

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Our family chose to join Habonim in 2003 for 2 reasons: the fees were reasonable, and the Hebrew school was only once a week, starting in Grade 3. Not a huge investment of time nor money. I wanted my children to have a Jewish education and somewhere for us to go on high holidays, that was about all we needed. Initially, I knew one other family. As time went on, I knew a few more people, a neighbour, another parent at the Hebrew school, a colleague of my husband. After I retired from teaching in 2012, I was looking for something to fill my time, so I offered to join the board. Then Habonim got under my skin.

I guess it's ironic how much time and money I have now invested in Habonim. But the return on my investment is immeasurable. I have built more relationships in the Habonim Family than I ever imagined. I have participated in many interesting and educational programs. I have been inspired by members and clergy alike. More than anything, I was given the opportunity to be your president. I didn't ask for this opportunity, I don't think anyone ever does. I have to thank Ted Rechtshaffen for putting my name forward and encouraging me, somewhat relentlessly, to accept the position. After 3 years at the helm, I am honoured and indebted to all of you for trusting me with this responsibility, especially during such a monumental time in the history of our congregation. Being part of the team that shepherded the building of our new synagogue is the proudest achievement of my time as President and a significant personal achievement as well.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank one person in particular, Joel Kwinter. During my tenure, Joel has been my right-hand man. He has worked equally as hard as I have, cares deeply about the success of Habonim both spiritually and financially and has been a great personal support to me every step of the way.

I would also like to thank Jordan Slatt. He tirelessly and diligently led the construction committee through the completion of our beautiful new building. He has also generously offered to manage any deficiencies and future issues. It is a commitment for which we should all be grateful.

Habonim has changed dramatically since I joined in 2003. We have a new cantor and associate cantor, a wonderful cast of musicians as well as a choir, all leading to what I believe continues to be the best Shul music in Toronto. Thank you, Aviva, Kim, Tom and Jim, it's been a pleasure getting to know you on a more personal level. We now have a brand-new building and a much larger membership. Fortunately, we also have a very strong board of directors, each of whom takes their responsibility with the utmost concern for the best interest of the synagogue. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the board as a group and individually.

Rick Glatt has been our Treasurer for 5 years and will also be stepping down this year. He has taken his role seriously and worked both conservatively and conscientiously to manage the building and the general operating funds for us. On behalf of the congregation, I would like to thank Rick for his excellent guidance in keeping the finances balanced and well-tended. Your new treasurer will be Anita Auerback. Anita has been on the board for 2 years and brings a wealth of accounting experience to the table.

As of June 16th, Cheryl Grammer will be taking over as the new President. You will be in excellent hands. Cheryl is organized, proactive, detail oriented and hard-working.

From our President *(con. From pg 1)*

Although she was principally looking forward to growing our programming, making use of our new space, these plans are being waylaid as we navigate through the pandemic that has greatly burdened our society. With the help of science, time, and maybe even a little luck, hopefully we will be back on track sooner rather than later. Under both circumstances, Cheryl will be a very capable leader.

I would of course, like to thank all the non-clergy staff I have worked with during my tenure, beginning with our dedicated and always available executive director Robin Zionce Garber, and her assistant Michelle Goldman, our Heritage School Principal Suzanne Hirsh, Youth Group Leader Adi Barel, Music Leader, Josh Engel, our building staff Patsy Lindsay, Silvio Munguia, Dick Yee and so many others. It takes a village!

I will miss many things about this job that has so enriched my life, two in particular. First of all, I will miss my regular

conversations with Eli. As you may have noticed, Eli was not among the 2 reasons that I joined Habonim, but Eli is certainly the reason that we have stayed members for so long. Eli has so many admirable characteristics, his inclusivity strikes a chord with me. It's something I've always valued and insisted that my children value as well. Having 150 families on our membership wait list speaks to the fact that everyone is welcome and can feel comfortable in our congregation. Eli is a very wise, just and reasonable individual, that's why my favourite conversations with Eli are when he calls me for advice! I'm always a little surprised and extremely flattered.

The second thing that I will miss considerably, is my parking spot!

Thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to be your president, it has truly been a wonderful experience.

Joanie

NOTE FROM ELI RUBENSTEIN

Since the publication of the last bulletin, our world has been rocked by the spread of COVID-19, and most recently the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing civil unrest it has sparked in our neighbor to the south.

Yet, even amidst both of these events, there also have been signs of hope.

In response to COVID -19, we have come together as a society to combat this formidable foe, by accepting our responsibility for each other's welfare. I am referring to the reactions of our governments (at all levels), our faith communities, and to the numerous acts of kindness, of altruism, shown by so many individuals to the most vulnerable among us and to those most affected by this pandemic. The loss of life has been heartbreaking, but I pray the increase in empathy we have witnessed, and the feeling that "we're all in this together", will remain long after COVID-19 has been overcome.

George Floyd's haunting last words and desperate plea for help - "I can't breathe" - reflect not only his dire circumstance but the centuries long fight for equality waged by African Americans. But the incident has also sparked an overwhelming outpouring of support for justice, along with an outcry from multitudes of young people, diverse faith groups, and many others, to address the systemic racism and injustice that still exist in our society.

This too gives one cause for hope.

Martin Luther King said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." I pray that, at this critical moment in time, we are now in the midst of this "bend toward justice"- when, at long last, this singularly important issue will begin to be addressed and a new era of equality and justice for all will have commenced.

"It takes a village..." the old adage goes, and it's now time to thank two people who have helped our little village grow over the last number of years.

First a few words about our treasurer, Rick Glatt, who has held this position for the last 5 years. This has been a particularly challenging and busy time to be Habonim's treasurer - erecting a new synagogue, running a building campaign, acquiring new tenants, accepting record numbers of new members and hiring more staff than we've ever had - all required a great deal of financial wisdom and acumen. Through it all Rick, has kept our synagogue's finances in tip top shape, running as smoothly as could ever be desired. Thank You Rick!

And then there's our President for the last 3 years - our incomparable Joanie Smith. This has arguably been the busiest and most exciting period in our Shul's 66-year history - but also, at times, the most nail-biting. Shepherding a new building's construction (with the help of a very dedicated group of Habonim volunteers) from start to finish - with the myriad of details that must be attended to - was nothing short of a Herculean effort. But our Joanie was more than up to the task!

And alongside this monumental task, Joanie continued her day to day job of being President of a synagogue, with close to 600 family units, running our board, overseeing the staff for both the shul and school - the list is endless.

And yet Joanie was always accessible - a call, text or email would always be responded to immediately, as if Joanie had a magical wand that allowed her to expand the hours one could fit into each day.

Joanie - thank you for 3 years of extraordinary leadership as our President (and for your 7 years on the board) and thank you for your wisdom and guidance which has helped Habonim thrive now, and, God willing, for many generations to come.

Your legacy will be felt long into the future.

OUR PROGRAMS

Over the past few months all of our lives have changed dramatically due to Covid-19. We have had to modify our work, home and social lives, and find new and innovative ways of staying in touch with friends, family, colleagues and our community. Congregation Habonim had to adapt as well. We moved weekly Kabbalat Shabbat and all other services to Zoom and shared our Shabbat service with isolated hospitalized patients at Mt. Sinai so that they could be comforted by the beautiful words and songs of Eli, Aviva, Kim and Tom. We organized meaningful Bar and Bat Mitzvahs in the synagogue with virtual clergy and musicians and have moved as much of our programming as practical to Zoom. We will continue to do everything possible to keep our congregants connected and provide meaningful services and programs virtually until it is once again safe to congregate in person.

The first program that we hosted on Zoom was with Dr. Michael Silverman, Chief of Infectious Diseases at University of Western Ontario and Leanne Matlow, youth counsellor and leading mental health advocate. This session was very informative as well as uplifting, providing practical coping strategies as well as answers to questions about the virus and when and how things may change.

We hosted Emma Fogel from the Social Work Consulting Group to lead a Q&A session and provide advice to parents on how to manage kids' stressors during Covid. And a trio

of our young members, Kellie, Lauren and Julie Grammer organized a virtual forum to connect grade 12 students with current university students and grads to help the high school students with the difficult transition to university during Covid.

We are also trying to keep young families engaged by providing different Shabbat Programs on Friday mornings. The first one we hosted was L'Dance which was an interactive high energy program with music and dancing. This was followed by Jstixx, an interactive high-energy percussion-based music class. The Jewish Heritage School also recently hosted a Havdalah service followed by family bingo.

We welcomed Rena Nickerson, General Manager of Sodastream Canada back to speak about SodaStream and the positive effects it is having on the environment, SodaStream in Israel and the 'Island of Peace', and their mission to revolutionize the beverage industry. [Click here](#) to see a video about the island of peace where people of all religions work together.

Finally, we were excited to have Jennifer from Irresistibly Delicious teach us how to make a no bake cheesecake for Shavuot!

UPCOMING ZOOM EVENTS:

FRIDAY, JUNE 12th 6:30 pm

Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat

TUESDAY, JUNE 16th 7:30 PM

Annual General Meeting

THURSDAY, JUNE 18th 8:30 pm

Dr. Michael Silverman

Dr. Silverman will return to speak about the developments in managing and treating Covid, and what has changed since he last spoke to the congregation a month ago.

TUESDAY, JUNE 23rd 7:00 pm

Challah Bake with Ellen Schwartz

FRIDAY, JUNE 26th 6:00 pm

Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat

We hope that everyone has been enjoying our Zoom programming over the past few months. We would like to know if there are any specific programs that you would like to see more of, or new events that you would like offered. While we are all anxious to get back into our beautiful building, for now we are only able to deliver virtual events. Please send in your suggestions to Michelle Goldman, Michelle@congregationhabonim.org. Thank you.

THE JEWISH HERITAGE SCHOOL UPDATE

We began this year in our beautiful new synagogue ready to learn how best to use the space for our school, and to explore the possibilities our new environment offered for the development of our programs. At first, all classes were held in the Esther Ganz Firestone Youth Hall but we gradually spread upstairs into the east and west wings of the sanctuary, and sometimes to the foyer with all its natural light. With Hebrew lessons and holiday celebrations, Jewish Studies, Music and Electives, we settled into our new communal home.

Among the highlights this winter was a visit to our school from Hannah Rechtshaffen and Zola, her African Grey Parrot. This was an amazing way to learn about the Jewish concept of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* which relates to the laws and values concerning the treatment of animals. Another highlight was the fabulous Habonim & Jewish Heritage School Purim carnival! Many families, friends and neighbours came to party with us and enjoy the music, snacks and fun activities.

Little did we know that the Purim celebration would be our last gathering in the synagogue this year. We knew, when the school year started, that our horizons were expanding, we just could not know or guess just how far they would actually stretch. Since the end of March, we have been offering online programming: Havdalah on Saturday evenings, Music & More on Sunday mornings which includes some Torah talk and Hebrew practice, and Book Club on Sunday evenings. Though not ideal, it has been gratifying to engage and learn in this new way. While we hope to return to the synagogue in the fall, the challenge now is to plan for the possibility that we may have some use of the building or we may not, and to imagine the best options for both prospects.

Normally at this time we are encouraging parents to register their children for next year's session. As our options for next year take shape, we will provide updates on the Jewish Heritage School website: jewishheritageschool.org. But feel free to be in touch any time.



HABONIM PURIM CELEBRATION



Elisa Goldman with Son
Harrison Pedro

President Joanie Smith &
MP Marco Mendicino

KABBALAT SHABBAT – WITH ELLIN BESSNER

On the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, journalist and author Ellin Bessner joined our Kabbalat Shabbat as a special guest to bring us the story of the Canadian Jewish military personnel who fought for Canada in WWII, helped defeat Hitler, and rescued the survivors of the Holocaust. Ellin Bessner book is called ["Double Threat: Canadian Jews, the Military, and World War II"](#).



MID TOWN LATER LEARNING SPEAKER SERIES – WITH RENA NICKERSON

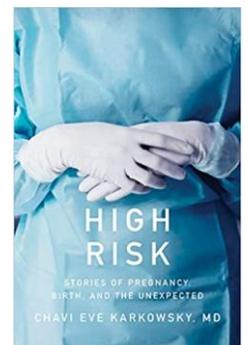
Rena Nickerson is a General Manager at SodaStream and came to speak to us about:

- SodaStream and the positive effects its having on the environment
- SodaStream in Israel and the 'Island of Peace'
- SodaStream's mission to revolutionize the beverage industry



SPEAKER SERIES – WITH DR. CHAVI KARKOWSKY (Zoom Event)

Dr Chavi Karkowsky; Author of "High Risk"
Chavi is a high-risk doctor for women in New York City and will discuss her experiences delivering care during the Covid pandemic. She spoke about how the pandemic will forever change the way medicine is delivered.



YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

We hope everyone enjoyed the programs from the recent months. Let us know your thoughts and comments, as well as your suggestions on any specific programs that you would like to see more of, or new events that you would like offered. Please send in your suggestions to Michelle Goldman, Michelle@congregationhabonim.org.





Noah and Erica Godfrey on Chase's Bat Mitzvah
Julie Soloway and Brian Bickley on Lucy's Bat Mitzvah
Jordy Frankel and Joshua Picov on Ella's Bat Mitzvah
Rosanna Breitman & Jeff Rechtshaffen on Joey's Bar Mitzvah
Charissa & Ari Levy on Noa's Bat Mitzvah

For the first time in our Shul's history, several families chose to celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs via Zoom due to COVID-19. Special thanks to the families for showing such flexibility during these challenging times.

Thank you!

Hi Eli,

I just would like to take a moment to thank you personally for officiating my granddaughter Ella's Bat Mitzvah. Although today's circumstances did not allow for her original plan of having a larger group and a party following, I must tell you it was absolutely PERFECT in every way.

When I joined Habonim a few years ago it was for a few reasons

- a) the CONNECTION to the Holocaust survivors (as my parents both were) who began the shul*
- b) YOU....your inclusiveness, your caring and compassion which reaches, and touches lives beyond the Jewish community (my immediate family is very mixed...lovingly referred to as... coat of many colours)*
- c) the sense of belonging, community and intimacy that I feel when I am in the congregation and of course the icing on the cake....AVIVA and all the singers and musicians who fill each holiday/ celebration with such beautiful voices and music, bringing the prayers alive.*

All of this was still there on Saturday giving Ella's Bat Mitzvah service real meaning...YOU, the Undeniable presence of my Mother, The community and intimacy of those very special to us being present and of course Aviva's beautiful voice.

Ella was amazing, poised, confident and in control just as I knew she would be. I am Truly grateful, honoured and blessed to be Ella's Bubie.

Thank you once again for being there and helping to make Ella's Bat Mitzvah PERFECT in every way.

Deeply Appreciated.
Susan Melvin



Chase Godfrey's Bat Mitzvah



Ella Frankel-Picov's Bat Mitzvah (Zoom)



Noa Levy's Bat Mitzvah (Zoom)



Joey Rechtshaffen's Bar Mitzvah (Zoom)

In Memoriam

Mourning those who passed away in the last year

Sara Gorman
Evelyn Lax
Dr. Mladen Vranic
Sylvia Levy
Rhoda Vyner
Harvey Sterling
Ben Hamilton
Ide Haber
Karen Kadish

Dr. William Singer
Irwin Weiser
Ruth Levy
Shirley Cadesky
Pauline Milrad
Cecile Metrick
Patricia Singer
Gerald Cooper
Dorothy Dime
Sally Levin



May their families be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yahrzeits

Yahrzeit reminders are now being sent. To receive your reminder please update your family Yahrzeits by contacting the office.

Honour the memory of your loved one.

Memorial Plaque \$360

Oval Shaped Eitz Chaim Tree leaf \$180

Please contact the office for more information or to send tribute and condolence cards.



NOTES FROM THE HABONIM OFFICE

- ⇒ Membership dues have been extended until July 31.
- ⇒ Please inform the office if you are not renewing.



CONGREGATION HABONIM'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A Notice of Meeting was sent to Habonim members on May 14, 2020 and contains details with respect to how to attend the virtual-only Meeting and how to vote. Members may vote (i) "in person" by attending the virtual-only Meeting via live broadcast online, (ii) by appointing someone else to participate in the Meeting and cast your votes in accordance with your instructions (a Proxyholder), or (iii) by phone, in each case as set out in more detail in the Notice.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

For the 2020-2021 year, four current directors whose terms expire at the Meeting have agreed to stand for election for an additional term. The Board, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, is proposing that the following four members be re-elected to the Board:

Anita Auerback
Lauren Black
Aaron Goldberg
Sonny Goldstein

In addition, Joanie Smith, President, and Rick Glatt, Treasurer, two long-standing members of the Board will not be standing for reelection at the Meeting. We wish to thank Joanie and Rick for their commitment and dedication to Habonim.

Immediately following the Meeting, the Board intends to appoint current Board members, Cheryl Grammer and Anita Auerback, as President and Treasurer of the Congregation, respectively.

Tuesday June 16th at 7:30 p.m.
Virtual-only Meeting via live webcast online

AGENDA

- Elect the directors of the Congregation
- Appoint the Congregation's auditors for fiscal 2020
- Present and approve the Congregation's audited annual financial statements for fiscal 2019.
- General comments from Eli Rubenstein
- Closing remarks from our President and passing the torch

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the Meeting, Meeting materials or how to vote in connection with the Meeting, please contact Robin Zionce-Garber, the Congregation's Executive Director, via phone at 416-782-7125 or via email at office1@congregationhabonim.org





Information and contributions to THE BULLETIN

Contact: Michelle Goldman,
michelle@congregationhabonim.org

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

www.congregationhabonim.org

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

www.jewishheritageschool.org

RELIGIOUS LEADER

Eli Rubenstein, 416-398-2615 Email: elir@bell.net

CANTORS

Cantor: **Aviva Rajskey** avivar@rogers.com

Associate Cantor: **Kim Doron** kimdoron@rogers.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robin Zionce-Garber

Email: robin@congregationhabonim.org

FACILITIES COORDINATOR

Michelle Goldman

Email: michelle@congregationhabonim.org

Volunteer Director of School Operations

Jackie Ruderman habonimschool@gmail.com

**Are you MOVING, CHANGING your ADDRESS,
PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL?**

Contact the Habonim office:

Tel: 416-782-7125 or

Email: office1@congregationhabonim.org