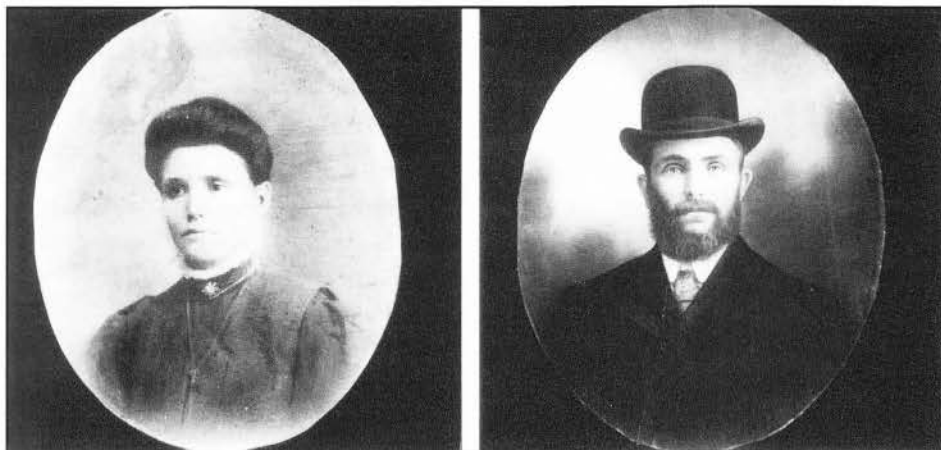


## The Ratchesky Saga – A Family Settles the West



Dina and Louis (Lazar) Ratchesky, Boston? c. 1900. Photo courtesy of Danny Gelmon.

By Jack Switzer

Early Calgary-area farmer Louis Ratchesky died in 1909 at a young age, leaving his widow Dina (Gabourvitch) Ratchesky and their four daughters – Gertrude, Lottie, Ida, and Eva – to earn a living, form new families, and help build Jewish life throughout Canada's three western-most provinces. Here is a brief review of their notable lives.

The first Ratchesky son-in-law, Morris Martin, was the first of our trailblazers to reach Canada. In 1898, at the age of 21, he left Romania, landing at Halifax, where he worked for two years. He set out for the west in 1900, taking a job as a ranch hand near Gleichen, east of Calgary. This dates Martin as one of the area's earliest Jewish residents (Calgary had only eight Jews in 1901). Morris was an able rider, a cowboy who could cook and bake from a chuckwagon.

About 1908 Morris Martin left ranching and moved to Calgary, where he opened a small clothing store on 4th Avenue East. In 1911 Morris Martin was able to bring two

brothers from Romania to join his family in Calgary. Sam Martin worked at a Jewish bakery, and after his 1914 marriage to Ida Speevak he opened his own bakeshop on 4th Avenue East. Martin's Bakery was to become an important part of Jewish life in Calgary. (Brother Jack moved on to Montreal, while a third brother, Abe Martin, lived in New York.)

Our senior couple, Louis (Lazar) and Dina Ratchesky, Russian-Jewish emigrants (some family documents list the original family name as Pogeshafsky; Dina is sometimes recorded as Dena), landed in Boston in 1901 with daughters Gertrude, Lottie, and Ida. A fourth daughter, Eva, was born there in 1904. Louis had been a Hebrew teacher in Grodno, but took whatever work was available to him.

The Ratcheskys learned of homesteading opportunities in Alberta, with virtually free land available. Despite his unfamiliarity with agriculture, Louis moved his family in 1906 to raw land near Cochrane, just west of Cal-

*Continued on Page 2*

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*Continued on Page 2*

### In this Issue:

The Ratchesky Saga.....	1
Green Fields Yiddish Film.....	1
Leonard Bercuson.....	4
JHSSA News .....	5
A League of Their Own?.....	6
Thank You to our 2008 Members .....	8

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## The Ratchesky Saga

*Continued from Page 1*

gary. Rock removal, land clearance, and land-breaking proved too much for the frail farmer. The family re-settled in Calgary, where Louis died in 1909, at the age of 47. His gravestone says he was 45.

Gertrude (Gertie) Ratchesky, the oldest daughter, worked as a clerk, first at Philip Diamond's general store in Canmore, and then in Calgary at Charles Malkin's grocery. She met Morris Martin, and the two were married in 1909, shortly before her father's death.

The widowed Dina Ratchesky operated a small grocery store on 4th Street East, in the heart of what was then Calgary's growing Jewish community. She moved the business to 8th Avenue East, and then to 17th Avenue East, near the Exhibition grounds.

By 1914 Gertie and Morris Martin had two daughters, Edith and Ruth, and a large house in the Mission district; Dina and her unmarried daughters joined their household. Ida Ratchesky helped out at her mother's store; she also worked for a time as a "revisor", cleaning and repairing movie film at the office of General Films.

Philip Adelberg (1862 – 1926) was the next Jewish bachelor to ride into town and meet a Ratchesky daughter. He and the much-younger Lottie were married about 1910. Adelberg, described in a brief biography as "a man of the world", was born in Lithuania and had farmed in South Africa,

where he fought with the Dutch rebels during the Boer War at the turn of the century. He had served as an aide to their leader, Jan Smuts. He travelled to Argentina, spent several years there as a rancher, and then moved on to Canada, arriving in Calgary about 1910.

Adelberg first ran a clothing store on 8th Avenue East, but soon became one of several hundred realtors riding Calgary's major population growth and building boom. (The city grew from 21,000 residents in 1901 to 44,000 in 1911; most growth was post-1905. The city's Jewish population rose from only a handful to almost 650 in the decade.)

The newly-wed Adelberg prospered during 1910 and 1911 and was able to buy a large house on 12th Avenue East. He was among Calgary's Jewish elite, English-speaking, acculturated, and well-travelled. By 1913, Phillip and Lottie Adelberg had two children, Lillian and Benjamin (Bernie).

The ambitious entrepreneur bought the East Calgary Wood and Coal Company in 1912, just as natural gas was coming into wide household use and the boom years were ending. In 1913 real estate prices collapsed, and Adelberg, already financially strained, went broke.

Phillip Adelberg's next adventure would take his family north to the Peace River district of British Columbia, just west of the Alberta border. The then-remote area, far

from roads and railways, was almost the last area of North America to be opened to homesteading. Phillip organized a group of twelve immigrant Irish families and led them, in the winter of 1913-14, northward on horse-drawn sleds. They spent a summer in northern Alberta, waiting for freeze-up to complete their trek.

Their life in the north-west wilderness was harsh. Clearing and cultivating the Adelberg homestead near Rolla, six miles from

*Continued on Page 3*

## Green Fields

*Continued from Page 1*

"The most critically acclaimed and beloved of American Yiddish talkies, Edgar Ulmer's soulful, open-air adaptation of Peretz Hirshbein's classic play heralded the Golden Age of Yiddish cinema. *Green Fields* celebrates an idyllic world of tribal wholeness and innate piety – no other movie has ever represented the shtetl with such lyricism. When an ascetic young scholar ventures into the Lithuanian countryside, searching for the city of "true Jews," he learns some unexpected lessons from the Jewish peasants who take him in as a boarder and tutor for their children. Also directed by Edgar Ulmer: *The American Matchmaker*, *The Light Ahead* and *The Singing Blacksmith*."

Playwright Peretz Hirshbein had an intimate connection to Calgary's Jewish community after he married local resident, Esther Shumiatcher in 1918. Esther became a well known Yiddish poet. The couple returned to Calgary frequently and were supportive of the I.L. Peretz Institute.

Hirshbein wrote *Grine Felder* in 1923 and it became very popular in the Jewish theatre repertoire. It was produced in English in Calgary in 1931 in honour of Hirshbein's 50th birthday. Hirshbein's sister, Sarah Pravatiner, a teacher at the Peretz school, played the starring role and her husband Abraham, the school's principal, directed the production.

*Grine Felder*, a classic of Yiddish film, depicts the life of isolated, farming Jews in Lithuania.



*The Ratchesky sisters, left to right: Gertie Martin, Lottie Sugarman, Ida Margolus and Eva Basin, Edmonton, 1954. Photo courtesy of Laila Dubinsky and Shirley Kort.*

## The Ratchesky Saga

*Continued from Page 2*

Dawson Creek, required very hard work for both Phillip and Lottie. Bernie Adelberg has some fond memories from his northern boyhood – he sometimes slept with a pet bear cub until it became unruly, and he fed an orphaned foal in the kitchen.

When Phillip worked off the farm for extra cash, Lottie had to run the enterprise herself. She hunted wild game – birds, rabbits, even moose and deer – and tried to prepare and serve them as “kosher” as she was able.

The British Columbia government appointed Phillip Adelberg as the first Justice of the Peace for its Peace River townships. A third child, Dorothy, was born during the Adelbergs’ northern sojourn.

Back in Calgary, Adelberg’s brother-in-law Morris Martin was raising his growing family and running his small clothing store on 4th Avenue East. There were three more daughters – Lily, Sara, and Bernice.

In 1919 the Adelberg family gave up their Peace River farm and moved back to Calgary. Very soon they packed up again, relocating to Loverna, a busy town just east of the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. Phillip left the management of their general store to Lottie, who was helped by younger sisters Ida and Eve, as well as their mother, matriarch Dina.

Phillip sought out other business opportunities, including a coal and wood-supply operation in rural Saskatchewan. The family finally settled in Prince Albert, where Phillip ran a furniture store, became active in the local political scene, and provided leadership to the city’s small Jewish community.

His mother-in-law, Dina Ratchesky and her two unmarried daughters went to Saskatoon, and operated the Barry Fruit Store and Confectionery for several years.

Phillip Adelberg died in Prince Albert in 1927, at the age of 64. His was one of the first burials in the community’s Jewish cemetery, which he had helped create. His widow Lottie joined her mother and sisters in Saskatoon.

In 1917 the Morris Martin family left Calgary, taking over a general store in the southern Alberta town of Blackie. They lived over their store. Gertrude fed and nursed neighbours stricken during the 1918 flu epidemic, but her family was unscathed. The Martins came back to Calgary about 1924;



*Cousins Lily Adelberg and Edith Martin, c. 1914. Photo courtesy of Edith Martin Gelmon.*

Morris briefly ran a grocery on 9th Avenue East, near 2nd Street.

Irricana, north-east of Calgary was the Martin’s next home. Youngest daughter Bernice was born there. The family operated a general store; the girls and their parents were active in many community activities. Morris served as a town councilor for several years. When a fire destroyed their store (and upstairs residence), neighbours took them in and furnished their new home.

Morris sold out in 1935, returning his family to Calgary, where the girls could be better educated and could grow up in a Jewish milieu. He opened another downtown confectionery, this one on 9th Avenue West.

In 1922 Ida Ratchesky, living in Saskatoon, met Charles (Charlie) Margolus, a pioneer of Edmonton’s Jewish community, and they were soon married. It was Margolus’ second marriage. His first wife, Raisel Katznelson, had died in 1918. He brought three sons, Wolfie, Ben, and Bory into his marriage with Ida. The couple had two daughters, Shirley and Layla.

Ida’s sister Eva and her mother Dina also moved to Edmonton, where Charlie ran a bedding factory (later to become the Sealy Mattress Company). Ida and Charlie Margolus were among Edmonton’s leading Jewish families. Ida, as well as being active in several women’s groups, was a founder of Jewish Family Service, and spent several

years as a social worker with the organization. Their daughters, Shirley Kort and Layla Sacks, live in Vancouver.

Family matriarch Dina Ratchesky, the industrious shopkeeper who had lived in several towns and cities with one or another of her four daughters since Louis Ratchesky’s death in 1909, died in 1940 in Winnipeg, where she was a resident of the Jewish Old Folk’s Home. She is buried in Calgary.

Eva, the youngest Ratchesky daughter, married Peter Basin of Regina in 1933, and moved to that city, where the Basins raised two daughters – Laila (Dubinsky) and Sheila (Herman). Peter Basin was a partner in Food Paradise, a large “grocery” in the old Regina Public Market site.

The Basins were very active in Regina’s Jewish community; Eva is remembered as a Hadassah stalwart, Peter for his support of B’nai Brith and the Beth Jacob congregation. Peter Basin died in 1968. Eva’s second husband was Alex Kohn. She died in Vancouver in 1988.

Morris Martin retired in 1955 and died in 1966. Gertrude Ratchesky Martin passed away in 1975; both are buried in Calgary’s Erlton cemetery. Their daughters all married and became Edith Gelmon (Vancouver and Calgary); Ruth Rubinsky (Boston); Lil Tabachnick (Calgary); Sara Olfman (Kamsack and Calgary) and Bernice Mochkatel (L.A.).

Lottie Ratchesky Adelberg, widowed in Saskatchewan in 1927, outlived Phillip Adelberg by four decades. She re-married twice, and died in Vancouver in 1967, as Lottie Sugarman. Her son, Bernie, 94, lives in Vancouver. Her daughters married and became Lillian Chatrin and Dorothy Satim (Montreal).

The descendants of Alberta immigrants Lois and Dina Ratchesky are spread across North America and continue their tradition of hard work and community building.

*Sources:* JHSSA Archives; *The Scribe*, Vol. XXV, Nos. 1/2, 2005, Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia; Glenbow Library, Calgary; Reesa Gelmon Givritz, Calgary; Danny Gelmon, Vancouver; Laila Basin Dubinsky, Vancouver.

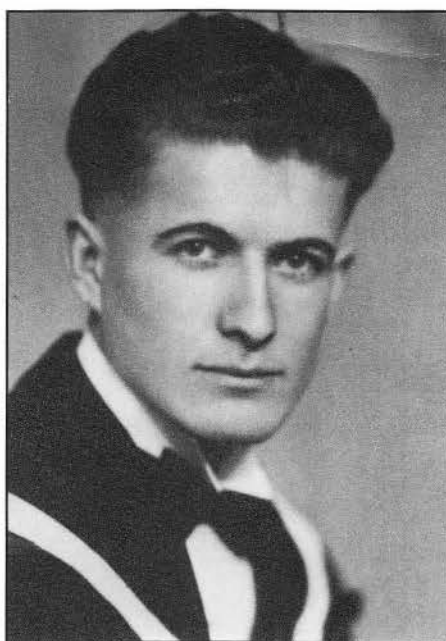
For more on the Martin Family see “Pioneers of Alberta” by Edith Gelmon, *Discovery*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 1992.



# Leonard Bercuson – A Rich Life Cut Short

By Jack Switzer

*In honour of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, we hope to feature a series of articles about Zionist activity in southern Alberta. We welcome any suggestions or material related to Albertans' commitment to Israel.*



*Leonard Bercuson, graduation photo, University of Alberta, 1934 or 1935. Photo courtesy of Ellen Hector Barberie.*

May of 1948 was a bittersweet month for many Alberta Jews. On Friday, May 14th, the State of Israel came into being. Celebrations were held Saturday and Sunday in every Jewish community. In Edmonton on Sunday evening, at a rally attended by over 1,000 persons, Leonard Bercuson, the Western Executive Director of the Canadian Zionist Organization, read the proclamation declaring Israel's independence.

But the very next day, May 17th, Leonard Bercuson, an Edmonton resident who had been born and raised in Calgary, died of his chronic heart disease. He was only 33. The jubilation of Alberta's Jewry was tempered by sorrow.

Leonard was the third of four children born in Calgary to Jewish pioneers Jack and Sarah Hart Bercuson. The elder Bercuson, a Romanian emigrant, came to Calgary about 1905, and became a men's clothier. Joseph was born in 1908, followed by Passie (Pat Hector) in 1909. Leonard Bercuson was born in 1914, youngest son Bernard in 1922. Bernard Bercuson died in 1944 when his RCAF bomber was shot down over the North Sea.

A rheumatic heart, diagnosed at an early age, did not keep Leonard from an active social and academic life in Calgary. He was best-known as a debater in Young Judea and AZA competitions, and he continued competitive debating at the University of Alberta.

During his university years in Edmonton (1932 – 1936), Leonard devoted his spare time to Jewish clubs on campus and Zionist groups in the city. It was at the U of A that he met fellow student Clarice Olyan, of

had a short but happy marriage. Their daughter Gail was born in 1945. Clarissa had apparently expressed some reservations about marrying the health-impaired activist, but was told by their friend Dr. Morris Weinlos that whatever time she shared with Leonard would be worthwhile and memorable.

During the World War II years Bercuson remained involved in Zionist causes, and also devoted himself to support for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, (CCF, now the New Democratic Party) and its Alberta election battles against the ruling and very dominant Social Credit party.

He helped organize Jewish summer camps under the Young Judean banner, first at Gull Lake, and later at Sylvan Lake, which brought together Jewish children from across Alberta in the mid-1940s. A later Young Judean camp at Chestermere Lake near Calgary is called Camp Bercuson in some sources.

About 1946 Leonard Bercuson became the director of the Zionist Organization of Canada for the four western provinces. At the same time, he continued a personally satisfying sideline: he had a weekly radio show in Edmonton. Every Sunday night he would discuss current affairs on his CBC-radio program, *Names in the News*. He was also a guest commentator on other programs.

Bercuson's Zionist duties expanded in 1947, when the United Nations voted for the partition of Palestine, and conflict between Jews, Arabs and British soldiers intensified. And he took on another important assignment. The Canadian Jewish Congress asked him to work on the growing threat of anti-Semitism from an Alberta source, the Social Credit party.

Several Social Credit MLAs, as well (after 1945) as Members of Parliament, were openly anti-Jewish, following the party's philosophic founder C.H. Douglas' ideas that Jews controlled the world's finances and were synonymous with communism. These views were spread across Canada by the provincial party's educational arm, The Social

Vegreville, whom he would marry soon after he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Between 1936 and 1942 Bercuson was a teacher at Smoky Lake, Alberta, becoming school principal during his later years there. He spent several summers at McGill University in Montreal, where he earned his Master of Arts degree in 1941.

His thesis, *Education in the Bloc Settlements of Western Canada*, suggested an expanded role for public schools as integration and acculturation agents in heavily-ethnic areas. He proposed a then-novel concept, the community school, which would provide a variety of cultural, vocational and recreational programs for citizens of all ages. He had developed such a program in Smoky Lake, a heavily Ukrainian (80 per cent) area.

Bercuson's expertise in the building of community schools led to his appointment in 1942 as the Adult Education director for the Alberta Department of Education. Leonard Bercuson was back in Edmonton, and back in the thick of Alberta politics and Zionist activity.

Leonard Bercuson and Clarissa Olyan

*Continued on Page 5*

## Leonard Bercuson

Continued from Page 4

Credit Board, and its official organ, *The Social Crediter*.

Canadian Jewish Congress wanted a public relations, educational approach to counter Social Credit hate literature, and was mainly concerned about the party's eleven-member presence in the House of Commons. Bercuson, supported by prominent Edmonton Zionists, told Congress the big problem was not in Parliament, but in the Alberta Legislature and local Social Credit offices, where the party and its intolerance had been nurtured and now resided.

He felt that the best way to silence the Alberta-based bigots was to support the CCF and replace Social Credit. In addition, he said that Congress branches in Calgary and Edmonton should have the authority to use local resources and solutions to address the problem.

Congress balked at open support of the CCF party, but did allow the local groups, notably the Edmonton branch, to undertake campaigns to lobby the Premier and to educate the public about Jewish issues and Socred tactics. Many of these campaigns used Bercuson's ideas and writings.

Late in 1947 Premier Ernest Manning "purged" the most notorious anti-Semites from the party apparatus, and promised a new era of civility. The government repudiated "any statements or publications ... which endorse, excuse or incite anti-Semitism or racial or religious intolerance in any form."

Bercuson was no doubt pleased to see his attempts to muzzle Social Credit anti-Semitism succeed to some degree, but he also realized the Alberta clean-up had little effect on the federal party, and that Socred leaders had a history of reversing their public utterances.

Leonard was also known to many as Lionel (his middle name); his close friends and relatives called him Liney. His nieces in Calgary (the daughters of Pat and Sam Hector) recall him as a playful, affectionate man, who showed them magic tricks and made up nonsense verses. He always carried a pipe, often unlit.

Poor health kept Bercuson out of wartime services and he was also unable, as a husband and father, to join his friends (including former campers) who travelled to Palestine as Mahalniks, volunteer fighters, in Israel's War of Independence.

But he was able to realize the fruition of his work as a Canadian Zionist leader – he saw Israel become a Jewish state, and celebrated its birth, if only for a few days.

Sources: Judy Hector Parker, Calgary; *Bercuson-Hart Genealogy*: Ellen Hector Barberie, Vancouver; JHSSA Archives; Glenbow Library and Archives, Calgary; Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*; David Bercuson and Douglas Wertheimer, *A Trust Betrayed: The Keegstra Affair*; Janine Stingel, *Social Discredit: Anti-Semitism, Social Credit, and the Jewish Response*.

## JHSSA News

### The Jewish Community in the 1930s – Talk by Jack Switzer on Feb. 27, 2008

JHSSA vice president, Jack Switzer, will speak about some of the colourful people in the Calgary Jewish community as part of the Calgary Public Library's Local History and Genealogy Programs on Wednesday, February 27, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Meeting Room, 4th Floor of the Central Library, 616 Macleod Trail SE.

### Thank You to our Volunteers

We want to thank all the volunteers, both JHSSA members and non-members, who volunteered their time at our Casino in November. Our next Casino is scheduled for late spring, 2009. We hope we can count on your help then.

### Auschwitz: The Eva Brewster Story in Red Deer Museum

This award winning exhibit was originally organized by the Galt Museum and Archives in Lethbridge. Eva Brewster settled in Southern Alberta after the war. Her book, *Vanished in Darkness*, described her war time experiences. The exhibit will be shown at the Red Deer Museum and Gallery, 4525 – 47A Avenue, from January 12 to March 9, 2008.

### Diane (Dinah) Spindel, 1924 – 2007

The JHSSA lost a long-time supporter with the passing of Dinah Switzer Spindel in late December. Both Dinah and her late husband, Dave, were very active Directors in the early years of the JHSSA. Dinah served as editor of this publication, along with Jay Joffe, in the early 1990s. Her extensive contribution to our first exhibit and publication, *Land of Promise*, was greatly appreciated. Her wide knowledge of our community was a great asset to our Society and she could be relied upon to help us identify unknown faces in historic photos. She will be missed.

### JHSSA Tribute Cards for any Occasion

You can support the work of the JHSSA by sending our historic tribute cards. Cards start at \$10 and can be sent for any occasion by contacting our volunteer, Carey Smith at 253-5152 or careysmith@shaw.ca.

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## A League of Their Own?

By Maxine Fischbein

The year was 1978, and much excitement was in the air – and on the ice – with the establishment of a Jewish hockey league in Calgary.

The league, according to its co-founder and archivist, Larry Katz, was to have been the Calgary Jewish Men's Hockey League, but that all changed one historic evening when the newly married Hal Joffe – who was one of the first team captains – came home and told his bride, Robyn (nee Leikin, formerly of Ottawa), that there was going to be a men's Jewish hockey league.

"Well, I am going to be playing," was Robyn's response.

But not before the male organizers met to vote on the matter.

"When that was brought to my attention, it made me angry," remembers Robyn.

Larry Katz recalls that the league executive members were overwhelmingly in favour of Robyn's participation, although there were some concerns that "girls" could get hurt. Katz, desiring a gentler game whether or not women played, proposed that the league ban checking and slap shots. It turns out that the latter issue generated more heated debate than the original question. In the end, there was consensus on both issues. Women could play, but checking and slap shots were also there to stay.

Thus, the proposed Calgary Jewish Men's Hockey League became the Calgary Jewish Hockey League, and Robyn (also one of the first women to organize and play on a University of Calgary women's hockey team) took to the ice alongside her husband, Hal.

"The joke at the time was that I got to play with the team because I slept with the captain," laughs Robyn who remained the only woman to play in the league.

Not all the opposing players were fond of the idea of a female player, recalls Robyn.

"I wouldn't even have the puck and they would come across the ice and hit me or trip me, or say things that weren't very nice."

"That first year of hockey was



*Scrap City Scrappers team, 1978-79. Back, left to right: Robyn Joffe, Hal Joffe, Ron Jeffrey, Jay Avivi, Rick Kline, Willy Kalmanovich, Mark Brager. Front: Larry Katz, Ian Cohen, Perry Cooper, Steven Walker, Stuart Harris, Mark Joffe, Michael Katz. Photo courtesy of Larry Katz.*

incredibly violent," recalls Larry Katz. "Robyn was hit by others who just wanted to make the point that women shouldn't play ... but she was plucky and didn't give up."

Robyn, who began the season in figure skates, had the support of those around her, including league commissioner Curly Gurevitch, who penned lively summaries of the games for the *Calgary Jewish News*.

"He teased me relentlessly," remembers Robyn, "but in a kind way. I always felt he was very supportive ... ahead of his time to be so accommodating."

Katz recalls that Robyn's fellow players also rose to the occasion, forming a goon squad to protect her when necessary.

There is some evidence that Robyn was pretty good at protecting herself, too.

"She was not afraid to tell people off when she felt they were inappropriate," says Katz.

"My best defence was my mouth," agrees Robyn, whose salty language was enough to throw some opponents off balance.

She recalls one incident, when an opposing player told her that she belonged "barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen." She responded with language appropriate to a locker room and

definitely not suitable for publication here!

The mother of the obviously rattled opposing player called Robyn's mother-in-law the following day, to say how upset her son had been by Robyn's verbal check.

Robyn still bumps into her former foe – today, a well-respected Calgary businessman. "He turned out to be a really good person," she says.

Ironically, Joffe's pregnancy with her daughter Kayla, was the reason for her early retirement after one season in the league. Though she never returned to the sport, Robyn has enjoyed her memories, and felt particularly nostalgic about the sport with the ascendancy in recent years of women's hockey with stars like Hayley Wickenheiser and Danielle Goyette making Calgarians particularly proud.

"It was a ton of fun," Joffe said of her brief hockey career, "but truly, I was a lousy player." She may not have been as bad as she thinks, having, according to team archives, chalked up four assists during the season.

Another woman who had fun as the sole woman on a Jewish hockey team was Deb Matthews, formerly of Regina, who played in Saskatoon during the 1976-77 season.

*Continued on Page 7*



## A League of Their Own?

*Continued from Page 6*

The long-time Calgary resident sums up her hockey career in similar terms as Robyn Joffe: "I was awful."

Matthews joined the Saskatoon Jewish men's team, the Screaming Chickens, "on a lark". The team played in a church league.

A university roommate of Matthews' from Indian Head, Saskatchewan, where girls were no strangers to hockey, lent her the equipment.

Teammate Grant Scharfstein encouraged Matthews by explaining she played a key role on the team, ensuring that when guys with limited skills saw how poorly she played, they wouldn't feel as badly about lacing up themselves.

It turns out that Matthews may have been a tad too gentle for the game. On one occasion, about to pop a puck in the net, she balked, afraid that she might hurt the goalie.

Her opponent later told her that "he'd rather lose his teeth than let me score," she recalls.

During another game, she fell on top of a player she was checking and apologized! A team member said that a far more effective course of action would have been to "hit the other guy while he was down".

"I wasn't cut out to be a hockey player, at least not on a guy's team," she says today.

But Matthews enjoyed the experience while it lasted, including a 1977 road trip to Edmonton and Calgary. The Calgary league – the first in Alberta – wasn't formed until two seasons later, but there were already enough players eager to participate in a Jewish game.

It was on the ice during that Screaming Chickens road trip that Matthews first encountered Larry Katz, on the other side of the blue line. They met for real after she moved to Calgary in the early 1980s and in 1984 Matthews married her previous hockey rival.

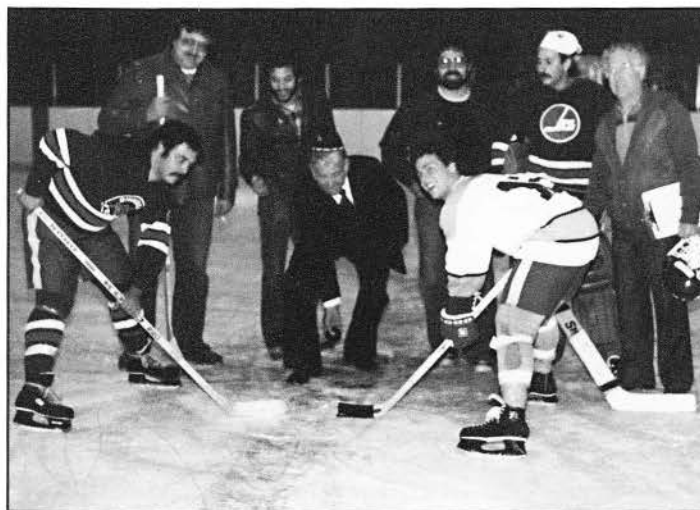
Long-time Calgary residents Robyn Joffe and Deb Katz may not have played in a league of their own, but their blades certainly carved a memorable mark in the history of Jewish hockey in western Canada.

## Calgary Jewish Hockey League Season One Trivia



- ☆ The league logo, patterned after Peter Puck of *Hockey Night in Canada* fame, was conceived by Larry Katz, who co-founded the league together with Lloyd Ashkin.
- ☆ During its first season of play, the league boasted four teams and a total of more than 60 players. Team sponsors were Scrap City, Lucifer's, Chinook Vending Ltd. and Viennese Furriers. The following season, two additional sponsors, Sherman Travel and My Marvin's, supported teams.
- ☆ The first CJHL executive included league commissioner Allan (Curly) Gurevitch; team captains Lloyd Ashkin, Darrel Gurevitch, Hal Joffe and Jack Lister; executive secretary Larry Katz; treasurer Ian Cohen; referee-in-chief Michael Brager; equipment secretary Steven Walker; and official scorers Jeff Eichler and Harold Lipton.
- ☆ The first season was inaugurated on the evening of Saturday, October 14, 1978, when Jack Lister's Lucifer Red Devils defeated Darrell Gurevitch's team (at the time unsponsored). The score was 8 – 3.
- ☆ Opening ceremonies included dropping of the pucks by Rabbi Lewis Ginsburg, Rabbi Abraham Postone, B'nai Brith President Lou Pomerance and CJHL Commissioner Curly Gurevitch. Clerical blessings were said to have done the trick later in the season when the Calgary Jewish Hockey League All Stars beat their Lutheran opponents in two games.
- ☆ Jewish Hockey League games were held Sunday and Tuesday evenings at 10:45 and 11:00 pm respectively at the Triwood Arena, off 19th Street and Northmount Dr. N.W.
- ☆ Players were required to pay three dollars a session to meet the ice rental fees of \$45.00.
- ☆ Chinook Vending won the playoffs with a goal scored by Maynard Switzer in overtime. Switzer was named the playoffs outstanding player. The season's top scorer was Cory Gelmon.
- ☆ A CJHL Awards Banquet, including cocktails, dinner and a dance, was held on April 26, 1979 at the Beth Israel Synagogue, featuring prominent Calgary sportsmen Ed Whalen and Rabbi Lewis Ginsburg as guest speakers. Tickets were \$15.
- ☆ The success of the hockey league led to the formation, in the spring of 1979, of a similarly very popular Jewish baseball league.

*Chinook Vending and Pumpnick's of Calgary Jewish Hockey League face off at the Oakridge arena during the 1980-81 season. Back, left to right: Harry Chetner, Miles Rimer, Lloyd Ashkin, Cary Paul, League commissioner Allan (Curly) Gurevitch. Front: Jay Avivi, Cantor Morris Lang, Perry Cooper. Photo courtesy of Larry Katz.*



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