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Jewish Report



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Friday, 11 November 2011 / 14 Cheshvan, 5772

Volume 15 Number 41

Jewish leaders: Russell Tribunal lives up to biased predictions



AND THEN THE TWIN DID MEET...

SA Union of Jewish Students National Chairman Stephanie Hodes, demonstrates against the Russell Tribunal at the entrance to the venue where it was being held last weekend in District Six, Cape Town. On the left is African-American writer Alice Walker, being ushered in to participate in the Tribunal, which was set up to examine whether Israel was guilty of practising apartheid against the Palestinians. Jewish organisations referred to the Tribunal as a "kangaroo court". (PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDYVER) **SEE PAGES 3, 6**

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18:08	19:01	Durban
18:20	19:19	Bloemfontein
18:00	19:32	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:21	East London

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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

All the world’s a stage



PARSHAT VAYEIRA
Rabbi Larry Shain
Ohr Somayach Glenhazel

WE'RE ALL familiar with the old joke about the little guy that comes home from school to tell his mom that he's in the school play... "what part did you get?" He answers: "A Jewish husband..." His mother: "Didn't I tell you to insist on a speaking role?!"

There's a variation on the theme in our parsha; the famous drama of the "binding" or "sacrifice" of Isaac. Our forefather Avraham was prepared to offer his only son upon the altar (and the 37-year-old Isaac was prepared to be that sacrifice).

This is the quintessential act of courage and self-sacrifice; this is the prototype for the Israeli officer who threw himself upon an exploding grenade in order to save the soldiers of his platoon during the last Lebanon campaign and the countless similar acts of self-sacrifice performed by Jews throughout the ages, whether during the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition or the Holocaust...

And yet, in contrast to the most lauded acts of bravery and physical prowess, which are inevitably enacted within the "public arena" before as large an audience as can be mustered (think Greek tragedy, bull fights, operas, World Cup events, etc), the act took place in private.

A deed witnessed only by the father, his son, and... Hashem Himself.

An interesting contrast was recently noted in the "Inbox" (letters to the editor in our electronic age) to Time magazine, subsequent to the outpouring of accolades and tributes to the late Steve Jobs of Apple and iPod/iPad fame.

The writer commented on the starkly relative lack of fanfare accorded the passing of the man who had invented the pacemaker, Wilson Greatbatch. Did you know his name? I admit I had to Google "inventor of the pacemaker".

The most significant acts are often achieved most humbly and privately, the true development of self and character... perhaps the speaking part is overrated, or in the words of Mr Greatbatch, a religious man who saw the Hand of the Divine in much of what he did, in his memoir: "To ask for a successful experiment, for professional stature, for financial reward or for peer approval, is asking to be paid for what should be an act of love."



Artist Loren Hodes with husband Robin standing next to her painting that was auctioned. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

Overcoming infertility, a long and hard road

SHIRA DRUION

THE "ROAD to fertility" is often a heart-rending one; the irony is that while some mothers - or would-be mothers - would easily "get rid" of an unwanted fetus or even baby, thousands of couples are desperate to have a child of their own.

This is where The Malka Ella organisation does such sterling work. But to be able to assist women conceive, costs money... At a fertility fundraiser on November 3 at the TAC in Johannesburg, over R180 000 was raised, when some 400 attended the event. Hugh Raichlin was a popular MC.

The Malka Ella Fund administers financial assistance to a growing numbers of couples who would otherwise be unable to afford the necessary fertility treatment. To date it has enabled over 100 babies to come into the world.

The fund hosts a biennial event, offering donors the opportunity to listen to stories of triumph over fertility adversity. Guests were invited to bid in a silent art auction for works donated by local Jewish artists.

Artist Loren Hodes expressed her joy at being able to contribute to facilitatating a couple being able to bring life into this world. These sentiments were echoed by artist Rinat Goldstuck.

"I feel so privileged to have been able to have created something that will help to bring children into the world," she said.

Two keynote speakers addressed the gathering. Rabbi Gideon Weizmann from the Puah Institute in Israel, assists couples in halachic fertility issues.

"It is moving to contemplate that we are able to empathise with a person whose pain we have not felt, but we give and feel for them, as if we had."

Dr Yossi Unterslak shared the personal journey of his and wife Esther's "road to fertility". He

said that the day he sat down to write his speech was October 18, the same day the release of Gilad Shalit was announced.

He connected this event to the fundraising evening, by emphasising the value that Judaism places on life and providing life. He accounted the tumultuous and harrowing process that engulfs many couples struggling with infertility.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein praised the work of the fund and its administrators. "The fund ensures that we are able to access the blessings of G-d by allowing couples the chance to conceive a child through the incredible blessing that technology has allowed our generation.

"Fertility treatment is a very costly process which, thanks to Malka Ella Fund, has afforded couples who would have otherwise been unable to afford the treatment, the chance to bring life into this world."

The fund not only provides financial assistance, but has expanded its services to provide for other areas associated with infertility. The Tikvah division of the fund provides emotional support for couples who are travelling the long and hard road to becoming parents.

The Shifra division ensures that the halachic concerns are taken care of.

The Chana division deals with the complexities associated with genetic disorders, offering advice and much needed information.

Pioneer of the fund, Suzanne Sackstein, told the crowd: "There is no doubt in my mind that the success of the fund can be attributed to the kindness that Hashem bestows on us.

"We have been able to experience an enormous amount of blessing and success in the fertility attempts of our couples, and I have no doubt, it is due to G-d's great benevolence and empathy for couples in pain."

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Russell Tribunal lives up to its biased predictions

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

MR JUSTICE Richard Goldstone's view that Israel is not an apartheid state has been dismissed by Michael Mansfield QC, who says the judge has been "seduced by an illusion perpetrated outside this building".

The UK barrister, who served as a juror on the Russell Tribunal on Palestine held in Cape Town's District Six over the weekend, delivered its findings at a media conference.

"Just look at the treatment of the Palestinians in Israel," Mansfield said. "Just listen to (witness) Haneen (Zoabi, an Arab member of the Knesset) saying that she's cate-

gorised as a 'threat to security'.

"She's been physically assaulted in the Knesset and they want to withdraw her citizenship. Tell me that's anything but institutionalised apartheid."

At the start, Mansfield announced that the Tribunal's website had been "hacked into and closed down. Experts say this was a precision job."

"We have to ask: Who benefits most from the website's disappearance?"

The Tribunal found that "Israel subjects the Palestinian people to an institutionalised regime of domination amounting to apartheid as defined under international law."

It urged "all states" to co-operate in ending the "illegal situation" by

exerting "sufficient pressure" on the country in the form of sanctions and the severing of diplomatic relations.

Another juror, African-American author Alice Walker, remarked that the Jewish, Zionist voice was "quite strong" in the US, while the Palestinian voice was "not heard much. I'm here to make sure that the Palestinian voice is heard there."

It would be "a very happy day for all of us" when "Zionists no longer control our Congress", she stated.

On Sunday, a group of around 20 protesters, comprising members of the Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation, SAUJS and others, engaged in "some civil exchanges, some heated" with delegates outside the District Six Museum venue, according to participant Alan Fisher.

Posters and T-shirts bore the legends: "Israel is not apartheid South Africa" and "No to kangaroo courts, yes to constructive dialogue". Pamphlets in this vein were also handed out to delegates.

Some protesters tried to get into the venue but were barred as the organisers said registration had closed the previous day. Describing the event as "very peaceful and constructive", Fisher said: "We wanted to put our view across that this is a kangaroo court, the verdict had already been decided, which makes a mockery of due process and justice - the very things that they were trying to promote."

He pointed out that Cosatu was using workers' money to sponsor the "gin and tonic revolutionaries".

The fact that only Israel was on trial and that no mention was made of suffering in the rest of Africa, smacked of a double standard and was "an obscenity", he added.

Testifying at the Tribunal, Israeli professor of anthropology and co-ordinator of the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Jeff Halper, said that Israel's 44-year Occupation "certainly constitutes the crime of apartheid. You can separate between Israel proper and the Occupied Territories less and less today."

"We use the word 'apartheid' in Israel officially - 'Hafrada' in Hebrew. The official name of the Wall is not the security barrier, it's the separation barrier."

Israel had demolished 26 000 homes in the Palestinian Territories since 1967, which he described as "the first act of the Occupation". In fact, he maintained, the country had since 1948 adopted a systematic policy of demolitions.

The same action had been taken against Israeli citizens who were Palestinians or Bedouins, with some villages destroyed "20 times or more" by Israeli policies. "This is certainly ethnic displacement - I would go so far as to say ethnic cleansing," he charged, claiming: "Security has nothing to do with the policy of house demolitions."

Zoabi said that, with her right to vote and represent her people in the Knesset, she was "supposed to be a walking example of (Israel's) democracy". Instead: "We are clear evidence of the racist Israeli system."

"As Palestinian citizens, we're defined as a strategic threat. We reveal the contradiction between a Jewish state and democracy. A Jewish state is a state with a Jewish majority, so it must do anything to preserve (this) majority. Of course it will be a racist state - what else

would it be?" she asked.

In the last two years, around 34 laws discriminating against Palestinian citizens had been introduced, she noted.

A Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would not end the struggle. "We want equality," she demanded, adding to loud applause: "I didn't immigrate to Israel - Israel immigrated to me."

Also testifying at the Tribunal, Bethlehem-based human rights lawyer Shawqi Issa, said Israel was not a country, but a club where "every Jew is a member and has the right to come and control the natives", an analogy described by juror Ronnie Kasrils as "very pertinent".

"The silence of Europe encourages the Israelis to commit more crimes - we as Palestinians believe they're responsible as participants in these crimes," Issa continued.

"It is easy for (Israel) to cover for their crimes before a naïve American public - they can market the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in Europe to go ahead with them," he added.

Mary Kluk, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), has dismissed the tribunal as "an expensive exercise in futility. (Its) proceedings were carefully stage-managed so as to depict Israel in the most damning light possible, without even a token effort being made to subject Palestinian actions to similar critical scrutiny."

"Its aim has solely been to isolate and delegitimise Israel," she said.

SAJBD and the South African Zionist Federation stated that the Tribunal's proceedings had "conclusively confirmed predictions that it would be no more than an unbalanced vehicle for anti-Israel propaganda, thinly-disguised as a quasi-judicial investigation".



Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu delivers his opening address at the Russel Tribunal. (PHOTO: ILAN OSSENDYVER)

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B’Nai B’rith again brings cheer to lonely elderly

RITA LEWIS
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

THE ANNUAL B’nai B’rith Hand in Hand function was once again held at the Edenvale City Hall and attended by some 400 local people of all denominations, who live alone in one room and are therefore in desperate need of the company of others.

They are as much in need of a home cooked meal and are very happy for the opportunity to attend such an interactional activity.

B’nai B’rith is a non-profit organisation which has provided various services to the less fortunate members of the South African community for over 75 years. This is their major one.

Their Lodge Aviv Unit which organised this event - which has been running for over 30 years - was formed circa 1973 and has also organised many other worthwhile and heart-warming projects such as this one.

Many of the participants are bussed in to join others who are entertained, served a cooked lunch and tea and then given a small useful gift to take home.

As usual the entertainment was put on by Eileen Wainer and her band, who give freely of their time every year.



Everyone responds to the command, “Put your arms in the air”.

Wainer who can still encourage the elderly attendees to stand up and dance with her in time to the music, is the mainstay of the event.

The Johannesburg mini and junior city councillors have also been assisting this function since it was first organised and this year was no different. They help with the organising, collect gifts and help out at the event - hence their slogan, “Hand in Hand” - The Youth Caring for the Aged.

B’nai B’rith said they could not have arranged this event without the aid of the willing councillors, their own unit members and the many generous sponsors.



Sue Benjamin; Elaine Kessel; and Simone French, working hard.



Irv Blumenfeldt; Barney Levinthal; and Norman Fleminger working well together.



Flora Fleminger and Sue Benjamin.



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BRANDFORT

From Lynne Raphaely:

“I so enjoy reading Community Buzz each week, but the October 17 issue was extra special for me!

“Under the heading ‘Brandfort’ was a letter from Naomi Bloch of Melbourne, seeking information about her father’s uncle and aunt, the Reverend Joshua and Hinda Batlan.

“They were the grandparents of my late mother, Estella Abro (née Kotzen). Naomi mentioned that the Batlan’s daughter, Sophie, married Meyer Kotzen from Potchefstroom.

“They, of course, were my grandparents, and their son, Isidore, now aged 88 and his wife, Beattie Kotzen still live in Potchefstroom. As a result of the article, my aunt was contacted by a cousin in Cape Town with whom I have also been in contact, and the Kotzens and I have also spoken to Naomi in Melbourne.

“In response to her query as to where they were buried, we were able to tell her that the Batlans, who died in the 1930s, are both buried in Brandfort.

“Thanks to the Jewish Report, I have discovered two new cousins”!

(Coincidentally, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader of the country communities, mentioned to me that he will be in Brandfort to attend to the relaying of the gravestones in the small Brandfort Jewish Cemetery.)

MAURICE WIDES

Grant Wides wrote (July 11, 2008):

“My father, Maurice Wides, is living in South Africa. He is nearly 90 years old and is not well and not in full control of his senses. Over the years he has related stories about his time in the Second World War when he was stationed in Lagos, Nigeria. He was given the rank of major. He had received his wings in 1939.

“He acted as a flight instructor and also flew as a pilot for the South African Air Force. They carried out sorties off West Africa and dropped depth charges when sighting an enemy submarine.

“After the war he went to live in Israel, again as a flight instructor. At the time of his arrival there were only six planes in the Israeli Air Force and he was instrumental in building it up with other early pioneers.”

• From “The Star” September 7, 2011: “The funeral service for Major Maurice Wildes, late of Kyalami, will be held at The Chapel, Fourways Memorial Park, Craigavon.”

Chase the dream, not the money, is Brozin’s advice

JODI DAYAN
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

“FOLLOW YOUR passion and not the money”, was the salient advice given by guest speaker Robbie Brozin, CEO of Nando’s, when he spoke at the culmination

of the ORT JET and Project Natan Jewish Business Plan Competition, at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in Sandton, when the winners of this prestigious award were announced.

Dr Avron Urison conducted an entertaining interview with Brozin, who advised



Paul Bacher; Jarred Myers; Errol Freeman; Jake Willis; Daniel Roy; Ryan Hollander; Anita Kramer; Amanda Rabinowitz; Michael Wingrin; and Donald Mghonyama.

aspiring entrepreneurs among an audience of 200: “Be single-minded. There is a thin line between success and failure. Don’t be discouraged, do what you are passionate about and make the journey fun!”

The competition was launched two years ago with the aim of inspiring Jewish entrepreneurs to make their dream businesses a reality. There were 38 business plans submitted this year for the two categories: startup and existing (for less than 18 months).

The winner of the New Business Category was The Ice Coffee company, whose vision is to bring the ice coffee “slush” machines to the South African convenience market. Owners Michael Wingrin and Ryan Hollander, have travelled extensively in Israel and observed that ice coffee “on tap” was not readily available in South Africa.

Runner-up to the new business category was Anita Kramer-Geffroy’s Handyman



Robbie Brozin

Assist, whose mission is to provide knowledgeable, convenient and reasonably priced handyman services to the market.

Existing business winner was Lulaway Job Centres-Internet Café. Entrepreneur Errol Freedman began operations with one internet cafe and has since expanded to three branches. He is now ready to take his business to the next level including a job portal.

The catalyst for this whole concept has been the demand by job seekers for simplified means of finding and applying for positions.

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The runner up for this category was Amanda Rabinowitz of Jellybean Events who provide fresh and fun edutainment for the “tots-tween” market.

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Noble attempt, or mere footnote

THE RUSSELL Tribunal has come and gone, with its predictable outcome that Israel practises apartheid. It has further widened the chasm between Israel's supporters and opponents and has also affected people ignorant of the Middle East, who are unable to judge whether its negative verdict of Israel is accurate.

How will it be viewed historically? A noble attempt by world citizens to expose injustice by one people against another and make human society better and more peaceful? Or will it be a tiny footnote, an event with more hot air and moral posturing than substance, contributing nothing to peace in the world?

It obviously depends on who you ask. What is clear, though, is that the Tribunal is a piece in a larger jigsaw - the movement to delegitimise Israel internationally through the BDS campaign. Some participants in the Tribunal will see it as their contribution to putting another nail in Israel's coffin.

Among the carefully selected delegates, some were obviously expected to be there, such as certain politicians, jurists and activists with clear interests in international politics and in particular, Israel. But there was one anomaly - the official presence of Cosatu with its strident anti-Israel stance, led by General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi. The Politicsweb site carried his address, in which he said: "As apartheid South Africa attempted to do with the black working class, apartheid Israel too seeks to humiliate and degrade the Palestinian working class, robbing it of its dignity and attempting to beat it into submission to a cruel, racist system."

His published address gave no context about the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its history, no reference to any wrongdoing by the Palestinians such as terrorism, nor the threats under which Israel has lived since its inception, its security needs, and so on.

It also lacked any nuanced analysis of Israeli society itself, presenting it as a one-dimensional cardboard cut-out. One can only conclude that Vavi is either grossly ignorant of the region's history, or purposely distorted a tiny sliver of that reality for his own motives.

Facts about the lives of Israelis and Palestinians raised at the Tribunal were not necessarily all incorrect, but were selective and lacked context - they were essentially cynical half-truths. Philosopher Bertrand Russell, whose name the Tribunal carries, would have wanted a fairer process.

As a South African trade union federation, Cosatu's mandate includes supporting the international struggle for workers' rights. But the question begs itself: Why is Cosatu taking such a vociferous role in this specific campaign against Israel?

The trade union federation should concentrate its energies on genuine worker issues, rather than twisting its anti-Israel stance to make it appear as a worker issue. If Palestinian workers are suffering, it is the long, bloody Israeli-Palestinian conflict which creates and allows that suffering. The most urgent goal is to help achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict for the sake of all Palestinians and Israelis.

This political conflict should be addressed at another level - by the ANC, for example, a political party with a huge Parliamentary majority, essentially the government. Its mandate is to address international politics and relations with all countries, including Israel - and eventually with an independent Palestine.

Cosatu has been criticised in South Africa too - a country with a socially explosive unemployment rate of over 25 per cent, which Vice-President Kgalema Motlanthe has called a "ticking bomb" - for representing only those who have jobs, while failing in its national duty to work for increasing employment per se; essentially, for being an elite "closed shop".

To go back to our opening question: Will this Tribunal matter in the long sweep of history? It might have mattered if there had been integrity or credibility, if the organisers had also incorporated voices making Israel's case alongside its detractors and created a forum for dialogue and honest examination of the whole situation, rather than mere propaganda.

In the form in which it took place, however, with all the emotive hype created, the answer is clearly "no". In a couple of months the Tribunal will mercifully be forgotten and we will scarcely remember who the players in it were, or their ill-disguised motives.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Limmud expands dramatically in former Soviet states

ALEX WEISLER
ODESSA, UKRAINE

SIX YEARS ago, Chaim Chesler's plan to bring the Limmud educational model to the former Soviet Union, was met with a chorus of naysayers.

"Everyone said I was nuts, they're not ready for it," Chesler recalls.

Today, Chesler, the founder of Limmud FSU and chairman of its executive committee, oversees an organisation with an annual budget of approximately \$1 million that operates in seven countries and can hardly keep up with the demand for its services.

Launched in the United Kingdom in 1980, Limmud has exploded in recent years. Dozens of countries have adopted its educational model, which is now seen as one of the world's most successful Jewish initiatives and a potent means of identity building.

But perhaps nowhere has the growth been as staggering as in the former Soviet states. With their substantial Jewish population and limited supply of innovative Jewish programming, demand for Limmud programming there has been significant.

This year alone, Limmud FSU held events in Moscow and St Petersburg, and Odessa and Vinnitsa in Ukraine, as well

as in Beersheba, Israel. Plans are afoot to expand to Moldova, the Carpathian Mountains and potentially Irkutsk in eastern Siberia.

Limmud FSU is the only Limmud operation that runs programming outside its geographic region for Russian-speaking Jews who live elsewhere. The organisation is operating in two Israeli cities, Ashkelon and Beersheba, home to large communities of Russian Israelis, and in Russian expatriate communities in the United States. And plans are in the works for more.

"It's something that I didn't even dream of," Chesler said.

Stressing openness and equality between lecturers and participants, Limmud offers a whirlwind array of workshops, film screenings, performances and lectures. At the most recent Limmud FSU conference, which concluded here earlier this week, options included everything from pottery to American Jewish music to the future of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

As the former head of the Jewish Agency for Israel's delegation to the former Soviet Union, Chesler says he was struck by the lack of control that Russian-speaking Jews had over their Jewish lives.



Participants in the Limmud FSU conference in Odessa, Ukraine, marking a birthday celebration during the event's closing party in November. (PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX WEISLER)

Is Jerusalem in Israel? Supreme Court takes up passport case

RICHARD GREENBERG
WASHINGTON (WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK)

THE US Supreme Court convened on Monday to ponder the implications of a single word that is conspicuously missing from the passport of a nine-year-old boy who was born in Jerusalem.

His name is Menachem Binyamin Zivotofsky, the son of Ari and Naomi Siegman Zivotofsky, Americans who made aliyah in 2000.

Menachem was born at Shaare Zedek Hospital in western Jerusalem, but due to a controversial State Department policy, his US passport does not designate "Israel" as his place of birth - despite a federal statute enacted in October 2002 that says Americans born in Jerusalem are entitled to have Israel listed on their official papers as their birth country.

The Zivotofskys want that law enforced so their son can claim what they feel is his birthright - the inclusion of the word "Israel" on his passport, a statement "that the land of Israel has centrality for the Jewish people", the boy's father, Ari Zivotofsky, told reporters after Monday's court session. "It's a very personal issue," he said.

A decision on the case is not expected for several months.

The arguments and counterarguments presented on Monday before the high court focused on several key issues, including which branch of government has the authority to conduct foreign policy and whether or not the appearance of the word "Israel" on a passport is in fact tantamount to an expression of foreign policy.

It is not, argued attorney Nathan

Lewin, representing the Zivotofskys. "It is purely a means of identification," he explained in response to a question from Justice Elena Kagan.

The petitioners maintain that Menachem Zivotofsky is one of an estimated 50 000 Jerusalem-born American citizens who have been unfairly barred from listing their place of birth as "Jerusalem, Israel", rather than simply "Jerusalem".

The federal statute that grants those passport holders the right to essentially identify their place of birth as they see fit, has been ignored by the administrations of both George W Bush and Barack Obama, with Bush claiming that it infringes on the president's authority to formulate foreign policy positions, such as the administration's stance on the status of Jerusalem.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the named respondent in the Zivotofskys' litigation, heads the chief foreign policy arm of the executive branch. She has argued that the State Department's regulations governing the passport designation of Jerusalem-born American citizens have rightly served to maintain US neutrality on the sensitive issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem. The Zivotofskys contend that the policy is biased against Israel and against Jews who have a religious attachment to the land.

"Congress recognised that with regard to the 50 000 people who have a passport that says 'Jerusalem', they are being denied a certain sense of self-respect that they feel they should be able to have in terms of their own identification," Lewin told the court in reponse to a question from Justice Samuel Alito.

"This is not a statute that is designed to

"Everything was from the top down... everything was telling them what to do," he said. "What they wanted was to do something of their own."

Greg Schneider, executive vice president of the Claims Conference, attended the Odessa event and led a lively question-and-answer session with about 20 participants. The Claims Conference, which supports educational initiatives relating to the Holocaust, is one of Limmud FSU's partners. Schneider said Limmud FSU's rapid growth was an opportunity to cement a new Jewish audience's commitment to memorialising the Holocaust.

"The explosion in interest comes from the fact that you've got a whole cohort of young Jews who don't have a venue to explore their Jewish identity," he said. "What we're so excited about is that it's clear that this group of people is starving, yearning to learn more about the Shoah and about the survivor community in the world."

Limmud FSU frequently receives requests for conferences to be held in new cities; recent enquiries have come from Uzbekistan, Toronto and Kaliningrad in Russia. The organisation plans an expanded outreach effort in the United States, beginning with an event next year on Albert Einstein at Princeton University and a conference in the Carpathian Mountains on the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidism.

Further in the future, Chesler wants to develop a conference on the works of Marc Chagall and host an event in Irkutsk.

Such thematic orientations are not typical of Limmud conferences, but in the FSU it has become common practice. The Ashkelon event was about space exploration. Odessa marked the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Israel and Ukraine.

"The Russians are very creative and independent, and they have their own culture and destiny," Chesler said. "They take the model of Limmud, but they have their own flavour because they're crazy - they want Sholom Aleichem, they want space." (JTA)



Ari Zivotofsky and his son Menachem speak to the press outside the US Supreme Court on November 8. (PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD GREENBERG)

create some political brouhaha or make a foreign policy statement."

Arguing on behalf of Clinton, Solicitor General Donald Verrilli acknowledged that the position of the administration is that the status of Jerusalem is disputed, and he added: "A passport is not a communication by the passport holder. It's an official United States document that communicates the position of the United States."

The State Department has contended, according to the petitioners, that if American citizens who are natives of Jerusalem are permitted to self-identify as being born in "Israel", that would create the misperception among Arab states that official US policy on the sovereignty of Jerusalem had changed, which in turn could have serious foreign policy repercussions. The Zivotofskys, however, maintain there is no evidence that would happen. (Washington Jewish Week)

OPINION AND ANALYSIS – FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

A growing openness to discuss faith

I’VE JUST finished watching the series *Battlestar Galactica*, which appeared in 77 episodes between 2004 and 2009. Of course, I remembered avidly watching the original series by that name, screened during the salad days of SABC TV in 1980.

The main characters were a couple of wise-cracking flyboys called Starbuck and Apollo, and Commander Adama (played by Lorne Greene, of Ben Cartwright-Bonanza fame and who we were delighted to note was Jewish).

The baddies were heavy-breathing robots called Cylons, whose fighter ships were regularly dispatched with satisfying bangs from episode to episode.

The modern-day version of this space opera is altogether darker, denser and morally ambiguous. It confirms for me that American television has become infinitely more sophisticated over the past couple of decades or so - better scripted, nuanced and layered than such superficial, assembly-line pap like the 1970s *Brady Bunch*, *Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Starsky and Hutch*.

Whereas the Cylons in the original series were largely ineffectual, in the remake they succeed in wiping out most of the human race in the first episode, and proceed to relentlessly hunt down the survivors. Moreover, many of them now are physically identical to humans, except that they can be resurrected (“downloaded”) into new bodies should they be killed.

This all may seem to be an unlikely subject for a Jewish Report column, but in fact there is an additional dimension to the series that does make it relevant. To a very remarkable extent, certainly beyond anything I have ever seen in a mainstream television show, it is underpinned throughout by a profound religiosity.

It continually deals with religious themes - the nature of G-d,



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Divine Providence, human free will and accountability in the next life, prophecy, personal revelation, miracles and Divine emissaries (“angels” is the term sometimes used), the meaning of suffering, retribution and redemption.

None of this would be possible in a conventional drama rooted in an ordinary, everyday setting, but in this science-fiction-fantasy framework, the writers of the series evidently felt they had more leeway to incorporate previously taboo issues of faith.

G-d is seriously discussed, and is at least mentioned in virtually every episode, with the Cylons being the most staunchly monotheistic. Starbuck - another sign of the times - is female this time round, and in the end assumes the form of a supernatural being dispatched from On High to lead both humans and Cylons to redemption.

Something similar happened in another recent long-running science-fiction-fantasy series, called “*Lost*”. Here, too, characters experienced events of a clearly other-worldly nature, including survival after death. Previous science-fiction shows have never been nearly as explicit when it comes to the supernatural.

Does the above point to a strengthening of religious feeling, or its opposite? It could plausibly be argued that humanity’s spiritual yearnings have now been rendered so out of the mainstream intellectual ballpark by the atheist triumphalism of the day, that one now needs to create an elaborate, imaginary setting in which to address them.

Surely this points to the progressive failure of the religious establishment, Jewish and Christian, in America (where Orthodox Jews form a minority) to provide a credible forum for this?

Personally, and even though the theological backing-and-forthing in the *Galactica* series was for me rather tiresome (and faintly risible at times), I find this new sense of openness towards dealing with the ultimate issues of human existence quite heartening.

It further indicates, to me at least, that American television (of which, like it or not, we are all to some extent cultural products) is growing up. Those who buy in to the still trendy notion that religiosity equates intellectual backwardness, will obviously no doubt see it as still more evidence of the infantilisation of popular culture, and indeed they have roundly deplored the way both *Battlestar Galactica* and *Lost* eventually concluded.

However, even today these secular denialists are a small minority, and for all their stridency are not really making much more of a case for their non-beliefs than generations of atheist theorists before them have done.

As a Jew who has been lucky enough to have found his way back to the Torah-true path, even if actually walking that path is never easy, I can view the earnest strivings of others to transcend the mundane and search for deeper answers with a sense of sympathetic detachment.

This is really true of the Jewish people as a whole, even though to say so still causes embarrassment in secular Jewish circles and angry resentment in most gentile ones. We can affirm with confidence that ours is a religious heritage conceived by G-d to define Man, not an artificial tradition invented by Man to define G-d.

Jewish prophecies, which are echoed in the Christian texts as

well, foresee that the “End of Days” scenario in which we are said to be living, would be characterised by a profound longing for Divine guidance.

As the famous verse in Amos (8:11) puts it: “Behold, the days

come, saith the L-rd G-D, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the L-RD.”

It may be that the growing openness to discussing issues of faith (even from the sceptic’s point of view), that I am definitely seeing more and more in modern-day discourse is evidence of that.

How many Jews in world population of 7 billion?

DAN KLEIN
NEW YORK

COULD THE 7 billionth person on the planet be Jewish?

According to the United Nations Population Fund, the Earth welcomed its 7 billionth resident on October 31. Statistically, the newborn was most likely a boy in India or China. The symbolic title was given to Danica May Camacho, born two minutes before midnight in Manila in the Philippines.

There is no reason, however, it couldn’t have been Ava Sarah Keyrallah, who was born later that evening in Paris.

“Every single second, four to five new babies are born in the world,” Sergio DellaPergola, a professor of population studies at Hebrew University, told JTA by e-mail. “It is difficult to say exactly which baby was the 7 billionth inhabitant of Earth. But why not dream that it might have been a Jew?”

The daughter of a French Jewish mother and a Lebanese Christian father, the 7-pound Ava Sarah joined a world in which one in 510 people is Jewish, but where the Jewish world as a whole, according to demographers, grows unevenly.

That Jewish world is one increasingly defined by a small number of population centres, according to a study by DellaPergola titled “World Jewish Population, 2010”.

Approximately 80 per cent of Jews live in Israel and the United



Ava Sarah Keyrallah was born in Paris on October 31, the day the United Nations celebrated the 7 billionth child being born. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY CELINE ABISOR)

States, and the nine countries with more than 100 000 Jews constitute 91.1 per cent of the total worldwide Jewish population.

Further, Jews remain exceptionally urbanised, with half living in just five cities and two-thirds living in 11 cities.

“Jewish population stands at somewhat above 13.5 million and very slowly grows - only thanks to Israel’s component, now approaching 43 per cent of the total world Jewry,” DellaPergola said.

Israel, the world’s most fertile developed nation, is the engine of Jewish population growth. Like the rest of the world, Israel saw a mas-

sive decline in fertility rates during the 1970s and 1980s due to increases in public health and education for women. Unlike the rest of the world, however, Israel stabilised in the early ‘90s and since then has maintained a fertility rate of 2.9 children per woman.

“Israel has an unprecedented birth rate,” said Leonard Saxe, a professor of contemporary Jewish studies at Brandeis University whose current research involves demographic studies of American Jewry. “Women have high birth rates.”

By 1995, according to the World Bank, Israeli women for the first time began having more children than the rest of the world. And last year, Israel surpassed Saudi Arabia to become the most fertile developed nation in the world. At the beginning of 2010, Israel had a Jewish population of 5.7 million.

Counting Jews outside of Israel is no simple task. Where Israel has a government census, Jewish communities in the Diaspora must rely on less rigorous and consistent methods, which leads to disagreements over numbers.

In general, demographers agree that the Diaspora population is in decline due to low fertility rates. Other factors changing the Jewish population include migration, “opting out” of Jewish life, intermarriage and choosing not to raise children as Jews.

Even if the population is shrinking, demographer Ira Sheskin of the University of Miami says, there is still a bright side for young Ava.

“Jews are a tiny percentage of the world,” he said. “They’re going to continue to decrease - and win Nobel Prizes.” (JTA)

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week prior to publication

Artisan Contemporary Gallery, Morningside, Durban: “Memories” an exhibition by 30 artists, curated by Sue Greenberg in celebration of 29 years’ association with the gallery, until December 24, (031) 312-4364.

Everard Read and Circa Gallery, Rosebank: “Paint” by Kerri Evans in Everard Read; “redeconstructivist” by Paula Louw, in Circa; until December 4, (011)788-4805.

Foxwood House Theatre, Houghton: “So French”, with Daniele Pascal, November 11; on November 18, an Agatha Christie-style murder mystery: “The Strange Case of the Headmaster’s Wife”, with Paul Spence and Annie Robinson, (011) 486-0935.

Goodman Gallery: In Parkwood, “Other Faces” by William Kentridge, until December 23, (011) 788-1113. In Woodstock, “Portraits” by David Goldblatt, until December 10, (021) 462-7579.

Joburg Theatre, Braamfontein: In the Nelson Mandela, Janice Honeyman’s, “Cinderella”, until December 30. In the Fringe, Matthew Ribnick’s “Monkey Nuts” until December 4. In the People’s Theatre, Jill Girard and Keith Smith’s “Beauty and the Beast”, until December 24, (011) 877-6800.

Market Theatre, Newtown: In the Laager, Craig Higginson’s “Girl in the Yellow Dress” until December 18. In the Main Theatre, Nik Rabinowitz, back by popular demand, with “You Can’t Be Serious”, November 14-19. In the Barney Simon, Paul Mpumelelo Grootboom’s “Rhetorical”, November 15-20, (011) 832-1641.

Montecasino, Fourways: In the Studio, Sonia Esgueira’s “Porrallicious!”, until November 13; Steve Solomon’s “My Mother’s Italian, My Father’s Jewish and I’m in Therapy” with Michael Richard opens November 16 for eight weeks. In the Pieter Toerien Theatre, “Menopause the Musical”, until January 8, (011) 511-1988.

Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton: Mark Sampson’s “Africa Clockwise” until November 19. Friday lunchtime concert on November 11 features the Goldberg Chamber players playing works by Bruch, (011) 883-8606.

Victory Theatre, Orange Grove: “Relive the 50s: Kwela Bafana”, a revived stage musical, directed by Phyllis Klotz and Smal Ndaba, performed by the Sibikwa Players, featuring Bra B Ngwenya, until December 10, (011) 728-9603.

TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Kwela Bafana is truly a not-to-be-missed show

Show: “Kwela Bafana” Victory Theatre, Houghton (011) 728-9603
Directed and devised by: Phyllis Klotz and Smal Ndaba
Musical director: Themba Mkhize
Cast: Andries Mbali; Velephi Khumali; Dumisani Mhlanga; Mduduzi Mkhethi; Simphiwe Nkabinde; Nkosana Xulu
Band: Simphiwe Kubheka (drums); Sabelo Masondo (bass/double bass); Lunga Mgcina (saxophone); Wandile Molefe (keyboard); Bra B Ngwenya (keyboard)
Design: Todd Twala (choreography); Sarah Roberts (costume, set); Kenny Bolokwe (lighting)
Until: December 10 (the show alternates with performances of Umoja)

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPH: RUPHIN COUDYZER

POPULAR MUSIC is arguably an era’s most potent indicator. Kwela Bafana, first performed in 1992, locally and at the Edinburgh Festival, makes your heart glad at the extraordinarily beautiful music made and performed in townships during the 1950s blemished as they were by forced removals and other hideous apartheid realities. This quasi-documentary musical, complete with narrative vignettes and patent leather

spats, is revived by Phyllis Klotz and Smal Ndaba. It’s one of the best shows on stage right now. The ensemble reflect the cream of Sibikwa - Klotz and Ndaba’s Benoni-based arts collective established 21 years ago. “Smal and I have wanted to revive Kwela Bafana for three or four years,” said Klotz, shortly before the opening. “The fifties are so hot right now. And lottery and National Arts Council funds have made it possible.” While it is a little raw around the edges, sheer exuberance and talent brings the house down. Led by the wonderful Velephi Khumalo, the show’s harmonies will make you think of the Manhattan Brothers and Miriam Makeba. But wait, there’s more. The draw card is Bra B, a member of the original 1959 King Kong cast. Born in 1935, Bra B still has the spunk and verve to knock you off your chair. Seated mid-stage in a fedora with a bowtie, his dignified presence says it all. He touches the keyboard for the first time in the show’s second half, in a decision of directorial genius. Bra B, with his almost toothless grin, holds sway over the audience, causing the shine of the rest of the cast to mute momentarily. The fact that he’s given promi-



The blokes and their fa-fi board: Fezela (Mdu Mkhethi); Poison (Dumisani Mhlanga); Styles (Andries Mbali) and Spikes (Simphiwe Nkabinde).

nence only toward the end of the show, allows you to breathe in the fineness of the full ensemble, for the rest of the show; thus making your heart fit to burst with delight at the finale. The repertoire ranges from a cappella to pieces involving the full band; it flits and jives through the ‘50s, featuring, among others, the moving 1954 Lakushon’langa (When the sun goes down... I will find you) by Macky Davashe, Todd Matshikiza’s 1959 King Kong theme song and his Back of the Moon, tunes replete with not only the bittersweet story of boxer Ezekiel Dlamini, but also delicious caveats of scat and harmony, making your body jive in your seat. All too quickly, it’s over. The finale is Strike Vilakazi’s ironic Meadowlands, an audience medley, which allows you to escape your seat and dance in the aisles and on stage. What a show! You won’t want to see this only once.

Getting swept away in hot flushes and chocolate binges...

ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MONTECASINO THEATRE

FIVE YEARS ago, an off-Broadway hit premised on menopause, a condition people normally don’t celebrate in public, rocked South Africa’s audience base with sold-out seasons in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Menopause the Musical, written by Jeanie Linders in 2001 in Orlando, is back. Says Hazel Feldman of Showtime Management, the show’s producer: “The show is stunning! While not all the performers are menopausal, the cast is so fantastic, you forget this and get swept away in allusions to hot flushes, memory loss, chocolate binges, night sweats, weight gain and everything else which make menopause so real!” While it’s essentially the same show fans saw in 2006/2007, with the same sets, costumes and repertoire, Feldman is not nervous about bookings. “Pieter Toerien and I reckoned it’s time for a comeback. Everyone knows these songs. “The show takes a serious subject and makes a joke of it, but every woman - and actually every man who’s had anything to do with a woman - can relate to it,” she added. It’s directed by Patty Bender, the show’s international director. Choreography is by Vicky Friedman; AFDA-trained Rowan Bakker is musical director.



Judy Ditchfield as the housewife and Brenda Radloff as the ageing hippie, in the off-Broadway musical, Menopause the Musical, which opened this week.

“Musically it is 25 relyricised pop songs from the sixties and seventies. The songs - like ‘My Thighs’ (a corruption of Mary Wells’ number one hit single in MoTown, 1964, My Guy) and ‘My Husband Sleeps Tonight’ (which spoofs the song known as ‘Wimoweh’, number one on the charts in 1961 for the doo-wop group, The Tokens) - are relevant to baby boomers - who are going through menopause now.

buried secrets of their parents, as well as their own genetic make-up. A quirky element of the story is a talking dog whose communication with his master is related through subtitles and anyone who can pull this off effectively, gets my vote. The film opens with Oliver (Ewan McGregor) cleaning out the home of his father, Hal (Christopher Plummer), who has just died. The place is sad and empty. Oliver finds a bottle of pills and flushes them down the toilet. Hal’s pet dog, a Jack Russell named Arthur, is also hurting. Oliver adopts Arthur and discovers this hapless hound is in constant need of companionship, and has to be with him all the time. The narrative, with its many flashbacks, is a touching experience and the relationship between Hal and his much younger lover Andy, played by ER’s Goran Visnjic, is sensitively handled. Writer and director Mills has based the story on his own experiences when his father declared in later life that he was gay. The film is not, as one would expect, a depressing experience. It’s gentle, playful, creative and

ultimately happy, with Ewan McGregor and veteran star Christopher Plummer giving immaculate performances as the father and son. McGregor submerges deeply into Oliver, offering moments of shining subtlety in his portrayal, while the effervescent Plummer has never been in better form as he shows the world that, despite the character’s illness, the man still has a voracious appetite for life. Another shining light is the beautiful French actress, Mélanie Laurent, who first came to the fore in Tarantino’s “Inglorious Basterds”. She plays an actress named Anna who works her way into Oliver’s affections. They meet at Halloween party and she is suffering from laryngitis and cannot speak, so she passes him notes: She asks why he is at a party if he is so sad. It’s a question that stuns Oliver, but he can’t deny it. Their relationship develops as Oliver recognises that he has always prevented himself from engaging in a truly meaningful relationship with a woman because he has difficulty conveying his feelings. Overall, “Beginners” is a warm, uplifting production.



FELDMAN
ON FILM
Peter Feldman

PICK OF THE WEEK

Beginners

Cast: Ewan McGregor; Christopher Plummer; Mélanie Laurent
Director: Mike Mills

“Beginners” is the bittersweet story of a young man who discovers that his terminally ill father is gay and has taken a younger lover. How he copes with the situation, and deals with his own mental and spiritual turmoil, forms the thrust of Mike Mills’ delightfully engaging cinematic excursion. For director Mills, “Beginners” is a deeply personal narrative as he artfully explores sadness, loneliness and love and questions the belief that humans can be stunted in their growth by the

TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Good reads with a local flavour

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

Ants in the Big Onion by Annica Foxcroft (Random House Struik, R170)

A B&B in Meyerton called the Fox 'n Zulu - run by a maid-turned-entrepreneur and her former madam - is the central meeting point for a group of stereotypical South Africans. As they share their respective challenges, ranging from tumultuous love affairs to business crises, they forge a bond that transcends even the most insidious racial prejudice. A light-hearted, skilfully delineated caricature of our country, its peoples and the times we live in.

Never Too Naked by Bambi Kellermann (Random House Struik, R200)

Fans of Evita Bezuidenhout may recall her recent run-in with her sordid little sister, Bambi Kellermann, which culminated in Bezuidenhout attempting to quash the publication of this salacious, hilarious memoir, Ag, sies, man! Kellermann spills the beans about the unwholesome Bezuidenhout/Poggenpoel families (a history most decent people would rather forget), her escapades in the world's glamour capitals, her encounters with legendary sirens like Marlene

Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe and Ava Gardner, and her days rubbing shoulders (and other body parts) with the likes of President Alfredo Stroessner, Chris Barnard and John F Kennedy. She's also apparently on good terms with Pieter-Dirk Uys. A crude and capricious romp through the psyche of white South Africans, eliciting the following comment from the mortified Evita: "I have no intention of reading this disgusting collection of lies and slander. As a Christian, I know I should forgive her. "Archbishop Tutu has always reminded us that reconciliation starts at home. But there are some lines that have been crossed here and I will not take these horrible libels lying down."

South African Odyssey: The Autobiography of Bertha Goudvis edited by Marcia Leveson (Picador Africa, R200)

A feminist and free spirit way ahead of her time, Bertha Goudvis' long life spanned three wars and the emergence of South Africa from colonialism to modern statehood. Having immigrated from England at the age of five in 1881, Goudvis' life among both English and Afrikaans communities gave her a unique vantage point into the socio-political dynamics of this country and the individuals who shaped its history. A journalist, novelist, librettist and

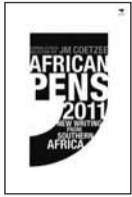
short story writer, Goudvis' trenchant observations - superbly edited by Leveson - offer rare insights into her environment and a unique mindset bolstered by natural resilience and enduring optimism. "(Life) has taught me not to expect too much from G-d or Man, but to accept with thankfulness the good that comes my way," she wrote. Well noted - then, as now.

The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter by Albie Sachs (Souvenir Press, R195)

This updated, revised edition of Sachs' celebrated memoir spans his years as an anti-apartheid activist, in the course of which he lost his right arm and an eye in a car bomb attack while in exile.

Recounting his battle to recover - both physically and spiritually - from the experience, Sachs explains the forces which helped drive him back into life and politics. These included an unassailable belief in the possibility of a free South Africa, the realisation that he still had much to contribute and, above all, a profound well of courage. The book includes his insights into South Africa's more recent history, his involvement in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and his reflections on the principles in which our new Constitution is grounded. An inspiring read. *African Pens 2011: New Writing*

From *Southern Africa*, edited by JM Coetzee (Jacana, R114)



Sarah Lotz, William Oosthuizen and Fadhila Mazanderani.

The winning submission, "The Story" by James Whyte, offers startling revelations of the obduracy and anger underpinning modern South Africa and the failure of redefined ideologies to effect real change. Despite a curiously laconic, almost reluctant introduction by Coetzee explaining in the most cursory terms the criteria by which stories were judged, the collection is both entertaining and enlightening.

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Cutback time, but Cinderella still a romp!



Not only does Fanny (Robert Whitehead) need a shoe horn for the famous crystal slipper, she needs a prosthetic foot! Behind her, is her sister, Flossie (Tobie Cronjé). The prince's consort, Dandini (Stephen Jubber) looks on aghast.



"Lots for us, and none for you!" The ugly sisters, Flossie (Tobie Cronjé) and Fanny (Robert Whitehead), veto their step-sister, Cinderella's (Carmen Pretorius) access to an invite to the royal ball.

Show: *Cinderella*, Nelson Mandela Theatre, Joburg Theatre, Braamfontein (011) 877-6800
Cast: Tobie Cronjé; Stephen Jubber; Tammi Meyer; Bongzi Mthombeni; Carmen Pretorius; Siby Radebe; Malcolm Terrey; Anna-Mart van der Merwe; Jaco van Rensburg; Robert Whitehead; an ensemble cast of 12, featuring child ballroom dancers from the Richmond School of Dance in Orange Farm, and a five piece band.
Director: Janice Honeyman
Musical director: Heidi Edeling
Band leader: Coenraad Rall.
Design: Jaco van Rensburg (choreography); Graham McLusky (lighting); Dave Smeda (sound)
Until: December 30

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIOLA BIELA

THIS, THE 22nd end-of-year pantomime under Janice Honeyman's direction, is in the name of fun in capital letters, and silliness, appropriate with the time of year. It does,

however, reflect economic cutbacks. Hinging on the old story of the pretty girl who debunks her rotten personal deal with nasty siblings and nastier menial expectations, to win the heart of the handsomest boy in town, it's sprinkled with jokes and punts in English and Afrikaans, that dot all the I's and cross all the T's of this type of show. With Anna-Mart van der Merwe as the guiding fairy to the tale, and Bongzi Mthombeni and Carmen Pretorius as the leading couple, its prettiness claims are high. This panto doesn't feature as much fall-on-the-floor funny dialogue with baddies as we've seen in the past. However; while there's the sprinkling of risqué jokes, the hilarity is generally sedate. The advertising punts, in gesture and lyrics honouring the input of sponsors at times are funny, at others, tired; but the cruellest cutback of all is that after all is said and done: pumpkins become chariots, and tablecloths cloaks, the amiable donkey, Donkey Outie (Jaco van

Rensburg), turns into a plastic unicorn. Gone are the days when real horses were panto stars, complete with real live magic. Having said that, the ugliest girls you could possibly imagine, Robert Whitehead and Tobie Cronjé, as Fanny Flatulina and Flossie Flemerina, embody the roles of the sisters with total aplomb, complete with toilet humour, spite and malice. But they don't incite us to a frothy sense of outrage nearly enough, what with sweetly constructed dynamics between Cinderella's buddy Buttons (Siby Radebe) and name changing shenanigans in the forest. The cherry on top is a cameo by tots from Orange Farm's Richmond School of Dance - the smallest couple can't be older than eight - who bring the house down with their abundance of cuteness. Watching them cha-cha-cha-ing and waltzing at Prince Charming's ball, will justify the cost of your ticket and saturate your start to the holidays with joy.

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LETTERS

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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
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HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO BRENDA STERN ON NEW JOB

I REFER to the article in the Jewish Report of November 4, “Stern advises Israeli Embassy on strategic projects”. Congratulations to Stern on her appointment as manager of strategic projects for the Israeli Embassy in Pretoria. It should be mentioned that Stern was a valuable member of the Cape Board of Deputies a few years back and she was both successful and well known as an activist for and on

MACKINTOSH AND GEFFEN GET PUBLICITY THROUGH SAJR

(DANIEL) Mackintosh/(Nathan) Geffen should be grateful to the Jewish Report for the publicity they receive through your pages - which I expect they appreciate. But for the Jewish Report, they would be unknown! Having seen Mackintosh’s picture in

NO PRICE TOO HIGH FOR A PRECIOUS ISRAELI LIFE

THE EXCHANGE of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for 1 027 Palestinian prisoners, including 279 sentenced to life imprisonment for multiple murders of innocent civilians, must stand, by virtue of its asymmetry, as one of the most extraordinary transactions in history. One would have to be blind not to see in this lopsidedness the stark difference in values between the two sides. Gilad was 19 years old at the time of his abduction near the Gaza border. He was never charged with any crime, nor was he brought before a court of law. Deprived of sunlight for over 2 000 days in the solitary confinement of a cellar, he was denied all contact with the outside world, including the Red Cross. His captors claim that he was confined according to the precepts of Islamic justice. The Palestinian prisoners, on the other hand, were convicted in a court of law and held according to international legal standards. They mixed with other prisoners, had television, books and newspapers and were allowed to study for degrees. Among those released was Abbas Sayyid, responsible for killing 30 Israeli civilians, including three generations of one family at a Passover seder. He had been sentenced to 35 consecutive terms of life imprisonment. Another was Hassan Salameh, responsible for killing 46 people and wounding scores more. He was serving 38 consecutive terms of life imprisonment. It was only because Israel outlawed the death penalty in 1954 (the first modern

WHY IS SAJBD REJECTING A TWO-STATE SOLUTION?

IN 1948 the Provisional State Council of Israel declared the state. It decided not to indicate the borders of Israel in the independence declaration, so as to leave open the possibility of expansion beyond the 1947 UN partition plan. Under David Ben-Gurion Israel began using diplomacy and military force to acquire territory. Even in 1948 Israel had military supremacy. Although it had a technological disadvantage until an arms shipment arrived from Czechoslovakia, Israelis outnumbered the opposing forces. Ben-Gurion understood then that non-specification of borders suits the strong. The Arab leadership in Palestine rejected the UN partition. This was understandable; they were allocated one third of the land while constituting two thirds of the population. But the 1948-49 War left them with less land and the permanent displacement of 700 000 men, women and children. The bid by the Palestinian Authority for UN recognition is an attempt to transcend this history; it has opponents both left and right. Some on the left advocate a single state, hoping to put aside religious identities in a secular country. Unlike in South Africa where urbanisation made black people the majority in the cities, in Israel there is effective territorial separation, due in part to the substitution of Palestinian labour by migrant workers from Asia. For a just solution, stopping the settlement enterprise must be the first objective, Although it won’t immediately give them the reality of independence. The Palestinian, Israeli, US, EU and South African governments, all claim to support a two-state solution. But the Palestinian bid has shown that Israel and its allies are only ready to pay lip-service to the idea.

behalf of the South African Jewish community. Not only is Stern capable and erudite, but she certainly has no fear when it comes to voicing her opinion. We wish her great strength to her arm in all her endeavours in assisting the Israeli Embassy.

Michael Bagraim
Cape Town

your paper, I feel that a year spent training with the Royal Marines or US Marines, would do him a world of good, if he survived the experience.

Hymie Stein
Johannesburg

democracy to do so) that these Arab prisoners became tradable entities at all. If their crimes had been committed in any Arab country, they would long since have been executed. The contempt for life that permeates the Arab world, explains why torture and execution are so widely used for the maintenance of public order and why mothers rejoice when their children martyr themselves. And it also explains the asymmetry of this exchange. For Israelis, Gilad Shalit wasn’t just an anonymous soldier - he was everyone’s son. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Gilad’s parents, Aviva and Noam: “I’m bringing your boy back,”, he spoke not only for, but to, all Israelis. No doubt the price of this exchange is enormous and no Israeli is oblivious to the fact that it will probably lead to further suicide attacks. But every Israeli understands that returning a solitary soldier to the bosom of his family is what has made Israel the unique country it is and continues to keep it so. This respect for life - every life - engenders the responsibility Israelis feel for one another. It is the value that has sustained Jewish solidarity for 3 000 years. While upholding values doesn’t come cheap, Israelis will take some satisfaction from the knowledge that they value one of their own as equal to 1 027 terrorists.

R Volpe
Port Elizabeth

The occupation is not a source of sufficient moral discomfort to Israelis. Except for the minority who do combat military service, the oppression of Palestinians is out of sight for the average Israeli. The Palestinian Authority has played its gambit against this background. It is risky, but what else is left for the Palestinian leadership to do to change the status quo? The Board of Deputies and Zionist Federation expressed regret that our government supports the Palestinian bid. It is disappointing that the Board of Deputies took this position. The Board has an important mission: “The SAJBD works for the betterment of human relations between Jews and all other peoples of SA based on mutual respect, understanding and goodwill, and to protect the civil liberties of South African Jews. “It is committed to a South Africa where everyone will enjoy freedom from the evils of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination.” There is nothing about supporting the narrow interests of the current Israeli government. To a large extent the Board fulfils its mission, but it fails when it takes positions on Israel. By publicly opposing the Palestinian bid and our government’s position on it, it does a disservice to its mission and to South African Jews. Opposition to Palestinian statehood also does a disservice to Israelis. International recognition of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in East Jerusalem, would give Israel recognition of West Jerusalem, something it has never had before.

Nathan Geffen
Cape Town

This letter has been shortened. - Editor

THOUSANDS SPENT ON RUSSELL COULD BE USED FOR STARVING AFRICANS

THE DEMONISATION of Israel, an industry that provides employment to hundreds of people worldwide and is a multi-million dollar business, whose workers do very little else than plan and plot various initiatives to delegitimise Israel, is on the roll again. This time under the banner of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine called an “international people’s court” which bears no resemblance whatsoever to a court of law or tribunal, other than in name only. The “jurors” and “expert witnesses” carefully selected for their well-documented bias against Israel, travelled to Cape Town in early November to take part in this hate fest headed by none other than The “Arch” (Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu) himself. So, we had about 40 international guests making up this circus and one can only speculate at the cost of this venture. No doubt these esteemed participants would only travel first class or the very least, business class, stay at five-star hotels in Cape Town which don’t come too cheaply today - and who knew for how long our visitors would stay. Don’t forget that not only did they participate in their orgy of hate in District Six, but they were no doubt booked for talks at universities and other venues (at a fee). Let’s not forget witness fees and juror’s fees over and above their salaries - dollar-based of course.

THE BAFFLING ENIGMA OF THE SELF-HATING JEW

THE QUESTION has come up again and again: Why do certain Jewish individuals see fit to side with the enemies of Israel and the Jewish people? Why do some Jews criticise Israel constantly while turning a blind eye to the myriads evils perpetrated by Palestinians and Arab nations against Jews, non-Arab minorities, non-Muslims, and even their own people? Allow me to shed some insight into what I think is the mindset of the self-hating Jew. Firstly, the self-hating Jew usually comes from a dysfunctional family or has other psychological issues that have caused him to feel alienated from the Jewish community. He or she is lashing out at fellow Jews and Israel, in an effort to shock them or to get back at them. Secondly, the self-hating Jew is an attention seeker, but at the same time he or she is a coward. Taking a one-sided anti-Israel, anti-Jewish stance is a good way for him or her to

VISITING KNP? WATCH OUT FOR MALARIA AND TICK BITE FEVER

THOSE WHO intend going to the Kruger National Park for the upcoming holidays, should heed warnings about malaria and tick bite fever. Malaria is a eukaryotic plasmodium disease spread by the female Anopheles mosquito. Typically the malaria parasites invade the red blood cells. This results in fever, headache and can result in coma leading to death. Falciparum is the dangerous form of malaria leading to the most fatalities. Fundamental to the understanding of malaria is an understanding of the life cycle of the malaria parasite in the mosquito and the human host and the sexual and asexual forms of the parasite. Malaria kills over one million people each year, most of whom are young children, under five years, with 95 per cent of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. Each year there are over 300 million cases of malaria. Malaria is responsible for one out of four deaths in children each year in Africa. Women are four times more likely to get sick and twice as likely to die if they are pregnant. There is more and more chloroquin resistance against malaria and DDT is not as effective as it used to be. Artemesin has come to the fore as a form of treatment. Tick bite fever has been a constant scenario in South Africa. Only recently has it been established that there are two aetiological agents with different epidemiologies and clin-

G-D TRULY WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

WHEN ONE considers: (a) Goldstein’s UN Gaza Report; (b) the acclaim he received from pro-Palestinian activists; (c) his subsequent retraction of some sections of that report; (d) then his op-ed in the New York Times regarding Israel not being an apartheid state, which delivered a fatal blow to the BDS movement; and (e) in Cape Town

You would no doubt see these folk at some of the finest dining establishments in the Cape and why not, a little relaxation after the gruelling court procedures... What better place to holiday (free, gratis and for nothing) than Cape Town in November and who would turn such an opportunity down with the added incentive of being able to demonise Israel in every which way possible! But then, isn’t the exorbitant cost of staging Russell far better than supporting organisations like the “Gift of the Givers” who could use these millions to save the lives of thousands of starving children in Somalia, where the organisation is doing such magnificent work. The cost of a few thousand little African children’s lives must pale into insignificance to the value that Russell brought to the party, after all those starving people are only Africans and life is cheap in Africa! But then, the plight of Africa - starvation, war, genocide, and rape - has never been a worthwhile industry for the human rights activists or for that matter the UN Human Rights Commissioner herself and for other UN agencies. Africa simply doesn’t appear on their radar screen, but Israel bashing is a big and lucrative business.

Allan Wolman
Norwood, Johannesburg

indulge both of these seemingly contradictory traits. The self-hating Jew seeks to ingratiate himself or herself before Islamists, leftists, and others deemed politically correct, because he or she is not brave enough to take these forces on. Therefore it is much easier to attack a soft target, like his or her own community, than huge, worldwide malevolent forces. Finally, I have a theory - and it is only a theory - but it’s worthy of thought: Perhaps if we were allowed access to a self-hating Jew’s finances, we would see that he or she benefits greatly from the deep pockets of Saudi Arabia, Iran, certain Emirati families, and other Islamist petro-interests, who will pay handsomely for the ultimate propagandist - a Jew who hates his or her own people.

Jared Joel
Sydenham, Johannesburg

ical presentations. They are Rickettsia conorii and Rickettsia Africa. Rickettsia Africa is the milder form of the disease. Rickettsia conorii can be fatal. The treatment of choice is doxycycline or tetracycline. Macrolides and quinolones may be of value. The incubation period for R conorii is five to seven days. The eschar is the primary lesion and indicates the site of attachment of the infected tick. It consists of a central necrotic area surrounding inflamed skin. Clinical presentation may be mild to severe and includes encephalitis, confusion, coma, pulmonary embolism, bleeding, myocarditis, hepatorenal failure and coagulopathy. The diagnostic triad consists of eschar, fever and rash. The rash may resemble rubella, measles, secondary syphilis, enterovirus, gonorrhoea, arbovirus, leptospirosis, drug reactions and immune complex disorders. The diagnosis of the South African variety of tick bite fever can be made if the classic triad of fever, eschar and rash is present. Less typical forms of TBF present with a wide range of clinical features and severity. The treatment of choice is either tetracycline or doxycycline.

Dr H D Solomons
Highlands North, Johannesburg

We have combined two letters from this writer and shortened them. - Editor

David Abel
SAZ Co-chairman
George

LETTERS

PHONE CALL OR TWO COULD HAVE RESOLVED CLASH OF DATES

WHAT A pity that the Rabin Memorial lecture is being held on November 8, as it clashes with the UJW’s 80th birthday event which was organised months and months ago and is surely written into the communal diary, which obviously no one bothers to look at!

I am very irritated with the community because there is a certain selfishness within it when it comes to showing some responsibility towards each other regarding the planning of these events.

All it needs is a few phone calls here and there to find out if there is a clash and if so, to try and make other arrangements that are mutually acceptable. Just a small effort from the staff and the bosses of that organisation and that is all(that is needed).

The UJW (and possibly one or two other women’s organisations) always try their best NOT to clash with the events of other organisations and often to their own great inconvenience. The UJW’s 80th birthday event is a case in point.

At the beginning of the year they began setting a date for late 2011 but after setting a date they discovered another community event had already occupied. And so it went on, yet again to look for another date that was free.

This is NOT the first time there have been

clashes of functions and I wonder why we just can’t get it right. It’s time we put our heads together and get the communal diary working. The Jewish community mostly read the Jewish Report, so this medium is the best way to advertise the communal diary and hopefully to also shake up the various organisations to come to the party and learn to play fair!

The communal diary is housed in Johannesburg at Beyachad in the office of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and we expect organisations to respect each other and to kindly diarise your functions and events in this Diary in good time.

In this way we can circumvent the anger, frustration and the disrespect to each other that these clashes generate.

We need to desist from selfishly going ahead and doing our own thing. Let’s show some ubuntu for the coming year 5772/2012 and not do unto others what you would not want to be done to you.

Please note that I write in my private capacity and on the above issue I am not carrying a flag for any particular organisation.

Ray Wolder
Corlett Gardens, Johannesburg

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



ABOVE BOARD

Mary Kluk,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

THE RUSSELL Tribunal on Palestine (RToP) has just concluded its two-day proceedings in Cape Town, but its impact is by no means behind us. Already, a number of highly emotive articles reporting on what was discussed, have appeared in the mainstream press and we can expect more of the same over the next few days.

Our expectations that the RToP would make a mockery of fair, reasoned debate were more than confirmed. Time and again, Israel was accused of gross human rights abuses as if its actions had no reasonable cause or context.

I think only of the case of a Palestinian woman who received weeks of specialised medical treatment in an Israeli hospital after being severely burned, yet on one such visit returned with a suicide bomb belt which she attempted - unsuccessfully - to detonate.

These are the kind of incidents that the RToP, supposedly a gathering of concerned human rights activists, completely neglected to deal with. It was a body that lied by omission, not occasionally but continually throughout its proceedings.

In preparing a counter-strategy, the Board worked closely with the SAZF and in consultation with a range of local and international experts within the overall structure of FairplaySA.

Our decision was not simply to be reactive, but to go on to the offensive at an early stage. It resulted in unprecedented co-operation between communal organisations and the different regions, and the fruits of this quickly became apparent in

How SA Jewry took on Russell Tribunal

the favourable media coverage obtained and the impact made through the social media.

We established a national media response team, activated on SMS, and assembled a team of experts ready to respond. Many op-eds and letters appeared in the mainstream papers and reports on the proceedings invariably quoted our side.

There was a positive response to our media packs delivered to journalists beforehand. In the electronic media, several of our spokespeople were interviewed on radio, our most noteworthy success being NGO Watch director, Prof Gerald Steinberg’s debating John Dugard on SAfm and acquitting himself excellently.

Among other initiatives, we also started a Facebook page called Russell the Kangaroo, and set up a twitter account. Some of us demonstrated against the proceedings in specially-made kangaroo outfits (the Kangaroo Court theme indeed proved to be very effective in holding the RToP up to public ridicule).

Compared to how well-funded the RToP was, we had to operate on the proverbial shoe-string, yet we were able to go toe-to-toe with its promoters and forthrightly challenge their right to assume the moral high ground.

Notwithstanding these achievements, which in many ways put the latter on the back foot, we certainly cannot rest on our laurels. Our strategy now is to keep up the pressure and do all we can to expose the RToP and its specious findings for what they are, namely a cynical, carefully stage-managed propaganda circus that is in turn part of an ongoing, multi-front political war against Israel.

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Jewish Report

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A portrait of Adolf Eichmann, in an exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of his trial in Jerusalem. (AP PHOTO/SEBASTIAN SCHEINER. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WWW.VOSIZNEA.IS.COM)

Kristallnacht was the harbinger of genocidal evil

ROBYN SASSEN

PAYING TRIBUTE to Holocaust survivors present, Katharina von Ruckteschell-Katte, director of the Goethe Institut in Johannesburg, this week introduced a talk commemorating 73 years since Kristallnacht, on November 9, and 50 years since the November 15 guilty verdict at Adolf Eichmann’s trial in Jerusalem.

Prof Hans Safrian, of the department of contemporary history at the Vienna Institute, was guest speaker.

Tali Nates, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, spoke of how the “series of events that many call the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning of the Holocaust”, were staged to seem unplanned, but were carefully co-ordinated, resulting in the destruction of 1 400 synagogues, deportation of 30 000 men, looting of 7 500 Jewish businesses, cemeteries, hospitals, schools and homes and deaths of 100 Jews, that night.

Adolf Eichmann founded the Central Office for Jewish Emigration, situated in Vienna, shortly thereafter.

Dov Segev-Steinberg, Israel’s Ambassador to SA, Horst Freitag,

Germany’s Ambassador to SA and Deputy Head of Mission, from the Austrian Embassy, Martin Gärtner, spoke of the Holocaust in their lives.

Safrian began research in the 1980s. “Then, the Holocaust knowledge base was small. Many Eastern Europe archives only became accessible once the governments had gone through transition. I wanted to examine the role of certain kinds of perpetrators in National Socialism, and to debunk the myth that Austria was the first victim of National Socialism.”

He also focused his talk drawing from his book Eichmann’s Men, (2003), in which he examined the contradictions in the reflection of Eichmann as the banality of evil, a phrase coined by philosopher Hannah Arendt.

“Historians don’t unpack what has become truism. The defence that Nazis acted on orders they could not evade or disobey, is generalised. It wasn’t specific to Nazi perpetrators; it’s an excuse in any defence for crimes against humanity.

“Eichmann styled himself as the absolute bureaucrat with nothing personal against Jews. In his trial, he didn’t tell outright lies; using glimpses of reality, he manipulated evidence against him to his advantage.”

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

SURVEY SHOWS SLIGHT RISE IN AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM

NEW YORK - Anti-Semitism in the United States has increased slightly since 2009, according to an Anti-Defamation League survey.

Results of the 2011 Survey of American Attitudes Towards Jews in America released on November 3, showed that 15 per cent of Americans held anti-Semitic views, an increase of three per cent since 2009 but matching levels in 2007 and 2005.

The survey also found a five per cent increase, to 19 per cent, of Americans who believe that “Jews have too much control/influence on Wall Street”. Other anti-Semitic views remained constant, with 31 per cent believing that Jews were responsible for Jesus’ death and 30 per cent that Jews were more loyal to Israel than America.

"The stereotypes about Jews and money endure, and the fact that more Americans are now accepting

these statements about Jews as true, suggests that the downturn in the economy, along with the changing demographics of our society, may have contributed to the rise in anti-Semitic sentiments," ADL National Director Abraham Foxman said in a statement.

"Once again, the old anti-Semitic stand-bys about Jewish loyalty, the death of Jesus and Jewish power remain strong."

The poll of 1 754 adults also found a stark correlation between anti-Semitic views and education levels, with nine per cent of college graduates holding some negative feelings toward Jews versus 13 per cent of those who completed some college and 22 per cent who graduated or completed some high school.

The survey was conducted on October 13-23 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2,8 per cent. (JTA)

OXFORD CLUB MEMBERS RESIGN OVER ANTI-SEMITISM

OXFORD - Four members of the Oxford University Conservative Association have resigned over anti-Semitism and snobbery.

The four senior members said they were quitting the association after members sang a song with a Nazi theme during an evening meeting billed as "port and policy", the Telegraph reported.

Student members of the club are facing disciplinary action by the university and the Conservative Party.

Both have launched investigations into the incident, according to the newspaper. Two prime ministers and 13 Cabinet ministers are among the club’s alumni.

The members reportedly sang a song that begins with the line “Dashing through the Reich... killing lots of kike”.

The club has faced accusations of racism in the past. In 2000, four members were expelled for making Nazi salutes. (JTA)

Rosh pilgrimage to Uman invigorates body and soul

SHIRA DRUION
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

IT IS almost impossible to believe that in September every year, over 40 000 Jews, from all over the world, swarm the streets of Uman in The Ukraine for the Rosh Hashanah pilgrimage to pay tribute to iconic Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

The High Holy Days draw the crowds who arrive by the thousands, to take over the little town of Uman to the great delight of the locals who cash in on the Jewish pilgrimage. This year, a group of 30 South African men set out to connect to the encapsulating spirituality that Uman holds.

Rav Nachman, as he is fondly known, is buried in the holy cemetery in Uman, which is also the infamous burial plot for 30 000 Jewish souls who were killed after being forced to choose between converting to Christianity or death.

The Haidamaky Uprising in 1768, saw Ivan Gonta and the Cossacks storm Uman and mercilessly spilt Jewish blood, attempting to force Jews to give up their faith. Today, an enormous building stands on the soil where the Jews were killed, as a Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify G-d’s name.

The Days of Awe are witnesses to Jews from all walks of life, who arrive in numbers to pray at the grave of Reb Nachman, called the “Tzion”. They arrive in bus loads and long lines can be seen at any hour of the day or night as Jews attempt to connect with the spiritual energy of their leader.

Stan Matthews, director of football for Supersport United, who made the pilgrimage this year, recalls his experience: “I have to admit that declaring the holy



Stan Matthews; Ilan Rabinowitz; Shimi Peres; Steven Noik; Sam Michel; Jonathan Rogoff; and Hilton Muller.



Kloiz Shul in Uman in the Ukraine erev Rosh Hashanah.

words of the shema in a Kloiz minyan of 7 500 people, far surpasses the euphoria of standing 10m from Spain as the (Soccer World Cup) trophy was handed to them (in 2010)."

The Kloiz Shul is the original shul in Uman, built over 200 years ago.

Rabbi Yechiel Hager echoes Matthews’ sentiments and tells how he has been accompanying his father to Uman since 1989.

“This year, the experience was a combination of tremendous joy, combined with the awesomeness of this auspicious time. The prayers begin at 06:30 and the experience is an exceptionally unifying and uplifting one, as the humdrum of thousands of Jews, many of whom are great Torah scholars, pray together. This is not something one

hears every day and I have to say that I yearn for this all year round.”

More on Reb Nachman of Breslov: He is famous for his innovative approach to Judaism and for the emphasis he places on various elements of one’s service to G-d. He teaches that in addition to the three regular daily prayers that one should say with a minyan, all Jews should also allocate an hour each day for personal prayer, called hisbodidut.

He teaches that this prayer should be said in one’s mother tongue to ensure a person is connecting to the words that he is saying. He is also very emphatic in his encouraging of service to G-d with joy, and the need to focus on one’s good qualities in order to overcome one’s negative qualities.

This outlook on life ensures that the thousands of diverse Jews who come to Uman, all feel welcome and

are able to plug into the electric energy, regardless of one’s religious level, background, culture and observance. It is truly a multi-cultural conglomeration of Jewish festivity at its best.

The Rosh Hashanah pilgrimage dates back to 1811, when the rebbe’s foremost disciple, Rabbi Nosson of Breslov organised the first such pilgrimage on Rosh Hashanah after Reb Nachman’s death. Reb Nosson informed Reb Nachman’s many students that his wish was that his students would spend Rosh Hashanah at his gravesite.

“The spiritual turbo-boost is unlike anything I have ever experienced to date,” says Matthews. He has already been canvassing for Uman 5773.

At the rebirth of Judaism in Eastern Europe

DAVID SAKS

MORE THAN 200 eminent rabbonim from across Europe and elsewhere, took part in last week’s Conference of European Rabbis in Warsaw. It was the most senior rabbinical gathering in the Polish capital since before the Second World War, with participants including Israel’s Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, the chief rabbis of the UK, France, the Ukraine, Rome and Moscow and heads and dayanim of batei dinim (ecclesiastical courts) from all the major European cities.

Among the non-European rabbis attending was South Africa’s Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, who spoke on the opening day on the role of the rabbi in a modern-day democracy.

The scholar-in-residence was the world renowned poseik (halachic authority) Rabbi Osher Weiss. The entire conference proceedings were conducted in Hebrew, the only common language for such a diverse gathering.

Although the conference had focused primarily on European issues, Rabbi Goldstein believed



Conference participants in the Nozyk Shul, the only surviving shul in Warsaw after the war.

that it was very beneficial for South African Jewry to take part in such gatherings, both in order that the community should not become isolated from the wider Jewish world and in order to have input into resolving the challenges facing it.

It had been an eye-opening experience for him to see how Judaism was being reborn in the Eastern European countries which had been subjected to the double onslaught, first of Nazism and then of communism and yet today was once again beginning to thrive.

It was interesting to see that many of the younger rabbonim who attended, were from Germany, today home to some 200 000 Jews.

One of the main issues discussed was the recent ban by the Dutch government on shechita. Because the current seat of the EU presidency is in Poland, delegations were sent to lobby EU officials on this particular matter.

Rabbi Goldstein said that davening mincha in the Nozyk Shul, the only synagogue in the city that had not been destroyed by the Nazis, had been a particularly moving experience.

The CER, which meets biennially, was founded on the initiative of UK Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie in 1956. Its current president is Swiss-born Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, chief rabbi and Av Beit Din of Moscow. His brother, Rabbi Tuvia Goldschmidt, heads the Beis Midrash Chafetz Chaim in Johannesburg.



Yoni Glassman, triumphant after his cricket match last week.

Hat tricks must surely be in the Glassman genes

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY SUZANNE BELLING

YONI GLASSMAN'S under-11 cricket team from Torah Academy Primary School, were bowled over recently in a match against Japari when the rising cricket star took a hat trick during the victory match.

But that's not all - Yoni, a grade 5 learner, not only made history, but followed in the footsteps of his older brother, Alon (now 23), who also took a hat trick in a Torah Academy Primary School match against Orlando East when he was in grade 6.

"I love playing cricket and intend to do so, like my brother, as long as I can," said a jubilant Yoni, who was given the now-famous cricket ball by his coach.

"I intend to frame it, just like the one Alon has on his wall."

Yoni and Alon - now a third-year accountancy student - are the sons of Dr Michael and Ariella Glassman.

YOUTH TALK

Alison Goldberg youthsajr@global.co.za

KDS art exhibition wows the crowds

VIVIENNE WEINER, KDS ART TEACHER
PHOTOGRAPH: A MANDEL

MORNINGSIDE Shopping Centre hosted the highly successful and popular King David Primary School Sandton annual art exhibition. The lower court was filled with over 600 art works on the opening night.

Diverse media and techniques were used in drawings, paintings and sculptures. Art work was inspired by famous artists, the children's personal adventures, as well as popular culture.

The intense detail of grade 7 fineliner drawings, prompted a viewer to touch them

in order to see if they were real or printed. Impressions of famous art works abounded in grade 6 mixed media pictures of gallery interiors.

Larger than life papier maché desserts encouraged a request to use them as centre pieces for a kitchen tea and inspired queues outside the ice-cream shop. Wire figure sculpture brought about gasps of awe over technical ability.

The children's work was on public display and they lived the life of a professional artist for a week. The praise and recognition they received together with their pride, strength-



Gabriella Friedman; Shayna Slom; and Julia-Rose Platt, all King David Sandton grade twos.

ened their self-esteem.

The opening last week Thursday evening was a cultural experience in itself - visual art, live music and social interaction. An event like this contributes to nurturing a cultural education and revitalises the credence the Jewish people place on the arts.



Rabbi Laurence Perez addressing the learners, parents and grandparents at Yeshiva College Primary School.

YC grade 2s get to grips with parsha

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

ON TUESDAY November 1, the grade 2 learners of Yeshiva College Primary School celebrated the conclusion of learning Parshat Lech Lecha. This was celebrated by a grand siyum to which parents and grandparents were invited.

Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, CEO Rabbi Laurence Perez and Primary School Principal Joseph Beer addressed the learners.

All the learners recited some of their Tefilot; they daven every day and then they said Pesukim with the English translation.

Divrei Torah were prepared and given over by the children. The parents were then invited to make a craft with their child.

As the grade 2s are embarking on learning about Sofer Stam, they beaded a mezuzah cover. The class moms prepared an amazing breakfast buffet for all and party packs for the children. Well done and mazaltov to grade 2 learners and teachers.

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Is Lipman the greatest Jewish rugby player?

JACK MILNER

WHO IS the greatest Jewish rugby player of all time? I can tell you it is not Syd Nomis or Okie Geffen or Maurice Zimmerman or Joel Stransky - not if you are American.

According to a number of American websites the answer is Shawn Lipman. “Who?” you may very well ask.

In fact, Lipman would be pretty well known in the South African Jewish community as he was born in Johannesburg in September 1964 and began his rugby career in this country.

In an interview Lipman said: “I developed a love for rugby at a young age. Rugby was not a sport that was generally played by Jews, but I loved it. I joined Wits University Rugby Club at under-20 level in 1983 on a rugby scholarship.”

He attended Sandringham High School and later played for the Wits 1st XV. “I represented Transvaal under-20s while playing at university, and also South Africa in the Maccabi Games in 1985.

“I emigrated to the United States at the end of 1985 and joined the Santa Monica Rugby Club where I immediately made life-long friends.

“Through my selection to the regional All Star teams, I was selected to play in the United States national team in 1988, earning my first cap against Canada, who we beat for the first time in many attempts.

“I travelled all over the world with the US national team and represented the United States in the 1991 Rugby World Cup in England.”

Lipman represented the US in over 20 international matches, including nine test matches. “I was fortunate enough to play against some of the best national teams and players in the world, including the New Zealand All Blacks, England and France.”

He also played at the Maccabi Games on five occasions as a player, having captained the US team in 1993 and 1997, and represented the US in 1989 and South Africa in 1985.

“At the Maccabiah we won gold in 1985; bronze in 1989; silver in 1993 and gold in 1997 (the first time South Africa did not win the tournament). The biggest honour was being elected as the flag bearer for the entire United States delegation in 1997.”

In 2009, at the age of 44, Lipman came out of retirement to represent the United States at the Maccabiah, winning a bronze medal. This culminated a 24-year career of playing at the Maccabi Games, winning two gold medals, one silver , and two bronze medals.

“I also toured South Africa in 1988 with the Pacific Coast Grizzlies, playing against the best teams in South Africa. My rugby career allowed me to play all



Some Americans seem to believe South African-born Shawn Lipman is the greatest Jewish rugby player. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

over the world against international sides, and took me to places like Russia, Japan, Canada, South Africa, France, England, Israel, Scotland, and Bermuda.”

He was inducted into the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 along with some of the best professional athletes in the United States, including Mark Spitz and Sandy Koufax among many other great Jewish sports stars.

“I also earned MVP of the Year award at the Santa Monica Rugby Club eight times and in 2006 was also inducted into that club’s Hall of Fame.”

In fairness to Lipman, he does not claim to be the best Jewish rugby player of all time, but according to his profile in the Jewish Hall Of Fame, Lipman is “the only Jewish player to ever play in the Rugby World Cup”.

They have obviously never heard of Joel Stransky or Josh Kronfeld.

Expat South Africans in emotional World Cup tizzy

JACK MILNER

THERE ARE not too many South Africa Jews who do not have friends or family who emigrated to Australia. Many of those are avid sports supporters who have either changed allegiance or remain diehard Springbok supporters.

So, one would understand the emotions that would emerge between members of the Jewish community, when South Africa and Australia meet in a Rugby World Cup quarter-final match.

Joshua Levi of The Australian Jewish News, had a look at the attitudes a few days before THAT match last month

The rivalry between native Australian and South African expat Jewish sports fans is as strong as ever.

Both countries’ backers are renowned the world over for their ferocious parochialism when it comes to the exploits of their sporting heroes, especially when they take to the field in opposition. And few contests spark the rivalry like a Springboks-Wallabies battle.

At 16:00 local time on that fateful Sunday, the next battle of this blood feud played out on the biggest stage of them all – the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand.

Since Australia’s shock loss to Ireland in the pool stages earlier, the possibility of a quarter-final showdown between South Africa and Australia had loomed large.

Gleeful Springboks fans took to social networking sites in droves when the Wallabies lost, to heap scorn on their hurting Aussie counterparts - they didn’t know they would be made to eat their posts.

There are thousands of Australians who were born in South Africa who still pledge allegiance to the Springboks. But then there are also plenty who come down on the side of their adopted country.

David Cohen already had his flights to Wellington booked with his friends before Australia lost to Ireland. “The Aussies and a lot of adults give me abuse because I’m a

Springboks supporter but I’ll never switch over,” 23-year-old Cohen said.

Cohen moved to Australia in 1997 when he was only nine years old, but he says he’ll always be a Springboks supporter. “There are two reasons I go for South Africa: I grew up with the 1995 South African rugby team because a lot of them worked for my dad and they are just better than the Wallabies. In every other sport I go for Australia, but in rugby I’ll always be a Springbok.

“I won’t be happy at all if Australia win,” he said before the “Bryce Lawrence” match.

Martin Chimes, on the other hand, had mixed feelings. “I moved to Australia in 1981 but I lived here for 15 years before I switched teams,” the 59-year-old said. According to Chimes, after you move to a new country you have to accept every part of it, including their sporting teams. But whatever the outcome he said before the game, he was looking forward to the match. “At least I won’t be upset if Australia lose.

“It took me a long time, and there is a part of me that wants South Africa to win, but I made a conscious decision to switch. I don’t remember what motivated me, but when it comes to the traditional rivalry, between Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, I don’t mind who wins as long as we always beat New Zealand.”

For diehard Wallabies fan and Australian native Richard Eisenstein, it is a cut and dried affair. “Winning the Ashes is nice but I don’t have many friends from England,” Eisenstein said.

“Beating South Africa means that instead of listening to how great the Springboks are I have bragging rights for the next four years.”

Unfortunately we all know now that the “other” team got the verdict. As for bragging rights, we also know that Australia are not the World Champions for the next four years.

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