

# VTT Connections



*Alumni Newsletter of the Vancouver Talmud Torah Association*

A Bi-Annual Publication

Winter 2011

## Message from the Alumni Chair, David Bogoch

Dear Fellow VTT Alumni,

In this exciting new year, you'll likely hear a lot about VTT Pride, and rightly so. I am pleased to introduce our new newsletter, **VTT Connections**, which will be published twice a year to keep you informed of what's going on at your alma mater, upcoming events, opportunities for involvement, and updates on your classmates. Vancouver Talmud Torah continues to offer our alumni many reasons to be proud as you'll see in this edition.

I begin this message with a special thank you to all those alumni who helped to make our two class reunions last year a success. Both were well-received and provided experiences that were meaningful for all those who attended. In May, the class of 1960 had a brunch for their 50th reunion, which was held in the old gymnasium; the classes of 1979, 1980, and 1981 celebrated their 30th with an evening barbeque. It was heart-warming to hear alumni share their memories and stories of their days at VTT. **Judy Stoffman's (Class of '60)** message on page 4 about attending her reunion truly captures the sentiments of the event. **Get ready Class of 1971 as your reunion is booked for May 15th!**

In June, we welcomed 47 new graduates of VTT. Best of luck to the class of 2010 and we wish you much success in all your worthy endeavours as you go on to secondary school and beyond. Please keep in touch!

Generous donors who contributed to the **Alumni Fund** supported areas of need at the school, such as the spring musical production of "Bye Bye Birdie." As well, proceeds from the fund enabled us to plant more in the Alumni Garden, giving it life and renewal in time to celebrate the start of the new school year.

Many of you from near and far kindly responded to the call for recipes in December from **Carla van Messel (Class of '74)** and parent, Stacey Kape, who are currently leading VTT's ambitious cookbook project. We greatly appreciate your efforts to submit your family's treasured recipes for this project. The cookbook fundraiser is set to launch in the fall of 2011.



As the theme of alumni pride continues throughout the year, I encourage you all to be involved in some way or form, whether it is coming out to events, giving of your time and talent to the school, making a financial contribution to help our students, or even dropping us an email to keep us in the loop on how you've been doing since graduation.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2011 - for both you and VTT!

## Save the Date: Class of 1971!

### Your 40th Reunion is coming up

- What:** A Sunday morning brunch to recollect and reconnect (FREE!)
- When:** May 15, 2011
- Where:** Talmud Torah School, 26th and Oak
- Time:** 11.30 a.m.
- RSVP:** David Bogoch at [vtalumni@gmail.com](mailto:vtalumni@gmail.com) or 604.269.9085





## Message from the Principal, Cathy Lowenstein

As Principal of Vancouver Talmud Torah for the last seven years, I am fortunate to meet the many alumni who either send their children and/or grandchildren to VTT or who spontaneously drop by to recapture some fond childhood memories. And every year, we have enthusiastic alumni return to give back to our school as teachers. The most recent VTT graduate to join our ranks is **Shannon Leonard, class of '81**, who is now teaching in our full-day kindergarten, after having lived and taught in Taiwan for many years. If you're curious to learn more about our faculty (and perhaps see if a beloved teacher is still on staff), visit our website at [www.talmudtorah.com](http://www.talmudtorah.com) and type "Faculty Profiles" in the search box. And for those of you curious about **Mr. Lee**, he's still a valued member of our team!

With the original wing of Talmud Torah standing unchanged since it was first built in 1948, and as the largest day school west of Ontario, the Board of Directors is embarking on an ambitious capital campaign to make improvements to the existing facility and to build a new wing on the campus to give us much needed additional space (and parking!) to accommodate our growing enrollment (now at just under 500). These are exciting times at VTT, and I welcome our alumni to get involved in the campaign to build a bigger, better Vancouver Talmud Torah. Future issues of this newsletter will provide more details.

Despite our cramped quarters, VTT continues to offer innovation in educational programming. Our grade 7 Mac laptop program, which puts technology directly into the hands of our students, is just one example of the school's commitment to educational excellence.



VTT alum (and past and current parents of VTT students)  
Yale Rosner, Deborah Youngson and Melanie Belkin

## Memories from the '79, '80, '81 Alumni Reunion

On May 15, 2010, the classes of '79, '81, '81 celebrated their 30 year reunion with an evening BBQ in the school yard. Check out pictures from their event at <http://alumni.talmudtorah.com>

Did you know that VTT  
has an Alumni Song?



Do you know the  
lyrics?

Is there a photo of  
you in this video?

Visit  
<http://alumni.talmudtorah.com>  
to view the clip.

## Warm regards from an Alum

Bernice Carmeli, Class of '74

As we go on... we remember...

Hi everyone, it's Bernice Carmeli (nee Doduck). I attended VTT back in the days. I am proud to say that I am an alum of VTT as were my sisters **Cathy** and **Sheryl** (z"l), my children **Ilana, Adina, Adam**, and my sisters' children **Tyler, Bradley, Shane and Dean**.

My mother, **Marie**, worked with the hot lunch program when I was a student as did I, when I was a VTT parent. From time to time, when I bump into some of the children that I remembered serving lunch to and see their beautiful smiles, it melts my heart. It makes me beam with excitement to see them all grown up, some graduating high school and going beyond. I can only imagine what it must be like for my mother, who volunteered for VTT for all my and my sisters' elementary school years, serving on the parent committee and the Board, to see the hundreds of children who have passed through the school over all these years and to see how much the school has developed and evolved.



Bernice (C), surrounded by mother, Marie Doduck and sisters, Sheryl Young (z"l) and Cathy Golden.

Since graduating from VTT, my children as well as my sisters' children have all gone on to attend the King David High School. Five of them are now in different universities in Canada. Can you say "Nakhes!!!" We are so proud of them and believe that the education, support and love they received from their days at VTT have made them the people they have become today. I hope that VTT will be around for my grandchildren as well as theirs.

L-R: Cousins, Tyler Golden, Ilana Carmeli, Bradley Young, Adina Carmeli, Dean Young, Shane Golden, Adam Carmeli



## VANCOUVER TALMUD TORAH WISH LIST

Help make our wishes come true!



Interactive Projector units with laptops – 8 needed for 8 classrooms  
**\$3,000 each**



Digital cameras – 4 needed  
**\$150 each**



2011 Spring musical  
**Fiddler on the Roof**  
 presenting sponsor  
**\$10,000**

For more information on our funds, to make a donation or to purchase a wishlist item, please contact the Development Office 604.736.2694 or [development@talmudtorah.com](mailto:development@talmudtorah.com)

## Program in the Spotlight: Mitzvah of Valuing Philanthropy (MVP)

### Are 12 and 13 year olds capable of making a difference?

Judging by the thoughtful and careful planning of Vancouver Talmud Torah's seventh grade students, our future is in very good hands.

In the year in which our grade 7 students become B'nei Mitzvah, they are learning in Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) class that becoming Jewish adults means becoming responsible for expanding their universe of obligation, i.e. fulfilling G-d's expectation that Jewish adults work in partnership with G-d to repair the world. The premise of the school's Mitzvah of Valuing Philanthropy (MVP) program is to allow the students to experience this in a meaningful way by finding out who needs their help and then granting money to those in need. Through acts of Tzedakah and Chesed, the students are experiencing what it means to become an adult in the eyes of the Jewish community.

During the year, students research, interview, and present the missions and needs of their chosen local beneficiary agencies (or international agencies with local representation.) The students then work together in community to assess the needs and allocate from their funds as they see fit. The resource money is a pooled fund generated by the students out of their anticipated Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts and other sources, including generous contributions from community members.

The year culminates in a Ceremony of Giving, as the beneficiaries come to VTT to receive their Tzedakah grants from the students.

MVP, now going into its fourth year, is the brainchild of Grade 6/7 Humanities and Tikkun Olam teacher **Sari Weintraub**, is modeled after similar programs in the United States. It is a program through which students become functioning members of their class 'budget and allocations' committee.

The Tikkun Olam curriculum is a curriculum of identity, exploration and action. We build the year on a tripartite theme based on the Pirkhe Avot quote:

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now---WHEN?

The MVP program is a call to action that enables thirteen year olds to experience the transformative power of this passage year in their lives.

Vancouver Talmud Torah would like to express deep gratitude to the Zack family for establishing the Irma Zack z"l Mitzvah of Valuing Philanthropy Fund to support this important program.



L-R: Joelle Moses, Talia Ergas-Lennet and Shira Wachtel, Class of 2010, through MVP, chose to research and allocate funds to Spread the Love Project, a charitable organization which funds the building of elementary schools in Ethiopia. Far right: Adam Segal (Class of '97), Vice-President, was honoured to accept the funds on behalf of his brother, Justin's, organization.

### In 2010 our grade 7 students allocated \$18,000 to over 30 organizations and agencies!

To see the list, please visit [www.talmudtorah.com](http://www.talmudtorah.com)

**Advertise in the alumni newsletter!**  
Your contribution goes to support the **VTT Alumni Fund**. For more info on this fund, please see page 8.

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# Class of '60 Alumni Reunion

## Judy Bing (Stoffman)

We were the front end of the post-war baby boom. The class of 1960, its members born in 1947, was the largest that Talmud Torah had had up until then--47 students in all.

Twenty-one of the surviving members of the class showed up on a sunny Sunday morning on May 16, 2010, for the class reunion seamlessly planned and organized by David Bogoch, Alumni Chair, and his team.

**Trudi Kolberg** (now Trudi Yifrah) and **Richard Zack** had the farthest to come, since both flew in from Israel, where they now live. Richard is now Raffi, though he made an exception and allowed his childhood friends to call him by his old name. Our class has dispersed widely, which accounted for many absences. In addition to Israel, class members are found in New York (**Judy Panar**), Hawaii (**Cathy Chechik**), Toronto (**Susan Zimmerman, Teddy Nemetz**), the Czech Republic (**Leonard Barak**).

Two class members, of blessed memory, **David Kantor** and **Carol Waldman**, had passed away and although few of us knew it at the time of the reunion, **Miriam Wosk** (z"l) was terminally ill in California. She died on November 5, having become a world renowned and respected artist.

Wearing our name tags, we greeted each other with cries of surprise and recognition. We watched a video that David had edited together from pictures of us as children, trying to recognize ourselves in the rapid-fire images. Over a delicious lunch we reminisced about our teachers **Mrs. Kron, Mrs. Trunkfield, Mrs. Holmgren** and the others. We marvelled that Mrs. Kron, our Hebrew teacher, actually could smoke in class back then. Many of our sentences began with "Do you remember..."

We also tried to catch up with what everyone has done over the past 50 years, a task that proved impossible in the time given. Among the high achievers: **Danny Steinberg** has become a famous judge, **Gerri Sinclair** a world-class expert on digital media, and **Sharyn Herman** the class's champion grandmother

with 13 grandkids. Who could have predicted all this?

Lunch was followed by a few speeches. I took the opportunity to thank everyone for accepting me so readily when I joined the class in the 5th grade as a refugee child who dressed funny and spoke broken English. (I had come from Hungary and had no idea that I was not supposed to wear pants to school.) Instances of the cruelty of children to outsiders are well known, but I was welcomed generously at Talmud Torah and retain fond memories of playing "One, two, three O'Leary" and of sleepovers with my childhood friends, who were all there in the room.



**Jerry Adler** gave an amusing speech about the time he and his brother were briefly taken out of Talmud Torah and sent to public school, since his parents were struggling to pay two tuitions. He described his confusion in public school, when at the end of the hour he was left alone while the other children mysteriously disappeared from the classroom. His evident unhappiness in the big public school made his parents finally relent. He told us of his joy at returning to the safety of little Talmud Torah, where the children stayed put and it was the

teachers who came and went.

**Lisa Weiner** told us about her career as a dancer and dance instructor and **Shari Altman** also spoke about her memories.

We were pleased to share this day with **Prof. and Mrs. Steinberg**, parents of Danny. Prof. Steinberg was president of the board of the school during the time we were there. Also joining us was the remarkably youthful **Mrs. Kolberg**, Trudi's mother, and former president of the PTA.

In addition, we were joined by the current principal of the school who has accomplished so much, Cathy Lowenstein.

I was glad to be back and felt very fortunate to have been able to attend such a nurturing elementary school. I believe my fellow alumni felt the same.



Alumni parents, Mrs. & Dr. Steinberg and Mrs. Kolberg



Carol Naimark, Lisa Weiner, and Gerri Sinclair



Sharon Abrahms, Raffi Zack and Sandy Waterman

# Class Notes

We always love to hear from VTT alumni and to hear of where life has taken them now. Below are some recent updates to share with you about your fellow classmates.

## Class of 1962

**Allan Nutkiewicz** lives with his wife, Karen, and they have three children, Max, Alex and Lexi, 17, 16 and 15 respectively in Westlake Village, California. He is a neurosurgeon but also has his own company that does high energy plasma physics research and development. The family loves to travel, and their most recent trip was last summer in Uzbekistan.



They have a big farm in Iowa growing corn and soybeans. He's written a novel, "Adventures in the Brain Trade," based on his experiences as a neurosurgical resident. Allan also has his MFA from UCLA in Theater, Film and Television.

## Class of 1964

**David Tarnow** and his wife Judy have been married for 33 years and have 3 sons. Dave has practiced criminal law for 33 years in Vancouver and his oldest son Jason has joined him in his office. Dave's son Ben is an articled student at another law firm and his youngest son Josh is finishing his 3rd year at Dalhousie Law School (where Dave also went to law school!). Dave has fond memories of his friends and teachers at VTT. He often thinks of **Mr. Amige** and how much he learned from him.

## Class of 1994

**Michael Sadovnick** earned his Chartered Accountant designation in 2009 after finishing in the top 50 of Canadians in the CA licensing exam. He currently

works with his father, Arnie Sadovnick, at his CA firm STS Partners LLP.



Michael is always looking for new clients from his VTT days. Michael is involved in the local Jewish community as a trustee of Schara Tzedek synagogue. He married his lovely wife Karen Niederhoffer in 2009. Karen is a medical genetics resident in Vancouver. As a Vancouverite, Michael always enjoys running into his classmates from his Talmud Torah days. Prior to becoming a CA, he worked in marketing in Vancouver, San Diego and Toronto. Michael is also a graduate of Point Grey Secondary, Vancouver Film School, SFU and UBC.

## Class of 1995

A proud graduate from VTT, **Haley Crooks (Segal)** went on to study at the University of Western Ontario, and

received a Master's degree in School Psychology from the University of British Columbia in 2009.



She is currently employed as a School Psychologist in the Surrey School District. Haley married Jim Crooks in March 2008 and currently lives at home in Vancouver with her husband and precious 9 month old daughter, Kacey.

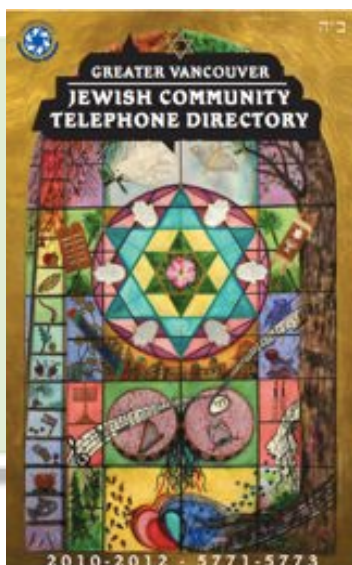
## Class of 2002

**Joshua Berkowitz** is graduating in Spring from the Richard Ivey School of Business at Western University. He will be working at Bain & Company as a business strategy consultant in Toronto afterwards. In between, he will be travelling all over Europe and Israel. Josh is a competitive weightlifter, technology buff and car guy.

What have you been up to since graduation?  
Where has life taken you? Simcha or Nakhes to share?  
We'd love to hear from you! And so would your fellow alum!

Please send in your updates to  
Audrey Moss  
[amoss@talmudtorah.com](mailto:amoss@talmudtorah.com)  
We'll include you in our next Class Notes!





Did you purchase your copy of the Jewish Directory yet?  
Did you know it has been a fundraiser for Vancouver Talmud Torah for over 50 years?

Visit [www.vancouverjewishdirectory.com](http://www.vancouverjewishdirectory.com) to learn more about the history of this project, advertising opportunities, and to be listed as a household.

Purchase your own today and stay connected with the community!  
**Only \$23.50 (including HST)**

Out of town? VTT Alumni will gladly mail you a copy! Please contact [vttalumni@gmail.com](mailto:vttalumni@gmail.com) for more details.

**If you have pictures from your days at VTT,  
help maintain our alumni archives by sending them  
to us so we can post them to share on our website!**

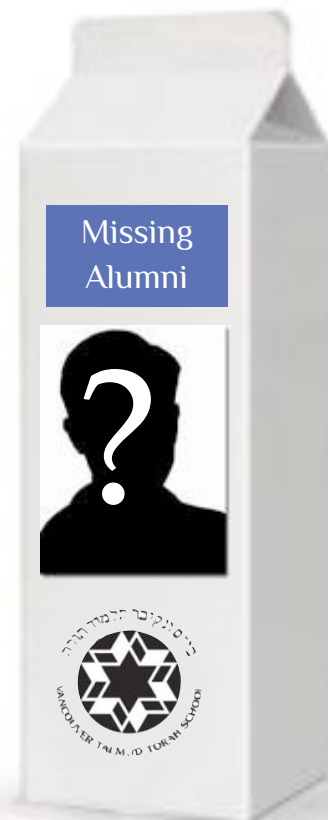
[vttalumni@gmail.com](mailto:vttalumni@gmail.com)

## Know where these alumni are?

Beverly Abramson '62  
Jerry Apfelbaum '59  
Yehuda Asaf '56  
Louis Baltman '50  
Melvin Belogus '56  
Valerie Blumes '59  
Tammy Brachfeld '63  
Eileen Buchwald '59  
Fred Buckwold '62  
Allan Chernoff '52  
Phyllis Davis '60  
Barney Eskin '57  
Aviva Fishman '66  
Allan Forbes '66  
Eugene Forbes '60  
Murray Fraeme '69  
Jeannie Garber '66  
Vivian Garber '61  
Judy Garfin '57  
Chuck Gelfand '52  
Davida Goldberg '68  
Darryl Goldenberg '65  
David Goldenberg '59  
Danny Goodman '59  
Marjorie Goodman '58

Reena Goodman '61  
Paul Goodwin '62  
Harvey Guler '50  
David Hammer '53  
Sylvia Herman '61  
Sharon Hersh '66  
Terry Kagna '56  
Barrie Keel '54  
Marsha Klein '54  
Billy Korbin '60  
Betty Kurtz '53  
Erica Lanz '69  
Sheryl Levine '61  
Howard Levy '64  
Michael Lexier '64  
Lawrence Lipsky '62  
Henry Mallin '63  
Sharon Minkoff '69  
Kenneth Mintz '56  
Judith Moskovitch '56  
Saul Parker '50  
Bernie Poplack '53  
Sherry Poplack '56  
Harvey Radman '66  
Ian Reigenstreif '69

Riva Rome '52  
Eva Rosenstrauch '59  
Phylis Rosenstrauch '59  
Audrey Rosenthal '59  
Jeffrey Samuels '59  
Kerry Samuels '64  
Estelle Schechter '57  
Bonnie Shaffer '62  
Carolyn Shaffer '64  
Mark Sherman '60  
Barry Slutsky '53  
Jack Smiley '56  
Ava Solman '61  
Corrine Solman '59  
Sylvia Tischler '65  
Bernie Toft '51  
Jacob Tor '65  
Barrie Turner '56  
Robert Waldman '69  
Ruth Weinstein '57  
George Weiss '59  
Karen Wosk '65  
Harold Yacowar '59  
Phil Young '54  
Jeff Zilberman '66



**We'd love to keep in touch with them! If you know where they are, or have contact info, please inform the Development Office, 604.736.2694 or [development@talmudtorah.com](mailto:development@talmudtorah.com)**

# Ways to Give

We're all familiar with the adage, "It takes a village to raise a child." This proverb rings so true when community members come forward to do their part for children's education. As a community school, we welcome every family into our fold regardless of ability to pay or learning style. Every extra dollar we raise ensures we can continue to offer quality programming and support to our entire student body.

If you would like to make a donation, you can support the following funds:

- Alumni Fund\*
- Atid Endowment
- Building Fund
- Capital Fund
- Operations Fund
- Gita Kron Fund for Special Education
- Library Fund
- The Lorne & Sylvia Cristall Tikkun Olam Chair
- Mitzvah of Valuing Philanthropy Fund
- Performing Arts and Band Fund
- Strathcona Fund
- VTT Family Fund



\*The Alumni Fund was established to support alumni activities. With this fund, VTT is able to host reunions and other meaningful activities for alumni. Past projects have included supporting a sound system for the school, contributing to production costs for our spring musical, and the creation of the alumni garden.

**For more information on our funds or to make a donation, please contact the Development Office**

**604.736.2694 or [development@talmudtorah.com](mailto:development@talmudtorah.com)**

## Contact Information:

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**Tirzah Abraham**, Development Assistant

**David Bogoch**, Alumni Chair

*We welcome your feedback about this newsletter. Please share with us your comments and suggestions by sending an e-mail to [info@talmudtorah.com](mailto:info@talmudtorah.com)*



Class of '71 in Grade 3

Don't forget to check out class photos at <http://alumni.talmudtorah.com>

You'll be glad you did!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [www.talmudtorah.com](http://www.talmudtorah.com)

and search for the Board of Directors' "Stakeholders' Report" to get a recap of all school's key educational and program initiatives for the last school year.