



AJL-CANADA NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

AJL-CANADA EXECUTIVE

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Dear AJL-Canada members,

It grieves me to inform you that our beloved AJL-Canada president and friend, Anna Skorupsky, passed away on Saturday March 8, 2025, after a courageous battle with cancer.

We put the “spotlight” on Anna in the October 2022 issue of this Newsletter, but I’m copying the (edited) article here in her honour.

May her memory be for a blessing.

B’shalom,

Anne



ANNA SKORUPSKY (1955–2025), AJL-Canada president, had a fascinating personal and professional journey. She was born in Kyiv, Ukraine in 1955. She grew up in a Jewish family and had a very busy childhood. In addition to her education at a school with very high standards, she also studied piano for ten years.

Anna's paternal grandfather, a committed Communist, was her role model because he taught her to be strong, honest, and to pursue her goals. Anna was accepted to the government university to study Scientific and Technical Information, Patents, and Library Science, along with the certification to teach elementary school. After obtaining her Master's degree (with honours), Anna worked at the Academy of Sciences and then at the Institute of Science and Technology doing research about patents.

In 1990, Anna immigrated to Israel where she worked in various libraries at Tel Aviv University for almost five years. After that time, Anna and her family moved to Toronto where she eventually obtained a position as librarian at the Jewish Public Library. When that organization was disbanded in 2007, Anna became head of the Holocaust Library until her retirement in 2020.

Anna was proud of the work she did at the Holocaust Library. She was able to include the best Holocaust books from all over the world into the collection, and to help scholars do their research to memorialize the Holocaust. From 2011, she was also gratified to serve as an authorized mentor to students from the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto. Finally, Anna was Vice President of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto Workers Union for a few years before her retirement.

During her retirement, Anna planned to attend ballet and theatre performances, spend time with her family, and translate texts and documents from Ukrainian, Russian, and German into English. She also volunteered with the Shoah Foundation as an interviewer.



- 1) We're still looking for someone to fill the position of president of AJL-Canada. If you think you can offer some time and energy to this not-too-onerous position, please contact me: adublin54@gmail.com.
- 2) Your AJL-Canada executive needs a Program chair or co-chair. It's interesting work, as it brings the organizer in touch with people around the world. If you can help, please contact Marjorie: marjoriegann5@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP

It's never too late to join the AJL-Canada! If you know anyone who might be interested in joining AJL-Canada, please give them my email address: adublin54@gmail.com.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

- Karen Hering, volunteer librarian, Beth Shalom Synagogue, TT School, and Jahsena, Edmonton
- Jody Spiegel, Director, Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, Toronto
- Elizabeth Banks, Curator and Archivist, Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, Toronto
- Carson Phillips, Manager—Academic Initiatives, Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program, Toronto
- Caitlin Donaldson, Director of Collections & Exhibitions, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
- Hannah Marazzi, Acting Executive Director, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
- Lise Kirchner, Director of Education, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

ON THE HUNT FOR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

If you have a bibliography that you would like to share in the Members Only section of our new AJL-Canada website, please send it to me as a Word document. Thanks in advance!



SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS

Rochelle Chester, Teacher-Librarian

Leo Baeck Day School, Toronto

Find me a librarian who does not think they have the best job in the world! I have been blessed to have a career that incorporates my passions: teaching and inspiring children, reading stories, and Jewish education. Over the past 28 years I have worked at The Leo Baeck Day School as a classroom teacher, administrator, and Principal, but I always return to the library.



My passion for writing, reading and stories began when I was young. I loved to read and escape into worlds foreign to my own. In university I was an English Literature and History major, combining my love of the written word and the pursuit of knowledge. Readers are curious people and reading opened many portals for me, helping me to face challenges and shaping my outlook on life. Midway through my career, I made a decision to become the best librarian that I could be for my students. I went back to school to become a school Library Specialist and level One Archivist.

Life as a librarian has changed significantly over the years. As such, I am constantly being challenged to learn about emerging technologies and to incorporate them into my library program. Librarians today are protectors of free expression, gatekeepers of knowledge access, and mentors to both students and teachers. But we are also advice givers, band aid providers, and suppliers of endless comfort and encouragement.



There are many joys to be had as a teacher librarian: The wonder on a child's face when they are engrossed in a book, the excitement they feel when a new book arrives, their curious engagement when I'm reading aloud. My role is to inspire children to love the written word and motivate them to read independently. No child will want to learn to read unless they are incentivized and see the rewards that reading provides. I take this role seriously, as the path to life-long reading begins at the earliest stages of a child's literacy journey. Our library is a place of endless possibilities.



In my role over the years our students have written their own stories, independently and as a class, that they are excited to share with others. When I was both a classroom teacher and part-time librarian, my students spent a year creating their own stories, incorporating research, literacy, artistic, and organizational skills (see photos below). To this day, former students tell me that the most meaningful work they did was in creating those stories.

Anne Dublin started a "The Olive Branch Book Award" and I gratefully took it on as a program at Leo Baeck, where students read three out of a given eight Jewish themed books a year and vote for their favourite to receive the award. We have also participated in the Kids Lit Quiz contest (<https://www.kidslitquiz.com/home.php>), an opportunity for students to showcase their reading knowledge with others in a friendly competition.

A rich library program can make all the difference in a child's academic journey. With passionate librarians and schools that support and value the library, the sky's the limit!

PAST PROGRAM

The webinar on **January 20, 2025**, presented three Holocaust museums from Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. A representative of each museum outlined its mission and an overview of its educational and outreach programs. With AJL's audience of librarians, archivists, educators and authors in mind, our presenters also introduced their museums' resources—books, archives, and other interesting holdings.

Presenters: Hannah Marazzi, Acting Associate Director, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre; Dara Solomon, Executive Director, Toronto Holocaust Museum and Ontario Jewish Archives; Sarah Fogg, Head of Marketing Communications and Public Relations, Montreal Holocaust Museum. The program was followed by a Q&A.

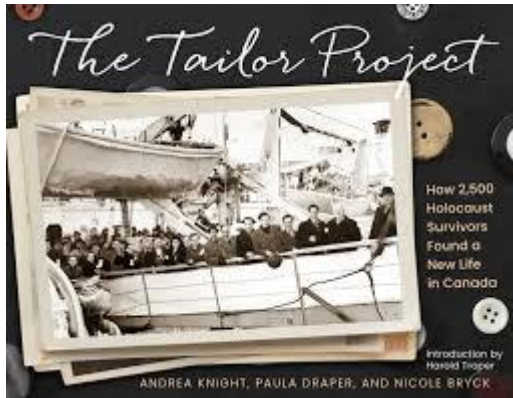
Here's the link to the program: [AJL Canada Presents Holocaust Museums in Canada](#)

FUTURE PROGRAM

Here's an exciting partnership initiative with Classi Learning—another benefit of AJL-Canada membership! (This program is offered at no charge to our members.)

The Tailor Project/ Garment Workers Scheme – with Classi Learning

Wednesday April 23, 2025, 4 p.m. ET



The Garment Workers' Scheme was approved by the Canadian government in 1947 in order to bring approximately 2,000 tailors and their families to work in the garment industry in Canada. The program was largely funded by the Canadian Jewish Congress and organized by a group of Jewish industry leaders. A committee of five men were selected to go to displaced person's camps across Germany and Austria to select tailors for immigration.

Drawing on interviews and archival material, award-winning author **ANNE DUBLIN**, who is the daughter of a tailor who came to Canada through the Garment Workers' Scheme, will give a talk about the history and impact of this program to the Tailor Project families and to Canada as a whole.

Marjorie Gann, AJL-Canada's Programs Chair, is excited to partner with Classi Learning for this program. For more info, see: [Home Page - Classi Learning](#)

Margie Gann, Programs Chair

YASHER KOACH TO OUR AJL-CANADA MEMBERS!

The Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program launched its newest memoir, *Between the Lines: The Diary of Margit Kassai*, on March 5, 2025 at Hart House, University of Toronto.

Between the Lines not only examines Jewish survival in Budapest but also, as Margit writes, "conversion mass fever," and what it meant to be a converted Jew in Budapest at this time. With its unique voice, genre blending and eye-witness accounting, this important

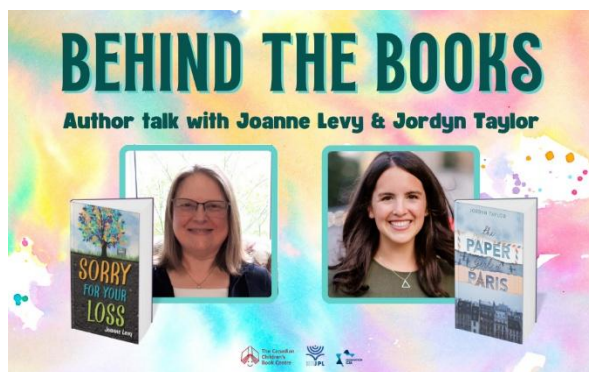
new book will interest scholars in diverse fields, including Holocaust and Hungarian history, life writing and memoir studies, and trauma studies.

Professors Judith Szapor (McGill University) and Julia Creet (York University) unpacked some of the nuances of Kassai's literary style and rich descriptions of life in post-siege Budapest. Eva Szekely, friend and author of the afterword, spoke about Margit's life in Canada. More information about the book can be found at

<https://memoirs.azrielifoundation.org/titles/between-the-lines-the-diary-of-margit-kassai/>



L to R: Prof. Julia Creet, Prof. Judith Szapor



April 27 @ 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm - FREE Event

Don't miss a chance to meet two bestselling authors! **JOANNE LEVY** and Jordyn Taylor are visiting the JPL (Montreal) for Canadian Children's Book Week! They will each give an engaging presentation and Q&A for tweens, teens, and young adults. They will discuss their books, their writing process, and their journeys to becoming authors. You'll get the chance to

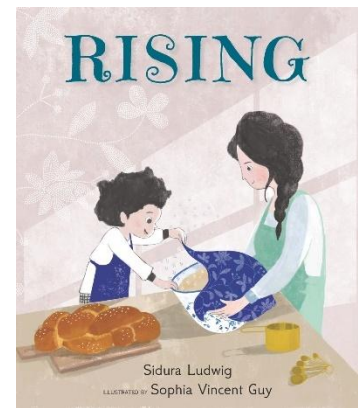
ask questions and chat with the authors! This is a perfect event for young readers and writers. Registration is required and space is limited. More info and registration: <https://jewishpubliclibrary.org/event/behind-the-books-author-talk-with-joanne-levy-and-jordyn-taylor/>

GILA GREEN'S Moroccan fish recipe will appear in the *TLAIM: The Patchwork Cookbook*:

From the website: "A project supported by Be'chol Lashon, this cookbook aims to celebrate the racial and ethnic diversity within the Jewish community. We want to celebrate the myriad unique experiences that each of us has as a product of our identities. We will pair recipes with poems, stories, essays, and photographs from submitters so that it becomes more than just a cookbook but also a mosaic of experiences from a plethora of backgrounds. <https://globaljews.org/innovation-hubs/tlaim/>

Author **SIDURA LUDWIG** is thrilled to share two bits of news! Her debut picture book *RISING* (illustrated by Sophia Vincent Guy, Candlewick Press, 2024) won the Sydney Taylor Honor Award at the 2025 ALA Youth Media Awards in January. Also recently, her middle grade novel, *SWAN: The Girl Who Grew* (Nimbus Publishing, 2024) was selected as a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard for spring 2025.

Sidura's next picture book, *MY SPECTACULAR SUKKAH* will be out with Candlewick Press, fall 2026.



The next issue of *Judaica Librarianship*, dedicated to Canadian collections, is guest-edited by AJL-Canada member, **DR. NADAV SHARON** (The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library - University of Toronto Libraries), and **HANNAH SROUR-ZACKON** (Congregation Shaar Hashomayim Archives, Montreal, Quebec).

For a link to the last issue, see: [Judaica Librarianship](#).

Jewish-Muslim Interactions in Books: The Medieval and Early Modern Periods

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. EDT

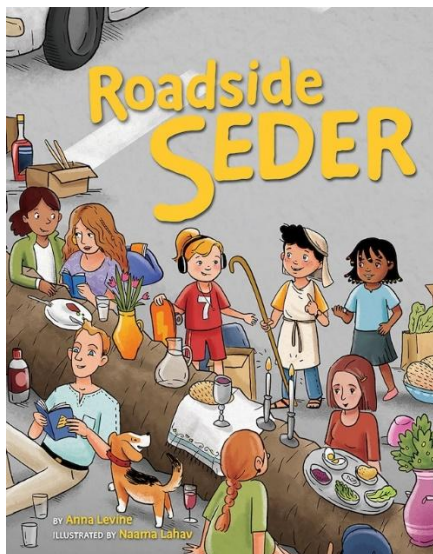


In recent generations, there is a tendency to view and define relations between Jews and Muslims through the lens of 20th-21st century political conflicts. Yet, the peoples that adhere to these two monotheistic religions have interacted in multifaceted – often much more positive – ways through the ages. The purpose of this exhibition is to highlight these relations, some of which had profound impacts on modern-Western culture more generally, through the holdings of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

[Jewish-Muslim Interactions in Books: The Medieval and Early Modern Periods | Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library](#)

Curators: Nadav Sharon and Blair Kuntz

NEW PUBLICATIONS (alphabetical, by author)



Roadside Seder

By Anna Levine (text) & illus. by Naama Lahav

Apples & Honey Press, March 2025.

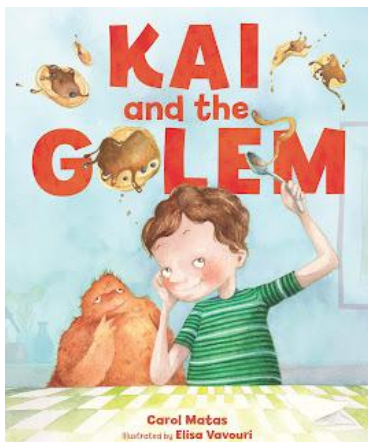
ISBN 9781681156613.

Preschool – Grade 2

In a story about community, problem-solving, and flexibility, young Benjy helps bring everyone together to share in the Passover holiday, even if it isn't how they planned to hold their seder.

Nominated for a Middle East Outreach Award and an AJL Spring Highlight pick, *Roadside Seder* celebrates the diversity of language, customs, and cultures of Israel.

“A fun-filled, original story worthy of inclusion.” (*School Library Journal*, December 2024)



Kar-Ben will publish award-winning author **CAROL MATAS'** picture book, *Kai and the Golem*, illustrated by Elisa Vavouri, in November 2025. In *Kai and the Golem*, nothing seems to be going right for Kai: It's raining every day, he doesn't get what he wants for breakfast, and he misses his Bubbe, who's in the hospital. He doesn't know what's going on, but he begins to wonder if a golem is to blame!

Carol's new book with Scholastic Canada, *A Storm Unleashed*, will be published in October 2025. Set in Berlin, the middle grade novel chronicles the years 1933–35 through the eyes of a young girl and her best friend, her dog. It documents the rise of fascism and dictatorship, as well as the little known story of Hitler's dog army.

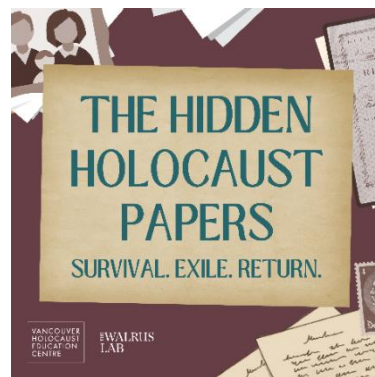
Carol is hoping to do virtual classroom visits in the fall and librarians should feel free to get in touch with her at carolmatas@shaw.ca

Over the past few months, the **Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre** (VHEC) has been honoured to partner with *The Walrus* and Timothy Taylor, award-winning author and professor of creative writing, on *The Hidden Holocaust Papers*, a six-part documentary podcast series about Timothy's family fonds (the Kuppenheim family fonds) relating to the Holocaust, which is now a permanent part of VHEC collections.

By looking at Timothy's family's correspondence, papers, diaries, photographs and artefacts, *The Hidden Holocaust Papers* explores themes of loss, death, family, survival and what happens to those who are left behind.

Listen to *The Hidden Holocaust*

Papers podcast [HERE](https://lnkfi.re/thehiddenholocaustpapers). <https://lnkfi.re/thehiddenholocaustpapers>



I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful
and joyful Pesach!

Anne Dublin

Newsletter Editor
& Membership Chair

