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page 12

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So far ‘smooth run’ for haredi draft. Or quiet before the storm?

In the wake of the recent controversial nullification of the law exempting haredi boys from military service in Israel, the haredi community continues to hotly debate the issue. According to Ha’aretz, there are currently 54 000 haredi men of enlistment age who have not served in the IDF. Many are still adamant that they will not be subject to the IDF’s uniforms, military trials or imprisonment; others are supporting the new legislation. Pictured, a haredi man and his son standing next to the Israeli army recruiting office in Jerusalem on August 1, the day the Tal Law was voided. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NOAM MOSKOWITZ/FLASH90/).

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BLUMENTHAL: Jewish nepotism can never be a bad thing

Our children are more vulnerable today than they have ever been... We have bought into the guilt trap of being white, of being responsible for the history of this country.

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SAKS: Jewish Anglo-Boer War dead cement sense of friendship, respect

The Jewish Boer monument project was driven by Afrikaners... It is the sort of thing our country needs to see more of.

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Jewish glory, frustration mark London Games

New medallists US gymnast Aly Raisman, New Zealand rower Jo Aleh and Australian kayaker Jessica Fox, joined previous medallist US swimmer Jason Lezak in glory; hopes that IOC would remember the 11 Israeli athletes murdered in 1972 at Munich Olympics, ended.

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Deputy Minister Ebrahim: SA should ‘discourage’ trips to Israel

The deputy minister said the government could not prevent individuals or organisations from visiting Israel, but merely to “discourage” them from doing so in order to send a strong message of South Africa’s disapproval of Israeli policy vis-à-vis the “occupied territories”.



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17:36	18:27	Bloemfontein
17:32	18:25	Port Elizabeth
17:24	18:16	East London

Community Briefs

US SCHUSTERMAN PHILANTHROPISTS AID SA ENTREPRENEURS

Oil billionaires from Oklahoma, Charles and Lynn Schusterman of the eponymous foundation, last week returned to SA to give \$30 000 in grants to young Jewish innovators in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

The Cape programme, at the Spier Hotel, Stellenbosch, included master classes by Jonathan Marks, formerly of the Raymond Ackerman Foundation for Entrepreneurial Development at UCT and tourist guru Sheryl Ozinsky. The Johannesburg launch, hosted by Jonathan Liebmman, founder of Maboneng featured entrepreneur Ronen Aires, who started Student Village, took place at Arts on Main, central Johannesburg.

Virtue, vice and vision

Blessings and curses. Stirring stuff from the Bible this week as Moses again cautions his congregation. The great prophet reminds them that living a life of goodness will bring them blessings, while ignoring the Divine call must inexorably lead to a cursed existence.

Moses prefaces his admonition with the Hebrew word Re'eh, "See". See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse.

But why see? What is there to see? Did he show them anything at all? The Torah does not use flowery language just because it has a nice ring to it and sounds poetic. What was there to behold? Why Re'eh?

One answer is that how we look will, in itself, determine whether our lives will be blessed or cursed. How do we look at others, at ourselves? Our perspective, how we behold and see things, will result in our own lives being blessed or, G-d forbid, the opposite.

The saintly Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once chanced upon a strong, young man who was brazenly eating on Yom Kippur. The Rabbi suggested that perhaps he was feeling ill. The fellow insisted he was in the best of health. Perhaps he had forgotten that today was the holy day of fasting?

"Who doesn't know that today is Yom Kippur?" responded the young man. Perhaps he was never taught that Jews do not eat on this day? "Every child knows that Yom Kippur is a



PARSHAT RE'EH
Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Sydenham Highlands
North Shul

fast day, Rabbi!"

Whereupon Rabbi Levi Yitzchak raised his eyes heavenward and said: "Master of the Universe, see how wonderful Your people are! Here is a Jew who, despite so many opportunities, simply refuses to tell a lie!" The Berditchever was always able to look at others with a compassionate, understanding and benevolent eye.

How do we view the good fortune enjoyed by others? Are we happy for them, or do we look at them with begrudging envy? How do we look at ourselves and our own shortcomings? Are we objectively truthful or subjectively slanted?

"He is a stingy, rotten good for nothing. Me? I am just careful about how I spend my money." "She is a bore of bores, absolutely anti-social. Me? I am a private person who just happens to enjoy staying at home." "He is as stubborn as an ox! Me? I am just a determined person."

Clearly, the manner in which we look at

our world and those around us will have a major impact on the way life will treat us. Quite justifiably, Moses says See. For how we will see things in life will undoubtedly affect life's outcomes.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson (1880 - 1950) once told how when he was a young child he asked his father: why does a person have two eyes? The right eye, his father replied is to be used lovingly, when looking at a fellow Jew; the left eye is to be used discerningly, when looking at sweets or other objects that are not that important in the grand scheme of things.

When I was in yeshiva, the same building also housed a synagogue where we would often interact with the adult men who would come to the daily minyan. One particular gentleman, may he rest in peace, always seemed to us rather cantankerous, what you might call a grumpy old man. I cannot remember whether he was actually a bit cross-eyed or not, but we referred to him as "left-eyed Sam" because he always seemed to be looking at us students with that proverbial left eye.

The parshah that is entitled Re'eh, "See," is a perennial reminder to all of us that even our vision alone can bring virtue or vice. Let us look at the world correctly and invite the blessings of G-d into our lives.

Jewish glory, frustration mark London Games

JTA STAFF LONDON

The London Olympics may have "lit up the world", as organising committee head Sebastian Coe put it, but for Jews the 2½ weeks offered healthy doses of frustration and glory.

On the plus side, new medalists such as America's Aly Raisman, gained the spotlight with her grace, which included a floor routine to "Hava Nagila" en route to a US women's team gold in gymnastics. She followed that with an individual gold for floor exercise and a bronze on the balance beam.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's Jo Aleh brought home a gold for Kiwi fans in the women's 470 regatta and Australian kayaker Jessica Fox won silver in the slalom K1. They joined in their glory with previous medallists such as US swimmer Jason Lezak, who helped his relay team win a silver in the 4x100-metre freestyle in what was likely the last of his four Olympics.

Yet the Game's opening ceremony ended hopes that the International Olympic Committee would officially recognise with a moment of silence the 11 Israeli athletes murdered 40 years ago at the Munich Olympics by Palestinian terrorists. An international campaign for a moment of silence had the support of President Barack Obama and nu-

merous other world leaders.

And Israel's athletes - for the first time in 24 years - went home without a single medal, which has prompted conversation about the country's lack of commitment to Olympics excellence. Israel's rhythmic gymnastics team made it to the finals, but last Sunday it finished last among the eight teams in the all-around group competition.

Two Israeli citizens, however, are coming home with some Olympic glory. David Blatt, an American-Israeli, coached Russia's bronze-winning men's basketball team and Aleh will soon make a family visit to the Jewish state.

Blatt, the coach of Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv team, has helped rebuild the Russian national squad since being brought in as head coach in 2006, Sports Illustrated reported. He took the team to a 2007 European Championship.

He played for Princeton University from 1977 to 1981 and on the gold medal-winning US team in the 1981 Maccabiah Games. Following the Maccabiah Games, Blatt played for several Israeli teams until he was injured in 1993 and took up coaching.

The disappointment in Israel over the lack of a national delegation medal may be behind what Yuli Edelstein, minister of Diaspora affairs, told Raisman last week as she

accepted his invitation for the Raisman family to be his guests in Israel.

"Making your first visit to Israel is not only important because it is the homeland of the Jewish people, but also because you can contribute from your experience to the young generation of Israeli athletes," Edelstein said, according to The Jerusalem Post.

Beating her to the Jewish State, however, will be Aleh. After a parade back home to celebrate New Zealand's success at the London Games, she reportedly is heading to Israel for the bat mitzvah of her half-sister.

The greatest disappointment of the Games for many Jews, however, was the failure of the international campaign to have the Munich 11 remembered. It included a petition launched by the Rockland JCC in suburban New York that garnered nearly 111 000 names, a private meeting with two Munich 11 widows and IOC President Jacques Rogge, and the backing of President Obama and political leaders from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy and elsewhere.

One widow of the Munich 11 had biting words for Rogge when he attended the London Jewish community's memorial for the murdered athletes and coaches.

"Shame on you, IOC," said Ankie Spitzer, widow of fencing coach Andre Spitzer, who died in the attack. "You have forsaken the



Israeli-American men's basketball coach David Blatt led the Russian national team to the bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympic Games. (PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON VIA CC)

11 members of your Olympic family. You discriminate against them only because they are Israelis and Jews."

Meanwhile, the Arab-Israeli conflict was felt when the Lebanese judo team refused to even practice in a gymnasium next to the Israelis. The Lebanese even erected a makeshift barrier to split their gym into two halves, according to the Times of Israel.

Also, Iranian judoka Javad Mahjoob withdrew from the Games, citing "critical digestive system infection", according to the Washington Post. The report speculated that Iran was maintaining a longstanding policy of not allowing its athletes to compete against Israelis. (JTA)

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Ebrahim unrepentant about discouraging official trips to Israel

DIANE WOLFSON AND VICTOR GORDON
PRETORIA

South Africa, on Tuesday, through Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Ebrahim Ebrahim (pictured), reiterated the SA government’s “discouragement” of trips to Israel, unless to further peace.

In a media briefing, the deputy minister explained that trips to Israel “endorse the Israeli occupation of Palestine which has been condemned by the entire international community”. He added that “a message should be sent to Israel that its occupation of Palestine has to end”.

The deputy minister explained that this was not a new position and “was even a position of the previous administration”.

Ebrahim told City Press last Sunday that South Africa should “scale down” its economic ties with Israel, but said he did not advocate a complete breakdown of relations. The country has formal diplomatic ties with Israel.

Ebrahim denied the call was a step toward a complete boycott of Israel. South Africa’s department of trade and industry indicated recently its intention to introduce legislation that would require all goods from the West Bank to be labelled as such.

Last week, a planned trip to Israel by KwaZulu-Natal province mayors and officials was called off due to pressure from the local pro-Palestinian lobby.



PHOTOGRAPH: DIANE WOLFSON

At Tuesday’s media briefing he started by saying that the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) committee on Palestine, of which South Africa is a member, was supposed to meet in Ramallah on August 5, to be briefed on the current situation in Palestine and to support Palestinian self-determination.

However, the Israeli government had blocked entry to various representatives from countries that did not have diplomatic relations with Israel. The committee issued a statement condemning the actions of Israel and said that support for Palestine would be transferred to the next meeting to be held in Tehran at the end of August.

During the briefing, the deputy minister was at pains to stress that this was not a travel ban “as such” as South Africa had long-standing diplomatic ties with Israel. The rationale behind the “directive” was to send a strong message to Israel that its occupation of the so-called

Palestinian territories was unacceptable.

Another question regarding the directive to South Africans not to visit Israel, was whether this was a new policy. The deputy minister said the government could not prevent individuals or organisations from visiting Israel, but merely to “discourage” them from doing so in order to send a strong message of South Africa’s disapproval of Israeli policy vis-à-vis the “occupied territories”.

Ebrahim was asked whether the SA government saw itself as an honest broker in the Middle East peace process and whether a directive to discourage visits, had been applied to any other country .

Ebrahim admitted that similar actions had never been taken in the past and that Israel had been singled out because the conflict had been dragging on “forever”. He further stated that South Africa had not played any active part for some years since the Spier Project which had failed to achieve its objective, “maybe because we invited the wrong people”.

The deputy minster’s comments follow a similar position that was outlined by his counterpart, Deputy Minister Marius Fransman, last month in Cape Town: “Our government since 1994 has consistently supported the Palestinian cause while increasingly putting pressure on Israel towards a just and lasting solution on a number of levels including [an] economic-travel ban.”

Communal bodies slam Ebrahim’s stance on Israel

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies, the SA Zionist Federation and the Office of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, in a media release come out strongly against Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation Ebrahim Ebrahim’s statement that he is discouraging South Africans from visiting Israel.

The three signatories to the media statement, Mary Kluk (SAJBD), Avrom Krengel (SAZF) and Chief Rabbi Goldstein, say the SA Jewish community “deplores” Ebrahim’s statement.

“Such a stance is grossly discriminatory, counter-productive and wholly inconsistent with how SA normally conducts its interna-

tional relations and contradicts its official policy of having full diplomatic ties with Israel.


“The result of such a policy is that South Africa, instead of lending its weight to international efforts to bring about a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, will be seen to be supporting those who wish to promote a complete boycott of Israel and to that end seek to shut down any initiatives aimed at meaningful dialogue.

“Effectively, honest debate is being shut down, the Israeli viewpoint censored and people denied the opportunity of making their own informed decision through actions amounting to controlling access to

information on the part of a government department.

“Whereas in other areas of conflict around the world, South Africa consistently emphasises the need for constant dialogue and engagement between all the parties concerned, when it comes to the Israel-Palestinian question, its current policy would seem to be to prevent the Israeli case from even being heard.

“Only through visiting Israel and engaging at first hand with the various role-players and issues on the ground can people gain a better understanding of the situation there, yet it is precisely such visits that Deputy Minister Ebrahim is seeking to prevent.”



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At haredi draft, no significant problems - or optimism

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The controversy had sparked a national debate, raucous protests in the streets and the collapse of a historic government. That came in the months after the Israeli Supreme Court had nullified a law exempting haredi Orthodox Israelis from military service and given the government until August 1 to draft a replacement law.

More than a week after the law’s implementation, the Israel Defence Forces has yet to encounter any significant problems in putting haredi men through the draft process, according to a military source with knowledge of the issue.

The IDF had no official comment on the new process.

In previous weeks, thousands of haredim had gathered in the streets, holding protest signs declaring that they would rather spend their lives in prison than serve in the “Zionist army”. Another protest in Tel Aviv declared that secular Israelis, who had always served, would no longer be “suckers”.

Political stalemate won out. No law was passed and a broad government coalition created to solve this issue broke up.

But political stalemate won out. No law was passed and a broad government coalition created to solve this issue broke up.

The day before the August 1 deadline, Defence Minister Ehud Barak sent out a media release stating that the IDF had one month to formulate guidelines on haredi military service that would accord with the Military

Service Law of 1986, which subjects haredim to the same service requirements as all other Jewish Israelis. Haredim have been subject to the law since August 1, and will be until the Knesset passes a new law on haredi service.

Under the 1986 law, 18-year-old haredi boys - until now exempt from the military draft while studying in a yeshiva - are eligible for the draft; their summons may come even before their 18th birthday. The penalty for refusing the summons: three years in prison.

The law includes a clause on religious exemptions from military service for women who observe Shabbat and keep kosher, but they do not apply to men. Men up to the age of 26 may be drafted, haredi or not.

Now haredi men born in 1994 and 1995 are or soon will be undergoing competency tests in maths, Hebrew and general knowledge, as would any draftee.

Now haredi men born in 1994 and 1995 are or soon will be undergoing competency tests in maths, Hebrew and general knowledge, as would any draftee. The first language of many haredim is Yiddish, not Hebrew, and their schools do not focus on maths or general studies.

The military source could not give any details on the formulation of guidelines for haredi enlistment, but said the month-long

period was granted in part to allow the army time to prepare for absorbing thousands of haredi soldiers.

According to Haaretz, there are 54 000 haredi men of enlistment age who have not served in the IDF.

But even as the protests have died down, observers on both sides of the issue do not expect the controversy to be solved or a new law to be passed anytime soon.

“Right now there’s not a general feeling that something major is going to happen because of the political consternation,” said Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblum, a columnist for Mishpacha magazine, a major haredi publication.

Rosenblum, of Jerusalem, said that when the coalition broke up, “the sense of panic diminished considerably” in the haredi world.

Although the Military Service Law is in effect, Rosenblum was not worried that any of his seven sons, including a 17-year-old, would be putting on a uniform.

Although the Military Service Law is in effect, Rosenblum was not worried that any of his seven sons, including a 17-year-old, would be putting on a uniform. Would the IDF be “subjecting them to military trial and imprisonment? No, I don’t think so,” he said. “I don’t think the government has a plan.

There was nobody who was talking about putting people in jail.”

During government negotiations on a new law on the matter last month, the major proposals suggested fines for draft dodging, while others eschewed the idea of personal penalties.

A leading official in Hiddush, an Israeli organisation that advocates for religious pluralism and equality, also does not expect new legislation - and a haredi draft with teeth - to move forward soon, despite his best hopes.

“The government won’t draft one yeshiva student,” said Shahar Ilan, Hiddush’s vice president. “The government isn’t doing anything. “This is a huge violation of the law.”

Ilan said that though most of the Knesset wants to see a new law enacted, no one is willing take the necessary political risks.

“Netanyahu does not want to hurt the haredi parties” in his coalition, Ilan said. “There’s a majority for a mandatory draft but it’s theoretical because the parties that support a mandatory draft are not ready to break up the government for it.”

Rosenblum said that even were such a law to pass, the IDF would not have the resources or will to absorb so many haredi youth, whose strict observance of Jewish law puts them in special circumstances.

“There’s no way in the world that the vast majority of haredi boys are going to go into mixed units,” he said. “There’s no way in the world that the army is going to put in place haredi-accommodating units within 30 days.” (JTA)

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The Jewish World

in seven seconds

Jewish Journal, Los Angeles, USA: www.jewishjournal.com

“Hotel Shangri-La raises spectre of anti-Semitism”

A discrimination lawsuit has been brought by 18 members of the Friends of the Israel Defence Forces Young Leadership Division in Los Angeles against the Pakistani-born LA-bred Muslim owner of boutique hotel, Shangri-La in Santa Monica.

Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem, Israel: www.jpost.com

“Interior Ministry approves twelve skyscrapers for Jerusalem”

The Interior Ministry has given its stamp of approval to a major construction plan that will completely change the capital’s skyline. The project includes 33- and 24-storey buildings that will be a mix of government offices, private businesses and residential apartments. It aims to reinvigorate Jerusalem’s struggling economy.

The Jewish Telegraph, Manchester, UK: www.jewishtelegraph.com

“Anti-Semitic soccer tweet arrest”

An Andover man has been arrested on suspicion of racially abusing Israeli football star Tal Ben Haim. He allegedly tweeted, during a contract dispute between Ben Haim and Portsmouth Football Club: “Tal Ben Haim refusing to budge on his 34k wages? What do you expect? He’s Jewish - used to fighting with a village-full over a penny.”

The Jewish Week, New York, USA: www.thejewishweek.com

“Levi Aron pleads guilty to Leiby Kletzky murder”

Brooklyn man Levi Aron, accused of killing eight-year-old Leiby Kletzky last year, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and kidnapping. He faces at least 40 years in prison. New York State Supreme Court Justice Neil Firetog said “a defence of not responsible by reason of mental disease would not be viable”.

Ynetnews, Tel Aviv, Israel: www.ynetnews.com

“African countries want to revive golden era of Israel ties”

Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon will launch joint agricultural, health projects in Kenya and Uganda. African leaders who visited Israel recently, “expressed disappointment” at Arab promises from the ‘70s and ‘80s.

The Jewish Chronicle, London, UK: www.thejc.com

“Israel boycotters turn attention to Edinburgh cultural meeting”

Anti-Israel campaigners have revealed plans to disrupt a meeting of international politicians due to discuss culture in Edinburgh this week. The first International Culture Summit brings together culture ministers from Olympic nation as well as scores of other figures from the arts world.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, international: www.jta.org

“New émigrés join the military, land in Israel”

The special Nefesh B’Nefesh-Friends of the Israel Defence Forces flight, carrying 350 new émigrés to Israel, arrived this week. An audience of hundreds, including Israeli dignitaries, gathered at Ben-Gurion Airport for an arrival ceremony featuring an address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

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Jewish Anglo-Boer War dead cement sense of friendship and respect

Last week, I participated in an unveiling ceremony for a new monument in Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal, in memory of Jewish fighters who died serving on the Boer side in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. It was a huge honour to have been part of the whole initiative, but it is not easy to explain why. That war, after all, concluded more than 11 decades ago and the Anglo-Afrikaner rivalry that underpinned it came to be progressively overshadowed, and eventually eclipsed altogether, by the far more momentous question of the black-white relationship.

That a relatively minor aspect of the war - Jewish participation in the cause of the Boer republics - has now been commemorated, is hardly headline news.

Military history enthusiasts have to contend against a certain image problem. Some are seen as overgrown schoolboys indulging a quaint post-adolescent passion for war games, while others probably come across as eccentric, rather sad social misfits morbidly drawn to long-forgotten scenes of death and mayhem (I'm probably revealing more of myself than I'd like to here!)

There is nevertheless a growing interest in local military history, albeit that it is still almost exclusively a white phenomenon. For those of us thus engaged, the passage of time is irrelevant. Instead, there is the thrill of connecting with some of the most dramatic events in this country's past, not merely through reading about them or viewing their material residue in museums, but in walking the actual sites where they took place.

In addition, it is a way of connecting with parts of the country one would never otherwise go near, with apparently non-descript koppies, streams and gullies well off the beaten track, being vested with a unique significance.

There are naturally hazards to negotiate, including unfriendly local fauna (not excluding local farmers). I once, for example, stirred up a rinhals while prodding around hopefully with a metal detector, and on another occasion was menaced by a goat that took an inexplicable dislike to me.

For lesser-known sites, a professional guide is recommended. On my first visit to Hlobane, I climbed the wrong mountain and on my second, lost my way on the summit, eventually stumbling back to my car wheezing and traumatised nearly six hours later. (Even getting lost, though, gives city boys like myself a little adventure in the wild to think about in traffic jams).

In my days as history curator at MuseumAfrica, I visited numerous places of general historical interest. One was in a derelict part of Von Brandis Street (in Johannesburg's CBD) where a group of homicidal Pathans nearly clubbed Gandhi to death because they



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

regarded him as a sell-out. Others included the original Bellevue house where Herman Charles Bosman shot dead his step-brother, and the old mining tunnel in Kensington where the Foster Gang were trapped by the police and eventually committed suicide (I even found a crumbling cartridge case relating to that grisly affair).

However, given the desperate, life-and-death nature of armed men pitting themselves against one another, battlefields have a special resonance.

In a real sense, the passage of time has actually created a much more favourable climate for preserving and commemorating our past, military or otherwise. It was striking that at the above-noted ceremony, English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were completely united in their common devotion to maintaining all aspects of Ladysmith's famed Anglo-Boer War heritage.

The theme of reconciliation also extended to that of Jewish-Afrikaner relations. By nearly all accounts, that relationship at the time of the war was a remarkably cordial one. Thereafter, the relationship certainly soured, reaching its nadir during the 1930s and 1940s, when the Afrikaner establishment adopted explicitly anti-Semitic platforms.

After the National Party's electoral victory in 1948, things began gradually moving the other way once more, but the rift was never more than partially healed. Jews could not forget the ruling party's previous support for the Nazis, nor how it had successfully lobbied against further Jewish immigration at a time when European Jews were desperate seeking an escape route. As a result, they were unaware of, or at least unresponsive to, the growing philo-Semitic strain that was emerging within Afrikanerdom,

For their part, Afrikaners resented the Jewish community for consistently siding with the political opposition and in particular for producing so high a proportion of the hardcore white anti-apartheid left. Rightwing Afrikaner websites still trot out names like Joe Slovo, Lionel Bernstein, Harold Wolpe, Ruth First and Denis Goldberg as evidence of how the Jews plotted the overthrow of the Afrikaner.

The fact that these particular Jews had (at least metaphorically and sometimes literally) been swilling vodka with the KGB

while Hebrew teachers were being sent to the Gulags is overlooked.

The Jewish Boer monument project was primarily driven by Afrikaans members of the Ladysmith Siege Museum Trust. It was an enormously generous gesture on their part to allow the Jewish community to have a share in this tragic but also exceptionally heroic part of the Afrikaner heritage.

Taken as a whole, a stirring sense of friendship and mutual respect underpinned this mixed gathering of fellow South Africans. It is the sort of thing our country needs to see more of.

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Is there a boycott or not?

A government’s policy is not tested merely against what is written on paper, but according to the spirit with which it is implemented.

South Africa’s relationship with Israel is “correct” on the formal level. President Jacob Zuma recently even went as far as sending an official letter to the SAJBD - albeit at their request - reaffirming the government’s endorsement of the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Yet there have been disturbing developments lately questioning its commitment to this policy. Last week, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation Ebrahim Ebrahim called on South Africans not to go to Israel because it is “an occupier country that is oppressing Palestine” (see story on page 3).

Ebrahim’s statements came after KZN province’s decision to cancel a trip of officials to Israel facilitated by the SA-Israel Forum, including local mayors and municipal managers. A joint letter from the ANC Youth League, Cosatu, the SACP, Sasco, the SA Council of Churches and others was sent to KZN Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize, urging the province to respect the “boycott” of Israel and cancel the trip.

But South Africa has no official boycott policy of Israel. So why are its officials behaving as if there is one? Cosatu is not a government agency; therefore its statements cannot be laid at the government’s door. It is, however, a senior alliance partner, and the government never repudiated its statements, knowing they were adding to a growing atmosphere against Israel in this country.

What can clearly be laid at the government’s door is that a senior official such as Ebrahim is not called to task for statements clearly contradicting the spirit of SA’s stated Israel policy - as former ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema was, for example, for his comments regarding Botswana. The impression created is that policy is being made “on the run” and for expedience’s sake.

Many ANC members and government officials have instinctive leanings towards the Palestinians, due partly to strong apartheid-era ties between the ANC and PLO. One can understand this, and cannot expect them to change their personal views because they are in government. But one expects the government to ask its officials to help further its policies by what they say publicly, rather than detract from them.

Ebrahim’s statement is of relevance. In his words: “Because of the treatment and policies of Israel towards the Palestinian people, we strongly discourage South Africans from going there [to Israel]... [and] any South African company from having anything to do with strengthening the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories” (Mail & Guardian, August 10, 2012).

He cannot actually stop people from going, or companies from doing business there. But what he says cynically puts pressure on them. As a deputy minister, he has the official clout of government behind him. Is our government trying to change its policy through the back door? Why is Ebrahim allowed to contravene stated official policy, to the extent that Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma herself keeps mum?

We cannot expect South Africa to agree with all Israeli policies. During the complicated, long-running conflict with the Palestinians, both sides have made mistakes. What we should demand from our government is to show that it is truly on the side of peace. This means asking its officials to display attitudes which are actually helpful.

Furthermore, the truism remains that a country has interests, not friends - and South Africa has much to gain from links with Israel (ironically, the KZN delegation was going there, according to the BDS joint letter to the premier, “to learn about Israeli agricultural know-how”).

South Africa promotes itself as the country where dialogue between adversaries was a centrepiece of how we achieved democracy, avoiding what could have become a racial bloodbath. We persevered and reached peace.

We ask for fairness, even-handedness and a commitment from government officials to the spirit of engagement with Israel. Discouraging contact is the wrong way to go. As South Africans with our particular history, we should be promoting dialogue. Foreign policy must not be blinded by historical events.

Jewish nepotism can never be a bad thing

DR IVOR BLUMENTHAL

Identifying a job to which one is suited; having the opportunity to be trained and developed to master the skills required to remain employed and to make a contribution; having the pride of a strong work history and the economic independence to feed and clothe a family and contribute socially to the Jewish community. This characterised the Jew of the past. This is what gave us such a proud legacy both in this country and overseas and allowed us to punch above our weight. We are no longer those people.

We assume that the young, the disabled and the mature, will land on their feet because SA Jews have the resources, the where-with-all.

I would not need to be writing this if we were the same Jewish community we were a decade ago, if our assumptions were true.

Our children are more vulnerable today than they have ever been.

Our children are more vulnerable today than they have ever been. They have no guaranteed future. Few have access to the kind of money which can protect them against unemployment, starvation and dependency. They are white. They are subject to affirmative action.

They are seen to be privileged. They leave school having made ill-advised choices, if any. They wander around aimlessly, often for years before finding their way.

Jewish owned businesses now have so many pressures to conform and comply with, a mess of regulations to stay in business, that the employment of Jewish school leavers is not a priority.

What compounds the issue is that whereas as a community the concept of assimilation terrifies us, the truth is that in business, the moral assimilation of Jewish business owners, is almost complete.

We have bought into the guilt trap of being white, of being responsible for the history of this country, of owing everyone except our own something, and therefore turning our backs on our own. We are prepared collectively to sacrifice our youth, our disabled and anyone over the age of 50 to the rubbish-bin of history, to assuage our consciences.

This does not mean that individuals in business, in their personal capacities are not generous to Jewish NGOs and do not give handsomely in spite of their business ethos of not openly wanting to be seen favouring their own. What it does mean, however, is that money alone will not solve the problem.

The major problems we face are the obvious gaps among our Jewish leader-



Ivor Blumenthal

ship. Strong on politics, on lobbying, on monitoring and reacting to attacks on our community and on Israel, our Jewish leaders are not focused on the other important things, particularly the economic and social sustainability of our community.

These gaps include employment and employability research, strategic planning to ensure a bright future for our youth, long-term sustainability interventions beyond supporting a few Jewish day schools.

These seem to be foreign concepts to those people who we have elected to take care of our community. I am astounded that when these questions are asked, the response is that the SABJE is taking care of these things. Surely the problem of referee and player comes to mind here?

Essentially, those who have the power to make things better, do not necessarily always have the competency, nor should they be expected to, given everything else they have to take care of.

As a community we seem so focused on countering the Muslim threat at every turn, that little time is devoted to the issue of why the Muslim community is so strong, so united and so focused as to be able to be so fundamental in its opposition of the Jewish community, and why it is growing as exponentially as it is in traditionally non-Muslim countries around the world.

In the late ‘90s, the National Skills Authority was asked to consider a report on employment statistics in the various communities in South Africa. I was astounded that the Muslim community had 90 per cent success in placing school leavers (those obtaining a university pass and those simply exiting matric); in taking care of their own.

Investigation revealed that it was not by chance but by design. As a community it is was unheard of as a Muslim-owned business not to give preference to Muslim youth needing a job.

More importantly, the community was constantly aware of who needed

work and where the vacancies existed among the Muslim business community. A Muslim business person could not risk turning his back on someone in-need of a job and even if it did not exist, that job would somehow miraculously be created if necessary. If that percentage was 90 per cent in the early 2000s, think how much higher it must now be with the advent of affirmative action.

What the SA Jewish community needs, is a long-term strategy for the training and employment of Jewish youth, the disabled and those over the age of 50. We do not have that plan, nor the strategy to develop it.

We need a conscious compact with Jewish-owned business (for which there is a database, often required for donation purposes) to set-aside 10 – 15 per cent of jobs in those businesses for the employment of people who are Jewish, and particularly those who are vulnerable.

We need a conscious compact with Jewish-owned business to set aside 10 – 15 per cent of jobs in those businesses for people who are Jewish, and particularly the vulnerable.

We need to have skilled people at the centre of leadership in our community who can translate strategy, into workable results. Grade 10 profiles should be mapped to career paths and development plans for those individuals agreed between parents, schools and prospective employers.

A national database of progression must become that individual’s skills passport throughout their working lives. We need a vocational development strategy in place, as opposed to only professional aspirations based on yichus.

There is no shame in being an electrician, a plumber, a printer or a nurse, if it will mean jobs, economic independence and prosperity. Similarly those capable of becoming lawyers, doctors and engineers must be identified and supported through very trying challenges. The thing is to know who is on which path and how they are doing.

It is never too late to become proudly Jewish and to invest in the future of our community. History shows that by taking care of our own as a priority, all of civil society, not just that component which is Jewish, will benefit.

• Dr Ivor Blumenthal is a past member of the National Skills Authority and CEO of the Services Sector Education and Training Authority.

News in Brief

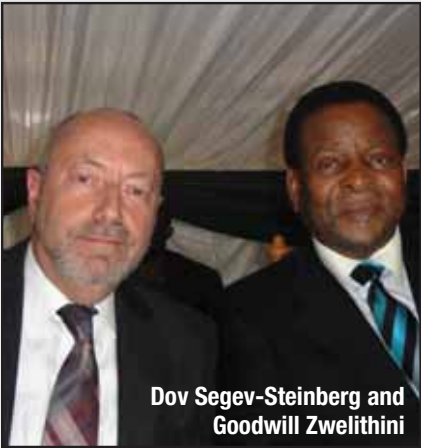
King Goodwill to visit Israel soon

Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini has accepted an invitation by the Israeli ambassador to South Africa, Dov Segev-Steinberg, to visit Israel early next year.

The invitation was extended during a visit of the ambassador and his deputy, Yaakov Finkelstein, to the king’s Royal Palace in kwaNongoma to celebrate and commemorate the Amazulu Football Club’s 80th anniversary. During the ceremony, the king paid tribute to the fallen King Solomon kaDinizulu, who was the club’s co-founder.

A media statement by the SAZF said “King Goodwill Zwelithini accepted the invitation and vowed to use his official visit to explore ways to intensify the co-operation between SA and Israel and especially between the Zulu people and the Israeli people.”

King Goodwill, who visited Israel before, spoke of his passion for rural development and said he would especially look into new possibilities to co-operate with Israel in the fields of health, agriculture and education, among other areas of interest for the benefit of the Zulu people.



Dov Segev-Steinberg and Goodwill Zwelithini

Enjoying a fun-filled Purim with The Dunk Tank’

Just as on Purim we celebrate the triumph of Mordechai over the evil Haman, so too did Yeshiva College celebrated the triumph by dunking our teachers and prefects in the “Dunk Tank”.

DAN CHAZEN
GRADE 11

The Boys High school celebrated the chag of Purim in style. The day commenced with a campus-wide davening, which included Boys’ High, Girls’ High, and Primary School, in the main shul.

Following the davening, we were treated to a falafel “seudat mitzvah” where we were joined by the residents of the Sandringham Lodge. There were divrei Torah at the meal, including a short shiur by a visiting rabbi from Israel, Rabbi Leron Bernstein.

After breakfast, YID, together with Henry Kriek, Terry Tennant, Rabbi Laurence Perez, Rabbi Ilan Raanan, Rabbi Natan Alexander and Rabbi Shmuli Kagan, put on our very own Yeshiva College Purim Play, which was enjoyed by everyone.

And then the moment everyone was waiting for arrived. Our amazing day concluded with the “Dunk Tank”. The Dunk Tank has major significance: on Purim historically the Jewish people rededicated themselves to the Torah and the Dunk Tank represented this “mikvah of conversion”.

A dunk tank consists of a large tank of wa-



Rabbi Laurence Perez, Managing Director of Yeshiva College, emerging from the “Dunk Tank”.

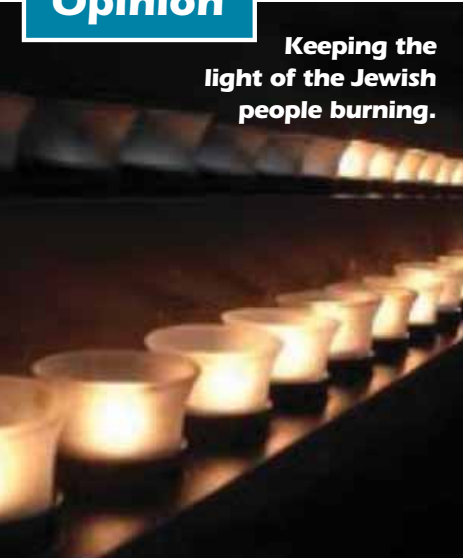
ter, over which a seat is suspended. By striking a target, the seat will tip or fall into the tank of water, thus “dunking” whoever is sitting on the seat.

The much-anticipated “Dunk Tank” was organised by the grade 11s as part of our fund-raising initiative for the school. Each child who

bought tickets, was entered into raffles to dunk Rabbi Perez, Rabbi, Gilad Friedman (head of Yeshiva Informal Department), Yoni Laz (head boy) and their friends, who were nominated by them. After the raffles were over, everyone got a chance to be dunked or dunk their friends. Altogether, an unbelievable experience!

Opinion

Keeping the light of the Jewish people burning.



A personal impression on Yom Hashoah

COMPILED BY DAVID BEDER
GRADE 11

As I sit down to write this article, I grapple with the task of turning my feelings on the Holocaust into words. For some reason this event does not sit well with me today. My thoughts evaporate as my BlackBerry vibrates. How can people downplay such a defining point in our Jewish history by typing in innocuous messages?

Growing up as a Jew, the Holocaust is a defining moment in my history. My father

has taught that the phrase “never forget” is not a cliché. Many years ago in the Drakensberg we were watching a soccer game on this day of Yom Hashoah between Germany and Brazil.

My dad’s spirits suggested that he was not himself. When I asked him what was wrong, he said to me: “Ben today is Yom Hashoah and even though you are having fun, it is your obligation to remember that six million Jews died at the hands of the Nazis! Never forget this lesson as you will one day pass it on to your son.”

In a recent school project, I read a book called, The Bielski Brothers. It is a truly inspirational story about three brothers who saved many Jews’ lives during the time of the Holocaust. It was while reading this book that my father’s gravity on that day in the Drakensberg became real. With the passing of time I have learnt more about the Holocaust and the fighting spirits of all those brave women and men who perished during that time and those who survived and my awareness of this very important day in Jewish history has become greater.

Opinion

A time to mourn and to remember

MARCEL BOSHOFF
GRADE 11

Yom Hashoah 2012/5772. Lest we forget the six million. On April 27 of this year, 27 Nissan 5772, a commemoration of the Holocaust was held at West Park Cemetery. Many members of our Jewish community united to mourn the horrific loss of the six million Jews who perished during the Second World War.

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies made it possible for the remembrance to take place and with the participation of schools such as Yeshiva College, King David, Crawford and Torah Academy, the ground was set for a remarkable event.

We, the audience, were privileged to

hear the extraordinary story of John Dobai, the keynote speaker. Dobai was a Hungarian Jew who was saved with his parents by their “guardian angel”, Raoul Wallenberg. This year marked the 100th anniversary of Wallenberg’s birth. Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat whose brave and selfless actions saved the lives of thousands of Jews - mainly Hungarian.

In the later years of the Shoah he has been honoured as one of the “Righteous Among the Nations” at Yad Vashem.

The sadness that hovered over the ceremony and the respect that people showed to one another

on that day, at the event added to the overall sense of loss.

It is miraculous how tragedy brings a nation together.



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Steven Braudo
Chief Executive:
Liberty Retail SA



Opinion



Home away from home.

Proud of where we come from

At Yeshiva College, we believe that our school days are the best days of our lives. Our campus may not boast the same manicured playing fields as some of the more hallowed private schools in Johannesburg, but the heartbeat that is Yeshiva College can be felt in every corridor, and its spirit is etched upon the faces of all who study here.

COMPILED BY GABI BENDER, GRADE 11

It is that intangible atmosphere of community, brotherhood, acceptance and unity that pervades the culture of this school. Rabbonim, staff members and boys nurture the mind, body and soul in a way I believe is truly unique.

While rules are mandatory and discipline non-negotiable, there is a spirit of kindness that exists between fellow learners, regardless of grade and is further echoed by the respectful but warm reciprocity between learner and teacher, learner and rabbi.

The marriage and synergy in provision of excellence in both secular and religious worlds, has been most successfully achieved by the competent and professional leadership at Yeshiva College.

It is a school that has moved with the times, embraced modernity, yet stayed rooted in our age-old heritage, the legacy of the Jewish people. Yeshiva College truly nurtures the whole human being.

Simply put: The offerings of Yeshiva College combined with the camaraderie exhibited on the playing field, create a unity of spirit where the sum of all parts becomes greater than the whole.



The grade 11 and matric boys in a competitive cricket match.

News

While my guitar gently weeps

**DAN CHAZEN
GRADE 11**

Four hundred and fifty high and senior primary school learners sit mesmerised by the strange man dressed in orange, tinkering away at the piano and crooning the blues. Not a sound comes from the audience as every learner hangs on the words of this piano man.

As soon as Larry Joe begins to speak, we realise that this is indeed a special treat. This is not one of the popular singers from about town, come to keep us busy for half an hour; Larry's story is as arresting as the lyrics of his songs. Most of them

have been written in prison and Larry is one of the success stories of South Africa's penal system.

He has not always been a model for society, we learn, but he chose to reconstruct his life by making the most of the opportunities that G-d has given him. Above all, Larry likes to sing and he uses this talent to persuade other young South Africans to stay off the streets and stay away from crime.

He is an inspiration to all of us because from him we do not only learn about crime; we also learn about free choice and making the right decisions.

As young people, Larry urges us to follow the principles of common sense and to stay away from the temptations of the street.



Larry Joe and his manager on stage at Yeshiva College.



The Yeshiva learners sit mesmerised as Larry Joe tells his incredible story.

Education

Growing up fast

**COMPILED BY ARI CHIPKIN
GRADE 11**

Israel is different. Very different! The people, the weather, the food, the culture and the language, to name just a few. However, the differences run far deeper than the eye can see.

In the Holy Land, spirituality is tangible. It is for precisely this reason that 18 grade 10 boys from Yeshiva College were learning Gemorah and Chumash rather than maths or biology. Away from the distractions of school and nagging teachers, we found ourselves engrossed in learning and thoroughly enjoying it.

According to the sages, the air of Israel makes one wise. Without the shelter of parents, we had to become independent and smarten up - quickly. While doing our own washing, catching public transport, and managing our own finances, we matured out of necessity.

Before the trip, the thought on everyone's minds was, "Should I stay, or should I go?"

By the end of our experience, not one person had any regrets - despite all the challenges, like functioning on minimal sleep and trying to break through the language barrier.

Being in Israel for several months, allowed us to experience all the different facets of the Promised Land. We toured from the Golan Heights in the north to Eilat in the south, from the biting cold of the Judean hills to the sun-kissed beaches of Tel-Aviv, immersed ourselves in the culture, attended a fiercely contested football derby between Betar Jerusalem and Maccabi Tel-Aviv, felt the spiritual and physical combine at the Western Wall and served a week in the IDF.

Finally we capped an inspirational period of learning by spending an otherworldly weekend away from civilisation in the middle of a forest.

Above all KFAR-Nachshon was a spiritual experience which left the spirit of Israel deeply ingrained in each and every one of us.

From the many shiurim and lessons spent in devout soul-searching, we have returned as more committed Jews and more assured as people with the deepest commitment to our historic homeland and her people.



Above: Yaron Keizan; Yoni Kohaly; David Milstein; Dan Finkelstein; and David Ben-David.

Right: Back: Ariel Brom; David Beder; Chanan Emdin; Zac Nicholls; Gabi Bender; David Ben-David; Yoni Kohaly; and David Sher. Middle: Dan Chazen; Yishai Gershuni; David Milstein; Ben Feldman; Yaron Keizan; and Yedidya Silber. Front: Ari Chipkin; Dan Finkelstein; and Jesse Yuter.



Judaism

Rosh Chodesh Adar: Rejoicing in the ways of Torah

COMPILED BY BEN FELDMAN GRADE 11

At Rosh Chodesh Adar this year, the grade 11 boys, with the help of YiD (Yeshiva Informal Department) put together an incredible programme for the day. The intention for us at Yeshiva College on this day was to remind us that Torah is a gift from Hashem and that this was our time to celebrate and rejoice in the Torah.

The day started with the entire Yeshiva Boys' High School davening in the parking lot. This inspired all that walked past and prepared them for not only laughter and fun, but also as a reminder that this experience is a very spiritual one. After an



Collective tefillah in the school parking lot.

incredible breakfast and dynamic shiur by Rabbi Moshe Schnerb, the whole school boarded buses for The Emerald City Aquadome in Vanderbijl Park.

One can just imagine the sight of 100 Yeshiva boys charging for the pools, all eager to try the amazing water slides, lazy river, beach volley ball, "walk the plank" and other exciting facilities the resort has to offer.

Home time came too soon and we all straggled through the parking lot to the awaiting buses.

Checking out the attraction at Emerald City Aquadome.



Sport

One goal in the beautiful game...

COMPILED BY BEN FELDMAN AND GABI BENDER GRADE 11

Yeshiva is well known for its academic achievements but not as much is known about our talent on our soccer fields. Yeshiva boasts a very competitive soccer team despite the fact that we draw from very limited pools of competitors.

At Yeshiva College we aim high and we are only satisfied when we have achieved excellence.

Soccer boasts a rich history of fine achievements at our school. We have been victorious in the South Eastern Premier Division. However, it can be said that, win or lose, the players at this school are motivated by two factors: pride and love for this wonderful game.

The soccer tour to Steve Haupt's acad-

emy in Hartebeespoort Dam, was a first of its kind for Yeshiva College and its soccer boys. The team arrived ready and prepared for the upcoming days, or so we thought.

We were oblivious to the fact that this was no day camp. Our sessions were gruelling. Our muscles ached from limb to limb and our shirts were stained from hot sweat and grime.

The skills that we took home from this camp we exhibited on the field this season, in the matches that we played. The primary school is also becoming very well known for sporting achievements.

Win or lose, the best part of soccer at Yeshiva College is being able to spend time with our friends playing the game we love. This is a season that every boy loves going to school and its Wednesday afternoon, when the ref's whistle blows; it's the best time of all!



Up and coming Barcelona hero, Aaron Herbert, in action.



Prepare to take the field, boys.

Extramural

Public speaking - ideal platform to release mental energy

COMPILED BY ARI CHIPKIN AND DAVID BEDER GRADE 11

Two Jews, three opinions... We all know that cliché. So, at Yeshiva College, you can just imagine how many ideas circulate at this school at any given time!

Public speaking, therefore, is the ideal forum for the release of this energy. In 2012, three teams from Yeshiva College Boys High School entered The Local Guild's Annual Speaking Contest.

The grade 12 boys, chaired by Jordan Moshe, vice head boy, and supported by Eli Hodes, Jonathan Jacobson and Adam Picker, argued that production was all in the mind, and each speaker constructed a creative but convincing argument that thoroughly captivated their audience.

The first prelims began, and under considerable pressure, this team was awarded a creditable B+.

The grade 10 boys, chaired by Yishai Abrams, and ably aided by Brad Lichtenstein, Joshua Marks and Idan Horowitz, provided a very stimulating and insightful take on division and separation in our society.

Rather than relying on Internet resources, these boys turned to their own commu-



Jordan Moshe; Jonathan Jacobson; Adam Picker; and Eli Hodes.

nities in order to provide an evening of thought-provoking discussion. They stole the night and were rewarded for their efforts with a worthy A+ symbol.

Our grade 8 boys, chaired by Yair No-chumson and supported by Yonathan Ovad, Gabi Herbert and Joseph Greenstein, thoroughly entertained their audience and wowed their adjudicator. Their arguments were mature and sensible and they were awarded an A+ symbol.

All in all this was a very successful season and with another couple of months to wait and prepare for the public speaking term of 2013, we expect, next year to be another successful time at Yeshiva College for this very worthwhile activity.

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Yom Ha'atzmaut

Yom Ha'atzmaut: Happy 64th birthday, Israel



All eyes to the sky.

**DAVID BEDER
GRADE 11**

Sounds of Hallel filled the air. Happy faces were smiling, young men were wrapped in tefillin, children broke out in song and horah. The atmosphere was electrifying. All in honour of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's 64th birthday.

Yeshiva College in its unique manner, treated the high school learners to a delicious falafel and pita breakfast bringing the taste of Israel to our campus. Afterwards in a round robin format, our school rabbonim gave shiurim to each grade. Their words were truly inspirational. After the shiurim we made our way to the field.

On the field Israeli flags were passed around. The mood was exhilarating as enthusiastic faces waited eagerly for the helicopters flying all the way from Rand Airport.

Above the blaring music the chopper blades could be heard. The crowd was captivated - all eyes searched the sky for what would happen next! One... two... three... skydivers swooped down like majestic eagles on to our Yeshiva field. The crowd erupted into applause.

Each skydiver collected two plates making a total of six lucky winners for the big prizes. They then proceeded to collect a further 50 plates. Rabbi Laurence Perez, Cheryl Harton-Hotinsky and Gilad Friedman, announced the lucky winners. A portion of the money collected was donated to Friends of the Defenders - Lone Soldiers in the IDF.

Standing proud and tall, the campus united in the singing of Hatikva. What a heart-warming ending to a spectacular celebration! Happy birthday our beloved Israel, may Hashem continue to protect our homeland and our nation from all harm.



Coming down to earth.

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

‘I DON’T FEEL GUILTY OF GROSS PREJUDICE AGAINST POLAND...’

The article of August 10, headed: “Are we guilty of gross prejudice against Poland?” by David Jacobson, refers.

Who is guilty of gross prejudice, we or the Poles?

Jacobson correctly states: “Poland has assumed a uniquely nefarious status in the Jewish psyche; Poland represents death, destruction, hate and unbridled brutal anti-Semitism.”

That is the truth and stating the truth does not amount to prejudice. Let us remember some facts before we lose our perspective:

Before the Second World War the Polish government had introduced a general boycott of Jewish businesses. Remember, Jews constituted 10 per cent of the total Polish population. On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland and set the Holocaust in motion.

In a little Polish town called Jedwabne, however, the locals did not need Nazi inducement to murder. On July 10 1941, the town’s Polish inhabitants, which constituted half its population, burnt to death the other half who were Jews - men, women and children.

In every German occupied country in Eu-

MANY POSITIVE (JEWISH) SIGNS IN MODERN-DAY POLAND

I agree with the sentiments of David Jacobson in last week’s issue of the SA Jewish Report. I decided to visit Poland independently in May 2011 and again this May. I had a desire to visit the “Old Country”, the birthplace of many of my ancestors, on my own terms, rather than be part of an organised Jewish tour that would most likely channel my experiences into that of a visit to the “Graveyard of European Jewry”.

I am pleased that by travelling as I did, I was able to experience a cross section of Polish life and have a more balanced view of the 1 000 years of Jewish heritage in the country I have family connections to, going back to the 1500s.

My experiences ranged from visits to Auschwitz and Treblinka, to meeting and working with young non-Jewish Poles, who are proactive in regenerating the Yiddish and Jewish culture within their areas of influence.

Jews no longer live in the town of Orla, near Bialystok in north-east Poland, but Wojciech

rope, there were brave people of conscience who risked their own and sometimes the lives of their families to save fellow human beings from torture and death. Poland also ranks high among such countries.

The Polish government went into exile in London and was led by the Prime Minister and Commander in Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, Wladislaw Sikorski. In one speech Sikorski promised that there would be equal rights in Poland for Jews after the war. That promise was omitted from the printed Polish version of the speech.

It is also a devastating condemnation of Poland for its treatment of 10 per cent of its pre-war population, the Jews.

My mother, eight-year-old sister and I were sent to the Ravensbruck concentration camp (KZ) for women. We were part of a group of 80 Jews which included 20 children, some of whom were still in nappies.

At the age of 13, I was the oldest child. We arrived there in February 1944 and the children attracted much attention. Many of the inmates had not seen their own children for six

Konończuk, a young researcher at the Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw, is searching for and reconnecting with Jewish families from Orla. Two of his team even flew to Haifa to interview one of the last Jews of Orla. I have just done some research on his behalf at the YIVO archives in New York.

Wanda Jóźwikowska who works for Virtual Shtetl, part of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews being built, has just been in Israel learning Yiddish. Her visit to Israel is another example of the importance young Poles are showing towards a new and positive era. Aleks Dybkowska works at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, helping non-Jews connect with their Jewish ancestry.

Journalist Tomasz Wisniewski in Bialystok has a most impressive collection of Jewish postcards and videos. He defines Jewish heritage in Poland as intertwined with Polish heritage and that it is his duty as a Pole to preserve

CARTOONIST ELI VALLEY AS LIMMUD SPEAKER, TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE

My wife and I recently attended the Limmud conference at the Vaal, as we have a few times previously. While I appreciate and respect the right of invited speakers to freely express their own views, albeit controversial or unpopular, to push the boundaries somewhat and to thereby elicit healthy debate, I was absolutely appalled and disgusted by the misguided decision of Limmud to invite a guy called Eli Valley to speak at the conference.

He is a young American Jew from New Jersey, who pens satirical comics for various obscure, leftwing publications in the US. He presented his published comics and invited members of the audience to participate in voicing the written text. The total focus of his “satire”, couched in a veneer of smut and vulgarity, is Jews and Israel. It is clear from his pictures and texts that he, himself, is a self-hating Jew.

In short, his presentation was a litany of lies, bigotry and anti-Semitic propaganda, the

years.

For eight months I shared a barrack with some 300 Polish women. Not once in that whole period did I see one sign, one gesture of affection for a little Jewish child. When we stepped out of the barrack, other women could not keep away from the infants - not the Poles. There was no contact, not a smile, not even a pat on the head.

The only Polish expression that I learned was Zhid pshakrew!, which I have been told means Cursed Jew.

Then the war was over and the pitiful human remnants from the concentration camps began to trickle back to their previous abodes. Polish Jews returned to the Polish town of Kielce. When their Polish neighbours saw them coming, a pogrom was organised and they butchered about 800 of these human wrecks that by some miracle had survived death in concentration camps.

No, I don’t think that I can say that I feel guilty of gross prejudice towards Poland.

Don Krausz, Chairman, Association of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg

it. He describes Poland as the first successful multicultural country. These are but a few examples of what is happening in contemporary Poland.

Berlin, which I visited for the first time this May, is successfully attracting many Jewish tourists. Its history, both good and evil is open for all to see. This city offers us a positive spin on the future.

So, as David concludes, I also have great hope for the regeneration of Jewish culture in Poland. We should visit Poland and other countries such as Latvia and Lithuania and other European countries of our ancestors with an open mind and openly endorse those who are creating a positive path for future Jewish generations.

Eli Rabinowitz (ex-South African), Perth, Australia

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Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication



Breindy’s music encapsulates what is deeply spiritual and beautiful

SHIRA DRUION

Breindy Auerbach (pictured), the new singing sensation to take Jewish SA by storm with her début album, Hallelukah, has been called “soulful” while others call her spin on Jewish music “refreshing”. Added to this, is her unique ability to incorporate a signature African stamp of individuality into the words of psalms and other holy verses.

Breindy who was born in Israel, moved to SA when she was three. Her family boasts a rich heritage of traditional Jewish music which she says has helped to form the basis of her musical repertoire.

Her great-grandfather and grandfather, were chazzonim at the famous Schiff Shul in Vienna and in America. Her mother is a professionally trained pianist, and her father, a prominent rabbi, is well known for his ability to lead communal prayers with his stirring melodies.

Says Breindy: “My interpretation of music has very much been influenced by the generations of musicians that have come before me.”

She began composing songs when she was 16, going into a quiet space with her guitar.

It was a natural progression for her to study music at Wits, after her return from seminars in England and Israel. She is currently completing her honours in visual and performing arts, and has future goals to collaborate with African artists to create a new album and to spend some time exploring the overseas market.

In 2010 she expressed a desire to record an album. She signed a deal with Other Mother Music and subsequently released her critically acclaimed debut album, Hallelukah in July 2011. This not only set her on her path as a Jewish artist, but is also responsible for introducing her to husband cum musical partner/producer, Matt Klawansky.

His background is an honours degree in music, with a major in composition. Matt accompanies Breindy on guitar and the talented duo has created music that incorporates an array of sounds and textures. The album also features elite artists, including Isaac Klawansky from Shadowclub (on drums) and Cid Travaglia from Napalma.

Prof Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph comments on Breindy’s album: “Her brand of music encapsulates what is deeply spiritual and beautiful; rooted not only in the world of mystical Judaism, but with her roots in the African soil, she brings to the music some earthiness within a sound-world that soars way above the mundane.”

Breindy is currently on a shul tour to promote her CD, performing in private homes in conjunction with different community shuls.

Breindy talks about her being able to perform to women only audiences: “I really enjoy performing for women, but the challenge is that it is only half an audience, and it is hard to make a real success if it, when it is such a niche market.

“But I am not deterred; I think we still have places to go and people to meet, and this is just the beginning.”

• The album is available on iTunes, Mostly Music, and local Jewish bookshops in Johannesburg. For more information: www.breindy.com; Facebook under breindymusic.

MMXII is a James Webb tour de force

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

Exhibition: “MMXII” by James Webb, Johannesburg Art Gallery
Until: October 14

When an exhibition kicks you in the gut with such vehemence you feel disoriented, it’s succeeded: Art isn’t, after all, primarily there to be facile. James Webb, arguably one of SA’s more noteworthy artists, who brings copywriting and comparative religion credentials to his work, presents in MMXII a collation of 13 years’ work.

Essentially an essay on beliefs, this tour de force project is an impeccable construct in tune with Webb’s established reputation. In 2007, he presented Beau Diable at Gallery in the Round, Grahamstown.

Working only with experiential darkness and sound, Webb exposed audiences to the horror of mine labour. He does something similar here. While not engaging horror, the work never uses stock images. It strips ideas of the obvious dry so quickly, you forget you had them.

Curiously, and on paper, this show says nothing new. It quotes labels from a Nagasaki museum. It presents found sound bytes of prayer. It shows work from JAG’s archives. Its brilliance rests on its cohesion and how it has been focused and put together.

Of course when a label on a wall says “Ask the gallery assistant if there is no sound coming from this work” and when there are no gallery assistants present,



you move on, which thwarts a couple of the seven linked mini-exhibitions here, but it is the potency of the others that will leave you wordless.

You walk into one room, through a doubly-curtained entrance, which immaculately holds the darkness. The space is dominated with the sound of the muezzin calling Muslim congregants to prayer. It is so dark in there, you don’t know if you are alone. The call infiltrates not only your ears, but your heart and lungs too.

The pristine Phillips Gallery contains a work called Prayer. A red carpet dominates the space. On this carpet are 12 speakers like votive containers. Each broadcasts prayer from a different religious establishment, from Chabad to the Zionist Christian Church, Rosebank Church, to Pine Street Shul. You must remove your shoes; you might be tempted to prostrate yourself or

weep.

Still, the praying voices are indistinguishable. And suddenly it doesn’t matter. The notion of prayer subsumes everything and a message about the universality of it all is cast, without platitudes.

But why do you feel whittled to the core by this exhibition? Not confrontational, it embraces. It’s about experiment as much as it is about universals teeming everywhere; engendering genocides often to do with this cacophony of prayer.

In MMXII, you don’t only experience the installations. The whole gallery is “booby-trapped” with hidden elements you must find to properly access the rich detail fertilising Webb’s modus operandi. Nothing short of brilliant.

Webb conducts tours of MMXII toward the end of August. Call (011) 725-3130.

Look closer - and see the bruised textures...

Exhibition: “Lichtenberg Flower and Medusa” by Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Nirox Projects, Arts on Main, Johannesburg
Until: August 29

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

As you enter the gallery, the first in an ascending suite of three spaces, you might feel it sparse. But look again. The works, artists’ books and small paintings, are quietly present; they speak in subdued tones, until you look at them directly.

Then, you engage with bruised texture created with colour and line. A quickly written cursive Hebrew phrase bolts across the page, followed by words in French. It doesn’t matter what they say, they cast a shadow connecting you to them through language.

This exhibition of Professor Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (pictured, inset), who commutes between Tel Aviv and Paris, is

an immense coup in the SA art world.

Though this Tel Aviv-born, Jerusalem and London trained psychoanalyst who boasts a litany of publications with intellectual focus reaching from compassion in art to the writings of Emmanuel Levinas, has visited South Africa before, it was in an academic capacity and not to show work.

Her exhibition dovetails with a University of Johannesburg colloquium, “Pointure”. Under the curatorship of Leora Farber and Ann-Marie Tully, the project blends contributions from far and wide on the theme of visual identities in art and design.

The work rests tangentially on all of this: A ghostly ephemeral quality to her material touches photographic histories, but never

reproduces images. “Mostly these are my thoughts,” she comments. “My dreams are all in Hebrew.”

The preciousness of these books, some of which are found, some she’s bound herself, is belied by the wildness of their contents. Most are small. They could be volumes of tehillim, but for the tell-tale ink that bleeds onto their foreedges.

The drawings evoke a young Kandinsky. “It is the trans-connect-edness of it all. The process of making art and that of psychoanalysis echo. It’s about me and not-me and how they are linked.

“It’s about how traces of past events can teach in the present or the future. It’s about a co-emergence of values.” Lichtenberg Ettinger’s work engages with her own identity; it is immured in an abstract ethos, where line is allowed to stroll without reign, creating its own narrative. Her use of colour is about erasure, layering and histories.

“Art is a solitary process. But because of my subject matter, I am never alone at work. My work is about a meeting of the inside with the outside. It is about awareness and resonance. It is utterly beyond what our five senses deal us. It might take me seven years to make a painting, but it does not take you seven years to see it.”

The exhibition ‘Pointure’ accompanying the colloquium is at FADA Gallery, UJ, until August 29; call (011) 559-2099.



Arts in Brief

Dance for Cure, also a tribute to Adele Blank

Last week “Dance for a Cure” performed its first two concerts in Cape Town. Said renowned choreographer Martin Schönberg, who began learning contemporary dance under Adele Blank as a teenager, “One thing she is always too modest to talk about is her status. She is the mother of contemporary dance. All the people whose lives she has touched will attest to how much she should be celebrated. I choreographed a work in which she performed last Thursday, celebrating her and all she has done.” The same programme performs at The Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City on August 17. Visit www.danceforacure.co.za

TRC the inspiration behind Madelaine Georgette’s paintings

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s goal to motivate healing through understanding, was the inspiration for a series of 48 paintings, by SA-American artist Madelaine Georgette, donated to Wits University by the artist. The collection, “A Just Society”, will be exhibited from August 22 - September 19 at the Origins Centre, before being absorbed into the university’s art collection.

Natalie Knight, curator, states: “We hope to educate, stimulate discussion and provide insight into a topic that should be seared into the consciousness of every thinking South African.” On August 28 she lectures on her work; on September 1 she conducts an exhibition walkabout. (011) 717-1146.

Obama can't be trusted on Israel, Boteach tells Limmud CT

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN**

Once again, Limmud Cape Town enjoyed a bumper turnout at its annual festival of learning, with sessions catering to every taste. Held at the Protea Hotel Technopark, Stellenbosch last weekend, local and overseas presenters tackled subjects like international politics, women in the Bible, Jewish characters in South African theatre, medical ethics, the Eichmann trial and more.

Speaking on Judaism and homosexuality, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach pointed out that it constituted one prohibition among 613 mitzvot, adding that the desecration of the Sabbath was “the worst sin in the Torah.”

“Do we treat people who drive to synagogue the way we treat gay men?” he asked. “The assault on gay men and women is a contradiction of all we believe in.”

Referring to the “superficiality and stupidity of our communal interest” in the light of outside threats, he exclaimed: “It’s embarrassing! We’re supposed to be a light unto the nations; we can’t even be a light unto ourselves!”

Referring to the Orthodox rabbinate’s boycott of Limmud as being one of the issues that divided the community, he said: “We’re destroying our community and we’re missing the bigger message.”

In a subsequent session, Rabbi Boteach, who is a Republican candidate for the US Congress in November, debated with Mr Justice Dennis Davis on which presidential candidate would be best for the Jews. He said he wished to bring “uniquely Jewish values” to politics.

“The Jewish community has no voice anywhere in the world in politics - the only voice we have is money.” He maintained that many American Jews had tired of President Barack Obama’s insistence on Israel’s return to the 1967 borders.

“There is only one reason that there is no peace and that is our Arab neighbours,” he claimed. “Regarding Israel, President Obama has proven that he can’t be trusted.”

Refuting this, Justice Davis said that Israel’s minister of defence, Ehud Barak, had said that the Obama administration was doing more for Israel’s security than any other. Davis postulated that were the American president white and did not have the middle name “Hussein”, there would be “vast swathes” of opinion in the US that would be more favourably disposed towards him.

Mr Justice Davis said it was possible Obama would do more after the election, “maybe even bomb Iran. He understands you can’t just wander into an area and destabilise it.”

“It’s interesting that Obama got rid of Osama bin Laden, but of course that’s forgotten. A sane, thoughtful and relatively principled president is in the best interests of Israel.”

“I think four more years of Obama will un-



Israeli clinical psychologist Michal Goldberg presented a session at Limmud.

lock the Middle East process that will be to Israel’s benefit.”

Rabbi Boteach said he found the suggestion that America was a racist country “deeply offensive” and a “slur not borne out with fact. We elected an African-American president - he is the one that lost the American people, with even Democratic commentators saying that he was too professional and aloof.”

“I support an administration that allows Israel to defend itself. (Mitt) Romney is a great friend of Israel and will allow her to defend herself against Iran.”

Secular clinical psychologist

Michal Goldberg, spoke of her work with a West Bank haredi community, describing it as “an unusual shidduch”.

She maintained she was more easily accepted because the “tsorris” was confined to people outside the ultra-Orthodox community and would not compromise patients’ social standing. She added that the community was becoming more and more accepting of psychiatric medication, though it was kept secret.

Describing the abuse of women as a “big problem” in the community, she said there were rabbis who hushed it up, as well as those who sent men for help, medication and spoke to them.



Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who was a presenter at Limmud, Debbie Boteach and Chana Opert.

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Visit SAJBD’s revamped website

Upgrading the Board’s website to the kind of level needed for it to act as an effective vehicle for what we do, was for altogether too long a work-in-progress. Time and again, it ended up being put on the backburner as issues requiring more immediate attention came to the fore.

I am now pleased to report that a sustained effort over the first part of this year has at last brought the project to fruition, and that at long last we can direct people to a website that we feel does justice to the Board’s multi-faceted work on behalf of the Jewish community.

For this, thanks in large part are due to our senior researcher, Steven Gruzd, who brought to the task all the necessary creativity, theoretical insight and, perhaps above all, persistence in ensuring that the project was followed through in all its myriad details.

While no longer a work-in-progress, the website should not, of course, be regarded



Above Board

Mary Kluk

National Chairman

as somehow complete and unchangeable. Like any other successful site, it needs to be dynamic, constantly up-to-date and engaging with its audience.

We invite you to avail yourselves of everything it has to offer, and use the opportunities it provides to give us feedback, whether on how to improve the website itself or on the work of the Board in general.

The SAJBD’s website (which includes links to the website of the Cape Board as well as information on all our other branches) can be accessed at <http://www.jewishsa.co.za/>.

Celebrating the Jewish heritage in Kimberley

This year has been a difficult one in terms of having to confront a rising tide of anti-Israel hostility, but it is far from being the whole story. In the same period we have seen numerous uplifting demonstrations of how deeply our Jewish community has interwoven itself into the

tapestry of South African society at every level, and how much good will this has generated towards us.

Last week, I wrote on two such events, the Cycalive inter-school cycling trip from Johannesburg to Durban and the unveiling ceremony for the new Jewish Boer monument in Ladysmith. I can now report back on another memorable celebration of our community’s role in building South Africa, the commemorative events held over the long-weekend to mark the 110th anniversary commemoration of the Kimberley Synagogue.

The SAJBD’s country communities department, African Jewish Congress and Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation, collaborated in hosting this exciting series of events.

Once again, we were impressed to see so many members of the general community joining us, and how much the Jewish contribution to their city from the earliest times to the present day, is recognised and appreciated.

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

‘I have learnt to look into people’s eyes and into their souls’

SHIRA DRUION

Rebbetzen Chaya Malka Abramson typifies the heroic woman with her inspiring story of triumph over adversity. Tragedy can often leave victims embittered and scarred, particularly when the trauma incurred is third degree burns over 85 per cent of the body.

But Rebbetzen Abramson turned her pain into a productive quest to assist burn victims with her establishment of the Chaya Malka Burn Foundation.

Recently, the Johannesburg community hosted a lecture tour by Abramson, who inspired audiences with her story of survival. Thirty years ago, at age 30, Abramson awoke to find her apartment in the Old City of Jerusalem, covered in smoke.

The devastating fire had been caused by a gas explosion that threatened the life of Abramson’s elderly grandmother and three of her children. Despite nearly losing her life in the process, Abrams three times ran back into her apartment to save her family as the flames scorched her tiny frame, nearly leaving her for dead.

ly leaving her for dead.

She writes in her autobiography, *Who by Fire*: “I was given a one-in-10 chance of survival. But for months, as I hovered near death in excruciating pain in Hadassah Hospital, my family and friends stormed the Gates of Heaven with fervent prayers and acts of kindness in an effort to ‘annul the evil decree’, and my life was spared.

She says: “There were days when the pain was so overpowering that it was excruciating but the force that drove me to recovery was the realisation that the most important thing in the world was my desire to return to my family, to be a wife to my husband and a mother to my children. This thought kept repeating over and over in my mind as the guiding compass when the pain was insufferable.”

She relates: “I am not sure anyone realises how painful third degree burns are, but my skin looked like it has been shredded to pieces. I remember lying in the hospital and my brother-in-law walked in to visit me.

“I asked him how bad I looked, and he told me that it just looked like I had been

badly sunburnt. To this day, I am indebted to him for not incurring me any further pain or embarrassment, as he spared me the gory details of how ravaged I really looked.”

She continues: “I had to wear an elastic pressure garment for two years, which was a very dehumanising and demeaning experience, especially when strangers would stare at me unabashedly, as I sat on the bus or when I took my kids to school.

“But the journey has taught me to look inward and to concentrate on the essence of others, without being distracted by the externals. I have learnt to look into people’s eyes, and into their souls, a lesson of eternal value.”

Today, the Chaya Malka Burn Foundation helps Jewish burn patients in Israel and abroad by raising money for costly treatments and helping them to resume a normal lifestyle. CMBF also publishes a free educational newsletter about burn prevention and home safety on www.whobyfire.net. For more information please contact www.cmburnfoundation.com, e-mail: cma-bramson@gmail.com

Community Briefs

OFF TO CLIMB KILIMANJARO, 18 LASSES WENT...

As one of the climbers, Daphna Horowitz blogged on the ORT SA initiative to Kilimanjaro: “Decision to preparation to action takes giant leaps. This trip has been a part of my life and thoughts for three months; nothing compares to the morning of. See you soon - lehitraot, totsien - I know all the encouragement and love I have had will get me to the summit!

On those cold, exhausting days and nights I will know you are all rooting for me to go further - one step at a time.” The 18 women left on August 7 and returned this past Thursday.



Ready to confront the mountain in the name of ORT SA: (back) Sharon Willensky; Kiki Marx; Andy Kopelowitz; Siobhan Wilson; Chev Bacher; Robyn Smookler; and Kate Gershuni, and (front) Rahima Ismail; Amanda Porter; Vered Mann; Shira Zadikov; and Tali Frankel. Absent Daphna Horowitz; Galit Fluxman; Jena Daitz; Noella Mosh; Tahlia Levin; and Terri Zidel. These intrepid women were photographed on the eve of leaving for Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE YUDELOWITZ)

SUCCESSFULLY RECONNECTING JEWS WITH THEIR EUROPEAN ROOTS

Rabbi Ryan and Tova Goldstein recently collaborated with the organisation J-Roots to take an SA contingent of young Jews to Poland and Lithuania, in the hope that they would reconnect with their roots by connecting to the purity of faith of the Holocaust generation.

Says Rebbetzen Goldstein: “The trip was a deeply moving experience for me; over the seven days, I was overwhelmed by the majesty of the Jewish people, who retained their dignity and connection with G-d, despite the atrocities they experienced.”

The group comprised 20 participants, ranging in age and background. Ohrsom will be taking another tour in November. *SHIRA DRUION*

YOUNG YAIR LOSES HIS FIGHT AGAINST LEUKAEMIA

Hundreds gathered round the family of 14-year-old Yair Nochumsohn at West Park Cemetery on Tuesday. Yair, a Yeshiva College pupil, died that morning from acute leukaemia, diagnosed only a month ago. The evening before an emergency SMS was sent out asking for blood platelets for him.

“In Shir HaShirim”, Rabbi Avraham Tanzer intoned, “G-d plucks the most beautiful rose from the garden. When King David lost his son, all he could say, over and over again, was: ‘My son, my son’. All we can all utter is a groan.”

From notes given to him by Yair’s father Harry, Rabbi Tanzer related how Yair was determined to overcome his illness and attend Bnei Akiva winter camp with his friends during the July school holidays. How this child loved babies, children and animals. He spent one happy week at home with his family in between bouts of hospitalisation over this period. He matured before his father’s eyes.

• The platelet drive is to continue in Yair’s name, as platelets only last a limited number of days and as there is always a huge demand for them. For more information phone (011) 882-1391 or www.sanbs.org. - ALISON GOLDBERG

News in Brief

EX-ISRAELI SOLDIER SENTENCED IN GAZA WAR CRIME

JERUSALEM - A former Israeli soldier was convicted under a plea bargain for a crime highlighted in the Goldstone Report on the Gaza war.

Under the plea bargain, which was approved last Sunday by the Jaffa military court, the unnamed Givati Brigade soldier will be jailed for 45 days. The charges for the soldier, known as Staff-Sgt S, were reduced from manslaughter to illegal use of a weapon.

Staff -Sgt S was convicted in 2010 for shooting and killing a Palestinian woman, 64, and her daughter, 35, who were part of a group of Palestinians approaching him waving a white flag. His superiors had not ordered him to shoot.

The incident was highlighted in the Goldstone Report on the month-long 2008 – ‘09 Gaza war. The controversial report, written by a United Nations-appointed committee led by former South African judge Richard Goldstone, accused both Israel and Hamas fighters in Gaza of war crimes. (JTA)

ISRAELI PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR END TO CIRCUMCISION-RELATED RITE

JERUSALEM - The Israel Ambulatory Paediatric Association is calling for an end to a controversial circumcision-related rite that is also under fire in New York.

Direct oral-genital suction, known as metzitzah b’peh, should not be performed during Jewish ritual circumcision, the IAPA said. The association is calling on Israel’s health ministry to require maternity wards and clinics to advise parents against metzitzah b’peh, Israeli media reported.

IAPA is recommending that mohels, or ritual circumcisers, use a tube to take the blood from the circumcision wound, preventing direct contact with the infant’s incision.

The rite is not used in most Jewish circumcision ceremonies, but many in the haredi Orthodox community still adhere to it.

Rabbi Chaim Moshe Weisberg, a mohel, told Haaretz that IAPA was not after the child’s best interest and was against circumcision.

“They want all parents to stop circumcising their sons, as they did in Germany,” Weisberg said. “The cases of reported diseases allegedly originating from the custom are very few - and even then they can’t prove it was actually transferred from the mohel.

“Only if a parent requests metzitzah b’peh, as people have done for 3 000 years, do we do it at his request.

“I’m opposed to compulsion. Why do you want to prevent a Jew from Mea Shearim from upholding the traditions of his forefathers, if he knows what the risk is? Why not respect him?”

The controversy over metzitzah b’peh was reignited in New York in March after it came to light that an unidentified infant died on September 28 last year at Brooklyn’s Maimonides Medical Centre from “disseminated herpes simplex virus Type 1, complicating ritual circumcision with oral suction”, according to the death certificate.

New York Health Department investigations of newborns with the herpes virus from 2000 to 2011 have shown that 11 infants contracted the virus when mohels placed their mouths directly on the child’s circumcision wound to draw blood away from the circumcision cut, according to a statement from the department. Ten of the infants were hospitalised; at least two developed brain damage and two babies died. (JTA)

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BIRTHS

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What's On

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

Today, Friday (August 17)

• **UZLC** hosts Mo Skikne whose topic is “Oi Vey - To Get Old”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria at (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

Sunday (August 19)

• Monthly Rosh Chodesh Shacharis with singing of Hallel, “Sing Hallel in Unity IV” at Our Parents Home, in the shul followed by drinks and eats. Time: 07:30. Contact: Rabbi Shaun Wingrin for more info 082-449-6273.

• **RCHCC** is showing the Academy Award nominated documentary, “Exit Through the Gift Shop”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378), after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net.

• **UJW CT**, under the umbrella of the executive committee the Na’Arot and Kesher Groups, runs a cookie stall at One to One at the Good Hope Centre. Contact: tel (021) 434-9555, fax: (021) 434-9302.

• “Shabbos with Shooby Doob Shloimy” in October. Auditions take place today, for boys and girls 6 - 10 years old, who love to sing, dance, and act. Auditions at Yeshiva Shul Hall, Glenhazel. Time: 10:30 - 12:30. Contact Helen Heldenmuth on 083-272-8541. E-mail: info@shoobydoob.com

• **Second Innings** hosts Prof Angela Itzikowitz, director at Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs, on “The Consumer Protection Act - A Bill of Rights for Consumers”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Contact: Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718 or cell: 082-561-3228.

• **B’nai B’rith Barak Unit** presents a “Charity Fundraising Evening”. Venue: Barnyard Theatre, Cresta Centre, Blackheath, with Ian von Memerty and his family, in a combination of their “Circle of Life” and “Celebration”. Admission: R180 pp. Doors open 18:30 for 20:00 sharp. You may bring your own food but strictly no drinks. Full cash bar available. Beneficiaries of this event: CAP Home Community Services and Oxford Jewish Remedial School. Contact Les Markowitz 011 786 6470 or 082 885 4107

Tuesday (August 21)

• **Cape Town Holocaust Centre** presents “The Ernest & Renee Samson 13th Anniversary Lecture” in association with The Stern Visiting Scholars Programme & Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, UCT. The topic is “Grappling with Holocaust Denial: Reflections on the Irving/Lipstadt Libel Case, January - April 2000”, by Prof Sir Richard Evans, Regius Professor of History and President of Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. Venue: Albow Centre. Time 20:00. RSVP: Tel (021) 462-5553 / e-mail admin@holocaust.org.za

• **WIZO Forum** shows the movie “Inside Israel”, with an analysis by Victor Gordon. Venue: Beyachad. Time: 09:30. Cost R40. Contact: Andrea 083-677-8999.

Wednesday (August 22)

• **UJW CT** adult education division hosts Andrew Marjoribanks, of Wordsworth, who will discuss the latest books. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl refreshments) Enquiries: (021) 434 -555 (mornings only).

כל הכבוד

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Maccabi football into the swing of things

The lights of the London Olympic Games have been turned off and that can only mean one thing - the final countdown to the 2013 Maccabi Games has begun.

JACK MILNER

Rugby, football and futsal all hosted successful training camps around the country over the past long weekend, allowing players from the various provinces to get together and to train as a squad. South Africa came away from the Olympics with six medals and the SA Maccabi teams will be hoping to emulate their success.

The open and masters futsal squads hosted their training camp in Cape Town, with various fitness and technical training sessions taking place over the weekend. The teams are already looking in top form and their coaching staff will continue to monitor their progress over the next few months, with another training camp scheduled for later this year.

The open men's football side held their camp in Johannesburg, with fitness assessments and various other technical and tactical sessions taking place at Old Eds Club from Friday until Sunday. There was a great turnout, even with injured players arriving in Cape Town while two players involved in preseason training for their professional clubs - Larry Cohen (Chippa United) and Wade Miller (Vasco Da Gamma) - as well as Noah Cohen (Dartmouth) and Dean Miller (Notre Dame College) who are based in the

US and are involved with their respective soccer university programmes.

Coach Shawn Bishop from Sundowns, was extremely happy with the progress of the squad and admitted it would be tough in November to cut the down to the maximum 20 players.

The squad were also privileged to receive their training kit and equipment sponsored by Forwardzone (FZ), a niche football management business. FZ arranged Kappa training kits, bibs, soccer balls and various other training equipment and were also instrumental in sourcing the coach for the side.

FZ has always been close to Maccabi, with CEO Ashley Kotzin having attended the Maccabiah in 1997 as the head coach of the boys Under-16 football side. FZ understand the need for excellent preparation, and has a key focus on football development and knows the importance of a professional environment to drive footballing success, so they were very interested in assisting the open men's team with their goal of a medal at the Maccabiah in 2013.

Further training camps will be held later this year for various sports as well as fundraisers to assist the juniors to participate in the Games. If you are interested in assisting Maccabi SA with their fundraising activities, please contact admin2013@maccabi.co.za



The Maccabi SA open men's football squad at their training camp at Old Eds. The squad will be trimmed to 20 players in November.

for more information.

The Maccabi SA Golf Day will be staged on September 11 at Houghton Golf Club. This event promises to be a fantastic day out with great activities, both on and off the golf course. Food and drinks, great prizes and

give-aways and, of course, great fun for all involved.

If you are interested in assisting with the golf day, be it playing, prizes or just enjoying the dinner and guest speaker at prize-giving, please contact lescohen@mweb.co.za.

Big payday for Anton Marcus

JACK MILNER

Last Wednesday night Anton Marcus was presented with a cheque for R250 000 for winning his his third Jockeys' Championship in succession, and his fourth overall.

It was arguably the most dramatic finish ever as Anton got up on the final day to beat Gavin Lerena by just a single winner.

"It's great, wonderful and I feel privileged to have won it," said Anton. "I honestly think too much emphasis is placed on the championship. From a personal point of view it's awesome, but it's the guys with the best support, the ones on the right horses, who will win it. I certainly don't think it determines who the best jockey is.

"I feel that in every province in the

country you can virtually throw your colours into the jockey's room. Whoever picks them up will do the job."

He thanked the owners and trainers who had helped him to the title.

"I am lucky to have an awesome support system," he said, before mentioning his fruitful association with Markus Jooste, the country's champion owner.

Anton played down the big cash bonus. "Although the sponsorship is fantastic, the money has nothing to do with the drive to win the title. It's all about the prestige," he said. "Last year Anthony (Delpech) and I went at it hammer and tongs and there was no prize money. I'm elated to have won it again and nobody can take it away."

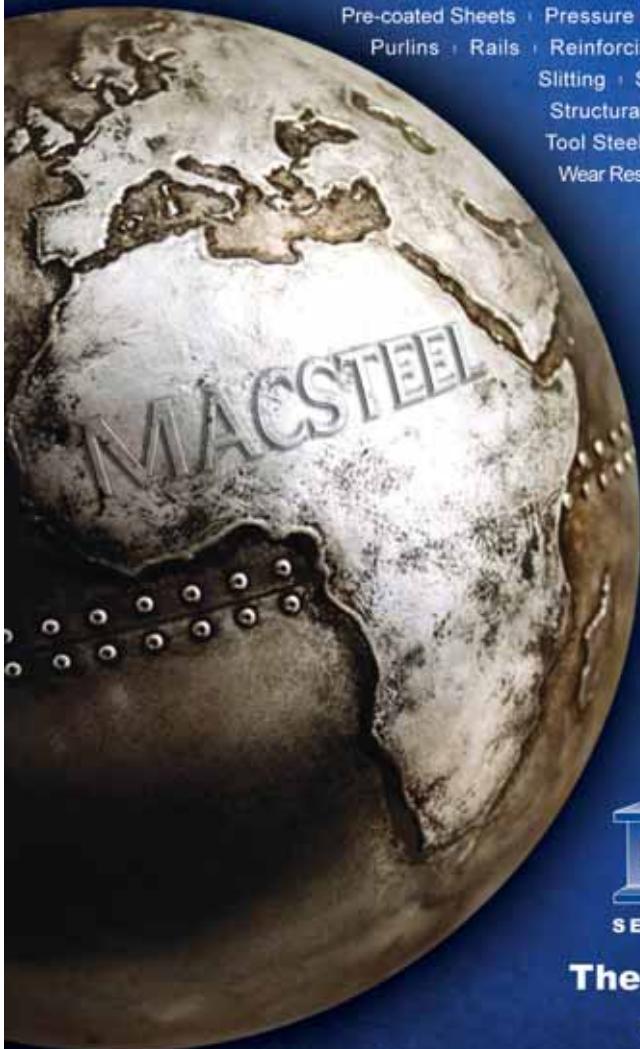



Anton Marcus is presented with a cheque for R250 000 from Klawervlei Stud's John Koster at last week's Equus Awards dinner held at Emperors Palace, for winning the 2011 - 2012 National Jockeys' Championship. (PICTURE: JC PHOTOGRAPHICS)

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