Opinion

Self-image to be tested

I t was all decorum and polite-
ness at an election forum 
Sunday sponsored by the
Centre for Israel and ... author was in the banana fields, working
on the irrigation system, when the war
started.

COURTESY VICTOR NEUMAN

Four “mainstream” parties have all – perhaps less predictably, his fellow
Canadians will now hear the per-
pectives to the debate. How far
from every port on its side. In an-
other look and was surprised to see
better look and was surprised to see

In this eight-part series, the author
recounts his life in Israel around the
time of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.
The events and people described are
real but, for reasons of privacy, the
names are fictitious.

Part 2: The War Begins

Sometimes, war begins with a
whimper and not a bang.
It was Oct. 6, 1973. It was
based on the kibbutz that I
had been on with Suzanne, except
Suzanne had never returned from
Paris.

I was in the banana fields, work-
ing alone on the irrigation system,
when I began to feel a strangeness
in the air. At first, I couldn’t put
my finger on what was different. I
was alone – just me and my tractor –
but that was nothing new. The ba-
nanans were not ready for harvesting,
so no one else was supposed to be
around. The pruning of new shoots
was over with and the stripping of
dead leaves had been done a couple
of weeks before.

Not being able to determine what
was bothering me in that moment,
I went back to pondering the mean-
ing of my life. I had been to Israel on
a previous trip, spent a year or so on
different kibbutzim, done
extracurricular work at the University of
British Columbia, and I was
undergraduate student. I was
always comfortable around
people in this image or any-
other thing about the event
described in the photo, visit
jewishmuseum.ca/blog.

In a few days, Canadians will get
our first look at all the party leaders
side by side, including Andrew Scheer
and Jagmeet Singh, who remain
unknown to many Canadians, and
Bernier, who will bring some
genuinely outside-the-establishment
perspectives to the debate. How far
Bernier pushes the envelope – and
how Canadians respond to his ideas
– will tell us just how accurate our
self-perception as an open, tolerant
society really is.

When Afula road went quiet

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recounts his life in Israel around the
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more swimming in the pool. The swimming pool is now empty, draining water supply. All tractor and vehicles are to be filled up with fuel and oil. All tractor and vehicles are to be scattered around the kibbutz and not parked in one place. The bomb shelters are no longer discretions. Nine kids have to clear out all the records, strobe lights and disco stuff.

"Before the day is over, I want white lines painted on all the shelter pathways. We are blocking out the kibbutz and we have to be able to find our way to the shelters in the dark. No lights on after dark in the rooms unless there is black plastic taped to the window. Patrols by the shomer idea (night guard) around the kibbutz perimeter are to be carried out seriously. I don't want to hear of any guards hanging out in the kitchen having food and coffee. They can pack their lunches and eat them as they do their rounds. No, we can't double the patrols. They'll just end up shoot- ing one another. That is all. We are at war. Are we understanding? Then do your jobs. I looked across the room at Tamar. She looked back and her expression was serious. We were at war. (Next Time: Dating, Israeli Style)"

Victor Neuman was born in the former Soviet Union, where his family sought refuge after fleeing Poland during the Second World War. The family immigrated to Canada in 1948 and Neuman grew up in the Greater Vancouver area. He attended the University of British Columbia and obtained a BA and MA with majors in English literature and creative writing. Between 1968 and 1974, he made two trips to Israel, one of which landed him a kibbutz at the time of the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Upon his return to Cana- da, he studied Survey Technology at BCIT and went on to a career of designing highways for the Province of British Columbia. When he retired, he reconnected with his roots in creative writing and began writing scripts for Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir concerts and articles for the Jewish Independent. Neuman and his wife, Tammy, live in southeast Vancouver and enjoy the company of friends, their extensive extended family and their four sons.

O Canada and Hatikvah were sung by the King David High School Choir.

Our deepest gratitude to caregivers Karen, Yemme and the team at the Baycrest palliative care ward. Funeral services were held in Toronto. Donations in Sheila’s memory may be made to Kids Help Phone or the charity of your choice.

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEVERLY FREEMAN

SEP'T 21

Sheila Austin (née Toban)

We are deeply saddened to announce the death of Sheila Austin (née Toban) in Toronto on Sept. 10, 2019, at the age of 87, after a long life lived with generosity, empathy and respect for all people.

Sheila was born in Vancouver, B.C., on Aug. 11, 1932, the third of four daughters of Harry and Mona Toban. She earned a bachelor of social work from the University of British Columbia and then an MSW from Boston University before returning to Vancouver to practise as a psychiatric social worker.

She put her career aside to raise her three daughters, during which time she was an active volunteer, specializing in the development of school libraries. Later, she returned to social work, at Riverview and St. Vincent hospitals, making a difference in many lives.

In 1980, Sheila realized what had been a dream since listening to Hawai’i Call on the radio as a child, and moved to Honolulu for a decade, where she became a student of Hawaiian culture and language, in addition to continuing her social work practice. Eventually, she moved back to Vancouver to be closer to her aging father, and was honoured with the Woman of Valour award in 1997 for her service to the Jewish community. Her later years saw the blossoming of her astounding talents as a chocolate maker and cake decorator; her birthday cakes for her precious grand- children were works of art.

Sheila was predeceased by her parents and her sisters Ronelle and Sandra. She leaves her sister Phyllis; her daughters Edie, Shari and Barbara (Trevor); her ex-husband Jack Austin; grandchildren Max, Annalisa, Gabriel and Isaac, Aaron and Sophie, and Daniel and Alexander; and many relatives and friends.

Our deepest gratitude to caregivers Karen, Yemme and the team at the Baycrest palliative care ward. Funeral services were held in Toronto. Donations in Sheila’s memory may be made to Kids Help Phone or the charity of your choice.