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FALL / WINTER 2015 | ISSUE No. 4

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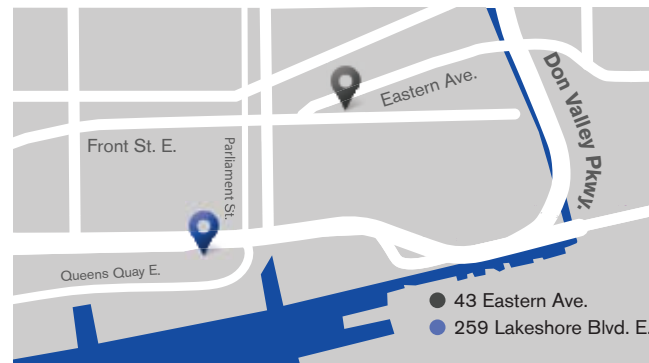
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Larry Danziger



Haskell Beale

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## JEFF LEVY AND MAXIM ZAVET – SPECTRUM OF SKILLS AND SERVICE

**F**or Jeff Levy, a client isn't just someone who he does business with. Rather, a client is someone who has unique needs to be filled.

To that end, as managing partner and co-founder of Levy Zavet Law, he has helped build a firm that encompasses diversity of language, diversity of services, a diverse team, and diversity of legal experience.

The firm, located in mid-town Toronto, appeals to a cross-generational multicultural clientele, while offering services in English, Russian, Farsi, Hebrew and Chinese.

"It's about the personal attention we give our clients," says Levy, who adds that another important aspect of their mission is "providing the client value." Knowing that legal fees can often be overwhelming, they make it a point to understand the financial burden, and do everything possible to keep the fees at reasonable parameters.

Levy began the firm five years ago with Maxim Zavet, a Russian-Israeli, and together they have assembled a team of top lawyers, law clerks and assistants, all with an extensive track record of success.

Located in the Eglinton and Yonge area, the firm offers myriad areas of legal expertise, ranging from real estate transactions, condominium development and construction law, business and corporate law, taxes, commercial litigation, and family law.

For Levy's part, he has honed his knowledge base in several areas of law, giving him a diverse skill set to offer clients.

"That's stand-out for us, the idea that the firm is providing many kinds of services at expert levels," he says.

One specialty of his includes real estate and mortgages. His clients have run the gamut from first time home buyers, commercial closings and condo developers. But those aren't the only business transactions he has focused on.

It should come as no surprise given his experience and training in business law, that so many clients have utilized his counsel on all things related to buying/selling businesses, venture capital and financing issues.

Business of all sizes – including corporations, family-owned and private businesses - have benefitted from his expertise as an adviser. Family-owned businesses, for instance, have welcomed his guidance in how best to pass the torch of ownership to the next generation. From older, established businesses, to brand new ones, Levy has been there to offer a



helping hand. Start-ups, too, have also actively sought his extensive insight to ensure they have the right plan for success. And while he's at it, he can adapt and adopt his vast understanding of tax law to address any tax issues or concerns.

But if that wasn't enough, Levy's additional impressive aptitudes in the business realm include wide-ranging familiarity with trademark and copyright law, and protecting intellectual property rights.

Meanwhile, he and the other partners in the firm keep abreast constantly of the changing legal landscape and trends, to make sure that their advice is up to date.

When they're not in the office, many lawyers in the firm frequently offer their services to the public in the form of online articles, that prove to be helpful to law students' research, according to Levy.

"Students find this valuable. We get very detailed regarding the technicalities in certain types of files – we will reveal some secrets on being a good lawyer," asserts Levy. Overall, their team has penned some 500 articles, he says.

As for co-founder Maxim Zavet, much like Levy he has a vast and varied range of experience, knowledge and expertise. His residential and commercial real estate transactions number in the hundreds, for a wide assortment of clientele.

There are a number of areas in condominium law, in which he can assist, too. Let's suppose you're about to embark on buying a piece of land for development into possibly a condominium project; before you sign and need a legal pair of eyes, or there's a conflict with your contract, Maxim has the ability to

scrutinize the fine print with a keen attention to detail and assess the plausibility of pursuing your endeavor from a legal standpoint. In cases of condominium law and development, his experience has shown that he can be your strongest partner.

From real estate contract disputes to title matters, Maxim has been able to solve issues efficiently and deftly. Indeed, his background in real estate law and condominium law and development has enabled him to take each case, each client, and give them individualized attention to serve them in the best way possible.


The list of types of transactions and files he has dealt with in this area include regular residential real estate closings, commercial real estate deals, land assembly and dealing with title matters, providing the complete package for developers and builders to pre-sell their projects, close on complex financing arrangements and preparing condo declarations and disclosures as well as dealing with and remedying ongoing development and construction issues..


And when it comes to family, nothing is as important as making sure the next generation is safeguarded, and that's why Levy is especially conscientious when it comes to helping people with estate planning. Doing so can maintain a family business, save taxes, and avoid conflicts between beneficiaries, among other important issues.

Overall, what's most meaningful to Levy is a job well done, and seeing those who use his services pleased with his work.

"Definitely the most rewarding is receiving great feedback from the client," says Levy, "more so than dealing with the firm matters. It always comes back to the client." ■







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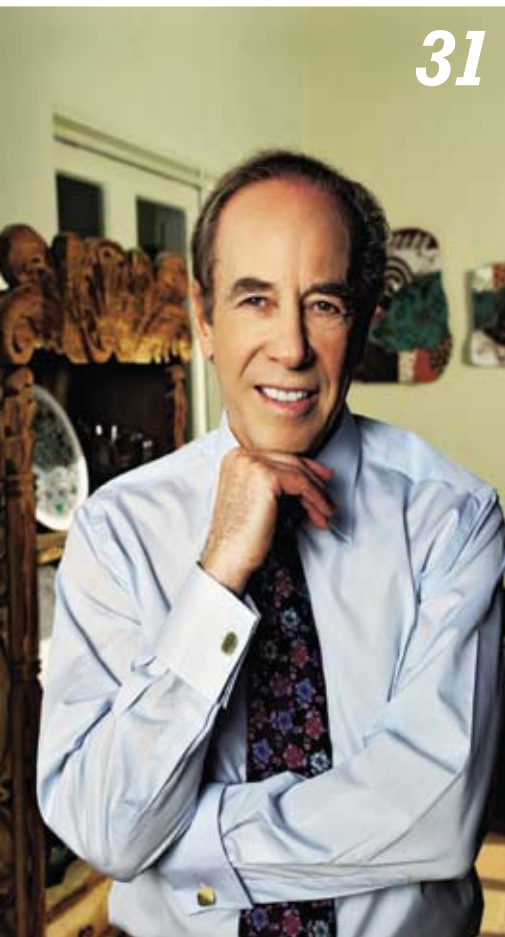
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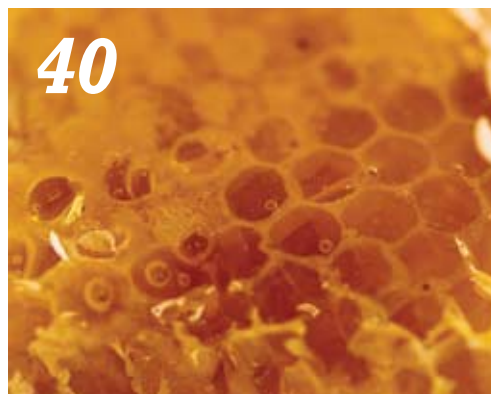
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# WELCOME



**MICHELE MICHAELOV**  
editor@jewishreview.ca



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[WWW.JEWISHREVIEW.CA](http://WWW.JEWISHREVIEW.CA).

One of the most distinctive strengths of the Jewish community is the ability to set aside our differences and rally together in times of trouble. This past summer was no exception. We united in support of Israel and were horrified as one at the tragic unfolding of events: the kidnapping and murder of 3 teenage boys, and the subsequent conflict in Gaza. Many took up the cause as social media warriors, battling for public opinion on Facebook , Twitter and YouTube.

But in times of peace, other strengths define the Jewish Community: the drive for success and the desire for a better world – Tikkun Olam. The Jewish Review, Canada's Business and Lifestyle Magazine, showcases these emblematic strengths and focuses on issues near and dear to our community.

Several of our community's successful individuals are profiled in this issue: Lisa Kimmel (our cover story), General Manager of Edelman Toronto, an authentic leader who genuinely understands people; Ivan Reitman, the renowned director of classics such as Animal House, Ghostbusters and Groundhog Day; Isadore Sharp, legendary CEO of the Four Seasons Hotel and dedicated philanthropist; and Eric Brass, the man behind the latest premium Tequila.

Alongside them, we spotlight individuals who strive to better the world through the causes they support: Kathy Laszlo, co-founder of DANI, a nonprofit organization for the self-development of challenged young adults; Sabrina Malach, director of community outreach at Shores; and Tag Meir, the Israeli forum against violence and terrorism.

And in a nod to the holiday season, we are excited to offer a festive look at our favourite gifts, fashion and food.

We hope you enjoy the Jewish Review, a magazine that reflects the many and varied strengths of our Jewish community. Please let me know what stories you would like to see in the future.

Contact me at [editor@jewishreview.ca](mailto:editor@jewishreview.ca).

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Michele Michaelov'.



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These are just a few examples of how control and media automation technology can be artfully blended into your home or business. Today's high tech world promises ease-of-use, and one-touch operation. Nevertheless, we are often disappointed by the increasing complexity of these technologies. Even some so-called 'experts' who install these systems have a difficult time explaining to clients how they work.

We caught up with Anthony Di Lecce, founder and president of Intelligent Sound and Vision, a high-end control and media automation systems provider. IS&V has been a Crestron control systems preferred partner (Crestron is the gold standard in control and automation) since 2002. Anthony gave us a better understanding of the business. Di Lecce describes the state of the industry to be one "in a constant state of flux, with continuous advances in core technologies, making it difficult for people interested in home/business automation, and those in the field, to keep up-to-date on products and best practices when it comes to design and installation." Anthony believes to be successful in the media automation business, companies need to be more than simply design and installation focused. For Intelligent Sound and Vision, it is critical to become a partner and advisor to those considering a total automation solution for their home or business: "Our industry needs to be better at explaining available solutions, and better at providing full support after everything is installed."

"Our industry needs to be better at explaining solutions available and better at providing full support after everything is installed." Anthony Di Lecce

Key to the process is developing a great working relationship, early on in the construction phase. Whether considering a home theatre solution, or a total control and automation solution for your home/business; the first step is to truly understand what options are available. The starting point for Intelligent Sound and Vision is a free in-business or in-home consultation so the team can understand the client's vision. Once the decision is made to move forward, the best way to appreciate a Crestron system, and how it can seamlessly integrate into your business or home, is to experience it in person.

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## THE REMARKABLE VISION BEHIND

# Dani

THE BUSINESS-SAVVY NONPROFIT

BY REBECCA IHILCHIK



Danny Laszlo working at DANI Dairy Delights

When Kathy Laszlo's son graduated from high school, she found herself at a standstill.

Danny, a young adult with autism, had very few options available to him: government programs were full, wait lists were excruciatingly long, and the offerings themselves were subpar.

Several other families were in a similar situation – and they wanted to act. So Laszlo, along with co-director Susie Sokol, started Developing and Nurturing Independence (DANI), an nonprofit organization for the self-development of young adults with physical and/or cognitive challenges (the acronym is a nod to her son).

When it began in 2006, DANI was a small-scale social group; eight years later, DANI is a well-functioning, popular organization in the Jewish community and beyond. Components include a day program, integrated social programs, a summer camp, and a catering business, among others. The day program aims to teach independent living skills; provide vocational placements; and encourage self-growth with activities like art, fitness, literacy training, and Jewish learning.

One of the unique aspects of DANI is its business savvy. (Laszlo is an accountant, which certainly helps.) Borrowing an organizational model they found in Cape Town, South Africa, the DANI founders ensured a social enterprise would serve as an integral part of their nonprofit.

The organization's Dairy Delights catering service offers the DANI clients a vocational opportunity, and the revenue generated from the business is turned directly back into the organizational budget. The service started out small, providing lunches for local schools and offices, but – thanks to word of mouth – soon expanded. Now DANI not only caters out, but uses its building as an event venue; the 8200-square-foot location in Thornhill's Garnet A. Williams Community Centre recently hosted a 250-person engagement party. It's even COR kosher-certified to boot.

Full government funding for nonprofits is, according to Laszlo, “not possible, and in my opinion, not right.” “I think it's absolutely essential that an organization helps itself,” she says. “It has to provide a service or a product that can be purchased.” That's not to say establishments shouldn't pursue grants or donations – Laszlo believes government funding should kickstart the process – but they should reach a point at which internal costs are covered by the organization itself.

Another unique aspect of DANI is its vocational placements. Placements for DANI clients are

sought based on the tenet that the young adults themselves should, and do, have their own ambitions.

“These people also have voices,” Laszlo says. “They have to have goals... Sometimes it's not realistic, but a lot of times it is.”

Some DANI participants work at the catering service, but others have no interest in the business, or don't have that particular skill set. In such cases, clients are offered external placements with establishments that appeal to them: grocery stores, warehouses, and even a pub, in one case. A few are paid for their work.

“Not everybody's going to be paid, to be honest,” says Laszlo. “But anybody that can do the same work as everybody else will get paid the same as everybody else. Because that's just right.” More importantly, though, the placements provide a sense of purpose and responsibility, and help the young adults integrate into the greater society.

Integration is one of DANI's pillars. Community is a fundamental part of the organization; Laszlo says they work with about 100 dedicated volunteers on a weekly basis. ▶

Kathy Laszlo and Susie Sokol at the Grand opening of the DANI Centre, May 5, 2013



Avi Slutsky serving slushy at Cafe DANI

*When it began in 2006, DANI was a small-scale social group; eight years later, DANI is a well-functioning, popular organization in the Jewish community and beyond. Components include a day program, integrated social programs, a summer camp, and a catering business, among others.*



*Parents play a major role on the DANI board and are heavily involved in the organization's vision.*

"When you enter [DANI], you don't feel like you're in an institution," she says. "It has a fantastic vibe. It's always upbeat, there's always coming and going."

The Jewish community understands that by using DANI's services, they're supporting the organization. "[The community] sees we set out to do something and actually do it," says Laszlo. "It's reassuring. They know it's not a pipe dream because of our track record."

She commends the devoted staff and parents as well. Parents play a major role on the DANI board and are heavily involved in the organization's vision, which Laszlo says ensures the program's high quality. More than that, though, the DANI families are unified

through their shared experiences. "Parents support each other," says Laszlo. "There are happy times and not so happy times in and out of the program. People rely on each other."

Clients' triumphs are Laszlo's proudest moments. They can range from a young woman walking home successfully after six months of practice, to 20-somethings learning how to read, to a 36-year-old man having his bar mitzvah in Israel on a Birthright trip.

The biggest misconception special needs adults face is the notion that they're "different from the normal," says Laszlo. "What is normal? It's not such a measurable idea."

She recalls when a physically challenged DANI client was once asked how he felt around 'normal' people.

"He said he didn't know, because 'normal' was only a setting on the washing machine. There's no such thing. One person's disability could be another person's ability."

Most of the DANI clients simply want to lead lives as independently as they can. For some, that means moving out of their parents' houses, working, and having social lives and relationships. To that end, DANI's next major project is residential planning.

Like the day programs, government housing is full, and the wait can exceed entire lifespans. The only way to move up on the list is if a parent passes

away. The parent-centric approach is important for practical reasons, Laszlo says, but the young adults are rarely asked what arrangement they would like for themselves. The project's success would mark an enormous step forward both for the organization and for the opportunities open to the young adults.

In the meantime, the DANI participants, parents, and staff continue to celebrate life together.

"We're like a family, and I like it this way," says Laszlo. "Many times people ask me how big I'd like to see the organization grow. Of course there's still room to grow, a lot of room to grow, but I'd want it in a way that we'd still be family... As long as I know every kid and their allergies, that's how big I'd like to go." ■



Jesse Saperia's makeup is done by volunteer Borka Rona.



Rita Winkler working at DANI Dairy Delights.



Miri Charney working at DANI Dairy Delights

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# the TEQUILA entrepreneur

## ERIC BRASS ON TAKING RISKS

BY REBECCA IHILCHIK

**D**rop your day job and pursue your entrepreneurial fantasy? For most, that's a pipe dream. For Eric Brass, that's reality.

Thirty-two-year-old Toronto native Brass is the brain behind premium tequila brand Tromba. As a business student on exchange to Mexico in 2005, Brass fell in love with the spirit – so much so that years later, after a five-year stint in finance, he quit his day job and started his own tequila brand.

With Australian partners Nick Reid and James Sherry and high-profile master distiller Marco Cedano, Brass has catapulted Tromba into the limelight. He's gone from selling it out of his backpack to having it carried in LCBO locations across Canada. Tromba is considered the number two premium tequila in the country, behind industry giant Patron, and the brand announced a U.S. expansion this past March.

Brass owes such rapid success to his audacity to take a risk. If he'd known then what he knows now about the tequila business—the fierce competition, the barriers to entry – he'd have stayed at his old job, Brass says.

"Sometimes being naive can be a real advantage. No analysis or research would have shown Tromba to succeed, and plenty of people told me it couldn't," he says. "Against all odds we are making our mark."

The tequila market certainly isn't a friendly one; it isn't growing, and it's dominated by big name brands. But Brass spied a lack that needed filling: integrity.

*"We have a legitimate shot at challenging the big boys, at becoming one of the top three tequila brands in the world."*

— Eric Brass



Photos by Jessica Blaine Smith



ERIC  
BRASS



"People now want craft, authenticity and want to know not only what they are drinking but why they are drinking it," he says. "That plays into our hands. Every bottle we've sold has been grassroots, word of mouth."

Of course, Brass's boldness is not to say there was no planning involved quite the opposite. But how can one tell when the business risk is worth taking? "You never can," says Brass.

"Just ask yourself – what's the worst that can happen? Almost all great men

and women have failed at one thing or another. Don't do it for the money, do it for the passion."

And Brass is undeniably passionate about his product. Tequila, he explains, is a misunderstood spirit, and Tromba is out to change how people think about it.

"Everyone has a bad tequila story," he says, alluding to the stereotype of downing a terrible-tasting shot of the stuff at a seedy bar.

But that's because your average tequila is a mixed product. A bottle requires only 51 percent tequila content to be labelled as such; the remainder is usually a blend of things like sugar and corn syrup. The Tromba product is 100 percent pure agave tequila, cooked at lower temperatures for longer periods to yield a smoother, very drinkable substance.

"Tequila is meant to be sipped and enjoyed," Brass says. "It's a beautiful spirit." Tromba's many fans would say so too.

Brass's proudest moments include his first time overhearing a stranger order Tromba at a bar, and the first day Tromba bottles appeared on LCBO shelves in 2012. More recently, he was an organizer of the Toronto group that broke the official Guinness World Record for largest tequila tasting.

His favourite part of the job? "The people you meet. I've met some great friends sitting at bar stools around the world. Some of the best people work in hospitality."

The future is bright for Brass, and he has great hopes for Tromba's American expansion.

"We have a legitimate shot at challenging the big boys, at becoming one of the top three tequila brands in the world," he says. And if Tromba's track record is any indication, that might prove a very real possibility. ■



# FIREBLADE:

## A TOP ISRAELI TECH START-UP

BY DAVE GORDON

### FIREBLADE

Israelis are good at security. This is a given. If anyone knows about not taking any chances, it's the Israelis.

By that rationale, it stands to reason they'd be good at online security. And they are. Heck, if they can (allegedly) sting the Iranians with a virus that took down their nuclear servers, it's no leap to say Israeli high-tech intelligence isn't to be reckoned with.

There's even a whole book ("Start-Up Nation", by Dan Senor and Saul Singer) about how Israel has more high-tech start ups than anywhere else – second only to Silicon Valley. Even Forbes took notice last summer of the ridiculously successful wave of Israeli innovation.

And so, those three reasons are good enough to pay keen attention to a successful Israeli tech start-up, Fireblade, who tout themselves as "sophisticated next generation website security". Headquartered in Tel Aviv, the cyber-security company was co-founded by Shay Rapaport and Erez Azaria in 2009 in response to growing website security threats and malicious bot traffic.

Rapaport, CEO, is a true visionary with extensive knowledge in internet security. Before Fireblade, he founded SmartMove, a CMS provider, and acted as its CEO for 5 years. Rapoport also has vast experience as an IT consultant and project manager and holds an LL.M. in International Law, specializing in internet law and cybercrime.

Azaria, the CTO of Fireblade, is a software engineer and IT professional with a strong background in a wide variety of computer and networking environments. Previously he worked with HP Software, serving in a variety of IT-related roles. Prior to founding Fireblade, Azaria co-founded and served as the CTO of Mobile Nature Ltd. He holds a B.A. in Industrial Design.

The difference with Fireblade is that it's mainly for huge web servers – not vanity or personal websites – whose data are measured in thousands of terabytes, or who receive millions of hits.

Fireblade works something like this: A hacker may decide they don't like a particular company, and begin to take advantage of a large number of infected computers distributed throughout the world (infected meaning that others can control them). The hacker instructs these computers to attack said company's website, game portal or news feed. All users of the particular company's services can therefore no longer access those services, because the service went down under the onslaught, or the bandwidth was simply consumed, denying access. Fireblade provides a layer of protection against what's called DoS (denial of service), so that at least the company's servers don't go down under the attack, and at best they can continue to serve their customers as normal.

"The simplest example might be, say, the Windows 10 announcement,"

explained Brent Scriver, senior programmer with game company Phoenix Labs, and a former Microsoft programmer. "The volume of people querying it may exceed capacity, resulting in the website going down. To avoid that, a service such as this will ensure a cap on the number of requests in such a way that the server won't go down, and at least some users will get the data."

Any organization of sufficient size and notoriety would benefit from such a service. According to the company, they protect billions of page-hits monthly.

For the computer nerd, the finer details are available online, but for the rest of us, another important thing to note is that its clientele are promised faster web services. So, you know when you're browsing, and a site is loading everything up, but it's all clunky and the graphics move like Godzilla? Fireblade won't tolerate that – they have real-time monitoring for website performance. Thirty spots around the world are hooked up to the company's hubs (POPs, or points of presence) so the signal channels can zap like lightning speed, closest to you. Also, if there's an outage or overload at a server, Fireblade reroutes the signal.

Basically, don't mess with Israeli tech guys, and don't be surprised in a couple of years if Fireblade becomes as well known as Google, YouTube or Wikipedia. ■

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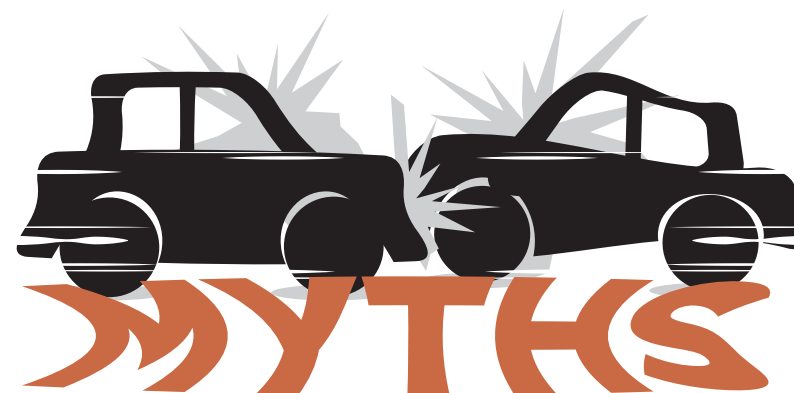
# DISPELLING THE MYTHS

## AUTOMOBILE COLLISION REPAIR

As Ontario motorists living in one of the highest density cities in which our automobiles are damaged by collision, vandalism or acts of Nature are almost inevitable. Unfortunately, when the need to repair the resulting damage arises, it is often difficult to navigate through the information (or misinformation) we are provided by friends, colleagues and even our Insurance Companies in order to make a decision regarding how we should deal with the repairs.

Experience teaches us that the most influential factor in the decision making process is the cost of repairs. This cost is almost always paid for by one of three different methods:

- 1.** Customer Paid – Where the owner or driver of the vehicle pays directly.
- 2.** Insurance Paid – Where the owner or other party involved feels the cost is more than what they would like to expense out of pocket and utilizes any applicable insurance coverage for payment.
- 3.** Third Party Paid – This term is widely used in the Insurance and Collision Industry and describes a situation where the other party involved (individual or company) agrees to pay for your repairs directly.



The Insurance Paid method is the most prevalent due to the high cost of repair associated with lighter and more costly components in today's vehicle construction.

### Myth #1

"My Insurance Company told me I have to go get 3 estimates." False! What the Standard Ontario Automobile Policy (O.A.P.1) says is that an Insurer must be given an opportunity to inspect any damage before they are obligated to pay. It is always best to bring the vehicle to the repair facility that you wish to use and have the Insurance representative inspect the vehicle with the assistance of a Licensed technician at that facility qualified to make the repair and diagnostic decisions.

### Myth #2

"My Insurance Company told me I have to go to one of their preferred shops." False! The decision regarding where to fix a vehicle is solely up to the owner. Many Insurers put a great amount of effort and focus on trying to convince their clients to use preferred facilities. Some do this to try and ensure their client is going to a properly equipped and licensed facility, but most do this for their own financial benefit.

### Myth #3

"My Insurance Company says they will not warranty my repairs if I don't go to a preferred shop." False! Insurance Companies do not repair vehicles. Ultimately the only valid warranty that is enforceable is that which is provided by the repair shop that has completed the repairs. Consumer laws in Ontario make it mandatory that shops must provide certain warranties regarding their repair work.

### Myth #4

"If I make a claim my Insurance rates will go up." False! Insurance is based on an assessment of risks based upon a myriad of factors. Comprehensive Insurance Claims that deal with damage caused by falling trees, hail, ice storm, flood etc.. almost never affect premiums as with not-at-fault collisions. In other situations or for clarity it is important to have a competent broker that can discuss your individual coverage and any effect on your premiums. ■





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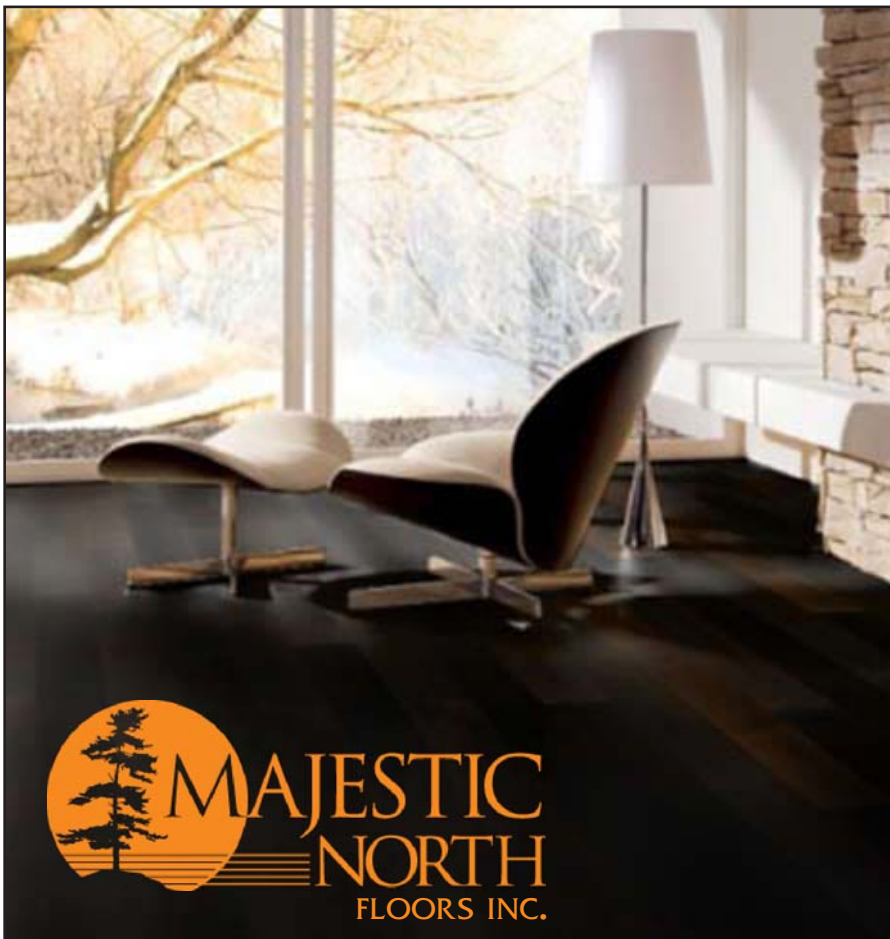
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A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

# ISADORE SHARP

CEO OF FOUR SEASONS HOTEL  
AND PHILANTHROPIST

BY DAVE GORDON



Isadore Sharp is the epitome of modesty when asked to describe his lifetime accomplishments: "I've been fortunate to be a reasonable success." His success has been more than reasonable, and can even be described as exceptional.

Sharp's hotel chain, Four Seasons Hotels, is located in 33 countries, with 94 hotels – and another seventy on the slate to be built. Condé Nast Traveler ranks 18 Four Seasons hotels in its worldwide "Top 100" list, more than three times the next most cited chain.

Sharp, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts summarized his fifty years of entrepreneurial experience and business fundamentals in his book, *Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy* in 2009. He has never made his formula to building a successful first-class hotel chain a secret.

"It comes down to one principle that transcends time and geography, religion and culture. It's the Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would want done unto you. The simple idea that if you treat people well, the way you would like to be treated, they will do the same." The rest, as they say, is commentary.

Sharp's ethical outlook also encompasses that which he doesn't look for among his employees. "I think what might irritate is people taking credit where it's



not due, being unfair, or dealing in a manner which humiliates others.”

Sharp and his three sisters were born to Polish parents who immigrated to Toronto before his birth in 1931. “It is a country of freedom,” he says of his pride of the land he calls home. “People of all backgrounds, races, religions and cultures are able to coexist and form a democracy. So it’s the luck of the draw to [fortunately] be born in this country, which affords us unlimited opportunity.”

He has lived through what he believes was Canada’s greatest achievement – standing up against Nazi tyranny – and her greatest failure, turning away those fleeing desperately for their lives.

“In the course of our history there have been those things the government has done that make you proud, and there are those things the government did that will always be a blight, as when Canada refused to take in Jews. It was wrong for Mackenzie King to do so. So those are the things you never live down.”

Fortunately, his parents fled Poland a few

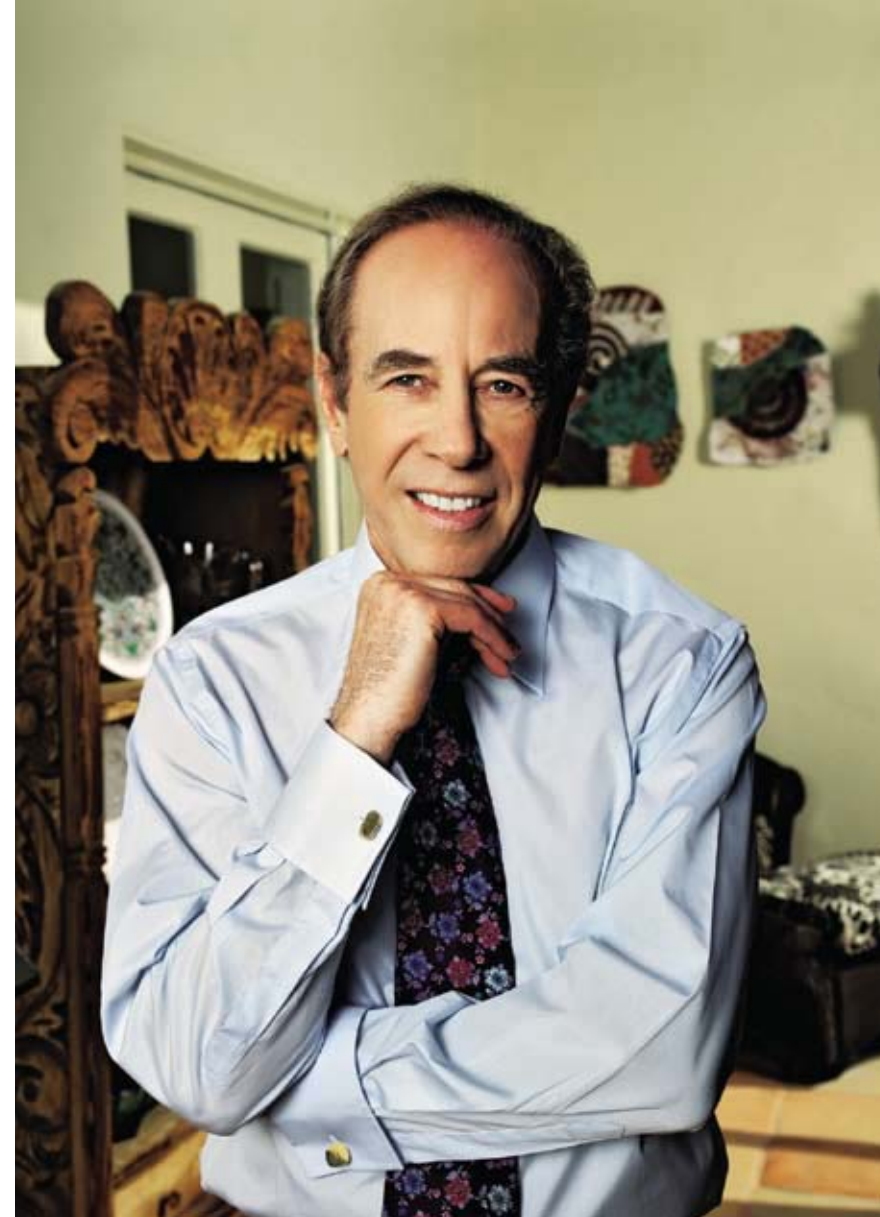
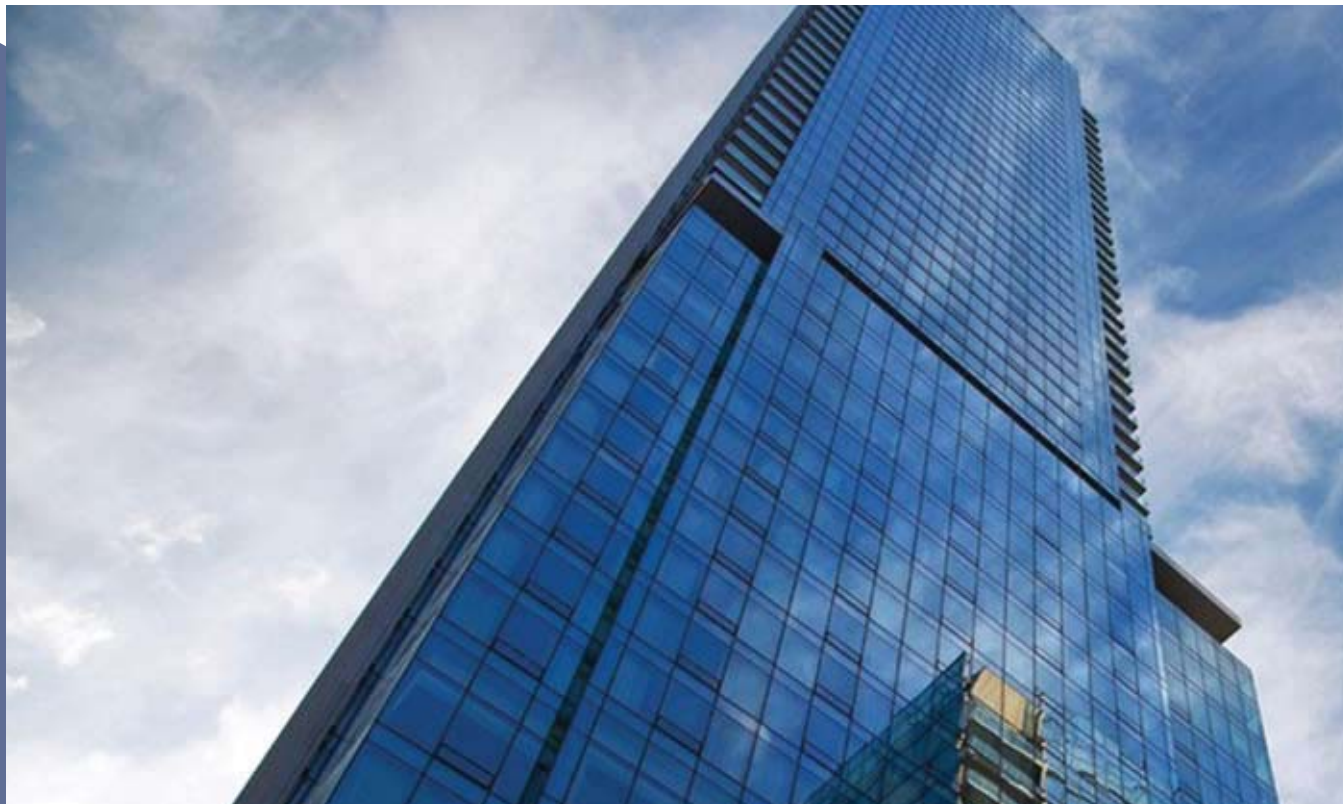
years shy of an oncoming Holocaust, to a country that provided the opportunity for their son to become one of Canada’s most successful businessmen.

At age 21, Sharp graduated from Ryerson University with a degree in architecture, later working with his father, Max Sharp, in the construction business. While building a motel for a client, the lightbulb went off in his head to create one for himself, one that he would own and operate. He knew nothing about the hotel business at the time.

He founded the Four Seasons Hotel in 1960, opening the first on Jarvis Street, a modest motor hotel with 125 affordable rooms in a seedy region abutting the downtown core of Toronto. Ten years later, his hotel experience had secured international renown. In London, England – competing against several known long-standing high-class hotels – the Inn on the Park became known as the best among the best, in 1970.

The luxury brand was made sweeter when the Four Seasons pioneered the idea of shampoo in the shower, 24-hour

Below: Exterior of Four Seasons Hotel, Toronto, Ontario location.



*At age 21, Sharp graduated from Ryerson University with a degree in architecture, later working with his father, Max Sharp, in the construction business. While building a motel for a client, the light bulb went off in his head.*

room service, bathrobes, cleaning and pressing, 24-hour secretarial services, among other avant-garde services that have since become hotel staples.

“It was a major strategic decision about what I thought the company could become. I decided it would operate as a medium-sized hotel of exceptional quality.”

Like with any business venture, it took determination, hard work, and overtime to reach the top.

The time balance between family and work was a precarious path. “Over the years I was working six, seven days a week, very long hours... I married someone who did a good job picking up on things I slipped up on. It’s a myth, the concept of a self-made man or woman. It doesn’t exist. We all need support along the way. In dealing with personal life, time with family, I wasn’t always there when I should have been. But these are the choices we make – and at the time, I didn’t have the maturity or option.”

Today, he’s more able to enjoy the fruits of his labours, even stealing away a little time for tennis, and a Bridge game with his wife of 58 years, Rosalie.

“I’ve been lucky enough to find and marry a woman who has enriched ▶





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my life and given me a family. That has been the most fulfilling."

The key to long-lasting relationships is a simple maxim, much like his business credo: "It has to be based on trust and respect. Those combinations, they continue to grow, through maturity."

Together, he and Rosalie have three sons, Jordan, Gregory and Anthony, and three grandchildren.

The happiest moments, he concedes, are "the pleasures you get over the years, the successes and happiness of your children." The advice he would offer to raise happy, well-adjusted children is both pithy and golden in itself.

"Put aside the proper time to be available when they need you, and always have the patience to listen."

That love and devotion for a child manifested itself in a tragic way for the Sharp family some thirty-five years ago.

Christopher, another son, succumbed to melanoma cancer in 1978 – a year after Terry Fox was diagnosed with cancer during his famed cross-country Marathon of Hope. With timing being everything, Sharp was inspired by Fox's drive to raise awareness, and to help science find a cure for cancer.



When Fox had to cut short his run due to his deteriorating health, Sharp sent a telegram to Fox's bedside, vowing to continue the work, and create a marathon event in his honour. Sharp helped originate and is Director of the Terry Fox Run, Canada's second largest non-government fundraiser for cancer research. Today, almost a half-billion dollars has been raised for cancer research in Fox's name and the event is now held in over 40 countries.

But the philanthropy doesn't stop there. He and Rosalie have made significant donations to the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the Ontario College of Art and Design, Mount Sinai Hospital, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

With Isadore no stranger to building from the ground-up, he and Rosalie's most recently announced major fundraising project will be a Jewish museum erected on the site of the now-closed McLaughlin Planetarium.

Interestingly, the museum – whose

doors have been shut since 1995 – is located mere blocks from the old Four Seasons flagship hotel in downtown Toronto. With the help of United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto, the Sharps are seeking partners to underwrite the project with a \$150 million price tag.

The museum foundation and the University of Toronto – who now owns the building – have agreed to kick in \$60 million.

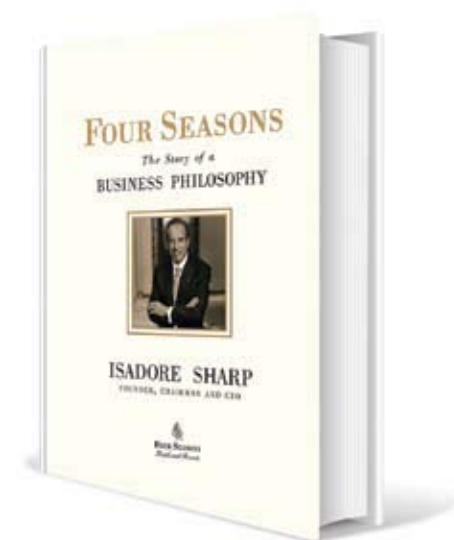
Rosalie has said to media that she hopes the museum's exhibits will cover Jewish history, the Shoah and celebrate Jewish accomplishments. Within five years, the Sharps have said, they hope the museum will open its doors.

"People are here for a very short space in history. It's a good idea to add something of value to others," he notes, musing on the meaning of life.

Many have certainly thought Sharp has helped others in major ways, judging by the reams of accolades he ▶

Left Page: Isadore Sharp and wife Rosalie Sharp, with George Christy at 2013 TIFF event.

Above: Terry Fox signs a poster promoting his run as Isadore Sharp looks on.







Isadore Sharp, Hon. Chairman, Four Seasons Hotels, with Mark Raynes receiving EOY Lifetime Achievement Award.

has received. To name some: In 1992, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. In 1998 he was inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame. In 2003, he received the Ontario Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year Program's Lifetime Achievement Award. He also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Hotel Investment Fund.

After so many years of giving and helping his fellow man, when asked

what else there might be in the world that could use some improvement, he points to the ever-elusive desire of the ages, world peace.

"I think there's an intolerance for people to accept others, there's a dogma, having to fit into one belief or another. There should be an acceptance that everybody is different, and there shouldn't be antagonism developed because of our differences." ■



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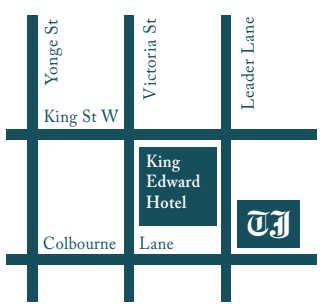

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# JEWISH COMIX ANTHOLOGY: VOLUME 1

## LAUNCH PARTY

By Andy Stanleigh,  
President, AH Comics Inc.



**E**ditor's note: *Jewish Review* featured an introduction to the inspiration behind *Jewish Comix Anthology* in our 2014 spring issue. We were excited about the chance to follow up with Andy Stanleigh and hear about the launch event for their *Volume 1* book, as well as what's next for these amazing artists. At the time of print, one of AH Comics' graphic novels, *Hobson's Gate*, was a finalist for an AASC Publishing Award and a People's Choice Award at Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair (November 13-16, 2014).

Co-hosted by the Koffler Centre of the Arts in Toronto, the launch party for the Jewish Comix Anthology was an immediate success full of good folks, good humour, media coverage and more! We had original illustration

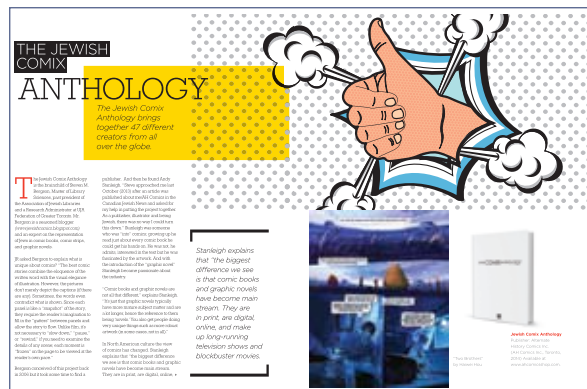
art on display taken directly from the pages of the book, lining the walls to create a "gallery" atmosphere which, coupled with the River Pilots' live playing of jazz instrumental music, made for a creative and classy affair.

We were very fortunate to have five of the artists in attendance, which is no small feat, considering that the 40+ creators involved are from all points of the globe. Those present at the party included Shane Kirshenblatt, Katherine Piro, Adam Gorham, Liat Shalom, Andy Stanleigh (myself) and, of course, editor Steven M. Bergson was on hand for speeches for the crowd of 130 attendees. The Space Channel also did interviews with the attending artists for their InnerSpace program (air date TBA).

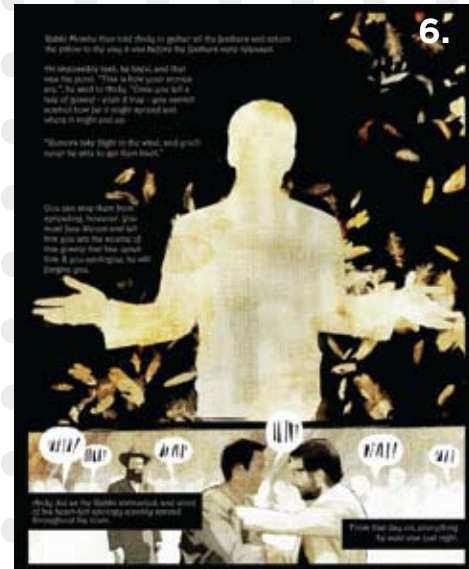
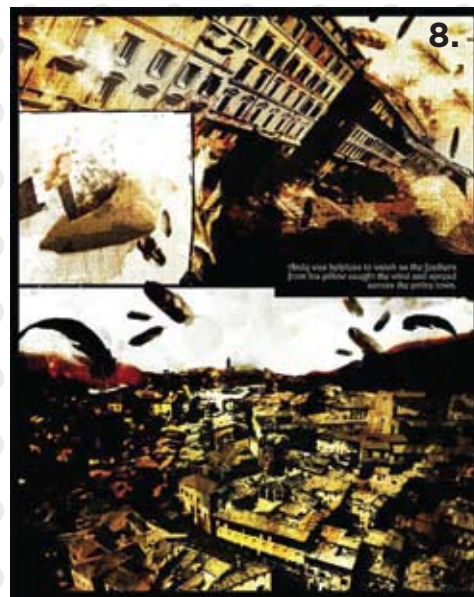
The partnership with the extremely gracious Koffler Centre allowed us to put on a party just beyond AH Comics' resources. With the additional promotion and advertising we had a lot of new faces, new fans and excited patrons. The vast mix of people who came out to the event and the atmosphere matched that of the Jewish Comix Anthology book itself – an entertaining and enthusiastic mix of different styles and stories from people of various backgrounds, joined by a common theme.

The Jewish Comix Anthology: Volume 1 is a 256 page collection of ancient folk tales and myths re-told in comic book format by some of the biggest names in the industry. With the launch party an amazing success, you can now purchase the book online ([www.ahcomicsshop.com](http://www.ahcomicsshop.com)) and in stores for the perfect present for anyone in your life interested in comics, legends and folklore!

Coming up, a few individual Jewish Comix Anthology artists will be displaying their artwork (some from the book, but mostly their own art) at the United Jewish Appeal Federation of New York's annual JOMIX: Jewish Comics and their Art exhibit, running February 27 to May 11, 2015. ■



Top: Andy Stanleigh  
Bottom: Feature from Spring Edition of Jewish Review, introductory article.



1. Page Sample: Two Brothers by Haiwei-Hou
2. Launch Party: Katherine Piro
3. Page Sample: Magic Mirror of Rabbi Adam by Adam Gorham
4. Page Sample: The Bleeding Tree by Shane Kirshenblatt
5. Launch Party: Liat Shalom
6. Page Sample: Pillow of Feathers by Andy Stanleigh
7. Launch Party: Adam Gorham

8. Page Sample: Pillow of Feathers by Andy Stanleigh
9. Page Sample: A Grave Matter by Liat Shalom & Villi Greenburg



# the BIG BUZZ around Shoresh

BY JANIS SEFTEL

## OUR Q&A WITH SABRINA MALACH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AT SHORESH JEWISH ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

For many of us living in Toronto, we occasionally seek out experiences with nature but are often time-poor – and not as informed as we could be – about all the opportunities there are to cultivate our own food, support local agriculture, spend weekend days in the country and meet a network of enthusiastic people looking for the same refreshing outlets. The role that Shoresh now plays in the Toronto Jewish community is drawing interest from many different sources both institutional and personal. Most recently, Shoresh was one of two Canadian organizations to be recognized in the Slingshot Guide 14-15 as a top innovative Jewish organization in North America (*there were 82 groups on the list in total*). The Guide highlights

the best of the thriving Jewish nonprofit world – it's a huge achievement.

As we get into “braving winter” mode, I wanted to make time to chat with Sabrina Malach, longtime lover of the outdoors and all things sustainable, to take a closer look at what's in the works for Shoresh and what to look forward to when the spring comes. It was a pleasure to chat with Sabrina and gain insight into one of the fastest-growing ventures of Jewish communal life in Canada.

**Janis Seftel:** Shoresh has obviously become more prominent in the Toronto Jewish community scene. How has your investment in strong community partnerships impacted on awareness of the organization?

**Sabrina Malach:** Every project we undertake is inherently a community

partnership, so we are automatically interconnected with other communal pursuits. We are who we are because of these relationships. We have been fortunate that major Jewish Federations in the US (*Joshua Venture Fellowship, the Natan Foundation and Slingshot*) have seen what we're doing and have given us a lot of support, resources and funding. The Joshua Venture Fellowship gave us \$100,000 over two years– they have projected that our Bela Farm [in rural Ontario] could be the biggest Jewish farm space in North America. We are also thrilled to have been named one of North America's top 82 innovative Jewish organizations in the tenth annual Slingshot Guide. We're so honoured to be on this list for the third time. Yet another amazing consequence of our growing reputation has also brought us other kinds of donors – recently a bnei mitzvah student in Toronto decided to donate ▶



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Sabrina Malach



Shoresh Beekeeping

a portion of his bar mitzvah monetary gifts to the apiary at Bela Farm. So we are seeing a response to our activities on different and important levels.

**JS:** Talk to us a bit more about Bela Farm! You recently had the first honey harvest at the farm last year. Tell me about that remarkable experience and what your goals for the apiary are now? Did you ever think you would be a beekeeper?

**SM:** Bela Farm is a spectacular 100-acre property an hour west of Toronto.

We put together a creative planning committee to create the vision for the farm. The committee includes the wonderful, generous and creative owner of the farm, two Shoresh staff and a professor from U of T. Together, we devised a platform that reflects our values and the owner's values. Some of the projects at the farm include a mini-garlic patch with 300 plants in it, an orchard, and my pride and joy, our apiary. Right now we are brimming with pride over the small apiary we have developed on the property. Honey is really important in Jewish ritual and

working with it is educational and sustainable. And honestly, there was genuine "buzz" around the idea!

We had our first honey harvest in 2013 and in 2014 we harvested 150 pounds of our sweet nectar. Just prior to Rosh Hashanah, we gave jars of Bela Farm honey to donors and volunteers. We also had a mini-market where we sold honey from a local beekeeper who tends hives in Toronto, Lake Simcoe and Peterborough. We sold jars on a sliding scale of \$12-18 each. People really responded and it was validation

that we should eventually sell our own. We now want to make beeswax candles for Shabbat and Chanukah.

Beekeeping is a great project for us in the early years at Bela Farm because the bees don't need to be checked every day. I have a background in Jewish farming and learned about beekeeping at the Isabella Freedman Adamah Fellowship program, in which our director Risa also participated. I then did an MA in environmental studies with a focus on pollinators in cities, an incredibly ▶

*Right now we are brimming with pride over the small apiary we have developed on the property. Honey is really important in Jewish ritual and working with it is educational and sustainable.*





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important part of food production.

**JS:** If I joined your CSA (*Community Shared Agriculture*) what could I expect to enjoy? Do you have plans to expand?

**SM:** At the moment our CSA operates out of the Heschel School in Toronto. Our current partner is Everdale farm – they are local and certified organic and you would get great produce from them if you joined. They are also our next-door neighbours at Bela Farm! We love this communal element. The Shoresh CSA has huge potential because it puts Jewish purchasing power behind sustainable agriculture. It means people are articulating their food choices through their spending.

**JS:** Do you think we are becoming more aware as a community of issues like urban chicken-raising, for example?

**SM:** Chicken-raising is currently not legal in Toronto. Some people are doing it in their backyards albeit illegally, but not commercially.

On the topic of chickens... Every few weeks I get an email from a community member looking for kosher, organic, pastured, ethical meat. There is definitely a market for this but policy and bureaucracy have made it very difficult for people to start up a business venture like this. I know a few people who are interested in starting something but they need support so if there is someone in the community who wants to invest in this, please contact us! We would



be delighted to match this enthusiastic person with an investor to get the project moving. There is obviously a demand for ethical meat, and it makes sense for Shoresh to be a part of this.

**JS:** To delve into your history for a moment, what was it like trying to emulate – or not emulate – Hazon in the United States, and perhaps apply this model in a Canadian context? Or are you a very different group?

**SM:** Hazon is a much larger environmental organization than Shoresh and while the work they do is incredible, it's very different from the work we do here. Our motto here at Shoresh is "Canadian soil, Jewish roots". While we draw on organizations like Hazon, Adamah and Teva for inspiration, we are very much a Canadian, grassroots organization and are thus very different.

**JS:** What is your volunteer base like? Do your volunteers have environmental backgrounds?

**SM:** We have a seasonal internship for people who want to learn about Jewish environmental ethics and organic farming. We also have regular volunteers who help us at the Kavanah Garden, Baycrest and at Bela Farm. They come from all age groups and

backgrounds. It's amazing to see the diversity of people who care about their health, the environment and creating a healthier world. I guess it's because everyone eats and everyone needs clean water and air!

**JS:** How does the Kavanah Garden change the way people are interacting with nature in this city?

**SM:** Kavanah Garden is a ¼ acre of land, which benefits people in cities who really want to spend time in nature. They want to know how to grow their own food, where their food comes from and how to become more resilient. I think we are at a point in time where the majority of people are living in cities and as such, people are beginning to realize that we need to make urban spaces healthier, cleaner, greener and more beautiful to thrive in them. The Kavanah Garden offers opportunities ▶

*The Shoresh CSA has huge potential because it puts Jewish purchasing power behind sustainable agriculture. It means people are articulating their food choices through their spending.*



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for people to develop knowledge and skills to do just that and within a Jewish context thus helping people not only connect to nature but also to their cultural and religious roots.

**JS:** What kind of outreach are you doing right now in schools and at camps?

**SM:** Throughout spring and fall, day schools come to Kavanah Garden for field trips, which has been really fun. We also offer consultation to schools and shuls who want to develop gardens or green their spaces. In October, we ran a few pickling workshops at Robbins Hebrew Academy and shuls bring us in for various activities too. We have had a lot of camps ask us to help them set up farms and gardens and hope to do this in the future.

**JS:** Congratulations on all the organization has achieved so far. How do you feel right now given the recent growth and the many plans ahead?

**SM:** Thank you – yes, we are growing and we are excited! Shoresh is in a great situation because the demand for our programs outweighs the supply (in other words, the community wants us to do more programs than we are able to offer due to our current resources). And as a non-profit organization, one of our challenges is that we don't necessarily have business backgrounds, so while to a business person, this demand is ideal, it's challenging for us to figure out how to match the demand while keeping Shoresh growing and sustainable. This is something we will navigate as we head into 2015 and we are grateful for all the support we have had so far. ■

For more information about Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs, visit [www.shoresh.ca](http://www.shoresh.ca).



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# Being a people Person: *The Strongest Level of Leadership*

REBECCA IHILCHIK TALKS TO **LISA KIMMEL**,  
GENERAL MANAGER OF EDELMAN TORONTO

**L**isa Kimmel is many things: a PR expert, an executive, a motivator, a mentor. As the general manager of Edelman Toronto, the largest Canadian office of Edelman—the world's largest independently owned public relations firm—Kimmel's garnered a bevy of accolades. She's been twice named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 by the Women's Executive Network—no small feat, to be sure. But, beyond the awards, what's most impressive about Kimmel is that she belongs to that rare rank of authentic leaders that genuinely understand people.

It wasn't love at first sight for Kimmel and public relations. From a young age she had her sights set on becoming a lawyer, and even wrote her LSATs as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto. But the professional dissatisfaction of her then-boyfriend, a law student, and her two lawyer uncles persuaded Kimmel to explore other options. Taking after her mother, who had a background in event planning, Kimmel completed Humber College's public relations certificate program—and became convinced PR was, in her words, "my calling."

After learning the industry ins and outs at two agencies—one of them the well-known firm Cohn & Wolfe—Kimmel was recruited by Edelman in 2002 to lead its consumer marketing practice. From a team of six, she built it into what is now Canada's largest. And in 2009, she was appointed Edelman Toronto's first-ever general manager.

The challenge awaiting Kimmel was enormous. How does a business excel when it's already at the top of its game? How does one innovate in an organization already celebrated for its innovation? The answer: from within. ▶





*She's been twice named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 by the Women's Executive Network – no small feat, to be sure. But, beyond the awards, what's most impressive about Kimmel is that she belongs to that rare rank of authentic leaders that genuinely understand people.*

Kimmel has, simply put, revolutionized her office's corporate culture. A strong believer in the value of employee satisfaction, she used her keen insight to usher Edelman Toronto into an unparalleled era of growth and verve.

"Historically, employee engagement and internal communication haven't been key priorities for a lot of organizations," she says. "But employees can be your biggest advocates or your biggest detractors. It's really important to recognize they're a critical audience in helping achieve your business objective."

Kimmel's brand of leadership is one based on inclusive management, meaning she actively solicits employee input in order to make the best decisions for the company. Transparency is a core value, as is co-creation. Kimmel meets on a quarterly basis with every level within the organization to hear "what's working, what's not working, how can we be doing better, how can we make this a better place to work."

"My philosophy has always been to ensure employees are very motivated and engaged," says Kimmel. "Because if they are, they're going to be inspired to do great work, and your business will grow."

It's a far cry from the stereotyped executive with the 'love it or leave it' attitude – and it's working. Under Kimmel's management, Edelman Toronto has swelled from 60 employees to over 130 in just five years. It's now the city's largest PR office, and is within the top few percent of growth of all 67 Edelman offices worldwide.

One of the best examples of Kimmel's leadership in action is the Edelman Toronto office space itself. Not long after Kimmel's promotion to general manager, the Edelman team moved to their current Yorkville location: an office meticulously planned with the group's specific needs in mind.

Aesthetically, it's a beautiful space—clean lines and vivid colours, sleek but inviting – by all standards, a fun, functional workplace. But the office is also carefully designed to help facilitate inter-organizational relationships through its open concept setup.

"In the old space, about 75% of people were in closed offices. Based on employee feedback, we saw that many people wanted more access to leadership," Kimmel says, adding that the members of each practice, or department, tended to stick together. So with the new office came the conscious decision to establish interspersed workspaces. That meant members of different practice areas got to know each other more intimately, and new hires now neighboured senior-level executives – Kimmel ▶



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Edelman's open concept office in Toronto.

herself included. "[The open concept] encourages great learning," she says.

The dynamic has not only improved internal functions, but it has increased organic client growth too; the greater level of collaboration means a client's particular need can be addressed by the best expertise in the office. And to think that growth begins, in part, by simply rearranging workspaces. It's these perceptive touches that are the hallmarks of Kimmel's style, and these careful manoeuvres that generate such potent results.

The decision to lead in this unique vein links to Kimmel's past experience as an employee. "I've worked for a lot of people I didn't feel were great leaders. But you can learn as much from bad leaders as you can from good leaders," she says. Self-awareness is key, as is surrounding yourself with people that excel in areas you don't – again, the

attitude that learning opportunities can emerge from unexpected sources.

The same goes for mentor relationships. Kimmel says she's had great mentors in her career, and even though she's no longer the mentee, there's still much to absorb.

"I feel I can learn just as much as a mentor, particularly given that I work in an industry that has a lot of young people. I'm interested in hearing what millennials are thinking about today, what's important to them, and how I can apply what I'm hearing from [my] mentees to my own organization."

The level of broad-mindedness Kimmel describes seems almost utopian. All things considered, though, isn't there a tension between such openness and maintaining a respectful authority in the workplace? It comes down to a question of trust, she says. Trust is based on consistency – and so is the



Lisa Kimmel hosting the Building Ladders to the Top dinner.

respect of employees. "Corporate culture is fragile. When things change, or when you're faced with tough times, you have to stay true to your values."

One of those values Kimmel feels most strongly about is advocacy for women's PR opportunities. Historically and today, PR is dominated by women; "but when you actually look at senior leadership within the industry, it's still heavily weighted towards men," she says. To combat the imbalance at Edelman, Kimmel is on the steering committee of the company-wide Global Women's Executive Network (GWEN). But in the wider world, Kimmel says women are still underrepresented when it comes to getting quoted in the media. The problem is due to a combination of factors, one of them that women are "often reluctant to be in the spotlight."

"It's important for anyone who wants to raise their profile to determine their area of expertise, and then be comfortable going out there and making themselves available for comment," she says. Kimmel is particularly sensitive to this issue as a mother to an eight-year-old daughter. She's acutely aware of "the power of media, and how

much they influence the decisions and perceptions young women have today.

"I want my daughter to see women experts in the media that are authoritative on certain topics, so they can act as role models to her. There are so many very qualified women that should be talking on any given topic."

Kimmel sets that example in her own life. She's a popular commenter in the media, and she's vocal in her own published writing about, among other things, the challenges of being an executive and a working mother.

"It's important to me to act as a role model, for people to see you actually can have a very fulfilling life and an amazing career – but it's all about making choices," she says. "I'm very honest about when I'm faced with challenges and when I am struggling to juggle my work and life commitments. Because it's not always easy."

Kimmel goes by what she calls the 'rule of thirds': ideally, a third of her focus goes to work, a third to family, and a third to herself. Outside of work, she enjoys fitness, photography, and cooking; she's also an active volunteer in the arts and

*Kimmel says women are still underrepresented when it comes to getting quoted in the media. The problem is due to a combination of factors, one of them that women are "often reluctant to be in the spotlight."*

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culture community and in a variety of professional mentorship programs.

And, of course, there's Kimmel's daughter and 10-year-old son. "They're my life," she laughs.

When asked about the most important value she hopes to pass on to her children, Kimmel pauses thoughtfully.

"I want them to be fulfilled," she says, "with whatever that is: a great career, or the people with whom they surround themselves, or a passion project... At the end of the day, if you're fulfilled, you're going to be

happy, and you're going to be doing the things you want to be doing."

And for her own future? True to form, Kimmel is bent on maintaining meaning.

"I still see myself working hard. I get tons of fulfillment from having a challenging career in which I'm constantly growing professionally and learning. At Edelman I still feel challenged, I'm still learning every day.

"I always want to be open to new experiences and opportunities. And I always want to remain curious." ■



Left Photo:  
Edelman's GWEN  
Global Women's  
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Right: Lisa Kimmel in  
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## A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Investing in small/medium real estate development is a better return on investment than renting out purchased property.

### Summary

Those who invest in property almost, by default, rent out purchased property and bypass the real estate development option. But that may not be the right choice – as investing in small/medium real estate development can be a better return on investment option than renting it out.

### Introduction

Real estate development, to many, may seem like a far-fetched investment opportunity. The steps and people involved could be too many for some to handle, not to mention the mountain of professional fees one might have to pay for consultants to liaise with government officials and neighbourhood associations only to get the project approved. Just from the looks of it, headaches seem to pile up way faster than cash! However, real estate development is easier than it seems, and the return on investment is very often, higher than renting your property out.

### How long?

Below are some steps you can take to get your foot in the door to real estate development

#### 1. Location, location, location

Find a neighbourhood with potential – low density neighbourhoods that show signs of future development are excellent candidates. Don't know where to look? Visit city/town planning websites to monitor open houses and public meetings on development proposals to find out where development is sprouting up in Toronto and the GTA. Here's a list to get you started:

- City of Toronto<sup>i</sup>
- City of Markham<sup>ii</sup>
- City of Vaughan<sup>iii</sup>
- City of Mississauga<sup>iv</sup>
- City of Brampton<sup>v</sup>
- Town of Caledon<sup>vi</sup>

#### 2. Size matters

Real estate development is only cumbersome and complicated if it involves multiple parties, all with a finger in the pie. Keeping the real estate investment to small or medium will limit the parties involved. Capital investment of \$.25 to \$2 million is considered small/medium investment. This is also the best option for individuals and professionals looking to get their feet wet in the world of real estate development opportunities with a higher yield than rent.

**Avg GTA Rental Cap Rate vs Avg Real Estate Investment Cap Rate**  
Greater Toronto Area - Q2 2014

Real Estate Investment	18.50%
Office	6.50%
Retail	5.90%
Industrial	5.60%
Apartment	5.30%

#### 3. Get cosy with city planners and neighbourhood associations

The best way to avoid disapprovals from city officials, lengthy meetings with concerned residents are to work with them from the get go to find a mutually beneficial solution for a reasonable return. While small and medium developments are not necessarily invasive to neighbourhoods and communities, some level of unrest are always expected when a character of a neighbourhood is to be transformed by a newcomer.

#### 4. Still too much work? Get someone to do the work for you

Many architects now provide one-stop solutions to perform all the above services with a nominal fee. These professionals

understand the intricacies of city development, and can tell you which neighbourhoods have the most potential. Few of those can even organize and package it into a real estate development opportunity to meet your needs.

### Success Stories

#### 1. The Beaches Neighbourhood, Queen Street East, Toronto

A property was recently purchased at the Beaches neighbourhood on Queen Street East. The dilapidated residential property was sold at an undervalue price. Investors recognized that development is favoured along this strip and seized the opportunity to re-zone into a 5 storey commercial building. By being in the know, this re-zoning process was completed effortlessly and increased its floor area by 3 times the size of the land.

#### 2. Mimico Neighbourhood, Lakeshore Boulevard, Toronto

Another residential property was purchased in the Mimico neighbourhood in west Toronto to build a mixed use development with commercial and retail components. Mimico is

an established community, one that the City of Toronto officials are looking to revitalize. By working with city officials and neighbourhood associations, investors are once again able to re-zone with relative ease. The ROI is also evidently identical to that in the Queen East neighbourhood. ■

### Sources:

- i - [www.toronto.ca/planning](http://www.toronto.ca/planning)
- ii - <http://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/Markham/BusinessDevelopment/PlanningAndDevelopmentServices>
- iii - [http://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/departments/development\\_planning/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/departments/development_planning/Pages/default.aspx)
- iv - <http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/planningandbuilding>
- v - <http://www.brampton.ca/en/Business/planning-development/Pages/welcome.aspx>
- vi - <http://www.town.caledon.on.ca/en/townhall/developmentplanning.asp>



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# WHO WORKS TO REPRESENT OUR COMMUNITY?

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE VALUES AND GOALS OF  
INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK FOR THE CENTRE FOR  
ISRAEL AND JEWISH AFFAIRS

BY JANIS SEFTEL

The idea that any one group can or should speak on behalf of an entire community is fraught with opposing views and reactions. There are those who feel protected, relieved even, in the knowledge that every day a central body arbitrates for Jewish communal growth and solves dilemmas which many of us do not have the expertise to tackle. On the other hand, it can be said that the Canadian ideal of democratic thought and process is challenged when any one organization puts their hand up in order to represent the whole.

The Canadian organization, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) – led by CEO Shimon Fogel – walks a balancing act between these two schools of thought each day. Their aspirations for informed debate and their desire to sustain an indispensable Jewish national sovereignty makes plain their general position on Israel and their assumption that the community needs such a central body. Where these goals find their outlet – ultimately increasing CIJA's value – is in genuine partnership with many other cultural groups in Canada and in significant relationships with political thought-leaders.

The national CIJA team comprises almost fifty dedicated individuals from diverse backgrounds, warranting a discussion of how a group with perspectives across a wide political gamut remains united in a common goal. What surprised me is that just under a dozen passionate CIJA staffers either did not grow up Jewish, or had minimal to no contact with Jewish community in their early lives. Some are now Jews by choice, or ardent Zionists who simultaneously maintain their cultural heritage. And some are simply outreach experts.

I spoke with several about how their unconventional job choice came to be, and what it is about their shared goals that keep them satisfied at work every day. ▶





RICHARD MARCEAU

Richard Marceau, former Vice President of the Canada Israel Parliamentary Friendship group, was invited to Israel on three separate occasions by Canada Israel Congress (CIC), a former iteration of CIJA. These trips are central to “the Israel file” that the organization is constantly developing. The overarching outcome is a strong takeaway for participants with regard to the diversity of Israeli society, an important aspect of Israel “which does not filter through to [international] media”. He affirmed that becoming genuinely attached to the objective of most Israelis – “the desire to live peacefully in a sustainable Jewish homeland in the ancestral land of Israel” – cannot be achieved without visiting and connecting with secular and religious families, Holocaust survivors, soldiers, writers, entertainers, politicians, Israeli-Arab communities and Palestinians.

Marceau is 11th generation Quebecois; his ancestors came in 1635. He jokes that an excerpt from his personal story of the journey towards Jewish life, *A Quebec Jew* (Editions du Marais, 2011) was published in *La Press* on a Saturday. His immediate circle must have taken time to get used to it. What do Quebecers think of Israel, anyway? They probably have “this dual image of chasid and soldier.” Plus, with 98% of Quebec Jews living in Montreal, there is a dearth of exposure to Jewish culture in the rest of Quebec. Of course, at their core, this is how lobby groups think, and CIJA is no exception. However, “there is outreach needed from

both sides... between Jews and non-Jews. A lot of Jewish people don't know enough about Quebec society either.”

Central to Marceau's adopted cultural outlook is the notion of tzedek, tzedek tirdof (justice, justice, shall you pursue). “Jews, particularly those who work in social justice, need to be defenders of human rights and vulnerable minorities.” Marceau tells me that Canada is the only G8 country not currently protecting individuals who face genetic discrimination. “[Our reality is that] an insurance company can deny coverage if an employee suffers from a genetic disease.” CIJA is the only non-disease organization currently involved in the protesting coalition.

Another file he works on is the C-279 Senate Bill; Marceau wants to provide better protection to transgender people and currently lobbies for this with a coalition of approximately 100 other groups. “The Canadian Human Rights Act should be amended... the transgender group [must be added] as an identifiable group.” Other pursuits include advocating on behalf of Jewish families from Morocco, Egypt and Iran who were expelled after 1948 and who are still considered refugees – “the world didn't take notice, but the Canadian government still has an opportunity to recognize them.” On top of this, Marceau is involved in ongoing restitution claims for Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe. Above all, these files are about “contemporary shared values that exist between Israel and Canada” – emphasizing these and working towards the discovery of more.

*“Jews, particularly those who work in social justice, need to be defenders of human rights and vulnerable minorities.”*



MARTIN SAMPSON

Martin Sampson wants his communications team to be known as “advocacy objectives experts” who are constantly aspiring towards intellectual honesty. He feels that CEO Fogel is committed to an extremely important cause and he himself, as a non-Jew, believes deeply in the idea of Israel, “but we are not a mouthpiece for the Israeli government.”

There are three groups that CIJA designates as being in the wider community. Adversaries, for better or for worse, have to be identified. Then there is the core constituency – the Jewish community – to whom Sampson believes CIJA has an obligation. The third group is the “movable middle”; it is vital to form relationships with them and act as a resource to help remove the hurdle of “message tension” which this group may experience from all sides. When this group needs information, CIJA knows their role is to respond right away and make themselves available. The CIJA Impact Report and the “four questions” document produced with AIPAC are available at [cija.ca](http://cija.ca) as a resource for the advocacy targets of media and opinion leaders. “We are not in the intellectual property business; we're in the explaining business.”

I asked Martin whether Aljazeera Arabic is still in the “adversary” camp after an incident in February when they articulated beliefs about the Jewish state which most Canadians would probably identify as vilification. Right now, CIJA

is monitoring them and continues to submit complaints because the group is generating “hate speech towards Jews.” They have to “demonstrate otherwise” before CIJA can believe that they should be on the radio.

Like Marceau, Sampson has been hugely impacted by his trips to Israel (in 2012-13, CIJA sent more than 400 people to Israel, including parliamentarians, media and interfaith leaders). Terry Glavin, Sue-Anne Levy and Marissa Semkiw are just some of the journalists who have gone on CIJA trips and become more informed. Seeing this greater fullness of perspective in others is gratifying for Sampson, a huge devotee to causes of importance in the Jewish world. His unique upbringing, with parents from Poland and England who moved to Montreal in the 1980s, contributed to his desire to be a part of “moving the needle”, however marginally, towards a greater understanding of the nature of the Jewish state and the Jewish people.

*Like Marceau, Sampson has been hugely impacted by his trips to Israel (in 2012-13, CIJA sent more than 400 people to Israel, including parliamentarians, media and interfaith leaders).*



DYLAN HANLEY

Associate Director of Government Relations and University Outreach, Dylan Hanley, grew up in similar circumstances to Marceau – no connection to the Jewish community “or the Muslim community for that matter.” He was a left-wing ideologue at school in Seattle, gradually becoming more interested in the Palestinian cause and eventually joining Students for Palestine in Calgary.

His “defining moment of getting schooled”, vis a vis Israel, came when he submitted a paper about the military career of Ariel Sharon. Hanley's professor at the time recommended he keep studying in order to find more authentic sources for all his deep accusations of Sharon as cruel and hawkish leader. Through this deeper research, he found that his understanding of the treatment of Palestinians by Israelis changed, and “pure injustice got ruled out... so was this still interesting?”

He began to study under Professor Alan Dowty and in 2007 participated in the Israel Young Leadership Program, which brings student leaders who are involved in politics, activism or student journalism to Israel. Hanley now runs this program. What role do these participants play on campus later on in terms of helping the advocacy cause? Interestingly, the campus issue – i.e., the level of anti-Semitism that is widely believed to exist at Canadian universities – isn't as “active” as we might think. “Anti-Israel

campus politics attracts people who are already on side,” which sounds to me like the student equivalent of Sampson's “adversary” category. However, learning about the perspectives Hanley once favoured as an undergrad, it is clear he speaks from experience.

Hanley sees CIJA as a big tent organization, which helps to create that thread connecting him and his colleagues. He is unequivocally committed to the defense of Israel's right to exist as a democratic state, a position I later saw distilled in his Twitter bio: “Alberta boy and accidental Zionist”. I'm hesitant to bring up the Twitter name belonging to Sampson – @axidntlzionist – in case there is some lighthearted dispute over who is the original, but I muse quietly about the amazing popularity of such a title in the halls of CIJA.

There are difficult days, we agree, but it is apparent that Hanley's positive associations with Israel sustain him at these times. His work is also concerned with Canadian-Israeli university bridge-building, like the current cardiac stem cell research being conducted between the University of Toronto and the Technion. This “traffic going both ways” is vital, not necessarily for political gain but in the interests of academic advancement. ▶

*Hanley sees CIJA as a big tent organization, which helps to create that thread connecting him and his colleagues.*





**INDIA ISRAEL OPPORTUNITY**  
The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs in partnership with the Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce, Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce and the City of Markham at a business breakfast at the Hilton Markham.

Pictured (Left to Right)  
Markham Mayor **Frank Scarpitti**;  
**Meir Klein**, Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce; **DJ Schneeweiss**, Consul General of Israel; **Akhilesh Mishra**, Consul General of India; **Naval Bajaj**, Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce; **Sarina Rehal**, Associate Director, Special Projects at The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; **Yogesh Sharma**, Rajasthan Association of North America (Canada).

### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING EVENT

An event attended by over 300 young professionals from the Indian, Ismaili, Sri Lankan and Jewish community for a night of professional development and networking.



### BINDAAS

A young adults event in partnership with the Ashkenaz Festival, bringing together the Indian, Jewish and Israeli communities in Toronto for an evening of fusion music featuring Shye Ben Tzur and the Rajasthan Gypsies, food, performances, henna and other entertainment.



STEVE MCDONALD

One topic that came up in a few interviews is that of the Quebec Charter of Values, the most controversial element of which Torontonians might remember from 2013 (the limits on conspicuous wearing of religious symbols by public sector personnel). It is Associate Director of Communications Steve McDonald who introduces the concept of “a more moderate front” into our conversation. Putting aside the wariness with which the staff approached the Charter in general, it was “not just a minority vs. majority” issue. So what exactly was CIJA’s role in this? In trying to lobby for change, an intellectually honest group needed to demonstrate how the charter actually conflicted with Quebec values. In other words, these efforts go a long way to move the issue away from simply being a minority problem, but one that affects the average Quebecer, and Canadian. Not only did CIJA go to bat for Jewish observant government employees, but all other ethnocultural groups whose right to express themselves religiously would have been compromised as well.

McDonald’s understanding of Israel has evolved deeply since he was first invited on a trip as part of CIC’s “internship on the Hill”. As a teenager raised evangelical in Eastern Ontario, he didn’t know any Jewish people. The very short story is that he met his wife in Ottawa, converted to Judaism, and is now incredibly proud to work alongside a “mensch” boss, Sampson, and the rest of the team.

I’m curious about McDonald’s favoured line, “national in scope, regional focus”. “Advocacy, most commonly, is happening on a local level,” even if we attempt otherwise. The Uniting Church of Canada (UCC) is one example of a group with whom CIJA has a great relationship in an individual city context, but if their leadership from above takes action that isn’t endorsed on a grassroots level, it can be difficult for the UCC to navigate their own reputation with CIJA in places like downtown Toronto.

Networking with other advocacy professionals, via social media or in person, is quite important and McDonald hopes to do more. Currently, CIJA sends people to the General Assembly, the World Jewish Congress, and they have three staff members in Jerusalem. The challenge, ultimately, is keeping people involved in community and philanthropy. “There is huge value in having non-Jewish speakers and thought-leaders. . . We need to mobilize those experts and always give them the tools they may need”. The basic gist? Advocacy organizations need to take risks and seize the initiative.

*Currently, CIJA sends people to the General Assembly, the World Jewish Congress, and they have three staff members in Jerusalem.*



SARINA REHAL

To Sarina Rehal, advocacy means building support for Israel and making it relevant. She grew up in Vancouver, studied political science and in her final year was very involved on campus (she was a member of a Darfur advocacy group) but didn’t know anything about Hillel. Rehal took an Introduction to Israeli Politics class and became fascinated with the Middle East. She saw similarities between Israel and India, as well as many stark differences.

One area Rehal works on under her portfolio of programming partnerships is connecting Jewish social service agencies with other ethno-specific agencies. Working with a variety of ethno-cultural faith groups can be highly beneficial for both sides. “We have a responsibility to provide support to some of these groups as they do not necessarily have the same organizational infrastructure. They ask CIJA for advice, and then we try and understand what their needs and interests are.”

How does an outreach professional clear away all the extraneous noise and focus on facts in order to connect with so many different groups? Rehal admits it is a challenge to navigate “information overload” if you work in an environment where messaging is top of mind. This is how CIJA’s Young Leadership Circle (YLC) was born, a “longterm focus group” which will hopefully become part of the next generation of communal leadership, ideally succeeding in ▶



keeping student leaders engaged after university. Every organization knows about the need to engage young people, but CIJA is taking tangible steps to lay the groundwork.

The size of one's Jewish community can be incredibly important, but not a deal-breaker. Vancouver is small and the community is in somewhat of a vacuum. In Toronto, people are more familiar with the Jewish calendar, and we can't underestimate how significant this is. But Rehal leaves me with a thought-provoking idea based on much interaction with people who feel they cannot be "advocates" because they have never been fully immersed in Jewish community. She references Fogel who once remarked that "you don't have to be an expert on the issues, but you can be a character witness for Israel". Rehal went on a Young Leadership Israel Advocacy trip three years ago, and judging by her continued involvement, it is clear that participants on these trips remain engaged with the cause after the fact.

*"We have a responsibility to provide support to some of these groups as they do not necessarily have the same organizational infrastructure."*



SHIMON FOGEL

In Fogel's mind, CIJA is a place where all voices are heard and factored in. "We want to reflect the broadest possible group of perspectives." This vision, it is clear, is now manifested in the CIJA of today. The group grew out of the CIC as a response to how the media and the political sector was changing, offering "compelling merit in bringing everything together" to maximize focus and consolidate efforts. "We are now very close to where we should be in order to best serve our own constituency," Fogel says.

Israel, not just historically, but also legally, "has to be understood in a particular way," and this serves as a foundational principle. If you have basic moral and historical fact, then there is room for an expression of a multitude of views. "You can have progressive views [at the table], as well as more entrenched, traditional views." Fogel alludes to the concept of "70 faces to the Torah" – tradition should in fact allow for a pluralistic approach. He passionately believes in unity, not uniformity, and is constantly impressed by the extraordinary commitment that the Canadian Jewish community has to Israel, which has allowed CIJA to take a leadership role in advocacy work.

Fogel is extremely proud of his colleagues' immeasurable service to the community, and is confident that the right experts get chosen for the jobs, regardless of cultural background. "It is a pleasure and honour to work with them." I let him know that from their point of view, the feeling is happily mutual. ■



*In Fogel's mind, CIJA is a place where all voices are heard and factored in. "We want to reflect the broadest possible group of perspectives."*

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# A HOPEFUL LIGHT AFTER A DARK SUMMER

BY ELYSA RAPOPORT, TEL AVIV

In 2009, a leading Israeli moderate Orthodox organization called Yod Bet B'Heshvan formed a coalition of like-minded religious and secular organizations from across the political spectrum in order to address the rising incidence of violence and incitement by Jewish religious extremists against Muslims and Christians in Israel. Today the coalition, known as Tag Meir, or the Light Tag Forum, has grown from 15 to 45 organizations.

Since the 1970s, the National Religious sector in Israel has turned significantly towards right-wing nationalism. In December 2009, Jewish extremists from National Religious West Bank settlements initiated a series of anti-democratic acts of incitement and violence against Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank in an effort to undermine the peace process. The attacks were termed "Price

Tag" to signal that for every act (such as evictions, demolitions and arrests) by the Israeli government against settlements, Palestinians will pay with a violent response. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there have been more than 1,000 random attacks by settlers on uninvolved Palestinians since records began in 2006, with a surge from 115 in 2009 to 399 in 2013, a 40% increase. The OCHA also reports that during 2013, more than 10,000 olive trees (representing 25% of the agriculture income of the West Bank) were vandalized by settlers – a 20% increase from the previous year. Countless vehicle tires have been punctured, homes and businesses sprayed with offensive graffiti, and headstones in cemeteries destroyed. Churches, mosques and monasteries have been



Head of Tag Meir Dr. Gadi Gvoryahu paying respects to the Abu Khdeir family.

specifically targeted with over 50 attacks to date. Through targeting these sites of religious significance, the perpetrators are attempting to transform the conflict from a civil to a religious one and thereby to draw support from the religious Jewish public.

Unfortunately things have not improved in 2014. There is a growing subculture in Israel of religiously motivated hate, incitement and violence. This subculture came to a peak this summer, with the brutal murder of Arab teenager Muhammad Abu Khdeir by a group of religious Jewish teens.

Tag Meir believes that these extremist acts must be responded to immediately. The Coalition organizes solidarity vigils to Price Tag victims, thereby increasing mutual understanding and coexistence between Jewish Israelis and minorities in Israel. In response to Muhammad Abu Khdeir's murder, Tag Meir organized for 350 Israelis to visit and pay condolences to the Abu Khdeir family. Tag Meir sends a strong message that Israeli society will not condone extremist actions, and lets the victims, their families and their communities know that such vile acts do not reflect the vast majority of Israeli opinions and do not represent national policy.

Although Price Tag attacks are condemned by many Israelis across the political spectrum, Tag Meir is the only Jewish Israeli organization taking a vocal, active stand against these attacks. Whatever their politics, the majority of Israelis oppose acts of violence against innocent people who are being used as pawns in a political fight that has little or nothing to do with them. Tag Meir offers these Israelis the chance to voice their opposition and publicize it to those who need to hear: the victims, Israel's government, the general public, and the world beyond Israel who cares about what happens in Israel. This has a major impact on strengthening civil society and democracy in Israel, particularly on young Israeli Jews who might otherwise think that Judaism actually condones or mandates the reprehensible behavior being advocated and perpetrated by

the Price Tag movement in the name of religious belief.

## The goals of Tag Meir

- To raise public awareness about the Price Tag attacks being perpetrated
- To develop mutual trust and solidarity with victims of Price Tag attacks
- To pressure the Israeli government and authorities to take measures to end Price Tag attacks, including condemnation, arrest and prosecution of perpetrators
- To promote the values of openness, pluralism, and tolerance in Israeli society, from a traditional Jewish perspective
- To lobby for new laws against incitement and hate crimes and to act through the court in an attempt to suppress publications that incite hatred

## Recent Solidarity Activities

- A series of six events across Israel, named "A Journey of Awakening", to collectively ask for forgiveness and do communal and societal soul searching. Some 1000 Jewish, Muslim and Christian men and women gathered at different locations to study joint texts on the subject of sacrifice in the lead up to the Day of Atonement and the Festival of the Sacrifices and sang Hebrew and Arabic songs, creating an emotional atmosphere
- Solidarity Event in Fureidis in April in response to a vandalized mosque, the 31st mosque or church to be vandalized since 2009. President Shimon Peres joined Tag Meir's calls to put an end to the vandalism
- A rally at the Prime Minister's House in May in response to a disturbing wave of nearly daily attacks in the past several weeks. Nearly 1,000 Israelis attended the event, and speakers ▶



Interfaith prayer service for the return of the 3 kidnapped teens

*Unfortunately things have not improved in 2014. There is a growing subculture in Israel of religiously motivated hate, incitement and violence.*





*The Coalition organizes solidarity vigils to Price Tag victims, thereby increasing mutual understanding and coexistence between Jewish Israelis and minorities in Israel.*



Israeli Jews paying respects to the Abu Khdeir family



Interfaith prayer service for the return of the 3 kidnapped teens

included Labor MK Merav Michaeli and prominent Orthodox Rabbi Benny Lau

- A prayer vigil with Congregation Moreshet Israel, a Conservative synagogue in central Jerusalem, which was vandalized in May

- An interfaith prayer vigil in June by Israelis and Palestinians in Gush Etzion praying for the safety of the three kidnapped boys

- A joint reading in June by Deputy Mayor of Baqa Al Garbiya and the Chairman of Tag Meir, in condemnation of the burning of a mobile synagogue on Road 6 near Baqa Al Garbiya

- A gathering of 3000 people in July in Kikar Hachatulim, Jerusalem, in response to the hate attacks conducted against Arab-Israelis and Palestinians on the day of the funeral of the three kidnapped and murdered boys

- A visit by 350 Israelis from across the country to the family of murdered teenager Muhammad Abu Khdeir to express their sorrow and offer condolences

### *Recent Advocacy Work*

- Tag Meir published a letter signed by 1000 rabbis and community leaders from around the world, sent to Nir Barkat, urging him not to appoint Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu as Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem
- Tag Meir published a letter signed by 30 religious Zionist Rabbis led by Rabbi Yaakov Ariel to the Abu Khdeir family stating that "The prohibition of murder applies to any person created in the image of God"
- Letter to the Chief Rabbis of Israel urging them to publically denounce calls for violence against innocent people.

Tag Meir has been recognized with three important awards: the Emil Grunzweig Human Rights Award, the Dror Prize for Social Change, and the Gerald Cromer Memorial Prize. The organization has vocal support from many public figures including: Reuven Rivlin (President of the State of Israel), Rachel Rabin Yaakov (Yitzhak Rabin's sister), Carmi Gillon (Former Head of the Internal General Security Service), Dalia Dorner (Former Supreme Court Justice), Amram Mitzna, Merav Michaeli and Itzik Shmueli (Members of Knesset), Dan Meridor (Former Member of Knesset), Rabbi Gilad Kariv (Director of the Reform Movement in Israel), Professor Michel Rebel (winner of the Israel Prize for Medicine), and several leading moderate Rabbis from the National Religious community.

Tag Meir is run by Dr. Gadi Gvaryahu, co-founder of many organizations including the Yod Bet B'Heshvan which he currently directs, The Ruth Korman Pelech School in Kiryat Eqrn, The Yitzhak Rabin Synagogue in Rehovot

Dr. Gadi Gvaryahu with the Imam at interfaith prayer service.



and the Religious Israel Scouts tribe in Rehovot. Gadi was a management member of Netivot Shalom as well as a board member of the Meimad political party. He has a Doctorate in Physiology & Animal Behavior from the Hebrew University's Faculty of Agriculture in Rehovot and is a consultant and developer of agricultural projects. Gadi is married to Aharona and they have five children.

For more information, or to support Tag Meir, contact [12heshvan@gmail.com](mailto:12heshvan@gmail.com). To make a secure online donation, please visit <https://secured.israelgives.org/donate/tagmeir>. ■

Elysa Rapoport is a Marketing and Communications professional based in Tel Aviv and is a consultant for Minuf Group, a social enterprise that works with both NGOs and philanthropic foundations to cultivate effective and influential civil society organizations in Israel and advance the country's social justice, equality, pluralism and civil rights.



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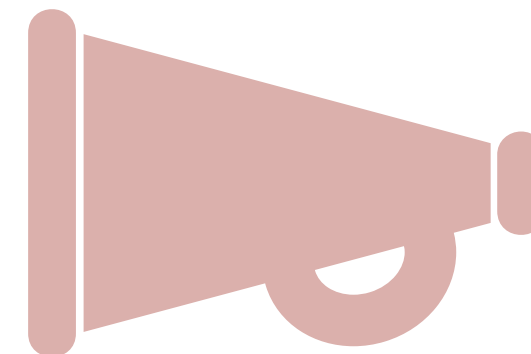


# WHEN THE COMEDY WORKS

BY DAVE GORDON

Ivan Reitman,  
Movie Producer and Director

# ACTION



If the old adage is right, and laughter is the best medicine, then Hollywood producer and director Ivan Reitman has given the world a major health boost.

"One of the first things I learned is that humour is thousands of things. It's tone, energy, rhythms, and confidence. Some people just have that innate skill of humour. But then again, there's a science involved," he says.

And he should know a thing or two on the topic. His string of Hollywood comedy hits reads like a resume of some of the most successful films in the past thirty years: Stripes, Ghostbusters, Twins, Kindergarten Cop, Dave, Junior, among at least two dozen others.

How he ascended to the film world's elite is a story much like the stuff of a Hollywood movie itself.

At age four, in 1950, the Czech-born Reitman immigrated to Canada. His mother, Klara, survived Auschwitz, and his father Leslie was an underground resistance fighter. Following the war, communism overtook Czechoslovakia, making life unbearable for those, like the Reitmans, who identified themselves strongly and outwardly with Judaism. In Toronto, where they planted their roots, the Reitmans found work at a local laundromat, and two decades later, Leslie opened a carwash.

Reitman's first producing job was with the then-new television station CITY-TV in Toronto, but he was let go within the

year. Soon afterward, he was filming a live TV series called Greed, emceed by an actor who would soon become a household name, Dan Aykroyd.

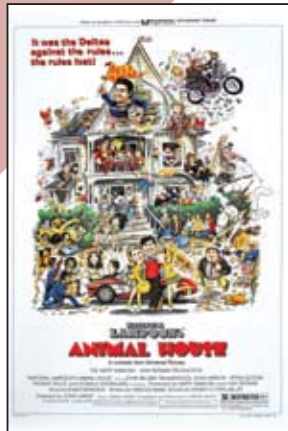
In 1969, he was the centre of controversy, with his premiere venture into feature-film production. The movie – based on the Victorian novel My Secret Life – was The Columbus Of Sex. Soon after completion, Reitman and his business partner, Dan Goldberg, were arrested and became the first to be convicted under Canada's decency laws. They were subsequently fined \$300, and given a year's probation.

Luckily, Hollywood took notice of the burgeoning talents, and during their trial, MGM offered Reitman and Goldberg \$175,000 to film the comedy Foxy Lady. After directing another low-budget comedy, 1973's Cannibal Girls – centering on a young hippie, played by fellow Canadian comedian Eugene Levy – Reitman achieved some success as a stage director and producer. Within three years, he'd again collaborate with a fellow Canuck, filmmaker David Cronenberg, on Shivers/They Came from Within/The Parasite Murders and Rabid.

The Great White North, to this day, remains in his heart. "I grew up in the [comedians] Wayne and Shuster era, and they played a huge influence on me, and [on] a lot of Canadians. Since the early 60s, Canadians have been making such large contributions to comedy," he says. ▶

*Reitman and his business partner, Dan Goldberg, were arrested and became the first to be convicted under Canada's decency laws. They were subsequently fined \$300, and given a year's probation. Luckily, Hollywood took notice of the burgeoning talents.*





Those inspirations might have had a hand in his real big breaks, which came with a one-two punch when he produced National Lampoon's Animal House in 1978 that introduced movie audiences to John Belushi, and a year later directed the Bill Murray sleepaway camp comedy, Meatballs, filmed a few hours north of Toronto.

So what is it about living above the 49th parallel that melds Canadian with comedian so well? "I keep getting asked why Canadians are so damned funny all the time," he says. "Compared to the US, there's a smallness to us. Perhaps there's some kind of inferiority complex that breeds good comedy."

As for smallness and inferiority, moviemaking is a different art form than it was thirty years ago when Reitman was just starting out, due to the proliferation of sophisticated, commercially available electronic gadgetry that gives equal airtime to the talented and untalented. Moviemaking today, versus the previous

generation, is an everyman's art – about which Reitman has a mixed opinion.

"It's easier and it's harder. It's easier because it's mechanically easy to do. You could do it on your damn phone. And people do. The other thing that makes it easier is how easy it is to distribute. There's an extraordinary democratization that YouTube and a thousand other sites [create], it's like blogging for writers. Some forums are read by millions; some by no one else but their friends," he says.

"And so the hard part of it? There are so many others. Much like ever before, the very talented or the lucky or the quirky come through. Everyone else gets lost in the morass. That's always been true."

Receiving peer and professional recognition remains tricky and elusive for even the likes of veteran filmmaker Ivan Reitman. While he may have been inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2007, which honoured three decades of filmmaking, accolades in the industry

for non-dramatic moviemaking tend to be far and few between. "We who toil in the fields of comedy just don't expect much during awards time."

Nonetheless, he doesn't fret at the relative lack of statuettes on his mantle, maintaining that comedic films have their impact, whether the Hollywood establishment admits it or not. "There's two kinds of recognitions: financial, and the awards season," he explains.

"Studios definitely recognize comedies for their bottom line. People who do well are well paid. In terms of the awards seasons, The Golden Globes really get it right with the comedic topics and formats. Every once and a while a movie like Juno comes along that is both so good and heartfelt. Aside from how funny it is, it gets recognized. It's very rare that that happens. Bill Murray – who I've worked with five times, a remarkable actor in every way – started to get some recognition in Lost in Translation. The work he does in a movie like Ghostbusters or Groundhog Day is just as ennobling. It's interesting people don't think it is."

Along with Bill Murray, Arnold Schwarzenegger is a recurrent collaborator, in movies such as Twins, Kindergarten Cop, and Junior, who, to the surprise of many at the time, saw Reitman tease comedic chops out of the Austrian bodybuilder-cum-action hero.

Lately, the two have found another reason to join forces.

Along with Reitman, last August Schwarzenegger signed a petition

condemning Hamas rockets, along with nearly 200 other celebrities.

"I am disappointed that most of the people in the movie business haven't spoken out against what's happening to Israel. Then again, they don't speak out against all that much, anyway."

For the famed director, Israel holds a special place in his memory for a number of reasons.

He recalls his first Yom Ha'atzmaut in 1958 – the tenth anniversary of Israeli Independence Day was when he was twelve years old, singing in the choir of the Toronto Hebrew Day School at Toronto's Massey Hall.

Since that time he and his family have made several trips to Israel, and even lived on a kibbutz for two weeks – where he fell mildly ill from working in fishponds. Like many who visit the Promised Land, those trips left a lasting impression.

"I believe that all democratic people, and Jews in particular, should fight for the right of that little country to exist," he says.

"We Jews are much safer with the State of Israel. I know that hundreds of millions of people want to obliterate this tiny little speck of a country in their midst, just because of a difference of religion. It's ridiculous. It should be defended by the world. Though that's an optimistic viewpoint. So it's important for us to stand up and recognize it."

He carries that same optimism with him when it comes to the ever-

elusive peace in the region, and yet is ruefully realistic about his peers' perception of Israel's right to exist.

"I truly believe all Israel wants is to live in peace. It's quite remarkable that they have managed to maintain the country, as hard as it is."

From Hogtown to Hollywood to the Holy Land and back again, Ivan Reitman continues to entertain audiences with his frequent film friend. Soon enough, filmgoers will be treated to Triplets, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DiVito, who team up again and discover they have a third sibling – played by Eddie Murphy.

And so, it plays as an apt metaphor for Reitman's oeuvre: an eclectic combination of humour, goofiness, wit, and a few surprises along the way. ■



IVAN REITMAN

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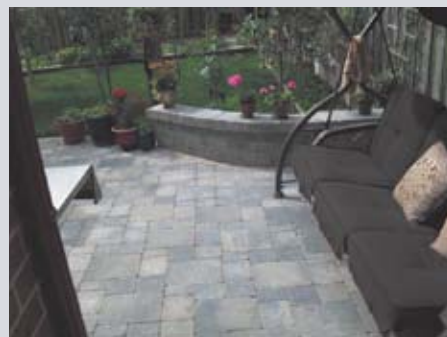
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## LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Ivan Reitman's eldest son Jason is carrying on his father's tradition. Starting out with supporting on-camera roles, typically in his father's projects -- such films as *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Twins* (1988), *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), and *Dave* (1993), Jason also spent hours in the editing room with his father, soaking in the process. He started out directing short films while majoring in English at USC and graduated to directing commercials. Reitman made his feature film directorial debut in 2005 with the biting satire "Thank You for Smoking" starring Aaron Eckhart -- which follows a crafty spin doctor for the tobacco lobby. That feature won rave reviews from critics across the U.S. He followed it up with "Juno" (2007), the celebrated comedy/drama about teenage pregnancy starring Ellen Page. The film was a smash hit, and garnered a number of year-end accolades including a Best Director Oscar nomination.

Reitman's third film, "Up in the Air" (2009) starring George Clooney, again earned glowing reviews, garnering Best Director and Best Screenplay nominations from both the Hollywood Foreign Press (where he won the Screenplay award) and the Academy, with nods from the Writers Guild and the Directors Guild as well. His other films to date are "Young Adult" (2011), starring Charlize Theron, the romantic drama "Labour Day" (2013), starring Kate Winslet and Josh Brolin and "Men, Women & Children" (2014), an ensemble piece about the effect the internet has had on the human condition. ■



Jason  
Reitman  
at TIFF  
2013.

# GETTING MOBBED BY MOMMIES



Rebecca Eckler is one of Canada's most well-known journalists and authors, for many years a daily feature writer for the *National Post*.

She is the bestselling author of *Knocked Up: Confessions of a Hip Mother-to-Be*, *Wiped!*, *Life With a Pint-Sized Dictator*, as well as the author of the international bestseller, *How to Raise a Boyfriend*.

The *Mommy Mob* (Barlow Book Publishing, 2014) is her ninth book, chronicling her decade-long blogging experiences and the ups and downs of attaching oneself to the phenomenon of blogging. While crafting and maintaining a popular blog is an incredible platform that can jumpstart your career or business, there can be downsides. Eckler's book details the experience of being

at the receiving end of shocking and vicious comments from other parents.

"When did so many mothers become so unkind and ruthless?" she asks in the opening chapter. "And why?" Hidden behind the anonymity of the Internet, using fake names, the Mommy Mob -- as she dubs them -- have heaped habitual derision on Eckler for talking about her trials and tribulations as a ►





parent. “Mothers trolling mommy blogs, broadcasting their opinions, can be the worst group of intolerant and humourless people out there,” she writes.

Eckler currently writes for numerous magazines and parenting blogs across North America. I chatted with her about unexpected parenting techniques, blogging, her children, fiancés, and some controversial revelations.

**Dave Gordon:** What’s The Mommy Mob all about and why did you write it?

**Rebecca Eckler:** I’ve been blogging for ten years, and over the years bloggers have become so judgmental, especially when they comment over the internet. You’re supposed to teach kids to play nice, don’t swear. Then adult women go online, rip you to shreds, get so upset about how someone parents. I don’t know if they’re tired or need to vent. They start arguing with each other, not about me, but they attack each other, like watching bad reality TV, or real housewives, where everyone’s always arguing. Comments in my

book are actual statements people made anonymously. Want to comment like that? Be brave enough to use your name if you feel strongly about it.

**DG:** It really does sound like moblike, with a double meaning – the mob is organized crime – and it also means gritty, mean.

**RE:** With some comments I get on parent blogs, it’s almost bullying at a certain point. For example, there’s a piece about how I worry that my daughter’s teacher doesn’t like me. 365 comments on it, almost all of them against me. Everyone is allowed their opinion – but the delivery of opinions is so shocking, my jaw drops. I’ve received over-the-top comments, like “I hope your baby gets eaten by an alligator when you go to Mexico.” Is that necessary? If you don’t like what I write, say you don’t agree and tell me why. I like to give people the benefit of doubt. Being a mother is exhausting! You’re tired, you write things that maybe you regret the next day, but I think with the internet and

*While crafting and maintaining a popular blog is an incredible platform that can jumpstart your career or business, there can be downsides. Eckler’s book details the experience of being at the receiving end of shocking and vicious comments from other parents.*

unmoderated comments, there’s a new personality behind computer screens. No one would walk up to me and say, “Children’s services should take your child away because you helped her with homework,” but it can be said online. Apparently, from comments following my post about homework, no other parent in the world helps their kid with homework.

**DG:** Is this about “doing” homework, versus “helping”?

**RE:** There is a distinction, a fine line. But when my daughter is so tired after school with extracurriculars and homework, and her face is falling in her dinner soup, you have to help. I should be getting my grade 5 diploma at the end of the year. I stopped understanding her math in grade 3 so she has to do it by herself.

**DG:** Do you like to help?

**RE:** Good question. Early on, to me it was bonding. You don’t see them that often when they’re in school. Two hours of homework a night I sit with her and help and talk things through. As she’s getting older she’s more independent, and likes to do it on her own, which is great. I blog about this kind of thing, but I think about it as a small glimpse into my life, not my entire life. That’s what gets me. People judge you on the smallest matter. Let’s have a debate. But I can’t have a debate when someone tells me I’m the worst mother in the world. What’s the comeback?

**DG:** I wonder that if they only spent that time on their own children instead of on yours...

**RE:** Some people care way more about me and my kids than they do about theirs. At the end of the day you should be worrying about your own family; I worry about mine.

**DG:** Where do you get some of your writing ideas?

**RE:** Talking to friends, other moms. Every mother I talk to hates school concerts, for instance! Especially at younger ages, when they’ll ask, “What song are you playing on the recorder?” ▶



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Twinkle Twinkle, or Happy Hanukkah?" I joked when my daughter brought home a violin. I told her to bring it to the basement. She laughed, too. Kids learning instruments is painful. Those who think it isn't are lying.

**DG:** Why is there no enmity between dads? Like, why isn't there a Daddy Mob? We just riff on sports, sex, movies and toss the football around and no one cares.

**RE:** I think women are more – I hate to say it – open and emotional. They like to talk and discuss and complain. We're more open to our girlfriends than guys are to guy friends. I can't picture my fiancé talking about some of the things I talk about. Women against women is age-old; for some reason, sometimes women just don't get along. My daughter goes to a girls' school, and sees politics in the playground, which is astounding and awful. The Mom blogosphere is an awful playground. Why are women like that? Start daddy blogging and see if there's Daddy mob.

**DG:** I guess kids aren't "conversation" for guys; they are for women.

**RE:** We're also competitive mothers these days. We sign kids up for dance

lessons, and suddenly everyone has to do it. Even if they don't say it out loud, moms want you to know their kid is an amazing gymnast and they feel a need to put them in classes everyone else does.

**DG:** You've written many things about your private life. Are there things you wish you hadn't revealed?

**RE:** No. Because things like getting your period is a natural thing. People have sex, so why not talk about it? Why be grossed out about it? You obviously had sex because you have children. I don't find those things personal. I just find them real, real life.

**DG:** In hindsight, have you ever taken anything too far?

**RE:** No. Mommy bloggers are always trying to out-controversy others. I don't go into it trying to be controversial.

My daughter found my vibrator, sang into it like it was a microphone and it was hilarious. So many other moms backed me up. They had funny stories about kids finding vibrators. If it happens to me, I assume it happens to at least hundreds of other moms. ■

Eckler's writing can be found at [www.rebeccaeckler.com](http://www.rebeccaeckler.com).



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**1. FIND A NICHE.**  
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**2. DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.**  
It's important to know who your readers are. Then you can tailor your content to their interests.

**3. BE HONEST.**  
Your readers need to trust you if you want them to remain loyal. Never recommend a product or service you wouldn't use yourself.

**4. ADD NEW CONTENT REGULARLY.**  
Fresh content will keep your readers coming back for more, so don't be lazy.

**5. ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK.**  
Whether by comments, tweets or shares, make it easy for your readers to spread the word about you.


**6. IGNORE NEGATIVITY.**  
With feedback comes criticism. Sometimes it can get downright nasty. Keep calm and blog on.

**7. SUPPORT YOUR ADVERTISERS.**  
Find a way to provide value without pandering and without losing your credibility (see number 3).

**8. THINK BIG.**  
Once you've established your blog, don't stop there. Adding related products, such as a directory or e-shop, will provide you with additional sources of income.


**9. PROOFREADING MAKES PERFECT.**  
Typos are a big turnoff, so before you click "Publish", don't forget to do a spell check and thorough once (or twice) over.


**10. GET SUPPORT.**  
If you're not tech savvy, make sure you have reliable IT support in place to avoid any disasters or downtime. ■



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# ACING the BUSINESS MIXER

BY CATHERINE BELL,  
CERTIFIED IMAGE PROFESSIONAL

**B**usiness mixers, fundraisers, and cocktail hours provide prime opportunities to meet new people. Although you may find this a breeze, most actually dread going into a room of strangers and striking up conversations. With these ten strategies, along with a goal to put them into practice, you will find it much easier to attend events that are teeming with interesting people and potential opportunities.



Photography by: Bell Photo

## 1. RECOGNIZE THAT NERVOUSNESS IS NATURAL:

At a young age, we are told not to talk to strangers, so entering a room filled with them is uncomfortable. Look for the common thread. For instance, at a fundraiser you probably have a similar focus in supporting the charity. With this awareness, the people you are about to meet are not so strange after all.



## 2. BE PREPARED:

Bring lots of business cards, have a few timely topics to talk about – such as positive current events – and use positive self-talk to quell any fears. Set a goal to meet three to five new people, or you will gravitate towards those you know, or cling to the first person you meet.

## 3. EAT BEFORE YOU GO:

A cocktail hour is not an opportunity to eat dinner, so if you haven't had lunch, eat a snack before you go. Learn how to balance a drink, a plate of hors d'oeuvres, and a napkin in your left hand, keeping your right one free for shaking hands.



## 4. DRESS WITH IMPACT:

Decide whether you want to be powerful or approachable, formal or casual, and then plan your clothing strategy. Don't dress down too far, remembering that your professional image is tied to minute details.



## 5. MAKE A DELIBERATE ENTRANCE:

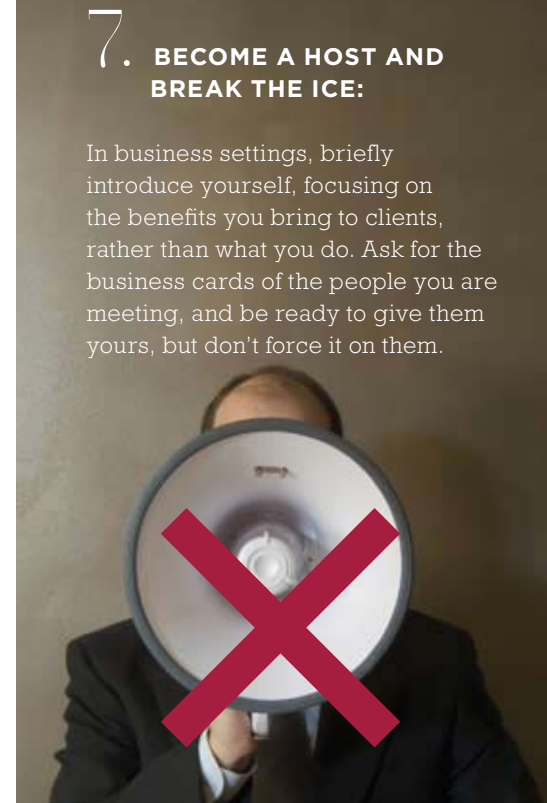
Walk confidently, move at least a quarter of the way into the room, and survey the crowd. Others will probably be absorbed in conversation, giving you a few minutes to decide what to do next.





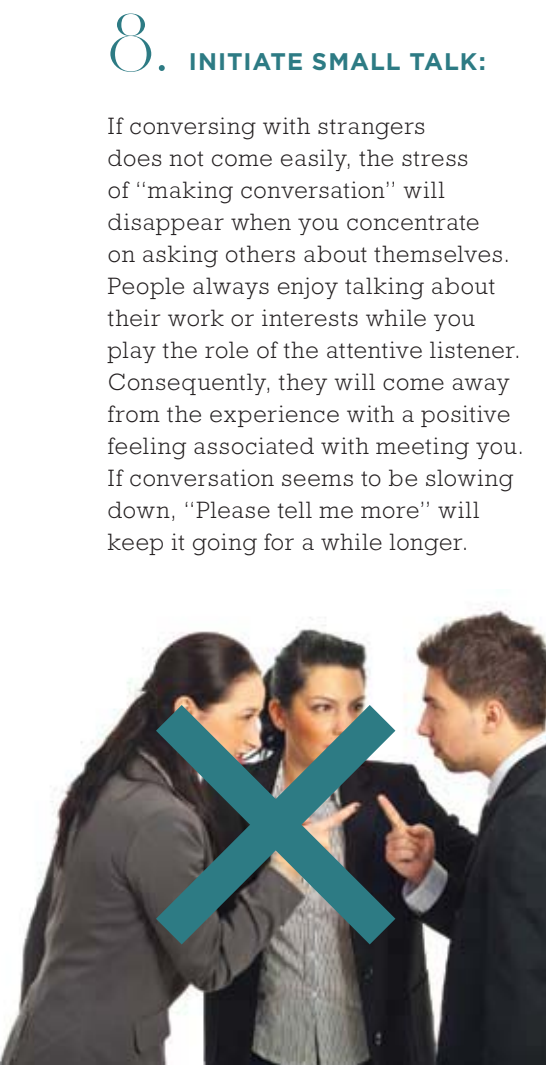
## 6. APPROACHING PEOPLE:

Go up to a person who is standing on their own, or a group of three or more. Two people may resent your intrusion, and most individuals standing alone are thrilled to have someone to talk with. Look for open circles that have a space for you to fill and try and get eye contact with someone who can then draw you in.



## 7. BECOME A HOST AND BREAK THE ICE:

In business settings, briefly introduce yourself, focusing on the benefits you bring to clients, rather than what you do. Ask for the business cards of the people you are meeting, and be ready to give them yours, but don't force it on them.



## 8. INITIATE SMALL TALK:

If conversing with strangers does not come easily, the stress of "making conversation" will disappear when you concentrate on asking others about themselves. People always enjoy talking about their work or interests while you play the role of the attentive listener. Consequently, they will come away from the experience with a positive feeling associated with meeting you. If conversation seems to be slowing down, "Please tell me more" will keep it going for a while longer.

## 9. BREAK AWAY GRACIOUSLY AND CONTINUE TO NETWORK:

To achieve your goal to meet new people, after about ten minutes, break away. While you are talking, start to summarize the conversation you've had, saying why you found it interesting, and then add something like, "I'm sure there are others here you'd like to meet." If they say yes, continue with, "I look forward to seeing you next time," or "Enjoy the rest of the event." If you think the person isn't comfortable being released into the crowd, take them with you and introduce them to others.

## 10. FOLLOWING UP:

Your focus at business mixers is to make contacts that can be followed up at a later date, not to close deals. Discovering a business card in your pocket or purse months after the event is not the best use of your networking time. This is especially true if you promised to contact the person with some information. Instead, within 24 hours of the event, set aside time to review the cards you collected. Call those you think might make good connections or be able to introduce you to others. Invite them to lunch or coffee to find out more about their organization and share information about your business. If this is not possible, at least send these new contacts a note or e-mail saying that you enjoyed meeting them so that you're top of mind for future opportunities.



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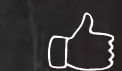
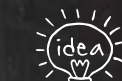
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# THE CHALLENGES FACING ABORIGINAL HEALTH

BY DR. MICHAEL DAN  
& BERNIE M. FARBER



*Dr. Michael Dan recently pledged a \$10 million donation to the University of Toronto for the creation of the first ever endowed Indigenous health and wellness institute, which will be under the auspices of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. The newly named Institute for Indigenous Health aims to promote the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally using multidisciplinary, population and community-based participatory research approaches. Established by Michael and Amira Dan, the Institute aspires to have a major impact on society by providing innovative solutions to promote thriving Indigenous communities. Following the gift, the School established an advisory committee dedicated to community-based collaboration, including key voices from Indigenous communities, to shape the Institute's mission.*

As Aboriginal communities reclaim control of their own health, and deal with the effects of multigenerational trauma, there's an opportunity to join hands with Jewish communities because we too have been down this road before. We understand what it means to be separated from the mainstream and the historic impact that has had on the health of our community.

However, first we must begin to understand the Aboriginal perspective of health. Aboriginal health is conceptualized around the medicine wheel. The wheel is divided into four quadrants: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. When the four are in balance, the individual, family, community, and nation are healthy.

Historically, Aboriginal people were extremely healthy. Anthropologists who studied the bones of plains First Nations, who lived prior to contact and ate a protein-rich diet that consisted essentially of buffalo meat, concluded that they were among the healthiest and best nourished people in the world.

In 1938, the American psychologist Abraham Maslow spent time among the Blackfoot community. Most freshman psychology students are familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of needs: food, clothing, shelter... with self-actualization at the top. Maslow's view of the Blackfoot was that they were among the most emotionally secure individuals he had ever encountered, largely because of their tough yet supportive parenting style. Some Aboriginal health practices are difficult for Westerners to understand. Four-day long fasts, the thirst dance, and the sun dance played

an essential role in keeping the medicine wheel in balance. Prolonged fasting carries the risk of dehydration and renal failure, and the sun dance involved a surgical procedure done without anesthetic under non-sterile conditions, followed by excruciating pain on the part of the participant—sometimes for days on end. The practice continues to this day in some communities, but it would be wrong to pass judgment on any of these practices since they formed part of a holistic approach to health that produced demonstrably beneficial results.

Health researchers talk of an "Aboriginal health space" that is distinct from a Western "health space". There is some overlap between the two, but there are culturally-specific practices that would appear strange to the other side. Just as Westerners find it hard to understand the basis for the sun dance, members of the Aboriginal community reject the Western concept of 18-hour workdays and constantly chasing after material wealth.

A special mention should be made of tobacco, which is a sacred plant in Aboriginal culture. Tobacco forms part of every major Aboriginal ceremony. It is offered as a gift from one person to another, offered to bodies of water and

the earth, and smoked. Any effort to initiate a smoking cessation program in an Aboriginal community is usually met with boisterous laughter.

Since contact with the West, and especially in the past 150 years, the state of Aboriginal health has deteriorated significantly. In essence, Western microorganisms, trauma, and diseases have colonized the Aboriginal health space.

Prior to contact with the West, Aboriginal people had never encountered chicken pox, cholera, diphtheria, influenza, measles, scarlet fever, typhoid, typhus, whooping cough, or even the common cold. When these diseases, in particular smallpox, first spread through the Aboriginal populations, the impact was devastating. Each time an infectious disease encountered a new community, the death rate would be upwards of 75%, and sometimes as high as 100%. As a pre-industrial, hunter-gatherer society with no written records, the loss of oral history and cultural knowledge must have been particularly devastating.

The residential schools were institutions of cultural genocide—perhaps even worse. Attendance was mandatory, and some 150,000 children were systematically separated from their families by Indian Agents, humiliated and punished for speaking their mother tongue, never touched or hugged by an adult, often emotionally and physically abused, deliberately malnourished, and allowed to die of treatable infectious diseases, most notably, tuberculosis. The mortality rate in residential schools was typically between 25 and 50%. No school was built without an adjoining cemetery. Today, attachment disorders and substance abuse disorders run rampant among survivors of the residential school system.



BERNIE M. FARBER

The medicine wheel is broken, but it can be fixed. Aboriginal wellness researchers (the term 'wellness' is now preferred over 'health') are de-colonizing the aboriginal health space, in an effort to make it culturally safe again.

Even though our histories are very different, we have much to learn from each other and much to share in the pursuit of individual, family, community, and national wellness. Let the healing begin. ■



DR. MICHAEL DAN

Michael Dan is a philanthropist and social entrepreneur who works with First Nations to create sustainable wealth through hydroelectric power initiatives on traditional territories. Through his support of the MA Program in Peace and Conflict Management at The University of Haifa, and the work of Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, he has helped to build tolerance and dialogue in the Middle East. Dan is also a strong supporter of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the University of Toronto Division of Neurosurgery, The Scarborough Hospital, and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. In 2002, he created The Paloma Foundation with a gift of \$15M. Over the years, the Foundation has donated over \$8M to charities in the Greater Toronto

Area, with a special emphasis on health, education and homelessness. Earlier this year, Dan and his wife Amira donated \$10M to the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School for Public Health (see intro).

Bernie M. Farber works with Dr. Michael Dan as a Senior Vice President at Gemini Power Corp where he assists First Nations Reserves in developing hydro projects and other initiatives encouraging sustainable wealth development. He is also the CEO of the Paloma Foundation, which helps develop skills of those who work on the frontlines with homeless youth in the GTA. Farber is the former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress and is a human rights advocate and journalist.



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# The tagines OF Tangier

BY CHEF MARGIE AROSH



Ten years ago few people knew what a tagine was. Today, Moroccan food has become quite popular and trendy for its use of natural and aromatic ingredients. It is easily found in supermarkets and on restaurant menus. Moroccan Tagines were traditionally cooked and served in a tagine pot. Made of heavy clay a tagine pot is beautifully painted and glazed and consist of two parts: a base unit, with a cone-shaped cover that rests inside the base during cooking. The cone-

shaped cover is designed to promote the steam to rise to the top and provide moisture during the cooking process, resulting in falling-off-the-bone tender proteins. You do not necessarily need a tagine pot to cook these stews any heavy-bottomed pot with a tightly closing lid can be used for this healthy braising technique. Today tagine pots are mostly used for serving food.

As my parents are from Tangier, Morocco I grew up eating many different types of tagines. With a family

of seven it was an easy, economical and nutritious way to feed the family. I have many fond memories of delicious, fragrant dishes served with golden couscous. My Mother would sprinkle the couscous with sugar and cinnamon to make it extra special.

There are many different types of Tagines; chicken, meat, fish or just vegetables. They are often garnished with olives, dried fruit and nuts. Traditionally tagines are seasoned with Moroccan spices including

nutmeg, turmeric, cumin, coriander and paprika or with Morocco's famous spice blend, "Ras el Hanout".

"Ras el Hanout" means "Head of The Shop". It refers to the best spice blend the shopkeeper has to offer. There is no definitive set combination of spices that make up Ras el Hanout. Each shop owner or home cook would have their own secret combination containing sometimes over a dozen spices.

Couscous Royale is one of my most popular dishes in my catering business. In Morocco it was usually served on holidays or celebrations. It is a beautiful assortment of vegetables, which includes butternut squash, carrots, onions, chickpeas, prunes, apricots and almonds. It can be made vegetarian or with the addition of braised chicken. The presentation of this dish is impressive. A tall mound of couscous is placed in the centre of a large platter and is surrounded by this colourful tagine and garnished with toasted blanched almonds. ■

*Ten years ago few people knew what a tagine was. Today, Moroccan food has become quite popular and trendy for its use of natural and aromatic ingredients.*



# COUSCOUS ROYALE:

CHICKEN (OR VEGETARIAN)  
TAGINE WITH CHICKPEAS,  
ALMONDS AND DRIED FRUIT

## INGREDIENTS

- 6** chicken legs cut in half (omit if making the vegetarian version)
- 5** tablespoons canola oil, divided
- 3** carrots chopped into a large dice
- 1** medium butternut squash in ½ inch cubes
- 1** large onion finely chopped
- 2** (19 oz) cans of drained, washed chickpeas
- 2** cups of chicken or vegetable stock (or **1** cup of boiling water with a tablespoon of chicken or vegetable stock powder)
- 1** teaspoon turmeric, divided
- ½** teaspoon paprika
- 1** teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg (optional)
- 1** teaspoon cumin
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste*

## STEWED FRUIT

- ¾** cup pitted prunes
- ¾** cup of whole blanched almonds
- ¾** cup of dried apricots
- 2** cinnamon sticks + ground cinnamon if desired
- ½** teaspoon ground cloves
- 1** cup of water
- 2** cups of couscous made according to package instructions and adding ¼ teaspoon of turmeric, ½ teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoons of canola oil and 1 tablespoon of chicken/vegetable soup stock.

## METHOD

If you are including braised chicken, preheat the oven to 400 degrees and season the chicken with salt, pepper, ½ teaspoon turmeric, ½ teaspoon paprika and 2 tablespoons of oil. Place in a roasting pan and roast uncovered for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, toast the almonds in a dry skillet until fragrant and set aside.

Remove the chicken from the pan and set aside. Heat a heavy bottomed wide pot to medium and add the oil and onions and sauté until slightly golden brown, approximately 5 to 7 minutes. Add the carrots and cook for 5 more minutes. Add the butternut squash and the chickpeas and season to taste with salt and pepper, ½ teaspoon turmeric, 1 teaspoon cumin, 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg (optional) and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the chicken or vegetable stock (or 2 cups boiling water with 2 tablespoons of chicken/vegetable stock powder). If using chicken add it to the pot at this time. Cook covered for 40 minutes or until most of the liquid has reduced.

To make the stewed fruit: In a small pot, place ½ cup of sugar and cook over medium heat swirling gently to melt just until it becomes a light brown color. Remove from heat and add 1 cup of water and swirl to combine. Return to heat and add the cinnamon sticks, clove and the dried fruit. Stir to combine and cook for 10 to 15 minutes until the fruit is glossy and the syrup has reduced.

Prepare the couscous according to package directions, adding ¼ teaspoon of turmeric, ½ teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoons of oil and 1 tablespoon of chicken/vegetable soup stock.

This dish is traditionally served on a platter with a mound of couscous in the middle surrounded by the chicken and vegetables and topped with the dried fruit and garnished with almonds.

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# World Class Cuisine

From Falafel to French fries, the GTA epitomizes diversity in dining.

BY CHRISTINE HOGENKAMP



One of the best parts about living in and around Toronto is how many different cultures and nationalities come together harmoniously in one space and that advantage is reflected in our wealth of choices when it comes to restaurants. With so many opportunities to try the best in secret family recipes and traditions from around the globe, you can fall in love with the flavours of a new country every day of the week.



## Vietnamese

### BANH MI BOYS

2 locations

[www.banhmiboys.com](http://www.banhmiboys.com)

There has been lot of positive word of mouth about Banh Mi Boys and their namesake banh mi sandwiches, made with banh mi buns baked in-house and available with different fillings such as lemongrass tofu, braised beef cheek and their specialty meat option: five-spiced pork belly. They also offer Chinese-inspired steamed bao and a Vietnamese take on tacos featuring options like kalbi beef, pulled pork and squid.



## Indian

### PUKKA

778 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto

416-342-1906

[www.pukka.ca](http://www.pukka.ca)

This recent addition to the St.Clair West neighborhood features slightly upscale Indian fare with staples like butter chicken and aloo ghoobi along with more haute cuisine inventions such as lamb lollipops, seared spiced duck breast and eggplant tartare. For the more food-adventurous, you can sign up for a set course that will give you the full subcontinental dining experience.



## American

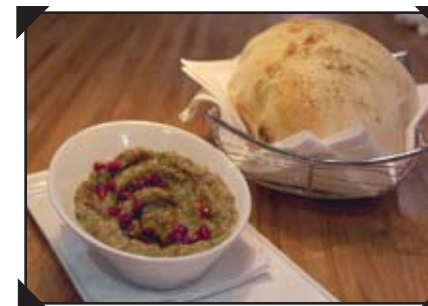
### HOME OF THE BRAVE

589 King St West

416-366-2736

[www.thehotb.com](http://www.thehotb.com)

HOTB acts as a culinary homage to all the best (and probably most unhealthy) of American comfort foods, offering classics such as the Philly Cheesesteak sandwich, Shaved Bologna sandwich and Tator Tots along with the more obscure treats like the Kentucky Fried Handshake sandwich and their buffalo cauliflower appetizer, complete with ranch dressing. Don't forget to check out their tasty and cheekily-named Freedom Fries.



## Middle East & Mediterranean

### DISTRICT OVEN

842 College Street, Toronto

416-901-7717

[www.districtoven.com](http://www.districtoven.com)

Middle Eastern flavours and foods have become very popular recently in the trendiest of gastronomic circles, and District Oven's executive chef Islam Kaisi combines them with Mediterranean flare to offer some truly delicious

dishes such as lamb and vegetable tagine (stew) with Ras el Hanout sauce or flatbread pizza with toppings like figs, halloumi cheese and Harissa pomodoro sauce. For more on tagine, please check out page 88 for our article "The Tagines of Tangier" which includes a classic tagine recipe.



## Peruvian

### VALDEZ

606 King Street West, Toronto

416-363-8388

[www.valdezrestaurant.com](http://www.valdezrestaurant.com)

Offering a taste of Latino street food, Valdez has a vast selection of different South American tidbits, many available in smaller taste portions to allow you to try as many as you like. Along with different Peruvian ceviches (which features raw fish or even octopus cured with citrus juices) which you can get singly or one of each as a flight, there are also arepitas (cornmeal fritters), king crab causas (potato cakes), tamales plus many other meat-friendly and vegetarian options.





## Ethiopian

### LALIBELA

2 locations  
[www.lalibelaethiopianrestaurant.com](http://www.lalibelaethiopianrestaurant.com)  
 For those new to Ethiopian fare looking for a complete dining experience, start by indulging in a traditional guest greeting of Ethiopian coffee served with popcorn and then go for the Lalibela platter which comes in both vegetarian and meat options like beef or lamb, or try one of their tibbs (short ribs) or wats (curry/stew). If you are worried about eating with those who are less daring, there are also regular Canadian items like burger, fries and chicken wings



## Jamaican

### MONA'S ROTI

4810 Sheppard Avenue East,  
 Unit 209, Toronto  
 416-412-1200  
[www.monasroti.com](http://www.monasroti.com)  
 A Toronto Carribean institution for more than 25 years, Mona and her family make some of the city's best rotis (comes as plain flatbread or flatbread pocket filled with split peas and spices), jerk

chicken, curried goat, and oxtail stews, with generous portions that suit the most frugal of budgets and all the meats are Halal. To complete your Carribean food experience, try pairing your meal with a drink like Ting Grapefruit soda or Peanut Punch.



## Japanese

### ZAKKUSHI

3 locations  
[www.zakkushi.com](http://www.zakkushi.com)  
 Zakkushi offers a multitude of bite-sized delights such yakitori (bamboo skewers of grilled meat and vegetables often with savoury sauces) with so many options they span three whole menu pages, as well as hot/cold tapas and oden (items like eggs, fish cakes, etc are boiled instead of grilled) and features authentic Japanese touches such as using binchotan charcoal for their grilling. As a popular place to have a good time with friends and a cold Asahi beer or two, you'll quickly understand why they enforce a two hour dining limit, and making reservations in advance is also a good idea.



## Greek

### PAPPAS GRILL

440 Danforth Avenue, Toronto  
 416-469-9595  
[www.pappasgrill.com](http://www.pappasgrill.com)

Take a break from winter's chill by stepping inside Papa's Grill, with their wood-burning fireplace keeping you cozy, and relax in their tasteful cosmopolitan décor complete with gorgeous windows that keep the tables immersed in sunlight all day long. In summertime, there's no better patio around to enjoy fresh air and good food, as they boast one of the largest patio spaces in the city. You can find all your Greek favourites, starting with appetizers like spanakotiropita (Greek filo pastry filled with spinach, leeks, and feta cheese baked to a golden brown) and dolmades (hand rolled grape vine leaves with lean ground beef, white rice, fresh dill and onion, drizzled with a lemon sauce) and mains such as oven-roasted lamb shank, mousaka (ground beef layered in eggplant and zucchini baked under a béchamel sauce, served with Greek salad and rice) and a solid selection of pasta and seafood dishes.

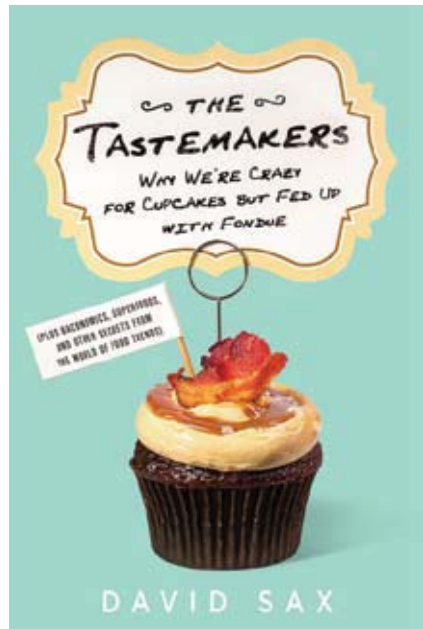


# LIFESTYLE MYTHS, TRENDS & WISDOM... FROM THE EXPERTS

BY JANIS SEFTEL

In our fast-paced and seemingly relentless schedule called modern life in a big city, it often feels like we are expected to pay attention to the newest exercise regimen, the latest low-carb solution for our bellies or the best way to detox in a flash. We talked to three local experts to discover what's real and what's just fluff in the nutrition and fitness world. Here's what they had to say. ►





## DELIS: PLACES WE USED TO BUY FOOD

Ongoing health trends will naturally mean that a place like the deli suffers in terms of popularity. But when we rule out a whole way of interacting with food, it can be extreme. There is room for a healthy society to also enjoy deli culture! It's when we try to eliminate a whole style of food consumption, but we are still not getting any healthier, that it's an issue for me.



©Christopher Farber

## WHEN DRINKS HAVE ANTIOXIDANTS

... and other perceived benefits. Marketing companies can make potential consumers believe that drinking coconut water, POM, juice, vitamin water, smart water and even 7-UP with antioxidants is better than drinking soda. There is a hierarchy of “badness” here that we buy into. The food and beverage industry can make us believe that anything is better for us than the last thing we had. Camel cigarettes were originally the “healthy” option for smokers! This isn't to say that drinking vitamin water is majorly hazardous, but we have to be careful not to over-consume. A few years ago a lot of boomers thought that POM was the answer to diabetes and cancer, and stocked their fridges full. Companies make claims which are just inaccurate and for which we need more information. Nothing is “the maschiach” of food.



## CORN SYRUP IN EVERYTHING

Moderation is important even if it feels boring. We live in an age where the cheapest ingredients we can harvest go into most processed foods. It is crucial to know what's in our food and avoid GMOs where we can. But we shouldn't be afraid of putting ketchup on a fry every now and again.

## DAVID SAX

Journalist, food writer and author of *Save The Deli* and *The Tastemakers*



## SMOOTHING AND JUICING

When we are told there is a solution to our diets and it's through our blender at home, we jump on it because it's suddenly accessible and because Dr Oz told us to. It's a cultural and lifestyle thing that should be pursued for the right reasons and not because holding a smoothie glass looks great when you are wearing yoga pants. Tastemakers like Gwyneth Paltrow are targeted for this kind of thing all the time and they end up as champions for something that we can't say for sure is actually part of their personal life.

## DESK WORK AND BEING SEDENTARY

Sitting at one's desk all day is sort of the new scapegoat for why we can't shed those last kilos. There is some truth to this, though. I think sometimes we take the idea to extremes, like installing a treadmill desk where the employee has to stroll for seven hours, or chew their bites 100 times, but these are ideas that mean something and come from somewhere. We all do need to be more active at work, or working from home, and this looks different depending on the kind of job you do.

## THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF WATER

When we think of drinking water throughout our day, we shouldn't worry too much about the concept of “six” or “eight” glasses. These numbers are based in research but the human body is so complex and everyone has different needs. Some of my clients hate drinking water, but they need to know how important hydration is. Have herbal tea, or a slice of cucumber or orange in your water. The issue is that sometimes we confuse thirst with hunger, and then we eat more. Also, you are slumped by the end of day if you are dehydrated. It is also important to drink your water by itself. Drinking and eating at the same time can create digestive issues. You may not be chewing as much if you are washing the meal down with water every few bites. Cold water can also halt digestion for some people, so room temperature is best.



©Marina Degteva

## FOLLOWING THE FOOD PYRAMID

Dieticians are pro food guide – it's a good tool if you want to know more about balanced meals, and it's based on science and devised by a panel of experts. However, we shouldn't feel we're not “hitting the mark” just because we're not following the food pyramid. There are many different combinations of good nutrients we could consume throughout the day. Four to six servings of wheat, for example, isn't right for everyone.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON DETOX

An extreme one is drinking warm water with lemon and cayenne pepper for a few days to a week. This is fine if you are supervised or on a retreat with professionals. But this style of detox



## JAIME SLAVIN

Nutritionist and Food Educator, [jaimeslavin.com](http://jaimeslavin.com)



can be dangerous to do while trying to maintain your same work and exercise routine.

At the other end of the spectrum is an elimination diet, for a week up to a month – this means you are still eating perhaps the same amount of solid foods but cutting out one or two major elements (such as dairy, sugar, meat or wheat). This can help you identify an intolerance or simply get your health back on track. A good midway point between these two, to more deeply reset your digestive system, is a juice cleanse. Organic juices made at home are more affordable than cold-pressed juices, which are amazing but not on the budget for most of us. (The value of a cold-pressed juice is that the fruits and vegetables are broken up in a way that still keeps them “alive”, with the enzymes intact). Beginners can do a day of organic juicing, but the magic number might be three days. This detox is not advisable for people with diabetes. If considering doing a juice detox, talk to your physician first.

## THREE BIG MEALS VS. FIVE SMALLER

It's true that grazing is better digestively and it is also easier on the spikes of our blood sugar. If one plans ahead they can make this work, instead of picking up a big takeaway lunch when at work and then going out for dinner. It is all about thinking ahead if we choose to change our eating habits.

## GLUTEN-FREE FOR THE REST OF US

If one can tolerate gluten, then it shouldn't be avoided. Most gluten-free snacks have a lot of other additives so it isn't always the “healthier choice” to pick up a gluten-free food product. For most of us, wheat in moderation is great. If you are conscious of being healthier in wheat intake, spelt is a great option. Regular flour can be swapped out for spelt flour. ▶



## CARBO-LOADING BEFORE A SPORTS EVENT

Our bodies are like a car. We need to put in the right gas. We need a combination of macro- and micro-nutrients (carbs, fats, vitamins and minerals). It is important to prepare for an event, like a marathon, in a way that will sustain our energy. Complex carbs certainly help us, but we shouldn't go overboard. The carb needs to be easily absorbable and enter our blood stream, providing glucose that converts to energy. A fast metabolism uses this up, whereas a slow metabolism has more stores. Individual athletes need to assess what works for them.

## TAKING ON A NEW SPORT

Whether continuing your current fitness hobby or starting a new sport, cross training and running drills are the most useful. This can be combined with agility and footwork training, depending on the sport. Going on the elliptical or hiking can be really beneficial too. A combination of some of these activities can take you anywhere from 2-4 times a week, more if you are looking to get serious. The main thing is to support your strength and core maintenance at the same time. When taking up a new activity, you have to plan in order to succeed. At my job, we are hoping to support runners who want to do our 10th Annual Spring Into Action! Walk or Run for Diabetes in Sunnybrook Park on May 2, 2015.

## DOING "JUST CARDIO"

Just running puts pressure on the body and the heart. We can prevent injuries by building up strength in the joints. Upper body balance is important and so is posture. Our stride becomes shorter as we age, so we need to take steps to make our workouts injury free. Strength training and weights can help with this.

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HAVING A PERSONAL TRAINER

That the growth happens purely on a physical level. Profound mental and psychological improvements are noticeable. Some people also assume that it's always going to be more than they can afford, but if training is necessary, then perhaps other cost-of-living expenses can be looked at more critically. I think there is also a tendency to rely on the PT sessions as one's workouts for the week. I believe that to reap the full benefit, you need a full commitment and that means being active in your own time, too.

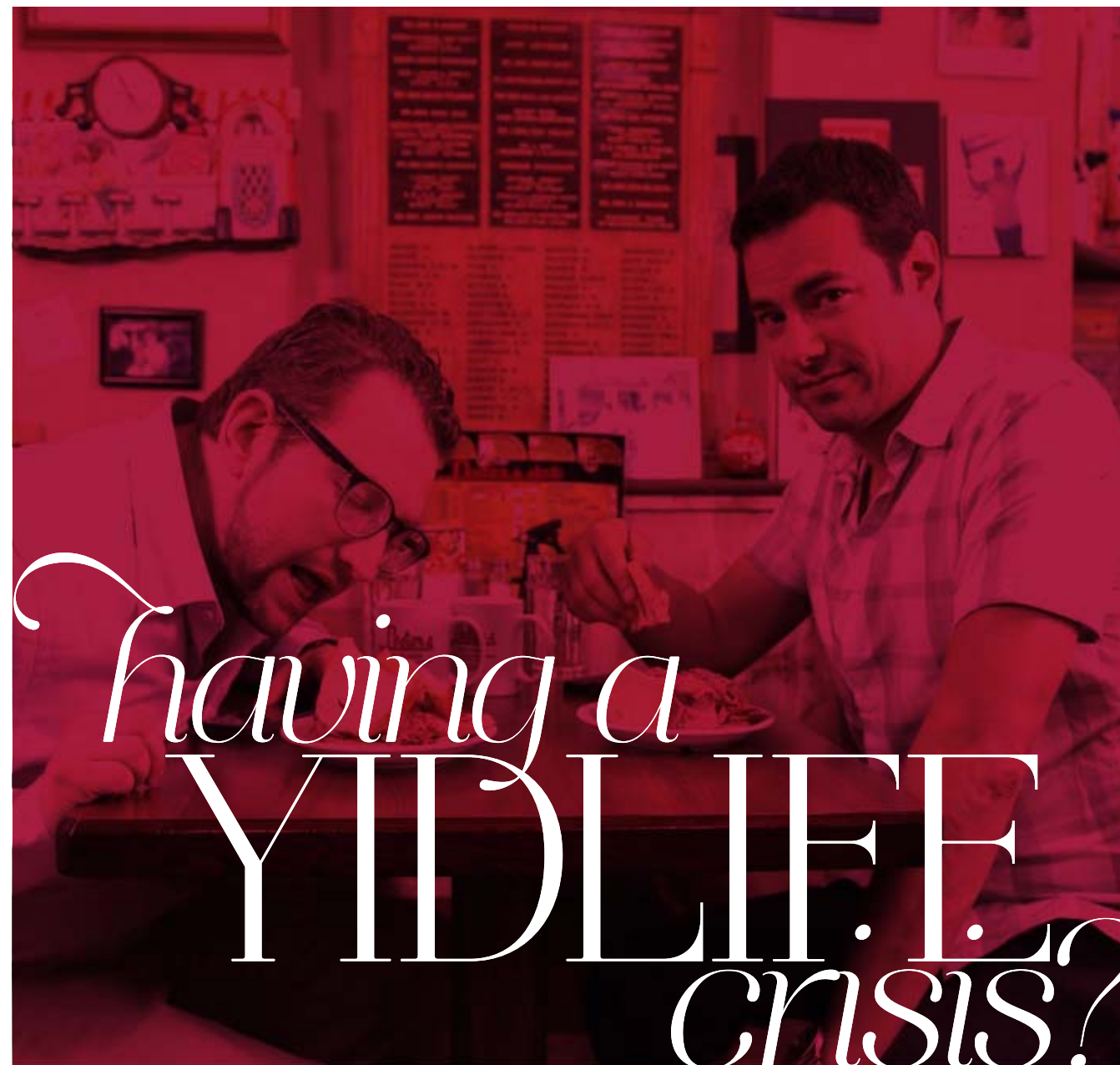
## WORKING OUT TIME - MORNING VS. EVENING

Morning is the preferred time for physical activity, it's when we're most rested and haven't allowed the chaos of the day to set in. However, having said that, there is no optimal time for getting it in. There is simply the satisfaction of being able to "check it off your list" and knowing that you made the effort! ■



## BARRY H. SAMUELS

Goals & Performance Coach and founder of [insideoutstudio.ca](http://insideoutstudio.ca)



# Having a YIDLIFE Crisis?

BY EVELYN TAUBEN

Just before Yom Kippur, a new online video went viral, the likes of which the world had never seen: two Montreal guys break the fast at midday, tearing into a local delicacy not known for its kosher properties – poutine – all while debating the sanctity of the day and Jewish dietary laws... in Yiddish. And therein begins the witty new web-series from Montreal natives Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman, *YidLife Crisis*, taking the Jewish gifts of gab and nosh to new levels, completely in the *mameloshen*.

I went to high school with Jamie and Eli, where Yiddish was part of the core curriculum. We caught up to discuss the duo's unlikely comedic collaboration, building on their experience in film, TV and theatre. After the requisite round of Jewish geography and sharing of current illnesses, we talked about the roots of their brand of humour, newish Jewish culture, and Chinese food. ►





JAMIE ELMAN    ELI BATALION

# YidLife Crisis

Sex, Drugs, and Milk & Meat.  
In Yiddish.

RESTRICTED  
RATED CHAI+  
(18 AND OVER)  
Under 18 Requires Accompanying Jewish Psychological

*“I believe that Yiddish should be preserved for the great value it has and its kind of a store of culture.”*  
— Batalion

**Evelyn Tauben:** *An online web-series in Yiddish with a healthy dose of Quebecois French – what were you thinking?!*

**Jamie Elman:** Eli and I had been talking for a while about working together. We’ve been friends for years. He pitched me on the idea that we should do something in Yiddish. I realized right away that it would be something really funny and also scary and daunting because I don’t actually speak Yiddish. It was sort of a tribute to the North American Jewish comedy that we grew up with, that we feel is highly influenced by and descends from Yiddish comedy and mentality.

**ET:** *We all went to Bialik High School where Yiddish is taught. What was your attitude towards learning Yiddish then and what are your thoughts now?*

**Eli Batalion:** For many, Yiddish period meant roaming the halls incessantly and doing anything other than learning the Yiddish language. But I took it seriously. I think because my parents spoke Yiddish. My grandparents certainly only spoke Yiddish for the most part. I was very much brought up in that environment. I ended up actually being the Yiddish valedictorian at Bialik, which I got by default. It was a forfeit position – no one else wanted to do it.

I believe that Yiddish should be preserved for the great value it has and its kind of a store of culture. I also think the language encompasses a certain form of thinking and comedy that doesn’t necessarily come out textually but it comes out in conversation, it comes out live in theatre, and now in this century in video. It comes out in our language, our comedy, the way we use our hands, the cadence and the way we speak.

I don’t believe in just blindly preserving the Yiddish language just for the sake of preserving the language. I don’t think it’s worth doing dogmatically or at the expense of anything else. As we know, there are other situations where people try to preserve languages and culture at the expense of others.

I believe in preserving what’s good for everyone about the language and sharing the joy of the language.

**ET:** *You have described the show as a love letter to Montreal and in one episode you refer to “Montrealese”. The show is indeed deeply infused with Montreal references. What has the reaction been like from people who don’t speak “Montrealese”?*

**JE:** We tried to make it so that anybody can understand most of it. We are trying to reflect [all these] different aspects of our lives as Jews, as Yiddish speakers (or as “Yiddish appreciators” anyway), as Montrealers, as Canadians.

**EB:** I have been surprised by how much people get it, even if they’re not Montrealers. I think that the city actually has a bigger footprint than we would imagine. In addition to that, there’s a certain universal theme that people get. Even if people don’t know the Cavendish Mall, I think people get it because somewhere in a New Jersey suburb they have their equivalent mall. There’s the same structure of Jewish suburbia or Jewish life in L.A., New York, Cape Town, Sydney, and London. To a certain extent among Jewish communities, there are some similarities.

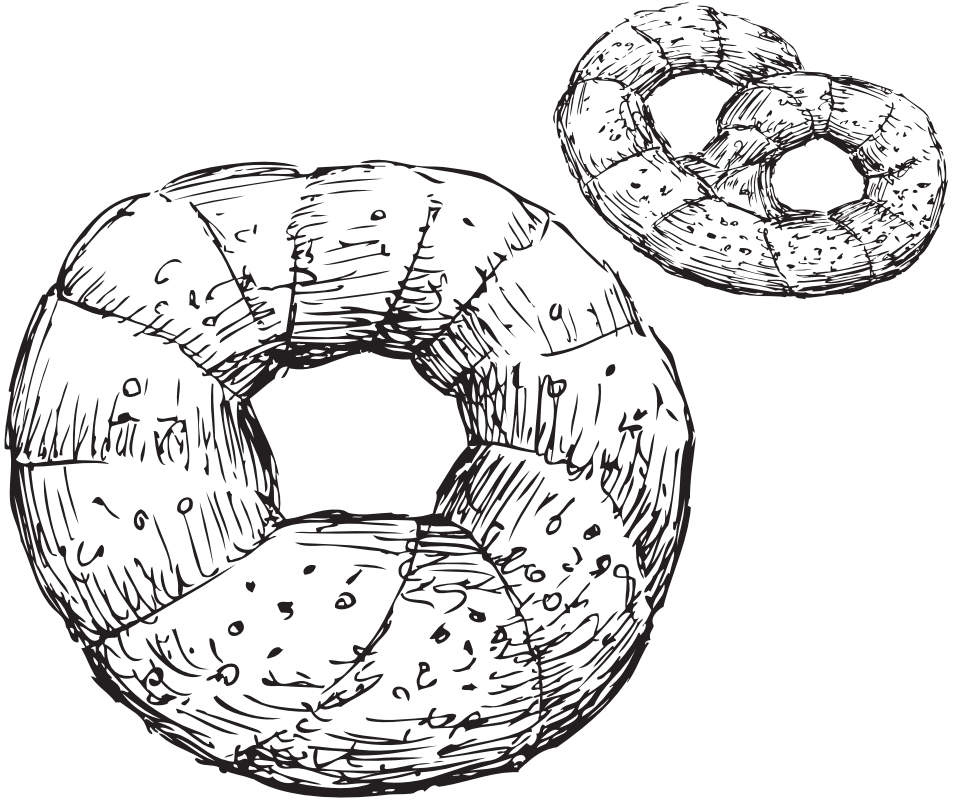
**ET:** *But as Jewish Montrealers, we like to believe that there’s no place like Jewish Montreal.*

**JE:** Sure, we try to do that in the third episode. We certainly feel that the Mile End and Plateau are those special places where worlds really collide.

**EB:** There’s just something about the Mile End. You have your Satmar Hasid almost literally brushing up against “hippie chicklech”.

**JE:** But not literally because that wouldn’t be kosher.

**ET:** *Amidst the comedy, you touch on very real issues of contemporary Jewish life. Was that the plan for your show: to take on hard questions in a humorous way?*



**JE:** As critical as we’re being about fundamental Jewish values, there are very few Jewish values that are more fundamental than asking questions. We’ve actually been having these conversations for years and years. And we decided to talk about the things [in the show] that we talk about anyways. For example, should we fast on Yom Kippur? Do we need to not eat bread for eight days on Passover? Do you need to believe in God to be a good Jew? Is circumcision really the thing that makes someone Jewish or not? These are topics that have becoming increasingly real, especially with friends of mine who are now having kids and they need to decide if they’re going to circumcise or if they’re going to send them to Jewish Day School.

**ET:** *Are you aiming to spark discussion through the series or is the focus on giving people a good laugh?*

**EB:** I would see it more as comedy art that in short vignettes sums up issues and debates that ▶

*At a certain point in the process, we realized there’s something clever about being able to have the food be a metaphor within the conversation.*





We get feedback about how hungry we're making people, and a lot of times its not people from Montreal. Sometimes though, its ex-Montrealers expressing their faux anger at us.

**JE:** I don't know what you're talking about: "faux anger." We've gotten hate mail from ex-Montrealers who say, "I've just gone six weeks for the first time in my life without waking up in the middle of the night screaming for St. Viateur bagels. Thanks guys!"

I know, that shot cutting into the bagel dough...

**JE:** Oh ya, I want to wrap myself like a tallis in that dough... As Eli said, we realized that food could be a metaphor for some of the things we wanted to talk about. But there's also the archetype of Jews fighting and talking over eating in restaurants. [Batalion: Literally, overeating.] We're huge fans of Seinfeld, so we had in mind this Jerry-George-style diner conversation.

**ET:** *What featured foods can we look forward to in future episodes of YidLife Crisis?*

**JE:** We have already written the Sunday night Chinese food episode. It's a classic but we'll put our spin on it. We've heard from various Montrealers who have asked, "Are you going to get out of the Mile End?" Eli, imagine the episode when Chaimie and Leizer take a road trip down the 401 to go see all their friends who have defected to Toronto...

**EB:** Ya, we stock up and we go on a pilgrimage to Thornhill. We don't even say anything. We just drop off a dozen bagels. It's a mitzvah.

For episodes of YidLife Crisis, visit [www.yidlifecrisis.com](http://www.yidlifecrisis.com)

Originally from Montreal, Evelyn Tauben is a Toronto-based independent producer, curator and writer with a focus on contemporary Jewish arts and culture. [www.evelyntauben.com](http://www.evelyntauben.com) ■

# holiday FLAIR



Cap Sleeve Embroidery Fitted Dress  
Victoria Beckham



Gucci Watch



"Nausica" Black Suede & Crystal Ankle-Tie Stilettos



LOVE Earrings  
Yellow Gold, Cartier



Marchesa Gold Embroidered Clutch



Chanel Rouge Allure Luminous  
Satin Lip Colour in Pirate.



Knot Eau de Parfum  
Bottega Veneta





WHAT I WISH I HAD  
KNOWN ABOUT

COUPLES  
THERAPY

BY WENDY LITNER

The drive home from couples therapy is an awkward one. The last time my husband, Stephen, and I discussed our relationship with a third party was with the synagogue’s rabbi before he officiated our wedding.

“Do you have any questions?” he had asked us. “Anything you would like to talk about?”

I nudged Stephen under the table, signaling for him to fill the silence. Taking a cue from an arbitrary painting on the wall, he cleared his throat and spoke.

“Are you fluent in Aramaic?”

*Huh?!*

Of course we didn’t have any real questions for the rabbi. Our relationship was perfect. That’s why we were getting married. Just look at how well we communicated, without even any need for words!

As we progressed, though, from newlyweds to a couple approaching their ten-year anniversary, it turned out our relationship wasn’t perfect after all. Our joint tendency to avoid conflict – and my passive-aggressive way of kicking him under the table – left issues in our marriage to simmer below the surface of our day-to-day pleasantries. After so many years of ignoring matters of substance, we stopped having the meaningful discussions that are the engine of a relationship and, eventually, we sputtered out and stalled. Having been silent for so long, we eventually realized we needed professional help to reignite the conversation.

While I was excited about the potential of couples therapy – in theory – I feared it in practice, worried that the very need to see a therapist cast irreparable doom on our relationship. Inundated with pictures of happy couples on Facebook, I felt like we had somehow failed each other in needing to seek outside assistance and that this faltering did not bode well for our future as a couple. I was fearful that therapy was merely a polite gateway to

separation, something you had to do in order to say “we tried everything.”

Working with a therapist, however, strengthened our relationship and taught us how to be married to each other specifically, not just in a vacuum. It amplified the consequences of our words and actions, engendering empathy and a new way of seeing one another. We had become so entrenched in our malfunctioning holding pattern that it took a professional to help us set a different course.

There are a few things I wish I had known, though, before enduring that awkward silence that saturated the drive home from our first appointment. I hope sharing them out loud helps those who are debating whether to go this route, should they need it.

1. THERAPY IS NOT JUST  
FOR CRISIS SITUATIONS.

Before attending couples therapy, I assumed it was solely for crisis management, used to resolve major

issues like infidelity. I failed to understand that therapy can help a couple address basic communication deficiencies. I came to appreciate that I was not an expert communicator. In fact, I wasn’t even an expert in my own marriage, despite having been a part of it for almost a decade. A couple’s therapist can help facilitate difficult conversations and assist spouses in seeing the other’s perspective.

2. THERAPY IS A TIME  
COMMITMENT.

Couples therapy takes time. Everyone is coming from a different starting point but you should probably be thinking past a single appointment. It also requires a concerted effort, juggling schedules and other commitments, times two. Both partners must be committed to making the relationship a priority and seeking help, together, to work through a problem until it is resolved.

3. THINGS MIGHT GET  
WORSE BEFORE THEY  
GET BETTER.

Therapy might provide a safe space to say the difficult things you haven’t been able to say to your partner, but you still have to drive home with him/her after you have both aired your grievances. And share a bed. And coexist through the day-to-day until the next appointment. As issues are fleshed out, it is possible to feel more disconnected from your partner as you process his/her thoughts and feelings, allowing them to come along with yours. These feelings of disconnection will hopefully resolve as you learn to process the reasons behind your reactions and communicate them to your partner.

4. YOU MAY FEEL  
CONFUSED AND  
QUESTION THE PROCESS.

While engaging in couples therapy my emotions swung from righteous indignation to questioning my efficacy as a life partner, sometimes in the very

	SHE MEANS	HE MEANS
“FINE.”	You’re not even worth arguing with right now because you’re acting too stupid.	I’ll Think About It.
“WHATEVER.”	You’re dismissed.	Fine.
“I’LL THINK ABOUT IT.”	You’re kind of winning right now, but i’m still going to make you sweat this one out.	Whatever.

same session. I found it difficult, at times, to adequately express myself and was frustrated with my husband’s ease in conveying his point of view. By focusing on the long-term goal and the value of the relationship as a whole over any particular problem, I was able to muddle through my confusion and get to the other side.

5. IT DOESN’T  
MATTER WHAT OTHER  
PEOPLE THINK.

There is an unfortunate stigma surrounding couples therapy, as if a strong marriage should never hit an impasse. You are the one, however, who has to live in your relationship, so it is no matter what well-meaning friends and family think about your situation. It is important to focus on you, your partner and your relationship, without casting judgment. There is no shame in working on your relationship. Quite the contrary. It is the bold and the brave and the truly committed that can face issues head on and address them constructively. While couples therapy may be an uncomfortable time investment week to week, it can set a precedent for coping with future problems. I wish I had appreciated this while delving into

such work so that I could have better focused my energy on strengthening my relationship skills rather than questioning the process. ■



Wendy Litner is a lawyer and writer living in Toronto. You can find more of her writing at [SadintheCity.com](http://SadintheCity.com) or follow her on Twitter @SadintheCity.



# Fall & Winter

EVENTS SCENE Fall/Winter 2014-15



## INTRODUCING SUZY LAKE

NOV 5/14 - MAR 22/15

Lake's photographs of people from ages 6-66 that focus on the social norm of the people portrayed. Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)



## THE ARTISANS' GIFT FAIR

DECEMBER 21

Features the unique work of over forty local artists and artisans. The Tranzac Club.



## KENSINGTON KRAWL FOOD TOUR - HOLIDAY EDITION | DECEMBER 27

Join us on this holiday edition tour to enjoy the very best of Kensington Market.



## THE SCOTTISH TATTOO: MUSIC OF SCOTLAND | JANUARY 29

Features bagpipes, drummers, musicians, singers and dancers - every last one direct from Edinburgh. Sony Centre for Performing Arts.



## TEA FESTIVAL

JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 1

Sample hundreds of teas and learn from experts in the industry. Toronto Reference Library Appel Salon, 2nd floor.



## WINTERLICIOUS

JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 12

Experience a series of mouthwatering culinary events and indulge in creative cuisine from around the world. Various restaurants.



## TORONTO SPORTSMAN SHOW

FEBRUARY 5-8

Introducing Canada's outdoor heritage with 65 years of history. Direct Energy Centre



## THE MOTORCYCLE SHOW

FEBRUARY 22

Features all kinds of exciting exhibits and entertainment that will run through the weekend. Direct Energy Centre.



## CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL AUTOSHOW | FEBRUARY 13-22

40th Anniversary that features the total automotive experience with over 600,000 sq of exhibits and displays. Metro Convention Centre.



## WORLD MASTERCARD FASHION WEEK

MARCH - DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Toronto Fashion Week is the place to be as some of the biggest names in fashion gather to showcase their collections. Various locations.



## PDAC INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, TRADE SHOW & INVESTORS EXCHANGE | MARCH 1-4

This convention is for people, companies and organizations in, or connected with, mineral exploration. Metro Convention Centre.



## HOT DOCS INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

APRIL 23 - MAY 3

Featuring more than 150 cutting-edge documentaries from Canada and around the globe. Various venues.

## TORONTO



## ESCALES IMPROBABLES 2014

MARCH - SEPTEMBER

A festival of "arts without borders" that holds events from March through September. Various locations.



## MONTRÉAL EN LUMIÈRE

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 1

A free outdoor event filled with lighting, music, fireworks and video projections. Various locations.



## THE HAUNTED WALK'S "NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS" | DEC 20 - 27

Explore the darker side of the festive season with stories about strange and frightening holiday traditions and creepy Christmas-themed tales. Bytown Museum.



## WINTERLUDE

JAN 30 - FEB 16

A winter festival featuring snow and ice sculpture competitions, skating and sporting events which transform Ottawa into a winter wonderland. Various locations.

## OTTAWA



## IGLOOFEST

WEEKENDS JAN 16 - FEB 8

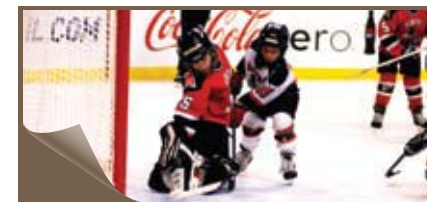
Dance under the stars at the annual outdoor Winter Rave of electronic music with over 100+ artist. Jacques-Cartier Quay.



## NUIT BLANCHE

FEBRUARY 28

Features over 200 activities, installations and exhibits in the great outdoors. Discover it all! Various locations.



## BELL CAPITAL CUP

DEC 29 - JAN 2

More than 500 teams of young hockey players from Europe, U.S. and Canada compete. Various locations.



## TD WINTER OTTAWA JAZZ FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 5 - 8

This event is full of jazz artists of international acclaim as well as a showcase of the best local talent on offer. National Arts Centre and other venues.

## MONTREAL



## FÊTE DES NEIGES DE MONTRÉAL

WEEKENDS JAN 17 - FEB 8

A free event with a variety of winter activities! Ziplines, tube sliding, skating, shows, music and much more! Parc Jean-Drapeau.



## UNDER THE SNOW

MARCH 4 - 9

Features today's alternative music artists emerging from the Québec music scene or internationally. Le Plateau-Mont-Royal.



## SEARS GREAT CANADIAN CHILL

JANUARY 1

Welcome the New Year and make a splash into the icy-crisp waters of the Ottawa River at Britannia Beach and raise money to Stop Kids Cancer Cold.



## CANADIAN SKI MARATHON

FEBRUARY 7 - 8

The world's longest cross-country ski tour, covering 160 km of ski trails, caters to about 2,500 skiers annually. From Lachute, Québec to Gatineau Park.



# LIFE IS A Cabaret

TORONTO THEATRE LISTINGS | WINTER-SPRING 2015

## PANASONIC THEATRE

Jan 2015: Potted Potter  
Feb 2015: Boom  
Mar 2015: Cannibal The Musical

## PRINCESS of WALES THEATRE

Feb-Mar 2015: Noël Coward's Blithe Spirit  
May-Jun 2015: Titanic The Musical

## ROYAL ALEXANDRA THEATRE

Dec 2014-Mar 2015: The Heart of Robin Hood  
April 2015: Dame Edna's Glorious Goodbye - The Farewell Tour



## BLUMA APPEL THEATRE

Jan-Feb 2015: The Seagull/The Other Place  
Mar 2015: Harper Regan  
Apr 2015: Spotlight South Africa  
May 2015: Needles and Opium

## FOUR SEASONS CENTRE for the PERFORMING ARTS

Jan-Feb 2015: Don Giovanni; Die Walküre  
Apr-May 2015: The Barber of Seville; Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung

## SONY CENTRE for the PERFORMING ARTS

Jan 2015: Disney Live! Mickey's Music Festival; Shen Yun Performing Arts; The Music Of Scotland  
Feb 2015: Let It Be  
Mar 2015: Fawlty Towers: The Dining



Experience; The Piano Guys; Sleeping Beauty On Ice; Star Trek (2009) With Live Orchestra  
Apr 2015: Eifman St. Petersburg Ballet Presents Anna Karenina  
May 2015: John Mellencamp Plain Spoken Tour; Jackie Evancho - "Awakening" Live In Concert

## TORONTO CENTRE for the ARTS

Jan 2015: Delimax (Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre); Li Delun's New Year's Concert 2015; Mozart Mass In C Minor (TSO); Remember Maggie? (Encore Entertainment)  
Feb 2015: The Value Of Names (Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre); Winter Warmth (Orchestra Toronto); Masters Meet Rising Stars (Sinfonia Toronto)  
Apr 2015: Olé Flamenco (Orchestra Toronto); The Love List (Encore Entertainment); Baroque Misbehaving (Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra)  
May 2015: Two Stars, Three Centuries (Sinfonia Toronto); J.S. Bach: The Circle Of Creation (Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra); Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell To Wicked (Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company); Con Brio! (Orchestra Toronto)

## YOUNG CENTRE for the PERFORMING ARTS

Jan 2015: The Conjurer  
Feb 2015: Accidental Death of an Anarchist  
Mar 2015: The Dining Room  
Apr 2015: Peer Gynt  
May 2015: Bedroom Farce  
Jun 2015: The Dybbuk, Between Two Worlds

## PASSE MURAILLE

Feb 2015: R-E-B-E-C-C-C-A;  
The Sound of Cracking Bones;  
Apr 2015: Hooked



## TARRAGON THEATRE

Jan 2015: Lungs  
Feb 2015: Waiting Room  
Mar 2015: Abyss  
April 2015: Cake & Dirt  
May 2015: Infinity; Much Ado About Nothing

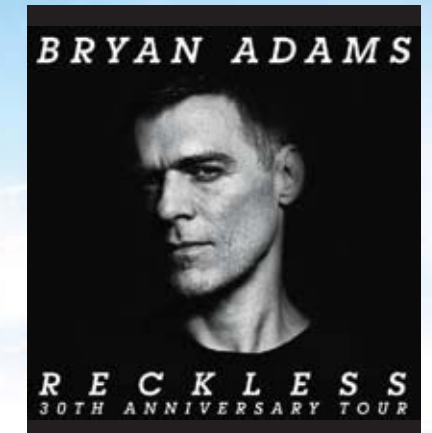
## AIR CANADA CENTRE CONCERT SCHEDULE



January 20



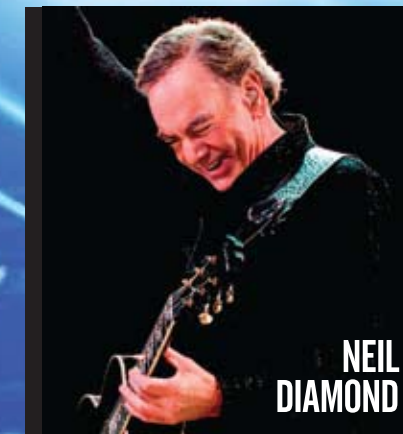
February 3



February 28



March 16



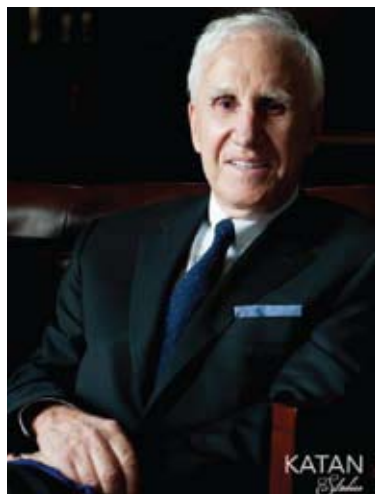
April 2



June 20



The Miracle Drive Dinner Photographed by: Katan Studios



By Rabbi Yonah Vilenkin

## THE JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

### Tzivos Hashem Canada's Newest Project

Since 1991, Tzivos Hashem Canada has been offering the Jewish community and the community at large dynamic educational workshops, exhibits and a variety of programs geared to children and youth. Tzivos Hashem activities are presented in a hands-on, interactive and fun way.

At this momentous point in the growth of Tzivos Hashem Canada, we have launched the building campaign for the first Ontario Jewish Children's Museum (OJCM). This follows in the successful

footsteps of Tzivos Hashem International and its Jewish Children's Museum in Brooklyn, New York.

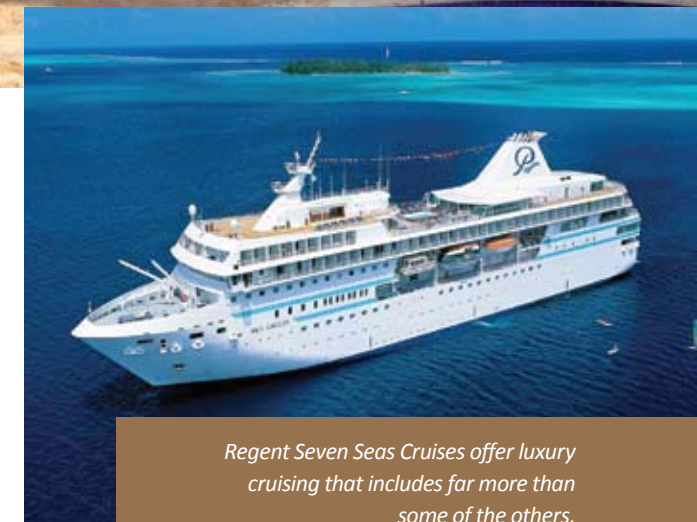
In today's hi-tech environment the Museum will be educational and informative using state-of-the-art technology, hands-on exhibits and other exciting mediums. Education is the key to advancing multiculturalism and tolerance among children and youth, the building blocks of a strong and tolerant society. Museum visitors will experience a universe of living, giving and discovery of the Jewish way of life.

Plans are now well into phase one for the OJCM campaign and the committee is working to secure a location in the heart of North York. An incredibly successful fundraiser, *The Miracle Drive Dinner, was held on July 6, 2014, sponsored by Downtown Porsche*. Tzivos Hashem's vision and development plan is currently at an estimated cost of \$50 million. The goal is to create community-wide awareness and gather support for this grand project. For those interested in supporting and/or donating to the campaign, please visit [www.ojcm.ca](http://www.ojcm.ca). We invite you to join this historic effort! ■



## LUXURY TRAVEL:

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cruising that includes far more than  
some of the others.

BY ELITE COLLINS

For those seeking luxury while traveling, there are countless options including superb service, fine dining, pampering spas, exclusive resorts and endless exceptional places to visit.

The **Isrotel** chain of hotels offers several types of accommodation. Particularly worth mentioning are the Carmel Forest Spa Resort – nestled in the picturesque Carmel Forest in Haifa – and the new Cramim Resort and Spa in the Judean wine region near Jerusalem. A truly pampering, relaxing and invigorating experience awaits you in both of these exclusive properties. The many spa treatments, indoor and outdoor pools coupled with the gourmet cuisine and fine wines provide the perfect combination for

an unforgettable retreat. Another Isrotel property is the Beresheet Hotel at the Ramon crater in the south, offering true luxury to those seeking an oasis in the desert with a backdrop of astounding nature. This property caters to families in villas designed with much attention to detail as well as to couples seeking a romantic getaway. Some of the rooms have private pools and astounding views of the crater.

**Mitzpe Hayamim** in the north offers breathtaking views of the Golan Heights and the Sea of Galilee, and is surrounded by gardens and forests. Most of the cuisine served at the two restaurants and the bakery is grown at the organic farm on site. From Mediterranean herbs and spices to fresh seasonal produce and

dairy products, you are sure to enjoy a unique culinary experience.

The recently opened **Waldorf Astoria** hotel in the heart of Jerusalem is the newest addition to the city's top hotels. It features opulent luxury throughout. It is located minutes from Jaffa Gate and close to Jerusalem's trendy Mamila mall, an outdoor promenade dotted with cafes, restaurants, shops and boutiques. Another new luxury property is the Ritz Carlton Herzliya. This elegant hotel on the coast has a rooftop pool, a spectacular spa and the world's first Ritz-Carlton kosher restaurant.

Private tours provide a personalized trip catered specifically to the travelers' needs and interests. Whether you are seeking a



desert adventure, a religious experience, a luxurious VIP tour, or a combination of all of these, private guides can offer an unforgettable trip.

Outside of Israel, many Canadian luxury seekers favour the all-inclusive vacation experience.

**Jade Mountain in St. Lucia** offers one of the most luxurious and unique Caribbean experiences. The infinity pools are a mesmerizing aspect of this resort. Each is designed differently and is unique in both shape and colour. These pools produce a visual effect of water extending into the horizon and flowing over a vanishing edge. Spa treatments are available and guests can choose to enjoy these in their own infinity pools. For those willing to leave the comfort of their rooms, there are two natural soft sand beaches and coral reefs in the area. Not far from this majestic property are the rainforest, volcano and botanical gardens. Private tours can be organized to visit the sites on the island.

The **Fairmont** chain around the world offers top hotels for both leisure and business travelers. The Fairmont Royal Pavilion Resort in Barbados is a spectacular destination. Set on a white sand beach and surrounded by lush gardens, the backdrop of the hotel is magnificent. All the guest rooms and suites have been recently renovated in true Fairmont fashion. Afternoon tea is an experience not to be missed.

*“Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer.” Through travel we enjoy unique experiences and make everlasting memories.*



*The recently opened Waldorf Astoria hotel in the heart of Jerusalem is the newest addition to the city's top hotels.*

Then there are those who prefer the sea. Cruising offers many benefits to travelers. The all-inclusive component is particularly attractive. Passengers prepay their vacation and have accommodation, gourmet cuisine, entertainment and travel from port to port without having to unpack and go from place to place.

Some cruise lines have taken this one step further. **Regent Seven Seas Cruises** offer luxury cruising that includes far more than some of the others. All taxes and gratuities are included as well as unlimited shore excursions. The staterooms are large and include a living area, walk-in closets, large bathrooms and some offer butler service. Exquisite dining options are offered throughout the ship. The many restaurants are sure to please even the pickiest palates. Some require advance reservations. Although the ships are small, the entertainment is excellent. The atmosphere, while luxurious, is relaxed and enjoyable.

**Crystal Cruises** also offer luxury cruising. The ships are magnificent, the service is extraordinary and staterooms are spacious and modern. Crystal has several themed

cruises to cater to specific interests like Ballroom at Sea, for those who love to dance and Crystal Wine and Food Festival, celebrating culinary arts and for the wine connoisseurs.

Some travelers, who want a luxurious cruise experience with a lower price tag, can turn to other cruise lines, like Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises. These offer upgraded balcony suites with extra amenities and more space than the standard staterooms. Some also include concierge service priority boarding and the option of in-room dining. Butler service is offered at the top categories as well.

“Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer.” Through travel we enjoy unique experiences and make everlasting memories. I have only mentioned a select few destinations to whet your palate. There are many more out there... Bon voyage!

*Elite Collins is a Senior Travel Consultant at Peerless Travel, one of Canada's largest independent travel agencies. She can be contacted at (905) 886-5610 ext. 368 or at elite@peerlesstravel.com.*



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