

# L'Khaim



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## The Winchevsky Centre Community Newsletter

Toronto's Secular Jewish Culture and Education Centre

September/October 2010

### Programs at a Glance



#### September

- Mon. Sept. 6  
1:00 p.m.  
Harbourfront  
*Toronto Jewish Folk Choir Concert at the Ashkenaz Festival*
- Thurs. Sept. 9  
10:30 a.m.  
*Rosh Hashonah Community Observance*
- Sun. Sept. 12  
11:00 a.m.  
*TSJCS Open House: "A Taste of Modules"*
- Fri. Sept. 17  
7:30 p.m.  
*Yom Kippur Community Observance*
- Sat. Sept. 25  
11:00 a.m.  
Camp Naivelt  
*"Harvesting Social Responsibility" – A Community Sukkes Celebration*
- October**
- Sun. Oct. 3  
7:30 p.m.  
*Labour Song Fest A Tribute to Gil Levine*
- Sun. Oct. 24  
1:30 p.m.  
Beth David Synagogue  
*Jewish Book Fair event: "Simcha for Simcha" Celebrating Yiddish poet Sam Simchovitch's 90th birthday*
- Sat. Oct. 30  
7:30 p.m.  
*"An Evening with Robert Meeropol", son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg*

**Rosh Hashonah/Yom Kippur order form in this issue!**

For event information call 416-789-5502,  
email [info@winchevskycentre.org](mailto:info@winchevskycentre.org)  
or visit [www.winchevskycentre.org](http://www.winchevskycentre.org).

### Remembering... Lee Schechter



#### Executive Report by David Abramowitz

Lee Schechter (née Swartz) was born on July 6, 1926 in Toronto. Lee and her siblings attended the Morris Winchevsky School, establishing their connection to Yiddish culture and secularism, while her mother joined the Yiddish Reading Circle of the Labour League, UJPO's predecessor.

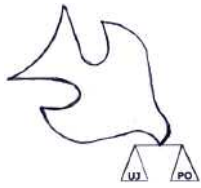
During the 1930s Depression, Lee left high school to work in factories. She recounted that ten minutes after her promotion to 'fancy stitcher' in a unionized shoe factory, they went on strike! As a cinema ticket seller, Lee met Hy Schechter, and their romance blossomed. They married in 1946, and had two children, Maxine (our Executive Director) and Marty. Their wonderful marriage lasted for 53 years till Hy's untimely death in 1999.

In the late 1950s, while working for an oil company, Lee was asked if she could do bookkeeping – she lied and said yes. She went home that night and started to learn it. In 1959, when the UJPO was Canada's leading progressive Jewish secular organization, Lee was hired as the bookkeeping 'girl in the office'. Lee supported those members active in the labour, peace, civil rights, anti-racism, women's and related movements. As these activists retired, Lee maintained solidarity with their contacts, for example, personally overseeing the Women's Committee when its Chair became ill. Eventually, Lee was the individual who kept all the facets of our organization operating.

As avid campers at Camp Naivelt, the Schechters settled on Hill 3, cottage #19. This cottage became a cultural centre for any and all campers, where they could engage in discussions on relevant socio-political topics, as well as test their skills in Scrabble and Boggle. It was also the venue for many, many family gatherings, as well as late-night patio drop-bys from fellow campers for the always-ready mug of coffee, cookies, and Lee's dry wit and wisdom. Years ago, the late Muni Taub and Lee put together a phenomenal cultural program for Camp, engaging Yiddish entertainment celebrities, both foreign and local, for Saturday night concerts.

Lee absorbed an enormous amount of historical and operational knowledge about all facets of the organization, eventually becoming its major Administrative Officer, and ultimately, its first Executive Director. Lee was instrumental in our bridging difficult and prosperous times – a laudable feat for 'the girl in the office'. Lee became our organizational encyclopedia upon whom we relied, even long after her retirement in the early 1990s.

Our profound condolences to brother Irving, children Maxine and Marty, grandchildren David, Elissa, Robin, Jane, Cynthia and Rachel, and great-grandchildren Hayden and Max. Lee will long be fondly remembered as we share and honour our many pleasant memories.



# United Jewish People's Order (UJPO)

## NATIONAL NEWS

### UJPO Solidarity and Peace Tour

The 2010 UJPO Solidarity and Peace Tour of Israel and Palestine has been a highlight for me as someone who has decidedly strong opinions on the Middle East, but had met few Palestinians up to now.

Along the way, we met and heard a number of Israelis and Palestinians expound on the occupation and its impact on the daily lives of ordinary people. One of the most emotional was the talk delivered by **Rabbi Arik Ascherman**, the head of **Rabbis for Human Rights**. A self-styled "cultural Zionist" versus the political one, he has participated in all of the major demonstrations in Palestinian villages threatened by either the Wall or encroaching settlements. Among the most stirring comments were those of Israeli-Palestinian and Nazareth feminist Nabilia Espanioly, currently the head of the Multi-Purpose Women's Centre.

The tour went down the spine of the West Bank. Included in our itinerary were two refugee camps, Balata and Aida (the former near Nablus and the latter near Bethlehem). Here we heard of the ongoing challenges of a growing population, unemployment, scarce resources and raids by the Israeli military. One of the ways that Palestinians cope with the occupation is the emphasis on education and culture. We also visited Ramallah, where at separate sessions **Al Haq** and **Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association** gave us considerable insight into the legal straight jacket imposed on Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The anti-occupation fight has become much more powerful and inspiring, with the emphasis on non-violence and Israeli-Palestinian cooperation. Muhammed Jaradat, a spokesperson for Badil, provided a comprehensive outline of the aims and strategies of the boycott-divestment-sanctions endeavour.

– Paul Weinberg

## TORONTO NEWS

### Toronto Board Writes Letter to Premier about G8/G20 Summits

Dear Premier McGuinty:

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) is a progressive, secular Jewish organization, and has a long history of principled defense of the oppressed and the defenders of human rights. UJPO is part of a growing list of organizations including Amnesty International and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, calling for a public inquiry into the excessive use of force by police during the G20 summit in Toronto.

True to our tradition, we stand in solidarity with those calling for an independent public inquiry into police actions during the G8/G20 summits, including disclosure on the role of police leading up to and during events, and the chain of command for the extraordinary crackdown on legal rights and protests.

The G8/G20 summits were a chance to put human rights, healthcare, women's rights and the global fight against poverty on the G20 agenda. Instead, the voices of thousands were silenced or ignored and the headlines dominated by images of burning police cars and broken windows – while little or nothing was discussed when the G20 announced its goal for deficit reduction.

We were shocked and appalled to find that the Ontario provincial government passed legislation in secret that designated the G20 security zone as a "public work", thus allowing the police to search without warning and arrest individuals within five meters of the four mile long wall surrounding the G20 zone.

Over the course of the weekend of June 25-27 more than 1,000 people had been detained. Many activists were arrested in their homes. On Sunday June 27th, people who gathered peacefully outside the massive temporary detention centre set up on Eastern Avenue were beaten by police, shot with rubber bullets, and tear gassed after negotiating and

discussing with police where, when, and the details of how they would be conducting their peaceful demonstration.

The United Jewish People's Order is opposed to the violations of people's civil and political rights in the name of defending G20 leaders. We support the immediate release of all those detained, the defense of civil rights of those facing charges arising from the extraordinary policing practices, and an independent public inquiry into police and government practices before and during the summits.

– UJPO Toronto Board of Directors

\* \* \*



**May 8, 2010  
Tribute Tea  
Honours Three  
Extraordinary  
Women in our  
Community**



Honouree **Anna Yanovsky** (third from left) sings "Bread and Roses" with friends and community members.



Honouree **Bea Levis** expresses her appreciation to the standing-room only crowd.



Honouree **Lee Schechter** (third from left) enjoys a retrospective slide show presentation with family at her side.



# Shule Corner



## Kinder Kapers Weekend at Camp Naivelt Restful, Engaging and Enjoyable

When we told our friends that we were off to a progressive Jewish camp in lovely Brampton, they were quite puzzled. Charles, my daughter Tziporah and I have participated in Kinder Kapers over the past two years, and while we have come up to Camp Naivelt a few times, this was our first opportunity to stay overnight. We are avid campers and naturalists, so we too were unsure of what to expect.

Kinder Kapers is the interactive toddler program held at the Winchevsky Centre on Sunday mornings. The second annual **Kinder Kapers Weekend**, which was held at Camp Naivelt on July 10th and 11th, gave participating families the opportunity to spend more time playing, celebrating and learning together.

We arrived on Saturday and spent the morning wading in the Credit River, swimming in the pool, walking and talking with other families and friends. The kids settled right in, running from cabin to cabin, over the expansive fields and through the wooded areas. An afternoon program was run by **Lisa Marie DiLiberto**, a lively entertainer who engaged the kids in songs and a short play. Afterwards, **Maxine and Elissa Hermolin** graciously hosted a barbeque in what is known as 'the Hill #2 Circle'. It was an opportunity to formally meet all the families and take some well-deserved rest and refuelling time.



After a restful sleep, on Sunday morning a Kinder Kapers program was run by **Lisa Roy** with the help of Naivelt youth **Shifra Cooper, Helah Cooper** and **Sasha Sokolova**. Using the environment and nature as a theme, we all participated in songs, crafts and stories focused on exploring and admiring each other and the world around us. The kids were taught *The Garden Song*, which they performed with actions for the adults gathered at the Bagel Brunch presented by **Charles Levkoe** (my partner) on the topic *Food Movements in Canada*. Everyone left the activities full of new ideas, songs, and bagels!



When we got back to Toronto, we assured our friends that it was a very restful, engaging and enjoyable weekend. We look forward to coming up to Camp Naivelt again for other programs and weekend events.

– Airin Stephens

To register for any TSJCS program,  
call Maxine at 416-789-5502.



## KINDER KAPERS

Our fun & interactive preschool program for children aged 2-5 and their grownups!

Upcoming dates:

September 19; October 3, 17 & 31  
Sunday mornings 10:30 a.m. - noon



## "A Taste of Modules" OPEN HOUSE

Sunday September 12th  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Winchevsky Centre

Families will enjoy an interactive preview of the exciting **Grade 1-6 modules** being offered in 2010-2011:

- Jewish Symbols in Art
- Jews in Sports
- What Makes a Song Jewish?
- Jews and Social Justice
- The Jewish Tradition of Thinking Green
  - The Joys of Jewish Foods
  - Ancient Roots of Jewish Myths
  - Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean

This event is free of charge, and is open to all current and prospective TSJCS families. Refreshments will be served.



**Secular B'nai Mitzvah Program**  
A unique group experience  
for Grade 7 students

**Sundays: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**  
**Classes begin September 19th!**



# News from Camp Naivelt

## Our summer cottage community

### 2010 Summer Season Has Lots of Positive Energy

Lots of hot weather, the ‘Ladies Auxiliary’ Book Club, many newcomers, a washing machine, bagel making, discussions about the G20, two black and white bunnies near the gate, Music Camp and Arts Camp, rafting on the river, midnight swims, the Naivelt Singers, the 2nd Kinder Kapers weekend, internet all through Camp, a UJPO community meeting and a mail box for the *Naivelt News* on Hill 1... these are some of things that have been part of Naivelt 2010. In addition, there have been more people at Naivelt this year since the 1980s!

It’s been a great season so far – lots going on, positive energy and, as of this article (the first week of August), still one month to go! Music Camp just finished and Arts Camp has just begun. **Camp Naivelt’s 85th Anniversary – A Celebration Through Music and Song**, is being held on **Saturday August 28th**, in conjunction with our Closing Banquet.

Mentioning all of the wonderful activities, challenges and people would turn this into a very long article, but one Naivelter summed things up so well:

*“... I am quite simply so happy to be living out here for a couple of weeks, swimming, reading, writing, biking, singing and playing my instrument in a makeshift orchestra, here in a beautiful, safe, nature-filled environment. I am grateful for all of the people who care so much to keep this place running, so that we all reap the benefits of enjoying it with our loved ones.”*

Thanks so much to Maxine, Barbara and Lisa in the office. And thank you to all of the Camp Committee and Board members and other Naivelt and UJPO volunteers for your dedication and hard work.

A special good luck wish to our vast wave of 18 year olds (and very soon to be 18 year olds) as they embark on a multitude

of new adventures. And to Naivelters one and all, your enthusiasm, commitment to values and *chutzpah* are inspiring, appreciated and to be applauded. We encourage you to participate in Naivelt and UJPO activities in the city – stay connected and involved! Keep the energy of the summer alive throughout the entire year.

– **Melanie Brennan and Shlomit Segal**  
**Camp Committee Co-Chairs 2009/2010**



### Music Camp Echoed the Charm and Strength of Naivelt Community

This year’s **Naivelt Music Camp**, the second in what is rapidly becoming a fixture in Camp’s summer programming, was a resounding success. Culminating in a two-hour performance that incorporated elements of traditional and non-traditional klezmer, jazz, and choral music, the week-long camp was exemplary of the artistic vibrancy and passion of the Naivelt community.

The age range stretched from children to adults, the experience levels varied, but the enthusiasm and dedication of all the participants was uniform. The Camp was led by widely respected Toronto klezmer and jazz clarinetist **Martin van de Ven** and myself – a first year jazz student at

the University of Toronto and an active member of the Naivelt community.

A typical day at the Camp started at 10:00-ish (it’s Naivelt after all), with the entire group of musicians, numbering about 25, meeting – somewhat sleepily – at the Lasowsky Centre. There, they rehearsed in one of three ensembles: a recorder and ukulele ensemble, a Celtic-influenced ensemble that incorporated pennywhistle and flute, and a larger band with a full rhythm section. Each approached the traditional klezmer repertoire that was the focus of the Camp with a vitality that gave each group its own unique sound.

Following the ensemble rehearsals, the Naivelt Singers, a choir led by **Shifra Cooper**, would congregate to rehearse their diverse and progressive repertoire. Finally, when the choir had disbanded for the day, interested musicians would take part in private lessons or workshops with Martin and myself.

Passionate and bustling, teeming with energy and enthusiasm, the spirit of the Music Camp echoed the qualities that characterize the charm and strength of the Naivelt community. Indeed, everyone agreed that the Camp was an enriching experience for all – musicians, singers, and the substantial group of attendees at the Saturday night performance.

– **Lucas Meilach-Boston**





# Winchevsky Community Events September & October 2010

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

## Toronto Jewish Folk Choir Concert at Ashkenaz Festival

Monday September 6  
1:00 p.m.

Brigantine Room, Harbourfront

Did you miss the Choir's spring concert this year? Or were you so captivated that you'd like to catch it again? The concert will feature the *Yiddish Suite No. 1* by Srul Irving Glick, with cellist **Esther Gartner** reprising her role as soloist, as well as works in memory of Emil Gartner, including *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves* and the *Market Scene* from *Benyomin III*, a utopian work based on Yiddish folk melodies. Songs in Yiddish, Hebrew and Ladino complete the concert.



## Usher in the New Year with our Community Secular Observances of

### *Rosh Hashonah*

Thursday September 9  
10:30 a.m.

&

### *Yom Kippur*

Friday September 17  
7:30 p.m.

Our contemporary progressive observances include the traditional blowing of the shofar, meaningful readings, poetry, and Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino and English music led by prominent Toronto musicians **David Wall** and **Marilyn Lerner**.

(See enclosed reservation form for details).

RSVP by August 31st.

## "Harvesting Social Responsibility" A Community Sukkes Celebration

Saturday September 25  
11:00 a.m.

Camp Naivelt, Brampton

Celebrate the harvest outdoors and enjoy fun and interactive activities for people of all ages: decorating our sukkah, a scavenger hunt, nature walk, holiday music, stories and treats.

There will also be a talk with a guest speaker about food security.

Bring your own picnic lunch.  
Carpooling can be arranged.

To RSVP and for directions to  
Camp Naivelt, call 416-789-5502.



## *Labour Song Fest* A Tribute to Gil Levine

Sunday October 3  
7:30 p.m.

We're recruiting musicians to participate in a Labour Song Festival. This program will honour **Gil Levine**, the director of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) research department, and an avid folk song and labour activist. Performers to date include Camp Naivelt musicians **Phil Ciglen** and **Steve Cooper**.

If you'd like to participate, please email producer **Dan Meaney** at [d\\_meaney@hotmail.com](mailto:d_meaney@hotmail.com).

Everyone is welcome!

## JEWISH BOOK FAIR EVENT:

### "Simcha for Simcha"

Celebrating Simcha Simchovitch's  
Yiddish poetry and 90th birthday

Sunday October 24  
1:30 p.m.

Beth David Synagogue  
55 Yeomans Road

**Simcha Simchovitch** is a Toronto poet whose works include seven poetry collections, five of which are in Yiddish. This event will include Yiddish and English readings of Simcha's poetry by **Ethel Cooper** and **Dorion Liebgott**, musical selections performed by **Lenka Lichtenberg** and a talk with **Gerry Kane**.

Admission: \$5.00 (*includes dessert reception*)

Co-sponsors: United Jewish People's Order/  
Winchevsky Centre; Committee for Yiddish;  
Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring; Beth Tzedek  
Friends of Yiddish and the Borochov Centre.

\* \* \*

## "An Evening with Robert Meeropol"

son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

Saturday October 30  
7:30 p.m.

**Robert Meeropol**, who was orphaned at age 6 when his parents were executed at the height of the McCarthy Era, will reflect on 20 years of the **Rosenberg Fund for Children's** work helping children of targeted activists. He will also outline dramatic developments that have recently come to light in his parents' case.

Suggested donation: \$15.00  
Net proceeds will be donated to the  
*Rosenberg Fund for Children.*



# Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

## Annual Spring Concert – A Personal Reflection

The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir has been a major presence in my life. My father, **Emil Gartner**, was the conductor of the Choir at the time of my birth and, although he's now been gone for 50 years, my emotional connection to the Choir has never diminished.

This year's **Annual Spring Concert**, which took place on Sunday May 30th, was dedicated to the memory of my father. Naturally, this made it a very significant event for me. The "Overture on Hebrew Themes" by Serge Prokofiev, which was featured in the concert, has always had special meaning for me, because my father actually conducted a performance of the work during one of the Choir's concerts at Massey Hall with the Toronto Symphony (of which I've been a proud member for almost 40 years). It has always been a wish of mine to play that piece, and there could not have been a more perfect occasion for this to take place. The commissioned work by Ray Luedecke, "Grief", was dedicated to both my father's memory and the memory of the composer's late brother, who recently passed away. Naturally, this is a deeply emotional piece for both Ray and myself, so obviously, it meant a lot to me to be able to introduce this work during the concert.

The other piece I performed was the "Yiddish Suite Number 1" by Srul Irving Glick. This piece also has special significance for me, because I performed the premier of the work in November 1979 with Srul Glick conducting, at the occasion of which I also met my husband. My mother, **Fagel Gartner**, also attended and took part in that concert. I was very interested in the parts added by current Choir conductor **Alexander Veprinsky** for flute and piano.

The concert was a very profound experience for me, stirring up so many emotions and memories. Thanks for inviting me to participate in this very special concert.

– Esther Gartner



# Community News

*We wish a Mazel Tov to...*

**Sandy and Ron Traub** on the birth of their granddaughter **Oriolle Margot**. Mazel tov to parents **Samantha Traub** and **Dave Koffman**!



**Lee Lorch** on his 95th birthday. *Biz hundert und tvantzik!*



*We welcome new UJPO members...*

**Paul Weinberg** and **Cathy McPherson**

**The Federgreen Family** – **Avi, Rachel and Isabel**

**The Sokolova-Sokolov Family** – **Marina, Victor, Katia and Sasha**

*We send get well wishes to...*

**Judy Goldie**



*Our heartfelt condolences to...*

The **Blazer-Blaser** family on the passing of long-time UJPO member **Reuben (Rube) Blazer**.

**Howard Tessler** and family on the passing of Howard's mother **Fanny Tessler**.

The **Hermolin-Schechter** family on the passing of long-time UJPO member and activist **Lee Schechter**. She will be greatly missed.



## Anniversary Events

### Camp Naivelt's 85th Anniversary

Saturday August 28, 2010

Camp Naivelt, Brampton

5:30 pm – Potluck Dinner

7:00 pm – Concert and Sing-along of Naivelt's History Through Song

### UJPO Canada's 65th Anniversary

### Winchevsky Centre's 50th Anniversary

### David Abramowitz's 75th Birthday

Saturday November 20, 2010 7:30 p.m.

Winchevsky Centre

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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*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".*