



5784 HIGH HOLIDAY
BULLETIN EDITION


PASSING THE BATON TO A NEW GENERATION BY ELI RUBENSTEIN

Since I joined Habonim in 1988 (some 35 years ago!) I have had the distinct privilege of working with many outstanding fellow clergy, office, school and building staff, board members, and a group of highly committed and tireless Presidents.

The first president I was employed under was Gangolf Herman, a Holocaust refugee from Germany, who was also among the synagogue's founders and its most devoted advocates. He was followed by a number of other dedicated presidents in the 1990s and 2000s: Roger DeFreitas, David Goldfarb and Samantha Goldman, each one a wonderful president and colleague in their own right.

Habonim's "modern era" was ushered in during the post 2010 years with the campaign to fundraise for a new building, which was spearheaded by our then president, the visionary Ted Rechtshaffen. The construction of the new Habonim was overseen by our next president, Joanie Smith who expertly guided the building through all its complex construction stages. Ted and Joanie's extraordinary efforts led to the opening of the new Habonim's doors in the fall of 2019 – a few months before the Covid 19 Pandemic began to develop. Cheryl Grammer took over the presidential role in the spring of 2020, and has been at the helm since then, during this most trying of times – until this past June of 2023, when she passed the baton to Alexis Slatt.

Below are excerpts from remarks I made in Cheryl's honor at the 2023 AGM in June of this year:

Cheryl if you remember you once told me that when you were a little girl growing up in Kitchener, Ontario that from that a young age you said you always dreamed of being a president of a new synagogue in the midst of opening up a new building as the world was going through a pandemic – and not just any pandemic, but the largest pandemic in the last hundred years. That was just the challenge you were looking for since your childhood!

Well maybe you didn't actually tell me that - but that's exactly what happened! And I have to say that I can't imagine a person handling the job better than you did.

This week's Torah portion is Parshat Shelach Lecha. In the portion we read about the 12 spies in the desert who were sent out to scout out the land of Israel where the new nation of Israel was about to begin the next chapter of their destiny.

As fate would have it, 10 of the spies cowered from their duties, and retreated back into the desert, telling the Israelites that the challenge was far too great for them to overcome. Only two of the spies – Caleb and Joshua - showed true leadership and encouraged the Israelites to move forward into the promised land.

PASSING THE BATON TO A NEW GENERATION (CONT.)

Cheryl you followed in the footsteps of the two courageous Israelite spies – as you worked tirelessly to keep our ship afloat during one of the most tumultuous times in the synagogue’s and world history.

And you did it all with grace and dedication and good cheer, devoting countless hours - and I mean countless - to the large number of needs that arose during these difficult years.

The hallmark of good leadership is making decisions - and on almost daily basis Cheryl you were called upon to make important and significant decisions. Each and every time you rose to the challenge, approaching each decision with exceptional thoughtfulness, fairness and wisdom.

There is a saying in the world of camping - leave a campsite in a better place than when you found it. And Cheryl you certainly did that with Habonim during the most trying of circumstances – and we are deeply grateful and better for it.

So, from the bottom of my heart, and speaking on behalf of all of our members, thank you for shepherding our shul through the last few years, during the most challenging years of our shuls almost 70 years of existence.

So, now I’m about to pass the mic over to Alexis, but before I do that – here is one of my favorite jokes:

Don’t Forget to Use your Elbows

Sadie says to her friend Goldie, “Goldie, is it true you just moved into a big, new apartment?”

Goldie says, “It’s true. Why don’t you come visit. It’s on 1584 8th st. What you’ll do is you’ll take the train down to 8th st and get out. You’ll walk up to the door, there’s a big double door, and open the door with your left elbow and then use your right elbow to prop the door open and walk in. There’s another door, so you have to go to the list of buzzers and with the left elbow, buzz apartment 680. It’ll ring me upstairs and I’ll buzz you in. Then you use the right elbow to press down on the handle of the inside door and push in. You’ll be in the lobby and you walk up to the elevator and with the left elbow you press ‘up.’ You’ll get into the elevator and with the right elbow press ‘six’ for the sixth floor. The elevator will take you to the sixth floor and then you’ll walk to the left down the hall to apartment 680.

You’ll ring the doorbell with the right elbow, and you can give some knocks with the left elbow. I’ll come open the door and you’ll come in and I’ll show you around and we’ll have some coffee.”

Sadie responds: “Wait, Goldie! What kind of directions are these with all the ‘right elbows’ and ‘left elbows’? What’s with all the elbows?”

Goldie replies, “What? You’re coming empty-handed?”

All this is to say, we did not come empty handed this evening Cheryl - and Alexis will now say a few words and present you with a special gift, which we hope you will like.

I would just like to add one last point.

Our synagogue was founded in 1953 by a group of faith filled Holocaust survivors and refugees from Germany and Austria. For many years, these survivors were the mainstay, the pillars of Habonim. Although this venerable generation of volunteers is largely gone, we are blessed with a new, younger generation of committed volunteers eagerly coming forward to assume these positions.

To this point, of the current slate of 13 Habonim board members, 6 of them are those who I taught Bar/Bat Mitzvah and/or officiated at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah service at Habonim. In fact, our new President, Alexis Slatt, is the first one of my many former students to become president at Habonim.

It gives me a really warm feeling to see so many of our younger members stepping up and filling new and vital roles at our synagogue.

Indeed, we are witnessing the seeds we planted just a few decades ago coming to fruition.

Wishing you and your families a Shana Tova.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I smiled at the woman carrying a cute toddler from the daycare at Habonim. As she came toward me, I watched the boy reach out and pull the fire alarm. In an instant, my plans for my first on-site meeting as Habonim President changed. I am learning that when I plan, Habonim laughs. I am learning to laugh with it.

My family joined Habonim when I was 8 years old. We became members looking for a meaningful and authentic liberal Jewish experience, but I don't think we anticipated the different ways and how deeply Habonim would impact us over our 30 plus years as members.

I have been a Habonim member for the better part of my life – I have been a Jewish Heritage School student, a Bat Mitzvah student studying with our Religious Leader Eli Rubenstein, a bride married by Rabbi Cantor Aviva Rajskey, a mourner comforted by our clergy and our community, a proud mother welcoming two sons, a long-time Board member serving in various roles including Secretary, Governance Chair and Vice-President, and now President.

I was honored to take on the role and responsibility of President of our congregation. I love this place - it is part of my history and my future.

Each year, I look forward to and always cry when I hear L'dor Vador – Generation to Generation sung by Aviva and our incredible choir. It gives me chills. It is a beautiful song and has become personal for me now that I realize that our traditions don't just pass automatically from generations. Our traditions and beliefs need to be carried, over strong links, and we are each one of those links.

One of my priorities during my term as President is to ensure that Habonim has a very strong foundation from which to continue to build our future. We have a rich history. Most of our early members were refugees from Central Europe - some were Holocaust survivors; some were part of the Kindertransport. All arrived in Canada after WWII and in 1953, 70 years ago, they organized High Holiday services. In the 70 years since the first Erev Rosh Hashanah services held by our founders, there are so many stories of families and community coming together to build their Jewish lives around Habonim.

The past 5 years have been big years for Habonim. We were strong as we tore down our old building and came together at Leo Baeck as we built a beautiful new synagogue. Under the amazing leadership of my predecessor Cheryl Grammer, we were able to stay connected when Covid tried to isolate us. We have a waiting list of people who would like to join. We are very busy with b'nei mitzvah, weddings and other simchas. I am very lucky to be able to make plans for our future, though I know that Habonim may laugh.

I cry when I hear L'dor Vador – Generation to Generation because something about it touches me. I think about the generations to come and those before me. There is something in the songs and stories of our shared history that connect us to each other and to our community in ways so much greater than our size. When we remember where we come from, we see not only our history but our future. As I step into this new role as President, I am proud to be one of the many strong links supporting and connecting us to Habonim and to each other.

Alexis Slatt
President



HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES

High Holiday planning is well underway!

In addition to in-person High Holiday services, an online option will again be available.

We encourage you to participate in our meaningful and song filled services, which will once again be led by

***Membership must be up to date to receive high holiday access

Rabbi Cantor Aviva Rajsky, Rabbi Noam Katz, and Associate Cantor Kim Doron. Eli Rubenstein will be delivering his usual High Holiday sermons at the services.

As in previous years, we will be offering early and late services (see schedule below).

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

FRIDAY	SEPTEMBER 15	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	EREV ROSH HASHANAH
SATURDAY	SEPTEMBER 16	8:15 AM - 10:45 AM	1ST DAY ROSH HASHANAH - EARLY
SATURDAY	SEPTEMBER 16	9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	CHILDREN'S SERVICES - EARLY
SATURDAY	SEPTEMBER 16	11:00 AM - 1:30 PM	1ST DAY ROSH HASHANAH - LATE
SATURDAY	SEPTEMBER 16	11:15 AM - 12:15 PM	CHILDREN'S SERVICES - LATE
SUNDAY	SEPTEMBER 17	10:00 AM - 12:30 PM	2ND DAY ROSH HASHANAH
SUNDAY	SEPTEMBER 24	6:00 PM - 8:15 PM	KOL NIDRE - EARLY
SUNDAY	SEPTEMBER 24	8:30 PM - 10:45 PM	KOL NIDRE - LATE
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	8:15 AM - 10:45 AM	YOM KIPPUR - EARLY
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	CHILDREN'S SERVICES - EARLY
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	11:00 AM - 1:30 PM	YOM KIPPUR- LATE
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	11:15 AM - 12:15 PM	CHILDREN'S SERVICES- LATE
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	4:00 PM	TASHLICH (Alex Muir Park)
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	5:15 PM	MINCHAH
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25		MARTYROLOGY
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25		NE'ILLA
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 25	7:15 PM (APPROX.)	HAVDALLAH

On Monday August 28th you will receive an email which will enable you to choose your preferred service. You will have the choice of either an early or late service selection for the entire High Holiday Schedule. All services will be filled on a first come first serve basis, so be sure to watch your email to make your selection.

We will also be having our popular Children's Service in person led by Josh, Mark and Shaina which will take place in the lower level, during regular services on 1st day Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Your tickets will be emailed to you the week of September 11th.

GUEST TICKETS

We invite your family and friends to purchase guest tickets for our ONLINE services only. The cost is \$360 for access to all High Holiday online services and can be purchased below.

<https://www.congregationhabonim.org/event/high-holiday-online-guest-tickets.html>

Guests will not have access to on site services.



THE JEWISH HERITAGE SCHOOL UPDATE

Shalom Habonim,

Time for some Jewish learning! At Habonim Jewish Heritage School we enjoy Sundays filled with hands-on activities! Students learn the Hebrew Alef Beth in experiential ways and games, Jewish Holidays and year cycle, Torah stories and Parashat Ha Shavua, Ahavat Israel, and Jewish music as well as arts and crafts, alongside holiday celebrations and class discussions.

New this year, we are excited to welcome two Shinshiniot who will join us at school and become part of our Ahavat Israel nurturing and the school's experience. Also this year, students and parents will enjoy a longer day of school, from 9:30 to 12.

Registration is still open, and I am happy to invite you to enrich your child's Jewish Education and to answer any questions you may have.

If your child is in grade 6 or 7 and you are planing a Simha this year or next year, I am happy to tell you about the new B'nei Mitzvah program this year. Using a creative collaborative approach to learning, the B'nei Mitzvah Program at Habonim is a fun and meaningful way to engage with Jewish living. Students meet with a group of their synagogue peers to learn about what is involved in becoming a Bat/Bar Mitzvah from the formal ceremony to the obligations and opportunities it brings. At this important stage of their lives, students will pursue their curiosity about aspects of Jewish identity

and share their discoveries, and will be engaged in experiential learning and activities that will help them unpack the term "Judaism" and build their jewish identity as young members of the Jewish community.

Students will have a chance to explore and question key figures and events in our ancient history, to learn about some Jewish leaders, inventors and thinkers, expand their Jewish Vocabulary from A to Z, engage themselves in Tikkun Olam and Mitzvot, explore some Jewish History, learn about Israel from different aspects, as well as about Jewish Toronto and the community around them, and all through class discussions, experiential activities, guest speakers and Field trips.

This year the program will be meeting twice a month, once on a Sunday morning and once on a Tuesday evening, to accommodate the busy schedule and plans of the B'nai Mitzvah and their families.

Join our Zoom information session on September 12th at 7:30pm. If you are inereted in attending please email haboinimschool@gmail.com.

Wishing you a joyful summer,

*Guy Mannheim,
Director of Education*



Mazel Tov!

Joanna Fine & Ian Richler on Rachel's Bat Mitzvah

Aaron and Lucinda Goldberg on Alma's Bat Mitzvah

Jonathan Kolber & Geraldine Rendon on Talia's Bat Mitzvah

Zach and Amy Lieberman on the birth of their son Noah Michael

Jolee Vanleuven & Andrew Webster on the birth of their son Joseph William Jay Webster, proud grandparents Edye & Charlie Webster, Joe Vanleuven and Jay Allender

Inbal Shreemohan and her family on the birth, bris and babynamings of her twins Adam and Gaia

Inbal has a long association with Habonim, having led our B'nei Mitzvah program for a number of years and singing in the Habonim Choir during High Holiday Services.



Pictured above (left to right) right after the bris and babynamings are:
Proud Grandfather, Shree and baby Gaia, Dr. Jack Langer (Mohel), Eli Rubenstein, Inbal and baby Adam, and proud Grandmother, Ada



Joseph William Jay Webster

BOOK NOW

**BAR/BAT
MITZVAH
BOOKINGS**

We are now booking into 2026 for Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

Please contact the office to secure your preferred date.



THE DOUBLE-STANDARD OF BEING JEWISH

By Zach Lieberman – Long time Habonim member, participant in the 2008 March of the Living, and grandchild of Holocaust survivors of Majdanek

A few months ago, a fledgling organization that advocates for human rights posted an apparently well-researched statement on their Instagram account, criticizing Israel.

Normally I'd just shake my head and try to ignore these increasingly frequent occurrences. Social media is rife with such commentary. And much ink has been spilled by the Jewish community, and by people far smarter and more eloquent than me, about the unfair share of criticism our nation receives. But this time, I felt compelled to reply.

You see, I respect the work this organization is doing. Generally, they create and distribute balanced information on current issues, grounded in critical thinking with an eye to justice.

So when they claimed that Israel is committing genocide, and used statements from talk show host Trevor Noah and tweets from Amnesty International – renowned for their anti-Israel bias and overt antisemitism – to parrot the now familiar claim of 'apartheid', I had to speak up.

As a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, I am unfortunately all too familiar with the consequences of coordinated misinformation, alienation, and dehumanization. And as a parent of two young children, witnessing the rise in antisemitism and overall divisiveness in our society, I feel I have a duty to help prevent history from repeating itself.

What follows is my response, as posted on said social media account. On behalf of the Jewish community, I thank you in advance for giving it consideration.

--

With respect for all the great work you do, there are a few issues with this post that I'd like to point out. And before being dismissed for whataboutism, know that I believe one should be able to criticize the Israeli government and its policies, and I don't support the settlements in the West Bank. The Palestinian people deserve to live freely, in peace.

To claim that Israel is committing genocide is flat out false. And I'd expect you to know and do better.

But let me unpack it for you.

Numerous data sources show that the Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza, and other areas in/around the state of Israel have grown. That means increased.

So if Israel were attempting to commit genocide, they would be failing terribly.

Now you may counter and say that what matters is the intent, not the outcome. To that I say, what documentation or policy states that Israel seeks to eliminate Palestinians? Please point me to the source. And not the words of single a lunatic politician, or fringe party, because every country (including ours, Canada) has those.

If you want to talk about genocide, I can easily point you to Hamas' charter which states that Israel should be destroyed. I look forward to your next post when you tackle that issue.

Know that I believe the Palestinian people deserve to live freely, but sadly, it's not Israel's sole responsibility to make it happen.

And that is why the entire narrative of apartheid falls down.

Let me explain.

Does the fact that many Arab countries surrounding Israel do not provide support to Palestinian people, ever factor into your criticism or acknowledgment of the situation? Are you aware that Palestinians are not able to receive citizenship in Lebanon and that Egypt does not permit entry into the country from Gaza? Egypt also supports the blockade. These political issues are clearly a challenge, yet seem to be swept under the rug. Why do you not also call out this unacceptable behavior and treatment? Why is it that only a Jewish state is called out for apartheid yet Arab/Muslim countries are not?

But that's not all.

Are you willing to acknowledge and denounce that teaching kids in school to kill Jews is wrong?

Do you think it's acceptable or appropriate to drive a car into pedestrians or stab them randomly, because they are Jewish? What about when it happens in cities like Tel Aviv which are not on occupied territory?

While I anticipate a counter-argument along the lines of, "their land has been stolen and they've been displaced, so their violent actions are justified", please consider and acknowledge that Jewish people have had their land stolen and/or been displaced far too many times to count - think Spain, Russia, Germany, Poland, France, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon - yet they did not resort to killing innocent civilians, nor teach their children to martyr themselves in retribution.

THE DOUBLE-STANDARD OF BEING JEWISH (CONT.)

Do you think that multiple attempts at peace, is something to be ignored? Or does that receive consideration in your mind?

Do you think it's fair or appropriate that an individual be attacked physically and/or verbally, because they carry a flag or symbol of their country? Or if they wear a religious symbol? What if they carry that flag or wear a religious symbol outside that country, across the ocean, here in Canada?

I know you would, and do denounce Islamophobia, anti-Asian hate, and anti-Black hate. So I would hope and trust that people being beaten in Canada for sharing their support for Israel is something you would not accept.

Yet, when you share information like this, without context, or asking for any accountability from the Palestinian and Arab side, you are fueling hatred and violence towards Jewish people.

It's interesting that one can be critical of China, but a person can still be Chinese. Or a person can be Russian and you criticize the Russian government, but you don't hold those people accountable for the actions of their government. You recognize that the two are separate. Unfortunately the same line of separation seems not to apply for to Israelis and/or Jewish people.

That is a double standard. And to deny it, is a demonstration of both ignorance and hatred.

What we ask, as Jewish people, is to be treated fairly and equally, like everyone else. When those standards are not applied, we are just in calling it antisemitic.



UPCOMING SERVICES

Saturday, October 7th, 10:00 am

YIZKOR SERVICE

Sunday, October 8th, 11:00 am

SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION

Friday, October 20th, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday, November 17th, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday, December 8th, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE



CONGREGATION HABONIM MEMBERS VISIT NEWLY OPENED TORONTO HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

On August 9th some 40 members of Congregation Habonim met for a tour of the new Toronto Holocaust Museum on Bathurst Street.

Museum architect, Tony Reich, and Executive Director, Dara Solomon, both of whom are Habonim members, greeted us warmly.

The tour started in the intimate theatre where the history of the rise of Nazism came to life on a huge curved screen. The 3-D images make you feel like you are standing on the streets of Europe and in particular Germany, during the horrific events leading up to the Second World War. The narrated film sends chills up one's spine as Hitler is seen delivering his hateful speeches. And we all know the results.

Tony Reich commented to me how the fascist rhetoric then was so similar to what is heard now in the United States. Scary!

After the film, everyone entered the main part of the museum. This consists of somber-lit rooms full of large interactive video screens and high-tech exhibits. While visitors can view everything on their own, there are half-a-dozen knowledgeable guides who offer assistance and who will answer any questions.

One guide, Michelle, explained that the museum was designed to be an educational experience for sixth-graders and class-visits are part of the curriculum of most school boards in Ontario. She also explained, that there are no images of gas-chambers or victims that would be upsetting to young students.

However, there are plenty of "horror" stories which are told by the survivors themselves, most of whom are Canadians and several who have gone on the March of the Living with Eli Rubenstein.

I asked two pre-teens who were with their parents (not with our group), if they knew anything about the Holocaust... they said "no"! I thanked them and the parents for bringing them!

All Habonim members appreciated that the tour was joined by our Rabbi/Cantor Aviva Rajscky and President, Alexis Slatt. Special thanks to Habonim's Michelle Goldman for all her work on this effort.

Everyone I asked was impressed with the substance and format of the museum and felt that further visits would be needed to see everything this exceptional museum has to offer.

Jeff Levy





IN MEMORIAM

Mourning those who passed away in the past year

Arthur Linder
Dr. Martin Blackstein
Renee Kaiman
Howard Levy
Sidney Finkelstein
Muriel Steinberg
Collette Landau

Dr. Norman Bogo
Helen Karney
Sandra Silver
Sam Stein
Bala Jaison-Rosen
Arturo Mundigo
Aaron Bregman

Ellen Joan Bregman
Donald Resnick
Norman Schipper
Rose Slavin
Fred Metrick
Syd Gladstone
Dr. Leslie Stephen Landecker

May their families be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yahrzeits

To receive your reminder please update your family Yahrzeits by contacting the office.

Honour the memory of your loved one.

Memorial Plaque \$360
Oval Shaped Eitz Chaim Tree leaf \$180

Please contact the office for more information or to send tribute and condolence cards.



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CONGREGATION HABONIM

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Our neutral palette, private courtyard and light filled lobby provide the perfect backdrop for any event. The main sanctuary offers 4,000 sq ft of open space, with a capacity of 250 guests seated, or up to 400 for a reception. There is a large second space in the lower level, with a capacity of 150 seated and 200 for a reception.

Our building is fully accessible, on-site and street parking available.



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