



# PRETORIA JEWISH CHRONICLE

*January/February/  
March 2021*

*Tevet/Shevat/Adar/  
Nissan 5781*



*Because we all need something good  
to look forward to this year.*

*Chanukah 2021*



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The Editor and/or the Editorial Board reserve the sole right to refuse publication of any material submitted.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE : Content Submissions**

Notice to all organisations and community members: **The due date for all articles, letters, classifieds and adverts is the 10th of each month for the following month's issue.** Please ensure that anything you wish to submit is done so timeously. The Chronicle depends on your contributions and your co-operation in this regard in order to meet publication and printer "deadlines", which is vitally important.

Kindly **EMAIL** all content to jewishchronicle@gmail.com

2020 can probably go down in history as being one of the hardest years in this decade, and for the matrics of 2020, this is certainly the case. Kol Hakavod to our Pretoria students who have worked hard to achieve under these trying conditions during the Covid lockdown year.


**GALIT HARRIS**

daughter of Eli and Jolene,  
matriculated from King  
David Linksfield.

A highlight of her year was participating in the National Yom Hashoa online ceremony.

She excelled in ballet and managed to complete her final exam during this year

Galit is following in her sisters footsteps and leaves for ulpan at Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael in Israel in January 2021.


**NECHAMA FOX**

daughter of Rabbi Gidon  
and Aviva,  
matriculated from Torah  
Academy

Nechama did gymnastics and ran children's services for many years at the PHC.


**JENNA MYER**

daughter of Tracy and the late Alan,  
matriculated from Pretoria  
Girls' High.

Her main sport is show jumping and Jenna spent a few weeks jumping in Germany and Holland this past year. She will be studying at Tuks in 2021.

## Mazal Tov Class of 2020


**DANIELLA YOHANAN**

daughter of Shlomi and Miri  
matriculated from Abbots  
College.

Daniella's passion is art which she did for matric. She will be taking a gap year in 2021.


**NIR LEVY**

son of Sam and Elana Levy  
matriculated at Abbots  
Collage.

Nir excelled in business studies and plans on studying B.Com Commerce in 2021.


**OPHEC FUNIS**

son of Anat and Isaac,  
matriculated from Pretoria  
Boys' High.

He will be studying at Pretoria University In 2021.



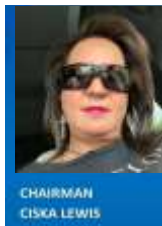
## THE UNION OF JEWISH WOMEN PRETORIA BRANCH

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**OUR LIVES NO LONGER BELONG TO US ALONE, THEY BELONG TO ALL THOSE WHO NEED US DESPERATELY"**

The UJW Pretoria continues to provide relief boxes for farmers and have received many acknowledgments and much gratitude.



While our usual Projects are continuing, we are blessed to have been able to assist others in need. Here are photos from some of our outreach work.

**All the children at the Baraka Orphanage received their Christmas gifts and groceries from the UJW Pretoria**



Wearing the name with pride!



You ladies are our Santa ♥. A big thank you my friends. The food parcel has a lot of love and care.

D.M. (a grateful recipient of a food parcel)

**Do you want to see where your donations go? UJW Pretoria now has its own Facebook page.**

**Please contact Ciska or Tracy if you are able to assist or wish or to become involved.**

**CISKA 083 272 7292  
TRACY 083 657 0222**



The opening ceremony of the Olympic Games is always a thrill to watch. Every nation, no matter how small and insignificant, takes its place in the line-up, led by its national flag proudly borne by an athlete honoured to carry it, while the teams circle the inner stadium before occupying their position in the centre of the field. Some teams, consisting of no more than a single athlete and a coach, are greeted with the same enthusiastic applause normally reserved for the athletic super powers like the USA, Russia and Australia.

To me, the initial appearance of Israel with its distinctive flag always brings forth a sense of joy tinged with concern. How will they be greeted? Will they encounter the same warm reception enjoyed by the other teams or will the applause be no more than obligatory? After all, is that not the reaction Israel encounters on many other forums?

Think "United Nations" where Israel is treated as a pariah by countries themselves guilty of human injustice, in direct conflict with the UN Charter and Declaration of Human Rights. Only a hermit would be unaware of the existence of this blatant bias which stems from nothing but crass anti-Semitism.

But perhaps my cynicism is misplaced. Don't the facts speak for themselves? After all, just two years ago, Israel won the coveted Eurovision Song Contest in the face of stiff opposition from the whole of Europe. The past few years have seen Israel doing phenomenally well in Gymnastics, Basketball and Sailing, as well as Judo and Karate, when competing on the international stage.

While the Palestinian issue continues to foster worldwide attention, there is little doubt that the intensity of interest is no longer at quite the same level. Whereas previously, hardly a day would pass without a photograph, an article, a letter or an editorial castigating the Jewish State for its supposed ill-treatment and abuse of the allegedly "suppressed" Palestinians. The world and many Arab countries in particular, have turned away from the notion that peace will come to the Middle East only when Palestinian statehood is resolved.

Every American president since Jimmy Carter has stood by the belief that Israel alone held the key to peace by handing more and more concessions (read "territory") to the Palestinians for little or nothing in return. Even the disastrous outcome of pulling every Jew from Gaza, resulting in three regional

wars, failed to register the truth – until the arrival of Donald Trump!

"Free handouts" is a phrase in Trump's vocabulary that simply does not exist! Those who wish for peace must understand that it is a two-way street, rich with benefits and rewards, if only given the chance. And so – seemingly out of nowhere – the United Arab Emirates, a country steeped in capitalism while totally committed to the practise of Islam, heeded the clarion call that sounded from the ramparts of Jerusalem.

"Make peace with Israel and enjoy everything that Israel has to offer! If you have any doubts simply read 'The Start-up Nation' and benefit from Israel's success." And the UAE heard and the UAE listened and the UAE stuck out a hand in friendship which Israel gladly accepted.

So far the display of friendship and even – dare I say – affection, displayed by the two parties has been quite overwhelming. For the first time in history a giant menorah was displayed in the UAE. The 12-foot metal menorah, locally constructed, stood at the foot of the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, for all eight nights of Chanukah.

Israeli flags adorned the main thoroughfares while Israeli products are prominently displayed in major supermarkets. Israeli tourists swarmed out of planes, ready to spend on having fun. To all appearances this was as "warm" a peace as one could hope for.

After years of insisting that peace would depend solely on Israel sacrificing land, a new reality emerged – "Trump's art of the deal and benefits for all." Soon, three more countries followed the UAE with others destined to come.

But back to my cynicism which exists simply because it is Israel with which the UAE has engaged and not some other country devoid of "Israeli baggage". Is this a simple case of expediency? Will the *shidduch* last? Or will it evaporate with the first sign of war between Israel and any other Arab or Islamic state, particularly Gaza?

Despite the enormity of this development, few local media outlets gave it much attention while in some cases (e.g. the ANC) there were only expressions of regret that allegedly "the Palestinians had been abandoned in favour of Israel".

Predictable ...?

## APPEAL

Our magazine keeps us all connected as a community and we are extremely grateful for the kind donations and subscriptions received from our readers who support our Chronicle with their contributions.

As a guideline, we request an average of R250.00 per annum. We have proudly maintained very high standards and have every intention of continuing to do so. If you paid your subscription last year, this is the time to repeat that generosity. If you have never paid it before, it is not too late!!

All contributions, whether large or small - and articles - will ensure we continue to be the mouthpiece of our wonderful Pretoria community for many years to come.

### **FOR OVERSEAS READERS**

The Chronicle is posted at the cost of R800 per year to overseas recipients, (being the new postal rates). A PDF version (sent by email) is now available to overseas readers for an affordable donation of \$20 p.a.

Please contact the Editor by email for more information: [jewishchronicle@gmail.com](mailto:jewishchronicle@gmail.com)

**Your donation would be greatly appreciated and will go a long way towards printing and postage costs, which increase annually.  
Our grateful thanks to the following who sent in their subscriptions.**

**2020:** Russell and Cheryl Bregman, Peter and Terry Brauer, Gary and Patricia Burg, David and Lyn Conroy, Miriam Eichhorn, Joy Fasser, Susan Fine, Sandy and Johan Greyvenstein, Bev Harris, Max Jacobson, Matthew and Lynette Karp, Lenny and Merle Karpes, Henry Katz, Michelle Kopelowitz, Wilfred and Marlene Lautenberg, Sandra Lever, Merton and Arlene Lifschitz, Oded and Michelle Lubczanski, Ella Lubie, Joe Lurie, Max and Audrey Nowitz, Gary and Ingrid Nowosenetz, Derek and Elayne Ossip, Louis Pearlman, Saul Rudolph, Herman Salmenson, Kelvan and Alison Schewitz, Percy and Reva Schwartz, Schwartz Family, Ivan and Giki Sive, Ian Smith, Wolf Smith, Leon Spungin, Shlomo and Devorah Wainer, Gavin and Sharon Yuter,

**2021:** Peter and Terry Brauer, Gary and Patricia Burg, David and Lyn Conroy, Joy Fasser, Melanie Frankel Abro, Mark Kapelus, Geoff and Lynette Ossip, Harvey and Jenny Saunders, Percy and Reva Schwartz, Schwartz Family, Susan Shapiro, Lawrence and Andrea Sher, Wolf Smith, Shimon Zivel

**Due to the shortage of donations during 2020, this issue will cover the months of January, February and March 2021. Hopefully subscriptions will be forthcoming enabling the magazine to come out more regularly for the rest of the year. We are hesitant to increase the annual subscription during these difficult times.**

If you paid by EFT and your name does not appear above (or in the previous issue), please advise with details. Unfortunately we do receive bank transfers with no name as a reference. This may result in you receiving an account during the year for subscriptions not yet paid and we do like to acknowledge all payments made.



**Tel: 011 485 1485**

**Email:  
[maxidiscout@mweb.co.za](mailto:maxidiscout@mweb.co.za)**

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**LAUTENBERG**

Wilfred & Marlene would like to thank friends, community members and organisations for their caring messages and support during Wilfred's recent illness, it is greatly appreciated.

**GORDON**

Victor and I wish to thank Rebbetzin Aviva Fox, the members of the Chesed Club and our dear friends for their kindness and generosity in providing meals and other provisions during my recent stint in hospital. Our deepest gratitude to Jaffa for the daily provision of meals to the hospital as well as the delivery of a generous meal to our home. We also deeply appreciate the many phone calls and good wishes received. Sincerely, Shirley and Victor Gordon

**THANK YOU**

A belated note of appreciation to Rabbi Fox and Rabbi Medalie for the December Chanukah event. It was such a special occasion, with a wonderful vibe of camaraderie and "togetherness", despite social distancing. This was the first event of any kind since the start of lockdown that we felt optimistic about the future and the possibility of the return of some kind of normality.

There is an enormous amount of work and organisation required for any function and I for one do not take it for granted and am most grateful to both of you as well as Jenny, the PHC staff and everyone involved in preparations. Thank you. Sonja and Julie Lifschitz

**During isolation and lock down, I have discovered :**

My wife and I play this fun game called "why are you doing it that way?" There are no winners.

I told my husband I want to buy an expensive blender. He said we don't need it. Long story short – how long should I wait before I tell him it arrives tomorrow?

Husband: does it bother you when I... Me: yes

**EXPERT FRAMING DONE TO ORDER**

With many years experience, I look forward to framing your art works.

I am now working from home in Faerie Glen. I also bring samples of frames to client's homes.

**Marianne Cohen**

**Cell: 082 493 4409**

**E Mail: [mariannecohen65@gmail.com](mailto:mariannecohen65@gmail.com)**

***Honour Roll***

At the end of 2020, with the Jewish Achievers Awards, three Pretorians were honoured by the SA Jewish Report on behalf of the SA Jewish community.

**Ciska Lewis  
Mark Isaacs  
Shaun Wilkinson**

were awarded with a Certificate as

**COVID-19 Heroes**

in recognition of their commitment to the people of South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

We are extremely proud of our Pretorians who have gone way beyond the call of duty and for the huge role they played and continue to play.

**Kol Hakavod.**

**ONLY IN ISRAEL**

A man living in Yerushalayim shared his story that he received his Pfizer vaccine by waiting in line on standby for the end-of-day leftover doses in the accumulated Pfizer vials that clinics give to people who wait.

"When the nurse asked me which arm I wanted to take it in, I said left. So she asked me "which arm do you put your tefillin on?" I said left. Her reply was "I would recommend getting it in the non-tefillin arm. Putting tefillin on the injection site might be uncomfortable and disturb your *kavana* (concentration) "

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Everybody is aware that little has changed in the past few months and Jaffa remains in lockdown, with Covid-19 infections escalating at an alarming rate.

We pray that the vaccination will be made available in South Africa soon and that our lives will revert to some form of normality, including the resumption of our lunches.

In the meantime, our thanks go to all those members who have paid their 2020 subscriptions, enabling us to make a donation to Ironi Cariera, our beneficiary in Israel.

We wish all our members and their families a happy festive season and may 2021 bring us all good health and much joy.

**Please continue to take precautions, keep well and stay safe.**

For further information or any queries, please contact:

**Sonja Lifschitz, Tel. 0834673640, E-mail: [cysonjul@telkomsa.net](mailto:cysonjul@telkomsa.net)**



**Being defeated is often temporary,  
Giving up is what makes it permanent.**

### **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

**PHC:**

Rabbi Fox 082 3399 744

**Bet Menorah:**

Wilfred Lautenberg  
082 788 1861

**Chevra Kadisha:**

Nolan Karp  
083 326 0002 / 012 346 8788

**Medical Rescue Unit:**

Dean and Gary Witz  
0861 112 911

**CSO: 086 18 000 18**

for any community related security, emergency,  
anti-Semitism, suspicious activity.

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Please note email address during lockdown: jaygee100@gmail.com

**The Pretoria United Communal Fund (UCF)** raises funds for the Pretoria Jewish organisations.

In 2020, a very challenging year, JAFFA and the Chevra Kadisha benefitted enormously from the generosity of the Pretoria Jewish community and friends following numerous **IUA/UCF** Appeals, including the annual Kol Nidre Appeal.

### 8 Levels of Charitable Giving (Tzedakah), devised by Maimonides in Mishneh Torah

1. The lowest: Giving begrudgingly and making the recipient feel disgraced or embarrassed.
2. Giving cheerfully but giving too little.
3. Giving cheerfully and adequately but only after being asked.
4. Giving before being asked.
5. Giving when you do not know who the individual benefiting is, but the recipient knows your identity.
6. Giving when you know who the individual benefiting is, but the recipient does not know your identity.
7. Giving when neither the donor nor the recipient is aware of the other's identity.
8. The highest: Giving money, a loan, your time, employment or whatever else it takes, to enable an individual to be self-reliant.



**Once again, we appeal for your much needed support  
in 2021. All donations are welcome.**

**(Section 18 (A) tax certificates available for all UCF donations)**

**Israel United Appeal, Pretoria (IUA)** supports Aliyah, working in partnership with Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem. Global pandemic notwithstanding, more than 20,000 Jews from 70 countries made Aliyah during the year, including 400 from South Africa.

Israel United Appeal	or	Pretoria United Communal Fund
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Acc. name : Israel United Appeal		Acc. Name : Pretoria United Communal Fund
Branch code : 251-345		Branch Code : 251-345
Acc. Number : 62012623337		Acc. number : 51040868924

**PLEASE USE YOUR NAME AS A REFERENCE ON ALL DEPOSITS.**

## AREN'T I JEWISH ENOUGH?

### Question of the Week:

I have to admit, I am angry. I was brought up Jewish, attended a Jewish school, and have only known Judaism as my religion. Now I am told I have to convert, because my mother never formally became Jewish. Isn't it a little unfair that all my life I was more Jewish than my friends, was subjected to anti-Semitism, and then I am told I need to convert?

### Answer:

I completely understand your frustration. It can't be easy to hear that you need to convert to your own religion. But please don't take it personally. This is not a reflection on you. The entire Jewish nation went through exactly what you are going through now.

After leaving Egypt, where they suffered as slaves and were tormented for being Jewish, the Israelites reached Mount Sinai. There they were told they had to formally accept the Torah, and convert to Judaism by immersing in a mikvah.

They could've had the same complaint as yours. We've always been Jewish, we have even suffered for it, and now we're told we need to become Jewish.

Indeed they were already Jewish in the ethnic sense, but they had not yet become Jewish in the religious sense. They were born into the Jewish clan, but they had not yet committed to the Jewish mission. Only by sincerely accepting the Torah did they take on the complete Jewish identity in body and soul.

The Israelites of old had a moment of truth. Am I ready to stand before G-d and commit myself to being Jewish? Not just for a day or a week or a year. Not just for my lifetime. For generations. And they said yes.

That power of that moment still reverberates to this day. All Jews alive today are descended from a mother who converted to Judaism, who took that plunge, either at Mount Sinai or sometime since then.

Now you have your moment of truth. You can be culturally and ethnically Jewish, as you already are. Or you can stand at your own Sinai and say yes to G-d.

Put aside the emotion and take this decision seriously. If you don't go ahead, you leave things hanging for your children and theirs. But if you do it, your commitment is forever, for all generations, once and for all.

Rabbi Moss

## CALL BACK THE PAST

The 26th November 2020 was the 70th anniversary of the opening of the new Club House at Wingate. Attached is a photo of the Trowel presented to my Dad, Sam Hyde.

I can well remember as a seven-year-old sitting in the car park above the circle, watching the whole ceremony taking place, with Sam Hyde and Leon Falkson, two of the original founders laying the two foundation stones at the entrance to the club



Another great occasion was when they found water near what is today the 18th Green. There was such a shortage of water at the club that when the news came, all committee members met at the club and like Red Indians danced around the flow of water coming out of the ground.

There was such a great vibe around Wingate in those days, with the Jews at last having their own Country Club.

We do still have very fond memories

Rob Hyde, Israel





## Bet Menorah under Lockdown

While the easing of lockdown restrictions across South Africa has at least hypothetically allowed for the resumption of religious services – albeit under strict sanitation conditions - most Progressive Jewish synagogues in Gauteng have decided to delay reopening until such time as an even more elevated level of safety can be assured. This decision is appearing both increasingly sound and prescient, given the recent alarming rise in COVID infections internationally and foreshadowing a possible “second wave” in South Africa’s near future as well. While Bet Menorah had briefly held out hope for reopening sometime during December, mostly out of concern for our ageing and thus particularly vulnerable congregation, we too decided to delay the resumption of normal religious operation until 2021.

While disappointing, some efforts have been made to serve our congregation as much as possible, thus ensuring that some sense of community is retained, even in the absence of physical interaction. The office continues operating normally and is thus able to ensure a steady flow of relevant information to our members. This includes our monthly newsletter which is still faithfully produced on schedule, even over the holidays, as well as regular notices of online events, lectures and discussions organised by various Jewish organisations, based both locally and abroad. Of particular importance is the provision of links to online weekly Shabbat services, at Bet David synagogue in Johannesburg. Bet Menorah members at times participate virtually via pre-recorded segments submitted for that purpose.

We also continue to provide life-cycle services as per usual, albeit with whatever adjustments may be required. These include funerals and virtual bar mitzvah services. A recent example of the latter is one held for William Herscowitz, led from Pretoria by Giddy Lief with the Herscowitz family in the U.S.A.

William Herscowitz



During the entire lockdown period Bet Menorah has also continued its support for the Kopano Manyano homeless shelter.

This support was notable with regular deliveries of food purchased with a monthly R2000 donation from the Monument Park Spar and, more recently, also with chicken bits donated by Bird & Co., a Groenkloof-based eatery.

Spearheaded by Giddy Lief, (who serves on the Kopano Manyano board), efforts in this regard have won praise from, among others, Shawn Wilkinson, councillor for Pretoria’s Ward 59.

In a similar vein, Bet Menorah was also able to donate some R6000 collected as part of its annual Yom Kippur appeal to Jaffa, demonstrating that even during a lockdown, we continue to impact our community – and the wider community – in a positive way.





## Question of the Week

My late grandmother once told me not to put my baby in front of a mirror before he has grown his teeth. She said it will affect his development???? She didn't know why or where it comes from. Is there any basis for this?

## Answer:

Many dismiss this as a *bubbe maiseh*, an old wive's tale. But if you heard it from your own bubbe, then perhaps you shouldn't be too quick to laugh it off. We take our grandmothers' traditions very seriously.

One respected authority, Rabbi Moshe Stern, validated the custom of not showing babies their own reflection, saying it was practised in his home town of Debrecen, Hungary. He quotes a 13th century Spanish sage, the Rashba, who says that we should never belittle the traditions of grandmothers, because even if we don't know the reasons behind them, they certainly come from a holy place.

I don't know if looking in the mirror will hinder your son's development. But I do know that being disconnected from his roots will. A person needs to know where he comes from. No one is born in a vacuum. We are all products of our ancestors. And to know who we are, we need to know who they were.

Your son stems from a long line of proud Jews. When you pass down your grandmother's traditions to your children, you are giving them roots, an identity, a clear sense of who they are.

Your grandparents' traditions included much more than just avoiding mirrors. They had a kosher home, celebrated Shabbos and Yomtov, gave charity abundantly and were active in their shul community. They were learned in Torah and loved being Jewish.

Pass these rich traditions on to your son. Then one day, when he is fully developed, teeth and all, he will look in the mirror and say, "I know who I am. I am a Jew."

Rabbi Moss

## JAFFA SOUP PROJECT

Residents and staff collected money to buy ingredients to make up soup packs for those in need in Sunnyside.



January February March 2021



**PRETORIA HEBREW CONGREGATION**

PRESENTS

# START!

2021 ZOOM SHIURIM

One zoom fits all - one zoom link for each of the shiurim

Commencing Monday 11 Jan at 8:00pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 873 5827 0682

**Monday nights**  
Great Jewish Personalities

**Tuesday nights**  
The Gantzer Megilla - unknown intrigue from the story of Purim

**Wednesday nights**  
Insights from the weekly Parsha

**Thursday nights**  
Q & A with the Rabbi  
Informal Chassidic Farbrengen

**@ JAFFA**

This year Chanukah was celebrated very differently at Jaffa .

On the first night Mike Belling lit the first candle and donuts and latkes were served with a cold drink on individually wrapped plates for each resident. The residents then went outside to watch the PHC Chanukah parade drive past.

Our thanks go to all the residents who came down each night for candle lighting; Roy and his kitchen staff for not only providing latkes and donuts on the first and last nights but also for providing tasty fried apple fritters and other delicious fried foods during the week; Mike Belling and Monty Sassen for leading the proceedings each night and to Cedric Lurie for preparing the Chanukah each night.



1st Night Mike Belling



3rd Night Cedric Lurie



2nd Night Jack Dorfan



4th Night Lynne Berkowitz



5th Night Monty Sassen



6th Night Lesley Beckbessinger



7th Night Mark Isaacs



8th Night Mike Belling



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JAFFA residents enjoying the sunlight in our beautiful garden as they do beneficial exercises which are presented each day and which are well attended.



**JAFFA KITCHEN IS NOW OPEN FOR TAKE AWAY ORDERS OF YOUR FAVOURITE MEALS, CAKES, BISCUITS, HERRING ETC.**

**CONTACT ROY : 012 346 2006**

Mandy-Lee Wiegman (Maria Lorca Montoya) and Tracy McConnell were very excited to be able to perform once again at Jaffa. Sadly only the two dancers from The Montoya Spanish Dance Theatre were allowed to perform but the residents enjoyed the performance as much as the dancers.



**Good For You**



**Wishing you all a happy, healthy and safe 2021**

Our friendly staff are here  
for your convenience.  
Thank you for your  
continued support.

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## Your Home and Community Centre

Jaffa has arranged for “drive-outs” twice a week in our Combi taking eight residents at a time. They were privileged to see the Jacarandas in bloom as well as the gardens of the Union Buildings and TUKS sports facilities.

Sitting in the Combi, driving in the midst of beautiful scenery and listening to calming classical music while enjoying tea/coffee with a biscuit....what could be a better breakaway for a couple of hours.



Anne Eichhorn, Pnina Rom and Maud Nowosenetz enjoying the outing



Zelda Bernstein and Myra Egdes

After Jaffa's initial period of lockdown, our library was flooded with books, some new ones donated by the Jewish Women's Benevolent Society, others returned by residents and many just taken off the shelves and left to lie around in untidy heaps.

Zelda Bernstein and Myra Egdes rolled up their sleeves and took on this gigantic challenge, succeeding with flying colours. Thanks to them, residents can once again enjoy their visits to the library and find the right book with ease.

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On 15 November 2020, exactly 49 years to the day that Matric exams began on 15 November 1971, a REZOOMION (a REUNION on ZOOM) was attended by 36 participants to re-connect with one another.

Vivienne Hosiosky (Novis) shared her idea of having a virtual reunion with some of her classmates including particularly Susan Shapiro (Jacobson), Melanie Frankel (Abro), Peter Brauer, Simmy Ziv-el (Zawels) and Rodney Kellen. A committee was formed to track down and contact as many people as possible who had been part of the class at some point between 1960 and 1971. They were also tasked with collecting photographs and memorabilia and this was undertaken with great enthusiasm.

An impressive Powerpoint presentation of the photos and memorabilia was created by Rodney





Kellen and Peter Brauer, who was also responsible for the wonderful medley of songs which accompanied the slides. The trip down memory lane was further enhanced by songs written and performed by Peter Brauer and Shirley Atlas (Lanesman) to highlight those memorable moments. There was also a special video message from Grace Randel who taught the group English at Primary School.

The event was hosted by the Head Girl and Head Boy of 1971, Vivienne Hosiosky (Novis) and Simmy Ziv-el (Zawels). The attendees, who were welcomed by Vivienne, watched the Powerpoint, enjoyed the songs and shared their stories.

The REZOOMION was enthusiastically declared a huge success and many positive comments and warm sentiments, including a poem, were received. This shows that our early shared memories of the years at Carmel Pretoria are an integral part of all our lives which connect us, no matter where in the world we now reside.

**Where the “Classiest Class of 1960 to 1971” now reside:**



## ZOOM

November 2020

Poem by Linda Chasen / Grinberg - Poet Laureate of Carmel Class 1960-1971

A new word to learn  
Although by definition it moves a buzzing  
sound  
It may even mean move or rise from the  
ground  
But in our strange new world of today  
The word Zoom has another role to play,

So Zoom we did this week online  
A meeting with classmates from another time  
Together on a set date we met on screen  
A meeting now called zoom we did convene.

And what an amazing rush of surprise  
To see again classmates we had to recognise

Years have passed...all have moved on  
Yet the memories of childhood are very  
strong.

Each one has moved at his own pace  
But each one has still the same face  
Each one carries a story from those days  
And we realised that we all have the same  
DNA phase..

So in fact Zoom as its meaning appears  
Did send a buzzing sound through our ears  
It did move us, rise us up, send us quickly into  
a high  
A zooming sensation we all experienced  
without being camera shy.

**Acknowledgement: Grateful thanks to the Carmel Reunion Organising Committee who generously sponsored these pages and for their support of this magazine.**



# ~Pretoria Hebrew Congregation~

Daily Positivity Boost—Rabbi Fox has started a new WhatsApp group for short daily inspirational messages. Contact Rabbi Fox to be added

Rabbi Fox is once again availing his services to the more elderly members of the community who may need shopping done. Should you wish to take up this offer, please contact Rabbi Fox on 082 3399 744.

Following the President's speech and subsequent clarifications from the Ministers regrettably shuls had to be closed for two weeks. As you can appreciate this is a tremendous blow and extremely painful. We have been struggling to get members to return to shul given the circumstances.

The opportunity to answer Kaddish and hear the Torah reading has been wonderful especially after the initial lockdown. With heartfelt prayers that Hashem remove this pandemic and allow us to return to regular shul services, activities and life in general in good health and in happiness.

The community will be informed when these are to be resumed. Men are encouraged to assist in making a minyan at the services once they resume to enable the saying of Kaddish etc.

The Chanukah Parade DID happen, bright lights shining from the roof and car tops. Thanks to the PHC for arranging "party boxes" of delicious eats, including donuts, latkes, spring rolls and drinks, to ensure everyone got to celebrate this chag. Y'Koach to Rabbi Medalie for organising this event and to Rabbi Fox, Jenny and Harvey Saunders and their little helpers for handing these out to the waiting cars and community members.



Pics: Sara Joseph



## NEW WEEKDAY SHIURIM

See Advert on page 12.



2021 Zoom Shiurim

One zoom fits all - one zoom link for each shiur.

Commencing Monday

11 January at 8pm

Zoom Meeting ID873 5827 0682

## YOUTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### All children under Bar/ Bat Mitzvah age

Please join the exciting Pre-Shabbat Children's service every Friday afternoon at 3pm until lockdown is over.

Get your parents to arrange a Shabbat treat for you and join us on Zoom. Contact Rabbi Medalie on 072 490 6329 to join.

Learn about the Parsha in a fun and exciting way, play fun games and stand a chance to win a Brooklyn Mall voucher just for participating. **Don't miss out.**

*Happiness is an inside job*



The enduring thread in the tapestry of the life of Myra Berkow reflects her wholehearted and selfless dedication to whatever cause to which she committed.

Myra celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 10 November this year, and has justifiable reason to look back and reflect upon a life of exceptional and extraordinary commitment to her family, as well as to civic and community affairs.

Her father emigrated from Ponevezh, Lithuania and her mother from Riga, Latvia. They had three daughters with Myra being the eldest. The family settled in the Eastern Free State farming town of Lindley where her father was a prosperous merchant but the family's fortunes were significantly affected by the skulduggery of the local farmers, and exacerbated by the Depression.

When she was eight, Myra was sent to live with an Aunt in Kroonstad in order to attend an English school, her parents and siblings having moved to Koppies. A year later, her family relocated to Brakpan, where she completed her primary school education. Her family moved again, this time to Cape Town, where Myra matriculated at Maitland High School.

Myra's father passed away in 1948, while she was employed at Rex Truform in Cape Town. Together with her mother and sisters, she relocated to Pretoria where her first job was as a receptionist at the well-known Polleys Hotel in Pretorius Street. As her mother was not keen on Myra doing night duty, she obtained employment as a secretary at General Spares & Accessories. Myra recalls that she noticed a gentleman, an accountant in the office, who she believed was Afrikaans, because she had only heard him speak Afrikaans and understood him to be a "Mnr Burger". It was only when she overheard "Mnr Burger" speaking Yiddish that she learned who he was and was surprised but not disappointed! Myra and Pinky Berkow were married on 17 March 1951, in the Adath Shul in Dorlas Street - a marriage of 48 years, which produced four children: Howard, Jonathan, Geoffrey and Gilda.

In the 50's and 60's, Pretoria was a thriving, bustling community of Jews, with numerous vibrant religious, Zionist and social institutions. Wingate Park Country Club catered for the sporting and social Jewish whirl. Myra has fond memories of Sundays at the pool and the simchas in the wonderful "ballroom", not to mention the legendary New Year dinners.

Myra was always an avid reader, a member of one of the ubiquitous book clubs, and made sure that her children were similarly engaged. Her children recall being taken by Myra to the State Library at least once a month.

Myra, with her energy, zeal and drive, involved herself in many varied activities and interests. She studied Modern Hebrew with a group of women, and subsequently enrolled for Hebrew as well as French language courses at UNISA. She also found time to satisfy her love of gardening by attending a course in flower arrangement. She became so proficient that she was responsible for many of the flower arrangements at community functions.

Whilst Myra was studying at Unisa, she started working there, first in the Semitics Department, and thereafter as Departmental Secretary in the Department of Communications. At the age of 65, not out of preference, but rather compulsion, she officially retired.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

Notwithstanding her busy schedule at UNISA, Myra found time to not only be a dedicated mother and housewife, but also secretary of the Carmel Primary School PTA, honorary secretary of the Pretoria Branch of the Womens Zionist League, a committee member of the Union of Jewish Women, honorary secretary of the Pretorius Street Shul Ladies Guild, and honorary secretary of the Pretoria English Society, the latter organising the annual Pretoria Schools Speech Festival. In addition, Myra sang in a choir, under the charge of the late Alan Gordon, which used to perform at various venues in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

Prior to moving to Jaffa in 2001, Myra became the honorary secretary of the Jaffa Management Committee, as well as assuming the role of its librarian. On becoming a resident, she continued to act as Jaffa's librarian, until poor eyesight prevented her from continuing. She has been on the House Liaison Committee at Jaffa and, together with the late Sylvia Berman, produced the Jaffa Jabber for a number of years. Notwithstanding the above activities and interests, Myra found time to canvass for the Progressive Party of the time.

With utmost compassion and steely resolve, Myra saw to the extraordinary demands and requirements of her son Jonathan who lived at Selwyn Segal for a number of years. In this respect, her relentless determination to ensure the best quality of life for him was both humbling and inspirational. Myra and Pinky were involved for many years in Committees and Associations pertaining to Selwyn Segal, both in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Myra, as those who know her well, is not a woman accustomed to "gilding the lily" and is feisty, often to a fault. However, she always remains steadfast in the defence of her principles.

A life replete with both good fortune and otherwise, Myra has certainly not stood idly by and remains an avid and dedicated participant in the "moveable feast". She requests that the pleasure derived from her five grandchildren and her great-grandson be specifically recorded.

**"SPOTLIGHT ON..."** is intended to be a project focusing on various Pretoria personalities, regardless of age or position in communal leadership. In order to be an ongoing feature, readers are requested to come forward with suggestions of members of our community who deserve a special mention.

**BEYOND THE SPOTLIGHT:** - Every day people do things that are not celebrated - the unsung heroes, the people who don't believe they are heroes. Everybody has a story to tell. **This is what links us all together as a community.**

There is so much we can learn from each other and so many fascinating, amazing people out there with endless stories to tell. It will be our pleasure and privilege to publish them.

We have an entire community of inspiration.



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## JOIN WIZO PRETORIA AND TURN A LIFE AROUND !

### WIZO wishes Mazal Tov to the following WIZO Members:

#### **Births:**

Linda and Colin Cope	grandson
Ingrid and Gary Nowosenetz	grandson
Maude Nowosenetz	great grandson
Louise and Syd Hack	great grandson
Joyce and Bernie Sossen	great grandson

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#### **Bar/Bat Mitzvahs:**

Bernice and Henry Seligmann granddaughter

#### **Weddings:**

Susan Fine and Mark Isaacs Mark's daughter

#### **We extend condolences to the following members:**

Elayne and Derek Ossip	father, Solly Pokroy
Sharon and Morris Pokroy	brother, Solly
Family and friends of the late Shirley Sacks	
Rhona Lief and Audrey Klein	Rhona's sister

Contact details for WIZO  
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 Email:  
 WIZOpretoria@gmail.com

This column is a courtesy to our WIZO members.



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"A gift registry of note" (unquote)

### THE COVID FUNERAL FOR THE WRONG MAN

Moshe Grunwald lived a full and long life. A scion of Hungary's rabbinic and chassidic aristocracy, he survived Auschwitz and the Nazi death marches, rebuilding his family and his life in America. A longtime resident of Brooklyn, N.Y., he passed away as dozens were felled by the coronavirus. The family was told that the funeral would be at 10 a.m. sharp. Only a small group was allowed to attend, and the entire proceeding would be brief, consisting of a few Psalms and the Keil Maleh Rachamim.

Following tradition, but standing apart from each other, the mourners approached the casket and asked their beloved patriarch to forgive them for anything they may have done to slight him. After Psalms were said and the truncated service was about to end, a flustered undertaker approached the casket and took a good look.

"I'm sorry," he told the shocked family. "We took out the wrong casket. Please wait while I return this casket and bring out Mr. Grunwald." The family exited the funeral home in shock and waited in their cars until it was time to begin the funeral ... again!

"I have to admit I was so upset that this had happened to my Zaidy," wrote his granddaughter, Chaya Maimon, on Facebook. "The man who was loved by all. Who deserved so much *kavod*, who had to die alone due to a pandemic, who had to have this embarrassment of a funeral, who couldn't have a fitting burial or *shiva*. This was the final insult. I was so upset, I started to laugh and cry simultaneously. I couldn't believe I was living in a time where there are so many bodies that they mixed them up." Then she learned the rest of the story.

The person whom the Grunwald clan had accidentally mourned was a *meit mitzvah* (a person who leaves no family to care for his or her funeral, whose burial is then a communal obligation).

He had died alone in his apartment and was only found four days later. He was to be buried with no fanfare with no one to mourn the end of his life. Through a Divinely orchestrated twist of fate, he ended up with a beautiful funeral and a *minyán* - something under normal circumstances he would not have had.

"And then I remember my Zaidy," wrote Maimon. "My Zaidy was always honoured, but he ran and hid from it; he never wanted the spotlight. My cousin posted that we would send people to follow him into *chuppah* to make sure that if they would honour him with reciting a blessing, he'd be there ... he always thought there was someone greater than him who deserved the honour.

"Well, Zaidy, as usual, got the last laugh. We couldn't chase him to the front of the funeral home. Even in death, he gave his *kavod* for someone else.

"A *meit mitzvah* got a funeral. I can just imagine the laugh in Zaidy's eyes as he watched this. His *chesed* [kindness] and *hachnasat orchim* [hospitality] knew no bounds. I know in my heart my Zaidy did in death what he always did in life." *May the memory of Moshe ben Amram and Chaya be a blessing.*

*Acknowledgement: Chabad.org*



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## Shirley Sacks OBM – More than met the eye

By Robyn Sassen

### **“BE READY FOR ANYTHING. EXPECT NOTHING!”**

was one of the unforgettable pearls offered by thespian Shirley Sacks to generations of performance students over a 33-year teaching career at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. Teaching in the creative arts is unquestionably a vocational blessing of the highest level. It's about giving of yourself in a way that sees youngsters become themselves, in spite of their own inhibitions, their bravado or their as yet unformed personalities. Shirley, who shone a light onto the potential of easily thousands of students, passed away after a long battle with emphysema on 28 November 2020 aged 78.

Remembered for her long cigarettes, her incisive opinions and her ability to make even the most directionless of young students glow with true – and humble — self-belief and unequivocal respect for the discipline of performance, Shirley was born in Pretoria – her father was a pharmacist, her mother a housewife. She was educated through correspondence in Performance, Acting and Teaching at the Trinity College in London where she was conferred with her licentiate and her fellowship in these disciplines, reading for a National Higher Diploma in Acting at the then Pretoria Technikon.

Respected as royalty when it came to teaching the nuts and bolts of wit and farce, she understood the value of slick and flawless in the comedic discipline – arguably the most difficult aspect of performance. After working as the secretary of Carmel School for many years, she started teaching in 1975 at the then Music School of the Pretoria College, which by 1980 became known as the Pretoria Technikon. Shirley had an eye for perfect dead pan farce, which sits on the cleavage between total humour and absolute tragedy.

Many well known performers in the South African theatre industry passed through Sacks' able hands. Offering a caveat which evokes Hillel's famous dictum “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?” Sacks would say to students: “If you are here only to please yourself, who are you? If you are here only to please your audience, what are you? If you are here only to please yourself and your audience, where are you? If you are here now – just being – with all you have done and with openness to all the possibilities of becoming, Hello!!

“If you say the audience is not important – or that it is not important to please them – then why expect an audience? Have no audience! Why should anyone come – and pay – for something which is not memorable for them?”



Shirley loved with a full heart, taught the values of communicating honestly and practiced them. “If the intention is genuine,” she once said, “it always reaches the listener.” She lost her beloved twin sister, Avrielle – who was 20 minutes older than her – in 2013 and moved to Jaffa in 2015.

Shirley is deeply mourned by many loving friends in the industry and literally countless people whose lives she touched, in her teaching, her theatre- and her directorial gifts.

Glowing tributes of love, appreciation and gratitude poured in from many past pupils, colleagues, friends and community members and for these, an entire magazine would be required. If anyone would like an email copy, please contact the editor. Tributes were received from:

Pamela Chasen, Henry Mylne (Advisory Director, 7de Laan), Stanley Jacobs (professional actor), Margaret Schiess (fellow actress in film and on stage and wife of the late Mario Schiess, Film Producer), Franlie Lexow (TUT Arts Library), Elandri Stricker-Timmermans (Student, Dance Studio Director, UK), Lerato Moloi (Student and Friend), Bertus de Bruyn – Student, Pam Witz, Ingrid Dominges (Luttig), Richard Hurwitz, Hazel Margalit (Donde), Leigh Gewer, Jenny Goldstone (Donde), Andrew, Savanna and Noa Abramowitz, Eric Nobbs, Stephen Faber (Student, Colleague & Friend), Belinda Kruger, Reinhardt van Aarde (Drama Dept, TUT).

**I take this opportunity to urge readers to come forward with memories and stories about those in our community so that we can continue to feature members of our community in the regular article “Spotlight On” in the Pretoria Jewish Chronicle. Let us continue to celebrate life.**

**COVID : BREAKING NEWS FROM ISRAEL**

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu after discussions with Pfizer Chairman and CEO Albert Bourla that they have reached a tremendous breakthrough to pull Israel out of the Corona virus and get all back to life. Israel will be the first country in the world to emerge from Corona virus.

The agreement reached with Pfizer will enable all citizens of Israel over the age of 16 to be vaccinated by end of March, perhaps earlier. The entire relevant population and everyone who wants to, will be able to be vaccinated.

This historic project will be called "Operation Getting Back to Life".

Israel will share with Pfizer and the entire world, statistical data that will help develop strategies for defeating the virus.

"We can do this because our health system is among the most advanced in the world, truly a Light unto the Nations" said Netanyahu.

On seder night, this coming Pesach, we will, with the help of G-d, sit around the table with all our family. When we ask "why is this night different?" the answer will be

"Everything has changed. Tonight we are all reclining".

Through Operation Getting Back to Life, we will open the economy, return to places of work, synagogues, restaurants and cafes, sports field, cultural events and return to the lives we so much miss and love.

We must not forget for a moment that the pandemic is running amok in the world with great vigor, but for us, victory is within reach.

We need everyone to make one final effort. I call on everyone to adhere to the lockdown rules without exception. We will look after each other and we will keep the rules because the Corona virus does not distinguish between us and neither can we distinguish among each other. Everyone needs to strictly observe the lockdown in a great final effort.

Very soon, by the end of March, through Operation Getting Back to Life, every citizen of Israel will be able to be vaccinated. We will be able to embrace each other and get back to life".



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## LATEST NEWS FROM ISRAEL

Acknowledgement Israel 21C

There is no denying it - 2020 was a horrible year. But it wasn't all bad. Despite it all, many amazing things did happen. Here are but a few of Israel's good news stories. Read and take heart. Humanity is often at its best during adversity.

### Suddenly things in the ME are getting normal

In just a few months, normalization deals were announced between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, then Morocco and Bhutan. And still more are expected.

Around 50,000 Israelis flew directly to Dubai for the first time in their lives during December and a flurry of cooperation agreements have followed in health, education, technology, disaster response, even shoes, and everything in between.

No one can keep up with the huge number of new deals and partnerships being created. Life in the conflict-ridden Middle East is suddenly looking entirely different and the consequences of these agreements are likely to be felt all over the world, for many years to come.

### Corona sent Israel into innovation overdrive

Hundreds of Israeli companies pivoted sharply, turning technologies designed for completely different challenges into answers for some of the biggest issues facing us all in Covid times.

Facemasks, ventilators, Covid tests, online communication and learning, air purifiers, online health – Israeli companies developed wave after wave of imaginative and outside-the-box technologies to help the world combat its biggest crisis in a century.



SonoMask antimicrobial facemasks under production in Israel.

Photo courtesy of Sonovia Tech

### Israel sends corona aid around the world (notwithstanding problems at home)

Despite entering a third lockdown, Israel managed to send aid to numerous countries suffering the impact of corona. We sent doctors to Italy, PPE to the US, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Australia, and to Syrian refugees. Hygiene kits went to Guatemala, ran education and awareness programs in Vanuatu, and offered stress relief to US health workers. Israeli psychologists offered free counselling online to American medical personnel and an Israeli aid group offered free stress-management webinars to Chinese first responders.

### Aid isn't just about corona

Other natural and manmade disasters continued in 2020, and a pandemic sure isn't going to stop

Israelis from offering aid wherever it's needed. So, closed skies or not, Israeli aid organizations were still out in force this year – offering help to Guatemala after Storm Eta, emergency supplies to malaria-stricken Chad, and water relief to Vanuatu.

Israel also sent Israeli firefighters to California during the devastating fires, raised money to help the Lebanese after the Beirut explosion, sent locust experts to Ethiopia, and developed energy boxes for off-grid schools.

### EMBASSY PROVIDES SAFE CENTRE FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN

The Embassy of Israel in South Africa, in joint cooperation with Fight Back SA, an NPO focused on the empowerment of young women and children, is providing free self-defense classes to individuals living in high risk and crime-ridden areas.



Recently the Embassy helped establish a Safe Centre for Women and Children providing secure and permanent space for self-defense classes with over 25 workshops across the Western Cape..

"The Embassy is committed to empowering SA women for their own safety and to increase their participation at all decision-making levels. Our donation will create a positive impact in the lives of so many women and children" says Ambassador Lior Keinan. Training provided is based on the principles of Israeli combat self-defense style of KravMaga.

This continues various women empowerment projects provided by the Embassy such as our sanitary towel initiative, reaching most provinces across South Africa. The Embassy values the importance of promoting gender-based and youth empowerment projects to South African communities.

Just when we thought nothing was happening in Pretoria, we are thrilled to welcome 14 Bochurim to our Yeshiva. Three of them have returned from the previous year's intake - but you will be forgiven if you do not recognise them, thanks to the masks!

We are sure that they will have a wonderful year in Pretoria and hopefully they will get to meet and interact with us, the community, sooner rather than later.

**YESHIVA LE RABONUS PRETORIA 5781**

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Jo'burg



Memke Azoulay  
Montreal



Yosef Citron  
London



Mendy Forer  
California



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California



Levi Salek  
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Shaya Sverdlow  
Yerushalayim



Mendel Weiss  
Antwerp, Belgium



Mendel Wuensch  
Yerushalayim



Ari Brikman  
Crown Heights NY



Dovid Yarmush  
Brooklyn, NY



Getzy Zeiler  
Yerushalayim





# **GANEINU NURSERY SCHOOL**



Mazal Tov to our **Ganeinu Graduates!** While they will no longer appear on this page in future issues, we do look forward to receiving regular updates and photos on their progress at big school. Go out and conquer. Be the best YOU that you can be.



**Neveh Shina**



**Refaela Wingrin**



**Gavi Goldberg**

What a year we had at Ganeinu!

Who would have thought we would have a pandemic in 2020?

Although the year was filled with a lot of uncertainty, we all did our best to adjust and make life as normal as possible.

Even throughout all the challenges, we were still able to learn, play and grow!

We learnt how capable we are at adapting. We became conscious of washing and sanitizing our hands constantly and loved finding out what our temperatures were.

We learnt that we can still have Ahavas Yisroel through words and actions even if we couldn't hug.

We discovered much through water play, videos, dancing and crafts.

We learnt about Chanukah and spun like dreidels. We made a book about Chanukah, baked challah and biscuits and heard the stories of the Parsha.

We put together a Covid-friendly graduation for our graduating class.

Gavi, Neveh and Refaela - we are going to miss you so much! We wish you Hatzlocha for next year and cannot wait for you to visit.

Coming up is Tu B'shvat, the birthday of the trees and we are looking forward to learning about nature, the growth of trees and of course why the day is so special.

We have such wonderful exciting plans for 2021 and will keep you all updated on our adventures during the year.

Keep safe and healthy!



**Malachi Goldberg**



**Samara Grunberg**



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