

ירשה

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HERITAGE

The Journal of THE JEWISH ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EDMONTON & NORTHERN ALBERTA

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AZA basketball team, 1944



JAHSENA Archives, photos donated by Hal Simons.

AZA basketball team, 1944.

Above: Back row: Morey Goorevitch, Saul Cohen,
Ben Grabow Middle row: Marty Bernstein, Jack
Feldman, Hal Simons Front row: Ben Warhaft,
Cecil Paull. Missing: Dave Sheckter

Right: AZA basketball team, 1944,

Left to Right: Saul Cohen, Cecil Paull, Ben
Grabow, Hal Simons, Jack Feldman, Marty
Bernstein, Morey Goorevitch, Ben Warhaft.
Missing: Dave Sheckter



"Bittersweet
Memories:
The War
Years",
available for \$18



From the Archivist's Desk...

by DEBBY SHOCTOR

Summer, 2008

A lot has happened around the archives since January, and here are just a few things to take note of:

Historica Fair – I again participated as a judge at this year's Historica Fair, held May 3rd at the Alberta Legislature. This is a national Social Studies Fair, where grade 5-7 students across the country enter into a juried competition with exhibits they have designed and constructed having to do with aspects of Canadian History. Winners continue on to Provincial and then National finals.

Historic Edmonton Week – We will once again participate in this event, held during the last week of July. Look for brochures around town which outline historic sites around Edmonton and Athabasca district which are opening their doors to the public for tours, exhibitions and presentations during this week.

ASA Conference in Red Deer – I am still on the Board of the Archives Society of Alberta as the Institutional Member-at-Large, and Chair of the grants committee. In May, I attended the annual Conference of the ASA in Red Deer, where I showed our film, "Bittersweet Memories: The War Years," and spoke about its making to conference Delegates. The following week, I attended the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies annual conference in Vancouver, where I was asked to participate in a panel discussion on Jewish Archives across the country along with archivists from Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg. Former Board Member Ed Mickelson continues on as a member of their Board, as well.

Also in May, we held our Spring Program, with Professor Mel Comisarow from Vancouver, who spoke about his two trips to the Kolonya district of the Ukraine, where his as well as many Edmonton Jewish families have their roots. The talk was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Our Co-President, Jini Vogel, recently spoke at the Jewish Senior's Drop-in Centre, about our Archives and Oral History Committee. She managed to sign several people up for Oral History interviews, which will be conducted

on-site by members of the committee.

In case you haven't seen it, an article featuring our archives appeared in the latest issue of Legacy Magazine, which is available from Chapters, Audrey's and Greenwoods, as well as several sites around the city. These articles are sponsored by the ASA and made possible by a grant from the NADP of Library and Archives Canada.

I was asked to present our film, "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," to a group at the Canadian Mental Health Association. The film was very well received by the group members, who asked many questions about the local Jewish Community. I think it worked very well as a community outreach program.

Another community outreach program I am involved in is collecting stories for the Phoenix Society, an announcement for which you will see featured in this edition of Heritage/Yerusha. Our freelance writer, Paula Kirman, is busy at work collecting stories of Jewish-Muslim-Christian cooperation for publication by the Society, and is sponsored by the Edmonton Police Service.

Other ongoing projects at the Archives include the arrangement and description of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization fonds, which is being carried out by volunteers Jini Vogel and Rebecca Killens. Unfortunately, Rebecca has had to leave us for a job at the University of Alberta Library, and will be moving to Winnipeg in the fall. Thank you, Rebecca, for all your hard work this year, and good luck to you in your future career! The transcription and summarization of Oral History tapes from our collection, which is ongoing, is being conducted by Helen Rosenberg.

We recently purchased a map cabinet to house our large-format materials. Because of a shipping snafu in which the first cabinet was damaged, we subsequently ended up with two cabinets for the price of one, as our trusty handyman here at the JCC, Joe Blondin, was able to repair the damaged cabinet! Thank you Joe! We have hired a company to re-design our

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Overcoming Existing Barriers: Telling Stories of Interfaith Co-operation

The *Phoenix Multi-faith Society for Harmony* is looking for stories about co-operation between different faith groups. We are collecting stories which demonstrate that people of different faiths and backgrounds can work together to fight racial discrimination and can live harmoniously.

This historical and anecdotal evidence is being gathered by the Society to demonstrate to school and community groups that interfaith cooperation and good will is possible, and has existed since the early days of Edmonton's history.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST'S DESK

Continued from page 2

website, and the first draft looks promising. We hope to have the website up and running by the end of the summer, which will provide a much more modern and user-friendly experience for our users.

We have also organized a committee to deal with our impending move from the JCC, should the building be closed for re-development. The committee, comprised of Dr. Manuel Friedman, Mandle Nozick, Jini Vogel and myself, has already met once and drafted a letter to send to the JCC planning

If you have a story about how someone from your faith or ethnic group helped someone from another group to start a business, get a job, find a home, raise funds, or in some other way, please contact your Phoenix Society member, Debby Shoctor at 489-2809, so that we may tell your inspirational story to others.

Ultimately these stories will be compiled and published, either in book form or on the internet, so that they will help to inspire others to cooperate with one another and thereby create a better world for us all.

If suitable temporary space cannot be provided by the JCC, we have been offered space at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Coming up in the fall, please watch for a new trunk on the ASA Website's online learning tool, "Letters from the Trunk." This exhibit will feature the life of Peter Owen. Tess Owen Abougoushue, his granddaughter, and a teacher at Talmud Torah, is helping to prepare the lesson plans for this interactive exhibit and learning tool.

*Debby Shoctor,
Archivist*

been many in recent years. Both Moe Litman and I served as Associate Dean. Anyway, there is another article there.

Also, I am enclosing a T-shirt which was produced at the first Keegstra trial for reporters and others – it's a real treasure. I think Bob Warwick, who was working for the *Calgary Herald*, may have had them produced.



Regards to you and Marshall from Nancy and me.
Bruce Elman,
Dean of Law,
University of Windsor

On Display

At the JCC...

Currently on display at the JCC you will find an exhibit of textiles from our collection. If you would like to donate a book, document or a piece of memorabilia to add to our collection, call 489-2809. Please stop by the JCC and view these items on display opposite the office in the glass display case.

At the Beth Israel...

Please check out the new permanent display at the Beth Israel Synagogue, "*Beth Israel: 100 Years of Memories.*" This display was put together by the Beth Israel Historical Committee, with help from JAHSENA, and highlights the history of Edmonton's oldest Jewish Institution through 108 photographs, and a chronology. In addition, there is a temporary display of artifacts from the Beth Israel and its members.

At the Beth Shalom...

There is also a display in the Board Room of the Beth Shalom Synagogue, put together by Rabbi David Kunin with help from JAHSENA. This display chronicles the 75-year history of Beth Shalom Synagogue. Also at the Beth Shalom Synagogue is an exhibit on the 100-year history of the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha, created by JAHSENA with the help of Rabbi Kunin for the Convention held by the Chevra Kadisha in June of last year.

On the Web...

Check out the Archives Society of Alberta Exhibit prepared for Archives Week 2007 (October 1-7), titled *Animals in Archives*, at www.archivesalberta.org. You will find five photos from our collection, one of which is featured in a 2008 calendar. Watch for a new exhibit this October, entitled, *Historic Hi-Tech*. In addition, a new trunk will be added to the *Letters from the Trunk* exhibit, about our own Peter Owen.

Letter to the Editor

5 May 2008

DEAR DEBBY,

I read with interest the winter 2008 issue of *Heritage*. I particularly liked (not surprisingly) the article by Barry Zalmanowitz on "Jewish Lawyers and Justices." Barry might have mentioned the "academic lawyers." Gerald Fridman was the first Jewish Dean of the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law. Lewis Klar was the second. I am not sure who the first Jewish faculty member was but there have

Drawing Back the Curtain: Jewish Theatre on the Edmonton Stage

BY LAURA NICHOL

If you ask Brave Sir Robin from Monty Python's *Spamalot*, "You won't succeed on Broadway if you don't have any Jews." Stereotypical? Sure, but the successful show tune exploits a trend pervasive across western theatre. When people think of drama - be it actors, writers, and especially comedians - they think of the Jews. Where does this propensity to performance emerge from? Discussion at the Edmonton Jewish Community Centre suggests that a dramatic tradition is religiously ingrained in Judaism; prayer itself involves theatrical aspects of song and movement. Children are taught to sing Hanukah songs at a very young age, and the festival of Purim involves masquerade and Purim spiel, which are small, comedic plays designed to entertain and identify the story of the book of Esther, the deliverance of the Jews from Haman's genocidal plot to rid the Jews from Persia.

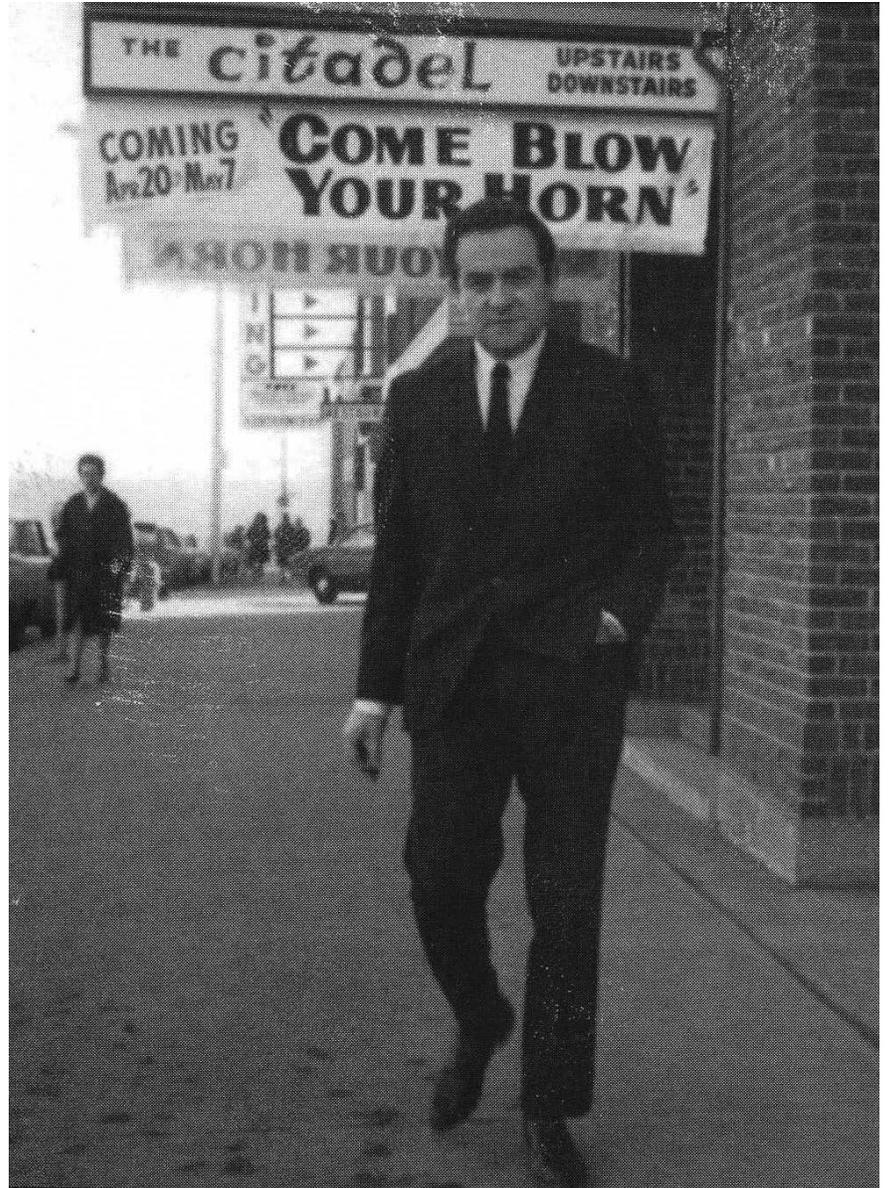
In contemporary society, Jewish theatre has become a manner of preserving religious and cultural heritage. Along with the growth of multiculturalism, open cultural dialogue has resulted in more prominent Jewish writing and performance in the later half of the 20th century, noting the emergence of countless famous Jewish film stars, directors and writers. Even famous playwrights like Harold Pinter, whose plays, despite centering on blatantly Jewish

topics, in any case have a Jewish voice and note aspects of Jewish culture, especially family. Perhaps, the ladies at the JCC suggest, it is because there is not the same stigma on going into the theatre that there is in other cultures; there is support for dreams, whatever they are.

The Edmonton stage and the Jewish Community, can boast a plethora of successful collaborations. One might even go so far as to say that the existence of the thriving theatre community in Alberta's capital depended entirely on the hard work

of a number of prominent Jews in the early 1900s.

By 1903, before Edmonton even became a city, amateur theatre was prominent in such groups as the Edmonton Operatic and Dramatic Society. Theatre operated out of over 12 theatres before 1940, when a lot of theatres turned over to film, including the Pantages Theatre. As the majority of theatre was either recreational or the work of traveling companies, it is not surprising that a Yiddish Theatre Company emerged out of the Peretz Shule, an auxiliary of the



Joe Shoctor outside the old Citadel Theatre, circa 1965.
JAHSENA Archives, donated by the Shoctor family.

Arbeiter Ring, a Yiddish workmen's group.

In 1932, Harry and Rose Hiller organized the theatre troupe in order to raise money to support the school, so that children could attend whether their parents could afford to pay or not. They put on productions once or twice a year, like *The Dybbuk* (or *Between Two Worlds*) by Ansky, a story based on the folk beliefs of Hassidic Jews in Russian and Ukrainian Shtetls about a malicious possessing spirit of a dead person. The play is considered of international relevance in the formation of Yiddish Theatre and a mainstay of Habima Theatre in Israel. The Edmonton company produced the play in 1937 and featured the Hiller's soon to be famous son Arthur.

ARTHUR HILLER

"They just loved their Heritage and they felt, to let their community remember its heritage, once or twice a year to do a play."

Film director of Hollywood fame, Arthur Hiller was born in Edmonton in 1923. He got his first taste for theatre early with his parents' company; "When I was seven or eight years old I was helping build sets. By the time I was 11, I was acting with the beard and the peyos and the whole thing and it started my love of



Arthur Hiller, appearing in a Peretz Shul production, circa 1935. JAHSENA photo, donated by Arthur Hiller.



Group of Parents and Board Members in front of the Peretz Shul, circa 1933.

JAHSENA photo, donated by Arthur Hiller.

theatre."

Arthur went on to attend Victoria Composite, the high school for the performing arts, where he continued to participate in theatre. After achieving a master's degree in psychology and flying in the Second World War with the Royal Canadian Air Force, Hiller decided to return to theatre and began working for the CBC. His prowess soon propelled him to Los Angeles where he directed a number of television serials and eventually films; *The Americanization of Emily* (1964), *Love Story* (1970), and *The Babe* (1992) to name a few.

Hiller's work notes an appreciable humanism: "My films are not necessarily great moralistic films, but if nothing else, at least I have an affirmation of the human spirit in everyone". It is because of this that Hiller has won numerous awards for his films, including the Jean Hersholt Humanitarianism Award at the Oscars in 2002. Hiller is respected especially for encouraging students following in his footsteps, even returning to his high school to teach workshops. But Hiller was not the only famous Jew to grace the halls of Victoria.

JOSEPH SHOCTOR

"I had to go in for a quadruple bypass. I went into the theatre the day before my surgery. It was a Sunday and the stage light was on. I sat there for three hours by myself – and the theatre became my Synagogue. I thanked the Lord for bringing me this far and said that if I didn't get off the table tomorrow, that was ok, I had accomplished what I wanted to."

Joe Shoctor was born in Edmonton in 1922, and graduated from Victoria High School a year before Hiller. Growing up, Joe had been involved in a variety of theatre productions, through school, even starring in Edmonton's first silent film. Despite his ability and interest, Joe got his BA at the University of Alberta and then got his Law degree.

Shoctor eventually wound up returning to his theatrical past as a producer on Broadway, which apparently incensed a local Edmonton woman. She called in to a radio show on CFRN called "Beefs and Bouquets" to complain that Shoctor ought to bring his talent home, "This Joe Shoctor, if he's so interested in theatre, why doesn't he start one here?"

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Joe Shoctor during the construction phase of the Citadel Theatre, 1976. JAHSENA photo donated by the Shoctor family.

THEATRE

Continued from page 5

Joe Shoctor,
Founder and
Executive
Director of
Edmonton's
Citadel
Theatre.

JAHSENA photo
donated by the
Shoctor family.



The DJ, Irv Shore, called Joe up the next day and suggested it. From that day on, Shoctor had a goal; "It was my dream, my hope to make Edmonton the theatre capital of Canada." Staring out of the window of his law office downtown on 102 Street, Joe saw the old empty Salvation Army building and found it the perfect place to make his dream come true.

Joe and his wife Kayla set to work raising funds for the theatre, Kayla heading a ladies group called the Houselighters, who worked tirelessly to encourage patronage and raise funds. Joe Shoctor had a gift for getting the funding together that was needed. Recalls Joe: "It was 100% Risk. We had no idea if anyone would come." His gamble paid off, and The Citadel Theatre opened in November, 1965 with a production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The show was a huge success. The theatre filled the void for a professional theatre that had existed in Edmonton through two wars and the depression.

The theatre quickly grew, with an auxiliary stage, the "Citadel Too", opening in the early 1970s, and eventually moving to the current building in 1976, the largest theatre complex in Canada. It accomplished a further goal of Shoctor's: to encourage the development of an arts community in Edmonton and to develop the downtown. Moreover, the Citadel contributed inexplicably to the theatre community in Edmonton, in the words of former artistic director of Theatre Network, Stephen Heatley, "It's safe to say that other theatres

came to pass because of the Citadel theatre – egged on by its success or in protest against it. The Citadel was the flagship, and their strength led to our strength."

"She loved teaching young people. She was a mentor to them not only musically, but spiritually too; their hopes, their dreams."

DASHA GOODY

A door was opened for theatrical education by Dasha Goody when she founded the Orion Musical Theatre in 1952. Dasha Shaw was born in Edmonton in 1922 and grew up in Vegreville and Winnipeg, daughter of Eva Shaw, a singer and voice teacher. The family moved to Edmonton, where Eva became involved in the Hillers' theatre group, as well as the Yiddish Drama and Culture Club later on. Dasha was always a performer, fostered by a family life filled with music.

Her parents would entertain every Saturday night with sing-alongs and recitals. Eventually, Dasha got involved with Radio, producing for the CBC. She taught Audio-visual arts, as well as directing local musicals. In the Fifties, she saw room for a company for amateur performers to get experience in Musical theatre which gave birth to Orion Theatre.

The accomplishment of the company bred the Second Generation Company in 1973 and eventually Edmonton Musical Theatre in 1977. "It meant a lot to her," says Dasha's daughter Brandy, explaining the importance of education to her mother. She involved a broad section of the Jewish

community in theatre and gave a first taste to a number of well known performers, like Robert Goulet, and others who went on to perform on Broadway.

Dasha was involved in Jewish culture, becoming a member of Hadassah – WIZO whose mandate is to uplift the lives of the unfortunate and enrich the culture of Israel. A prime example of this was Dasha's direction of a Musical Tribute to Israel's 25th anniversary, featuring a variety of local talent.

MICHELE DARIAN MILLER

"There's a very big connection...the theatre industry the people who own everything are mostly Jews. And it's because they're creative, artistic. Why are the funniest comedians Jewish? It's a rhythm. There really is something cultural."

The current artistic director of Edmonton Musical Theatre is Michele Darian Miller, a native New Yorker. Daughter of an Armenian Opera singer, Michele had exceptional voice training at a young age and went on to receive her BFA Magna Cum Laude from Hofstra University in New York.

Her very first professional role out of college was the lead in a Broadway show, a musical called *Runaway*, which ran for 10 months between *Grease* and *A Chorus Line*. Next for Miller was a role in the touring company of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which she considers the perfect Jewish musical, if not "the best musical ever written".

The tour took her across the United States, ending up in Los Angeles, where she married Josh Miller of Edmonton and had her children. Upon her marriage, Michele converted to Judaism. "I really felt as far as family wise and culturally, Armenians and Jews were just so similar, close knit families, appreciating what you have. Armenians suffered genocide at the hands of the Armenian Turks in 1915." These aspects of family were what won Michele over to act in *Fiddler on the Roof* a second time after she moved to Edmonton from L.A. "It doesn't have a happy ending" she admits, "But it does have the 'we still

Dr. Dasha
Goody, founder
of Edmonton
Musical
Theatre.

JAHSENA photo,
donated by Brandy
Graesser.



Michele Darian Miller, current director of Edmonton Musical Theatre.

Supplied photo.



have family and we'll be fine. It's not the place; things are not as important as people and family."

Theatre has given Michele an opportunity to experience her Jewish culture in a very successful career in Edmonton, including performances at the Citadel Theatre and the Mayfield Dinner Theatre. Miller taught at the Foote Theatre School at the Citadel, as well as at Talmud Torah for a number of years before taking on the post of Artistic Director at Edmonton Musical Theatre. She loves her job and loves learning which is evident in the success of her students.

"I find the comedy in performing something 'Jewish' relieving and strengthening, educational and sometimes provocative."

– Kory Mathewson

"Any Jewish play, if it's shown in the proper Jewish light, or the proper historical light – I feel very proud; it's something dear to my heart."

– Joshua Schayer

Kory Mathewson and Josh Schayer were some of Michele Miller's students at Talmud Torah, and both are active in the theatre community in Edmonton today through the city's vibrant improv tradition. It was at a Jewish summer camp that Josh first was introduced to theatre. He ended up taking drama at Talmud Torah with Kory, who he had known from childhood.

"I started doing improv in high school, grade 11, when Josh actually invited me up on stage... From there I represented my school at a city wide high school improv festival where I was approached by Rapid

Fire Theatre to join the company." With Rapid Fire, Kory honed his improv skills, and, as the only Jewish member, was able to pull aspects of his culture into his performance; "I would say that a lot of the characters I have in my stock, and a lot of the humor comes from my Jewish culture, the stories I was told as a boy, my grandparents."

Both find the significance of theatre in the Jewish tradition a tool for education. The use of stereotypes and archetypes are an opportunity, for Kory, to "educate the public on our culture, it is not hateful or discriminatory, it is beautiful; it is story telling, character development, it is majestic and wonderful". Josh speculates that Jews thrive in a theatre environment because it is "a way to cope. Jews have had a hard time. If they can create something that isn't their lives, why not – It's escapism." He appreciates the expression of his history that can appear on stage. As for Jews having a propensity toward theatre, Josh says with a grin "Maybe we're just naturally charismatic."

In Edmonton, the historical development of the theatre we have today can be traced back to a couple of ambitious Jews who are undoubtedly appreciated not only by the Jews involved in theatre today, but by the theatre community as a whole. Across the variety of experiences that constitute Jews in Edmonton theatre, what is clearly overarching is the pride that comes from being a part of this facet of society. It is apparent how vital the cultural identity is to Jewish life; as Arthur Hiller said, "What I found central was so many people who loved their cultural heritage." Josh Schayer agrees, "Jewish Theatre around the world is similar; one people, one voice, one experience, one history. Edmonton has a very active, close knit community. Maybe it's not like that everywhere - I'm proud of it."

LAURA NICHOL IS A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, AND THIS PAPER WAS WRITTEN FOR A CLASS TAUGHT BY PROFESSOR FRANCES LANDY.

DONATION CARDS

JAHSENA now has donation cards with historic pictures on them available for purchase. Mark your special simchas by sending a donation to JAHSENA. Contact the office for more details at: 489-2809. We have received the following donations:

MAZEL TOV

To Farrell Shadlyn from Debby & Marshall Shoctor on becoming a Queen's Counsel.

To Howard Davidow on the birth of his three newest grandchildren, from Geoff Birchall & Rivvy Meloff.

To Dr. Manuel Friedman on his special birthday, from the Board of JAHSENA.

To Howard Davidow on the birth of his grandchildren from the Board of JAHSENA.

To Dr. Ted Aaron on his special birthday, from Betty and Leon Kagna.

SYMPATHY

To Clarice Switzer in memory of Irving Switzer, z'l.

from Debby & Marshall Shoctor from Dan & Esther Kauffman

To Alan Lyons from Rivvy Meloff & Geoff Birchall, in memory of Morris Lyons.

To Dr. Frank Jackson and family in memory of Leone Jackson, from Dan and Esther Kauffman.

To Agi Romer Segal in memory of her father, from the Board of JAHSENA.

JAHSENA Spring Program

JAHSENA held this year's Spring program, on May 15th at the JCC, featuring former Edmontonian, Mel Comisarow, who talked about his genealogical research concerning the Litvaks of the Kolonya region of the Ukraine. This talk featured slides of many sites of Jewish interest in the region, and information on how to conduct your own research in this area.

In 1999 and in 2002 Mel Comisarow made a trip to the Kolonya area and met the local Ukrainians and the few remaining Jews. He was treated royally as he was the first Westerner to visit the Kolonya region. He also made contact with previously unknown relatives of his own family and relatives of others in the West with Kolonya connections. He located his grandfather's land and also the house that his father lived in from 1912 to 1922, after his grandfather had immigrated to Canada. He also visited the Ukrainian major cities of Kiev, Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhe and Donetsk and he observed the post-Soviet resurgence of Jewish life in those cities. He returned with Kolonya records from Ukrainian archives that are of considerable genealogical interest.

Mel was born in Viking, Alberta and graduated in Honours Chemistry from the University of Alberta in 1963. Since 1971 Mel has been a chemistry professor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. For his scientific achievements Mel has received awards from British, American and Canadian scientific societies. In 1995 he was elected to Fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada.

For those of you who were unable to attend, the following is an abstract of the content of Mel's talk:

A little known subchapter of Eastern European Jewish history is the 19th century establishment of Jewish agricultural colonies (Yiddische Kolonyas) in Southeastern Ukraine. In the eighteen forties, with the offer of a 50-year exemption from the military draft and perpetual familial leaseholds on land, several thousand Litvaks, Lithuanian Jews, were induced to settle on virgin agricultural land in Southeastern Ukraine. German

farmers were imported as teachers as these Lithuanian Jews had no agricultural skills. Government aid was promised and perhaps even sometimes delivered to develop these agricultural colonies. With great difficulty these migrant Litvaks established thriving agricultural communities and the population of these Jewish agricultural colonies reached tens of thousands by the turn of the twentieth century.

Marriage partners for these Jews were usually migrant Litvaks from surrounding villages. It was fairly common for two different families to be related in many ways via marriages in different generations, some dating back to Lithuanian residence. Marriages between first and second cousins were common. These Jews were termed "vechni aradotari", renters forever, as their original leaseholds of 40 desyatin (1 desyatin = 1.09 hectares = 10,900 square meters = 2.9 acres) could be neither bought nor sold, but only passed on to succeeding generations. The divisions of land amongst the males in succeeding generations meant that only one

or two individual families could survive on the familial land, causing other offspring to migrate to the surrounding towns and cities. Due to limited economic opportunities, overall political oppression and periodic pogroms (i. e., the usual reasons), starting in the 1880s many of these agricultural Ukrainian Jews migrated to Cyprus, Palestine, Western Europe, Australia and the Americas. Winnipeg was a common New World destination for these Kolonya emigrants, from which some of these Kolonya people later dispersed throughout North America. For example, at various times in the 20th century members of the Kolonya BRODY/ZABRODSKY, BRUSER, COMISAROW, GOLOSOV, LEV, MORRIS/MOROZOV, NEWHOUSE/NAIHAUSEN, SCHLACTER, SOROKIN, WILNER/STEIN, WINIKOV/WINIKOVSKY, and WOLOCHOW/VOLOKHOV families lived in Edmonton and/or Northern Alberta.

If anyone has questions for Mel arising from this talk, please contact the JAHSENA office, and they will be passed on to him.



ACJS spring conference featured a panel on Jewish Archives. Left to right standing: Debby Shoctor, JAHSENA, Janice Rosen, CJC Archives, Agi Segal, JHSSA, Ellen Sheinberg, Ontario Jewish Archives. Seated, L-R Janine Johnston, JHSBC, Vanessa Hariri, JHCWC. Shoctor photo.

Jewish Journalists in Edmonton

PAULA E. KIRMAN

Journalism is a career choice that requires drive and determination. It's a difficult field to break into, doesn't pay well (in most cases), and can often have unusual hours. However, there are several journalists in Edmonton who have Jewish backgrounds and are working in print media who have managed to carve a niche on the local scene and beyond.

PAULA SIMONS

Paula Simons is one of Edmonton's most recognizable and accomplished journalists. She writes the City column for the *Edmonton Journal*, offering witty and opinionated insights into current happenings affecting Edmontonians.



Born and raised in Edmonton, Simons earned her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Alberta, and a Masters from Stanford University. Prior to working at the *Edmonton Journal*, Simons was a documentary and program producer with CBC Radio for seven years.

Simons' Jewish roots in Edmonton go back to 1905. "That's when a cousin of my grandmother's arrived here from a village near Kiev. My grandmother, Rose Hardin, arrived here when she was a teenager. My grandfather, Sam Simovitch, later changed his name to Simons," she says.

Her journalistic accomplishments are many. On her own, she has won four National Newspaper Award citations of merit. As well, Simons was part of a team from the *Journal* who, in 2005, won a National Newspaper Award in the breaking news category for their coverage of the murder of four RCMP officers at Rochfort Bridge. A few years prior, in 2002, the *Journal* investigative unit she was with won a Michener Award citation for meritorious public service journalism. The unit had been investigating the deaths of seven Aboriginal children from the Samson First Nation who were in foster care.

Simons' father is Jewish, and her mother is of German Lutheran background. "I think

that my Jewish background helped to make me a civil libertarian, someone who defends individual rights and liberties and someone with a healthy mistrust of government," Simons explains. "It's something about the Holocaust – that ultimate racial injustice. 'Never again' can't just be a motto for fighting anti-Semitism. It has to be a call to arms to fight prejudice and oppression of all kinds."

In addition to the *Edmonton Journal*, Simons writes a regular column for *Legacy Magazine*, and can often be seen on CBC and Global Television as a political and social commentator.

"I think my Jewish identity had a profound influence on my decision to become a journalist, and then, a columnist. And every time I take an unpopular stance, every time I stand up for what I think is right, in defiance of public opinion and political pressure, I draw on my Jewish roots for strength," she says.

Simons is married with one daughter and balances her career with being a mother. "I read, I cycle, I walk my dog. I am a passionate theatre-goer, and I love the opera. My husband and I both love to cook and entertain and throw dinner parties for our friends and family. But really, I'm a mother before all else -- I can kvell with the best of 'em."

MIKE SADAVA

Mike Sadava recently retired as a writer with the *Edmonton Journal*. He is originally from Ottawa. "My mother's side is Romanian; father's from a Shtetl near Odessa. My grandmother, Esther Bloom, nee Hertzcovitch, was the first Jewish girl to graduate from high school in Quebec City," he tells.

Sadava says that "understanding a lot of complex issues instantaneously" is the most challenging aspect of being a journalist.

Away from writing, Sadava enjoys music, family, cycling, and cross-country skiing.

MARTA GOLD

Marta Gold is another *Edmonton Journal* writer with a Jewish background. She was raised in Toronto as Conservative, with a Jewish father and mother who converted to Judaism. "I went to United Synagogue Day School (the private school affiliated with Beth Tzedec synagogue) from nursery school to Grade 8. My father, pediatrician Sam Gold, was the first Jewish intern at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto," Gold says.

Gold has been with the *Journal* since 1987, beginning as a summer student after graduating from Carleton University in Ottawa with a Bachelor of Journalism degree. "My background growing up in a larger city with a large Jewish community (as well as many other ethnic communities) has given me a good understanding of the position and plights of minorities," she says. "Of course, it also gives me more insight when writing stories about the Jewish community or on issues related to Judaism (like the Holocaust, for example). It also helped when I traveled to the Middle East, including Israel, as a reporter for the *Journal* with former Premier Ralph Klein, back in 1995."

Gold's interests and activities apart from writing include her children, running, cooking, and reading. She says that the most challenging part of journalism is when "we become 'instant experts' in so many subjects, and that we accurately process and reflect, in our writing, the information we take in every day. That also makes our jobs interesting, exciting and fulfilling."

JASON MARKUSOFF

Jason Markusoff is a staff writer with the *Edmonton Journal*, known especially for his coverage of the Alberta political scene.

"I am Ashkenazi on both sides; my mother's family immigrated just after World

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War II after having fled eastern Poland, and lived at a postwar DP camp in Bavaria. They settled in Montreal. My father's side is from Belarus, and they moved to Winnipeg before the war. I was raised in Hamilton and went to Conservative synagogue on high holidays and private Hebrew dayschool," Markusoff explains.

"My family kept separate plates and constantly queried us about the proportion of Jewish friends my brother and I had, but never about G-d. I would later embrace the more cultural traditions of Judaism in my later teens. I started a Klezmer radio show at McMaster University's radio station for a couple years in Hamilton."

Markusoff's Jewish background has some bearing upon his work. "There is some element of Tikkun Olam as the foundation of my work, but rarely do I think of it as such. Often, I will share a certain bond with many Jewish sources, which can improve my relationships with them."

The transplanted Easterner is involved with Jewish life, but not specifically in Edmonton. "I normally go to Hamilton, Montreal, or Vancouver to spend Yom Kippur/Rosh Hashanah or Pesach with family," he says. "I have wandered the city, trying to find the right high-holiday synagogue that fits for me – Beth Tzedek, Beth Israel, Beth Shalom, even Calgary's Lubavitcher congregation — but I've most commonly gone to Beth Shalom, since it most resembles my childhood shul, and it's closest to my Whyte-area home. My geographical distance from the west-end Jewish community has in a large part kept me away from getting involved, as has my longstanding sense that I'm not in Edmonton permanently."

DEBBY WALDMAN

Debbi Waldman is a journalist best known to Edmontonians for her bi-weekly Family column in the *Edmonton Journal*.



Her publication credits also include *People*, *Parents*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Chatelaine*, and *The Washington Post*. She has also published a children's book based on a Jewish folktale.

Waldman was born in 1960 in Utica, New York. She has a degree in journalism from Syracuse University, and an MFA in creative writing from Cornell. "My dad, Elliot Waldman, was a reform rabbi in Utica, New York. He'd grown up Orthodox, in Boston. His maternal grandfather had been a rabbi in Eastern Europe, then in Vermont, then in Utica, and then in New Bedford, Massachusetts," Waldman explains.

"On his father's side, he had an uncle who was an Orthodox rabbi in Washington, DC, and cousins who were

Conservative rabbis in Philadelphia and Long Island. My sister and I say that our dad was the black sheep of the family because he became a Reform rabbi. And this was classical Reform, which had done away with many traditions."

Waldman moved to Edmonton in 1992. "The first time I came to Edmonton for the summer – I think it was in 1990 or 1991 – I asked my boyfriend, David Wishart, to please bring me to the reform congregation. He had grown up in the United Church, but he looked up the reform congregation and we went. David Mannes was playing guitar. I was so thrilled that he was playing songs that I knew, songs that one of my cousins had written. Susan Lieberman and Ehud BenZvi were also there, and they were very welcoming to me. I thought, 'I could feel at home in this place.'"

In addition to writing, Waldman is also a teacher. She has taught journalism, composition, creative writing, and magazine writing at a variety of colleges and universities, including Cornell University, Ithaca College, and here at Grant MacEwan Community College. She also teaches music, Judaism and ethics to elementary school aged children at Temple Beth Ora's Beit Sefer.

She married Wishart, and they have two



children: Elizabeth (born in 1996) and Noah (born in 1997). Waldman loves bike riding with her children, as well as reading, music (both making and playing), and cooking and baking. Not surprisingly, she is also passionate about her work. "I love hearing people's stories. I love interviewing people and then writing about them," she says.

MINDY JACOBS

Mindy Jacobs is a columnist with the *Edmonton Sun*. She has been with the Sun chain in Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Ottawa for over twenty years, writing two national columns each week, and another one exclusively for the Edmonton paper.

Jacobs was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan and grew up in a Conservative household in St. Catharines, Ontario. She is a Journalism graduate of Carleton University. Both of her parents were Jewish and emigrated to Saskatchewan in the 1950s. Her mother was from Liverpool, England, and her father was from Northern Ireland originally.

"I write a lot about social issues which possibly stems from the Jewish maxim of Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world," Jacobs explains. "I also write on the Israel-Palestinian morass from time to time because I am a strong Zionist and feel it's important to use my pulpit occasionally to support Israel and correct all the misconceptions out there!"



Jacobs, who loves to travel, lived in Israel for two years (1990-1992) doing Public Relations for Hebrew University and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. She is involved occasionally with Na'amat and is a member of Beth Shalom Synagogue.

"The hardest part of my current job is to write three (used to be four) columns a week on a routine basis. Some Sunday nights it's hard to sleep because I wonder if I've hit the wall and have run out of ideas. (My critics say I ran out of ideas long ago!) It's a constant challenge to write columns I think will resonate with readers. But I love the job

and enjoy the feedback – both positive and negative.”

PAULA E. KIRMAN

I was born and raised in Edmonton, and am Jewish on both sides. My parents are originally from the United States.



Writing has always been an interest and hobby of mine since childhood, whether it was short stories, poetry, songs, and later articles. At Ross Sheppard, where I went to high school, I became the editor of *The Thunderbolt* student newspaper, and at that point I had a pretty good idea my future would include some pursuit of journalism.

At the University of Alberta I earned a Bachelor of Education in Secondary English and Music, graduating in 1996. It seemed like a practical choice, as teaching would be an excellent fallback for a struggling writing career. Little did I know that writing would actually become the fallback, as local teaching jobs in my area of specialty were few and far between.

Envisioning my future as either writing or ending up in some dead-end retail job, I began pursuing freelance work full time. Incorporating my skills as a photographer and website designer also helped. My areas of interest were music and literature, and I have written CD and book reviews, author interviews, and other features of a general nature for a diverse number of publications such as *The Edmonton Journal*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Prairie Books Now*, *Where Edmonton Magazine*, *Global Rhythm*, and *AlbertaViews*. I am involved in local Jewish journalism as a former contributor to Neil Loomer's *Edmonton Jewish Life*, and currently writing for *Heritage* with JAHSENA. I also contribute to content-based websites and online publications, most notably operating several websites for About.com, a *New York Times* Company, until a few years ago. From time to time, my words and photos are picked up for use in book and educational textbooks.

A growing interest in peace and social justice led me to get involved with a number of activist organizations in 2005, and also marked a change in direction for some of my work. Much of my time now is spent working in community media. I am the Editor and one of the Volunteer Coordinators at *Boyle McCauley News*, an inner-city community newspaper serving the neighbourhoods of

Boyle Street and McCauley. As well, I am on the Editorial Committee of *Our Voice Street Newspaper*, sold by individuals experiencing economic marginalization. I also operate *RaiseMyVoice.com*, an independent media outlet visually documenting Edmonton's peace and activist scenes. I guess you could say this is a way of incorporating Tikkun Olam into my work.

I think the field of journalism is very challenging and worthwhile to pursue if you have a passion for what you are doing.

JAHSENA Archivist and *Heritage/Yerusha* editor Debby Shoctor is also a Journalism grad, holding a B.J. Honours from the University of King's College, Halifax, and has worked in journalism, free-lance writing and publishing.

NEW MEMBERS

The Board of Directors of JAHSENA would like to welcome the following new members:

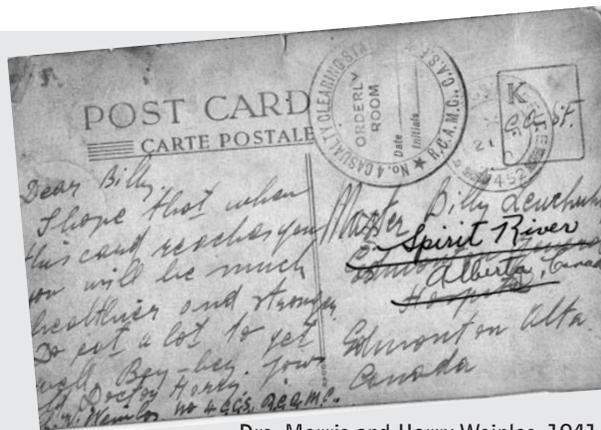
Arlene & Pierre Morin, Edmonton, Alberta
David Joly, Edmonton, Alberta
Samuel Koplwicz, Edmonton, Alberta

Postcards from Beyond

This postcard recently arrived at the Lewchuck farm in Spirit River, Alberta – 67 years late! Mr. Bill Lewchuck of St. Albert contacted JAHSENA in May, after receiving this postcard from his sister, who still lives on the family farm in Spirit River, and received it in February, 2008.

The postcard was mailed in 1941 by Dr. Harry Weinlos, to Mr. Lewchuck's 12-year-old brother, also named Bill. Dr. Weinlos had treated young Bill at the old Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton, before being called up to the service and heading off to Europe. Young Bill had suffered a broken leg and other injuries on the family farm and had been sent to Edmonton for treatment.

Dr. Weinlos had treated his leg, but could not stay with him until he was better as he had to go off to war. Concerned about the young boy, whose injuries were severe,



Drs. Morris and Harry Weinlos, 1941



he sent this postcard, asking how the boy was doing.

Unfortunately, the postcard never made it, and Bill succumbed to his injuries. Dr. Weinlos did not find this out until after the war, at which time he wrote a heartfelt letter of condolence to the Lewchuck family, which they still have. Bill Sr. was born five months

after the boy died and was named after him.

Bill Lewchuck is currently investigating the reason behind the postcard's late arrival, and will keep us informed as to what he turns up. Dr. Harry Weinlos was known for his soft heart and charitable works, and according to one of his relatives, very often didn't take a penny for his services.

JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

These items have recently found their way into the archives, and are available for research purposes:

Black & White, 8 x10 photograph, probably of farm colony picnic, donated by Ruth Nolan.

Approximately 50 colour 4x6 photos of Edmonton Hadassah-WIZO events, donated by Stephanie Hendin.

"The Apothecary", "The Walnut Tree" and "Children of Paper", by Martha Blum. Donated by Debby Shoctor.

"A. M. Klein, the Father of Canadian Jewish Literature: Essays in the Poetics of Humanistic Politics," by Rachel Feldhay Brenner, 1994.

"History of a Jewish Burial Society: An Examination of Secularization," by Marelyn Schneider. 1991.

Newspaper and Magazine articles, pertaining to Edmonton's Jewish

Community, as well as Beth Shalom Synagogue bulletins and flyers, collected and donated by Sharon Abbott.

Four Talmud Torah T-shirts, donated by Stephanie Hendin.

40 cm text, pertaining to Camp B'nai Brith, including board minutes, grant applications and reports, donated by Howie Sniderman.

40 cm. of text, pertaining to Maccabi Canada Edmonton Section, donated by Howie Sniderman.

"The Lost Wooden Synagogues of Eastern Europe," VHS, 48 minutes, produced by Albert Barry and the Florida Atlantic University, 2000.

Photo of Canadian Young Judea Camp, Chestermere Lake, Alberta, 1949, 8 x10, black and white, donated by the estate of Sora Satanove Shilman.

Eight copies of Edmonton Jewish newspapers, a

catalogue of the "Journey into our Heritage" exhibit of the JHSWC, 1976, and three copies of past issues of "Heritage/Yerusha", donated by Ansel Mark.

Photograph of Mizrachi Edmonton women's organization, circa 1960, donated by Robyn Sperber.

Photograph of Mitch Klimove in uniform, ca. 1940, donated by Mitch Klimove.

Six photos and miscellaneous text regarding the life of David and Hanna Pollack, donated by Hanna Pollack.

Oral History interview with Simon Alexander Simons, b. Jan. 25, 1893-d. Jan. 23, 1974, and two photos of the AZA Basketball team, circa 1944, Donated by Hal Simons.

Miscellaneous text and photos relating to Na'amat Edmonton, donated by Sylvia Alpern.

20 cm. miscellaneous text, relating to Jewish organizations

in Edmonton, donated by Valda Levin.

"Living Legacies: A collection of inspirational Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women," researched and edited by Liz Pearl, 2007, donated by Ruth Nolan.

10 Plaques awarded to Burton Margolus for service to the Jewish and General communities. Donated by Eva Margolus.

T-Shirt from the James Keegstra Trial, 1986, donated by Bruce Elman.

The Jewish Archives & Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is always looking for new donations. If you have any personal papers, photographs, negatives, books, audio-visual recordings or other items relating to the history of the Jewish community of Edmonton and Northern Alberta that you would like preserved for generations to come, please contact our office at (780) 489-2809.

Help Us Preserve Our Past for the Future!

I (we) would like to become part of the continuing quest into our historical past by joining the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta in the category marked. A charitable receipt will be issued. Membership for other than individuals includes spouses. Membership includes an annual subscription to Heritage/Yerusha, the Society's newsletter, published 3 times a year.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____
Payable to the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta (JAHSENA).

- Patron \$100
 - Benefactor \$50
 - Donor \$36
 - Individual \$18
 - I am interested in serving as a volunteer.
 - I have historical material that I would like to donate.
- Please call me.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number _____ Email: _____

Visa/MC Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Please clip out and return to:
JAHSENA 7200-156 St. Edmonton, Alberta T5R 1X3