



'Share Your Stories'

Gail's Update, No 6

October, 2023

Shana Tova to you all!

It's just over a year that our project, 'Share Your Stories', has been running. Thirty-one contributors have shared 111 stories on the site- without a doubt, a respectable response to a call for stories/personal writing from a community spread throughout the world! And of course, the more stories we have, the more stories are 'born'.

Sitting at home while it is 31 °C outside I have plenty of time to go over the new tales that have been spun over the last year. These are obviously the fruits of my interactions with you all and are completely subjective.

I'll begin with **Anthony (Tony) Fagin**. Tony was from Sea Point. He had lived in London for many years, was an English teacher and loved writing. He contacted me through a member of our group and was thrilled to be able to post his stories on our site.



His one major problem was difficulty in working the various Apps on his computer and so we'd spend long sessions trying to sort that out, often simply talking on Zoom without a video since it was so erratic on his screen. I learnt that Tony lived with Morris Nitsun, whom I had met many years before at my aunt's house. He planned to deal with the issue of his unreliable computer by using Morris's room (which he did) for the reading of "Why Mark Kaplan didn't become a Lawyer" which he read in Oct 2022.

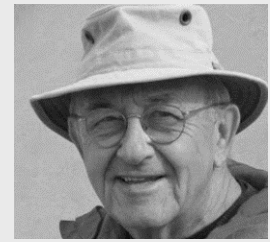
Tony was thrilled to read his story which was enjoyed by all those who attended the Zoom. ([Why Mark Kaplan Didn't Become a Lawyer](#)) And then soon after, tragedy struck; Morris, Tony's partner passed away unexpectedly a few weeks after that reading. We corresponded briefly after that. Tony was really upset and agitated after Morris's passing, but who would have thought that within a month, he would pass away suddenly from a cardiac problem?

Following this sad development, CHOL, 'Share Your Story', held a memorial Zoom session, organized largely by Tony's friends and family who gathered and spoke about him. This was a truly special evening which has been saved on our website. Tony's friends read his story, 'Vredfort' at the meeting.

[Tony Fagin's memorial zoom meeting 22.1.2023](#)

And then there's **Raphael Shevelev**

In February this year, I read an article in the Jewish Chronicle of some time back, 2010 to be precise, called 'Mrs Marcus's Bagels' written by Raphael Shevelev.



There is no doubt that Cape Town bagels were partly responsible for my believing that the world was a good place, full of humour, warmth, kindness and good taste. After all, they were baked in two of my favourite places - under Table Mountain in Mill Street and around the corner from my grandparents' flat in Muizenberg. Reading about them infused me with an excitement and naivete that I had somehow lost along the way, living in the Land of Milk and Honey since 1976.

I just had to contact the writer of that article. I sleuthed the Internet for his name which I found on several sites relating to Raphael's photography and art work. It didn't take that long to find an address which I used with the following short note:

I have just read your story about Mrs Marcus's bagels which I so enjoyed and can imagine. My mother, Rita, grew up in the Gardens and I in Bellville.

You have led a most creative and productive life according to your blogs and website. Amazing!

Just thought I'd say Hi and hope you're well and still finding excitement in what you do!
Best wishes

Not all that long after that, Karine Schomer, Raphael's partner in San Francisco of 34 years replied, telling me that Raphael had passed away in September 2021 and that she found my note in his unused Email account, and felt compelled to reply.



Karine, a PhD, writer, speaker, scholar, political and social commentator was looking for a site where Raphael's legacy of stories about Cape Town where he grew up, could be safely posted!

Our website, fitted the bill perfectly and subsequently in 3 meetings, Karine has been embraced as an adopted member of the clan. In fact, her reading of Raphael's stories together with her wisdom expressed at our Zoom sessions, are a favorite with our forum!

I invite you all to listen to them! Here is Mrs Marcus's Bagels: [Mrs Marcus's Bagels](https://www.chol.website/stories.htm) The others are on our website: <https://www.chol.website/stories.htm>

Next is **Jack Hoffmann** who lives in Denmark. Some months ago, Jack wrote me a letter telling me that he had recently been made aware of the CHOL 'Share Your Story Site' and wondered whether his writing could find a place on it.

Jack was from Johannesburg, had gone through a similar childhood to so many of us, was educated at King David, then Medical School (Wits), then Israel and then Denmark where he has been living for decades.



The special aspect of our meeting was that Jack immediately offered to 'collect' stories from his South African contacts as well as assist me in editing and organizing the site itself!

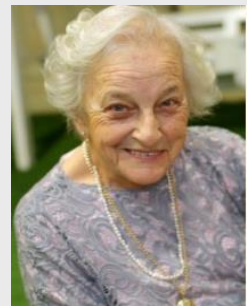
This has been a super experience since it's wonderful having help on the job. Many of the new memoirs on our site are of Jack and his friends and are really well worth reading!

For example, I recommend this outstanding one of Jack's:

[Scenes From A World Long Gone](#)

And lastly, there's **Vicky Scher** who lived up the road from us in Durbanville. We had never really met, but I remembered her name, knew her family who lived near us in Bellville and of course had contact with many of the Schers at school and in the community.

Vicky's personal story of the Durbanville community is full of vibrancy, emotions and her memory of the people, their lives in that small country haven is truly exceptional. We spent many hours on the phone, getting the facts down, exactly how Vicky wanted them, correcting them many times until the green light was finally given.



This project was discussed at a CHOL Community zoom meeting and Durbanville is discussed from 31:42 -55.28 minutes

[The Durbanville Jewish Community - a personal perspective](#)


These are my tales for now. Each and every encounter had its special effect on me. I guess they all reflect in some way the range of experiences and emotions we uncover on meeting people and then interacting with them on a serious level over a special task. Our common background made the whole process more intense and meaningful...

There are many more stories I could tell, but I'll leave them for next time!

It remains for me to extend the ongoing invitation to you write.

Believe me, it's a great way of focusing on one's 'inner world' which we often neglect.

Warm wishes to you all,

Gail 

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