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THE JEWISH POST & NEWS

Vol. 36 No. 6 WINNIPEG, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2022 27th Day of KISLEV, 5783

Candle lighting time Friday is 4:13 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 5:18 p.m.

Some thoughts on the passing of Jim Carr

By **BERNIE BELLAN**

I first met Jim Carr when I decided to take an evening course Jim was teaching about politics at the University of Winnipeg in the 1970s. He was already well known to many Winnipeggers from his occasional appearances on the local CBC news program “24 Hours,” where, although still only in his twenties, he was able to offer informed insight about politics.

Jim was only two years older than me, but he was so much wiser. A scan of the many tributes that have poured forth since his death on December 12 was announced reveal – if you weren’t already aware, how incredibly diversified his interests were.

But, since this is a Jewish newspaper I’ve decided to focus on aspects of Jim’s life as they relate to his own Jewish identity. Yes, it’s true that even though Jim did not go out of his way to draw attention to the fact he was Jewish, he was still immensely proud of his heritage.

At the beginning of his contribution to the Jewish Foundation’s Book of Life in which he writes about his Jewish background, Jim notes, in a way that would probably sound so familiar to so many of us, that “My grandparents all arrived in Canada in the early 1900s. They came from Europe with no money and no English; they came with nothing but hope, optimism, and the desire to work hard to make a life for their families in this young country.

“Those early seeds of risk and hard work have taken root as the Carr and Golden families have flourished in this great land. It’s a story that can be told thousands of times for thousands of families who saw Canada as an oasis of calm and opportunity in troubled times. I’m very aware, and proud, that to this day people from around the world continue to come to Canada. Together, we weave an elegant, multicultural tapestry that is the envy of the world.

Jim didn’t attend Jewish school, although in conversing with him he often liked to drop Yiddish expressions. He also mentions that his mother belonged to “Hadassah,” while his father belonged to the “Montefiore Club,” which was really just a venue for Jewish men to play cards.

Typically for young south end boys growing up in the 1960s, Jim wrote that “I was involved in some Jewish youth activities and enjoyed my time as a member of Toppers in BBYO. I had my Bar Mitzvah at Shaarey Zedek where I shared the pulpit with another young man, Howard Gurevich.”

Jim goes on to describe his schooling and some of the organizations with which he was associated to that point in his life. (He was still with the Business Council of Manitoba until 2015, which is when he reentered politics, this time becoming the MP for Winnipeg South Centre.)

“I attended school at Brock Corydon, Montrose, Grant Park, University of Winnipeg Collegiate, the University of British Columbia, and McGill University. I have enjoyed—and still do—a diverse career. I have always been drawn to



The late **JIM CARR**

(Continued on page 3.
See “Jim Carr.”)

Asper Foundation pleased to announce the appointment of Anita Wortzman as President

December 5, 2022 - With the planned upcoming retirement of Moe Levy, The Asper Foundation is pleased to announce that Anita Wortzman has been appointed President, effective immediately. The appointment consolidates the two former positions of President and Executive Director, and Anita will report to the Board of Trustees.

Effective Jan 1, 2023, Gail Asper will move to Chair of The Asper Foundation as Leonard Asper completes his term of office and resumes regular ongoing duties as a Trustee. Moe Levy will continue in his role as Executive Director until the end of February and remain as necessary to support a smooth transition.

Anita has a successful history of leadership in law, business and community service (and we welcome her to The Asper Foundation.

Anita Wortzman graduated with her Bachelor of Commerce degree and Law degree from University of Manitoba. Anita practiced law for 9 years specializing in tax and mergers and acquisitions. She then worked in various high growth businesses including Assante Corporation, Activa Consumer Promotions, Acumen Corporate Development and Farmers Edge. Previously, Anita chaired the Gray Academy Board of Jewish Education and was President of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba. Currently, Anita sits on the Boards of Business Council of Manitoba and Nature Conservancy of Canada (Manitoba Region) and co-chairs Lions of Judah (Jewish Federation of Winnipeg) with her two daughters.

“As we welcome Anita, I can not stress enough the important executive role Gail has played in all of our success as an institution” said Leonard Asper, Chair of The Asper Foundation. “As incoming Chair, Gail will play an ongoing crucial part in the evolution of the legacy of our parents, Babs and Israel. The many incredible projects of The Asper Foundation that Moe and the organization have achieved have come about because of her direct involvement and we look forward to having Gail’s leadership remain an important part of our future success and impact in our community.”

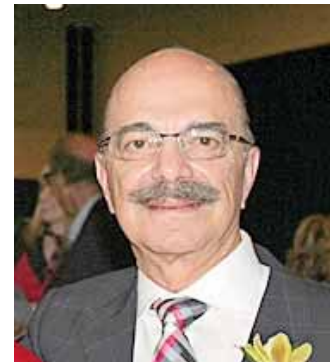
Gail Asper added: “I am extremely pleased to welcome Anita, someone I have known for many years and a respected business and community leader, to The Asper Foundation. I know she will be a wonderful steward of the many programs and projects we have supported and developed since our inception, and we look forward to the new and exciting contributions Anita will be making as we mark the 40th anniversary of the Foundation in 2023.”

“I also want to acknowledge the

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ANITA WORTZMAN
new President of the
Asper Foundation in a
move that consolidates
the positions of
President and
Executive Director.



MOE LEVY
retiring as Executive
Director of the Asper
Foundation



GAIL ASPER
moving from President
of the Asper
Foundation to Chair

(Continued on page 2. See
“Asper Foundation.”)

Community news

Chesed Shel Emes unveils new art installation honouring major donors to recent fundraising campaign

By MYRON LOVE

The Chesed Shel Emes, our community's non-profit burial society/funeral chapel, has recently unveiled a new piece of art in recognition of the major donors who contributed to the recent construction of the new administration building that is attached to the south side of the 75-year-old chapel.

"We wanted to commission a unique piece of art in celebration of our generous donors and create a permanent reminder of their connection to the community and our chapel," says Chesed Shel Emes President Hillel Kravetsky.

The 7' tall by 5' wide sculptured wall hanging in the shape of the Hebrew letter "shin" contains the names of 330 families and individuals who contributed more than \$1,000 a piece to the construction of the new administration building which officially opened just over a year ago. The new building replaces a more than 100-year-old house which the Chesed Shel Emes board purchased shortly after its formation in 1929.

Rena Boroditsky, the Chesed Shel Emes' long time executive director, notes that the plaque in the shape of a "shin" is based on the organization's logo which is on display on the front of the building and in the chapel itself. She explains that the letter, "shin", is significant in our end of life rituals. The Shechinah – or feminine aspect of God – is with us in the tahara room as we lovingly prepare the body for burial.

She reports that nearly 1,000 donors contributed toward the campaign in total, raising \$3.7 million to completely cover the cost of construction.

Boroditsky notes that fundraising continues - and that there is still a \$165,000 bill to cover to replace the roof on the historic chapel.

"We knew that our roof needed work," she says, "but we didn't initially realize the extent of it."

Readers who may want to support the Chesed Shel Emes can also contribute to the Building Fund or to one of organization's endowment funds being administered by the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

The interest from both the general fund and the Jeff Morgan ZL Memorial Fund goes toward fulfilling Chesed's mandate of making sure that everyone is cared for regardless of financial constraints. (Morgan was a dedicated volunteer as well as a staff member who passed away suddenly two years ago.)


Boroditsky would also like to let the community know that the new facility – with its kosher kitchen – has meeting space for community organizations.

"Everyone is welcome to come by for a tour of our new building," the executive director says.

For further information readers can contact Rena at chesedwinnipeg@gmail.com.



The installation is in the shape of the Hebrew letter "Shin."




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to JUDAISM

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Asper Foundation truly remarkable impact Moe's leadership of the Foundation has had on Winnipeg, Canada and Israel especially with the creation of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and dozens of other transformative gifts and projects that he has led. Moe was hired by my late father to fulfill his philanthropic vision and we thank him for his dedication and inspiration over these past 23 years. We know that Moe will continue to be an important supporter in the future."

"I am excited to work with the amazing team at The Asper Foundation and the communities that The Asper Foundation serves to continue to make an impact for future generations," said Anita Wortzman. "I welcome the opportunity to be a part of an organization that is so dedicated to making a difference."

The Asper Foundation is a Winnipeg-based philanthropic organization established in 1983 that develops major projects and provides general support to the Jewish Community while also supporting the broader community in areas of culture, education, community development, and human rights on a local, national and international scale.

Editorial/comment

Short takes

By


BERNIE BELLAN

The juxtaposition of the two stories on our front page – about the death of Jim Carr and the appointment of Anita Wortzman as the new President of the Asper Foundation was not done by coincidence.

As our Jewish community here has evolved new leaders have emerged to take the places of those who have gone before them. The names Carr and Asper have been synonymous with a kind of community-minded selflessness for many years now.

And, while the Asper Foundation has been led by several very capable individuals, including its soon-to-be retiring Executive Director, Moe Levy, it is undoubtedly true that Gail Asper has been the face of that organization since she stepped in to take over the role that her late father, Israel Asper, had in establishing the Asper Foundation as a pivotal supporter of Jewish causes, not only here in Winnipeg, but around the world.

What I also found interesting about both Jim and Gail was that both grew up in the south end of the city, but neither attended a Jewish school. Yet, they both were deeply supportive of the State of Israel – Gail in ways that are quite apparent and which she has demonstrated throughout her career in her championing of philanthropic initiatives for the Jewish State, but Jim also in his own way by working to enhance dialogue between Jews and Arabs and, in his capacity as a Federal Minister, working to expand trade ties between Canada and Israel.

In so many ways Jim Carr and Gail Asper had the same kind of magnetism that led people to feel so comfortable in their presence. It was always so easy to talk to Jim, as it is to Gail. There was no pretense or putting on airs with those two. Their eternal optimism – in Gail’s case as she fought for years to get the Human Rights Museum built – and in Jim’s case as he fought a horrific battle against cancer, was quite remarkable.

Lesser individuals would have given up hope long before they both continued to persevere in their determination to see things through. In Gail’s case it was more a matter of continuing to rally support for a cause that at times seemed dangerously close to being lost, but in Jim’s case it was an insistence on not letting his own physical deterioration distract from his duty as a representative of Manitoba within the Federal Government.

Now that Gail is stepping down from her role as President of the Asper Foundation – to be succeeded by Anita Wortzman (who will be assuming both the role of President of the Foundation in addition to that of Executive Director), it will be interesting to see how high a profile Gail will continue to maintain.

It’s hard to imagine that a woman of such incredible energy and talent will recede into the shadows. Yet, in Anita Wortzman the Asper Foundation has found a woman of considerable talent who has also played a very important role in many Jewish organizations. I note, for instance, that in August of this year we reported on the successful effort of the “Friends of Town Island” to raise \$2.85 million for the purchase from the Town of Kenora of that portion of Town Island (home to BB Camp) which was not already owned by BB Camp. That fundraising campaign was led by Anita Wortzman, along with Leah Leibl.

Our Jewish community has always had leaders who possessed great vision and whose contributions paved the way for future generations to reap the benefits of that vision. Whether it was building the enormous number of synagogues that at one time existed in this community, the schools that have educated tens of thousands of Jewish youngsters over the years, the camps that have offered a vibrant Jewish atmosphere for Jewish kids, the community centres that have provided a rich panoply of services, and the institutions, such as Jewish Child and Family Service - which has attended to the psychological and often the financial needs of members of our community who are in need of help, it was men and women who had the foresight to lay the foundations of a community that is often

the envy of other Jewish communities across North America who we must always remember.

Yet, at the same time as the foundation for a Jewish community that can exist for years to come has been laid, there are so many cracks that have emerged in that foundation it would be naïve to think that the existence of the Jewish community here has been safeguarded for the indefinite future.

Recently I was informed that a long-surviving institution known as the “North End Jewish Choir” is about to go out of existence. The reasons, as it emerged from within an email which I received, are twofold: There is a lack of members to sustain a viable choir and two, even if there were sufficient members, there is no venue available in which to practice.

Perhaps not a great many readers of this paper will care that another Yiddish institution here is about to fold. I am often asked why this paper still carries a Yiddish column when there may be so many fewer readers who can even read it? I do it because it’s always been an important tradition in this paper and to me, it’s symbolic of what a Jewish newspaper should be: one eye toward the future but still with a healthy respect for what was once an integral part of Jewish life in this city.

At the same time I’m asked why we don’t have a Hebrew column or perhaps a Spanish or Russian column? The answer is not that we don’t have room for any of those; it’s that we don’t have anyone to write them. At one time, if you can believe it, we had a Russian column and a Spanish column, in addition to our usual Yiddish column. And, while we had the occasional Hebrew column as well, it was not a regular feature of this paper simply because we couldn’t find a columnist who was willing to contribute a regular Hebrew column.

Of course, with the advent of social media, members of our community who speak any number of different languages can easily find a Facebook page that caters to their interests in a language with which they are most comfortable, so it would be naïve to think that this paper could attract new readers by offering columns in Hebrew or some other language.

As we are about to enter 2023 there are some momentous changes in the offing for our Jewish community, including the putative move of Etz Chayim Congregation to a new home on Wilkes Avenue, the continued renovation of the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, and the uncertain state of the Rady JCC.

Why do I use the expression “uncertain state” with reference to the Rady JCC? The reason, quite simply, is that the Rady JCC has lost so many members ever since Covid first emerged in 2020 that, had it not been for a huge amount of government infusions of cash, I doubt it would still be around today. It might come as a surprise to readers who have been seeing regular advertisements in this paper for Rady JCC programs over the past few months, but I’m going to let you in on a little secret: All those ads have been run free of charge.

I can’t think of an institution in this community that is more important to our future than the Rady JCC and I have pledged to do whatever I can to help sustain that institution as it battles back from the terrible effect Covid has had on its bottom line – both in financial terms and in loss of members.

While individuals such as Jim Carr and Gail Asper can never be replaced, there will always be other leaders who will come along and at least try to provide the inimitable leadership that both Jim and Gail have provided, and synagogues may continue to close going forward, but it will never be possible to replace a Rady JCC. Let’s hope that 2023 emerges with some really positive news about the future of our community’s hallmark institution.

In one final nod to the story that continues to haunt Jews, there is no shortage of headlines detailing yet more incidents of brazen antisemitism. We could fill the pages of this paper with stories that are shocking in how much they demonstrate that antisemitism has now become normalized throughout the world. Not only does Myron Love do an excellent job of describing a story that was sent to me by so many different individuals: how a University of Toronto professor of medicine decided to expose the blatant antisemitism that pervades that institution, at the same time there was another similar story - this time coming from Berkley, California - a hotbed of anti Israel sentiment.

Apparently a pro-Palestinian group in the law faculty there passed a resolution that would prevent invitations being extended to “speakers that have expressed and continued to hold views ... in support of Zionism, the apartheid state of Israel, and the occupation of Palestine.” Given Berkley’s reputation as a bastion of radical leftist ideology, it’s hardly surprising that a resolution of that sort would be passed there. And, even if you’re critical of Israeli policy toward Palestinians, a resolution of that sort would prevent anyone who might have something favourable to say about Israel from speaking to students at the Berkley law faculty.

That story about Berkley along with the story about the U of T Faculty of Medicine might not be indicative of anything going on elsewhere, but it simply adds to the discomfort Jews on campuses everywhere are feeling when it comes to espousing pro-Israel sentiments.

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