Dedication of the Australian Jewish War Memorial
and
Commemoration of the Centenary of
General Sir John Monash’s Knighthood

The ACT Jewish Community will publish a limited number of special Commemoration booklets for release late 2018.
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FRONT COVER:
Farewell to our shlichim, Almog Zoosman and Hillel Lehman as they return home to Israel in September. They will be greatly missed. They write about their experiences in Australia in this edition of Hamerkaz - see page 7.
FOREWORD
FROM THE
EDITOR OF
HAMERKAZ

ADELA GREENBAUM

This is the last issue of Hamerkaz with me at the helm.

It has been a pleasure editing the magazine in the brief months that I have been a member of this community. I will be continuing on the Hamerkaz Committee.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

REPORT FROM THE
ACTING
PRESIDENT

SARAH GREENBAUM

We have had a very busy few months in the ACT Jewish Community. We have had major community events, active learning programs, prominent speakers and excellent events for our young people.

On Sunday, August 12, we commemorated the installation of the Australian Jewish War Memorial. The completion of the construction of the monument as well as the reception that celebrated its opening reflected very well on our community. The attendance of senior government representatives and the resulting media coverage significantly boosted the national profile of our community. A separate booklet will be published commemorating this event and providing more information on the Australian Jewish War Memorial.

The opening of the War Memorial was not the only event that brought members of parliament and other senior leaders into our Centre however. Dr Anne Aly, member for Cowan (WA), joined us for an engaging and informative discussion on counter-terrorism. We were very lucky that Anne took several hours out of her busy schedule, especially during such a crazy week in Parliament, to engage with our community.

I am pleased to let you all know that Rabbi Gary Robuck will be joining our community to support the progressive congregation. Rabbi Robuck has over 30 years of professional experience as a rabbi and community educator and recently retired from North Shore Temple Emanuel. He will lead progressive High Holiday services and visit eight more times over the Jewish year to come offering additional educational programming to the whole community. You will find a High Holiday greeting from Rabbi Robuck later in this edition.

As we build up towards the High Holidays, I wish all members good health and happiness and I look forward to seeing you in the Centre in the weeks to come.
FROM THE RABBI’S DESK

RABBI SHIMON EDDI

Rosh haShana is fast approaching—so what’s the big deal? What is the point of Rosh haShana? It may mark the end of one year and the beginning of the next, but what meaning does it actually hold for us? Even more puzzlingly, what is the meaning of the shofar? What significance is there in the sound of the ram’s horn on the holiday?

Rosh haShana is also known as the Day of Judgment. It is the day when, Jewish tradition teaches, God judges everyone’s actions in past years; it is similarly the day when our fates for the coming year are set out for us—at least initially. It is, as such, a time for introspection, a time for taking stock of our lives and for reckoning where we could improve and how we could grow. The shofar, in this manner, functions as an alarm clock; the blast of the shofar is a wake-up call to us. The sound of the shofar is meant to echo the human heart as it cries out, both in despair of its past errors and in desperate need of a connection to its Creator.

Our Community has had a number of milestones over the past months, some joyous and some sad. From the most jubilant to the most poignant, though, one common thread has tied them all together in common purpose: every one of these major events offers us that opportunity for introspection, for focussing on our priorities, our hopes, our regrets, our gratitude.

This Rosh haShana, and every Rosh haShana from here on, may we always be ready to hear the call—both from the shofar and from within our own hearts.

OUR VISITING RABBI

RABBI GARY ROBUCK

My wife Jocelyn joins me in extending to you and your loved ones our very warmest wishes for a “Shanah Tovah” – a good, healthy and happy New Year. We are honoured and delighted to be spending this yontif in Canberra and greatly look forward to our continued association throughout the year ahead.

I wish to thank Sarah Greenbaum for her hard work, determination and vision along with all those whose support have made my appointment possible. I also want to acknowledge Rabbi Eddi, my new colleague and friend. We enjoyed an extremely cordial and highly productive visit earlier in August and I am certain that our collaboration will rebound to the advantage of the entire ACTJC.

I hope that the entire community will have regular occasion throughout 5779 to build new relationships and to deepen existing ones: to share in appealing prayer, social get-togethers and meaningful Jewish learning. I am excited to work with your children, to inspire our youth and to provide an uplifting program of activities that will engage families and individuals of every age and interest. As we get to know one another I have every confidence that we will succeed in building a dynamic progressive presence in Canberra that all can be proud of.

Please take the opportunity to have a look at the list of dates when I will be visiting the community and plan to be with us. In the meantime, please enjoy the brief reflection below provided in anticipation of the upcoming holy days.

B’Shalom
Ropes and Ladders

Rabbi Gary Robuck

Not long ago, a very distant memory came rushing back to mind. I was back in Belvoir primary school in my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

At Belvoir and throughout my education, sport came easily to me and I enjoyed it. But on gymnastics day I was hopeless, lacking in confidence and frightened, for in the school's gymnasium resided equipment that by today's safety standards would almost certainly fail to meet the code. On one side stood a ladder that reached to the ceiling with rungs spaced wide-apart, requiring strength and no small amount of courage to scale it. On the other side were thick ropes, marine-grade and rough; ropes hanging down from the joist at the top of the vaulted gymnasium, ropes that could rip through hands better suited for piano practice than basic training. The ropes, like the ladder were terrifying to the 10-year-old me. Students were made to shimmy up the rope, higher and higher, hand over foot, until that one terrifying and triumphant moment when you were required to extend one hand upwards to tap the ceiling beam before returning to earth.

On reflection, I realise now that these ropes and ladders were much more than a physical challenge. They were precursors of the many tests we must face throughout life: ill health, loneliness, uncertain faith or fear for the future. Have we not all ropes and ladders that we must face and attempt to surmount?

Surely we do. And how do we meet these challenges? By embedding ourselves within supportive faith communities that encourage us to climb, have courage and reach towards God, our Parent and Sovereign, who at this season and throughout our lives, sustains us when our confidence in ourselves abandons us.

ACT Zionist Council Report

Daniel Coppel
President, ACTZC

On Wednesday, August 22, the ACT Zionist Council played host to renowned speaker Stan Goodenough, a Christian Zionist advocate. He spoke to a large audience of members of the Jewish community and several local Christian groups, in an effort to make his message be heard as widely as possible.

He spoke to the importance of supporting Israel, both on a local level with politics and communities and the wider need for global support of Israel in the face of enemies all around it. He stressed that as Christian Zionist, he seeks to support the Jewish state, has no hidden motive or agenda and seeks to ensure that anti-Semitism is eradicated. Stan, originally from South Africa, has lived in Jerusalem for nearly 30 years.

Stan captivated a full house for about an hour, and then took questions that ranged from his thoughts on engaging young people to the importance of the Australian political community's strong stance on Israel. It was an important evening and we were glad to have hosted Stan and look forward to his return in the future.
FAREWELL CANBERRA

ALMOG ZOOSMAN & HILLEL LEHMAN

Welcoming in the Airport
Exhausted but excited, not really knowing what to expect, we finally arrived in Canberra about a year ago. The only faces we could recognize were of Raz, Rotem and Rabbi Meltzer. Luckily, all three were at the airport to welcome us, in addition to a few more new faces. This warm welcome was a good and cozy start of our Shlichut, and for the first time we felt like “shlichim”!

Magical Driving
When we had just learnt how to drive on the wrong side of the road, we were amazed (and still are) by the magical Australian animals. On one side of the road, possums were running up the tree branches. On the other side, a family of kangaroos were staring at us (we stared back at them, not knowing if they’ll take the right to cross the road, or not). Up above in the sky, there were flocks of beautiful birds, those pure white mini-dinosaur birds, those hypnotising red chested, those rainbow coloured birds that we’ve never seen before.

Café Ivrit
On our beloved Café-Ivrit classes, where others are meant to learn Hebrew, we learnt the best English jokes as well as proper English tips, grammar and pronunciation. Toda Raba for all the learning AND teaching!

The First Kids’ Fight
You’d think that coming from a conflict zone would makes us expert in conflict resolution. But when it comes to kids... Wow! That’s difficult. On the other hand, when finally making an official “peace compromise” between two (or more) kids, this feels just like true peace has come. Just for a little while though.

Yom Ha’atzmaut
This is probably the holiday that made us miss home the most. The Jewish holidays are celebrated here just like in Israel, so we haven’t felt we are away. Yet, this one is special, when all over Israel, every house and car is decorated with a blue-white flag. Thanks to you and the Zionist Council, we managed to celebrate this wonderful holiday in a meaningful way.

The Evolution of Education
We completed two “End of Semester” ceremonies. There was a long way from the 1st ceremony which occurred in the beginning of our Shlichut, up until the 2nd. We were very touched to see the special connection we created with the kids we are used to seeing on a weekly basis. Education is very powerful and we appreciated the diversity and every question, perspective and story that your kids brought up. We’ve learnt so much from them.

Seder Pesach
We’ve been writing a blog in Hebrew, telling our Shlichut stories to our families and friends in Israel. This Pesach, family representatives got to experience what we’ve been writing about - in reality! That Pesach was unforgettable: full of kids, winter cold, laughter and family. We were very proud and happy to introduce our Canberran community to our family.

True Caring
Canberran winter hit us and sadly, we were ill for more than a moment. Fortunately, we were blessed with caring community members, some of which became our real friends. They visited, helped and made us some great food. Toda!

In every single session we held, we learnt from each and every one of you. Being our first home is not just a statement. Thank you for being a wonderful family in the first year of our marriage and for the rest of our life! Hope to see you in Israel!

L’Shana Haba’a Beyerushalayim.

Eight unforgettable moments we will take with us to our future journeys

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HAMERKAZ: Issue 542 | PAGE 7
Thank you to Rabbi Shimon Eddi and to you all for coming today for the consecration for our friend Ruth Goren and my mother. Thank you also to Rabbi Eddi’s predecessor Rabbi Alon Meltzer for pressing me to get the headstone finally done – life had intervened – and for making sure that the Hebrew text was correct. Thank you also to Alan Shroot and Raffi Lehrer, who conducted the funeral service for my mother in May 2013 at a time when we still relied on volunteers.

I never thought I would be standing at my mother’s grave. All my life Mum talked about wanting to be cremated, just as her beloved parents and her 16 year old sister had “gone up in smoke at Auschwitz” (the words were hers, not mine). That is why the names of her parents Leona and Jozef and her 16-year old sister Anna are on her headstone.

I also put my father’s name (Theodore Karas) name on her headstone because he too has no grave. He chose to be cremated, thinking that my mother would also go that way. That was a surprising choice, given that he was the son of an Orthodox chazan. He had wanted his ashes scattered in the river Hron in his native town of Banska Bystrica in what is today Slovakia. (He yearned for his beloved home town all his life.) My mother said, to him, “How on earth do you expect me to do that?” So he agreed to have his ashes scattered in Sydney Harbour, because, he reasoned, “all the rivers of the world flow into the sea.”

So I remember them on this headstone, though Anna’s name is also remembered elsewhere. My mother arranged to have Anna’s name recorded in the children’s memorial at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Near the end of her life, when she was already in the nursing home here in Canberra, my mother changed her mind. She asked to be buried after all. So we have fulfilled her wishes, and she lies here among friends, some of whom knew her during her 10 years here, and that gives me great comfort.

Although her adult life was shaped by the tragedy of the Holocaust, where she lost 42 members of her immediate and wider family, she had a happy childhood and adolescence in Czechoslovakia. She lost her first husband Andrew Horn in the Holocaust but then married my father in 1945 and I was the child she so desperately wanted to rebuild her family. We got out of communist Czechoslovakia in 1949, and arrived in Sydney at the end of that year. Hers is then the typical migrant story, with all the challenges of rebuilding in a new country where you don’t even know the language and yet manage to make a good life for yourself.

My mother was a witness to the Holocaust, as was my father. They both recorded their testimonies for the Spielberg Shoah Foundation, and she also previously recorded her story both on audio tape and video for the Sydney Jewish Museum. I feel the responsibility to continue to bear witness, and this headstone is part of that message.

She lies here in the same beautiful cemetery as our friend Ruthie, who was sadly robbed of many good years.

Thank you for being here with us today to honour them both.
Our community celebrated another wonderful milestone this year with a very successful and well attended Limmud Shavuot. Speakers from all corners of the Jewish community and across Australia shared their views and brought inspiration to our community.

We heard presentations on the hydrodynamics of Noah’s Ark, the history of Jewish women in the ABC, and everything in between. Members of all ages enjoyed theatre sports and our CaTZ leaders delivered excellent programming for the kids.

Over the course of Limmud Shavuot we ate over 200 serves of cheesecake, 10 giant trays of cheesy pasta and lasagne as well as countless bagels. So many bagels!

This year’s festival of Jewish learning was made extra special by our special guest Andrew Markus, author of the Gen-17 report, who shared insights on the future of the Australian Jewish community.

Thanks as always goes to the many volunteers who made the event possible. Special thanks go to Pearl Rozenberg who volunteered to manage the catering of the event, and Vicki and Alice for keeping the wheels turning behind the scenes.

We are also grateful for the financial support that Bnei Brith gave to this event.
There are 2 things for which life can never prepare you for. Twins. It's been said that, when it comes to raising children, the days go slow and the years go fast. Well, I don't think Ilya and I would've survived those very long days with 3 babies under the age of 2, without a lot of help, not only from our fabulous parents but also people whom we had just barely met from this warm and wonderful community who came together to help our young family.

So, I really want to take this opportunity to thank some very special people.

Firstly of course, thank you to our wonderful mums and dads. Gaby and Rafi and Nomi are so lucky to have all 4 of their grandparents here today to celebrate this special milestone together with us. Thank you for the countless times you have driven the 300kms to help us or simply visit us over the past 14 years.

On the topic of parents, I also want to thank Deb and Leslie Shroot and Deena Rosalky. I especially want to thank you because you may have noticed that I kind of adopted your parents as my own so just wanted to say 'thanks for sharing!'

Adele Rosalky and Anita Shroot – I hope you don't mind me saying but thank you for being our second mums since we have lived in Canberra. Adele, you were the first person I called and turned to for help 13 years ago when we found out we were having twins, literally, as soon as we walked out of that ultrasound I called you and asked if you could mind Nomi the following day because we'd have to go back for a longer appointment because they couldn't tell me for sure how many babies I was having! You came to the rescue from day 1. And similarly, Anita, after working all day you would pop in just to help with our mountain of laundry or hold a baby so I could take a shower or just put my feet up. But Adele and Anita, you have been more than a babysitter or a helping hand. You are both our friend and advisors, you have both showered us with your creative gifts and you have always welcomed us into your homes on so many occasions but most importantly of all, you have taught us the meaning of community.

Now their respective husbands.

David Rosalky and Alan Shroot, I can't say I remember much about the boys' brit milah because let's face it, one, I was in the kitchen and two, who can cope with 2 bris' at once? But I do remember before the bris, you were both busy researching what parshat the boys would be reading in 13 years' time. Clearly you had a vision of these boys growing up in this community. You each held one of our babies at the bris, you were there for us from the beginning and now 13 years later, you have taught our sons their respective readings. You have given the boys the gifts of tallit and tefillin and with your help you have helped us wrap our children with Yiddishkeit. We are so honoured to have you as role models and teachers and mentors for Gaby and Rafi. Thank you.

The Meltzer Family. Thank you. Thank you for everything you do for our family. Thank you Linsay for...
the beautiful dress I am wearing – local designer extraordinaire! Thank you for all your creative input and helping me design and plan for this day. You are a sea of calm when I have worked myself up into a frenzy, you help me put things in perspective and often help me see the bigger picture. Thank you for your friendship.

Rabbi Alon. Ilya thinks I should take this opportunity and start with the apologies. I hope that’s ok. Firstly, we are very sorry for our inferior camping skills. You knew straight away that that 60-second tent was never going up in 60 seconds! But you patiently helped us over the course of 3 hours put up this ridiculous tent and then patiently escorted us to the nearest camping store to purchase a new one... after ours had collapsed on us in the middle of the night.

We are very sorry you got injured while taking the boys to Power Kart race-way. In their defence, the boys actually asked to go to Disneyland instead in exchange for finding the afikomen last year. But, apologies aside, we really want to take this opportunity to say thank you, really – for everything you have done for our children and for Ilya and I.

You have taught us, educated us, cooked for us, holidayed with us, included us in all celebrations large and small, inspired us and engaged all of the Leydmans including the grandparents, connecting all of us with our Jewish roots.

Thank you Rabbi Alon for teaching all our children; for educating them, for pushing them, in a good way, to learn more, to increase their Jewish identity but more importantly to engage with Jewish learning in a fun way. In spending weeks teaching Gaby and Rafi to daven – to pray, you taught them how to connect with G-d. In teaching Gaby and Rafi to lead services, you have taught them how to connect with community. I often say that one of the benefits of being Jewish is that you can travel to anywhere in the world, walk into a local shul and feel instantly at home surrounded by familiar people who share common values and ideals and regardless of what language they might speak, all pray in the one language while singing familiar tunes. Our friend and mentor to the boys Daniel Coppel, kindly advised Gaby and Rafi that if they offer to lead services wherever they might be in the world – they’re pretty much guaranteed a meal; see its always about the food!

Anyway, Alon - I hope the boys have made you proud today because, along with the Shroots and the Rosalkys, you have made their bar mitzvah day more meaningful and inspiring and for this Ilya and I say thank you.

Thank you to all our friends and family who have come from Melbourne and Sydney. Thank you to our fabulous Schlichim, Almog and Hillel for making this day so special, we are so lucky to have you as part of this community. And thank you to Rabbi Eddi for the lovely words in shul this morning. And to my fabulous friends, Naomi, Hadas, Erez, Deena, Adele and Aviva and, a new addition to our community and our friendship circle Nikki Bronberger for helping me set up for these past few days and for putting up with all my crazy demands. You are all truly fabulous, I couldn’t have done this without you. Thank you. And of course, thank you Sasha and Yael for putting together this awesome meal.

Finally, there’s two other special young people I would like to thank and that is Gaby and Rafi. You have studied so much for this day; you have dedicated hours to learning your parsha, reading it, singing it, memorising it and understanding it. In the past year, not only have you transitioned from primary to high school, keeping up with your homework and your respective music lessons but you have also managed to learn your Torah portion as well learn how to daven and lead services. And yes, there is still a whole lot to learn. I believe shul tomorrow morning starts at 8.30am?

So, to continue with the theme of this week’s Parsha, Emor – which combines the themes of spiritual and physical perfection, laws of sanctifying G-d’s name, how and when to celebrate the holy days and festivals as well as the laws of social justice and compensation; your father and I want to give you this message for you both to always remember:

You should both:

Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words
Keep your words positive because your words become your actions
Keep your actions positive because your actions become your habits
Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values
And last but not least, keep your values true and positive because your values become your destiny.

Thank you. Shabbat Shalom.
According to Leo Rosten, the author of The Joys of Yiddish, a Yidush, a ‘mensch’ is “someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character”.

This morning, Rafi and I read Parshat Emor. The parsha begins with the special laws relating to the Kohanim (the priests), the Kohen Gadol (the high priest), and the Temple Service. Because of their privileged status, the kohanim had to maintain an especially high standard of purity and perfection. Stricter rules applied to the Kohen Gadol, the high priest.

A Kohen was not allowed to come into contact with a dead body except on the occasion of the death of a close relative. A Kohen was not allowed to marry a divorcee or a widow.

Similarly, today, a Kohen may not participate in a funeral unless it’s for one of his closest relatives, and the laws surrounding who a Kohen may marry still exists.

Back in the day of the Holy Temple, however, a Kohen had to be perfect. The Torah goes to great lengths to tell us just how perfect a Kohen must be. The Torah lists several blemishes and deformities which would result in the Priests being unable to perform the holy temple service.

For example, a priest whose nose has no bridge, one who has one limb longer than the other or one eye is larger than the other or who has abnormally long eyebrows would be disqualified from performing the temple service.

But today, these laws seem unfair, discriminatory and cruel. Why shouldn’t a Kohen be allowed to bury his best friend? Why couldn’t a Kohen who was blind be allowed to serve in the Temple, and why couldn’t a divorcée whose first marriage didn’t work out, be allowed to marry a Mrs Cohen?

One of the explanations we found to better understand the answers to these questions involve first understanding what the Kohanim represented.

Kohanim were meant to represent two bygone eras – these were 2 periods in history that were unlike any other. The first period of time is known as the pre-lapsarian era, this is a fancy word which refers to the brief period of time that Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before God evicted them from the Garden. The second period of time was between the time the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai until the sin of the Golden Calf.

During those two time periods (which the Kohanim were meant to represent), there was immortality, none of the people would have died if it wasn’t for the sin of eating from the tree, or the sin of the Golden Calf; and so the Kohanim were restricted in coming into contact with the dead.

Similarly, during these 2 time periods, there was physical perfections, the blind and lame were healed at Mt Sinai so a blind or lame Kohen was not able to perform the service in the Temple. Also, during those two periods, the concept of divorce was unthinkable.

Today, a Kohen enjoys special status – he is the first to be given an Aliyah when the Torah is read, he is the first to lead the benching, the grace after meals – today,
the Kohen is there to remind us of a special time when there was immortality, completeness, marital bliss, holiness and closeness to God so that we can aspire to reach these lofty ideals.

So what lesson can I learn from the perfect Kohanim? Because to me it seems there are not many people today who are perfect, except of course, our mother!

I think, that to be perfect, means to be your best self, to always give your best. It’s not about ‘likes’ on social media or how many followers or friends you have. To me, being perfect means to be the best version of yourself; working to the best of my ability in all that I do.

While Rafi and I are not Kohanim, perhaps we could aspire to live by some of the values that the Kohanim represented and in the future, lead and inspire others to do the same.

In Pirkei Avot, Ethics of the Fathers, Hillel teaches us “Al tifrosh min hatsibur” – do not separate yourself from the community.

Communal responsibility is an important Jewish value that we accept as we stand here today as b’nei mitzvah. The Jewish principle that “All Israel is responsible for one another” means each of us must take action and inspire others to create a community in which we can all take pride.

We are so honoured and proud to be celebrating the first (and second) bar-mitzvah in this beautiful new shul. We are proud to be part of this community that we were born into and just like our parents, our teachers, Rabbis and mentors, we want to contribute to community life, in as many ways possible. Whether it’s to lead services, help in the kitchen, entertain the younger members in our Catz youth group, or simply, stand up and be counted as part of a minyan, we hope to make this community proud of us as much as we take pride in our community.

Shabbat Shalom.

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Rafi

Now that we have transitioned into High School, we have had to learn very quickly how to manage and keep a diary. The diary helps me keep track of what assignments and homework I need to do and when they are due. Our mum also uses a diary for our family but hers contains all the Jewish holidays and festivals for the entire year.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is a big believer in keeping and using a diary. Successful people, he says, schedule their most important tasks in their diary. They know, if it isn’t there, it won’t get done. Rabbi Sacks says that, to-do lists are useful but insufficient because they remind us of what we have to do but not when. Only a diary connects ‘what’ with ‘when’. This is what the Jewish calendar is about.

Part of the Torah reading in Parshat Emor that I read from this morning sets out a weekly, monthly and yearly schedule of the ‘moadim’ – appointed times.

The festivals listed in the Parsha include Shabbat, the counting of the Omer, Pesach, Shavuot, Succot, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – these moedim – special appointed times are also referred to as mekrae kodesh – callings of holiness.

Maimonides tells us that the festivals were days where people were invited to assemble in prayer; The Torah states:

These are the appointed times of Gd, callings of holiness, which you shall call in their appointed time.

Although the Jewish year is filled with holidays that commemorate past events, the festivals in this Parsha are known as “callings of holiness” mikrae’i kodesh), in the sense that each is a landmark in time at which we are empowered to call forth the particular holiness or spiritual quality embedded within that special day.

For example, on the first Passover, God granted us the gift of freedom. On the first Shavuot, He gave us the Torah; on Rosh Hashanah, Gd became king of the universe and on Yom Kippur, we received the gift of teshuvah.

There is a beautiful parable told by Rabbi Yechezkel Panet which may help us understand how the moadim, these appointed times are relevant to our modern life:

A king was traveling through the desert, and his son, the crown prince, was thirsty for water. Now, the king was very wealthy and could have dispatched a horseman to fetch water from the nearest town, but instead, the king ordered a well to be dug at that very spot and to mark it with a signpost.

The King explained to his son “at the present time, we have the means to obtain water far more quickly and easily. But, perhaps one day, many years in the future, you will again be traveling this way. Perhaps you will be alone, without the power and privilege you now enjoy. Then, the well we dug today will be here to quench your thirst. Even if the sands of time have filled it, you will be able to reopen it if you remember the spot and follow the signpost we have set.”

The Torah, is reminding us that we have these dedicated times, all the various holy days and festivals throughout the year, where we not only remember the past but they also force us to focus on the things that give life meaning.

In our house for example, we celebrate the festivals and Shabbat by sharing meals with lots of friends and family. For our family, the important times are those we share with others.

The point of bar-mitzvah is to realise and actualise our place within the Jewish people, how to develop a sense of community and of Jewish identity; how we will engage in the educational process following our bar-mitzvah. We know all these things are important. But knowing is not enough. As Rabbi Sacks reminds us, these are elements of a life that become real when we live them, not just when we know them.

So whatever we want to achieve, we must write it in our diary. We hope to live by the Jewish calendar so that we can keep experiencing all the things that give life meaning.

Shabbat Shalom.

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THE ACTJC FOOD FAIRS
......A FLASHBACK FROM THE PAST......

JANET FROMMER

Written by Janet Frommer, a committed (unfortunately unable to be active these days) and devoted member since being welcomed at our one of a kind, outstanding community in 1987.

The balance of volunteers to paid staff at the Centre has changed with the times. Back in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s the Centre was almost fully supported and run by parents and adults contributing to the activities of the synagogue services, education, administration, Pesach goods sales, social activities and governance of the Centre. Today there are but a few dedicated, loyal, hard working souls who spend a great deal of their own time attending to the wellbeing of our community. It is time to acknowledge but not by name, their time and effort, which is one of the reasons that prompted me to write this article for Hamerkaz. The other was some discarded documents that came my way.

In preparation for the renovations to the Centre a major de-clutter and clean-up was carried out. Amongst the collateral disposal were a number of documents that someone rescued, relating to the Annual Food Fairs held in November, going back some 30 years. The Fairs were a major undertaking involving many community members and ring-ins. A coordinator organised the frugal advertising to the public and then our extensive grounds at the Centre were fitted out with hired equipment for shade. Stalls were set up in a circular formation with some under the trees. The financial management was secure in the office. There was a welcoming party at the entry where food vouchers were sold. The foyer was full of donated white elephants, (trash and treasure), which was the most lucrative stall and there was a hive of activity in the upstairs kitchen supplying some of the busy stalls outside. As you might imagine, this was a major venture.

The purpose of the Food Fair was two fold, one to generate some income for the Centre and the other to meet the wider Canberra community, offer some Jewish traditional food and answer their questions about our religion and traditions. This was a public relations exercise that was revisited by many. As an event, the Food Fairs were full on.

In November 1975 there were an amazing twenty-nine stalls. Sources of income recorded an impressive $1,285 in net receipts. A comment in the Statements record shows a loss on the soft drink stall due to the authorised distribution of freebees to various people such as the band. By November 1980 the stall numbers were reduced to fifteen. Unfortunately the papers I have do not include the names of the coordinators who took on the overall responsibility of this massive undertaking but to give you an idea of the stalls on offer at that time, gefilte fish, curry and rice, bagels and coffee, cakes, blintzes, ice cream/watermelon, iced wine, spring rolls, hot beef sandwiches, soft drinks, pavlova/strudel, recipe books, fruit salad, kugel, cheese cake, goulash, blintzes, falafel, white elephant, lucky dips, handicrafts and plants. All this went on with queues of hungry customers being entertained with music, singing, dancing and announcements.

It was a huge logistical operation, one that brought the efforts of many together, exhausting and totally memorable.
Hey everyone, we are very excited to be the new shlichim to Canberra, Australia. We are Shay and Shir Pinsker. Shay was born and raised in Ashdod and Shir in Alon Shvut (a community near Jerusalem). Shay served in the army as a combat soldier and a medic in the Paratroopers Brigade, and Shir as a social service worker in the Golani brigade.

After our military service we flew for a long trip to the east (like most Israelis) and we met there. Three years later we returned to India for a semester break and got engaged there. Today we are 26 years old and live in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, very close to Gaza.

We both recently completed a bachelor’s degree. Shay in Technological Marketing & Management and Shir in Human Resources and Management. Shay’s second love, after Shir, is wave surfing, his passion is entrepreneurship and innovation and hiking around the world but specially in Israel. Shir spends her time in various sports activities, reading books and articles and having fun with friends.

We both love to be with diverse and interesting people. Shay is an entrepreneur and super creative and expects to implement his creativity in the community. Shir is an excellent organizer, a great madricha and is anticipating to demonstrate her skills in the community.

Israel is a home for us, it is Judaism and tradition, it is special and interesting. It is full of different and varied people, with different opinions. Israel is also complex and has challenges and obstacles, but it is also full of love, warmth and mutual help. We see the shlichut as an amazing opportunity to connect Israel and the Canberra community.

We bring our Israelism, our skills and our love and look forward to learning a lot from the Canberra community. Together we will try to make effort to create a meaningful experience for us and for you.
On Saturday 30 June 2018 the ACT Jewish Community celebrated its first b’nei mitzvah with brother and sister Eytan and Aviva Campbell being called to the torah during the shacharit service, followed by a women-only mincha service. Eytan read from Parashah Balak and Aviva read from Pinchas. They both delivered drashot, as follows.

Eytan and Aviva are the great-grandchildren of Community founders Anne and Earle Hoffman, grandchildren of David and Adele Rosalky and children of Deena Rosalky and Kelvin Campbell, completing four generations of involvement with the Community. A party followed the service in the upstairs hall, beautifully catered by Sasha Weisman.

This event followed the earlier milestone on 5 May of the bar mitzvah of Zac Raiz on 23 June. Another milestone event celebrated by the Community was the brit/baby naming of twins Barak and Noa Adler on 17 June.

Mazel tov to all families involved! The Community celebrates these events of renewal and continuity!
THE STORY OF PINCHAS AND THE CONTROL OF ANGER

AVIVA CAMPBELL

Shalom, thank you for sharing such a meaningful day with me today. In the parasha you will hear next week, we learn about a man named Pinchas, who released his passionate anger in a destructive, harmful and unhealthy way. In human development, we have gathered many ways to satisfy, calm and release strong emotion.

Studies show that anger can be a destructive feeling of powerlessness. However, within anger is also a tremendous sense of power, purpose, passion and meaning because when you feel angry, it’s because you want to do something that you were blocked from doing. People usually think of emotions as good or bad and they think that anger is bad. From my point of view, it is a rather good emotion because it motivates you to act on the situation and to express yourself. The truth is, that no emotion is negative unless we refuse to express and or feel it. That’s when the emotion begins to become destructive. We are all only required to feel our emotions and then release them. Even the most beautiful emotion: love, will become destructive if it’s blocked and not expressed. But how can we express anger in a way that is not harmful to ourselves or others around us?

In this parasha, Pinchas releases his anger in a way that majority would say was violent and destructive. At the time of Pinchas, Balaak, who was the king of Midianites, was feeling threatened by the Israelites because they were travelling through his territory. As king of the Midianites, Balaak felt a responsibility to protect his people and their land. As an act upon this, he ordered a prophet called Bilaam to demand Hashem to curse the Jewish people. Bilaam travelled several times to ask Hashem to curse the Jewish people. Each time Hashem told Bilaam that the Jewish people are blessed, and not cursed. When prophet, Bilaam told king Balaak what Hashem had said, Balaak was angry. After patiently asking Hashem 3 times, Bilaam conceived of a plan to curse the Jewish people himself, thereby gaining favour with Balaak so that he may receive the reward promised to him. The prophet introduced idol worshiping and prostitution to the Jewish people and it didn’t take very long for the Jews to misbehave and disobey the Jewish law. The tribe was chaotic!

Which brings us back to Pinchas. Pinchas was a zealot and like Bilaam he was a prophet. He was absolutely FURIOUS with the appalling behaviour that the Jews were displaying. Driven by his anger and zealotry, pinchas commits an even worse sin. Pinchas was passionate, pulling a gruesome and public act where he stabbed a spear through two people at once (that’s right, through the both of them!), the man, who was a Jew, and woman, who was a Midianite, were having sexual intimacy in public. However, Pinchas’ motivation for this sin was not to harm, embarrass, or do wrong by anyone, but to uphold the sanctity of G-d’s law. He was driven by ferocious anger resulting in the murder the lovers. He didn’t hate these people personally, but he was driven by strong anger towards the act they engaged in and their disrespect of Hashems law.

Immediately after the scene, Hashem rewarded Pinchas with a covenant of peace. Wasn’t it weird how Pinchas was rewarded for such a horrific sin? In the 21st century, murder is punished by a sentence of life in prison, though in this instance Pinchas was rewarded. I think what Hashem was trying to imply was that he understood Pinchas’ reasoning behind the act. However, Pinchas’ behaviour was inexcusable. From this we can clearly see that Hashem appreciated Pinchas’ respect for Hashem’s laws, however there were better and less harmful ways to deal with his anger and improve the situation for everyone. For example, when Eytan and I get into fights or disagreements (all his fault, by the way…) and I retaliate in a destructive way, my parents will tell me that they understand why I was frustrated, however there was a better way to improve the situation and calm myself. It wasn’t very much earlier in Pinchas’ life that his great uncle, Moses, brought the 10 Commandments to the Jewish people. The 6th commandment instructs us not to kill. Hashem giving Pinchas the covenant of peace was a reminder to express his angry in a way that does no harm.

Everyone gets angry sometimes. It’s a daily emotion experienced by all. You could have spilt dinner all over the kitchen floor, seen Donald Trump on the news, stuck in traffic, or mums, your kids played the classic glad wrap over toilet seat, or simply stubbed your toe. Everyone gets angry sometimes. It’s a daily emotion experienced by all. You could have spilt dinner all over the kitchen floor, seen Donald Trump on the news, stuck in traffic, or mums, your kids played the classic glad wrap over toilet seat, or simply stubbed your toe. Everyone gets angry sometimes. It’s a daily emotion experienced by all. However, within anger is also a destructive feeling of powerlessness. Studies show that anger can be a tremendous sense of power, purpose, passion and meaning because when you feel angry, it’s because you want to do something that you were blocked from doing. People usually think of emotions as good or bad and they think that anger is bad. From my point of view, it is a rather good emotion because it motivates you to act on the situation and to express yourself. The truth is, that no emotion is negative unless we refuse to express and or feel it. That’s when the emotion begins to become destructive. We are all only required to feel our emotions and then release them. Even the most beautiful emotion: love, will become destructive if it’s blocked and not expressed. But how can we express anger in a way that is not harmful to ourselves or others around us?

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Stage 1 of the building project has been completed and is in full and continuous use. Each element is working well and the wing and the security perimeter are providing new capacity and operational flexibility.

There are two elements: the perimeter fence and the secure access system; and the new classroom/synagogue wing.

The security perimeter has delineated a safe area for our children to move around in but it also means that our grounds are safe from vandalism. That has enabled us, for example, to install and to dedicate the Australian Jewish War Memorial in a protected precinct. This memorial is a treasure for the whole national Jewish community for which we are the custodians and must protect it for everyone and for future generations.

Access to the precinct and to the building has been made more formal with the new facility. We have installed multiple mechanisms to gain access – electronic cards, keys, mechanical keypad – and are making access readily available to financial members with a need.

The classroom/synagogue wing is proving to be flexible and elegant and is being used constantly for multiple purposes. There are classrooms or meeting rooms at each end with their own storage and air-conditioning. The central area operates as a synagogue that can seat 65-70 people in variable configurations. It is also used frequently configured as the Sir John Monash Lecture Room with modern AV facilities. The mechitza and reading desk of the synagogue are mobile and give access to the space for other activities.

The whole wing can be opened for large services (used three times for large family bar/bat mitzvahs already), lectures with large attendances or social events. The lunch following the war memorial dedication took place there. So, the space is proving to be flexible and user-friendly.

After a dark period, which we fortunately navigated without any accidents, high quality lighting is now installed along the driveway and illuminating the car-park.

Stage 2 of the project, which involves the construction of the new wing plus other renovations, is proceeding to tender-planning detail but we will not be able to go to tender until we can locate additional finance. We are undergoing an investigation of ways to gain the needed finance.
Some years ago an ACT Jewish Community President commissioned a study into anti-Semitism in the ACT. I had a significant role in submissions to that study. It was delivered to the Human Rights Commission in the A.C.T. but it is not clear to me whether it was ever acted upon. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism remains a problem in Canberra. Last year a Jewish colleague told me that his son had received death threats from fellow pupils in an ACT government school, on the basis of his faith. Holocaust denial leaflets have been left on cars parked at the ANU. An ANU AUJS student was verbally abused as a ‘Zionist bitch’. An orthodox Jew waiting in a chemist was abused loudly by another customer as a ‘Christ Killer’. These are just a few of many recent incidents.

Racism and discrimination are alive and well in our region. As Deputy Chair of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum, including more than 110 community organisations, I composed and presented a submission in 2016 to the Parliamentary Joint Committee On Human Rights On The Proposed Racial Discrimination Act Amendments To 18 C. It was praised by Associate Professor Asmi Wood of ANU Law, with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law, Comparative Law, Legal Theory, Jurisprudence and Legal Interpretation. Two years ago I organised a Forum with guest speaker Associate Professor Asmi Wood ANU with an attendance of 150. I had also previously organised a forum on the Race Discrimination law with Professor Simon Rice ANU.

Last year I was invited to present my views relating to the proposed 18C Racial Discrimination Act amendments to a Senate Committee Hearing. This was part of my role as Deputy Chair, Canberra Multicultural Community Forum.

One of the government Senators suggested to me that people choose to be victims. I responded that people do not choose to be victims and this is certainly one of the lessons that we learn from past and recent Jewish history, including the Holocaust, and also from the history of indigenous people in Australia, for example the indigenous women and children massacred in 1946 in Western Australia.

In my response to the Senator, I referred to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry submission and to my submission on hatred and vilification spread through social media, including the persecution and stalking of the mother of a Jewish girl killed in the Melbourne CBD in a car ramming incident. This heinous act of spreading anti-Semitic hatred was by an actor in a popular TV show with a following of 18,000 on social media, who insisted that this Jewish girl had not been killed, and that it was all a hoax. He then tried to pursue and harass the mother while she was recuperating in hospital. This is an example of why we need the Racial Discrimination Act and the protections it offers under section 18C.

Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee relating to the Proposed Racial Discrimination Amendment Bill (Section 18C), 2016

We write to express our deep concern and dismay at the implications flowing from any proposed changes or amendments to the Race Discrimination Act (RDA). Our community members and leaders of our 110 community affiliated organisations include lawyers, professionals in many domains, reverend clergy, journalists, academics and teachers as well as senior public servants who have worked and are working across the spectrum of interests in our nation. Because of our very broad constituency we understand the concerns of our fellow citizens of all the diversity of communities of Australia.

Our view is that the existing Racial Discrimination Act has provided vital and essential protection against racism and racial vilification in the community at large. Our members never ever felt our rights to freedom of speech neither constrained nor diminished by the existing RDA.

Moreover we know of no incidents of persecution, vilification, ‘ethnic cleansing’, massacre or genocide in human history that have been stopped, diminished or abandoned by “good speech”. We understand the naive view expressed that ‘good speech’ is all that is necessary, but strongly suggest that human history finds that view, tragically wanting!

Australia welcomed many of our members and their families amongst the many fleeing from racism and racial vilification and the ensuing persecutions and murders. Such acts were preceded by words. Many of our 110 communities family members and relatives are more than aware of murder, in the countries which they left, happening as a result of racism and racial vilification – all of which started with words. Evil words lead to evil deeds. Former Prime Minister Abbott stated that Australia was a society based on the Judeo-Christian Ethic. That Ethic (which includes the teachings of Islam) teaches that: “Words can kill”.

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We do not understand why anyone would seek to give encouragement to language and behaviour in our society in daily discourse, which is not permitted in the Houses of Parliament, nor on the football fields of this nation.

To suggest such a path in the face of growing racial tensions and expressions of racism, including in the diversity of social media is indeed counterintuitive if not contrary to the interests of developing and maintaining social and civil harmony in Australia at large. We are firmly of the view that Australia’s international reputation will be adversely affected by the inevitable rise in incidents of racism and racial vilification in our national capital with more than 120 Legations and High Commissions and their attendant staff and communities, as well as in the nation as a whole, if changes which will diminish or weaken the current protections are enacted. We are already witness to an increase in such behavior. Such abuse only requires words, not necessarily action. And such abuse can create significant psychological damage.

And finally, what of our children in schools? What are their teachers to say to those students reprimanded for racist behaviour and vilification in the playground and who respond: “But the Attorney-General of Australia said it is my right to be a bigot and to say what I like.”

The moral and political leadership expected of every political leader is that that s/he would speak out against bigotry, and not condone it in such a public manner. We want our children and grandchildren to grow up in an Australia protected from the malice and evil of bigots and racists, not in an Australia where bigots and racists feel empowered, on the spurious claim that only ‘politically correct’ speech is allowed. Australians over generations have been raised to believe in ‘politely correct’ speech and in a civil society.

We consider it absolutely essential to ensure effective protection will continue. We believe that weakening the current RDA, in particular the scope of the exemptions, will exacerbate, not attenuate, the 59% increase in incidents dealt with by the Human Rights Commission and in society in general in recent years.

We have faith in the judiciary and we expect our political leadership to equally express that confidence in the judiciary to make sound judgements in the common interest in this Commonwealth.

The Human Rights Commission’s existing complaint processes under the RDA provide access to justice through swift and cost effective dispute resolution and their resources need to be strengthened not diminished.

It would be a shame for citizens and residents to be denied the opportunity to use these processes. Instead, they would have to rely upon defamation and other much more costly and inaccessible legal remedies. The growth of the easy expression of racism and vilification through the internet and electronic devices has been dramatic. It must be countered.

Freedom of speech is not an absolute but is mediated by society and is already protected in Australia: “The right to freedom of expression is, nonetheless, protected by the common law and developed by Australian courts. As the High Court has stated, under the common law: Everybody is free to do anything, subject only to the provisions of the law’, so that one proceeds ‘upon the assumption of freedom of speech’ and turns to the law to discover the established exceptions to it. (Lange)”

We do not believe that any proposal to diminish or weaken the provisions of the current RDA adequately addresses the balance of freedom from racism and racial discrimination and of freedom of speech.

We respectfully call on you to strengthen your confidence in the current RDA and to retain the current legislation.

Yours faithfully,

Harry Oppermann
Deputy Chair

On behalf of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum representing more than 110 community organizations across the ACT.

9/12/2016

Visit by Dr Anne Aly MP

David Rosalky

On 21 August 2018, the ACTJC was privileged to welcome Dr Anne Aly, Member for Cowan, WA, who is an expert in global security, counter terrorism and countering extreme terrorism on line. Some 40 members of the Community attended this event in the Sir John Monash lecture theatre. Dr Aly generously gave of her time during parliamentary sittings and an especially busy week.

Her presentation was personal and professionally enlightening. She described her upbringing in Australia after her family migrated from Egypt and then her education in Egypt and Australia. She became interested in the influences on her community but especially her two sons, recognising their vulnerability.

She became an academic and a professor in studies of extremism and jihadism and was invited to advise and to address major international conferences on the topic. She spoke to us about social and communal processes that can address the issue including the nature of “deradicalisation”.

Thank you to Rabbi Eddi for organising this event.
LAST POST CEREMONIES

ADELE ROSALKY, AJHS (ACT)
PETER KOHN, AJN, SYDNEY

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra over recent years has held ceremonies every evening to commemorate Australia’s fallen servicemen. Amongst these has been a number of Jewish servicemen. Two members of the ACT Jewish Community have honoured their fallen relatives at Last Post ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial. In 2014 a ceremony was held to honour Adele Rosalky’s uncle, Flying Officer Adolf David Leon Hoffman, RAAF, and in 2017 Judith Eisner honoured her uncle Sergeant Morris Solomon, RAAF.

This year, on 29 March 2018, a Last Post ceremony was held for another Jewish serviceman, Sergeant Albert Levy of 39th Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces. It marked the centenary of Sergeant Levy’s death. On 29 March 1918 Sergeant Levy of Melbourne led a patrol of 15 in advance of their unit, to take on a German machine-gun post firing on them. Levy was wounded in the leg by machine-gun fire. stretcher bearers reached him but as he was carried back, he tried to sit up and was killed by an enemy sniper’s bullet.

Levy’s great-nephew Phil Lipshut of Melbourne joined several members of the Digger’s extended family at the AWM for the Last Post ceremony at which his story was told. The family was joined by Melbourne Ports MP Michael Danby and Eden-Monaro MP Mike Kelly who laid wreathes, as did Squadron Leader Phil Creagh and others from the ACT Jewish Community and Federation of Australian Jewish Ex-service Associations (FAJEX). After the ceremony, the MPs joined Lipshut in reciting Kaddish.
Today we remember and pay tribute to Sergeant Albert Levy.

Albert Levy was born in 1895 in Ascot Vale, Victoria, one of three children of Jacob and Eve Levy of St Kilda. Affectionately known as “Mick”, he had two sisters, Minnie and Phoebe. Albert attended South Melbourne College and then worked as a warehouseman. He also served for three years in the 50th Battalion of his local St. Kilda cadets. Levy enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on the 10th of January 1916, joining the 39th Battalion, which formed in Ballarat. Due to his previous military experience in the cadets, Levy was soon promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Levy and the 39th Battalion sailed from Melbourne in late May 1916 and when they reached Britain, began four months of training. In late November they sailed for France, arriving on the Western Front in December 1916, just in time to face the coldest European winter in living memory.

Levy spent the next six months experiencing the hardships of trench warfare. He did not take part in a major battle, but instead fought a grinding war of attrition, spending time at the front line under intermittent enemy artillery fire, and training and taking leave behind the front. Levy wrote home to his mother, “It is nearly 12 months since we first came out, but it seems like years.” Later in the year, Levy and the 39th Battalion transferred north to near Ypres [pron. Eee – per] in Belgium, where the focus of British operations had shifted.

On the 7th of June, Levy and the 39th Battalion had their first taste of a major battle at Messines [pron. Mess - een]. Having bombarded the German position with high explosive artillery for a week, one million pounds of explosives that had been buried under German lines in a daring series of mines and tunnels was detonated.

The explosion was devastating, and the ridge was occupied virtually unopposed by 5.30 in the morning. Levy and the 3rd Australian Division, however, came under heavy German gas and shrapnel attack while approaching their starting position. Five hundred men were gassed and hundreds more fell to shrapnel wounds. Although it was a successful operation, Australian forces suffered nearly 6,800 casualties.

Levy was wounded by gunshot wounds to both legs and his right arm. He was transferred to a field hospital and then sent to England to recover. He did not return to the front until late August. A few months later, he sprained his ankle and was hospitalized for almost the entire month.

Returning to the front, on the night of the 30th of November Levy led a night blocking party into enemy trenches near the French-Belgian border. A report of his conduct noted, “He was one of the first to enter the enemy trenches and his example of courage, determination and complete control of his men while under heavy fire helped largely in the success of this operation. He was also one of the last to leave the enemy’s trenches and assisted the bringing in of the wounded.” He was awarded the Military Medal for his conduct on this night.

On the 29th of March 1918, while serving in northern France at Mericourt L’Abbé [pron. Merry - core - Labbay], Levy took part in a reconnaissance mission in no man’s land. Struck in the ankle by machine-gun fire he lay in no-man’s-land until two stretcher bearers were able to come to retrieve him. The stretcher-bearers were able to carry him to the relative cover of a nearby hay stack, where they dressed his wounds and waited for half an hour for the enemy machine-gun fire to die down. When they left their cover to return safely to the trenches, Levy attempted to sit up and was struck in the head by a sniper’s bullet and killed instantly. He was 22 years old.

He was buried at the Mericourt-L’Abbe Communal Cemetery Extension in France, where his remains lie under the epitaph chosen by his family: “A good and dutiful son”.

A few months before his death, Albert had written home to his mother, informing her of his intention to marry his sweetheart, Doris. Less than a month after his death, Albert’s family would also be informed of the death of Albert’s cousin, Alywn, who was killed in an air force training accident.

In their grief, Albert’s sisters Minnie and Phoebe placed the following poem in the local newspaper: “Just when his life was brightest, Just when his hopes were best, His country called: he answered; Now in God’s home he rests. Loved by all who knew him.”

Sergeant Albert Levy is listed on the Roll of Honour on my right, among almost 62,000 Australians who died while serving in the First World War. His photograph is displayed beside the Pool of Reflection.

This is but one of the many stories of service and sacrifice told here at the Australian War Memorial. We now remember Sergeant Albert Levy, who gave his life for us, for our freedoms, and in the hope of a better world.
I had always been drawn to the notion of taking a gap year. I considered it immediately after high school but went straight to university. I next considered it directly out of my undergrad, but quickly went to work. After settling into the routine of working life, I figured my gap year wasn’t meant to be. However, as the years in Canberra passed, my desire to take an extended break only grew stronger. Early in 2017, I made the decision to take leave from my Public Service job, and planned for 6-12 months abroad, but where, and doing what exactly?

As I was deciding what I would do with this newfound freedom, I felt some unease about my decision. How will I explain this gap on my CV? Hasn’t that gap year ship sailed? However, it was speaking to a member of the ACTJC at a communal event that put my mind at ease. She said doing something different is good for the soul. As I considered a range of cities and activities to keep me busy, from Spanish immersion in Buenos Aires or Barcelona, to teaching English in Southeast Asia. Eventually I opted for the teaching option in Vietnam (because why not?!), packed two suitcases and arrived in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) shortly after. It had been my intention to spend 6-8 months living the cliché; part-time world traveller, part-time ESL teacher but plans soon changed, as they normally do.

Out of the blue, an opportunity fell into my lap to work on some research for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) through the Australian APEC Study Centre at my former university, RMIT, where I had just weeks earlier completed my MBA. With Vietnam the Chair of APEC 2017, everything seemed to fall into place. My role evolved, this APEC project quickly became my sole focus, and my ESL teaching certificate was relegated to the bottom of my suitcase, never to see the light...

APEC in Vietnam

I spent the next several months based out of RMIT in serene Saigon South campus, leading a team across RMIT Vietnam, and RMIT Australia, examining digital business, specifically the needs of start-ups in the Asia-Pacific. We spent time interviewing players across the innovation ecosystem, and researching issues from digital skills, and ICT infrastructure, to government regulation, and financing. My team and I were invited to present our project findings, and recommendations to business and government leaders at the APEC Summit in Da Nang, Vietnam last year, which was a unique experience.

Life in Saigon

By almost all accounts, Saigon, as it’s still known, is described as chaotic, and certainly a far cry from Canberra. There is both thrill, and frustration associated with living in a city with a population pushing 9 million, and which boasts as many motor scooters as people. Life can be challenging without any language ability, from getting drinking water delivered to the home, to communicating with taxi drivers. Vietnamese food is sensational, and there is always something happening, and new people to meet. Like many foreign cities, there are expat hubs so Westernised you wouldn’t know you’re in Vietnam. Equally, there are districts so authentic, you’d be hard-pressed to find anything remotely familiar. New meets old in Saigon, and the mix of commerce, and culture makes the city most interesting. Further north in Da Nang, you can stay at beach resorts that rival those of Hawaii, and eat the freshest seafood you’ve ever had. Even further north in Hanoi, a whole different, and traditional world awaits. Vietnam has something for everyone!

Jewish Life in Vietnam

Believe it or not, there is a Jewish Community in Vietnam, and it’s growing. With congregations in both Saigon, and Hanoi, I was put in touch with the Chabad Rabbi in Saigon by a contact in Melbourne. Much like Canberra, young adults come and go but plans are in place to ensure inclusive community events that young people want to attend, and return to. I can’t think of a greater sign of the growth potential of Vietnam’s Jewish Community than this memory:

In January, I was dining with a friend in magical Hoi An. It’s an enchanting little town in Middle Vietnam to which tourists flock en masse in search of the famous Hoi An Lanterns, and perfect selfie. As we watched the world go by, a familiar face rushed past. As I spied this man scurrying through the crowds, I recognised him as the Rabbi from Saigon. I messaged him inviting him to walk back and join us. He was the last person I’d expected to see in Hoi An, but he was there for a good reason; to set up shop in Hoi An, and shortly welcome Jews from all over to Friday services and other events.

This not only confirms Vietnam’s rise, in many respects but also supports my belief that a Jewish connection can be found anywhere your travels take you.

My Return to Canberra

Never in a million years could I have envisaged this outcome when I left my job early last year. While I didn’t get the gap year I had planned, I gained so much more. The work for APEC was an eye-opener, and I learnt an incalculable amount about this Fourth Industrial Revolution. In affirmation of our work, I felt honoured to have been invited back as a guest speaker at the APEC Senior Officials’ Meeting Policy Dialogue on the Digital Economy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, earlier this month (pictured). What an unforgettable trip that was!

I have returned to Canberra with a fresh outlook. Doing this work, and having the privilege to speak at two APEC meetings in two member economies, has contributed to my decision to change career paths. Soon I will be commencing my consulting career, and am very much looking forward to getting back into the swing of life in the Capital.
How long have you lived in Canberra?

This is my third year in Canberra. I came here to join the public service at the beginning of 2016. At the end of the year I will be leaving to take up a posting to New Delhi. This has been the longest I have lived in one place since I was in high school - so I'm ready for a new challenge.

Where did you live before Canberra?

I spent a few years moving around working in the United Nations system. I started and finished with the UN Development Program in New York. In the middle I worked in the regional office for Asia, which was in Bangkok and spent some time working in Ethiopia. I was focussed on human rights, affordable medicines and access to health; issues I continue to be passionate about.

You have done some pretty interesting things recently - what study did you do to prepare you?

I completed Arts/Law with Honours at UNSW. As part of my studies I was a Prime Minister’s Australia Award Scholar and I was supported to study law at the Hong Kong University Law School. This was a wonderful educational experience but also opened my mind to the diverse and vibrant Jewish communities that exist outside major Jewish centres. I was a member of an active congregation and served on the board of the Hong Kong Jewish Women’s Association which raised money to support women’s causes in Hong Kong and Israel.

What is your career highlight to date?

While I was studying at UNSW I had the opportunity to work for the Hon. Michael Kirby in his capacity as Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Abuses in North Korea. This was fascinating work and the beginning of my interest in human rights issues. I continue to be a North Korea watcher and am always interested to see the most recent developments in the news.

Where do you call home?

I was born in Toronto but moved to Australia when I was little. I have lived here most of my life and I definitely feel Aussie. I have been asked at work whether I am the US exchange officer - I then need to explain that I am Australian and that I learnt to talk overseas.

What do you do to remind you of home while you’re living overseas?

I care a lot about food. I find that if I am able to bake something that reminds me of home or eat the foods that are special to me then I don’t get homesick. This sometimes means braving the markets or paying extraordinary prices for lettuce or blue cheese. I’m expecting the food thing will be even more challenging in India, so I’m ready to try new things and make a babka when I miss home.

Now for something a little lighter, what is your spirit animal?

That’s a tricky one. I love being outside and I love being around people and getting to know them. I think my spirit animal would be a puppy.
The Humble Kugel

By Yvette Goode

The kugel is a classic Ashkenazi Shabbat and holy day food offering. Kugels may be the sweet noodle or savoury vegetable kugels that we may remember from our grandparent’s houses but the all time favourite has to be the potato kugel. Every Jewish cook has his/her own much-loved recipe, from one handed down through the generations to one gleaned recently from the internet, where there are literally hundreds of variations from which to choose. I can certainly remember eating rich meals that should not have contained any extras but the appearance of a kugel meant having to find a little extra room even if it meant having a too full feeling and a stomach ache for hours afterwards.

Before the kugel became the baked item we know today, there was a European tradition of making dumplings from bread, eggs and flour and dropping them into the stew or cholent that would be served for Shabbat lunch. The idea of dumplings had come from China to Germany along the Silk Road about the 12th Century, about the same time that the early cholent recipes were to be found in Germany, having come there from Spain and then France. Adding dumplings to overnight stews helped develop a richer flavour and extended the capacity of the stews to feed more people, who would arrive home from Shabbat morning services to find the house filled with the wonderfully enticing aromas of the anticipated lunch.

Over the years there was an emerging German practice of steaming puddings in a clay pot, rather than in a stew. In fact, the little rounded clay pots would contain the dumpling mixture, and be dropped into the top of the stew to steam, which would keep the batter moist. This changed the batter from a dumpling consistency to that of a pudding. This clay pot was called a kugeltopf, kugel meaning “ball” and topf meaning “pot”. The change of the cooking method introduced the possibility of greater versatility for the pudding, so it was fitting that this newer food item be given a new name. There are various names used all over Europe to describe these puddings, but the one that we know, the kugel, arose from Eastern Europe. While there are various pronunciations, the kugel became a firm favourite with Jews throughout Europe.

The history of the kugel is intertwined with that of the cholent, and over time this simple pudding evolved. Various other foods were added for flavour and texture, including onions and fat. In 17th Century Europe sugar became an expensive but popular item and so sweet puddings emerged, but the basics remained the same. To make a kugel, one needed some kind of starch as a base, fat and eggs or some other kind of binding agent. It was thus a short step for the kugel to feature noodles as the starch and on Pesach, matzah. Rice kugels also became favourites as the Ottoman Empire advanced into parts of Europe and brought their middle-eastern foods with them. As rice was expensive, rice kugels were reserved for very special occasions.

Potatoes became popular in Europe about the middle of the 19th Century. They were cultivated widely and as they were not expensive and were very filling, rapidly became a staple starch item for kugels, especially in the very poor shtetls of Eastern Europe. There is a traditional Yiddish song that celebrates this, with the chant of “Sunday potatoes, Monday potatoes, Tuesday potatoes, Wednesday potatoes, Thursday potatoes, Friday potatoes but on Shabbas, a potato kugel.”

By the 1800’s, there were moves by Jews from various parts of Europe to what we now know as Israel and of course they brought with them their traditions, including the kugel, which underwent an interesting transformation. The Yerushalmi kugel was a kind of hybrid, fusing both savoury and sweet noodles, with the addition of black pepper and more sugar often caramelised for more flavour.

Early Jewish cookbooks, such as The Jewish Manual, by Judith Montefiore in London, 1846, introduced the English to the word “kugel”. The first American Jewish Cookbook, by Esther Levy, Jewish Cookery, used the term “gooble”. Both of these early cookbooks described the kugel as a sweetened and spiced noodle/bread mixture, to be steamed in a covered basin or pot, in a stew/cholent, adhering to the centuries old practice.

As home ovens were almost unheard of in the poor shtetls, food was usually cooked over an open fire, but as technology began to provide home ovens, particularly in America, it was a simple step to remove the kugel from steaming in a stew and simply bake it in the oven. The kugel as we know it as a baked pudding had made its appearance, with another unexpected consequence. Removed from the stew pot and baked separately, removed the kugel from Shabbat lunch to a dish that could be served at any time.

Vegetarian slices, popular the world over, owe their origins to the humble kugel. With starchy potatoes and sweet potatoes, onions, extra vegetables, oil and eggs, they are kugels! When stuck for an idea for dinner, their versatility makes the kugel an ideal meal and can incorporate leftovers brilliantly. Embrace your traditions and eat kugel!

The Classic Potato Kugel

This is a traditional recipe, suitable for Pesach.

Ingredients

6 medium red or other starchy potatoes
1 or 2 small onions peeled, stem ends trimmed. Leeks may be substituted if the onion taste is too strong.
4 large eggs, well beaten
1/4 cup vegetable oil, plus more for coating dish
2 tablespoons matzah meal or potato flour
1 tsp salt
Optional - freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

Heat oven to 375°F. Ensure a rack is in the middle of the oven. Generously coat an approx. 28 x 18 baking dish with oil and set dish in oven to heat.

Peel the potatoes and submerge them in a pot of cold water. Grate the onions through the large holes of a box grater and set aside. Grate the potatoes, removing each potato from the water as needed, through the large holes of the box grater. Alternating the grating is useful as it keeps the potatoes white.

Place the onion and potato mixture in a clean, lint-free teatowel and gently squeeze out liquid (stop squeezing when water begins to drip rather than stream).
Place the mixture in a large bowl. Add the eggs, oil, matzah meal/potato flour, salt and pepper to taste. Stir very well to combine.

Transfer to the hot baking dish and spread into an even layer. Bake until golden brown on top, about 1 hour.

**THE CLASSIC PAREVE NOODLE KUGEL**

This kugel is very easy to make and is suitable for many occasions. It is easy to personalise with the addition of dried fruits to taste.

**Ingredients**

- 1 packet 450g egg noodles – wide or thin depending on preference.
- 120 g Nuttelex
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 200 g light brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups well-stewed apples – tinned is fine if short of time
- 5 ml vanilla extract
- ground cinnamon, for dusting optional – nutmeg, few sultanas/raisins/cranberries/chopped almonds

**Directions**

Preheat oven to 175 degrees.

Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the egg noodles, and return to the boil. Cook the noodles uncovered, stirring occasionally, until they are cooked through, but are still firm to the bite. Drain well in a colander.

Place noodles in a large bowl. Mix margarine into the noodles until melted. Stir in the eggs, sugar, stewed apples and vanilla extract. Pour noodle mixture into a baking pan approx 33 x 23, then sprinkle with cinnamon (and nutmeg). Cover baking pan with aluminum foil.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Uncover the kugel and continue to bake until golden brown, approx. 20 to 30 minutes.

**With the Canberra winter upon us, on Sunday 19 August 2018 the AJHS changed to an afternoon time to avoid the night-time cold. Two long standing members of the ACTJC told the stories of a member of their family at an event named **Tell Your Story**..**

**Leonie Webb** told the moving story of her aunt Elizabeth Friedman (1909-2001). It was a torrid story of survival, but it ended well. Elizabeth was transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and worked in the Political Registry for two sadistic SS officers, who were later jailed for war crimes. Although severely traumatized by her experience, Elizabeth survived two brutal years in the concentration camps, finally arriving in Australia to live out a long and happy life.

**Merrilyn Sernack** told the story of her father Sidney Sernack (1918-2016) who served as an Army officer in WWII and afterwards worked in the fashion industry for the next five decades. He established wholesale and retail outlets in a number of Sydney locations with his own design labels, and was responsible for introducing the bikini and the Mary Quant label to Australia.

Both were very personal stories which shed as much light on the storytellers as on their subjects. The stories were generously illustrated with photographs and documents which shed light on the subjects and their families. The AJHS president thanked both presenters for sharing their stories.

The audience was then invited to view three documents of historical interest:

1. Obituaries and Consecrations
2. Historical Sites of Jewish Interest in Canberra
3. Catalogue of Provenance of Donations to the ACT Jewish Community

An enjoyable afternoon tea followed which had been prepared by three committee members, Leonie, Susanna and Judith.

The next AJHS(ACT) event will be held in the Sir John Monash Lecture Room on 14 November at 7.45 pm. Engineers Australia’s Rolfe Hartley will speak on **The Engineer, John Monash**, coinciding with the week of Remembrance Day.
LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

BIRTHS, B’RITHS, BABY NAMING

NOA AND BARAK ADLER – 17 JUNE 2018 / 4 TAMUZ 5778
CHILDREN OF MAAYAN ADLER AND SAM ROBINSON

CHARLIE POLLAK – 5 AUGUST 2018 / 24 AV 5778
SON OF RENEE POLLAK AND JAMIE HORSFIELD

B’NEI MITZVAH

GABI AND RAFI LEYDMAN – 5 MAY 2018 / 20 IYAR 5778
SONS OF ILYA AND VERONICA LEYDMAN

ZAC RAIZ – 23 JUNE 2018 / 10 TAMUZ 5778
SON OF DANNY AND ANAMARIA RAIZ

EYTAN AND AVIVA CAMPBELL – JUNE 30 2018 / 17 TAMUZ 5778
CHILDREN OF KELVIN CAMPBELL AND DEENA ROSALKY

DEATHS

ELLEN MILLER, 4 APRIL 2018 / 19 NISAN 5778
THOMAS BLUMENTHAL – 6 JUNE 2018 / 23 SIVAN 5778

CONSECRATIONS

RUTH GOREN – 29 APRIL 2018 / 14 IYAR 5778
SUSAN KARAS – 29 APRIL 2018 / 14 IYAR 5778
MANNY GETZLER – 22 JULY 2018 / 10 AV 5778

Eulogies read at the funerals of our late members and friends are published on our website at https://www.actjc.org.au/yizkor.html.
The Burning Bush sculpture, which adorns the façade of the National Jewish Memorial Centre building, has been part of the Canberra visual landscape for over forty years. Its cultural and historic significance has been perpetuated by the Canberra Jewish Community through extensive use of the Burning Bush graphic.

For more information on the sculpture, please visit the home page of our website or [click here](#).