



COS MEN'S CLUB NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2021

Hearing Men's Voices – COVID-19 Pandemic

On Monday, March 1, members of the Men's Club Board participated in a **Hearing Men's Voices** Zoom program focusing on the COVID-19 Pandemic and how it has affected the daily lives of our Men's Club family.

Hearing Men's Voices programs consist of a series of programming opportunities for Men's Clubs to implement to enable men in their community to discuss issues that men too frequently do not talk about. The series is divided into topical areas, each one consisting of a printed volume with detailed information to allow any Men's Club to implement the programs by following the guidelines provided.

COVID-19 has been in the forefront of everyone for almost a year and is not going away anytime soon. It has effectively reduced interaction among family & friends to a minimum and created new and updated opportunities for families to spend more time at home. Many office-based jobs became home-based jobs, virtual school became the norm for most students, and creative cooking and baking rose to prominence, along with binge watching TV and movies and Zoom conferences.

There has been a lot of discussion and reports about the impact of this "new normal". Examples include increased stress levels, anxiety, food indulgences and depression, just to name a few. This program is not designed to address medical or psychiatric issues, rather it provides an outlet to discuss every day issues around specific topics affecting men.

The men shared stories of the past year, including changes in working and living conditions, and how daily routines have been affected by these changes.

Plans are being made to hold a follow up Hearing Men's Voices program with the COVID-19 topic with the Men's Club membership in the near future.

Happy Passover from the COS Men's Club Board

UPCOMING MEN'S CLUB EVENTS

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WEDNESDAY
APRIL 7, 2021 AT
7:00 PM
COS MEN'S
CLUB YOM
HASHOAH ZOOM
PROGRAM

—

SUNDAY,
APRIL 11, 2021
AT 8:30 AM
COS PEDALERS
BIKE RIDE

—

THURSDAY,
APRIL 15, 2021
AT 7:00 PM
COS MEN'S
CLUB ANNUAL
MEETING
(ZOOM)

FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK
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OHEV SHALOM
MEN'S CLUB



COS Men's Club Yom HaShoah Zoom Program

The COS Men's Club will hold a Yom HaShoah Zoom program on Wednesday, April 7 from 7:00 to 7:20 pm, with some readings and the lighting of the memorial candle for the entire congregation to ensure that our entire community is aware of and commemorates Yom HaSho'ah v'Ha'G'vurah – Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day. Rabbi Kay will recite Kaddish and the Eil Malei Rachamim and offer his remarks. Yellow candles will be available at the synagogue office for pick up.

Bruce Hoffen, Yellow Candles Chairman, explains the importance of this program.

These continue to be difficult times filled with an alarmingly growing number of incidents of hatred, bigotry and anti-Semitism. It is hard to imagine that more than 75 years after the Holocaust the Jewish community still needs to confront such issues, especially in the United States. Whether it is tragedy in Pittsburgh, Poway, Paris, or anywhere else, we have a meaningful opportunity to reunite and rededicate ourselves to the history and lessons of the Holocaust as we approach Yom HaShoah. This is the opportunity every year to honor the memory of our six million brothers and sisters who were murdered during the dark years of the Shoah.

Each year at this time your COS MEN'S CLUB and all other Men's Clubs of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs around the world participate in our Yom HaShoah Yellow Candles Project. The goal of this project is to have a Yellow Candle in every Jewish home so there are at least six million yellow Yahrzeit candles burning brightly together on the same night. Thus, at least once a year a "Pintele Yid," the small spark of every Jewish victim and of those Jews available to remember them, is reignited. This year Yellow Candles can be picked up by arrangement with the COS office.

Each candle purchased will be lit by FJMC in Israel in memory of those who perished in the Shoah. This will allow us to continue our annual tradition, and we hope that you will take this opportunity to discuss the Holocaust and anti-Semitism with your families in your homes on **Yom HaShoah on the evening of April 7**. Remember with your children the 1.5 million children who were among those killed by the Nazis and their collaborators. We have enclosed a special prayer below to assist you when you light the Yellow candle or use an electric light.

(continued on Page 3)

Special Prayer:

As I provide for someone to light a Yellow Candle, I vow never to forget the lives of the Jewish men, women, and children who were martyred and are symbolized by this flame. They were tortured and brutalized by human beings who acted like beasts. Their lives were taken in cruelty. May we be inspired to learn more about our six million brothers and sisters as individuals and as communities, to recall their memory throughout the year so that they will not suffer a double death. May we recall not only the terror of their deaths, but also the splendor of their lives. May the memory of their lives inspire us to hallow our own lives and to live meaningful Jewish lives so that we may help to ensure that part of who they were shall endure always.

We also hope that you will join us online on the evening of Wednesday, April 7 at 7:00 PM for our annual COS Yom HaShoah service and program. You may light a virtual candle and learn more about Yellow Candles at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU8eSE2eN28&feature=youtu.be> and
<https://www.fjmc.org/our-stories##tikkun>

“Am Yisrael Chai.” The people of Israel live! Thank you for your support.

COS MEN'S CLUB
YOM HASHOAH ZOOM PROGRAM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021 7-7:20PM
REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/COSYomHaShoah>

NOTE: Registration is required. After registering, you will receive an email from Zoom with the link for the event.

Men's Club Mensch

Alan Rusonik – Men's Club Member



Things you may not know about me.

- I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada and I proudly maintain my Canadian citizenship to this day.
- My wife and I met in Jerusalem when we were students at Hebrew University. We were in the same Ulpan class, and when the teacher called her last name, Sonik, I knew we were destined for each other. I eventually married Dana Sonik Rusonik. We have been married for over 34 years.
- Dana and I have four children, Amanda, Ashley, Hannah and Zachary. Only Zachary moved with us to Florida in 2014, while the girls stayed in California. We are moving back to California to reunite with our girls, while Zach is off to Israel for a gap year on NATIV. Zachary's full name is Zachary Joseph Carter Rusonik, named in honor of Joe Carter, whose walk-off homerun in the bottom of the 9th inning won the World Series for the Toronto Blue Jays in 1993.
- I appeared on a TV show when I was 4 years old. It was on CTV in Canada and it was called "The Little People Show" hosted by the late Jack Berry. It was a Canadian version of "Kids Say The Darndest Things." My nickname on the show was "Big Brain." When I would answer a question correctly, the rest of the cast would say "Big Brain always knows." I peaked very early.
- I am a long-suffering Toronto Maple Leafs hockey fan, last winning the NHL Championship on my 4th birthday in 1967. I pine for the day when the Leafs get to hoist the Stanley Cup again, *Bimhera Beyamenu, Amen!* (Translation: May it happen speedily in our day, Amen!)

(continued on Page 5)

Editor's questions:

You recently announced your intention to leave your position as head of school at JAO. Can you share some of your accomplishments and memories while at the school?

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure as Head of School at Jewish Academy of Orlando. The teachers, families and students have been wonderful, and most welcoming. I have endeavored to share my love and passion for Judaism with the future leaders of the Jewish people, for it is the children who will be the ones to change our world and make our world a better place. In reflecting back on the past seven years, I feel I have accomplished many of my goals and objectives, and there is much for which I am proud. If I had to choose among my accomplishments, I would say leaving a strong social-emotional curriculum in place that aligns with the Judaic Studies values of the school would definitely be at or near the top. It has been my goal to raise students who acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express, and manage emotions - to always be mindful and respectful of others, and to develop meaningful relationships with their friends and loved ones.

As an active member of the Congregation Ohev Shalom and the Orlando Jewish education system, what do you see as the future of Conservative Judaism with the next generation of younger Jewish men & women?

After many years of affiliation with the Conservative movement, I have come to realize that we need more than movements and classifying one another by titles such as Reform, Conservative and Orthodox. What we need are serious Jews of any denomination. By serious Jews, I mean Jews who commit to a life dedicated to the principles of Torah, Lifelong Learning, Mitzvot, Ma'asim Tovim, Mentschlichkeit, Klal Yisrael and Tikkun Olam. These ideals do not belong exclusively to any one movement; they cross all denominations and boundaries. In our everchanging world, I want to focus on what unites us as a people, and not what divides us. It is time we stop worrying about titles and focusing on our beautiful inheritance, that is, the values and traditions that have sustained us as a people for 3,700 years.

Counting of the Omer

In 2021, the counting of the Omer will begin in the evening of Sunday, March 28 and ends in the evening of Sunday, May 16.

*The counting of the Omer seems to have been introduced to establish a connection between Passover and Shavout – holidays separated by seven full weeks. Passover marked the beginning of the grain harvest. The first crop (barley) was cut on Passover, and a small amount (an omer) was brought to the Temple as a sacrifice on the second day of the holiday. For the next 49 days, each day was marked off (counted), and the period became known as Sefira ("the counting"). The fiftieth day was Shavuot, on which the next crop (wheat) was harvested and brought to the Temple as a sacrifice.

According to the twelfth-century philosopher Moses Maimonides, the importance of counting the days between the exodus from Egypt and the anniversary of the receiving of the Law at Mount Sinai is to indicate that the release from bondage is not an end to itself, that liberty without law is a doubtful blessing.

**(Excerpts taken from "The Jewish Book of Why" – written by Alfred J. Kolatch)*

This Year on Zoom: Next Year May We Be Free

Written by Tom Sudow, International President of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and copied from the monthly FJMC Hashofar newsletter

In 1947, David Ben-Gurion went before the United Nations to plead the case for the establishment of the State of Israel.

“Three hundred years ago a ship called the Mayflower set sail to the New World. This was a great event in the history of England. Yet I wonder if there is one Englishman who knows at what time the ship set sail? Do the English know how many people embarked on this voyage? What quality of bread did they eat? Yet more than three thousand and three hundred years ago, before the Mayflower set sail, the Jewish people left Egypt. Every Jew in the world, even in America or Soviet Russia, knows exactly what date they left – the fifteenth of Nisan. Everyone knows what kind of bread they ate. Even today Jews worldwide eat Matzah on the 15th of Nisan. They retell the story of the Exodus and all troubles Jews have endured in exile. They conclude the evening with two statements: This year slaves; next year, free men. This year here; next year in Jerusalem in Ertz Yisrael. That is the nature of the Jew.”

Each year, attending a Passover Seder is the number one Jewish ritual. More people attend a Seder than light Hanukkah candles or attend High Holiday services. Yes, it is a time of family and tradition, but so are many other times in the Jewish year. Why aren't we showing up at the family Sukkan in the numbers that show up for a Seder?

I believe it is because Passover is the story of survival. It is the optimistic story of a people enslaved for hundreds of years defiantly marching to freedom. No matter how bad the circumstance we face, there can be an Exodus. The Seder is the story of our freedom and it is a story that we know in detail because we retell it every year.

Many of us end our Seder each year with the singing of Had Gad Ya. “One little goat that my father bought for two zuzim.” It sounds like a nursery rhyme. It is so much more; it is a statement of survival. Each verse becomes more challenging, until the final verse, when the Holy One slew the Angel of Death. This nursery rhyme says those who victimize you will be victims themselves. That there is justice, and you can and will be free.

Over the past year, many of us have endured a plague, which changed our lives. Some who we loved and cared for did not survive the plague and our thoughts are with them. When will it end? When can we defiantly march out of our homes maskless?

Did you ever think about the song Dayanu that we joyously sing at our Seder? Dayanu is often translated, as “it would have been enough”.

Had he split the sea but not brought us through on dry land – Dayanu

Had he provided for our needs without feeding us Manna – Dayanu

Had he given us the Torah without bringing us to Israel – Dayanu

Would it have really been enough? The Jews would have drowned in the Red Sea if they did not walk through on dry land. The Jewish people would have starved in the dessert without manna. The Jewish people would still be wondering, without Israel. So, why do we sing this happy song and say it would have been enough – Dayanu?

Why? Because they did march through on dry land; they did eat manna; and they made it to the Promised Land. The Jewish people survived!

Throughout our history, in good and bad times, families have gathered for the Seder. Sometimes faced with horrible oppression all around, they told the story of the Exodus and they sang songs and said, “our liberation will happen soon”. The Seder is a time of optimism and time to remember, that we can overcome odds and survive.

It was with that optimism that David Ben Gurion addressed the UN, a few years removed from the Holocaust and the destruction of European Jewry. He knew that Jewish hope was renewed every 15th of Nisan throughout Jewish History. He saw a modern day Exodus bringing survivors to Israel. That was the story he addressed to the UN.

As some of us face another Passover separated physically from family and friends, we do so with the knowledge that this modern day plaque will soon be behind us. Next year may we all be together in health.

This year here; next year in Jerusalem. This year enslaved, next year a free people.

I wish you a healthy, safe and meaningful Passover.

Manischewitz Sangria

Summertime is right around the corner, so embrace the warm weather and serve this fruity, delicious, and 100 percent kosher sangria from [What Jew Wanna Eat](#). Made from Manischewitz wine, lemon-line soda, kosher vodka, and fresh fruit, this is sure to be a crowd pleaser for the 21-plus crowd.

Ingredients:

- Fruit of your choice (apples, oranges, peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, etc.)
- 1 750 bottle Manischewitz Blackberry wine (3 ¼ cups)
- 2 cups lemon-line soda, sparkling water or sparkling wine
- ¼ to ½ cup booze of your choice or to taste (vodka, brandy or rum)

Instructions:

1. Chop your fruit into bite sized pieces.
2. Put fruit into a large pitcher.
3. Cover fruit with Manischewitz, soda and booze.
4. Stir and let marinate 1-24 hours.
5. Serve over ice and drink up.



2021 Virtual FJMC Convention and the Whova App <https://whova.com/>

Written by Danny Mandeau. Co-chair of the 2021 Virtual FJMC Convention and copied from the monthly FJMC Hashofar newsletter

As many of you are aware, a fantastic Convention was planned for Chicago this year. Due to Covid we had to change our plans and go virtual instead. Although nothing beats being together in the flesh, we have done our best to replicate as many of your favorite events from past conventions as possible. For example, Ma'asim Tovim, Quality Club, Torch Awards and, of course, everyone's favorite, Our World Famous Cantors Concert!

Our agenda also features several prominent guest speakers throughout the week. One example is one of Israel's best speakers and authors, Micah Goodman, live from Israel on Sunday, June 13 at 11 am. If you have never heard Micah, you are in for quite a treat. One of our past International Presidents told us that he, "was blown away", after listening to Micah on a podcast. Micah's topic will be, "Catch 67, The Ideas Behind the Arguments That Tear Israel Apart". His presentation will bring us a fresh way of thinking about the problems that are dividing the Jewish world. This is just one of the amazing events that will fill the convention week.

Unbelievably, the entire Convention will only cost \$36! We are purposely charging this low price to attract a wide audience, especially to those who have never been to a Convention or are not that involved with FJMC. This will be a great opportunity to "strut our stuff".

One more exciting addition: We will be using a new app called Whova which will help you easily navigate through our Convention once you register.

Some of the features include:

- Full agenda allowing you to create your own personal agenda
- View all sessions and receive session material
- Built in Q & A and chat features
- Speakers' bios
- Instantly reach out to your fellow FJMC'ers and participate in virtual meet-ups.
- Whova is a terrific way to keep us "Always Connected" during the FJMC Virtual Convention.

In sum, we will have an action packed week and encourage you and your friends to register as soon as you can.

We can't wait to see you June 6-13! (weekday programming is evening only)

COS Men's Club Leadership 2020-2021

Co-Presidents	Steven Herman & Elliott Davis
Treasurer	Andy Rosen
Secretary	Jerry Leibman
VP Programming	Jerry Leibman
VP Membership	Stuart Leventhal
VP Publicity	Michael Broniewski
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At-Large Board Member	Jim Tinkoff
At-Large Board Member	Mike Wheeler
At-Large Board Member	Alan Zelt

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