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Bess Swedlove at 100
 Centenarian donates her piano to Soloway Jewish Community Centre > p. 3

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OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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Hundreds gather to perform good deeds during Mitzvah Day

Event should be a “beacon for other groups in the city to follow and replicate,” Mayor Jim Watson says.

BY MONIQUE ELLIOT

Hundreds of volunteers – from young children to seniors – spent the morning doing good deeds during the Jewish Federation of Ottawa’s eighth annual Mitzvah Day, February 9.

A total of 544 community members eagerly signed up to give back to the community in the spirit of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), one good deed at a time.

The good deeds piled up quickly, with 74 team captains wrangling the participants – including 120 students from Ottawa’s Jewish supplementary schools – to and from such activities as writing letters to lone soldiers in Israel, decorating cards for sick kids at CHEO and Roger’s House, and making sandwiches for the Ottawa Mission, among others.

The majority of the 15 different mitzvot were held on the Jewish Community Campus at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre and Hillel Lodge, while three were held offsite.

One of the main events of the day was when three young girls had their ponytails cut so that the hair could be donated to Locks of Love, a charity that provides hairpieces for children suffering from long-term medical hair loss.

Mayor Jim Watson, who cut Talia Freedhoff’s ponytail, had participated in the Locks of Love hair-cutting at Mitzvah Day last year and joked that he hoped for sharper scissors this time.

“I’ll never make it as a barber, but, once a year, I think I can handle it,” he said.

“It was a little difficult cutting through some of the hair,” Watson smiled. “But it’s such a wonderful sight to see these young girls doing something year-long, and which culminates with the cutting of their hair for cancer patients on Mitzvah Day.”

The other girls donating their ponytails were Abby Tatham, whose hair was cut by Mitzvah Day co-chair Linda Melamed, and Elana Rogoff, whose hair was cut by Josh Engel of Mitzvah Day sponsor GGFL Chartered Accountants.

Mitzvah Day co-chair Warren Melamed, Linda’s husband, said his family’s decision to accept the Federation’s request that his family take on a major role in organizing Mitzvah Day was an easy choice.

“We said yes because we thought, not only is it a nice way to get involved with the Jewish community and to help and

See Mitzvah Day on page 2



(Front, from left) Abby Tatham, Talia Freedhoff and Elana Rogoff had their braided ponytails cut at Mitzvah Day so the hair could be donated to Locks of Love. (Rear) Mitzvah Day MC Patricia Boal of CTV Ottawa with haircutters Linda Melamed, Mitzvah Day co-chair; Mayor Jim Watson; and Josh Engel of GGFL, a Mitzvah Day sponsor.



Funds raised by the extreme football game were donated to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada. Mitzvah Day co-chair Michael Melamed (centre) presents the cheque for \$1,000 to Dr. Vladimir Contreras Domingues and nurse Carolyn Pugliese of the Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.

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Stuart Hendin’s mission to Afghanistan > p. 12

John Diener on genealogy and genetics > p. 20

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Mitzvah Day: 'It's just about doing good in the community'

Continued from page 1

give back, but also to teach our kids to get involved and put others before themselves," he said of sons Jacob and Michael, who joined their parents as Mitzvah Day co-chairs.

The Melameds said their involvement was also to raise awareness for pulmonary hypertension, a medical condition affecting blood pressure in the lungs, which can lead to heart failure. The family said the cause is very important to them, as they have a close family member diagnosed with the illness.

Michael Melamed organized an extreme football challenge in which participants donated \$10 to play, with the funds being matched by the family.

About 20 of his friends signed up to play, but the game was much less extreme than initially anticipated, with participants opting to stay indoors due to the cold weather. All proceeds from the tournament were donated to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada.

"People come back every year," Linda Melamed said. "It's an event that's very popular."

Mitzvah Day has long been a family affair for Sara Miller, whose father, Jeff

Miller, is a partner at Mitzvah Day sponsor GGFL.

"I love participating," she said. "I wish I could've been more involved in planning; I'm a student now, again, so it's much more difficult. But I like the feeling I get from helping."

Event organizers said getting involved with Mitzvah Day not only gives participants a fantastic feeling by helping others, but also pointed out that high school students can use their Mitzvah Day time toward the 40 volunteer hours they need to graduate.

"I enjoy coming because it's just such a wonderful, beautiful concept, that a community gets together and does good deeds," Watson said. "It's not about fundraising, it's not about advocacy; it is just doing good in the community. I think that's very heartwarming."

Watson, who said he has been attending Mitzvah Day for the past five years, added he would like to see the event gain more widespread recognition, so that the Mitzvah Day model can be used as a "beacon for other groups in the city to follow and replicate."

"The greatest form of flattery is imitation," he said. "And I'm sure the Jewish community would share their



Teacher Aaron Kaiman helps Ottawa Modern Jewish School Grade 2 students decorate letters to lone soldiers in Israel during Mitzvah Day. Aaron's brother, Tobin Kaiman, recently served as a lone soldier.

manual on how to do a wonderful Mitzvah Day with other groups so that we can instil this sense of responsibility in all corners of the city."

The legacy of Mitzvah Day in Ottawa goes back much further than just eight years, said Francie Greenspoon, senior director of communications for the Federation.

"When I went to look back in the archives the other day, it actually has gone on longer," she said, noting it was originally organized under a different name, though with the same intention to do good deeds in the community.

Mitzvah Day is now organized at many of the Jewish federations in North America, Greenspoon said.

Sara Miller said there is no question as to why people have – and should – get involved.

"It really, really makes you feel good at the end of the day. It's just a couple hours of your day to help somebody and make them happy. It's just a fantastic event to get involved in," she said.

"I recommend everybody try it at least once – and then you'll be hooked."



Students from the Temple Israel Religious School decorated tzedakah boxes on Mitzvah Day. The students brought the boxes home and will fill them with coins to be donated to the charity of their choice.

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CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

MAR 7	5:37 PM	APR 4	7:14 PM
MAR 14	6:47 PM	APR 11	7:23 PM
MAR 21	6:56 PM	FIRST DAY OF PESACH	
MAR 28	7:05 PM	APR 14	7:27 PM

BULLETIN DEADLINES

MARCH 12 *	FOR APRIL 7
APRIL 2 **	FOR APRIL 28

*Community-wide Issue (all dates subject to change)
** Early deadline because of Passover closures

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Centenarian ensures magic of music continues

Louise Rachlis talks to **Bess Swedlove** and to members of her family as the pianist, who donated her beloved piano to the SJCC, prepares to celebrate her 100th birthday.

The gorgeous baby grand piano that Bess Swedlove lovingly played in her family home for more than four decades now sits on the stage in the social hall of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC) where it is now being enjoyed by community members who gather there for concerts and other musical events.

Bess, who turns 100 on March 2, recently donated her treasured piano to the Soloway JCC and was in the front row with members of her family on January 22 to hear pianist Katherine Addleman inaugurate the piano at its new home with a concert of compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach.

“The piano was my baby – doing what comes naturally,” she said in an interview at Hillel Lodge, where she has lived for the past two-and-a-half years. “My family stood by me with the piano, encouraging me.”

The piano arrived at the house about 45 years ago as a gift from her husband, Casey, who died in December 2006, just after their 66th wedding anniversary. The new piano replaced a previous piano that was not as grand, and her daughter, Carol-Sue and husband Jack Shapiro, still remember the excitement on the day the piano arrived at their Crescent Heights home.

The longstanding Swedlove family home overlooking Dow’s Lake was sold this past summer when Jack and Carol-Sue downsized to a condo.

Bess – née Bess Jack – grew up in London, Ontario, one of five children, and it was only by default that she received the piano lessons that would help define her life.

“My late aunt had a habit of tapping on the table,” said Carol-Sue. “My grandparents thought that she would be a perfect candidate for the piano and so they bought one. Once it was in the house, my aunt refused to take lessons. Having made this huge expense, Max and Dora Jack needed a child of theirs to learn how to play the piano. Their daughter Bess was the logical choice, as her brothers had already chosen their instruments.”

Once the lessons were registered for, Dora and young Bess’s trips to the Royal Conservatory began. Bess eventually became a piano teacher herself charging 25 cents a lesson.

“There was talk of mom teaching Guy Lombardo,” said Carol-Sue, “but, in fact, Guy Lombardo taught Bess’s brother Nathan how to play the violin.”

Bess excelled at piano in her teens and early 20s and then, at a Jewish youth event in Toronto, she met Casey Swedlove.

“She came in from London, Ontario; he came in from Ottawa and they started courting.”

They married and lived in Kemptville for a while and then moved to Ottawa. Casey had a family theatre business and a furniture and general store in Kemptville called Swedlove’s. In Ottawa, they owned the Rialto Theatre, the Linden Theatre in New Edinburgh, as well as some theatres in the Ottawa Valley.

Then came the twins – Carol-Sue, and Alan, who died in 2003 – and Bess had her hands full. Nevertheless, she continued to give piano lessons as often as she could.

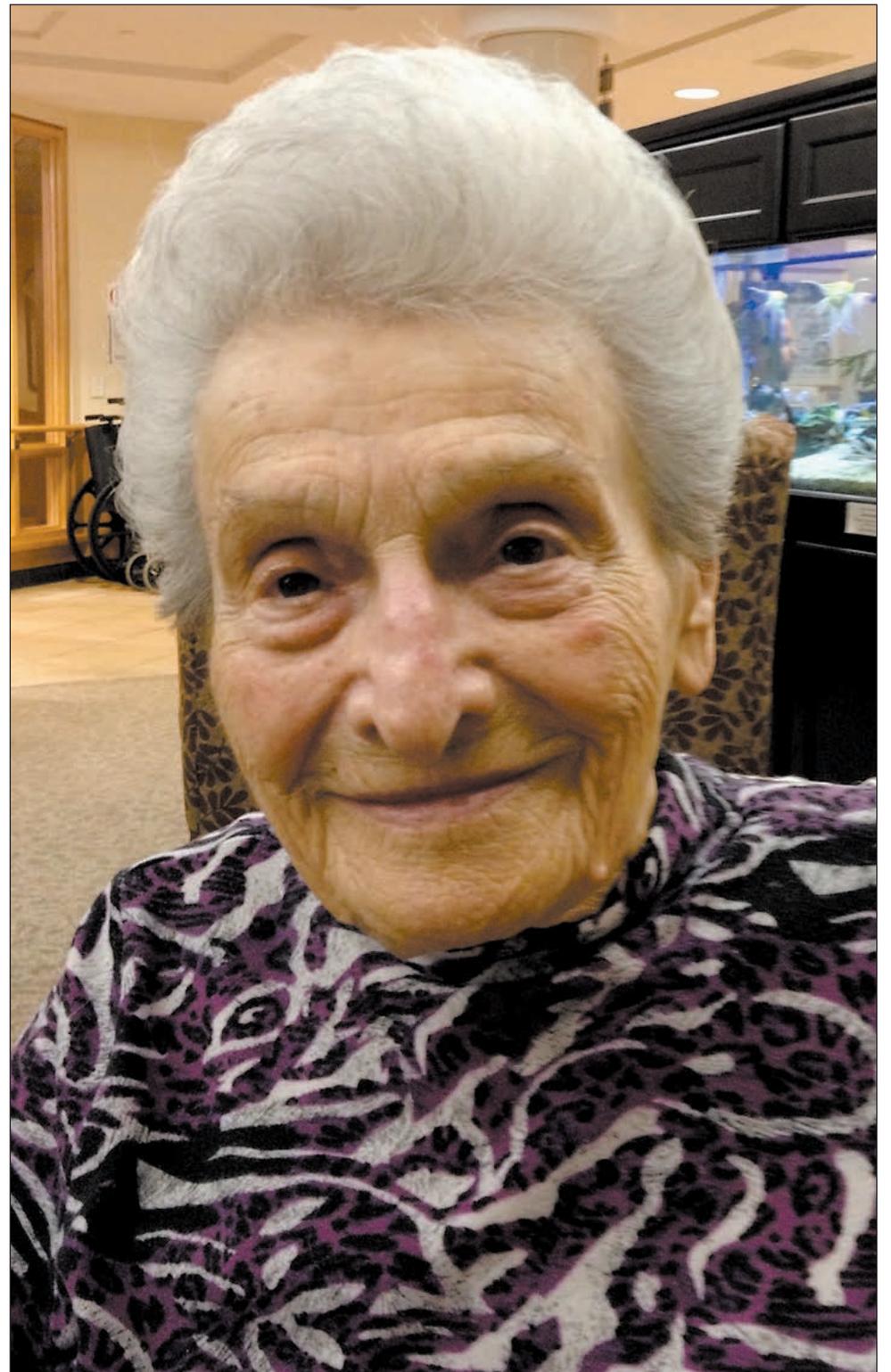
They lived in the Fisher Park area before moving to the Dow’s Lake house when the twins were 16.

Grandchildren Tracy and Michael Shapiro grew up with Bess singing and playing the piano for them. She knew all the popular songs. Later on, when she was in her 90s, she was still creating memories by playing the piano for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

“It was always so special to see her play for them and at family dinners, so warm and special,” said Nikki Shapiro, Michael’s wife.

“A piano was always part of our family’s life,” agreed Carol-Sue. “Many a Saturday night the piano could be surrounded by Bess and Casey’s friends belting out all the old songs. Mom volunteered to accompany the musicals at Agudath Israel Congregation for approximately 22 years, always staying behind the stage curtain, never taking a bow.”

For more than 50 years, Bess volunteered at the Civic Hospital’s gift shop,



Bess Swedlove, seen here at Hillel Lodge, celebrates her 100th birthday on March 2.

their longest standing volunteer ever. She only stopped doing that when she was 93.

Over the years, the Swedloves often took in boarders suggested by family and friends to help them get a start in the city.

“No questions asked,” said Nikki.

An avid cook and baker, Bess was skilled at Jewish cooking, hosting large groups for Shabbat dinners and other occasions.

“There was a social event every Saturday night, always a party, right up until Grandpa passed away,” she added.

Still sociable and friendly, Bess Swedlove is happily greeting visitors at 100 years of age.

“It’s amazing how I got around to this,” she smiles, gazing out at Hillel Lodge. She says she cares about her family and is eager to see what they have planned for her birthday.

New SJCC chair takes office, awards presented at AGM

BY PAMELA ROSENBERG
SOLOWAY JCC

Outstanding community members were honoured, staff members were recognized and a new chair of the board of directors took office, February 6, at the annual general meeting of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC).

Mitch Miller succeeded Bob Wener, who had served as chair for three years. An Ottawa native, Miller served several terms on the SJCC board, most recently as first vice-chair.

Jacque Luffman-Lyman received the Ben Karp Volunteer Service Award. The award was established in honour of volunteer extraordinaire Ben Karp to recognize continued outstanding volunteer service on behalf of the SJCC and was presented by Karp's granddaughter, Andrea Simms-Karp.

"Jackie is one of those wonderful volunteers who puts her heart and soul

into everything she does," said SJCC President and COO Barry Sohn. "She is able to maintain a broad perspective while using her skill sets, resources, intuition and relationship strengths to provide leadership. The SJCC and community are enriched by her involvement."

Luffman-Lyman's relationship with the SJCC began in 2003 after moving to Ottawa from Winnipeg. With her children spending days at Early Beginnings Multicultural Child Development Centre, Jackie joined the SJCC board.

As a unit manager at Statistics Canada, Luffman-Lyman's skills were a welcome addition to the board. Using her professional background, she helped the SJCC find and use statistics and data to understand the organization's needs and improve services.

She has also helped design surveys for different areas of the SJCC and helped



PHOTO: ALEX SARNA

Ben Karp Volunteer Service Award recipient Jackie Luffman-Lyman (centre) with Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Award recipients Eyal Podolsky (left) and Samantha Ruckenstein at the Soloway JCC AGM, February 6.

restart the Early Beginnings board of directors, eventually serving as its chair. With her husband, David Lyman, she co-chaired the 2010 Walkathon.

Samantha Ruckenstein and Eyal Podolsky received Grossman-Klein Teen Leadership Awards, recognizing their outstanding dedication and service to the Jewish community and to the community-at-large.

"Both have helped grow their own youth groups over the years," said SJCC Children and Teens Program Manager Gail Loeff. "They are looked up to by their peers and enjoy giving back to the community."

Ruckenstein, a student at Sir Robert Borden High School, is involved with many community organizations, including FROSTY (Federation of Reform Ottawa Senior Temple Youth) at Temple Israel, the Friendship Circle, Temple Israel Religious School and Congregation Beit Tikvah.

She has served as FROSTY president and was recently awarded the Harriet

Schneider Annual Youth Volunteer Award by Temple Israel. She has also dedicated many hours to the Jewish Youth Library's Friendship Circle, where she provides companionship to a special needs teenager.

Podolsky is a leader in the B'nai Brith Youth Organization and is regional vice-president for Eastern Ontario and Quebec. He has taken advantage of all leadership opportunities presented to him and, in recognition of his initiative, accomplishments and outstanding leadership, was awarded the Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award, in addition to many other awards at both local and regional levels.

Podolsky is an avid volunteer at community events and Hillel Lodge, and is co-president of Sir Robert Borden High School's Jewish Culture Club.

A dozen SJCC staff members were recognized for their years of service. At the top of the list was Jon Braun, director of Athletics and Leagues, who has served 25 years.



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World's oldest Holocaust survivor takes centre stage in Oscar-nominated doc

BY TOM TUGEND

(JTA) – In her 110 years, Alice Herz-Sommer has been an accomplished concert pianist and teacher, a wife and mother – and a prisoner in Theresienstadt.

Now she is the star of an Oscar-nominated documentary showing her indomitable optimism, cheerfulness and vitality despite all the upheavals and horrors she faced in the 20th century.

The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved My Life, a 38-minute film up for best short documentary at the Academy Awards, begins in her native Prague. Alice – everyone from presidents on down calls her Alice – was born on November 26, 1903 into an upper-class Jewish family steeped in literature and classical music.

A friend and frequent visitor was “Uncle Franz,” surname Kafka, along with composer Gustav Mahler and other luminaries.

Trained as a pianist from childhood, Alice made her concert debut as a teenager, married, had a son and seemed destined for the pleasant, cultured life of a prosperous Middle European. But

everything changed in 1939 when Hitler, casually tearing up the Munich accord of a year earlier, marched his troops into Prague and brought with him his anti-Semitic edicts.

Her public concert career was over, yet the family managed to hang on in an increasingly restrictive existence in the Czech capital.

In 1943, however, Alice and her husband, their six-year old son Raphael (Rafi) and Alice’s mother were loaded on the transport to Theresienstadt. The fortress town some 30 miles from Prague was touted by Nazi propaganda as the model ghetto – “The Fuhrer’s gift to the Jews,” with its own orchestra, theatre group and even soccer teams.

With the full extent of the Holocaust still largely unknown, Alice took her deportation with relative equanimity, as was typical for many European Jews.

“If they have an orchestra in Terezin, how bad can it be?” she recalled asking, using the Czech name of the town.

Alice soon found out, as her mother and husband perished there. Alice was saved by her musical gifts; she became a



PHOTO: POLLY HANCOCK

Alice Herz-Sommer, now 110 and pictured here on her 107th birthday, is the subject of an Oscar-nominated documentary.

member of the camp orchestra and gave more than 100 recitals.

But her main focus was on Rafi, trying to make his life bearable, to escape the constant hunger and infuse him with her own hopefulness.

“What she did reminded me of Roberto Benigni in the Italian film *Life is*

Beautiful,” said Malcolm Clarke, director of *The Lady in Number 6*. “He plays an Italian Jew who pretends to his young son that life in the camp is some kind of elaborate game for the boy’s special amusement.”

Liberated in 1945, Alice and Rafi
See Alice on page 9

Jewish Community Service Awards

Members of the Jewish community are invited to nominate individuals to receive community awards at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation in early June.

Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award

The Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award is the highest tribute the Ottawa Jewish Community can bestow on an individual for exceptional service and leadership to the Jewish community over the course of many years.

Freiman Family Young Leadership Award

The Freiman Family Young Leadership Award recognizes an individual under the age of 40, who has rendered exceptional service to the Jewish community.

The Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award

The Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award recognizes an outstanding and active volunteer with the Jewish community who, through many years of service, has contributed to the enrichment of Jewish life in Ottawa.

Submit Recommendations by Monday, March 31, 2014 to:

Chair of the Community Award Selection Committee
Jewish Federation of Ottawa

21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9

or email: rabenheim@jewishottawa.com

For more information or to download a nomination form, please visit www.jewishottawa.com

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FEDERATION
REPORT



JOHN JACKSON
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

Jewish Family Services: chesed and tikkun olam

the man – perhaps for his appearance, perhaps because he might have been mentally ill – my grandfather stopped, gave comfort to the man and gave him his new overcoat. When he got home, my grandmother became furious with him for giving away his overcoat (they were not wealthy people), yet she knew her husband did the right thing, the Jewish thing: providing comfort for someone in need.

Perhaps this is the reason I have spent many years volunteering for JFS: to bring comfort and warmth to those in our community who are so often ignored, forgotten or, even worse, invisible to others.

Over the years, JFS has grown exponentially. This was not because we wanted to, but because we needed to in order to serve and meet the needs of our Jewish community.

Some of these needs are reflected in:

- the \$25,000 in direct financial relief that JFS provides to financially challenged Jewish families per month –

although \$35,000 per month reflects the true need;

- the \$228,000 JFS receives from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany – although \$240,000 better reflects the amount required (the shortfall of \$12,000 is provided by our Jewish community);
- the 25 hours a week of homecare services, which some Holocaust survivors require to continue to live in their own home;
- the Miriam’s Well program, which provides fresh fruit and vegetables to 120 Jewish families each month;
- the 80 Jewish families that use the resources provided by the Kosher Food Bank run by Agudath Israel and Temple Israel;
- the urgent need to find volunteers willing to drive seniors to medical appointments, take them grocery shopping and run other errands, and to provide them with companionship;
- the 25 Jewish women per year who turn to the JFS Shalom Bayit (partner

abuse) program for help, while dozens more suffer in silence;

- the growing need to provide more spaces in JFS’ two adult day programs.

One of the attributes of Abraham is that he said little and did a lot. That is JFS in a nutshell. JFS sees a need, recognizes how to address it, and fulfils our duty and responsibility to provide assistance. There are no focus groups or consultations beyond the approval process of the board and finance committees. JFS just does what is right.

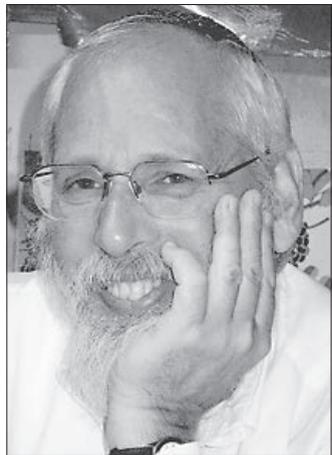
JFS is also a leader in providing services to a range of ethnic communities. In doing so, we continue to build bridges and remove barriers that once stood between our community and many others. It is this notion of tikkun olam I am most fond of: repairing the world, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

I strongly believe in the principles of chesed and tikkun olam, but I also take care to live it on a daily basis. This, I am sure, is because of my grandfather, and other examples like him. I must have absorbed it growing up. My priorities, as president of JFS, will be to continue to help JFS build a strong and healthy Jewish community; a community that is inclusive of all Jewish people.

I am the grandson of Szlojme (Shlomo) Jakow Rabinowicz, the architect of the Great Synagogue of Bialystok, son of Jewish immigrants and the current president of Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS).

My mother, may she rest in peace, used to tell me there was no doubt I was part of my grandfather’s family. The story goes that, one day, in the frigid temperatures of Eastern Europe, my grandfather was walking home and saw a man shivering in the cold with only a shirt on. As others walked by ignoring

FROM THE
PULPIT



RABBI BARRY SCHLESINGER
AGUDATH ISRAEL

Try it, you’ll like it!

mean we should be oblivious to the *Shechina* moments in our lives.

But, what are *Shechina* moments?

These are times when the intensity of this transcendent experience is so strong the person feels the divine presence dwelling within.

Shira and I have felt *Shechina* moments at the births of our children, at the *britot* of our boys, at Adiya’s *simchat bat*, when our daughter Chanita was called to the Torah on her Shabbat Kallah, and at the Shabbat table with all our kids around us.

A *Shechina* moment fills your body and soul with a feeling of reassurance that God must be with you, even if you didn’t expect the call.

In summary, *Vayikra* suggests that we should all be ready for the call to experience the Divine presence. In order to bring this about in a post-*korbanot* (animal sacrifices) era, we strive to get *karov* (close to God) as often as we can. *Vayikra* teaches us we don’t have to wait for the call to get close to God; there’s an opportunity for a *Shechina* moment just around the corner.

We can turn the Shabbat table from a solely gastronomical experience into an educational and spiritual *Shechina* moment for the whole family. The Shabbat dinner (Friday night and Shabbat afternoon) offers the family a weekly opportunity to be together

without the need to rush through the meal to get to the board meeting or hockey game on time.

Our Shabbat dinner table is transformed, as the Rabbis teach us, to an altar; a way of getting close to God in lieu of sacrifices.

In addition, observing *kashrut* and *hachnasat orchim* (practising hospitality) we turn our dinner table into *davar shebikdusha* (sanctified activity). We sit together for some quality time with family and friends. We chat about our week, what was accomplished, and what we should be thankful for. We discuss *Parshat Hashavua* and raise our modest Shabbat table to the Heavens.

As the Rabbis teach us (*Pirkei Avot* 3:4), “Three who dine at a table and exchange words of Torah are considered as have eaten at God’s table. As it is written (*Ezekiel* 41:22), And God spoke to me, “This is the table before Hashem.”

Oneg Shabbat (enjoying the pleasure of Shabbat) is done by dining, talking, learning and singing together with family and friends. As the *piyut* (liturgical poem) goes, “Shabbat is a taste of the world to come,” or, in my words, you don’t have to wait until the age of 120 to appreciate *Gan Eden* (Paradise – the Garden of Eden). Shabbat offers a weekly genuine *Shechina* moment, an experience of joy.

Try it, you’ll like it!

This coming week’s (March 8) Torah portion features an interesting calligraphic anomaly in the Torah. The parsha opens with the words “*Vayikra el Moshe* (He [God] called to Moshe from the Tent of Meeting).”

Vayikra, the opening word of *Leviticus*, includes an *Alef Ze’ira*, a smaller than usual *Alef* at the end of the word. The *Baal Haturim* (Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, 14th century Spain) explains that the little *Alef* symbolizes the humility of Moshe Rabeinu, who didn’t expect God’s direct call to him. He felt that he wasn’t really worthy of this direct communication with Hashem.

Today, we may live long lives without ever experiencing Moshe’s *Vayikra*. We may never receive that direct long distance call from God, but that doesn’t

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The Bulletin, established in 1937 as “a force for constructive communal consciousness,” communicates the messages of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and its agencies and, as the city’s only Jewish newspaper, welcomes a diversity of opinion as it strives to inform and enrich the community. Viewpoints expressed in these pages do not necessarily represent the policies and values of the Federation.

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

I'm somewhat of a music maven, and singer-songwriter-guitarist David Broza – who performed a sold-out concert 15 months ago at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre – has long been one of my favourite Israeli artists. In his music, he often combines elements of folk, flamenco, pop and rock styles to create something that is both universal and uniquely his own. Many of his songs are compelling and intense keeping listeners' attention glued both to the music and to the messages in the songs.

Broza has long advocated Israel's seeking a comprehensive peace treaty with the Palestinians – one of his most beloved songs is "Yihyeh Tov," which, decades ago, became an anthem of the Israeli peace movement – and nowhere is that more clear than on his latest album, *East Jerusalem/West Jerusalem*.

Israeli singer reaches out with a powerful message of peace

Broza purposefully recorded the album in an East Jerusalem recording studio owned by a Palestinian and on it he collaborates with a cast of Israeli, Palestinian and American singers and musicians on a repertoire of songs – some of which he wrote or co-wrote, others borrowed from other sources – most of which advocate for peace and co-operation.

The songs on *East Jerusalem/West Jerusalem* are written and sung primarily in English although a couple of them also have verses in both Hebrew and Arabic. Some of the songs are specific to the Israeli-Palestinian situation, while others take on that meaning due to the context of the album, the artist and his collaborators. Several of the songs are controversial just by virtue of who wrote them.

Among the highlights of Broza's own songs is the title track, "East Jerusalem/West Jerusalem," which he co-wrote and sings with American-Haitian hip-hop artist Wyclef Jean. The song recognizes the essential humanity of all people – Israelis and Palestinians and others from around the world – and expresses a longing for *shalom* and *salaam*, and a time when "the world will be a better place." The musical interaction of Broza's singing and Jean's

rapping is captivating and convincing.

But, without doubt, the most poignant song on the album is Broza's musical setting of "The Lion's Den," a poem written by Judea Pearl, the Israeli-American university professor, about the horrific murder of his son, journalist Daniel Pearl, by Islamist terrorists in Pakistan.

Written and sung as an imagined narrative by Daniel of what he was witnessing in Pakistan in his final days and hours, he observes that unspeakable evil is being committed and justified in God's name. Although it is sung quietly, "The Lion's Den" is a song of unmistakable and unforgettable power.

One song that I think misses its intended mark is "Jerusalem," written by Steve Earle, the acclaimed American folk and alt-country artist who co-produced the album. While it's certainly well intentioned, the song absurdly seems to suggest the conflict between "all the children of Abraham" will be resolved when Jews and Muslims get around to accepting the peaceful teachings of Christianity. The song's essential message ignores centuries of war and oppression wrought in Jesus' name. (I made this same point in 2002, when I reviewed Earle's

album, *Jerusalem*, in the *Montreal Gazette*.)

I mentioned that several songs are controversial just by virtue of who wrote them. The most notable of these is "Mother" from Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, which was written by Roger Waters, perhaps the most fervent anti-Israel boycott in popular music.

Others are "Every Day I Write the Book," by Elvis Costello, who cancelled a concert in Israel in 2010 following pressure from Palestinian solidarity activists; and "Where Do the Children Play," by Cat Stevens, a British convert to Islam, who is alleged to have provided support to Hamas.

I think that by including those songs Broza is reaching out to anti-Israel boycotters with a message that peace will be found through dialogue, co-operation and collaboration. If only they could understand that message.

East Jerusalem/West Jerusalem will be released in Canada on March 4.

ANNE MAYBERGER BLAIR

The February 17 edition of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* – which went to press on February 7 – included a feature article celebrating what was to have been the 100th birthday of Anne Mayberger Blair on February 18. Sadly, she passed away on February 13, just as the issue was beginning to reach subscribers' homes.

We extend our deepest condolences to her family and friends.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

Harper's position on Israel is not about votes

was never made to feel so good to be a Jew in Canada ... It is such a gift, such a sea change."

Then he paused and said he worries whether what the prime minister says is too positive, too good to be true.

And there it is. How a totally positive conversation can produce this reflective doubt, this worry. The prime minister is so overwhelmingly favourable that, as Jews, we have to sometimes pinch ourselves to make sure we heard correctly, because it is so inconsistent with virtually everything we hear around us.

We know all too well that we live at a time when the policies of the Israeli government are under constant attack from all sides and from every quarter. In many cases, it is without merit and intellectually dishonest, but it isn't always the case. A perfectly legitimate question can be asked: How can the Israeli government talk peace and promote new settlements at the same time?

While Harper's Knesset speech talked about a two-state solution, his silence on settlements throughout his visit seems so inconsistent. His silence makes our

position, the Canadian position, on past and proposed settlements seemingly ambiguous in a part of the world where ambiguity has been a long-standing obstacle.

The Harper visit generated a lot of media attention in Canada. A lot of it was critical, but, in some instances, surprisingly positive – certainly more positive than one might have expected. The coverage also conveyed the fact not all Jews think alike.

Our community is diverse in its opinions. For example, I have a friend who won't engage in a critical conversation about Israel on the grounds he has full faith the Israeli government does what it has to do and we in Canada have no right to question anything. I have another friend who came back from his first trip to Israel backing his pro-Palestinian views and declaring the only nice Israeli he met was a server in a restaurant.

Many critical commentators will continue to write that the prime minister sees Israel in black-and-white and there is a risk of our community becoming

colour-blind to the many other shades that make up the Middle Eastern conflict. It is easy to see it the prime minister's way, because he is such a powerful, positive, lonely voice in a universe of negatives.

It just seems there are any number of hard realities that might bring us down to earth with a thud, beginning with the Canadian government's official position on the peace process, settlements and borders. As for what the rest of the world thinks, if we care, and one day we might have to, there is no leader in the world who thinks as Harper does, a fact that was well documented during his visit.

But, in the meantime, how could most of us not rejoice in our prime minister's understanding and respecting Israel as much as he does. He has demonstrated, time and again, how he sincerely supports Israel as a thriving democracy and how he believes growing anti-Semitism in the world is a major concern.

His position is not about votes that will make a difference in the next election. If it were, he would not be so one-sided. Beyond a precious few ridings like Mount Royal, he actually risks losing many more votes than he stands to gain.

And, while we rejoice in his support, we should be respectful of those who don't agree with everything the prime minister says or doesn't say about Israel.

Irwon Cotler's announcement that he won't seek re-election in 2015 raises a couple of interesting questions. His long-time Liberal riding in Montreal has the second largest Jewish population in Canada. Will it remain Liberal? Will the voters of Mount Royal not feel compelled to vote Conservative in light of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's trip to Israel?

In a recent conversation with a friend, it seemed automatic that Pierre Trudeau's old riding would turn Conservative. After all, Harper could not have done more or said more in support of Israel.

We talked about all the positives and then my friend said, "I tell my children it was never like this when I was young. I



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Dating really can be fun and the Single Dating Diva will show you how

BY JONATHAN AVERY
FOR EMERGING GENERATION DIVISION

One of the biggest – and, for some, the most terrifying – hurdles for members of the emerging generation is navigating the world of dating.

Like many, I'm searching for that one special person to share my life with. As we get older, however, it seems that much more difficult to find the person we're looking for. We are more established in who we are and we want to find that special someone to complement our life.

Although online dating facilitates the process, effectively marketing yourself, weeding through countless profiles and making a good impression is quite challenging. If only we knew someone who could help us make dating fun again.

On Saturday, March 8, the Emerging Generation Division of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa is co-sponsoring *Effectively Navigating the Dating World*, an interactive workshop hosted by Suzie A., also known as the "Single Dating Diva" and the author of the *Single Dating Diva* website – www.singledatingdiva.com.

Having a professional background in public relations and interpersonal communications, Suzie uses her expertise, as well as her own dating wisdom, to help make other people's dating experiences better. The workshop will offer participants the opportunity to develop skills to interact more effectively with people online and off.

Ask the Single Dating Diva a dating question, make new friends and have fun sharing your own dating tips!

"It's not easy out there, I know that first hand. All we want is our own happily ever after, but how do we achieve it? It's all about perspective," says the Single Dating Diva.

"We all have the ability to put ourselves out there in the best way possible, but we don't always do that. Our emotions, insecurities and anxiety about being alone often cloud our judgment. I always tell my readers to focus on the process and not the dating outcomes.

"Dating is fun when you make it enjoyable. It has to be more about meeting new people and discovering



Suzie A., the Single Dating Diva, will lead an interactive workshop on dating geared to young adults in their 20s and 30s on March 8.

more about who you are and what you like and don't like than being a chore or an interview.

Also, remember that 'single' isn't a bad word. Once you've truly realized that, then you will be able to be true to yourself, which will make you that much further ahead in your dating life."

So, join us, Saturday, March 8, 8 pm, at the Acting Company, 738A Bank Street.

Tickets are \$10 at the door and light refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Jonathan Avery or Erica Bregman at marchdatingevent@live.ca.

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From seeds to trees on Tu Bi'Shevat

JNF Ottawa's Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon supported our Adamit Park. But we also had many activities and winners in Ottawa – specifically our two grand prize winners: Hannah Gregory, a student at Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS), won the Sens Zamboni package, and David Steinberg won an Epson colour printer. The Telethon and Tu Bi'Shevat are over, but the mitzvah of tikkun olam by planting trees in Israel is 365 days a year. As we like to say, it's never too late to donate.

During Mitzvah Day at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (JCC), more than 60 youth planted seeds in recycled JNF Blue Boxes. Half of the decorated "planters" are being given to Tamir for their residents who can enjoy the "fruits" of this mitzvah. The other half went home with the children who enjoyed the activity. Reusing the donated Blue Boxes was an idea from JNF Canada's Education Department. Five classes at OJCS also decorated and planted seeds for Tu Bi'Shevat in recycled Blue Boxes – one of the many and varied art projects made from recycling at the school. A special thank you to Morah Ruthie for helping to make JNF Ottawa Day at the school a reality.



Ottawa Jewish Community School student Hannah Gregory, winner of the Sens Zamboni package, one of the grand prizes in JNF Ottawa's Tu Bi'Shevat Telethon.

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ottawa.jnf.ca

Alice: Documentary film captures Alice's unfailing affirmation of life

Continued from page 5

returned to Prague, but left for Israel four years later. There she taught at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and performed in concerts frequently attended by Golda Meir, while Rafi became a concert cellist.

Alice said she loved her 37 years living in Israel, but, when Rafi, her only child, decided to move to London, she went with him. A few years later, Rafi died at 65, but the mother remained in her small flat, No. 6, in a North London apartment house.

Nearly all of the film was shot over a two-year period inside the flat dominated by an old Steinway piano on which Alice played four hours each day, to the enjoyment of her neighbours.

Originally, the filmmakers considered *Dancing Under the Gallows* as the film's title before going with *The Lady in Number 6*.

It was a wise decision, for the film is anything but a grim Holocaust documentary with Alice's unfailing affirmation of life, usually accompanied by gusts of laughter.

Her health and speech have declined in recent months, and she no longer does interviews. But, in a brief phone conversation, conducted mainly in German, Alice attributed her outlook partially to having been born with optimistic genes and a positive attitude.

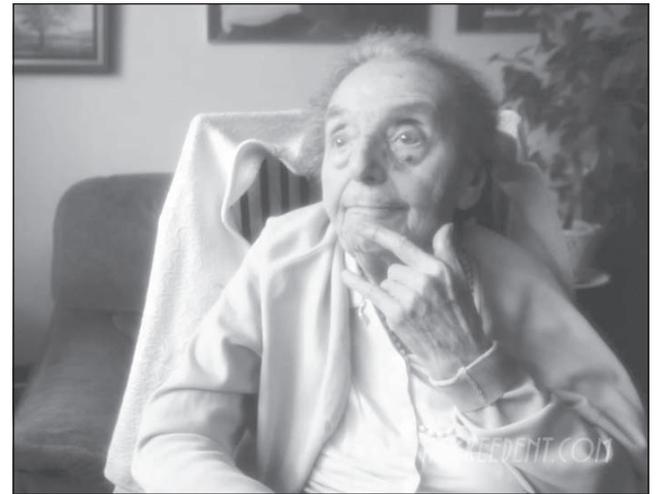
"I know there is bad in the world, but I look for the good," she said, and "music is my life."

At 104, she took up the study of philosophy and likes to quote German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who said "Without music, life would be a mistake."

The film is peppered with such observations, which coming from anyone else might be considered a sign of Candide-like naiveté.

A sampling of her sayings: "Wherever you look, there is beauty everywhere"; "After a century on the keyboard, I still look for perfection"; "I'm so old because I use my brain constantly. The brain is the body's best medicine"; and "A sense of humour keeps us balanced in all circumstances, even death."

Many of the observations are recorded by Caroline Stoessinger in her book, *A Century of Wisdom: Lessons from the Life of Alice Herz-Sommer, the World's Oldest Living Holocaust Survivor*, which forms the basis for the



Alice Herz-Sommer in a scene from *The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved My Life*.

film and her on-screen interviews.

Stoessinger, a New York concert pianist, interviewed Alice and her friends over a period of 15 years and became an ardent admirer of her subject.

"Alice doesn't complain, she doesn't look back, she has no anxieties," Stoessinger said. "Even in Theresienstadt, she never doubted that she would survive."

Stoessinger also convinced Clarke to direct the film. He won an Oscar in 1989 for his short documentary, *You Don't Have to Die*, and an Oscar nomination for *Prisoner of Paradise*, which also focused on life and death in Theresienstadt.

The film's producer, Nick Reed, like Clarke, was reluctant to take on the new assignment.

"We asked ourselves, who is going to watch another Holocaust documentary with a really old lady? Fred Bohbot, our executive producer, Malcolm and I have really been stunned by the enthusiastic reaction to the film," Reed said.

Clarke and Reed are British-born Canadians. Neither is Jewish, but, as Reed put it, "I am not a Jew, but I'm Jewish."

Asked about the film's budget, Reed responded, "About 35 cents, a bus token and bits of old chewing gum."

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'OJCS is an incredible school,' says Grade 9 student

Editor's note: The following is an edited version of a speech made by Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) Grade 9 student Ella Sabourin at a recent OJCS open house.

OJCS is an incredible school for many reasons. The learning environment is excellent. The anti-bullying policy is well enforced.

The security team makes me feel completely safe and protected, and that is very important. With all of these school attacks as of late, security is key. I have never been scared to go to school.

As well, the people who contribute to this school, be they custodians, administration, staff or schoolmates, are all kind, eager and enthusiastic about OJCS. I am proud to be part of that.

The teachers here are charismatic and look out for each and every one of their students, ensuring we will not only succeed, but have fun while doing so. It is truly

ELLA SABOURIN GUEST COLUMN

an incredible school and lacks only more Jewish kids willing to come and participate in this incredible, unforgettable Jewish learning experience.

Changing from the elementary division to the high school was a surprisingly big step. Lots of kids think it's the same thing because it's in the same building. It is actually very different. When you go to the high school, you have far more responsibility and freedom. There aren't as many strict rules or guidelines, including school uniform.

As well, the teachers were almost all new to me. They have different teaching styles than the elementary teachers. Teachers are a crucial aspect in a small school. If you get stuck with a bad teacher, the experience would be pretty bad. Thankfully, the OJCS teachers are all fantastic. I don't know how they do it, but they manage to find some of the best teachers I've ever had.

Another thing I want to mention is the clubs. There are a lot of clubs and teams to join in the high school division.

For example, I was able to join the girl's golf club with two of my friends, even though I've never played golf in my life! One of my other favourites so far is the Reach for the Top club, a trivia competition. We ask each other trivia questions and buzz in if we know the answers.

Trust me, it's way more fun than it sounds.

The other students here are so welcoming and super nice. I got to know the older kids by participating in the OJCS drama production. If you decide to come to this school, that is something I highly recommend. It was an absolutely incredible nerve-racking and exhilarating task. We performed *The Three Musketeers* and everyone had a lot of fun! It was one of the most rewarding experiences.

The last thing I'll mention is the Shabbaton. Every year, the whole high school gets together on a Friday and Saturday and we go to shul, participate in fun group activities, and go out to Funhaven or play laser tag together. The Shabbaton was a great experience and it was some of the most fun that I've had at shul recently.

Those are only some of the highlights of what I've experienced so far. I can hardly wait for what's to come at OJCS. I really hope you take consider this school, because I am truly glad that I did.

To learn more about OJCS, contact Andréa Black at 613 422-2795 or andrea.black@theojcs.ca.

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OTTAWA JEWISH
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Women's Seder highlights issues of domestic abuse in the Jewish community

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

Isolated, her self-confidence eroded, it can be much harder for a Jewish woman to seek help when experiencing abuse.

"As a member of a minority group, it takes much longer for Jewish women to come forward," explained Lynne Oreck-Wener, a member of the Ottawa Women's Seder committee. "Women feel the burden of betraying the Jewish community and the concept of maintaining *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) has been a barrier to speaking out."

"Some men are controlling; some use physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse," said Women's Seder founder Yaffa Greenbaum. "Abuse cuts across all socio-economic lines. People think if they have money, it's not an issue. In reality, this is not what protects someone from being abused."

The goal of the annual Women's Seder – which takes place this year on Sunday, April 6 – is to bring awareness of the issue of domestic abuse in the Jewish community, said Greenbaum. "Research indicates that our statistics about abuse in the Jewish community mirrors those in the community-at-large, which is that four out of 10 women will experience abuse in their lifetime."

The strength of the annual seder grows each year.

"It has taken a very strong education campaign," said Greenbaum. "One of the things so powerful about the seder is that women express how meaningful it is to them. It's remarkable to me that women from all walks of life come here and say, 'I had no idea. How can I help my neighbour, friend or family member?'"

"Every year, there are women who come forward and say the seder has brought them new awareness of the issue of domestic violence in the Jewish community. They have that spark of recognition that it's closer to them than they realize."

"It resonates," agreed Oreck-Wener.

"Women say, 'I'm going to come back next year and bring a friend or relative.'

"Our goal is to have younger women learn and take the message back to their friends or families so they are able to help one another and get access to services."

This year, Miriam cups, named for the prophetess Miriam and symbolizing her bravery and devotion to the Jewish people, will be sold at the Women's Seder.

"Perhaps the presence of the cup will help open up a discussion on the roles women play in our history and liberation and in the search for freedom," said Greenbaum.

The Miriam cups come in many different styles and materials, including glass, ceramic and wood.

"We are also asking women to bring pre-paid gift cards for us to distribute to local shelters," said Oreck-Wener. "Shelters have given us a list of cards that would be greatly appreciated, such as long distance phone cards for those that have had to come down from the North, cards for drug stores and grocery stores, movie theatres and coffee shops."

Greenbaum has created a Haggadah for the Ottawa Women's Seder, which combines traditional seder ritual with passages from a wide variety of sources that explore the role of women from the perspective of oppression.

"We say to women, 'It's not your fault,'" said Oreck-Wener. "We're hoping with the seder will come increased awareness of this issue and more women experiencing abuse will come forward or help a friend or family member who is in an abusive relationship."

The ninth annual Women's Seder, including a full seder dinner catered by David Smith, takes place Sunday, April 6, 5 pm, at Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue. Tickets are \$36 and all women are welcome to attend.

For information and tickets, e-mail ottawawomensseder2014@gmail.com or



PHOTO: LOUISE RACHLIS

Organizers Yaffa Greenbaum (left) and Lynne Oreck-Wener with one of the Miriam cups that will be sold at the ninth annual Women's Seder, April 6.

call Jean Myers at 613-798-4696, ext. 242.

Sponsored tickets are available for those who can't afford to attend. All requests will be kept confidential. You

can also arrange to sponsor tickets for others.

Doors open at 4:30 pm for the sale of Miriam cups.

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Ottawa lawyer returns from training mission for lawyers and judges in Afghanistan

Louise Rachlis talks to **Stuart Hendin** about his dangerous mission in the war-torn country

Ottawa lawyer Stuart Hendin has returned home after spending more than four months in Afghanistan training lawyers and judges as an international training adviser in Kabul for the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).

An expert on the law of armed conflict and human rights law, Hendin teaches morality and ethics at the Royal Military

College of Canada in Kingston and at the Canadian Forces College in North York.

His experience in Afghanistan has been an incredible contrast to his life in Canada.

“When you undertake something like this, you always go with the very best of intentions and you think you can make a difference,” said Hendin, 69, who spoke with the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* on his



Stuart Hendin instructs a small class on the importance of the preservation of evidence so that it would be admissible in a trial.

return from Afghanistan last month.

“However, the overwhelming obstacles of trying to implement changes in the rule of law in Afghanistan are depressing. Afghan society has been in a state of armed conflict for 40 years and they are in a survival mentality. The default position and fallback excuse for everything is, ‘This is Afghanistan.’ You run into a brick wall.”

The IDLO mission is to enable governments and to empower people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity and their international training advisers are responsible for the oversight of the organization and delivery of criminal justice training for judges, prosecutors, defence lawyers and investigators, as well as for follow-up coaching of training participants.

The organization, headquartered in Rome, has extensive experience in countries emerging from conflict or striving towards democracy. Increasingly, it is also working in emerging economies and middle-income countries to strengthen their legal capacity for sustainable development and economic opportunity.

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International training advisers are required to have extensive experience working in a post-conflict country, and to

have “the emotional strength” and willingness to work in a difficult environment.

Security is always “a very real concern.” The Taverna restaurant involved in the recent bombing in Kabul was the first place Hendin had been taken on his first night in the city, and he was there numerous times since.

“Kamal, the owner of the restaurant was the most gracious gentleman,” he said. “The casualty list would have been much greater 20 minutes later when a large group of Russians were expected,” Hendin said.

“The issue of vulnerability for all of us who work [there] is a very real one, particularly when we do simple things like going out to places of work outside our compounds or when we go to one of the few stores that our security personnel view as safe.”

The insurgents can hit any place they want, he said.

The morning he was leaving to come back to Canada, he could hear the blast and see the smoke from his bedroom window when an Afghan National Army bus across the street was hit.

“Our compound was on the exit route, so, at any time, I would hear helicopters coming directly over my bedroom. You got to know the sound of the different helicopters. The Americans also had fish-eye cameras on tethered balloons for surveillance purposes.”

See Hendin on page 13

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Hendin: Underlying anti-Semitism in Afghanistan

Continued from page 12

Whenever he travelled, it was in an armoured car with GPS so that his security officials knew where he was at all times.

"It's a heavily armed compound with double barricades. It's a completely different environment. It's just not a safe environment. And, as it gets closer to the election, it gets worse.

"The insurgency is effectively saying it's not the number of people they're going to kill, but that they want to show no place is safe. Wherever you want to go, that place will be targeted. It's the most complex society, and corruption is systemic from the bottom up and the top down. That's something those of us who work in the West have trouble comprehending."

In his first week there, he visited a senior prosecutor in Kabul who was wearing a tailored suit and a Rolex watch.

"He asked me for a thousand dollars so he could buy a new desk."

Another huge challenge in the country is the level of illiteracy.

"Illiteracy in the army is huge; 25 to 30 per cent of the police and the army are illiterate," Hendin said. "I forgot my ID once and showed the policeman my Costco card with my photograph on the back, and he approved it. He had no idea what he was looking at."

Hendin said issues surrounding gender justice and rule of law are making little headway in Afghanistan.

"What's even more unfortunate is the level of corruption," he said. "Judges can be bribed negatively or positively. Some judges will not go outside of Kabul. Record keeping is almost farcical. The concept of decisions made on evidence presented is not well established at all. The concept of precedence and reported cases is almost non-existent."

The people Hendin was with did not know he was Jewish and didn't ask.

"There is underlying anti-Semitism in the country," he said, noting there is an assumption by the people there that all visiting Westerners are Christian.

Hendin said getting used to the lack of freedom



Stuart Hendin (far right) with a class of lawyers and judges he and a colleague trained in Kabul, Afghanistan.

resulting from the inherent dangers in Afghanistan took much getting used to.

"I had some trepidation when I was going, but the significance of the surroundings really hit me once I was there. When I left Kabul in November to teach in Vienna for a week, it took two days to feel back to normal and to walk on the streets. In Kabul, we had a no-walk policy and we couldn't walk outside our walled compound. Our visit times are staggered so we don't make a pattern," he said.

Hendin is unsure of whether he will return to Afghanistan, although he feels there is still much to accomplish.

"The program is transitioning to allow Afghans to stand alone. However, the particular area I'm working on is mentoring, so my involvement may continue. I feel I have a great deal of work yet to do there."

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Susan Angel, a member of Temple Israel's youth group, FROSTY, and a Grade 11 student at Merivale High School, participated in the art category of the North American Federation of Temple Youth – North Eastern Lakes region's "Debates" event in January. The words on her drawing, in Hebrew and English, "The only alternative to war is peace, the only road to peace is negotiation," were said by former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir during the peace negotiations with Egypt in 1977.

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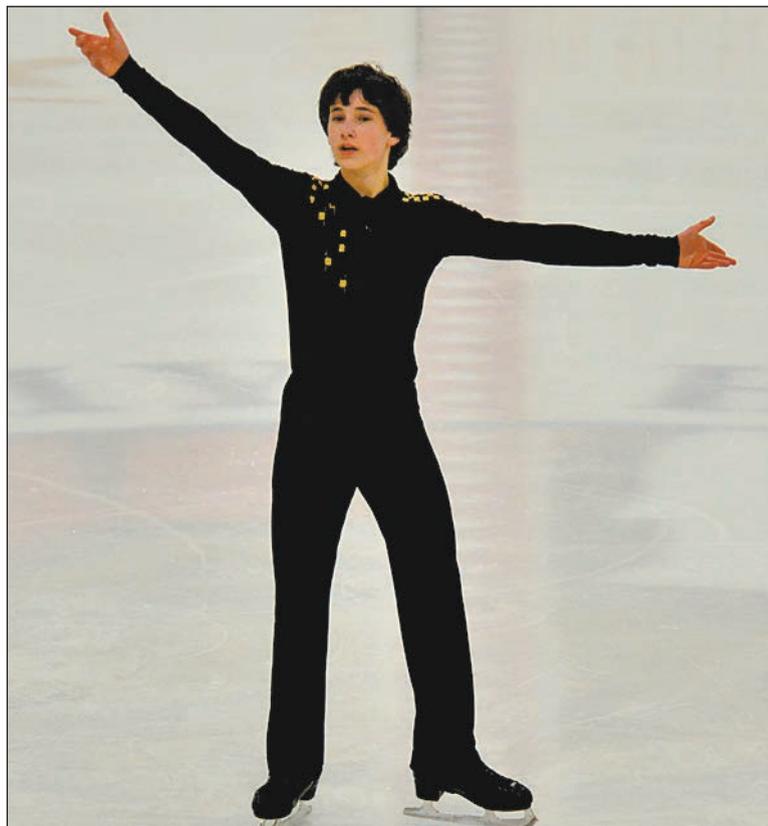
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Josh Allen at centre ice following the finale of his short program at the Bell Sensplex during the National Skating Championships.



Josh Allen with his bronze medal in the novice men's division at the National Skating Championships at the Canadian Tire Centre.

Local student wins a bronze medal at National Skating Championships

Josh Allen takes 'big step forward,' coach says

BY MONIQUE ELLIOT

Is there an Olympic future in store for figure skater Josh Allen?

The 16-year-old, who trains with the Nepean Skating Club, earned a bronze medal in the novice men's division of Canada's National Skating Championships, January 14, at the Canadian Tire Centre.

Josh said he's hoping to build on his success at his first national-level competition.

Josh had been sitting in second place after completing the short program at the Bell Sensplex, but slipped to third place overall after earning fifth best in the free skate with a score of 70.25.

"My long program wasn't quite as good," Josh reflected. "I've done it better, but it didn't start very well; but I was able to pull it together.

"I just focused on my own skating. I didn't think about the position or anything, but it was a great surprise, so I was quite happy," he said.

The third-place finish marks a significant improvement for Josh, said Leonid Birinberg, his Nepean Skating Club coach.

"I think it's a crucial milestone of his figure skating career," adding that it was a "big step forward," but Josh still has much work to do.

"I'm looking at this more as a development, instead of a final destination," Birinberg said.

Josh's previous coach, Justin Bell, moved away and, when the family went to visit him, he insisted that Josh train with Birinberg.

Josh had to skate for a session with Birinberg so that he could evaluate his skill level and whether or not they would be the right fit for a coaching team.

"Right from the beginning, that first day, I don't

know, they just clicked!" said Josh's mother, Pam Allen. "I think that Josh has grown into Leonid," she said, adding that she thinks neither will ever leave the other due to their successful and strong bond as an athlete-coach duo.

Birinberg said he admires Josh's work ethic, knowing that, when he is given a training task, he will not cut corners and will complete his assignment to the best of his ability, without needing constant supervision to ensure he stays on task.

"He's a very hard worker. I know I can trust him," he said.

The soft-spoken and humble Lisgar Collegiate Institute student said his older sister is the reason he began skating when he was three years old.

"It was mostly from watching my sister. She's two years older than me and she started skating about two years before me, and I would always go to the rink and watch her do the CanSkate program," he said. "From watching her, I was inspired."

Josh's family is also his biggest support group. With his newly retired parents Sandy and Pam Allen helping to organize and shuttle Josh to training, they said it can be like a full-time job, but that it is worth all the time and effort.

"His training is gruesome. It's intense," Pam said of Josh's 25 hours per week he typically spends training on and off the ice in addition to his schoolwork.

"This next year will be mostly a training year. It's my first year in the junior division, so I'm just going to train as hard as I can and get all the rest of the jumps I'm working on, currently," Josh said.

Josh said he will have plenty of time to focus on his training and new programs in this off-peak season, when there are very few competitions.

"It'll be like starting over," he said.

Josh's parents said they will continue to support him and do what is necessary to help him realize his dreams.

"He's happy, so we're happy," Sandy said.

Shirley Steinberg publishes children's book

BY LAYA STEINBERG

At age 87, Shirley Cohen Steinberg has celebrated a new chapter in her life by publishing her first children's book, *Frogs in the Bed*. A unique combination of storybook and Passover seder activity book, it is based on her popular Passover song, "One Morning," known to many as "The Frog Song."

The book, delightfully illustrated and co-written by Ann Koffsky, is symbolic of Steinberg's lifetime involvement in and love of languages, Jewish music and education.

In 1951, when Steinberg wrote and recorded "One Morning," there was little else available for preschool teachers to use – other than traditional holiday songs – that was whimsical or fun and allowed children to learn about Passover in an active, participatory way.

Steinberg wrote and recorded songs for three albums, which became known as the *Holiday Music Box*, to use in the classroom. Children loved the music. They loved pretending to be frogs jumping around, marching to the Red Sea and singing the other songs that taught about Passover, Chanukah and Purim.

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Steinberg was barely five years old when she was chosen to sing on the *Horn and Hardart Children's Hour* on the radio in New York.



Shirley Cohen Steinberg

Even at that young age, performing was second nature to her.

As a young adult, she performed for Jewish organizations in New York, sang Israeli music on a weekly radio program and appeared at Jewish music festivals. She also sang modern opera in Greenwich Village.

Steinberg holds degrees in languages and psychology from Brooklyn College, Hebrew studies from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a master's in early childhood education from New York University.

After moving to Ottawa in 1970, Steinberg taught Jewish music and international folk songs to adults, and to children at Hebrew schools, and was music director for the Israella Singers for almost 30 years.

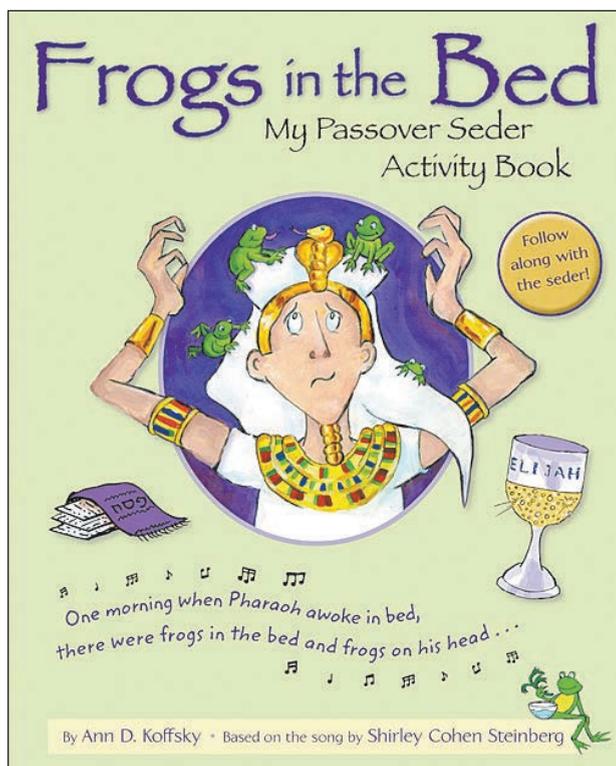
In the 60 years since the *Holiday Music Box* albums were released, the songs have spread around the world and are still used by preschool teachers, parents and by many other singers. They have been preserved at the Florida Atlantic University's Jewish Sound Archives and are online at www.tinyurl.com/oysongs.

The Passover songs have been printed in Haggadot, and many people assume the songs are so old they must be in the public domain. Once at a Passover seder in Calgary, Steinberg was sitting with a family from Australia that sang "The Frog Song," not knowing she had written it.

For many years, Steinberg has been director of Die Folkshpieler, the Yiddish theatre troupe at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, for whom she writes and directs Yiddish plays. She also hopes to publish more children's books based on her songs and stories.

Frogs in the Bed is available through Behrman House Publishing at www.behrmanhouse.com/frogs.

Laya Steinberg is Shirley Cohen Steinberg's daughter.



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Mitzvah Day at Temple Israel: Members of Temple Israel youth group packed dehydrated soup and oatmeal for Ottawa shelters and drop-in centres on Mitzvah Day, February 9. (From left) Jenny Tarof (adviser), Miranda Rhamey-Smith, Avram Stern, Sam Ruckenstein and Ben Hammer.”

Police allege physical, psychological abuse in Lev Tahor sect

(JTA) – Newly unsealed police search warrants allege physical and psychological abuse, forced ingestion of drugs and girls coerced into marriage among the fringe haredi Orthodox sect Lev Tahor.

The documents, which were unsealed February 14 at the request of several Canadian media outlets, are part of applications for search warrants from the Sûreté du Québec, the provincial police force.

The warrants claim that a young woman in the sect said she was hit with a belt and a coat hanger, and that a pregnant 17-year-old told nurses at a hospital she was beaten by her brother, sexually abused by her father and forced to marry a 30-year-old man when she was 15.

Investigators were told children were forced to drink water mixed with an unknown green powder and that “all kinds of pills” were bought from a pharmacy and given to members without explanation, reported the *Globe and Mail*, one of the media outlets that argued for the unsealing of the documents.

About 200 members of Lev Tahor fled Quebec in November just before the

execution of a court order to remove 14 children and place them in foster care. Quebec authorities said they had evidence of psychological abuse, underage marriage, child neglect, poor health and a home-schooling regimen that fell well below government standards.

Quebec police began hearing allegations against the community in April 2012.

The community settled in the Chatham-Kent area near Windsor, Ontario, where last month a judge upheld the Quebec order, excluding one of the children. But he stayed the ruling for 30 days to allow time for an appeal, which is expected.

The Lev Tahor’s spiritual leader, Rabbi Shlomo Helbrans, was convicted of kidnapping a young boy and served two years in a U.S. prison before being deported to Israel in 2000. He fled to Canada the following year on a temporary visa and was later granted refugee status.

An Israeli parliamentary hearing on the Lev Tahor sect has documented cases of physical abuse and said the sect is a dangerous cult.

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Na'amat Canada Aviva Chapter holding annual Passover wine sale

**BY DEANA SCHILDKRAUT
AVIVA CHAPTER – NA'AMAT CANADA**

Aviva Chapter of Na'amat Canada Ottawa is helping you get ready for Passover by holding our annual kosher-for-Passover wine sale. We have a large selection of wines available from a variety of countries including Israel, France, Italy and the United States.

Na'amat Canada – www.naamat.com – is a registered Canadian charity and part of a worldwide progressive women's organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for women, children and families in Israel and around the world.

The name "Na'amat" is a Hebrew acronym for *Nashim Ovdot Umitnadvot* (Movement of Working Women and Volunteers). Inspired by the founding women of the State of Israel, we believe every citizen is entitled to respect and equal opportunity within a just society.

Generations of Na'amat women have been making a difference since 1925.

Na'amat Canada sends money to Israel to help support a vast network of social and educational services. Especially now, as a result of terrorist acts and the deteriorating economic situation, the number of Israelis experiencing hardships is increasing greatly. Many people turn to Na'amat for help. Services Na'amat funds include daycare centres, vocational and agricultural high schools, single-parent support services, legal aid centres and a facility for abused women.

Locally, Na'amat Canada Ottawa is involved in the School Supply for Kids project. Every fall, we supply hundreds of backpacks filled with supplies to children living with their mothers in shelters for abused women. The generous support of the Ottawa community over the years has allowed us to continue funding this project.

Wine orders can be picked up at the Passover Fair we are holding in collaboration with Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Ottawa Centre and Congregation Beit Tikvah on Sunday, April 6, 10:30 am to 4 pm at Beit Tikvah, 15 Chartwell Avenue. Handcrafted Passover items such as wine

bags, seder matzo covers, aprons and many other items suitable for Passover gifts will also be available.

To receive the list of wines available for purchase, or to place an order, contact Deana Schildkraut at 613-726-9595 or deana.schildkraut@gmail.com.

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters to the Editor are welcome if they are brief, signed, timely, and of interest to our readership. The *Bulletin* reserves the right to refuse, edit or condense letters. The *Mailbag* column will be published as space permits.

Send your letters to Michael Regenstreif,
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Combining genealogy and genetics can be potentially life-saving

Last month, I received an email from a third cousin on my mother's side of the family who lives in the United States.

While we have never met, we have corresponded for a few years and have exchanged genealogical information on our respective branches. We also see each other on Facebook, so I was aware she had married in December.

She began by telling me she and her new husband are planning to have children and, because some of her family members are carriers of Tay-Sachs disease and Joubert syndrome, the couple decided to undergo genetic testing.

Tay-Sachs disease is one of the genetic disorders that affect Ashkenazi Jews at a rate higher than the general population. There is no known cure for this neurological disease and children born with it generally do not live beyond the age of four. If two carriers of the disease have a child, there is a 25 per cent chance of the child being affected; a 50 per cent chance of the child being a carrier; and a 25 per cent chance of the child not being affected or a carrier.

Since there is no cure, many young Jewish couples undergo the testing to see if they are carriers. If the testing establishes they are both carriers, the couple is given the tools to make an educated decision whether or not to start a family, knowing the possible consequences.

In my cousin's case, it turned out that neither she nor her husband were carriers of either of the two diseases. Interestingly, in this case, the testing was done under

the watchful eye of her aunt, who just happens to be an expert in genetic diseases, and who works in that field in Philadelphia. The aunt decided to test for more than the usual Ashkenazi-affected diseases, and found that my cousin was a carrier of something known as familial Mediterranean fever (FMF).

FMF, which is quite treatable and is very rare among Ashkenazi Jews, is more prevalent among Sephardi Jews. Not being aware of any Sephardic roots, she wrote to me, as the family historian, to tell me we may have Sephardic background somewhere in our family.

Of course, since it is her father who is a member of our family, and the gene may have been passed down from her mother, our branch may not be affected at all. She did suggest, though, that I might wish to pass this information on to other cousins so they could decide to have expanded genetic testing, or at least be aware there is a slight possibility some of us might be carriers.

Combining genealogy and genetics is not a new concept.

One of the world's most prominent Jewish genealogists, and probably the best known in Canada, is Stanley Diamond, president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal, and founder of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland. Diamond began his genealogical research because, in 1977, he discovered that he, his three siblings and nine of their combined 13 children were carriers of beta thalassemia trait.

Several years after making this discovery, Diamond



JOHN DIENER
CONNECTING
THE BRANCHES

found out his family had come from the town of Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland, so he went to great lengths to obtain records from the town to determine if there were other people descended from a common ancestor who might have also been carriers of the trait. His efforts led to the establishment of JRI-Poland, which is the most important resource for those researching their Jewish roots in Poland.

"How I Have Traced the Beta Thalassemia Trait," a fascinating article written by Diamond for the winter 2006 issue of Avotaynu magazine, can be read at www.diamondgen.org/trace.pdf.

Many people are now doing genetic or medical genealogy to identify potential health issues and life expectancy in their families.

There are software programs designed to capture the information, and online forms available to download to use when interviewing family members about their medical histories.

Since about 30 per cent of known diseases have genetic links, compiling a medical history of one's family that covers several generations can be interesting, informative and potentially life-saving.

I know that, in my own family, there is a higher than average incidence of Crohn's disease and colitis. Perhaps my next project will be an attempt to figure out where that came from and to try to predict how it will affect future generations.



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Driving camels through the holes of illogic

It all comes down to camels – or no camels, to be precise.

Yes, that humpbacked beast of burden is in the news these days – for better and for worse.

Israel's detractors have seized on new research suggesting that camels weren't domesticated in Israel until well after the time of *Bereshit* (Genesis), and concluded that the entire Zionist dream is based on a myth.

That's a big leap, even for curmudgeonly camels and rabid anti-Zionists.

On the plus side, there's www.nocamels.com – more on the name later. This excellent website and news service has nothing to do with archaeological research, but everything to do with promoting Israel – specifically, Israeli breakthroughs in science, technology, medicine, the environment and more.

Let's start with the camels that apparently didn't exist during the time of Abraham and how this allegedly invalidates Zionism.

In an article in the journal *Tel Aviv*, Israeli archaeologists Erez Ben-Yosef and Lidar Sapir-Hen concluded that camels were not domesticated in Israel until centuries after the Age of the Patriarchs (2000-1500 BCE).

The researchers used radiocarbon dating and other techniques to analyze the oldest-known domestic camel bones in Israel, located in the Aravah Valley. These bones were found almost exclusively in archaeological layers dating from the last third of the 10th century BCE or later – centuries after the events chronicled in *Bereshit*.

The few camel bones found in older layers probably belonged to wild camels. In case you're wondering how they could tell the difference, the leg bones of domesticated camels showed signs of having carried heavy loads.

The book of *Bereshit* makes about 20 references to camels, including a description of Abraham's servant travelling by camel to find a suitable wife for Isaac.

If domesticated camels didn't exist in Israel during that period, does that mean at least some of the details in *Bereshit* were written centuries after the events happened? If so, does that mean some of these details may have been embellished or even invented?

Good questions indeed. And, if I were a Torah scholar, I might have some profound answers.

Unfortunately, ignorance hasn't stopped Andrew Brown of the *Guardian* – Britain's notoriously anti-Israel newspaper – from gleefully pouncing on this study as proof positive that the Torah is little more than fiction, and therefore the Zionists' claim to Israel is a fraud.

If the Torah was wrong about camels, then the entire Jewish Bible is likely a pack of lies, he argues.

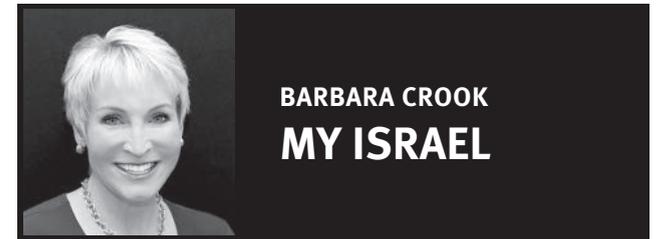
What a relief for Brown, who asserts, "Everyone else has known for decades that there is even less evidence for the historical truth of the Old Testament than there is for that of the Qur'an."

And since the Torah is bogus, he crows, so is "the Zionist project."

One could drive quite a few camels through the holes in his logic.

To start with, the archaeologists' research was limited to a particular geographical area of Israel during a particular period, so it is far from definitive. And it has to be viewed in the context of the many other archaeological finds that have confirmed very specific details of Biblical history.

Brown's argument also presumes that Zionism is based solely on the literal truth of every word of every Jewish text, rather than on thousands of years of Jewish history in Israel. Furthermore, the Zionism of Theodor



BARBARA CROOK
MY ISRAEL

Herzl was a predominantly secular movement.

Sadly, those who are determined to deny Israel's legitimacy typically start with the conclusion then seize on any detail that might shore up their shaky arguments.

Nocamels has a different take on dromedaries. It's a tongue-in-cheek reference to the fact that there are people out there who still believe Israel is little more than a desert with camels.

So the project – based at the Sammy Ofer School of Communications at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya and funded by Canada's Asper Foundation – highlights the most fascinating Israeli innovations and the people behind them.

This isn't like the bad old days of *hasbara*, when Israel's advocates were taught to counter every criticism of the country's politics and policies with chirpy anecdotes about the Intel chip or some other Israeli innovation.

Nocamels starts with the fact that Israel has the highest concentration of startups and research and development centres per capita in the world, then shines the spotlight on the best of these inventions and innovations.

It's also a great training ground for student journalists from around the world, who work on the site with industry professionals.

Perhaps their next project could include teaching the Andrew Browns of the world what the Zionist dream has created – with or without camels.

Four students celebrate a special bat mitzvah

For most of us, our bat or bar mitzvahs were rites of passage into Jewish adulthood and experiences we will never forget.

The bat and bar mitzvah takes place when we're 12 or 13 years old and many of us assume that, if we don't have it then, it's too late, we've missed our chance, the ship has sailed.

But, thanks to Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky and his wife Yocheved of the Rohr Chabad Student Network of Ottawa (CSN), four Ottawa university students have learned that's not the case.

On Saturday, February 8, CSN held a special bat mitzvah ceremony and event for Ariele Jacobson, Dana Melamed, Dali Carmichael and Kamilla Riabko – four young women who did not have a bat mitzvah ceremony when they were 12.

The event aims to engage students who may not have a strong Jewish connection or affiliation but are looking for one. For the fourth year in a row, CSN has helped guide young men and women – albeit just women this year – along the path that young Jews follow while preparing for their bat or bar mitzvah.

Franny Weigensberg, Carleton University's CSN president, said this event is so important because, no matter the size of the Jewish community, a bat or bar mitzvah is something every Jewish youth deserves to experience.

"However, due to financial reasons, personal circumstances, growing up with a limited Jewish background, etc., not everyone gets to have one," said Franny. "So, what we do is hold this event to enable them to celebrate their growth as Jews and show the Jewish com-



RANDY FOX
CAMPUS LIFE

munity that what they have learned will take them along their paths as Jewish women."

CSN, which holds various events for young Jewish adults throughout the year, has something of a scouting process for the bat and bar mitzvah event. At dinners, classes and other events, the topic of bat and bar Mitzvahs is often brought up. If it turns out that someone never had the chance to have one, they're offered the opportunity and CSN hopes they say yes.

"We invited all girls who never had a bat mitzvah, and the girls who got involved with Chabad and wanted to learn more jumped at the chance," said Rabbi Boyarsky.

The four women went through preparation that was as long as any young girl's bat mitzvah process would be, if not longer. They studied constantly, involved themselves in Jewish community events, went to classes and participated in several community service events. One of them, Dana, even went on a trip to Israel this past summer to further connect with her Jewish roots.

Along with speeches from Rabbi Boyarsky, his wife Yocheved, Rabbi Reuven Bulka of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, and student executives from CSN, each of the four bat mitzvah celebrants prepared a

speech for the gala event, which was held at the University of Ottawa.

The evening was a night of celebration for all who attended. The bat mitzvah speeches focused on Jewish identity and the sense of community that comes with growing with your spirituality into the community. As the women spoke about their newfound sense of belonging in the Jewish community, they all thanked Rabbi Boyarsky, Yocheved and CSN, and their obvious sincerity was matched only by their excitement.

"The main thing that I gained from the experience was a sense of belonging. It is so wonderful to know that I have a purpose in other people's lives, and I hope they know how important they are to me," said Ariele.

"The whole process just reaffirmed why I love Jewish culture and community so much. Chaim, Yocheved and Chabad are the epitome of everything wonderful about Judaism, and I consider myself to be very fortunate to experience a bat mitzvah with them."

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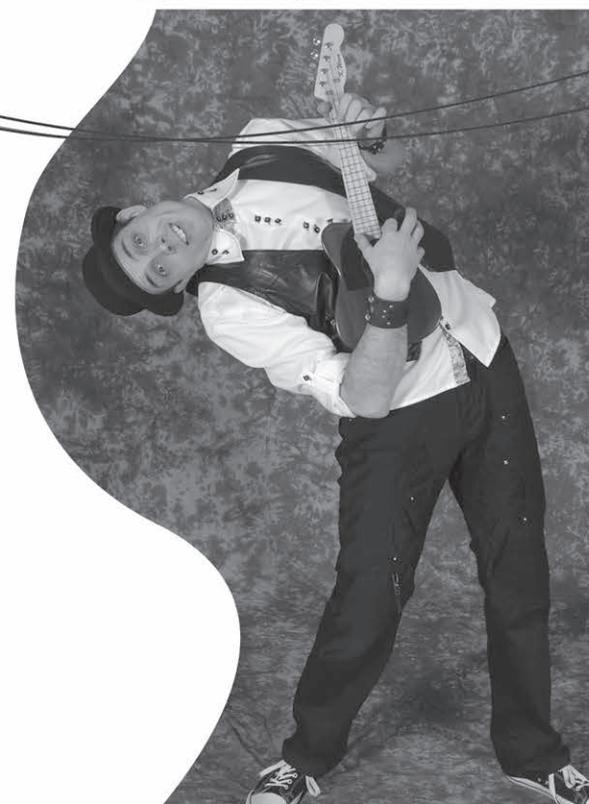
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‘Should I stay in my congregation and attempt to eke out change from within or switch shuls?’

The Jewish denomination wars have flared up again. On February 4, Knesset member David Rotem said, “The Reform movement is not Jewish ... they are another religion.” He later backtracked, withdrew the comment and apologized for making it.

A few days later, Rabbi Mark S. Miller, an American Reform rabbi, took his colleagues to task in his *Times of Israel* blog suggesting that, with their Shabbat tables always at the ready, traditional Jews are much more welcoming than the Reform movement can ever be. Plus, the Reform movement’s insistence that they care about Shabbat and kashrut is duplicitous, he argued.

And here, in the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, Orthodox Rabbi Howard Finkelstein wrote a letter-to-the-editor (*Mailbag*, February 3) in response to Reconstructionist Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton’s piece on Jewish belief in God (*From the Pulpit*, January 20) stating her “evaluation flies in the face of traditional Judaism for millennia.”

But there is also the reverse conundrum. Rather than ask which type of practice is most Jewish, I find myself asking a thornier question: which is more human?

Such is the challenge currently facing Conservative Judaism in Ottawa, specifically around the issue of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) inclusion and related questions of human dignity. Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism both embrace same-sex marriage. And many Conservative congregations across North America are now doing the same – but not so far in Ottawa.

Here in Ottawa, Congregation Beth Shalom, a member of the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues, is not even gender egalitarian (and is currently without a

rabbi), and Agudath Israel Congregation, a member of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), the main Conservative organization, and the synagogue to which I belong, is still keeping its tent flaps closed to same-sex weddings. The much smaller and lay-led Adath Shalom Congregation, also a USCJ member, does not currently perform weddings.

In 2012, the Committee for Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly approved the performing of same-sex marriages. Conservative rabbis in various corners of North America have embraced the opportunity.

“As a rabbi I cannot countenance sitting before people who can fully love one another and insisting that the Jewish tradition has no place for them simply because they are of the same sex. Surely no people understands rejection and marginalization better than the Jewish people,” wrote Rabbi David Wolpe last June in the *Washington Post* as he announced his willingness to perform same-sex marriages at Sinai Temple, his Los Angeles synagogue.

But no Conservative rabbi or congregation in Ottawa has yet taken up the mantle. The national context makes this especially ironic, given that Canadian law has outpaced American law on these issues.

For myself, I’m increasingly noticing a disconnection between my denomination as practised at my shul and the values I place on human dignity. The question for me, then, and perhaps for others, is should I stay in my congregation and attempt to eke out change from within or switch shuls. Given the landscape of progressive Judaism in Ottawa, switching shuls would mean switching



MIRA SUCHAROV
**VALUES, ETHICS,
COMMUNITY**

denominations thereby both sending a strong signal and, hopefully, finding a community that better connects with my values. However, we know the signal a person tries to send when exiting in protest is typically heard at a much lower decibel than intended.

For me, as someone who values the Jewish literacy component of Conservative Judaism, the choice is doubly complicated by having kids. I want my kids to grow up surrounded by a certain flavour of Judaism. But I also want them to understand that the range of human sexuality is something to be celebrated, not hidden, denied and shamed.

To stay would mean being authentic to my Jewish self, but inauthentic to my human self. On the other hand, to stay might also mean enabling my kids to take a stand, as one child in the U.S. who gave a Dvar Torah on the topic of GLBT inclusion, chose to do. His speech was celebrated across social media.

To stay might also help give way to an opening, as dialogue might shift hearts and minds. But is there a deadline by which one should decide that one’s efforts on this front, however passionate, creative and sustained, ultimately have yielded little?

On some days, the choice seems clearer than others. *Mira Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, blogs at Haaretz.com.*

Seven body myth busters

Myth #1: “If I exercise, I can eat whatever I want.” That’s what lots of people believe. But the truth is that exercise is not a licence to indulge. People have a tendency to overestimate the intensity of the exercise they do and the number of calories they burn, and to underestimate portion sizes and calories consumed. Eating more than your body uses throughout the day is a formula for weight gain.

Myth #2: “I can change my body shape.”

Instead of trying to change your natural body shape and feeling disappointed, embrace it and work on what you *can* change. A slim man with narrow shoulders can bulk up, but may never be able to attain the broad shoulders like some bigger fellows. A woman who dislikes her pear-shaped body may be genetically designed that way.

But you can change many other things that are more important, such as your weight, body composition, strength, health, mood, and risks for illness.

Myth #3: “I have pain, so I can’t exercise.”

Sitting around doing nothing isn’t going to improve your painful condition, and you’ll lose out on all the health benefits of exercise.

In fact, exercise has been shown to provide pain relief and improve joint function. The key is to engage in exercises that are suitable for your condition and to use correct form. High-impact movements can exacerbate joint pain. However, gentle, modified strength-training exercises or water-based exercises can improve circulation and flexibility and strengthen surrounding tendons and ligaments.

Myth #4: “Poor posture is part of the natural aging process.”

Bone density and muscle mass decline with age. However, a healthy diet coupled with weight-bearing exercise prevents bone loss and builds muscle. Staying active and strong can prevent you from hunching over. You should regularly perform exercises to strengthen your many back muscles.

Reminding yourself to stand tall with chest out and shoulders back is also helpful. Avoid or minimize time spent with your head jutted forward, such as when looking down at cell phones. Poor posture, weakness, and loss of balance are associated with age, but are actually symptoms of inactivity.

Myth #5: “I really don’t have time to exercise.”

Everyone is busy. Some people are busier than others. Yet, you find time to do things that you feel are high priority or essential. When you put your personal health at the bottom of the list, you won’t find time for exercise.

More than 2,000 years ago, Rabbi Hillel said, “If not now, when?” I say *now* is the time to make your health a priority. There will never be a perfect time. Don’t look back years from now with regret when you are unwell. Instead, organize your life so you can fit in some exercise.

Myth #6: “No pain, no gain.”

High-impact or high-intensity exercise that pushes you well past your fitness abilities can be unsafe, even life-threatening. Recent news reports have highlighted the risk of rhabdomyolysis, the rapid release of proteins into the blood due to skeletal muscle damage. This condition, which can lead to kidney failure, is associated



GLORIA SCHWARTZ
**FOCUS ON
FITNESS**

with exercise environments that pressure participants into extreme exertion, such as military-style training.

The health benefits of higher-intensity exercises over moderate-intensity exercises are well known. However, extreme exercise that causes pain or makes you feel nauseous or faint is unwise and risky. Ignoring pain, getting dehydrated and giving in to peer pressure can have dangerous consequences.

Myth #7: “More is better.”

I’ve heard people talking about the so-called “30-day squat challenge” that’s been circulating on the Internet. It basically involves doing 50 squats on the first day, then increasing the number of squats each day over the course of a month until you reach hundreds. A few rest days are built into the schedule. The idea is that you’ll develop a strong and sexy derriere at the end of 30 days.

The whole truth is that to develop a lean and healthy body, you need to eat properly, exercise your entire body and burn more calories than you consume.

Thirty days is hardly enough time to change your body significantly. Doing such high numbers of squats is difficult for anyone, especially beginners, and you risk injuring your knees if you use incorrect form. Instead of following this program, do a few sets of properly executed squats as part of a balanced exercise program.

Gloria Schwartz is a personal trainer at the Soloway JCC.

Short stories to savour by Israeli-Canadian author

The Best Place on Earth

By Ayelet Tsabari
HarperCollins, 2013
234 pages

I didn't want to put down *The Best Place on Earth*. Ayelet Tsabari's first book is a smart, sexy, and absorbing collection of short stories. Tsabari, an Israeli-Canadian who moved to Canada in 1998, studied creative writing, and now writes in English about the Israeli and Israeli-Canadian experience. Most of her characters in this collection are Mizrahi-Israeli – whose family lineage traces to Yemen, Tunisia, Spain or Morocco – plus one intriguing story where the narrator is a Filipina caregiver.

The press around Tsabari's work focuses on this minority aspect of her writing as she seeks to introduce an additional voice to what is an Ashkenazi-dominated Israeli literature canon.

Though this sense of minority identity peppers the work, to me, her stories, like any piercing writing, are primarily about themes that are much more universal in nature than they are particular to any ethnic, gender, sexual or religious group. The stories are about love and loss, sexuality and sexual identity, loyalty and morality, the shifting sense of home, parent-child relationships, and redefining cultural traditions.

Perhaps mirroring the visible minority themes, though, is precariousness to these characters' situations. Tsabari ensures, in just a few pages, that we care deeply about their fates. A Filipina caregiver lives in fear of being deported at the same time as she is nurturing a

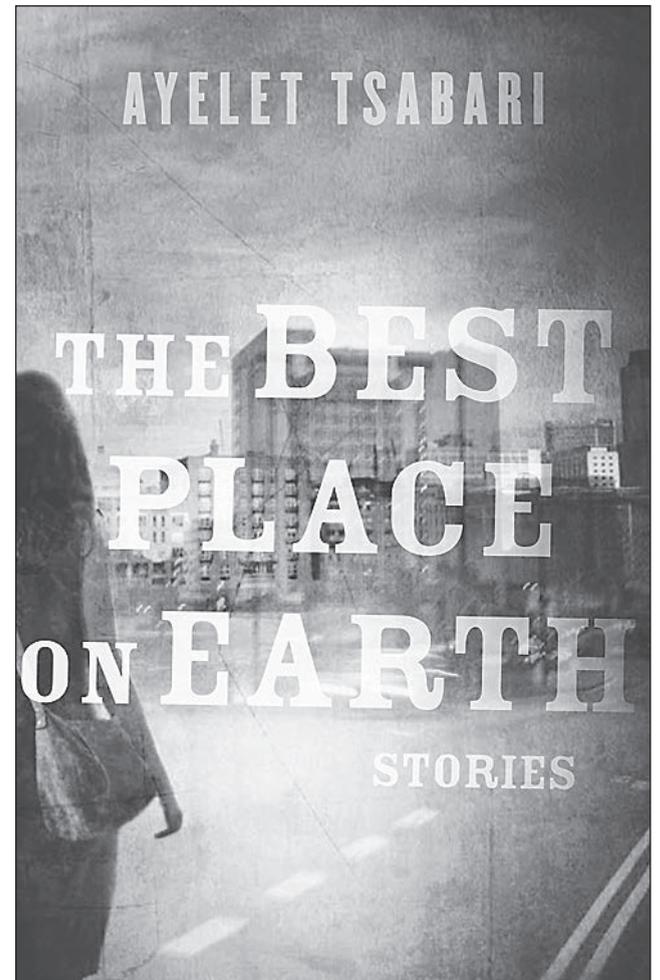
MIRA SUCHAROV BOOK REVIEW

new love interest with an Israeli man. A pre-army girl wants to lose her virginity before she is drafted, as she searches frantically for clues to her biological past. A medical clinician soldier dabbles in illegal pursuits, as she finds herself a lifeline for the soldier boyfriend after whom she no longer lusts. And a new arrival to Israel, a girl from Canada, discovers her sexuality with a Russian-Israeli girl who sways between being lavish and fickle with her attentions.

Many of these narrative threads point to issues surrounding the body – whether the silent genes of paternity, the intactness of a circumcision foregone, the moments of wanted and unwanted sexual trysts, and the clinical setting, where soldiers roll up their sleeves and stick up their tongues in hopes of being granted leave.

In the background to the personal journeys of each character are themes central to the Israeli experience: the shock of terrorism – Tsabari expertly weaves the Hebrew term *pigua* (attack) into the English prose, initially jarring and then familiar; the challenges of arrival, departure and distance; the military experience of boredom and fear; the bomb shelters, the gas masks, the military weekend furlough's sexual energy; and the post-military escapes to India.

Using Israeli themes in the background of each story, Tsabari enables us to empathize with a land to which we may be only tourists. We identify with these characters' struggles, no matter how far their day-to-day experience may be from ours. But, wisely, Tsabari paints these characters as flawed, as all three-dimensional characters should be. We empathize without necessarily taking sides. It's a powerful and subtle metaphor, perhaps, for how observers can best engage with Israel: understand its struggles, absorb its narratives, all while seeing the whole country in its complexity; all while not being blind to its flaws. Though politics differ from literature, of course, in politics the story is always being written.



The reader of politics, the keen observer, can even help write the story, if he or she is a committed, wise and pragmatic friend.

If I have one quibble, it would be that, while the endings are beautifully poetic, they do tend to each land on a similar chord. But it is a haunting chord, not easily forgotten.

I said I didn't want to put down the book, but I frequently did. I wanted to savour each story, willing the book not to end. Though, when I did sometimes read straight from one story to the next, I realized how flawless is Tsabari's ability to introduce us to a new set of characters with a new set of challenges. As soon as a new story has begun, the reader is entirely invested in it.

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The Board of Directors of the
Ottawa Jewish Community Founda-
tion acknowledges with thanks
contributions to the following funds
as of February 10, 2014.

**RUTH AND IRVING AARON
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Birthday Wishes to:
Ruth Aaron by David and Judith
Kalin.

**MARJORIE AND BEN ACHBAR
COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FUND**

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:
Carol-Sue Shapiro by Marjorie and Ben
Achbar.

**APPOTIVE FAMILY
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Best Wishes to:
Ryan Appotive and Yoni Silberman by Debi
and Neil Zaret and family.

**MARTIN AND ELLIE BLACK
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Mazal Tov to:
Eric and Donna Levin on the birth of their
first granddaughter, Marlowe by Martin and
Ellie Black.

**CHANI AND BRAM BREGMAN
JEWISH EDUCATION FUND**

Mazal Tov to:
Barry Silverman on his daughter's marriage
by Chani and Bram Bregman.

**ARTHUR AND LINDA COGAN FUND
FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP**

Best Wishes to:
Arthur and Linda Cogan by Sue-Carol
Isaacson; and by Joyce and Marvin Tanner.

In Appreciation to:
Sandra and Bill Lippy by Arthur and Linda
Cogan.

Arthur and Linda Cogan by Joyce and
Morty Certilman; and by Barbara Cohen and
family.

In Memory of:
Arlene Tuxet by Arthur and Linda Cogan.

**HOWARD, JEFFREY, ANDREW,
MICHAEL, GREGORY
AND ZACHARY COGAN FUND**

Condolences to:
Leonard Koffman and family on the passing
of their daughter-in-law, Carrice by Fred and
Lisa Cogan and family.

In Memory of:
Stan Katz by Fred and Lisa Cogan and
family.

Mazal Tov to:
Leslie and Vera Klein on the marriage of
their son, Michael by Fred and Lisa Cogan and
family.

Sara Vered by Fred and Lisa Cogan.

**SELMA AND BARRY DAVIS
ENDOWMENT FUND**

In Memory of:
Barry Davis by Sol and Zelaine Shinder.

**NATHAN AND REBA DIENER
ENDOWMENT FUND**

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:
Jerry Penso by Reba Diener.

DOLANSKY FAMILY FUND

Condolences to:
Merv Stone on the loss of Sally by Bernard
and Donna Dolansky and family.

**CYNTHIA AND ABE ENGEL
ENDOWMENT FUND**

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:
Leonard Shore by Cynthia Engel.

**FLORENCE FAMILY
MEMORIAL FUND**

In Observance of the Yahrzeit of:
A.L. Florence by A.L., Ann, Leanne, and
Brendan Smith.

Lena Florence by A.L., Ann, Leanne, and
Brendan Smith.

Jack Florence by A.L., Ann, Leanne, and
Brendan Smith.

Rose Doctor by A.L., Ann, Leanne, and
Brendan Smith.

**ALFRED AND KAYSA FRIEDMAN
ENDOWMENT FUND**

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:
Tim Murray by Alfred and Kaysa Friedman.

**FRAN AND SID GERSHBERG
FAMILY FUND**

Mazal Tov to:
Eva and Paul Nadler on the birth of their
twelfth grandchild by Fran and Sid Gershberg.

**BARBARA AND SYDNEY GREENBERG
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Birthday Wishes to:
Linda Signer by Judi Bodnoff and family.

**LAURA AND MILTON GREENBERG
FAMILY FUND**

In Memory of:
Stan Katz by Laura Greenberg and family.

**ZELDA AND JOHN GREENBERG
ENDOWMENT FUND**

In Observance of the Yahrzeit of:
Zelda Greenberg by Margot Greenberg.
John Greenberg by Margot Greenberg.

GROSSMAN KLEIN FAMILIES FUND

In Memory of:
Stan Katz by Vera and Leslie Klein and
family.

Jacob Kingston by Vera and Leslie Klein
and family.

**MICHAEL DANIEL HILL
MEMORIAL FUND**

In Memory of:
Stan Katz by Annette, Benjamin and Alex
Hill.

Abe Farber by the Hill family.
Gary Steinberg by the Hill family.

Mazal Tov to:
Benjamin Hill on receiving his medical
degree by Myriam, Robin, Annette and Alex
Hill.

Derek Huber and Annette Hill on the birth
of their daughter, Heidi by Myriam and Robin
Hill.

**NAP AND FANNY KARP KAPINSKY
MEMORIAL FUND**

In Memory of:
Jeff Katz by Sheldon and Sandy Kapinsky.

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**LIBBY AND STAN KATZ FAMILY
COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FUND**
In Memory of:

Stan Katz by Gloria Krugel and family; by Sally Taller; by Ronald and Françoise Vexler; by Alti and Berel Rodal; by Roxy and Martin Freedman; by Marilyn and William Newman; by Donna and Eric Levin; by Bert and Kathryn Palmer; and by Joel Weiner and Elaine Sigler.

**ARTHUR AND SARAH KIMMEL
MEMORIAL FUND**

Mazal tov to:

Heather Ordon on the birth of her granddaughter, Reese by Roslyn and Arnie Kimmel.

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:

Leonard Shore by Roslyn and Arnie Kimmel.

**SHARON KOFFMAN
ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Birthday Wishes to:

Ken Koffman by Sandra Zagon.

Mazal Tov to:

Myra and Sam Krane on the birth of their first grandchild, Annie Michelle by Sandra Zagon.

**KRANTZBERG KRANE
FAMILY FUND**

Mazal Tov to:

Sam Gelman and family on Jessica's engagement to Josh, by Myra and Sam Krane and family.

Ann Lazear on her granddaughter Jessica's engagement to Josh, by Myra and Sam Krane and family.

**ELLEN AND IRVING LITHWICK
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Mazal Tov to:

Rona and Gary Harmon by Yvonne and Harvey Lithwick and family.

**RON AND RUTH LEVITAN
ENDOWMENT FUND**

In Memory of:

Stan Katz by Ron and Ruth Levitan.

**NORMAN AND ANNE MIRSKY
MEMORIAL FUND**

In Memory of:

Sandy Roff by Millie and Steve Mirsky.

**HARRY AND BERTHA PLEET
MEMORIAL FUND**

In Memory of:

Julius Laurence (Larry) Nathanson by Pinchas and Barbara Pleet.

In Observance of the Yahrzeit of:

Bertha Pleet by Pinchas and Barbara Pleet.

Harry Pleet by Pinchas and Barbara Pleet.

Yaacov Pleet by Pinchas and Barbara Pleet.

**EVELYN AND NORMAN POTECHIN
ENDOWMENT FUND**

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:

Norma Miller by Dodie and Bram Potechin.

**ALTI AND BEREL RODAL
FAMILY FUND**

In Condolence to:

Jacques and Judie Rostenne on the loss of Lily by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Yuli Edelstein on the loss of Tatiana by Alti and Berel Rodal.

In Memory of:

Elisheva Novak by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Mazal Tov to:

Mushki and Yisroel Silverstein on the birth of Fayga Gitta, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Leibel and Chani Rodal on the birth of Fayga Gitta, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Shmulik and Dvora Rodal on the birth of Fayga Gitta, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Robin Mader and David and Lindsay Mader on the birth of Leonard Benjamin Scott Mader, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Menachem and Sherna Rodal on the birth and Bris of Tzemach Shmuel, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Berke and Rochele Rodal on the birth and Bris of Tzemach Shmuel, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuel Rodal on the birth of Fayga Gitta, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Yisroel Meir and Bayla Rodal on the birth of Fayga Gitta, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Jennie and Paul Claman on the birth of Adina Mirel, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

Zolly and Penina Claman on the birth of Adina Mirel, by Alti and Berel Rodal.

**FLORENCE AND
GDALYAH ROSENFELD
ENDOWMENT FUND**

In Memory of:

Florence Rosenfeld by Ron Vered and family; by Ira Greenblatt and Danielle Dugas; by Cynthia Cowan; by Deborah and Rob Malone; by Lionel Metrick; by the Palisades Retirement Residence; and by Pamela, Allan, Brittny and Jason Book.

**DORIS AND RICHARD STERN
FAMILY FUND**

In Memory of:

Joe Betel by Doris and Richard Stern.

**SARA AND ZEEV VERED
COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FUND**

In Appreciation to:

Arnie Vered by the Board of Directors and Staff of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

Mazal Tov to:

Sara Vered by Sol and Zelaine Shinder.

**THE SAUL AND EDNA GOLDFARB
B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM**

LIEFF FAMILY B'NAI MITZVAH FUND

In Memory of:

Stan Katz by Norman Lieff, Francie Greenspoon and family.

Birthday Wishes to:

Dorothy Nadolny by Norman Lieff, Francie Greenspoon and family.

**NOAH REICHSTEIN
B'NAI MITZVAH FUND**

Mazal Tov to:

David and Lisa Leith on their daughter Sydney's Bat Mitzvah, by Vera and Malcolm Glube.

Seymour and Edna Eisenberg on their granddaughter Sydney's Bat Mitzvah, by Vera and Malcolm Glube.

Contributions may be made online at www.OJCF.ca or by contacting our office at 613-798-4696 extension 274, Monday to Friday or by email at tributecards@ojcf.ca. Attractive cards are sent to convey the appropriate sentiments. All donations are acknowledged with a charitable receipt. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Amex.

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WHAT'S GOING ON | March 3 to 16, 2014

FOR MORE COMMUNITY LISTINGS, VISIT WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM AND SELECT 'CLICK TO SEE MORE MONTHS'

WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAYS

Drop-In Playgroup for newborn to 3 years of age. 9 am.
Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 263

TUESDAYS

Israeli Folkdancing: Learn contemporary Israeli dances. No partner required.
6:30 pm - Introductory Steps;
7 pm - Beginners and Requests;
8:30 pm - Intermediate and Advanced Requests.
OJCS Gym, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private.
Info: 613-256-6272

FRIDAYS

Shabbat Drop-in: After playtime, recite blessings, sing songs, and enjoy a snack of challah and juice. 9:30 am.
Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 263

SUNDAY, MARCH 7

Registration deadline for Spin/Swim/Shoot:
The SJCC's First Annual Biathlon Fundraiser (Sunday, March 30) is a fun day of fitness where teams of 12 spin, swim and shoot hoops to raise funds for the SJCC. Put together your own team of 12 or be placed on a team.
Info: Carla Gencher 613-798-9818, ext. 278, cgencher@jccottawa.com

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Purim Palooza hosted by PJ Library & OJCS. Activities, songs, Megillah reading, treats and more. OJCS Gym, 31 Nadolny Sach Private, 10 to 11:30 am.
Info: 613-722-0020, andrea.black@theojcs.ca

Purim Shpiel, Ottawa author and playwright Pierre Brault directs "Shmaltz - A Greased Purim." Tickets: General Admission \$15. 7 to 9 pm.
Info: Roslyn Wollock 613-798-9818, ext. 254 rwollock@jccottawa.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Ottawa Jewish Community School Open House, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private. 9 to 11 am.
Info: Sarah-Lynne Levine 613-722-0020, sl.levine@theojcs.ca

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

An Eccentric Purim - A performance by Eccentric Adam, featuring magic, juggling, circus, fire, music and puppetry, followed by a Purim Parade through the SJCC and an abridged Megillah reading. Hamantashen and juice to follow. 1 to 1:30 pm.
Info: Gail Lief 613-798-9818, ext. 303 glicff@jccottawa.com

Agudath Israel Purim Carnival: Join us for our annual Purim Carnival, featuring fun games, activities

and prizes for the entire family, Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue. 3 to 5 pm.
Info: 613-728-3501

COMING SOON

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Kabbalat Shabbat and Dinner: services include song, mediation and learning. Everyone is welcome! Song sheets provided.
Dairy vegetarian potluck afterward.
The Glebe Minyan, 91A Fourth Avenue. 6 to 9 pm.
Info: 613-867-5505, glebeminyan@gmail.com

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Presentation by Adam Heffez, author of "Words and Walls, Social Commentary Through Graffiti in Israel and the West Bank." Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Drive. 9:30 to 11 am.
Info: Shayla Mindell 613-594-4556, shaylamindell@rogers.com

Spin/Swim/Shoot, a fun day of fitness where teams of 12 spin, swim and shoot hoops to raise funds for the SJCC. 10 to 10:30 am. Register by March 7.
Info: Carla Gencher 613-798-9818, ext. 278, cgencher@jccottawa.com

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE AT THE JOSEPH AND ROSE AGES FAMILY BUILDING, 21 NADOLNY SACHS PRIVATE

Early Deadlines

* March 12 is an early deadline for the April 7 community-wide Ottawa Jewish Bulletin.

** April 2 is an early deadline for the April 23 Ottawa Jewish Bulletin because of Passover closures.

CONDOLENCES

Condolences are extended to the families of:

Anne Mayberger Blair

Ian Jonathan Kagedan

Eva Simkover

May their memory be a blessing always.

The Condolence Column is offered as a public service to the community.

There is no charge.

For listing in this column, please call 613 798-4696, ext. 274.

Voice mail is available.

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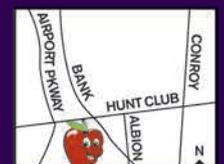
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Thank
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