

L'Khaim



!פּוּרְנִיס

The Winchevsky Centre Community Newsletter Toronto's Secular Jewish Culture and Education Centre

March/April 2010

Programs at a Glance



March

- Sun. Mar. 7 10:30 a.m. Kinder Kapers
- Sat. Mar. 20 8:00 p.m. Theatre Club: *Talk* by Michael Nathanson
Jane Mallet Theatre
- Thurs. Mar. 25 7:30 p.m. Community Activism on Screen: *Home Safe Toronto* with filmmaker Laura Sky
- Sun. March 28 10:00 a.m. Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School's Modules 9 and 10 begin
- 10:30 a.m. Kinder Kapers

April

- Sat. Apr. 10 4:30 p.m. Annual Community Passover Third Seyder with musical guests David Wall and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir
- Sun. Apr. 11 & 25 10:30 a.m. Kinder Kapers

**Third Seyder Order Form
enclosed in this issue!**

For event information call 416-789-5502,
email info@winchevskycentre.org
or visit www.winchevskycentre.org.

Foresight, Hard Work and Tenaciousness Ensure Our Future Executive Report by Marsha Solnicki

The following is an excerpt from the 'State of the Order' address given by UJPO President Marsha Solnicki at our recent Annual General Meeting.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of Camp Naivelt, the 65th anniversary of United Jewish People's Order – Canada and the 50th anniversary of the Winchevsky Centre. I was born into this organization. My dad, **Izzie Fine** and to a lesser extent my mom, **Helen Fine**, were long-time members and activists. My memory bank goes back to the mid-1950s, and I share these memories with some other second and third (or more) generations of UJPO-ers whose memories reach still farther back. I think at times there has been too much dwelling in the past, not focusing on how the world and we have changed, and how to prepare for the future. But we must give our founders great credit for our organization still being here.

We are all here today because of the foresight and very hard work of our founding members and others for two specific things. First of all, the founding of our children's summer camp, **Camp Kinderland** and later, the family version of **Camp Naivelt**, together on the beautiful piece of land we have near Brampton. By managing to buy this land – against great odds, both financial and discriminatory – we still have today a unique little paradise which we strive to protect, and is for this organization, a vibrant precious jewel to preserve. Heritage designation by the City of

Brampton is now a possibility and perhaps, at some time in the future, it may become a national cultural site.

The other important event to which we owe some of our existence today is the purchase of the **Winchevsky Centre building**. Yes, the UJPO had its share of business-like 'movers and shakers', who saw to it that a piece of land was bought and a building erected. Think about it! This was no small feat. It has meant we have had a secure home in which to have our *Shule*, our Choir, and hold our various community events and programs.

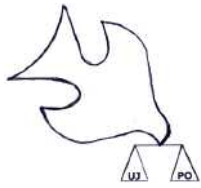
So as we look forward to this anniversary year, I can't help but be impressed with the foresight, hard work and tenaciousness of those who saw how to ensure our future. I can only hope to be able to put my energy into making it continue.

**Please join us in welcoming our 2010
UJPO/MWS Board of Directors,
elected at the February 28th AGM:**



Left to right: **Howard Kaplan**, **Sol Blaser** (Vice-President), **Julia Barnett**, **Ronit Little**, **Gord Meslin** (Treasurer), **Marsha Solnicki** (President) and **David Abramowitz** (Past President).
Absent: **Henry Lowi**.





United Jewish People's Order (UJPO)

TORONTO NEWS

Building Lasting Relationships While Building Lasting Change

Last fall, our family proudly became members of the United Jewish People's Order. While we had been peripherally aware of The Winchevsky Centre, occasionally attending the Third Seyder and other events, it wasn't until the birth of our daughter Levia that we began to actively seek out a community in which to raise her – not an easy task in a society that privileges conservative, homogeneous and oppressive ideas of what family means.

We are a queer family. We are a socialist family. We believe that freedom and justice matter above all else, and we work every day in our jobs and in our lives to this end. Our daughter is the child of a first generation Russian Jew and a runaway from small town Ontario Irish Catholics. We will raise her to love and understand all aspects of her queer, socialist, Jewish and Irish family. And in the end, we will encourage her to be the best she can be and who she wants to be. Just as we encourage each other to do the same.

When we enrolled Levia in **Kinder Kapers**, an interactive toddler program, I remember a co-worker remarking, "I didn't know she was half-Jewish". The comment threw me off, as I had never thought of her as being half of anything. She is wholly herself, and that includes being wholly Jewish. Levia loves Kinder Kapers, and she knows that when we pull up in the car that she will be warmly received by teacher **Lisa Roy** and the other families who attend. She will sing and dance and create and celebrate her Jewishness. I feel such a deep sense of relief that this community exists for her. That as she grows and becomes who she wants to be, that she will have this resource, this family, to help guide her.

When we attended the **Sukkes** celebration last fall, we were lucky enough to get a tour of **Camp Naivelt**. We immediately

fell in love, and went home fantasizing about how wonderful it would be if we could be a part of this magical place. We are excited that we will be renting a cottage at Camp this coming summer.

In time, we look forward to meeting all of the people who make up the UJPO community. And more importantly, we hope to build lasting relationships while working to build lasting change.

– **Becky McFarlane and Lana Rabkin**



NATIONAL NEWS

Remembering Larry Usiskin February 24, 1920 – January 15, 2010

Larry Usiskin, long-time member of the UJPO in **Winnipeg**, passed away in January of this year. To know Larry was to experience his kindness and his generosity in his quiet way.

Larry's father, David Usiskin, began his life in Canada as a Jewish homesteader in Edenbridge, Saskatchewan. Larry's mother, Esther Travis, however, was a city girl – and so they moved to Winnipeg for Larry's birth. The Usiskins became chicken farmers in Fort Garry, the south part of Winnipeg.

There were three children in the family: Larry, his younger brother Sid and Marcia, who was 16 years younger than Larry. Times were difficult, as it was the Depression years and the family needed Larry's wages. Despite his considerable academic abilities, he went to work at the age of 16, just after he finished high school. Marcia, Larry's sister, remembers that thanks to Larry, the family was able to afford such luxuries as a record player. One of his first jobs was as a delivery boy

on a bicycle for Warkov-Safeer Leather. He worked there for 55 years until his retirement, working his way up and eventually owning the business.

Larry and his family were life-long members of the Freiheit Temple, and original members of the UJPO in Winnipeg. Larry became active in the UJPO Youth Group in the 1940s where he met and married **Roz Wolodarsky**. They were married for 60 years. Larry and Roz were a very good team. Ideologically, they both remained strong supporters and activists in the UJPO. Many of us know Roz and how much she has done for the Jewish community and the UJPO in Winnipeg as its President and nationally as a Vice President, but a relative commented that their partnership was indeed an equal one. Roz once said of Larry that, "he lets me make all the decisions he agrees with!"

The family grew to include sons Michael, Arnold and Len, their wives Jean, Robyn and Priscilla, and grandchildren Jana, Mika, Josh, Beth, Aaron and Jacqui. The extended Usiskin and Wolodarsky clan are a large, loving family, requiring the renting of a big hall for get-togethers as no single house can fit them all.

Larry read voraciously about everything. He was gentle, non-judgmental, offering advice when asked and never calling attention to himself. Through example in word and deed, he created a legacy of support and caring for his immediate and extended family and community. After his passing, many of his friends donated money to **Outlook Magazine** as a tribute to Larry – a gesture very much in line with his generosity and principled politics.

– **Ester Reiter**





Shule Corner



Feeling Accepted and Comfortable as Secular Jews

The initial motivation for myself, my husband and my son to start coming to the Shule and the Winchevsky Centre many years ago was to celebrate the holidays. To celebrate in the way we felt accepted and comfortable as **Secular Jews**.

In thinking back, we started with Chanukah, the holiday we were the most familiar with. Celebrating Chanukah represented having fun playing *dreydel*, eating yummy *latkes*, receiving presents and singing songs. As our son grew older, the significance of the holiday included getting to know the story of the Maccabees and their fight for freedom.

My mother always joined us on these occasions, as she was the reason we started to come to the Winchevsky – she was active in a variety of groups and committees associated with the Winchevsky/UJPO community, and I had grown up with the same left-wing, humanistic philosophy.

As we grew to feel that the Winchevsky Centre was our place to celebrate being Jewish, we began coming to other holiday celebrations and our son attended Shule classes every Sunday morning. His

favourite holiday next to Chanukah was Purim. Purim was another opportunity to have fun: to dress up, play games, be joyous, eat and make lots of noise. He always anticipated the fun he would have playing games and winning prizes at the Winchevsky's annual Purim Carnival. This past Saturday February 27th, our son helped supervise the console game booth at the **Family Purim Carnival**.

My family felt that the day was planned with activities for all age groups. It started with a short Purim play performed by The Winchevsky Wits, "*Shushan Shenanigans*", a play was traditional in content for the children, with wit and humour for the adults. We were then entertained with the interactive mummies play "*Rise Up Jock!*" performed by **Clay & Paper Theatre**, a costume parade led by an enormous Clay & Paper puppet, a variety of carnival games and activities and, of course, food.

This is our son's last year attending Shule, as he, along with two other classmates, are preparing for their **B'nai Mitzvah Ceremony** in June. As this chapter in our lives draws to a close, I realize that my family will have to find new ways to continue participating in a community in which we have always felt welcome!

– Elyssa Marks

Registration is still open for these Shule programs. To register call 416-789-5502.

SHULE MODULES 9 & 10 Sundays: March 28 - May 2, 2010

Module #9:

MEETING THE MINORITIES IN ISRAEL

Time: 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

Instructor: Nadav Ben-Jacob,
a Hashomer Hatzair* peer leader

Join us as we journey among the different minority groups who contribute to the richness of Israeli society, including Bedouins, Druze, Palestinians, Charedim and Ethiopians. Through games, movies, music and food students will explore the unique culture of these groups.

**a progressive Zionist Youth Movement specializing in youth-led experiential Jewish education.*



Module #10:

THE KEY TO SPAIN: LA LLAVE DE ESPAÑA

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Instructor: award-winning singer/songwriter
Batsheva*

Use your special key to unlock the door to the house our ancestors left in Spain. Take a journey with us through the mystical, musical cultures of Judeo-Espagnol/Ladino and explore the world of Sephardi Jews. Students will eat the food, sing the songs and hear the stories.

**Renowned Canadian broadcast journalist Ralph Benmergui will guest teach 1 week.*



Upcoming Kinder Kapers Dates:

March 7 & 28

April 11 & 25

Sundays 10:30 a.m. - noon

A fun & interactive program for toddlers (18 months-4 years) and their grownups.





News from Camp Naivelt

Our summer cottage community

And Of Course, There Was Mingling

With the dead of winter comes Camp Naivelt's annual **Mid-Winter Mingle** which was recently held at the Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club on Saturday February 13th. This event gives all of the Naivelters an opportunity to see each other and catch up over the winter.

Despite having fewer people in attendance than last year, there was the same spirit. Many generations splashed, swam and floated around in the pool together. Games of basketball, soccer, and dodge-ball ensued in the gym, while others kept

their wrists loose as they played games of foosball.

For those of us who are less athletically inclined, there was live music performed by **Steve Cope** and others, and there were an assortment of snacks to munch on. And of course, there was mingling.

The community potluck dinner was delicious, and there was more than enough food for all, followed by a rich dessert – **Sybil Goldstein** baked a cake and cupcakes for her son, **Jacob's** 17th birthday. Once again, happy birthday Jacob!

A special thanks goes out to all of those

who helped set up and clean up after the event, as well as to **Abby Cope** for organizing the Mingle (she should perhaps consider a future career in event planning).

As the night wound down and people made their way home, I am sure this event was a happy reminder that we will all be together again up at Naivelt in five months time for another season.

– **Ezra Lipton**

Ed: Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make this year's Mid-Winter Mingle such a success, in particular the Cope family: **Abby, Ben, Shelley and Steve.**



Summer of 2010 Special Dates!!

- **Kinder Kapers Weekend & BBQ with Alistair Ant**
July 10 & 11
- **Naivelt Music Camp with Martin van de Ven**
July 25-31
- **Naivelt Arts Camp with Naomi Kates and Shifra Cooper**
August 1-7

Watch for details in the next issue of *L'Khaim*.



Winchevsky Community Events March & April 2010

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are held at
The Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Avenue (Lawrence & Bathurst area)
To RSVP, call 416-789-5502.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM ON SCREEN:

"Home Safe Toronto"

with guest speaker Laura Sky,
a veteran filmmaker with a
taste for social justice

Thursday March 25, 2010
7:30 p.m.

"Home Safe Toronto" is the second in the Sky Works Foundation series of documentaries that deal with how Canadian families live with the threat and the experience of homelessness. It shows how the housing crisis in Canada is an expression of the increasing economic and job insecurity that has devastated the manufacturing sector in the Greater Toronto Area and throughout southern Ontario. This 2009 film reveals the consequences of this 'new economy', where families surviving on low wages with no benefits, or on dwindling social assistance, are faced with the terrible choice between keeping a roof over their heads or putting food on the table.



Toronto Filmmaker **Laura Sky** will facilitate a post-film discussion.

Laura founded Sky Works Charitable Foundation in 1983, a non-profit documentary organization that produces documentaries dealing with contemporary issues, and uses them as community development tools to help concerned communities create strategies for change.

Admission is free.
Popcorn/drinks will be available for sale.



THEATRE CLUB:

"Talk" by Michael Nathanson
Produced by the Harold Green
Jewish Theatre Company

Saturday March 20, 2010
8:00 p.m.

Jane Mallet Theatre, 27 Front Street

Old friends Josh and Gordon are out for drinks. A great evening is interrupted when a word, the wrong word, enters their conversation for the first time.

Witty and engaging, *Talk* explores the minefield of friendship: where the political and personal intersect and political stances mask personal demons.

A finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award.

This performance will be followed by a 'Talk After Talk' with special guest speaker **Martin Luther King III**.

Tickets are \$25.00 and are only available in the last row of the balcony. All ticket reservations must be received by **Wednesday March 10, 2010.**

HOLD THE DATE!

**Congress of Secular Jewish
Organizations (CSJO) 40th
Anniversary Conference:**

Friday May 28 - Monday May 31, 2010
Ursuline College, Cleveland, Ohio

For more information,
visit www.cjsjo.org.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY THIRD SEYDER

Saturday April 10, 2010
4:30 p.m.

Sala Caboto, 40 Playfair Avenue



We invite you and your family to celebrate Passover at our annual community Third Seyder – our most popular event of the year!

Passover, one of the most significant holidays in Jewish tradition, is particularly meaningful to our organization's secular humanist tradition. As we retell the story of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery to freedom, we link that history to modern-day struggles for freedom and social justice.

This year's program highlights include:

- award-winning Toronto musician **David Wall** leading songs in English, Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino
- special commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with music performed by the **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir**
- Passover play performed by **The Winchevsky Wits**
- traditional Passover full-course dinner including wine and ceremonial foods



Tickets range from \$35.00-\$45.00 for adults;
\$20.00-\$30.00 for children ages 3-12;
\$30.00 for students/unwaged persons.

**Tickets must be reserved in advance
on or before March 25, 2010.**

(See order form insert for more details.)

We Welcome...

This new column will profile UJPO members who have recently joined our organization. Please make them feel at home.



New member **Shirley Lipton** (left) and **Barbara Lipton** (right) at the February 28th AGM.

“Mom joined the United Jewish People’s Order – she liked the philosophy of the organization, and now understands my attraction to the many facets of the UJPO, especially Camp Naivelt.”

– Barbara Lipton

Community News



We wish a Mazel Tov to...

Ezra Lipton on being accepted to Dalhousie University.

Ronit Little on becoming a Bubby/grandmother. Ronit’s daughter **Khaleen** gave birth to fraternal twin girls on Feb. 4th, **Celeste Erin Day** (left) and **Simone Maisie Day** (right). Mazel tov to new parents **Khaleen and Mark** and to the entire Little-Lipton family!



Many thanks to...

All those who volunteered for our Homentash Bake: **Antonia Butler, Sylvia Hunter, Hilarie Klapman, Stuart Lubin, Ester Reiter, Jack Wilcan** and the Shule students and staff.

PASSOVER Food Drive



Every year, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) holds a Passover Food Drive, which provides food to over 3,000 families in Toronto.

There will be a Passover food drop box outside the Winchevsky office until **March 18th**. All donations must be marked “Kosher for Passover” and boxes of matze stamped ‘2010’.

Everyone who worked so hard to make our Purim Carnival such a success: teens **Helah Cooper, Astrid Harrison, Shayle Kilroy, Talia Lowi-Merri** and **Adam Tate-Howarth**; Winchevsky Wits **Sam Blatt, Sylvia Hunter, Lev Jaeger** and **Adam Tate-Howarth**; volunteers **Barbara Blaser, Elizabeth Hill** and **Stuart Lubin** (who was our pizza chef extraordinaire); the **B’nai Mitzvah students** for their Haiti fundraiser Bake Sale and for running the video console booth; everyone who donated clothes to the North York Women’s Shelter and Shule staff.



We send get well wishes to...

Rita Bergman Alan Cantor
Judy Goldie Brenda Nietupski

The Winchevsky Centre is home to:

- **United Jewish People’s Order**
- **Morris Winchevsky School – Toronto’s Secular Jewish Community School**
- **Camp Naivelt**
- **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir**

The Winchevsky Centre, founded on the traditions of social justice and humanism, is committed to making secular Jewish life relevant and accessible through a wide variety of cultural, social and educational programs.



Celebrating our Roots
Transforming our Present
Welcoming our Future

The Winchevsky Centre

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Website: www.winchevskycentre.org

If you wish to correct, add or delete a name from our mailing list, or if you do not wish for your photograph to appear in L’Khaim or on our website, contact L’Khaim editor **Lisa Roy**.

Your donations are critical in sustaining the important cultural and educational work of the Winchevsky Centre. Tax deductible receipts are issued for donations to the “Morris Winchevsky School” and “Toronto Jewish Folk Choir”.