

Community news

Jewish Winnipeggers brainstorm about community's future at Federation planning evening

Participants emphasize need to be 'inclusive', strengthen Jewish religious life

By MATT BELLAN

On a hot summer night last week, the air-conditioned Asper Jewish Community Campus Multi-Purpose Room buzzes with talk.

About 60 Jews from different parts of the community sit around four round tables, discussing what its priorities should be over the next five to 10 years.

"We're at the beginning of a planning and priorities process," Faye Rosenberg-Cohen, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg planning director, explains during a break between sessions. "We're trying to find gaps, and set the highest priority needs."

Each participant brainstorms about what community priorities should be in two of four areas, ranging from "education and identity" to "religious life" to "social life" and "community ser-



FAYE ROSENBERG-COHEN, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg planning director: "We're trying to find gaps, and set the highest priority needs," she says of the planning evening.



ABBY MORRIS, standing to the right of the easel, leads one of the brainstorming sessions: "In coming years, the community won't look the way it does now," she says of the community's future.

People taking part in this planning evening come from a wide variety of community organizations and institutions, and range in age

from youths to seniors.

Some have responded to ads in local Jewish media and synagogue bulletins.

"We also picked out 200 names from different age groups on our mailing list," Rosenberg-Cohen adds. "We mailed them invitations, followed up by a phone call."

Rosenberg-Cohen first briefs participants about "the community today".

It numbered 14,765 in the 2001 census, with 12,760 identifying themselves as "Jewish by religion". Winnipeg's Jewish community has "415 fewer Jews" than in 1991.

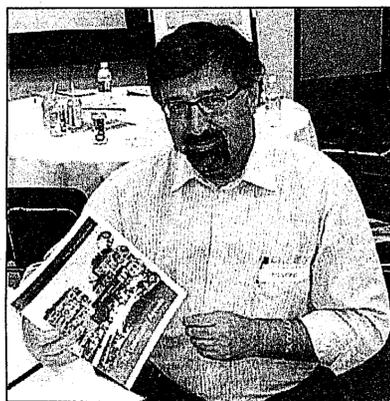
Jews are the 10th-biggest ethnic group in Winnipeg, and the fourth-largest religious group.

Twenty-two per cent of the Jewish community is over 65, compared to 13 per cent of Winnipeggers as a whole.

Twenty-one per cent of the community is 25-44, compared with 30 per cent of Winnipeggers as a whole.

About one in six Winnipeg Jews are immigrants, the lowest percentage of "any (major) Jewish community in Canada."

Twenty-three point three per cent of



DR. TED LYONS, Federation president, with a copy of a booklet from a similar planning session "five years ago": It led to several major community initiatives, he says.

Jewish spouses and their partners are intermarried; that rises to 62.5 per cent for couples under 30.

Leaders of the four brainstorming groups later sum up the priorities the 60 participants have agreed on.

"The underlying theme in my first group was the need to have funding to be able to move forward in services and marketing," says Leslie Wilder, leader of the groups setting community services priorities. "Planning (also) means having flexibility, adjusting your priorities as demographics shift."

Sarah Arenson, a member of one of Wilder's discussion groups, mentions other priorities for the future: Being "inclusive", "retaining young people in Winnipeg", and reducing the "humiliation" lower-income Jewish families experience, "having to ask for subsidies" from community organizations.

Howard Kideckel, leader of the brainstorming sessions on "religious life", says his groups felt "Torah has to be the centre of the community. Our community will die if this does not happen."

Abby Morris, leader of the brainstorming sessions on "education and Jewish identity", notes that "in coming years, the community won't look the way it does now. Likely, we'll have a community that's not all white, that won't all be straight (as opposed to gay and lesbian), not all married."

(Cont. on page 3. See "Federation planning session").

Community news

Federation planning session

(Cont. from page 2.)

"We have to be more inclusive," Morris stresses. "And remember, one size doesn't fit all."

Michael Lazar, chair of Federation's Planning and Priorities Subcommittee, tells participants the planning evening is similar to earlier ones Federation has held over the years.

"Our committee is going to be going through this through the summer," he says of the "numerous notes" brainstorming session leaders recorded.

"We'll be meeting with focus groups and stakeholders, comparing these results with results we had last time, seeing where we've come from, and where we go, tomorrow."

As for how useful such community-wide planning evenings are, Dr. Ted Lyons, Federation president, says they're "incredibly important".

Similar planning sessions in the past decade led to initiatives ranging from Grow Winnipeg, which led to "about 1600 new (Jewish) immigrants" coming here "over the last five years" to Federation's "Half-Shekel Task Force", trying to address the needs of lower-income Winnipeg Jews.

"We need to be pro-active," Lyons concludes, adding that he feels such planning sessions should happen more often. "We can't just sit back and wait for things to happen. We have to make things happen."

Note to readers

When pictures with photo captions, stories and other announcements appear in boxes, that indicates the material inside the box is paid for. Stories with headlines in a typeface other than the one used for standard news stories (samples of standard news headlines appear with all stories on page 1) are also partly or fully paid for.

Notice to organizations, publicists

The Jewish Post & News now is charging for publicity about upcoming events running in this newspaper.

- Anyone running a display ad at least "business card size" (2 columns wide by 2 inches deep) publicizing a Jewish organizational upcoming event will be entitled to up to the equivalent amount of editorial space free every time the ad runs.
- Announcements of synagogue service times run for free, but are subject to editing for length.
- All publicity about upcoming events submitted for publication must include the names and addresses of the individuals authorizing publication, for billing purposes.
- All news releases and announcements published in The Jewish Post & News are subject to editing, and all references to ticket prices, admission charges and phone numbers will be deleted, unless the items are authorized to run at the full display advertising rate.
- All news and advertising should be in our office by noon, Friday, for the following week's paper.
- We can't be responsible for the delivery-time of the paper. You may wish to run your publicity or ad at least two weeks in advance of the event.



MICHAEL LAZAR, chair, Federation Planning and Priorities Subcommittee: "Our committee is going to be going through this through the summer," he says of the "numerous notes" brainstorming session leaders recorded.

Nazi hunter Efraim Zuroff pays tribute to mentor Simon Wiesenthal at Ohr HaTorah evening

2 incidents right after war inspired Wiesenthal to pursue Nazis

By MYRON LOVE

In the immediate decades following the Holocaust — at a time when the world was focused on the Cold War and the struggle against communism — there were just two men who worked to keep alive the memory of the Shoah. They were Eli Wiesel and Simon Wiesenthal.

"The Holocaust wasn't a popular subject in the 1950s and '60s and even into the 1970s," Efraim Zuroff reminded an audience of more than 200 supporters of Ohr HaTorah School gathered at the Fort Garry Hotel June 7 to hear the world's leading Nazi hunter. "There were no movies being made about the subject. People preferred to forget about it. The only person writing about the Shoah was Eli Wiesel. The only person fighting for justice for the victims was Simon Wiesenthal."

This was Zuroff's second visit to Winnipeg on behalf of Ohr HaTorah Day School in a year and a half. In his previous appearance, he spoke about the ongoing efforts to bring former Nazi war criminals (including non-German collaborators from other eastern European countries) to justice. On this most recent visit, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel office and the worldwide co-ordinator of Nazi War Crimes Research for the center dedicated his presentation to an overview of the life and legacy of his mentor, who passed away a few months ago.

Wiesenthal was inspired to take on his life's work in part because he survived when so many others didn't and, in particular, because of two incidents that occurred right after the war, Zuroff explained. The first of these happened at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp where Wiesenthal was interned when the Americans liberated the camp. In order to impose some order, the American administration put a former political prisoner — a kapo — in charge.

"This kapo was a notorious anti-Semite," Zuroff said. "Wiesenthal approached him for permission to leave the camp. The kapo not only refused, but insulted and hit Wiesenthal. His first reaction was that nothing had changed. But a Jewish American soldier who had befriended Wiesenthal encouraged him to report the kapo to the American commanding officer. He did and

the kapo was relieved of his position and forced to publicly apologize. Simon Wiesenthal thus saw that justice was possible."

The second incident involved some Jewish books that had been gathered by the Nazis and stored in a German castle. Three rabbis approached Wiesenthal — who was working for the Americans by then — to help them gain (Cont. on page 7. See "Nazi-hunter pays tribute to mentor Simon Wiesenthal".)

JEWISH FEDERATION OF WINNIPEG

FACT OF THE WEEK

Week 6

DID YOU KNOW

that the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg funds Partnership 2000?

Since 1997, the Canadian Coast to Coast communities (Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa and the Atlantic Region) have been matched with the five municipalities in Israel's Galilee Panhandle (Metulla, Kiryat Shmona, Yesud Hama'ala, the Galil Elyon Kibbutzim and Mevo'ot HaHermon). The partnership involves a variety of living bridge ("Gesher Chai") programs developed to strengthen Jewish values and to foster a connection among elementary and high school students and teachers in the Galilee Panhandle and in Canada. Winnipeg has played a lead role in the partnership, fostering links between the Gray Academy of Jewish Education, Brock Corydon School, and three schools in our partner region.

In addition to establishing people-to-people connections, the Coast to Coast communities have created a strategic partnership (BeYachad) with three philanthropic organizations that are committed to the cause of education in the Galilee Panhandle. Together, the Coast to Coast communities, the Israel Venture Network, the Sacta-Rashi Foundation, and the San Francisco Jewish Federation provide over forty programs designed to meet the needs of children at risk in the region.



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