



## **AJL-CANADA NEWSLETTER**

### **APRIL 2026**

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

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#### **A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

Dear AJL-Canada members,

As we wind down from a hectic Passover season and head into Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, perhaps your thoughts have been divided between family and friends at home and those who are in Israel and abroad. As have I. Perhaps you have been thinking about freedom and redemption. As have I. Perhaps you have been thinking about the rise of antisemitism in Canada and in the world. As have I.

At this time of trouble and strife in the world, I'm trying very hard to hold onto the things I'm grateful for: caring family, stalwart friends, and fulfilling pursuits. AJL-Canada members who share good news about their many accomplishments continue to inspire me.

Please take special note of our upcoming Canadian Authors Showcase on **Monday May 4, 2026, 1-2 p.m. EDT**. Even if you're not presenting, your presence would be appreciated and valued. The zoom link will be sent in a separate email.

May this Spring bring us all a renewal of spirit and an abundance of things to be grateful for.

*Anne*



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](mailto: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 Programs 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](mailto: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***

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

We welcome new member, **Anna Rosner**. Anna is a Toronto teacher and award-winning author who has published essays, short stories, numerous scholarly articles, and four books for middle-grade readers. Dedicated to promoting her love for words, Anna has taught language and literacy to children and adults ages five to seventy-five. Anna is the director of [Books with Wings](#), which provides new, quality picture books for Indigenous children who reside in isolated Canadian communities. Anna holds a PhD from the University of Toronto in Early Modern French Literature.

[Editor's note: See more about Anna's latest novel in the **NEW PUBLICATIONS** section.]

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

If you haven't checked out our 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.

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

NOTE: You'll have to log in and create a password to access the Members Only section. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me directly: [adublin54@gmail.com](mailto:adublin54@gmail.com).

## ***FUTURE PROGRAM***

### ***CANADIAN JEWISH AUTHORS SHOWCASE***



AJL-Canada will present an Authors Showcase on **Monday May 4, 2026, 1-2 p.m. EDT**. We will feature AJL-Canada members who have published books or articles in the last two years. Many of our talented members write in a variety of genres—fiction or non-fiction, for young people or adults.

**This will be an event via Zoom.** Here's a chance for our author members to share recently published or forthcoming titles, from 2025-2027.

The session will be open to all AJL members; it will be recorded and put on the AJL National and AJL-Canada websites.

We hope that all AJL members and the public will attend as we highlight the new and varied books and articles that our AJL-Canada members have created.

The zoom link will be sent to members in advance of the event.

## ***SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS***

### **BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE**

### **MOSHE YEDLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

#### **Edmonton Alberta**

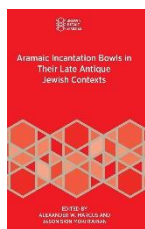
(Submitted by AJL-Canada member, Karen Hering)

*“My pen is my harp and my lyre; my library is my garden and my orchard.”*

*Yehuda Ha-Levi*

Edmonton’s largest dedicated Jewish library is grateful for the ongoing support of the Beth Shalom Board of Directors, and community members who donate books and funds to expand our collection. The library, open to the entire community, functions purely on volunteers and they deserve a huge thank you for their ongoing commitment. We have completed the online conversion and continue to refine the database.

Last October we held a successful relaunch featuring University of Alberta’s *Belzberg Family and Jewish Federation of Edmonton Professorship in Jewish Studies*, Dr. Alexander Marcus, who presented his co-edited book, *The Aramaic Incantation Bowls in their Late Antique Jewish Contexts*.



Over 40 attendees explored the fascinating subject, with an active question-and-answer session following the presentation. The book is now available in the library, with thanks to the Jewish Federation for funding both the purchase and event refreshments.



A quick demonstration of the catalogue was provided which met with great enthusiasm. On display were many interesting titles and tours of the library were offered. Many attendees (synagogue members and non-members) registered as library patrons.

A successful used book sale of duplicate and weeded items was held last year and the next is scheduled for April 26. Proceeds go to buy new materials and library supplies.

In February, the library supported an Adult Education program with displays of books complementing the talks on Israel by Dr. Marcus and Howard Sniderman, a synagogue member and Mercaz-Canada delegate to the World Zionist Congress.



We have been in contact with the National Library of Israel which collects books about the history of Jewish communities worldwide. Several duplicates on the Jewish community in Edmonton and Alberta which have been identified as needed will be donated to them, increasing visibility to our community and we will continue to assist in building their collection about Jews in Western Canada and the prairies.

Penny Hardin continues to lead the very popular short story book club. Each month Penny provides the group with several interesting stories for discussion, followed by refreshments in the home of a participant.

The nonfiction co-ed discussion group will hold its third Zoom session on April 6<sup>th</sup>, exploring Dara Horn's *People Love Dead Jews* and David Baddiel's *Jews Don't Count*. Anyone interested in joining may contact Karen Hering ([heringk@gmail.com](mailto:heringk@gmail.com)) for the zoom link.



Extra *Haggadot* have been offered to congregants and they are fast disappearing.

A presentation about the library was given at the recent synagogue AGM which garnered more interest and new registrants.

A display of relevant books enhanced a talk given by Rabbi Zilbershtein on Kabbalat Shabbat. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> in an 8-part series co-sponsored by Temple Beth Ora, Jewish Family Services, and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

The Moshe Yedlin Library continues to work collaboratively with the other Jewish libraries (Jahsena and the Edmonton Talmud Torah Day School) in the city, moving donations to the most appropriate library collection.

A library committee continues to meet occasionally to offer ideas for marketing, programming, purchases, and maintenance. You can explore the [online catalog](#) here.

## **YASHER KOACH TO OUR MEMBERS!**



**Rona Arato** is delighted to be on the jury for the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards. She has the privilege of working with a distinguished group of judges and reading many excellent submissions. She's looking forward to another year of great reads.

The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards invites you to submit any books in English, French or Yiddish, on a Jewish theme or topic. The Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of the winning authors with significant cash prizes and public recognition.

**The CJLA accepts books published between June 1, 2025 and May 31, 2026. Submissions should be received by June 2, 2026.** Early submission is encouraged and appreciated.

The awards will be presented at a gala ceremony at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave, Toronto, on **Sunday, October 25, 2026.**

For more information about submissions to the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards, see their website: [CJLA](http://CJLA).



**Anne Dublin** has had a busy April 2026! She presented her middle-grade historical novel, *Jacob and the Mandolin Adventure*, to students at the Danforth Jewish Centre (Toronto). She also gave a lecture about the Garment Workers' Scheme/Tailors' Project at Beth Tikvah Synagogue (Toronto). Anne continues to host a monthly **Jewish Storytelling Circle** in her home. If you live in the GTA or are visiting, contact Anne for more details: [adublin54@gmail.com](mailto:adublin54@gmail.com).

Anne has also prepared the teacher's guide for Kathy Kacer's latest book, *Last Known Address: The Stumbling Stones of Europe* (Second Story Press): [Last Known Address Teacher s Guide.pdf](#)

**Kathy Kacer's** *Memory Stones* (Second Story Press) has been shortlisted for the 2026 Jean Throop Book Award recognizing "outstanding Canadian-authored children's books for ages 3–7." This picture book was inspired by a true story about Kathy's late sister.



[Submitted by OJCS librarian, Brigitte Ruel]



On Yom HaShoah 2026, the OJCS (Ottawa Jewish Community School) middle school students had the privilege of welcoming acclaimed Canadian author **Kathy Kacer**, in a visit generously sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Ottawa. Widely recognized as Canada's leading author of Holocaust literature for young readers, Kacer has made an extraordinary and unmatched contribution to Holocaust education both nationally and around the world.

Our middle school students were rapt throughout her presentation. She talked about the true stories behind some of her most popular works, including *Hidden on the High Wire*, her newest book, about a girl who survived the Holocaust by performing in the circus. She also read us a compelling excerpt from one of her other new books, *Under the Iron Bridge*. Our students couldn't wait to ask their questions, as well as share their own stories about grandparents and great-grandparents who had survived the Holocaust.

**Carol Matas** has been presenting *A Storm Unleashed* for students in Winnipeg. Recently, she presented two sessions at the Rady JCC to grade seven classes for a Holocaust Education Day. For Yom HaShoah 2026, she will be presenting virtually to the grade 6 students at the Hebrew Bilingual school, Brock Corydon. Carol also did a presentation virtually for the Jewish Book Festival in Vancouver, combined with PJ Library, of *Kai and the Golem*. PJ Library had an artist assist the children in making their own golems after the presentation was over. In the spring, Carol will be doing two more presentations for the festival of *Kai and the Golem* or *A Storm Unleashed*.

**Anna Rosner's** most recent novel, *Eyes on the Ice* (Groundwood, 2024), is a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection and has been nominated for six awards in the US and Canada.

## A Message from the VHEC

We're pleased to share a new national resource from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre: *Fragments in Focus: A History of the Holocaust*.

With Holocaust education now mandatory in many Canadian provinces, educators are navigating a more complex teaching environment—one where students are increasingly encountering Holocaust-related content online, often shaped by misinformation, disinformation, or unverified sources. This makes it more important than ever to support students in building critical media literacy, historical thinking skills, and evidence-based understanding.

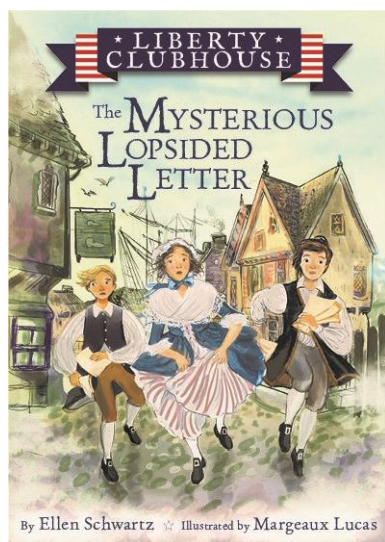
To meet this challenge, the VHEC has developed *Fragments in Focus*, a free, bilingual (English and French) teaching website designed for Grades 6–12. It brings together 160 curated primary sources—including photographs, letters, artifacts, and historical documents—to examine the Holocaust through the experiences of Canadians and those who later made Canada their home, connecting local history with global context.

While teachers are responsible for determining how to cover the Holocaust, *Fragments in Focus* provides practical guidance, modular teaching units, and inquiry-based student activities to help educators teach this complex history effectively. The resource is grounded in an inquiry-based approach, guiding students to first analyze evidence, then develop interpretations, and only after that reflect on the ethical dimensions of the Holocaust.

This school year, VHEC's Director of Education, Lise Kirchner, has led professional development workshops in more than 25 communities across British Columbia, helping teachers integrate *Fragments in Focus* into their classrooms.

We encourage you to explore and share this resource within your networks today: <https://fragmentsinfocus.ca/en/>

## NEW PUBLICATIONS



### ***The Mysterious Lopsided Letter***

By ELLEN SCHWARTZ  
 (Apples and Honey Press)  
 April 2026  
 Ages 7–10

*The Mysterious Lopsided Letter* is the first volume in the “Liberty Club House” series. It is set in Boston, Massachusetts, immediately after the American Revolutionary War and features characters based on two actual Jewish children, Catherine Hays and Judah Touro, as well as their friend Joseph Revere.

Catherine's father, Moses Michael Hays, invites Jewish families into his home on the Sabbath, as synagogues aren't permitted in Boston. When printed flyers circulate stating that Moses Hays

has insulted Christianity with his unlawful gatherings of Jewish people, the children are appalled and determined to find the culprit.

Kirkus described *The Mysterious Lopsided Letter* as "a thought-provoking and insightful historical mystery" and said, "Schwartz has crafted a fascinating window into the era."

### **Zevi Takes the Plunge**

By CAROL MATAS  
 (Orca Book Publishers)  
 2027  
 Grades 4–6 (Hi/Lo)

*Zevi Takes the Plunge* is the second *Zevi* title from Orca. Zevi sets off to a camp for psychic teens to get better at using his abilities. The trouble is he has a bad feeling about it—as do the other psychic teens attending! And when campers start to go missing, Zevi will have to face his greatest fears in order to set things right.

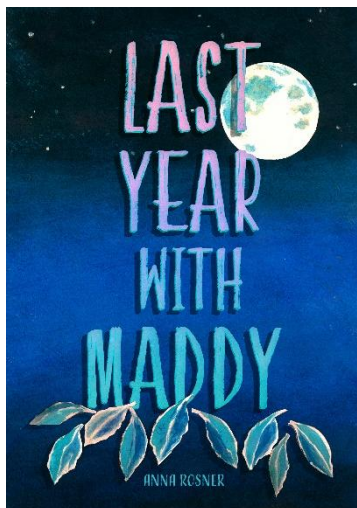
***Last Year with Maddy***

By ANNA ROSNER

Great Plains Press

2026

Ages 9–12



Twelve-year-olds Maddy Li-Quinn and Aviva Adelman were born on the same street and have been inseparable ever since. The two are innately connected through their love of the arts: Aviva is passionate about poetry and writing, and Maddy is a gifted violinist. However, over the course of a painful year, very different family struggles drive the two girls apart. Maddy encounters violence in the home, and Aviva’s baby brother faces a difficult diagnosis.

To cope with the stress, Aviva's mother suggests she write a book about her friendship with Maddy. In an attempt to heal through the written word, Aviva becomes the funny, feisty protagonist of her own book. Reflecting back on the past year, Aviva realizes that she, too, has made many mistakes along the way.

*Last Year With Maddy* draws on the author's personal experience with loss and recovery.

### ***AJL NATIONAL CONFERENCE***

“Cooler by the Lake”

Evanston, Illinois

The 2026 Conference will be held Monday, June 22 to Wednesday, June 24, 2026, with preconference events (board and council meetings, newcomers’ welcome, meet & greet) on Sunday, June 21, and optional tours on Thursday, June 25. Conference sessions will begin at 9:00 a.m. CT on Monday, June 22, and conclude on Wednesday afternoon, June 24.

Visit the [2026 Conference webpage](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.

Conference Support. Conference support will be available to current members of AJL and students. See the [Conference Support](#) and [Student Scholarship](#) pages for details; deadlines and the application forms will be posted in January 2026. Not an AJL member? [Join or renew now!](#)

[Editor’s note: A bursary will be offered to attend this conference for AJL-Canada members. The application form and more information to come.]

## LAUNCH OF PARCHMENT JOURNAL

*Parchment* is the only literary journal devoted to contemporary Canadian Jewish writing. To read an issue of *Parchment* is to hold in your hands a world as dynamic as the Canadian Jewish community itself.

Inside our Spring 2026 issue, you will find a splendour of poetry, non-fiction, and fiction from Shel Krakofsky, Ronna Bloom, Stuart Ross, Marc Bendavid, Adam Seelig, Miriam Libicki, and more.

*Parchment* is seeking literary work—non-fiction, fiction, reviews, translations, liturgy, interviews, poems, cartoon—that celebrates curiosity and ignites conversation. For submission guidelines, see: [Home | Parchment Journal](#)

*Parchment* will be published twice a year, in the spring and fall, by the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies, York University, Toronto.

### Editorial staff:

Publisher: David S. Koffman (a member of AJL-Canada)

Editor-in-Chief: Orly Zebak

Non-fiction Editor: Kelly Baron

Poetry Editor: Alisha Kaplan

Publishing assistant: Joshua Tapper

Literary Director: Adam Sol

