

Community

March 2017

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JCC
Jewish Community
Council of Montreal

Conseil de la Communauté
Juive de Montréal

ועד הקהילה היהודית
במونتריאול

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friend,


As we count down the days to Pesach, we work earnestly in preparation of this great Yom Tov. By the time you read this newsletter, you will have probably received the annual Canada's Kosher Passover Magazine which includes many articles of interest, as well as a detailed and updated list of many new over-the-counter products and cosmetics which may be used over Pesach.

This year, the JCC has come up with an innovative idea! For the first time, we will be publishing a stand-up Haggadah, the first of its kind, which will be available in day schools for your families to enjoy. Just flip through the pages and enjoy the discussion of the Seder. This Haggadah is dedicated to the memory of the late Lynn Eltes obm, a well-known humanitarian in our community, who constantly gave of herself.

We are currently hearing of the increase in anti-Semitic attacks taking place across North America and we must unite in our attempt to eradicate these atrocities. There should be no tolerance whatsoever for any type of violence or hate crimes in our society. We must not remain silent or be passive concerning this new phenomenon. We have always survived and will always survive with Hashem's help. However, unity is strength and that same strength is required to ensure our continuity.

Best wishes for successful Pesach preparations.

Rabbi Saul Emanuel
Executive Director

 - Canada's Kosher Certifier


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WE ARE STRIVING TO SERVE YOU BETTER:

Should you have any suggestions, questions or ideas, or if you'd like to see an article written on a certain subject email kalmanemanuel@mk.ca

We'd Love to hear from you!





From Morocco to Montreal


The Madame Fhal Bakery in Casablanca, Morocco has been baking delicious kosher cookies for over eight decades. With over 20 varieties of cookies available in Morocco, they are a deeply rooted part of the childhood of many Moroccans now living in other countries.



Olivier Benchetrit grew up eating Madame Fhal cookies. In fact, the Madame Fhal bakery was owned by the family of one of his closest friends, which was how the idea of importing these cookies to Montreal began. Although Mr. Benchetrit had been living in Montreal for well-over a decade, he frequently returned home and spent a great deal of time with his childhood friend Kevin Fhal, the third generation of Fhals to run the bakery.

Since 1948, when the number of Moroccan Jews was estimated to be about 265,000, Moroccan Jews have become a far more dispersed community. With the decreasing number of Jews in Morocco, there appeared to be a decreasing market for kosher cookies. Upon examining the situation, however, the friends Mr. Fhal and Mr. Benchetrit realized that if the Jews couldn't come to Madame Fhal, then Madame Fhal could come to the Jews!

The export-import of Madame Fhal cookies began on a personal basis. Mr. Benchetrit and his brother Cédric began sharing cookies with local market owners and fellow business associates. There was no question, the demand was there.

What did concern the Montreal Jewish customer base was whether they would buy cookies with a Moroccan Hechsher (kosher certification). One retailer who wished to sell the cookies in Ontario, where there is a much smaller Moroccan community was hesitant to import Madame

Fhal's Cookies with their current Kosher certification. It was time for the next step, contacting the .

Although the  is an international organization, every new factory in an exotic location has challenges. The  however, didn't blink. They found a Mashgiach (Kosher Supervisor) willing and able to oversee the Madame Fhal production runs destined for export to Canada. This pertained to only five of Madame Fhal's many tasty baked goods: Salted Galettes, Sweet Galettes, Small Crown Cookies, Chocolate Lady Fingers, and Fekkars (which are similar to, but more moist than biscotties).

For those who love cookies, Madame Fhal's offers year-round delight. The Moroccan bakery has an annual run of Special-for-Passover cookies that the burgeoning North American customer will also be able to enjoy.

Currently, Madame Fhal's cookies are available primarily in Montreal's Cote-Saint-Luc neighborhood, but Mr. Benchetrit is expanding their market throughout the city and beyond. A Madame Fhal's website is currently being created to allow for online ordering as well.



JGH FOOD

CARREFOUR LEA POLANSKY - THE FOOD COURT AT THE JEWISH GENERAL HOSPITAL IN PAVILION K

By: Joannie Tansky

Bright, open, spacious, clean, natural sunlight, delicious food, warm ambiance... guess where you are eating? If you said the food court in Pavilion K at the Jewish General Hospital you read the title. Otherwise you would never have figured it out – it's that good!

After decades of serving staff, patients and visitors at the hospital, the cafeteria on the main floor closed in November 2016. There was no doubt that another venue had to be found to serve the hundreds of people who ate there daily.

Where is the Food Court?

Those familiar with the Jewish General Hospital will no doubt have visited Pavilion K, which houses the emergency area and has a surgery department as well as other medical facilities. When you enter the building at the Legaré entrance there is a set of stairs facing you. After walking up the stairs you will see an escalator straight ahead of you. Take that escalator and lo and behold you will get off

in the airy and beautiful food court, which has replaced the cafeteria.

Currently being built is a passageway (where the cafeteria used to be) that significantly cuts the distance

"THEY HAD A VISION OF WHAT THIS NEW EATERY WOULD REFLECT: A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COULD GATHER AND NOT FEEL LIKE THEY WERE IN A HOSPITAL"

between the main entrance and the Atrium.

Carrefour Lea Polansky

Mrs. Lea Polansky obm, passed away in 2013. To honor her legacy and memory, the family were the gracious benefactors of the food court – Carrefour Lea Polansky, in the new pavilion. After spending many hours in the hospital when their mother was ill, they had a vision of what this new eatery would reflect: It should be a place where people could gather and not feel like they were in a hospital. They succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

If you decide to sit at the far

end of the very large space, you will be under a long and wide window with natural light flowing into the room. It is interesting to note that the façade of a building formerly on that site was kept intact, which gives the entire space

an outdoor feeling.

Canada's Kosher Certifier

Under strict ^{MK} – Canada's Kosher Certifier supervision, the food court is a business independent of the hospital. There are two Mashgichim who, as is the norm of the ^{MK} are responsible for making sure the food is under the strictest supervision. These men take their jobs very seriously and as such, the level of kashruth is as good as it gets.

There are five different kiosks in the food court serving about seven hundred and fifty people daily. Once the passageway has been completed, the next opening will be a sushi restaurant which will be

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located along the hallway facing the food court. What the kiosks have in common is that the food is made fresh daily and it is delicious. Where they differ, is in what they serve. You name the food, it is available.

What They Serve

There is a head chef overseeing the menus and quality of food. Fresh ingredients and elite presentation are hallmarks of the food court. Waiting in line is not an issue as there are enough kiosks to accommodate even the busiest breakfast or lunch-hour.

The Kebab Shop serves up exactly that – kebabs, shwarma, falafel, salads and many other Israeli and Moroccan dishes.

At present Café Sofia is a breakfast place but will shortly switch menus later in the day to serve Italian food. You can get breakfast sandwiches, a sweet breakfast (pancakes, waffles or French toast) and delicious coffee.

Maison Ben'jing is the Chinese food kiosk. You can get anything from General Tao Chicken to Sesame Beef, Egg Rolls, Asian Noodles Dishes, Soups and much more.

Gare 18 has rotisserie chicken, hamburgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, fries, cole slaw and all the fixings.

Beso Prêt-à-Manger has salads, ready to go sandwiches, yogurts, bagels, homemade

bread, baked goods such as muffins, croissants and Danishes, fresh fruit cups or if you're in a rush you can pick up their 'Grab and Go'. Fresh baked challah is available for take-out on Fridays as well as whole rotisserie chickens. They are planning to be partially open for Passover and close on Fridays approximately two hours before Shabbat. Beso has ready-to-go sandwiches, salads and other items for Shabbat.

There is no doubt that when the cafeteria closed, a piece of history closed with it. Given that the Carrefour Lea Polansky Food Court filled the void in a spectacular fashion, serving people who often need to be pampered, if only for one meal.





IAN BELL HEAD OF MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY AT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

IAN BELL HAS BEEN MAINTAINING THE JCC FOR OVER TWELVE YEARS. HE'S AN UNSUNG HERO, WHO QUIETLY MAKES SURE THAT OUR OFFICES RUN SMOOTHLY, ARE CLEAN AND WELL-STOCKED. HE RUNS HIS OWN COMPANY CALLED HOME AND OFFICE CLEANING.

Q: WHEN DID YOU START WORKING FOR THE JCC?

IB: I started in 2005. It's a long time but feels like yesterday. It's a great place to work. Whenever I walk in here everybody is friendly, always offering me a coffee and nosh.

Q: WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

IB: I look after set-ups such as board meetings and other functions and stock the photocopy room and kitchen. In the kashruth office I make sure that any items the mashgichim need are available. I take care of the place A-Z, as well as the cleaning services which I was hired for.

Security is also under my purview. This part has changed over the years, along with the rest of the world. I always took it very seriously, now more than ever!

Q: WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN CHANGE OVER THE YEARS IN THE JCC?

IB: I've seen expansion in both employees and events. It keeps getting bigger and better, with many community functions. It's an exciting place to work, sometimes hectic, but always great. I'm always ready for the unexpected in a good way. There's always something 'freilach' happening.

Q: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO CLEAN UP THE OFFICES?

IB: It's an adventure sometimes. For the most

part it's like any other office but the ☺ is a special place. There is always something unexpected happening. We come in and sometimes there's popcorn everywhere, like a theatre, but it shows things are happening here.

Everybody has their quirks and I am aware of most of them. The office space is not that large and I have to be aware of where everybody likes everything.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?

IB: I clean and maintain offices and do heavy cleaning in homes. I started in the building industry in 1982 with the Golden Age doing maintenance for seniors through a government grant. I liked what I was doing and went into my own business.

I've worked in the Jewish community for years. In 1989 I began working at the Montefiore until they restructured. I then worked on a contract basis until they finally closed. Several years later I was called in by the Director of the Castel Royale, which has also since closed. I then re-focused on my own company.

Q: WHAT IS IT LIKE CLEANING FOR PESACH?

IB: Passover falls in the Spring and everyone wants to have things cleaned. Even the cleaning staff is excited to do this annual cleaning. My team is about six or seven people for the day – from 9:00 am – 6:00 pm. A lot of preparation goes into the cleaning.

Believe it or not, some of the desks cannot be touched before Pesach. We must wait until the last minute. All the walls are washed; every desk drawer and crevice are checked thoroughly.

Carpet Cleaning for Passover is also a part of my business. This starts mid-January. Most people are very organized when it comes to Passover cleaning. I have a great team with me which makes life much easier. The weekend before Pesach I can be doing 20-25 homes, starting at 6:00 am. You can't imagine how happy people are, when I show up.

Q: WHAT INTERESTING STORIES STAND OUT WORKING HERE?

IB: I think every day is exciting and each day tells a new story. I never know what to expect when I walk in. One thing that was very nice was when the JCC was hosting the dinner for Prime Minister Harper and Rabbi Emanuel insisted that I attend. I was graciously hosted and I am still deeply appreciative. I'm part of the JCC family and that is wonderful. Like in any family, there is sometimes a bit of tension, but that's normal. It's a warm atmosphere.

Q: HOW IS IT WORKING FOR RABBIS?

IB: I don't know that many rabbis, but the ones here are decent human beings. Rav Weiss is very approachable and I am able to ask him questions. Rabbi Jaffe is a very special person. I love him 'to death'. He's a straight arrow and tells it like it is. Rabbi Emanuel is also a super nice person. From the minute I started here, I could tell that he was smart, a good businessman. No one can pull the wool over his eyes, especially in the kashruth business.

Q: YOU MUST LIKE YOUR BUSINESS – YOU'VE BEEN IN IT FOR 30 YEARS!

IB: Yes, it's honest work and I get to meet different people all the time, which I enjoy. I have great and long lasting relationships with my clients: I have been with the Baron de Hirsch cemetery for over 30 years for maintenance and security. I have a clinic and pharmacy that I have been with for over a dozen years. My customers are loyal to me and in turn, I am loyal to them. I don't take them for granted.

Q: IF YOU COULD GIVE SOMEONE IN THE 'PEOPLE' BUSINESS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

IB: I learned over the years if you have a job, do it with passion. If you don't like what you're doing, perhaps you should find something else to do. I also learned that one on one, almost everyone is nice and kind if given the chance to be.

YAAKOV LITZMAN VISITS THE JCC

The Jewish Community Council recently hosted Israeli Health Minister Yaakov Litzman. Dubbed Israel's most popular minister, Mr. Litzman's visit was a testament to his approval and reputation.

His stopover was initiated by Mr. Litzman's office in Israel. As the Health Minister was coming to Canada to meet with parliamentarians and Canada's and Quebec's health ministers, he felt it would be both respectful and beneficial for him to meet prominent Jewish Montrealers and dignitaries.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Yaakov Litzman was born in 1948 to Polish survivors of the Holocaust in a displaced persons camp in Germany. When he was two years old, the family immigrated to Brooklyn where he grew up. In 1966, at seventeen years old, he immigrated to Israel and continued his Torah studies.

He has been in politics since 1999, appointed Minister of Health in August 2015 in Netanyahu's fourth government. Mr. Litzman has been named the most popular minister in all surveys, even among the secular population. He makes a point of focusing on issues concerning his own ministry, declaring that he is working on behalf of all the citizens of Israel. As it turns out, people respond well to this message. He may look like a diaspora Jew engaged in Torah study, but Mr. Litzman is a very astute politician.

THE VISIT

The Jewish Community Council invited the key players of Hatzalah, Refuah V'Chesed, Ezras Cholim as well as other influential members of Montreal's diverse Jewish community.

Rabbi Emanuel warmly welcomed Mr. Litzman to Montreal, making special mention of the honor to be able to host him at the Jewish Community Council, as a representative of the Israeli government. Rabbi Emanuel went on to elucidate Mr. Litzman's qualifications explaining that those in the diaspora closely follow his distinguished career with great pride.

The Israeli Consul General of Montreal, Ziv Nevo Kulman who has been serving in this capacity since September 2014, extended greetings, telling Mr. Litzman about the JCC's prodigious role in Montreal's Jewish community. He expounded his remarks by highlighting the JCC's outstanding relationship with the Consulate and many other government and private organizations and businesses.

Rabbis from across Montreal shared in this unique and enlightening afternoon.

