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18:21	20:19	Cape Town
18:15	19:21	Durban
18:20	19:39	Bloemfontein
17:52	19:50	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:39	East London

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EDITOR - Geoff Sifrin
geoff@sajewishreport.co.za

COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Sue Morris - sue@sajewishreport.co.za

Sub-Editor - Paul Maree

Ed Co-ordinator - Sharon Akum
carro@global.co.za

Sports Editor - Jack Milner
jackmilner@telkomsa.net

Books Editor - Gwen Podbrey

Arts Editor - Robyn Sassen
robyn@sajewishreport.co.za

Cape Town correspondent
Moira Schneider: 021-794-4206

Pretoria correspondent
Diane Wolfson: 082-707-9471

Advertising - (011) 023-8160
advertising@sajewishreport.co.za

Adi Lew: 083-407-8034
adi@sajewishreport.co.za

Britt Landsman: 082-292-9520
britt@sajewishreport.co.za

Manuela Bernstein: 082-951-3838
manuela@sajewishreport.co.za

Freelance Advertising Executives
Marlene Bilewitz: 083-475-0288
marlene@sajewishreport.co.za

Classified Sales
Charissa Newman - jrclassified@global.co.za

Manager: Distribution
Britt Landsman

Design and layout
Frankie Matthyssen | Nicole Cook

Website
www.sajewishreport.co.za
llan Ossendryver - ilan@ic-creations.com

Subscription enquiries
Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860-13-2652

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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

The echo of Sinai



PARSHAT YITRO
Rabbi Pesach Fishman
Northcliff Shul

THE SINGLE most important event in world history is arguably the Giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai to the Jews.

It certainly is the defining moment for the Jewish people. It was a national experience that forged our values, shaped our relationship to G-d and guided our interaction to our fellow man. It unified the Jewish People in an unbreakable bond.

It wasn't a dry communication of do's and don'ts - rather the very Heavens opened up and those gathered there experienced a revelation of G-d similar to the highest levels of prophecy. That experience was imprinted on our souls and became inseparable to who we are - a nation shaped and guided by the Torah and Judaism.

Many of the basic values, worldviews and even practices of other world religions, were adopted and then adapted from Judaism, thus making it the crucial event for most, if not all of mankind.

It isn't surprising this momentous event was accompanied by dramatic smoke, lightning and thunder. It was only fitting that an earth-shaping event would be an earth-shaking event.

One would expect the mystical and mysterious was revealed that day, 3 324 years ago. Yet, if one looks at the details of what was communicated, it all seems rather simple: Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, among other commandments.

Wasn't this an anti-climax? Couldn't we figure out much of this on our own, as so many societies have done? Did we need all that fuss over matters that are so obvious, especially to our modern sensibilities?

First a story. Charles, an Oxford graduate is bushwhacking his way through the darkest jungles of Africa on an exploration mission when he chances on a tribe of cannibals. Soon they tie him up and place him in a large pot. He immediately realises that he's in the soup. As the cannibals start dancing a hora around their victim, to his great relief he recognises that one of them is his old classmate from Oxford!

"Simba! I'm so pleased to see you. Please explain to the others who I am and release me."

"I don't want to let you go," comes the reply.

"But what then did you learn in Oxford?"

"To eat with a fork and knife."

Manners are not morals. Etiquette is not ethics. Advances in modern technology do not necessarily mean advances in morality. Sometimes the only progress has been from machetes to machineguns and arrows to air-planes.

Laws that are based solely on mankind's reasoning are subject to change with the shifting conventional wisdom of the times and the society. In the hands of society, "don't murder" comes with all types of exceptions. "Don't murder"... except daughters (China and India), the elderly (the Eskimos), the Jews, Gypsies, gays and mentally handicapped (the Nazis), the terminally ill (the Scandinavians) and the unwanted unborn (much of the world).

The G-d-given commandments communicated at Mt Sinai are as necessary to guide Man and mankind today as they were millennia ago. Through their fulfilment we recapture a bit of that experience and hear the echo of Sinai.

I wish you and yours an inspiring and Shabbat Shalom!



The Robins family, who recently spent a holiday backpacking in Iran: Ma'ayan Nandi; Evan Kallmann; Yael Lerato; Karen Kallmann; Aryeh Andile; and Eitan Nkosinathi.

Iran - an unlikely Jewish holiday destination

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN
PHOTO SUPPLIED

"THE ROAD less travelled" could well be the motto of Cape Town's Robins family who undertook a backpacking holiday to Iran last September, with the motive of showing solidarity with the country's Jews. And the timing over the chaggim was to ensure maximum interaction with the "very isolated" community.

Evan, a financial analyst, and Karen (Kallmann), a social and economic researcher, are intrepid travelers, having traversed Russia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Cuba, India and parts of Africa. And having Yael Lerato (7), Eitan Nkosinathi (5), Aryeh Andile (3) and Ma'ayan Nandi (18 months), has not stopped them in their tracks.

What's more, Kallmann says she makes a habit of travelling while pregnant. "I'm always worried that once I have another child, I won't be able to!" she laughs.

They travelled light: two backpacks, two day packs and a pram to see them through the 32-day journey.

The observant family spent 10 days in Turkey, then Yom Kippur and the chaggim in Iran with members of the 25 000-strong Jewish community, the biggest in the Middle East after Israel. "We were astounded by how young the community is," she recalls.

And they are allowed to practise their religion freely "in theory", she says. "They have a Jewish representative in Parliament and in a country where you are not allowed to drink alcohol, Jews are allowed to make their own wine. They have shuls that are very active and their lives are comfortable."

While there, Kallmann had to wear the hijab, the head covering traditionally worn by Muslim women.

The family arrived in the capital, Tehran, a few hours before Yom Kippur, having no idea where the shul was. The next morning they spent over two hours

continuing their search.

"I was so excited because as we came near the building, I saw a man walking in with a tallis and as we came in, all these kids came running down the stairs.

"It was fantastic, especially for my kids, because I think the thing kids miss most is social interaction. There were a few minyanim going at the same time, people had brought food for the kids and they kept feeding ours."

Kallmann says things were "very relaxed", with the women, although separate, being very much part of the (Sephardi) service. The family found the community to be really friendly and very excited to see them.

Simchat Torah was totally a highlight, with the women being given a Torah. "It wasn't an issue," she comments.

"It's obviously always been done - these Jews trace their ancestry to the Prophet Daniel and the destruction of the First Temple."

The community takes the injunction to say 100 brachot daily very seriously, so the family was constantly plied with biscuits, fruit and other goodies. Word of their arrival spread, so that when they arrived in Isfahan for Succot, arrangements had been made to pick them up for shul.

"What was incredible was that the next day, people we had never met before, came to our hotel with food," she remembers.

And what of the challenges of travelling with young children? "They got diarrhoea, but I think everyone who travels does," says Kallmann.

Laundry was a big mission. Her top tip? "They're hungry all the time - you have to have food all the time," she emphasises.

The family's gesture of support to the community did not go unappreciated. At a post-Simchat Torah party, Evan was called on to the bimah, given a bouquet of flowers and thanked for coming to the country.

"I don't know when the last time was that they had contact with Jews outside Iran," Kallmann says.

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Obama stresses Israel still weighing Iran options



Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman meets with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Tuesday.

PHOTOGRAPH: JEWEL SAMAD/ AFP/GETTY IMAGES.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON - US President Barack Obama in an interview on Sunday stressed that Israel had “not yet decided” how to respond to Iran’s nuclear threat and that “there is no evidence Iran has the ‘intentions or capabilities’ to wage attacks on American soil”.

But Obama reiterated that the US would do everything to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons.

The US and Israel have not ruled out a military strike against the country if diplomacy fails to resolve the standoff. Iran has warned that its response to any such strike will be “painful”, threatening to target Israel, and US bases in the Gulf, along with closing the vital oil shipping route of the Strait of Hormuz.

Asked in an NBC interview whether Israel was set to attack Iran, Obama said: “I don’t think that Israel has made a decision on what they need to do. I think they, like us, believe that Iran has to stand down on its nuclear weapons programme.” But, he said, Israel was “rightly concerned” and the United States would work “in lock-step” on Iran.

Obama stressed he was not taking any options off the table to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power. “We’re going to do everything we can to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and creating an arms race - a nuclear arms race - in a volatile region.”

Obama, who is up for re-election in November, made clear he would not like to see more fighting in the oil-producing Persian Gulf region.

“Any kind of additional military activity inside the Gulf is disruptive and has a big effect on us. It could have a big effect on oil prices, we’ve still got troops in Afghanistan, which borders Iran, and so our preferred solution here is diplomatic,” he added.

Republican Mitt Romney, the top contender to oppose Obama in the November 6 presidential election, said he would start his presidency by imposing “far tougher” sanctions on Iran and back up American diplomacy with “a very credible military option”.

Tehran has repeatedly said its nuclear

programme centred on producing energy, not weapons, but has not responded to the latest Western overtures for talks and has threatened to retaliate against US and European sanctions affecting its finances and oil sales.

Meanwhile on Sunday, in a sabre-rattling speech, the deputy head of Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards, told the semi-official Fars news agency that Iran would attack any country whose territory is used by “enemies” of the Islamic state to launch a military strike against its soil.

“Any spot used by the enemy for hostile operations against Iran, will be subjected to retaliatory aggression by our armed forces,” Hossein Salami said, during military manoeuvres.

The Revolutionary Guards began the two-day ground exercises last Saturday as a show of military might as tension rises between Tehran and the West over Iran’s disputed nuclear programme.

On a visit to Washington, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Tuesday spoke of the significance of further sanctions against Iran in his meetings at the State Department and on Capitol Hill.

“The measures that were taken in the last weeks sent a very important message to the entire region,” he told Foreign Secretary Hilary Clinton, according to a statement put out by the Foreign Ministry.

Later he stood alongside Senator John McCain (Republican Arizona). Asked by reporters whether those sanctions were sufficient, McCain answered: “Obviously not, because Iran has not renounced their path towards the acquisition of a nuclear weapon.”

He also addressed the issue of Syria, declaring that the “blood-letting’s got to stop” and suggesting the US “start considering all options, including arming the opposition”.

But the main issue under consideration during Lieberman’s Washington tour was clearly Iran.

That focus was underscored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican Florida), when she said during their meeting the two of them would “talk about Iran, and Iran”, and later “Iran” some more.

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‘Laughing Waters’ - Selwyn Segal camp



Left:
Adele and Ryan's happy faces.

Below:
Campers say farewell to Camp Laughing Waters.



CELESTE EVERITT
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CHEVRAH KADISHA

AT EVERY year's end, Selwyn Segal arranges a summer camp for its residents at Camp David in the Magaliesburg area. The theme for each camp is different and in recent years the residents have been given the opportunity to select the theme and name of the camp themselves.

"Laughing Waters" was chosen for the 2011 camp and when a resident was asked why he had chosen that particular name, he said the name described the camp as he saw it: swimming, fun, lots of laughter, clowns and happiness.

Some 160 residents from the Centre and Kibbutz Lubner, including day-care attendees, visited the campsite in five staggered, small groups over the camp period.

Each week a clown/magician visited the camp and entertained the campers, which was truly the highlight of their week.

A weekly braai was also enjoyed where friends and family of Selwyn Segal were invited to join with the campers for a delicious meal prepared by Roy Levinson and Steve Dewey of the Chev's catering team.

Other entertainment consisted of a variety of games and activities and in the evenings, there was even a disco.

In keeping with the theme, face painting was a huge success!

WIZO SA visits Ochberg memorial

Pictured are some of the South African WIZO delegation to the Kibbutz Dahlia and Isaac Ochberg Lookout Memorial, with an Ochberg survivor, Sissy Harris.



A WIZO SA delegation on January 21 paid an uplifting visit to Kibbutz Dahlia and the Isaac Ochberg Park, arranged by David Kaplan.

"Despite the rain, cold and even hail, we did not let it 'dampen' our spirits," WIZO SA said in a media release, "particularly remembering the hardships, so much part of the narrative that we were experiencing, being immortalised for all eternity."

The media release pointed out that it was fitting that the first two delegations hosted to date, had been the Canadians and the South Africans – the two countries that took in the orphans in 1921.

"It was truly special to have had 93-year-old Sissy Harris from Haifa join us... the only surviving Ochberg orphan living in Israel."

After listening to Harris' anecdotes, the delegation ventured outdoors to see the innovative memorial which had been constructed - a magnificent curved wall, resembling the bow of a boat, is embedded with plaques in alphabetical order of the 200-plus orphans saved and brought to South Africa and Canada.

"The South African Jewish community can take great pride in what has been done so far to preserve the legacy of one of its favourite sons. Isaac Ochberg not only saved children from disease and death in the Ukraine, but also left the largest tract of land ever given by a single donor to the JNF in Israel.

"We foresee this park becoming a major tourist attraction in the future and look forward to further visits with WIZO SA."

Daf Yomi cycle: PE celebrates first siyum

RABBI SHMUEL BLOCH, PE HEBREW CONGREGATION PHOTOGRAPH: REBBETZEN SANDRA BLOCH

WHENEVER ONE travels, one can find a Daf Yomi shiur virtually anywhere in the world. Daf Yomi is a programme where one learns a page of Talmud a day and completes the entire Talmud every 7 years.

The latest city to start a Daf Yomi shiur is the Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation, which recently celebrated their first siyum (completion) in the Daf Yomi



cycle. At the Raleigh Street Jewish Pioneers Museum, a siyum was held, completing Tractate Bechorot, after which participants were treated to a breakfast.

Participating as well was Rabbi Morrison, a former rabbi of the congregation from 1981 – 1987.

Rabbi Bloch learned together the last few lines of the Tractate and spoke about the importance of commitment and continuity. He mentioned how poignant it was to be holding a siyum in a place where most of the former founders of the synagogue were immigrants and were alive in 1922 at the time that Rabbi Meir Shapiro launched the Daf Yomi programme in Poland.

The Raleigh Street Jewish Pioneers Museum is the second oldest synagogue in South Africa. Consecrated in 1912 by then Chief Rabbi J H Landau, it served the community till its amalgamation with the Western Road Synagogue in 1951.

In 1955 the current synagogue complex was built in Glendinningvale. On September 18, last year, a new refurbished synagogue was inaugurated by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.

Women financially empowering women

ALISON GOLDBERG

FROM FINANCIAL chaos to proper financial planning, ORT JET is collaborating with Sasfin Bank to offer a six-week financial empowerment course for women, by women. The brain-child of JewishInteractive director Nicky Newfield, it will kick off on February 28 with proceeds going to ORT JET to teach job skills to underprivileged women.

Why not profit from shares in South Africa's fastest growing companies: Richemont, Mr Price and Kumba Iron Ore for instance, as Sasfin director David Shapiro showed at its launch last Tuesday.

Where women have traditionally relied on fathers and husbands to handle their finances, the men in turn have left it to everyone else to deal with them, quipped Sasfin financial planner and course designer, Natasja Hart.

Overcoming our emotional ambivalence about money is the first step in learning to take care of ourselves. Not least for the reason that divorces have increased and women have to raise children



Natasja Hart with Nicky Newfield. (PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

themselves.

The most basic objective at the end of the process is a file in triplicate, summarising your financial situation, with contact names of people dealing with different aspects of it, should something happen to you. But the course is more than that: risk and estate planning (a will, at the least); budgeting; and creating wealth.

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Community stalwart Michael Bagraim new MDA patron

DAVID SAKS

VETERAN communal leader Michael Bagraim (pictured), had another noteworthy entry added to his communal CV with his recent appointment as patron to Magen David Adom SA.

This adds a Zionist dimension to Bagraim's long record of volunteer work in both the general and Jewish community, which up until now has primarily been in the fields of welfare, labour relations and local Jewish affairs.

A specialist in labour law, Bagraim practises as a labour law consultant in Cape Town. He is today frequently in the news in his capacity as president of the Cape Town regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He joined the Cape Council in 1994 and became chairman in 1999. In 2003, he became only the second Capetonian to be elected national chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, a position he held until 2007, followed by two terms as national president.

Bagraim has been especially involved in the welfare field, including serving as chairman of Staffwise and the Jewish Welfare Council and as an adviser on labour and staff-related issues for a wide range of Jewish organisations.

His other community-related activities include serving as vice-chairman of the Western Cape branch of the Association of the Physically Disabled, as an adviser to Child Welfare and he sits on the committee of the Epilepsy League.



It's 300 not out for Michael Kimmelman

ROBYN SASSEN

RECENTLY, 74-year-old Lyndhurst resident Michael Kimmelman (pictured) donated his 300th unit of platelets at the SA Blood Transfusion Centre in Auckland Park in Johannesburg.

"I can no longer claim first place," he explains that as he's over 70, he must wait four weeks between donations. Younger donors can donate blood every two weeks.

Kimmelman has been donating blood since "about 1965". He used to donate in Hillbrow; one day, he noticed a room which contained machines he didn't recognise.

He learned that the machines were "for donating platelets to help sufferers of leukaemia, people having chemotherapy and burn vic-



tims".

Platelets, also called thrombocytes, are essential in the healing process. They control bleeding and enable clotting. In the process of donating, the blood goes through a machine separating it: thrombocytes are collected and the rest of the blood returned to the body.

Unlike blood, platelets are not categorised according to type. "Often

they're more necessary than blood. They're always needed: after five days, they cannot be used.

"Giving platelets takes longer than blood. After-effects include a pins-and-needles feeling in your mouth and light-headedness.

"My platelet yield is like that of a 50-year-old," Kimmelman, who keeps active with bowls, ballroom dancing and bridge, says. He also is a volunteer for UJW's Kosher Mobile Meals and Yad Aharon.

"When I was retrenched 11 years ago, I got a letter from the UJW about Kosher Mobile Meals. Cash I couldn't give. I decided to give in kind: Ever since, twice a week from 06:30, I pack and deliver kosher meals."

Kimmelman challenges the community to meet or beat his record; he looks forward to celebrating his 350th donation, in a few years' time.

The SA National Blood Service has fixed donor sites nationally and also mobile sites. You can visit www.sanbs.org.za or call 0800-11-90131 for further information.

In divorce, the children should be considered first

ALISON GOLDBERG

NO LONGER may divorcing parents enter litigation in South Africa regarding disputes pertaining to their children without first consulting a social worker, psychologist, family lawyer or suitably qualified mediator.

The advent of the Children's Act in 2005, which lays down these stipulations, has meant a more child-centric approach, "leading to a softening and humanising of an adversarial process", in the words of family lawyer Charles Mendelow.

Mendelow recently chaired a two-day conference for the South African Association of Mediators in Johannesburg: the first day a series of talks by experts; the next a practical training programme by them.

Mendelow was described by well-known divorce lawyer and speaker Alick Costa as having the ideal personality required of a family law practitioner. The gist of Costa's talk was that even though you work for a client, it does not necessarily mean he or she is right, and that children's needs were the determinant in final decisions.

Consensus among experts was that not only the articulated views of the child should be taken into account in deciding on residence, maintenance and visitation rights, but in the case of minors, unable to speak for themselves, their whole behaviour, whether bed-wetting or other disturbing signs, should inform parents and mediators in deciding what it best for the child.

The term "visitation" itself, it was pointed out, was a term abhorrent to most children who see themselves rather as "living" with their parents.

Thus no age is set in considering the views of the child. And as Professor Leentjie de Jong quite rightly pointed out, in the case of children over 18, though they have reached their majority, many are still at school.

Despite what the law requires, they should not have to be party to acrimonious financial support claims, nor have to make these claims themselves in a court of law. Instead, a parenting plan should be entered into upon divorce where they can negotiate their maintenance claims in the presence of both

their parents and other minor siblings, in the informal, private and unthreatening atmosphere of the mediation process.

The general concerns of the mediators at the conference was that children wanted to have their opinions known, but did not want to be the decision-makers. The exception, attorney and psychologist Sheetal Vallabh pointed out, was when there was a lack of a trusting child-parent relationship.

But mediation is not advised in cases of abuse. And according to psychologist Dr Lynette Roux, children should never be asked to choose with whom they wanted to live.

Mediating in high conflict cases, the subject of Mendelow's talk, required parents, if unable to buy into an agreement, to buy rather into the process of assessment or case management. It also required the involvement of other disciplines - psychologists and social workers.

For judges, such as retired Justice Percy Bliden who spoke first, and who is known for his compassion in his judgements, there is a strong duty on the part of legal practitioners in divorce cases to keep the best interests of children as their primary focus and to exercise a restraining influence upon clients who might otherwise act in a manner that would escalate parental conflict.

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Jewish Report

On trees and guns

OUR TROUBLED world seems to be tottering on the brink of war. The threat from what analysts say is a soon-to-be nuclear-armed Iran, and the march towards a military strike on that country by the US or Israel, are frightening.

Consequences could include terrorism against American, Jewish and Israeli targets worldwide, Mideast regional turmoil, and who knows what else. Starting a war is easy, but stopping it is very difficult, and one never knows what unintended outcomes may flow from it.

The “Arab Spring” which started with so much hope last year, has not yet produced much to celebrate in real terms and looks like turning into an “Arab Winter”.

Syria’s President Bashar Assad continues murdering his people - killings are estimated at some 7 000 so far - and the UN Security Council is stymied as Russia and China vetoed a resolution condemning Assad. Morality is callously sacrificed to expediency in international diplomacy.

Above the warmongering, another threat looms: Global warming and climate change are already affecting weather patterns worldwide. In South Africa we have recently had some of the worst heat waves in years. In Prague, the temperature recently fell to -38°C and in Venice even the canals started freezing up.

In our country, crime and corruption threaten to drown us and undo the positive changes since 1994.

Perhaps all of this explains why last Wednesday’s Jewish festival of Tu B’Svat - marked by the simple act of planting trees - has such appeal. In the face of all the acrimony, tree-planting is a peaceful, peace-giving act. It will not remove the Iranian threat, stop the Syrian bloodletting, nor silence racial hatred. But it makes the statement that the world does not have to be solely about those issues.

Johannesburgers know the power of trees. This city - home of the SA Jewish Report - is the biggest man-made forest in the world, with 10 million trees, most of them having been individually planted by its founders and early pioneers. This is a stark contrast to the dry, sparsely wooded Highveld region in which it is located.

Drive north over the city on the elevated M1 motorway, and the thick blanket of trees over the neighbourhoods of Saxonwold and all the way to distant Northcliff, is an inspiring sight - the trees all but conceal the houses.

For the Tu B’Svat week in Israel, truckloads of over 1,1 million trees made their way to nurseries in 1 200 communities throughout the country, organised by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). The plan is to plant “a tree for every resident” of Israel this month.

The city of Tel Aviv has supplied 30 000 seedlings - herbs, shrubs, perennial species and vegetables - to community gardens, schools and other institutions.

There will be Tu B’Svat events in its community gardens throughout the week, including picnics, bicycle tours, composting workshops and urban nature tours.

We live in the fast-moving, “virtual” digital age, the age of mass social networking like Facebook. The savvy JNF is making use of this to promote its environmental message.

The organisation is launching the world’s first “social forest”, which will allow Internet users to plant virtual trees on the JNF’s website, after which foresters will plant live trees in Israel’s wooded regions for their online visitors.

If war does erupt with Iran, much work will be needed in stemming the hatred which will follow. Ditto with the aftermath of Assad’s crimes in Syria, and other conflicts. Sadly, tree-planting cannot prevent the guns and rockets from firing. But in this world we need as many life-affirming acts as we can get. Here the JNF is in the forefront.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS – FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Is the bottle half full or half empty?

ON APRIL 27, democratic, post-apartheid South Africa turns “chai”. It is the 18th anniversary of the first non-racial elections that marked the conclusive passing of white minority rule into history.

Already, a substantial section of the population will never have known any other reality, having still been very young during the dying days of the apartheid regime, or born afterwards. One has to have known at first-hand what living in a state dominated at every level by a minority racial group, with all the injustice and repression that came along with it, to fully appreciate just how very remarkable South Africa’s transition was.

How has it all turned out? Afro-pessimists, always with an eye to the generally disastrous record of post-colonial African countries – and especially neighbouring Zimbabwe – predicted that the brave new society whose birth was being lauded throughout the world, would inevitably mutate into another disintegrating, neo-fascist Third World kleptocracy.

Whatever had been built up by the more advanced European settlers over the past three centuries, would be progressively mismanaged and ultimately ruined beyond recall.

As for the much-vaunted democratic culture being launched, this would survive only so long as it suited the ruling party; once it no longer could be relied upon to usher in an automatic majority for the all-powerful ANC, but instead began threatening to whittle away at its dominance, it would inevitably begin to be phased out.

Then there was the question of how whites would fare under black rule, and the inevitable fears that the latter would set about settling old scores.

Those more optimistically inclined believed that South Africa was on the verge of creating something extraordinary, a multiracial democracy where everyone had learned the lessons of toleration from their collective divided past and would now work hand in hand to realise their country’s extraordinary potential.

For a while at least, this spirit pre-



BARBARIC
YAWP
David Saks

ailed, in no small part due to the amazing success of the first democratic elections and how this, at a stroke, brought to an end more than a decade of political violence.

Nelson Mandela’s remarkable ability to reach out to the anxious white population and make them feel that, notwithstanding what had gone before, they were seen as valued, equal partners in the nation building process, can also not be overstated.

Looking at the situation nearly two decades later, it seems that both in more or less equal measures got it right and wrong. For the optimists, South Africa has remained largely democratic.

All subsequent elections have been free, fair and peaceful, the media and judiciary remain independent and both have effectively challenged government actions where called for.

Pessimists, on the other hand, will point to mounting instances of government interference in the judicial process, politically connected individuals guilty of serious crimes going unpunished and, most recently, disquieting moves by the ruling party to limit press freedom.

They might also point out how in its foreign policy, the ruling party has consistently sided with autocratic, anti-Western regimes, to the point of helping stymie international efforts to address human rights violations concerning them.

Obviously from a Jewish point of view, the automatic taking of the Palestinian side against Israel, regardless of the facts of the situation, has particularly rankled.

So far as being a parliamentary democracy goes, the fact that voting now takes place along rigid racial lines, with no credible opposition to the ANC emerging from within the black majority, has created a de facto one-party state scenario.

With regard to the state of the country, its infrastructure and economy, the picture is equally ambiguous. A Third World basket case, after all, could hardly have pulled off so successful a 2010 World Cup, not to mention all the other major sporting tournaments it has hosted so competently.

Nor would it have managed to weather so relatively well the disastrous economic downturn of the past few years, which is a tribute to the competence of government’s financial management.

Actually, that former communists have understood the dynamics of capital management so well is itself quite striking.

That being said, the sharp decline in public services, lack of employment opportunities even for those with qualifications and countrywide breakdowns in law and order are too evident to explain away anymore as a young nation’s growing pangs.

It is no longer an excuse to harp on about the harmful legacy of apartheid, even though this can never be wholly discounted. Perhaps most disturbing is the rampant corruption, in which government representatives are squandering or misappropriating public funds in full view of the electorate, and overwhelmingly being allowed to get away with it.

In the race relations sphere, there has been no Night of the Long Knives against the white minority. There has been considerable anti-white sentiment expressed at government level, without this, however, leading to official anti-white measures.

Unofficially, though, it has not been quite so comfortable for whites. Affirmative action continues to limit their upward mobility in the job market, even though their young black competitors have not themselves suffered from racial discrimination.

Thousands of white farmers have been murdered in what at least in part seem to have been racially motivated attacks.

One would dearly love to know, one way or another, which way South Africa is going. For the time being, however, it would seem that the jury is still out.

Ahead of March meetings, Israel and US close ranks on Iran



WASHINGTON - Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and President Barack Obama, shown at a September 2011 meeting at the UN in New York, are likely to meet again in Washington at the beginning of March, when decisions on Iran will be coming to a head. Netanyahu’s office confirmed over the weekend that he would address the AIPAC policy conference on March 5, and sources say a meeting with Obama is likely. The IAEA board is meeting the same day to consider its inspectors’ latest Iran report, which came closer than ever to indicting the Iranian regime for making weapons, and it helped spur stronger international sanctions against Tehran. (JTA) (PHOTOGRAPHY: AVI OHAYON/GPO/FLASH90)

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For novice investors



Bryan Silke's
BusinessBrief
Know your business

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT is a multi-faceted term comprising wealth options from property or stock portfolios to life insurance. Business owners need to be cognisant of ways to maximise their personal and fixed asset values on a short, medium or long-term basis. The investor should assess existing obligations, annuities and assets when planning an alternative strategy.

Finding a game plan

Whether you are looking to put together a first-time wealth portfolio, or revising your present personal portfolio, the same principles apply. This is according to Warren Ingram, a director at Galileo Capital, and 2011 FPI Financial Planner of the Year.

Ingram advises potential investors that your financial plans should incorporate: your current and planned expenditure, your savings, your assets and your liabilities. These four aspects apply to everyone, from a young person who has just started work, to someone who is retired. This means that a financial plan also incorporates your planning for retirement.

Choosing a financial advisor is in many ways akin to finding a life partner. There needs to be unconditional trust, chemistry in personality and a respect for their respective skills - the platform for trust.

Ingram advises that one should choose a financial advisor who is a qualified certified financial planner (CTP). This is regarded as a globally recognised qualification, and says Ingram, “is the minimum standard for professional advisors in South Africa”.

In terms of payment - as a financial novice, demands for upfront payment are unreasonable, and according to Ingram, unfair on the investor. However, “ongoing (annual) fees that adjust with the value of the investment, are fair.

“Initial fees are only justifiable when the advisor charges you a fixed rand-based fee for advice. That means the fee should not be determined by the size of the assets involved”, concludes Ingram.

New retirement fund regulations

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) is reputed to be perhaps South Africa’s most efficient and world-class government institution. As the tax year-end nears, it is perhaps a good idea to maximise on the tax breaks allowed by SARS on retirement annuities.

This is the opinion of Christo Terblanche, head of product development at Allan Gray, who cautions that if your RA doesn’t comply with the asset limits set out in the revised version of Regulation 28 of the Pension Funds Act, making an additional contribution may force you to bring it into line.

Time to be cognisant of your retirement plan

The South African economy, though not as severely affected by the European and US sub-prime crisis of 2007 and 2008, is not as secure as one would hope. With spiralling unemployment, and caution among the investors, junior investors should at least have a plan when looking to secure their future.

Former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel’s National Planning Commission (NPC) recently released a document entitled Vision 2030, which discussed the urgent need for South Africans to create a culture of saving in the light of potential decreased income security.

Commenting on the need to receive assistance from government in the guise of saving initiatives, Rowan Burger of the Liberty Group contends that “the need for social protection as an integral part of any country’s social development and upliftment, is well documented.

“It is absolutely essential if our country wants to achieve any success in income equality, poverty alleviation and even crime reduction.” he says.

However, Burger says the document should not consider solutions for secure long term employment as they have in the civil service, but focus on the needs of the population who are informally or temporarily employed and where the reality is that long-term job security is fast becoming a thing of the past.

• For more information, and to read more from the above authors, visit www.bbrief.co.za

OPINION AND ANALYSIS - FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Montefiore’s tome on Jerusalem will compel debate on its future



THE JURY IS OUT
Dennis Davis

Dome of the Rock meant that Solomon’s Temple could not be rebuilt.

From the downfall of the moderately liberal Umayyad regime in 750 and the passing of the Caliphate to the Abbasids of Baghdad, an unrelenting period of cruelty and desolation, descended upon the city until the emergence of Saladin in 1187, presented in contrast to the gratuitous violence of the Crusaders.

Thereafter the only major antidote to further despair was the role of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1517 as a result of which the city’s distinctive walls were constructed.

By the time of the First World War, Ottoman rule had disintegrated and both Jewish and Arab nationalism had begun to emerge.

While the Jews received by way of the Balfour Declaration, Montifiore compellingly shows the expedience of the British as they also nodded in favour of Arab demands in order to promote their

IN JUNE 1967, I remember well how I sat in our kitchen with my beloved father listening to the English broadcast of Kol Yisrael. The announcer concluded the broadcast with the statement that Hatikvah would follow to be played from Jerusalem, united under Jewish rule for the first time in 2 000 years.

It remains one of my most indelible memories and I was reminded of it as I read Simon Sebag Montifiore’s compelling book Jerusalem: The Biography.

As one reviewer said of the book, its title connotes the idea of an anthropomorphic city and, to a large extent, that is how Montifiore, the great-great-nephew of Sir Moses Montifiore, and a man who played a significant role in the development of Jerusalem in the 19th century as well as the promotion of the Jewish claim to the city, treats his subject.

The clue to the book’s overarching theme is found in the following comment: “Jerusalem is a holy city yet it has been a den of superstition, charlatanism and bigotry... the cosmopolitan home of many sects, each of which believes the city belongs to them alone.”

The violence which accompanied the competing claims is framed in the introduction which graphically describes the brutality of Titus’ capture of the city and destruction of the Second Temple in 70CE.

At the time, Jerusalem’s population had swelled with refugees and those who had come up to the city for Pesach. Five hundred Jews were crucified after Titus gained his victory until the Romans ran out of wood!

Having set the scene, Montifiore returns to the construction of the City of David and the building by Solomon of the First Temple. The sacking of the city and the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BCE, is seen by Montifiore as a seminal moment for the history of the city, not only as a harbinger of the destruction and desolation to come.

As he writes, the city was thereafter to be seen as “the venue of the Last Days and the coming of the divine kingdom. This was the Apocalypse - based on the Greek word for revelation - that Jesus would prophesy.

“For Christians it became a defining and perennial expectation, while Muhammad would see Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction as the withdrawal of divine favour from the Jews making way for his Islamic revelation.”

The history of the city thereafter first confirmed and then denied each exclusive claim. The book documents how pursuant to the decision of the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century to impose Christianity on the entire Empire, Jerusalem became a centre of Christian pilgrimage.

In the seventh century, Muhammad ensured that a third religion would lay claim to the city, seeing it as the site of the last judgment. While the Jews, according to Montifiore, welcomed Islamic rule which was far more tolerant initially than were their Christian predecessors, the construction of the

own war interests.

The book then steers a fair course through the struggles which took place after the War. He documents the Arab rejection of settlement in the ‘30s and ‘40s, the Nazi sympathy’s of the Mufti of Jerusalem, the possibilities for a secular consensus and the impact of Deir Yassin.

The book ends where my personal narrative began, with the recapture of Jerusalem by Israel in 1967 and the recognition of the wisdom of leaders like Moshe Dayan who understood the importance of the city to the other faiths.

But the reader is then afforded the benefit of a reflective epilogue in which I was compelled to interrogate my own conception of the city.

With the benefit of over 500 pages of history, Montifiore’s argument that there is no single claim to the city is difficult to rebut save by way of uncritical recourse to one or other of the three faiths, all of whose own history the book has shown are inextricably linked to the city.

For these reasons, the book poses a series of important questions for how the future of the city will be negotiated.

Doubtless there will be many who will recoil instinctively against the pluralist conclusion, but even then this majesticly written book will compel debate.

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Illuminating the ‘Dark Continent’ with solar power

DANIEL BEN-TAL
TEL AVIV

HOW CAN local governments keep public spaces and roads illuminated at night in places where there’s no electricity, or an unreliable supply? Solar power, obviously. But there’s a catch. “The vast majority of solar-powered streetlights and similar fixtures on the market don’t survive for long,” Zeev Jakoby, managing director of Israeli startup Globe Light & Water System, tells Israel21c. “That’s why we’ve devised a sturdy, solar-powered light fixture that needs no infrastructure.”

This could prove a godsend to developing nations where a lack of street lighting results in dangerous driving conditions and far slower economies.

“It’s designed with the African market in mind,” explains Jakoby, who spent many years in Nigeria overseeing construction projects.

“In Africa, the heat, humidity, mud and dust are given factors that have to be taken into consideration. In many places there’s no electricity infrastructure, so the fixtures have to stand alone. The other major issue that has to be dealt with is criminality. Vandalism and theft of public property is widespread,” he says.

With these parameters in mind, Jakoby approached the technological challenge a little over two years ago. He brought together some of Israel’s leading experts in fields such as design, electronics, mechanics and optics to devise a workable solution.

“My background is in electronics and I had the vision and understood the needs of this market. Our team was able to think out of the box and came up with some innovative approaches to the issues. That’s what Israelis know how to do best,” he says.

Jakoby is not the first to think of solar-powered solutions for lighting the streets of poor countries.

“Chinese companies have been making similar light fixtures for several years now, but almost all of them involve inferior technologies. They are inefficient, have shorter life spans and break down far too regularly,” says Jakoby.

The GLWS Orion light fixture offers some fundamental design improvements on existing systems.

“We’ve designed an all-in-one package - one box containing all the parts. In other systems, each part is supplied separately,” says Jakoby. “It’s a modular system that can be designed according to need.”

A major innovation, he says, is the built-in microprocessor that constantly monitors and regulates factors such as bulb temperature and battery charge.

“The problem with other solar light fixtures is usually the components’ integration - they don’t always work together optimally. We invested a lot of thought in this aspect, and designed the microprocessor accordingly. We use a particularly high-quality type of LED (light-emitting diode) lamp that can work in extreme conditions and does not burn out as easily as the ones used by our competitors.

“The junction temperature of our LED is 60 degrees Celsius. The microprocessor automatically dims the light if it approaches this temperature.”

Another advantage: “We can lower electricity consumption by an average of 60 per cent. This translates into negating the need for complete power stations,” he says.

As important as its technical aspects, is the fact that the fixture is theft-proof, he adds. “We designed the light poles in a way that no one can steal the batteries from inside. There’s also the option of adding a CCTV camera to the pole so that anyone trying to vandalise it will be seen from the central control facility.”

“We started in Nigeria and spread to other countries. We’re already developing lighting systems for Nigeria, Ethiopia and Colombia in South America, and are in the negotiation process with several other countries. Meanwhile, there’s great interest from countries in other parts of the world.” (Israel21c)



Lighting roadways with no need for electricity.

‘Judenpolitik’ at centre of Nazi decision-making

Holocaust. The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews, by Peter Longerich, Oxford University Press, 2010 (ISBN 9780192804365, R280 incl VAT).

REVIEWED BY PROFESSOR
MILTON SHAIN

FOR AT least two decades after the Second World War, most scholars attributed the destruction of European Jewry to Hitler’s evil designs, informed by a paranoia rooted in his early life experiences and nurtured within a specific German cultural and political environment.

Hitler’s ambitions, they argued, were apparent in his early speeches and unveiled in his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*. Once in power the Führer ensured that Jews were identified, marginalised, ghettoised and ultimately murdered.

By the late 1960s “Hitlerist” views were being challenged and placed under the spotlight. Overall Nazi designs were scrutinised and the Führer’s direction of events questioned.

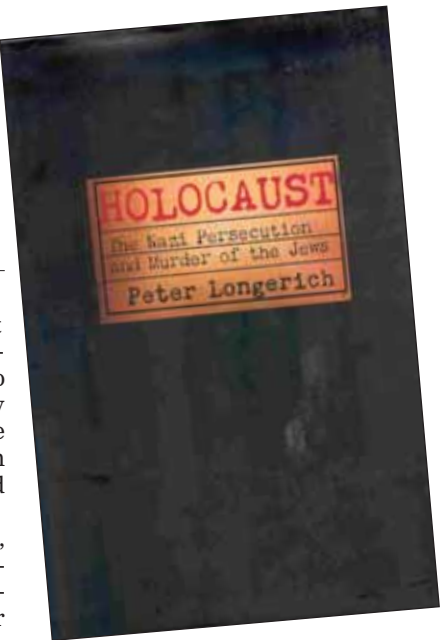
For many his role was even minimised. Karl Schleunes articulated the new research direction in the title of his important book, “The Twisted Road to Auschwitz”.

By the 1980s two schools of explanation for the Holocaust had evolved: the so-called “Intentionalists” who emphasised Hitler’s personal direction of events and the “Functionalists” who emphasised policy improvisation to meet specific wartime circumstances.

High powered scholarly exchanges informed articles in learned journals and a plethora of books.

Subsequently the debate settled somewhere between the two poles. From now on the focus was on dating the decision to murder the Jews of Europe. Was it decided upon during the euphoria following the early successes of Operation Barbarossa, the attack on the Soviet Union launched on June 22, 1941? Or was it a product of the failure of Operation Barbarossa and the entry of the United States into the war?

All these questions are carefully examined by Peter Longerich in his carefully argued “Holocaust”. Translated from an earlier German version - but updated to



incorporate crucial new East European documents - Longerich maintains that the “Intentionalist” and “Functionalist” schools are in fact complementary and not mutually exclusive.

The “Final Solution” was ultimately the product of a complex process and not the result of a decision made by Hitler at a particular moment. Rather, the Holocaust was embedded within the planned Nazi racial utopia.

Already in January 1939, Longerich reminds us, Hitler had prophesied the “destruction of the Jewish race of Europe”. But the decisive turning point leading to the “Final Solution” only occurred with the early deportation of Jews in late 1939.

In effect, maintains Longerich, deportation meant death. Here he discounts the attack on Russia in 1941 as the decisive turning point in the murder of European Jewry. Put simply, measures taken in 1941 were merely “the concrete realisation of the extermination envisaged in 1939”.

This is not to suggest that Longerich ignores changes in the intensity of ethnic cleansing, palpably upgraded in the summer of 1941. Here he emphasises the role of Heinrich Himmler, the SS leader.

But at all times, notes Longerich, Hitler was fully informed. He certainly knew about the actions of the Einsatzgruppen, the motorised killing brigades that trailed the Wehrmacht.

Most importantly, argues Longerich, Hitler’s decision not to await the defeat of the Soviet

Union before deporting Jews to the east had genocidal consequences.

Concurrently with deportations, a decision was taken to murder indigenous Jews already in provisional reception areas and to “reduce” the numbers in other areas of occupation.

Overcrowding and logistics necessitated new killing facilities, established in the autumn and winter of 1941. In the final analysis, however, deportation, mass shooting and gas vans were effectively interchangeable.

These various approaches were co-ordinated at the notorious Wannsee Conference, chaired by Reinhard Heydrich on January 20, 1942.

Deportation and “extermination through work” would continue, while new methods were at the same time unfolding in the implementation of the “Final Solution”. The radicalisation and acceleration of the Nazi programme, was evident by the summer of 1942.

For Longerich, Judenpolitik played a central role in Germany’s domestic politics from 1933 as well as in its occupation and alliance policies that evolved to the very end of the war.

Carefully exploring the success and failure of specific German alliances, including the support of Hungary and Slovakia and the timing of breakdowns with Italy, Romania and Bulgaria, Longerich makes a convincing case for the centrality of the “Jewish Question” in Nazi thinking and its importance for strategic alliances.

A number of factors operated when it came to Jews in occupied territories. In certain situations murder was accelerated, in others slowed down, suspended or modified. But throughout, the Nazis demonstrated an elastic flexibility.

Genocide, it would seem, requires a steely determination and an ability to adapt. Longerich makes this case in his hugely informative and careful analysis of the destruction of European Jewry. Judenpolitik, he concludes, was at the centre of all decision-making.

Professor Milton Shain teaches in the Department of Historical Studies and is director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town.



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Where we were able to encounter ourselves...



Kira Gimpel, Cayla-Jade Butkow holding ruach session at Encounter.

SACHA CRAMER AND Yael ASOULIN, GRADE 12

ON AUGUST 30 last year, the grade 11s of King David High School Victory Park embarked on the trip of a lifetime. Off to Encounter we went, where we were afforded the opportunity to bond, obtain personal growth, stimulation and the opportunity to observe oneself in the Jewish community.

Each day was filled with group

learning, in areas such as Jewish identity, self growth, family and world appreciation. In these thought-provoking activities we gained appreciation for the world around us; to take the time to look at an aspect and to value its being.

Family was a significant powerful topic that everyone felt very close to; we were given the chance to look at our own lives and loved ones and view our strengths and weaknesses. Each session and group talk was very

open-minded and allowed each of us to feel comfortable in our learning surroundings and to get involved.

During free time we had many activities to choose from, such as crafts and the ever-popular volley ball.

On the last day there was a volleyball tournament where our room of girls made it to the finals, competing against the bloodthirsty boys of our grade. To our disappointment, we lost. Nevertheless, in the beautiful surroundings of our camp, we were



Kira Gimpel with maddies of the encounter group.

able to sit by the river and chat excitedly with our friends.

There were many other exciting events, such as ruach (spirit) sessions where we all sang with passion and stood arm-in-arm, proud of our unity. We felt gratified to be young Jewish South Africans who had a chance to dream about the exciting opportunities in our future.

Usually after a school weekend away, one would feel inspired for maybe a week if two at most, but what Encounter 2011 has given us will be something we will hold dear for the rest of our lives. We believe that each person leaving Meulstroom

Lodge gained something that will impact them each day, whether it is saying thank you to a parent, looking at a tree and smiling or waking up in the morning and appreciating the gift of life.

As a grade we finally felt like we were one. We were one group learning and experiencing together; one group laughing and sharing like never before over the past years of our childhood.

There are thousands of photos which can show you a tableau of a second, but no image or words can explain what a life-changing experience Encounter 2011 actually was.

Interesting results in our vox pop

We went round to ask learners and teachers: What is the soundtrack to your school day?



Rabbi Ricki Seeff. Talya Granat and Michael Levensstein. Saul Maserow. Zoe Wein. Barak. Max Cohen. Amy Strous. Julia Chaskalson. Ariella and Kira Gimpel. Art teacher, Lexi Biccard.

Liberty Life

“We at Liberty are delighted to be involved in the Junior Jewish Report issues. At Liberty we believe passionately in the value of education. We wish the Jewish Report success with this exciting new project.”

Steven Braudo
Chief Executive: Liberty Retail SA

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Proud of KDVP’s multi-faceted offerings

Our school welcomes this opportunity to be a part of the new Junior Jewish Report, a wonderful initiative showcasing the writing talent of our aspiring young reporters.

Gavin Budd
Headmaster

THE ARTICLES included in this KDVP edition highlight the multi-faceted offering of our vibrant school, providing each of our learners with a relevant and enjoyable holistic Jewish education.

Grounded in firm Jewish values and traditions, the educational experience at our school provides our learners with an outstanding academic education (as evident in the consistently excellent results of our

matriculants, their success in tertiary studies and in the workplace) and the opportunity to excel in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities.

Moreover, it is the experience of belonging to the KDVP family that learners fondly remember when they leave matric and when they return to enroll their own children at their alma mater.

Finally, my thanks to Ms Mirah Langer and the learners who contributed to this edition for successfully capturing the spirit of KDVP and communicating it to our community.

Education

KDVP Headmaster Gavin Budd on ‘smelling the roses’



KDVP Headmaster Gavin Budd.

ADAM DISON GRADE 12

VICTORY PARK is a school focused on developing individuals to reach their full capacity. I sat with the man responsible for doing so, Headmaster Gavin Budd, to find out more about his views, vision and favourite parts of our school.

Q: What are the first five words that you think of when you think about King David Victory Park?

A: Dynamic, Vibrant, Caring, Aspirational, Excellent.

Q: What is your favourite thing about the school?

A: The intellectual climate of the school. I like the interest the learners have in learning, in academics, in doing well, achieving. They are all individuals and quite proudly so, which is great; they speak their mind. They have, as the Yiddish word expresses, chutzpah.

Q: What is your vision for the school?

A: I would certainly want to build on the excellent reputation of the past: the school’s outstanding academic results, sporting and cultural achievements. As I am particularly passionate about the arts, I would like to build on the school’s strong tradition and success in the performing arts. I would also like to broaden the educational offering, providing a holistic educational package to meet each individual learner’s needs.

Q: What were you most impressed with when you first joined our school?

A: Definitely the learners. They were warm, embracing and accepting. I enjoy their confidence and joie de vivre.

Q: What are some of the school events you have enjoyed attending since taking on the post of headmaster?

A: My first assembly, the Matric Dance, the Grade 12 final drama practicals, the art exhibition, the De La Salle Derby Day...

Q: What are the most important values with which you would like to see learners leave King David Victory Park?

A: These are incorporated in our purpose statement: “Tolerance, respect and integrity”.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself: What makes you laugh?

A: I enjoy relating to people and listening to their experiences.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: Getting out into the countryside on weekends and I am very fond of travelling overseas. I also enjoy listening to music, playing the piano and reading.

Q: If you could meet your high school self now, what advice for the future would you give him or her?

A: To be less frenetic and driven; to make more time to slow down and “smell the roses”.

Israel

The bond with Israel is unbreakable



Learners celebrate Yom Yerushalayim.



Barak enjoys a falafel on Yom Ha’Aatzmaut.

TZVI LIPSCHITZ GRADE 12

ON MAY 30, 1948, just after the establishment of the State of Israel, a group of Israeli Air Force pilots launched an attack on Arab positions around Tulkarm in the West Bank. One of the pilot’s aircraft was hit during the attack, but he managed to fly over Israeli territory ejecting 1 200 feet over the Mediterranean. His parachute only fully deployed immediately before he hit the water, causing him three broken ribs, among other injuries.

Despite his pain, he began to swim to shore, but gave up after a couple of hours. He stood up and realised that the water was only up to his knees. The farmers on the Israeli coastline were shooting at him, thinking him to be an Arab pilot as the citizens had not yet been told about the new Israeli Air Force.

The pilot’s problem was that he knew no Hebrew and very little Yiddish so in order to convince the farmers he was Jewish he shouted the only thing he could remember: “Shabbos, gefilte fish! Shabbos, gefilte fish!”

We, as learners of King David Victory Park, feel a similar connection to our homeland, Israel.

KDVP High School is a small school of less than 500 learners, but we have an immense connection to Israel. Most learners at our school have, at some point in the

past, been to Israel and most of them hope to visit again. Some say they will, if the possibility arises, “Immigrate to Israel”.

One of these learners is Mikhael Adler, a grade 11 learner, who last year said that “Israel is my soon-to-be home”. Saul Maserow, another grade 11 learner, said: “Israel is (my) homeland” and: “It’s the only place, besides South Africa, where (I) feel completely safe.”

Morah Ben Moshe, a teacher at King David, feels that our school connects to Israel in a variety of ways: knowledge and tours being among the biggest. At King David great importance is placed on learning Hebrew and learners are encouraged to participate in the Israel Quiz. These things help create a knowledge and understanding of the State.

Tours to Israel are held in grades 10 - 12 and learners return to South Africa with greater emotions towards Israel. She also notes that there are a few of King David’s past matrics who have joined the Israeli Army.

Sarah Katzew, in grade 11, says her connection with Israel is so deep that “it is impossible to describe”. Sarah sums up our connection perfectly when she says: “From the people, the beauty and the history, there is no other place quite like it on earth and I hope it continues to act in a way that makes us proud to call it our home.”

Judaism

Beit Midrash programme proves to be a resounding success

KAYLA-JADE BUTKOW GRADE 12

It is our first Gemorah lesson. My friends and I walk into the Beit Midrash classroom eager to understand what this new subject is all about. We look around, and see a man in a suit and tzitzit standing in the front of the classroom. By way of introduction he says: “I’m Rabbi Ricki Seeff, head of the Victory Park Beit Midrash.

“The first thing to know is that analysing the written law without the oral law, is like a boy receiving an SMS from a girl and then sitting and trying to decipher her feelings for him.”

From that moment on, we are all convinced... Beit Midrash is the right choice.

The Beit Midrash programme at King David Victory Park was started in April 2010, as an alternative to Jewish history and philosophy. According to Rabbi Seeff, the programme was started in order to expose the Jewish youth to the intricacy, depth and relevance of Jewish text and Jewish thought.

The subject Beit Midrash consists of two sections, namely Gemorah or Chumash and Pirkei Avot. I take Gemorah, which is the defining work that encapsulates, defines and elucidates the Jewish oral law.

Gemorah is one of the highlights of my week because of the relaxed and fun atmosphere of the class. Everyone gets involved and Rabbi Seeff allows us to get into deep discussions about the Gemorah we are studying. Our Gemorah class is an open environment where anyone can voice their opinions without fear of ridicule.

The other section of Beit Midrash is Pirkei Avot. In Pirkei

Avot we learn Jewish ethics and about how one should behave. These lessons also incorporate lots of discussion, and are very enjoyable.

The Beit Midrash has enabled me to interact with and understand more about my Judaism, and have discussions that I would not have had without the programme.

When asked his favourite thing about the programme, Rabbi Seeff said: “Interacting with such inspiring young minds and learning more through teaching others.”



Stephan Morris, Saul Maserow and Bongani Mbena working hard during a Beit Midrash lesson.



Rabbi Ricki Seeff converses with Tzvi Lipschitz, a learner.

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LIBERTY

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Arts

Arts and culture – it remains KDVP’s heart throb

ARTS AND culture are right at the heart of KDVP’s aims to get its learners to explore different ways of expressing themselves. Learners are given a variety of outlets to find innovative ways of making their voices heard and for exploring their identity. Some learners tell us why they have a passion for dance, drama, art and music.

ART is flourishing at KDVP

CHAD AND KYLE EDERY GRADE 12

ONE MAY look at a picture and perhaps just see a simple landscape. However, that landscape and the journey to achieve it, is anything but simple. A whole journey full of research, brainstorming ideas, sketching, planning, making decisions and deciding on what mediums and materials to use, precedes the final creation of the landscape.

King David Victory Park High School is a school full of artistic learners, overflowing with creativity, imagination and originality. Learners are able to interpret for themselves what art is, as well as to decide what different ways they will choose to express themselves.

Each learner becomes a story teller, armed with a paint brush and paint, a pencil and eraser, or found materials, they transform empty canvases and empty spaces into stories.

For the learners, art is a break from the normal school day; it’s a time for us to look around and interpret everything we see in a different light. It is a subject that allows one to experiment with new techniques and mediums, from sculpture, to collage, from charcoal to ink.

Art, however, is not just a subject, but a way of life. As Pablo Picasso put it, painting is just another way of keeping a diary. Art is an emotional outlet, it allows the artist to learn new things about themselves, about their strengths and weaknesses and to express themselves without being judged; whether it takes the form of a squiggle or an elaborate masterpiece.

In drama you face your own character

JESSIE LEWIS GRADE 12

BRING TO mind the tragedies, comedies and great gods of Ancient Greece; hear the lamentations of Oedipus Rex as he pierces his eyes on discovering that he is cursed; observe his daughter, Antigone, rush to his side - she too will soon be banished for claiming her rights as a mortal being.

She too will feature as an inspiration for the South African protest plays during apartheid. In fact, during Nelson Mandela’s imprisonment on Robben Island he himself read the great Greek plays and played Antigone as a recreational activity.

What do we see in the distance? It’s Nora, standing up for her rights as a woman in the theatrical realism world of Henrik Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House”. And there’s Samuel Beckett, horrified by the state of the world and the massive loss of lives in its wars - “Waiting For Godot” asks the rhetorical questions: “Why are we here?” “What are we doing here?” “Why do we exist?” Absurd no doubt. A crisis, indeed. Existentialism!

Dramatic arts at King David Victory Park could be seen as one of the highlights of this school. There is constantly something to be inspired by in drama - whether we are studying the words of great playwrights, going to watch live contemporary SA theatre, or sitting in class having heated debates about world issues or themes dealt with in the texts in front of us.

Alexis Biccard, an art teacher at the school, says art is always a dynamic and evolving subject:

“It’s one of the only subjects that allows the learners to express their particular insights about the world, at this both exciting and challenging juncture in their lives. It is gratifying to see how learners begin to emerge with a stronger sense of self after grappling with the process of creating something new in this world.”

Judy Shear, head of department, agrees that in this subject learners are their own textbooks.

“It is the nature of the subject that you have the opportunity to learn an enormous amount from the learners.”

Towards the end of every year the school hosts an exciting art exhibition, where the wider community can come and view the fruits of the learners’ imagination and labour.

Learners are eager to share their work and receive feedback on how an audience grasps it. It also allows teachers and parents to see a different side of the learners.

As learners we are inspired by the words of an anonymous speaker who said “art will remain the most astonishing activity of mankind, born out of the struggle between wisdom and madness, between dream and reality in our mind”.



“Identity” by Jake Pencharz (grade 11).



Jessica Kaplan in “The Most Massive Woman Wins”.

Our teacher, Renos Spanoudes, has taught us that drama requires one to face one’s own character - in its raw and true form - before taking on a different one.

Through this experience you start to learn more about yourself, seeing things that you may not want to see, but that you need to see.

You see similarities between yourself and your chosen character and it eventually becomes hard to differentiate between the two. By the time you get onto stage you are a completely different person. The audience is a group of complete strangers in your mind and all you are doing is telling your story.

You are liberated, exhilarated and then, unfortunately, you’re back to being yourself. You become anxious, falling back into the technicalities of drama.

“Did I remember all of my lines?” “Was I loud enough?” “Why were they laughing? It wasn’t supposed to be funny!” Now, of course these are all necessary things to take into account.

You need to learn your lines. You need to project your voice, but one sometimes takes up so much time worrying about these things that you fail to connect with your character.

Through drama, you are forced to face issues that happen around the world and you start to see things in a new way. Drama, acting and theatre are integral to life, creativity and expression.

Constantly inspired and challenged, I feel that my high school drama classes will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Sport

Healthy minds in healthy bodies



Adam Gordon and Tyron Sussman.



Jessica Kaplan stretches out.

RICCI-LEE RAGOSLKY GRADE 12

KING DAVID Victory Park learners unite to share one common interest, namely their complete and utter love for sport. They are mad about sport, whether taking part in one of the wide variety of sporting activities offered, or cheering on the teams. Be sure, KDVP will be out in full force, showing much team spirit. There is a place for every learner to take part in this aspect of school life.

The school already offers a wide variety of sports, including rugby, netball, tennis, cricket, swimming, soccer, squash, cross country, athletics, water polo, chess and table tennis. However this list is set to increase when two new sports - golf and cycling - are added.

The head of the sports department, Darren Jordaan, says these additions will be extremely beneficial to the school.

“We have a number of learners who excel in these two sports. We have learners who are involved with our sister school (King David Linksfield) in doing a ride down to Durban. We also have a number of cyclists that do the 94.7 race.

“In terms of golf we have around 20 to 30 players, so in would be in our best interest to offer a sport such as this, which I believe would bring great exposure to our learners who enjoy this sport.

KDVP learner Saul Daleski already plays golf outside of school. He is excited that he will be able to take it as one of his school sports as well.

“I am thrilled that the school will be offering golf. It is a great opportunity to interact with other people from other schools. I’m impressed that KDVP is always open to supporting its learners’ interests.”

Another sports-mad KDVP learner, Jacob Mendelowitz, feels that he learns important life lessons through sport. “By taking part in sport at school, I learn that through commitment and dedication comes great results. This is something I apply to all aspects of my school career.”

Win or lose, the King David Victory Park family thrives on camaraderie and friendship on and off the field. Jordaan himself is adamant that sport plays an important role in encouraging KDVP’s school spirit.

“We have an 80 per cent participation rate in the school which shows that learners love being involved in our sports. We have grown a very strong tradition. I am proud of our school’s sports motto. If you ask any learner taking part in a sport: ‘For whom do you play?’, their response will always be: ‘For each other’.”

Jordaan says he loves his job. “I am a sports mad individual and I love seeing how sports puts learners in situations where they are challenged and then we can see how they cope with this.

“I am also dedicated to Jewish sports and I believe we have learners in our Jewish community who can make it to our highest level in sports and I love trying to develop that.”



Tal Nagar.



Shani Cohen.

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TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

This ‘Phantom’ – from the sublime to the grossly flawed

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPH: PAT BROMILOW DOWNING

Show: Phantom of the Opera
Where: Teatro, Montecasino, Fourways, (011) 511-1988
When: until April 22

THIS HIGHLY anticipated production of arguably the world’s best loved contemporary opera, is not flawless. It is so over-consumed with overwhelming you as a viewer, that it occasionally stumbles into eye- and ear-shattering gaucheness. It’s unthinkable that a theatre with such critical stature as Montecasino’s Teatro cannot be bothered to warn patrons of the use of strobe lights, as a matter of principle. Besides, a show with as much inherent explosive energy as Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “Phantom of the Opera” doesn’t need extra technological sparks to set it afire.

In 2004, this show, also presented by Pieter Toerien, in Cape Town and Pretoria, raised the bar for the staging of a work of this complexity and challenge to performers, effectively launching careers for Rory Rootenberg and Andre Schwartz. The bar in question has not moved since.

Phantom tells a complex tale of the Paris Opera House, of unrequited love, a ghostly singing teacher and time shifts. It tells of no fury like that of a scorned ghost, but of love conquering all.

Unlike its earlier manifestation, this production is hampered by irritating busyness onstage which forces it toward glib extravaganza.

While it wouldn’t be appropriate to finger staging, lighting, or sound design in particular, it’s a collaborative flaw: the story is replete with activity, it’s populated by developed characters expressing real emotions. The last thing one needs is self-consciously clever stage tactics for further visual clutter.

This interpretation is also flawed by vulgar humour. Seeing the ghost (Jonathan Roxmouth) peek over the top of a sculpture on the roof of the Opera House, like a clumsy spy, after the famous love scene between Christine Daaé (Magdalene Minnaar) and Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny (Anthony Downing), collapses spectral dignity.

This tackiness is more aptly placed with Carlotta (Hanlee Louw), the prima donna with a persona greater than her singing skills. She is scripted as over the top; sound design occasionally takes her voice



Running with the ghost: Christine (Magdalene Minnaar) and the Phantom (Jonathan Roxmouth). (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT BROMILOW DOWNING.)

appropriately to truly horrible levels.

Having said all of that, Minnaar, who opera lovers will recognise from William Kentridge’s Magic Flute, steals the show. Her stage presence offers a range echoing the personality and crises of Christine. She shifts from being palpably humble and frightened, a chorus girl secretly tutored by a long dead professional, to having passionate authority in her vocal skill and love choices.

In parts, this show is sublime, owing primarily to a brilliant cast and a beautiful original, composed as it was in 1986, based on Gaston Leroux’s eponymous 19th century gothic horror novel. The music magnificently layers classical phrasing with contemporary idioms, reflecting love with all-embracing enormity. Under Louis Zurnamer’s baton, the sound of the 17-piece ensemble is big as the show’s reputation.

Bigger, louder and brighter is seldom better. This work’s loveliness is thankfully mostly allowed to shine through all the earnest attempts to blow you off your seat.

Strobe lights may have side-effects

A STROBE or stroboscopic light is used to produce regular flashes of light at great intensity. It was developed in 1931 for the study and photographing of moving objects.

While it can be used to save energy, onstage it can appear to freeze or reverse cyclical motion, or to simulate lightning. It was popularised in the 1960s club scene; it was understood to emulate the effects of LSD trips.

Strobe lights can trigger seizures in photosensitive epilepsy as well as migraine sufferers. An individual might not know they are susceptible until they are exposed to strobes. In 1997, in Japan, an episode of the animated television programme, Pokémon featured a scene depicting an explosion using flashing red and blue strobe lights. It caused 685 children to be hospitalised.

According to theatre rulings, available not only to professionals but to drama students as well: “If strobe lighting is to be used in a production, warnings should be posted at front of house, theatre entrances and in the programme.” In up-to-date theatres LED technology replaces strobes.

Cosmic good vs cosmic evil makes for a best-seller

The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern (Random House Struik, R215)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

ONE MORNING in 1874, 10-year-old Marco is removed from a London orphanage by a tall, top-hatted magician and begins a 20-year apprenticeship, with one express purpose: to become a master sorcerer and best his opponent in a contest which will take place at an unspecified time and place.

The contest is the result of a wager between Hector Bowen (stage name: Prospero the Magician) and his long-standing friend-cum-rival, Chandresh Christophe Lefèvre. Bowen’s own entrant in the contest will be his daughter Celia, tutored since the age of six to become a brilliant illusionist.

The two children, separated by continents, are rigorously schooled in all branches of magic. They are also brutalised emotionally by their teachers, denied any human warmth and steered obsessively towards one goal only: to win the contest.

Neither of them knows who their opponent will be, nor do they know what form the contest will take. But when Lefèvre opens a new and spectacular business venture, Le

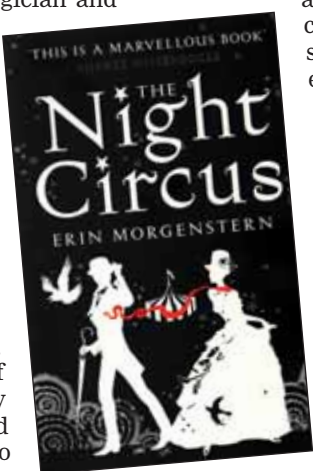
Cirque des Rêves (The Circus of Dreams), and tours it around the world, both Marco and Celia find themselves indentured to it.

The circus itself - which operates only from sunset to sunrise - is a surreal miasma of tents which appear, without warning, on the edge of a town or city and then disappear again, often for months or years at a time. It comprises dozens of enormous black-and-white striped tents, each offering visitors a fantastical experience.

One tent, for example, contains only clouds, another an oneiromancer, yet another a dizzying ensemble of trapezists who defy all gravity. Everything in the circus, from its sumptuous, fragrant food and beverages to its enticing acts, is seductive. Patrons assume that this is the learnt magic of professional conjurors. In fact, it is real magic, employed by real magicians.

The novel’s plot - and, in fact, its entire framework of cosmic good versus cosmic evil - is predictable and often paper-thin. Of course, Celia Bowen and her rival, Marco, meet, fall in love and discover a very different (but equally potent) kind of magic from the one they have been forced to practise.

Neither they, nor any other characters in the book, are well realised. Erin Morgenstern’s over-ambitious canvas is



far too expansive and messy for her to handle.

But it is her ability to evoke, and sustain, a mood of esoteric, otherworldly suspense that has made the novel a best-seller. Imagine combining the homiletical subtext of JK Rowling, the dark, fantastical humour of Lemony Snicket, the homicidal energy of Aubrey Beardsley and the eerie, gaslit tension of Victorian London, and you approach what Morgenstern attempts to create in this - but cannot quite pull off.

Nevertheless, its themes of manipulation, empowerment, transience and diablerie versus divinity come through strongly enough to keep readers intrigued. As a metaphor of potential and possibility, the circus is apposite. And, for all its complexity, the novel’s ultimate wisdom is surprisingly simple - and sad.

“People see what they wish to see. And in most cases, what they are told that they seem,” Lefèvre tells his young apprentice. Indeed.

FOR THE RECORD

PICADOR IS PUBLISHER OF MALEMA BOOK

In Gwen Podbrey’s book review “A threadbare, poorly conceived offering” (February 3) on Fiona Forde’s book on Julius Malema, the publisher is given as Jacana, whereas in fact it is Picador Africa (Pan MacMillan).

A Klass act with much (Jewish) food for thought

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

AFTER 13 years in the game, Cape Town comedienne Tracy Klass (pictured) says it is time for her first solo performance away from home base. “The kids have finished matric and it’s time to spread my wings,” says the single mother of Aimee (21) and 18-year-old twins Adam and Jake.

Being a Jewish mother of three is an unlikely background for a professional comic and Klass agrees she is “probably unique” in that respect. “Of course they get embarrassed,” she says, referring to her brood. “I am embarrassing!”

She is directed in Klass Struggle by Riaad Moosa, himself an accomplished comic. I ask if there are any negative undertones to the relationship, given the political situation in the Middle East.

“Completely the opposite,” she exclaims in surprise. “Riaad is so respectful of my family values and me of his. We’ve got such similarities. Politics doesn’t enter into it.”

That said, she concedes that working with Moosa as director is “not easy. He rips your soul out - he wants the real person on stage. He’s a very, very, very edgy comic and he encourages that edginess - it’s tough because he makes you work hard.”

Klass has drawn her material for the show from personal experience. “It’s my journey bringing up children and trying to grow old gracefully,” the latter of which she finds “so damn hard”.

The show also touches on being an older person in a new society and the enormous adaptation necessary to cope with modern technology. “I think that our adjustments have been far greater than those that our parents had to make,” she reflects.

“To give you a classic example: The Jewish mother knew everything. Now there’s Google, on your Blackberry, in your hand and you can correct your mother while she’s laying down the law!”

Klass’ day job is marketing and communications officer for the United Herzlia Schools. When I suggest that this



must be a source of much of her material, she hesitates, saying diplomatically, “Sometimes”.

She does admit to rich pickings at shul on Yomtov, though. And of course “Jews and food” is “a very big part” of the show.

“When you go to a wedding, the first thing you say is: ‘The food was divine.’ Do you say: ‘The bride looked magnificent?’ No.

“And G-d forbid they run out of food! I was at a wedding like that (on a wine farm) and they kept saying: ‘But we’ve got bottles of Merlot’ and all the Jews were going: ‘We don’t care - we’re starving!’”

Part of the original Cape Comedy Collective, Klass says she got started in the genre as it was “absolutely imperative that I kept my sense of self. You can get so sucked into just bringing up the kids. You become so boring and lose your ability to look at things with a different eye.”

• Klass Struggle is at the Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton, February 14 - 25, (011) 883-8606.

LETTERS

The Editor, Suite 175, Postnet X10039, Randburg, 2125 email: carro@global.co.za

Guidelines for letters: Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact telephone or cell number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report

DAVID SAKS SELLS THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT SHORT

I REFER to David Saks’ column with the headline “Trying to escape an all-pervasive impurity”, (SAJR January 27). While agreeing with him that the public is bombarded by odious and degrading propaganda under the guise of “promotion of sexual liberation”, I must take issue with him regarding the role of the feminist movement.

The feminist movement was formed in reaction to the exploitation of women as sexual objects, particularly poor, uneducated rural women who had no alternatives. The same values apply today when feminists protest against degrading depictions of women in the media.

The prevalence of educated and competent women in the modern world, has produced outstanding leaders in the fields of finance, politics and the social sciences, to name but a few examples. These women have nothing to do with pornography or promiscuity.

Why not rather blame certain promoters in the so-called “entertainment industry” of cheap movies, bawdy pop culture, advertising and internet and cell phone pornography, most of whom, I guarantee you are not women.

Incidentally, sexual exploitation began long before the period of the 1960s. We know that poor girls from tiny East European shtetls were lured to America and South Africa by promises of marriage, riches and employment, only to be trapped in a life of prostitution.

The 19th and early 20th centuries, seemingly so decorous, was a period of the utmost hypocrisy.

As for the recent incidents involving attacks by certain haredi men on innocent and defenceless women, one can only be filled with a sense of shame and despair. We are commanded as Jews to observe and study the Holy Texts in a spirit of submission and humility. Moreover, the intensity of this study requires the utmost concentration, to the exclusion of all outside activities.

Where was the humility of these men, lying in wait for the next defenceless passerby, woman or child, on whom to vent their spleen? Even if the passerby is not Jewish, are we not commanded to show mercy and kindness to the stranger, because we were once strangers in Egypt?

Perhaps senseless hatred of one’s fellow human being is an even greater scourge of our modern world than pornography.

Naomi Musiker
Johannesburg

WHY HAVE PROGRESSIVES BEEN TIPPEXED OUT?

MAY I add my voice to the recent debate in the Jewish Report regarding the neglect of Progressive Judaism? I am dismayed to note that this once so active, vibrant and proud branch of South African Jewry, has virtually been tippexed out.

Take, for instance the otherwise very comprehensive “Jewish Guide for Joze”, which was published last year. Were a Jew from, say, America or England to arrive in Johannesburg, and being from one of the many and varied congregations there, wish to find out where to go, he would believe that such congregations do not exist. They have no mention whatsoever.

When I think back to my childhood in the ‘50s/’60s in Cape Town and the vibrancy and range of activities presented by Temple Israel under Rabbi Sherman and the enthusiastic committees, “Sisterhood” and “Brotherhood”, it is sad that all that is no more, and what there is, is ignored.

Apart from all the extra activities that went into the religious observance surrounding Shabbat and the festivals, there was the youth group, cubs and scouts, dances, dinners, father-and-son events, fundraisers, annual fete, charity do’s, children’s concerts, seders, Purim parties, etc, etc. Far from being a watered-down version of Jewish life, as the Reform congregations are viewed today, it was all-embracing.

Sonja Bulkin
Highlands North, Johannesburg

GREENSIDE SHUL IS NOT CLOSING DOWN - IN FACT IT’S MOVING FORWARD

THERE HAVE been unfounded rumours in the community that Greenside Shul is closing down. This is untrue.

The rabbi and committee are working hard to ensure the positive future of the community: a warm active community with a special place in the hearts of many people. The shul has a fulltime chazzan, choir, a youth director and an Eishet Chayil women’s group.

Many successful activities attracting large numbers of people are held on a regular basis and we hold many special functions every year.

The Mina Lopato Nursery School situated on the Greenside Shul campus is also not “closing down”. The school is well supported with a waiting list and has a reputation for excellence.

The shul holds various shiurim during the week and also offers cultural activities including Israeli dancing, Hebrew learning classes, regular guest speakers and arts and crafts mornings, to name but a few.

The “Greenside Eruv” has been in operation for a number of years.

The Greenside Function Venue has become a well-known wedding venue especially among the Jewish community and has held some of the bigger weddings in 2011 and 2010, not to mention the Biltong & Pot Roast Comedy show and other amazing events that are planned for 2012.

As a result of financial difficulties which are also being experienced by many commu-

nal organisations, the community does need to raise additional funds. Various meetings have been held to this effect within the community to explore different avenues to assist the shul and to guarantee its sustainability.

At no stage was it stated by the committee that the shul is closing down. On the contrary we hope that 2012 will be a vibrant, successful year for us.

People wanting to join the shul, well known for its warmth, please contact the shul office for more details on (011) 788-5036.

Rabbi Mendel Rabinowitz
Ari Ben-David (chairman)
Greenside Shul

What do you want to read in the SA Jewish Report?



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SOUTH AFRICAN

Jewish Report



COMMUNITY COLUMNS



ABOVE BOARD
Mary Kluk,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

IN THE course of his address at the opening night of the SAJBD’s national conference last year, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe appealed to the Board to assist in addressing the pressing challenges of education and skills development facing the country.

The SAJBD, he said, was well positioned to make a contribution in this regard because of the skills, knowledge and influence its members wielded as significant role-players in the South African economy.

We have made answering the Deputy President’s call one of our main projects for 2012. This will in turn be linked to our marking of the SAJBD’s centenary as a united, national body.

The most meaningful way for us to celebrate this milestone would be for us, as the representative body for South African Jewry, to harness the resources of our community – countrywide – for the benefit of the greater society.

The way we are approaching the challenge is through a two-stage process. The first is to establish exactly what is already being done by the Jewish community all around South Africa, both at the organisational and the individual level, in the educational and skills development spheres.

This necessary “stock-taking” process will provide us with a better idea as to how Jews are contributing, which projects have been especially successful and what resources and expertise might be available for further developments.

It would perhaps be premature to propose new outreach projects before knowing what is already out there.

Once we have determined this, we can move

Skills development: Our community contribution

on to the next stage, which is to identify ways in which what is already out there could be better harnessed and extended upon.

The possibility of bringing in Jewish skills and resources from further afield, will also form part of this, given the interest that many Jewish welfare workers internationally have expressed in somehow getting involved.

In due course, all this will be formally presented to the Deputy President with a view, we hope, to fostering constructive working partnerships between government and Jewish outreach bodies.

The first stage of the project is already well advanced. Our professional staff has met with a wide range of Jewish organisations and individuals involved in the outreach field, and a comprehensive database is being compiled.

What has already become clear is that there are a great many worthy projects being run by community members and even our affiliate organisations that we have been unaware of.

Undoubtedly, we will learn of many more in the course of our research. However, without the participation of our community, it is inevitable that important projects will end up being overlooked.

I would like, therefore, to appeal to everyone involved in educational and skills development initiatives, or who are aware of other such Jewish-headed activities, to please let us know about them so that we can add the relevant details to our database.

The contact person in this regard is Steven Gruzd: steven@beyachad.co.za.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD



WIZO South Africa
Yvonne Jawitz

A column of WIZO South Africa

OUR GROUP of 18 enthusiastic delegates to the World WIZO Conference in Israel, has just returned, all fired up and raring to go.

The names of the speakers who addressed us on politics, economics, the status of women, freedom of the Press, security and IT, reads like a veritable Who’s Who of Israeli intelligentsia and provided us with a wealth of interesting information.

There was a day of real “Tachlis” too in the form of sessions on publicity and communication; organisation and education, fundraising and empowering children at risk. We had the opportunity to share ideas, ask questions and gain a greater understanding of the many WIZO departments that make up WIZO Israel.

Then there was the tour day: 16 buses of women from 50 federations toured WIZO projects and unique sights. For instance, bus No 6 included WIZO facilities in Herzliya and Haifa and a fascinating visit to Atlit Camp which served as a detention centre for Jewish immigrants, most of whom were Holocaust survivors, seeking refuge in Palestine during the period of the British Mandate.

An up-to-the-minute fashion show, showcasing top Israeli designers; a variety show of talented performers from various WIZO schools, with

Shalom and a happy 2012

guests of honour including Israeli President Shimon Peres; a concert with stars such as Dudu Fischer; and a gala dinner, provided the delegates with an opportunity to sparkle and exchange tidbits and addresses.

The highlights for us were the appointment of Laurienne Baitz from Durban as the International Aviv representative to the World WIZO executive (a post she will hold for two years) and the honouring of our immediate past president, Lorraine Rosmarin, making her an honorary life member of the World WIZO executive. Kol hakavod to them both.

Proudly, we were able to see the difference we make in the lives of our beneficiaries and we stood tall when the president announced that WIZO South Africa has committed to building a fifth cottage at Neve Wizo, for children at high risk.

The cherry on the top was the election of Tova Ben Dov, who has such strong links with South Africa and whose daughter Tamar Lazarus is a vice president of WIZO SA, as the new president of World WIZO.

We wish the outgoing president, Helena Glaser, great success in her new career as vice president of the Zionist General Council and congratulate Tova and her executive committee on their election to office of this great global organisation called WIZO.

This column is paid for by WIZO

LETTERS

The Editor, Suite 175, Postnet X10039, Randburg, 2125 email: carro@global.co.za

THE TIME IS NOW, PEOPLE!

I AM NOT sure about others, but I for one, am heartily exhausted with the hate fest that thrives in the Middle East. One simply has to scour facebook to discover how many pages are devoted to recording “the evil that you do” as seen by either the Israeli camp or the Palestinian support groups.

At last, after growing weary of the wall of disrespect, lack of humility and downright nastiness that thrives in cyberspace, I found a facebook site called “Time is Now”.

“Time is Now” is the brainchild of American Rodney Anderson, and is a group which is growing rapidly, as more and more people who are also fed up with the negative approach to the problems, come to seek answers. Made up of Palestinian, Israeli, American and European activists in the main, the group seeks a way to peace and dignity.

In September 2011, a Global Drumming Circle was launched, supporting all peace movements across the world. The event on International Peace day was tailored for “Time is Now’s” declaration of peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

This group believes that empathy for the other lies at the heart of dignified relationships, and that dialogue and active listen-

ing are central tools in the advancement of dignity.

“Palestinians and Israelis have all suffered, in different ways, from prolonged conflict,” says Rodney Anderson.

“We must strive to surpass victimhood and we take responsibility for the future. Embracing the above principles, we propose to create events in the Israel/Palestine region, beginning September 2011 through to the end of 2012.”

“Time is Now” will bring together a diverse multitude of NGOs, organisations, artists, healers, peace activists from Israel/Palestine and from abroad, united in our common quest for dignity. The process leading to, during, and following the festival, will be characterised by dignified and empowering interactions between all players.

Rodney’s group promises to demonise no one and to instead humanise everyone, reaching beyond the “peace camp” to mainstream Israelis and Palestinians.

I for one, look forward to a peaceful, meaningful culmination of this event.

Gill Katz
Victory Park, Johannesburg

REMEMBER: ‘A JEW IS A JEW IS A JEW...’

I COULD not agree more with Cedric Braudo (SAJR January 20) that Progressives are being neglected on the pages of Jewish Report.

It is almost impossible to believe that with all the challenges that Israel and the Jews have to face, we still find the opportunity to discriminate against our own, particularly since discrimination against all others is forbidden.

Are Progressive Jews lower than others because they are not Orthodox? Have we found a new meaning to “a bittere gellegte”?

How is it that the Chief Rabbi and some of the “Orthodox” community cannot find a way to accept the differences and embrace the fact that we are all Jews and equals?

People around the world have multiple

choices and many of them choose to hate and discriminate against Jews without even knowing one, or understanding the faith and what it is and means to us all.

It is a disgrace to us all to witness and accept internal discrimination among ourselves.

What happened to the most important word in Judaism and Hebrew - shalom? Can we not find it among ourselves: a Jew is a Jew is a Jew?

I’m sure we all look to the leadership of the Chief Rabbi to lead South African Jewry and world Jewry out of this enigma.

South Africa took the lead in 1992; what about the South African Chief Rabbi taking the lead in 2012 (20 years later)?

David Blend
Sydney

THESE BRACELETS TRULY BRING HOPE

I WOULD like to compliment the Jewish Report in general and Robyn Sassen in particular, for a wonderful article on the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society’s “Bracelets of Hope” project (SA Jewish Report February 3).

We have had the most overwhelming response from the article and people have contacted us from as far away as Boca Routon and Los Angeles, as well as Cape

Town, to enquire about buying and selling bracelets on behalf of the JWBS.

Thank you so much for a very informative and worthwhile article and we at Benevolent look forward to sharing many more success stories with your fabulous newspaper.

Glynne Wolman
Morningside, Sandton

MICROWAVES MAY BE A BIG ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD

CONCERNING YOUR article “Israel can play an important role in climate change debate”, I mention another environmental hazard – microwaves.

Microwaves go right through walls, so someone with a bad microwave oven next door can cause radiation to get to you.

In poor areas people may not have money to repair microwave ovens. Also wax and paraffin focus microwaves well so that round fat

candles and big bottles of paraffin (found in poor areas) could cause spots of high intensity microwaves in a room.

Readers can get more information on the overall focusing of microwaves at http://www.vias.org/basicradio/basic_radio_39_07.html

Eddie Miller
Port Elizabeth

DEAFENING SILENCE OVER ASSAD’S ATROCITIES

I AM speechless at the indifference and deathly silence of the media civil society, the ANC/SACP and Cosatu over the massive slaughter carried out by the genocidal Assad regime in Syria against the population of that country.

When Israel retaliates against rocket fire by Hamas into Israel’s towns and Palestinians casualties make up but a fraction of the number now being killed in Syria, the newspapers and other media scream out large front page headlines, castigating Israel.

They are frenetically pumped up with rage; Cosatu, the Treatment Action Campaign and the various Muslim organisations in South Africa embark on aggressive mass marches and the South African government recalls its ambassador to Israel.

Here we have a regime that is mass murdering women and children and yet has received no condemnation from the ANC/SACP alliance - the same regime that cut off ties with Israel for responding in self-defence to a ship full of armed terrorists invading her waters.

Why are there no mass marches by Cosatu and NGOs on the Syrian embassy?

Why no activities at the universities where there is always such rabid anti-Israel activity by the self-proclaimed custodians of human rights?

If one Hamas terrorist is killed, South Africa catches fire; if thousands of Syrians are killed by the Assad regime, there is no mention of it in South Africa at all.

There has been little coverage in the media, no demonstrations, no declarations or petitions about the Syrian atrocities.

I suppose all of these entities will find their voice to protest if the Western democracies step in to stop the slaughter. Then we’ll hear about their outrage at “Western imperialism”.

There is also a tendency among all these entreties in South Africa to excuse or even support any tyrannical mass murdering regime, no matter what the extent of atrocities is, as long as it is anti-Western or anti-Israel.

Is there no end to the hypocrisy of the leftist establishment that dominates all discourse in South Africa?

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg



Avigail Popack (executive director); Marc Lipshitz (psychological services co-ordinator); and Pauline Sevitz (past director) of Nechama Counselling for the Bereaved, at the organisation's biennial seminar.

Grieving has so many faces...

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN
PHOTOGRAPH: SHANA ISSEROW**

IN 1974, Evan (8) was diagnosed with leukaemia and given three months to live. After his death some 19 months later, the advice given to his parents was to have another child to “take away the pain”.

“I am the other child,” Marc Lipshitz said, addressing the subject of “Bereaved parents and sibling loss” at the biennial Nechama Counselling for the Bereaved seminar.

Lipshitz, Nechama’s psychological services co-ordinator, commented that the role of psychologist - “to fix and make things better” - had been set up for him prior to conception.

“I remember feeling responsible for my mother,” he said, describing a symbiotic relationship that had developed between the two. “I played therapist for her and lost my identity.

“My friendships and romantic relationships were all about rescuing others in emotional distress.”

Lipshitz noted that in the past, the grieving process was thought to be about detaching one’s ties to the deceased. It was also assumed that it was time-limited, with anything beyond two years being considered “maladaptive”.

In the 1980s, it was understood that complete detachment from the deceased was neither possible nor desirable, that the grieving process involved alternating periods of intensification and subsiding of symptoms and was “highly individualistic”.

On the impact on surviving siblings of the loss of a child, Lipshitz said they were “by and large simply forgotten about because all the focus is on the bereaved parents. Bereaved parents simply do not have the emotional capacity to parent surviving children.

“My two older sisters were not given permission to grieve their late brother. All the attention was on me, the replacement child – their loss went unnoticed,” he stated.

In becoming a “parental child”, Lipshitz’s childhood had been taken away from him, he said. In addition to his feeling “suffocated”, his sisters resented him for “stealing all the attention and love”.

Carin Marcus was 11 years old when she lost her father in the Helderberg air disaster.

Addressing the topic, “Silent grief - grief and bereavement in childhood”, she described childhood loss as “a wound that’s there forever”.

Marcus, a clinical social worker in private practice in Johannesburg, noted that the child’s grief was often not spoken about, with the attitude that he “seems to be doing okay” often expressed. She pointed out that grief was a reaction to all loss, including the situation of divorce.

As much as one wanted to protect children by not talking to them about death, one was in fact denying them the opportunity to develop skills, she maintained.

Childhood grief was not homogeneous but rather age appropriate. It was silent grief, with actions speaking louder than words.

When asked how he is, a child

might simply say, “Fine.” “We leave the silence without the courage to unpack it further,” she stated.

Marcus’s brother was three at the time of their father’s death. “He never knew my Dad at all,” she said, whereas she at least had memories of him attending her ballet concerts.

“It was our responsibility to help Adam understand who this person was who died. We need to recognise and support grieving children,” she added, saying their world would never be the same again.

“I tell people: ‘Don’t make a child feel responsible for the family or a bereaved mother’ because they can never reclaim that loss (of childhood) either. We need to listen out for feelings of responsibility on the part of the child for the death.”

As for “repetitive questions”, Marcus said these helped the child to “gain mastery of the situation. Children need sufficient information which must be honest and age-appropriate.”

Routines should be maintained and activities for expression of feelings provided. One should watch out for changes in eating and sleeping habits, schoolwork and other activities.

There was no blanket rule as to whether a child should attend a funeral. “It depends on how the family feels, whether the child understands what a funeral is, as well as cultural attitudes towards children attending,” she said.

“Not all kids need counselling,” she added. “You think you have to go out and find the best therapist - the truth is, often what’s there is okay and it works.”

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

JEWISH LEADERS PLEDGE TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES

NEW YORK - Fifty Jewish leaders have signed a pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in advance of Tu B'Shvat.

The communal leaders and rabbis from the Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Reform and Renewal movements on Monday signed The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life's "Jewish Environment and Energy Imperative" declaration.

In the declaration, signed during an official ceremony in Manhattan, the leaders set the goal of significantly lowering greenhouse-gas emissions, advocating for energy independence and security, and reducing the Jewish community's energy consumption 14 per cent by 2014.

"The need to transform the world's energy economy while addressing global climate change is not only a religious and moral imperative," the declaration states, "it is a strategy for security and survival".

The year 2014 is the next sabbatical, or seventh year, on the Jewish calendar, a traditional time to refrain from impacting the earth.

Tu B'Shvat, the New Year for Trees, began on Tuesday night, with tree plantings the next day. (JTA)

ISRAEL'S LIEBERMAN MEETS CLINTON IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON - Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman has reconfirmed his commitment to a two-state solution during a meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington.

Lieberman, who arrived on Monday for a three-day visit, and Clinton reportedly talked on Tuesday morning about the situation in Syria, recent elections in Egypt and the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

After the meeting Lieberman “thanked (Clinton) for the determined stance of the United States on the Iran issue and said the steps taken in recent weeks send an important message to the entire region”.

Later in the day, Lieberman met with Senator John Kerry (Democrat Massachusetts), chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and Senator John McCain (Republican Arizona). (JTA)

BILL WOULD PROVIDE FINANCIAL AID TO YOUTH WHO LEAVE HAREDI WORLD

JERUSALEM - A Knesset member from the left-wing Meretz Party has authored a bill that would provide financial aid to young people who leave the haredi Orthodox fold.

The bill being advanced by Zehava Gal-On, would provide a financial aid package similar to one given to a new immigrant to the country, Haaretz reported.

Hundreds of youth who leave haredi Orthodoxy each year face financial hardship and difficulty in getting a higher education because their schools do not teach all the core subjects required for a matriculation certificate, according to Haaretz.

The aid would amount to more than \$13 000, according to the report.

Meanwhile, an organisation that works to help former haredim to reconcile with their families, is putting together a class-action lawsuit against the state that says the former haredim should be compensated for their lack of a basic education in the core subjects, necessitating them to spend a large amount of money to catch up on the material, Ynet reported.

The Maavar Association told Ynet that it would file the lawsuit in the next two weeks and that the case would be handled on a pro-bono basis.

"Whoever studied in haredi schools without core issues (including those who are still haredi) and has been forced to complete matriculation or psychometric exams, losing years of work or suffering any other financial damage, is invited to send us his personal details," Maavar said in a post on its Facebook page, according to Ynet.

An estimated 200 plaintiffs are expected to join the suit. (JTA)



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WHAT’S ON

Sharon Akum sharon@sajewishreport.co.za

DEADLINE PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for all entries is 12:00 on the Friday prior to publication, without exception.

Today, Friday (February 10)

- UZLC hosts Jack Slier who will talk on “Shanghai Today”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact Gloria at 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.
- RCHCC hosts an audiovisual presentation by Lyonell Fliss - “Jewish Berlin”, the relationship between the German Jews and Germans during the last most traumatic 100 years, followed by the acclaimed film “The Harmonists” Time: 19:30. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378), after hours (011) 728-8378. E-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za.

Sunday (February 12)

- JNF and Israel Centre invite you to “JNF Jungle” to celebrate Tu B'Shvat. Be involved in Israeli drumming, live cheetah presentation, cuddly jungle plants and creatures. Refreshments on offer. Bring your picnic and relax. Time: 11:00 – 14:00. Venue: Sandton Field and Study Centre, Parkmore. Cost: R50 per adult, children free. Contact: (011) 645-2541 or jnf@beyachad.co.za
 - Second Innings hosts pianist Tony Bentel on “Intermezzo - The Music Between Your Memories”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 for members, R40 for non-members. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.
 - Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets in the Jeffrey auditorium at St John’s College in St Johns Road in Lower Houghton at 14:15, with a selection of good audio and video material, featuring the great bands of yesteryear. For further information phone Dave on (011) 885-3525 or Barney on (011) 440 1996.
 - RCHCC invites you to an exhibition of new works by Trevor Coleman, titled “Samarkand”, comprising paintings, photographs and colour sketches of his trip to Uzbekistan. Antoinette Murdoch, chief curator, Johannesburg Art Gallery, will open the exhibition. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 18:00. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours: (011) 728-8378.
- Monday (February 13)
- UJW hosts Naomi Dinur who will talk on “Dura Europe’s Ancient Synagogue – a Jewish Pompeii in Syria”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R20. Contact: (011) 648-1053.
 - Jewish Learning Institute at the Great Park Synagogue introduces the first of a six session series of lectures on “Money Matters”, pertaining to a host of questions. Time: 19:30 at Great Park. Reserve a place by calling 079-106-4777 or e-mailing shmuelsimpson@gmail.com

Tuesday, (February 14)

- Second Innings Men’s Group hosts Menachem Kaye who will speak on “The Economy in 2012”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 14:15 for 14:30. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.
- Wednesday (February 15)
- Emunah Ladies Beit Midrash hosts Sheryl Cohen who will lecture on “Top Tips for Raising Toddlers” Time: 09:30 - 11:00. Venue: 60 Mejon St, Glenhazel. Tel: (011) 887-2910. Donation R50.
 - UJW Hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson former lecturer Dept English at Wits, who will be delivering part 1 of five lectures on Exploring George Elliot’s “Middelmarch - a Study of Provincial Life”. Time: 09:30.

- RCHCC hosts an audio-visual presentation, “The Jews of Argentina”, by Hugh Raichlin. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378), after hours (011) 728-8378. E-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za.

- UJW CT adult education division hosts Riaan Manse who will talk on “Leadership”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434 9555 (mornings only).

Saturday evening (February 18)

- WIZO Tzabar branch invites you to a Valentine’s love songs and love scenes from romantic films, hosted by Sivan Raphaely. Venue: EOH Hall in Bedfordview. Time: 20:00. Cost pp R90. To book or directions phone Shelly (071) 438-0263 or Ayela (011) 882-9875 or 082-4122269.

Sunday (February 19)

- RCHCC in association with Hope for Heroism, is hosting “Pride of the Nation” - recently injured Israeli combat soldiers talk about their experiences. Time: 19:30. Cost: R50 (Incl refreshments). Contact Hazel (011) 728-8088 or René (011) 728-8378.

Tuesday (February 21)

- UJW CT hosts a “Card Afternoon” at The Forum, V & A Waterfront, at 13:00 for 13:30. Entrance: R75. Wonderful prizes. Enquiries: F Davis: 082-426-7749 or N Baruch: 083-298-6849.

Wednesday (February 22)

- Emunah Ladies Beit Midrash hosts Rabbi Alon Joseph who will talk on “I am what I think I am”. Time: 10:00 – 11:00. Address: 60 Mejon St, Glenhazel. Tel: (011) 887-2910. Donation R50.

- UJW Hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson former lecturer Dept English at Wits, who will be delivering part 2 of five lectures on Exploring George Elliot’s “Middelmarch - a Study of Provincial Life”. Time: 09:30
 - Second Innings hosts Gerald Zwrn (known as “Mr Opera”), who will talk on “Be My Love - A Tribute to Mario Lanza”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.
 - UJW CT adult education division hosts Esta Levitas who will talk on “Save a Child’s Heart. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434 9555 (mornings only).
- Sunday (February 26)

- WIZO invites you to an evening of enchantment and magic with a SA twist, with Ilan Smith, master of illusion and intrigue. Tickets: R160 pp. Contract: Andrea: 083-677-8999.
- Beyachad Library book launch: “Israel - Reclaiming the Narrative” by Barry Shaw. The author will be here from Israel. Books available from the library at R150. Time: 17:30. Venue: The Hon Abe Abrahamson Auditorium at Beyachad. Donation R30. Contact Norma (011) 645-2567 or e-mail library@beyachad.co.za

- Second Innings presents Prof John Lubbe (retired professor of Semitics) who will talk on “The Dead Sea Scrolls; Qumran, its Writings, Caves, Ruins and Graves”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

Monday (February 27)

- Women of the World hosts educationist Gavin Keller, an expert in brain-based teaching, learning and leading, who will present a series of three lectures for teachers and parents. The first lecture is “The Talent Code”. Venue: Sydenham Shul Community Centre, 24 Main Street, Rouxville. Cost R50 per person per session. Time 20:00. For more information call Mandy 083-380-5268.

Tuesday (February 28)

- Women of the World hosts educationist Gavin Keller, an expert in brain-based teaching, learning and leading, who will present the second of his series of three lectures for teachers and parents. The lecture is on “Secrets of the Teenage Brain”. Venue: Sydenham Shul Community Centre, 24 Main Street, Rouxville. Time 19:30. Cost R50 per person per session. For more information call Mandy 083-380-5268.

‘Rising air pollution worsens drought and flooding’



Prof Daniel Rosenfeld.

JERUSALEM - Increases in air pollution and other particulate matter in the atmosphere can strongly affect cloud development in ways that reduce precipitation in cool and relatively dry regions, such as Israel in winter, but also can increase rain and the intensity of severe storms in warm and moist regions or seasons, such as the eastern half of the US during summer, says a new study by researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Maryland.

The research provides clear evidence of how aerosols - soot, dust and other small particles in the atmosphere - can affect weather and climate. The findings have important implications for the availability, management and use of water resources in regions not only in Israel but around the world, say the researchers.

Using a 10-year dataset of extensive atmosphere measurements from the US Southern Great Plains research facility in Oklahoma (run by the US Department of Energy’s Atmospheric Radiation Measurement programme), the researchers uncovered, for the first time, the long-term, net impact of aerosols on cloud height and thickness and the resultant changes in precipitation frequency and intensity.

This study confirmed and showed the importance of the theory developed by Prof Daniel Rosenfeld of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in his previous studies. The authors of the new study, who published it, along with Prof Rosenfeld, are Prof Zhanqing Li and Feng Niu and Yanni Ding of the University of Maryland; Jiwen Fan of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; and Yangang Liu of Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY. The article appeared in a recent issue of Nature Geoscience.

The findings have significant policy implications for sustainable development and water resources, especially for those developing regions susceptible to extreme events, such as drought and floods. Increases in manufacturing, building of power plants and other industrial developments, together with urbanisation, are often accompanied with increases in pollution whose adverse impacts on weather and climate, as revealed in this study, can undercut economic gains, it was stressed.

The aerosols, tiny solid or liquid particles suspended in air, include soot, dust and sulfate particles and are what we commonly think of when we talk about air pollution. Aerosols come, for example, from the combustion of fossil fuels, industrial and agricultural processes, and the accidental or deliberate burning of fields and forests. They can be hazardous to both human health and the environment.

Aerosols also affect cloud microphysics because they serve as nuclei around which water droplets or ice particles form. Both processes can affect cloud properties and rainfall. Different processes may work in harmony or offset each other, leading to a complex yet inconclusive interpretation of their long-term net effect.

“When the air rises, the water vapour condenses on aerosol particles to form cloud drops. In cleaner air the cloud drops are larger due to fewer drops and have better chances of colliding to form large rain drops. In polluted air, more and smaller drops are formed. They float in the air and are slow to coalesce into rain drops,” says Prof Rosenfeld.

“With a small amount of moisture, most cloud drops never become large enough for efficient precipitation, and hence rainfall is reduced. The rain that is withheld in moist, polluted, deep clouds freezes at higher altitudes to form ice crystals or even hail. The energy released by freezing fuels the clouds to grow taller and create larger ice particles that produce more intense precipitation. This explains why air pollution can exacerbate both drought and flood,” says Rosenfeld.

This may partially explain Rosenfeld’s finding in another study that there are more severe convective storms during summer on weekdays compared to weekends in the eastern United States, because more pollution is emitted during the working weekdays than during the weekend.

Support for this latest research was provided by the Department of Energy, NASA, the National Science Foundation and the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology.

THE BRIDGE LOUNGE by Jeff Sapire

BRIDGE IS a game with a large number of rules and guidelines, and if most players simply followed them without question they would do pretty well. But it’s also a game of common sense - something which West did not think enough about on today’s hand.

West dealer, neither vul			
NORTH			
♠ A92			
♥ A32			
♦ KQ1092			
♣ 76			
WEST			
♠ Q107			♠ 83
♥ J96			♥ KQ754
♦ AJ			♦ 63
♣ KJ954			♣ Q1082
SOUTH			
♠ KJ654			
♥ 108			
♦ 8754			
♣ A3			
East	South	West	North
		1C	1D
1H	1S	1NT	3S
P	4S	All pass	
Opening lead: H6			

South was guilty of some serious overbidding when he carried on to 4S. North could also have done better by using the “cue bid raise” - a 2C bid, showing a “good” raise in spades, allowing the partnership to stop at the two level if necessary.

Declarer took the ace of hearts in dummy, and taking note of the 1NT bid by West, which promised a spade stopper, he played A-K of spades, foregoing the finesse. He then played a diamond to the jack and king, followed by another diamond to West’s ace.

West, a student of the game, but a player who tended to follow rules blindly without sufficient thought, immediately cashed his master queen of spades, and then continued with a heart, taken by East. He switched to a club, but declarer put up the ace and ran the remaining diamonds, pitching his losing club.

“We never got our club trick,” said East.

“Yes I know,” replied West, “declarer discarded it on the diamonds before we had a chance to get it.”

“But why did you cash the queen of

spades after winning the ace of diamonds?” continued East. “If you refrain from playing it and continue a heart, I will win, and knowing you started with three cards in hearts (you led the six and then played the nine) I would switch to a club. Then, when declarer tries to run the diamonds, you ruff in early and we get that club trick.”

“You are quite right, but I was taught that as a defender one should always play the last trump if it is a winner, especially if one is getting two of their trumps for one of ours.”

West was right in theory, but there are times when it is correct to withhold a winning trump, and this hand is a case in point. The moment he released the last trump, declarer was in a position to run off the diamond suit uninterrupted.

Every Tuesday (Intermediate) and Wednesday (Advanced) I run bridge workshops from 10:00 – 12:00 at the Great Park Shul, corner Glenhove Road and 4th Avenue, Houghton - alternating with play hands one week and a bidding lecture on the other. For more information, call me on 082-551-2526 or e-mail me at jeffshirl@telkomsa.net

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‘No-hoppers’ KD Victory Park stuns St David’s

JACK MILNER
PHOTOGRAPH: Yael Gordon

IN AN INTERVIEW I had with former world No 1 tennis player Pete Sampras at the height of his career, he said that he was always cautious not to underestimate his opponent, no matter how lowly ranked he might be.

“He also had a racket in his hand and he had spent years training to hit a ball. I never took any opponent too lightly,” said Sampras.

Well, St David’s learned that lesson in the final of the Johnny Waite Cricket Trophy last week when they played a spirited King David Victory Park team at St David’s.

KDVP played in the B Section of the tournament, which is for all co-ed schools and second teams for the top schools, and did not have an easy path to the final. Along the way they beat Northcliff High and then St Stithians in the semifinals.

Perhaps St David’s should have taken cognisance of these results and not have treated the Victory Park team as a “no-name brand”.

St David’s won the toss and put Victory Park in to bat in this T20 competition and were probably a little surprised when KDVP amassed 132 for six wickets in their allotted 20 overs. Captain Lee Gruskin got his eye in quickly and pounded 53 off just 59 balls, while vice-captain Shandon Weinstein weighed in with 27 runs off 21 balls.

Marc Redfern, Justin Sher and Brandon Bolnick, the other vice-captain, added to the tally late in the innings.

“Before the game we felt 120 would be a decent total on that wicket, so we knew that 132 would be pretty competitive,” said



The victorious King David Victory cricket team with the Johnny Waite Trophy they won after beating St David’s by 33-1 in the final of the competition: Darren Jordaan (director of sport - KDVP); Justin Breger; Marc Redfern; Jordan Grill; Stefan Morris; Shandon Weinstein (vice-captain); Lee Gruskin (captain); Erin Berman-Levy; Brandon Bolnick (vice-captain); Shaun Bolnick; Jarryd Buchalter; Joshua Reichman; Justin Sher; and Michael Chilvers (coach).

coach Mike Chilvers.

St David’s got off to the perfect start and were on 45 without loss after just six overs. However, left-arm seamer Justin Sher stepped up to the plate and a couple of overs from him turned the tide. He took out one of their openers but after 10 overs, where King David had been on 53 for two, the home team still had the edge at 59 for one.

The 13th over changed all that, however and when 15-year-old Shaun Bolnick took

two catches in two balls off Justin’s bowling, the writing was on the wall. A couple of run-outs saw St David’s start to panic and they were all out for 99. In total there were five run-outs, one of them off a magnificent direct hit from the fine-leg boundary by Erin Berman-Levy.

What struck the King David players was the absolute silence after the final wicket fell. “They were shell-shocked,” said Lee. “They couldn’t believe what had happened.”

According to director of sport Darren Jordaan, the major turnaround for the team came last year when they were forced to play two matches in one day. “We beat Northcliff in a tight match in the morning and then defeated Crawford Lonehill that afternoon on the last ball of the match.”

With the Maccabiah taking place next year, Maccabi South Africa Chairman Cliff Garrun has confirmed they were keeping a close eye on the achievements of King David Victory Park’s cricket team.

Maccabi SA trials for Maccabiah

Preparations are well under way from Maccabi South Africa to select and prepare the delegation for the 19th Maccabiah in June next year.

A NUMBER of sporting codes will be holding trials in the next few weeks.

JUNIOR CRICKET (born in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998)

The trials will take place on March 21 at Old Eds Cricket Club, starting at 09:00. The fee per player is R100.

For further information contact Myron Michael on 082-327-3686 or e-mail myka@mweb.co.za

JUNIOR NETBALL (born in 1995, 1996, 1997 or 1998)

Johannesburg trials will be held on Sunday February 19 at King David High School Linksfeld, starting at 07:30. The fee per player is R100.

The Cape Town trials will take place on Sunday March 4 at Herzlia High school (at the Vredehoek Courts in Highlands) at 08:00. The fee is R100 per person.

For further information contact Lisa Hack at lisahack01@gmail.com

JUNIOR TENNIS (born in 1995, 1996, 1997 or 1998)

The trials will be held at King David Linksfeld High School on February 26 and March 4. Registration will start at 08:30 and play will begin at 09:00 sharp until 14:00.

The fee is R180 per person, which will include a Maccabi Tennis T-shirt.

FOOTBALL

Girls Soccer (born in 1995, 1996, 1997 or 1998)

The trials will take place on February 12 and 19 at Highlands Park in Johannesburg, from 15:00 to 17:00. The fee is R50 per person.

For queries contact Debbie Ilouze on 082-560-9830.

Boys Soccer (born in 1997 and 1998)

The trials will take place on March 4 and 11 at a venue to be confirmed, from 09:00 to 12:00. The fee is R50 per person.

For further information contact Daniel Witz on 082-322-3100 or e-mail him on danielwitz@mweb.co.za

Boys Soccer (born in 1995 or 1996)

The trials will take place on March 4 and 11 at a venue to be confirmed, from 09:00 to 12:00. The fee is R50 per person.

• For further information contact Clive Bedell on 082-852-9818 or e-mail him on clivebedell@gmail.com

• For Opens ladies, men’s and Masters, please get in touch with Maccabi SA Soccer convener, Ryan Kalk on ryankalk@gmail.com

SQUASH

Maccabi Junior Squash training kicks off this Sunday at 18:00 at Killarney Country Club. For more information contact Glenn Lazarus 083-273-6926 or e-mail glenn@ats.co.za.



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