



jewish achiever awards
2012

5 DAYS

to go for the
*Annual Jewish
Achiever Awards*
on June 20!

• south african •

jewish report

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Phillip Tobias: Great scientist, great mensch, great humanitarian

With the passing of world-renowned palaeanthropologist Phillip Tobias last week, South Africa - and the world - has lost one of its greatest scientific minds. But Tobias, who rose to prominence with the discovery of “Little Foot” at the Sterkfontein Caves in the Cradle of Humankind, was not your common garden variety detached, aloof academician. He had a wide variety of interests – ranging from politics, the arts and sport - and lived life to the full. Small in stature, he had the heart of a lion and a humanity that embraced everyone who crossed his path, with compassion and empathy. In this file photo of 2007, the dapper Prof Tobias is pushing another - now deceased - Jewish stalwart, politician Helen Suzman, in her wheelchair. Tobias has left a void that will be very hard to fill.

PHOTOGRAPH: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

SEE PAGES 4 & 6

In view of the upcoming Jewish Achiever Awards on Wednesday June 20, our next issue will come out on that day. There will therefore be no issue on Friday June 22.

FREUND: Take back the holy sites

“There is a limit to what a nation can be expected to tolerate when its most hallowed places repeatedly come under attack. It is time we let the Palestinians know that their abuse of our heritage, and all we hold dear, will no longer be tolerated.”

7

GOLDSTUCK: Gadget War 3 is here!

The next big war in technology is about to be fought; the battleground is the mobile phone. But it's not the obvious war over who has the best features, size, weight, sound and screen quality. It's the next phase in the war of operating systems, beginning this week.

11

New York Jewish population increasing in diversity



“The most dramatic Jewish population growth came among the Orthodox and unaffiliated parts of the community.”

6

ANC in Western Cape plays Israel card to woo Muslim vote

The ANC in the Western Cape has declared its intention of challenging what it terms the “close” relationship between the Democratic Alliance-led provincial government and the State of Israel, as part of its outreach to the local Muslim community.

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Shabbat Times

June 15 / 25 Sivan		
June 16 / 26 Sivan		
Parshat Shelach		
17:06	17:58	Johannesburg
17:26	18:21	Cape Town
16:46	17:39	Durban
17:07	17:59	Bloemfontein
16:57	17:52	Port Elizabeth
16:51	17:45	East London

Kashrut Alert

FAIRCAPE YOGHURTS NO LONGER KOSHER
The Cape Town kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues advises that with immediate effect, due to reformulation, Faircape yoghurts are no longer kosher, even when bearing the Beth Din logo.
Faircape will be removing current stock of yoghurts bearing the logo from store shelves.
The kashrut department of the Beth Din in Johannesburg says updated packaging of Robertsons' spices do NOT bear the Beth Din logo. Those spices that have been certified to date, remain kosher certified.
In response to consumer queries regarding Nan HA baby formula, the Beth Din notifies the public, that when directed by a health professional, it may be used without reservation.
Kellogs Special K Oats and Honey is kosher certified without the Beth Din logo ONLY when manufactured in Germany.
Ultramel Zero ready-made custard (previously Ultramel Lite) is NOT kosher certified (there is no Beth Din

A paradigm shift is required

In today's fast paced world of instant gratification, high speed Internet and social networking, we feel that we are in control of and run the world.

In this week's Torah portion Shelach Lecha, Bnei Yisrael is about to enter into the Promised Land when the Children of Israel ask to send spies to do a preliminary inspection of the land and gather intelligence, in order that they should know what they are up against.
This mission was headed by a prince from each of the 12 tribes. The mission goes terribly wrong, when the spies except for two, Yehoshua and Calev, return with terrible reports about Eretz Yisrael and its inhabitants.
What went wrong? The 12 spies were great men, each an individual in their own right, men who saw the miracles in Egypt, who saw the splitting of the sea, who witnessed Hashem on Sinai.
Each spy had a choice to make: recognise Hashem's involvement in their lives, or blind themselves to this reality. When they made their assessments of the Land of Israel, they failed to see Hashem behind all that they had witnessed.
Could they have had so little faith in



PARSHAT SHELACH LECHA
Rabbi Yoni Lipschitz
Mizrachi Shul

spite of what they had witnessed? Instead of working on themselves and strengthening their own faith, they gave up, despairing of their ability to be victorious.
In our busy lives we find many reasons for not putting in the time to work on our faith in Hashem, our Emunah. We are just too busy; we live in a very fast moving and competitive environment; we need to work harder; and we need to put in more hours. Life is too short.
What is required is a paradigm shift. We need to shift the way we look at life, just like Yehoshua and Calev were able to do.
Each and every challenge that we are presented with in life, is an opportunity

for self-improvement and growth. Each and every challenge is placed before us by Hashem in order for us to grow and perfect our character. We need to fight the battle the spies feared to fight. We need to learn to see the hand of Hashem in our daily lives.
In our lives, we need to open ourselves up to the hand of Hashem and realise that Hashem's miracles are not always massive multimedia events, but that He assists and guides us every step of the way, every day.
Whether it's taking the time to notice that we got the parking bay close to the shops and did not have to walk far in the rain, or a hurdle we need to climb, everything that happens in our lives is the hand of Hashem guiding and assisting us through life.
Being cognisant of the hand of Hashem in our lives will reduce our daily stress and anxiety as we will understand that Hashem is guiding us and supporting us every step of the way.

Celebrating 80 years of Progressive Jewry in SA

LIONEL SLIER

The South African Union of Progressive Jewry celebrated 80 years of existence in this country with a three-day conference in Johannesburg last week-end.
Historically, it was the Idelson brothers, from England, who had, in the late 1920s, first mooted establishing a Reform community in this country. However, it was the arrival of Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler, in 1932, that is marked as the start of the Movement here.
Therefore the 80th anniversary of the establishment was celebrated in the three Progressive synagogues in the city- the "Mother congregation", Temple Israel in Hillbrow, Beit Emanuel in Parktown and Beit David in Sandton. Six South African-based rabbis and eight overseas rabbis were among those who attended.
There was certainly a full programme, starting last Thursday evening with a welcoming address for those who had travelled to Johannesburg and they came from Cape Town, Durban, the United Kingdom, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Russia and Israel.
On Shabbat itself, after the Ma'ariv service at Beit Emanuel, there was a full programme of talks on subjects such as "Defining the Progressive Challenge" and "Using Technology and Social Media for Our Benefit" to "Reviewing the Work of Congregations and Sisterhood" and more.
After the Shabbat evening service led by the resident rabbi at Beit Emanuel, Rabbi Robert Ash, Rabbi Stephen Fuchs, president of the

World Union of Progressive Jewry, spoke about the "Vision for Progressive Jewry in 2012".
At the dinner which followed, Mike Grabiner, chairman of the World Union, spoke about "The Importance of the World Union for South African Jewry".
The Shabbat morning, service, next day, was held at Temple Israel and the shul was almost full. The congregation certainly enjoyed themselves joining the choir on every occasion. It was interesting to note that the congregation really represented the South African rainbow nation.
At the packed gala dinner on Saturday night, Isla Feldman of the SA Zionist Federation officially brought "heartfelt congratulations".
Mary Kluk, chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, (who, unfortunately, could not be present), sent "a hearty mazeltov" on behalf of the Board and "we look forward to strengthening our two organisations".
The Sunday was devoted to "A Day of Learning". Speakers were Ya'akov Finkelstein, deputy Israeli ambassador, Professor Anthony Arkin (Durban), on "The Place of Israel in the Changing Middle East". Then followed "The Changing Politics of The Middle East" with Reeve Forman, Yaron Shavit (Israel) and Dalya Levy (Israel). Next on "Problems and Success-



Yaron Shavit, chairman of the Reform Movement in Israel.



SA-born Dave Robinson, chairman of the Australia/New Zealand/Asia (Singapore, Shanghai) Union of Progressive Jewry.



es of Diaspora Jewry", speakers were Miriam Kramer (European Union), Rabbi Helena Rubinstein (St Petersburg), and Dave Robinson (Australia/New Zealand/Asia Progressive Union).
Tali Nates, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre) gave a presentation on the Rwanda Genocide.
In the afternoon there were talks on "Anti-

Zionism vs Anti-Semitism"; "Images of Jews in the Media"; "Progressive Jewish Identity"; and "Progressive Jewish Views of Justice".
The following are some words distilled from an avalanche of positive opinions:
Mike Grabiner: "The World Union was the international umbrella organisation of the Reform, Progressive, Liberal and Reconstructionist Movements and represents the largest body of religious Jews in the world -1,8 million in 45 countries."
Danny Rich, chief executive of Liberal Judaism in the UK: "We believe in unity with all Jews, but with the difference of uniformity."
Dalya Levy (SA and Israel) Arvenu and WIZO: "Eighty years ago there were visionaries (of the Progressive Movement in South Africa), today there is a hall full of people."
Rabbi Rubenstein (St Petersburg): "I wish to make our vision work like you have made yours work."
Rabbi Alexander (Cape Town) "There is more than one way to be Jewish."
The celebrations ended in a general mood of satisfaction and happiness. The SA Progressive Union was cheered by the knowledge that they are not operating in isolation, that they have compatriots throughout the world and the belief that "The words of Torah are the same to all of us."

The SA Jewish Report of June 22, will also reach 600 of the crème de la crème of the community, at this year's gala dinner. June 29 will feature coverage of the event and the winners. Don't miss out on these ideal advertising opportunities!

jewish achiever awards

2012

ANC in W Cape plays Israel card to woo Muslim vote

DAVID SAKS

The ANC in the Western Cape has declared its intention of challenging what it terms the “close” relationship between the Democratic Alliance-led provincial government and the State of Israel, as part of its outreach to the local Muslim community.

According to the Cape Times of June 11, ANC Western Cape Leader Marius Fransman, deputy minister of Internal Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO), said his party was “concerned” about this relationship and its provincial general council had decided to hold meetings “with a cross section of communities” on the matter.

Fransman was speaking in the context of outlining his strategy to win back the province from the DA.

Fransman further stressed the importance of the ANC having a strong relationship with the country’s 1,3 million-strong Muslim community, not because it wanted its votes but “because they were part of the fight for liberation”.

However, the intention of using the Israel issue as a way of winning over Muslim DA supporters, was made clear by his point-



ANC Western Cape leader, Marius Fransman. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WWW.SKILLS-UNIVERSE.COM)

edly drawing attention to the DA’s allegedly close relationship with Israel, while noting that the plight of the Palestinians was “dear to local Muslims”.

Fransman’s remarks come shortly after Western Cape MEC Gerrit van Rensburg cancelled his scheduled trip to Israel - under duress - after being informed by the Department of International Affairs and Co-operation that visits by government officials to that country should be kept to a minimum.

Both Fransman and fellow DIRCO Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim, of the same department, were cited as being behind this directive.

The Muslim population in the Western Cape is estimated at about 500 000. In the past, there have been occasional smear cam-

paigns at election time seeking to portray the DA as pro-Israel, such as in 2004 when posters bearing gruesome images and the slogan: “A vote for the DA, a vote for Israel”, appeared in certain areas of Cape Town where the Muslim community is concentrated.

Up until now, however, these have always been officially disowned by the ANC in the province.

News in Brief

AFRICAN MIGRANTS PROTEST THEIR TREATMENT IN TEL AVIV

JERUSALEM - Hundreds of African migrants at the weekend protested in Tel Aviv against violence directed at them, as well as Israeli government policy toward migrants as a group.

The some 300 migrants, most from Eritrea and Sudan, according to Ynet, marched from Levinsky Park in Tel Aviv to the United Nations mission.

Signs carried by the migrants read: “A refugee is not cancer, he’s a person who escaped persecution and is entitled to protection” and “We want group protection, not refugee rights”, and “stop violence against refugees”.

The Population, Immigration, and Borders Authority reportedly arrested eight South Sudanese migrants in Eilat over the weekend.

Last week, the authority announced that the migrants illegally in Israel would have one week to turn themselves in and leave the country, with a small grant to help them get started in their home country, or be deported.

The deadline was imposed following a June 7 Jerusalem District Court ruling that the migrants could be deported because the lawsuit filed on their behalf failed to prove that they would face “risk to life or exposure to serious damage”.

Some 1 500 South Sudanese are affected by the ruling. Approximately 60 000 African migrants are living in Israel, and thousands are infiltrating into the country each month through its border with Egypt. (JTA)

TOULOUSE KILLER MOHAMMED MERAH’S FATHER SUING POLICE

TOULOUSE - The father of Toulouse killer Mohammed Merah, reportedly is suing police for allegedly murdering his son.

Mohamed Benaël Merah filed a lawsuit against the RAID elite police who shot his son, the French news agency AFP reported on Monday.

“This is a suit against unnamed persons for murder with aggravating circumstances concerning those who gave the orders at the top of the police,” Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, a member of the legal team representing Mohamed Benaël Merah, told AFP.

Mohammed Merah, who murdered four at a Jewish school in Toulouse in a drive-by shooting on his motorbike, was killed last March by police after a 32-

hour siege at his house in the southern France city. Merah was fatally shot while jumping from his window during a daylong siege on his apartment in Toulouse.

“You’ve got 300 to 400 heavily armed people and a guy shut up all alone in his apartment. That alone is enough to raise questions,” Coutant-Peyre said.

Merah had confessed to the school killings, which included a rabbi and his two of his young sons, and the daughter of the school’s headmaster. He filmed himself carrying out the attacks.

AFP reported that the head of the legal team, Algerian attorney Zahia Mokhtari, said he had evidence that Merah had been “liquidated”, including videos that Merah filmed himself during the siege. (JTA)

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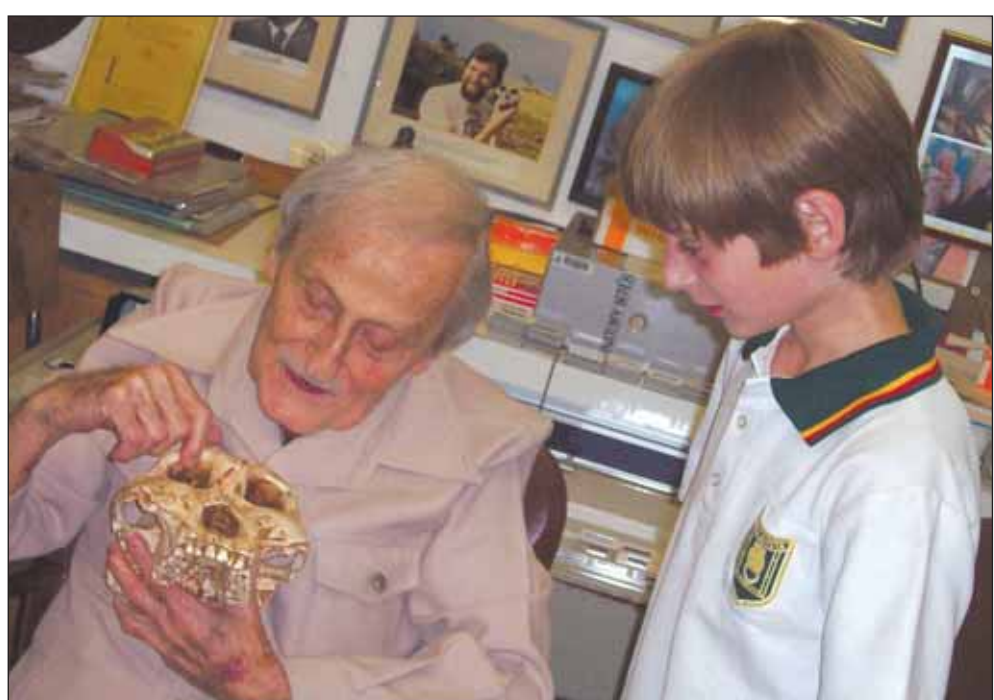
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A great, humble, man has passed this way

World-celebrated palaeoanthropologist and universally loved gentleman, human rights activist and sports fan Phillip Tobias died last Thursday, after a three-month illness. In his hesped, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of the Great Park Shul said Tobias “walked with academic aristocracy, but retained the common touch.”



Professor Phillip Tobias gently explaining the skull of a hominid to grade 3 learner at Bellavista School, Gabriel Brest, November 2008. (FILE PHOTO)

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Former President Thabo Mbeki talks to Rabbi Dovid Hazdan. (PHOTO: ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

ROBYN SASSEN

Born in Durban on October 14, 1925, to Fanny Rosendorff and Joseph Tobias, as a 15-year-old Phillip promised himself he would one day understand the diabetes-related death of his 21-year-old sister, Val and his grandmother, also from diabetes. His childhood was troubled. His parents separated following the bankruptcy of his father's toy shop. But, according to Rabbi Hazdan, “this sadness was for him a great motivator that enabled him to take on the world”. Tobias enrolled as a medical student at Wits University in 1943. He deviated to do a medical BSc; by 1946, he was already lecturing. He completed doctorates, and was awarded professorships, in medicine, genetics and palaeoanthropology. Among other accolades, he was granted honorary doctorates from 11 universities, including Pennsylvania and Cambridge, and was nominated three times for a Nobel Prize.

In 1959, at 33, Tobias became head of anatomy at Wits Medical School, the first SA-born person in the chair of any medical facility nationally, and the youngest in this position, which he retained for 32 years.

Among his other achievements in this discipline was a mandatory course in medical ethics for medical students, which he mooted. “He felt it was important for anyone dealing with the human body, that they did so with respect and a sense of connection,” recalled Rabbi Hazdan.

Internationally, he is best known for his work on human evolution, and his key role in establishing the Cradle of Humankind as a world heritage site. In 1966, he began the excavation programme at Sterkfontein, the world's longest continuously active palaeo-anthropological dig, which has yielded over 1 000 hominid fossils, about one third of all hominid fossils ever found.

His crowning palaeoanthropological find was “Little Foot”, four 4,17 million-old foot bones at Sterkfontein, identified as of human ancestry in 1995. More Little Foot bones were found; to date, Little Foot is SA's most complete skeleton of a direct ancestor.

In 2002, Tobias led the process of having the remains of Saartjie Baartman returned to SA, for a dignified burial. Parts of the body of this Khoi woman had been exhibited in Paris as ethnological curiosities in the 19th century.

An immensely prolific writer, Tobias was respected not only for his research, but also for his anti-apartheid stance. President of the National Union of SA Students in 1948, he embraced his role of bringing about societal change. He launched the university's first anti-apartheid campaign and was a vociferous presence against the closing of Wits to black students.

Said archaeologist Lyn Wadley: “During



Veteran anti-apartheid activist George Bizos at the funeral. (PHOTO: ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

the darkest days of South Africa, when he could have got a job anywhere in the world, he chose to stay; this was his country, where he could make a difference.”

In 2001, he won the SA Jewish Board of Deputies' Human Rights award, followed by the Jewish Achiever's Lexus Lifetime Achiever Award the next year, and the Walter Sisulu Special Contribution Award from the City of Johannesburg in 2007.

Also in 2002, the SABC screened Tobias' Bodies, in which Tobias showed how food shaped humankind's evolution. The series won a Creative Excellence award in the US International Film and Video Festival and Best Educational Programme for Adult Audiences, in the Ide Suisse Award.

A frequent Shabbat guest at Rabbi Hazdan's home, Tobias was “a man of deep beliefs” - having as a youngster nurtured an idea to become a rabbi. “He appreciated beauty,” the rabbi recalled. “He took immense joy in nature; he loved theatre, music and art.” Tobias, who never married or had children, referred to his thousands of students, as “in some way” his children. “It is not a genetic legacy I leave, but a cultural one, orally transmitted through education,” he told colleague Anthony Paton.

Blessed with a wry sense of humour, Tobias was genuinely generous in his acknowledgement of others. His dapper presence downplayed his iconic status, making him universally adored in any context.

There were hundreds of mourners at his funeral at the West Park Cemetery on Sunday, representing the cream of South Africa's intelligentsia; pall bearers included former President Thabo Mbeki, Advocate George Bizos, Mr Justice Edwin Cameron, Wits Vice-Chancellor Professor Loyiso Nongxa, and others. Tobias was buried in a special section reserved for those who extend themselves beyond their immediate needs by contributing to the world at large.

See editorial on page 6

The Jewish World

in seven seconds

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

“Israeli group stands by terror claim”

An Israeli civil rights centre alleging a Palestinian group funded by Canberra has terrorism links, is standing by its findings, despite claims that such ties don’t exist. Shurat HaDin now plans to release its report to Israeli authorities.

Arutz Sheva, Beit El, West Bank, Israel:
www.israelnationalnews.com :

“MK calls Reform Jews ‘clowns,’ ejects their representative”

Finance Committee Chairman MK Gafni kicked out Reform Movement’s Gilad Kariv in a stormy session, in response to the Knesset’s Finance Committee’s discussion of the recent instruction by the Attorney General and Legal Advisor to the Government, that Reform and Conservative Jewish rabbis are eligible for state funding.

Baltimore Jewish Times, Maryland, US:
www.jewishtimes.com

“White House removes Gertrude Stein from proclamation”

The White House has removed a reference to Gertrude Stein, a Jewish poet, arts critic and literary theorist, who notoriously flirted with Nazi ideology while living in France in the 1940s from its Jewish Heritage Month proclamation. Stein - along with Aaron Copland, Albert Einstein and Louis Brandeis - were deleted from the proclamation.

Huffington Post, international:
www.huffingtonpost.com

“Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial sprayed with hate graffiti by vandals”

Vandals spray-painted anti-Zionist graffiti at Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, its chairman said, suggesting radical ultra-Orthodox Jews were to blame. The anti-Zionist graffiti was painted at 12 spots across the memorial compound, including slogans that read, “Hitler, thank you for the Holocaust”, “Jews, wake up, the evil Zionist regime doesn’t protect us, it jeopardises us”, and “If Hitler hadn’t existed, the Zionists would have invented him”.

Jewish Journal, Los Angeles:
www.jewishjournal.com

“Northridge mother charged in syrup swastika vandalism”

A Northridge woman has been charged with multiple criminal counts for helping her teenage daughter and two friends deface homes with maple syrup swastikas, human faeces and toilet paper. Catharine Whelpley, 43, was charged on June 11 with three counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, two counts of vandalism and two counts of trespassing.

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

“Israel Prize-winner disparages liberal rabbis”

Rabbi Chaim Druckman, this year’s winner of the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement, raised eyebrows with his dismissal of the Israeli government’s decision to, for the first time, recognise Conservative and Reform rabbis. The move, by Israel’s attorney general, not only recognises them as rabbis but also pays 16 of them who work in rural settings.

Jewish Times Asia, Hong Kong:
www.jewishtimesasia.org

“Holocaust denying bishop allowed to embark on Asian tour”

Bishop Richard Williamson, who was in 2009 excommunicated by the Vatican through Pope Benedict XVI because of his status as a confessed Holocaust denier, was allowed to visit the Philippines, Japan and South Korea in May as part of a regional tour. In Japan he visited the Marian shrine at Akita and held confirmations at a church in Quezon City in the Philippines.



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We will miss Phillip Tobias

The stature of world-famous palaeoanthropologist Phillip Tobias, who died last week (see story on page 4), was so great that all the major dailies and television channels in this country, and many abroad, paid warm tribute to one of South Africa’s greatest minds. His contribution to the understanding of human evolution was gigantic and he firmly placed South Africa as “the cradle of humankind”.

He was slightly-built, but a giant intellectually and ethically. Our country is poorer without him. Even though he was retired, he was still very much there as a presence.

An all-rounder, he showed that a great academic and intellectual life doesn’t have to be confined to dusty university chambers, but can embrace the world in all its fun, fascination and beauty. He was interested in the arts and politics, and a lover of sport - particularly cricket and soccer. There was no snobbery in him - he was a people’s person with a common touch, yet could as easily converse with the rich and famous. His sense of humour and twinkle in his eye is fondly remembered by all who met him. He never ever talked “down” to anybody - not even to the youngest child.

He spent much of his working life in the virtual police state of the apartheid system, when speaking out against its injustices was not easy - in fact often dangerous. Colleagues and friends were banned, jailed, or fled the country. Yet speak out he did; fearless even against the might of the regime.

His life story echoes a theme prevalent among Jewish immigrants to this country from Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s - the rapid rise of subsequent generations into professions, big business and other areas. His parents in Durban were shopkeepers - yet their son became the youngest-ever head of the Medical School at Wits University and one of South Africa’s greatest scientists.

He embraced his Jewishness openly and proudly, without making a fetish about it. He regularly attended the Great Park Shul in Johannesburg. He did not force the rational scientific approach into everything, but showed respect for the spiritual world. His field of study, of course, did not find favour in all religious circles, especially when the bogey word “evolution” was mentioned.

Consistent with his belief in the dignity of all people, he was a major figure in the campaign to bring Saartjie Baartman’s remains back to this country. This Khoi woman, born in 1789, had been taken to Europe and ended up being displayed for decades in the UK and France as a freak for people to gawk at - during her life and after her death. She was finally buried on Women’s Day, August 9, 2002, in her birthplace, the Gamtoos River Valley in the Eastern Cape.

Tobias was Jewish and South African. With his credentials and qualifications he could have easily got a post abroad at a myriad Ivy League or other universities - some of which conferred honorary doctorates on him - but he opted to stay in South Africa. The presence at his funeral of people like former President Thabo Mbeki and Struggle veterans Ahmed Kathrada, Tokyo Sexwale and advocate George Bizos, bears testimony to his status as a true son of Africa. Public tribute was paid to him by President Jacob Zuma. It is fitting that he rests now in this country.

Sadly, the fact that he retired many years ago and largely moved out of the public eye, may have contributed to a younger generation of South Africans either knowing little about the man and his achievements, or regarding him as “yesterday’s man”. That was evident from the lack of young faces at his funeral. That does not, however, detract from the fact that the cream of this country’s intelligentsia came to West Park Cemetery on the cold Sunday to pay their last respects.

Phillip Tobias epitomised the best this country can produce. Internationally, his legacy will live on in palaeoanthropology and other fields long after the man himself has been laid to rest.

He lived life to the full. He died with dignity, much loved. We will miss him.



Members of the UJA-Federation of New York at the “Celebrate Israel Parade” in New York City on June 3. (PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK)

‘NY Jewish population rising, increasing in diversity’

DEBRA RUBIN
NEW YORK

The New York City area’s Jewish population is on the rise again, thanks largely to the growth of Orthodox households.

The number of Jews in the city and three suburban counties jumped to 1,54 million, up from 1,41 million a decade ago, according to a comprehensive population survey released on Tuesday by the UJA-Federation of New York.

The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 covered New York City’s five boroughs as well as Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties. Jewish households represent 16 per cent of all households in that region. The survey does not include New Jersey or Connecticut.

In New York City specifically, the Jewish population, which in 2002 was found to have dipped below one million, now stands at 1,086 million.

The most dramatic growth in the overall area’s Jewish population came among the Orthodox and those unaffiliated with any denomination. Each group increased by more than 100 000 over the past decade. The numbers of Conservative and Reform Jews each declined by about 40 000.

The number of Jewish children and people under 25 rose from 432 000 in 2002 to 498 000 in 2011. That’s largely a reflection of the growth in the Orthodox community, whose families typically have more children than non-Orthodox families.

Meanwhile, the number of Jews aged 75 and older also increased, rising in the same time frame from 153 000 to 198 000 and mirroring trends in other Jewish communities and the American population at large.

While 32 per cent of the area’s Jews live in Orthodox households, Orthodox households are now home to 61 per cent of the area’s Jewish children - a staggering statistic, said Brandeis University’s Jonathan Sarna.

“It serves as a reminder that while we talk about intermarriage, singleness/childlessness among non-Orthodox Jews may actually be a far more important long-term trend,” he said.

On poverty in the Jewish community, about 19 per cent of Jewish households are categorised as poor - defined by the survey as having an income under 150 per cent of the federal poverty line. The number soars to 43 per cent in Chasidic households.



A Chasidic couple overlook Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. The Jewish population in the city and three suburban counties, has increased largely due to the growth of the Orthodox community. (PHOTOGRAPH: GAELX VIA CC)

“The government has to be the safety net. The Jewish community has to augment the safety net,” said John Ruskay, the UJA-Federation’s executive vice president. “We will need laser-like interventions.”

The largest Jewish community outside of Israel is extremely diverse.

The largest Jewish community outside of Israel also is extremely diverse, noted Jack Ukeles, who conducted the 274-page survey with Steven M Cohen.

Overall, 44 per cent of area Jews live in, comprises either Orthodox or Russian-speaking households.

Some 216 000 Jews live in Russian-speaking households, while 121 000 Jews are in Israeli households and 50 000 Jews in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) households - which Cohen said might be underreported - and 38 000 Jews in Syrian households.

“No other community lives in such diversity in all the areas we have identified,” Ukeles said.

Some 12 per cent of Jewish households include a person who is biracial or non-white (a category that includes Hispanics). Cohen said that was the highest such percentage nationwide.

The community’s intermarriage rate remains unchanged from the last

survey, holding at 22 per cent of married couples.

The rate is lower than in many other communities, noted Ira Sheskin, who has conducted numerous Jewish community surveys. By comparison, he said, the intermarriage rate was 28 per cent in Philadelphia, 41 per cent in Greater Washington, DC, and 55 per cent in the San Francisco Bay Area.

In New York area intermarried families, 31 per cent of children are being raised as Jewish, as compared with 98 per cent in families where both parents are Jewish. Those statistics are roughly in line with the 2002 numbers.

Curiously, just 71 per cent of children in conversionary families are being raised as Jewish, but the survey’s authors speculate that those children might be from prior marriages or the adults had converted after they began to raise their children.

When it comes to synagogue affiliation, New York Jews are at 44 per cent, which is much higher than communities such as Las Vegas (14 per cent) but considerably lower than Cincinnati (60 per cent).

New York also is a “day school town”, said Scott Shay, who chaired the federation’s community survey committee. In fact, 64 per cent of Jewish children attend Jewish day schools. Of that number, 93 per cent are Orthodox, six per cent are Conservative and one per cent are Reform.

The Jewish community’s outreach efforts are having a positive effect.

In a revealing statistic likely to encourage outreach programmers, more than half of the Jews with no religion and more than a quarter of those with another religion, still engage Jewishly, for example, attending Jewish cultural events and activities, and participating in holiday celebrations.

That, both Cohen and Ruskay said during a conference call on Tuesday, demonstrates that the Jewish community’s outreach efforts are having a positive impact.

The study was conducted by telephone, including by cellphone, from February 8 to July 10, 2011. Some 5 993 self-identifying Jewish adults were interviewed. The poll’s margin of error is plus minus two per cent. (JTA)

Take back the holy sites

Displaying their customary respect for Jewish holy sites, Palestinian vandals struck again last month, desecrating an ancient synagogue in Naaran near Jericho.

In addition to damaging priceless relics, the perpetrators spray-painted swastikas, Palestinian flags and political slogans, adding insult to injury in their hate-filled assault.

The defilement of the site was discovered by a group of Israeli worshippers who visit it regularly to maintain a Jewish presence in the area.

The synagogue in question was built more than 1 500 years ago, predating the establishment of Islam and serving as tangible proof that the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel preceded that of our foes.

The synagogue in question was built more than 1 500 years ago.

Indeed, perhaps that is one of the reasons why the Palestinians attacked it. After all, the Naaran Synagogue gives the lie to their dubious claim to the land.

Needless to say, this latest outrage received virtually no coverage in the mainstream press. Only a handful of Israeli news outlets bothered to mention it, and the international media showed no interest in sharing the story with their audiences.

Contrast this with the whirlwind of reports last October when an Israeli Arab mosque was desecrated and you begin to get a sense of the hypocrisy at work in the media.

Indeed, the incident in Naaran is just the latest in a long line of Palestinian acts of sacrilege which have targeted Jewish religious sites. Remember Joseph's Tomb in Shechem (Nablus)?

It was nearly 12 years ago, on October 7, 2000, that the IDF withdrew from the site under cover of darkness after a joint assault launched by Palestinian police and terrorists.

The Palestinians, of course, agreed to protect the Tomb, but that promise quickly went up in smoke. Several hours later the burial ground of the biblical Joseph had been reduced to debris.

Palestinians armed with pick-axes and hammers attacked the tomb, smashing the stone structure and ripping it apart, brick by brick. They burned Jewish prayer books and other religious articles and subsequently began transforming the site into a mosque.

It was then and there, at Joseph's Tomb, just days after the start of the second intifada, that the Palestinians learned two very dangerous lessons, which continue to haunt Israel until today.

First, they saw that violence pays. Israel's retreat from Joseph's Tomb was the first time Israel had fled under fire, abandoning territory to Palestinian control under threat



FUNDAMENTALLY FREUND
MICHAEL FREUND

of the gun.

Secondly, the Palestinians also learned that they could deliberately assault Jewish sites of immense historical, religious or emotional significance without fear of retribution from Israel.

The same holds true for the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The same holds true of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where successive Israeli governments have failed to stand up to wanton Palestinian acts of desecration.

And therein lies the "original sin" of various Israeli policymakers, who have consistently capitulated, retreated and withdrawn whenever the Palestinians have trampled on some of our most important national symbols.

Instead of displaying some elementary Jewish pride and confronting the Palestinians to prevent them from assaulting what is holy to us, we prefer to shrug our collective shoulders, look away in shame, and hope for the best.

The Palestinians cannot, must not be entrusted with safeguarding or administering Jewish holy sites.

That may have made sense when the extent of our national power was limited to community councils in the shtetls of Eastern Europe, but surviving in the modern-day Middle East requires an entirely different approach.

For far too long we have inculcated in the Palestinians a sense of impunity when it comes to vandalising or defiling Jewish holy sites, and it is time for this to change.

In light of the Palestinians' serial abuse of Jewish holy sites, it should be clear to all that they cannot, must not, be entrusted with safeguarding or administering them under any circumstances whatsoever.

The Palestinians have once again failed to demonstrate even the modicum of decency and civility that calls for respecting houses of worship that belong to others.

And so Israel should not hesitate to do what should have been done already: take back Joseph's Tomb, reassert its sovereignty over the Temple Mount, and eject the PA-controlled Muslim Wakf from the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

These three sites, more than any oth-

ers, symbolise our ties to this Land, and the abiding faith upon which they are based. It is time for all of them to return to sole Israeli control, along with all Jewish holy sites in Judea and Samaria.

Such a step would send a clear message to the Palestinians.

Such a step would send a clear and unequivocal message to the Palestinians that there is a price to be paid for treading on Jewish religious rights and assaulting our holy places.

It would also underline Israel's determination to retain these sacred spaces in any future arrangements that might be reached.

There is a limit to what a nation can be expected to tolerate when its most hallowed places repeatedly come under attack.

Israel's patience reached that limit long ago. It is time we let the Palestinians know that their abuse of our heritage, and all we hold dear, will no longer be tolerated.

The writer is chairman of Shavei Israel (www.shavei.org), which assists lost tribes and hidden Jewish communities to return to the Jewish people.

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

EATING KOSHER NEED NOT MEAN ACCEPTING SECOND BEST

I would like, if I may, to initiate a discussion with your readers. Firstly, if I may quote variously from “What Is Kosher”, by Rabbi Yossi Baumgarten, principal rabbinical supervisor of the kashrut department of the Johannesburg Beth Din:

“The Hebrew word kosher is used almost exclusively in the food and beverage area. Its literal meaning is ‘fit’ ie that the food item or beverage is fit to be ingested by one who adheres to the laws of Kashrut (Kosher Dietary Laws).”

And later: “The Torah instructs the Jewish people to be Holy and commands that they should not eat certain animals, fowl, fish or insects which would render them spiritually unhealthy or impure. Not that these foods are inherently unhealthy or impure, but that the Jew is spiritually allergic to them.

“The Torah itself explicitly declares the issue to be a metaphysical one. From a nutritional or medical point of view, there is no material difference between a Kosher and a non-Kosher diet.”

The dietary laws fall within a category of Jewish law known as Chukim (statutes: those Divine commandments which appear to have no rational basis).

A Beth Din stamp on a food product, or Beth Din approval of a restaurant, confirms that the product or establishment complies with Jewish dietary law. This then is a formal approval of conformity only and has no

direct bearing on quality.

In discussion with fellow Jews with discerning palates and a love for good food, there is a general perception that the SA Jewish community is rather poorly served when it comes to the quality of our kosher eating establishments. We know that there are a few exceptions.

The terms “Beth Din Approved” and “Kosher excellence” are not and should not be mutually exclusive terms.

In so many aspects of life we Jews strive for, demand and achieve the highest of standards, why do we accept second rate when we dine out or buy kosher?

In contemplating opening a kosher restaurant, the desire to serve good food should be as prime a motivation as being fully and acceptably kosher. Your food should be so good that even non-Jews choose to eat at your restaurant. Attracting custom from both kosher and non-kosher would make your business more viable. A ridiculous thought? I think not.

One of the top Shiraz wines in the world is the Carmel Winery Kayoumi Single Vineyard Shiraz 2006 from Israel. It was awarded 5 Stars by the influential Decanter Magazine.

Kosher products can be excellent.

Let’s get talking. I would truly value your thoughts and suggestions on how we can achieve kosher excellence in South Africa.

Julian Richfield, Cape Town

TUTU USES INCITEMENT IN ASKING FOR HARSH ANTI-ISRAEL ACTION

Methodists recently voted for a balanced approach to the Middle East, rejecting Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu’s support of a harsh anti-Israel resolution.

Tutu penned a letter to delegates at a conference of the Methodist Church, and published an op-ed in the local newspaper as the conference met. He used language, both recent and in the past, that crossed from political agitation to incitement. Some of the remarks made by him: “Whether Jews like it or not, they are a peculiar people. They can’t ever hope to

be judged by the same standards which are used for other people. Israel has oppressed more than the apartheid ideologues could ever dream about in South Africa.”

He made it perfectly clear that he is not speaking of the Biblical Israelites alone, but the Jews of today as well.

And the powers that be still want him as a patron of the Holocaust Centres in Cape Town and Johannesburg?

Go figure!

Bennie Katzman, Israel

BRYAN SILKE AS SAJR PUBLISHER IS A GOOD CHOICE

I was delighted to learn that the new publisher of the Jewish Report was going to be Bryan Silke and I would like to wish him good luck and every success in his position.

I have met Bryan and have read - and was most impressed with - his master’s thesis which compared the coverage in the Cape Times, the Mail & Guardian and the Sunday Times of the Gaza withdrawal, confirming what many of us suspected about the lack of balance in reporting on Israel.

He demonstrated using objective criteria undue and unfair focus, a lack of historical context, oversimplification and the unfair apportioning of responsibility.

With his knowledge and ability, he will be a great asset to the community.

ISRAEL SHOULD WASH ITS HAND OF HOSTILE ANC GOVERNMENT

Avner Eliyahu Romm (SAJR June 8) points out that I am incorrect to use Moroccan control of the Western Sahara as an example of illegal occupation of one territory by another country. That may be so, but there are plenty more pertinent examples, I should have added.

Mostly we should be boycotting Turkish goods made in occupied north Cyprus and Indian goods manufactured in the Sikh Punjab and Sikkim. South Africa’s special warm relations with countries which carry out horrific human rights abuses, such as Red China, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Cuba (and most likely the New Egypt, should the Muslim Brotherhood consolidate power).

I would like to welcome the special initiatives Israel is investing in, in Botswana (BGU to help Botswana build a new uni-

versity). Much luck to this new project. Botswana is lucky that it has no Steven Friedmans or Zackie Achmats to poison that country’s relations with Israel and therefore will benefit much from Israeli innovation and generosity. South Africa clearly sees Israel hatred as more important than the welfare of its own people.

Israel has good relations with countries like the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Cameroon, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Cote D’Ivoire and Ethiopia, among others, which it has given invaluable assistance to in recent years, I would encourage Israel to invest its efforts in fostering relations with the many friendlier African countries, and to wash its hands of the hostile and prejudiced ANC-ruled South Africa.

Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA ON THE BRINK OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

SA Jewish Report has given much editorial coverage to the African National Congress’ shenanigans and their position on Israel. What we all seem to have forgotten, or ignored in an attempt to “appease these masters”, is that they do not like Israel and the Jews in their Cabinet are invariably antagonistic to our cause, scapegoats to support state policy.

We must accept that their sympathies probably lie with Islamic fundamentalists and all other terrorist/despotic leaders. If this was not so, why do they support such brutal dictators as those in Zimbabwe, Myanmar, North Korea, Syria, Iran and Somalia, and were heart-broken at the Arab Spring uprisings where Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown?

Further, while the “Liberation Struggle” was supposedly designed to topple the injustices of apartheid, all the ANC has done since, is reintroduce the same racist legislation - affirmative action/employment equity/black economic empowerment, that not only discriminates against all “non-blacks”, but denies them access to universities, jobs and government tenders.

To make matters worse, as happened under apartheid rule, industry is only too happy to be complicit, pretending that it’s for a good cause.

JEWES FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE SPECTRUM NEED TO EXERCISE TOLERANCE

There seems to be a lot of tension between secular and Orthodox Jewish viewpoints. Let us be more tolerant and level-headed about this conflict.

On the one hand, many liberal people feel strongly about religious tolerance. Yet, when it comes to our traditions, many of them lose that tolerance.

Remember, the Orthodox believe that the halacha is Hashem’s way. It is therefore not for us to change these laws in accordance with our whims or to fit in with passing trends.

Doing so would denigrate our Divine

As a result, fat-cat cadres - the Bentley and Breitling Gang - have raped our economy, with government reporting that in excess of R20 billion per annum is being siphoned off by unscrupulous operators (with crooked tenders that figure is closer to R100 billion), and with their tacit approval.

The economic outlook for South Africa is repeatedly being downgraded, and it’s not done by those with a “hidden political agenda” - as the ANC states - but by respected analysts, who see that our beloved country is no longer a power-house, but rather on the brink of a socio-economic collapse.

Unemployment is among the worst in the world; more than three times those who pay income tax are on social grants; and education, healthcare, parastatals and all public services barely operate.

And, I have not even touched on the epidemic of crime and violence, and the threat to nationalise banks, mines and private property.

I firmly believe that the ANC is far more of an organised crime syndicate than a political party, pretending to have an interest in the “poorest of the poor” when their focus is squarely on self-enrichment and get-rich-quick schemes that are plundering all resources.

Mark Wade, Johannesburg

JEWES FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE SPECTRUM NEED TO EXERCISE TOLERANCE

tradition into a wishy-washy religion of convenience. On the other hand, there are Orthodox Jews who do not accept those who are secular.

Such a narrow view is offensive and leads to many rejecting the traditional viewpoints.

The Talmud teaches that the great Second Temple was destroyed because of hatred for no reason. It wasn’t destroyed because the Jews were irreligious.

It’s time we learned to love for no reason.

Martin Zagnoev, Sunningdale, Jhb

WE WERE NOT ‘DUPED’ TO WRITE PRO-LITHUANIA COMMENTS

While I respect the views expressed by Olga Zabłudoff in her letter in response to my article “Lithuania - a past not forgotten”, I would like to address a number of inaccuracies therein.

Contrary to Ms Zabłudoff’s impression that my colleagues and I were duped (?) by a “hyped-up whirlwind tour” in a “PR event staged by the Lithuanian government”, our Baltic visit - as noted in my article - was arranged by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which is instrumental in assisting the local Jewish community both financially and in terms of Jewish renewal activities.

The government played no part in arranging the visit, and our meeting with the prime minster was arranged as a courtesy by the Lithuanian ambassador to Israel (who is also accredited to South Africa) with the objective of rebuilding bridges with Litvaks.

As such, the agenda during our visit focused on connecting with the local Jewish community - our primary objective - and was augmented with two official meetings.

In my article, I pointed out that “there remain some unresolved issues” between the Lithuanian government and the local Jewish community, including some of those correctly pointed out by Ms Zabłudoff (whereas others she points out are unsubstantiated by any available data, such as a “significant increases in anti-Semitism”).

However, there are also immensely positive steps that have been taken to make amends, which deserve to be recognised. For example, it is quite remarkable that a small country with a consequently small economy has approved a \$52m property restitution fund in an election year and in the midst of a European financial crisis resulting in severe austerity measures.

Moreover, the changes to the dual

citizenship law that were implemented in 2011, have a potentially disproportionate benefit to Litvaks wishing to restore their citizenship.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, the leadership of the local Jewish community expressed much enthusiasm during our visit regarding the sincere and open dialogue that they have with the current government, including easy access to top officials, including the prime minister himself.

The issue surrounding the reburial of the Nazi-era prime minister, Juozas Abravavicius, has raised its head in the last few weeks and although some ceremonies were cancelled, others did indeed take place (and raised the ire of a number of government officials, academics and prominent citizens). I agree with Ms Zabłudoff, that this is an indictment on the part of the government officials who authorised it, and is at odds with the many positive steps they have taken.

In my opinion, and as alluded to in my article, the most effective method of forming one’s own views about the past, present and future of Jewish Lithuania, is by visiting the country. I remain convinced that, in contrast with Ms Zabłudoff’s experience, the visit will be overwhelmingly positive for most.

Being able to especially engage with the local Jewish community via JDC, to get involved in their efforts to re-establish and rebuild the community, to encounter young Jewish leadership who are committed to preserve Jewish history and memory, and to play a part in this process is meaningful and transformative. In addition, those who believe in the future of Jewish revival in Lithuania should arguably play an active part in building bridges.

Steve M Felder, Herzliya Pituach, Israel

Menuhin very capable to build ME bridges

“Mutual recognition of the Palestinian and Arab Jewish refugee problem is essential to reach a just peace in the Middle East,” Iraqi-born columnist Linda Menuhin Abdul Aziz told a WIZO audience last Wednesday night in Johannesburg.

ALISON GOLDBERG
PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF WIZO

The occasion was the biennial of WIZO, an organisation dedicated to helping single mothers and children in Israel. Menuhin also spoke at WIZO functions in Cape Town, following the event.

“The Palestinians are part of this equation, but there is a need to highlight the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab countries to reach a symmetry from what has been an asymmetrical understanding of the situation for 64 years. Compensation of both is necessary to achieve justice. Israel will be seeking reparations for these refugees.

“Some 850 000 Jews in 1950 - ‘51 were either expelled from, traumatised, tortured or victimised in Arab countries - each status qualifying for the UN’s definition of refugee.

“All these cases were an implementation of a premeditated plan by the Arab League in 1947 to strip Jews of their assets and use them as a card against plans to set up a Jewish State of Israel. They were taken in by Israel and assimilated.

“Arab countries on the other hand, did not grant citizenship to the 670 000 Palestinian refugees of wars they initiated against Israel; to this day many still live in refugee camps in Arab countries.

“The UN has passed 150 resolutions against Israel because of these refugees who have now ballooned to 4,5 million. Even Israel has contributed to their upkeep. Not a single resolution has been passed against an Arab country for their mistreatment of Arab refugees.”

In Iraq, 130 000 Iraqi Jews escaped, or were expelled, at this time. All those who registered to leave for Israel were stripped of their citizenship following the implementation of a law passed by the Iraq parliament. Virtually overnight they were robbed of their jobs, schooling and homes.

Following Israel’s victory in 1967, the remaining 3 000 Jews in Iraq were made to pay the price. Their phone lines were cut; they were forbidden to gather, work or attend universities. Growing anti-Jewish sentiment culminated in the public hanging of nine Jews on trumped-up charges of espionage. One was a fellow member of a sports club of Menuhin’s.

Menuhin and her younger brother Eric, decided to flee in 1970 when they saw there was no future for Jews or minorities in Iraq, escaping through Iran. Their mother joined them a little later. Their father, a lawyer, and scholar of Judaism and Islam, who stayed behind, was kidnapped in 1972, after being arrested and released previously three times. The family were only able to confirm rumours that he was executed, six years later. The story of Menuhin’s life is captured in a film: Shadowing Baghdad.

Despite the trauma inflicted on Menuhin and her family, she has made it her mission to educate Israelis and Arabs about the conflict and one another. For this she won a prize from the Next Century Foundation for her outstanding contribution to peace in the media. She also helped found the Society for Peace with Syria and joined the Advisory Board at the Forum for a Smart Middle East.



Linda Menuhin Abdul Aziz (centre) flanked by her husband Mordechai and WIZO chairman, Yvonne Jawitz.

Community Briefs

UJW TO OPEN AFTERCARE CENTRE, ALEXANDRA

The Union of Jewish Women is to soon open its AfterCare Centre at the Lutheran Church in Alexandra township. The centre will cater for primary schoolchildren with no-one to care for them in the afternoons. It will offer homework supervision and fun activities in a safe environment. The UJW requests donations of new wax crayons, paints, paintbrushes and colouring-in books, as well as the occasional commitment of volunteers to help with homework, conversing with the children, and assisting with arts and crafts, music or drama. Transport to and from the church will be provided. Contact Bev on 083-381-8180.

20 SA WOMEN TO SUMMIT MOUNT KILIMANJARO

ORT SA, South Africa's leading education and training NGO, launched its Kilimanjaro Camp, an initiative of the Women's Empowerment Division, on June 14. On August 9, National Women's Day, 20 women, from all walks of life, set out to summit Mount Kilimanjaro, under the auspices of ORT. The fundraising initiative aims to empower vulnerable women in the broader community; it's premised on the butterfly effect: if one woman motivates other women to be brave in overcoming daily "mountains", the world will be a better place. The launch is at 13:00 at ORT House, 44 Central Street, Houghton. Contact Debby: kilicampaign@ortsa.org.za



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“Get rid of him!” Boesman (Elton Landrew) and Lena (Quanita Adams) argue over the presence of Outa (Charly Azade). (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUPHIN COUDYZER)

Inset: Nadya Cohen with her dog, Binks. (PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED)



This heart-gripping Boesman and Lena – as contemporary as ever

ROBYN SASSEN

“It is like a carcass of someone else’s leisure,” award-winning set designer Nadya Cohen, who has brought more than 50 productions to life on-stage, says of the appropriateness of the skeleton of a deckchair in the set of the current production of Athol Fugard’s Boesman and Lena, at Old Mutual Theatre on the Square.

“In researching for this production, I was Lena! I walked miles carrying rubbish I’d found.” Cohen has earned her reputation for unequivocal brilliance in sets which creep into your understanding of the play and snatch you by the heart, unsuspectingly.

The play, set in the Eastern Cape, focuses on the Beckettian endless struggle of a homeless couple. Theatre owner, Daphne Kuhn, decided on producing this particular work in honour of Fugard’s 80th birthday, on June 11.

“This play is still contemporary,” Cohen comments. “You see Boesmans and Lenas wherever you go in this country. ‘Once you have put your life on your head and walked, you never get light again’,” she quotes a line from this work that debuted in Grahamstown in 1969. “It’s this image that was central to my design. This, and muddy footprints.”

The production is premised on two basins of wet clay in which the performers stand. “They’re like athletes’ starting blocks. It’s about circularity. And it’s about acknowledging that this is a theatre space, not the Eastern Cape landscape.

“Last time I worked on this play, it felt completely different. This time, it feels like it is Lena’s play.

Quanita Adams takes uncanny and beautiful possession of the character. She is like a female powerhouse.”

Having first encountered the production’s director, James Ngcobo about 14 years ago in Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, Cohen has enjoyed a long association with him.

Her history with Boesman and Lena is interesting too. She worked on it at the Market Theatre in 1993, with Bill Curry and Nomhle Nkonyeni, under director Jerry Mofokeng. “I have no idea what provoked me then to make a set for this play. Possibly the arrogance of youth. The work’s first stage direction is: ‘an empty stage’.

“Central to this play is substitutionary atonement, like kapporah. It’s a gesture that absorbs a sin; and it resounds with the value of the third character, ‘Outa’, played by East African actor, Charly Azade, who speaks French, instead of isiXhosa, as he’s scripted to do.

“This atonement is manifest in a Muslim-oriented object containing written prayers, almost like a mezuzah. It’s called a taweess. It was important for me to get this right. Quanita is Muslim; she sensitively places the taweess on the body of Outa, in substitutionary atonement.

“I just love this play! But this production made me fall in love with it all over again, and it made me feel as though I’d never read it before. It touches me in its profundity, accessibility and humour... who could ask for anything more!”

Boesman & Lena is at Old Mutual Theatre on the Square, Sandton until June 30 (011) 883-8606.

Ultimately it’s the story of the fin de siecle

Now All Roads Lead to France: The Final Years of Edward Thomas by Matthew Hollis (Faber & Faber, R148)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

Some 98 years after the outbreak of the First World War, in our world of technological advancements, digital communication and nuclear energy, it is difficult to focus clearly on the four-year trench battles which were supposed to be “the war to end all wars”.

It is also startling to realise that this conflict could induce two of its young participants - on one side, the poet Edward Thomas and, on the other, Corporal Adolf Hitler, to leave their respective marks on history.

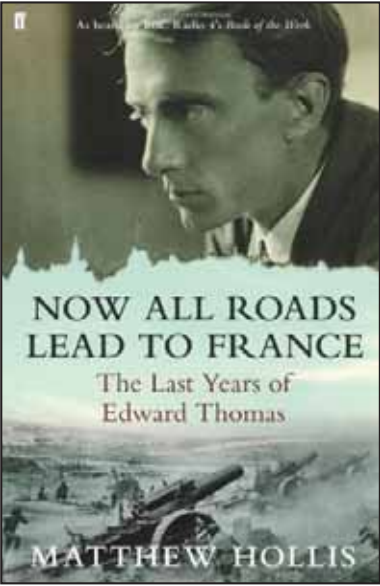
Thomas, born in 1872 in Lambeth, London to a family of Welsh descent, had always shown literary talent, though it remained unharnessed and erratic for much of his life. While still a student at Oxford University, he met and impregnated Helen Noble, whom he subsequently married. By the time Thomas had graduated, the couple had two children, and a third would follow in short order.

Thomas was a resentful husband and an inadequate father, unable to forge close bonds with (or financially support) his family on his meagre earnings as a literary reviewer, biographer and journalist. He sought solace in the company of other women, adding guilt to self-hatred and recurrent depression.

The Thomases eventually made their home in Steep, East Hampshire, but it was only in 1913 that he would form the most important friendships of his life, when the “Dymock poets” - a group of Georgian writers comprising Lascelles Abercrombie, Wilfred Wilson Gibson, John Drinkwater, WH Davies, Harold Munro and the newly arrived American Robert Frost - was formed.

The group, who idealised the simple, rustic style of Thomas Hardy, championed minimalist imagery, relatively free verse and direct, unfettered language which was free of either cloying sentimentality or abstractionism.

Thomas, though older than most of the group, had found the portal which would lead him to his own, distinctive style. It



would be informed by the advice of Carlyle to poets in 1840: “See deep enough and you see musically.”

Metre, the cadence of speech and rhythm - both suggested and explicit - would become the engine of Thomas’ poetry and prompt him to write, when reviewing Frost’s book “North of Boston”: “It is poetry because it is better than prose. It speaks, and it is poetry.”

His relationship with Frost - which would continue for the rest of his life - provided him with both the warmth and vindication he craved. The two men, sharing both political and creative values, would become each other’s most trusted confidants and critics.

Yet, for all Frost’s grounding influence, Thomas’ inherent insecurities warped many of his decisions. A traumatic incident in which he was humiliated by a belligerent groundkeeper on a friend’s estate, traumatised him, reinforcing his feelings of failure and cowardice.

And when Frost wrote his seminal work, “The Road Not Taken”, the impetus of the poem, his unhappy personal life and the outbreak of war would persuade Thomas to turn to soldiering as a means of achieving manhood.

There was another factor too, however - one compellingly delineated by Hollis: Thomas’ own latent death wish. He had in the past seriously considered suicide. Now the idea of court-ing death in a socially acceptable - indeed, admirable - way was a heady one. To the alarm of Frost (who had returned to the US), Thomas enlisted and was quickly promoted to artillery officer.

His letters to Frost from the front reveal a form of cognitive dissonance. “I am just quietly in exile, a sort of half or quarter man... Only sometimes I hear things I really care for, far off, as if at the end of a telephone,” he wrote in February 1917.

Surrounded by filth, atrocities, misery and disease, Thomas succeeded in detaching himself from reality and maintaining an insouciant, almost indifferent attitude towards them, producing his greatest works from an intensely private, anaesthetised space.

Posted to Arras, France, he was killed on the morning of Easter Monday, 1917, in the midst of a particularly virulent Allied assault. “[Thomas] left the dugout behind his post and leaned into the opening to take a moment to fill his pipe. A shell passed so close to him that the blast of air stopped his heart. He fell without a mark on his body.” He was 39.

Just hours before, he had penned in his diary his last three lines: “Where any turn may lead to Heaven / Or any corner may hide Hell / Roads shining like river up hill after rain.”

Thomas had entered an altered, almost sublime state of consciousness. At the moment of losing his authentic voice, he had finally found it.

His death devastated not only his friends, but also his antagonists, including fascist poet Ezra Pound, who raged at the British government for sending millions of wide-eyed young men to the slaughter for England, “for an old bitch gone in the teeth - for a botched civilisation”.

And 23 years later, another Welsh war poet - Alun Lewis - fighting in Burma, 1944 (where he, too, would be killed), paid a searing tribute to Thomas, “brooding long on love and beauty - till suddenly, at Arras, you possessed that hinted land”.

Hollis’ biography is the story not only of Edward Thomas as dissipated paterfamilias and tragically misguided patriot, but as prescient poet whose craft and inner vision progressed inexorably towards maturity and, eventually, greatness. It is also the story of the fin-de-siecle.

One of the most moving, beautiful and important biographies to appear for many years.

Arts in Brief

NDEBELE ART COLLECTION SET TO GO TO THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM

In 1976, gallerist, art writer and lawyer Natalie Knight began collecting and researching material culture relating to the Ndebele community of South Africa. There was at that point no interest in the material at all. Last week, she returned from Washington DC, where the donation of her Ndebele and Tsonga research material was accepted into the archives of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. At last, the years of dedicated research, practised by this art researcher and curator, in collaboration with her research partner, Suzanne Prie-batsch, who currently lives in Boston, has been recognised.

FOUR JEWISH COMICS AMONG SHORT-LISTED NOMINEES FOR ANNUAL COMICS CHOICE

Shortlists of nominees are out for the Annual SA Comics Choice Awards, “The Colour of Funny”. This year, the event’s creative team presents a preliminary show: “The Grilling of a Lifetime” where a “board of directors” chaired by Mel Miller will lambast the 2012 Lifetime Achiever recipient at Parkers on June 26.

Four Jewish comics are among the short-listed nominees: Eddie Eckstein and Deep Fried Man for The Times Comic’s Pen Award; Deep Fried Man for the BlackBerry Breakthrough Act Award and Nik Rabinowitz for the Comic of the Year Award. All will be revealed on July 10. Visit www.comicschoice.co.za.

BALLET CLASSIC LE CORSAIRE TO BE STAGED IN SA AT THE MANDELA

Mzansi Productions and SA Ballet Theatre present the first-ever production in SA of the ballet classic Le Corsaire, based on a poem by Lord Byron in two acts, with original choreography by Marius Petipa and music by Adolphe Adam, Cesare Pugni, Leo Delibes, Riccardo Drigo and Prince Oldenbourg. Le Corsaire tells an exotic tale of love and adventure, showcasing virtuoso dancing in classical ballet’s grandest style. The piece features a new set design by Andrew Botha, and guest performers to be announced. It is staged at the Mandela, Joburg Theatre Braamfontein, for nine performances from July 19. Visit www.joburgtheatre.com for details.

Gadget War 3 is here

The next big war in technology is about to be fought, and the battleground is the mobile phone. But it's not the obvious war over who has the best features, size, weight, sound and screen quality. It's the next phase in the war of operating systems, and it begins this week.

Gadget War 1 ended in victory for Apple, when its iPhone completely transformed the phone market, and set a new benchmark for ease of use, integration of applications, and sheer aesthetic appeal.

In the past year, a titanic struggle was waged between Apple's iOS and Google's Android operating system, with the latter now by far the leading smartphone operating system globally. They've both destroyed RIM's BlackBerry OS and Nokia's Symbian, although these two still dominate in South Africa.

The new market landscape reflects the outcome of Gadget War 2, with Android holding uneasy sway over the market.

This week, Gadget War 3 began. From June 11 to 15, the annual Apple developer conference, WDC, was expected to see the launch of the new version of their operating system, to be called iOS6. Apple never confirms ahead of its events what products will be launched, and the arrival of iOS6 was previously



GOLDSTUCK ON GADGETS
Arthur Goldstuck

anticipated, when the new iPad was launched.

As a result, no one knew what would be in iOS6. However, it was expected that it would include better integration with the Apple Mac operating system for computers, an improved iTunes interface, more options for touch-screen gestures, and better app updates and notifications.

The announcement was to come days after the biggest challenge yet to iOS's market strength: the release of the Samsung Galaxy S3 smartphone, running on the Android operating systems.

It is already in line to be declared phone of the year. More important, it is likely to be the best-selling smartphone of 2012, too. It runs on the latest version of Android, known as Ice Cream Sandwich, and is dazzling on the eyes, compelling to the touch, and probably the best phone in the world right now.

It's an important phone for the

South African market, which is still loyal to BlackBerry, but losing patience with its unwillingness to name a date for the release of the next version of its own operating system.

Based on trying out an early prototype, the BlackBerry 10 operating system seems comparable to Android and iOS, but it is still on the drawing board, and is likely to be released in September or October.

That will be too late for anyone looking to upgrade right now. The three-four month gap will give Samsung a huge head start in reclaiming South African market share.

A further issue for BlackBerry maker Research in Motion, is that, if it waits until October, it will find itself competing for attention with the next operating system from Microsoft, Windows 8, set for release on October 15. Pay careful attention to that phrase: "set for release".

If BlackBerry maker Research in Motion were able to offer the market the same kind of certainty, predictability and sense of having a clear plan, it would inspire far greater confidence.

October will also, most likely, be the month of release of the new iPhone, number 5. Like the new iPad, it may well drop the numbering convention and be called, sim-

ply, the new iPhone. It is expected to move Apple and its iOS into a new era of market leadership, but for the first time it will be fighting on more than two fronts.

Microsoft's Windows 8 will appear on numerous tablets and phones at the same time. BlackBerry 10 will have emerged. And Samsung will already be running ahead of the market with its deadly strike force in the form of the Galaxy S3.

So, when should you buy a new phone? If you need a new phone, buy it now. If you don't, as an Afrikaans poet once wrote, "October is the most beautiful month of all". But it will also be the month of the greatest gadget war of all time.

• Follow Arthur Goldstuck on Twitter on @art2gee or at www.gadget.co.za

Community Briefs

UJW'S WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT IN ALEXANDRA STARTS WELL

The Union of Jewish Women's empowerment project for unemployed women at the Lutheran Church in Alexandra has taken off well, with sewing and baking facilities developed to enable women of the community to be self-supporting and enterprising.

"It is difficult to believe our sewing students, most of whom had never used a sewing machine before, and most of whom had no sewing skills whatsoever, are now producing quality items they are able to sell."

The UJW is seeking one additional sewing machine and a Mix Master and baking equipment. Please contact Bev if you are able to assist on 083-381-8180.

Zionist 'Caravan' rolls into East London

MYRON ROBINSON
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

The "Zionist Caravan" visited East London on Sunday evening June 3. The function was attended by around 70 congregants and supporters of Israel.

The "Caravan" comprised Yaniv Nachmias, Habonim Dror and aliyah shaliach in Cape Town, Leshem Brosh Netzer and the Reform community shaliach, Ido Shapira, a community shaliach, Avnet Elias and Ester Azancot Bnei-Akiva Shlichot and Yair Bedell and Emmanuel Trau from the Yeshiva of Cape Town.

The "Caravan" presented a very interesting video clip on Israel, after which the members answered questions on a one-on-one basis.



Some of those who attended the function.

Community Briefs

OUR PARENTS HOME BIDS PHILIP KALMONOWITZ FAREWELL

Residents and staff of Our Parents Home in Gardens, Johannesburg, recently honoured former general manager Philip Kalmonowitz with a celebratory tea for the dedicated and committed focus he has given his work over the past two years. Kalmonowitz has been transferred to a position a West Park Cemetery where his interpersonal skills are set to enhance interaction and communication with the community. Pictured, Kalmanowitz cuts his cake. CELESTE EVERITT



PHOTOGRAPH BY CECILIA COHEN



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INTEGRITY TOLERANCE RESPECT

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

SA Union of Progressive Judaism’s 80th

Over the weekend, the SA Union of Progressive Judaism held its 80th anniversary conference in Johannesburg. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate the movement on reaching this milestone.

The event itself was a highly stimulating one, with speakers including leading figures within the world Progressive Jewish movement from the United States through to Russia, Australia, New Zealand and Israel.

The Board was represented by, among others, National Director Wendy Kahn, and two of our professional staff, Charisse Zeifert and Steven Gruzd, who participated as panelists in two of the Sunday sessions.

Charisse spoke on how the Jewish community and Jewish issues in general are portrayed in our media and Steve spoke on anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism and how the line between one and the other is often crossed.

Steve also brought a message on behalf of the Board at the opening night. Report-back session for Cape Town Jewry.

On Monday evening, I participated in a joint SAJBD-SAZF report-back meeting in Cape Town on the issue of relabelling products from Israeli en-




Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

claves in the West Bank. This follows on a similar session held for the Johannesburg Jewish community some three weeks ago.

It was likewise a lively exchange, with the individual presentations being followed by questions from the floor, as well as a number of individuals using the opportunity to put forward their own views on the situation.

Such events are very important, not only as a way of keeping the community abreast of what the leadership is doing regarding matters that concern them, but also as a way of gauging how

those we represent are feeling. We do not pretend to have all the answers, so the considered input we receive from the floor on these occasions is always helpful.

During the discussion, the Board was urged to keep its constituents better informed about what is happening. Here, I would like to briefly repeat what I wrote in a previous column regarding the communications mechanisms we use for this purpose.

There are our two websites, one for the national Board and one for

the Cape Council (www.jewishsa.co.za and www.capebod.org.za). Then there is the Jewish print media, including this paper, the Cape Jewish Chronicle, Hashalom (Durban), Pretoria Jewish Chronicle and Jewish Life.

Every Tuesday evening, 101.9 Chai FM broadcasts “Jewish Board Talk”, details of which appear separately at the end of this column. In the social media sphere, we are involving ourselves in the dynamic world of Facebook and Twitter. Finally, there are the Board’s regular national and regional conferences, which all community members can attend and which provide comprehensive feedback on what has happened during the inter-conference period.

In memoriam - Phillip Tobias

Our community, and indeed our country, suffered a grievous loss last week with the passing of Professor Phillip Tobias. The status of this illustrious academic and humanitarian was shown not just in the fulsome tributes paid to him, from President Jacob Zuma downwards, but by the stature of those, including former President Thabo Mbeki, who attended his funeral. It is an additional source of pride to us that he was throughout his life a strongly identifying Jew, with an abiding interest in this community’s history and heritage.

“Jewish Board Talk” with Steven Gruzd on 101.9 Chai FM will be changing time slots! This Jewish variety talkshow will be broadcast on Tuesday June 19 and Tuesday June 26, from 19:00 - 20:00, before moving to its new slot on Friday July 6, 2012 from 12:00 - 13:00. Repeated Sundays 11:00 – 12:00, and also streaming on www.chaifm.com



A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

I’ll keep my job

Lately, I speak to many people who, after a few minutes of conversation, good-naturedly say: “I wouldn’t have your job for anything!”

I get that; it’s a challenging and often heart-breaking position. Sometimes I wish I could put the problem into G-d’s in-tray because it needs more wisdom than we human beings have.

But when I search my soul, I know that I do want my job. Here are some reasons why:

No doubt about it, there is terrible tragedy in our community. And much of that comes across my desk: individuals who are ill; children who are maltreated; tortured people in the grip of devastating addictions; abandoned spouses; homeless, jobless, penniless and family-less Jews.

So, what could be comforting about that? The answer is that, like doctors in children’s oncology wards, we get the chance to do something about the suffering, to try and help. And sometimes, we are rewarded with positive results, which brings me to my next point...

When a patient is in recovery, when a Jewish child is rescued, when a counsellor helps a suicidal person see the sun, there is great celebration - of a quiet, humble kind.

I am surrounded by a strong, professional, compassionate team who have the best interests of our community at heart.

I get to meet the wonderful, special people in our facilities - the aged, who are warm, wise and appreciative; the Selwyn Segal residents who are always thrilled to see me and for whom the smallest gesture elicits uncontained joy; and the feisty children of Arcadia who respond to feeling safe and loved.

There never is a dull moment.

I am inspired - by you. I see the chesed, generosity and sensitivity of our supportive community, every day and in so many ways.

I am fully cognisant of the fact that nobody could do this without the help of Hashem, and each other.

May our partnership continue to thrive!

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




Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

Unfiltered Internet access a threat to Jewish community

SHIRA DRUION

The Internet has become a growing threat to the community at large, as the techno-generation continues to engage with content that wouldn’t make it through the front door. In response to the growing challenges that have unfolded due to a lack of unfiltered internet access, educators, parents, and community leaders have come out in protest to implement ways to combat this problem.

Rabbi Ze’ev Kraines, rabbi of Ohr

Somayach Gallo Manor and principal of Sha’arei Torah Primary School, recently attended gathering of over 40 000 Jews in New York, which was held at the Citified Stadium.

“The overwhelming theme of the event was that as Jews, we should strive to fulfil our Jewish destiny as a people who endeavour to uphold the highest levels of morality in a world that is often filled with darkness.

“The conference was a tribute to the religious community, who have addressed the issue and have not

pretended that there is not a problem out there.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein mentions the steps he is taking to deal with the many challenges that the Internet is causing in the South African Jewish community.

“The Internet is a powerful vehicle that can be used for tremendous good. However, the net has also been able to successfully distract thousands of people from their day-to-day activities, and has prevented them from being productive.

“Children have been exposed

to all kinds of dangerous predators and there is a general laxity in what we have allowed into our homes. The Jewish home is a sacred space, and should be treated as such. This issue has become of such great concern to me, that together with Rabbi Alon Joseph and Ilanit Gerson, we have been able to create a pilot programme that will be taught during LO periods in the school curriculum. “The course will deal with all kinds of Internet issues and will empower children with the necessary tools to help navigate their way

through cyberspace.”

Rabbi Ricky Seeff, rabbi of the Beit Medrash programme at King David Victory Park, says: “The solution really lies in the hands of the parents.

“If adequate filtering software is used, it can protect children from sites and from people that are potentially harmful. I think that by encouraging children to use the Internet not just to surf but to read (eBooks) and to listen to informative podcasts, etc, could become a very empowering educational device.”

Progressives’ Miri Gold makes history in Israel

SHIRA DRUION

Israel currently supports some 4 000 Orthodox rabbis, but recently Progressive Rabbi Miri Gold (pictured) has changed the status quo, as the first non-Orthodox rabbi in Israel’s history to receive funding from the Israeli government. The controversial issue has sparked debate worldwide and is reflective of the growing diversity filtering the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities worldwide.

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Israeli Union for Reform Judaism commented: “This is a watershed moment for the Reform Movement and for religious pluralism in Israel. Mazeltov to Rabbi Gold and the activists who work so diligently

to ensure the thorough embrace of liberal Judaism in Israel.”

In a media statement, SA Union of Progressive Jewry says: “The Israeli Attorney-General committed to equal pay for Rabbi Gold for her work at Congregation Birkat Shalom. This allows the Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism to build on the success achieved so far and to deepen their work for the Israeli public.”

In an interview, Rabbi Robert Jacobs of Bet David Progressive Synagogue in Morningside, commented: “Rabbi Miri Gold and her colleagues in the regional councils in Israel, represent an important segment of Israelis affiliated with the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism.

“In addition, the majority of

Israelis are secular and have significant interests that have until now been obscured or even blocked in their spiritual growth. The growth of Progressive thought reflects the Jewish thirst for knowledge which has brought much that is positive into contemporary life.”

Upon hearing the news on Israeli radio, Gold commented: “This is a big step for religious pluralism and democracy in Israel. Israeli Jews want religious alternatives and with this decision the State is starting to recognise this reality. There is more than one way to be Jewish, even in Israel.”

Gold said from her Kibbutz Gez-



er home, that had she not made aliyah, she probably wouldn’t have even been Reform but would have rather continued on the path of her more Conservative upbringing in Detroit.

However, due to her mother’s consistent reinforcement to uphold Jewish values, Gold was pushed toward a decision to live in Israel, initially for a year and then, in 1974, for good.

The repercussions of the landmark Supreme Court decision are not yet clear. On the face of it, Gold, as the rabbi of her community, will finally be remunerated from the government coffers that

are earmarked for religious leaders. She, however, will not be paid in the same way as other rabbis, because her salary will come from the culture ministry, instead of the ministry of religious services. She will also wear the title of “community leader” as opposed to the title of “rabbi”, or the Hebrew feminine equivalent of “rabba”.

Lynton Travis, PR and marketing and vice-chairman of Bet David Progressive Synagogue Morningside, commented: “The separation of religion and state in Israel is really important to give recognition to all forms of Judaism, and by recognising Rabbi Miri Gold and 14 others on the regional level, ensures that Progressive Jews and rabbonim are not discriminated against.”



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TA tots learn all about shopping

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH:
SUZANNE BELLING

The Torah Academy Nursery School children from Sharene Smith’s class set up “shop” in their classroom to learn the art of “making purchases” and the additional lessons of improving their vocabularies and the five senses.

Pictured are Yael Willemse loading her trolley, with Rachel Meltzer as the “cashier”, while Tehilla Bacher proudly shows the goods she “bought”.



Troy Etberg and Michaela Dermeik – first cousins. (Michaela addressed the assembly of King David Victory Park Primary School on the life-threatening illness of her cousin, Troy Etberg).

Glowing tribute to a brave young boy

MICHAELA DERMEIK
GRADE 7, KDVPPS

“Today I am going to talk about someone who has been an inspiration and whom I admire very much. His name is Troy Etberg. He was born on September 1, 1999.

“Let me tell you why Troy has been such an inspiration to me; from the time I arrived from America as a 10 month old, Troy and I instantly formed a bond, which has strengthened over the years, bringing us even closer.

“He has been a role model to me as I have never met a person who has such strength, courage, determination and been through as much as he has in such a short time.

“Last year Troy moved to Cape Town for two months for 16 hour life threatening surgery. Before he left he said to me: ‘Please don’t worry

Caeli, I will be fine and see you soon.’ The doctors did not foresee a great outcome for him. The most amazing thing through all this is that the doctors booked Troy for three weeks in the hospital intensive care and were so amazed that after five days they discharged him. I spoke to Troy on Skype nearly every day and watched his recovery.

“The reason that Troy is an inspiration, not only to me but to everyone who knows him, is because he has fought against all odds and has always had a positive outlook on life.

“He has fought and worked to get to where he is today. He has more strength, courage and a will to live than anybody I have ever met. He is my hero, my total inspiration and my cousin. I am so proud of what he has achieved.

“The mind is everything. What you think, you become.”

Old MacDonald’s farm at TANS

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH:
SUZANNE BELLING

Old MacDonald? No, the tots from Dina Schneider’s and Danit Bokow’s class at Torah Academy Nursery School - Naomi Goldman; Yehuda Mandelberg; Rebecca Lipschitz; and Levi Rodal - set up a “farm” in their classroom, learning all about animals and the farming industry. Here they show off the ducks and chickens they made.



KDSPS moves into their Foundation Phase classrooms

GILLIAN HORWITZ
PHOTOGRAPH ARNALDO MANDEL

What a wonderful and exciting week we have had! The anticipation of the move to our new Foundation Phase classrooms finally came to fruition and the precision which we employed to move as expeditiously as possible, was a beautiful sight to behold.

King David Sandton has put down more permanent roots which will embed our school in a very bright future.

The most important act which cemented the fact that our younger children were finally ensconced in their new home, was when Rabbi Craig Kacev (pictured) affixed a mezuzah on the main entrance to the building.

SAUJS’ Daniel Katzew sees himself as a bridge builder

SHIRA DRUION

The 2012 chairman of the SA Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS), Daniel Katzew (pictured), is well known among Jewish students across the country. He spoke to Jewish Report about his legacy and what he envisages for SAUJS. He sees himself as a bridge builder with groups outside of the Jewish community.

Katzew is a born and bred Johannesburger. He attended King David Victory Park School and is currently in his third year actuarial science at Wits.

Katzew speaks of his SAUJS role with passion and a commitment to the cause. “From as early as my school days, I always knew that I wanted to get involved with SAUJS. I have always been a proud Jew and come from a family who are Zionist and communally oriented.

“So, when I left the structured environment of school, I did so wanting to stay connected to my Judaism, and SAUJS was the obvious platform, allowing me to stay connected to my Judaism and to my community.”

On his role as national chairman, he acknowledges the achievements of his predecessors and pointed to the solid foundation that had been laid down for him.

“The previous SAUJS leadership was made up of a group of highly competent individuals, so I was fortunate to come into the organisation when the necessary structures were already in place. This has certainly contributed to making my job and my committee’s job that much easier.

“I am privileged to have the opportunity to work with an outstanding committee this year. All the portfolios are headed up by smart, passionate and committed student leaders.”

He mentions with appreciation the full support SAUJS receives from the broader Jewish community.

On his mandate for the year, he says: “I have three main areas of concentration: relationship building with all established, progressive and traditional communal structures, sorting out finances, and relationship building with the universities themselves, as well as with other campus societies.

“I have also endeavoured to invest effort, time and money into assisting SAUJS in Cape Town on their projects because UCT has become a popular choice for many Jewish students.”

As a competent “multitasker” he is in the process of trying to put together a delegation of students to attend the Muslim/Jewish Conference, an intercultural/interfaith conference which will take place in Slovakia in July.

“I think that building bridges of communication between different sectors of our SA society is critical, because only by opening channels of communication and engagement, can we begin to merge a way forward.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDYVER



Learning about shapes is fun.

Learning about all shapes the fun way

VAL ARONSON
PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICIA THSABALALA

Children of KDL Playschool are having fun learning about shapes. Lara Ribak and the children are matching colourful balls with flat circles.

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What's On

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

Today, Friday (June 15)

• UZLC hosts Metrowatch journalist Anna Cox who will talk on "Johannesburg Billing and E-tolling". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485 4851.

Sunday (June 17)

• The Samantha Amy Brest Endowment Fund, under the auspices of the KDSE, hosts a fundraiser brunch. Author Joanne Jowell will speak on her book, "On the Other Side of Shame". Venue: 38b Adrienne Street, Sandown Extension 24. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Donation: R150 per person. Bookings: Felicite Brest 082-333-7961 or e-mail brest@icon.co.za

• Second Innings hosts Hilary Joffe, spokesman for Eskom, on "Can We Keep the Lights On?" Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time 10:00 for 10:30. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members.

• Sydenham Shul's Family Fun Day, originally scheduled for May 20, takes place today. Information: Lee 072-909-707 or Shirley at the office (011) 640-5021.

Monday (June 18)

• UJW adult education division hosts Beresford Jobling, freelance historian and lecturer and leader of special tours to Russia, on "A Sojourn in St Petersburg". Venue: I Oak Street, Houghton. Time 09:30. Tel: (011) 648-1053. Donation: R25.

Wednesday (June 20)

• UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer Dept English at Wits, on "Poetry's Pleasures". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R25. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

• UJW CT adult education division will host Andrew Brown on "Write What You Like, and Like What You Write". Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

Thursday (June 21)

• JHGC in association with Bet David, commemorates World Refugee Day with the screening of award-winning documentary "The Last Survivor". Guest speaker is Tina Ghelli UNHCR. Venue: The Middleton, Bet David, Sandton. Time: 19:30. Information: Sharon (011) 783-7117 or admin2@betdavid.org.za

Friday (June 22)

• UZLC hosts Wendy Kahn, national director of the SAJBD on "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Scorecard". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Information: Gloria (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

Sunday (June 24)

• Second Innings hosts Isabel Bradley, (flautist) accompanied by Susan van der Watt (piano), playing "Flute Favourites". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time 10:00 for 10:30. Contact Grecia Gabriele (011) 532-9718. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members.

Monday (June 25)

• UJW adult education division hosts Gary Ronald, head of public affairs at the Automobile Association, on "Tolls and Motor-ing Matters in Gauteng". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time 09:30. Tel: (011) 648-1053. Donation: R25.

Wednesday (June 27)

• UJW CT adult education division hosts Dan Brotman on "Why Does the Board of Deputies Need a Media and Diplomatic Liaison?" Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

• UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer Dept English at Wits, on "Poetry's Pleasures". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R25. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Monday (July 2)

• UJW adult education division hosts Daphne Kuhn of Theatre on the Square, on "The Jewish Contribution to South African Theatre". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time 09:30. Tel: (011) 648-1053. Donation: R25.

Monday (July 23)

• Chevrah Kadisha Community Services is offering an 8-week "Divorce Support Group" for people who have been through, or are going through a divorce. It starts today. Reconnect. Rebuild. Renew. Gain support and need to know practical and legal information. Bookings or more information, call Sheila on (011) 532-9653.

Wednesday (July 25)

• Chevrah Kadisha Community Services is offering an 8-week "Parenting Skills Group" for parents of teenagers. Gain practical parenting skills, understand your teen's world, learn to connect to and assist your teen on their journey into adulthood. Starts today. Bookings or more information call Lara on (011) 532-9793.

Sunday (August 5)

• WoW Annual National Women's Day Brunch will explore "Brain and Nutrition" by educationist Gavin Keller, psychologist Dr Sandy Gluckman and applied nutritional scientist Mary-Anne Lindenberg. Venue: Sandton Sun Hotel. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R500. Bookings close end of June. Call Mandy 083-380-5268 or email womenoftheworld.org.za

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Stransky explains Meyer’s options at Maccabi Stag

Former Springbok flyhalf and current rugby commentator and analyst Joel Stransky, made a couple of predictions regarding what would happen in last Saturday’s first test match against England in Durban when he addressed the Maccabi Stag gathering at Beyachad in Johannesburg last Thursday.

JACK MILNER

Overall, he was pretty accurate in his assessment of how the game would go.

As expected a large crowd attended the event in the hope of eliciting some information on the thinking of new Bok coach Heyneke Meyer.

A sprightly Syd Nomis introduced his “chommie”, Joel, to the audience, citing his quite staggering Springbok record. Apart from the ever-memorable drop kick against the All Blacks that won South Africa the World Cup in 1995, Stransky will be remembered as a player with a phenomenal Test record, having made 22 appearances and scoring

240 points, an average of over 10 points per match.

Stransky was inducted into the International Jewish Sportspersons Hall of Fame a few years back.

Stransky “kicked off” the evening by commenting on the present state of world rugby. He remarked that rugby union is no longer a smooth, running and “beautiful” game. Rugby League has impacted on the sport to such an extent that each game is now reliant on players’ size and brute strength.

Allied to such strength, is the ability of players in the modern game to disrupt opposition forwards and “fetch and carry” the ball, until the opposition wanes and the way is open for “impact” players

to make their mark on a tiring set of forwards and backs.

It is this trend that influences coaches in their selection of players and left Heyneke Meyer with no option - particularly given the lack of preparation time for the side due to their gruelling Super Rugby commitments - but to choose players for their physicality and ability to grind and carry the opposition into submission, rather than select players according to their latent talent.

Given the type of display that the Springboks demonstrated in winning the first Test against England in Durban last Saturday, Stransky’s analysis proved correct.

Stransky also made an interesting comparison of the current side

with the side of 1995 when, prior to the World Cup, there was also a relative amount of inexperience. He voiced confidence regarding the future of the Springboks, emphasising that there were several additional young stars on the horizon who will make their debut for the side shortly.

Question time raised issues regarding not only team selection, but also discussion about the future of the Gauteng Lions, the problems of schools’ rugby and anecdotes that Stransky shared concerning his experiences with players of his era both here, as well as his stint in Europe.

• Harry Zarenda contributed to this article.



Former Springbok great Joel Stransky was the guest speaker at last week’s Maccabi Stag evening.

Israeli Olympian Zemiro fails drug test

JACK MILNER

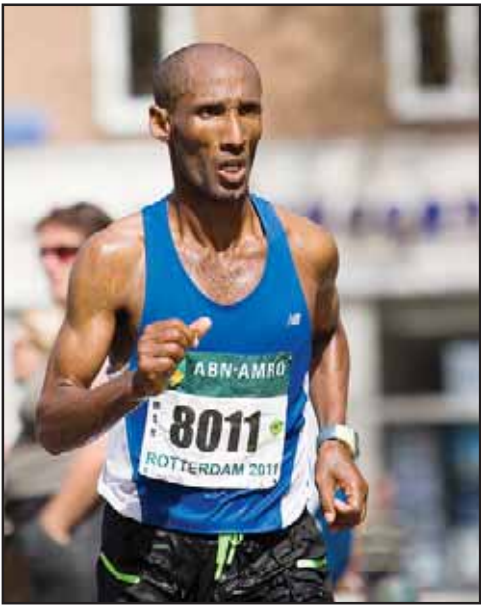
It always amazes me that despite all the warnings given to athletes about the use of stimulant drugs, there are still those who will not listen and fall foul of the authorities.

The latest “victim” is Israeli Zohar Zemiro, whose dream of representing Israel in the marathon at the London Olympics next month, could end in heart-breaking fashion after it was revealed on Monday that he had failed a drugs test.

The 35-year-old, who became the first Israeli athlete to book his place in the 2012 Games when he ran the Amsterdam Marathon in two hours, 14,28 minutes in April last year, tested positive for Terbutaline, an illegal substance found in asthma inhalers.

The Anti-Doping Committee of Israel will receive the result of his B sample in the coming days and should it be found to be positive like his A sample, Zemiro is set to miss out on the Olympics.

Zemiro, who was tested about a month ago, explained that he has suffered from asthma symptoms for some years and a small amount of Terbutaline must have entered his body without his knowledge following his use of an inhaler.



Israeli marathon runner Zohar Zemiro could be excluded from the London Olympics if his B sample test proves positive for a banned substance.

“I have always believed in fair and clean competition and I’m certain that the circumstances that have resulted in this result will not prevent me from representing Israel at the Olympics,” Zemiro told the Jerusalem Post.

Dr Jacques Asharov, head of the Anti-Doping Committee of Israel, called for caution.

“This is still only a suspicion,” he said. “We are still to receive the result of the B sample. If that will be negative, then the entire test will be declared negative.”

Athletes who take prescribed medicines are obliged to declare any such medication prior to the start of the race. They are allowed to use certain medication as long as that medication meets the necessary criteria. Non-declaration will result in the athlete being deemed to have taken the drug illegally.

News in Brief

PERES IN US, TO PRESS FOR POLLARD’S RELEASE

JERUSALEM - Israeli President Shimon Peres, in the US to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, will press President Barack Obama and other American officials to release Jonathan Pollard.

Peres is carrying a petition signed by some 70 000 Israelis calling for Pollard’s release.

Pollard, a civilian US Navy analyst, has been serving a life sentence for spying for Israel. He has been in ill health and hospitalised several times in recent months.

The petition began circulating two months ago, but in recent days it was signed by former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, who will attend the medal ceremony; left-wing Israeli authors Amos Oz, David Grossman and AB Yehoshua; and Nobel Prize laureates Dan Shechtman and Aaron Ciechanover. Former captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit signed the petition in April.

Pollard has been at the Butner Federal Correctional Complex in North Carolina since 1986. (JTA)

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News in Brief

ISRAELIS RIDE SABBATH BUSES AS PART OF PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

JERUSALEM - Some 200 Israelis rode buses for free as part of a Meretz Party drive to show that public transportation is needed and wanted on the Jewish Sabbath.

The free buses on Saturday ran from Kfar Saba through Ra’anana and to the beach in Herzliya, according to reports.

The issue of offering public transportation on Shabbat came to the fore in February when the Tel Aviv City Council voted 13 - 7 to approve a resolution allowing public transportation to run on Saturdays.

But asked to approve the new schedule, Israel’s Transportation Ministry said in a statement: “There is a decades-old status quo regarding operation of public transportation on Shabbat, and the Transportation Ministry does not intend to violate it.”

The municipal resolution provides for the creation of an independent transportation service if the Transportation Ministry does not approve the request.

Members of the council’s Meretz Party, who proposed the February motion in the Tel Aviv Municipal Council, appealed to Israel’s Supreme Court in April.

In general, public transportation does not operate on the Sabbath in Israel, except in Haifa and Eilat on a limited basis. It is part of the “status quo”, a doctrine that regulates the public relationship between the religious and secular positions in Israel. (JTA)