



INSIDE

Jewish Book Festival • 5
Memory and devotion • 7
Shtetl on the Grand • 13



CHESVAN 5780

Hamilton
Jewish

News

The voice of Jewish Hamilton Nov 2019

RECLAIMING HIS HERITAGE, FILMMAKER PURSUES POLISH JEWISH DIALOGUE

Slawomir Grunberg is on a quest to promote understanding between Poles and Jews

STORY BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**,
THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

SLAWOMIR GRUNBERG beamed as he looked out at the audience in a Hamilton Public Library auditorium after a screening of his film, "Karski and the Lords of Humanity." Speaking in Polish-accented English, the Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker told attendees that he was deeply gratified to see the local Polish and Jewish communities come together to learn about a Second World War Polish resistance hero who delivered one of the first eyewitness accounts of Nazi atrocities to the allied powers. Grunberg was in town in early September at the invitation of the Hamilton branch of the Canadian Polish Congress and the Hamilton Jewish Federation, who co-sponsored the screening. As the evening wore on it would become evident that Grunberg feels at home in both communities, which explains why he is uniquely positioned to promote mutual understanding between the two.

RECLAIMING HIS HERITAGE CONTINUES ON P4



Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg (left) and Canadian Polish Congress - Hamilton branch vice president, Yolanda Czyzewski-Bragues (far right) pose with Polish Jewish filmmaker Slawomir Grunberg and his wife Barbara during the couple's visit to Hamilton in September.

SEE RECLAIMING HIS HERITAGE P4



PHOTO BY CHUCK FISHMAN

Rabbi Avi Baumol (right) shows a Torah scroll to Polish Jewish children at his Sunday school class at the JCC Krakow in this Sept. 2013 photo.

POLAND'S JEWISH REVIVAL

The renaissance of Polish Jewish life that no one could have foreseen

EDWARD SEROTTA REPORTS: **P10**

CANADA AND THE US. VIVE LA DIFFERENCE **P14**

“ I have been told that Israel has no right to existence nor self-determination. ”

MICHAEL BERENS ON CANADA'S ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY AND POLICY **P14**

Hamiltonjewishnews.com

PM Agreement # 40007180



JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG

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.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND HATE?

BY **RABBI HILLEL LAVERY YISRAELI**
BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

JUST BEFORE YOM KIPPUR, I had the unpleasant experience of explaining to my six-year-old why someone would write “no Jews” on the parking lot of the synagogue he prays at nearly every day. I had to explain to him the meaning of a swastika. “Not many, but some people in our city think we should be killed just because we are Jews.”

As one social commentator noted, on Yom Kippur morning, the first five pages of The Hamilton Spectator were covered with stories of hate in our city: graffiti at Beth Jacob, the violence at Pride, and the murder of a 14-year-old boy. Later that day at the Yom Kippur service, I would learn of the shooting outside the synagogue in Halle, Germany.

Hamilton is famous for being the city with the highest rate of hate crimes in Canada. Jews comprise one per cent of the country’s population, but are the targets of 19 per cent of hate crimes.



How do we understand anti-Semitism, racism and hate? How should we live our 21st century lives knowing someone on our street likely wishes we were dead, or at least living in another country?

Our rise from suffering to peoplehood was designed to make us more compassionate.

RABBI HILLEL LAVERY-YISRAELI

To me, there must be meaning in this. It should serve to make us better people. Again and again, the Torah reminds us to be kind to the stranger, since we were strangers in Egypt. Our rise from suffering to peoplehood was designed to make us more compassionate. Today, too, our continuous experience of hate should propel us to find other targets of hate and work to protect them whomever they may be.

The Talmud gives a supposedly foolproof recipe for having God answer one’s prayers. “One who prays for their friend while having the same need themselves, will have their need granted first.” Imagine a society comprised of distinct groups with distinct needs, where instead of praying for their own needs, each group prays for a different group’s needs. The result is technically the same as if each group prayed solely for its own needs, since with both ways, all the collective needs are prayed for by some group. But if you were God, which option would you prefer?

Similarly, in Pirkei Avot 4:1 Ben Zoma teaches, “Who is honoured? One who honours all other people.” This lesson should be self-evident. It should be impossible for someone to hate a person who treats them with abundant kindness.

Our own experience proves this in the hundreds of gestures of love and solidarity that we received in response to the graffiti, including flowers, letters, phone calls, online messages, and chalk drawings. One non-Jewish Hamiltonian wrote on Facebook, “This synagogue has always been ... welcoming to all ... always supporting charities and people in need for years. I’m appalled and will stand against these cruel human beings who think its okay to do this to anyone!”

It is solely the responsibility of haters to cease hating. Nevertheless, Jews search for meaning. Being hated can and should prompt us to be better people who prioritize caring for others – the essence of living Jewishly. Teaching by example, others follow suit. And in doing so, we reduce the overall potential for hate.

Hamilton remains our home. Yom Kippur teaches us that recovery is possible, though very difficult, and that children should not be blamed for their parents’ wrongdoings. Hateful societies turn new leaves. It requires admitting that hate is destroying them and actively working to eliminate it. Bigger cities have been plagued with hate and have overcome it. We will help Hamilton overcome it too.



THE RICHTER GROUP

Proudly serving the Greater Hamilton Area since 1957






Experience the trust, dependability and accountability that over 50 years has provided at any of the Richter Group stores.

			
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

NOVEMBER 2019

LOCAL NEWS

5 DEALING WITH HATE
Jewish community

FEATURE

7 MEMORY AND DEVOTION
A daughter's gift to her mother

FEATURE

10 POLAND'S JEWISH REVIVAL
Despite rise of nationalism, Jewish life is thriving

VOICES

14 CANADA AND THE U.S.
Vive la difference



PHOTO BY DAVID CHURCHILL

PAGE 7



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

BOARD BUSINESS

A sunny Sunday morning in October found Hamilton Jewish Federation's board of directors, strategic planning committee, and staff hard at work planning for the community's future. The meeting was chaired by Federation vice-president, Howard Eisenberg (front row, far left) and facilitated by Toronto consultant Linda Kislowicz (front row, third from left.)

DEPARTMENTS

Guest Editorial	2
Cover Story	4
Fed News	5,8,9,16
Local News	6
Features	7,10
Obituary	11
Community	12,13
Voices	14,15

COMING UP

CHANUKAH ISSUE

- Deadline for receiving editorial copy
Oct. 31, 2019
- Deadline for receiving ad copy
Nov. 21, 2019
- Estimated date of arrival
Dec. 6, 2019

HJN

PLEASE RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

1605 Main St. W.
Hamilton, ON L8S 1E6

The Hamilton Jewish News is published four times a year by Hamilton Jewish News Inc. and funded by the Hamilton Jewish Federation

CIRCULATION 2,000

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.

EDITOR

Wendy Schneider

w Schneider@jewishhamilton.org
905-628-0058

PUBLISHER

Hamilton Jewish Federation

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Abigail Cukier

DIGITAL EDITOR

Ben Shragge

CONSULTING ART DIRECTOR

John Bullock

HJN CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Arnold, Steven Brock, Abigail Cukier, Barry Rosen, Ben Shragge, Phyllis Shragge

HJN ADVISORY BOARD

Aviva Boxer
Wade Hemsworth
Celia Rothenberg

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

PRESIDENT

Jacki Levin

CEO

Gustavo Rymberg

BOARD MEMBERS

Janis Criger
Mike Dressler
Howard Eisenberg
Daniel Hershkowitz
Lester Krames
Larry Levin
Alice Mendelson
Arie Pekar
Josh Rauchwerger
Peter Smurlick
Laura Wolfson

ON LINE

Dog Training

McCann Professional Dog Trainers

In just a few weeks, your dog will become a good family member!

Come!

COME when called, the first time, every time.

Heel!

WALK on a loose leash without pulling.

Stay!

STAY reliably despite distractions.

Take the FREE TRIAL today at
www.McCannDogs.com



McCannDogs.com

More than 80,000 4-legged family members trained since 1982!

Charred



Charred Chicken

Fresh BBQ chicken cooked on our charcoal rotisserie with our signature home made piri piri sauce

244 James St. N.,
Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 2L3
(289) 396-0662

@charredchicken
charred.ca

Delivery and catering available

“I didn’t want to be a Jew and I didn’t feel like a Jew. I wanted to be as Polish as possible.” **SLAWOMIR GRUNBERG** Documentary filmmaker

RECLAIMING HIS HERITAGE, FILMMAKER PURSUES DIALOGUE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Grunberg’s personal biography mirrors those of many among the first post war generation of Polish Jews. Born in 1951, Grunberg became aware of his Jewish identity during his teenage years, a discovery that caused him great consternation. After moving to the United States in 1981, Grunberg began a journey of self-discovery that would see him increasingly choose Jewish subjects as the focus of his growing body of work.

In his conversation with the HJN the morning after the screening, Grunberg spoke in more detail about his personal history, the revival of Jewish life in Poland today and why he sees “Karski and the Lords of Humanity” as his most successful film.

When did you discover that you were Jewish?

My mother and father got divorced before I was born and I was brought up by my grandparents on my mother’s side. I never heard the word “Jew” except when I misbehaved, I would be called “Jewish seed” by my grandmother. I had no idea what “Jew” meant, but I knew it was a bad word. Years later, when I started to dig deeper into my Jewish background. I realized that my grandmother’s family was also Jewish but they converted to Catholicism at the turn of the century to avoid pogroms. The way she acted was sort of anti-Semitic but she was Jewish to the point that even though she had all the right papers that identified her as Catholic, she had to hide during the war because her look was so obviously Jewish. When I was in high school I was much more aware of being Jewish



because I’d seen a lot of movies on television about the Second World War. There was a Czech movie that played on the main television channel The name Grunberg showed up (on the list of victims’ names), and I was scared to death that my colleagues in high school would learn that I was Jewish because being “Grunberg” obviously put me in a different category. I didn’t want to be a Jew and I didn’t feel that I was a Jew. I wanted to be as Polish as possible.

How typical was your experience in the first post-war generation of Polish Jews?

I would say very typical for families either from mixed marriages or for those wanted to hide their Jewish backgrounds. A lot of them changed their last names or gave Polish or Slovak first names to their children. Some became anti-Semites. People were afraid (that history could repeat itself.) My father, who was a historian and to whom I dedicated the film, until

the end of his life, tried to protect me, and didn’t want me to be too open about my background.

What kind of antisemitic experiences did you encounter during your years in Poland?

In university, there were several incidents — I would even call it a lynch — by my colleagues who were Polish, who beat me up because I’m a Jew. I learned very quickly that whatever I would say about who I am didn’t matter because I was perceived as a Jew. In 1979 when I won first place in a film festival in Krakow my colleague came to me and said, “I know why you won ... because the head of the jury is a Jew.” When I left for the United States in 1981, suddenly I was treated completely differently. Nobody treated me differently because I was seen as an immigrant and it didn’t matter if I was a Jew or not.

How do you account for the revival of Jewish culture in Poland?

The revival of Jewish life in Poland, as I see it, has been happening for the last 10 or 15 years. Parents on their death beds, were telling their children and grandchildren that they were Jewish. Or people became curious about their last names or absence of extended family and were discovering it for themselves. That’s why there’s such an unusual growing number of Jews in Poland. Jews are discovering that they’re Jews. Krakow is a particularly friendly environment because of the Krakow JCC, which director Jonathan Ornstein has made into a very important and colourful place and because, for the last 29 years, Krakow has been home to the biggest festival of Jewish culture in the world, created and still run by a non Jew.

Is Polish antisemitism a problem today?

The official Polish government line is that Poland is the most pro-Jewish country in the world, because there is a festival, and there

Members of Hamilton’s Polish and Jewish community during a Q and A after the screening of Slawomir Grunberg’s film “Karski and the Lords of Humanity” at the Hamilton Public Library.

are Judaic studies. But it’s totally wrong. Antisemitism in Poland is on the same level that it was before, but now it’s in the open.

How was “Karski and the Lords of Humanity” received in Poland?

I believe it has an impact. That’s why I’m doing it. We take it to high schools and have a conversation. That’s the best that we can do. I make films to educate. I make films to leave an impact. I don’t make films to entertain, so if the film is alive and invited and can change the world even in the smallest way, that’s a success.

Why was it so meaningful to you to see a mixed audience of Poles and Jews in Hamilton?

Because my experience is telling me how far the Polish and Jewish communities are from each other. How afraid they are of each other and how they don’t understand each other. “Karski and the Lords of Humanity” is the most successful of all the films I’ve made because it deals with a totally Jewish subject in a way that both the Jewish and Polish communities can get together and talk about.

“Karski and the Lords of Humanity” can be ordered through the website logtv.com.



**SAVE TIME!
NO PAPER FORMS!**

New!

**BUY
ISRAEL BONDS
ONLINE**

**IT’S NEVER BEEN
EASIER!**

Start here:

israelbonds.ca



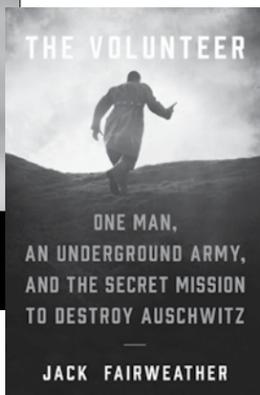
ISRAEL BONDS
CANADA-ISRAEL SECURITIES, LIMITED

THE MARVIN CAPLAN JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

November 16 - 24, 2019 | Four Books, Four Authors



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16
JACK FAIRWEATHER



8 P.M. JHAMILTON

The Volunteer: One man, An Underground Army, and the Secret Mission to Destroy Auschwitz

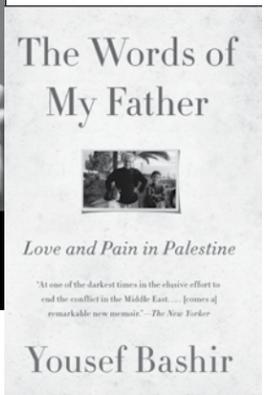
(Custom House June 2019)

Award-winning journalist Jack Fairweather reconstructs the remarkable, little-known story of Witold Pilecki, who spent nearly three years in the Auschwitz concentration camp, clandestinely working to undermine the Germans and inform the Allies of Nazi crimes—while all the time struggling to survive. Pilecki's exploits were suppressed for decades after the war by Poland's Communist government, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the opening of the archives in Warsaw, the story of his heroic mission slowly emerged.

Jack Fairweather has been a correspondent for the Washington Post and the Daily Telegraph, where he was the paper's Baghdad and Persian Gulf bureau chief. His reporting while an embedded reporter during the Iraq invasion won him the British Press Award (the British equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize.) He now lives a quieter life, writing history books while raising his three daughters in Vermont. He is the author of A War of Choice, and The Good War.



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19
YOUSEF BASHIR



7 P.M. JHAMILTON

The Words of My Father: Love and Pain in Palestine

(Harper; May 2019)

Amid the tragedy of the ongoing Middle Eastern conflict, *The Words of My Father* is both a powerful tale of moral awakening and an affecting story of ferocious and profound love between a son and his father. With conviction and arresting humanity, Yousef Bashir delivers an indelible reminder that compassion and forgiveness are uncommon gifts—and ours to choose.

Yousef Bashir is a Palestinian American from the Gaza Strip and the son of Khalil Bashir, a highly respected educator. Still suffering the effects of a near-catastrophic injury at the hands of an anonymous Israel Defense Forces soldier, Yousef made his way to the United States, where he earned a BA in International Affairs from Northeastern University and an MA in Coexistence and Conflict from Brandeis University. Now living in Washington, DC, he has worked on Capitol Hill and served as a member of the Palestinian Diplomatic Delegation to the United States. Yousef is an accomplished author, a vigorous advocate of Israeli-Palestinian peace, and a much sought-after public speaker.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20
MEG CLAYTON



7 P.M. JHAMILTON

The Last Train to London

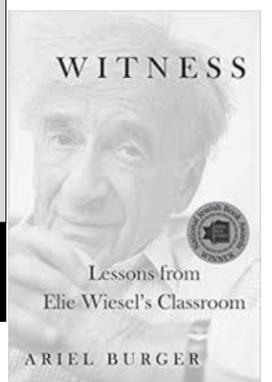
(Harper: September 2019)

New York Times bestselling author Meg Waite Clayton illuminates a little-known true story surrounding the Kindertransport in the run-up to the Second World War and a forgotten heroine whose daring exploits helped save up to 10,000 children as Hitler marched through Europe. A beacon of hope to many, childless Dutchwoman Truus Wijsmuller has already spent several years crisscrossing the border to spirit Jewish children out of Germany. Much to her dismay, the world appears apathetic to their plight as nation after nation rebuffs increasingly desperate asylum seekers from the Reich. Despite the escalating danger, Truus is driven to save all the lives she can before it's too late.

Meg Waite Clayton is a New York Times bestselling author of six novels, including *Beautiful Exiles*; the Langum Prize-honored *The Race for Paris*; *The Language of Light*, which was a finalist for the Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction (now the PEN/Bellwether); and *The Wednesday Sisters*, which was chosen as one of Entertainment Weekly's 25 Essential Best Friend Novels of all time.



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24
ARIEL BURGER



2 P.M. JHAMILTON

Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel's Classroom

(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Elie Wiesel was a towering presence on the world stage—a Nobel laureate, activist, adviser to world leaders, and the author of more than 40 books, including the Oprah's Book Club selection *Night*. But when asked, Wiesel always said, "I am a teacher first." In fact, he taught at Boston University for nearly four decades, and with this book, Ariel Burger—devoted protégé, apprentice, and friend—takes us into the sacred space of Wiesel's classroom. In bringing together never-before-recounted moments between Wiesel and his students, *Witness* is a primer on educating against indifference, on the urgency of memory and individual responsibility.

In this profoundly thought-provoking and inspiring book, Burger gives us a front-row seat to Wiesel's remarkable exchanges in and out of the classroom, and chronicles the intimate conversations between these two men over the decades as Burger sought counsel on matters of intellect, spirituality, and faith, while navigating his own personal journey from boyhood to manhood, from student and assistant, to rabbi and, in time, teacher.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LESLIE SELEVAN AT 905.648.0605 X 301 TICKETS AT JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG/BOOKFESTIVAL

“About 20,000 Jews made it to Shanghai. They lived a difficult life there but most survived, unlike their family members back in Europe.” **KATHY KACER** Children’s author

A MEANINGFUL GIFT

BY **BARRY ROSEN**
SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

I ATTENDED THE Shavuot morning service at Temple Anshe Sholom on June 9, 2019. During the Kiddush lunch following the service, I noticed a large framed object, possibly a painting, sitting on an easel at the front of the room. It seemed rather mysterious, as it was completely covered with a fabric. Nobody at my table talked about it, but I was very curious about what the object could possibly be.

After lunch, the fabric was removed and a rather impressive framed Torah fragment was revealed. Congregants discovered that it was donated by Joseph Scott, who is neither a Temple member nor a member of the Jewish faith.

Scott has been attending Torah study on Shabbat morning at the Temple since October 2018. He explained to the congregation how his gift came to be. I was fascinated with the story and wanted to know more. I realized there were two stories here—one about Joseph Scott and his involvement with the Temple and the other about the Torah fragment itself.

Scott agreed to meet with me so that I could learn more about him and his generous gift. From the beginning of his attendance, he has found Torah study to be personally and spiritually meaningful. He very much appreciates the learning atmosphere under Rabbi Cohen’s leadership.

Scott initially considered purchasing a Torah. The cost being prohibitive, he eventually located a Torah fragment online, from a seller in Israel. Scott’s next challenge was to have the fragment properly framed, and he was eventually able to do so here in Hamilton.

He decided to donate the Torah fragment to the Temple in order to show his appreciation by giving something back to the community. He showed it to Rabbi Cohen and then met with Cantor Baruch and they made arrangements to donate the gift to the



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, THE HIN
This Torah fragment, origin unknown, was donated to Temple Anshe Sholom.

Temple at the Shavuot service.

Rabbi Cohen says the Torah fragment consists of six sheets, or the first quarter, of the book of Genesis. The parchment is thicker than normal, and is uniformly dark brown, unlike a creamy colour typical of most Torah parchments. The reasons for this are unclear. In addition, the calligraphic style is unique and likely of Mizrahi origin.

The Torah fragment is a historical document that can be used for teaching, but since it is framed it cannot be used for ritual purposes. It was not accompanied by any documentation, but Rabbi Cohen speculated that it might be 150 years old.

When Scott initially showed Rabbi Cohen the fragment, the rabbi had no idea that Scott intended to donate it to the Temple. During the fragment’s unveiling at the Shavuot service, Rabbi Cohen was visibly moved.

A plaque on the frame reads: Dedicated to all who have suffered discrimination, persecution, murder and martyrdom for revering God. “An attack on one faith is an attack on all faith” – Rabbi Jordan Cohen.

Barry Rosen is a member of the Hamilton Jewish community.

HOLOCAUST STORIES GEARED FOR YOUNG READERS

Kathy Kacer shares her Holocaust stories in Hamilton

BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

THE CHILD OF Holocaust survivors, Kathy Kacer always knew she would write about her family history. She also knew she would gear her stories to a young audience.

Twenty years after deciding to become a full-time writer, Kacer is about to have her 25th book published in 2020. A psychologist for many years, working with adolescents and their families, Kacer decided to leave her job to pursue her dream of having a writing career. Her first book, published in 1999, was *The Secret of Gabi’s Dresser*, which was based on a true story of her mother, who hid in a cabinet while Nazi soldiers searched for her.

“That story of how my mother hid was told to me when I was a child and I wanted to tell it to other children,” said Kacer, who lives in Toronto. “I was so lucky when that book was picked up by Second Story Press and published. I haven’t looked back since then. I never imagined I’d have this full second career. And I never imagined that my books would be published around the world and read enthusiastically by young people.”

Kacer will be visiting Hamilton on Sunday, Nov. 3. She will be discussing her 2013 book, *Shanghai Escape*, which tells the story of a family who fled Austria during the Second World War. They ended up in Shanghai, China—one of the only places in the world to take in Jewish refugees at that time.

“About 20,000 Jews made it to Shanghai. They lived a difficult life there but most survived, unlike their family members back in Europe,” said Kacer. “I am going to talk about that book and a couple of other books that focus on Jews trying to escape Europe at that time. The talk is geared to teens but also to adults.”

Dedicated to writing about the Holocaust in a way that is sensitive to the age and stage of young readers, Kacer has been recognized with many awards, including a Silver Birch for *The Secret of Gabi’s Dresser*, a Jewish Book Award for *The Secret of Gabi’s Dresser*, a Red Maple Award for *Clara’s War* and a Yad Vashem Award for Children’s Holocaust Literature



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY KACER
Children’s author, Kathy Kacer

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: *Shanghai Escape* and other stories of the Holocaust with Kathy Kacer; An educational program for adults and children aged 8+

WHEN: Sunday, Nov. 3 at 7 p.m.

WHERE: JHamilton, 1605 Main St. W., Hamilton.

(Israel) for Hiding Edith.

Kacer speaks to children in schools and libraries around the country, about the importance of understanding the Holocaust and keeping its memory alive. In addition, she speaks in universities and colleges on the topic of teaching sensitive material to young children.

“I emphasize that it is OK for kids to be saddened by this history. It’s a very sad subject. What we don’t want is for young people to be traumatized by this history,” she said. “So, I talk about a number of principles to keep in mind when working with this difficult material in the classroom. I love talking to educators about this.”

Kacer believes it is important to share these stories, especially with young people. “I write both historical fiction and historical non-fiction. Many of my books focus around the lives of real survivors whom I’ve met and interviewed. But even when I write about a fictional character, I have to be so careful to make sure that the historical context is real and accurate. That’s where all the research comes in!

“This history is fast becoming ancient history,” said Kacer. “Now, more than ever, we all need to continue to pass this history on to the next generations. I believe this is our collective responsibility.”

DID YOU MISS US?

JNF BLUE BOX DAY WAS SUNDAY OCTOBER 27TH. DID WE PICK UP YOUR BLUE BOX?



PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE TO ARRANGE PICKUP BEFORE NOVEMBER 30 TO FACILITATE TAX RECEIPTS AT YEAR’S END. 905-527-5516 OR 1-866-527-5516



VINE and PARTNERS LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants

- Audit and Review Engagements
- Not-for-Profit and Charity Engagements
- Corporate Tax and Reorganizations

A Partner to Grow With

Brock Whitwell, Partner, CPA, CA, B.Comm
(905) 549-8463 Ext. 243 • brockw@vine.ca

[vine.ca](https://www.vine.ca)

“It wasn’t until I began researching my genealogy that I discovered who all these relative strangers were and how they fit into my family.” **STEVEN BROCK**

INSIGHTS FROM A LONG LOST PHOTO ARCHIVE

An old photo collection adds new dimension to family tree

BY **STEVEN BROCK**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

FOR MORE THAN 22 years, I have been diligently re-researching my Russian and Polish family roots. My father’s grandparents arrived in Montreal from the Pale of Settlement in 1907. With eight children in tow, they settled into their new country and the family began to prosper and grow. Throughout my childhood, we were never close to more than a handful of our relatives. As I was growing up, we would meet someone on our daily travels or at a social event and my parents would introduce me stating that “this is a cousin.” So, as far as I knew, I had hundreds of cousins but few whom I had met more than once. It wasn’t until I began researching my genealogy that I discovered who all these relative strangers were and how they fit into my family.

As I delved deeper into our history, I discovered more of my ancestors from earlier generations and the number of people on my family tree grew significantly. However, rather than flesh and blood people who I could identify with, most of them merely became names on a page.

Growing up, my father took a lot of snapshots of our family vacations and other special events, so we had many photos of my immediate family. However, being the youngest of four children, my father never had many photos of family members beyond his generation, many of whom had died before I was born. Over the years, my grandparents’ family photos were handed down to my older aunts and uncles and then later to their descendants. After a few generations had passed, the latest owners of the family pictures found themselves in possession of hundreds of old photos of people, most of whom they could not identify and to whom they did not feel any real connection or attachment.

As often happens, these priceless and valuable family heirlooms get thrown out, because the new owners don’t want them and don’t know what to do with them. Happily, after all these decades, my father who is now 92, and has outlived just about everyone from his generation, was given this treasure trove of old photos, which he had never seen.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN BROCK



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN BROCK

Above Left: The author’s grandmother, Rachel is at the far left with her parents Sophie and Michel Yurofsky and two sisters - circa 1900.

Above right: A wedding photo of the author’s paternal grandparents, Michael Borochovitz and Rachel Yurofsky, in Montreal on March 22, 1914.

Left: The author’s great grandfather, Yisroel Borochovitz in Montreal - circa 1920.

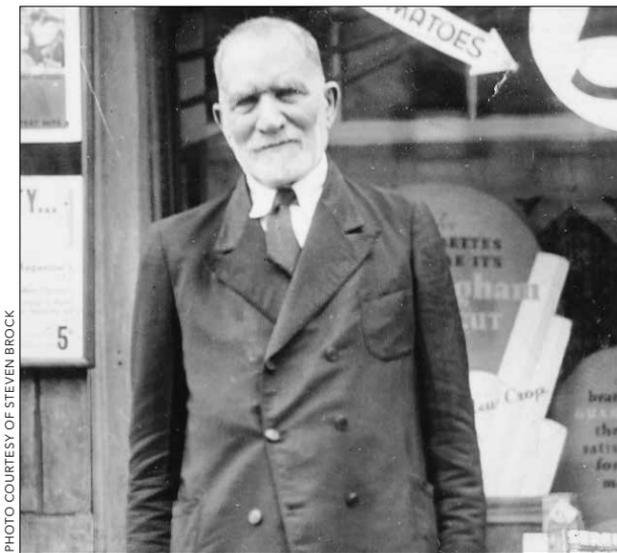


PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN BROCK

In April, I—the family genealogist—was offered this archive of our family history. Unfortunately, few if any of the photos had any inscriptions on the backs indicating who the subject of the snapshot was or when and where the picture was taken. However, my parents are particularly sharp when it comes to their long-term memories and recalling the past. So spending a few evenings reminiscing and

going through this archive, they were able to identify many of the people, places and events that this collection had documented.

As a result, my family tree has now taken on a brand new dimension, putting faces to many of the people who had for so long been only names and cold facts in my historical documentation.

With the photos now scanned, sorted, labeled and most importantly, backed up on several computer drives, the history of my family is saved forever. As my children and eventually grandchildren begin to ask questions about where they came from, I will not only be able to tell them the story of our family, but also show them the faces of those who came before.

A MOTHER’S MEMORY, A DAUGHTER’S DEVOTION

Former Burlington resident Agi Meinhard celebrated her mother’s 94th birthday with a unique gift

BY **MAURA PAYNE**, SPECIAL TO THE HJN

FOR NINE MONTHS Agi Meinhard dreamed, experimented, and agonized over a very special birthday gift for her mother Martha Gottlieb’s 94th birthday on June 2 of this year. Meinhard often heard her mother reminiscing about the beautiful synagogue she attended as a child in Debrecen, Hungary. By chance, while visiting Pompano Beach Florida, Meinhard saw exquisite balsa wood replicas of synagogues destroyed in Europe during the Second World War.

That sparked the idea to replicate her mother’s beloved and destroyed synagogue in clay, a medium she had been sculpting with for several years. In October she began her research, looking for pictures of the synagogue on the Internet. She was fortunate to find an article in the journal, Hungarian Architectural Digest, in which the Debrecen synagogue was featured. The article had the actual architectural drawings of the synagogue, and from that she was able to figure out a schematic to scale of the original building. She also found a newspaper article from 1897, describing the dedication of the synagogue.

The cornerstone was unveiled and read by Meinhard’s maternal great grandfather, Joseph Burger, scribe for the congregation.

Meinhard has found clay sculpting to be an utterly compelling and fascinating art form and has progressed with the skill over the last eight years. Her first instructor encouraged her to start by closing her eyes, massaging and feeling the clay, and then “see what the clay tells you.” Meinhard has the artist’s ability to see quite a lot.

Now began Meinhard’s real challenge. Working on a weekly basis, the sculpture took form from the ground up. She gives great thanks to her teacher and mentor, Jim Hake, who is associated with the AGO. The clay work, as it grew,

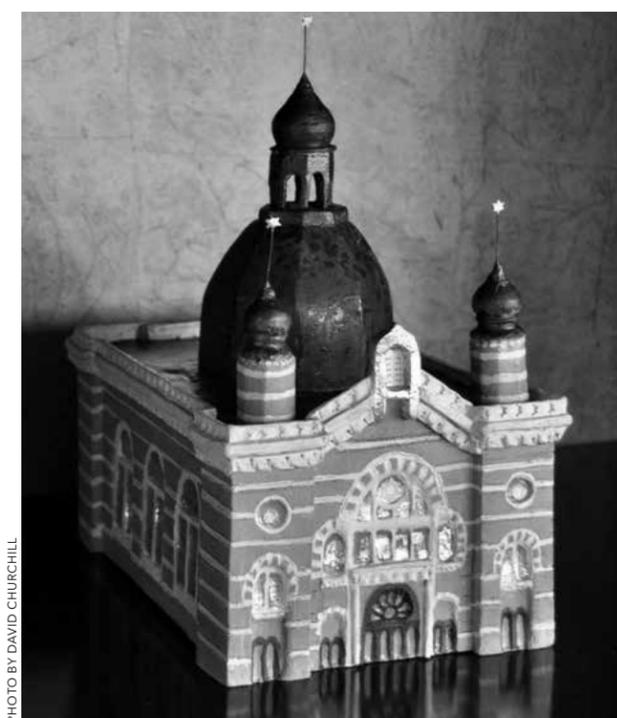


PHOTO BY DAVID CHURCHILL

had always to be encased in plastic so as not to dry out. It was a continual learning curve as Meinhard learned what worked and what didn’t sometimes having to start parts all over again.

The piece is about seven inches wide and 10 inches deep and because it is made out of clay and fired, it is fragile. After the walls replicating the three-story building, were completed, Meinhard and her instructor had to figure out how to make the dome—not only its unique shape, but how

Agi Meinhard created this clay model of Debrecen Synagogue for her mother’s 94th birthday.

it would be supported and keep its shape. Not unlike real architecture.

The façade of the building is exquisitely executed in the colours of the original building. Two short side towers embellish the front with miniscule stars of David held above by small copper staffs.

Needless to say, Martha Gottlieb is thrilled with her daughter’s priceless and loving gift. And Meinhard is justifiably proud of her achievement.

A version of this article first appeared in Toronto’s Manhattan Matters publication.



PHOTO BY DAVID CHURCHILL

Agi Meinhard and her mother, Martha Gottlieb

L'CHAIM!

A toast to Jewish Hamilton

MAIN SPONSORS

Effort Trust

CHAI SPONSORS

Apel Investment Group

Carmen's Group

Damin Starr Commercial Enterprises

First Ontario Credit Union

Fortinos Main West

Israel Bonds

Jewish National Fund of Hamilton

Leppert Business Systems

LiUNA! 837

McMaster University - Health Sciences

Vine and Partners LLP

ADVERTISERS

A.M.A. Paving and Concrete

Bert Laranjo

City Manager's Office

Canadian Polish Congress | Hamilton Branch

Councillor Esther Pauls

Councillor Sam Merulla

Coldwell Banker Community Professionals

Judi Caplan

Hamilton Community Foundation

Hamilton Fire Department

Hamilton Police Service

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Larisa and Mark Volman

MP Filomena Tassi

MP David Sweet

MPP Andrea Horwath

MPP Sandy Shaw

MPP Paul Miller

MPP Monique Taylor

MPP Donna Skelly

The Office of Mayor Fred Eisenberger

Raj and Damini Sandhu

YWCA | HAMILTON



Thank YOU



Did you make a positive impact on your community today?

When you support Federation's annual Community Campaign you can.

The Hamilton Jewish Federation unites Jewish Hamilton to act as one. It is where the Jewish community combines its collective strengths to fulfill its most important needs and aspirations. We welcome newcomers. We educate our youth. We fight antisemitism and the anti-Israel agenda. We create opportunities, celebrate and commemorate. We nurture our future leaders.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING JEWISH COMMUNITY IN HAMILTON. TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE. BUT WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE.

It's up to us. Let's write our story.



Hamilton
JEWISH FEDERATION

Campaign 2020

Poland's post-1989 Jewish story is unique, because before the fall of Communism, no one community seemed quite so finished as this one." **EDWARD SEROTTA** Founder, Centropa Institute

THE MIRACLE OF POLAND'S JEWISH REVIVAL

Amid a resurgence of nationalism and open antisemitism, Jewish life in Poland is thriving

BY **EDWARD SEROTTA**
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

THE SCALE OF MASS murder during the Second World War is unimaginable and a great many of its horrors took place in German-occupied Poland. That is the reason tens of thousands of Israeli, western European and North American Jewish students are visiting Poland every year.

This is understandable. In the years when Poland was wiped off the map—from 1939 until 1945—Nazi Germany set up its factories of death on occupied Polish soil and carried out the murder of three million Jews there and in the surrounding areas.

During the Holocaust, Polish citizens saved more Jews than in any other European country (6,500 have been named as Righteous Gentiles by Yad Vashem, a quarter of all those given this award), yet some Poles carried out murderous pogroms against Jews during (Jedwabne is the best known) and after the war (Kielce, Kraków, elsewhere).

Around three million Christian Poles were shot or starved to death by the Nazis during the German occupation, so when we are told to remember the past, the question is: Who is doing the remembering? What is being remembered? There is a Jewish narrative and a Polish narrative. And they don't very often meet.

Eastern European Jewry was all but wiped out during the Holocaust. Yet when tens of thousands of young Jews from around the world march from Auschwitz to Birkenau each Spring, a great many will tell you that "the Jewish people won," and "Adolf Hitler did not achieve his posthumous victory." For anyone who has seen these marches, it is not difficult to see how impressionable teenagers come to this conclusion, as they are surrounded by thousands of other Jewish teens, most of whom are carrying Israeli flags.

One can now own a color picture of Birkenau beneath the wings of Israeli fighter jets.

Neither the Jews, nor civilization as a whole, won anything in the Second World War. We all lost, but what the Jewish people lost is unfathomable and saying otherwise is ethically and morally wrong.

The Communist Era

What the Nazis began through genocide in German-occupied Poland and the rest of the region, the Soviet Union nearly finished when it occupied Eastern Europe after 1945. Synagogues were shuttered, Jewish schools were closed, official Jewish communities became mouthpieces for the Communist Party. For 40 years after the war, most outsiders were calling the few Jews still living behind the iron curtain "last Jews," and describing their communities as "remnant."

Yet after Communism fell in 1989, as each of these countries rushed to form parliamentary democracies and market economies, their tiny Jewish communities started throwing off the mantle of remnant like a garment that no longer fit.

Out of the ashes, a revival

Over the next three decades, Jewish summer camps, senior citizens' clubs, cultural programs, women's groups, and Jewish youth clubs all came bursting forth with an energy that far outweighed their actual numbers and, much to their credit, international Jewish organizations stepped in to help with funds and guidance including the Ronald S Lauder Foundation, headed by Hamilton native Rabbi Josh Spinner.

But to be realistic, the outlook is not especially bright. The numbers are just too small, and no community in the region compares to Budapest. Since the majority of its Jews were not murdered during the Holocaust, and since



PHOTO BY CHUCK FISHMAN

"Shalom on Szeroka Street" – a July, 2014 photo of the closing night concert at the 24th annual Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, Poland.

Hungarian Jews were never particularly Zionist, this community (with some 35,000 to 50,000 Jews) has the critical mass, the commitment and the energy level no other community in the region can match.

Poland's post-1989 Jewish story is unique, because before the fall of Communism, no community seemed quite so finished as this one. No observant Jew remained after the 1940s, then the Communists forced 20,000 Jews out of the country in 1968 and, afterwards, Poland's devastated economy in the 1980s sent scores of younger Polish Jews looking for better life chances elsewhere.

Even before 1989, however, hundreds (some claim thousands) of Poles heard a deathbed confession from a parent or grandparent that their family was, in fact, Jewish. Others told their children they were not their real parents, but had been given to them as babies over the walls of the Warsaw, Łódz, or Krakow ghettos. Still others found a crumpled piece of paper that led them to find their real name, their Jewish heritage.

Since Communism's fall, in addition to the Jewish school in Warsaw, lively community centres have opened in Warsaw and Krakow, as have youth clubs. The few elderly Holocaust survivors still living in Poland are well looked after thanks the Claims Conference, there are cultural

programs, and Jews can choose between any number of religious services to attend.

Young Poles and Jewish culture

No one agrees on the number of Jews in Poland although I do not buy the often used number of 30,000. What makes Poland so fascinating, in my opinion, is how many Poles are "filling the Jewish space," as Ruth Ellen Gruber eloquently wrote in her 2002 book, *Virtually Jewish*, as did Diana Pinto, a French thinker and a keen observer of Jewish life in contemporary Europe.

There are scores of Jewish festivals or one kind of another taking place each year; young Poles are studying Jewish history, Hebrew and even Yiddish in universities; books on Jewish history, culture, and food are released regularly; in Krakow, The Centre for Holocaust Studies at Jagiellonian University draws academics from all over the world to its programs.

Why the interest? Because today's young Poles are the first generation to grow up without the twin vultures of Nazism or Communism perched on their shoulders. At my institute, Centropa, we believe that young non-Jewish Poles are keen to learn about their towns' Jewish histories because when they do, they are reaching for a heritage that was stolen by the Nazis, then buried beneath the floorboards by the

Communists. Besides, telling teenagers who weren't even alive in the 20th century that they should feel guilty for anything that happened more than a half century before they were even born is a lose/lose proposition; having them explore their town's Jewish history and reclaim it as their own turns it into win/win.

To help them get there, the Galicia Jewish Museum in Krakow works with my institute to provide teacher training and weekend seminars that have now seen more than 192 teachers over the past five years. The educational programs at the enormous and highly impressive Polin Museum are just as effective.

Even though the current government in Poland has displayed a genuine rightward and antidemocratic bent, history has taught us that betting against Polish civil society is a losing game. Poles worked too long for their freedom and the basic tenants of democracy to allow the current trend to continue. After all, politics, like history, is a pendulum. It will swing back. Hopefully soon.

Edward Serotta is the founder of Centropa, a non-profit, Jewish historical institute dedicated to preserving 20th century Jewish family stories and photos from Central and Eastern Europe.

Wishing the Hamilton Jewish Community L'Shana Tova. Next Year, Invest In Jerusalem.

Access through Mandeville.

Tick Investment Group
100 King St. West, Suite 5708
Toronto, Ontario M5X 1B1

Robert Tick, PFP®, CIM®, FCSI®
Investment Advisor
rtick@mandevillepc.com

Mandeville Private Client Inc. is a member of the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada and a member of the Canadian Investor Protection Fund.

To Milli, the right thing was thinking through every minor detail to ensure a perfect outcome.” **BEN GOULD**

Lives Remembered

MILLI GOULD

Born April 14, 1933; Died October 13, 2019.



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER

BY **BEN GOULD**

IT'S NEVER WRONG to do the right thing. Such a simple edict, yet impactful. In pondering my mother's extraordinary life this may be her most important life lesson to us and it continues to resonate. Yet, like talmudic lessons it needs interpretation.

In her community, my mother didn't follow the route of volunteering. While she admired those who did step forward, she helped in other ways. She was a strong believer in helping those less fortunate either through generous donations or by supporting those who led volunteer initiatives. "No" was not in her vocabulary. Approached many times to be an honouree, she always rejected the offer. She gave of herself quietly.

Doing the right thing also pertained to my mother's beloved business. She loved her clients, her suppliers, and her staff. When she strode through showrooms around the world in her austere black outfit with hair pulled smartly back into a ponytail, Milli had an uncanny knack for picking the styles best suited for her clients. She kept her staff tight and ruled with a strong hand. And let's not forget her famous, well-manicured finger pointing out a rebuke when her view of perfection was not achieved by those around her. Her pursuit was not about the perfect outfit — it was about building confidence in those around her by being the best they could be. To her, the right thing was thinking through every minor detail to ensure a perfect outcome. Get it right or fear her wrath. Despite her sometimes intimidating way she engendered fierce loyalty. One of Milli's employees wrote us to say that although she was "terrified every day she came to work," Milli taught her "countless lessons on what it takes to be a fierce, feminist leader." The tributes we have received have been astounding. She quietly touched people deeply in ways we never knew.

Doing the right thing reached into her personal style. Milli's home was immaculate, her environment always stylish, tasteful, classic — perfect. In her final weeks when she was unable to get out of bed, she still had to approve e-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g. After showing her a photo of the table we had prepared for the family Rosh Hashanah dinner, my mother raised her eyebrows and began pointing out the missteps — the placemats were wrong and didn't match the serviettes; cutlery was missing; and, "why did you choose those salt and pepper shakers?" I could go on.

Doing the right thing also pertained to my mother's friendships. She would lie next to a dying friend until the end, never thinking of her own comfort. When she became enamoured with chocolate-making some 40 years ago, she began making incredible cakes and

chocolate creations for her friends. These were works of art that could easily be found in the likes of Fauchon. Milli would say that her cold hands were perfect for forming chocolate but it's her warm heart that gave without any thought for her own time or effort.

Doing the right thing was, most importantly, for her family. My mother put family first, and while her stern perfectionism extended to all of us, she always did what needed to be done. Being in business together, our immediate family had its unique challenges, but when the Jewish holidays came around, she made sure we settled our differences while reminding us that family is irreplaceable, precious and the bond that mattered most. She observed the holidays in her unique way — the perfect meal, the perfect table, every detail considered.

Doing the right thing was always on demonstration through my mother's force of will, determination, and tenacity. When she made up her mind, that was it. She had a sixth sense, a deep understanding of human strengths and human frailties. She could relate to both.

To many, Milli will be remembered for some of the highlights in her life about which we are all immensely proud. She received an honorary Doctor of Laws from McMaster University, despite the fact that she didn't finish high school. She was inducted to the Gallery of Distinction by the City of Hamilton, and the YWCA recognized her as a Woman of Distinction. Shelly Faulkner and the Art Gallery of Hamilton saw something special in her history and created an exhibition highlighting the wonderful garments my mother helped create and the impact she had on the lives of her cherished clients and friends.

Others will remember the obstacles my mother overcame — principally losing her daughter and husband in a house fire early in her life while she was pregnant with me, and then losing her husband 20 years ago.

What is not revealed in these events are the gifts, the extra effort, the personal touch, the advice, the support. Her legacy has taught us to never stray from our moral or ethical principles; to enthusiastically put others' interests before our own; to be compassionate, especially when it feels undeserving or unappreciated; to tirelessly give of ourselves for the benefit of others — particularly when no one is looking; and that reconciliation is more empowering than resentment. This is the sage advice she lived and shared. And this is how she showed us the meaning of doing the right thing.

Ben Gould is Milli Gould's son.



Authentic Montreal-Style Bagels



Try our delicious Lox, Chopped Liver, Smoked Meat, Tuna and Egg Salad Sandwiches Assorted Platters & Pastries Knishes, Latkes & Cheese Blintzes

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

Scarfone Hawkins LLP
Lawyers and Trade-Mark Agents

"Making a transaction work for a client is like making a painting look good. The art, for us, is doing our work in the most skillful way possible to get the best result."

Joseph G. Speranzini, Partner
speranzini@shlaw.ca



"The comparison doesn't have to be to visual arts. Process is art — how you accomplish your goal, how you do it differently from everyone else. It's about creativity."

Danielle Iampietro, Partner
iampietro@shlaw.ca



"When we talk about the art of law, we're really talking about excellence. It's elevating the practice of law to an art form. That's what makes us stand apart."

Jim Mahler, Partner
jmahler@shlaw.ca



Scarfone Hawkins LLP

1 James St. S., 14th Floor
P.O. Box 926, Depot 1
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3P9
Phone: 905-523-1333
Fax: 905-523-5878

www.shlaw.ca

The HJN acknowledges the generous support of the Allen and Milli Gould Foundation, sponsors of its Community section.



The Hamilton Jewish Federation extends our deepest condolences over the loss of

Milli Gould, z'l

TRAILBLAZING ENTREPRENEUR, PHILANTHROPIST

Milli devoted much of her life to supporting causes she held dear, both within and outside the Jewish community. We will forever be grateful for her devotion to our community.

May her memory be a blessing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JNF HAMILTON

JNF's Future Group volunteering with our partner Leket, Israel's national food bank.

JNF'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE

BY JOSH BLACK

THIS PAST MAY, I was part of a group of young professionals who journeyed to Israel with the JNF Future group to enjoy a week of exploration and to see the benefits that have been accrued by JNF Canada over the years. Throughout the trip we were informed that the JNF does more than blue box donations and tree planting. Our itinerary was proof of that.

The trip included a visit to Leket Food Bank which, among other things, claims unwanted produce in grocery supply chains that would otherwise be left out to rot in fields, and distributes it to those in need. A quick stop at the Carmel Fire Memorial to those who perished in the wildfires of 2010 provided panoramic views of the forested rolling hills that the JNF has helped to vegetate since the country's inception. We stopped at two youth centres, one outside of Tel Aviv in Jaffa, and one near Nazareth, where children of all backgrounds were provided with opportunities to build relationships, enhance skillsets, and build confidence. The next day we visited the soon to be inaugurated Stephen Harper Bird Sanctuary in the beautiful Hula Valley. Snow still capped the peak of Mount Hermon as the birds and fruiting mulberries abounded in the lush Hula Valley below. The once malarial swamps drained and reconfigured, have

now become a sanctuary of peace and solitude, thanks in part to donations to the JNF.

After a few days in Jerusalem, we made our way to the tomb of Ben Gurion in Sde Boker surrounded by the desolate brilliance of the Negev wilderness. A harmattan from the east was a reminder of the extent of the harshness of desert life. And yet, thanks in large part to Ben Gurion's visions, and JNF donations, pockets of green now paint the Negev landscape.

An interesting conversation has arisen recently with regard to whether Israel, as a newly developed nation, should now be sending donations to the diaspora instead of the historically reverse relationship. This seems an absurdly bifurcated question, as certainly there is so much to gain when both parties are giving, and in the way they best know how. The quality of projects supported by JNF Canada in social services, food security, water innovation, and yes, trees, is a testament to the continued impact diaspora support can have in building up Israel, and how much innovation, connection, and pride we can benefit from in return. The JNF Future trip was a fantastic learning tool for me and the other young professionals to experience this first hand, and the next time you're in Israel, with the JNF or otherwise, go and explore some of these projects for yourself.

Knowledge and Experience Matter.



Jeffrey Manishen

Barry Yellin

Brad Wiseman

No other law firm in the city offers as many practice areas or services to its clients. If you have any questions about what we can provide you, feel free to contact us.



Ross & McBride LLP

1 King Street, 10th Floor
Hamilton, ON L8P 1A4

TEL: 905.526.9800

FAX: 905.526.0732

www.rossmcbride.com

Lawyers in your Corner

JCC PROGRAMS



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JCC

The JCC's September back to school backpack drive was a huge success, with more than 50 backpacks assembled.

BY **AIMEE WIGLEY**,
JCC FAMILY PROGRAM COORINATOR

The Jewish Community Centre, Hamilton Jewish Federation and Hamilton Jewish Social Services have banded together to create an ongoing project, designed to aid all members of our community and beyond. Dubbed "The Mitzvah of the Month," the goal is to be able to make meaningful changes in our world through acts of kindness, something I think its safe to say we all sorely need. The September Back to School Backpack Drive was a total success; we packed up and donated more than 50 backpacks to any who requested.

On Friday, Aug. 30, JHamilton was filled with laughter as a tenacious group came together to assemble the school supplies. It illustrates to me just how wonderfully caring and compassionate our community truly is; we had donations from all over and the project exceeded all our expectations!

Please make sure to keep an eye on our Facebook pages, as well as the weekly eblasts, to see what Mitzvot are coming up. We are always looking for ways to make our community a little brighter, one act of kindness at a time.

SHTETL ON THE GRAND

BY **WILLIAM DARFLER**

THE FIRST JEWISH family moved to Brantford, Ontario in 1881. By the 1960s the community peaked at 150 families and at the turn of the last century there were only 28 families left. Gerald Tulchinsky, the leading scholar of Canadian Jewish history, saw this as a pattern: initial settlement, followed by growth over a decade or two, and then decline as the younger generation sought greater opportunities in the cities.

Gerald Tulchinsky was born in Brantford in 1933. His grandparents were among the early immigrants, scrap dealers primarily, and his parents were local merchants. Tulchinsky became a professor at Queens. In his retirement he wrote a memoir of growing up Jewish in Brantford, titled "Shtetl on the Grand". He died two years ago and never had a chance to return to his home town to promote the book.

Recently, an ad hoc committee has formed to popularize "Shtetl" and to interpret Brantford's Jewish history. The group consists of two local historians, the director of a theatre company, and an associate professor at Laurier Brantford. The project started out as a public reading from Tulchinsky's book but has morphed into staged performances of a few of the stories, lectures, a presentation of a project

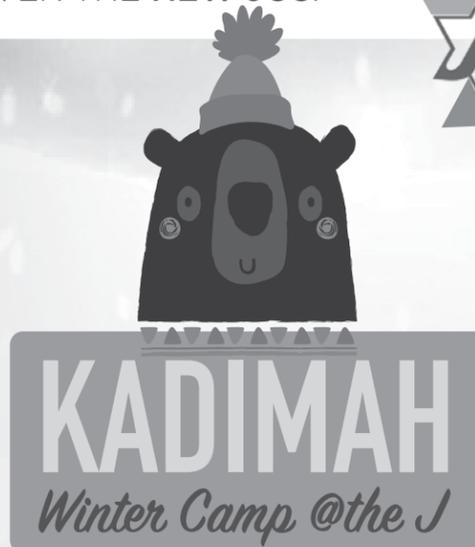
at Laurier that maps the locations of the Jewish owned shops in the downtown and the telling of the stories of notable Brantford Jews, along with music and food.

The performance takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 5:30 p.m. at Market Square, 150 Dalhousie Street in Brantford. Jewish historian, Franklin Bialystok, will be speaking and Tulchinsky's widow, Ruth, will also be a guest.

We have uncovered some really interesting stories in our research. The Allen Brothers' chain of movie theatres had their start on Colborne Street and the first Brantford Hebrew Association meetings were held upstairs at the Wonderland Theatre. Tulchinsky writes in "Shtetl" about his visits with his father to the Czechoslovakian Jewish agricultural community in Lynden. We have made contacts with the Loewith family and they're excited about the project. We hope that Hamilton's Jewish community will pay us a visit in November. For more information contact branttheatre.com/shtetl-grand or email wmdarfler@gmail.com.

William Darfler, a Brantford-based historian, is a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award.

DISCOVER THE NEW JCC!



Monday, December 30 | 9 am - 4 pm
Tuesday, December 31 | 9 am - 3 pm
Thursday, January 2 | 9 am - 4 pm

Registration: \$65/day | \$150/3 days | JK to Grade 6

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION CONTACT AIMEE AT AIMEE@HAMILTONJCC.COM | 905-648-0613

PLEASE REGISTER BY DECEMBER 11!

69TH ANNUAL



THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2020
HAMILTON CONVENTION CENTRE

WITH CELEBRITY GUESTS:

Georges St-Pierre

Jim Ralph

Dan Shulman

Tessa Bonhomme and MORE!



HamiltonSportsDinner.com

PARKWAY MOTORS HAMILTON
PROUDLY SUPPORTS THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS



CANADA AND THE US. VIVE LA DIFFERENCE.



**BEN
SHRAGGE**

BEFORE I MOVED to the US, I assumed Canadians and Americans were pretty much the same. The narcissism of small differences so exaggerated in school—clichés like “America’s a melting pot, Canada’s a mosaic”; “They fight the wars, we keep the peace”—added up to a case of the lady doth protest too much. If we were really so different, we wouldn’t talk about it all the time, or try to counter a man on the moon with an arm on a space station.

I still roll my eyes at the Canadarm as national symbol. But I do admit now, having lived in the US for more than three years, that our differences are real. Is any random Canadian more polite than any random American? Not necessarily. But in a crowded city, or even at a crowded party, a greater number of polite people matters.

An American observed to me that on driving into Canada, cars on the highway started leaving each other more space. Is that true

everywhere in Canada, and with everyone? No. Certainly not in Quebec. But the average Canadian crowd is noticeably different from the average American crowd: more polite (if more passive-aggressive), more foreign-born (but less Spanish-speaking), and yes, more likely to say “eh.”

Canadian Jews too, are decidedly different from American Jews en masse. According to a 2018 Environics survey (which, alas, left out Hamilton), Canadian Jews are twice as likely as American Jews to belong to a synagogue, with 26 per cent identifying as Conservative, 17 per cent as Orthodox, and 16 per cent as Reform. By comparison, according to the 2013 Pew survey, 35 per cent of American Jews identify as Reform, 18 per cent as Conservative, and 10 per cent as Orthodox. Canadian Jews on the whole are more religious and more traditional.

Related to the numbers, there are actual doctrinal differences between Canadian and American Judaism. Perhaps most significantly, while American Reform Judaism accepted patrilineal descent in 1983, Canadian Reform Judaism doesn’t to this day. Since

Reform is the largest American Jewish denomination, that means there are significant numbers of American Jews who, despite being raised in the religion, most Canadian Jews (in theory at least) don’t recognize as Jews.

Why the difference? According to Rabbi Dow Marmur, rabbi emeritus of Toronto’s Holy Blossom Temple: “Whereas Reform has long been a dominant force in American Jewish life, in Canada we are a minority, significantly outnumbered by Conservative and Orthodox Jews. As we’re determined not to become a fringe group, we have tended toward traditional observances that unite rather than divide the Jewish denominations in Canada.” He goes on to say that “many Reform Jews in the United States have wrongly perceived me as an Orthodox Jew masquerading as Reform.”

The more conservative tone of Canadian Judaism seems counterintuitive. Isn’t Canada, with its public healthcare system, official multiculturalism, and early adoption of same-sex marriage, supposed to be more liberal than the US?

Canada is certainly more liberal in policy than the US, but sensibility runs deeper than policy. And while the American sensibility emphasizes individualism, the Canadian sensibility emphasizes consensus: whether that consensus is liberal or conservative. The American catchphrase is “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The Canadian catchphrase, if you can call it that, is “Peace, order, and good government.” The US was born of a revolution; Canada was born of a conference. It shows.

The emphasis on consensus is why Canada’s politics are generally middle of the road, with Conservatives funding public healthcare and Liberals balancing the budget. It’s why Canada has only participated in wars with broad international support (Korea, not Vietnam; Afghanistan, not Iraq). It’s also why Canadians accept keep-the-peace conventions—like a foreign monarchy no one takes seriously, French public services in wholly English-speaking areas, and government-funded Catholic schools—that from the outside, seem bizarre or unjust.

Canadian Jews share the national consensus on the value

of consensus. American-born University of Toronto professor Judith Taylor wrote a lament in *The Forward* titled “Why Are Canadian Reform Jews So . . . Conservative?” In response, a committee of anonymous Reform rabbis wrote that “. . . we in Canada value communal standards over radical individual autonomy. Canadian Jewish culture, informed by the Talmudic admonishment, *al tifrosh min hatzibur* (do not separate yourself from the community) celebrates the collective.”

Their argument, as much as one can be detected, isn’t the Orthodox claim that the traditional approach is right. Rather, it’s a call (or admonishment) for consensus for the sake of consensus; for the primacy of “peace, order, and good government” in a religious context. How very Canadian indeed. We no longer believe in the divine right of kings, but we believe in peacekeeping; and paying lip service to the Queen keeps the peace.

Ben Shragge is the digital editor of the Hamilton Jewish News. He currently resides in Boston.

CANADA’S ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY AND POLICY



**MICHAEL
BERENS**

THE INTERNATIONAL Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism has been adopted by dozens of democratic countries – it is a vital tool in countering the global rise in antisemitism.

On June 25, 2019, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism announced that the Government of Canada will adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in its anti-racism strategy.

This is a major milestone in the struggle against antisemitism. It sets a strong example and offers a practical tool for authorities – from police and prosecutors, to school principals and campus officials – as they work to tackle antisemitism on the ground across Canada.

The IHRA definition also

explicitly recognizes that anti-Zionism – that is the delegitimization and demonization of the Jewish state – is a clear and unequivocal expression of antisemitism. The definition states clearly that Jew hatred includes applying antisemitic slurs to Israel, denying the Jewish people’s legitimate right to self-determination, accusing Israelis of blood libels, and holding Israel to double standards. The IHRA definition also recognizes that, like any democracy, criticism of Israeli policy is not antisemitic. But calling into question the right of the Jewish people to self-determination is.

The IHRA definition clearly exposes how the demonization of Israel is antisemitism, pure and simple.

My personal observation of some of the postings in the past by a few of the readers of my Facebook posting to only friends and family has been very disappointing and often left me feeling distraught due to the one-sided bias displayed.

Many of us feel that the Palestinians have a right to self-existence but the sources of the media which are disseminated have countless been proven doctored and erroneously stated, notwithstanding Israel’s current policies should be critically addressed – not condemned without a better understanding of a very complex situation.

During an internationally monitored election, the Palestinians freely voted in the Hamas government in which the leader of the party has publicly stated that ALL Jews should be destroyed, not just the state of Israel. In the disputed and often volatile areas of Israel, namely the Western Bank and the Gaza strip, much needs to be critically addressed but in most of the other regions, there is a mix of racial, ethnic, and religious neighbours – some live in peaceful tolerance of each other and others have formed strong friendships. I have heard many personal stories of the latter but no Israeli or Jew, for that matter, could feel equally

comfortable living in any of the surrounding countries without adopting their culture and particularly their religion.

To have some friends sign petitions to support the BDS movement leaves me in a quandary regarding our friendship. I respect their right to dissent from my views but ignoring or not delving into the real meaning of such a movement, and yet supporting it, is tantamount to supporting prejudice. As of January 2019, 27 U.S. states had passed various anti-BDS measures. I believe more have passed state laws since. True, some states have groups challenging these laws based on the 1st Amendment but needless to say, those appear to be alt-right groups.

Any attempt to have honest dialogue has been rife with acerbic and aggressive comments laden with accusations of my being biased, hence, I have refrained from such futile discussions. I have even been told that Israel has no right to existence nor self-determination including by a university

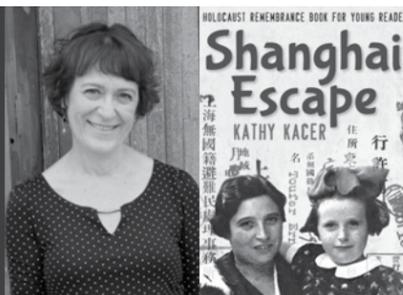
professor who teaches peace in one of the Humanities departments.

Finally, the media stories and images of atrocities committed by Israel, as I alluded to earlier in this article, have been proven to be doctored, incompletely reported and often regaled, or outright lies. I would never suggest that lone-wolf soldiers and perhaps, some sectional divisions, “may” have acted beyond protocol (not proven) and perhaps in a perceived threatening situation, but it is not Israeli policy to blatantly commit atrocities – it is not inherently part of the Judaist belief.

Furthermore, the perpetrators of the recent local acts of antisemitism at Beth Jacob Synagogue should have been charged with antisemitism, not merely a legal transgression within a financial limit.

Michael Berens is a former member of the Freelance Editor Association of Canada (FEAC) and a member of the Hamilton Jewish community.

HEW | 2019
HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 | 7PM

“Shanghai Escape” and other stories of the Holocaust Educational Program for Adults and Families with children ages 8+ | FREE EVENT AT JHAMILTON

REGISTER TODAY | LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

<https://events.idonate.com/holocausteducationweek2019>



PHYLLIS SHRAGGE

“When we use general extenders, we give a negative impression. If we are sloppy speakers, are we sloppy thinkers?”

UNNECESSARY QUALIFYING PHRASES

WHEN I THINK about it, as far as I can tell, unnecessary qualifying words and phrases, and that type of thing, are destroying verbal language, and all that stuff. Many educated, intelligent people sabotage themselves by using crutch words that detract from what they're saying, and things like that. You know what I mean. General extenders are a distraction, that's for sure. Let me tell you, at the end of the day, we should aim for verbal succinctness, and so forth.

The truth of the matter is that when you spout verbal garbage, you make a bad impression. Like I was saying, unnecessary words and phrases, especially phrases that include the word stuff, are a scourge on spoken language. Let me tell you, unnecessary qualifying words and phrases are more than blips in conversation; they are like nails being scratched on a blackboard, and stuff like that. Seriously.

What can you do when a close friend or family member overuses fillers in everyday speech? Suggesting he stop saying basically, or stop adding all that stuff to the end of a sentence, may not go over well. He might interpret your suggestions as disparagement, a criticism of his intelligence. But should you zip up your lips and say nothing?

When I was a young girl, I had the habit of saying, you know at the end of a sentence. My mother was determined to rid me of the habit. Each time I said you know, she interrupted me by saying, “No, I don't know.” Needless to say (I added a qualifying phrase, but here, it fits), I was annoyed. No, I was more than annoyed; I was furious. However, as the weeks passed, my mother's perseverance helped me delete the phrase

you know from my vocabulary.

When we write, most of us are careful about our choice of words. (This diligence may subside over time, however, as we continue to communicate through texting and tweeting.) But with the spoken word, carelessness abounds. Why are we so unsure of ourselves when we speak? Why do we need to add Let me tell you to the beginning of a sentence, or and all that stuff to the end?

It doesn't take much to destroy the impact of a sentence. Can you imagine Socrates saying: “The unexamined life, like, is sort of not worth living,” or Einstein exclaiming: “I mean, try not to become a man of success but rather to become a man of value, or something like that.”

(And don't get me started on misuse of pronouns. You wouldn't say, “Him walked to the store.” So why would someone say, “Jennifer and him walked to the store.”)

Back to the original premise: Our use of language says so much about us. When we use general extenders, we give a negative impression. If we are sloppy speakers, are we sloppy thinkers?

If you catch me adding basically to a sentence, or if you notice that I am tacking on the phrase, and that type of thing, please pretend you are my mother and point it out. I may be furious that you are correcting my use of language, but in the end, I will be glad that you made me aware of my verbal tics. Please be my watchdog. I do not want to succumb to the crutch word habit.

All I can say is, words are important ... and all that stuff.

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



MIRIAM SAGER

“It's easy to believe that people living in poverty are lazy. This ethos rubs off on anyone enjoying a certain amount of privilege in our society.”

TOWARDS A MORE JUST SOCIETY

I FLIPPED ON the TV during a recent trip to Jerusalem and was stunned by the number of big companies promoting themselves by providing holiday meals to the poor. Very nice, and a very Jewish thing to do, but the profound erosion of Israel's exemplary safety network has led to a steep increase in disparities between the rich and the poor and to the privatization of social services. Israel, with its famously booming economy, has poverty rates among the highest in the OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.)

The City of Hamilton does a relatively good job ensuring that no one goes to bed hungry; that is, if they have a bed. But located as we are next to the powerful country that created the myth that if you only work hard enough you will succeed, it's easy to believe that people living in poverty are lazy, or taking advantage of the system.

This ethos rubs off on almost everyone who enjoys any amount of privilege in our society. We like to think that we deserve what we have because we worked so hard for it, and do not see all the supports that have helped us along the way, be it a roof over our head, a desk at which to study, a culture that supports learning, parents who helped with our homework and paid for our schooling, teachers who believed in us. This is not to say that most of us haven't worked hard for what we have, but almost no one succeeds in a vacuum, and most of us were not facing headwinds at every turn, such as the daily indignities and impediments caused by racism, for example.

This attitude trickles into our Jewish community, too. I recently heard someone

say to an accomplished mutual friend, “I know you will never be homeless.” But homelessness can be caused by circumstances well beyond our control, our talents, or industriousness. The steep rise in housing costs is challenging many people's ability to maintain adequate housing should illness, a recession, or a climate catastrophe strike. With insurance companies likely finding more ways to protect themselves, we will see increasing numbers of people who, unable to afford the costs of repairing their homes, may need to abandon them.

I have learned about the terror of living without a safety net from three of my friends who live one paycheque away from homelessness. One is a single mother who has struggled to provide quality food, time and opportunities to her daughter while trying to work and study. Her hard-earned degree put her no further ahead as she lost her subsidized housing and other benefits. The others are hard-working women who have devoted their working lives to tikkun olam in unsteady and unrewarding jobs. As they are getting older they are finding it increasingly harder to find employment.

We would all do much better to adopt a more humble attitude, realizing that we are ultimately luckier—not smarter or better—than others, and that a kinder and more equitable society would contribute to a real sense of community and security for everyone. As we open our pockets to give Tzedakah, let us also do our share to advocate for a more just society, for Tzedec, another fundamental Jewish value.

Miriam Sager works at SACHA, the Hamilton Sexual Assault Centre.

Brought in part by Portland Investment Counsel Inc.



The Wealthy Invest Differently; Access through Mandeville

8.8%* Since Inception TFSA, RESP, RRSP & RRIF Eligible

Portland Private Income Fund
Investing Primarily in Private Debt Securities

- Capital Preservation
- Income
- Reduced Market Risk
- Access

Let's talk about what this means for you.

Robert Tick, PFP®, CIM®, FCSI®
Investment Advisor

rtick@mandevillepc.com
Tel. (416) 304-9440 Ext.2005

*Inception Date January 7, 2013, Annualized returns on Series F as at July 31, 2019
The Fund is only available to certain investors who meet eligibility or minimum purchase requirements such as “accredited investors”. Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses all may be associated with investments. The Fund is not guaranteed, its value changes frequently and past performance may not be repeated. The Fund is not publicly offered. A redemption fee of 5% within 18 months and 2% within 19 to 36 months applies. Mandeville Private Client Inc. is a Member of the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada and a Member of the Canadian Investor Protection Fund. Mandeville Private Client Inc. is a registered trademark of Portland Holdings Inc. and used under license by Mandeville Private Client Inc. PORTLAND, PORTLAND INVESTMENT COUNSEL and the Clock Tower design are registered trademarks of Portland Holdings Inc. Used under licence by Portland Investment Counsel Inc.

MARGARET'S LEGACY |
HAMILTON JEWISH
FEDERATION PRESENT

KRISTALLNACHT

ANNUAL COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION

In 1941, in German-occupied Warsaw, soon after the creation of the Warsaw Jewish Ghetto by the Nazis, a Polish amateur 8mm camera enthusiast shot a remarkable 10-minute film from both sides of the Ghetto walls. This never before seen footage is woven into "Warsaw: A City Divided", acting as a silent witness to the tragedy of the wartime division of the city and the murder of its inhabitants.

A FILM BY CANADIAN DIRECTOR ERIC BEDNARSKI



SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY
DR. PAMELA SWETT
Dean of the Faculty of
Humanities at McMaster
University.



WARSAW: A CITY DIVIDED

A FILM BY ERIC BEDNARSKI

CANADIAN PREMIERE

"Rare footage filmed on both sides of the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto kept in storage for decades has been brought back to life in a new film."

SUNDAY, NOV. 10 | 2 PM

THE WESTDALE, 1014 KING STREET WEST | HAMILTON, ON
TICKETS: ADULTS \$15 | STUDENTS & SENIORS \$10
AVAILABLE AT <https://events.idonate.com/warsawacitydivided>

All proceeds to support our local participation in the 2020 Asper Foundation Human Rights & Holocaust Studies program and March of the Living

Holocaust Education Week 2019
AT JHAMILTON | FREE EVENT

TUESDAY, NOV. 5 | 7PM
AN EVENING OF PERSONAL STORIES



This will be a unique opportunity to be part of an intimate group to learn and discuss the fascinating and inspiring stories of 5 heroic women, who survived one of the darkest period of mankind. Vera Barany, Sonia Ger, Diana Gutwein, Nadia Rosa and Anna Schafer will share their courageous stories of not just survival but triumph to rebuild a life of meaning.

MARCH OF THE LIVING 2020
April 18 to May 4

Registration for students & adults is now open
marchofthelivingcanada.org

Scholarships for students are available.

Please contact Gustavo Rymberg at grymberg@jewishhamilton.org

