70th anniversary of Kristallnacht marked on Parliament Hill

By Liana Shlien

Hundreds gathered at the West Block on Parliament Hill November 9 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the organized extermination of six million Jews during the Holocaust.

The events of Kristallnacht marked a turning point for European Jewry and were a prelude to the systematic extermination of six million Jews during the Holocaust. The night of November 9, 1938, rioters in Nazi Germany and Austria burned hundreds of synagogues and smashed the windows of thousands of Jewish-owned businesses and homes. Nearly 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to concentration camps and 92 German Jews were killed.

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Schwarzfeld is longtime CHW activist

(Continued from page 1)

In Europe disdained one of their key religious commandments – “to love one’s neighbour as oneself” – when they saw that. “It was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. Once you walk in that door, everybody is a person and all the barriers fall away. It’s amazing.”

Kilgour stresses need to unite against hatred and apathy

(Continued from page 1)

In particular, he cited Holocaust denial and anti-Israel rhetoric by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as meriting serious concern and attention. “There was a particular importance to her,” she quickly mentioned the Acco daycare centre supported by the Ottawa chapters. Visiting the daycare this past March, she saw Jewish, Arab and newly immigrant children playing together. “Kids are kids,” she said, “and that gives one hope when you see that.” The other project she called attention to was Hadassah Hospital. When asked if there were CHW projects that are of particular importance to her, she mentioned the CHW’s governance structure so that it can function more efficiently.

In talking with Schwarzfeld about CHW, her commitment to the organization, indeed her love for it and the work it does, is obvious. Another of her priorities will be to work on expanding the CHW membership base. “Times have changed,” she said, “and that’s not as simple as it used to be.” Schwarzfeld said there’s been a decline in membership that can be partly attributed to the aging of the population and partly to the changed role of women in society. “I don’t think young women necessarily look to these kinds of organizations in the same ways they always did,” she said. “So it’s a challenge to us to keep up with the times and make the organization interesting to younger women.”

During her term, Schwarzfeld also plans to look at modernizing CHW’s governance structure so that it can function more efficiently. She’ll invite me.”

As president will be to help near Tel Aviv. The other project she called attention to was Hadassah Hospital. In Jerusalem and hospitals in Israel: Hadassah Hospital.

The other project she called attention to was Hadassah Hospital. She will be to help CHW projects in Israel are six daycare centres, including the one supported by its Ottawa membership in Acco. “We support four schools, two youth villages and two women’s centres, and our funding also supports a shelter and a women’s hotline.”

And CHW also provides financial support to two hospitals in Israel: Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and the Assaf Harofe Hospital near Tel Aviv. Schwarzfeld said her role as president will be to help maintain the CHW vision as a Zionist organization and to promote the many projects for women and children that CHW funds and supports in Israel. “You have to keep everybody in the loop, so there’s a whole communications role.”

Schwarzfeld will also be involved in CHW fundraise efforts and in “encouraging the membership to fundraise for our cause.” Another of her priorities will be to work on expanding the CHW membership base. “Times have changed,” she said, “and that’s not as simple as it used to be.” Schwarzfeld said there’s been a decline in membership that can be partly attributed to the aging of the population and partly to the changed role of women in society. “I don’t think young women necessarily look to these kinds of organizations in the same ways they always did,” she said. “So it’s a challenge to us to keep up with the times and make the organization interesting to younger women.”

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In particular, he cited Holocaust denial and anti-Israel rhetoric by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as meriting serious concern and attention. “No one anywhere should take lightly such outrageous statements,” he cautioned. Echoing Kilgour’s theme, Rabbi Howard Finkelstein of Bet Tikvah Congregation delivered a D’var Torah and stressed that vigilance is needed to follow the paths of justice and morality, so that “the ugly head of wrongful theology” can never again lead to genocide.

Canadian Jewry is in the fortunate position of being able to stand up for human rights both at home and abroad, he said. “Thank God for Canada, thank God for our ability to live in a democratic country.” George Kadar recounted his survivor story as a Jewish child who in New York. “It was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. Once you walk in that door, everybody is a person and all the barriers fall away. It’s amazing.”

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Mailbag

Afternoon school a serious option for Jewish education

While I generally agree with the theme of Rabbi Finkelstein’s column (From the Pulpit: Discarding ideological differences in the name of unification, November 10), I was greatly concerned by a comment regarding modern Orthodox families choosing public schools. He claimed some parents didn’t feel that the day schools provided an adequate religious education and wondered how they would get such from a public school. The answer is by combining the public school experience with attendance at Ottawa Talmud Torah Afternoon School (OTTAS). Our school provides 50 per cent of the hours of Jewish education provided in a day school, and our classes are taught by certified professional teachers. These include an Orthodox rabbi and a member of Young Israel Congregation.

It is unlikely that modern Orthodox parents are choosing public education because of a failure of day schools to meet their religious needs. It is more likely that cost is a factor, or they want French immersion, more visual arts, music or drama, or they have a child with a learning disability who can’t be served in a trilingual day school program.

Rabbi Finkelstein and I agree that the concern should be that many Jewish parents are choosing NOTHING for their children. Leaders in this community, including supporters of day schools, need to start looking at OTTAS as a serious option for families who reject Jewish day schools of any persuasion.

Shawn Marmer
Principal, Ottawa Talmud Torah Afternoon School

Keynote speaker David Kilgour meets with Cantor Moshe Kraus and two members of the Jewish war vets colour party, David Cohen (left) and Philip Pinkus, post commander.

Closing prayers and Kaddish were recited by Cantor Moshe Kraus, also a survivor.

A group of six Jewish war veterans opened and closed the ceremony by marching the Colours on and off.
DO A MITZVAH AND HELP SOMEONE IN NEED

SAVE THE EARTH
We will be painting canvas reusable lunch bags to decrease the use of plastic shopping bags and paper lunch bags to help the environment.

CELEBRATION KITS
Create and pack a kit with all the supplies needed to celebrate a birthday. Kits will be distributed to shelters around Ottawa. This will ensure that every child is given the opportunity to have a “Happy Birthday”.

DOLLS FOR DARFUR
The Dolls for Darfur Campaign was started to raise awareness about the genocide happening in the Darfur region of Sudan. Doll pins will be made and donated to the Dolls for Darfur Campaign which is a collaborative project of Temple Emanu-El of Dallas Texas, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the Union for Reform Judaism’s Commission on Social Action. (This activity to be done by grade six students of Hillel Academy and Charles H. Hulse Public School, December 2nd at Hillel Academy.)

NIGHT NIGHT BAGS
Night Night Bags will be made to comfort children in crisis care. They will be distributed by the Children’s Aid Society and the Ottawa Police to children dealing with various traumas, including being removed from their homes.

BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY
Crafts will be created for seniors to brighten someone’s day! They will be distributed by Jewish Family Services through the Thelma Steinman Seniors Support Unit.

CHEO KITS
When children are checked into CHEO they are given kits containing necessities for their stay. Our kits will be made for the parents of sick children and will include basic personal hygiene items needed throughout their child’s stay, leaving them with one less thing to worry about.

WELCOME KITS
In 2007, Canada welcomed 236,759 immigrants from all across the world. Kits made will include maps, transit information, dictionaries and more. They will be given to new immigrants to help make their transition into the Ottawa region easier.

FEEDING THE STREETS
Lunch bags will be made and distributed to people on the streets with the help of two organizations: Streetsmarts and Centre 454.

MITZVAH DAY
Sunday, December 7th, 2008
Registration begins at 8:00 am
Free Breakfast at 8:00 am
Mitzvots 9:30 am
Dr. Kaboom & Mitzvah Bash 12:00 pm
Cake & Ice Cream

For more information contact Patrice Berdowski at (613) 798-4696 ext. 241 or pberdowski@jewishottawa.com

Live Generously.®
IT DOES A WORLD OF GOOD
Secular candidate Nir Barkat elected mayor of Jerusalem

By Uriel Heilman (JTA) – The victory by secular businessman Nir Barkat in Jerusalem’s mayoral election was greeted with relief by Israelis concerned about the increasingly fervently Orthodox character of the city.

Barkat, a city councilman and high-tech entrepreneur, defeated his fervently Orthodox rival, Rabbi Meir Porush, 52 per cent to 43 per cent, in the November 11 election. The other high-profile candidate, Russian-Israeli tycoon Arcadi Gaydamak, finished a distant third with less than 4 per cent of the vote.

Barkat’s election returns control of City Hall to secular residents. The vote was marred by irregularities. Barkat’s campaign pointed to some of these.

Barkat, Jerusalem’s victorious mayoral candidate, casts his vote in the November 11 election. (Photo: Brian Hendik)

Barkat’s victory comes at a pivotal time for the Israeli capital. The city is victimized by hackers who appeared from some polling stations, and his website was taken down for a few minutes. Barkat’s campaign headquarters were cerrted by the city’s elections. The vote was marred by some irregularities. Barkat voting slips apparently disappeared from some polling stations, and his website was victimized by hackers who redirected surfers to Porush’s site. At another polling station, a group of Orthodox men reportedly hurled a stone at a police officer, lightly injuring him, in a bid to bar people from voting. Police dispersed the group.

During the campaign, Barkat campaigned on a platform of investing in the city’s tourism-based economy and ensuring that Israel’s capital city remains majority Jewish. “We have to build Jerusalem economically,” Barkat told JTA in an interview earlier this year.

“Jerusalem has only 1.5 million tourists who come annually. We have more to offer than any city. We have to open Jerusalem up to the global tourism marketplace.”

While the turnout exceeded the last municipal elections, in 2003, the vast majority of Jerusalem Arabs stuck to their policy of boycotting the city’s elections. There were also municipal elections in dozens of other cities and towns across Israel, from Tel Aviv to Sderot, on November 11. In Tel Aviv, incumbent Ron Huldai handily defeated his challenger.

For these residents of Jerusalem – modern Orthodox included – Barkat’s election is a welcome change from five years of fervently Orthodox leadership.

“There is the sense that if another ultra-Orthodox mayor gets elected, the city’s last secular residents will leave,” one voter told Israel’s Channel 10 News on election day. “There’s a feeling that this is the last chance for this city.”

In his victory speech, Barkat said, “I am aware of the depth of the challenge and the complexity of the mission. Now is the time to work together for the good of the city.”

During the campaign, Barkat’s spokesman acknowledged that the candidate, a veteran fixture of Israel’s Orthodox political scene and a seventh-generation Jerusalemite, was a proponent of Orthodox-only cities.

The victory by Barkat, a self-made millionaire and venture capitalist, comes at a pivotal time for the Israeli capital. With one-third of its residents Orthodox and one-third Arab, Jerusalem is Israel’s largest city, and its poorest. A recent survey of Israel’s 15 largest cities ranked Jerusalem last in terms of livability. The city is wracked by political and religious divisions, and its young, secular population is dwindling due to a dearth of affordable real estate, limited job opportunities and what some decry as its increasingly Orthodox character.

Many Jerusalemites deriding the city’s elections. At the ceremony, a fervently Orthodox deputy mayor compelled a teenage girls’ dance troupe to wear hats and long, loose-fitting clothing so as not to offend the sensibilities of Orthodox viewers. Many Jerusalemites and Israelis were outraged, blaming Lupolianski for what they called the Taliban-style outfits.
Moishe’s Grill: Israeli-style restaurant now open at the SJCC

By Michael Regenstreif

Walking up the steps to the second floor of the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) at lunch time or dinner time, you’re likely to encounter the mouthwatering aromas of freshly grilled food, including steaks, burgers, kebabs and chicken.

Although there’s no sign up yet, the smells are from Moishe’s Grill, an Israeli-style kosher meat restaurant that opened this fall in the space formerly occupied by the dairy-only Rideau Bakery Café. In fact, it is the only meat restaurant available to kashrut-observant Ottawans who have long longed for some place to go for a good steak.

“It’s Ottawa’s first good kosher restaurant,” said enthusiastic diner Mark Zarecki, executive director of Jewish Family Services, while enjoying dinner with his wife Gladys, one evening this month.

“The food is very good. You can’t ask for more.”

In addition to the various grilled specialties, popular menu items at Moishe’s Grill include Israeli-style salads and sandwiches, falafel, and, after 5 pm, sushi prepared fresh on the premises by an experienced sushi chef. There’s also a chef’s special that changes daily.

Moishe’s Grill was opened by Moshe and Karen Segalovich, an Israeli couple now living in Montreal who operate two popular kosher restaurants there – Prime Grill on Queen Mary Road and the Yakimono Sushi Bar on Decarie Boulevard. The menu at Moishe’s Grill in the SJCC draws on the best of both establishments.

Moshe and Karen and their staff have been enjoying the experience of getting their Ottawa restaurant up and running.

“The people in Ottawa are more appreciative” than Montrealers who have long enjoyed a choice of kosher restaurants, says Karen.

Karen encourages anyone who hasn’t been to Moishe’s Grill yet to give it a try.

“And we’re always open to suggestions,” she says, “about the chef’s specials. They’re always different.”
Hillel Ottawa: a great start to a promising year on campus

Can you imagine all the Jews in the world coming together? All Jews, without exception, assembled in one place, for one purpose, with one heart? This used to take place once every 70 years, with one heart?

Historically, in the time of the Second Temple, this used to take place once every 70 years. It is instructed in the Torah that, once every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot following a Shmita (sabbatical) year, the entire Jewish nation—the men and women, infants and their great-grandmothers, scholars and laypeople—assemble in Jerusalem. A hush would fall into their operations. Committees so they can provide some insight into the community’s major beneficiary agencies or the chairs or presidents of the executive attended a brunch at Congregation Machzikei Hadas welcoming the new presidents of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University to Ottawa’s Jewish community. Both Allan Rock of uOttawa and Roseann Rutten of Carleton spoke of their commitments to work closely with the community. The event also provided us with a wonderful opportunity to meet faculty and administrators from both universities and to spend some time talking with community members.

... our dedicated team of student volunteers and staff members are committed to making this a year to remember.

Let us recreate Hakhel! We are, after all, family.

From the pulpit

Rabbi Menachem Blum OTC Chabad

Let us recreate Hakhel! We are, after all, family.

Let me suggest something ambitious. In keeping with the theme of ‘new,’ much of the Hillel Ottawa executive and staff—from the city-wide president to the executive director—are new this year. Fortunately, the team has quickly learned to work together, and we have benefited from the advice of past executive and staff members who have been extremely helpful in facilitating the transition.

On November 2, the Hillel Ottawa executive attended a brunch at Congregation Machzikei Hadas welcoming the new presidents of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University to Ottawa’s Jewish community. Both Allan Rock of uOttawa and Roseann Rutten of Carleton spoke of their commitments to work closely with the community. The event also provided us with a wonderful opportunity to meet faculty and administrators from both universities and to spend some time talking with community members.

... our dedicated team of student volunteers and staff members are committed to making this a year to remember.

November 2 to 9 marked Hillel Ottawa’s Holocaust Education Week. On November 3, we partnered with Alpha Ep-silon Pi, the Jewish fraternity, and held a name reading ceremony on Parliament Hill. Despite the cold weather, more than 50 students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, stood silently around the Centennial Flame as the names of Holocaust victims were read. It was truly special for us to see so many caring students huddling together to remember the six million Jews whose lives were taken during that terrible time in our history.

On the Friday of Holocaust Education Week, we hosted our second annual Shabbat dinner with Holocaust survivors. This event has quickly become one that students look forward to. Indeed, the students really appreciate opportunities like this when we can show the depth of our appreciation to the Holocaust survivors in our community.

In short, the year has got off to a fabu-

This year, you may meet someone you do not know, another Jew, another member of the mishpacha. Say ‘hi’ to them, greet them, make Hakhel with them. Perhaps, invite them for a barbecue, for a dinner, for a Shabbat meal. Let us recreate the feeling of Hakhel!

Let me suggest something ambitious. Over the next 12 months, let each of us resolve to organize a few gatherings, where we invite friends, relatives, business colleagues, strangers, to a gathering, a Hakhel, dedicated to Jewish unity.

Let’s create a grassroots awakening that will make a difference for our community and for the Jewish people. Families deserve to be united. And we are, after all, family.
I've been in Ottawa, working at the Bulletin, for almost 15 months now. As a newcomer to the community, I kind of just plunged into working from the deadlines of one issue to the next, first as assistant editor, working with Barry Fishman, and then acting as editor when Barry had to go on disability in February. Along the way, of course, I've had a chance to meet and talk with many people in the community. I meet new people — new, at least to me — almost every day when they drop by the office, when I attend community events or go out to cover a story for the Bulletin or in the hallways of the Joseph and Rose Apartments Family Building as people arrive for and leave the many programs and events taking place at the Solomon Jewish Community Centre (SJCC).

Of course, though, there are so many more people I haven’t had a chance to meet yet, so I thought I’d take a few paragraphs to tell you about myself.

I was born in Calgary and spent parts of my childhood in Calgary and Vancouver before my family moved back to my hometown of Montreal when I was in high school in 1968. I lived in Montreal for almost 40 years before coming to Ottawa. I went to Jewish day schools in Calgary, Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, and then public high schools.

I went through the CEGEP system in Montreal, took some time off from school to work at journalism and arts administration, and then went back and got my BA in political science and my MA in public policy from Concordia University.

My father, who is now retired, was a Jewish community professional, so I’ve been around Jewish communal organizations all my life. I’ve even worked for some myself.

I spent four summers working at Camp B’nai Brith of Montreal and did two stints working with Hillel in Montreal in the 1970s and ’80s directing their Golem Coffee House project.

As an editor and author, I’ve worked with a number of organizations, including Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, the Jewish General Hospital and the YM-YWHA in Montreal on magazine and book projects.

I first got into journalism as a music critic for the Montreal Gazette in 1975 and have been at it — sometimes full-time, sometimes as a sideline — ever since. As a ‘Jewish journalist,’ I did general reporting and feature writing for the Canadian Jewish News in Montreal for nearly two decades.

I’ve done some other things along the way, but that’s basically the path that led me to the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin. It’s a newspaper with an incredibly rich history having served and documented Ottawa’s Jewish community for more than 70 years. And I’m happy to be here.

As Ottawa’s Jewish community newspaper, the Bulletin fulfills a number of roles. We report the news of our own community and use the resources of JTA to report important and interesting stories from the wider Jewish world. We’re an outlet for all manner of Jewish agencies and organizations active in Ottawa to get their news out to the rest of the community.

If you organize an event or have breaking news, please make sure we know about it. If you’re presenting an interesting speaker, we may well want to cover the event as a news story.

And in our various columns we try to provide you with food for thought about issues of concern, amuse you with humour, give you some great recipes to try, and turn you on to books you may want to read (or avoid) or music or films you may have missed.

Your letters to the editor are welcome if you’ve got something to say about what you read in the Bulletin or on an issue of concern to the community. We’re also open to guest columns.

So, if you’ve got news for us, stories to contribute, suggestions to make, I want to hear from you.

You can call me at 613-798-4696, ext. 310, or send an e-mail to mregenstreif@ottawajewishbulletin.com.

I mentioned in the first paragraph that Barry Fishman went on disability in February. The most frequently asked question I get is, ‘How’s Barry?’

Barry continues to face up to the extremely difficult medical circumstances of ALS – Lou Gehrig’s Disease – with an awe-inspiring combination of determination, courage and dignity.

As editor emeritus of the Bulletin, Barry fulfils a number of roles, including as an invaluable source of guidance and advice as we strive to maintain, and build on, the standards he set during his tenure as editor. Most notably, he appealed to younger voters with his inspiring talk of hope and change and with his unswerving message of unity across party lines and demographic groups.

“There is no red state, there is no blue state, there is only one United States of America,” Obama thundered at campaign rallies after rally. The message resonated with post-partisan young voters. Early indications are that voter turnout among youth was higher than in any other American election except that of 1972, the first election after the voting age was lowered to 18.

Does Obama’s win mean we’re in a new political era? Hard to say. Obama himself muddled the waters when he appointed Congressman Rahm Emanuel, who has a reputation as one of the most hyper-partisan Democrats in Washington, as his chief of staff.

An acknowledgement, maybe, that even in a post-partisan world, there are still political benefits to ‘kicking ass.’

Alan Echenberg is TVO’s Parliamentary bureau chief.

Please allow me to introduce myself.

A friend of mine used to be a major partisan of a major political party.

Come election time, there were few lawn signs bigger than his. He would tirelessly canvass for his chosen candidate and take it pretty hard if that candidate did not triumph. The ebbs and flows of his party’s fortunes would influence his own frame of mind.

He would socialize among fellow members of his party, enthusiastically devote large chunks of free time to party activities and view most public issues through a partisan lens.

Although I never asked him this question, I’m reasonably certain, if someone had told him to state five adjectives that best described himself, one of those adjectives would match the capitalized name of his political party.

As a journalist, I zealously follow partisan politics, and have covered it for many years. But I’ve never been a member of — or loyal to — any political party. Although I find party politics fascinating, I do not support or have any given issue in a fiercely partisan way, he smiles and thinks, “I used to be like that.”

Is my friend onto something? In the recent American presidential election, one of the big buzzwords was post-partisan. The victory of Barack Obama was not only historic because he is the first African American president in history, but also because of the way he achieved his triumph.

Through grassroots efforts, and over the Internet, Obama mobilized voters and contributors like no one else had done before. Most notably, he appealed to younger voters with his inspiring talk of hope and change and with his unswerving message of unity across party lines and demographic groups.

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An acknowledgement, maybe, that even in a post-partisan world, there are still political benefits to ‘kicking ass.’
Yitzhak Rabin High School to move onto campus during December break

By Nicola Hamer

Hillel Academy communications director
Editor’s note: This is the second in a continuing series of articles being prepared by Nicola Hamer on the revitalization of Jewish education in Ottawa.

Hillel Academy has been Ottawa’s largest Jewish day school for decades. But it’s always been an elementary school. Until 13 years ago, students graduating from Grade 8 had no other choice but to move on to public or private secular schools. Then parents wanting a Jewish option for secondary education opened Yitzhak Rabin High School (YRHS). For a number of years, YRHS has been renting space in the basement of the empty Confederation High School building at the corner of Woodroffe Avenue and Hunt Club Road. While this building gave the school a significant amount of space, YRHS was also isolated from the Jewish Community Campus, the focal point of Jewish life in Ottawa. As the number of students enrolled in Jewish education declined, the distance from the campus began to be something of a concern and the YRHS board decided that moving closer would benefit the school.

The concern was not simply in the declining numbers. Those running the high school felt it is important to have the teenaged students involved in community life. A move closer to the campus would allow the school to get its students involved in a much greater way.

It was a happy coincidence that, at the same time as the YRHS board was looking for a way to move near the campus, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa was becoming more determined to fight the decline of Jewish school enrolment by revitalizing day school education.

The Federation had held a symposium in a February 2006 examination to the community’s future and to explore the big issues and concerns it faces.

“When the Federation engaged the community in an in-depth discussion about our future at the 2006 symposium, Jewish education was reinforced as our greatest priority,” says Jonathan Freedman, Federation chair.

“One specific area that received a lot of attention was the very pressing need to have a vibrant and growing community high school. It was felt that more high school students getting an excellent education and fully engaged in Jewish community life would be of tremendous benefit to our future success.”

One of the suggestions was that YRHS move into the Hillel Academy building at 31 Nadolny Sachs Private on the Jewish Community Campus.

Initiallly, YRHS was uncertain about actually moving into the Hillel Academy building. There was a concern that the high school students might view moving into the building as a step backwards to their elementary school years. But, as the boards of two schools talked, a plan emerged for YRHS to have its own wing, with a separate entrance, thus clearly maintaining its own identity.

Sharing the school building that will allow YRHS to make the move are now in the final stages and the move will be made during December break. The high school students will return to class in January in their new facilities.

While everyone recognizes the need for the high school students to have their own space, putting both schools into the same building is also allowing for a great deal of co-operation that can only be of benefit to the two institutions.

It can be difficult running an entire school with only 40 students, thus limiting possible resources. So, as noted in the first article in this series (Rambam now on campus with Hillel Academy: YRHS coming soon, November 10), Hillel Academy and YRHS will not only share the building, they will share their administrative staff as well.

And, beyond the simple cost savings of sharing a building and administration, the move will also allow YRHS to revitalize its programs.

Sharing the teachers’ lounge with Hillel and Rambam will mean much less isolation for YRHS’s teachers. And both schools can share professional knowledge and educational resources in a much easier way.

The high school students, who all need 40 hours of volunteer work before they graduate, will be able to volunteer in the elementary school, as well as at other organizations on campus, including Hillel, the Lodge, Tamir and others.

If these advantages were not enough, being on the Jewish Community Campus will allow YRHS to significantly raise its profile in the community. The new head of schools, Donna Palmer-Dodds, thinks both schools will benefit from the move.

“Yitzhak Rabin’s move onto the campus will not only allow its students to be more involved in community life, but I think it will foster a much greater connection between the elementary and high school students,” says Palmer-Dodds. “I’m really looking forward to this move.”
Members meeting discusses possible usage of vacant land

By Michael Regenstreif

The possible future usage of a vacant lot adjacent to the Jewish Community Campus was the main topic of discussion at a members meeting held by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa on November 5.

The land is across Kerr Avenue from the campus at Nadolny Sachs Private and is bounded by Carling, Boyd and Kerr Avenues. The lot was purchased by the Federation in February 2006 and, for the time being, is being used as a parking lot for campus staff.

Among the current initiatives Bellman also called attention to a "graphic." He also reported that the renovation project in the short term and the third project in the short term and the third would be special fundraising to pay off the mortgage and reserve the land for use in the medium or long term.

He also noted that increasing opportunities for members of Ottawa’s Jewish community to connect to Israel and Israelis has been added to the Federation’s strategic objectives.

Among the current initiatives Bellman pointed to was the revitalization of Ottawa’s Jewish education system, noting that Hilal Academy and Yitzhak Rabin High School (YRHS) have jointly hired Donna Palmer-Dodds to head the administration of each school.

He also reported that the renovations to the school building are almost complete. The Rambam Day School has already moved into its space and YRHS will make its move to the building over the December break.

Bellman also called attention to a current online survey gathering input from 18- to 35-year-olds in the community that will lead to an "emerging generations strategy" to recognize and respond to the needs of this demographic.

Among the other initiatives that Bellman said the Federation hoped to introduce in the short term are a program of ticket donations to help low-income members of the community to attend major events and a Shabbat hosting program to reach out to the community’s newcomers and to the unaffiliated.

Ottawa JNF 2008 Negev Dinner
honouring Dan Greenberg and Barbara Crook
a great success!

As I write, the 2008 Ottawa Negev Dinner on November 24 at the Museum of Civilization is still a few weeks off. So, you may well ask, how I could start with a headline declaring that it is a great success.

Well, as of November 5, the number of tickets sold is already at the point where the Great Hall will be practically full for the Negev Dinner and we are looking forward to a complete sell out.

Most importantly, thanks to the dedicated work of our Campaign Chairs, led by Ron Prehogan, our JNF volunteer and, in particular, our Honourees Barbara Crook and Dan Greenberg, the JNF fundraising for this year’s project, the Barbara Crook and Dan Greenberg Reservoir at Misherit HaYarden located north of Lake Kinneret, is a complete success. Thanks and Yasher to everyone who worked on the campaign and to all of our many generous individual donors and corporate sponsors from the Ottawa Jewish community and the entire Ottawa community. I look forward to the next Bulletin to Ivel (again, G-d willing) and to properly thank those who are participating in the evening.

Offset your carbon emissions with JNF

JNF in Canada and around the world is introducing an exciting new environmental program this year called GoNeutral. When you board a plane, drive a car or even do your laundry, it takes a toll on the environment. We encourage you to take measures to minimize your carbon emissions and offset the remainder through our JNF GoNeutral program.

Through this campaign, you can calculate how much carbon dioxide you emit each year, and become ‘carbon neutral’ by planting trees in Israel. One tree will offset one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. You can also help fund JNF environmental programs to halt desertification, boost water supplies through reservoirs and help fund JNF environmental programs to halt desertification, boost water supplies through reservoirs and

More than trees
613.798.2411

Ottawa JNF 2008 Negev Dinner honouring Dan Greenberg and Barbara Crook a great success!

Unfortunately, the text ends here, so I cannot provide the rest of the content. However, from the visible text, it appears to be discussing an environmental program called GoNeutral, which encourages individuals to calculate their carbon footprint and offset it through planting trees in Israel.

The text also mentions a fundraising event called the Ottawa Negev Dinner, which is presumably a dinner that raises funds for the JNF (Jewish National Fund) and its environmental programs.

Additionally, there is a mention of a JNF GoNeutral program, which is likely a part of the organization's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote environmentally friendly practices.

The text also highlights the success of the Ottawa Negev Dinner, indicating that it is almost sold out and thanking everyone involved in the campaign.

Overall, the content seems to be promoting environmental awareness and action, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions and supporting Israeli environmental projects. The text is likely part of a broader campaign to encourage individuals to take steps towards a more sustainable lifestyle.
Jewish War Veterans announce scholarship award winners

Five accomplished Ottawa students each received $1,000 scholarship awards when the Ottawa Post-Jewish War Veterans of Canada held their annual general meeting and brunch October 26 at Agudath Israel Congregation.

Adam Moscoe, now in his final year at Nepean High School, received the Jewish War Veterans Award.

Two students who graduated this year from Machon Sarah High School and are now studying at seminaries in Israel received Saul and Edna Goldfarb Awards. Elisheva Shaps is a student at Michlalah and Rivka Aptowitzer is at Merkaz.

Naomi Muroff, now a student at the Maalot Seminary in Baltimore, was the recipient of the Abe Carlefsky Award.

The fifth scholarship, the Max and Tessie Zelikovitz and Dorothy Nadolny Award, was given to Tess Fischer who is now studying at McGill University in Montreal.

While the students now in Israel and the U.S. could not be there in person, Moscoe and Fischer were on hand to receive their awards.

The meeting also heard from guest speaker Eric Vernon of Canadian Jewish Congress who spoke on anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.
Card Donations
Card donations go a long way to improving the quality of life for our residents. Thank you for con- sidering their needs and contributing to their well- being.

On behalf of the residents and their families, we extend sincere appreciation to the following individ- uals and families who made card donations to the Hillel Lodge Long-Term Care Foundation between October 20 and November 5, 2008 inclusive.

HONOUR FUNDS
Unlike a bequest or gift of life insurance, which are realized some time in the future, a named Hon- our Fund (i.e., endowment fund) is established dur- ing your lifetime.

By making a contribution of $1,000 or more, you can create a permanent remembrance for a loved one; honour a family member, declare what the Lodge has meant to you and/or support a cause that is dear to your heart.

The Hillel Lodge Honour Fund is a permanent pool of capital that earns interest or income each year. This income then supports the priorities desig- ned by you, the donor.

Bill and Leona Adler Memorial Fund
In Honour of:

Sarah Swedler  Congratulations on being hon- ored by the Hillel Lodge Auxiliary by Marilyn Adler
R’sha Shloma:
Molly Greenberg by Elayne Adler and Farley, Jordan and Benjamin Steen.
Sandy Klein by Elayne Adler and Farley, Jordan and Benjamin Steen.
Samuel and Joan Ackerman Memorial Fund
In Honour of:

Aron Goldberg  Best wishes on your special birthday with love by Sheila and Larry Hartman
Auxiliary of Hillel Lodge Fund
In Memory of:

Abe Fleming by Ruth and Lawrence Menonell and Family
In Honour of:

Yvonne Azzieba Thank you by Stan Goldberg
Asher Farber is appreciation by the Hillel Lodge Auxiliary
Sid Katz Thank you for all your hard work by The Hillel Lodge Auxiliary
Sarah Swedler  Congratulations on a well- deserved honour by Betty Finkelstein
Esther Baker Endowment Fund
In Memory of:

Beloved mother of Rabbi Steven Garten by Polly and Jack Moran
In Honour of:

Betty and Sam Kotzar Mazal tov on moving into your new home – live happy and healthy by Polly and Jack Moran, and Sammy
Tania Firestone Family Fund
In Memory of:

Alyce Cohen by Suzy and Phil Firestone
Friedberg and Daley Families Fund
In Memory of:

Chaya Perel Mogilovsky by Elaine Friedberg and Bob Dale
Martin and Thea Ginsburg Memorial Fund
Generous donations to this fund have been made by Janet Cohen; and Joel Ginsberg
Malcolm and Vera Glube Family Fund
R’sha Shloma:
Rhoda Levinit by Vera and Malcolm Glube Betty Rose by Vera and Malcolm Glube
Neil Gluck Memorial Fund
In Memory of:

Dave Mohot by Rabbi Alan and Linda Cohen
John Steinberg Mazal tov on your 95th birth- day and best wishes for many more by Maureen and Henry Mohot
R’sha Shloma:
Fern Ryboler by Maureen and Henry Mohot
Evelyn and Irving Greenberg Fund
In Honour of:

Larry Grados  Wishing you a very happy birth- day by Evelyn Greenberg
Moe Greenberg and Elissa Greenberg Ing Family Fund
In Memory of:

Beloved brother-in-law of Raymond Stern by Eli and Avraham Ing
Abe Padishky by Eli and Avraham Ing
Shelly and Steven Kimmel Mazal tov and best wishes on your daughter Leora’s engagement by Elius and Avraham Ing
In Honour of:

Dr. Hyman and Dr. Sylvia
Van Straten Kaufman Fund
A very generous donation to this fund has been made by Dr. Hyman Kaufman
Morris and Lillian Kimmel Family Fund
In Honour of:

Claire and Irving Berevich Mazal tov and best wishes on the birth of your granddaughter by Morris Kimmel
Noreen and Sid Bodey Wishing you Mazal tov on the occasion of your daughter’s Bat Mitzvah with love by the Kimmels, Kaiman and Levine families
R’sha Shloma:
Sol Kaiman by Morris Kimmel
Joan and Russell Kranick Family Fund
In Honour of:

Joan and Russell Kranick Mazal tov on the birth of your granddaughter Olivia by Betty and Ed Rose; and Toby and Teddy Nathanson
Levenson-Polowin Feeding Fund
In Memory of:

Beloved mother of Rabbi Steven Garten by Heidi and Steve Polowin
Rabbi Michael Levenson by Sally Tally
Pencer Family Fund
In Honour of:

Harvey Segal Best wishes on your special birth- day with Marcia and Irwin Pencer
Sonia Rawicki Agudath Music Therapy Fund
In Honour of:

Dorothy Torontow  Best wishes for health and happiness on your special birthday with Helene Rose; and Paula and Manny Agutik
Stephen and Debra Schneideman Family Fund
In Memory of:

Chaya Perel Mogilovsky by Stephen Schneideman
In Honour of:

Sarah Swedler Mazal tov on being recognized by the Auxiliary for all your hard work and dedication to Hillel Lodge. The Residents and Staff are lucky to have you and your efforts are truly appreciated by Debra and Stephen Schneideman
Harold and Lillian-Shloetz Memorial Fund
In Honour of:

Shelly and Andre Engel Mazal tov on the engagement of your daughter to Michael Shoshet
Ralph and Anne Sternberg Memorial Fund
In Honour of:

Harvey Nipsec Mazal tov to HRM on your birthday with warmest wishes from two of his loyal subjects by Laya and Ted Jacobsen
Brian Strain Mazal tov on his birthday on his 60 birthday by Laya and Ted Jacobsen
Sarah and Arnie Swedler Family Fund
In Honour of:

Claire and Irving Berevich Mazal tov and best wishes on the birth of your beautiful granddaughter and Happy Birthday to Irving by Sarah and Arnie Swedler
Sarah Swedler Yasher Kochav on receiving a well deserved honour from the Auxiliary of Hillel Lodge by Ruth Mellin; Karen and Ian Zunder and family; Rhonda, Danny and Shelley Levine; the Chazonoff- Moosie clan; Betty and Ed Rose; and Cynthia and Max Weinstein
Rozlyn and Mylos Taller Family Endowment Fund
In Honour of:

Sarah Swedler Mazal tov on being honoured by the Auxiliary of Hillel Lodge by Roz Taller and family
R’sha Shloma:
Betty Rose by Roz Taller and family
Harry Torontow Family Fund
In Memory of:

Harry Torontow by Anne and Sol Shmelzer; Debbie and Herb Cosman and family; and Rhonda Lazarus
Mitton and Mary (Terry) Viner Family Fund
A generous donation was made in Observance of the Yahrzeit of Dave Schaenfield by Millie Schaenfield
Anna and Samuel Wax Family Fund
In Honour of:

Eileen and Leen Shulit Mazal tov and our very best wishes on the birth of your grandchildren, Morgan Rita by Anna and Sam Wex
Residents Feeding Program
In Memory of:

Perel Mogilovsky by Mura and Isaac Muzinskys

IN MEMORY OF:

The Beloved Mother of Rabbi Steven Garten by Lorna and Carl Rasin, and the Residents, Board and Staff of Hillel Lodge
Helen Harper by the Residents, Board and Staff of Hillel Lodge
Chaya Perel Mogilovsky by Lorna and Carl Rasin
Antonia Steenbakkers by Doreen and Bill Skoreny; Rose and John Steenbakkers, the Steenbakkers grandchildren, Helen and John Kieff, and David Shethman
Beth Welty by The Residents, Board and Staff of Hillel Lodge; and Francesse and Ron Vitril

IN HONOUR OF:

Salvina and Jason Berovicz Mazal tov and best wishes on the birth of your baby girl by Deb and David Shere
Judy and Jonathan Belson Mazal tov on the occa- sion of your daughter Mara Lily’s Bat Mitzvah by Bella Gelbman
Mara Lily Belson Mazal tov on the occasion of your Bat Mitzvah by Bella Gelbman
Vera and George Gara Mazal tov on the occa- sion of your grandchildren’s Bat Mitzvah by Bella Gelbman
Leah and Bob Gencher Wishing you a heartfelt Mazal tov on the occasion of your 50th wedding an- niversary by Claire and Irving Berevich
Morris Kimmel Mazal tov on the engagement of your granddaughter by Sally Taller
Leah and Bob Gencher Wishing you a hearty Mazal tov on the occasion of your 50th wedding an- niversary by Claire and Irving Berevich
Mara Lily Belson Mazal tov on the occasion of your Bat Mitzvah by Bella Gelbman
Sara and Arnie Swedler Family Fund
In Honour of:

Claire and Irving Berevich Mazal tov and best wishes on the birth of your beautiful granddaughter and Happy Birthday to Irving by Sarah and Arnie Swedler
Sarah Swedler Yasher Kochav on receiving a well deserved honour from the Auxiliary of Hillel Lodge by Ruth Mellin; Karen and Ian Zunder and family; Rhonda, Danny and Shelley Levine; the Chazonoff- Moosie clan; Betty and Ed Rose; and Cynthia and Max Weinstein
Rozlyn and Mylos Taller Family Endowment Fund
In Honour of:

Sarah Swedler Mazal tov on being honoured by the Auxiliary of Hillel Lodge by Roz Taller and family
R’sha Shloma:
Betty Rose by Roz Taller and family
Harry Torontow Family Fund
In Memory of:

Harry Torontow by Anne and Sol Shmelzer; Debbie and Herb Cosman and family; and Rhonda Lazarus
Mitton and Mary (Terry) Viner Family Fund
A generous donation was made in Observance of the Yahrzeit of Dave Schaenfield by Millie Schaenfield
Anna and Samuel Wax Family Fund
In Honour of:

Eileen and Leen Shulit Mazal tov and our very best wishes on the birth of your grandchildren, Morgan Rita by Anna and Sam Wex
Residents Feeding Program
In Memory of:

Perel Mogilovsky by Mura and Isaac Muzinskys

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THE LODGE EXPRESSES ITS SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR YOUR KIND SUPPORT
AND APOLOGIZES FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS. DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, THE WORDING APPEARING IN THE BULLETIN IS NOT THE WORDING WHICH APPEARS ON THE CARD.

GIVING IS RECEIVING – ATTRACTIVE CARDS AVAILABLE FOR ALL OCCASIONS
Here’s a good opportunity to recognize an event or convey the sentiment to someone important to you and at the same time support the Lodge. Card orders may be given to Debra or Rhonda at 613-728-3960, extension 111, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Friday. You may also e-mail your orders to donations@hillel-ltc.com. E-mail orders must include name, address, postal code, and any message to person receiving the card; and a description of the donation, name, address and postal code of the person making the donation. Cards may be paid for by Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Cheque or Cash. Contributions are tax deductible.
Community will gather on Mitzvah Day, December 7, to perform good deed projects

Although Mitzvah Day ’08 will be taking place on Sunday, December 7 at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC), Grade 6 students from Hil- lel Academy and Charles H. Hulse Public School will get a jumpstart on performing good deeds by making doll pins for the Dolls for Darfur Cam- paign on December 2.

The Dolls for Darfur Campaign was started to raise awareness about the genocide taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan. The pins represent an opportunity to educate others about the atrocities in Darfur.

Each individually packaged pin comes with a business-sized informa- tion card about the plight of the people of Darfur. Proceeds raised from the sale of the pins will be given to advo- cacy and humanitarian agencies work- ing on the Darfur crisis.

Nearly 400,000 people have died in Darfur since 2003. More than two mil- lion civilians have been forced to flee their homes and live in refugee camps in the Sudan and Chad and an estimat- ed 15,000 people die each month.

On Mitzvah Day itself, hundreds of children and adults will gather at the SJCC to perform such mitzvahs as painting reusable canvas lunch bags to decrease the environmental harm caused by thruway plastic and paper bags, creating celebration kits to be given to parents of children in Ottawa-area shelters and making night-night bags to comfort children in crisis care.

Mitzvah Day participants will also be assembling informational welcome kits to help new immigrants make their transition to life in the Ottawa area and lunch bags for the homeless.

Mitzvah Day begins with registra- tion and free breakfast on Sunday, De- cember 7 at 8 am. The mitzvahs get underway at 9:30 and conclude with a cake and ice cream party, and a perfor- mance by kid’s entertainer Dr. Kaboom, at noon.

Mitzvah Day is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and chaired this year by Stacey Segal.

For information, contact Patrice Berdowski at 613-798-4696, ext 241 or pberdowski@jewishottawa.com.

OTC offers adult programming and education

By Pherris Hamilton
for Ottawa Torah Center Chabad

The Ottawa Torah Center Chabad (OTC), which has been providing children’s and family programs for the last decade in Ottawa, is presenting adult education pro- grams this fall with courses ranging from Torah to Talmud, and even some Kabbalah and mysticism.

Many of the offerings are being present- ed in public spaces making them non- threatening to anyone who wants to partici- pate. For example, we recently offered Kosher: A Diet for the Soul, a three-part seminar, at the Loblaws at College Square, and are currently offering a Sunday book discussion on the subject of Genesis at Chapters Pinecrest.

Another course is Soul Maps: Kabbalah to Navigate Your Inner World, now ongo- ing on Tuesday evenings at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre and Thursdays during lunch hour downtown at the Ottawa Main Public Library.

OTC is also offering traditional chavru- ta-style learning where participants can choose the topic and time to explore their Judaism on a one-on-one basis with a rabbi.

Call OTC at 613-823-0866 for informa- tion on these and other adult education op- portunities or visit ottawatorahcenter.com or myjli.com.

OTC also appreciates your feedback and suggestions about topics and areas of study you would like to see explored in future courses.

OTC offers adult programming and education

Challah on Campus

JET’s On Campus Program introduces students to the joys of challah baking, while raising money for the Solar Cooker Project to enhance the safety of women in Darfur. (Above, from left to right) are: Zach Cantor, Asher Farber and Eli Bitton; (at right) Sarah Librach, Rebecca Trueman and Jordana Trueman.

Dr. Kaboom will entertain the kids at the ice cream and cake party that caps off Mitzvah Day.

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YRHS teacher honoured with Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award

By Christena Edwardson for Yitzhak Rabin High School

Teacher Shaya Rodal of Yitzhak Rabin High School (YRHS) has been named a Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award winner by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life.

“Mr. Rodal has been an exemplary teacher over the years and we are very proud of his achievements,” said Rabbi Howard Finkelstein, director of Judaic studies at YRHS, who nominated him for the award.

Rodal began his post-secondary education at Carmel College in London, England and later attended Oxford University where he majored in politics and philosophy. He then attended McGill University in Montreal where he obtained degrees in sociology and education and specialized in teaching history and Judaic studies.

The Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards recognize and honour Jewish educators from across North America who have shown outstanding commitment to Jewish education. The awards were established in 2000 and are administered by the Jewish Education Service of North America.

Rodal and four other Canadians were among the 68 teachers selected for the award this year. As a winner of the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award, he received a monetary prize, a portion of which must be used for professional development.

Rodal, who previously taught at Akiba Hebrew Academy in suburban Philadelphia, is now in his fifth year at YRHS where he teaches Jewish history, Talmud, Torah, civics and careers, and sociology.

“Mr. Rodal’s classes are very informative and he is always willing to help his students outside of class time,” said Adam Sadinsky, co-president of the YRHS Students Council.

“I enjoy teaching at Yitzhak Rabin because of the quality and character of the students and the family-type atmosphere,” said Rodal. “And I enjoy the freedom Rabbi Finkelstein allows me to develop the curriculum.”

In addition to classroom responsibilities, Rodal established and leads the school band and is the faculty adviser for the Yitzhak Rabin Model United Nations team. His interests outside of school include music and sports.

“It is a great honour to be recognized,” said Rodal after returning from the awards ceremony in New York City. “It was very positive, sharing ideas about Jewish education.”

Donations in memory of Zeev Vered purchase essential life-support system

Donations made to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute in memory of Zeev Vered, who passed away June 9, will be used to purchase an essential Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) system valued at $50,000.

An ECMO system – which is similar to the heart-lung machines employed during open heart surgery – is a vital life-support apparatus used in surgical intensive care units for patients whose diseased lungs and heart are not strong enough to pump enough oxygen to the blood and enough oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body.

Many patients would die without modern ECMO systems.

Although the Heart Institute has two ECMO systems, one is an older, now obsolete system that will be replaced by the one purchased with the funds donated in memory of Mr. Vered. With more than 1,500 cardiac surgeries performed annually at the Heart Institute, it is not an unusual circumstance for two ECMO systems to be needed at the same time.

Sara Vered told the Bulletin that the Vered family was most grateful for the many generous donations made to the Heart Institute in her late husband’s memory.
The founding force behind AJA 50+

By Benita Siemiatycki

In the late 1990s, four active and knowledgeable women, Estelle Gunner, Cecily Bregman, Teena Hendelman and Ruth Levitan, were asked by Jewish Family Services (JFS) to study the situation facing Jewish seniors in Ottawa. All volunteers, the women examined statistics, held focus groups, talked to community agencies and identified emerging issues for this age group. Some 18 months later, reports were presented on three areas: transportation, housing, and programming.

They identified a lack of transportation options for Jewish seniors to safely and reliably take them to appointments and social events. In the area of housing, a gap existed in Jewish-based housing options for people who could not live independently anymore, but were not ill enough to qualify for a long-term care facility like Hillel Lodge. The last area, programming for more mature adults, was one the women felt they could actually tackle.

That was the beginning of Active Jewish Adults (AJA) 50+, an independent, non-profit, volunteer-driven organization that advocates for well Jewish seniors, and offers a wide variety of programs.

The first president was Ruth Levitan, who for three years was the driving force behind the success that AJA 50+ still enjoys. What started modestly in 2000 now boasts more than 500 members.

“Who would have believed in the concept of AJA?” asks Ruth incredulously. “In fact, people laughed at me when I said ‘give me $25.’ They gave it to me, but they laughed at me.”

Ruth credits her three committee colleages, Teena, Cecily and Estelle, for motivating her to take on the presidency.

“I was very lucky to have met and been associated with those three,” she says.

“People are connecting and they’re making a contribution. It’s very important to build people’s self-esteem, especially as they get older,” she says.

Ruth has spent years volunteering in the Jewish community. Along with her work on AJA 50+, she worked for Hadassah, chaired the Talmud Torah Afternoon School Parents’ Committee, assisted the Agudath Israel Sisterhood, sat on the Board of Jewish Family Services and worked on a proposal to establish a Jewish retirement home.

“I believe we have to get involved in our community,” she says. “We’re the only ones who can get involved in our community to make things better.”

Currently, Ruth sits on the AJA membership committee, chairing the group’s Bridge and Mah Jongg fundraiser held in October.

Volunteer spotlight

The idea of who we should be, and the reality of who we were, were in conflict,” she said.

Of course, said Ellenson, “no look at Jewish guilt would have been complete without a look at Jewish mothers.”

She described one of the stories in the book about a mother who tried to outwit the call display feature on her daughter’s telephone because she felt her daughter was avoiding her calls.

She also mentioned the infamous Monica Lewinsky.

“There was a dual pride and revulsion in the fact that this zaftig Jewish girl could seduce the president, versus the fear that the Jews would be blamed for bringing down the presidency [of the United States].”

Ellenson: Jewish guilt translates into ‘something powerful’

By Diane Koven

In a hall packed with Jewish women, there was bound to be plenty of guilt to go around. According to guest speaker Ruth Andrew Ellenson, the reasons Jewish women feel guilty are as diverse as the women themselves.

Speaking October 30 at Agudath Israel Congregation at the Women’s Campaign of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa’s Choices event, Ellenson revealed a few of the stories told by her friends, leading to her decision to compile them into an anthology, *The Modern Jewish Girl’s Guide to Guilt*, a collection of 28 stories on the theme.

Ellenson introduced her own story of Jewish guilt by describing her background. Though her father and step-mother are both Reform rabbis in the United States, her mother is a convert to Judaism, which means that Ellenson’s maternal relatives are not Jewish.

Born in Jerusalem and educated in the United States, she had a very strong Jewish education and upbringing. The dilemma came, however, when she spent her summers visiting her grandmother in Lynch Station, Virginia.

The guilt Ellenson felt while attending church with her grandmother, all the while being acutely aware that, as an observant Jew, she should not be there, was partially assuaged by her decision to recite the Sh’ma quietly, under her breath. While sharing this experience with a friend, she was surprised to learn that her friend had her own guilty dilemma.

“Then I started talking to another friend of mine, Rebecca Walker, who had written a book called *Black, White and Jewish*. Walker’s father is white and Jewish, and to add to the mix, she and her husband are both ‘black Buddhists in Brooklyn.’”

One by one, Ellenson collected her stories.

The daughter of immigrants from Poland and Germany, Ruth grew up in Ottawa. As a child, she attended programs at the old Jewish Community Centre. She and her husband Ron have two children – Riva, a family physician, and Michael, an industrial designer. Two grandsons attend Hillel Academy.

One of Ruth’s strongest beliefs is that services be available to Jewish seniors when they’re most in need. Citing national statistics, she predicts that in 10 years, 30 per cent of Jewish Ottawans will be over the age of 65. She still urges a community strategy to address what she sees as a need for assisted and affordable retirement housing for the Jewish community.

Ellene Wolfish, co-president of AJA 50+, says, “We have been so fortunate to have her leadership and vision in our organization.”

As a founder, she already sees the value of what she’s accomplished.

“This has been one of the most satisfying periods of my life,” says Ruth. “When I see the AJA 50+ and the needs that it meets, and have met, I’m absolutely thrilled.”

For more information about AJA 50+, call 613-798-9818, ext. 309.

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Performance
Jan. 1 - Sept. 30, 2008 (9 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Return</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROMSPEN Mortgage Investment Fund</td>
<td>9.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Mortgages</td>
<td>-15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Bonds</td>
<td>-38.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>91 Day T-Bills</td>
<td>-10.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Stocks (TSX)</td>
<td>-18.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.14%</td>
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Since its inception, the Fund has consistently offered investors enviable returns. Consider the numbers: The RMIF has yielded an average annual net return of 9.74% since inception, and an impressive 10.14% when the monthly interest is reinvested through the automatic unit reinvestment program.

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Fears of another Durban at 2009 Geneva conference

By Michael J. Jordan

(JTA) – The run-up to a major United Nations (UN) anti-racism conference planned for April appears to be mimicking the 2001 Durban gathering that notoriously singled out Israel with the most incendiary language in the human-rights lexicon.

At a preparatory meeting last month in Geneva, the ‘Asian Group’ reintroduced language drawn from 2001 pressing for any final document to pronounce the Jewish state guilty of “a new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity, a form of genocide” and “acts of racism.” The group’s Middle Eastern member-states bar Israel from joining.

Recent developments also brought renewed concern of a repeat of the anti-Jewish intimidation that marked the South African event seven years ago. Jewish activists fear that, despite platitudes to the contrary, the follow-up to the first anti-racism conference will unfairly target Israel.

The 2009 World Conference Against Racism, slated to take place in Geneva, is billed as the most important such gathering in years and one that advocates say must send a tough message to human-rights abusers.

Concerned about the direction the 2009 conference was headed, Israel and Canada have already vowed not to participate.

Many observers were looking to the European Union, which in September reiterated member-states bar Israel from joining.

While some defenders of Israel tend to find the wording so excessive she declined to forward the text to government representatives to absorb into their own document.

By comparison, the official state-sponsored final declaration was far tamer and more balanced in addressing the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The new high commissioner, Navanethem Pillay, opened the Geneva meeting last month by condemning “the virulent anti-Semitic behaviour” of some anti-Israel groups at Durban, but not the NGO document itself.

Pillay went on to acknowledge that “this review process is burdened, understandably, with a fear that incidents expressing hatred and intolerance will be repeated. It would be tragic to allow this fear to compromise our efforts to find common ground.”

Yet with Libya chairing the process, and Iran, Cuba and Pakistan serving as vice-chairs, Jewish observers say it has become clear the Islamic bloc and its allies have widened the crosshairs to target the West itself. High on the agenda is Islamophobia, denounced as a form of genocide and torture that infringes on the human-right principles.

Whether or not there is an NGO forum during the April event.”

“Whether or not there is an NGO forum depends essentially on the NGO community,” he said. “It is up to them to decide.”

Whether it would carry the imprimatur of the UN is another question.

“Between now and April, there will be constant struggle because the extremists who want to maximize the attacks on Israel see the NGOs as their primary vehicle,” said Gerald Steinberg of the Jerusalem-based NGO Monitor.

In the court of public opinion, Steinberg said, “NGOs have the facade as being above politics, representing universal morality and human rights principles.”

Meanwhile, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has sent a letter to the mayor of Geneva in response to reports that the local Green Party had requested that the city host the NGO Forum. In imploring city officials to deny “a replica of the Durban hate-fest,” the centre also called on the city to “provide all Jewish institutions in Geneva with adequate protection during the April event.”

While it’s unclear whether the new U.S. administration will attend or boycott the event, some Jewish groups are grappling with the question, too.

“We think it is vital that Jewish organizations be on the front line in defending Jewish interests, including Israel,” said Sybil Sanchez, the director of B’nai B’rith International’s office of UN affairs. “However, we are concerned that a point may come where the deck is so stacked against us that we would have to reconsider this approach. That moment has not arrived, and we are doing all we can to prevent it from arriving.”
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Nominations must be submitted to the selection committee by Wednesday, January 14, 2009 and should include a resume of the nominee’s involvement with the Soloway JCC and the Jewish Community. Address nominations to the Soloway JCC Ben Karp Award Selection Committee or the Grossman-Klein Family Youth Award - Selection Committee, 21 Nadolny Sachs Private, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 1R9.
Attention: Joelle Gencher - Executive Assistant, jgencher@ccottawa.com.

Awards will be presented at the Soloway JCC Annual Meeting and Awards Night Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at the Soloway JCC.

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A documentary directed by Suzannah Warlick

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Israeli circumcision experience helps fights AIDS in Africa

By Dina Kraft
TEL AVIV (JTA) – In a clinic in the hills of Swaziland’s capital, Israeli doctors have been training their counterparts in male circumcision, hoping expertise in the ancient technique will help in the battle against the modern scourge of AIDS.

The United Nations announced last year that the procedure could reduce the rate of HIV transmission by up to 60 per cent. It was in Israel, with its experience performing adult male circumcision on a wide scale, that the international medical community found an unlikely partner in the global fight against AIDS.

“Israeli medicine and public health are positioned as a real asset in African countries,” said Dr. Inon Schenker, a director of Operation Abraham, the consortium that sent the doctors to Swaziland and plans to send more training teams to Africa.

“They recognize the expertise and experience gained in Israel over the past decade, where close to 100,000 male circumcisions have been conducted.”

Israel’s accidental expertise in conducting large-scale numbers of male circumcision came with the mass wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union, which brought with it a dramatic rise in men requesting the procedure.

To meet the demand, Israeli hospitals set up special circumcision clinics in five hospitals throughout the country. In turn, Israeli doctors gained unique experience in performing a high number of procedures efficiently.

It’s a model organizations such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations would like to see replicated in Africa as a tool for combating the spread of HIV.

Answering the call has been Operation Abraham, a team of Israeli doctors and AIDS educators – Jews, Muslims and Christians – who this year made three training trips to Swaziland in what is considered a pilot program that they hope is just the start of their work.

The organization has had requests to do a similar training program in Uganda, Lesotho, Namibia, Kenya and South Africa.

Their work is sponsored by the Jerusalem AIDS Project and the Hadassah Medical Center, and they hope to recruit surgeons from abroad.

Dr. Etan Gross, a pediatric surgeon at the Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem, who was in Swaziland and is the medical director of Operation Abraham, said he was surprised initially to hear that surgery could play a role in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Research has shown that male circumcision reduces the chance of HIV infection. Experts say the scientific evidence has shown that specific cells on the penis foreskin appear to be targeted by the virus. It also has been found that the non-removed foreskin can trap the virus on the skin, making infection more likely.

Gross said he was moved by his time in Swaziland, which has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, and where the average life expectancy has plummeted to just 31 years.

“People came of their own free will,” he said.

“There was no publicity to draw them in out of fears that we’d be overwhelmed by a massive number of clients. When we spoke to the men who came, many of them in their 20s and 30s, they told us about living amid the epidemic and what it’s like to see so many people die.”

Although nearly 30 per cent of the world’s men are circumcised, the practice is quite rare in many southern African countries where AIDS has become a pandemic.

Dr. Jamal Garah, an Israeli Arab pediatrician, was among the Israeli doctors in Swaziland. He has experience performing male circumcisions, usually on babies or young children in Israel’s Muslim community.

“It’s fitting that our project is named after Abraham,” he said. “It symbolizes a measure of unity to give the message to other people that we can work together.”

Officials from the World Health Organization traveled to Jerusalem in 2006 to gather information on Israel’s experience in the field.

“The circumstances in which adult male circumcision are done in some institutions in Israel are generally of a high standard with few complications,” said Dr. Tim Hargreave, a leading British urological surgeon and technical advisor to the World Health Organization, explaining the organization’s interest in Israel’s experience.

Drawing in part on Israeli methodology, Hargreave helped author the World Health Organization manual on male circumcision that along with a teaching course, is now being used as part of government male circumcision programs in several countries in Africa.

Koshy said he was one of the doctors working in Swaziland trained by the Israeli team. He now conducts as many as 15 male circumcisions per week at the Catholic mission hospital where he works near the Mozambique border – more than twice the rate he was performing previously.

“I have now learned the technique and I can work faster,” Koshy told JTA in a phone interview from Swaziland. “There are a lot of people coming in for the operation, and I think the numbers are only going to increase.”

Meanwhile in San Francisco, Don Abramson, a former chairman of American Jewish World Service who has been advocating for the project, said he hopes it will help galvanize Diaspora Jewry to fight one of the world’s biggest problems.

One of his ideas is to encourage Jews around the world to donate money to Operation Abraham whenever they attend a b’res.

“My message to Jewish families is that a bris affirms the Divine covenant relationship with the child, but also demonstrates that their friends and family who care about the child celebrate that the child is healthy enough to have a bris,” Abramson said.

“A contribution to Project Abraham demonstrates a desire for others to be alive and healthy as well and could be a life-saving act.”

More information about Operation Abraham is available at operation-ab.org.
Spoiler alert! There’s an insightful exchange in the recent hit film, Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist, where Norah, a Jewish high school senior, explains to her love interest, Nick, the meaning of the Hebrew phrase Tikkan Olam (repairing of the world). Nick replies that perhaps the concept speaks to the idea of the world becoming a better place when two lovers find each other.

Hollywood treatments of Jewish life have certainly evolved from the chopped liver sculpture decapitation scene in the 1969 film, Goodbye Columbus, to such creative and intelligent parsing of Talmudic phrases. But there is another lesson to be gleaned from the Tikkan Olam scene in this charmingly off-beat, coming-of-age film set during a single New York night. That is, social action and social justice can only take place if we internalize the humanity of the other. Like romantic partners coming together, fixing the world’s ills – poverty, disease, racial injustice, human trafficking – will, arguably, never happen unless we examine how we think and talk about those who differ from us.

Social psychologists have long studied the dynamics of identity between groups, and how individuals view their sense of self in contrast to others. Being a woman gives rise to gender identity only insofar as a woman is aware of the existence of men; being white is only meaningful insofar as one is aware of blacks, Asians, etc. In the political realm, some observers have taken this to mean that conflict is inevitable, while others are more optimistic about the possibility of shared identity across social categories.

So while it is inevitable that human identity will, in part, reflect a natural sense of otherness, as a society we can decide what we will make of that other. The discourse surrounding Jewishness exemplifies the alarming lack of humanity that public discourse can lapse into. This is all the more disturbing in a democracy where all citizens are supposed to have the same formal rights, including the right to run for public office (although standards are more particular for U.S. presidential candidates, including having to be a natural born citizen).

As the media reported during the campaign, by attempting to discredit Senator Barack Obama’s legitimacy as a potential president, many accused him of being a Muslim. Other brave individuals, such as retired U.S. general Colin Powell, a former secretary of state, responded by stating that Obama is a Christian, not a Muslim, but added, “The really right answer is: What if he is?”

The implication of these charges, of course, is that one religion is more American than another, and that Muslims do not really belong within the body politic of the United States. This is an insidious view, one that is not only morally repugnant, but can only serve to raise the level of intergroup tension on a global scale.

We live in an increasingly global world, where we often bump up against each other. Physically, in crowded cities; economically, in the marketplace of ideas. Fifteen years ago, Samuel Huntington hypothesized about a “clash of civilizations” occurring at the global level. The events surrounding 9/11 and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led many to believe that this dynamic, indeed, defines contemporary international life. But, in order to improve the social, economic and political ills ailing the world, what we need to ask is how we can get past the determinations of who belongs, and who doesn’t, in our estimation of who counts.

Identity politics – attempting to delegitimize others by fixating on superficial differences from ourselves – obscures the ability to solve the big problems requiring joint action. If Tikkan Olam is partly about bringing two people together, maybe we can scale up that idea to the political level. We will never have enough political will to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa until we see those sufferers as being as important as SARS victims in Toronto.Millions will continue to perish in Darfur unless we have a view of those genocide victims as deserving of life. Sex trafficking will continue until we act on the fact that women are people, not objects. The homeless problem in our own cities will not improve unless we see the humanity in souls of people living on our streets.

Helping fix the cracks in the structure of society – both locally and globally – will only happen by empathizing with others. And, if that means “loving the one you’re with” through a night of band-chasing in New York, as Nick and Norah do, then so much the better. But while you’re gazing longingly at each other, don’t forget the voiceless people living by the wayside. The too, need us to look into their eyes, no matter what colour.

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Nick and Norah and Tikkan Olam

Mira Sucharov

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Ottawa Jewish Bulletin – November 24, 2008 – Page 21
How Birthright Israel forges Jewish identity

Mira Sucharov

Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity
By Leonard Saxe & Barry Chazan
Brandeis University Press, 2008
(paperback)
256 pages

Since its creation in 2000, Birthright Israel has sent more than 150,000 young adults on a free, 10-day trip to Israel. Its founders, anthropologists Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, envisioned a brief and powerful immersive experience in Israel that would help shore up Jewish identity among contemporary youth.

In demanding that the applicants, who are required to self-identify as Jewish and be between 18 and 26 years of age, have never been on an ‘organized’ trip to Israel, the program hopes to attract the least affiliated. The authors point out that Birthright alumns exhibit a collection of attitudes more tightly linked to Jewish identity across a host of issues. Nor does it offer data on whether enrolment in those trips has been affected. The authors do note, however, the opposition the proposal initially received. North American Jewish federations wanted participants to pay a portion of the trip, and some Israeli politicians – notably on the right – complained that Birthright was helping fund Diaspora Jewish experiences at the expense of domestic Israeli needs.

First, Birthright represents a new way of engaging in Jewish learning. Unlike the ‘Israel experience’ summer trips that had been offered since the state’s founding, and especially after 1967, Birthright offers a new way of engaging Jewish youth experientially.

The trip uses a combination of tourism to ancient and contemporary Israeli sites, small-group discussions, extended interactions with Israeli youth (often soldiers), meetings with Israeli politicians, a Shabbat experience and a mega-event bringing together thousands of trip-goers to hear keynote speakers and dance the night away. Participants often describe Birthright as “amazing,” a term that is quoted frequently in the book, and one that my 21-year-old cousin, Dara Nadel, a 2006 Birthright participant, used, adding that the trip is “10 jam-packed days of touring, learning and partying.”

The book doesn’t make clear, however, how the summer-long Israel trips that many youth took prior to Birthright’s founding differ in their pedagogical goals and identity effects. Nor does it offer data on whether enrolment in those trips has been affected. The authors do note, however, the opposition the proposal initially received. North American Jewish federations wanted participants to pay a portion of the trip, and some Israeli politicians – notably on the right – complained that Birthright was helping fund Diaspora Jewish experiences at the expense of domestic Israeli needs.

Second, citing an in-depth study conducted by the Cohen Center at Brandeis University, the authors point out that Birthright alumni exhibit a collection of attitudes more tightly linked to Jewish identity across a host of issues. Compared to applicant non-participants (those who felt connected enough to Judaism or Israel to apply to Birthright, but did not ultimately go on a trip), participants are more likely to think of Israel as a “source of pride,” less likely to think of Israel as a “militaristic society,” more “connected to Israel” and more committed to “raising Jewish children.”

The authors also note, however, that these presumed attitudinal changes did not match the level of actual changes in participants’ behaviour following the trip.

Third, they argue that Birthright represents a “countercultural” stance. They ask, “Why should a program that caters to fostering the ethnic and religious identity of a particular group promote it and be successful?”

This question speaks to the heart of the postmodern struggle between ethnic particularism and cosmopolitan identity. Ultimately, the authors demonstrate that Birthright succeeds in strengthening Jewish identity, but they discuss only briefly – and suggestively – the broader question posed.

Citing Robert Putnam’s research on contemporary social connections, the authors argue that Birthright is “designed to create ‘bonding’ social capital among Jews. They add that this sort of bond is the “glue that allows members of disparate subgroups to come together as a society.”

The book does attempt to lay out a proposed relationship between ethnic and universal identity, arguing that “although it is possible that the program’s Jewish-centricness will lead to an exclusive concern with the Jewish community, our understanding of the participants makes that highly unlikely.”

It is perhaps what is perhaps the elephant in the room: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

They make clear that Birthright attempts to impart “the Jewish narrative,” but it’s not obvious what messages, beyond support for Israel as a Jewish state, participants are intended to absorb about the conflict. The trip does not seem to promote a particular view of the situation, except that, in Nadel’s words, “everyone who does the trip goes home a Zionists.”

It may be that the authors are simply reflecting the Birthright organizers’ middle-of-the-road perspective on the conflict. But, when thinking about the role of the program in shaping Jewish identity, and if these youth are meant to be among the Diaspora Jewish leaders of tomorrow, perhaps Birthright should think more about the role of these youth in potentially ameliorating the dire situation in the Middle East.

The book reads, in places, like an advertisement for the program, although the authors claim that “although our view of the program is decidedly positive, our goal is not to promote the program but to explain and critically assess how and why it operates.”

One passage describes a late-night, political discussion between the group’s participants and several Israeli soldiers (also participating on the trip for the mandated mifgash – intercultural encounter – component) after a long day of hiking.

“One flows that night, to quench thirst, not to create drunkenness,” the authors write.

Were these authors ever 20, in mixed company and surrounded by alcohol?

Finally, the book engages only fleetingly with what is perhaps the elephant in the room: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The book doesn’t make clear, however, given that the program’s first allegations that the program’s Jewish-centricness will lead to an exclusive concern with the Jewish community, our understanding of the participants makes that highly unlikely.”

The deadline date is Wednesday, November 26, 2008.
The Board of Directors of the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation acknowledges with thanks contributions to the following funds as of November 4, 2008:

MARDORIE AND BEN ACHAR # COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FUND
Birthday wishes to:
Dorothy Naidny by May and Ben Achar.

APPOTIVE FAMILY ENDOWMENT FUND
In memory of:
Malcolm MacNeil by David and Sharon Appotive.

ANNE AND LOUIS AARON MEMORIAL FUND
Speedy recovery to:
Andrew Aryan by Alan and Linda Gilbert.

YETTA AND LAWRENCE AARON ENDOWMENT FUND
In memory of:
Larry Aryan by Horace and Muriel Belin.

RICKI AND BARRY BAKER ENDOWMENT FUND
In memory of:
Rabbi Michael Levenson by Ricki and Barry Baker.

MYRNA AND NORMAN BARWIN FOUNDATION OF THE PINCHAS ZUKERMAN MUSICAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Mazel Tov to:
Jackie Holzman on receiving the United Way Community Builder of the Year award by Myrna and Norm Barwin.
Birthday wishes to:
Peter Barwin by Myrna and Norm Barwin.

IRVING AND ESTHER BELLMAN MEMORIAL FUND
In memory of:
Moshe Benlolo by Rhona and Leonard Cogan.

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Sydney Schecter’s meaningful gesture

Sydney Schecter, father of Jack Schecter (Librarian of the Greenberg Families Library), Estelle Gunner (volunteer for the Jewish Archives and Past President of AJA 50+), Brian Schecter and Mel Schecter, was a long-time resident of Ottawa’s Jewish community. Sydney passed away peacefully on November 27, 2007, at the age of 90, and was the last of his brothers and sisters to pass (three brothers and four sisters).

Sydney had a deeply rooted attachment to the Ottawa community, which included owning a home, building a business, raising his family, a lifelong membership at Beth Shalom Congregation and great pride in the accomplishments of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As a way of giving back to the community he loved so much, Sydney and his wife Shirley opened their own fund, the Syd and Shirley Schecter Endowment Fund, through the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation in March 2000.

The Schecter family proudly contributed to this fund. “Every time he donated to his fund, he felt that he was truly helping his community. It was his way of giving back,” commented Brian.

Given how Sydney and Shirley lived their lives and raised their children, it seemed fitting that the Foundation should receive a last gift through a bequest from Sydney’s estate to his fund. It was, in essence, a giving back to show his support to the community he was so proud to be a part of. The Syd and Shirley Schecter Endowment Fund will live on in their memory for generations to come.

To learn more about how you can leave a meaningful gift to the community through a bequest or other types of planned giving vehicles, contact the Foundation office at 613.798.4696, ext. 246 or contact your financial adviser.
Happy and healthy New Year to:

ENDOWMENT FUND

VICTOR AND SHIRLEY STEINBERG

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of:

Daniel Spring by Debbie and Ron Weiss.

Stephen Drugan by Debbie and Ron Weiss.

Chaya Pearl Maglikovsky by Debbie and Ron Weiss.

R’Tshuvah

Gusynsky by Debbie and Ron Weiss.

Mazal Tov to:

Shell and Steven Kammel on the engagement

LEONA by Debbie, Ron, Josh, Jason and Lauren Weiss.

IRVING AND DIANE WEXLER FAMILY FUND

In memory of:

Saul Blank by Diane Wexler.

In observance of the Yahrzeit of:

Joseph and Freda Cohen, dear parents by Diane Wexler.

ZEPES KARAFOSKY FAMILY

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of:

Audrey Gay by Helen and Rick Zipes and family.

Bela Lipnowski by Helen and Rick Zipes and family.

MIRIAM AND LOUIS WEINER

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of:

Stanley Paukis by Miriam and Louis Weiner.

Contributions may be made online at

www.OJCF.ca or by contacting Caroline Pena at 613-798-4696, extension 232. Monday to Friday. We have voice mail. E-mail address is donation@ojcf.ca. Attractive cards are sent to convey the appropriate sentiments. All donations are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Amex.

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Some special ways to say ‘thanks’

I sometimes find that people are too intimidated to cook for me because I used to work for a living as a cook. They worry that I would be critical of their efforts. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. I am always grateful to be invited to a friend’s house.

Opening up your home and kitchen to others is a wonderful act of generosity and it should be rewarded with a proper thank you. A bouquet of flowers from the supermarket or a bottle of wine are a nice gesture, but, with a little forethought, these gifts can go from ordinary to extraordinary. Here is my top five list of hostess gifts.

Flowers already arranged in a vase

If you are going to bring flowers to say thanks, keep in mind that your host or hostess has a million last-minute details to take care of when having guests for dinner. The last thing he or she needs is someone showing up with a bunch of flowers that need arranging in a vase.

For less than $10, you can buy a simple glass vase in almost any supermarket. Other great places to look for reasonably priced stylish vases include Canadian Tire (the housewares department is fantastic), Ikea, HomeSense and Winners.

Instead of buying a mixed bouquet at the supermarket, buy several bunches of all one type of flower or several bunches of different types of flowers, all in the same colour. Arrange them yourself in the vase and people will think you spent a lot more than you actually did. They will also be so grateful they did not have to hunt for a vase and do the arranging themselves.

Fresh herbs in a ceramic flower pot

If your hosts love cooking or gardening, they will probably appreciate a pot of fresh herbs that can sit on the kitchen windowsill and snip from all winter long.

Go the extra distance and spring for a pretty ceramic pot to put them in. It hides the cheap plastic planter the herbs are sold in.

A dozen new tea towels

I don’t know anyone who wouldn’t appreciate 12 brand new tea towels. It’s something you always need, but buying new tea towels. It’s something you always need, but buying...
A jump start to Chanukah book reviews

Kid Lit

Deanna Silverman

When I have several Chanukah storybooks on my shelf, as I do now, I can’t help but feel the holiday breathing down my neck; even though it really isn’t. Nevertheless, I’m reverting to the tried-and-true solution of devoting two columns to reviewing Chanukah books.

When I’ve done this in the past, readers have occasionally asked whether the books are reviewed in the first or second column implies a subtle preference. The answer is no. Unless books deal with similar themes, the order in which they appear in a two-part series is purely by chance.

Letter on the Wind: A Chanukah Tale
By Sarah Marwil Lamstein
Illustrated by Neil Waldman
Royal Mills Press 2007
32 pages. Ages 4-8.

Based on a Tunisian Jewish folk tale, Letter on the Wind is a moving, lyrically written and magnificently illustrated book infused with an aura of spiritual intrigue. Portraying an act of faith and its consequences, the story replicates the Chanukah theme of dedication in both an obvious and a less obvious way.

But what do poverty, envy and gossip have to do with Chanukah? In this story, everything, as Hayim, the poorest villager in a drought-stricken, destitute, far-off village, sends a letter to the Almighty asking for help. Without it, the villagers will have no oil for their menorahs and will not be able to celebrate Chanukah.

Of course, all the villagers, and especially the scribe who reluctantly writes the letter, think Hayim is crazy. A letter to the Almighty? How do you send such a letter? Hayim uses the wind. When the letter lands at the feet of Ger Yehudah, a famous Jewish merchant in a far-off city, the merchant realizes he has been chosen as God’s instrument to provide the help.

The merchant immediately sends out a caravan packed with pure olive oil, a year’s worth of food and a bejewelled silver menorah. But there was no return address on the letter.

How will the caravan reach the right person? That, too, is a matter of faith. All goes well as the caravan is unloaded outside Hayim’s door in the dead of the night before the first night of Chanukah.

Hayim is sure he’s received a gift from the Almighty. He eagerly shares the largess with all the villagers. But the scribe is less sure when he sees an inscription on the silver menorah that reads, “Ger Yehudah.”

“I am His servant,” the scribe asks in a letter to Ger Yehudah, turning what should have been a wonderfully happy holiday for Hayim and the village into one of suspicion, malice and, by the seventh night, lack of faith.

Swift action from Ger Yehudah, matched by Hayim’s kindness and generosity to a stranger, resolve the issue. The Almighty has indeed bestowed a wonderful gift on two men of faith as everyone who reads Letter on the Wind and admires its vibrantly flowing watercolour and ink illustrations will attest.

Jodie’s Hanukkah Dig
By Anna Levine
Illustrated by Koesna Topaz
Kar-Ben Publishing 2008

Jodie’s Hanukkah Dig is a charming version of the well-worn theme that, sometimes, children can accomplish what bigger folks can’t. Set in modern Israel during Chanukah, the story focuses on a young girl’s desire to become an archaeologist like her father.

Imagine everyone’s surprise, then, when it is Jodie, rather than her dad or the famous archaeologist, Professor Hoffer, who overcomes all obstacles to be the first person to explore an underground cave newly discovered at an archeological site at Modi’in, where the Maccabees revolution against the Syrians began.

Showing the same grit, determination, nimbleness and bravery as the Maccabees of old, Jodie’s keen eyesight results in confirmation that the site does, indeed, date back to the time of Judah Maccabee.

A playful, though predictable story, Jodie’s Hanukkah Dig provides young readers with interesting information about the importance of archeology in Israel and what actually occurs on an archeological site. Colourful, realistic illustrations enhance the developing story line, beautifully matching its pace with Jodie’s determination.

Humour me, please
Rubin Friedman

“The fine art of asking ‘How are you?’

“What are you saying? Are you saying you brushed off when you didn’t say you were fine? Come to think of it, you always say you’re fine and we have a long conversation about other things. You’ve never answered the ‘How are you?’ with anything else.’

“That’s exactly my point. I never answer any other way because I know what you’re expecting and I can tell from the way you hurry on from the ‘I’m fine,’ answer that you don’t really care. We don’t spend any time talking about how I am. I say ‘I’m fine.’

“But that’s absurd. If you say you’re fine, what is there to talk about? Look, there’s only one way of settling this for sure. We’ve got to start over. After I say, ‘How are you?’ you answer any way you want. Then we’ll see what happens.”

“Well, I’m sure what will happen, but OK, let’s start over. You go first.”

“All right, I’m backing up a few steps and you do it too. Then we’ll meet and I’ll say ‘Hi, how are you?’ Deal?”

“Deal.”

“Well, how are you?”

“I’m fine.”

“I am extremely agitated because you just said ‘fine.’”

“Well, I don’t have time to talk now. So, see you.”

“I know it!”
WHAT’S GOING ON
November 24 to December 14, 2008

WEEKLY EVENTS
TUESDAY
Israeli Folkdancing, 6:30 pm. Info: 613-722-9323.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24
Negev Dinner, sponsored by the Jewish National Fund of Ottawa, honouring Barbara Crook and Dan Greenberg, with keynote speaker Ambassador Dennis Ross, special adviser to President-elect Barack Obama on Middle East issues, Museum of Civilization, 6:00 pm. Info: 613-798-2411.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25
Why Faith Matters, sponsored by the SJCC, Rabbi David Wizig of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles discusses his personal journey through threatening illness and tackles issues such as science and religion, atheism, whether religion causes war and how to read the Bible in a modern context; part of “Live from New York,” 4:05 pm. Info: 613-798-9818, ext. 271.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27
Yiddish-speaking group “Lomir Reydn Yiddish,” hosted by Jewish Family Services, 2255 Carling Avenue, suite 301, 10:00 am. Info: 613-722-2225, ext. 325.

COMING SOON
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17
Let’s do Lunch, sponsored by Jewish Family Services and Congregation Agudath Israel, monthly seniors’ luncheon and entertainment, Agudath Israel, 1400 Coldrey Avenue, 12:00 pm. Info: 613-706-3501.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29
Saturday Night Fever, dance the night away; Congregation Beth Shalom, 151 Chapel Street, 8:30 pm. Info: 613-798-3501, ext. 223.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4
The Kibbutz Club, sponsored by Jewish Family Services and Congregation Beth Shalom, seniors’ program with entertainment; transportation available, Congregation Beth Shalom, 151 Chapel Street, 12:30 pm. Info: 613-798-3501, ext. 223.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7
Mitzvah Day, sponsored by Young Adults Division of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa; everyone is invited to donate their hair to Locks of Love; professional stylists are donating their time to cut the ponytails and style donors’ hair. Donations to the Snowsuit Fund welcome; many activities for all ages. Info: 613-798-4696, ext. 270.

Condolences

Condolences are extended to the families of:
Isle Cohen
Annette Lipsey, Toronto (mother of Shaina Lipsey)
Isaac Rabinovitch
Leslie Sela
May their memory be a blessing always.