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B'nai Brith Canada

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KOL ECHAD

Kol Echad is the official publication of Forestdale Heights Lodge, B'nai Brith Canada.

It is published five times a year.

We welcome all articles and letters from members of the Lodge and their spouses.

All material submitted is subject to editing.

The editor may consult with members of the bulletin committee regarding suitability and editorial decisions.

All opinions expressed in Kol Echad are those of the individual writers and do not reflect the views of either Forestdale Heights Lodge or B'nai Brith Canada.

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PRESIDENTS' PENS

Debbi Silver

Dear Members of Forestdale Heights Lodge,

This is my first article since becoming co-President with Ruth Pupko. I must admit that I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would ever accept this position. This is a first for our Lodge. There have never been co-Presidents in its history. Ruth and I decided that this would be a good fit. We get along very well; with this in mind, we know we can instill enthusiasm into Forestdale Heights Lodge.

This past week we celebrated the Seders (written on April 9). The enjoyment of sharing the Seder table with our family and daughter-in-law's family was truly a treat. The teenagers participated in every part of the evening. It was incredibly special to us because our granddaughter, Jaime, departs on the March of the Living this coming Saturday evening. Jaime has participated in seminars over the last two months, instructing the students about what they would experience in Poland and then in Israel. They have, as well, met survivors who will be attending the trip. This will be a trip to remember for the rest of her life.

The Lodge has participated in the Toronto Marathon for many years. This year it is taking place on the first Sunday in May. Stuart Indig is overseeing this program. As well as Stuart, volunteers will be Mark Spergel, Jeff Rosen, and Ray Moscoe.

At our last meeting, we discussed having our annual summer BBQ. Stuart and Mark have offered their homes for the program. Thank you both. With the pandemic 90% over, we can begin to look at other projects we have done in the past.

As Treasurer, I have prepared our budget for 2023. I want to commend Jeff Rosen for his work on Kol Echad. We have surpassed last year's income due to Jeff's diligence in obtaining ads. I also would like to thank Harvey for making sure the envelopes get to the printer on time and for sending out the invoices to the advertisers.

That's it for the May/June bulletin. If you have any questions or would like to recommend a fundraising program or anything else, please e-mail me at debbisilver@rogers.com.

Have a safe and happy summer.





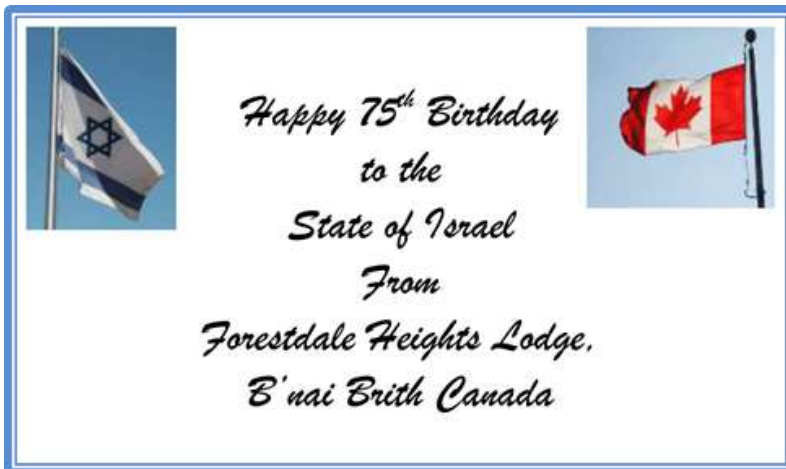
PRESIDENTS' PENS

Ruth Pupko

You will be reading this column well after the Seders and Passover will be over and be gone in a blink of an eye. My family Seders are still the same, yet they have changed over the years. My three brothers still conduct the Seders the Sephardic way, the same as my father/grandfathers, and ancestors have done for so many years. They also include the Ashkenazi family members in contributing and participating as their forefathers before them. It is not necessarily about sweet gefilte fish versus spicy fish balls or sweet and sour meatballs over savoury meatballs. It is about being with family and teaching our kids to learn about our customs and traditions and, most of all, learning to respect one another and be proud to be Jewish. Sitting together and sharing our stories over two meals brings out the best in us. I am proud of how the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim have come together as one.

I am also proud to have Debbi Silver as co-President. We will work together as a team, just as we always do. I also welcome the new board members and look forward to their expertise and willingness to roll up their sleeves and work hard. The Purim megillah reading was a huge success, and this was the opening to many more events after a two-year absence.

Let's keep our tradition of being "Forestdale Heights Lodge - the community service Lodge," and we will continue to make a difference to our community and to the people who need us. Just like at Seders, we will get together at our Lodge meetings, discuss ideas, and make plans. Take care and looking forward to next time.



AT A GLANCE

FHL will hold Zoom meetings on the second Tuesday of each month in 2023.
Start time: 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings: May 2, June 13

All dates are subject to change

Kol Echad schedule for the 2022-23 season

July / August – Summer/Digital Issue

Deadline: June 20

2023-24

September / October – High Holiday Issue

Deadline: August 10

November / December – Chanukah Issue

Deadline: October 10

COVER ART



This issue's cover looks good enough to eat. However, while Kol Echad is a great read, we're not exactly sure how your digestion system would handle it.

It would be better to wait until Shavuot, which starts on the evening of May 25 and ending on May 27, to enjoy a piece of cheesecake.

Chag Sameach!





EDITOR'S DESK

Jeff Rosen

When considering your work life, would you say you liked what you did? How about loving what you did every day over several decades? I guess I'm lucky that I loved the three newspapers I worked at for 32 years, from 1982-2014.

Truthfully, most of the time, I could not believe I was being paid for what I did as I enjoyed it so much. It is a philosophy I passed down to my daughter, who has been working as an early childhood educator in Oakville for over a decade. I realize I'm biased, but they are true heroes, taking care of and educating our society's youngest so their parents can continue in the workplace.



This is also the same philosophy I have brought to our Lodge's publications since I was recruited back in 1991. Then I was the "padawan," the apprentice to a senior member of the Lodge. The decades passed, and technology improved, allowing for more innovation in both The Horizon and Kol Echad. Almost nine years ago, the end of my working career meant I had more time to devote to this bulletin to ensure that every issue was better than the previous one.

When COVID forced our Lodge into a virtual mode, all our columnists remained by my side, turning out column after column. At the same time, my devoted colleague, Harvey Silver, ensured our advertising revenue remained strong. I was lucky to have such a great team behind me.

I reflect on the past now (as I do every year) as Kol Echad gets ready to publish the final print issue of its 21st season. That's quite the accomplishment; everyone who has contributed should be lauded. I would pin a medal on each of you if I could. Some longtime contributors have passed away, while others have either left the Lodge or decided to put down their pens. Those remaining are now the backbone of what makes Kol Echad such a great read. Quite honestly, I don't know if I could do it without the words and feedback from all the people who have written under the President's Pen banner, as well as from Debbi Silver, Rosalie Moscoe, Lisa Rosen, and Marc Kates. Since his mother's passing, Marc has also served as a co-editor, helping to polish every issue to a fine sheen.

Continued on next page



I always look forward to the final print issue of each season and mark it as an accomplishment of another successful year. However, I also take note of how time is passing. As I said last issue, the state of the bulletin remains strong, but will it remain so for another year? I know I will stay at the helm of the "Good Ship KE" for as long as our leaders choose to keep me on. All I ask is for the continued support of our fantastic advertisers, those whose ads appear in every issue and those you see in our greetings issues, as well as our dedicated columnists. I know they have other interests and busy lives, but their words will ensure Kol Echad thrives into its 22nd season.

As we sign off again for another season, I'll repeat what I have said many times. I am thankful for my good health and a fantastic family who stands behind me and provides the necessary moral and mental support to do this job. Lisa and Jordana, your advice and ideas are a constant source of inspiration.

Take care, have a great summer and let us hope the second half of 2023 is better than the first.

We will connect again in the season's next and last issue (digital).

Be well.



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MILESTONES

FHL wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Aaron Pacter	May 4
Stewart Indig	June 1
Harvey Silver	June 6
Jeff Rosen	June 12



Anniversaries

Carl & Debbie Zeliger	June 8
Ira & Paula Kuchinsky	June 10
Ray & Rosalie Moscoe	June 21
Ivan & Elizabeth Bloom	June 27
Marc & Anna Pollock	June 29



SPEEDY RECOVERY

FHL wishes Rosalie Moscoe a speedy recovery following her fall in Florida.

Congratulations

To Marc Kates & Rachel Spitzer on the bat mitzvah of their daughter, Eve. Eve Kates is the granddaughter of Lodge past presidents, Michael, z"l, & Bonnie, z"l, Kates.

Condolences

Forestdale Heights Lodge extends condolences to Rosalie & Ray Moscoe on the passing of her brother, Fred Fleishman.

Forestdale Heights extends condolences to the family of Marc Kates on the passing of his uncle, Yermi Kates, brother of Lodge president Michael Kates.

If you have any memorable moments in your life (or the lives of your children and grandchildren) you wish to share with the Lodge, please send announcements to jelijo@sympatico.ca.




ALLOCATIONS

As of March 1, Forestdale Heights Lodge has made the following allocations for 2023

1. Hill House Hospice
2. Imagine a Cure
3. Kayla's Camp
4. United Chesed of Toronto
5. Beit Halochem Canada
6. Magen David Adom Canada
7. Covenant House
8. Neshama Hospice
9. Fred Victor
10. Ezer Mizion



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CORRESPONDENCE



Sharing our compassionate approach to hospice care and creating comforting memories for everyone in our home.

March 14, 2023

Dear Members of Forestdale Heights Lodge, BBC,

On behalf of the entire team at Hill House Hospice, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation for the support given. Your generous donation will go a very long way in supporting our operations at the hospice to ensure we can continue to provide compassionate care to all that walk through our doors. Your donation will be specifically utilized for any household supplies that support families and patients staying at the hospice.

As we look to celebrate and give thanks for the tremendous support and love that we have received for the past 25 years, we would like to cordially invite you to join us in commemorating this momentous milestone at our Annual Hike for Hill House Hospice 2023. The Hike this year will be a hybrid and will enable people to participate virtually throughout the month of May and/or in-person on Sunday May 7th at Hill House Hospice.

Hill House Hospice is a home decorated and filled with love and care; it is also York Region's first ever residential hospice started in 1998. Here at Hill House, we believe that it is the right of every individual with a life-threatening illness to receive palliative care appropriate to his or her needs. At Hill House, we provide palliative care to individuals diagnosed with a terminal illness in a home-like setting, support for their families and friends and we ensure that each patient is treated with dignity, respect and the highest standard of care. Our Home is staffed by nurses, personal support workers (PSW), doctors and volunteers, all of whom help provide 24-hour care to our residents and families. Hill House is a very special place filled with laughter, tears, as well as a compassionate and caring team of professionals and volunteers.

Your thoughtfulness will always be reflected and remembered in the care and comfort provided to individuals and their families living at Hill House Hospice.

With deep gratitude and thanks,

Michelle Hambly
Executive Director

36 Wright Street, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 4A1
Phone: (905) 737-9308 Fax: (905) 737-4807
www.hillhousehospice.com

CORRESPONDENCE



AID TO DISABLED VETERANS OF ISRAEL (CANADA)

March 28, 2023

Ms. Ruth Pupko
President
Forestdale Heights Lodge

Dear Ms. Pupko:

On behalf of more than 50,000 Israeli disabled veterans and victims of terror, we say "thank you".

Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel appreciates your generous donation.

While we long for peace, the great need to defend and secure Israel never ends. Unfortunately, the number of Beit Halochem members continues to grow. Your support enables us to provide rehabilitative therapies at our leading-edge Beit Halochem Centres in Israel, facilities offering a remarkable range of programs and services to assist Israel's disabled heroes and their families.

Thank you, once again, for helping Beit Halochem Canada rebuild, rehabilitate, and enhance thousands of lives!

Sincerely,

Lisa Levy
National Executive Director



CORRESPONDENCE



.....
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www.imagineacureforleukemia.com Charitable Organization Number: 83964 6320 RR0001 www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities

March 5, 2023

Dear Forestdale Heights Lodge,

On behalf of the Directors of *Imagine A Cure for Leukemia*, we would like to thank you for your thoughtful and generous donation. Your on going support to help us find a cure is much appreciated.

We are thrilled to be hosting our first in person event since 2019. On May 28th we will be hosting "Come Together -a Fitness Fundraiser". We are looking forward to bringing together our friends and supporters for a 3 hour workout.

Imagine A Cure for Leukemia was founded in 2006 with the goal to give inspiration to those with the disease and to fund research. We are thrilled that with your support we have donated over 1.5 Million Dollars to research.

In good health and happiness,

Nara Abrams

Nara Abrams
President & Founder

Danielle Reich

Danielle Reich
Event Manager



CORRESPONDENCE



302-336 Spadina Road, Toronto ON M5R 2V8
647-289-7200 | donations@neshamahospice.com
neshamahospice.com

Forestdale Heights Lodge

March 16, 2023

Dear Ruth Pupko and Debbi Silver,

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and commitment in helping to create Canada's first hospice residence based on Jewish values. Neshama Hospice will make a positive impact on the lives of thousands of individuals and their families. We hope you will take great pride in knowing that your donation is integral to the construction of the hospice, and we gratefully acknowledge your generous contribution.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Neshama Hospice
647-289-7200
neshamahospice.com



MARCH MEETING

Our March 14 Zoom meeting was short (and sweet), but everything was timely, nothing was rushed, and all the affairs of the Lodge were dealt with.

As well as Lodge President Ruth Pupko, those in attendance included Zoom moderator Stewart Indig, Harvey & Debbi Silver, Albert Ohana, Carl Zeliger, Elizabeth Bloom, Marilyn & Eddie Arkin and Jeff & Lisa Rosen.

Ruth opened the meeting, reporting how she volunteered that day at Beth Emeth Synagogue at a Pesach food parcel program.

It was announced that the Lodge would once again be helping out at the Toronto Marathon this year, to be held on Sunday, May 7. Stewart said he would forward more information to volunteers as it becomes available.

Stewart also confirmed that Forestdale Heights would probably have a summer BBQ: location and further details to come.

Members of the Lodge also discussed inviting guest speakers, perhaps around Holocaust Education Month in the fall. This could be done as an in-person event at a party room in a member's building.

Turning to elections for the 2023-2024 season, Ruth cast one vote for each nominated individual and congratulated the incoming executive.

As there will be no meeting in April due to Pesach, the Lodge's next meeting will take place on May 2. It is being held the first week of the month as the second Tuesday is Lag B'Omer.

Jeff Rosen

I visited a monastery and as I walked past the kitchen I saw a man frying chips. I asked him "Are you the friar?" He replied "No, I'm the chip monk..."



PURIM 2023

After a two-year absence due to COVID-19, Forestdale Heights Lodge returned to the B'nai Brith Seniors' Residence at 4300 Bathurst Street for the Lodge's annual Purim program, once again led by Rabbi Jay Kelman.

It was as if no time had passed as over 40 people, including Lodge members, residents and the Kelman family, came to hear Rabbi Kelman and one of his sons recite the Megillah on Monday, March 6. Rabbi Uri Gelman, who has been the spiritual leader of the 4300 Bathurst Street Synagogue since 1997, started the evening with a few inspirational words.

At the conclusion of the traditional reading, the Lodge members present donned gloves to serve delicious treats, including hamentashen, clementines, chips and drinks.

Continued on next page



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PURIM 2023



This year's program included Ruth Pupko, Stewart Indig, Marilyn & Eddie Arkin, Debbi & Harvey Silver, Debbie & Carl Zeliger, Lisa and me. Also joining us this year were the Zeligers' son and daughter-in-law, Josh and Zlata.

Special thanks for this annual program go to Carl Zeliger, who coordinated the evening and to Rabbi Jay Kelman and his family for supporting our endeavour.

Jeff Rosen

More photos can be found at kolechad.com/purim23.htm



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PURIM 2023



HIGH HOLIDAY GREETINGS 5784

If Forestdale Heights Lodge continues to operate in virtual mode, Kol Echad will again run a modified High Holiday Greetings campaign similar to last year. There will be no charge for placing a business card-sized greeting in the September/October issue.

There will be a small charge if you wish to place a quarter or half-page greeting (\$20 or \$40). If you want to make any changes or remove last year's ad, please let us know by August 1.

Please send all relevant information to jelijo@sympatico.ca

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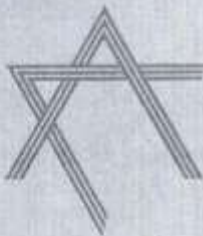
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FOOD SENSATIONS



It's BBQ season again, and throwing something on the grill is an easy summer dinner. This guide will help alleviate some of the "Is it cooked?" stress from grilling. Exact times will vary due to the thickness, but the following is a great starting point.



Chicken

Thighs and breasts are two popular cuts of chicken to grill. Make sure to cook over medium heat (350-450F). If the temperature is too high, it will cause the outside to cook before the middle gets to 165F. Always check the internal temperature with a thermometer before serving.

Chicken Thighs (Boneless): 5-6 minutes per side;

Chicken Breast (Boneless): 5-6 minutes per side.

Burgers

Preheat the grill high - 450-550F - when grilling burgers. Cooking at that temperature will create a delicious crust on the outside. Once on the grill, close the lid and step away. Do not press down or flatten the meat. It will result in a less juicy burger. Only flip one time halfway through cooking too.

Rare: 5 minutes;

Medium Rare: 7 minutes;

Medium: 8 minutes;

Well Done: 10 minutes.



Fish

Don't fear cooking fish on the grill. Ensure the grates are properly preheated (450-550F) before placing the fish on them. Since fish is delicate, only flip once halfway through cooking. When done, it will release from the grates.



Steak






High heat is best when grilling steak – 450-500F – to seal in the juices and ensure beautiful grill marks. Set it and forget it. Don't open the lid or flip it too many times. Steaks only need to be flipped once during the cooking process.

Rare: 8 minutes;

Medium Rare: 9 minutes;

Medium: 10 minutes;

Well Done: 14 minutes

Rare		120-125°F
Medium-rare		130-135°F
Medium		140-145°F
Medium-well		150-155°F
Well-done		≥160°F

The classic temperature scale for steak doneness



FOOD SENSATIONS



PHILADELPHIA 3-Step Cheesecake

Enjoy a PHILADELPHIA 3-Step Cheesecake recipe, the creamy classic you can make any time you're asked to bring dessert. This 3-step recipe features only a few steps and all the delicious cheesecake flavour you love.

Ingredients

2 pkg. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
1 ready-to-use graham cracker
crumb crust (6 oz.)

Directions

Heat oven to 325°F.
Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla with a mixer until blended. Add eggs; beat just until blended.
Pour into crust.
Bake for 40 min. or until the centre is almost set. Cool. Refrigerate for 3 hours.

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TORONTO MARATHON



This year's Toronto Goodlife Marathon was held on Sunday, May 7. Due to our production schedule, we could not include more information about this year's event. However, this is what we know, as Kol Echad was going to print.

Once again, our Lodge was in charge of the first water station at Harlandale Avenue, just north of Yonge & Sheppard. We arrived around 6:00 a.m. and were finished around 9:00 a.m. A good time was had by all in attendance.

Watch our next issue, July/August, for a full report and photos.

Kol Echad archive photos



FORESTDALE FUNNIES

Sadie and Benny were both 65 years old and were celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary. When all the family and guests had left their house, a fairy appeared from nowhere and said to them, "Congratulations, you two. I'm here to grant you both one wish each."

Sadie said, "I want to travel around the world."

The fairy waved her magic wand and **POW** – Sadie had tickets in her hand for a round-the-world cruise on a Cunard liner.

Then the fairy asked Benny what he wanted.

Benny replied. "I wish I had a wife 30 years younger than me." So the fairy picked up her wand and **POW** – Benny was 95 years old.

* * *

Maurice and his wife Sadie were asleep one night when suddenly, at 2 a.m., the phone rang. Sadie picked it up.

She listened to the caller and said, "How the hell should I know? It's 95 miles away." She then hung up.

Maurice asked, "Who was that?"

Sadie replied. "Some mad woman wanting to know if the coast was clear."



ISRAEL@75

With Israel celebrating its 75th birthday in May, we take this time to look back on the state of Canada-Israel relations.



In 1947, as a representative on the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), Canada was among the 33 countries that voted in favour of the Partition Plan for Palestine, which aimed to split the British Mandate into an Arab state and a Jewish state with an internationalized Jerusalem. Despite heavy pressure from the United Kingdom on the Commonwealth of Nations to abstain during the vote, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Partition Plan with a majority of the representatives in favour. While the Partition Plan could not be implemented as intended due to the outbreak of a civil war in the territory, the State of Israel emerged with an agreed border by 1949.

Canada granted de facto recognition to Israel in December 1948 and full de jure recognition on May 11, 1949, after the Jewish state was admitted into the United Nations as a member state. In September 1953, a Canadian embassy was opened in Tel Aviv; a Canadian ambassador to Israel was appointed in 1958.



In May 1961, David Ben-Gurion, left, was the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit Canada. Since then, officials from both countries have made frequent trips. Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers and Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada have visited Israel, demonstrating the ever-strengthening relationship and cooperation. In addition, the premiers of Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Ontario and Alberta and cabinet ministers from other provinces have led successful commercial and cultural missions to Israel. Several Canadian municipalities have twinned with Israeli cities.

Continued on next page



In 1957, after the Sinai Campaign, Lester Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, received the Nobel Peace Prize for successfully leading the process by which UN peacekeeping troops were stationed along the border between Israel and Egypt. Canadian troops also played a central role in the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). This role is part of the broader Canadian commitment to efforts to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. Later, in the late 1970s, Canada encouraged peace negotiations between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Begin stopped in Canada and met with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1977. While diplomatic relations were cordial, they were not particularly close during this period.



Canada's support for Israel received strong public endorsement during the 1990-91 Gulf War, during which Iraqi missiles were fired into Israel from occupied Kuwait. Canadian forces were part of the United States-led coalition against Ba'athist Iraq during this time.

With the election of Stephen Harper's government in 2006, the relationship between Canada and Israel strengthened considerably. The Harper government played a direct role in forming policy for the region, seeking to adjust the positions to conform with the principles of the Conservative majority.

As anti-Israel political movements spread to Canada, including at university campuses through events such as Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), Canadian government officials and members of parliament from different parties expressed opposition. Ultimately, all parties, except for some NDP members, denounced Israeli Apartheid Week.

On April 29, 2009, to mark the 61st anniversary of the State of Israel, PM Stephen Harper said, "We count ourselves among Israel's closest partners. Since its founding in 1948, Canada has supported Israel and its right to live in peace and security with its neighbours. We value this relationship and look forward to continued friendship and collaboration."

In a magazine interview published February 12, 2010, Environment Minister Peter Kent said: "Prime Minister Harper has made it quite clear for some time now and has regularly stated that an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada."

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Following the return of the Liberal Party to power under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2015, relations between Canada and Israel remained essentially unchanged. In September 2016, Trudeau headed the Canadian delegation to the state funeral of Israeli leader Shimon Peres. In his condolence message, he stated: “Mr. Peres was an internationally-respected statesman and a great friend to Canada. He visited our country often and helped build relations that remain strong to this day.”

Canada exports agricultural products and raw materials to Israel, which, in turn, exports diamonds, textiles, clothing, and food products to Canada. On July 31, 1996, Canada and Israel signed a free trade agreement called the [Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement](#) (CIFTA). It came into effect on January 1, 1997. Bilateral trade subsequently increased to \$1.24 billion by 2005.

In 2012, Joe Oliver, the Canadian Minister of Natural Resources, and Uzi Landau, the former Israeli Minister of Energy and Water Resources, announced the creation of the [Canada-Israel Energy Science and Technology Fund](#) to spur the development of energy technologies and processes for the development of unconventional oil and gas resources. Two Canadian R&D workshops took place in March 2013, bringing together leading Canadian and Israeli stakeholders.

In September 2019, following four years of negotiations, the updated version of CIFTA entered into force following ratification by both governments. The new agreement included Israeli access to Canada to sell produce, grain products, and wines. In return, Israel agreed to tariff exemptions for Canadian companies in agricultural, agri-food and fisheries products. Clauses on women’s rights and gender equality in trade were also included. The volume of bilateral trade between Israel and Canada in 2018 was \$1.1 billion, consisting primarily of chemical and machinery-related products and medical or optical instruments.

-Wikipedia





AS I SEE IT

Marc Kates

I am very fortunate that I was born into a world where the State of Israel exists; I can't imagine life without it. My world contains a place where Jews can openly practise their Judaism and where it's not hard to be a Jew. True, the State of Israel isn't exactly the Biblical land of milk and honey, but even millennia ago, life in Israel certainly wasn't perfect. Despite the hostilities, from outside and from within, there is no place on earth quite

like it.

I often find it so bizarre that despite being the fifth generation born in Canada, and a proud Canadian, I am attached to this small piece of land so far away. Yes, I have family there, but it's not through them that derives the attachment. My parents made it a priority for me to understand our history and be part of a chain that stretches back in time through what was taught at home and my Jewish day school education. My parents told me the story of how, in 1973, they decided to travel to Israel for the first time. Many family members tried to dissuade them from visiting, but they went anyway. (Little did they know that they would find themselves in the midst of the Yom Kippur War, spending a lot of time in bomb shelters and performing tasks on my uncle's kibbutz when the soldiers were called up for active duty.) Despite their wartime experiences, that connection to Israel only grew stronger. My parents supported my decision to study in Jerusalem during my third year of university, so I can only imagine that they would support my brother's decision to make aliyah nearly a year and a half ago.



It's also amazing how this small country has advanced at such a rapid pace. With each and every visit, we marvel at the latest advancements: the light rail line in Jerusalem, the latest inventions, and the high-speed train from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The juxtaposition and the dichotomy between the ancient and the modern makes exploring this place a true adventure.

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Back in 2016, when we told the kids that we were going to Israel, each child (including the nearly three-year-old) suggested things to do on the itinerary. Despite the late arrival and our drive to Jerusalem, we quickly changed at the hotel and drove to the Old City, where the first true stop on our journey was the Kotel. Standing with our family at this holy site was one of the many memories that I cherish. To add fun to our trip, I had prepared clues about destinations and tasks the kids had to do on our family's version of "The Amazing Race - Israel Edition." Yes, there were the scheduled events on the trip, but then there were those unscripted moments that are equally as memorable.

As I write this article for Kol Echad, I can't help but feel my excitement and anticipation grow as we start to plan our Israel trip in August. Like every trip, I know this one will be unique as we explore new places in Israel. Now that the kids are seven years older, they will have new perspectives and experiences, and I can't wait to see them through their eyes.

So, as Israel gets ready to celebrate its 75th birthday, I wish her Yom Huledet Sameach. Over the next 75 years, may Israel continue to grow and prosper in peace. May the arid desert continue to be made to bloom, and may the line in Hatikvah come to pass, "I'hiyot am chofshi be'artzeynu" (to be a free people in our land).



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