



# ***AJL-CANADA NEWSLETTER***

## ***JUNE 2024***

### ***AJL-CANADA EXECUTIVE***

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### ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

Dear colleagues and friends ,

I am delighted to again express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your constant and meaningful support during such difficult times.

I certainly hope that you enjoyed our recent fascinating program, "Canadian Jewish Authors' Showcase". It was organized by AJL-Canada with invaluable help from AJL National. The program was very successful and brought us new members.

I also want to express my gratitude to our Executive: Marjorie Gann, Anne Dublin, Hannah Srour, and Caroline Ingvaldsen. Due to their hard work and creative ideas, our chapter continues to grow and prosper.

I wish you and your families a lovely and peaceful summer.

*Anna Skorupsky*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Welcome new member, Carly Heffner. You'll read about Carly and her work "In the Spotlight" below. I'm also 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](mailto:adublin54@gmail.com). Our membership keeps growing, with people joining even in the middle of the year!

I'll be sending out renewal notices in August for 2024–25. Our fiscal year is September 1 to August 31. I hope your membership in AJL-Canada has been valuable, and that you'll renew for another great year. Stay tuned for an exciting partnership initiative.

### **SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS:**

***Carly Heffner***

**JAHSENA Archivist, Edmonton**



I began my journey as an information professional at McGill University in the Fall of 2019. What I had thought would be the beginning of a career in public librarianship or branching out from my previous career as a teacher to work in a school library turned into a discovery of archives. There I took classes in Archival practise and procedures, working at the Jewish Public Library and becoming amazed by the role Archives play in research and seeing the value to communities everywhere.

In the pandemic I moved back to Alberta working in rural public libraries, where I didn't feel much was catching and found myself more of an administrator than a librarian. I saw an opportunity at the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, applied, and now I am the current Archivist Administrator at JAHSENA!

The work I do here changes and keeps me on my toes, balancing the admin work with the user needs of the archives, programs, and then the general upkeep of the archives and library makes the days go by fast. I have quite a few volunteers including retired Archivists and Librarians, which help me immensely in getting work done.

Archives – We are currently working on our Finding Aids. In my first year working at JAHSENA I did an assessment and created a timeline to get our fonds described, a portion of the collection is described and posted on Alberta on Record. Over the summer I will work on describing the remainder of the collection, then to be inputted on Alberta on Record. Alberta on Record is a searchable database through the Archives Society of Alberta, which we are institutional members of.

Library – After 2 years of hard work from our Library Committee our online catalog is almost complete and will be posted on our website in September for anyone to view. Members will be able to check out books, and anyone in the Edmonton area can come in during Library Open hours to read a book or research onsite. This summer we will be conducting a user study so we can finalize the lenders guide and circulation policy.

The mission of the JAHSENA Library is to compliment the Archive by supporting the informational needs of researchers, JAHSENA members, and anyone interested in the Jewish community of Edmonton and Northern Alberta. The collection acts to promote the understanding of Judaism and Jewish culture/people. The library has several collections of 2000 books all together.

I am looking forward to having the summer to get to complete all the projects on the horizon for JAHSENA. Stay tuned for updates on our website, we are planning to make some additions, including launching our library catalog towards the end of September. Here's the link to our website: [www.jahsena.ca](http://www.jahsena.ca)

### ***AJL-CANADA WEBSITE***



**Our AJL-Canada website is being updated. Stay tuned for better and brighter things!**

## **PAST PROGRAM**

### **CANADIAN JEWISH AUTHORS SHOWCASE**



On **Sunday May 5**, AJL-Canada presented a members-only event—a Canadian Authors' Showcase. Fourteen Canadian authors introduced recently published or soon-to-be-published works ranging from picture books to scholarly histories. Some were on Jewish themes, others were not. The variety of themes and genres was wide.

Attendees got a foretaste of board books for toddlers, of biographies of accomplished Jewish women, of books on Holocaust heroism, and of books on Canadian Jewish history.

Some publishers, like Owlkids and Nimbus, were Canadian; others, including KarBen and Toby Press, were American.

The session ended with a short talk by Toronto publisher Margie Wolfe, co-founder of Canada's Second Story Press which has, since 1988, grown to be a major Canadian publisher of women-focussed, social justice, and human rights books for adults and young people. Margie's insights about publishing were enlightening and engendered good discussion.

AJL-Canada was delighted to give our participants a chance to showcase their creative work, especially to the Americans in the audience.



*Margie Gann, Programs Chair*

## **FUTURE PROGRAM**

Your Executive is planning several exciting programs for the coming year. We'll give you more information in the next Newsletter or via e-mail.

## OUR AJL-C MEMBERS ARE BUSY!

**Brayden Bernstein** did a reading of *The Great Mensch* for the Junior Kindergarten class at the Leo Baeck Day School in Toronto on May 21. Here's a photo of his eager listeners.

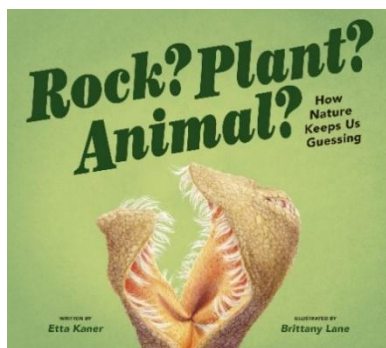


On May 18, 2024, **Gila Green** was interviewed by *The Jerusalem Post* about her latest novel, *With a Good Eye*, as well as about her future writing and activist projects. Here's the link to this fascinating interview: <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-801333>.

And here's a link to the Modiin Literary Event on May 19 with **Gila Green** (WITH A GOOD EYE), Sarah Ansbacher (WAVE AFTER WAVE), and Sheryl Abbey (ALONG THE EDGE OF ABSENCE):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c08\\_9K4e49U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c08_9K4e49U)

Photos: <https://gilagreenwrites.com/blog/news-and-events/photos-from-literary-modiin-author-event>

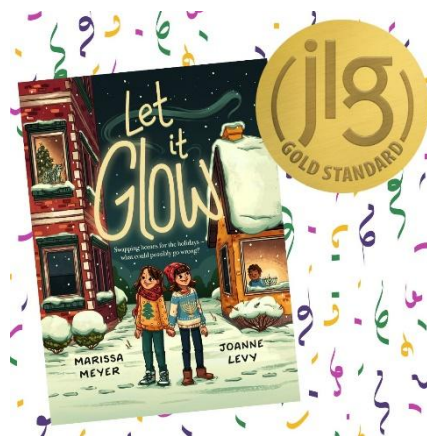


**Etta Kaner's** book, *Rock? Plant? Animal? How Nature Keeps Us Guessing* (Owlkids, 2022) has been chosen by students in Ontario for this year's Silver Birch Express award. Mazel tov, Etta!

A brief summary 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!"



**Joanne Levy** is thrilled to announce that her upcoming middle grade holiday story, co-written with *NYT* bestselling author, Marissa Meyer, has been chosen as a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection. The book will be released on October 1<sup>st</sup> and is currently available for preorder and review on NetGalley. Find out more about the book at [joannelevy.com](http://joannelevy.com).



Here's **Brigitte Ruel's** fascinating article about AI (used with her permission). AJL-Canada member Brigitte is Library and Media Specialist at the Ottawa Jewish Community School.

## From “AI Skeptic” to Algorithmic Advocate

By Brigitte Ruel [May 21, 2024](#)



### “Why Our Students Need Critical AI Literacy”

As a part of my professional development project this year, I signed up for a wonderful course through Library Juice Academy called [AI and Libraries: For Skeptics](#). Though it was Keanu and dystopian futures I was envisioning, that really wasn't what it was about. The focus of the course was to make sure that even with all the media hype about AI, we understand how important it is to have a critical perspective about it. So what I got was a reality check, a deep dive into the unseen algorithms that are shaping our world, and a newfound conviction: our students desperately need algorithmic literacy.

The course wasn't about demonizing AI. It was about understanding its limitations and potential biases. We explored how algorithms can perpetuate discrimination, filter information in sneaky ways, and even manipulate our choices. Author Thomas Corman called algorithms “a major human rights issue in the twenty-first century.”

It was a wake-up call. How much did I truly understand about the forces shaping my news feed, the recommendations bombarding me online, or even the way my search results are prioritized? Not enough. Or about how when we use Large Language Models like ChatGPT, these chatbots are “trained” by using data that may be skewed in ways that may lead to bias and stereotypes, and also need to be trained to be ‘clean’ using exploitative and damaging labour. And the environmental ramifications of AI that should be an important consideration as these technologies continue to advance.

If I, a supposedly tech-savvy adult, felt overwhelmed with so much new critical perspective, imagine the plight of our students. They’re growing up in a world saturated with AI, but without the tools to critically analyze it. They need to be able to ask questions: Where did this information come from? Is this algorithm fair? What are the potential consequences of this technology?

*Algorithms as part of increasingly ubiquitous AI, such as machine learning and deep learning systems, reflect and promulgate certain ideologies and have impacts and influences in the full range of human society —Michael Ridley and Danica Pawlick-Potts*

This isn’t just about protecting them from manipulation. It’s about empowering them to be active participants in a future heavily influenced by AI. They should be able to understand how algorithms work, identify potential biases, and even use them for good!

So, the next time you hear about AI, let’s move beyond the hype. Let’s equip our students with algorithmic literacy. Let’s make them critical thinkers, not passive consumers, in the age of intelligent machines. After all, the future they inherit depends on it.

#### References:

Ridley, M., & Pawlick-Potts, D. (2021). Algorithmic Literacy and the Role for Libraries. *Information Technology and Libraries*, 40(2). <https://doi.org/10.6017/ital.v40i2.12963>

Thomas H. Cormen et al., *Introduction to Algorithms*, 3rd ed. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2009

Perrigo. B. (2023, January 18). Exclusive: The \$2 per hour workers who made chatgpt safer. *TIME*. <https://time.com/6247678/openai-chatgpt-kenya-workers/>

Naughton, John. (2023, 23 Dec). "A World Suffused with AI Probably Wouldn't Be Good for Us – or the Planet | John Naughton." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media. [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/23/ai-chat-gpt-environmental-impact-energy-carbon-intensive-technology](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/23/ai-chat-gpt-environmental-impact-energy-carbon-intensive-technology).



<http://ojcslibrary.edublogs.org/>

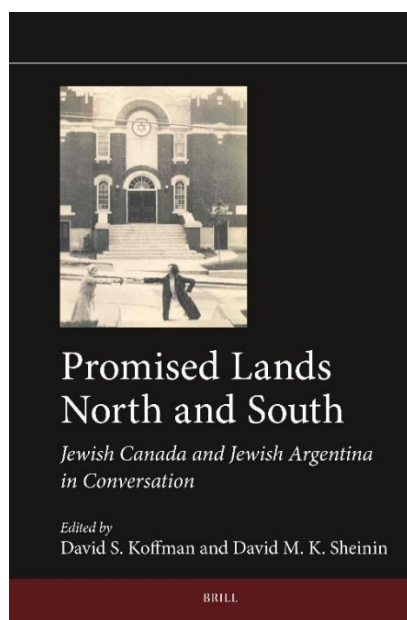
For last-minute registration of the AJL Conference in San Diego, go to:

[2024 Conference – Association of Jewish Libraries](https://www.jewishlibraries.org/conference)





## NEW PUBLICATIONS (alphabetical, by author)



### Jewish Canada and Jewish Argentina in Conversation

Series: *Jewish Latin America*, Volume: 15

Volume Editors: David S. Koffman and David M.K. Sheinin

25 March 2024

ISBN: 978-90-04-54869-5

This book puts two of the most significant Jewish Diaspora communities outside of the U.S. into conversation with one another. At times contributor-pairs directly compare unique aspects of two Jewish histories, politics, or cultures. At other times, they juxtapose. Some chapters focus on literature, poetry, theatre, or sport; others on immigration, antisemitism, or health. Taken together, the essays in *Promised Lands North and South* offer sparkling insight and new depth on the modern Jewish global experience.

[Editor's note: The launch of this book will take place on June 20, 6.30 p.m. DST. See my email of June 2 for registration information.]

Also by **David Koffman**:



"Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions," *Canadian Jewish Studies*. Vol. 37, Fall, 2024.

<https://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs>

"Afterword: Seven Theses on the Ongoing Impact of *None is Too Many*," Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [1982] 2023.

"Painting Jewish Life in Canada," in Sarah Milroy (ed.) *William Kurelek: Jewish Life in Canada*, Kleinberg, ON, and Fredericton, NB: McMichael | Goose Lane, 2023, pp. 27-43.



A corner of my garden in May

I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful,  
healthy summer!

*Anne Dublin*

Membership Chair & Newsletter Editor