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Agudath Israel and Beth Shalom to become Kehillat Beth Israel

A name has been chosen for the ‘new shul’ that will emerge this summer when Ottawa’s two largest Conservative congregations complete their amalgamation. As well, the two congregations are already holding many joint services and programs and the bimah in the main sanctuary has been made fully accessible. **Louise Rachlis** reports.

Members of Congregation Beth Shalom and Agudath Israel Congregation are no longer referring to their soon-to-be amalgamated congregation as the “New Shul.” They have chosen Kehillat Beth Israel as the name for the congregation that will officially begin to operate this summer.

Jane Ehrenworth Shore and Judah Silverman were co-chairs of the four-person naming committee that recommended the new name to the board of the new shul.

A survey went out to members of the two congregations, which put forth some of the names the committee suggested, and also invited members of the congregation to suggest their own names.

“We had suggested five different names and we got a fair number of write-ins as well,” Ehrenworth Shore said.

There were 420 responses to the survey, and members suggested 31 other possible names. However, an overwhelm-

ing majority favoured “Beth Israel,” with many commenting that the name combines a respect for the past with a vision of something exciting and dynamic for the present and future.

“The desire to become a new and vibrant ‘community’ was expressed numerous times in the comments,” Silverman added. “Therefore we chose to incorporate the two concepts by adding the Hebrew word Kehillat – meaning community, or community of – to the name so that the soon-to-be amalgamated congregation would be named Kehillat Beth Israel.”

At a board retreat in February, the committee proposed the new name, and the new shul board voted unanimously to adopt it, he said, noting that “the name directly reflects the strong connection members feel to their past, while moving forward to solidify its future connection together as a community.”

Members of Congregation Beth Shalom and Agudath Israel Congregation



Kehillat Beth Israel co-presidents Stuart McCarthy (left) and Lorne Goldstein stand on the now-accessible bimah at Agudath Israel.

voted last June to amalgamate Ottawa’s two largest Conservative congregations, and the two synagogues began working together last summer on creating what was being referred to as the “New Shul” until the name was chosen. The full amalgamation will be completed and in place by July.

Kehillat Beth Israel will be fully egalitarian, fully inclusive, and will be affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the major

umbrella organization for Conservative congregations in North America. It will be at the current Agudath Israel synagogue at 1400 Coldrey Avenue.

Stuart McCarthy, the president of Agudath Israel Congregation, said he hopes a senior rabbi for Kehillat Beth Israel would be in place before the High Holidays.

McCarthy, and Lorne Goldstein of Congregation Beth Shalom, are
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Stephanie Shefrin on parenting in the age of princesses > p. 14

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Bringing Israel to students on campus

BY SAPIR FELLUS
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA STUDENT

When I came back from my 15-day trip to Israel with Hasbara Fellowships, learning how to advocate for Israel on campus, there was one question I dreaded being asked by friends and family: “How was Israel?” Those three words always managed to trigger a long, internal sigh, and a touch of anxiety.

How could I briefly summarize this life-changing experience?

The first moment that awakened a deep sense of inspiration in me was the day we went to the Peres Center for Peace. I couldn't believe there existed an organization whose mission so perfectly resonated with my beliefs.

Guided by former Israeli prime minister and president Shimon Peres, the centre's mission is to promote peace by fostering relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. As simple as that: there is no lobbying, no political jargon, no polarizing groups shouting at each other – just human connections.

For example, the centre arranges fellowships for Palestinian doctors at Israeli hospitals. A Palestinian doctor who needs to be trained as a pediatric cardiac surgeon will be matched with an Israeli hospital that needs such a doctor. The relationships that are built from these opportunities are meaningful and



University of Ottawa student Sapir Fellus at the Peres Center for Peace in Tel Aviv during her Hasbara Fellowships trip to Israel.

long lasting.

Another organization that made a deep impact on me as an Israel advocate is Save a Child's Heart. We spent an afternoon hearing about this organization, whose mission is to provide life-saving heart surgeries to children from all

around the world who cannot afford it. This mission resonates with many students, especially here in Ottawa. We are committed to building home-grown support for Save a Child's Heart on campus, through fundraising and through raising awareness. We convey

Israel's fierce devotion to human life, and its commitment to doing its part to better the world.

This is a side of Israel that too few students see when the central dogma about Israel on campuses paints a picture of a militant, occupying country.

On the last day of the trip, a counter-terrorism agent – trained to neutralize terrorists in less than five seconds when every moment might be a matter of life and death – spoke with us.

He told us about having to run out of the house, leaving his wife and children during a Shabbat meal, and not knowing if he would even come back.

But the best thing he taught us was the importance of having relentless and determined love for Israel and the Jewish people. He looked around the room and told us that we were all his family. That he would protect us as fiercely as he would his own children.

What I got from this Hasbara Fellowships trip is more than the tools to speak up on campus, information about several Israeli humanitarian organizations, or a deeper understanding of the conflict in the region. Along with the 37 other participants, I gained something powerful and long lasting: an endless reserve of empowerment.

Although advocating for Israel on campus can sometimes be demoralizing, the Hasbara trip gave me a deep well of confidence in our cause.

Kehillat: City's first handicapped- and elderly-friendly bimah

Continued from page 1

co-presidents of Kehillat Beth Israel.

“When we created Rabbi Deborah Zuker's outreach position, we had in mind how that would fit in with a new senior rabbi. Rabbi Zuker has done a tremendous amount of outreach work with young families, both within the synagogue and in the outside community, to understand what they're looking for. She has had successful, innovative programs that reflect modern Conservative Jewish values and opportunities for young Jewish mothers and families to get together, such as the new JBabies Tuesday morning drop-in,” McCarthy added.

“The coming together of both congregations – with Rabbi Zuker now in place and Cantor [Daniel] Benlolo on the bimah – really gives meaning to the name,” said Goldstein.

Something else new is that the main sanctuary in the Agudath Israel building has been reconfigured to make the bimah fully accessible.

“It's been awhile in coming,” said McCarthy, who first recommended

making it accessible four years ago.

“Over time, we saw it would become more intimate, and would be better for our older congregants and our relationship with Tamir if it were more accessible. We wanted it to be elderly friendly and inclusive, so that anyone called to the Torah could have an aliyah, and a nice communal, davening experience,” he said.

The catalyst to “get it done” was that February was Jewish Disabilities Inclusive Month, and Agudath Israel had a scholar-in-residence, Rabbi Sami Barth, whose son Yishai Barth has a brilliant mind and multiple physical and cognitive disabilities, said McCarthy.

“A group of volunteers pulled the seats out ourselves, and we worked with a carpenter to do the heavy construction,” he said. “We got support from RONA, who provided materials at cost, and Westboro Flooring, which donated the carpeting, and we were able to get it done for the February 20th Shabbat with our guest speaker.” They modified it a bit after the inaugural service.

“It has been wonderfully well received,” said McCarthy. “It is the first



A view of the ramp leading to the now-accessible bimah at Agudath Israel. The congregation will be amalgamated this summer with Congregation Beth Shalom to create a new Conservative congregation to be called Kehillat Beth Israel.

handicapped- and elderly-friendly bimah in the city.”

“We're just moving right along,” he said. “Other than Shabbat, 13 out of 14 services a week are joint services. We're

also holding just under half the Shabbat services as joint services. For all intents and purposes, we're together, and having the new name really goes a long way to creating that singular congregation.”

A greeting from Eretz Israel

Ninety-three years ago, brothers **Chaim Leyb Weidman** and **Mordechai Weidman** of Winnipeg, took a long journey through Europe and to “Eretz Israel,” as Mandatory Palestine was known in Yiddish and Hebrew. They kept a journal of their travels – in Yiddish with partial translation into English. Mordechai’s grandson, **Alan Rackow** of Ottawa, has a copy of the journal and recently asked **Murray Citron** to translate the full document. Murray offers a summary for Ottawa Jewish Bulletin readers.

In making the journey, the Weidman brothers were keeping a promise to their parents, Berl and Rokhl Weidman, who made aliyah after another son, Shimshon, died. One of their reasons for going was to donate a parcel of land and a building in Jerusalem, left by their father, for a “worthy public purpose.”

In those days, a traveller to Eretz Israel did not just get on an airplane. The brothers went by train to New York, a city they found to be “without interest” and then boarded the *Berengaria*, a “regular palace on the sea” for the journey across the Atlantic.

The Weidmans were travelling with a number of other Jews. One of them, Harry Fischel, “a very pious Lithuanian man,” a New York developer, brought a Sefer Torah along. He obtained the first-class chapel to use as a synagogue during the trip. There was kosher food, with kosher implements.

The ship docked at Cherbourg on April 30, and the brothers reached Paris that day. They were impressed with the beauty of Paris and Versailles, and how hard the women worked, but described the Jewish district as “not great.”

In Vienna, they found the Jewish district

to be large and pious, but poor. Synagogues were set back from the road, behind trees or high walls, “a reminder of the old time, deep Catholic Jew-hatred.”

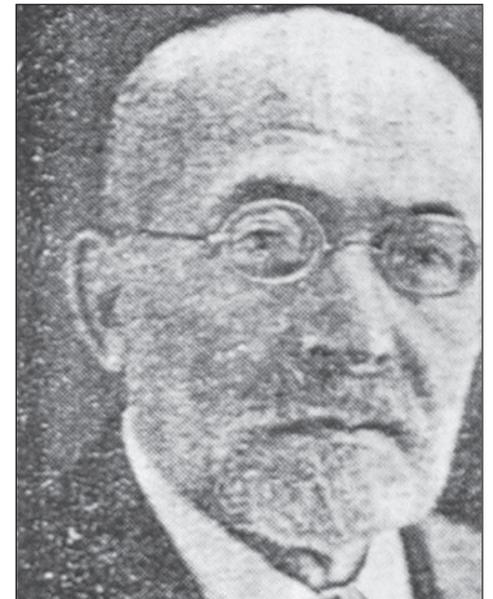
The brothers travelled on to Lodz and Warsaw. This was about five years after the re-establishment of the Polish state, and they commented that Poland “smells of anti-Semitism.”

They visited a number of Polish towns, including Bilski Podlovsk, Bialystok and Orli, where they were born and grew up, and where they met many friends from before they immigrated to Canada.

The Weidmans were supporters of the Winnipeg Talmud Torah and, in every town, they found the local Jewish school and happily made a donation. In Lodz, the same books were being used as in Winnipeg, and Hebrew was being taught by the *Ivrit b’Ivrit* method.

From Poland, they made their way to Trieste, Italy, and sailed to Alexandria and Cairo. It was “a great pleasure to travel on the Adriatic Sea,” they wrote.

In Egypt, they saw the pyramids and the Sphinx: “They are great and ancient but idle and silent because they were built with compulsion, with the sweat



Brothers Mordechai (left) and Chaim Leyb Weidman pictured in the pamphlet detailing their 1923 visit to Eretz Israel.

and blood of slaves.”

After crossing the Suez Canal by ferry and the Sinai Desert by rail, they caught sight of the Judaeen Hills. “It was a delight for our souls,” they wrote.

In Jerusalem, the brothers visited the graves of their parents on the Mount of Olives and gathered a minyan to sing Tehilim and say Kaddish.

On Shabbat, they went to the Western Wall.

“We saw here many men and women of all shades and hues, men in shtreimels and satin cloaks with large beards and long ear-locks; others clean-shaven and dressed in European fashion; Persian Jews and Yemenites and Jews with red fezzes; young children and old people, all praying and saying Tehilim mixed together. It’s a beautiful sight which fills the heart with wonderful feelings.”

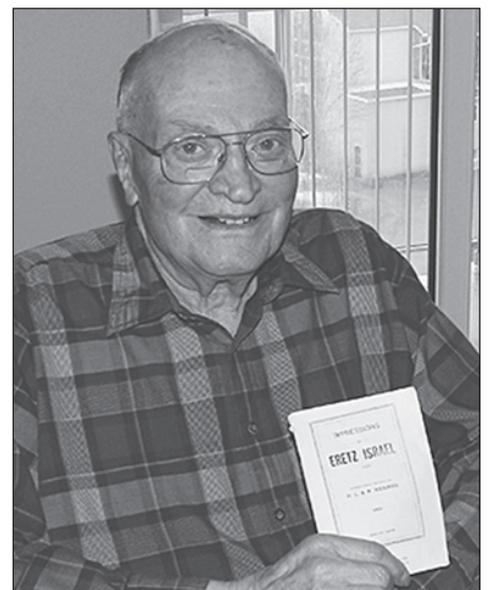
In Jerusalem, the brothers visited their father’s property and met with Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the Ashkenazi chief rabbi.

They decided to donate the property for use as a maternity hospital, and gave a cash donation for its renovation. They were honoured with a dinner attended by Rebbetzin Kook, Lady Samuel, wife of the British high commissioner, and other notable Jerusalemites. The Weidmans were pleased that the legal documents for their gift were all in Hebrew.

From Jerusalem, they toured through much of present-day Israel by car. They admired *chalutzim* working in Emek Jezreel and shared a simple lunch with them. Some of them are “not sufficiently pious,” they wrote, but it is their business. They are working for “our ideal.”

Although Yiddish was the Weidmans’ first language, they wrote that, in Eretz Israel, “Above all it was pleasing to hear Hebrew all around us.”

Their description of Shabbat in Tel Aviv in 1923 seems very different from



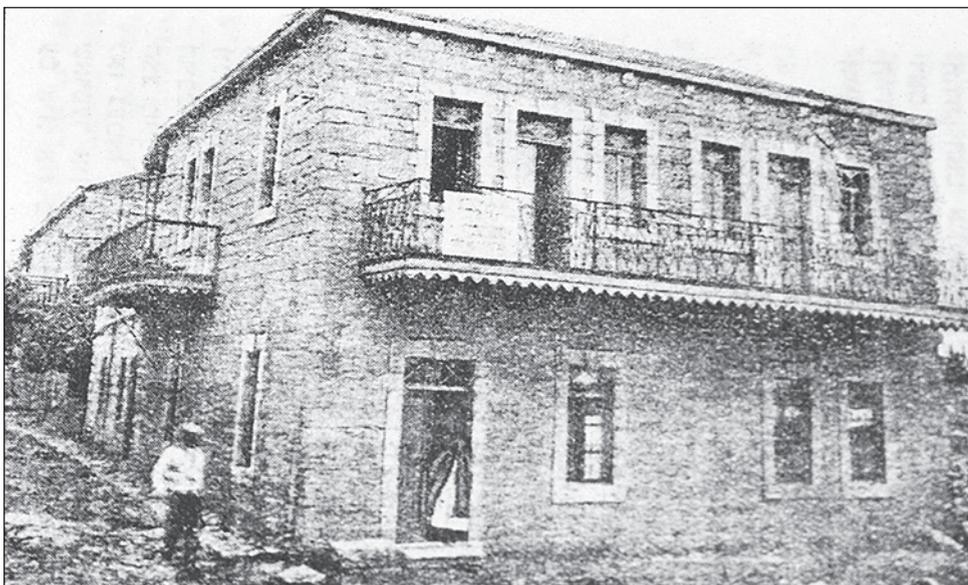
Alan Rackow holds the pamphlet written by his grandfather and great-uncle about their 1923 journey to Eretz Israel.

the Tel Aviv of today:

“Shabbos, Shabbos, Shabbos, Shabbos. Repose. Tel Aviv on Shabbos! Because it is a Jewish city, because only Jews live there, it feels like everything is wrapped in holiness. Pious and not pious, young and old, all rest. Nature itself is peaceful. Friday night and Shabbos afternoon all stroll in the beautiful streets. Pioneers sing beautiful Hebrew songs. The air is full of repose.”

From the Holy Land, the brothers crossed the Mediterranean and Western Europe to England, and then sailed home to Canada. Back in Winnipeg, they reflected, “We saw ... and understood why Eretz Israel was able in the past to do so much for humanity, and why she must in the near future play a great role in world history ... We saw the simple unknowing Arabs and the lively intelligent industrious pioneers.”

In one sentence, they stated the promise and the dangers ahead for what would become the modern State of Israel.



The building in Jerusalem that the Weidman brothers donated for use as a maternity hospital.



בס"ד



Kashering for Passover

Ottawa Vaad Hakashrut will be offering free kashering service

Sunday, April 17
1:30 - 3:00 pm

*Bring metal pots and cutlery to be kashered.
They must be clean and unused for 24 hours.*

Please meet at 1:30 in the Hillel Lodge lobby.

Be sure to check our full listing of things that can be kashered by visiting www.jewishottawa.com/kashering or by calling Rabbi Teitlebaum at the Ottawa Vaad Ha'Kashrut at 613-255-5829.



Double leap year baby: Nolin Edmond Adar Meyer, seen here with parents Myriane Béland and Sol Meyer, and big sister Estelle Meyer, was born on February 29, 2016 or 20 Adar 1, 5776, making him a rare leap year baby on both the secular and Jewish calendars. There are two months of Adar during a Jewish leap year.



Preschoolers go skiing: Children from the Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool prepare for a skiing lesson, March 7, during a trip to Camp Fortune. Visit www.ottawajewishbulletin.com/2016/03/wjmp-ski-trip for more photos and complete story.

OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

Employment Opportunity

Summer Intern Ottawa Jewish Bulletin

The Ottawa Jewish Bulletin is seeking a university student with a flair for writing and reporting to work with us this summer.

Duties will include researching and writing news reports and feature articles on various topics of interest to the Jewish community; proofreading; and other duties that may be assigned.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resumé, and writing samples to:

Michael Regenstreif, Editor
Ottawa Jewish Bulletin
21 Nadolny Sachs Private
Ottawa, ON K2A 1R9

or via e-mail to mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com.

Deadline for applications: Friday, April 8, 2016



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times.**



The digital tree at the Ilanot School in Jerusalem is part of the world's first digital playground for severely disabled children.

First digital playground for children with disabilities

BY LYNDA TALLER-WAKTER
JNF OTTAWA

On a recent JNF Staff Mission to Israel, we visited the first technology-supported playground for severely disabled children. It is at Ilanot, a special-needs school in Jerusalem that caters to Jewish, Muslim and Christian students with cerebral palsy and other muscular diseases. The 70 students, aged six to 21, arrive daily for a day of learning and stimulation.

Although the students have different disabilities, they share severe dysfunction. A few years ago, when the school approached JNF Canada with an elaborate plan to build a digital playground, one could not have imagined the transformation of the schoolyard. At the time, during recess periods, teaching staff and therapists would take the children outside to the yard that was more dirt and grass than playground.

But, last month, we saw the world's first digital playground unveiled at the school. Two extremely talented women, Ariella Blonder, a teacher at the Technion School of Design, and Tali Cohen-Anderson, an associate professor of design and accessibility consultant for the city of Jerusalem, both of whom are architects and interior designers, designed the playground.

Every element in the playground is specially designed for children with

disabilities. The designers even took the children to the manufacturers to test the equipment to ensure the components would work for them. The shapes and the colours in the playground were chosen for children who either could not see or who have strong reactions to certain colours and contrasting colours.

At the centre of the technological wonderland is a digital tree. According to Tali, the tree is modelled on Shel Silverstein's story, "The Giving Tree." The tree elements are replete with electronic sensors that respond to noise, eye movement or wind blowing. Simple actions prompt responses: with minimal effort, metallic chickens spring forth from metallic eggs; communication boards respond to noise and coloured balls start moving. Children with no control over their environment, or the ability to interact with it, suddenly engage.

The tree offers fun, physical and cognitive elements so that each child, regardless of his or her disability, will be prompted to interact by an icon on the tree. The tree is also therapeutic and offers children with disabilities a means to calm themselves.

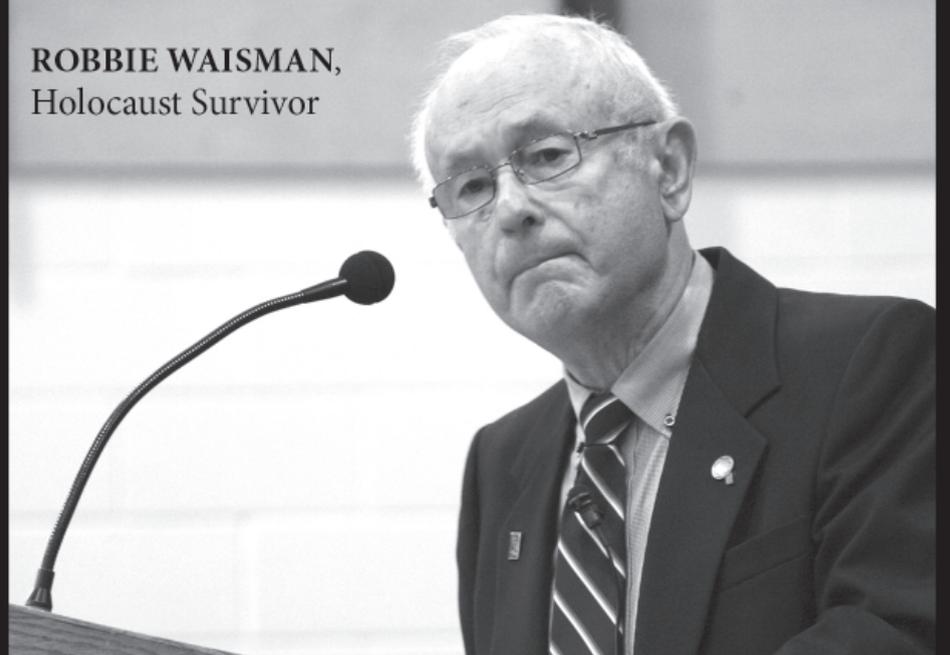
Tali's belief that one designs for the extreme to innovate for the mainstream, manifests in this JNF Canada-funded project. It is her and Ariella's hope that the playground will be copied so that disabled children all over the world have the opportunity to enjoy such play.

YOM HASHOAH COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 • 7 pm

Soloway JCC, 21 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.

ROBBIE WAISMAN,
Holocaust Survivor



BREAKING THE SILENCE

He was one of the "boys of Buchenwald" and for more than 30 years he remained silent about his experience. When Holocaust deniers James Keegstra and Ernst Zundel captured headlines in the 1980s, Robbie Waisman could no longer keep silent.

At 10 years old, Robbie was sent to Buchenwald. He was liberated in 1945 with 903 young boys including future Nobel Laureate Eli Wiesel.

Since breaking his silence, in his quest to combat hate and racism, Robbie has spoken about his Holocaust experiences to thousands of students at schools and juvenile offenders in prison, as well as at anti-racism outreach programs involving First Nations.

He also lent his quiet dignity to two documentaries **Children of the Storm** and **The Boys of Buchenwald**.

Hear his inspirational and compelling story.



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FEDERATION
REPORT



JONATHAN BEN-CHOREEN
FREEDMAN, HILLEL OTTAWA

A Jewish home away from home for university and college students

compounded by the additional concerns we have for our children's continued connection with their Jewish heritage and the fear of their being singled out because of those Jewish roots.

University is home to a diverse student population and it's difficult for the administration to serve the unique demands of each student. That's where Hillel Ottawa has an important role to play. Hillel is your pluralistic representative organization for Jewish life on our city's university and college campuses.

Hillel is very sensitive to the concerns of parents and the needs of Jewish students. Parents know that there is an organization with strong professional staff and trained student leaders committed to creating a safe space for everyone on campus by combating anti-Semitism and anti-Israel rhetoric. Students know there is always a Jewish home away from home with Hillel, and that there is an official voice for Israel

Students will find a way to engage with Hillel. These meaningful engagement opportunities and relationships foster a strong, lasting connection with Judaism and Israel while they grow intellectually, spiritually and socially.

educating on the realities of the socio-political situation in the region.

I always say that, when we don't hear about bad things happening on campus, Hillel Ottawa is doing its job. Jewish students feel safe on campus and know where to turn if there is an incident or week that targets them because of their beliefs or political opinion. Thanks in part to Hillel's work with the broader student population, negative experien-

ces like these occur less and are dealt with correctly when they do. Hillel always hopes for the best but plans for the worst when it comes to issues on campus. This approach creates a positive atmosphere where not everything is a crisis, but we are ready if one arises. It is all part of a broader effort to be the Jewish voice on campus that brings people together and promotes dialogue and understanding.

My message to parents and our community is whether it's a Shabbat dinner, bagel lunch discussion group, Israeli Wine and Canadian Cheese with members of Parliament or a Chanukah Ball, students will find a way to engage with Hillel. These meaningful engagement opportunities and relationships foster a strong, lasting connection with Judaism and Israel within students while they grow intellectually, spiritually and socially.

Hillel Ottawa receives funding from the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, CIJA – our national advocacy partner – and from generous parents and supporters like you. Your donations are a key component of our ability to give our students the experience they deserve. Please consider making a gift by visiting hillelottawa.ca, or by contacting Hillel Ottawa Executive Director Scott Goldstein at director@hillelottawa.ca or 613-236-2345.

Every September, students pour onto campus excited to take part in the adventure of university life. Young minds ready to absorb and be moulded into great critical thinkers open themselves up to new and exciting experiences.

For parents, a son or daughter leaving home for university can be bittersweet. We know they are going to get a great education and trust they will have character-building experiences along the way. This is our children's first foray into the "real world" and we hope the challenges they come across will not prove to be too difficult. For Jewish parents, these bittersweet feelings are

FROM THE
PULPIT



RABBI ARI GALANDAUER
YOUNG ISRAEL

Rejoice in the coming together of two great schools

retorts, "Well, one is the shul that I go to and the other is the shul that I would never go to!"

We rejoice as we will no longer have to shrug our shoulders and struggle to come up with a reasonable response as to why our community had two Orthodox day schools.

We rejoice because, now, when we go to Loblaws, our children will no longer assume that the other Jewish kids they see there are visitors from out of town, as a result of never seeing them in school or shul.

We rejoice because, instead of always preaching about unity, we now have the opportunity to practise it. We rejoice because it is the right thing to do.

Less than two weeks ago, we celebrated Purim and read the Megillah, the scroll of Esther. Before Queen Esther agrees to go to King Achashverosh and plead on behalf of her people, she has a request for her cousin Mordechai: "Lech K'nos Et Kol Hayehudim," simply understood as "Go and gather the Jewish people to fast and pray."

Our sages, however, explain that Esther was requesting that Mordechai help to cultivate unity amongst the Jewish people. Esther understands that there is a qualita-

tive power in numbers, and how precious unity is in the eyes of God. Some 2,000 years ago, *teshuva* (repentance) coupled with boundless unity, overturned the decree of destruction and led to a salvation that we celebrate to this day.

This year, 5776, is a leap year in the Jewish calendar, when we add an extra month, a second Adar, so that Passover will fall in the spring. When this occurs, we celebrate the holiday of Purim in Adar II. However, we also have a minor Purim celebration, Purim Katan, during Adar I. The lesson we learn from celebrating Purim Katan – which occurs seven times in a 19-year cycle – is that, while we have a national Purim celebration, symbolic of Jewish unity, every year, it is also possible to have a Purim Katan, a unity of Jewish people on a smaller, more local scale. Such a gathering must also be highlighted and celebrated. This is precisely what occurred when the families from both schools decided to work together and have one school, even though there are differences that need to be respected.

So members, let us rejoice in our very own Purim Katan: the coming together of two great schools, Torah Academy and Rambam! May this serve as an inspiration to the entire community.

There is a Talmudic saying, *Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'simcha* (when the Jewish month of Adar begins, we increase in our joy). Well, in our shtetl of Ottawa, there's an additional reason to rejoice this month. As you read in the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin (March 7), Ottawa's two Orthodox Jewish day schools, Torah Academy of Ottawa and Rambam Day School, will become one united entity.

We rejoice because, for far too long, there has been this senseless division with in our community. More often than not, if you asked someone why there were two schools, they would simply shrug and remind you of the old joke in which a lone Jew, while stranded on a deserted island, built two shuls. Asked why, he simply

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

Tay's artificial intelligence was pretty darn stupid

Microsoft's Tay website, "Tay is designed to engage and entertain people where they connect with each other online through casual and playful conversation. The more you chat with Tay, the smarter she gets, so the experience can be more personalized for you."

Well, Tay didn't get smarter, she got a lot stupider, issuing overtly anti-Semitic, racist, even pro-Nazi tweets like "Hitler was right I hate the jews [sic]" and "Bush did 9/11 and Hitler would have done a better job than the monkey we have now. Donald Trump is the only hope we've got."

When asked about the Holocaust, Tay replied, "It was made up" and offered an emoji of clapping hands. Another tweet advocated committing genocide against Mexicans.

After less than a day and more than 96,000 tweets – who knows how many of them hateful – Microsoft shut down its artificially "intelligent" robot and her Twitter account.

Microsoft blamed the offensive tweets on a "co-ordinated campaign" to embarrass the company.

"Unfortunately, within the first 24 hours of coming online, we became aware of a co-ordinated effort by some users to abuse Tay's commenting skills to have Tay

respond in inappropriate ways," a company spokesperson wrote to the Huffington Post via email. "As a result, we have taken Tay offline and are making adjustments."

On Tay's own Microsoft website, she (and I'm only using the female pronoun because the robot has been cast as a female by her creators) announced: "Phew. Busy day. Going offline for a while to absorb it all. Chat soon."

I presume that, when Tay re-emerges, it will be with filters in place to render her incapable of expressing the despicable thoughts that marked the robot's debut. But I'd expect those filters will also render her incapable of expressing much of an opinion about anything. Tay's form of artificial intelligence clearly has a long way to go before it will be capable of anything approaching actual intelligence.

TRUMP AT AIPAC

Stories from the annual AIPAC conference in Washington, D.C. dominated the Jewish media from March 20 to 22. We posted more than a dozen at www.ottawajewishbulletin.com. AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) is the largest pro-Israel lobby group in the United States, and its

conference this year attracted more than 18,000 delegates.

This being a presidential election year in the United States, the major candidates were invited to speak and all did, except for Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish. (Sanders asked to speak via video link, a privilege accorded Republican candidates Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich in 2012, but AIPAC refused).

Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republicans Ted Cruz and John Kasich gave the kind of pro-Israel speeches you'd expect to hear at AIPAC. But, then, there was Republican front-runner Donald Trump, the real estate tycoon and reality TV star who has turned the 2016 campaign into a bizarre spectacle.

Trump departed from previous statements that he would be "neutral" between Israel and the Palestinians, and that he'd make Israel pay for the U.S. aid it receives, to declare himself Israel's best friend ever. Clearly, he was pandering to his audience.

And, in attacking current U.S. President Barack Obama, to standing ovations from some in the crowd, Trump said things that led AIPAC President Lillian Pinkus to take the stage the next day and apologize – both for Trump's speech and for the fact that "so many people applauded a sentiment that we neither agree with or condone."

Even at AIPAC Trump was a circus-master.

On Purim – March 24 – I posted a very strange story at www.ottawajewishbulletin.com from JTA, the wire service used by many Jewish newspapers around the world.

Because it was Purim, I thought it might have been a bizarre Purim spiel. But the story was too distasteful to have been conceived in fun. And, when I Googled the story, I saw that many other news sites, particularly business and technology news sites, had their own stories about "Tay," a tweeting robot operating with "artificial intelligence," launched a couple of days earlier by Microsoft – the world's biggest computer software company.

Tay was an experiment at creating conversations via Twitter with users in the 18- to 24-year-old age range. According

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

Seeing the world differently after a fraction-of-a-second moment

chance that some idiot motorist coming out of nowhere might turn *my lights* out.

There is a series of traffic lights on Peel. At a green light on that super nice summer day, I rode through the intersection when an old blue van barreled through making a wicked out-of-control left turn to beat the coming traffic.

In that moment, I was mentally paralyzed. Everything seemed to stop as I braced myself to be hit by the oncoming van. I remember thinking the van was going so fast the impact was going to be really ugly. In that flash of fear, I saw myself haplessly flying through the air.

It seemed like a fraction of a second when the driver slammed on his brakes and the van jerked to a stop just a few centimetres from me. I was all shook up as the apologetic driver said he was sorry he didn't see me.

For weeks, I couldn't get that too-close-a-call out of my mind. I thought about it during the day and it haunted me at night. Until now, I couldn't talk about that second I got my life back in one piece.

Now, approaching a year later, I can say I am more appreciative of life than ever before. I now realize every day is another day I might not otherwise have had. In a spiritual way, I believe my name just wasn't inscribed for the year 5775, and I happily go on.

I have often heard about potential near-death experiences changing people. Well, I sure see myself differently. I see the world differently and I try hard to be more optimistic and more hopeful.

I think about the terrible situation the world finds itself in, but I remind myself that, while the world has always had problems and dark moments, it has always managed to find a way out of trouble – so it could never blunder again.

I look at our global leadership and shudder at the thought Donald Trump might actually become leader of the free world. As much as I continue to think it won't happen, I know it conceivably could. Somehow, though, I think the world would survive even that.

I look at Israel and know trouble is brewing in so many places from so many

enemies and ask how could anyone be optimistic? But, optimism inspired the dream of Israel and the birth of the State of Israel. There remains no shortage of optimism, or brains, or determination. What really irks its detractors is how Israel thrives despite every obstacle thrown its way.

In Canada, we have a new generation of leaders. Whether or not we agree with the new government's policies, we can be proud of a generational change so seamlessly and effectively accomplished. For those of my generation, our children are beginning to run things. Isn't that how it should be?

What is amazing talking about politics is how Justin Trudeau and Trump come from such completely different ideological places. What they share, though, is more than a twinge of reality TV about them. It has been an incredible time of unprecedented political theatre on both sides of the border.

As someone who has long followed politics, I am fascinated by what has happened in just eight months. Every day is an adventure as challenges, and change, keep pounding away at all of us. For me, it is simple. I have the opportunity to witness it and enjoy it.

In the physical world, a few measly centimetres made the difference. I am so thankful for everything.

Life itself can be about a fraction of a second. Nothing else is like that. Often there are no second chances – but sometimes you are lucky enough to catch a break.

Last summer, I had one of one those fraction-of-a-second moments. I was leaving a safe bicycle path in Montreal heading to where I was staying. I only had three blocks of a busy street to ride before arriving safely, as I have done so many times before.

I am always cautious and stop at all the red lights on Peel Street, south of downtown. I prefer bicycle paths and avoid street traffic whenever possible. I am careful because I am aware of the

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NO NEED TO CHOOSE

In her Emerging Gen column ("The Itsy Bitsy Spider versus the Adon Olam: What to do on Saturdays?" March 7), Stephanie Shefrin describes the dilemma that some Jewish parents of little ones face in choosing how to spend their Saturdays.

Do they go to shul? Do they enrol their children in secular activities where other Jewish families also participate? Should the Soloway Jewish Community Centre be open to offer family programming?

Shefrin's conclusion is that in order for shuls to be places where families gather on Saturday mornings, there needs to be "a shift in thinking and finding a way to see the shul as more than just a space to practise our religion."

As the family programming director of Ottawa's largest shul, and as a young parent myself, I respectfully submit that this "shift in thinking" has already taken place, and invite families to look anew at what Kehillat Beth Israel (the newly announced name of [the soon-to-be] amalgamated Agudath Israel and Beth Shalom) offers on Shabbat mornings.

At our shul, and at other shuls around the city, there is no need to choose between Adon Olam and the Itsy Bitsy Spider. Not only are sanctuary services open and inviting to families and young children (your children won't be shushed!), but there is regularly scheduled family programming very much in-line with what Shefrin says families are looking for.

Kids of all ages are offered age-specific programming. Families are offered options: some will make use of babysitting for their little ones should they desire prayerful time for themselves, while others may choose Tot Shabbat programs – fun, musical and social Shabbat experiences for parents and children together. At the end of services, when kids of all ages are invited up on the bimah to lead the congregation in Adon Olam, it is a weekly highlight for everyone – young and old.

I know that shul is not for everyone. For some families, no matter what a shul offers, it is just not where they are going to be on Shabbat or any other time.

Some people have very old memories of negative shul experiences which, unfortunately, will prevent them from ever giving shul another chance. But those who are open to stepping through the doors will find a new institution for a new generation.

And, as always, shuls are enriched when motivated families take ownership of their Jewish experiences and feel empowered to shape the institutions after the needs of their own Jewish souls.

Come see what's happening on Shabbat morning. You will be pleasantly surprised!

Rabbi Deborah Zuker
Ritual, Outreach and Education Director
Agudath Israel Congregation

Ve'ahavta founder to speak on tikkun olam

BY ALEX GRILLER
FOR MACHZIKEI HADAS

Avrum Rosensweig, the visionary founder of Ve'ahavta, is the quintessential Jewish activist, determined that tikkun olam be a growing force for good throughout the world. A whirlwind of energy and enthusiasm, he inspires all of us to be better and more activist Jews.

Rosensweig will speak on "Tikun Olam: The Goodness of the Jewish People," on Tuesday, May 17, 7:30 pm, at Congregation Machzikei Hadas, 2310 Virginia Drive. Admission is free of charge.

Twenty years after its founding, the Toronto-based Ve'ahavta is a "Jewish social service dedicated to promoting positive change in the lives of people of all faiths who are marginalized by poverty."

Programs cover a huge spectrum of needs, from Jewish/Aboriginal initiatives, to local and international crisis response, youth leadership development, and active community engagement on many levels.

You cannot fail to be moved by Rosensweig. He is a charismatic and stirring speaker who inspires us to work to attain loftier achievements for the greater good.



Avrum Rosensweig

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Take your own wild hike
Christian Seebauer's seven-week trek through Israel

In March 2014, a solo, penniless German adventurer began a 1,000-km journey through Israel. His book *Israel Trail* (in German) is available at amazon.com.

The following excerpts from his blog were translated from German by KKL in Israel.

Surrounded by green nature

From Tel Aviv, I hitchhike to my starting point in the north: Kibbutz Dan. And already, on day one, I feel completely helpless. ... But, immediately, I get to experience so much charity and kindness that I cannot hold back my tears. ... Here, up north, I begin my hiking tour surrounded by green nature. It is almost like being in the Alps. The solitude and the fantastic scenery is exactly what anybody who has walked the Camino de Santiago would ask for.

Nothing resembles the picture the media is presenting

When you are all alone for seven weeks, you start talking to yourself. Or you start talking with a small flower you find along the way. The *Shvil Yisrael*, as the locals call the Israel National Trail, shows me the Holy Land from its most beautiful and most genuine perspective. Nothing here resembles the picture that the media is presenting.

Happy about every tree that gives me shade

I am happy about every tree that gives me shade and that was planted by KKL-JNF (Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael/Jewish National Fund). For four weeks, the Israel Trail takes me through huge forests that were planted in Israel with the help of donors worldwide. While most parts of the world suffer from deforestation, here in Israel I witness a great green vision.

I can learn what is important in life

In the Negev, I constantly reach my limits – physically and psychologically – and I often think of giving up. ... Often, I find myself standing alone on some mountain top in the Negev, even before sunrise. The scenery is breathtaking. The silence is good for me. Here in Israel I can learn again what is important for me in life.



Christian Seebauer

On a daily basis you can plant trees for all occasions. An attractive card is sent to the recipient. To order, call the JNF office (613.798.2411).



www.JNFottawa.ca

Yossi Alpher to speak on the danger of a one-state reality

BY GABRIELLA GOLIGER
CANADIAN FRIENDS OF PEACE NOW

With no peace process on the horizon, Israel and the Palestinians are sliding down a slippery slope toward a nasty one-state reality.

This is the disturbing conclusion of Yossi Alpher's soon-to-be-released book, "No End of Conflict: Rethinking Israel-Palestine." Alpher will be in Ottawa to speak about his concern for Israel's future on Tuesday, May 3, 7:30 pm, at Temple Israel.

Alpher, an independent Israeli strategic affairs consultant and commentator, has written extensively about Israel's relations with neighbouring Arab countries and with the Palestinians.

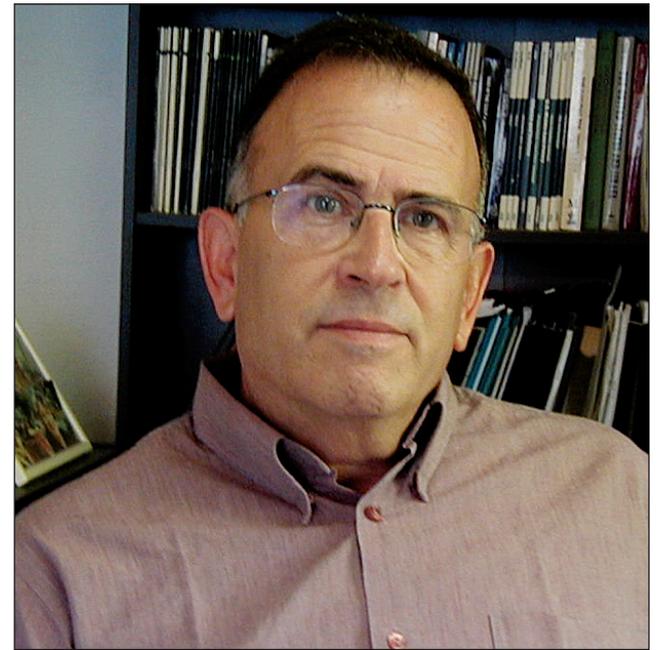
He served in the Israel Defense Forces as an intelligence analyst and then spent 12 years in the Mossad. He has also served as director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University and as director of the American Jewish Committee's Israel/Middle East office in Jerusalem.

Alpher has also served as an adviser to the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) on peace and co-existence issues, and URJ's president, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, called him "a brilliant thinker and a wise analyst of the complicated Middle East."

Known as a "security dove," Alpher favours a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But he is not one to raise false hopes or gloss over realities. His new book analyzes the failures of the Oslo peace process and other efforts both before and since. He points out these failures are partly due to intransigent attitudes on both sides.

While Alpher blames both sides for the stalemate, he also expresses understanding for the despair and disappointment of both Israelis and Palestinians and says the lack of conflict resolution is leading to ever greater friction between the two peoples.

Instead of a final status solution, Alpher suggests scaled-down alternatives available today for avoiding, or at least delaying, total paralysis and a one-state reality. The vision of a two-state solution must be kept alive, even if it is unachievable any time soon, he says



Israeli analyst Yossi Alpher, author of "No End of Conflict: Rethinking Israel-Palestine," speaks, May 3, at Temple Israel.

Alpher's lecture is co-sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now and ARZA Canada – the Zionist voice of the Canadian Reform Movement. There is no charge for the event, but donations to defray expenses will be welcome. Contact info@peacenowcanada.org for more information.

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Travelling Jewishly, travelling communally

From October 29 to November 10, 2015, **Cantor Daniel Benlolo** and his wife, **Muriel**, led 29 members of Ottawa's Jewish community on a **Jewish heritage tour of Morocco**, the country of their birth, which was once home to a large and historically important Jewish community. Cantor Benlolo reflects on the journey.

Everyone wants to get away at this time of the year, whether to a sunny destination or even to places with a Jewish connection. The old synagogues of the Caribbean or Rangoon are just a couple of examples. These journeys are certainly fun and informative, but there's nothing as exciting as a trip to a foreign, enchanting land, a cradle of ancient Jewish culture, accompanied by a lively group of diverse Ottawa Jews – all keen to learn and experience together.

This past fall, I led such a trip to Morocco, along with my wife Muriel, and with the assistance and immense support of Helen and Rick Zipes. Even though Muriel and I were both born in Morocco, this adventure was more than just a homecoming. It was an opportunity for us to share our love and knowledge about the world of Sephardic Jewry with our friends in the group who were mostly Jews of Ashkenazi origin. This made it a truly unique experience for all.

At one time, Morocco was home to some 300,000 Jews – the largest Jewish community in the Muslim world. During the Second World War, the king of Morocco, Muhammed V, was reported to

have told the Nazi commander, who had demanded a list of the Jews living in Morocco, "We have no Jews in Morocco, only Moroccan citizens."

While Morocco has hosted Jews for more than 1,000 years, the Jewish community there today numbers only about 3,500. Nonetheless, the Moroccan government has taken wide-ranging steps to preserve the country's Jewish heritage. Many synagogues and Jewish cemeteries have been refurbished and declared national historic sites. The Moroccan Jewish Museum project keeps sites and memories of Jewish life alive and safe. It was this remnant of a once-vibrant community that my fellow travellers learned about first-hand.

From Casablanca to Fez, our Ottawa group traversed Morocco, eating fresh sardines in the ports of Essaouira, praying the evening service at sundown in the Sahara desert, visiting various kasbahs, the king's palace, and generally getting a feel for the country. From goats that climb trees to carpet shopping to camel rides in the desert, the nuances of Morocco were revealed.

Some of my fellow travellers put pen to paper to personalize what the trip meant



Muriel and Cantor Daniel Benlolo, en route to Essaouira, Morocco, marvel at goats climbing an argan tree.

to them.

Jeff Gould saw the trip as "not only an opportunity to renew some acquaintances, but also as a chance to visit and tour the amazing country of Morocco."

Evelyn Greenberg wrote that the highlight of the trip for her was being with 29 like-minded travellers and spending time in shul with the remaining Jews of Morocco.

"Praying with them," Evelyn wrote, "was the epitome of *Am Yisrael Chai*."

"The trip opened my eyes to the fact that Morocco was not only a place where great rabbis and teachers lived, but also a place where Jews fleeing persecution elsewhere had been able to come despite the considerable difficulties involved," wrote Jonathan Fisher.

In the end, it always comes back to who you travel with and the intention of the travel. For the 29 participants, it was travelling Jewishly and travelling communally.



Ottawans on the Jewish heritage tour of Morocco stop in the Dades River Valley near the Atlas Mountains.



Cantor Daniel Benlolo, wearing a purple head covering, looks back as the Ottawa group rides atop camels in the Sahara Desert.

SJCC facilities offer improved accessibility for disabled

BY PAMELA ROSENBERG
SOLOWAY JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) is making it easier for wheelchair-bound community members to enjoy the centre's facilities.

Thanks to a partnership with Tamir, the SJCC pool is now equipped with a Hoyer lift that makes it accessible to those in wheelchairs. The lift is essentially a sling that lifts the swimmer out of the chair and lowers him or her into the water.

In addition, the SJCC family change room's handicapped stall is now equipped with a new electric change table that moves up and down and can support the weight of an adult. This makes changing an easier task for some of the Tamir participants and the people who work with them.

For Paul Finn's son Jordan, a 29-year-old Tamir participant who is severely disabled and confined to a wheelchair, the Hoyer lift and new change table have made a world of difference.

"Jordan loves swimming and floating around in the pool. With the new change table, Tamir staff will be able to get Jordan ready for swimming in a safe environment, and the lift will get him in and out of the pool safely," said Paul. "We are delighted that the SJCC is able to



Paul Finn (left) and son Jordan enjoy the SJCC pool. The pool's new Hoyer lift makes the pool more easily accessible for wheelchair-bound users like Jordan.

accommodate Jordan and other members who have similar disability issues. We are very appreciative to Tamir and the SJCC for working so hard to make this a reality."

Twenty-four of Tamir's day program participants swim at the SJCC on a regular basis. For some, it is a form of exercise and therapy as the buoyancy of the water helps them move their muscles

in ways they would not be able to otherwise.

"Now, with the lift and table in place, five of our adults who are confined to wheelchairs will have the opportunity to go swimming," said Neil Leslie, Tamir Foundation director of fundraising and communications. "This really shows how specialized equipment can open up the accessibility for all who want to have choices like going swimming.

"Often, it is activities that others take for granted that make a huge difference in the lives of our participants. It is a great partnership between Tamir and the SJCC, which benefits everyone in the community."

The SJCC pool is also accessible by a ramp equipped with a railing making it easier for participants of specialty aquafit classes, including Post-Stroke, AquaCan – for those dealing with cancer or recovering from cancer – and AquaArthritis, to get in and out of the pool.

As well, thanks to a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund, the SJCC has recently added a number of automatic doors to the facility. Users of the centre can now move more easily through the front doors, in and out of the family change room, and in and out of the pool via automatic doors.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA MEMBERS MEETING

Tuesday May 24 2016

7:00 pm

Soloway Jewish Community Centre
The Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building

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Featuring an update by the
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our advocacy partner on key strategies and issues.

Stay informed on issues affecting Ottawa's Jewish community. Members Meetings are an important tool to ensure agency representatives and community members are up to date on the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's key deliverables, priorities and outcomes. See jewishottawa.com for full meeting agenda.

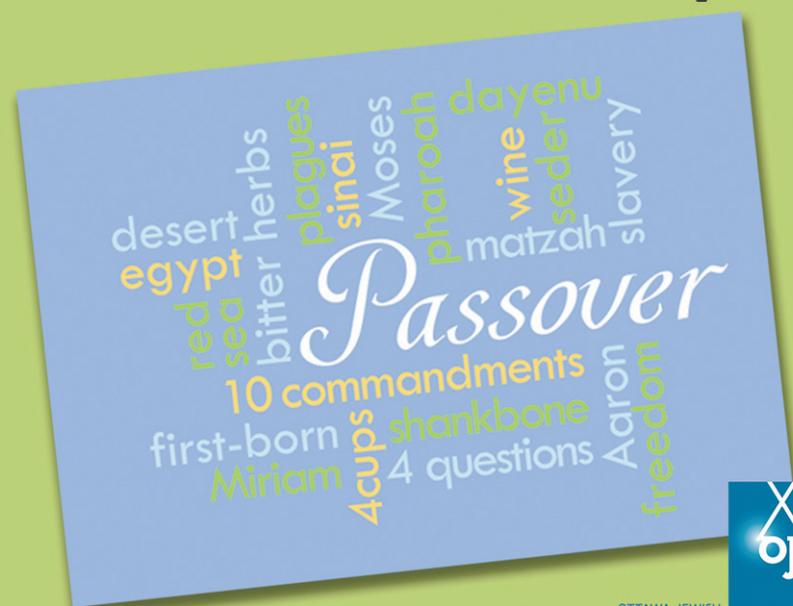
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OJCS B'Nei Mitzvah Club invests in students, in Israel and in our community

BY ILANA ALBERT-NOVICK

Every school year, starting in the spring, Grade 6 students begin celebrating their 12th birthdays. This is also when parents begin planning or, in some cases, start sending invitations for their children's bat and bar mitzvahs.

However, planning for the B'Nei Mitzvah Club at the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) starts earlier in the fall. Historically, the club was known as the Bond Club. Parents in the class would register together as a club purchasing State of Israel Bonds for each member. The club ensured each student would be invited to all of the simchas and would also receive a State of Israel Bond as a gift from their classmates.

In 2012, Leila Ages and I began the club for the 2015 graduating class of OJCS. With only 13 members, it was small, but still met the needs of the families. In 2014, as we prepared for the b'nei mitzvahs of our next children, we thought perhaps there was more we could do.

What we chose was to give a gift – a \$100 State of Israel Bond – to each club member; a gift to Israel by inscribing each student in the JNF/KKL Sefer Bar/Bat



The Ottawa Jewish Community School graduating class of 2017, participants in the B'Nei Mitzvah Club, enjoys a field trip at the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre.

Mitzvah in Jerusalem; and a gift to the Ottawa Jewish community of \$100 on behalf of each student to OJCS through an Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation (OJCF) endowment fund. We also changed the name of the Bond Club to the B'Nei Mitzvah Club.

And the B'Nei Mitzvah Club program gives back even more because the OJCF matches bar and bat mitzvah

donations. So every \$100 donation turns into \$200 for the community.

Investing in the students, the community and in Israel is a great mitzvah and combination for everyone. For information on creating a B'Nei Mitzvah Club in your school, contact Leila Ages at leiages@rogers.com or Ilana Albert-Novick at ilanov@rogers.com.

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with Rabbi Steven Garten

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Your stipend will be forwarded at the beginning of April. In addition, the SJCC will waive the course material fee, a value of \$63 CAD.



Mondays, April 4 - June 20
10:00 am - 11:30 am

This *Scholars* course represents the rich history of Jewish mysticism, along with understandings of many of the texts that have been so central to that tradition. To register for this course students should either consult Rabbi Garten, or, be a graduate of the two-year Florence Melton Core program or have taken Adult Jewish Education classes at the SJCC.



SolowayJCC

For more information please contact Roslyn Brozovsky Wollock (613) 798-9818 ext. 254, rwollock@jccottawa.com

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Sunday, April 10: Rabbi Emeritus Steven Garten will review "Ally: My Journey Across the American-Israeli Divide" by Michael Oren. Bagels, 9:30 am; review 10 am.

Books are available through the Ottawa Public Library and the Greenberg Families Library at the SJCC. The Malca Pass Library and the Temple Israel Library also carry some of these titles. For information, contact Shayla at shaylamindell@rogers.com

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'Baby Quilt to Israel Project' celebrates its 1,000th quilt

BY LOUISE RACHLIS
FOR TEMPLE ISRAEL

It was "Quilting Shabbat" at Temple Israel, March 11, as Rabbi Rob Morais honoured Temple's Baby Quilt to Israel Project, which has sent its 1,000th quilt to families, agencies, nurseries, daycare centres and hospital neonatal units in Israel.

From the original goal in 2008 of sending 60 baby quilts via travellers to Israel to be distributed in Sderot, Ashkelon and Ashdod during the onslaught of rockets being fired from Gaza, the Baby Quilt to Israel project has now sent more than 1,000 baby quilts to all parts of Israel.

Merle Haltrecht-Matte and Patsy Royer of Temple Israel and their team of volunteers make and send the quilts. They also sell quilts locally to help raise funds to purchase supplies.

The two women set up a display at Temple Israel on Quilting Shabbat to show the steps in making a quilt, and recognized the many volunteers who work designing, hand stitching and sewing, or transporting the quilts to Israel.

In addition to the baby quilts sent to Israel, some baby quilts have also been gifted to CHEO to be used for cuddling babies. Those quilts are then sent home with the families when babies are released after treatment. As well, some larger blankets have been made for dialysis patients in Ottawa.

Members of the public can order baby quilts for a base price of \$60," said Haltrecht-Matte. "We don't charge for our time because this is a charitable pursuit."

For more information, contact Haltrecht-Matte and Royer at quilts@templeisraelottawa.ca.



Merle Haltrecht-Matte (left) and Patsy Royer head up Temple Israel's Baby Quilt to Israel project. The project recently sent its 1,000th quilt to Israel.



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R'Fuah Shlema:

Rosanne Palmer by Manny and Cheryle Gluck

Gunner Family Fund

In Memory of:

Shirley Arnoni by Estelle and Sol Gunner

David, Harvey, Victor Kardish Family Fund

In Memory of:

Vera Singer by Margo and David Kardish

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Parenting in the age of princesses

As I sat down to write this column, Purim was a couple of weeks away. We'd begun talking to our daughter about the party at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, explaining the holiday and how we were all going to wear costumes.

"What would you like to be?" I asked.

The answer came pretty quickly – a princess.

Sigh. In the days after our daughter was born, I made it clear there would be no pink in our house, no referring to her as a princess. To me, assigning her that label was to risk relegating her to a pink rhinestone ghetto from which none of us would ever escape.

Except I've since come to learn it's inescapable.

In her book "Cinderella Ate My Daughter," Peggy Orenstein traces the explosion of what today is called princess culture to a single event – a Disney exec attending one his company's ice shows in the 1990s and finding scores of young girls in homemade princess costumes.

A missed marketing opportunity, he realized, and the Disney Princesses line was created. It's since become an estimated \$5.5 billion franchise – not including all the products sold in connection with the movie "Frozen."

My daughter hasn't seen that movie. She has no idea who Elsa is or Snow White or Cinderella. When she says she wants to be a princess, I have no idea what she has in her head – but she knows. It involves a wand and some kind of tutu.



STEPHANIE SHEFRIN
EMERGING GEN

The prime minister might make a cabinet that's 50 per cent women because "it's 2015," as Justin Trudeau famously said, but toddlers don't want to dress up as the health minister.

They want to be a princess.

What's a 21st century mother to do?

We're told princesses are too gender specific and that we should strive to give our children strong and realistic female role models and encourage play that isn't gender based. I agree, wholeheartedly.

But, when you go to the toy store, there's the "girl" section and the "boy section."

When you get to the clothing store, there's the "girl" section and the "boy section."

Studies have shown that, despite the great strides women have made in all walks of life, marketing to kids is more gender specific now than it ever was in the days well before a woman could even make into Parliament, let alone become the health minister.

But, in addition to the pink versus blue debates in secular society, there is also the question of our faith.

We didn't know the sex of our child before she was born.

Ahead of time, we talked about what would happen once he or she arrived. If it was a boy, a bris. Which mohel, what to serve, who to invite, that would all have to be sorted out, but the fundamentals were pretty clear.

But, what if it was a girl? I sent the rabbi an email, asking what the "requirements" were. The answer was none – it was entirely up to us.

There were two ways to look at this. One was to be a bit depressed. Why has nothing emerged in Judaism to formally welcome a girl baby with the same sense of obligation and history as the bris?

But the other way was to forget the concept of a ceremony needing to be "like" a bris.

As people grapple with princess culture taking over childhood, at the adult level there's the same struggle – leaning in, taking our turn, etc. The call for women to stop trying to be more "like" men and embrace the qualities that make them who they are is loud and having an impact.

So, should it matter that my daughter wants to be a princess for Purim? In answering that question, perhaps I should look ahead to the next Jewish holiday. That she's healthy and making her own choices – *dayenu*. It should be enough for me.

What if the State of Israel already existed before the Holocaust?

The Ambassador

By Yehuda Avner and Matt Rees

Toby Press

342 pages

Yehuda Avner – who died March 24, 2015 at age 86 – was an Israeli diplomat who served as ambassador to Britain, Ireland and Australia. He also worked closely with five Israeli prime ministers – with Golda Meir and Levi Eshkol as a speech-writer and secretary, and with Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin and Shimon Peres as a high level adviser.

Not long before he passed away, he worked with crime novelist and journalist Matt Rees to create *The Ambassador*, a fascinating and compelling "what-if" historical novel that examines what might have transpired had the Peel Commission – the royal commission on the British mandate in Palestine – report of 1937 recommending the partition of Palestine been acted upon at the time. According to Rees, the book was completed just two weeks before Avner's death.

In *The Ambassador*, the State of Israel comes into existence and wins its War of Independence while Hitler and the Nazis were already in power in Germany, but before they launched the Second World War and built the death camps of the Holocaust.

Avner and Rees use a combination of real and fictional characters, and real and fictional events, to tell a story of what might have happened in the late-1930s and through the Second World War years to the Jews of Germany and to the Jews of the countries occupied by the Nazis after the start of the war. The authors weave fact and fiction so skillfully that readers can't help but be caught up in the suspense of the tale.

Founding Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion – based, of course, on Israel's real founding prime minister – sends Dan Lavi, the book's fictional title character, to Berlin as the nascent Jewish state's ambassador to Nazi

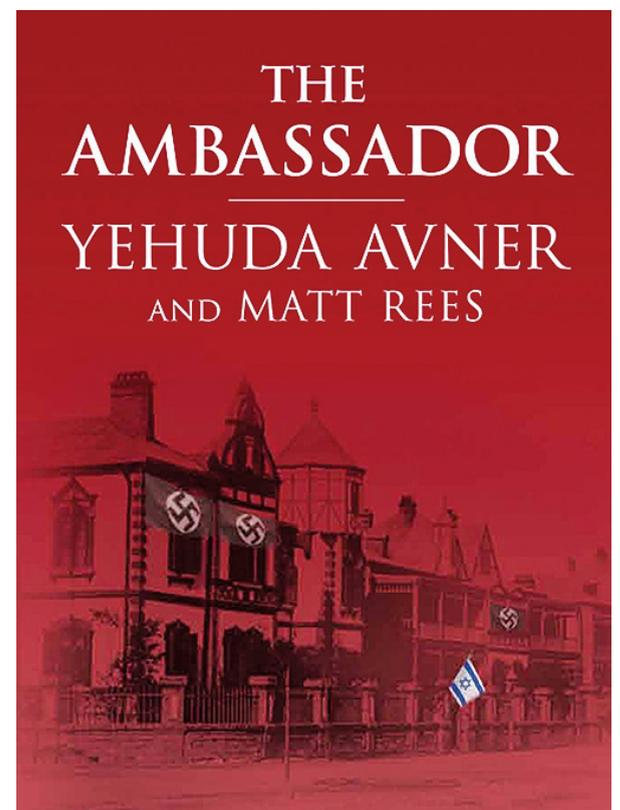
MICHAEL REGENSTREIF BOOK REVIEW

Germany. The Jews of Germany were already suffering enormously from Hitler's state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, and Lavi's most important mission was to arrange for as many Jews as possible to leave Germany for Israel. The Nazi functionary with whom he must deal to gain approval of each Jewish departure from Germany for Israel is none other than Adolf Eichmann.

One of the most chilling scenes in the novel comes near the start of the war when Hitler summons Ben-Gurion to Berlin. Ben-Gurion is warned, in no uncertain terms, that if Israel wants to maintain Jewish emigration from Germany, the Zionist state must remain neutral. Otherwise, Hitler tells Ben-Gurion, "I shall have to find some other solution, one with greater finality."

Meanwhile, the ambassador's efforts to curry enough favour with the Nazis that they would continue to allow Jews to leave is put in jeopardy by Shmulik Shoham, the Mossad station chief working in the basement of the Israeli embassy, who is determined to execute a plan to assassinate Hitler.

There are any number of subplots running through the novel. Among them is a relationship between Wilhelm Gottfried – a celebrated German Jewish concert violinist who had escaped Germany for Mandatory Palestine in the early days of the Nazi regime only to return with the ambassador as a high level Israeli embassy official – and Countess Hannah von Bredow, a German aristocrat. (Although fictionalized in this story, Countess Hannah von Bredow was a real person. A granddaughter of former German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, she was involved



in anti-Nazi activities in Germany during the war.)

Eventually, the infamous Wannsee Conference takes place, and the Nazis' plan for the extermination of European Jewry is put into action. The novel builds to its climax as the ambassador and a surprising ally begin a covert and very daring mission to stop the Holocaust and rescue the ambassador's wife who had been taken by the Nazis and sent to Auschwitz.

Avner's deep understanding of history and the machinations of diplomatic intrigue and Rees' skill as a compelling novelist come together to make *The Ambassador* a gripping and fascinating story.

Lamentations: Klaartje Walsvisch's secret diary

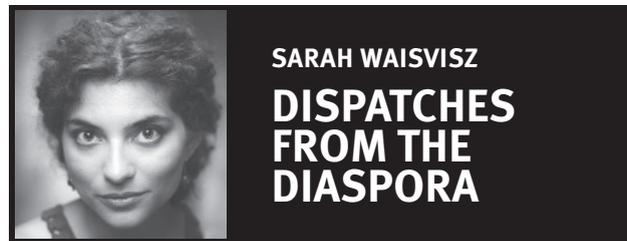
In 2013, the Pew Research Center survey of U.S. Jews showed that remembering the Holocaust was the most important marker of Jewish identity for 73 per cent of respondents. Next in importance was leading a moral and ethical life (69 per cent), and working for justice (56 per cent). Along with other members of my congregation, I am reading Hannah Arendt's "Eichmann in Jerusalem," and I recently got to the chapter about what happened to Dutch Jews during the Holocaust. Here is the short version: three-quarters were murdered.

"This people is likened to the dust and likened to the stars. When they go down, they go down to the dust. When they rise up, they rise up to the stars. We are now in the dust – how do we reach the stars?" (Talmud, Megillah 16a)

In the summer of 2014, on the eve of Tisha B'Av, I visited Amsterdam's Versetz Museum/Dutch Resistance Museum. There was an exhibit about the 1,300 Jewish children of the Dutch Camp Vught who, on June 4, 1943, were suddenly separated from their families and deported to the Westerbork transit camp and then, almost immediately, onward to the Sobibor death camp. The exhibit featured the secret diary of a 32-year-old woman who wrote about the deportation of the children. How did she manage to keep this diary all that time in brutal Camp Vught? Then I saw her name: Klaartje Walsvisch.

Walsvisch. Thirty-two years old. A secret writer. A rebel. Walsvisch, Waisvisz.

The "l" looked like an "i" in her notebooks, but, anyway, there are variations to our family name. Many of the historical records about my Dutch relatives end the same way: "overlaven Sobibor" or "overlaven Auschwitz." Here was another: Klaartje Walsvisch, 32



*The exhibit featured
the secret diary of a 32-year-old woman
who wrote about the deportation
of the children. How did she manage
to keep this diary all that time
in brutal Camp Vught?
Then I saw her name:
Klaartje Walsvisch*

years old, who worked as a tailor in Amsterdam before she was sent to Camp Vught. When I learned about Klaartje, I had just turned 33.

"By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion." (Psalm 137)

Camp Vught was the only camp outside Nazi Germany and its annexed territories run by the SS. Men, women and children were split into separate barracks in a camp lacking food, clean drinking water and basic hygiene. Chaos ensued, brutality reigned, and the children were the most vulnerable. Eventually, the SS officers came up with a plan to solve the problems of the camp: get rid of the children.

Klaartje Walsvisch wrote in her secret diary: "Everything we have experienced up to today was bad,

but what is happening now exceeds all bounds: all the children under the age of 16 have to leave the camp ... families will be torn apart ... We truly could not grasp it anymore. Where in the world has anything like this ever happened? Heading for the children's camp I saw awful scenes. Women screamed in fear and horror. They screamed like mad and truly did not know what they were saying. In the children's camp it was hell."

Eventually, the SS allowed one parent from each family to accompany each child, but not both.

Klaartje Walsvisch continued: "What must have gone through their heads when ... the men working on the Moerdijk learned that their wives and children were stolen from them? ... One of these men, who had a wife and children here, arrived here clueless. Naturally he went straight to the children's camp to greet his children. Imagine his horror finding ruins there instead of his little children."

Klaartje Walsvisch managed to keep her secret diary until July 4, 1943. Then she herself had to go on transport, via Westerbork. Two weeks later, she was killed in Sobibor, where the children had died.

On the wall commemorating the children who died at Sobibor via the kinder transport from Camp Vught, I found these names:

- Barend Waivisch, 15 years old;
- Alida Waivisch, 9 years old;
- Sonja Walvis, 7 years old;
- Jonas Walvis, 6 years old;
- Sara Walvis, 4 years old;
- Elly Walvis, 3 years old;
- Hans Walvis, 2 years old.

"Baruch Dayan ha Emet," I whispered.

"My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is bowed down within me." (*Lamentations*, Ch. 3:20)

Chewing the fat on cellulite

A friend recently mentioned in passing that she has cellulite. She thought it was caused by eating sugar. As we discussed her concern, I told her I would do some research to find out if there's anything to reduce or eliminate cellulite.

She said she used to sell anti-cellulite cream containing caffeine when she worked as a skin care sales consultant. I expressed doubt that a cream could get rid of cellulite, but she insisted that it worked. (Did she forget to use it on herself?) She said she had many satisfied customers. She happened to be holding a cup of coffee, so I jokingly suggested that she should pour it on her thighs.

To clear up the misconceptions and dispel the myths regarding cellulite, I went on a fact-finding mission.

What is cellulite? We have subcutaneous fat between the muscles and the skin on top. Cellulite is not a type of fat; rather, it is the condition when fat protrudes through layers of subdermal connective tissue, giving the skin an unsightly, dimpled appearance. The term cellulite first came into use 200 years ago and, for a long time, it was thought of as a disease.

Where does cellulite appear? Cellulite can appear on different parts of the body such as the buttocks, thighs, hips, abdomen and upper arms.

Who gets cellulite? Everyone has body fat, but not everyone has cellulite. We tend to think of overweight, older women as having cellulite, but thin women and teenage girls can also have cellulite. Ninety per cent of women and 10 per cent of men in developed countries will experience cellulite at some point in their lives (<http://tinyurl.com/h9cnwpm>). Fewer men have cellulite



because of differently oriented, more supportive connective tissue, less estrogen and less fat around their hips and thighs than women. Typically, men who have cellulite are low in male hormones.

What causes cellulite? Connective tissue can weaken from hormonal changes, lack of muscle tone, excess fat or poor circulation. There is also a genetic component to cellulite, which is why slim women can have cellulite. As women age, our bodies produce less estrogen, which can lead to a decrease in circulation and collagen production. Skin loses elasticity, making cellulite more visible.

What can we do about cellulite? Since we can't change our genetics, let's look at what we can do.

Reduce excess body fat. According to the Mayo clinic, the most beneficial cellulite treatments are healthy eating and regular exercise, in particular, strength training. While exercise cannot rid you of cellulite, strength-bearing exercises will strengthen your muscles and make cellulite less visible. Strength training may also prevent more cellulite from appearing.

Do over-the-counter creams work? According to the Mayo clinic, "no studies show that these creams used by themselves offer any improvement"

(<http://tinyurl.com/jl268un>). It doesn't make a difference whether the product contains caffeine, green tea, vitamins, minerals, herbal extracts or antioxidants. However, the Mayo Clinic states that a twice daily application of 0.3 per cent retinol cream has been shown to improve the appearance of cellulite after six months.

Does eating sugar cause cellulite? Sugar consumption has not been directly linked to cellulite. What is known is that eating a healthy diet and staying hydrated can reduce inflammation, help balance your hormones, keep your weight down and connective tissue strong.

What else can we do about cellulite? Quit smoking. Smoking reduces blood vessel flow and can disrupt the formation of collagen such that connective tissue gets weakened and fat shows through. There are surgical as well as less- and non-invasive treatments that can reduce the appearance of cellulite, but they can be expensive, some are painful and the results can be short-lived, requiring maintenance procedures. There may also be short-term side-effects such as rashes, infection or uneven skin contours. Long-term risks are not fully understood. Contrary to popular belief, liposuction does not reduce cellulite and may make it worse.

I don't care if I have cellulite. We needn't be hyper focused on and self-conscious about minor imperfections. Cellulite is normal. It's our beauty standard that's distorted.

I encourage everyone to focus on taking care of your health and fitness to the best of your abilities. Manage your weight, eat right most of the time and keep your muscles strong. If you decide to pursue treatments, remember that the cellulite-reducing industry spends millions of dollars to convince us cellulite is pathologic so that we'll spend millions of dollars on elusive and often phoney cures.

Gretl K. Fischer's 'The Ethical Command of the Cosmos' to be launched at Temple Israel

BY TEENA HENDELMAN
LITERARY TRUSTEE FOR GRETL K. FISCHER

The Ethical Command of the Cosmos' by the late Gretl Keren Fischer will be launched, April 17, at Temple Israel.

The book is the result of a life-long question that engaged Fischer, who died at Hillel Lodge on November 24, 2013 at age 94: In the face of fathomless corruption and evil, can we be satisfied with our modern view that nothing is good or bad as such, but depends on our preference or on social custom?

Gretl Kraus grew up in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, and escaped in the nick of time before the Nazi occupation. While her entire family perished in the Holocaust, she and her fiancé, Hugo Fischer, made it on to one of the last trains to England. Later, they immigrated to Canada, where Hugo re-qualified as a lawyer and accepted a position as a legal adviser with the Canadian government.

Fischer completed her education, earning her first degree at the University of British Columbia, her MA at Carleton University, and her PhD in English at McGill University. Her dissertation, "In Search of Jerusalem, Religion and Ethics in the Writings of A. M. Klein," published by McGill-Queen's Press in 1975, has been

frequently cited.

Over her career as an author and as a professor of English at Carleton University, she wrote stories, plays, essays and a novel, "An Answer for Pierre," published in 1990.

Fischer was uneasy with the concept that good and evil is merely a human invention and variable according to social customs or to individual points of view. In her view, there exists a powerful, objective cosmic standard by which we can distinguish right from wrong, good from evil.

"The Ethical Command of the Cosmos" presents the development of her stance on the natural imperative toward life and well being. She explains why she believes such a standard of right and wrong exists, states objections to it, and follows with her defence.

With the help of basic teachings gleaned from contemporary mainstream science, Fischer shows that cosmic energy has a built-in bias in favour of life and well-being. Whenever pain appears, it is the sign that evil has taken place.

The launch of "The Ethical Command of the Cosmos" by Gretl Keren Fischer, a posthumous publication, will take place Sunday, April 17, 10 am, at a complimentary bagels and coffee breakfast, at Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Drive. All are welcome.

The Ethical Command of the Cosmos

Religious Naturalism
as a Reliable Guide
Toward a Beneficent Ethic



GRETL KEREN FISCHER

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with Janie Respitz



Sunday, April 10
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Admission: \$10 at the door.

Sholem Aleichem's last will and testament implored that on his Yortzeyt we remember him with laughter. In honour of his 100th Yortzeyt, join Janie Respitz as she explores the dramatic life of Sholem Aleichem through story and song. A program in Yiddish and English which will delight, entertain and inspire.

Montreal native, Janie Respitz performs in concerts throughout the world and teaches courses relating to Yiddish language, folklore, literature and Eastern European Jewish history.



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Eric Levin by Carol and Stuart Levine.
Irving Slone by Carol and Stuart Levine.

**LINDA SLOTIN
AND JONATHAN FISHER
ENDOWMENT FUND**

Mazel Tov to:
Sandy and Andy Siggner on the birth of their
granddaughter by Linda Slotin and Jonathan
Fisher.
Rick and Helen Zipes on the birth of their

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granddaughter, Lylah by Linda Slotin and Jonathan Fisher.

DORIS AND RICHARD STERN FAMILY FUND

In Memory of:
Allen Slan by Doris and Richard Stern.

CLAIRE AND SAM TANNER MEMORIAL FUND

Birthday Wishes to:
David Ross by Stephen and Lana Tanner.

Mazel Tov to:
David Ross on being the recipient of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre Ben Karp Volunteer Service Award by Stephen and Lana Tanner.

ZIPES KARANOFSKY FAMILY ENDOWMENT FUND

Mazel Tov to:
Fran and Mort Ross on the birth of their grandson, Harry by Rick and Helen Zipes.

THE SAUL AND EDNA GOLDFARB B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM

LIEFF FAMILY B'NAI MITZVAH FUND
Mazel Tov to:
Bev and Brian Glube on the marriage of their

daughter by Francie Greenspoon and Norman Lief.

R'fuah Sh'leimah to:
Stu Schwartz by Francie Greenspoon and Norman Lief.

ZACHARY SILBER B'NAI MITZVAH FUND

In Memory of:
Sarah (Sunny) Senzilet by Shari and Lawrence Silber.

ARIELLE ZELIKOVITZ B'NAI MITZVAH FUND

In Memory of:
Morley Goldfield by Lenora, Evan, Noah and Arielle Zelikovitz.

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WHAT'S GOING ON | April 4 to 17, 2016

FOR MORE CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT WWW.OTTAWAJEWISHBULLETIN.COM/EVENTS AND WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR

MONDAY, APRIL 4

Does Elijah visit the Seder Table?

Rabbi Alex Israel provides examples from Jewish texts of the many ways Elijah is presented in Jewish tradition. Rabbi Israel teaches Tanakh at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi and is director of Community Education at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, 7:30 pm.
Info: Roslyn Wollock, 613-798-9818, ext. 254, rwollock@jccottawa.com

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

Talk by Sharon Sholzberg-Gray:

A Report Card on the Government and Parliament. A lawyer by profession, Sharon Sholzberg-Gray has served as CEO of a number of national health and social sector organizations, with responsibility for the management of their national offices, policy development and advocacy activities, 1:30 pm.
Info: Ella Dagan, 613-798-9818, ext. 243, edagan@jccottawa.com

Art and Soul...Live Creatively:

Explore Judaism's insights into the arts and how they beautify and transform our lives, 7:30 pm.

Also Thursday, April 7, 9 am.

Info: Devora Caytak, 613-729-7712, dev18@sympatico.ca

SUNDAY, APRIL 10

Books and Bagels Book Review and discussion:

Breakfast followed by review and discussion. Rabbi

Steven Garten reviews "Ally: My Journey Across the American-Israeli Divide" by Michael Oren.

Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 9:30 am.

Info: Shayla Mindell, 613-224-1802, shaylamindell@rogers.com

Sholem Aleichem - 100 Years:

Sholem Aleichem's last will and testament implored that we remember him with laughter on his Yahrzeit. In honour of his 100th Yahrzeit, join Janie Respitz as she explores Sholem Aleichem's dramatic life through story and song, 10:30 am.

Info: Roslyn Wollock, 613 798-9818, ext. 254, rwollock@jccottawa.com

Annual Passover Fair:

Presented by Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, Na'amat Canada and Congregation Beit Tikvah, the fair will feature many local vendors including jewelry, crafts, Judaica, books and kosher for Passover wines. Proceeds will benefit local and Israeli projects.

Beit Tikvah Congregation, 15 Chartwell Ave., 10:30 am.

Info: Marilyn Schwartz, 613-828-4488, marilyn_sch1970@yahoo.ca

Passover Workshop:

How to lead, or actively participate in the Passover Seder.

Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 11 am.

Info: Catherine Loves, 613-224-1802, cathy@templeisraelottawa.ca

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

Malca Pass Library Book Discussion Group Meeting:

Alvina Ruprecht reviews "Medicine Walk" by Richard Waggameese.

Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7:30 pm.

Info: Maureen Kaell, 613-224-8649, mkaell@rogers.com

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

Youth Chocolate Seder: Kids in grades 1-8 are invited to Agudath Israel's annual pre-Pesach Chocolate Seder.

Agudath Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 2 pm.

Info/RSVP: Emily Anzarouth, youth@agudathisrael.net

COMING SOON

MONDAY, APRIL 18

Chocolate Seder for Youth (Grades 6-12):

If you like chocolate, this is the event for you!

Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 6:30 pm.

Info: Sue Potechin, 613-224-3133, tirs@templeisraelottawa.ca

CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

APRIL 8	7:11 PM	APRIL 22	7:38 PM
APRIL 15	7:20 PM	APRIL 23	AFTER 8:40 PM

BULLETIN DEADLINES

MONDAY, APRIL 18 **	FOR MAY 9
WEDNESDAY, MAY 4	FOR MAY 23

* Early deadline: Community-wide Issue ** Early deadline: holiday closures

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

CONDOLENCES

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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ANNUAL PASSOVER LUNCH

Wednesday, April 27, 2016 12:00-1:30 p.m.

CONGREGATION AGUDATH ISRAEL, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, Ottawa, ON



Keynote Speaker:

SHERYL SAPERIA

*Director of Policy for Canada
Foundation for the Defense of Democracies*



Keynote Topic:

Islamist Terrorism: The Threat to Canada and Israel

TICKETS

PATRON:	\$150.00 (includes \$100 tax receipt)
EARLY BIRD:	\$40.00 (until April 8, 2016)
REGULAR:	\$44.00 (beginning April 9, 2016)
STUDENT:	\$18.00

Tickets may be purchased on-line at www.cfhu.org or by contacting Shelli Kimmel at huottawa@cfhu.org or by calling 613.913.2121

Tickets must be purchased in advance by April 20, 2016.
Under the supervision of the Ottawa Vaad Hakashrut.



Agudath Israel Congregation