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# OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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## Meet Jon Mitzmacher, incoming head of school at OJCS

In a guest column in the April 3 issue, **Aaron Smith**, board chair of the **Ottawa Jewish Community School**, announced **Jon Mitzmacher** would become head of school at OJCS. The accomplished educator spoke with the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin during a visit to the city in advance of his move here this coming summer. **Louise Rachlis** reports.

**J**on Mitzmacher, the incoming head of the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS), is a proven leader in Jewish education whose track record includes being head of two successful Jewish day schools in the United States – one of which he built from scratch.

Mitzmacher is currently vice-president of innovation at Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools, the umbrella organization for Jewish day schools in North America – including OJCS – where he has been working with day schools all over North America to establish best and innovative practices to ensure educational excellence, financial vitality and community support for Jewish education.

“Jon is a warm and approachable leader,” said OJCS Board President Aaron Smith. “He will be a great asset internally for our teaching faculty and is genuinely interested in getting to know every family

in Ottawa to let them know about the benefit of a Jewish day school education.”

“I’m pleased to be coming into a school with a rich tradition of excellence,” said Mitzmacher, 44, who spoke with the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin during a visit to the city, April 4, in advance of his move here. “We want to build on that strong foundation and guide the school to its next chapter of growth and excitement. ... I want it to be filled with passion and learning and enthusiasm.”

Mitzmacher, who holds a doctorate in Jewish education from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, has signed a five-year contract with OJCS and will begin work as head of school on July 3.

Mitzmacher said his family – wife Jaimee and daughters Maytal, age nine, and Eliana, 11 – are looking forward to the move to Ottawa this summer. Maytal and Eliana will be students at OJCS beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.

“We’re looking at this as an international adventure for us,” he said. “We are excited to be active members of this vibrant community. The decision to come to here was not just about what makes sense for my career, but what’s right for our family.”

Mitzmacher grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and did his undergraduate work at University of California, Berkeley.

“I moved to Los Angeles and got my next round of degrees at American Jewish University: a master’s in Jewish education and an MBA.”

Mitzmacher began his career in Jewish education at the Bureau of Jewish Education for Greater Los Angeles, where he was educational director the Youth Programs Department for three years.

He then served as education director at the Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation, a Conservative synagogue on Long Island, New York, before moving to Manhattan where he started working toward his doctorate at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

After completing his doctoral course work and comprehensive exams, Mitzmacher moved to Las Vegas and spent five years as the founding head of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Las Vegas.

“We started with five kids, and five years later had 85 children and a kindergarten-to-Grade 5 program,” he said. “Founding a Jewish day school from scratch was quite a learning experience.



Jon Mitzmacher says his family is excited and looking forward to becoming active members of Ottawa’s Jewish community.

I’m proud that the school has done so well.”

From there, he went to Jacksonville and became head of the Martin J. Gottlieb Day School, a preschool-through-Grade 8 school of about 200 students.

“In Jacksonville, we became known for being one of the leading 21st century learning schools,” he said.

After leading Jewish day schools in Las Vegas and Jacksonville, Mitzmacher became the creative director of the Schechter Day School Network – the umbrella organization for Jewish day schools in North America associated with the Conservative movement. When the Schechter Network merged with four other national and international Jewish educational organizations to form Prizmah, Mitzmacher became vice-president of innovation.

See Mitzmacher on page 3

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Aubrey Goldstein appeals for living liver donor > p. 3

Rabbi Yoey Shaps on growing up with JET > p. 12



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# Eric Vernon's Jeopardy! adventure

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

**E**ric Vernon's two-game run as a Jeopardy! champion ended April 3 in his third game on the classic TV game show.

A familiar figure in Ottawa's Jewish community, his first appearances on Jeopardy! aired March 30 and 31, and he won the two games – and more than \$50,000 US.

At 63, Vernon was “by far the oldest in the pool of contestants” when he achieved his lifelong dream of being a Jeopardy! contestant.

“The shining moment of my entire experience was at the end of the second game,” he recalled, “when the question for Final Jeopardy! was extremely difficult. I was the only one that got it right. I was in second place going into the final, but the only one who got my money out of it.”

It took him 20 of the 30 seconds allotted to work out his answer, and then he had to scramble to write it down before the Jeopardy! music stopped playing and the pen stopped working.

Originally from Toronto, Vernon has lived in Ottawa since 1982. Now retired, he was the long-time director of government relations for the Canadian Jewish Congress. His wife, Laura, teaches English as a second language at Algonquin College.

History was Vernon's major at the University of Toronto, along with political science, and he did his master's at the University of Waterloo. But being a trivia buff has been a longtime hobby.

“I also have a keen interest in word games and puzzles; that keeps the mind sharp,” he said.

Being on Jeopardy! was “something I'd wanted to do for decades,” said Vernon, who started watching the show as a teenager.

After doing an online quiz last August, he received an invitation to audition in New York City in October.

While there were 50 questions in the online quiz and 15 seconds for each question, at the audition he had just eight seconds for each question, he said.



Two-time Jeopardy! champion Eric Vernon (right) with “the host of Jeopardy! Alex Trebek.”

“You have to put the answer in the form of a question in the show, but in the quizzes you just write down the answer.”

The next activity at the audition was to play a mock game.

“We had the signalling device and played a typical game for five minutes, and they did a little interview with each of us after.”

A month later, he received the call to film the shows on December 13 and 14 in Los Angeles.

“They film the series at the Sony Picture Studios where “The Wizard of Oz” was filmed; it was a real Hollywood experience.”

Vernon said he didn't appreciate, until he was actually there, how stressful and nerve wracking being a Jeopardy! contestant would be.

“I knew this intuitively from watching for so long, but you have to have three or four things going for you to be successful: a broad base of knowledge that you can quickly recall; a little bit of luck; betting strategies [for Daily Doubles and Final Jeopardy!]; and, above, all you have to be lightning fast on the signalling device. There were several times when I knew the answer, but people signalled ahead of me.”

Clue: So far, the only Ottawa Jewish Bulletin contributing book reviewer to be a Jeopardy! champion.

Answer: Who is Eric Vernon?



**Canadian Jewish Experience:** Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the launch of the Canadian Jewish Experience (CJE) exhibit at 30 Metcalfe Street. (From left) National Capital Commission CEO Mark Kristmanson; Supreme Court Justice Michael J. Moldaver; Ottawa Police Services Chief Charles Bordeleau; Rabbi Reuven Bulka, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Machzikei Hadas; Catherine Bélanger, widow of the late Ottawa-Vanier MP Mauril Belanger; CJE Chair Tova Lynch; Jewish Federation of Ottawa Chair Linda Kerzner; and Cantor Daniel Benlolo of Kehilat Beth Israel. The exhibit is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm. Visit <http://cje2017.com/> for more information.

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# Aubrey Goldstein appeals for living liver donor to save his life

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

**A**pril is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness month, and, for Dr. Aubrey Goldstein, it's personal.

Almost 20 years after his first liver transplant, Goldstein needs a second liver transplant.

As past-president of the Canadian Transplant Association, Goldstein has worked tirelessly for many years on behalf of Canadians in need of transplants.

"Most people think of liver disease as alcohol-related, but that's not my case, or usually the case," said Goldstein, 63, who suffers from recurrent primary sclerosing cholangitis.

Leslie Kaufman, vice-president of corporate services at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, understands the position Goldstein is in as she suffered from an autoimmune disease called PBC (primary biliary cirrhosis or primary biliary cholangitis), which is marked by slow progressive destruction of the small bile ducts of the liver.

"Dr. Goldstein's liver is failing, but his MELD (Model for End-Stage Liver Disease) score is not high enough to

qualify him for the wait list for a deceased donor," said Kaufman. "I was in that exact situation in 2015, and was sent home from Toronto to wait for either a living donor to step forward or to become sick enough to be waitlisted. It's a terrible predicament."

Goldstein is feeling "tired and itchy," and waiting. However, "it's amazing," he said. "Many people have messaged me and are in the process of filling out the paperwork, the first step to becoming a donor."

Goldstein said his wife, Caroline Vanneste, and sister-in-law both donated kidneys three years ago."

In a recent Facebook post, Goldstein noted that the Toronto General Hospital told him his best chance of getting a liver was to ask friends and acquaintances to consider becoming living donors.

"This is a hard ask to do," he wrote. "But I'm posting this message because someone out there may be able to save my life ... At this time, they do more living donor surgeries than any other transplant centre in North America. But they have yet to do a second liver transplant living donor procedure. For the donor it is the same surgery as is used



"Someone out there may be able to save my life," says Aubrey Goldstein, who is in need of a second liver transplant.

## Mitzmacher: OJCS appoints proven leader in Jewish education

Continued from page 1

"Five national Jewish organizations coming together is no small feat," he said.

Jewish community leaders expressed excitement at the news that Mitzmacher will become head of school at OJCS.

"I congratulate the leadership of OJCS for hiring a first-rate educator. Jon has a deep understanding of Jewish education and knowledge of how to run an excellent school, coupled with energy and passion for Jewish life. I look forward to

working with Jon and am excited to begin this next chapter for OJCS and our community," said Jewish Federation of Ottawa President and CEO Andrea Freedman.

"We are so pleased to have such a highly accomplished day school professional join our school community," said Aaron Smith. "Jon brings a wealth of experience in modern educational approaches that will benefit both current and future students at OJCS."

now for first liver transplant. But for the recipient it takes twice as long for the operation."

For those considering being an organ donor, Goldstein advises visiting [www.uhn.ca/MOT](http://www.uhn.ca/MOT) which has a description of the Toronto General Hospital's organ donation program. There is a link on the page specific to becoming a living liver donor.

Consenting to be an organ donor after death is the only thing right now that will reduce wait times for transplants, "but courageous people willing to step forward to donate a kidney or a portion of their liver to an eligible recipient is a life-saving gesture as well," said Kaufman. "I ask for our community to once again consider the mitzvah of giving the gift of life to Aubrey by applying to be a living donor."

"Aubrey has been a true champion for the cause," said Rabbi Reuven Bulka,

rabbi emeritus of Congregation Machzikei Hadas, and chair of the board of the Trillium Gift of Life Network. "I am sorry to hear he is struggling."

Organ donation is "lifesaving at its best," said Rabbi Bulka. "There is no greater fulfilment than saving another person's life. Lifesaving is true Godliness. If we have the opportunity to do this, we should rush to embrace it."

Kaufman encourages community members to visit the Trillium Gift of Life website at [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca) to register to become an organ donor and has arranged with the local chapter, Eastern Ontario Gift of Life, to have representatives present to explain organ donation and register potential organ donors at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre on Wednesday, April 26. Their table will be set up in the Fitness Centre hallway from 9:30 to 11:30 am and in the main lobby from 3 to 5 pm.

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## JEWISH FEDERATION OF OTTAWA MEMBERS MEETING

Wednesday May 17 2017

7:00 pm

Soloway Jewish Community Centre  
The Joseph and Rose Ages Family Building

Meeting is open to the public.

Featuring a multifaith panel discussion  
on the Importance of Interfaith in Advocacy,  
a collaborative effort between the Jewish Federation  
of Ottawa and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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](http://jewishottawa.com) for full meeting agenda.

Information: contact Rachel Abenhaim  
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(From left) Pamela Cogan, Dr. Paul L Hacker, former senator Sharon Carstairs, Rabbi Rob Morais and Ottawa South MPP John Fraser gather at Temple Israel's forum on advanced care planning, April 2.

## Temple Israel launches Palliative Care Outreach Program

BY GLENN JOHNSON  
FOR TEMPLE ISRAEL

Temple Israel, on April 2, held a public forum on advanced care planning and announced the launch of its own volunteer-based Palliative Care Outreach Program.

The forum, called Living and Dying with Dignity, featured medical, political and community leaders who specialize in palliative care.

Retired senator Sharon Carstairs, a leader in palliative care policy and the Caring Communities Initiative, said communities need to normalize dying.

"There's a time to live and be born and there is a time to die," she said quoting Ecclesiastes, "and these are the only two events that every single human being has in common."

"In this country, we do a pretty good job of welcoming those newborns – at least most of them, but we don't do nearly as good a job at saying goodbye to those that are leaving us."

Ottawa South MPP John Fraser, parliamentary assistant to Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term care Eric Hoskins, said he began learning about palliative many years ago as a volunteer at an Ottawa hospital.

"One thing I learned that always stuck with me is that the smallest things are the most important at the end of life – and those small things are often the most important in life. Those small kindnesses are so important in palliative care."

Ottawa palliative care physician Dr. Paul L. Hacker, a member of Community Palliative Medicine Associates (CPMA), spoke about patient care and the critical need for community volunteers such as

those from the new Temple Israel program.

Hacker said volunteers are ready and trained for their roles while family members are often not ready when a loved-one's health changes.

That's one of the reasons Temple Israel decided to create its Palliative Care Outreach Program and train volunteers who can help members of the Jewish community and their families.

"In Jewish terms, it is really one word – *chesed* (kindness)," said Temple Israel's Rabbi Rob Morais in describing the foundation for the outreach program.

"It's a sense of our obligation to be kind and be compassionate to all those who need it and to recognize the kind of care people need at different points throughout their lives."

Pamela Cogan, chair of Temple Israel's Social Action Committee and organizer of the conference, said her career as a respiratory therapist at the Ottawa Hospital places her in contact with patients and families when she works in intensive care or emergency.

"In the hospital, we care for many people who have not prepared for their death or even denied that their death was coming. The impact of this is most often felt by family members who are starting to grieve and who are just slammed with last-minute decisions that have to be made," she said.

Cogan said visiting the sick is an important part of Jewish life as an act of loving kindness.

Those interested in training as volunteers in the Palliative Care Outreach Program are asked to contact Temple Israel at [socialaction@templeisraelottawa.ca](mailto:socialaction@templeisraelottawa.ca) or 613-224-1802.



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*Celebrating Canadian Jews of the last 150 years*



A series of profiles throughout 2017 spotlighting the contributions of historically important Jewish Canadians to our country.

*Bora Laskin* 1912 - 1984

**Canada's first Jewish chief justice**

By Ben Dodek

**T**he Right Honourable Bora Laskin was a respected constitutional and labour law professor and a respected justice on the Supreme Court of Canada from 1970 until his death in Ottawa in 1984. From 1973 until 1984, he served as chief justice of Canada and was the first Jew appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal and to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Laskin was born in Fort William (now Thunder Bay) on October 5, 1912. In high school, he excelled in both academics and sports and was his graduating class valedictorian. He earned his BA and MA from the University of Toronto and law degrees from Osgoode Hall in 1936 and Harvard in 1937.

He returned to Toronto and found it hard to find a job due to anti-Semitism in the legal profession. His first legal job was writing case

summaries for The Canadian Abridgement.

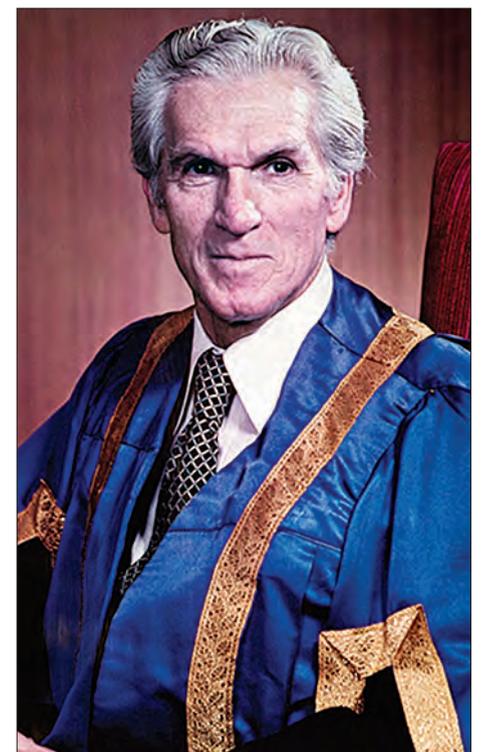
Laskin found his calling as a law professor. He taught at University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School from 1940 to 1965 and was a founder of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. He wrote numerous texts including the first casebook in Canada on constitutional law which was used by a generation of law students across the country. Laskin was one of the leading Canadian experts in constitutional law and labour law during this time

Until the 1950s in Ontario and other provinces it was common for Jews, blacks and Asians to be prohibited from purchasing land in many places. Laskin was an important part of the Canadian Jewish Congress legal team responsible for fighting to abolish these bans.

Laskin was appointed to the Court of Appeal for Ontario in 1965. In 1970, prime minister Pierre Trudeau appointed Laskin to the Supreme Court of Canada. He was the first justice on the Supreme Court not descended from Canada's two "Founding Peoples" – the English and the French. In 1973, Trudeau appointed Laskin chief justice.

Laskin lived in Ottawa from the time of his appointment to the Supreme Court. He was married to Peggy Tenenbaum and they had two children: John, who became a lawyer and judge and now serves on the Court of Appeal for Ontario, and Barbara, a communications professional.

Laskin received honorary degrees from many Canadian universities as well as from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and University of Padova in Italy.



He passed away on March 26, 1984, at age 71, and Peggy died shortly after.

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University in Laskin's hometown of Thunder Bay and the Bora Laskin Law Society, Ottawa's Jewish law society, are both named in his honour.

Ben Dodek is a Grade 10 student at Nepean High School and a graduate of OJCS.



*Next in the series* Cecil Hart 1883 -1940

Jewish coach of the Montreal Canadiens who won three Stanley Cups (1924, 1930, 1931). The Hart Memorial Trophy for the NHL's MVP was named for him. He was a descendant of Aaron Hart, Canada's first Jewish settler.



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FEDERATION  
REPORT



LINDA KISLOWICZ, JEWISH  
FEDERATIONS OF CANADA – UIA

February marked Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) in Canada. JDAIM aims to build awareness and increase engagement in Canadian Jewish communities by identifying and breaking down barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from fully participating in community life. These barriers may be physical, organizational – structure and attitude, or political – public policy and funding models. Less concrete – but no less serious – are community culture and mindset.

## ‘Improving the lives of Canadians with disabilities’

I am very proud that our national system, in partnership with our advocacy agent, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Jewish Federations across Canada, local agencies and residential organizations as well as Israeli partners, is invested in improving the lives of Canadians with disabilities.

On February 21, a national delegation of leaders from Vancouver, Calgary, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal gathered in Ottawa to present the Jewish community’s issues and perspective to federal ministers and parliamentarians.

We are changing our community’s narrative by building a deeper understanding of the abilities of this population and barriers that they face. This multi-faceted effort has wide reaching policy, programmatic and financial implications.

Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA (JFC-UIA) is actively engaged programmatically and philanthropically in promoting inclusion and awareness.

In 2016, Canada Israel Experience

brought two groups of young adults with special needs on a Birthright Israel experience that was modified to meet the participants’ unique needs and capacities.

In Israel, within our partnership communities, JFC-UIA and the Federations are invested in facilities and programs that work with individuals with motor, developmental, physical and sensory challenges. Open to Israelis of all backgrounds and disabilities, programs address therapeutic, educational and social welfare needs.

‘Maarag’ increases economic independence through training and business development. The hydrotherapy pool in Mevot Hermon, in Ottawa’s Partnership 2gether region, provides physical therapy to Israelis living in the north. Krembo Wings in Kiryat Shemona is a fully integrated program for youth with and without special needs. A special relaxation program for autistic children is supported in Bat Yam and a full continuum residential program is supported in Beer Sheva.

When someone in your family has a

disability, it is a complicated journey for all members. It requires physical, emotional and financial resources often beyond available capacity. Often, community services are not organized in a user friendly way. In addition to navigating a compartmentalized and fragmented system, individuals with disabilities face serious economic, employment, housing, home care provision, transitional and jurisdictional challenges.

That said, families often react with incredible ingenuity, rallying together to create innovative and inclusive programs for their own children.

A community that takes a systemic approach towards embracing the disabled and their families will understand that an integrated ecosystem is required – from the basic requirements of shelter and food, to education, socialization, vocational training, healthcare and related therapies. The elimination of all barriers to participation requires a community that is open minded and prepared to invest in training and infrastructure; and a system that is built on strong partnerships between government, community and family.

Linda Kislowicz is president and CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA. JFC-UIA supports Canadian Jewish Federations and communities by increasing philanthropic capabilities, national and international influence, and connection to Israel. Visit [www.jewishcanada.org](http://www.jewishcanada.org) for information.

FROM THE  
PULPIT



RABBI CHAIM MENDELSON  
CHABAD OF CENTREPOINTE

The publication date for this issue of the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin is just after the conclusion of Passover. The rush and anxiety associated with Passover preparations will be behind us. The Passover seder with extended family and friends will be a thing of the past. Some will be feeling relief, while others will feel a void.

Either way, I am sure you will be glad to learn that there is another major holiday right around the corner, another biblical holiday with its own variation of meaningful customs and traditions. This of course is the holiday of Shavuot.

In a way, I sort of feel bad for Shavuot. It is so close to Passover that it seems to be overshadowed. In fact, it is of equal biblical significance. If you look at the spirit and meaning behind the holidays, I would argue that Shavuot may even be

## Achieving Jewish unity on Lag Ba’Omer

more important.

Shavuot is so important that, from the second day of Passover on, Jews around the world begin to demonstrate their eager anticipation for Shavuot by literally counting down the days. Every day, we make a special blessing as we count down towards Shavuot.

This is to emulate the original countdown. When the Jews were miraculously freed from Egypt, they were told they didn’t need to fear slavery under the mighty Pharaoh and Egyptian superpower. They would now experience a different type of slavery. They would now be slaves of God. In 49 days, they would receive the Decalogue on Mount Sinai with a set of instructions and rules to which they would be obliged to adhere.

Instead of resisting this new form of “slavery,” they celebrated its unique opportunity. They eagerly counted down the 49 days. And, on the 50th day, on a modest mountain in the desert under a spectacular sound and light show, the people heard God’s powerful voice and became a formal nation with their own identity, history and responsibility.

The commentaries share with us an interesting twist. When the Jews camped at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, the Torah uses a

perplexing term: “*Vayichan sham yisrael neged hahar* (And he camped opposite the Mountain).”

Why would the Torah use a singular term and “he” camped when referring to the nation of Israel. The explanation given is that, at the time of receiving the Torah, the nation was so unified, they were like one collective organism.

Perhaps, it was this unity that made them worthy of receiving this divine gift.

Jewish unity is not something of the past and it is not a cliché. It is a tangible aspiration for our beautiful and eclectic community. Here in Ottawa we can achieve unity.

That is why we at Chabad of Centrepointe are so proud to host, together with other worthy educational and community institutions, an annual Lag Ba’Omer festival of unity. A day when the Jewish community of Ottawa gathers together from every denomination to enjoy a parade with Jewish-themed floats and marching bands followed by a carnival and barbecue.

Please join us on Sunday, May 14, 3:30 pm, on the grounds of the Jewish Community Campus for an even bigger and better version of Lag Ba’Omer.

Let us see that our community is not great despite our differences; rather, we are great because of them.

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The *Bulletin* cannot vouch for the kashrut of advertised products or establishments unless they are certified by Ottawa Vaad HaKashrut or a rabbinic authority recognized by OVH.

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

I'm writing this column on April 7 just as this issue of the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin is about to go to press. April 7 is a significant date. In 2008, a unanimous vote in the House of Commons approved a motion put forward by then-MP Irwin Cotler, a former minister of justice and legendary human rights activist, making April 7 Canada's National Day of Reflection on the Prevention of Genocide. The date was not random. Cotler specifically chose it because it was the anniversary of April 7, 1994, the start of 100 days of genocide in Rwanda that saw more than 800,000 Tutsi people murdered by the Hutu-dominated government – a genocide that the world community was aware of, but did not act

## Syria and the world's 'Responsibility to Protect'

to prevent or stop. As Cotler wrote in an op-ed published in the National Post last year on April 7, "Indeed, what makes the Rwandan Genocide so unspeakable was not only the horror of the genocide itself, but the fact that it was preventable. No one can say that we did not know – we knew, but we did not act." <http://tinyurl.com/cotler-np>

In an op-ed for the Huffington Post that was also published last year on April 7, Cotler wrote about the principles of the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine (R2P) adopted by the United Nations in 2005. <http://tinyurl.com/cotler-hp>

The R2P doctrine, Cotler wrote, "mandates international action to 'protect a state's population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.' In a word, if such mass atrocity crimes are being committed, and the state where these crimes are occurring is unwilling or unable to act – or worse, is the author of such international crimes – the Responsibility to Protect arises."

Cotler goes on to discuss the devastating humanitarian crisis arising from the civil war in Syria and the crimes against

humanity committed by the regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. "Indeed, if mass atrocities in Syria – with 500,000 killed, 12.5 million displaced, five million refugees – are not a case for R2P, then there is no R2P."

This week, on April 4, a year after Cotler wrote that article, the Assad regime launched a chemical weapons attack against civilians in the town of Khan Sheikhoun in Syria's Idlib province. At least 100 people, including infants and small children were massacred as the world looked on in horror.

It seemed like a repeat of a 2013 chemical weapons attack perpetrated by the Assad regime. A year before, then-U.S. president Barack Obama had warned Assad that using chemical weapons was the "red line" he must not cross, or the U.S. would act. Many commentators pointed to Obama's failure to take military action in response to that crime against humanity as his greatest foreign policy failure. Others pointed to his diplomatic efforts to have Assad give up his chemical weapons stockpile as a great success in preventing both further chemical weapons attacks

and American involvement in another Middle Eastern war.

Among those who vehemently opposed a U.S. response to the 2013 chemical weapons massacre was future U.S. president Donald Trump.

And, in the 2016 U.S. election campaign, Trump routinely ridiculed his opponent, Hillary Clinton, when she called for action in Syria.

It seems, however, that Assad held on to at least some of his chemical arsenal and may well have been emboldened by the Trump administration's recent statements that regime change in Syria was no longer an American goal.

Then, last night [April 6], on Trump's orders, 59 cruise missiles were launched at the Shayrat air base from which Assad's forces launched this latest chemical weapons attack against civilians.

As I write, it is much too early to know if this missile response will make a difference in the Syrian civil war. Will it make a difference in helping to protect the Syrian people from Assad?

Trump said he was affected by the sight of the "beautiful babies" killed in the massacre. But it's hard to forget that Trump's policy has been to refuse to help any Syrian refugees. And, with all the controversy about Russia in recent months, Trump has had (at least, so far) nothing to say about Russian complicity with Assad in the Syrian civil war.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

It's come up again: that really annoying question about whether only a true blue French-speaking Quebecer has the right to criticize Quebec society. But the real question is about something else. It is about who is a Quebecer.

This essential question about Quebec society has no bearing on political affiliation. This is not about separatists. It is about a time honoured Quebec instinct to close ranks whenever identity issues are raised or appear to be raised. Quebecers see themselves as family and their bond is strong.

My introduction to French Quebec was as "pure laine" as it can get. Working in Quebec City between 1976 and 1980, I dove into complete immersion around

## 'Who is a Quebecer?' is the real question

the French fact. Back then, Quebec City was all white and all French. Any other skin colour or language raised eyebrows, not necessarily in a bad way, but certainly in a curious way.

Whenever I sought services in Quebec City, such as a dry cleaner or a garage, my name would always instantly lead to questions about where I was from and how I got there. There was no hostility. It was asked in the innocence of never having run into a name like Moscovitz before.

But, as innocent as such exchanges may have been, they left me with the distinctive feeling that I was somewhat of an alien. It never felt good, but it wasn't a show stopper. I still liked Quebecers and just saw it as part of their survival mode. I must say that rationally I understood it.

So, last month, more than a quarter-century later, respected thinker Andrew Potter was tarred and feathered for criticizing Quebec society. He was not pilloried because he criticized Quebec, but because he used his finely tuned English brain to produce his conclusions in an English-language publication read

primarily outside the province.

Questioning where a name like Moscovitz comes from in the 1970s may have been innocent, but condemning an accomplished thinker like Andrew Potter for thinking out loud in 2017 is really not worthy and not acceptable. It is the Quebec survival reflex disappointingly off kilter; the direct result of a reality Quebecers can't escape. Tribalism runs deep. You see it in big ways and small ways. You can see it every day.

When pressed, Quebec elites will always go haywire when they're assessed as being close-minded. They hate that because it is not how they see themselves. They see themselves as open. But, when push comes to shove on an identity matter, they stop moving forward. Instead, they move in protective circles.

A long time ago, René Lévesque, the founder of the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ), used to talk to Jewish Quebecers in a way he thought they would understand. He told them Quebecers wanted nothing more than what the Jews had accomplished when the State of Israel was established. He equated what he was trying to do in Quebec with Zionism.

Today, of course, no leader of the PQ would ever dare equate an independent Quebec at any level with Israel, but the larger picture remains the same. Despite all protestations, being a Quebecer, being a real Quebecer allowed to express opinions about Quebec, means being French-speaking and, in most cases, Quebec-born.

During the language law and referendum debates from 1976 to 1980, Lévesque – who was then the premier of Quebec – would say there was no French language requirement to being a Quebecer. He said that, if you live in Quebec, you were a Quebecer. He said it seriously, but, somehow, it never smelled right.

Paradoxically in Quebec there have always been many unilingual French speakers who have English, Scottish and Irish names. Names like O'Neil, Mackay and Burns. In these instances, funnily enough, there can sometimes be moments of truth about identity.

One day, Lévesque announced that the government's crown jewel, Hydro Quebec, was getting a new president: a man named Robert Boyd.

As soon as the words came out of his mouth, Lévesque looked up and felt a need to reassure French-speaking reporters that despite his name, Robert Boyd was a Quebecer.

Indeed, he was. He just had a funny name.

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# CIJA supporting community security in challenging times

Events in the past few months have brought the issue of Jewish community security to the forefront.

Since January alone, more than 150 Jewish community institutions across North America, including in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, London and Toronto, were targeted with false bomb threats. While no physical harm manifested itself in these incidents, repeated evacuations of Jewish facilities have inevitably led to heightened community anxieties. Added to this have been various incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism at cemeteries and other Jewish sites.

Israeli authorities have apprehended an individual – an American-Israeli teenager – believed to be responsible for most of the bomb threats. I imagine you were as stunned and upset as I was when you heard the news that the suspect is a member of our own community. Reports in the media, including comments from the suspect's lawyer, reveal the strong possibility of mental health being a prominent factor in this case. It is a troubling end (at least, we hope it is the conclusion) to a worrisome few months for the North American Jewish community.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has worked proactively to support our community institutions in responding to these and other hate crimes. Given that the JCC bomb threats were designed to spread fear, we have emphasized that the best response is to maintain existing security protocols while enjoying our JCCs and other institutions without fear. All the more so, given that our community has always had robust security systems and procedures.

Jewish Federations across Canada, for example, benefit from the National Community Security Program co-ordinated by CIJA. The program provides a hub for incident support, security training and tools, liaison with police agencies, and the sharing of intelligence and trends. Just as we benefit from a close working relationship with law enforcement at all levels, no Jewish institution should feel isolated when it comes to protecting their facilities.

The Jewish Federation of Ottawa has long prioritized community security and taken a comprehensive, responsible approach to protecting against threats. Local communal facilities, particularly the Jewish Community Campus, maintain effective security protocols and experienced personnel. Federation also enjoys a strong relationship with Ottawa Police Services, which proved exceptionally responsive to the wave of anti-Semitic vandalism that struck Ottawa's Jewish community last November.

At the same time, there is a vital role for government to play in supporting our community's security needs, alongside those of other minority groups targeted for hate. Every Jewish institution should be aware of the financial support available through the federal government's Security Infrastructure Program (SIP).

**STEVE MCDONALD, CIJA  
GUEST COLUMN**

This program allows at-risk community institutions, including places of worship, community centres and religious schools, to apply for funding to offset the costs of essential security upgrades. The Jewish community has benefited immensely from the SIP, though security costs continue to pose a burden to shuls, day schools and JCCs.

The federal government's 2017 budget allocated an additional \$5 million over the next five years for the SIP. This infusion of funds represents a doubling of the SIP's budget and reflects the dedication of Canada's elected officials to protect at-risk communities such as ours.

"This has the potential to be transformative, making a substantial upgrade to the program possible to maximize its effectiveness in addressing the evolving security challenges faced by communities at-risk," noted Noah Shack, CIJA's director of policy. Expanding the SIP in this way has been a cornerstone of CIJA's advocacy activities over the last year, and we look forward to the translation of these additional resources into tangible improvements."

Anti-Semitism, the world's oldest hatred, has always managed to adapt itself to local conditions and changing times. While Canada is a remarkably safe and welcoming country for minorities, Canadian society is not immune from anti-Semitism or other forms of bigotry. Fighting anti-Semitism requires vigilance, awareness, education and proactive engagement with leaders in all communities.

At the same time, we must maintain a healthy dose of optimism rooted in the fact that we have many allies, exceptional support from government and law enforcement, and a national community security infrastructure to assist our institutions. Behind all of this is the knowledge that the Jewish people are no longer defenceless; we have in Israel a strong, national homeland that remains a haven for Jews seeking to leave troubled lands.

This issue is especially poignant at this time of year. The Passover seder is in many ways a metaphor for how we must handle these challenges today.

In the seder, we teach our children to remember the threats and suffering we have faced, but we do so with a sense of gratitude for our blessings today and hope for the future.

*Steve McDonald is deputy director, communications and public affairs, at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs – the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and Canada's other Jewish Federations.*

## LETTERS WELCOME

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

Send your letters to [bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com](mailto:bulletin@ottawajewishbulletin.com)



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**One kernel yields amazing success**  
*TIRS students fundraise for Israel*

Sometimes it only takes a kernel of an idea to produce great results. And that's how students at Temple Israel Religious School (TIRS) raised money during the Israel emergency forest fire campaign in November 2016 that saw thousands of trees go up in flames and risk the lives of many.

Five students – Sara Bier Perez, Yonas Shapiro, David Cottin, Tyler Evans and Jonah Wilbur – joined forces to sell popcorn at the school and raised \$450. They ate lots of popcorn and produced a tremendous source of pride for their school. On March 26, they gathered with their teacher Jenny Tarof-Burns, TIRS Principal Sue Potechin and Temple Israel President Patsy Royer to present JNF Ottawa with their big cheque – and proof of young leadership, commitment to the environment and support for Israel. Thank you!

**Lessons learned over 50 years since the Six-Day War**

*Ottawa Torah Centre course offers unique perspective*  
It is often the subject of conversation, debate and heated passions. The Six-Day War permanently changed the landscape of Israel and world Jewry – its identity, its political discourse, and its view of its position in the family of nations. To mark the war's 50th anniversary, the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute has produced a comprehensive six-week course, "Survival of a Nation."

This course investigates the momentous – indeed historic – implications of the events that led to the war, the war itself, and its aftermath. The goal of this in-depth evaluation is to determine the ways in which the lessons gleaned from the Six-Day War continue to be relevant, and how the pertinent issues it generated might be effectively tackled. Register at [www.myjli.com](http://www.myjli.com).

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# Ottawa Talmud Torah to begin partnership with Kehillat Beth Israel

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

**O**ttawa Talmud Torah Afternoon School (OTTAS), which launched a new initiative with Congregation Machzikei Hadas for this current school year, is growing again and launching a similar initiative with Kehillat Beth Israel for the upcoming school year.

"Our growth was truly a team effort that would not have been possible without all of the hard work of our teachers and board members," said OTTAS Director Eliana Mandel-Carsen.

"The opportunity to collaborate creates an even better program, and I'm very excited about it," said Rabbi Eytan Kenter of Kehillat Beth Israel, who will be doing some teaching and is involved in the curriculum development as well.

"Too often everyone tries to do their own thing," said Rabbi Kenter, who describes the joint project as "a wonderful partnership."

OTTAS describes itself as a pluralistic and inclusive Jewish supplementary school for children in junior kindergarten to Grade 7. Talmud Torah welcomes all Jewish children, regardless of background, affiliation or how often they engage in activities associated Judaism.

Classes are now held Sundays at Machzikei Hadas, Tuesdays at the Ottawa Jewish Community School and Thursdays at Knoxdale Public School. Tuesday classes will move to Kehillat Beth Israel for the 2017-2018 school year.

"This past year has been fantastic," said Mandel-Carsen. "At the end of last year, we had 17 students. Now we have 55 students, which is pretty amazing. We've all been working very, very, hard. We are developing a well-rounded, spiral curriculum so that students get different themes each year ... For instance, they will be learning about Shabbat in many different ways. We are really trying to offer hands-on learning experiences, not just learning out a book."

Ottawa's Shinshinim, Canaf Ahituv and Noga Weiss, the two young Israelis who deferred their Israeli army service for one year to act as ambassadors of their country in the community, have also played a part at Talmud Torah.

"This year has been the first year for the Israeli Shinshinim," said Mandel-Carsen. "They have been so helpful in integrating Israeli culture, Jewish identity and Jewish celebrations as part of our program."

The Shinshinim program is fully supported by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa.

As part of the OTTAS program, Rabbi Scher teaches bar and bat mitzvah lessons and Torah reading to both girls and boys on Tuesdays, and a bar and bat mitzvah leadership program every second Sunday for students in Grades 6 and 7. The leadership program is "a study of what it means to become an adult and ultimately a leader in the



"We are really trying to offer hands-on learning experiences, not just learning out a book," says Ottawa Talmud Torah Afternoon School Director Eliana Mandel-Carsen.

Jewish community and in the community at large."

"It's been wonderful to have a community school, a place to send children in our network and congregation who are looking for a supplemental school," said Rabbi Scher.

(councillor)

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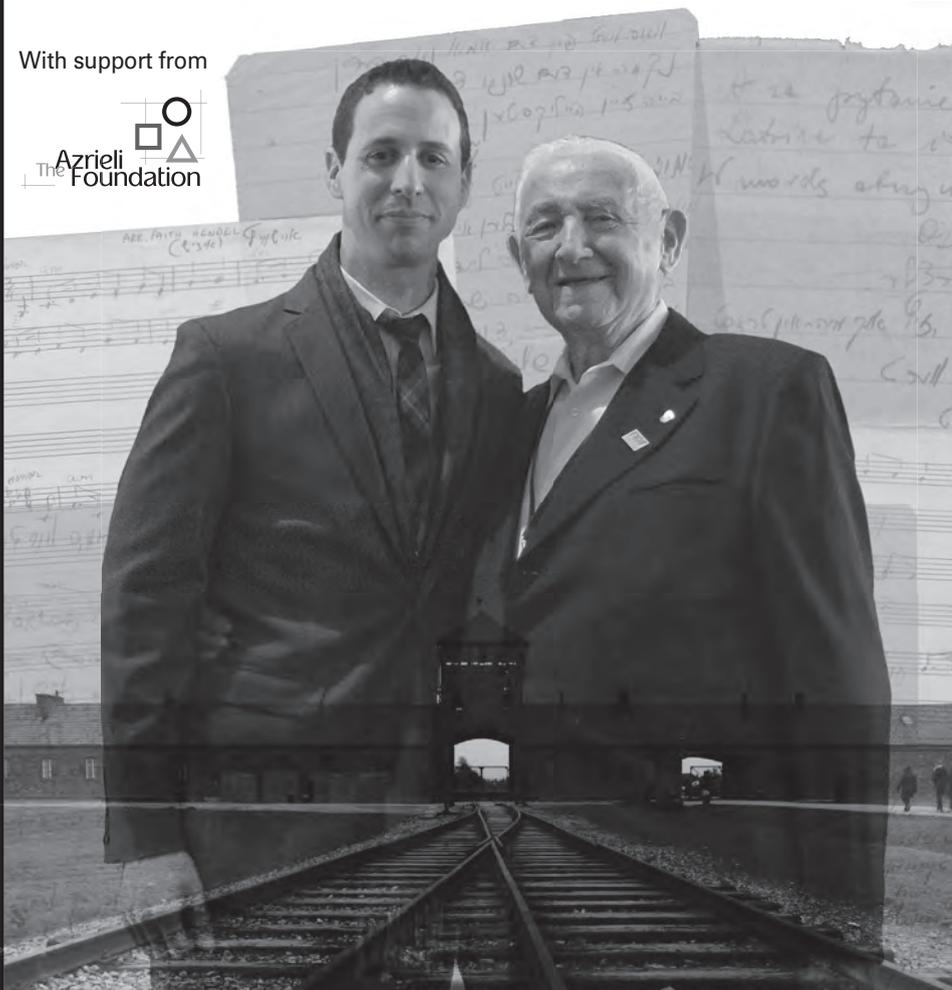
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# Growing up with JET

**RABBI YOEY SHAPS**  
**GUEST COLUMN**



Rabbi Yoey Shaps is co-director of the Glebe Shul, the JET program for young professionals.

**L**ike so many members of this community, I owe a debt of appreciation to JET (Jewish Education through Torah). My unique experience of growing up with JET has been a key contributor to the person that I am today.

I was only five years old when the initial idea took off. My parents, Rabbi Zischa and Lauren Shaps, alongside my Grade 2 teacher, Rabbi Yossi Skaist, created a schedule of weekly Torah classes and Hebrew reading courses, offered throughout the week. Over the next few years, the scope and scale of the programming became progressively bigger and better. Shabbatons, holiday gatherings, Shabbat dinners, and a variety of learning opportunities for members of the community of every level were just some of the highlights that JET would come to offer.

To be honest, growing up with JET did not mean that I personally attended any of the classes. I spent my time doing whatever kids do. Nevertheless, growing up in a home that sometimes felt like Grand Central Station with all the comings and goings – whether for Shabbat meals, events in the house, meetings, or just people sleeping over sometimes for a week or more, my siblings and I learned so much from these experiences.

Perhaps what we learned most is the importance of every individual. The success of a program or class is not determined by how many people are there, but by who is there. Each and every person has great value, potential for greatness, and something to offer to those around them. We learned not to count anyone out, as it may be the last person you'd expect who goes on to make the greatest impact. And that a person's impact is sometimes hard to measure.

We learned to respect and appreciate every individual, regardless of who they are or how different they may be. I don't know too many other kids who were exposed to so many people from so many backgrounds on such a frequent basis, as we were. Aside from merely enhancing our social skills, we also developed a deep respect for every person, regardless of his or her background, knowledge, or outrageous opinions!

We learned about the importance of strong relationships and genuine caring for others. To paraphrase the dean of my

yeshiva, Rabbi Dovid Harris, "To be successful one must have a love for Torah and a love for people. If someone only cares about people, but not about the Torah, then one's value system can easily become distorted. On the other hand, if someone only cares about Torah, but not about people, it will be impossible for a person to (a) uphold the Torah or (b) impart it to others." Growing up with JET there was always this dual emphasis. Teaching Torah was always a priority, but with the knowledge that there has to be a strong relationship and concern for every individual.

At JET's annual Jewish Unity Live event on Sunday, May 14, at Centrepointe Studio Theatre, JET will celebrate 25 years by highlighting 25 individuals from our community who have been directly impacted by what JET has accomplished. No, my siblings and I were not asked to fill five of these spots, but, rest assured, it only takes the smallest amount of reflection to recognize how much we have gained from these past 25 years with JET.

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# YOM HAZIKARON 2017

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# An ABC of Ottawa offers a child's eye view of the capital

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

It's not as easy as ABC to produce *An ABC of Ottawa*, but it has been a rewarding project for Ottawa graphic designer, and now children's book author, Miriam Bloom.

"It was a long process," said Bloom, an active volunteer in Ottawa's Jewish community, and grandmother of four.

"Writing a kids' book is something I've wanted to do for a very long time," she said.

The breakthrough came when her close friend and colleague, Julie Mason, asked Bloom to bring her design and typographic skills to the table for *An ABC of Ottawa*.

When Mason died in 2010, the book was not finished, and only half the photos had been done. With the support of Don McGregor, Mason's husband, Bloom resumed work on the project.

"Even a short children's book can be surprisingly complex," said Bloom.

By January, *An ABC of Ottawa* was at the printer, and it is already in its second printing.

"We just wanted to have fun and produce a good book for young children," said Bloom. "Julie had two young granddaughters at the time. Secondly, we

wanted to produce a professional quality book. Thirdly, we wanted to showcase Ottawa and all the attractions here for families.

"In the years since her death, I've accumulated grandchildren myself, and it's a nice thing to have for them. In this digital age, it's great to get kids off the screen."

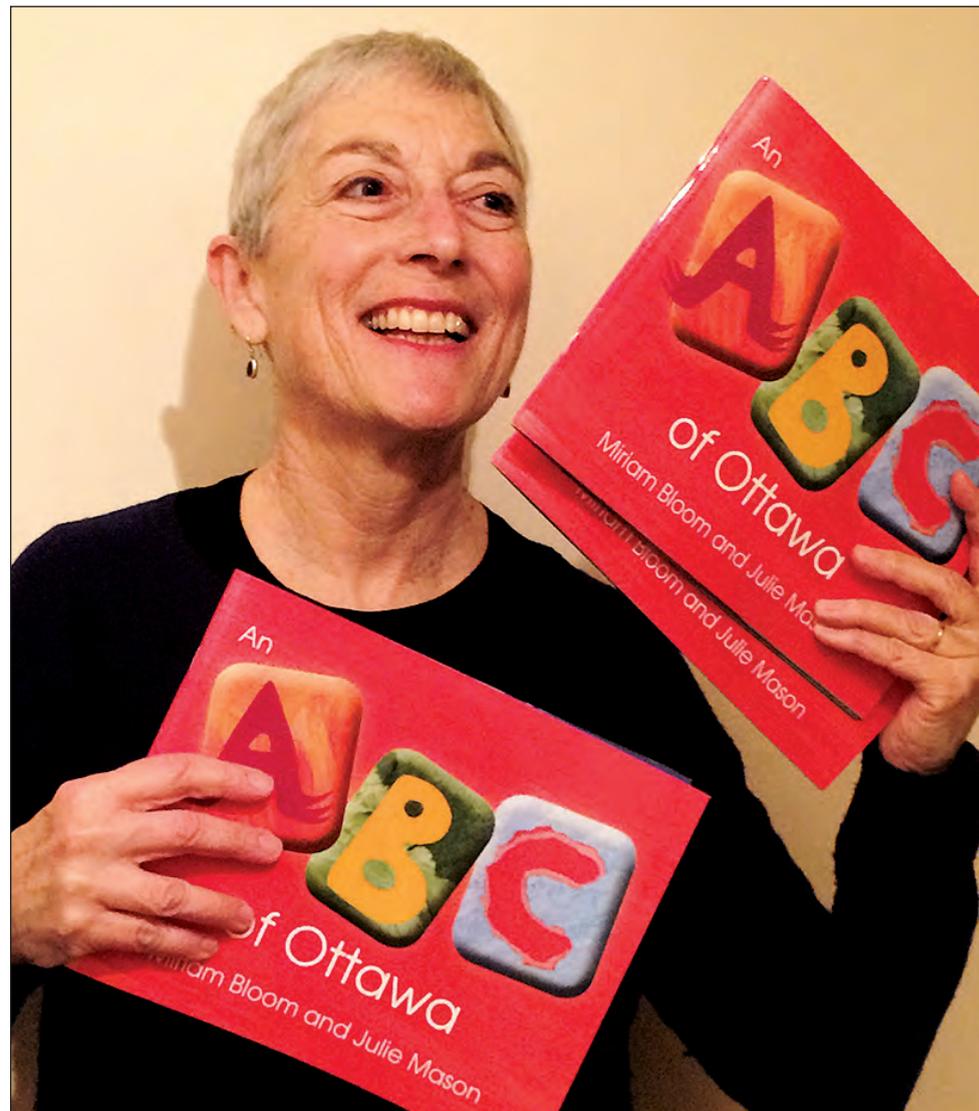
Bloom is delighted with the final product.

"It's a very beautiful, high quality, 60-page, full-colour book. It's aimed at young children and a perfect book for families and educators, too. It's more than an ordinary ABC book.

For example, A is for Astrolabe, and I decided to add a definition of astrolabe. There is a picture of the Samuel de Champlain statue. The pages are a combination of decorated photos and some full-colour photos. Every letter is hand cut."

*An ABC of Ottawa* is the first ABC book to feature popular Ottawa sites, and an education guide is available to help plan visits and activities.

*An ABC of Ottawa* is available at Books on Beechwood, Perfect Books, Octopus Books and Mrs. Tiggy Winkle's toy stores, or online at [www.miriambloomart.ca/abc](http://www.miriambloomart.ca/abc).



"We just wanted to have fun and produce a good book for young children," says Miriam Bloom, co-author of *An ABC of Ottawa*.



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Musica Ebraica will feature songs by Jewish Canadian composers at its "Sing! Chantez! Shiru!" concert, May 14.

## Musica Ebraica concert to celebrate Canada 150

BY MINDA WERSHOF  
MUSICA EBRAICA

Jewish music is alive and well in Canada. What better way to mark Canada 150 than with Musica Ebraica and "Sing! Chantez! Shiru!" at Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, on Sunday, May 14, 7:30 pm.

The concert will feature the world premieres of several pieces by Ottawa's own Leo Lightstone, as well as original songs by Larry Tarof and Kathryn Palmer.

Our concert will also feature works by Srul Irving Glick of Toronto, Sid Robinovitch of Winnipeg, Ben Steinberg of Toronto, Leonard Cohen of Montreal

and Leon Dubinsky of Sidney, Nova Scotia.

This performance is dedicated to the memory of Ely Garfinkle who sang tenor with Musica Ebraica and loved the choir and its music as much as he was beloved by the choir. His daughter, soprano Samara Garfinkle, will be our featured soloist.

Musica Ebraica is delighted to share this musical history with you in English, Hebrew and French.

Tickets are \$20 (general admission) and \$10 (students). For information contact Minda Wershof at 613-224-7073 or [pmwershof@gmail.com](mailto:pmwershof@gmail.com).



**OTC CTeen:** Ottawa Torah Centre's Cteen group met March 20 for dinner and a Tour For Humanity session. Tour For Humanity is a mobile classroom designed and built by Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies to inspire and empower people to raise their voices and take action against hate and intolerance.

The Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program at the University of Ottawa

## Yiddish Summer Institute

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- o who wish to be able to translate out of or into Yiddish;
- o who seek to be creative in Yiddish;
- o who enjoy learning new languages.

Financial support and scholarships are available. Registration opens at the end of March.

For information regarding the program, registration, and housing: [www.yiddishottawa.com](http://www.yiddishottawa.com)

Or contact the program coordinator and instructor:

Professor Rebecca Margolis [rmargoli@uottawa.ca](mailto:rmargoli@uottawa.ca)



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## Soloway JCC Employment Opportunity

### Early Childhood Director of Ganon Preschool Soloway Jewish Community Centre (Maternity Leave – 11 months Replacement Position)

The Soloway Jewish Community Centre is seeking a Manager with an Early Childhood background and credentials to direct its Ganon Preschool. Ganon has the capacity to serve 84 children from 21 months to 5 years. We are licensed by the Ministry of Education and offer full day and half day programs. Candidates should be ECE certified or currently working towards certification with a minimum of 3 years supervisory and management experience. Candidates must have a knowledge of the Jewish community, culture, and holidays. Interested parties should email a cover letter and resume by May 10, 2017, to Barry Sohn at [bsohn@jccottawa.com](mailto:bsohn@jccottawa.com)

To view the complete job description and job requirements, please visit our website at <http://www.jccottawa.com/job-opportunity>

Only successful applicants will be contacted.

## AJA 50+ announces spring and summer programs

BY SUSAN GARA MARKOWITZ  
AND MAURICE KLEIN  
FOR AJA 50+

Spring has arrived bringing sunshine, warmer temperatures, tulips, daffodils and an exciting new lineup of programs for AJA 50+.

The new season will include a wonderful selection of historical walks through the towns of Merrickville, the “Jewel of the Rideau,” Renfrew and Smiths Falls. Architectural historian Hagit Hadaya will share her knowledge of these towns. A walk through Old Bytown Ottawa and a tour of the Jewish Memorial Gardens on Bank Street will round out this program.

How often have you looked up into the night sky to explore our broader universe? While Ottawa has plenty of city-light blocking our view, astronomer Pat Browne will bring his telescopes to the Mill of Kintail near Mississippi Mills to aid our understanding of the stars and planets.

Tickets have been reserved for AJA 50+ members to attend two amazing productions of the Classic Theatre Festival in Perth: “Arms and the Man” and “Same Time Next Year.” We have also arranged for guided tours of exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada and the Karsh-Masson Gallery.

AJA 50+ members are keen to expand

their knowledge. This season, Professor Steven Levy will tell us why Canadians stopped speaking British English, while Ian Austen, the New York Times correspondent in Canada, will discuss U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration in relation to our country.

Dan MacKay will deliver an illustrated talk on Lillian Freiman, a “person of national historical significance.” Freiman was a well-known and respected Jewish-Canadian philanthropist who, at the beginning of the First World War, organized the production of blankets to be sent to soldiers serving overseas. She was also one of the founders of the Royal Canadian Legion. Join us to find out why Freiman was nicknamed “Canada’s poppy lady.”

In partnership with the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC), AJA 50+ offers a mixed media workshop. Artist Violeta Borisonik will give an overview of several techniques along with guided exercises in design, composition, colour and texture using acrylic paint and other media.

Has your interest been peaked? To learn more, and to meet AJA 50+ members, join us on registration morning, Monday, April 24, 9:30 am until noon at the SJCC. For information about membership in AJA 50+ and a complete list of programs, visit <http://aja50plus.ca>.

# Temple Israel

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Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Services, 6:15 pm.

Saturday Shabbat Services, 10:15 am.

Thursday morning minyanim:  
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**Sunday, April 30, 2017:**

Come visit us at **TEMPLE’S GOT TALENT**  
Arts, crafts, books, author presentations, music, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

**Sunday, May 7, 2017:**

“The Gender Inclusive Community with a Jewish Perspective,”  
presentation by Anne Lowthian, an educator and parent of Charlie,  
a very influential trans kid. Rabbi Garten will also give a short talk  
on trans within Jewish law and its modern implications.  
Question period to follow,” 10 am. Everyone welcome.

President Patsy Royer  
Rabbi Robert Morais  
Rabbi Emeritus Steven H. Garten  
Executive Director Heather Cohen

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Shauna Gilboa by Chaim Gilboa.

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##### **IN MEMORY OF:**

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#### SANDRA AND JACIE LEVINSON ENDOWMENT FUND

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Continued on page 18

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You can provide for the ongoing support of the causes in the community with which you identify most closely. A **legacy gift** most often takes the form of a bequest in your will that designates a portion of your estate to create an endowment fund. Take Foundation's **Legacy Challenge**, and with a bequest of \$10,000 or more, we'll cover up to \$1,000 in legal costs.

The Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation supports the long term financial stability of the agencies which serve the Ottawa Jewish Community.

Find out more at [OJCF.CA](http://OJCF.CA) or contact **Arieh Rosenblum**, Director of Development at [arosenblum@jewishottawa.com](mailto:arosenblum@jewishottawa.com) 613-798-4696 x270



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**MAZEL TOV TO:**  
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# What inspires your legacy giving? Take the challenge and help fuel our Jewish future.

## First Nations advocate leaves legacy with Jewish community

A year ago, Foundation staff was contacted by an older gentleman, who had seen an ad about the Legacy Challenge and was interested in honouring the memory of his wife who had recently passed away. In talking about the ways that could be done through the Foundation, via an endowment fund or a legacy gift, we were struck by his gentle and humble nature. Eventually, he decided to open an endowment fund while also establishing a substantial legacy gift through the Foundation.

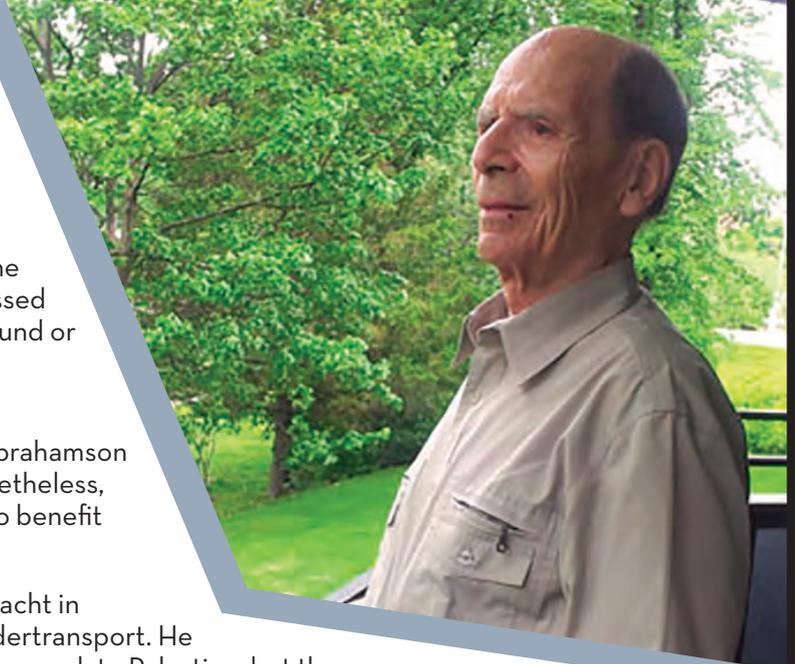
Sadly, this past April, that gentleman, Gunther Abrahamson, passed away in his 90th year. Mr. Abrahamson had lived in Ottawa for many years, but had not been closely connected to the community. Nonetheless, toward the end of his life he reached out to his roots, and he was determined in his generosity to benefit Ottawa's Jewish future.

Who was Gunther Abrahamson? Born in Berlin in 1926, he remembered the horrors of Kristallnacht in November of 1938. He was among the several thousand Jewish children saved through the Kindertransport. He made it to Scotland shortly before the beginning of the Second World War. His sister escaped to mandate Palestine, but the rest of his family were lost in the Shoah.

Mr. Abrahamson immigrated to Canada in the 1950s and became an expert in resource management, gradually taking more senior positions with the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs. He was responsible for securing the growth of northern Caribou herds and many other natural resources working closely and compassionately with the First Nations peoples of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut over a career spanning more than four decades.

Mr. Abrahamson also quietly, but determinedly supported First Nations culture, through art, language, and investing in the publication of news and periodicals in the North. His reputation was such that employees in his departments were drawn to put in extra hours and effort, not because he demanded it, but because they wanted to accomplish the important goals he had set. He was well loved and respected throughout Canada's North.

Mr. Abrahamson loved his wife of 55 years, his partner Inge, and was heartbroken when she passed away in 2015. In his desire to find a purposeful way to memorialize her, while at the same time wanting to establish a lasting connection to his Jewish heritage, he turned to the Foundation, and we worked with him to create a suitable legacy, helping to sustain our Jewish community. Distributions from the Fund that Mr. Abrahamson established at the Foundation will be allocated to over two dozen agencies and programs in Ottawa's Jewish community. The Foundation is honoured that a builder of Canada's future and protector of its Aboriginal heritage chose to leave a legacy with us. May his memory and that of his wife be a blessing.



Foundation assists donors in contributing to the long-term financial support of the agencies which serve the Ottawa Jewish community. To find out more, contact Arieh Rosenblum, Director of Development, at [arosenblum@jewishottawa.com](mailto:arosenblum@jewishottawa.com) or 613-798-4696 x270.

Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation



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OTTAWA JEWISH  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# Open dialogue is the greatest threat to Israeli Apartheid Week

Israel Apartheid Week (IAW), held last month at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, was surprisingly subdued this year, with events sparsely attended.

This year's itinerary included events like "Zines Against Zionism," various workshops and documentary screenings on BDS and how to fight against "colonialism," a poetry night, and, perhaps, most intellectually dishonest of all, "Reclaiming Queer Arab Narratives," where a gay Arab gave a presentation claiming Israel's LGBT record is nothing more than "pinkwashing" and that LGBT rights in Arab countries are not nearly as dire as often portrayed. (I would point out that this queer activist wouldn't have been able to speak so openly about his sexuality in Gaza, where homosexuality is illegal, but, silly me, that's obviously Israel's fault, too.)

I personally witnessed the vitriol and overt hatred that Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) activists have for Israel when a non-Jewish colleague of mine recently posted a picture of a beach in Tel Aviv with a caption expressing his admiration for the beautiful scenery as his Facebook cover photo.

Within minutes, he was hit with a barrage of mean-spirited comments from SAIA executives, voicing disgust that he would show a beach that was "ethnically cleansed of Palestinians." One even said my friend would go down in history like former South African president P.W. Botha.

Within moments, a flame-war had erupted.

The SAIA executives refused to address any legitimate counterpoints and repeated the same tired narrative of "Israel committing colonialism and genocide." Their hatred became more and more overt as they began writing things along the lines of "We're done arguing



MICHAEL AARENAU  
CAMPUS LIFE

with white Zionists."

Their hatred for Israel's very existence became especially clear when they were asked three times if they believe that Israel had the right to exist at all within any borders and they either ignored the question or deflected.

This exchange seemed to illustrate what most Jews on campus already knew: SAIA uses the issue of Palestinian self-determination and human rights to masquerade blind hatred of Israel and only Israel.

In reality, it's quite clear that they don't care about Palestinians at all because they never voice even an iota of concern about issues like Amnesty International's report about Palestinians being tortured in prisons in the West Bank and Gaza – <http://tinyurl.com/kgtsfx3> – or the more than 3,000 Palestinians who have been killed in Syria by the Assad regime since 2011. <http://tinyurl.com/mjrhxc>

They also don't seem to have a problem with the existence of Pakistan, even though it's a state that was partitioned on religious lines, resulting in the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands and which, to this day, remains a hotbed of terror and extremism.

Would SAIA activists have commented about human rights had my colleague posted a photo of a Lebanese

café, a Pakistani mountain or a Saudi Arabian desert? I'm sure not. It's only Israel that gets such nasty treatment.

In a world where Zionism is becoming increasingly viewed as a monolithic movement, it's more important now than ever to have Zionists with diverse opinions speak to those who are interested in genuine dialogue.

That's why I'm so proud to have taken part in "Exploring Perspectives: A Panel Showcasing the Zionist Spectrum," an event organized by the Israel Awareness Committee, where I was able to speak about the liberal Zionist perspective on Israel alongside two panellists who gave right-wing and Arab Zionist perspectives.

It was an excellent opportunity to show just how wide the Zionist spectrum is, how, even though the sides may disagree with each other, they're all equally "pro-Israel." The hour-long discussion was followed by a half hour Q&A, where the audience was able to ask any questions they had.

By the end of the night, it was clear that this one event did more to bring real dialogue to campus on the Israel-Palestine conflict than all the combined IAW events ever did.

**Editor's note:** Michael Aarenau graduates from Carleton University and will be starting law school at McGill University in Montreal in September – so this is his final column as the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin's Campus Life columnist.

Thank you, Michael, for your work on the column over the past school year – and, of course, for your work last year as our summer intern. We'll continue to look forward to your occasional contributions to the Bulletin as a freelance reporter. –**Michael Regenstreif**

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**Sample classes at the SJCC: Wednesday May 17**  
9:30 am–10:30 am *or* 7:30 pm–8:30 pm

**Contact:**  
Roslyn Wollock (613) 798-9818 ext. 254  
[rwollock@jccottawa.com](mailto:rwollock@jccottawa.com)

## The Middle East in Global Politics:

### What to expect in the future of the region?

LECTURE WITH **DR. HENRI HABIB**  
Presented by Vered Israel Cultural & Educational Program

**Monday, May 15**  
**7:00 pm**  
Soloway JCC, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private  
Admission: \$10 at the door

The past is never really quite past in the Middle East. International borders created after the fall of the Ottoman Empire have become unstable. Conflicts between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims have spilled across these borders. Russia, Iran, Turkey and the United States are drawn to the conflict. And the Israeli-Palestinian question is unresolved.

Contact: Ella Dagan  
(613) 798-9818 ext. 243,  
[edagan@jccottawa.com](mailto:edagan@jccottawa.com)

VERED ISRAEL  
CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAM

# Modern magic and avoiding the Evil Eye

Recently, I found myself talking about old wives' tales and how to theoretically avoid the Evil Eye. It was a tricky conversation because I'm never sure that in talking about the Evil Eye I'm not actually encouraging it to turn toward me. Does writing about it count, too? Excuse me for a minute as I turn and spit three times.

I know I'm not alone in feeling superstitious. Contemporary Jews in North America, as well as elsewhere, engage in syncretic practices that blend and blur traditions and ancient beliefs with our modern outlooks – so much so that we don't always realize it.

I thought of this when discussing an upcoming baby shower. I confessed I was superstitious about giving gifts before a baby was born, "because, just in case ..."

I continued: "I don't think either of my Jewish friends has ever had a baby shower ... Is that something we just don't traditionally do?"

My non-Jewish friend's response was logical. "But then when do you give gifts?"

"At the bris, of course!"

A brit milah or brit bat ceremony is the ideal place to give gifts to the parents of a newborn or adopted child, and these events happen after the birth.

Does the timing of these events inspire the safe delivery of a healthy child rather than inspiring the Evil Eye? The timing of eight days after birth means the new parents might have adjusted to caring for their newborn, and might tolerate having well-meaning people invade their home. But, more than that, does a bris or brit bat take place eight days after birth to account for the



SARAH WAISVISZ  
DISPATCHES  
FROM THE  
DIASPORA

traumas and health concerns that may have occurred?

The Evil Eye is called *ayin ha-ra* in Hebrew, and it basically refers to a malevolent gaze or evil regard. In the Mishna, someone who has the Evil Eye is someone who cannot be glad for the good fortune of another; in contrast, someone with the Good Eye delights in the successes of the other.

Pagan societies were not the only ones to believe in magic and the occult, and the development of a codified, monotheistic Judaism did not mean an instant opposition to belief in the supernatural. While the rabbis of the Talmud opposed magic, Jews at that time were known to consult and use magic formulas and incantations just like the early Christians did: the Kabbalah Ma'asit is a text of mystical literature featuring formulas for achieving closeness with God mostly through meditation and recitation of holy names, and the Dead Sea Scrolls include a fragment of a formula for warding off attack by demons! During the Middle Ages, Jews were regarded as proficient magicians because many of them were scientists and trained in medicine, and Maimonides himself took the occult seriously enough to

write a tractate disproving magic and astrology.

In contemporary times, modern Jews still hold onto traces of these mystical beliefs, no matter how liberal-minded and rational we are, and still engage in certain practices to protect ourselves. Many people are familiar with the hamsa, the five-fingered hand symbol worn as an amulet or displayed in a house to ward off malicious intent. "Hamsa" means "five" in Arabic and the hamsa is also referred to as the Hand of Fatima or the Hand of Miriam, and it can be pointed up or down. Sometimes a *tefillah ha bayit* (prayer for the household) is inscribed on a hamsa, and the hamsa itself can also include symbols such as an eye, a fish, or a Magen David. Hamsas are especially popular among Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews; I myself own at least six in ornament or necklace form.

Other protections against incurring the Evil Eye include wearing a red string around your wrist or neck, and for good measure you can recite the incantation that you are "of the seed of Joseph," because it is believed that Joseph was immune to the maleficence of the Evil Eye.

You can also say "kenahora" after praising someone. The Yiddish expression literally means "let it be without the Evil Eye." You say "kenahora" or spit three times when you have said something good about someone, made a statement hoping for something good, or assumed a positive outcome.

So will I be attending that baby shower? Probably. Will I bring a present for the unborn child? Maybe. Will I secretly spit three times in the garden beforehand? You can count on it.

# Metabolic Syndrome: What is it and what can you do if you have it?

Metabolic Syndrome (MetS) is a cluster of lifestyle-dependent metabolic disorders that significantly increase your risk for heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes. MetS is linked to obesity and inactivity and is considered an emerging epidemic affecting one in five Canadian adults.

Without medical testing, you probably don't know if you have MetS because you cannot see or feel symptoms of most of the metabolic disorders associated with it. It's important to know whether you have MetS so you can make changes to your lifestyle that can help reduce your health risks.

The definition of MetS has changed since the term was coined back in the 1940s. Originally, the defining feature was obesity. Currently, the World Health Organization defines insulin resistance and not obesity as the critical feature.

Perhaps the most practical and widely accepted definition of MetS is the presence of three or more of the following metabolic disorders:

1. High waist circumference (102 cm or 40 inches or more for men; and 88 cm or 34 inches or more for women);
2. Elevated triglycerides;
3. Low HDL ("good") cholesterol;
4. High fasting blood sugar – if it's very high, you may have symptoms of diabetes such as increased thirst and urination;
5. High blood pressure.

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pharmacies or your doctor can check it. It's considered a risk factor for MetS if it is greater than 130/85. Your doctor can send you for standard blood tests to check your triglycerides, cholesterol and fasting blood glucose.

To correctly measure your waistline, do it against your skin. Place the tape measure at your belly button and around your body at the top of the hip bone on each side. Take a deep breath then exhale. Don't hold in your stomach – that's cheating.

As we age, our risk increases. Thirteen per cent of 18- to 39-year-olds have MetS, 25 per cent of 40- to 59-year-olds, and 39 per cent of 60- to 79-year-olds have it. There is no significant difference between men and women. There are some racial variations. The most prevalent risk factor in the younger age group is high waist circumference; in older adults it's high blood pressure.

Only one-third of Canadian adults have none of the risk factors. Fifty-one per cent of young adults already have at least one risk factor, which is worrisome.

Has your doctor ever informed you that you have abdominal obesity or abnormal test results for cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar or blood pressure? Did

you take that information seriously and do something about it, or did you ignore it?

You can't do anything about your age or genetics. You're also at increased risk for MetS if you had gestational diabetes, cardiovascular disease, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease or polycystic ovary syndrome. Children with abdominal obesity are at increased risk for MetS. Everyone has a realistic opportunity to reverse one or more metabolic syndrome conditions with diet and physical activity.

**Dietary tips:** Consider reducing your consumption of simple carbohydrates, unhealthy fats and sodium and increasing your consumption of complex carbohydrates, fibre and healthy fats. You also may be eating too much protein, which can be harmful if you're obese or have kidney disease.

Always check with your doctor before making dietary changes if you have any health issues.

If you have MetS or a large waistline, a dietician can help you choose the right balance of nutrients and a suitable amount of calories.

**Exercise tips:** If you have MetS, your best option is regular, intensive physical activity. If you are unable to do intensive exercise, then you can start with light to moderate exercise, such as daily walking for thirty minutes. You can eventually work your way towards more intensive exercise for better results.

Exercise is good for your heart, for lowering your blood pressure, increasing your good cholesterol, and together with a healthy diet will reduce your body fat.

If you can't achieve the desired results with lifestyle changes or you're unable or unwilling to implement the necessary changes, your doctor may prescribe medications or other interventions to treat your metabolic disorders.

Talk to your doctor and ensure you know your risks so you can take the right steps to improve your health.

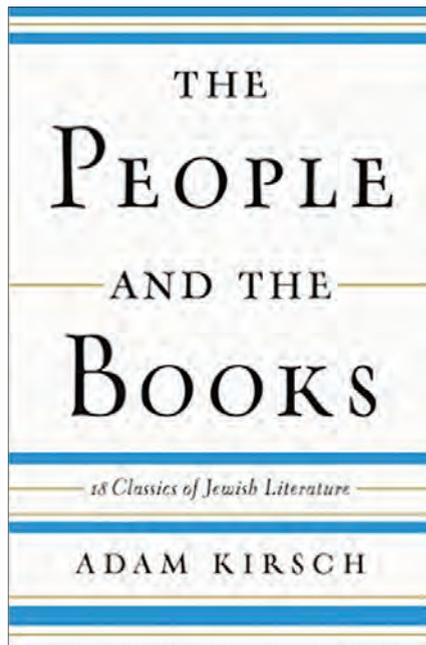
# Kirsch helps make classic texts of Jewish literature accessible to modern readers

**The People and the Books:**  
**18 Classics of Jewish Literature**  
By Adam Kirsch  
W.W. Norton & Company  
432 pages

History, we are told, is written by the conquerors. Except the Jews, who continued to write about themselves and their culture through two millennia of exile and expulsion. As Adam Kirsch tells us in *The People and the Books: 18 Classics of Jewish Literature*, from the fall of the Temple to the rise of the State of Israel, Jewish history is not primarily a history of political events; it is “a history of books.”

Kirsch is a poet, academic and critic who has written a number of books, and whose work appears in *Tablet*, the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and more. He is a man of letters. His book is made up of essays on classic works of Jewish literature, beginning with the biblical *Deuteronomy* and concluding with *On the Brink: Tevye the Dairyman*, the nine Tevye stories that Sholem Aleichem wrote over a 25-year period beginning in 1895.

Kirsch’s book is not an academic examination of the



works treated. He states his purpose this way: “My goal in *The People and the Books* has been to open up these texts to the interested reader – to show what they contain, how and why they were written, and what they can tell us about Judaism and Jewishness.

He does this well. There are no footnotes. Each chapter has a short bibliography with reference to at least one English translation of the work discussed.

The opening essay, on *Deuteronomy*, tells us what is known about how the book came to be written, comments on its literary qualities, and discusses some of the questions and paradoxes it continues to raise. It is followed by a chapter called “In the Kingdom of

Chance,” which is about *The Book of Esther*. God is not mentioned in the *Esther Megillah*, and yet the Jews survive. Kirsch takes it as a commentary on the riskiness of being a people without power, depending on an individual Jew like Mordechai or Joseph, whose power is itself an invitation for envy: “It is only in the last half-century that this double bind has loosened, thanks to the emergence of two Jewish communities that no

longer conceive of themselves as being in Diaspora.”

Kirsch moves on to the immediate post-biblical period with chapters on the philosophical work of Philo of Alexandria, who tried to show that the Bible and Greek metaphysics say the same things; a history book, Josephus’ “The Jewish War,” about the end of the Jewish kingdom; and *Pirkei Avot*, the masterpiece of Jewish theology and ethics.

The mediaeval period is represented by chapters on books by exiles from Spain: Benjamin of Tudela, Yehuda Halevi, and Moses Maimonides. Jewish mysticism brings in *The Zohar* and the tales of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav.

For Jews, the modern era struggled into existence alongside the mystics. There are essays on Spinoza, Solomon Maimon, and Moses Mendelssohn. Modernity meant that Jewish women started to be heard, so there is a chapter on the *Tsenere*, the Yiddish translation of the bible, intended for women, and on the memoirs of the famous *balebuste*, Gluckel of Hamelin.

The book closes with a chapter on the writings and work of Theodor Herzl, and finally the chapter on Tevye. In his preface, Kirsch comments on the “remarkable continuity of Jewish thought.” In his last chapter, he characterizes the Tevye stories as a “strikingly modern work” and, like a good essayist, shows the continuity by relating them back to many of the works mentioned earlier: Gluckel, *Pirkei Avot*, Maimon, Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Herzl, Philo, Yehuda Halevi, Josephus, and *Deuteronomy*.

MURRAY CITRON  
BOOK REVIEW

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**SUNDAY, APRIL 23**

**Adult Jewish Exploration at Temple Israel:**

The Book of Ruth.  
Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 10 am.  
Info: Cathy Loves, 613-224-1802, [cathy@templeisraelottawa.com](mailto:cathy@templeisraelottawa.com)

**JET Girls Club:** Crafts and conversation for girls in grades 6, 7, 8 and their moms, 3 pm.

Location provided after RSVP. Also May 7.  
Info/RSVP: 613-695-4800, [info@jetottawa.com](mailto:info@jetottawa.com)

**Yom HaShoah Commemoration:**

Join the Federation's Shoah Committee, 7 pm.  
Info: Elana Moscoe, [emoscoe@jewishottawa.com](mailto:emoscoe@jewishottawa.com)

**TUESDAY, APRIL 25**

**Malca Pass Library Book Group Meeting:**

"White Dog Fell from the Sky" by Eleanor Morse will be reviewed by Alvina Ruprecht.  
Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave., 7:30 pm.  
Info: Maureen Kaell, 613-224-8649, [mkaell@rogers.com](mailto:mkaell@rogers.com)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26**

**Eastern Ontario Gift of Life at SJCC:** Representatives will explain organ donation and register potential donors.  
Fitness Centre Hallway, 9:30 to 11:30 am; Main Lobby, 3 to 5 pm.

**"Cracking the code" for Boomer engagement in Jewish life:**  
Linda Kislowicz will present findings and lessons learned from a recent survey of Canadian Jewish adults., 12:30 pm.  
Info/RSVP: Sarah Beutel, 613-798-4696, [sbeutel@jewishottawa.com](mailto:sbeutel@jewishottawa.com)

**EG Happy Hour:**

Sir John A Pub, 284 Elgin St., 6 pm.  
Info: Ariel Fainer, 613-798-4696 ext.240, [afainer@jewishottawa.com](mailto:afainer@jewishottawa.com)

**Women's Torah Study with Rabbi Deborah Zuker:**

Members and non-members welcome. Also June 21, 7 pm.  
Info/RSVP: Rabbi Zuker, [rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com](mailto:rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com)

**FRIDAY, APRIL 28**

**TOTally Shabbat at Temple Israel:** A special Shabbat experience for families with young children.

Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 5:30 pm.  
Info: Cathy Loves, 613-224-1802, [cathy@templeisraelottawa.com](mailto:cathy@templeisraelottawa.com)

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30**

**TIRS Open House for JK - Grade 6:**

Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 9:30 am.  
Info: Sue Potechin, 613-864-8156, [tirs@templeisraelottawa.ca](mailto:tirs@templeisraelottawa.ca)

**Temple's Got Talent:**

Come and celebrate Temple Israel's creative community.  
Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 9:30 am to 3 pm.  
Info: Heather Cohen, 613-224-1802, [execdir@templeisraelottawa.com](mailto:execdir@templeisraelottawa.com)

**Yom Hazikaron:** Memorial ceremony for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of war, 7 pm.

Info: Ella Dagan, 613-798-9818, [edagan@jccottawa.com](mailto:edagan@jccottawa.com)

**MONDAY, MAY 1**

**Bring a Friend to School Days during the month of May:**

Temple Israel Religious School, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr.  
Info: Sue Potechin, 613-864-8156, [tirs@templeisraelottawa.ca](mailto:tirs@templeisraelottawa.ca)

**TUESDAY, MAY 2**

**Yom Ha'Atzmaut City Hall Flag-Raising:**

Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. West, 11:30 am.  
Info: Francie Greenspoon, 613-798-4696, [fgreenspoon@jewishottawa.com](mailto:fgreenspoon@jewishottawa.com)

**Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration:**

Community-wide event, 5 pm.  
Info: Ella Dagan, 613-798-9818, [edagan@jccottawa.com](mailto:edagan@jccottawa.com)

**THURSDAY, MAY 4**

**PJ Library First Ever Parent Book Club:**

First Thursday, every other month (until Nov 2), 7:30 pm.  
Info: Ariel Fainer, 613-798-4696, [afainer@jewishottawa.com](mailto:afainer@jewishottawa.com)

**SUNDAY, MAY 7**

**Building a Gender Inclusive Community with a Jewish Perspective:**

A seminar by Anne Lothian, transgender educator. An open question period will follow. All are welcome.  
Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr., 10 am.  
Info: Dar Blue, 613-297-1838, [blued@me.com](mailto:blued@me.com)

**Film screening "Colliding Dreams":** Feature-length documentary film on evolution of Zionism probes complexities of Israel's creation and presents many points of view.

St. Paul University, 223 Main St., 3:30 pm.  
Info: Gabriella Goliger, 613-222-3838, [goliger@rogers.com](mailto:goliger@rogers.com)

**CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE**

APRIL 21	7:36 PM	MAY 5	7:59 PM
APRIL 28	7:45 PM	MAY 12	8:02 PM

**BULLETIN DEADLINES**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19	FOR MAY 8
WEDNESDAY, MAY 3	FOR MAY 22
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7	FOR JUNE 26
WEDNESDAY, JULY 5	FOR JULY 24
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1	FOR AUGUST 21

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

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*Condolences are extended to the families of:*

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**Marjorie Goldmaker** (née Lang)

**Donald J. Langdon**

**Matvey (Mordechai) Shteynberg**

*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.  
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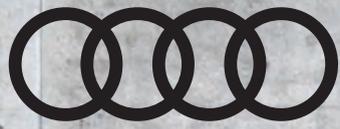


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