



THE WINCHEVSKY CENTRE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Toronto's Hub for Secular Jewish Culture and Education

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

Programs at a Glance



Events at the Winchevsky Centre
unless otherwise specified.
A chairlift is available.

JANUARY

Sunday January 7, 2018

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Morris Winchevsky School back in session

Note: Kinder Kapers resumes January 14.

Friday January 19, 2018

6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Alternative Shabbes Potluck

KAIRO'S Blanket Exercise

Details on page 3

Sunday January 28, 2018

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Workshop on Anti-Semitism with Treyf

Details on page 6

FEBRUARY

Thursdays beginning February 1, 2018

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Critical Perspectives on Israel & Zionism:

A 7-week course – downtown location

Details on page 6

Thursday February 8, 2018

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Zing! Zing! Zing!

UJPO's Singing Group

Details on page 6

Friday February 9, 2018

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Alternative Shabbes Potluck

Intergenerational Dialogue, Part 2.

Details on page 8

Saturday February 24, 2018

4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Camp Naivelt's Mid-Winter Mingle

Dovercourt Boys & Girls Club

Details on page 5

Sunday February 25, 2018

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Morris Winchevsky School Purim Party

Details on page 5

UJPO/ISRAEL-PALESTINE/ANTI-SEMITISM



Israel/Palestine was identified last year as one of UJPO's priority social justice areas. While UJPO members hold a range of viewpoints on this subject, we are committed, as an organization, to a critique of the Israeli government's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and to open dialogue on the issue. To further this aim we recently sponsored, with Independent Jewish Voices

(IJV), a two-part series called *Beyond Polarized Kvetching: How to Effectively Communicate on Israel/Palestine*. Facilitated by Lia Tarachansky and Emily Green, the workshop offered participants new tools to de-escalate and positively engage in discussions on this issue, both with family members and friends, and in broader community settings.

For those interested in exploring issues of Israel/Palestine in more depth UJPO is co-sponsoring, again with IJV, a 7-week reading/discussion group called *Critical Perspectives on Israel and Zionism*. Facilitated by Sheryl and Syd Nestel, the course will be held at a downtown location on Thursday evenings, beginning February 1, 2018. For more information or to pre-register, email: info@ujpo.org or call: 416 789 5502.

On November 30 we were fortunate to sponsor a talk by Jonathan Kuttab, a visiting Palestinian lawyer and human rights activist. Jonathan's talk, entitled *A Vision for One State in Israel/Palestine*, addressed the following questions: "If the elusive two-state solution is truly dead and buried, what might a one-state look like? What would be required from the Israeli Jews, Palestinians living in Israel, the occupied Palestinians and the world community? What is the role of Diaspora Jews and Palestinian refugees?" Jonathan shared his vision of what is possible in an area that seems so impossibly without hope. And, of course, President Trump's December 7 decision to declare the American embassy to Jerusalem has done nothing but generate worldwide outrage and exacerbate more violence. UJPO has been part of protesting this provocative move.



Jonathan Kuttab.
Photo: Shlomit Segal

Continued from Page 1.

Earlier in the month, on November 10 — the anniversary of Krystallnacht — as we celebrated the launch of Max Wallace’s historical book on the Holocaust, our building — the Winchevsky Centre — was plastered with neo-Nazi posters. In that same week we were denied a seat on the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate’s anti-Semitism Committee. The juxtaposition of these two events led UJPO’s Executive Director, Rachel Epstein, to write an article in *NOW Magazine* that raised serious concerns about the silencing of alternative Jewish voices by equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.



Max Wallace.
Photo: Rachel Epstein

Shortlink to the NOW article: <http://bit.ly/2BmGPrb>

As follow up to these events, we are working with IJV to petition (link here: <http://bit.ly/2FqZJQz>) the Ontario Government to include a broader and more diverse range of Jewish voices on their anti-Semitism Committee and to recognize the dangers of equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

We will continue our reflections on current manifestations of anti-Semitism on January 28 when we are delighted to welcome Montrealers Sam Bick and David Zinman, of the *Treyf* broadcast — treyfpodcast.wordpress.com — to lead us in a 3-hour workshop/discussion about bringing an intersectional understanding of anti-Semitism into our work. More details on page 6 and a link to the event page: www.facebook.com/events/1546868008734279

Rachel Epstein, Executive Director

UJPO AT NINETY: A CELEBRATION



On December 10, 2017, the United Jewish People’s Order celebrated 90 years of active engagement in social justice and community-building.

The walls of the hall were decorated with the artwork of members, John Williams and Mike Constable. At the end of the event, attendees were encouraged to take copies home with

them, which was a welcome surprise.

David Abramowitz and Barbara Blaser delivered a PowerPoint presentation of historical photos, images of publications, and the art of late UJPO member, Avram Yanovsky. Appreciations to our archivist, Ruth Grossman, for all her work digging through the piles of photographs and ephemera for this amazing presentation.

David and Barbara spoke of the marriage of art and politics that is UJPO — the theatrical productions, dance performances, and the UJPO folk singers. The folk singing group held sing-a-longs at Camp Naivelt and gave birth to the well-known Canadian group, The Travellers, who sang at labour events, protests and strikes.

After the PowerPoint presentation, David gave a dramatic performance of his *Khanike Shmanike spiel*, detailing the real story of *Khanike/Chanukah*, about the struggle between Jews who were nationalist-minded and those in favour of Hellenization.

Afterwards, Rachel Sheinin and Hartley Wynberg, who are spearheading UJPO’s new singing group, *Zing! Zing! Zing!*, led everyone in a sing-a-long (see more about *Zing! Zing! Zing!* on page 6). And, of course, there was a fine spread of food and coffee.

UJPO is now embarking on its next ninety years. We hope you’ll join us for our second Intergenerational Dialogue on Friday February 9 at the Centre. The discussion will focus on what we need from a Jewish organization in the 21st Century. For more on this, see page 8.



John Williams’ works.



David does Khanike



A rapt audience.

Story and photos: sue goldstein

UPDATE ON GRASSY NARROWS

by Deb O'Rourke

It was an interesting year for Grassy Narrows. Ongoing sources of pollution were tracked down, the Province "committed" to clean up the English-Wabigoon river system and the Feds to "helping" build a mercury care home. But it's hardly winning the lottery. Grassy Narrows celebrates the building of a care home so that those afflicted by mercury poisoning can be cared for close to their loved ones, in the land they have defended forever.

Their waters poisoned by the industrial lumber industry, many Grassy Narrows community members are afflicted by devastating neurological disabilities. Despite diagnosis in the 1970s by doctors who had learned from the mercury spill in Minimata, Japan, federal and provincial governments denied that mercury poisoning was a problem. This year the province "committed" \$85 million

for clean-up. I use quotation marks because for over four decades multiple governments have continued to deny that there is a problem. They have now moved to the next stage of genocidal neglect: delay.

Both the cleanup of the river and the building of a care home must be done soon and done well. And really, that's only the beginning. Safe water and food supplies, access to health care and education, not to mention just compensation, are not even in sight yet. So please COMMIT to stay informed, and keep bugging your representatives for health and justice. It's easy to keep up with Grassy Narrows — they have a very well-maintained website at www.freegrassy.net. For more background see Aboriginal People's Television Network's (APTN) articles at <http://aptnnews.ca/tag/grassy-narrows>.

Idle No More at Five, Vigil at the INAC Offices, MMIW

Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS), a powerful ceremonial installation of moccasin tops, was in Toronto for one week in mid-October at the First Nations School of Toronto. The installation began in 2013 and is set to travel until 2019. It is a commemorative show in honour of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit and Trans People (MMIW).

On December 21, 2017 there was a Prayer Walk from the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) office on St.

Clair Avenue East, where a vigil was held in 2017 for 157 days (ending in December) to bring attention to the large number of suicides among Indigenous youth. The Walk proceeded to Dundas Square for a round dance, honouring five years of Idle No More.

Upcoming on Wednesday February 14, 2018 is the annual Strawberry Ceremony for MMIW. UJPO-Toronto has been a supporter of this action and urges those who are able to attend. For more information, please see: www.facebook.com/events/2069831206584293

The Blanket Exercise:

The Indigenous Rights History We're Rarely Taught



**ALTERNATIVE SHABBES AND POTLUCK
FRIDAY JANUARY 19, 2018
6:30 P.M. • WINCHEVSKY CENTRE**

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that was developed in response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Blanket Exercise covers over 500 years of history in a one and a half hour participatory workshop.

6:30 p.m. Arrival, Candlelighting, Wine & Challah followed by a Potluck Dinner • 7:15 p.m. Blanket Exercise
What to Bring: Potluck dish to share • RSVP is appreciated, last-minute arrivals are welcomed.

To RSVP please email: info@winchevskycentre.org



A Message from Lia Tarachansky, Morris Winchevsky School Education Director

Fall 2017 has been a busy semester at the Shule! Before the New Year we managed to pack in thousands of years of Jewish history and civilization with Sukkes in the Park, a Chanukah play, and a trip to the Royal Ontario Museum where students learned about Hebrew migrations from Babylon to Rome. With lesson plans that weave culture, history, and experiential learning, we try to give the students an idea of the kinds of questions and problems their ancestors faced and the creative solutions they came up with, while braiding in today's challenges.

One incredible lesson by Grade 4-6 teacher, Alex Barnes, had the students divide into two groups on opposite sides of the classroom. Each was given some tools and instructions on how to build a "kosher home." They observed how the same instructions led to vastly different kinds of problem-solving and had a discussion about how isolated communities practised Jewishly. In the B'nai Mitzvah class, students contemplated how simplified, binary stories lose meaning and context. For the Chanukah-themed lesson, teacher Sterling Stutz had the students retelling the

Maccabean revolt through a series of emojis, with hilarious and remarkable results. In the Grades 1-3 class with teacher Miriam Brookman, students constructed a variety of gummy bear societies for the Nation/Power lesson. Whether led by religious clerics, a dictator, or through democracy, the students saw how power systems impact individuals. Finally, this has been a crafty semester for the Kinder Kapers who made their own menorahs and dreidels, and sang copious Yiddish songs, led by ukulele-playing Winchevsky star and teacher, Sarena Sairan.

I am also excited by the Great Questions we have been collecting this semester. Raised by students of all ages, the questions demonstrate the depth and curiosity of our remarkable student body (which this year has grown by 37%!). In the upcoming two-part Storytelling module, some students will be using these questions to make a podcast. This semester they will learn about Indigeneity and Jewish responsibility on Turtle Island/North America, Israel/Palestine, and the struggle against inequality in both places. All that and more in a very exciting 2018!



Morris Winchevsky School Classes
Sundays 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
918 Bathurst Street
Kinder Kapers
Sundays 10:30 am – 12:00 noon
Winter Semester KK Dates:
January 14, 28; February 11, 25;
March 18; April 8, 22; May 6, 20

Pictures from the MWS Chanukah Party on December 17, 2017. Photos: Shlomit Segal

PURIM

PARTY

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2018 • 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. • 918 Bathurst Street
Featuring: Purim story and songs • Holiday crafts and activities • Pizza and *Hamantashn*

MWS students FREE

Adults: \$10 • Children: \$5 (12 & under) • Families: \$25 (2 adults, 2 children) • PWYC option available
Includes pizza, *hamantashn* and beverages.

Please RSVP: 416-789-5502 or info@mwstoronto.org

CAMP NAIVELT'S

Midwinter Mingle

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2018 * 4:00-8:00 P.M.
DOVERCOURT BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB * 180 WESTMORELAND AVENUE



This fun-filled event for all Naivelters past and present includes swimming and a potluck dinner.
Don't forget to bring a dish for the potluck, your own plates, cutlery and cups, as well as drinks!

\$5/person or \$10/family — The pool will be open from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Meet old friends and new for a relaxing and enjoyable evening of socializing, games, music and good food.
If you're thinking about renting or buying a cottage at Camp Naivelt, this is a great way to meet new friends!

Zing! Zing! Zing!

Come out and “zing” in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Zing! Zing! Zing! is a place to laugh, learn some Yiddish, and sing protest songs, old and new, in Yiddish and English. In this no-pressure environment, we sing together, and enter into lively discussion and debate on politics, Yiddishkeit, and anything else we can think of!

Plans are in the works to perform at the Winchevsky Centre’s Third Seder in April, and to prepare a repertoire to sing at political protests and rallies. Performing is an option for those who are interested, and not an obligation for those who just want to sing together and have fun. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Zing! Zing! Zing! sessions at the Winchevsky Centre for 2018:

Thursday February 8 — 7:00 p.m.

Thursday March 8 — 7:00 p.m.

Thursday April 12 — 7:00 p.m.

For more information, email Max Wallace at maxwallace@gmail.com.

Event page: www.facebook.com/events/153835608594879



Photos: Rachel Sheinin

Treyf in Toronto: Workshop on Anti-Semitism

Sunday January 28, 2018 • Winchevsky Centre • 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Sam Bick and David Zinman of the TREYF Podcast the workshop will raise questions about the dominant framework for understanding anti-Semitism and how we bring an intersectional way of thinking into our work.

For more information: www.facebook.com/events/1546868008734279
info@winchevskycentre.org or 416.789.5502

TREYF

A DEBATABLE JEWISH PODCAST

Introducing Anton Guz, our student intern!

Anton Guz, hailing from Kiev, Ukraine, is pursuing a master's degree in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at SIT Graduate Institute. Their academic focuses are in grassroots activism, the intersections of refugee, LGBTQ+, youth and disabled identities, and Jewishness. They are very excited to put their knowledge to the test in this position at UJPO, where they are working with Hannah Blazer on initiatives to bring teenagers and youth into the organization.



To All Our Dear Friends and Comrades



We cannot express enough our deepest thanks for the fantastic brunch and wonderful program in appreciation of our many years of participation on committees and boards and of Barbara's financial work.

As many of you know, Solly Blaser was born into the Labour League Mutual Benefit Society and has been involved in all facets of the organization since 1931. We met at Camp Naivelt in the early fifties. After a few summers of attending Naivelt, he asked me to marry him, and as you all know, I said YES. We spent many years at Naivelt in the Blaser cabin and have many memories of the early years that have now disappeared.

We have raised a wonderful family. Our children, who have gone to the Morris Winchevsky Shule, have always found this organization to be a very important part of their lives, just as we have. The political views and values of social justice have been invaluable to us and to many others.

For all this, we thank you. May we all one day look forward to a world where we have tolerance, peace, and justice for all humankind.

Warmest regards,
Barbara and Solly Blaser



Photo: Rachel Epstein. Photo above courtesy of Barbara Blaser.

Community News

Brian Kirby, in Memorium



The UJPO/Winchevsky community mourns the passing of Brian Wayne Kirby, beloved partner to our National president, David Abramowitz.

From David: Brian had fabulous idiosyncrasies combined with great intelligence and an inquiring mind which made for a person admired and respected by so many. Our love was based on the appreciation and mutual respect of our differences. My dad, a devoted atheist, loved to debate religion with Brian, who was a sincere Presbyterian. And who would have thought Brian would complain that my mother was serving him too large portions? True! Brian had just had one of his best Christmases ever, surrounded by the joy and camaraderie of family. Hearing himself called Uncle Brian by my grandniece and grandnephew thrilled him immeasurably.

MAZL TOV...

To Harriet and Andy Lyons on their 50th Anniversary.
To Max Wallace on being shortlisted for the RBC Taylor Prize for his book, "In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust"

SPEEDY RECOVERY TO...

Ester Reiter

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES TO...

Michael Cummings and Agi Lukacs on the passing of Michael's father, Kealey Cummings.
Paul Kellogg and Abbie Bakan on the passing of Paul's mother, Mary Helen Kellogg.

TALKING ABOUT OUR GENERATIONS:

An Intergenerational Dialogue About Jewish Organizations



ALTERNATIVE SHABES POTLUCK
FEBRUARY 9, 2018
6:30 PM
WINCHEVSKY CENTRE
585 CRANBROOKE AVENUE
Hosted by UJPO-T0

Join us February 9th at 7pm for UJPO's second Intergenerational Dialogue! This evening's topic shall be "What do YOU need from a Jewish organization in the 21st century?" We look forward to considering knowledge from those of all ages as we seek to deepen UJPO's social justice commitments and provide the kind of space we all want to share.

Home to:

- United Jewish People's Order – Canada
- United Jewish People's Order – Toronto
- Morris Winchevsky School
- Camp Naivelt



Email: info@winchevskycentre.org

 www.facebook.com/WinchevskyCtr

Website: www.winchevskycentre.org

 twitter.com/WinchevskyCtr

These institutions, founded on the traditions of social justice and humanism, are committed to making secular Jewish life relevant and accessible through a wide variety of cultural, social and educational programs.

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, please contact us at info@winchevskycentre.org.

The Winchevsky Centre

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Your donations are critical in sustaining the important cultural and educational work at the Winchevsky Centre.

Tax deductible receipts are issued for donations to the "Morris Winchevsky School."