



33 DAYS
*Until the Jewish
Achiever Awards,
on June 20!*

south african
jewish report

www.sajewishreport.co.za



DA's Jack Bloom and fellow-members on the march

DA's Gauteng caucus leader Jack Bloom, one of the last active Jewish politicians in Johannesburg, joins ranks with his DA comrades in Tuesday's march, which was halted by hostile members of the Congress of SA Trade Unions. The DA wanted Cosatu to stop stonewalling a government youth wage subsidy which it believes will create thousands of new jobs for young people. The police later used teargas and water cannons to disperse Cosatu members. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER)

Davis and Gordin go head to head with Saks on women singing in public

DAVIS: "When an employee of the Board of Deputies dismisses the controversy as 'yentas yodelling', the Board becomes at war with the principle of kvod habriut."
GORDIN: "To women, and to some men, humorous references to burkhas and public floggings are not laughing matters."

6, 8-9

FREUND: "Stop funding Tel Aviv University"

In a move incomprehensible and shameful, Tel Aviv University allows students to commemorate Nakba Day, when Palestinians bemoan the establishment of the State of Israel.

6-7

"Stable Jewish day schools show modest growth"

"Pupil enrolment figures for Jewish day schools in Jhb and CT, provide encouraging evidence that Jewish population numbers remain largely stable....," says David Saks.



2

GOLDSTUCK: The great Internet switch

"The Internet arrived publicly in SA almost 20 years ago; it continually evolves and grows along paths that were never anticipated. This month saw a momentous week for SA Internet connectivity in which three of those paths were opened up."

14

Moira Katz, new CEO of National Children's Theatre is brimful of new ideas



"I want more!," she says, in a promise to make the Parktown-based theatre national.

10

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Please see invitation to presentation on page 9

Shabbat Times

May 18/ 26 Iyar
May 19 / 27 Iyar

Parshat Behar/Bechukotai

17:10	18:00	Johannesburg
17:33	18:26	Cape Town
16:51	17:43	Durban
17:12	18:03	Bloemfontein
17:05	17:57	Port Elizabeth
16:58	17:50	East London

Kashrut Alert

THIS CURRY PASTE IS NOT KOSHER

Spice and All Things Nice Thai Green Curry Paste and Thai Red Curry Paste, erroneously bear the Beth Din logo, the kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, reported. These products are not kosher.

Spice and All Things Nice has covered up the logo and has apologised for the error.

“MCY” meat restaurant and “MCY” milk restaurant (Chalav Yisrael), which opened last Sunday, are under Beth Din supervision.

The address is 3 Durham Court, Durham Street, Raedene in Johannesburg.

The milk section is open daily from 07:00 – 21:00 (subject to change) and the meat section is open daily from 11:30 to 21:00 (subject to change).

Unassuming Mt Sinai holds a lesson for all Jews

This week we read two Torah portions, Behar and Bechukotai. The name Behar means literally “on the mountain”. The Midrash relates that when G-d wanted to reveal His holy Torah to the Jewish people, all the mountains in the world vied for the privilege.

Each mountain in turn came before G-d and boasted of its superiority and beauty, yet it was precisely Mount Sinai - a small and unassuming mountain that refused to boast - upon which G-d chose to give the Torah.

Neither the mountains’ impressive height, prime location or other physical characteristics, were taken into consideration. Not only did these features not convince G-d, as it were, to choose them, but their boasting had the opposite effect. For the Torah could only be given in a place where side issues were irrelevant; the Torah was revealed purely for its own sake.

The giving of the Torah on humble Mount Sinai, contains a lesson for all of us in how a Jew is supposed to observe G-d’s commandments. Personal considerations and motivations, no matter how valid or convincing, are not the real reason we per-



Parshat Behar-Bechukotai
Rabbi Ariel Woznica
Torah Academy Cheder

form mitzvoth. Rather, a Jew fulfils the Torah’s commandments solely because such is the will of G-d.

Nor do we perform mitzvoth because of their reward, despite the fact that the Torah promises ample dividends for our compliance. True, we will be more than compensated, but the true reason a Jew obeys G-d’s will is only because He wants us to.

Some Jews may wish to observe the commandments in order to merit the Garden of Eden, but this too, is only a sec-

ondary issue. Observing mitzvoth (commandments) brings delight to the spirit, refines our character attributes and purifies the soul, but the desire to obtain these personal benefits is not the Jew’s genuine motivation.

As Jews we are obligated to emulate the example of Mount Sinai, the only proper “vessel” for containing the Torah. Our motivation and intent in heeding G-d’s word must be unadulterated by thoughts of personal gain or advantage. For the true reason we serve G-d and obey His mitzvoth, is solely for the sake of serving Him.

In fact, had G-d commanded us to perform actions which would not be rewarded, we would carry out His will with the same joy, enthusiasm and vitality with which we observe the Torah commandments, solely because He wants us to!

Stable Jewish day schools show modest growth

Pupil enrolment figures for Jewish day schools in Johannesburg and Cape Town, provide encouraging evidence that Jewish population numbers remain largely stable and indeed may be experiencing modest growth.

DAVID SAKS

Overall, there was a slight increase in the total number of day school enrolments over the previous year. This continues the slight but consistent upward trend that has been evident over the past five years, particularly in the more religious day schools.

South African Jewry is renowned internationally for the high proportion of its school goers - well over 80 per cent - who attend a Jewish school. Of the remainder, most are enrolled at private colleges, mainly Crawford.

In Cape Town, some 90 per cent of Jewish children and teenagers attend one or other of the five schools in the Herzlia system, which comprises a high, middle and three primary schools.

There was an overall increase in this year’s enrolment figures. There are in addition two small more religious-leaning



Happy learners in a King David Classroom. (FILE PHOTO)

schools in Cape Town, Phyllis Jowell School and Sinai Academy, both of which grew by over 10 per cent.

The Herzlia pupil body is mainly Jewish, but includes a small percentage of non-Jewish learners. Port Elizabeth’s Theodor Herzl still operates strictly as a Jewish day school, although today only around 15 per cent of its pupils are Jewish.

In Johannesburg, just under 60 per cent of Jewish pupils attend one of the King David Schools, which include two high, three

primary and a junior school. Overall numbers remain stable at around 3 300 – 3 350.

Over the past five years, there has been an overall decline of just over two per cent, in part due to emigration and in part to change-overs to other schools. However, this figure makes a noteworthy contrast with trends of just over a decade ago, when the King David Schools were shrinking by an average of five per cent annually.

The next major school system, Yeshiva College, now has 928 pupils, an all-time

high, while the next two, Torah Academy and Hirsch Lyons, remained stable at around 600 and 400 respectively.

The remaining schools, Shaarei Torah (primary and boys’ high), Yeshiva Maharsha (nursery, primary and a boys’ and a girls’ high), the Johannesburg Cheder and Beth Yaakov (girls’ high) all remained numerically stable or grew slightly. With the exception of a limited number of families going to Israel, the more religious schools noted very few losses to emigration.





CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

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jewish achiever awards

2012

SA govt discourages ‘high-level’ political visits to Israel

The report that the Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Gerrit van Rensburg, was last week discouraged by national government to leave on an official visit to Israel to attend a conference on drought-resistant crops, was a matter of concern to the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, who is looking into all the facts before deciding on appropriate action.

OWN CORRESPONDENT AND DAVID SAKS

According to Rapport, Van Rensburg was told last week – 24 hours before he was due to leave for Israel – that the government “strongly disapproved” of the visit as South Africa’s foreign policy discouraged “high level” visits to Israel, unless such visits could contribute to “the peace process between Israel and Palestine”.

Deputy Foreign Minister

Ebrahim Ebrahim wrote a letter to Van Rensburg, strongly discouraging him to travel to Israel. But he told the newspaper at the weekend that the ultimate decision had been Van Rensburg’s as the government couldn’t stop him from visiting the country.

“But it is our policy to advise high profile government representatives not to go to Israel as a result of the continuing occupation of Palestinian settlements.”

SAJBD National Chairman

Mary Kluk, reacted: “We were surprised, and obviously much concerned, to learn of this as it would seem to clearly run counter to our government’s oft-stressed policy of maintaining full diplomatic relations with Israel and to engage with all parties in the region.

“We are currently following up the matter with the relevant department in government to establish the exact facts of the matter before deciding on an appropriate response.”

News in brief

PALESTINIAN JOURNALISTS BANNED FROM MEETING ISRAELI COUNTERPARTS

JERUSALEM - A Palestinian journalists' group in the West Bank has banned its members from meeting with Israeli journalists.

The penalty for such a meeting was expulsion from the Palestinian

Journalists Syndicate, Khaled Abu Toameh reported in the Jerusalem Post.

The ban came after Israeli and Palestinian journalists met in Oslo, Norway, on World Free Press Day, on May 3. They have met several times in

recent months in other European countries.

Palestinian journalists who meet with their Israeli counterparts also will be fired, a senior syndicate member told The Jerusalem Post. (JTA)



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ADVERTORIAL



‘WE CONQUER MOUNTAINS ONE STEP AT A TIME’

ORT SA team to Climb Kilimanjaro

“We conquer mountains,” says Robyn Smookler, head of the new Women’s Empowerment division at skills and training NGO, ORT SA. Robyn means this both figuratively and literally - she will be leading a group of high-profile women up Mount Kilimanjaro on National Women’s Day, August 9, this year.

In response to a growing awareness that there are many women who are in need of far more than a monthly welfare package, Robyn’s dream emerged over the past six months when daily contact with some of the women under her watchful care revealed the mountain of their daily burdens.

They needed respite. Robyn thought: What if there was a group of women, able-bodied, willing and brave enough, to conquer a real mountain in support of women facing metaphorical mountains every day?

Thus the “Kili Team” was born. The team will not only push their own personal boundaries, but assist the organisation to raise funds in order to launch an ORT Women’s Empowerment Academy.

The call went out and was answered by a diverse group of women - married and single, mothers and sisters, Jewish, Christian, Muslim... Twenty women, professionals in every possible sphere of human endeavour, committed themselves to taking on Africa’s tallest mountain on August 9.

You can support our Kilimanjaro team by making a pledge in the name of women who



Back: Rahima Ismael; Kiki Marx; Heidi Feldman; Siobhan Wilson; Andy Kopelowitz; Daphna Horowitz; Robyn Smookler; and Nicci Lurie. Front: Galit Fluxman; Estelle Smit; Gina Goldstein; Vered Mann; Tali Frankel; Shira Zadikov; and Kate Gershuni. Sharon Willensky is on the floor. Absent: Tahlia Levin; Terri Zidel; and Jena Daitz.

has inspired you in your life and her legacy will be carried up the mountain with the climbers.

JOIN OUR KILI TEAM at the Discovery 702 Walk the Talk Sunday, July 22, 2012.

Registration closes May 23. 8km cost R180 or sponsor someone who can’t afford it.
Contact Debby to register: ortjet@gmail.com

For more information contact Nicci Raz at nicci@ortsa.org.za, (011) 728-7154, www.ortjet.org.za / <http://kilicampaigndiaries.blogspot.com>

Danziger, ‘a good friend of Achievers’, walks the walk

SAICC’s Stephen Danziger, the man who has taken networking in South Africa to a new level, speaks to JANINE WALKER about his new venture, Simply Networking and why he is passionate about the Jewish Achiever Awards...

He’s the man who practises what he preaches and lives his life by the motto: “It’s not what you know, but who you know.”

Danziger – CEO of SAICC (the South Africa Israel Chamber of Commerce) – is a business network guru par excellence. He has assisted 7 500 introductions of companies to talk to one another, thereby growing both their business and their bottomline.

His latest venture, Simply Networking, a division of the SAICC, in association with Vodacom, is a first for South Africa and will target corporates and SMMEs throughout the country.

“We will create a large network of companies, but still maintain our personalised way of doing business. We will be using the extensive knowledge and experience gained during the past 13 years to help grow smaller businesses and thus create employment.”

He is also a good friend of the upcoming Jewish Achiever Awards, which take place in Sandton on June 20, and has assisted over the past few years with nominations. This year he personally nominated 30 people.

“There is a certain amount of recog-

nition that people in our community should receive. I have always chosen the people who are under the radar and who are not well-known. They have done well, but have had little recognition.

Until recently the name SAICC was something of a misnomer as more of the company’s time was spent on networking South African companies to each other rather than what the name stands for - the promotion of business between South Africa and Israel.

“We have recently re-launched the SAICC International Division headed by someone who has extensive experience with both countries.”

While it did successfully promote business opportunities and investment between Israel and South Africa, SAICC is primarily an SA business network, connecting participating small, medium and large companies and business people across all industries. Its success and proven track record, says Danziger, is built around personal relationships.

SAICC currently has more than 200 South African companies on its books of which 45 per cent are Jewish.

In June Danziger, with Vodacom,

will launch Simply Networking and taking networking to a whole new level.

He’s passionate about the project: “It will target corporates and SMMEs and help them grow their business by offering them the opportunity to use our specialised networking services to grow their businesses.”

The Jewish Board of Deputies is currently documenting those people in the Jewish community who are actively involved in job creation and helping to alleviate poverty.

Those attending the prestigious Jewish Achiever Awards, will receive a pack of books courtesy of Rabbi David Masinter at Chabad House - starter manuals that educate people on how to start their own businesses. The books teach the basics of entrepreneurship.

- Reservations for the Jewish Achiever Awards can be made with Colleen Forrester on (011) 612-3068 or colleen@ninesquared.co.za. Seats can be purchased individually at R2 000 excl VAT or R20 000 (VAT excl) for tables of 10. Stephen Danziger can be reached on saicc@icon.co.za or 082-465-2222.



Famous S Africans have been honoured as Jewish Achievers

JANINE WALKER

Some of this country’s most prominent role-players have been honoured over the years at the annual Jewish Achiever Awards, the highlight on the Jewish social calendar.

Few events in the country attract the Who’s Who of business and society as much as this awards ceremony that honours consistent achievement in a number of fields, including business, entrepreneurship, empowerment, philanthropy and the arts.

Past winners of the humanitarian award include former President Nelson Mandela (1999); Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (2000); Nkosi Haven founder Gail Johnson (2001); Ina Perlman of Operation Hunger (2002) and joint winners last year Marc Lubner (CEO, Afrika Tikkun) and Danny K and Kabelo (Shout).

Business giants who have been honoured are Discovery Health’s Adrian Gore (2000); William Kirsh (Primedia, 2005); Raymond Ackerman (2010); Gill Marcus (2000); Patrice Motsepe (2004); and Brian Joffe (2009).

Other well-known names who have been recognised for their achievements include paleoanthropologist and one of the world’s leading authorities on the evolution of humankind, Professor Phillip Tobias (2002); cricket supremo Dr Ali Bacher (2003); singer Johnny Clegg (2007); satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys (2008) and artist William Kentridge (2011).

Excitement is building to see just who will join these luminaries when the awards are made at the gala banquet which takes place at the Sandton Sun’s Maroela Room on June 20.

Entertainment this year will be provided by award-winning comedian and singer Deep Fried Man and Ensemble Borsalino, who plays a wide repertoire from gypsy manouche to klezmer (Jewish jazz) and swing.

Reservations should be made with Colleen Forrester on (011) 612-3068 or colleen@ninesquared.co.za. Seats can be purchased individually at the cost of R2 000 (exl VAT) or R20 000 (VAT exl) for tables of 10.

CALLING ALL PROGRESSIVE-MINDED JEWS

Join the four-day conference celebrating 80 years of Progressive Judaism in South Africa, 07 to 10 June 2012 in Johannesburg.

Celebrating *Infinite Progress*, the conference features some of the most progressive thinkers in the Jewish world. Join us in a *Yom Iyyun* (Day of Learning) featuring both international and local luminaries, including Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs (President of the WUPJ); Mike Grabiner (Chairman of the WUPJ); Rabbi Helena Rubinstein from St Petersburg, Russia; Rabbi Danny Rich from the UK; and Israel’s Yaron Shavit and Dalya Levy. Local leaders include all our Progressive Rabbis, Professor David Bilchitz, Professor Antony Arkin, Tali Nates, Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, and Lael Bethlehem.

SAUPJ

South African Union for Progressive Judaism

Topics that will be presented for discussion and study include:

- Defining the Progressive Challenge
- The Place of Israel in the Changing Middle East
- The Changing Politics of The Middle East
- Problems and Successes of Diaspora Jewry
- Anti-Zionism vs Anti-Semitism
- *Tsedek, Tsedek ... Progressive Views of Justice*

Our Gala Dinner on Saturday 09 June at The Middleton, Bet David Campus, 3 Middle Road Morningside follows Havdalah, and is by prior reservation. The Keynote Speaker is the Director of the Israel Religious Action Centre (*Mercaz Lapluralizm*) and Chairperson of *Nashot HaKotel* (Women of the Wall) Human Rights Activist, Anat Hoffman.

Become part of the future you want to create. Register now on www.saupj.org.za or call 011 784 7145. A parallel Netzer Youth programme will run during the conference, by reservation.

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Israel News, Tel Aviv:
www.ynetnews.com

“PALESTINIANS RIOT AT RACHEL’S TOMB”

Dozens of Palestinians were rioting during the week, throwing rocks at people praying at Rachel's Tomb. Border guard police from Jerusalem were scrambled to secure the scene, while Palestinian police arrived on the Palestinian side of the site to break up the demonstration.

The Canadian Jewish News; Toronto & Montreal
www.cjnews.com

“QUEBEC PROMOTER NIXES PERFORMANCES BY ANTI-SEMITIC COMIC”

A series of performances in Montreal by French comedian Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala, has been cancelled, by Quebec's largest concert promoter, Evenko. Dieudonne, whose routine includes Holocaust denial and praise for Hitler, has been found guilty of inciting hatred in France.

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

“GREEK JEWS 'SHOCKED' AFTER HOLOCAUST DENIER IS ACQUITTED BY ATHENS APPEALS COURT”

Neo-Nazi militant Kostas Plevris, who wrote a book denying the Holocaust and containing offensive references to Jews, was acquitted by a five-member Appeals Court in Athens last week.

The Jewish Chronicle, London:
www.thejc.com

“TOP VET DENOUNCES SHECHITA”

Professor Bill Reilly, the former president of the British Veterinary Association has criticised kosher slaughter for causing "unacceptable suffering to animals" and called for the practice to be curbed. Shechita UK said it was preparing a response to the claims by Prof Reilly in the Veterinary Record.

Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem:
www.jpost.com

“VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN WEST BANK AS NAKBA DAY KICKS OFF”

Palestinians mark 64th anniversary of establishment of Israel with rallies in West Bank, Gaza; rioters throw stones, fire bombs at Israeli civilians, IDF forces; at least 20 Palestinians injured at Kalandiya.

Jewish Journal, Los Angeles
www.jewishjournal.com

“AFTER ARREST OF TEACHER, QUESTIONS ABOUT VETTING”

In the wake of last week's arrest of yeshiva teacher and youth worker, Evan Zauder, a former sixth grade teacher at Yeshivat Noam in Paramus, NJ, for possession of child pornography, attention is turning to how day school - and indeed, all - teachers are vetted.

The Times of Israel, Jerusalem:
www.timesofisrael.com

“FAR-RIGHT VICTORIES IN GREECE PROMPT UPSET, CONCERN FROM JEWISH COMMUNITY”

With most ballots counted after last week's elections, the fascist Golden Dawn Party, whose flag closely resembles the Nazi swastika, was poised, with nearly 7 per cent of the vote, to enter Greek parliament for the first time.

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How far can Israel’s democracy stretch?

“Damned if you do, damned if you don’t” sums up the challenges faced by Israeli democracy, in a country with implacable enemies wanting its demise. What happens when they are citizens of the state, whose laws provide for freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and a range of other basic rights?

No right is absolute; taken to extremes, any one infringes on others. A balance must be struck according to circumstances and values.

An extreme example of the difficulty of defining the boundaries of freedom of expression, occurred earlier this week when Tel Aviv University President Joseph Klafter, in a highly contentious decision, allowed a commemoration on its campus of Nakba Day – when Palestinians mark what they call their “catastrophe” upon Israel’s establishment.

The Nakba sentiment runs completely counter to the patriotic feelings of Israelis celebrating the “miracle” of the Jewish State’s establishment and its continued flourishing, despite attempts to destroy it.

Among most Jewish Israelis and Diaspora Jews, allowing such an “unpatriotic” event on the campus of one of the most prestigious universities, evokes a feeling of horror. It is anathema. Education Minister Gideon Sa’ar reportedly attempted to convince Klafter to “reconsider” his decision to allow it.

Klafter’s act in no way connotes agreement with the Nakba sentiment, but rather stems from the belief that Israeli democracy is mature and robust enough to allow a contentious view like this to be voiced in such a place.

Michael Freund, in his column on page 7, finds the university to be in total error, even advocating the cutting off of funding to it. Many people will instinctively and passionately agree – the university must not be allowed this act of “betrayal” of the Jewish State without consequences.

It is easy for people living in the safety of Diaspora countries to indulge in moral grandstanding about what Israel should or should not do. But both Freund and Klafter are at the very coalface of the quandary.

Interestingly, two of Israel’s major, long-established newspapers - the Jerusalem Post, regarded as moderately right-wing and Ha’aretz, regarded as left-wing - both said Klafter’s decision to allow the event was correct, although explaining it differently.

The Jerusalem Post said in an editorial: “Israel’s vibrant - though embattled – democracy, was on display on Monday at Tel Aviv University in all its glory... Palestinian suffering was the result of the extremist Palestinian leadership’s rejection of the 1947 UN General Assembly’s partition plan and the foolish decision by figures such as the anti-Semitic Haj Amin al-Husseini to launch a war against the fledgling Jewish state. Short of lying down and dying and trashing aspirations for national self-determination, there was little Jews could have done to prevent Palestinian suffering.

“Still, as a democracy, Israel has an obligation to protect the right of Palestinians to commemorate their history, regardless of how distorted and counter-productive to peace it might be.”

Ha’aretz wrote in its editorial: “A person who understands that an Arab citizen should not be forced to sing ‘a Jewish soul still yearns’ (in the national anthem, Hatikvah) should be expected to let that citizen commemorate the Nakba without having to pay for it and without being denied government funding. Nakba Day does not belong only to the Arabs; it is an inseparable part of the story of Israel’s revival.”

Where must freedom of speech stop and the need for ensuring the security of the state take precedence – the very state which, it must be stressed, makes this freedom possible? The line is hard to draw in a country like Israel, where security is high on the list of priorities.

As South Africans, we are not faced with this excruciating predicament in such extreme form. We can talk about it theoretically, but it is Israelis who live with it day after day.

Support SACRED - for the sake of the community

Over the past couple of weeks, Haaretz has carefully covered the campaign of a new organisation SACRED (South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity), which was established to promote issues of social justice, after a mixed voice choir was initially refused participation in the annual Zionist Federation’s Independence Day celebration.

Although the refusal was later rescinded, the question of female participation is one that is hugely problematic for the South African Jewish community.

SACRED has issued a six minute video (now on YouTube) featuring 11 South African Jewish women who state that, notwithstanding their personal affiliations to Orthodox or Progressive Judaism, the prohibition is a matter of human and civil rights and they object to religious prejudice inhibiting civil rights.

The South African Jewish community lives within a constitutional democracy which is committed to principles of equality and dignity for all.

In stark contrast to this responsible coverage, in South Africa these women have now been subjected to rampant abuse. Take David Saks whose response in this newspaper (May 11) is titled “Just tip me off when the yentas start their yodelling...” He describes the video as “a series of grim faced local women saying why they are mad as hell and are not going to take it anymore”. He rejects their arguments as “the humourless self-importance of the speakers”.

The only respect Saks affords this group is that in his view, unlike arguably the majority of the community who refuse to get off their “apathetic backsides”, this group has “shown themselves to care enough about their Jewishness to stand up



The Jury is out
Dennis Davis

and make a noise for what they believe in”.

Instead of considering the dignity of women in an era of (post) modernity, Saks feels that a good dose of hate speech is sufficient to show them on their way.

To be sure, there are those within the Orthodox community, particularly the ultra-Orthodox, who adhere to a very rigid application of the principle of kol isha. A significant balance of halachic authority holds to the prohibition of a man praying or studying Torah in the presence of a woman who is singing.

The various passages in Berachot, which canvass the principle of kol isha, support this conclusion. But the scope and extent of the prohibition is another highly debatable matter. For example, Samson Raphael Hirsch did not appear to have any problem with singing in mixed groups on the basis that the female voice was not distinctly heard as separate from the group.

There is also weighty authority that the principle of kol isha applies only when there is some connotation of sexual pleasure being involved. To the extent that there is a

Women don’t find their exclusion from singing funny

JEREMY GORDIN



Jeremy Gordin is a veteran journalist, former director of the Wits Justice Project (WJP) in the journalism department at Wits University, and author of Zuma: A Biography (2008), ghost-writer of Eugene de Kock’s A Long Night’s Damage (1998), and three books of poetry. He is vice-chairman of the management committee at Beit Emanuel. This article, in response to David Saks’ Barbaric Yawp column in last week’s Jewish Report, represents his own views.

I have met David Saks, associate director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, and believe those meetings were cordial. I am also an admirer of Saks’ writing because his columns, especially those written in “defence” of the community in the general media, have been fair, informed, and thoughtful.

I especially like Saks’ work, because he is obviously a member of a fundamentalist sect - that is, Jewish Orthodoxy.

Saks appears to have momentarily lost the plot.

Let me explain: I understand fundamentalism of whatever stripe (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) to be deeply irrational. This being the case, what is so impressive about Saks is that, notwithstanding his adherence to the beliefs

and practices of his particular sect, he usually remains rational in his arguments.

But in his column, Saks appears to have momentarily lost the (rational) plot.

What he does is attack those women, including members of SACRED (South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity) who were not allowed to sing publicly at the Johannesburg Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations.

Of course Saks (and others) might respond that the first half of his article was merely meant to be funny. He might say: “Oh, come off it, Jeremy, I already wrote that the singing of women or not at Yom Ha’atzmaut should not be the issue ‘over which the Jewish Kulturkampf must be fought’.”

But here’s a thing, David, or here are a few things.

First, to a Jewish woman who wants to take part on such occasions as Yom Ha’atzmaut, it is not funny at all to be precluded. It is especially not very humorous to be precluded by members of your fundamentalist group. It is even less funny when one realises that the theology of the local chapter of your sect is incorrect.

There’s no space here for a theology lesson. But check it out and you might find that the local rabbis have it wrong - that (and I quote the learned Rabbi Alan J Yuter) “... a close reading of the sources suggests... that the (Talmudic) ruling regarding women’s singing depends upon ‘moral intent’ and is not

parallel drawn between listening to a woman’s voice and gazing at her little finger, with regard to the latter there is clear authority that the gazing at the finger is prohibited when done expressly for sexual pleasure or when there is any sexual pleasure involved therein; hence the link drawn between the prohibition of listening to the female singing voice for some form of sexual pleasure.

There is also further authority which suggests that the singing of a hymn or some other song which has a religious connotation, cannot be connected to any form of sexual pleasure and accordingly should fall outside of the prohibition.

The reach of the prohibition is contested. It follows that there is scope to apply it in a way which is both sensible and accords with the moral convictions of a community located within a modern constitutional world.

In celebrating major events such as the Independence Day of the State of Israel or similarly important occasions, regard should be taken of the community’s participation as a whole.

While due respect must be accorded to all sections of the community, including Orthodoxy, it is important, if this community is to cohere, that a form of overlapping consensus should exist so that no one group feels excluded from participation in events so important to the Jewish world. Even Saks is constrained to concede that there is a major divide within the community.

For these reasons, the participation of SACRED should be supported by all of those who wish our community to be strengthened rather than to spin off into small and disparate groups.

When an employee of the Board of Deputies, which is supposed to represent the entire community, can dismiss the entire controversy as “the yentas yodelling”, then the Board places itself at war not only with the South African Constitution, but with a foundational principle of kvod habrit (respect for the dignity of every member of this community), in particular of those who have raised so critical an issue as the marginalisation of half of the Jewish population.

a categorical prohibition.”

Why, anyway, are the Orthodox having a controlling say about Israel’s Independence Day festivities? I do not want to be offensive or to over-generalise. But the Orthodox as a group hardly played a starring role in the creation and defence of the State.

There’s no space here for a theology lesson.

Second, why refer contemptuously to these women as “grim-faced”, “humourless”, “earnestly tight-lipped”, and as “yodelling yentas”? I know you liked the alliteration, but why insult them in so obviously an anti-feminine manner?

It seems to me that a frighteningly oppressive sexlessness is what, alas, characterises the females of your sect. In his poem about Mea Shearim, the English poet AC Jacobs wrote: “And young girls were concealing their sex / In a terrible kind of shapelessness. / And all this / Under the hot sky of Jerusalem.”

Finally, I would be cautious about making humorous references to burkhas and public floggings. To women, and to some men (like me, for example), these are not laughing matters - and they should not emanate from a group whose members say a prayer thanking the Divinity for not having been born a female, and whose female members wear sheitels.

Sheitel/burkha - it’s all the same primitive stuff to me, David.

Stop funding Tel Aviv University

One of Israel’s leading universities seems to have lost its way. In a move that is as incomprehensible as it is shameful, Tel Aviv University (TAU) agreed to allow a student group to hold a ceremony last week commemorating “Nakba Day”, when Palestinians bemoan the establishment of the State of Israel.

The event, which was held on May 15, included the reading of Palestinian poetry, a moment of silence and the recitation of an alternative version of the “Yizkor” prayer which Jews traditionally say in memory of their loved ones.

In case their intent was unclear, the organisers of this anti-Israel hatefest went out of their way to elucidate the reasons behind it, with one telling Haaretz in no uncertain terms that Israelis need to realise that, “we’re talking about a disaster that must be known on a human level”.

Another student involved in planning the event, said she saw it as a way “to remember the tragedy and great loss that befell the people who were here before ‘48”.

No excuse for allowing the publicly-funded grounds of an Israeli university campus to serve as a staging area for assaults on its continued survival.

Have these people lost their minds? What on earth would prompt Jewish students at an Israeli institution of higher education to lament the founding of their own country?

Clearly, something is very wrong at Tel Aviv University. Though ostensibly a Zionist institution, its administration ignored the pleas of various public figures and permitted this outrage to go forward.

Indeed, for an institution whose website states that it has “a deep commitment to Israeli society and the Jewish people”, it is hard to fathom what would prompt university officials to sign off on such nonsense.

After all, this has nothing to do with the boundaries of free speech or the fundamental right to criti-



Fundamentally Freund
MICHAEL FREUND

cise one’s government. It’s about delegitimising the State of Israel and attempting to undermine its very existence.

Promoting “Nakba Day” is a crucial political goal of the Palestinians. Giving it a platform not only fosters a false narrative of history, but it also plays directly into the hands of those who wish to dismantle the Jewish State.

At a time when Israel is facing existential threats from its neighbours, there can be no excuse for allowing the publicly-funded grounds of an Israeli university campus to serve as a staging area for assaults on its continued survival.

Clearly, university administrators have lost sight of one of the essential purposes of education. As the 18th-century political philosopher Baron de Montesquieu once pointed out, the promotion of love for one’s country “ought to be the principal business of education”.

This is so patently obvious that it should not even need to be stated.

Then again, given some of the radical faculty that populates various departments at Tel Aviv University, it should hardly come as a surprise that this basic idea has been all but overlooked.

As Dr Steven Plaut and the IsraCampus organisation have been documenting for years, various TAU departments have become hothouses for anti-Israel hotheads.

These range from a professor who denies that the Jews are a nation, to another who has referred to the residents of Judea

and Samaria as “Jewish Cossacks”.

Yet another TAU instructor justified a Palestinian grenade attack on Israeli soldiers as a legitimate act of resistance while others have affirmed their support for efforts to boycott the Jewish State.

If you find this hard to

A growing cadre of Israeli academics are preaching far-left views.

believe, just go to IsraCampus’ website (www.isracampus.org.il) and see for yourself how various anti-Zionist and Marxist loons have been indoctrinating Israel’s younger generation at TAU with toxic views.

Anyone concerned for the future of Israel should be concerned by what is happening on campuses such as Tel Aviv University.

A growing cadre of Israeli academics are preaching extremist far-left views and turning the hallowed halls of higher education into profane pillars of puerile Palestinian propaganda.

There is no reason why the Israeli taxpayer, or pro-Israel Diaspora Jews, should continue to generously fund TAU even as it serves to undercut the values they hold dear.

For all their talk of principle, college administrators can be swayed if enough pressure is applied. And that is what needs to be done in order to restore some sanity, and Zionist commitment, to Israeli academia.

So, next time you reach for your chequebook and consider making a donation to Tel Aviv University, do yourself and the Jewish people a favour: Stop and think whether your money is truly going to a good cause. In the current environment, chances are that it isn’t.



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For the Record

BREST DIDN'T WRITE KREBS ARTICLE

The community news brief “Shani Krebs home after 18 years in jail” which appeared on page 11 of last week’s issue, was not, in fact, written by Anne Brest, as stated.

Drive on the right in Switzerland

In last week’s Switzerland travel tips story, it was erroneously stated that traffic in Switzerland is on the left hand side of the road, whereas it is on the right hand side. In addition, while the euro is widely accepted in Switzerland, the Swiss franc (CHF) is considered the national currency. At the time of going to press, the CHF will cost you R8,75.

MEDIAEVAL TIMES ARE LONG GONE, DAVID!

David Saks’ article in your issue of May 11 is contemptible. His attitude seems to be that men are superior and women should stick to “kinder and kuchen”.

Wake up! Mediaeval times are long gone - or are they? I must add that I have no connection whatsoever with the group which he has so insulted.

Gwen Jacobson, Gallo Manor, Sandton

'YODELLING YENTAS' HEADLINE IS OFFENSIVE

I found the heading to David Saks’ column in last week’s paper, “Just tip me off when the yentas start their yodelling...” offensive and insulting. The article may be very readable, but the heading is uncalled for.

I am sure you have received many letter from women who have taken offence from this ill chosen heading.

Shifra Jowell, Cape Town

Sinai Indaba 2012 promises to be even bigger, better

This year’s Sinai Indaba, convened by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, boasts a mouth-watering array of 12 international speakers. It takes place on June 16 and 17 at the Sandton Convention Centre.

Sinai Indaba is an unprecedented gathering of the foremost international Jewish thinkers ever assembled in South Africa, the Indaba promises in a media release. The event theme is “Unite – Inspire – Discover”.

“A true powerhouse of fascinating speakers will share their original Torah insights on spirituality, family, politics,

creativity, happiness and more.”

On launching this year’s Sinai Indaba, Chief Rabbi Goldstein said: “The way to nurture a value-based society is through education and inspiration, and that is what Sinai Indaba is all about.”

The 2012 Sinai Indaba is a Jewish religious values convention, hosting leading international thinkers and speakers who will apply their Torah knowledge and insights to some of the most important issues the Jewish community faces in their daily lives.

It is about “Torah Talking to a Modern World”. As the phrase suggests, it emphasises that the Torah concepts apply to real life. It will present inspiring intellectual and spiritual learning through presentations, panel discussions, debates and dialogue.

“There will be an array of fascinating topics and issues, including philosophy, medicine, business, marriage, relationships, parenting, global politics, Israel, emotional wellbeing and spiritual development – all presented from the perspective of the teachings of Judaism,” the release states.

• For more information or to book tickets, please visit Sinai-indaba.co.za or contact (011) 305-9860 or 083-522-8490.

Join them on [Facebook.com/-SinaiIndaba](https://www.facebook.com/SinaiIndaba) or follow them on Twitter @SinaiIndaba

Community Briefs

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES

ORT JET’s Women’s Empowerment Division was born on the premise of empowering women to look after themselves. Headed by newly appointed project manager, Robyn Smookler, it aims to empower women through training and mentoring to achieve independence and fulfilment.

“We hope to create a cycle of women empowering other women and then a ‘pay it forward’ approach, creating a healthier financial environment,” she says.

The first five-week pilot course recently ended; feedback was so positive, ORT JET will expand this project next year.

For further information on upcoming Women’s Empowerment seminars and workshops contact Robyn (011) 728-7154 or visit www.ortjet.org.za

SAZE, MIZRACHI HOST YOM YERUSHALAYIM

The SA Zionist Federation and Mizrahi SA present a sensational evening of Yom Yerushalayim on May 20, celebrating 45 years since the reunification of Jerusalem, at Theatre on the Track in Midrand. Its line up features soloists David Gabay and Choni G, and the Yom Yerushalayim Youth Choir featuring child soloist Jarred Greenstein, with musical direction by Bryan Schimmel.

The show’s executive producer is Isla Feldman; it is produced and directed by Gavin Opert and Linda Starkowitz. Mincha will be davened at the venue before the show’s start at 1730.

Bookings on (011) 645-2531 are essential as seats are limited.

‘LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE’

ORT JET’S Women’s Empowerment division in conjunction with Yad Aharon recently held a workshop, Living Your Best Life, in Melrose Arch. Presenters were dynamic image consultant, Tanya Sachs who highlighted the importance of appearance in all life situations; executive life coach Dina Cramer, who shared the secret of visualising and actualising one’s goals; Daphna Horowitz, also an executive life coach, whose talk “Identifying Your Inner Genius” enthralled and inspired; and real estate agent Denese Zaslansky, who is also a motivational speaker and despite her own personal setbacks and challenges, has become very successful in her profession. MARCELLE RAVID

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THE BLUE AGENCY

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

NOT ‘YODELLING YENTAS’ BUT ‘DIVAS WHO DELIGHT’

David Saks is entitled to an opinion (in his Barbaric Yawp column in last week’s Jewish Report) and to choose how he practises Judaism. When he is disparaging, then his writings cannot be taken seriously.

To Saks I want to say: They are not “yentas who yodel” but divas who delight. I assume you have not attended a service where a mixed choir has sung. It is your loss as the liturgy is greatly enhanced by having a range of voices and many of our ancient tunes are even more beautiful and spiritual when sung by a woman. It is your right not to go to such a service but to insult these women is unnecessary.

As to SACRED, perhaps you should read their founding document which was released in September 2011. You would learn from this that SACRED has a wide and meaningful platform. There are many issues that need to be debated in our community (both right- and left-wing) including abuse, HIV status and drug use.

SACRED acknowledges these problems and gives an opportunity to Jews who are excluded by the Orthodox to have their voices heard. Is there more to this than the singing? Yes! It is the right of all Jews to worship in a manner that is meaningful to them, without being dictated to by a section of the community who think they have a monopoly on how to interpret the Torah.

SACRED, the Progressive Movement and other left-wing Jewish organisations, do not “occasionally rally” but have ongoing issues which are regularly discussed with the Jewish Board of Deputies and other relevant organisations and, given Saks’ status in the community, he should be aware of this.

There is one aspect of his column with which I agree. There are many fine people in South Africa who care enough about their religion and their beliefs that they actively participating in, ensuring that they are heard. They are writing letters, talking and, yes, singing.

Steven Solomon, Bramley Park, Sandton

BARRING WOMEN FROM PUBLIC SINGING IS SIMPLY ‘PETTY MISANTHROPY’

It’s quite difficult to seriously respond to an op-ed that approaches a serious matter with disdain, sarcasm and ridicule. David Saks calls the growing chorus of voices (of both genders, mind you) protesting the attempts to silence women in many different spheres of public space, all over the Jewish world, as the effort of “yodelling yentas!”

If it were not such a sad response, one could let out a hearty laugh and go about one’s business. Incidentally, that was not the reaction in our ancient writ, by Moshe Rabeinu to the daughters of Tzelophchad.

Ridicule and disdain are tools used, I fear, when reason is too difficult or dangerous a tool to employ. Judaism is under threat, as are all religious systems within mainstream society, in the present time.

If one values the deeply woven threads of gold that underpin our ethical/monotheistic world view, one needs to remove the barnacles, the dross, that has clung to the under belly over the centuries.

Where is the “k’vod ha-briut” the honouring of human dignity, when fellow human beings are allocated self expression only in limited areas, mainly as “enablers” within family settings or among women alone?

What petty misanthropy to deny women the opportunity to express joy or lament in song, with their people in public as our Biblical foremothers certainly did.

And yes, Mr Saks is right, in that limitation of voice usage is not the whole issue; it is the outer covering of a package of limitations that bar women from the full flowering of their creative talents, bestowed by a beneficent Providence.

For those women, however, who feel sufficiently able to express themselves within the prejudged boundaries imposed by those who define women as potentially dangerous in some way or another, one has no quarrel.

Where there is protest, is where such ideas are used in a coercive way over the bulk of the community, to the detriment of all.

The suffragettes, a scant 100 years ago, received exactly the same tenor of response as Saks gives, in their efforts to advance the cause of enfranchisement for women.

Their determination endured. So will ours, in order to rid our Jewish community of any prejudicial attitudes towards any of its members. Justice always triumphs - eventually.

Zmira Cohen, Cape Town

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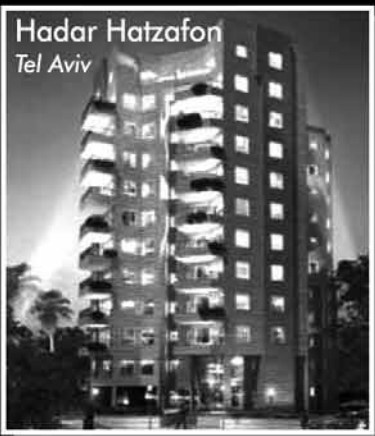


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Moira Katz is brimful of new ideas for the NCT

ROBYN SASSEN
PHOTOGRAPH BY ILAN OSSENDRYVER

Last December, major changes spearheaded by new CEO Moira Katz (pictured), began to unfold at the National Children’s Theatre (NCT) in Parktown in Johannesburg - and she’s only just begun. “I would like to do more,” is her refrain in detailing all the theatre’s initiatives.

Katz, a business management graduate of Wayne State University, in Detroit, with years and years of theatre experience behind her, was a trustee on the theatre’s board for 15 years. Since NCT’s artistic director and founder, Joyce Levinsohn stepped down late in 2011, due to delicate health, Katz has filled her seat.

“Joyce is my cousin; our philosophies differ radically. While she focused on the theatre’s artistic values, my passion is its admin. I come from a very structured environment which must be organised and above board. This theatre is a business! I will not stretch the limitations of copyright organisations Dalro and Samro as I will not sanction ideas without budgetary support.

“We are doing a lot of exciting things this year that have not been done before. We will be staging more than four shows; I’m very keen to make this theatre national.”

NCT travelled its “African Tapestry” to the Knysna Arts Festival last month, and to schools in the area, as far as Mpumalanga and Venda. “Most of these schools cannot afford theatre; we are taking the play to them with lottery money.”

She added that she was expecting an audi-

ence of teachers from Polokwane for “Charlotte’s Web”, on the boards at the time of our interview. “Not one of them has seen theatre before.” It’s not just about giving free entertainment to poor teachers. The theatre is supported by workshops.”

The theatre in the Sir Herbert Baker house on Jubilee Road, built in 1902, is a repository for children’s workshops as well as professional productions. “It was the first in Johannesburg to have Cape gables,” she says, speaking of how different parts of the rambling former Rand lord establishment have been repurposed so that it can function as a theatre.

“Joyce converted it about 15 years ago. And the theatre still has about 30 years left on its City Council lease.

And when it comes to her main customer base, she melts. “I’ve even sometimes see tots of 18 months, completely mesmerised by a show on stage. It all depends on the parent, though. I’ve also seen three-year-old hooligans unrail a production, from the audience.

“But generally, three is a good starting point. They don’t always understand the stories, but they love the songs and the colour. A parent should never just send a child to the theatre; it can be a learning, inspiring experience, and should be valued as such. My bottom line is to keep the theatre alive and growing, expanding into new areas and meeting new challenges. I want more,” she concludes.

- From June 4, the National Children’s Theatre brings back its production of Disney’s Aladdin by popular demand, for a seven week season. Call (011) 484-1584.

Startling in its parabolic, disarming simplicity

In the Orchard, the Swallows by Peter Hobbs (Faber & Faber, R179)

REVIEWED BY
GWEN PODBREY

In an age when the arts have become infused with newspeak, techno-savvy accoutrements and multiple subtexts, this novella is startling in its parabolic, disarming simplicity - so much so that one grows suspicious, assuming one is somehow missing something.

But no, so confident is award-winning writer Hobbs in his style and genre that he uses only the most elementary vocabulary, construction and development - which strengthen the impact of the book’s great, central message.

Set in a far-flung region of Pakistan, the story is narrated by the son of a peasant farmer. Barely literate and entirely unfamiliar with any of the modern trappings of city life, he nevertheless has an exquisitely sensitive aestheticism and a deep attachment to the land.

In particular, he loves the pomegranate orchard, where flocks of swallows nest and where, as a boy, his father often bore him on his shoulders, traversing the trees and delighting in the fragrance and fulsomeness of the fruit.

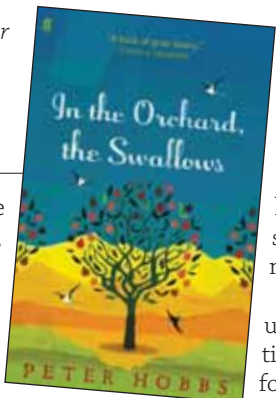
When the young man first sets eyes on Saba, the daughter of the richest and most influential agriculturist in the district, he is smitten by her beauty, but has neither the vocabulary nor the imagination to strike up a flirtation: all he can offer is utter sincerity and commitment.

Happily, the attraction is mutual. However, the strict prohibition on unmarried girls conversing with males outside the family, as well as the narrator’s own timidity, make any real communication impossible. It is only some weeks later, at a wedding party in the village, that the pair steal a few moments to talk. During this brief interaction, the young man invites her to meet him later in the pomegranate orchard, so that they can experience the beauty of sunrise in that idyllic setting.

Awaiting the dawn, the couple - who have shared nothing more lascivious than a fleeting kiss - fall asleep. And when they are awakened, it is not by the morning sun, but by one of Saba’s kinsmen, who assaults the narrator and drags Saba home.

Anxious to profess his honourable intentions to her father, the narrator walks to their residence and begs for an audience with him. The older man, however, is in no mood for talking and lays into him with a whip. Incensed, the narrator fights back, injuring him - and before long, he is picked up by a police van and taken to the local precinct, where he is savagely beaten and then locked in a cell.

Within a few days, he is transported to a prison in another province, where - without being tried or even charged - he is incarcerated



ed in a dank and filthy dungeon, together with dozens of other men. Fifteen years pass, during which he is repeatedly flogged, systematically tortured, starved, raped and entirely cut off from his family. Then, one day, he is suddenly released and left to make his own way home.

Emaciated, disalienated and unsure whether any of his relatives are still alive, the narrator is found by Abbas, a kindly taverner, who takes him in until he can recuperate.

As weeks turn into months, the narrator - now aged 29 - realises he has never had an opportunity to mature. He is as wide-eyed, gauche and ignorant as he ever was. All that he has acquired is the wariness (and weariness) of long imprisonment, and a dread of others.

The country has changed dramatically: gone are the traditional, closely-knit Pakistani communities. Now American militia loiter on street corners, among religious extremists, terrorists and frightened citizens caught in the nexus between the old and new worlds.

The narrator spends his days attempting to recall his rudimentary schooling, drawing pictures and performing menial household chores for Abbas. Above all, he tries to express the single enduring sentiment which has sustained him throughout his 15-year ordeal: his love for Saba, who he realises must now be long married, with children, and has likely forgotten about him. Yet he remains obsessed with her memory and the sweet richness of their few moments together.

Having learnt that his parents are dead and his old family homestead deserted, the narrator - aware that he cannot much longer prevail on Abbas’ hospitality - makes several visits to the old pomegranate orchard, which still exists, though its neglected trees now bear rotting fruit. The swallows, however, have remained.

“They are so quick, so perfect in their lines, like little miracles in the air. One when I lay in the prison cell in a stupor, I saw a flutter of light at the window... (And) I saw a shadow pass, too quick to leave a shape.”

Reflecting on his wasted youth and uncertain future, he declares: “I do not regret that I was imprisoned. It would be senseless to do so: our lives are leaves, and the wind takes them... Time softens all griefs, they say, and it is useless to dwell on lives that might have been. We are granted only one life, and one life is enough.”

Almost Biblical in its austerity, Hobbs’ text is sometimes too cloying and simplistic to sustain the reader’s passion. Yet there are passages where his imagery and lyricism are profoundly beautiful.

The book is at once a lament of lost innocence, transience, brutality and the abuse of the poor by the wealthy - all ancient, human tragedies we know only too well. However, it is also a homage to the equally powerful, eternal things underlying them: beauty. Potential. And, overwhelmingly, love.

Arts Briefs

DISCUSSING AFFILIATION BETWEEN MATHEMATICS AND ART

On May 23, renowned artist and mathematician, Chonat Getz speaks on “The strange affiliation between mathematics and art” at the Clive M Beck Auditorium, RCHCC, Oaklands. This talk will open Getz’s exhibition of drypoints, sculpture and glass work in the centre’s gallery. The relationship between maths and art is closer than you might think, the centre explains in a media statement: “neither respects national boundaries, they are both international languages; many of art’s laws be expressed in maths; in many ways, both move in the same direction.” Getz’s exhibition is on show until June 17, call (011) 728-8088 for more details.



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Arts Briefs

COME JOIN THE ‘CABARET’ IN JOHANNESBURG

One show promising to bring the house down this year, is John Kander and Fred Ebb’s between-the-wars stage musical, “Cabaret”, at Pieter Toerien’s Montecasino Theatre, Fourways, June 7 - August 5. This dark, sassy show launched the career of Liza Minelli in 1972 and won Joel Gray, who played the sinister MC, Oscars for his live and film roles. Debuting in Durban last August, the work bagged the bulk of Mercury Durban Theatre Awards, including best production of a musical, best director (Steven Stead) and best designer (Greg King). The Johannesburg cast includes German theatre star Sascha Halbhuber and Samantha Peo. (011) 511-1818.

‘AFRICAN TAPESTRY’ SHOWCASED IN POLOKWANE AND VENDA

Cast members of the National Children’s Theatre, Parktown are currently hard at work on African Tapestry, a unique cabaret for little ones from underprivileged communities, in Venda, Polokwane and surrounds. The cast features Ntambo Rapatla and Candida Mosoma amongst others, and is part of the theatre’s bid to make itself national, under the leadership of the theatre’s new CEO Moira Katz. African Tapestry performs at NCT’s Parktown home in September, but will be showcased in a one off performance on May 26. By popular demand, the theatre’s repeat season of Disney’s Aladdin opens June 4. Visit www.jyt.co.za or call (011) 484-1584.

A host of factors lead to young Jews leaving the country

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

Developments in politics, interference with the Constitution and corruption were factors that could influence young South African Jews to emigrate. So said Dan Brotman, media and diplomatic liaison at the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council), addressing the topic, One Foot In, One Foot Out: Do Young Jews in South Africa See a Future Here?

This was one of several presentations at Taste of Limmud, an event that served as an appetiser to the Limmud SA Cape Town conference, to take place from August 10 - 12 August at the Protea Technopark, Stellenbosch.

Brotman spoke of “an aggregate of events”, a phrase coined by Professor Colin Tatz to describe “Political, economic, social and psychological forces which accumulate and help build up a perception, or recognition, that it is time to think of moving, and then to act upon them.”

Tatz co-authored Worlds Apart: The Re-Migration of South African Jews, in which he proposed that South African Jews had never left this country because of a single event, but rather a combination of factors.

Brotman pointed out that 40 per cent of the community had emigrated between 1981 and 2005 and it had also aged, with the average age today being in the mid- to late-forties. A “much higher proportion” of Jews had left than was the case in the general white population.

Quoting from the 2005 Survey of South African Jewry conducted by UCT’s Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research, he said that 92 per cent of the community had

indicated a desire to remain in the country, the highest percentage of Jews ever wanting to stay and an increase from 71 per cent in 1998.

Dealing with the challenges facing young South African Jews today, Brotman highlighted the policy of affirmative action which he said had become “more stringently applied” since 2005. It was much more difficult for young Jews to get into law school and medicine, fields they traditionally entered.

“There’s a lot of pressure on young Jewish students to achieve,” he stated. “They have to be better than their parents’ generation.”

The community had responded with its own form of affirmative action, in 1999 introducing Staffwise, to assist Jewish applicants

and to encourage Jewish-owned companies to employ Jews. Entrepreneurship – assisted by ORT-JET - was also encouraged as a response to affirmative action, with Brotman saying there was talk of introducing such a course at Herzlia.

Speculating on the future “aggregate of events” that might spur young Jews to emigrate, Brotman suggested the performance of the Democratic Alliance was a factor to watch. “Jews will feel more comfortable politically if the DA becomes stronger,” he maintained.

Fears had been expressed around the ANC and its former Youth League presiden, Julius



Dan Brotman, who presented at Taste of Limmud.

Malema. “If he returns or someone of his ilk (emerges), this could drive people out of the country,” Brotman suggested.

Developments around the Constitution and corruption would also be determining factors, he predicted.

Of interest was the fact that eight per cent of the Jewish community has emigrated and returned to this country, according to the 2005 Kaplan Centre survey.

“I would guess that the numbers are higher today because of the recession in other countries,” Brotman stated.

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Lag B'Omer at Sydenham Nursery School

LESLEY BLOCH
PHOTOGRAPH: INGRID SEEFF

The children of Sydenham Nursery School joyfully sang and danced around the fire and enjoyed eating braaied potatoes on Lag B'Omer. The theme of Lag B'Omer was to reinforce the children's artwork, with paintings in the colours of fire.



KDVPPS gets into the spirit of Lag B'Omer

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
STACY FLEISHMAN

Lag B'Omer is a Jewish holiday that falls between the holidays of Passover and Shavuot, a day traditionally celebrated with picnics and games. It is also customary to light bonfires and sing and dance around them. King David Victory Park Primary School celebrated in style. On Wednesday, May 9, parents, learners, teachers and friends, came together to celebrate this happy event. Entertainment was provided by Nir Etzboni and the Ma'Afrika Choir together with the stunning sounds of the King David Primary Choir under the auspices of Rina Vissoker. Bonfires were kept burning and the high-



Bonfires epitomised the spirit of Lag B'Omer at the King David Victory Park Primary School celebrations.

light was the draw for a car raffle. The evening culminated with the release of Chinese lanterns into the night sky which set a wonderful ambience. Thank you to all those who ensured a wonderful evening for all.

Fire engine cherry on top as tots celebrate Lag B'Omer

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
SUZANNE BELLING

With sirens blaring, a fire engine from the Rosebank Fire Department entered the grounds of Torah Academy, where children from the nursery school and their guests,

tots from the Yiddish Folk School, were given the basics on how to fight fires. The occasion was Lag B'Omer, when learners from the TA Primary School had a morning of activities on the sports field, a braai and bonfire, while the high school boys held a braai and bonfire in their grounds.



Every child's dream comes true... Children from Torah Academy Nursery School and Yiddish Folk School gather in front of the fire engine from the Rosebank Fire Station, on Lag B'Omer.

Baked potatoes for a super YC Pre-Primary Lag B'Omer

OWN CORRESPONDENT
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

The children of Yeshiva College Pre-Primary School celebrated Lag B'Omer with a picnic in the garden, eating baked

potatoes and ice lollies. They brought their own blankets (and teddies) to school and fun was had by all. One of the learners in the five-year-old unit said: "Oh, I can smell the potatoes baking and it's delicious!"



Learners of Yeshiva College Pre Primary School enjoying their Lag B' Omer picnic.

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Learn about SAJBD through SA Jewish media

In recent weeks, readers of this column will have noticed the addition of a shaded box providing details of the forthcoming week's "Jewish Board Talk" programme on 101.9 Chai FM. The show is hosted by the Board's Senior Researcher Steve Gruzd and produced by our communications head, Charisse Zeifert.




Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

It is proving to be a most engaging, as well as entertaining vehicle through which to keep the Jewish community abreast of a wide range of issues and developments, local and international. In addition, the Board has a weekly report-back slot each Thursday after 17:00.

"Jewish Board Talk" is the latest instance of the Board's making use of the SA Jewish media to keep the community informed about what it is doing.

On our show, we try to be as broadly reflective of what is happening in the Jewish community as we can. This is in keeping with the SAJBD's mission to be the umbrella representative body for SA Jewry as a whole.

Today, of course, the media incorporates much more than traditional print media and radio. There is obviously the Internet, probably today the dominant vehicle through which organisations market themselves.

The Board's website, www.jewishsa.co.za, has been extensively upgraded of late and will shortly be re-launched.

Our Cape Town branch, has recently launched its website (www.capebod.org.za). Another site on which the Board's work, among many other items of Jewish interest, features regularly is www.myshtetl.com.

Even the Internet has been rendered somewhat passé by the emergence of social media. The Board is taking advantage of the opportunities this provides, by involving itself in the world of Facebook and Twitter, thereby greatly extending its reach within the greater Jewish community.

In addition to all of these exciting new developments, we also have our traditional printed Jewish publications through which to communicate with our constituency. In addition to this paper, we have a number of wide-reaching monthly publications in all the major centres, including the Cape Jewish Chronicle, Hashalom (Durban), Pretoria Jewish Chronicle and Jewish Life (which is national).

In all of these, we ensure that the Board's work is regularly featured. Today, in fact, there should be no grounds anymore for people to claim that they do not know what it is that the SAJBD does, since so many different vehicles now exist through which they can find out.

Listen to "Jewish Board Talk" every Tuesday evening on 101.9 Chai FM with Steven Gruzd from 20:00 – 21:00, repeated Sundays 11:00 - 12:00. Also streaming on www.chaifm.com On Tuesday May 22, Steve chats to Claudia Braude about the Irma Stern painting purchased by Qatar. Ilan Ossendryver talks about his ongoing research on Ethiopian Jewry. Helen Leiberman from Cape Town reflects on her development work through Ikamva Labantu. Finally, live from Paris, Richard Pasquier, president of CRIF (France's major Jewish federation), discusses the election of Francois Hollande and issues affecting French and European Jewry.




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Breaking the cycle

You may be aware that the children in residence at Arcadia Children's Home have been placed there by the Children's Court for their safety.

What you probably don't know is that there are a further 100 plus families with children, several younger than six, who have been identified as being "at risk" of the same statutory intervention.

Childcare professionals and social workers often talk about the "Cycle of Deprivation", referring to a chronic cycle of unhealthy family dynamics which, if not broken, will perpetuate. At the Chev we can attest to families who are dependent on financial and/or psycho-social support through second and third generations. This pattern is one of the reasons the Children's Act (# 38 of 2005) places enormous emphasis on preventative work.

Arcadia cares for these "at risk" children in its daycare programme where we do our utmost to help them break this destructive cycle.

If all goes well, these children will never have to become court-appointed residents in need of protection from abuse and neglect. But if not... the cycle will almost certainly repeat itself.

The challenge for us is that Arcadia's daycare is over-subscribed. We would gladly admit those 100 plus "at risk" newcomers into the programme tomorrow, if we could accommodate them. There are lives at stake here.

Despite our financial constraints, the Chev has decided not to abandon these vulnerable children. We will, instead, extend our services and increase our registration capacity by building additional facilities and employing more personnel. Some cycles need to be broken.

Please feel free to communicate with me about this or any other matter, on feedback@thechev.org.za



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The great Internet shift

The switch-on of the WACS cable, the first in-flight WiFi in South Africa and the latest Internet stats made for a big Internet week, writes ARTHUR GOLDSTUCK

The Internet arrived publicly in South Africa almost 20 years ago, but it continually evolves and grows along paths that were never anticipated.

In one week this month, three of those paths were opened up or laid bare in a momentous week for South African connectivity.

On May 8, the first-ever scheduled air flight with onboard WiFi, took off from Lanseria Airport on a Mango plane. The connectivity technology was supplied by the Wireless G hotspot and telecommunications provider, and the “backhaul” by Vodacom.

Anyone on board could switch on a laptop or tablet computer or even a smartphone.

In theory, it meant that anyone on board could simply switch on a laptop or tablet computer, or even a smartphone, and connect to the WiFi access point on board.

After a registration process and a



Goldstuck on Gadgets
Arthur Goldstuck

credit card payment - or entering a voucher or account number - the traveller could not only access e-mail and the web, but also conduct instant messaging and even voice conversations.

The bad news is that a new generation of morons will be sitting on planes shouting into their computers things like “You’ll never guess where I’m phoning from” and “Can you hear me now? And now? Sorry, I’ve got a bad signal!”

During the test flight, around 100 technology media types on board tried to connect simultaneously, and the connection crashed under the load. Because the total capacity of the current system is about 8Mbps to a single aircraft, each user is limited to a 256Kbps link, with “bursts” up to 1Mbps.

So, as long as no more than a dozen or so are trying to connect at once, it should work fine for basic purposes. That limitation, hopefully, will discourage the peril of phones on a plane.

The day after the flight, World Wide Worx released the headline findings of its Internet Access in South Africa 2012 study, which was backed by the howzit MSN online portal.

The study showed that the SA Internet user base had grown from 6,8-million in 2010 to 8,5-million at the end of 2011 - no less than 25 per cent growth.

Some 100 technology media types tried to connect simultaneously.

Moreover, this strong growth would continue during 2012, and the Internet user base is expected to pass the 10 million mark by the end of the year.

Said Justin Zehmke, executive producer of howzit MSN: “These

findings are a powerful signal that the demand for online content in South Africa is likely to explode in the coming years. As the market grows and matures, we will see a greater choice in information sources and a maturation of online services.”

This strong growth would continue during 2012.

These numbers also show that the Internet has finally awoken, fully, in South Africa. Penetration is now approaching 20 per cent of the population, and for the first time we can see the mass market embracing digital tools on their phones.

The headline findings revealed that a total of 7,9 million South Africans access the Internet on their cellphones. Of these, 2,48 million access it only on their cellphones, and do not have access on computers. The remaining 6,02-million users access the Internet on computers, laptops, and tablet computers.

However, 90 per cent of this number - 5,42 million - also access it on their cellphones. This means that almost 8-million South Africans sometimes or regularly access the Internet on their phones.

While smartphones are the main driver of Internet growth, the

cost of data use is being driven down by new undersea cables connecting sub-Saharan Africa. The study shows that undersea cable capacity to SA at the end of 2011 was 2,69 Terabits per second (Tbps), and due to rise to 11,9Tbps by the end of 2012.

On May 11, the next massive pathway to that capacity was opened up: the West Africa Cable System comprising 5,12Tbps of South Africa’s undersea cable capacity, was officially switched on.

MTN is the largest investor in WACS, having committed more than \$100 million, of which a chunk went to the construction of cable landing facilities in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Cote d’Ivoire, to support their networks there.

The Internet has finally awoken, fully, in South Africa.

“The impact of MTN’s investments in Africa is far-reaching,” said MTN SA Chief Technology Officer Kanaragaratnam Lambotharan. “Africa has, until now, been a pedestrian on the information superhighway.”

Clearly, in land, sea and air, a new connectivity era has begun.

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

The March of the Living to remember those who had died

STEVEN MELTZER

A SOUTH African contingent has recently returned from the March of the Living. The March of the Living in Poland, ending in Israel last month, was an inspiring, emotional and wonderful experience.

A South African contingent joined an international group of 86 participants, mainly Americans, Canadians and about 10 Australians.

The South African group was led by Tali Nates. Other members were Ann Harris, widow of the Late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris; Eda and Steven Meltzer; Joel and Chris Neuhaus; Richard and Cheryl Treisman; Tracey Farber, a clinical psychologist; Dominic Mahlangu (deputy editor of The Times); Margaret and Stan Hoffmann; Geoff Sandler, formerly from Klerksdorp and now in Melbourne and his wife, Dr Natalie Taft.

The tour started in Krakow near the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps, where we were shown how the Jews lived there before the Holocaust – there were five shuls in a small section; today there are only memorials.

The three kilometre march was along the infamous railway line, where Jews were taken to be gassed and cremated.

There were 12 000 marchers in March of the Living. Many had Israeli flags draped over their shoulders and we proudly carried our SA flag.

The march started with the sound of a shofar and took about 1,5 hours. A ceremony, led by Rabbi Meir Lau was held, together with Dudu Fisher intoning the Hazkorah.

Six large fires were lit by six survivors, with Israeli flags flying proudly behind them. In Auschwitz, mincha was held. It was very emotional.

The tour then proceeded to Lodz and

Warsaw We visited concentration camps, death camps, mass graves and then on to Chelmno where the first gassings en masse was carried out in trucks. The Nazis found this type of murder “too slow” and gas chambers were built.

We visited cemeteries, museums and a yeshiva in Lublin, where there are now 20 Jews living.

Our full daily itinerary started at 08:00 and finished in the evening.

The highlights, although very emotional and tearful, were survivors’ children meeting the Righteous Among the Nations, who saved the parents of those now on the march, and saying Kadish, lighting yahrtzeit candles and singing Hatikvah at many places.

One death camp, Majdanek near Warsaw, had not been destroyed by the Nazis when the Russians and Americans arrived. We went into the gas chambers and the crematorium, but at the end of the death camp there is a large memorial consisting of a mountain - about 75 metres in diameter and about 30 metres high - with a dome built over it, of human ashes and bones of Jews. We sang an Ani Maamin, lit candles and the men said Kaddish. We then all sang Hatikva.

Other highlights of the tour were a visit to Schindler’s factory; a Dutch survivor - Maude - who toured with us and recounted her stories; a concert at the Krakow Opera House where 22 liberators of the death camps (from the US, Canada, England and Russia) came onto the stage.

The standing ovation they received brought tears of joy to our eyes.

Then going on to Israel for Yom Hazikaron and a march on Yom Ha’atzmaut from Sachar Square to the Kotel. Yad Vashem became more significant to us as we had seen actual physical details at the camps.

Warmth of Lag B’Omer at Great Park



Thousands gathered at last Wednesday’s immensely successful Lag B’Omer evening, hosted by the Great Park Shul in Oaklands, Johannesburg, to watch Mark Samowitz (aka Shoobie Doob Shloimy) perform, dance around the bonfire and celebrate in true community style. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY GREAT PARK SHUL)

News in brief

KATSAV DENIED NEW HEARING IN RAPE CONVICTION SENTENCE

JERUSALEM - An Israeli Supreme Court justice has denied a new hearing for former President Moshe Katsav to request a reduction in his seven-year prison sentence for a rape conviction.

Supreme Court Justice Esther Hayut last Sunday denied the motion for a new hearing, meaning that the only possibility that Katsav has for a reduction of his sentence is through presidential pardon.

Katsav, who was elected president by the Knesset in 2000 in an upset win over Shimon Peres, resigned in the wake of rape allegations shortly before the end of his term in 2007. Peres succeeded Katsav in the post and continues to serve.

Israel's Supreme Court upheld Katsav's rape conviction and prison sentence last November. (JTA)

KNESSET COMMITTEE REJECTS LAW TO ANNEX SETTLEMENTS

JERUSALEM - A bill aimed at applying Israeli law on West Bank settlements, has been rejected by a Knesset committee.

The bill, proposed to the Ministerial Committee on Legislation by Likud lawmaker Miri Regev, would have removed Israeli settlements from military rule and effectively annexed them.

In Sunday's vote, nine lawmakers opposed the bill - including most of the committee's Likud members - and five abstained in an unexpected turnaround of several members who had originally said they would support the bill.

They reportedly changed their votes after Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman asked Regev to postpone the vote, and after learning that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu planned to vote against the bill.

Netanyahu reportedly did not want to go head to head with the Obama administration over the settlements at this time.

The bill can be resubmitted in six months. (JTA)

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Spotlight on debilitating MS

Multiple sclerosis support organisations in 47 countries will be marking World Multiple Sclerosis Day on May 30, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of SA says in a media release. The day is to “raise awareness of MS as a global issue and raise funds to support the work of the (global MS) movement including MS research”.

MS is an illness of the central nervous system. For unknown reasons, the immune system attacks the body, causing damage to the myelin coating around nerves, causing messages from the brain not to reach their destination.

This damage to the nervous system affects people in different ways, but all MS sufferers experience extreme fatigue, find it hard to balance, and may find all or some of their senses suddenly not working as they once did.

MS cannot be cured and often has a devastating effect on the life of the person suffering from it and his or her family and friends.

Janet Bentel says: “...it is a silent, deceptive and insidious

condition that is part of your life - you might look fantastic but you feel awful... you try and be normal but you can never forget...”

Irene Stephanou, (49) a long term survivor, remembers: “When I was 16, I suddenly realised I was blind in one eye. Fortunately a cortisone shot brought my sight back, but that was the start of a long struggle with a disease that constantly surprises me with attacks on different parts of my body.”

It is estimated that there are about 5 000 people living with MS in SA. However, because of the stigma of the disease and the difficulties of diagnosis, no-one is sure just how many people are in fact suffering from it. Those living with MS have to take regular – costly - immune-modulating medications.

The MSSA provides support to people with MS and runs a 24 hour helpline. MSSA can be contacted 24 hours a day on 0860 45 6772. Leave a message and your call will be returned, or you can e-mail the Society at inland@multiplesclerosis.co.za.

What’s On

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

TODAY, FRIDAY (MAY 18)

- **UZLC** hosts radio personality John Berks, on “My Life in Radio - a Dream Becomes a Reality”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.
- *Second Innings* hosts Tom Wheeler, research associate at the SA Institute of International Affairs, on “The Politics of Oil and Gas in Central Asia”. 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.

SUNDAY (MAY 20)

- **JWBS** annual Morning Market and Book Fair takes place at Jabula Recreation Centre. A variety of stalls, lots of fun for the kids and delicious food. Call (011) 485-5232 during office hours or e-mail benevolent@iafrica.com
- *Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue* hosts a “Torah Breakfast” every Shabbat morning at 08:30. Join us for a light breakfast and listen to our guest speakers. Venue: 38 Oxford Road, Parktown (entrance in Third Avenue). For more information visit www.beitemmanuel.co.za or call (011) 646-6170.

- *RCHCC* hosts the Oscar-nominated, Emmy Award-winning documentary, “Promises”, a film by Justine Shapiro, BZ Goldberg and Carlos Bolado. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za

MONDAY (MAY 21)

- *RCHCC* launches Mona Berman’s “Serendipity in my Seventies” Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R60 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za

- *UJW* hosts Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of

Great Park Synagogue, who will talk on “Challenge of Jewish Continuity”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R20. Tel: (011) 648-1053.

- *The Pine Street Shul*, for Rosh Chodesh hosts Sara Evian on “Using Our Soul Powers to Write Our Personal Story”, an in-depth look at the Tree of Life (Sefirot) as it is found in the human body. All women welcome. Venue: Shul Hall. Time: 19:30. Donation: R40. RSVP: Kiki 083-692-6399 or kikimarx@worldonline.co.za

WEDNESDAY (MAY 23)

- *RCHCC* hosts a lecture by Chonatz Getz, “The Strange Affiliation Between Mathematics and Art”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378. E-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za
- *RCHCC* is hosting an art exhibition of works by Chonatz Getz and Collin Cole. Opening at 18:00. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378. E-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or René at renes@greatpark.co.za

- *UJW adult education* division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer Dept English Wits, on “Poetry’s Pleasures”. Venue: 1 Oak Street Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R25. Information: Tel: (011) 648-1053.

- *UJW CT adult education* division hosts Jacques Weber who will talk on the “Function and Role of the CSO (Community Security Organisation)”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

THURSDAY (MAY 24)

- *Emunah Ladies Beit Midrash* hosts Rabbi David Milston who will talk on “We Don’t Need No Education - Really? Time: 10:15. Venue: Emunah Ladies Beit Midrash 60 Mejon St Glenhazel, Tel (011) 887-2910.

Lance breathes easy at the top of Cho Oyu

In 2010 Lance Metz became the youngest South African to summit Mount Everest via the North Ridge. Last week he made further inroads in his mountaineering career by reaching the summit of another mountain in the Himalayas, the 8 201m Cho Oyu.

JACK MILNER

Cho Oyu, the sixth highest mountain in the world, lies 20 km west of Mount Everest, at the border between China and Nepal. Cho Oyu means “Turquoise Goddess” in Tibetan.

What made Lance’s mission even more demanding is that he attempted to summit without the use of oxygen.

“The last four days have been the toughest of my life,” said Lance. “I had to dig deeper than I had ever dug before to find something in me that I never knew I had.

“The idea of climbing without oxygen was the root for finding this new inner drive. The rest of the team had gone on to bottled O² from Camp 2 (7 200m) and already the difference was apparent. I had gone from the fastest climber to the slowest, gasping for air every couple of steps.

At Camp 3 at 23:00, it was time to get up and prepare to go. The weather was looking good - the winds were between 0-5km/h with a temperature of -35 degrees. “All was looking on course.”

Then Ngima - their Sirdar Sherpa - told them two of the Sherpas had fallen ill and not come up to Camp 3. “We were six bottles of oxygen short, including my two ‘get-out-of-jail’ reserve bottles.”

Sean Disney, the leader, made the decision to sacrifice his own summit attempt and give his bottles to the team, as the weather window was short and they could not afford any delay.

“At 01:00 we started our summit push without our leader. We tramped straight upwards through snow to a wall of rock called the ‘Yellow Band’ at 7 800m. This marked the start of a 100m technical in which we negotiated the rock band through a narrow gully.

“Our biggest challenge was that there were no new ropes and we weren’t sure how stable the old worn ropes were,” said Lance.

To complicate the situation, half way up the gully one of the climber’s crampons broke and this took some time to repair.

“As I hung there with my crampons locked into the rocks, I started to shiver as the effects of oxygen deficiency were starting to take their toll on my body.

“One of the risks to climbers entering ‘Death Zone’ without supplemental oxygen, is that your body cannot generate enough heat to stave off frostbite. As the hours passed the lag between myself and the rest of the team started to increase



Lance Metz with Sherpa Sonnem on Cho Oyu.

dramatically and the energy I had exerted trying to keep up, was becoming a problem. My beard was completely iced, the tip of my nose was showing early signs of frostbite and my 10 toes were all numb.”

While his Sherpa, Sonnem, assessed his situation, they heard a yell from above: “Rock!, Lance, rock!”

“I looked up to see a boulder dislodged by one of my teammates tumbling towards me, building up speed as it came. The last bounce of the boulder sent it directly on course to hit me head-on. I think I broke some type of record for the fastest dive at that altitude.”

They then got back to the task at hand. Eight hours of strenuous climbing without oxygen had passed. For the last few hours the only way Lance could move forward was by setting himself markers every few metres.

“I was now down to moving two steps and dropping to one knee to recover my breath. With about two hours and 100m of altitude still to climb, I had to make the decision: Do I put on my only bottle of oxygen to keep my summit hopes alive, or just give up and turn back?

“In a heartbeat I made the tough decision to give up on my dream of summiting without oxygen. I donned my mask and opened the regulator, feeding oxygen to me. It was incredible - the moment I got a taste of oxygen my entire body started to warm up and it was like I got a complete second wind and a new burst of energy. It was like I was a new man.”

Two hours later Lance found himself standing at the summit of Cho Oyu at 8 201m.

The whole team had summited but counting the cost came later - one frost-bitten finger, one crushed and frostbitten toe, five frostnipped noses and one frost-nipped cheek.

Community Briefs

‘REACHING BEYOND WHAT WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO’

ORT JET hosted international speaker, Rabbi Ben Zion Shafier at a special morning buffet that took place at the newly revamped Waverley Shul hall, recently. Everyone left with a feeling of “can-do”. The title “Aspiring to Greatness” espouses reaching beyond what we are accustomed to. “When you put

your goals in writing, you commit”, said the Rabbi. “Just try it!” Cindy Silberberg, HOD of the department at ORT JET said, “The lecture motivated and inspired me to work harder towards my goals.” More of these kinds of lectures will be held under the ORT JET banner. *MARCELLE RAVID*

OXFORD SHUL CELEBRATES 65 YEARS OF CHORAL MUSIC

This year the Oxford Shul celebrates 65 years of choral music under the baton of extraordinary choir masters, chazzonim and choristers. In a media statement, the shul adds: “song has the capacity to reach the depths of our hearts, bring old memories alive, awaken our deepest aspirations.” This concert, to be

held on June 9, at Oxford Shul will feature the Oxford Shul Choir, the Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir, the newly established Johannesburg Jewish Boys’ Choir and the resident choirs of Pine Street, Pretoria, Waverley and Sandton Shuls. Call Evelyn Green for more details and bookings (011) 728-5570.

SANDRINGHAM GARDENS CELEBRATES YOM HA’ATZMAUT

It was an emotional moment in the Sandringham Gardens dining-room in Johannesburg recently, when residents stood up to sing Hatikvah on Yom Ha’atzmaut.

Chevrah Group Rabbi Jonathan Fox spoke about the significance of Israel’s Independence Day and recounted the history of the State from Theodor

Herzl to 1948. He emphasised the importance of giving thanks to Hashem for the miracles that led to the creation of the Israeli state and concluded with prayers for the Israel Defence Forces.

Residents were treated to a musical performance by Krystel Gaddin on the violin and Joey Louw on vocals. *CELESTE EVERITT*

Maccabiah cricket trials

The Maccabi SA senior cricket trials to select the squad for next year’s Maccabiah, will take place this Sunday in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

In Johannesburg the trials start at 08:30 at the Old Eds nets. The contacts are Matthew Rosen at rosen.mattfrank@gmail.com or Myron Michel at myka@mweb.co.za. The entry fee is R100 per player.

In Cape Town, players should contact

Wayne Myers at wmyers@telkomsa.net for further information. It is essential that all players attend these trials, should they wish to be considered for selection.

The SA senior cricket squad will be defending their Gold medal from the previous Maccabiah after defeating India in the final and will also be attempting to make it a hat-trick of wins, having won Gold both in 2005 and 2009.

Karate trials for Maccabiah

The SA “All Styles” karate trials for the 19th Maccabi Games to take place in July 2013, will take place on Sunday, June 10, at Malcolm Dorfman Shihan’s dojo, 31 7th Avenue, Parktown North, Johannesburg.

All competitors must be at the venue by 14:00 for registration. There will be a

R50 participation fee. The trials will start at 14:30.

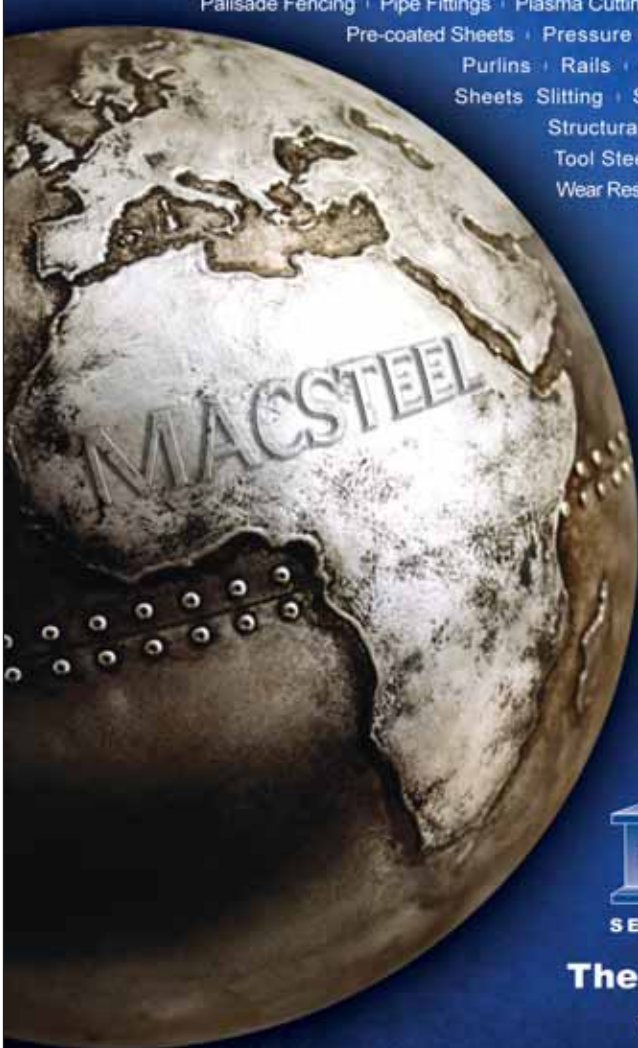
Karate trials will be conducted according to the basic rules of the WKF (World Karate Federation).


For more information please contact your dojo heads or Farrell Cohen at e-mail farrellcohen@mweb.co.za.

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