



AJL-CANADA NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

AJL-CANADA EXECUTIVE

Anna Skorupsky, President

Caroline Ingvaldsen, Secretary/Treasurer

Anne Dublin, Membership & Newsletter Editor

Hannah Srour-Zackon, Online Host & Webmaster

Email: ajlcanada18@gmail.com

Website: AJL - Canada | Association of Jewish Libraries - Canada Chapter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It's my sincere pleasure to greet you all as spring has come and with it, new hopes for peace and good health.

My deep gratitude to all members of our Association for their invaluable help, support, and initiative, without which we would not be able to be what we are: informative, helpful, united. And this is confirmed by the fact that our membership is steadily growing.

I certainly hope that you'll enjoy AJL-Canada's excellent new upcoming program, "Canadian Jewish Authors Showcase", co-sponsored by AJL National. All the information about it you'll find in this Newsletter.

I'm especially grateful to all the members of our AJL-Canada Executive for their dedication and hard work to make our chapter the best of the best.

My heartfelt wishes for a Happy Passover to you and your families!
Chag Passover Sameach!

Anna Skorupsky

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome new members: Rona Arato, Etta Kaner, Anna Levine, Carol Matas, Alex Rudkevich, and Janice Weizman. I'm delighted that several of our members live in Israel but are keeping close ties with Canada and our chapter!

If you know anyone who might be interested in joining AJL-Canada, please give them my contact information: adublin54@gmail.com. Our fiscal year is September 1 to August 31. Our membership keeps growing, with people joining even in the middle of the year!

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS: Ana Esterin



Originally from Central Asia (Uzbekistan), I moved to Israel in the '90s and received my undergraduate degree from the Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva (Jewish History and Arts History). Following graduation, I embarked on my career journey at the Kiryat-Gat Public Library while concurrently pursuing a Master of Information Sciences degree at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, specializing in library management.

Relocating with my family to Canada in 2008, I was fortunate to find employment at the library at Gray Academy of Jewish Education in Winnipeg. Over time, I became a head librarian overseeing both the school and the community libraries.

Our institution holds a rich legacy, stemming from the original Jewish Public Library founded in 1922, complemented by collections from various Jewish schools that consolidated in 1997 to form the JK-Grade 12 day school, the Gray Academy of Jewish Education. I am very happy that in recent years we were able to attain first the basic, and then the advanced levels of accreditation from the Association of Jewish Libraries.

While I attended several AJL conferences in the past, my current engagement with AJL is through online conferences, which I find to be invaluable for networking and inspiration. I am also a member of the Manitoba Association of Independent School Libraries.

I appreciate the varied tasks involved in my work, serving a diverse clientele. I find satisfaction in organizing children's activities and managing our collection. Currently, I'm focused on promoting our growing eBook collection.

FUTURE PROGRAM

CANADIAN JEWISH AUTHORS SHOWCASE



On **Sunday May 5, 1 p.m. EDT**, fourteen Canadian authors of children's, YA and adult books will introduce their recent or upcoming 2024 titles, providing an overview of the newest Canadian Jewish literature, both fiction and non-fiction. Publisher Margie Wolfe (C.M.) of Second Story Press (Toronto) will follow the authors' presentations and speak about her thirty-five years of publishing in Canada. All AJL members are invited to attend this celebratory event via zoom. If you miss it, the event will be recorded and available on the AJL-Canada and AJL National websites.

AJL-CANADA WEBSITE



Our AJL-Canada website is being updated but stay tuned for better and brighter things!



Registration for AJL Conference 2024: *Standing Together* is now open!

For Registration and more information, go to:

[2024 Conference – Association of Jewish Libraries](#)

If you're planning to go to the conference, a bursary of \$250 is available from AJL-Canada to help defray expenses. Please contact me (Anne Dublin) directly for an application form: adublin54@gmail.com.

Application deadline is May 15/24. If you receive a bursary, you will be asked to write a brief article for our *Newsletter* about your participation at the conference.

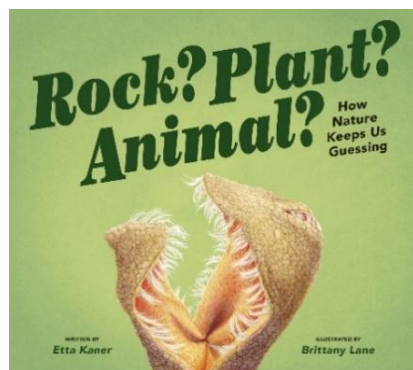
OUR MEMBERS ARE BUSY!

Anne Dublin will be giving two talks via Zoom for Classi Learning about post-World War II Jewish refugees:

- **May 9, 4 p.m.:** The Bricha: The Jewish Underground Railroad
- **May 16, 4 p.m.:** Jewish Displaced Persons Camps: Liberated but not Free

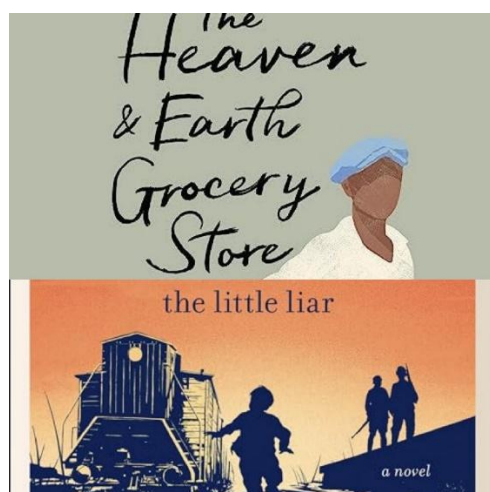
To register for either or both talks, go to: <https://classilearning.com>

Gila Green was recently interviewed about her novel, *With a Good Eye*, on several podcasts, including an excellent one out of Toronto. She was also interviewed by Ari Barbalat for the “New Books Network”: <https://newbooksnetwork.com/gila-green-with-a-good-eye-aos-publishing-2024>



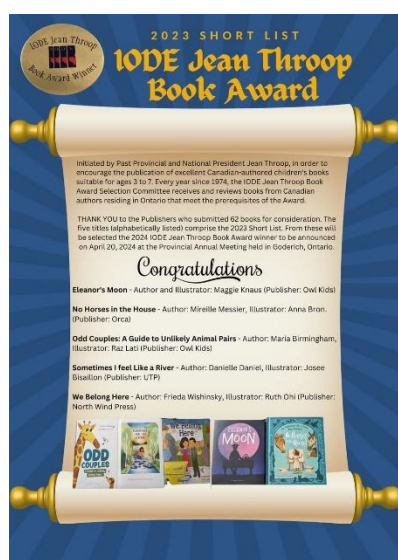
Etta Kaner's book, *Rock? Plant? Animal? How Nature Keeps Us Guessing* (Owlkids, 2022) is a nominee for this year's Silver Birch Express award. Mazel tov, Etta!

From the Toronto Public Library website: "In *ROCK? PLANT? ANIMAL?*, young readers are invited to guess what they are looking at as they are introduced to animals that don't look like animals, plants that don't look like plants, and rocks that don't look like rocks!"



AJL-Canada Executive member, **Hannah Srour-Zackon** is also the book reviewer for the *Canadian Jewish News*. See her recent review of two books that combine history with a Jewish perspective:

[Book columnist Hannah Srour-Zackon reviews two recent bestsellers that combine history with a Jewish perspective \(thecjn.ca\)](#)



Congratulations to **Frieda Wishinsky** on being nominated for the IODE Jean Throop Book Award for *We Belong Here* (North Wind Press). The winner will be announced on April 20th, 2024 at the Provincial Annual Meeting in Goderich, Ontario. Here's the summary from the Toronto Public Library website:

"A touching story of friendship between a Japanese boy and Jewish girl that takes place in Canada, soon after the end of World War II..... As we know, that war was fought on two fronts. One front was against the Nazis in Europe. The other against Japan after the Japanese government bombed Pearl Harbour in Hawaii in 1941. *We Belong Here* tells a story of allyship, ingenuity and loyalty in friendship."

NEW PUBLICATIONS (alphabetical, by author)

[Editor's note: Most of the following books will be presented in our Canadian Jewish Authors Showcase on Sunday May 5, 1 p.m. EDT.]



Rona Arato
Nothing Could Stop Her! : The Courageous Life of Ruth Gruber
 (Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2023)

Ruth Gruber didn't want to live an ordinary life, and she wouldn't take "no" for an answer. Born to a Jewish American family in 1911, she grew up to become a renowned journalist and activist. Her career spanned seven decades and led her to places that other reporters wouldn't or couldn't go, from Nazi Germany to the remote Arctic regions of the Soviet Union. At a time when women were expected to stay at home

and raise families, Ruth told the stories of people in need and fought for their rights to live in safety and freedom.

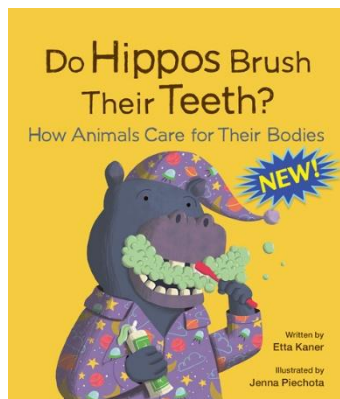


Zehava Cohn
Connor Kissed Me
 (New York: Lee & Low Books, 2023)

In this empowering picture book, Miriam navigates her confusion about an unprovoked kiss—finding her voice and using it to assert her personal boundaries.

Miriam is so surprised when her friend Connor kisses her that she doesn't know how to react. Not sure what to do, she turns to the people around her—her best friend, the recess monitor, her teacher—but everyone has different reactions and advice for Miriam. It's not until she gets home and talks with her mom that Miriam stops to ask herself how *she* feels about Connor's kiss.

With simple text and expressive illustrations, *Connor Kissed Me* introduces young readers to consent and bodily autonomy in plain terms: always ask someone if it's okay to kiss or hug and listen if they say no!



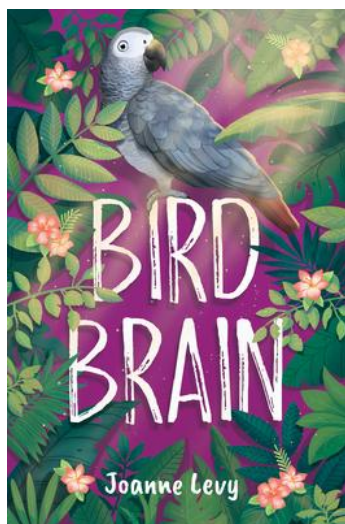
Etta Kaner
Do Hippos Brush Their Teeth? : How Animals Care For Their Bodies
 (Toronto: Owlkids, 2024)

Do tortoises take vitamins? Do badgers wash their hands after using the toilet? This eagerly anticipated fourth and final installment of the “Do Animals” series raises these questions and more about how animals take care of their bodies—much like the ways people maintain their hygiene!

From lava lizards that do push-ups, to giraffes that clean their noses with their tongues (yuck!), this book is full of interesting and unexpected ways that animals keep their bodies in top condition.

Written in an interactive question-and-answer format perfect for reading out loud, this follow-up to bestsellers [Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?](#), [Do Lizards Eat Ice Cream?](#) and [Do Fire Ants Fight Fires?](#) encourages inquiry and discussion.

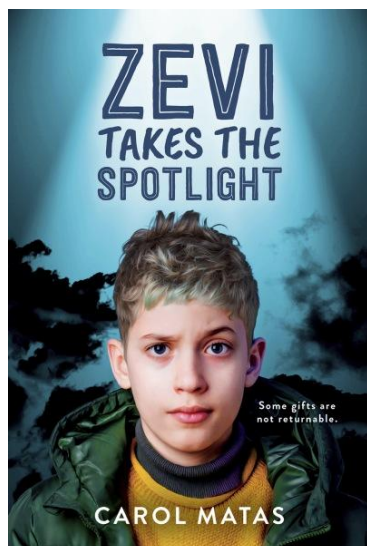
Silly scenarios and comic illustrations will invite readers to learn about animal adaptations and STEM in a fun and accessible way.



Joanne Levy
Bird Brain
 (Victoria: Orca Books, 2024)

Arden Sachs has always wanted a pet: a purring kitten or an adorable puppy. But when her Uncle Eli, a professor and scientist, asks Arden to look after Ludwig, his African Grey parrot, while he’s away on sabbatical, Arden reluctantly agrees to prove that she can handle pet ownership.

As they get to know each other, Arden realizes Ludwig is not only super smart, he's also fiercely loyal, helping her with everything from her school presentation to her bully problems, and her pursuit of a spot on the Science Bowl team. Ludwig may not be the pet Arden wanted, but he might turn out to be exactly the pet she needed.

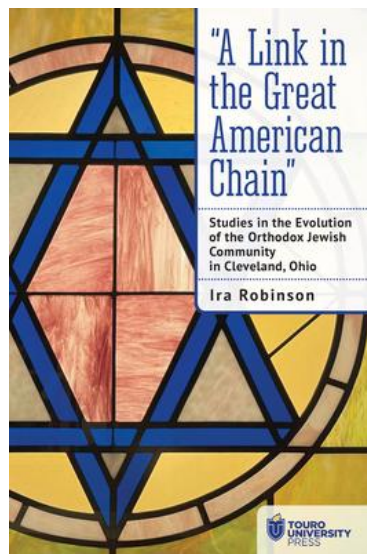


Carol Matas
Zevi Takes the Spotlight
 (Victoria: Orca Books, 2024)

Sudden fame throws thirteen-year-old Zevi into the spotlight when the media discovers his secret abilities—and it's ruining his life! He wants fame as an actor, not as a psychic. So, when Robert Lemon, a famous actor, comes to town to film a movie, Zevi hopes this is his chance to turn things around. Until he begins to sense that the star's life is in danger. When "accidents" start befalling Robert Lemon on the movie set, it's up to Zevi to use his gift to save the famous actor.

★"Zevi is Jewish, and this important part of his identity is skillfully woven throughout the narrative. This hi-lo title excels in the genre, packaging an accessible, dyslexia-friendly text with a compelling plot and a likable protagonist whose journey readers will happily follow. Highly recommended.
 – *School Library Journal*

<https://www.orcabook.com/Zevi-Takes-the-Spotlight>

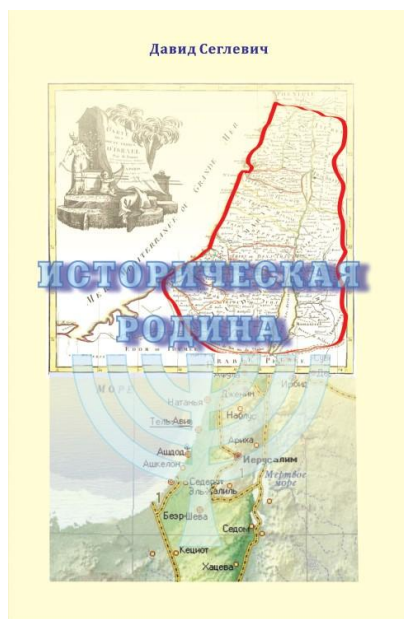


Ira Robinson
A Link in the Great American Chain: Studies in the Evolution of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Cleveland, Ohio
 (New York: Touro University Press, 2023)

This book brings together six articles the author has published in recent years on the development of the Orthodox Jewish community in Cleveland, Ohio. While a number of scholars have ably presented important parts of the history of Jewish Orthodoxy in Cleveland, this book is a first attempt to deal comprehensively with the story of Cleveland Orthodox Judaism. Chapters one and two, taken together, present a connected narrative history of the evolution of the Jewish Orthodox community in Cleveland, from its beginnings to the early twenty-first century. The successive

chapters present in greater detail persons and institutions of great importance to the historical development of the Orthodox community.

<https://www.academicstudiespress.com/9798887191515/a-link-in-the-great-american-chain/>



David Seglevich (pen name)
by our member, Alex Rudkevich

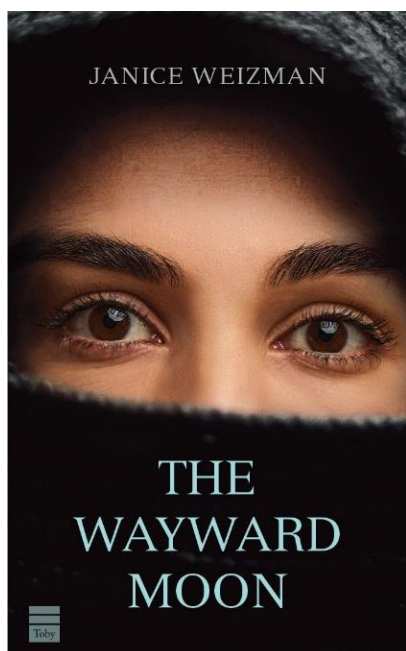
***My Historical Land, Давид Сеглевич. Историческая
родина*** (in Russian)
(Toronto: Litset, 2023)

My Historical Land is based on extensive (sometimes unique) documentary sources. The book narrates the events leading to the foundation of the State of Israel and covers the period from the end of the 19th century up to 1949.

The main character, Yerushalayim Sigalov, was based on the life of the first Israeli cinematographer Yerushalayim Segal (1898 – 1993). He tells about the main milestones of the times: the first Russian Revolution and anti-Jewish pogroms, both World Wars, and the War of Independence. The reader learns interesting facts about the everyday life of the Jewish pioneers (*halutzim*), the battles of the Jewish Legion, Arab revolts in Mandatory Palestine, the heroic struggle of the Jewish underground, and the formation of Israeli cinema.

Janice Weizman
The Wayward Moon

(Jerusalem: Toby Press, 2024)



Recently reissued with Toby Press, *The Wayward Moon* (originally published in 2012) was the winner of the Independent Publishers Award for Historical Fiction. Here's how AJL reviewer Debbie Feder described the book:

“Set in the year 854, in a town called Sura (in modern day Iraq), Rahel, a 17-year-old Jewish girl, is handed an incredible burden. Instead of preparing to meet her fiancé for the first time, she will have to flee, leaving behind her intended, her home, possessions, and her identity. An enemy of her father has burst into her house and killed her father. Rahel has had to kill him in self defense. At that time and in that area of the world, Rahel’s choices and rights are limited. Rahel encounters wealthy merchants, Islamic theologians, Christian monks, illicit lovers, and shrewd innkeepers. She must outplay them all.”



Janice Weizman
Our Little Histories
 (Jerusalem: Toby Press, 2023)

When museum curator Jenifer Greenberg-Wu is approached by Belarusian tycoon Maxim Pranovitch to create a Reality show involving “Jewish people living their Jewish lives” she takes up the challenge, calling on her Israeli relative, Nadav Markovitch and his family to move into a glass-walled house where they will enact Jewish practice before an audience of spectators. Six generations earlier in a remote village in Belarus, Jennifer and Nadav’s ancestor, Raizel Shulman, needs to find a way to save her three young sons from being drafted into the Czar’s army.

This is the story of what happened over those six generations. In seven episodes, moving backwards through the tumult of the 19th and 20th centuries, Raizel’s descendants make fateful choices as they struggle to reconcile their identity, their dreams and the constraints of their time and place. Their stories play out on a reality set in rural Belarus, 1960s Tel Aviv, a pre-independence kibbutz, 1930s Chicago, pre-war Vilna, turn of the century Minsk, and finally, to the tiny shtetl of Prepoisk—not as a single overriding narrative, but as a collection of small, intimate histories.

"When I was 19 years old I couldn't go to college because I came from a poor family. We had no money, so I went to the library at least three days a week. At the age of 27, I have actually completed almost the entire library instead of university. So, I got my education in the library and for free. When a person wants something, they will find a way to achieve it."
 (Ray Bradbury)

I wish you and your loved ones a safe, healthy, and meaningful Passover.

Anne Dublin

Membership Chair & Newsletter Editor



