



October 15 PM – Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will cover COVID19 updates, data supporting the theory that schools are not super spreaders, why people with type O blood may have less chance of catching COVID19, how local bar and bat mitzvah students are adjusting, anxiety tips from NASA and Baylor College of Medicine, updates on the PPP (yep, more updates and more guidance!), why Zoom is killing creativity, updates from Harris County Flood Control District, Facebook's ban on Holocaust deniers, and several security webinars coming up from SCN and ADL.

### **COVID19**

Countries around the world are beginning to see the hallmarks of a third wave of COVID19 infections. From [Dr. James McDeavitt's Coronavirus update](#):

[The news out of Houston this week is a mixed bag.](#) No one has a crystal ball, but on balance, I am discouraged by our numbers and believe we are on the cusp of another surge. Although there is good news (the City's test positivity rate is down to 5%), a number of our metrics are worsening. From the TMC data, our R(t) value, after 32 days of staying below 1.0 (virus receding), snuck above 1.0 (virus is expanding). New daily cases in the greater Houston area remain stubbornly in the 400-500 range, and the daily rate for the past three weeks is edging up (373, 394, 412). New hospitalizations are increasing, albeit at a slow rate (0.9% daily increase) and the total census of COVID-19 patients in TMC facilities is again rising (1.3% daily). Data from the Baylor diagnostic labs show the positivity rate increasing, along with the average viral load of specimens, a sign that the tested individuals may be more infectious. There is increasing evidence that young adults (20s and 30s) are responsible for much of the spread.

The [Harris County COVID-19 Data Landscape](#) supports Dr. McDeavitt's update. We are seeing a slow increase in cases around the County. Most of these new cases are attributed to the 20-30 year old crowd and to private gatherings and transmission within the home. Which is why it is still important to mask up and wash hands when visiting friends and family.

Emily Oster, and economist at Brown University, has [released the preliminary findings of her new school dashboard](#) to track COVID19 infections and transmissions in pre-K-12 schools. Current data shows that the safety measures schools have in place, when followed, lead to very few "super spreading" events inside the building. This dashboard does not cover colleges and universities.

New reports are coming out that [people with blood type O](#) may be at a lower risk of infection and severity of the illness.

The [Houston Chronicle highlighted several of our area synagogues](#) and how teens are dealing with coming of age during COVID19. Bar and Bat Mitzvah students grapple with whether to proceed when social distancing requires virtual or deeply scaled back celebrations.

Anxiety levels are rising around the country as voting, politics and the pandemic take their toll. [NASA Astronauts are offering their tips](#) on how to deal with long periods of isolation and anxiety when family and friends are—quite literally—a world away.

Dr. Eric Storch, department chair of psychology at Baylor College of Medicine, will be presenting a [webinar on how to help children manage their anxiety](#) during these trying times.

It's been a while since we last looked at the Paycheck Protection Program guidance. Last week, the SBA issued a new simplified PPP Loan Forgiveness Application and guidance for borrowers with PPP loans of \$50,000 or less. The new form and guidance permits these borrowers to disregard any reductions in FTEs or in covered salaries when applying for loan forgiveness. A copy of the new application and instructions can be found at [SBA Form 3508S](#) and [here](#), respectively. [Additional details are available from the Jewish Federations of North America.](#)

As always, the JFNA team suggests you contact your professional advisor for additional information, though we remain available to answer questions at [SBALoans@JFNA.org](mailto:SBALoans@JFNA.org).

The novelty of Zoom is beginning to wear thin as we enter our seventh month of remote working, for many. Once hailed as a business savior during the pandemic, [Zoom calls are now reaching the point of "Zoom fatigue."](#) People are logging in and checking out leading to disengagement and lower creativity and productivity levels. Businesses that once thought they would never go back to large offices are now [rethinking how viable a purely work-from-home environment can be](#) when human nature longs for social interactions. Goodbye boring Zoom calls, hello boring in-person meetings.

## **Hurricane Season 2020**

The [Harris County Flood Control District held its update on the South Rice and Chimney Rock bridges](#) and Meyergrove Stormwater detention basin. So far the current projects at Hillcroft and Braeswood are behind schedule and the contractor is doing everything possible to get that project finished. S. Rice and Chimney Rock are out for bid and should begin early next year. There are plans to turn the former Meyergrove apartment complex land into a new wet bottom detention basin but a timeline has not been finalized for that project. If you know anyone who would like to contribute to connecting the trails along Braeswood so they go under the bridges, HCFC would like to hear from you.

## **Security**

After years of pressure, [Facebook announced this week that it will ban all posts and groups that deny the Holocaust.](#) This comes after a broad coalition of Jewish organizations spent years educating Facebook's founder, Mark Zuckerberg, on why Holocaust denial is fuel for antisemitism and leads to attacks, often deadly, on the Jewish community. The ADL has been a key leader in pressuring Facebook and other social media companies to take more responsibility when it comes to hate speech online.

The Secure Community Network (SCN) will host a webinar "[Two Years After the Pittsburgh Attack: The Evolution and Future of Securing the Jewish Community.](#)"

The ADL will be hosting two webinars on the 2020 election. The first, "[Voting Rights in Texas](#)" will be at 12 p.m. on October 20<sup>th</sup> and the second, "[Extremism and the Election](#)," will be at 12 p.m. on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **In Other News...(Ear Buds In, Volume Up!)**

What are two out of work Israeli actresses who speak Yiddish to do during the pandemic? Pivot to a band! *Vibers*, a play on "vayber," the Yiddish word for women, is the newest modern Yiddish band to hit YouTube. Their first song, "[Bei Mir Bistu Shein](#)," is a playful new take on the 1932 operetta. It's a catchy tune filmed in a closed community pool in Tel Aviv reminiscent of the 1980's. Can you spot the horseradish, matzah balls, and compote? Wish I spoke Yiddish...

Take care today and I hope you find time to enjoy some bright music to lift your day,

Jackie

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