

# SHORESH

שורש

Congregation Etz Chayim  
Community News

SEPTEMBER 2017

תשרי תשע"ח | TISHREI 5778

Shana Tova u'Metukah

Mindfulness for  
the High Holidays

In Sync With  
the Times

Our Trees of Life



In the Eye of the Beholder  
page 14





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**Tackling and Tracking Congregation Etz Chayim's New Strategic Plan**

Late last year, Congregation Etz Chayim presented a new strategic plan to guide the synagogue community into the 2020s, and beyond. But how does this translate for the average Etz Chayim congregant?

**Back Up a Bit...to the Change Story**

When Congregation Etz Chayim laid out a new Strategic Plan late last year, the shul was also committing to a "change story." But what was the story? And who would decide?

After congregant conversation cafes held in 2015 and extensive dialogue among Etz Chayim board members and staff, it became clear that the "synagogue's prime responsibility was to establish a framework for being both responsive to needs and wants of the community, and to a degree, leading the community," explains Myron Schultz, Second Vice-President of the CEC board of directors. The framework would have to be sustainable, he adds, "and allow CEC to thrive for years to come as the home for Conservative Judaism in Winnipeg."

New mission and vision statements were developed for the shul (see [www.congregationetzchayim.ca/about/mission-statement](http://www.congregationetzchayim.ca/about/mission-statement)), and a maxim established, which "boiled the mission and vision statements down to a simple, understandable, guiding principal," says Myron: "Finding Meaning in Jewish Life." This meant that as the plan was put into action, all activities had to align with, and fulfill the mandate of Finding Meaning in Jewish Life.

**Meta Magazine**

Among outputs of the strategic plan is *Shoresh*—the

tiny but tough magazine you are holding, designed "to share stories that offer insight into who we are, what we do, where we are going, why we are 'in business'," says Myron. This community chronicling points to strategic plan objectives such as improved conversational communication, engagement, unity, and Jewish literacy.

**Finding Meaning in Our Stories**

Another significant output of the plan is Our Trees of Life, which facilitates intergenerational family dialogue and then helps to preserve, as a digital recording, the unique family stories that result. This project also branches to objectives of improved communication and further engagement with the synagogue community, unity, and Jewish literacy, and points to CEC's commitment to staying in-sync with digitization trends (see article, page 10).

**Teaching and Reaching the Community**

TV Kids Media School is a third important product of the strategic plan. Through this program, which fast forwards into a fourth session this fall, the community's youngest can learn film and videography skills like camera operation, interviewing, directing, music-video basics and more. TV Kids branches to objectives of communication, understanding the community, engagement, and again to CEC's digitization responsiveness.

**Shabbat Ambiance**

A change to the general atmosphere at Etz Chayim's Shabbat morning services is a fourth significant fruit of the strategic plan, says Executive Director Jonathan Buchwald, explaining that the shul is trying to create a more welcoming environment.

"Physically, we've changed the layout of the foyer, and we have instituted greeters, who welcome congregants as soon as they walk through the synagogue doors." He adds that a "caring committee" has also been struck, with a mandate to explore simple but important ways to be more inviting and welcoming to congregants.

**Up Next: Gentle Service Innovation**

The next step, says Jonathan, is service innovation within the Shabbat morning service—explore ways to enhance the service without changing it too drastically. Trying to elude the Shabbat-centricism trap, Etz Chayim continues to expand programming beyond a Shabbat focus to include the other six days of the week, and incorporate programming outside the synagogue walls and that reaches out to the broader community.

At the same time, Etz Chayim recognizes that honouring Shabbat *is still* an important part of being Jewish. So the shul is looking for ways to enrich the Saturday morning Shabbat service, to offer improved explanation, make it more relevant, meaningful, user friendly.

"We can offer explanation without changing the overall structure of the service, incorporate that to make people feel more comfortable and welcome," Jonathan says. The synagogue is simply trying to appeal to various groups of people with different needs, and to offer some other options without drastically changing the integrity of the service.

"We're very clear that we want to stay within the traditional conservative model, but we are looking for ways to innovate," he says. ■





# Cultivating a New Project: Our Trees of Life

## Etz Chayim's Multi-Generational Family Heritage Project

**E**tz Chayim means “tree of life.” An output of the strategic plan unfurled last November by Congregation Etz Chayim, the Our Trees of Life project branches to goals of improved communication and further engagement with the synagogue community. Facilitating conversations among relatives about the distinct limbs of their family’s life—what’s important to them, their family values, special memories, and such—Our Trees of Life then helps to preserve these unique stories forever as a digital recording.

“We had always seen the same pictures hanging in our parents’ and grandparents’ houses, but never really thought much about who was in the pictures or the stories behind them,” said Kevin Segall and Sheryl Singer. Kevin and Sheryl, along with their sons Justin and Hayden, and their parents, Maxine and Alex Segall, and Myrna and Herb Singer, were the first Etz Chayim family to take part in the Our Trees of Life project.

“Often in life you don’t take time to sit down and talk, and it was nice to listen to our parents recount everyday stories about their childhood to our son, and see him engaged and interested in learning about his grandparents as children and teens,” said the couple.

“There’s something beautiful that happens when families talk to each other about their past, their present, and their potential future,” says Tracy Kasner-Greaves, cantor at Congregation Etz Chayim. “Those conversations go on record, and then generations from now, family members will be able to see what is important to you and your family.”

Family itself is very important to them, so Sheryl and Kevin were motivated to take on the project. “We want our children to have a close relationship with their grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. In our busy lives, we don’t always take time to talk about our past or look at photos. We wanted Justin to learn more about his parents, grandparents, and great grandparents, especially when they were his age, so he could relate to them even more.

“Knowing where you came from helps to shape the person you are.”

Justin and his family worked on the project last year, during his Bar Mitzvah year—timing that made sense to Justin.

“It isn’t just about me, it is about family, and it is a good time to learn more about your family.” And learn more he did.

“It was funny when Zaida Alex talked about how his mom could see him from wherever he was climbing, and she said he should get down before he breaks his neck, and if he didn’t,

Historical photo used in the Segall/Singer family Our Trees of Life project.



We want our children to have a close relationship with their grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins.

that she would break his neck,” Justin says. Also, “that Zaida Joey’s family came from New York.”

Our Trees of Life is the brainchild of cantor Tracy Kasner Greaves, who explains, without melancholy, that the project takes the eulogy we would write at the end of a life, and puts it into another life, earlier. “That is about shoshon, about roots,” she says. “When you see Justin interviewing his grandparents about life...to be able to ask while they are alive—I don’t think we should wait for death to bring that out in us.”

The project now complete for the Segall/Singer family, they have a 15-minute video of their family’s unique story to treasure (plus a shorter video, shown at the Saturday dinner of Justin’s Bar Mitzvah last winter).

“The video is a living document of our past and is timeless,” say Sheryl and Kevin. “We think Justin and Hayden will enjoy watching it many times, to learn about their past and to strengthen their ties not only to their family but also their synagogue.”

Not to mention, leave a kind of legacy to future generations, for long after we’re all gone. ■





Rabbi Larry Lander

## *Time to Help in a New Way*

**R**abbi Larry Lander may have stepped down from the pulpit after 30 years as a congregational rabbi, but he isn't ready to hang up his hat—it's just time to do something new.

Building on both his experience in pastoral counselling and his social work training, Rabbi Lander is opening a private counselling practice in Toronto, specializing in older adult and young couple counselling. So really, he'll be picking up right where he left off—in another province, and with a different sign outside his door.

Rabbi Lander says he is proud of everything he accomplished as a rabbi. With a bit more contemplation, he goes deeper.

"Every day, I got the chance to comfort, inspire, teach, guide, lead. Those are the highlights—every person, every family."

He says his primary role was to ask himself, every day, "how can I help my congregants? That's what I really cared about: helping people, and Jewish continuity, interpreting Jewish law."

"I'm a social worker in my bones," he adds. "My big achievements are helping individuals."

After three decades as a congregational rabbi (two plus ten years at Etz Chayim, seven at Har Tikvah in Brampton, and eleven at Or Shalom in London) Rabbi Lander does have a lot to be proud of.

"I helped a lot of individuals, couples, families through pastoral counselling. I've been to so many hospitals, nursing homes, people's homes—tried to lift people up, give them hope, help them get clarity."

Alongside his private social work practice, Rabbi Lander plans to develop his photography hobby, and to be very involved in the lives of his seven grandchildren, all of whom live in Toronto. Although he plans to do some rabbinical officiation at funerals and weddings, he is ready to put most of his work as a rabbi aside.

"Not that I didn't love being a rabbi," he clarifies. "It's very important work. But there's a season for everything. It's sad to leave so many good people, but it's time to help people in a different way." ■



Darlene Davis

## *Heart and Soul Work*

**D**arlene Davis says she loved every minute of the 25 years she worked at Congregation Etz Chayim.

"I put my heart and soul into my job. I loved what I was doing. I loved meeting with congregants and working with them. And that's probably why I've been here for 25 years."

It was the people she met through her work at Etz Chayim that brought her the most happiness. And when asked what she will miss the most about her job, it is the congregants she cites, and her eyes fill with tears.

"I met a lot of people that I probably wouldn't have met otherwise, made friendships that I probably wouldn't have made," she says. "It just seemed to fit. I was at home, and very comfortable doing what I was doing."

Although she spent most of that time as an administrative assistant at Etz Chayim, Darlene says she began working at the synagogue as a volunteer: "They were doing a fundraising dinner and I came to help with that... and I never left."

Her work as administrative assistant included planning for congregant involvement in ritual components of services, taking care of tribute cards and other correspondence, organizing high holiday seating, purchasing supplies for the office, and managing the phones.

Before coming to work at Etz Chayim, Darlene was an educator for eight years; she taught grade 2 in Brandon for two years, then moved back to Winnipeg to teach in the Seven Oaks school division.

Having retired from Etz Chayim last June, Darlene looks forward to a little bit more travelling, more time with her family, and more time to put into volunteer work.

"When you're working it's hard to volunteer, and I'm happy to get back to that," she says. Knowing Darlene, she'll put her heart and soul into that too. ■

### **Contributors Wanted**

*Shoresh* is your community news magazine. As members and friends of Congregation Etz Chayim, you are the best source of ideas, content, and photos for this publication (feedback is also welcome). Please contact the editor if you have anything to share: [LeslieMalkin@LofC.ca](mailto:LeslieMalkin@LofC.ca).




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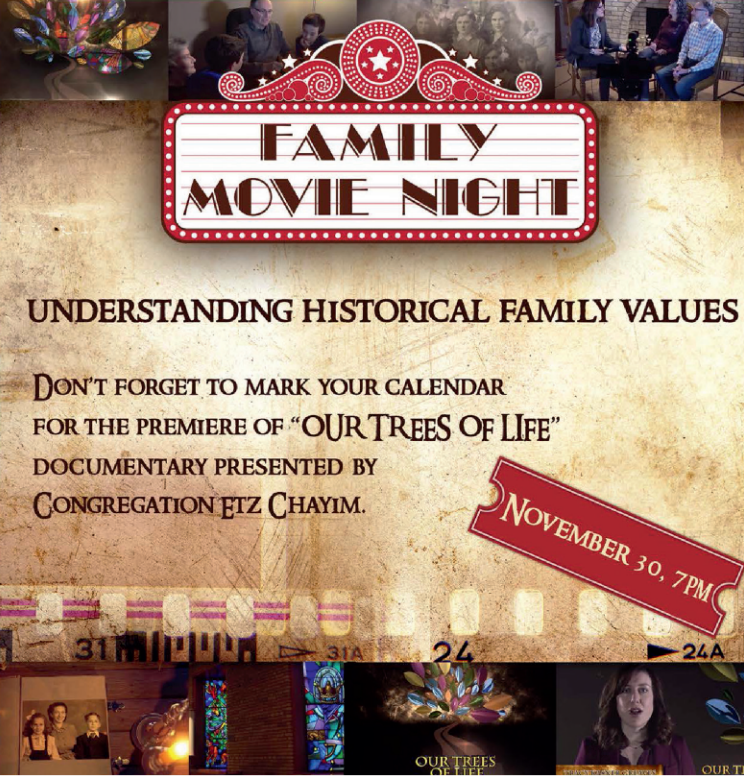

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OUR TREES OF LIFE





# Honey for the High Holidays

Recipes that include honey as an ingredient are traditional at Rosh Hashanah. On the next page *Shoresh* presents some favourites of CEC Executive Chef Boguslaw Stras.

Top: *Apis mellifera* by Ivar Leidus; Middle left: The hives in the apple orchard (courtesy Harold Goldberg); Right: Bees shipped in the spring in 3-lb boxes for starting a new hive (HG); Bottom left: The house set up for honey extraction (HG); Right: Honey and apples, by Zachy Evenor.



## Apiary Enthusiasm

**B**ees are big these days—the topic, not the insect. Panic not. And while Winnipeggers may soon notice an even bigger presence for bees (after a recent recommendation by a senior city planner to expand opportunities for urban beekeeping), for Jews in *any* city, these flying honey machines, and particularly their sweet nectar, have a history of receiving much ado—especially at Rosh Hashanah, when our tradition is to dip our apples into honey, and to use honey in our cooking.

Harold Goldberg keeps bees. The eldest son of Etz Chayim members Ben and Serky Goldberg, and brother to CEC member Elana Schultz, learned the tradition from his father in law, Rabbi Richard Israel, who would open up his home to volunteers to help with the honey extraction just before the *chagim* every year. Harold, who now lives in San Jose, CA but grew up in Winnipeg, says he got “hooked on farming” after a year in Israel on Kibbutz Kfar Blum, where he learned how to milk cows. But it wasn’t until after he finished graduate school (MA, political science) and met his future

father-in law with his “quirky interest in bees,” that Harold switched his own focus from bovine to bees. Three decades later, bees still give Harold a buzz.

“I figured out bees were much smaller than cows, and easier to take care of, and have been keeping bees ever since.”

Each year, he and his wife Alisa open up their own home to friends and neighbours on the Labour Day weekend to prepare for Rosh Hashanah by extracting the honey their bees have produced. In a good year, Harold says a

hive produces between 60 and 90 pounds of honey. “So when we all get together for extracting day, we can process up to 600 pounds of honey, depending on how good the crop is at the various hive locations.”

Two years ago, the couple purchased a small apple farm in Sonoma County, CA, and “last year was the first year that we dipped our own apples in our own honey,” said Harold, who also uses the beeswax to make Havdalah and other candles. ■

## Kosher Catering Service

Congregation Etz Chayim Catering offers a variety of Kosher Shabbat, Kiddush, dinner, and party menus. We also cater home events, office meetings, shiva meals, and more. Let us know how we can help you: (204) 589-6305.



## Moroccan Lamb with Honey and Prunes<sup>1</sup>

### Ingredients

Generous 1/2 cup pitted prunes; 1.5 cup hot tea; 2-1/4 lb/1 kilo stewing/braising lamb (e.g., shoulder) cut into chunks; 1 onion, chopped; 6 tbsp chopped fresh parsley; 1/2 tsp ground ginger; 1/2 tsp curry powder or ras al hanout (a spice mix from North Africa); pinch of freshly grated nutmeg; 2 tsp ground cinnamon; 1/4 tsp saffron threads; 2 tbsp hot water; 5-9 tbsp honey, to taste; 1 cup beef or lamb stock; 1 cup blanched almonds, toasted; 2 tbsp chopped cilantro; 3 hard-boiled eggs, cut into wedges; salt and ground, black pepper.

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F. In a bowl, pour hot tea over prunes. Cover, and leave to soak and plump. 2. In roasting pan, put lamb, onion, parsley, ginger, curry/ras al hanout, nutmeg, cinnamon, salt, and a large pinch ground, black pepper. Cover, and cook 2 hours, or until meat is tender. 3. Drain prunes; add their liquid to the lamb. Combine saffron and hot water to add to pan, with honey and stock. Bake again, uncovered, 30 min, turning lamb occasionally. 4. Add prunes to pan, and stir gently. Serve sprinkled with toasted almonds and cilantro, and topped with wedges of hard-boiled egg.

## Honey-Ginger Grilled Salmon<sup>2</sup>

### Ingredients

1 tsp ground ginger; 1 tsp garlic powder; 1/3 c soy sauce; 1/3 c orange juice; 1/4 c honey; 1 green onion, chopped; 1 (1.5 pound) salmon fillet.

### Directions

1. Combine ginger, garlic, soy sauce, orange juice, honey, and green onion in large zipper-locking plastic bag, and mix well. Place salmon in bag and seal tightly, turning bag gently to distribute marinade. Refrigerate 15 to 30 min. 2. Preheat outdoor grill for medium heat and lightly oil grate. 3. Remove salmon from marinade, shake off excess, and discard remaining marinade. Grill for 12 to 15 min per inch of thickness, or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

<sup>1</sup>Taken (with slight edits for brevity or clarity) from *Jewish Cooking – The Traditions, Techniques, Ingredients, and Recipes*, by Marlena Spieler (Hermes House, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>Taken (with slight edits for brevity or clarity) from *allrecipes.com* – recipe posted by Kerri Skrudland.

## We Came, We Golfed, We Shmoozed, We Dined

(and the answer to what you'd really like to know about the annual CEC golf tournament)



If you're one of the lucky 96, you hit some balls at the 10th Annual Congregation Etz Chayim Golf Tournament last June. Or maybe, at least, you're one of a few more who was regaled by golf stories as you dined after the tournament.

It was a great day, said Sid Rosenhek, chair of the event for eight of the past ten years, citing that the event was well attended and the weather was good. Not to mention that "our tenth year was financially better than anticipated." Sid attributes this to devoted and continuing sponsor support and a dedicated team of tournament volunteers.

But back to "financially better" (see last paragraph), what does that mean for Etz Chayim congregants? Where does the money go?

Funds raised from the golf tournament go toward a range of unique synagogue programming directed at both Etz Chayim congregants and the broader community—from a scholar in residence program to Russian Speaking for Seniors, and from targeted children's programming, like synagogue skills for grade-school kids (Mitzvah Minds) or film and videography skills for young congregants (TV Kids Media School) to an ongoing multi-generational family heritage project (Our Trees of Life – see article page 3).

Perhaps more importantly, some of the money raised helps Etz Chayim offer financial assistance to many families who register for a variety of these programs and would otherwise not be able to attend. ■





# Shanah Tovah Greetings



**Elissa Abrams and Alex Singer, Claudia, Ben, and Hannah**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Darlene and Jerry Davis**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Diane and Richard Boroditsky and family**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Ricki and Alex Feder and family**  
Wishing all good health and joy for the New Year

**Norman Freedman and family**  
Wishing family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Lil and Ben Hirt and family**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Matthew, Nola, Ezra, Yona, Galya, and Gilon Lazar**  
Shana Tova U'Metukah

**Gail, Ron, and Marlee Cantor**  
Wishing a happy and healthy New Year to all our family and friends

**Ann, Max, and Elie Feierstein**  
Wishing your families a year of gezunt, health, and wellbeing

**Dina and Bruce Granove**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Terry and Jerry Katz Q.C.**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Evelyn Numerow and family**  
Wishing family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Wendy, Alan, Laurie, and Jillian Daien**  
Wishing our family and friends a happy and healthy New Year

**Dina and Mark Frankel**  
Wishing all our friends and family a happy and healthy New Year

**Phyllis and Aubrey Himlestein and Family**  
Wishing our family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Howard Kideckel**  
Wishing family and friends a healthy and happy New Year

**Jane, Ronald, and Tiffany Reider**  
Wishing family and friends a healthy and happy New Year



**Lorraine Reiner**  
Wishing family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Marvin and Esther  
Samphir and family**  
Wishing family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Ethel and Zvi Dil and family**  
Wishing family and friends a  
healthy and happy  
Shana Tovah

**Colette Rubin**  
Wishing family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Shayna and Merrill  
Shulman and family**  
Wishing our family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Kim Hirt, Jerry Rubin,  
Rachel and Bina**  
A sweet and happy  
New Year to all our  
family and friends

**Tammy and Wayne Singer  
and family**  
Wishing our family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Sid and Joyce  
Rosenhek and family**  
Wishing family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Avery and Nata  
Spigelman, Adam, David,  
Jenny, Deborah,  
and Joshua**  
Wishing our family and  
friends a healthy and  
happy New Year

**Women's League of  
Congregation Etz Chayim**  
Happy New Year



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**Etz Chayim**



# Adapting to the Digital Age

## How Etz Chayim Stays in Sync With the Times



There's no stopping digitization. We bank, make reservations, book appointments online. We can program the Wifi to turn off at a designated time, track runaway dogs remotely...or wayward kids (with an app installed on their phone), all thanks to digital technology.

Some concepts inherently defy digitization, thank goodness. Nature is one; religion another. But now, develop a park to preserve a bit of that nature; or build a house of prayer, a synagogue, to nurture that religion—and you bump back into the digital world again. It's unavoidable.

### In-Step With Technology

Congregation Etz Chayim is committed to staying in-sync with technological advances. The website, redesigned in 2010, was voted one of the top 20 synagogue sites in North America at the time. It served its purpose well, then, says Jonathan Buchwald, Executive Director at Etz Chayim.

But websites have evolved impressively since then; so have the needs of the community—Etz Chayim, and broader—and how people use websites, he explains. "We want people to be able to do most of their synagogue 'business' on the website, if they choose" (adding that all traditional 'ways' to do synagogue business will remain available—by phone, or even the disappearing art of the personal visit). Purchasing

high holiday seats, registering for a program, making a donation, all should be easily done on the shul's website, he says. So it's time for a redesign, and Jonathan says the board has approved it in principle.

### Multimedia Approach to Programming

Synagogue business isn't the only reason to reinvent the website, Jonathan says.

"Now we're doing TV Kids and Our Trees of Life, and we want to make use of some of that multimedia that we're incorporating into our programming." He'd like to be able to showcase, on the website, tangible product of unique new programming now offered at Etz Chayim—well, *digitally* tangible: like video product of TV Kids Media School—where the youngest of the Etz Chayim (and broader) community can learn a contemporary set of TV and video skills for the twenty-teens and twenty-twenties.

"The modern generation is all about technology," says Taya Rtichsheva, Communications Specialist at Etz Chayim, who also runs TV Kids Media School.

"Most of them are clients of Youtube and other video hubs and want to produce their own video. I teach them the basics of videography, so they could use their skills for school projects on different digital platforms." What's more, not only a skills-building centre, TV Kids





is also a new medium for exploring cultural heritage, Jewish identity, *human* identity.

Even stories about our *shoresheem*, our roots, can be digitized. Our Trees of Life, a heritage project launched last year by Etz Chayim with the Singer/Segall family, facilitates intergenerational family dialogue, then uses digital technology to preserve the unique family stories that surface. As more families undertake the family legacy project, a digital painting of our community's heritage will begin to emerge. So the possibility of hosting, on the Etz Chayim website, product from this heritage project—bits of the digital painting—when families are willing, means sharing this rich fabric of Jewish history, tradition, and ritual with the rest of the community, the broader one too.

## Digital Persona

Today, an organization's website is its wired image, often the first point of contact with the surrounding community—digitally. For Etz Chayim, just like the human Shabbat greeters, whose role is to welcome congregants into the Saturday morning service, so too must the website engage and embrace people who visit online.

"It's like physically walking into the synagogue and seeing it's kept up and clean; your website creates your first impression of the synagogue." Seven years ago, for a synagogue website, "it was ahead of its time," he says. But time moves more quickly in the digital realm—so it's time for a reboot.

## The F-Word

Facebook is the new F-word, and there's no forgetting it. With 1.71 billion active monthly users, Taya says, Etz Chayim needs a Facebook presence too.

"Facebook is the biggest digital platform in the world," she says. "The presence of an organization on all different platforms is crucial for its development."

Facebook targets audiences in a range of ages with various interests and backgrounds, Taya says, making Etz Chayim more accessible to the broader community. She says visitors to Congregation Etz Chayim's Facebook page can find up-to-date information about services and programs for families and individuals. And a "donate" link provides a simple way to make an online gift to the synagogue. ■

# Don't Dump Print for Plugged-in

As the world adjusts and readjusts to digitization, what on earth are you holding in your hand?! Never mind what to do with your back issues of *The Walrus*.

Truth is, there remain enough advantages to print media (which now stands out in face of an oft-confusing digi-media mayhem) to ensure it remains a viable and valuable medium for informing and educating people for years to come. Here are a few of those:

### Content Credibility

In a world where threats of fake news, e-fraud, and hacking are all too real and where policymaking could conceivably happen on Twitter, finding responsible and trustworthy media has become top priority for the masses. Book and magazine/news publishers have spent decades—some of them more than a century—building reputations with bricks of integrity and content credibility. Whether this *actually* makes print more reliable than digital or simply increases the general perception that it is, is not ours to say. But it does buy print some time.

### Haptic Communication and Engagement

Holding a book, magazine, or paper forces a reader to engage, to physically interact, with the medium—haptic communication. More than a simple click to begin reading and occasional scroll, print requires readers to maintain physical intimacy with it to support it in space, not to mention turn its pages. Thus, print engenders more commitment from readers than digital text or video—both of which are ephemeral, quickly clicked off or closed, scrolled or swiped past, easily abandoned.

It can be easier to engage with the content of printed media too. A relationship with a book is pretty monogamous—not much else to do with a book than read it (though arguably, there are other uses for newspaper). But with digital media, the rule is multitasking. No application gets the user's full attention.

### Staying Power

Unlike info conveyed via websites and email, printed media—from single-paged invitations and notices to multi-paged magazines and books—has staying power. Its tangibility makes it a resource that can be visited and revisited. And with many publishers committed to best green practices (like using recycled paper), the medium becomes a more environmentally viable option.

### Eye Kind

Printed text is easier on the eyes than digital (never mind moving pictures). Imagine life without the flicker effect, without glare (let alone buffering stalls). You can't, can you? It's there though, in your memory. Reach back. Moreover, and back to haptics, printed media engages two senses at once—touch and sight. Digital—only one.

As technology races forward at mind-bending pace, there coexists growing anxiety over, backlash to, and rejection of our over-digitized world. A familiar bid, like *déjà vu*, echoes to slow down, unplug, be *here*. As with many incongruities, the answer likely lies somewhere in the middle—at that balanced, sensible, mindful place, where there's room for both print and digital. ■



# Sharing the Joy of Shabbat: The Shabbat Project

“When embraced as an island of time, Shabbat packs the greatest ongoing potential for living a Jewish life.”

If there's one Jewish ritual that engenders love, warmth, joy, and devotion among Jews more than any other, it is Shabbat – “a day so precious, so extraordinary, that to write about it seems an almost superhuman task,” as begins the Shabbat section in *The First Jewish Catalogue* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973). Not to mention that Shabbat connects us globally to other Jews around the world.

“The beauty of Shabbat is that it occurs with such frequency,” says Etz Chayim member Dr. Elissa Abrams. “Should a family choose to celebrate it, whether in song, or a special meal, or a prayer, they have opportunity to do so on a regular basis—a way to make this part of their everyday life.”

Etz Chayim cantor Tracy Kasner Greaves couldn't agree more. “Shabbat holds exciting opportunity because it is a gift that comes every week. When embraced as an island of time, it packs the greatest ongoing potential for living a Jewish life.”

It is perhaps that potential that explains why one silvery November eve last year, more than 150 people gathered at Etz Chayim to delight in dinner and Havdalah, the prayer marking the end of Shabbat. The event was presented by Etz Chayim in partnership with The Shabbat Project, an international, grassroots movement launched in South Africa by the country's Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, in 2013. The Shabbat Project brings Jews around the world together to share in the tradition of Shabbat. A second Etz Chayim-Shabbat Project celebration is planned for Saturday, October 28, 2017.

“People were there to have a spiritual, religious experience,” says cantor Tracy of the Shabbat Project evening, with palpable enthusiasm. “They were not in the building to celebrate Shabbat by transitive property due to a bat or bar mitzvah—they were there because they were celebrating Shabbat!”

Elissa Abrams was instrumental in bringing the Shabbat Project to Winnipeg via Congregation Etz Chayim.

“I felt it was an important event for a number of reasons,” she says. “My family loves Shabbat, and I thought the Shabbat Project might enhance others' joy in the experience. It was an event that families could appreciate together, and that might result in families being more engaged in Shabbat, ongoing. I hoped it might stimulate greater interest in Shabbat—the joy, musicality, and spirituality of it,” she says.

No one was disappointed.

“It was an uplifting experience, cantor Tracy says. “The room literally filled with song and laughter.”

“The feedback we received was very positive,” agrees Elissa. “I had a number of people contact me to tell me how much they enjoyed the event.” For her own family, it helped nourish a love for Shabbat that was already potent.

The Shabbat Project concept is simple, explains the movement's website: “Jews from all walks of life, from across the spectrum – religious, secular and traditional, young and old, from all corners of the world – unite to experience one full Shabbat together, in full accordance with Jewish law.”

Elissa maintains that the Shabbat Project sends some very positive messages. “Shabbat is about family, and community, and being together. Shabbat is about music, and food, and spending time with people you love. Shabbat is about turning off technology and turning inwards and towards each other. Shabbat is about self-reflection and self-improvement. Shabbat is about learning and growing as a person, a family, and a community.

“Any program that celebrates that, and draws attention to that, to me improves humanity as a whole.” ■

Shabbat Project 2016





## MEMBER NEWS & LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS

### SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

#### JULY

Ivor Berman, Arthur Chapman, John Diamond, Terri Lee Farber, Steven Feldgaier, Kim Hirt, Sharon Maltz, Rita Margolis, Isadore Minuk, Gerald Pritchard, Sid Robinovith, Norma Schacter, Elaine Swirsky, Rachel Word

#### AUGUST

Elissa Abrams, Heather Diamond, John Farber, Agnes Funk, Lawrence Gillman, Bernie Gunn, Linda Gunn, Phyllis Himmelstein, Barbara Hirt, Evelyn Moglove, Roy Paisner, Roslyn Rosenberg, Noni Rosenblat, Norman Schwartzman

#### SEPTEMBER

Allan Adelman, Brent Apter, Javier Bokser, Chuck Frohlich, Serky Goldberg, Dina Guth, Fay Hoch, Robert Pudavick, Marvin

Samphir, Howard Schwartz, Mauricio Zylberman

#### OCTOBER

Shira Cohen, Max Feierstein, Lil Frohlich, Sody Kleiman, Fay Reich, Ruth Riesenbach

### SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES

#### JULY

Betty and Sam Searle (60); Linda and Sydney Cohen (50); Ethel and Zvi Dil (50); Ilana Simon and Ari Marantz (30); Fay Ann and Avrom Charach (25); Barbara Hirt and David Petrie (20)

#### AUGUST

Pearl and Mickey Rosenberg (70); Dolly and Zivey Chudnow (60); Myrna and Frank Shiffman (60); Corinne and David Billinkoff (50); Jerry and Darlene Davis (45); Elaine and Neil Swirsky (45); Elaine and Bert Schaffer (45); Sheila and Norman Schwartzman (35); Jacqueline and Michael Meyers (30); Ada and Steven Shuster (25)

#### SEPTEMBER

Ariela and Mervin Drabinsky (45); Debbie and Donald Stern (35); Hadass Eviatar and David Hoult (25); Regina and Frank Shiffman (25)

#### OCTOBER

Karen and Richard Gall (15)

### MAZEL TOVS

#### Recipients of the Shem Tov Awards at the Jewish Federation Kavod Evening

Tracy Kasner Greaves, Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education; Murray Hyman, Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre; Daniel Samphir, B'nai B'rith Jewish Community Camp

#### Participants in the 44th Annual Gray Academy Song Festival

Jenna Buchwald; Matthew Buchwald; Sam Dimerman; Nesy Greaves; Ethan Levene; Maya Shore; Naomi Skladnik

#### Individual Mazel Tovs

Cynthia Aizenberg and Javier Gurfinkiel on the Bat Mitzvah of their son Tomas Gurfinkiel, October 21st

Alyssa Cohen and Gregory Hyman on their awards at the Winnipeg Music Festival  
Donna and Mark Cohen on the marriage of their daughter Lesley to Eric Cohen

Sima Feuer on the Bat Mitzvah of her daughter, Nomi, on September 2nd  
Phyllis and Aubrey Himmelstein on the birth of a grandson Asher Benjamin Himmelstein

Denny and Mel Hornstein on their grandson Brady Elchitz's Bar Mitzvah in Calgary

Sharon and Benson Labinsky on the marriage of their granddaughter Sara Labinsky to Ariel Gold, in Israel

Sheila and Mark Lander on Reannah and Matthew's marriage

Sherrill and David Levene on the birth of a grandson

Dafna Orbach and Diego Skladnik on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Naomi Skladnik, June 25th

Walter Saltzberg on receiving the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers

Jeff Waldman on the Bat Mitzvah of his daughter, Samantha, on October 28th  
Linda Waldman on the Bat Mitzvah of her granddaughter Samantha

### NEW MEMBER WELCOME

Bonnie and Steven Buchalter and family  
Sabrina and Javier Bokser and family

### IN MEMORIAM

Beverly Abrams  
Harvey Chochinov  
Eleanor Dashevsky  
Max Fogel  
Hartley Phillip Gale  
David Golub  
Robert Handler  
Hannah Isenstein  
Meira Lofchick  
Bernice (Bayla) Mainster  
Sally Nelko  
Sheila Paisner  
Irvin Plosker  
Kerry Roitenberg  
Gabriella Skladnik  
Rose Slayen  
Sheila Spigelman  
Fanny Sucharov

## Yizkor: Reasons, Remembering, Reflections

**Y**izkor: the prayer we dedicate to departed loved ones after the Torah reading, four times a year—Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, the last day of Pesach, and Shavuot. In Hebrew, *Yizkor* means remember, characterizing the prayer's general theme—an appeal to God to remember the souls of our relatives and friends who are no longer with us.

When we say *Yizkor*, we renew and reinforce our connection to departed loved ones, and we engender merit for their departed souls. It is customary, during *Yizkor*, to privately promise a gift of charity after the holiday, in honour of loved ones.

"*Yizkor* is a time of remembering, in an official way, with our community around us," says Tracy Kasner Greaves, cantor at Etz Chayim. "This sanctifies the few moments where we are bringing to the forefront the nostalgia that many people feel on all the holy days."

*Yizkor* is also a way of connecting us, through prayer, to the generations of Jews who came

before us, not to mention the generations to follow.

"As I recite the memorial prayer for my own father, when in quiet devotion, I am overcome with the memory of standing next to him while he said *Yizkor* for his own father and mother. This profoundly impacts my spiritual experience when I am in that moment of prayer," continues cantor Tracy.

"I imagine how he felt, in connection with how I am feeling in the very same service, saying the very same words," she says. "This connects my experience to his experience and to more than 600 years of Jewish experience."

Although traditionally, one left the sanctuary during *Yizkor* if both parents were still alive, "in recent history, we don't encourage congregants to leave," says cantor Tracy. There are moments to remember all our loved ones throughout the *Yizkor* service, she explains, as well as the six million Jews killed during the Holocaust. ■

## Funeral and Cemetery Services

Congregation Etz Chayim provides funeral services at the synagogue, graveside, or at Chesed Shel Emes community funeral chapel.

Etz Chayim also operates three cemeteries: Bnay Abraham, Hebrew Sick Benefit, and Rosh Pina Memorial Park.

For help or more information, please contact Etz Chayim Funeral Director Shelley Sklover at (204) 589-6305 ext. 214 or [ssklover@etzchayim.ca](mailto:ssklover@etzchayim.ca).



**RLL: Rabbi Larry Lander (CEC Rabbi, 2007-2017)**

**CTKG: Cantor Tracy Kasner Greaves (CEC Cantor since 2004)**

**DD: Darlene Davis (CEC Administrative Assistant, 1992-2017)**

**SS: Simon Simkin (First Vice-President, CEC board of directors since 2009)**

## Career Roads Not Taken

This issue, *Shoresh* asks a quaternary of Congregation Etz Chayim people the same question, for a peek at the path each of them *didn't* pursue.

**Shoresh: What is a different career that you might have pursued, if you hadn't chosen the path you did?**

**RLL:** I got my first full-time job as a social worker in a hospital emergency ward, and the day I started that job I got a call that I was admitted to rabbinical school. So, I put my social work career aside. Now that I'm retiring as a rabbi, I'm going to dust off my degrees in social work and take up that mantle again. Also, there's a famous rabbi, the *Kotzker Rebbe*, who says there's something noble about every profession. I kind of always wanted to be a garbage collector; being outside all day, getting lots of exercise appeals to me. Instead, I'm going to collect people's emotional garbage and help them take that out to the garbage dump.

**CTKG:** I considered a career as a producer/theatre director. It's something I dabble in on the side, as a hobby. I love to be the visionary without having to do all the nitty gritty work. Seeing an idea take the stage when it started as line-notes on a napkin is very exciting.

**DD:** I always wanted to teach and I did, for a number of years, prior to having my family. But I think I may have gone into journalism if I hadn't gone into teaching. I always loved writing as a child, and it was in the back of my mind as a young adult.

**SS:** Growing up, my hero was Jacques Cousteau, the famous marine explorer. I never missed a television show of his. When I went to university I studied (or pretended to) zoology and environmental sciences, but following a year off school travelling Europe, I never went back to university and took an entry-level position (sweeping the floor in the shipping room) at Super-Lite, and have been here ever since. I don't regret my choice, but I could have ended up a marine researcher. ■

*Ed note: Thirty-nine years later, Simon Simkin is president of Super-Lite Lighting Ltd.*

## All Eyes on Art

If you're an art aficionado, get thee to the shul on Sunday the 29th evening of October for "In the Eye of the Beholder," an art auction fundraiser being hosted by the Women's League of Congregation Etz Chayim.

This will be the first art auction fundraiser ever hosted by the Women's League, whose members noticed other synagogues holding *Antiques Roadshow*-like events, and the idea spun off from that, explains Brenda Keller, president of the Women's League. All art in the auction is donated by Etz Chayim members and non-members within the community, such as the needlepoint, *Wailing Wall* (top image, above right).

Rebecca Cramer, a new Women's League member and an artist herself, donated a framed Rebecca Cramer original, a watercolour called *At First Blush*.

"I painted this newly blossomed peony because I liked how lovely and delicate she looked swaying in the breeze," says Rebecca. "It seemed fitting to donate this watercolour because, like the title, I am new to the sisterhood."

Cathy Itscovich is another Women's League artist who donated two original watercolour paintings, *Northern Lights* (bottom image at right) and *Sunset Fields*.

"The painting of the sunset was inspired by a photo I saw," says Cathy. "I changed it around to make it mine, and I thought the sunset was very striking."

Of the *Northern Lights*, she says, "I went to high school in Thompson and they are gorgeous up there. I have painted them several times."

There are many other art donations, creating a gallery-worthy collection for the auction that includes a Shelia Butler lithograph from her renowned swimming series (as on the cover, donated by Kathleen Black, another Winnipeg artist).

All artwork will be set up for viewing at Etz Chayim, and the auction will function like a silent auction, each piece poised with a minimum bid based on an artist evaluation, Brenda explains. Any piece receiving three or more bids will go to the highest bidder; pieces receiving less than three bids will then go to an actual auction. Wine and pastries will be served at the event, and the auctioneer host will be Kinsey Posen.

Women's League fundraising both supports synagogue initiatives and also offsets costs for many of its own programs. Some synagogue initiatives funded by the Women's League include juice, challah, and cookies for Junior



Congregation, an end of year gift for each youth involved with Junior Congregation; a gift to every Bar/Bat Mitzvah; and replacement of kitchen appliances and equipment like mixers and baking pans. A portion of the funds raised will also be going to CancerCare. ■



# Try a Little Mindfulness

One of the main themes for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is repentance, *Teshuvah*, which literally means to turn or return. At the new year, we return or reorient ourselves back towards God, in repentance for wrongdoing of the year past. And we reorient toward the intention of becoming better people.

It's also worth exploring, at the High Holidays, another theme widely shared around water coolers (or in yoga classes) these days: Mindfulness. Because the two themes are more than a bit similar: *Teshuvah* is returning to the divine, while mindfulness is returning to where we are.

## Right Where You Are

"Mindfulness is about staying in the present moment, staying exactly where you are with whatever's happening. Which sounds really easy, but it's difficult to do with all the distractions in our worlds," says D'Arcy Bruning-Haid, a private-practice therapist in Winnipeg, who has trained internationally in a holistic mind-body approach to healing and wellness.

"It could be great joy, or music, or love, or it may be anxiousness, or frustration, or disappointment, or loss—whatever it is that's going on, you stay with it and you breathe through it, and try to embody it as best possible, so it can show you the gift it has to offer."

D'Arcy believes mindfulness is a portal to embodying the divine. When you embody something, you become that—the divine itself, she explains.

"So that whatever you do, be it praying, talking, sharing laughter, tears, your presence, you are sharing the best part of yourself. It's the ability to have God within each one of us, show the mirror of goodness and what's possible." Sometimes that can be very challenging, she adds, when hardship or heartache is too difficult to ignore.

## Garden Inventory

D'Arcy shares a practice she likes to do at Rosh Hashanah to focus on *Teshuvah*. She takes the opportunity to "reflect on the entire year, events both internal and external, and then begin a cleanse of some form, doing an inventory of what is working and what's not, and letting go of what's no longer working; then bringing in a sense of gratefulness and appreciation for all



"Whatever you do, be it praying, talking, sharing laughter, tears, your presence, you are sharing the best part of yourself."

that is; and then allowing the return of what needs to come."

She likens this practice to planting a garden—evaluating what's working, and what's really not growing, "what you would like to grow, and how to cleanse that enough so you can have a harvest that you can continue to love and expand and grow and forgive, sometimes, with as much compassion as possible."

D'Arcy says when we practise mindfulness, we shape a little window into all that's possible in ourselves. And there are bonus gifts from mindfulness too—like the gift of being.

"We spend so much time in our lives doing, which is important. But mindfulness brings us back to *being*," she says.

Like on Shabbat, she adds. "We battery charge at Shabbat; the quiet, sweet joy of being—when we be, not do." ■



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