



**B'NAI SHALOM V'TIKVAH**  
**NEWSLETTER**

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**Welcome to the April 2020 Edition of our Newsletter!** In this edition, we are featuring contributions from some of our readers...articles, reflections, noteworthy information and more, to share with us during this difficult time. Watch for their welcome words throughout this edition.

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### **'Grateful'...Beryl Apelbaum**

Thursday, March 12 was the first inkling that life would be different and by the following week, it became clear to me that there would be no visits from my daughter Robyn who lives on her own, no Passover seder as in the past, no BSVT Passover seder that Howard and I had organized and no seeing the musical "Hamilton". No anything. A big open space. Life as I knew it had been cancelled. My first reaction was to be proactive, productive and make good use of this "gift". There were so many things I could be doing that I had put off. This would also give me a sense of control and fulfillment over the situation. However, I am someone who is a natural procrastinator with mild obsessive-compulsive tendencies. How do you keep both in check? The past 5 weeks have seen a real see saw of emotions – feeling productive but also **very** anxious. Did I waste too much time today? Am I pleased with what I accomplished? Did I have any "me time" today?

As of today, I must stop that conversation and take the time to recognize everything that I am grateful for.

Grateful for the major decluttering of my office.



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Grateful for the reorganization of many cupboards and drawers.

Grateful that my husband has not disowned me for all of my demands.

Grateful for the 2 beautiful seder meals that I prepared even though there were only 3 of us at the table.

Grateful that the rabbi officiating at my uncle's funeral in Montreal set up a zoom meeting so that I and others could watch.

Grateful for twice connecting 2 generations of cousins on my father's side(25 people) by zoom.

Grateful for the zoom meeting with some of my cousins on my mother's side.

Grateful that BSVT has virtual Saturday services and organized a virtual Passover seder.

Grateful that my family and I are healthy.

The list can go on and on...

*Beryl Apfelbaum*

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### **Messages from the President – Ron King**

#### *In Recognition...*

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic all of us have had to restructure our lives. Institutions have been forced to rethink how they serve their population. B'Nai Shalom v'Tikvah is no exception. Fortunately, our congregation is served by a rabbi who immediately recognized the importance of maintaining our connection with our tradition and with each other. Rabbi Printz suggested to our Board of Directors that we continue our worship through the technology available on the internet.

The Board of Directors readily agreed and, with the assistance of our vice-president Howard Steinberg, on Shabbat April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 B'Nai Shalom v'Tikvah held its first virtual Shabbat service and Torah study. More than thirty members of the congregation participated in our Shabbat service created by Rabbi Printz.

It was a wonderful experience! To be able to meet everyone (virtually) on Shabbat. To fulfill the mitzvah of Shabbat worship and learning was truly a blessing. So successful was this experience that the Board of Directors were delighted when Rabbi Printz offered to lead a virtual second night seder.

While the “gathering” for the second night seder was not as large as the previous Shabbat service it was yet another historic event in the life of our congregation!

On behalf of the congregation I would like to express our sincere thanks to Rabbi Printz for taking the lead in creating, organizing and conducting the first virtual worship services at B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah. TODAH RABAH! Our congregation is indeed fortunate that our rabbi recognized the importance and acted to innovate the creation of these virtual events.

Our Board of Directors and Rabbi Printz are committed to continue to innovate in order to bring opportunities for Jewish life to continue at B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah. In the future **please consult your emails for notices regarding services and other events.**



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### Reaching Out

When difficulties arise, it is often important to know that there are those who are there, who are ready, willing and able to assist. Rabbi Printz has expressed her willingness to be of assistance and certainly if there is anything further you believe our congregation can do to be helpful, I am here to listen.

Therefore, I have included below the email address for Rabbi Printz and my email address should you need to consult or you feel the need for telephone communication, further arrangements can be made.

Rabbi Printz – [rabbiprintz@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiprintz@gmail.com)

Ron King – [king838@gmail.com](mailto:king838@gmail.com)

Wishing you health and safety...

*Ron King  
President*





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## Reaching Out to Others...The Passover Season

I would venture that your Pesach seder this year was not what you envisioned. Certainly, the second night virtual seder that Rabbi Printz led was nothing like the second night seder that Beryl Apelbaum, Joanie Gertler and Howard Steinberg were planning for our congregation. Yet for the Jewish people, the celebration of freedom has taken many forms.

Those congregants who are around my age can recall numerous “EXODUSES” to freedom. The LET MY PEOPLE GO campaign of the seventies to free Soviet Jews followed shortly afterward by the campaign to free the Syrian Jews, followed by the Israeli rescue of the Jews of Ethiopia and then the dramatic rescue of Yemenite Jews by Israel ( and I have probably omitted other rescues as well. )

Of course, this past year we witnessed on television the plight of thousands of refugees fleeing war and hunger. (Regrettably, this is a sight that has been repeated too often in the recent number of years.)

As we contemplate our family seder we are reminded to make places for those who would otherwise not have a place at a seder table. I have always taken that to mean that one has an obligation to share with those less fortunate. A donation to the Passover Food Drive, organized by the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (and when possible packaging and delivering the food), has been a mitzvah I look forward to doing.

However, there are some years when this mitzvah is just not enough. Proudly, I remember when Reform Jews in particular, sought to perform acts of charity which related directly to the teachings of the seder. I can recall one year as Passover approached that our distinguished rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple, Rabbi Gunther Plaut, knocked on the door of my religious school classroom. The students had all departed and I was surprised to see Rabbi Plaut since certainly he had just finished leading a Shabbat service in the sanctuary.

That year many young adult Jews were in the throws of the “ Let My People Go” campaign to free the Soviet Jews. Rabbi Plaut took my hand and said, “Thank you for providing yet again a teaching about the importance of our Pesach. Rabbis are students too. “ He smiled and left.



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I still don't remember if I said anything or just stood there with my mouth open but from that moment on, I realized that I had been visited by a great rabbi and a compassionate human being!

Hopefully, this Pesach has once again contributed to your Jewish understanding. Hopefully, you have fulfilled the mitzvah of inviting those in need to your seder table through a donation or action that has contributed to the welfare of others. (If you haven't you might consider a donation to Food Banks Canada since there are so many who are in need.)

In the weeks ahead our Board of Directors is working to offer opportunities for worship and learning. Should any congregant have a suggestion to enhance our sharing please contact a board director.

With hope for renewed strength,

*Ron King*





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### Recognitions Club – Paula Rudner

Dear friends,

I know I'm a bit late, but on behalf of my mother, Bryna, and myself, we hope you all enjoyed your seders, including the virtual one online with Rabbi Printz. I wish I could have seen it all, instead of only the last few minutes of the after-seder conversation and questions. For me... next year!!

In this April Newsletter, we celebrate May 2020 birthdays, an anniversary, and we honour and support those who have Yartzheits. I have not received notification of any Simchas, but if you do have one coming up soon, I hope you would like to share it with our BSVT family. We would enjoy celebrating your good news and wishing you **Mazel Tov!!**

If you would like to be recognized in future Newsletters but have never submitted yours or your children's or grandchildren's information, please read the "Reminder" below for details (the details include a note about simchas). We'd love to recognize you and yours for your special day!

### *Paula Rudner, Ad Hoc and Recognitions*

#### **Warmest Birthday Wishes to:**

May 01: Cliff Frumkin

May 04: Beth Lichtental

May 11: Claire Hughes

May 13: Jordan Rudner, grandson of Bryna Rudner, and nephew / godson to Paula

May 16: Ken Daniels, our dear friend in Australia, a deeply missed past member



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May 19: Jessica and Kamille Shulman, twin daughters of Arlene and Richard Shulman

*A very Happy Birthday to all of you!*

**Congratulations on your Wedding Anniversary:**

May 8: Randi and Michael Booth, granddaughter and grandson-in-law of Bryna Rudner and niece and nephew-in-law to Paula (3 years)

*Happy Anniversary! Wishing you many more years of happiness together!*

**Our thoughts are with you for your Yartzheit:**

May 9: Jonathan and Evelyn Judah on the Yartzheit of your son, Dr. David Judah  
(Iyar 1, 5776)

May 10: Gayle Kahn, on the Yartzheit of your mother, Dorothy Vigodda  
(Iyar 4, 5757)

May 12: Vivian Laiwint, on the Yartzheit of your father, Jacob Rossman  
(Iyar 11, 5717)

May 19: Arlene Shulman, on the Yartzheit of your father, Joe Skolnik  
(Iyar 21, 5766)

May 31: Paul Joseph, on the Yartzheit of your father, Bernard Joseph  
(Sivan 14, 5729)

*May their memory be for a blessing.*



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**Reminder:** If you are interested in joining our 'Recognitions Club', and allowing us to honour your immediate family's birthdays, anniversaries or Yarzheits in the monthly Newsletter, please email me at [pmrudner@rogers.com](mailto:pmrudner@rogers.com). It's so easy to do! Just send me the names and dates\* for yours, your children's, your grandchildren's or great-grandchildren's birthdays; yours and your spouse's names and the full date of your anniversary, and the same information for your children's or grandchildren's anniversaries; the name, relationship to you or your spouse, and the full Gregorian date of the person for whom you have Yarzheit (both the Gregorian and Hebrew date should be provided, but it's not a problem if the Hebrew date is unknown - we'll gladly convert it for you).

\*There is no need to provide the year for birthdays unless you wish to - just the month and day will be used, but as noted, the year must be provided for anniversaries and Yarzheits.

**Simchas**, including births, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, university graduations, engagements or weddings, are limited to you (i.e. BSVT members), your children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Details for each specific simcha are as described in the email headed "**Recognizing your Simchas**" that was distributed on December 9, 2017. If you have a simcha, but you no longer have a copy of the December 9th email, nor do you recall the details needed for publication, please email me, and I will be very happy to provide them to you. Your simcha will be included in the month the simcha will be, so details need to be provided to me with sufficient time to include it.

Please remember that all names should be provided as how you would like them to appear in the Newsletter. It's our honour and pleasure to celebrate you and yours!





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### **Serving Us In This Time of Crisis...John Stocker**

This is a father's pride showing through. And why not?

Most Ontarians have very recently read about or seen news items concerning the 500+ troops that have just been stationed in Canadian Forces Base Borden as emergency responders. Their duties are unspecified but may be utilized to support vulnerable communities, deployed to provide humanitarian support or assist provinces and municipalities with logistics; possibly all of the above. This is a five month commitment for all involved.

The commanding officer of this, the 32 Territorial Battle Group is Lt.-Col. James Stocker, my elder son.

We just know him as J.J.





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### **Festivals and Rituals Report – Joanie Gertler**

Shalom all,

I am sitting here thinking that the Passover we just had was very different than the ones we have had in the past- all due to the Covid 19 pandemic which is really a trying and difficult time for all of us. I hope that you had the ability to share some virtual time with your families.

BSVT had a virtual 2<sup>nd</sup> night seder hosted by Rabbi Printz and sounded like it was successful. I spent the 1<sup>st</sup> Seder with my husband and myself reading the Haggadah and enjoying a typical Seder meal and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> night we had a virtual meeting with my children and extended family. I'm sure that everyone would definitely have preferred having the family together for this holiday especially, if there is Grandchildren in your family but, we all have to stay healthy and safe so, we will have to wait till Passover 2021 and pray that we will all be able to say NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM WITH OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS SITTING TOGETHER!!!

I hope that everyone in our community remains safe and healthy during these difficult days and reach out to your families and friends whenever you need them. Stay Positive and Strong. This will pass.

Shalom Bayit. *Joanie Gertler*





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### **Sharing and Honoring...Enid Young**

Michael and I moved to Huntsville 13 years ago. We love Huntsville. According to a recent study we are the 4th friendliest town in Canada!

There are very few Jewish folks who live here full time. That hasn't been a problem. We have many caring friends and have a big social life, but little Jewish food, culture or connections except with you folks.

Since being a very small girl, I have always secretly been envious of people who got Easter baskets.

Yesterday, I went to the door and there were my neighbours from next door. Mom and her 3 yr. old daughter were putting an Easter basket full of popcorn on my porch. It just made our day.

This pandemic is awful, but wouldn't it be wonderful if it became a norm for Christians and Jews to honour each other's traditions all the time?

Virtual hugs, *Enid Young*





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**We're Up and Running on The Web!**

**Have you visited BSVT's All New and Improved Website, Yet?  
Here's How!**



***How to use the BSVT website...by Howard Steinberg***

- First type in [www.bnaishalomvtikvah.ca](http://www.bnaishalomvtikvah.ca) or do a search for “Durham Region Reform Jewish Synagogue” and our website should come up somewhere near the top of the page.
- Once you are on our home page, you will see the picture of the Aron Kodesh. To the right (or below for mobile) you will see the dates of the next services or events. To the left there will be a menu or a little square with 3 bars. If you see the 3 bars, click on it for the menu.
- Scroll to the bottom of the menu and click “Registration”. If you wish to see the “hidden” parts of the website (pictures and newsletters), then fill out the form. If you have a cryptic email address like “[imL84shul@bizzare.ca](mailto:imL84shul@bizzare.ca)” then please put in



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a name I will recognize so I will accept you. We get about 4-8 web bots per week requesting to join BSVT's website (it's that good).

- Click on "Submit" and within 3-5 days, I will accept you as part of the online tribe. This will give you access to the aforementioned special sites which are "Pictures" and "Newsletters".
- Somewhere along the line, Google or the website will ask if you want to stay logged in or "**Remember me**". Click yes if you don't want to enter a password next time. If you do not want to stay logged in, write your secure password on a post-it note and put it on your computer. I don't think there are any requirements for our passwords, but at least 8 characters including some numbers, text and punctuation are more secure.

If you have any questions, email me at [howman606@gmail.com](mailto:howman606@gmail.com) or text/call me at 416.606.1460.

P.S. I cannot see your passwords. I can only reset them to something bizarre which you can then change to whatever you want. This can also take a few days.

Sincerely,

**Howard the Web Guy.** (not the Web Master. I'm working on it, but it's slow).





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### **A Good Time to Learn to ZOOM...and More!.. Ingrid Thompson**

Hi: Our daughter Leisa is the Communications Manager for the OSCC. This is recent media release. I asked Leisa if I could send this information for the congregation. She absolutely agreed. She and her staff just want to keep people engaged and their minds and bodies active. Of particular interest for members of BSVT might be the online programs on Zoom. The OSCC has at least two programs per day scheduled for the next couple of weeks, everything from Art to Zumba. Just go to [www.oscc.ca](http://www.oscc.ca) and you will find the link to 'onlineprograms' (at the bottom of the scroll which has pictures of four staff members as the background). Just click on that and you're in. There's a tutorial about Zoom at the beginning. They've modified Zoom so all you have to do is click on the link of the program you've chosen about 5 minutes beforehand and the host will let you in at start time. All interested people are welcome. You don't have to be a Senior or even a member of the OSCC. Just enjoy!

Take care. *Ingrid*

### **Stay Connected, Stay Active**

#### **OSCC55+ announces assistance for seniors during COVID-19**

(Oshawa, ON) – The Oshawa Senior Community Centres 55+ (OSCC55+) has introduced a new business model designed to help older adults combat isolation and stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Seniors can access the following services via [oscc.ca/stayconnected](http://oscc.ca/stayconnected) or by calling 905-576-6712:

**Telephone Outreach Program** – Seniors can register to receive regular check-in calls to reduce feelings of isolation and provide care and concern. This free service is available to anyone 55 or older in the Durham community. To register, please call 905-576-6712 ext. 2830 or email [info@oscc.ca](mailto:info@oscc.ca).

**Grocery Order & Delivery Service** – in partnership with a local grocer, the OSCC55+ will be facilitating grocery orders and providing delivery within Oshawa by our vans and transportation staff. Seniors can call 905-576-6712 ext. 2830 or email



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[groceries@oscc.ca](mailto:groceries@oscc.ca) with their list and staff will be in touch to confirm delivery and payment. Payments must be by cheque to the grocery store.

**OSCC55+ COVID-19 Resource Guide** – OSCC55+ has prepared a resource guide to assist older adults with access to services in the community. The complete resource guide can be found at [oscc.ca/stayconnected](http://oscc.ca/stayconnected) and at various businesses in Oshawa. Grocery stores or pharmacies interested in receiving copies may contact our staff at 905-576-6712 ext. 2830 to request a drop off.

**Online Programs** – OSCC55+ has introduced online programming for seniors wishing to stay active and continue to be engaged. These free interactive programs are accessible at [oscc.ca/onlineprograms](http://oscc.ca/onlineprograms) through a computer, smart phone or a tablet. Topics include: Zumba, yoga, wellness seminars, general interest workshops, current events, cooking demonstrations and more.

**Social Connecting through Facebook** – OSCC55+ is engaging with the community through the OSCC55+ Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/OSCC55plus/](http://www.facebook.com/OSCC55plus/)) with entertaining videos, useful links, programs and fitness demonstrations to help keep seniors engaged and active. We invite people to comment, share and like to keep our seniors' community connected and strong.

Though our branches remain closed, we continue to serve the seniors' community. For more information, please visit [www.oscc.ca](http://www.oscc.ca), email [info@oscc.ca](mailto:info@oscc.ca) or call 905-576-6712 ext. 2830.



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## Stories of Kindness, Courage and Faith...Ron King

We should never forget.

[US Holocaust Museum](http://ushmm.org) – ushmm.org





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## *Always of Interest...*

Article submitted by John Stocker

### **The Refusenik Exodus from Slavery to Freedom United the Jewish World and Brought Down the Soviet Union.**

*What lessons can we learn from them today?*

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/refusenik-exodus-passover-soviet-union> Page 18

The story of the refuseniks—Soviet Jews who were refused permission to emigrate and were often jailed and persecuted for having asked—and the global struggle for their freedom is one of the most momentous chapters in recent Jewish history. Rich in biblical symbolism, it is filled with drama and heroic action. It culminated with victory: a triumphant exodus of 1.5 million Jews from the Soviet Union. Yet in the three decades that have passed since then, efforts to transmit the story to the next generations have come to naught.

Anat Zalmanson-Kuznetsov, an Israeli filmmaker and the daughter of celebrated refuseniks Sylva Zalmanson and Eduard Kuznetsov, first became aware of this failure as she began to tour with her award-winning 2016 documentary *Operation Wedding*. The film documents her parents' participation in a daring 1970 plot to hijack an empty Soviet plane from an airfield outside Leningrad and fly it across the border to Europe. She noticed that the teens who showed up at her screenings lacked any historical context that would help them understand the film. "I had to explain everything from scratch—including the fact that people were not allowed to leave the Soviet Union," she said.

Zalmanson-Kuznetsov, 40, remembers how the story gradually faded from public memory. As a child growing up in Israel, she experienced the glow of her parents' fame firsthand. Just walking into class felt like a ceremony: "My teachers had been protesting for my parents' release just a few years earlier," she said. Yet when she began to

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research her parents' story as a young filmmaker, she found that not a single film had been made about them.

Exactly why this story, which touched millions of Jews around the globe, has been so thoroughly forgotten has puzzled many over the years. Misha Galperin, interim CEO of the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, which is home to the exhibit [Power of Protest: The Movement to Free Soviet Jewry](#), and which before the coronavirus crisis had planned to host a talk by Natan Sharansky on the lessons of the Soviet Jewry's movement for today's fight against anti-Semitism, thinks the reason may be that the participants in those events are still with us. "It was such a part of my life, it didn't occur to me that it was part of history or something I needed to tell my children about," he said. Echoing his musings, Zalmanson-Kuznetsov recalled having to push her parents to speak about their experiences. "Many of these people were heroes, but they didn't know how to tell their story," she said.



Refusenik women and their children, Moscow, Ovrazhki, 1979 COURTESY OF REMEMBER & SAVE

Part of the problem, though, is most certainly a failure to make the story of Soviet Jewry relevant to new generations of Jews, who have an obvious need for a story of an



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extraordinary rebirth of Jewish identity in a part of the diaspora that many had assumed was destined for cultural and spiritual annihilation. Behind the heroic grand narrative of a resistance struggle in a country that no longer exists on maps is a story about the *why* and *how* of the process of Jewish rediscovery which is both inherently powerful and also worthy of present-day reexploration and transmission. While American teenagers today might find it difficult to relate to a story of harassment of activist Jews by Soviet state police and imprisonment in the gulag, for each refusenik who experienced those ghastly hardships there were dozens whose drama was seemingly more prosaic yet more relatable. Kicked out of their jobs and familiar social circles, pushed to the margins of society, stuck in refusal for years and even decades, these largely assimilated Jews had to reinvent their lives in their newly narrowed circumstances.

What is so compelling about the refuseniks' story today is that so many of them chose to define themselves by delving into their Jewish identities and finding sources of strength, motivation, and optimism there. From friends of friends, they dug out the addresses of old men who had the secret knowledge of the Torah. They studied with them, then in turn taught others. Under the guise of camping, they organized expeditions to Holocaust mass graves and Hasidic sites and reported to others on what they saw. "It meant something to them to recover that sense of their Jewish selves, their Jewish identity and this connection with the tradition and the values, and to relate to one another on that basis," said [Ann Komaromi](#), associate professor of comparative literature at the University of Toronto, who worked with prominent refusenik activist [Yuli Kosharovski](#) on the English edition of his seminal work ["We Are Jews Again": Jewish Activism in the Soviet Union](#) (2017).

It is this process of Jewish rediscovery that makes this story so important and relevant. "This is not just the story of Soviet Jews. It's the story of our nation," said Zalmanson-Kuznetsov. After she finished *Operation Wedding*, she realized that her mission was not yet over. "It's about the whole story," she said. "At the age of 15 or 16, children ask themselves questions like, how would I behave in that situation?" When you learn about it at that age, she said, it creates an impact.

Which is how the [Refuseniks Project](#) was born. The project is a collection of 30 lesson plans designed to help Jewish educators teach a variety of age groups. The lessons include video and music links, photographs, slide shows, and ideas for interactive



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learning. “With every lesson, I asked myself: How can I make it more engaging for the kids?” said Zalmanson-Kuznetsov.

The lessons, which are in English and available for free, in partnership with Bar Ilan University’s [Lookstein Center for Jewish Education](#), are built around contemporary universal themes that students can relate to, such as social justice, political protest, women’s rights, or popular culture, as well as specifically Jewish and Israel-related topics that guide students to reflect on their own stories and Jewish identities. For example, the lesson “[Present, Protest and Inspire](#)” includes biographies of 16 Prisoners of Zion—prisoners of conscience who were punished with jail terms for Jewish activism—including a [9-month-old baby](#) and a teenage girl whom [the KGB kidnapped](#) to prevent her from emigrating to Israel with her father. Students are asked to work in small groups to plan a protest on behalf of one of the refuseniks, then present the protest—which may be in the form of dance, a collage, or a song—to the rest of the class.

The lesson “[Brainwashing and Fake News](#)” includes a brief video of a 2004 interview with a [former KGB official](#). In the interview, the official insists that the Soviet Union did not have a Jewish emigration problem and estimates the total number of people refused permission to emigrate at around 20. (The actual number is estimated at 30,000–40,000.) The lesson plan prompts students to consider how to “tell the difference between truth and a lie,” setting up a conversation about the very contemporary issue of fake news.

A number of educators have already given Zalmanson-Kuznetsov’s curriculum a try. Nick Greene, who splits his time between [acting](#) and teaching at [Valley Beth Shalom](#) Conservative synagogue in Encino, California, picked two lessons to teach his eighth-grade students. They began with “[Women of the Refuseniks](#).” The group watched a [video](#) about well-known female refuseniks such as Avital Sharansky, Ida Nudel, and Raiza Palatnik, and Western [women’s campaign for Soviet Jewry](#) including film stars such as Jane Fonda and Liv Ullman. “I thought it was a wonderful, modern sort of look at this,” said Greene. The lesson kicked off a discussion about what it would have meant to be not just a Jew but also a woman at that time in the Soviet Union.

For the second lesson, Greene chose “[Sing in Hebrew: Songs sung by captive Soviet Jews and by free Jews in Israel](#).” Students learned a well-known Israeli song, “[Kachol](#)



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[V'Lavan](#) (“Blue and White”), which was written in the 1960s by a 21-year-old refusenik, Israel Rashal. The song, whose lyrics express (in a simple and easily graspable Hebrew) a longing for Israel, became the refuseniks’ anthem. “The song is wonderful, and their being eighth-graders right now in this world, pop culture is so influential, and music is a big part of that,” said Greene. The lesson evolved into a discussion of the role of artists in today’s American society and the power of music as a means for personal and political expression. At the end of the lesson, the students [performed the song](#) together.

The universal themes of the lessons, such as political protest and artistic freedom, can be explored in other contexts, but exploring them in the Jewish context made it more personal for his students, Greene explained. “A number of our congregants’ ancestors were the Soviet Jews. A lot of them participated in the Soviet Jewry movement, so they have a personal experience with that.” But the material created points of reference for students of other cultural traditions as well. Students from the synagogue’s Persian families, who had their own family history of social upheaval, displacement and emigration, also could relate to it, Greene told me. Echoing his observation, Zalmanson-Kuznetsov recalled an Israeli teenager of Ethiopian descent who approached her after a lecture to tell her how much the story touched her and inspired her to work to bring her Ethiopian family to Israel.

Another way to create a personal and emotional link for students with the material is to invite a participant in those events to class. This was the approach that [Debbie Chessin](#), educational director at Cleveland’s Reform [Beth Israel-The West Temple](#) synagogue, intended to take before the coronavirus pandemic put her plans on hold. Their synagogue had been at the forefront of the Soviet Jewry movement, and she had invited Herbert Caron, one of the leading activists in the movement, who is now 97, to come and share his story. “The stories will always be there, but to hear them from individuals, whether it’s a Holocaust survivor or someone who was a refusenik, it’s impactful,” said Chessin. (Zalmanson-Kuznetsov’s [“Bring Refuseniks or Activists to Class”](#) lesson makes it easy to find such a guest speaker—including for a video link, if one doesn’t live nearby.)

The refuseniks’ stories teach lessons of courage and resilience, as well as commitment to one’s Jewish identity. Sharansky himself indirectly made this point in a [recent lighthearted video](#) in which he offered tips for handling a quarantine, based on his



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experience of spending nine years “quarantined” in a Soviet prison (half of them in solitary confinement). His tips—remember that you are part of a larger whole; don’t expect your circumstances to change for the better immediately; use your time productively—offer a model of endurance and mental strength under circumstances beyond one’s control that have obvious relevance to the experiences of billions of people around the world today, whether they are suffering under authoritarian regimes, or are victims of war, famine, or pandemics.

It is Zalmanson-Kuznetsov’s belief that the refuseniks’ stories need to become household knowledge among Jews the same way that Holocaust is. “Everybody knows six million died in the Holocaust. Everybody should know who a Prisoner of Zion is.” Moreover, she emphasized the strong historical link between the Holocaust and the story of the Soviet Jewry movement. Her mother, for example, was part of a group of Jewish youth that used to gather decades after the war in the [Rumbula Forest](#), where tens of thousands of Jews had been shot, to pick up litter from the abandoned graves. In Ukraine future refuseniks began their path by gathering at the site of the Babi Yar massacre in Kyiv, in defiance of official orders. Memory of the Holocaust is what prompted a rebirth of Jewish consciousness for them, and also was an important mobilizing factor for Jews abroad.

“It’s the last event that united practically all Jews, independent of their political interests and religious views,” said Nati Cantorovich, head of the Research and Information Department of Nativ, an Israeli government agency that played a critical role in the movement. Nativ is working to declassify some of its documents related to the era and to translate Zalmanson-Kuznetsov’s site into Hebrew.

To stimulate further interest, Zalmanson-Kuznetsov has [established a giveaway](#) for educators who teach one or more lessons on the Soviet Jewry movement: prizes of \$300, \$700, and \$1,000, to be awarded in an online raffle on June 7. ([Jewish LearningWorks](#), a San Francisco Bay Area Jewish learning organization, is acting as a fiscal sponsor for the award.) Applications are due June 4, so teachers have several weeks to teach a lesson and enter the competition. Teaching this material while we all find ourselves in forced confinement may bring it even closer to home.

*Izabella Tabarovsky is a researcher with the Kennan Institute at the Wilson Center focusing on the politics of historical memory in the former Soviet Union.*



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**Article submitted by Beryl Apelbaum**

[https://reformjudaism.org/blog/2020/04/16/health-and-hope-lessons-my-parents-who-survived-holocaust?utm\\_source=TWJL&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=20200417&utm\\_campaign=Feature&utm\\_content=2020\\_4\\_17](https://reformjudaism.org/blog/2020/04/16/health-and-hope-lessons-my-parents-who-survived-holocaust?utm_source=TWJL&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20200417&utm_campaign=Feature&utm_content=2020_4_17)

## Health and Hope: Lessons from My Parents, Who Survived the Holocaust

BY ARON HIRT-MANHEIMER, 4/16/2020



Growing up as the child of two Holocaust survivors, I was always acutely aware of the imperative to stay healthy. In the concentration camps, contracting a disease was



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tantamount to a death sentence. In my home, a cold was anything but common; a cough would set off alarm bells. I trained myself not to cough in the presence of my parents.

The fear of illness was a constant in my early years because [my father had been afflicted with a deadly disease](#) shortly after his liberation from the Mauthausen concentration camp. Tuberculosis was so dreaded in my family that I was forbidden even to utter the word, as if it were a curse.

Back then, it was a curse of sorts because there was no cure for TB, except to surgically remove the damaged lung tissue. Doctors performed that operation on my father, using whiskey for anesthesia. He survived, though left with less than half of one lung.

When my mother was reunited with my father, her fiancé from before the war, he was in a TB sanatorium in Germany. He freed her of her vows, saying he was no longer the same man he'd been before Auschwitz, before Mauthausen, before the unmentionable disease. My mother replied that she would stay with him and moved into a wife's barrack adjacent to the sanatorium.

Day after day, defying doctors' warnings that she would likely fall victim to this highly contagious disease, my mother tended to my father's needs and extended her support to the other men in the ward.

After two years of hospitalization and convalescence, my parents married in Feldafing, a displaced person's camp in U.S.-occupied Germany, where I was born the following year, in 1948. It would take another three years before he had recovered sufficiently to qualify for an immigration visa to the United States.



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We settled in Cleveland, OH, where my father got a job as a drill press operator in a factory. My sister Rosalie was born, and things went well for a time – then one day my father collapsed on a bus and was rushed by ambulance to a hospital.

He was diagnosed with TB and spent the next two years in the Sunny Acres Sanatorium outside of the city. By that time, there was an antibiotic for TB, streptomycin, but my father had a terrible reaction to it, which worsened his condition. I remember coming to visit him after a year, singing him a song I had composed for the occasion.

I spent much of my youth expecting to die from TB or some other ghastly infectious disease.

Every year when I went in for a check-up, the doctor did a tuberculin skin test, and every time, that spot on my arm turned red and itchy. To my mind, that positive result signaled my imminent death. (I still don't understand why they continued testing me when it was clear that I'd been exposed to the bacteria at some point in my life; maybe it was for research purposes.)

In my teens, I was part of a UCLA experimental study of a drug that would supposedly prevent me from ever contracting TB. Going to the lab by bus was the only regular outing I ever did with my father.

My parents had strange, old-world views of illness causation. I was forbidden to eat popsicles, for example, because they could cause pneumonia. One day I got such a high fever that I had to be rushed to the hospital. And wouldn't you know it? The day before I had secretly consumed a popsicle!

While I was in the bath one night, my mother noticed a bruise on one of my legs. In a grave voice, she told me that black and blue marks could lead to cancer. As proof, she offered the cautionary tale of poor little Haskeleh, of blessed memory. Truly, it's a wonder I didn't become a hypochondriac.



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As my father got older, he found it harder and harder to breathe, and living in smoggy Los Angeles didn't help. One day he went for a walk, and the next thing we heard was that he was in the hospital. ER doctors, not knowing his medical history, pumped him with too much oxygen, resulting in irreversible damage.

After a while, he could no longer breathe on his own, and his doctor advised my mother to end all life-sustaining measures. She refused, reminding the doctor that they were survivors and pleading with him to let her take charge of my father's care. He agreed, and a ventilator machine was brought into their bedroom. My mother learned how to operate it, woke up several times a night for endotracheal suctioning, and kept him alive in that way for the last nine months of his life.

In this time of COVID-19, my mother will likely spend her upcoming 100th birthday sheltering at home with her caregiver. When I asked her how this *tsura* (tragedy) is different from the time of Hitler, she told me:

"You have to be hopeful and be grateful for what you have. In the concentration camp and on the death march, I lived on hope. Today I have a home, food, a television, a phone – and hope."

Amen.



Aron Hirt-Manheimer is the [Union for Reform Judaism](#)'s editor-at-large.

*Photo credit: Rose Eichenbaum*



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**DON'T WORRY  
BE JEWISH**

## On the Lighter Side...

### **Forewarned...Harley Saltzman**

*At this time as more and more of us are reliant upon electronic communication to stay in touch I wish to bring to our membership's attention a new virus that we should all be aware of. Remember, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.*

## **The Third Strain of the NILE Virus is coming. (Cat C)**

I thought you would want to know about this virus. Hope it's not too late! Even the most advanced computer programs from Norton, McAfee, Eset - Nod 32 and others cannot take care of this one.

It appears to target those who were born prior to 1958.

### **Virus Symptoms**

1. Causes you to send the same e-mail twice. (Done that)
2. Causes you to send a blank e-mail. (That too)
3. Causes you to send an e-mail to the wrong person. (Yup)
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you. (Ah-ha)
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment. (Done that)
6. Causes you to hit SEND before you've finished. (Oh no, not again)



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7. Causes you to hit DELETE instead of SEND. (Hate that)
8. Causes you to hit SEND when you should DELETE. (Heck, now what?)

### **It's called the C-NILE virus!**

A lot of us have already been inflicted with this deadly disease and unfortunately as we age it gets worse.

Stay safe!



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“Your son’s a doctor? Meh! My son owns a toilet paper roll factory.”



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### **From 'Legend' to History...John Stocker**

From the stories in the Torah.

It's exciting that they take us from at least somewhat dubious to well beyond nominally doubtless. Worth another trip just to see this.



### **Fear Not, For I Am With You**

This photo of 'Tel Beersheba' is an archaeological site containing the remains of the original Biblical town where Abraham and Isaac lived and a MUST see on your next visit to the Holy Land.



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**Dates for BSVT Services – March 2020 – December 2020**

March 21, 2020	Shabbat
April 4, 2020	Shabbat
April 18, 2020	Shabbat
May 9, 2020	Shabbat
May 23, 2020	Shabbat - Bat Mitzvah – Rebecca Efraim
May 28, 2020	Erev Shavuot – 6:30 p.m.
June 6, 2020	Shabbat
September 12, 2020	Shabbat
September 18, 2020	Erev Rosh HaShanah – 6:30 p.m.
September 19, 2020	First Day Rosh HaShanah – 10:30 a.m.
September 20, 2020	Second Day Rosh HaShanah – 10:00 a.m. Tashlich – 9:30 a.m.
September 27, 2020	Kol Nidre – 6:30 p.m.
September 28, 2020	Yom Kippur – 10:00 a.m.
October 3, 2020	Shabbat
October 10, 2020	Erev Simchat Torah – 7:30 p.m.
October 24, 2020	Shabbat
November 14, 2020	Shabbat
November 28, 2020	Shabbat
December 12, 2020	Shabbat
December 19, 2020	Shabbat

**Kiddush/Onex Sponsors**

If you would like to sponsor a Kiddush/Oleg, perhaps to mark a birthday, anniversary or other special event, please contact Beryla Oelbaum at [beryla@sympatico.ca](mailto:beryla@sympatico.ca).



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**Notes:**

Shabbat morning services commence at 9:30 a.m. Torah Study follows the Kiddush. Evening services commence at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

**Watch for ad hoc email messages for invitations with times and instructions for accessing virtual services via Zoom planned during this crisis.**





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## *Signs of Spring*



*Photo by Wenda Abel*