RRSP/RRIF)

Your retirement funds are amongst the most heavily taxed assets you own. However, when your selected Jewish organization(s) is designated as a direct beneficiary of a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) or registered retirement income fund (RRIF), these taxes are offset at the time of death. Your gift will be treated as a charitable donation in the year of death and your selected Jewish organization(s) will issue a tax receipt for the full amount being transferred to it. The gift is simple to make—you name your selected Jewish organization(s) as a direct beneficiary on the plan document and advise the institution holding your retirement account of the change.

OUTRIGHT GIFT

You may gift money or other assets now that will provide funding for your preferred Jewish organization(s)'s endowment(s). The endowment funds will be invested and the income generated each year will support your preferred organization in perpetuity.

Disclaimer: When considering a legacy gift, it is important to assess your own unique financial circumstances. You should always consult your financial advisor when making a gift so you can choose a strategy which best provides you or your estate with the largest tax savings while fulfilling your charitable goals. We strongly recommend that you seek professional advice to ensure your financial goals are considered, your tax situation reviewed and your planned gift is tailored to your circumstances.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact Naomi Rosenfeld at executivedirector@theajc.ca or **902.422.7493** to learn more or to make your commitment.

“When a man departs this life, neither silver nor gold nor jewels accompany him, only Torah and good deeds.”—Mishna Abot

Life & Legacy In Atlantic Canada—Frequently Asked Questions

What if I already give money annually?

Thank you. Your gifts are so appreciated. Regular giving is an important part of how nonprofits keep their doors open. But what happens to the organizations you've supported after your lifetime? Your support continues with a legacy gift to their endowments.

What if I might need my money?

It's true, you might. And it'll be there for you if and when you do. This type of gift is made after your lifetime, once you no longer need your assets.

What if my children are getting all of my money?

Parents want to help their children become financially secure, and we aren't asking you to ignore your children! Consider leaving just a portion of your assets to charitable causes that are important to you. You'll be demonstrating to your children the importance of helping build a better world. Additionally, with tax benefits associated with certain legacy gifts, there are ways to leave money to the endowments of Jewish organizations that you care about without taking a penny away from your children!

If the organization dissolves, so will my money?

It's hard to predict where any of us will be in 10, 20, even 50 years. If you're concerned an organization might not be around when your gift is made, you can name an alternative cause.

Can only older people leave a legacy gift?

Anyone—no matter your age—can support the causes and organizations you cherish with a legacy gift. If you have assets, you'll want to decide how they'll be divided.

What if I've already finalized my will?

There are several ways of making a legacy gift that don't involve changing your will. Consider directing a portion of your retirement fund or life insurance policy to your favorite charitable beneficiaries. The AJC can also connect you with a local lawyer to draw up a codicil to your existing will, free of charge.

Do I have to be a millionaire to leave a legacy?

The beauty of legacy giving is you can make a gift of any amount. Whether your estate is worth a few shekels or a few million, your gift is your legacy. And your legacy should live on!



Please contact
Naomi Rosenfeld at
executivedirector@theajc.ca
or 902.422.7493 to learn
more or to make your
commitment.

Todah Rabah!

Thank you to the following people who have already committed to making a legacy gift to an Atlantic Canadian Jewish organization!

Anonymous X4
Joyce Barak
Ethel Cooper-Rosen
Yakov Feig
Devorah Gillard
Eric Goldberg
Judith Goldberg
Jennifer & Richard Goldhar and Family
Paul Gray & Toby Mandelman
Bonnie Katz Webber & Henry Webber
Linda Law

Miles Leznoff
Carol Lee Loebenberg
William Mosher
Lloyd Newman
Jack Novack
Mark Rosen
Joseph Roza
Lynda Suissa
Jack Yablon
Harold Yazer
Arthur Zilbert

If you too have already made a legacy gift to a Jewish organization in Atlantic Canada and would like to be included on this list, please reach out to Naomi at executivedirector@theajc.ca

ON THE LIFE OF NATAN NEVO Z"l

October 1930 – April 2021

Written by Shirley Shamash and Denise Nevo

We have lost our dear Natan, husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, uncle, great uncle, friend to so many, an incredible, kind, and caring man with a heart of gold.

His life journey was anything but ordinary. He was born in Warsaw, Poland. When the Second World War broke out, his father had the wisdom to move the family (Natan, his mother, and his older brother Adek) to Russia, via incredible and difficult means of travel. This allowed them to escape the Nazi occupation in Poland and being deported to Concentration Camps, where all his uncles, aunts, and cousins perished. Soon after, the family was sent to Siberia, where Natan spent most of the war years. Thankfully, the two brothers were able to go to school there during the entire war period.

When the war ended, the family moved back to Poland, but antisemitism was so prevalent there that Natan, as a teenager, joined a group of young Jews and moved to what was then Palestine, in early 1948. In May of that year, the modern State of Israel was born, and Natan, with a group of other young Holocaust survivors, became one of the founding members of Kibbutz Megiddo, where he worked in various occupations, including theatre.

After five years, he left the kibbutz and moved to the southern city of Eilat, where he



worked as a bank teller. A few years later, he wanted to study theatre and painting, and he moved to Paris, France, where he met Denise. The two of them moved back to Israel in 1965 and were married there, that year. But life was difficult in Israel at the time, Natan's brother Adek was living in Halifax and urged Natan and Denise to move to Canada. So, they arrived in Halifax in October 1965 and have lived ever since in this beautiful city, where they raised their two sons, Igal and Amir.

Natan was the type of man who always had a story to tell and always had a smile on his face. He spoke five languages, he was charming and charismatic, and people always gravitated around him.

Despite dabbling in various careers, ranging from theatre to bank teller to property manager to university professor, his passion was always art and he loved to express himself through his paintings, abstracts as well as beautiful landscapes. These filled the walls

of his art studio, in the house on Bayview Road where he lived with Denise for 30 years, before moving to the condo.

Natan loved to spend time with his five grandchildren, Zev and Phoenix in Halifax, and Itai, Sarah and Daniel in Israel, where Igal had moved and married Tamy. From the time they were able to hold a paintbrush, Natan taught them about brush strokes and how to paint. Their painting moved from paper, to canvass, to painting rocks. To this day, several of them have a passion for painting and the two little ones in Halifax, Zev and Phoenix, decided to deposit on his coffin two stones they had painted with him a short while before his death, along with some drawings they made for him, with big red hearts, to be buried with him and stay with him for ever and ever.

We just finished celebrating Passover a short while ago, he was then full of life and had a great time with his family, but he was an intelligent and intuitive man and he knew what was coming. He told his daughter-in-law, Shirley, that this would be his last Passover...

He was an incredible man who lived a full and joyous life, despite the terrible hardships he encountered along the way. We all have amazing memories of the times we spent with him that we will cherish forever. We will all miss him so much! 🕊

18th Annual Holocaust Education Week



November 1–7 2021

Presenting virtual and in-person programs in Atlantic Canada
—in accordance with Nova Scotia Health guidelines

Details coming soon: HolocaustEducation.ca

MISHLOACH MANOT BASKETS: Shining a light on Marcia Kohler

BY MADELYN HERB

This past year has taught us all about the importance of community and connection. Emails, text messages and phone calls have kept us in touch with far flung loved ones for years, but all of a sudden they became a vital tool as we had to keep 2 meters between ourselves and the rest of the world. We've made the most of virtual holidays, drive through celebrations and distanced gatherings. But overcoming distance to create a sense of togetherness is an area of expertise for Halifax's Marcia Kohler. I had the pleasure of speaking with Kohler by phone to learn more about her community work.

After returning from a trip to Israel with the AJC and the Jewish Women's Renaissance Project (JWRP) in 2017, Marcia Kohler was giving a presentation about Purim to her group and began thinking of the tradition of giving during the holiday. When we spoke, she noted that people have always been involved in shalach manos here in Halifax, and recalls thinking, "it would be a good way to bring all individuals of the Halifax Jewish community together regardless of whether they belonged to a synagogue, or which synagogue they belonged to".

Her now university-aged children were teens at the time and involved with the Jewish Outreach Leadership Training (JOLT) program; she thought that this community project could help weave the generations together. Extending the invitation to participate to the children of the Hebrew schools and their families, Marcia brought together volunteers spanning a wide age range to create something special, not just for the seniors, but for the volunteers themselves.

"It's so important that the generations are connected, and the senior generation is not forgotten, right? It's so incredibly important for these younger kids to meet



these seniors", says Kohler. Especially without a Jewish community centre here in Halifax, it can be hard to find ways to be connected if you're not a member of one of our synagogues. "The seniors just love the children" and this project has given the groups more opportunities to cross paths.

Kohler shared that the members of the JWRP trip sourced a variety of kosher snacks for the mishloach manot baskets, and thanks to the generosity of the Beth Israel Synagogue, the involvement of the Beth Israel Synagogue sisterhood, and the benefit of some "phenomenal, phenomenal bakers", the baskets usually include homemade hamantaschen.


While last year they were able to bake, assemble and deliver the 144 mishloach manot baskets as planned, as with so many aspects of life, COVID-19 took a toll on their 2021 plans. With respect to public health protocols, Kohler says, "we technically couldn't be in the synagogue kitchen as a group" and instead the group sourced prepackaged Kosher hamantaschen.

Another change was that, due to the virus, JOLT group activities were put on hold, so the teens didn't take quite as big a role as usual, but thanks to the help of several of the women of the JWRP trip, as well as members of the community mahjong group, the baskets were still able to be delivered. Given our current reality, this project now more than ever seems to carry greater importance. "This year is different" she says, "because its been so long and nobody really expected that we'd

still be in this situation all these months later, and that social connection is just a bit of a perk, and hopefully we're soon going to see the light at the end of the tunnel".

In talking about her future plans for the mishloach manot drive, Kohler says she'll continue to organize the project, and keep up with the connection with the JOLT program. Going forward, she hopes to find a way to include yet another demographic in her volunteer base—university students! Looking to find a way to connect with local Hillel groups, she hopes that for both local and non-local students alike, this project could be something that integrates them in to our community a little better. She also says that they're always looking for more bakers and welcomes any interested volunteers.

If the past year has taught us anything, it's that for many of us, isolation is not a sustainable state. We have redefined what it means to be together, reinvented holiday traditions, and reevaluated the things that matter most. We have done all this in an effort to reestablish our sense of community when safety protocols have made it more difficult.

It's with this in mind that the importance of this project becomes even more apparent. There are members of our community who have been living in some degree of isolation long before COVID-19 sent us all inside. Marcia Kohler has found a way to not only bring the joy of Purim straight to the door of these senior community members but has opened up an opportunity for all the generations to come together to make it possible. 

Madelyn Herb is an educator from New York City, and a recent Halifax transplant. She enjoys knitting, gardening, and cooking her way through Jewish culture.

MEET THE BAIGS

A PANDEMIC FRIENDSHIP

BY JONATHAN WERBITT

Separated by half a century, COVID has brought these newfound cousins closer than ever.

Four years ago, a group of Jewish women in Halifax who had recently returned from a trip to Israel with the AJC were assembling and delivering Purim baskets to local senior members of the community. Jennifer Jacobson noticed a familiar name on her list—Baig.

“It was my grandmother’s maiden name,” Jennifer says with a euphoric expression on her face. “It’s my middle name!”

Jennifer dropped off the basket and met Jack Baig.

It didn’t take long for the two to connect the dots. They traced the branches of a family tree with both of their names on it, and at 95, Jack became Jennifer’s newest relative.

The cousins continued to meet over the next few years. When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, the community decided to reach out to older people. Jennifer made sure Jack was on her list.

“He loves to get Wendy’s. So, I’d go get him Wendy’s and pick him up groceries,” she said.

Shortly thereafter, two weeks became the new normal and Jen started visiting Jack every couple of days.

Jack was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia to Max and Minnie Baig—both Lithuanian immigrants. His father, a scrap metal dealer (like so many Jewish immigrants), had come to Canada alongside nine siblings who splintered off upon arrival in Saint John, Jennifer’s great grandfather—Harry—was one of them.

Though there wasn’t a single synagogue in Amherst, Jack’s family preserved their Jewish traditions. He studied engineering at Mount Allison University and moved to Halifax in 1946, when he began putting his skills to use for the federal government. He retired in the mid-80’s.

There aren’t many Baigs here in Atlantic Canada. Neither Jack nor any of his three siblings had children. Finding a new relative has been a gift for both the retired engineer and the middle-aged mom.

“It’s such a nice thing for me because I don’t have any family on that side,” said Jennifer, a fourth-generation shop owner who runs Studio 14 in Halifax.

She is more than happy to give Jack a hand, who in turn tells her stories about their family history and of life in Nova Scotia throughout most of the 20th century.

At 95, Jack’s memory is crystal clear. From seventy-year-old bus schedules to the opening of the Shaar Shalom Synagogue in 1955, he chronicles stories of times long passed in stunning, vivid detail. Naturally, he remembers the countless Bar Mitzvahs he’s been to and the thirteen-year-old boys who are now all grown up.

Jack’s house hasn’t changed a bit since he first bought it in 1948. Back in September, the electricity started browning out. When the electrician flipped the archaic main power switch, it recoiled and triggered a huge power surge which blew out the water main and the hot water tank. The electrician was spooked, but Jack wouldn’t budge.

For three days, a contractor—one of Jennifer’s Camp Kadimah friends’ fathers—and his crew worked tirelessly to get Jack’s home back into livable condition. They had to dig up the lawn. The city installed a new power line. The house needed a new electrical panel. It was a hefty undertaking, but they got it done over the course of a weekend.

The best part? It turned out Jack had attended the contractor’s Bar Mitzvah.

Jews have a knack for making connections, especially in strange places and circumstances. Whether you find a Goldberg in common or a brisket recipe, there is almost always something that links two members of the “tribe.” The general rule is six degrees of separation, but in the Jewish community it rarely takes more than two or three. In the Atlantic, the circle is even tighter.

It has been a tough year for families all over the world. The news seems to be permanently plastered with stories of separation, longing and heartbreak. Though Jack and Jennifer met four years back, it was the pandemic that truly brought them together.

In hindsight, Jennifer is just grateful for the name she now sees as a beacon.

“There’s no question, I was given that middle name to find him,” she said. ●

Jon is a student at the King’s School of Journalism. As a writer and musician, he is constantly on the search for new stories and sounds.



Please join us on Zoom
for the **AJC’s 2021 Annual
General Meeting** on Tuesday
June 15th from 7–9 p.m.

More information to follow.
theAJC.ca

NOW INCLUDES 1 BOOK PER CHILD PER MONTH!



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THROUGH 8 YEARS OLD
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*Signing up is free, easy, and takes less than
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living in Atlantic Canada?**

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PJ Our Way is a program that offers the gift of exceptional chapter books with Jewish themes to kids ages 8½-12—books that they choose themselves! Every month, kids visit the PJ Our Way website to choose a book from a selection of four high-quality titles that have been reviewed by a panel of PJ educators, parents, and kids.

*Signing up is free, easy, and takes less than
3 minutes. Go to **pjourway.org**!*



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pjlibrary.org/grandparent-enrollment
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emails from PJ Library*

Limmud FSU Labs Atlantic Canada 2021: Building Community Leaders

Yulia Elgin, Halifax, proposed and received a grant to host a Limmud FSU (Former Soviet Union) Labs program in Atlantic Canada. Limmud FSU Labs is a grassroots initiative that contributes to helping develop Jewish community life and enriching the Jewish knowledge of young Russian-speaking Jews.

Yulia was inspired to initiate a program to help grow and strengthen the interaction with the local established Jewish community, to build a richer Jewish life, and instill a deeper sense of Jewish identity as well as a connection to Israel, in our local Russian speaking Jewish population. Yulia Elgin immigrated to Canada in 2012. She works at Scotiabank, Customer Experience Lead, and teaches, since 2012, at The Halifax Joint Hebrew School, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

WHAT IS LIMMUD FSU LABS—ATLANTIC CANADA?

It is an educational, cultural and entertainment initiative for Russian families with Jewish roots.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Monthly activities provide an opportunity for active, interesting, and incredibly fun experiences. Jewish spirituality and philosophy, ethical issues, social and political trends in the Jewish communities of the world, the diversity of Jewish culture, the secrets of Jewish cuisine. Following the NS Health guidelines, the program offerings have been virtual.


WHEN?

Once a month. Each month participants have the opportunity to communicate, participate in lectures, games, master classes, creative workshops, and group discussions on a variety of topics.

FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION:

On Facebook: Atlantic Canada-Limmud FSU Labs.

Contact project organizer Yulia Elgin with any questions: Yulia.elgin@gmail.com

Limmud FSU Labs Atlantic is made possible by a grant from Limmud FSU Labs Canada and with the support of the Atlantic Jewish Council. 

The virtual Master Chef program in April with Chef Udi Baida was a huge success! Yulia Elgin challenged participants with Israel trivia questions and Udi provided the winners with baked treats! The group explored the history of Israel while preparing a classic Israeli meal of Shakshuka and Israeli salads. Adam Conter, Vice-President AJC (Halifax), and Mila Voihsanski, Executive Director, Limmud FSU (Toronto) welcomed the group.

PHOTOS: 1. Yulia Elgin, pictured on left with Lisa Baida. 2. Chef Udi Baida.



NEWFOUNDLAND NEWS

News from the far east **BY RABBI CHANAN AND TUBA CHERNITSKY**

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. WOW!

Who would have thought so much could be accomplished during a global pandemic? Of course Hashem is on our side and He made it possible.

On Sunday January 17th we hosted a live stream of a wonderful film called "The Light of Fire", produced by Bentzi Avtzon.

It's a touching and up-close thirty-minute film that tells the story of American-Israeli artist Yoram Raanan, as he rebuilds from a sudden fire.

In five minutes, he lost all 40 years of his breathtaking original artwork. The pain was indescribable.

The film gave us a boost to start off 2021 with motivation, perseverance, faith and hope.

In February we launched the Jewish Children's Book Club. The first installment was sponsored in loving memory of Ruth Lacombe.

The book club is aimed at Jewish children under the age of 12. Each child/family will receive an age-appropriate book every 2 months and the best part is that membership is free!

We enjoyed "Feeling Better from A to Z" as part of the first installment.

Towards the end of February, as COVID cases spiked in Newfoundland and we had to cancel all in person events, even at lower capacity, Chabad offered curbside pickup of homemade Challah and chicken soup. A local family sponsored it and it was a great hit!

On a similar vein, as we weren't allowed to have a proper Purim program due to restrictions, we offered Purim meals for pick up. Whomever wanted could pick up a delicious meal consisting of rice, sesame chicken and Challah. This was also sponsored by a generous local family. Thank you!

Rebbetzin Tuba once again took charge of the Passover order for the whole community. We extend our sincere gratitude to the "Pipers" store for shipping in the order for free from Montreal.

Thank G-d, we distributed more Shmurah Matzah than ever this year. Thank you to D. Z. for helping with the deliveries! This year we offered Seder kits as well.

We received a generous produce donation from a local wholesaler to be used for the Passover Seder and meals. G-d bless you!

Next year, in Jersusalem! (together).

Right after Passover we moved into our new location. It was a long wait, but it was well worth it.

We look forward to the swift end of the pandemic so we can all celebrate together in person once more.

We are currently planning our yearly Holocaust Speaker program, scheduled to take place in June or July, G-d willing.

Have a healthy summer! 🍓

We are open 24/7 (with social distancing practices). For more information you can reach us at 709-341-8770 or through e-mail at chabadofnewfoundland@gmail.com.



PHOTOS: 1. Curbside Challah 2. Matzah ready for delivery 3. Purim Meals Prep

BETH EL SYNAGOGUE NEWS

BY DR MICHAEL PAUL, PRESIDENT

The Synagogue was gearing up to have a festive Purim, when the Second Wave of COVID struck. All plans for a communal reading of the Megillah and party were unfortunately cancelled.

Our Passover food order arrived about 2 weeks before the Chag. It looked like it would once again be a very lonely series of seders, as if the Plague would win, when the alert level was lowered the morning of Erev Pesach. As such, small seders with up to 4 or so people were allowed in private homes. Sadly, for the 2nd year running, no communal gatherings.

Alert levels have been lowered since then and so Synagogue services have resumed for every Friday evening and Saturday morning Shabbat services, to much général happiness. If all continues on this path the entire Jewish community is planning an Oneg Shabbat at the synagogue on Friday June 4th.

We hope to have a lovely summer and may even be able to enjoy a community wide BBQ, rules permitting.

We are now starting to plan High Holiday joint services. 🍓

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Please contact the AJC
info@theajc.ca

FREDERICTON NEWS

COMPILED BY **AYTEN KRANAT**

Mazel Tov to Leianne and Ivan Levine on celebrating their First Wedding Anniversary 02/02/2020.

We would like to wish Mazel Tov to Albina and Isaac Lazarev and Violetta and Boris Kartuz on the recent wedding of their children, Jonathan and Daniella on December 13, 2020.

Mazel Tov to Joshua Stephens, proud son of Shelley Stephens and Byron Stephens (z'l) on his relocating to Toronto and furthering his career with his chosen profession as a Security Guard.

Mazel Tov to Jasmine Kranat being accepted to the New Brunswick Bar. Proud parents Ayten and Marc Kranat.

Our deepest condolences to Mel, Marissa and Soicher family on the passing of their mother, Sylvia (z'l). Sylvia loved skiing at Crabbe Mountain, and she was a pleasure to talk with as well as a gracious, energetic lady. She will be especially remembered as her large mural painting is displayed in our Social Hall of Sgoolai Israel Synagogue.



PHOTO: JASMINE KRANAT, TORONTO

Congratulations to the Fredericton Jewish Community on being COVID-19 safe. Best wishes for a safe summer!

Shelley Stephens Sisterhood President, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue. 📞

MONCTON NEWS

BY **FRANCIS WEIL**

SHMUSH FROM MONCTON

As everybody else, the greater Moncton Jewish community (it includes Sackville, Dieppe, Woodstock, Riverview, Miramichi and Johnston Point) is living with the COVID-19 rules imposed by the provincial government.

Since our last article in *Shalom Magazine* we had two holidays—Purim and Pesach.

Purim fell on March 25 and 26. By that time, Rabbi Yagod had returned to the US, the preparation for Pesach food was starting and his work was getting quite heavy.

Pinchas Yagod, his son, a Rabbi in training, stayed in Moncton and read the Megillah on both days.

On Sunday March 28, the community had a virtual gathering using Zoom. It was well attended. All who did, were delighted by a beautiful violin performance from Neri Harris. Victoria Volkanova was the very able Master of Ceremony.

Francis Weil has submitted his resignation as President. Since then we have a new slate of people on the board.

As usual, the bulletins from the congregation can be seen and downloaded from www.tiferesisrael.com. The website lists the names of the members of the board. Do not hesitate to go on this website to see more details.

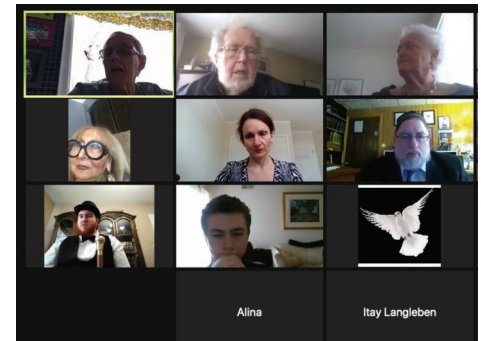
A few sad news items—Ann Gorber z'l, Dora Haller z'l, and Yosef El z'l, have left us.

Ann Rose Gorber z'l, a long-time member, left us on February 12, she will be remembered as a very dignified lady. Our deepest condolences to her family, particularly to her three children Daryl, Sheryl and Lorne.

Dora Haller z'l, is the much loved Mother of Jack, Grand-Mother of Joshua and Samuel, Mother-in law of Nicole.

Our sympathies to Ury and Nir for the loss of a Brother and Uncle.

We were very happy to hear of the marriage between Aaron Cohen and Karli Lynn in Squamish, BC. Mazel tov to them and to Nancy and Ivan!



The eight days of Pesach were well attended at our synagogue.

Ralph Benmergui, from CJN, conducted an interview with three of our congregants on the "life within a small Jewish community". You can hear the interview at theajc.ca/greetings-from-yehupetzville-with-ralph-benmergui-a-new-cjn-podcast-about-small-town-canadian-jewish-life-1st-episode-is-about-moncton-nb.

Mazel tov to Liel Izichkis, you did very well in that interview! It was a pleasure to hear how a young person feels living a Jewish life in Moncton. 📞

SAINT JOHN NEWS

BY SUSAN ISAACS-LUBIN

Sincere sympathy to Joe Arditti on the death of his beloved wife, Rene. Rene died in early January. Rene was predeceased by their two children, Eliezer and Perla. We hope that Joe will find peace in his memories of Rene.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family of Ron Levine. Ron died suddenly on April 5th. Ron was a pillar of the Saint John Jewish Community. He served as President of Congregation Shaarei Zedek, vice chair of Chevra Kadisha, and as our Building Chair. Ron is survived by his loving wife, Sandy, and three children: Candace Davis (Nathan), Tammy Earle (Matthew), and Darren (Julie), as well as six grandchildren. May his memory be a blessing.

Saint John is pleased to welcome several new families who have settled here. Gary and Buffie Lee and their daughter have moved here from Atlanta, Georgia. Benjamin Elbaz is moving to Saint John with his wife and five children, Noa Dror is moving here from Vancouver, and Eric Chambers is moving to St. Andrews from New Mexico. We hope they are all successful in their resettlement.

We were pleased that we were able to celebrate Purim in the Synagogue with about 35 people in attendance. This was the maximum we were allowed to have due to COVID restrictions. We read the Megillah, dressed in costumes, and had take home goodies for all (since we are not allowed

to serve food in the Synagogue because of COVID). It was really nice to see those who came out, on a sign up first come basis, and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Pesach Seders this year were held in accordance with COVID restrictions, in small family get togethers. Our thanks to Drew Wall, of No Frills grocery in Saint John for bringing in the wide variety of kosher for Passover items. This enabled all of us to celebrate Passover in our homes with the groceries we have come to expect for this holiday.

Mazel tov to Dr. Anna Barnea Isaacs on opening her new dental office. Anna and her husband, Dr. Yaniv Isaacs (also a dentist), and their two sons, immigrated to Saint John from Israel in 2015, and in 2017, Anna completed her National Dental Examination Board in Canada. Anna has been working in her field with other dentists in the Saint John area since then. Best of luck, Anna.

We are all slowly receiving our COVID vaccinations and are looking forward to being able to have the freedom to travel within the Maritimes to see family and friends.

We send get well wishes to Linda Hamburg, Janet Holtzman, and Norman Hamburg and to anyone else who has been ill this past winter. 🤞



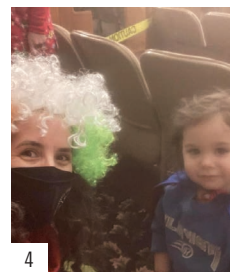
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PHOTOS: 1. Enjoying Purim!
2. Hila Aharon 3. Natanel Yosef and some costumed children 4. Purim!
5. Purim costumes
6. Dr. Anna Isaacs' dental office opening.

REPORT FROM THE SAINT JOHN JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

BY KATHERINE BIGGS-CRAFT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CURATOR

For the first time in over a year, the Museum is opening its doors for a live in-person and via Zoom event—**Judaism in Context Lecture Series, Part II**—on April 18 and 25 and May 2. These lectures will be presented by Dan Elman on three Sunday afternoons

exploring Judaism in the context of world religions and history. In each two-hour session, Dan will discuss the topic in an informative and interesting manner and will then open the floor to questions and comments.

- April 18, 2021—When Religion Goes Wrong/Conversations reveal our cultural history (words are often houses for similar ideas)
- April 25, 2021—An Evolution Towards Today: The Axial Age, Mysticism, Polytheism and Monotheism
- May 2, 2021—The Eternal Triangle/From Moses to Plato to Jung

Dan Elman served as president of Congregation Shaarei Zedek from 1983-1984. In the absence of a rabbi, he was the community's Lay Reader for nearly two decades, leading Sabbath services,

teaching children for Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and conducting community outreach about Judaism to community, church and school groups. More recently he has served as a coordinator for the community's Immigration Committee which has been working since 2004 to rebuild the Jewish population of Saint John. Dan Elman has also made a name for himself as a champion chess player and instructor and was instrumental in bringing the World Chess Festival to Saint John in 1988.

The Saint John Jewish Historical Museum will be open for the summer tourism season from Monday, June 14 to Friday, October 8 with regular hours from Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the addition of Sunday hours of 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. during July and August. Visitors can also arrange to view the Museum by appointment. Please note that the Museum will observe all COVID-19 protocols as required including regular cleaning of all touch points, screening of visitors, contact tracing, physical distancing, and the use of cloth masks and hand sanitizer by staff and guests.

Activity is well underway to get the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum ready to open for the summer season. Our new exhibit will be **The View from Damascus Gate: Travels in Israel, 1855-2017**. The inspiration for the exhibit for 2021-2022 came from photographs taken in the Holy Land in 1860 by Rev. William Mead Jones, a missionary who lived there from 1856 to 1860. His experiences there were preserved in his journal and the voluminous correspondence which have survived. This will be accompanied by stories and photographs from more than a dozen Museum members of travels taken during the past 50 years. Our display cases will be filled with treasures from our collections including our small collection of 2500 year old archaeological artifacts. This exhibit has been made possible with funding from the Exhibition Renewal and Museum Activities Support Program, Archaeology and Heritage Branch, Province of New Brunswick.

Several other projects are either underway and under development including:

Saint John Jewish Family Tree, which will be presented online as a collection of family stories of many of the family which made up the Jewish community in Saint John from 1858 to the present. This digital project has

been made possible with funding from the Exhibition Renewal and Museum Activities Support Program (Digital World and Social Media), Archaeology and Heritage Branch, Province of New Brunswick.

Following Their Footsteps: Finding Former Jewish Homes and Shops, which will be a self-guided walking tour of former homes and businesses in uptown Saint John. Each stop will include notes about the building's architecture, ownership and Jewish connections. The walking tour will be launched in the late spring of 2021. Funding to support this project was from the Saint John Community Arts Board.

Every Stone Tells A Story which will create a series of walks through the Shaarei Zedek Cemetery to follow a number of different themes and family relationships. Walking guides of the cemetery should be complete in early 2022. Funding to support this project is from the Saint John Community Arts Board.

Our perennially popular business exhibit, **Open for Business**, has been redeveloped an online exhibit for Digital Museums Canada and will be available to viewing by the end of 2021.

We started a project last summer to write biographies for each of the names listed on the yearzeit plaques in the Synagogue. **The Yearzeit Biographies Project** has produced more than 600 stories which are shared as part of the weekly reminders of yearzeits sent out to congregation and museum members. We have been excited with the engagement this has had with the community members who have come forward with additional information and stories to be included.

The **Oral History Project** has been revived after a long hiatus and efforts are being made to record as many interviews as possible with current and past members of the Saint John Jewish community. Each interview is recorded, will be transcribed and added to our archives. We are embracing the use of Zoom as a medium for this project and have completed several Zoom recordings with former community members living in other parts of the country. It is very exciting to be able to extend our reach across the country to share memories of the community that was so important to their youth. If you have a connection to Saint John and want to have your story preserved, please contact the Museum.

We invite everyone to visit the Saint John

Jewish Historical Museum this coming season and welcome any who would like to contribute to any of our projects. Remember to keep in touch with us by checking our Facebook page where we post information on events and community history. 5



Lecture Series - Judaism in Context, Part II
Presented by Dan Elman
Sunday, April 18 and 25 and May 2 - 2:00 to 4:00 pm
Saint John Jewish Historical Museum
91 Leicester Street and via Zoom

Join us for three Sunday afternoons to learn about Judaism in the context of world religions and history. In each two-hour session, Dan will discuss the topic in an informative and interesting manner and will then open the floor to questions and comments.

- April 18, 2021 - When Religion Goes Wrong / Conversations reveal our cultural history (words are often houses for similar ideas)
- April 25, 2021 - An Evolution Towards Today: The Axial Age, Mysticism, Polytheism and Monotheism
- May 2, 2021 - The Eternal Triangle / From Moses to Plato to Jung

In keeping with COVID-19 restrictions, in-person attendance at this event will be limited to 15 participants. Pre-registration is required. Or you may request a non-transferable link to attend the lecture via Zoom. Please call or email for registration information - 535-1833 / ajc@stjohnsb.ca. The event will also be recorded and shared at a later date.

Dan Elman studied at the University New Brunswick; Fredericton, Dalhousie University, Halifax; the University of Freiburg, Switzerland; the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium and the Jungian Institute, Zurich, Switzerland. He has enjoyed a diverse career. Dan served as president of Congregation Shaarei Zedek from 1983-1984. In the absence of a rabbi, he was the community's Lay Reader for nearly two decades. Dan Elman has also made a name for himself as a champion chess player and instructor and was instrumental in bringing the World Chess Festival to Saint John in 1988.

The Judaism in Context Lecture series was launched in May 2019. Digital copies of these lectures are available - please contact the museum for further information and pricing.

For further information: Tel: 506-533-1833 / Email: sjhm@stjohnsb.ca



PHOTOS: Chapel and cemetery gates; event poster for Judaism in Context; Saint John Jewish Historical Museum



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PEI NEWS

BY JOSEPH B. GLASS

The Prince Edward Island Jewish community continued its adaptation to the on-going public health restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Most of its activities were conducted virtually. For Purim, the PEIJC's Secretary, Rafael Baliardo, designed a delightful, uniquely PEI greeting card that was shared with the community. It brought smiles to all.

Over the years, our neighbours have taken notice of Passover celebrations on the Island. On April 22, 1908, 113 years ago, The Patriot published the following:

The Jews of Charlottetown are now concluding the celebration of the Feast of the Passover, which commenced on Wednesday last,

and which lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, as prescribed on the Mosaic law is eaten during the continuance of the feast, and many reminders of Israel's exodus from Egypt were introduced.



This year, the Charlottetown Guardian addressed the topic of celebrating Passover on PEI for a second year under the shadow of COVID-19. Diversity reporter Logan MacLean shared some insights in the article "Passover in a pandemic: P.E.I. Jewish community celebrating freedom from afar." Leo Mednick, the PEIJC president, was featured in the article which was illustrated with the Mednick seder table. In the photograph are Martin Rutte (left), Maida Rogerson, Andrew Melzer, Karin Melzer and the hostess, Beverly Mednick.

With no youngsters at this festive holiday table, the Four Questions had been pre-recorded by Amalia Hoersting, a young member of our community. She has been studying Hebrew with Ilana Clyde and over the past two years, Amalia's renditions of various holiday blessings and songs have been shared with the community.

Islanders now enjoy the convenience of having kosher for Passover wines sold at PEI Liquor. Although limited in its selection, this year bottles of red and white were available at outlets from Summerside in the west, through Charlottetown and Stratford, to Montague in the east. Only Manischewitz kosher wine could be found in O'Leary. The PEIJC appreciates the on-going efforts of its vice president, Leslee Sack, to ensure that anyone who wanted kosher for Passover wine in their four cups and in Elijah's cup, could easily obtain some. ☺

Storyteller VIRTUAL J

AT GREAT RISK
Memoirs of Rescue during the Holocaust

The Azrieli Foundation presents the launch of:

**At Great Risk:
Memoirs of Rescue
during the Holocaust**

Featuring memoirs by
Eva Lang, David Korn
and Fishel Philip Goldig

Speakers include
Sheryl Ochayon from Yad Vashem,
David Korn and Fishel Goldig

Sunday, May 2nd at 7:00pm EST

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CAPE BRETON NEWS

BY SHARON JACOBSON

Who knew 2021 would be one long weekend without Shul?

Despite this Endless Weekend, I can't say we haven't travelled—We have ALL made one trip around the sun! And, it looks like we are doing it again this year... my mind has gone quirky! So, as you can sense, COVID Fatigue has set in.

Because events are few and far between, someone explained it to me—"There is nothing to talk about." But, I will try.

For example, engagement@theajc.ca has kept me very busy online during this pandemic! The virtual programs are varied, relevant and interesting. Case in point, January's presentation for International Holocaust Remembrance Day with Dr. Rohini Bannerjee of Francophone Studies from the Department of Modern Languages at St. Mary's University. She spoke about Mauritius, a small, remote island in the Indian Ocean, (not to be confused with Mauritania or the Maldives.) This island was inhabited by French, English, Arabs, Chinese, Europeans, East African slaves, and, Jews.

"In The Shadows of Beau Bassin" is a documentary about the story of Jewish refugees who had fled Nazi persecution in Europe in 1940. They were refused entry into Palestine by the British and were subsequently deported to Mauritius. They were "detained in a prison until the end of the war and were deprived of all basic human rights, even that of family life." You can view this Doc by Kevin Harris on YouTube.

Dr. Bannerjee also mentioned two books: The Mauritian Shekel by Genevieve Pitot which speaks of a journey from Bratislava to Haifa only to end in Mauritius and, The Last Brother by Natacha Apranah which describes a complex, historical Diaspora for two little boys from different backgrounds, Raj and David.

Dr. Bannerjee's talk was so intriguing, she left me with the feeling of wanting to meet her and hear more of what she knew.

Zoom has also increased the number of participants in community events!

A Five Year Memorial to Frank Medjuck, spearheaded by his daughter, Bina, brought together friends & family from

many locations who wished to reach out and reminisce about "all things Frank". The yearning to talk about their personal experiences was palpable. Frank's memory is a heartfelt legacy to Hedda and her family. Indeed, he was one of a kind.

Next we Zoom to Adath Israel in Toronto where Phil David, formerly of Sydney, together with Joe Trager, formerly of Halifax, coordinated a program about another Maritimer, Irwin Simon. Irwin is a home-grown "Bay Bye" who unabashedly wears it proudly. He took us down the road with him from Glace Bay to New York City to Toronto: we flew over his bumps and climbed the hills to his success. Irwin was informative and straightforward with a winning smile. His shout-out to his 91-year-old Aunt Tootsie David was sweet. But I would expect nothing less from the son of Nate & Nettie Simon.

The Cape Breton Community suffered the unexpected loss of Eleanor and the late Buddy Epstein's son, Norman, formerly of Sydney. He grew up on the island with his sister, Arlene and brother, Brian, who along with their mom are presently Toronto residents.

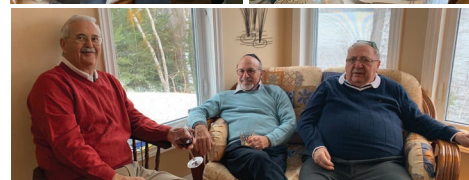
Sam Karrel, another C.B. icon, also passed away. He was predeceased by his wife Eva.

I grew up with Brian, Miriam, Debbie, Patsy, (married to Steven Simon), Shelley, Pam and Curdis. Quite a family.

Back in the Fall of 2020, Barrie Carnat was kind enough to drive Rabbi Ellis to Inverness to view the stained-glass windows in St. Matthew's church. The names on the windows include 3 Jewish boys from the area who died in the war: Lt. Jack Levine, Pte. Nathan Feinstein and his brother, Sgt. Sam Feinstein. They had a very interesting tour with Pastor Maggie Plant. Photographs are provided with this article.

Now onto a breath of Spring. Passover, with its ritual Seder is the story we all gather round.

It is the time we remember that we were slaves in Egypt who walked through the parted Red Sea to a life of Freedom and



PHOTOS: 1. Does anyone recognize this kitchen utensil?!?
2. Bella Shore 99-years-old in July: Cooking a stew with very "little vision left" and an "aching body." Talk about growing old with "chutzpah"
3. Moe, Volunteer fireman

Continue on page 36

Continued from page 35



L-R: District Governor Dr. Ian Doyle, Frank Elman, Sydney Rotary President Darren Vallis

Frank Elman, was acknowledged by Rotary International for 50 years of dedicated community service in 2020.

(Due to COVID) At a belated ceremony on March 25, the Rotary Club presented Frank with a pin for his service. He is the only Jewish member in his club.

Frank is one of the pillars of the Sydney community and a mainstay of our minyans!

Nationhood and Responsibility and in one week! Well, eight days.

Operation Matzo-Meals On Wheels went into action. From Halifax, Myrna Yazer filled the order and Hubby Harold delivered it. He handed off the special cargo to Stanley and I on Boularderie Isle and, “poof”, we were in business! David Ein and Stanley Jacobson set up shop in the Sydney Shul where the children of Israel made the trek to collect their manna from Halifax.

Yes, indeed, Seders were a blessing as spring beckoned. There were Bubble and Zoom Passover seders.

Vaccines became another hopeful miracle as they were pitted against the 11th plague, COVID.

David Ein relishes this holiday with its Pesach delicacies cooked up by Paula. While the camaraderie lightens the spirit, the chopped liver and chocolate matzoh weight the appetite.

Barrie Carnat ended up having two Seders due to the 10 people limit.

Many of us missed our kids...next year.

And lo & behold, we did have an unexpected Spring this Spring! At least one week anyway, it brought some of us out and into the woods.

Marlene Elman introduced Bethsheila Kent

and I to the Goat Island Trail in Eskasoni.

We also climbed a gravel pit road to view the McPhee Island(s) in Northside East Bay with a spectacular vista across the water to Ben Eoin.

Bethsheila, who is our very own local radio personality on all things flora and fauna, recommends to all exploring Nature and its Trails the “Leave No Trace Policy”.

Take nothing away with you, only what you have carried in. Stay on the trails as the ground cover in our woodland is sensitive to trampling. Keep your eyes open for interesting plants and your ears perked for birdsong—Many migrant species have begun to filter back to our area.

Barrie Carnat from Englishtown also tells me he is “getting through the pandemic by spending as much time as possible outside”! We escape outdoors whenever we can; it’s a tonic really. When everyone is vaccinated, we shall probably retreat indoors and resume Shabbat services! In the meantime, our souls rise up in the fresh air!

This brings me Zooming back to another online event April 11. This year, Diane Lewis who heads Holocaust Education here in CB directed us to a virtual presentation coordinated by the AJC, University of Kings College and Pier 21. Edna LeVine informed me 300+ had registered to attend!

The film we viewed had its Atlantic Canadian premiere as part of a Yom HaShoah Holocaust Memorial.

“Warsaw, A City Divided”, a documentary by Eric Bednarski about the Nazi destruction of a European Capital was followed with Dr. Dorothy Glowacka (King’s College) hosting the discussion.

Eric gave a non- Jewish person’s depiction of this city in Nazi Poland. The Nazis believed when you destroy the capital of a country, you destroy the country. The Jews comprised 1/3 of the city’s population. By artificially dividing Warsaw, the lives of Jews and non-Jews were turned upside down. Both were displaced as the Ghetto was contrived. Architects were brought in to “build a Wall” and contain the Jews. Propaganda entrenched the necessity of this division, stating Jews were carriers of typhoid which would lead to a pandemic of this deadly disease. This sounds all too familiar; the playbook of tyrants.

Bednarski’s documentary contained 8 mm footage that had never been seen before. It was shot in 1933 by a distant relative, a Polish

citizen. Thus, he felt it was an unbiased record of life in the Ghetto. A little boy was caught on camera smuggling wood, probably for his family. The next moment he is being chased by a policeman and beaten with a broom and then a stick. His anguished face turns towards us and the camera freezes as blood drips from his nose. The film moves backwards and forwards in time. Several interviews heighten the reality of specific Jewish lives. Two women, each with their own story, were born, survived, and still live in Warsaw. Their escapes were harrowing. One escape was through a hole in the wall! She is frightened when she thinks about it.

When my mother was in her 80’s, my two brothers and I accompanied her on a pilgrimage of sorts, back to her birthplace in Bialystok. We called it the “land of gefilte fish” because when she emigrated around 1925, there had been no Holocaust.

We stayed in Warsaw. Eric’s shots of this rebuilt, post-war city, juxtaposing Then & Now were in evidence to us. We saw a remnant of the Ghetto Wall, stood at the eerie Treblinka Station, and made our way to the cemetery (of 200,000 graves) that was not destroyed and ironically deemed a miracle. (As an aside, we also viewed the grand mansions of Jewish textile merchants, now housing Museums of art, music.) Modern buildings soared next to the new Old Town.

As teenagers, a lot of us had read Mila 18 by Leon Uris. We enacted its tale in Judaeen camps for Erev Tochnit. I suppose, just like at the Seders where we are to re-live the exodus of our ancestors, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, made everyone a Judah Maccabee, a self-sacrificing hero! The “Ghost Tram” is a haunting symbol of the destruction of the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw. Each year, on January 27th, International Holocaust Day, this EMPTY Tram runs through the streets of the city. It leaves and re-enters what was once The Warsaw Ghetto, a powerful reminder to all.

Eric Bednarski, during discussion, impresses us with the fact that he is not political. Despite the political statements which emanate from official Poland, he has witnessed a rise in interest in learning about the history of the Jews who lived in their city by many Warsawians who want more information!

There are remembrances: In April, 250,000



MEN IN TALIT



daffodils are symbolically worn; Every July there are marches to remember and, The Warsaw Ghetto which no longer exists has boundary markers to outline what once was. Eric Bednarski believes "Memory unites us all".

Well, this winter has witnessed what has been called a U.S. Insurrection followed by a U.S. Inauguration. In a country which proudly touts "anyone can become President" while proclaiming the strength of its democratic institutions, the USA has left the world uneasy.

Truth has become an arbitrary fact. But Jews always knew this. And now, Euphoria!

Everybody is Jewish! Blacks, Asians, Muslims—all minorities who suffer from racist, misogynistic, hateful dogma should understand each other? Well, empathy seems to have a fashionable run.

"Jews Don't Count", a book by David Baddiel informs us that we are not on the runway.

My last few musings as the pandemic unfolds—"crossing the border" has many connotations; and for different reasons: first it was news of the Mexican border; then it was news of our US/Canada border; and now it is news of our Nova Scotia/Canada border.

Can the Mainland/Cape Breton border be next? Hmmmm.

The pandemic has brought Atlantic Jews closer as we can now Zoom in on programs together that were unavailable due to geography. This is a Good Thing!

For example, (AJFF) and also viewing online The Shababniks, an award-winning Israeli series about the trials and tribulations of 4 Yeshivah Bochers. Funny and insightful...

Finally, on a much lighter note; possibly something that might resonate with you...

In a conversation on CBC, they were speaking of "Hypnotic Capture"—That state of reverie which calms your mind and slows your heart. Good therapy in these times. Examples are: A crackling fire, a flowing stream and a "Zamboni" at work.... I SO get this! 🍷

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CONNECTIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

BY CAPTAIN (RABBI DR) NOTEH GLOGAUER, RCAF—12WING, SHEARWATER, NS

Have you ever thought about the paths that peoples' lives follow? There are entire Jewish extended families, four and five generations, from great grandmother to great grandchild, who live within a few blocks of each other! While other families are destined to use Zoom, family blogs and WhatsApp to communicate with each other. Some people have lived on the same continent, nay in the same neighbourhood their entire lives! While others, have moved countries and continents more times than they are willing to count!

I fall into the latter category. Having arrived in Halifax just last year, as a Military Chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces, I find myself thinking a fair bit about what G-d has in store for me in this latest stop on my journey through life. When you move around as much as I do, people ask you the most interesting questions: "How do you keep Shabbos when training?"; "Can you keep kosher in the military?"; "How often do you see your family?"

When you can count the number of years that Hashem has placed you in a certain part of the world, a thought that often crosses your mind is your connections to others in the world, family and friends. As I am sent each time, to a different locale, there are connections that I have made with friends and with family that I would never have expected. There are challenges to other connections that I could never have anticipated. Occasionally, the farther I have been sent away from a person, the closer our 'connection' becomes. When I stop and think about this, I realize the incredible contradiction. How do I resolve this contradiction? What are the mechanisms for establishing true connections? Where does our need and desire to be connected to others come from?

According to the Torah, whenever we come upon a seeming contradiction, we search for parallels in ideas and concepts. From these parallels, we hope to inspire our ability to gain perspective and understanding.

One of my favourite examples of these parallels occurs each year around the time of my wedding anniversary, in the auspicious

month of Elul. In two consecutive weeks we read the Parshiyos (sections) of Ki Seitzei and Ki Savo. Seitzei means to go out and Savo means to come in—two opposites. On the surface, there is something intrinsic in their nature that seems to set them apart. And yet, on the Shabbos of Ki Seitzei, we read Ki Seitzei in the morning, but at Mincha Shabbos afternoon, we sneak a peak at the next week's parsha Ki Savo, the first section of which is read Shabbos afternoon at Mincha. The fact that these two parshiyos are read on the same day points to some innate parallel.

The Parsha of Ki Seitzei begins with the words *כי תצא למלחמה על איבך* "when you go out to war against your enemies". Our sages point out that *על* doesn't always mean against. *על* can also mean above. Before embarking on its journey to this lowly world, our Neshama (soul) resides, above, in heaven, not waging any wars. When our Neshama comes into this physical world and begins to fulfill its purpose, to elevate its physical surroundings, the real battle begins. What is the lesson for us? These opening words of Ki Seitzei encourage us to know that even when we are embattled in a spiritual war, we are always *על איבך* "above our enemies". Our G-dly soul is a true spark of Hashem and we must realize that there is no challenge too great which cannot be overcome.

Parshas Ki Savo which we read at Mincha begins *כי תבוא אל הארץ* "when you will come to the land". This pasuk (verse) speaks about coming to the Holy Land of Israel, settling and living in it the way Hashem intends. When a Jew is engaged in this holy battle down below, keeping above the enemies, struggling to fulfill this purpose, connecting to G-dliness and elevating this physical environment, he or she should know that success has been guaranteed! The harmony and peace of Ki Savo will eradicate the wars of Ki Seitzei.

Our challenge is that it is easier to see the present than the future. That is the reason why we read Ki Savo on Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei. This is a distinctive demonstration that our hopes and dreams of a peaceful

future are not simply a mirage for the future but a realistic taste we can have today. We look deeper into the parallels of the apparent contradiction and see the resolution.



What about connectedness? Our ultimate example of connectedness comes from Torah in the book of Vayikra: *וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךְ אָנִי ה'* *V'ahavta lereacha kamocha—Ani Hashem.* Love your neighbour as yourself, I am G-d. As we know according to Rabbi Hillel, this is the ultimate mitzvah of the Torah. What is a mitzvah? The word mitzvah comes from the root.—tzavtsa—connection.

In the arena of mitzvos/connectedness there are different categories: there are *mitzvos bein adam l'adam*—between us and our fellow person. There is also the category of *ben adam l'makom*—between us and G-d. These are contradictory aims. A pasuk beginning *V'ahavta lereacha kamocha* and ending *Ani Hashem* is contradictory. The pasuk begins with mitzvos between us and our fellow person and ends with a comment about between us and G-d. Why is Hashem included if it is between us and our fellow person? Again an apparent contradiction as we look at connectedness: Why does the pasuk end with *Ani Hashem*?

When you meet someone new, whether you are aware of it or not, your neshama is looking for a connection to their neshama. We think of it as finding things or people in common. So when we are engaged in *V'ahavta lereacha kamocha*, we are 'making friends' with a new aspect of G-d's manifestation in this world. Ani Hashem. Nice to meet you. When G-d is part of the friendship, we can truly be connected to each other. Beyond friendship, Hashem is saying "if two people show true love between them, Hashem desires to stand with them in partnership". It is the reunification and bridging of the apparent differences between people that paves the pathway to true connectedness.

Every day we face apparent contradictions in our relationships. In our conversations,

CELEBRATION AND TRAGEDY

BY RABBI YAKOV KERZNER, BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, HALIFAX, NS

sometimes we understand something really complicated and miss something very simple. Within ourselves, sometimes we can feel happy and scared or angry and sad at the same time. Our behaviour can be contradictory to what we are feeling or thinking, such as when we act interested even when we are bored or uninterested. Or, the most fascinating opposite! When we really ARE desperate to connect to someone but we feign boredom or disinterest! Many a young person has been heard to say “I don’t care”. It takes a wise, sensitive listener to realize and connect with how much that person does care! These day to day examples are a reflection of these Divine aspects of contradiction and connectedness. As each of must grow into an understanding and awareness of future and past (Ki Savo), the present (Ki Seitzei) is much more salient than the promise of future peace and happiness. So when faced with a disagreement with a relative or friend right now, the anxiety and feeling of inability to keep ourselves above these internal ‘enemies’ is the war we are fighting. Our job is to be mindful of the perspective the Neshama has—Ani Hashem. We are always above our ‘enemy’ whether we realize it or not. By maintaining our perspective that we came from above and will rise above, we can connect to this elusive yet real viewpoint. With this divine koach—force, we can strengthen the bonds of unity and be able to reach the highest levels of connectedness which will ultimately draw down blessings to experience the hope of redemption with whatever challenge we face.

May our peek into the peaceful future become an immediate reality as we all work together to realize that our purpose is to attack our challenges from above, keeping our eyes on the ultimate prize—a world that recognizes the signs of true peace, unity and redemption, speedily in our days. ❧

The days between Pesach and Shavuot contain contradictory emotions. The Torah, as understood in our tradition, portrays these days as a transitional period. We slowly count the 49 days, between our Redemption from Egypt to Revelation at Mount Sinai on the 50th day. Ideally, as one day follows the next, we should be in joyous anticipation of the defining feature of Judaism, receiving the Torah as G-d reveals Himself to the Jewish People. As often happens in Jewish history, the reality does not always match the dream. At the end of the 11th century, the Crusades brought death and destruction to numerous Jewish communities. Only a few days before Shavuot, the Jews of Worms were massacred by the Crusader army. The Jews of Speyer and Mainz fared a similar fate. As a result, the days of Sefirat Omer (the counting of the 49 days) became a time of mourning in Jewish tradition. This mourning period was also associated with the story in the Talmud of the tragic death of 24,000 students of the famed Rabbi Akiva. Although historians assume their death was a result of the failed Bar Kochba Rebellion in 132 C.E., the Talmud relates that they died of respiratory diseases during a plague. The parallels to the beginning of our modern day COVID Plague occurring in the same season can not be ignored. In typical Talmudic fashion, the blame for our afflictions and suffering are assumed to be a result of our sins. The plague or our enemies are only the agent of a wrathful God. Our sin? The Talmud relates that the students did not show proper respect to their fellow students. Not idolatry, murder, thievery or other forms of depravity. Rather, they did not show respect to each other. The Talmud goes on to say that Rabbi Akiva reestablished Torah study with five students who spread learning throughout the Jewish Nation. This Talmudic story is obviously a morality tale more than it is a retelling of historical events.

The message seems very clear. No matter how large our audience or how widespread our ideas, we can never forget the importance of individuality and the unique character of every single person. For our

society to thrive and grow or even to survive, we can never forget the beauty of every individual. We can not create an identity if that identity is a carbon copy of others. We can not exist as individuals

if our sense of self is only a reflection of our neighbors. My father often quoted the Kotzker Rebbe as saying, “If I am I because You are You and You are You because I am I, then I am not I and You are not You. But if I am I because I am I and You are You because You are You, then I am I and You are You.”

Respect for a spouse, a sibling, a friend or a neighbor is not a feigned superficial nod to their right to an opinion. It is a deep appreciation of the essence of the Other. Survival, in the long term, depends on learning what others stand for, getting to the core of their identity and sincerely knowing who the Other is. Shavuot is a time of Revelation from G-d. G-d doesn’t speak in a booming voice that overwhelms our senses and dissolves our identities. Rather, as Elijah learned in his private revelation, G-d speaks in a “kol demamah dakah”, a thin still voice. Revelation is a private experience uniquely experienced by each and every one of us. We all see G-d through our own private lenses. Just as the beauty of a rainbow is its variety of colors, so does the exquisite splendor of the Jewish People depend on the many shades of light that shines forth from our personal encounters with G-d. When these colors unite, the product is a bright white light that shines forth in the World and creates the illumination that allows all that exist to experience “the light unto the nations” that is our ultimate mission in life. ❧



PERSPECTIVE DURING THE PANDEMIC

BY CHANA YAGOD, DAUGHTER OF RABBI YITZCHOK AND REBBETZIN FRIMET SHAYNA YAGOD, CONGREGATION TIFERES ISRAEL, MONCTON, NB

2020 has sure been an interesting, unusual year and it looks like 2021 is going to continue to be yet another unusual year in different ways.


January was still full of so much unknown and global fear, and now so much of the population has been vaccinated and a huge percentage of business have opened back up to the public, with procedures in place, and welcoming the new flow of traffic in our streets. New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio... all these places have brought back a lot of non-home routine and in some cities, you might not even know it's Corona era anymore because for the signs and masks everywhere, because there is so much opened up and resumed. We have entered a new normal, where the world is reintroducing public routines of work and commute and eating out, overlays with new habits to adjust to, evident in the surplus of locations for hand sanitizing, the sheer variety of face masks to suit every type, the social distancing floor markers. Companies all over have added delivery services and the national ones have regularized their offerings, and there is contactless shopping in abundance

too. With all this, we have resumed going into the workplace, the stores, and seeing people in limited ways. There is still so much confusion in the world and dispute across the board on what is the right way to handle any of this, but one thing we can always do is look to the torah: in Mishlei, around Chaoter 2, it says "if you are always happy, you will be saved from Magefah. But if you're sad, what will save you?" And in the Targum (Aramaic explanation) it says the Magefah is "Koronah," in Hebrew.

What does this mean? There was a story of a rabbi whose student showed up one day panicky about a plague going around their town and others, and was afraid it would kill off tons of people and couldn't rest from fear. So his rabbi assured him "don't worry, only a few thousand will die," out of the hundreds of thousands of people who lived in the region. He wasn't making light of the deaths, he considered them very tragic, but he was trying to give his student some perspective on the mortality rate and the level of danger being lower than he feared. Weeks later the plague was over, and it turned out not a few thousand but tens of thousand died. So

they returned to their rabbi and asked him "what happened? I thought you said only a few would die." He explained: "only a few thousand passed on from the plague itself, but the rest of them... died from the fear of it."

Because chronic paranoia is the biggest destroyer of all. So as we proceed through new unknowns and advanced stages of the world's adjustment to the situation, let us not be so panicky but keep it all in perspective. Excess fear is the most dramatic peril. Absolutely you should do all you can to keep yourself and your family and community safe, and to practice good hygiene and health habits. But also keep in mind perspective and chill out a bit. Just do your very best, and leave the rest up to Gd, because you are not responsible for what you have no control over. Once we are doing 100% of what we can, we may not have control over the outcome, but we can always control our reaction to the situations going on around us and whatever may come our way.

May Gd help you and all your loved ones stay safe and healthy, and with G'ds Help we will all chart a way through this. 

PESACH—WHAT DOES SPRING HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

BY RABBI MENDEL FELDMAN, CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF THE MARITIMES



The Torah cautions us three times to celebrate Passover only during the spring season.

Our months follow the lunar cycle, so naturally Passover would fall out at various seasons of the year. Accordingly, every 2-3 years we need to create a leap-year, add an extra month to our calendar, so that Pesach does not "move" away to another season, and always coincides with spring.

Why is the Torah so adamant that we observe Passover during the spring season? The Torah explains this at the three occasions "for in the month of spring, G-d

brought you out of Egypt." But still, what is the importance of celebrating Passover each year at the identical season when it occurred the first time? What message can we learn from this?

THE REBBE GAVE THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION:

In the winter you go out to your yard, and you see the trees are bedecked with snow and ice, no leaves, no growth, no vegetation they appear lifeless. However, this is only on the surface, but in reality, although the tree seems dormant it is very much alive.

Winter is a cold and difficult time for many organisms, including trees, and the trees must prepare themselves to survive this

harsh season. During winter's dormancy, a tree's metabolism, energy consumption, and growth all slow down significantly in order to endure the harsh season of winter when water and sunlight are scarcer. This dormancy occurs in stages; it begins in the fall with the loss of leaves, so trees do not expend energy in keeping them alive during the winter. Through the winter months, the rate of growth is brought nearly to a halt, the stored energy is utilized to maintain the tree's health. With no growth and the task of keeping its leaves alive, trees are able to survive through winter by maintaining only the "essential systems" until the spring when

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WHAT KIND OF ZEBRA ARE YOU?

BY RABBI CHANAN CHERNITSKY, DIRECTOR, CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF NEWFOUNDLAND

A man visits the local zoo, and for the first time in his life, he sees a Zebra. In his innocence, he asks the Zebra the following question: "Are you white with black stripes or are you black with white stripes?"

I need to interrupt the story to let you know that this was no ordinary Zebra, because not only did the Zebra understand the question but the Zebra even responded.

This is what the Zebra told him: "Are you narcissistic, egoistic and self centred with some good habits or are you good with narcissistic, egoistic and self centred habits?" Good question.

Have you ever asked yourself this question?

Perhaps you have asked this question, albeit a bit differently: "Is the world good but bad things happen or is the world bad and good things happen".

This is an easy one. Really. Just look around you.

No need to open holy books and get into philosophical debates.

You see a world full of colour. Full of life. Full of growing plants and flowers.

Obviously the world "is good"! The world is good and we need to retrain ourselves to interpret positively whatever happens to us in our lives.

I recently saw how Maimonides makes this point in his Guide for the Perplexed called Moreh Nevuchim. He writes that people often lose sight of the big picture of life because of their personal suffering or misfortune (G-d forbid) and they paint life and the world as a whole with the same brush.

Neuroscientists discovered that negative events make a stronger mark in our brain, to help us avoid dangerous and uncomfortable situations. Not so with positive and happy events.

Practically speaking? We need to make a conscious effort to be positive for us to lead positive lives and have a positive attitude or it won't happen by itself.

Just take a few minutes every day to count your blessings and notice the beautiful world around you.

You woke up today? Do you have a family? Do you have a roof over your head?

But what about our friend who visited the zoo?

The answer is the same.

We are intrinsically good and holy but we get distracted and sometimes our intrinsic goodness is covered in dirt.

Instead of focusing on the dirt, the flaws, etc. in your spouse, sibling, boss or anyone else, look beyond the trappings, look beyond the surface and focus on that person's positive qualities. Everybody has them.

We need to take the time to look for them and make a conscious effort to focus on the good.

Focusing on the good and having positive anticipation are the vessels for the Divine blessing.

Have a healthy summer! ☺



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nature reawakens, and the trees begin to blossom once again.

The truth is that the spring blossoming is a direct result of the incredible work the tree did during the harsh winter, conserving its energy and nutrients. What seemed like lifelessness was the furthest thing from it; it was really the conservation of life internally, allowing afterward for the outward blossoming.

We can now appreciate one of the reasons that the Torah instructs us to celebrate Passover during springtime for it is this season and its botanical wonders that allow us to internalize one of the holiday's vital messages. The prophet Ezekiel described the Jewish people before the Exodus in these words: "But you were naked and bare, similar to the tree in the winter: naked and bare. When the Jews were in Egypt, the sages teach us, they were submerged in the

"forty-nine gates" of impurity, to the point that if they would have remained there any longer, they could not be redeemed.

They suffered so much they were numb and lost all hope for redemption. But, just like the tree, that was only externally, at the surface it seemed like the Jews were bare and naked. But as "spring" arrived, as Passover came, the people blossomed, and merely seven weeks after liberation, in a singular moment in history, G-d revealed Himself to them and gave them the Torah, the blueprint to create a nation under the direct sovereignty of G-d, and to change the world.

Within a few weeks, the incredible transformation that has happened to this people during all those years in Egyptian exile became apparent. They may have seemed lifeless, but internally, they were alive to the degree that they were able to receive the Torah just seven weeks later.

So too, in our own lives, sometimes it seems hopeless, and unpromising—look

again! There is a simmering life beneath the surface, give yourself some time, "sunlight" and nourishment, and you will come back to life.

What is more, sometimes our dormancy serves a vital purpose, occasionally, our minds and souls retreat into hibernation in order to conserve energy focus and vitality. It is essential to the process of nature, you can't be bedecked with green leaves all the time, there are times in life when we need to shed the leaves and retreat into our inner self. Don't be afraid of such moments; it will allow you to regenerate with new life, vitality and focus!

Wishing you a spring and summer season of good health, growth and vitality. ☺

IT'S ALL ABOUT TORAH

BY RABBI GARY KARLIN, SHAAR SHALOM CONGREGATION, HALIFAX, NS

I'm not kidding myself. I'm an Atlantic Canada newbie. By the time you read this, I'll be getting ready for my two-year anniversary on July 4 as the Rabbi of Shaar Shalom Congregation, and as a resident of Halifax. Two years here is very much still a "from away," but just starting to feel at home, and hopefully more accepted as a Haligonian.

But being from a place is not really about geography. It's about being somewhere long enough to have a past, a store of memories, a history. It's about people: family and community.

The Hebrew language has a word for the connection between place and people: *bayit*. In Hebrew School, many of us learned that *bayit* means house. *Beit k'neset* is a house of meeting—a synagogue. *Beit sefer* is a house of a book, or books—a school. But *bayit* also means "family."

When the Torah talks about how we were to offer the ancient Passover sacrifice of a lamb or goat, it tells us that each head of household

is to take one animal per household, "*seh l'veit avot, seh la-bayit*" (Exodus/*Shemot* 12:3). If there were too few in the family to finish the sacrificial meat, then they would link and pool resources to offer an animal jointly, "if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat" (12:4).

Note here the triad of elements: family/community, a significant occasion, and ritual food. We join with others with whom we share our lives most intimately (family) and then only slightly less so (community). We follow a shared calendar of holidays like Passover, as well as other times of common memory. And we perform unique and evocative rituals using food, drink, words, and actions. Think of a family Shabbat meal with *kiddush* wine and two loaves, or eating outdoors in a *Sukkah* during that wonderful fall festival, or hearing the Rosh haShanah *shofar* with so many

others before returning home with loved ones to dip apple in honey. The uniqueness of Yom Kippur, in fact, is that it focuses only on two of the three elements, people and an occasion, while dispensing entirely with the third.

Tying all these together, of course, is Torah—by which we mean not only the *humash*, the "Five Books," but also the vast Jewish literary tradition that continues to flower from the written Bible: Midrash and Mishnah and Talmud, *Halakhah* (law) and *Aggadah* (lore), philosophy and mysticism, poetry and prose, even music and art. Shavuot, which begins this year on Sunday evening, May 16, celebrates the giving of our Torah at Mt. Sinai, but in a sense it is a starting point for everything else: family, community, shared sacred times and ritual.

This Shavuot 5781, we're especially fortunate to be able to gather safely together to symbolically re-experience the giving of the Torah as always: with family and community, with sacred time and song, and with food and ritual, both at home and in *shul*.

Wishing you and yours a joyous and meaningful Shavuot—*hag Shavu'ot same'ah*. ❧



WE ARE WHAT WE EAT!

BY RABBI YOSEF GOLDMAN, SGOOLAI ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, FREDERICTON, NB

This interesting expression is attributed to Hippocrates, however, I believe that Hashem in the Torah already taught this idea through what are known as the Kosher Dietary Laws. I hope to continue this as a series of teachings in future Shalom Magazines.

A little introduction. There is a certain distinction between Mitzvot (commandments) that are between us and our fellow human being; and commandments that are between us and G-d. Last year I learned, to my surprise, that the list of sins that we ask Hashem for forgiveness on Yom Kippur includes only sins that are committed against G-d! The other thing about that list is that it does not include "major" laws such as Shabbat and Passover?! I believe that the entire purpose of the Mitzvot is to come closer to Hashem and our fellow human being. As far as I know, the Kosher Dietary Laws do not affect our relationship with our friends & neighbours.

There is a rather unknown Midrash about

the first conversation between G-d and Adam (even before Eve was created...). I believe this is the source for the term Tikkun Olam, and should be studied in the proper context—just for example, it does not include saving the whales when there are hungry & homeless people in our community! The Midrash says (on Ecclesiastes 7:13) that when G-d created Adam, he took him for a walk through the Garden of Eden and showed him the beauty & harmony of the garden, and then said: "behold, see what I have created... pay attention and make sure not to destroy my world" (Kohelet Rabbah 7:13).

Our first discourse will be about the law: "thou shalt not sow your field KILAYIM (mixed seeds)" (Leviticus 19:19). In a different context, the Sages in the Midrash ask: "Why does G-d care...?" (Bereshit Rabbah Vayetze), and the answer is: we don't know! However, when Hashem told Adam not to destroy & ruin this beautiful world, we may understand

this as ruining the harmony in this world. Hashem does not want us to create new plants, however, we are asked by G-d to be active participants in making the world a better place. That's why Hashem did not create a tree that will produce cookies & other sweet things, but we participate in the creation by baking & making these delicious things. It sounds like a very fine line, but this is how Hashem wanted it.

In conclusion, the word Mitzvah comes from two different sources: a. A line to Hashem (see Isaiah 28:10); and b. From the modern Hebrew word TZEVEH—team! So, when we keep a law, especially what's called a "negative" (thou shalt not) law, we are doing what pleases Hashem, just like a married couple does things for their spouse without asking why (e.g. why does my spouse like a certain chocolate or flower?). Now that we have that context, we will continue to seek what pleases Hashem and we will become better people and more loving Jews! ❧





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