



June 3, 2025

A Note From Our Chair

Chag Sameach,

What a whirlwind of events we have pulled off in celebration of Jewish Heritage Month. Thank you to all those who participated and took the time to appreciate local artist Alan Stein's art work, the exhibits from Abraham Global Peace Initiative, the screening of Tragic Awakening, the informative talk with Raheel Raza or the Jewish outreach class we held at the Wasaga Beach Public Library.

In addition to all this, it was also a busy month in the advocacy and fighting antisemitism departments. After finding out there were plans for a pro-Palestinian protest outside town hall in Collingwood, quick action was taken to ensure our local O.P.P., council members and BIA staff were well informed and monitoring for any issues. A plan of action and strategic approach was decided on, and I am grateful that our Jewish community avoided confrontation, thereby not only ensuring safety, but also upholding the high regard with which we are held (and that I am working hard to build) within our extended communities. Due to the lack of attention the protest received, it seems to have now dwindled down to a few desperate and ill-informed locals. It is the hope of all involved that with time even these small scale disruptions will fizzle out in the interest of all including our downtown tourism sector.

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STAY IN TOUCH!

I recently attended the Nova Exhibition in Toronto, a carefully crafted retelling of the dreadful events at the music festival on October 7th. The journey from pain and loss to healing and hope is relevant to all of us, and it's a must-see, if you can make it. The exhibit has recently been extended until June 22nd. And if you can attend on June 5, the exhibit will host a moderated discussion that includes Maureen Basnicki, a member of the SGBJC, and Raheel Raza, a prominent Muslim activist who speaks out against antisemitism. Tickets and information can be found at www.novaexhibition.com

This past Shabbat, I was invited to Barrie's Am Shalom synagogue to talk about my journey in fighting antisemitism and building a local Jewish community in the Southern Georgian Bay Area. The following is an abridged version of my speech. I hope it serves both as a reminder of how much we have accomplished together as well as highlighting the path that we must continue to forge in an effort to achieve our desired goals.

"My name is Rashell Feldman. I converted to orthodox Judaism in 1998 when I was 20 years old, over 25 years ago. I never saw that coming, nor did I expect to become the lucky and adoring wife of Dr. Michael Feldman, or the blessed and grateful mother to five spirited and amazing children named Aliyah, Zevan, Tahlia, Noah and Liam. I admit to dragging them all here this morning against their will. The real reason I had them come today wasn't just to hear me speak but to watch what I do. Their close attention to how I live my life and the priorities I live by is part of my legacy. I also had no idea that I would develop a side gig later in life practicing psychotherapy and family law mediation. I am never one to allow boredom to set in. My life has not been short of surprises. Up until a few years ago, I would have considered myself to have a full life, complete with adequate doses of suffering punctuated by a deep sense of meaning and purpose and with rich undertones of nachas. What more could there be to a life well-lived, I asked? I was sure that I had built a life based on the teachings of Judaism, and I felt satisfied.

In my efforts to fight antisemitism, I learned that our focus has to be to help Educate, Celebrate and Integrate. After starting the SGBJC I made deputations at multiple council meetings and the towns of Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, and Blue Mountains have now adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This is a first step. We need to be able to identify the problem before we can begin to solve for it.

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I developed partnerships with our local libraries, mainly in Wasaga and Thornbury, where we provide monthly Jewish children's classes and other programming that is open to everyone with the hopes of creating safe space to build bridges and connections. This has recently led to my having to make a deputation with the Collingwood Public Library as they were less enthusiastic about partnering with us. I am waiting to hear back from them about next steps, and I feel confident they are going to have to agree with our request for partnership. We do actually meet their criteria with respect to Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity. Starting this holiday season you will be able to come check out large LED menorahs that will be lit and on display in downtown Wasaga Beach and Collingwood, with the hopes I will be able to pull this off in Thornbury as well.

What's my take-away? If I can do it, so can you. What should you do? That's a question only you can answer. But "never again" is now and it's not too late to start answering the call to action that at the very least should be the lesson we draw from the horrors of October 7th.

Some key take-aways from this journey that I have been on over the last 603 days have been:

- 1. Don't sit passively and assume someone else is going to handle things. Each one of us was born to play a role and your part is equally necessary. We need you!*
- 2. Do what speaks to or inspires you: Join, Participate, Teach, Volunteer, Advocate, Donate, become a Member and most importantly UNITE.*
- 3. Now is NOT the time to turn on one another. I am not suggesting that you agree with Israeli politics or the approach the IDF is taking in fighting this war. But we aren't living there and maybe the people on the front lines whose job it is to protect the residents of Israel and uphold their national security might know more than we do. They might be privy to information we are not. Let us not forget that their lives, the lives of their families, and their reputations are on the line. It's easy to live here and pass judgement from afar but let's not air our dirty laundry publicly. I am grateful for their sacrifices and bravery and I choose not to publicly condemn or show a lack of respect and support for a people and a Jewish state whose mere existence and fight for determination ensures the safety of all other Jews living in the diaspora.*
- 4. As JFK famously once said, and I have since adapted: ask not what your state can do for you but what you can do for the land of Israel. For those of us not living and fighting for the return of our hostages and our right to exist, let's focus on what we can do here, in support of our people.*
- 5. Let us create and fortify our community, let us build alliances and bridges with others in order to fight systemic antisemitism, let us help to educate and in so doing integrate into our larger communities. Let us prioritize our children and the next generation. After all, Whitney Houston sang it best: "I believe our children are the future, teach them well and let them lead the way."*

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6. In conclusion, to me the answer has always been to LEAN in more deeply. To honour and celebrate Judaism. To boldly commit to being the light and leading the way. Ignore the haters and let us rise to the occasion and learn from reliable sources and avoid spreading false narratives. Let us UNITE and stand tall and proud. Embody the fearlessness that Moshe demonstrated as he led us out of slavery and into the land of Israel thousands of years ago. Together let us be the change we wish to see in the world. Am Israel Chai!"

Rashell Feldman
Chair of SGBJC

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Highlights & Memories from our May Events:

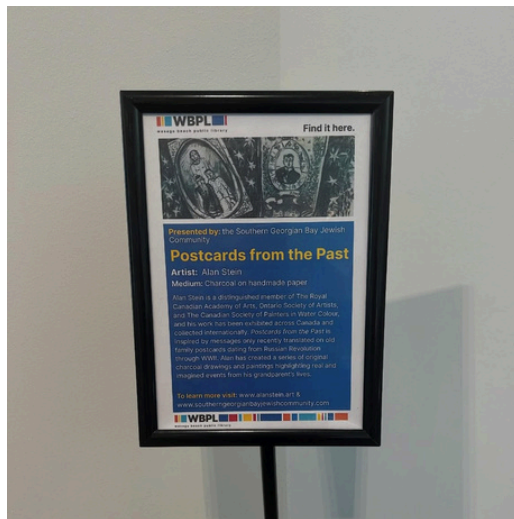
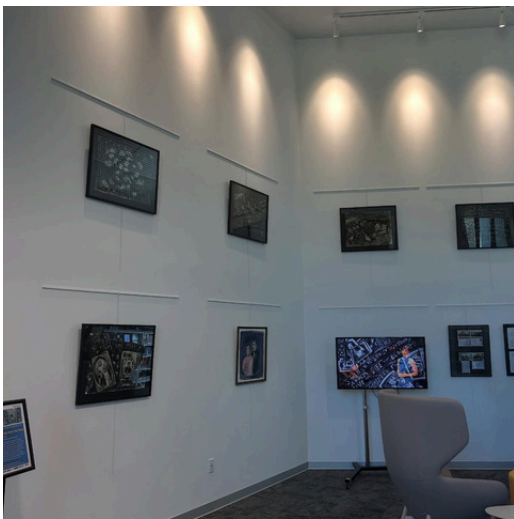


Tragic Awakening Movie Screening

We had two screenings of A Tragic Awakening featuring Raman Osman and Raphael Shore. The October 7 pogrom in Israel was the worst massacre of Jews since the days of the Holocaust, yet rather than rally to the victim's side with empathy and compassion, the international community has, confoundingly, exploded with Jew-hatred. Tragic Awakening: A New Look at the Oldest Hatred is therefore a profound and timely documentary that delves deeply into the roots of antisemitism and provides sobering revelations about the world's oldest hatred. Where does such unbridled hatred come from, and can it be harnessed into a force for good? Tragic Awakening answers these and so many other questions with unvarnished candor.

This was an extremely powerful film that we highly recommend and led to some great discussions as an audience.

Highlights & Memories from our May Events:

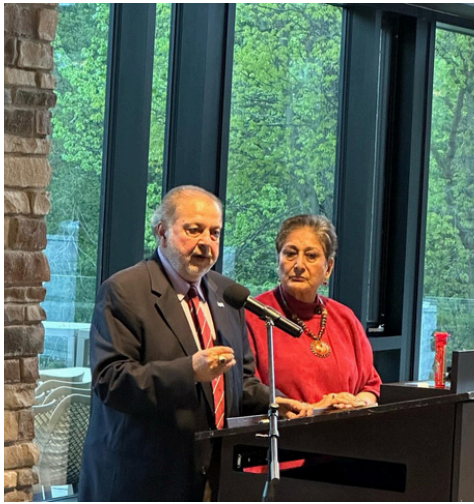


Postcards from the Past by Alan Stein

Postcards from the Past by Alan Stein was on displayed at the Wasaga Beach Library for Jewish Heritage Month. Alan Stein has created a series of original charcoal drawings and paintings highlighting real and imagined events from his grandparent's lives. Inspired by messages found in old family postcards, the exhibit is enhanced by reproductions of a selection of old photographs and the postcards themselves.

The images in this exhibit take us on a trip through time, with a young woman in St. Petersburg, Russia during the Russian revolution, and a young man in Lodz, Poland. From the invasion of Poland, inside the Lodz ghetto, immigration to Toronto and New York City, and a joyful marriage. How did they meet? What secrets were never told? What happened to the families left behind? We will never know but perhaps we can imagine. There were dreams of youth, tragedy, war, and finally love.

Highlights & Memories from our May Events:



Raheel Raza Event

Thank you to everyone who came last night to hear Raheel Raza speak.

Raheel spoke about how Islamists have co-opted Western liberal democratic values to advance their own political agendas, including antisemitism.

Raheel's simply-worded messages resonated with all of us, and she once again proved herself to be a powerful ally of the Jewish community and of all people who should be vigilant of Islamic fundamentalists.

A very big thank you to Raheel Raza for coming to speak to us, we truly appreciate it.

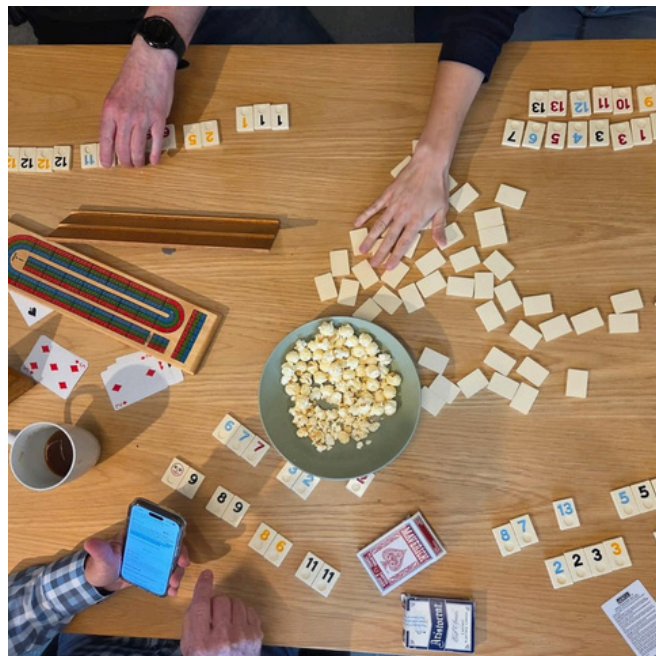
Highlights & Memories from our May Events:



Jewish Heritage Month Kids Program

Celebrating Jewish Heritage Month at the Wasaga Beach Public Library was a beautiful gathering of community and culture. There was storytelling, we explored the core values of justice, compassion, and collective well-being, and enjoyed a variety of crafts, including making edible shortbread mezuzahs (yes, they were as delicious as they sound). A meaningful afternoon filled with connection, learning, and fun – thank you to everyone who joined us.

Highlights & Memories from our May Events:



First Game Night

What a fun night for our first game night!! Thank you to Gordon's in Collingwood for hosting and to everyone who came, we look forward to more games nights in the future! Stay tuned for our next date.



Now available at your local libraries: PJ Library Books!

Thanks to a generous donation from PJ Library, a wonderful selection of Jewish children's and teen books has been added to the collections at Collingwood Public Library, Wasaga Beach Public Library, and L.E. Shore Memorial Library (The Blue Mountains Public Library). These books celebrate Jewish culture, holidays, traditions, and stories — enriching our community with meaningful reads for all ages. Next time you visit, check out the new titles and look for our special sticker label inside the cover! Special thank you to our board member Monique for all her hard work making this happen.

Upcoming Events

Join us for a fun-filled Children's Program learning Jewish Values & Mitzvahs



Storybook reading, learning about Jewish values & mitzvahs, and crafts at the Thornbury Library.

Hosted By :



**SUNDAY
JUNE 15TH**
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm



**L.E. SHORE
MEMORIAL LIBRARY**
173 Bruce St. S,
Thornbury, ON



Register Here:
shalom@sgbjc.ca

Open to children ages 3-12. Parents must accompany their child. All are welcome!

Join us for a fun-filled children's program learning Jewish values & mitzvahs!

WHEN: Sunday June 15th, 2025

TIME: 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

LOCATION: L.E. Shore Memorial Library- 173 Bruce St S, Thornbury, ON

Intended for children ages 3-12 years, and must be accompanied by a parent. No charge for this event. Please RSVP to shalom@sgbjc.ca to reserve a spot for your child(ren) so we can ensure we have enough supplies. We look forward to seeing you there!

Upcoming Events



Join us for our first co-ed community brunch! Meet fellow SGBJC members and socialize over a delicious brunch at the Georgian Family Restaurant.

WHEN: Thursday June 19th, 2025

TIME: 11:00 AM

LOCATION: Georgian Family Restaurant- 401 Hume St, Collingwood

Each attendee is responsible for covering cost of their own meals and drinks.

RSVP by emailing shalom@sgbjc.ca and let us know if you are attending. We can't wait to see you there!

Upcoming Events



SGBJC
SOUTHERN GEORGIAN BAY
JEWISH COMMUNITY

JOIN US FOR THE NEXT SGBJC
**BI-MONTHLY
BOOK CLUB**

Read (or Listen) to
the book or join us
for casual chat!

The Weight of Ink
A NOVEL
RACHEL KADISH

THURSDAY JUNE 26, 2025
DROP IN | 5-7 PM
At Gordon's Market & Cafe-
1 Hume st. Unit 107, Collingwood

Save the date & don't miss out!

*No Outside Food or Beverage Please

WHEN: Thursday June 26th, 2025

TIME: Drop-in from 5:00 to 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Gordon's Market & Cafe- 1
Hume St. Unit 107, Collingwood

Our next book club will be at Gordon's on Thursday June 26th - drop in from 5-7 grab a drink or something to eat and join me for a discussion about *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadish.

WINNER OF A NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARD

Set in London of the 1660s and of the early twenty-first century, *The Weight of Ink* is the interwoven tale of two women of remarkable intellect: Ester Velasquez, an emigrant from Amsterdam who is permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi, just before the plague hits the city; and Helen Watt, an ailing historian with a love of Jewish history.

As the novel opens, Helen has been summoned by a former student to view a cache of seventeenth-century Jewish documents newly discovered in his home during a renovation. Enlisting the help of Aaron Levy, an American graduate student as impatient as he is charming, and in a race with another fast-moving team of historians, Helen embarks on one last project: to determine the identity of the documents' scribe, the elusive "Aleph."

Electrifying and ambitious, sweeping in scope and intimate in tone, *The Weight of Ink* is a sophisticated work of historical fiction about women separated by centuries, and the choices and sacrifices they must make in order to reconcile the life of the heart and mind.

Get Involved & Stay Connected

How to become a member and support our community

To become a member of the Southern Georgian Bay Jewish Community, simply sign up on our website and submit your yearly membership dues of \$180. You can send your payment via e-transfer to shalom@sbgjc.ca, or if you prefer, mail a cheque made out to "Southern Georgian Bay Jewish Community" to 307 Pine Street, Collingwood, ON, L9Y 2P4. Your membership helps support our ongoing efforts to provide Jewish education, programming, and community events. We thank you for your support and look forward to welcoming you as a member of our community!

Are you a member of our members-only Facebook group yet?

There are lots of ways to stay in touch. We will continue to send out our regular newsletters. Don't forget to check out our members-only private Facebook group "Southern Georgian Bay Jewish Community" and our public Instagram account [@sbg_jc](https://www.instagram.com/sbg_jc)



Have any ideas for future events?

Our executive team meets regularly to plan events and liaise with outside organizations. If you have any suggestions for future activities, keep them coming by emailing shalom@sbgjc.ca.

**Join our mailing list by filling out a form
at www.sbgjc.ca**