

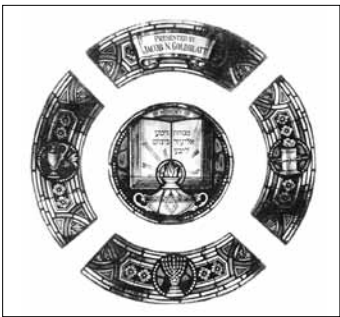


Judaism and organ donation

One family’s search for kidney donors **P19**

Lost and Found

Hunter Street Shul window resurfaces after 59 years **P23**



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Hamilton Jewish News

THE JEWISH VOICE OF HAMILTON

APRIL 2013 VOL 27:3/ NISAN 5773

AGREEMENT #40007180

We’re not done yet!

by JAY STATE, UJA Campaign Chair

Hope, dignity, security, care, community... inspiring words to describe the purpose of the UJA campaign. We transform these words into reality by providing services through our beneficiary agencies, to the most vulnerable in our community.

The vehicle for doing this is the United Jewish Appeal Campaign.

Our dedicated Campaign Cabinet and many other volunteers have been busy pulling together to ensure that we are healthy and strong, for young and old, for today and tomorrow. And many of you have responded, reaching deep into your pockets for the collective good, for Klal Yisrael. For this we thank you!

The 2013 campaign is going well... though we’re not done yet! As we move into the campaign’s final days, we owe it to ourselves and to the beneficiary agencies

we serve, to make the final push. Our goal was to raise \$1,200,000; to date we have raised approximately \$1,070,000; leaving about \$130,000 to go. We are asking for your help – to make a donation if you have not done so, or to increase your donation if you can.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for helping us make our goal. I also want to thank all of our UJA volunteers including our cabinet, captains, canvassers, professional staff and all of you who worked in so many, many ways to help all of us, to make this campaign a success.

Please call Chris Nusca at 905-648-0605, ext 306, to make a pledge, increase your pledge or to offer your help or go on-line at www.jewishhamilton.org to make a pledge.

Together WE do extraordinary things.

20-something and living in Hamilton

HOW CONNECTED ARE THEY TO JEWISH COMMUNAL LIFE AND WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?



Honouring women’s journeys to freedom



Human freedom and dignity being key themes of the Passover seder, Temple Anshe Sholom’s Deborah Sisterhood decided to dedicate their women’s seder to immigrant women’s journeys. Read more on page 16.

For today’s 20-somethings the world is substantially different than it was in their parents’ generation. The combination of tougher economic times, shifting attitudes towards intermarriage and social media becoming the preferred mode of interaction and communication, has resulted in a generation whose values and priorities will, in all likelihood, impact the future of Jewish life in this community.

In its effort to both identify and

understand the needs of today’s young Jewish population, the Hamilton Jewish News conducted interviews with 10 individuals whose thoughtful answers on questions relating to Jewish identity, Israel and life-choices, provide important information to anyone concerned with the long-term sustainability of our Jewish institutions. Their profiles appear on page 12 and 13.

Two additional articles on page 14 provide further insight from young Jewish leaders and the perspective of Federation’s new CEO.



Touch of Klez
Hamilton’s Klezmer band celebrates its 10th anniversary

P6



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The Centre for Israel
and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

THE ISSUE THAT UNITES ISRAELIS ACROSS PARTY LINES

As advocates for Israel, the world's only Jewish state and the sole liberal democracy in the Middle East, we watch Knesset elections with a close eye and great pride. This year's election was no exception. Wherever one stands when it comes to Israeli politics, the thought of Israelis from all walks of life casting ballots at more than 10,000 voting stations is nothing short of inspiring – especially given the fairly high turnout (nearly 68 per cent).

David Weinberg, a former Canadian who now runs the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' office in Jerusalem, notes that Israeli voters largely defied pundits around the world. "Nothing in the election results indicates that 'Israelis have taken a sharp turn to the right,' as the global press has been inaccurately reporting for weeks," Weinberg recently wrote. "Just the opposite is true: Parties of the left and centre-left grew in strength." This follows on the high-profile social justice protests of the summer of 2011, in which hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets to call for government action to deal with rising housing prices and living costs.

In contrast to the one-dimensional view of Israel that often dominates discussions of the Middle East, the distribution of votes shows the extraordinary diversity of the Israeli political scene. While Benjamin Netanyahu's party retained the most seats, it did so after losing support to both the centre and right of the spectrum. To his right, Bayit Yehudi gained – but not nearly as much as did the centrist Yesh Atid party led by former journalist Yair Lapid. Indeed, it was Lapid's ability to connect with average Israelis on the economic issues that led to his party receiving a widely unpredicted boost from the electorate. It is these pressing domestic challenges, including a \$4 billion budget shortfall and a proposed Haredi draft, that are almost certain to drive the governing coalition in

the months ahead.

This is not to say that Israelis are unconcerned by security threats, regional strategic matters, and the issue of Israeli-Palestinian peace. As Weinberg remarked: "Polls do show that Israelis remain very wary about regional developments and do not expect their leadership to take dangerous diplomatic and security risks at this time. But there is no indication that Israelis would reject compromises for peace, were the Arab and Palestinian worlds ready to show moderation."

History confirms this analysis. At times when Israel's adversaries have demonstrated a willingness to end the conflict and reconcile with the Jewish state, the Israeli public has reliably supported compromises to achieve peace. But such concessions have only led to real peace when they were made at the negotiating table, and secured through a final agreement that ends hostilities and imposes security guarantees. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority's continued refusal of Israel's offers to negotiate without precondition in recent years has only delayed an end to the conflict. This is not merely a failure to reconcile with the Jewish state. It shows a stubborn refusal to do what is necessary to build a future of peace and prosperity for the Palestinians themselves.

On Israel's northern and southern borders, the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate and relations with Egypt remain tenuous at best. Instability in the wake of the Arab Spring is no doubt keeping high-level Israeli defense officials awake at night. There is always a possibility that unexpected events could push domestic economic issues to the backburner.

But in the meantime, it appears that Israelis have asked their government to deal first and foremost with an issue that unites Israelis across party lines: the need to make life more affordable for average Israeli families. In this regard, all Canadian voters can instantly relate to the 2013 Israeli election.

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COMING UP

SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE

- Deadline for booking ad space April 17, 2013
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy May 8, 2013
- Deadline for receiving ad copy May 17, 2013
- Estimated date of arrival June 13, 2013

JEWISH STUDIES AT MAC

Professor Samuel Heilman, above, delivers a riveting talk at last fall's annual Goldblatt lecture in Jewish Studies at McMaster University, based on the acclaimed biography he co-wrote with Menachem Friedman about Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe. Heilman's talk covered Schneerson's transformation from an aspiring French-trained electrical engineer in pre-Nazi occupied Paris into a charismatic leader who believed that he and his Lubavitcher Hasidic emissaries could transform the world. He also outlined Schneerson's attempts to put the ancient idea of a day of redemption onto the modern world's agenda and how many of his followers came to think of him as the Messiah himself, in the period leading up to and following his death.

Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

Hamilton Jewish News

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Vincent Lam headlines Na’amat Author luncheon

DEENA SACKS, Na’amat hamilton

Na’amat is pleased to announce the 28th Annual Celebrity Author Luncheon to be held on Monday, April 22, 2013. This year Dr. Vincent Lam will be our guest speaker. Lam has been nominated for the 2012 Governor General’s Literary Award for his novel, The Headmaster’s Wager.

Dr. Vincent Lam is from the expatriate Chinese community of Vietnam and was born in Canada. Lam did his medical training in Toronto and is an emergency physician there. He is a lecturer with the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto. He has also worked in international air evacuation and expedition medicine on Arctic and Antarctic ships.

Lam’s first book, Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures, won the 2006 Scotiabank Giller Prize and has recently been adapted for television and broadcast on HBO Canada. The Headmaster’s Wager, Lam’s first novel, about a Chinese compulsive gambler and headmaster of an English school in Saigon during the Vietnam War is published by Doubleday Canada.

Since 1984, Na’amat has hosted an impressive list of esteemed Canadian authors, including Mordecai Richler, Daniel Richler and Noah Richler, Knowlton Nash, David Suzuki, Margaret Visser, Robertson Davies, June Callwood, Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Bob Rae, Anne Michaels, Barbara Gowdy, Edeet Ravel, Lynn Johnston, Jane Urquhart, Eleanor Wachtel, M. G. Vassanji, Timothy Findley, Nino Ricci, Elizabeth Hay, Lawrence Hill, Dr. Brian Goldman and Miriam Toews.

Na’amat is a liberal, progressive, and humanitarian women’s movement founded in Israel in 1921, and in North America in 1925. Today, it is the largest women’s movement in Israel, representing a cross section of the population including Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze. Na’amat Canada works with Na’amat worldwide in providing legal counselling, homes for abused women and children, recreational and retraining programs, vocational and agricultural schools, and a country-wide network of daycare centres in Israel. Na’amat facilities in Israel, particularly those that work with families in crisis, are vital today as people struggle with the horrors of violence, terrorism and a challenging economy. Our organization also contributes to local women and children’s causes in Canada.

The luncheon will take place at the Adas Israel Congregation at noon. Tickets can be purchased at Bryan Prince Bookseller, 1060 King St. W. 905-528-4508 or by contacting annashkolnik@hotmail.com.



Dr. Vincent Lam
Photo courtesy of Barbara Stoneham

JNF honours Ardyth and Boris Brott

by DEBORAH MORRISON, Jewish National Fund

This year’s Negev Dinner will pay tribute to Ardyth and Boris Brott at the 61st Annual Negev Dinner in Hamilton. This year’s event will take place on Sunday, June 2, 2013 at 6 p.m., venue to be determined, and will be a musical celebration of the 65th Birthday of the State of Israel.

Ardyth and Boris are being recognized by the Jewish National Fund for their commitment to family, music, the arts, their community and promoting the arts in the State of Israel.

Boris Brott was born in Montreal into a musical family; his father was the conductor of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and his mother was a noted cellist. Boris is one of the most internationally renowned Canadian Conductors and enjoys an international career as Music Director, principle Guest Conductor, Educator and Cultural Ambassador. Boris is the founding Music Director and Laureate Conductor of the New West Symphony, California. He has received many awards including Canada’s highest civic honour, Officer of the Order of Canada. He was inducted into the Order of Ontario, the province’s highest civilian decoration, along with the National Child Day Award for introducing more than two million young people to classical music. The National Academy Orchestra stands as the centerpiece of the Brott Music Festival in Ontario having just completed the 25th Anniversary (2012) of this highly acclaimed 30 concert series. Currently he also serves as Artistic Director of the McGill Chamber Orchestra, Montreal and is the Principal Guest Conductor of



Ardyth and Boris Brott
Photo courtesy of the JNF

the Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari, Italy.

Ardyth Webster Brott is a sixth generation Hamiltonian. She has had a very productive role as an arts administrator. For 25 years, she has been a driving, creative force as executive director of Canada’s largest orchestral music festival, the 25 year-old Brott Music Festival. In addition, she has acted as executive director of the internationally –renowned Glenn Gould Foundation in Toronto, and YWCA Woman of Distinction Award, Arts and Creative Energy.

authorred several books including “Here I Am” a book about a child’s life in the womb and birth as seen from the child’s perspective. The book sold out its first printing in six weeks and is now in its second edition.

Ardyth’s further notable achievements include holding the position of Chair, Art & Archives Committee, Hamilton Club, Director of the Ontario Place Pops series held in Toronto. Ardyth is also an accomplished children’s author having

The Brott’s are the proud parents of three children; David, Alexandra, and Benjamin.

City park may be named for Raoul Wallenberg

Discussions currently underway at City Council

by ABIGAIL CUKIER, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Citizens of Hamilton held a program to commemorate Raoul Wallenberg Day last January 17, but Hamilton Jewish Federation’s Holocaust Education Committee and city council hope to eventually honour Wallenberg with a more lasting tribute.

In December, council agreed to honour Wallenberg, possibly by naming a park within the city for him. Hamilton’s public works department is looking into a location.

City councillor Maria Pearson, chair of the city’s facilities naming subcommittee, hopes for more than a park naming.

“I am hoping to work with (the culture department) to have some sort of statue instead of just naming a park,” Pearson said. “This was one man, a single person trying to safeguard so many people and putting his life in danger to do this. I am not saying he’s the only one. I am sure there are others, others we don’t even know. But that’s why we have to honour the ones we do.”

Ernie Mason, who was saved by Wallenberg, spoke to council to help convince them to create a tribute. Mason also shared his story at the Raoul Wallenberg Day event, which took place Jan. 16 at Adas Israel Congregation. The Holocaust Education Committee presented a program that included Mason’s personal testimony, a short film, poetry, music and a preview of the Wallenberg stamp, which was released the next day.

Wallenberg saved as many as 100,000 Hungarian Jews during The Second World War. Often in dangerous circumstances, he handed out a protective document called the Schutz-Pass, featuring the



Ernie Mason
Photo courtesy of The Hamilton Spectator

“He saved my life. Without him, my children and grandchildren would not be here.”

Ernie Mason

symbols and colours of Sweden, to Jews. At the end of the war, he was taken into Soviet custody. His fate was never discovered and his body has never been found.

Mason was 10 years old in 1944. His father and older brother, Laszlo, were sent to a work camp, where his brother was killed. Another older brother went to Auschwitz, and his older sister lived with a friend, posing as a Christian.

Mason lived with his mother and baby brother near Budapest.

They were also posing as Christians and living with a host family. After six weeks, they left so as not to endanger their host family.

His mother headed to the Swedish Embassy, where she had heard they could get citizenship papers. Encountering a long line, she went to the back of the building and a man who spoke German let them inside. He gave them papers and put them in a safe house, where they remained until the end of the war.

Mason later learned that the man was Wallenberg.

“He saved my life. Without him, my children and grandchildren would not be here. Now that the opportunity is here to do something nice in his memory, I think it is very important,” said Mason. “Heroes are few and far between, and I think he was one of them.”

Mason came to Hamilton in 1949. He and his wife, Dorothy, have been married for 52 years. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Madeleine Levy, co-chair of the Holocaust Education Committee, said she is proud of the committee’s nationally recognized education work, but there is no tangible recognition of the Holocaust in Hamilton.

“We thought Raoul Wallenberg could be that lightning rod,” she said. “He exemplifies the power of one and is someone Hamiltonians could be inspired by.”

“This tribute within the city will also be a testament to all Holocaust survivors who have made Hamilton home and contributed to Canada in many ways. We want to leave a legacy to citizens of Hamilton and ensure the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten.”



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Touch of Klez celebrates 10 years

Anniversary concert to feature music “that talks to everybody”

by BEN SHRAGGE, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Though rooted in Eastern European Jewish culture, klezmer music has universal appeal. Just ask Jordan Abraham.

Abraham plays accordion for Touch of Klez, the Hamilton-based klezmer band that will be playing its 10th anniversary concert in April. Of Indian Jewish descent, Abraham didn't grow up listening to klezmer music.

“Our Judaism is Sephardic,” he said. “It's not part of our culture at all. I immersed myself in it but it was completely foreign to me.”

Ten years ago, Alan Livingston, the band's guitarist, invited Abraham to participate in what started as an informal jam session at the Beth Jacob synagogue.

The then long-haired Abraham is a classic rock fan, so klezmer was a hard sell. “I guess I just started studying it so I could understand what I was heading into. At the time, I remember listening to it and thinking, man, this is terrible,” he says. “There's one good player who plays lead and all the rest of the guys sound like they're drunk. But I came to realize as I learned more about it, that that's the feel. It's got this lilting feeling, and then you get into it, and start to understand what you're listening to, and it's amazing.”

In addition to Abraham and Livingston, Touch of Klez includes Charlotte Price on violin, Rick Black on soprano sax, David Ludwin on bass clarinet, Ron



Touch of Klez members: Back row, l to r, Rick Black, Alan Livingston, David Ludwin; Front row: Orange, “Moishe” McFarland, Charlotte Price, Jordan Abraham and Ron Richter. Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

Richter on piano, Orange “Moishe” McFarland on bass, and Dave “Leo Kosovski” Jones on drums.

Original bassist Michael Glogauer, who started the band, moved to Toronto. Sadly, original drummer Murray Adelman passed away in 2011.

The current lineup features a wide range of musical influences and training.

“David Ludwin is more of a classical fan, but the other guys came from rock,” Abraham says. “Ron is a big Beach Boys fan. Rick is also really into rock 'n roll. Charlotte

was classically trained, and she does bring that. David Ludwin had only been playing for about two years when he joined the band.”

Rock 'n roll and klezmer may seem like an odd pairing, but Abraham perceives a similar spirit to both genres. “At the time, klezmer was subversive music. It was heavily regulated in most of Europe. In Odessa, for instance, there could be only four Jews in a wedding band” he says. “If you think of what was happening in music at that time, in Europe, it was Strauss waltzes, very subdued, very controlled.

What klezmer was doing was like punk. The rhythms were heavy. It was pretty angry music.”

From ramshackle beginnings, the band has coalesced into a tight unit.

“We've gone down to klezmer seminars and workshops, and had people come in and teach the band, and we've really become used to being musicians,” Abraham says. “It's amazing to watch people find something in themselves that they didn't know was there.”

During their 10 years together,



Michele Tredger will join Touch of Klez. Photo courtesy of Michele Tredger

Touch of Klez has recorded one album (they're currently working on their second) and played a variety of shows around the Golden Horseshoe: from the expected weddings and bar mitzvahs to a Lutheran convention and a world bike race.

“The music talks to everybody,” Abraham says, and his own unlikely journey is good evidence.

At their 10th anniversary show on Sunday, April 28 at 2 p.m. at Beth Jacob Synagogue, the Touch of Klez will be joined by actor and singer Michele Tredger.

“Michele is a very emotive vocalist with whom we had the pleasure of working for the first time at Beth Sholom in Toronto,” said Abraham. “She is a perfect balance of beauty and talent. We are very pleased that she will be joining us for our 10th anniversary celebration.”

For tickets call 905-522-1351 or email office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca.

A day in the life at JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES

Bea Matchen introduced herself to the elderly Jewish patient. “I work for Jewish Social Services,” she said, introducing herself. Grateful for the company, the gentleman shared his personal story with Matchen. Born in Montreal, he came to Hamilton 60 years ago in search of work. He found a job in a factory, married a non-Jewish woman, and together they had four children. After 25 years the couple divorced, followed by his remarriage and fathering a child with his second wife. Throughout the 60 years he has been in Hamilton, said Matchen, “he has been completely cut off from the Jewish community.”

During their long chat, they discovered many shared biographical details. “I told him that I also grew up in a Yiddish speaking home and that my



Bea Matchen

parents also came from the Ukraine,” said Matchen. The gentleman was as curious about Matchen as she was about him. “He wanted to know how I wound up in Canada and how I met my husband,” she said.

Matchen was deeply moved by the visit. “I could see on his face that this was a very moving experience for him. After having no connection with anything Jewish for all these years, our meeting revived him.”

WINE TASTING FOR A CAUSE



Sandy Seigel, Joel Yellin, Flora Rams and Mike Zians enjoy the JSS wine tasting event. Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

THE HAMILTON KOSHER FOOD BANK NEEDS YOUR HELP

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To make a donation call 905-627-9922 ex 21 or send your cheque to 30 King St. E, Dundas, ON L9H 5G6. Alternatively, you can drop off a cheque at the Hamilton Kosher at 889 King St. West. All donations are tax deductible. From the JSS board of directors, we wish you all a happy and healthy Passover.

BAKERS NEEDED

Hamilton Jewish Social Services, under the chairmanship of Jo-Ann Pomerantz and Heather Ritter is starting a volunteer Baking program. Volunteers will come to JSS's newly renovated kitchen and bake cakes for senior programs and for the food bank. Our goal will be to bake nutritious, delicious kosher food. To volunteer call Carol Krames at 905-627-9922, ext 21 or email Carolkramesjss@hotmail.com.



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KEHILA JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL



Morah Mary Clements brings French language to life.

Photo by Rina Rodak, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Learning two foreign languages through an integrated approach has had a positive impact on our students' memory and communication skills. The Kehila language program provides its students with an exciting, enriching and unique opportunity. Our K-2 students are taught French using an immersion, conversational approach six times a week during physical education, art and music. Kehila's older students have regularly scheduled French classes.

Kehila students are also exposed to regularly scheduled Hebrew language classes,

covering a wide range of skills, including conversational Hebrew. Employing an "Ivrit b'Ivrit" approach provides the students an opportunity to both hear and speak in Hebrew.

One parent kvelled about her children's ability to watch and understand French language television, while another boasted that her child was able to translate the ingredients on an Israeli food container. We are all proud when our students participate in the Torah service and are so comfortable leading, reading and following along.

HAMILTON JEWISH MIDDLE SCHOOL



The Grade 8 yearbook committee

Photo by Rebecca Shapiro

Hamilton Jewish Middle School Grade 8 students are gaining work experience by editing and publishing their school yearbook. This is the first year it will be produced digitally. Their teachers have assigned editing duties and the students are also learning graphic design skills. Each editor will be graded on their organizational skills, meeting deadlines, working with others in a positive way, creativity and ability to detect errors and typos. The newly developed curriculum

will allow them to sharpen their math, literary and sales skills as well as acquire new skills in desktop publishing and graphic design. The students have created a code of conduct that includes actively contributing ideas, being attentive to others, constructively critiquing ideas and working co-operatively as a team. Anyone who is interested in placing an ad in the yearbook can e-mail yearbook@hamiltonhebrewacademy.ca.

SAVING LIVES HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER

Hamilton Jewish Federation have partnered with Canadian Blood Services Partners for Life in a blood drive. Our goal for 2013 is 40 units of donated blood.

You can help us reach our community goal by calling 1-888 2 Donate (1-888-236-6283) or registering online at www.blood.ca/partnersforlife

Please use our Partners for Life ID# UJAF009824

BETH JACOB HEBREW SCHOOL



Elissa Press and Adam Klein enjoying Beth Jacob's Whimz live animal program in honour of Tu B'Shevat

Photo by Jason Leizer, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

It seems like Purim (and our amazing Queen-themed Purimshpiel) was just yesterday. But now, we're getting ready for Passover. Our students have been encouraged to help their parents clean out the chametz from their kitchens and bring it in to the Temple in time for our annual Pre-Pesach Kosher Pasta Pig-Out and Perky Performance Night! This is our Pesach Open House and the community is welcome to come and join us on Wednesday, March 20 at 5:15 p.m. Our parent volunteers will be cooking up a wonderful spaghetti dinner to follow the kids' performances, and our B'Yachad students will follow up by sorting and delivering the chametz collection to local food banks.

Shortly afterwards, we're preparing to say farewell to our wonderful songleader, Jonny Vaisberg, who has been with us at Temple for the past five years. Jonny has been our songleader at Temple holiday celebrations and Shabbat, our religious

school music teacher, a founding member of the Shabbat Family Jam Band, and of course, a fabulous and funny member of our Temple Purimshpielers. Jonny has also been very active in Aepi at McMaster, and has made a mark on the whole Jewish community in his role as Camp Director of the JCC's Camp Kadimah for the past two summers. When Jonny leaves town later this spring, he'll be leaving lots of friends who will miss him. The Temple's Jam Band is planning a tribute concert, "Jammin' For Jonny" on Saturday, April 13 at 7 p.m. Please come and say thank you to Jonny, and wish him well. Performers include Jonny Vaisberg, the Temple's own jam band, and some other special surprise guests. Jonny will be choosing some of his favourite tunes to rock that night. Tickets are on sale for \$5 and can be purchased by emailing the Temple office at jbrown@anshesholom.ca or by calling (905) 528-0121.

HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

The Hamilton Hebrew Academy and Hamilton Jewish Middle School are pleased to announce the formation of an Educational Advisory Council. The Council consists of leading professionals in the fields of education, psychology, and social work and includes a member of the parental body and teaching staff. The EAC will ensure that students meet the highest standards of educational excellence in a nurturing school climate. They will serve as a vital resource for the school administration assisting with the ongoing articulation of the school's vision and ensuring that the HHA/HJMS adhere to principles of best practice.

Through the ongoing articulation of the school's vision, educational philosophy, and principles of best practice, the Council will ensure that the HHA/HJMS maintains a standard of excellence well into its future.

"The Council is a dream-team that can propel the educational experience of our children to entirely new dimensions," said Rabbi Daniel Green. "The power of their collective expertise will lead to exceptional outcomes in so many diverse areas."

The members of the Educational

Advisory Council include: Maureen Bergart, a former professor at Brock University's Faculty of Education who has held various positions in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board; Gary Drenfeld, a social worker with more than three decades of experience working with parents, teens and young children and a columnist with The Hamilton Spectator; Gord Garshowitz, a veteran educator and school administrator with more than three decades of experience at the elementary, middle school, and secondary school levels; Dr. Lester Krames, Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto, where he taught and did research in the Department of Psychology for 30 years; Anna Shkolnik, principal of Hamilton Academy of Performing Arts, who has held the positions of principal and mathematics department head at Columbia International College, the largest boarding high school in Canada.

As the HHA/HJMS continues to build upon the significant achievements of the past 50 years, the council will ensure that the students in our community meet the highest standards of educational excellence in a nurturing and safe environment.

Best ever JNF Tu Bi'Shevat Festival

SUZY POLGAR, Jewish National Fund



Shimmie Green feeds a chickadee during their Tu Bi'Shevat hike.

Photo by Lawrence Yanover, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

On January 27, an enthusiastic group of more than 80 community members met at the RBG Arboretum Nature Interpretive Centre for a fun-filled afternoon to celebrate the holiday of Tu Bi'Shevat. Our planning committee and co-chairs Tova Green, Rebecca Shapiro and Zavi Wolman are to be commended for a job well done for a bigger and better than ever program this year. Many thanks to Noah Katz and Israel Wolman for volunteering their time the day of the event and giving us a helping hand.

Adults relaxed in a room set up with coffee, JNF-themed videos and art submitted by close to 60 Hamilton-area children hoping to win the honour of their drawing appearing on the cover of a new JNF tree card. The winners of the contest, judged by children's author Ardyth Brott and

illustrator, Jacqui Templeton Muir were Taliya Hara (first place), Ido Rosenberg (second place), Raz Amsili (third place), and Daniel Bamm and Tal Rosenberg (honourable mentions).

Among the activities was a do-it-yourself Seder that highlighted the seven species of Israel, planting and decorating JNF pots of parsley and decorating JNF Blue Boxes.

The event continued with guided hikes in the snow where we fed chickadees, made bark rubbings, learned the history of some trees, and about the importance of the Black Walnut to the pioneers and the importance of trees in different cultures. Many thanks to Ian Hendry and Geoff Allan who led the groups during the hikes.

The event concluded with a bonfire, hot chocolate and marshmallows and a "kumzitz" (sing

along) led by Israeli shlichah (emissary), Shlomit Komar.

Newly included in this year's program was a PJ Library story and craft. Children decorated their own growth chart and were encouraged to see how much they and the trees around their home grow by next Tu Bi'Shevat.

We had a record number of groups of young people in our offices making calls on our behalf and they were well respected by our community when receiving the calls. A special shout-out goes to the Junior NCSY youth group and McMaster University Israel on Campus and AEPi members for making calls.

JNF plans a number of events throughout the year for people of all ages and interests. If you would like to receive our monthly news and views, please call 905-527-5516 or email Hamilton@jnf.ca.

JNF maximizes scarce water resources

FRANK SIMKEVITZ, Jewish National Fund

Chief JNF water expert, Avri Kadmon, spent the better part of January 22 in Hamilton talking to different groups as part of an initiative to let people in Canada know just how resourceful a country can be when faced with extreme shortages of water.

Kadmon began his day at the Hamilton Hebrew Academy followed by a joint Israel on Campus/JNF sponsored event at McMaster University in the afternoon and a presentation in the evening to a small community gathering at the Dundas Civic Centre.

The message was simple: Israel receives about seven billion cubic metres of rainfall a year and loses about five billion of that to natural evaporation and recycles between 75 and 80 per cent of its waste water. The next closest comparator is Spain, which only recycles between about 12 to 15 per cent. By maximizing the available fresh water sources and



Avri Kadmon with McMaster Jewish students.

Photo courtesy of the JNF

desalinating water from the Mediterranean, Israel is able to meet its freshwater needs. However, that can only happen because the JNF is the principal organization responsible for treating and recycling most of Israel's waste water.

Recycled water allows Israel to support a vibrant and vital agricultural sector. As Kadmon pointed out, without agriculture, a country's survival is at risk. Today, the JNF operates more than 240 reservoirs. It also rehabilitates Israel's polluted rivers and streams, providing additional opportunities to recycle water for agricultural purposes.

During his week-long trip, Kadmon visited five cities and spoke to at least 15 different audiences. They learned a lot and the message is getting out—the Jewish National Fund is playing a vital role in Israel's development.

The story behind the Hamilton chapter of CMDA

I have often been asked how I became so involved with Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel (CMDA) and what inspired me to become so active. The answer lies in the years following Israel's becoming a state in 1948, when a group of friends from Hamilton would often meet over coffee. Some had somehow had managed to survive Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen while others survived the labour camps in Russia. A few of us had the privilege of being born



Hilda Rosen Photo by Donna Waxman, Special to the HJN

in Canada. As we sat and discussed the future of Israel, we felt the need to do something as a group project. We looked into various Israeli organizations before deciding to create a chartered organization known as Hamilton Supporters of Israel. On the advice of our mentor, the late Morris Lax and our first president, Norman Levitt, we decided to dedicate our efforts towards providing Israel with medical assistance.

To mark the 36th anniversary of Israel, we decided to hold a community-wide event that would focus on raising funds to purchase an ambulance. Through the generosity of many people, we raised the \$90,000 needed to make the purchase. Arrangements were made for the ambulance to arrive in Hamilton on a Friday and spend the weekend with us.

At exactly noon on Friday, Hamilton Hebrew Academy students greeting the sight of the ambulance parked outside with hoots and hollers of excitement. At a reception that Saturday night, catered by the inimitable Max Mintz, various dignitaries, including the Israeli ambassador and a spokesperson from Magen David Adom addressed the large crowd. On Sunday, people were able to walk through the ambulance and view its equipment. On Sunday evening, a gala dinner was held, again catered by Max Mintz.

On December 19, 1992, the sudden demise of Morris Lax shocked the entire community and brought the Hamilton Supporters of Israel to a sudden halt. We had lost our mentor and we felt that it was necessary that we step back and let other people follow in our footsteps. Unfortunately, this was not met with success and the new group fell apart.

After a year's hiatus, I called the CMDA head office and volunteered to represent the organization in this area. My first visit was to a very dear friend of mine, the late Margo Rethazy who wrote out a cheque for \$25,000 towards the purchase of an ambulance.

Since that day, Hamilton has purchased four ambulances, each bearing a plaque that reads, "With love to the people of Israel from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada." Hamilton donations have also purchased some defibrillators including the most recent purchase of the \$36,000 Corpul3 defibrillator, the newest wireless technology system that allows for continuous life saving patient monitoring.

In recent years CMDA has identified a need for scooters, which can more easily navigate Israel's narrow roads and heavy traffic when responding to medical emergencies. Since December 2012, Hamilton donors have purchased three scooters, at a cost of \$25,000 each and plans are currently under way to purchase a fourth.

It is with much gratitude that I thank each and every one who has made Hamilton an outstanding part of CMDA. Because of your generosity many lives have been saved. If you wish to contribute towards our current fundraising campaign please call me at 905-529-4824. To pay by credit card, please call our Montreal office at 1-800-731-2848. All donations are tax-deductible. Every donation helps SAVE



The Magen David Adom scooter Photo courtesy of CMDA

A LIFE.

My sincerest wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy and healthy Passover.



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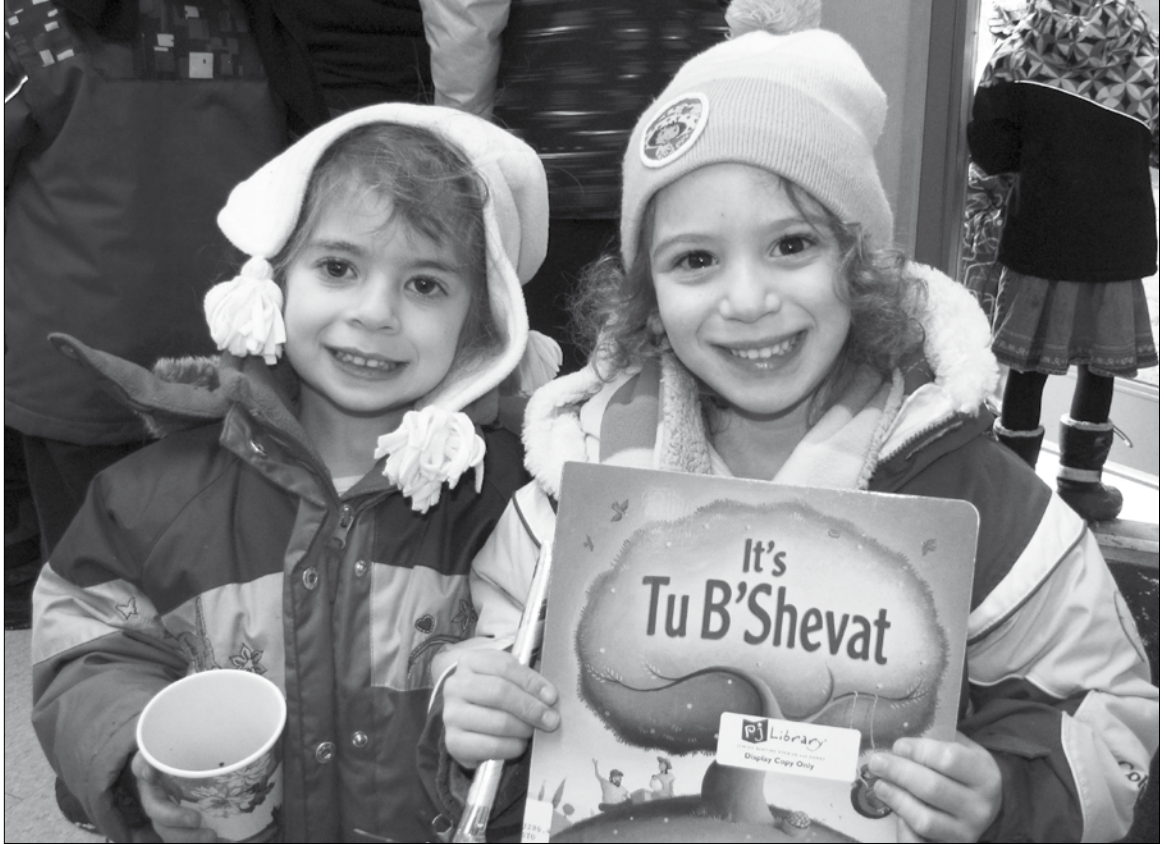
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Gila Zians and Jacqueline Arnold display one of the PJ Library books read at the JNF Tu B'Shevat Family Festival.

PJ LIBRARY TEAMS UP WITH JNF

Community children were treated to a story and craft activity sponsored by the PJ Library at the Jewish National Fund's Tu B'Shevat's program on Jan. 27. This spring, the Hamilton Jewish Federation's PJ Library program is celebrating its first birthday. The program is designed to transform early childhood experiences of reading together, into Jewish memories for parents and children. Thanks to the generosity of Shirley and Morris Waxman, the Hamilton Jewish Federation's Lion of Judah Division and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, more and more Hamilton families are enjoying their growing library of Jewish books! If you would like to enroll in PJ Library, or are interested in planning PJ Library programs, please contact Elaine at elevine@jewishhamilton.org or call 905-627-9922, ext. 24. See you at the library!

Camp Kadimah 2013
Meet our fantastic staff!



Josh Lerner

I am very excited to be returning to Camp Kadimah as camp director. I am currently finishing my degree in International Relations at Western University. This summer there will be more activities, skits and fun — all in a safe environment that fosters Jewish learning. All my years at Camp Kadimah have given me a unique outlook on how to make camp a great experience for the campers, parents and staff. I look forward to seeing everyone this summer!



Zachary Ellis

While I may be one of the newer additions to Kadimah's staff, I am positive that this coming year is going to be one of the best! I am a Hamilton native currently attending McMaster University for a degree in Fine Arts. In 2012, I had an amazing summer because of Kadimah. I honestly can't imagine a better way to spend my summer this year!



Julie Waxman

Hi everyone! My name is Julie and I'll be the Administrative Coordinator for Camp Kadimah summer 2013! I have been an active member of the Camp Kadimah staff for eight years and I'm thrilled to be taking on a new position where I can further challenge myself to make lasting memories for each and every camper on a daily basis. I'm currently finishing up my third year in York University's BFA Dance Program and eagerly awaiting the start of summer.

Schedule

Week 1: The Environment	July 3: Loewith Farm	July 31 - Aug. 2: Camp Shalom
Week 2: Repairing the World	July 9: Fire Station	Aug. 6: Ice Skating
Week 3: Israel	July 16: Tisha Ba'Av Program	Aug. 13 - 15: Camp George
Week 4: Visiting the Sick	July 16: Splitsville	Aug. 16: Reptile Guy
Week 5: Peace	July 17: Parents' Night	Aug. 20: Bingeman's
Week 6: Compassion	July 23: Earl Haig Family Fun	Aug. 21: Community BBQ
Week 7: Respect for Humans	July 26: Theme Day	Aug. 21: Erev Maccabiah
Week 8: Bestowing Kindness	July 30: Hoop Funzone	Aug. 22: Maccabiah

Visit www.hamiltonjcc.com/campkadimah.htm for more information or call 905-648-0605 ext 308. Registration opens online in April.

ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION

The Adas Israel Sisterhood has experienced a rebirth this year, as numerous enthusiastic women have created regular women's programming and charitable activities. Among those taking leadership roles are Kathy Jackson, who has launched several community outreach programs, and Tziporah Tsaidi, who has overseen monthly Rosh Chodesh programs, such as the Tu B'Shevat floral arrangement get-together, that enable women of all ages to be creative and bond over words of Torah and treats. Tsaidi's intention is to empower women to make their Judaism a mind, body and soul experience. Women's Torah classes include A Second Thought at Second Cup led by Aharon Gans on Tuesday mornings at 9:15 a.m., as well as a Guard Your Tongue group, that encourages positive speech. In addition, women's fitness classes are booming in the Yeshiva building with Latin dance lessons, Zumba and JOGA (Jewish-inspired Yoga). Women from across the community are welcome to participate in Adas Sisterhood programs. For more information please e-mail sisterhood@adasisrael.ca.



Pictured, l to r, are Shlomit Komar, Celia Ohayon, Shira Teller, Leora Michalowicz and Baila Vaturi at the Adas Tu B'Shevat floral arrangement program. Photo by Rebecca Shapiro

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

Temple Anshe Sholom is entering a new technological age and we are very excited about the wide range of new learning, worship and program opportunities that are now available to us. Thanks to a generous donation, Temple-wide Wi-Fi is now available for all members and guests. In addition, in our Chapel, we are introducing "Visual T'filah" for Kabbalat Shabbat and Religious school services. Visual T'filah is a way to enhance prayer and assist worshipers in finding new and deeper meaning in prayers, utilizing contemporary technology to display liturgy for the congregation, intermingled with art and other visual imagery. This system incorporates a large wide-screen monitor that has been installed next to the Ark which is controlled wirelessly from an iPad. "I am very excited about this enhancement to our worship experience," said Rabbi Cohen. "This beautiful and well presented complement to our conventional siddur allows congregants to pray with their heads up and to connect with one another, rather than burying their faces in the book. It is very engaging, and works wonderfully with children, adults and especially seniors, who often find a siddur uncomfortable to hold." This new installation will be available not only for use during services, but also for showing movies, powerpoints and other learning presentations. The Temple has also acquired new computers and iPads for use by our students in the religious school and youth groups. The Temple's Mandell Auditorium has also been enhanced with a new projection system to compliment the new sound system that was acquired last year. This system includes a large automatic theatre-quality screen and a ceiling mounted projector which will allow for easy presentations from all formats and media. The new system was introduced on March 2 with a gala showing of The Mystery of San Nicandro, the CBC documentary featuring Temple member Laura Cattari's search for her Italian Jewish roots, and will allow for the introduction of our social action committee's new film lovers Tzedakah series which will be launched in April. The Temple Youth Group is also particularly looking forward to plugging in their Playstation for gaming on the giant screen at their "shul-in".

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

As winter ebbs away and spring slowly offers its promise of renewal, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Hamilton and area (JGSH) is gearing up for a stellar home stretch to conclude their record eighth year. Whether you are a seasoned family tree researcher, novice, or if you just enjoy hearing from our amazing roster of speakers you won't want to miss our final four meetings of the 2012/2013 season. On March 20, we welcome Gloria Geller to present Reflections on My Ukrainian Roots; an enthralling account of the two weeks she spent travelling from Kiev to Odessa, retracing her family's ancestral towns. Our April 23rd meeting will showcase the Working Family Stories and Treasures of the Hamilton Jewish community. Curator and project coordinator, Melinda Richter will speak on the topic, A Place for our Past and how her organization uses art and technology to preserve the stories of our community. In May, Elaine Cheskes, of the Toronto JGS will present a riveting account of the Brest Ghetto passport archives. We conclude our season in June with the heartbreaking and inspiring story of Hynda Kofsky Halpren's quest to locate and visit her mother's grave at the Hofgeismar Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Germany. The JGSH meets at 7:30 p.m. monthly at Temple Anshe Sholom, 215 Cline Ave. N. All are welcome. First meeting is free for non-members. Call Hazel Boon at 905-524-3345 or jgshamilton@gmail.com. For more information, check out the events page at www.jgsh.org.

BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

On Sunday, June 9, Beth Jacob will celebrate its 125th year with an unforgettable production that will showcase four defining eras in our shul's history: its earliest years on Hunter Street and the relocation in the '50s to Aberdeen Avenue; the Rabbi Eugene Weiner years in the 1960s, during which an entire generation of teens ripe for social change experienced life-transforming memories that remain undiminished to this day; the 30-year reign of Rabbi Israel and Gloria Silverman, a period in which the shul's renown for excellence in both adult and youth education was known far and wide; and the shul's recent years of renewal and revitalization under the leadership of Rabbi Dan Selsberg, whose warmth, humour and intelligence have enriched and inspired both long-time members and a new generation of Beth Jacob members. The festivities begin on Friday night, June 7 with a Kabbalat Shabbat service and catered dinner, and a special Shabbat service the following morning. The main event will take place on Sunday afternoon, as past and current Beth Jacob members come together to renew their bonds with each other and with our shul. The event will feature wonderful Sisterhood recipes, Chicken Roost butter tarts, music from A Touch of Klez and a production that highlights the peak moments in our shul's history. To mark this milestone the shul is publishing The Beth Jacob Family Album, a commemorative book that will tell the story of the people who have inspired us and the values that guided us through the generations. Everyone is welcome to take part in this event. For more information call the shul office at 905-522-1351 or visit www.beth-jacobsynagogue.ca. To find out how you can participate in The Beth Jacob Family Album, call Wendy at 905-628-0058.

On the weekend of June 7 - 9, 2013



Remember.
Commemorate.
Celebrate.



For more information visit www.bethjacobsynagogue.ca

20 somethings living in Hamilton

Whether in transition or settled down, these 10 young people have (unexpectedly) found themselves living in Hamilton. How these educated and thoughtful 20-somethings are contributing to their community and whether Hamilton is providing them with opportunities to engage in Jewish life are questions many Jewish communal leaders would like to find out.

Story and photos by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News



JOSH BLACK, 25

Background: Raised in Ancaster
Jewish education: a graduate of the Hamilton Hebrew Academy (HHA)
Higher Education: Bachelors in International Studies and Political Science; Masters in Water Resource Management
Resides: parental home. "Being very independent and travelling and living on your own, and then coming back and living at home is challenging ... Hamilton is somewhere I can definitely see myself living."
Volunteering: Volunteers full time at an organic farm in Copetown.
In a relationship? No
How important is it that partner be Jewish? Increasingly important.
Jewish identity: While in high school and university, "being Jewish was never something I was proud of." Black's interest in Judaism and Israel grew during a year spent volunteering in Africa, where there were "no negative perceptions of Jews ... It was the first time I really could be proud of my heritage."
Jewish life: attends a weekly Talmud class at Beth Jacob with his father.
Ties to Israel: "Although it's easy to say the opposite I think Israel and our Jewish identity are very much connected. And it's tough because Israel is very much criticized and it's very hard for us to understand Israelis as a people ... because we live in a very different culture and a very different country ... Israel is very important to me and it's possibly somewhere where I may live in the future."



LAUREN MARK, 26

Background: Raised in Dundas
Jewish Education: a graduate of the HHA, Mark also attended the Temple Religious School until Grade 11.
Higher Education: Bachelors in Commerce and Religious Studies and a Masters in Industrial Relations.
Employment: Project Coordinator with McMaster University's Human Resources department.
Resides: parental home
Volunteering: Human Resources consultant at Temple Anshe Sholom
In a relationship? Yes
How important is it that partner be Jewish? "For me, it's more about raising my family Jewish."
Ties to Israel: While Mark "had a great time" on her Birthright trip, her ties to Israel are not particularly strong.
Reaction to criticism against Israel: "I haven't really been faced with it." When she was at Queens, she got involved in an effort to gather votes that would compel the president of its student council to retract anti-Israel comments.
Jewish life: Identifies strongly with being Jewish. Two years ago she and Brian Rochweg tried to organize a YAD group for 20-somethings but the response was disappointing.
Thoughts on future of Jewish life in Hamilton: "I think people just have other things on their agenda and socializing with Jewish people isn't on their radar ... I'd be really excited if there was more involvement but I don't know how to reach out to people who aren't interested in being reached."



BRIAN ROCHWERG, 26

Background: Raised in Ancaster
Jewish Education: Temple Religious School until Grade 12.
Higher Education: Bachelors in Biology and Psychology
Employment: he works in the family metals recycling business, now in its fourth generation.
Resides: in an apartment in downtown Hamilton.
Volunteering: In the past volunteered as a TA with the Dale Carnegie Leadership Program.
In a relationship? No
How important is it that partner be Jewish? "You can't really pick the person you fall in love with ... but I do what I can to pursue Jewish relationships."
Ties to Israel: Participated in March of the Living and Birthright. Tries to keep abreast of news relating to Israel.
Reaction to criticism against Israel: "Everyone has different points of view about the situation so it's interesting to hear different points of view ... I don't like hearing people saying they're the aggressor."
Involvement in community: Two years ago he and Lauren Mark made an effort to attend YAD (Hamilton Jewish Federation's Young Leadership group) events. "People were mainly 30, 35, 40 ... and we had trouble relating to them." Their attempts to start a younger group didn't get off the ground. Since then, "I've taken a back seat."
Thoughts on future of Jewish life in Hamilton: "I don't know what it would take to get more involved ... I'm already discouraged, but I want there to be a vibrant Jewish life in Hamilton."



NOMI CUNEO, 22

Background: Raised in Dundas
Jewish Education: graduate of the HHA and Temple Religious School.
Higher Education: Bachelors in Religious Studies
Employment: assistant program coordinator at the JCC.
Resides: parental home.
Volunteering: Volunteers regularly for Toronto-based Free the Children and Me to We.
In a relationship? Yes.
How important is it that partner be Jewish? "Very important," said Cuneo, whose grandparents were Holocaust survivors. "It was instilled in me how important it is, because we are so small, to raise a Jewish family and to teach Jewish values."
Ties to Israel: Cuneo has dual citizenship due to the fact that her mother was born in Israel. A past Birthright participant, she is applying to lead a trip this summer.
Reaction to criticism against Israel: "It hurts. I have Muslim friends who I've had very uncomfortable conversations with ... I try to defend Israel as best as I can but still try to understand and not argue just for the sake of arguing. I don't think any country is perfect ... but it's important to stand with Israel."
Major influences: "My grandparents had a strong love for each other, their community and their family and taught me that there's nothing more important than that. That same fierce love for family was instilled in me from my father's side as well."



AHA BLUME, 28

Background: Raised in Hamilton
Jewish Education: attended Temple Religious School until the end of high school.
Higher Education: Bachelors in English and a teaching diploma. Currently working on a second BA.
Employment: works part-time at a fast food restaurant.
Resides: in a house owned by her mother.
Volunteering: Volunteers with the Children's International Learning Centre and with Neighbour to Neighbour's reading program.
In a relationship? No.
How important is it that partner be Jewish? "It's important to me."
Jewish life: attends daily minyan at Beth Jacob and Shabbat services at Temple whenever possible. "It's always been very important to me. I've always identified as a ... feminist Reform Jew ... Its'very important to me not to work on shabbes."
Feelings about community: "We have several Jewish communities in Hamilton. We have the students and then ... the Reform, the Conservative and the Orthodox. They sort of interact but they're not necessarily one community ... I think one Jewish community is definitely stronger than several different ones."



BEN SHRAGGE, 27

Background: Raised in Hamilton
Jewish Education: Attended Beth Jacob afternoon school.
Higher Education: Bachelors in History and Masters in Religious Studies
Employment: Managing editor of a surgical education publication sponsored by the American College of Surgeons.
Resides: parental home.
Volunteering: Has volunteered with children's literacy program and done some fundraising for Hamilton Health Sciences. Currently writes articles for the Hamilton Jewish News
In a relationship? Yes.
How important is it that partner be Jewish? "It's important to me."
Jewish life: attends synagogue regularly to say Kaddish for his late father.
Ties to Israel: "The story of the country is very inspiring ... it's fascinating to read about how people built something from almost nothing ... I think it's like any other country. It doesn't have a perfect record but either does any other country and in the grand scheme of things they've done pretty admirably." Shragge went on a Birthright trip several years ago.
Reaction to criticism against Israel: In university and in high school, "there were certain people who were very anti-Israel ... I was one of the few Jews in public school, and felt I had an obligation to defend what I think."
On being more involved in Jewish community: "I know a lot of familiar faces here whereas if I was in Toronto I'd probably be more anonymous ... I think I would be more involved if I found people (my age)... because at this point, I don't really have too many people to go to things with."



SHAUNA EISENBERG, 27 AND MITCH RITTER, 30

Background: Eisenberg was born and raised in Hamilton. Ritter's family moved here from Ottawa when he was in Grade 6.
Jewish Education: Ritter is a graduate of the HHA. Eisenberg never attended formal Hebrew school.
Higher Education: Both have teaching degrees from Australia. Teaching is a second career for Ritter.
Employment: Both are elementary school teachers in Hamilton.
Reside: They share a home in the Locke Street neighbourhood.
How they met: Ritter was supply teaching at her school and caught Eisenberg's eye. On their first date, "I knew right away," she said. "It took him a little longer." Their wedding will take place this coming August.
Volunteering: Both coach children's sports teams on a daily basis, both after school and during lunch breaks.
Jewish identity: For Ritter, "It's always been strong ... I love the traditions. We're having a Jewish wedding which is really important to both of us."
Eisenberg, a star athlete, experienced a strong surge in her Jewish identity while participating in several Maccabi games, in Cincinnati, in Israel on two occasions and in Chile for the Pan-Am games. Participating in the games, "was my first real exposure to being a part of something Jewish that was cool."
How important is it that partner be Jewish? Ritter: "I think I tried to delude myself into thinking that it wasn't that important but after being with Shauna and having girlfriends in the past that weren't

Jewish I see the benefit of it and I see how much easier it really does make things."
Eisenberg: "We just understand where we come from ... Our wedding will be a Jewish wedding. That's an important part of our lives."
Jewish life: Both describe their level of involvement in Jewish community as "pretty low," although Ritter plays squash regularly at the JCC.
Ties to Israel: Eisenberg has a close connection to her father's sister's family who have made their home there. Participating in Birthright, said Ritter, "gave me a different perspective on what goes on in that country. It's a place that has beautiful terrain, people and a lot of diversity ... There's not much that really compares with it."
Reaction to criticism against Israel: Ritter: "It hits me in a personal spot. I get where certain people are coming from ... but they don't understand what it means to Jews ... I educate myself on things I want to know about because I think if you're going to talk about something with other people, you better know what you're talking about."
Thoughts on future of Jewish life in Hamilton: "My best friends are all Jewish, but they fundamentally have no connection, because they're not with Jewish partners," said Ritter. "None of my friends feel a tie to religion," said Eisenberg. "It's our generation as a whole. Christians, Catholics, Jews; most don't seem to hold on to it anymore. What can you do?"



JOSH SCHWARTZ, 31 AND JESSICA WOOLFSON, 29

Backgrounds: Schwartz was born and raised in Thornhill. Woolfson is from Whitby.
Jewish Education: Schwartz attended Jewish day school through Grade 10. Woolfson attended afternoon religious school three days a week during her formative years.
Higher Education: Woolfson is doing a pediatric residency at McMaster; Schwartz is studying home inspection.
Reside: The couple is engaged to be married and bought a house in Westdale last summer. Woolfson: "I'm pretty happy here. The program's really good and we were able to buy a house which we wouldn't have been able to do in Toronto."
Volunteering: Schwartz volunteers at Shalom Village.
Jewish identity: Woolfson said her grandparents, two of whom were survivors of the Holocaust, were major influences on her sense of Jewish identity, which she labels as "cultural as opposed to religious." Woolfson grew up in Whitby, where her family had the distinction of being the only Jewish family in town. She spent her summers at Young Judea summer camps. She spent a summer in Israel with Biluim Israel, an experience that she loved. Schwartz was raised in a Reform Jewish family. He attended Jewish day schools through most of high school. He, too, defines himself as a "cultural Jew."
How important was it that your partner be Jewish? Woolfson: "To me it was important to raise my children Jewish. Didn't matter quite

as much who I wound up with. Josh is the first Jewish guy I dated in 10 years. Having been with him it's much easier and nicer ... We've been raised with same kinds of traditions and values. It makes it easier, my parents are much happier." Schwartz: "This way is a lot easier."
Involvement in community: Woolfson: "It would be nice to be a little bit more involved in terms of meeting people. I'd be open to the idea if I could find the time. Schwartz has not checked out Jewish events or organizations. He speculates that, had he remained in Toronto, he would be "indirectly more involved" in community life, "because more of my friends are involved."
Ties to Israel: Both have been to Israel once before and it's on their list of possible honeymoon destinations.

Need to know

Federation leadership recently met with young leaders to strategize ways to more effectively reach out to the community's younger demographic.
Lauren Mark has accepted an invitation by the Jewish Federations of Canada young leadership division to sit on their national board. This April, she will join other young Jewish leaders from across the country at a leadership retreat in Banff.
"With the renewed energy that Federation CEO Barb Babji is bringing to the community and with hard work from Elaine Levine and the rest of us on the committee, I think we can revitalize YAD," said Mark.

It's our turn

Young leaders take on challenge of engaging a new generation

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

"It's our turn," was the mantra repeated over and over again at Leadership in the Third Space, a national young leadership symposium held in Montreal last December.

The three-day conference, organized every two years by Jewish Federations of Canada, UIA, "demonstrates the organization's commitment to invest in our young leaders by empowering them with the skills to continue their personal and Jewish leadership journey," said Hamilton Jewish Federation staff member Elaine Levine, who was part of a five-person Hamilton contingent.

Yael Reznick DeMarco, a research assistant at Hamilton Health Sciences said she was inspired by seeing so many "enthusiastic, committed and dedicated" young professionals, giving time out of their busy lives and careers to help their community."

For Dafna Bener, a physio-therapist who, like Reznick, spent her formative years in Israel, being in the company of so many young Jewish people was energizing in and of itself. "The havdalah was something out of this world," she said, "150 people holding hands and singing ... was something you cannot explain."

Bener found workshops on the topics of The Art of Persuasion and How to Deal

with Difficult People particularly helpful.

While investment advisor and veteran Federation board member, Yves Apel, enjoyed the workshops and camaraderie, he derived the biggest benefit from discussions on how best to reach out to a generation of donors, that are neither

"The key to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Jewish communal life lies with successfully engaging a new generation of Jewish adults."

Yves Apel

emotionally nor financially as invested in Jewish communal life as their parents and grandparents. Pointing to the example of the Montreal UJA Campaign, which is reeling from the recent deaths of two major donors whose combined annual gifts surpassed \$1.1 million, Apel said that Hamilton's UJA campaign can no longer afford to rely

on the generosity of the few as opposed to a wider participation from the many. As chair of Federation's Budget and Allocations Committee, Apel is on the front lines of navigating the gap between funds raised and the needs of the community.

"We have very poor people in the community," he said. "We could do better, but support needs to be wider and at a more responsible level than right now."

The key to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Jewish communal life in Hamilton, said Apel, lies with successfully engaging a new generation of Jewish adults – not an easy task, considering the research that shows today's young Jewish adults neither identifying nor affiliating with the Jewish community like those of earlier generations.

In fact, organizing events for a younger demographic is high on the list of priorities for every one of the Montreal conference attendees.

"We're all very pumped up," said Bener. "We all have the spark to do something that will involve and educate more people."

"We live in the age where Jews have never had it better," said Apel, "and we need to bank up for the future" he said, "because I believe that our comfortable Jewish existence is not always going to be where it is today."

Their turn is our future

Federation CEO: "It's about leadership."

by BARB BABIJ, the Hamilton Jewish News

One day Honi was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long does it take (for this tree) to bear fruit?"

The man replied: "Seventy years." Honi then further asked him: "Are you certain that you will live another 70 years?" The man replied: "I found (already grown) carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me so I too plant these for my children." (Talmud Bavli Ta'anit 23a)

For me, this story is about leadership; literally and figuratively about planting the seeds for the next generation. We are part of a remarkable community with a rich history, each generation building on the one before.

Five young adults travelled to Montreal to participate in the InMontreal conference this past December. Ten young adults were

Indeed, this realization was the catalyst for conducting a recent planning session for the YAD group. The outcome: to create some structure for the group and identify who would work on what. So, part of their answer was to specifically target each end of the age spectrum with regard to events. And part of the answer is still undiscovered; the next session will focus on how to "get the word out."



Our job as current leaders is to help them ... create a vibrant Jewish life in Hamilton; to make Judaism, well, cool."

life in Hamilton; to make Judaism, well, cool.

Their voices echo our own hopes. Some of those echoes will die out; some of those echoes will resonate and be amplified by the choices they make – to help craft that future. This is hard work and it will take time.

To honour the past, build on the present, and create a sustainable future; these are the lessons of Honi, and these are the aspirations expressed by our young adults. We have a remarkable community. Let's commit together to build our future – Together WE do extraordinary things.



MEETING OF MINDS

Community professionals gather to learn about the geopolitical situation in Israel, its potential impact on local Jewish agencies, and what our agencies can do to enhance security. Guest speaker was Doron Horowitz, director of national security infrastructure for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). Pictured above, (back row, l to r, Elaine Levine (Federation), Rebecca Shapiro (Adas Israel), Laura Laengeler (JCC), Jeanette O'Leary (Shalom Village), Laura Wolfson (Temple Anshe Sholom), Suzy Polgar (JNF), Hanna Schayer (Beth Jacob Synagogue), Jerry Goldblatt (Beth Jacob Synagogue), Rabbi Elliot Feldman (Hamilton Hebrew Academy), Frank Simkevitz, (JNF) Doron Horowitz, (CIJA) Peggy Kachurovski (Federation), Rabbi Jordan Cohen (Temple Anshe Sholom). Seated in the front row (l to r) are Carol Krames (JSS), Paula Baruch (Temple Anshe Sholom) and Barb Babij (Federation).

Photo by Chris Nusca (Federation)

OUT AND ABOUT

Hamilton Spec wins award



Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

At the Raoul Wallenberg commemoration held at the Adas Israel on January 16, Federation's Holocaust Education Committee co-chair Madeleine Levy (centre) presented Hamilton Spectator Editor-In-Chief Paul Berton and Manager of Community Partnerships, Jane Allison with an Award of Distinction, "as a passionate Holocaust and human rights champion."

Pur Taste?



Photo by Jason Leizer, Special to the HJN

During the recent Purim festivities, the HJN conducted a survey to determine the most popular hamantaschen filling. While not statistically significant, chocolate turned out to be the favourite filling, with poppy seed a close second. Apricot was not even mentioned, out-voted by cotton candy (preferred by the youngest demographic) and fig. Will this spell the demise of the apricot hamantasch? You'll have to wait until next year to find out.

HHA students raise funds for UJA



Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

HHA students present Federation CEO Barb Babij with a cheque for \$300 they raised for the UJA Campaign.



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Community joins together to celebrate Israel's 65th birthday

This year the annual JCC Yom Ha'atzmaut and UJA Walk will be combined into one community event. To continue building "Unity in Community" we have invited all beneficiary agencies to actively participate in this year's celebration to make it one to remember.

Be sure to save the date Tuesday, April 16 at 6pm

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A woman's journey to freedom

Women's seder dedicated to experiences of female immigrants

by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

The biblical story of the Jewish people's journey from slavery to freedom is among the great archetypal stories of all time. The refrain, "Let my people go," found in the powerful Negro spiritual *Go Down Moses*, is just one example of how the exodus story, told and retold at Passover seders throughout the ages, has brought comfort to the oppressed of all nationalities and religions. So when Temple Anshe Sholom's Deborah Sisterhood decided to use the theme of immigrant women's experiences for their women's seder this year, it immediately felt like a perfect choice.

A Woman's Journey to Freedom, is the third seder organized by the Deborah Sisterhood and a committee headed up by Cheryl Dembe and Sarah DeLeon. Last year's seder on the theme of breast cancer attracted nearly 100 and raised \$1,000 for breast cancer research.

This year, McMaster University professor Sigal Balshine was invited to join the committee. "We were trying to come up with a theme," said Balshine, describing the brainstorming process, "and I started thinking about all the people we have in Hamilton who are new immigrants and it's easy to think about that ... I thought, wow, we as Jews have a lot to



The organizers with their guest of honour (l to r) Cheryl Dembe, Laura Wolfson, Joanne Warren, Valerie Masinzo, Celia Berlin and Paula Korman

teach people because our people, maybe our grandparents, or our great grandparents all came from elsewhere ... so wouldn't it be nice to share that tradition and look to see how our immigration mirrors immigration today." Fittingly, the committee decided that all funds raised by the seder would be given to the Women's Immigrant Centre located in downtown Hamilton.

Through its rituals of eating bitter herbs and unleavened bread, drinking four cups of wine and reclining while eating, the

Passover seder is designed to help participants feel the bitterness of slavery and enjoy the sweet taste of freedom. As the group's creative juices began to flow, ideas about how to make their theme move from the intellectual to the experiential began to emerge.

Israeli artist and art therapist Hana Pinthus, an immigrant herself who has run workshops for immigrant women, will facilitate an art activity designed to help participants access the journeys undertaken by themselves or their family

members. The concept is very exciting to Dembe. "Every woman is going to be able to add her own roots," she said, "and people will have their own family's journey in mind when they apply the brush to the canvas."

Another central feature of the seder will be a talk by Valerie Masinzo, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Masinzo and Pinthus met a few years ago when the latter was working with the now defunct SISO. In an email to the HJN, Masinzo wrote, "I was

first contacted by Hana Pinthus who had me share my story of exodus to a group of women. She asked me if I was willing to be the same at the women's seder ... I am always motivated to support any women's events whenever I can, but this event is very special because the theme, "A woman's journey to freedom" is appealing ... My participation is not only to share my story, but to be part of this special event which is organized by an extraordinary group of women."

The Rwandan genocide will also be commemorated through the inclusion of a Rwandan collard green dish on the seder plate in the place of the traditional bitter herbs. Other food on the seder plate will recall various Jewish immigrations, said Temple educator Laura Wolfson.

"We will have a Moroccan recipe for charoset to represent the wave of North African Jewish immigration to Israel ... for the shankbone we decided to have beet borsht to represent Russian Jewish immigration to Israel and North America."

A Woman's Journey to Freedom will take place on Sunday, March 17 at 3 p.m. at Temple Anshe Sholom and all are welcome to attend. The cost is \$18 per person. For more information please contact the Temple Office at 905-528-0121,

Special Menschen

A Passover Recipe

Simone Rotstein shared the following recipe, a variation on one that her mother used to make when she was a young child growing up in Egypt. Rotstein's family was expelled from Egypt in 1956 in the wake of the Sinai Campaign, a joint British, French and Israeli military operation launched in response to Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalizing the Suez Canal. "My parents broke a curfew set on foreigners and we were expelled," said Rotstein. "Both my parents and some of my grandparents were born in Egypt, yet we were foreigners. My mother was stateless. My father had French citizenship from his great grandparents who had lived in Algeria." The family fled to Paris, where they lived for about seven months. They arrived in Montreal in 1957.

The Mina de maza (Sephardi matzo pie) is very well known in the Sephardic world, said Rotstein.

Leek and Cheese Mina

An Egyptian and Syrian recipe

- 5 medium leeks, white part only, washed, sliced in half lengthwise and then into thin slices (about 3½ cups chopped)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp oil
- ½ pound cottage or ricotta cheese
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp fresh ground black pepper
- Pinch of nutmeg
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- 4 matzos
- 1 and 1/3 cups grated cheese (Gruyere, Kashkaval)

- Preheat oven to 375°F and grease an 8-inch square baking pan.
- Over medium heat, sauté the leeks and onion in the oil, for about 15 minutes. They should be very tender.
- Remove from heat, cool and mix in cottage cheese, 2 eggs, salt, pepper, nutmeg and dill.
- Beat remaining egg in a shallow bowl large enough to hold one matzo. Put cold water in another shallow bowl.
- Soak matzo in water for about 3 minutes, drain, dip in beaten egg and place in prepared pan. Use additional matzo to fill in spaces in pan.
- Sprinkle with 2/3 cup of grated cheese and top with leek mixture.
- Soak remaining matzo in water for about 3 minutes, drain, dip in beaten egg and place on leek mixture. Use additional matzo to fill in spaces in pan.
- Top with rest of grated cheese.
- Bake for 30 - 40 minutes, until browned.

Variations:

- Substitute spinach for leeks
- Substitute ground meat for cheese

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Back home with happy memories. Rivky Zians with her mother, Andrea

Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

A bat mitzvah to remember

WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News

After months of planning, it was looking like Rivky Zians' bat mitzvah plans were all for naught. Her family had just arrived in Israel. On the trip they had arranged to mark the occasion of her bat mitzvah, which she planned to celebrate by hosting a barbeque at an Israeli army base. Arrangements had been made through a volunteer organization called Standing Together, that caters to IDF soldiers by hosting barbeques and ice-cream parties and providing warm clothing. All was going according to plan right up until the day of her bat mitzvah when their plans were thrown into disarray by the IDF's sudden launching of Operation Pillar of Defense.

As army bases around the country scrambled to mobilize as part of an offensive designed to put an end to the barrage of Hamas rockets



that had rained down on southern Negev communities for months, the family's plans were thrown into disarray when news arrived that the base where they planned to hold their celebration was being mobilized. Thanks to the efforts of Standing Together director David Landau, an alternative base was found. But when Rivky's family pulled up with all their supplies, they were barred entry. No one, it seemed, had let the security guards know they were coming.

"The security guard looked at Mr. Landau and my Zaidy," wrote Rivky in a speech she wrote for the Morris Black Public speaking contest about her adventure. "He said 'Let me get this straight, you have a truck full of meat, and you want to make a barbeque for this girl's bat mitzvah?' ... We think that it was probably the oddest thing

the guy heard all night but he let
us in anyways. “

As the smell of barbecued hamburger wafted through the base, soldiers happily helped themselves to the unexpected treat. "Some of the soldiers brought out a guitar," wrote Rivky, "and we had a real bat mitzvah party." After letters written by Hamilton Hebrew Academy students, in which they thanked the soldiers "for all they do for us," Rivky's favourite moment took place between a female soldier, who was looking quite sad, approached her grandfather, Lester Krames.

“She came up to my Zaidy and said, ‘Do you like doing this?’ She had tears in her eyes. My Zaidy answered, ‘Yes.’ She told him ‘You and your family have lifted my spirits.’”



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Special Mentschen

The mitzvah of organ donation

Family shares story in hopes of finding kidney donors

by JOY PEKAR, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

Nineteen years ago, as a result of a genetic condition called Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) my mother-in-law, Ilana Pekar, experienced total kidney failure. Following diagnosis, she underwent two kidney transplants, both of which her body rejected, and so, for the last 19 years she has relied on dialysis treatments – several hours daily, several days a week – to keep her alive. Life on dialysis is difficult. Ilana has had many complications and frequent need for repairs of the 'plumbing' that connects the dialysis machine to her blood circulation as these connections are not designed to last for as long as she has needed them.

Though her journey has been extremely difficult, Ilana doesn't complain about her health. She lives life to the fullest and enjoys each day as best as she can.

My husband Arie has inherited this genetic disorder from Ilana. Since his diagnosis at the age of 21 the disease has slowly worn away at his kidney function, until he has found himself today, at the age of 35, needing a kidney transplant. If one cannot be found, he, too, will need to begin dialysis, a procedure that would dramatically affect his ability to run his business, travel, spend time with his hobbies and even his energy in the most basic of day-to-day activities.

In an effort to help both Arie and Ilana find a kidney we have found



Pictured above, (l to r) are Joy Pekar, Joshua Pekar, Arie Pekar and Ilana Pekar. Arie Pekar was hoping to receive a kidney from his brother, but Joshua was not a suitable donor, so Arie waits, along with his mom, Ilana, who also needs a kidney. Photo Courtesy of The Hamilton Spectator

ourselves sharing a very private story in a very public way. We started by sharing with our closest friends and family, but so far have not found a match.

By telling our story, first in The Hamilton Spectator, and now in the Hamilton Jewish News, we hope to raise awareness of the mitzvah of organ donation and its impact on those suffering from PKD and other types of chronic kidney disease.

Currently, there are nearly 1,500 people in Ontario waiting

*"Many Jews
are under
the mistaken
impression that
organ donation
is against
Jewish law."*

for organ transplants, and every day, on average, three people will die waiting for a transplant. Yet less than 25 per cent of eligible Ontarians are registered as organ donors. If people realize that one organ donor can potentially save the lives of eight and enhance the lives of up to 75, why are there not more registered donors?

Some believe that they are too old, or that their health problems prohibit them from being a donor. But it's important to understand that even if one's organs are

determined unsuitable for donation, it may still be possible for that same individual to donate tissue that could save, or dramatically enhance a recipient's life.

Some people believe that since they have an organ donor card signed and safely stowed in their wallet, that registration is unnecessary. But a new system requires potential donors to complete a registration form on renewing their health card or driver's licence or register online at beadonor.ca.

Many Jews are under the mistaken impression that organ donation is against Jewish law. But the Toronto Board of Rabbis have written that "The value of human life is a cardinal value in Jewish Law. This is a value which is expressed through the obligation for self-preservation, but also in the duty to save the life of another human being. This obligation is a mitzvah, a commandment, of such a supreme value that it takes precedence over virtually all other religious duties."

If our story has inspired you to consider becoming a living kidney donor to either Arie, Ilana, or any of the other people waiting for a kidney transplant, please email us at MomAndMeNeedAKidney@gmail.com.

Please follow us on facebook www.facebook.com/MomAndMeNeedAKidney or twitter www.twitter.com/MomAndMeKidney.

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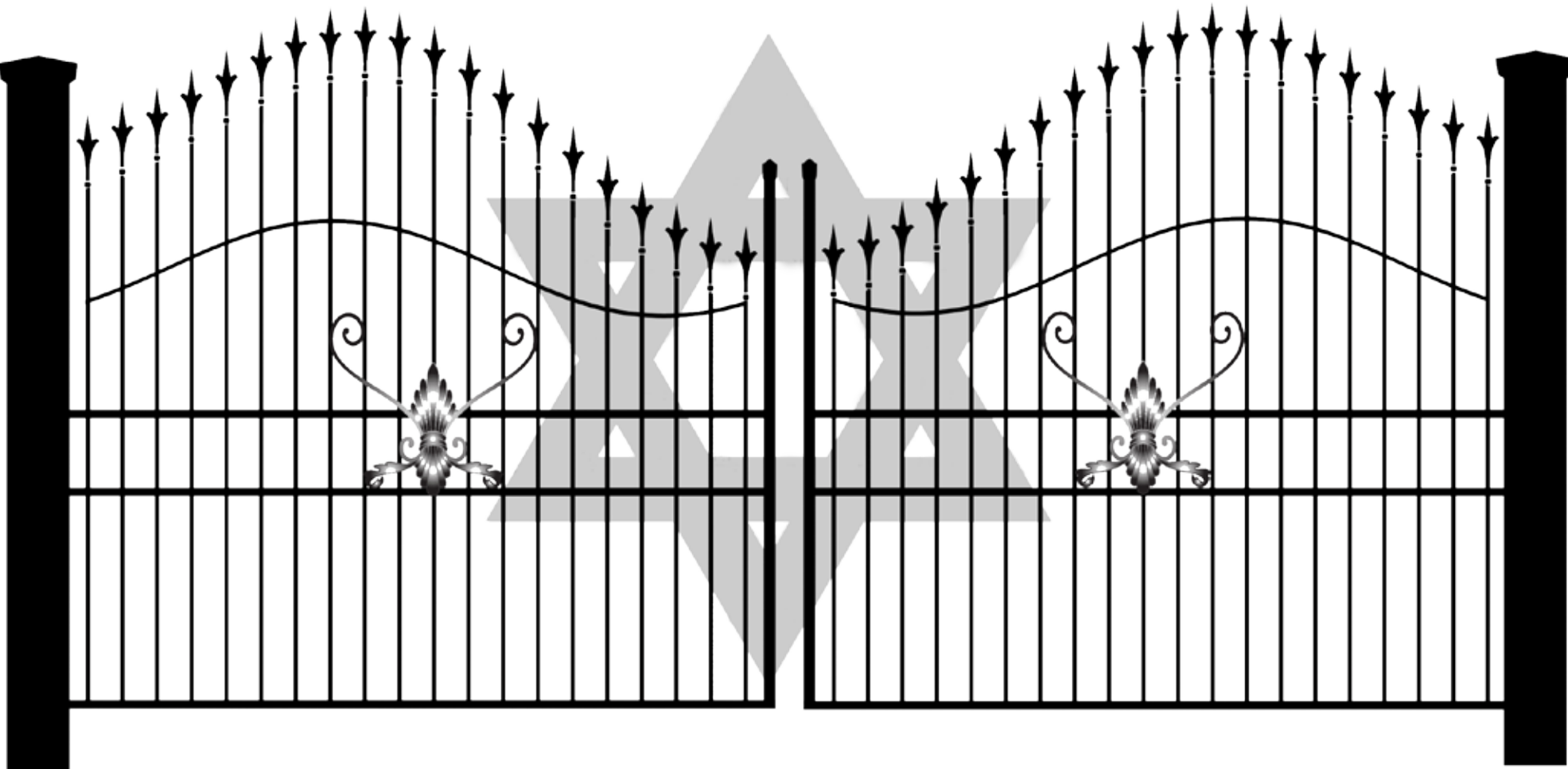
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Gatekeepers to Judaism

Story and photos by WENDY SCHNEIDER, the Hamilton Jewish News



How do our community rabbis respond when potential converts come knocking?

“I’m interested in converting to Judaism,” the caller says. The number of times Hamilton’s three congregational rabbis receive that kind of call is surprisingly high. Temple Anshe Sholom’s Rabbi Jordan Cohen gets about a half dozen a month. For Beth Jacob’s Rabbi Dan Selsberg, it’s an average of two over the same period. As for Adas Israel Rabbi Danny Green, calls of this kind take place on average about twice a year. While the numbers of inquiries about conversion may have been just as high, say, 30 years ago, the big change is that today, calls from people wanting to convert because they’ve fallen in love with a Jewish partner are the exception rather than the rule.

That’s a marked change from how things were a generation ago, when intermarriage was spoken of in hushed tones and conversion was seen as a way to appease one’s future in-laws. So, what is motivating today’s converts to Judaism, and what, if anything, do they have in common?

“It’s hard to categorize,” said Cohen, who, said he receives inquiries from people as young as 16 and as old as 70, from a “mostly Christian” background.

Selsberg commented on the varied levels of knowledge among those approaching him about the possibility of conversion.

“Some people come here after having thought about it for 10 years and read every book they could get their hands on ... other people had a dream last night.” What they share, he said, is a love for Judaism, “which could mean either they feel that the Jewish conceptions of God are true ... or they feel drawn to the mitzvot, a sense of community or Jewish tradition in general.”

What of the commonly known custom, commonly depicted in television and movie scripts, of rabbis turning away conversion candidates three times before taking them seriously? Does this actually happen in the real world? Green’s version of checking out people’s level of commitment is to invite them to attend a service.

“After I meet someone for the first time, I tell them, ‘you know something, just start coming. And we’ll meet after six weeks.’

I’m not pushing them away as such. I’m just creating another level within their process before we can actually sit down and talk about things in a more meaningful way.”

While Selsberg will arrange to meet with individuals in order to give them the opportunity to share their personal stories, he makes a point of telling them, “You’re fine as you are,” and that being welcomed into the Jewish community as an “ohev Yisrael” (literally, lover of the people, Israel) is something that does not require conversion.

Cohen, too, encourages people to simply learn, explore and participate in community life. “We never push people,” he said, but instead offers to mentor them through a process “and then in a year’s time ... we’ll talk about final steps towards conversion.”

The 12-month time frame is pretty much the standard. For those converting through Temple Anshe Sholom the process involves joining the synagogue, attending services and registering for the 10-month long Jewish Information Course, a program of study shared among the Hamilton, Oakville and Mississauga Reform congregations. “What that means is from the time they enter into the process, they’ve had at least one opportunity to experience everything that goes on in a Jewish calendar year,” said Rabbi Cohen, who, through monthly meetings with candidates, plays the role of personal mentor.

Preferring to mentor people individually in one-on-one meetings rather than send them to Toronto for the Conservative movement’s course of study, Selsberg requires candidates to attend services and adult education classes and work their way through an extensive reading list.

“I tell them to keep a notebook, both in classes on what they’re reading and as they go about their day to write down their questions,” he said, “like (reading) a story on abortion and they want to know what Jews think about abortion,” he said.

Green also presents candidates with a reading list and an independent study paper which they have to work through. The most important criteria for him, however, is that participants fully engage in community life.

“You can have people that are on their

own personal spiritual odyssey ... They can keep Shabbat, they can keep kosher, they can keep everything. But they don’t feel that they’re part of the Jewish community per se,” he said. “If they can’t find their place in the synagogue, then the conversion can’t really take place.”

“Some people come here after having thought about it for 10 years and read every book they could get their hands on ... other people had a dream last night.”

Rabbi Dan Selsberg

For Green, mentoring adults through conversion is much less common than his converting children born to non-Jewish mothers or in the case of adoption.

“The truth is it’s a different process for children,” he said. “The main goal of a conversion is the accepting of the mitzvot. The child doesn’t have the mindset to accept anything ... It’s a different kind of process, which makes it somewhat easier to facilitate.”

Upon completion of their course of study, candidates appear before a Beit Din, or rabbinical court, that consists of either four or five rabbis or other individuals deemed as having the required knowledge and level of observance by the sponsoring rabbi. The process of a group of learned individuals question candidates regarding their level

of knowledge, personal practice of Judaism and relationship with families of origin is seen as the last opportunity to measure their commitment before welcoming them into the fold.

After the Beit Din has accepted the candidate comes the sine-qua-non of conversion that all of Hamilton’s rabbis adhere to, is mikvah and milah – ritual immersion and circumcision. Because Jewish law dictates that even men who were circumcised at birth must go through a process called “hatafat dam,” every male candidate most undergo a ritual in which a single drop of blood is taken from the corona of skin that surrounds the head of the penis. While the procedure is often done in a physician’s office in the presence of a rabbi, Selsberg most often has candidates perform the ritual in his office using the same kind of disposable devices used to check blood sugar levels.

“It’s more squeamish than painful,” he said. “It’s very foreign to all of polite society and at the same time ... this isn’t Seinfeld episodes and bagels and lox. Brit milah is a core value of Jewish life and it’s hugely powerful.”

Cohen acknowledges that, even with mikvah and milah, those who convert to Judaism through the Reform movement are unlikely to be accepted as Jews in the Orthodox world. But in light of recent moves among certain elements of Israel’s Orthodox community to nullify the conversions supervised by other Orthodox rabbis, Cohen said there is no longer any such thing as a universally accepted conversion.

“In a way I find that very liberating ... it’s really about finding the place that’s right for you and going through the conversion process that’s going to be acceptable by that congregation or by that rabbi.”

In the final moments of the Beit Din process, a candidate is asked to formally renounce all of his previous beliefs and practices. The drama continues to build, said Selsberg, with a series of yes and no questions leading to the final question: Do you bind your own personal destiny with the destiny of the people of Israel? “They say ‘yes’ and it’s a wonderful moment,” he



Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

LAURA CATTARI

Laura Cattari is convinced that her Italian Catholic family are descended from Italian Jews from Southern Italy forcibly converted to Judaism during the Spanish Inquisition. After becoming interested in Judaism in her 30s, she recognized, among the Jewish customs she was reading about, that many were observed in her own home.

“We never mixed milk and meat,” she said, “I never ate pork. I ordered veal parmigiana in my twenties and was shocked that there was actual cheese on it.”

Walking into Temple Anshe Sholom for the first time, Cattari said, felt like “an incredible feeling of coming home.”

After making the decision to convert, Cattari hoped to get confirmation

On hearing the news that her granddaughter was planning to convert to Judaism, Cattari’s grandmother, who was 18 years of age when the Nazis marched into Southern Italy, began to ask her granddaughter what she planned to do if there was a war. “First they come for the men,” she said, “then they’re going to come for you.”

The line of questioning, said Cattari, “was simply a matter of safety which I found really bizarre.” When she finally drummed up the courage to ask her grandmother directly if “we were Jews,” her grandmother only responded that she didn’t remember. She, however, is convinced that they were.

Her favourite part of the conversion process was the mikvah. “You feel reborn, new again, renewed, refreshed ... Something about the immersion, repeating the blessings over and over again, you feel some part of you is washed away.”



Photo by Carl Cuneo, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

ALEX & PATRIZIA MAINE

For Alex Maine, it all began with a simple act of kindness shown his family by their Jewish landlady as his recently divorced mother struggled to carry their belongings into their rented duplex in Montreal.

“My mother couldn’t move all our things upstairs and she was in tears,” he recalled. “So our landlady brought our things up for us, brought food up.” After introducing the children, his mother asked about the landlady’s family. “With her eyes cast down to the floor she said ‘I lost them all in Auschwitz’ ... I never forgot it.”

Years later, at university in Thunder Bay, Maine was drawn to the local synagogue’s friendly, tight-knit community. “I was the resident goy there for three years,” he said. When the occasional piece of hate mail would come through the synagogue fax machine or its door vandalized by a painted swastika, Maine took it personally. “It was soul destroying to see and I realized I don’t get Christianity any more ... These were people that had survived thick and thin and there’s such an essence of community, of goodness to them,” he recalled thinking. “I’m on the wrong side of the fence,” he concluded. “This is where I need to be.”

But it took many more years before Maine followed through on his convictions. First came marriage to Patrizia, born into a Catholic family with roots in Northern Italy, who, independently of her husband, had concluded that her family, like Cattari’s, was descended from Jews forcibly converted during the 15th century. The Maines converted as a couple with Beth Jacob’s Rabbi Dan Selsberg. “We came like orphans,” said Maine. “They took us in. It was just like those experiences I had as a kid.”



Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

KAREN MERCER

Karen Mercer grew up in a home where her Scottish-born mother was constantly using expressions in a foreign language. It was only in high school when she herself was throwing around words like “ferklept” and “chutzpah” that she learned that the words she thought were Gaelic were actually Yiddish.

As a teenager, Mercer was convinced that her mother was deliberately hiding the fact that the family was actually Jewish, but, in fact, it was simply a fascination with all things Jewish that she passed on to her daughter.

Five years ago, Mercer, who is gifted in languages, began taking a Hebrew class at Beth Jacob. At the top of her class due to having learned the alphabet online, she decided to start attending services as a way to practice what she’d learned. “I tried to sneak in the first time,” she said. “But I learned that you can’t sneak into a synagogue ... A little old lady got me in the lobby. ‘You’re new here,’ she said.” After that, Mercer just kept coming.

After about six months of regular attendance, Rabbi Selsberg approached her. “So, you come a lot,” he told Mercer. “Are you thinking about sticking around?” Once immersed in the conversion process, Mercer kept receiving positive messages that she had made the right choice, like the first time she touched the Torah with her siddur and felt something akin to an electric shock running through her body.

The week following her mikvah she chanted a haftarah and sponsored a kiddush to thank those who had offered her so much support. This Purim she recited a chapter from the Book of Esther. Her congregation, like a good Jewish mother, is kvelling with pride.



Shalom Village

shalomvillage.ca

A message from CEO Jeanette O'Leary and Board President Dr. Larry Levin

Accredited with Exemplary Standing!



Like many of you, here at Shalom Village we are busy readying ourselves for the rituals and traditions of Pesach. We are cleaning our kitchens and dining areas, stocking up on kosher for Passover food and supplies, planning our wonderful seder menus and inviting family and friends to join us as we gather to reflect upon and celebrate the enduring Pesach messages of remembrance and freedom.

Leap over

I have often read that the word 'Pesach' means to "leap over". Building on this positive connotation, the celebration of Pesach and the remembrance of the actions and courage of the Jewish nation all those centuries ago bring to mind visions of achievement, drive, and opportunity. No doubt, these are words of our modern era, and they certainly frame the task at hand for the Jewish people on the eve of that first Pesach. Their task

must have seemed unachievable, yet they persevered and did achieve what had been impossible for so many years before that first Seder - freedom.

Celebrating achievement

In the spirit of celebrating achievement, we wanted to share with our community an exciting accomplishment. Like many other organizations providing health care and services, Shalom Village participates in the Accreditation Canada program to evaluate our performance against national standards of excellence. Participating in this program means that Shalom Village was assessed by its peers, met or exceeded national standards of excellence, and continues to strive for high quality health care.

Highest award possible

We are pleased to announce that Shalom Village received the highest award possible from Accreditation Canada — *Accredited with Exemplary Standing*. The achievement of this award represents a culmination of the efforts of all those who work at Shalom Village and that our care and services have exceeded national standards of excellence for health care. Most importantly, for our residents and their loved ones it provides further assurance that our teams are

committed at the highest levels of quality and excellence to ensure our vision of Honouring our Fathers and our Mothers are not just words on paper, but are values that are brought to life every day by our dedicated staff and their leaders.

One of the proudest moments for Larry and I was, when listening to the surveyors comments on our home, they described how they consistently felt, saw, and heard our A.T.H.O.M.E. values in action. In their conversations with and observations of residents, families, and staff they heard loud and clear that spirit of honoring through love, compassion, and commitment to excellence is alive and well at Shalom Village. This is the ultimate achievement any CEO and Board President could hope to have, one that will now be part of our story and traditions as an organization.

Joyous Pesach

As you gather this year to celebrate and remember the achievements told in the stories of Pesach, we wish you many happy moments and memories with your family and friends. On behalf of all those who live and work at Shalom Village and our dedicated Board of Directors, we wish all those in the Hamilton Jewish Community a joyous Pesach.

Happy Passover from your friends at Shalom Village



Passover is celebrated at Shalom Village with a Seder, where the story of Passover is retold through the reading of the Haggadah. With its special foods, songs and customs, the seder is the high point of our Passover celebration.

Preparations start early as our kitchens and dining rooms are cleaned and our regular dishes go into storage to be replaced by special Passover dishes and utensils. Matzah and matzah products are substituted for bread products (Shalom Village uses more than 280 packages of matzah during Passover!).

Our residents and their families enjoy a seder on the first night of Passover in our dining rooms beginning with candlelighting and reading the haggadah, accompanied by a traditional dinner.



Passover Cards

Why not send Shalom Village Tribute Cards for Passover? Just send us your list and we'll take care of the rest! Call 905-529-1613 and ask for Kathleen or Kate to learn more.

Thank you

Grateful thanks to the families of **May Evans, Rose Rosenshein, Geraldine Shapiro, Lillian Cohen, Bess Dulberg, Sharon Nagler, Lee Cohen, Norman Carpenter and Helen Katz** for requesting donations to Shalom Village in lieu of flowers.

Memorial donations support the *Possibilities Fund* at Shalom Village, making many special programs and services possible for our residents.



Shalom Village

shalomvillage.ca
70 Macklin Street North
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 3S1
P: 905-529-1613 F: 905-529-7542
E: info@shalomvillage.ca

Arts

Lost and Found

THE MIRACULOUS RESURFACING OF A PIECE OF BETH JACOB HISTORY

by STEVE ARNOLD and KAREN MERCER, Special to the Hamilton Jewish News

A piece of Beth Jacob's history has resurfaced after more than 50 years and will soon be coming home.

A five-piece stained glass that once looked down on the bimah of the old Hunter Street shul had been buried for the last half century in the basement of a man who purchased it on a whim. The window was commissioned by Jacob Goldblatt in memory of his wife, Menucha, and the family name, and hers, are prominently featured. Goldblatt, who came to Canada from Lithuania at the end of the 19th century, was a noted philanthropist, a primary benefactor to the shul and one of its presidents. His wife, who had suffered from Parkinson's disease, died in 1919, making the memorial window about 85 years old.

As the congregation began to grow and prosper in the 1950s, plans were made to relocate the synagogue in Aberdeen Avenue. Some of the fixtures from the old shul, including the pews and the carved wooden Aron Kodesh, became part of the new building's small chapel, but the window, being an integral part of the building, was left behind. It would have been difficult to remove and replace before the building could be sold, at a time when all funds were earmarked for the new synagogue. Neither would it have fit the streamlined, modern look.

In all the excitement of the new, the old was gradually forgotten. The old Hunter Street Shul changed hands more than once before being slated to be torn down for City Hall's parking lot. By then, nobody remembered whose shul it had been to offer them a last chance at what was left, and nobody from Beth Jacob remembered that anything valuable had been left behind.

But the window got a last minute stay of execution in the spring of 1965, when Hamilton physician Bob Dickson, then 25, hired a local tradesman to remove



Jacob Goldblatt, Beth Jacob's primary benefactor in its early years, commissioned the window in memory of his wife, Menucha.

Photo courtesy of Beth Jacob Synagogue

Would Dickson, he wondered, be interested in purchasing an additional stained glass window from "an old synagogue that's being torn down?"

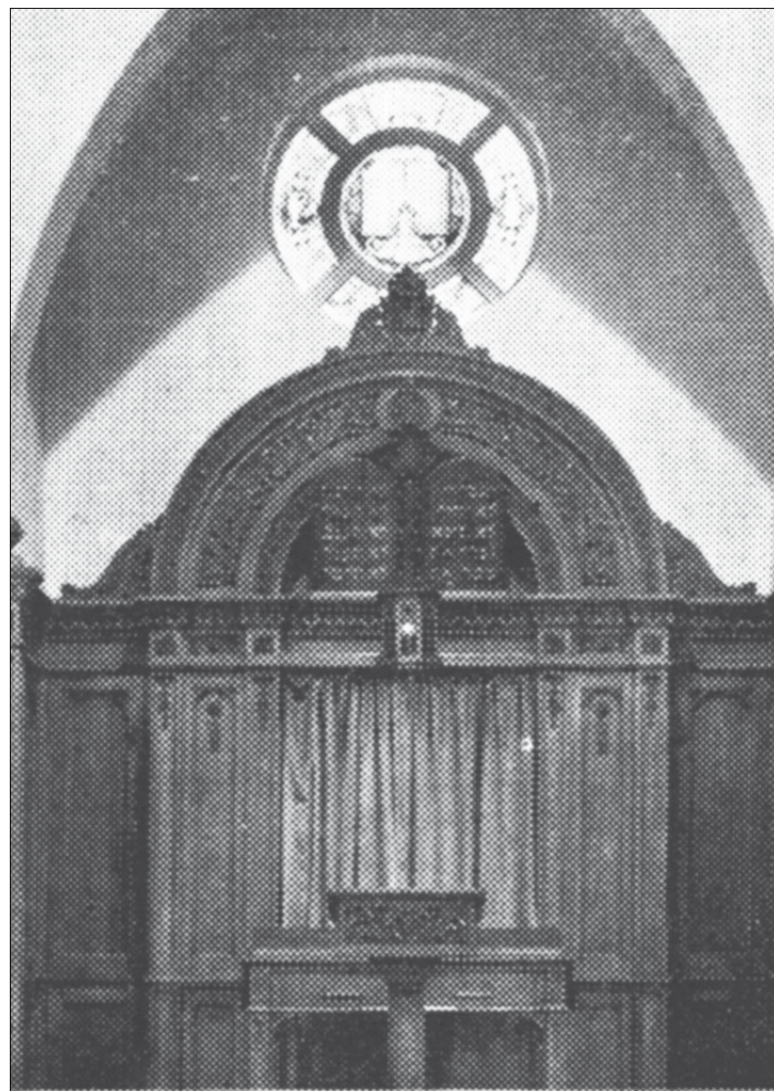
and crate two stained glass windows from his grandmother's former home, with the thought of installing them in a future home. Shortly after, the tradesman called him back with a question. Would Dickson, he wondered, be interested in purchasing an additional stained glass window from "an old synagogue that's being torn down?" Dickson, an avid collector, bought the window, sight unseen, for \$35 plus crating fees, and had it carefully stored in the basement of a friend while he continued his studies in England, California and Ottawa. Eventually he settled again in Hamilton, taught in McMaster's new medical school briefly and then trained as a family physician.

The Beth Jacob window remained unopened until 1984, when Dickson remembered it and thought he ought to sell it. He brought it to Classical Stained

Glass in downtown Hamilton, where proprietor, Lowell Souci uncrated it and discovered the inscription bearing Jacob Goldblatt's name. Dickson began trying to contact the family at random through the phone-book, leading to a brief opportunity that slipped by. Some time in 1985 Marvin Goldblatt, accompanied by interior decorator, Harvey Sobel, walked into Souci's store. According to Souci, Goldblatt considered purchasing the window for his new office, but Sobel dissuaded him as it would not suit the sleek modern look they had planned and neither could think of another place for it. Nobody thought that the place for it might be back in the synagogue. Once again, a desire to move into the future had blocked the window from the past.

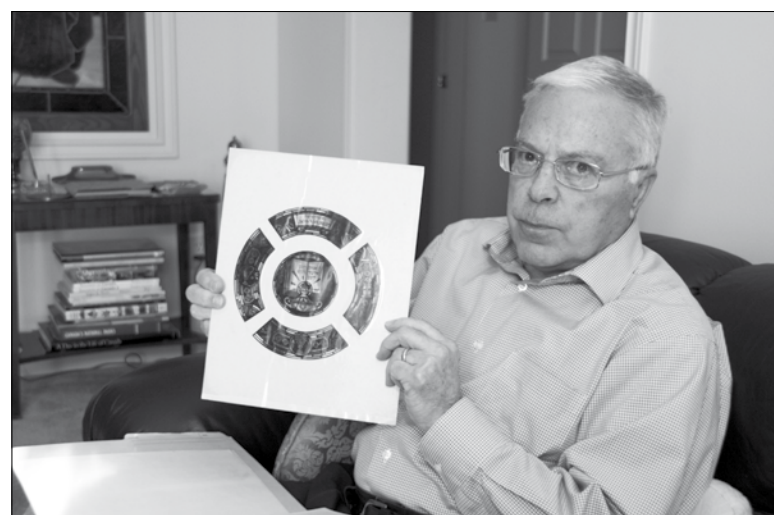
Another 30 years went by. During that time Dickson would, from time to time, remember the window. At one point he considered offering the window as a donation, in exchange for a tax receipt, to Shalom Village, but no agreement could be reached on a value. Three years ago, now in his mid-70s, Dickson decided he should make some permanent arrangement. He connected with Rabbi Bernard Baskin, known to him through his Spectator column. "I thought I'm getting older and I didn't really need a stained glass window, a Jewish stained glass window, so I should really do something about that before I drop dead and my kids don't know what to do with it," Dickson said.

Recognizing the window as a piece of Beth Jacob history, Rabbi Baskin contacted Wendy Schneider, a former co-president of the synagogue and member of the Goldblatt family, indicating his desire to see it returned to its rightful place. Schneider, whose Hebrew name was given in remembrance of her great-grandmother Menucha, was delighted by the discovery and last spring, she acquired the window on Beth



The stained glass window from the Hunter Street Shul occupied a central place directly over its Aron Kodesh.

Photo courtesy of Beth Jacob Synagogue



As a young man, Dr. Bob Dickson purchased the Hunter Street window from a tradesman and kept it in safekeeping for almost 50 years.

Photo by Wendy Schneider, the Hamilton Jewish News

Jacob's behalf.

"I think the whole thing in terms of how this came to be is beshert," Schneider said, recalling the reaction of the synagogue's board of governors when they heard the story. "They couldn't believe that something that had been in the Hunter Street shul in the '50s has resurfaced after all these years."

As part of her efforts to raise funds to restore and display the window in time for the synagogue's 125th celebrations on June 9, Schneider has shared the story with long-time Beth Jacob members who can still recall the old Hunter Street Shul. Goldie Robbins's eyes lit up on hearing the news, "What a wonderful miracle," she said.

For Rabbi Dan Selsberg, the repatriation of the Hunter Street Shul window has particular significance.

"When I read the history of Beth Jacob Synagogue, I read

about how Jacob Goldblatt was not only a primary benefactor of the shul, not only the president of the shul for decades, but also lead services on High Holidays. These windows were above the ark, where the prayer leader, looking up, would see sunlight falling through them. To have artwork that doubles as an emotionally and religiously resonant part of Jewish history recovered is wonderful. To recover, reframe, and rededicate these windows as we prepare for our next 125 years tells a uniquely Jewish story."

The story of the Beth Jacob window is, ultimately, a Jewish story — about exile and return, the weight of history and the bonds of family and community. It's about how easy it is to forget the past in the excitement of the now and the plans for the future, and how what one generation leaves behind, another will rediscover and find value.

Service Awards for Geriatric Excellence

Two SAGE nominations for Shalom Village

Several Shalom Village team members have been recognized with nominations for 2013 Service Awards for Geriatric Excellence (SAGE).

Patricia Smalling, who leads our physiotherapy team, has been nominated in the individual category, and the **Shalom Village Physician Team** has been nominated in the team category.

Recognizes excellence

SAGE recognizes outstanding achievements of individuals and organizations who demonstrate excellence in positively influencing the quality of life of seniors and to highlight geriatrics as a critical area of health care. This unique program celebrates the professional excellence of individuals and organizations that provide health care and community services for seniors and their families.

Compassionate

As well as leading the physiotherapy team, Patricia is a member of the Shalom Village Occupational Health & Safety and Falls Prevention teams. Patricia also provides educational workshops for other staff at Shalom Village.

"Patricia has a way of making each

resident and participant feel heard," says Krista Sheppard, who leads the *Goldie's2Home* Slow Stream Rehabilitation program. "She is thorough and thoughtful, but most of all she is compassionate."

Dream Team

At Shalom Village we are incredibly fortunate to have what we call the "dream team" of family physicians. **Alan Taniguchi, Doug Oliver, Anna Emili and Danielle O'Toole** are the physicians who care for our 127 long term care residents, including our 15 bed Convalescent Care Program.

"These are four amazing physicians who are role models in their profession, for their students, for our staff and other health professional they interact with," says Shalom Village CEO Jeanette O'Leary, "and most importantly a beacon of compassion and reassurance in the sometimes overwhelming journey for frail seniors".

Winners announced May 24

SAGE winners will be announced at an awards ceremony at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum on May 24.



Patricia Smalling helps Norbert Casey get back on his feet



Dr. Alan Taniguchi, left, along with Dr. Doug Oliver, Dr. Anna Emili and Dr. Danielle O'Toole are the Shalom Village Physician Team

Mark your calendar!



32nd Annual Ladies Auxiliary Tea
July 4th 2013



12th Annual Hannukah Hustle
November 17th 2013

New Bubbi Bessie's now open!

Beautiful new location, same great people!

Bubbi Bessie's Café has reopened in its beautiful location in Shalom Village.

The new space is not only larger than the old location, it includes state-of-the-art fixtures and modern, attractive furnishings.

Wide aisles, fireplace

There are twice as many dining tables as before, and aisles are wide and spacious. Guests can relax and chat in a cosy seating area featuring a beautiful fireplace and a large flat-screen television mounted on the wall.

WIFI, computers

Two computers are provided and there is WIFI access for those who bring their own wireless devices to the café.

Visit soon!

Noreen McConnell is your hostess at Bubbi Bessie's. Noreen and her team would love to see you soon!



Jeanette O'Leary welcomes guests at the grand opening of the new Bubbi Bessie's Café

It's not too late to help!

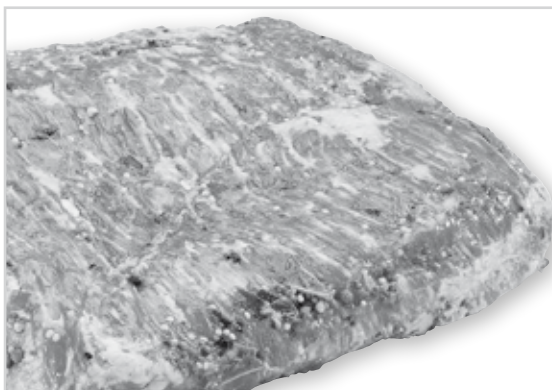
We are about 75 per cent of the way to our fundraising goal of \$60,000 for the Bubbi Bessie's project. Call 905-529-1613 and ask for Kathleen or Kate if you would like to help.

Happy PASSOVER



5⁹⁹lb
13.21/kg

**boneless skinless
chicken breast**
fresh Kosher



7⁴⁹lb
16.51/kg

pickled beef brisket
Kosher



2⁹⁹ **save
\$2**

**Kedem sparkling
grape juice**
selected varieties
750 mL



1⁹⁹ **save
\$1**

Ceres juice
selected varieties
1 L



3⁹⁹

Hagada egg matzos
300 g

**save
\$1.50**

2⁴⁹

**Manischewitz Matzo ball
mix or Matzo ball soup mix**
142 g



**save
\$1**

4⁹⁹

**Cantalia extra virgin
olive oil**
extra light or 100% pure, 1 L



**save
\$1**

1⁹⁹

**Nature's Own
100% apple juice**
1.89 L

**save
\$2**

2⁹⁹

**Osem instant chicken
soup mix**
400 g



**save
.60**

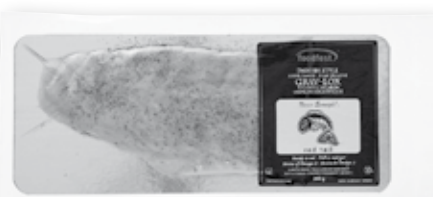
.69

White Rock seltzer
selected varieties
1 L



5⁴⁹lb
12.10/kg

lean ground beef
fresh Kosher



6⁹⁹

Foodfest smoked salmon
selected varieties
200 g



4⁹⁹

Strub's Kosher dill pickles
selected varieties
2 L



**save
\$1**

4⁹⁹

Planters nuts
selected varieties
200-350 g

PRICES EFFECTIVE UNTIL THURSDAY, APRIL 4TH, 2013

All references to any savings claims (ie. "Save", "was", "1/2 price", etc.) Is in comparison to our regular retail. We reserve the right to limit quantities. Some franchise and independent stores may have sold or will sell for less. Product selection may vary and may not be available at all stores. **Image prevails when text does not correspond to the description of advertised product.** ®/TM trademarks of Loblaw's Inc. © 2013 Loblaw's Inc.

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