

ירשה

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HERITAGE

The Journal of THE JEWISH ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EDMONTON & NORTHERN ALBERTA

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JAHSENA AGM

Sunday, Dec 15, 2pm at
Beth Shalom Synagogue
Speaker: Prof. David Goa
Topic: Facing Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

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A Meeting of the Minds Board Members of JHSSA



Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta and JAHSENA – Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Northern Alberta in September 2019. l-r: Howard Davidow, Judy Goldsand, George Goldsand, Mel Ksienski, Gillian Horwitz, Sandra Lipton, Rebecca Aizenman, Marni Besser, Agi Romer Segal, Phil Lister

Thank you to the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation for the grant providing for the publication of this edition of Heritage/ Yerusha.





From the President

HOWARD DAVIDOW

December 2019

It has been an event-filled year since I last took the opportunity to contribute to our superb publication. Among other happenings, we participated in the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival in our sponsorship of the film "From Cairo to the Cloud", a documentary film tracing the history of the Cairo Geniza from its first days up to the present, covering a millennium of preservation of artifacts of Cairo's Jewish community, providing insight into their observance of our customs, rituals and education. Preservation is what we see as a major element of JAHSENA's role in our community.

In July, our organization participated in the Edmonton Historical Society's annual Historic Festival and Doors Open program. More than 50 visitors joined us at Our Parents' Home to enjoy the JAHSENA produced video, "From Pedlars to Patriarchs" depicting Edmonton's early Jewish history.

We met with several board members of JHSSA – Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta in September. We discussed common goals and issues, one of the main concerns being the long-term continuity of a dedicated cadre of interested individuals taking over the roles being filled by our present boards and volunteers. We look around the table at our board meetings and we note that there is no one under the age of sixty there. We ask ourselves who

will take our place to continue our necessary and meaningful roles. Then the facts come into focus – none of us took on this volunteer role until we had passed that age. We were all dedicating our time to our families and to our careers. My thought is that most of the people on our mailing list and who read this publication are over the age of sixty. Perhaps we become somewhat more sentimental and appreciative of the past as we mature and are willing to share our talents and time with this and other community organizations. We look forward to your continued support of our important work and we ask that after you have read it that you pass this publication along to members of a younger generation. We also ask that if you are not able to volunteer your services that you let any one of us know about individuals of any age who may have a similar interest in preserving our history.

We express our appreciation to you, Debby Shoctor, our previous archivist, for continuing to volunteer your time and energy to JAHSENA in a myriad of ways. Debby also wrote the most fitting tribute to devoted volunteer and past president, Dan Kauffman, which you will find in this publication. Thank you, Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation for your grant which will cover the cost of this newsletter.

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HERITAGE

The Journal of the Jewish
Archives & Historical Society
of Edmonton and Northern
Alberta

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ca

FROM THE PRESIDENT

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We express our condolences to our archivist office manager, editor, and finder of grant monies, Colleen Paull, on the passing of her father, Edward Swanson z'l. May your memories be for a blessing. We take this opportunity to remember longtime volunteer, Dan Kauffman z'l and express our condolences to his family.

You will see the announcement for our annual general meeting on a later page. I have known and deeply respected our speaker, David Goa, for many years. His subject matter is something that should be of concern to everyone on this planet, racial discrimination, specifically in the form of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. He is eminently qualified to share his thoughts on these issues. Your attendance will be time well spent. We urge you to attend and to bring your relatives and friends.

Board member Allan Lyons has taken on a new role as co-editor of Heritage. We appreciate you sharing your talents with us in taking on this new responsibility. In addition, Allan has written of his experiences in Canada's diplomatic service for this edition. Thank you, Allan.

You will recall that in the previous two Heritage publications Eric Schloss provided most interesting and comprehensive articles giving us detailed histories of the Jewish communities at Alberta lakes. Look for continuity with Eric's "Fish Story" inside. Eric, thank you for sharing with us. We look forward to more.

Do enjoy this newsletter. As always, we invite you to entrust us with your histories, photos, artifacts and suggestions for programming. We look forward to seeing you on December 15 at the AGM.

Casino Volunteers

JAHSENA would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers for taking shifts at the casino on July 28 and 29, 2019. A special thank goes to **Casino Co-Chairs Karen Farkas and Penny Hardin** for completing all the details that go into a successful casino.

Aliza Asbell
 Rebecca Asbell
 Susan Binnington
 Marcia Bercov
 Howard Davidow
 Alison Eidelman
 Rhonda Eidelman
 Cory Felber
 George Goldsand
 Judy Goldsand
 Linda Goody
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 Ron Pierce
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 Cheryl Shur
 Karen Tang
 Dianne Whitehouse
 Mel Wyne



Doors Open Program at OPH July 2019 l-r: Sharon Marcus, Susan Binnington, Colleen Paull, Lesley Jacobson

Hook, Line and... *a Fishing Story*

By Eric Schloss



Leo Superstein and daughter Janna

Most Jewish residents vacationing on Alberta lakes participated in fishing to a variable extent. The most common fish has always been the Northern pike (commonly referred to as jackfish) however, perch, pickerel, and walleye (although absent from Lake Wabamun from the early 1900s until very recently) were also available along with whitefish, which were frequently sought with ice fishing and the main focus of Indigenous fishermen.

Many members of the Edmonton Jewish community have been avid fishermen. Eddie Zipperstein was recognized as a master and talented fisherman who taught many others the best techniques. He fished in many Alberta lakes and rivers and a particularly favorite site was the McLeod River near Edson where he was able to fish for sturgeon, arctic grayling and several types of trout. He had frequent

fishing companions including Izzy Kettner and Mr. Stanieszky. Eddie's son, Leo Superstein, learned well from his father and eventually opened fishing supply stores, first in 1982 with the "Fishin Hole" in Edmonton and subsequently "Superfly" in 1984 which is still operated to this day by his daughter Janna. His fishing trips often included his daughters Janna and Lauren and his good friend Hershel Sorokin who told me he would usually take a book along to pass time while he was in the boat or on the shore!

Dr. Harold Samuels was a frequent fisherman, often with his son Ron and friend and colleague Dr. Leo Lyman. Abe Katzin and Alex Davis were also on many of these trips. Abe Silverman has also been an avid fisherman, often flying his plane to many Alberta and Saskatchewan lakes and rivers. Other regular fishermen included Mike Mann who par-

ticularly enjoyed the whitefish from Jousard on Lesser Slave lake, 360 km northwest of Edmonton. Taking his motorboat in the summers often to many central Alberta lakes, Allen Marcus, with his sons David, Marty and Gary would usually fish, and also enjoy waterskiing.

Fishing trips could occasionally be amusing, particularly for those experiencing it for the first time. On an early date, Frank Sheckter invited his bride-to-be Sonia to go fishing and, when he arrived to pick her up, with her usual elegance she was wearing high heels for the trip.

Growing up in Medicine Hat, Jonathan Nobleman loved fishing with his father Abe who was a skilled angler and fly fisherman. Other families from Medicine Hat including my wife Elexis' family (the Conns) would quite often fish every Sunday in the summer months at Lake Newell, which was actually a large man-made



Ron Ritch c. 1950



Norma (Ritch) Grobman c. 1950



David Shugarman c. 1958

reservoir south of Brooks. However, Elexis did not wear high heels!

The Nobleman's, mainly in the late 1950s and 1960s, preferred to fish in the nearby beautiful and scenic Cypress Hills region just east of Medicine Hat and extending into southern Saskatchewan. Battle Creek was a choice site particularly for trout and is a national historic site as the location of the famous 1873 Cypress Hills Massacre, resulting mainly from conflict between the American whiskey traders and First Nations or Metis. The lawlessness on this frontier led to the formation of the Northwest Mounted Police (precursors of the R.C.M.P) in 1874.

Slightly further east of this in the Cypress Hills was also the area of Wood Mountain where Sitting Bull fled to Canada after the famous Battle of the Little Big Horn and Custer's Last Stand in 1876.

The Nobleman's usually fished out of a canoe or on shore with Jonathan mainly choosing to spin-cast while his dad was often fly fishing. After Jonathan's parents moved to Vancouver, he would often fly with his father to northern BC fishing areas particularly for trout rather than salmon.

As a well-known talented fly fisherman, Mr. Justice Sam Lieberman kept a log cabin at Prairie Creek, next to Rocky Mountain House, as a base to explore and fish the numerous creeks, streams and lakes in the scenic and natural beauty of David Thompson country. Sam particularly concentrated around Highway 11 (David Thompson Highway) between Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg, Alberta (56 miles west of Rocky Mountain House). The area and highway are named after the famous

Continued on next page



Russ Rudolph at Mameo Beach c. 1949



David, Marty, Allen and Gary, early 1970s



Jack Mayer c. 1986

Canadian explorer and fur trader David Thompson who mapped and surveyed over 49 million square kms of North America and most of western Canada. He was based at Rocky Mountain House in 1806 and 1807 with the Northwest Company (rivals to the Hudson Bay Company) as the fur trade, based on the North Saskatchewan River at this site, was overtaking Fort Edmonton as a fur trade centre. He left Rocky Mountain House in 1807 to explore the Columbia River and its basin and established major routes through the Rockies including the Howse and Athabasca passes. Whether he fished in the same areas as Sam Lieberman is uncertain. Several rivers and lakes particularly around Nordegg were known as favourite fly-fishing sites such as Ram River and Lake Shanda near where Martin Nordegg discovered coal deposits in 1910.

Martin Nordegg (1868-1948) was born in Silesia (north German Federation) and was educated and lived in Berlin for many years before arriving in Canada in 1906. He was the son of a Rabbi and changed his name from Cohn to Nordegg in 1909, after initially discovering coal in the Rocky Mountain foothills of

Alberta. He was responsible for the initial success of the bustling coal mining town of Nordegg but, because of his German background, he was exiled by the Canadian government in WWI (1915) to the United States. After the war he was also forced to sell his shares in his successful Alberta coal company. He then resided in Ottawa for the remainder of his life, but prior to WWII he helped Jews escaping Nazi Germany and arranged funding for the refugees.

Unfortunately, Nordegg became and remained a ghost town and it may be prophetic that the nearby Lake Shanda (now renamed Fish Lake) may have been named by Martin Nordegg as he likely knew the Yiddish word for shame!

Sam Lieberman also frequently travelled to fish in the Northwest Territories with friends and associates. One of his popular destinations was the fishing camp operated by Max Ward (founder of Wardair) termed "Rust Haven" on Red Rock Lake, four hundred miles north of Yellowknife at the entrance to the Coppermine River.

A popular northern Canadian destination for many was the iconic Frontier Lodge on the east arm of

Great Slave Lake, 120 air miles east of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The lodge was operated for approximately 20 years by Jerry Bricker who eventually sold it in 1990. This was a very popular spot to fish for Jack Mayer who often was accompanied by his sons and friends such as Joe Doz.

In 1989, Ron Ritch planned a salmon fishing trip off Vancouver Island and invited a group which included his father-in-law, Izzy Kettner, and me. Dr. Maurice Blackman was also along on his first fishing trip. We took a small float plane from Campbell River headed for the Stewart Lake Fishing Lodge. We felt the plane land and Maurice Blackman shouted, "We're here!" While preparing to leave the plane, looking out all we saw everywhere was water; no land. Without explanation, the plane was towed back on the water to Campbell River where the group was transferred to another "presumably safer" aircraft and we eventually reached our destination. The next day, news broke that a group of German tourist fishermen in a similar plane had crashed near Stewart Lake Lodge and were killed.



Joe Doz and Jack Mayer catching a float plane, c. 1986

Needless to say, that was the end of salmon fishing for many of us.

Commercial fishing was apparently at its peak on the prairies in the 1920s and 1930s but overfishing and pollution drastically reduced fish stocks over many years, leading to a ban of commercial fishing by the federal government in 2014. However, it still continues as a significant industry. The bulk of the fish caught in Alberta and Canada have always been exported to the U.S. (greater than 60%), Europe and other countries (over 20%) and only 15 percent has remained for Canadian consumption.

In Edmonton an early leading figure in the commercial fish market, known as “Kingfish” Feldman, equipped the Indigenous fishermen of Northern Alberta with nets and supplies and paid for their hauls starting in the late 1920s and at least through the 1930s (perhaps longer). Mitch Klimove clearly remembers this imposing Jewish man living across the street from the Klimove house on 102A Ave during Mitch’s youth. Remarkably, he even remembers the likely address as 9534 102A Ave! Mitch recalls the “Kingfish” being regarded as a very wealthy indi-

vidual who would arrange transportation of the fish to Chicago where he had obvious “connections”. Later, George Glasby also provided northern Alberta Indigenous fishermen with nets to profit in commercial fishing.

A major source of fish, besides Lake Winnipeg, is Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories just north of Alberta. Since 1969, the “for profit” Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has controlled most of the commercial fishing industry with major headquarters in Winnipeg and many satellite sites on the prairies. It has controlled the processing, marketing and exportation since that time. However, there has been controversy and concern about their management practices, including favouritism in concentrating on pickerel exportation to northern and midwestern United States to the exclusion of other fish varieties. In December 2017, the Manitoba government decided to discontinue their contract, but the Corporation still controls the bulk of commercial fishing on the prairies. This matter is now under federal review.

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Eddie Zipperstein



Sam Lieberman 1995



Abe Nobleman, 93 years young!



Ben and John Nobleman c. 2018

Interesting by-products of the commercial fishing industry have developed, particularly the processing and marketing of golden caviar derived from the fish eggs (roe) mainly of white fish, northern pike and carp. Many countries, particularly Scandinavia, have been good customers for the caviar and it is regularly served on Scandinavian tour ships. It is much cheaper than the classic black caviar from sturgeon, and sturgeon fishing is now largely banned. Another somewhat unusual by-product is found at Watrous, Saskatchewan where the salty water does not sustain fresh fish. However, a quarter-inch long crustacean termed “brine shrimp” has been harvested from the salt water in the amount of at least 100,000 pounds per year and is exported abroad for use as aquarium fish food, particularly in New York.

The iconic Winnipeg goldeye is still a desired item. It was originally found in Manitoba lakes (particularly in Lake Winnipeg) in 1890 but supplies dwindled extensively by the late 1930s. It has made somewhat of a comeback and can now be found in Alberta and Saskatchewan lakes in addition to those in Manitoba. It has been considered a gourmet item particularly when served on toasted rye bread with cream cheese, lemon, capers and dill. Clothing travellers from Winnipeg would often bring the goldeye as gifts for their customers (including my father) when they met in the clothing sample rooms at the Macdonald Hotel.

Orthodox rabbis in Winnipeg, at the main marketing plant, survey, screen and approve fish kosher status and a high percentage of these fish are

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sent to kosher markets particularly in New York and Chicago. Those who wish to “catch” gefilte fish, to eventually end up on your table particularly for Shabbat meals, Passover Seders and other Jewish holidays, should know that at least the main ingredients, whether from whitefish, northern pike, carp or mullet, are approved by the rabbis as kosher. Finally, we should determine what is the Edmonton Jewish Community’s favourite fish? An extensive survey of all our local fishermen to determine their favourite catch from Alberta lakes unfortunately could not find a single person who snagged either lox or a gefilte fish!



Famed Painter Allen Sapp, Gary Marcus, and Allen Marcus, mid 70s



Alex Paull fishing at Seba Beach c. 2001



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Sunday, December 15, 2019
TIME: 2:00 pm
LOCATION: Beth Shalom Synagogue
Speaker: Prof. David Goa
Topic: Facing Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

David Goa is a Professor of Religious Studies. He teaches in the Religious Studies and Philosophy program at the U of A, The King’s University, Saint Stephen’s College and Newman Theological Campus.

Years ago, Professor Goa worked with Eve Pascoe and JAHSENA building the initial Judaica collection at the Royal Alberta Museum and the holdings at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

He has written numerous books and articles.

DAN KAUFFMAN Z'L

Dan Kauffman was one of the founding members of JAHSENA. He passed away last month in Vancouver at the age of 84.

Dan became a member of JAHSENA in the beginning, in 1996, as Vice President, becoming President in 2000, and remaining so until he moved to Vancouver in 2010. He participated in all aspects of JAHSENA's work. He conducted oral histories, oversaw finances and Casinos, initiated new projects and recruited new members. He conceived and produced two outstanding documentaries, which recounted the history of Jewish settlement in Edmonton and the community's contribution to Canada's war efforts: *From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered* debuted in August, 2004 and *Bittersweet Memories, The War Years*, in October, 2007.

A native of Toronto, Dan attended Harbord Collegiate and took broadcasting courses in Los Angeles at City College after completing High School. He worked for CBC in Toronto in film editing from 1955-1960, before moving to Edmonton to work for CFRN TV, working mainly in the areas of public and community affairs, producing documentaries and features, many of which won awards. He worked there from 1960 to 1996, for over 35 years.

Dan's involvement in the Edmonton Jewish Community also includes serving as President of the B'nai Brith Lodge, as an advisor and as Board member to the B'nai Brith Youth Organization. He also served on the Board of the Edmonton Historical Society, which presented him with an award at a ceremony in 2008. In 2009, he was recognized by Mayor Steven Mandel at the annual Salute to Excellence awards. He was married to Esther Kauffmann, z'l of Winnipeg, and they had one son, David, who lives in Vancouver with his wife Tilly and two sons, Solomon and Elia.



Dan Kauffman

In Memoriam 2019

The following individuals were lost to us this year. We offer our condolences to their families and friends, and hope that their memories will be blessings to us all.

Rose Abrams, z'l
 Michael Alkalay, z'l
 Ida Antflick, z'l
 Leonid Bantchik, z'l
 Deby Bernstein, z'l
 Freda Braude, z'l
 Isadore Burstyn, z'l
 Dan Kauffman, z'l
 Tatiana Chkliar, z'l
 Eileen Cooper, z'l
 Robert Dlin, z'l
 Marvin Eidelman, z'l
 Dr. Richard Faintuck, z'l
 Louis (Larry) Furman, z'l
 Russ Joseph, z'l
 Jenö Klein, z'l
 Helen Kolodenco, z'l
 Leo Mickelson, z'l
 Esther Miller, z'l
 Monica Miller, z'l
 Samson (Sparkie) Miller, z'l
 Beryl Nathan, z'l
 Miriam Rabinovitch, z'l
 Mildred Ragosin, z'l
 Frank Sheckter, z'l
 Harold (Hal) Simons, z'l
 Norman Simons, z'l
 Lillian Soroka, z'l
 Amir Taller, z'l
 Bente Gudron Thomsen, z'l
 Richard Thueman, z'l
 Lynn Estrid Weinlos, z'l
 Marielle Witten, z'l

Every effort has been made to identify all those who have passed away in the last year, but if we have omitted someone, please contact the JAHSENA office.

Remembering the Early Years of Jacob Masliyah's Journey on the Path of Lifelong Learning: IRAQ TO CANADA

By Daniel Erin

It was a cloudy but warm Wednesday evening when your author had the pleasure of sitting down with Jacob Masliyah. As you may recall from a previous article in *Heritage*, where I met with Jacob's wife, Odette, the Masliyahs are friendly, humorous, and welcoming. Their hospitality is a sign of kindness, patience, and resilience. Both Jacob and Odette were made to feel like aliens in their home country, Iraq, as children and adolescents. Nevertheless, just as Odette did, Jacob found a path leading towards a new home, a place where he ensured that others are welcomed. Indeed, Jacob forged this path through his love of learning and passion for knowledge.

Jacob was born on August 9, 1942, in Baghdad, Iraq. His father was a merchant who ran a textile dye business that served clients both in and outside of the city. His mother worked at home, and her hands were full raising eight children.

Although he had seven siblings—two sisters and five brothers—Jacob explains that he never

felt crowded or cramped in his home growing up because his siblings began leaving the country during his childhood.

First, around 1947, two of his brothers left Iraq for school. One brother went to study in Beirut, and the other travelled to the United States for his undergraduate and medical degrees. Laughing, Jacob notes that he still can't believe that his family let his brother go to the United States. "Back then," he muses, "It would have been the equivalent of going to the moon!" However, as we will learn, for Jacob and his family—as well as for Jews living in Iraq—education and relocation often went hand-in-hand.

The second wave of departures from the Masliyah home occurred in 1950 during the period of the emigration law that allowed Jews to move to Israel. Two of Jacob's brothers and one of his sisters registered to go to Israel, leaving him in Baghdad with one sister and one brother. During this mass emigration to Israel, 150,000 Jews—approximately one-



Jacob Masliyah Baghdad c. 1955

third of the city's total population—left Baghdad. After the registration deadline for departing, the government sanctioned the confiscation of the Jewish émigrés' property. This significant decrease in the population placed considerable cultural, social, financial, and religious strain on the remaining Jewish community members. Even more pressure was exerted, making the sense of being a foreigner in one's homeland even more acute.

Soon after this period, the Jewish community amalgamated, and schools started to close. Although this made it difficult on the community, many Jewish youth took advantage of the unique educational situation that was developing during the middle of the 1950s. Jacob recalls that the French-Jewish community—primarily in Paris—believed that Jews living in countries such as Iraq could improve their

Continued on next page

quality of life and standard of living through education. So, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* supported a school in Baghdad, where it taught French language and culture to Jewish youth.

For Jewish children living in Iraq, Jacob recounts, education did have the potential to improve their lives, but it was also a means of survival and escape. Education was a pre-requisite for even just a small *chance* at an opportunity—an opportunity to explore what life had to offer without the ever-present spectre of persecution, violence, censorship, and oppression.

Jacob remembers with pride that he went to Frank Iny, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* school. Frank Iny was a wealthy businessman, who had accrued his wealth in New York, and decided to build this school in the 1940s; it

was the last Jewish school in Baghdad, and it closed in 1973. The school housed grades K-12; it was also the only school in Iraq that taught boys and girls together. The majority of the curriculum was conducted in French—which began in grade 1—with one hour a day for Arabic, which was spoken in every grade, and one hour per day of English, starting in grade 5.

According to Jacob, this diligent attention to language training across the subjects proved incredibly valuable to the students of Frank Iny. They had the training to take advanced level examinations in French for subjects such as math, physics, and chemistry. Jacob admitted that only one member of their household attained the A-level scores on these exams: Odette. That said, Jacob did successfully complete the exams in both French and English, earning admission to the University College in London, where he studied Chemical Engineering.

However, before he could leave for England to pursue his post-secondary education, Jacob had to navigate a hostile bureaucracy in order to obtain a passport. A small window of opportunity presented itself for Jacob, because Abd al-Karim Qasim had taken power during a coup d'état in 1958. Under al-Karim Qasim, it was possible for Jews to acquire passports and leave Iraq legally. Nevertheless, despite this slightly less oppressive regime, it was still challenging for Jacob to acquire his passport. In fact, Jacob stressed that getting a passport was no joke. It was nothing like it is today in Canada; it was political; it required patience; it required commitment; and, it required a bit of luck.

After making it through the Kafkaesque nightmare of applying for and receiving a passport, Jacob could pursue his studies in England. In 1964, Jacob graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering, but in 1963, the Ba'athists executed Qasim during yet another coup. After establishing power, the Ba'athist regime declared that once Iraqis such as Jacob finished their studies abroad, they had to return to Iraq. This situation was akin to going to prison because Jacob would not have been able to continue his studies or apply his skillsets in a meaningful context—not to mention the explicit hostility that the Jewish community faced on a daily basis.

Jacob had to find a new place to live, but he only had three months left on his passport, and he required at least six months on a valid passport in order to apply for a Master's degree in Canada. Acquiring this exten-

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Jacob's parents Naima and Hesel Masliyah, Baghdad, Oct 1960



Top: Salem, Hesel, Muzli, Naima, Joseph, and Victor. Bottom: Jacob with his bird, Joyce, Sadok. The Masliyah Family, c.1945



Order of Canada, Odette, Ruth (daughter), Jacob, Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean, Daniel (son), Tamara (daughter), Larry (Tamara's husband), Ottawa 2008



Alberta Order of Excellence, Top: Daniel (son), Ruth (daughter), Tamara (daughter), Bottom: Odette, Jacob, Ellie (Tamara's daughter) c. 2015

sion took some bureaucratic acumen within the walls of the Iraqi embassy in London. During a brief encounter with a senior bureaucrat, Jacob managed to convince the officer to extend his passport, and he walked out of the embassy with a one-year extension; this allowed him to enter a Master's of Chemical Engineering program at the University of New Brunswick.

Upon completing his graduate degree in New Brunswick, Jacob decided to work for a while, but he still felt a strong desire to continue learning. Eventually, he returned to school to do a PhD at the University of British Columbia. He remembers this period fondly as a rich, exciting time to explore and learn in a rewarding intellectual atmosphere, especially working and publishing with a visiting professor from Oxford. Jacob stayed in Vancouver for one year after graduating before taking an assistant professorship at the University of Saskatchewan, where he commuted between Saskatoon and Edmonton until 1977. It was in 1977 that Jacob accepted an offer from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Engineering and moved to Edmonton. This also marks the year when Jacob married Odette.

Before meeting with him, it was brought to your author's attention that Jacob has been awarded both the Order of Canada and the Alberta Order of Excellence for his ingenuity as a chemical engineer and his many professional accomplishments: including extracting bitumen from the oil sands of northern Alberta in an efficacious and environmentally sustainable method. Before concluding, I would like to share some words about Jacob from the Alberta Order of Excellence: "As great as his research leadership is, Jacob has

an equal ability to develop human potential as a mentor, educator, and recruiter." One small example of this leadership is a graduate scholarship that Jacob started for students at the University of Alberta to develop research interests and skills in the field of oil sands development. Now that Jacob has forged his own route—cultivated a life in a new home with his family and friends—through education and research, he is helping members of younger generations find their own paths.



Jacob, Odette, and grandchildren Judah, Hannah, Jacob, Odette, Ellie, and Jasmine, c. 2019

THE DIPLOMATIC LIFE OF A LOCAL BOY

BY ALAN LYONS

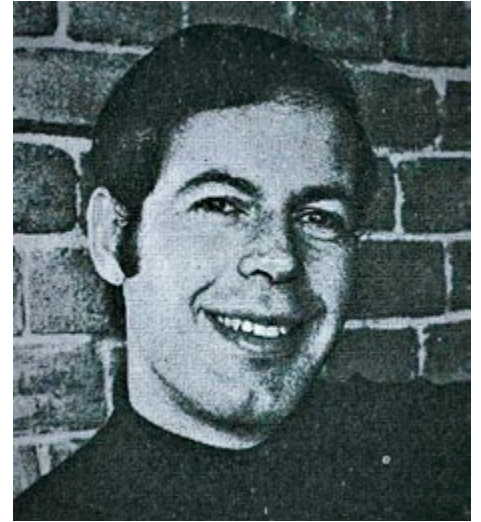
I was born in 1935 and raised in Edmonton by the late Earl and Laura Lyons. I attended the old Talmud Torah school on 103rd Street south of Jasper Avenue, from kindergarten to grade five, then night classes after days in grades six and seven at Oliver School. My Talmud Torah classes usually had fewer than 10 students. We lived next to the old Shul on 95th Street, the same street as did the Mickelson, Shtabsky, and Doz families. The Wynes lived nearby. I received a BA degree from the



Al and brother Morris at home 10150-117 Street c. 1938

University of Alberta in 1956, and my LLB at UBC in 1959. As my late brother Morris was a lawyer, among others in the Lyons family, the law seemed a logical path to follow, although I was drawn toward the sciences, especially biology and space. Articling with Morris, I was called to the Alberta Bar in 1960. Then I received a call from Ron Katzin, an old friend from Calgary from our AZA/BBG days, asking me to join him on a voyage to Australia. I gladly agreed and, to save a bit more money to that end, I taught tennis for the City of Edmonton evenings and weekends. Allan Rose, a mutual friend from Edmonton, eventually joined us in Sydney.

My adventures during the next year and a half gave me a permanent "travel bug" culminating eventually in some 30 years in Canada's Diplomatic Corps. In Australia I worked in Sydney for the AMP Society, the largest insurance company in the Southern Hemisphere; then worked in a cabaret in Surfers Paradise, Queensland, waiting tables in the day and singing upstairs with a trio in the evening; then moved on to selling boat cruises on the Surfers Paradise beach during the day which, thankfully, earned me a good income for a few months. Leaving Brisbane by ship for Japan and Hong Kong, we were embarking on the next legs



Al Lyons, The Community Theatre of Guatemala c. 1970

of travel around the world. My adventures included being offered a job in Hong Kong as a police magistrate in the colonial government, which I declined after considering the dangers it entailed; walking the length and breadth of beautiful Ceylon (now Sri Lanka); sleeping alone in a cave in a barren, mountainous moon-scape terrain in Iran on route to Turkey (I could already see Mount Ararat in the distance). I had to flee from a snake that I found occupying the cave, and next morning rode on a donkey with Persian soldiers part way to the border. In Israel I worked at Yotvata kibbutz, and in Hatzertim in the Negev. In the latter, they put me to work alone with my donkey and cart where the only people I would see all day were Bedouins and their camels outside the kibbutz. My duties, besides feeding the beast, were to spray insecticide on the date palms and pomegranates, and keep moving the irrigation pipes.

Returning to Edmonton in 1962 to resume practising Law, after having visited Canadian offices in various places in Asia, the Mideast



Israeli government officials, Jerusalem 1979



l-r: Canadian Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan, AI, Assistant Deputy Minister of Ontario Trade, George Fleishman, unknown, Alan's boyhood hero Moshe Dayan, Jerusalem c. 1979

and Europe, I envisioned a career in our Foreign Service. A year later I was in Ottawa working in the Department of Justice investigating restrictive trade practice offences. In 1964, I moved to the Department of National Revenue to appear for the Crown in Income Tax Appeal Board hearings. Then, lo and behold, having passed the foreign service exams and the ensuing Board interviews, I was recruited in 1965 into the program. After an extensive cross-Canada tour of meetings with provincial governments, and industrial and commercial leaders and facilities, the Lyons family (ex-wife Judy and our infant children Dan & Kathy) flew to London, England on my first posting lasting from 1966 to 1969. Delightful London was a great base for exploring the UK and Western Europe with my family.

From 1969 to 1971, I took up duties in the Embassy in Guatemala City, stopping first with my family in Cuernavaca, Mexico to study Spanish in a most picturesque environment, living in an adobe hut

at the back of the Salazar residence overlooking a stream frequented by cows stopping for a drink. Kathy was bitten at night by a scorpion, and partially paralyzed for a few days but recovered completely and is apparently now immune from scorpion venom. However, she still has a somehow related fear of spiders. Daily travel to the school, run by a brilliant defrocked priest and located up a mountain, was navigated in rickety old buses shared with locals and their (mostly) live hens, sheep, goats and other barnyard animals, on their way to be sold at local markets. Arriving at our destination, already passably able in Spanish, we found a recently completed bungalow in Zone 10, Guatemala City, overlooking a barranca (ravine), from which gun shots were heard almost nightly and where bodies were found the following day. We just got used to it. Our territory in the Embassy also included Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. At times I would carry all six currencies plus US dollars on my travel in territory,

usually aboard rickety regional aircraft which people jokingly said must be held together with scotch tape. Guatemala, "Land of Eternal Spring", is an incredibly beautiful country, with volcanos, lush jungles, highlands, picturesque lakes, and gentle, colourfully dressed people in age-old Mayan style, varying like their many dialects from village to village. Unfortunately, they have been mistreated ever since the arrival of the Spanish conquerors, the leader of whom became known by the Mayans as Quetzalcoatl (bearded serpent), ascribed by the Mayans as being of other-worldly origins. The villagers, unlike the Mestizos or mixed-bloods in the cities, still maintain their old traditions and beliefs and their worship is a colorful blend of Shamanism and Catholicism, probably best seen at the old temple at Chichicastenango, where worshippers mount the stairs on knees, swinging incense pots, and sometimes orally berating statues of saints in the temple for not bringing them rain. Archeological remains of

Continued on next page

ancient temples and villages are notable especially in Tikal in the Peten region.

Political instability and terrorism have been rife in all Central American countries except Costa Rica, fomenting coups and counter coups. Before our arrival, the German Ambassador was kidnapped and killed, and the U.S. Ambassador met a similar fate. Thus, all personnel were instructed to vary their driving routes and times so as to reduce the risk of being taken by the terrorists, reputedly at that time consisting of only perhaps a hundred idealistic university students hiding out in the mountains, desperate to bring justice to the beleaguered masses of Mayan descendants. After taking a driving holiday to see the country,

we returned to the city to be told by Esperanza, our loyal cook, that she had received phone calls asking about my driving schedules, and threatening us with kidnapping and possibly death for all including our brave Esperanza if she didn't cooperate. This was the pattern for many government officials, senators and diplomats. An orderly phased-in evacuation plan for Canada-based staff was devised in discussions with Ottawa, and the Lyons family was evacuated to Ottawa. After a short visit to Headquarters for debriefing and instructions, we packed up important files and clothing in Guatemala and drove to Costa Rica to set up house for my family and for me to work out of the San Jose Embassy. At the El Salvador border with Honduras,

we were met by boy soldiers carrying weapons which they pointed at us. We concluded they were interested mainly in the kids' toys in the back seat with Dan and Kathy. There had been the "football (soccer) war" between the two countries and hostilities were still somewhat ongoing, witness the shell-pocked roads on either side of the border. After three days of driving, mostly on bad roads and stopping on the way in Managua, Nicaragua, we reached the San Jose residence of the Emile Martels, a fellow-diplomat and parents of then very young Yann, author of "The Life of Pi". They helped us find a house for rent and we settled in and found a school for the children. I worked there for a couple of months, then, as planned, flew alone to Guatemala to take over in charge of the Embassy as the only remaining Canadian, carrying out a full slate of duties i.e. political, commercial, consular, and administrative. I was eventually able to bring my family back to Guatemala.

Upon my return to Guatemala, arrangements were made to protect us. The Guatemalan Government had a police sergeant accompany me everywhere on official business, revolver at the ready at all times. Armed guards were deployed at either end of the house (unfortunately they seemed to spend more time sleeping in their chairs than guarding), and were not helped much by our beloved pet German Shepherd, Samantha, originally acquired to be a guard dog. The children's school bus was also guarded, as was the school itself, which survived an aborted raid by armed, masked men.

Before all of this happened, I put on my actor's persona taking the role of the naive, romantic teenager



Top, l - r: Sarah Kagna, Leon Kagna, Marsha Kagna, Morris Lyons, Laura & Earl Lyons
Bottom, l - r: Morris Kagna, Chaya (Lyons) Spivak & Mr. Spivak, Lottie Lyons holding David, Irving Lyons and in front Allan Lyons c. 1939



PM Menachem Begin's office, Ontario Government delegation, Jerusalem 1979



Israeli Honor Guard, Jerusalem c. 1979

Matt in eleven performances of the *Fantasticks* at the local theatre. One of the cast members was the head of the US Information Office at their embassy, and frequently he was drawn from rehearsal by phone to be blindfolded and led to a secret spot to negotiate with the terrorists for the release of an American undercover CIA officer they had captured. I won't comment on his condition when he finally was freed.

Following a refreshingly peaceful and productive three-year stint in the Hague, Netherlands, then four-years at Headquarters in Ottawa, came assignment from 1974 to 1978, to our Embassy in Tel Aviv, as Commercial Counsellor, with accreditation also to (Greek) Cyprus. Turkish-occupied Cyprus to the north is shown in the Greek Cypriot map of the island blanked out in white, as is the southern Greek part of the island shown in Turkish maps. UN troops were stationed at the dividing Green Line and also in Nicosia. On a visit arranged by our British Embassy friends, we visited the north and found resort hotels boarded up and empty, and Turkish soldiers working the agricultural fields. There had been a mass exodus

to the south by the Greek Cypriots. It was a surrealistic atmosphere!

In Israel I pursued opportunities for Canada, with such entities as the railway, banks, various ministries, businessmen and industrial sectors, such as energy, defence, electronics, hi-tech and agriculture. I had the pleasure of being there during the signing of the Camp David Accord, and my son Dan and I were among the first to visit the Sinai after it was turned over to Egypt. It was a two-week hiking trip with the Chevrat L'Tevah (Israeli Nature Society). I also had the honour of meeting the late Prime Minister Begin, the then Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, and my Israeli hero, Moshe Dayan. In my leisure time I played tennis at the Canadian sponsored Tennis Centre in Ramat Hasharon. An ensuing assignment to Headquarters included three and a half years heading one of the legal Divisions of External Affairs in the Lester B. Pearson Building. I also took on a number of acting roles in the Ottawa Little Theatre

The next stop was to have been Beijing, preceded by intense Chinese language training. As my then wife chose to continue with her job in Ottawa, I asked instead for a posting

a bit closer to home. I ended up going to Havana, Cuba for two years, preceded by a refresher class in Spanish in Cuernavaca, Mexico. After updating my Spanish, I was brought back to earth when in the first week in Cuba I co-chaired meetings at the Cuban Central Bank with a Canadian delegation at which I had to quickly adjust to the peculiarities of Cuban Spanish which involves rapid speech, dropping of the esses, and changes in meaning of some key words. For example, in different countries "coche" can mean car or pig. You don't want to tell people that you bought a used pig.

Cubans adore the ballet, and baseball, much as we love hockey. At the ballet I witnessed people in the audience clapping, cheering and walking around. Imagine that happening here!

Diplomats were constantly monitored. After the telephone company, under the guise of fixing my phone simply installed a better bugging device, I took some pleasure, when I knew the Cubans were listening, by talking loudly to the caller in Hebrew, or in backwards language. Early in my posting there was a serious hurricane that levelled

Continued on next page

trees, telephone poles, sent ocean waters high above the Malecon (sea wall) in Havana, causing flooding blocks away. All we could do was get everyone under tables and tape the windows. We had to work for a long while afterwards without electricity, using candles to prepare our annual reports and plans for the coming year on time.

Since the aborted 1961 invasion by American-trained, exiled Cubans at the Bay of Pigs, Cuba has anticipated further attempts and deploys troops manning trenches along the coast facing Miami. I met the three Castro brothers on separate occasions and, when I told Ramon that he resembles El Presidente, he rejoined with, "No, he looks like me. I'm older."

Next stop was Nairobi, Kenya, housed in a nice bungalow on an old coffee plantation, with sloping ground containing a giant old tree under which we believe Kikuyu leaders once sat on a wooden throne. We also discovered a nest of cobras, the granddaddy of which my gardener, Samuel, (an otherwise gentle, lovable Beluyah tribesman who would bring home a different female "cousin" almost every weekend) deftly beheaded with a machete.

My territory also included Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Mauritius and Madagascar. On one memorable occasion, for bilateral meetings with Ugandan President Museveni, the High Commissioner and I flew in a small aircraft from Nairobi to Lake Victoria over herds of animals, volcanos, bomas (homes), quick right turn at the lake, landing at Entebbe airport. This deliberately traced the same route as that taken by the Israeli liberators of skyjacked

Israelis years before. We were met by a military convoy and taken to the President's lakeside headquarters, where we were introduced to him and his staff, all dressed a la Castro in military field dress. What a fascinating environment in which to discuss Canada-Ugandan relations! Kampala at that time was a bit like Havana in the way that buildings were deserted and everything looked bleak, in the wake of Idi Amin's reign of terror. I met more than a few Ismailis who had fled Amin for Canada and returned to Uganda to try to regain their confiscated homes.

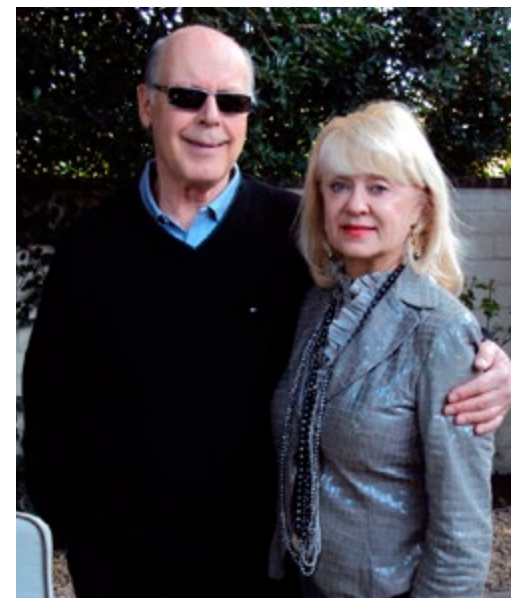
One Monday morning my nerves were tested when I entered the High Commission and was asked to listen to a recorded message advising that bombs had been placed in the building, set to explode at noon. We had the building evacuated while awaiting the appearance of smartly dressed Kenyan police with their Israeli-trained Doberman Pincers to sniff for explosives. Fortunately, only the chief of administration and I were there to sweat it out with the police. No bombs were found. My thought had been, "what an awful way to die!"

Another memorable occasion occurred in 1998 Nairobi, when I was invited to lunch with my next-door Israeli neighbour, attended by then Deputy Foreign Minister Netanyahu and his wife. A most interesting afternoon was spent chatting with them. The next day Mr. Netanyahu announce the naming of my neighbour as the Israeli Ambassador to Kenya upon restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

My final assignments included exotic Winnipeg for one year, San Francisco, from 1990 to 1992, and lastly Dayton, Ohio as Canadian ci-

vilian liaison officer to the United States Materiel Command, with offices at Wright Patterson Airforce Base. I liaised with senior officers, technical people, scientists at the base and other bases under WPAB, to jointly work on opportunities for bilateral research, development, production and procurement under the Canada/US Memorandum of Understanding. The base houses a magnificent military aerospace museum with military aircraft and equipment, old and new, on display. Among the many buildings and facilities on the base are several that many believe contain crashed alien aircraft, undergoing reverse engineering for development of new technology. Also, rumours persist of aliens on the base, dead and/or alive, but of course there is top-secret security status so that who knows the truth?

I returned to Edmonton in 1994, and work as a mediator for the Alberta Ministry of Justice in civil claims litigations. My wife, Dyanne, and I celebrated our 10th anniversary in February, 2019.



Al and Dyanne c. 2010

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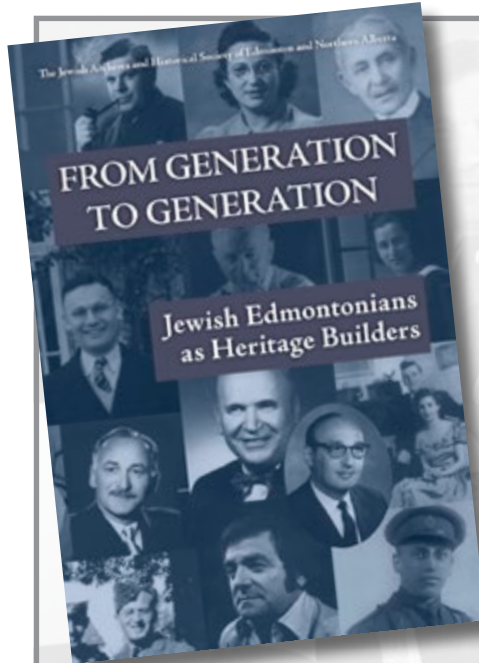
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