

# SENIOR LINE

MAGAZINE OF THE JEWISH SENIORS ALLIANCE OF GREATER VANCOUVER



VOLUME 28(3) - NOVEMBER 2021

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Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents,  
Aunts, Uncles, Cousins & Friends  
Retainers of our community's collective wisdom.

*You Are*



We honour the memory of our parents Harriet and Arnold Shine<sup>z1</sup>, Babs and Ted Cohen<sup>z1</sup>  
~ Gary and Linda Cohen



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Dolores Luber

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## WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

It is November, 2021—we have been dealing with the pandemic since March, 2020, one year and eight months. Many of us are weary, sick of masks, trying not to listen to the news about the ‘fourth wave’ and, in general, the situation is demanding more and more effort to remain optimistic, to believe that change will come, to hope for the end of this long, frightening period in our lives.

After reading several historical accounts of past pandemics, I know intellectually that COVID will burn itself out; but when? I urge everyone to get vaccinated, to obtain your vaccination card and to get out of the house. Do you have FOGO? Fear of Going Out? Face it, act with deliberate small steps to conquer it. It takes one minor activity at a time, one small interaction with a person; your mental health is at stake; you need interaction with people and mental stimulation outside your home. Oh my, how the therapist in me has taken over!

## FEEDBACK AND PARTICIPATION

It would seem that our July issue has met with your approval. I have received so many complimentary letters that I had to add an extra page to the *Letters to the Editor* column. Thank you, my readers. You made my day! **Our advertisers provide us with additional income and readers. We appreciate their participation and support of**

# WITH ADVOCACY COMES CHANGE, WITH CHANGE COMES BELIEF, WITH BELIEF COMES HOPE

Written by Dolores Lubber

**our organization. Acknowledge your gratitude to them by patronizing their places of business and their professional services.** Another way that you can assist JSA in our efforts to create the best magazine possible is to **sponsor an article** or a page in the magazine. For the sum of \$180 your name will be mentioned in a prominent box at the end of the article: *Sponsored by...* Call or email the office at 604.732.1555, [office@jsalliance.org](mailto:office@jsalliance.org).

I urge everyone to get vaccinated, to obtain your vaccination card and to get out of the house. ”

## EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

The startling, stunning image on our November cover of a battle mask worn by royalty in the British Isles around 600 -700 C.E. represents my predilection for ruins, archaeology sites and culture. I love learning about other civilizations. The excavation site and the artifacts of Sutton Hoo reveal the depth and complexity of the past, providing us with a window into the social, economic, and technological spheres of the ancient world.

## NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

I would like to introduce the new member of our editorial committee, and author of the *Centerpiece* article on seniors’ housing options—Michael Geller. Michael is a well-known architect and developer in the Greater Vancouver area. We welcome his enthusiasm and expertise to *Senior Line* magazine.

## FAMILY COUNCILS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

*The Great Debate* with Ken Levitt and Larry Shapiro continues. This time they slug it out on the topic of who should be in charge of the long-term care facilities in B.C. The importance of family councils in long-term care is being encouraged by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils, “Independent family councils in all B.C. Health authorities want a guaranteed voice in the decisions that are being made in individual facilities, in health authorities, and within the Ministry of Health.” I endorse this idea. Why shouldn’t the very people sending people into long-term care and paying the bills have a say in what is actually happening in these facilities. Family members provide practical, day-to-day help to residents. Family members could have important conversations with staff as they represent elderly people who are afraid to complain. **I encourage you to organize a Family Council in your long-term care facility.** “We have to

have a way to network provincially so everyone is not operating in silos” says Vancouver Island association’s chairperson, Kim Slater. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/accountability/family-and-resident-councils>).

Our resident physician, Anton Grunfeld, continues to inform and encourage us to better health with his article on Dehydration, a common problem with seniors.

Jewish Seniors Alliance now has a monthly newsletter *JSA Connections*, which is sent by email to all our supporters. It will provide us with information and announcements of importance so that we can stay up-to-date and involved in JSA, in Advocacy, in Peer Support Services, in

entertainment and in our connections with each other.

## FEAR AGEISM, NOT AGING

On the lighter side of things, but not the brighter, have you noticed the absurdity of the super-rich lifestyle, now called the UBER-RICH: For a plate of French fries on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, you will pay \$200. The French fries are scalded in vinegar and champagne, then fried in pure goose fat and sprinkled with edible gold, seasoned with truffle salt and truffle oil and served on a crystal plate. Top it off with the world’s most expensive hamburger for US\$295, followed by an ice cream sundae for \$1,000.

AND there is a space race of the Uber-rich: Jeff Bezos went for a 10-minute suborbital space flight. His space flight company Blue Origin costs him US\$1

billion a year. Not to be undone, Richard Branson of Virgin Galactic successfully went into space. The cost of a ticket for you, a mere US\$450,000. Meanwhile, waiting in the wings is Elon Musk’s Falcon 9 SpaceX vehicle that will, in due course, take passengers on orbital space flights. The important thing to note is that Mary Wallace Funk, 82 years old, was in that spaceship with Bezos and William Shatner, age 90, and completed a 10-minute voyage to space in the Blue Origin. I am saving my money for a ticket!

**Dolores Luber** MS is a retired psychotherapist and family counsellor. She taught psychology for many years, and loves to learn. Researching, writing and organizing *JSA’s Senior Line* magazine is her passion.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

Write to Dolores at: [editor@jsalliance.org](mailto:editor@jsalliance.org)

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Please know that the summer *Senior Line* is absolutely FABULOUS! All of the articles/reviews are outstanding and my Mom, age 98, read many aloud to me and was thrilled with the broad range of themes, the humour and all the film/book reviews.

Also, while dropping off 15 copies of the magazine to Buchan’s Stationery & Gifts in Kerrisdale, two older gentlemen asked if they could take one. “Of course,” I said, “please help yourself.” Their response was, “We have heard that this is one of the best magazines anywhere and are thrilled to have them—thanks so much.”

**Gyda Chud**

Dearest Dolores, You have managed to turn the *Senior Line* into a magazine that people enjoy reading while gathering information of a plethora of subjects. Through your efforts you also managed to raise the profile of JSA. Aside from all this you are a privilege to know and a pleasure to work with.

**Rita Roling**

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I find your magazine so invaluable and informative not only to me, but to other seniors.

**Patsy Craig**

Dear Dolores, Thank you doesn’t even begin to cover my gratitude for your donation to the paper and your just incredibly thoughtful and kind greeting. I am so moved by your belief in me, and can tell you that the feelings are reciprocal. You are a great writer and editor. There were so many interesting articles in the Spring *Senior Line*, as always. Your reviews, Gloria Levi’s and Pnina Granirer’s reflections, and so many others. You’ve done an amazing job with the magazine. Thank you for everything.

**Cynthia Ramsay**  
**Editor of the Jewish Independent**

*Editor’s note:* As an editor, I have considered the Jewish Independent newspaper as my textbook, and Cynthia Ramsey as my teacher.

**Continued on page 4...**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

Write to Dolores at: [editor@jsalliance.org](mailto:editor@jsalliance.org)

...Continued from Page 3.

I would like to express my appreciation of your *Senior Line* Magazine. It is always filled with relevant articles and abundant information. I enjoy all the writers and artists, this time I especially noted the artist Delores Anderson Bird. The article about her was very well written and the cover photo was absolutely beautiful.

Thanks to Shanie Levin for her coverage of Dr. Alexander's helpful approach to health education online.

**Aida Davis**

I would be remiss if I didn't share this compliment with you from Monique Layton, an accomplished anthropologist and author of a number of books that might interest you.

Isn't it satisfying to experience acknowledgement of your stellar accomplishment with regard to the *Senior Line*?

Congratulations on a well-written and well-balanced *Senior Line* magazine. Lots of good stuff in it.

Best, Monique Layton

**Larry Shapiro**

I actually read parts of the summer *Senior Line* to my family while they were visiting and they (hard markers) were extremely impressed with the variety of content and subjects shared. Thank you. It is no wonder that *Senior Line* crosses all ages and continues to be a quality magazine.

My friend Delores Anderson Bird whose painting is on the cover has distributed the magazine to her connections. And so our fame continues to expand. Book and film reviews are always well researched and I am happy to report that I enjoy the broad variety of interesting choices, without having to leave my home. Connecting through words and thoughts.

**Binny Goldman**

## RESPONSE TO THE DEBATE ON MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID)

I have some concerns about the views expressed by Mr. Levitt. He does not clearly differentiate between medical assistance in dying via suicide and medical assistance via euthanasia. In the first instance the doctor prescribes lethal medicine and the patient then decides when, where and if, this medication will be taken. Mr. Levitt incorrectly states that there is a trend to this method of MAiD in the United States. In fact the first state to legalize assisted dying was Oregon in 1997 and this is still the only way to access assisted dying there.

The second method, euthanasia, is where the doctor directly administers a lethal dose of medication intravenously.

In Canada and BC both forms of assisted dying are allowed but in practice it is almost always euthanasia that is used due to a ruling by the College of Physicians that makes suicide an impractical option.

There is no evidence of a slippery slope. There is no evidence that the poor, marginalized or disabled are being seen

as throwaways. These issues have been tested in court and there is no evidence to support this position. In the recent case which lead directly to the new law C7, Jean Truchon was a totally disabled man in a wheel chair who was destined to live for years. Justice Christine Baudouin granted him an Assisted Death and directed the federal government to change the law. In fact most citizens who access MAiD are well educated, well informed and have above-average income.

This issue is all about informed choice. It is not up to the state, doctors, nurses or family members to decide on MAiD. It is an individual human right. Of course we need to have good access to medical care, including palliative care, but no one gets out of palliative care alive! It is up to the individual to decide when they have had enough suffering and want to end it. Of course there are those opposed to MAiD and they have equal rights to suffer as much as they wish until they have a natural death.

**Dr. Derryck Smith, Psychiatrist**

## JSA WELCOMES NEW SUPPORTERS

Dr. Avrum Brenner  
Harry & Ruth Dashevsky  
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Lone Tratt  
Susan Ulliyot  
Marilyn & Arthur Weinstein  
Jack Wizenberg

# COPING WITH CHANGES AND MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

Written by Larry Shapiro and Gyda Chud



## CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

**H**ello readers. How are you coping with all the adjustments and changes we have had to deal with in our daily lives? We are now well beyond twenty months of living through a pandemic that has altered much of our accustomed behavior. Our interaction with friends and family and the general public has been drastically impacted. We think twice every time an activity or chore involves any direct contact with another human being. Our children and school age grandchildren pose potential risks.

We are more vulnerable to the virus and less likely to fare well if exposed to it. Our regular regimes or habits to which we had become accustomed have necessarily ceased or have taken on a new form as the dreaded Covid-19 virus and its derivatives continue to mutate.

## EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

How has the stress of all the disruptions in your life caused by this virus affected you, and what have you observed in the attitudes and behavior of others that you know? Sadness, anxiety, irritability and depression are common characteristics that are becoming more prominent and noticeable in people.

How have the ravages of this pandemic affected your relationships with other people? Have you managed to discover any hidden creative talents or interests to occupy the time you now have to fill?

## OPTIONS IN DEALING WITH DAILY LIFE

Things that you used to do and took for granted and represented important parts of your life but are now unattainable, present a real challenge shared by most of us—like the simple chore of shopping for groceries. Personally, my wife and I prefer using the online ordering option; stores like Loblaw's and Superstore bring the orders to our car at a pre-determined time. Home delivery is another option being offered by several chains.

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**If we value each other, we are less likely to harm each other. ””**

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We began online banking as a way of eliminating the necessity of visiting a bank branch. During the recent high holidays, I was directed to several shuls offering live streaming services which I enjoyed immensely in the safety of my home.

As far as entertainment is concerned, I have discovered that there is enough diversity on television or live streaming to satisfy my appetite for entertainment, be it musical, theatrical, sports, politics or business. For those

who are unable or unwilling to visit their local Vancouver Public Library (VPL) branch, their home delivery service brings the library to you. Online concerts and plays abound and both live and pre-recorded exercise programs and yoga of all types are abundant and free of charge. Reading books that somehow you never before found the time to read, or jigsaw puzzles that have remained untouched in bookcases can now offer a delightful way to fill those new found hours at home.

If you would like to answer any of the questions posed up to this point, please do so and offer any other ideas or tips you may have to your fellow *Senior Line* readers.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR HUMANITY

As Gyda and I begin our third year as Co-Presidents of JSA, we would like to solicit your opinions on certain questions about humanity with which we have been struggling. Particularly perplexing is why we are not kinder to each other and ourselves, and why we seem to be ruled by anger and greed rather than love and compassion? Is it that we are predisposed to this affliction? How do concepts of good and evil affect our daily lives? We are born with the possibility of doing both

**Continued on page 9...**



## SERGE HABER'S MESSAGE

One day, Shelley Rivkin at Jewish Federation in 2010, informed me of the Provincial Government's decision to cut the funding to all Neighbourhood Houses for peer counselling programs. She suggested that Jewish Seniors Alliance of Greater Vancouver (JSA) could develop a program of our own. Shelley presented the idea to the Executive. Rita Roling visited several organizations that provided such services. She wrote a proposal to the Jewish Community Foundation and they gave us the start-up funds of \$20,000. I then initiated a pilot project and our first senior Peer Counselling Program had begun! We recognized the importance of emotional support for vulnerable older adults, and, with the support of Rita Roling, we decided to engage Charles Leibovitch, a Social Worker, to start the program.

In 2011, Charles became employed for 11 hours each week. He then hired Grace Hann who was available along with Lori Wall to facilitate the first senior volunteer training program of 55 hours! Grace was a Train the Trainer with Senior Peer Counselling of B.C. with many years of experience. We felt confident we were on the right path. Charles then recruited enough volunteers for the first training!

In order to fully evaluate the quality of the program and understand the

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND CREATIVITY

## MEMORIES OF A FOUNDER AND PAST-PRESIDENT: PART 3

Written by Serge Haber

training process, Board member Rita Roling, Coordinator Charles Leibovitch and myself (President and Founder) took the course together with twelve other individuals. This experience would help me with the promotion of the program and fund raising.

The course, based on experiential learning and role-play was a learning experience which set us up with great communication skills, as well as a better understanding of the many challenges seniors are facing. We completed the training with the tools necessary to help enrich the lives of seniors in our community.

Visits by volunteers were for one hour in their homes, in Assisted Living and in Residential care homes. It became obvious very early on what the issues consisted of—grief and loss, transitional living situations, loneliness and isolation, and early onset of dementia. The training taught us not to rescue or judge, but rather through our communication skills to help the person come up with their own solutions to their problems. If there was loneliness, to help the person become connected with their community. If resources were required, our volunteers were well-trained in tapping into what was needed. Senior Peer Counselling had become a reality!

Several years later, we realized another component needed to be addressed, "The Friendly Visitor". Grace Hann

developed the program, senior volunteers of all ages were recruited and a 15-hour training course was initiated. Many thanks to Pam Ottem and Rita Rolling who were instrumental in developing JSA's Peer Support Services.

### VOLUNTEERING AS EMPOWERMENT

I would like to recount a story of my dear friend Dr. Harold Laimon 'May his memory be a blessing', a physician and surgeon in the City of Vancouver. At an early age he became blind and had a severe hearing problem. After he retired, with vision and hearing loss, his life became somewhat meaningless.



We support all seniors who are facing profound challenges in the aging process.

I suggested that he take the course on calling seniors, which he did. For several years, he had at least seven individuals that he would spend one hour with each week. He brought them back into a social life with great success. Dr. Laimon took pride in this work, thus enhancing the quality of his life as well as the quality of the senior clients he regularly called.

We now have an average of 60 to 70 trained volunteers providing



emotional support to one hundred plus individuals as well as supporting their families as needed. Make no mistake, we are not helping only a hundred families, we are also helping those volunteers that are helping themselves, through their experience and involvement with seniors.

## FACING THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit seniors with a vengeance. Isolation became an issue to all seniors, particularly those who did not have any family or friends to help them out. It was not only a question of verbal help, but also the importance of health and food support. Our organization was able to provide the needed emotional support for loneliness and social isolation.

We rose to the challenge. The Board and our Staff immediately pivoted to virtual meetings; our volunteers were supported more regularly; our staff set up weekly virtual support for clients who were able to use this technology. Zoom became a tool for training and we have been able to successfully train 30 volunteers virtually to date with another training course due to start.

Our volunteers recognized the need to do more outreach towards their clients. Because home visits were prohibited, phone calls became more frequent, up to 2-3 times per week. When the pandemic ends, with the use of virtual technology, and with more capacity, we will continue to reach people throughout the Province.

## ACCEPTING AND FOSTERING DIVERSITY

Work that started with no money and with no knowledge has developed and become 'the primary program for JSA'.

Our program has been enriched to include greater diversity, recognition of cultural differences and LGBTQ seniors. In essence, we support all seniors who are facing profound challenges in the aging process. We have every reason to feel proud of the incredible support we are providing through JSA and our amazing team of staff and volunteers! We will maintain the Outreach Program and our Advocacy Program, and hopefully will see increased capacity in all areas of peer support.

My term as JSA President was completed in September 2014. None of the things that I have accomplished and the work that I was giving to the community could have been done without the support, sacrifice and encouragement of my dear wife Elinor 'may her memory be for a blessing' my partner for 57 years of my life, and the continued support of my best friend now for the last five years, Sheila.

The incoming President, Marilyn Berger, and incoming Vice-President, Ken Levitt, were kind enough to bestow upon me the honour of President Emeritus, which I humbly accepted. The two year term of Marilyn produced further advancement of the JSA that continued as well in the three years Ken Levitt was President. JSA today is in the capable hands of Co-Presidents Gyda Chud and Larry Shapiro, and the wonderful support of a Board made up of 21 mostly older adults that are giving their life experience and support to the seniors of our community.

None of this would be possible without the wonderful support and expertise of our professional staff, which includes Liz Azeroual, Executive Administrator, Rita Propp, Administrative Assistant,

Wendy Lo, Bookkeeper, Jenn Propp, Graphic Designer and Webmaster, Rochelle Garfinkel, Manager Donor Relations, Charles Leibovitch, Coordinator Peer Support Services, Grace Hann, Supervisor and Trainer Peer Support Services, Vicky Albarracin, Peer Services Assistant, and Margot Beauchamp, Quality Assurance Liaison.

It is my vision that JSA now has the ability and organizational capacity to become one of the most important organizations in the City of Vancouver. The Pandemic era has brought a new element into JSA's ability to communicate and train senior volunteers via the Zoom platform. This newly acquired ability could and should expand our programs to all seniors in the Province—if the financial help is available. I am still involved at age 93; with my support, my mentorship, and my vision, I hope to see the JSA go forward to greater heights.

Someday, I will face my maker, who will question by asking me, "I gave you life, what did you do with it?" I will lift my head high and proudly say, "I helped my community and my fellow man."

Blessings,

**Serge Haber**

*President Emeritus*

**Serge Haber** is the founder and President Emeritus of Jewish Seniors Alliance. His vision, his determination and his continuing commitment are crucial to the development of the organization and its services.

SPONSORED BY LEAH & KEN LEVITT

# REVIEW: JSA SNIDER FOUNDATION EMPOWERMENT SERIES

## A CONCERT FOR THE SOUL

Written by Shanie Levin

**A** *Concert for the Soul*, the last in the 2020-21 *JSA Snider Foundation Empowerment Series* took place on Monday, June 28. Jewish Seniors Alliance and the Kehila Society of Richmond presented classical pianist **Libby Yu** in performance via Zoom. **Toby Rubin**, coordinator of Kehila Society, introduced the guest. Libby Yu was born and grew up in Richmond. She is an accomplished performer, collaborator, teacher and adjudicator. Yu has graced international stages and has appeared as soloist with major symphony orchestras. She brings her passion for music to share with audiences of all ages and venues. She is an artist for the Health Arts Society, *Concerts in Care*, which allows her to share her music in residential care homes and hospitals. Toby encouraged us all to watch Yu's fingers as they move on the keyboard.

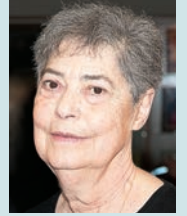


Libby Yu greeted everyone from her home and stated how much she enjoyed performing for JSA and Kehila and that she looks forward to playing for us in person in the future. She told us that she will be playing Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin. The first piece was Beethoven's *Moonlight* in three movements. The first was slow, the second light and happy, while the third was dramatic with many runs and chords. The next piece was Frantz Schubert's, *Impromptu*, 4th Opus in A flat major. This piece is full of cascades, arpeggios with a beautiful melody. It is in the ABA format, where the third movement returns to the melody of the first. This was followed by two of Chopin's *Etudes*, the first in F minor and the second his well-known revolutionary etude that reflects his turmoil over the instability of his native Poland. Yu ended her performance with a Chopin *Ballade*, in G minor. The main theme is a quiet, still melody that builds in virtuosity and then flourishes to huge dramatic chords. The coda is fast and exciting.

It is indeed a pleasure to watch Yu in her intensity and concentration. She thanked the audience and said that she hoped that the music brought us all joy. **Gyda Chud**, Co-President of Jewish Seniors Alliance, thanked Yu for the amazing program. She encouraged the audience of about forty-five to complete the evaluation forms on the screen. She reminded everyone that in the past, events with Kehila have included lunch, and hopefully

we will all be able to enjoy both lunch and a performance in person in the future. Chud again thanked Libby Yu stating that the concert was not only an inspiration for the soul, but also for the heart and mind.

**Shanie Levin** is an executive board member of JSA and on the editorial board of *Senior Line* magazine.



## GLORIA LEVI: WHAT INSPIRES ME AT 90?

Written by Tamara Frankel

**A**nother successful virtual Empowerment Series by Jewish Senior Alliance was cosponsored by Peretz Centre, featuring nonagenarian **Gloria Levi**. **Gyda Chud**, Co-President of JSA, as well as President of Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture, welcomed the 67 viewers and offered a background of JSA's Empowerment series. **Fran Goldberg** introduced Gloria as a feminist, activist, Covid survivor, gerontologist, therapist, social worker, and a woman of tremendous confidence, who finds joy in the darkest of moments.

Gloria seems to find inspiration in everything around her, from the rustling breeze and glistening sunsets to deep soulful self-discovery. She finds meaning in both everyday happenings and the larger matters of the heart and social justice. If we were to sum up Gloria's nuanced and profound wisdom in a word, it would be wholeness. She elevates the whole person with all their perfect imperfections.



Gloria Levi

To Gloria, self-discovery and self-knowledge are paramount values. She illustrates the importance of being true to oneself with the charming story of Rabbi Zusia, who lamented to God, bemoaning his fate for not being like Moses and Abraham. God advised him to be exactly who he is – Zusia. The goal is not to strive for perfection but to be authentically oneself.

Through the lens of Gloria’s approach of wholeness, even a global disaster like Covid-19, has vital lessons for us. Gloria, a Covid-19 survivor, refers to the virus as the 11th plague. But she is passionate about the lessons that this pandemic has brought to light. It revealed the discrepancy between the haves and the have nots: the ones who support our daily life, the low wage earners, clerks, grocery store workers, hospital workers, drivers, food production workers, in stark contrast with the billionaires. The pandemic has yielded an awakening, a heightened awareness that things need to change on numerous levels, both environmentally and socially.

Along with her staunch commitment to social justice, Gloria draws connections and inspiration from Jewish sources; for example, she refers to *Leviticus* in which God tells Moses to instruct the

Israelites to give the land a rest. During the Sabbath year, the land is to lie fallow and to be “released” from cultivation. Weaving rest and restoration into our physical and spiritual worlds is a much-needed change. Finally, Gloria quotes Ecclesiastes and reminds us all that 'vanity of vanities; all is vanity'. So (let’s) follow Gloria’s advice: Embrace life, enjoy meaningful relationships and small kindnesses. And find inspiration all around us.

**Tamara Frankel**

serves on the Executive Board of Jewish Seniors Alliance and is a member of the Editorial Committee of *Senior Line* Magazine.



## COPING WITH CHANGES

...Continued from Page 5.

good and evil deeds, and that personal choice and its resulting acts is how we should be judged. Why is a world of friendship and benevolence so elusive? Have we not either seen in others or experienced ourselves the connection between good and happiness and evil and unhappiness? Everyone is free to determine their own moral codes. Who among us does not strive for friendship and benevolence?

When evil becomes common place as it evidenced by the rise of racism, discrimination, gender bias, white supremacy and LGBTQ2 prejudice, we tend to lose our collective ability to recognize it. If we value each other, we

are less likely to harm each other.

We are seeing a rise in far-right extremism. We have been made painfully aware of the fact that hate groups in Canada have kept a proportionate pace with their American counterparts tripling in recent years. There were close to three hundred hate groups in Canada in 2019-2020 and

**Gyda Chud’s** lifelong passion is her career in Early Childhood Education which she teaches at Langara and VCC. She serves on the Boards of numerous organizations including JSA and President of the Peretz Centre which her parents helped establish in 1945.

over 120 violent incidents since 1990 including three mass murders. Most popular hate crimes in the Western Hemisphere are motivated by race, ethnicity and ancestry as well as gender identity. We must endeavour to rid ourselves of the old inappropriate mindsets that can easily be passed on to future generations.

To all of you, be well and stay safe,

**Larry Shapiro and Gyda Chud**  
*Co-Presidents*

**Larry Shapiro** studied accounting and worked at major firms as well as with the Federal government. In 1977, he studied real estate and opened his own business. Since moving from Montreal to Vancouver, Larry has been an active member of the JSA Board.



Jewish Seniors Alliance

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Written by Shanie Levin



The AGM took place on the evening of September 23rd, with a few Board members in the *Sukkah* at Congregation Beth Israel and many others participating on Zoom. **Gyda Chud**, Co-President of JSA, welcomed all who were in the *Sukkah* and those online. She acknowledged that we were on unceded Indigenous territory and expressed hope in the moving forward of Truth and Reconciliation.

She called for a moment of silence for JSA supporters who have passed away during the past year.

This being the second year that that we are unable to celebrate together with a dinner and the recognition of volunteers who have contributed to the wellbeing of older adults, she hoped that next year we can break bread together.

Gyda then introduced **Rabbi Adam Stein**, Associate Rabbi of Beth Israel, who has joined the Board of JSA. Rabbi Stein said the blessing for sitting in the *Sukkah* and spoke about Sukkot. Pointing to the different parts of the *lulav* and *etrog* he said that the myrtle could be compared to an eye, the willow to a mouth, the palm to a human body and the *etrog* to a heart. This personifies the work of JSA and helps them physically

and spiritually to be seen (myrtle), to be heard (willow), to stand up tall (palm), and to have heart in all we do. Gyda thanked Rabbi Stein for the connection with the symbols.

The minutes of the past meeting and the agenda for the present meeting were accepted. Treasurer **Alan Marchant** presented the financial report, on the screen, prepared by Joseph Stein and Assoc. He stated that the wage subsidies from the government had been helpful for the fiscal year. Alan pointed out the revenue and expenses, outreach, peer support and other income. All these sheets are available on the website.

**Larry Shapiro**, Co-President, then continued to present the president's report. We continued to deliver our services in spite of the difficulties of COVID and we re-organized as necessary. He and Gyda look forward to a third year of working together and he thanked the Board, staff, committee chairs and all our supporters for their work.

The chairs of the various committees then presented their reports, which are available in full on the website.

The Peer Support Services report chaired by **Rita Roling** was presented by Gyda Chud. All of their services

had to be delivered by phone or online. Staff innovation began with zoom training in order to provide weekly webinars for volunteer development. Three picnics in the park were held as well as an outdoor BBQ. She thanked **Margot Beauchamp** for the quality assurance reports to Vancouver Coastal Health.

**Tammi Belfer** reported for the Communications Committee. She thanked **Rochelle Garfinkel** and **Liz Azeroual** for their help in producing a monthly newsletter with the goal of informing and educating the community of the ongoing work of JSA.

**Lyle Pullan** reported for the Membership Committee. We have 550 supporters as well as 146 life members.

**Serge Haber** gave the Fundraising report. He emphasized the help that various Foundations have given to JSA over the years.

**Shanie Levin** gave the report for the Program Committee. As in past years this Committee has co-hosted an Empowerment Series with other seniors' organizations in the community. This year the theme is "Be Inspired". We also present two Forums, Fall and Spring.

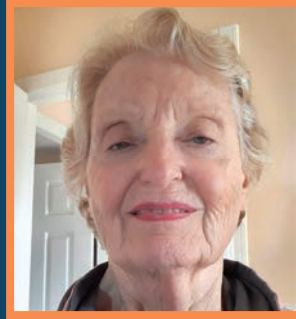
## INTRODUCING JSA'S NEW BOARD MEMBERS...

**Dolores Luber** pointed out the *Senior Line* magazine is now a forty page journal completely written by dedicated volunteers. She thanked Jennifer Propp for her graphic designs and all of the writers and readers. She reminded readers that anyone can sponsor a page in the magazine.

**Tony DuMoulin** for the Advocacy Committee mentioned the paper they had produced on Long Term Care and also the All Candidates Meeting that had been co-sponsored by a number of senior groups. He thanked Margot Beauchamp for her work with the committee. One of their initiatives for the coming year is a seniors' advocacy council to combat ageism. Tony also presented a Special Resolution to amend JSA's bylaws and by request he read it. Voting was carried out on screen and the resolution passed.

This was followed by the Nomination Committee report presented by **Ken Levitt**. The slate of members was shown on the screen. Motion three, to fix the number of Directors at 21 for the 2021-22 year, and number four, that the membership approve the nomination slate were passed.

A short video about the Peer Support Program concluded the meeting. A big thank you to **Tamara Frankel** and Tammi Belfer for organizing the meeting, to Alan Marchant for the technical work and to the staff, who worked hard on all the elements of this event.



**NASSA SELWYN** is a retired Community Health Nurse who was active in health promotion and community development. She participated in the school system, well-baby clinics, pre- and post-natal care, substance abuse counselling, and long-term care assessment for seniors. Since retirement she was on the early developing board of Jewish Seniors Alliance.

She has served as an active volunteer in the community, on the Boards of Louis Brier Home and Hospital, and its Foundation. Nassa enjoys hiking, swimming, tai chi, painting, singing in community choirs and traveling. Nassa with her husband Arnold Selwyn are proud of their blended family of five children with their spouses and partners and four grandchildren.



**RABBI ADAM STEIN** received his BA in Judaic Studies with minors in Theatre and Philosophy at University of California, San Diego. He was ordained from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles in 2009. Rabbi Stein and his wife Tamar moved to Kansas City, where he was Assistant Rabbi

at Congregation Beth Shalom. Then to Australia as Rabbi of the only Masorti (Conservative) synagogue in the Melbourne area. Rabbi Stein and Tamar, along with their two sons, Eli and Gabriel, returned to Vancouver in 2016 to join the staff of Beth Israel. He has long had passions for theatre, photography, and technology.



**JERRY BLEET** graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce at U. of Manitoba. After a 10 year career with the Hudson Bay Company (HBC). Jerry moved to Edmonton, as Vice President Operations for Acme Merchandise Company. He transferred to Vancouver. He then joined London Drugs Ltd as Vice President. He completed requirements from UBC as a

Commercial Real Estate Agent and completed four years as a Director of the Commercial Division of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. Jerry and his wife Estelle moved to Richmond with their two daughters and a son—now including 7 grandchildren. He is active with Beth Tikvah Synagogue on the Real Estate Committee. At Hillel he served as President of the Board of Directors. At Jewish Family Services, he is a volunteer for RICHMOND food delivery for JFS Food Bank.

# THE BULLETIN BOARD

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND WEBINARS CONCERNING SENIORS' ISSUES

Written by Shanie Levin

### MOVING BEYOND COVID-19: PREPARING OURSELVES AND OUR COMMUNITY FOR RECOVERY

On Sunday, April 25th and Monday, April 26th the Vancouver Jewish Community sponsored a virtual webinar in the form of three lectures directed to community members, communal professionals, volunteers and rabbis. Spearheaded by the Jewish Federation, the program was sponsored by eleven community organizations including Jewish Seniors Alliance.

The first presentation was titled *A Year of Upheaval: What has Trauma Done to our Bodies and our Brains?* This was followed on Monday by a morning keynote: *Growth after Trauma*. The lunch hour keynote was *This Moment in Time: Reflections on Jewish Leadership*.

The speaker for the first two lectures was Betsy S. Stone, PhD, who is a retired clinical psychologist. She is currently an adjunct lecturer at Hebrew Union

College - Jewish Institute of Religion. During the pandemic she has led numerous webinars on Trauma, Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth. The second speaker was Dr. Steven Windmueller, who is the Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk Emeritus Professor of Jewish communal studies at the Jack H. Skirball campus of HUC-JIR in Los Angeles.

#### TRAUMA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Dr. Stone offered the following definition of trauma: The response to a deeply distressing event that overwhelms the individual's ability to cope. Responses to the pandemic were feelings of helplessness, and a diminishment of a sense of self. Also a feeling of being overwhelmed and an inability to express a whole range of emotions. The problem with this definition, in relationship to COVID, is that trauma is usually related to a one-

time event, whereas the pandemic is ongoing. People are not coping well and their coping skills can make things worse, for example, the increase in drinking, particularly among women with children. Dr. Stone emphasized that trauma is different than grief in that it involves a different part of the brain. It is a more primitive part that relates to basic fears and can cause hyper-arousal. She calls this the COVID brain, and it can lead to sleep disturbances, overeating, distortion of body image and hypochondria. We have lost people to suicide, marriages are weakened, jobs disappear and the ability to trust is diminished markedly. Some of the results may be that adults will marry later, have fewer children and be less participatory in community. Hate and violence may continue through a backlash against minorities and the exodus of the middle class from large city centres.

#### THE JEWISH WORLD AND ITS RESPONSES

Vancouver, and the West Coast in general, is now the cutting edge of the Jewish world. Dr. Stone suggests that we will need to retain tech and small group events, and maintain longer term welfare for some who will still be suffering. This will put more pressure on community leadership who will also need support. Dr. Stone feels we are still many long months away from re-emergence. Communities need to find ways for people to tell their stories. These narratives can present opportunities for healing.

In her second lecture on Monday, Dr. Stone discussed what we can learn from a year of fear, loss and disruption. How can we begin to repair ourselves and explore growth after trauma?

Dr. Windmueller looked at what we may have learned from previous pandemics, for example, the Spanish Flu. What have



Betsy S. Stone, PhD



Dr. Steven Windmueller

we learned through technology about Jewish engagement? There has been significant growth and participation in Judaism virtually, as well as collaboration between community organizations. Economic realities may lead to downsizing and merging of many organizations. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic 20,000 Jewish professionals in the USA were either furloughed or laid off. We need to create new programming models to help with the reintegration of individuals into the community. Some new alternatives have already been created, such as Mazon and J-Street. We need to acknowledge losses and look at where we go from here. Dr. Windmueller felt that Vancouver had done very well and that the cooperation between agencies and the use of the virtual world contributed to this. Hopefully, the community with its participation in

these instructive presentations will find these new tools and procedures useful in the reorganization of community institutions. The outlook is hopeful.

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## BC SENIORS GUIDE: SERVICES FOR SENIORS

**M**abel Elmore, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long Term Care and Isobel Mackenzie, Seniors Advocate for British Columbia, presented an update on seniors' services to a group of organizations involved with services to seniors. The main point of the announcement was to make everyone aware that the updated and enhanced Seniors Guide (last updated in 2016) is now available to the public. The Guide can be accessed either in print or online.

The Guide is now available in seven languages. Copies can be accessed through calling 211 or 1-877-952-3181, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, also on the computer through the provincial website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/about-seniorsbc/seniors-related-initiatives/bc-seniors-guide>. They hope that the various organizations will share this news with their networks.

**New additions to the guide:** digital literacy; cultural safety; LGBTQ2S support; medical assistance in dying (MAiD); and information from the B.C. Centre for Disease Control on COVID-19. For more information on how to access the Guide go to BC Seniors Advocate: <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

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# AYELET COHEN WEIL

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LOUIS BRIER FOUNDATION

Interview by Tamara Frankel

**J**ewish Senior Alliance congratulates Ayelet Cohen Weil, who has recently been named Executive Director of the Louis Brier Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, Ayelet held the position of Associate Director of Community Engagement at the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver.

During her work at the Jewish Federation, Ayelet spearheaded the development of a new community group called *Beyachad* ('together' in Hebrew). This group, composed of Israeli-Canadian women, supports new mothers with networking and career opportunities. With the onset of Covid, Ayelet convened all Senior Service providers for bi-weekly roundtable

meetings to assess emerging needs collectively, and to facilitate collaboration amongst all organizations.

In her new position at Louis Brier, she will concentrate on raising funds to maintain and foster the well-being, care and happiness of the seniors who reside at the Louis Brier Home and Hospital and the Weinberg Residence.

Ayelet Cohen Weil was born in Mexico City to an Israeli father and a Mexican Jewish mother. "Being Jewish is what ultimately defines me. It has defined who I am, where I come from, where I'm going, why I am who I am, and who I want my children to be."

Ayelet completed a bachelor's degree in political science and Middle Eastern studies at the University of Victoria. Shuttleing between Canada and Israel, she racked up an impressive string of accolades and experiences. She became the Hillel director at the University of Victoria, and continued on to serve another two years as Hillel's managing director of programs for the province, in Vancouver.

Ayelet obtained a master's degree in public policy, specializing in conflict resolution and mediation at Tel Aviv University. And finally settled in Vancouver, with a husband and a baby girl, where, we hope, she'll stay for a while. Ayelet Cohen Weil is an impressive and extremely qualified young woman, who will, no doubt, bring a wealth of background in non-profit management, fundraising, strategic planning and community relations to the Louis Brier Foundation.



Gold buckle with rectangular plate (detail).

# Sutton Hoo

## INGENUITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE ROMAN IRON AGE

Written by Rita Roling

All images © The Trustees of the British Museum

The British Museum is the home of the Treasures of Sutton Hoo, unearthed in 1939 on the 500 acre Suffolk estate owned by Mrs. Edith Pretty. Sutton Hoo, named after the nearby parish of Sutton, is the site where a buried rowing ship filled with treasures such as beautiful jewellery, armoury, weaponry and eating and drinking utensils was discovered. The find proved to be the largest ship burial in European history.

The hillocks marked on maps as Roman tumuli had an aura of mystery. On several occasions townspeople claimed to have seen unexplained warriors on horseback disappearing

into the hillocks; Ms. Pretty herself had been told by a spiritualist that she needed to dig as there were treasures in the ground. To satisfy her curiosity and to see if there was any truth to this, she hired the self-taught archaeologist Basil Brown to begin an excavation. In the summer of 1938, he started to explore the smaller mounds and found some rivets, shards and tool fragments. The burial grounds had been looted but from the found remnants it was possible to determine that a ship had been buried over a burial chamber which appeared to have been generously outfitted for a comfortable afterlife. It is estimated that the burials took place around the mid-sixth and seventh centuries (650 -700 CE).

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE ROWING BOAT AND THE BURIAL CHAMBER

In May 1939, work started on the larger mounds and the excavation team unearthed a twenty-seven meter Anglo-Saxon rowing boat. The wood had rotted but the rivets had remained in place. The working team were careful not to disturb the boat or other buried objects and thus dug around it. There were signs of looting but for unknown reasons the grave robbers had abandoned their quest. The following month word reached the Ancient Monument Inspectorate (AMI) that there was a possibility of a major find at Sutton Hoo. They immediately



Reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo shield, using original gold, garnet, copper alloy and iron fittings.



Plain gold clasp designed to engage the hinged tongue of purse-lid.



assumed responsibility for the excavation. The collapsed 5.5m by 4.5m burial chamber was found under the boat and on June 14 the first of 263 objects was retracted. The earlier finds were wooden and iron items but as the work continued the crew unearthed precious metal objects such as platters, weaponry, armour, coins, drinking vessels, a belt buckle, shoulder clasps and an iron helmet.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ARTIFACTS

Europe was in turmoil as war was looming. To protect the finds from possible damage they were hidden in the London Underground by the AMI. The burial place covered with bracken remained in place. Once peace was restored the treasures returned to the museum and the reconstruction work began. The iron helmet – one of the most significant discoveries was shattered in a myriad of pieces, and only its bronzed face mask with the garnet adorned eyebrows, nose, mouth and moustache was recognizable. It took months of effort to precisely fit the 500 micro pieces together. Each needed to be examined for thickness and a possible pattern. Eventually these fragments became a face mask, a skull cap and cheek pieces. Once the crest across the helmet was assembled, the dimensions became defined and the work was less tedious. The hollow tube-shaped crest is inlaid with silver wires and traces of gold. Each side has a geometric design which culminates in a dragon head at the ends. When fitted correctly the eyebrows metamorphose into dragon wings. Decorated bronzed panels cover the mask but only two of the carvings remain. One is of two horned dancing warriors and the other of a mounted horseman thrusting a spear.

The helmet appears to have dual purposes. The detachable ear flaps and the inside

leather lining with extra padding around the skull protects the warrior and is part of the regular armour. However, the ornately decorated and jewelled head piece demonstrates that the wearer was a man with high status, maybe even a royal. Legends tell us the rowboat, filled with treasures, was King Raedwald of East Anglias' vessel to the afterlife. Judging from the items in the burial chamber he was a man who enjoyed life and wanted the same for his afterlife—board games, a lyre, drinking horns and a cauldron holding 100 litres of drink were available for the traveller and 40 oarsmen to enjoy.

## THE LEGACY OF MRS. PRETTY AND THE TREASURES OF SUTTON HOO

The Sutton Hoo estate still receives many visitors but the hillocks are quiet, there are no signs of their past glory. Mrs. Pretty was judged by a jury of ten to be the rightful owner of all the unearthed objects. She donated all the items and any future rights to the British Museum and she refused to accept any special accolades or recognition for her generosity.

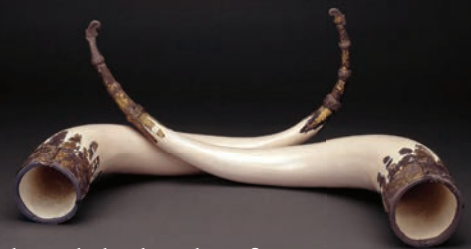
What does the Sutton Hoo ship burial show us about Anglo-Saxon society and culture? The discovery of the Sutton Hoo burial in 1939 profoundly changed opinions of an era long dismissed as the dark ages. The Anglo Saxon world was connected through a complex trade network, and gifts were often exchanged among the highest tiers of society.

For historians and archaeologists, the Sutton Hoo burial was crucial—it showed that England was not a dead zone for the arts after the Romans left during the 5th century.

**For details, visit [www.national-trust.org.uk/Sutton-hoo](http://www.national-trust.org.uk/Sutton-hoo).**



Archaeologists excavating the ship burial at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, 1939.



Silver-gilt drinking-horn fittings mounted onto a replica horn.



Gold belt-buckle. The upper surface is covered entirely with zoomorphic interlace.



**Rita Roling** worked in the social service field for over three decades. She is a firm believer in volunteerism and has for many years been actively involved with JSA. She is an executive of JSA and a member of the editorial committee.

# SENIORS AT THE MOVIES

Written by Dolores Luber

To find out where you can watch these movies and shows, do a Google search ‘Where can I watch \_\_\_\_?’ The Vancouver Public Library has a huge selection of DVDs for rent, free, also check out their streaming service Kanopy.



## NOMADLAND

2020



This elegiac and beautiful film pays tribute to those unshackled by career or mortgage. Frances McDormand plays Fern, a woman who responds when asked if she's homeless, “I’m

not homeless. I’m just houseless. Not the same thing.” Chloé Zhao, the director, is known for her calm pacing, for an emphasis on natural beauty and landscapes, and for balancing precisely atop the fiction/documentary divide. Fern, reeling from the recent loss of her husband as well as her livelihood, decides to strike out on the open road. There are issues; toilet facilities, parking, a flat tire or a balky engine; but she keeps moving on. For cash, she does a stint in an Amazon warehouse at Christmas time and a stint at a National park in summer. She meets others who also live her lifestyle, each one has a different story. I was enthralled and relished the beauty of the landscape and the authenticity of the narrative.



## PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN

2020



Carey Mulligan stars in this shocking thriller. You have been warned, now sit back and enjoy sociopathy as it becomes a style and

trauma as it turns into a joke. Cassandra, 30, a medical school dropout still living with her concerned parents is a weekday barista and a weekend huntress. Her prey is two-legged, but single-minded: men who equate a woman’s inebriation with consent. Buried beneath blonde curls and sheepdog bangs, Mulligan gives depth and sensitivity to a character that is little more than a vengeful doll. This is

black comedy, revenge thriller and feminist lecture. We find out why she does this and we empathise; but in the end it is a sad tale of warped grief and blazing fury. Do not watch it before bedtime!

## TELEVISION SERIES



## ATLANTIC CROSSING

2020



This 8-part series is inspired by a true story of a friendship forged in wartime. *Atlantic Crossing* explores politics and ambition as Norway’s crown Princess Martha flees to

America for safety when her country is invaded by the Nazis, and is taken under the wing of the U.S. president, Franklin Roosevelt. This period piece transports armchair travelers, history buffs, and romantics (that is definitely me!) back and forth across the Atlantic—to Norway, Great Britain, and the United States. Beautifully filmed, the fictionalized drama is a personal tale set against the gripping backdrop of World War II and the occupation of Norway. The series is superbly acted by an international cast. Each episode is superb. Binge alert!



## THE COOK OF CASTAMAR (SEASON 1)

2021



This sumptuous historic melodrama has it all, the setting is beautiful, the customs are historically correct, the music is exquisite and the food scenes

are to die for. Is this wild story of debauchery and deception based on real events? No, but who cares. However, the story of Clara the cook and the Duke of Castamar is enhanced by the use of authentic details of the time period it is set in, as well as a few actual historical figures.

The love story “lovers from the wrong side of the tracks” is classic, it swirls around the strict rules of society that kept people regimented into social and class strata in the 18th century. Clara Belmonte, a woman who has fallen on hard times takes a job as a cook for the wealthy Duke of Castamar. When the Duke tastes Clara’s cooking, he finds himself completely enchanted. This is a thoroughly entertaining series. Sit back and enjoy it.

## FOREIGN FILMS



### ANOTHER ROUND

2020



Four Danish men, all schoolteachers, led by Mads Mikkelsen who plays Martin, embark on a pseudoscientific quest; to see if drinking daily will pull them out of their midlife slumps. The

Danish director Thomas Vinterberg's latest film is a sweet, strangely modest tragicomedy about the pleasures of (mostly banal) excess. Middle-class lives do come unspooling in *Another Round*, but this odd little film turns out to be neither farce nor moralistic provocation. The buoyancy of the film comes from moments of unpredictability, when the characters teeter on the precipice of either ecstasy or injury. Mikkelsen and Co. are incredibly accomplished throughout the film, cautiously essaying middle aged men. What a treat!



### THE SONG OF NAMES

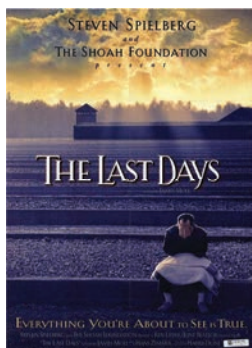
2019



Tim Roth and Clive Owen star in *The Song of Names*, a violin saga steeped in mystery. Although this is a fictional mystery drama, its story feels as real as many of the true-life, Holocaust-centric tales that we have seen. It's a profound, affecting and beautifully told chronicle of faith, family, obsession and the language of music.

It's 1951, and a major musical event is about to enliven London's classical scene. The evening will feature a young violin virtuoso, Dovidl Rapaport, playing a program of Bruch and Bach. But Dovidl disappears. Martin never sees him again. Thirty years later, Martin finds himself intrigued by an auditioning would-be student who rosins his bow in a particular way. That way belonged to Dovidl, who, we learn in flashback, was an arrogant child prodigy left in the care of Martin's father before the outbreak of World War II. *The Song of Names* is a musical recitation of the names of all those who died at Treblinka. The music is rapturous, the movie is a kind of requiem for a nightmare. Bring a handkerchief. Bravo!

## HOLOCAUST/ WORLD WAR II



### THE LAST DAYS

1998



Thanks to the recommendation of Peter Karasz, a friend and Hungarian survivor of the Holocaust, I watched this profoundly moving documentary about the Hungarian Jewish

experience in the final stages of the Holocaust. The Nazis deported 438,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz within a six-week period. Survivors Zisblatt, Basch, Cahana, Firestone, and the late Democratic politician Tom Lantos recount on camera their own ordeals from this period in horrifying and heartbreaking detail. There is searing footage of actual survivors, walking skeletons, as the Allies liberated the camps, and angry memories of the aftermath. There is a final passage of joy as Tom Lantos, whose wife is also a survivor, both had lost all of the members of their families, recount how they had two daughters who came to them with the promise of a gift: they would have a lot of children. And then there is a shot of the Lantos family and their 17 grandchildren. *The Last Days* has been re-released in 33 languages on Netflix worldwide—an essential and powerful experience.

## WATCH WITH THE GRANDKIDS



### THE BIGGEST LITTLE FARM

2018



John Chester, who directs and narrates the documentary, and his wife, Molly, set out from Los Angeles to establish a farm they would run in an old-school, anti-corporate-agriculture style. The Chesters are inexperienced! Nature both gives and takes away and gives again as the Chesters work the land. Advised by their farm guru Alan York to embrace biodiversity, the couple stock the farm with all form of animal life. There is a lot of organic waste. We are amazed and glad to learn that there are ultimately awe-inspiring ways in which humans can help nature do its work. The film succeeds beautifully. The science is fascinating, the results thrilling, the message sober and empowering.

# PROFILE: YIDDISH MOVIES WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Written by Dolores Luber

**M**y respect and admiration for Yiddish films, theatre and culture is growing every day, especially after reading the book *Yiddish: Biography of a Language*, reviewed in this magazine.



For starters, watch *YidLife Crisis*, a series about nothing and everything, drinking in the very best that Montreal's multicultural Mile End has to offer. The series is a joint effort of two actors, Eli Batalion, who plays Leizer in the series; and Jamie Elman, who plays Chaimie. Best friends and debating adversaries, they tackle life, love, and lactose intolerance in this foodie-centric web series done entirely in their grandparents' fluent Yiddish. Topics include a wide range of existential questions such as "who (and what) is a Jew?" and "should we fast on *Yom Kippur*?" According to Elman, "We're using Judaism and Yiddish to talk about the issues of culture, religion, dogma, hypocrisy, extremism and fundamentalism, which pervade a lot of culture and a lot of religions." Available at <https://www.yidlifecrisis.com/> or [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=ydlife+crisis](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ydlife+crisis)

## SEVEN YIDDISH FILMS WHICH SCRUTINIZE HASIDIC MORES

***Mendy*** (2003): Mendy is a young Brooklyn Hasid who leaves the strict rules of his insular and repressive community to join his childhood friend, Yankel, who is living a secular life in Manhattan. Mendy's struggle to integrate his faith and traditions with the modern world are influenced by his growing friendship with Bianca, Yankel's free spirited Brazilian roommate.

***Where is Joel Baum?*** (2012): After a tragic accident occurs in the home of a Hasidic rabbi, the family is forced to navigate the unexpected consequences. Taking place in contemporary Brooklyn, the Grand Rabbi's wife is forced to reconsider her loyalties when she finds out that the culprit is her grandson, the heir to her husband's dynasty. Rather than calling the Hasidic vigilante patrol, she calls the police, which in turn ruins 60 years of tradition that she and her husband put into place.

***Felix and Meira*** (2014): A portrait of a tempted Hasidic wife who chafes against the restrictions imposed by her Orthodox community, and weary of being scolded by her bewildered husband, she meets Felix and becomes involved in a halting courtship with a secular middle-aged man.

***Menashe*** (2017): Deep in the heart of New York's notoriously secretive Hasidic Jewish community, Menashe, a good-hearted but somewhat hapless grocery

store clerk, struggles against tradition to keep custody of his only son after his wife passes away.

***One of Us*** (2017): Observational filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady take a look at the lives of three individuals who have chosen to leave the world of Hasidic Judaism.

***The Awakening of Motti Wolkenbruch*** (2018): Pressured to marry a nice Orthodox Jewish woman, a young Orthodox Jew is thrown for a loop when he falls for someone who will not meet with his mother's approval.

***Unorthodox*** (2020): Anchored by a remarkable turn from Israeli actress Shira Haas, *Unorthodox* oscillates between dour coming-of-age drama and taut survival story. Haas as Esty encapsulates an intimate saga defined by the limbo of feeling trapped between two worlds.

**And, if you want more, go to this website to watch a sampler of five Yiddish films, old and new, which you can stream right now for free.**

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/six-yiddish-films-you-can-stream-right-now-for-free/>

***Mehabem-Mendl from Tel-Aviv*** (2016)  
***Yidl Mitn Fidl*** (1936)  
***Zay Gezunt, Jerusalem*** (2015)  
***Tevye*** (1939)  
***Samuel 613*** (2015)



# LOST IN TRANSLATION

Written by Dolores Luber

I am humiliated! I read articles and discover that I do not understand words and phrases commonly used by journalists in English, no less. Here are a couple of doozies—let me know if you also are stumped by them.

**WHACK-A-MOLE:** 1. an arcade game in which players use a mallet to hit toy moles, which appear at random, back into their holes. 2. A situation in which attempts to solve a problem are piecemeal or superficial, resulting only in temporary or minor improvement. Example: Trying to get on top of malicious software is kind of like playing whack-a-mole. I suspect in the long run it would just be a game of whack-a-mole with the spammers.

**BESPOKE:** The word bespoke has evolved from a verb meaning ‘to speak for something’, to its contemporary usage as an adjective. Originally, the adjective bespoke described tailor-made suits and shoes. Later, it described anything commissioned to a particular specification. The word has become a general marketing and branding concept implying exclusivity and limited runs. Newsweek described

the word as “monstrously distorted, abused and otherwise mangled into near meaninglessness.”

**WOKENESS/WOKE:** Wokeness is a state of being aware, especially of social problems such as racism and inequality. It also encompasses the need to search for more knowledge, understanding and truth in order to challenge injustice. Pete McMartin wrote “its membership also appears to have been designed by demographic wokeness, divided as it is almost evenly between men and women, the requisite number of Indigenous representatives and people of colour.” Also, “The Oscars was a woke award season.”

**VIRTUE SIGNALLING:** Scrabble players have been banned from using derogatory racial terms in the official rules, causing complaints from fans who have accused the game makers of virtue signalling. Banned words include racial slurs and epithets against those of Black, Pakistani and Irish origin. David Webb, a British Scrabble grandmaster, has accused Mattel of pandering to “wokeness.” Wow, now I understand wokeness!

**FOGO:** Are you anxious about the prospect of emerging from your cocoon that you’ve been hiding in for the last year and a half? You might have a bad case of “FOGO”



– fear of going out. Some people may be reluctant to leave their homes. It is another anxiety disorder, similar to agoraphobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder and germaphobia. FOGO is the fear of getting infected. Help is available, speak to your physician or mental health professional.

Then I heard about **FOMO**, fear of missing out! And, **YOLO**, you only live once, as in, “Children, I am going sky diving tomorrow”. “No Mom, don’t go, it’s dangerous.” YOLO!

**DOUBLE WHAMMY:** Last but not least is the sentence by John Ivison reporting on the Liberal party campaign: “All of that is to suggest *caveat emptor* for what follows, which may be completely specious.” I was blown away, two phrases which I did not understand. *Caveat emptor* is Latin for “Let the buyer beware.” Four years of Latin in high school did me no good! **Specious** means superficially plausible, but actually wrong, that is, misleading in appearance, especially misleadingly attractive.

I remain your humble servant—your editor, Dolores.

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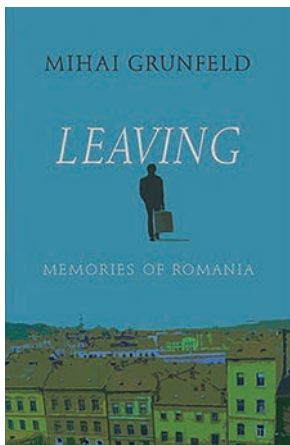
# CURL UP WITH A GOOD BOOK

Written by Dolores Luber

Send me ([editor@jsalliance.org](mailto:editor@jsalliance.org)) your recommendations of a good book or write a couple of paragraphs about the book. Be a contributor to the magazine as well as a reader.

## LEAVING: MEMORIES OF ROMANIA

Written by Mihai Grunfeld



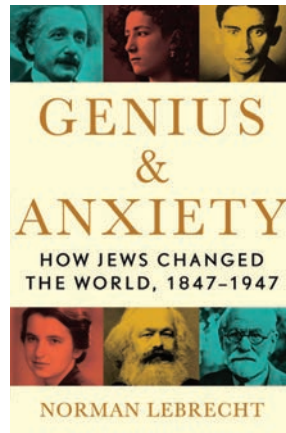
I was enthralled and enriched by the author's description of his childhood and adolescence as the son of impoverished Holocaust survivors. His parents are silent about the past but gradually the story evolves into a powerful tale of complex family dynamics shaped by adolescent experimentation, the daily grind of factory work, anti-Semitism, and big dreams of escaping the politically restrictive system in which he lives.

Mihai Grunfeld was born in Cluj, Romania where he lived with his family until he was eighteen. In January 1969 he and his older brother traveled to Czechoslovakia and from there escaped to Austria. This was the beginning of a long journey, which took him to Israel, Italy, Sweden, and Canada in search of a home in the West. Eventually he settled in the United States where he is a professor of Spanish and Latin American Literature at Vassar College.

## GENIUS & ANXIETY: HOW JEWS CHANGED THE WORLD, 1847 - 1947

Written by Norman Lebrecht

This lively chronicle of the years 1847-1947 is a thrilling and tragic history which is riveting to read, a page-turner! This is the century when the Jewish people changed how we see the world. Lebrecht sees Jewishness as essentially a matter of culture, especially high culture. *Genius and Anxiety* is an exercise in boosterism, designed to show how

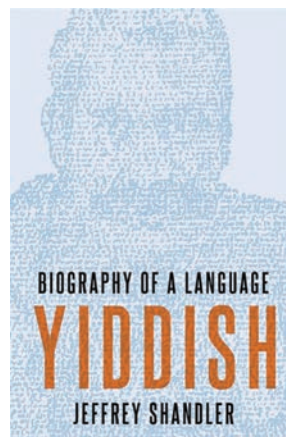


Jewish talent has “remade the world” in the past two centuries. The book begins in the 1840s, with a chapter focused on Felix Mendelssohn, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx and Benjamin Disraeli. And then proceeds to discuss in exquisite, intimate detail the lives of Freud, Einstein, Trotsky, Kafka, Wittgenstein and Schoenberg. He is determined

to present Jews as bold creators rather than victims of Nazi policy. The ever changing prohibitions aimed at Jews made every moment of their lives incalculably precarious. Hence “existential angst”—a dread of losing their rights to citizenship and free speech amid widespread persecution—freed many Jews to pursue unusual accomplishments with abandon. Hence “Genius and Anxiety.” I could not put the book down.

## YIDDISH: BIOGRAPHY OF A LANGUAGE

Written by Jeffrey Shandler



This extraordinary book provides a virtual catalogue raisonné of approaches to Yiddish, the language and its culture. This book offers readers who have little familiarity with Yiddish an introduction to its significance within multiple scholarly perspectives, including European studies, Jewish studies, diaspora studies, and immigration studies. For

those readers conversant with Yiddish, this book's format presents new ways of understanding familiar phenomena and scrutinizing conceptualizations of the language, its speakers, and their cultures. I do not speak Yiddish, yet I was engaged intellectually and emotionally in the text. I came away with an immense appreciation and respect for the language and culture. Notwithstanding the academic nature of the book, it was easy and fun to read.

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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: STREAMING, THE NEW ADDICTION

Written by Dolores Luber

I admit to watching movies and television series on Netflix, Kanopy.com, Amazon Prime, TIFF, VJFF and any other website which offers movies and TV shows free or for a price. I watch Netflix and Amazon Prime on my television set and everything else on my desktop PC. I do not feel guilty nor am I ashamed! I do not want to be cured of this addiction.

I may never go to a movie theatre again. I like setting my own schedule, I like not having to find parking, I like not standing in line. And I love subtitles. I wear two hearing aids, so even though I can hear, I sometimes have trouble understanding what the actors are saying, especially if they have accents (I love foreign films). I watch everything with subtitles. What a relief.

Total freedom is at hand—I can stop the show and go to the bathroom, I can prepare a meal and then sit down to eat it watching the show, I can watch 3 or 4 episodes in a row—I am in control! I can start a series, and if I do not like

it, I stop watching—too violent, too slow, whatever! I can watch season one of a series and decide that one season is enough, or I can continue to watch all the seasons. My record is 9 seasons of Doc Martin. Instant gratification you say; you bet! It has been a wonderful way to be entertained, educated and inspired.

Raise your hand if you also exhibit some of these symptoms! Ah, wonderful, How comforting to know that I am not alone. By the way, I still managed to create and publish 3 editions of *Senior Line* magazine, do my 4 workouts a week, study twice a week with Hebrew teachers and walk the dog 4 times a day. I am not a reprobate.

## Some of my favourite television series:

- *New Amsterdam*, 2 seasons
- *Snowpiercer*, 2 seasons
- *Black Space*, In Hebrew, English Subtitles, 1 season
- *Diagnosis*, documentary
- *Halston*, 1 season
- *Lupin*, In French with English subtitles, 2 seasons



## WATCH A MOVIE OR SHOW SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH FRIENDS

### WHEREVER THEY ARE!

There is a free extension for the Google Chrome browser called NetflixParty ([www.netflixparty.com](http://www.netflixparty.com)) that allows you to watch Netflix, Disney+, HBO, and other streaming site shows virtually with friends using synchronized playback—with a chat window down one edge of the screen. Kast ([www.kast.gg](http://www.kast.gg)) operates in a similar way but can be installed on any browser. You can have a viewing party with one friend or dozens, and it's a fun way to connect.

## FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

*Pachanga פצנגה* - Written and illustrated by Ronny Gordon (In Hebrew).

Pachanga is a young witch who lives in an ancient tree with her flying dog Miguel Sandoval. They guard the tree from two evil sorcerers who wish to steal the magic acorns from the tree. Miguel has been transformed from a prince into a dog by two wicked magicians. There is tension and humour in the encounters of these four characters. The illustrations are beautiful and clever. It is a romp in the park in the struggle between good and evil—great fun! Dust off your Hebrew, or just enjoy the illustrations which are self-explanatory. Available at the Isaac Waldman Jewish Public Library.



# Options

## WHERE ARE WE GOING TO LIVE NEXT?

Written by Michael Geller

**A**s we get older, so many things change. The house that once seemed too small is getting too big. Windows and doors are letting in too many drafts and the roof and furnace need replacing. While you can still manage stairs, you worry about the day when you might not. The neighbourhood has changed. Favourite shops and services have disappeared, and close neighbours and friends are no longer around. Relatives have suggested you should think about moving too, but where do you go? What type of housing would be best?

In the past, seniors had limited housing choices - government-funded seniors' apartments, a nursing home, or move in with family. However, today's seniors have many more alternatives —from laneway houses to co-housing developments, retirement homes, assisted living, or long-term care. This article explores some of the options available for those capable of

independent living. A future article will examine options for those needing a level of care. In considering the options it is important to remember that seniors are all different and may want or need different solutions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Here are some choices.

### SMALLER HOUSES.


Many of us might want to move into a new, smaller bungalow. Unfortunately, most new houses are too large and expensive with too many levels and bathrooms. But this is changing. In America, many municipalities encourage smaller, single-level homes on smaller lots within what are called 'pocket neighbourhoods'. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sherikoones/2019/06/07/the-allure-of-pocket-neighborhoods/?sh=21cb26843152>)

I expect this type of housing to soon appear in British Columbia. Increasingly, local municipalities are allowing small laneway houses to be

built. While zoning generally requires them to be rental, this too is changing. In UK and Australia, these homes are often referred to as 'granny flats'. However, locally some households are building laneway or coach houses for adult children, with the expectation that in future, they will move into the big house and a parent will move into the laneway home. While there are legal and tax considerations, this option may be attractive to some families. Details can be found here: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/laneway-houses-and-secondary-suites.aspx>

**DUPLEXES.** Vancouver's zoning regulations now allow duplexes to be built on a single-family lot, resulting in homes half the size of what might otherwise be built. However, what many purchasers do not realize is that a duplex is a strata-titled development. While there will not be a strata council to deal with, the two owners will need to agree on maintenance matters.

**ROWHOUSES OR TOWNHOUSES.** The terms rowhouse and townhouse are often used interchangeably to describe a form of housing with a front door at grade and shared walls on one or both sides. Locally, townhouses are usually within a condominium development with ongoing strata fees and rules and regulations. However elsewhere they can be 'fee-simple' which means they are individually owned, like a single-family house, without monthly strata fees and a domineering strata council president to deal with. Expect to see more townhouses that can

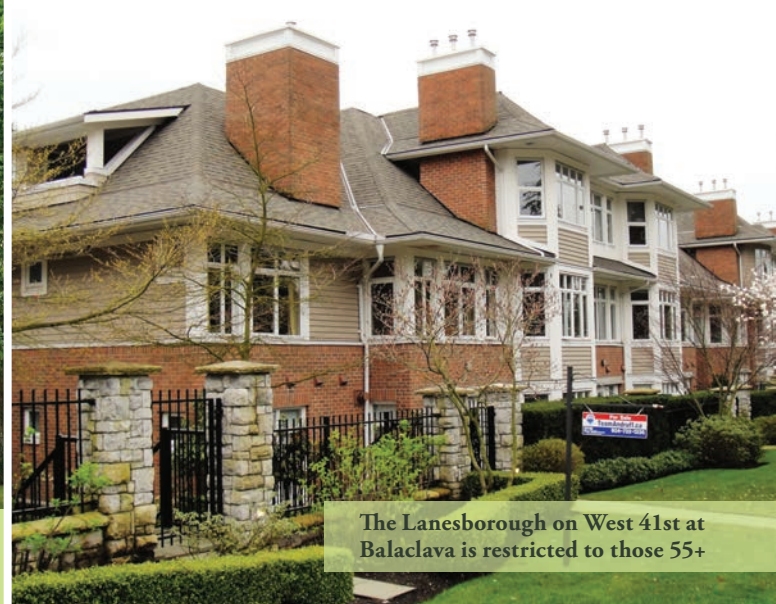


Seniors moving to an apartment from a house often seek large balconies and terraces like those on this Geller project in Kerrisdale.





Oak Gardens on Oak Street at 43rd was developed as seniors housing for the Jewish Community



The Lanesborough on West 41st at Balaclava is restricted to those 55+

be individually owned in and around Vancouver in the years to come.

**APARTMENTS.** While seniors-oriented apartments used to be built by government or non-profit organizations, increasingly ‘adult-oriented’ or seniors’ apartments are being built by private developers. Sometimes they have legal covenants on title restricting them to those 55 and over and include design features and amenities suitable for older people. These can include wider doors, raised electrical outlets, space for a small table in the kitchen, and accessible bathtubs or showers with grab bars and seats. Some buildings may even include a live-in caretaker to help change light bulbs and other daily tasks. I personally was involved in the design and development of two such projects, Oak Gardens at 42nd and Oak Street and The Lanesborough on West 41st. Many more seniors’-oriented buildings are now being developed in neighbourhoods throughout Metro Vancouver.

**LIFE-LEASES.** While apartments are generally offered for rent or sale, there are exceptions. Cooperative housing is one alternative. ‘Life-lease’, a hybrid form of tenure, is another. (<https://www.bcrea.bc.ca/legally->

speaking/life-lease-housing-and-seniors-351/). One highly successful local example is the Performing Arts Lodge (PAL) development within the Bayshore community in Coal Harbour, which offers a mix of life-lease and subsidized rental suites.

**COHOUSING.** Cohousing – a cross between cooperative and condominium living – offers townhouses and apartments in a more friendly, community setting. Shared spaces can include communal dining and a broad range of recreational and amenity spaces. While most cohousing developments cater primarily to families with children, others can be exclusively for seniors, such as Harbourside in Sooke, B.C. (<https://www.harbourside.ca/>).

While many seniors may be reluctant to move from their house into these various types of housing because they fear they may require future care one day, they should not be. Increasingly



While highly controversial, today Geller Properties seniors housing at Oak Street and West 43rd is barely visible through the trees

publicly and privately funded homemaker services are being available for seniors living in these different types of housing. However, in the next issue of *Senior Line*, I will examine the vast choice of care facilities now becoming available for British Columbia seniors.

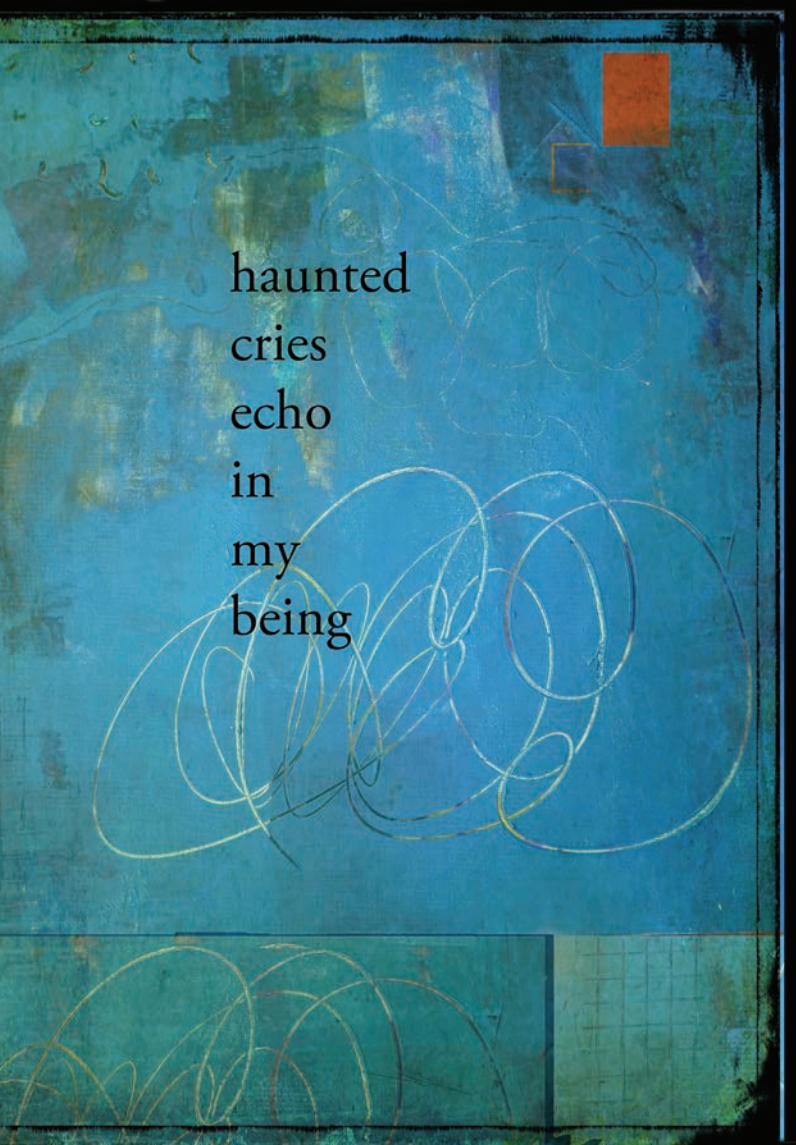


**Michael Geller**  
FCIP, RPP, MLAI,  
Ret. Architect  
AIBC is a Board  
member of JSA  
with five decades’  
experience in the planning, design,  
and development of seniors housing.

# A WHISPER ACROSS TIME

MY FAMILY'S STORY OF THE HOLOCAUST  
TOLD THROUGH ART AND POETRY

Words And Images By Olga Campbell



haunted  
cries  
echo  
in  
my  
being

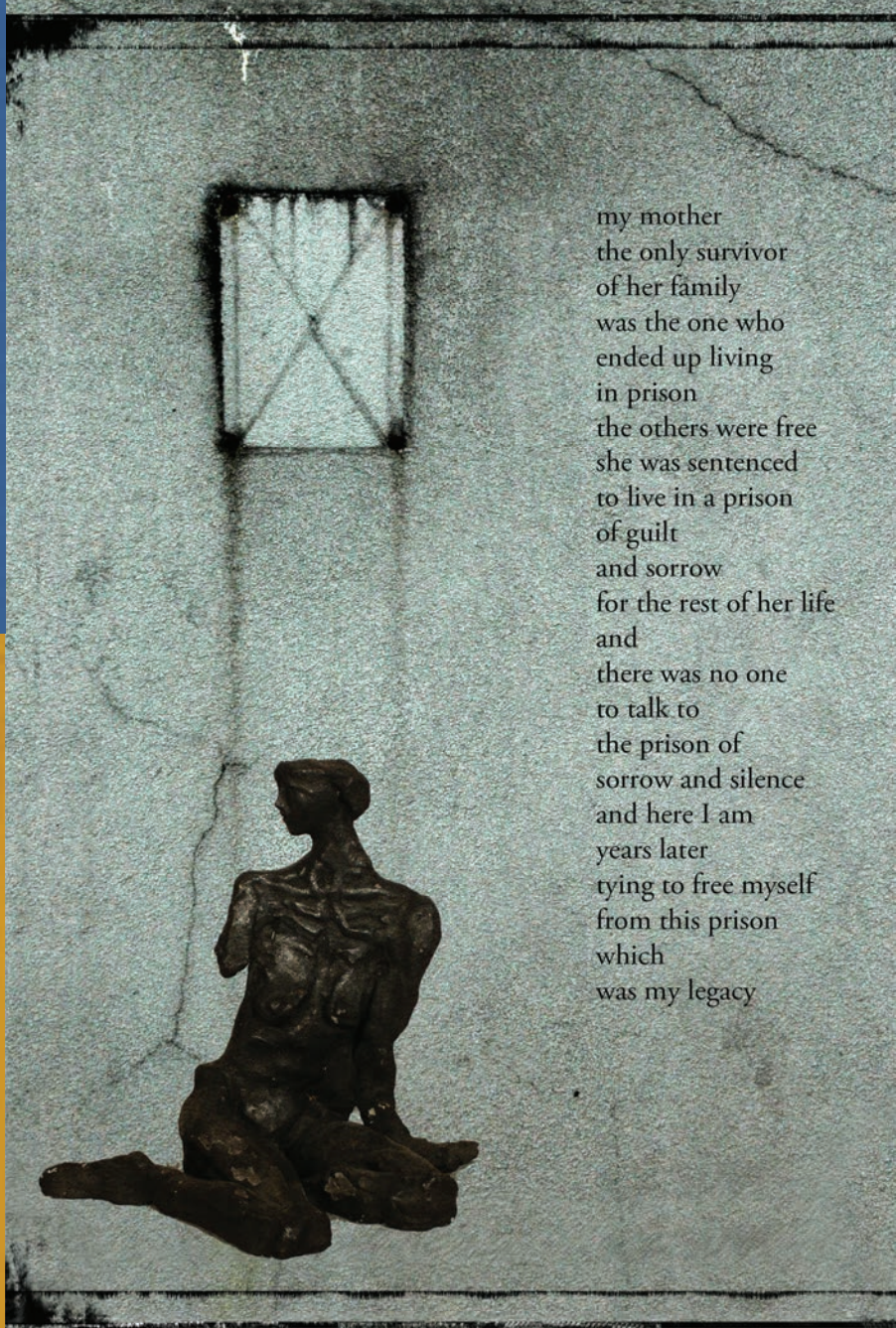
It started with a whisper reminding me of things forgotten, things lost. Then it became deafening in its explosion of feelings. Twenty years ago, after listening to a radio program about second generation Holocaust survivors, I experienced feelings that I'd spent a lifetime repressing. My experience of grief, sorrow and sadness had its origins in events which happened to my family during the Holocaust. I started to confront these feeling by creating a solo multimedia exhibition in 2005 called *Whispers Across Time*. A year ago I felt compelled to write my family's story. It felt as if my ancestors were whispering to me, encouraging me to do this. *A Whisper Across Time* is the result of these whispers. This is the story of one family's experience of the Holocaust.



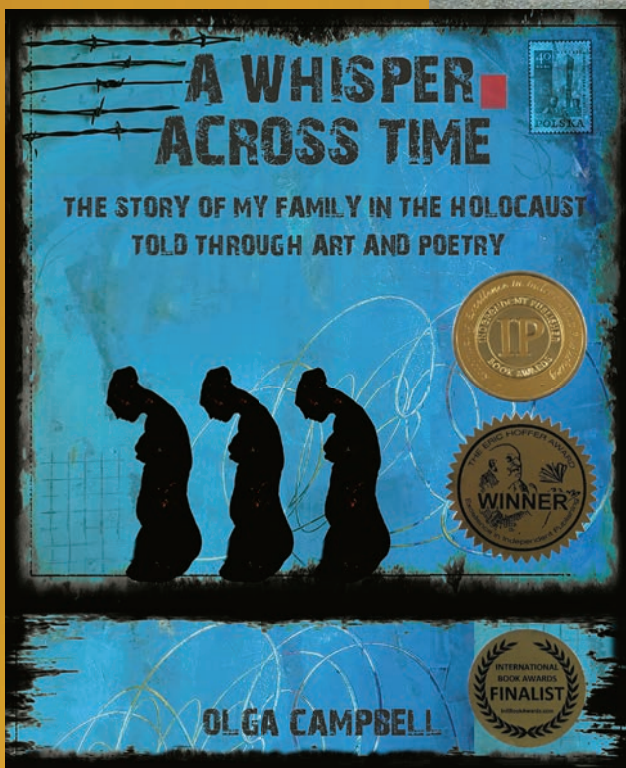


As I was making art for the exhibit “Whispers Across Time” I had a haunting realization. Both the materials and the processes that I was using, especially when making bronze sculptures, eerily echoed the experiences of my family who perished in the Holocaust. When I used them, these materials and processes were instrumental in creating art as a tribute to my family. But these same elements were also instrumental in causing their deaths and the deaths of millions of people.

fire  
gas  
chemicals  
acids  
wire



my mother  
the only survivor  
of her family  
was the one who  
ended up living  
in prison  
the others were free  
she was sentenced  
to live in a prison  
of guilt  
and sorrow  
for the rest of her life  
and  
there was no one  
to talk to  
the prison of  
sorrow and silence  
and here I am  
years later  
trying to free myself  
from this prison  
which  
was my legacy



**Olga Campbell** is a visual artist living in Vancouver B.C. Her art includes photography, sculpture, mixed media painting and digital photo collage. She has

written two books, *Graffiti Alphabet* (2009) and *A Whisper Across Time* (2018). *A Whisper Across Time* is available at the Waldman Jewish Public Library. Visit [www.olgacampbell.com](http://www.olgacampbell.com)

# WILL OUR GOVERNMENT KEEP ITS PROMISES?

Written by Tony DuMoulin

I am writing this article on Thanksgiving Day, 2021. Among other things to be grateful for, we can be thankful that we live in a democracy, where we are free to express ourselves and our wish that the society we live in is fair and inclusive.

Seniors in Canada's democratic system are entitled to expect their governments and their local elected representatives to honour the commitments they make during election campaigns.

On September 13, 2021, one week before the last federal election, Jewish Seniors Alliance, along with COSCO (Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C.), B.C. Health Coalition, South Granville Seniors Centre, Marpole Oakridge Family Place and the South Vancouver Seniors' Network, hosted a virtual *All Candidates Meeting on Seniors Issues*. Some 180 plus attendees heard the comments, and in some cases, commitments, made by the candidates running for election to Parliament from two ridings: Vancouver Granville and Vancouver South. In total, eight candidates participated, and we thank them for joining the event, as well as for their public service in campaigning. One was a Liberal, one a Conservative, two were NDP candidates, one was a Green, two were from the People's Party, and one was from the Marxist-Leninist Party.

Representatives from each of the co-hosting seniors' organizations asked the candidates to answer five specific questions representing a range of issues of concern to seniors. These questions had been sent to the candidates ahead of time.

Of course we now know that voters in both the ridings elected the Liberal party candidates, and that party has formed the current government.

Harjit Sajjan, the re-elected MP for Vancouver South was the only Liberal candidate to attend our *All Candidates Meeting*, and since he is a senior MP (and perhaps still in the cabinet) representing the federal government in our region, I want to focus on his answers to the five questions he was asked, and to examine what commitments he made to us on behalf of the federal government, so we can better hold the government's feet to the fire if and when they fail to follow through on their election promises.

## Here are the five questions, and a summary of Mr. Sajjan's answers on behalf of the Liberals:

1 Many seniors are on tight budgets and must choose between proper nutrition and prescribed medications. Does your party's platform for seniors include support for a National Pharmacare program, at least for seniors, and how would you fund it?

### The Liberal response:

- Yes, the Liberal Party supports a National Pharmacare program, and has been working towards one since 2018.
- Since health care is a provincial responsibility, the federal government must work through collaboration with the provinces.
- So far, the government has, as a pilot project, created a pharmacare plan with the province of PEI.
- In 2018, the government set up an Advisory Council on Pharmacare and drug access.

I would comment that Mr. Sajjan did not address funding; nor did he pick up on the "at least for seniors" part of the question. A pilot project to assist all Canadians over 65, say, would be a good test drive, without the costs involved in a full plan.

2 What measures will your party take to protect all accrued pension benefits, support defined pension plans, and protect retirees if their employer becomes bankrupt?

### The Liberal response:

- We have already started this work with recent reforms to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.
- These reforms ensure that no executive compensation may be paid out as long as any pension benefits are owed to employees and retirees.

These legislative efforts should be acknowledged, but more can be done, such as the establishment of a fund which could be drawn on if the bankruptcy trustee has insufficient funds to fulfil all pension commitments.

**3** (1) Does your party support working with the provinces to establish national long term care standards? (2) How would such standards be enforced? (3) Give examples of some specific standards your party would establish.

**The Liberal response:**

- This is a provincial responsibility.
- However, the federal government is investing \$9 billion as a federal share in that responsibility; it will be ear-marked for wages and working conditions in LTC residences; funding for 50,000 new support workers at a minimum wage of \$25 per hour; funding for infection protection and control measures; and for inspections.

Mr Sajjan has provided some valuable specifics, but he did not answer the question about enforcement. My own view is that enforcement would need to be in the form of withholding public funds from care homes which fail to meet whatever national standards the federal government and the provinces agree upon.

**4** Seniors increasingly say that we will do everything we can to avoid going into long term care. With good reason, we want to live at home. A key to ageing in place is having the necessary community services and home support available and well funded. The average OECD country spends 35% of its long term care budget on home support, yet Canada spends only 13%. A recent report from the Parliament Budget Officer estimated that the level of funding needed to bring Canada's spending on home care in line with peer OECD countries would be \$5.2 billion each year. What commitment has your

party made towards such increased funding for home support?

**The Liberal response:**

- Health care is a provincial responsibility, so we will work collaboratively with the provinces and territories.
- We have allocated \$6 billion for home care, in the form of grants to make homes accessible, and to fund the "Aging at Home" benefit.

This answer does not make clear if it is referring to increased funding or existing funding.

Finally, the last question:

**5** Many seniors suffer from poor housing or lack of housing due to low housing stock, long waiting lists for housing, and abuse and neglect at the hands of landlords. What measures would your party take to promote the creation of suitable, safe and affordable housing designed to enable seniors to age in place?

**The Liberal response:**

- The problem is lack of supply.
- In 2015, the Liberals established the Canadian National Housing Strategy and has allocated \$7.2 billion to address the chronic housing shortage in this country.
- \$1 billion is for urgent housing needs

- \$2.7 billion will be used to increase funding to the National Housing Fund, to make it double what it is now.
- 1.4 million homes have been built or "revitalized" using the Housing Benefit.
- A Liberal government is committed to building 250,000 new homes over four years.
- Under the Federal Co-op Housing Agreement, 4300 co-op housing units have been built.

My final comment: it is good that the federal government is back into housing, and the Liberal government can be applauded for that. What I found missing from Mr. Sajjan's response was anything specific for seniors, and no creativity in its funding approach to enable



All seniors can and should raise their voices to see that promises are kept. ”

imaginative new forms of housing for low income seniors.

As you can see, some of the Liberal responses were general in nature, and in many involved a restatement of what had already been committed to by previous liberal governments. Nevertheless, there are a number of meaningful commitments made by Mr. Sajjan that we must press the government to follow up and actually deliver, such as:

- Implementation of an often promised National Pharmacare Program, starting with seniors.
- Establishing national long term care standards, and using the federal contribution to earmarked long term care funding as a tool to enforce these standards.

- Delivery of the promised funding for the training and hiring of 50,000 new long term care support workers.
- Wisely spending the \$6 billion to be allocated to improving home care.

By the time this magazine is in your hands, the Prime minister may have appointed a new Minister of Seniors. (The last one, Deb Schulte, was not re-elected). We on the JSA Advocacy Committee look forward to developing a strong working relationship with the new Seniors minister in the coming months, and through that office, advocate for the implementation of Mr. Sajjan's commitments as well as other initiatives to improve the lives of seniors.

But please do not leave the advocacy

to us. All seniors can and should raise their voices to see that promises are kept. We are the fastest growing demographic in Canada, and we have significant political clout if we use it.

**Write to your M.P., whether in government or opposition, whenever you feel that election campaign commitments are not being honoured. We invite you to contact the JSA office for assistance with your personal advocacy.**

**Tony DuMoulin**  
is a JSA Board  
Member and Chair  
of its Advocacy  
Committee.



## DO YOU NEED POWER TOOLS TO OPEN YOUR PACKAGES?

Written by Tony DuMoulin

Jewish Seniors Alliance of Greater Vancouver - JSA - has an Advocacy Committee to give voice to the concerns of all seniors. At the moment it is developing its list of initiatives to pursue as priorities this year.



### AN OVERPACKAGED WORLD

High on this list will be a focus on the development of "Age-friendly" forms of packaging. Although consumers of all ages encounter package-opening difficulties from time to time in our overpackaged world, seniors in particular often suffer from arthritis in their hands and a loss of strength in their hands and fingers as they age.

These seniors have real challenges opening basic necessities like their prescription medications and many food items.

These challenges threaten the independence of some seniors who are otherwise perfectly capable of living on their own.

There must be ways to make package opening less of a struggle. Less use of sharp, heavyweight plastic coverings on so many items would be a start. JSA wants to research and identify "best packaging practices", and to reward brands willing to adopt them, with a "Certified User Friendly" type of label on each package to encourage loyalty to those brands.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Help JSA with this project by emailing the Advocacy Coordinator at JSA, Margot Beauchamp, at [margot@jsalliance.org](mailto:margot@jsalliance.org) and share with her your package opening experiences, both good and bad.**

# ANNUAL SUMMER VOLUNTEER BBQ

Written by Shanie Levin

Seven round tables were set up in the Courtyard outside Jewish Seniors Alliance office at 49th and Oak St. to honour the Peer Support Volunteers at the annual summer BBQ on Wednesday, September 1st. Forty volunteers who have worked so hard



under stressful conditions and a few board members and staff congregated happily for the event. Careful screening of all participants occurred at the sign-in where attendees had to list dates of their vaccines and contact information.

**Grace Hann** and **Charles Leibovitch** and a few of the volunteers circulated, offering salad and took orders for either beef, chicken or veggie burgers. **Tony DuMoulin** manned the barbeque that provided everyone with their choice of burger. Dessert of fruit salad and cookies followed. Musical entertainment was provided throughout by **Dave and Julie Ivaz**, with stirring vocals accompanied by guitar. Charles



**Tony DuMoulin and Grace Hann**

joined in by singing a few songs and then people began dancing.

The event began at 4 p.m. and by 7 p.m. the dancing was still going strong. It was a wonderful ending to a delightful and delicious evening which provided an excellent opportunity for the volunteers to spend time together in a safe environment after so many months of being unable to get together in person.

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# PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DOROTHY LI

Interview by Charles Leibovitch

**D**orothy Li was born in Hong Kong to a middle class family. She grew up with seven siblings. She always felt loved and cared for by her parents. Dorothy wished to go abroad to study, so she applied to Briercrest College in Saskatchewan through a missionary in Hong Kong. Dorothy had enough money for one year's school fee. "With God's help through people I met, I was able to finish my degree in Christian Education & Music."

After graduation, she moved to San Diego, living with her cousin. She joined the La Jolla University Chorus and sang in a Christmas concert as First Soprano. The song was the Messiah by Handel. She also was a volunteer visiting seniors.

On her return to Hong Kong, she married in 1990. She became a pre-school teacher. Dorothy returned to Canada in 1999, with her husband and two young children. She wanted to work in pre-school again, so she enrolled at Langara College and earned an Early Childhood Education Certificate. One of her teachers was our own JSA's Co-

Chair Gyda Chud! Dorothy said Gyda was a good teacher, she remembers Gyda had a contest for her students and Dorothy won first prize, a handbag. She is still using it!

She worked for 5 years as a pre-school teacher. Unfortunately, she had a car accident. After recovery, she decided to change careers and went back to school. She obtained her certificate in Home Health Services. She began to work as a home support worker, travelling to five or six clients a day, providing personal care and housekeeping to seniors. Dorothy learned a lot from her clients. She discovered that they were lonely and felt helpless. One woman had 12 children, but none of them came to visit her. It was so sad. It was Dorothy's skill in building relationships with her clients that she found most gratifying. She enjoyed her role in helping seniors in home support service. She ended up working in home support for 27 years!

Dorothy learned about our JSA Senior Peer Support training course and took the course in 2018. She was



impressed with the training provided by Peer Support Volunteer Trainer and Supervisor Grace Hann and liked the idea that JSA was training volunteers to provide emotional support. Today, Dorothy continues to phone or visit three clients weekly. She is very thankful to Grace and Charles for the work they do with seniors. She said there are many seniors who need this kind of service. "We need more volunteers—especially during the pandemic."

Dorothy advises that she will continue to learn how to speak the truth in love. She said "God gives us life, we hope to love one another. Everyone has to leave this earth one day. Hope we can leave a good Legacy."

In the future, Dorothy would like JSA to provide more opportunities for both our volunteers and clients together to have a Fun Fair. This could happen after the pandemic. "God bless."



### CORRECTION

We regret that we have made an error in the spelling of the name of David Kirkpatrick, Senior Peer Support Volunteer, in our July magazine (Volume 28-2).



**Charles Leibovitch**, MSW, is JSA's Senior Peer Support Services Coordinator. He initiated the Program in December 2011. He has a long history of caring for seniors.



# VOLUNTEER PROFILE: KRISTINE THEURER, PHD

Interview by Grace Hann

**B**orn in the tiny town of Oliver, B.C., Kristine only realized much later as a young adult that most of her childhood peers did not work after school! Her family Nursery needed all of the nurturing it could get. Still, there was time for music lessons. Her mom being a classical pianist was determined that her children would follow suit. Kristine naturally fell into line. Kristine graduated with grade 12 and went on to earn the Associate Diploma (ARCT) in performance on flute at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Her favourite music included the Dvořák cello concerto. Music became part of Kristine's life as she joined bands with other songwriters as well as studying voice.

Kristine's music became very valuable in her early occupation as a music therapist where music was pivotal in engaging with residents. Yes, it helped, however, it did not take long before Kristine realized that residents were given many 'social snacks' as activities overall but where was the essential meal? There were so many lonely residents, but how does one end loneliness? Regardless of the typical activities such as bingo, bowling, entertainment, and bus trips, many residents were longing for in-depth connections with their peers—longing for deeper meaningful relationships.

Kristine first experienced peer support when her brother died of suicide. She joined a grief peer support group and the connection with others who

had experienced similar losses was healing—being with others who truly understood with great empathy. Here she could share her sorrow without burdening her family. Developing friendships helped her feel less alone, and what had previously felt unbearable, became bearable.

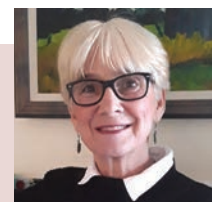
It was at this time that Kristine decided to go back to school. She earned her master's degree in Gerontology at Simon Fraser University and went on to complete her PhD at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Kristine Theurer has since pioneered the use of standardized peer support and mentoring programs to address loneliness and social isolation among older adults. She is author of *'It Makes Life Worthwhile!'* Peer Mentoring in Long-Term Care in the *Journal of Aging & Mental Health* and *The Need for a Social Revolution in Residential Care* in the *Journal of Aging Studies*.

Dr. Theurer has received numerous research awards including Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She serves on the planning committee for the Canadian national conference on culture change. Dr. Theurer went on to form her own company called Java Group Programs. Philosophically grounded in Thomas Kitwood's theories of Personhood, the main focus is to engage residents in helping each other to address loneliness—residents helping residents.



Dr. Theurer became interested in being a Senior Peer Counsellor two years ago with an interest in learning about one-to-one support for seniors living in the community. She joined our training program, which she said was a powerful combination of Peer Student Support and Hands on Training.

Once training had been completed, Kristine's passion became evident as she supported several clients. When asked what it was like for her to support clients, she replied, "I am uplifted!" She went on to share a quote from the book she had recently read called "I am a girl from Africa" by Elizabeth Nyamayaro: "When we uplift others, we ourselves are uplifted". It is an absolute pleasure to have Dr. Kristine Theurer as a part of our great team of volunteers at Jewish Seniors Alliance!



## Grace Hann

is the trainer of volunteers of Senior Peer Support Services. She has been training volunteers and supporting seniors for over 20 years.

# PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

## DID YOU KNOW?

Jewish Seniors Alliance Peer Support Program provides services to over 200 seniors with varied needs, from diverse cultural backgrounds. Services are delivered in multiple languages by highly trained and motivated volunteers, who receive certification after 55 hours of training.

### SENIORS STRONGER TOGETHER



**YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF SENIORS**



"My passion is to help others. I saw an ad for Senior Peer Support Volunteers and took the training with Grace Hann which further enhanced my helping and listening skills. Today I am busy with JSA, Pacific Association of First Nations Women and my grandchildren.



**CATHERINE, VOLUNTEER**



I have truly enjoyed each senior to whom I have been assigned. These seniors have different stories and very unique lives. Being a part of their lives has been very enriching as I also continue to learn."

**PETER, VOLUNTEER**



JSA has initiated several supportive and distinct peer services offered to all seniors in the lower mainland, promoting self-empowerment, volunteerism and seniors helping seniors.

Peer support is a one-to-one service provided by specially trained volunteers who are supervised by professional staff.

JSA Peer Services include: **Weekly Peer Support Sessions, Friendly Phone Calls, Home Visits, and Information Referrals.** These services are provided free of charge.



Jewish Seniors  
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# OUTREACH



JSA provides annual programs to empower, inform, and educate, which are designed to enhance and improve the quality of life for seniors, including our **Spring Forum**, **Fall Symposium** and **Empowerment Series**.

Three times a year the **Senior Line Magazine** will come to your door, chock full of informative, innovative, and cultural articles. Our website **www.jsalliance.org** is bursting with useful information, including an up-to-date calendar listing senior events, articles, videos and much more. Follow our **Facebook Page** for curated articles on topics about seniors.

# ADVOCACY



Advocating for the needs of seniors and seniors' organizations in the Lower Mainland, JSA responds to concerns with governments, public agencies and funding groups, including at this time:

- Advocating to both levels of government for an overhaul of the Long Term Care system.
- Urging the federal government to implement a national, universal pharmacare and dental insurance program for seniors.
- Participating in webinars and zoom meetings to share information that focuses on issues seniors are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Combatting Ageism in all its forms.



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# HUMOUR!

I didn't get old on purpose, it just happened. If you're lucky, it could happen to you!

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

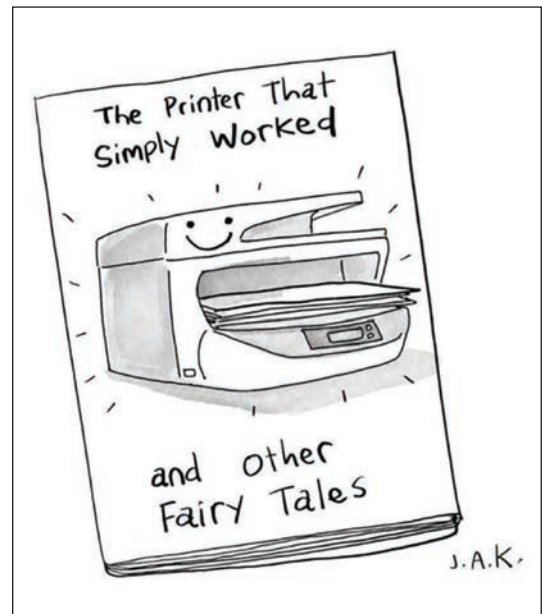
I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my children, friends, family and work.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenaline flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

*True, sometimes I do hear myself talking to myself, but only because I require extra advice!*



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# CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNER:  
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OUR RUNNERS UP:

No available grandchildren to install those apps!!!!  
- **Hugh Nathan**

1. I have a great job with the tax department, and I've got my eye on you.
  2. I have golf clubs, fishing gear, a tennis racquet and a boat!!
- **Edward Korbin**

Eye have a life!!!  
- **Sandy Hollenberg**

An ugly, google-eyed, social media-mad *nudnik* bugging me!  
- **Alex Klinier**

A Friendly voice.  
- **Bill Gruenthal**

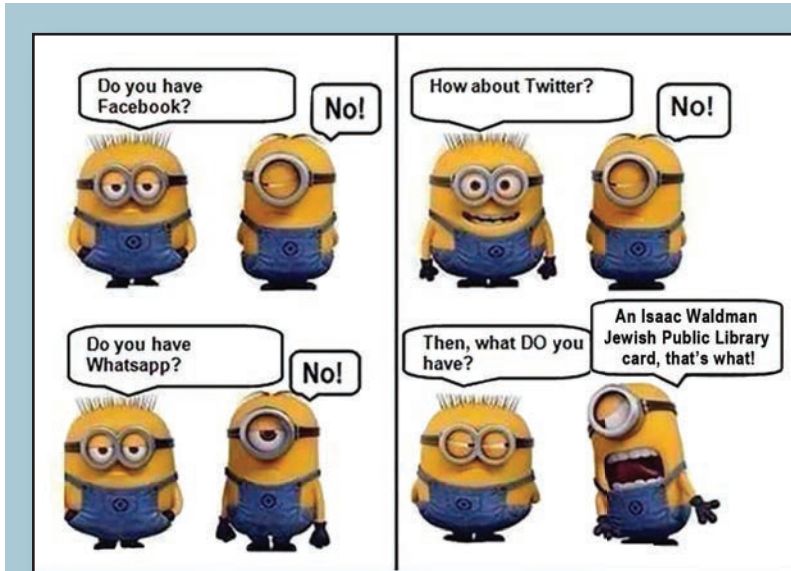
I have a LIFE!  
- **Shirley Cohn**

Sense.  
- **Lone Tratt**

I complete a Minyan.  
- **Ron Barak**

One eye pad.  
- **Gary Schajer**

I can yell at the top of my lungs and lay in some guilt with my shaking finger and my kids come running to help me with anything I want or need.  
- **Leslie Benisz**



"An Isaac Waldman Jewish Public Library card, that's what!"

Thanks to everyone for your  
creative efforts!



ENTER THE CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST!

Write a caption for the cartoon and send it to us  
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Be sure to include your name and address. The author of the winning caption will receive a JSA T-shirt and two Tribute Cards worth \$18.00 each. We will publish the cartoon with your caption in the next *Senior Line*.

# DEHYDRATION IN SENIORS

Written by Anton Grunfeld

**O**ur body is about 60% water. The body has several mechanisms designed to achieve and maintain this volume of water and also the concentration of sodium, potassium and other electrolytes in the body fluids. Dehydration occurs when these homeostatic mechanisms are overcome. We then use or lose more fluid than we take in and our body doesn't have enough water or other fluids to maintain its multiple physiological functions.

Anyone may become dehydrated, but the condition is especially dangerous for very young children and seniors. Dehydration may complicate existing medical problems and may itself cause significant illness. We can usually reverse mild to moderate de-hydration by just drinking more fluids, but severe dehydration usually requires urgent medical care.

## DAILY NORMAL WATER INTAKE

Minimum daily water intake varies with gender, weight, environment, diet and genetics. With exercise, hot environment or decreased response to thirst additional water may be

required. The Institute of Medicine survey in 2004 noted that the total water intake from all foods and liquids was 3.7 litres for men and 2.7 litres for women. In a follow-up survey in 2016 they confirmed these numbers and noted that men over 60 on average consumed just less than 3 litres of water and women over 60 consumed 2.5 litres on average a day. Approximately one third of this amount was consumed as plain water.

## PRESENTATION OF DEHYDRATION

There is no one test to diagnose dehydration. The diagnosis is usually made by considering the person's history and by examining the patient as well as obtaining laboratory tests.

For well adults, thirst is usually a reliable indicator of the body's needs for water; a healthy adult seldom becomes dehydrated when he or she has access to water and drinks to thirst. In seniors however, thirst may be blunted and may not be triggered until one is quite dehydrated.

Common presenting symptoms and signs for dehydration include but are not limited to fatigue, thirst, dry skin

and lips, skin tenting, dark urine or decreased urine output, headaches, muscle cramps, lightheadedness, dizziness, passing out and palpitations. None of these presentations, except thirst, are specific for dehydration. In a systematic review of the medical literature only fatigue and missed drinks between meals predicted the diagnosis of dehydration.

## CAUSES

Dehydration generally occurs as a combination of fluid loss and decreased intake that fails to replace these losses. Body fluids are lost through the skin, lungs, kidneys or gastrointestinal tract. Diarrhea and vomiting, fever, sweating or increased urination (as for example in uncontrolled diabetics) are typical causes.

Heat and humidity increase the risk that one may become dehydrated and develop heat illness. When the air is hot and very humid, we continue to sweat but sweat can't evaporate and cool us. This can lead to a potentially dangerous increase in body temperature and the need for rapid cooling and more fluids.

For seniors, as we age, our body's fluid reserve becomes smaller, our ability to conserve water is reduced and our thirst sense becomes less acute. These problems are compounded if we have a chronic illness such as diabetes, kidney disease or dementia, or when we use a number of medications, such as diuretics. We may also have mobility problems that limit our ability to obtain water for ourselves. Even having a minor illness, such as a cold, makes us more susceptible to dehydration because we're less likely to feel like eating or drinking when we're sick.

Anyone may become dehydrated, but the condition is especially dangerous for very young children and seniors.



## TREATMENT

The best way to treat mild dehydration in seniors is to rehydrate gradually by drinking fluids and concomitantly to identify and address the cause of fluid loss. Seniors with moderate to severe dehydration may require more rapid replacement of fluids, including the appropriate electrolytes, depending on a person's type of dehydration. Many times the replacements can be given orally but in most severe cases it will require hospital admission and intravenous treatment.

When the underlying cause of dehydration is treated, and the patient's volume has been restored, the majority of patients recover fully. Failure to treat dehydration in seniors may lead to significant mortality.

## PREVENTION OF CATASTROPHE

Preventing dehydration in a healthy adult is relatively straightforward. Let your thirst guide your water intake and be aware that you will need to increase your intake for conditions such as vomiting and diarrhea, fever, extremes of weather, heavy exertion or illness.

Preventing dehydration in seniors may be challenging when the sense of thirst is blunted. Suggested strategy stresses the need to make sure that the senior drinks at least 1.7 litres a day, that water and favorite fluids are always available, that fluids are available with meals and snacks, and that fluid intake is increased during warm weather. Hydrating fluids, in addition to water, include flavoured water, juices and milk. Tea and coffee are also recommended, despite previous

prohibitions, as are high water content fruits and vegetables.

Extreme heat events such as the Heat Dome which we experienced in B.C. in June are particularly dangerous for seniors. The BC Coroners Service identified 569 heat-related deaths from June 20 to July 29, 445 of which occurred during the heat dome. Of those who died, 79 percent were 65 years of age or older. Many organizations have developed protocols to address rapid hydration and cooling and, if needed, emergency transfer to hospital.




**Anton Grunfeld** is a retired emergency physician. He is a board member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada.

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## PROFIT VERSUS NON-PROFIT IN LONG TERM CARE

We continue with our series of debates on important topics. Ken Levitt presents arguments for For-Profit Long Term Care facilities; Larry Shapiro supports Not-For-Profit. These are personal opinions, JSA does not have a position on this topic.



### FOR-PROFIT OPERATORS IN LONG TERM CARE ARE HERE TO STAY

Written by Kenneth Levitt

The Covid-19 Pandemic with its various mutations has caused a justified focus on **Long Term Care (LTC)** in Canada. Organizations such as the B.C. Health Coalition, the NDP, unions and other left leaning/progressives and some physicians have called for the abolition of all For-Profit (FP) facilities to be taken over by provincial governments or government approved **Not-For-Profits (NP)**. This will not happen in the near future. **For-Profits (FP)** are here to stay, and, furthermore, provincial governments support them with LTC operating agreements.

### PROFIT AND QUALITY OF CARE

The two main issues are profit and quality of care. In B.C. there are 27,000 persons in LTC. Approximately 1/3 are in each of government operated (GO), NP, and FP facilities. When a FP builds or upgrades a facility there is no government capital fund support. Capital funds for FPs come from

investors and shareholders whereas NP depend on governments and their own fund-raising efforts. FPs have saved governments billions of dollars in capital costs. In general, residents are financially responsible for their room and board. Their care is paid for by the local funding authority. Should residents pay from their assets (as in the USA) or continue to pay from income testing? Should residents who are capable contribute more for their room and board? Many NPs raise funds to subsidize care; others permit paid companions to provide extra care for residents. Should investors who put up their own risk capital (with government 'ipso facto' approval) be permitted to make a profit? Is it immoral?

### LACK OF AWARENESS AND PREPARATIONS

FPs did not do well in terms of Covid-19 deaths. Horrendous stories from Ontario and Quebec came to light that noted the squalor and the shameful living conditions of many vulnerable residents. In B.C. a number of NPs and FPs had too many Covid infections and deaths. Staff were not exempt from contracting Covid. How do we account for this? When we factor in those facilities with two or more residents per room, the number of Covid-19 infections,

complications, and deaths increases dramatically for NPs and FPs. In most cases staff and visitors were responsible for importing the virus. Governments/health authorities were totally unaware, at the outset of the pandemic, of the extent of the problems. However, most care homes planned well, had few infections with a high percentage of vaccinated staff and are faring well during the pandemic.

It is not just a move to single beds that will solve the problem of Covid and seasonal flu outbreaks, it is the design of the facilities. We need new and upgraded buildings NOW. It is also imperative that all staff be vaccinated, and that they be supported by management to better prepare for future health crises.

Canada needs FPs. FPs have the capacity to provide needed accommodation for older adults who qualify and can build more LTC beds faster than governments. They can provide improved efficiency and greater innovation than NPs. The naysayers want to nationalize all private-sector nursing homes in Canada. The National Institute on Aging at Ryerson University in Toronto recently noted, "Some of the FPs are doing well because they have deeper pockets and much better planning procedures than NPs.



It is not clear that one class of ownership is better than the other." In an April 21, 2021 report, Isobel McKenzie, B.C. Senior's Advocate, criticized the FPs for apparently shortchanging the number of direct care hours for which they were paid and making a profit by doing so. At the same time McKenzie noted that capital costs (building maintenance) is one area where private (FPs) outperform NPs.

There is one FP LTC operator in Ontario, Schlegel Villages (Campuses) (<https://schlegelvillages.com/>) that is at the cutting edge of services and programs for their residents. Schlegel is a family-owned company that has about 5,000 residents and about 5,000 staff in 19 Villages. It did not escape Covid-19. They have excelled in what is known as "Best Practices":

- Their Philosophy: A purposeful life for each resident.
- Each village is accredited.
- Staff are unionized and pay is the same as at NP's.
- Owners are committed to providing exceptional care, are good corporate citizens who are involved and contribute to the communities they serve.
- Newer villages are 60% private rooms and 40% with two persons per room. Moving forward all new construction will be single rooms with en-suites.
- Each resident has two bathing opportunities per week.
- Villages have several neighbourhoods with 32 residents residing in each self-contained neighbourhood which is well supported by 7 staff with a variety of skills.

- Each village has programs and space open to outside community organizations and they encourage the locals to hold events in the available space.

How can we move forward in a constructive way that includes government operated, not-for-profits and for-profits?

- The federal government, in partnership with the provinces, needs to develop and to legislate a set of standards of care and service that will be enforced with consequences. This can be done through Accreditation that is currently voluntary. Once the feds have placed standards of care and service into law each province should enact similar legislation requirement that all LTC facilities be accredited. A provincial accreditation body would be responsible for accrediting, monitoring, and enforcing standards.
- Accreditation would ensure every LTC facility is delivering the hours of care and support for which they are receiving funds.
- Wages and benefits for full-time staff should be uniform for all LTC facilities and part-time staff should be equally entitled to the same wages and benefits.
- Hours for Home Care and Better at Home need to be increased. The financial threshold needs to be lowered to allow more persons in need to take advantage of such a service. This has the potential to put less strain on wait lists for LTC admissions.
- When a FP is for sale give preference for a quality NP to purchase it or allow a local (new) society to purchase and to operate it.

- Require all LTC operated facilities who plan to expand to have only single rooms with en suites.
- Develop a timetable and a budget for NPs to upgrade/replace current outdated institutional/hospital style buildings.
- Health Care Leaders, their Boards of Directors and seniors should be the ones who are advocating/ pushing for changes. The status quo is not acceptable.

To eliminate FPs is specious and politically/ideologically motivated and is a short- sighted non-pragmatic position. Canada's parliament this past spring voted against such a proposal put forth by the NDP. The issue is not between the NPs or the FPs. The issue is how to ensure that the interests of the residents come first.

The billions of dollars that would be required to eliminate the FPs can better be used for increased and quantifiable quality programs and services. This would be the best and the most ethical way to honour those lost in the pandemic and to ensure it will never happen again. The issue is how we treat our most vulnerable older adults. After all, is it not a matter of human rights and choices?



**Ken Levitt** is a Past President of JSA, former CEO of Louis Brier and a past Chair of Camp Miriam. In 1985 he co-edited, *The Challenge of Child Welfare*, the first textbook on child welfare in Canada.

# THERE IS NO PLACE FOR PROFIT IN LONG TERM CARE

Written by Larry Shapiro

**M**y goal in this debate is to paint a comprehensive picture illustrating conclusively why many of the for-profit **long term care facilities (LTCFs)** are squandering public funds with little transparency or few accountability requirements to honour any pre-determined set of standards in the areas of quality of service, accountability and profit. We need to see profit taken out of long term care and need new investments in public and non-profit beds so that we can reduce our dependence on the private, for-profit sector.

Decades of budget cuts, underfunding and privatization by successive governments has resulted in the catastrophic state of the many private care facilities that have been the sites of the loss of a great number of our loved ones. Nobody should be profiting from the care of our senior citizens. Policy decisions going back 20 years have encouraged raising the profits of private LTCFs by replacing union staff with contract workers, which have resulted in creating personnel shortages, declining working conditions and less access to public funding. The center of most COVID-19 outbreaks have been in our LTCFs in BC and throughout the rest of the country.

Let us examine the causes and effects of some of the common characteristics of for-profit LTC facilities that negatively affect the quality of care being dispensed to our seniors. Statistically 67% of LTC in BC is supplied by both non-profit and for-profit organizations with the remaining 33% being supplied directly by provincial health authorities. The

practice of sub-contracting care services occurs when the service providers like LTCFs and assisted living facilities that are contracted by regional health authorities to provide care then proceed to sub-contract with other companies that offer care workers, kitchen staff and maintenance crews.

These sub-contractors are able to bid lower than qualified unionized staff would cost, all to the detriment of the senior residents who are being served by these workers who are receiving lower wages, poorer benefits and enjoy fewer full-time positions. The prevalence of sub-contracting in elder care began about 22 years ago when the BC government, by virtue of Bills 29 and 94, stripped out no-contracting and job security provisions from the collective agreements governing health care workers. These laws resulted in the loss of 8000 jobs by the end of 2004. These laws (which were repealed in 2018) provided health sector employers, including private LTCFs with unprecedented rights to lay off unionized staff and hire them back as non-union workers through sub-contracted companies. Predictably, this negatively impacted wages and working conditions.

Reduced funding for and access to publicly funded seniors' care from the early 2000's resulted in the rationing of care. This meant that access to publicly funded care is limited to those with more acute needs, leaving seniors with less complex needs without access to support services that could keep them from deteriorating and requiring institutional care. So, as staffing levels have declined, the care needs of many LTC residents have increased. More of the publicly funded services are being delivered by for-profit companies, often in LTCFs that combine publicly funded and private pay beds. The latest data shows that over 35% of beds are run by the for-profit companies. The health

authorities pay for the services through block funding which accounts for the direct care hours that each resident is to receive per day and the cost of other services and supplies such as meals. There are no restrictions on how operators spend these dollars and health authorities do not perform payroll or expense audits to ensure public funds are actually spent on direct care.

A report from the Seniors Advocate exposed the fact that most direct care (67%) is delivered by care aides, the lowest paid care workers. For-profit care companies generate profits by underpaying the workers who provide most of the direct care despite receiving funding based on the assumption they pay union rates contained in the master collective agreement (industry standard). Operators are not monitored to ensure that they are providing the number of care hours for which they are being paid. Without adequate oversight and reporting, companies also make profits by understaffing which impacts the amount and quality of care that residents receive. Many LTCFs have a combination of publicly subsidized and private pay beds, but the co-located private pay beds are not consistently included in the calculation of care hours delivered. This practice results in publicly funded care hours used to cross-subsidize the care of private care residents who pay out-of-pocket for the generation of greater profits and at the same time exacerbates staffing shortages as companies use the same staff to cover both publicly funded and private pay beds who should have their own dedicated staff. Low staffing levels and resulting poor working conditions deteriorate the quality of care.

Notwithstanding the fact that the last period for which the data is available is 2017-2018, it is noteworthy that while receiving on the average, the same level of public funding, contracted not-for-profit LTCF operators spent \$10,000

more per resident per year than did for-profit providers. In addition, and not surprisingly, the for-profit LTCFs failed to deliver 207,000 funded direct care hours while the non-profit LTCFs exceeded direct care hour targets by delivering an additional 80,000 hours of direct care beyond what they were funded to deliver. Care workers are being underpaid relative to the funding operators receive resulting in staff shortage. Low staffing places both workers and residents under increased stress and reduces the amount of time care workers can spend with residents. The combination of low pay and understaffing makes it difficult to recruit and retain staff. There is adequate proof that staffing levels and staffing mix are key predictors of resident health outcomes and care quality and that care provided in for-profit long term care facilities is generally inferior to that provided by

public and non-profit owned facilities.

The BC government's long standing reliance on attracting private capital into the seniors' care sector has benefited corporate chains with the ability to finance and build new facilities. In the decade between 2009 and 2018, BC invested less than one half of 1% of the total health care capital spending (which is not very much money). Over 1/3 of all publicly subsidized and private-pay long term care and assisted living spaces are controlled by large corporations while the balance is owned by either non-profit agencies or health authorities.

Corporate chain consolidation in seniors care has become popular among investors in this sector because the business is real estate focused resulting in the seniors' care facilities being treated and traded as financial commodities. This being the case, the

care chains are prone to engage in risky business practices. These chains are routinely bought and sold after using debt-leveraged buyouts which leave the chains with debt until the revenue that depends on government funding cannot meet the cost of servicing the debt resulting in financial crisis thus creating disruptions that undermine the stability of relational care due to high staff turnover which results in a negative effect on quality of care. The evidence is clear: profit making has no place in seniors' care. Public dollars are flowing into profits not into frontline care as intended.

Let us strive to provide the care and support for our parents, grandparents, siblings and others who gave us so much and for whom we care so much. Nobody should be profiting from the care of our seniors, and that dear readers is why profit should be eliminated from long term care.



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# FRANCES BELZBERG

LEADER AND PHILANTHROPIST  
AWARDED THE ORDER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Written by Bob Markin



With characteristic warmth and kindness and a determined strong will to “do the right thing”, community leader and philanthropist Frances Belzberg – vibrant as ever in her 94th year – reflects on a lifetime of outstanding local, national and international service dedicated to the betterment of needy individuals, special groups and important causes.

Mrs. Belzberg has recently received the province’s highest award for service, the prestigious Order of British Columbia, given in recognition of her co-founding the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation in 1976 and helping to found the AIDS Thinking Society.

In 1995 she was named to the prestigious Order of Canada based on her founding and fundraising of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, her raising of funds for the HIV Care Unit at B.C. Children’s Hospital and the Research Centre at St. Paul’s Hospital, her co-founding of the Centre for Holocaust Studies in Los Angeles, and her chairing of the city’s Museum of Tolerance.

The high esteem in which Mrs. Belzberg is regarded in the community can be seen in noting that the nomination for her Order of B.C. award was made by the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, the ‘umbrella’ organization representative of the area’s entire Jewish community, which also spotlighted her as a prime spokesperson for its 2020

annual fundraising campaign. As a JSA board member Mrs. Belzberg said, “I’m amazed at what JSA has accomplished and I find the *Senior Line* magazine to be phenomenal.”

## A FATHER’S INSPIRING GUIDING MANTRA

Frances Belzberg (née Cooper) was born and raised in Los Angeles, married prominent community leader Sam Belzberg z'l (1928-2018) in 1950, and settled in Edmonton. The family moved to Vancouver in 1968.

What was Frances’ prime motivation for the passionate desire to help society? “In my younger formative years in L.A., we all had specific responsibilities in the house to perform, *pushkas* (charity boxes) were everywhere, it was a religious home, and the importance and obligation to be of service to others was always stressed in the household. My father’s mantra prevailed, ‘We All Have to Pay for the Space That We Occupy on This Earth.’”

## SERVING THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY WITH PASSIONATE DEDICATION

“Each participation was a passion for me, I don’t get involved with anything that I’m not emotional about”, she stresses. As Jewish Federation CEO Ezra Shanken stated, “It’s difficult to find any prime organization or cause that Mrs. Belzberg hasn’t been passionately involved in.” For example - her support for the expansion

and development of both the University of B.C. and Simon Fraser University; and the Belzbergs’ strong backing for ‘Action Canada’, in partnership with the Canadian Government developing leadership skills for young Canadians. She continues to serve on the SFU board and has been a board member for the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Museum, B.C. Children’s Hospital Foundation, Think AIDS Society...and the list goes on.

## ALL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORTHY OF SUPPORT

Frances sees all Jewish Community organizations as being of importance, serving valuable purposes and goals, and worthy of support. “Without community involvement,” she said, “there will be no future for the Jewish People. It is up to us to combat anti-Semitism and make sure our communal organizations remain strong.”

In Vancouver she chaired the State of Israel Bonds Campaign and the first-ever separate Women’s Division of the Jewish Federation Campaign. “In the course of those involvements and my leading of Women Mission tour groups to Israel, I had the chance,” she said, “to meet Israel’s Presidents and many other phenomenal people – it’s exciting because you get their point-of-view.” She has long

supported Hadassah-WIZO, including serving on the national board and chairing a Vancouver Hadassah Bazaar.

## HELPING HER DAUGHTER CHERYL AND SO MANY OTHERS

Going back four decades, Cheryl, the Belzberg's eldest daughter, began experiencing bizarre, debilitating symptoms, which progressed until she found herself unable to speak or to walk normally. This intelligent young woman had dystonia, (known medically as *dystonia musculorum deformans*), a neurological disorder that causes excessive, involuntary muscle contractions which result in abnormal muscle movements and body postures. Sam and Frances, heartbroken by the ravages of this disease suffered by Cheryl and so many others world-wide, embarked on an intense hands-on endeavor to find solutions, where none existed.

I'm blessed to be  
94 and people are  
still asking me for  
my opinions. ”

For almost 45 continuous years, their work has been tireless, being the key leaders in the establishment and ongoing support of organizations such as the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation (DMRF) which is dedicated to enlisting leading medical and scientific knowledge to find solutions, and to offer support and educational resources to aid sufferers and their families.

Cheryl went on with her life. She married, obtained several university

degrees, had three children, pursued her eclectic artistic talents, learned to play the harp and became a grandmother. Along the way she learned how to live, love, cry and overcome a serious disability. Sadly a solution for dystonia has not been found and Frances remains on the DMRF board, fervently hopeful that answers will soon be discovered and implemented.

## CREATING A WORLD-CLASS MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE

The Belzbergs were instrumental in their founding and their ongoing financial and leadership support for the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC). Named in honour of the famed Nazi hunter, the SWC is based in Los Angeles under directorship of former Vancouver Schara Tzedek Rabbi Marvin Hier. The SWC, with centres world-wide, confronts anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promotes human rights and dignity, stands with Israel, defends the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaches the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations.

“My husband Sam started the Center in 1977 and was responsible for the purchase of the land, it was a major accomplishment, and I founded and created the Center's Museum of Tolerance situated in the heart of the SWC,” Frances stated.

The Museum of Tolerance (MOT), founded in 1993, is a dynamic human-rights laboratory and educational center dedicated to challenging visitors to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts and confront all forms of prejudice and discrimination in the world today. The Museum has served over seven million visitors with 350,000 visiting annually, including 150,000 students.

Frances worked and travelled extensively over the course of five years with

Simon Wiesenthal. “It was quite an experience because Mr. Wiesenthal was a phenomenal human being,” Frances stressed. “I learned so much from him and the museumologists as we all worked towards establishing the Museum and honouring its objectives.”

## CHERISHED FAMILY— LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

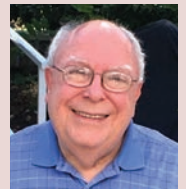
One of Frances' strongest sources of pride and passion are her four children who carry on the family tradition of 'positivism' – being personally optimistic and making life better for those in need. “My children have created on their own something quite wonderful in their communities.” She considers her greatest achievement to be her 4 children, 16 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Frances characteristically states, “I'm blessed to be 94 and people are still asking me for my opinions. I'm still thrilled that because of my involvements over the years that I'm vital, interested, stimulated and involved.” She earnestly hopes for a treatment for dystonia, an end to racism and anti-Semitism, world/ Mideast peace...and love and joy in everyone's heart.

Onwards to 120 dear Mrs. Belzberg. Thank you so much for being you, thank you for being Frances.

**Bob Markin** served on the Editorial staff of the *Jewish Western Bulletin* for 16 years, and has

written numerous free-lance stories and articles throughout the years. He is a member of the editorial committee of *Senior Line*.



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