Coming to terms with ‘real’ life

Israeli President Shimon Peres visiting Gilad Shalit at the Shalit family home in the northern Israeli town of Mitzpe Hila, on October 24. (ZIV BINYONSKI/FLASH90)  SEE PAGES 3, 5, 8

'Stuttgart' arrived in SA 75 years ago / 4  DAVIS: Russell Tribunal like Stalinist trial / 8  Jews gear up for climate parley / 25  SUPPLEMENT: Year-End Travel & Celebrations / 11-20

YOUTH / 24  SPORT / 28  LETTERS / 22  CROSSWORD & SUDOKU / 27  COMMUNITY BUZZ / 7  WHAT'S ON / 27

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SHABBAT TIMES

October 28/30 Tishrei
October 29/31 Cheshvan

Rosh Chodesh
Parshat Noach

18.00 19.07 East London
18.00 19.18 Port Elizabeth
17.57 18.49 Durban
18.10 19.47 Cape Town
18.04 18.55 Johannesburg

18.14 19.07 East London

PARSHA OF THE WEEK

An opportunity squandered is a sin

RABBI NOACH
Rabbi Berel Wein
Director of The Destiny Foundation

ONE CAN ONLY view the entire Torah narrative of parshat Noach as being one that describes lost opportunities, of roads not taken and chances missed.

It begins with the generation of Noach itself. Noach was the progenitor of the great biblical disaster of the flood which destroyed them and their world and its civilisation. Either he is not persuasive enough or the society is perhaps perversely oblivious to what is about to happen to their world.

This conclusion is valid in both, Jewish and general, we are witness to the consequences of not taking heed of warnings and ignoring evident signs of danger. No one likes to listen to prophets of gloom and doom.

These contrarians disturb our daily lives and its sense of equilibrium and inertia. We say that we want positive change to occur, but in our hearts we are more than satisfied to have the status quo of life remain.

So, Noach’s generation saw an opportunity to save itself and thereby to change all of later world history. They judge Noach and his ark building project as being of no entirely of no other. So, even as the rains begin and the water begins to rise, they continue to scoff at Noach and his message to them.

The unwonted savour is usually ignored in human events. He does not fit our preconceived matrix of help and salvation. Thus, human beings accept and approve and correct in his assessments, he is usually reviled, ridiculed and ignored.

I need not give examples of this truism of human behaviour to those of us who have lived in Israel over the past number of decades.

After the flood it is Noach himself who is found wanting in this very true tract of missed opportunities. The reason that the commentators have always seemed to treat Noach negatively, even harshly, is because he missed out on creating a new world unsullied by past error and sin.

An opportunity such is that, essentially the same one offered to Adam and Chava in the Garden of Eden, has never again been offered to anyone else in the long history of human civilisation.

Not accepting that offer, not seizing that opportunity is the weakness that dooms Noach to criticism and bad reputation in Jewish rabbinic scholarship. The Torah itself advances clearly the need to make correct decisions and choices in life. The Torah tells us to choose life over death, good over evil, eternal life over the fleeting.

Many times the refusal to make any choice when the correct one was patently present, is not viewed in any way as being neutral. Rather it is viewed as being a fatal wrong choice. An opportunity such is that, essentially the same one offered to Adam and Chava in the Garden of Eden, has never again been offered to anyone else in the long history of human civilisation.

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Joy over Gilad, fear over terrorists on the loose

ROBYN SASSEN

THE THOUSAND-TO-ONE exchange ratio established by the deal struck in Cairo a fortnight ago to facilitate the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, has been controversial on several levels. The SA Jewish Report spoke to two senior rabbis and two youth leaders. Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, South African Rosh Beth Din, explained how the issue is not cut and dried. “It is obviously a very emotional thing,” he said. “We are, on the one hand, very happy that Gilad Shalit is out. Halachically speaking, however, is the question of beside the fact of a so to speak high ransom, halacha instructs that you do not pay more than the value of that person, unless that person is in danger, which of course, was.

“On the other hand, halacha also states that the family must redeem the one who is kidnapped. In this argument, the Israeli government takes the role of the family in redeeming the prisner. These released prisoners are terrorists and they are already back in society in. These released prisoners are terrorists and they are already back in society. These released prisoners are terrorists and they are already back in society.

“Secondly, unfortunately the media made a big thing of the emotions in this case. The media putting pressure on the government, pre-empted the deal and increased the danger of the situation, which makes it all the more complicated. And thirdly, Benjamin Netanyahu has written books claiming Israel will never capitulate to terrorists. But what has happened here?”

Rabbi Yossy Goldman, spiritual leader of the Sydenham Highlands North Congregation, felt that he shared the views of most Jews. “We are, of course, delighted for Gilad and his family. I prayed for him regularly on Shabbat when I did the Prayer for the State of Israel. We thank G-d for His mercies and Gilad’s release from a life-threatening, tortuous imprisonment. Please G-d, he should be well and enjoy a blessed future.”

Said youth leader Daniel Mackintosh, an outspoken supporter for the Open Shuhada Street movement: “Basiclly I am relieved. It is good to have Gilad back in Israel. It is important to remind those who think that Israel cannot talk to Hamas, that they can.

“Further, Israeli can make difficult decisions and confront its right wing when the Prime Minister is under enough pressure. This should redouble the efforts of those around the world seeking to place diplomatic and economic pressure on Israel to end the occupation, support a two-state solution and the Palestinian bid for statehood at the UN.”

Lara (Greenberg) Doel, a relatively recent ohalah, and former staffer for the SA Jewish Report and Beyachad commented: “Gilad Shalit’s release is a true example of the real Israel experience - absolute joy and gut-wrenching sorrow combined in an emotion-roller-coaster.

“No-one in Israel could help but shed a tear as that first image of Gilad filled our screens. Having said that, watching convicted murderers walk free is not a sight any Israeli can stomach or condone. As Gilad re-acclimatises and begins to live life as a free man, our government and military have much to do to ensure such a top-sided and nationally dangerous deal is never repeated.”

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

SUSPECT IN SAUDI ENVOY PLOT PLEADS NOT GUILTY

CORPUS CHRISTI - The Iranian-American man accused of plotting to kill the Saudi ambassador to Washington, has pleaded not guilty. Manssor Arbabsiar, 56, from Texas, made his plea on Monday in US District Court in NY, facing charges to murder the Islamic Revolutionary Guard. The plot reported-ly involved an attack on Saudi and Israeli embassies in Buenos Aires. The Iranian government denies involvement. Arbabsiar’s alleged co-conspirator is said to be a member of Iran’s Quds Force, the covert arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard. Arbabsiar says he was coaxed into making the confession. (JTA)
THIE 1930s witnessed a massive upsurge of anti-Semitism in South Africa, hardly a propitious time for the influx of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. Opposition was swift, driven largely by the Greyshirts, led by Louis Weichardt. His ideas resonated widely. Jewish immigration was identified by Die Burger and other opposition newspapers as a recipe for disaster.

Under huge pressure, the United Party government hurriedly announced restrictive immigration regulations on September 23, 1936. From the beginning of November, immigrants who would have made a sizeable cash deposit, clearly an impossibility for refugees who had already been stripped of their possessions. By late October well-attended meetings protested against the impending arrival of the Stuttgart. This German liner, with 517 German-Jewish refugees on board, had been hurriedly chartered by Jewish organisations in Europe to arrive before the new immigration regulations came into effect.

On the eve of her arrival, the Greyshirts held a 3,000 strong protest meeting at Cape Town's Koffiewinkel, at 22:20 a rumour that the Stuttgart was due to dock at 01:00, provoked hundreds in the audience to march on the docks. Within half an hour about 400 Greyshirt supporters were loitering at the quayside. But the ship had dropped anchor outside the entrance to Table Bay.

By the time the liner docked at 06:00 the next morning - exactly 75 years ago - the crowd had largely dispersed, leaving only a small group of protesters on the quayside shouting anti-Semitic slogans and giving the Nazi salute.

The refugees were horrified. Some had embarked without any knowledge of the new immigration regulations, and the 300 other documents assembled in contesting the ruling in the US court claimed that Schneerson had no heirs when he left Russia.

A US District Court in Brooklyn ruled in August 2001 that the Schneerson collection, containing 12,000 books and 50,000 other documents assembled by Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneerson, was seized during the Russian Revolution and the Nazi invasion, and then later by the Russian army. It is currently stored in the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow. The Russian Cultural Ministry in contesting the ruling in the US court claimed that Schneerson had no heirs when he left Russia.

In August, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art cancelled plans for an art loan to a Russian museum in the ongoing dispute (FTA).
Pretorians give thanks for Shalit’s safe release

STORY BY DIANE WOLFSON

THE PRETORIA Jewish community gathered in their numbers at the shul on Tuesday evening last week, to pray in thanksgiving for the safe release of Gilad Shalit and a prayer for Gilad’s safe release after some five years of incarceration by Hamas. The Glenhazel Shul was once again almost filled, just as it had been only a few weeks previously when Jews flocked to answer the call of Rabbi Goldstein to join in the shul service and prayers for the freedom and well-being of the young soldier. The atmosphere at the time at the Tefillah Service, was sombre. Krengel said: “It is a joyous day, but also a painful day. "A great sacrifice has been made for the unification of the Shalit family. The Jewish people had adopted Gilad as our own and we hope that his release will be the forerunner of a new dawn for Israel.”

Rabbi Goldstein quoted from Devarim Parsha Nitzavim where G-d says: “I call heaven and earth today to bear witness against you. I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse; and you shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your offspring…”

“Of course we have to choose life. There is no other decision.”

In Judaism, if you save one life, it is as if you save the entire world and similarly, if you destroy one life it is as though you destroy the world.

He said there was no other country or government in the world which would exchange one life for 1 000.

“Although we are heartened, we can celebrate life; it is our celebration of life and sanctification of heroes that we are able to give so much to save one life.”

Yaakov Finkelstein, charge d’affaires of the Israeli Embassy, said: “As a representative of the State of Israel, but also as a Jew and as a father, I stand here with mixed feelings, in the words of President (Shimon) Peres, ‘with torn hearts’ and I believe many of you are with a torn heart as well.

“While we rejoice and celebrate the return of Gilad to his family and people, we remember the innocent victims of the terror attacks and their families, whose wounds will never heal, and are bleeding again today, as they watch the vicious murderers of their relatives - literally with blood on their hands - being released today.

“Gilad became the son of all mothers in Israel as well as many in the Diaspora. How many times had we prayed that he should be home for Rosh Hashanah, for Yom Kippur… This time our prayers have been heard.”

World ORT leader Robert Singer visits SA next month

ORT South Africa is excited to announce the imminent arrival of one of its international leaders, Robert Singer, in November. Singer is the director general and CEO of World ORT, one of the world’s largest non-governmental education and training providers.

SO, WHO is Mr Singer and WHY would you want to meet him?

Incredible fact that he has been instrumental in increasing World ORT’s efficiency and visibility, the organisation he works for, ORT, has been instrumental in the survival of the Jewish people throughout the history of persecution from the pogroms in Russia in 1880, through the Second World War and is still doing amazing educational programmes in the communities in which it finds itself.

Prior to joining World ORT, Robert Singer spent 12 years with the Office of the Prime Minister in Israel in various capacities. From 1993 to 1997, he was consul and head of the Prime Minister’s North American Mission, dealing with the US government, Senators as well as other bodies on issues relating to the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, the CIS and the Baltic States. He was also responsible for building links with Jewish communities throughout the United States and Canada.

Jewish history is one full of persecution, bigotry and adversity, but through organisations like ORT, Jews have always found a way not only to survive, but to thrive in the communities that they find themselves in. ORT is steeped in a rich history that has been vital in the continuation of the Jewish communities around the world.

ORT SA has been operational in South Africa for 75 years, with projects reaching into disadvantaged communities in South Africa as well as the Jewish community. Singer will be meeting with heads of community and visiting the various projects in South Africa.

“Education helps eradicate poverty. It builds satisfaction, meets a sense of belonging and mobility. We believe in ‘Educating for Life’,” says new CEO, Yehudah Kay.

ORT SA will be hosting a networking breakfast for the ORT JET mentors, where Robert Singer will be the keynote speaker on Wednesday November 26. This breakfast invitation is open to the members in the community who would like the opportunity to hear Robert Singer speak and network with individuals already involved in ORT SA projects.

Place is limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. E-mail Tracy at info@ortjet.org.za or for more information visit www.ortjet.org.za

Word 1223

ADVERTORIAL

Singer visits SA next month
Part of the crowd of Chai Seniors in the Succah.

The gathering enjoying their outing while photographer Joe Yudelowitz surveys the scene.

Rabbi Ari Kievman addresses the seniors, watched by entertainers Anthony Antonier and Tony Bentel.

About to start her repertoire, Helen Heldenmuth stands with Rabbi Ari Kievman and Anthony Antonier.

Shelia Bogarti with Jeannette Seligson.

Two of Rabbi Shloimy Raitport's children, Chaim and Avraham Aaron, watch the proceedings.

The "FULL HOUSE" experienced at the Chai Seniors' Succah Party held at Chabad House in Savoy, pays its own tribute to the seniors' director, Rabbi Ari Kievman whose dynamic approach, endless energy and constant smile, is getting more and more people to participate in the activities laid on for them.

Last week around 350 seniors (some from Pretoria) attended the activities to celebrate the festival of Succoh.

Today, most people do not “dwell” in the succah but enjoy themselves in it—remembering how the same type of construction was used as dwelling places by the Jews during their 40 years in the desert, after leaving Egypt.

In Savoy, the entertainment started with a film entitled “Ushpizim” (Guests).

According to tradition, seven Ushpizim visit every succah during the week of Succoh and give it their blessing. The Ushpizim are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Joseph, Moses and Aaron, and (King) David.

The film tells the story of a religious couple who come upon hard times but a visit by two “guests” from the past, wreaked even further havoc in their lives, but eventually “with G-d’s help, everything turns out alright”.

After the film, the seniors congregated in the succah. Entertainment was provided for them by pianist Tony Bentel and singer Anthony Antonier.

Their interaction and rapport with their audience, ensured that their performance was most enjoyable and greatly appreciated.

Another professional, theatrical personality Helen Heldenmuth was also there to amuse and entertain the appreciative crowd.

With her “born and bred” knowledge of Mammaloschen (the “Mother Tongue”), Yiddish, had the seniors in their lunch and he did his stuff.

“Magical Marc” was also there to display his magical talent, keeping everyone spellbound while they ate his lunch and he did his stuff.

For those who had not waved their lulavim, Rabbi Raitport was there to show them how this was done and to help them recite the relevant brachot.

The lulav comprises four types of growing things, all bound together in one bundle. Similarly, the “four species” also personifies the different prototypes of Jews.

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From Ruben Eshkovitz:

“Max and Minnie Hirschowitz lived in Brandfort. Max was a hide dealer, wool, skin and produce buyer. He also owned a cattle store (1921 - 1929).

“Their daughter, Grace, was born in Brandfort and married my uncle - my father’s brother - Chaim Eshkovitz of Uniondale.

“During the 1970s the cemetery was well kept by the municipality, but from about 1974 it looked very neglected, with grass and weeds growing in abundance. Rabbi G M Boswell was bitten by a snake in the jungle look-alike cemetery.

“In 1966 Mr Venter, the town clerk, told Rabbi S A Zaiden, the (then) country community rabbi, that the municipality would only clean the area of the cemetery if they were not prepared to clean up between the graves.

“There were more adult graves with tombstones and one adult grave without a stone. There are six children’s graves with tombstones and one without. Four tombstones are broken and 11 are crooked and leaning.”

From The “Star” October 18, 2011

“Former Fifa vice-president Jack Warner (from Trinidad), has blamed Zionism for the circumstances that led to him and ex-Asian Football Confederation chief, Mohammed bin Hammam being forced out of World Football.”

ISRAEL

Paul Liptz was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In May 1967 Israel sent out a call to young Jews around the world to assist Israel in the coming war. Paul took leave of absence from the international trading firm where he was working and joined hundreds of southern Africans going to Israel. His plane arrived on June 1, 1967, one day before the Six Day War.

He decided to stay in Israel and studied at the Hebrew University. He then moved to Tel Aviv University where he lectured for 35 years. His main interests were topics dealing with Arab women and nationalism in the Middle East.

He taught for over 25 years at the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College, dealing with modern Jewish history, Israeli society and the Middle East. He is now a senior educator with the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem.

In the last decades, he has become increasingly interested in world Jewry and has visited, lectured and conducted work-shops, in some 20 countries. He has also been the scholar with many American groups in Central and Eastern Europe.

He is married to Brenda and they have four children and nine grandchildren.

THE SOUTH African Zionist Federation is organizing a function on Tuesday November 8, at 19:30 at the Beyachad Auditorium in Johannesburg, to honour former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The guest speaker at the event will be Member of the Knesset Ophir Pines-Paz, who had a very special relationship with the late prime minister.

Having served as both Minister of the Interior and Minister of Science, Culture and Sport, Pines-Paz also served as a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Cabinet, the SAZF said in a media release.

During his Knesset period, Pines-Paz held numerous parliamentary positions, including head of the environmental lobby in the Knesset and chairman of the Interior and Environmental Committees. He also chaired the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and founded and chaired the Committee on Foreign Workers.

Today Pines-Paz heads the Local Government Studies Department of the IDC Herzlia, while working in a number of NGOs for the betterment of the State of Israel.

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Nov 8, SAZF commemorates Yitzhak Rabin’s 16th yartzeit

COMMUNITY BUZZ
LIONEL SLIER
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JOHANNESBURG

From Norman Sher:

“I am a practising attorney of many years’ standing.

“In 1964 I became one of the first Jewish public prosecutors together with Hiram Slomowitz SC, who is now one of the most prominent advocates in South Africa and Julius Sher who is a judge in London.

“We were in the service during a very interesting period and I have great experiences which I wish to share.

“The year was 1964 and I had just returned from what was then Rhodesia. The courts there were beautifully conducted, particularly the High Court, where the advocates wore wigs and were trained barristers from London who spoke impeccable English.

“I enjoyed my service to Rhodesia as a young bachelor and practice was conducted in a far more honourable manner, contrary to South Africa. The practitioners were people of high calibre and morals. It was a day of trepidation.

“Early in June 1964, I paused at the entrance of the Johannesburg Magistrates’ Court to commence my first day as a public prosecutor. As I alighted the steps of the Court, I stared pensively at the police desk which was loaded with files and in a state of complete chaos.

“This was the remand court which dealt mainly with pass offences, which in those days was a very serious offence and the offenders were treated very harshly, with out any sympathy whatsoever.

“This was on a Monday morning after the police had conducted their normal days was a very serious offence and the state of complete chaos.

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Russell Tribunal no more than a Stalinist show trial

THE RELEASE of Gilad Shalit from five years of captivity, raises many issues. In the first place, the concern for his welfare exhibited by Israelis of all political persuasions truly expresses Israelis society in the best possible light.

The contrasting physical conditions of Sergeant Shalit to the freed Palestinian prisoners focused attention on the utter disregard that Hamas has for international law. It should be noted that the execution of international law on occasion, the law of nations and Hamas are totally irreconcilable, the latter showing no concern for its canons and principles.

Both of these points are relevant to theICTURED face of Muammar Gaddafi, as depicted on the New York Times' front page on July 20, 2011. This picture of the hanged dictator has found a place in numerous books, as have photographs of the hanged Nazis seen in Italy. Local Italians even urinated on them. Pictures of this kind are usually found in death books.

Now, however, do we see such books in the news? In the Libyan media? No, we do not. Libyans generally have a healthy respect for death. There is a strong taboo against it, but for those whose role it is to arrange burial, the custom is to bury a person as quickly as possible, so that the burial site wouldn't become a shrine.


Does depicting Gaddafi's bloody face and laughing to his downfall do his enemies any good? For those who savage the world's bad dictators, whose authority has been cast off, this may set a tone reducing us to his level, where summary execution and disdain for a human body, rather than following due legal process, is routine? Or does it serve the needs of sensitivity?

Many say that to reinforce the importance of "civilized" legal process, Gaddafi should have been arrested and handed to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, not shot in cold blood. Another argument is that the Libyan authorities took him prisoner, and the death by what seems an outright execution. The Prime Minister sought to save a life, no matter the price. For those who savage the world's bad dictators, whose authority has been cast off, this may set a tone reducing us to his level, where summary execution and disdain for a human body, rather than following due legal process, is routine? Or does it serve the needs of sensitivity?

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Shalit deal shows Israel's fundamental strength

As I so well known, the primary cause of the destruction of the second Bais Hamikdash was sinas chinam - baseless hatred among the Jewish people.

That Jews did not treat one another with the requisite degree of kindness and consideration, was enough to seal their fate, notwithstanding the high levels of piety they had achieved in their general Divine service.

Scrupulously observing the mitzvah in its entirety, was ultimately not enough to save the nation from destruction; what was missing was a correspondingly high level of Ahavat Yisrael.

Less well known, but equally striking, is an example from Biblical times of how a high level of Jewish unity was for a long time enough to keep an evil decree at bay, despite the spiritually impoverished state of the nation as a whole.

Some eight centuries before the second Churban, by far the most powerful of the two Jewish states then in existence, was that of the northern Kingdom of Israel. In bare materialistic terms, the Kingdom of Judah in the south was very much the lesser of the two, although its spiritual backsliding was less serious.

The psychological break-up of the Jewish state shortly after the death of Shlomo Hamelech, the northern terri- tory had been on a spiritual downward slide. The nadir was reached under Achav (Ahab), a king regarded by Chazal as so wicked that according to the majority view, he is listed among those who have no share in the World to Come.

And yet, despite the lowly state of the nation so far as Torah observance was concerned, it was able to endure, and indeed even thrive for long periods, because the people were essentially united; they were able to stand against one another.

All of this came to mind last week when the Israeli people, notwithstanding the absurdly high price that had to be paid, celebrated the return from captivity of their son. The modern State of Israel, still heavily oriented as it is towards secularism, has far more in common with the Kingdom of Achav than with that of Shlomo, yet it too has the savoir-faire of a people who care deeply for one another.

The liberation of Gilad Shalit was a stirring demonstration to the world at large of this caring. I know of no similar case of a country at war being willing to submit to a technically one-sided deal just to free a single soldier.

Indeed, the parallel release of over a thousand Palestinians guilty of direct involvement in terrorist acts, could only have yielded to extortion and black-mail, and some on the other side will no doubt claim that it shows how Israel ultimately does not have the stomach to make the necessary sacrifices to ensure its own survival. In my view, however, Israel’s actions are indicative of its fundamental strengths, not weakness.

In any case, the Palestinians have so many potential terrorists to draw upon today, that they so choose, that putting a few thousand of them behind bars makes little difference. Tight border controls, pin-point retaliatory raids, targeted killings of the leadership, thorough intelligence work and blockades, have been the real reason why Palestinian terrorism has been rendered largely dormant.

Palestinians must surely have found it secretly rather galling to see the hated Zionists being so unmoved by the threat their much vaunted militants pose, as to be able to free more than a thousand of them for a single one of their own soldi- ers.

On paper, therefore, Hamas came out well ahead on the deal, but the moral vict- ory was Israel’s. Above all, those called upon to serve in its defence will know how far their fellow citizens will go to rescue their own from enemy hands, should it become necessary.

That being said, though, the example of the ancient Kingdom of Israel shows that Ahavat Yisrael by itself cannot be relied upon to protect the nation indefinitely. Ultimately, the northern kingdom was indeed destroyed and its people - the Ten Tribes - permanently exiled and largely lost among the host populations.

In the case of modern Israel the real battle - literally a life and death one - is between those who recognise that the state’s long-term survival is predicated on a wholehearted acceptance of the “Yoke of Heaven” and those who continue to believe in pursuing secular, material solutions.

In that sense, Hamas are way ahead of us; they recognise unequivocally that their conflict with the Jews is a cosmic struggle for spiritual supremacy, one on which the fate of the entire Creation rests.

New York - A lawyer for the man who confessed to killing eight-year-old Leiby Kletzky, says the confession was coerced and his client is insane.

Howard Greenberg, an attorney for Levi Aron, said during a hearing on Monday in New York State Supreme Court in Brooklyn, that he would prove that Aron was not guilty by reason of insanity in the July murder.

A psychological exam found Aron competent to stand trial, although he has admitted to hearing voices. Aron pleaded not guilty to charges of murder and kidnapping.

Aron is charged with murdering Leiby near his Brooklyn home. He said he picked up the harried Orthodox boy in his car when the boy became lost while walking home from camp for the first time and asking for directions.

Aron said he panicked after the boy was reported missing. Parts of Leiby’s dismembered body were found in Aron’s freezer. (JTA)
Weithaas excels in Berg masterpiece

Concert: Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra
Conductor: Bernhard Gueller
Soloist: Antje Weithaas (violin)
Programme: Music by Haydn, Berg and Beethoven

REVIEWED BY PAUL BOEKKOOI

IT WAS the coming together of the kindred spirits of two great German musical interpreters which made the first local public performance in more than 30 years of Alban Berg’s Violin Concerto such an astounding experience. Antje Weithaas is a phenomenal violinist who seems to transcend the physical challenges of the solo part, together with her compatriot Bernhard Gueller, who conducted this undoubted masterpiece for the first time, one felt a continuous surge of inspiration in the affections unfolding of a complex work.

Perhaps the description of painful beauty is the emotion that will linger after the music has been heard, depending on the level at which the listener’s receptive sensibilities functioned in the core of the work. Weithaas and Gueller never short changed us. All through this they demonstrated that the 12-tonne system possesses no barrier to music of great beauty and spirituality, while the older Viennese-Austrian sounds which are woven into the work’s structures, seemed to float, not connected by the conception out of reach.

The soloist’s opening statement was given with a suggestion ofdistance before it started opening up as being truly lyrical, totally engaging.

The compassionate clarity of her tone and dynamics, which she applied, were underpinned by the wealth of Berg’s orchestral detail, which in Gueller’s hands were beautifully articulated – especially by the woodwind and brass. In the first movement’s Allegretto section there was a hint in the way the many folk-like references were treated.

The Allegro section of the second movement with its cadenza was played magnificently. These pages remind us how close they connect to the traditions of the virtuoso concerto. In these moments of enraging emotions we also experience the Bergian polarity of hallucination and delirium.

This, however, is followed by the Bach chorale section which returns to an antidote. This, and especially the “wie aus der Ferne” (as far away) passages near the end, left us with Weithaas’ hands, truly heart-throbbing.

The dynamic levels were carefully soft and atmospherically shaped by the player, at the end, experienced music of purity and consolation.

Viennese Jewish composer, Alban Berg (1885-1935), arrives at the Theatre, with Photography by The DPS Studio (Pty) Ltd (www.karstenwitt.com)

Violinist Antje Weithaas, (PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARCO BORGGREVE, COURTESY OF WWW.KARSTENWITT.COM)

TAPESTRY
ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Janet Suzanne on SA stage - after 35 years

Janet Suzanne has been on the South African stage for 35 years. Her return has been anticipated by theatre-goers, especially those who have come to know her in roles where she was either a character actor, a lead or an ensemble player. Janet has always enjoyed working in different genres and medium formats. She has a talent for comedy, tragedy, romance and musicals and has worked extensively with actors and directors of national and international stature.

Weithaas excels in Berg masterpiece

Janet Suzanne is in town to appear in “Solomon and Marion”, the two-hander in which she stars opposite the legendary Opposition politician. It is in cahoots with the pharmaceutical industry, may or may not be immune, from her boyfriend. But also wants to protect his teenage daughter, who is immune to the disease. He is demanding answers, of the World Health Organisation, sent to Hong Kong, where it is believed the disease took root.

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In the past, first time a role has been written specially for Suzanne.

In that there is a character in the play who has cancer on the day of that character’s birthday, based on those terrible events, but “it is not that story. It is about a woman who loses her son and then strangely, finds another.”

On her return to the South African stage for the first time in 35 years, she says there is “a real intense feeling of payback and a delight that you’re back in the context that formed you.”

“Solomon and Marion” is at the Baxter Golden Arrow Studio, October 29 - November 26; (021) 685-7880.

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Preparation is key to a happy holiday

The year is coming to a close and it has been a challenging one for everyone: the dire global economy preying on our minds and affecting business decisions and actions.

But, it’s time to clear our heads and prepare for the coming year and what better way to clean the slate than an exciting or simply relaxing getaway. One can take a cruise, fly to a foreign land, speak another language, eat unusual foods and experience new things, or just chill at your favourite haunt at the sea or in the bush, maybe even the snow! But, in order to enjoy this time, one must be correctly and efficiently equipped. For a woman, one of the most important requirements for a good holiday is ensuring that one has the correct attire for the right occasion. If travelling by car, be sure that you get it checked early enough to avoid that last minute rush and make sure that you have all the necessary emergency items with you in case of any unforeseen delay on the road - blankets, extra water and food, tools and emergency equipment - really important when out on the open road. If travelling abroad, be sure to check all visas, currencies, insurance policies and, if possible, try and find out as much about the destination you’re visiting - what there is to see, where to get good food at a price that suits your pocket and make sure that your accommodation is centrally situated to ensure easy access to the places you want to visit. Now, all that is left is to make sure that you have made adequate preparations at home as far as security, animals and people left behind are concerned and have “a happy holiday and return safely.”

The Cape Floral Region takes up only 0.04 per cent of the world’s land area, yet contains an astonishing three per cent of its plant species. Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden on the slopes of Table Mountain, is part of the region, making it the first botanical garden ever included in a World Heritage Site. South Africa has eight World Heritage Sites. The rich diversity of the Cape Floral Region contributes to South Africa having the third-highest level of biodiversity in the world.

Year-End Travel & Celebrations

Compiled by Marlene Bilewitz. Contact (011) 023-8160, Cell 082-475-0288 or e-mail: marlene@sajewishreport.co.za

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Europcar puts the customer first with vast product portfolio

For one of South Africa’s leading car rental companies and winner of “Africa’s Leading Car Hire Company” at the 2011 World Travel Awards, customer service remains at the core of Europcar’s business.

WITH AN impeccable 30-year track record in the car rental industry, Europcar consistently invests in new infrastructure and facilities to ensure that it offers world-class services to business and leisure car rental customers locally and from across the globe.

With a fleet peaking at 16 000 vehicles in over 120 locations in southern Africa, and through its global Europcar network, it offers 220 000 vehicles in 3 000 locations across 150 countries.

Always putting customer needs first, Europcar offers a number of services to make its customers’ travelling experience personal, enjoyable and easy. It provides a chauffeur service for the discerning traveller who requires an effortless, exclusive and safe travel experience, or for those simply wanting a quick and convenient transport option from one destination to another.

Europcar additionally offers commercial vehicle rental options through its Van Rental division. The extensive range includes well-maintained commercial vehicles from half tonners, 1-ton workhorse bakkies, 4x4 bakkies, panelvans, MPVs, 4-ton vans, as well as luxury SUVs and people-carriers.

The company also has access to a wide range of larger vans and trucks within the Imperial Group and is therefore well-positioned to meet most customers’ commercial needs.

With Europcar’s “Ready Service”, car rental customers receive their keys in hand in 30 seconds, without having to complete paperwork or having to wait in long queues. Once registered, all that’s needed is appropriate identification. “Express Ready” kiosks are located at Lanseria, O R Tambo, Cape Town and King Shaka International Airports.

For those customers requiring a vehicle for 30 days or more, Europcar offers tailored packages on monthly rentals. Consumers can rent a vehicle from one to five months at competitive rates including 3 000 free km per month and standard cover.

Europcar CEO Dawn Nathan-Jones says: “We constantly strive for outstanding customer service excellence and extending our product offerings. While we will never lose sight of our primary goal of providing an incredibly effective and personal car rental service, Europcar is also committed to becoming more sustainable in every aspect of our business; and this includes our fleet.

“We are therefore proud to announce that we are further reducing our impact on the environment by being the first and exclusive car rental company in the country to offer the ultra-energy-efficient and environmentally-responsible Polo BlueMotion, currently South Africa’s lowest CO₂ emitting vehicle.”

Europcar’s extended product and service offering also includes: portable bike racks, GPS units, hand-controlled steering for the disabled, baby car seats, personal accident insurance, tyre and windscreen cover as well as fly, drive, stay baggage insurance.

• Bookings can be made by calling Europcar’s 24-hour call centre on 0861 131 000 or by visiting www.europcar.co.za.
TRAVELLERS TO Israel from South Africa, are ideally placed to take advantage of a world first from Bidvest Bank - a shekel-denominated world currency card.

The world-beater from Bidvest Bank, cuts out many of the foreign exchange problems that traditionally confronted those visiting Israel.

As travellers cheques are not available in shekels, visitors often took US dollar bank notes or US dollar travellers cheques, creating double the transaction cost and twice the inconvenience as double currency converters were necessary - as travellers pre-load shekels onto the card before departure, securing exchange rates from the day the card was loaded... Capazorio explains: "The card can be loaded prior to departure and reloaded from South Africa in a matter of minutes during your stay. It's therefore ideal for school tours and individuals on an extended trip."

"Security is also enhanced thanks to PIN and signature validation. This cash card is as safe as a credit card, only cheaper, as there is no point-of-sale fee to pay when you are out shopping, dining or settling hotel bills."

"We launched the card in late September first from Bidvest Bank - a world-first in South Africa to introduce a web-based global payment system called Global Payments Online."

Shekel card another world first from Bidvest Bank

Shekel card another world first from Bidvest Bank

If you’re looking for swimwear, look no further than The Kriss Shop in Sandton. One is instantly struck by the overwhelmingly extensive and beautiful range of swimwear and lingerie.

It’s often heard: “If you can’t find what you’re looking for at Kriss, you never will.”

One doesn’t know where to look first - there are gorgeous swimsuits with matching wraps, tops and kaftans (the swim-suit and you’re ready for dinner).

There are bikinis for large (D-cup) or small-bosomed girls, coloursoft or bright, glitzy and glamorous, all guaranteed to enhance every figure to confident shape which one experiences when well-dressed and fitted.

Kriss is renowned for her designer ranges of swimwear from all over the world - mainly Israel - with names like Gottex, Gideon Gibeon and Diva. This exciting range now includes Seafolly from Australia.

Whether you have a svelte and beautiful young body or a more mature figure, there is something for you that will make you look stunning. Asked what the age group was Kriss catered for, she replied: "Teenage to forty-fourever." Then there is also a superb range of elegant and sophisticated nightwear from France and Italy, plus the much sought after romantic and pretty Miss Elaine selection from America.

Kriss, the owner of Kriss of Sandton, started her business 26 years ago with three shops - Hyde Park, Sandton and Eastgate - but now concentrates all her efforts on the one store which is situated on the upper level of Sandton City. There she and her highly-trained staff are able to give their customers the best personal service in the selecting and fitting of brass, nightwear and swimwear that they desire. They specialise in cup sizes and body lengths.

Because of the intimate knowledge the staff at Kriss have and the fact that they are qualified consultants, they are able to fit and enhance the body by maximising or minimising the bust and general body shape with their body wraps, expertise and range of cut sizes. 

* If you would like a personal, private fitting, please call for an appointment with either Kriss or Charmaine, tel: (011) 783-0901.
How to kit yourself out for overseas travel

CAPE UNION Mart provides extremely valuable tips for your overseas trips. Preparing for an overseas trip, whether it be for business or pleasure, can be trying at the best of times. With so many details to remember, one tends to overlook some important elements which could make your trip that much more comfortable and trouble-free.

The most important travelling tool... your luggage

• Buy luggage that meets your most demanding travel needs. Sensible, sturdy, good quality luggage is best. Look at how you will be doing most of your travelling once you’ve stepped off the plane. If you intend hiring a car; one hard suitcase and some smaller gear bags, are best but if you intend on taking trains or buses, it is more convenient to take a roller-gear bag which has wheels.

• Always lock luggage, not only to discourage theft but also to make sure it does not open during handling. Buy small locks to lock all external zipper pockets of bags. This will also protect against others slipping illegal substances into your luggage.

The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requires that you leave your cases unlocked when travelling to and from the US. Locks will be clipped off unless you have a TSA-approved lock when travelling to and from the US. Locks will be clipped off unless you have a TSA-approved lock which can be opened by authorities with a special key they wish to search your luggage.

• Identify your luggage with bright tape or stickers, a key should they wish to search your luggage. The LAG regulations only apply to hand luggage (TSA) requires that you leave your cases unlocked when travelling to and from the US. Locks will be clipped off unless you have a TSA-approved lock which can be opened by authorities with a special key they wish to search your luggage.

• A Leatherman Multitool also comes in handy, but with the new regulations, these must not be packed in your carry-on luggage, rather put them in your suitcase that will be put in the hold.

• A travelling alarm clock can be very useful if the hotel desk forgets to give you your wake-up call.

• If you have a GPS, or are planning on purchasing one, it’s a good idea to load it with maps of your destination. This will ensure you never lose your way and you spend your valuable time doing what you want to do.

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Hand luggage restrictions

The enforcement of international aviation safety regulations began in South Africa on June 1, 2007. These restrictions have been applied in the European Union and US since last year. Airports Company SA (ACSA) is now enforcing these rules which restrict the amount of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGS) that passengers may take on board in their hand luggage on international flights, to protect against the threat of liquid explosives.

• LAG stands for liquids, aerosols and gels. If you can pour it, pump it, squeeze it, spread it, smear it, spray it or spill it, it is considered a LAG.

• Under the new standardised regulations, the amount of liquids, gels and creams permitted in hand baggage, will be limited to 100 ml per container. These have to be carried in a transparent, ziplock plastic bag with a maximum volume of one litre and must be presented during security checks.

• Only one bag per passenger is permitted. Bags will be available at key points in the airport precinct and will also be issued to airlines for distribution to their passengers at check-in as a last resort.

• Zip-lock bags can be bought at retail outlets.

• Exempted from these rules which restrict the amount of liquids, gels and creams permitted in hand baggage if they are required during the flight.

• Liquids can also be purchased duty-free on board some flights. Liquids that have been purchased after passing through security at the airport, may also be taken on board, although this does not apply on flights to the United States.

• The LAG regulations only apply to hand luggage on international flights.

Preparation and knowledge is the key to a successful trip!

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Experience Europe the Contiki way in 2012/13

Have you got Europe in your sights for 2012? Contiki’s brand-new Europe 2011/12 brochure is hot off the press and packed with a comprehensive range of holiday options for South African travellers.

WHETHER you want to snap up local styles, sample medal-italian cooking or party to the beats of some of the world’s most famous DJs, Contiki Holidays has the perfect fit for you across a variety of travel styles.

Want to sleep easy in quality, well-located hotels? Contiki’s Time Out tours are all about keeping it comfy. Choose from either Time Out Multi-Country, for a taste of all Europe has to offer, or Time Out In-Depth Regional, allowing you to dig a little deeper and get into the heart of a particular place, country or region.

New for 2012, Contiki is offering a range of 16 Easy Pace itineraries across its Time Out tours. With a minimum of two- and three-night stays, often later starts in the morning and even more authentic local meals, Easy Pace tours offer a more relaxed way to experience Europe.

For travellers who want to save on costs – but not experiences – there are Contiki’s Camping Trips. This is the way Contiki originally started in 1962, but since then, we’ve made a few adjustments with spacious tents for two, comfortable air mattresses and market-fresh local food every day – all at some of the best campsites across Europe.

Contiki’s Concept tours are all about mixing it up. You could experience one of Contiki’s exclusive Special Stopovers such as a 16th century château, traditional Austrian gasthof or cosy Swiss chalet with hostels, cabins and amazing hotel upgrades in between.

Other tour styles include Ski & Board trips for those who want to keep things cool, and Festivals, Events & Short Breaks, featuring some of Europe’s most epic festivals, awesome trips over Christmas, New Year and much more.

Contiki’s 2012/13 Europe programme is all about making sure you make the most of each and every place you visit. We’ll take you from the best blockbuster sights to truly genuine local experiences.

Speaking of authentic, to allow you to take your passion for fashion or interest in the culinary arts further afield, NEW for 2012, Contiki has added exclusive food and fashion shopping experiences across select itineraries. With these designer outlet stops, you’ll have the chance to snap up discount threads from some of the hottest names in fashion.

Don’t worry, you’ll find plenty of energy to fuel this fashion frenzy with a range of restaurants, cafés, bars and gelaterias within the outlet malls.

Contiki’s 2012/13 Europe brochure is out now! For more information see www.contiki.com. To make a booking see your local ASATA travel agent, or call Contiki directly on (011) 280 8400.
The Travel Company offers so much more than only travel!

Marlene Bilewitz

The Travel Company is a winner of 101 awards from airlines and tour operators since opening its doors 36 years ago. The company’s CEO, Lynne Backos, who is passionate about travel, says if she didn’t have a family to anchor her, she would have been one of the “wandering Jews”.

Add Lynne: “The excitement of discovering foreign lands, learning new customs and trying new foods, is something I have never grown tired of. Doing as the Romans do is an education in itself.”

Her knowledge and experience is invaluable to her clients, making her the perfect travel consultant. The Stables, an elite small venue in the grounds of the Travel Company’s premises in Sandton, is open Monday to Friday, from 08:00 to 17:00. It provides complete catering and conference facilities for small functions (maximum 18). Teas and lunch are served around the pool, or in the cozy atmosphere of an oversized boardroom.

Their company has become known for its expertise and efficiency in corporate travel, conferences and events. Lynne and her right-hand partner, Corinna, are always there to take care of you, whether it’s leisure travel for the boss or business travel for the company.

They will find ways to save you money, give regular reports and literally take over the entire travel operation if requested. As well as the normal travel arrangements The Travel Company offers a one-stop conference management service which includes everything from accommodation to on-site organization of all requirements at the event, right down to all peripheral services which extend to accompanying spouse programmes, offering peace of mind and a guarantee of excellent co-ordination and smooth running of all the proceedings prior, during and after the conference.

They will book, plan and co-ordinate full-scale conferences, events or incentive packages to destinations and venues of choice, national or local.

Leisure travel also features highly. The Travel Company specializes in kosher cruises. They will organize absolutely everything for you, from assisting with documentation and visas, car-hire, hotel accommodation, transport and transfers, theatre and restaurant tickets, or reservations to games. If you are not sure of what’s available that will interest you, rest assured, Lynne will find something. If you’re thinking of getting married and want an unusual wedding and wedding venue, Lynne can organise that too.

A question Lynne is often asked is: “Why should I use a travel agent when it is possible for me to get information on the Internet?”

Well, that’s just it! There is so much selling and so little service, that things can become very confusing. Most importantly, one needs someone to call on when things go wrong.

All the consultants at The Travel Company are of senior level which means that you are truly in the hands of professionals.

• See their website: (www.travelcompany.co.za) which is constantly being updated by Lynne herself.

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JUST CRUISING, established 1997, was the first, and for a long time, the only “Cruising Only” specialist in the country. After 15 highly satisfying and successful years, they can justifiably claim to be South Africa’s top cruise specialists.

SAYS RAYMOND Leibman: “Ships, unlike people, are not all born equal. Standards vary and a ‘cheap’ offer can very often mean just that. We represent all of the world’s major cruise lines and source the deals, very often pre-purchasing cabin[s], to give our clients the maximum benefit.”

Just Cruising represents over 45 cruise lines operating over 400 ocean and river cruise ships throughout the world. Their vast experience of the industry, the ships and the itineraries, (Raymond has personally done over 50 cruises) ensures that their client’s are booked on a cruise well suited to their personal tastes and requirements.

The difference across the spectrum of cruise ships is immense: from mega resort-type ships of over 5 000 passengers, literally floating cities of full-on Broadway shows, DreamWorks Animation, over 20 dining options, theme areas such as “Central Park” and a host of innovative family entertainment options seldom seen on land-based resorts, down to “boutique” type ships, small, upmarket and very exclusive.

Between these extremes are a range of ships to give every passenger the most wonderful cruise vacation.

The majority of just Cruising clients are “repeat” cruisers as cruising is definitely addictive. How else can one explore new and exciting places where your “transport” has so much to offer and becomes an integral part, if not the highlight, of your vacation.

Unpack once, have a wonderful meal and watch a show, lie at the pool or go to the gym, all while moving from one destination to another. It certainly beats fast foods and hours at airports, bus or train stations. Taking everything into account, a cruise generally offers exceptional value for money.

Raymond and Les at Just Cruising know and understand their market. They regularly identify “different” sailings that would have an appeal to their clientele and pre-purchase cabins, creating “groups” where passengers have the opportunity, if they so choose, to socialise with people of similar backgrounds, and yet still retain their full independence and choice of their daily activities onboard or ashore.

Itineraries are varied and include beach and water sports in the Caribbean, cultures of the Mediterranean cities and Northern Europe, exotic Asia and the Far East, vibrant and beautiful South America and the magnificent scenery of Alaska, Norwegian fjords, Iceland and the Antarctic.

The recent Rugby World Cup presented a great opportunity and just Cruising booked over 200 people on cruises around New Zealand, visiting magnificent places including Picton, Tauranga, Bay of Islands and of course Auckland where premium tickets to the semis, bronze final and final were included. Notwithstanding the rugby result this was a trip of a lifetime that will not be forgotten.

If you have never cruised before don’t “miss the boat”. Just Cruising will change the way you look at vacations.

Visit just Cruising on www.justcruising.co.za or call (011) 483-1997.

For a cruise vacation, just Cruising is the name.

JUST CRUISING
Carrol Boyes mezuzahs set to become treasured Judaica

"THE MEZUZAH Project", an integral part of Pine Street Shul's Diamond Anniversary, is a collaborative effort between the late Edoardo Villa, Carrol Boyes and the shul. Before Villa passed away on May 1 this year, at the age of 95, he endorsed something that he had never agreed to previously, namely to have his Pine Street Shul murals reproduced for mezuzahs. Never before had anyone or any organisation been granted permission to replicate Villa's work in any way.

At the time that the Pine Street Shul building was being completed, a wealthy benefactor requested that the architects of the building include some decorative design to give it more prominence. They had heard about a sculptor, Edoardo Villa, working from the Lupini Terrazzo factory in Louis Botha Avenue in Wynberg in Johannesburg.

This was the beginning of a process that recognised the architectural potential of incorporating Villa's work on some prominent items. Villa created a series of panels to depict the 12 tribes of Israel, the inspiration of the "Mezuzah Project". Six of these panels have been recreated in a limited edition mezuzah series, designed by the well-known artist Carrol Boyes. Boyes is one of the most highly respected artists in her genre, and her work, too, is much sought after.

Only 500 of each design of these mezuzahs have been produced and the moulds have been destroyed. Each mezuzah is etched with Villa's signature, has a unique series number engraved on it and has a signed certificate of authenticity. The mezuzahs are now available for purchase from selected Carrol Boyes outlets in South Africa and by special request internationally, or at www.carrolboyes.com as well as from the shul on +27 11 640 3101 or at www.pineshulmezuzah.co.za.

ZANDWIJ, the producer of Kleine Draken Kosher Wines, is nestled on the south-eastern slope of Paarl Mountain in the Western Cape. The vineyard enjoys a superior terroir, which contributes towards capturing the delicacy and complexity of both red and white grape cultivars alike.

The farm is 12 hectares in extent, of which 8.5 hectares are planted with vines – 50 per cent white grape cultivars and 50 per cent reds.

Zandwijk has produced a new family member, the Kleine Draken Merlot 2011, which has been released in July this year. This is a very light, fruity red wine. This wine has also won the "Best Value 2012 Award" from the Best Value Wine Guide.

There are quite a number of activities you can come and enjoy on Zandwijk Wine Farm, but please remember to book in advance to prevent disappointment.

As far as wine tasting is concerned, there are two options: the informal wine tasting and the cheese and wine tasting pairing. For the cheese and wine tasting pairing you will have to book 24 hours in advance.

PINE STREET SHUL,

The vineyard enjoys a superior terroir, which contributes towards capturing the delicacy and complexity of both red and white grape cultivars alike.

A Collaborative Work by Edoardo Villa, Carrol Boyes & Pine Street Synagogue.

Launching 26 October 2011, each beautifully designed Mezuzah over in this series is a signed and limited edition work of art by world acclaimed artists. With only 500 of each design being cast, they are sure to become a rare and much sought after piece of Judaica.

Order yours now at the following Carrol Boyes stores: V & A Waterfront, Sandton, Esagonite or Killarney or directly from the Pine Street Shul at +27 11 640 3101. Alternatively visit www.carrolboyes.com or www.pineshulmezuzah.co.za.

The Mezuzah Project
Victory Theatre – much more than just a theatre venue

The Victory Theatre Entertainment Complex in Johannesburg, has over the past four years proved not only to be a great venue for theatre productions, but also for product launches, 21st birthday parties, batmitzvahs, weddings, all of which have been extremely successful.

The silly season upon us and venues at this stage of the year always in high demand, the Victory is one to be considered for Christmas/year-end parties or any other functions that you are thinking of holding.

The new show, “Kwela Bafana - A Night in a ’50s Shebeen” opening and running in conjunction with Umoja on November 1, have proved to be excellent entertainment for company functions.

Kwela Bafana, a Sibikwa Players production, directed by Phyllis Klotz and Smal Ndaba, promises to be a real fun evening. Dress up ‘50s style and compete for “Best Dressed Couple”. Winners will receive a free dinner and show of choice. Umoja, on the other hand, is sure to lift you into a “party spirit”. To quote the Sunday Telegraph: “Umoja has enough energy to light up London.” Bookings for any of these productions can be made during the day or evening.

Tickets start from as little as R195 per head, which includes the show and a three course meal, which can be enjoyed before or after the show. Kwela Bafana is a typical night in a ’50s shebeen and encourages audience participation, which makes the guests feel that they are actually in a shebeen and participating in the entertainment.

Umoja on the other hand, needs no introduction and this new refurbished production is a must-see before it leaves on its first tour of 2012 to France, followed by three weeks at the Peacock Theatre in London’s West End and then on to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans for a two week run.

For our Afrikaans friends we have “My Pa Dink Hy is Elvis”, two shows only on November 10 and 11.

To show the versatility of the venue, we are hosting the Colombian Embassy on November 15; they are bringing out six of Colombia’s top dancers and have extended an invitation to 200 South Africans interested in dealing with Colombia (the evening will be hosted by the Colombian Embassy as well as a host of trade and export personnel) to see the show or discuss business opportunities with Colombia.

Interested parties must contact the Victory Theatre on (011) 728-9603 to book tickets as this invitation is for the first 200 to respond. Entrance is free, courtesy of the Colombian Embassy.

For those who have not visited the theatre: It has a 400 seater restaurant with views overlooking Houghton and Sandton. The catering can be kosher (we bring in outside caterers to do this) before it leaves on its first tour of 2012 to France, followed by three weeks at the Peacock Theatre in London’s West End and then on to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans for a two week run.

For more details on booking the venue and restaurant, please contact the Victory Theatre on (011) 728-9603 or for ticket bookings for any of the shows, you can also call Computicket on 0861 915 8000.
Eight World Heritage Sites in South Africa

Did you know that Table Mountain National Park has more plant species in its 22 000 hectares than the areas with a total size of 234 566 hectares. Its remarkable biodiversity is a result of the park's location between subtropical and tropical Africa, as well as its coastal setting.

Robben Island

Robben Island, is most famous as the place where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of his 27 years in jail. The island has since become a symbol of the triumph of democracy and freedom over oppression. Lying 11 kilometres offshore from Cape Town, the small, windswept island is now home to the world-renowned Robben Island Museum, a highlight of any visit to South Africa. Robben Island was not always a prison, nor was it originally cut off from the Cape Peninsula. Thousands of years ago it was an inhabited area connected by a spit of land to the Cape mainland. It was first made a jail by Dutch colonists at the Cape who, from their arrival in the mid-1600s, incarcerated accused colonists and slave traders. Robben Island became infamous as a maximum-security prison for anti-apartheid activists, including Mandela. It was also used as a leper colony, and as a mental hospital from 1846 to 1931.

Cradle of Humankind

Known in South Africa as the Cradle of Humankind, the region of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and engravings has one of the world's richest concentrations of hominid fossils, evidence of human evolution over the last 3.5 million years. Situated in the provinces of Gauteng and North West, the fossil sites cover an area of 47 000 hectares. The remains of ancient forms of animals, plants and hominids are captured in a bed of dolomite rocks, stretching 2.5 billion years ago. The Cradle has produced more than 950 hominid fossil specimens. Committee noted that the sites "throw light on the earliest ancestors of humankind. They constitute a vast reserve of scientific information, the potential of which is enormous."

*Imangaliso Wetland Park

On November 1, 2007, South Africa's first World Heritage Site, the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park in KwaZulu-Natal, was given a new name, the iMangaliso Wetland Park. It boasts one of the largest estuarine systems in Africa as well as the continent's southernmost coral reefs. In granting it World Heritage status in 1999, the World Heritage Committee noted the park's "exceptional biodiversity, including some 521 bird species". Situated on the central Zululand coast, the park is made up of 13 adjoining protected areas with a total size of 234 566 hectares. Its remarkable biodiversity is a result of the park's location between subtropical and tropical Africa, as well as its coastal setting.

Mapungubw Cultural Landscape

Mapungubwe - "place of the stone of wisdom" - was South Africa's first kingdom, and developed into the subcontinent's largest realm, lasting for 400 years before it was abandoned in the 14th century. Its highly sophisticated population traded gold and ivory with China, India and Egypt. The site lies on the open savannah of the Mapungubwe National Park, at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers in Limpopo. It's the northern border of South Africa and the borders of Zimbabwe and Botswana, a crossroads location that helped explain its prosperous past as an important trading centre, particularly in the height of its power between about 1220 and 1301 AD. A free-standing structure rising 30 metres above the surrounding grasslands, Mapungubwe is topped by impregnable cliffs all around.

Cape Floral Region

The Cape Floral Region takes up only 0.04 per cent of the world's land area, yet contains an astonishing three per cent of its plant species. This makes it one of the richest areas for plants in the world and one of the globe's 18 biodiversity hot spots. A spot of land and sea spanning 99 000 square kilometres, the 553 000 hectares Cape Floral Region comprises eight protected areas stretching from the Cape Peninsula to the Eastern Cape. Table Mountain, De Hoop Nature Reserve, the Boland mountain complex, the Groot Winterhoek wilderness area, the Swartberg mountains, the Besemarosbos wilderness area, the Cederberg wilderness area, and Baviaanskloof. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens on the slopes of Table Mountain is part of the region. The rich diversity of the Cape Floral Region contributes to South Africa having the third-highest level of biodiversity in the world.

Vrededorp Dome

Some two billion years ago a meteorite 10 kilometres in diameter, hit the earth about 100km southwest of Johannesburg, creating an enormous impact crater. This area, near the town of Vrededorp in the Free State, is known as the Vrededorp Dome. The meteorite, larger than Table Mountain, caused a thousand megaton blast of energy. The impact would have vapourised about 70 cubic kilometres of rock and may have increased the earth's oxygen levels to a degree that made the development of multicellular life possible. The original crater, now eroded away, was probably 250 to 300 kilometres in diameter. It was larger than the Sudd impact structure in Canada, about 200km in diameter.

Mapungubw Cultural Landscape

The iMangaliso Drakensberg Park has outstanding natural beauty, Africa's highest mountain range in Africa south of Kilimanjaro and the continent's richest concentration of rock art. It boasts one of the largest estuarine systems in Africa as well as the continent's southernmost coral reefs. In granting it World Heritage status in 1999, the World Heritage Committee noted the park's "exceptional biodiversity, including some 521 bird species". Situated on the central Zululand coast, the park is made up of 13 adjoining protected areas with a total size of 234 566 hectares. Its remarkable biodiversity is a result of the park's location between subtropical and tropical Africa, as well as its coastal setting.

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Richtersveld Cultural & Botanical Landscape

The Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape covers 360 000 hectares of dramatic mountainous desert in the north-west part of South Africa. A unique feature of the site is that it is owned and managed by a community that until recently had very little to call its own. Characterised by extreme temperatures, the communally-run landscape affords a semi-nomadic pastoral livelihood for the Nama people, descendants of the Khoikhoi people who once occupied lands across southern Namibia and most of the present-day Western and Northern Cape provinces of South Africa. Modern human history in the Richtersveld began a century or more back, when the Khoi were pushed into the remote region by the spread of other farmers from the Cape. The San people, meanwhile, were forced into the area from the north.

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Brilliance of the imagery is coruscating

Nineteen by Henrietta Rose-Innes
(Random House Struik, R180)

REVIEWED BY GWENDOLYN POODREY

THERE ARE many perspectives which to view Cape Town. One is from the viewpoint of the tiny, multitudinous creatures which infest its dingy suburbs, swarm its tepid shrubberies, invade its gardens, plague its citi- zens, undermine its foundations and teem beneath the floorboards. The insects, fish- moths, cockroaches, flies, spiders and a myriad other species of insect.

These are the unloved, detested, watchful little gladiators making slow, but persistent war on a community of hawkers. Once a day Katya, the pest-removal expert, arrives at Nineveh amid its ruined splendour. The insect problem, he tells her, is her life. She is more reliable than emotion. It is the manipulative mindset her father underpins that are its only certainties.

The insect problem underpins the story line. However, the brilliance of the text is matched by the strength of her characters. Len Grubbs, in particular, is unforgettable. We all recognise him and shudder. But Katya's arrival at Nineveh yields surprises: firstly, the realisation that beneath its gleaming, pristine exterior, its foundations are mired in shifting swampland. The walls are hollow, concealing all the creeping, filthy things that the mud and wilderness beyond the gates harbour.

Secondly, there is the discovery that her father - as always - is right behind her: squatting illegally in one of the disused villas, Len Grubbs is purloining fixtures from the premises she promises her new assignment: removing an infestation of particularly resilient beetles at Nineveh, the new, magnifi- cent suite of villas his company has erected a short distance outside the city. The insect problem, he tells her, has frightened off prospective tenants. Besides a generous fee, she will enjoy free accommodation at the complex while she does a pre- liminary investigation of the premises. Brand also makes it clear that he finds her sexually exciting: something Katya notes as a future weapon in her dealings with him. The manipulative mindset her father has instilled in her, but it is a weapon more reliable than emotion.

The insect problem acts as an introduction to Nineveh. The insect problem, he tells her, is her life. She is more reliable than emotion. It is the manipulative mindset her father underpins that are its only certainties.

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Secondly, there is the discovery that her father - as always - is right behind her: squatting illegally in one of the disused villas, Len Grubbs is purloining fixtures from the units and selling them off to a community of hawksers. Once again, Katya's dream of breaking free of him is thwarted. And in due course, she finds herself not only tolerating him, but assisting him.
MAKING A STRONG CASE FOR HORIZONTAL TOMBSTONES

I JUTS cannot understand it in General Jewish people apply the concept of “fore- sight”. As I walked through the Jewish ceme- tery, I was confounded to see that the major- ity of our tombstones are standing upright as opposed to flat or horizontal ones.

Firstly the standing up tombstones require care and maintenance; who says in Jewish law that the standing tombstones are a part of our law? They make wonderful recycled materials, with a hint of unlawful use. Lastly, Jewish people have always been known as the wandering Jews. Zimbabwe is not that far away; in many respects we can- not guarantee our continued stay in our South Africa. It’s amazing how few families applied their minds.

Jonathan Swartz
Johannesburg

WHY THE SILENCE ON MAKHANYA’S ISRAEL-BASHING? – REPLIED

I AM most disappointed and upset that nei- ther the Jewish Report nor the Jewish Board of Deputies, have commented on the constant Israel-bashing of Makanya. This is by far the most disgusting attack on Israel. We have no right to this abuse. I have written to the Archbishop Emeritus to demand to see him on a personal level to explain to the true facts about Israel and ask him as well as the Archbishop (Archbishop Emeritus) Desmond Tutu to do the same.

Bertha Segal
Johannesburg

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Jonathan Swartz
Johannesburg

WHY THE SILENCE ON MAKHANYA’S ISRAEL-BASHING? – REPLIED

I AM most disappointed and upset that nei- ther the Jewish Report nor the Jewish Board of Deputies, have commented on the constant Israel-bashing of Makanya. This is by far the most disgusting attack on Israel. We have no right to this abuse. I have written to the Archbishop Emeritus to demand to see him on a personal level to explain to the true facts about Israel and ask him as well as the Archbishop (Archbishop Emeritus) Desmond Tutu to do the same.

Bertha Segal
Johannesburg

LETTERS

SA JEWISH REPORT

28 October - 04 November 2011

LETTERS
This column is paid for by the SAJBD

The challenges of arranging examination timetables to avoid clashes from the outset, but should future cases nevertheless recur, we know that such cases are resolvable.

In bringing this matter to a successful resolution, a special thank-you is due to our national director, Wendy Kahn. As in the past, Wendy displayed boundless energy, tenacity and creativity in pursuing a workable solution. She cared deeply about the dilemma of each student, and was committed to doing everything in her power to assist them.

Much of the most crucial arrangements had to be made by her, while she was supposed to be enjoying her leave, but there was never a question that she would be on hand to do what had to be done. Kol Hakoros to her in particular, and to everyone else involved in this initiative. This column is paid for by the SAJBD

Thanks to Unisa for rescheduling exams

at Beyachad, with the Board providing the necessary logistical assistance (including paying for suitably qualified invigilators).

Prior arrangements included having the relevant rubrics and exam questions. The universities have to ensure that the students are Shomer Shabbat. Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtzman addressing the students on their halachic obligation to uphold the integrity of the examination process.

On behalf of the Jewish community, I would like to record our grateful thanks to Unisa for making these alternative arrangements possible. Their willingness to work with us in arriving at a workable solution has demonstrated both a respect for the religious needs of the Jewish community and a principled adherence to the constitutional right to practice one’s religion without being unfairly disadvantaged.

The ideal situation going forward, of course, is to prevent any serious scheduling clashes from the outset, but should future cases nevertheless recur, we know that such cases are resolvable.

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In good order

Arcadia, Birkuk Choshim and Selwyn Segal Hostel are entertained weekly and the residents of Arcadia at least once a month. Members assist in maintaining minyanim by regularly attending services at the Benoni Shul.

The Hebrew Order of David International is a growing international network of lodges. On Sunday May 22 this year, the Ilan Ramon Lodge was consecrated in Toronto. The lodge is led by former Cape Town Rabbi Braude with many former South Africans as members, but they have attracted a significant number of Canadians to the Order.

The opening of the new lodge follows the expansion of the Order in North America. Lodges are now open in Atlanta and Florida as well as having lodges in California, Texas and Arizona. The majority of members in the United States are Americans by birth. Yet the Hebrew Order of David International has lodges in Israel and the United Kingdom.

Chaver means someone who is similar to you and who is therefore easy to befriend; in our book Chaverschaft means working together with those friends. But in the context of the Order, it goes beyond that description.

It is a feeling of belonging and working to help each other progress and develop as Jews and to improve the lives of others. It is challenging for the individual but entirely possible as a group.

The Order is holding an information session for interested Jewish men on November 22, at 19:30 for 20:00, at the HOD Centre in Oaklands, Johannesburg. Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, the Travelling Rabbi, will present some of his work in the communities in Africa and senior members of the Order will be on hand to talk about the Hebrew Order of David International and the proposed opening of a new lodge in the Johannesburg-Sandton Area.

To attend please contact the HOD office at (011) 640 2017 or e-mail info@hodavid.org.

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Rugby fever hits the Corner School

YOU CAN never be too young - or too cute - to show patriotism and rugby spirit, as the kids at the Corner School, a Jewish play school in Orchards in Johannesburg, for kids from around 14 months to four years, prove every Friday when they dress in the green and gold colours of the national team.

Along with celebrating Shabbat each Friday, the Corner School has been raising the flag in support of the Boks.

Pictured are Cole Matthews, the twins Jordan and Eden Rozentvaig; Max Levitt; and Jony Raid.

KDL Primary joyously celebrates Shalit’s release

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Yeshiva College wins the Israel Centre Prize

A GROUP of King David Linksfield and Victory Park and Derradoll Development School learners, from October 2 to 6, cycled all the way to Durban, in what has become known as the “Davidians to Durban” cycle ride.

The boys all rode the entire way to “Durbs” in the cycle ride now in its third year.

A group of some 35, which included learners, teachers, parents and King David Linksfield headmaster Marc Hyman; Adam Gabriella Urdang with her supporters Gabi Selikson and Hannah Lager.

Pinestreet Playschool supports Bandana Day

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY HAILEY FOX

A TYPICAL day on tour was waking up at 04:30 and to be on the road by 06:00. “We would have breaks in between and eat delicious snacks and lunch... After our last break we would finish cycling to our accommodation for the night. Here we could rest up and get readily physically and mentally for the next day as well as socialise with the other cyclists.

They added: “We undertook many obstacles and were not blessed with good weather. It rained three out of the four days and we were changing so many punctures that we lost count of how many we had.”

Joseph Marcus and Oren Blass, both in grade 8 at King David Linksfield, were on their first ride to Durban.

“They rode to Durban! On a bicycle!”

This is the reaction most people give when we tell them about King David’s 500km ‘Tour de Durbs’ - from the flats in the Free State to the never-ending Griffin Hill in the (KwaZulu-Natal) Midlands; from the crazy 30km descent to Midmar and parts of the Amashova/Comrades into Hillcrest, ‘Davidians to Durban’ was an unbelievably extraordinary experience,” they recalled.

“We loved the cycling as we bonded with our friends and really get to know each other, having six-hour conversations and of course seeing our incredible country from a new perspective.”

Pedalling all the way from Johannesburg to Durban

OWN CORRESPONDENT

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Bandana Day raises funds and awareness of those fighting leukaemia.

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Jewish community gears up for climate change conference

**SA JEWISH REPORT**

In the run-up to the COP17, various activities have been planned so that different sectors of the community will be able to make their voices heard. South groups will be submitting themed posters which will be compiled into a book and given to the head of the conference.

All members of the community will be able to sign a petition calling on leaders to get a fair and legally binding outcome for COP17. In addition, the JNF-SA campaign is a call for the community to plant trees during the conference. Planting trees is an important method of fighting global warming and specially marked JNF certificates will be issued for those wanting to plant trees in South Africa or Israel.

During the event itself, JNF in Durban will be hosting speaking events and tours which will highlight the work that is done by the JNF, both in South Africa and in Israel. Regular updates about COP17 will be provided through all the Jewish media, including radio, print and the Internet.

The JNF will also be hosting a community dinner with the Israeli Embassy, where the Durban community will be able to meet members of the Israeli delegation.

- Anyone wanting more information or to get involved can contact Benji Shulman on 084-499-6411; email JNF@beychad.co.za or myshtetl.co.za/JNF

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**SAJEE honours Lt Col William Bergman**

A JEWISH engineer has made history by being the recipient of a prestigious award. Lt Col William (Bill) Bergman received the “South African Institute of Electrical Engineers’ Engineer of the Year” award at the Institute’s annual banquet held at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg on October 14.

The award was presented to Bergman by the president of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers (SAIEE), Andries Tshabalala and Mark Wilson, CEO of Actom (Pty) Ltd, who sponsors the award.

Bergman is a Fellow of the Institute and is also a member of the Institute’s Council. He is also the recipient of the Military Merit Medal (MMM) and is the honorary national secretary of the South African Jewish Ex-Service League, as well as being the Johannesburg and Reef branch chairman of the League.

On retiring from the SANDF after 25 years’ service, he has opened a consulting engineering practice.
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Monday to Thursday
Mincha with Heicho Kadisha on the Terrace just above KosherWorld.

If you are an owl or have yartzeit, come down from the amud.

We reserve the right to amend this advert when payment is received in the next edition.
WHAT'S ON

Sharon Akum sharon@sajewishreport.co.za
28 October - 04 November 2011

DEADLINE

PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for all entries is 12:00 on Friday prior to publication, with the exception of:

SA JEWISH REPORT

SOUTHERN SUBURBS, CAPE TOWN

SPRING BUDS - SUNDAY VACANCIES

厩eed pamphlets distributed? Young Jewish girls to deliver prayers at all services at a
nominal fee. David 072-346-4077

Volunteer student/teacher examiners, seeking a job for the month of Nov as available as an ex-
pupil or till later. Ellen 073-586-5857

House sitter available. Longported form. Excellent secur-
ity background. Good with pets. Contacts or reply. Call Wayne 083-351-1225

WHERE TO BUY OR SELL YOUR VEHICLE?

BUY OR SELL

YOUR VEHICLE?

Visit Woodmead Supa Quick now to take advantage of our current spe-
cial offers on tyres and shock absorbers!

Supa Quick Woodmead - out with the old, in with the new

Lynden McCarthy

WOODMEAD Supa Quick, situated at 14 Waterfall Crescent, a stone’s throw
away from Makro and across the road from the Woodmead Value Village, made a
total revamp as this existing fitment centre transformed into a state-of-
the-art Supa Quick fitment centre, with a full range of products and services,
including tyres, wheels, batteries, shocks and so much more.

Lynden McCarthy, head of the Woodmead Supa Quick franchise, said of
the motivation to change to a Supa Quick franchise: “I am and was very
impressed with the proactive approach from the Supa Quick franchisor and
Bridgestone Retail team.

“People buy from people and the Supa Quick brand identity is synony-
mous with expert service to our customers.”

The management team at Woodmead Supa Quick of Justin Reinart, Gary
Back, sales personnel, mechanics and fitters, boasts over 50 years’ exper-
ience in the tyre fitment industry and is well-versed in new product addition.

Visit Woodmead Supa Quick now to take advantage of our current spe-
cial offers on tyres and shock absorbers!

Monday (October 31)

• LWU House & Garden Centre meets. Time:
9:00 for 10:00. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

• LWU at the Sydenham Shul Community cen-
tre hosts renowned entrepreneur Gavin Kelber who will conduct sessions on
“Nurturing Emotional Intelligence” and “How Does the Brain Process Emotions and
How to Assist Children to Build a Neuro-hygiene Between the Thinking and
Feeling brain” at 09:30 and at 13:00 “Brain Processormgr and Sensory Integration (Pre-school
Teachers and Parents)” and “What Every Teacher Needs to Know About New Differently
we all Process Information and Embed Memory.” At 15:30 “The Crocodile, the Elephant
and the QED (Primary/High School Teachers and Parents)” and “Discipline Requires
a Revolution In Our Schools. Understand how Our Brain
both serves to Threaten and Reward.” Cost R50 per
session. For more information, Mandela 083-360-5268. No
booking necessary. The session centre on

Tuesday (November 1)

• Great Park invites you to a parenting workshop

with Dr Irina Ousset, aimed at expect-

ing parents and parents of young children.

This is the second of a two part series, but is
valuable as a free-standing session. Topic:
“Mothership From Spousal to Parental
Relationship.” Time: 19:45. Cost R20 per
session. Booking essential. Contact Goldie, 072-
832-2001; goldie@sunsigns.com

• ORUJ and Project Ratan host a gala

and networking event at the Johannesburg Stock
Exchange, Swan Lane Sandton, where they will
announce the winner of the “Win your Dream
Business Plan Challenge. Guest speaker is
Robbie Bruns of Runa.co. Time from 17:30 to
20:30. Bookings: Today (011) 729-7154

• Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir

with Stevens Lewis (London), in the Linder
Auditorium at 19:45. Tickets: R180 and R185
through Computicket and Evelyn Green. Information:
Evelyn Green (011) 728-5570; Joanne, 082-782-4839,
Gavin Keller, (15:00) “Help to Guide and Lead
Intelligence” and “How Does the Brain Process
valuable as a free-standing session. Topic:
“Moving From Spousal to Parental
Relationship”. Time: 19:45. Cost R30 per ses-

Wednesday (November 2)

• LWJ adult education division hosts

Brooke Rubins who will talk on “Lifestyle
and Nutritional Causes of Chronic
Illnesses”. Venue Stonehaven. Time: 10:00
Cost: R20; (ext refreshments).
Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

• LWJ adult education programme hosts

Dr Lorraine Chalmers, former lecturer in the
department of English at Wits, at 09:30, who
will talk on the novel by George Eliot, “Adam
Back”.

• ORUJ hosts photojournalist Ilan Oswald

who will present an audiovisual show on “The
Last Remaining Jews of Ethiopia”, Venue: Olive
& Anchor. Time 19:30. Booking: Hazel or Penny (011) 728-6888/6878, after
hours: (071) 587-9071, e-mail hazelormoat-
park@telkomsa.net or
mirenb@yachad.co.za

Thursday (November 3)

• The SAFZ hosts two screenings of

“Unmasked: Judeophobia, The Threat to
Civilisation”, at the Nu Metro Hyde Park.
Time: 18:00 and 20:00. Bookings: Mimi on (011)
645-2531 or Mimi@yachad.co.za

Friday (November 4)

• UZLC hosts Russell Gudgin who will talk on

“The International World and The Liberal Left’s
Impact on Israel.”

Saturday (October 29)

• The United Zionist Lebanon hosts Jewish
Report’s arts editor Robyn Sassen who will
speak on “Doo Doo Boo: Scattering by Jeev.”

• Chevrah Kadisha Social Services’
Domestic Violence Support Group, is hold-
ing an 8 week support group (starting today)
for women who, or have, are in abusive
relationships. The group, which will be fac-
ilitated by a social worker, offers a safe and
controlled space where women can gain
information and support. No charge. Bookings
or more info, call Jacqui: (011) 520-9732.

Sunday (October 30)

• LWJ at the Sydenham Shul Community cen-
tre hosts sessions by renowned educator
Jeanette Will for “The Basics of Teens and Pre-
Femmes” and “Secret of the Teenage Brain” at 19:30 and “How to Talk
to your Generation” at 9:00 a.m. For
more information: Mandela 083-360-5268. No
booking necessary. The session centre on
tomorrow.

• Second liners hosts David Lubiniak, Wilts
professor and businessman, who will speak on “Teens’ View on Judaism
and Spirituality”. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Venue: The
Herzl Gorvan Lounge, Golden Acres

Sudoko Puzzle 43

(Easy, difficulty rating 0.23)
Reneé Richards... ‘a nice Jewish boy’

JACK MILNER

OPEN OF the great sporting trivia questions is, ‘Who is the only tennis player to have competed in both the men’s and women’s singles draw at the US Open?’

There is no real trick to the question. The answer is Reneé Richards. Reneé was born Richard Raskind on August 19, 1934. He was an America-English introversion as Nobel, author, and former professional tennis player. In 1975, Richards underwent ‘sex reassignment surgery’.

She is known for being initially denied entry to the 1975 US Open by the United States Tennis Association, citing an unprecedented women-born-women policy. She was ordered to produce medical evidence that she was and remained female. She also was told to return in three years for reevaluation. A six-year-old Jewish boy named Renée Richards was when she entered the 1977 US Open, as she put it, as ‘a nice Jewish boy’. When Raskind was six years old, the family moved to Forest Hills.

How do we decide to rehash the story of Reneé Richards? Well, a documentary on her life has been released. Eric Draitz’s ‘Reneé’, premiered at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival, played at New York City’s New Fest and now is available in about 40 million homes via Tribeca On Demand. The film covers events that took place nearly 35 years ago, yet you easily can imagine how explosive and controversial a figure Richards was when she entered the 1977 US Open after taking the USTA to court and winning the right to play professional tennis as a woman, without being subjected to chromosomal testing.

But ‘Reneé’ is not a musty time capsule: you get interviews with fellow tennis legends Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova (whom Richards coached) and John McEnroe - but you also meet Reneé as she lives today, dealing with all of the challenges of life as an older - she is now 77 years old - transgender woman.

Richards was born in New York City and was raised, as she put it, as ‘a nice Jewish boy’. When Raskind was six years old, the family moved to Forest Hills. Richards excelled at tennis from early on and was ranked among the top-10 Eastern and national juniors in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He was captain of his high school tennis team at the Horace Mann School in New York City, and at 15 won the Eastern Private Schools Intramural singles title. He attended Yale University, where he found it slightly uncomfortable being Jewish, and where he played on the tennis team in singles competition, then captained the team in 1954. After Yale, Raskind attended medical school at the University of Rochester, before serving in the United States Navy as a Lieutenant Commander.

He pursued a career as an eye surgeon, specialising in strabismus (eye misalignment). Raskind reached the final of the men’s national 1975-and-over tennis championships in 1972.

In the mid-1980s Raskind travelled in Europe dressed as a woman, intending to go to North Africa to see Georges Burou, a famous gynaecologist at Clinique Parc in Casablanca, Morocco, regarding sex reassignment surgery. He changed his mind, however, and returned to New York, marrying and fathering a son. Richards was referred to surgeon Roberto C. Granato and in 1975 successfully ‘transitioned’.

Richards was barred from playing as a woman in the US Open in 1976, unless she submitted to chromosomal testing. She sued the United States Tennis Association, and in 1977 won the right to play as a woman, without submitting to any testing. Richards played from 1977 to 1981. She was ranked as high as 26th overall (in February 1979), and her highest ranking at the end of a year was 22nd (in 1977). In her first professional event as a female, she was a finalist in women’s doubles with Betty Ann Stuart, in 1977 and continued to have a successful career afterward. Her greatest successes on court were reaching the doubles final at the US Open in 1977 with Betty Ann Stuart - the pair lost a close match to Martina Navratilova and Betty Stove of Holland - and winning the 35-and-over women’s singles. Richards was twice a semifinalist in mixed doubles (with Ilie Nastase) at the US Open.

Reneé Richards with Martina Navratilova at Wimbledon.

In 1979, she defeated Nancy Richey for the 35-and-over singles title at the US Open. Richards posted wins over Hana Mandlikova, Sylvia Hanika, Virginia Ruzici and Pam Shriver.

She later coached Navratilova to two Wimbledon wins and was inducted into the USTA Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame in 2000.

In 1986 Richards published an autobiography, “Second Serve”. In 2007 Richards published a second autobiography, “No Way Reneé: The Second Half of My Notorious Life”, in which she describes regret over the type of fame that came with her transsexuality, although she said in 2007 that she did not regret undergoing the sex reassignment process in itself.

Richards’ father, David Raskind, was an ophthalmologist, author and her mother, Richard Raskind, was a film-maker and stockbroker. Richards’ son, Nicholas Raskin, is a film-maker and stockbroker.

CHELSEA Football Club’s Roman Abramovich.

A SYMPOSIUM was held in England last month, called ‘Historical Perspectives on Jews and British Sport’. One of the papers delivered dealt with the Jewish contribution to English football, an amusing detail of the details were most interesting.

The introduction read as follows: ‘Jews don’t do football. Or, at least, they don’t play it. Thus, at any rate, is the myth. Jews are People of the Book, not People of the Penalty Shoot-out. In the film “Airplane”’, the ‘bodybuilder’ who takes place: Stewardess: ‘Would you like something to read?’ Old Lady: ‘Do you have any Jewish football books?’

And yet English football has been revolutionised by Jews. From Harry “Abe” Morris - the Swindon Town legend who scored 239 goals in seven seasons for the club in the 1920s - to Chelsea’s Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich - the club’s values shaped by what David Peace has written in “The Damned United”: “called a last lost tribe of self-made men... in search of the promised land, of public recognition, of acceptance and of gratitude”.

Over the course of 130 years, football has deeply penetrated Jewish society in England. In four generations, they have been from being ghetto outcasts to inside outsiders. At the core of this journey, from...