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## Klez 7

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# OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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## Lone soldier put aside fear of heights to become paratrooper

Monique Elliot talks with Tobin Kaiman, a young man from Ottawa who recently returned home after serving for two years in the Israel Defense Forces.

**T**obin Kaiman said he is afraid of heights, but he still jumped.

As a paratrooper in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Kaiman completed four daytime jumps and two night jumps from an airplane as part of his training.

To be accepted as a paratrooper, soldiers first have to pass both a mental and physical evaluation.

"Before the test, I knew I was afraid of heights. I thought this would be a good way to overcome that fear. [It] didn't work at all," he laughed. "I'm still afraid of heights. I can't go to the edge of a balcony in a hotel room, not even close."

Kaiman, 24, was a "lone soldier" from Ottawa. Typically, lone soldiers are young Jews from the Diaspora who volunteer to serve in the IDF, a military that has national mandatory conscription for most Israeli citizens at age 18.

Growing up in a house where even toy guns were not welcomed, Kaiman said it was still an obvious decision for him to enlist in a combat role as he became more aware of the political and military situation in the region.

"There's [the option of 'other' roles]

but, you know what, combat's the real stuff," he said. "That's where all the heroes from the Israeli army came from. When anyone thinks of the Israeli army, everyone thinks of combat: a soldier with a gun in olive green camouflage. And that's what I wanted to be."

He served in the IDF for two years – from December 25, 2011 until December 24, 2013.

While most lone soldiers in the IDF sign up as a volunteers from abroad, the term also refers to all soldiers who do not have their biological parents in Israel, including new immigrants and orphans – as well as Israeli soldiers who are estranged from their families.

There are currently about 3,200 lone soldiers serving in the IDF according to a December 2013 report in the *Jerusalem Post*. About 1,500 come from Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union, while the second highest number of volunteers come from the United States. The rest, like Kaiman, come from other countries around the world.

Back at home in Ottawa, his mother, Janet Kaiman, said naturally she worried about her eldest son and the "what if"



Tobin Kaiman (right) on manoeuvres in Israel with his IDF unit.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOBIN KAIMAN

scenarios, especially during the communications blackout when the officers took soldiers' phones away as the conflict with Gaza escalated in November 2012.

"Honestly, the scariest thing for me was during the couple of weeks he was jumping," she said. She added that she and the family could not be more proud of Kaiman for devoting himself to Israel, which ultimately strengthened the whole family's connection to the Jewish homeland.

Kaiman said he had "mixed emotions" about returning to Ottawa after his service in order to complete his studies. Before going to Israel, he had completed two years at Carleton University and is now back as a third year economics student.

Kaiman said he considered staying in Israel to complete his studies, but that the credits he had earned at Carleton would not count toward his degree if he transferred, so essentially he would have had to start his degree over.

"If I could've, I probably would've done it there," he said of his decision. "It was easier to come back, finish my degree, and go from there."

Kaiman said he is fidgety in class because he is used to having multiple responsibilities, but that he is still able to help out his fellow soldiers even when he is far away.

"They're watching over the country and I'm over here, relaxing and having

See Kaiman on page 2

**inside:** New production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* > p. 3

Monique Elliot on video kindness campaign > p. 21

A Russian-Jewish 'portrait of the artist as a young man' > p. 26

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# Kaiman: Former lone soldier still working to help comrades

Continued from page 1

coffee with everyone, while they're not sleeping, not eating, and just [enduring] the terrible conditions of winter," he said, bothered by the fact that he is unable to be with his unit, which is now stationed along the cold border with Lebanon.

In an effort to keep his fellow soldiers comfortable while working in harsh conditions, Kaiman organized an online *Go Fund Me* campaign in December to raise funds for warm winter gear, which is not a top priority for the IDF.

"All money raised from abroad goes to keep the troops comfortable" while the top budget priorities for the IDF are for "life or death" gear and equipment, he said.

The campaign ran for two months and raised only \$400 out of the \$5,000 needed to outfit Kaiman's company with gloves, hats, and thermals, at a cost of \$50 per soldier.

Kaiman said he plans to start another campaign in the hopes of raising at least

enough money to support his unit, which is typically made up of about 16 soldiers.

Kaiman is also working with the pre-army program he completed to create a charity called the Jerusalem Lone Soldier House, which is in the process of getting registered in Canada and the United States, and is slated to be registered in Israel next week.

The charity would own property in Israel, provide room and board and take care of the daily chores in an effort to ease the burdens lone soldiers can feel when away from their families.

"A place where stuff is taken care of for the soldiers is what we're looking for," he said.

It is that sense of connection that keeps him dedicated to Israel and to each lone soldier serving in the IDF, he said.

"We don't have to join, we want to join. We also have to remember that Israel is not the home of the Israelis; it's the home of the Jews ... that's my family. The entire nation is my family."



Tobin Kaiman at an Israel Awareness Committee table at Carleton University

PHOTO: MONIQUE ELLIOT



Tobin Kaiman on one of his jumps as a paratrooper in the IDF.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOBIN KAIMAN

## BULLETIN INDEX

BOOK REVIEW	26	FOUNDATION	23-24	MY ISRAEL	21
COMMENTARIES	6 + 7	GUEST COLUMN	16	SJCC LECTURE	15
EMERGING GEN	21	ISRAELI NGOs	10	VALUES, ETHICS	25
FITNESS	25	MAILBAG	8	WHAT'S GOING ON	27

## CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

MAR 21	6:56 PM	FIRST DAY OF PESACH
MAR 28	7:05 PM	APR 14 7:27 PM
APR 4	7:14 PM	2ND DAY OF PESACH
APR 11	7:23 PM	APR 15 after 8:31 PM

## BULLETIN DEADLINES

APRIL 2 **	FOR APRIL 28
APRIL 23	FOR MAY 12
MAY 7	FOR MAY 26
JUNE 11	FOR JUNE 30

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## Early Deadline

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

# Anne Frank's diary still reveals lessons for all generations

**Monique Elliot** speaks with members of **Phoenix Players**, an Ottawa community theatre group rehearsing its new production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning drama

**A** new Ottawa production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the theatrical adaptation of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* will debut next month with a new, local cast that said it is committed to revitalizing the spirit of the inspirational narrative.

In her diary, the teenaged Anne Frank documented her thoughts and some historical notes, while hiding from the Nazis with her Jewish family in an Amsterdam attic during the Second World War.

The Franks were eventually betrayed and discovered by the Nazis in 1944. Anne's diary was kept hidden by a family confidant until it was returned to Otto Frank, Anne's father and the only member of the family to survive the Holocaust.

Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett adapted the diary into a theatrical script, which won the 1956 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The original Broadway production won both the Tony Award and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best play, among many other accolades.

For lead actress Marie-Pier Jean, 15, playing the role of Anne is the fulfilment of a long-held dream.

"I think she's such a heroic character," Jean said, noting that what Anne experienced is something most people of her generation cannot comprehend.

"For me to be able to, if I can say, be her, in a play, is an honour for me. She's such a big part of history."

This production marks the second time Phoenix Players director Tim Picotte has directed the award-winning play. The first time was more than two decades ago, and Picotte said he decided it was time to revisit the life of the Jewish teen whose penchant for storytelling changed the way millions of people have come to understand the horrors of the Holocaust.

"It's going to move the audience. As a director, you want to pick a show that moves and gives the audience an experience. This is going to be it," he said.

Picotte and the crew said they are using the power of lighting, sound and technology – through the use of a

drop-down screen for a short slideshow – to elicit strong emotional responses from the audience.

The unique set designed for this production is causing excitement among the cast and crew. Picotte said his vision was to create an imposing, symbolic and ultimately realistic representation of the cramped reality of eight people living in an attic for more than two years.

"We elevate the rooms of the children to create islands of isolation," Picotte said, adding that the symbolism hidden within the set will be central to the main themes of discrimination and oppression.

"What I like about how Tim directs shows is that he really goes deep into the feelings, emotions and evolution of the characters," Jean said of the levels of complexity the audience can discern while watching.

"I think strength, overall, is the biggest theme we can find in the show, in my opinion because every [character], at some point in the show, breaks down. And, at other times, it's their turn to be

strong. And we can really see that contrast. Tim is really making that come through."

"It's a play that everyone can connect with," said Ellen Clare O'Gallagher, president of Phoenix Players and production manager for the show. "It's a play about the terrible consequences of intolerance."

O'Gallagher added that this is contrasted with joy, discovery and humour because Anne is an extremely relatable character.

"She's just a young girl," she said.

Picotte said he hopes there will be a strong turnout among youth not yet familiar with Anne's story.

"They just don't know. So it's time. It's time to remind them," he said.

Evening performances of *The Diary of Anne Frank* will take place from April 10 to 12 and April 15 to 19 at 7:30 pm, with matinees on April 13 and 19 at 2:30 pm at the Gladstone Theatre, 910 Gladstone Avenue. Following the matinee on April 13, the cast will stay on stage for a talk-back with the audience to discuss



Anne Frank in May 1942 around the time her family went into hiding from the Nazis.

the play and their performance and respond to questions from the audience.

Tickets are \$18 (adults) and \$15 (students and seniors) and can be purchased at the door or in advance at [www.thegladstone.ca](http://www.thegladstone.ca) or by calling the box office at 613-233-4523.



The cast of the Phoenix Players production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* rehearses their lines for the Chanukah scene. (From left) Elizabeth Chant (Margot Frank), Dirk Visbach (Mr. Dussel), Barbara Kobolak (Mrs. Frank), William Blampied (stage manager), Andre Dimitrijevic (Mr. Van Daan), Vanessa Cook (Mrs. Van Daan), Vincent Scattolon (Peter Van Daan) and Marie-Pier Jean (Anne Frank). Missing from photo: William Horsman (Mr. Frank).

PHOTO: MONIQUE ELLIOT

# Netanyahu wants 'durable peace' with Palestinians soon

Washington (JTA) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to work for a "durable peace" with the Palestinians in the coming weeks and reiterated his refusal to accept a deal with Iran that included any uranium enrichment capacity.

Netanyahu, in his March 4 speech to the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, embraced an optimistic vision of peace with the Palestinians as the key to broader regional stability.

"I'm prepared to make a historic peace with our Palestinian neighbours," Netanyahu said.

"Peace would be good for us, peace would be good for the Palestinians, but peace would open up the possibility of establishing formal ties between Israel

and leading countries in the Arab world," he said. "Peace with the Palestinians would turn our relations with them and with many Arab countries into open and thriving relationships."

Netanyahu repeated a number of his demands of a peace agreement, including Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state and a long-term Israeli military presence on the Jordan-West Bank border, but he suggested that a deal could come soon.

"As we work in the coming days, in the coming weeks, to forge a durable peace, I hope that the Palestinian leadership will stand with Israel and the United States on the right side of the moral divide, the side of peace, reconciliation and hope," he said.

He paused, waiting for the AIPAC



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Policy Conference in Washington, March 4.

PHOTO: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

supporters to applaud this vision and, when they did not, he explicitly solicited their applause.

"You can clap – you want to encourage them to do that!" he said.

Netanyahu's message came a day after meetings he held with U.S. President Barack Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry.

Obama, before meeting Netanyahu, had told Bloomberg News that he would impress upon him the need to embrace the framework agreement Kerry hopes to unveil soon, and in Netanyahu's AIPAC speech, he appeared to do so.

The two leaders also discussed the nuclear talks between Iran and the major powers and, in this area, Netanyahu did not appear to budge from his insistence that any deal include a total dismantling of Iran's nuclear capability, including an end to enrichment.

"The leading powers of the world are talking about leaving Iran with the capability to enrich uranium," he said. "That would be a grave error."

Obama and officials in his administra-

tion have indicated that leaving Iran with a limited enrichment capability is the likeliest outcome of the talks.

Netanyahu said that Israel could not accept such a status.

"We will never be brought to the brink of extinction again," he said. "As prime minister of Israel, I will do whatever I must do to defend the Jewish state of Israel."

Netanyahu also repeated his call for enhanced sanctions on Iran, something that Obama has rejected, saying they could scuttle the talks.

"You know how you get that agreement with Iran?" Netanyahu said. "Not by relieving pressure, but by adding pressure!"

A focus of Netanyahu's speech was the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement targeting Israel, which he described as anti-Semitic.

"Those who wear the BDS label should be treated as we treat any anti-Semite and bigot. They should be exposed and condemned," he said. "The boycotters should be boycotted!"

**A Shloshim/Memorial Gathering will be held on Sunday, March 23, 2014 at 2:00 pm to honour the memory of Ian Kagedan z'L (Yehonatan HaKohen Ben Yosef V'Miriam) Who devoted his life to Family, Community Service and Scholarship All are invited to attend and pay their respects Congregation Beit Tikvah of Ottawa 15 Chartwell Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario**

## LAST CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

### 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: [rabenhaim@jewishottawa.com](mailto:rabenhaim@jewishottawa.com)

For more information or to download a nomination form, please visit [www.jewishottawa.com](http://www.jewishottawa.com)

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# AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The Federation supports our community agencies through your generous donations to the Annual Campaign.



## Community partnerships paint a brighter tomorrow

By Katherine Carter

Rising prices and government cutbacks are the realities of today's life. Over the course of the past four years, Tamir has faced austerity measures affecting government funding for the developmental services sector.

What does this mean? It means zero. Zero increase in funding to assist agencies meet the increasing cost of living while trying to care for the needs of participants as they age. A gap that started four years ago is steadily becoming a canyon.

In response, Tamir has made immense efforts to operate as efficiently as possible to ensure front line services for participants do not suffer. But, with each passing year, as the belt tightens, choices become a little more difficult.

Tamir is the sole organization in Ottawa that provides support to individuals with developmental disabilities in a caring Jewish environment. Tamir households face

the same increasing costs we do in our own homes. Since cutbacks were announced in 2009, Tamir has been feeling the strain of higher costs without any increase in funding from the province of Ontario.

There have been some difficult decisions, but this situation has also provided an opportunity to develop new and existing community partnerships for Tamir and our homes.

Just this past winter, CertaPro Painters rejuvenated two bedrooms at a Tamir program, free of charge.

"It was certainly unexpected. David Barron, the owner, just called us up one day and asked if any of our rooms needed a new coat of paint. It was very generous of them," said Brad Hammond, supervisor of Tamir's Broadview home.

"I think for our participants to have a space that is their own and they feel represents their personality is incredibly important."

Stephen Sammon, who was overseeing the work at Broadview, said that the best part was in knowing the impact it made for the participants.

"I love thinking about the smiles put on their faces. Knowing that we're doing something that makes people happy is really special," he said.

"It may seem like something small, but, when they see their room in their favourite colour, it's amazing."

For David Barron, the inspiration for this initiative came after taking on CertaPro Painters' first job with Tamir.

"It all started with us doing some projects earlier in the year, but, when I saw how big the organization was and how many people they support, I knew there was more we could do," said David. "The amount of love and dedication the staff has for the participants was really touching.

"Then, as the year progressed, we

learned that some of our workers were supporters of Tamir. And then I saw a Tamir tribute card while at another project site.

"It just confirmed that this was a great opportunity. Our supplier was really supportive and donated the paint."

A fresh coat of paint may seem small, but it can mean the world to Tamir participants.

Tamir needs to focus on maintaining core services to ensure quality care in the face of government cutbacks. Support from community partnerships such as the one with CertaPro Painters may not close the funding gap entirely, but it does strengthen the bridge that will help Tamir get across.

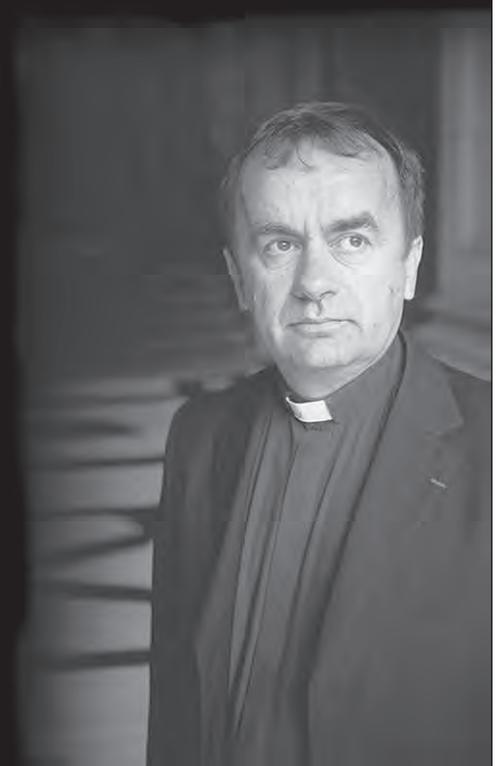
*On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, families and especially our participants, Tamir would like to express our sincere thanks to CertaPro Painters for their generous contributions.*

# YOM HASHOAH

APRIL 27, 2014 • 7 pm

**Keynote speaker Father Patrick Desbois,** president of the Yahad-In Unum Association, has devoted his life to confronting anti-Semitism and improving the relationship between Jews and Catholics.

His extraordinary work to locate every mass grave and site at which Jews were killed during the Holocaust has received international attention.

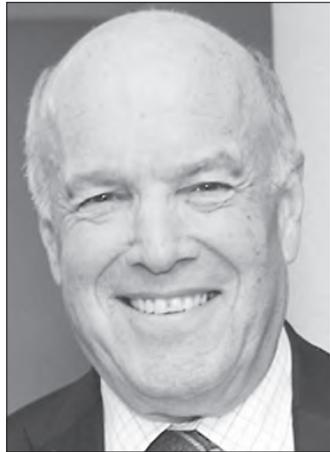


Soloway Jewish Community Centre  
21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa  
Info: bsiemiatycki@jewishottawa.com

A program of the Shoah (Holocaust) Committee of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa



FEDERATION  
REPORT



RUSSELL KRONICK  
HILLEL LODGE

## The Hillel Lodge mission: honouring our fathers and mothers

It was my mother's last home, and the compassion, love and care she received significantly eased a difficult life transition. We saw first-hand how Hillel Lodge carries out its mission, the mitzvah of honouring our fathers and mothers, which is one of the cornerstones of what it means to be Jewish.

My mother's experience compelled me to become a volunteer and to help in the governance of this wonderful institution. And many other families have had the same experience. Visitors to Hillel Lodge marvel at the surroundings, the atmosphere, the programs, the staff and, above all, the spirit permeating the facility. We can and certainly should be proud beyond measure. The herculean effort of our community, and the many selfless volunteers who have for decades dedicated their time, talents and spirit, has resulted in an institution that is the envy of many and an example to all.

However, we must never fall into the

trap of complacency. Certainly, we're successful. We have an institution recognized for its achievements. We take care of our loved ones with compassion, love and excellence, and we have fantastic staff. But all of this has to be managed and maintained, and even improved in the future. The Board I have the privilege to chair has recognized that, notwithstanding our success, we must be vigilant to ensure the continuation and improvement of our standards of excellence.

Our community wants, and expects, Hillel Lodge to be a Jewish facility. This costs money. So where does the money come from? There are three sources, two of which are fixed by law. The first is provincial funding that has been, and likely will continue to be, plagued by uncertainty and cutbacks. The second source is room rates charged to residents. These are fixed by provincial law and cannot be increased. These two sources of money do not cover the cost of

running a Jewish facility.

The only other source of money is all of us. While we receive a generous allocation from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, no one should be surprised when we reach out to the community for support for annual fundraising events and planned long-term gifting. The Hillel Lodge Long-Term Care Foundation has been given a significantly expanded role in these areas. Its organizational structure has been revamped with the addition of a professional director of Development and it is now located in a new and visible office on the main floor.

An exciting new website at [www.hillel-ltc.com](http://www.hillel-ltc.com) allows the community, the residents and their families to engage with us as never before. The success of events such as the Auxiliary Tea and Biking for Bubbies, as well as our recent Capital Campaign, demonstrate the depth of the wellspring of support that Hillel Lodge enjoys in our community. And the Board itself has risen to the challenge by planning a strategic planning retreat that will attempt to map the way forward to an even brighter future.

We all want and need Hillel Lodge. And so we need your help with leadership and financial support. But most of all we need your goodwill.

Years ago, walking on Wurttemberg Street with my parents, I asked what the small building was that some Jewish people were entering. My mother said it was the "old people's home."

Several decades later, my mother entered that home, Hillel Lodge, now located on the Jewish Community Campus. But what a difference: it is now a modern 121-bed facility, staffed by the most competent caregivers and administrators, and is recognized as one of the finest examples of long-term care in Canada.

FROM THE  
PULPIT



RABBI MENACHEM BLUM  
OTC CHABAD

## A Jew in the free world

persecution and poverty that many of our grandparents faced in Europe. This great gift of freedom, however, has also brought the greatest challenge for the North American Jew. The free world has opened up the possibility for the Jew to choose whether or not to identify as a Jew. Jewishness has gone from being destiny to being a conscious choice.

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom, put it, "Previously, Jewish identity had been a total one, a matter of dress and speech, manners and mannerisms."

"Tradition," sung by Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, confirms the shtetl Jew didn't have to make too many choices. Being born a Jew meant it was automatically all-encompassing. Today, however, with the gift of freedom, we can make a personal choice about whether or not we would like to participate in the Jewish community and engage Jewishly. This was clearly illustrated in the results of the recent Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews.

There is a positive side to this freedom of choice though. God created us with the ability to make choices so that we can achieve things on our own. Our choices create the world we live in. When our choices and actions are mindful of our Jewishness and God's values, we become transformed personally and we transform the world around us into a more Godly place.

The Baal Shem Tov once said, "True service of God is achieved only when we motivate ourselves." The power of devoting ourselves to something without coercion is that it becomes more precious to us and we are transformed as a result.

This is the power of the modern world. In the shtetl, there was little we could choose about our lives. There were many things that were determined by our family background and our little close-knit Jewish community. Our engagement with Jewish life was a given. You dressed differently, you spoke differently, you conducted business differently, and this is who you were.

Compare that with today's world, where our choices in all areas of life are endless. Today, when we choose to live Jewishly, our choices are so much more meaningful and powerful, because they are really *our choice*. Because our choices to live Jewishly today are freely generated without coercion, our Jewish identity becomes more precious to us. When we engage Jewishly today, it is an ultimate statement of our love and commitment to being a Jew.

As we prepare to celebrate the festival of freedom, let's embrace the power of this freedom and choose to add one new element of Jewish tradition to our Pesach celebration, thereby making this Pesach a transformative experience for our families and our Jewish community. Wishing you all a Kosher and Happy Pesach!

We find ourselves in the Hebrew month of Adar II, which includes Purim and precedes Pesach. These two holidays share a common theme as they both celebrate liberation and freedom from our oppressors. In fact, we specifically celebrate Purim in Adar II (this year being a leap year when we have two months of Adar) so that we keep the two holidays close to each other as they share that common theme.

Liberation and freedom are something we really identify with as Canadian Jews living in the modern age. We are steeped in freedom. We have the liberty to integrate within our society and we enjoy all of the rights and opportunities that are equally available to all Canadian citizens. We are free to practise our Judaism openly and we don't have to deal with the

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

In May 2008, less than a year after I moved to Ottawa from Montreal to work at the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, I attended a talk at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre given by Queen's University historian Gerald Tulchinsky.

Tulchinsky was here to speak about his then-new book, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, a history of Canada's Jewish community. At one point in his talk, Tulchinsky was describing the Protestant school system in Quebec in which the vast majority of Montreal's Jews in the 20th century were educated. He asked if anyone in the audience had been through that system. About two-thirds of us put up our hands.

All that to say that there are many of us in Ottawa's Jewish community with

## The Quebec election is all about values

roots in Quebec. And many of us retain deep ties there. So, we feel like we have a stake in what goes on in Quebec. And, as Jason Moscovitz notes in his *Ideas and Impressions* column in the space below, the campaign has begun for the Quebec provincial election on April 7.

One of the main issues in this election – I would argue *the* main issue – is the so-called Charter of Quebec Values proposed by the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ), which seeks to take away the right of public sector workers to wear clothing or obvious symbols of their religion. Under the charter, a Jewish doctor, a Muslim teacher or a Sikh bus driver would be banned from wearing the kippah, hijab or turban they might feel is important to their religious observance. And there are PQ ministers who have said they would like to see private sector companies adopt the charter as well.

In essence, the proposed charter is a decidedly unsubtle message to religious minorities that they are not welcome in mainstream society – at least the society envisioned by the PQ.

That this proposed charter runs

contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and to Quebec's own Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, is of no consequence to the PQ. They want nothing more than to provoke court battles with the federal government as a way of proving the need for separation to their followers.

Yes, this election is very much about values – and it remains to be seen which values Quebecers will choose.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

One of the most important roles for the *Bulletin* – both in print and online – is as a medium for discussion and debate on issues of concern to the Jewish community. We welcome letters to the editor and guest columns and, since the launch of our new website – [www.ottawajewishbulletin.com](http://www.ottawajewishbulletin.com) – last November, comments on the individual articles and columns that we post online.

As with everything else in the paper, letters and guest columns that we publish are subject to editing for length, style and clarity. Both letters (up to 300 words) and guest columns (up to 700 words) should be as concise as possible.

The best way to submit them is via email to [bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com](mailto:bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com).

We don't accept anonymous submissions. Letters and guest columns need to be fully attributed with the name of the author and, if relevant, any organizational affiliation.

When we launched the website, we decided to apply the same standard to comments. We welcome readers' comments, but they must post under their real names and be on-topic. Internet forums – including the comments sections on the websites of many newspapers – often turn vindictive, ugly and very personal when anonymous posting is allowed. Particularly so, it so often and sadly seems, when anything to do with Israel is under discussion.

We recently rejected a comment made to a column on the website, even though it was relevant and interesting, because it was submitted anonymously. The person who made the comment called me to explain the reasons for wanting to remain anonymous. While I understood and respected the person's concerns – even though I didn't agree with them – I thought it better to not set a precedent by allowing an anonymous post.

The *Bulletin* website is an extension and expansion of what we have been doing in print since 1937. We welcome your voice and your opinions – but we need to know whose voice and whose opinions we're hearing.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

The storm clouds are threatening again. A Quebec election is coming April 7 and polls point to a likely Parti Québécois (PQ) majority. Dinner table talk is about politics. Montreal's Jewish community, and other minority groups, are bracing themselves for another round of feeling unwanted.

Of course, Quebec has been through this before, and I had the professional privilege to be close to it. I covered René Lévesque's sweep to power in 1976 and I covered both referendum campaigns in 1980 and 1995. Having a government in power that wants to pull Quebec out of Canada may not be a new phenomenon, but each time is different, with its own unique set of circumstances and

## The script is written, the curtain is about to rise

challenges.

This round coming does not auger well – which is a fancy way of saying it doesn't smell very good. How could it smell good when the rest of Canada has no appetite for another round of Quebec's threats to separate? It is not just fatigue with the subject; it is also that Canada has changed dramatically since the huge flag-waving Canadian unity demonstration on the eve of the 1995 referendum. A lot has changed in 19 years.

This is not to say Canadians are not proud of their country. Just look at the glory celebrated during the recent Winter Olympics. Canadian unity and identity are now so solidly rooted, there could be resentment towards those who challenge the virtues of being part of Canada. For Quebecers who wish to renew the independence debate, there will likely be many in the rest of the country saying that to do so would be at their own peril.

There are other issues that preoccupy Canadians: the economy, including concerns about high unemployment among young Canadians, household debt, and taxes; health care; and our crumbling infrastructure. The Quebec debate will be

an unwelcome distraction from such concerns.

And, if many Canadians are starting not to care whether Quebec stays or goes, the next question to ask is where is the national leadership? Who will be the best political champion for a united Canada?

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives have never had a Quebec base on which to build. Justin Trudeau's Liberals have been unelectable in French Quebec since his father left politics in 1984. Thomas Mulcair's NDP have the numbers today – but, until proven otherwise, those seats belong to the late Jack Layton.

Current polling indicates the Liberals have the best chance in Quebec – but let's also remember the next federal election is more than a year-and-a-half away, while the Quebec election is next month.

With polling trends indicating a sizable PQ majority, Premier Pauline Marois will have the breathing space she needs to pass the *Charter of Quebec Values*, reinforce the language law and do all the promotion she wants that Quebec would be better off as an independent country. Her majority government will be actively entrenched by

the time the federal election comes around. National unity will become an issue in the federal campaign. Marois will engineer it that way.

It could be a huge risk for federal leaders to take on the national unity mantle. Not because of the reaction in Quebec, but rather because of the potential backlash in the rest of country. What a tricky time it will be for a federal election with the PQ leading the orchestra in Quebec City.

There is something about the people in the present PQ minority government that speaks volumes about how they will govern as a majority. They look for confrontation rather than compromise. They consider compromise to be weakness. A majority will give them a chance to flex their muscles and, as the expression goes, take no prisoners in the unity debate.

In his day, Lévesque poked and prodded to see what he could get – as if he was actually afraid of going for the full-fledged Quebec independence that motivates and energizes Marois and her group. The rules of the game are about to change in dramatic fashion and, somehow, you can't help but be saddened by it.

We are about to embark on a long voyage of sustained negativity. There is nothing the Marois government will want to do more than turn off the rest of Canada on Quebec.

The script is written, the curtain is about to rise.



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### SUCHAROV'S THOUGHTFUL AND PROVOCATIVE COLUMN

I want to commend Mira Sucharov for her column "Should I stay in my congregation and attempt to eke out change from within or switch shuls?" (*Values, Ethics, Community*, March 3). She wrestles with the dilemmas and the compromises that we make as members of the Jewish community, parents, spouses and individuals with our own ethical values.

Sucharov's column is always thoughtful and provocative, as a good column should be.

She opens herself up to her readers in a way that most readers are unlikely to feel comfortable doing the same. That she does so in the public forum of the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* strengthens this paper and our community.

Adam Dodek

### WITH HARPER ON ISRAEL

"We should be respectful of those who don't agree with everything the prime minister says or doesn't say about

Israel," writes Jason Moscovitz in his column "Harper's position is not about votes," (*Ideas and Impressions*, March 3).

On Israel, Prime Minister Harper and I, though we are far apart on many issues, stand together, unambiguously so.

People everywhere pay far too much negative attention to Israel while the rest of the world is on fire. We Canadians would much rather read about Israeli settlements than, for example, about what our ancestors did to First Nations.

As I understand it, Israeli settlements will be on the table if the negotiations with the Palestinians should move forward. Some settlement blocs will likely be absorbed by Israel but Israel should not be expected to stagnate while waiting for the Palestinian leadership to say yes to land for peace. It's been no for six decades now.

Palestinian leadership must recognize Israel as a Jewish state and say yes to the next fine offer that comes along.

Kerry Wilson

## 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, *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*  
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Or by email to [bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com](mailto:bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com)

## Annual Passover gift fair, Sunday, April 6

### BY MARILYN SCHWARTZ CHW OTTAWA CENTER

The Third Annual Passover Fair – presented in collaboration by Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW), Na'amat Canada and Congregation Beit Tikvah – will take place Sunday, April 6, 10:30 am to 4 pm, at Beit Tikvah, 15 Chartwell Avenue in Craig Henry.

Among the many local vendors participating in the fair are Miriam's Glass Works, Designs by Sharron, Suzie Q Tee Design and Marvalee Jewelry Designs.

There will also be gift shop items from Beit Tikvah and other synagogues, Pampered Chef products, Nadia's Aloe Vera products, Tupperware, books, kosher for

Passover Wines from Na'amat and much more.

Creations made by CHW Amit Chapter members will include an array of matzo covers, afikoman bags, aprons for children and adults, gift wine bags in holiday fabrics, stuffed animals wearing crocheted kippot, and many other crafts.

Forms will also be available to arrange for the selling of your chametz. Proceeds from the fair will benefit CHW, Na'amat and Beit Tikvah projects.

For more information, contact Beit Tikvah at 613-723-1800 or [shul@cbto.org](mailto:shul@cbto.org); Deana Schidkraut of Na'amat at 613-726-9595; or Marilyn Schwartz of CHW at [marilyn\\_sch1970@yahoo.ca](mailto:marilyn_sch1970@yahoo.ca).



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### March 21 is International Day of Forests

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed March 21 as International Day of Forests to celebrate all types of forests and raise awareness of the importance of woodlands. On each International Forest Day, countries are encouraged to promote local, national and international initiatives to organize activities involving forests and woodlands, such as tree-planting campaigns.

For many years, KKL-JNF was synonymous with planted pine forests in Israel. As awareness of the importance of biodiversity grew, KKL-JNF's approach to forestry changed. Today's forests barely resemble those of the past – they are varied and open, providing a welcoming home to a broad range of plants and animals, and serve as wonderful recreation sites. KKL-JNF is also committed to forestry research to improve the quality of its trees, to develop environmentally friendly methods of dealing with pests, prevent erosion and desertification, and create forests that people can enjoy.

To date, KKL-JNF has planted over 240 million trees for the benefit of people and the environment and maintains over 100,000 acres of natural woodland. KKL-JNF forests, among the largest planted forests in the Mediterranean Middle East, are a source of substantial carbon sequestration. Since its inception, KKL-JNF policy has been to open its forests to the general public and, with the help of its friends worldwide, KKL-JNF has developed over 1,000 recreation areas that host hundreds of thousands of visitors. Many of KKL-JNF's sites are fully accessible to the physically challenged, and to wheelchairs and baby carriages.

If, at the beginning of its history, KKL-JNF concentrated primarily on covering the bleak Israeli countryside with a carpet of green forests, in recent years the emphasis has been on care and maintenance. Forests change – trees grow older, fires break out and sometimes aggressive pests attack. To keep its forests healthy and thriving, KKL-JNF has developed a top-notch firefighting system and early-warning network, and it rehabilitates burnt trees. KKL-JNF also invests in forestry research devoted to finding innovative solutions to problems such as desertification.

### Trees root Israel in global forestry discussions

The Israel Foreign Ministry has been working in recent years on involving Israel in the global agenda of the UN. Agriculture, forestry, water and combating desertification, along with sustainable development, which are KKL-JNF's main fields, merit Israel acclaim and visibility. Israel became a member of the directorate of the UN Forum on Forests as a member of the OECD, and in view of this function is in the forum administration. As a result, KKL-JNF personnel have been part of the delegation of experts from Israel attending conferences on forestry where delegates from 130 countries have discussed forestry and economic development.

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A Touch of Klez performs at Westfest 2013. (From left) Irwin Brodo (mandolin), Shaina Lipsey (vocals), Peter Teitelbaum (clarinet), Eric Elkin (flute and piccolo), Jacki Langsner (keyboard). Not seen in the photo are Fred Brown (bass), Steve Shapransky (drums) and Don McVeigh (banjo).

## Evening of Jewish music to benefit the Ottawa Kasher Food Bank, March 30

BY FENJA BRODO  
FOR KLEZ 7

If you like to kick up your heels and dance, or just simply enjoy listening to vibrant Jewish music, come out to *Klez 7*, the seventh annual musical evening in support of the Ottawa Kasher Food Bank. The evening will include performances by A Touch of Klez and the choral ensemble Musica Ebraica.

*Klez 7* takes place Sunday, March 30, 7 pm, at Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Avenue. The evening promises to be good for both the body and soul.

You don't need a partner, but you do need comfortable shoes to dance to the music of A Touch of Klez. The musicians are preparing exciting new music, employing traditional dance rhythms of bulgars, shers, Yiddish horas and waltzes. Don't worry if you don't know the steps, members of the International Folk Dancers of Ottawa will be on hand to teach the dances. Then, for a change of pace, Musica Ebraica, under the direction of Gloria Jean Nagy, will delight us with a selection of Hebrew and Yiddish songs.

*Klez 7* is co-sponsored by Adath Shalom Congregation, Agudath Israel Congregation, Congregation Beth Shalom, Congregation Machzikei

Hadas, Or Haneshamah and Temple Israel.

Agudath is a lovely venue for this event with lots of room to dance. Refreshing drinks and snacks will keep you going throughout the evening.

The suggested donation is \$10 per person and donations of non-perishable kosher food items are also welcome. Cheques can be made out to Agudath Israel, with "Ottawa Kasher Food Bank" on the memo line.

For further information, or to become a sponsor, call Toby Brooks at 613-234-1649.-

### House Exchange

Ex-Ottawa couple living in Moshav Zippori, Israel, would like to exchange houses with someone in Ottawa any time from mid-August to mid-September, 2014. For information, contact Frank and Elaine Goldstein at [goldsnm@yahoo.com](mailto:goldsnm@yahoo.com) or call us at 972-4-6468349

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# New fund announced for innovative capacity building

BY SARAH BEUTEL  
JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA

The Jewish Federation of Ottawa is excited to announce a new fund to support innovative projects that help build capacity within the Federation's partner agencies. Thanks to the support and initiative of a generous donor, the new fund will provide grants for new initiatives that strengthen Federation funded agencies, enhance their strong foundations and advance the important work they do.

The fund is an important opportunity for agencies to come up with innovative, creative ways to increase their capacity and strengthen their services through a

one-time cash injection that is aimed at helping improve operations over the long-term.

With grants of up to \$15,000 and an emphasis on collaboration, the Federation hopes the new fund will encourage more collaboration and partnerships among agencies. These partners need not be currently funded organizations, as long as the lead organization is currently funded. The new fund will award grants totalling up to \$100,000 this year, with another \$50,000 available in 2015.

The announcement of the new fund was met with approval when it was discussed at a recent meeting of partner agency executive directors.

"Agencies and organizations in our community provide such valuable and meaningful services. Focused on the daily struggle to meet needs, it can be challenging to devote extra time to forging partnerships. We hope that one of the side-benefits of the fund is to increase collaboration amongst an assortment of partners, including non-traditional ones," said Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman.

Agency executive directors have already started to put their heads together to find new ways to collaborate and think of how this one-time funding can help them carry out initiatives that would not otherwise have

been possible.

The new fund is specifically designed to address key challenges facing the Federation and Jewish agencies in Ottawa.

Firstly, the fund injects new financial resources into the community at a time when pressure is mounting on agencies to deliver the same high quality services, but with fewer resources.

Secondly, it is clear there is growing donor fatigue as needs in the community continue to rise. Therefore, only proposals to grow capacity for projects requiring a one-time cash infusion will be considered for funding. Similarly, it is targeted at initiatives that help "scale up" existing programs or projects, enabling them to move to the next level.

Finally, agencies can apply to the fund for capacity building twice a year, injecting nimbleness into Federation's allocations that will further strengthen the community.

While the fund's donor wishes to remain anonymous, the Federation is grateful for his visionary leadership, which will benefit our agencies and ultimately the community.

For more information on this and other Federation initiatives, contact Bram Bregman, vice-president of community building at [bbregman@jewishottawa.com](mailto:bbregman@jewishottawa.com).

## It's a girl!

Manny and Paula Agulnik are thrilled to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Ariella Areeya, daughter of Mark and Julie Agulnik and little sister to Liliana, on Friday, February 21 in Coral Springs, Florida.

Ariella is named in memory of her great-grandfather, Harry (Aaron) Agulnik and maternal great-grandmother Ada Jacobson.



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## Israeli NGOs bring expertise to Kenya

BY BEN SALES

Nairobi, Kenya (JTA) – When they first arrived in northern Kenya in 2011 at the height of a massive drought, the Israeli refugee aid organization IsraAid planned to offer food and other core necessities to the 100,000 residents of the Kakuma refugee camp.

When the drought subsided a year later, IsraAid's directors saw that this sort of assistance was becoming less crucial. Much larger organizations were providing food, clothing and medicine.

But, rather than leave, IsraAid shifted its focus from short-term aid to long-term support through something Israelis do best: post-trauma counselling. Decades of terror attacks have equipped Israeli experts to serve the camp's residents, many of whom are survivors of hunger, torture

or the violent death of relatives. IsraAid has trained 18 camp residents to be social workers; most of them are now helping other camp residents cope with their pain.

"Part of the health of a person is mental health," said Naama Gorodischer, IsraAid's Kenya country director. "We can do what we know, and what we do in all our projects is use Israeli knowledge and specialization to perform capacity building."

See NGOs on page 11

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# NGOs: Kenyans have 'strong sense of affinity with Israel'

Continued from page 10

IsraAid is one of several Israeli NGOs working to improve the lives of Kenyans by importing Israeli technology and expertise. Their work is enabled by a history of friendly ties between Israel and Kenya and the relative stability of Kenya's government and economy.

Nairobi, a booming city where new malls and roads intersect with destitute slums and gated communities, has emerged as a centre of humanitarian work in East Africa. International organizations from the United Nations to Oxfam have located their regional headquarters there. Even after the terrorist attack on the city's upscale Westgate mall in September, international aid workers continue to operate in Kenya with little fear.

"Nairobi is an international hub in East Africa for development," said Gilad Milo, the founder of Israel for Africa, a Kenya-based non-profit that teaches young people to farm using Israeli technology. "It's like an entry point, spreading to Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi. It's a good melting pot for ideas."

Kenya has been a friendly destination for Israelis since it gained independence in 1963. Israeli businesses helped build the country's infrastructure and boost its agriculture sector, and the two countries co-ordinate on security issues. Exchange

between the two countries has been robust, with Israeli military personnel advising Kenya in the wake of the Westgate attack and Kenyans routinely travelling to Israel for professional training programs. Israeli experts come to Kenya to lead seminars on everything from agricultural technology to Krav Maga, the martial art developed in Israel.

"There's a strong sense of affinity with Israel as a country struggling for liberation," Israel's ambassador to Kenya, Gil Haskel, told JTA. "Kenyans understood that they could benefit from relations with Israel."

Such close relations have led to a booming industry in Israeli humanitarian assistance. Israel for Africa provides impoverished young Kenyans with farming kits that include the equipment necessary to raise a small plot of crops, from Israeli-made greenhouses to Israeli-designed drip irrigation systems.

Members of one of the youth associations with which Israel for Africa partners, a dance group called Ramsa Africa, begin work at 6 am on rows of tomatoes, peppers, spinach and kale, watering the crops with drip-irrigation hoses and checking each plant for signs of disease. After lunch, they have dance rehearsals.

A similar mission drives Brit Olam, an Israeli non-profit running an agriculture



Regina Muthoni, left, and Kenneth Gitau of the Nairobi dance group Kreative Generations, learned to farm with the help of the non-profit Israel for Africa.

development program in the semi-arid northwest region of Turkana. Droughts have made reliance on grazing cattle impossible, so Brit Olam imported Israeli technology for desert farming to give local residents economic independence.

"This is a change in mentality for people who never had to wake up early and go every day to the field to do a routine," Brit Olam project developer Millet Biberman said. "But, until you have water and food, you can't do anything else."

The Israeli non-profit Save a Child's Heart, which was founded in 2008 and is

active in 44 countries, brings underprivileged Kenyan children in need of heart surgery to Israel. According to founding director Rina Attias, the waiting list has 250 children.

Attias, who survived the Westgate attack by hiding in a closet, said that experiencing terror in Kenya only made her more dedicated to saving lives there.

"Every place has terror," she said. "This can happen anywhere. If I was supposed to die, I would have died, but my time apparently has not come yet. So I chose to do more for this community."

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2nd Friday of the month: "Bring your own dinner," following Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:00 pm.

Saturday Shabbat Services, 10:15 am.

Sunday, March 30: Adam Heffez, foreign policy analyst, will give a presentation telling the hopes and frustrations and visions of both Israelis and Palestinians through the anonymous, spontaneous and uncensored medium of graffiti, 9:30 am.

Sunday, April 6 and 13: Prof. Shawna Dolansky, "Who Wrote the Bible," 10:00 am

Sunday, April 27: *Harvard Square*, by Andre Aciman, will be reviewed by Sophie Kohn Kaminsky, 9:30 am.

Sunday, May 11: *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*, by Ari Shavit, will be reviewed by Rabbi Steven Garten, 9:30 am.

Rabbi Steven H. Garten, Spiritual Leader

For information, please contact Heather Cohen, Executive Director, 613-224-1802 #4

For Temple Israel Religious School (TIRS), please contact Sheli Braun, Principal, 613-224-3133 or tirs@templeisraelottawa.com



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בס"ד


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## Renowned Israeli theatre scholar to spend week at uOttawa

BY REBECCA MARGOLIS  
VERED JEWISH  
CANADIAN STUDIES PROGRAM  
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

The University of Ottawa will host Freddie Rokem, a world-renowned expert on Jewish theatre, as part of our Distinguished Visiting Professor program, during the week of March 24.

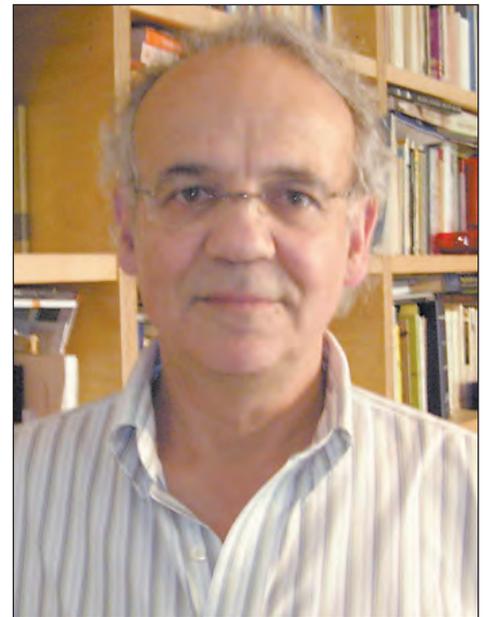
Rokem teaches in the Department of Theatre Studies at Tel Aviv University, and his areas of interest combine theatre and philosophy. He is the author of *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, which received the Association for Theatre in Higher Education Prize for best theatre studies book in 2001.

He is also author of *Strindberg's Secret Codes and Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance*. Rokem is also co-editor of *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre* and a translator and dramaturge.

During his stay as a visiting scholar at uOttawa, Rokem will meet with students and faculty and hold a round-table event for graduate students. He will also deliver a public lecture, *Possessed by Theatre: 'The Dybbuk' at HaBima, 1922*.

Habima – now the national theatre of Israel based in Tel Aviv – was the first institutionalized Hebrew theatre and was founded in Moscow, circa 1913, where it staged a repertoire of experimental works, of which *The Dybbuk* remains the most renowned.

The play tells the story of a young bride possessed by a dybbuk and was authored by folklorist S. Ansky, based on materials he collected during his expeditions among Eastern European Jews on the eve



Israeli theatre scholar Freddie Rokem will deliver a public lecture, March 27, 2:30 pm, at the University of Ottawa.

of the First World War. HaBima's Hebrew-language production seamlessly blended Soviet experimental theatre with Jewish folklore to great critical acclaim in 1922.

In his lecture, Rokem will discuss this production, a major event in the history of Jewish theatre. The public lecture, which is free of charge, will take place Thursday, March 27, 2:30 to 4 pm, at the University of Ottawa's Academic Hall.

For more information, contact Yana Meerzon at [ymeerzon@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ymeerzon@uOttawa.ca) or 613-613-562-5800, ext. 2243.

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# Adath Shalom to hold Shabbaton in memory of Harold Shizgal

BY RUTH KAHANE GOLDBERG  
FOR ADATH SHALOM

Carleton University biblical studies professor Shawna Dolansky will be the guest speaker at the Harold Shizgal Shabbaton to be held by Adath Shalom Congregation on Saturday, March 22, 9:45 am, at the Ottawa Jewish Community School chapel, 31 Nadolny Sachs Private.

At the Shabbaton, the congregation will study *Parashat Shemini* with Dolansky, who will discuss the task of the priest to distinguish between the pure and impure, the laws of kashrut and what the impetus was for kashrut. Her scholarly approach draws on literary criticism, comparative religion, historical study, anthropology, archaeology, political science and classics. Dolansky's topic for the afternoon session will be *Understanding gender roles in Ancient Israel*.

"Everyone knows that ancient Israelite

society – like all ancient societies – was patriarchal. But what exactly does that mean?" said Dolansky.

"We will join in an in-depth exploration of gender, power and agency in the familiar and not-so-familiar stories of *Genesis* and the 'Eshet hayil' poem of *Proverbs 31* in order to find that patriarchy is a lot more complicated, and nuanced, than you thought," she added.

The Shabbaton is dedicated to the memory of the late Harold Shizgal. Harold was deeply involved in Adath Shalom as an accomplished volunteer ritual leader, role model and friend whose ongoing participation helped build the lay-led Conservative egalitarian congregation. He passed away on January 2 at the age of 91.

To attend the Harold Shizgal Shabbaton, RSVP to [psadler@psadler.com](mailto:psadler@psadler.com) or [rkg@sympatico.ca](mailto:rkg@sympatico.ca) by March 20.



The late Harold Shizgal.



Biblical scholar Shawna Dolansky.



**Mitzvah Day at Agudath Israel:** On Mitzvah Day, February 9, families gathered at Agudath Israel Congregation to make Mishloach Manot food packages to be distributed on Purim by the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank to those in need.

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# Lecture at SJCC to focus on lessons *Book of Kings* has for today

BY MAXINE MISKA  
SOLOWAY JCC

Many Jewish communities have fissures the depth of the Grand Canyon, and, while this may be perceived as a localized phenomenon, Jewish history is replete with examples of deep divisions.

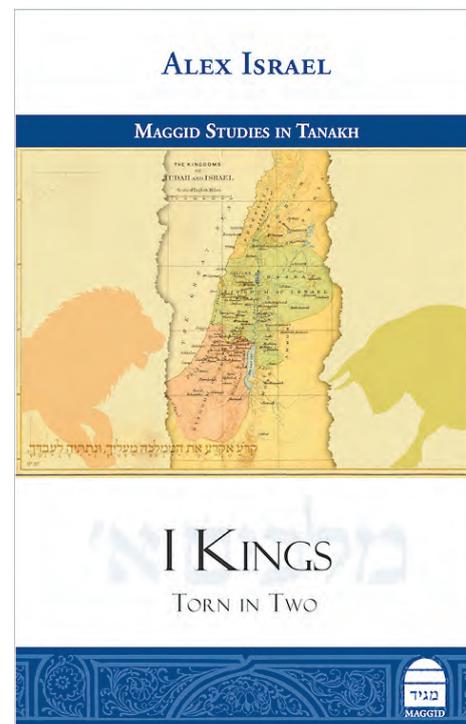
Rabbi Alex Israel of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem is an expert on a monumental schism: the division of the empire built by King David and his son King Solomon into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Rabbi Israel will present a lecture, *Torn in Two: How the Jewish People Split Apart*, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) on Wednesday, April 2, 7:30 pm.

Rabbi Israel is an esteemed educator who is a master at using traditional commentaries, contemporary sources and modern literary techniques to explore and illuminate biblical texts. He believes in animating the stories by finding relevance to modern life, placing the biblical narrative in its historical and geographical context and portraying the biblical figures as complex, sometimes

flawed human beings.

Through insightful analysis of the personalities of the kings and prophets in the Bible and the tension between state and religion, Rabbi Israel examines the conflicts that split apart that society. As an empire in a multicultural Middle East, the kings of Israel were caught between the monotheism of the tribes of Israel and the idol worship of the region, and between the remonstrations of the prophets and the seductions of empire building, power and wealth. King Solomon straddled these two worlds and built the wealthiest and most expansive kingdom in the history of the Children of Israel, but, after his death, the northern tribes revolted against the rule of his son Rehoboam and seceded as the Kingdom of Israel.

According to Rabbi Israel, the *Book of Kings* speaks to our own predicaments: conflicts between tradition and modernity, community values and global culture, our adherence to Torah, and our desires to blend into a multicultural society that no longer excludes Jews.



Rabbi Alex Israel of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem will speak about how the kingdom of David and Solomon split apart in Ancient Israel, April 2, at the SJCC.

Rabbi Israel serves as director of Community Education at Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies and is a teacher of Tanakh and Jewish thought at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi. Born and raised in London, Rabbi Israel was an active youth leader in Bnei Akiva. He holds degrees from the London School of Economics, the Institute of Education, London, and Bar Ilan University.

Admission is free of charge and Rabbi Israel's new book, *I Kings: Torn in Two*, will be available for sale at the event.

The lecture is sponsored by the SJCC and the Friends of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies. For information, contact Maxine Miska at [mmiska@jccottawa.com](mailto:mmiska@jccottawa.com) or 613-798-9818, ext. 263.

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2013 G.J. Cooper Scholarship recipient Michael Kent received a scholarship of \$12,850 at the Foundation's Annual General Meeting (presented by Steven Lesh, 2013 Scholarship Committee Chair)

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# Pew report's 'Jews of no religion' is not a new phenomenon

According to the Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews released last fall, Jews are assimilating at an alarming rate. These are the so-called "Jews of no religion." While the Pew report seems to have invented this phrase, in reality, it is a very old concept.

I recently read several books that have provided an overview of the Jewish condition in the 1800s and the birth of Zionism. These include *My Promised Land* by Ari Shavit, which offers a sobering and insightful take on Zionism; and *An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris, a fictionalized account of the Dreyfus affair. Add to this a biography on Brahms, whose ongoing quarrel with Wagner was based, in part, on Wagner's virulent anti-Semitism.

With the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason in 18th century Europe, some Jews began being accepted into the middle and higher classes of society. There were Jewish lords, bankers and musicians/composers. However, the price of societal acceptance paid by some of these Jewish interlopers was conversion to

Christianity. Other Jews who had penetrated genteel society assimilated into society-at-large.

Many of these Jews never saw the inside of the shul or never celebrated a bar mitzvah. Some Jews, at the urging of the kaiser in Vienna, tried to make religious observance be more like the Lutheran church. But society never let them forget they were Jews. Even the most assimilated Jews still went to the gas chambers during the Holocaust. So Jews of no (or little) religion are not a new phenomenon. They have been around for several hundred years.

Zionism, as envisioned by Theodor Herzl, was not based on religious Judaism. A homeland for the Jewish people was needed, and the original Jewish settlers in Palestine were not religious. Even today, according to a recent Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs study, 55 per cent of Israeli Jews are non-religious. That is, they are Jews of little or no religion.

The question is complicated. No one asks a Catholic

Frenchman if he is a faithful citizen of France. However, Dreyfus, a citizen of France, was said to be a traitor, largely because he was a Jew, and Jews, it was said, had no permanence in French society. The fact that they were citizens was of no account. When it comes to persecution, no one asks what kind of Jew you are.

So, what is this hand wringing over the Pew study all about?

Jews are not attending shul? It was always so for many Jews. But even Jews of no religion still identify themselves as Jews – ethnic Jews.

What may be troubling is that the Conservative and Reform movements cannot seem to engage ethnic Jews with Judaism. Perhaps, then, it's the product that is at fault.

It is some comfort to me that non-religious Jews still identify as Jewish. History has shown that Jews have a way of reinventing ourselves. All is not lost – history is on our side.

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**OJCS and Hulse students meet:** Students from the Ottawa Jewish Community School hosted their counterparts from Charles H. Hulse Public School on February 6 as part of the annual program of cultural understanding for Grade 6 students at the two schools. The annual program includes writing letters as pen pals and visits to each other's school where students interact and engage, learning more about one another and their communities. The students worked together on a Mitzvah Day project.



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# Cabinet recognizes plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands

(JTA) – Canada has formally recognized the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.

On March 3, the federal cabinet approved a report tabled last year that called on the federal government to

“officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees who were displaced from states in the Middle East and North Africa after 1948.”

Submitted to Parliament last November by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the 17-page report noted that, during the course of its hearings the previous spring, members “learned of the discrimination and hardship faced by Jewish people living in the Middle East and North Africa in the 20th century [which] surged over the years in tandem with the crisis moments of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular the 1948-49

and 1967 wars.”

The committee heard that, since 1948, roughly 850,000 Jews fled persecution and violence in the Middle East and North Africa, and that about 650,000 immigrated to Israel, while the rest settled in other countries, including Canada.

The countries in question had a collective Jewish population of just 4,315 in 2012, the report noted. It stressed that “recognition of the experiences of Jewish refugees does not diminish or compete with the situation of Palestinian refugees.”

A campaign for recognition of Jewish refugee claims has gained steam in recent

years in part as a response to demands of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel. Israel has said it will not grant Palestinian refugees citizenship.

“This is not only a matter of ensuring historical accuracy,” said CIJA chair David Koschitzky. “Once implemented, it will correct a fundamental imbalance in a Canadian policy that acknowledges Arab refugees but makes no mention of Jewish refugees resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

A CIJA spokesman said the organization is “looking forward to details on how this will be integrated into Canada’s standing policy on the Middle East.”

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# Jewish Family Services opens walk-in counselling clinic

BY GEREY MILLER  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS) is one of five family services agencies mandated by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to implement an exciting new counselling program in the Champlain region.

The Walk-in Counselling Clinic is a no-fee service, which operates at five different locations. Clients are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. No referrals or appointments are necessary. Clients of all ages regardless of ethnicity, race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, income and political or religious affiliation may simply walk in.

The clinic is open at Jewish Family Services – 2255 Carling Avenue, Suite 300 – on Wednesdays from noon until 8 pm (last walk-in session is at 6:30 pm) and Sundays from noon until 5 pm (last walk-in session is at 3:30 pm).

It is well known that wait times for community counselling and mental health services in Ottawa can be very long – often from several months to a year, or even longer. The Walk-in Counselling Clinic will provide immediate access and relief to people in crisis. The clinic will also provide support to individuals, couples and families struggling with a variety of life challenges,

including issues related to mental and emotional health and addictions.

By providing immediate support to people when they are most in need and most open to change, professional counselors are able to intervene and support people in crisis, or even prevent situations from escalating to become crises.

Rebecca Fromowitz, JFS assistant director, said she is excited about the new clinic because it will enable community agencies to reduce their wait times for counselling, and help family services agencies become more accessible to their

communities.

The research on walk-in counselling clinics has been very positive. The large majority of Ontario walk-in clinics' clients report significant improvements, including reductions in stress and negative symptoms. More than 50 per cent of clients required no further service after visiting a walk-in clinic.

"A key goal of the Champlain LHIN is to ensure more people with mental health conditions and addictions have access to services," said Chantale LeClerc, Champlain LHIN CEO. "These new clinics,

now being piloted in specific communities of the region, are providing a new approach to therapy with an aim of serving more clients while also reducing wait times."

Walk-in counselling clinics have also been instrumental in reducing pressure and wait times on primary and emergency care. According to Family Services Ontario, the estimated savings in health care costs for the province of Ontario is about \$10 million per year.

For more information, contact JFS at 613-722-2225.

# PJ Library, Jewish kids' books provider, creates new program to serve Arab sector in Israel

BY JULIE WIENER

(JTA) – A Religion News Service article about the PJ Library is headlined "Free books – 10 million of them – help keep Jewish kids Jewish."

Now, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, which is behind the widely lauded nine-year-old program that distributes free books to more than 130,000 Jewish children in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Australia, is also helping keep

Arab Israeli kids engaged in reading.

(The Grinspoon Foundation works with local partners on the PJ Library program. In Ottawa, it partners with the Jewish Federation of Ottawa.)

The Grinspoon Foundation recently launched *Maktabat al-Fanoos* (Arabic for Lantern Library), which provides Arabic-language children's books to Arab Israeli children in kindergarten and pre-K.

The program, funded in partnership

with Israel's Ministry of Education (which is paying approximately 75 per cent of the cost) and the San Diego-based Price Family Charitable Fund, will give 45,000 children monthly books "based on universal values," according to a press release issued by the Grinspoon Foundation.

Matkabat al-Fanoos comes four years after the Grinspoon Foundation launched **See PJ Library on page 20**



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# PJ Library: Program hopes to encourage Arab Israeli authors

Continued from page 19

*Sifriyat Pijama*, PJ Library's sister program distributing Hebrew-language books for Israeli Jews.

What are two American Jewish foundations – Price was established by Sol Price, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants – doing distributing Arabic books? It's in the interest of the State of Israel, said Galina Vromen, director of the Grinspoon Foundation's Israel operations.

"In many cases the Arab population is the poorest and the least likely to have books at home," she told JTA. "It behooves the Jewish state to promote the well-being of all its citizens."

Branching out into the Arab community "seemed the logical and right thing to do, in the sense that the Arab population needs books, too. They also need to have parents and children reading together, and we want to instil a love of books in them as well."

Price also funds Arab early childhood programs in Israel. And other Jewish foundations, as well as federations, have donated money for social service programs in the Israeli Arab sector.

While the Arabic books, unlike the Hebrew and English ones the foundation distributes, won't have Jewish content, Vromen said there "isn't such a stretch between Jewish values and universal values: whether it's respecting parents, inviting strangers into your home or visiting the sick, these are just as relevant for Arab kids."

"We very much wanted to keep the part of the program that really stimulates parents to talk to their kids about things that matter," she added. "It's about creating a generation that loves to read and knows how to behave."

One challenge, however, is the dearth of Arabic children's books available to the program, a combination of the turmoil in the Arab world limiting its children's



Israeli Arab children at a school in Baqa al-Gharbiyye reading books from Matkabat al-Fanoos (Lantern Library), a spinoff of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's PJ Library.

literary scene and "there not being relations [between Israel and] most of the Arab world that would allow for free trade of books," Vromen explained.

A number of Arab publishers have refused to sell reprint rights to the Israeli publishers that create special imprints of the books, with parents' guides, for the program.

"When Arab publishers don't want to work with us, the only people ultimately harmed are Israeli Arab children and their families," Vromen said. "We hope publishers will understand this and will decide to make their books available to Arab children in Israel, enhancing the

children's access to Arabic culture and heritage."

PJ Library has influenced the North American Jewish children's book-publishing industry, committing to use manuscripts if published and spurring publishers to bring back out-of-print books. It has also pushed Hebrew-language publishers to produce more books that can serve its diverse population of both religious and secular Jews.

Given the limited selection of Arabic books on the Israeli market, Vromen said it may "play a similar role in Arabic literature," encouraging not just free trade, but the emergence of more Arab Israeli authors.

## MEMBERS MEETING

A meeting of the members  
of the  
Jewish Federation of Ottawa

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Social Hall A

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*Meeting is open to the public.*

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# What can Obama bring to the peace talks table?

**J**ust when we thought the peace process couldn't get any murkier, along comes a new player to further muddy the waters.

Technically speaking, U.S. President Barack Obama isn't a new player. But he's mostly stayed out of the Israeli-Palestinian sphere since his clumsy and misguided attempts to bring the two sides closer together during his first term in office.

Late last month, the *New York Times* reported Obama was about to take a more hands-on role to get the two sides to agree to a framework for further talks. Since there's no way to meet Secretary of State John Kerry's overly ambitious deadline for having a peace deal in place by the end of April, agreeing on this framework for continued negotiations – something akin to another road map – is the latest Plan B.

Obama met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on March 3 when he was in Washington for the AIPAC Conference, and was scheduled to meet with Palestinian Authority (PA) Chairman Mahmoud Abbas on March 17.

With two years left in his term, Obama is following in the footsteps of several of his presidential predecessors, who tried and failed to solve the conflict during their final months in the Oval Office.

Every American president in recent years has wanted to be the world leader who finally makes peace in the Mideast, and Obama is no different. But his odds of success are even lower than the first time he waded into the fray.

One potential upside is that Obama's involvement would take some of the heat off Kerry. Although I'm on the record as being skeptical about the negotiating skills

of Kerry, who used to be notorious for being influenced by whomever he last spoke to, he has certainly made the talks a priority and devoted substantial time and energy to meeting both sides and trying to bridge the gaps in their demands and perspectives.

He has fans and detractors on both sides. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon accused Kerry of "acting out of misplaced obsession and messianic fervour," then later apologized. Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman calls him "a true friend of Israel."

Kerry has clashed with Minister of Economy Naftali Bennett and formed a mutual admiration society with Finance Minister Yair Lapid. His relationship with Netanyahu is tense, although certainly better than Obama's.

On the Palestinian side, one of the PA's two negotiators, Mohammed Shtayyeh, quit in November. He said a deal was impossible because of gaps between the two sides and American bias in favour of Israel.

After Kerry met with Abbas in Paris in February, senior PA official Hanan Ashrawi dismissed the idea of a framework deal as "a box of chocolates," from which each side could pick and choose desirable elements and ignore those it found distasteful.

One must give Kerry credit for his thick skin, tenacity and ability to keep the talks from breaking down. But the fact that the U.S. is settling for a road map and the continuation of talks, instead of the comprehensive peace deal to which Kerry aspired, is a clear sign that the goalposts have shifted and it might be time to change quarterbacks.

So, what could Obama bring to the table at this stage? *Times* reporter Mark Landler says the White House



would not want Obama to re-engage in these discussions unless there was a good chance he could succeed.

He quotes a senior U.S. official, who said, "The president wouldn't want to run any risk that it was the lack of his involvement that would make the difference between success and failure."

Obama's involvement could also be perceived as a sign the U.S. is truly committed to hammering out a peace accord.

But the fact is Obama has proven over and over again that he doesn't get Israel or really understand her security concerns – shown most recently by his lenient stance on Iran.

Some observers believe the U.S. knows the talks are doomed, but is determined to keep the process going long enough to forestall a United Nations vote on Palestinian statehood in September and to keep Netanyahu happy until after U.S. midterm elections in November.

If so, then Obama's involvement could be mere window dressing, so that, when the talks ultimately fail, he can say, "I did everything I could, but those people just didn't listen."

Stay tuned.

# Deadly drinking game inspires online kindness campaign

**T**he hashtag is #Neknomination.

It's a simple premise: friends call you out on social media to chug a beer or hard liquor in a creative and daring way, video it, post it online, and then challenge more of your friends to best your effort within 24 hours.

The craze, popular with youth and young adults across the world, has resulted in the death of at least five people, while countless others have put their health and safety at risk.

I've had many friends and even a family member nominated. While consuming alcoholic beverages in and of itself doesn't have to be harmful, as the injuries and deaths continued to be reported, it became clear it was only a matter of time before people would begin to use social media to speak out against the dangers of this game.

And in true #Neknomination form, it was creativity and peer pressure that helped a new kindness campaign to catch on and spread instead.

Josh Stern, a University of Ottawa medical student, has helped to change the way Canadians are now using the power of peer pressure by founding the #FeedTheDeed campaign, which quickly partnered up with Kindness Counts, a Toronto-based non-profit organization.

Instead of chugging a strong drink, people are now being encouraged to video themselves doing a good deed, and then challenge more of their friends to do the same.

In a video that changed the game, Brent Lindeque of South Africa inspired Stern, when he gave lunch to a homeless man instead of chugging booze when he was



nominated in late January.

"I think the most important part is when people are videotaping themselves and then calling on others. It's giving some extra motivation for the next person to get out and actually do the good deed," Stern said.

With most of the emerging generation online and using social media in some form, a new message and a simple change of hashtag was all that was needed to spread the kindness.

"When they see it on video, it's kind of like showing them it's socially acceptable to do a good deed," he said. "And, when so many people see their friends doing it, I really think it encourages them further to get out and do good deeds."

While the campaign is continuing to have a positive impact on the actions of others, some say they hope #FeedTheDeed will have a strong influence on the *why* behind doing a good deed.

Stephen Shedletzky of InspirAction, a Toronto-based coaching and leadership training organization, said he hopes people complete the good deeds because it's the right thing to do, rather than for the online praise and attention.

"My biggest fear is we will stop doing good for others,

if we don't get rewarded," Shedletzky said.

"All I'm saying, though, is that, if we really, truly care about kindness and spreading good, it's a commitment that each one of us has to make every single day. Otherwise, it's just going to be a fad," he cautioned.

Shedletzky, who also supports the #FeedTheDeed campaign, said he recognizes we are a social species that uses our technology to connect, which is exactly what happened during the annual Mitzvah Day activities on February 9, when hundreds of people in Ottawa's Jewish community reached out to do good deeds (mitzvahs). Technology is now an essential tool for connecting, learning and influencing others.

Mitzvah Day organizers used a website and an online sign-up process and #FeedTheDeed uses hashtags and videos. But what makes people want to participate is the good feeling they get, no question.

"Obviously, it's important to do good deeds in your daily life, and you don't need to videotape yourself doing a good deed for it to be an act of kindness," Stern said. "The whole point of #FeedTheDeed is to inspire people to bring acts of kindness to their daily lives.

You have now been called out. You have 24 hours to do a good deed for someone else.

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A lecture by Rabbi Alex Israel on *The Book of Kings*

**Wednesday, April 2 at 7:30 pm**

Free admission

Soloway JCC, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private

The Book of Kings narrates the vivid and turbulent history of Israel and its monarchs. Master educator Alex Israel uncovers the messages hidden between the lines of the biblical text and draws rich and indelible portraits of its great personalities. Filled with political upheaval, empire building, religious and cultural struggle, national fracture, war and peace, the Book of Kings depicts the titanic clashes between king and prophet and the underlying conflicts that can split apart a society.

Rabbi Israel is Director of Community Education at Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and is a teacher of Tanakh and Jewish Thought at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi.

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## Should Canadian Jews be concerned with Israel maintaining its democratic character?

**A**s a country analyst for Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World Report*, once yearly I report on the improvements and fissures in the democratic and civic freedom landscape in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. The political systems in the Palestinian territories are currently stymied by the absence of regular elections. So for month-to-month changes in democracy legislation, it is to Israeli news that I turn.

Recent news from Israel reveals a regrettable bill having been passed into law, one legislating differences between Israel's Muslim and Christian Arab citizens for the ostensible purpose of expanding the membership of a public advisory council for the Equal Employment Opportunities Law.

The real reason, though, as articulated by the sponsoring MK himself, is chillingly different.

"We and the Christians have a lot in common. They're our natural allies, a counterweight to the Muslims who want to destroy the country from within," said Likud member Yariv Levin in a *Maariv* interview, which was extensively quoted in a February 25 article in *Haaretz*.

"I was praying that this was a dystopian-fiction piece or some sort of whacked-out satire. It's not, and it's bad," wrote Israeli pollster and political commentator Dahlia Scheindlin in posting a link to the *Haaretz* article on Facebook.

I paused before deciding whether to focus my *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* column on this unfortunate news piece. I feared my usual critics would slam me for revealing

an unsavoury side of Israel.

This, in turn, led me to realize that now is a good opportunity to reflect on how I see my role as a *Bulletin* columnist.

My goal is to get readers to reflect on topics related to Jewish life, including Israel. The principles and practices that guide me are: promoting an educated perspective on Jewish life; the valuing of liberal thought, including individual choice; a commitment to community; a spirit of volunteerism; a valuing of open debate; a prizing of Jewish literacy; and an empathic perspective for the experiences of others.

When I write about Israel, my goals are similar. I seek to promote a broad-based debate about Israeli policies, to promote an emotional and intellectual connection to the country, and to encourage critical and analytical thought.

My goals regarding Israel also have a political end, with which some readers will agree and others will not. That end is the maintenance of a Jewish and democratic Israel. The specifics of that goal, as I see it, are the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, so that Israel stops being an occupying power – a position which is eroding its democratic character.

The two-state solution is a position well within the international consensus. It is also a position held by a majority of Israelis and Palestinians. It is hardly controversial. In fact, there are many to my left who would disagree in the very justness of Israel's existence. The positions I advocate in my column are intended to respond to those critics as much as to critics to my right,



MIRA SUCHAROV  
**VALUES, ETHICS,  
COMMUNITY**

who, for whatever reason, seem to have less of a problem with Israel's ongoing occupation.

The issue of the recent legislation in Israel is that much more concerning because it connects not with the occupation of the West Bank, nor with the faltering peace process, both of which topics are well trodden in the daily news, but because it suggests a slow erosion of democracy within Israel itself.

As Canadian Jews, should we be concerned with Israel maintaining its democratic character? Given the efforts of our community to support Israel, both symbolically and financially, and given how much we have depended on Canada's democracy to prosper out of the ashes of Europe, I would think the resounding answer is yes.

The Jewish Agency has recently invited a widespread Diaspora conversation on the future of Israel and Jewish continuity writ large. As I wrote in a February 19 post to the *Forward Thinking* blog on the *Jewish Daily Forward* site, when I joined the 2,000-person online conversation a few weeks ago, I found precious little debate about Israeli policies. The more we allow ourselves room to talk seriously about Israel amongst ourselves, the more robust Israel's future hopefully will be. And a more robust Israeli future can only bode well for the health of our Jewish community here.

Mira Sucharov, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University, blogs at *Haaretz.com*.

## Role models: Olympic athletes project positive body image

**T**he 2014 Winter Olympics provided much-needed positive role models, and shone a spotlight on physically fit, active athletes. We need more of these role models because we're inundated on a daily basis with unrealistic, unhealthy images of what we're supposed to look like.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, right now in Canada 70 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men are on a diet. [www.tinyurl.com/facts-eating-disorders](http://www.tinyurl.com/facts-eating-disorders)

What are we teaching our children?

Diets don't work. The vast majority of dieters eventually gain the weight back. Though most of us lack the talent, commitment or aspiration to make it to the Olympics, we can think and live more like champions in our everyday lives by modelling positive behaviours that include regular exercise and healthy eating.

Girls' role models are typically skinny women – actresses, models and cartoon characters – with tiny waists and hips, giraffe-like legs and disproportionately large busts. Many dolls young girls play with have unrealistic bodies.

When I was growing up, I played with Barbie dolls, but I never felt pressured to look like Barbie. I was content and secure with myself. That was in the 1960s and '70s. Children then were not exposed to as many sexualized and unrealistic body images as are kids today. We didn't have social media, all those cable TV channels or video games. Most of the images we were exposed to were much tamer, as it was a more conservative era.

One of the dangers of body image issues and dieting is that they can lead to eating disorders. Many young children are thinking about dieting and, according



GLORIA SCHWARTZ  
**FOCUS ON  
FITNESS**

to the National Initiative for Eating Disorders – [www.nied.ca](http://www.nied.ca) – the rate of eating disorders in girls is 18 per cent. That's nearly one in five girls! And that's double the rate of obesity in girls.

Boys also suffer from body image issues and eating disorders. Ten per cent of childhood eating disorders occur in boys, and 20 per cent of adult eating disorders occur in men.

While girls typically want to be skinny, many boys want to be muscular. The strong and lean mid-century Superman character that my generation grew up with has been replaced in recent decades with a super hypertrophied freak. Yet, this is the type of image boys are exposed to when they play with action figures and video games or watch cartoons. Heroes with pumped-up bodies contribute to *reverse anorexia* in boys and male teens – the fear of being thin and weak.

According to the Saskatchewan government – [www.tinyurl.com/sk-eating-disorders](http://www.tinyurl.com/sk-eating-disorders) – up to 90 per cent of eating disorders begin with a diet. Eating disorders are characterized by extreme feelings and thoughts about food and eating, as well as with one's body weight and shape. Individuals may be preoccupied with counting calories or grams of fat, or they may engage in excessive exercising.

There are three main categories of eating disorders:

1. Anorexia Nervosa – characterized by extreme food restriction and a distorted belief they need to lose weight even when they become dangerously underweight;
2. Bulimia Nervosa – characterized by attempts at weight control via frequent episodes of binge eating and purging (self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives, fasting or excessive exercise);
3. Binge Eating – characterized by feelings of loss of control and eating enormous amounts of food in one sitting, often in secret and post-binge shame and anxiety, which can lead to more binge eating. Binge eaters don't purge or exercise obsessively, so they are often overweight or obese.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all medical disorders, with 10 to 20 per cent of sufferers dying from complications.

As parents, we can influence to some degree how our children feel about their bodies. Focusing on a healthy lifestyle – eating well and being active – is a good start. Modelling other positive behaviours is important too. We can contribute unknowingly to our children's negative body images if we express dissatisfaction with their or our own appearance, weight or shape, or if our children see us obsessing about calories and diets. In addition to engaging our families in a healthy lifestyle, it's important to have open conversations with our children about what's healthy, safe, and realistic.

If you suspect that you or someone you know has an eating disorder, please refer to the resources in this article and contact a mental health professional who specializes in eating disorders.

Gloria Schwartz is a personal trainer at the Soloway JCC.

# A Russian-Jewish ‘portrait of the artist as a young man’

## Little Failure: A Memoir

By Gary Shteyngart

Random House

368 pages.

Perhaps it is characteristic of our compacted times, when nostalgia is only decades deep, that an author born in 1972 writes his memoir. In *Little Failure: A Memoir*, Gary Shteyngart describes his childhood life in Leningrad; his immigration at age seven to Queens, New York; his inculcation into the American Jewish community at a day school; his passage onto hipster and substance-enhanced life at an elite high school and at Oberlin College; and, finally, his alcoholic launch into adulthood on the twin engines of novel-writing and psychoanalysis.

The travelogue of Shteyngart’s life is merely the bones of the narrative. He is writing about his parents and about being Russian. Igor (Gary is his American name) is a sensitive, asthmatic child, both constricted and deepened by his laboured breathing and his obsessive parents. His mother calls him *failurchka* (little failure), an English word with a Russian diminutive ending, after he does not conform to the model of the high-achieving Russian-Jewish student. His father calls him *solpyak* (snotty), because of his asthma.

In the early part of this memoir, the Russian language is as much a character as his family. Russian speech – the idioms, the forms of address, the caress and brutality – mirrors his relationship with his parents. His father insults him constantly with *shutki* (trenchant jokes), hits him – *dal emu po shee* (give one [a blow] across the neck) – but holds the young Gary’s mouth open with a spoon while he sleeps to ease his asthmatic breathing. When a day school teacher is impressed that Gary can read Dostoyevsky in the original Russian, his father responds by poo-pooing, “Only Chekhov.”

Of his mother, Shteyngart writes, “My mother is from a country of lies, and I am still one of its citizens. She can lie to me at will. She can lie to me without even using her imagination. And whatever comes out of her mouth I am supposed to accept as truth, a *doubleplusgood*.”

## MAXINE MISKA BOOK REVIEW

His father and mother fight, and he feels he is the glue that keeps them from a *razvod* (divorce). Eventually, he discovers he will need a divorce from them.

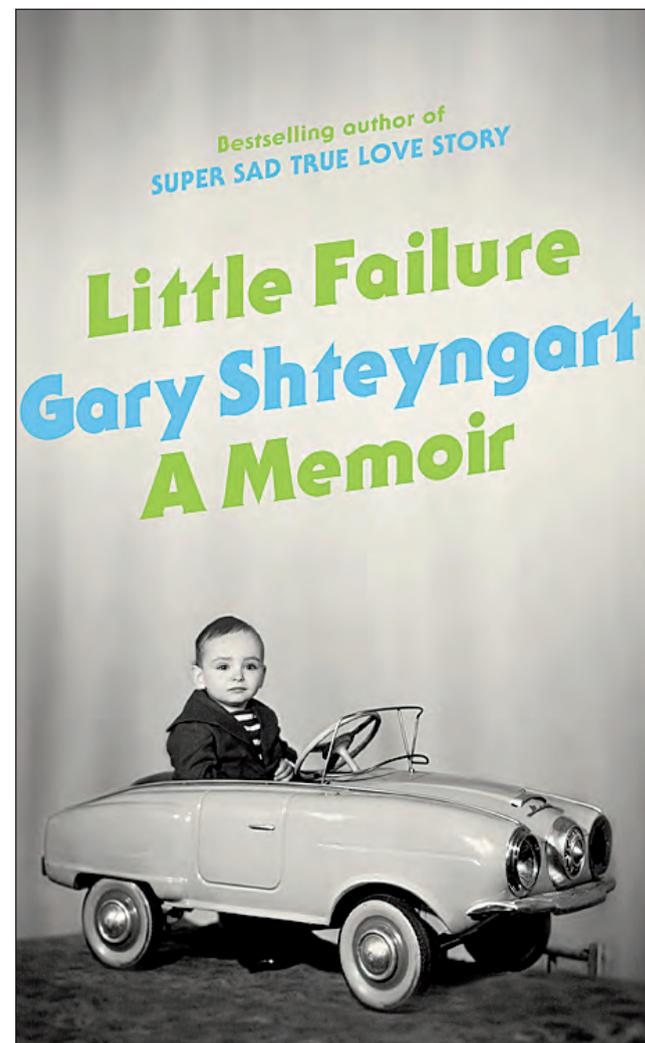
Evident in the first part of the memoir is how different Soviet Jews were from the immigrants who arrived in North America early in the 20th century. As a precocious child, Shteyngart played in front of a statue of Lenin, wrote juvenilia about Lenin and a magic goose, embraced Russian classics and lived daily in the memory of the 26 million Russians killed in the Second World War, including his grandfather.

When the Shteyngarts have the opportunity to emigrate during Jimmy Carter’s presidency, they join the Russian ex-pat community in Queens, embrace Judaism and pursue the American dream through frugality and hard work with the expectation their son will excel and eventually be a doctor or lawyer.

The fulcrum of this transformation for Shteyngart from a Russian-experiencing-America to an American writer reflecting on his Russian past is when he realizes that “We are the enemy.” He is called the “Red Gerbil” by his classmates, since he comes from what then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan called the “evil empire.”

As Shteyngart becomes more assimilated, he loses his accent and engages his prodigious intellectual and creative abilities. The narrative becomes a more conventional story of an outcast hoping to fit in – an alcoholic, druggy slacker and sexually frustrated adolescent, a Russian-Jewish version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

When Shteyngart finds his vocation in writing, his Russianness re-emerges as a fictionalized reflection of Russians in America in *The Russian Debutante’s Handbook* (2002) and of Russian-Americans returning



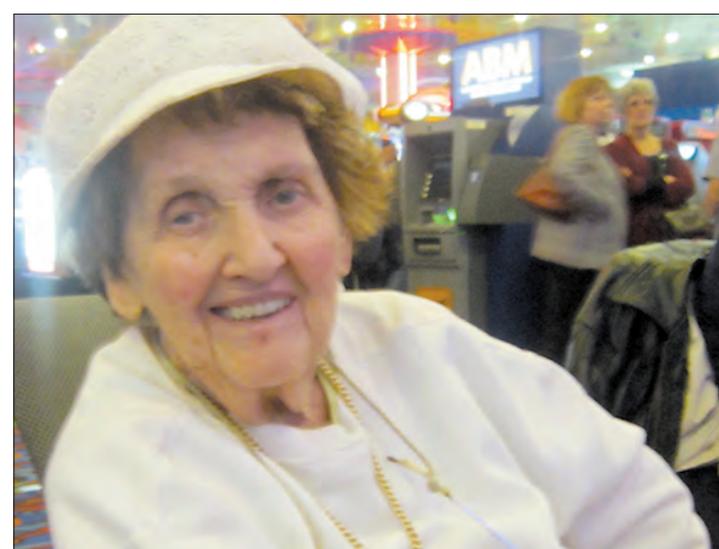
to the former Soviet Union in *Absurdistan* (2006). *Little Failure* provides a sort of *Coles Notes* summary of the characters and incidents in his young adult life that were transformed into fiction.

Whether in memoir or fiction, Shteyngart’s writing is funny, deft and charged. His control of language is formidable and, in *Little Failure*, he mixes his characteristic humour with the dolour of being Russian for the perfect sweet-and-sour piquancy.

## COMMUNITY MILESTONES | Celebrating significant milestones or events



◀ **Arnie Vered receives Community Leader Award from prime minister:** Congratulations to Arnie Vered, recipient of the Community Leader Award for Ontario, at the Prime Minister’s Volunteer Awards ceremony, February 27, in Toronto. Arnie (centre) receives the award from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of State (Social Development) Candice Bergen.



▲ **Happy goth Rose Bregman-Greisman:** A happy goth birthday to Rose Bregman-Greisman from your children Barry, Paul and Suzanne, and from your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Send us notices of your significant milestones or events and they will be published on a space-available basis. Email your photos and information to: [bsilverman@ottawajewishbulletin.com](mailto:bsilverman@ottawajewishbulletin.com)

**WHAT'S GOING ON** | March 17 to April 6, 2014  
FOR MORE COMMUNITY LISTINGS, VISIT [JEWISHOTTAWA.COM](http://JEWISHOTTAWA.COM) AND SELECT 'CLICK TO SEE MORE MONTHS'

**THURSDAY, MARCH 20**

**Yuk Yuk's Ottawa featuring comedian Darryl Lenox:** All proceeds go towards the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies course in Israel this spring. 292 Elgin Street. Doors open at 7:30 pm. Tickets: [studyabroadmay2014@gmail.com](mailto:studyabroadmay2014@gmail.com)

**FRIDAY, MARCH 21**

**Shabbat 200:** The Rohr Chabad Student Network of Ottawa invites all undergrads, grad students and alumni to the biggest Shabbat of the year. Sandy Hill Community Centre, 250 Somerset West, 6 to 10 pm. Info: Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky, 613-601-7701, [rabbichaimb@gmail.com](mailto:rabbichaimb@gmail.com)

**TUESDAY, MARCH 25**

**Malca Pass Library Book Discussion Group** book review and discussion: *The Road House* by Louise Erdrich, reviewed by Alvina Ruprecht. Congregation Agudath Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: Maureen Kaell, 613-224-8649, [mkaell@rogers.com](mailto:mkaell@rogers.com)

**FRIDAY, MARCH 28**

**Kabbalat Shabbat and Dinner:** Join us for a meditative Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by a potluck dairy meal and inspiring conversation. The Glebe Minyan, 91A Fourth Avenue, 6 to 9 pm. Info: Anna Maranta, 613-867-5505, [glebeminyan@gmail.com](mailto:glebeminyan@gmail.com)

**SATURDAY, MARCH 29**

**Gratitude:** Emerging Generation Division's night of cocktails, good eats, laughter and cheer. 131 Bank Street, upper level loft, 8:30 pm to 12:30 am. Info: Sam Banks, 613-798-4696, ext. 270, [sbanks@jewishottawa.com](mailto:sbanks@jewishottawa.com)

**SUNDAY, MARCH 30**

**SJCC's First Annual Biathlon Fundraiser:** a fun day of fitness where teams of 12 spin and swim to raise funds for the Soloway JCC, 8 am to 10 pm. Info: Carla Gencher at 613-798-9818, ext. 278, [cgencher@jccottawa.com](mailto:cgencher@jccottawa.com)

**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](mailto:shaylamindell@rogers.com)

**KLEZ 7:** Musical fundraiser for the Kosher Food Bank. Congregation Agudath Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 7 to 9 pm. Info: Toby Brooks, 613-234-1649, [toby.brooks@sympatico.ca](mailto:toby.brooks@sympatico.ca)

**TUESDAY, APRIL 1**

**Seudah Shlishit Study and Dinner:** Meet for study with coffee, tea and treats, followed by a potluck dinner and Havdalah. Come for study or dinner or both.

The Glebe Minyan, 19 - 612 Bank Street, 5 to 8:30 pm. Info: Anna Maranta, 613-867-5505, [glebeminyan@gmail.com](mailto:glebeminyan@gmail.com)

**Torah Academy of Ottawa's Honouree Reception** for Rabbi Yisroel and Rochel Goldbaum. Centrepointe Studio Theatre, 101 Centrepointe Drive, 6:30 to 10 pm. Info: School Office, 613-274-0110, [Torahacademyottawa@gmail.com](mailto:Torahacademyottawa@gmail.com)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2**

**Lecture by Rabbi Alex Israel on *The Book of Kings:*** "Torn in Two: How the Jewish People Split Apart." 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: Maxine Miska, 613-798-9818, ext. 263, [mmiska@jccottawa.com](mailto:mmiska@jccottawa.com)

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6**

**Third Annual Passover Fair** featuring many vendors. Congregation Beit Tikvah, 15 Chartwell Avenue, 10:30 am to 4 pm. Info: Marilyn Schwartz, 613-828-4488, [marilyn\\_sch1970@yahoo.ca](mailto:marilyn_sch1970@yahoo.ca)

**Ninth Annual Ottawa Women's Seder:** bringing awareness of domestic abuse in the Jewish community. Congregation Agudath Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 5 to 9 pm. Info: Sarah Beutel, 613-798-4696, ext. 253, [sbeutel@jewishottawa.com](mailto:sbeutel@jewishottawa.com)

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

**CONDOLENCES**

Condolences are extended to the families of:

**Stan Cherney**  
(father of Ron Cherney)  
**Reuben Fine**  
**Lorna Lew**  
**Ben Marcus**

**Rabbi Leib Scheiner**  
(father and father-in-law of  
Dina and Rabbi Levy Teitlebaum)  
**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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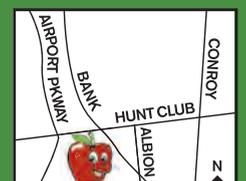
**KALE: THE QUEEN OF GREENS!**



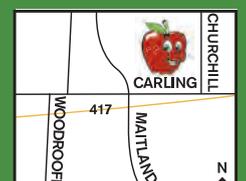
Researchers have identified over 45 different flavonoids in kale. Kale's flavonoids combine both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. You can also count on kale to provide cardiovascular support by lowering cholesterol. To enjoy the maximum nutrition and flavor from kale, try steaming it for 5 minutes.

Learn more about kale and other greens at [producedepot.ca/academy](http://producedepot.ca/academy)

FOR GREAT RECIPES & WEEKLY SPECIALS, VISIT US ONLINE AT [PRODUCEDEPOT.CA](http://PRODUCEDEPOT.CA)



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