

OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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A doctor and a rabbi walked into Federation...

Although the 2020 Annual Campaign kickoff is not until September, **Karen Palayew** has joined **Rabbi Reuven Bulka** as Campaign co-chair. **Louise Rachlis** reports.

Karen Palayew is the new co-chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Annual Campaign, teaming with Rabbi Reuven Bulka, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Machzikei Hadas.

The busy Ottawa pediatrician began her two-year term recently, when Aviva Ben-Choreen finished hers.

"It has been a great pleasure working with Aviva as Campaign co-chair," said Rabbi Bulka of Palayew's predecessor. "She put all her considerable energies and dedication into her work on behalf of the community.

"We are all delighted that Karen Palayew is following Aviva," he added. "Her involvement with March of the Living showed her love of community, her appreciation of our history, and her commitment to our posterity. She is engaging, caring, determined, and wonderful."

After Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman and Rabbi Bulka reached out to Palayew about co-chairing the Annual Campaign, she contacted several past co-chairs to hear about their personal experiences.

"They were all very positive, supportive and encouraging," Palayew said. "They inspired me to accept the

role." She says she is pleased to be working alongside Rabbi Bulka during her first year.

Originally from Montreal, she and her husband, Lorne Segal, moved to Ottawa from Toronto in 2000 and their three children attended Hillel Academy (now the Ottawa Jewish Community School).

"That was our introduction to the Ottawa Jewish community."

Palayew chaired the health committee at Hillel Academy and went on to co-chair the Physicians' Division of the Federation Annual Campaign.

"While fundraising does really not come naturally to me, once I started making calls and reaching out to colleagues, it was extremely gratifying," she said.

Palayew had been Ottawa chair of the March of the Living since 2012. The March is a program for high school students in which teens spend one week in Poland learning about the Holocaust at some of the actual sites where the Holocaust was perpetrated by the Nazis. The actual March from Auschwitz to Birkenau takes place on Yom HaShoah. The students then spend a week in Israel that includes marking Yom Hazikaron and celebrating Yom Ha'Atzmaut.

"It's been my passion," she said, "engaging teens in a program that heightens their awareness and connects them to their past and to Israel. It has really pulled on my heart strings to leave that position, but it's in good hands with Allan Shefrin," her successor as Ottawa chair for March of the Living.

Palayew and Segal co-chaired the 2018 Annual Campaign kickoff events on September 17, 2017 with evening keynote speaker Hillel Neuer of UN Watch and an afternoon family concert by children's entertainers



Karen Palayew becomes co-chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa Annual Campaign after five years as Ottawa chair of March of the Living.

Sharon and Bram.

"We really enjoyed working with the Federation team and were really happy to be involved in events with people of all ages coming together as one," said Palayew.

"Over the years, my view of Federation is that it cares for the entire spectrum of needs in the community," added Palayew. "I hope to encourage even more individuals to engage in Federation and to fulfil meaningful initiatives. The support we give Federation today will ensure support for our cherished community for generations to come."

inside:

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Lisa McLeod visits Tamir > p. 2

Remembering Estelle Backman > p. 5

Toby and David Brooks visit a Jewish Heritage site in India > p. 8

April 2&3, 2019



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Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Lisa MacLeod with members of the Tamir Neshama Choir, February 8.

MATTHEW HORWOOD

Minister of children, community and social services visits Tamir

Lisa Macleod sings along with Tamir Neshama Choir and visits with Tamir participants and families. **Matthew Horwood** reports.

Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Lisa MacLeod, the MPP for Nepean, visited the Tamir facility on the Jewish Community Campus, February 8, where she met with Tamir participants, staff, and family members, for a get-acquainted visit.

Tamir is the community agency “dedicated to assisting people with developmental disabilities realize their potential in a supportive Jewish environment through opportunities for personal growth and community

involvement.”

Tamir Executive Director Mark Palmer welcomed the minister and said that agencies such as Tamir are in the business of “making sure people are cared for and looked after.

“Quality of life is about much more than just custodial care. It’s about people having meaningful stuff to do and a sense of belonging, attachment and pride,” he explained.

To give the minister a “flavour of the kinds of stuff we are talking about,” Palmer shared videos of Tamir participants taking part in special events,

including the Lip Sync Battle for the Jewish Federation of Ottawa’s Annual Campaign kickoff last September and Tamir’s own “Stepping Out in Style” fashion show in 2017.

The Tamir Neshama Choir, led by Nigel Harris, sang touching versions of the Beatles’ song, “With A Little Help from My Friends,” and the Louis Armstrong hit, “What a Wonderful World.” MacLeod joined in singing along with the choir and was presented with a copy of their CD.

After the brief performance, she spoke with individual members of the choir hearing about how Tamir participation has improved their lives.

After meeting with members of the choir, MacLeod spoke with several family members of Tamir participants.

Bob Thompson, a member of the Tamir Board of Directors since 2009,

and a past president of the Board, said Tamir has “incredible strength within the community.”

“When I go out to look for new directors for Tamir, almost everybody I talk to within the Jewish community knows about Tamir and what we do,” he said.

Thompson said he would like to get his son – who has Angelman syndrome – into a residential home because it would allow him to become more independent and grow as an individual.

Paul Finn is also a Tamir parent who sits on the agency’s board.

“We are thankful for Tamir, we think it’s a wonderful program,” Finn said to MacLeod.

The minister said she wanted to provide “wrap-around support” for individuals with special needs through social, healthcare, education and employment programs.

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OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

Please visit www.jccottawa.com for course descriptions.

Adult Cultural and Educational Programs Spring 2019

JEWISH EDUCATION

FLORENCE MELTON SCHOOL OF ADULT JEWISH LEARNING – SCHOLARS COURSE

The Star and the Crescent: The Long Relationship of Judaism and Islam
with Rabbi Steven Garten

To register please visit
www.events.org/MeltonOttawa

March 28 – June 13, 2019
Thursday 10:00 am -11:30 am
No Class: April 11 and April 18

The Good Life

with Sabina Wasserlauf MSW,RSW
and Lauren Shaps MSW, RSW
May 7 – May 28
Tuesday 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm

LITERATURE

The Twentieth Century as Literary Epoch – 1945-1999

with Dr. Nick Milne

March 27 – May 1
Wednesday 10:00 am–12:00 pm
No Class: April 24

GENERAL EDUCATION

History of Canadian Music – From Indigenous to Folk to Pop

with Mika Posen

April 29–June 3
Monday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
No Class: Monday, May 20th

Shakespeare Uncovered

with Actor, Playwright, Director Pierre Brault
April 4 – May 16
Thursday 1:00 pm–3:00 pm

MUSIC

Music Concert Series

Bach, Beethoven and More
with Pianist Katherine Addleman
and Cellist Daniel Parker
Tuesday, March 5
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Chopin, the Poet of the Piano
with Pianist Katherine Addleman
Tuesday, April 23
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Trio Concert

with Katherine Addleman, Nina Gordon & Galina Rezaeipour
Tuesday, May 28
1:30 pm–2:30 pm

SPECIAL INTEREST

Populism, Antisemitism and the Rise of Authoritarianism in Eastern Europe
with Professor Jan Grabowski

Wednesday, March 6, 7:30 pm
\$5 at the door, SJCC Social Hall A

The Real Lolita: The Kidnapping of Sally Horner and the Novel That Scandalized the World

Author Talk with Ottawa native, Sarah Weinman.

Tuesday, April 23
\$5 at the door, SJCC Social Hall A

The SJCC presents A Celebration of Jewish Music

Sunday, May 5, 2:00 pm

Shirley Berman Lecture Series

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30 pm

LANGUAGE

Conversational Hebrew from Scratch: Evening
with Yochi Sirota

April 3 – May 22
Wednesday 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Conversational Hebrew for Beginners: Daytime
with Ella Dagan

April 3 – May 29
Wednesday 10:00 am – 11:30 am
No Class: May 8

S'iz Besser Oyf Yiddish – It's Better in Yiddish – For Lovers of Mamaloshen

with Shirley Steinberg and Rubin Friedman
Tuesdays 10:00 am–11:30 am
April 2, May 14, June 11

Yiddish Conversation Circle

Wednesday 1:00 pm–2:30 pm
Bi-weekly beginning March 13.

DANCE

New! Evening Program: Tango

with Armand Solomonescu
March 25 – April 15
Monday 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

ART

New! Summer Evening Class: Drawing with the Right Side of the Brain

with Jinny Slyfield
June 20 – July 25
Thursday 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Mixed Media for Beginner/Intermediate (Daytime)

with Violeta Borisonik
March 27 – May 8
Wednesday 12:30 pm – 3:00 pm
No Class: April 24

Compassion to be a focus at Limmud Ottawa 2019

BY LOUISE RACHLIS
FOR LIMMUD OTTAWA

Compassion will be key at this year's edition of Limmud Ottawa.

Among the presenters will be Brian Goldman, host of CBC Radio's "White Coat, Black Art." Goldman, a veteran ER doctor described by CBC as "one of Canada's most trusted medical broadcasters," will discuss his new book, *The Power of Kindness: Why Empathy Is Essential in Everyday Life*.

There will also be a panel on compassion, which includes former Ottawa mayor Jackie Holzman, co-chair of Compassionate Ottawa, a volunteer organization working to make Ottawa more compassionate for people diagnosed with life-threatening illness.

The all-day Limmud event on Sunday, March 31, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) will cover many vital topics for the Jewish world and beyond.

"We're going to have a conversation with an Indigenous leader, Claudette Commanda, on 'Indigenous and Jewish community Reconciliation,'" said Jenny Roberge, an Ottawa mashgiach who was a co-founder of Limmud Ottawa in 2012. "Hopefully we'll break a lot of barriers this year."

Elder Claudette Commanda is an



SJCC front desk staff welcome Limmud participants to the 2018 event.

Algonquin Anishinabe from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation and is executive director of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres.

Roberge said there will also be a focus on the Sephardic philosopher Maimonides.

"The Israel Museum in Jerusalem just opened a new exhibition on Maimonides and we will have a speaker on Maimonides from the Zelikovitz Centre, Soroosh Shahriari," said Roberge. Her topic will be "Maimonides' Philosophical Religion vis-à-vis Spinoza's Theistic Revolt."

Roberge also points out that Limmud supporter Rabbi Howard Finkelshtein of Congregation Beit Tikvah and the Ottawa Jewish Community School will be retiring later this year. "He has been so supportive of Limmud and we will have an opportunity to say thank you."

From Israel, Hen Mazzig, named by the *Algemeiner* website as one of the

"top 100 people positively affecting Jewish life" for 2018, and an expert on Israel and gay rights advocacy, will speak about how to fight the new anti-Semitism and BDS.

There will also be a session for students on Israel, BDS and campus advocacy with Rebecca Katzman.

"We will even have a session on international migration from a Jewish perspective," Roberge said, "presented by Howard Spunt, who served as a Canadian diplomat for 37 years."

Other speakers will include Zane Caplansky, owner of Caplansky's Deli in Toronto, and Adam Moscoe, who will discuss "Leonard Bernstein at 100." Visit www.limmudottawa.ca to see the full list of Limmud presenters.

"Limmud participants come from very diverse backgrounds, religious affiliations, age, gender, religious practice, nationality, and level of Jewish knowledge," said Roberge. "Limmud is a wide-ranging set of networks of Jewish intercultural communication."

Limmud Ottawa is affiliated with Limmud International and has partnerships with the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies at Carleton University, the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program at the University of Ottawa, and is a beneficiary of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa.

Limmud Ottawa 2019 takes place throughout the morning and afternoon on Sunday March 31 at the SJCC. Adult admission for the day is \$36 which includes all sessions and a light kosher lunch. For more information, or to pre-register, visit www.limmudottawa.ca. Pre-registration is highly recommended as Limmud Ottawa has sold out in the past.

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Saturday Shabbat Services

10:15 am

Thursday morning minyanim

7:30 am

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Remembering beloved librarian Estelle Backman

BY DONNA GUTTMAN

The Jewish community in Ottawa has been blessed by the efforts of many dedicated individuals who work to enhance Jewish life.

Each of these individuals is a hero in that they selflessly seek to do for others.

On February 17, Ottawa lost a quiet hero when Estelle Backman z"l, died suddenly, at home, at age 74.

Estelle loved books. She also loved her community. Estelle served as Jewish community librarian for more than 20 years, until her retirement at the end of 2014.

At first, she laboured quietly in the basement of the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) building on Chapel Street. Working with only a tiny budget and more often only with donated books, Estelle sought to build a resource of Jewish learning accessible to all. Hers was a quiet endeavour that required patience, persistence, dedication and love.

In 1998, when the JCC moved to its new home – the Soloway JCC on the Jewish Community Campus in the west end – Estelle was overjoyed to find herself in beautiful new surroundings. The newly minted Greenberg Families Library made it possible for Estelle to shine and accomplish all that she had always hoped and dreamed of doing.

Under her watchful eye, the collection was expanded and the old card catalogue was replaced by an electronic database. This intensive process involved culling old, irrelevant books and creating digital records for all titles in the collection. Cultural programs blossomed with the vital support and dedication of avid readers and friends of the library. With the new prominence of the Greenberg Families Library, came the ability to build a true

In 1998, when the JCC moved to its new home Estelle was overjoyed to find herself in beautiful new surroundings.

community resource – a resource which continues to enrich the lives of anyone seeking to broaden their knowledge of all things Jewish.

I was fortunate to have worked closely with Estelle during the first seven years after the library moved to the Soloway JCC. During our shared time in the library, I came to know the quiet determination of a woman who did not look for honour or attention, but sought only to help others. Estelle was always ready to assist anyone searching for a book suitable to their needs – and she always did this with a smile, grace and kindness.

Estelle's work in the library lives on. Her years of service to the Jewish community were vital to building a resource that serves as testimony to her love of her community, and to her love for the books that tell our story.

Estelle will be deeply missed by her husband Sydney, her daughter Andrea and her family, her son David and his family, and her sister Anita. To them, I say, May You Be Comforted Among the Mourners in Zion.

Estelle will also be missed by the many people who had the good fortune of benefiting from her help and warm smile. May her memory be for a blessing.

Donna Guttman worked alongside Estelle Backman as a librarian at the Greenberg Families Library in the Soloway JCC. She now lives in Jerusalem.



COURTESY OF OTTAWA JEWISH ARCHIVES

Librarians Estelle Backman (right) and Donna Guttman in the Greenberg Families Library at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, circa 1998.

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RECORDING OF EULOGIES REINSTATED

In a letter to the community published in the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin (Mailbag, February 18, 2019), I wrote to inform everyone that the Ottawa Jewish Historical Society had, with heavy hearts, made the very difficult decision to discontinue recording eulogies at Jewish funerals in Ottawa.

As a direct result of that letter, I am pleased to inform you that a very generous anonymous donor has come forward with funding, for each of the next three years, which will enable us to reinstate the recording of eulogies at funerals.

The donation will be placed in a

Eulogies Fund that will only be used to cover the costs of the recordings.

We hope many of you will also contribute to this fund. Doing so will ensure we will have the funding we need to continue beyond the three-year term of this generous donation.

Our benefactor has provided a wonderful opportunity for all of us to pull together. This is a win-win situation for everyone.

Donations may be made to the Ottawa Jewish Historical Society, Eulogies Fund, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, ON K2A 1R9.

Teri Levine, President
Ottawa Jewish Historical Society

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS 2019

Members of the Jewish community are invited to nominate individuals to receive awards at Federation's Annual General Meeting June 19, 2019.

Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Leadership Award

The Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Leadership 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.

Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award

The Shem Tov Community Volunteer Award recognizes an outstanding volunteer for a lifetime of service dedicated to the betterment and enrichment of Jewish life in Ottawa.

Freiman Family Young Leadership Award

The Freiman Family Young Leadership Award recognizes a member of the Ottawa Jewish community 40 and under, who has demonstrated proven leadership to the benefit of Ottawa's Jewish community.

Student Leadership Award

The Student Leadership Award recognizes a student currently pursuing a post-secondary degree who demonstrates leadership and outstanding commitment to the Ottawa Jewish community.

Visit jewishottawa.com for more information, to complete an online nomination or to download a nomination form. **Deadline March 29, 2019.**

Nominations can be delivered attention:
Chair of the Community Award Selection Committee,
Jewish Federation of Ottawa, 21 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.,
Ottawa, ON K2A1R9

Questions? Please email info@jewishottawa.com
or call 613-798-4696 x 236



**FEDERATION
REPORT**



**RUTH MIDDLEBROOK,
PJ LIBRARY PARENT COMMITTEE**

As a PJ Library Parent Committee member, I'm pleased to provide you with an overview and update on the program, and also share my personal experiences.

PJ Library Ottawa, a core on-ramp of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Superhighway, offers local Jewish families so much. It brings Jewish education into homes via a monthly delivery of books, streaming of music through PJ

Federation's PJ Library is making a difference for Ottawa families

Library Radio, and holds activities that bring families together with the Jewish community.

In March, we will be holding our first-ever welcome event for new PJ Library families. In June, we will be holding PJ Library in the Park. It'll be a morning filled with fun, games, and kosher treats.

These events build on the successful programs hosted last year. In the fall, we partnered with Beit Tikvah for Sukkot. PJ Library families met in the congregation's sukkah for story time, crafts and blessing recital while holding the lulav and etrog. We followed this event with PJ Library Parent's Night Out where parents got to make pizza with Dashing Pinch caterers at Kehillat Beth Israel. Most recently, we partnered with the Soloway Jewish Community Centre for a Chanukah Party where we enjoyed entertainment from Junkyard

Symphony, made menorah crafts, and ate sufganiyot and latkes.

These events are helping to build a strong, inclusive and thriving community for young families. PJ Library welcomes all Jewish families. Whatever your background, knowledge, family make-up or observance of Jewish faith, everyone is welcome to participate! I know that for my family this is significant. We're interfaith, and we feel so welcome.

Federation's PJ Library makes a real difference in our lives and in the lives of many families in our community. It teaches our children Jewish values, Hebrew vocabulary, about Jewish holidays and blessings. Our children are also encouraged to help others through the PJ Library Tzedakah Box and the PJ Library Kindness Card Game. PJ Library has helped bring my family into the Jewish community, created a home for

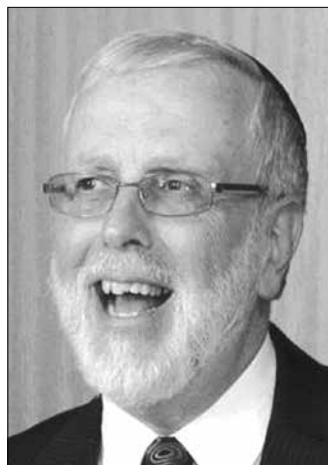
us, a place where we can learn, meet friends, and give back.

Since 2011, PJ Library has provided Jewish books and music to more than 900 Ottawa children aged six months to eight years. This is made possible through the generous donations of local donors and the support of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

The goals of PJ Library Ottawa are to promote Jewish literacy and culture, encourage families to talk together about our values and traditions, and create opportunities for families to meet others and engage in local Jewish life.

We look forward to your family participating in PJ Library in 2019. Please join me and my fellow Parent Committee members at activities throughout the year – you'll enjoy connecting with your Jewish community!

**FROM THE
PULPIT**



**RABBI HOWARD FINKELSTEIN,
BEIT TIKVAH**

In 2009, *A Common Thread*, a book describing the Jewish community of Ottawa from its inception to modern times was published by the Ottawa Jewish Historical Society. It was a wonderful book, filled with impressive historical and anecdotal accounts of life in Ottawa through the years.

Missing, however, was any mention of the existence of Yitzhak Rabin High School, which operated for 20 years from 1995 until 2015, or of Torah Day School, formerly known as Torah Academy, an Orthodox institution operating for over 20 years.

Understandably, not everything can be included in a history book, but gaps in the recording of the existence of educational institutions which have shaped and influenced the Jewish community must be addressed as the discerning student of history has to remark on the underlying and sometimes invisible contributions made by people and by

History of Jewish Ottawa

institutions in the community.

Specifically, talking about institutions, one can ask as to what salutary or negative effects were felt by people who were touched by their presence? How many students, for example, attending the community's day schools, past and present, elementary and high school, are leading strong Jewish lives, and can attribute their spiritual growth to the foundation they received in these schools?

How many people were influenced, positively or negatively, by their association with synagogues in our community? How many can point to rabbinic leadership that does not garner headlines, but is highly influential in one's life? While *A Common Thread* can admirably speak about the development of synagogues and the role of rabbis in the community's history, by definition, it cannot assess the historical significance that these institutions and leaders had and continue to have on those affected by them.

In truth, it is impossible to write a true and complete history of a community, for every individual has his or her personal story to tell. As a rabbi and educator in Ottawa since 1991, I can attest to the mini-histories of the Jews of Ottawa with whom I have had contact. Each story is different, and each story is instructive, in terms of how we relate to the community at large, and to each other.

Consequently, we have the incom-

plete history of the Jewish community of Ottawa consisting of myriad individuals who can feasibly write his or her own versions of that account, with common threads of agreement, and discordant impressions simultaneously. It will be interesting and exciting to see how the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's new Jewish Superhighway project will relate to the individuals and families of our community. The underlying statement that 'no Jew will be left behind' on this new pathway bodes well for community cohesion and individual identification with other Jews in Ottawa. The Superhighway can be our common thread in bringing the Jews of Ottawa together.

When the call came for the Hebrews in the desert to come together to contribute to the building of the sanctuary, the Hebrews came from all walks of life to donate their time, energy and resources to its successful completion. As a result, God promised to dwell among the people of Israel. In a similar vein, each Jew of our community should not only contribute material goods to the betterment of Ottawa's Jewish institutions, they should contribute their wisdom and their experience to build a model of a community for future generations. We may not need a new history book to recount these experiences, but we do need people to step up and figuratively write their own accounts by continuing to build our community.

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

With Israel's system of proportional representation and its many political parties – many of which are focused on a single issue or represent a specific cultural or religious community, and many of which come and go – it's virtually impossible for any party to form a majority government without bringing together a coalition.

For example, Benjamin Netanyahu put together a governing coalition with the support of other parties in 2015 – mostly by promising control of certain cabinet ministries to other parties – after his Likud Party received 23.4 per cent of the vote to win 30 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

Two deals between parties announced late last month could have major effects on the outcome of the April 9 Israeli election, and on the

Campaign wheeling and dealing in Israel

wheeling and dealing between parties that will take place after the votes are counted in order to assemble a governing coalition.

The first deal merges three centrist parties – two of them newly-formed – under prominent military and political figures to create the new Blue and White Party (named for the colours of the Israeli flag). Combining to form what could be the most significant new political force in Israel in many years were Benny Gantz's Israel Resilience Party (a former general, Gantz was chief of the Israel Defense Forces' general staff from 2011 to 2015); Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid Party (a former journalist, Lapid served as Israel's finance minister from 2013 to 2014); and Moshe Ya'alon's Telem Party (Ya'alon is also a former general and chief of the Israel Defense Forces' general staff who served as Netanyahu's minister of defence from 2013 to 2016).

Gabi Ashkenazi, another former general and chief of the Israel Defense Forces' general staff, is also part of the Blue and White Party's leadership team.

Under terms of the merger Gantz and Lapid would rotate the prime-minister-ship after two-and-a-half years.

The Jerusalem Post reported that

polling immediately after the merger was announced suggested that the Blue and White Party could overtake Netanyahu's Likud and perhaps win 36 seats to become the leading party in the race to form a governing coalition.

The other deal brings together two parties on the right and extreme right: Jewish Home and Otzma Yehudit.

Jewish Home was part of Netanyahu's 2015 coalition but its two most prominent members – Education Minister Naftali Bennett and Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked – recently split off to form the New Right Party.

Otzma Yehudit (Jewish power) is an extremist party which advocates the relocation of West Bank Palestinians and Israeli Arabs to Arab countries – in other words, ethnic cleansing. The party is the successor to Meir Kahane's Kach Party – a party that has been banned from running for the Knesset due to its racist ideology since 1988 and banned outright since 1994.

The electoral threshold for a party to obtain seats in the Knesset is 3.25 per cent of the popular vote – which would mean four seats. Polling has suggested that neither the current version of Jewish Home or Otzma Yehudit would crack the threshold on its own – but

jointly they may win four or five seats.

And as the leading parties scramble to assemble a governing coalition after the election, those four or five seats would be crucial for Netanyahu's chances. Knowing this, it was Netanyahu himself who reportedly brokered the deal by apparently promising two seats at his cabinet table to the joint ticket.

While it's highly unlikely that a cabinet position would go to one of the Otzma Yehudit candidates, it's frankly appalling that Netanyahu would broker a deal that would lend political legitimacy to a group that should never have moved beyond the fringe.

And there is still another wild card which could affect the outcome of the election as Israeli Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit is widely expected to announce this month whether he will accept police recommendations that Netanyahu be indicted on several corruption charges. Although the prime minister denies the validity of the allegations against him and has said he will not stand down if indicted, it remains to be seen if his support will weaken significantly enough if he is indicted to change the outcome of the election. Some Israeli analysts suggest that it would.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

It is shocking and disturbing and reminiscent of a real-life nightmare that Jews have endured for centuries. It never stops. The targeting of Jews in any number of countries they find themselves in. Sometimes it is subtle and sometimes not.

On January 30, another synagogue was broken into and desecrated. Photos show ripped and shredded sacred Torahs on the ground, the locked ark was forced open by sawing a hole on its side, and the photos show destroyed prayer books strewn all over the ransacked synagogue.

It is all the same script. The same hatred that saw so many synagogues ransacked in pogroms – most notably in czarist Russia – to synagogues burned

Eye-openers you might never want to see

to the ground in Nazi Germany. It is the same hatred that still leads to toppled and defaced tombstones in Jewish cemeteries around the world.

The script for the January 30 attack may look the same and we may wish it was the same because then we could understand it. The attack on the synagogue I am referring to did not happen in some country one might expect. Most regrettably, this attack happened in the one country you would think a hate crime targeting Jews would never happen.

The name of the ransacked synagogue is Siah Yisrael. It is located in Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people. More precisely, and more personally, Siah Yisrael is in my daughter's family's neighbourhood of Kiryat Yovel.

When I arrived here in Jerusalem in February for my annual visit, I heard people talking about the badly damaged synagogue – and the plot certainly thickens when you find out more.

Siah Yisrael has many French-speaking congregants who recently came from France. Imagine, they left France to come to Israel to get away from the very thing that happened to their synagogue in Jerusalem. It truly is unimaginable how persecuted and let down those French Jews must feel.

Now, super-sophisticated anti-Semites would have loved to have ransacked their synagogue in Jerusalem to send a message to Jews who left France that hatred for them will follow everywhere they go, including Israel. And while that may be the result, it is hard to imagine the thinking behind the attack was that sophisticated.

As I write, 10 days after the attack, authorities are not putting any kind of premise forward and there is very little information being made available. But, there are theories in the neighbourhood, and in the media, about who did this and why. The underbelly of the speculation seems to fall on tension between secular and the growing number of religious people in the neighbourhood. It is something no one wants to talk about.

As troubling as the invasion of the Siah Yisrael is, it takes no time to realize it is not the only synagogue in Israel to be hit in the middle of the night.

Just days before the attack in Jerusalem two synagogues were targeted in Netanya. The MacDonald International Shul, an Orthodox shul with English-speaking congregants, mostly American and British, was hit by perpetrators who left ugly graffiti with crosses

and “Hail Satan” written on the walls.

The Reform synagogue Natan Ya was flooded that same night when perpetrators broke a window and forced a running garden hose in leaving half a foot of water throughout. Last May, also in Netanya, Beit Israel, a Conservative synagogue was vandalized on four separate occasions.

There may be a line of thinking that connects the attacks in the Conservative and Reform synagogues in Netanya. It takes neither a rocket scientist nor a Talmudic scholar to know Reform and Conservative Judaism is not appreciated in religious circles in Israel. As for the Orthodox congregation in Netanya, one could speculate the perpetrators thought a shul called the MacDonald International Shul, commonly referred to as “MacDonald's,” did not fit the mould of what they expect a shul to be.

As for the French shul in Jerusalem, while theories abound as to who is responsible and why, it remains hard to think secular Jews did this to protest the arrival of religious newcomers coming to their neighbourhood, just as it is so hard to think religious Jews would hurt Reform and Conservative Jews for not being observant enough.

Every visit to Israel brings eye-openers – including those you never want to see.

Our visit to Jewish heritage site in India

On a trip last November, Ottawans **Toby and David Brooks** visited the Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi – the oldest continuously used synagogue in the British Commonwealth.

BY DAVID B. BROOKS

There are not many Jewish sites in all of India, but one of the best, if not the best, is found in the city of Kochi (formerly called Cochin) in the state of Kerala. Kochi offers one of India's best ports on the Arabian Sea, and was the site of the first English settlement in India. Perhaps it is not surprising that, as one of the main sources for spices and tropical fruits across the then known world, Jewish merchants would have found their way to Kochi by sometime in the seventh or eighth centuries CE. Stories place Jews there in the first century as the Romans dispersed Jerusalem's Jews after destruction of the Second Temple.

Most evidence indicates that Kochi had a nascent Jewish community as

early as the fourth century CE, and that the community had grown to several thousand people with seven synagogues by the middle ages. Most of them were located in the Mattancherry district of the city, close to the port and not far from the British palace and fort. Alas, only the Paradesi Synagogue, which was built in 1586 on a site that formerly held a synagogue built nearly 250 years earlier, remains open today. However, with Kochi's Jewish population today reduced to a few dozen individuals, services are now held only on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. Even so, it does remain the oldest continuously used synagogue in the British Commonwealth of Nations. At other times, it is one of Kochi's premier tourist attractions.

Toby and I visited the old Jewish area of Kochi (labelled "Jewtown" today, as it



The interior of the Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi, India.

used to be according to old records) and the Paradesi Synagogue in November of 2018. *Paradesi* means "foreigner," so designated to distinguish these Sephardic Jews from other Jews in more northerly India. It was as much a sad as a happy visit for us. Perhaps the happiest point was learning that the Jewish community

co-existed in a pleasant if competitive relationships with local Dutch, Portuguese, and British trading communities. While there must have been tensions from time to time – just think of a large cargo ship docking on Shabbat – the limited historical records of the day

See **Paradesi** on page 9



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**JNF visits with schools and educators
OJCS students dress down to donate**

JNF Ottawa was delighted to have been invited to accept the proceeds for the OJCS students' January campaign which will be allocated to the Tu Bishvat campaign. Abby, the OJCS Knesset's Communications Representative said, "Each month OJCS chooses a different charity to give tzedakah to on the last Friday of the month for our Dress Down Day. For the month of January, the OJCS Knesset chose JNF for our cause to support. On Wednesday, February 6, Lynda Taller-Wakter joined us for our Rosh Chodesh assembly to explain the important work of JNF and the cause we were supporting. Members of OJCS Knesset presented Lynda with our Dress Down Day funds from January."



(From left) Ben L.- Assembly MC; Daniel- President; Abby- Communications; Shylee- Grade 4 Class Rep; Adam- Grade 4 Class Rep.

Community educators meet with JNF shlichah

JNF Canada Education Emissary Yifat Bear Millar met with many of Ottawa's educators and shinshinim in February. JNF offers materials and activities in both English and Hebrew as a complimentary service to supplement or complement Israel education in schools, synagogues and camps. One of the programs, a movie called "Sustainable Nation," was presented to students at Torah Academy. Yifat holds the rank of Captain (Reserves) in the Israel Defense Forces. She has a master's degree in education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a bachelor's degree in social work from Haifa University, and a teacher's certificate. She is a former community emissary to South Bend, Indiana and prior to her role at JNF, she was the Jewish Agency's communities coordinator, and was responsible for overseeing all of the community and youth emissaries. After Yifat presented the "Sustainable Nation" video to Grade 3 and 4 students at Torah Day School, Principal Rabbi Durden helped to facilitate the lessons learned from the movie.

JNF Golden Book Inscription

In memory of Dr. Sydney Kronick, by David and Heather Goldfarb.

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Paradesi: Services still held on Shabbat, holidays

Continued from page 8

make no reference to anti-Semitism.

Apart from the synagogue itself, about all that one finds today of the old Jewish quarter is a plethora of shops selling everything from Stars of David and menorahs to Hindu and Buddhist religious materials, and, T-shirts, post cards, and Indian saris, all in the same shops.

The synagogue itself is a relatively small but well-built white two-story building near the end of a typically narrow street, bordered by tourist shops. The city has placed signs directing the visitor to the synagogue at corners of nearby main roads. The building consists of an anteroom with a gabbai to keep tourists in order and the sanctuary itself with a surprisingly large women's gallery, including its own bimah, upstairs.

The visit starts with a surprise. Immediately upon arrival, the gabbai asks everyone to take off shoes. For most tourists, who have likely spent the previous week or so visiting Hindu or Buddhist temples, where

To the surprise of most North American tourists, the bimah appears in the middle of the sanctuary rather than at end of the room, and therefore lacks any apparent connection to the Aron HaKodesh on the eastern wall.

removal of shoes is de rigeur, this, no doubt, just seems to be local practice. But that is not at all the issue. Rather, the gabbai's request is intended to help preserve the beautiful blue willow Chinese porcelain tiles that cover the floor. Even they come with a bit of a mystery. Though dating from the 1800s, well after construction of the synagogue, information at the shul says that the tiles were a gift from the Dutch community to the Jewish community. However, some websites suggest they were brought to Kochi by a Jewish merchant, or by convincing some local rajah that the tiles were made with cow's blood, which made them repugnant to Hindus.

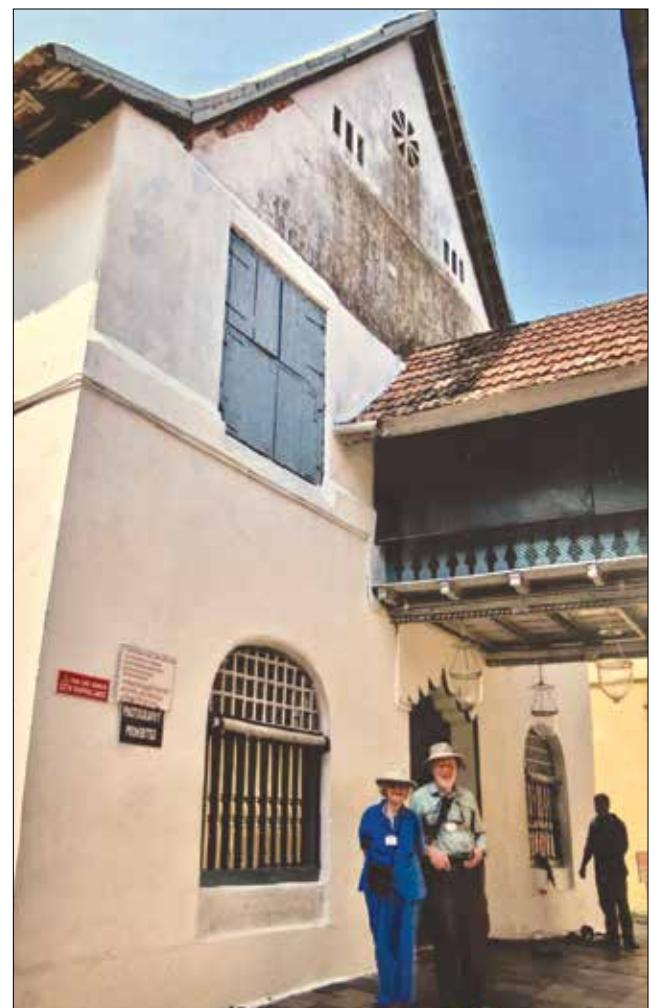
The next thing a visitor will note inside the sanctuary is the ceiling, which is covered, wall-to-wall, with crystal chandeliers. For this, we found no explanation. It seems that they were just added over time. Clearly, one is the eternal light, but it is barely visible among the others. The lighting is now all electrified, but it looks as if it may have originally held candles.

To the surprise of most North American tourists, the bimah appears in the middle of the sanctuary rather than at end of the room, and therefore lacks any apparent connection to the Aron HaKodesh on the eastern wall, which also serves to conceal all of the synagogue's real treasures.

That observation gets us to the saddest part of our visit. There is next to no explanation for non-Jews,



The entrance to the "Jewtown" neighbourhood in Kochi, India.



Toby and David Brooks in front of the Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi, India.

who surely make up the great bulk of tourists, about a Jewish service nor about objects found in the sanctuary. Neither is there any translation of the numerous Hebrew phrases that decorate the sanctuary. A short brochure is available on the history of the Jewish community in Kerala, as are some postcards of the interior of the synagogue, where photographs are forbidden.

This gap led to an amusing experience as Toby and I appeared to be the only Jews in the synagogue at the time of our visit, and we started to respond to questions from our own tour-mates when we both found ourselves at the centre of a cluster of tourists asking questions. I have no doubt that we could have stayed much longer than we did, but we began to impinge on the gabbai's two-hour closing time for lunch.

Despite the numerous disappointments, it was thrilling to visit the Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi. It is listed in all the guidebooks about the city, and it forms an important part of the history of Jews in India. The visit remains among the most vibrant memories of our trip, and of our brief stint as tour guides.

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An inside view of history, current issues by former Israeli prime minister

DAVID ROYTENBERG
BOOK REVIEW

My Country, My Life: Fighting for Israel, Searching for Peace

By Ehud Barak
St. Martin's Press
496 pages

Ehud Barak's memoir, *My Country, My Life: Fighting for Israel, Searching for Peace*, is an interesting and well written account of the life of one of the central figures of Israel's history, from the early years of the State to the present day. Barak shows us the kind of man he was and how those qualities were well suited to the weighty responsibilities he took on. Where he is critical of the actions of others, he often makes a good case, and his views are of interest even where they are not necessarily convincing.

Born in 1942, Ehud Barak grew up with the State of Israel. Growing up on a kibbutz, he exhibited a streak of independence which sometimes crossed the line into delinquency. An insistence on following his own course developed into tough mindedness and self confidence, which would prove valuable as he took on increasing responsibility in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), even as it sometimes got him into trouble.

During his long military career, Barak found himself at the centre of important events in the history of the State and dealing with the leading political and military figures of the era. Readers of *My Country, My Life* get a fascinating first-hand account of these events – an account which deepens one's understanding of how Israel became the military power it is today. We also learn about some of the key political and military decisions of the 1990s and 2000s that culminated in Israel's present stalemate with the Palestinians.

The early chapters describe Barak's youth and his experience as one of the founding members of the *Sayeret Matkal*, Israel's Special Forces. Created in response to an incident in the early 1960s when Israel found itself unaware of Egyptian force movements in the Sinai, we follow the development of the *Sayeret* from its initial role covertly gathering intelligence behind enemy

lines, into the highly capable counter-terrorism unit that it later became. Rising eventually to command of the unit, Barak helped to develop the strategies behind successful raids to free hostages from Beirut to Entebbe.

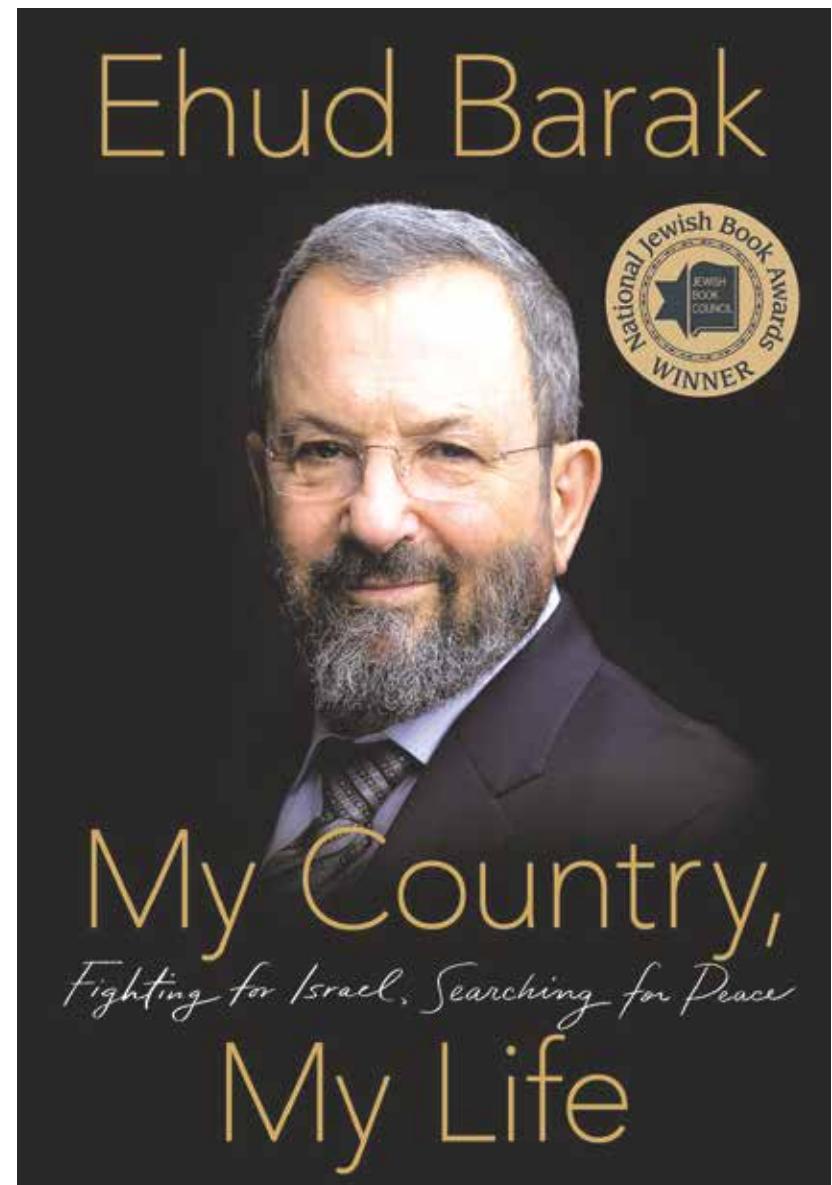
Barak's account of Israel's wars comes with insight into the IDF leadership's strategic thinking in advance of victory in the Six-Day War of 1967 and the surprise attack on Yom Kippur in 1973. We get to know the key decision makers and see the political consequences of the intelligence failures in the summer and fall of 1973. His analysis of the war against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon in the 1980s presents a highly critical assessment of the strategy pursued by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon. In his discussion of the motives of his political adversaries, his arguments are, perhaps, a bit less persuasive, but the account of the events in Lebanon is crucial to understanding Barak's own thinking when he rose to positions of senior leadership later.

In 1991, Barak became chief of staff of the IDF, appointed to the role by prime minister Yitzhak Shamir. Shamir was succeeded within a year by Yitzhak Rabin and the period of the Oslo agreements. In his account of the Oslo process, which he generally supported, Barak criticizes the extent to which Israel made its territorial concessions early in the process, without ensuring a commensurate Palestinian willingness to compromise on the issues that were critical to Israel.

The later chapters detail Barak's experience in politics, rising to become prime minister in 1999, and the critical summit in 2000, with U.S. president Bill Clinton and PLO leader Yasser Arafat at which he tried and failed to conclude a final agreement with the Palestinians. Barak's day-by-day account of his dealings with Clinton and Arafat are the highlight of the book.

The final chapters of *My Country, My Life* describe the events of the second intifada, Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, and Barak's views of the best strategy for ensuring Israel's security in the absence of a Palestinian interlocutor interested in peace.

My Country, My Life: Fighting for Israel, Searching for Peace is an important book for anyone wanting to understand Israel's modern history and the issues facing the Jewish state in our day.



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Myles Taller Mazel Tov and best wishes on your 85th Birthday by Roz, Jodi, Julia, Selina and Louis, Alexa and Eriana

Toby and Joel Yan Family Fund

In Memory of:

Belle Gitterman by Toby and Joel Yan

Carole and Norman Zagerman Family Fund

In Honour of:

Carole Zagerman Mazel Tov and best wishes on your special Birthday by Barbara and Steve Levinson

Feeding Program

In Memory of:

Sydney Kronick by Harriet and Irving Slone, Donna and Eric Levin

Bryna Monson by Barbara and Steve Levinson
Armin Klein by Michael Wexler and Muriel Korngold Wexler

In Honour of:

Joy and Seymour Mender Mazel Tov on the birth of your twin grandchildren by Barbara and Steve Levinson

Liz Vered Mazel Tov on the birth of your granddaughter by Barbara and Steve Levinson

Carol and Stu Levine Wishing you a belated Happy Anniversary and a Happy Birthday to Stu by Donna and Eric Levin

Ruth Aaron Happy 90th Birthday by Joy, Michael, Josh and Rachel

Recreation Program

In Memory of:

Sydney Kronick by Esther and David Kwavnick

Bryna Monson by Debra and Gary Viner and Family

In Honour of:

Arlene Rosenbloom and Mark Fraser Mazel Tov on the birth of your grandson by Debra and Gary Viner and Family

Liz Vered Mazel Tov on becoming a grandmother by Marty Saslove

In Memory of:

Belle Gitterman by the residents, staff and Boards of the Lodge and LTC Foundation, Dan and Cathy Sigler, Morris Shapiro

Sydney Kronick by Mark and Nina Dover

Bryna Monson by the residents, staff and

Boards of the Lodge and LTC Foundation, Evelyn Monson

Annette Millstone by Jeff and Felice Pleet

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Participation of women critical, Ottawa rebbetzin tells Modern Orthodox conference

BY JOSHUA STEINREICH
FOR OHR TORAH STONE

CANCUN, Mexico – Ohr Torah Stone’s Beren-Amiel and Straus-Amiel emissary training programs brought together 42 of their North, Central and South American emissaries to Cancun, Mexico in February to address ways to tackle critical issues affecting mainly smaller Diaspora Jewish communities. There was unanimity among the group that the most significant issue they face in their communities are conversion, rampant assimilation, and how to educate a generation of Jews with virtually no connection to Judaism.

Among the participants were Rabbi Idan Scher and Rebbetzin Shifra Scher of Congregation Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa.

Rebbetzin Shifra Scher told the group that a critical part of keeping members of the 325-family Congregation Machzikei Hadas engaged is programming focused on finding significant roles for women in synagogue and communal life.

“Women need to feel they can contribute in a significant way. If not, we will lose them and most likely their families as well,” she said. “People of all levels of observance need to feel close to the shul because it is the centre of the community for Jews in smaller communities. We must engage all elements of our community so they feel close.”

Other participants in the three-day conference hailed from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Guatemala, Colombia, Panama, El Salvador and Ecuador. They shared best practices and discussed both the communal and personal challenges they face in their daily work.

“This is the best of times in that Jews are seeking spirituality, yet the worst of times because there is more assimilation in these communities than we have ever seen,” said Ohr Torah Stone President and Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Kenneth Brander. “The rabbis and rabbanits, teachers and educators in this room are on the front lines of the battle for Jew-



Rebbetzin Shifra Scher (centre) addresses participants at the Ohr Torah Stone conference in Cancun Mexico while her husband, Rabbi Idan Scher, spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, leans in.

ish souls. They are a Modern Orthodox army giving their lives to change the Jewish world. There is a new energy out in the field, and it is a direct result of the rabbis who’ve studied at our Straus-Amiel, and educators who’ve trained at our Beren-Amiel training programs.”

Conference participants attended sessions focusing on why Jews assimilate, how to understand the assimilated and reach them, how to cultivate a curiosity for Torah learning in children and adults, how to set rules for a community or shul for congregants who are not yet observant, the rabbinate and politics (the pros and cons of involvement in community and national politics), how to bring Jews closer in a small community, working alongside a multitude of outreach organizations and how to keep in touch with people who only come to synagogue once a year.

“The greatest challenge these men and women face is how to transmit Judaism to people with no connection. We work with these exceptional rabbis and educators to provide them with

the training, development and support to be successful in their communities,” said Rabbi Eliyahu Birnbaum, director of the Straus-Amiel and Beren-Amiel programs. “But an equally important part of our job is to support these families so they can stay in their communities for longer periods of time and continue to make a difference in the lives of Jews everywhere. Many of these communities would not have Modern Orthodox synagogues and educators, were it not for our emissaries’ work.”

The Straus-Amiel rabbinical emissary training program and the Beren-Amiel educational emissary training programs are committed to the spiritual continuity of the Jewish people everywhere, training rabbis and educators to effectively strengthen Jewish identity and existence in more than 160 communities across the Diaspora. Participants enroll in this program to acquire the specific tools which will enable them to most effectively awaken in their future students a knowledge and love of their heritage, to inspire in their adoptive com-

munities an enthusiasm for and pride in being Jewish, to spread the message of unity, continuity and social justice and to promote the continuity of a Judaism which is warm, welcoming and profoundly relevant to daily life. Upon completing the program, participants receive a certificate as well as placement in a Diaspora community, followed by ongoing support and training via email, newsletters, phone calls, visits, regional seminars and international conferences, for as long as they remain in the field.

Founded in 1983, Ohr Torah Stone is a Modern Orthodox network of 27 institutions which are transforming Jewish life, learning and leadership worldwide. The network champions academic excellence and creative scholarship infused with intellectual openness and a deep sensitivity to contemporary concerns. It is creating the next generation of Modern Orthodox leaders and training them on how to deal with cutting edge issues that impact the global Jewish community. For more information, visit <https://ots.org.il/>.

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Mah jongg isn't just a game. It's a way of life.

BY JESSICA TURNOFF FERRARI

For Jewish women of a certain age, playing mah jongg is as inevitable as eating Chinese food on Christmas or complaining that you're hungry on Yom Kippur.

The sounds of thick tiles clinking and calls of “five crack,” “two bam,” and “six dot” are ubiquitous at sisterhood events and assisted living facilities around my hometown of Boca Raton, Florida.

For many of us, the memory of these sounds transport us to our childhood, when it was Mom's or Bubbe's turn to host the game – and that meant excellent snacks. Some of my fellow players recall fondly the sounds of mothers and grandmothers playing as they drifted off to sleep – the tinkling of the tiles, the voices, the laughter.

My introduction to mah jongg came later in life, however. The women in my family did not play “mahj,” as so many Jewish-American players nicknamed the game. My grandmother, for one, viewed mah jongg as a lesser pastime, designed for those who couldn't handle “real” games like bridge or canasta. I first encountered a mah jongg set when my kids were attending Jewish preschool. The tiles were both exotic and comforting, familiar and foreign.

A Chinese pastime, mah jongg became a popular American parlour game in the 1920s. So many people were playing and creating unique table rules that it became difficult to play with others. According to Melissa Martens of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, in 1937, 200 women – all Jewish! – gathered to systematize the rules of the game, and the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) was born. The Americanized version differs from its Chinese forebears in a few ways, namely that each year, the NMJL issues new score-cards, thus new winning combinations. (There's also the unique spelling of the game – why there are two g's in the American version is anyone's guess.)

We think of mah jongg players as women over 60. So as a mother of grade-school kids, when people learn that I play mah jongg, their most common reaction is, “Aren't you kinda young for that?” Everything old is new again, as we were so presciently reminded by Peter Allen in “All That Jazz.” Whether we are talking about vinyl, flannel, round glasses or mah jongg, the biggest surprise is that we didn't expect it.

Here's how it happened: Four years ago, the director of my daughter's preschool asked me to lead a Torah study for parents after drop-off. Now I'm all for Torah study, but as parents of toddlers, my friends were more interested in exercising, working and going to the bathroom alone. They weren't particularly keen on studying Torah, but when



Camaraderie, the challenge, the whimsy of the tiles, and the snacks, help keep mah jongg players engaged.

SCOTT SCHILLER/FUCKR

one friend suggested we spend a precious preschool morning learning mah jongg, socializing and drinking mimosas, my fellow parents were all in.

The director was horrified. I believe her exact words were, “What is this, 1950?!” But the preschool staff made beautiful fliers for “Mah jongg and mimosas” and we played nearly every two weeks for the rest of the preschool years. And now that our children are in Grade 1, we continue to play.

We keep coming back for the camaraderie and the challenge, the whimsy of the tiles and, for some, the snacks. The game relies on a healthy balance of skill and luck; every game is different; and unlike a book club, there is no homework. Meeting for drinks or coffee doesn't quite create the same kind of shared mission and excitement. Through mah jongg I have reconnected with childhood friends who play and table conversations can range from our teenage exploits way back when to more recent health challenges.

Much like life itself, mah jongg can be frivolous or serious, depending on your circumstances and fellow players. Beneath the sparkly silver tiles of my set there are dragons to be slayed and some serious life lessons to be learned.

Here are five things I've learned by playing mahj.

1. IT'S JUST A TILE.

My friend Emily taught our group to play four years ago, and I can still hear her saying “It's just a tile.” When she first dropped this wisdom, it was as if the Mona Lisa had found her voice and spoken. If I have a tile in my hand, but I don't know what it is or how to use

it, then I probably don't need it. Long before Marie Kondo implored us to discover whether or not our possessions “spark joy,” Emily taught me that “it's just a tile,” and if it doesn't do anything for me, I can probably toss it.

2. COMMIT. YOU CAN MAKE CHANGES LATER IF NECESSARY.

Deciding which of the 50 or so hands to pursue will shape the game in profound ways – not unlike deciding who to marry. This decision will determine how you can pursue your goals, though luck does play a part, too. Once you have a hand to play, you have a clear path forward. There will be times when you carry out your mission as planned and you win. You will be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment, admiration from your friends and, in some games, cold, hard cash (OK, OK, quarters).

But there are other times when your mission, due to circumstances beyond your control, becomes impossible. That's when a resilient player might change course – as we see middle-aged people divorcing and remarrying, and reinventing themselves when things don't go as planned. So in mah jongg, as in life, do this: Commit. Revise. Recommit, and see No. 3 below.

3. PLAY THE HAND YOU'RE DEALT.

One pretty tile does not make a winning hand, just as one latent ability does not make a successful career. Maybe you really enjoyed theatre in school, but that does not mean you should head straight to Broadway. Take stock of what you have and how it fits together to create some synergy. Squaring up the hand you wanted to play vs. the hand you have

can take some doing, both in mah jongg and in life, but it's always important to work with what you've got.

4. SPREAD THE LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE.

Teaching others the tips and tricks you've picked up along the way will ultimately be an advantage to you and to others. Sure, if all your fellow players can predict your moves, you might not be able to win by bluffing, but you will have more people to play with. There will be more people hosting, teaching and playing, and you will be adding more joy and connection to your circle. Same goes for any other hobbies or gifts you may have – pass them on! A rising tide, as they say, lifts all boats.

5. MAKE IT A MITZVAH.

If you're lucky, you have people in your circle like my friend Jennie, who takes what she loves to the next level. After realizing that it would be so much easier for a bunch of tired moms to play in pajamas, for example, she planned a pajama game night and turned it into a charity event. Late last year, Pajama Game Night took place at a beautiful country club with some 200 players to benefit Sweet Dream Makers, a local charity. Due to her efforts (and mah jongg), we helped provide more than 50 beds for needy families in our community. Leave it to Jewish women to take up a popular Chinese game and use it to help make the world a better place. You might think this is a game, but we're not just playing around – mah jongg is a way of life.

This article originally appeared on Kveller.



Otzma Yehudit party leaders Michael Ben-Ari (left) and Baruch Marzel in 2012.

Netanyahu brokered deal with political heirs of Meir Kahane. Here's why, and why it matters.

BY MARCY OSTER

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israel would never have a government without political horse-trading. Governments form when parties win enough seats in the Knesset and cobble together enough partners to form a ruling, majority coalition.

But one trade is raising eyebrows and even alarm, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being seen as brokering a marriage of convenience between an extremist right-wing party, Otzma Yehudit, and a more moderate right-wing party, Jewish Home.

Otzma Yehudit, which means “Jewish power,” is the spiritual godchild of Rabbi Meir Kahane’s Kach party, which was banned from the Knesset under a Basic Law outlawing incitement to violence and later exiled entirely in Israel. Kahane was the American immigrant founder of the militant Jewish Defense League, who, before his assassination in 1990, promoted the immediate annexation of disputed territories and the expulsion of Arabs from the West Bank.

WHAT WAS NETANYAHU’S ROLE?

On February 20, Netanyahu cancelled a planned meeting in Moscow with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for, according to Russian media, “Israeli internal political reasons.”

Hours later Otzma Yehudit accepted a compromise offer and entered into its unity pact with Jewish Home.

Netanyahu needs a solid bloc of right-wing parties to form a government following the April 9 election. If the two parties had run separately, there is a chance that neither would have had enough votes (3.25 per cent of those voting) to enter the Knesset, hampering Netanyahu’s ability to assemble a majority.

To sweeten the pot, Netanyahu offered the joint list of Jewish Home-Otzma Yehudit two cabinet seats, as well as a spot on the Likud candidates list.

WHAT IS OTZMA YEHUDIT?

Like its Kahanist ancestors, the party calls for a greater Israel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the annexation of the West Bank. It calls for unrestrained settlement building and the resettlement of Palestinians and Arab Israelis in Arab countries. It wants to restore Israeli sovereignty to the Temple Mount and cancel the Oslo Accords.

Party head Michael Ben-Ari has called Kahane his rabbi and his teacher. Other leaders include former Kahane aide Baruch Marzel, a resident of Hebron who holds a party every year at the grave of Baruch Goldstein, who in 1994 massacred 29 Palestinians at the Cave of the Patriarchs; Rabbi Bentzion Gopstein, who runs Lehava, a group that opposes marriages between Jews and non-Jews; and Itamar Ben Gvir, an attorney who defends right-wing activists accused of Jewish terrorism.

DO ANY MEMBERS OF OTZMA YEHUDIT HAVE A SHOT OF BEING ELECTED TO THE PARLIAMENT?

The fifth slot on the combined party list is reported to be reserved for Ben-Ari. So maybe.

HOW ARE PEOPLE RESPONDING?

Mideast watchers outside of Israel are appalled.

“I grant that Otzma will have little to no power in an Israeli govt,” tweeted Michael Koplow, policy director of the Israel Policy Forum. “Explain to me how associating with [Otzma Yehudit] is any different than politicians who are willing to cavort with Farrakhan, and why anyone who rightly goes nuts over the latter should do anything different with the former.”

Lahav Harkov, The Jerusalem Post’s senior contributing editor, urged restraint. The move might mean “a Knesset with one person from Otzma in it whose chances of imposing a theocracy and deporting most or all Arabs is nil. This is purely symbolic,” she tweeted. “Let’s not kid ourselves that the whole Knesset is turning into Kahane now.”



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plus a fully finished lower level. Features 2 ensuite bathrooms, a renovated kitchen, renovated bathrooms & so much more! Professionally landscaped with a 16' x 32' inground pool! July / TBA possession

22Northgate.com

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30 day / TBA poss. **12Saddlebrook.com**

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Begin with an injury-preventing warm-up of five to 10 minutes. You can do some dynamic stretching such as swinging your arms, shrugging your shoulders and swinging your legs; or you can do light exercise such as walking or jogging on the spot. The warm-up should not be intense and should slightly elevate your heart rate. Once you're warmed up, you can begin.

Squats will work many muscles including your glutes (buttocks), quadriceps and hamstrings (front and back of thighs). It's important to get the form right. Place your feet shoulder-width apart and lower your buttocks as if you're sitting down on a chair. Your knees should be above your ankles and bent to 90 degrees. Most of your weight should be supported by your heels. You may find it helpful to slightly lift your toes. If you're unable to get down into a well-formed squat, you can practice on a chair. Lower yourself into the squatting position just until your glutes barely touch the seat, then immediately use the strength in your lower body to push yourself back up into standing position. You can keep your arms straight out in



Whether you're a beginner or an athlete, these traditional exercises will challenge you and develop your muscles.

front to help with balance.

Stationary lunges are another exercise that strengthen many muscle groups in your lower body including glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves. Abs and back muscles will also be activated as they stabilize and balance your body. Place your right foot in front and take a big step back with your left foot. Check your form. Your feet should be aligned and only the front part of your left foot should touch the floor, with your back heel elevated. Your body should face forward and chest high. To lunge, bend your right knee to 90 degrees. Your back leg will automatically go downwards. See how close to the floor you can lower your back knee. Next, straighten the right knee to get back into the starting position. Perform a set then switch leg positions. Perform a total of two sets per side.

Push-ups strengthen your upper body including del-

toids (shoulders), triceps, pecs (chest) and even back and abdominal muscles. You can perform military-style push-ups with your legs fully extended. If you're not yet strong enough to do that, you can do push-ups on your knees. Check your form. Start with your body on the floor facing down with your hands under your shoulders. If you're doing push-ups on your knees, make sure your knees are far back so you're pushing up your body weight and not just lifting your rear end. Push up until your arms are straight then bend your elbows until your nose almost touches the floor. See how many you can do with correct form.

Planks are an effective exercise for your abdominal muscles as well as your lower back and glutes. Planks are much safer for your spine than sit-ups or crunches. Begin on the floor facing downwards. Bear your weight on your forearms and toes. Elbows should be on the floor under your shoulders. The rest of your body should be lifted off the floor and in a straight line with your spine, including your neck, in its natural, neutral position. If your stomach or hips start to drop, realign yourself or end the plank. Make sure your rear end is not sticking up. If you're not yet strong enough to hold a plank position, you can do it on your knees.

The side-plank is a bonus exercises that will target your obliques (the abdominal muscles on your sides). Hold the plank with your body facing a wall and one forearm on the floor. Feet can be stacked or both feet on the floor. Try a plank on each side.

Once you've completed two sets of eight to 15 repetitions for each exercise, stretch your tired muscles. Start-to-finish including the warm-up and stretching should take approximately 30 minutes.

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PURIM CARNIVAL

SUNDAY, MARCH 17
10 am to 12 pm • \$5 per child

Dress up in your favourite costume and head to the SJCC gymnasium for fun blow-ups, games, crafts and Purim treats.

Purim Storytime in the library
10:30 am - 11:30 am
Free
Children must be accompanied by an adult

Contact Gail Lief (613) 798-9818 ext. 303, glieff@jccottawa.com

WHAT'S GOING ON | March 4 to 17, 2019

FOR MORE CALENDAR LISTINGS, INCLUDING ONGOING EVENTS, VISIT WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

Crime & Consequence - Jewish Wisdom on Criminal Justice

7 - 8:30 pm. Tuesdays until March 12, 2019
Ottawa Torah Centre Chabad
111 Lamplighters Drive
Contact: Rabbi Blum, rabbi@theotc.org
Cost: \$ 90. A six-week course that explores 3000 years of Jewish wisdom in criminal justice. This course will challenge our thinking, help us discover and recover the humanity within criminals, question practices that seem unethical and unfair, and explore ways to prevent crime from ever taking place.

Kol Miriam Choir

7:30 - 9 pm. Tuesdays until June 4, 2019
Hillel Lodge, 10 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
Contact: Estelle Melzer
estelle.melzer@gmail.com
A group of female voices singing spiritual, joyful Jewish music for women by women. No musical experience required. Everyone welcome. Led by new director Aura Giles.

OTTAWA ISRAELI DANCE 2018-2019

6:30 - 10 pm, Tuesdays until June 25, 2019
Ottawa Jewish Community School gym
31 Nadolny Sachs Pvt.
Contact: Judy
judy@ottawaisraelidance.ca
Contemporary Israeli dances. Old favourites. Great music. Exercise. All in a fun and friendly atmosphere.

Guf Va'Nefesh - Body-Mind-Spirit Integration Classes

7:30 - 9 pm, first Wednesdays of the month until June 5, 2019,
Or Haneshamah, 30 Cleary Ave., Rm 5.
Contact: Tana Saler
tana.saler@rogers.com
Guf Va'Nefesh means Body and Mind

(Soul). Simply expressed, your mind affects your body and your body state affects your state of mind. Participants engage in gentle movement, verbal and non-verbal interaction, conscious breathing styles and visualization. Class leader Tana Saler, a member of Or Haneshamah, brings Jewish concepts to an embodied experience, and their applications to real life.

MONDAY, MARCH 4

Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Community Consultation

7:30 - 9:30 pm
Contact: Sarah Beutel
sbeutel@jewishottawa.com
Jewish Federation of Ottawa wants to hear from you! The strategic plan will guide the community and our organization for the next five years, and your input would be greatly appreciated.
RSVP: Cibeles Rosa crosa@jewishottawa.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Populism, Anti-Semitism and the Rise of Authoritarianism in Eastern Europe

7:30 - 9 pm
Contact: Roslyn Wollock
rwollock@jccottawa.com
Cost: \$5. Professor Grabowski will speak on the rise of authoritarianism and anti-Semitism in Europe.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Classic Israeli Film Series

6:40 - 8:40 pm
Contact: Ella Dagan, edagan@jccottawa.com
A short talk by Israeli cultural attache to Canada, Itay Tavor, followed by the film "White Panther." Sponsor: Vered Israel Cultural and Educational Program, Soloway Jewish Community Centre, The Embassy of Israel, CICF

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Family Service at KBI

10:30 - 11:30 pm, Kehillat Beth Israel Congregation
Contact: Deborah Zuker
rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com
A new family service! Parents and kids will share prayers for Shabbat, read from the Torah and learn lessons from the weekly parsha. The one-hour service will be interactive and inclusive, with frequent explanations and all texts available in transliteration. Everyone is welcome to stay for Kiddush Lunch with the congregation following services.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

Malca Pass Library Book Discussion Group

7:30 - 9 pm, Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave.
Contact: Maureen Kaell
mkaell@rogers.com
Book review and discussion.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Teddy Bear Shabbat - Costume Party

5:30 - 7:30 pm, Kehillat Beth Israel Congregation, 1400 Coldrey Ave.
Contact: Deborah Zuker
rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com
Tots and their teddy bear friends (and their parents/caregivers) are invited to a special Teddy Bear Shabbat for Purim! Dress in your favourite costume and join us for a kid-friendly dinner, tot-style service, stories, and dessert! Free and open to the community; sponsorships welcome.

CSN : Shabbat 150

6 - 9 pm, University of Ottawa
55 Laurier Av., Suite 4101

Contact: Yocheved and Rabbi Chaim Boyarsky, rabbichaimb@gmail.com
The largest Shabbat dinner at the University of Ottawa and Carleton! Matzah ball soup, chicken, and dessert.
Sponsor: Rohr Chabad Student Network of Ottawa

Friday Night Dinner with Rabbi Haskel Lookstein

6:15 - 10:15 pm, Congregation Machzikei Hadas, 2310 Virginia Dr.
Contact: office@cmhottawa.com
Register: <http://cmhottawa.com>
Rabbi Lookstein will deliver his talk "Making Halakhic decisions in a complicated world," about the Jewish conversion of Ivanka Trump. See website for prices. Babysitting available during the speaker. Followed by Shabbat Lunch on Saturday.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Community Wide Purim Carnival

10 am - 12 pm
Contact: Gail Lieff
glieff@jccottawa.com
Cost: \$5 per child.
Purim Carnival. Games, Crafts, giant inflatables, hamentashen and juice
Fun for the whole family.

CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE

MARCH 8	5:41 PM
MARCH 15	6:51 PM
MARCH 22	7:00 PM
MARCH 29	7:09 PM

BULLETIN DEADLINES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13	FOR APRIL 1
MONDAY, MARCH 25*	FOR APRIL 15
MONDAY, APRIL 15	FOR MAY 6
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8	FOR MAY 27

*Community-wide Passover issue

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:

Estelle Backman

Joanne Frankel

Pauline Hochberg

Gusztav Nador

Elie Paroli

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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