



# CHOL – Community History On-Line

A forum for those involved in preserving the footprint of Southern African Jewish community life in digital form

## Community History On-Line CHOL Newsletter #21 July 2025

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### ‘Share your stories’ – an Update from Gail Loon Lustig

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June -July has been a productive month, relatively speaking! Wonderful to read your pieces rather than yet another podcast, video or post on social media.

CHOL ‘**Share Your Stories**’, received contributions from 4 different writers, far and wide from Jerusalem to Sydney, Perth and Tel Aviv. Different subjects were covered, mostly in the genre of creative non-fiction which tell about past personal experiences.

I guess our roots, our lives, our dreams and creative streaks extend back decades. You’re all invited to check out the new pieces on [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website) /Stories and then Search

**Eli Rabinowitz** traces the breath holding and fascinating story of a family member after whom he was named; **Russell Sacks** reminisces about the time he was an apprentice baker in England, while **Rose Saltman** tells of a trip to Vietnam which evoked much thought. **Brian Meyer's** poems capture the flavour of growing up in South Africa and are both humorous and charming.

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The story I'd like to tell in this newsletter relates to the **Bellville Community site** to be found alongside other communities on our CHOL Website. [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website)

A little while ago Stanley Loon who 'drives' the site received the link to a short 7-minute family movie that the Levy family in Bellville had made in 1959 and chose to share with us all. CHOL is truly grateful for the clip prepared by the late Hazel and Leslie Levy and forwarded to us by their daughter, Shelly who lives in the States!

The subject of the well-planned video captures a day in the Hebrew Nursery School in the centre of the town, set up by the community, where children between ages three and six, spent their formative years. We’re talking about the Apartheid era when our choices as citizens were limited in so many ways. All the children attending came from the various neighbourhoods in the town which then had 100 Jewish families and a population of 40,000. (our Geography teacher taught us just how many there were in Std 3!) Till today, many ex-Bellvillites, Jewish or not, recall meeting friends daily in an environment that was both stimulating and lots of fun.

One can't help but smile watching the children in the movie, many of whom we still have contact with 66 years later!! They are spread all over the world, from Australia to Canada, Israel and South Africa. And yes, in the digital world in which we live, these once cute children pulling carts, spinning on wheels and climbing jungle gyms, received an email link to the movie. Giggles, oohs and aahs, came back via return mail and the smiles and amazement could be felt threading their way through our often dull and repetitive email accounts.

The star of the clip was undoubtedly Betty Frumer (Kagan) the young Nursery School Teacher in her early twenties, who drove every morning from Kuilsriver, the neighbouring town, to Bellville with her two children, Lynette and Janine. Betty, who grew up in Muizenberg, married to Benny, a GP, was freshly out of the Barkly House Training School for nursery schoolteachers. She embarked enthusiastically on her new appointment in the community, running the youngest class.

After receiving the movie, I set about tracing Betty's family so that they too could share the joy of discovering a snippet of life then, showing Betty at the beginning of her very varied career. The Frumers had settled in Israel in 1962, their lives centring around Ashkelon, a coastal city in the south of the country. After the usual 'do you know' and asking around, I found a phone number for the business that the family ran.

Two weeks ago, I phoned.

'Hello, I wonder if you could help me. I'm looking for the Frumer family....'

'I see, who is this please?'

'My name is Gail and I'm from Tel Aviv. I have a special short movie of Betty that I'd like to forward to her family...Maybe you could tell me how to contact them?'

**'This is Betty!!** was the reply.

'Really?? that's amazing!' I mumbled.

And so Betty and I chatted for ages on the phone about people we both knew, her time at the Nursery School, the children and their families. She shared her age of 93 with me and said she felt like 70 and that she'd love to meet up. Of course, she remembered Stanley, my younger brother, who was her pupil in the kindergarten and was thrilled that he'd be joining us.

She was prepared to travel up to Tel Aviv by train and meet. Her schedule was pretty full, but we managed to set a date and so yesterday that's exactly what we did!

We met for coffee 66 years later, reminisced endlessly exchanging experiences, each telling the other about our lives, the ups and downs, the choices we made. It was simply wonderful. And then right at the end, her grandson Edo together with the partner of her grand-daughter, arrived on the scene to meet with Betty and Bini, her helper. They were thrilled to watch the movie of Betty checking ears, smiling in the playground, making sure the children were safe and happy.

<https://chol.website/communities.htm> (check Bellville, and then 'images' for the link to the movie)



Betty Frumer and Stanley Loon.

Teacher and pupil, meeting in Tel Aviv  
66 years later!



*Lehitra'ot* till next time

Gail, Betty and Bini - Tel Aviv, July 2025

So, yes, dear friends, a lovely CHOL story, connecting us with the past in so many different ways, making sure the present isn't far behind! Ah, and before I forget, Betty has promised to comment on the Maitland Community Site run by Philip Stodel, Maitland being the childhood home of her late husband Benny.

**As ever, looking forward to receiving your stories!**

Warm regards,

Gail Loon Lustig

Checkout the CHOL website: [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website) which now has on it:

- 59 [Communities](#)
- 63 [Memoirs](#)
- 173 original [Stories](#)
- 41 Videos of [Presentations](#)
- 20 [Newsletters](#)

Feel free to browse **resources** and **journal articles** as well as our **CHOL newsletters** on the Site

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**CHOL – Community History On-Line** is a forum set up in 2020, under the auspices of the Kaplan Centre at UCT and the South African Jewish Museum – bringing together all those working on / or interested in creating an online presence relating to the **History of Jewish Communities in Southern Africa**.

see [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website)

contact [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website).



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