



AJL-CANADA NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

STEERING COMMITTEE

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Marjorie Gann, Programs

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear AJL-Canada members,

The past summer and present autumn has been filled with both positive and negative happenings in our world and at home. As I write this note, the peace plan between Israel and Hamas has been signed and twenty hostages have been returned to Israel and their families. We wish them a “refuah shlema”. We wait with bated breath for the return of the remains of the hostages who died during their captivity.

In this issue of our *Newsletter*, you’ll find much to “kvell” about: authors who are launching new books, members who are proudly presenting Canadian Jewish culture and history, and Anna Levine, our member, who gave a fascinating talk at the June 2025 AJL conference.

Do register for Lesley Simpson’s program sponsored by AJL-Canada on **November 12, 2025**: “L’Chaim: The Jewish Letters Project”. This program is sure to be engaging and informative.

And find out more about the Canadian Society for Jewish Studies “In the Spotlight”.

May the following season be one of health and fulfillment for you and your loved ones, and may Israel finally have peace.

Anne Dublin
Membership Chair & Newsletter Editor



- 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. The duties are as follows:
- a. Preside over and prepare agenda for executive meetings;
 - b. Submit a message for the *Newsletter*;
 - c. Participate in AJL-Canada programs, as needed;
 - d. Respond to AJL International correspondence;
 - e. Attend annual AJL International conference, as required.
- 2) Your AJL-Canada executive also needs a Program 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.

ON THE HUNT FOR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

If you have a bibliography that you would like to share with our members (only) on the AJL-Canada website, please send it to me as a Word document. Thanks in advance!



MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to new members:

Sara Horowitz, graduate program coordinator, York University, Centre for Jewish Studies
Sheryl Johnston, volunteer, Holy Blossom Temple Library, Toronto

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

AJL-CANADA WEBSITE

If you haven't checked out our new AJL-Canada website, I hope you'll do so soon! You might want to dig into the "Members Only" section for more content: Bibliographies, Current Newsletter, Past Programs, and Members Directory. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me directly: adublin54@gmail.com.

Here's the link: <https://ajlcanada.org>

NOTE: You'll have to log in and create a password to access the Members Only section.

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS

Dr. Ira Robinson

Distinguished Professor Emeritus

Concordia University, Montreal

The Canadian Society for Jewish Studies

Readers of the *AJL-Canada Newsletter* who want to know what other organizations exist in Canada that seek to improve the quality of Jewish cultural life in this country should become aware of the existence and activities of the Canadian Society for Jewish Studies/ Société canadienne d'études juives.



This organization has been in existence since 2004. Prior to this, despite the growth of academic Jewish studies in Canada over the past half-century and more, there was no Canadian organization specifically devoted to the subject, though an unsuccessful attempt had been made to create one in the late 1970s. Canadians who desired to present their research in this area could, of course, do so internationally, for instance at meetings of the Association for Jewish Studies in the United States, or the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Israel. They could also find a forum at meetings of Canadian learned societies in other disciplines, such as the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion; that solution sufficed for many but was not satisfactory to everyone.

At this point, it needs to be said that there is some confusion among observers of the Judaic scholarly scene in Canada because there is a forum for studies related to the history, literature, and experience of Jews in Canada, founded in 1976 as the Canadian Jewish Historical Society. (It changed its name in 1996 and became the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies.) I joined this organization, and it fulfilled my need to present my

research on Canadian Jewry. Nonetheless, I noticed that from time to time the annual meeting of ACJS also accepted topics that were not directly related to Jews in Canada.

At an ACJS meeting in the early years of this century, I raised the possibility of formally opening the organization's annual meeting to areas of Jewish studies not directly related to Canada. This suggestion aroused opposition among some ACJS members, who wished their organization to retain its Canadian focus. I then suggested the creation of a new organization, the Canadian Society for Jewish Studies, and the CSJS was founded in 2004.

In its initial years, the new Jewish studies society met at the same time and place as the ACJS and definitely benefitted from the older organization's generous hospitality. As time passed, however, it became clear that the new Jewish studies society had grown sufficiently in its numbers and in its finances to be able to stage annual conferences on its own.

The latest CSJS conference, under the presidency of Professor Laura Wiseman of York University, took place at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario and hosted 22 presentations over a two-day period in 2025. The relatively small number of presentations has the distinct advantage of enabling conference participants to be exposed to a wide variety of areas of study, something that has become practically impossible in larger conferences like that of the Association for Jewish Studies.

To find out more about CSJS, the best place to begin is its website:

<https://csjs.ca/>

FUTURE PROGRAM

L'CHAIM: THE JEWISH LETTERS PROJECT



LESLEY SIMPSON will give a talk on **Wednesday November 12, 2025, 1 p.m. ET** about what she calls her “little flashlight during a dark time” — *L'Chaim: The Jewish Letters Project*.

NOTE: This program is open to AJL members and the public.

Registration link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/swkZae8JRN2noB4wL0lbog>

The project is a newsletter on the substack platform that features Jewish wisdom letters from around the world. These are letters most often but not always from parents to children about how to create a purposeful life. The letters are sometimes called ethical wills but they are not legal documents and have no legal authority. Their power resides in the voices of the people who have taken the time to write them.

In these letters, Jews share what has made their lives meaningful, how they navigated catastrophe, and what has sustained them with joy. The letters are as varied as the people who write them.

Launched in 2024, *L'Chaim: The Jewish Letters Project* highlights examples from the 12th century to the present day, across multiple platforms ranging from videos to comics and handwritten letters.

Lesley Simpson is a former journalist and published children's book author. She did her PhD about this tradition because she developed what she calls a serious case of "radical Jewish curiosity".

To subscribe, click on: jewishlettersproject.substack.com

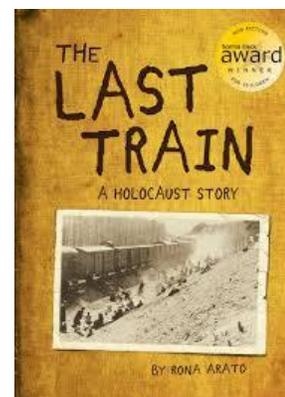


Lesley Simpson

YASHER KOACH TO OUR MEMBERS!

ANNE DUBLIN was thrilled that her collective biography, *She's a Mensch!: Ten Amazing Jewish Women* (Second Story Press), received a glowing review by Prof. Kora E. Bättig von Wittelsbach in the September 2025 issue of *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary e-Journal*. For more information, see: [Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary e-Journal](#).

RONA ARATO and **ANNE DUBLIN** are looking forward to speaking at the Ottawa Jewish Community School on November 19. Anne will talk to students in grades four to six about writing biographies; Rona will speak to junior high students about *The Last Train*, her award-winning historical novel which keeps chugging along! Thanks to The Writers Union of Canada and the Ontario Writers in the Schools for this opportunity.



JOANNE LEVY'S novel, *Let It Glow!* (Feiwel & Friends, October 2024), received a terrific review in the latest issue of *AJL News & Reviews* (Summer 2025). The reviewer, Mimi Leyton of Ottawa, called it an “entertaining and heartwarming holiday novel... a delightful celebration of family, friendship, and the richness of diverse traditions. It offers a beautiful representation of both Hanukkah and Christmas, making it an excellent holiday read for middle-grade readers.”



For more about this intriguing novel, see: [Let It Glow | Joanne Levy](#)

See also Betsy Bird's interview with Joanne on August 6, 2025 about her latest novel, *About All the Things We Found* in *School Library Journal*: [Grief and Humor by Turns: A Talk with Joanne Levy About All the Things We Found](#).

Join award-winning authors
Joanne Levy & Kathy Kacer
 As they discuss their new books.

Sunday, October 19, 2:00p.m.
 A Different Drummer Books
 Burlington, ON

Light refreshments will be served.

LIBERATION 75 sent 56,000 free copies of *To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis* by **Kathy Kacer**, complementary posters, and a full host of resources to Grade 6 teachers throughout the province of Ontario. This year, they will be bringing another 26,000 copies to Ontario schools PLUS a new French edition!



CAROL MATAS was the keynote speaker at B'nai B'rith's Diverse Minds competition in September. Young writers from all over Canada were encouraged to submit. It was a beautiful and exciting evening. Carol shared some great advice!

At the end of October, Carol will be speaking to social study teachers at a large conference in Winnipeg about her new book, *A Storm Unleashed*.

The Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada invites you to a special book launch to mark Kristallnacht

Acclaimed author Carol Matas will be discussing her gripping new novel, *A Storm Unleashed*. It's 1935 Berlin, and Mia, brought up in love, faces hate everywhere.

November 10, 2025, 7-8pm
 Multipurpose Room - Asper JCC
 1300-123 Doncaster Street
 Winnipeg, MB

Books will be available for sale by the author, with proceeds supporting Holocaust Education.

To register for this FREE event or for more info, please contact:
jewishheritage@jhcwc.org

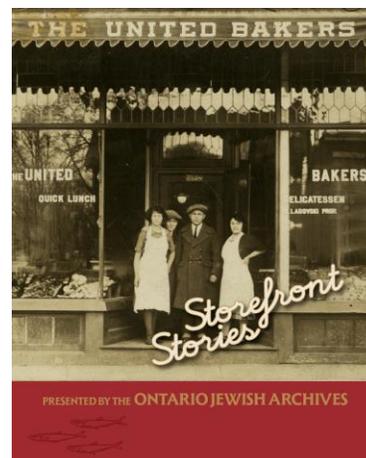
Event sponsored by Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada

SCHOLASTIC

A Storm Unleashed (Scholastic Canada) will be launched on November 10 at 7 p.m. at the Rady JCC in Winnipeg. The launch will be sponsored by The Jewish Historical Centre and the Winnipeg Jewish Federation and will be part of Kristallnacht remembrance.

[Editor's note: For more information about this novel, see the June 2025 issue of the AJL-Canada Newsletter.]

It's not too late to attend the **ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES'** latest exhibition, "Storefront Stories." This fascinating exhibit (May 2025–April 2026) explores the history of Jewish entrepreneurs in Ontario, the businesses they built, and their role in shaping Ontario's streets and our community. The exhibit is on view now at the Sheff Family Building, Sherman Campus, Toronto. See: <https://ontariojewisharchives.org/Exhibitions/Storefront-Stories>



On November 2, the **Centre for Jewish Studies at York University** will host two events about Yiddish: one focused on Europe and one on Canada. Austrian scholar Thomas Soxberger will present a zoom lecture on Yiddish literature and culture in pre-World War II Vienna. The program is co-sponsored by the Toronto UJA Committee for Yiddish. For more information and to register, see:

[Nov 2: Thomas Soxberger, Yiddish Publishing in Vienna During the Holocaust | Committee For Yiddish](#)

It will also host a live event on November 23 to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the **YIVO Institute for Jewish Research**, the premier archives and institute for the study of eastern European Jewry. The event will bring together well-known Yiddish folklore and folk music experts Professor Itzik Gottesman and Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a Toronto native and director of the **Polin** museum of Polish Jewry in Warsaw, to speak about Canadian contributions to YIVO's storehouse of Yiddish music. It will feature performances of songs collected in Toronto and Montreal as part of the *Sound & Sense: Jewish Music @ York* series curated by Centre member Professor Noam Lemish and generously sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation. It will be held in conjunction with its musical partner, the **Ashkenaz Festival**, and co-sponsored by the **Association for Canadian Jewish Studies**.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program

Lancement des mémoires de Salomon Buch: Un serment à la vie

Rejoignez-nous pour une discussion exceptionnelle entre Annette Wieviorka et Christian Bode.

Un événement à ne pas manquer!

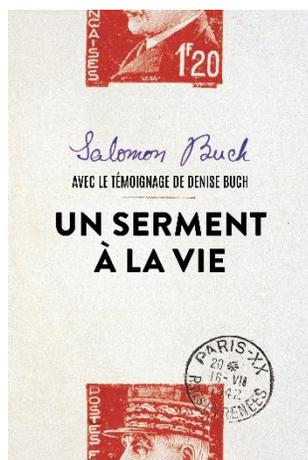
[Lancement des mémoires de Salomon Buch Un serment à la vie Tickets, Tue, 21 Oct 2025 at 7:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Date : Mardi 21 octobre 2025

Heure : 19 h

Lieu : Alliance Française Toronto - Downtown Campus

24 Spadina Road Toronto, ON M5R 2S7



Une discussion entre Annette Wieviorka, historienne et autrice de l'introduction de l'ouvrage, et Christian Bode de la Société d'histoire de Toronto. Un événement à ne pas manquer!

Aîné d'une fratrie qui compte par ailleurs quatre filles, Salomon a grandi à Paris, dans le centre juif de Belleville, qu'il dépeint comme un village animé, peuplé de personnages hauts en couleur. De ce quartier vivant et chaleureux, rien ne subsistera à la fin de la guerre. Lorsque les Allemands occupent Paris en juin 1940, la capitale que Salomon aime tant devient le théâtre du drame qui se noue. Après l'arrestation de son père et sur les conseils de ce dernier, Salomon fuit à Lyon, en zone libre. Le sort s'acharne quand la rafle du Vél d'Hiv emporte le reste de la famille, à l'exception de Denise, l'aînée de ses sœurs. Seule, elle tente de les faire libérer, en vain: elles seront déportées et aucune ne reviendra. Impuissant devant le désastre, Salomon parvient à convaincre Denise de le rejoindre. Ensemble, ils survivront à la guerre et reconstruiront leurs vies respectives, liés à jamais par un drame commun et portés par la force de leur serment à la vie.

Pour plus d'information sur les mémoires de Salomon Buch, consultez notre [site Web](#)

Les mémoires de Salomon Buch seront distribués gratuitement à l'occasion du lancement.

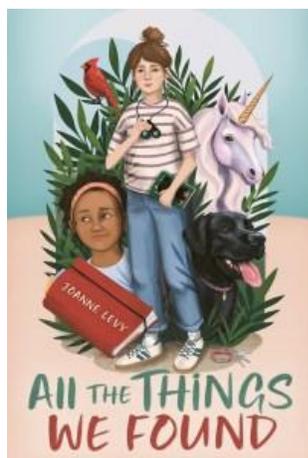
L'événement sera suivi d'une réception.

All the Things We Found

by JOANNE LEVY

(Orca Book Publishers)

9–12 years



Ruthie is finally getting used to the new normal: her parents' divorce, having a stepdad and (annoying) stepbrothers and trying not to think too much about *before*.

When her mom starts feeling sick, Ruthie's relieved it's nothing serious...until her mom tells her she's pregnant again. Their family suffered a loss three years ago and it was devastating. How could her mom risk that again?

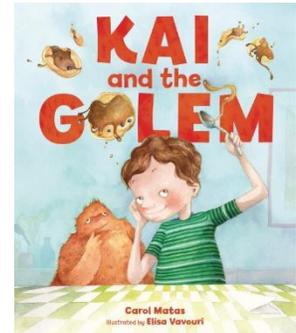
At least Ruthie has her best friend and her dog to help comfort her, as well as her favorite book series that always cheers her up: The Unicorns of Faravelle Forest. When Ruthie unexpectedly meets Ally, an older woman in the park where she takes her dog to play, she

learns Ally is grieving a loss too, and the two develop an unlikely friendship. Though the journey is never smooth, Ruthie eventually realizes there's comfort to be found in expressing your feelings and cherishing the memory of those you've loved.

Kai and the Golem
by Carol Matas
(Kar-Ben Publishers)
Preschool–Grade 3

Rain in the morning makes Kai say, "That's not what I want!" After school, he wants to read stories with Bubbe, but she isn't there. "That's not what I want!" says Kai. Maybe, he thinks, there's a creature that makes bad things happen. Could it be a Golem, big and scary? But maybe things aren't so bad if you look at them in a different way...

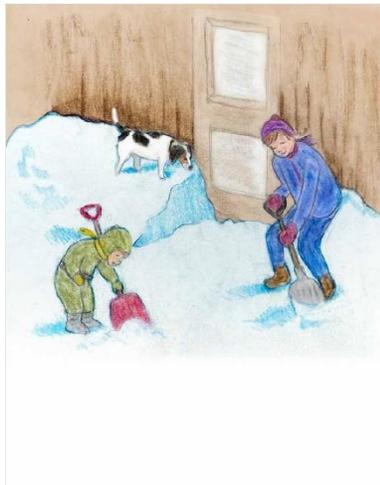
The launch of *Kai and the Golem* will take place on **December 2** at the Rady JCC in Winnipeg where Carol will speak to grades 1–3 students. It is sponsored by another AJL-Canada member: Ana Esterin, Librarian, Gray Academy of Jewish Education, Kaufman Silverberg Library.



PROF. IRA ROBINSON'S English translation of Moses Cordovero's introduction to Kabbala, first published in Spanish in 1994, has just been published. Available on Amazon:

[Grata Luz: Introducción a la Cábala : Cordovero, Moisés ben Jacob, Robinson, Dr. Ira, Román Vela, Pedro: Amazon.ca: Books](#)

SHIRLEY SHOUB, Canadian Jewish author/illustrator, has written and illustrated a series of children's picture story books for children ages 3–9 years of age. The stories are told from the perspective of the family beagle dog, Skipper.

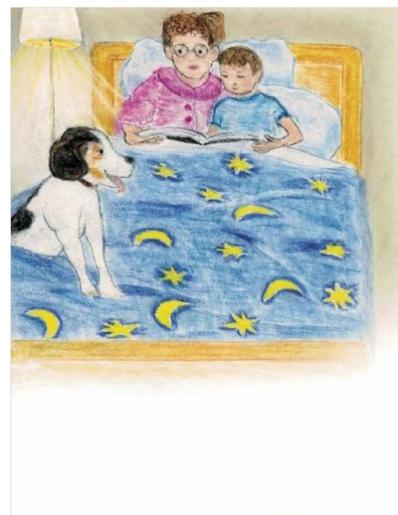


Skipper's Stories: Skipper, a beagle puppy, loves his adopted family—his human mom and dad, his brother Ezra, and especially his grandma—who all accept his beagle ways, particularly when his beagle nature gets him into trouble.

Skipper's Stories: Almost Twins:

Skipper identifies as "almost twins" with Ezra, his human brother, as both puppy and baby grow up together.

Skipper's Stories: Moving On: Skipper vies for his place in the family, helping to care for his new human baby brother Billy, while having to compromise his comforts for his new brother.



Book 3: Shovelling Snow

These picture books are available from Ingram Spark.

Skipper's Stories ISBN/SKU 9781990093999

Skipper's Stories: Almost Twins ISBN/SKU 9781998686001

Skipper's Stories: Moving On ISBN/SKU 9781998686018

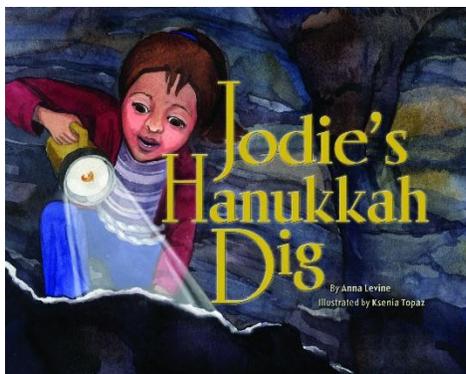
AJL NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

AJL-Canada member, **ANNA LEVINE**, participated in an excellent panel with Tammar Stein at the AJL Conference in June 2025. The topic was "Biblical Archeology to Spark Curiosity: Introducing Young Readers to History and Archeology Through Literature".

Here's Anna's report about her presentation and her participation in the conference:

(From Israel, with gratitude!)

This year's AJL Conference was a wonderful experience for me, both professionally and personally. The sessions I focused on related primarily to Jewish children's literature, classroom applications, intergenerational activities in community libraries, as well as the exciting Sydney Taylor Award discussions. Highlights included discussions on queer Jewish representation, writings inspired by family histories, and the power of books to foster belonging and resilience. Dahlia Adler, M.A. Wardell, and Eytan Kessler offered insights into queer Jewish YA lit, while Sydney Taylor Award winners shared the moving stories which inspired their work.



Tammar Stein and I showed how archaeology can inspire curiosity while offering an organic way of introducing Israel into diverse classrooms.

Other standout sessions included Shanah Khubiar's heartfelt talk on Jewish books for incarcerated readers and Jessica Fink's intergenerational book club model. Susan Dubin shared her creative music-based curriculum for teaching about the Holocaust. The conference was a powerful reminder that our librarians are the heroes who

build strong Jewish communities through the literature they share. Thank you to AJL, especially Anne Dublin and AJL Canada.

Anna Levine (Sydney Taylor Honor Award winner for *Freefall* (Greenwillow/HarperCollins) in 2008, and Sydney Taylor Notable Award in 2008 for *Jodie's Hanukkah Dig* (KarBen Publishers). Most recently, *Roadside Seder* (Apples & Honey Press) was an AJL Summer Highlight.

OF INTEREST

Have you seen the latest issue of *SCRIBE QUARTERLY*? A short article entitled "Aaron Lansky Built a Home for Yiddish Books. Now He's Handing Over the Keys" (p. 23) should interest book lovers everywhere. Many of you know about the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, or even have visited it. But did you know that Steven Spielberg's Digital Yiddish Library is an online collection of more than 12,000 Yiddish titles?

Spielberg once told Lansky, "You have to understand that what I do for a living is tell stories. The idea that you have miles of Jewish stories that have yet to be told, that's just irresistible to someone like me."

To explore the Digital Yiddish Library, see: [Digital Yiddish Library | Yiddish Book Center](#)

JEWISH STORYTELLING CIRCLE



*-Telling and Listening
-Making connections
-Feeling the Joy*

ANNE DUBLIN hosts a Jewish Storytelling Circle on the second Sunday of each month (7–9 p.m.) in her Toronto home. If anyone is interested in telling and/or listening to Jewish stories of all kinds, please contact Anne directly to be placed on the mailing list: adublin54@gmail.com.