



Mazaltov
all round:
Sydenham
Shul turns 70
(page 2)

• south african • jewish report

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Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

With conviviality and dignity: Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

‘Looking Forward’ – Cyril on the spot about Israel

SUZANNE BELLING

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s initiative “Looking Forward” - a discussion between the Jewish community and the ANC - saw ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa giving answers to foremost concerns of SA Jewry, while Rabbi Goldstein pulled no punches when it came to Israel.

The audience of 600 (a further 500 were turned away due to lack of space) and simulcast to Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, heard Ramaphosa take criticism of government inadequacies regarding crime, poverty and education in his stride, answering questions frankly and honestly, while advocating not taking sides, but facilitating peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

“We strive to see what we can do for our country, but we also strive to see what we can do for Israel. The heart

of the Jew is in Israel. What we do expect is balance and support for Israel and the Palestinians in a quest for peace,” Rabbi Goldstein said.

The South African voice on bringing peace to the Middle East was getting lost, because the government was regarded as taking sides. The perceived one-sidedness was one of the tragedies of the past few years, because South Africans had consensus-building in their DNA, after the peaceful democratic transformation in the 1990s.

Ramaphosa replied: “We are in full support of peace negotiations that will lead to a solution where both countries will live in peace. This is something we should support unreservedly. There needs to be an area where we can find balance. We should not sit on the sidewalks of the street and say it’s their problem.

“We need to be engaged. We actually need to talk to the people, argue our point and find a consensus.”

Continues on page 4

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Meyer Kahn, President of Miracle Drive; Rabbi David Masinter, Chabad South Africa’s mastermind; and former US Senator Joe Lieberman, Tuesday’s keynote speaker.

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The taller they are the harder they fall

People who know me will find it humorous that I have chosen to title my piece as I’ve done above, because since grade one, I have either been the shortest or second shortest male in my year.

This is not a rant against tall people, but rather an attempt at explaining how such a great nation, who had just witnessed the greatest revelation of G-d in history, could fall to what a cursory reading suggests as the grievous sin of idol worship!

I am referring to what is recorded in this week’s sedra - the sin of the Jewish people crafting the golden calf. This episode is a memory that still haunts the Jewish collective soul, but what really makes it so seemingly absurd was that it followed almost a mere 40 days from when G-d revealed

Himself on Mount Sinai proclaiming

“I am the L-rd your G-d... You shall have no other gods before Me.” How did we fall so low and so quickly?

I imagine many of us have been following the tragic story of the remarkable paraplegic sprinter Oscar Pistorius’ alleged killing of his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. Whether he murdered her or not, this episode shows us how the famous fall so quickly and so dramatically from the perch on which the world previously viewed them.

This not only applies to their personal moral life, but also to their level of sporting excellence - for a beginner at golf to duff a shot, might be acceptable; for a professional, it would be completely humiliating. The greater

one is at something, the higher the expectation, and the more intense the risk and effect of failure.

In Jewish terms, the more moral and righteous a person is, the greater the repercussions of his or her failings. In spiritual terms, this refers not only to the smear of G-d’s name which is caused, but the level one reaches in religiosity and observance, is met by one’s constant invisible foe - the yetzer ha’ra (evil inclination).

We are endowed with freedom of choice and in order to keep the balance between our positive and negative influences, they grow or deplete as we make choices. Consequently, ironically, the most righteous have the most difficult battles with their yetzer haras.

The Jewish people fell from



PARSHAT KI TISA
Rabbi Shmuli Kagan
Or Zarua, Mizrachi
Young Adults Minyan

such a height at the sin of the golden calf because they were on such a high level. Their inclination for choosing the wrong path was as powerful as the force empowering them to the right one. This is the battle each and every one of us faces every day. The greater we become, the harder we need to work to maintain it. As Spiderman’s uncle advised him: With great power comes great responsibility.

May we rise to the challenges of excellence, reaching for the highest level we can attain, while understanding the glory and the accountability it entails.
Shabbat shalom.

Sydenham Highlands North Shul turns 70 in style

OWN CORRESPONDENT

An evening of nostalgia, good food, songs and spirits celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Sydenham Highlands North congregation in Johannesburg. Under the masterful steerage of Rabbi Yossy Goldman for almost 27 of those 70 years, the shul has gone from strength to strength.

Coinciding with Purim and the Academy Awards, true to the shul’s ethos which presents itself as a family shul, at the forefront of Johannesburg’s Jewish life, where every Jew is welcome, there was a mélange of celebration.

“Mazaltov one and all,” began Rabbi Goldman, who was MC of the event, with song and focus. “Seventy years ago, the Holocaust in Europe was happening; here at the bottom of Africa, a congregation was being born.”

Indeed, a shop in Durham Street, Raedene was where the first service under the umbrella of a new community was held on Purim.

“In the interim,” Sydenham Shul’s Platinum Purim brochure explains, “Joshua Lichter bought the stand in Main Street for £3 000.” By Rosh Hashanah of that year, a hall had been built, which served also as the shul.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, a special guest, alongside Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag; dayan of the Beth Din, Rabbi Dennis Isaacs; and Rabbi Shmuel Moffson, commented: “Purim presents the hidden hand of Hashem.

“His name does not appear in the megillah, but his fingerprints are all over it. The founding of this community was in the darkest time

of Jewish history. Who could have seen the future, then?”

The event honoured key congregants with silver statuettes like the Academy’s Oscars: Gerald Lichter (founder member); Leone Muskat (daughter of Bucky Niselow one of the shul’s builders); Leon Druckman (earliest chorister); Naomi Seeff (faithful shul attendance since the 1950s); Itz Ginsberg and Benny Puterman (for consistent presence in the daily minyanim); Loraine Ware (longest standing Ladies’ Guild chairman); Myra Felsher, Linda Merkel and Gertude Michel (conveners of the shiurim programme); Colin Band (longest serving chorister); Cynthia Trapedo (longest serving staff member) and Ingrid Seeff (total commitment to the shul).

The keynote award went to the shul’s chairman Harold Novick, with 40 years of loyal community service behind him. “Blending autocratic management style with a soft heart,” in the words of president Stanley Seeff, Novick received a specially engraved yad.

Novick, also chairman at the UOS for several terms, and controversially responsible for appointing Rabbi Goldman to a shul nervous of Lubavitch influence in 1986, was visibly moved as he spoke of how the personal and the communal interfaced so smoothly through the years, demonstrating just how valid the shul’s slogan is.

Featuring duets by choirmaster Yudi Cohen and former choirmaster Oshy Tugendhaft, the evening was brought to satisfying closure by Novick, echoing the sentiments of many congregants: “This shul is part of my life. It will always be. Bis 120!”



At the opening of the Shul, December 4 1955. On the bottom right, Chief Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz whispers to the Shul’s then Rabbi, Rev. Ossher Altschuler. Lay leader Israel Katz is at the podium.

Harold Novick, Chairman of Sydenham Shul; Stanley Seeff, the shul’s president; Rabbi Yossy Goldman; and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.



PHOTO: Andrew Knobloch.

jewish report

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A Backbone of Integrity



Karabus trial has been postponed - yet again...

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Michael Bagraim, the Cape Town attorney representing Professor Cyril Karabus, told Jewish Report on Wednesday that Karabus’ trial, which was scheduled for Wednesday this week, “has been postponed until March 20. No reason has been given. We are horribly shocked.”

Karabus, 77, a world-renowned paediatric oncologist, was arrested last August

in Dubai while in transit to South Africa from Canada, on 10-year-old charges of manslaughter and falsifying medical documents, after a three-year-old girl with acute leukaemia he had treated while on a locum in Abu Dhabi in 2002, had died. Karabus had been tried and found guilty in absentia and without his knowledge. He has strongly denied any wrongdoing.

According to an article by Haneen Dajani in the UAE publication, The National, “The medical committee examining the case has not yet sent its report in, the criminal court has announced,” explaining the further delay in this trial.

Since last August, the trial has been postponed at least six times, with the child’s medical record still “unavailable”.

Public protests in the streets of Cape Town have been held in recent weeks calling for Karabus’ release. It is likely that the protests will intensify and become more widespread after this latest postponement.



Professor Karabus and his wife Jenny

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PROF. KARABUS

Case postponed to end of March - a sad day for justice



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The audience at Investec listens to Cyril Ramaphosa.

‘Looking Forward’...

Continued from page 1

He acknowledged that the Jewish community was deeply connected with Israel. “We also have a community that is deeply connected with Palestine. We need to find something that can bind us together. We can make a contribution. We are great at helping other people solve their problems.”

Although the conflict in the Middle East was almost intractable, it required cool heads on both sides to help find solutions, “at least solutions that can make our own tempers go down”.

Rabbi Goldstein said South Africa’s role was to promote peace by engaging with both sides.

“We should not pick one side and say it was right and the other wrong, punish one and reward one. That’s not going to help anybody.”

Referring to his colleagues on the National Religious Leaders’ Forum, he said he had warm personal relationships with them. “But then Israel comes into the headlines and we are at each others’ throats.”

The anti-Israel lobby in South Africa had made it its business to put Israel negatively in the headlines, which fanned the flames of the conflict in this country.

“We need to come together as South Africans. Why can’t I say to my Muslim colleagues, let’s agree to disagree. Israel is in my heart and the Palestinian areas are in your heart. Let’s shake hands and be brothers.”

Standing in the way of this was the anti-Israel lobby which had infected the media and public debate.

“I appeal to the ANC as a party and the South African government as a government to do what you can to promote peace in the Middle East and do whatever you can to promote peace here. South Africans are getting torn apart. If we cannot solve it here, at the very least we shouldn’t tear ourselves apart.”

Rabbi Goldstein advocated more balance from the government and the ANC on the matter.

Regarding South Africa, he called for “a true spirit of altruism. We need to rekindle the spirit of the Struggle.”

The Talmudic philosophy of leadership was not about power, but about service.

“As Jews, we don’t predict the future, we create it.”

Part of our ethos was to alleviate suffering and build up a society, through business, service and community.

Ramaphosa said the Jewish community cared deeply about South Africa and was engaged with issues that affected its future.

“It is a community with strong roots in this country and which has played a significant role in shaping its development.” Its members were to be found and had excelled in almost every field of social, scientific and economic endeavour. There was much this nation could learn from its Jewish community.

“Though small in numbers, the South African Jewish community is significant in its influence and capabilities and in the contribution it has made and continues to make in building this nation.”

But a community was not defined by language, religion, geographical proximity, nationality or a shared identity or common ancestry.

“Community is about solidarity, mutual respect and understanding - about a shared and abiding concern for the most vulnerable and marginalised.”

He said individual interests were inextricably linked to the interest of the collective. “Islands of wealth surrounded by a sea of poverty are intolerable.”

We had to foster a sense of inclusiveness. The South Africa of today was very different from the South Africa of 1994, with significant improvements and progress in many areas.

“We had leadership with foresight; otherwise this country would have evolved into civil war.”

But we had to be forthright about obstacles that still hindered our progress and also had to achieve greater consensus on the means by which we addressed the needs of our country - unemployment, poverty, education, governance, service delivery and infrastructure.

In conclusion, he quoted former President FW de Klerk, who said: “South Africa will succeed - provided we can work together as South Africans to support our Constitution, to demand the rights that it guarantees and to achieve the vision of human dignity, equality and enjoyment of human rights and freedoms that it articulates.”

Ramaphosa said he agreed: “South Africa will succeed.”

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Community Voices

Guarded optimism after the ‘Looking Forward’ exchange

After the public dialogue between Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa on February 21, selected members of the audience were asked if the conversation has changed their views about the future of South Africa’s relationship with Israel.



LAURENCE RAPP, in his communal capacity: “I wouldn’t say my views have changed because of the discussion; it is clear from comments made by Mr Ramaphosa that he feels the SA government has a role to play in seeking peace in the Middle East based on our experience in South Africa’s peaceful transition and the role he played in Northern Ireland. It must, however, be stressed that government has no role to play as a peacemaker in the Middle East if it continues to display such bias in representing Israel’s situation. To play this role they must show better understanding of facts, context and be more even-handed.”



HAROLD JACOBS, director at Werksmans Attorneys: “The ‘Looking Forward’ exchange between the Chief Rabbi and ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, was a huge success; my views about the future of South Africa’s relationship with Israel haven’t changed. The Chief Rabbi’s fervent insights to sustain continued appreciation and support of Israel for SA Jewry, left Ramaphosa in no doubt about that ‘service’. Ramaphosa, while maintaining his party’s line, given resolutions adopted at Mangaung, gave the impression that he personally had a benevolent appreciation for South African Jewry’s continued contribution to South Africa. Continued ‘Looking Forward’ exchanges need to be held to achieve a more balanced relationship between South Africa and Israel.”



STEPHEN KOSEFF, Investec Bank, who is currently in London: “I did find the session with Cyril Ramaphosa very encouraging and if he is able to implement the National Development Plan effectively, South Africa will be in a different place in 20 years’ time.”



ALEX ZINGOL, Durban Jewish communal leader: “At the outset, a hearty ye’asher koach to the Chief Rabbi for his initiative in having arranged this meeting and dialogue. Regrettably, I see very little (if any) shift in the South African government’s relationship with Israel. The anti-Israel campaign has the ear of some government officials who are far more sympathetic to Arab propaganda than the facts as per the Israeli reports. However, with the constant attention being given to this issue by the Chief Rabbi and the SA Jewish leadership, hopefully we will see a change for the better in the near future.”

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Can Ramaphosa’s understanding change things?

The atmosphere in last week’s meeting at Investec between Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa was for some an encouraging indication that there is someone at the top in the ANC to talk to who is genuinely receptive to hearing Jewish concerns, particularly about the South Africa-Israel relationship, even if there is not agreement on everything. The audience clearly felt this positive atmosphere.

There was also a sense of the possible role South Africa might play to foster dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, rather than just taking the Palestinian side and alienating the Israeli side, as currently happens.

Given South Africans’ history of peaceful change through dialogue, they still pride themselves on being equipped to teach others about its power. Yet we have squandered that skill of ours when it comes to the Palestine-Israel conflict, opting instead for simply taking one side.

With the political star of Ramaphosa rising, people are already asking: “How would our concerns be addressed if Ramaphosa were in the president’s seat?”

The political reality is that knives are out for Ramaphosa in some significant quarters, purportedly because he is Venda - therefore an “intruder” into the Zulu and Xhosa Nguni mainstream. Zuma enjoys a huge Zulu support base in KwaZulu-Natal which does not always objectively evaluate his actual performance.

Is the Jewish community grabbing at straws by attaching such weight to this meeting? Is it a taste of what is possible, or merely political smoke and mirrors - a short-lived, feel-good event which will be rapidly swept aside by South African political realities?

The number of people who attended and the large number turned away because of lack of space indicate the significance they see in it.

The cynical maxim says: A country does not have friends; it has interests. If so, where do South Africa’s interests lie? With the Palestinians and the Arab bloc? With the West, including Israel, Germany, Canada, France, the UK, etc? Or with NAM, which aligns with neither? Currently South Africa is opportunistically aligning with the Arab bloc - a stance open to question.

The meeting also underscores the status of South African Jewry as not merely a small minority group, but one with gravitas. Ramaphosa, with his business background, is perhaps more aware of this than other ANC stalwarts.

Projecting forward, though, even if he understands the Jewish affinity to Israel, will he be willing to spend political capital defending it in the ANC? Will he even be allowed to stick his neck out this way?

Ramaphosa is not deputy president of the country, but deputy president of the ANC; Zuma will give him his rein, provided it neither threatens his own status nor steals his thunder. He can even use Ramaphosa as a lightning conductor.

ANC stalwarts may be concerned that Ramaphosa will not follow the party line at all times, and they may feel the need to take him down. Some are wary that, with the wealth he has acquired through shrewd business dealings, he may not really be one of “them”. There are also vested interests who are nervous about his outspoken stance against corruption.

We should explore every opportunity to promote a more constructive attitude towards Israel, including meetings like this. But much more is necessary: the hard-core political and practical dimensions must be tackled.

Chief Rabbi Goldstein must be commended for this initiative, particularly the “public” nature of it. It was not a whinge fest, but a positive attempt to do something in good spirit, to see what can be practically achieved.

The dialogue was courteous and dignified, but the two sides did not shirk controversy or “difficult” issues. They spoke openly - it was not simply tokenism.

Perceptions are crucially important and the Jewish view of South Africa has been improved from this gathering. May this be the harbinger of more events of this calibre.

The Oscars crossed a fine line into bigotry

PETER DREIER
LOS ANGELES

It seems as though the Oscars writers think that Hollywood is so liberal that they can get away with making offensive comments because everyone knows they’re “just joking”.

I don’t agree.
Sunday night’s Academy Awards ceremony featured a not very subtle onslaught of sexist, racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic “jokes”.

At a time when America is facing an epidemic of gun violence and debating how to limit the spread of assault weapons, host Seth McFarlane thought it would be clever to make a joke about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

“Daniel Day-Lewis is not the first actor to be nominated for playing Lincoln,” McFarlane said. “Raymond Massey portrayed him in the 1940s ‘Abe Lincoln in Illinois’. I would argue, though, the actor who really got inside Lincoln’s head was John Wilkes Booth.”

Perhaps hoping to win an award for “most racially insensitive” comment, McFarlane joked about Lewis’ habit of staying in character during the filming of Lincoln, even when the cameras were off.

“If you bumped into Don Cheadle in the studio lot,” McFarlane said, looking at Lewis in the audience, “would you try and free him?”

McFarlane also made outrageous remarks about Adele’s weight, gays, women, Latinas and Jews.

It would be difficult to pick a winner in the “most sexist comment” category. McFarlane sang a juvenile song, “We Saw Your Boobs”, about movie scenes in which former Oscar nominees were topless. Referring to the decade-long quest to find Osama bin Laden by Jessica Chastain’s character in “Zero Dark Thirty”, McFarlane said it was an example of women never being “able to let anything go”.

To those women who lost weight before attending the Oscar ceremony, McFarlane said: “For all those women who had the ‘flu’, it paid off. Lookin’ good.”

Referring to Latina actresses Penelope Cruz and Salma Hayek - both of whom speak impeccable English - McFarlane said: “We have no idea what they’re saying, but we don’t care cause they’re so attractive.”

After singing “We Saw Your Boobs” with the Los Angeles Gay Men’s Chorus, MacFarlane made a point of explaining that he wasn’t actually a member of the chorus, as if being gay was something to be ashamed of.

MacFarlane also observed that the show’s producers had invited the cast of “Chicago” to perform on the telecast because “the [Oscars] show isn’t gay enough yet”.

Perhaps the most offensive comments were made by “Ted”, the talking stuffed bear who bantered (through McFarlane’s voice) with actor Mark Wahlberg about Hollywood’s domination by Jews. If putting those words in the mouth of a talking bear is supposed to make the remarks cute and cuddly, it didn’t work with me.

Photos courtesy www.justjared.com



Emma Stone and Seth MacFarlane at the announcement of Steven Spielberg as the 2013 best director at the Academy Awards.

The set-up was Ted’s desire to gain acceptance with the Hollywood “in” crowd, which he said were the Jews, so he could attend a post-Oscars orgy. Ted begged Wahlberg to tell him where the orgy would be held. Wahlberg finally spilled the beans - it would be “at Jack Nicholson’s house.”

Wahlberg explained that he is Catholic. Ted responded: ‘Wrong answer. Try again. Do you want to work in this town or don’t you?’

It was a not very subtle - and not very funny - reference to a 1977 incident that occurred at Nicholson’s home, where director Roman Polanski raped a 13-year-old girl. Polanski pleaded guilty but fled to Paris before he was sentenced.

Remarking on all the talent assembled at the ceremony, Ted said to Wahlberg: “You know what’s interesting? All those actors I just named are part Jewish,” referring to Joaquin Phoenix (who has a Jewish mother), Daniel Day-Lewis (ditto) and Alan Arkin (both parents were Jewish).

“What about you?” Ted asked Wahlberg. “You’ve got a ‘berg’ on the end of your name. Are you Jewish?”

Wahlberg explained that he is Catholic. Ted responded: “Wrong answer. Try again. Do you want to work in this town or don’t you?”

To gain favour with the Hollywood crowd, Ted claimed that he was Jewish, that he “was born Theodore Shapiro”,



“Ted” (voiced by Seth MacFarlane) and actor Mark Wahlberg at this year’s Academy Awards.

Anti-Semitic literature and acts are on the increase worldwide



An example of antisemitic material which was disseminated electronically to multiple recipients in South Africa, in August 2012

DAVID SAKS

Annual reports by a range of organisations involved monitoring and combating anti-Jewish prejudice in various parts of the world. These reports have again recorded an upward trend in global levels of anti-Semitism over the past 12 months.

A report on anti-Semitic trends in 2012 prepared by Israel’s Ministry of Information and Diaspora, noted “an alarming rise in the number of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks against Jewish targets and an escalation in violent incidents against Jews throughout the world”.

Anti-Semitism levels, as measured by documented acts of hostility towards Jews and Jewish institutions, began rising at the start of the century following the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and have shown no sign of dropping to pre-intifada levels, even in times of relative calm in the Middle East.

Countries like Canada, the UK, France and Australia, all home to Jewish communities ranging from 100 000 to half a million, now consistently record annual totals of anti-Semitic incidents as being at or near their highest levels since detailed record-keeping commenced some three decades ago.

The situation is mirrored by what is being experienced by smaller Jewish communities throughout Western Europe. This is despite the fact that all of these countries are fully democratic, egalitarian societies whose legal systems strictly prohibit all forms of prejudice and discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion or other grounds.

Anti-Semitism may no longer be legally sanctioned, but it is continually happening nonetheless, and little is being achieved at the official level to address this.

Compared with other Diaspora countries, South Africa once again recorded strikingly low anti-Semitism figures in 2012. Fifty incidents were logged during this period by the SAJBD and CSO, which share all information and where called for act in tandem to address cases of anti-Jewish behaviour.

About one-third of these incidents, moreover, were generated by just two individuals, who persistently sent hate

mail to Jewish recipients. The identity of one of the perpetrators is unknown; the SAJBD has now instituted legal proceedings against the other.

Surprisingly, in view of previous experience, the upsurge of violence between Israel and Hamas in November did not lead to a spike in anti-Semitic behaviour. About half of the incidents logged, comprised either the one-on-one sending of hate mail to Jewish recipients (usually anonymously) or mass e-mail postings of anti-Semitic literature.

The balance was made up of verbal abuse (20 per cent), and a handful of cases of assault, vandalism, graffiti and offensive media.

Comparative figures for other countries show rates of anti-Semitism to be between 10 to over 20 times higher. SPCJ, the security unit of France’s Jewish communities, reported 614 anti-Semitic acts in France during 2012, a 58 per cent rise from the previous year.

Of these acts, 177 were classified as “violent”, and included the murder of a rabbi and three children at a Jewish school in Toulouse by a Muslim extremist.

In the UK, the Community Security Trust recorded 640 anti-Semitic incidents, a five per cent increase and the third-highest annual total since records started being kept in 1984. Eleven per cent of these fell into the category of “violent anti-Semitic assaults”.

Jewish organisations documented 543 incidents of “racist violence” against Jewish Australians, including physical assaults, vandalism and harassment. The Canadian figure for 2012 has yet to be released, but according to B’nai Brith Canada’s most recent annual audit, released at the end of April 2012, there were 1 297 anti-Jewish occurrences in 2011, only slightly under the previous year’s all-time high.

Nine hundred and sixteen were cases of harassment, 362 involved vandalism and there were 19 cases of violence.

In contrast to these trends, anti-Semitism levels in the United States, home to nearly 40 per cent of the world Jewish population, were once again comparatively low.

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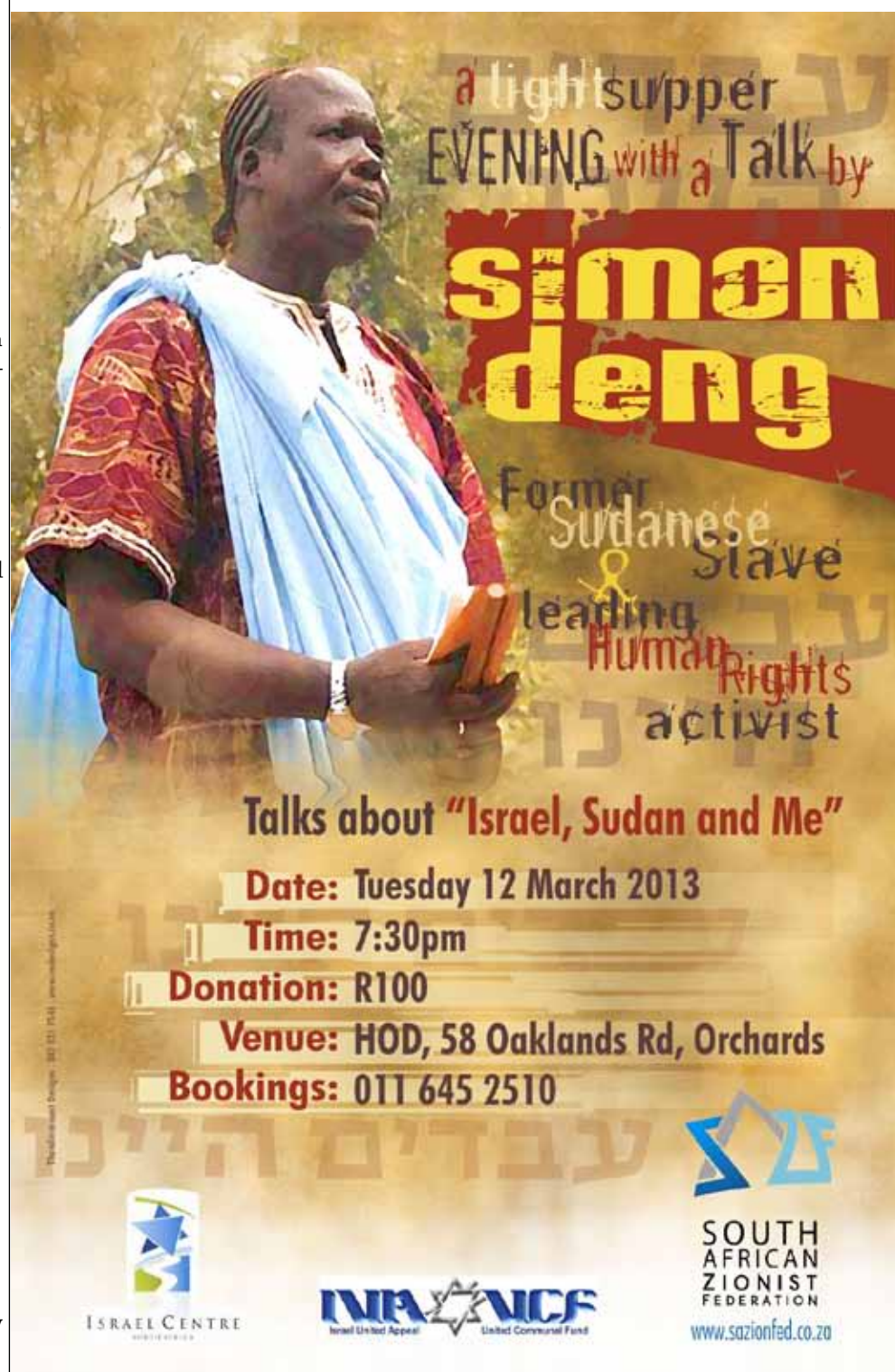
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Photos: Ian Ossendryver



The cream of SA Jewry. This year saw some 3 000 community stalwarts attending Miracle Drive.

Glitz and glamour mark Chabad’s stunning Miracle Drive

OWN CORRESPONDENT

“This is one of the best times ever in Jewish history,” said former US Senator Joe Lieberman, at Chabad’s 24th Miracle Drive event, hosted at Sandton Convention Centre, Tuesday evening.

Lieberman, keynote speaker at the glamorous event, was speaking on the importance of miracles to our world. “Chabad is focused not on creating more and more followers, but rather on growing more and more leaders,” he said.

Blending light humour with gravitas, jazz with rock and a bouquet of really exciting prizes against the backdrop of Chabad changing the world in deed and for good, the event was attended by some 3 000 - the cream of Jewish society.

“When we observe what you as a community do for society,” said Ben Kruger, Standard Bank’s Group Deputy CEO, “we are humbled and extremely inspired.” He spoke of Chabad’s “Grow Your Life” and

job creation programmes, and presented a R1 800 000 donation.

Introducing Lieberman as a “thoughtful legislator and a principled man”, Chabad’s Rabbi Michael Katz spoke of Lieberman as formerly from Connecticut. A former member of the Democratic Party, he was a vice-presidential candidate in 2000.

In 1988 Lieberman, an observant Jew, who believes in the importance of honouring the Constitution responsibly, was nominated to run for the US Senate.

“I believe in miracles,” began Lieberman, who in his time was the only independent in the Senate. “But what is a miracle? It is an understanding of the manifestation of the Divine Presence in our human efforts, giving us the confidence that we aren’t here by accident. But miracles don’t stop when the bible ended.” He cited medical, economic and information technology miracles.

“In the Jewish world, it is a time of great

miracles: Firstly, the re-establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in its historic homeland, something for which Jews prayed but they also advocated, they lobbied, they immigrated and then they fought for it. I often ask myself whether Israel in our time is less miraculous than it was in biblical times.

“Secondly, the freedom to exist as Jews

“The remarkable thing about Chabad in South Africa is its reach beyond the Jewish community,”

and the success Jews are free to enjoy almost all over the world - and in the US and places like South Africa in particular.

“Thirdly, the reconciliation that continues between Christians and Jews, after 2 000 years in hatred that defied all rational response and defined the two cultures’ relationship.”

He went on to discuss the reality he had faced being the only Jew on a national ticket in US government. “When the barrier is broken for one people, opportunities are opened for everyone.

“And fourthly, the existence of Chabad. The movement continues to grow worldwide, and the remarkable thing about Chabad in South Africa is its reach beyond the Jewish community.”

Stand-up comic Nik Rabinowitz was MC of the event, which also featured a performance by Danny K. The evening, handled and made possible with the characteristic efficiency and class of Rabbi David Masinter, was closed with the announcement of the top prize, a red Nissan Infiniti G37 Cabrio valued at over R600 000, which a delighted and stunned Jules and Stephanie Urdang drove home.

Miracle Drive this year again lived up to its enviable reputation as an undeniable highlight on the Jewish social calendar and a blueprint for a successful fundraiser.



A stunned Jules and Stephanie Urdang on stage accepting the keys to their new car.



Keynote Miracle Drive speaker, former US Senator Joe Lieberman.



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GREENSTEIN WANTS EQUAL RIGHTS FOR PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS FOR ISRAELIS

In your article (Jewish Report February 22), “Ramallah journalist: Abbas may have scuppered a two-state solution”, your reporter got a simple statement I made to her after the event in which (journalist) Joseph Dana spoke on February 18, wrong.

In response to her question about the kind of solution I would like to see, I answered: “A society in which all citizens and residents have equal rights, Israelis and Palestinians alike, in whichever political frameworks they happen to live.” I did NOT refer only to Palestinians as she claims.

Ran Greenstein
Associate Professor, Sociology Department
University of the Witwatersrand

The Jewish Report takes the first opportunity to clarify Prof Greenstein’s remarks and to apologise to him for the error. - Editor

CHOICE OF MANIS FRIEDMAN FOR SA TOUR ‘SHORT-SIGHTED’

The Sydenham Shul in Johannesburg has a wonderful programme planned for the speaking tour of Rabbi Manis Friedman.

He was recently filmed during a private talk where he made a number of comments about victims of child sexual abuse. He was widely criticised for his cavalier and insensitive attitude towards the victims of this terrible crime.

He then issued a heartfelt apology for his remarks. All of this is freely available on YouTube.

Sexual abuse has become a well-recognised problem in the Orthodox Jewish world and it is of particular relevance in the South African context.

There is, fortunately, no shortage of amazing individuals who could come as guest speakers to South Africa and we think it insensitive and short-sighted to have invited him as an honoured guest so soon after this controversy.

Josie and Dean Lutrin, Glenhazel, Johannesburg

BEYACHAD LIBRARY ITEMS BELONGING TO SAZE, WILL BE ACCESSIBLE TO COMMUNITY

The proposed closure of the Beyachad Library has generated much negative publicity stemming from an equally large amount of misinformation. This has centred primarily on ownership of the library and the items therein, including the archival material, the books, videos and other media-related items.

The physical library itself is part of the Beyachad building and is administered by the Beyachad management committee, but the material in the archives and certain of the books are the sole property of the South African Zionist Federation and will be monitored and controlled by that organisation.

This archival material will be safely housed on the premises and made available to visitors, under the aegis of the SA Zionist Federation, who may be seeking relevant historical information on the community and its Zionist activities dating back to the previous century.

As to the remaining books and the video material presently housed in the library, they will be dealt with according to the provisions made by their respective owners. Those which are not the property of the SA Zionist Federation as such are not its responsibility.

It is hoped that this clarifies the situation vis-à-vis the library and its contents, and satisfies those who were under the misapprehension that archival material would be destroyed or removed to where it was not accessible.

Lisa Peretz
South African Zionist Federation

HATS OFF TO HATZOLAH FOR A JOB WELL DONE

I would like to congratulate Hatzolah on a job well done. On Saturday afternoon, February 23, while in Melrose Arch, a young black woman (an employee of Woolworths) had an epileptic fit in front of a friend and I.

We are familiar with epilepsy and together with other people, became concerned when the young woman continued to have seizures for over 10 minutes.

Someone did contact local paramedics but after 20 minutes of contacting them, they still had not arrived.

Another woman called Hatzolah and within a couple of minutes a Hatzolah ambulance and emergency vehicle arrived at Melrose Arch and attended to the young woman. The young men from Hatzolah were amazing and did not hesitate to attend to the young woman despite the fact that she was not Jewish and that it was on Shabbos.

As they were placing her in their ambulance, the other paramedics who we had first contacted arrived (almost an hour after being notified).

Hatzolah should be acknowledged for the incredible service that they render, not only to the Jewish community but to others as well.

Niccita Glass
Johannesburg

‘WOMEN ISSUE’ PROVES ISRAEL IS NO DEMOCRACY

Your story in the issue of February 15 headlined “10 women arrested at Western Wall for praying with prayer shawls”, proved it was stupid of me to believe that Israel is, as is often claimed, the only democracy in the Middle East, and that religious freedom is a cornerstone in its Constitution.


Had it been a democracy, women would have had the same right as men to pray at the Western wall from a Torah, and wear a talit.

I do not know of any democratic country that has laws that would enable its supreme court to ban those practices, as the Israel Supreme Court did in 2003. Maybe I was wrong.

Maybe I was also wrong not to have noticed in the Bible that G-d Himself issued such an injunction. If He did, I would be grateful if some learned reader of the SAJR would tell me, chapter and verse, where I can find it in the Bible.

David Pincus
Highlands North, Johannesburg

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Travelling in 2013

Tanzania – where a bit of your heart will stay behind

ROBYN SASSEN

Noella Moshi, one of the women who summited Kilimanjaro in the name of personal achievement under the ORT SA umbrella last year, was born in Tanzania. Just over six years in S, she has been all over southern and central Africa.

Working on a malaria-awareness initiative, she met up with ORT SA’s Robyn Smookler. “I was bullied into it,” she laughs, talking of the exercise of climbing the mountain.

“I was doing this completely outside of my comfort zone. The challenge was an emotional one and once I’d committed to it, I was determined to finish. It was necessary for me.”

“I really wanted to experience this,” she

adds. “It was a privilege being among a group of ORT SA women who really take their faith seriously. The trip was organised with no meat products at all.

But Tanzania is a place not only about extreme challenges, she adds. It’s a place where cheerfulness is cultural. “Tanzanians have a special attitude. They’re cheeky, but will make sure that the visitor has the best time in the world while staying there.

“Kilimanjaro is not the only tourist attraction. Freddie Mercury, lead singer of the iconic rock band Queen, was born in Zanzibar. And there is also much tradition along the Bagamoyo coastline.

The Tanzanian Republic includes several

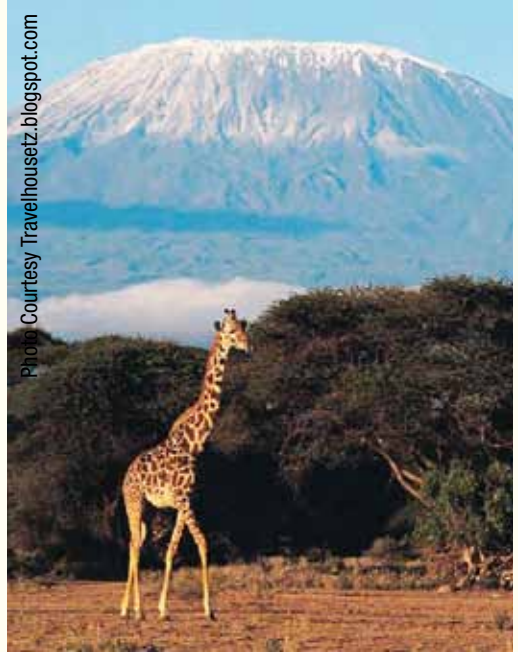
islands under its jurisdiction, as beautiful as tropical islands must be, including the famous and beautiful Pemba Island, steeped in mystery and tradition.

“Another of these is Spice Island, which has strong Arabic culture influences; another is Mwanza, next to Lake Victoria, a really quiet and restful place. And then, of course there is lots of game in the Serengeti National Park.” The Serengeti counts among the world’s greatest nature reserves.

“Dar es Salaam was once a slave compound and it teems, mythically and historically with stories and songs from slaves. The Arab culture in the place is big, but there’s a mix of pre-colonial British values there too.

“Today, it’s teeming with new life, and a large expatriate population is living there, lending the city a truly cosmopolitan feel.

There is something in Tanzania for everyone. The root “Zanzi” means to relax, and the term Bagamoyo, the name of the coastline means, “leave your heart.” A little part of your heart will stay here.”



Kilimanjaro, highest mountain peak in Africa, at 5 895m above sea level.

Tips for when you visit Tanzania

- If you’re holidaying in Tanzania, and hold a South African passport, you will need a tourist visa, which will cost you about R670. The Tanzania High Commission of South Africa is in Pretoria: (012) 342-4371, and the visa section is open mornings only.
- Before visiting Tanzania, you may need to be inoculated against hepatitis A and B, typhoid, rabies and polio, and possibly take anti-malarial drugs, depending on your itinerary.
- The weather in central Africa has, due to global warming, become unpredictable, but generally, Tanzania’s major rainy season is between March and May; its major dry season is between June and October. A season with less heavy rains runs from November to December, and January and February see shorter dry spells.

- Over 100 different languages are spoken in Tanzania; Swahili is the official language; English, the language of the higher courts. Most native Tanzanians are at least trilingual, speaking Swahili, English and their own culture-specific tongue.
- The Tanzanian shilling (Tsh), at the time of going to press, will cost you 59c.
- Traffic in Tanzania is on the left hand side, like South Africa.
- Electricity in Tanzania is at 220 - 240 volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. There are two types of standard plug in Tanzania: one to fit a three-pronged flat adaptor and another to fit a three-round pronged small adaptor.
- Avoid unboiled tap water in Tanzania, and be aware of ice. Drinking water can easily be disinfected with iodine tablets.
- Johannesburg is one hour behind Tanzania.

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Heidi and Howard Feldman: Johannesburg/ South Africa

“We had a special family event to celebrate and were looking for an exciting and

different experience. We were very fortunate in that Yoni offered the Chobe and Vic Falls tour.

What made our visit complete was the very efficient manner in which all aspects of the planning and tour itself were on the highest professional level. The kosher facilities enhanced this absolutely magnificent trip.”

Sender and Zelda Lees :Raanana/Israel

Protea Hotel President – where the atmosphere is luxurious yet affordable

Situated in Cape Town’s gorgeous Bantry Bay area, the atmosphere at the Protea Hotel President is relaxed, yet professional. The accommodation is luxurious yet affordable; for business or leisure, there is no better choice of venue.

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In 2013, no cleaning of the house, no koshering the kitchen, no buying new cutlery or special cooking, let Protea Hotel President take care of all your Pesachdik needs – all in the best month to visit the Mother City!

A top cruise ship is stopping over at Port of Haifa



Agents are invariably asked for cruises on internationally acclaimed ships which call on Israeli ports. The answer is more often than

not in the negative. However, this August there is a wonderful option for those who wish to combine a cruise on a very top cruise ship with a three-night stop-over in the Israel, at the port of Haifa.

Oceania Cruises are sending their brand new ship, state-of-the-art, “Riviera”, on a 10 night “Sacred Sanctuaries Cruise”. The cruise starting in Athens on August 6, ends in Istanbul on August 16, and calls on the Greek Islands of Crete and Rhodes, as well as visiting Cyprus and Kusadasi (Turkey) en-route.

The three-day Israel stopover is the highlight, made possible due to the fact that previously scheduled stops in Egypt for this routing have momentarily been put on the back- burner.

Cruise specialists “Just Cruising” have taken a limited cabin allotment on this sailing and are selling at hugely discounted prices, which Oceania have made available on specific sailings to celebrate the Riviera’s Inaugural sailing year.

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would hardly be conceivable to imagine a more luxurious setting for a composite visit to Israel.

The cruise terminates with an overnight in Istanbul, one of the world’s truly most beautiful cities, with its vast spread of minarets, domes and magnificent palaces, while sailing up and down the Bosphorus is an enchanting, never-to-be-forgotten experience.

For atmosphere as well as shopping, you will have to experience the Kapalıçarsi or Grand Bazaar of Istanbul, the largest covered market in the world, spread over 20 hectares and containing some 4 000 shops on 65 streets.

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“This is the Middle East,” he said. “Whoever lives here should live on the heights, and be able to see everything.” (JTA)

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Miracle needed to save ballet in South Africa

ROBYN SASSEN

SA ballet’s future was speculative, but he remained hopeful for a miracle, ballet historian Jonathan Hurwitz (pictured) told an audience at the Union of Jewish Women, recently.

Starting in 1925, he spoke of how Anna Pavlova in a three-month South African tour, developed ballet consciousness here. “But only after the Second World War dancers were being trained here by women like Marjorie Sturman, founder of Johannesburg Festival Ballet and Ivy Conmee who introduced Royal Ballet values to South Africa.

“Johannesburg Festival Ballet, established in 1962, became Johannesburg City Ballet, which, was absorbed by the new government-supported entity, the performing arts council.

“PACT Ballet became the standard bearer for ballet until 2000. In the 1990s cracks in ballet’s veneer began to appear. Because of its Eurocentricism, it fell into disfavour.

“In 2000, government closed the State Theatre (in Pretoria). For ballet, this represented the end of its repertoire, and the lapsing of rights to perform several ballets.

“A year later, SA Ballet Theatre emerged, on the initiative of former PACT ballet dancers, who

refused to let ballet die. It has recently re-established itself as SAMzansi Ballet (SAMB), with the amalgamation of another local ballet company.

“The future is speculative, not so much because of 1990s-redolent ideologies, but because of finances. Like the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, ballet in this city does not enjoy the support from central government, private donors or the lottery that it did, in the past.”

He compared South African ballet to that in Russia and Cuba, adding that if ballet could survive in those countries, it should have a chance here.

“Before the First World War, Russian ballet was strictly to entertain nobility. With the fall of the Romanoff dynasty, it was deemed elitist. But early in the Bolshevik era critic Anatoly Lunacharsky fought for it as an art for the people. He won; ballet become one of Russia’s best cultural exports.

“In Cuba, it was due to an odd couple, former dictator Fidel Castro and ballerina Alicia Alonso, who had a dance career in the US in the 1930s and the 1940s, that ballet exists in that country today. Contemporary Cuban ballet cuts across class, economy, and racial and social divides. It embraces the whole Cuban population from the fields to the cities. Ballet is the ticket for



Camille Bracher another beautiful young South African-trained dancer snapped up by the Royal Ballet, is partnered by José Martin.

poor dancers, from the slums.

“Ballet in South Africa is beleaguered: there aren’t many jobs available and there are no tax incentives for donations to culture in here. When we train a dancer to be superb, they most likely leave for an international company offering more for a career dancer.

“And our dancers have nothing to dance. We can’t afford rights for new ballets. Working with old classics is self-defeating. With

casts smaller and smaller, season after season we perform the same ballets, inadequately, because we’re hamstrung.

“Closing a ballet is like closing a library and burning the books. We need another Alonso to save us.”

• *SAMB performs Don Quixote, March 8 - 24, at the Mandela Theatre in Braamfontein. Call 0861-670-670 or visit www.joburgtheatre.com*



Much potential - but it falls between two chairs

Dear Edward: Family Footprints by Paul Weinberg (Jacana: 2012) R236.

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

Premised on the phrase “keeping you posted” and based on the photographer’s personal journey back into the annals of his own family history, and his penchant for collecting historical postcards, this book represents an introspective research project, but doesn’t seem decided in its own identity - as to whether it is a book of stories or one of photographs. Ultimately it falls between the two.

The fact that Weinberg, one of the co-founders of Afrapix in 1980 is a well-established politically focused photographer with a keen and curious eye, might explain why you will expect Dear Edward to enthrall you with provocative images; rather, it disappointingly bombards you with a lot of anecdotal text and a slew of tiny, thumbnail photographic “snaps”, which, without captions are like red herrings.

As you page through the whole book, you realise a cleavage between image and text, and find the larger images printed toward the end of the book, but the visual decisions taken in the layout of the book and the way in which captioning is ignored, leaves the reading experience uneven. It’s also sorely under-edited and under-proofread.

Further, the publication suffers from odd layout decisions, which affect its credibility. Its square layout is too small to

ease the book into coffee table associations; too large for sensible containment of its diary-like musings and observations.

The text, overall takes layout precedence, making the images casualties; the size at which they are reproduced make them easy to ignore and hurts their dignity as images.

Edward is Weinberg’s paternal great-grandfather and the book is directed back at him. As a result, the experience of reading it feels intrusive.

Rather than being swept away on the project’s initiative, you feel you are prying into the private fabric of a stranger’s life. As the tale unfolds, beginning at Philippolis in the Free State, where Weinberg’s grandfather first rooted himself in South Africa, gems emerge, but given that this project hasn’t convincingly decided what it is, they lie unpolished.

The Weinberg family’s moves through the interior of South Africa are documented in minuscule detail, from a travel diary perspective. While anecdotally readable, it becomes tedious.

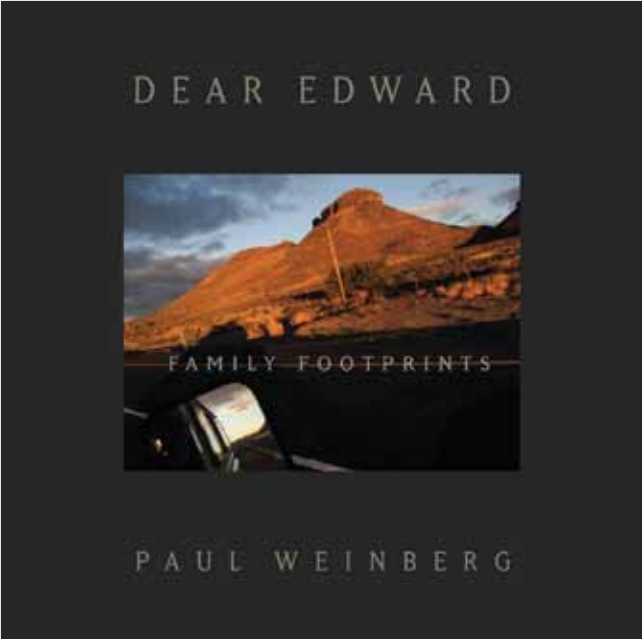
The biggest problem with this book is the addressee. Weinberg begins and ends it with prosaic letters to his dead relative, in the material he caresses his own history, explaining parts of it.

But somewhere between too much and too little information for the casual reader forces your eyes to gloss over the text and land on the photographs, which are too often “cutely” overlapped, hurting their impact.

In one image, a postcard, has images disparate and con-

structed. Handwriting fills the sky. Another image shows a snapshot of two white men in Victorian garb pondering a naked face-down body of a khoi man.

Is he real? Is he dead? What’s going on here? No answers are forthcoming; the mysteries remain opaque but not difficult to turn away from.



Arts Briefs

CLANCY’S ‘THE TIMEKEEPERS’ IS BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Dan Clancy’s “The Timekeepers”, back by popular demand from Israel, performs at Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, March 12 - 16, with one Hebrew performance on March 14. Voted among the top five theatre shows in London by the British Theatre Guide, the play, which has toured internationally since 2004, is a Holocaust drama which soars into the world of opera as it touches on Nazi discrimination of Jews and homosexuals. It’s performed by Roy Horovitz, Pinhas Mittelman and Michael Gamliel and is directed by Lee Gilat. The season is supported by the Israel Embassy and Tararam. Call (011)883-8606.



‘PUBLIC ART/PRIVATE LIVES’ ON SHOW AT ART ON PAPER GALLERY IN MARCH

An exhibition, “Public Art/Private Lives” by Terry Kurgan is now on show at Art on Paper Gallery in Milpark, until March 23. It coincides with the release of Kurgan’s book “Hotel Yeoville”, the result of a participatory public project, published by Fourthwall Books, and features a conversation between Kurgan and Sarah Nuttall, professor of Literary and Cultural Studies and director of WISER at Wits, on March 2. “Hotel Yeoville” is shortlisted for the International Award for Excellence in Public Art, an academic partnership between the United States and China, and it will be reviewed in these pages soon. Call (011) 726-2234 or visit www.galleryaop.com

Vienna Jewish museum grapples with items looted by Nazis

VIENNA - Twenty-five years after the founding of the Jewish Museum of Vienna, museum officials have admitted that many of the items in the museum’s possession were looted from Jewish families during the Holocaust.

A review of the artefacts found 490 objects and more than 980 books that may have been stolen from Jewish owners.

Back in 1998, Austria passed a law requiring restitution for Jewish families who lost property to the Nazis. Previously, the Leopold Museum in Vienna spent 10 years fighting Jewish heirs who sought the return of two paintings.

“For historic reasons people did not see themselves as responsible for investigating the collection referring to provenance,” Christian Kircher, a member of the Vienna Jewish museum’s board, told the New York Times. “This attitude changed completely during the last few years.”

While the Jewish Museum of Vienna is not the first institution to have such items, many have said that as a Jewish museum it has a special responsibility to find any living descendants of the original owners and to return the items.

The investigation of the items’ origin, which began in 2008, was completed only recently. Museum officials said that researching the origin of Judaica can be very difficult, given the few identifying markers and the fact that most Jewish institutions that existed before the Holocaust were completely destroyed.

They also cited the lack of funds for such research. “Our situation is not comparable to any other museum in Austria,” said Museum Director Danielle Spera. (JNS.org)

Dozens protest anti-Semitic bullying at Danish school

COPENHAGEN - Dozens of protesters outside a school near Copenhagen, last Saturday demonstrated against the anti-Semitic harassment of Jewish learners.

The protesters at the rally in Norrebro, a suburb north of Copenhagen, outside the Radmandsgades Elementary School, held up Israeli flags and signs reading “Today we are all Jews”.

The demonstration was in response to recent statements by Lise Egholm, a retiring headmistress of the school, who said the bullying of Jewish children by Arab classmates forced her to advise Jewish parents not to enrol their children in the school.

“We have had some unfortunate incidents, which means that I have had to say to some parents it can be hard to have Jewish children in this area because there are many Palestinians,” Egholm told Dansk Radio.

Among the rally participants were members of a movement called Stop the Islamisation of Denmark, according to Bashy Quraishy of the European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion, a Strasbourg-based NGO.

Quraishy in a statement said the rally, which he attended, was met with a “counter-demonstrate” by “anti-racist activists” who were stopped by police. (JTA)

Study: Sderot rocket attacks increased miscarriages

BEERSHEVA - Rocket attacks on Sderot significantly increased the number of miscarriages that occurred in women from the southern Israeli city, according to a new study.

The number of miscarriages likely was increased because of the rise in stress, including the release of too much cortisol, a stress hormone, wrote Tamar Wainstock and Professor Ilana Shoham-Vardi of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev’s Department of Epidemiology, Faculty of Health Sciences.

The study was published this month in the latest issue of Psychosomatic Medicine Journal of Bio-Behavioural Medicine.

It compared miscarriages, called spontaneous abortions, or SA in the report, in women from Sderot and Kiryat Gat, two southern cities, between April 2004 to December 27, 2008, when Operation Cast Lead broke out. At that point, Kiryat Gat also came under rocket fire.

All but seven of the 1 132 women from Sderot included in the study, had never experienced a siren during or six months prior to conception.

“The findings demonstrate a significantly increased risk of SA among women exposed to potentially life-threatening situations for a prolonged period, both before and during pregnancy, when compared with women of similar demographic characteristics who were not exposed to missile-attack alarms or missile attacks,” according to the report. (JTA)

Kerry to skip Israel on first Middle East trip

Washington - US Secretary of State John Kerry would bypass Israel on his first official trip to the ME, US officials said last week, announcing a jam-packed itinerary through nine nations, including several in Europe.

Kerry’s maiden voyage began last Sunday. He is visiting close US allies and partners in Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

Nuland said the US was waiting for Israeli political parties to form a new government after the recent Knesset election. (Israel Hayom/Exclusive to JNS.org)

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Friends Forever

Where pupils develop into menschen



Ruth Isaacson, Principal of King David Junior Primary, Linksfield, discussed what it means to be a mensch, with Grade 1 pupils David Jammy; Elan van Rensburg; Sammy Kotzen; and Jarren Sacke.

RUTH ISAACSON
PRINCIPAL KING DAVID JUNIOR PRIMARY, LINKSFIELD

The King David Junior Primary School Linksfield, has published a mission statement.

It reads: “We strive to nurture graduates who are menschen, confident and equipped to pursue opportunities they wish to, who are proud of their Jewish heritage and its traditions, who have a love for learning and a determination to contribute to their society.”

King David Junior School is using the power of visual media to support the school ethos of developing our pupils into menschen. We want our children to understand the concept of a mensch in practical, child-orientated terms. How do they recognise and emulate the behaviour of a mensch?

To create a meaningful message, we combined the children’s artwork and photographs of every grade one child demonstrating what it is to be humble, responsible, kind, tolerant, respectful and doing mitzvoth.

The beautiful billboards displayed around the school, remind all our stakeholders, children, parents and teachers, that building a mensch is a team effort. It requires consistent role-modelling from the adults in their lives. Children learn from every deed and every word.

We want our children to appreciate Hashem’s gift of speech and the power of choice we all have, to build a better world. A child who is a mensch has learnt the secret of personal happiness and is well-positioned to make a contribution to society.

Lots of fun at Curly ‘C’ Carnival!



MICHELLE VINOKUR

Last week Friday, the grade Rs at Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School in Johannesburg, had a lot of fun at the Curly “C” Carnival. They made their very own “C” biscuits and delicious clown. Pictured are Daniel Levy; Kiara Lapedus; Sara Joffe; and Zac Munitz.



Purim fun at Sandringham Gardens

GILL FRANSMAN

The Grade Rs at King David Linksfield celebrated Purim at school last Friday. They went to Sandringham Gardens to give michloach manot that they had made. They had so much fun! Pictured is Yita Kahn’s grade R class.

Waverley’s best-dressed Purim family



MICHELLE VINOKUR

Daniel, Simone, Liora and Batsheva Israel, won the prize for the best dressed family at the Beit Yisrael and Waverley Shul Purim function.



Pine Street’s glorious Purim

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY JODY HARRIS

Meir Felsher, Erin Katzman and Aaron Michels from Pine Street Playschool, are all dressed up for Purim and enjoy watching a puppet show.



TA Primary dresses for Purim

OWN CORRESPONDENT

All dressed up for Purim with their festive balloons and sporting mishloach manot, are grade two learners from Torah Academy Primary School. They are: Red Indian maiden (Ella Levin); Queen Esther (Tali Lieb); and Japanese lady (Tiffereth Cohen). A glorious time was had by all.

Blood test for Alzheimer’s by Israeli company

**ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN
JERUSALEM**

“Today one of the main weaknesses in the Alzheimer’s area is that patients don’t find out until it’s too late,” says Ilya Budik, CEO of NeuroQuest, an Israeli company developing a novel blood test for early detection of the most common cause of dementia worldwide.

“There are many new therapies under development, and the most successful trials are showing the earlier a patient is treated, the better likelihood of responding to the treatment,” he says.

A portfolio company of the government-supported Misgav Venture Accelerator in northern Israel, NeuroQuest recently received \$500 000 in a funding round led by the InterTech Group in South Carolina and the Maryland/Israel Trendlines Fund.

This half a million dollars will enable NeuroQuest to progress towards a validation clinical trial at four US medical centres and to establish a US development centre, possibly alongside its South Carolina partners.

Its first human trials in Israel showed NeuroQuest’s test - which is based on 20 years’ research by Prof Michal Schwartz of the Weizmann Institute of Science - to be 87 per cent accurate with an 85 per cent specificity rate in detecting Alzheimer’s and ALS, two common neurodegenerative diseases.

With blood tests, Budik explains, anything over 70 per cent is considered medically significant.

“That gave us proof of concept for Prof Schwartz’s discovery that certain parts of the immune system are involved in protecting the central nervous system and also in healing it from neurodegenerative diseases or neural injury,” Budik tells Israel21c.

Encouraged by these successful results, the



company went into a more aggressive mode to determine how its niche product could fit specifically into the global Alzheimer’s market. NeuroQuest built up a team with experience in running clinical trials in this space.

Because the Alzheimer’s population in Israel is too small for major clinical testing, NeuroQuest brought aboard Dr Jacobo Mintzer, chief of geriatric psychiatry and co-director of Alzheimer’s research and clinical programmes at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

Aside from his prominence and expertise in the field, Mintzer did his post-doctorate at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School.

Budik says the first of 170 test subjects will be recruited beginning next summer. The trials will be overseen by the Harvard Clinical Research Institute, and Harvard Medical School is to be one of the four testing centres.

“A clinical research organisation allows the trial to be more impartial and controlled, and

benefits the company because the trial is run by specialists making sure it’s safe for the patients,” explains Budik. “We’re just doing a blood draw, but we still want to make sure everyone involved is involved for the right reasons.”

If the trials go as hoped, NeuroQuest could find itself in the right place at the right time. That’s because in late 2012, the US Food and Drug Administration approved Amyvid, a radioactive diagnostic agent for positron emission tomography (PET) imaging of the brain to see the density of harmful plaques in adults being evaluated for Alzheimer’s and other causes of cognitive decline. It wasn’t possible until now to evaluate these plaques in a living patient.

However, a PET scan costs up to \$6 000, meaning that Amyvid will not be widely available. Budik says that a relatively inexpensive positive blood test using NeuroQuest’s tech-

nology could potentially provide enough cause for a health insurer to authorise the highly accurate PET imaging. So the two breakthroughs may in fact work well together for the greater good.

“We envision that in 10 to 15 years, the Alzheimer’s market will look like the cancer and heart disease market looks today,” says Budik, who is in talks with other potential investors and partners.

“One doesn’t want to find out one has heart disease if a heart attack is coming tomorrow. One wants to take medication to lower cholesterol and blood pressure at the first sign of high cholesterol so that the heart attack might not happen at all.”

NeuroQuest’s management hopes to provide the same early-warning capability to people in the first stages of Alzheimer’s, ALS, Parkinson’s and other progressive neurodegenerative diseases. (Israel21C)

The nose that can smell cancer goes commercial

**BRIAN BLUM
TEL AVIV**

An Israeli invention that can detect lung cancer from exhaled breath will be commercialised in a joint venture between the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and Alpha Szenszor, a Boston-based manufacturer of carbon nanotube sensing equipment.

Technion’s Prof Hossam Haick has been working on what he calls “Na-Nose” (the “na” is for “nanotechnology”) since 2007, and the device has been proven in numerous international clinical trials to differentiate between different types and classifications of cancer with up to 95 per cent accuracy.

Patients breathe into a tube; the Na-Nose analyses the more than 1 000 different gases that are contained in the breath to identify those that may indicate that something’s wrong. It works by binding gases to specific nano-materials, a technique formally known as volatile organic compound (VOC) detection.

The breakthrough is significant because there is currently no commercially available way of screening for lung cancer. Expensive and cumbersome imaging technologies (such as CT scans) are ordered only when a patient complains of symptoms, when it’s usually too late, or for a smaller group of high-risk individuals, mostly long-term smokers. And biopsies of tumours, when required, are inherently invasive.

Na-Nose could potentially change the current reality, where receiving a diagnosis of lung cancer is all too often a death sentence. Eighty-five per cent of those with this particularly pernicious form of cancer don’t survive more than five years.

Up until now, Haick’s innovation could only

be used in a laboratory setting, says Steve Lerner, CEO of Alpha Szenszor. The new partnership will aggressively push to produce a manufacturable commercial “appliance” within two to three years. FDA testing could take up to another five years.

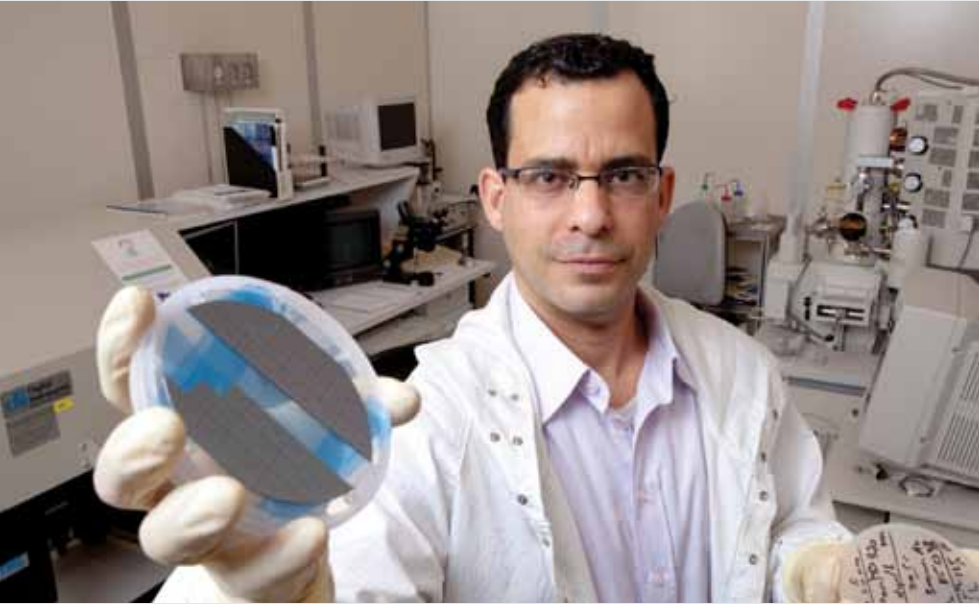
But before the decade is over, Haick and Lerner are confident that your local family physician should have a pocket-size “Na-Nose”, costing as little as \$10, in his or her office. The initial device will be a lot more expensive, perhaps as high as \$10 000 per unit, which will limit it to larger clinics and hospitals. But that’s still much less expensive than a CT imaging machine, and smaller.

The vision is even bigger. Lerner anticipates a day when the nanotechnology underlying the Na-Nose will be built into smartphones and tablets - allowing you to connect a tube to your iPad and screen yourself for cancer at home. Haick envisions an even lower-cost model put to work in the developing world.

While the initial focus for the joint venture is on lung cancer, the possible benefits go much further. Haick says that, in the five years since he’s been working on the technology, his team has expanded the range of diseases it can detect. Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and other types of cancer - including breast, prostate and gastric - are all being found with similar levels of accuracy.

Alpha Szenszor is probably the ideal partner to bring the Na-Nose to market. Lerner has spent his career building and managing scalable manufacturing operations, from consumer electronics to semiconductors.

Meanwhile, Alpha Szenszor had been perfecting its carbon nanotube sensor equipment but hadn’t yet found the right commercial application. Haick needs those nanotubes to



Hossam Haick with the components of his Na-Nose.

move to the next level.

“The Technion has gone through all the engineering work, significantly accelerating our path. They’ve also made inroads with the medical community,” Lerner tells Israel21c.

If Lerner represents the manufacturing brawn, Haick is clearly the scientific brains. A faculty member in the Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Unit and a professor in the Technion’s Department of Chemical Engineering, he was inspired to apply his chemistry background to disease detection after he read that dogs could sniff out certain types of cancer.

“But they had no way to communicate that efficiently,” he said, “and it’s not possible to bring dogs into a hospital setting due to issues with hygiene.” The Na-Nose explicitly seeks to duplicate the dog experience with technology.

Na-Nose’s detection device can be used at three different stages. The first, and most critical, is advanced screening. The earlier cancer is detected, the better the survival rate. The second stage is detailed diagnosis and monitoring during the cancer treatment: a simple breath analysis could mean less radiation or fewer bi-

opsies. Finally, the Na-Nose can be used following successful treatment, to stay on top of any signs the cancer may be recurring.

Haick, 37, born and raised in the Christian Arab city of Nazareth, has appeared on Yedioth Ahronoth’s list of 50 leading Israelis in 2007; on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Review list of 35 leading young scientists for 2008; and in 2010, he was named one of the 10 Most Promising Young Israeli Scientists by Calcalist, and one of the Jerusalem Post’s Young Israelis of the Year.

With time the Na-Nose will get smarter and new medical treatments will follow. For example, Haick is working on the ability to connect lung cancer detection with genetic mutations. “This is quite important,” he said, “as many people with similar lung cancers, in the same environment, who get the same treatment don’t respond equally. We attribute this to genetic mutations.”

There’s still much to be done to make the new joint venture a reality. But given the potential, Haick and Lerner may just hit this one on the nose. (Israel21c)

Purim in Pretoria - Israel style

DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

“Purim in Israel”, the theme of this year’s celebrations in Pretoria, was embraced with great humour and imagination by the Pretoria Jewish community, who came out in large numbers as well as some visitors from Johannesburg.

The Pretoria Hebrew Congregation celebrated this festival with a special kids’ programme, including a prize for every child.

After the reading of the megillah, a delicious Israeli-style supper was enjoyed by all before the costume parade and prize-giving for adults and children.



A group of children lining up for their prizes.

ORT JET has transformed speed dating into speed networking

MARCELLE RAVID
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING,
ORT SA

More than 75 small business owners attended ORT JET (Jewish Entrepreneurial Training) first networking event of the year for small businesses, recently. The event was hosted at the Waverley Shul hall.

This was an opportunity to meet and connect with like-minded people in order to expand their business network. Speed networking is based on the popular model of speed dating. It is a meeting format designed to accelerate business contacts and involves multiple people gathering in a round-robin set-up, which is random and time bound.

During a set period of time participants greet each other in a series of brief exchanges and share their professional backgrounds and business goals. Networkers are generally seeking exposure to new markets and/or to expand their pool of vendors.

Small business owner David said: “The networking last night was fun and rewarding and seriously well catered! Many thanks!”

“Although we have held networking events in the past, this was the first of its kind in this format and from our feedback it was well received by all who attended,” says Cindy Silberg, ORT JET Business Mentorship Manager.

ORT JET endeavours to empower business owners in the Jewish community. Networking is an essential tool for any business owner to achieve growth.

Journey through Israel’s political landscape

Johannesburg WIZO Forum, appropriately chose an “Update on Who’s Who and What’s What in Israel Today”, to kick off its fortnightly Hasbarah series for 2013, according to a media release.

Avrom Krengel, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, took the audience on a detailed journey through the Israel elections of January 22 and (possible) coalitions and what the various scenarios would mean for the country.

He moved on to the uncertain and sometimes worrying situation of Israel’s Arab neighbours and what the desire for democracy in those countries would mean for their citizens and for the area at large.

Krengel spoke about the South African politicians who support the BDS and Labelling campaign and how much work goes into counteracting these policies.

The many questions from the floor touched on army service for the haredi community; nuclear Iran; President Barack Obama’s role in world peace; the offshore gas discovery; and the settlements.

As Krengel concluded... there is never any shortage of discussion where Israel is concerned and changes occur almost daily.



Gertie Feinstein; Avrom Krengel; Yvonne Jawitz; and Nava Gonen.

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The winners in the WIZO South Africa “Progressive Jackpot” Competition were :-

1ST Draw

Judy Moritz Jack Bloom Andy Schwartz

2nd Draw

Nava Gonen Lee Joffe Hessie Isaacs

WIZO South Africa would like to thank everyone who participated. For more information: sophia@beyachad.co.za

Many thanks for all your support.

Friday (March 1)

• Sydenham Highlands North Shul hosts international lecturer and author, Rabbi Manis Friedman at the Friday Night Club Dinner for Young Adults, “Intimacy for Dummies”. Contact: (011) 640-5021.

• UZLC hosts Stan Klaff who will speak on “The Hebrew Order of David International - Now and Then”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria, (072) 127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

• The United Sisterhood book sale at the Benmore Gardens Shopping Centre. Unwanted books and magazines donations gladly accepted. Contact: (011) 646-2409 or fax (011) 646-4654.

Saturday (March 2)

• Sydenham Highlands North Shul hosts international lecturer and author, Rabbi Manis Friedman at a public shiur after davening (approx 11:00) on: “Warning: Religion May be Hazardous to your Health!” Cholent Lunch Fabrengen: Talks & Tales: Insights & Inspiration; Seudah Shlishit (for teens only) at the Sydenham Bayit. Contact Eli Unterslak, (011) 640-5021.

Sunday (March 3)

• Second Innings hosts Shareen Richter who will talk on “The Laughter Professor”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Contact: Grecia, (011) 532-9718. All talks are R20 entrance for Second Innings members and R40 for non-members.

• RCHCC hosts an exhibition of works

What’s On

1 – 8 March 2013

by Mark Nathan. Opening: 18:00. Exhibition closes March 24. Hours: Monday - Thursday 09:00 - 16:00, Friday 09:00 - 12:00, Sunday 18:30 - 21:30. Information: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, or e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

• RCHCC shows a biopic documentary, “The Kid Stays in the Picture”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net or www.great-park.co.za

• Sydenham Highlands North Shul hosts international lecturer and author, Rabbi Manis Friedman for an “Evening lecture” at Cape Town Gardens Shul. Contact: (011) 640-5021.

Monday (March 4)

• UJW hosts Richard Tait, a chemical engineer and retired lecturer at Wits, who will present the second of two lectures on: “Can Renewable Energy Reduce Rising Costs - Bio-Fuels or Solar Energy” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

• ORT JET is hosting a breakfast with Allon Raiz, founder and CEO of Raizcorp, who will talk on his new book “What to Do When You Want to Give Up”. Learn how to weather the challenges that many small businesses face. Venue: Pine Street Shul, Orchards. Time: 08:30 - 11:00. Donation: R100. Booking: Tracy, (011) 728-7154, or e-mail tracy@ortjet.org.za

tion: R100. Booking: Tracy, (011) 728-7154, or e-mail tracy@ortjet.org.za

• Sydenham Highlands North Shul hosts international lecturer and author, Rabbi Manis Friedman on “If its All for the Good, Why Does it Feel so Bad? (men and women). Venue: Seeff Hall. Time: 20:00. Donation: R50. Contact: (011) 640-5021.

Tuesday (March 5)

• WIZO Forum, “Art (E)scape”, invites you to explore art in the newly-developed West Campus at Wits. Natalie Knight curator will lead a walkabout showing a selection of the art. Bus leaves Beyachad at 09:15am sharp. Cost: R80 (incl tea and refreshments). Booking essential. Contact: Sandy, (011) 645-2515.

• Sydenham Highlands North Shul hosts international lecturer and author, Rabbi Manis Friedman on “Healing the Past; Healing the Future” (women). Venue: Elk Hall. Time 13:00. Donation: R30. In the evening: “How to Like the People You Love”. (men and women). Venue: Seeff Hall. Time: 20:00. Donation: R50. Contact: (011) 640-5021.

Wed (March 6)

• RCHCC hosts Harold (Smoky) Simon to talk on “Role of the Volunteers from Abroad (Machal) in the Israel Air Force in the War of Independence (1948-49)”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R80. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net or www.great-park.co.za

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Sheila learns that life does begin at 50



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

It is amazing how sometimes a phrase you have not heard for a long time sends you back in time and evokes a whole lot of interesting memories.

I happened to notice a horse running in Cape Town last week named Recall To Life. I had to stop for a moment and think back on where I had heard that phrase before and suddenly I found myself taken back to my form 4 (I think it would be called grade 11 these days) class at King David Linksfield.

The line comes from A Tale Of Two Cities by Charles Dickens and I could see myself and my class mates having an English literature class conducted by Luli Zampektakis.

The line refers to Dr Manette, who is about to be released after spending 18 years in the infamous Bastille prison in Paris during the French Revolution.

The term had me thinking about older people who have found a new path later in their lives, especially in the world of sport. I recently found the perfect example of somebody whose entire life changed because of a challenge.

Sheila Isaacs had shown no interest in sport at all. As a youngster, then known as Sheila Lurie, the only activity she did was occasionally riding her bicycle to

Barnato Park Girls School in Berea. Sheila got married and emigrated to the US and lives on Long Island in New York.

“On my 50th birthday my daughter bought me a little pink girls’ bicycle with her first pay check as a teacher and it felt nice to ride a bike again,” explained Sheila.

At the time she was working with a man who was a cyclist and runner and he challenged her to enter a triathlon on Long Island with him. She had a bike, she was able to swim a little, it was just a question of doing the run.

To everybody’s surprise Sheila began to train and when the time came to participate, she was in the line-up. Remarkably, the man who challenged her, was not!

“On the day the water was cold and rough but I completed the swim, ran the 10km and cycled 25km. I completed it and was awarded a gold medal in my age group.”

That was in 1991 and after that Sheila was hooked. “The day after the triathlon I wore the T-shirt and my medal to the office, I was so proud. I have now been doing it for 22 years.”

She started travelling around the US competing in various triathlons and then made it her mission to compete in an event in all 50 states.

Unbeknown to her, the triathlon in which she chose to participate in Maryland, turned out to be the national championships.

“The top 10 in each age-group were chosen to run for the national team.” A flat tyre on her bike cost her a place in

the team, but the following year Sheila did qualify and has participated in triathlons all over the world, including New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Mexico, Canada and Portugal.

She then learned about the Maccabi Games and set her sights on participating in Israel. In 1995 she qualified for the Maccabi Pan American Games in Argentina and two years later went off to Israel.

“Israel was wonderful because I had a lot of family support there. Unfortunately, that was the year the bridge collapsed at the opening ceremony and that was a terrible incident,” she recalled.

In the meantime she was closing in on her ambition to race in every state in the US and she deliberately left Hawaii as her 50th.

It turned out to be the World Championships Iron Man Competition and Sheila finished second in her age group. It took place in extremely difficult conditions and only three of the group managed to finish.

She has since participated in the All Africa Championships in Mauritius and even raced in Beijing on the Olympic course, although two years after the Games.

But Sheila is not stopping there; she has set herself new goals. “I have participated in close to 140 triathlons, but my next ambition is to do one in each province of Canada. I have done six, there are still four to go.”

She is now in her 70s and still going stronger than ever. There is no question that Sheila has been recalled to life.



Sheila Isaacs on her bicycle during the World Championships Iron Man competition in Hawaii in October 2004.

Jarred and Laurie win equestrian trophies



At the recent Gauteng Horse Society annual awards evening, held in Kyalami last weekend, Jarred Morris , a pupil at King David High School Linksfield, was awarded two trophies, firstly for junior intermediate equitation and secondly the junior 1,10m championship trophy.

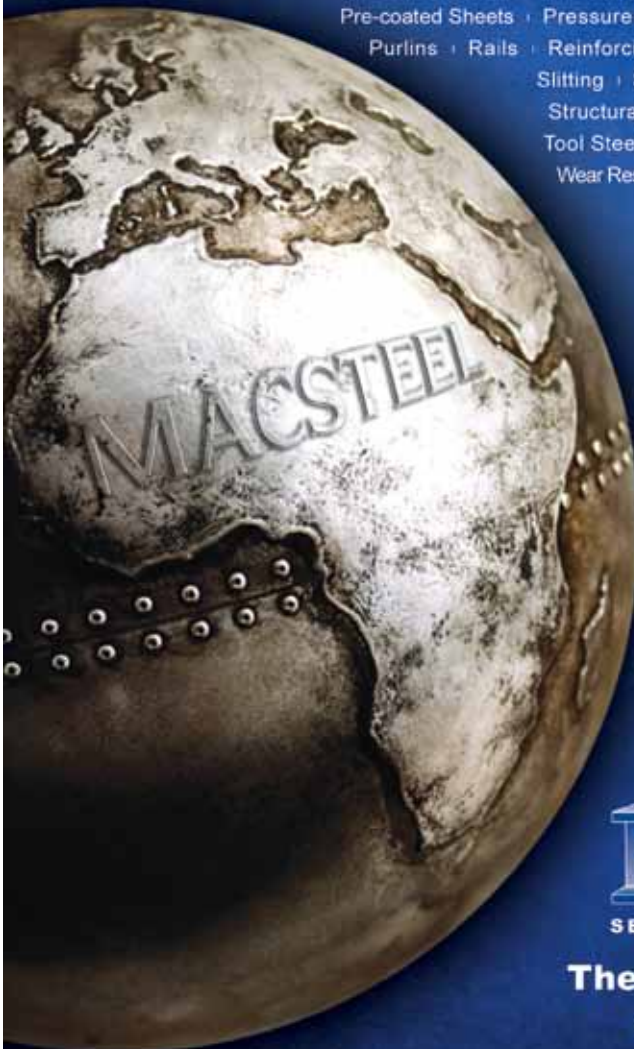
Both were ridden on his mare “Flower Powa”.


Jarred’s sister Laurie, also recently won the novice dressage class at the Sanesa Interschools Competition for Central Gauteng.

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