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HERITAGE

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

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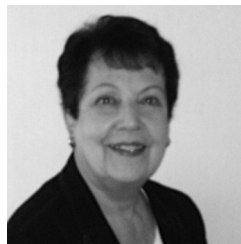
First Session of Camp BB - Riback 1956



Please email the office if you know the names of these campers.
If you have old Camp BB photos or artifacts to donate, please contact us at
jahsena@shaw.ca or phone (780) 489-2809.

JHSSA #2526

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From the President,

by JUDY GOLDSAND

June 2014

By now, most of you know that Debby Shoctor has left her position at JAHSENA to become the new CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. Debby has been the mainstay of our organization during her 13 year tenure with JAHSENA and we will miss her greatly. Of course, we wish her the very best as she assumes her new challenges directing the activities of Edmonton's Jewish Community.

We have received several applications in response to our advertisement for an Archivist and hope to have a new professional in place before the end of August. In the meantime, Colleen Paull is holding the fort at the JAHSENA office on a part-time basis. She would be happy to help you with information or questions.

During the past month, JAHSENA has co-sponsored events with other Jewish Community organizations. In May, we sponsored one of the ten films presented in the Jewish Film Festival. And, together with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, we are

co-sponsoring a pictorial exhibit about the history of Canadian Jewry. It was developed by the Canada Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and runs from June 2 to 13 at the Prince of Wales Armories Heritage Centre, 10440 – 108 Avenue. Hours are: Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm; Wednesdays to 8 pm. Entrance is free.

As part of the Edmonton and District Heritage Society's week-long tour of historical sites in Edmonton, JAHSENA will offer a tour of Beth Shalom Synagogue on Sunday, July 20 at 10:30 am. Everyone in the Jewish and general community is welcome to attend.

During the coming months, several of our volunteers will continue to conduct oral history interviews to add to our collection. We hope that you, our readers, will send us your documents, photographs and other materials that tell your families' stories that contribute to the rich history of Edmonton's and Northern Alberta's Jewish communities.

Judy Goldsand, President

Letter to the Editor

Dear JAHSENA:

The Winter 2014 *HERITAGE* article on Teddy's Lunch reminded me of the Winter 2011 *HERITAGE* article on Edmonton delis and my Summer 2011 *HERITAGE* letter to the Editor where I noted the significant drop in pastrami quality that occurred around 1960. I have tried the pastrami in many cities I have visited and I never experienced pastrami as good as the pastrami served at Teddy's Lunch, that was manufactured by Chicago Kosher Meatpacking of Winnipeg. Well, now I know why. The November 30, 2011 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* had an article on NYC pizza and an on-line reader comment from one Allen Roth said something about pizza and then the following:

... and I grew up in Brooklyn, in the days when pastrami was still cured with nitrates, nitrites, and all the other goodies which the Federal govt now prohibits, and now there is absolutely nowhere to be gotten the pastrami that was available in any good ordinary neighborhood deli in Brooklyn in the 1950s. I can only rely on my memories of those sandwiches that tasted like ambrosia. ...

I take Roth's comment to be an endorsement of my memory of 1950s pastrami in Edmonton and also that pre-1960-quality pastrami, aka "Jewish ambrosia", is gone forever. Post-1960 pastrami fressers will never know what they missed.

Mel Comisarow, Vancouver, B.C.

ירשה HERITAGE

The Journal of the Jewish
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of Edmonton and Northern

Alberta

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Jews in Canada Exhibit



Felice Lifshitz speaks at the Jews in Canada Exhibit opening. Larson photo.

From June 2-13, JAHSENA was privileged to co-sponsor an exhibit along with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton put together by CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs entitled "Jews: A Canadian Story in Pictures." The exhibit and opening were held at the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre on the second floor.

Since 1760, Jews have helped open Canada's frontier, build Canada's cities, fight in Canada's wars and have made their mark on Canadian society. The story of Canadian Jews is a story of immigrants, farmers, factory workers, soldiers, survivors, social activists, entrepreneurs and, yes, the occasional cowboy. This exhibit

offered us a stunning pictorial journey through Jewish history in Canada and showed how one small group had an enormous impact in shaping our great country.

An additional exhibit featuring local Jewish history was added by JAHSENA to the exhibit. The opening reception featured local History and Women's Studies Professor Felice Lifshitz, from the University of Alberta, who spoke about "The Celluloid Ghetto? – Jews in Medieval Film," about which she is writing a book.



Felice Lifshitz

JAHSENA Spring Program



Paula Simons and friend.



L-R: Jini Vogel, Debby Shoctor, Paula Simons and friend.

JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

These items have recently found their way into the archives, and are available for research purposes:

Three items found behind a wall at Edmonton House dating from ca. 1981 relating to the Schechter family of Columbia, donated by Marc de La Bruyere. *If anyone knows something about this, please call the office.*

1 box of miscellaneous text, 23 negatives and 99 photos from the Beth Shalom Synagogue.

Three oral history interviews conducted by the JAHSENA Oral History Committee: Cecil Paull, Frieda Bugis and Harold & Eleanor Eist.

One photograph of a Talmud Torah award presentation, donated by David Kauffman.

2 pro-Israel signs from when the community used to do marches around town.

An old Edmonton Journal excerpt regarding the Holocaust,

Several English and Hebrew books, on Jewish history, Israeli history, some novels and books on health and philosophy, donated by Daniel Larson.

The Jewish Archives & Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is always looking for new donations. If you have any personal papers, photographs, negatives, books, audio-visual recordings or other items relating to the history of the Jewish community of Edmonton and Northern Alberta that you would like preserved for generations to come, please contact our office at (780) 489-2809.

Jewish Fitness Instructors

BY PAULA E. KIRMAN WITH NOTES FROM JEFF LEON

While not a huge number, Jewish fitness instructors do exist here in Edmonton. Here are profiles of a few we know about.

SEEMA LEON

Seema Leon was one of the first exercise instructors in the Edmonton Jewish Community. She taught classes at the Jewish Community Centre in the 1960s and '70s. Married to Herb Leon, an American soldier who came to Canada during WWII, Seema and Herb were always active in the Jewish community, Herb with B'nai Brith and Camp BB, Seema with Hadassah and other women's organizations.

"As an infant, Seema Podolsky immigrated from Russia in 1924 with her older sister and parents, Baruch (Benjamin) and Luba. Part of a wave of European Jewish immigration, the family settled in Toronto, where her father eked out a living as a peddler.

"Seema excelled in school, learning to "read her questions twice." But she abandoned her studies after Grade 8 to help support her family. Later she made her way to her aunt and uncle's home in Edmonton, where she worked for her uncle in his dry cleaning business.

"In synagogue she met Herb, a U.S. Army soldier from Brooklyn stationed at an Edmonton weather base. A lifelong relationship of love, respect and support began. Married in 1945, the newlyweds moved to New York for a short time. But opportunities were limited, so, when Herb had a job offer in Edmonton, they returned to Canada.

"Their three sons, Barry, Jeff and Lawrie, became Seema's focus. She generously opened her home and dinner table to those who were alone and wanted companionship in a traditional Jewish home. Her baking – raisin loaf, comish (biscotti) and bundt cake – was a highlight.



Seema Leon (left front) teaching "Keep Fit" at the JCC. Also: Mamie Sorokin, Estele Silver, Florence Burstyn, Jan Zurin, Becky Fayerman, Anne Eaman, Ruth & Esther Samuels, Fran Ritch, Florence Mass, Chappy (Esther) Rosenthal. JAHSENA Archives.

"In the early 1960s, private gyms were for men. Seema, concerned with staying healthy, started taking women's Keep Fit classes at a local gym. She again became a star student – then a teacher. She taught Keep Fit to friends in Edmonton's Jewish community, then to women at community centres and school gyms around the city. A true pioneer of women's fitness in Canada, she had a large, enthusiastic following. She taught exercises. She dispensed weight-control advice ("a moment on the lips means an inch on the hips"). She cared about her students, proudly helping them stay healthy.

"In the 1970s, Seema's younger sister, a successful Toronto financial planner, introduced her to Great-West Life in Edmonton. The "read your questions twice" philosophy kicked into gear.

"With no business background, Seema's understanding of people brought her suc-

cess and recognition in life insurance sales and, later, as a financial planner. She built a grassroots practice, catering to business people, professionals, friends, former fitness students and those she met in day-to-day life, from the prominent to the humble. "To do well in business you have to genuinely like people," she said.

"Seema wanted to be forever young. She worked into her 80s, retiring in 2008. Her love for and generosity to her family was paramount. She enjoyed the company of friends and always had a kind, reassuring word for others, putting their needs and feelings before her own.

"And she kept fit, working out daily. At 89, she could touch the floor with the palms of her hands without bending her knees. If she were reading this, no doubt she would insist, "Don't tell them my age." Sorry Mom, it's the rules and I read them twice" – Jeff Leon.

JANE SOBEL

In her own words:

"I was born and raised in Edmonton, and attended Talmud Torah and Ross Sheppard High School. I obtained my B.A. degree at the University of Alberta, and while there also took various physical education courses that I thoroughly enjoyed.

"As a young adult, I always had a passion for fitness, but tried some other jobs at first before settling on a career in fitness. In the early 1980s, I met a fitness expert who was the impetus for my change in career path. She became my mentor and encouraged me to become involved in the fitness industry.

"After training with her for a number of months, I enrolled in the YMCA fitness leadership course. I then furthered my education through the Alberta fitness industry, becoming an Alberta Fitness Leadership Certification Association (AFLCA) leader. With this certification, I now had the opportunity to teach fitness classes, and so began my career in fitness.

"I began teaching fitness by volunteering at many community centres. Then I advanced to teaching numerous fitness classes at a number of private clubs throughout the city including the Riverbend Club, Mayfield Inn, Derrick Club, and of course the Jewish Community Centre (JCC). Later, I also began teaching various fitness classes at the University of Alberta.

"I started out instructing general "aerobic" classes in the 1980s, and then evolved into teaching more specific types of fitness classes. By attending several workshops and weekend courses while teaching, I developed the knowledge to choreograph a variety of classes. I specialized in courses in "step", "strength & endurance", "flexibility", and "cycle".

"I truly enjoy teaching each and every type of class, and for the past 25 years I've loved waking up every morning and working in a profession that's not only enjoyable but very rewarding. My driving force became instructing and meeting all sorts

of interesting people and inspiring them to exercise regularly. Teaching my clients to incorporate both cardio-vascular exercise and strength training into their lives continues to be my goal. I strive to encourage my clients to achieve a healthy lifestyle through fitness. Whether it's an organized class, a walk, jog, swim, or the use of exercise equipment, the key is to be active.

"I strongly believe that exercise is such a vital part of being both physically and mentally healthy and happy. Physical fitness definitely changed my life, and I hope that I have inspired many others along the way."

MATT CAIRNS

"I have been creating, supervising and modifying exercise programs for 15 years in both group and private formats," says Cairns. "I got started as a personal trainer at the Jewish Community Centre in Edmonton. I became interested after observing a personal training session in the gym and felt that it would be a great fit for me. I was lucky to connect with the personal trainer (Ben Casson), who helped me get started. I worked as a trainer for over ten years using a combination of weight training, cardiovascular exercise, sport-specific training and Pilates. I completed a Master of Science degree in Physical Therapy October 2013 and have been seeing patients with a wide variety of musculoskeletal, orthopedic and neurological conditions since."

Matt currently works full-time as a physiotherapist at Remed Rehabilitation Centre, where there is a strong focus on exercise and education for the patients. He is originally from Edmonton, where he lives with his wife Tami who is originally from Winnipeg. The couple are expecting a child in June. "My parents and older brother are here as well, along with his children and many other cousins," he adds. "My mother's maiden name is Pekarsky, and her father, Leo Pekarsky, was the first principal of the Edmonton Talmud Torah. My father Bobby Cairns is one of Canada's premiere jazz guitar players."



Jane Sobel – JAHSENA Archives.



Judy Miller – JAHSENA Archives.

JUDY MILLER

Miller is a veteran fitness instructor, leading groups for 34 years. "I am a paid instructor who does a variety of group exercises. I teach Step, Interval Training, Cardio Rebounder, Muscle Endurance, Strength, Core and Flexibility. My groups ranged from the ages of 12 years to 91 years of age!"

Continued on page 12

Camp BB-Riback: Memories Midor L'Dor

BY MAXINE FISCHBEIN

For three generations, Camp BB-Riback — originally known as Camp B'nai Brith — has provided a phenomenal Jewish camping experience for youth from Alberta, Saskatchewan and beyond on the shores of Pine Lake near Red Deer, Alberta.

“The camp’s success is due to the power of the peer experience,” says Edmontonian and former board chair Geoff Sky, who remembers the thrill of learning new skills from teenaged counsellors he looked up to and, in turn, teaching outdoor skills to the kids who followed him.

Since 1956, kids from Western Canada and beyond have enjoyed great summers at Pine Lake and although all of them grow up — and most move on — it is clear that Camp BB-Riback continues to hold a special place in their lives.

Former campers and staff, many of whom hail from multigenerational Camp BB families, have taken much pride in giving back to the camp and the Jewish community at large.

Former Edmontonian Josh Staav, who now serves the Calgary JCC as manager of marketing and events, recalled that Camp BB played a major role in moulding him. A camper every summer since the age of eight, Staav later worked as a Junior Counsellor, Senior Counsellor, LTP Coordinator and then as an Assistant Director.

“I always really enjoyed camp and decided I was going to keep going until



Sascha Grunberg and Bill Meloff in front of Camp sign, August 3, 1975. JHSSA #3080

they said I couldn’t go back anymore,” said Staav, now 27.

Nobody told Staav he couldn’t return ... he simply moved on to other positions of increasing responsibility as a full-time Jewish communal professional. These days he’s “back at camp” as a member of the Camp BB-Riback board of directors.

Lessons learned during summers at the camp continue to inform his professional life and his ongoing participation as a Jewish lay leader. Camp buddies remain his nearest and dearest friends.

This is no surprise to Aron Eichler, who in 1956 was Camp BB’s first Director together with his late wife, Ida, with whom he returned to Pine Lake once again to run the camp between 1968 and 1970.

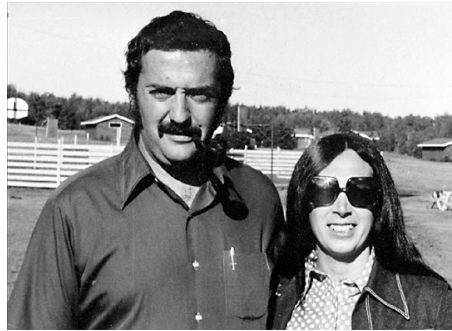
“Friendships that were made there were everlasting,” recalls Eichler who delightedly attended weddings of campers who met at Camp BB. Edmonton couples who tied the knot after camp romances include Edmonton Jewish community leader and former Camp Chair Howie

Sniderman and his wife Debbie (nee Hamburger) and Geoff Sky and his wife, Lauren.

Lauren’s parents — the camp’s longest serving directors, Bill Meloff z”l and Rivvy Meloff (nee Richman) — also married after a camp courtship that began in 1958. Bill introduced horses to the camp that year and was the resident cowboy. Rivvy was the Israeli song and dance director.

The rest, as they say, is history. The Meloffs’ grandson, Michael Sky, 18, is returning to camp this summer to help run the waterfront. According to his grandmother Rivvy, he has ambitions to one day follow in the footsteps of his grandparents as camp director. His brother Billy also returns this summer as a Counsellor in Training.

Camp BB has spawned numerous Jewish leaders whose networks can be traced all the way back to highlights like the Maccabiah sports day, a time-honoured tradition first instituted at Camp BB by Aron and Ida Eichler.



Left to Right:
Camp B'nai Brith
Dinner, January 1957.
Aron Eichler (camp
director, speaking)
and M. Ted Riback.
JHSSA# 625.43
Bill & Rivvy Melloff,
JAHSENA Archives.
Justice Tevie Miller,
JAHSENA Archives.

"Camp helps children to grow physically, mentally and Jewishly, including a love for Israel and Jewish people everywhere," recalled Eichler in an interview last year. "They learn about Judaism and about living in peace and harmony with others."

North American studies confirm that kids who go to Jewish camp are far more likely to engage actively in Jewish life when they reach adulthood.

This is precisely the vision that drove camp founder Ted Riback when he championed the establishment in the 1950s of a Jewish camp on the shores of the lake then known as Ghost Pine. So dedicated was Riback to the cause, that he even lived on site during the construction of the camp over the summer of 1955, working closely with Calgary-based architect Jack Abugov who drew the plans and assisted in overseeing construction.

But what really "lit a fire" under Ted Riback was a disaster-in-the-making that he witnessed while visiting his daughter Donna, a senior counsellor at a Young Judaea Camp held in rented facilities at Lake Chestermere, near Calgary.

When they got to one cabin, they couldn't open the door because it was so badly warped. When they finally burst in, they startled a bunch of girls who were hiding there, smoking.

Riback was horrified. Smoking on straw mattresses in a cabin with a door that couldn't open was a recipe for potential tragedy. Riback decided then and there that the Jewish community needed to build their own, safe facilities.

He made it his mission to get B'nai Brith Lodges in Alberta and

Saskatchewan on board, personally traveling to every city and town with lodges in order to raise funds for the purchase of lands he secured at Pine Lake. The camp enjoyed significant support from B'nai Brith and, later, from other key organizations in the Jewish community.

Notably, when a severe recession in the 1980s created great hardship for Camp BB, Edmonton Jewish Federation and the Calgary Jewish Community Council (now Calgary Jewish Federation) joined forces with B'nai Brith lodges and private donors to ensure the survival of the Camp.

Along the way, the camp also enjoyed the financial support of government. Rivvy Melloff recalls the generosity of Horst Schmid, Alberta's former minister of Government Services and Minister of Culture (1975-1979), in providing badly-needed grants to the camp during the Meloffs' second stint as camp directors between 1971 and 1985.

Over the years, generous support within and beyond the Jewish community has allowed Camp BB-Riback to serve religious kids, secular kids, the affiliated and unaffiliated, the able bodied and those with special needs.

Geoff Sky and Rivvy Melloff recall how the first waves of Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in the 1970s brought many Russian speaking Jewish kids to what was then known as Camp B'nai Brith, helping to ease their integration into local Jewish communities.

"I didn't think about it in those terms as a kid," said Sky in a 2013 interview. What I do remember is that we could all be kids and just have fun together."

Sky's mother-in-law, Rivvy Melloff, remembers the influx of Jewish kids from the FSU "as if it happened yesterday." She made it a priority to aid their integration, personally teaching ESL classes daily following lunch in the chadar ochel (dining hall).

"It was amazing to see their progress," recalls Melloff. "Some came to us not knowing a word of English and by the following summer, they were fluent."

Melloff fondly remembers the support the camp received from long-serving Edmonton Jewish Family Services Executive Director Clara Mintz who worked in partnership with camp directors to ensure maximum support for children requiring advocacy, including immigrants from behind the "Iron Curtain."

Other caring community members who enriched the camp experience were doctors – and often their spouses – who did volunteer rotations at the camp.

"I slept better when they were there," says Melloff, recalling with affection the service of Calgary doctor Harvey Rabin and his wife, Rayna. For many years, Rayna Rabin sewed costumes for camp musicals directed by Melloff and helped make hundreds of blintzes as a special evening treat for camp staff during multiple seasons.

In recent years the Rabins' daughter, Erica, a physician at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, continued the family tradition as a camp physician.

Phil Gordon was another memorable camp doctor.

"To this day, I can picture Phil Gordon playing basketball with one little boy who

Continued on page 8

CAMP BB-RIBACK

Continued from page 7

badly needed the attention,” says Meloff. Like other doctors before and since, the Edmonton physician, together with his wife Tessa, served BB campers with love both within and beyond the infirmary.

According to Meloff, Camp BB was a lifeline in numerous ways, especially for kids and families hailing from smaller towns and cities. Lacking a critical Jewish mass, their hometowns did not provide the same Jewish opportunities enjoyed by youth in communities like Calgary and Edmonton.

Born and raised in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, there was always a special place in Meloff’s heart for kids from small communities including some fondly remembered campers from Billings, Montana whose mother had tragically succumbed to breast cancer.

Decades later, Saskatoon native Zac Waldman says that summers at Camp BB-Riback, both as a camper and as a long-serving staff member, have been life-changing. Serving the camp this season as a volunteer nurse between his shifts at the Innisfail Health Centre, Waldman, 21 – who just graduated with his nursing degree from the University of Saskatoon – previously worked as canoe specialist and medic.

He follows in the footsteps of his father, Ron, who spent summers at Camp BB while growing up in Moose Jaw,



Saskatchewan. Zac’s younger siblings, Max and Molly, are also veteran campers who will be working at BB-Riback this summer.

“It shows you how passionate our family is about the camp, and I am also very fortunate that camp has given me the opportunity to gain real skills in my professional field,” Zac says.

“My Jewish identity was formed at camp. My family isn’t very religious . . . Camp gave me a way to learn about Judaism in a fun and unforced way.”

According to Waldman, highlights include reciting blessings before and after meals and other fun camp traditions like Shira, or singsongs that include traditional and Modern Hebrew music.

“I couldn’t have experienced it in Saskatoon to the same extent,” says Waldman who, like other members of very small Jewish communities, is particularly grateful for having had the opportunity to enjoy immersive Jewish camp experiences in

the company of an expanded range of peers.

Many Jewish children do not have the benefit of extensive Jewish practice or involvement at home. For them, in particular, Jewish camp provides a valuable portal. And even for those already immersed in Judaism, Jewish camp provides a peer experience that helps to deepen their experience.

“Leaving your family and your community to go to camp has been a cornerstone in the development of Jewish leaders since the beginning,” says current Camp BB-Riback Director Jerrod Henoch.

And by the beginning, he means THE beginning.

In Parshat Lech Lecha, God tells Abraham to leave his home, go to the wilderness and learn to be a leader.

“I like that Lech Lecha tells us to ‘go away’ and ‘go to yourself’. Both of these things are what camp is all about” says Henoch.

“It happens with Moses too - wilderness, freedom, and a greater sense of who you are and who you want to be, as a person and as a Jew”.

Camp is also about those pioneers who had a vision and left a legacy to grateful individuals and communities in Alberta, in Saskatchewan and beyond . . . people like Calgary Morris Hector and Edmontonians Mickey Dlin and Tevie Miller who rose to the occasion when camp founder Ted Riback came calling, encouraging the North West Canadian Council of B’nai Brith to generously support the establishment of the camp.

It’s about early camp coordinators like



Jerrod Henoch with Donna Riback, supplied photo.



Camp B'nai Brith First Session Campers, 1956. JHSSA #2526

Abe and Rose Segal and long-serving camp chairmen like Burton Margolus.

It's about the people for whom "good enough" wasn't good enough . . . benefactors like Calgaryans Harry and Martha Cohen whose eponymous swimming pool was dedicated by Alberta's Lieutenant Governor Grant MacEwan in 1968.

"The pool was a really wonderful addition to the camp," recalls Rivvy Meloff. "It allowed us to provide swimming lessons. The kids were very excited to achieve their swimming levels at camp."

Another capital project that greatly enhanced camp life was paved tennis courts, says Meloff. "It was just terrific. Campers played throughout the day and the staff would often play at night. I enjoyed taking lessons too."

Although the tennis courts are a thing of the past, Meloff says she's impressed with the ropes course, climbing wall and zipline enjoyed by a whole new generation of campers.

Other notable improvements over the years included a new Arts and Crafts building in 1976 in memory of Edmontonian Mickey Dlin. Though that building was later replaced with the new Jr. Side Clubhouse, the legacy and the memories remain.

A twister narrowly missed the camp in the summer of 2000, wreaking havoc in a nearby campground and trailer park where 12 people were killed and more than 100 injured. The Abugov Centre (named for Jack Abugov) -- a state of the art, tornado proof building featuring A & C, dance

studio, staff lounge and multipurpose space -- was dedicated in the wake of that tragedy when the community, supported by additional funding from the Provincial Government, rallied to ensure the safety of campers.

Similar generosity has been a hallmark of the camp since its inception with many dollars raised at honouree events saluting dedicated camp volunteers and benefactors including Edmontonians Herb Leon and Associate Chief Justice Tevie Miller and Calgaryans Harry Cohen and Dr. Sidney Gelfand.

When Ted Riback was in his 90s, he was thrilled when approached by former camp chair Howie Sniderman who enlisted his help in once again bringing the camp to new heights. Proving that one is never too old for camp, Riback sprung back into action with energy normally associated with people half his age. Yet again, he gave generously to the camp, rallying additional support from friends and community leaders, and he was delighted when the camp re-named itself in his honour.

"It was important to the camp to teach kids that people like Dad worked very hard for this thing that they treasure," recalls Donna Riback.

"When Dad turned 100, all the kids at camp sang Happy Birthday to him as I held the telephone for him. It was an especially happy moment for him, as was the giant birthday card signed by all the campers."

The card continues to hold a place of prominence in Donna Riback's heart and



Geoff Sky & Lauren Meloff, ca. 1980, JAHSENA Archives.

home.

Meanwhile, Camp BB and Camp BB-Riback hold a special place in the hearts of thousands of campers and counselors from Alberta and Saskatchewan and numerous other towns and cities throughout North America and around the world including Israel, Europe and Asia who have, as the famous camp song proudly proclaims, "put on your blue and white sweater."

"Oh we'll sing and dance

And we'll find romance

And we'll have fun while we're here!"

The history provided in the foregoing article is representational rather than exhaustive.

Sadly, there isn't the space to pay tribute to all the individuals who have served Camp BB and Camp BB-Riback as coordinators, chairs and directors. They are fondly remembered by all whose lives have been touched by the magic of Camp BB!

Former Edmontonian Maxine Fischbein is a Calgary-based freelance writer and proud mother of two grown daughters who were raised with the help of Camp BB-Riback. Her article is based on pieces she wrote previously for the Edmonton Jewish News and the Jewish Free Press (Calgary) as well as archives from Camp BB-Riback, JAHSENA and the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta.

If you have stories, names, photographs or information that will help us preserve the history of Camp B'nai Brith and Camp BB-Riback, please consider documenting and sharing them with JAHSENA and/or Camp BB-Riback.

A History of Witten LLP, Barristers & Solicitors

By STEVEN SHAFIR

Witten LLP is an Edmonton law firm with a visible presence in Edmonton's Jewish community. Many members of the Jewish community have worked as lawyers at the firm.

Norman Witten grew up in Purdue, Saskatchewan and graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He moved to Edmonton with his family and enrolled at the University of Alberta Faculty of Law. In 1953, he was awarded the Gold Medal for academic achievement. Shortly thereafter, he was admitted to the bar and started practicing at Miller & Miller, a firm founded in 1924 by Abe W. Miller, Q.C. Miller's son, Tevie H. Miller, who subsequently served as Associate Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, was the other member of the firm when Norman Witten joined.

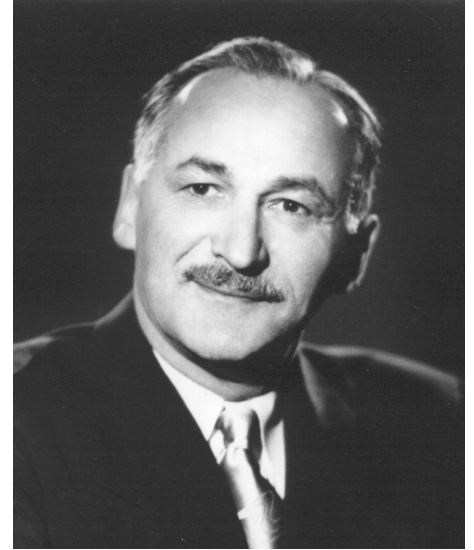
Since its founding, the firm's name changed often as new partners came onto the scene, and took the following various iterations throughout the years:

- Miller & Miller, circa 1954;
- Miller, Miller & Witten, 1950s and early 1960s;
- Miller, Miller, Witten & Vogel, 1965-1967;
- Miller, Miller, Witten, Vogel & Pollock, 1967;
- Miller, Witten, Pekarsky, Vogel & Pollock, 1967-1973;
- Miller, Witten, Friedman, Pekarsky & Vogel, 1973-1976;
- Witten, Pekarsky & Vogel, 1976-1980;
- Witten, Vogel & Lyons, 1980-1982;
- Witten, Vogel Binder & Lyons, 1982-1984;

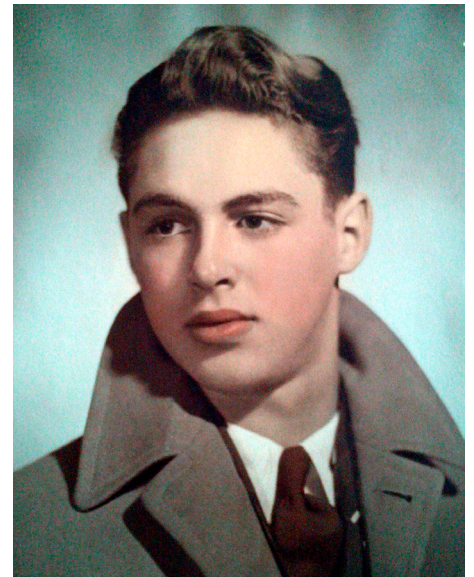
- Witten Binder, 1984-2000;
- Witten LLP, 2000-Present.

In 1954, the firm, comprised of 3 lawyers, was located on 101 Street and Jasper Avenue, in the old Baltzan building. Through planned growth and mergers, the firm moved in January 1970 to the Oxford Building on 100 Street and Jasper Avenue. At the end of March 1987, the firm moved to the then Principal Plaza (now Canadian Western Bank Place) at the corner of 103 Street and Jasper Avenue, and the firm's offices remain at that location to this day.

Witten LLP started as a firm exclusively of Jewish lawyers, and has always had a significant number of Jewish lawyers even in the present day. Those whose names have been on the firm's masthead over the years include: Abe Millerz'l, who became an MLA and President of the Alberta Bar Association; Tevie Miller z'l, who became the Associate Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench; Norman Witten z'l; Barry Vogel, who became an ethics advisor for the Law Society of Alberta; Daniel Pekarsky, Leonard Pollock z'l, who was a professor of law at the University of Alberta; Samuel Friedman, who also became a Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta and was twice Deputy Attorney General of Alberta; Ricky Lyons, and Mel Binder, who served as an Alderman for Ward 4 of the City of Edmonton, an Edmonton Public School Board Trustee and as a Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Numerous other Jewish lawyers worked at Witten at various times, either retiring with the firm, becoming judges, leaving the practice of law, moving along to other



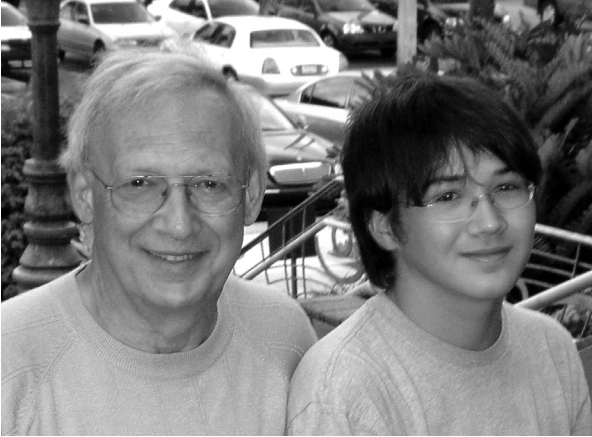
Abe Miller, JAHSENA Archives photo.



Young Norman Witten. Supplied photo

firms or on their own, or continuing to currently practice with the firm.

Since the firm's founding, Witten LLP has continuously provided legal services to both the Jewish and greater communities. The firm is a well-known, well-established law firm which enjoys the respect of its clients and peers. The firm offers full services except for criminal and family matters, acting for large and small clients for virtually all of their needs in Alberta and beyond, with lawyers who have been called to the bar in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories



Barry Vogel and grandson Jordan. Supplied photo.



Norm Witten, Q.C. Supplied photo

and Nunavut.

Members of Witten LLP have traditionally been active in community public service. Members of the firm and alumni presently serve or have served as Queen's Bench Justices and Provincial Court Judges and in various capacities with the University of Alberta Law School, the Law Society of Alberta, the Canadian Bar Association, Edmonton City Council, the Edmonton Bar Association, Legal Education Society of Alberta, as well as numerous charitable and political organizations.

Witten LLP lawyers have sat in the past or continue to sit on boards of numerous Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, B'Nai Brith Youth Organization, Beit Horim, Beth Israel Congregation, Beth Shalom Congregation, Edmonton Talmud Torah, Maccabi Canada, Canadian Friends of Hebrew University and the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism.

Today, Witten LLP has grown to be one of the largest firms in Edmonton, with over 55 lawyers. The current Jewish lawyers at Witten are David Margolus, Q.C., Leonard Dolgoy, Q.C., Earl Parker, Q.C., Danny Zalmanowitz, Q.C., Howie Sniderman, Q.C., Mel Tussman, Q.C., Ellery Lew, Ron Sorokin (Managing Partner), Steven Shafir, Liam Kelly and Sharon Ohayon. Norman Witten

remained involved with the firm until his recent passing earlier this year at the age of 85.

The author of this article, Steven Shafir, is a civil litigator whose practice emphasizes creditors' remedies, banking, foreclosures, security enforcement, leasing litigation, and landlord's remedies. After earning his B.A. (2000) and his LL.B. (2004) from the University of Alberta, Steve was admitted to the Alberta bar in 2005 and the Nunavut bar in 2009.

Away from work, Steve is extremely active in the community. He has taught the "Being a Landlord" course as part of Metro Continuing Education's "Law for the Layperson" series and has lectured to real estate agents at the Edmonton Real Estate Board on the foreclosure process in Alberta. Steve is a member of the Canadian Bar Association Creditor's Rights subsection. He also sits on the board of several community organizations, including Camp B.B. Riback (as Past Chairman), the Jewish Federation of Edmonton (as Vice President), and he was the Vice-Chair of the City of Edmonton's Next Generation Task Force. In 2009, Steve received the National Award of Excellence for his commitment to the Canadian Jewish Community. During this time he



Steven Shafir

co-chaired the National Young Leadership Israel Advocacy Program for the Canadian Jewish Congress, and through this position led missions for Members of Canada's Parliament to Israel. Steve is also involved politically and has assisted in various campaigns on the municipal and federal levels.

On Display

At the JCC...

Currently on display at the new JCC you will find an exhibit of artifacts from our collections. Come visit us at 10220-156 St., Suite 200 to see the exhibit and our new offices. If you would like to donate a book, document or a piece of memorabilia to add to our collection, call 780-489-2809.

On the Web...

Check out the Archives Society of Alberta Exhibit prepared for Archives Week 2012, entitled "Looking Good, Alberta, Fashion in the Archives," at www.archivesalberta.org. You will find five photos from our collection, one of which, a photo of Lou Moss Manswear is featured in a new 2014 calendar, which is available from our office. Also check out the Peter Owen exhibit online at the same website under "Letters from the Trunk." Old issues of our newsletter, Heritage/Yerusha are available on our website, www.jahsena.ca.

New Website!

JAHSENA has revised its website. Please visit us at www.jahsena.ca to see our new and improved website designed by Kyle Huberman of Pixel designs. Thank you to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton for the grant we received for this!

NEW MEMBERS

JAHSENA would like to welcome the following new members:

Karen Estrin, Vancouver, BC
Paul Estrin, Quebec City, Quebec
Randy Bell, Edmonton, AB

FITNESS INSTRUCTORS

Continued from page 5

She was inspired by “a wonderful fitness instructor” and received her Alberta Fitness and Leadership Certification (AFLCA) in 1981. “I have been teaching ever since. I am probably one of the oldest instructors in the city!”

Fitness is a secondary career for Miller, who was with the Edmonton Public School District as a teacher, consultant, and finally a supervisor for over 40 years. “During that time I taught seven fitness classes a week and sometimes subbed for other instructors as well,” she says. She is now retired from her education career.

Miller is originally from Edmonton and lives here with her husband. They have two children and four grandchildren also in the city. She was involved with the BBYO and Camp B'nai B'rith when her children were younger, and is currently a volunteer with Beth Shalom Synagogue.

“Although my fitness career is soon coming to an end, I don't ever intend to stop working out,” she says. “Each one of us owes it to ourselves and to those we love, to keep fit, to keep moving, at whatever level is appropriate. I know I have been and continue to be a positive role model in this area to my own children and now my grandchildren.”

DEBBIE SONEGO

Debbie Sonogo has been a certified

fitness instructor teaching step aerobics and a variety of other fitness classes for 15 years, including step and strength, strength classes, boot camp, and hi-lo. She has the theoretical and practical training required to complete certification in both Group Choreographed Based Fitness and Group Resistance Training.

“I am pretty versatile,” she says. “Although I have taught some classes where I have received remuneration throughout the city and at a wide range of fitness venues, I have primarily volunteered my time as a fitness instructor. I have also had the pleasure of leading workshops in health and wellness as well as workshops on Step Aerobics.”

Sonogo, who was born and raised in Edmonton and works full time as a psychologist, finds exercise to be an important part of her life. “I enjoy working out and have been pretty active most of my life. While I was participating in a fitness class, I was approached and asked if I might be interested in becoming certified to teach,” she recalls. “I had never thought about it before that time but I was open to looking into it. I have never looked back.”

Debbie primarily teaches at the Jamie Platz YMCA, and sometimes her daughter Jamie joins her to teach tag-team classes.

Farewell to Claudia, Hello Colleen

We are sorry to say that our long-time conservator, Claudia Kertzer, will be leaving us at the end of May to return to Seattle with her husband, Johnathan Kertzer. Claudia



has worked long and hard to preserve and protect our precious collection and we will be forever grateful to her. We wish the Kertzers well in their new (old) home. We would also like to welcome Colleen Paull as Archives Assistant, a position she will be filling in Claudia's wake, but which will be more archival and less conversational. If you have any questions about membership, reference inquiries, etc., please direct them to Colleen. Colleen is married and has three adult children and for over 30 years has been living and volunteering in Edmonton. Her longest involvement has been with Hadassah-WIZO which she joined as a young wife. She has served a number of capacities on the board and co-chaired two Bazaars.

A lot of her volunteering coincided with stages in my children's lives. She served/chaired in the following organizations: PACE (parents of asthmatic/allergic children of Edmonton); Lung Association, Indoor Playground (infants to 3), The Glenora Preschool, The Glenora Elementary School, Westminster Jr. High School, The Glenora Community League and Social Committees planning events for these boards.

The search is underway for a new Archivist, but in the meantime, please direct your inquiries to Colleen.

DONATION CARDS

JAHSENA now has donation cards with historic pictures on them available for purchase. Mark your special simchas by sending a donation to JAHSENA. Contact the office for more details at: 780-489-2809. We have received the following donations:

MAZEL TOV

To Lawrence Rodnunsky upon joining the Board of JAHSENA, from Barry and Fani Estrin.

SYMPATHY

To the family of Anita Pearlman, z'l, from Judy & George Goldsand, and from Debby & Marshall Shoctor.

To the family of Dr. Ted Aaron, z'l, from the Board of JAHSENA, and from Marshall & Debby Shoctor.

To Jodi, Michael and Rebecca Zabłudowski, from the Morin family, on the death of Jodi's mother, Rita Weinstein, z'l.