



P4



P7

- ▷ HJN online launches a new podcast • 4
- ▷ Jewish students at Mac ill equipped • 7
- ▷ A family tree connects two families • 10



P10

Hamilton Jewish

News

FEBRUARY 2022 | ADAR 1 5782

The voice of Jewish Hamilton

Hamilton WILL HOST AN international CONFERENCE ON antisemitism

Distinguished scholars to examine and reflect upon the rise of global antisemitism at the conference scheduled for November

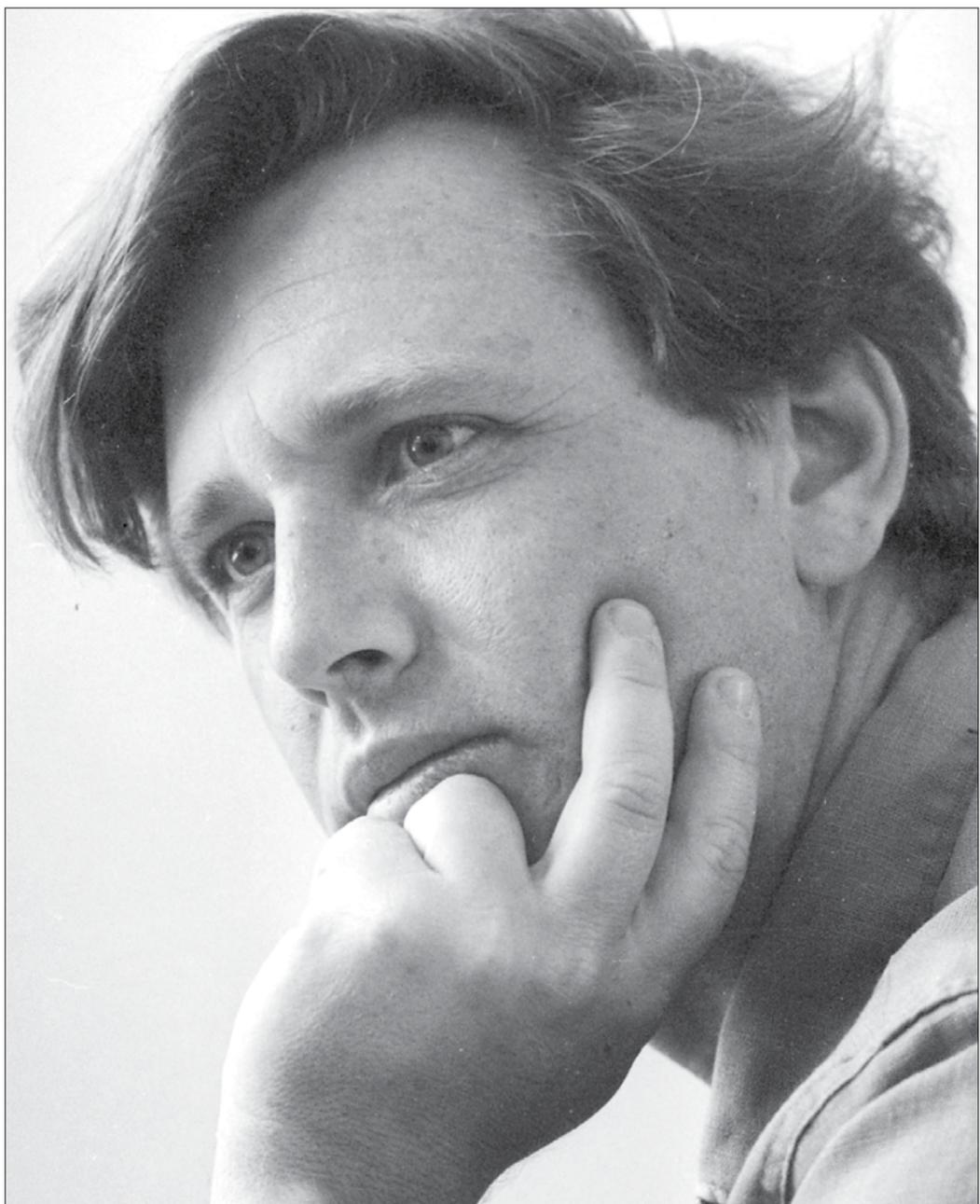
BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

IN HER MANY speaking engagements at Jewish Studies departments in universities across North America, author Dara Horn invariably is told by her hosts that their courses on the Holocaust are the most popular in the department. But the question no one ever asks, she says, is why the Holocaust is considered a Jewish subject at all. Why should it be a Jewish responsibility to teach about antisemitism? Shouldn't antisemitism be something that non-Jews should primarily be thinking about instead? Most of the time, it isn't. This is part of the goal of Hamilton Jewish Federation's inaugural annual international conference on antisemitism—to bring together people of all ages, from all communities and ethnic and cultural groups to learn and to dialogue.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CONTINUES ON P5

“It was really hurtful to see someone writing that Hillel shouldn't be allowed on campus, when it's simply a safe space for Jewish students ...”

JEWISH STUDENTS STORY ON P7



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN HADANI

Israel's most widely read author, Amos Oz, is the subject of the Hamilton Jewish Film Festival's opening film.

Portrait of a flawed artist

Hamilton Jewish Film Festival opens with a nuanced portrait of the prolific Israeli writer, Amos Oz.

THE STORY AND MORE ABOUT THE UPCOMING FILM FESTIVAL: **PAGE 11**

Hamiltonjewishnews.com

Hamilton Jewish News is funded in part by a generous gift from the Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation.



Hamilton JEWISH FEDERATION

JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG

PM AGREEMENT 40007180

TD Wealth

Fowler and Associates

TD Wealth Private Investment Advice
Complete Investment and Estate Planning

Scott Thomson
Investment Advisor

905-528-6349

Dwight A. Fowler
Vice President,
Investment Advisor

905-528-4254

Shane Fowler
Investment Advisor

905-528-0113

Toll Free: 1-800-775-0037
Fax: 905-528-6897

Fowler & Associates



Fowler and Associates consists of Dwight Fowler, Vice President and Investment Advisor, Shane Fowler, Investment Advisor and Scott Thomson, CFA, Investment Advisor. Fowler and Associates is part of TD Wealth Private Investment Advice. TD Wealth Private Investment Advice is a division of TD Waterhouse Canada Inc., a subsidiary of The Toronto-Dominion Bank. TD Waterhouse Canada Inc. — Member of the Canadian Investor Protection Fund. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners. *The TD logo and other trade-marks are the property of The Toronto-Dominion Bank or a wholly-owned subsidiary, in Canada and/or in other countries.

Now is the time to reimagine and reinvent ourselves



Gustavo Rymberg

CEO
HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

ONE OF THE MORE interesting programs offered by Federation and the JCC last fall, was our JTalk Zoom Series, which featured community members sharing their skills and expertise on a broad range of topics. Among the presentations was one given by HJN editor, Wendy Schneider, titled “The Way We Were: Highlights from the Jewish Hamilton Project,” in which she shared excerpts from the oral history she created in 2009 in collaboration with McMaster University professor Billy Shaffir.

Listening to the recollections, reminiscences and reflections of the Jewish Hamiltonians interviewed as part of the project, and the comments of those on the call, I got a taste of the vibrancy of the Hamilton Jewish community in the early years of the 20th century. It was a different community then for sure, with different circumstances, priorities and needs. It was interesting for me to learn more about the history of this community, and to reflect on the societal trends that have influenced how our community has evolved to where it is today.

In an article titled, “Saving Jewish Organizations from Themselves,” Jeffrey R. Solomon, who is the former president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, writes that the future of Jewish life in North America depends on Jewish communal organizations’ willingness to “invest in and incentivize organizational change in whatever ways we can.”

He writes, “We must reflect and understand why so many Jewish organizations lack the core elements that support organizational flexibility and success: strong governance, healthy staff cultures, and data-informed decision-making versus personal feelings or personal needs decision making.”

Solomon goes on to say that, in today’s world, “Jewishness is, at best, only a part of the way that most Jews identify themselves.” As a result of the “incredible access and success” that North American Jews have enjoyed over the last 100 years, Jewish donors are just as likely to fund the arts, healthcare and higher education institutions as they are to fund Jewish institutions. Collective responsibility is seen less as an imperative and our young adults’ connection to Israel is tenuous and under great strain (see Dani Wohl’s thoughtful piece on page 7).

All of this presents us with an opportunity to reflect on how the organized Jewish community must adapt to new realities. Notwithstanding the amazing ways in which our Jewish organizations have responded to the effects of a global pandemic, I believe that it’s now time to reimagine and reinvent ourselves. My hope is to engage many of you in conversations about Jewish identity and Jewish community in the interest of creating the conditions that will ensure our future as a vibrant Jewish community. As a start, I’d like you to reflect on the following questions:

- What is your definition of the Jewish community?
- How important is your Jewish identity, and what is its relevance to your everyday life?
- What are the key ingredients to a vibrant Jewish community?
- Most importantly, what role do you see yourself having in creating a vibrant Jewish community?

I’d like to close with the following thoughts expressed so eloquently by Jeffrey Solomon: “Jewish history is full of stories of amazing resilience. New challenges and opportunities have led, over and over again, to radical changes in Jewish communal life, driven by life-affirming Jewish values. This past should reassure us that change is possible yet again. The challenges of the current moment require us to embrace the double helix of vision, mission, and human resources. Our memories will never exceed our dreams. We can—and we must—adapt.”



THE RICHTER GROUP

Proudly serving the Greater Hamilton Area since 1957



Experience the trust, dependability and accountability that the Richter Group stores have provided for over 50 years



Hamilton Hyundai
324 Parkdale Ave N
905 545 5150
hamiltonhyundai.ca

Eastgate Ford
350 Parkdale Ave N
905 547 3211
eastgateford.com

Bay King Chrysler
55 Rymal Rd
905 383 7700
bayking.ca

CSN Collision Centres
230 Lansing Drive
350 Parkdale Ave N
eastgateford.com

Did you know?



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

One of Tel Aviv's most popular photo spots is a statue on Frishman Beach of Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion standing on his head, which he began to do in the 1950s as part of his daily Feldenkrais Method exercises. The Tel Aviv Municipality put up the statue in 2015, which was inspired by a famous photograph taken in 1957 by photographer Paul Goldman.

COVER STORY

Federation to host an antisemitism conference in November

7

LOCAL NEWS

Jewish students ill-equipped

11

ARTS AND CULTURE

Portrait of an artist as a wounded man

15

LIVES REMEMBERED

Batia Phillips who filled the world with her laughter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editorial
 - 4 Readers write
 - 5 Cover story
 - 6 Local news
 - 7 First person
 - 10 Feature story
 - 11 Arts and culture
 - 13 Local voices
 - 15 Lives remembered
- FEDERATION NEWS:
8 & 9

NEXT ISSUE: **APRIL 2022**

DEADLINES Booking ads: **March 1, 2022**
Advertising copy: **March 23, 2022**
Publication date: **April 10, 2022**

HJN

The Hamilton Jewish News is published five times a year by the Hamilton Jewish Federation

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Hamilton Jewish News invites members of the community to contribute letters, articles or guest editorials.

Written submissions must be forwarded by the deadline indicated in each issue. This newspaper reserves the right to edit, condense or reject any contribution for brevity or legal purposes.

CIRCULATION
2,000

EDITOR

Wendy Schneider
wschneider@jewishhamilton.org
905-628-0058

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Abigail Cukier

DIGITAL EDITOR

Ben Shragge

HJN CONTRIBUTORS

Dave Carson, Michael Gutman, Miriam Sager, Ben Shragge, Phyllis Shragge, Samantha Winemaker, Dani Wohl

ADVERTISING

Wendy Schneider

CONSULTING ART DIRECTOR

John Bullock

PUBLISHER

Hamilton Jewish Federation

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

PRESIDENT

Howard Eisenberg
CEO
Gustavo Rymberg

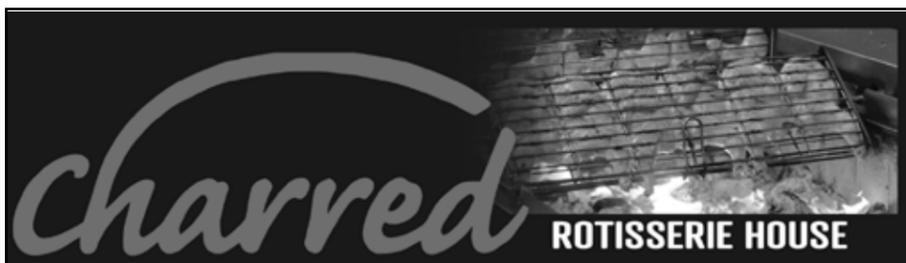
BOARD MEMBERS

Janis Criger
Romy Friedman
Jacki Levin
Alice Mendelson
Adam Norris
Josh Rauchwerger
Jamie Richter
Lowell Richter
Lorne Rochweg
Peter Smurlick
Jason Waxman
Laura Wolfson

Are you new to the Hamilton Jewish community?

Find what you need to know from a source you can trust.

Online at: jewishhamilton.org/growhamilton



Follow us on social media: @charredrotisserie

WELCOME TO CHARRED

All our products are made in-house and all our chicken is locally sourced, raised without antibiotics, and free run.

Our chicken is cooked fresh over a flaming bed of hardwood charcoal to deliver that delicious "Charred" flavour in every bite.

Take Out, Delivery, and Catering available!

www.charred.ca

Join our mailing list for your chance to receive a FREE meal every month!

244 James St. N.
Hamilton, On L8R 2R3
(289) 396-0662



Dan MUYS

Flamborough-Glanbrook

The recent act of terrorism and anti-semitism at the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Texas and too many other incidents in recent years across Canada and the world are alarming and appalling.

We will always stand with the Jewish community and re-commit ourselves to fight antisemitism, in all its insidious forms.



Dan Muys, M.P. | 905 648 3850 | Dan.Muys@parl.gc.ca

Letters to the editor

Censorship has no place in our community

It is troubling that the only letters published in the HJN November issue responding to Rachel Loewith Rochwerg's letter "Don't stifle criticism of Israel" (September 2021) were hostile and disparaging.

Several of the writers used the existential threat of antisemitism as justification for refuting Rachel's comments. Antisemitism has existed for hundreds of years. Does this justify the poor treatment of Palestinians? Does the suffering of Israeli children growing up in southern communities negate the distress of Palestinian children? Humanity is at the core of our Jewish ideals. What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbour (Rabbi Hillel).

Judith Coret Simon and Alexander Coret have suggested two books to read. We, in turn, would recommend two others: "My Promised Land" by Ari Shavit and "The Lemon Tree" by Sandy Tolan. We also recommend viewing the video "Mission Hebron" by Israeli filmmaker Rona Segal, which can be seen through the New York Times. We can all deepen our understanding of the complex context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through such thought-provoking and insightful works.

"Not even the remotest perception of demonization of Israel should be given a forum in its (HJN) pages." Comments insinuating that censorship has a place in our community are frightening. We believe that HJN is the appropriate place for dialogue. Otherwise, we risk standing by as Israel becomes a pariah state.

In conclusion, we wish to compliment Rachel on a thoughtful and well written letter. She is not the only one to subscribe to her opinions. Nor is it only young people who have the same concerns. We are seniors and we agree that criticism of Israel should not be stifled. Our community can love Israel without giving unconditional support to its policies. Israel must live up to a high standard because we, as Jews, hold ourselves to high standards in our daily conduct. To love Israel does not mean to never criticize Israel's policies.

HINDA AND MARK LEVINE

No need to vilify those who disagree

The November 2021 HJN contains seven letters lambasting the letter by Loewith-Rochwerg. Both sides of this fractious issue have a right to express their honestly held opinions. However, it is very disturbing to see one side vilifying the other for exercising their "freedom of speech" to present a legitimate, alternative viewpoint. Israeli Jews (and Arabs) are permitted to criticize Israeli government policies. Many do so with zeal. Do Canadian Jews not have the same right as their Israeli counterparts? Both sides in this "family" dispute are justifiably concerned about the rising menace of antisemitism.

What gives one side the right to

proclaim that they and they alone understand the threats we face, that they and they alone have the required answers, and also the justification to demonize a respected member of our community as a way to impose their views. Ironically, the headline on page 5 of the November HJN proclaims "New generation of leaders want to see more community cohesiveness." Obviously, some members of the community have not yet embraced the message.

RON BERENBAUM

Take a stand against antisemitism

As a convert to Judaism, I should be shielded from the scourge of antisemitism. I have a very English name and unless I were to tell someone my religion, they would not be forewarned of it as they would be were my name Cohen or Einstein.

Hatred is not a rational emotion, and it is not predictable. Ask the Tutsi from Rwanda. In the span of 100 days in 1994 their neighbours, the Hutu, murdered between 500,000 and 800,000 of them. Sadly, this story is told with sickening repetition all over the world when ethnic differences descend into tribal anarchy. Nor is it confined to ethnic or religious differences.

Western countries are rightly concerned that the United States could be brought to the brink of another civil war as the differences between political factions goes from healthy debate to physical conflict. Families rent apart for no other reason than a difference of political affiliation.

At a time when the world is awash with migrants seeking refuge from climate or economic and political catastrophe, we see our liberal and tolerant societies crumbling, and a future of bleakness the like of which we thought never to see again.

Antisemitism is largely a bi-product of this descent of man, fuelled by those who have always hated Jews simply because they are Jews. Using terms like Zionist as a slanderous suggestion of mixed loyalty and carried on the wind by the mob mentality that is more willing than any time since the Salem witch trials to believe all the ills they perceive are an organized conspiracy.

So, how do we combat antisemitism? Perhaps by seeking to inform those who are not too ignorant to listen. By standing up to those who seek to oppress others, and not just those who seek to suppress us, but those who threaten our fellow men and women whoever and wherever they may be. I argue that the convert to Judaism has a special responsibility to hold up a mirror to the antisemite and show them that what they see is a person much like themselves who chose instead the road less travelled.

PETER WATSON

HJN welcomes letters to the editor from community members. Views expressed in the Letters to the Editor section do not reflect the views of HJN. To submit a letter for publication, email: wschneider@jewishhamilton.org

New monthly podcast coming to Hamiltonjewishnews.com

The Shpiel on Hamilton will take a fresh look at what our city has to offer from an outsider's point of view

HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS is further moving into the digital world with the launch of its new podcast series, The Shpiel on Hamilton, in February 2022.

Hosted by Ilana Zackon, a multidisciplinary performer, freelance writer for the Canadian Jewish News and co-host of its podcast *Bonjour Chai*, and produced by HJN assistant editor, Abigail Cukier, The Shpiel on Hamilton will focus on unique aspects of local Jewish life.

Zackon, who resides in Toronto, is eager to learn about Jewish life and culture in Hamilton.

"I am thrilled and honoured to take on the position of podcast host for the Hamilton Jewish News. I very much look forward to expanding my knowledge of Canadian Jewry, by getting to know the Hamilton Jewish community and all that it has to offer."

Abigail Cukier hopes the podcast will provide an opportunity for Jews who may feel like outsiders see themselves more like insiders.

"We are very excited to bring The Shpiel on Hamilton to the community.



DBC PHOTOGRAPHIE

Ilana Zackon will host the new HJN podcast, The Shpiel on Hamilton.

As an outsider of the city, Ilana will bring a fresh perspective to all things Hamilton, including our history, current events and what the community has to offer. It will be the perfect opportunity for listeners to reflect, learn and engage."

The Shpiel on Hamilton is the first of what the Hamilton Jewish News anticipates will be more creative digital content in the years ahead designed to appeal to a younger readership. The podcast is made possible through a donation by the Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation.

Federation to launch Jewish Studies lecture series Feb. 17

THE J-Academy Jewish Studies Lecture Series will launch this February with lectures scheduled through to April 2022. The series, which is a collaboration between the Hamilton Jewish Federation and the Hamilton JCC, will consist of five lectures given via Zoom by local and international academics on a diverse range of topics in the field of Jewish studies.

The series opens on Thursday, Feb. 17 with Hamilton native Miriam Simma Walfish's talk on the topic, What Did the Rabbis Learn from their Mothers, in which Walfish, who is faculty member at the Hadar Institute in New York, will walk participants through a selection of texts from the Babylonian Talmud.

On Thursday, March 3, Derek Penslar, the William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History at Harvard University, will speak on the topic, What makes a great Jewish leader? The life of Theodor Herzl, in which he'll discuss Herzl's galvanizing effect on the Zionist movement. On Tuesday, March 15, Robin Buller, a postdoctoral fellow in the History of Migration at University of California Berkeley's Institute for European Studies, will speak on the topic, Ottoman Jewish Immigrants, Cafés, and Belonging, during which she'll discuss how this particular immigrant group carved out its own sphere of belonging in interwar Paris. On Thursday, March 31, Ryan Heyden, a senior PhD candidate



GEORGIA KIRKOS

Pamela Swett, McMaster University's dean of the Faculty of Humanities, will be one of the presenters at the J-Academy of Jewish Studies.

in the Department of History at McMaster University, will speak on the topic, Humanizing Remembrance: The Memory of the Holocaust and the Stumbling Block Project in Europe and beyond, in which he'll demonstrate how the Project has changed how families of the victims, the Jewish community, Germans, and Europeans remember the Holocaust. The final lecture in the series will be given on Thursday, April 6 by Pamela Swett, McMaster University's dean of the Faculty of Humanities, who will speak on the topic, Life and Death in Theresienstadt, the Nazis' "model" camp, in which she will present new research that has uncovered the complex society that developed within the camp walls.

Each hour-long talk begins at 7 p.m. with both a lecture portion and a follow-up Q&A session. To register, follow the links at jewishhamilton.org or call 905-648-0605.

"We are very excited to present this series, and see it as a unique opportunity for community members to learn from international scholars in the field of Jewish studies," said Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg.

International conference

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

The conference, scheduled for November will be held at the Art Gallery of Hamilton and at McMaster University both virtually and in person

STUDENTS, EDUCATORS and community advocates, as well as unaffiliated community members, will be invited to participate in the conference, which will run from Nov. 19 to 21, 2022. Horn, the award-winning author of People Love Dead Jews, will be one of many esteemed guest speakers.

Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg says that Hamilton has had Canada's highest per capita rate of hate crimes for the last three out of five years. And while the number of incidents targeting Jews, Muslims, Blacks and people in the LGBTQ community is growing, the rate of antisemitic incidents is the highest.

"Hamilton has been called the 'hate capital of Canada.' That is a terrible thing to have on our back," he says. "That is why I think it's important to have a conference here. And to show the country and the world that we're trying to finish with that stigma. We want to be the capital of good. But the No. 1 reason to hold the conference is to educate. Educating about antisemitism is our obligation and responsibility."

The conference, which will be held at the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the David Braley Health Sciences Centre at McMaster University, will be delivered virtually and in person to two tracks—one to educators and administrators from public and Catholic school boards, colleges and university students and a second track for community advocates, politicians and the general public.

"... the No. 1 reason to hold the conference is to educate. Educating about antisemitism is our obligation and responsibility."

GUSTAVO RYMBERG
CEO, Hamilton Jewish Federation

The #nomoreantisemitism conference will include keynote lectures delivered by experts in the field, as well as an expo featuring book sales, displays and booths hosted by community organizations. It will also include group discussions and workshops.

THE SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- **Irwin Cotler**, Canada's first special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism
- **Dara Horn**, award-winning author of People Love Dead Jews
- **Alana Newhouse**, founder and editor-in-chief of Tablet magazine
- **Elisha Wiesel**, advocate and son of Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel
- **Michael Mostyn**, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada
- **Dr. Robert Rozett**, senior historian for the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, in Israel
- **Yoni Berrous**, educator, Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, in Israel
- **Michael Levitt**, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies
- **Shimon Koffler Fogel**, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
- **Jess Burke**, director, community training and LGBTQ2+ partnerships, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
- **Edward Serotta**, director, Centropa Jewish Historical Institute
- **Jody Spiegel**, director, Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program



Featured speakers, speakers at the #nomoreantisemitism conference include (top left, clockwise) award-winning author Dara Horn, Elisha Wiesel, son of Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, the Honourable Irwin Cotler, the founder and chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Ed Serotta, director, Centropa Jewish Historical Institute, and Alana Newhouse, founder and editor-in-chief of Tablet Magazine.



NEW HORIZON
DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Something new is on the Horizon

nhdg.ca



Authentic Montreal-Style Bagels





Try our delicious Lox, Chopped Liver, Smoked Meat, Tuna and Egg Salad Sandwiches, Assorted Platters & Pastries, Knishes, Latkes & Cheese Blintzes, Matzah Ball, Chicken Noodle and Minestrone Soup, Freshly baked Challah

Save Time. Order Online or order through Skip the Dishes or Uber
Open 7 days a week

Old Bagel House
University Plaza, 101 Osler Dr #120, Dundas (905) 627-5299
oldbagelhouse-ontario.com

Joint campaign will seek to grow three communities

Hamilton, London and Windsor launch Welcome Home, a marketing campaign aimed at attracting new immigrants

BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

HAMILTON JEWISH Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg and his family were among the first immigrants from Argentina to move to Winnipeg in 1997 under the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's GrowWinnipeg program, which aims to retain and attract Jewish families. He then lived in Ottawa and Toronto before moving to Hamilton in 2017.

Dan Brotman, executive director of the Windsor Jewish Federation and Community Centre, was born in Boston, grew up in the United States and lived in South Africa for 10 years before moving to Windsor in 2020.

Rob Nagus, executive director of Jewish London, was born in Montreal and most recently lived in Toronto before moving to London in October 2021.

Each has experience with immigrating to a new country or moving to a new city and becoming involved in their Jewish communities. Now, they hope to use their experience and what they learned to help others find the perfect home and to help grow their respective Jewish communities.

The Hamilton, Windsor and London Jewish federations are collaborating on a campaign, Welcome Home, to attract new Jewish residents to their communities.

In Hamilton, this new initiative will build on the existing Grow Hamilton committee's successful efforts. According to Laura Wolfson, chair of the Grow Hamilton committee, 15 families moved to Hamilton in 2020 and

2021 through Grow Hamilton, while many more have inquired and are working on immigration applications. Wolfson says other Jewish families have also moved to the city in the past two years outside of the Grow Hamilton initiative.

Rymberg says combining efforts among three cities will help save costs through combined marketing efforts and allow them to support each other.

"This initiative will give us an opportunity to promote each city in particular and at the same time will allow us to make recommendations according to the needs of the newcomers and what each Jewish community has to offer. We are similar but different at the same time and it is important for smaller communities to collaborate and create new synergies," said Rymberg.

Nagus says that when he was approached to be part of the Welcome Home initiative he jumped at the opportunity. "London is an incredibly warm and welcoming place where one can build a meaningful and fulfilling Jewish life and we want people to know that," he says. "Working with Hamilton and Windsor is a great way to get the word out."

And now is a favourable time to launch, Brotman says. In 2021, Canada landed more than 400,000 new permanent residents for just the second time since it was founded as a country in 1867.

"People are immigrating to Canada in large numbers. At the same time, major Canadian cities are becoming increasingly unaffordable, along with the fact that people can work



GROW HAMILTON VIDEO

Fabio and Soraya Chusyd and family are featured in the Welcome Home video promoting Hamilton's community.



DAN BROTMAN



ROB NAGUS

remotely, which is also driving people to look to consider relocating to smaller communities. But many just don't know all the options," Brotman says.

"We thought that if we bring our voices together, our message would get out a lot louder than if we were competing and each doing our own campaign."

A creative agency based in Windsor has developed a digital and social media marketing strategy for the campaign and is completing the campaign website; a production company in Hamilton shot promotional videos for each city. The initiative will also include helping people with relocation, information and support services.

It will initially focus on the

communities Rymberg, Brotman and Nagus know well—South Africa, Argentina and Toronto. Then with more media awareness, they hope people will find their website when they search for information on immigrating to Canada.

"I think it is an asset to have two directors who understand, what's involved with immigrating to a new country and one who understands how to talk to people about giving up big city life in Toronto and what you will be gaining," says Brotman. "I think the fact that we can speak to these issues from our own experience is very beneficial. Because it's not theoretical for us, these are actual life decisions that we made and we can help others through."

J-ACADEMY | A JEWISH STUDIES ZOOM LECTURE SERIES

PRESENTED BY THE HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION AND JCC



MIRIAM SIMMA WALFISH

DEREK PENSLAR

DR. ROBIN BULLER

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17 AT 7 P.M. | MIRIAM SIMMA WALFISH
What Did the Rabbis Learn from their Mothers?

An exploration of texts from the Babylonian Talmud that describe mothers teaching their sons.

Hamilton native, Rabbi Miriam Simma Walfish is faculty at the Hadar Institute in New York and a Senior Coach for Pedagogy for Partnership.

Robin Buller is a Tandem Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Migration at University of California Berkeley's Institute for European Studies and the German Historical Institute West.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3 AT 7 P.M. | DEREK PENSLAR
What makes a great Jewish leader? The life of Theodor Herzl

An exploration of Theodor Herzl's galvanizing effect on the Zionist movement in the 19th Century.

Derek Penslar is the William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History at Harvard University. His research explores Jewish political and economic life in modern Europe as well as the relationship between modern Israel and diaspora Jewish societies and global nationalist movements.

THURSDAY, MARCH 31 AT 7 P.M. | RYAN HEYDEN
Humanizing Remembrance: The Memory of the Holocaust and the Stumbling Block Project

This talk will explore how the Stumbling Block project humanizes the commemoration of the Holocaust.

Ryan Heyden, a senior PhD Candidate in the Department of History at McMaster University researches the history humanitarianism and memory studies in the twentieth century.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15 AT 7 P.M. | DR. ROBIN BULLER
Ottoman Jewish Immigrants, Cafés, and Belonging in Interwar Paris

An exploration of how tens of thousands of Sephardi Jews migrated out of the crumbling Ottoman Empire and its successor states to build new lives in interwar Paris.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6 AT 7 P.M. | DR. PAMELA SWETT
Life and Death in Theresienstadt, the Nazis' 'model' camp

This talk will present new research that has uncovered the complex society that developed within Theresienstadt and shaped the daily struggle for survival for prisoners.

Pamela Swett, dean of the Faculty of Humanities, received her undergraduate training at Bryn Mawr College and completed her graduate degrees at Brown University. Her research and teaching interests lie in 20th-century German and European social and cultural history.

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION
#Here for Good



PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE AT
HAMILTONJEWISHFEDERATION.REGFOX.COM/J-ACADEMY

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT JACKIE AT
STIRLING@JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG | 905.648.0605 X320

Jewish students need more nuanced Israel education

The Israel narrative that is taught in Jewish schools no longer cuts it in the age of social media



Dani Wohl
SPECIAL TO HJN

AS FIRST year Mac students moved into residence for a semester of hybrid online and in-person classes last September, the Jewish students among them received a rude awakening when they opened the “welcome back” edition of the campus newspaper, *The Silhouette*. Inside the issue was an article that effectively attacked McMaster Hillel for its connection to and support of Israel and calling for the club’s defunding.

Maya Mammon, a first-year student majoring in life sciences, was handed a copy of the newspaper during welcome week.

“While I wasn’t 100 per cent shocked by the article’s subject matter since I feel like going to Jewish school for so long, this is stuff they almost make us hyper-aware of, it still left a weird taste in my mouth” she said.

Mammon said that while she doesn’t think most students who voice negative opinions about Israel “have terrible intentions,” their words, nonetheless, “take a toll on Jewish students. It’s definitely been an adjustment.”

It’s become somewhat of a rite of passage for first-year Jewish students to discover that the Israel they’d come to associate with innovative inventions like the USB memory stick or the cherry tomato is not the same Israel that’s being portrayed on university campuses. That Israel, they

almost immediately understand, has some pretty outspoken critics, and the disheartening feeling sinks in further when you realize that the peace dove you were raised to be doesn’t cut it anymore in academic discourse. Dove-like silence can’t protect you from your peers and their claims that what’s close to you is irredeemable.

Hayley Kupinsky, a health sciences student, said that McMaster Hillel has been “one of the few places on campus that feels familiar” in her transition to university.

“It was really hurtful to see someone writing that, essentially, Hillel shouldn’t be allowed on campus, when, in reality it is simply a safe space for Jewish students, and has never pushed a political agenda of any sort,” she said, a sentiment echoed by Hillel president Hannah Silverman, in a subsequent issue of *The Silhouette*.

Hillel is primarily a resource for Jewish students at university, not the staunchly right-wing anti-Palestinian organization that its detractors make it out to be. However, in an age of social media activism and oversimplification of geopolitical conflicts, Hillel has become a victim of cancel culture for apparent moral impropriety on foreign politics, despite not being a political organization at all.

It’s become a difficult line to navigate—wanting to hear perspectives about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict you were not taught in Jewish day school, while feeling the need to protect the organizations and resources that sustain you as a Jewish student from public scrutiny and supporting your Israeli family and friends. This



COURTESY MCMASTER HILLEL

line becomes more blurred as social media activism seeks to oversimplify and polarize a centuries-long geopolitical conflict that has two valid narratives as a black and white, good and bad, “us versus them” way of thinking. That mentality, while easily digestible and shareable, ignores the many nuances of a complicated history, which only furthers cycles of misinformation and alienation.

It also creates the same “us versus them” dynamic vis a vis Hillel and other campus groups and Jewish students with their peers.

Despite everything, I still have hope for a future of safety, freedom and peace for Israelis and Palestinians, which begins with connection and partnership in dialogue around

the world. However, until that day arrives, we can’t solely rely on defensive support of Jewish organizations and students, but must be proactive in preparing students not to fight battles and lead their dove-like hopes to slaughter, but to start talking and learning. Perhaps a place to start is with Jewish organizations improving their Israel education to promote nuance and empathy with those whose stories we haven’t learned yet. This is the first part in connection and dialogue towards tangible coexistence, letting the birds of peace fly at last.

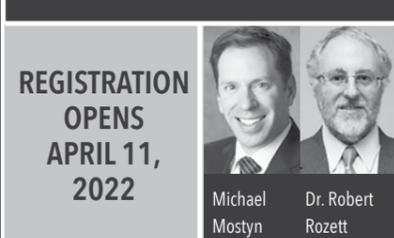
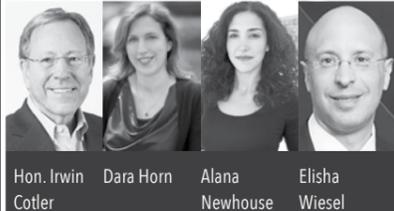
McMaster Hillel students pose in this 2018 photo in McMaster University’s Student Centre.

Dani Wohl is a second year student in McMaster’s Arts and Sciences program and a member of the McMaster Hillel executive.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

- The Honorable Irwin Cotler
Canada’s First Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism
- Dara Horn
Award winning author of “People Love Dead Jews”
- Alana Newhouse
Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Tablet Magazine
- Elisha Wiesel
Advocate and son of Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Elie Wiesel
- B’nai Brith Canada Michael Mostyn, CEO
- Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, International School for Holocaust Studies | Jerusalem, Israel
Dr. Robert Rozett, Senior Historian
Yoni Berrous, Educator
- Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies
Michael Levitt, President and CEO
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO
Jess Burke, Director Community Training and LGBTQ2+ Partnerships
- Margaret’s Legacy Holocaust Education
Lila Strub and Rebecca Shapiro, Educators
- Centropa Jewish Historical Institute | Vienna, Austria
Edward Serotta, Director
- Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program
Jody Spiegel, Director
Marc-Olivier Cloutier, Manager Education Initiatives
Michelle Sadowski, Educator

#nomore antisemitism



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 19-21, 2022 | HAMILTON, ON | CANADA
Art Gallery of Hamilton | David Braley Health Sciences Centre, McMaster University

REGISTRATION OPENS
APRIL 11, 2022

For more information please contact jrymberg@jewishhamilton.org | 905.648.0605 x 301



HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION AND HAMILTON JCC PRESENT

J-Talks!#?2022

An eclectic series of Zoom presentations by community members generously sharing their expertise on a variety of topics. **Get ready to be inspired and learn something new.**

Thursday, Feb. 17 | 1 pm
Rabbi Ben Shefter in conversation
with Mac student Dani Wohl



What is it like to be a college student right now? Join McMaster Hillel Student Dani Wohl and McMaster Hillel Rabbi Ben Shefter as they discuss how the pandemic, social media, and community have affect students' identities.



Thursday, Feb. 24 | 1 pm
Dave Carson
One family's diaspora: how the Mayers of Mainz survived Nazi oppression.



There are so many sad stories about the fate of Jewish people in WWII. Here is a happier one. It recounts the journey of three generations of the Mayer family of Mainz to England, Holland, Switzerland, USA and Argentina following their escape from Germany. Some under their own steam, some on Kindertransport, others hiding like Anne Frank in Holland. All lived to bring up their families in new countries post war.

Dave Carson lives in Dundas. He is collecting family history stories to keep them alive for current and future generations.

Thursday, March 3 | 1 pm
Natalie Sobel | Mindful Self Compassion



In this talk, Natalie Sobel, MSW, RSW, will give participants the opportunity to experience some of the evidence-based benefits of the practices of Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)! From the groundbreaking research of Dr. Kristin Neff and the clinical expertise of Dr. Christopher Germer, MSC teaches core principles and practices that enable participants to respond to difficult moments in their lives with kindness, care, and understanding.

As a Trained Teacher of MSC, Natalie will give a sampler of what the mindful practice of self-compassion can feel like.

Thursday, March 10 | 1 pm
Helaine Ortmann | Aging: it's all about the journey



An opportunity to reflect on the diverse facets of aging from a close-up and personal perspective.

A Hamiltonian by birth and choice, Helaine Ortmann has focused her energy and talents in equal parts on her family; professional career in marketing, communications and fundraising; and community as a volunteer and activist. Recently retired, Helaine is exploring what it means to grow older with dignity and grace.

Thursday, March 24 | 1 pm
Samantha Winemaker | Befriending Palliative Care



Dr. Sammy will describe how concepts about palliative care need to evolve so that if and when it is offered, it doesn't feel like a death sentence.

Dr. Winemaker is a graduate of McMaster University Medical School. Her clinical work is predominately community based, caring for people in their home. She is an associate clinical professor at McMaster University in the Department of Family Medicine, Division of Palliative Care. She is an advocate for palliative care reform. She believes strongly that basic principles of palliative care should be the business of all health care providers and integrated into care seamlessly, upstream in the patient's illness journey.

Thursday, April 7 | 1 pm
Naomi Brounstein | My Aliyah story



In a conversation with HJN editor, Wendy Schneider, Naomi will discuss how growing up in Hamilton influenced her decision to make Aliyah and the circumstances that prompted her to become the co-founder of Ten Gav, a charitable organization that has assisted thousands of needy Israelis and hundreds of front-line social workers who turn to the organization regularly for assistance.

Thursday, May 12 | 1 pm
Carol Podedworny | Herman Levy: Canadian Collector



Herman Levy is one among a small number of Canadian donors who, over the years, have made a significant contribution to the arts and culture of Canada. Generously donating works to institutions across the country, including the National Gallery of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum and Art Gallery of Hamilton, Levy's largest donation was to the Museum at McMaster University. This talk will look at Levy's history as a collector, his relationship with McMaster University, his incredible legacy to the institution and, at the many significant works of art that he gifted and/or bequeathed the institution.

Carol Podedworny is the Director and Chief Curator of the McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton. Podedworny's research interests include curatorial and museological practice, de-centering the traditional museological narrative and, post-contact Indigenous art.

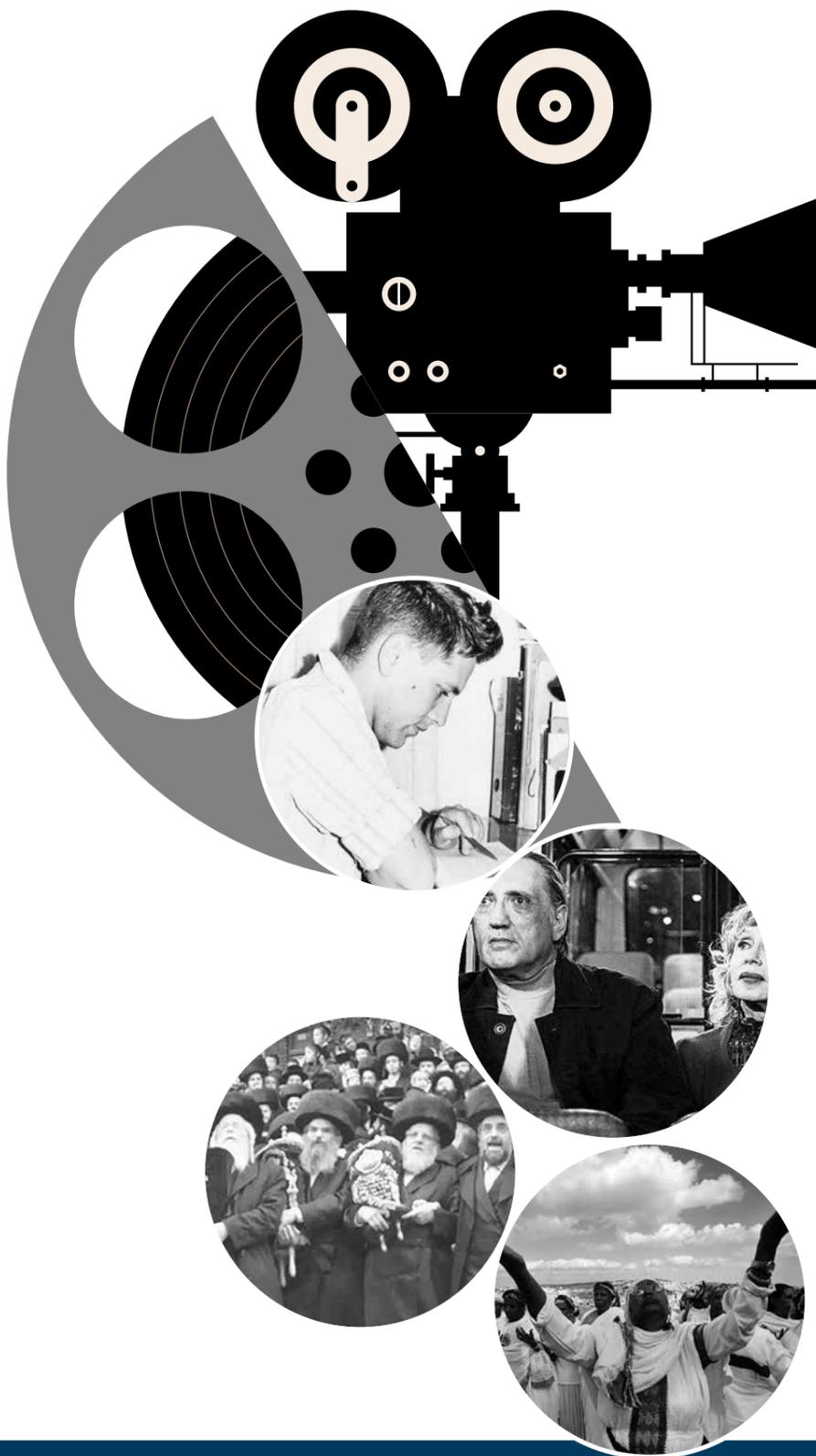
J-Talks!#?2022

Please register in advance at
<https://hamiltonjewishfederation.regfox.com/j-talks-series2>
 SUGGESTED DONATION \$10 PER TALK.



Hamilton Jewish Federation, Effort Trust Company and Margaret's Legacy present

4TH ANNUAL HAMILTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL MARCH 20 TO 22, 2022



SUNDAY, MARCH 20

3 PM | OPENING FILM: THE FOURTH WINDOW

Israeli director Yair Qedar's sober and engaging account of celebrated Israeli author Amos Oz's unusually fraught life. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the director.

5:30 to 6:30 PM | OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION

with The Fourth Window director Yair Qedar

7:15 PM | GOLDEN VOICES

A wonderfully romantic film about a married couple who dubbed hundreds of films in their native Soviet Union, but who struggle to adapt to Israeli culture as new immigrants

**MONDAY, MARCH 21 | 7 PM
OUTREMONT AND THE HASIDIM**

Stepping beyond "clichés" and stereotypes, Outremont and the Hasidim presents the point of view of both the Hasidic and surrounding Quebecois communities in order to discover what divides and what unites them, in search of reasonable accommodation. The screening will be followed by a Q and A with Montreal native Simon Mendelson and film director Eric Scott.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 22 | 7 PM
YERUSHALEM: THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ETHIOPIAN JEWRY**

The complex saga of Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community is brought to life in this compelling documentary through a mix of archival footage and interviews with first and second generation immigrants, Aliyah activists, Mossad personnel, naval commanders and Israeli air force pilots, decision-makers and many others who worked to bring Ethiopian Jews back to their ancestral homeland. There will be an interactive discussion after the film led by McMaster professor Benson Honig.

PRESENTERS:
EFFORT TRUST COMPANY AND MARGARET'S LEGACY

OPENING NIGHT SPONSOR:
YVES APEL | CIBC

FILM SPONSORS:
Bill Nisker and Diane Sandler | Dan Muys
Pic 'n Save | The Score | Tepperman's | Vine and Partners

FRIENDS OF THE FESTIVAL:
Lee Alexander | Judith Coret Simon | Daniel Kollek

WESTDALE THEATRE | 1010 KING STREET WEST, HAMILTON

To purchase your tickets please visit www.jewishhamilton.org

For more information please contact Jackie Stirling @ 905.648.0605 x 320
or jstirling@jewishhamilton.org



How a family tree connected two Hamilton families

The late Ruth Goldberg's passion for meticulous research into her family tree changed Dave Carson's life

BY DAVE CARSON
SPECIAL TO HJN

Some members of the Hamilton Jewish community will have known Ruth Goldberg. She died in 2010 but her memory lives on. Her maiden name, Benario, can be translated as "son of a lion." Ruth was a lioness when it came to searching her family ancestry and connecting living family members.

I know, because she did this for me and it changed my connections to my family and its history.

It starts with the Benario family tree drawn up in 1921 and passed down to Ruth. She used it to search for connections, writing letters around the world to find connections with names on the tree.

An early connection was triggered by the tree hanging in Ruth's home.

Her friend Lore Jacobs saw this picture and said "Gangolf Herman, a friend of my husband's in Mississauga has a copy of that hanging on his wall." Gangolf's wife, Hilde (nee Stern) was the granddaughter of Mathilde Benario. With this, Ruth made a new Benario connection. One that lived just a few miles away from her.

We will come back to that connection later in the story.

My father, Andrew Carlebach, born in 1919, was also noted on this tree as a grandchild of Mathilde Benario. Along with his parents, Alfred and Elisabeth Carlebach, and sister Susanna, Andrew had fled Germany to England in the 1930s. Wartime saw my father in the British Army and required to anglicize his name to Carson in case of capture. Alfred and Elisabeth separated, and my father lost contact with other Carlebachs.

Fast forward to 1995 when sister Susanna met Emil Carlebach, a survivor of Dachau and Buchenwald, at a 50th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Buchenwald. Naturally, she asked if they were related. No, came the answer, but you might contact Professor Carlebach at the University of Sussex.

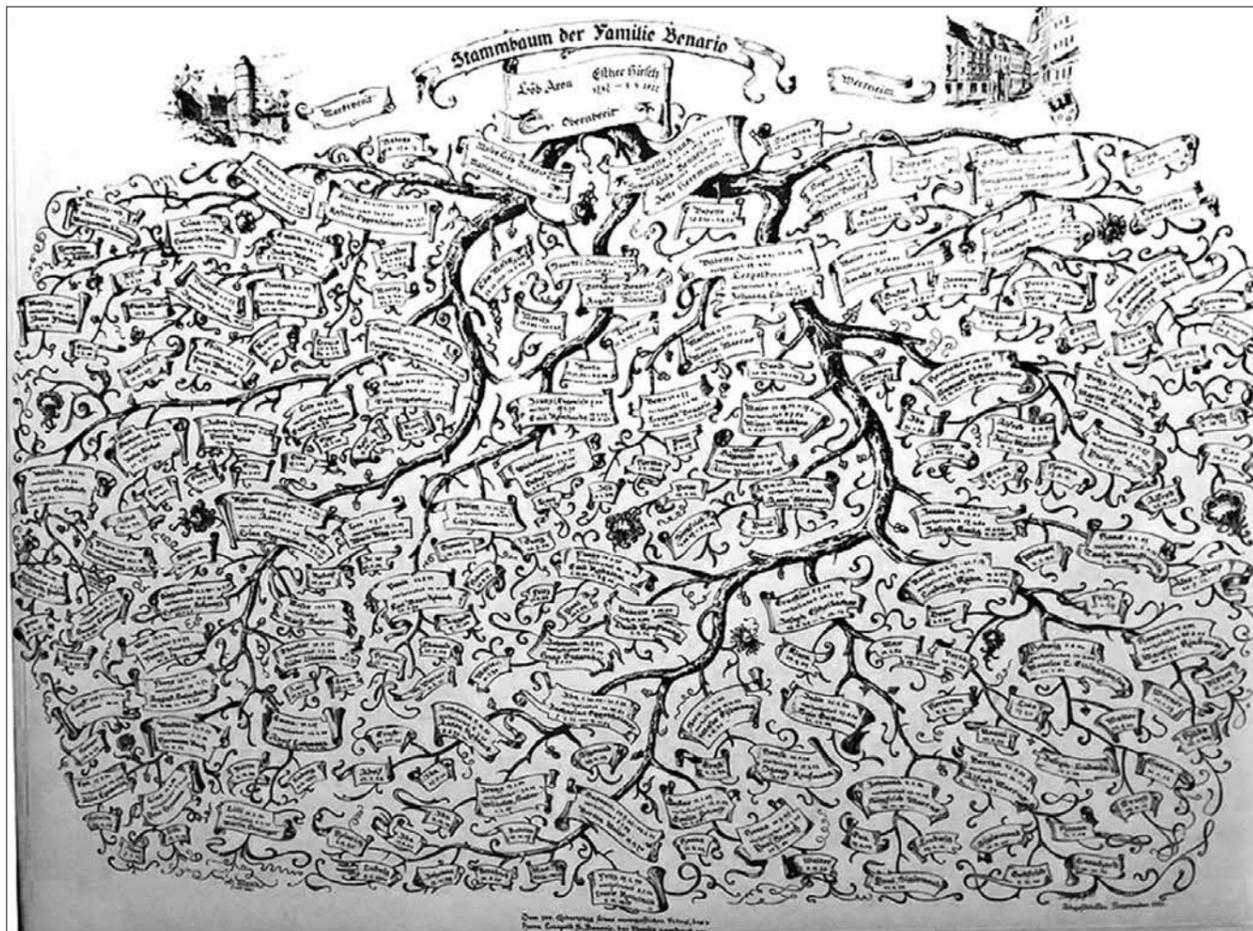
A reply came from Professor Carlebach's wife. "We are not related, but I kept a letter written to us five years ago from Ruth Goldberg in Hamilton, looking for a Peter Carlebach, who appears on her family tree."

Susanna passed the letter to my father Andrew (his middle name, which he used instead of his given name Peter), who suggested I contact Ruth as she lived close to me. A phone call to Ruth was all it took.

The Benario lioness had struck. Another family member found. Another connection made.

After I connected with Ruth Goldberg, another phone call was made. Gangolf and Hilde's son Gavin Herman, my soon to be known second cousin, also lived in Mississauga, his sister Ruth in Vancouver.

Gavin and I connected, and we have



A detail from the original Benario family tree.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE CARSON



RUTH GOLDBERG

Opposite, Ruth Goldberg and Dave Carson's families after discovering their family connection. Pictured left to right are: Shirley Herman, Gavin Herman, Ruth Goldberg, Sue Carson, Dave Carson and Yaacov Goldberg.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE CARSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE CARSON

Opposite far left, From left to right, Dave Carson's three Carlebach cousins, Ruth Hayon, nee Coblener from Israel, Oscar Stern from England and Susanna Beer from England.

Left, Dave Carson's father, Andrew with sister Susanna and cousin, Oscar Stern.

become great friends. He introduced me to Helena, his Stern/Benario cousin in England, and together we have all been on many family ski-trips ever since.

Another connection made.

More connections came as Gavin's children celebrated their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Family were invited from everywhere and Benario cousins met, or reunited for the first time since Germany in the 1930s. In the pictures above are two of these meetings. Ruth Goldberg, Benario lioness, had triumphed again.

TWO FOOTNOTES:

Andrew Carson and Gangolf Herman, on swapping stories, learned they had both been interned by the British as enemy aliens and transported to Australia on the notorious ship Dunera in 1940. Connection!

Cousins Andrew Carson and Oscar Stern, also story swapping, learned that post-war they had both worked, unknown to each other, in the same office of Lyons Tea in England. Connection!

In 2022, at the time of writing this, Yaacov Goldberg, Ruth's husband is

alive and well in Hamilton. Susanna is the only surviving cousin of her generation. The cousins' children though are still very much connected and thank Ruth Goldberg, lioness of the Benario clan, for her work in bringing them together.

David Carson lives in Dundas. He continues to search for family connections. His father, Andrew Carson, was a member of the X-Troop, a secret Jewish commando unit that fought for the British against the Nazis on the front lines of all the major battles of the Second World War. Dave Carson will discuss his father's career as part of the JTalk Zoom series on Thursday, Feb. 24 at 1 p.m. See page 8 for details.

Hamilton Jewish Film Festival returns to The Westdale

Organizers look forward to an in-person community event

THE HAMILTON JEWISH Federation is excited to announce its upcoming Jewish Film Festival, which will be returning to The Westdale, COVID restrictions allowing, from March 20 - 22, 2022. The festival, now in its fourth year, is proud of its mandate to bring entertaining and thought-provoking films to engage the broadest spectrum of the Jewish community, and provide an opportunity for the greater Hamilton community to learn about Jewish culture, Israel and Jewish history. This year's festival includes four excellent films and two Q & A sessions with film directors who will be coming to Hamilton from Israel and Montreal.

The program opens on Sunday, March 20 at 3 p.m. with the acclaimed documentary *The Fourth Window*, Israeli director Yair Qedar's sober and engaging account of celebrated Israeli author Amos Oz's unusually fraught life. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the director.

Following the opening reception will be the screening of *Golden Voices* at 7:15 p.m., a wonderfully romantic film about a married couple who dubbed hundreds of films in their native Soviet Union, but who struggle to adapt to Israeli culture as new immigrants.

The festival continues on Monday, March 21 at 7 p.m. with the documentary *Outremont and The Hasidim*. Stepping beyond "clichés" and stereotypes, *Outremont and the Hasidim* presents the point of view of both the Hasidic and surrounding Quebecois communities in order to discover what divides and what unites them, in search of reasonable accommodation. The screening will be followed by a Q & A, conducted by Montreal native Simon Mendelson, with film director Eric Scott.

The closing film of the festival will be the film *Yerushalem: The Incredible Story of Ethiopian Jewry* on Tuesday, March 22 at 7 p.m. This compelling documentary brings to life the complex saga of Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community through a mix of archival footage and interviews with first and second generation immigrants, Aliyah activists, Mossad personnel, naval commanders and Israeli air force pilots, decision-makers and many others who worked to bring Ethiopian Jews back to their ancestral homeland. McMaster professor Benson Honig will lead a discussion after the film.

Tickets can be purchased through the Hamilton Jewish Federation by calling 905-648-0605, emailing info@jewishhamilton.org or through the Federation website at jewishhamilton.org.

HAMILTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

WHEN
Sunday, March 20 to Tuesday, March 22, 2022

WHERE
Westdale Theatre

SCHEDULE
Sunday, March 20 3 p.m.

THE FOURTH WINDOW
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Opening night reception with "The Fourth Window" director Yair Qedar

7:15 p.m.
GOLDEN VOICES

Monday, March 21 7 p.m.
OUTREMONT AND THE HASIDIM

The screening will be followed by a Q & A with film director Eric Scott hosted by Montreal native Simon Mendelson.

Tuesday, March 22 7 p.m.

YERUSHALEM: THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ETHIOPIAN JEWRY

The screening will be followed by an interactive discussion led by Benson Honig

COST
Ticket price per film: \$15
Opening film plus reception: \$25
Festival Pass: \$60 includes opening night reception

TICKETS AND INFORMATION
Phone: **905-648-0605**
Email: **info@jewishhamilton.org**
Online: **jewishhamilton.org**



An archival photo of Amos Oz at his desk on Kibbutz Hulda, where he lived for many years.

OZ FAMILY ARCHIVE

A portrait of the artist as a wounded man

Yair Qedar's film shows the dark side behind the international success story of Amos Oz

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

ISRAELI FILMMAKER Yair Qedar went to bed one Saturday in 2020 after spending the night celebrating the completion of his documentary about Amos Oz, but he woke up the next morning to news that stopped him in his tracks. An article in Ha'aretz reported that Galia Oz was about to publish a tell-all book about abuse she suffered at the hands of her father, and just like that, the release date of his film, *The Fourth Window* was put on hold. Qedar was aware that Galia Oz had stopped speaking with her father as early as 2015, but he was surprised by the nature of the accusations and the media circus that ensued. "Everything was spiralling, the anger of the family, the tension, the conflict between Galia and the rest of the family," he told the HJN in a telephone conversation in early November. "It became very unpleasant, the whole affair and I knew that I couldn't have the film the way it was, without Galia. Because I would not be doing the right thing. I had to find a way to cover it and it was going to be very, very complicated because everything is so sensitive." And find a way he did. In its unflinching, multi-layered, and sensitive portrayal of Israel's most prolific and internationally read author, *The Fourth Window*, which will kick off the Hamilton Jewish Film Festival on March 20, has particular relevance in an era that demands honest evaluations of its cultural heroes. Below, Qedar discusses the events leading up to his film's release.

Q What did you think when you first heard about Galia Oz's accusations against her father?



PHOTO BY ZOHAR GUR ARIES

Israeli filmmaker Yair Qedar

A I completely believe her that what happened, happened ... The accusations are like in the "me too" style but not a real "me too." There's no sex there. So, I believe her but I feel discomfort. What also gives discomfort is the vagueness, the moral vagueness. Are we supposed to be the judges of this affair? Can we not be judges and say that we believe all sides?

Q You've said in past interviews that Amos Oz's close friend and biographer, Nurit Gertz played an important role in creating the final version of your film. In what way?

A Nurit was brave enough and wise enough to (return to the set after the article came out) to offer a narrative that allowed us to incorporate both

worlds of the victim and the victimizer which is the notion of a double tragedy. She was the only person willing to come to save the day in giving an interpretation that allowed us to put both narratives together, that allows us to identify with Amos but also, with Galia.

Q In the film Nurit asks Amos to tell his version of what happened between Galia and himself, offering to be both judge and jury. Did you mean to put your audience in the same position?

A Nurit offered to judge. I don't want to judge and I hope this film shows the complexity. It doesn't give an answer because this is very tragic and complicated. It's not a question of judging or criticizing ... Maybe the ability to feel compassion.

Q Oz lost his mother at the age of 12 to suicide. In the film, Nurit speaks about this childhood trauma and all that followed after, as akin to a Shakespearean tragedy. Do you agree?

A Yes. It's a tragedy. I feel compassion towards Galia and I feel compassion towards Oz. And this is what was so surprising for me to find out. You have the golden boy of Hebrew literature, the most successful Israeli artist of all time with this huge hole from the mother, with this tragedy of the daughter. My God. This is so strong and powerful. I didn't expect it at all. So, just listening and feeling compassion, that's enough.

Q How did the Oz family react to your film?

A Very good. They were at the premiere and they were crying (throughout) the whole film. We hugged each other and they said, 'You did what you had to do.' They were not happy... that Amos Oz is now in the world with a moral stain. But ... they thought it was fair.

Listening makes a difference



Miriam Sager

I WISH WE were a united Jewish community. We can do wonderful things together, but we are deeply divided and polarized, as seen on the pages of HJN just recently. It is clear that all who have contributed to this conversation care deeply about the survival of our people. I wish we could use this recognition as the basis for an open conversation and really listen to each other.

I am an Israeli-Canadian and love Israel — I am writing to you from Jerusalem. The first war I lived through was when I was 11 years old. I served in the IDF, have used a gas mask and have had to decide whether to take public transportation when buses were exploding. I wish there were no antisemitism, anywhere. I fervently wish Israel was safe and its future secure, a strong base for Jewish liberation and unity.

I also wish Israel was truly a light onto the nations, that it was moral and principled and that I could stand up for it fiercely and unequivocally. It would be comforting to think of myself and my people as innocent victims. Unfortunately, black and white is the stuff that Hollywood is made of. Reality is more complicated; no country is perfect, and maintaining an ongoing occupation

cannot be done without compromised values. I find myself defending Israel's right to exist against those who would negate it, while criticizing many of its policies.

Over the years I've discovered that shouting down my opponent, putting them down, coming up with a smart retort or waving facts or books at them, cutting them off or out, although all very Israeli responses to controversy and at times very satisfying, will not change minds or improve situations.

In contrast, listening thoughtfully to each other's stories does make a difference. For me, it is one of the hardest things to do: it requires that I recognize that every person has a valid story, reasons for how they've arrived at their world view and why they have acted as they have; I must be willing to hold back and really listen to things I really, really, don't want to hear, and to drop my defenses; to show my vulnerability, which perhaps I myself do not want to feel.

Understandably, this is not easy to do when you are scared and feeling unsafe, as we Jews tend to be, and for good reason. But Jewish Israelis and Palestinians do this in dialogue and activism groups. Bereaved parents on both sides can listen to each other and find common ground (look up The Parents' Circle). I wish we Jews could do so with each other.

Miriam Sager works with others to stop climate change, and leads listening circles.

A grandmother's angst



Phyllis Shragge

GRANDMOTHERS are a complicated lot, whether they're called Baba (as I am), or Bubbie (as most of my friends are) or Safta, or just plain old Grandma. Grandfathers are simple, unperturbed beings and thus are not part of the following thesis, regardless of their monikers, Zayda, Zaydee, Sabba, Grandpa, or whatever.

Your typical grandmother is a confused creature with a deflated sense of self-worth due to her tenure as a mother. Mothers, no matter how competent, are self-doubters even if they have a close relationship with their children.

A mother's insecurity usually doesn't manifest itself when her children are young. She is too busy being sleep deprived and totally focused on caring and protecting her little ones. But then, when her children become adults and her role as a mother is redefined, she is thrust into uncertainty. She knows she must step back and let her adult children make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes. This is easier said than done. The mother has spent years protecting her children. It's not so easy to watch from the sidelines when a grown child does something really stupid.

But let's say a mother does adapt to her new role. She bites her tongue when she sees her children doing something she knows they will regret. She won't offer advice unless asked (with the exception of health-related issues which supersede the holding back on advice rule.) Yes, this abridged form of mothering can throw a woman off balance, but she adjusts, because she has to.

And then, as the years go by, if she is lucky, the mother becomes a grandmother. Suddenly, her role is muddled. Just when she got used to standing back as her children went on with their lives, this woman is called upon to dare I say it: HELP. Yes, this mother/now grandmother is required to be hands-on, when a minute ago she could focus 100 per cent

of her time on her career, if she has one, or her hobbies, or her exercise regime, or whatever is important to her. No longer is she No. 1 in her own life. Of course, she gladly drops everything to help. She loves her grandchildren dearly and is thrilled to do all she can for them.

But in order to assume this role of grandmother, the woman must have a split personality. She has to be both hands-on—willing to babysit or pick up grandchildren from school when needed—and hands-off because she must not in any circumstances offer suggestions regarding a baby's sleep position, a toddler's toilet training, or how much TV a child watches. This dual role thrusts the woman into a frenzy of insecurity.

In addition to this, a major hurdle throws the grandmother into even more turmoil. This impediment (generally not spoken of in this negative term) is a thorn in her side, eating away at the already insecure grandmother's sensibility. This rarely talked about obstacle throws the grandmother's already wobbly self-confidence into mayhem.

She now has to deal with...the other woman! No, I'm not referring to a husband's mistress. I'm talking about the other grandmother.

This instigator of grief is a wonderful person. She's so nice. But why is the other grandmother such a fabulous cook? And why does she find it so easy to knit adorable hats for the grandchildren? It's not fair that she's a former kindergarten teacher with unparalleled expertise in the art of playing with the little ones. And she is so patient, seemingly unfazed by the demands of youngsters. Doesn't she get tired?

On top of everything, the other grandmother lives close to the grandchildren—not an hour away (two hours when the 401 is jammed.) When she's needed, she can drop everything and be with the grandchildren in an instant. Everything seems to be stacked in her favour. Okay, it's not a competition, but...

God forbid—the insecure grandmother laments—what if the grandchildren love the other grandmother more?

Phyllis Shragge is a local writer, mother of five, and grandmother of five.

COMING IN THE APRIL PASSOVER ISSUE: Test your knowledge of Jewish history in Hamilton. Plus, thoughtful pieces by our regular columnists.

Resilience ... what's sustaining you?

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting new and unforeseen pressures on all of us. Having so many areas in our lives affected, together with a sense of not having control over these events, can bring about uncertainty, confusion, worry and stress.

The Hamilton Jewish News has thought deeply about resilience and what skills and habits prepare us to better cope with, adapt to, and recover from personal and professional challenges. As a follow-up to our cover story on mental health in the community that appeared in our Passover issue a year ago, we are interested in hearing from our readers about how they've managed to cultivate resilience and well-being through the last year.

Have you taken on a new household or art project? Are you working towards a certain goal? Are you cultivating relationships with old friends? The Hamilton Jewish News wants to hear about it. You can contact us by emailing wschneider@jewishhamilton.org.

We are Open.

Safely open, in-person, on the phone or by video conference for all your legal needs.

Ross & McBride LLP

Clients first, forward thinking. It's what sets us apart

www.rossmcbride.com

1 King Street West, 10th Floor Hamilton, ON L8N 3P6

The rights of family caregivers



Samantha Winemaker

SOME PEOPLE diagnosed with a serious illness hope they will be able to shield their family from their experience. Most go through their journey trying to make the smallest ripple in the water. They assume if they attend appointments alone, try to remain as independent as possible, shoulder all of the big decisions, and stay quiet about their feelings and fears that they will protect their family from the 'burden' of their illness.

They want their independence to shelter and allow others around them to continue with their own lives, status quo, as if the illness is just a minor inconvenience.

Despite a person's best intentions, the family will begin to naturally form an "informal team" around them. The informal team begins to take shape with different people taking on different roles that change over time. Intuitively, informal team members seek to understand what is happening, how to plan and prepare, and how to get ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

If they are intentionally or unintentionally shielded from being involved, they begin to feel helpless. Consequently, they withdraw from an active role and begin to stay quiet because they haven't been invited into the fold by the patient. The atmosphere becomes polite, superficial and "safe" from any real conversation about the illness experience. A charade is in play. The patient and his/her informal team are negotiating an awkward dance around open, honest communication with each other. Families often adopt a cheerleader role, because they have no permission to be real. But they want to be real.

The family team can also find itself isolated from the interactions with the healthcare providers. They report feeling ignored at appointments while the patient takes the spotlight. Sometimes, their observations about the patient aren't invited by the clinicians, yet they have amazing insight into the patients' day to day journey.

Furthermore, they might feel conflicted about voicing their concerns because they don't want to discard their "positive vibe," or be seen to be divulging information given in confidence by the patient. They sit in the room beside their loved one, and assume the false appearance of having a passive role.

Many family members resent that they were never given the chance to meet with

the healthcare clinicians alone. So, they just go with the flow and keep their insights and worries to themselves, bottled up.

As the illness changes, the family team becomes more involved instrumentally. They drive, do groceries, banking, cleaning, and errands. Eventually, they are needed more and more, shifting from errands to providing more personal care and a physical presence.

This has a huge impact on the usual rhythm of caregivers' lives. They start to scramble to balance the needs of the patient and their own family/personal needs. Because there was no open negotiation about the caregiver role from the get go, they find themselves far into the journey without a proper plan. The "code of silence" around the realities of the illness, including what to expect, forces the family team to operate on instincts instead of a well laid out plan to help them understand how their own lives will change.

A reactive, crisis driven, pattern ensues because everyone is always caught off guard. Lack of explicit communication between the patient and their family, the health care team and the family, put all players at a disadvantage. In an effort to focus on the person with the illness, the families often feel lost.

Yet they too feel the effects of the illness. Unfortunately, they aren't treated as a vital part of the wider care team who need information, inclusion, and care themselves. Their insights, perspectives and knowledge of the person with the illness go unexploited.

This is an avoidable and missed opportunity to broaden the supports around the patient, to create a liaison between home and healthcare to ensure that the survivors, after death of a loved one, live on as healthily as possible as they attempt to integrate back into their own lives.

It is a sad misconception to think that a family can, and should, be protected from the truths of the illness. They are brought into the situation because of circumstances beyond their control, and they require and deserve as much attention as the person with the illness. It is their right to know how their lives will be affected so they can best prepare for the journey at hand. The isolated family will struggle and this will amplify everyone's suffering. Families need to assert themselves into the healthcare team. After all, they're a critical addition to the patients' journey.

Dr. Samantha Winemaker is a palliative care physician based in Hamilton.
Twitter @Sammywinemaker
Instagram Sammy.winemaker.

Learning to accept COVID-19



Ben Shragge

THERE'S A SUBTLE but important difference between acceptance and resignation.

Both acceptance and resignation involve acknowledging our lack of control over a situation. But if we're resigned to a situation, we feel defeated and hopeless about it. If we accept a situation, we observe it objectively and move forward. Resignation asks, "Why did this happen to me?" Acceptance asks, "What should I do next?"

What does accepting COVID-19 mean? Acceptance doesn't mean wanting to get infected. It means listening to experts like White House chief medical advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci, who said that "Omicron, with its extraordinary, unprecedented degree of efficiency of transmissibility, will, ultimately, find just about everybody." Or Dr. Amesh Adalja, senior scholar at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, who told Wired that "no one is going to leave the planet without COVID, just like no one leaves the planet without being infected with any of the other coronaviruses. The goal is to get it when you're vaccinated, so it's mild." It means paying attention to the global president of Pfizer vaccines and to the nearly 90% of researchers surveyed by the journal Nature, all of whom say that COVID will transition to an endemic state.

Endemic means COVID will become a constant, predictable presence in our lives; unlike an epidemic, which occurs when there is a sudden, unpredicted rise in cases. COVID will become endemic when there is enough immune protection in the population, from vaccination and previous infection, to reduce transmission, hospitalization, and death to manageable levels; even as the virus continues to circulate. Endemic COVID will still be a cause of sickness and death (though much less as new treatments continue to emerge), but not a cause of lockdowns and societal disruption.

In a Journal of the American Medical Association article, three of President Biden's former top health advisors write, "The 'new normal' requires recognizing that SARS-CoV-2 is but one of several circulating respiratory viruses that include influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and more. COVID-19 must now be considered among the risks posed by all respiratory viral illnesses combined." According to Jesse Bloom, evolutionary biologist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer

Research Center, "SARS-CoV-2 will become a less serious problem and something like flu." We don't passively resign ourselves to the flu: we get (or should get) flu shots, we avoid contact with sick people, and we stay home when we're symptomatic. But we also don't put our lives and society on hold indefinitely with every new flu variant.

The flu is a serious illness—claiming roughly 650,000 lives per year—and COVID even moreso. For the unvaccinated, the elderly, and the immunocompromised especially, COVID can pose a mortal threat. Although I don't fall into any of those categories, I certainly want to avoid infection. But accepting COVID also means looking at the data. Based on current CDC numbers, if (or when) I become infected, there's a 0.0009% chance I'll require hospitalization. That number is for all vaccinated adults in the US aged 18–49; since I lack comorbidities, my real risk of hospitalization is likely even lower.

Again, acceptance is not resignation. Acceptance means acknowledging that I—and everyone else—will likely experience COVID eventually, so I should get vaccinated and boosted to ensure my case is mild. It means getting tested if I suspect infection, and staying isolated if I do, to protect the vulnerable. But it also means taking calculated risks and not waiting at home for the end of the disease, which will likely never come. (Only one human disease has ever been wiped out globally: smallpox.)

According to Jeremy Farrar, director of global health philanthropy the Wellcome Trust, "The key question—which the world hasn't had to deal with at this scale in living memory—is how do we move on, rationally and emotionally, from a state of acute [emergency] to a state of transition to endemicity?" The science around COVID-19 is new, and its conclusions change rapidly. But the attitude of acceptance—our proper response—is as old as human wisdom.

The words of the Book of Ecclesiastes are as true now as they were when written more than 2,000 years ago: "No one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them." Yet we must not feel resigned; rather, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Death, and sickness, are inevitable; but our attitude towards them is up to us.

Ben Shragge is the HJN's digital editor. He lives in Boston with his wife Yelena and newborn daughter.

MARCH 20-22, 2022

Hamilton Jewish Film Festival

IN-PERSON PRESENTATIONS COMING TO





Noah and Andrew Tepperman

CELEBRATING 97 YEARS

As we approach our anniversary we are grateful to share wonderful relationships with generations of loyal families like yours for the last 97 years in the communities across south western Ontario. Although we have only been in the Ancaster market for a short time, our team works hard to bring you the best possible selection and value to help create a home environment that makes you happy.

This march we will celebrate our 97th year and we still believe in my grandfather Nate's guiding principle that **WHEN WE DO IT RIGHT THEY WILL COME BACK**. As part of the 3rd generation at Tepperman's, every day we provide our customers with the right products, value and service to make your house a home that you'll absolutely love!

I want to thank you for letting Tepperman's into your home and we look forward to continuing to serve you and the community for many years to come. We hope to see you at our anniversary celebration where you'll find great deals throughout the entire store.

Andrew Tepperman *Noah Tepperman*

TEPPERMAN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

Every month Tepperman's awards **TWO \$1,000** scholarships towards post-secondary education. We've invested over **\$700,000** in our youth via Canadian Registered Education Savings Plans.

\$1,000
SCHOLARSHIP
GIVEAWAY

teppermans.com/scholarship

SCAN HERE TO ENTER CONTEST



GET HOME HAPPY

As a local, Canadian family owned business, we're grateful to be part of the family. For over 97 years, people like you have trusted us to bring you the best fashions, values, and brand names in Furniture, Mattresses, Appliances, and Electronics at the lowest prices guaranteed.

- ✓ KNOWLEDGEABLE PRODUCT EXPERTS
- ✓ WHITE-GLOVE DELIVERY SERVICE
- ✓ STYLISH HOME DÉCOR SOLUTIONS
- ✓ TONS OF IN STOCK PRODUCTS
- ✓ EASY ONLINE SHOPPING
- ✓ PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE



Need a little help getting HOME HAPPY!
You don't have to do it alone, Tepperman's

FREE* HOME DÉCOR SERVICE

can help. You'll be confident in your selections and planning after seeing your space come to life virtually before you make your purchase.

*In-store or virtual appointments.

BOOK NOW

at teppermans.com



45 LEGEND COURT, ANCASTER, ONTARIO
WEEKDAYS 10AM-9PM • SATURDAY 10AM-6PM • SUNDAY 11AM-5PM
SHOP ONLINE 24/7 AT TEPPERMAN'S.COM

TEPPERMAN'S

 **PROUDLY CANADIAN & FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1925**

BATIA PHILLIPS, 93

A woman who filled the world with her laughter

BY MICHAEL GUTMAN



Batia Ben Tov Phillips

TO SAY THAT Batia Phillips was “larger than life” seems like a cliché, but this saying holds especially true for my mother.

Batia was born on October 28, 1928, in Haifa in what was then the Palestinian British Mandate and what is today Israel. She described her life as a child in the streets of Haifa as carefree and happy. She was a latch-key kid, letting herself in

and out of her home and fending for herself as her mother worked hard managing the labour movement cafeteria and her father worked in construction. Both of her parents had immigrated to British Mandate Palestine escaping pogroms and poverty in their native Ukraine.

At the age of 15, Batia left home to join a kibbutz. Several years later, she moved to Jerusalem to train as a nurse. During Israel’s War of Independence, Batia fought with the Palmach, an elite, highly trained combat unit. In one battle, Batia’s commander was critically wounded and she rushed to his side, taking her own shirt off to bandage his wounds. She picked up his rifle as he was incapacitated and continued shooting, eventually repulsing the attack. Shortly after, the Lebanese and Syrian newspapers ran a story of how the Jews were in such desperate straits that they had their women doing the fighting for them.

My father, Jacob, was also part of the Palmach, though in a different unit. A few years later they met and married. When the State of Israel came to existence, my father was sent as an attaché to the Israeli embassy to consult on mining technology in Kashmir and Burma. There are pictures of grand parties at the embassy with visiting dignitaries from that time.

At one point during those years, we lived on an ornate wooden houseboat on the headwaters of the river Ganges. We returned to Israel briefly in 1963, but my father chafed under the socialist strictures of a developing new country and so we left, first to Switzerland, and then two years later to Hamilton. My mother did not want to leave Israel at all, but for the sake of supporting her husband, she went along.

Two years after arriving in Canada, my father died of stomach cancer. A lesser woman would have collapsed or at the very least returned home under the burden of being a young widow with three children in a foreign land. But that same fighting spirit that sustained her during the War of Independence came to her aid again during this period of adversity.

My father had left my mother five run-down apartments, which she fixed up using his life insurance money and sold, using the profits to buy an apartment building in Burlington. After a few short years, she owned and managed close to 200

apartments. My mother once told me after being in business for several years that if she had known the risks that she was taking, she might never have acted as she did. But thanks to her Israeli chutzpah, she did take the gamble and won.

Because my mother was working so hard to provide for her family, she needed help raising her young children.

Eventually, she married a rather handsome and charming Hungarian Holocaust survivor named Egon, who was haunted by his painful memories. I am not sure those were happy years for my mother, though eventually they made their accommodations with each other. He died in 1985.

My sister Edith, a restless teenager like her mother at that age, returned to Israel at the age of 17. She soon married and gave birth to Sharona, Yardena and twins Shachar and Ayelet. When Edith got into a terrible car accident shortly after the twins were born, my mother flew to Israel and nursed her for several months. Assisting Edith and her family became the focus of my mother’s life. My sister died 17 years after that car accident, essentially succumbing to the injuries she sustained. Batia never forgave herself for Edith’s suffering, thinking that she was somehow to blame.

When my mother entered a room, her personality would fill it. She was charming, charismatic and mercurial.

My mother’s generosity knew almost no bounds. God gave her abundance and she did not shy away from distributing it to others. Aside from helping support her family, Batia contributed generously to Jewish life

in Hamilton. Her favourite charity was Na’amat, an organization that strives to enhance equality for women, fighting against domestic violence in Israel and in Canada.

Though Batia’s life was filled with adversity, she had the capacity to enjoy and appreciate much of what this world had to offer. After Egon’s death, she met a wonderful man named David and they became inseparable for many years, entertaining almost constantly at their Lake Huron cottage or their Florida home.

When my mother entered a room, her personality would fill it. She was charming, charismatic and mercurial. Her anger could burn hot, but she was surrounded by people who loved her deeply because they saw past her prickly outbursts to the warm heart and soul that filled her failing body to the very end. I think it is safe to say that there was no person who was part of Batia’s life who was not influenced or changed by her.

God gave Batia the opportunity to experience this life and she lived it with courage, adventure, love, and joy. Throughout everything, she filled the world with her laughter, which sounded like bells chiming.

Michael Gutman is Batia Phillips’s son. He lives in Israel.



ON HAMILTON

A new podcast brought to you by the Hamilton Jewish News

SPONSORED BY THE ALLEN AND MILLI FAMILY FOUNDATION

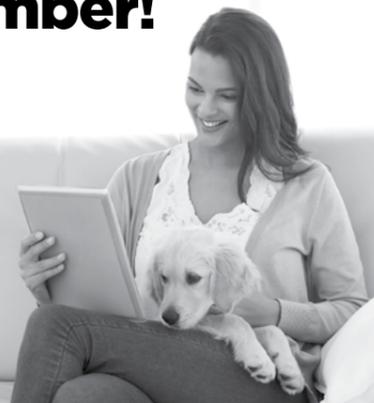
Watch for details

In just a few weeks your dog becomes a well-behaved family member!

- Online Classes or In Person Classes
- We have online students in 29 countries around the world - including Israel!
- Put an end to Barking, Nipping, Chewing, Jumping Up, Pulling on the Leash
- More Than 500 Free Educational Videos on our YouTube channel



MCCANN DOGS



McCannDogs.com

We’ve helped more than 100,000 dogs become well-behaved family members. And we can help yours too...online or in person. Contact us today!



Kehila Heschel School

ecoschools
écoécoles
CANADA

ARE YOU READY TO INSTILL A LOVE OF LEARNING IN YOUR CHILD?



Now is the perfect time to consider what would be the best school choice for your child.

YOUR CHILD BELONGS AT KEHILA HESCHEL
“WHERE EVERY STUDENT SHINES”

Kehila Heschel School
215 Cline Ave. N.,
Hamilton L8S 4A1
Tel: (905) 529-7725
Email: office@kehilaschool.ca
website: kehilaschool.ca

- Enhanced Ontario curriculum
- Immersion-style French and Hebrew starting in JK
- Integrated curriculum through a Jewish lens
- Heschel educational philosophy focus on
- Social action, environmental stewardship
- Judaic values of respect, kindness and community
- Enrichment through outdoor education
- Eco school, art and drama

Generously supported by The Weisz Family Foundation

PARKWAY MOTORS HAMILTON is proudly owned and operated by the Pinassi Family.

***EXCELLENT
SERVICE***

***COMMUNITY
FOCUSED***

***41 YEARS
IN BUSINESS***

