



**Shwekey
mania takes
hold of SA
Jewry -
page 8**

• south african • jewish report

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Oh what fun to play in Highveld snow!

Frolicking in the snow and making their first ever snowballs in South Africa, some of the Torah Academy Boys' High School learners were given an opportunity to take a break from class and experience Johannesburg's first real snowfall in many years. They are Doron Joffe, Shmuel Dovid Goldberg, Betzael Chaikin, Pinni Katz and Mendel Zlotnick.

(PHOTO: SUZANNE BELLING)

A potpourri of perspectives and podia at Limmud on the Vaal



4, 5, 6, 8

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12

Are we guilty of gross prejudice toward Poland?

We brand the Polish people as "eternal anti-Semites" and we send tour after tour of young Jews to the death camps... blinkered to the multitude of memorials to Jewish history, life and legacy in Warsaw and Krakow.

6, 7

Ladysmith memorial remembers Jews who died on Boer side



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17:32	18:23	Bloemfontein
17:27	18:20	Port Elizabeth
17:19	18:12	East London

Kashrut Alert

SOME IMPORTED CADBURY CHOCOLATES NOT KOSHER

A number of Cadbury chocolates, being imported into South Africa, appear similar or identical to products produced locally. The only difference is the place of manufacture, the kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues said in a media release.

For example, the label on Cadbury Flake large says “made in Egypt for Kraft SA”. The imported products do not bear the Beth Din logo. “Our certification applies only to products ‘made in South Africa’ and similar products made elsewhere are not certified.”

For a complete list of certified Cadbury products, visit www.uos.co.za or via your mobile phone www.uos.co.za/mobi

The invisible hand

As the State of Israel stands this week, it is surrounded by a shrinking circle of “friends” in its region and a growing gang of enemies. Where it could once count on Egypt as a ground-breaking peace partner and Turkey as a moderate Muslim ally, it now has an unstable Syria threatening the use of chemical weapons, a Muslim-Brotherhood ruled Egypt, Iran growing increasingly bellicose and Turkey decidedly antagonistic.

Surely this is something to fear?

This week’s parsha has the following to teach us regarding this: “Do not fear them [the Canaanites,] remember what Hashem your G-d did to Pharaoh and the whole of Egypt: the signs and wonders which you saw... He will also do these to all the nations which you fear. Also G-d will send the hornets against them.”[D’varim 7:18-20]

What is perplexing is the last sentence here. If G-d is assuring us that He will employ against the Canaanites His entire anti-Egyptian arsenal, why does He need to add that He will also use wasps? I mean, from a tactical point of view, I’d rather know that He is warming up a plague of the first-born,



PARSHAT EIKEV
Rabbi Ramon Widmonte
Bnei Akiva Mizrachi

or a splitting of a sea than a bunch of insects!

We find an answer to this question in the commentary of the S’forno regarding G-d’s command to the Jews earlier, to conduct a census. He states as follows” “[Moshe was commanded to conduct a census of the Jewish people] to order them so that they might enter the Land immediately, each man under his banner, without war; rather, the [Canaanite] nations would leave of their own free will, as some of them eventually did...

“It was the sin of the spies which enabled the seven [Canaanite] nations to do evil for forty more years, which culminated in their destruction.”

The S’forno’s answer is that there is a level greater than having G-d conduct a hi-

tech war for us to enable our possession of the Land of Israel: no war at all! Hashem’s first option is to have no one die, but rather that the Jewish people would have such a moral charisma, such a wave of positive energy, that all foes would bow their heads before us and move aside.

This is what Hashem originally envisioned for the entry of the Jewish people into Israel and, in this mode, Hashem would not employ split seas and mighty plagues, but rather some insects, which would not kill anyone, but just irritate them away.

For most of us, such a view sounds Pollyannaish at best and suicidal at worst, but as we strive with our enemies about us right now, it is what the Torah wishes us to bear in mind.

Yes, the Stuxnet viruses, drones, satellites, commandos, bombers and submarines are all important, but they are far from ideal. Even sanctions are not the Jewish people’s preferred method of victory. What we seek is a method which even vanquishes our own fear: moral strength; that is our most secret weapon, so secret, we sometimes even forget it ourselves.

Cycalive Jewish initiative embracing the broader society

SUZANNE BELLING
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

To the rousing music of the Springs Field Band and the roar of Steel Wings on their Harley Davidsons, some 30 grade 11 cyclists from Torah Academy, with two Soweto schools, Pace College and Moletsane High, set off on Sunday on their relay ride to Durban where they arrived on Thursday.

Also part of the team were cyclists from Israel brought out by Partnership 2Gether, principals and teachers from the three schools and a support team of medics.

Welcoming the crowd at the start of the 15th annual Cycalive from the grounds of Torah Academy in Orchards, Johannesburg, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy, and driving force behind Cycalive, said it was a Jewish initiative to embrace the broader South Africa.

TA Boys’ High principal, Rabbi Motti Hadar, in saying a prayer before departure, asked Hashem to “put into the hearts of all South Africans a spirit of wisdom and understanding that we may recognise that nation-building is founded on love and concern for each individual citizen, regardless of race, religion, culture or language and on mutual respect for the rights of each individual community to express itself freely, uninhibited and to thereby contribute to its uniqueness to the betterment of our country”.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said Cycalive symbolised what was special, hopeful and optimistic about South Africa. He paid tribute to Rabbi Hazdan, not only for having the vision, but for seeing it through.

Referring to the slogan on the Cycalive banner regarding retaining balance and

moving forward, Rabbi Goldstein pointed out that “balanced living and moving forward are important values for Cycalive and South Africa”.

Chris Vondo, a member of Johannesburg’s Mayoral Committee (Community Development), said: “I take off my hat to the learners who will be embarking on this gruelling, yet significant, tour to Durban. I am proud of you for taking part in this initiative whose primary aim is to bridge cultural, race, religious and traditional divides.”

Frank Meintjies, co-ordinator of Nelson Mandela Day, pointed out that Cycalive - an official event on the Mandela Day calendar - was indicative of creating the legacy of Nelson Mandela as each public participant envisaged it to be.

Two aspects of this legacy highlighted by Cycalive, were bridge-building and the ability to engage with others in generosity and kindness. “You form a wonderful core of change agents,” he said.

Representing the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, commissioner Marlene Bethlehem, quoted from Jewish sages who had said that “without vision, the people perish”. Applauding the efforts of the Cycalive team, she said the initiative “speaks about ubuntu and great mitzvot”.

Gigi Wolf, deputy chairman of the Gauteng Jewish Board of Deputies, bringing greetings, said Cycalive taught us how to live together happily and in peace.

Pace principal, Dan Zimba, thanking the sponsors, told the cyclists: “Make sure that when going up or down a hill, you keep your balance - if you fall, you affect everybody.”

Samuel Matseda, of Moletsane, cut the ribbon to mark the official departure.



Cycalive cyclists at rest before the race.

Inclement weather affects Cycalive

• Cycalive 2012 had part of its cycle relays interrupted by heavy rain en route to Durban. The learners cycled on roads surrounded by snow-covered peaks and countryside, but spent extra time on the bus because of the rain. They were still expected to arrive in Durban at the Moses Madiiba Stadium on Thursday afternoon as the weather was lifting.



...And they’re off!

• south african

jewish report

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Ladysmith memorial remembers Jews who died on Boer side

DAVID SAKS
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

On Monday, representatives of the SAJBD and other members of the Jewish community travelled from Johannesburg and Durban to participate in a unique memorial ceremony near Ladysmith.

The occasion was the formal unveiling of a new monument commemorating Jewish burghers who died serving on the side of the Boer republics during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.

In addition to the Jewish visitors, there was a large attendance of dignitaries, well-wishers and members of the town's active local heritage community. The post-ceremony luncheon was combined with the Ladysmith launch of the 2010 book *Boerejode: Jews in the Boer Armed Forces, 1899-1902* by SAJBD Associate Director David Saks.

The memorial, which includes English, Afrikaans and Hebrew text, is located close to the main Burgher Monument on the Platrand, a hill bordering Ladysmith to the south, that was itself the scene of bitter fighting during the war.

It is unique both in being the first-ever official recognition of Jews who fought on the Boer side and by the fact that it is the first monument solely in recognition of Jewish soldiers ever to be erected in a public space in South Africa. While there are a number of memorials commemorating fallen Jewish soldiers around the country, all of them are either located in synagogues or Jewish cemeteries.

The monument project was carried out under joint auspices of the SAJBD and the Ladysmith Siege Museum Trust. The two organisations worked together for the 110th anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Surprise Hill on December 11, 2009, when a plaque in remembrance of Harry Spanier, the first Jewish Boer to be killed, was among the new monuments unveiled.

The ceremony commenced with a march of honour by members of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (Siege Town Shell Hole). Councillor Z B Rassool, Speaker: Emnambithi/Ladysmith Council, then delivered a message of welcome followed by a scripture reading by SSAI Regt

Chaplain Rev Caroline Pillay and an English version of the Hazkara by Country Communities Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

Trumpeter William Dyer played the Last Post as the monument was unveiled and two minutes' silence was observed, concluding with a gun salute from an Anglo-Boer War-era 12-pounder gun.

In her keynote address, SAJBD National Chairman Mary Kluk, said the day's gathering was to remember and honour 12 members of the Jewish community who gave their lives for the Boer republics. At the same time, all the brave men who fell in combat in the service of their causes, were being remembered.

"The sacrifices made by so many in so many wars fought in our land must be remembered. We need to learn from what happened, not only to honour their memories, but so that such events are not allowed to happen again" she said.

The ceremony concluded with Marina Gildenhuys reading FE Jan Celliers' poem *Dis Al* and the laying of wreaths, while Douglas McMaster played the Piper's Lament on the bagpipes.



Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry President Linda Nathan; Mary Kluk; Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft; David Saks; and Ronnie Herr.

Baal Shem Tov wins permit battle

STAFF REPORTER

The fight for survival of the Baal Shem Tov Shul in Orange Grove has officially been won.

Rabbi Gavin Michal said he was happy that all permits had now been granted and that the shul was now operating legally.

"It is a pity that the matter had to go so public, but there were issues of anti-Semitism involved. Had this not been the case, we would have dealt with the (disputed issue of) parking quietly," he said.

The Provincial Townships Board, two weeks ago, finally granted the shul permission to continue operating, despite objections from the Orange Grove Ratepayers' Association and a City of Johannesburg councillor, Christine Walters, who lives across the road from the shul.

Town planner Rick Raven, who applied for consent for the shul, said he was relieved the board had approved the shul operating in the street.

"They gave us a "reasonable time" in which to regularise the parking. There are no time frames, but, in the meantime, I am starting a process to ask the Johannesburg Property Company, which owns the park at the end of the street, to use some of the land for parking," said Raven.

The shul caused controversy when Walters was accused of being anti-Semitic because she wanted to close the shul down. She accused congregants of blocking her driveway and causing a nuisance in the area. She was also accused of making anti-Semitic remarks about congregants and using her political power to influence the hearings for rezoning.

What followed was months of hearings, accusations and claims of untoward conduct by politicians.

The ANC Youth League has expressed support for the shul and went to a Friday night service to show support for Rabbi Michal.

The SAJBD also became involved in trying to resolve the matter ami-

cably.

The shul has been operating for over 15 years without the formality of proper zoning rights.

Rabbi Michal's first application to regularise the zoning, was turned down, because the shul townplanners had not applied for a relaxation of parking conditions as well.

In January 2011 the Johannesburg Roads Agency said their engineers had investigated the application and there was no need for additional parking.

The matter was set down for a hearing by the Provincial Townships Board in November. There was a further complication when the objectors claimed they were not informed of the hearing, with the incorrect fax number having been given; the matter could therefore not be heard.

Raven said: "Councillor Walters was aggrieved and she is right in being so, as some horrible things were said about her being an anti-Semite, but this had nothing to do with the merits of the case."



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From Kabbalah, to Islam to status of Jerusalem...

ALISON GOLDBERG

Chabad scholar of the Kabbalah, Zemach Mendelow, speaking on “Kabbalat Shabbat”, at Limmud, described the passage of the soul and the alteration in our state of consciousness, from week days into Shabbat, using a Zohar text. From a self-centred mindset, we, like children, open ourselves to “receive” - the meaning of Kabbalah - a union within ourselves, with Hashem and with klal Yisrael.

As the text describes it: we achieve “unity [in our 10 sefirot or G-dly traits] paralleling unity [above]”; “oneness [in these traits] corresponding to Oneness”. This is this ideal state of being, a separation from the “other side”; “severed from all strict judgements; where all powers of wrath and all adversaries flee from the Queen or Shabbat and vanish, and no other power reigns in any of the worlds”.

This is also a metaphor for sexual relations between husband and wife intended for Shabbat, but forbidden should any tensions exist between them. We distance ourselves from worldly distractions by desisting from the 39 prohibited creative acts during Shabbat.

“A Muslim perspective on Interfaith Issues” was presented by Aydin Inal, executive director of the Turquoise Harmony Institute. Representing the Hizmet movement, spread over 100 countries, Inal said it was inspired by the philosophy of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish Muslim leader. Its purpose is to promote dialogue, interfaith dialogue being one aspect, and education.

Gülen’s is a Sunni perspective of the Qur’an, suffused by a Sufi understanding. It believes the Qur’an is the word of G-d, but so too, the religions that came before it 1 400 years ago, and which are as much part of Islam, as Islam itself.

Abraham, Moses and Jesus are among the 25 prophets in the Qur’an and are as important as Muhammad himself. The injunctions about war and killing were relevant to circumstances at its founding. There is no command in Islam to go to war, Inal pointed out. Islam accepts other religions and their freedom to practise them.

Dr Amos Goldberg, who teaches Holocaust Studies at the Hebrew University, stated his political leftist approach to the “Struggle over Jerusalem”, objecting to placing Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas around the “Holy Basin” of Jerusalem, which include the neighbourhoods of Silwan, Sheikh Jarach and A’tur.

These he called “unfair, discriminatory and oppressive” and could jeopardise any diplomatic solutions in the future. To the best of his knowledge Israel has offered no compensation for the homes and land confiscated from Palestinians in Jerusalem or elsewhere. Any solution would have to include equal rights and prospects.

Arrested a few times and due to stand on trial in the next four months for his political activism, his argument was not about the unification of Jerusalem he said, but about its character. It was a myth, a much later one, that Zionism, as espoused by David Ben-Gurion, had at its core, full, exclusive sovereignty over Jerusalem and that Zionism without Zion is meaningless.

In 1937 he envisaged Jerusalem as an international zone and in 1947 reiterated this following partition, clarifying at the same time that Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish people. In the case of the Jewish Agency, its official policy, as formulated in June, 1937, was that the city should be divided, with only west Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.



Zemach Mendelow



Aydin Inal



Amos Goldberg

Limmud 2012 – a potpourri of thought-provoking concepts



Ivor Blumenthal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBYN SASSEN)



Bonita Meyersfeld. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY www.intlawgrrrls.com)



Judy Klitsner. PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBYN SASSEN



Ben Turok. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY www.jacana-bookslive.co.za)



Mpho Motloung. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY www.ysa2011.mg.co.za

ROBYN SASSEN

A capacity audience attended Limmud at the Vaal last weekend. A bouquet of focuses ranging from nepotism; education in the broader community; violence in patriarchy; progressiveness in Judaism, was a tip of the diversity iceberg.

Close to 100 speakers featured on the multiple platforms. Something for everyone; everyone spoiled for choice. Lightweight topics jostled with more meaty engagements with issues headlined in our world, not offering solutions, but splaying ideas to rapt audiences.

ANC veteran Ben Turok had been invited to speak about progressive Jewry in SA, but as a Latvian-born Jew, who came to SA in 1934 and remained unaffiliated religiously, he spoke of political progressiveness, autobiographically.

“The legacy of oppression in SA is still strong,” this Treason Trialist said. Raised on Sholem Aleichem, he said: “The youth of today have no idea of the richness of Yiddish culture. Jewish culture and humour have been drowned in Zionist

rhetoric.” He had visited many places but not Israel, because he disagreed with her politics.

Former Services SETA CEO Ivor Blumenthal spoke about SA Jewry’s “need for nepotism”. Acknowledging this as “racist and generalist”, he challenged communal leadership: “From the National Skills Authority, I discovered the Muslim community places 97 per cent of its youth in jobs. Our community is not so big that we cannot do that too.

“We are a microcosm of a macro-problem in this country.”

Another macro-problem not only in this country but also this world, was painted by a panel comprising filmmaker Melody Emmett, legal expert Bonnie Meyersfeld, sociologist Leah Gilbert and Jerusalem-based biblical scholar, Judy Klitsner. The topic was the relationship of patriarchy and violence, premised on a film by Emmett, made 10 years ago, with SA women of different faiths.

“Things haven’t changed in patriarchal traditions,” she added. Meyersfeld

spoke of barriers between public and private. “Lawyers must penetrate private spaces to address violence. The relationship between violence and patriarchy isn’t hostile to the community; it is endorsed by it.” Added Gilbert, “Patriarchy is a structure of social inequality between men and women; a cultural ideology.”

Klitsner considered “how not special we (as Jews) are in this. I was raised believing Judaism protects women; the flipside of a protected woman is an owned one. Violence to women exists in Haredi society; there’s an explosion of women learning in that community.”

Another panel of educationalist Brahm Fleisch, activist Mpho Motloung, and strike remediation specialist David Silman advocated revolution in our education system, reflecting ghastly oversights in the standard of public education.

Entitled “Education on the precipice”, the panel concurred that for most children, education is beyond the precipice; it’s fallen into the abyss.

Shalit a small piece in a bigger picture

GEOFF SIFRIN

“Bibi (Netanyahu) surprised us when he decided to bring Gilad Shalit home,” Gershon Baskin told a rapt audience at Limmud on Sunday, delivering a blow-by-blow account of how, over the five years of the kidnapped Israeli soldier’s imprisonment by Hamas in Gaza, the pieces were put in place for freeing him.

It involved an intricate back-channel process in which Baskin played a crucial role from June 2006 until Shalit’s release in October 2011.

Baskin is a US-born Israeli academic, “peacenik”, and co-director of the Israeli/Palestine Centre for Research and Information - a public policy think-tank.

His contacts with Hamas, which evolved through an Arab academic friend and his numerous approaches over the years to the Israeli political and security establishment, helped close the deal in which Shalit was freed in exchange for 1 027 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Some of those prisoners were hardcore terrorists. The prisoners released were collectively responsible for 569 Israeli deaths.

Agreeing to the deal was a huge and difficult step for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who, according to Baskin, “literally wrote the book about the principle that you never negotiate with terrorists! Ultimately, Bibi had the scales in front of him: on one side, ‘not negotiating’; on the other side, Shalit. And he chose Shalit.” There is a rumour that Netanyahu’s wife Sara had said to him, “What if it was your son?”

About 80 per cent of Israelis backed Netanyahu, despite the lopsided nature of the exchange. Shalit had effectively become the son of all Israelis. Baskin,



Gershon Baskin. (PHOTOGRAPH: HOWARD SACKSTEIN)

who has one son in the Israeli army and another soon to go, described the “unwritten contract” between Israelis and their government and army. Israelis need to know the government will do all in its power to rescue a soldier.

During Shalit’s imprisonment, said Baskin, people thought Israel should stage a commando raid and pick him out of Gaza “with tweezers”.

The Entebbe raid, when commandos flew to Uganda and rescued Israeli hostages at the airport, was held up as an example. “But there was not enough information. For a brief time after his capture, the Israelis knew where Shalit was, but after that his location was unknown.”

The deal with Hamas carried risks which worried a lot of people. Firstly, would those released terrorists go and kill more Israelis? How many Israelis would die because Shalit’s life was saved in this way?

Many of the terrorists were deported to other countries and the security services of those countries watch them. “For example in Turkey,” says Baskin, “though diplomatic relations have gone sour with Israel, the Turkish intelligence services and the Israeli ones maintain good co-operation. In the West Bank, to where other prisoners were released, Palestinian and Israeli security services work closely together.”

Another risk was that the deal would increase the likelihood that more Israeli soldiers would be kidnapped to exchange for more Palestinian prisoners. But this possibility is there anyway, says Baskin.

Despite the current freeze in the peace process, Baskin believes the basic elements of a peace agreement are there,

and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, are the best partners Israel will get.

“In Israel the prime minister has enormous power - almost like the president of the United States. Bibi could make peace if he wanted to. I don’t know why he doesn’t. Also he comes from the right, and it is easier for someone like him to make dramatic moves; he would be more trusted by the Israeli people.

“The Palestinians would accept a fair deal along the following lines: The major settlement blocs will be annexed to Israel with the equivalent amount of land being given to the Palestinians in exchange elsewhere; some form of Palestinian capital in Jerusalem, and control of the haram al sharif - the Temple Mount; Israeli acceptance of at least some responsibility for the refugee situation; a symbolic return of some refugees to Israel; and financial compensation for refugees for what they lost.

“The cost of peace, according to this plan, would be between \$70bn and \$100bn.”

Could Hamas accept the existence of Israel? “They could not do so ‘morally,’” says Baskin, “since it is waqf (Muslim) land for them. But if Israel made peace with the Palestinians and Arab countries, they could go with the stream and engage in diplomacy, trade and so on.

“They are close to the people, and most Palestinians are ordinary people trying to make a living, raise their families and so on. They want peace, just like Israelis.”

Sadly, he says, the peace camp in Israel is virtually dormant at present: “Most Israelis - and most Palestinians too - don’t believe peace is possible right now.”

“But Bibi surprised us with Shalit. And I think he will surprise us again.”

In Judaism, lust is the foundation of marriage - Boteach

ALISON GOLDBERG

Named one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by the Jerusalem Post and by Newsweek as the most famous rabbi in America, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach (pictured), in his search for truth, injects in his book titles, seemingly inherent and heretical contradictions. Kosher Jesus and Kosher Adultery are among the 28 books he has so far written. And yet they don't diverge from Jewish values.

Kosher Lust, his latest, was the topic of his delayed talk to Limmudniks on Monday night. (He missed his flight to speak at Limmud at the Vaal and eventually spoke on Monday night at King David Linksfield)

The rehabilitation of the disintegrating American family and family values is a priority in his determination to run for Congress, where he has just won 58 per cent of the Republican nomination votes in the Ninth District in New Jersey. With a 50 per cent divorce rate, intermarriage is not the crisis, where children born to Jewish mothers are Jewish and children of Jewish fathers adopt Judaism. It is confidence in the institution of marriage that is at stake, he maintains.

The mistaken belief, propagated by Paul in the New Testament, is that love is the foundation of marriage rather than lust - an unsustain-

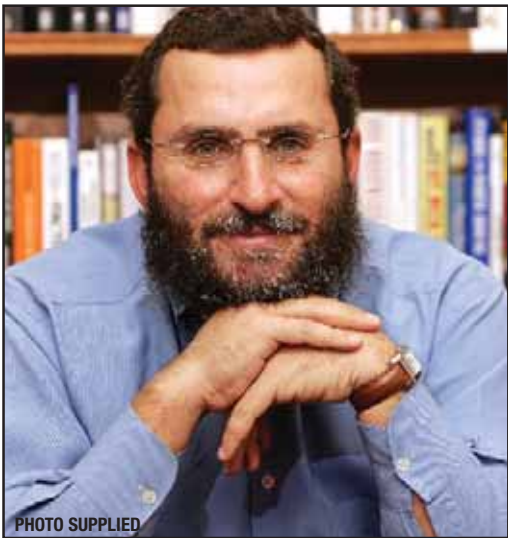


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able, unattractive notion and hence the demise of marriage. In our Ten Commandments it is clear that you shall not covet your neighbour's wife. Judaism insists that lust is the foundation of marriage.

Every woman desires to be lusted after; not loved. Being best friends is not a foundation for marriage. That is why women are attracted to bad boys, because they make them feel desired; not Myron with his glasses, prepared to move their boxes.

Shir HaShirim has been said to be the holiest book in the Bible because it is a passionately erotic poem about the yearning between man and woman to be one; the ultimate proof that G-d exists.

Even children yearn for that unity between their parents, to see them

as one. The American electorate proved the point of our desire for unity, after President Barack Obama gave a speech in 2004 saying there were no red or blue states, simply the United States.

We think lust is degrading and confuse it with pornography which is simply sleaze. What is lust but a desire to know every last part of our partner?

Love on the other hand grows with familiarity, based on the notion that the more time we spend with our partner, the more love grows.

Lust grows with absence. It is the opposite. It is why Judaism insists on separation. It is mystery. Judaism is based on the tenet that your wife must be a stranger to you.

The first of the three great rules of lust are unavailability, just as we yearn for G-d. The second is G-d's absolute mysteriousness, just as our most holy articles are hidden away, so too women follow the laws of modesty that excite lust. The third is the forbidden, how and when our own wives are forbidden to us. We are alone among the religions where this is commanded.

Compatibility is not what we should strive for - men and women have nothing in common. It is attraction we must seek and sustain in marriage, because we are so different.



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south african
jewish report

A festival of learning at the Vaal River

Images of the Vaal River for Johannesburgers are usually about boating and skiing, boerewors and braaiing, and holiday homes. The Limmud conference last weekend - see stories on pages 4, 5 and 8 - had the traditional boerewors and braai, but also added another image: Jews of all stripes engaging in animated discussions about Jewish ideas, identities and issues.

This is the sixth annual Limmud in this country. It has gone from strength to strength since the first in 2007. The Tsogo Sun Hotel was filled to capacity with some 400 Limmudniks, many of whom had attended previous conferences.

Limmud - Hebrew for "learning" - is an approach to Jewish education started in the UK in 1980, which has proliferated into Jewish communities worldwide and is regarded as the fastest-growing Jewish institution. In the UK it has become a five-day residential conference on a university campus attended by some 2 500 people, attracting 350 presenters and providing 900 sessions on a myriad topics.

Not everyone would agree with Limmud's philosophy that "every Jew should be a student and any Jew can be a teacher". But certainly the atmosphere at the Vaal over the weekend, where a huge array of people, viewpoints and lifestyles, engaged with and learnt from each other, gives credence to that view.

There were experts in numerous fields - scientists, offbeat poets, musicians, professors and others - as well as ordinary Jews who came with inquiring minds and a desire to engage and learn. The only jarring note at the event was that the high cost of spending a weekend at the Vaal precluded many potential participants from attending and therefore reduced the possibility of influencing Johannesburg Jewry at large.

The gathering illustrated the diversity and multi-layered nature of SA Jewry. We are not a homogeneous people. As the Limmud credo stresses: no single Jewish stream has a monopoly on what it is to be Jewish. One's identity develops and grows through interaction and debate with other Jews.

With the huge range of topics, there were often nine different sessions going on simultaneously. The dilemma was not which session to attend, but which to leave out.

While the "official" approach of the Orthodox streams continues to largely cold-shoulder the event because of its openness to such a wide spectrum of movements and lifestyles - including Reform, Conservative and egalitarian; gays and lesbians; supporters and critics of Israel; and others, the participation of Orthodox Jews has grown and Limmud has made serious attempts to provide the necessary components for Orthodox involvement. In fact, Limmud provides a strong teaching opportunity which all Jewish streams should consider embracing.

In certain circles there is a misconception that Limmud is a collection of intellectual dissidents or old-style leftists with no other place to express their Jewish views or anger. This is obviously a grossly simplistic view.

There are, of course, people for whom the participatory approach of Limmud is not the preferred one, and who favour the format of the successful Sinai Indaba held recently. Here, the primary structure is of an "expert" or highly esteemed rabbi or personality addressing an audience who have come specifically to hear him or her.

It was encouraging to see the large number of young people at Limmud, a trend which was also apparent at Sinai Indaba. It provides a positive outlook for the future.

Limmud and Sinai Indaba are not mutually exclusive. Both have brought new vitality to SA Jewry, showing the intrinsic hunger for knowledge and open debate. They have different approaches, but a similar objective - to impart knowledge, stimulate thought and help people develop their Jewishness and ability to think for themselves. Many people attended both events. It is a credit to SA Jewry that, despite its relatively small size, it can enthusiastically support these two major Jewish festivals of learning.

Limmud Cape Town and Limmud Durban are scheduled for the coming week. We congratulate the organisers of these grand events.

Are we guilty of gross prejudice towards Poland?

**DAVID JACOBSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SAJBD (CAPE BOARD)**

In the ashes of Auschwitz we lost more than Jewish lives - we lost an integral part of our historical memory. If we truly want to ensure Jewish continuity for tomorrow's Jews, then we have to reclaim the positive history of Polish Jewry today.

Mention Poland to most Jews and their immediate association is with Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and the brutal murder of some six million Jews. I have recently returned from two weeks in Poland attending the 24th International Nahum Goldmann Fellowship with a group of 40 young Jews from around the globe (including SAJBD Senior Researcher Steven Gruz) and I witnessed personally the deep psychological wounds that are still alive today in the present generation of Jews.

**Whenever something
went wrong, if a computer
crashed or a meal was late,
the standing response was:
'It's Poland.'**

Even though these Jews are two or three generations removed from the horror of the Holocaust, members of the group broke down at various stages during the week-long conference, weighed down by the living, haunting memory of their families' stories.

Whenever something went wrong, if a computer crashed or a meal was late, the standing response was: "It's Poland." And behind this jocular response lies a real pathology. Poland has assumed a uniquely nefarious status in the collective Jewish psyche - Poland represents death, destruction, hate and unbridled, brutal anti-Semitism. It is seen as a Jewish black hole.

And until my recent visit, that was indeed the image I held in my mind and heart. Although I fully understand its genesis and there is a sane substantiation for it, everything I saw and heard convinced me that Poland has been unfairly portrayed by the global Jewish establishment.

This has created dangerous prejudices and stereotypes (generalisations of an entire people); ironically these stereotypes are of the very same ilk that was the thought-generators of the rampant racism that laid



Cape Board Director David Jacobson and National Board Senior Researcher Steven Gruz, at the 24th International Nahum Goldmann Fellowship in Poland.



the foundation for the genocide that took place during the Shoah.

We brand the Polish people as "brutes" and "eternal anti-Semites" and we send tour after tour of young Jews to the death camps and they march defiantly through Poland, blinkered to the multitude of memorials to Jewish history and Jewish life and legacy that literally litter the streets of Warsaw and Krakow.

By doing this, we are not only perpetuating a cruel bigotry, but we are also cheating these young Jews of a remarkable opportunity for Jewish growth and regeneration.

**During my two weeks in
Poland, I learned about and
witnessed another side to
this much maligned country.**

During my two weeks in Poland, I learned about and witnessed another side to this much maligned country - a side that should shine light on the shadow of the valley of death that is the perpetual Jungian mirror for most of us.

I heard from Professor Moshe Rosman, an internationally distinguished professor of Polish Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University, about the great Jewish civilisation in Poland and its legacy that was eradicated in the Holocaust and that has largely been forgotten, even by the descendants of Polish Jews who emigrated before the Second World War to the United States and Israel.

**The historical scope and
reach of Polish Jewry was
gargantuan and cast an im-
posing shadow over the rest
of the Jewish world.**

Indeed, the children and grandchildren of those immigrants in the United States know more about the Native Americans than about their Jewish antecedents in Poland.

I heard about 1 000 years of uninterrupted Jewish history that is arguably unparalleled in the annals of our people - a history that produced the Lublin Yeshivot and Jewish greats like Rabbi Moshe Isserles and Rabbi Yosef Schneersohn, not to mention contemporary Jewish giants like David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin.

I also heard from Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, programme director at the Museum of

the History of Polish Jews, which is being erected in Warsaw, who described with great passion the different historical periods of Polish Jewry and their rich cultural achievements. The historical scope and reach of Polish Jewry was gargantuan and cast an imposing shadow over the rest of the Jewish world.

**'Discovering Judaism made
me feel Polish for the first
time.'**

But the reach of Polish Jewry is not only a matter of history. I had occasion to spend time with Magda Koralewska, the 29-year-old co-founder and president of Beit Krakow - a newly created Reform community in a city that once had 64 000 Jews, but was reduced to 3 000 in 1945.

Her and other young Jews like her, are doing remarkable work in recreating Jewish life out of the ashes of the Holocaust and the death-grip of communism. Magda is a "Jew by choice" - a voluntary convert to Judaism.

**At the Krakow Jewish Festival,
now in its 22nd year,
thousands of non-Jewish
Poles stream to listen to
Klezmer music and Chazonis.**

"Discovering Judaism made me feel Polish for the first time," Magda explained. "I finally had something to be proud of as a Pole - the contribution of Polish Jews to the history of Poland and the world."

And Magda does not stand alone. There are a slew of young Jewish Poles who are reinventing their community, redefining their Jewishness and reinvigorating the proud legacy of Polish Jewry.

I also witnessed a remarkable attraction and affinity to Jewish culture in Poland. We forget that pre-Second World War, one in every three Warsaw residents was Jewish. Thus in many ways, Jewish culture and Polish culture are inextricably linked.

At the Krakow Jewish Festival, now in its 22nd year, thousands of non-Jewish Poles stream to listen to Klezmer music and Chazonis, or to attend lectures on Jewish topics or to view art with a Jewish theme. Haunting reverberations of Yiddish songs fill the streets and restaurants.

Continued to page 7

Are we guilty of gross prejudice towards Poland?

Continued from page 6

I visited Kazimierz Dolny during the annual Klezmer festival and was treated to a burst of Jewish culture unlike anything I have ever encountered in the streets of Cape Town or Johannesburg. The audience was filled with not Jews, but ordinary Poles - Poles of all ages and all sizes, drawn to this Jewish culture that they feel is as much theirs as it is ours.

This is not to suggest that there is no anti-Semitism in Poland. There is. Pop into almost any curio shop in Krakow or Kazimierz and you will find the ubiquitous “Lucky Jew” in both figurine and poster.

This is a caricature of a Hassidic Jew in full garb, with a prominent nose, holding onto a coin. Poles buy them as they believe it will bring them good fortune. It is a somewhat bitter reminder of the deep and dangerous prejudice that still exists within Polish society.

This is a caricature of a Hassidic Jew in full garb, with a prominent nose, holding onto a coin.

But this ugly stereotyping is hardly unique to Poland. So while we should not disregard it, we should also not dismiss our Polish heritage because of it. For Poland is so much more than merely a Jewish nightmare.

Professor David Shneer, an expert in post-Soviet Eastern European Jewish communities, explained: “The most important thing we can do is stop seeing Poland simply as a graveyard of the Holocaust and to start seeing it as a potential new site of Jewish life.”

My intention is in no way to demean the memory of the Shoah or trivialise the real pain of people for whom Poland



The ubiquitous “Lucky Jew” found all over Poland.

does signify horror and destruction. The seething distaste for Poland and the deep wounds that exist are part of a collective post-traumatic stress disorder that is a natural and inevitable response to the greatest genocide ever committed. And we must continue to teach our youth both the horrific facts of the Holocaust and its universal and eternal lessons, lest we ever forget.

But at the same time, we must be careful not to create an unhealthy cult of death and decay. We need to constantly make the prophetic choice of choosing life.

And I saw Jewish life aplenty in Poland - life that has given me great hope for the regeneration of Jewish culture and Jewish continuity, not only in Europe, but right here in South Africa.

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The Canadian Jewish News, Toronto, Canada:
www.cjnews.com

“Jewish groups protest in ‘Al Quds’ rally”

Two major Jewish organisations, Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, are calling on the leadership of Queen's Park in Toronto, to refuse permission for an anti-Semitic rally, like the “Al Quds” rally hosted in the province last year.

Haaretz, Tel Aviv, Israel:
www.haaretz.com

“Justice Ministry to review new regulations that may ban Palestinians, migrants from filing suits in Israeli courts”

The Justice Ministry, under Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman, will re-examine the wording of regulations it has issued barring individuals without a passport or ID card from filing lawsuits in Israeli courts. Civil rights groups protested against the regulations, due to come into effect September 1.

The Algemeiner Journal, Brooklyn, USA:
www.algemeiner.com

“Orthodox rabbi sues Pennsylvania Board of Funeral Directors”

Pennsylvania's Board of Funeral Directors and two state officials are being sued by Rabbi Daniel Wasserman from Shaare Torah Synagogue, Pittsburgh who claims the state's board violates religious freedom by requiring only licensed funeral directors oversee all burials.

The Australian Jewish News, Sydney, Australia:
www.jewishnews.net.au

“PM's Shoah pledge”

In a state visit to the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced a \$500 000 grant contributing to the memorialisation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Arutz Sheva, West Bank, Israel:
www.israelnationanews.com

“Muslim Brotherhood blames Israel for terror attacks”

The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood claimed on Monday that Israel was behind the terror attack along the Egypt-Israel border on Sunday. Terrorists attacked two Egyptian army posts, killing 16. They tried to infiltrate into Israel using two stolen Egyptian vehicles, but the IDF foiled them.

New Jersey Jewish News, New Jersey, USA:
www.njjewishnews.com

“Court ruling on Sabbath seen as ‘huge problem’”

A federal court ruling involving a bus driver could have implications for Jewish workers who observe the Sabbath and Yomtov, a Jewish legal scholar warned. In July, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld NJ Transit's decision to fire a driver who refused to work on Sundays.

European Jewish Press, Western Europe:
www.ejpress.org

“Greece and Israel can work together in many areas, says Greek president”

Greece and Israel can work together in many areas, including the energy sector, to the benefit of both economies, Greek President Karolos Papoulias said at a meeting with his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres who is on a three-day visit in Athens.

‘Shwekey mania’ is taking hold of SA Jewish audiences

SHIRA DRUION

Yaakov Shwekey (pictured) has become a household name for Jewish music lovers round the world, with a growing fan base stretching from Israel, the US, to SA. This religious Orthodox Jewish superstar’s fan club includes religious as well as secular Jews.



His songs reverberate with distinct, soulful authenticity, so that not only are they pleasing to the ear, but are able to move the soul. It is these defining qualities that have allowed him to successfully and with humility become the penetrating voice to sing the stirring and beautiful melodies that are played daily in thousands of Jewish homes across the globe.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul, the organiser of the Shwekey concerts in SA, is looking forward to the upcoming shows next week.

“Last year we were totally bowled over by the response from the thousands of Jews who flocked to see Shwekey perform. In fact, some would say the ticket frenzy actually bordered on hysteria.

“This year, the shows promise to be even bigger and better and we are delighted that Rabbi Asher Deren of The Sinai Academy and the Shul of the West Coast, has partnered with us on this very exciting project, so that Shwekey will now (also) perform in Cape Town.”

In an interview with Jewish Report, Shwekey was full of praise for the SA Jewish community. “Initially when I was asked to perform in South Africa, I had no idea what to expect from the audience. But I was absolutely overwhelmed by how many South Africans related to me how the songs have enriched their relationship with Judaism and with G-d.

“This essentially encapsulates the magic of Jewish music, because music that stems from a spiritual place, allows one to plug in and connect. Jewish song has that unique ability to enhance one’s relationship with G-d, and that is my sincere prayer when I sing. I don’t just sing to be a Jewish entertainer, but my real intention is to facilitate the connecting of Jewish souls to one another and to their Creator, and the South African audience really gets that.”

Last year, Choni G, wowed audiences with his opening act at the sold-out Shwekey concerts. This year, as the recent winner of the Jewish Star competition, Choni G is fresh off the plane from a visit to New York, where he has recorded a single with well-known Jewish pop artist Eli Gerstner.

He comments: “The Shweksta has a beautiful voice and is a very personable and down-to-earth human being. I am looking forward to sharing the stage with him and know that the shows will be really spectacular.”

Rabbi Goldman says: “2011 saw over 4 000 Jews gather together to be inspired and ignited through the soulfulness of Jewish music. The concerts were not only a huge musical success, as audiences sat enamoured by the stories and the words of wisdom shared, but more than that, the shows were able to uplift the soul through the power of song. I for one, was deeply moved, and am looking forward to what Shwekey 2 has in store.”

• Shwekey 2 is at the Teatro, Montecasino on August 14 and 15, and at the CTICC, Auditorium 1, Cape Town on August 16.

• At the time of going to press there are still some seats available, but they’re selling fast. Call Ingrid: 083-377-1111 or www.computicket.co.za.

It is history at its most reductionist – instructive and highly entertaining

Titans of History by Simon Sebag Montefiore (Quercus, R150)

REVIEWED BY GWEN POBBREY

Not another compilation of greats and not-so-greats, groaned this reviewer. But, on reading the foreword, it transpired that this is no bland litany of names. Instead, the book aims to whet the appetite of readers, inspiring them to find out more about personalities who have, for better or for worse, left an indelible fingerprint behind them.

It is history at its most reductionist, premised on the belief that it is individuals - rather than movements - who ultimately refashion the planet.

As George Bernard Shaw observed, change is only achieved by unreasonable people who do not adapt to the world, but try to adapt it to themselves. “The Norwegians alone have a word for this: ‘stormannsgalskap’ - the madness of great men [and women],” writes Montefiore.

The book’s 185 biographical profiles date from antiquity to contemporary times and are short, but decidedly not sweet. The author makes no secret of his contempt for many of the subjects: in fact, the language is occasionally so vituperative as to shift the attention off the villain and onto Montefiore’s motives.

Those seeking objectivity had better look elsewhere. Italian Dominican friar Girolamo Savanarola, for example, was “a reactionary zealot and bigoted theocrat.... whose ‘Christian and religious republic’ was an intolerant, sanctimonious and murderous reign of terror.”

There are many admirable figures too, like Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122 - 1204), the beautiful, flamboyant and piercingly intelligent queen of two kings (and the mother of two more), who was kidnapped innumerable times, imprisoned by both her husbands and who crossed the Pyrenees at the age of 80.

Pity about her son, though, who was by all accounts a meshuggeneh, a meeskeit and a schlemiel, to boot: King John (1167 - 1216), writes Montefiore, “lost most of his empire, broke every promise he ever made, dropped his royal seal in the sea, impoverished England, murdered his nephew, seduced the wives of

his friends, betrayed his father, brothers and country, foamed at the mouth when angry, starved and tortured his enemies to death, lost every battle he ever fought, fled any responsibility whenever possible and died of eating too many peaches.

“Treacherous, lecherous, malicious, avaricious, cruel and murderous, he earned his nicknames ‘Softsword’ for military cowardice and incompetence, and ‘Lackland’ for losing most of his inheritance.” Nu, fun azelchener kinder kriegt mir kayn naches.

Talking about disappointing children, Eleanor would have benefited from the advice of Greek military strategist and philosopher Alcibiades (c 450 - 404 BC): “It is wiser not to rear a lion’s whelp, but if you do, you must accept its ways.”

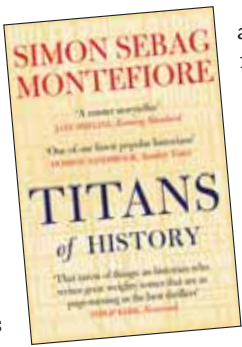
The book also offers revelations: consider Chinese general Sun Tzu (c 544 - 496 BC), whose philosophy of combat was a forerunner of Gandhi’s Satyagraha: “To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”

All the profiles are preceded by quotations which reveal more about the subjects than any long-winded history. In some cases these are deeply moving, like the one from Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha (c 563 - 483 BC): “‘Are you a god?’ - ‘No,’ Buddha replied. ‘Are you a reincarnation of a god?’ - ‘No,’ he replied. ‘Are you a wizard, then?’ - ‘No.’ ‘Well, are you a man?’ - ‘No.’ ‘So what are you?’ they asked in confusion. ‘I am awake.’”

Unsurprisingly, Jews figure prominently and include David and Solomon, Benjamin Disraeli, Sarah Bernhardt, Albert Einstein, David Ben-Gurion, Isaac Babel and Anne Frank.

Jesus Christ is there too, of course, though his biographical description is unduly harsh and withering, implying - among other things - that he engineered his own death by deliberately returning to Gethsemane when he knew the Roman authorities had put a price on his head.

“Jesus remained a practising Jew and, as such, he knew that a Jewish prophet had to live



and die in Jerusalem,” writes Montefiore. There is no evidence for such a conclusion, either historically or Biblically.

Alongside the Jews come history’s most notorious anti-Semites including Godfrey of Bouillon (1060 - 1100) and the Crusader Kings of Jerusalem, who slaughtered thousands of Jews in an attempt to “purify” the city, Tomás de Torquemada (1420 - 1498), first Inquisitor General in Spain, Isabella and Ferdinand, the monarchs of that country, Ungern von Sternberg (1886 - 1921), Adolf Hitler and SS overlords Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich.

Other tyrants abound, including Francisco Nguema (1924 - 1949), the “corrupt, demented, homicidal, skull-collecting” first president of Equatorial Guinea in West Africa, who styled himself “the Unique Miracle”, Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier (1907 - 1971), whose regime as Haitian president became a foul kleptocracy, communist Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot (1925 - 1998), who - in just four years of ruling Cambodia - slaughtered fully half its population, including intellectuals (defined as anyone wearing eyeglasses) and who tried to restart the calendar from Year Zero, Columbian druglord Pablo Escobar, Mafia kingpin Al Capone and Al-Qaida visionary Osama Bin Laden.

Among the heroes are American novelist Ernest Hemingway and President John F Kennedy, Oskar Schindler and French-born British Resistance fighter Odette Sansom.

And then there are individuals who changed the course of history through myopia, misadventure, misanthropy or sheer pragmatism: Egyptian Presidents Abdul Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak, and Russian physicist, Andrei Sakharov.

There are many inclusions and omissions which will elicit cries of protest from readers - but that, as Montefiore notes, is half the fun.

The profiles are too brief to convey more than a (highly subjective) inkling of these “Titans” claim to historical significance, but they are instructive, incisive and highly entertaining.

All the insane idiosyncrasies and contradictions of Jewish culture

ROBYN SASSEN

“Funny, you don’t look Jewish,” is a line which starts a delicious flaying of the stereotypical Jew, stereotypical anti-Semite in the contemporary mating dance, in a slam poem called “The Hebrew Mamita”, by Vanessa Hidary (pictured).

It’s one of the bouquet of spoken word poems that heralded Hidary’s meteoric rise to prominence in slam poetry circles, collectively entitled Culture Bandit. On the eve of Limmud 2012 at a resort on the Vaal River, Johannesburgers got to experience some of the spice of the programme with an early appearance of Hidary at the burgeoning POP-Arts Centre in urban Johannesburg.

She quickly warmed up the almost capacity audience on a cold early August evening. “I call myself a solo performer,” she began, speaking of how she interjects spoken word poetry with storytelling and anecdotes.

Getting into her stride before the enthusiastic audience of Limmudniks and others, this daughter of Manhattan public school teachers

from the multicultural upper west side of the suburb, who grew up in a mixed neighbourhood of bodegas (corner shops not different from our local spazas), once concocted a blessing for the neighbourhood comprising a delicious mix of pre-batmitzvah Hebrew and Puerto Rican slang.

Similarly, the rhythm and vibe of her work is spicy yet culturally recognisable, down to the last bit of cringeworthiness and the nauseating accent and endemic emptiness of nasal kugels.

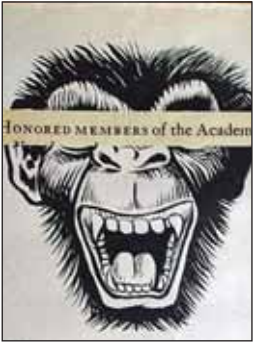
Her humour slides along the edge of the bitter gelechte, teetering on the cruel. It’s funny until it isn’t, dealing with all the insane idiosyncrasies and contradictions of Jewish culture, from guilt to gefilte fish with lots of gut-wrenching truths in between.

Hidary’s no soft touch; the work is sophisticated and rude; it’s explicit and sexual. She might be Jewish, but she’s no quivering wall flower. Everything from not being married in your 30s, to dating a whole spectrum of men, to wondering if the establishment will accept her, with a “bust hymen and a head full of human rights”, comes under her electric tongue,



and as you listen to the language, you appreciate the skill of choosing the most apt word, not only for intent, but for the rhythms it must fit.

A Limmud speaker since 2009 in London in her characteristic head mix of poetry and racism awareness, she has become one of the big names of the organisation, offering a level of intellectual and entertainment-worthy spice, central to our era, but is not one for the irrecoverably prudish.



Cartoonist Eli Valley – this year’s Limmud enfant terrible

ROBYN SASSEN

Limmud is never a concept to skirt from radical Jews and their creative expression in the broader community. Cartoonist Eli Valley, the artist in resident at the Jewish Daily Forward, was the enfant terrible this year.

With material published broadly, he deals with a “mash-

Valley’s interpretation of Kafka’s Report to an Academy.

ing” of contemporary discourse with what he terms authentic Jewish identity, which stretches all the way back to turn of 20th century Prague.

A speaker and participant in four separate sessions, Valley set sparks flying among his audiences in playing with Franz Kafka’s The Trial, balanced with Knesset rhetoric, using informally sacred images of figures like Anne Frank in a quasi-pornographic context and other similar gestures, taking communal self-criticism to its outer reaches.

The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

NEVER FORGET RUSSIA'S VOLTE FACE SINCE 1948 PRONOUNCEMENTS ON ISRAEL

In 1948 Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet representative at the United Nations, referring to the Arab attack on the fledgling State of Israel, expressed surprise that the Arabs states “have resorted to such action as sending their troops into Palestine and carrying out military actions aimed at the suppression of the national liberation movement”, that is Israel. Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.

This is a truth serum to the venomous rantings of Ronnie Kasrils and his ilk, who try to demonise and delegitimise Israel and her people (in order to prepare the world for the genocide of Israel's people), coming from Kasrils’ own ideological mentors and former masters.

The fact that the Soviet Union would later be the incubator for all the vile anti-Israel propaganda now espoused by the international left, cannot erase this admission.

The Soviets had voted for the State of Israel in the UN, hoping to dislodge Britain from the Middle East. Russia also counted on the Jews, from whom Karl Marx originated, to join the Communist orbit.

But just as the Jews 2 000 years earlier had refused to follow Jesus, and just as 1 300 years earlier had refused to follow Muhammad, so they refused to follow Marx.

MACHALNIKS – TO A LARGE EXTENT FORGOTTEN BY HISTORY

Despite the horrific massacre of our people in the Holocaust as witnessed by British soldiers as they entered the death camps, the British government persisted in its Palestine policy of limiting the number of Jews who desperately wanted a safe haven in the only country in the world that wanted them.

The Anglo American Commission of 1946 proposed that 100 000 be allowed into Palestine over a two year period; this was rejected by the British government.

This situation was the root cause for the creation of the Mossad led Aliyah Bet by the Jewish Agency, to ferry by any means possible survivors to Palestine.

Here in South Africa, the Zionist Federation organised a group whose purpose was to find an overland through Africa route for the same purpose, without success. (The story is still to be told.)

In February 1947 the British government decided to hand over the Palestine problem to the UN. An international committee was appointed to study the problem and submit recommendations.

On November 29, 1947 they recommended the partition of Palestine into two independent states - one Jewish, one Arab. To this the Jews agreed, while the Arabs on hearing that the British government was withdrawing from Palestine, immediately decided to solve the problem by a show of arms.

This is the background on which my letter is based.

COULD THIS BE THE SAME MATTHANYA ETTINGER?

I read a very interesting letter in the Jewish Report from Ellen Ettinger. She mentioned Matt Ettinger’s second barmitzvah.

I attended Athlone High School from

And just as the Vatican in the Middle Ages had turned against the Jews for their refusal to follow the Christian line, just as Muhammad had turned against the Jews for their refusal to follow Islam, and then, as Martin Luther had turned against the Jews for refusing to be lured with sweet words into becoming Christians, all with genocidal results, so the Kremlin in the modern age has turned on the Jews for refusing to follow the Communist line.

Egypt and Syria offered the Soviets the Middle East foothold Israel denied them, and the Soviets gratefully armed the Egyptians and Syrians with the technology of death.

It was in the Soviet centres of agitprop that the evil network of lies were incubated and exported, namely that that Zionism is “racism”, “apartheid”, “colonialism”, “imperialism” and “Fascism”. Eventually, after the Six Day War, they have become the staple diet of the international left.

Ronnie Kasrils learnt his anti-Israel agitprop and hate against that country and its people, in the Soviet Union and so did Cosatu learn this from SACP cadres who had been trained there.

But let us not forget the original admission of the Communists before Israel refused to become their satellite.

Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

Immediately the surrounding Arab countries - Egypt, Trans Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and other states - proclaimed loud and clear their intention of coming to the aid of their fellow Arabs and of driving “the Jews into the sea”.

The armies of these countries were trained and supplied by Britain and France. They had airplanes, tanks, artillery, and well-trained armies.

On the Jewish side, there to face this threat, were only two organised fighting units in the Palmach and the Irgun Tzvai Leumi, and the Haganah, a very loose organisation of part-time members. Both these units had only a few guns, a few machineguns, no tanks, no artillery and no planes.

War was imminent and in 1948, Jews from many countries volunteered and went on a suicide mission to help their fellow Jews in defence of the only home that we had. These volunteers were labelled as Machal

Of all the countries the contingent of 805 from South Africa, was by far the largest, proportionally to the country’s Jewish population.

Of all the contributions the SA Zionist Federation made for Israel, these Machal volunteers’ were by far the greatest.

Yet, despite this, the story of their deeds is not taught in the Jewish schools. Why?

(A book of the exploits of some called “Those were the days my lads” is available from the Zionist Federation.)

George Jameson, Johannesburg

1942 - 1946. Matthanya Ettinger was in my class. Is this the same person? I would like to find out if possible.

Jack Shnaier, Johannesburg

HATS OFF TO BUTHELEZI AND MESHOE FOR THEIR ISRAEL MARCH

There was a report recently in the press about the march headed by Dr Mangosutho Buthelezi and Rev Kenneth Meshoe of the ACDP, in support of Israel. One can only commend these gentlemen.

Buthelezi has for many decades been a voice of reason and moderation in South Africa, which is why the ANC in exile sought to undermine him and his supporters. One can read the underhanded manner this was done in Dr Anthea Jefferey’s book, People’s War. Buthelezi deserves the right to be the president of this county.

Where are the voices of Archbishop-Emeritus Desmond Tutu and the SA Council of Churches on the Muslim attacks on civilians and churches in northern Nigeria?

Peta Oresta, Johannesburg

YY JACOBSON

WED 22 AUGUST | 7.30 PM

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803172...open sundays...jewish report

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

I must admit

Would you be surprised to learn that the Chev collected R32 million in accommodation fees in the last financial year? While that may sound like a lot of money, it's actually only 20 per cent of what residential services cost the organisation in that time period.

That's why we have had to tighten our admissions policy and become less, well... accommodat-ing.

The Chev runs several residential facilities which provide a high standard of catering, healthcare and social interaction, as well as a large variety of stimulating activities and spiritual input. Our central admissions office handles applications for Sandringham Gardens, Our Parents Home, The Capri, Selwyn Segal and Sandringham Lodge / Square.

The application process begins with completing a form, requesting personal, medical and financial information and is followed up with two interviews - one a psycho-social assessment to identify the most suitable placement; the other to discuss financial arrangements.

And it is here, in the financial details, that the proverbial devil sometimes resides.

That's because when subsidies are applied for, we have to go through a thorough process to ensure that potential residents have no means of their own - and that their immediate families are unable to help - before we can subsidise them with your donor funds.

I must admit that this is not always a comfortable course of action, but one we are halachically and ethically mandated to follow.

The point is that, apart from the charity funds so graciously and generously provided by our community, the Chev has no other source of income with which to subsidise residents. We are morally obligated to verify that the family cannot pay their own way before we ask donors to do so.

That said, I want to assure you that for anyone in genuine need, there is no question that we will gladly, and fully, subsidise accommodation for as long as is necessary. It's what we do. The challenge for us is to identify those cases of real hardship.

May our partnership continue to thrive!

Please feel free to communicate with me on feedback@thechev.org.za



Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

Jews who died on Boer side, commemorated

On Monday, I was privileged to take part in a moving, and in many ways unique, commemorative ceremony in Ladysmith, in KwaZulu-Natal. The occasion was the unveiling of a memorial to 12 Jewish fighters who died in the service of the Boer republics during the Anglo-Boer War.

Joining me were the president and vice-president of the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry, Linda Nathan and Ronnie Herr, SA Country Communities Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and Associate Director David Saks.

We all participated in some way, from delivering messages, laying a commemorative wreath or speaking at the luncheon function afterwards. The Jewish role in the Anglo-Boer War is one of David's special interests, and he was much involved in the initiative.

We were pleased to also have with us the director of the Africa Desk of the American Jewish Committee, Eliseo Neumann. Eliseo and David had just participated at the Johannesburg Lim-mud event, which I was delighted to hear was a resounding success. .

Jewish attendees were far outnumbered by local enthusiasts, some who had travelled far to be there. The function took place under the joint auspices of the SAJBD and the Ladysmith Siege Museum Trust, and the latter was very much the senior partner.

The whole venture entailed a huge amount of organisation, from obtaining the requisite permission from the national monuments authority, through to making the memorial and then organising the various details of the ceremony.

It was indeed a remarkable display of warmth and friendship towards our Jewish community. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all concerned and in particular to Dr Eugene Campher and Jan Human for helping to add a unique Jewish dimension to the culture of military historical commemoration in our country. Thanks also to the Victor Daitz Foundation, Aaron Beare Foundation and Jakamar Trust for sponsoring the production of the monument.



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

Where Mandela was captured

On our return to Durban, Linda, Ronnie and I made a brief stop to view another new monument that has just been erected. This marks the spot where Nelson Mandela was finally captured after a long period on the run, on August 5, 1962, marking the start of the 27 years he would spend in prison.

Our visit reinforced for us how important it is for South Africans to join in preserving and remembering their common historical heritage. Whatever we are today, individually and collectively, can only be properly understood through looking back to what happened in previous generations and acknowledging the accomplishments and sacrifices of those who preceded us.

Cycalive bringing S Africans together

Continuing on the theme of bringing South Africans together, the annual Cycalive event is currently underway, with learners from Torah

Academy and other local schools cycling from Johannesburg to Durban.

This remarkable initiative, started by Rabbi Dovid Hazdan some 15 years ago, not only raises funds for needy Gauteng schools, but just as importantly, builds bonds of friendship between our Jewish youth and their counterparts in the wider society.

We are looking forward to hosting them at the traditional welcoming braai at the Durban Jewish Centre.

All about university exams

Finally, we urge University of Johannesburg students whose exams have been set on Shabbat to contact us without delay (011) 645-2521/ jenni@beyachad.co.za. Resolving the problem is dependent on our being timeously informed, and if left too late doing so might not be possible.

Listen to Steven Gruzd on Jewish Board Talk on 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00. Repeats Sundays, 11:00 - 12:00.

Focus on National Women's Day



WIZO SOUTH AFRICA
Yvonne Jawitz

On August 9, 1956, women participating in a national march petitioned against pass laws (legislation that required black African persons to carry a document on them to "prove" that they were allowed to enter a "white area") and a proposal to further restrict the movements of women.

Imagine over 20 000 women of all races and ages from every corner of South Africa marching together towards the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The Federation of South African Women organised the march, led by four women: Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophy Williams and Lilian Ngoyi. To conclude the Women's March, the women sang freedom songs; the song that became the anthem of the march:

"Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom! wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo, uza kufa! [When] you strike the women, you strike a rock, you will be crushed [you will die]!" The march was a resounding success; we recognise the bravery of the women who risked arrest and banning by declaring August 9 National Women's Day. I am so proud to be an SA woman; our freedom was not fought by our men alone, but by the mothers of the nation too.

Jewish women have always aligned themselves with causes that promote justice and human rights. In SA we have only to think of Helen Suzman who dedicated most of her life to the fight against injustice in this country. As the only woman in a male-dominated political domain, she often faced verbal abuse and threats.

Ina Perlman who recently passed away, was a humanitarian and founder of non-profit organisation Operation Hunger. She was a passionate and stubborn fighter for social justice and strongly believed that lots of small changes would eventually bring about major shifts.

Other Jewish women in this country have for many years been active in the civic arena, trying to make a difference to the quality of life of ordinary citizens.

Just as we remember the four leaders of the Women's March in 1956 in SA, so too do we remember the founding leaders of the largest Jewish women's movement in the world, Rebecca Sieff obe, life president of World WIZO; Dr Vera Weitzmann; and Edith Eder.

In 1920 after seeing the appalling conditions facing women and children in then Palestine, these three women, with Romana Goodman and Henrietta Irwell, created the Women's Zionist Organisation, which has changed the lives of thousands of women in Israel.

WIZO women in South Africa continue to play their part in creating a safer and more equitable environment for women. Let us celebrate National Women's Day in the knowledge that women CAN and DO make the difference.

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ME conflict - time ripe to revive Spier Initiative, says Meyer

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MOIRA SCHNEIDER CAPE TOWN

“It doesn’t help to keep putting the blame on the other side, not recognising what you’re doing wrong on your side.” This was the advice of Roelf Meyer, chief negotiator for the National Party government during the settlement of the South African conflict.

Meyer shared his insights gained during that process at the South African Zionist Federation (Cape Council) conference held this past weekend, during a session titled “Overcoming obstacles to improve Israel – SA relations”.

“We succeeded in taking ownership of our own destiny, with no outside facilitators or mediators,” he said, describing this as “the most relevant factor” of those talks to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

“We were forced to sit across the table from each other, not because we loved each other, but because we knew that we had to find a solution to the crisis.”

Addressing himself to fellow-panelist Israeli Ambassador to

South Africa Dov Segev-Steinberg, Meyer suggested the time was right to revive the 10-year-old Spier Initiative with which he had been involved and which brought together Palestinians and Israelis in this country. “We as South Africans can do this,” he stated.

“I know how much pressure individuals in the SA Jewish community put on us to end apartheid - it’s now payback time.”

Former SA diplomat Stephen McQueen, said that, for a long time, South African Jews thought that their role in ending apartheid would stand them in good stead vis-à-vis the government’s attitude to the Middle East conflict.

“Their incredible contribution is nothing that can be looked at today - the time has moved on.”

“The SA Jewish community is not going to convince the ANC to become pro-Israeli,” he continued, advocating importing Israel’s “cutting-edge technology” as a way to overcome hostilities.

Johann Marx, Chief Director: Middle East in the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, maintained that the government would like to expand



Roelf Meyer, chief negotiator for the National Party government during the settlement of the SA conflict.



Johann Marx, Chief Director: Middle East, Department of International Relations and Co-operation.



Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Dov Segev-Steinberg.



ACDP MP Cheryll Lynn Dudley, who chaired the session.



Former SA diplomat Stephen McQueen.

diplomatic relations to the benefit of both countries; the major obstacle was Israel’s continued occupation of “Arab lands” and its ongoing blockade of Gaza.

In an earlier session, Johnny Copelyn, CEO of HCI Holdings and former trade union leader who was banned for five years under apartheid, said it was not the case that the government and the ANC were uniformly hostile to Israel, despite efforts by a particular group to claim that they were “the SA view. This is not so - they are not the centre of South African politics,” he stated, urging the community not to “let go of people who are still thinking about the matter”.

The divide between Israel and the international community arose from the right of the Jewish State to build civilian settlements outside the area that it

could possibly justify, describing this as the fatal flaw that the Zionist movement had been “dragged into” and saying that Israel was going to have to abandon these settlements.

“This is a Rubicon moment for Israel, similar to the one faced by SA. It’s time to start thinking: ‘How can we leave with our heads held high?’

“Simply standing still until it’s too late to make a choice, is not wise. At the end, we will have to make compromises.”

“Compromises, but not suicide,” interjected David Abel, national vice-chairman of Likud, from the floor.

YY JACOBSON

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Comic cheer to warm up a cold Jo’burg night

ALISON GOLDBERG

“What do I know about love? I’m divorced. This is the day you lose your home,” master of ceremonies John Vlismas sneered. “What is this holiday? Two above?”

Actually it was Tu B’Av last Thursday night - the Jewish version of Valentine’s Day. In Biblical times young maidens would dress in white and go out and dance in the grape harvest while young men would look for prospective wives.

Chai FM decided to put a spin on it by hosting a Live Stand-Up Comedy evening called Feel The Luv on Tu B’Av at Killarney’s Cinecentre, accompanied by a wine-tasting.

On this cold, wintry night in Johannesburg, everyone dressed in anything but, save one brave soul of about 50 or 60 plus in woollen whites with boots to match, with not a hope, given most of the crowd were 30 and below.

I celebrated by taking my ten-ton Tessie friend along.

Announced Vlismas: “Mi Vami

has made a wildly generous offer of 15 per cent off their fela-fels in Glenhazel, from tonight until 3pm tomorrow. If you want one it’ll cost you R72 in petrol to get there.”

An older and more rotund Mel Miller made a surprise appearance, offering women in the audience the opportunity of “shtoothing him”, guaranteeing his weight as proof he was Aids-free. He said he had dispensed of all his security needs in the new South Africa - wall, security gate, Trelli doors, CTV camera and guard dog, by simply hoisting an AWB flag alongside a South African one on his house. Since then he’s been watched by the police 24/7.

Ariel Kagan complained about his dope-smoking mother. The police wouldn’t believe it was hers when they found a stash of weed in the boot of her car he was driving at a road-block.

Commented Vlismas: “I hope this guy gets over his issues.”

Mpho “Poppo” Modikoane lamented how hard it is to be black. He had heard of tokoloshes at age nine,

but not the tooth fairy, when he appeared at his Model C school with no front teeth. “Coloureds should be rich! They obviously don’t go to these schools.”

On why girls have the curious habit of accompanying each other to the bathroom: “They’re more curvy. They need a car guard to guide them in and out of the cubicles.”

Comedic genius Mark Banks, the headline act, had us in hysterics all the way home. He asked Nicky in the audience where she lived. “Victory Park,” she yelled. “Eeew... eeew,” said Banks scrunching up his face, “Neither here nor there...”

“It’s hard not being Jewish and being discriminated against for being Jewish. Have you ever noticed when you do some Jewish geography you get the full low-down about someone’s life, like when he went machulah?”

His main beef were the salesmen on the side of the road who have carved out a niche market in nodding dogs, world maps and pumice stones. “They’re even trying to sell blind people.”

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Another WoW day full of glitz and glamour

SHIRA DRUION
PHOTOGRAPH:
HAYLEY GINSBERG

The annual Woman of the World function has become a highlight on the Jewish social calendar. This year’s glamour and glitz occasion, at the Sandton Sun Hotel, yet again maintained the high benchmark set in the past, ensuring that a fabulous time was had by all, as “the nurturers” came out in droves for a morning of delectable mind, body and soul pampering.

Mover and shaker behind WoW, Rebbetzen Rochel Goldman, ably assisted by Mandy Bloch, again left no stone unturned to provide guests with a morning of treats, which included, a hand massage bar, a glorious brunch, gift bags and soulful singing by Choni G. Eva Sassoon of Sasfin, was recipient of the Woman of the Year 2012 award.

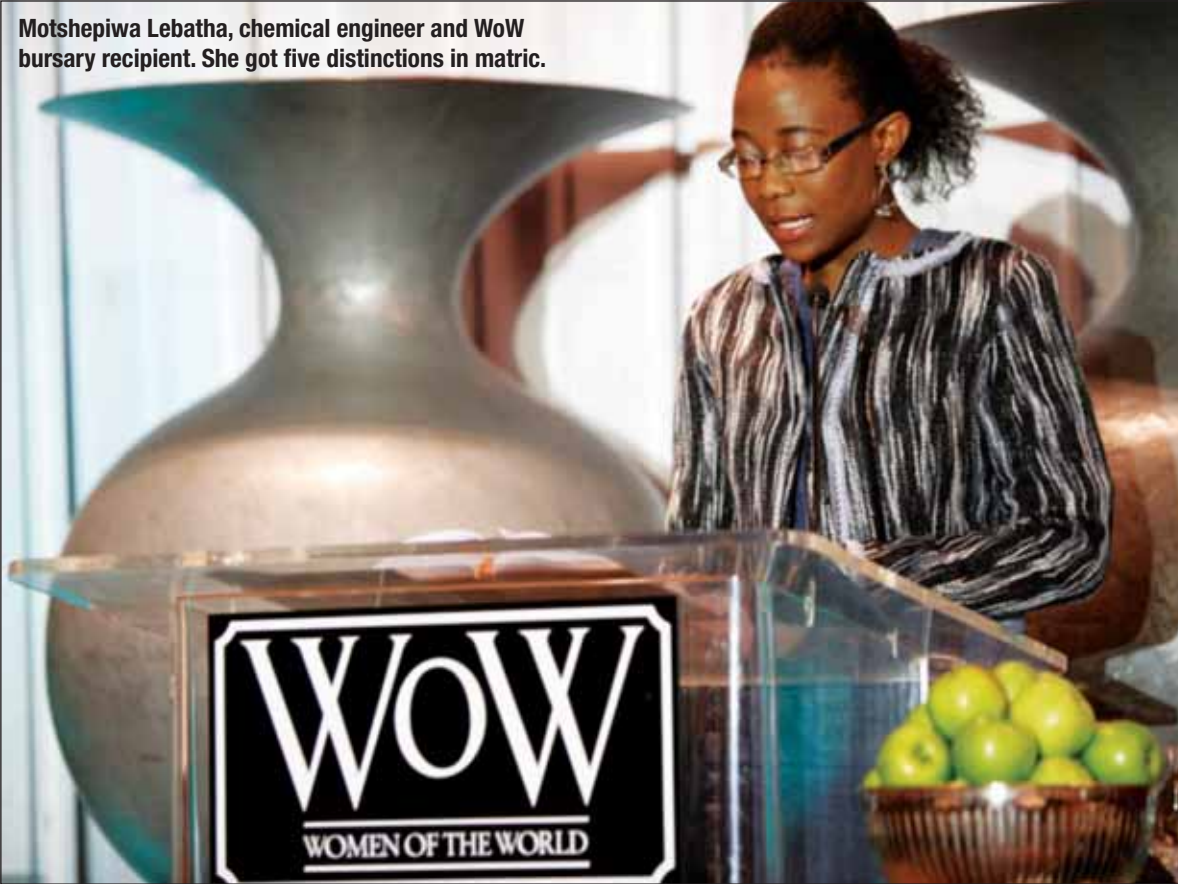
Rebbetzen Goldman in 1999 founded WoW. Her three-pronged mission statement has brought light

to thousands of people: “To nurture the nurturers, uphold her patronage of education and promote a positive South Africa.”

She welcomed the over 500 women and then introduced Motshepiwa Lebata, a young woman, and former pupil of Moletsane School in Soweto. Lebata, who had been a recipient of a WoW education bursary, shared a moving address with the audience,

“The education sponsorship I received from WoW allowed me to feel valued and worthy, and as a result of the funding, I was able to afford a school uniform and text books. This gesture created a space for me to feel that somebody out there believed in me, and this became the motivation I and many of my classmates needed to achieve five distinctions in my matriculation exams.

“My results then enabled me to pursue a BSc in chemical engineering and currently, I am working as a process engineer at Petro SA. I will always be grateful to WoW for ensuring that my educational journey began



Motshepiwa Lebata, chemical engineer and WoW bursary recipient. She got five distinctions in matric.

on solid ground.”

Goldman welcomed three speakers who shared of their knowledge and expertise, enriching the crowd with helpful information to better the educational and developmental process.

Nutritionist Mary-Anne Lindenberg told her story of triumph over adversity, as a survivor of cancer. She told guests of the necessity of mak-

ing healthy food choices for both the mind and body, affirming that by implementing healthier living, health could be prolonged.

Dr Sandy Gluckman encouraged the audience to “nurture the spirit” so that the brain, body and spirit could find a healthy equilibrium, thereby avoiding stress and nourishing the brain from the inside out.

These points were echoed by

educationist Gavin Keller who wows audiences with his knowledge and entertaining brilliance. He shared the secrets of the brain and how to make it feel loved, less stressed and safe.

Maureen Phaka, guest of the event commented: “It is the most fulfilling morning I have ever attended, and it is inspiring to know how women can make a difference to the world.”

Seven ages of data

The Mobility 2012 research findings released recently, uncovered the age divide in mobile data use in South Africa. ARTHUR GOLDSTUCK drills down.

If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, broadband beauty is in the eye of the downloader. Or rather, the age of the beholder.

It turns out that, the older you are, the less data you use, and the younger you are, the less satisfied you are with data download speeds.

This is one of the more intriguing findings from our Mobility 2012 research project, conducted in June this year. The most important overall finding was that South African cellphone users are using more of their phone budget on data and less on voice than 18 months ago.

At the end of 2010, data made up eight per cent of average spend on cellphones.

At the end of 2010, data made up eight per cent of average spend on cellphones. At the end of June 2012, that had gone up by half, to 12 per cent. Voice spending dropped from 77 per cent of average phone budget to 73 per cent.

Within those statistics, however, lurked a fascinating trend: the proportion of spend is directly related to age - the younger the user, the higher the proportion. This doesn’t mean that younger users spend more rands on data; in fact, it may well be less, as their overall spending on their cellphones is lower than for older users.

For example, those aged 16 - 18, on average, spend 17 per cent of their phone budget on data, while those aged 46 and over spend only 11 per cent - but of a much larger budget.

For this reason, the networks have not yet felt the full effect of this trend in terms of declining voice revenues. But they are



GOLDSTUCK ON GADGETS
Arthur Goldstuck

feeling the effect all the same.

In its recent annual results, Vodacom announced that voice revenues grew by less than three per cent over the past year, while data revenue grew by a massive 28 per cent.

The new findings should be a wake-up call to networks.

The new findings, however, should be a wake-up call to networks that they cannot treat all users the same, and that they have to start bundling, packaging and marketing voice and data services differently to different market segments.

In particular, they need to appreciate the differences between the seven ages of data. It looks something like this, backed up with a few statistics from our research:

Infancy (under 12): Gimme games, gimme games. Oh wait, look, a new game! Gimme!

Teenager (12 - 15): Data costs nothing, because mom or dad pays for it. And I need it to chat with my friends, because they’re all on WhatsApp, Mxit and BBM.

The pre-adult (16 - 18): Data is what I do. Voice? Oh yeah, some people still expect that. Twenty per cent of phone spend is on data, 17 per cent on SMS (any text is good text), only 58 per cent on voice.

The young adult (19 - 24): 17 per cent of phone spend is on data, but only 11 per cent on SMS. You have to watch those student budgets in case of dating emergency,

you know? Sixty six per cent goes to voice.

The rising star (25 - 35): 14 per cent of phone spend is on data. Why use my own if I can use the company’s? SMS gets 12 per cent of my budget, and voice 72 per cent.

Settling down (36 - 45): 11 per cent of phone spend is on data, and most of it is my kids showing me how this app download thing works; 13 per cent on SMS, because that’s the kind of messaging I know; 74 per cent on voice, but it’s a big 74 per cent because I have more disposable income than any of those data-hugger kids.

Past all that (46+): 6 per cent of phone spend is on data, but that was by accident. Oh, you mean e-mail uses data? Oh well, then. And 11 per cent on SMS, because I grew up with it; 81 per cent on voice, because I don’t need my reading glasses to talk. But it’s my talking that keeps the networks’ voice departments in the money.

You get the occasional 60-year-old geek who is addicted to Angry Birds Space.

Of course, these are averages, so you do get the odd 18-year-old who doesn’t know how to optimise a WiFi access point, and you do get the occasional 60-year-old geek who is addicted to Angry Birds Space.

But in general, how old you are, how much you have to spend, and how you spend it, will dictate what phone as well as what voice and data package is best for you. One size sure doesn’t fit all ages.

• For more on the Mobility 2012 project, visit www.worldwideworx.com

• *Arthur Goldstuck is MD of World Wide Worx and editor-in-chief of Gadget.co.za. Follow him on Twitter on @art2gee*

Community Briefs

JAFFA RESIDENTS KEPT IN THE JEWISH CULTURAL LOOP

The month of July saw two great events at Jaffa, the Jewish Aged Home in Pretoria. The Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir performed for the residents; and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, the country communities’ rabbi came to launch the publication Jewish Life in the South African Country Communities. Rabbi Silberhaft was accompanied by senior researcher Elona Steinfeld who answered questions from the audience on the research conducted.

The JJMC performs again, under the baton of Russel Lurie and accompanied by Evelyn Green on piano, on November 4, in a concert entitled “Israel in Song”, at the Linder Auditorium in Parktown. -DIANE WOLFSON.



Guests at the Pretoria Aged Home: Marlene Lanesman; Annie Melamed; Sarah Widman; Oscar Sher; Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft; Elona Steinfeld; and Anne Seligman. (PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED)

BOOK ON MACHALNIK EXPLOITS NOW AVAILABLE

The legacy of the Machalniks who fought for Israel in 1948 against concerted Arab onslaught, continues to inspire the next generation of Zionists. In 1948 those 800 valiant young men and women volunteered to assist Israel in her greatest time of need, helping Jews securing their own homeland.

Approximately a quarter of the total number of volunteers in the Haganah, Irgun and Lechi, were South Africans. The riveting stories were later recorded by late 1948 war veteran, Henry Katzew in a book Telfed commissioned him to write. This book is now available on order. For more information, call Jonathan: 082-330-1001. SHIRA DRUION

REMEMBER THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER ON AUGUST 24

On August 24, Erev Shabbat, the Federation of Synagogues Women’s Guilds of SA in conjunction with the Kosher Consumers’ Organisation hosts their annual National Day of Prayer, at 17:30.

According to a media statement, the organisation appeals to all Jewish women to pledge a donation to charity, recite Psalm 27, and light Shabbat candles and pray for peace.

“We have linked our Day of Prayer to the mitzvah of candle-lighting, as it is uniquely the Jewish woman’s mitzvah. We chose Psalm 27 because it is the psalm Jews all over the world will recite through Elul until after Succoth.

News in Brief

SINAI ATTACK, BORDER INFILTRATION ‘WAKE-UP CALL’ FOR EGYPT, BARAK SAYS

JERUSALEM - Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak has called a major attack by Sinai terrorists a “wake up call” for Egypt.

“We hope this will be a fitting wake-up call for the Egyptians to take matters into their own hands on their side more forcefully,” Barak told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on Monday.

Armed attackers in the Sinai Peninsula killed at least 15 Egyptian soldiers at the Rafah security checkpoint before attempting to infiltrate the Israeli border on Sunday.

The attackers, who Barak identified as members of the Global Jihadist terror group, also kidnapped several Egyptian soldiers on Sunday evening, according to reports. Two of the vehicles used in the attack then crossed the border into Israel, the first blown up by the terrorists to breach the fence, and the second targeted and hit by Israeli forces, according to the Israeli military.

Israeli intelligence had information on the planned attack, which allowed the military to have helicopters in the area to strike the vehicle, an IDF spokesman said on Monday.

Israel and Egypt remained in close contact during the attack, Barak said, according to reports.

Last Friday, the US Embassy in Israel called on American citizens to “take precautions” in travelling to the Sinai. The warning came a day after Israel’s National Security Council Counter-Terrorism Bureau called on “all Israelis in Sinai to leave the area immediately and return home.”

The embassy’s security message pointed out that there have been multiple kidnappings in the Sinai of US citizens over the past four years and that kidnappings of foreign tourists in the Sinai have increased since January 2012.

US government personnel are prohibited from travelling to the Sinai, except by air to Sharm el Sheikh. (JTA)

NORWEGIAN OFFICIAL: JEWS, MUSLIMS SHOULD REPLACE CIRCUMCISION WITH ‘SYMBOLIC’ RITUAL

THE HAGUE - Norway’s ombudsman for children’s rights has proposed that Jews and Muslim replace male circumcision with a symbolic, nonsurgical ritual.

Dr Anne Lindboe told the newspaper Vart Land last month that circumcision in boys was a violation of a person’s right to decide over his own body. “Muslim and Jewish children are entitled to the same protection as all other children,” she said. She added that the practice caused unnecessary pain and was medically unbeneficial.

Lindboe, a paediatrician, was appointed ombudsman in June. Her predecessor, Reidar Hjermand, proposed setting 15 as the minimum age for circumcision. According to Jewish religious law,

Jewish babies must be circumcised when they are eight days old.

The children’s ombudsman is an independent governmental institution entrusted with safeguarding the rights of minors.

Ervin Kohn, president of The Jewish Community of Oslo, said that Norwegian Jews “will not be able to live in a society where circumcision is forbidden.”

He noted that the mandate of Norway’s children’s ombudsman did not extend to devising Jewish rituals. Norway has a Jewish community of about 700.

In June, a spokesman for Norway’s Centre Party, which has 11 out of 169 seats in parliament, proposed a ban on circumcision in babies. (JTA)

TWO TEL AVIV DEMONSTRATIONS PROTEST AUSTERITY MEASURES

TEL AVIV - Social justice activists held two parallel demonstrations in Tel Aviv to protest new Israeli government austerity measures.

Some 2 000 participants attended a demonstration last Saturday night at the Tel Aviv Museum organised by several established social protest organisations, the Israeli business daily Globes reported. The rally also called for universal military conscription.

The other demonstration, which also had about 2 000 participants but was not sponsored by any specific organisations, marched through the city, ultimately joining the Tel Aviv Museum demonstration.

Eight protesters were arrested for blocking roads

and violence toward police officers.

Supporters of the two demonstrations scuffled as participants in the second demonstration attempted to mount the stage of the museum protest.

“We serve in the army, we pay taxes, we volunteer. We’re in all the places the state forgot about and, mostly, we’re willing to sacrifice everything,” said Itzik Shmueli, chairman of the National Student Union.

Shmueli added that the Netanyahu government had “breached the agreement you made with the people. An agreement that says that if we work hard, you will let us live in dignity.” (JTA)

POLAND HONOURS JANUSZ KORCZAK ON 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

WARSAW - Polish government officials have unveiled a memorial plaque in Warsaw in honour of Warsaw Ghetto hero Janusz Korczak.

Last Sunday’s unveiling took place exactly 70 years after German soldiers sent Korczak and 192 Jewish orphans to their deaths in Treblinka, a Nazi extermination camp.

Korczak, director of the Dom Sierot orphanage for Jewish children, declined help from friends in the Polish underground who offered to hide him. He insisted on staying with the children and orphanage staff.

During the ceremony, representatives of Poland’s Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture read

aloud a letter written by Poland’s first lady, Anna Komorowska. They laid wreaths at a statue of Korczak situated near the plaque.

The plaque was installed on the site of the last location of Korczak’s orphanage, in the area that Nazi forces declared as the city’s Jewish ghetto.

Sunday’s ceremony was part of a series of commemorative events in the framework of Korczak Year, a government-sponsored campaign headed by Komorowska.

In addition to Korczak, the children and the orphanage staff, some 6 400 people were deported on August 5, 1942 to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto. (JTA)

ROMNEY AD RAPS BARACK OBAMA FOR NOT VISITING ISRAEL

WASHINGTON - A Mitt Romney campaign ad criticises President Barack Obama for not visiting Israel during his presidency and refusing to call Jerusalem the capital of Israel.

The 30-second television ad rolled out last Sunday, which features American and Israeli flags and Romney at the Western Wall, is titled “Cherished Values” and begins with the question: “Who shares your values?”

“As president, Barack Obama has never visited Israel and refuses to recognise Jerusalem as its capital,” says the ad for the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. “Mitt Romney will be a different kind of president - a strong leader who stands by our allies. He knows Amer-

ica holds a deep and cherished relationship with Israel.”

Obama visited Israel during the 2008 campaign. President George W Bush did not visit Israel until his second term.

The ad comes on the heels of Romney’s recent trip to Israel and concludes with Romney noting: “It’s a deeply moving experience to be in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.”

Obama’s staff has pointed to the frequent sharing of information between Israel and the United States and the millions allocated by his administration for the defensive missile programme Iron Dome and other weapons systems in showing his support for Israel. (JTA)

RAYMOND SIMONSON RESIGNS AS HEAD OF LIMMUD

LONDON - The executive director of Limmud, Raymond Simonson, has resigned to head the Jewish Community Centre in London.

Simonson announced last week that he would leave Limmud, which makes Jewish learning accessible to Jews around the world, after six years in his position. He was appointed Limmud’s first fulltime executive director in May 2006. During his tenure, Limmud has grown into a worldwide movement, active in 60 Jewish communities in over 25 countries ranging from China to Moldova, and Argentina to South Africa.

“In the past six years Limmud has gone from strength to strength and grown in ways no one had predicted a decade ago, to the point where it has become known as British Jewry’s greatest export. Owned and run almost entirely by volunteers, I’m proud to have made my small contribution to this success,” Simonson said in a statement.

He will remain at Limmud until mid-October and will lead the search for his successor. (JTA)

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A Curriculum Vitae and contact information with two referees should be emailed to: HUDSOND@sabje.co.za

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Hundreds of Johannesburg kids enjoy Winter Camp

LIEBEL BAUMGARTEN
PHOTOGRAPH: CHAYA SILBERSTIEN

More than 300 children joined Camp Gan Israel day camp in Johannesburg recently during the holidays, for two memorable weeks of meaningful fun. The programme, run under the auspices of Chabad House, attracted campers from all the city’s Jewish day schools, from Torah Academy to King David, Yeshiva College, to Shaarei Torah.

“It was a unique experience for me,” said Tzivi Lazar of Montreal, Canada, girls division co-head counsellor, along with Chaya Silberstien. “To have children from every background and level of observance coming together and becoming united, was remarkable.”

With just a two week programme to work with, organisers packed the schedule with as many activities as possible.

“We had sports, arts and crafts, inflatable rides, candle-making, acrobatic shows, trips to Fourways Avalanche and Acrobranch in Melrose, along with daily davening and learning

classes,” said camp director Rabbi Pini Pink, who directs the camp along with his wife Rochie.

A jammed schedule aside, it is the famed Camp Gan Israel atmosphere that the kids love. “Our supper table has become a concert. My children sing all the songs they learnt in camp,” said Susan Klein. “If you could bottle the camp spirit, I would pay a lot of money for it!”

Michael Goldberg agreed. “My son has not stopped smiling from the first day of camp; he can’t get enough of it!”

Boys division head counsellors Mendy Katzman, of Staten Island, New York and Yisroel Levertov of Phoenix, Arizona, said they had been a little apprehensive at first. “A new country, new continent, unknown staff and campers we’ve never met.

“We were a little nervous. Yet everything was incredible; a professional administration, devoted staff and spirited campers. It is easy to see why this camp just keeps on growing.”

• For more info about the camp, visit www.cgjioburg.co.za or find us on Facebook: Camp Gan Yisrael - Johannesburg.



A group of girls enjoying a string hunt at Gan Yisrael.



TA Nursery School goes for gold...

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH:
RACHEL PELS

Going for gold... Leah Lipskar’s class at Torah Academy Nursery School, has been learning all about the 2012 Olympic Games in London and the dif-

ferent competing events.

Each of the boys made a gold medal which they proudly wore around their necks to identify with the real sports stars.

Pictured are Moshe Sevitz; Leor Levin; Aharon Belcher; and Ezer Goldman, showing off their handiwork.

YC celebrates siyum Hashas with Rabbi Avraham Tanzer

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

Friday morning, August 3, brought about great excitement on the Yeshiva College campus in Johannesburg, as it was the culmination of seven and a half years of dedicated learning a page of Gemora a day (Daf Yomi).

This amazing feat of completing 2 711 pages of the Talmud, is a worldwide event that takes place si-

multaneously throughout the world.

In a major celebration of accomplishing this incredible labour of love, the entire Yeshiva College campus joined for a combined davening, followed by a video presentation depicting the history and magnitude of such a project.

Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, who led the completion, spoke about the importance of constantly dedicating time to Torah learning and the benefit and rewards

it gives. He then completed the cycle by reciting the last verses in the Talmud and the learners together with the rabbonim erupted in song and dance, in honour of our rosh yeshiva and in celebration of the Torah.

The entire school was present for this event, and what a sight it was, seeing 700 learners experiencing an event of such magnitude.

The new seven and a half year cycle began with Rabbi Laurence Perez, managing director of Yeshiva College, learning the first Mishna with the enthusiastic learners of the school and community. The day concluded with a seudah (festive meal) which enhanced the importance of this day.



Rabbi Avraham Tanzer completing his siyum with the entire school.

SARAH MORRIS
PHOTOGRAPH: GRACE ELLIOTT

The Herzlia High School Representative Council was inducted at the start of the third school term. The selection of this group of 11 grade 11 learners is determined entirely by the vote of their peers, the grade 11 year group - the people who know their leadership capabilities.

Each SRC holds office from July of grade 11 to July of grade 12, so that matric learners are free to focus fully on their preparation for their finals in the second half of their last year of school.

The executive of the SRC consists of a head student and three deputies.

This model has proved to be an extremely effective and successful one, ensuring that the school has the best leadership possible.

Pictured are: Levi Todes (deputy head student); Faye Zachariadi; Rachel Serraf; Cleo Candy (deputy head student); and Aidyn Breiter. Front: Mischa Kleeblatt; Lebone Matshitse; Tao Klitzner (head student); Saul Bloch; Zach Helfrich; and Joshua Stein (deputy head student).

KDVPPS has two at interprovincial soccer tournament

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPH BY
DR CRAIG NOSSEL

Gaby and Josh Nossel from King David Victory Park Primary were selected to participate in the Bill Stewart u-13 Interprovincial Soccer Tournament.

The tournament, which involved 16 teams from around the country, was held over five days at “Affies” (Afrikaans Hoër Seunsskool) in Pretoria during the July school holidays.



Herzlia High School appoints SRC for next year



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NOTICES

BIRTHS

KIRSH
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What's On

NOTE: Deadline for all entries is 12:00 on the Friday prior to publication.

Today, Friday (August 10)

- UZLC has as its guest speaker Marlene Bethlehem, on “The Big ‘W’ Trip - Wim- bledon & Warsaw”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact Gloria, 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.
- The Lewandowski Chorale is giving their debut concert at the Old Mutual Thea- tre on the Square in Sandton at 13:00. The choir is conducted by Adam Golding with Len Kay as soloist and Avi Kanar as accompanist. Cost: R30 (incl coffee and a programme). No advance booking. Seats purchased at the door. Contact: 082-338-4462.

- Emunah, Mizraichi, Yeshiva College and the Campus Kollel, have launched their learning programme, “64 Days of Learn- ing for 64 Years of Israel”. The new Daf Yomi cycle, which began last week Fri- day with Masechet Berachot, will end 64 days later in Chol HaMoed Succoth. There will be a daily shiur, Monday to Thursday given by the rabbonim of the Mizraichi Shul after the Kollel Mincha. This started on, Monday, August 6 (from 17:30 to 17:50), in the Boys’ High school Beit Midrash (011)8872910 Contact Melissa Chipkin

Saturday evening (August 11)

- WIZO Tzabar is screening the Israeli movie, “The Policeman” (with English subtitles). Venue: Bedfordview. Time: 20:00. Cost R60. Contact: Graciela: 082-925-0924.

Monday (August 13)

- UJW hosts Marlene Bethlehem, former deputy chairman of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural and Religious Rights, on: “Are the Democratic Rights Organisations of the Constitution Still Relevant?” Time 09:30. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R25. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (August 14)

- Second Innings Men’s Group hosts Li- onel Slier who will talk on “South Afri- can Stories” Venue: Our Parents Home, Time: 14:00 for 14:30. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

- JWBS “55” club takes place every Tues- day and Thursday from 11:30 to 15:00, at Sandringham Gardens. Wonderful opportunity to meet new friends, enjoy a lunch and be entertained. Transport provided. Contact: (011) 485-5232.

- King David Victory Park PTA is hosting well-known chef and cookbook author Sharon Glass, who will be presenting a cookery demo and new recipes for Rosh Hashanah. Drinks on arrival, tastings of the food and many exciting prizes to be won. Cost: R300 pp. Venue: King David Victory Park High School hall. Time: 19:00. Contact: Lorien 082-486-0148 or e-mail lorien@atlasstudios.co.za for tickets.

Wednesday (August 15)

- UJW hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson,- former lecturer in the Department of English at Wits, who today delivers the third of a five-part series on “Eng- lish Metaphysical Poetry”. She will discuss the poetry of two 17th century poets, John Donne and George Her- bert. Time 09:30. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R25. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Raisman, Down Under athletes soar among Jewish Olympians



Australian kayaker Jessica Fox won a silver medal in the K-1 kayak slalom final. (PHOTOGRAPH: JESSICA FOX FACEBOOK)

JTA STAFF LONDON

Aly Raisman, who performs her floor routines to the melody of “Hava Nagilah”, won an individual gold medal on Tuesday in the floor exercise as well as a bronze on the balance beam after helping the US women’s team take the gold last week.

Her bronze came after the US lodged a protest against the original result. Raisman, 18, of Needham, Massachusetts, had finished fourth, but the judges agreed to a rescoring, putting her in a tie with Romania’s Catalina Ponor. Under a tie-breaking procedure, Raisman took the medal with a higher execution score. She defeated Ponor again in the floor exercise final.

Meanwhile, there was something good in the water for Jewish athletes from Down Under.

Nathan Cohen, who is Jewish, and his partner Joseph Sullivan, won the men’s double sculls on August 2, to give New Zealand its first gold medal of the London Olympics. They rallied in the last 200 metres to overtake Italy’s Alessio Sartori and Romano Battisti with a time of 6 minutes, 31,67 seconds – 1,13 seconds ahead of the Italians.

Australian kayaker Jessica Fox, 18, won a silver medal in the K-1 kayak slalom final. Her first Olympic medal followed a family tradition: Her mother, Myriam Jerusalemi Fox, won a bronze in the same race for France at the 1996 Atlanta Games.



New Zealand sailor Jo Aleh, left, and partner Olivia Polly Powrie, are leading the 470 category race at the London Olympics. Aleh is the daughter of Israeli parents. (PHOTOGRAPH: TEAM JOLLY)

US gymnast Aly Raisman and athletes from Down Under were the story for Jewish sports fans at the London Olympics.

Her British father, Richard, finished fourth in the same event at the 1992 Olympics and was appointed coach of the Australian kayak team before the 2000 Sydney Games.

At midweek, New Zealand sailor Jo Aleh was in good position to win her first Olympic medal as her event headed into its final stretch. Aleh, whose parents, Shuki and Daniella, lived in Israel before moving to Auckland, and teammate Olivia Powrie, were in first after eight of 10 races in the 470 event on Wednesday, when Jewish Report went to press.

Two rounds remained - both on Wednesday - followed by a medal race, scheduled for Friday.

Aleh’s father has flown in from Israel to watch the final rounds, while her mother has arrived from New Zealand. Aleh has two half-siblings who both live in Israel, according to a report in The Forward. After the Olympics, the family is reportedly travelling there for her half-sister’s batmitzvah celebration.

Australian sprinter Steven Solomon’s bid for a medal ended when he ran out of steam in the 400-metre final. Solomon trailed the pack on Monday night, finishing eighth in 45,14 seconds - his second fastest time and just 0,17 seconds off his landmark semifinal time.

The 19-year-old runner, who played soccer at the 2009 Maccabiah before taking up sprinting, heaped praise on his Jewish Ukrainian coach, 78-year-old Fira Dvoskina, who could not travel to London but was coaching him via Skype.

Israeli athletes were not faring well and, for the first time since 1988, seemed likely to return home without a medal.

Windsurfer Lee Korzits, Israel’s likely last hope for a medal, finished the medal race in ninth place, dropping from second place to sixth in the overall rankings. Shahr Tzuberi, the bronze medallist from Beijing, did not qualify for the medal event.

Also, Israeli judoka Arik Zeevi, who predicted he would win a medal at the London Olympics, lost his opening match. Dmitri Peters of Germany put Zeevi in a headlock in their 100 kg match on August 2, forcing the 35-year-old Israeli to tap

out after 43 seconds, the Times of Israel reported. He had tears in his eyes as he left the mat.

Female judoka Alice Schlessinger, another Israeli medal hope, was eliminated early as well.

Last Sunday, Israeli gymnast Alex Shatilov finished sixth in the floor exercise finals. Shatilov, 25, had finished 12th last week in the individual all-around final.

In an odd incident, Israeli sprinter Donald Sanford was forced to borrow running shoes, saying his had been stolen and that he did not have the opportunity to warm up. He argued unsuccessfully with the judges for more time and failed to advance out of the first round in the 400 metres, though he did run his personal best time of the season.

Meanwhile, French Olympic swimmer Fabien Gilot grabbed some attention with the Hebrew tattoo on his left arm that he said was a tribute to his late grandmother’s husband, a Jewish survivor of Aus-

chwitz.

Gilot, who is not Jewish, said the tattoo was dedicated to his family and honoured Max Goldschmidt, who has been a major influence in his life, Ynet reported. The tattoo says: “I’m nothing without them.”

Gilot revealed the tattoo, which is on the inside of his left arm, after exiting the pool following his team’s gold medal-winning performance in the 4x100-metre freestyle relay. (JTA)



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Current Olympic medal count for Jewish athletes (as on Wednesday, when we went to press). (CREATED BY URI FINTZY)

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