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Tishrei 5763

September 2002

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM VOTES TO EXPLORE TRADITIONAL JUDAISM

It was discussed. It was debated. It was accepted. The Board proposal that Beth Shalom shift its religious affiliation from Orthodox to Traditional passed with 71% at the General Meeting held May 21st.

But it wasn't an easy decision to make. For the longest time, the Board thrashed around ideas on how to attract new members. With a steadily declining membership, something had to be done, but what? Moving towards more rigid orthodoxy and raising the *mechitza* to kosher standards was one suggestion that was considered. Conservatism was another. Neither seemed to be the best solution.

Moving more to the Right would not necessarily attract members because real estate in downtown Ottawa is prohibitive for most people. On the other hand, going Conservative seemed a bit too radical. Yet maintaining the status quo was not a consideration either because the status quo had seen membership atrophy.

Traditional Judaism appeared to be an acceptable compromise. It would allow for mixed seating while still maintaining services based on the Orthodox siddurs. And it would still allow the more observant of Beth Shalom's members to have their own Orthodox services in the Chapel, at all times. It offered the best of both worlds.

And so, after much agonizing, Beth Shalom's Board decided to submit the proposal to its membership. The Board's motivation: to maintain Congregation Beth Shalom as a downtown shul in the nation's capital.

Before the vote was set, the Board held two Town Hall meetings at which both members and non-members were invited to make their opinions known and to discuss and debate the merits of going Traditional. The changes would include:

- *haftorahs for Bat-Mitzvah girls*
- *mixed seating*

- *women allowed on the bimah.*

The service would remain as we know it.

The final vote was held following the Town Hall meetings where members on both sides of the theological fence were again invited to make their cases heard. Everyone and anyone who wanted to speak was given the floor with President Tom Gussman chairing the open session. Following the discussion, the over 230 members in attendance cast their vote — and this was done privately — thereby determining Beth Shalom's future in a most democratic process. With only three abstentions, the vote passed by a large majority.

Since that vote was held, though, rumours have abounded. The word on the street, so to speak, is that Beth Shalom is going Conservative. *That's a fallacy.* The Board would like to set the record straight for the congregation.

The UTJ is a trans-denominational education and outreach organization dedicated to promoting the principles of traditional Judaism. It supports and encourages traditional Jewish practice among individuals, congregations, institutions, scholars and religious leaders across the spectrum of the Jewish community. **Its goal is to bring the greatest possible number of Jews closer to an open-minded, observant Jewish life.**

The UTJ promotes "open-minded observance," i.e. commitment to Halachah (Jewish law) combined with intellectual openness and loyalty to Klal Yisrael (the totality of the Jewish people). It affirms that Halachah encompasses ritual (prayer, kashrut, Shabbat, etc.) as well as ethical obligations, both of which are intended to bring us closer to G-d. The unique ideological position of the UTJ contrasts with what is rapidly becoming the norm of Jewish denominational life. Keen observers of Jewish life have noted that, within the Jewish community, the Right is moving farther to the Right and the Left is moving farther to the Left. ***The UTJ aspires to become the focal point of an emerging center of Jewish religious life.***

The road ahead will not be without its challenges. There are many things to work out. First on the agenda will be the bylaws. They will be rewritten to reflect Beth Shalom's new direction. Then, seating will have to be reviewed. Going Traditional will not happen overnight. But with every congregant's support and energy, Beth Shalom's new focus can bring in a new future: one of shared optimism, of renewal, of a new faith in our future.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Memorial Tablet Dedication
..... Saturday, August 31 (10 p.m.)
Kever Avot Service
..... Sunday, September 1 (10:30 a.m.)
Rosh Hashanah 5763 Sept. 7-8
Fast of Gedalia..... Sept. 9
Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre)..... Sept. 15
Yom Kippur Sept. 16
Sukkah Decorating Party..... Sept. 18
Sukkot (1st & 2nd Day) Sept. 21-22
Simchat Torah Dinner..... Sept. 28
Hakkafoth, followed by lunch Sept. 29
Remembrance Day Kiddush Nov. 9
Chanukah Ball Nov. 30
Beth Shalom Chanukah Party.....Dec. 1



A Message from Our Rabbi

In searching for spiritual insight to Rosh Hashanah, one should begin by asking what do the *Torah*, the *Talmud* and the *Midrash* tell us about what happened on Rosh Hashanah?

The first direct reference is in the Book of Leviticus, where G-d tells Moses “speak unto the children of Israel saying, in the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of servile work; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Leviticus 23:24-25).

The *Talmud*, in Sanhedrin 38b, tells us that the creation of Adam and Eve took place on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Thus, the second day of Rosh Hashanah, according to the Talmud, was the event described in Genesis (2:3): “G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it he had rested from all his work.” Further in this section of the *Talmud*, it states that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden on the first of Tishrei, and on this date Cain was born.

Bereshit Rabbah 22 informs us that Abel was also born on Rosh Hashanah. Ironically, this reference in the *Midrash* informs us that Cain killed Abel on the first day of Chanukah (Kislev 25).

According to Rashi in his commentary on Parshat Noach (Genesis 8:5, 13), Noach dispatched the dove and removed the cover of the Ark on the first of Tishrei. This view of Rashi is based on Rabbi Eliezer's opinion in *Talmud Rosh Hashanah*, however, the commentator Ibn Ezra disagrees with Rashi.

In the *Talmud*, we learn that Sarah, Rachel and Hannah prayed for an offspring and their prayers were granted on Rosh Hashanah (Yevamot 64b); the *Midrash* says that prayers of Rebecca and Leah were also granted on this day (Tanchuma, Vayera). It is based on this that the Biblical account of Sarah's and Hannah's conceptions are part of the Torah Reading (Genesis XXI) and Haftorah (I Samuel 1:1-2:10) for the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

The reading for the second day of Rosh Hashanah (Genesis 22) is the story of the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac. The connection of this Torah Reading to the second day of Rosh Hashanah is the ram, which was substituted for Isaac, and is remembered through the shofar, which we blow on Rosh Hashanah.

A perplexing philosophical concept is raised in an ancient Palestinian tradition where on the first day of Rosh Hashanah Satan was granted permission to test Job's character (Targum Jerus., Job 1:6).

According to the Book of Nechemia (8:2), two events took place on the first of Tishrei in 538 B.C.E.; Zerubbavel brought the first offering on the new alter in Jerusalem and in 444 B.C.E., Ezra read the *Torah* to the assembled Jews at the Watergate. According to *Pirkei Avot*, the letters of the *Torah* were created on the eve of Shabbat, which would make it twilight between the first and second day of Rosh Hashanah.

From the above, we learn that Rosh Hashanah is a time of beginnings and transitions. What we make of these transitions is dependent upon us and the choices we make in life. We know that the Holy One, blessed be He, has shown us that prayers can be answered on Rosh Hashanah when the aim is for good. However, we also learn that Rosh Hashanah is a time of testing when Satan is active.

The Ethiopian Jewish community celebrates the "Commemoration of Avraham", also known as "the Festival of the Light Has Appeared". The name refers to a legend associated with the birth of Avraham. This celebration is linked to the words "Memorial" as Rosh Hashanah is the only holiday referred to in this way. Legend has it that Avraham was born, and died in the month of Tishrei.

How shall we look at Rosh Hashanah in terms of our own lives? Will Rosh Hashanah serve as a memorial to our forefather Avraham? Will we choose to live a life based on his modelling of *chesed* (acts of loving-kindness)? Will we choose to pursue our relationship as that of Cain and Abel? Will we trust in man or trust in G-d? Joseph who trusted in man rather than G-d served

extra years in prison before his release, on Rosh Hashanah according to the *Talmud*. Will we choose to be free or enslaved in our own Egypt? Pharaoh, according to Tractate Rosh Hashanah (11a), freed the Jews from slavery on this day. Will we remember Isaac, will we remember Jacob or the Prophets Samuel –all connected to Rosh Hashanah. Will we see the Dove return with an olive branch this coming year? Rosh Hashanah is filled with questions. I join Sheli and our children in wishing everyone a Shana Tova with an inscription and seal for a year of peace, good health, spiritual and material success as we journey to find meaning in all of our paths.

Rabbi Ely M. Braun*

A Message from Our President

As you all know, we as a congregation are in a period of transition. Well before the vote of last May 21, various forces were at play and various pressures were beginning to be felt. I will not repeat the messages, the arguments, the rationale or the proposed solutions here. Suffice it to say that many of us have been working hard in an attempt to make the proposals a reality. That work is ongoing and there are still challenges to be met. You can read about Traditional Judaism and the concept we are pursuing elsewhere in this New Year's Bulletin. Everyone knows how important security is for the Jewish community in these times of difficulty in the Middle East. We asked for your financial support and many members were forthcoming. Thank you all very much. We must be vigilant but never panic. We must be strong and organized. Together, all of us in the Jewish community of Ottawa must work to monitor events and people around us and ensure that we keep our friends and neighbours aware and informed. Let us pray that we can continue to attend shul without incident. Nonetheless, let us always be in a state of preparedness.

It is my usual approach to report to you on progress with the building, our financial situation, seating arrangements and related issues. These are all subsumed under the larger umbrella that is the shul's future. I urge you to participate in achieving a solution and in recruiting new members to strengthen our ranks. Beth Shalom, in whatever configuration emerges, must continue to grow, and we must all be united in supporting that growth.

Thus, I will not repeat the arguments here. I will simply thank you for your support during my tenure as President and offer my personal thanks to all of you who continue to work so tirelessly to keep Beth Shalom active and contribute to its progress.

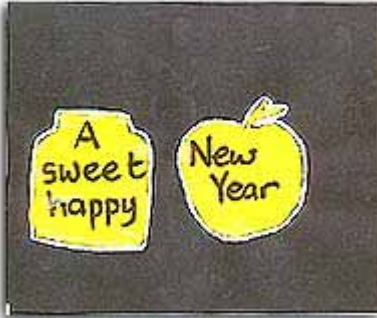
From Natalie, Alison, Paula and me -- sincere wishes for a healthy, meaningful and successful New Year. *L'shana tova tikateivu v'tikateimu.*

Tom Gussman
President*



MAKE A GREETING CARD

- coloured cellophane
- glue
- construction paper
- scissors



1. Fold the construction paper in half to form a card.
2. On the front, draw a Holiday design (any Rosh Hashanah symbol).
3. Cut out the shape.
4. Cut a piece of coloured cellophane into a square, big enough to cover the cut-out design, and stick it on the back with glue or tape.
5. Write your message inside and you'll see it through your special design.*

RECIPE

APPLE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

This recipe originally appeared in *Family Circle* or *Woman's Day* (over 20 years ago).

Ingredients:

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter or margarine
- ¾ cup chopped, blanched almonds
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 4 medium-sized baking apples, pared and thinly sliced
- 2¾ cups sifted flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2/3 cup vegetable shortening
- 1½ cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla

Instructions:

- Melt butter/margarine in 13x9x2" baking pan in oven while pre-heating; remove from oven.

- Combine 1 cup of sugar, almonds and cinnamon in small bowl; sprinkle evenly over melted butter. Arrange apple slices, overlapping slightly.
- Sift flour, remaining sugar, baking powder and salt into large bowl; add shortening, milk, eggs and vanilla. Beat at low speed until combined, then at high speed for 2 minutes; pour evenly over apples.
- Bake as instructed, or until top springs back when lightly pressed with fingertip.
- Cool in pan on wire rack for 5 minutes. Loosen around edges with a knife; cover with a large serving tray or cookie sheet; turn; lift off pan.

NOTES: Use pareve margarine for both topping and shortening. You can also use non-dairy creamer in place of the milk to make the cake pareve. Walnuts or pecans may be better for the topping than the almonds. The amount of sugar in the original may be excessive and you may want to use ½ cup less. Egg whites can be substituted for whole eggs, but the cake should be yellow.

Bake at 350 °F/175 °C for 1 hour, 10 minutes ---- **Serves 12 [at least]***



Thelma Steinman:
“Angel Woman”

by Ian Sadinsky

My wife calls **Thelma Steinman** the “Angel Woman”. Those who have known Thelma for any of her 90 years will attest to the celestial qualities of this diminutive cherub.

Thelma was born in Mankieski, Russia, a little town near Kiev, and immigrated to Canada in 1921, with siblings **Eleanor Wallach**, **Eileen Goldberg**, and **Albert Rivers**. In Canada, brother **Irving Rivers** and sister **Goldie Cantor** were added to **Jacob** and **Leah Rivers**’ brood. **Jacob Rivers** ran a store on the market and Thelma worked in that store after completing studies at York St. School, Lisgar, Ottawa Technical High School, and the High School of Commerce (Thelma was in the first class at the newly-built high school). The market was a central point in the family’s history as later Thelma and husband **Nat Steinman** ran a store in the market called Economy Dairy. Brother Albert had a clothing store, and Irving established a specialty clothing and camping store, which still “corners the market”.

Perhaps the constant service to customers ingrained the spirit of volunteerism into the Rivers family. Thelma first volunteered for Hadassah at the age of 16 at her mother’s urging. Prominent women like **Tessie Zelicovitz**, **Irene Kronick**, **Edith Torontow**, and **Isabel Torontow** influenced her. From Hadassah, she branched out to ORT, Hillel Lodge (influenced by **Helen Beiles**), Jewish Family Services, the Ottawa Historical Society, and countless other local charities. Thelma is currently an Honorary Board Member of Hillel Lodge, JFS, and the Historical Society (“I can talk, but I can’t vote”). She spends a lot of time visiting the elderly in

their homes, encouraging them to consider Hillel Lodge, taking them out on excursions or errands, and sometimes bringing people from the Jewish Archives to record highlights of their lives. Thelma invented multi-tasking!

At Beth Shalom, Thelma was an active member of the Sisterhood, supporting the late **Muriel Levine** who was its President. More recently, she has been a one-person phoning committee, encouraging men to attend the daily minyan. The term “Thelma’s boys” has become part of the synagogue parlance. Thelma attends services regularly and volunteers for virtually every synagogue program.

Thelma has received many awards over the years: from B’nai Brith, ORT (Woman of the Year), Israel Bonds, and the UJA. In 1998, Thelma won the coveted Gilbert Greenberg Distinguished Service Award, the UJA Citation for Service, and a special award from the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa. She also recently received the Province of Ontario Volunteer Award.

But Thelma Steinman doesn’t volunteer to win awards. Her rationale for volunteerism is as complex and enigmatic as the woman herself.

“I can’t do two things at once,” says Thelma, “so when I am busy with other people’s needs I’m at peace with myself. The satisfaction is so rewarding, and it overwhelms the fact that I may be sad or disturbed about something else.

“I just enjoy doing it,” says Thelma. “I don’t have time for Bridge or anything else because I am so satisfied. It’s what makes me happy and keeps me going.”

Thelma has three daughters: **Gail Victor**, **Elaine Shapiro**, and **Adele Tate**. She also has six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren (“only one boy – the Rivers tend to be all girls!”). Thelma believes that she has been “blessed with a gift”. Anyone who has ever had anything to do with Thelma undoubtedly feels that they have been in the presence of an angel. *

NEW MEMBERS

Beth Shalom is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Moe Geltman
Rose & Howard Krakower
Blema & Louis Woolf
*Denes Woolf**

Pesach Seder - Hine matov u'manayim
by Sophie Wapniarski

Every year during Pesach Jews celebrate an eight-day observance that commemorates the freeing of the nation from slavery in Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh, Ramses II. The highlight of the Pesach observance is the Seder where we eat symbolic foods and read the *Haggadah*. We eat *Matzah Shmura*, bitter herbs and *charoset*, the Hillel sandwich.

The youngest at the table sings the MaNishtanah, asking why this night differs from all others. We recall the four sons. We sing songs and drink four cups of wine. We shed a bit of wine recalling the ten plagues to remember the pain of our enemy, for we are all Hashem's creations. We lean to our left side, during drinking of the wine and eating of the matzah, as a symbol of freedom. As a symbol of freedom, we also fill each other's cup with wine. We pour a fifth cup of wine for Elijah.

This March 27th night was different from all others in yet another way. About 100 people chose to come and celebrate the evening together at a communal Seder organised by Beth Shalom synagogue. I was no exception.

Faced with spending Pesach alone at home (my daughter and her children were invited to their father; my son lives in Israel), I had to make an "executive decision".

Instead of feeling sorry for myself and laying a guilt trip, I chose to let "*my people go*" and celebrate my personal liberation from slavery (of cooking, washing dishes, etc.) to spend Pesach with my "Beth Shalom Family". I decided to participate in a Seder led by Rabbi Braun and Chazzan Subar. They both walked the group through it in a most informative and animated fashion.

Everything about this year's Seder was *beseder*. It was delightful, splendid. We were greeted by festively-set tables, joined in a rectangle, so that everyone seated, whether adult or child, felt at home. All were encouraged to participate in reading the *Haggadah*, following the order of historical events recalled in it.

This was not just "another Seder", but also a truly joyful occasion and by each person taking part in reading, we relived the Exodus as a communal and personal liberation from slavery. As the *Torah* says, "You should tell your child on that day, 'When I left Mitzrayim, Hashem did miracles for me.'" Each person felt as if s/he personally had come out of Egypt.

But no Seder is complete without a meal. Prepared and served by David Smith and his truly professional staff, we were treated to a fantastic dinner. It was delicious, superb. The abundance and quality of his catering is now legendary. It was a meal fit for Royalty and we were treated as such. Those 100 members and guests who attended will agree with me, I am sure.

For me, and probably for all of our guests, it was a truly spiritual experience, a reminder that although we should have the ability to be alone, it is truly important not to separate ourselves from the community.

Next year in Jerusalem!

Next year in Beth Shalom!

CHANUKAH

**COMBINED SYNAGOGUE CHANUKAH
BALL TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 30 AT AGUDATH ISRAEL**

**CHANUKAH
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH TO
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH INCLUSIVE
FIRST CANDLE FRIDAY EVE, NOV. 29TH**

***BETH SHALOM CHANUKAH PARTY
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1st***

Tu B'Shevat Seder ***by Elly Bollegraaf***

The celebration, Tu B'Shevat -- the New Year for Trees, a time in Israel when the trees begin to bear fruit -- occurs on the 15th of Shevat. This year, it fell on January 28, 2002. On the occasion of this event, a very beautiful Tu B'Shevat Seder, led by Rabbi Eli Braun, was held at Congregation Beth Shalom on Sunday evening, January 27, 2002.

In attendance were the many appreciative shul members, their relatives, and friends, who followed the Seder with the help of the texts provided. As Rabbi Braun led the Seder, he explained with great enthusiasm and joy the significance of the occasion being celebrated. He discussed the symbolism of the different fruits -- the almonds, oranges, raisins, and carob bean pods -- which were displayed on the Seder plates. In addition, there were the four cups of wine which graduated in colour intensity from white, to pale pink, to rose, and finally to red. The symbolism of each was also explained. Rabbi Braun took the Seder participants through a vivid agricultural, symbolic, and spiritual awareness.

To this elevated spiritual mood was added the fine vocal accompaniment of the two Chazzans, Congregation Beth Shalom's Cantor Yair Subar and his brother, Cantor Arie Subar. What a great pleasure it was to hear these fine voices in their beautifully sung renditions. In turn, the members of the Beth Shalom men's choir and children's choir, under the direction of Cantor Yair Subar, delighted all with their lovely and spirited songs. The congregants were further treated to

the delightful singing and guitar playing of Isaac Muzikansky. In fact, his spontaneity and infectious and melodious singing was soon joined by the many who hummed and sang along. It was a terrific evening in every way. It would thus be an oversight if one did not also mention that the dinner served that evening, and catered by David Smith, was outstanding in quality, variety, taste, and absolutely beautiful presentation. The Seder was without question a most memorable and beautifully conducted shul event, one into which much planning and effort had gone by the organizers, led by Muriel Wexler.*

Yahrzeit Plates

Members are reminded that reservations are being accepted for individual Bronze Yahrzeit Plates located at the memorial corridor of the Synagogue.

The tax-deductible charge for individual plates is \$250, which includes the cost of inscription. Members interested in perpetuating the name of a deceased family member are asked to contact the Shul Office at 613-789-3501.



We express our deepest condolences to the families of Sylvia Arron, Hy Roodman, Rose Roodman, Rita Vogel, Bella Sadavoy, Yetta Glazerman, Ann Bloom, Jean Dover, Ralph Torontow, Jack Arron.

INEZ & JOE ZELIKOVITZ TREE OF LIFE

The following leaf was purchased on the
Tree of Life:

In honour of the birthday (May 15, 2002) of
EVA POLLOCK GERTLER
from her grandchildren and great-
grandchildren.

HOSPITALIZATION

If you or anyone in your family is admitted to one of the local area hospitals for any reason, please make a point of informing our Synagogue Office by calling 789-3501, so that our Clergy and Visiting Committee may visit at the earliest convenience. This is necessary, as it frequently occurs that the hospital does not keep proper records, and it can be quite a while until we find out that someone is in the hospital. Hence, if you would like a visit to take place, please inform our office at the earliest opportunity.

Endowment Fund

To make a contribution, please call Gloria any weekday at 613-789-3501. We accept Visa and MasterCard. All donations are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

Congregation Beth Shalom would like to thank the Beth Shalom Sisterhood and the families of Barry and Marcia Cantor, Eva and Michael Rosen, Asa Goldfield, Isabelle and Allan Cantor, Audrey and Irwin Kreisman, Randi and Ian Sherman, for purchasing all of the beautiful new chairs for the auditorium.



BIRTHS

- Mazel Tov to Vittoria and Michael Radnoff on the birth of their daughter, Angela Sarah. Proud grandparents are Jeanette Radnoff and Kenneth Radnoff and Angela and Rocco Nicolo. Very proud great-grandmother is Freda Radnoff.
- Mazel Tov to Orly and Stanley Aaron on the birth of their daughter, Sarah Leah. Proud grandparents are Ruth and Irving Aaron, and Annette Buzelan and the late Georges Buzelan of Montreal.
- Mazel Tov to Norma and Brian Silverstone on the birth of their daughter. Proud grandparents are Bernice and Abe Hochberg, and Evelyn and Ralph Silverstone of Toronto.
- Mazel Tov to Ilana and Michael Garber on the birth of their son, Mitchell Noah. Proud grandparents are Cynthia and David Blumenthal, and Reva and David Garber of Toronto. Mitchell is the great-grandson of Irene and Irving Rife of Toronto.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Mazel Tov to Debra Ruttenberg, daughter of Franceen Shier and Barry Ruttenberg, granddaughter of Sylvia Shier, on her engagement to Ronnen Lederman, son of Miriam Lederman and Zeev Lederman of Toronto.
- Mazel Tov to David Baker, son of Ricki and Barry Baker, grandson of Clare Polonsky, on his engagement to Marla Karpman, daughter of Renee Karpman and the late Manny Karpman of Montreal.

MARRIAGES

- Mazel Tov to Eva Goldfield, daughter of Asa Goldfield and the late Jack Goldfield, on her marriage to Michael Rosen, son of Helen and Dr. Martin Rosen of Palm Springs, California.

BAT MITZVAH

- Mazel Tov to Arielle Kreisman, daughter of Audrey and Irwin Kreisman, on her Bat Mitzvah which will be celebrated on Saturday evening, November 9, 2002.

Are you interested in contributing an article?

We are always working on ways of enhancing the publication so that it has something for everyone. We hope you like it. We invite you to share your ideas, comments, recipes, stories and suggestions (please call Gloria at 789-3501).

Shana Tovah oo'Metouka!

The Bulletin Committee

MARCH OF THE LIVING

by Sabina Wasserlauf

"The March of the Living" is a programme, begun in the mid-eighties, that offers Jewish teenagers from around the world a one-week tour of Poland, followed by one week in Israel. This year, because of the situation in Israel, the March was shortened to one week in Poland. On April 5, 2002, five Ottawans, including teens Ryan Appotive and Daniel Polowin, David Shentow, a Holocaust survivor and his wife Rose, and myself in the role of chaperone, headed off to a weekend Shabbaton in Toronto. There we met the rest of the group who would accompany us: 28 teenagers from Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary and Toronto and three seasoned chaperones from Winnipeg and Edmonton. On Monday, April 8, we arrived in Warsaw where we met our two outstanding tour guides, one Israeli and one Pole. Our adventure was beginning -- one that had us touring a good part of Poland, our days beginning at 6:00 a.m. and rarely ending before 1:00 a.m.

In the course of this eventful week, we toured the Warsaw ghetto, the Jewish sections of Krakow and Lublin, visited Jewish cemeteries in various cities and towns, visited and prayed in a number of beautiful synagogues, and sang and danced in the courtyard of a building that until 1939 had been the great Yeshiva of Lublin, now a medical school.

The most heart-wrenching parts of our tour were the visits to the concentration camps, including Auschwitz, Birkenau, Majdanek, Treblinka and Plashov.

On April 9, Yom Hashoah, we participated in the actual “March of the Living”. This was a silent march from Auschwitz to Birkanau, which took about an hour, in the company of Jewish groups from around the world along with a sizeable contingent of Polish gentiles who represent Polish Friends of Israel In Solidarity With Jews. There were over 3,000 people walking silently, wearing the blue “March of the Living” jackets, and carrying Israeli flags. At one point, as we crossed a raised bridge, I looked back and gazed at the sea of blue and white marchers. I was filled with a mix of joy and sorrow as I felt the impact of this March, and reflected on why we had come to this place. We were very much alive, and had come to Poland to witness and commemorate our indescribable loss as a Jewish people as well as to affirm our devotion to Jewish continuity.

Towards the end of the week, we had the pleasure of meeting with a group of Righteous Gentiles, and visiting a Jewish day school in Warsaw, serving children whose families are committed to Jewish renewal in Poland. On our final Shabbat in Poland, we went to the Noczyk Synagogue – the only synagogue in Warsaw, filled that day with Polish Jews and “March of the Living” participants from around the globe – and participated in a wonderful service that was capped by a beautiful rendition of Anim Zmirot, led by local Jewish children.

In the course of this very dramatic and moving week, we cried and laughed, we sang together, and offered each other support, understanding, and comfort. We moved from being a group of virtual strangers to a close-knit network of people who became family for each other. Rose and David Shentow became honorary grandparents for the teens – much loved and appreciated for their strength, kindness and tremendous knowledge. They gained thirty very appreciative “grandchildren” in return.

We returned deeply saddened by our experience of witnessing, first-hand, the destruction of Jewish lives and Jewish presence in Europe. At the same time we felt strengthened by the experience, and inspired to use it in the service of Jewish causes.

We came back from Poland knowing that what we had been on, to quote David Shentow, “was not a trip but a pilgrimage”. *

LOBLAWS COUPONS

Would you like to help the Shul raise money without having to do anything? Then please consider buying Loblaws coupons. You can use them at any Independent and Loblaws store and you don't have to buy the coupon's worth of food.

Running out of food? Take your coupon to a store nearest you. Running out of money? Take the coupon, purchase the minimum and you'll receive the rest of the coupon's worth in cash. It's better than running to the bank.

And every time you buy a coupon from Congregation Beth Shalom, the Shul automatically receives a percentage of the sales. It's the easiest fundraiser going! Please support our Shul by supporting this endeavour and call Gloria at 613-789-3501 for more information.

Congregation Beth Shalom

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Chazzan Sheni:	<i>Howard Dover</i>	Vice-President:	<i>Ruth Freiman</i>
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