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THE JEWISH CONNECTION

SMASH BROADWAY HIT HAS A RABBI AND TWO JEWISH WRITERS

By ALEXANDRA COHEN

“Come from Away” (www.comefromaway.com), the hit Broadway musical by the Jewish Canadian husband and wife duo Irene Sankoff and David Hein, tells the sometimes forgotten story of the 38 planes that were diverted to Gander, Newfoundland on September 11, 2001. While the tragedy of 9/11 does not sound like the most uplifting premise for a musical, the show’s creators refer to it instead as a story about 9/12 and the days that followed. “Come from Away”, to put it simply, is a 100-minute musical celebrating

human empathy and kindness.

The small town of Gander nearly doubled its population, turning itself upside down to accommodate the visitors, many of whom spoke different languages and came from different cultural backgrounds, including Rabbi Leivi Sudak. Rabbi Sudak told *The New York Jewish Week* that during his time in Gander, a town official noticed that he was not eating. “But what can we do for you so that you’ll be able to eat while you’re here?” the

(Please turn to page 24)

Shana Tova שנה טובה

Wishing a Happy and Healthy New Year to the
Jewish communities in Canada, Israel, and around the world



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PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

(Continued from preceding page)

from small towns and vil- ship qualifications were
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Expensive private elite school settings are not the raison d'être for your children to do well academically or socially. Hard working, independent, motivated bright children do just fine in a public schools and learn to compete on the world stage.

Warren Buffett, the richest man in the world, sent his two children to public schools; "not wanting them to be deemed special" because of their father's

wealth and influence.

To sum up: I do not recommend private, expensive faith based, same sex schooling for our children. Publically funded schools offer up a vast array of programs for all of our students. One does not flourish in a bubble like self imposed segregated/ghetto like school environment. Our children have to learn to embrace the vast world of diversity in order to be truly successful.

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JEWISH CONNECTION

(Continued from page 6)

rabbi said he was asked.

Both on stage and in real life, he was given access to a room which he converted into a kosher mess and also a meal room for vegetarians and those observing Halal rules. A song in the show celebrates the coming together of many cultures and faiths in this small town "in the middle of nowhere".

"Come from Away", which was nominated for seven Tony Awards including Best Musical, features an outstanding ensemble of actors who work together to tell this deeply moving story. Each performer plays multiple roles, and they transition seamlessly from Newfoundlanders to the people on the planes under the expert direction of Tony Award-winner Christopher Ashley.

Of particular note in the cast is Tony-nominee Jenn Colella, who amongst other roles, plays Captain Beverly Bass. Bass was, as sung by Colella, "the first female American captain in history", and her plane flying from Paris to Dallas was one of the 38 diverted to Gander. She has been to see "Come from Away" a whopping 61 times thus far. "I never get tired of it," Bass told the *New York Times*, also adding "I can't believe I've seen it that many times

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– but I’m ready to go back”.
 Leaving the theatre following the show, I couldn’t help but feel exception-

ally proud to be Canadian. ‘Come from Away’ is laced with inside jokes meant just for us, like references to Tim Hortons and Molson beer, along with stereotypical jokes like a moose standing in the middle of the road and the communal disappointment felt when hockey is cancelled.

While up to now history has largely forgotten about the incredible people of Gander, that cannot be said anymore. In June, it was announced that for their hospitality and kindness, the town of Gander will be honored as the first municipality to win an international humanitarian award from the Values-In-Action Foundation.

Run, don’t walk, to see this incredible Broadway production. “Come from Away” will

launch a North American tour across the United States and Canada at Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theatre

in October 2018, and a third production has been announced for Toronto’s
(Please turn to following page)

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(Continued from preceding page)

Royal Alexandra Theatre beginning on Tuesday, February 13, 2018.

By the way Hein is from Regina and Sankoff, North York. They met on the first day of frosh week at York University in the 1990s. You may remember their hit musical in Toronto, “My Mother’s Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding.”

When in New York City, we also strongly recommend a visit to the fabulous Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), dedicated to being the foremost museum of modern art in the world. One of the stars of the museum’s collection is Vincent Van Gogh’s – The Starry Night. Log on to www.moma.org.

If Broadway shows are the reason for your trip, then the historic Algonquin Hotel (www.algonquinhotel.com) is the ideal place to stay.



THE JUDAH HYAM Synagogue in New Delhi, India serves the tiny Jewish community of Delhi, where Jews have been living for over 2000 years. Today, there are only some 10 families remaining in Delhi. During Rosh Hashanah and other holidays the synagogue is home for expatriates working in Delhi, Israeli diplomats and tourists.

It commands the center of 44th Street, just a block and a half away from Times Square. For 100 years, the Algonquin has been greeting and lodging the country’s most prominent writers and literary personalities, as well as the leading figures of the American stage. Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. Always

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one step ahead, the hotel was the first to offer accommodations to actors and single women travellers. In the book *the Algonquin Kid: Adventures Growing Up In New York's Legendary*

Hotel, author Michael Colby tells the story about how his grandparents Mary and Ben Bodne built this legendary landmark. Southern Jews, they owned the hotel from 1946 to 1987.

WORLD IN REVIEW

(Continued from page 3)

Steve Bannon and Jared Kushner, wife Ivanka and Gary Cohn (rumoured to be in line for chairman of the Federal Reserve). Two issues helped fuel the simmering animosity.

According to the article, Bannon urged Donald Trump to carry through on his campaign promise to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to adopt a much tougher line with Mahmoud Abbas. When Abbas met with Trump at the White House, Bannon was nowhere to be seen. "I'm not going to breathe the same air as that terrorist", he is reported to have said. Kushner has taken a much different position on both issues. He does not support the embassy move at this point in time and also sees Abbas as someone with whom the United States, and Israel, can work.

The response to events in Charlottesville drove the wedge even deeper between the two camps. Bannon supported Trump's response to the violence, agreeing with the president that the anti-racism protesters were just as much to blame as the neo-Nazis and white supremacists. Jared and Ivanka, on the other hand, both urged Trump to speak out more forcefully against the KKK and the neo-Nazis.

"Steve Bannon reads his revenge" screamed the headline in *Vanity Fair*. "He wants to beat their ideas into submission", said Breitbart News Editor-in-Chief Alex Marlow.

"Jared and Ivanka helped push him out", ran a

story in the *Daily Mail*. "They were concerned about how they were being viewed by the Jewish community".

For his part, Bannon has downplayed the dispute and insists he will now concentrate on waging war on Trump's opponents.

Beer Pong, Jews vs Nazis Style

"Character education is at the heart of all we do at Lovett," says a spokesperson for The Lovett School in Atlanta, Georgia. If that's the case, the private high school still has a bit of work to achieve its goal.

School authorities were forced to expel one student, suspend four others and ban two more from extra-curricular activities for two weeks after a photo on social media showed them playing a game of Jews vs Nazis beer pong. The photo depicts large red beer cups laid out on a table in the shape of a swastika and a Star of David.

Local Atlanta rabbi Peter Berg informed the headmaster about the party after receiving the photo in an e-mail. "The fact that someone could even conceive of such a game and then think it's funny is beyond words", the Rabbi told WSB-TV.

Despite his concerns, Rabbi Berg did acknowledge that the school, whose website says its philosophy is based on the Judeo-Christian tradition, did a "phenomenal job" of responding to what was a very serious matter.

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