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# OTTAWA JEWISH BULLETIN

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## JNF honours Lawrence Greenspon at Negev Dinner

BY NORAH MOR

**M**ore than 500 people filled the sold-out Infinity Convention Centre, November 6, to celebrate 2017 honouree Lawrence Greenspon at the Jewish National Fund (JNF) of Ottawa's annual Negev dinner.

Greenspon, a well-known criminal defence attorney and civil litigator, also has a long history as a devoted community activist and fundraiser. A past chair of the Ottawa Jewish Community Centre and the United Way Community Services Cabinet, Greenspon has initiated a number of health-based events and campaigns and has been previously honoured with many awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award from Volunteer Ottawa and the Community Builder of the Year Award by the United Way.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka, the Negev Dinner MC, praised Greenspon's creative fundraising ideas using "boxing, motorcycles, paddling races and even hockey and dancing events."

"Lawrence has touched so many of us, in so many ways, by devoting endless hours, and being a voice for those who don't have a voice," said Negev Dinner Chair David Feldberg in his remarks.

Greenspon's involvement with JNF dates back to his days as a Hebrew school student in Ottawa when he'd bring coins to class that contributed to planting trees in Israel. In accepting the Negev Dinner honour Greenspon said he was "grateful to be honoured by a community of givers."

"Why am I – why are we – doing these things?" Greenspon asked in regard to charitable pursuits.

"The opposite of love isn't hate, it is indifference, and we rise up by lifting others," Greenspon said in response to his rhetorical question.

Greenspon announced that the funds raised by the Negev Dinner in his honour would support the renewal of the Noga Home residential facility at the ALEH-Negev Nahalat Eran Rehabilitation Village for people with complex disabilities.

The village is home to 137 Jews, Christians, Muslims and Bedouins with severe developmental and physi-



Negev Dinner honouree Lawrence Greenspon receives his citation from the Jewish National Fund of Canada, November 6, at the Infinity Convention Centre,

(From left) Negev Dinner Chair David Feldberg, Carter Grusys, Lawrence Greenspon, Maja Greenspon, Angela Lariviere, JNF National President Wendy Spatzner, Major General (Res) Doron Almog, JNF Ottawa President Dan Mader (partially hidden), and JNF Ottawa Executive Director Lynda Taller-Wakter.

cal disabilities that require extensive supportive care. The residents of the Noga Home are girls in need of a soothing environment, spacious treatment area and new assistive technologies and equipment.

Major General (Res) Doron Almog, founder of ALEH-Negev Nahalat Eran, was the evening's keynote speaker. Almog retired 14 years ago from active service in elite units of the Israel Defense Forces and has since devoted himself to the ALEH-Negev centre. For his efforts, Almog has received the Israel Prize and the Yigal Alon Award for Exemplary Pioneering Social Activities.

Almog brought many in the audience to tears as he spoke about his late son, Eran, who died prematurely in 2007 and "taught me to care, listen, assist, be humble and love, above all."

He said that people with disabilities like his son "are the purest people who have never done harm to

anyone – yet are punished twice, first by broken bodies, and second by shame, stereotypes and a wall of exclusion from society."

ALEH-Negev, Almog explained, is a new model of integration for people living with physical and mental disabilities "all enveloped by love, with the best education and housing facilities."

The disabled, Almog noted, are among "the most discriminated against" in society and urged the audience to help build a world free from discrimination. "By loving the disabled we will have a better humanity," he said.

The evening ended with Carter Grusys thanking Almog for "helping those who can't help themselves by leveraging your strength for them and creating a place where people with special needs can belong, thrive and develop."

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and Ten Yad > p. 6

Barbara Crook on our P2G projects  
in Northern Israel > p. 21



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# Syrian refugee family feels at home in Ottawa

Refugees from the Syrian civil war, the **Al Sahhar** family arrived in Ottawa in February 2016 under sponsorship of **Temple Israel**. Despite a tragic loss, the family has done well in Canada. **Louise Rachlis** reports.

**L**ife for the Al Sahhar family of Syrian refugees sponsored by Temple Israel is very different from what it was on their arrival in Ottawa almost two years ago.

Recently, as Fidaa Al Sahhar served homemade basbousa, a traditional Middle Eastern sweet cake with coconut and syrup, she discussed the definition of the word “enthusiasm” with her friend and former ESL tutor Madeleine Whitfield, a volunteer with ELTOC (English Language Tutoring for the Ottawa Community).

Fidaa, the family’s mother, was telling Whitfield that her current ESL teacher at Graybridge Malkam’s LINC language program was “excited” about the class, and Whitfield was explaining that “enthusiastic” was the right word to describe Fidaa’s teacher.

“I hadn’t heard that word before,” said Fidaa, who is a good example of “enthusiastic” herself.

“She’s such a positive person and a pleasure to be with,” said Whitfield. “They’re a very special family.”

“The family is so independent now,” said Lori Rosove of the Temple Israel Social Action Committee. “They know that in February we will no longer be their sponsors, but we will still be their friends. Things are quite different than last time we spoke.”

A team of more than 30 Temple Israel volunteers had organized and amassed all of the family’s initial settlement requirements. Tasks were broken down into categories like clothing, furniture, translators, education resources, language classes and more. They had the entire apartment set up and stocked so the family could go from the airport to their new home on Meadowlands Drive when they arrived in February 2016.



Tarek (left) and Mohammed Al Sahhar have adapted well and are enjoying their new life in Canada.

Ziad, the father, is now working full time as a house painter. He’s got his driver’s license and now has a car. While Ziad had to stop taking English classes because of his long hours at work, “he gets excellent reviews” from his employer, according to Temple Israel volunteer Jordan Rosove who has stayed in touch with the employer.

Fidaa is now in level 4 ESL and her English is getting better every day. Whitfield is helping her navigate the school system because she wants to enrol at Algonquin College after she completes level 5. She is still considering what to study as she strengthens her English speaking and writing skills.

Son Tarek, almost 13, is in Grade 7 at Merivale High School, and seven-year-old son Mohammed is in Grade 2 at Carleton Heights Public School.

“The boys have lots of friends,” said Lori. “They have a busy social life, and

they love their apartment and to visit with their friends.”

The Al Sahrars, who are Muslim, came to Canada through the Joint 12-month Assistance Support program because of their seven-year-old daughter Sendos’ serious health condition. It was devastating for the family when Sendos died in Ottawa in July 2016.

“Their strong religious beliefs have helped them,” said Lori, “but it was difficult for quite a while. They appreciate that having a car means they can go to the cemetery when they want.”

Just a few weeks after their arrival in Canada in 2016, Ziad spoke to the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin through a volunteer interpreter.

“We were amazed by how much people cared about us, and were doing everything to make us happy,” he said at the time. “Before [we arrived in Canada], we were worried and had so many concerns about our life. But when we got here, everything had been taken care of. We can breathe properly.”

Now that the Al Sahrars are well settled in Canada, they are looking forward to Fidaa’s brother, who is currently in Lebanon, joining them, thanks to a private sponsorship group based at Kehillat Beth Israel synagogue which is working on that.

## CORRECTION

In “A frustrating encounter with the Israeli bureaucracy (November 13),” Elena Keen’s first name was spelled incorrectly. The Bulletin regrets the error.

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MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

Panelists gather following a discussion on interfaith partnerships, November 15, at the Federation members' meeting. (From left) Richard Marceau, Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka (moderator), Amrit Kaur, Imam Farhan Iqbal and Julia Beazley.

## Panel discusses interfaith partnerships in advocacy

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

A panel discussion titled “The Importance of Interfaith Partnerships in Advocacy” was the focus of the semi-annual members’ meeting of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, November 15, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

The discussion was a collaborative effort between Federation and the Centre for Israel Affairs (CIJA) and panelists included Imam Farhan Iqbal of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at of Canada, Ottawa; Amrit Kaur, vice-president for Quebec and Atlantic Canada of the World Sikh Organization; Richard Marceau, general counsel and senior

political adviser at CIJA; and Julia Beazley, director of public policy at the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The moderator was Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Machzikei Hadas.

“Advocacy is what democracy is all about,” said Rabbi Bulka who led the discussion by posing a series of questions to the panelists.

The panel described some of their major challenges that interfaith advocacy could help with.

Imam Iqbal mentioned helping the public and media understand the importance of religious symbols and combatting Islamophobia.

See **Interfaith** on page 14

## Jewish Life in the Arab World at the Mid-Twentieth Century

*An event commemorating the expulsion of Jewish people from countries in North Africa and the Middle East preceding and following the establishment of Israel.*

© Photo Credit: Canadian Jewish Archives (CJCA/CJMA)



Dr. Christopher Silver

### FEATURING

Dr. Christopher Silver, the award-winning inaugural Segal Family Assistant Professor in Jewish History and Culture, Department of Jewish Studies at McGill University.

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Soloway Jewish Community Centre

November 30, 2017

7:15 p.m.



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## Students defeat BDS at uOttawa

BY DANIEL PRUDKOV  
FOR HILLEL OTTAWA

The Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (SFUO) held its monthly Board of Administrators (BoA) meeting on Sunday, November 4. Among other divisive topics, the BoA – consisting of SFUO executives and other faculty student representatives – was to hold a vote on the adoption of a discriminatory anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) motion.

The SFUO has a long history of picking sides in political conversations while allegedly representing the entire student body. Its record shows a history of threatening student clubs they don't agree with.

A few weeks prior to the BDS vote, the SFUO tried to remove club status from the Israel Awareness Committee, as well as from Hillel, citing the clubs' pro-Israel stances as a reason to discredit them. However, that attempt was quickly thwarted.

Representing all students while adopting divisive and discriminatory political stances sounds a little contradictory, right? And the BoA meeting's agenda was nothing less than hypocritical of SFUO's statement of principles promoting debate, inclusion, and free speech.

Many students weren't even shocked about the BDS vote when they found out about it two days prior to the meeting. To be frank, many students saw it coming. However, this reality definitely made some people uncomfortable, others frustrated, and most at a loss for words. But this loss for words translated into a call for action.

With help from Hillel Ottawa, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, and Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, student leaders were guided in drafting an action plan to counter this hateful motion. Students mobilized in droves, contacted their faculty's representatives, and invited their friends to attend the vote. On the day of the vote, more than 50 students showed up to rally against

the BDS motion.

The initial BDS motion simply read, "The Student Federation of the University of Ottawa will support [the BDS] movement as well as take a Pro-Palestine stance."

But before the vote took place, Leila Moumouni-Tchouassi, an SFUO vice-president, proposed an amendment that "the SFUO will divest from industries and companies who actively support war and occupation including the apartheid regime of the State of Israel against the Palestinian population."

If you are trying to understand the difference between the former and the latter, there is none. The SFUO executive actually thought that people's opinions

on the motion would change if instead of specifying BDS, it actually explained the concept.

Jewish or not, political convictions aside, student after student expressed disappointment with the SFUO's

*Many students weren't even shocked about the BDS vote when they found out about it two days prior to the meeting.*

tactics of exclusion. Many stated that BDS was a form of anti-Semitism. Some Jewish students said they felt unwelcome on campus. Others didn't even mention their stance on BDS but simply mentioned that the SFUO has no business choosing sides on such a complex conflict.

After many emotional testimonies, the SFUO got the message. The motion was changed to say "the SFUO will do all in its power to promote peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." This motion passed.

The many smiles and sighs of relief from the crowd standing at the back of the overflowing room said it all as we all want to coexist and we certainly all want peace.

In putting forward the BDS motion, the SFUO seemed to have forgotten that peace will only come with dialogue. Silencing Jews and Israelis is counter-productive. When they try to silence us, we will only get louder.

Hillel Ottawa member Daniel Prudkov is a first-year civil law student at the University of Ottawa.

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*The Sixth Lamentation* by William Brodrick will be reviewed by **Rabbi Steve Garten**, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Israel who is a well-known educator in the community and a fan of mysteries.

9:30 am breakfast followed by review and discussion.

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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.

## *Leonard Cohen* 1934-2016

### Legendary poet, novelist, songwriter and singer

By Michael Regenstreif,  
Editor

**L**eonard Cohen, the legendary Canadian poet, novelist and singer-songwriter was born in Montreal on September 21, 1934 to a prominent Jewish family. His paternal grandfather, Lyon Cohen, was founding president of Canadian Jewish Congress and his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Solomon Klinitsky-Klein, was a noted Talmudic scholar. His father, Nathan Cohen, a clothing manufacturer, died when the boy was just nine years old. Masha Cohen, his mother, from whom he inherited a love for songs and poetry, died in 1978.

Growing up, Cohen studied extensively with his rabbinic grandfather and was profoundly influenced by him on several levels. In much the same way that he and the rabbi would spend many hours discussing the meaning of a single sentence, Cohen said that he often devoted similar amounts of time, sometimes more, to a turn of phrase in a poem or song.

As a McGill student in the early-1950s, Cohen began to make his mark as a poet. His first book of poems, *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, was published in 1956 and Cohen quickly became one of the Montreal's major English-language literary figures. More books of poetry and two novels – *The Favorite Game* and *Beautiful Losers* – soon followed.

In the mid-1960s, Cohen turned his attention to songwriting. The 1960s were an exciting time for innovative songwriters. Another Jewish songwriter, Bob Dylan (born Robert Zimmerman), had combined the musical influences of Woody Guthrie and traditional American folksongs with the literary influences of beat poets and novelists like Allan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, thereby redefining what could be accomplished in a song. Cohen was drawn to that creative challenge and it was as a singer-songwriter that Cohen would attain his most enduring fame.

Jewish and Jewish-influenced themes were evident in many of



Cohen's songs including his most famous song, "Hallelujah," and "You Want It Darker," which he recorded shortly before his death with Cantor Gideon Zelermyer and the men's choir from Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, the synagogue at which he grew up in Montreal.

In 1994, Cohen withdrew from public life and moved to the Mount Baldy Zen Center in California. Zen is a branch of Buddhism that stresses meditation and offers no discussion of God. He left the Zen centre in 1999 and told an interviewer in 2002 that the years he spent at the Zen centre had strengthened his commitment to Judaism. "You just enter into that 4,000-year-old conversation with God

and the sages," he said.

In 2008, Cohen embarked on the first of a series of concert tours over the next five years. With an ensemble of world class musicians and back-up singers, Cohen performed hundreds of masterful, meticulously planned, and long concerts of songs drawn from across his career at major venues around the world, including in Israel.

Cohen suffered from cancer in his final months and died November 7, 2016 after taking a fall in his Los Angeles home. He was buried near his parents at the Shaar Hashomayim cemetery in Montreal. Cohen was survived by a son, Adam, also a noted singer-songwriter, a daughter, Lorca, and three grandchildren.



### *Next in the series*

#### *Louis Rasminsky* 1908-1998

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### *Submit an essay*

To help mark Canada's 150th, we are welcoming personal essays from readers. Please share with us! What does it mean to you to be Jewish in Canada? As a Canadian Jew, what do you hope for our future? Is there anything special in our Canadian history that has impacted you as Jew?

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**FEDERATION  
REPORT**



**JACK SHINDER, PRESIDENT  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES  
OF OTTAWA**

## Jewish Family Services responds to needs in meaningful ways

referrals to the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank; delivering food to approximately 20 families from our Kosher Meals-on-Wheels program; and providing case management, counselling, advocacy, and financial support to individuals and Jewish families who live below the poverty line via our Tikvah program.

Much of the work that JFS accomplishes affects allied communities around the greater Ottawa area. Other than delivering services to our own Jewish community, we view this as an ideal way to break down stereotypical barriers, as well as an opportunity to bring diverse people together across the city.

The JFS budget exceeds \$4.5 million annually with funding and grants from the city, the provincial and federal governments, as well as the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, private charities and foundations, and our own donors. We have also enjoyed partnering in significant charity events with the organizations like Ottawa Chamberfest. These funds enable

the agency to pinpoint needs within the Jewish community, in particular, that are otherwise not being met.

One specific program that I'm particularly proud of is the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, which enables JFS to provide support services to Holocaust survivors. The significant funds received annually from the German government are designed to meet the unique needs of an elderly traumatized population, and JFS is very well suited to act in partnership. The funder is looking for opportunities to broaden its support for the growing needs of this aging population. It is a remarkable expression of contrition that is unprecedented in this day and age.

Another program that I would point out is the Diverse Seniors Support Services program. The program places our staff in the living rooms of seniors, and exposes this diverse population to the soulful work of our highly trained staff. Not only do we meet the support needs

of these populations, but we expose them to our Jewish values.

The ongoing work of JFS changes the views for our Jewish and non-Jewish workers, who then become ambassadors of openness, acceptance, and tolerance. This paradigm shift is helping the Jewish community as more people are replacing hate and fear with reconciliation and trust.

At our recent annual general meeting, our guest speakers, clients and staff, shared how JFS has made a difference in their lives and those of their clients, from the perspectives of the Tikvah Unit, the Counselling Group, and Street Smarts. Being in the forefront of these community-building activities and supporting vulnerable populations enables JFS to develop programs that are over-subscribed and indeed enables us to broaden our many offerings in an atmosphere that relies on cutting-edge strategic techniques, targeted staff training as well as broad community volunteer and financial support.

**J**ewish Family Services of Ottawa (JFS) supports the vulnerable in our Jewish population and in the community-at-large. After a dozen years of serving on the board, I continue to be surprised by how many people underestimate the number of individuals our programs are designed to serve.

JFS responds daily to the needs of this population in a variety of meaningful ways: providing fresh produce to 120 families monthly via our Miriam's Well program; supporting 80 families through

**FROM THE  
PULPIT**



**RABBI IDAN SCHER  
MACHZIKEI HADAS**

## The centrality of kindness in our lives

being well thought out in your kindness is reaching a whole new level.

When I think about a model for this in the Torah I go back to the Torah portion of Hayei Sarah, in which Avraham sends his faithful servant Eliezer to find a wife for his son Yitzhak. In his search, Eliezer keeps his eye out for one specific trait: someone who is kind. But it is not just about being kind. It is about finding someone whose kindness is fueled by their wisdom. Someone who thinks deeply about kindness and who can respond to needs which are not readily apparent. Someone who is insightful about kindness and who puts in the effort to make sure her acts of kindness are as efficient and as impactful as possible. That was the one trait that Eliezer looked for when looking for a wife for Yitzhak.

Rabbi Joseph Baer Solovetichik is the main character in this wonderful story.

A poor man came to the home of Rabbi Joseph Baer. He said he had come to ask a halakhic question regarding Pesach. He told the rabbi that he could not afford to buy wine, so he wished to know if he could fulfil the obligation to drink the four cups of wine during the seder by drinking four cups of milk.

Rabbi Joseph Baer told him one can-

not not fulfil this important mitzvah by drinking milk, and he then gave the man 25 rubles to buy wine.

After the man had gone, the rabbi's wife approached her husband and asked, "Why, when wine costs two or three rubles, did you give him 25?"

Rabbi Joseph Baer smiled and said, "If he is so poor that he cannot afford wine for the seder, I doubt that he has the money to buy matzo for the seder either. And if he is asking about drinking milk, that means he has no meat or chicken, because he would not be mixing it with milk! I want to give him enough money so that he can buy the proper food that he needs to fully enjoy the holiday of Pesach."

Kindness is one thing. To be ever-thinking with your kindness, that's on the next level.

Ten Yad, a volunteer-run organization, has revolutionized kindness in our community by thinking deeply about kindness, and how to be as efficient and as impactful as possible in this mission.

Almost 10 years ago, a group of women from every segment of our Jewish community sat around a dining room table and reflected. They saw

See Pulpit on page 18

**O**n a recent Sunday evening, 135 volunteer cooks gathered at Congregation Machzikei Hadas to prepare meals to benefit Ten Yad, a wonderful local organization that provides support to Jewish families in times of need.

I spoke that evening about the centrality of *chesed* (kindness) in our lives and I share some of the ideas from that speech here.

What does optimal kindness look like? Many are kind, but optimal kindness is more than just being kind. It's a fusion of kindness with thought and wisdom. It's thinking deeply about where my kindness is most needed and how to provide that kindness in the most impactful and effective way possible. Spontaneous kindness is great, but

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FROM THE EDITOR



MICHAEL REGENSTREIF

One of the most profound Jewish cultural events I've witnessed since moving to Ottawa a decade ago took place in a Christian church.

It was a concert on November 9, the 79th anniversary of Kristallnacht – the Night of Broken Glass – when Nazi brown-shirts conducted murderous and devastatingly destructive anti-Semitic pogroms throughout Germany and Austria.

Hundreds of synagogues and thousands of Jewish homes and businesses were destroyed on Kristallnacht, among them the Hebräaische Buchhandlung (Hebrew Bookstore) which was also the headquarters of Hirsch Lewin's Semer record label.

From 1933 until 1938, Lewin had pro-

## The lost – and found – Jewish music of Germany before the Holocaust

lifically recorded German Jewish singers and musicians with repertoires ranging from Yiddish folk and theatre songs to classical music, popular and art songs, opera, and much more. Ironically, he also recorded musicians and singers from pre-state Israel who travelled to Berlin because there were not yet any professional recording studios in the Holy Land – so some of the earliest Israeli folksongs were recorded in Nazi Germany.

All of the masters that Lewin had produced as well as his stock of records were destroyed on Kristallnacht and presumed to be lost forever.

In 1992, German musicologist Rainer E. Lotz began what turned out to be a decade-long, worldwide quest to find copies of the entire Semer catalogue. Eventually he was able to assemble "Beyond Recall," an 11-CD boxed set that includes more than 14 hours of Jewish music recorded in Berlin in the 1930s on the Semer label, as well as a 516-page hardcover book.

In 2012, the Berlin Jewish Museum commissioned Alan Bern, a renowned American Jewish musician living in the German capital, to put together a

contemporary band to perform modern adaptations of music from the Semer recordings. Bern recruited other Jewish musicians living in Germany, as well as from the U.S., for what became known as the Semer Ensemble.

This month, the Semer Ensemble performed concerts in three U.S. and three Canadian cities. The Ottawa concert took place at Southminster United Church in Old Ottawa South.

The concert – fittingly titled "Rescued Treasure" – was spectacular. Virtually every piece in the long program was a highpoint. Bern and the other virtuoso musicians and singers – including Lorin Sklamberg of the Klezmatics – performed brilliantly. There were moments of great sadness in the music as well as moments of great humour, and great spirituality in what was, in essence, a celebration and remembrance of the vibrant Jewish culture that existed in Germany before the Holocaust – and which is enjoying a substantial and meaningful revival today.

I've attended concerts in churches on many occasions – including several at Southminster United. But it was odd to

hear this distinctly Jewish music – some of it religious – in a sanctuary filled with Christian iconography.

And of all the concerts I've ever attended in churches, this one surely had the most Jewish of audiences. I recognized what must have been several hundred members of the Jewish community among the hundreds more in the sold-out church.

However, many Orthodox Jews would not, or would be reluctant to, attend an event taking place in a church. So, although the Southminster United Church folks were completely welcoming, the very nature of the venue itself was unwelcoming for some Jewish people. For that reason, I wish the Ottawa concert – like the Semer Ensemble's other North American concerts – had taken place at either a Jewish or nonreligious venue. The Montreal concert, for example, was at Shaar Hashomayim, an Orthodox synagogue, while the Toronto concert was at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

The Semer Ensemble has a CD, also called "Rescued Treasure," that includes many of the pieces they performed in Ottawa. It is well worth seeking out.

IDEAS AND IMPRESSIONS



JASON MOSCOVITZ

Numbness comes on in these strange times when mass slaughters in the U.S. are almost weekly news. What should be shocking news is becoming routine – and it is dehumanizing to see us become used to mass murder.

Mass murder is so random, so unpredictable and so demoralizing. There are now two kinds of indiscriminate mass murderers. There are the terrorists and there are the "crazies," but in the end there is so little difference between them. They both kill as many as they can.

Both kinds of these attacks lead to astounding numbers of dead people of all ages and genders. That's the indiscriminate part. Then there are the wounded that somehow survived

## U.S. politics keeps gun reform out of reach

the bullets but are struggling. Many maimed people, young and old, will struggle for the rest of their lives.

The news networks feed off these terrible tragedies. Anchors go on location and the drill is always the same. Beginning interviews with victims' family members they tell them how sorry they are for their loss. But the sorrow sounds hollow because being sorry too many times makes it almost sickly mundane.

We grew accustomed to bombs and other devices exploding in faraway places in Africa and the Middle East. Terrorist attacks and insane killing sprees in Western Europe and North America are relatively newer, but hardly anyone seems to be shocked anymore. Not like Canadians once were.

December 6 will mark the 28th anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre at the Université de Montréal. Fourteen women were murdered – and another 14 people were wounded – by a madman who came to the engineering school that bitterly cold winter day to hunt down and kill women because, as was made clear in his suicide note, he hated women and the feminist movement. Marc Lépine didn't think women should be engineers.

Canadians were shaken and sickened and there was political pressure

on Brian Mulroney's Conservative government to toughen Canada's gun laws. While there was disagreement and later repeal of the long gun registry by Stephen Harper's government, there was a strong Canadian consensus to make enhanced gun control a Canadian standard to be proud of.

December 6, 1989 was a long time ago and there hasn't been a mass killing on that large a scale in Canada since. But we shake our heads in bewilderment as mass killings in the United States continue unabated.

For all the security measures now in place, there seems to be no defence at big gatherings like an open air country music concert, or at an indoor gay discotheque, an elementary school, a high school, or a church. And no defence on a bicycle path when a homegrown terrorist wants to kill people by mowing them down with a truck.

We know that with so many votes to lose, that American politicians are not interested in passing tougher gun laws. It doesn't seem to matter how many of their fellow citizens are gunned down by assault rifles and machine guns which remain readily accessible to virtually anyone with the money to buy them.

The attacks in recent weeks indicate

Americans with documented troubled pasts can still manage to get weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition to slaughter people. What is so hard to understand is how anyone could think a machine gun can be used, outside of military use, for anything other than killing dozens of innocent people in seconds.

It is beyond sad to see all these lives lost, all these families' hopes shattered, because so many troubled insane people in the U.S. can use assault weapons to turn themselves into killing machines. The problem seems so obvious, the solution seems so easy, and yet American politics make significant reform out of reach.

In 2012 at the Sandy Hook Elementary school in Connecticut 20 six- and seven-year-olds were gunned down for nothing. It was a low blow to humanity that set a trend to which we can now add Las Vegas, San Bernardino, Orlando, Charleston, and Sutherland Springs, Texas. And with every massacre we wonder why nothing changes in the U.S.

And after every massacre so many American politicians keep saying that after a mass killing is not the time to discuss gun control. And with the frequency of these events it will never be the right time for them.

# New group launched for Jewish stepmoms and single mothers

BY LYNNE COHEN BEN-AMI  
FOR HEARTLINKS

**D**id you ever think you could paint a beautiful picture of, say, the Kotel in Jerusalem, in front of a vivid sunset? Neither did anyone in the group of women who gathered for fun and enjoyment at the Heartlinks paint night, October 29, at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC).

For 75 minutes, instructor Miriam Gershzon strolled around the room, studying each creation, and patiently offering advice on how to craft 'a stunning masterpiece.' The budding artists gazed with excitement at their work and marvelled at their hidden gifts. Several potential new Heartlinks members also dropped in to greet and support the participants.

A relatively new organization, Heartlinks brings together women who are stepmoms or who are single due to divorce or widowhood.

"We are a special organization for Ottawa Jewish mothers," said founder and coordinator Miriam Tanger, who herself has three children and three stepchildren. "I am in my second marriage and my husband and I just celebrated our two-year anniversary. For a long time I really felt there was a need for a group like this, so I applied for a grant back in June."



Heartlinks founder and coordinator Miriam Tanger (left), Delphine Jacobson and Gladys Zarecki enjoy the Heartlinks paint night, October 29, at the SJCC.

Tanger received a grant from the Women's Collective Philanthropy Program of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation to support her initiative to help women and children.

"I saw that Ottawa was not supporting these women enough," said Tanger,

"that there were not enough programs, not even entertainment or socializing events, to bring them together."

The first Heartlinks event was a lecture at Jewish Family Services (JFS) given by Devorah Jonas, a family mediator and certified divorce coach. Jonas'

presentation focused on developing resilience in children and other issues related to divorce. Kids' programming was also provided at which children made a Heartlinks banner.

Paint night, a night out for women only, provided a venue for members to enjoy the company of others who can identify or relate to their situation. Refreshments were served thereby combining three surefire entertainments: Judaism, art and food.

One of the single mothers laughed as she explained her son's reaction when she left the house: "What's going on, Mom, are you going out? You have plans to socialize and have fun? This is so weird!"

Tanger said the next Heartlinks program will be kid-centred.

"I am the coordinator but we all work together to decide what we want and need. Our Facebook page has members from all different Jewish denominations. There are a variety of ages too. Some women are grandmothers; some are young moms with a baby at home. It is great to have events at different parts of the city like JFS and the SJCC so members can see what the community has to offer."

For information about Heartlinks, contact Miriam Tanger at [YandM613@gmail.com](mailto:YandM613@gmail.com).

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**JNF Ottawa Negev Dinner honours  
Lawrence Greenspon**

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Lawrence Greenspon expressed his deepest, heartfelt emotion and gratitude to the 550 people who came to the JNF Ottawa Negev Dinner, November 6, to recognize him as this year's most-deserving and inspiring Honouree. He recalled his early connection to JNF as a child, filling a JNF Blue Box or buying leaves that would ultimately add up to the purchase of a tree.

His path to becoming an Honouree started as a Bar Mitzvah boy – his gifts ranged from binoculars to cheques to a poem, which at the time left him underwhelmed. But it is Rudyard Kipling's poem, "If," given to him by his father that is the only gift he continues to treasure. Rich in themes of stoicism and overcoming adversity, the poem conveys a key guiding principle to Lawrence's approach to life, the last stanza of which he recited.

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute/With sixty seconds' worth of distance run/Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it/And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!*

Another key influencing figure in his life was his late stepfather Paul, an Auschwitz survivor, who taught him the deepest meanings of community. And Lawrence is an unparalleled champion for dozens of community causes ranging from youth at risk to children with disabilities to the underprivileged and marginalized.

His project at ALEH Negev-Nahalat Eran is an obvious continuation of the work he has championed locally for the past 30 years. Lawrence, citing that *aleh* in Hebrew means leaf, saw the JNF and ALEH connection as a perfect fit. And, it was fitting that Major General (Res) Doron Almog was the keynote speaker. Speaking from his heart about having a son with severe autism, Doron spoke about this commitment to never leave the weakest members of society behind; and that the only way to measure the success of society is by the care we give to our weakest and most vulnerable.



Dinner Chair David Feldberg, Lawrence Greenspon, Major General (Res) Doron Almog and Angela Lariviere.

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# What Balfour means for pro-Israel advocacy today

**STEVE MCDONALD, CIJA  
GUEST COLUMN**

**T**his year marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, a cause for commemoration and even celebration on the part of Jewish activists worldwide.

The Balfour Declaration refers to a short letter from Lord Arthur Balfour, a former United Kingdom prime minister and then-foreign secretary, to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild. In it, Balfour declared that the British cabinet had approved a statement that the government favoured the establishment of a Jewish national home in what was soon to become the British Mandate of Palestine.

The implications of the Declaration have been debated by pro- and anti-Israel activists for, well, an entire century. For many in the pro-Israel community, the Declaration is akin to a Magna Carta for the Zionist movement: an affirmation – from the very authority that would oversee the territory – that Zionism was indeed a worthy enterprise.

Without diminishing this sentiment, I offer my interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and what it teaches us about pro-Israel advocacy today.

The Balfour Declaration was a strategically vital *recognition* of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination – and one that clearly affected the course of history. But Balfour did not *establish* our national rights, which pre-existed the Declaration. These rights have always been rooted in the natural right of every nation to shape its own identity and achieve self-determination in its ancestral land.

This is not a minor distinction. We dare not confuse the *validation* of our rights with the *source* of our rights. Indeed, our detractors falsely do so. In their minds, if the Balfour Declaration can be dismissed as a “colonial” statement, the rights of the Jewish people to which it speaks can be similarly undermined.

It's this sort of nonsense that suggests Jewish history in the land began in 1917. To believe it, one would have to ignore the mountains – and caverns – of archaeological and historical evidence that confirm a Jewish presence in the land for millennia. In

addition to various non-biblical documents confirming Jewish indigenous roots in Israel, the Bible itself is widely recognized – even by ardent atheists – as a historical chronicle of a particular people in a particular land.

As Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), recently observed, the Balfour Declaration was “one milestone among many that confirm the moral, historic, and legal right of the Jewish people to self-determination in our ancestral land. Just as many states endorsed the Balfour Declaration at the time, the international community's support for the national liberation of the Jewish people after centuries of exile has been expressed time and again.”

Fogel further noted that, in a similar vein, November also marks “the 70th anniversary of the UN partition resolution of 1947, which expressly called for the creation of a Jewish state.”

The Balfour Declaration matters today precisely because it is more important than ever that we show how our fundamental rights as a people are backed by international consensus. The Declaration is not the linchpin of this recognition but rather a signpost on the road to achieving widespread affirmation of our rights.

Every year, CIJA brings approximately 200 Canadian leaders and future leaders (almost all of whom are non-Jewish) on fact-finding missions to Israel. As someone who heads an annual trip of post-grad students, I can tell you that most Canadians – including those sympathetic to Israel – are not particularly interested in what a British lord had to say about the region a century ago.

But what they do care about, and what makes them more receptive to understanding the strong legal and moral foundation for Israel's existence, is that many global figures and organizations (including the UN) have echoed these rights. In this regard, Balfour is an important thread of the historic fabric.

The importance of non-Jewish validators applies to many pro-Israel advocacy issues, such as Israel's right to define itself as a Jewish homeland, the dangers of BDS, or the threat posed by Israel's neighbours. On these and other topics, our target audience is generally more receptive to our perspective when we can demonstrate that it is one shared by others, including governments and leaders around the world.

Balfour matters, but we should remember why. The Declaration serves not as the *basis* for modern Israel's existence but as a key *witness* to the abundant evidence – irrefutable, millennia-old proof – of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination.

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. Follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/koshermcdonald>.

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**Jewish Memorial Gardens honours veterans**

To honour our Ottawa Jewish veterans this Remembrance Day, Jewish Memorial Gardens (JMG) and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa marked the graves of several hundred brave veterans buried in our cemeteries with Canadian flags. Although the groups worked diligently to honour all Jewish veterans, some of the records, particularly names found on the Honour Roll with only first initials, were incomplete. If you have a family member who was a veteran and whose grave was missed, please contact JMG at 613-688-3530 or visit [www.jewishmemorialgardens.org/contact/](http://www.jewishmemorialgardens.org/contact/) to leave an email.



**City honours Cantor Benlolo**

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson (right) and Kitchissippi Ward Councillor Jeff Leiper (left) present the Mayor's City Builder Award to Rabbi Cantor Daniel Benlolo, November 8, at the start of the City Council meeting.

Cantor Benlolo, who recently returned to live and work in Montreal after 23 years in Ottawa, was honoured for his long record of volunteer service, particularly with the Jewish and interfaith communities.

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## Interfaith: ‘There is so much that unites us’

Continued from page 3

Kaur agreed with the imam’s point about the importance of understanding religious symbols and pointed to the importance of the turban and kirpan – the ceremonial knife carried by Sikhs – to her own faith.

“Being a turbaned woman, I’m not oppressed,” she said. “I cannot take my religion from my existence. We’ve gotten a lot of support from other religions. It has made us appreciate our religious symbols even more. It creates empathy.”

“When religious freedom is challenged for one group, it’s challenged for all of us,” said Beasley. “There is an awful lot we can work together on.”

Marceau pointed to social housing and palliative care as examples of issues that CIJA is working on with other faith groups.

All the panelists agreed that their religious values and beliefs shape their world view to help, but they don’t wish to impose their beliefs on others.

“There is so much that unites us, to support each other and to know each other better,” said Marceau. Quoting Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom, he described Judaism as a “call

to rebel against injustice.”

“Canada is a model for other countries in interfaith work,” said Imam Iqbal.

At the end of the discussion Rabbi Bulka opened the floor to questions from the audience.

“We don’t hear about how much is being done by other religious com-

munities. How do we work together?” asked one member of the audience.

“The hardest communities to speak to are our own,” another audience member added. “When we come together, we might hear ‘why should we help *them*, what do they do for *us*?’ We need to tell the stories, and we need to hear them.” She cited the success of the Multifaith Housing Initiative in Ottawa as an example of successful interfaith cooperation.

“We all have to share our stories,” said Kaur.

It’s hard to get attention for interfaith cooperation in the media when “there’s no sex, no blood and no sport, and so people aren’t as interested,” said Marceau. He mentioned that it doesn’t make news that Sikh temples have soup kitchens to help feed needy people.

Marceau added that one area of interfaith advocacy and cooperation that has received media attention has been the help provided over the past two years to refugees from the Syrian civil war. He pointed out that many synagogues, churches, mosques and Sikh temples have organized sponsorships to help refugees settle in Canada.

The meeting began with Federation President and CEO Andrea Freedman providing an update on progress of Federation’s five-year strategic plan.

Now at the three-year mark, Freedman said that good progress has already been made on 85 per cent of the initiatives detailed in the plan. Crediting strong volunteer leadership and professional management she said she expects the majority of the goals will be achieved by the end of the five-year period in 2019.

Freedman cited Federation’s Emerging Generation division, “which has grown by leaps and bounds,” as an example of the plans success at this point.

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## Win prizes and eat chocolate at Torah Day School of Ottawa fundraiser

BY SARA-LYNNE LEVINE  
TORAH DAY SCHOOL OF OTTAWA

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Prizes include trips for two to Israel, airfare to anywhere in North America; centre court Toronto Raptors tickets; a laptop computer; electronics; tickets and passes to museums, the National Gallery, and the National Arts Centre; tickets to Ottawa Senators, Redblacks, 67's and Fury games; themed bundles for the wine lover, coffee drinker, sports enthusiast and much more.

There are also children's prizes including toys and admissions to FunHaven, Little Ray's Reptiles and Saunders Farm. There will also be a silent auction for several special items.

Hosted by the hilarious Rabbi David Rotenberg, you can expect humour that includes belly laughs, guffaws, chuckles, chortles and giggles.

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To purchase tickets to Chocolate Chances, contact Torah Day School of Ottawa at [events@torahday.ca](mailto:events@torahday.ca) or 613-274-0110. We hope you can attend.

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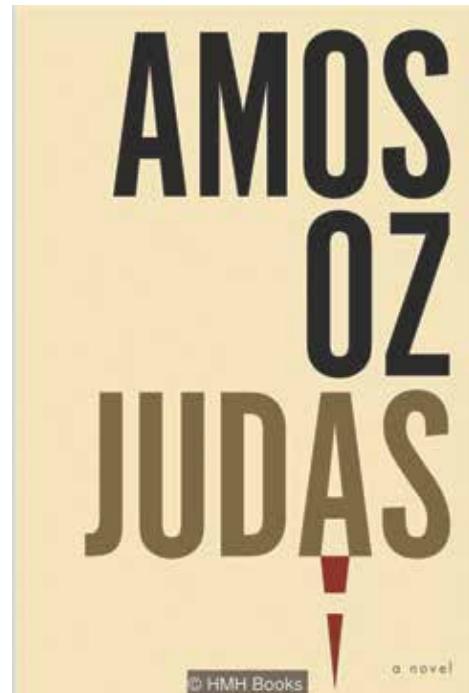
# Righteous characters at odds with prevailing norms

## Judas

By Amos Oz  
Translated by Nicholas de Lange  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
320 pages

Can betrayal be a form of loyalty? Consider the archetype of betrayal, Judas, whom Dante consigned to the innermost ring of the inferno. In 1937, Aaron Abraham Kabak published *The Narrow Path*, a fictional retelling of the life of Jesus. In it, Jesus asks his disciple Yehuda Ish-Keriot (Judas Iscariot) to hand him over to the Roman oppressors in order to set in motion the uprising against them. Jesus, in *The Narrow Path*, recognizes that Judas, of all the apostles, is strong enough to fulfil his self-destructive demand. The reality of the gospel account is that while Jesus is crucified by the Romans, it does not lead to a revolt of national redemption, but rather to a movement of individual spiritual transformation.

In *Judas*, his first novel in 10 years, Israeli author Amos Oz resumes the debate about betrayal and loyalty and reconsiders the contemporary meaning of Judas for the Jewish state. *Judas* combines an exploration of the motivation of the renegade apostle and what the author calls a story of “error, desire and



unrequited love,” set in Oz’s native Jerusalem in 1956.

The link between the two strands is a young, sensitive Shmuel Ash, a bib-

lical studies student who has dropped out of university. He takes a live-in job as a companion to an elderly, incapacitated man, Gershon Wald, who, in true Jewish fashion, needs someone to argue with as a coping mechanism against the tragedy which destroyed his life: the death of his son in the War of Independence. Also living in the gloomy house is Wald’s daughter-in law, Atalia Abravanel. Gershon encourages Shmuel to continue his research into Jewish views of Judas.

In less skillful hands the academic slugfest would be boring. Oz describes Judas as the only real believer in the divinity of Jesus. He believes that if Jesus is crucified and rises from the dead while on the cross the world will be forever changed. As we know, the story did not end that way and in the book Judas commits suicide. He will be remembered not as the truest disciple but as the Traitor.

But Oz does more than recraft the Judas story. He juxtaposes it with the story of Sheatiel Abravanel, Atelia’s father. Sheatiel, a fictional character, had been the only member of the Zionist executive committee to oppose David Ben-Gurion over the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. Abravanel had developed close friendships with the local Arab population and instead

of statehood advocated that Jews and Arabs should live side by side as equals in a country under international control. His Zionist colleagues rejected his view, forced him to resign from the council and labelled him a traitor. Abravanel was forced to live out his life as an outcast, a Judas.

Oz gives us two characters who act in a righteous, just manner but whose opinions are at odds with the prevailing norms. They are not honoured for their “prophetic posturing,” rather they are reviled and hated. Oz calls to our attention that both Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln were called traitors in their own times. Their love for their countries was eventually requited but Abravanel and Judas die as prophets with no honour.

*Judas* is a multi-layered novel. It is certainly a personal novel as Oz has been vilified by the Israeli right for advocating a two-state solution and for criticizing Israeli governments that have refused to actively pursue peace. He has been called a traitor by more than one politician, more than one newspaper, and more than one Israeli.

You will find this old-fashioned in its writing but modern in its sensitivity. It was originally published in Hebrew and is now available in this English translation.

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# Pulpit: Ten Yad is a ‘fusion of what kindness and wisdom looks like’

Continued from page 6

that so many people wanted to help their friends and family during challenging times, but they were not as organized as they wanted to be or they could not sustain the support in a meaningful way. As much as they tried to help, their efforts were not as impactful as they would have liked because it wasn't a coordinated effort among everyone who was trying to help.

This meant that a person or family going through a difficult time might receive a lasagna every night

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Along came Ten Yad and changed everything. They created an organized system with coordinators in every area of Ottawa directing an army of volunteers. It is a system that uses a family's circle of support in the

most effective and impactful way possible. Through this system people and families who have a limited or no circle of friends or family in Ottawa are being taken care of and receiving the support they need.

Ten Yad continues to branch out covering a range of support from visiting the sick to providing kosher pantries in the Ottawa hospitals, constantly acting as a paradigm of what that fusion of kindness and wisdom looks like. This is high-level kindness at its finest, and all of us in Ottawa are blessed to have them.



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Ruth Adler by Sylvia and Morton Pleet, Felice and Jeff Pleet, and Harris Pleet and Aurete Lavie

Jonah Poplove by Phyllis and Lou Gordon

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# Come share the music that moves you

BY IRWIN M. BRODO  
AJA 50+

It's said that music and the love of music binds people as few other things do. Many of us who have had careers in business, medicine, the trades, academia or whatever turn back to our love of music when we near and then reach retirement. Such was the reason for the formation of an Active Jewish Adults (AJA) 50+ group devoted to exploring music of all kinds more than a decade ago.

Under the guidance and leadership of Roslyn Frankl and Sherwin Lyman, the group was formed to present and discuss the music of Jewish performers and composers. "Jews in Music" covered theatre music, the classics, jazz, pop and folk and there was no lack of material for the weekly presentations, all prepared by the participants themselves. Subjects included Israeli singers, Jewish violinists (by the score), opera singers, Broadway greats and famous popular singers with Jewish backgrounds.

Gradually, the group's interests spread out more broadly - "Zubin Mehta? Well, he's like a friend of the family." "Mendelssohn? He may have converted, but look at his grandfather." Eventually the group's name was changed to "Sharing the Music that Moves You" so that there are no boundaries as to what kind of music or musicians are discussed.

It's a club that expands interests, tastes and horizons as well as our appreciation of music of all kinds. There might be a program on Russian composers one week, and on Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers or Theodore Bikel, Sting, the French impres-



Roslyn Frankl (left) and Sherwin Lyman co-founded "Sharing the Music that Moves You," an AJA 50+ group that meets Thursday mornings at the SJCC.

sionists or Nat King Cole the next.

Sometimes, the week's presentation is a musical film that interests a member who explains why it deserves attention. Another participant might bring in CDs by a young jazz vocalist from Montreal that she heard on radio and another might be a fully researched presentation on the history of the mandolin, with examples of virtuosos from YouTube and even a live performance.

All the group's participants get in the act and "share music that moves them." There's much to be learned

in preparing these presentations and it is exhilarating to share all that knowledge and exciting discoveries with like-minded friends.

And we are a friendly group. We meet Thursday mornings at 10 am for one-and-a-half to two hours, usually in the board room at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. For more information, contact Roslyn Frankl at [rosfrankl@rogers.com](mailto:rosfrankl@rogers.com), Sherwin Lyman at [lymansx@rogers.com](mailto:lymansx@rogers.com) or myself at [ibrodo@sympatico.ca](mailto:ibrodo@sympatico.ca). The cost is \$15 per season for AJA 50+ members.

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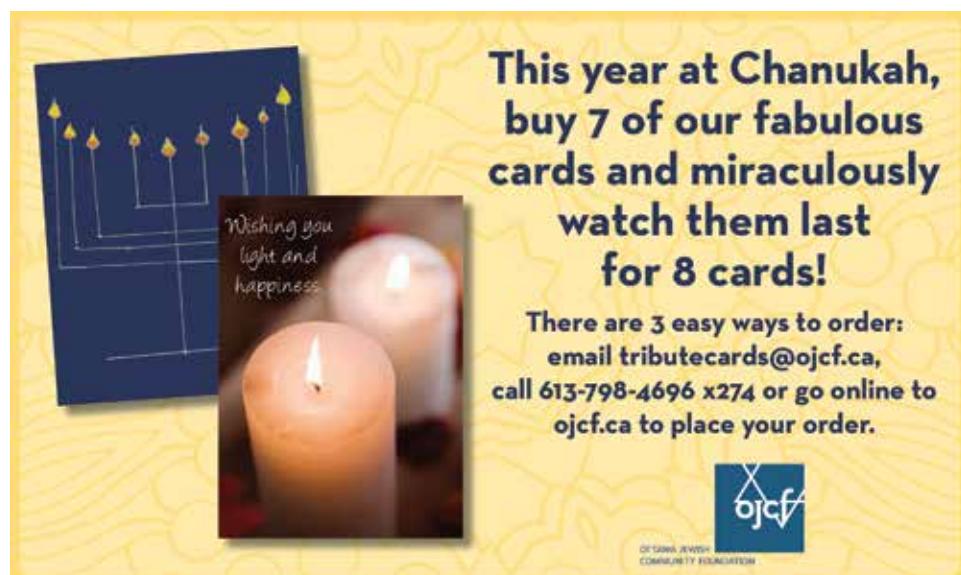
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## P2G projects help young Israelis create their own opportunities

**M**ETULLA, Israel – The work table is too crowded, and there’s no extra room for storage.

Time to call in some consultants – in this case, Grade 5 and 6 students at HaNadiv School, working in a classroom that’s also a “tinkering space” and design lab.

The students come up with questions or problems, find innovative solutions and build prototypes that could one day become marketable products.

For the crowded table, the students came up with different designs to organize and store school supplies. One group of girls designed and built a fabric case that stores two dozen pens and pencils in a compact roll.

Another group created a box to hold a range of school supplies, with straps that hook over the back of a chair.

Three teachers are present, but the kids are leading this program at HaNadiv, which is partnered with the Ottawa Jewish Community School through Partnership 2Gether (P2G).

The program is called Maker Space, which is known around the world but is quite new to Israel. Although the students have access to a range of tools, from sewing machines to 3D printers, this isn’t an industrial arts class.

Maker Space is all about helping young people develop critical thinking skills that will help them succeed in science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM).

It also fosters teamwork, creativity and mentoring skills. Some of the Grade 5 students, for example, have developed innovative games that will be used to teach math to Grade 2 students.

Jewish Federation of Ottawa President and CEO Andrea Freedman, Linda Kerzner and I visited HaNadiv earlier this month during our P2G meetings in the Upper Galilee. We also visited our newest partner, Einat HaGalil School, which is twinned with Temple



BARBARA CROOK  
MY ISRAEL

Israel Religious School.

P2G pairs Jewish communities in the Diaspora with cities or regions in Israel. Ottawa is part of the Coast to Coast Partnership, with Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and Atlantic Canada.

We’re partnered with Kiryat Shmona, Metulla, Mevo’ot HaHermon, Galil Elyon and Yesod HaMa’ala, northern communities near the borders with Lebanon and Syria.

We focus on youth and education, Geshet Hai (people-to-people partnerships that include school twinning programs and student exchanges) and capacity building – social programming and regional development.

The Upper Galilee is geographically, economically and politically isolated. Despite its spectacular beauty and affordable cost of living, it’s tough to attract new families to the region. And when the best and the brightest leave the region for higher education, they rarely return.

That’s why so many of the programs we support, such as the robotics program at Emek HaHula Regional High School, emphasize skills that will allow young people to create their own opportunities as entrepreneurs and inventors.

We’ve just approved funding for a STEAM pilot project that we hope will eventually reach all the elementary schools in the region. Like the Maker Space program at HaNadiv, the Galilium Initiative (in partnership with Tel-Hai College) introduces problem solv-

ing, design and entrepreneurship to younger students.

It emphasizes biomimicry, which seeks sustainable solutions to human problems by studying the patterns of nature. For example, students were inspired by the shell of an armadillo to design protective clothing for motorcyclists.

I could write a year’s worth of columns about P2G, but here are a few more highlights.

Since our partnership funded half the salary of a psychology intern at the Youth Mental Health Clinic in Kiryat Shmona, the waiting list for regular treatment has dropped from eight months to two months. The most urgent cases can be seen immediately.

At Hafuch al-Hafuch in Kiryat Shmona, a drop-in counselling and information centre, we’ve funded a new program specifically for adolescent girls. It includes private counselling, workshops on such issues as sexuality and prevention of risky behavior, and a young ambassadors program in co-operation with the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel.

Private donations from Ottawa provided 20 scholarships to the Clore Music and Dance Center at Kfar Blum, and allowed 17 Grade 9 students from Yesod HaMa’ala to go on a life-changing Holocaust education trip to Poland in July.

Private donations from Ottawa and Vancouver bought equipment and expanded programs at Beit Kadima in Kiryat Shmona, which provides hot meals, tutoring and activities for kids at risk.

We’re not talking big bucks here. We’re dealing with modest Canadian seed money and strategic investments, leveraged with money from the Israeli government when possible.

And we’re working with tireless Israelis who demonstrate extraordinary commitment to their people, their country and their future.

That’s what I call a great partnership.

## When faith meets data: ‘Who gets to define who is a Jew?’

**R**ight before Rosh Hashanah, we got an unexpected piece of mail – a Shana Tova card from an Ottawa area member of Parliament.

Some might find this an interesting bit of political outreach. I found it unsettling. I don’t know this MP – they don’t represent my riding – and I’ve never dealt with them or their office for any reason.

It’s not rocket science to figure out how I might have ended up on the greeting card list in general.

I write this column, after all, and my husband is active in the Jewish community. We’re in the Ottawa Jewish phone book, a public list of sorts all in its own right.

Why would an MP who doesn’t represent me directly feel he should send us a card? That’s a reflection of how politics has become a bit of a nice marketing game – a subject for another time.

But what unsettled me was that, in government office, there’s a list of people who are Jewish and identified as such by name. What starts out as a holiday card list can easily be manipulated for purposes far less benign.

It got me thinking though about the question of how we are identified as Jews and who gets to make the choice about that definition.

Another list of Jews has been in media lately – the government mega-list, aka the census. Thanks to questions on ethnic origin and religion, the government may not know all the Jews in Canada by name, but it has a pretty good idea of where they live.

There’s been some controversy over what the 2016



STEPHANIE SHEFRIN  
MODERN  
MISHPOCHA

census says about the Jewish population, based on the way the question about ethnic origins was asked this year. In raw data terms, the results suggest that in 2016, the number of people with Jewish origins dropped by half when compared with the 2011 results.

The Jewish population in Canada hasn’t declined by that dramatic an amount in five years. Simply put what happened was that in 2011, Jewish was on the list of ethnic origins people could choose when filling out the census. In 2016, it wasn’t. People had to write it in. So, the responses plummeted.

Ottawa Jewish Bulletin editor Michael Regenstreif explains a bit more of what happened in his November 13 column, and Jackie Luffman does a great deep dive into the issue on her Ottawashetl blog.

<https://ottawashetl.wordpress.com>

What struck me as so fascinating is the existential issue at the heart of it all: Who gets to define who is a Jew? And how do we craft that definition?

The census results have sent minor shockwaves through the organized Jewish community – demo-

graphic data, after all, is used to plan and allocate increasingly scarce resources.

But as we all know, those decisions don’t get made based just on what the numbers say.

There’s also the question of the extent to which the people behind those numbers stand up and ask to be counted.

In my October 30 column, I wrote largely about the positive developments in our community to make sure the needs of young families were being met. By showing increased interest in the programs being made available, we’re, in essence, standing up to be counted – and we are.

But in that column, I also referenced some recent instances where, when other people have sought to be included in our community, the responses they’ve received raise questions for me about whether we’re also falling short of the standards of inclusivity to which I believed everyone legitimately aspires.

For this, I’ve been accused of distorting or just making up facts, tarnishing the reputation of an entire segment of the community and actively seeking to drive a wedge between it and others.

I’m glad people took the time to challenge my views and stand up for theirs. That’s their right.

Every Jew in this community – whether they meet a census definition or not – has the right, and perhaps even the obligation, to stand up and be counted if we want a community that truly reflects our diversity. We shouldn’t need a census to make that a priority.

# Stuart McGill on preventing and eliminating lower back pain



**GLORIA SCHWARTZ**  
**FOCUS ON FITNESS**

**B**ack pain is a complex problem. To find out how to best prevent and eliminate it, I spoke with Stuart McGill, PhD, a world-renowned expert in low-back disorders and spine biomechanics with over 30 years of experience including research, training clinicians and seeing patients. He is a professor emeritus at the Department of Kinesiology, University of Waterloo. He's written several books including *Back Mechanic: The Step-by-step McGill Method to fix back pain*.

The majority of adults will experience back pain at some point in their lives. McGill says poor posture and prolonged sitting contribute to this widespread problem, as does combining improper loading with unhealthy movements such as spine-flexing. Compression followed with bending the lumbar spine can lead to disc bulging and herniation which can press on a nerve and cause pain. Some exercises such as forward-bending yoga poses, sit-ups and crunches can result in injury with repeated use, though not everyone is as anatomically susceptible. McGill says crunches put the equivalent of 340 kilograms of compression force on the spine!

If your back hurts, don't ignore it. You need to find out what's causing the pain.

"There's no such thing as non-specific back pain.

Every person's pain is different and has different mechanisms," said McGill.

He says avoiding all movement due to fear of exacerbating the pain is not the solution. He recommends a precautionary visit to your physician to rule out sinister causes (e.g., a tumour). Next, conduct a thorough self-assessment using his book. He believes not all clinicians are highly skilled when it comes to back issues and they may not be able to precisely diagnose the mechanical cause.

Once you've identified the problem, stop doing whatever triggers your pain. Some people may find sitting painful and walking provides relief; others may experience the opposite. Still other people may find bending forward to put on shoes painful. McGill says avoiding the specific personal triggers desensitizes the pain. Acute back pain involving disk degeneration can be episodic. It may go away but if you keep repeating behaviours that trigger the pain, it will eventually come back. McGill describes chronic back pain as micro acute pain that occurs daily.

Next, choose spine-sparing restorative exercises that suit your needs and abilities. For example, an older person with arthritis might require a progressively challenging therapeutic walking program. In addition, use pain-free alternative movements to complete a task, such as lowering down into a lunge rather than bending forward to tie your shoes.

"You have to build the foundation for pain-free movement and develop core stability with 'the Big 3,'" said McGill.

McGill's Big 3 exercises are the: 1-curl-up; 2-side-bridge; 3-bird-dog. This series of effective core exercises conserves your spine by keeping it in a neutral position maintaining the natural curves. These exercises

are both preventative and suitable for people who already have pain. They provide stability and are not intended for strength training.

"Endurance, not strength, makes the back more resilient," said McGill.

McGill says stiffness can cause back pain but so can too much flexibility. There's no one-size-fits-all solution.

To do the bird-dog, go on your hands and knees on a mat so you're in a tabletop position. Extend your right arm forward and your left leg straight back and parallel to the floor. Try to hold this position for 10 seconds then switch to the other arm and leg. People with limited mobility can perform a modified version by leaning against a kitchen counter. Athletes can do more challenging core stabilization exercises such as one McGill aptly calls stir-the-pot: holding a plank position with forearms on a stability ball and making small circular motions with the elbows. McGill shows how to correctly perform the Big 3 and stir-the-pot exercises in a three-minute video.

<http://tinyurl.com/y942292b>

Resolving back pain can have a profound effect on people's lives. McGill recounts a case of an elderly woman whose family wanted to move her to a nursing home because she was unable to get on and off the toilet due to back pain. After teaching her for just a few minutes how to squat and stand up in a non-pain-triggering manner, she was able to continue living independently.

McGill has found that 95 per cent of back pain sufferers who haven't found lasting relief with chiropractic, physical therapy or other treatments and who've been told that surgery is their last option can successfully avoid surgery using his methods.



**It takes just moments to light the menorah and transform the holiday with a blessing.  
You, too, can be the blessing this Chanukah, by helping someone in need.**

Let Federation help with your year-end giving. Donations received before December 31 will receive a charitable tax receipt.  
Visit [jewishottawa.com/giving](http://jewishottawa.com/giving) or contact Rena at [rgarshowitz@jewishottawa.com](mailto:rgarshowitz@jewishottawa.com) or 613-798-4696 x 272.



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**WHAT'S GOING ON** | November 28 to December 12, 2017  
FOR MORE CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT [WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR](http://WWW.JEWISHOTTAWA.COM/COMMUNITY-CALENDAR)

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28**

**Ottawa Israeli Dance**

7 - 10 pm every Tuesday until December 19, 2017  
Ottawa Jewish Community School Gym  
Contact: [judy@ottawaisraelidance.ca](mailto:judy@ottawaisraelidance.ca)  
Contemporary Israeli dances. Great music. Exercise. All ages welcome. Cost: \$5/evening (pay at the door).

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29**

**Holocaust Education Month - Author Robert Watson**

7 - 9:00 pm  
Contact: Natalie Abenheim, [nabenheim@jewishottawa.com](mailto:nabenheim@jewishottawa.com)  
Author and speaker Robert Watson, Ph.D., tells the lesser-known story of "The Nazi Titanic". Book will be available for sale following the talk.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30**

**Jewish Refugees From Arab Lands Commemoration**

7 - 9 pm,  
Contact: Maxine Miska, 613-798-9818  
Professor Chris Silver from McGill University speaks about Jewish life in the Arab world at the mid-twentieth century. Sponsored by The Sephardi Association of Ottawa, the Embassy of Israel, CIJA and the Soloway JCC.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2**

**JET Musical Family Havdalah**

December 2 in Barrhaven, Dec. 9 in Centreponte  
Contact: Arielle Stirling, [admin@jetottawa.com](mailto:admin@jetottawa.com)  
Songs courtesy of Rabbi Mark Rose, as well as crafts like kiddush cups and besamim sachets.  
Cost: Adults free, \$7 a child.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**

**Women only event. Decorate your very own hamsa**

2 - 5 pm, Shikun Oz, 57 Bateman Dr.  
Contact: Isaac Nahon-Serfaty, [info@sephardiottawa.ca](mailto:info@sephardiottawa.ca)  
Led by Zahava Goldstein is an Israeli/Canadian artist. Cost: \$30 per person, Snacks and coffee will be served. Sponsor: Sephardi Association of Ottawa

**Chanukkah & Beyond**

3 - 5 pm, Temple Israel, 1301 Prince of Wales Dr.  
Contact: Minda Wershof, 613-224-7073, [pmwershof@gmail.com](mailto:pmwershof@gmail.com)  
Musica Ebraica choir, under conductor Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton, presents a concert of Chanukkah songs and other Jewish music. Cost: \$20 each, students \$10.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 4**

**The Eyes of the Spies: Lessons from Parshat Shelach**

7:45 - 8:45 pm every Monday until December 18, 2017  
Contact: Sierra Cwinn, 613-695-4800, [info@jetottawa.com](mailto:info@jetottawa.com)  
Let Shaindel Simes take you on a journey through Parshat Shelach. Cost: \$50 for all sessions. Pre-register at [www.jetottawa.com](http://www.jetottawa.com). Sponsor: Binoseha, JET

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8**

**Guest Lecture by Abby Stein at Shabbat Dinner**

5 - 7 pm, Kehillat Beth Israel, 1400 Coldrey Ave.  
Contact: Deborah Zuker, [rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com](mailto:rabbizuker@kehillatbethisrael.com)  
A special Congregational Shabbat Dinner with guest speaker Abby Stein, an educator, writer, speaker, and activist.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10**

**Robert Hage keynote at Emunah Ottawa membership Event**

6:30 - 8:30 pm, 11 Clemow Ave.

Contact: Lisa Bogdonov, 613-866-4444, [lbogdonov@gmail.com](mailto:lbogdonov@gmail.com)

Robert Hage, former Canadian ambassador to Washington, Lagos, and Paris, will deliver his presentation "Canada in the Eyes of the World" Cost: \$36, or \$25 for Emunah Lifetime Members.

**Chocolate Chances**

7 - 9 pm  
Contact: Sara-Lynne Levine, 613 2340110, [slevine@torahday.ca](mailto:slevine@torahday.ca)  
Raffle and Silent Auction in support of the Torah Day School of Ottawa. Proceeds to scholarships for students in need. Cost: Free.

**CBTO's Beit Midrash Adult Learning**

7:45 - 8:15 pm, Tuesdays, December 12 and 19, Congregation Beit Tikvah of Ottawa, 15 Chartwell Ave.  
Contact: Elisheva Brantz, [shul@cbto.org](mailto:shul@cbto.org)  
Rabbi Eleazar Durden will be giving a class on Mishna Brura. Men and Women are welcome to attend.

**CANDLE LIGHTING BEFORE**

DECEMBER 1	4:03 PM	DECEMBER 29	4:09 PM
DECEMBER 8	4:01 PM	JANUARY 5	4:16 PM
DECEMBER 15	4:02 PM	JANUARY 12	4:24 PM

**BULLETIN DEADLINES**

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3	FOR JANUARY 22
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17	FOR FEBRUARY 5
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31	FOR FEBRUARY 19

\* Early deadline: Community-wide Issue \*\* Early deadline: holiday closures (all dates subject to change)

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:**

**Sam Abramson**, Montreal  
(father of Allen Abramson)

**Jack Feldberg**

**Donald Cherry**, Montreal  
(father of Cindy Cherry)

**Kaysa Friedman**

**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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